Doralzuelan:

An Emerging Identity of the Venezuelan Immigrant in Southern Florida

by

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ABSTRACT

The steady influx of Venezuelan immigrants to the United States has resulted in the creation of a close-knit community of these immigrants in the city of Doral, Florida, now nicknamed Doralzuela given the strong imprint Venezuelan have left in this city. This study aimed at gaining understanding on how the process of immigration and settlement in the context has affected Venezuelan immigrants' identity, their perception and use of English and Spanish in daily interactions, and how, or if, their bonds with the home country has affected their incorporation to the host society. The study followed a qualitative design. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed following Riessman's (2008) notion of dialogic narrative analysis. Six themes emerged from the data; (re)configuration of the self, the role of social networks, negotiating identity through language, issues of assimilation, transnational identity, and Doralzuela, the new Venezuela. These themes were discussed, and multiple and distinct views on each theme were identified.

DEDICATION

To my family, for giving me their unconditional love

To Shea, for being my rock

To Venezuela, for being my source of inspiration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The number of Venezuelan citizens immigrating into the United States has increased dramatically since 1990, going from 35 thousand immigrants to 170 thousand as per the 2013 census (Lopez, 2015). As of 2013, Venezuelan-origin immigrants (both foreign and U.S-born) comprised the thirteenth largest population of Latin American immigrants in the United States, and they accounted for 0.5% of the overall Latin population in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). According to the 2013 American Community Survey, the majority of Venezuelans were located in the South of the United States (69%), with 42% living in Florida.

Over the past couple of decades, this population has clustered mainly in southern Florida, particularly around the cities of Weston and Doral, which have been nicknamed "Westonzuela" and "Doralzuela" (Felix & Brochu, 2013; Latzman, 2013; Long, 2015; Paz Salas, 2015), due to the great influx of Venezuelan immigrants. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that, by 2013, around 50% of the Venezuelan-origin population (whether foreign or American-born) had at least a bachelor's degree. This is compared to all of U.S Hispanics (14%) and the overall U.S population (30%). This typically translates into better job opportunities especially after legal status is acquired (Lopez, 2015).

Another aspect that sets Venezuelans apart from most Latin American immigrants is are the characteristics of those who emigrated to the United States following Hugo Chavez victory in the presidential elections of that country in 1999, and the 2002 "oil

strike". Most of these individuals belonged to the Venezuelan middle-upper class (Freitez, 2011). Some of them were high level employees from Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), the main oil company in Venezuela. Others were entrepreneurs who saw their assets threatened by Chavez' socialist ideology, in which private properties and businesses were the main target (Semple, 2008).

The aforementioned workers from PDVSA were fired after the sixty-two-day strike and blacklisted, so that they could not be hired in any other public company in the country. These individuals were mostly professionals with extensive academic formation in their fields of expertise, as well as a vast experience in the industry. These conditions had allowed them to maintain a comfortable quality of life that they considered could no longer be maintained in their country. According to Freitez (2011), the lack of professional opportunities and the uncertainty regarding the future, along with the growing wave of crime and delinquency was a determining factor in the increasing waves of emigration from Venezuela in the past two decades. As the author also expresses, the majority of these Venezuelans chose United States as preferred destination for emigration, with Spain as the second choice (pp. 20-22).

As data from different censuses and surveys show, the number of Venezuelans in Florida has increased considerably from 40,781 in the year 2000 to 126, 674 in 2015 (U.S Census Bureau, 2016b). Most of these people came in search of a better future for themselves and their families. Those who came to the United States alone have since found spouses and started families in this country. Both of those groups have developed social and personal bonds with their environment. They have families, friends, jobs, and their

children go to neighborhood schools. In sum, these former immigrants – some of whom have already become citizens – have created a new life in this new country and, as years go by, the possibilities of returning to Venezuela have decreased exponentially.

Along with the change of life, which entails social and legal status, comes a change of attitude. As previously mentioned, a considerable percentage of Venezuelan immigrants have higher educational levels (at least a bachelor's degree), and most of them had certain professional experience in well-paying jobs. However, once they arrive in the United States, they find a different reality. They are immigrants, and illegal ones in most cases. This means that they must struggle to find jobs, and even accept the conditions imposed on them in order to make a living.

Although most of these Venezuelan immigrants have been in the United States for over a decade, only 39.11% (74,234) of the foreign-born residents had been naturalized as U.S. citizens by 2015 (U.S Census Bureau, 2016a). The remaining 60. 89% (115,148) had not yet applied for citizenship by that time. It also remains unknown how many of these non-naturalized Venezuelan are actual legal residents of the United States and how many are in the country illegally. The reasons for the unchanged status of the non-citizens can be diverse, ranging from not having the required time to take the citizenship test, to not having enough skill in the English language to take said test. Another possible reason might be the fear of losing their Venezuelan identity should they obtain their U.S citizenship.

The issue of identity is one common to all immigrants. When they arrive at a new place, they carry with them an array of cultural, religious and linguistic values and practices

into the new country (Kaplan & Chacko, 2015). The circumstances surrounding the arrival of these immigrants can also influence the way in which they are received and the extent to which they feel they belong in that place, or that they are "home" (Chacko, 2015; Hume, 2015). A process of adjustment becomes necessary for both, newcomers and citizens, to achieve balance and to let the former assimilate into the new environment (Massey & Sanchez R., 2010). The case of Venezuelan immigrants is not different. Each person who has arrived in the United States from Venezuela has their own identity and a distinct notion of what it means to be a Venezuelan (at least older teenagers and adults). Once in the United States, these immigrants are faced with the reality of a society which is, in some cases, linguistically and culturally different from their own. In others, these individuals find commonalities, such as language, amongst the various groups of residents, more specifically those of Latin American origin. In addition, new immigrants have to go through a number of administrative processes to obtain legal status in this country, all while learning to adapt to their particular contexts, which can be open and amicable or discriminatory and antagonistic. As Kaplan and Chacko (2015) argue, national context is relevant because it provides broader expectations of incorporation, but local contexts are just as vital, since there can be substantial differences in the ways in which immigrants are received and the opportunities provided by them (p. 130).

This process of adaptation and subsequent *assimilation* is not without constraints. One of the main issues is how assimilation has been conceived and understood in the past. According to Massey and Sanchez. (2010), for many years, Americans saw assimilation as a one-way street, where immigrants were the only ones making changes, adopting

American values, habits, and tastes until they begin to act more like Americans (p. 2). Yet recent discussions on the topic have approached the process of assimilation from a complex perspective which departs from the straight-line views on of past decades (Brubaker, 2001 Levitt, 2003; Morawska, 2003).

One alternative view of the assimilation process emphasizes the agency of social actors in negotiating the incorporation process and stresses the influence of contextual factors. From this perspective, assimilation is an interactive, bumpy journey along multiple non-linear pathways (Alba & Nee, 1999; Levitt, 2003; Rumbaut 1997). It could be argued that this journey towards assimilation and the different paths individuals take in order to achieve it has a deep effect on newcomers' perceptions of themselves and their surroundings. These conceptions play an important role in the development of new identities. These individuals start seeing themselves as being part of two, or more, cultures, languages, and locations, just to name a few areas.

This merging of identities can be explained from the perspective of transnationalism (Kivisto, 2002; Lie, 1995; Massey & Sanchez, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Massey and Sanchez (2010) define it as a new type of selective assimilation in which individuals keep the language and culture from their homelands while strategically picking features from the new society. For Vertovec (1999), transnationalism describes a condition in which certain kinds of relationships have been globally intensified and now take place paradoxically in a planet-spanning virtual arena of activity, despite great distances and notwithstanding the presence of international borders. Transnational relations are not to be confused with international relations since the latter entails exchange at the level of

governments and corporations, while the former is reserved for non-state or corporate actors (Vertovec, 2009). From the idea of transnationalism, comes that of transnational identity, which is applicable to those immigrants mentioned above. These individuals learn to live in two or more cultural frameworks and to establish a dialogue between their place(s) of origin and the host country, and city (Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015).

As it can be seen, the issue of immigrant identity has been well documented over the past years (Chacko, 2015; Chavez, 2001, 2008; Hume, 2015; Kaplan & Chacko, 2015; Massey & Sanchez, 2010; Papastergiadis, 2013; Zhou, 1997), with a transnational approach to this phenomena (Cordero-Guzman, Smith & Grosofoguel, 2001; DiCarlo, 2008; Esteban-Guitart & Vila, 2015; Faist, 2000; Ghorashi, 2004; Massey & Sanchez, 2010) gaining strength and giving us great insight into the complex processes of immigration and adaptation to the host society. However, there are still some aspects of assimilation, identity, and transnationalism left unapproached in understudied immigrant groups. One of these groups which has not been pointedly studied before is the one comprised by Venezuelan immigrants, in particular those who have settled in the Southern Florida, specifically in the city of Doral. This research aims at exploring the elements of the identity of these Venezuelan immigrants and seeks to answer the following questions:

- What was their process of adaptation to the new context?
- What type of relation do they maintain with their home country?
- How do they perceive themselves with respect to their (new) environment?
- How do first generation and second-generation immigrants compare to each other in terms of identity?

- What does the name of "Doralzuelan" mean to them?

As mentioned before, there has been little research on the issue of identity of the Venezuelan immigrant in the United States (Sanchez, 2011; Sanchez & Aysa-Lastra, 2013). As a result, the Venezuelan culture is not widely known among Americans[1]. This study is an attempt to shed a light on a group that is rapidly growing in the United States of America. Furthermore, it seeks to develop an understanding of the nature of assimilation for this community and the ways in which it is a complex and variable process. This study also intends to argue how the process of assimilation to a new environment does not entail the loss of individuals' linguistic and cultural heritage. Instead, it allows for negotiation of boundaries – to use Massey and Sanchez (2010) term – in which these immigrants find a middle ground between the conventions of the new society, and their own cultural legacy. Likewise, the present study aims to show how the characteristic of the diaspora under study has led to the emergence of a sociocultural group known as Doralzuelans.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A history of Venezuelan migration

Venezuela's migration history started with the Spanish colonizers, led by Christopher Columbus, during their third voyage in 1498, when they arrived at the northeast coast of the country, more specifically to the city that is known today as Macuro, in the state of Sucre. Columbus and his men named the newly found land as "Land of Grace" due to the beauty of its landscapes (Dominguez & Franceschi, 2010). Following this so-called discovery, many other Spaniards arrived in the country, as well as other European citizens who saw in this new world the opportunity for a new life. The arrival of new colonizers and representatives of the Spanish crown continued until the battle of independence in 1810.

After the colonization process and the battle of independence from the Spanish crown, and the subsequent separation of what was known as the Great Colombia[2] in 1830, Venezuela underwent several stages of migration. During the first stage (1830-1963) official migratory guidelines were established by then president José Antonio Páez, during his two consecutive terms (1831-1839). These guidelines authorized the immigration of Canary Islands citizens and other Europeans, with the purpose of populating the uninhabited areas of the country (Álvarez de Flores, 2007).

The second stage of immigration (1963-1983) was spurred by economic and political reasons. With the expansion of the oil industry, the necessity for a skilled

workforce increased. This caused a change in the migratory guidelines, where not only Europeans were allowed entrance to the country, but citizens from other Central and South American countries, and also, professionals in the oil industry from the United States. The period between 1963 and 1972 was marked by a considerable increase in the gross domestic product due to the rise of oil prices and a subsequent increase in migration to Venezuela due to its flourishing economy, which made it an appealing destination for those in search of better living conditions (Álvarez de Flores, 2007, Pellegrino, 1989). By 1983, however, the economy of the country started to decline due to the devaluation of the Venezuelan currency, the increase of the price of the US dollar and the increment of corruption in the highest levels of the government, as well as the growth of the external debt (Dominguez & Franceschi, 2010, Torrealba, 1987).

This collapse of the Venezuelan economy brought as a consequence, not only a decrease in the number of immigrants to the country, but the emigration of Venezuelan nationals who sought a better future in foreign lands. According to Mateo and Ledezma (2006), this migration of Venezuelan nationals to other countries started to become notable around the 1990s, with Venezuelans applying for jobs and residencies in other countries such as United States and Spain. Many of these people were already professionals looking for work opportunities in international companies (Pellegrino, 2003). Another migratory trend which started in the early 1990s and continues to this day is that of foreign-born citizens who were naturalized as Venezuelans during the 1970-1980s and are now returning to their birth country or using their birth nationality to enter other countries. Concurrently, their Venezuelan-born children, have started to formally request to have their parents'

nationality in order to legally enter countries like Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Colombia (Mateo & Ledezma, 2006).

Although the country's economy reached a stable level between 2003-2008 due to the increase in the oil prices, the migratory trend did not reverse. The political climate of the country following the presidential victory of Hugo Chávez in 1998 and his attempted coup in 2002 served as catalysts of a new wave of emigration which continues to this day. Following this coup, the coalition of opposition parties at the time (Democratic Coordinator), together with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce (Fedecámaras) and the board of the national oil company, PDVSA promoted a strike which affected the oil industry in the country. From then on, Chávez's politics became stricter, aiming at private companies and multinational corporation. Several private companies were expropriated by the national government, and given to communal representatives for their management. Chávez was re-elected as president in 2006. In 2007 the government shut down Radio Caracas Television, one of the main television networks in the country, and threatened to shut down any media that aligned with the Venezuelan opposition. In 2009, Chávez won a referendum that allowed him to run for election indefinitely. Hugo Chávez died in Cuba on March 5, 2013, five months after being elected president for the third consecutive time (Escalona, 2017). After the election of Nicolás Maduro as president in 2013, the social and civil unrest in the country increased considerably, as a consequence of an increase in the levels of violence all over the country, a shortage of basic food and hygiene products, as well as medicines. These conditions have led to the exodus of over one million

Venezuelans, with the majority settling in different countries of the American continent and Spain (Páez, 2015).

The Venezuelan diaspora 2002-2016

Hugo Chávez started his first mandate as Venezuela's president in 1999, following the presidential elections of 1998. It is worth mentioning that in 1992, Chávez, along with other military officers, attempted a coup against then president Carlos Andrés Pérez. After failing to seize power, Chávez and his group spent two years in prison and were released following a pardon granted by the president at the time, Rafael Caldera.

Chávez's ideology was a socialist one. One of his first moves as president was to call for the dissolution of parliament and the modification of the constitution, which took place in 1999. In 2000 he called for a re-legitimization of powers, which granted him five more years in the presidency, as well as the restructuring of public powers (La Cruz, 2006). These and other decisions intensified the political conflict among parties who disagreed with all these changes. Said conflicts led to a number of protests in 2002 that ended in an "oil strike[3]", which lasted 62 days, and an attempted coup in April 2003, which meant Chávez' transitory release from his seat as president.

As a consequence of the aforementioned oil strike, more than twenty thousand workers were laid off the state oil company (PDVSA), among these workers were engineers, technicians, and military personnel. In the same way, several political leaders were prosecuted after Chávez' return to power, three days after the failed coup. Oil workers, political leaders from opposition and civilians who had previously collected

signatures asking for the president's impeachment were singled out and put on a public list, known as The Tascón List[4] available on the internet. These citizens were not allowed to seek work in any public office in the country (Freitez, 2011).

The events of 2001 and 2002 led to the first big wave of emigration, with many of those affected by the layouts in the oil industry and the *Tascón List* sought refuge and a new beginning in other countries. At the time, the main destinations for these migrants were Spain (Tedesco, 2008) and the United States of America (Delgado de Smith & Abellana Chaybub, 2009; Freitez, 2011; Pew Hispanic Center, 2013). This migration from Venezuela to other countries has not stopped or slowed down, on the contrary, it has increased considerably since 2013, when Nicolas Maduro was elected president, following the death of Hugo Chavez in March of 2013 (Inojosa, 2017).

It is difficult to determine clearly the number of Venezuelans who have left the country. The most recent censuses have not accounted for the international emigration of Venezuelan citizens in the past two decades, and the National Institute of Statistics (INE, in Spanish) no longer releases its records of external migratory movements (Delgado de Smith & Abellana Chaybub, 2009). All known records of external migratory movements from Venezuelan citizens come from international sources, such as the National Institutes of Statistics from host countries in Latin America (Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay) and Spain. In the United States of America, these figures are drawn from the U.S Bureau of Census and the Pew Hispanic Center.

In the past years, the main sources of information regarding the now called *Venezuelan Diaspora*, are news sources. The online portal *Caracas Chronicles* in its 2016 article about the Venezuelan diaspora, presents a rough distribution of Venezuelan nationals around the world, based on the data provided by the National Unity Roundtable's result of the plebiscite against the government of Nicolas Maduro in July of 2016 (Gonzalez, 2017). According to the votes registered, over 500,000 of Venezuelan nationals are currently living in the American continent, followed by 141,000 in Europe, over 4,000 in Australia and New Zealand, approximately 3,400 across Asia, and over 200 throughout Africa (see Appendix A).

Migration to the United States of America

As mentioned above, the United States of America is the first destination for Venezuelan migrants. Following the promise of a better life in "the land of dreams", many Venezuelans have settled in the United States in the past three decades. According to the IMILA[5] project (Research on the International Migration in Latin America, in English), the number of Venezuelans in the United States increased from 33,000 in 1980 to 42,000 in 1990, and 107,000 in 2000 (CEPAL, 2006). The results of the census from the American Community Survey shows that the number of Venezuelan-born citizens in United States territory increased to approximately 160,000 between 2006 and 2011, and 200,000 between 2011 and 2015. This latter figure would correspond to almost a 100 % increase from the 2000 census[6]. According to reports by the Pew Research Center (2016), the number of Venezuelan exiles seeking asylum in the United States has jumped since 2014, increasing from 3,800 to around 10,200 in 2016[7].

As we can see, the Venezuelan-born population in the United States shows a considerable tendency to grow as a result of the economic and political crisis Venezuela is going through at the moment. Due to the decrease in commercial airlines flying to and from Venezuela, many lower-income migrants have decided to migrate to closer countries in the southern part of the continent. Common destinations include Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina and Chile. These can be reached by bus, with journeys taking up to seven days. This, and stricter migratory measures taken in the past months (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2018) could cause a slowing down of the influx of Venezuelans in United States territory.

Characteristics of the Venezuelan population in Doral, FL.

The profile of the Venezuelan immigrants living in Doral is similar to that of Venezuelans in other cities across the United States. That is, the majority of these immigrants are between 25 and 44 years old, with a median of 34 years of age, most of them are married and living in a family household (73.5%). Among the population between 3 and 25 years of age, the educational levels with the highest enrollments are elementary school (33.8%) and college or graduate school (39.3%). As for those over age 25, 26.3 % have some college or an associate's degree; 34.3% have a bachelor's degree, and 20.2% have a graduate or professional degree. In relation to employment and income, 69.3% of the population 16 and over are in the labor force, with 65% employed and 4% unemployed. The most common occupations among Venezuelans in Doral are those related to management, business, science, and arts (US Census Bureau, 2016). As for the income, the same survey reveals that the median annual personal earnings for Venezuelans ages 16 and

older was $28,000 in the year 2015. This is greater than the median earnings for all U.S. Hispanics ($21,900) and less than the median earnings for the U.S. population ($30,000). With regard to language, according to the 2016 Survey by the US Bureau of Census, around 92% of the Latino population over 5 years of age speak a language other than English, and said language is Spanish (in the case of the Venezuelan-born population), and that around 32% reported speaking English less than very well.

Venezuelans have had an impact in the growth and development of the city of Doral. In 2012, Luigi Borgia, a Venezuelan-born minister and entrepreneur, was elected mayor of Doral, after Juan Carlos Bermudez, a Cuban-American, had held the position for nine and a half years. Borgia became then the second Venezuelan to hold a mayoral position in the United States.

Identity and immigration

Due to the complexity of the construct known as identity, several ways of theorizing identity and/or social identification processes have emerged along the years. Some authors have focused on specific issues involving identity, and how this construct is defined from different ideological perspectives. Moje and Luke (2009), in their article about identity and its relation to literacy, offer several metaphors regarding identity. Among these metaphors, the perceptions of identity as a) *difference*, b) *narrative*, and c) *positioning* are of particular interest for the development of this study. Identity can be conceived in terms of *difference* (Sen, 2000), that is, how people are distinguished – and/or distinguish themselves – from one another by way of group membership and practices (Moje & Luke, 2009. p.420). The view of identity as *narrative* (Bamberg, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2007; Wortham, 2004)

conceives the self as developed through stories individuals tell over time, with some authors even arguing that these stories are, indeed, people's identities. The third perspective is that of identity as *position*, in which a person's social positioning determines how subjectivity, and therefore identity, is formed (Butler, 1997; Davies, 2008).

