CHAPTER 4

The Spanish of Chicanos

This chapter will describe some of the major characteristics of the Spanish of the Southwest as well as analyze samples of Southwestern Spanish discourse in terms of stylistic shifts. Code-switching, a process in which two languages converge in the same utterance or exchange, is also a characteristic of Southwest Spanish. Because of its frequency and importance, we will devote the next chapter solely to it.

Since sociolinguists, linguists and educators continue to wonder about the linguistic status of Chicano Spanish, we will present data demonstrating that the Spanish varieties spoken in the Southwest are authentic Spanish varieties, sharing features of peninsular and Latin American Spanish. The phonological, syntactic, morphological and semantic rules that we find in Spanish varieties of the Southwest are not unique to Chicano Spanish. The phonetic and morphological variants that we will describe are found in the popular Spanish varieties of all the Spanish-speaking world. Given the social stratification in Latin America, Spain and the United States, it may also be possible to describe Spanish varieties in the rest of the Spanish-speaking world in terms of class, ideology, nativity and residence, as we will seek to do here and in the following chapter, for those factors which affect and determine type of social interaction also determine type of verbal interaction.

The fact that the rules and forms to be described in Chicano Spanish varieties are not unique to the Spanish of the Southwest will not however stop us from labeling these varieties as Chicano Spanish. Can one speak of Cuban Spanish if sibilant aspiration and loss, nasalization of vowels, lateralization of vibrants or velarization of final nasals can be found in the Spanish of other Latin American countries beyond the Caribbean area? Can one speak or write of the language of a particular area if the features of the language varieties spoken in that country are not unique to that area? It would be absurd to dismiss all the hundreds of dialectological studies of the Spanish of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico or wherever on the basis of their concentration on features of a

particular province, city or country, without specific recognition, for example, that laxing of fricatives also occurs in a neighboring nation and even in one two thousand miles away.

The other extreme would be to think that the Spanish of a particular area, for example the Southwest, is different from that of any other area. As we shall see, this is not the case, as rule differences found here are present in the Spanish of the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. In fact all variants occurring within Chicano Spanish can be explained within the rules of Spanish grammar and are not the result of English interference or convergence.

Descriptive studies of the Spanish of the Southwest, like most dialectological studies of peninsular or Latin American Spanish, have sought to account for the presence of particular variants. A compilation by Melvyn C. Resnick of studies on phonological variants in Latin American Spanish is particularly interesting in its inclusion of contradictory reports in the cases of particular phonological phenomena.[1] Thus what for one author is a rare variant, for another may be the predominant, general or "sometimes" form; there is also disagreement on whether particular forms are to be classified as "cultas" or "vulgar" or rural or urban. The problem lies partly in seeking to identify an area by one particular variant. Given the mobility of modern urbanized societies and the forced migration that results from disparities in development, it is difficult to find a homogeneous society that uses one single widespread form. The real source of the problem can be traced to earlier studies concerned with noting the appearance of particular variants rather than with their function in the discourse of particular individuals and in particular contexts. These same difficulties have arisen in studies on Chicano Spanish when attempts have been made to identify varieties by states in an attempt to ascribe a particular feature to one state. Despite some general patterns of immigration from Northeastern Mexico to Texas and from Northwestern Mexico to California, one is just as likely to find immigrants from Puebla in Texas as in California. In fact the border states often serve only as way stations for immigrants on their way to Chicago, Minneapolis or Seattle. Available statistics on the origin of migrants in border Mexican towns indicate the presence of many regional varieties of Spanish in the Spanish of the Southwest, because Chicano Spanish is first and foremost Mexican Spanish with a number of lexical borrowings from English.

As we have indicated in previous chapters, there are three principal cultural groups within the Chicano communities of the Southwest with varying patterns of socialization and consequently of language maintenance and shift. Since social interaction and verbal interaction are interconnected, the various Spanish varieties of the Southwest can be analyzed in terms of the linguistic process as well as the interactional process within which they are used. In the area of the social-interactional process we must consider the characteristics of the speakers, the context of communication and the socio-semantic objectives of the communicative act. These various categories can be further subdivided as follows:

1. Characteristics of the Participants:
   Material Culture
   a) Middle class
   b) Urban working class
   c) Rural working class
   Roles
   a) Dominant
   b) Subordinate
   c) Equals
   Generation
   a) First generation—Foreign-born
   b) Second generation—Native-born
   c) Third and subsequent generations
   Residence
   a) Urban
   b) Rural
   Age
   a) Children
   b) Adolescents and young adults
   c) Older adults
   Relation to Dominant Ideology
   a) Resistant
   b) Acceptant, proponent
   c) Habituated, passive
2. Context of Communication:
   Fields of Discourse
   a) Formal
   b) Informal
   c) Intimate
   d) Familiar
   Circles
   a) Inter-group
   b) Intra-group
   c) Intra-sub-group

