Language attitudes in a group of Cubans during migratory journey and establishment in Mexico[1]

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Abstract: The current article explores the linguistic attitudes of thirteen Cuban migrants residing temporarily in migrants' shelters in Mexico. This case study aims to demonstrate their posture towards the change in language variety and lexicon as they integrate into Mexican society. It sought to examine their positive and negative affective attitudes towards Mexican Spanish through a semi structured questionnaire and qualitative analysis of recorded interviews. The findings reveal similarities and differences in the Cubans' desire to maintain or change their Spanish variety, highlighting the influence of migratory more than the social factors on their language decisions.
Keywords: migrant, Cuban, Mexico, language attitudes, Spanish varieties, linguistic conflicts, sociolinguistics, case study

1 Introduction

Migration entails not only geographical displacement but also forces migrants to face new sociopolitical, occupational, and cultural circumstances. It also leads to new linguistic contacts, either between different languages or between regional varieties of the same language. Likewise, competence in the dominant language of the country destination is considered one of the main factors for successful social integration (cf. Fernández Vítores 2013: 53–54). However, it can also lead to linguistic conflicts, for example, between people of different varieties of Spanish, even though fluid communication is foreseeable, because they have the same language as the host country, but being from different cultures can lead to misunderstandings (Rodríguez Salgado & Vázquez Silva,

2017: 37–38). There could appear possible prejudices that sometimes range from xenophobia to a kind of linguistic discrimination. According to Martín Butragueño (2004), there are many factors that influence the types of language contact situations that can occur, including the number of dialects of a language and the linguistic distance between them (e.g., conservative Spanish and innovative Spanish), and the reference standard of a language that the individuals have in their mind. Moreover, the process of variation works jointly at two stages: the individual and the community.

These above exposed language phenomena can be seen with the Cuban migrants while crossing or establishing in Mexico. Even though they have a general knowledge of the Spanish/Castilian language, as it is their L1 or mother tongue, it is observed that they face linguistic and communicative challenges during their migration journey when changing to another dialect context. Consequently, their linguistic practices are reflected in their decisions towards the host country Spanish variety and their preferences whether to maintain their Spanish variety intact, or integrate some part of the new one, at least in the first stages of establishment in the country.

1.1 Migratory Context

Mexico is a nation that represents an interregional border between the Americas, and it receives thousands of migrants each year. For instance, in 2022, at least 346,656 individuals were detained and statistically calculated by the Mexican government's Migration Policy Unit (cf. Unidad de Política Migratoria de México 2022). Cuban migrants are one of the groups that frequently enter Mexican territory irregularly, along with citizens of other countries such as Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and more recently, Haiti and Ecuador.[2] Some of them, due to the risk of being deported, end up requesting refuge in Mexico, while others, if they have not yet been detained, decide to continue their journey until reaching the territory of the United States of America. There, they have a 91% chance of receiving asylum or refuge (cf. Blizzard & Batalova 2020).

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[2] cf. Detectó el INM 147 mil 33 migrantes indocumentados de enero a agosto, 2021: https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2021/09/02/politica/de-enero-a-agosto-detecto-inm-147-mil-33-migrantes-indocumentados/

2   Statement of the Case Study

The present article aims to demonstrate the language attitudes of thirteen Cuban migrants in Mexico, focusing on the aspects related to how they perceive the change of variety in Spanish language during their migration and temporarily residing in migrant houses (CAMs, from its Spanish acronym, *Centros de Ayuda al Migrante*). Despite the fact that this study is limited because of the number of participants, the scope of it is to reveal that these attitudes arise together with the migrants' social integration into the host country, regardless of whether they decide to stay permanently in the country or for a short time and continue their journey to the north. Furthermore, this study also explores the dilemmas faced by the migrants with extra-linguistic situations, which could potentially lead them to modify their perceptions of the variety of Mexican Spanish. In other words, this work deals with knowing to what extent the migratory factors impact the Spanish variety of these Cuban individuals in Mexico, whether they stay temporarily or permanently in the country.

It must also be considered that there is no single pattern in Hispanic studies to investigate the social integration of an immigrant to a new social and economic context, and there are many types of instruments for the researcher to address the investigation of specific migratory phenomena. From particular and interdisciplinary objectives related to sociolinguistics, migration linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and sociology there are various researchers who focus on these fields such as Moreno Fernández (2009), Sancho Pascual (2013), Paredes García & Sancho Pascual (2018), Cuesta Chorro (2023); and others.[3] Moreover, there are different studies about language attitudes in Spanish speaking countries and also from inside each country between rural and urban areas. The principal ones in the field of Spanish philology are PRECAVES-XXI (*Proyecto*

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[3] "Integración sociolingüística en contextos de inmigración: marco epistemológico para su estudio en España" (Moreno Fernández 2009) is one of the most important statements of future research in the Hispanic world related to this type of investigation.

Homolingual research:

Integración sociolingüística de los inmigrantes ecuatorianos en Madrid (doctoral dissertation) (Sancho Pascual, M. 2013).

Influencia de las expectativas de permanencia o retorno en la Integración sociolingüística de la población migrante en la Comunidad de Madrid (Paredes García, F., & Sancho Pascual, M. 2018).

Bilingual research:

Integración Sociolingüística de la Comunidad Inmigrante China en Madrid (Cuesta Chorro, G. 2023).

para el estudio de creencias y actitudes hacia variedades del español en el siglo XXI) and the LIAS project (*Linguistic Identity and Attitudes in Spanish-speaking Latin America*). They conduct a deep research related to linguistic variation by analyzing the beliefs and attitudes of individuals towards linguistic Spanish varieties and their behaviors towards them.

This study primarily addresses two aspects of the interviewed individuals: their positive and negative attitudes towards Mexican Spanish, and their decisions about learning the lexicon of this new variety and the circumstances in which they use it. The main objectives for this study are:

1) to gain a better understanding of the crisis of communication among Cuban migrants in a new Spanish-speaking environment

2) to examine how these speakers look at language variation as a socially intentional action in these unique circumstances and how it affects their sense of identity as migrants

3) to identify whether social variables and migratory experiences during their journey impact their language attitudes and decisions

To achieve these objectives the profile of the participants, their social and migratory variables will be given first and then the results will be laid out in two main topics: language community (the old and new one), and social integration (related to whether or not they maintain their Spanish variety and how they see Mexican Spanish).

In addition, this research is characterized as qualitative and synchronic, since the individuals being studied typically reside in migrant homes for no longer than one year (with some exceptions), and it can be difficult to track their exact migration destination. It is also conceived as a case study, since the theory contemplated is applied to this specific migratory phenomenon in a small group of Cubans. Overall, it seeks to demonstrate the linguistic-migratory dynamics in homodialectal immigrants in another context of the same language.

Furthermore, the type of migration to be valued, following a typology established by Zimmerman (2009: 135), is one that could be classified as *non-conquistatorial* migration and which is mainly due to political or economic reasons (extreme poverty), or a combination of both.[4]

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[4] It is also noteworthy that this research is part of a larger research project known as the "EMILS-ISMX project" (*Experiencias migratorias: identidad, lengua y sociedad – Integración sociolingüística de Migrantes en México*) that examines the migratory experiences, identity, language, and society of migrants in Mexico.