Another notion of identity is that which entails the performance of the self an individual decides to portray. One of the most salient works in relation to this performativity in life comes from Goffman (1959). In his *Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman uses a theatrical metaphor to illustrate how individuals engage in interpersonal relations with others, creating a persona – a self – in reaction to their cohorts and the setting, or the environment in which these interactions take place. As the author argues, a person may be completely taken by this performance, turning the staged reality into the real reality. On the other hand, this performer may not believe in his or her own act, but still guides the conviction of his or her audience to a desired place, with specific goals in mind (p. 17-18). It can also be the case that a person begins this performance as a cynic, yet in time starts believing this act and becoming the self that he or she was initially portraying (p.18). Other authors also argue that the identities are meanings which individuals attribute to themselves in a role and, as a consequence, others attribute to them (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stryker, 1968). This conception of the self as a performance is, then, based on the belief that a) identities are social products, b) identities are formed and organized in particular situations of interaction, and c) audiences respond to the self performed by the person in a particular situation, thus cementing the identity portrayed (Goffman, 1969; Striker, 1968).

Along with social psychologists and sociologists, linguists and linguistic anthropologists also discuss the concept of identity, albeit focusing on the role of language in the process of developing or constructing identity. Kroskrity (2000) refers to identity as "the linguistic construction of membership into one or more social groups or categories" (p.111). The author also points the fact that language plays an important role in the construction of one's identity. The tendency in linguistic and discourse studies is to consider identities not as fixed properties of humans, but to emerge throughout discourse, particularly, in interactional situations where identities are created and recreated in the course of interactions, with certain aspects becoming more or less salient than others (Androutsopoulos & Georgakopoulou, 2003; Butler, 1990; Daves & Harré, 1990).

The previous views of identity need to be taken into account when analyzing the ways in which a group of immigrants perceive themselves and others within particular geographical and temporal contexts. Aquino's (2002) claim that a person has more than one identity may require a reconsideration of the previous approaches to the development of identity in which they are not seen as separate and incompatible, but as interconnected.

The complexity of the construct known as *identity* becomes undeniable in light of the perspectives discussed above – and others which we will not discuss in this study. The issue, however, becomes more intricate when the *immigrant* dimension is added. It is indisputable that migration has contributed to the enrichment of cultures, ethnicities, and races in terms of diversity, especially in developed countries. Those who migrate into a place, the *immigrants*, are bound to experience different stages of stress and confusion from the moment they decide to leave their place of origin (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). We could

argue that the notion of *self* starts changing from the moment their decision is made since they recognize that they will no longer be in a familiar place, and that social norms and conventions will likely change. The potential loss of cultural, religious norms and customs, as well as a social support system may trigger changes in ways of thinking and behaving in individuals. It can also cause those values to become more ingrained in the person's being. As Kaplan and Chacko (2015) explain, "When immigrants enter a place, they bring with them a set of cultural traits and a particular socioeconomic and legal status. Their religion, their language, and their skin color all shape the experience they are likely to have in the new country" (p. 129). These traits play an important role in the way in which these individuals feel in relation to the new place, and whether the immigrant senses that he or she is somewhere that can be considered a new home.

One of the key elements in the construction of immigrants' identity is the context in which they arrive (Chacko, 2015; Kaplan & Chacko, 2015). Here we are not only referring to the general context, the country, but the more specific, local context. The national context is relevant in the sense that it determines the legal frame the newcomers must learn and respect. It also provides broad expectations of incorporation and assimilation, as well as a general picture of the racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the place. However, the local context in which these immigrants arrive is just as vital as the national one, since different local regions have diverse conceptions and ideas regarding immigrants and their place of origin.

These contexts – both national and local – can make the process of assimilation easier or more difficult. Marked cultural differences and different language can constrain

the process of assimilation and leave immigrants feeling devoid of any sense of belonging. Immigrants seeking a new start in the United States, for example, may have an idea of the overall cultural norms and expectations in this country, but they would probably also be aware of the cultural diversity of the nation, and that they may be able to find members of their own community somewhere in this vast land. Thus, some of these immigrants will be drawn to places where they can be in touch with the familiar, a least at a smaller scale.

Along with the concepts of immigration and identity is the concept of assimilation. According to Gordon (1964), assimilation is divided into *cultural assimilation* and *structural assimilation*. For the author, cultural assimilation requires outsiders (immigrants) to gradually become similar to those born in their chosen country of immigration. Structural assimilation occurs only when one becomes institutionally incorporated. From Gordon's perspective, assimilation, in its purest form, assumes a rewrite of the native culture. However, as it is explained in The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (2009), assimilation is not unidirectional (p.125), immigrants, or in Gordon's words, *outsiders*, do not simply erase their original culture and take on the new one, but instead, a transformation the old and new cultural environments takes place, with the outsider taking on some of the cultural aspects of the new place, and leaving behind some of their own. Contrary to the common conception, assimilation is not unidirectional; instead, it is a considerably more complex process that is shaped by both the actions of immigrants and that of the natives.

As Alba and Nee (2003) observe, alternative views on assimilation have emerged, describing how immigrants adapt in a new historical context of globalization and multi-

ethnic immigration. One such alternative envisions enhanced prospects for a vigorous ethnic pluralism in the contemporary world, generated partly by globalization driven by considerable advances in information technology, market integration, and mass air transportation—all of which make it feasible for immigrants and perhaps the second and later generations to maintain significant relationships with their homeland and with the relatives and towns that hold a special place in their hearts and memories (p. 6).

In countries such as the United States, which offers a wide range of cultures from immigrants who relocated to its lands decades, or even centuries ago, it is not uncommon to find entering groups choosing to relocate in localities where already settled groups with similar racial, ethnic and even class backgrounds could be found. This search for familiarity has, in many cases, led to a segmented assimilation (Portes & Zhou 1993; Zhou, 1997), creating small transnational communities with shared characteristics, as it was the case of Italians around the north-east coast of the United States during the twentieth century, or the Cuban exiles who created a large community in the South of Florida, following Fidel Castro's rise to power in 1959.

Another factor which plays a role in the (re)shaping of immigrants' identities is the characteristic of the immigrants themselves. It is important to keep in mind that, even within the same nationality, individuals present differences in financial, human, and even sociocultural capital. A refugee or an asylum seeker will face challenges that, perhaps, a wealthy investor will not, despite coming from the same country. It could also happen that some immigrants purposefully decide to avoid areas with large concentration of fellow countrymen, and instead decide to immerse as fully as possible in the new culture. The

particular characteristics of the immigrant, then, may determine how smoothly or tumultuous the process of assimilation turns out to be, and how their identity is affected and transformed.

Transnational identities

Nowadays, the word *transnationalism* seems to be a common one, at least in social sciences. In the past decades and with the expansion of globalization, there seems to be a widespread scientific interest in economic, social and political linkages between people, places and institutions crossing nation-state borders and spanning the world. Transnationalism emerged as a topic in the late 1980s, with only a mere handful of articles across the social sciences discussing the issues, yet by 2003, over a thousand articles approaching the topic could be found in on scientific journals (Cano, 2005). It is thought that the interest in the topic is rapidly expanding within the scientific community, and it is of particular interest in the field of migration studies. Guillén (2001) claims that transnationalism, which he defines as sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations, and social formations spanning nation-states, is a key manifestation of globalization. The term globalization, as it is, has entailed an increase in the velocity and impact of global connectedness across a broad range of human domains (Held *et al*. 1999).

Since there are different ways of approaching both globalization and transnationalism, and aspects like political and economic exchanges tend to be related to the former, it is important to make the distinction between what are considered international relations to transnational ones. According to Vertovec (2009), interactions

between national governments – either regarding diplomatic relations or trade – are to be considered international. The term *transnational* is to be reserved when discussing "sustained linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors across national borders businesses, non-government-organizations, and individuals sharing the same interests" (p. 3).

Just as identity and assimilation are not unidimensional and clear-cut concepts, transnationalism has also been approached from different perspectives (Glick Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vertovec 2009). One of the concepts associated with transnationalism, is that of *diasporas*, and how they relate to transnational issues. Although the term *diaspora* was traditionally used to refer to the Jewish dispersal outside Israel, it is now applied to a growing list of migratory groups (Karim, 2003). The term diaspora is said to be applicable to those who have been dispersed from a specific center to one or more peripheral or foreign regions. These individuals also retain a collective memory or vision about their original homeland. They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to the land they left behind. They are also willing to survive as a minority by maintaining and transmitting a cultural and/or religious heritage derived from their ancestral home (Safran 2007). The term diaspora is frequently used to refer to 'non-white' peoples who have had to leave their home countries and are considered minorities in their new places of residency. According to Karim (2003), a key indicator of a transnational group's status as diaspora is its non-dominant position in global cultural contexts.

Venezuelan identity

As many other Latin American countries, Venezuela was colonized by Spaniards from the XV to the XIX century. These men and women who left their country and started a new life in the new continent also brought African slaves, to serve as cheap (or free) labor. These two distinct groups, along with the native indigenous tribes spread around the country, gave rise to a new type of ethnicity. Unlike the dominant American binary race paradigm, which labels individuals as "black" or "white" (Perea, 1998), in Venezuela, as in many other Latin American countries, this distinction is not as clear cut (Marrow, 2003). Given the mix of different races, Venezuelans have difficulties defining themselves in terms of race, at least outside the borders of their country or region. For them, anyone with any European ancestry can be labeled as "potentially white", or at least "not black" (Marrow, 2003).

During colonial times in Venezuela, racial groups were clearly distinguished based on the mix of individuals of different races. In this sense, the label *Pardos* was for those born of the mix of Europeans, Natives and Africans. Within this label there were three sub-group, *mestizos*, *mulatos* and *zambos*. *Mestizo* or *mixed-race* was applied to those with white European and indigenous heritage. *Mulatos* were those born from the union of a white European and an African, and *Zambos* where those born of the mix African slaves and indigenous people. As for those labeled "white", there were three groups, *Blancos Peninsulares* (Peninsular Whites) were those who were born in Spain; *Blancos Criollos* (Creole Whites) were those born in Venezuela of Spaniard parents; and *Blancos de Orilla* (Seashore Whites, or Canary Whites) were those from the Canary Islands, who although

light-skinned, were considered second-class individuals and could not aspire to any privileged position. These labels not only served to identify people's "race", but they also determined which positions or jobs a person could obtain or aspire to during colonial times (Brito Figueroa, 1996; Cavieres, 2000; Sosa Cardenas, 2010).

Nowadays, those distinctions have all but disappeared, but the question remains regarding race. The fact that Venezuelan society has lived with the mixing of races as part of an ideology of integration, has rendered questions regarding race to be inadequate in population censuses from the very beginning, since questions about someone's race were considered, in fact, essentially racist (Briceño-León *et al*. 2004). Although the ethnic make-up of the Venezuelan population renders any race distinctions and racist behaviors –based on the perception of a "pure" race – meaningless, and even ludicrous, there is still discrimination based on preconceived ideas regarding each social and ethnic group in the country; even when the everyday Venezuelan will vehemently claim there is no racism in this country (Wilpert, 2004). These preconceptions and stereotypes are reflected in common expressions used by speakers of Venezuelan Spanish, such as the generalizations that all Afro-Venezuelans are boastful, that the indigenous people are ignorant, and that a person of European ancestry (more specifically a white person) would help "improve the race".

The previous account of the racial make-up of the Venezuelan population is relevant when discussing the cultural and social features which identify and/or represent Venezuelans. As mentioned before, given the mixture of races and cultures (European, African, Indigenous) which gave origin to the current population of the country,

Venezuelans tend to find affinity with certain aspects of all those cultures, while maintaining a strong sense of nationalism, in which they are, first and foremost, Venezuelans (Carvallo Morales, 2005).

Venezuelan poet, Luis Britto Garcia (2004), in his poem *El Discurso del Privilegio* (The Discourse of Privilege) (Appendix B) describes different behavioral aspects of his culture which concisely articulate the collective identity of Venezuelans, highlighting both their positive and negative characteristics. Throughout his poem, the writer talks about how "We are all coffee with milk[8]. There are no social differences […]. We are all brothers" to describe how issues of race are not influential factors for Venezuelans. He goes on to point out that Venezuelans have a tendency to forgive and forget, by stating that "… Nobody holds grudges […]. No scandal lasts three days. The party is over and everyone goes home. We are all noise. Everything is negotiated. The Venezuelan forgets. Everything is forgiven." Yet, he also exposes what is perceived by others as stereotypical dimensions of the Venezuelans identity:

> The Venezuelan is lazy. The Venezuelan is messy. The Venezuelan is late. The Venezuelan is wasteful. The Venezuelan is behind. The Venezuelan is irresponsible. The Venezuelan is machista. The Venezuelan is authoritarian. The Venezuelan is vulgar. […]. The discourse of privilege disqualifies as it qualifies.

Although this literary depiction of the characteristics of Venezuelans reflects the point of view of only one person, regarding the culture of the country, some of the qualities and flaws reflected in the poem are shared by other members of Venezuelan society. For

others, the issue of Venezuelan identity is more complex, since different regions of the country have their own cultural conventions, which make its people stand out when they are in a different part of the country (Carvallo Morales, 2005). Jackson *et al* (2013), in their study about cultural identity marketing in Latin American, found that Venezuelans tend to pay more attention to dress, grooming and personal care than participants from other countries. The study also found that Venezuelans have a higher need for achievement and excellence when compared to their Mexican counterpart, as well as a higher proclivity towards exhibition, defined by the authors as the need for attention and social recognition, a high tendency for consumption and pretentiousness.

The above descriptions and depictions of Venezuelans as individuals are relevant when analyzing their attitudes towards the new environment and the changes they go through in order to adapt to a context with different social conventions and expectations.

In the case of Venezuelan migrants, there has been a growing tendency towards nationalism among those living away from the home country. This is conveyed through the use of clothing items representative of the country – caps and shirts depicting the Venezuelan map or flag, shirts from the official soccer team *La Vinotinto,* necklaces and bracelets with the national colors – as well as having national symbols or phrases tattooed on people's bodies (Zambrano Benavides & Benincore Agudelo, 2018). Another way these migrants find to reflect their loyalty to their country and highlight their identity is through festivals and celebrations of the Venezuelan culture. In the United States, Miami and other cities of the Miami-Dade counties hold a celebration every July 5th to commemorate the country's independence. Artistic festivals such as the Venezuela Music Fest, as well as the

upcoming Union Rock festival also take place in the city of Miami, gathering a considerable number of Venezuelan artists and attendants. Christmas is one of the holidays in which Venezuelans seek to recreate their original traditions in the United States. Across the country, different local communities gather to recreate the traditions and customs from their home country.

The need to come together as a community is another characteristic of Venezuelans. Wiesenfeld and Giuliani (2002) found that the community is the core of social interaction in Venezuelan society. It is unsurprising, then, that a large number of Venezuelans seek to relocate to cities with a large representation of their country and culture, where they can maintain the sense of community and togetherness that characterizes the Venezuelan population.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present research followed a qualitative design. The chosen data collection method for this study was semi-structured interviews. Qualitative studies like this aim at understanding individuals' subjective experiences (Howitt, 2010), while also taking into account how the researcher's perception and approach to the data may influence the way in which the data is interpreted (Holliday, 2016). The topic of research, as well as the characteristics of the population to be studied, also called for an ethnographic approach to the study of immigration and identity and their relationship with language use. Since this research focused on a particular group of individuals with their own cultural conventions in a specific setting – as is the case of Venezuelan migrants in the city of Doral, Florida – an ethnographic approach to the subject of study allows a better understanding of the social reality of all involved in the research process (Starfield, 2016). Previous visits to the city of Doral allowed the interviewer to observe and take part in the different interactions amongst the different groups living in the area, focusing mainly on Venezuelans.

One of the goals of the present study was to gain some insight into how individuals make sense of their new identity(ies) after moving from one cultural environment to another, and the role language played in the development and performance of the new identity(ies). In light of this, a qualitative ethnographic approach was deemed suitable as it is mainly concerned with documenting and analyzing how this particular group of individuals, with specific cultural and contextual characteristics, make sense of the world

around them, and how they assimilate to the new environment (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Willig, 2013).

The data collected from interviews were analyzed from the perspective of narrative analysis, which has been previously used in studies of immigrant populations, as well as identity (Baynham, 2006; De Fina, 2003, 2006, 2013; Riaz, 2015). There is a broad spectrum of definitions and conceptions about what is to be considered narrative (De Fina, 2003; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Riessman, 2008; Smith, 2007). Some authors emphasize the complexity of the term, and how each area of study creates its own conception of what a narrative is, or the parameters a text should fulfill in order to be considered a narrative (Barkhuizen, 2013; Riessman, 2008; Stanley & Temple, 2008). In the case of this research, narratives are constructed through discrete units of discourse, i.e., an extended answer given by the research participant during an exchange between him or her and the researcher in the context of an interview (Riessman, 2008). Although not all responses provided by the participants constituted narratives, there were instances in which the question posed by the researcher elicited a narrative. These narratives took the form of an anecdote, an extended generalized opinion, or by creating tangents in which they discussed issues not related to the questions, yet which were of interest for the participant.

Participants

Several potential participants were contacted via telephone and in person. Although many showed interest in taking part in the study, scheduling conflicts hindered the realization of the totality of interviews. Out of those initially contacted, eight individuals were recruited and interviewed. Participants were selected using snowball sampling and

their participation was voluntary. Snowball or chain referral sampling is a type of non-probabilistic sampling in which the researcher accesses participants through contact information or referral from other participants (Goodman, 2011; Noy, 2008). Although criticized by some researchers (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Hendricks, Blanken, & Adriaans, 1992), it is one of the most widely used methods of sampling in qualitative studies in the social sciences (Goodman, 1961; Heckatorn, 2011; Noy, 2008). This type of sample is convenient for studies which involve marginalized societies, hidden or hard-to-reach populations (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Cohen & Arieli, 2011), as well as those who share social experiences related to movement (Noy, 2008). In the case of this study, the target population had the migratory experience in common, as well as certain level of apprehension towards outsiders in search for information regarding the community. The use of snowball sampling also allowed the researcher to obtain a particular type of knowledge that comes from social networks and their interactions as members of the same community (Noy, 2008).

The criteria of inclusion for participants entailed, in first place, those who had migrated from Venezuela and settled in the United States. In second place, these individuals had to be residents of the city of Doral, Florida. The lapse of residence in the city was not considered as an inclusive criterion given the different contexts of migration of this population, however, the researcher attempted to select individuals with at least two years of residence in the city of Doral. The previous criterium played an important role in determining whether there had been any sort of integration to the new context, and how that process had come about (Massey & Sanchez, 2010; Zhou, 1997). Although all

individuals contacted for this study had over three years of residency in the United States, not all of them had had the required time of residency in the city of Doral. The eight participants interviewed were among those had lived in that city for at least the past two years. In order to protect participants from legal and psychological risks, the latter stemming from fear of deportation, they had to be citizens or legal residents of the United States of America. In the case of second-generation participants, these had to be old enough to clearly and comfortably maintain a conversation with the researcher, and answer the interview questions. Those considered 1.5 generation, that is to say, children of immigrants who arrived in the country at a young age (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut 2004; Rumbaut & Ima 1988), were also considered for this study. The reason for including this generation is that migration to this city is a relatively recent occurrence, and many of these migrants either came with an already established family, or their children are still too young to be included as participants. In recent years, however, a great deal of research on children of immigrants does not differentiate between the 1.5 generation and the second generation, instead grouping them all under the *second-generation* label (Allensworth 1997; García 2004; Levitt & Waters 2002; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

For the purpose of this research, all children of immigrants who arrived in the United States before the age of seventeen, as well as those who were born in the country were considered second generation. Although the initial intention was to have an equal number of first and second-generation participants in this study, only one second-generation speaker agreed to take part in this study.

According to Fossey *et al*. (2002), there is no fixed number of participants necessary in qualitative research. Sample size is influenced by the time and resources available to the researcher (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Given the geographical distances, as well as the time and resources available to the researcher, a sample of eight participants was used in the present study. The sample was comprised of four female and four male participants. The ages of first-generation participants ranged from 27 to 39. Due to the aforementioned time constraints, and difficulties finding suitable candidates, only one 18-yeard-old, second-generation participant was interviewed. All participants were born in Venezuela and had moved to the United States within the last 20 years. Out of the eight interviews, three were conducted via videoconference with the first participants contacted. The other five interviews were conducted in person, in the city of Doral, Florida. The initial contact with most participants was done via phone call. During these phone calls, the researcher gave a general description of the study, its goals, and motivations. Likewise, she explained what the interview would entail. Participants received a copy of the recruitment and consent forms (in English and Spanish) via email. The researcher also answered the participants' questions regarding the study and the interview. These individuals were given approximately one week to decide whether they wanted to take part in the study. Once they accepted and returned the consent form signed electronically, an interview schedule was arranged. Two of the participants were contacted in person, in the city of Doral – both referred to by other participants – and they also received a detailed explanation of the study, as well as a hard copy of the aforementioned forms. Both participants decided to conduct the interview on the spot.

The different contexts of interview did not considerably affect the interaction among participants and interviewer. The main difference between the two groups of interviewees was the lack of direct observation of the videoconference interviewees' personal environment. All in-person interviews took place in the participants' houses or workplaces, which enabled the researcher to observe and analyze speakers' environment and how these related to participants narratives. In the case of the virtual interviews, the researcher relied on speakers facial and body gestures as complements of their responses.

