



**Title:** Entrevista con Jossie Altamirano Sosa

**Interviewee:** Jossie Altamirano Sosa

**Interviewer:** Andrea Williams

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**Series:** Somos NC

**Length:** 8:46

**Spanish Summary of Interview:** En esta entrevista, Jossie y yo hablamos sobre su experiencia viviendo en ambos México y Carolina del Norte y la decisión de sus padres de mudarse a los Estados Unidos. Ella nació en Carolina del Norte, pero sus padres son de Oaxaca, México, y volvieron a México por parte de su niñez. Después de seis años su familia regresó a Carolina del Norte y han vivido aquí desde entonces. Hablamos sobre su experiencia como una estudiante de ESL, discriminación y las dificultades de aprender inglés en el sistema de escuela de Carolina del Norte.

**English Summary of Interview:** In this interview, Jossie and I talked about her experience living in both Mexico and North Carolina and her parents' decision to move to the United States. She was born in North Carolina, but her parents are from Oaxaca, Mexico, and returned to Mexico for part of her childhood. After six years, her family returned to North Carolina and have lived here ever since. We talked about her experience as an ESL student, discrimination she experienced, and the difficulties of learning English in North Carolina's school system.

***Start Transcript***

**Andrea:** [00.00.01] My name is Andrea Williams and I am here with...

**Jossie:** Jossie Altamirano Sosa.

**Andrea:** And where are you from?

**Jossie:** I am here from Wilmington, but my parents are from Oaxaca, Mexico.

**Andrea:** And were you born there or did your parents move here before you were born?

**Jossie:** My parents moved here in 2003, and I was born here in 2004, in Wilmington, North Carolina, and then I actually went back to Mexico in 2007 I believe. And then came back here.

**Andrea:** So do you still have family there?

**Jossie:** Yes, my whole family is there.

**Andrea:** And do you get to see them often?

**Jossie:** I try to go every year, over the summer, at least a month, to go and spend time with them. Yes.

**Andrea:** [00.00.48] And do you know why your parents decided to move here?

**Jossie:** Well, mostly it was just the money there. It's really hard to find a job, you really have to have multiple jobs, or be really good at one thing, so that was really hard. Over here in America you can kinda find a job easier, so also for money, and also for safety. There were a lot of things at that time where I am from that was really dangerous.

**Andrea:** Okay, and do you know why they chose Wilmington specifically, or North Carolina specifically?

**Jossie:** I think it was because at the beginning a lot of people were moving to California, and then Michigan, and then out of nowhere they started to come to Wilmington, like the majority part from Oaxaca were there, so my parents were like , "Well, we know people there, why not just go and see how it goes." But yeah, that's why. It was just, they knew people.

**Andrea:** [00.01.57] So did any of your family, like your extended family, move too or was it just your parents?

**Jossie:** I think throughout the years my family, like my cousins and uncles would move here ot the United States. I have family members that are in Michigan right now. And in Greensboro, here in North Carolina, and I think some in California, but that;s it.

**Andrea:** And so was your first language Spanish?

**Jossie:** Yes.

**Andrea:** And when did you start learning English? Was it when you started going to school or was it before that?

**Jossie:** So I went to school in Mexico for like four or five years I believe, and got here to the United States when I was in fourth grade, and started learning when I was 10 I think. Yeah, I was 10 years old when I started learning English.

**Andrea:** [00.02.57] So how long did you live in Mexico?

**Jossie:** For like six years I think. Six, seven years.

**Andrea:** And what are some differences you remember, I know you were young, but differences between living in Mexico and living here?

**Jossie:** Just in general, or like school?

**Andrea:** Just in general, anything that you remember.

**Jossie:** There's a lot of things for sure, I would say the transportation is different, a lot of people there walk, here there's cars, when it comes to school, I feel like there's more opportunities here. In Mexico, they're very, I guess, close-minded, and they're very religious, so you also learn about religion and here they're more....

**Andrea:** Liberal?

**Jossie:** Yeah, more liberal than over there, but also when it comes to work, like I said a lot of people do have different jobs. Like literally they work on their farm, they have a little store, stuff like that. And over here they're more like, you do this, you work. And I also think over here in the United States it's more of a work style than over there. Over there you have family, it's more calm, to be honest. Very calm.

**Andrea:** [00. 04.11] Which language do you speak more now and which do you feel more comfortable speaking?

**Jossie:** I speak more Spanish, and I feel more comfortable speaking Spanish. I think it's just because I'm more used to it than English, and I feel like I do have an accent. But yeah, Spanish.

**Andrea:** And how would you describe your experience in school in America, like learning English in america?

**Jossie:** I'm not going to lie, it was bad. I remember I did ESL, and they would take me out from the classes, I would be in my math class, for example, and out of nowhere they would just be like, "Oh, come for like 30 minutes" to teach a little bit of English. And then in middle school I feel like it was too repetitive and I didn't learn anything in ESL, I think I learned more with my friends and by watching things in English than at school. I think the ESL part, it's very hard, but also because there's not enough ESL teachers, which is also very complicated. But it was very hard to learn English in the ESL classes.

**Andrea:** [00.05.27] That's what I was going to ask; do you think that they have enough resources or enough help for ESL students?

**Jossie:** Not yet, for sure.

**Andrea:** Did it make learning other subjects more difficult too?

**Jossie:** Yeah, like I said, they would take you out of classes, sometimes they would try to make it an elective, but also for a lot of kids I noticed when I was in middle school they were embarrassed to take ESL, so sometimes they wouldn't even go to the ESL classes. If you go to any ESL classes it was like, "Oh, you don't know English." Like they would actually make fun of you. Sometimes they wouldn't even learn English because of that.

**Andrea:** [00.06.08] That kind of goes into my next question. Did you experience any discrimination growing up as an ESL student, or even more recently as a Hispanic woman in North Carolina?

**Jossie:** I would say I did more when I was in school, just as an ESL student. Even the teachers, because they didn't feel like we had enough to do in class, or it was like "We're going to make it easier for them," which, I think instead of making it easier for them, which I get it, but I think just trying to teach us a little bit clear. I remember they would separate us from when we would take the EOG's, they would take us out of the room somehow, and they would give us a dictionary- I don't know how that was going to help with math and everything- and that's what we were gonna use for the exam. I don't think it helped at all, I never used the [dictionary] and I remember they would say, "Why does she have to go to another room when we don't? That's not fair." But for sure, when we were in school, even the teachers and the students would see you differently.

**Andrea:** [00.07.19] And have you seen family or friends experience discrimination here in America?

**Jossie:** Yes, my brothers, my second brother mostly, because he also was in second grade, but for him he learned English faster, but I heard that a lot of his classmates made fun of him, they didn't understand, they thought he was just dumb because he didn't know how to speak English. But also teachers again, which is sad.

**Andrea:** You are a college student. What are your plans or goals for the future?

**Jossie:** I want to be a Spanish teacher. I really like cultures a lot, from Mexico and from any other place, like Spain. I just want to go abroad and teach. I'm also considering doing ESL, but you never know. Right now, Spanish teacher,

**Andrea:** You kind of answered this, but do you plan on staying here in Wilmington, or would you like to live somewhere else?

**Jossie:** Probably stay here in North Carolina, I don't know about Wilmington, but here in North Carolina, yes.

**Andrea:** [00.08.40] I think that is all I have, thank you.

***End Transcript***