3   Theory Review

3.1   Language: Attitudes and Ideologies

As background, the earliest research on language attitudes were conducted within the context linguistic-empirical studies as part of social psycholinguistics – a line of research was promoted in which the attitudes that speakers show towards a specific language or linguistic variety could be analyzed, and which has been applied to sociolinguistic research (Fishman 1982: 17). There are two different perspectives on the study of language attitudes: the mentalist perspective, which views attitudes as a mental state produced by certain *stimuli* and is supported by authors such as Gardner (1982, 1985); and the behaviorist perspective, which views attitudes as an observable action resulting from the reaction to various *stimuli* and is supported by authors such as Fishbein (1965). Currently, several research seek to integrate both perspectives, and this study is not an exception.

Besides, linguistic ideologies are representations, whether explicit or implicit, that interpret the relationship between language and humans (Woolard 2012: 19). Therefore, it is possible to observe the epistemological links of language with identity, aesthetics, and morality. Specifically, the beliefs and perspectives regarding language can strongly influence the way in which individuals understand their identity, appreciate the aesthetics of language, and establish moral standards regarding the linguistic use of their language. In fact, beliefs and attitudes of speakers are the true cause of sociolinguistic variation (cf. López Morales 1989; Moreno Fernández 2005). Human behavior is guided by beliefs towards certain stigmas of language use, and speakers conceptualize language as a socially intentional action with ideas about its meaning, function, and value. These language ideologies are manifested by the speaker through negative or positive evaluations of language, whether it is a dialect or a particular linguistic feature (Garret 2010).

Following these scholars, Cestero & Paredes (2018) define language attitudes as the action or reaction – i.e., the behavior – that stems from the acceptance or rejection of a linguistic fact, such as the use or disuse of a language dialect. These attitudes are influenced by the interviewee's linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge and are determined by the cognitive component that motivates them. For studying these attitudes, it is recommended to approach three main components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Quesada Pacheco 2014: 266). The cognitive component is related to the speaker's knowledge and conscious-

ness of social and linguistic prestige, while the affective component is closely linked to the cognitive one and deals with the emotions associated with the psychosocial prestige (whether covered or uncovered) that the speaker has towards the language. Lastly, the behavioral component refers to the positive or negative attitudes that the speaker applies in certain situations towards the language or, in this case, towards a specific language dialect.

There are consequences stemming from the phenomena of convergence and divergence in the contact of Spanish varieties.[5] These consequences are reflected in the language attitudes of migrants and their cognitive perceptions. In this study, it was established that convergence is the process of approximation or influence from the Spanish variety of the host country, occurring at any level of the language, and with different degrees of intensity or transfers. On the other hand, divergence is the process by which these individuals drift apart from the non-native Spanish variety. Trudgill (1986) has explained how speakers not only accommodate with other speakers inside their language community, but also do it in other communities. This situation happens often with individuals who decide to migrate to another dialectal area (cf. von Essen 2021: 31–32). In this case study it has been observed that the decisive first step of social integration takes place only at the stage of decision on the part of the migrant whether or not to acquire a second dialect and its lexicon.

About the perception of individuals towards their language and dialect, speakers usually have a clear awareness of the prestige of their variety and its distance from another, in its linguistic use, and interpretation of a variation. In concordance, following the precepts of Anders, Hund & Lasch (2010) and especially from Quesada Pacheco (2014) on perceptual dialectology, each individual identifies the Spanish variety that is most similar to its own.[6] In this study, in particular, this awareness during the interviews was focused on their

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[5] Regarding the phenomenon of dialect contacts, the theory of communicative accommodation, at the lexical level, has also been taken into consideration (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991) based mainly on two strategies that can be observed in immigrant communities: *convergences* (the speakers seek to adapt to the speech of their interlocutor and new society); *divergences* (the speaker is interested in accentuating his differences with respect to the speech of his interlocutors).

[6] In this discipline, the linguist can measure in different ways the extent to which speakers are aware of their way of speaking and that of those around them. The main themes are dialectal features that highlight non-linguistic ones, with which of these features the non-linguistic one's associate, linked to mental cartography. In other words, perception is extremely important for this discipline.

migratory journey through several countries and dialect areas before and after arriving to the variety/dialect they were interacting at the time of the interview.

3.2 Classification of Mexican and Cuban Spanish

Spanish is a multicentric language without a single governing center or norm. Instead, it works from diverse perspectives and regional norms (cf. Eckkrammer, 2021; Cichon & Cichon 2021). Defining the concept of the pluricentric norm of Spanish is problematic, as there may be possible coexisting with monocentric factors. Therefore, there seem to be two situations in the Spanish-speaking world: traditional monocentrism and a growing acceptance of the diversity of new emerging or existing norms (Lebsanft, Franz, et.al. 2012). Further, the Spanish language varieties of the American continent are conceived as conservative or innovative varieties. These phenomena of variety arise for two reasons. Firstly, during the colonial period, not all-American territories of Spain maintained the same contact with the main metropolis overseas (Lope Blanch 1969). Secondly, the influence of indigenous, African, or other Indo-European languages cohabiting with Spanish has had an impact. Due to the aforementioned reasons, there are various ways to divide the dialectal zones (*Regiolekt*) of Spanish in America.[7] Accordingly, and to understand better the division that the participants expose in their interview, the following ideas were considered about Cuban and Mexican Spanish.

The insular Hispanic Caribbean is an innovative dialect zone. This zone is a territory where Spanish evolved under circumstances very different from the other dialectal zones, with its undisputed center in the Antilles, and is managed as a macrosystem containing three major diatopic varieties: Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican. However, as it is not a homogeneous area, it is not considered a single entity (cf. Alba 1992). Cuba is a monolingual country and part of this dialectal area. Its Spanish variation was strongly influenced over the centuries by different waves of Spanish immigration, as well as by African and Chinese immigration. Likewise, it has an Arawak legacy, mainly at the lexical level

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[7] Theories of the origin of the American Spanish towards Andalusians and anti-Andalusians roots have been developed by the scholar Henríquez Ureña (1921), who roughly separates them by highlands (continental, cold) and lowlands (coastal, hot). It has also been divided by indigenous languages (cf. Rosenblat, 1965; Saralegui, 1997). Further, other authors separate American Spanish by macrozones (cf. Rosenblat, 1962) and historical or colonial traces (cf. Canfield, 1981), resulting in between 16 to 17 dialect areas, into addition bilingual areas.