Table 1 below presents a summary of the participants' demographic information regarding age, occupation, time of residence in the United States and the immigrant generation to which they belong. The variation in time of residency in the United States provided a wide range of responses and narratives which allowed us to observe the divergence of opinions in certain topics, the role and value of English being the most outstanding. Out of the eight participants interviewed, only four reported being highly proficient in English and feeling comfortable using the language in everyday communication. Two participants reported having little proficiency in the language, and a tendency to feel extremely anxious in situations in which the use of English was required. The proficiency levels listed below appeared in response to the question of how proficient they considered themselves in English. They based their self-reported proficiency on their ability to sustain a fluent conversation in English with native speakers, and whether they had taken English courses in the United States and elsewhere. For instance, Thalia had previously lived in London and studied English there. Daniel had studied in Canada for

one year before relocating to Doral. Out of the eight participants, only one (Luis) had not taken any courses of English since his arrival to the United States.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

Participant	Age	Occupation	Time of residence in the US (in years)	Immigrant Generation	Self-reported level of English
Jeanette	35	Personal trainer/ health coach	17	First	High
Beatriz	39	Housewife	3	First	Medium
Ana	39	Entrepreneur	5	First	Medium
Thalia	28	Fashion/Finance	3	First	High
Enrique	37	Entrepreneur	18	First	High
Maximiliano	23	Student	3	First	Low
Luis	32	Dental assistant	3	First	Low
Daniel	18	Student	8	Second	High

Two interviewees reported being able to communicate in English at a medium level, which according to them, entailed the ability to carry out a short conversation, in public places with native English speakers, yet not having enough confidence to initiate a full, long conversation, and feeling hyper-aware of their "grammatical mistakes". When asked how they navigated everyday communication with a low English proficiency, Maximiliano and Luis, the respondents with self-reported low proficiency, replied that English was not really necessary in their everyday lives. Luis works in an all-Latino environment, where everyone communicates in Spanish, and Maximiliano responded that his professors would often switch to Spanish due to the number of English learners in his class. Table 2 shows each participant's mobility since arriving to the United States. As it can be observed, most

participants either arrived directly at Doral or moved in from other cities in the state of Florida. Only one participant moved out in recent months due to a job opportunity.

Table 2. Participants' mobility in the United States since arrival

Participant	Mobility
Jeanette	Saint Petersburg, FL/ Doral, FL
Beatriz	Doral, FL
Ana	Gainesville, FL/Miami Beach, FL/ Doral, FL
Thalia	Miami, FL/ Doral, Fl
Enrique	Doral, FL
Maximiliano	Doral, FL/ Orlando, FL
Luis	Orlando, FL/ Doral, FL
Daniel	Miami, FL/ Doral, Fl

Context of study

The present study focuses on the Venezuelan population living in the city of Doral, Florida. Doral, is one of the thirty-four municipalities of Miami-Dade County. According to the city's website, Doral occupies an area of 15 square miles, bordering in the north with the Town of Medley, the south by the City of Sweetwater, the west by the Ronald Reagan Turnpike, and the east by the Palmetto Expressway (See Appendix C). The city was incorporated in 2003 to the county, after a seven-year process. Per the 2016 census by the US Census Bureau, the population of Doral reached the 53,426 inhabitants (the data for 2017 is not yet available). Out of these inhabitants, 43,821 are of Hispanic or Latin origin, with over 30,000 being foreign born. The number of Venezuelans in the city of Doral is about 14,523, which corresponds to 27.18% of the total population[9]. The majority of these Venezuelans are foreign born (about 69%) and less than half of them have been

naturalized[10]. Doral is also home to several national and international corporations, such as Univision, Perry Ellis International, Carnival Cruise Lines, Trump Golf Resort and Spa, and Tele Futura, among others.

The mix of diverse Latino communities in this city has brought Spanish to the top of the list of languages spoken in households at 80.6% (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2017). In 2013, a petition introduced by then Mayor Luis Borgia to make Spanish the second official language was rejected by the city council. Nevertheless, a great deal of official documents and services are provided in English and in Spanish.

Regarding Venezuelan presence in Doral, this is made visible particularly by the number of restaurants and businesses owned by Venezuelans. Some of the most emblematic Venezuelan places in Doral are Arepazo 2 restaurant, Bocas House Doral – part of the Bocas group – Don Pan Bakery, Pepitos Plaza, Canaima Restaurant, among others (Appendix D). Most recently, given the economic crisis in Venezuela, several transportation companies have been created by Venezuelans in Florida to allow people to send shipments of different items to Venezuela (mostly food and basic hygiene products). Doral is home to VenCarga, Doral Express Cargo and Next Day Cargo, all companies which transport packages and deliver them "door-to-door".

One of the main examples of Venezuelan presence in Doral is El Paseo de las Artes. It is a space converted into an artistic park where artists from Venezuela and other Latin countries perform plays in Spanish and set up different art exhibits. This space uses

converted shipping containers as micro-theaters were short plays are presented several times a week. (See Appendix E).

Data collection

Eight in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the data. The length of each interview varied, ranging from 22 minutes to 45 minutes in the case of first-generation participants, and 20 minutes for the second generation-participant. The totality of the recorded data added up to 273 minutes, including the speech of the interviewer. The variation in the length of interviews was influenced by the fact that participants were given as much time for their responses as they deemed necessary. Interviews are a very helpful tool to elicit narrative data, which in turn allows the researcher to investigate people's views and opinions in great depth (Alshenqeeti, 2014; Kvale, 1996, 2003). At the same time, they allow interviewees to "speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings" (Berg, 2007, p. 96). Moreover, semi-structured interviews, being a more natural way of interaction than surveys, allow for a better understanding between the interviewer and interviewee – researcher and participant in this case – as the interviewer can rephrase or simplify questions that were not understood, ensuring the collection of more accurate data (Dörnyei, 2007). For the purpose of this research, narrative refers to extended accounts speakers produce about their lives and which arise in the context of a speaker-hearer interaction (Riessman, 2008).

For this research, an interview guide (Appendix F) was constructed using the study of De Fina (2003) on the identity of Mexican immigrants to the United States, as well as Massey and Sánchez R.'s (2010) research on first and second-generation immigrants from

different countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America, as well as Mexico as a base for the current study. These questions were modified to adapt to the goals of this study, and new questions specific to the community under research were formulated. The questions asked depended on each participant and their ongoing narratives. These semi-structured interviews were a suitable choice of data collection method for the present study as they allowed the researcher to delve into social and personal aspects of the participants' lives (DiCico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) such as the formation of identity and the role the surrounding community and language plays in it. The interview log, as well as the proposal for this study, was revised and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Arizona State University.

As mentioned in the Participants section, three of the interviews were conducted via videoconference, with the researcher in Phoenix, Arizona, and each of the interviewees in Doral, Florida, while the remaining five were carried out in person at a location of the participant's choosing in the city of Doral. Participants were contacted by the researcher after referral from members of the target community, with previous approval of the potential participants. Phone and in-person meetings were scheduled before the interview to allow the researcher to inform participants about the nature of the study and to answer their questions and clarify any doubts they may have had.

Each interview was recorded using a mobile device (smartphone), as well as the researcher's personal computer to ensure the proper collection of the spoken data. On the mobile device, a voice recording application was installed and used to maximize the quality of the sound, and allow it to convert to MP^3 format. The free program for recording and

editing sounds, Audacity®, was used for recordings on the personal computer. All participants agreed to be recorded without hesitation.

Although observation is an integral aspect of ethnographic qualitative research, in this study only five of the eight participants could be observed in their everyday environments. The interviews carried out through videoconference left little to no space for in-depth observation of the participants and their surroundings. Despite the constraints provided by the long-distance interactions, the researcher made sure to take notice of as many gestures or facial expressions provided by the interviewees as possible. Gestures can convey and communicate semantic information to the receiver, thus adding another dimension to the narration and, therefore, to the data itself (Alibali, Flevares & Goldin-Meadow, 1997; Kendon, 1983, 1995). Moreover, being that the researcher is a member of the Venezuela community and has spent some time in the city of Doral before, and keeps in constant communication with residents of said city, there is existing knowledge of the dynamics of the community.

Observation in this study was not limited to the participants. During previous visits to the city of Doral, the researcher was able to observe and participate in the dynamics of this city, as well as the different types of interaction among the various communities that coexist in Doral. This observation was carried out during the months of December 2016, July 2017, and December 2017. Due to external factors, this observation was limited to a total of 40 days. Given that the researcher was also a member of the Venezuelan community, certain cultural and linguistic practices of the community were already familiar to her. During these observations and its accompanying interactions with

Venezuelan residents of Doral, the researcher was able to position herself as both, a member of the Venezuelan community, and a non-resident of the city of Doral. This allowed her to have different readings of events taking place in the community under study. Issues regarding the researcher's positionality were developed in a separate section.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews had been conducted, they were transcribed verbatim. First, a rough transcription was made from the interviews in Spanish. A second transcription was performed based on Gumperz and Berenz's (1993) guidelines for interactional sociolinguistic transcription. Following this, preliminary analysis of the data was conducted to identify the narrative accounts produced during the interviews. These narratives were analyzed based on Riessman's notion of dialogic/performative analysis. According to Riessman (2008, p.11), narrative analysis "refers to a family of methods for interpreting texts [e.g., oral, written, and visual] that have in common a storied form". However, not all narrative takes the form of stories. Toolan (2001), for example, conceives narrative as a recounting of things which are spatio-temporally distant, with the speaker and the listener – or writer and reader – sharing a space, and the tale and its topic at a temporal and spatial distance. In recent years, research has pointed out to the variability of texts that fall under the narrative genre umbrella, and to the existence of several types of narratives which do not fit the usual equation of narrative to stories (DeFina, 2003). Thus, while stories are usually conversational events with no pre-established topics, other types of narratives develop around previously conceived and stipulated topics, such as

court narratives or elicited accounts of personal and/or social events (Barkhuzien, 2011; 2013; DeFina, 2003; Riessman, 2008).

Riessman's (2008) performative/dialogic approach to the analysis of oral narratives makes use of select elements of structural, and thematic analysis of narratives with the goal of learning how talk among speakers is interactively or dialogically produced and performed as a narrative (Riessman, 2008, p. 102). This dialogic approach to narratives can trace its bases back to Bakhtin (1981), who conceived the communicative act as an exchange of voices in a discourse, where a speaker's discourse is constructed in response to a previous discourse uttered by his or her interlocutor. In this sense, the narratives constructed by interviewees are a response to the interaction with the interviewer, they emerge from a request for information (Thomas, 2014).

In framing the study of identity within the perspective of the dialogic/performative approach to narratives, the researcher also looked at how participants' identities are presented through narration, keeping in mind Goffman's (1969, 1981) dramaturgical metaphor of identity. The author argued that we are constantly constructing impressions of ourselves, in terms of who we are in front of others (Riessman, 2008, p. 106). Language plays a central role in these performances and the identities (re)configured through them. In this study, the audience (the researcher) was another member of the Venezuelan community, albeit, not of the "Doralzuelan" community. From the perspective of Riessman's dialogic approach, and Goffman's performative identity, this could have potentially influenced the way in which the interaction flowed, the persona presented by the participants and the readings the researcher could have had of the exchange.

The transcripts were read several times in order to become familiarized with the data and to conduct their analysis. Upon close examination of the data collected from the first round of interviews, it was deemed necessary to gather more data in relation to the meaning and implications of being a Doralzuelan for these participants. In light of this, follow-up phone interviews were conducted with the participants, where the issue mentioned above was discussed. Out of the eight participants, six were available for a second round of interviews, which lasted an average of ten minutes per participant (in addition to the duration of the first interviews). Between the date of the first and the second interview, one participant moved out of Doral. However, since the move had taken place less than a month before and the speaker had lived in Doral for the previous three years, his responses were still considered valid and valuable for this study.

Salient extracts of both rounds of interview were highlighted in an initial coding process. Said process was performed both manually and later using the software QDA Mining Lite© to extract a list of initial codes and themes, which were revised and reorganized in more specific, concise categories.

Because the interviews were conducted in Spanish and the interviewer was a native speaker of the language, the original transcription was performed in Spanish, as well as the analysis of the data. Excerpts of the interviews were later translated to English and used in this report. At this point, it is relevant to highlight the researcher's bilingualism and knowledge of the rhetoric and linguistic conventions of both Spanish and English. Sharing the same cultural background as the participants also allowed the researcher to understand idiomatic expressions and linguistic constructions which might have not been easily

understood by a non-native speaker. In addition, the researcher had previous training in Spanish-English translation. Some of the expressions used by speakers were translated in English without major issues, while others required a more specific explanation regarding their backgrounds and meanings in the Venezuelan context.

Narrative and Identity

Narratives allow speakers – immigrants in the current case – to bring coherence to the array of experiences which have shaped their identities (Barkhuzien & Klerk, 2006). Narrative is considered to have emerged as a way through which people provide their lives with meaning across time (Pavlenko, 2007). As Bourdieu (1977) points out, every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to a larger social world. This speech often takes the form of narratives, which allow individuals to make sense of issues such as identity by making claims about who they are and how they relate to others (Barkhuizen, 2013). The idea of individuals having, or developing a single, stable identity has come into question in the past decades, with new waves of studies using the plural form *identities* instead (De Fina, 2003), which are in constant (re)construction through discourse (Hall, 2000).

The notion of multiple identities coexisting within an individual resulted in a reformulation of the construct known as identity. The focus is now on ways in which these fragmented identities (Barret, 1999) change and evolve according to situations, interlocutors, and context; and on the ways in which these identities are "created, imposed, enjoined, or repressed through social institutions and interactions" (De Fina, 2003, pp. 16). An individual can develop and portray several simultaneous identities – at times conflicting

– yet these can coexist in a cohesive way within the person. Since these identities are enacted through social interactions, studies based on narratives need to take into account the role of the interactant(s) or interviewers and how their presence might influence identity displayed by the speaker (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

While conducting the present research, the code of ethics of the Institutional Review Board of Arizona State University was closely followed. Approval from the IRB was granted before starting the data collection process (Appendix G), upon completion and submission of the Protocol for Social and Behavioral Research. All participants received an invitation letter (Appendix I) containing information regarding the study, in order to help them understand the goals and procedures involved in the study. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point they felt uncomfortable. Informed consent was gained through a consent form (Appendix J). No real names were used for the transcription or presentation of the data, thus ensuring confidentiality throughout the research process. Participants' identities were kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms chosen by themselves. Additionally, the data gathered during the interview process was kept on a password-secured computer with only the researcher and the research supervisor having access to it.

Researcher's Positionality

Research, being a human activity is subject to failings or mistakes (Norris, 1997). Unlike experimental quantitative research, the very nature of qualitative research makes it the object of claims regarding the validity of its results, given the potential for bias by the

researcher (Rajendran, 2001). Because qualitative research requires a more personal engagement in the research context than quantitative research, it raises questions in researchers as to how much of the researcher's "voice" should come into play during the research process (Meloy, 1994). According to Bogdan & Biklen (1982) qualitative researchers attempt to study the subjectivities of their subjects as objectively as possible. The methodological frame within which the research takes place also plays a role in determining the degree of subjective engagement allowed to the researcher. Within the dialogic approach to narratives, researchers play an important role as co-constructors of the stories, which requires them to become an active presence in the text (Riessman, 2008). It becomes clear, then, that researchers need to be able to identify and account for instances in the data collection process where their presence influences the participants' narratives. They also need to acknowledge the ways in which their personal experiences and points of view may influence the research and interpretation processes.

A potential for bias in the present study was given by the proximity of the researcher with the topic, as well as the community under study. Being a member of the community may have influenced the way in which the researcher's presence was perceived, and the way in which interviewees presented themselves and performed their narratives.

In order to reduce the potential for bias, the researcher recorded field notes reflecting her subjectivity and potential assumptions stemming from her knowledge of the current situation of the immigrant community under research. Conversations with the supervisor regarding doubts in terms of assumptions were also shared and discussed in

order to determine whether these were based on actual facts or any subjective perception of the situation under study.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the access to the population under study. Given that the potential participants had to be residents of the city of Doral, Florida, and the researcher is a resident of Phoenix, Arizona, the processes of recruitment and interviewing took longer than initially projected. Another limitation, stemming from the geographical constraints mentioned above, was the number of participants in the study. The initial contact with potential participants was made through phone calls and e-mails, which led to the first three interviews being conducted via videoconference. The remaining participants were contacted and recruited in person, during a week-long trip by the researcher to the city of Doral. The short amount of time to recruit participants and collect this data represents another limitation for this study. The researcher only had a limited amount of time to conduct interviews and conduct observations of the community under study, and of the participants in their everyday environment. It is worthwhile to point out, however, that the researcher is familiar with the community of Doral in general and has spent time in that city in previous occasions, which allowed her to have a clear idea about the dynamics of the community.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Following Riessman's (2008) dialogic/performative analysis of narrative, six themes were identified from the totality of the data, including non-narrative responses: *1) (re)Configuration of the self, 2) The role of social networks, 3) Negotiating identity through language, 4) Issues of assimilation, 5) Transnational identity, and 6) Doralzuela, the new Venezuela.*

(Re)Configuration of the self

One of the central topics of the interviews for this study revolved around the participants' identities. Throughout our interviews and based on the questions posed by the interviewer, participants discussed several topics related to their life in the United States. They explained how the experiences they have gone through have affected the way they perceived themselves, how they have had to change as people after their immigration to the United States. An analysis of their talk about their experiences and their present-day lives shows that while many have managed to maintain their identity as Venezuelans, others describe themselves in ways that reveal how their identity has evolved into something that is neither Venezuelan nor American, but a fusion of both, called Doralzuelan.

During our interviews all participants emphatically stated that they considered themselves Venezuelan, regardless of how long they had lived in the United States. Beatriz discusses how, although she recognizes she belongs to the overall Latin community, she

does not identify herself with only one group, “We are Latin, O.K. I feel Latin, but not in the whole sense of the word. I feel Venezuelan. I am Venezuelan” (B. L# 324-325). She explains how she feels proud of her roots, and how she defends and tries to pass that feeling on to her children (B. L# 329-330). Beatriz also takes pride in commenting how Venezuelans tend to stand out among the Latin communities in Doral, especially in the academic context: “I will tell you, I studied in an institute with Brazilians, Italians, Hondurans, Panamanians, everything. And the faculty would say that the most professional student was the Venezuelan. The smartest. And you could see it” (B. L# 365-367).

Jeanette explains that, although she is “one hundred percent Venezuelan” (J. L#114), she had great respect for other communities and had learned the value of diversity, which led her to realize she had lived in a bubble until she moved out of Venezuela (J. L# 120-123). Thalia had a similar view regarding her identity as “totally Venezuelan” (T. L# 105), which while recognizing the similarities amongst the different Latin communities in the area, set them apart from the European-Americans (T. L#110-113). Most participants recognized they had learned from other Latin communities in Doral and that this had enriched their vision of the world; yet, they do not see themselves as primarily Latin, but as Venezuelans.

A second aspect discussed within this narrative was the changes and adaptations these participants have undergone, and how these changes have re-shaped the way in which they perceived themselves. Just as all interviewees claimed they were one hundred percent Venezuelan, they all admitted to having changed as people after moving to the United States. In this sense, Jeanette explains “here I have had a personal growth I would not have

had in Venezuela. At an emotional, professional and spiritual level" (J. L# 244-245). Jeanette is one of the participants who discussed, in depth, the changes she has gone through since leaving Venezuela. She explained "Simply, my birth house is Venezuela. The one which gave me, let's say, an identity in the sense of (physical) features and language. Yes, it was Venezuela. But where I have grown as a person and as an adult, to my life's mission, that has been here" (J. L# 258-261).

For Ana, the process of adaptation to the new place was a difficult one, however, she deemed it a positive one, "I have studied things. I have learned new things. I have interacted with people from all over the world. I think my way of thinking is much more open, wider. I learned to respect religions I did not know" (A. L# 251-253). She goes on to explain how she appreciated the American culture and how she has tried to adopt it somehow (A. L# 254), but that she still misses her country. In line with Ana's reflections, Thalia also expresses how she has, in a way, become aware of social aspects she did not consider before:

> "I feel more responsible with myself. More committed every day, with my surroundings. Like I told you. I think we create those opportunities for ourselves […] My thought is that in Venezuela, and in other Latin countries, it was us who were, unwittingly, taking away opportunities. By trying to pay less for things, that *native cunning*[11] started to bury us. And I think we should all respect each other, value each other's work" (T. L#161-167).

Although the male participants admitted having changed since moving to Doral, they did not elaborate much on the nature of those changes. Maximiliano, who gave the most elaborate answer among male speakers, pointed out, “I was very disorganized, careless. Now I am organized in all aspects of my life. I think that has helped me grow as a person” (M. L# 188-191).