The characteristics of the speakers in terms of class, generation, roles, residence and age were discussed in previous chapters. In the area of ideology we have indicated that the prevalent perspective is functionalist, that is, there is full acceptance of the existing socio-economic structure and faith in its power to resolve whatever conflicts arise. There are nonetheless resisters who, whether from a political awareness or a defense mechanism, adopt an antagonistic attitude to the dominant culture, language and sometimes to the Anglo population as well. Then there is the habituated group of individuals who, although passively accepting, are so involved in a struggle for survival that for them activities like questioning the system or defending it are irrelevant issues.

These positions assume an expression-form when shifts to Spanish signify opposition or retreat from the dominant culture and ideology.

Fields of discourse are analyzed in terms of the degree of formality. The formal style can be further subdivided into Broadcasting Style, Academic Style, Interview Style or other styles, depending on the context. The informal style is the Everyday Style in which speakers of all classes engage but not necessarily with the same varieties. This everyday style is differentiated from two other informal styles: intimate and familiar. An Intimate Style allows the speaker to engage in verbal activities that are not felt to be subject to public criticism. This Intimate Style is synonymous with Family Style. It becomes important to distinguish both Informal and Intimate from Familiar in order to account for the style used in peer situations where informality rather than intimacy reigns. In a familiar-informal situation particular roles, especially among young adults and adolescents, lead to an intra-sub-group style characterized by adherence to the sub-group's linguistic norms in order to express adhesion to the sub-group itself. Thus the interaction can also be categorized according to the composition of the participating group and the participants' affiliation: inter-group, intra-group and intra-sub-group.

Linguistically, then, we are postulating three principal Spanish varieties in the Southwest with subcodes within each code:

Chicano Spanish Varieties of the Southwest
a) standard Spanish
b) popular urban Spanish
c) popular rural Spanish

Although there is a large Latin American contingent in the Southwest, our study focuses on the Spanish varieties spoken by people of Mexican origin. Thus "standard" refers to the standard Mexican Spanish spoken by middle-class Mexican radio announcers and professionals, who have immigrated to the United States. More specifically it is the Spanish spoken by educated individuals who have received formal instruction in the Spanish language, where Spanish has been the medium of instruction. If this generalized notion of what constitutes standard Mexican Spanish is vague, it is in part the result of a lack of definitive statements on what constitutes "standard Mexican Spanish" in the various Mexican regions. Once these linguistic studies are available, we might be able to pinpoint whether the standard operating in the Southwest is the standard of Mexico City or that of Jalisco, Sonora, Coahuila or Chihuahua. In what follows we will attempt to describe general features of the two popular varieties, contrasting these with a postulated "Mexican Standard" based on the Spanish of Mexican radio announcers transmitting from Los Angeles over XPRS (Radio Exprés), XEGM (Radio 95, La Grande) and KLVE.

These three varieties differ in terms of grammatical rules, with a great deal of rule simplification occurring in the popular codes. Rule differences occur at the phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical levels. These Spanish codes and

their subcodes could be said to constitute a community continuum, ranging from a standard variety to the popular variety with the greatest number of morphosyntactic rule differences. All of these rules, as we said before, are Spanish rules and could be found in the grammars of Spanish varieties from other countries. It is possible for one speaker to have full command of the entire range of varieties contained within the continuum, but it appears that a number of external factors in fact determine one's position and range along the continuum and one's accessibility to particular varieties.

Before discussing this continuum further, we would like to note that there are norms for each Spanish code, that their use is dictated by both social and linguistic norms. Standardization codifies a particular type of norm; here the dominant group or class in society creates and dictates the official norm. Where there is no specific language academy, official norms are established and disseminated by the state apparatuses: schools, colleges and universities, government agencies, churches, intellectual centers and of course, the media (radio, TV, newspapers, journals, publications, etc.). Where the dominant class is not Spanish-speaking, Spanish norms are borrowed from some accepted model: *la Academia Española* or *la academia mexicana*. Yet, it is important to recognize that given the particular historical context of the Mexican-origin population in the United States, oftentimes Spanish-language publications and radio transmissions reflect the popular varieties of speakers and writers who have received no formal training in Spanish. Thus within formal domains, more than one norm may function. Thus what functions as a formal style may not be necessarily verbalized in the standard variety.