(cf. Sobrino Triana et.al. 2014; López Morales 2018). In Cuban Spanish there are seven phonemes that are phonetically realized as unaspirated fricatives: /b, d, g, f, s, j, r/. The most characteristic phonic mark of the island is the strong tendency to assimilate the final consonants of syllables with the following, especially with alveolar liquid [ɾ], for example: "mi hermano" [mijem.ˈma.no], "corbata" [Kob.ˈba.ta]. Even so, there are considerable internal differences between the phonic and lexical levels. For example, between Camagüey and Santiago de Cuba there are phonic solutions with greater articulatory tension and the maintenance of liquid /r/ and /l/ than in other parts of the island. With respect to the grammatical level, diminutives end in *-ito/a* (e.g., "poquito"). However, if the diminutive ends especially in -t it turns into *-ico/a* (e.g., "zapatico", "ratico"). According to Sobrino Triana, Montero Bernal, and Menéndez Pryce (2014), as suggested by various authors including Choy López (1985, 1989) and Moreno Fernández (1993), the dialectal areas of the Cuban Spanish are divided specifically into the following five areas:

  I. West (Pinar del Río, Havana, Artemisa, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, and Trinidad)

 II. Center (Santa Clara, Sancti Spíritus, Ciego de Ávila)

III. East center (Camagüey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Manzanillo and Bayamo)

IV. Southeast (Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo)

 V. Far-eastern (Baracao, Maisí and Imías, Moa and Sagua de Tánamo)

The Cuban informants of this case study are from areas I, II, III and IV. Therefore, they primarily have variations in pronunciation, intonation, and different phonetic features such as accents, tone, etc., more than in lexicon or grammar.

Mexican Spanish, together with the Central American Spanish dialects, is considered one of the conservative dialect zones, with certain innovative features, especially in the area of lexicon (cf. Canfield 1981). This Spanish, along with its sociolects and dialects, developed in the Mexican territory, owes its

special characteristics to various factors, having a legacy mainly from indigenous languages such as Nahuatl, Maya, Mixtec, and others (also from African languages brought in the time of the colony).[8] In addition, it has been influenced by the English language, thanks to its North American neighbors, the United States of America and Canada (cf. Lope Blanch 2004). One of the most outstanding characteristics of Mexican Spanish is the intonation – its acoustic properties; for example, when the end of an utterance goes up followed by a strong drop in the middle tone (circumflex intonation). This varies greatly depending on geographic, social, or situational factors, such as in the case of the pronunciation of *-tl* in the same syllable [a.tlas], perhaps due to the influence of Nahuatl. The use of diphthongization of /e/ and /o/ with a strong vowel, for example: *tiatro* instead of "teatro", *pior* for "peor", *tualla* for "toalla". The grammar of Mexican Spanish is common to Spanish in general; however, it has Mexican grammatical features. There is for example, "hasta" used as an adverb and in a position of negation or inclusion. In addition, the use of the *le* pronoun in the form of imperatives and intensified form, for example: "ándale", "órale" (let's go, come on), "úpale" (get up). In relation to the Mexican lexicon, mainly there are those of Hispanic origin (like "alberca", "banquete", "cajeta"), and there are also those from indigenous languages (such as "popote", "coyote", "guacamole" "chapulín", "cenote" and toponyms along the Mexican territory). Furthermore, there are different divisions of the dialectal areas in Mexican Spanish. Here follows the example of the 10 dialect zones of Mexico: Yucatán, Chiapas, Tabasco, Veracruz, Oaxacan highlands, central highlands, coast of Oaxaca and Guerrero, northwest, northern highlands, and northeast (cf. Moreno-Fernández 1993, 2020a; Lope Blanch 1996).

Below, a general table outlining the phonetic, grammatical, and lexical characteristics of Cuban Spanish and Mexican Spanish is presented. The aim is to provide an overview of the distinctions of the two varieties of Spanish, highlighting both their similarities and differences.

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[8] The territory has a total of 63–68 indigenous languages, which are classified along with Spanish as official languages.

Table 1: Example of differences and similarities between Mexican and Cuban Spanish. Author's own table based on Lope Blanch (1996), Černý (2015), López Morales (2018), and Moreno Fernández (2020b).

CUBAN SPANISH	MEXICAN SPANISH
DIFFRENT FEATURES	
PHONETICS	
There are at least seven fundamental intonation patterns in Cuba: 1. Neutral enunciation; 2. Neutral interrogation; 3. Interrogation with a high degree of uncertainty; 4. Interrogation introduced with conjunction "y"; 5. Non-conclusive enunciation; 6. Evaluative-ponderative structure; 7. Vocative structure.	Circumflex intonation. The high pitch accent is located before the end of the stressed syllable, finally falling to minimum. Mexican Spanish accents are distinguishable from each other's, such as those of Nuevo León, Sinaloa, Yucatán, Mexico City, Jalisco, Tabasco, Chiapas, and Veracruz.
Aspiration of prenuclear /s/, for example, forest "bosque" [bohque].	Diphthongization of /e/ and /o/ with a strong vowel, for example: tiatro instead of (theather) "teatro", (worst) pior for "peor", (towel) tualla for "toalla". Full and tense articulation of consonant groups exam "examen" [ek.ˈsa.men], capsule "capsula" [ˈkap.su.la]
The post vowel or final /s/ fades, for example, back "espalda" [eˈpal.da], stop "basta" [ba.ta].	Weakening and loss of unstressed vowels: before [ˈants] "antes"
There are two variants of the phoneme /b/ [β]: voiced bilabial fricative and voiced bilabial quasifricative.	The phoneme /b/ [β] is a voiced bilabial fricative (like the general Hispanic norm).
Assimilation of /l/ and /r/ liquid neutralization. Pharyngeal aspiration of /x/: [ˈka.ha].	The "j" is pronounced with a gentle pharyngeal aspiration /h/ and not with a harsh and tense fricative in the style of the Peninsular Spanish /x/.
Voiced post dental /d/ in intervocalic position, or loss of it in plain words like past "pasa(d)o", dress "vesti(d)o".	Pronunciation of -*tl* in the same syllable [ˈa.tlas] *atlas* – influence of the Nahuatl.

GRAMMAR	
Preference for the periphrastic future over the synthetic is a topic in Cuban Spanish, although it depends on the types of verbs and text.	Use of "hasta" with start value: "viene hasta hoy" comes until today; also, as negation and inclusion.
Gender: as part of Antillean Spanish (but not exclusive to this region) there is gender hesitation in nouns ending in -*e* or in a consonant, withdrawal of alternations of the type of the bridge, the heat.	Use of encliptic pronoun *le* with intensifying value: "ándale, órale" or "le traje el libro a los muchachos" (I brought the book to the guys).
Number: in the Antilles, popular speech includes in plural -*ses* in words such *as ajíes, cafés, papas, sofas, tés* denominating them as *ajises, cafeses, papaeses, sofases, teses*.	Frequent use of "no más" as only, "ni modo" in any/no way.
Preference to use SVO (subject-verb-object), in questions as expressivity factor, and a lot of frequency of using subject pronoun I "yo".	In Mexican Spanish, a plural marking -*s* is added when the receiver (indirect object) is semantically a plural, but it is added to the direct object clitic: I told him/her "se *lo* dije (singular)", I told them "se *los* dije (plural)".