Throughout the different narratives extracted from the interviews, it was notable how participants expressed their pride in being Venezuelan and in maintaining the traditions of their home country alive in Doral. Whether it was by relocating to Doral to be closer to the Venezuelan community, as in Jeanette’s case; or by maintaining Venezuelan culture and keeping traditions alive for their children, as Beatriz and Ana claimed to do, participants showed a strong determination to keep their culture alive, while learning to adapt and assimilate to the new environment.

The role of social networks

A second commonality amongst speakers is the characteristic of their social networks. All participants reported that their social circles were comprised, in its majority, by Venezuelans, as well as a few members of other Latin communities, such as Colombians, Cubans, and Dominicans, for example. Although some of the interviewees stated that, given the dynamics of their lives here in the United States, they do not have enough time to socialize outside their household or workplace, they try to keep in touch with other members of the Venezuelan community. It was also mentioned that there are places which serve as meeting points for the Venezuelan community, where people can gather together and feel as close to home as possible.

The city of Doral is home to people from different Latin American countries (Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Peru, and Argentina, among others). All these communities cohabit in a relatively small geographic space, and interaction amongst their members becomes almost inevitable. The perception of these inter-community relations varied amongst participants. Ana, for instance, commented that her friends are all Venezuelans, and she feels that even though she has met people from other Latin countries, she does not feel she can develop the same closeness as she does with other Venezuelans (A. L# 123-124). Enrique also talked about how, even though most of his neighbors are from countries different from Venezuela, his friends are mostly Venezuelans, and he feels more comfortable around others from his home country (E. L# 66-68). Luis, Maximiliano and Daniel, however, claimed to get along equally well with members of other communities. For Maximiliano, it was difficult to deal with Cubans at first, because of the cultural differences, and the political history between Cuba and Venezuela in the past decades (M. L# 134, 136, 137). Luis, on the contrary, considered the shared political history between the two countries as some type of bond. He talks about his experiences with Cubans who were sent to Venezuela (as physicians and physical trainers) as part of the social missions of Hugo Chavez, and once in Venezuela escaped to the United States, and see Venezuela as the "trampoline" that brought them to this country, and are grateful to those Venezuelans who helped them during their stay in the country (L. L# 133, 136-139). Beatriz, however, had a different view from Luis. She commented that the Cuban community has been the least receptive among those in the Miami/Doral area, and that this animosity is shared by many Venezuelans, herself included, "I confess that the only community I don't walk with (get along with) is with the Cubans. I confess this to you

sincerely" (B. L# 385-386). She went on to explain how her perception of Cubans changed after Chávez's government brought Cuban professionals to Venezuela, and how they took over jobs once held by Venezuelan professionals, especially physicians and engineers.

In general, all interviewees considered the relation among different Latin communities in Doral to be an amicable, albeit, distant one. They all emphasize, however, that it was more common to see people from the same country hanging together, so the inter-mixing in terms of social relations was minimal.

The relationship among Venezuelans in South Florida seems to be a more complex issue. When asked about their relationship with other Venezuelans communities (outside Doral), responses landed on a continuum from positive to negative. Luis, for instance, saw all communities as one, and considered that all Venezuelans were always united, regardless of their location (L. L# 144-146). For Thalia, the issue was a neutral one. She explained that when people migrate from Venezuela they look for those in their family or social circle who arrived first in the United States, and they settle wherever that support is found (T. L#129-132). Thalia states that comparisons would always be drawn, based on where a person, or group of people decides to settle in, but that at the end of the day, that people were drawn by opportunities and movement from one community to another is not uncommon – as it was in her own case – and at the end of the day they were all Venezuelans (T. L#133-140).

Maximiliano and Enrique, on another hand, had very strong opinions and perceptions about these relationships. For Maximiliano, there was an unstated rivalry, a

competition, among Venezuelans living in Doral, Brickell, Downtown, and Miami Beach, among other places (M. L# 162-164). He goes on to state that this competition is based on social and economic reasons, "who is in a better position than whom, or who does it better, you or I" (M. L# 167-168). It is important to mention at this point, that when asked the question regarding the relationship among Venezuelan communities, Maximiliano's initial response was a mouthed expletive about the other communities, followed by a laugh and a slashing motion across his throat, before giving the response reported above. The expletive and the gesture used by this speaker reflected his negative assessment of those groups of Venezuelans who have settled in locations different from Doral. The meaning of the gesture used by Maximiliano in the context of Venezuelan Spanish and interaction among speakers of this variety is explained in the following sub-section. Enrique was slightly more articulate in his comments about these perceived differences among communities. He explained that the new immigrants are different from the old ones (Enrique has been in the country for 18 years and is already a U.S. citizen) in the sense that those who come from higher social status in Venezuela have what he called the "I used to be, I used to have" mentality (E. L#108-110). He comments that those who settle in different places see themselves as better than the other groups, and he does not agree with that mindset (E. L# 110-112). For Beatriz, the difference resided in people's lifestyles, and even age group she commented "I say that the city of Weston is for old people. I don't like it. I don't like Brickell either, because it is not a city for children, for families" (B. L# 523-524). She considers Doral to be a more family-friendly city, whereas Brickell attracts younger, single residents, with different lifestyles. Nevertheless, her assessment of the relationship amongst residents of the different locations is a positive one, calling it a *Siblinghood*[12].

Regardless of the differences among the different groups of Venezuelan migrants who have settled in different parts of the south of Florida, there seems to be a strong bond among all of them. This unity became more noticeable in 2017, during activities such as protests, food and medicine drives for protesters in Venezuela and participation in the referendum against the government in July of that same year. In all, speakers see themselves as exiles, even Jeanette and Enrique, who came to the United States to learn English and decided to stay. Enrique explained how the current situation of the country has kept him from going back and visiting his family (E. L# 221-222).

Negotiating identity through language

This theme was characterized by a strong sense of attachment to one's language and its use in everyday life. It was reported by the majority of participants that their main language of communication is Spanish and that knowledge of English was considered important, but not necessary in the context of Doral. Thalia discussed how she believed that being able to speak English was important because it "opens many doors" (T, L.183), however, upon requesting clarification regarding the question, Thalia stated that "Here (in Doral) it is important but not necessary" (T, L.187).

Language seems to be a determining factor in the process of adaptation to this particular location. As mentioned by several of the participants, most of the day to day interactions are carried out in Spanish. As another participant, Ana, comments in relation to the automatic use of Spanish for daily communication, "The thing is that here you speak English and you are immediately spoken to in Spanish" (A. L# 305-306). Upon mentioning that something similar had happened to me during my first visit, Ana commented that if

the person spoke Spanish and recognized you as Latino, then they would immediately do the "switch" and speak in Spanish, because it is more comfortable for everyone (A. L# 309-312).

Another point made by some of interviewees, all of them mothers of young children, is that they always use Spanish at home as a strategy to keep their native language alive among their children, and make sure their children do not lose touch with their first language. As Beatriz commented that she spoke only Spanish at home because "the kids are in school all day and I don't want them for forget their Spanish" (B, L. 47-48). She mentioned that sometimes her children (ages 8 and 14) forget words in Spanish and that worries her. For that reason, she always addresses them in Spanish, even if they talk to her in English.

Out of the eight participants, the three with the longest time of residence in the United States, emphasized the importance of learning English as a sign of respect towards the new country. They openly criticized the "new" immigrants whom, according to them, do not make an effort to learn English under the excuse of it not being truly necessary in the context of Doral (or Miami). Enrique, who has lived in the United States for 18 years, when asked about the importance of knowing English, stated that:

> For me it is the number one rule that any person must follow in this country, because it is the language of this country. I mean, I find it disrespectful, especially here in Doral and Miami that you go to any supermarket, and the first assistance you get is in Spanish, when they should address you in English. It is really uncomfortable, from

> my point of view, for those who don't speak Spanish to go to a supermarket and not being able to communicate with the employees, or not receiving a quality treatment, because the others speak only Spanish. (E. L# 151-155).

Enrique goes on to illustrate how those who emigrated to Venezuela from different countries made an effort to learn Spanish, because that was the language of their new country, and Venezuelans demanded those people to speak in their language. He also commented on the fact that if you are Latino in Doral, and even in Miami, and you address someone in English you are considered strange, and even rude. Jeanette and Daniel, who have been in this country for 17 and 8 years respectively, also emphasize that for them it is mandatory to learn English and being able to speak English in the United States. They both see it as a sign of respect towards this country. For Jeanette "I think it (knowing English) is of outmost importance because we are in the United States. The language of the United States is English" (J. L# 277-278). "And I think that must be respected" (L# 280). Daniel commented that it was all about being respectful towards the country you moved to (D, L#56). He said that being of Italian ancestry, he knew that if he ever chose to move with his relatives in Italy, then he would have to learn Italian, because it is the language of the country (D. L#57).

Regardless of their beliefs and attitudes towards English in the context of Doral, all participants admitted using Spanish in their everyday lives, with their family and friends, using English only when their interlocutor did not know any Spanish. In fact, when asked about the language they preferred to use for the interview, all of them chose Spanish. One of the participants, Luis, admittedly avoided any situations in which he needed to use

English for communication (L. L#100), because he feels frustrated for not being able to speak the language fluently (L. L#103). "I try to communicate, but I come off as an *indio*[13] because I use a lot of hand gestures, and it looks bad" (L. L# 107-109). The use of the term "indio" by the speaker denotes the social separation in terms of ethnicity, as well as his assessment – shared by many in Venezuela – of this ethnic group in terms of education and social practices as seen by those of different ethnic heritage. His lack of linguistic proficiency in English in the context of the United States led Luis to reclassify himself as part of an ethnic group that he would not have claimed in Venezuela, where these linguistic or communicative issues were less likely to arise.

When questioned about the features of their Spanish, and whether these had changed throughout the years, only Jeanette said her own Spanish contained certain features of other dialects, such as Cuban Spanish or Colombian Spanish, due to previous repeated interactions with members of those communities. "Sometimes I feel that it (the accent) gets mixed with the Cuban and the Colombian, and also Puerto Rican. I worked a lot with a lot of Puerto Ricans" (J. L# 397-398). She clarified that once she moved to Doral from Saint Petersburg, her native accent has returned as a result of her primary interactions with members of the Venezuelan community.

Issues of assimilation

This theme is characterized by three main stances amongst speakers. The first of those revolved around the acceptance of their destination – in this case Doral – as their new home. In this sense, almost all of the interviewees have obtained residency in the United States and either already obtained their citizenship, are in the process of becoming citizens,

or plan to apply for citizenship as soon as it is legally allowed. For them, moving to the United States was a decision which entailed sacrifices and required commitments, and they consider the American citizenship the ultimate symbol of "assimilation" to this country. For Ana, it is about her daughter's future "We took this step and now we have to move forward. My daughter was born here and I want to raise her here" (A. L# 267-268). Enrique recalls his first days as an immigrant as being some of the most difficult of his life (E. L# 127-128), having to adapt to a new country with a different culture and with his entire family in Venezuela, a country which was still prosperous at the time. Enrique is the only United States citizen among the participants. For him becoming a citizen was a matter of ensuring his place in a country which taught him to be a responsible adult (E. L#131-133). For Jeanette, being in the United States was being home. Like Enrique, she has spent half of her life here and considered this country the place that taught her to be an adult and to take adult responsibilities (J. L# 228-234). For her, Venezuela was her birthplace, but Doral was her home, and she felt grateful for that (J. L# 255-261). Although resistant to shed all their previous cultural heritage, most speakers showed willingness to embrace aspects of the American culture and lifestyle, as long as these allowed them to keep their own cultural legacy alive.

The second stance among the participants in this study, regarding assimilation, was related to the recognition of the cultural differences. All interviewees acknowledged the differences between their culture, and that of the United States, as well as their willingness to adapt mostly to those related to legal issues. Some, like Jeanette, seemed to embrace all aspects of the new culture. When discussing American culture and lifestyle she

commented, “I love it. I mean, I am telling you because I was married to an American. I mean, yes, family relations are a little cold, because they are very, very rigid” (J. L# 264-265). She continued on to highlight what she considered the positive aspects of American culture, and the ones she has adopted as her own: “They are very proactive people, they are people who, I mean, it is white or black. It is like this, it is like that. I mean, they are determined. But I love it. I love their mentality” (J. L3 266-268). In all, most speakers highlighted the positive aspects of the culture of the United States, or Florida, to be more specific. They also agreed that some type of adaptation was necessary to be able to live here, without losing the features that distinguish them as Venezuelan.

The third stance was not voiced by all participants. Yet, through the discussion of topics such as language use, social networks, and choice of location for settlement, it was possible to unveil certain resistance to fully assimilate to the general context of the United States. Ana, for instance, was the only participant who openly admitted being resistant to assimilate into the American culture. When discussing her first days in the United States, she stated, “I say these are still those (first) days. Because we are always connected to our country […] personally, it has been some sort of resistance to the process of adaptation” (A. L# 99-101). She goes on to explain “… there is always resistance, because your country is this- I mean, at least in my case, Venezuela will always be the best country in the world […] then I don’t want to adapt to life here. I don’t want to fall in love with this place” (A, L#108-110). Even though Ana has lived in Florida for five years, she admits that she does not celebrate any American holidays, and that she only eats Venezuelan food, and listens to Latin music.

Although no other speaker openly discusses this resistance to the assimilation process, their stances in relation to language use, social relations and choice of location reflect some reluctance to fully immerse into the American culture. All of them speak Spanish in most of their everyday interactions, with some admittedly avoiding situations where communication in English is necessary. The majority of these participants gravitated towards other Latinos/as, preferably fellow Venezuelans. By limiting their interactions with other Spanish-speaking groups, participants would feel less pressured to perform in a language different from their own. Using English for communication would entail the risk of making mistakes which could constrain communication with their interlocutor(s), and thus be negatively assessed by them.

Lastly, the choice of Doral as immigration destination allowed them to feel as if they were, somehow, still in Venezuela, and the changes or adaptations to be made to their cultural legacy were minimal. As Ana commented "The one time I recognized I was in the United States was during a marathon here in Doral two years ago. And before the race, I mean, the United States Anthem (was played), and I told myself 'I can't believe it. I am not in my country'" (A. L#135-137). It seemed easier for some to forget they were not in Venezuela while living in Doral. This adds another dimension to the process of assimilation. In this sense, these speakers show certain assimilation to the specific context of residency, which is different from others across the United States.

Transnational identity

Another important narrative which emerged from the analysis was the bonds between the participants and the home country, as well as the reconstruction of Venezuela

in the new setting. All interviewees showed deep connections to their country of origin, as well as a sense of pride in being Venezuelans. They also discussed the fact that, for them, the city of Doral has become a second Venezuela, which allows them to feel closer to home.

Ana was one of the participants who showed a great attachment to her country, she commented, "One preserves their identity. Too much. I eat Venezuelan food; my daughter is two years old and she eats Venezuelan food as if she'd lived there her entire life. I cook Venezuelan in my house" (A. L# 113-114). She also explained that she called her family in Venezuela at least once a week (A. L# 332), and has participated in activities of the Venezuelan community in Florida, such as elections and referenda (A. L# 340). She also remarked that she owned several items of Venezuelan memorabilia, such as art, music, clothes, and accessories, as well as products made by fellow Venezuelans (A. L# 348-352). Despite her attachment to her Venezuelan roots, Ana stated that she would not return to live Venezuela, even if the socio-political situation changes. She explained how she and her husband took the step of moving to the United States, and for her, there was no going back, especially since she doubted her country would ever be the same one she grew up in and remembered fondly (A. L# 364-368).

Other participants, like Luis and Daniel, showed a great attachment to their roots. Luis decided to get a tattoo of the Venezuelan flag and map before leaving his country so he could take his country and his roots with him wherever he went (L. L# 173-175). He mentioned he communicated with his family in Venezuela every day (L. L#247), and took part in all activities of the Venezuelan community in Doral – or wherever these were (L.

L# 264). Regarding the possibility of returning to Venezuela, Luis' response was similar to Ana's. For him, the issue with Venezuela went beyond government problems:

> "Look, right now it is not a government issue anymore. It is a matter of culture. Building back a country like Venezuela is going to be hard. Then one of the reasons I would not go back (is) because it is not a matter of changing this government anymore […] it is a matter of culture, of education. People got used to lines (for food), to live off welfare, to not having to work" (L. L# 283-290).

Unlike Luis, Daniel stated that he would go back to live in Venezuela. For him "… it is the country where I was born, where I was raised until I was ten, and that time I lived there, wow, was a wonderful time" (D. L#150-151). He commented that he has gone back to visit several times, and that he loved it each time (D. L# 141). For Daniel, "Venezuela is a fighter, warrior country, with hard-working people who never give up" (D. L# 164-165). Similarly, Beatriz affirmed that she would go back to Venezuela once her children went to college, "I am clear that I am in this country as a passerby" (B. L# 342). She explained that she and her husband decided to relocate to the United States because of their children, but her home was in Venezuela, and she would go back once her children were able to fend for themselves (B. L# 347-351). At the time of the interview, Beatriz was preparing to spend the holidays in Venezuela, "I am happy because I will spend (time) there" (B. L#356).

Another relevant aspect of this theme is the way in which Venezuelan immigrants in Doral have, somehow, managed to (re)shape that city into a small replica of some parts of

Venezuela. The influence of thousands of Venezuelan immigrants is palpable all throughout Doral, and the participants in this study were quick to point out that being in Doral was almost like being in Venezuela. As Luis points out "The (SIC) Doral is mostly a Venezuelan community. You came years ago and there were many Cubans, because of the benefits they had, but now there are many Venezuelans. You are in Doral or Miami, and you think you are in Venezuela" (L. L# 57-59). It is worth clarifying at this point that before the mass immigration of Venezuelans, the majority of residents of Doral were of Colombian descent, not Cuban. In fact, Colombians comprise the second largest group of Hispanics in Doral (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2016). Meanwhile, Maximiliano stated that his decision of moving to Doral was a based on the comfort of having a little piece of his country (M. L# 48).

When asked about gathering places for the Venezuelan community, Ana commented there was not a "fixed" place, because "Being in Doral is like being in Venezuela" (A. L#127). She talked about her shock after listening to the American anthem at the beginning of a marathon in her community and realizing she was actually expecting to hear the Venezuelan anthem, "it is this super weird feeling, because you feel so much in Venezuela. I tell my husband 'this is Venezuela. I mean, it is Venezuela'. It is amazing how the Venezuelan took this city as their (SIC) own" (A. L#141-142). For Daniel, going out to play soccer with his friends feels the same way it felt in Venezuela (D. L# 64). Jeanette describes her community as "total Doralzuela" (J. L#26), and explains that one of her reasons for moving from Saint Petersburg, Florida to Doral was being closer to her fellow Venezuelans, and Doral feels like being back in her country (J. L# 43-44).

All participants mentioned iconic Venezuelan places in Doral, such as El Arepazo restaurant, Don Pan bakery, Doña Empanada café, and the locally famous Paseo de las Artes, where Venezuelan artists perform plays and also present art exhibits in micro theaters and galleries built out of shipping containers. It is worth mentioning that there are several Venezuelan radio and television stations, as well as printed newspapers which are available all through the Miami-Dade County, including Doral, nowadays. This is another piece of evidence of the growth the Venezuelan community has experienced in the past years.

It was undeniable that all participants maintained strong bonds with their home country, and that they yearned for the Venezuela they left behind. For some, their home country was lost. Others had already started a new life in Doral, and decided to build a new life there. Daniel, Maximiliano and Beatriz, however, showed willingness to return to their country when the time was right for them. These bonds with their native country can also be appreciated in the way in which the Venezuelan community in Doral has, in a way, built a piece of their country in their new home. All interviewed agreed that, at present, living in Doral feels like living in Venezuela, albeit, the Venezuela of their childhood.

Doralzuela, the new Venezuela

This sense of nationalism and attachment to the home country mentioned in the previous theme has opened the path for the imagination and creation of a place which does not officially exist, but is well known by those familiar with the Venezuelan diaspora. The young city of Doral has been nicknamed Doralzuela (Latzman, 2013; Paz Salas, 2015), due to the great influx of Venezuelan immigrants in the city. Colombians, who were majority

in the area in its beginnings, have seemingly been displaced by Venezuelans who have made the city of Doral their home.

As pointed in previous narratives, several speakers considered Doral as a miniature version of Venezuela. Ana maintained that for her being in Doral was like being in Venezuela (A. L# 127). She commented that the ongoing joke among her friends is "…down here (Doral) we are not in the United States, but we are still in Venezuela" (A. L# 229-230). She also remarked how her friends usually asked her to move "up here, to the United States" (A. L# 226). Referring to more northern cities, like Hollywood (FL), where life is "totally different from Doral" (A. L# 232-233).

