

RECURSO GRATIS • NIVEL PRINCIPIANTE

Entre dos versiones de mí

A B2 story about cultural identity, code-switching, and the pressure to perform an easily recognizable version of yourself.

IDENTITY

CONTEXT

WHOLENESS

APRENDE GRATIS EN [EZINGLES.COM](https://ezingles.com)

ANTES DE LEER

Prepare to read

Sofía, a Colombian American photographer, receives an exhibition opportunity built around 'authentic identity.' As expectations multiply, she begins questioning who gets to define what authenticity looks like.

Think critically

Can people behave differently across languages and settings without either version being false?

Reading goal

Analyze how audience expectations shape self-presentation. Notice vocabulary for identity, cultural interpretation, and artistic representation.

The version that fit the application

Sofía Herrera changed slightly when she entered her parents' apartment. Her shoulders relaxed, her Spanish became faster, and sentences moved freely between both languages.

At the design studio where she worked, she was more **reserved**. She planned every presentation and avoided expressions that colleagues might ask her to translate.

Neither version felt dishonest. Each had developed in response to a different room.

Sofía also photographed city life at night. When she applied for an emerging-artists exhibition, the form asked how her work expressed her 'authentic cultural identity.'

She hesitated. Her photographs showed laundromats, buses, apartment windows, and people waiting outside twenty-four-hour stores. They were shaped by migration, though they contained no flags or obvious symbols.

A friend advised her to make the connection more **explicit**. Sofía added a paragraph about growing up between Colombian traditions and American urban life.

The exhibition committee accepted her. The curator praised the 'vibrant duality' of her perspective and requested several images that made her heritage more visible.

Sofía staged a photograph of her mother's dining table with coffee, family documents, and an embroidered cloth. The image was beautiful, but it felt like evidence prepared for an examiner.

Her mother loved it. Her younger cousin called it 'very cultural,' then laughed because nobody used that cloth except when visitors came.

Sofía wondered whether the photograph revealed her family or merely translated it into symbols the gallery already understood.

Too much for one audience, not enough for another

At a preview, the curator arranged Sofía's work beneath the title BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.

Sofía disliked the phrase. It suggested two separate territories with an empty space between them, while her life felt more **overlapping** than divided.

She proposed IN THE SAME FRAME. The curator worried visitors would miss the cultural theme.

Meanwhile, relatives debated her photographs in the family group chat. An uncle in Colombia said the images looked too American. A cousin in Oregon said the dining-table photograph felt exaggerated.

Everyone appeared to possess a standard of authenticity that Sofía had failed in a different direction.

During an artist talk, an audience member asked whether she felt more Colombian or American. Sofía gave her usual diplomatic answer: 'Both identities have shaped me.'

The response was true but incomplete. It transformed a complicated question into a smooth **statement** suitable for a microphone.

Afterward, another bilingual artist named Renata challenged her gently. 'Why do you keep accepting the question's two categories?'

Renata described **code-switching** not as proof of a divided self but as a sophisticated ability to read context. The danger came when adaptation stopped being a choice and became a demand for approval.

Sofía reviewed her photographs and noticed how many showed thresholds: bus doors, windows, counters, and hallways. She had interpreted them as symbols of being between places.

Now she considered another possibility. A threshold was not only a border; it was also where movement became visible.

Refusing the simpler frame

Two weeks before opening night, Sofía asked to change the exhibition selection. She kept the dining-table portrait but placed it beside an ordinary photograph of the cloth folded inside a closet.

She added a self-portrait made from two simultaneous video calls: one with coworkers discussing a deadline, the other with her aunt describing a family celebration.

The images did not reveal a secret ‘real Sofía.’ Instead, they showed identity as a series of relationships, habits, memories, and choices.

She also replaced BETWEEN TWO WORLDS with IN THE SAME FRAME. The curator resisted, arguing that the original title was immediately **accessible** to visitors.

Sofía acknowledged the marketing concern but refused the implication that her life needed to become simpler in order to be understood.

The committee accepted the change. Reviews were mixed. One critic called the exhibition subtle; another complained that its cultural argument lacked clarity.

At the opening, Sofía's mother stood before the closet photograph for a long time. ‘This one feels almost too private,’ she said.

‘Because it shows we perform culture sometimes?’ Sofía asked.

Her mother shook her head. ‘Because it shows that even special things spend most of their lives inside ordinary days.’

Sofía realized her mother had found a meaning she had not planned. Representation was not a final explanation delivered by the artist; it was an encounter the artist could not fully control.

After the exhibition, Sofía still adjusted her language across rooms. She no longer treated those adjustments as evidence that one version was more authentic.

The question was not which self was real. It was whether she retained enough **agency** to choose what each context asked her to reveal.

Wholeness does not require behaving the same everywhere. It requires knowing that every version still belongs to you.

Words for identity and representation

reserved	reservado/a
explicit	explícito/a
overlapping	superpuestos/as
statement	declaración
code-switching	cambio de código lingüístico
threshold	umbral
accessible	accesible
agency	capacidad de decidir
authenticity	autenticidad
wholeness	integridad / totalidad

COMPREHENSION

Analyze perspective

A. Choose the best answer

1. Why does Sofía stage the dining-table photograph? a) The curator wants visible heritage b) Her mother sells cloth c) The studio requests it
2. Why does she reject BETWEEN TWO WORLDS? a) It is too long b) It implies separate identities c) It ignores photography
3. How does Renata redefine code-switching? a) A language error b) Proof of dishonesty c) A contextual ability
4. What does Sofía pair with the table photograph? a) A bus ticket b) The folded cloth c) A gallery sign

B. Analyze

1. In what sense is Sofía's diplomatic answer both true and incomplete?
2. Explain the difference between adaptation as agency and adaptation as a demand for approval.
3. Why is the mother's interpretation of the closet photograph important?

C. Write

Write 5–7 sentences about a way you communicate differently across contexts. Explain what changes, what remains consistent, and whether the adjustment feels chosen.

ANSWER KEY

Review and reflect

A. 1. a 2. b 3. c 4. b

B. Suggested answers

1. Both cultures shape her, but the phrase avoids challenging the assumption that they are separate categories. 2. Agency means selecting how to communicate for one's own purpose; a demand for approval pressures someone to perform acceptability. 3. It shows that meaning is created between artwork and audience, and that ordinary life may preserve culture as powerfully as visible symbols.

Sample reflection

I speak more formally during work meetings and use shorter, more direct sentences. With family, I interrupt more, tell longer stories, and rely on shared references. My values and sense of humor remain consistent even when my tone changes. Usually the adjustment feels chosen because it helps each conversation. It feels restrictive only when I hide useful ideas to avoid being judged.

KEEP GOING

Debate: Who has the authority to decide whether an identity is authentic?