LEXICON	
Immigration waves coming from Africa, Chinese, Spanish in the last centuries. Arawak, taino legacy.	Legacy mainly from indigenous languages such as Nahuatl, Maya, Mixtec, and others (also from African languages brought in the time of the colony). Strong influence of English language.
Cubanismos, examples: *congrí* (rice with black beans), *bitongo* (rich and spoiled, kid), *biyaya* (smart, hardworking), *fuácata* (being poor, lack of economic resources).	Mexicanismos, examples: *aguacate* (avocado), *coyote* (American jackal), *guajolote* (turkey), *zopilote* (black vulture).

SIMILAR FEATURES
Seseo, yeísmo
Queísmo and Dequeísmo
Change of the inflectional morpheme *-mos* for *-nos* in the conjugation ("íbanos", "veníanos") used in various varieties of Spanish.
The fricative variant for *-ch* [ʃ] common in Cuba as well in other varieties such as the Mexican Spanish from northwest.
Nominal treatment: *tú/usted* (in some parts of the south of Mexico is common to use *vos*, and it is almost extinguished in Cuba).
The verb "haber", which should be used as impersonal, being conjugated in 3rd person singular, commonly it is formulated as a 3rd person plural for example: "hubieron muchos niños".

4   Methodology

In this study, the social integration of the immigrants was established according to a modified version of Moreno-Fernández's pyramidal model levels for immigrants (2009: 132–133) (Table 2), because the participants were in a country that speaks the same language as their L1 and they were staying in the CAMs following the process of regularization of their migratory status in most cases. The levels of social integration are: 0-cooperation, 1-competency, 2-accommodation, 3-assimilation. It should be noted that one of the first features to be changed in immigrant communities is the lexicon. Moreover, the norms of the host variety are introduced from the outset and slowly assimilated from the first level of cooperation (Level 0). Besides, this table shows only the process of insertion of the migrant groups in the "new" community.

Table 2.

Level 0 of cooperation involves basic survival in which migrants give and ask for information and develop a basic understanding of the social and cultural pattern of the host community. In this research, this phase is conceived from one to three months.
Level 1 of competency is reached when the immigrant begins to participate in a broader range of social interactions outside the CAMs, in search of work or schooling. This phase occurs between the fourth and the six months after arrival.
Level 2 of accommodation occurs after seven months to a year. During this time the migrant adopts cultural strategies for complex sociocultural situation.
Level 3 of assimilation requires the length of stay over a year. The migrant starts to assimilate more than sociocultural customs from the new country. He/she might start to develop morphosyntax changes.

4.1 The Semi-Structured Interview

In order to cover the research topics without binding the interviewee to a rigid system, the semi-structured interview was chosen. In this type of interview, a prepared protocol is followed by the researcher, but different discursive strategies can also be used to redirect the interview and ask questions that are not part of the questionnaire guide. With this qualitative approach, these people were given the opportunity to develop their ideas and provide insights from their points of view on the topics (cf. Karatsareas 2022: 100). Other types of instruments for data collection were not used in this research because the use of audio or any type of prestige survey (e.g., *matched guise*) was not allowed due to the type of regulations and requests of the migrants' houses.

4.2 Data Collection and Corpus Analysis

This study compares itself to previous research projects related to language attitudes towards Spanish varieties, such as PRECAVES-XXI and the LIAS project. Still, since the investigated group is in a migratory crisis of communication, the methodology used is a specially designed questionnaire divided into three

sections: social and migratory variables, language community, and social integration.

For the semi-structured interview, a questionnaire consisting of 40 questions related to the participants' social and migratory variables profile, migratory journey, and their stay at the CAM; how their dialectal perception is, what discrimination they might have suffered, and the challenges of lexical acquisition. The interviews were conducted for a duration of 20 to 40 minutes (with one exception of 62 minutes), depending on each individual and his/her will to share information; also, they were allowed not to answer. To transcribe the recording interviews, the *OpenAI* tool *Whisper* was used to automatically transcribe recorded conversations.[9] For the qualitative analysis of this group of Cubans, as this is an exploratory and phenomenological work, we ended up with 5 main groups of codes: 1. Social variables; 2. Migratory variables; 3. Language community, 4. Social integration and 5. Social representations. In total, 36 codes are used.

4.3 Place and Individuals

To conduct this research, three migrant houses (CAM)[10] located in the Center (1), West (1), and Northeast (1) regions of Mexico were visited.[11] These shelters are situated along the railway lines and are commonly used by migrants traveling through the country by walking or riding on top of cargo trains. At the time of the interviews (between April and June of 2022), these thirteen Cuban citizens were either seeking refuge in Mexico (with two exception cases) or in the process of obtaining asylum in the United States of America through the 'Migrant Protection Protocols' program, also known as the *Quédate en México* program. Still other migratory statuses were encountered inside the CAMs.

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[9] The WER (Word Error Rate) of this tool in Spanish is 3.0, but its performance is subject to variation based on the language (Radford *et al.*, 2022). Additionally, the transcription was reviewed, and errors were corrected using the Audacity 3.1.3 program. This software was used to improve the interviewee's voice by eliminating background noise from the audio recorded in the CAMs.

[10] The leaders of these migrants' shelters allowed the researcher to have access and interview people inside. The thirteen Cuban participants gave consent and authorization to use their interviews for this research. They were codified with letters at the beginning of the recording. Consequently, their identities are anonymous.

[11] *Casa Tochan* (Mexico City), *FM4 Paso Libre* (Guadalajara), *Casanicolás* (Monterrey).

4.4   Researcher Position

Pivotal recommendations from scholars Nguyen & Hamid (2016) are being considered, most importantly the impact of the researcher's identity on selecting the topic and individuals of study. The researcher is a Mexican citizen and speaks the native Mexican Spanish variety (from the West region).[12] Prior to the investigation, the researcher worked as a volunteer at a migrant house (CAM). The volunteer experience provided crucial insight into the lived experience of immigration in Mexico. Still, the researcher/interviewer may not have a deeper understanding of some place names, customs, and traditions of each migratory group, such as the Cubans. Nevertheless, during the interviews, the interviewer did not influence the interviewees to develop positive or negative attitudes towards Mexican Spanish or other varieties. However, it may have raised these people's linguistic consciousness about their attitude decisions, communicative perceptions, and linguistic repertoire.

5   Results of the Analysis

5.1   Profile of the Participants: Social and Migratory Variables

The social variables used for this study were stratified in sex (man, woman), age (young adults, adults), community (urban, rural), educational level (high with degree or postgraduate, medium with high school or technicians). In addition, to understand better their migratory journey and status their migratory variables were analyzed: type of migrant (transit migrant, refuge in Mexico) and the time in Mexico (less than 1 month to 3 months, 4 to 6 months, from 7 months to 1 year, over 1 year).

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[12] Originally from the city of Guadalajara, her Spanish is from the *altiplano* of Mexico, central highlands.