The presence of various norms for different segments of the population make shifting between Spanish varieties indispensable. Interaction at different levels with different Chicanos requires a repertoire that includes several codes and several styles of speaking. Much has been written about the fact that no one is monodialectal, that all have a repertoire consisting of several varieties from one or more languages. Our study of factors triggering particular shifts indicates that although it is true that each individual's repertoire contains more than one variety or mode of expression, there are particular types of shifts across code borders that do not occur in the absence of certain social conditions. In analyzing a large corpus of taped material where shifts in languages and styles accompanied by shifts in topics and speech acts occur in discourse, we have found that, except in the case of language-conscious Chicano speakers, morphosyntactic shifts generally do not occur. Phonetic shifts, on the other hand, are numerous as are lexical shifts. Thus a speaker may say "tá" for "está" or "lo'o" for "luego" as he slips into an informal style but immediately afterwards or later in the conversation as the individual becomes conscious of being taped or being interviewed he will "correct" himself and carefully pronounce each sound or syllable. On the other hand, speakers whose codes are characterized by particular morphosyntactic variants retain these throughout the taped conversation even though they may shift phonetically or lexically.

Thus a speaker who uses *-nos* (instead of *-mos*) as the person-number morpheme of verbs which are *esdrújulos* (i.e., words with antepenultimate stress) generally retains this form throughout the verbal interaction. Those speakers saying *comíanos* also consistently say *salíanos, fuéranos, comiéranos* and *íbanos*. It is of course possible for an *íbanos* user to shift to *íbamos* after undergoing language training. Given the limited number of years of Spanish instruction in transitional bilingual programs today, it is questionable whether formal language instruction will now lead to the rejection of *íbanos* among a large segment of the population using it. Unfortunately emphasis is often placed on producing a permanent shift rather than on expanding the students' repertoire. A student, made to feel inadequate for using a particular variant, may adopt the school's norm as the one and only correct form and reject not only the *-nos* morpheme but the cultural context within which it is used as well. In what follows we will specify in more detail the morphosyntactic, phonetic and lexical variants which characterize popular Spanish varieties of the Southwest.

RURAL VARIETIES

In view of continuous and widespread immigration from Mexico, popular varieties in the Southwest could be subdivided into as many types as there are regional urban and rural dialects in Mexico. As we said previously, these Chicano varieties share many of the characteristics of similar varieties in Mexico and the rest of Latin America, with one exception: the degree to which these popular codes have incorporated loanwords from the English language.

Rural varieties of Spanish are to be found in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, California, Oregon, Washington and sometimes the Midwest, where rural workers have migrated, often after stopping briefly, or for a generation or two, in Texas and New Mexico. It is important to recall that today about 80% of Chicanos reside in urban areas but that only California is heavily industrialized; there are thus many urban centers with a semi-rural flavor dependent on an agricultural economy throughout the Southwest. Only Dallas and Houston in Texas share metropolitan characteristics with Los Angeles.

Up till now far too many studies of Chicano Spanish have summarized linguistic features within isolated sentences or examples. It is important that we analyze these popular varieties within a discourse context. In the pages that follow, phonological, morphological and lexical characteristics of rural varieties will be analyzed within the context of particular exchanges, beginning with a conversation recorded by Yolanda Roblez in Austin, Texas, in an interview with a University of Texas student who was a former migrant worker (Episode A).

Interview of G. V. from Dallas, Texas by Yolanda Roblez. Episode A.
YR: — ¿Dónde vives?
GV: — Dallas, Texas.
YR: — De . . . ¿cómo creciste?