Despite being used in everyday discussions about the Venezuelan diasporas in the United States, the words Doralzuela and Doralzuelan were used by only one participant in this study. When describing her neighboring community, Jeannette describes it laughingly as "Total Doralzuela" (J. L# 26). At a further point in our conversation, when talking about the commute amongst the distinct Venezuelan communities in the south of Florida, she said, "I think here Doral has become a small city where we have everything […] and speaking to you as Doralzuelan, I imagine a person from the beach, might think the same about having to come here" (J. L# 198-201). For Luis, "You come to Doral and Miami and you think you are in Venezuela, everybody is Venezuelan. There are Venezuelan restaurants, Venezuelan stores, and you barely hear any English" (L. L# 59-61)

Despite participants' perception of Doral as a small Venezuela, when discussing the labels Doralzuela and Doralzuelan, their opinions ranged from positive, to neutral, to

negative. When asked whether what the term Doralzuelan meant to him, Daniel stated that it was just a Venezuelan who relocated to Doral and decided to live there (D. I2- L# 3). He also clarified that he did not see any difference between a Venezuelan and a Doralzuelan, other than the nickname and the place (D. I2- L# 6-7). Daniel was emphatic in claiming "I am a Venezuelan. That Doralzuelan thing doesn't go with me. I am a Venezuelan, girl" (D. I2- L# 7). Luis' responses were similar to Daniel's. For him, Doral is "just a place Venezuelans chose to live in, and so earned its nickname" (L. I2- L# 3). For him, there is no difference between Doralzuelans and Venezuelans, except for the name (L. I2- L#7), he claimed "I will always be a Venezuelan, wherever I am, and for as long as I am in any place" (L. I2- L#12-13). Jeanette considered that the word Doralzuelan referred only to a geographical location (J. I2- L# 14). For her, the word Doralzuelan was just a label and has nothing to do with their identity (J. I2- L#16, 19).

Some participants considered the terms as identifiers of a different type of Venezuelan. For Ana, Doralzuela meant "Venezuela in Doral, Florida" (A. I2- L# 2). She explained that, for her, it was like having a little piece of Venezuela in the United States. She, unlike Daniel, found that Doralzuelans were those Venezuelans who had lived in Doral for several years, whose children had been born in there and who still had a strong attachment to their country and their culture, and saw Doral as a bubble where they could feel as in their home country (A. I2- L# 4-5). When asked whether she considered herself a Doralzuelan, her response was an immediate "Yes" (A. I2- L#7). She explained how she felt anchored to Doral, because "basically everything is Venezuelan. My daughter's teachers are Venezuelan, her pediatrician is Venezuelan, the food, our friends" (A. I2- L#

9-10). Interestingly enough, Ana went on to explain how, at first, the word *Doralzuelan* felt derisive and mocking (A. I2- L#11). But she said she does not find it negative anymore. For Ana, *Doralzuelan* referred to those who were "hooked to our land by keeping ourselves in this bubble called Doral" (A. I2- L# 12-13). She admitted to never using the term herself, because it brought up the pain of separation from the home country (I2, L# 17), but at the end of the day, she was a Doralzuelan. In line with Ana, Maximiliano saw Doralzuela as a haven built by Venezuelans in Florida (M. I2- L# 2). For him, Doralzuelans were Venezuelans who chose to live in Doral, in hopes of being as close to their country as possible (M. I2- L# 8-9). When asked whether he considered himself a Doralzuelan, Maximiliano stated that he saw himself as Doralzuelan, until he had to move to Orlando due to economic reasons. He explained that once away from Doral, the Venezuelan charm was lost, and he was just a Venezuelan living in Orlando.

For participants like Thalia, on the other hand, the words Doralzuela/Doralzuelan have very negative connotations, and imply "rejection, contempt" (T. I2- L# 3). She saw a difference between Venezuelans and Doralzuelans but, unlike Ana, her perception of Doralzuela was not positive: "Sometimes, Venezuelans here change. I think the United States go their heads, and they are not the same quality of people anymore" (T. I2- L# 10-11). She talked about her experiences meeting Americans or people from other countries at work, and when asked where she lives, people will not let her respond, simply state, "Oh, you are Venezuelan, of course (you live) in Doral" (T. I2- L# 14). She explained how people mentally distributed the different communities by saying "It's like, Cubans in Hialeah, Venezuelans in Doral" (T. I2- L# 17). She discussed how the label *Doralzuela*

felt derisive to her, and she rejected it. “I am not Doralzuelan. I am from the world. I mean, I am Venezuelan, but I am not a fanatic nationalist. I learn to adapt to where I live, without forgetting my roots. But I don’t bring my whole country with me” (T. I2- L# 26-28).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Speakers' positionalities

Following the narrative analysis, it was possible to identify several contrasting positions from the speakers. The first apparent contrast is related to their portrayed identities. One of the bases for this study was Goffman's (1959) notion of identities as composed and performed for an audience. Following Goffman, Reissman (2008) argues that we are constantly constructing impressions of ourselves, projecting a persona, and making claims about ourselves and our relationship with the world (p.106). Throughout their narratives, speakers in this study positioned themselves as immigrants, Venezuelans, and, in some cases, Doralzuelans. All through the interviews, all participants were found to constantly reposition themselves, flowing from one identity to another in some cases. In other cases, speakers seemed to hold several identities at once, even when these contradict each other. When asked how they identified themselves, the immediate response was Venezuelan – some even claiming to live Venezuelan (Ana). The same speaker claimed that she refused to embrace American traditions and culture, thus asserting her loyalty to her home country, yet at the same time she claims she would not return to Venezuela – at least not permanently – and that she looked forward to becoming an American citizen.

During their narratives regarding their experiences in the United States, speakers positioned themselves as immigrants, who have had to adapt to a different culture and learn to navigate the intricacies of a society which greatly differs from their own. For De Fina

(2003), this process of adaptation entails the construction of a new identity, a redefinition of one's self based on the circumstances in which individuals find themselves (p.143). It is possible, then, to argue that the participants in this study have developed a new self who is yet to be outwardly acknowledged by themselves given its contradictory nature, or who they have decided not to overtly discuss with the researcher.

For some of the participants in this study, the city of Doral represented the place where their identities as Venezuelans and as immigrants somehow reconciled. For them, the process of adaptation to the new country has been somehow eased by the characteristics of the host city. As previously pointed out by Kaplan and Chacko (2015), the local context of immigration is as vital as the national one since the reception and treatment of immigrants are issues specific to each city. In this sense, for new immigrants, Doral represents a smaller version of Venezuela. Given the number of immigrants from that, and other Latin countries, the city boasts an array of services and opportunities aimed at the Venezuelan population, especially since, as mentioned by one of the speakers how in Doral, English was not necessary for communication (Thalia, L.187).

It becomes possible to understand why these participants claim their Venezuelan identity before any other. In fact, several speakers stated that they did not see or refer to themselves as Latinos/as or Hispanics. They said to be aware that, in a general sense, they were Latinos/as, however, they do not refer to themselves as such. In the course of the interviews, speakers referred to the different groups of Latinos/a settled in Doral by their nationality – Cubans, Colombians, Dominicans and so forth – which may convey attitudes held towards other groups (Buriel & Cardoza, 1993). As argued by De Fina (2003),

narratives told by speakers who belong to a particular group may present recurrent schemas at the level of self and other representation (p.181). In this study, speakers presented consistent "us/them" scenarios, in which members of other communities are considered "the other", and given different characteristics from Venezuelan. This apparent ethnic[14] affiliation becomes clearer in their narratives about social networks, where speakers admit to having some contact with members of other communities, yet preferring those of their own when forming strong bonds. This ascription to group membership is central to the formation of social identities, since they are usually based on individuals' sense of belonging to specific groups (Tajfel, 1981). On the base of this group affiliation, it is possible to argue that those interviewed for this study have formed an identity which still maintains considerable traces of their Venezuelan heritage, yet has been modified by different cultural and social aspects which they have had to adapt to after migrating to the United States.

According to participants, what differentiates these speakers from other groups of Venezuelans who have settled in other cities is the characteristics of their chosen destination. As mentioned earlier in this study, Doral is a relatively young city which boasts a great concentration of Latin communities. Venezuelans represent 27.18% of the total population, and 33.14% of the Hispanic or Latino Population (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2016). This is the greatest concentration of Venezuelans in a single geographic area in the United States, followed by Medley, and Weston, both in Florida. (City-Data, 2017). The fact that Doral is a relatively small city, with a high percentage of Venezuelan-born residents has allowed individuals to invest and develop different types of businesses in the

area. In fact, six of the participants are either business owners themselves or spouses of investors. Ana, Beatriz, and Thalia stated that the main reason for choosing Doral as a place of residence was because their families had previously developed businesses in the area, catering mostly to the Venezuelan population. Jeanette and Enrique, the participants with the longest time of residency in the country have also established their businesses, which are mostly frequented by Venezuelans. The fact that the city of Doral offers a wide array of services and opportunities for the Venezuelan immigrant population, sets it apart from other cities in the United States, and created the ground for the formation of a distinct identity which we have called Doralzuelan.

As mentioned by some of the speakers, Doralzuela is the name given to the city of Doral, due to the number of Venezuelans who live there, and Doralzuelan is, by consequence, any Venezuelan who lives in Doral. However, these names seem to be rarely used by Venezuelans in Doral. The terms, then, could be considered exonyms given to the city and the Venezuelan population residing there by members of different communities. Group names are not static concepts, but a means used by individuals, or groups of people, to position themselves with respect to other individuals or groups. Thus, a single group can use several endonyms, depending on how it wants to present itself, and at it can be given different exonyms, depending on either the person using it, or on the context in which it is used (Urech & van den Heuvel, 2011). From the data extracted from the narratives, it was observed that speakers referred to themselves almost exclusively as Venezuelans, except for the cases where they identified based on their city of birth – mostly amongst fellow Venezuelans.

While a few of the speakers considered themselves Doralzuelans, others rejected the label, stating that they were simply Venezuelans living in Doral, or Doralzuela. For the participants, the word *Doralzuelan* had diverse connotations, ranging from negative to positive, and could be applied to some, but not others. This brings us back to De Fina's (2003) argument about self and other representation, and collective identities, where speakers convey, through their narratives, pre-constructed schemas about what constitutes a Venezuelan, and what differentiates them from a "Doralzuelan". These categories of identification are said to be subject to constant negotiation, according to speaker, audience, and the topic under discussion. Each of the speakers had a distinct idea of what being a Doralzuelan entailed, and whether there was a real difference between a Doralzuelan and a Venezuelan. Those who considered themselves Doralzuelan, insisted that they were, to their core, Venezuelans who have created a life in a setting which felt like home, without truly being so. The speakers who claimed to be only Venezuelan, emphatically rejected to be called Doralzuelans, for considering that the word either derisive, or completely devoid of meaning. After discussing the possible meanings and connotations of the word Doralzuelan, one speaker (Thalia), decided, from then on, to use that term to refer to those Venezuelans who, in her opinion, changed once they settled in the city of Doral and forgot or dismissed their roots. In this sense, the term could potentially be used as both a term of inclusion and exclusion depending on how the speakers perceive the other in relation to themselves.

Based on the above, there appeared to be several positions and conceptions regarding the self and the other which are conveyed discursively in the course of the

interviews (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). For Davies and Harré (1990), these positions provide individuals with ways of making sense of their world. The authors argued that once a person has taken up a particular position as their own, they see the world from the perspective offered by that position (p.35). In the case of the speakers in this study, these positions are not fixed. If arranged along a continuum of preeminence, we could argue that these speakers position themselves mostly as Venezuelans throughout their interviews, followed by a shift to immigrants, and above all, Venezuelan immigrants, then shifting to Doral residents, and in a couple of cases, Doralzuelans.

From their position as Venezuelans, they conveyed loyalty for their ethnicity and nationality, and their narratives encompass all the members of their community, including those living outside Doral. These speakers did not make distinction of socioeconomic status or ethnic origins when conveying their nationalistic self. If any distinction could be inferred from the narratives, was one based on political ideology. It is common practice for anti-government Venezuelans – in almost every country – to separate themselves from those identified as former members or business partners of the Venezuelan government. When speaking from their immigrant position, they aligned themselves with all immigrants, who have had to leave their countries and adapt to a new culture, and way of life. The shift from their position as immigrant, to that of Venezuelan immigrants is only explicit in a couple of cases. When discussing about her relationship with members of other ethnicities, Beatriz was quick to position herself as a Venezuelan immigrant, who is regarded differently by her instructors during her language learning courses. She claimed that the Venezuelan immigrant was different, with a higher educational level than other Latin immigrants,

which was recognized by Americans and created tension among non-Venezuelans. In this sense, Beatriz, by positioning herself as a Venezuelan immigrant, had a perspective of the world which allowed her to construct clear representations of herself and others.

Another position taken by speakers is that of Doral residents. During the interviews the topic of the different Venezuelan communities in the south of Florida was one which brought a varied array of responses. Some participants pointed to clear differences between those who chose to live in and outside Doral. These differences ranged from socioeconomic status, mindset, age, and desire to assimilate to American culture. In this sense, those who chose to settle in, or relocate to Doral saw themselves as sharing certain characteristics, such as being more mature, family oriented, and keen on staying in touch with their roots. The need to stay close to their roots – or as close as possible in the new environment – seemed to be the main factor which differentiated those who chose Doral as place of residency and those who settled in different cities. Those who settled in other parts of the state – Miami, Hollywood, Weston, Tampa, Fort Lauderdale – were given the opposite characteristics by the interviewees. The non-Doral residents, or immigrants were described as either much younger and single (living in Downtown Miami), or much older and retired (living in Weston), they were wealthier or acted as if (living in Brickell, Miami), or they wanted to immerse themselves in the American culture and saw Doral as "more of the same" (those living to the northern-most part of the state) (Ana, off record). As mentioned before by one of the speakers, new immigrants seem to have a different mentality than those who arrived years and even decades before, and therefore they sought places where they could be enact a lifestyle similar to the one they had in Venezuela. Beatriz had strong

opinions regarding life in the neighborhood of Brickell, in Downtown Miami. She argued that she did not like the public displays of members of the LGBTQ community, and she would not want her children to witness them at such young age. For that reason, she considered Doral to be more family oriented, since those displays were unheard of in her city (B. L# 528-529).

The final position taken up by few of the speakers was that of Doralzuelan. Just as *Doralzuela* represents an exonym, used mostly by members of other groups and, most prominently, the media (BBC Mundo, 2011; CBS Miami, 2011; Torres, 2016). The term Doralzuelan was seen as a label used by others to refer to Venezuelans in Doral. Nonetheless, a couple of speakers explained what they thought was the definition of the term, and whether they considered it to apply to them. For them, a Doralzuelan was a Venezuelan who had lived in Doral for some time, and had created a bond with the community. It was also thought to refer to those Venezuelans who migrated to Doral in search of a small piece of their country. A third definition saw the term Doralzuelan as a label applied to Venezuelans living in Doral, but which did entail a change in personality or behavior. Only two of the respondents – Ana and Maximiliano – admitted considering themselves Doralzuelans, since they had to adapt to the legal and social conventions of the new context, yet they stayed true to their roots and their culture themselves as Venezuelans. Although the term Doralzuela refers to the entire city of Doral, due to the great concentration of Venezuelan immigrants, the label Doralzuelan was thought to apply only to those of Venezuelan origin living in said city. It seems that there is a clear delimitation regarding those may or may not fall in the category of "Doralzuelan".

The different positionings mentioned above illustrate the complex intersectionality of the identities portrayed by the participants through the course of the interviews. Each of these identities emerged at different points of the different narratives, and are related to the different topics and categories of membership and meaning (Wilkins, 2012) referenced by speakers.

Social networks, the second theme extracted from the interviews, served as a platform through which speakers portrayed their identities as Venezuelan, with most of them stating their tendency and preference to interact with others from their country. Only two interviewees claimed to have a wider social circle, and this was justified by their occupations. The findings from this narrative aligned with the principles of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which postulate that social identity, the part of an individual's perception of him or herself that is based on his or her group membership, is a central element in choosing their group over others (Turner & Tajfel, 1986). According to this theory, individuals do not just have a personal selfhood, but multiples selves and identities associated with their affiliated groups. This affiliation allows individuals to differentiate themselves and their group from other groups in order to attain self-enhancement and maintain positive self-esteem. Furthermore, positive identification can also be achieved through reducing uncertainty by aligning one's self closely to a clearly defined group (Hogg *et al.*, 2007).

The findings seem in line with SIT as some of the speakers seemed to identify with specific groups at different points in their narratives. When discussing the relation amongst all the different Latin communities in Doral, speakers positioned themselves as members of the "Venezuelan" group, which distanced them from other group, such as Colombians,

Cubans, and Dominicans. Further on, in the same narrative, those same speakers aligned themselves with a more exclusive group, namely, Venezuelans living in Doral – who are positioned as different from those who live in other cities of Florida. Research has found that group membership based on ethnic and national identity is central to people's self-concept and psychological well-being, depending on the type of self-identification[17] adopted by the individual (Rotheram-Borus, 1990; Verkuyten & Kwa, 1994). The choice of social networks based on ethnicity has allowed speakers to maintain a strong identity as Venezuelans, and to empower their ingroup to appear as the quintessential representation of the Venezuelan diaspora.

Closely related to the previous themes, is the one related to speakers' negotiation of their identities through language. As language is a prominent factor in the formation of identity, it is therefore, seen to reflect a given culture's values and beliefs (Zhang, 2008). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) conceive language and identity as being interrelated in two ways: first, languages supply the terms and other linguistic means with which identities are constructed and negotiated. Second, ideologies of language and identity guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities and to evaluate the use of linguistic resources by others p. 14).

For speakers, their consistent use of Spanish in their everyday activities and interactions has allowed them to maintain their identity as members of the Venezuelan community. Furthermore, their constant interaction with other ingroup members, namely Venezuelans – as reported in the Social Networks narrative – has allowed them to maintain the features of their particular dialect of Spanish almost intact. Although six of the speakers

reported having medium and high proficiency English, all of them chose to perform the interview in Spanish. As previously reported, they considered English to be important since it was the "official" language of the country, yet unnecessary in the local context. As one of the participants reported, if residents of Doral realized you could speak Spanish, they would not use English for communication. My own experience in Doral before this interview had informed me of this practice. Once I was recognized as a fellow Latina, I would be spoken to in Spanish, unless my interlocutor only spoke English, and my replies in English were taken as "rude". As I was later educated by my companion, my choice of English instead of Spanish - the latter being my first language – in the context of Doral, and even Miami, conveyed rejection of my own culture and was highly frowned upon. These incidents regarding the use of English in the context of Doral did not affect the interviewer's initial interaction with potential participants, since these were all spoken to in Spanish from the beginning.

Based on the speakers' narratives and the researcher's anecdote mentioned above, it could be suggested that the Latin population in the city of Doral is intent on preserving their native language, as one dimension of their identity. According to López García (2008), for language maintenance to take place, there must be a situation of language contact – whether bilingualism or multilingualism – within a community. In situations where speakers of an ethnic language are in regular contact with a dominant language, there are two possible outcomes: both the ethnic and the dominant language are preserved by each group achieving coexistence within the speaking context, or the minority group acquires the dominant language and either preserves or loses its ethnic language (López

García, 2008). In the context of this study, the dominant language (English) is the official language for education and all public services. Yet, 99.99% of the Latin or Hispanic population speaks Spanish at home according to the 2016 American Community Survey (U.S Bureau of Census, 2017), with 0.1 % speaking only English. Out of those who reported speaking Spanish at home, 79.10% reported to speak English "very well" or "well"; and 17.56 % reported either not speaking English well or at all.

Ethnic or minority languages can be maintained through several areas or domains based on the speakers' choices and preferences. These language areas include home/family, friends, neighbors, community, religion, education, and the media (Fishman, 1964, 1991; Holmes, 2013). Furthermore, research has shown that the geographical concentration of minority languages in a particular area can be highly favorable for language maintenance (Fishman, 1991; Holmes, 2013; Lee, 2013; Sanchez-Castro & Gil, 2009). Fishman (1991) argued that community languages were better well-maintained by minority groups who were more concentrated within certain geographical areas than those that were more dispersed. As found during this research, the city of Doral houses the largest concentration of Venezuelans in the United States, along with a great number of other Latin American immigrant communities. This creates a suitable context for Spanish to be maintained and coexist along with the dominant language. The context of Doral also contains the factors Fishman (1964, 1991) considers necessary for language maintenance. The presence of religious and cultural organizations, as well as media, from the minority community under study ensures the constant contact, not only with Spanish, but with the variety of Spanish from Venezuela.

The narratives collected from the individuals interviewed for this study showed that, as mentioned before, these individuals used mostly Spanish in their everyday interactions, resorting to English only when their interlocutors did not understand Spanish. One of the speakers, who reported low proficiency in English, claimed that he avoided any situations which required him to communicate in English, since he found those situations highly frustrating. The results from this research also align with Anderson, Carlson & Mejías' (2006) study on speakers' attitudes toward Spanish language maintenance in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, in South Texas, where they found a consistent use of Spanish in their daily life, along with English – even among later generations – and that both languages play vital roles in their daily lives.