Table 3: Social and migratory variables of the Cuban participants[13]

Code	Community of origin	Sex	Age	Type of Migrant in Mexico	Time in Mexico
C1	Town next to Havana	woman	36	Refugee process	6 months
C2	Havana	man	34	Working visa	3 years
C3	Havana	man	39	Refugee process	6 months
C4	Havana	man	50	Refugee process	3 months
C5	Havana	woman	51	Refugee process	7 months
C6	Town next to Cienfuegos	woman	22	Transit Migrant/MPP program	3 weeks
C7	Las Tunas city	man	35	Transit Migrant/MPP program	1 month
C8	Havana	man	36	Transit Migrant/MPP program	3 months
C9	Puerto Padre city	woman	28	Transit Migrant/MPP program	1 month
C10	Town next to Holguín	woman	34	Transit Migrant/MPP program	1 month
C11	Town next to Varadero	man	26	Transit Migrant/MPP program	1.5 months
C12	Town next to Santiago de Cuba city	man	35	Transit Migrant/MPP program	2 months
C13	Town next to Ciego de Ávila city	man	30	Has stopped refugee process; married a Mexican.	3 years

Table 3 presents the profiles of the participants, comprised of eight men and five women, and highlights the following observations:

Social variables

– Seven individuals were between 20 and 34 years old (young adults), while six were aged between 35 and 51 years old (adults).

– The community variable revealed that eight individuals were from urban areas, while five were from rural areas.

– It is noteworthy that despite coming from different areas most individuals had a good educational background. Nine of them held a degree (high education level), while four had completed high school/pre-university or were technicians (medium).

Migratory variables

– The variable 'type of migrant' showed that four of them were in the refuge process in Mexico, while seven were in the refugee/asylum request process for the United States of America through the MPP/*Quédate en México* program, as mentioned earlier. Two of them had different migratory status as one ended up marrying and the other getting a working visa.

– All participants had in common that they entered Mexico irregularly. Moreover, the additional variable of 'time in Mexico' revealed that eight of

[13] To see a characterization of the participants, see Appendix 2.

them had been in Mexico for less than three months, two between 4 and 6 months, one for over 7 months, and two for over a year (specifically 3 years).

Furthermore, 5 of these individuals were detected by Mexican authorities during their migratory journey due to various reasons such as being victims of human trafficking, extortion, or kidnapping, and were subsequently detained. Consequently, they were offered by the migration authorities either deportation or to start the refuge process. Furthermore, eight of them openly admitted being guided by a *Coyote* (migrants' smuggler) to enter Mexico. It is worth noting that most of the interviewed people followed a similar migration route before reaching Mexico, passing through countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, except for two who began in Haiti or the Dominican Republic.

5.2 Language Community

In this section, the questions were mainly linked with the knowledge and consciousness of the Cuban migrant's community and the new one being established. The results regarding keeping a community (NDG, native domain group) in the country of destiny were diverse. These individuals have family (7 of them) or friends (3 of them) in the desired country, except for one woman and two men who decided not to answer. 7 of them have their community in the United States of America and just three in Mexico.

It is simply called as *español* by 5 women and 4 men.[14] In contrast to the female interviewees, male participants showed a slight difference of naming it such as *Castellano*/Castilian (1), Cuban Spanish (2), or Cuban *Castellano*/Castilian (1). However, they did not provide a detailed explanation for their choice.

About how they perceive their Spanish variety by sex, this interviewed group said it is mainly neutral (4 women and 7 men), claiming that there were no remarkable differences between women and men. Still during the conversation, the interviewees considered the question to be a field in which they could explain the differences in regional variations in Cuba compared with the capital city (Havana) and that their Spanish could be more related to peninsular Span-

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[14] Some research has proven that on the American continent it is more common to call it *Español* than *Castellano*, and this interview confirms this tendency. However, participants' awareness of their Spanish variety has led them to classify it in more detail.

ish, demonstrating their awareness of their language variety. This can be seen in the following passage from a translated interview (see Example conversation 1).[15]

Less than half of the interviewed group (2 women and 2 men) mentioned that women in Mexico speak differently than men. Still, they replied that there were more differences in the age dimension than in the sex dimension. Nonetheless, they provided examples of Mexican women whom they perceived as speaking more slowly and politely, while men speak faster and use profanity (see Example conversation 2).[16] The individuals who had been in Mexico for over a year mentioned the diastatic variation and jargon that exists in Mexican society. For example, one interviewee mentioned the classified *naco* slang.

In response to dialectal perception during their migratory journey, there were diverse responses. Participants' preferences seemed to be more related to the Spanish variety they had heard most frequently or felt most comfortable with, whether from other migrants or volunteers in the migrant shelters. However, six of them did not identify with any accent or variety, seeing their own Spanish as related to all other variants or not related to any at all. The countries mentioned most frequently were Nicaragua (3), the Dominican Republic (2), Venezuela (1), and Mexico (1).

The interviewees could identify compatriots (5 women, 6 men), except for people who decided not to answer. They explained that they could perceive gestures and manners of the other people, and confirmed it through intra-linguistic facts, such as the way of greeting with phrases like *asere ¿qué bolá?* or *socio ¿qué bolá?* ("How are you, friend/colleague?").

5.3   Social Integration

This section focuses on how they perceive the new environment through language and communication practices. It was remarkable how they show their attitudes not just towards Mexican Spanish but surprisingly towards other Spanish varieties spoken inside of the CAMS.

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[15] To read the conversation examples please see Appendix 1.

[16] It appeared that during their migratory journey they encountered more men than women, and many of the men were involved in organized crime (like the coyotes), which led the interviewees to perceive men as speaking rudely.

Most of the interviewed people (3 women and 8 men) had heard Mexican Spanish before their arrival through popular cultural elements such as rancheras (Mexican folk music), dubbed movies, and soap operas. During the conversation, four of them realized that even though they had already heard Mexican Spanish, they were not accustomed to hearing swear words.

Upon arriving in Mexico, four women and five men strongly noticed the change of accent and lexicon. Additionally, two of them noted that there were other languages spoken in the border region (see Example conversation 3), which they supposed were native languages of the area.

The two men who had been in Mexico for the longest time (beginning Level 3 of assimilation), clearly, had the most to say about the Mexican Spanish variety, as they were already integrated economically and legally into society. During the interviews, they discussed their thoughts on the dialect (as illustrated in Example conversation 4).

Furthermore, two women and two men said that they tried to change their accent under the direction of the coyote in order to correctly pronounce place names with indigenous language origins, as these can work as shibboleth words.[17] For example, the name of a State in Mexico: *Tamaulipas* (derived from *Tamaholipa*, a Huastec term).[18] They reported that local people had no questions or doubts when they used the correct pronunciation of the indigenous words. The other eight interviewed people did not attempt to change their accent because they were traveling quickly and had no contact with Mexican citizens, other than the smuggler.[19]

About dialect discrimination[20] suffered during the migratory journey, 4 people (3 women and 1 men) answered with a definitive yes, while three said that they had experienced it to some extent but were more concerned about other types of discrimination and potentially encountering it in the future. The remaining five people said they had not experienced any discrimination. The interviewees who answered yes explained that they had been subjected to

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[17] The word *Shibboleth* is understood as the "word proof" and refers to any in-group word or phrase that can distinguish members from outsiders (cf. Chambers & Trudgill, 1994).

