

Making sense of multilingual contexts: exploring the views of multicultural staff in a resettlement centre in Darwin, Australia.

Abstract

The following study will attempt to ascertain the views of multicultural staff in a resettlement centre in Darwin, Australia, with regard to multilingual contexts. In situations where individuals constitute a minority, their voices are often rendered particularly significant. The sensation of power is not experienced. There is a sense of disempowerment, as if one's voice is not heard or acknowledged. Sophia, a multicultural support worker at a resettlement agency in Darwin, Australia, discusses the difficulties and challenges experienced by new humanitarian entrants upon their initial arrival. "When you're the minority your voice is quite... You don't feel powerful. You don't feel like you've got a voice." In this instance, she is recounting an experience she had when she was residing in Tanzania. She describes her efforts to empathize with her clients' experiences, striving to understand their perspectives from their vantage point. The linguistic and cultural barriers experienced by people play a significant role in shaping their perception. Indeed, the experience of being an outsider, a foreigner, a stranger, a migrant, newcomer, an outcast, or an other is a shared experience among millions worldwide, encompassing those who have voluntarily or involuntarily departed their country of origin in pursuit of a new place of residence. This study, which is a component of a doctoral program, is from the perspective of the support workers that provide pathways for those seeking resettlement. The objective of this initiative is to illuminate the challenges and barriers that appear insurmountable to those seeking refuge, and at times, engender feelings of unwelcoming, neglect, and a sense of being in a position where they would prefer to move on. In the domain of humanitarian assistance, language functions as a pivotal factor in the way recently arrived humanitarian entrants navigate their resettlement processes. This phenomenon is particularly salient in contexts where individuals have been detained or confined in camps within host countries for extended periods, often spanning decades.