

Sol De Mi Vida

As the school day ended, I stepped into my car to go visit my yaya at the hospital. At that time, she had been in and out of the hospital for different reasons over the past year. It was a very difficult period of time for my family because my Yaya is a first generation immigrant from Argentina who knows very little English, and she was admitted to a hospital where Spanish speakers receive the bare minimum of help and support. Therefore, we had to be there for each and every time the doctors or nurses had important information to share about her diagnosis.

As I entered her room, I looked to my left and then to my right, and saw that there were two people other than my yaya, my cousin and the doctor, who are both non-Spanish speakers. I observed while the doctor explained everything to her in English with the few words in Spanish he knew, as she sat there in confusion, smiling and nodding. It struck me that someone should be here to not only make sure she understands what's going on, but also to ensure that the doctor is able to understand the correct information from her. Consequently, I had no other choice but to do it myself, so I stepped in and took part in interpreting their conversation.

After what felt like ten minutes, interpreting back and forth, voices fell quiet, and the doctor finally left the room. Naturally, I asked her, "*De todo su tiempo en el hospital has tenido a alguien aquí para traducir lo que dicen los doctores y enfermeras?*" She responded that my yayo is usually around and can interpret for her. I thought to myself, that it's not enough. Both my grandparents immigrated from Buenos Aires, Argentina to the states around the age of 20. In their culture, it was expected for the women to stay home to cook, clean, and take care of the children while the men went out for work to financially support their family. As a result of this, my yayo was able to learn English and communicate with others while it has always been more of a struggle for my Yaya.

The next day, as I entered the hospital, I asked the front desk what their policy is on providing interpreters. He told me that they are able to provide an AI interpreter on a computer, but not a real person. Just a computer which uses speech recognition technology to transcribe conversations back and forth. It feels very insensitive to be told all your diagnostics through a computer. Granted, my yaya is fortunate to have such an amazing family who can help her understand what is happening with her body, but there are many families who aren't as lucky as she is. According to the website Minority Nurse, the data shows that only 4.8% of RNs are Hispanic or Latino ("Nursing statistic").

Through my yaya's experiences in the healthcare system, I realized that there are many people in this country who struggle with a language barrier with their healthcare providers. Fortunately, I was given the chance to go through a Dual Immersion K-12 program and become fully biliterate, whereas many people aren't given that opportunity. That being so, I want to use this skill to help those who have to work twice as hard to succeed in this country. With the inspiration from my yaya, my goals consist of getting my Bachelors in Science and Nursing to give Spanish speakers a fair chance at receiving standard care in the healthcare system. I'm aware of the privilege I have with language compared to my grandparents, and as an empathetic, dedicated, and passionate 3rd generation immigrant, I strive to make a difference in this world to help the underprivileged feel heard.

Work Cited

"Nursing Statistics - Minority Nurse." *Minority Nurse - Diversity in Nursing*, 14 Apr. 2016, minoritynurse.com/nursing-statistics.