[18] Other words they refer to are *Tampico* (*Tampiko* huastec term) and *Apizaco* (atl *pitsawak* Nahuatl term).

[19] Besides, the interviewees shared that they tried to fit the fashion not to be noticed as foreigners, hiding their identity, but by the time of the interview they were more stable and felt less need to hide their roots.

[20] Conceived as an active prejudice towards regional accent.

criticism and ridicule by *coyotes* due to their accent or way of speaking, and particularly in the southern border towns, which have a large population of migrants passing through.

In relation to the acquisition of new vocabulary during the initial phases of settlement, the responses were diverse. Initially, these individuals were curious about the bad words or profanity, as well as phrases and verbs with double meanings (such as *fregar, chingar*) that they heard; however, as they became more entrenched in Mexican territory, there was a strong rejection of the use of Mexican profanity due to their experiences with human trafficking networks.

Further, it was asked whether they used these words and phrases they learned in Mexico in daily life. Nine people said yes, mainly greetings like *¡qué onda, wey!* ("What's up, dude?"), adverbs like *luego luego* ("immediately" or "at once"), and religious phrases like *Dios mediante* ("God willing"). They like the words and phrases but mainly use them with other migrants from different nationalities as a *koiné* language between them. Furthermore, the interviewees indicated that they mainly learned it during the journey, except for religious phrases that were taught inside the shelters by volunteers.

The last questions of section were about linguistic attitudes toward the forms of nominal treatment between the two Spanish varieties. The forms of nominal treatment are a set of expressions used by a speaker to refer to or establish contact with their interlocutor, and which have a deictic and relational value (cf. Hummel, Kluge & Vázquez Laslop 2010; Mahecha Ovalle 2018). The majority mentioned that for calling someone to how much they trust and respect they say either *tú* or *usted*.[21] The phrases for calling others from far that they indicated most were: *oye chica, oye chico, ven acá* ("come here girl/boy, come"). They mentioned that Mexicans often respond with *mande*, a word used to ask someone to repeat something that was not heard or as a response like "yes, tell me"; however, their experience with the coyote was negative as he treated them poorly and used offensive phrases to call them such as *hija/hijo de la chingada* ("son of a bitch") and *chinga tu madre* ("fuck off") (see Example conversation 5).[22] They compared these phrases with their own offensive phrases in Cuban Spanish.

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[21] When they were asked how they were addressed in Mexico the participants' response was that inside the CAM shelters they interacted with other migrants and volunteers in a respectful *usted*.

[22] The verb *fregar* means 'to mop', in Mexican Spanish has different meanings like: "to disturb", "to kick/slap" someone. The verb *chingar* has many meanings such as "to work", "to disturb", "to fuck", and others.

6   Discussion of the Results

The change in language variation is considered essential in the context of migration. This article strongly emphasizes the link between language and social integration of each person in a migratory context, as evidenced by the results. The questionnaire focuses on migratory experiences and the practices of valuing the variety of the migrants' origin and the language spoken in the host country, both cognitively and affectively. The results of the recorded conversations evidently demonstrate that those staying in Mexico were the ones learning more actively the new dialect, while the others continuing their journey decided to maintain their dialect, at least in this first migratory phase. Therefore, it was seen in this group that social and dialectal integration was a major point of divergence.

The individuals in this study showed convergences in the lexicon they learned, but their individual processes resulted in different patterns within this Cuban national group. The observed divergences were that they felt closer to the Spanish variety spoken by other migrants than to the one spoken in the host country, Mexico, as they experienced negative situations during their migratory journey. Furthermore, it could be seen that the national identity and linguistic loyalties of this group of Cuban citizens were exposed during the recorded conversation, as most of them expressed their decision to maintain their own vernacular; however, it was demonstrated that learning and acquiring the lexicon of the variety of the host country, along with other varieties they heard, was necessary only during the dangerous journey when they did not have a defined migratory status.

Nevertheless, as part of positive language attitudes, it was noticed that some participants showed interest in the dialectal acquisition of Mexican Spanish through phraseology (Mexican slang) and lexicon due to its use by migrants from other Spanish-speaking countries; however, this interest was not shared by all of them. The interviewees were able to live together inside the CAMs in a neutral way with other migrants, feeling identified with them due to their similar experiences in Mexico. Additionally, for those who stayed for over a year (migrants from level 3), they tended to become bidialectal and successfully acquire Mexican Spanish as a second dialect (mainly the variety from the city in which they lived). During the interviews it was also noticed that they accepted cultural diversity as a source of enrichment while dialect-switching and trying to accommodate their Spanish to that of their interlocutor. Likewise, the interviewees appreciated the host society and culture and seemed to consciously develop affection for the receiving culture.

As mentioned before, the negative attitudes observed towards Mexican Spanish were due to extralinguistic situations and criminality. For instance, some individuals were robbed, kidnapped, or threatened by *narcos* (drug traffickers) while traveling to the northern border of Mexico. Additionally, they faced rejection and possible discrimination in some local communities and cities located on the southern border of Mexico.

For its analyses this study reviewed the results of the LIAS project in terms of language attitudes towards the different Spanish varieties spoken in the Hispanic world. In the regions that LIAS has studied, with few exceptions – like Colombia, Venezuela, and Paraguay – Spanish from Spain is considered the most correct (cf. Sobrino Triana 2018: 16); however, as to which standard dialect/variety to select, the general trend was to choose their regional one in first place, over the peninsular. Likewise, for the PRECAVES XXI project was important for fostering the value of Spanish dialects. In this case, 10 out of 13 of the Cuban interviewees recognize the hegemony of the Mexican Spanish variety through media communication in Hispanic America. Despite this acknowledgement, they do not see this variety as being any stronger or more acceptable than Cuban Spanish. In the first instance, they do not consider the change of lexicon to be a major necessity. In the second instance, they consider Peninsular/European Spanish (in general) as the standard norm, and some of them characterize their variety as being quite like the Castilian from Spain.

Furthermore, participants did not have extreme differences in terms of education. Despite not all of them coming from urban areas, the diastratic differences were not strongly noticeable. Certainly, in the diatopic dimension they always compared their accent and regional variety with the Spanish of the capital, Havana, and the other regions of their country; however, the diaphasic dimension was well-noted depending on age.

7 Conclusions

As the PRECAVES XXI and LIAS projects have already demonstrated, and comparing with these research results, the study of language attitudes and collective acceptability are decisive factors in the development of new social connections. In the case of the migrants' social integration, their attitudes and beliefs towards the new society are vital. Chiquito & Quesada Pacheco (2014) also observe the development of a linguistic democracy and a 'loyalty to one's own variety' that

has never been seen before in the history of Spanish and this was recognized by these Cuban citizens as they had very well configured their dialectal identity.