Language maintenance mitigates the impact of migration in the lives of Latin American-origin individuals since language can be a particularly salient form of connection to social and emotional geographies, or a way of maintaining membership with the home community following the process of migration (Zitlali Morales, 2016). For speakers, this connection with their home community is given by the constant interaction with other individuals from their country. This has not only allowed them to maintain their language alive, but to keep their own dialect alive. Given the constant communication with other Venezuelans, they were able to retain and, in the case of Jeanette, recover features of their particular dialect of Spanish. Throughout the interviews, most speakers used expressions which were common of Venezuelan Spanish, such as "ir por el carril" (stay on one's lane), Indio (an expression meaning ignorant), "se la tiran de" (they pretend to be), "todo es un relajo, una faramalleria" (nothing is taken seriously, it is all about showing off,). Some

speakers also used expletives common of Venezuelan Spanish during the interviews. Few of those have varying meanings in different countries in Latin America, and could easily be misinterpreted by someone not familiar with the dialect. It could be argued that the use of those expressions by these participants happened because the interviewer was also a speaker of Venezuelan Spanish. In that sense, they did not feel the need to "normalize" their Spanish, as some reported doing with speakers from other Latin communities. Given past influx of immigrants from different Latin countries, most Venezuelans, at some point, become aware of the linguistic differences between their own Spanish and that of other countries. Many of them, having interacted with other groups of Latino/as are familiar with the misunderstandings which may arise from the use of each other's dialect with no attempt at normalizing or standardizing their speech.

Interestingly enough, these dialectal expressions appeared mostly when discussing issues related to the Venezuelan community, other Venezuelans, or the loss/retention of dialectal features. When asked about the loss or retention of dialectal features of his Spanish, Luis uses an expletive and an accent common to the northwestern part of Venezuela, more specifically, the city of Maracaibo. Interestingly enough, Luis is not a native of that region, but he explained he had several friends from that city in Doral, and that the accent is one of the most representative of Venezuelan Spanish. Conversely, when talking about topics such as the process of migration, relations with other communities, and opinions about the host country, its citizens, and its culture, most speakers used standard forms of Spanish and a seemingly more formal speech style.

It was also notable how they all maintained some marked phonologic features of Venezuelan Spanish, namely, syllable-final postvocalic /s/ aspiration, word-final /s/ aspiration, and word-final /ð/ deletion. These results were determined in a separate linguistic study of consonantal features in the speech of the same group of Venezuelan immigrants performed by the same researcher conducting the present study. Said study analyzed samples of ten minutes of speech, about the same topic – views on other Venezuelan communities in Florida – from four of the participants in the present study. The data for that study was taken from the two speakers with the longest time of residency in the United States – Jeanette and Enrique – and the two speakers with the shortest time of residency – Luis and Beatriz. The study analyzed five features of Venezuelan Spanish: a) *syllable-final postvocalic /s/ aspiration, b) word-final /s/ aspiration, c) word-final /ð/ deletion,* d) *intervocalic /ð/ deletion, and e) word-final /r/ deletion in infinitive verbs.* Features a, b, and c have been found to carry certain covert prestige among speakers of Venezuelan Spanish (Lispki, 1996; Paez Urdaneta, 1981; Obediente, 1992; Sedano, 2001), whereas features d and e are socially stigmatized in this variety of Spanish for indexing lower social class and educational level (Diaz-Campos & Killian, 2012; D'Introno, Rojas & Sosa, 1979; D'Introno & Sosa 1986). Results showed that the speakers with the shortest time of residency in the United States presented a higher percentage of use of variables a, b, and c than those residing in the country for over a decade. Nonetheless, all speakers presented high percentages of syllable-final and word-final /s/ aspiration, and a lower but consistent percentage of word-final */ð/ deletion.* The same linguistic analysis showed a low or null usage of the features *intervocalic /ð/ deletion and word-final /r/ deletion in infinitive verbs,* which fell in line with previous analyses of those consonantal features

(mentioned above) in the context of Venezuelan Spanish. It seems that time of residency in the host country, and interaction with speakers of different varieties of Spanish are variables which could have affected the speech of these participants. However, further in-depth studies are necessary in order to reach more generalizable conclusions regarding this phenomenon.

It can be also argued that these speakers' use of Spanish for a great deal of their daily interactions has served as a tool to maintain their identity as Venezuelans. At the same time, they recognized English as the dominant language of their new home and demonstrated interest in either learning it or improving their proficiency levels. For some speakers, the use of Spanish at home was their way to ensure the preservation of their native language for their children and the generations to come, since they feared the younger speakers would prefer to use English instead of Spanish, thus forgetting their first language. In all, participants showed nothing but pride for their language, and more specifically, their dialect of Spanish.

The previously discussed themes, more than random conceptions and choices, denote the speakers' sense of attachment to what they still consider home, namely, Venezuela. Before approaching the subjects of the three last themes of this study, I find it necessary to, somehow, illustrate the general context of migration of participants. Out of the eight individuals interviewed, only two – Jeanette and Enrique – admitted travelling to the United States with for the purpose of learning English, and after living in the country for a few months, decided to stay. One respondent claimed to have come in search of a better future for her child (born in the United States). The other five respondents, including

the one 1.5 generation speaker, claimed to have been driven to emigrate for social and political reasons; some had been harassed for their political ideologies, others had suffered the consequences of a rising wave of violence and insecurity, which drove them away from their country.

At this point, I feel the necessity to bring up the concepts of “exile” and “immigrant”. From a conventional standpoint, someone is or becomes an exile by the act of leaving one's country, usually for political reasons, whereas an "immigrant" is normally regarded as someone who leaves the country of his or her birth in search of a better future elsewhere (del Aguila, 1998). For exiles, the political dimension stands out, that is, an individual consciously chooses to emigrate for political reasons of either personal or contextual nature, but it is the person’s political dissatisfaction with a government, ideology, or society that drives the decision. In contrast, an immigrant's motivation is not exclusively political, in the sense that politics is not as central to the decision as is the desire to improve one's lot in life. In both cases, individuals’ agency allows them to make the decision to leave. For del Aguila (1998), going to exile affects one’s self-concept and identity. It can be argued, based on the existing literature, that both exile and immigration affect an individual’s self-concept.

Many Venezuelan immigrants who left their countries following the oil strike of 2002, and the subsequent attempted coup against Hugo Chavez see themselves as exiles rather than immigrants. For some of these participants, the distinction was not clear, while others, who obtained residency through the process of political asylum, understood the difference. Piacentini (2008) observed that asylum seekers waiting for a change in status,

still develop relationships with different communities and tend to engage in asylum seeker associations and that they continue to exist as social agents. Bloch (2000), on the other hand, claims that the social structures placed upon these individuals tend to limit their human agency, yet they respond to limitations in ways which allow them to recover said agency.

When asked for their reasons to leave Venezuela, five of the participants pointed to the rising insecurity and oppressive government practices as their main reasons for leaving. Two of them had been victims of kidnapping, and one had fled political persecution. Their decision to leave the country was a difficult one to make, as pointed out by Ana when discussing her feelings about her reasons for not using the term Doralzuela "There is a world of pain in that separation (leaving Venezuela). It's like getting a divorce while still in love with that person" (A. I2- L# 17-18). This seemingly unwilling separation from the home country has caused those participants to profess a deep attachment to Venezuela, and to attempt to recreate the land left behind.

The complexity of the landscape presented by these speakers relies in the interplay amongst three factors: the process of assimilation to the U.S., the bonds maintained with the home country, and their perceptions of Doral as Venezuela. Regarding the first, speakers have taken different, and in some cases conflicting, positions regarding their process of assimilation or incorporation to the host society. The conflict is given by their admitted desire to fully become citizens of the United States, and to create a new life in the country and to raise their children as citizens of the country – even while resisting the expectation that they embrace certain cultural aspects of the host environment which may

replace those of the speaker's native culture. The majority of participants communicated willingness to assimilate to the new country to a certain degree, and showed awareness of the changes in mentality and behavior this entailed. However, their choices of language for everyday communication, gravitation towards other Latin communities, and their distancing from American groups or communities evidence some resistant to *assimilation* – as conceived by Gordon (1964), and described by Massey and Sánchez (2010) as a one-way street where immigrants steadily adopt American values, tastes, and habits, until they eventually act more like "Americans" (p. 1).

It has been argued, however, that the type of assimilation described by Gordon overlooks the complexities of the experiences of immigrants to various parts of the United States. For Morawska (2003), assimilation is "a multipath process involving the incorporation of immigrants and their offspring into the economic, political and social institutions, and culture of different segments of the host society" (p.134). For the author, the circumstances in which particular groups of immigrants find themselves, their process of assimilation can contain different proportions of social practices transplanted from the home country, which can be reshaped by the host society. For Alba and Nee (2003), the word *assimilation* is an unpopular term which awakens negative reactions, especially in minority and ethnic groups. This term is said to be condemned for the implied expectation that minorities would want or need to shed their own cultures. Although not explicitly pointed out by interviewees, it could be inferred that it is the stigma associated with the process of assimilation which has led many immigrants – these participants included – to, either consciously or unconsciously, tighten the bonds with their home country through

constant interaction with individuals from their home community, and create distance with the members of the host community.

Regarding aforementioned bonds with the home country, interviewees claimed to be in constant interaction and communication with family and friends in Venezuela. Some have returned several times to visit, while others have been unable to visit their family and friends, yet maintain constant communication through telecommunication and social media. The majority of the respondents claimed to keep themselves constantly updated regarding the political situation in Venezuela. Some have participated in social and political activities in protest of the Venezuelan government, and in support of the opposition coalition of parties of the country carried out in the city of Doral, and surrounding areas. Although few of the speakers claimed not to take part in the civic activities organized by the Venezuelan exile in Florida, they argued that they still worried about the situation in their country, but found any protest activities in Doral and Miami pointless. Besides their concern about the political climate in Venezuela, and their involvement in pro-Venezuela activities, speakers also conveyed their loyalty for their country and culture by showing support of Venezuelan-owned businesses and organized events. During the interviews, several of the interviewees talked about how the artistic walkway known as "El Paseo de las Artes" was a jewel of the Venezuelan artistic movement brought to Doral. For them, "El Paseo" was a place to enjoy artistic representations of their country, through concerts, short-plays, art exhibits and ornamental displays representing Venezuela's culture and folklore.

This sustained involvement with political, social, cultural and even economic affairs of the home country (Morawska, 2003) denotes the speakers' transnational tendencies. Portes (1999) defines transnational activities as those that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and require constant and significant commitment by individuals taking part in it (p. 464). Transnational activities are not limited to government representatives or multinational corporation. The concept of transnationalism also includes individuals, such as immigrants and their interactions with their home country kin and relations. These transnationals activities and movements are currently facilitated by technological advances, such as the advent of social media and the evolution of telecommunications. Nowadays, groups of immigrants find a place in common in social networks, such as Facebook© and Instagram©; likewise, families can stay in touch more easily – regardless of the distances – through instant messaging and call services like WhatsApp© and Skype©. When discussing his first days in the United States, Enrique mentioned how not having social media that could keep him connected to his country and his family (E. L# 57-58). Jeanette says she uses WhatsApp to talk to her family every two weeks (J. L# 351), and Luis uses Skype to call home every day (L. L# 247, 249).

Transnationalism has been assessed from different perspectives, both positive and negative. From a negative perspective, transnationalism is considered to create disunity in terms of introducing new ethnic, linguistic, and religious traditions in developed countries (Wilkinson, 2005), and poses risks to security and national well-being (Joppke & Morawska, 2003; Wilkinson, 2005). Transnational communities may also face isolation due to the lack of sufficient ties with both, their home country and their new country of

residence (Vertocev & Cohen, 1999). From an economic standpoint, transnational relations increase the concern that immigrants do not invest in the host society, but prefer to send their earnings home to families abroad. Seen in a positive light, transnationalism enhances the cultural and linguistic diversities of countries, and contributes to the economic exchange in increasingly globalized societies (Wilkinson, 2005; Portes, 1999)

Immigrants in different parts of the world have been dealing with both, the positive and the negative connotation of transnationalism, especially when the idea of assimilation as the full incorporation to the host society, shedding individuals' home cultures and languages, is still engrained in the minds of a large percentage of the host country's – in this case the United States – population. Although none of the speakers reported dealing with external pressures to "assimilate", when asked to discuss their process of adaptation to the new environment they all mentioned being aware of the differences between their host country and their home country, and that they need to find the balance which would allow them to integrate to the American society. For some, like Luis, Jeanette, and Thalia the process was easy to navigate for different reasons. For Ana, the process was still ongoing, even after five years, because she refused to embrace the new culture. Beatriz, Maximiliano, Enrique and Daniel said they had a hard time navigating the new environment, but that they had learned to navigate through its diversity of cultures. Yet, as mentioned above, some of participants' self-perceptions as exiles, causes them to grasp at those transnational relations as a lifeline. On this topic, Portes (1999), asserts that "when migration is massive and motivated by political convulsions at home, it is likely that immigrants remain morally tied to kin and communities left behind and, hence, are more

likely to engage in a variety of activities to bridge the gap and sustain a common bond" (p. 464). The scenario described by Portes comes close to the type activities these participants engage into, as well as their constant yearning for the home left behind.

Contrary to the belief that transnationalism is incompatible with assimilation, this study supports the claims that transnationalism offers an alternative to the straight-line notion of assimilation, i.e., a new kind of selective assimilation in which migrants do not abandon their linguistic and cultural background, but strategically select elements from sending and receiving societies in ways that advance their interests in both, often creating and sustaining new transnational identities and multinational cultures that incorporate dissimilar components (Lie 1995; Smith 1997; Massey and Sanchez 2010; Portes 1999; Kivisto 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2001, 2006).

The participants of the present study seemed to have tried, to the best of their possibilities, to navigate the processes of immigration, adaptation, and incorporation to the new environment while retaining the roots of their cultural and ethnic identities. The results varied among participants, with some still resistant to immerse themselves fully into the culture of the new home, and others embracing it and finding a balance which has allow them to assimilate – in the sense of Massey and Sanchez (2010) – to the new country, while maintaining their Venezuelan identity.

Successful assimilation to a new environment is contingent to several factors, including, but not limited, to knowledge of the dominant language, academic level, race, and ethnicity (Massey & Sanchez, 2010, Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Zhou, 1997). Added to

those factors, the local context of immigration plays an important role in individual's adaptation and incorporation to their new home, with an open and welcoming context facilitating assimilation, and a hostile environment constraining it (Kaplan & Chacko, 2015). Different types of immigrants find diverse ways to incorporate to their new context. One of these ways is by place-making (Hume, 2015; Kaplan & Chacko, 2015; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996), where an immigrant group manages to imprint a place with its own identity, either from duress or as an affirmative action. The city of Doral represents an example of place-making. The constant influx of Venezuelan immigrants who, in many cases had experiences in business management, gave way to the construction and, either creation of new businesses, or recreation of old, well-known Venezuelan companies and businesses which cater particularly to the Venezuelan community in the city. Among these are Don Pan Bakery, a well-known Venzuelan bakery, Bocas House Restaurant, Budare Bistro, and El Arepazo, all famous Venezuelan restaurant franchises. The establishment of those places, and many others, turned the young city of Doral into a place where Venezuelans in the United States could have a taste of home. As more immigrants arrived in Doral, more companies and businesses run by and for Venezuelans were created. The nickname Doralzuela is owed, not only to the number of Venezuelan immigrants in that city, but by the deep imprint of Venezuelan economy, culture and lifestyle in within and outside the borders of the city of Doral.

Public perception of Doral as the hub of the Venezuelan exile in the United States has led to the mental representation of a place that is more dominated by these immigrants than it actually is. According to the 2016 American Community Survey, only 27.18% of

the population of Doral is of Venezuelan origin – with a 2.60 % margin of error – (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2017). Yet, some of the participants claimed that the majority of residents of Doral were Venezuelan, with one even claiming that Doral was comprised by a 95% of Venezuelans (D, I2- L. 3-4). Along with the disproportionate perception of Doral demographics was the idea that being in Doral was being in Venezuela. Nevertheless, these speakers did not equate Doral to the entirety of their home country, nor did they perceive it as the current version of Venezuela. For them Doral represented the "nice" parts of their country, i.e., the *East side*[16] of the main cities of their country, especially Caracas, at a time where the "socialist revolution" was nothing more than part of a campaign slogan. One example of this representation of Venezuela is when Luis commented how Doral felt like being in Las Mercedes (An upper-class shopping district in the State of Miranda), with the restaurants and the stores much like in Venezuela, and with Venezuelan workers (L. L# 60-61)

This mental picture Venezuelans, both in and outside Doral have of said city can be related to the concepts of imagined communities as conceived by Anderson (1983, 1991). For the author, nations are imagined political, religious, and cultural communities. They are perceived as imagined because, given the impossibility for members of a nation to know or meet most of their fellow members, they create a mental image of what their community – the nation – is like (p. 6). These communities, contrary to Gellner's (1983), are not invented or fabricated. These communities, as is the case of Doral or "Doralzuela", are real and exist in temporal geopolitical context. They are, however, partly configured in people's imagination, which leads them to create a mental picture of what the community

is like, and this includes its social, religious, economic, and even political configuration. By creating this imagined micro-nation outside their nation, Venezuelans have extended the borders of their country to different latitudes. In the United States, this extension spans the City of Doral, as well as neighboring parts of Miami. Further research would be necessary to find out whether the same phenomenon has taken place for other Venezuelan diasporas.

Doralzuela, as perceived by the speakers, represents the new Venezuela. The version of Venezuela where cultural, linguistic, and economic representations of the original nation meet with the legal and social system of the host nation and create a community that allows speaker to maintain their national identity views, while developing an alternative self-concept. This alternative identity is that of a Venezuelan who has had to learn to adapt to a new context, as well as adopt different laws and principles of coexistence.

Final reflexive remarks

My interest in this topic stemmed from personal experiences as a member of the Venezuelan community. Having witnessed the figures on immigration of Venezuelans to the city of Doral and the way it was perceived by those still living in Venezuela, I wondered whether the portrayals of different kinds of media were accurate. After visiting the city of Doral and witnessing the influence Venezuelan culture has had in that particular location, along with the different interactions with fellow Venezuelans settled in various parts of the state of Florida, I decided to conduct a more systematic study of the characteristics of the Venezuelan population in Doral, their relation to other Latin communities, and the role that

language plays in their daily lives. Given that the percentage of Venezuelan immigrants in the United States has steadily increased in the past decade, I found it relevant to start conducting research focused on that community. The socio-historic and economic conditions under which this emigration is taking place have their own markers which can be only limitedly compared to other waves of immigration from diverse Latin countries.

Another aspect to emphasize regarding this research is related to the advantages and the limitations faced during the processes of data collection and analysis. Being a Venezuelan, provided me with a deeper understanding of the process of emigration undergone by Venezuelans in the past decades, and the events which have led to the exodus of millions of individuals to various parts of the world. It also facilitated my contact with members of the Venezuelan community in Doral. Once I explained the topic of my research and my reasons to carry it out, participants showed a willingness to take part in this study and to talk about the issues discussed in previous sections. They also expressed their interest in the research I was performing since it focused on the Venezuelan community. This insider's position and perspective also brought the risk of altering my participants' portrayals of their everyday lives, not to mention their feelings and ideals. In order to minimize research bias, I ensured I conducted the analysis of the interviews with an open mind, even when faced with comments and assertions which contradicted my own perceptions and thoughts regarding issues discussed (Appendix K). At all times I was aware that my own identity as a Venezuelan – now an exile – my experiences living in a city with a considerably smaller Venezuelan community, my linguistic training, and my personal views on language learning and bilingualism had the potential to influence my analysis. I

attempted to acknowledge my conflicts with these positions and how I handled them during the analysis and interpretation of the narratives.

One of the aspects not developed in the previous analysis was that of the interactions between the interviewees and myself. During interviews, I tried to keep as much as a dialogic dynamic as possible, without disrupting or guiding speakers' responses. My responses were usually short, conveying understanding and agreement with their statements, or requesting clarification on certain comments (Appendix L). I also took notes of gestures which could add to the meaning of the narrative. Some of these gestures could have been seen as involuntary or subconscious responses, given that they were followed by more composed, polite or neutral responses to the questions. One of the most outstanding gestures was made by Maximiliano, when discussing his view of Venezuelans living outside Doral, in nearby cities. He immediately mouthed a harsh expletive meant to demean or offend the groups under discussion, while pretending to slash his throat with his hand[17] conveying dislike for the individuals he was referring to. He immediately recomposed and constructed an articulate, albeit neutral response. This response to the question asked conveyed both his easiness in sharing a visceral and honest response with a fellow Venezuelan, and awareness of his position as a research participant and the type of responses and behaviors expected from him. This type of reflex response, followed by a more composed one, supports the notion of a performative identity (Goffman, 1959), especially on those cases where the initial gestural response belied the carefully articulated verbal one. I could assume that my presence, as a fellow Venezuelan, allowed speakers to

show a less composed self, which might have not appeared had the interviewer been member of an outgroup.