In terms of how these speakers view language variation as a socially intentional action, it could be said that this group of Cubans began their migratory journey with optimism about integration to the new society because of their general knowledge of Mexican Spanish, but that extra-linguistic factors diminished this optimism. The participants confirmed the humanitarian and legal help of the CAMs, but for many of the interviewees the phrases and words learned from the Mexican Spanish variety were not from the shelter but from the period of mobility, or in some cases, for the ones staying in Mexico, from daily life. Even with the changing lexical features of their Spanish, variety itself is not a major challenge; on the contrary, in their irregular migration it can be crucial in order not to be identified as foreigners.

It must be mentioned that this research had two limitations. The first is related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico and how the country experienced it during the collection of corpora. The second is the data collection tool, the semi-structured interview. This type of interview works with a self-portrait scheme. Therefore, it has access to the affective and cognitive components of the interviewed people and their migratory situation; however, this limits the information given by the individuals during the recording.

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the findings, observations, and conclusions drawn from this case study are contextualized in terms of the specific individuals analyzed and should not be extrapolated to represent broader populations or general trends. The results are limited to the examined participants in this study and should be interpreted with caution to avoid overgeneralization. Finally, this study benefits a better understanding of the situation in the Americas regarding irregular migration from South to North.

Appendix 1: Transcript of the Recorded Interview Examples

Spanish transcription and English translation	
CONVERSACIÓN 1 Entrevistadora 1 (E1): MX-E1 Entrevistado/a (E): C9 (cubana, mujer, 28 años, un mes en México) E1: ¿Crees que las mujeres en tu país hablan diferente a los hombres? E: No, lo que se divide no es en mujeres y hombres, sino en la región donde vivimos. Se habla español, pero Cuba es una isla y vivas donde vivas el acento es diferente. Tal vez tengo un acento diferente al de otro cubano que entrevistaste aquí; ¿no te diste cuenta? (/) E1: Sí (/) (se mencionan nombres de los otros entrevistados de la CAM) E: Depende de donde vivas, de la región donde vivas; vivo más en el oriente de la Isla, en el occidente la gente habla... más rápido y chabacano, no sé, no sé cómo explicártelo. Nosotros los puertopadrenses hablamos más despacio, más español, así que se entiende más.	**CONVERSATION 1** Interviewer 1 (I1): MX-I1 Interviewee (I): C9 (Cuban, woman, 28 years old, one month in Mexico) I1: Do you think that women in your country speak different than men? I: No, what is divided is not in women and men, but in the region where we live. Spanish is spoken, but Cuba is an island and wherever you live, the accent is different. Maybe I have a different accent than another Cuban you interviewed here; didn't you notice? (/) I1: Yes (/) (Interviewer mentioned the name of other participants from the CAM) I: Depends on where you live, in the region where you live; I live more in the east of the Island, in the west people speak... faster and more *'chabacano'* I don't know, I don't know how to explain it to you. We the *puertopadrenses* speak more slowly, more Spanish like this, which is more understandable.

| CONVERSACIÓN 2
Entrevistadora 1 (E1): MX-E1
Entrevistado/a (E): C11(cubano, hombre, 26 años, 1 mes y medio en México)
E1: Aquí en México ¿piensas que las mujeres hablan distinto que los hombres en algún sentido?
E: Hasta ahora, en mi experiencia que he tenido, sí se nota un poquito la diferencia porque los hombres hablan un poquito más fuerte y dicen más malas palabras.
E1: ¿Sí?
E: Pero bueno, ya te digo, yo no tenía interacción con la población en general, no sé decirte bien tampoco. | **CONVERSATION 2**
Interviewer 1 (I1): MX-I1
Interviewee (I): C11 (Cuban, man, 26 years old, one month and half in Mexico)
E1: Here in Mexico, do you think that women speak differently than men in any way?
E: So far, in my experience I have had, the difference is a little noticeable because men speak a little louder and say more bad words.
E1: Yes?
E: But well, I told you, I had no interaction with the population in general, I don't know how to tell well either. |

CONVERSACIÓN 3	CONVERSATION 3
Entrevistadora 1 (E1): MX-E1	Interviewer 1 (I1): MX-I1
Entrevistado/a (E): C11 (cubano, hombre, 36 años, 3 meses en México)	Interviewee (I): C11 (Cuban, man, 36 years old, three months in Mexico)
E1: Recordando la primera vez que entraste a México, ¿por dónde entraste? ¿Por Tapachula o por Tabasco? ¿por dónde fue?	I1: Remembering the first time you entered Mexico, where did you enter? Through Tapachula or through Tabasco? Where did you enter?
E: Tapachula.	I: Tapachula.
E1: Tapachula, en Chiapas. Entonces, no sé si te diste cuenta de que había gente que hablaba otra lengua indígena.	I1: Tapachula, in Chiapas. So, I don't know if you realized that there were people who spoke indigenous languages.
E: Sí, como no, una lengua extrañísima.	I: Yes, of course, a very strange language.
E1; Y sacaban alguna palabra en español y tú decías, ¿qué es esto?	I1; And they would bring up some word in Spanish and you would say, what is this?
E: ¿Qué coño es esto? Pero hay gente que no habla español, bueno, me pareció a mí, porque había gente que hablaba una lengua extraña ahí y que nunca la escuchaba hablar español. Yo no sabía que existía aquí.	I: What the hell is this? But there are people who don't speak Spanish, well, it seemed to me, because there were people who spoke a strange language there and I never heard them speak Spanish. I didn't know it existed here.
E1: Sí, eso pasa aquí en el sur. Y entonces, además de eso, ¿te diste cuenta, sentiste el cambio de acento, las palabras, algo que te llamara la atención?	I1: Yes, that happens here in the south. And then, in addition to that, did you notice, did you feel the change in accent, the words, anything that caught your attention?
E: No, no.	I: No, no.
E1: no más eso de que dijiste: ¿qué es eso?	I1: no more that thing you said: what is that?
E: Extrañas palabras y hablan extrañísimo.	I: Strange words and they speak very strangely.

CONVERSACIÓN 4	CONVERSATION 4
Entrevistadora 1 (E1): MX-E1	Interviewer 1 (I1): MX-EI
Entrevistado/a (E): C13 (cubano, hombre, 30 años, tres años en México)	Interviewee (I): C13 (Cuban, man, 30 years old, three years in Mexico)
E1: Pensando en los primeros días que estuviste en México, ¿sentiste que te costaba comunicarte por alguna razón, no sé, tal vez el acento o el vocabulario? ¿Te preguntaste qué estaban diciendo?	I1: Thinking back to the first days you were in Mexico, did you feel that it was difficult for you to communicate for some reason, I don't know, maybe the accent or the vocabulary? Did you wonder what they were saying?
E: no, no, solo unas pocas palabras a veces en México, digo [...] ahí va mi chiste de que no hablan español, hablan mexicano; y lo demuestro porque la mayoría de las cosas tienen otros nombres. En otros países, en la gran mayoría de Latinoamérica usamos palabras muy parecidas para determinar cosas u objetos; no como aquí, ejemplo, todos decimos remolacha, aquí es betabel, todos decimos habichuelas, aquí son ejotes [...]	I: No, no, only a few words sometimes in Mexico, I say [...] there goes my joke that you don't speak Spanish, you speak Mexican; and I evidence it because most things have other names. In other countries, in the vast majority of Latin America we use very similar words to determine things or objects; not like here, example, we all say *remolacha* ('beet'), here is *betabel*, we all say *habichuelas* ('green beans'), here they are *ejotes* [...]