Another relevant aspect of the interview-interviewee interaction in this study was the way in which some interviewees positioned themselves as Venezuelan and immigrants, yet not recognizing the interviewer (me) as such. Their stories about the migration process were sometimes followed by "I don't know if you understand me". One speaker repeatedly referred to Venezuela as "my country", even when discussing issues related to Venezuelan culture. This use of the first person possessive adjective could be interpreted as exclusive, given the context of the conversation and the interactants.

The presence of only one second-generation participant was a limiting factor, since it prevented me from drawing significant comparisons regarding the identity(ies) portrayed by first and second-generation immigrants. Daniel's (the only second-generation speaker) responses aligned with those of first-generation speakers regarding their Venezuelan identity, social networks, language use, and transnational relations.

Responses regarding a new identity(ies) developed by Venezuelan immigrants in the place known as Doralzuela were varied. Some speakers admitted seeing themselves as Doralzuelans, while others strongly asserted their identity as Venezuelans. While few of these speakers used the word Doralzuela to refer to the city, especially those spaces heavily populated by Venezuelans, it was stated by all that the term Doralzuelan was not used by Venezuelans to refer to themselves. Incidentally, one speaker commented on her

inclination to use the term in the future to label a specific type of Venezuelan immigrant in the city of Doral (See discussion on Thalia's assessment of Doralzuela/n above).

As a result of the discussion above, it could be argued that "Doralzuelan" has emerged as an alternative identity developed by some Venezuelan immigrants in Doral. Whether this new identity conflicts with other existing identities in the individual, Venezuelan being one, is yet to be determined. This is due to the divergence of ideas and opinions expressed in this study regarding the meaning and implications of the term Doralzuelan. For speakers like Ana and Maximiliano, Doralzuelan identity would be in harmony with their Venezuelan identity, while for Thalia the characteristics of a Doralzuelan would conflict with those of a Venezuelan. For the other participants, Doralzuelan is not considered an identity, but a label created based on the geographic location of this diaspora.

In light of the above, I consider that further studies involving a larger number of participants, as well as additional variables are necessary if any conclusions of interpretations regarding this emergent identity are to be generalized. Along with this, further inquiry regarding the experiences of Venezuelan immigrants in Doral as related to their migration process, their connections to the homeland and their language – and dialect – maintenance practice would allow for a better understanding of this community. Given that the terms Doralzuela and Doralzuelan are exonyms, additional research of outgroups' perceptions of Venezuelans in Doral, seem necessary in order to have a broader perspective of this community and the reasons that led to the creation of the terms Doralzuela and Doralzuelan. In addition to the studies suggested above, future research should also include

studies of other Venezuelan communities in the United States to determine how local contexts of immigration influence newcomers' self-concept, transnational relations, and language issues (English learning and attitudes towards English and Spanish).

A final aspect which requires some reconsideration is the conception of assimilation and its relation to transnationalism in immigrant communities. As it was discussed above, the term assimilation, as defined by Gordon (1964), carries certain stigma amongst non-Anglo-Americans and non-Europeans for considering the term to be a reminder of a time when ethnic and racial groups could be assessed according to their cultural profiles (Alba & Nee, 2003). The straight-line view of this process overlooked the value of minority communities, as well as their ability, not only to self-sustain in the new context, but to influence it. This old conception of assimilation failed to consider how core aspects of the human being, such as culture and language, are engrained in those individuals who migrate to new environments. This attachment seems to be even stronger in exiles, i.e. those who were forces to leave their home countries due to political reasons. In the case of the United States, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country renders the previous view of assimilation unsuitable, since there is not a single "American culture" or "lifestyle", but several cultures and language intermingling – sometimes in the same local context.

More recent perspectives of assimilation (Alba & Nee, 2003; Massey & Sanchez, 2010; Morawska, 2003) highlight the complexity of this process by pointing out the many paths available to achieve this so-called assimilation. In addition to that, the aforementioned conceptions also highlight the reciprocity of the process, by explaining how the contexts can also adapt and accommodate to the newcomers and their cultures.

Although this reframing of the concept of assimilation is not new, the old conception of assimilation as a linear, one-way process which divested outsiders from their cultural legacies retains great power over individuals' psyche. It seems that the term *assimilation* retains its negative connotations, making it a rather controversial topic to discuss. It is perhaps advisable, when discussing immigrants' experiences and processes of integration to the new context, to use terms that do not carry the same stigma as assimilation. Words like *adaptation, integration, incorporation,* and *acculturation* may be used instead, both, when conducting interviews with participants and when framing the interpretation and discussion of the data.

NOTES

1. The adjective American is used in the present study to refer to citizens of the United States of America.

2. La Gran Colombia refers to a republic established in 1821, formed in by Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Panama after the Boyacá Battle, which brought the colonial era in South America to an end. This union of countries into a "mega-nation" was proposed by Simón Bolívar, as a military and politic strategy to defend the newfound freedom of these countries, as well as the potential economic development of the region. Internal conflicts amongst leaders of each nation led to the separation of Ecuador, followed by Venezuela. The Great Colombia was completely dissolved following Bolívar's death in 1830.

3. The Venezuelan Oil Strike took place between December 2002 and February 2003, as an attempt to pressure president Hugo Chávez to call for a new presidential election. The shutdown of the oil industry, particularly the state-run company *Petróleos de Venezuela* (PDVSA), the major exporter of oil in the country caused a great impact in the economy of the country.

4. The Tascon List (Lista de Tascón) was a list of signatures from Venezuelan citizens who asked for the resignation or impeachment of Venezuela's president, Hugo Chávez in 2003 and 2004. The list was compiled and published online by National Assembly Representative Luis Tascón, and was used by the Venezuelan government to discriminate against those who had signed against president Chávez. President Chávez publicly called for the destruction of the list in 2005, after constant complaints of discrimination in public offices.

5. The International Migration in Latin America (IMILA) Project was a plan conceived by the Latin America and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE), and entails intraregional cooperation in the collection of migration data in the region. The project comprises five elements: exchange of information regarding country of origin of residents, migrant specification, migrant profile, dissemination of data, geographical coverage (this includes 20 Latin American countries, plus English-speaking Caribbean countries).

6. The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates 91,507 Venezuelans lived in the United States by 2000, while Comisión Económica para America Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) counts up to 107,000 Venezuelan immigrants.

7. Figures do not include the last quarter of 2016.

8. Term used to refer to the mixture of races which comprise the Venezuelan population.

9. Different sources show different figures for population and percentages, for this research, we only consider those found in the US Census Bureau website.

10. The data provided here does not include those immigrants who arrived after the date of the survey (July 2016) or those who are in the United States illegally.

11. Native or creole cunning (*Viveza Criolla* in Spanish) is a phrase that describes a philosophy of life in Latin countries like Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia and Venezuela. It aims at the achievement of progress with the least possible effort, ignoring rules, disregarding any sense of responsibility and accountability, and even stepping over others to achieve one's goals (Bracamonte, 2015).

12. The speaker used the Spanish term *hermandad*, which encompasses both men and women. The English term *siblinghood* was used to avoid sexist connotations.

13. In Venezuela, the term *Indio* is used in some contexts, especially when addressing a non-indigenous or native person, in a derogatory way to imply the person being referred to is ignorant or clueless about basic knowledge, or does not know how to act or behave.

14. In this study, the term "ethnic" is used broadly to refer to categorizations based on nationality. Although I am conscious of the possible differences between these categories and of the lack of an objective description of their referents, I adopt them in order to reflect the labeling practices that are widespread in the context under study.

15. In Venezuela, the *East* of each major city – whether geographical or imaginary – is characterized by housing the upper-class demographics, with services being of higher quality and cost, usually considered by residents as safer places to live and visit. Major malls and upscale businesses are usually located on the "East", as it is simply known by locals.

16. Based on Hutnik's (1986) study of Indian girls living in Britain, in which the author extracts four types of self-identification which members of minority groups can adopt: 1) *Dissociative*, where one sees oneself as predominantly belonging to one's own ethnic group; 2) *Assimilative*, where one identifies predominantly with the majority group; 3) *Acculturative*, where one identifies both with one's ethnic minority group and with the

majority group; and 4) *Marginal*, where one identifies with neither one's own group nor with the majority.

17. A throat slashing motion in Venezuela, particularly in informal contexts, can be interpreted in two ways. On one side, it may convey the speaker's desire to metaphorically kill the recipient of the gesture. One the other hand, it signals a strong dislike for the one(s) the gesture refers to. Venezuelans use the expression "no lo/a paso de aqui" (I can pass him/her down from here) while bringing their hand to their throats, in a seemingly slashing motion, or "no lo/a trago" (I can't swallow him/ her, meaning, I can't stand him/her). Both of these expressions can be accompanied or replaced by the aforementioned gesture.

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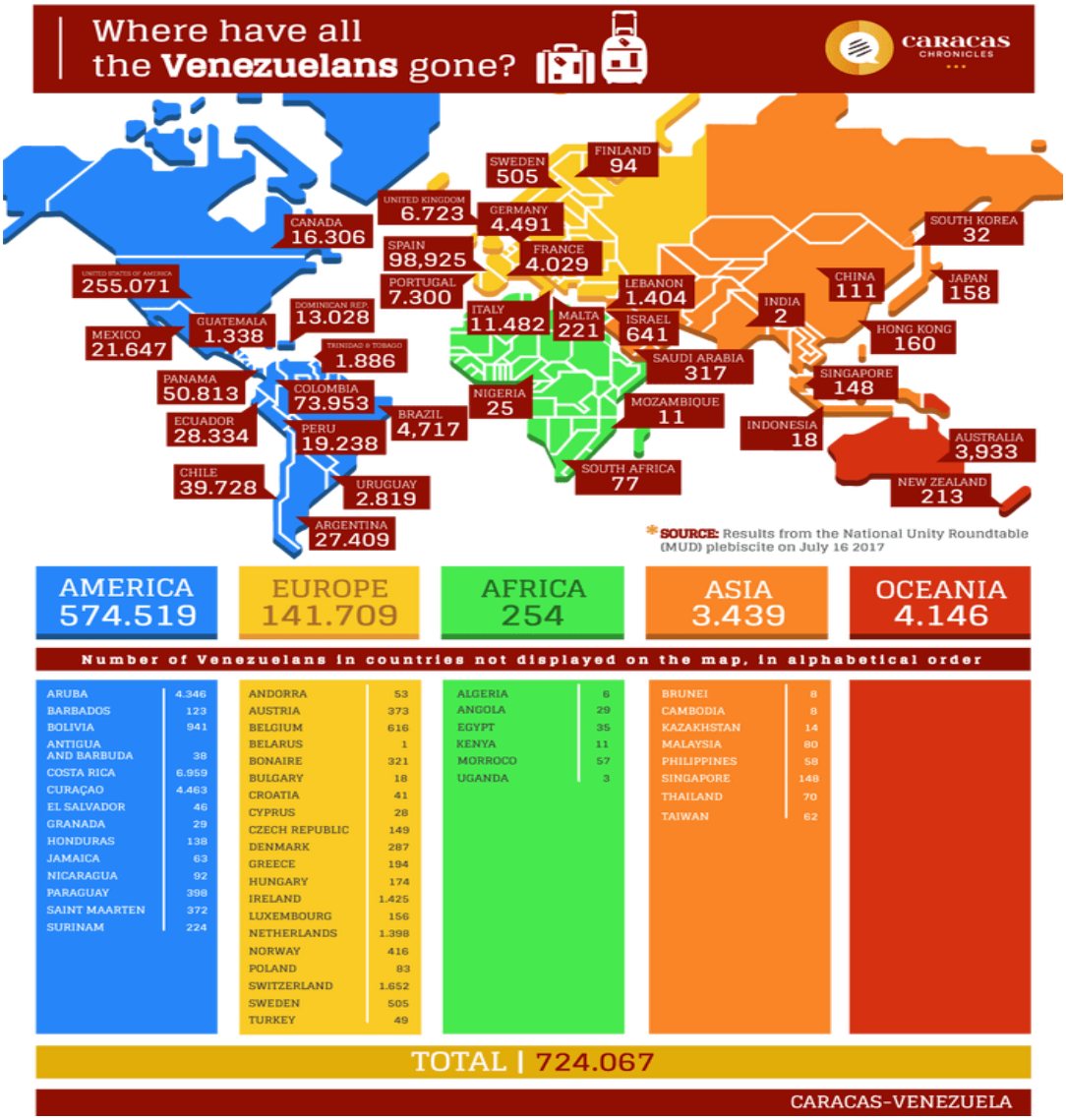
APPENDIX A

DISTRIBUTION OF THE VENEZUELAN DIASPORA



Source: Results from the National Unity Plebiscite on July 16, 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.caracaschronicles.com/2017/10/06/calculating-our-diaspora/

APPENDIX B

[POEM, THE DISCOURSE OF PRIVILEGE (SPANISH VERSION)

El Discurso del Privilegio
Luis Britto García

I

Todos somos café con leche. No hay diferencia social. Quien estudia, llega. No estudia quien no quiere. Este es un país de oportunidades. Todos somos hermanos. Aquí no hay prejuicio. Aquí no hay discriminación. Aquí no hay distancias. Todo el mundo te trata de tú. Todos pueden hacerse ricos. La gente está contenta con lo que tiene. Aquí no hay desigualdad. Los amos quieren a sus esclavos como hijos. Los esclavos quieren como padres a sus amos. El discurso del privilegio es igualitario.

II

Nosotros. Los que nos diferenciamos de los otros. La gente. La gente pensante. Los pocos. Los pocos y selectos. Los pocos que sólo somos comprendidos por poquísimos. Los que no somos comprendidos. Los que no nos dirigimos a todos. Los que no permitimos que nadie se nos dirija. Los que no tenemos interlocutores válidos. Los que sabemos hablar. Los que sabemos hablar inglés. La meritocracia. La crema. La última cola del desierto. Los que somos publicados en los sitios adecuados. Los que copamos las instancias de legitimación. Los que manejamos los instrumentales del discurso. Los que ejercemos la veridicción. Los que dominamos las ciencias del lenguaje. Los que monopolizamos los términos. Los que no necesitamos las palabras. Los que nos expresamos con propiedad. Los que nos expresamos con la propiedad. La gente de los medios. La gente de medios. Los únicos que podemos hablar. Los únicos que debemos hablar. Los únicos. El discurso del privilegio monopoliza el privilegio del discurso.

III

El pueblo está callado. Calma y cordura. Aquí nos queremos todos. Nadie abriga resentimientos. No hay motivos de conflicto. Aquí nunca pasa nada. Ningún escándalo dura tres días. Se acaba la fiesta y todo el mundo a su casa. Somos pura bulla. Todo se negocia. El venezolano olvida. No hay mal que dure cien años. Mientras el palo va y viene, las espaldas descansan. Este es un pueblo sano. Todo se perdona. La conflictividad es inventada por agitadores de oficio. El discurso del privilegio es ataráxico.

IV

Pobre, economiza. Explotado, produce. Hambriento, ayuna. Tiranizado, obedece. Oprimido, resígnate. Analfabeto, ignora. Humillado, humíllate. Amordazado, cállate. Manso, acobárdate. Despojado, sacrifícate. Encadenado, aquiétate. Olvidado, bórrate. Incomunicado, aíslate. Alienado, globalízate. Marginado, exclúyete. Enfermo, muérete. Desposeído, defiende lo que no tienes. Víctima, inmólate. Sacrificado, comparte el sacrificio. Sin tierra, desterritorialízate. Desesperado, no caigas en la tentación de la esperanza. El discurso del privilegio desalienta a quienes no tienen nada, salvo la esperanza, a favor de los que tienen todo, salvo esperanzas.

V

Después. Más tarde. Más adelante. A posteriori. Mañana. En la otra vida. No hay prisa. Los grandes proyectos deben meditarse en calma. No hay que quemar etapas. Tras la formación de ciudadanos. Tras el proceso civilizatorio. Tras la formulación del proyecto.

Tras la creación de vanguardias ilustradas. Tras la necesaria acumulación de capitales. Tras la industrialización. Tras la formación de una verdadera clase obrera. Tras la modernización. Tras el desarrollo. Tras la integración de las élites. Tras la unificación por la guía eclesial. Tras la globalización. Tras la aplicación integral de los paquetes económicos. Tras la inserción en el mercado internacional. Tras la renuncia a la esperanza. El discurso del privilegio es postergatorio.

VI

Siempre habrá pobres y ricos. Siempre habrá privilegiados. Siempre se heredará la propiedad. Siempre se heredará el poder político. Las leyes de la economía de mercado. Las leyes de la evolución. Las leyes de la genética. Las leyes de la vida. La ley del triunfo de la civilización sobre la barbarie. La ley del triunfo de la raza superior. La ley del Talión. La ley del revólver. La ley del más fuerte. El discurso del privilegio se confunde con la ley natural. El discurso del privilegio se confunde.

VII

El venezolano es flojo. El venezolano es desordenado. El venezolano es impuntual. El venezolano es derrochador. El venezolano es atrasado. El venezolano es incumplido. El venezolano es machista. El venezolano es autoritario. El venezolano es vulgar. El venezolano es rentista. La patria huele a nigua. Este es un país de mestizos. Negros. Indios. Zambos. Bembúos. Camisas de mochila. Gentuza. Desdentados. Zarrapastrosos. Alpargatúos. Pata en el suelo. Malandros. Vándalos. Bestias. Monos. Primates. Micos. Macacos. Chimpancés. Niches. Pelomalos. Tierrúos. Turba. Escoria. Horda. Chusma. Especimenes. Ralea. Jauría. Bandas. Lumpen. El discurso del privilegio en cuanto califica se descalifica.

VIII

No debemos pronunciarnos, pero me pronuncio. Renunciemos a la opinión, pero opino. Es vacuo condenar o absolver, pero condeno. Envolvámonos en el silencio mientras grito. Abstengámonos del debate mientras debato. No militemos, al tiempo que milito. Aborrezcamos tomar partido, pero tomo partido. Alejémonos de todo bando, pero únete al mío. No participemos, pero participo. No juzguemos, pero sentencio. No nos pronunciemos, pero repruebo. No adhiramos a ideologías, pero me cuadro. No me manifiesto, pero censuro. No polemizo, pero veto. No admito directrices, dogmatizo. No me adelanto, pero voy con el Adelantado. Amparémonos en la legalidad para el golpe de Estado. Yo no lancé el paro, sino que se me fue de las manos. Yo no fui, pero siempre he sido. No soy ni lo uno ni lo otro, sino todo lo contrario. El discurso del privilegio tira la piedra y esconde la mano.

IX

Todos somos culpables. Aquí nos conocemos todos. Aquí nadie es inocente. Nadie puede tirar la primera piedra. Todos tenemos rabo de paja. Todos tenemos tejado de vidrio. Tiburón se baña pero salpica. Somos una sociedad de cómplices. El discurso del privilegio es chantajista.

X

Mi único verso. Mi cuento único. Mi único ensayo. Mi perfume único que sólo se vende en frasco microscópico. Mi único estudio sobre el estudio de Mengano sobre el estudio de

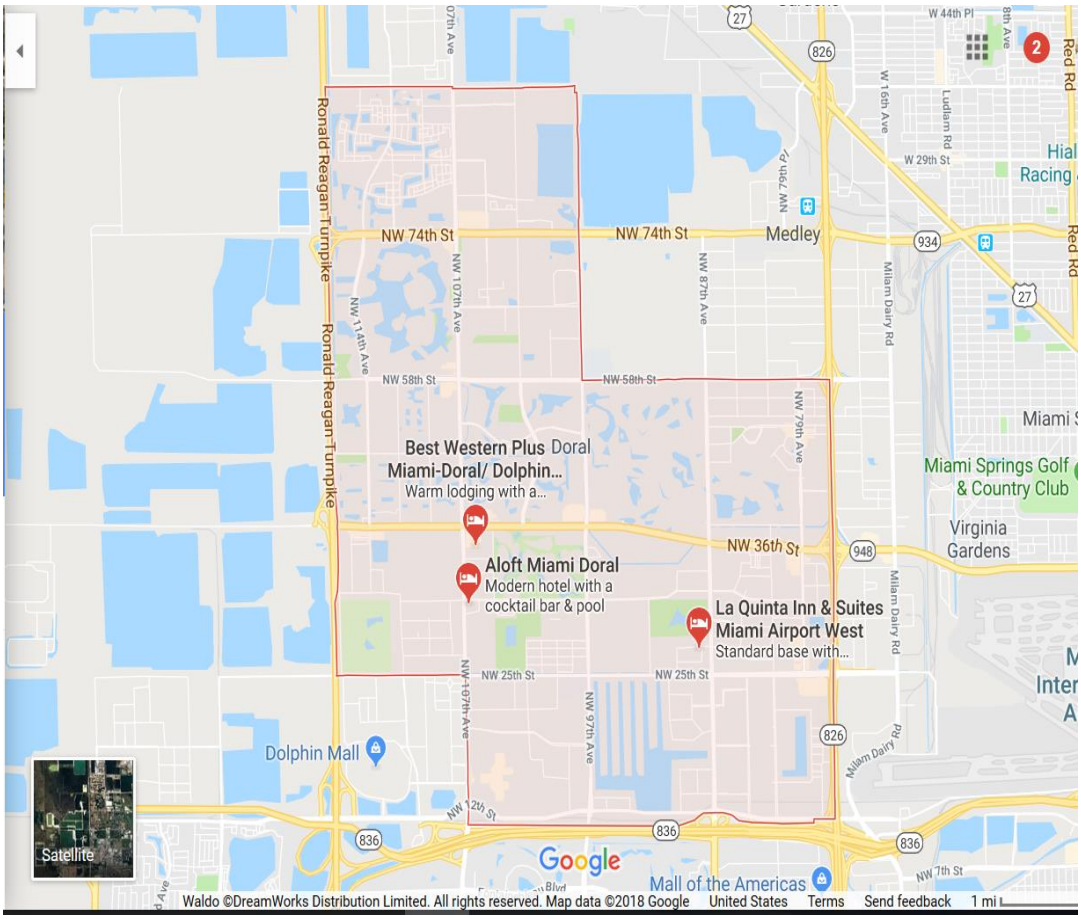
Zutano sobre Octavio Paz. Mi talento único que no condesciende a plasmarse en la imperfección de la obra. Mi única obra que jamás condescenderá a mostrarse. Mi silencio único cuidadosamente administrado. Mi único silencio que no debe ser interpretado como silencio únicamente. El discurso del privilegio es estéril.