CONVERSACIÓN 5	CONVERSATION 5
Entrevistadora 1 (E1): MX-E1	Interviewer 1 (I1): MX-I1
Entrevistado/a (E): C6 (cubana, mujer, 22 años, 3 meses en México)	Interviewee (I): C6 (Cuban, woman, 22 years old, 3 months in México)
E1: ¿Y cómo sientes el acento, el vocabulario, algo que sentiste que hubo un cambio cuando entraste a México?	I1: And how do you feel the accent, the vocabulary, something that you felt there was a change when you entered Mexico?
E: Bueno, es que el coyote estuvo todo el día ofendiéndonos, nos llamó hija de la verga, de la chingada. Así que, a ver, ni siquiera sé lo que significa, pero creo que es algo muy malo; o sea, siempre nos trató mal desde el principio.	I: Well, the thing is, the coyote spent the whole day offending us, he called us *hija de la verga, de la chingada* ("son of a bitch"). So that, let's see, I don't even know what it means, but I think it's very bad; I mean, he always treated us badly from the beginning.
E1: ¿Y cómo se veía, si se veía mexicano?	I1: And how did he look if he saw himself as Mexican?
E: Sí, alto, pelo largo, como medio achinado y color así (señaló el cabello café oscuro de la entrevistadora), un poquito más largo (/)	I: Yes, tall, long hair, kind of curly and colored like that (she signalized the dark brown hair from the interviewer), a little longer (/)

Appendix 2: Characterization of the Interviewees Based on Data Collection

C1- IATL860128O32[23]

Woman/36 years old, married and nurse

From a town next to the Havana / dialectal area I West

Refuge process in Mexico

Reasons of migration: Political repression

6 months in Mexico

First migration

Has no contact with a community of her country, just at the CAM

Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico

Didn't have accidents while traveling

The nearest Spanish to her from the countries she traveled: Nicaraguan

Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "FM4 PASO LIBRE"

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[23] Within the Atlas.ti 9 program, informants are categorized by their nationality, also with a special code that they themselves gave when accepting the interview. It is based on main letters of their name (but not in order), date of birth (yy,mm,dd), vowel and a number they like.

C2- JHA 860828O35

Man/34 years old, single and software engineer
From the Havana/ dialectal area I West
Working visa for Mexico
Reasons of migration: economics
3 years in Mexico
First migration to Mexico but lived in other countries before (didn't specified where).
Has contact with his community in Mexico City
Didn't have accidents while traveling
The nearest Spanish for him from the countries he traveled: Dominican Republic (but believes Colombia, Venezuela and Spain varieties are nearer)
Point of the interview: videocall (friend from Tochan CAM participant).

C3- MAP820612O04

Man/39 years old, married and nurse
From the Havana/ dialectal area I West
Refuge process in Mexico
Reasons of migration: Political repression
Six months in Mexico
First migration
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico
Didn't have accidents while traveling
The nearest Spanish for him from the countries he traveled: Nicaraguan (outside from the country he pass through, he choosed Venezuelan)
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "FM4 Paso Libre".

C4- PAMO720701A01

Man/50 years old, single with kids (in Cuba) and agriculture, part of the USC association
From The Havana/ dialectal area I West
Refuge process in Mexico
3 months in Mexico
Reasons of migration: Political repression and economics.

Trajectory journey: Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico
Didn't have accidents while traveling.
The nearest Spanish for him from the countries he traveled: Salvadorian.
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "FM4 Paso Libre".

C5-EM691005A43

Woman/51 years old, married and teacher
From The Havana/ dialectal area I West
Refuge process in Mexico
Seven months in the Mexican country
Reasons of migration: Political repression
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico
First migration
Has contact of her community with her (husband and friends)
The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: Nicaraguan
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "FM4 Paso Libre".

C6- CBCS000404A04

Woman/22years old, single and was studying for being teacher
Town next to Cienfuegos/ dialectal area I West
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
3 months in Mexico
Reasons of migration: economics
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico
Was stolen and chased by the *coyote* she hired
Has contact of her community with her
The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: Nicaraguan
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C7- DRP870203A10

Man/35 years old, married and Fine Arts teacher
Las Tunas city/ dialectal area III East center
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program

Reasons of migration: Political repression
1 month in Mexico
First migration
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico.
Fell into human trafficking network
Has contact of his community with him
The nearest Spanish for him from the countries he traveled: Mexican
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "Casanicolás"

C8- TR850609U07

Man/ 36 years old, single and mechanic
The Havana/ dialectal area I West
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
Reasons of migration: Political repression and economics.
3 months in Mexico
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico.
Extortion by the Mexican police.
Has contact with his community in USA
The nearest Spanish for him from the countries he traveled: Mexican and Guatemalan
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C9- GCL 931219A07

Woman/28 years old, married and teacher of Maths and Physics
Puerto Padre city/ dialectal area III East center
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
Reasons of migration: Political repression and economics
1 month in Mexico
First migration
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico.
Fell into human trafficking network
Has contact of her community with her
The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: Nicaraguan
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C10- IED871130A03

Woman/34 years old, married and Computer technician
Town next to Holguín/ dialectal area III East center
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
Reasons of migration: economics
1 month in Mexico
First migration
Trajectory journey: Haiti, Jamaica, Dominicana, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico
Fell into human trafficking network and extortion
Has contact of her community with her
The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: Dominican
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C11- IFG 950819A10

Man/26 years old, married and bussinessman
Varadero, Matanzas/ dialectal area I West
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
Reasons of migration: Political repression and economics
1 month and a half in Mexico
Extortion from police
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico.
Has contact of his community with him
The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: all same
Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C12- LARC870305A11

Man/ 35 years old, single and dentist
Santiago de Cuba city/ dialectal area IV southeast
Transit migrant/ Refuge process for USA MPP program
Reasons of migration: Political repression and economics
2 months in Mexico
Extortion by the Mexican police.
Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico.
Has contact of his community in USA

The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: all same

Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "CasaNicolás"

C13- YBR910728E07

Man/30 years old, married, volunteer at the CAM and used to study Law in Cuba

Town next to Ciego de Ávila city/ dialectal area II center

He has stopped his refugee process when he married his Mexican wife.

3 years in Mexico

Reasons of migration: economics

Extortion from the Mexican Police and encounter with Migratory Police from Mexico

Trajectory journey: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico

He has a small community and mainly he works with Mexicans and other nationalities.

The nearest Spanish for her from the countries she traveled: all same except Mexican Spanish

Point of the interview: Inside of the CAM "Tochan"

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