XI

Mi beca. Mi subsidio. Mi instituto. Mi ascenso. Mi decanato. Mi rectorado. Mi senaduría. Mi diputación. Mi museo. Mi juzgado. Mi agregaduría. Mi embajada. Mi ministerio. Mi pensión. Mi dividendo. Mi National Endowment for Democracy. Mi Club. Mi cenáculo. Mi rosca. Mi círculo. Mi periódico. Mi canal. Mi programa. Mi apellido. Mi familia. Mi herencia. Mi clase. Mi whisky. Mi restaurante preferido en París. Mi receta. Mi chef. Mi estilista. Mi sastre. El discurso del privilegio es tarifado. Si todos toleraran el privilegio, no habría que encomiarlo. Si nadie amenazara el privilegio, no habría que defenderlo. El discurso del privilegio surge ante la amenaza contra el privilegio, y su intensidad es directamente proporcional a esa amenaza. El único fruto del privilegio es su discurso. Sus víctimas producen todo lo demás.

APPENDIX C

MAP OF THE CITY OF DORAL



Google. (n.d.). [Google Maps geographical area of the city of Doral, Florida]. Retrieved February18, 2018, from https://goo.gl/kqXRJD

APPENDIX D

VENEZUELAN RESTAURANTS IN DORAL

Arepazo 2 Restaurant.

Don Pan Bakery

Lisa, P. (2016). Bocas House. [photograph] Retrieved from: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurant_Review-g680222-d9733752-Reviews-Bocas_House_Doral-Doral_Florida.html#photos;geo=680222&detail=9733752&ff=195759690&albumViewMode=hero&aggregationId=101&albumid=101&baseMediaId=195759690&thumbnailMinWidth=50&cnt=30&offset=-1&filter=7&autoplay=

APPENDIX E

PASEO DE LAS ARTES

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APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE
FIRST GENERATION

General Questions

1. How old are you?
2. What is your profession?
3. What is your educational level?
4. What was your profession before coming here?
5. Are you married? Do you have children?
6. Where were you born?
7. Do you speak English? If so, how old were you when you learned the language?
8. What language do you speak at home? Is it always the same?
9. How long have you been here?

Motivations –Migration Process

10. Why did you decide to leave Venezuela?
11. What made you choose the United States as destination?
12. Why did you choose to come to the city of Doral?
13. What was your first impression of this country?
14. How different is it from Venezuela?
15. What do you remember from your first days here as an immigrant?
16. How was the process of finding a house?
17. How did you find a job?

Social Networks

18. Can you tell me about your social connections here in the United States/Doral?
19. How did they originate?
20. Do you have a specific place where you meet with your friends/acquaintances?
21. Are there any meeting places for the Venezuelan community?
22. Are all your friends or acquaintances Spanish speakers?
23. Do you ever interact with (monolingual) English speakers?
24. How do you feel about interacting with someone in English?

Identity

25. How do you identify yourself?
26. How is your relationship with members of other communities? (Colombians, Cubans, Dominicans, etc.).
27. Do you see yourself as a Latino in the United States?
28. In your opinion, how is the relation among different communities here in Doral?
29. How is your relationship with other members of the Venezuelan community here in Doral?
30. Do you identify or relate yourself with European Americans?
31. Did you find it difficult to adapt to life in the United States?
32. Do you feel that you have changed since moving here? How?
33. Have you applied for citizenship? Why? Why not?

34. What is your opinion about Americans (born in the U.S.) in general?
35. How important is it for you to be able to speak English?
36. Do you feel comfortable speaking in English?
37. When given the choice of interacting with someone (even native English speakers) either in English or Spanish, which language do you choose? Why?
38. Have you ever found yourself mixing English and Spanish in your conversations? In which context has this happened?
39. Have you ever forgotten common Spanish words and/or struggled to remember them, but you do recall the English equivalent?

Transnational Relations

40. Do you keep contact with your family and friends in Venezuela?
41. Have you, in any way, helped other people in Venezuela? How?
42. What do you think about the situation in Venezuela?
43. Have you taken part in any activities from the Venezuelan community here in Doral (or anywhere else)?
44. Which would you say is your fondest memory of Venezuela?
45. Have you travelled back to Venezuela since you moved to the United States?
46. Would you move back to Venezuela? Why? Why not?
47. Do you think you have lost any of your native accent? If so, could you provide any example?
48. Has anyone of your relatives or friends from Venezuela ever mentioned a difference in your accent or pronunciation of Spanish words?
49. Would you move away from Doral to a place with fewer Venezuelans, and Spanish Speakers? Why? Why not?

INTERVIEW GUIDE
SECOND GENERATION

General Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. When did your parents arrive in the United States?
4. Did you all come together? If not, who came first?*
5. What do your parents do for work?
6. Do you speak English? How old were you when you learned the language?*
7. What language do you speak at home?
8. What language do your parents use to speak to you? Is it always the same or do they vary?
9. Do you speak Spanish? How often?

Experiences in the United States (For Venezuelan-born participants)

10. How old were you when you first arrived in the United States?
11. How was your first experience at school here?

12. Did you get along with your teachers and classmates? How are those relationships now?
13. How different is school here from school in Venezuela?
14. Was it easy or difficult to adapt to life here?
15. Did you have any problem with language at school?
16. Did you find it easy to learn English? If not, what were the reasons?
17. How did you feel about having to learn English after you arrived in the United States?

Social Networks

18. Can you tell me about your friends here in the United States/Doral?
19. When and how did you become friends?
20. Can you tell me where your friends are from?
21. Do you have European American friends? How different are your they to your Latino friends?
22. What language do you use to communicate with your friends? Why?
23. What language do you use at school (outside the classroom)? Why?

Identity

24. How do you identify yourself?
25. Do you see yourself as a Latino in the United States?
26. How is your relationship with other members of the Venezuelan community?
27. Do you identify or relate yourself with European Americans?
28. Do you feel that you have changed since moving here? How?*
29. Would you apply for citizenship? Why? Why not?*
30. What is your opinion about Americans in general?
31. What language do you prefer to use in your everyday life?
32. What language do your parents use to talk to you?
33. Do you consider yourself bilingual?
34. Do you see yourself more as an American or a Venezuelan?
35. Would you rather live in a place with fewer Spanish speakers? Why?

Transnational Relations

36. Do you keep contact with your family (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) in Venezuela?
37. How do you keep in touch with them?
38. Tell me about your memories of Venezuela
39. Have you travelled back since you moved here?*
40. Have you ever travelled to Venezuela?
41. Would you like to go to Venezuela?
42. Do your parents talk to you about Venezuela? What do they say to you?
43. What language do they use to talk about Venezuela?
44. Do you think you would be able to communicate fluently in Spanish there?
45. Do you consider you have an English accent when speaking Spanish?

46. Has any of your relatives/friends in Venezuela mentioned your accent? Or that you have a different accent?
47. What do you like the most/least about Venezuela?
48. Have you taken part in any activities from the Venezuelan community here in Doral (or anywhere else)? Would you like to do it?
49. Is there any impediment for you to take part in the Venezuelan community events or activities?
50. What does Venezuela mean to you?

* Questions for Venezuelan-born participants in the Second Generation category.

APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVAL FORM

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Karen Adams
English
480/965-3013
KLAdams@asu.edu

Dear Karen Adams:

On 11/3/2017 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Doralzuelan: An emerging identity of the Venezuelan immigrant in the south of Florida
Investigator:	Karen Adams
IRB ID:	STUDY00007159
Category of review:	(6) Voice, video, digital, or image recordings, (7)(b) Social science methods, (7)(a) Behavioral research
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Consent form - Revised, Category: Consent Form; • Assent Form, Category: Consent Form; • Interview Guide English - Spanish - revised, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Parental Consent form - revised, Category: Consent Form; • DORALZUELAN IDENITY - ROMERO PINO, Category: IRB Protocol; • Recruitment Script for research, Category: Recruitment Materials;

The IRB approved the protocol from 11/3/2017 to 11/2/2018 inclusive. Three weeks before 11/2/2018 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 11/2/2018 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the "Documents" tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Blanca Romero Pino
Blanca Romero Pino

APPENDIX H

RECRUITMENT LETTER

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Karen L. Adams, in the English Department, at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to analyze the identity of the Venezuelan immigrant in the City of Doral, Florida, and how it is reflected on and has affected their linguistic choices.

I am recruiting individuals from Venezuela to answer some questions in an in-person, audio recorded interview, where the participants will be asked questions related to their motivations for migrating, the assimilation process, their relationship with other members of their new community, as well as the ties they may have with the home country. The participants must be legal residents of the United States, and may be younger than 18 years old. In the case of minors, a parental form of consent will be addressed to his/her parents or guardians, explaining the purposes and implications of this study. Minors will be given an assent form, to state that they agree to be part in this study. This interview will take approximately 60 minutes and the recordings will be handled solely by the researcher and her advisor. Likewise, these recordings will be digitally stored in a password protected computer, the researchers virtual cloud in password protected folders, and the university's virtual cloud.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (480) 410-9685, or email me at blanca.romero@asu.edu.

Blanca Romero Pino
Graduate Student

Karen L. Adams
Advisor

APPENDIX I

CONSENT FORM

DORALZUELAN: AN EMERGING IDENTITY OF THE VENEZUELAN IMMIGRANT IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Karen L. Adams, in the English Department, at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to analyze the identity of the Venezuelan immigrant in the City of Doral, Florida, and how it is reflected on and has affected their linguistic choices.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve answering some questions in an in-person interview, where you will be asked questions related to your motivations for migrating, the assimilation process, your relationship with other members of the new community, as well as the ties you may have with your home country. This interview will be recorded and later transcribed for analysis. There are no right or wrong answers and, you have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no repercussions. You must be a legal resident of the United States of America and over 18 years old in order be eligible to participate in this study.

Although there are no direct benefits to you as an individual, your responses will help deepen our understanding of the processes Venezuelan immigrants go through before and after coming to the United States, and the impact these may have in the identity of the Venezuelan community living this country, specifically in Doral, Florida. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. The researcher will create a personal ID for you, as well as master lists to store then information from your interview. If any follow up interviews are deemed necessary, you will be contacted again within the next three years and a new consent will be requested. The data will be deleted after follow-ups are completed (this could take up to six years).

I would like to audio record this interview to make sure I do not miss any detail of your responses. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please, let

me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team: Blanca Romero Pino, blanca.romero@asu.edu and Dr. Karen L. Adams, KLAdams@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study

Date:

APPENDIX J

EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Extract 1. On Venezuelan's capacity to afford basic food items – Beatriz

I: Oh.. all right..Now, why did you decide to leave Venezuela and move here to the United States?

B: 1 I think the main cause of Venezuelans now/

2 the cause of immigration (SIC) by Venezuelans is safety

I: Uh-hum..O.K.

B: 3 My family suffered kidnappings, My mother-in-law was kidnapped,

4 My daughter witnessed the kidnapping//

I: That must have been hard

B: 5 Yes .. My husband moves in an entrepreneurial environment

6 and he coincidentally told me

7 the SEBIN (Bolivarian Intelligence Service) had circulated a list of forty

8 kidnappings that had been already planned…

9 I think the main cause is safety

I: Safety yes,

I understand

B: 10 **The rest can be solved .. I never – I can now now now.. I can go to**

11 **Venezuela and I don't- I can eat normally .. I can find the basic food**

12 **basket as usual and I can eat like always …**

I: I see

B: 13 **= Overpriced of course .. but you can find it and buy it …**

I: Hhhmmm

B 14 **= You can afford it**

I O.K.

B 15 = But the safety issue

16 you don't have that//

Extract 2. On the lack of necessity for knowledge of English in Doral - Thalia

I: As for language.. how important is it for you to be able to speak English and why?

T: 1 It is important because it opens so many doors ..

2 A new language is even above a college degree in my opinion ..

3 and English is the number-one language … But, going back to the question,

4 did you want to know whether it was important or necessary?

I: Important

T: 5 Important …O.K …

6 In the state of Florida is important but not necessary.

I: Not necessary.. I see.. Why?

T: 7 **Yes … Because wherever you go here you are spoken to in Spanish,**

8 **So nobody really bothers with English ..**

9 **I mean … you don't have to .. really**

Extract 3. On Cubans – Beatriz

After talking about her experiences with Cubans in Venezuela

B: 1 **So when I see them here (Cubans),**

2 **besides finding them some of the laziest people in the world ..**

3 **I swear...** With those financial aids this government has given them, ma::n

4 ..**The Venezuelan population would have half of Miami**

5 **with a hell of an economic growth because as soon as they arrive here**

6 **.. they are given that financial aid and they don't take advantage of it**

7 **… They don't …**

8 When have you seen a Cuban- when I was studying-

9 that year and some that I was studying .. I didn't see one Cuban studying

10 English … You don't see them ..

11 They don't care .. I mean, (if) you look for Cubans who speak English

12 those will be the ones who were born here or arrived as little children ..

13 But the one who came recently .. they are just –
14 I mean, look at that roof there … They made it ..
15 The home owners' association had it made with a contractor but the
16 workers were Cubans ..
17 They spent more than six months building that roof … And I used to see
18 them .. and my bloo::d boi::led …
19 Because you saw them there .. eating and doing God knows what
20 And then they waited for their noon break and they would sit again
21 Good Lord/
I: (laughs)
B: 22 No no ... Too much laziness//

Extract 4. On American culture – Beatriz

I: Now … what's your opinion about the American culture?
B: 1 Too cold//
I: How come?
B: 2 Too cold .. and I mean that their lifestyle ..
3 They are used being cold here .. To being disheveled …
4 I suffer a lot because Mariangela studies in a place where there are many
5 Americans …
6 and I:: see the girls looking untidy, with messy hair, for school …
7 I mean ... it seems that even their personal hygiene is unattended ..
8 These girls look very messy.. They all look like that..
9 do you get me?
10 Youth here is abandoned by their parents ...
11 The American work on the streets a lot ...
12 And kids wander around alone after school ..
13 That is why there is so much vice in their youth here …
14 The Latino parent is very mother hen and father hen,
15 They are always watching over their children ..

They go, they search, they come, they ask “who is that?” …

The American works too much .. too much …

They are counting down the days until the children turn eighteen,

get their independence and leave …

But they do::n’t .. I mean .. they don’t observe their behavior,

who they talk to .. who they are

“Where did you go after school?”

they don’t ask …

That’s what I don’t like//

APPENDIX K

INTERVIEWER RESPONSES

Extract 1. Interview Ana

I:		O.K. Now Doral ...
		Why that city in particular and no other in Florida or anywhere else?
A:	1	Look … Actually when we got here, We were first in Gainesville ..
	2	Like two weeks//
I:		A:hha .. Then?
A:	3	Then we moved to Miami Beach for two weeks ..
	4	But we traveled to Doral everyday … And it was li::ke
	5	The lawyer was here, the realtor was here …
	6	Uh, it was like it was a spot where you could find everything ..
	7	Anything .. like the bank …
	8	I mean .. there were many things that always brought us here ..
	9	And then my husband would say
	10	"Hey, we are so far and we travel every day to be in Doral"
	11	Uh … we found a business spot …
	12	Not in Doral but in North Miami and we tried to relocate to Aventura
	13	But in reality, the opportunity came up in Doral
	14	Because it was found-
	15	My husband- his grandmother had an apartment here
	16	and she rented us the apartment a lot cheaper to help us
	17	and it was something that came up like this …
	18	We would have preferred Aventura because it was closer to our business
I:		I see
A:	19	But well … We stayed in Doral and my husband loves Doral//
I:		Well that's great ..That's perfect

Extract 2. – Interview Enrique

I:		Did you find it difficult to adapt to life here in the United States?
E:	1	Ye::s, ye::s. Ve:ry.
	2	At the beginning .. well .. because when I came here

3 Venezuela was a country that wasn't missing anything
4 So being away from the family, from my mom, my brothers
5 It is difficult…
6 It is difficult and it took me eight years to see them
7 Until .. well I got to see them…
8 So go figure then ..
9 It isn't easy .. It's very hard//

I: Believe me.. I know that…
And do you feel you have changed since you moved here?

E: 10 No no. I am the same .. but with more responsibilities ..
11 Maybe life here in the United States taught me how to grow..
12 because I came here very young .. at nineteen
13 and now I'm thirty-seven years old…
14 It's eighteen years here .. and something life taught me from a very
15 young age was to be responsible…
16 Basically if I didn't work, I didn't eat.

I: I guess that's the way life is

E: 17 Yes..
18 And that's been my experience//

Extract 3. Interview Jeanette

I: Very well..
If you had to interact with someone,
even if they are native English speakers,
and you had the choice between English and Spanish,
which language would you choose?

J: 1 Well .. it depends..
2 Because if the person- I mean the person may be a Latino…
3 For instance .. my friend.. let's put him as an example.. Alfred…

4 He- he is a person who speaks both languages perfectly.. but he thinks
5 in English..
6 Because he came when he was thirteen, and it has obviously been the
7 language he is better at...
8 So, I know that it is faster for him to speak to me in English than in
9 Spanish..
10 So, I communicate, yes … It's like a little Spanglish..
11 But eighty percent of my interaction with him is in English
12 because it is easy for him…

I: I see

J: 13 = Then I analyze the person.. If it is easier for him/her…
14 I mean .. if I see him/her struggling with Spanish..
15 then I speak to him/her in English..
16 To make it easier for the person…

I: Oh.. I get it …Then you think more about your interlocutor than the language per se

J: 17 Yes .. because.. it is like saying
18 "because you are Latino we (SIC) have to speak Latino (SIC)"..
19 No.. We have to facilitate communication (to the other person)…
20 Now, if the person wants to learn-
21 Because I have met people who (said)
22 "No, no, no. it's just that I want to practice Spanish" for example..
23 Then I (say) "let's do it"
24 Do you understand me?
25 But if it is to .. like communicate.. learn something then –
26 For example a meal plan… If I explain it (to the person) in Spanish..
27 he/she probably won't understand me as much as –
28 eh.. I don't have as much impact in his/her life.
29 There isn't a change .. a transformation in his/her diet
30 if I don't speak to him/her in his/her language…

I: Hmmm.. I get you now

J: 31 = I mean..

32 because he/she will probably only understand eighty percent of what I

33 said//

I: Exactly .. It is a possibility

Extract 4. Interview Jeanette

I: Have you ever found yourself mixing both languages in conversation?

J: 1 Totally... I have a Cuban friend in Saint Petersburg

2 and we spoke .. e::h.. we spoke both languages.

3 But it was super funny

4 because we were only like three Latinos//

I: O.K .. and then?

J: 5 Well .. and the Americans would get frustrated because they only

6 understood half of the conversation…

7 I mean,..I could say "O.K. Blanca".. E:h I don't know...

8 "Blanca.. la casa es gris but remember that I want it to be white..

9 Entonces yo me fui y era gris.. Entonces tú puedes entender eso,

10 then I went and bought a paint (SIC) and I painted it white"..

11 And that's how the conversation would flow..

12 half in English and half in Spanish/

13 It was something like- I don't know if it was a joke or a game between us ..

14 but we loved iy ..We were fluent in that sense, and we basically did it…

15 It was like having this conversation .. but it was a matter of seconds..

16 We wouldn't even think about it .. And I loved that//

I: Yes, I understand what you are saying .. because it has happened to me several times.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Blanca Romero Pino holds a degree in Education with a concentration in English as well as a Masters' degree in TESOL. She has been a professor at the Modern Languages Department at UDO-Sucre in Venezuela for the past ten years. She is currently a Fulbright Scholar working on a M.A in Linguistics. Her areas of interest are mainly sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and language variation. Her research includes contrastive study of rhetorical features of specialized and academic language in English and Spanish. She has also worked on issues related to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language.