GV: — Yo ha tenido ganas de platicarle algo . . . a alguien de esto porque . . . en las clases que tengo todo el tiempo dicen que, migrant workers . . .
YR: — ¿Quién, los estudiantes? ¿los estudiantes o los . . . ?
GV: — No, toda la gente piensa eso, el maestro, los estudiantes, los libros, todo el tiempo dicen que los migrant workers y que, 'tán muy este oppressed y todo eso . . .
YR: — Que viven una vida bien difícil . . .
GV: — Ajá, bueno y, y la vida que yo conocí . . . la que . . . lo que yo sé de esa vida, no es así . . . este, cuando estábanos chicas, íbanos con, con mi papá, bueno íbanos, el era troquero y nos llevaba a las piscas de algodón y íbanos primero pa ' Sinton, es un pueblo que está cerquita de Corpos y . . .
YR: — ¿De dónde, de acuál pueblo se iban?
GV: — De Devine, porque entonces vivíanos en Devine, vivíanos en Devine. Ibanos a las piscas . . . y cuando . . .
YR: — ¿Toda la familia?
GV: — Toda la familia. Y este . . . vivíanos en unas casitas viejas pero no . . . estaba . . . como dice en los libros, que parecían gallineros y todo eso, pero este . . . no estaban muy buenas pero comoquiera estaban limpias y to'os los mejicanos que las tenían limpias y to'os, to'os los sábados íbanos a . . . al pueblo y teníanos y nos . . . y íbanos a las vistas y comprá'anos to'o el tiempo comprá'anos ropa y comprá'anos zapatos y íbanos a comer y el domingo íbanos a Corpos a la laguna. Bueno, pero . . . del trabajo . . . yo, yo vendía sodas. Y yo tenía mucho fun haciendo eso porque, porque este . . . podía hablar con todos los guys que andaban . . .
YR: — Heh, heh, heh, ¿Qué tantos años tenías?
GV: — que 'taban, que andaban en la pisca . . .
YR: — ¿Qué tantos años tenías?
GV: — Cuando comencé, bueno primero . . . ¿cuándo comencé? Yo creo que no tenía diez, yo creo, once, once, yo creo tenía once cuando comencé a vender sodas. Pero hacía, hacía mejor dinero que los que andaban piscando y de . . . me podía, me podía sentar en la sombrita, cuando no estaba trabajando, me podía sentar en la sombrita y de veras, este . . .
YR: — ¿ Cómo le hacían . . . ?
GV: — eran, la gente era muy alegre, no andaban que, que, que no les gustaba el trabajo y que nada. Quién sabe no les gustaría pero and . . . eran muy alegres.
YR: — Quizás porque no conocían otra vida, porque así, así se impusieron desde chiquitos, y ellos, y la gente grande también, así le hacía. ¿Cómo le hacían pa' pa' tener las sodas frías, las tenían en algo . . . caja o qué?
GV: — Era una hielera de esas grandes, como las que tienen en la tienda. Nomás que no era eléctrica. Le teníanos que echar hielo y . . . teníanos que ir a comprar el hielo y echarle . . . libras de hielo y . . . y . . . con eso, con eso teníanos pa to'o el día.
YR: — ¿Y se llenaba la, la refrigeradora de, de sodas?

GV: — De sodas y después le tenían, cuando se acababan esas, tenía que echarle más y . . .

YR: — ¿Compraban bastante, entonces?

GV: — Sí, mi, mi apá las iba a comprar a una . . . a una fábrica de sodas que había en el pueblito, él y él y las iba a comprar y necitábanos, este . . . entonces las usábanos.

YR: — Y ¿cómo le hacían pa, como le hacías tú para, pa, de feria? ¿Qué hacías? ¿Tenías allí la feria contigo en cajón o cómo?

GV: — Bueno, casi, unos me daban, eh, las vendía a daime las sodas y, y casi to'os, los que traiban, me daban un daime, casi todo el tiempo tenían un daime que me daban pero muncha gente este . . . nomás era más fácil que . . . yo tenía una, un . . . un cuaderno y . . . las, las apuntaba, las apuntaba por nombre cada quien que venía, las apuntaba, y después el sábado cuando . . . o el viernes en la tarde, cuando este . . . mi papá les pagaba, lo que 'bían ganáo esa semana, entonces allí 'staba yo tamién esperándolos pa que me, pa que me pagaran las sodas y así no tenía nada de dificultad en que me pagaran las sodas, de andar coletando pa que me pagaran.

YR: — Allí 'taba tu papá lo'o luego.

GV: — Allí 'taba mi papá y él les pagaba y lo'o ellos me tenían que pagar a mí. Y este . . . en veces este . . . en sábado, no, en viernes, nos, nos íbanos pa la casa a mediodía o después . . . en o temprano, cuando ya la gente ganaba lo que querían ganar y si ya habían trabajado bastante esta semana se iban temprano y era lo que, una de las cosas que a mí me gustaba . . . de irnos pa la casa temprano para comenzarnos a, a arreglar pa salir. Y tamién me gustaban los días que llovía porque esos días tamién este . . . no teníanos que ir a trabajar y me la pasaba, me la pasaba'llí por las casas platicando con toda la gente pero más, más los muchachos, especialmente los muchachos.

ANALYSIS OF EPISODE A

Possibly the most outstanding variant in the rural varieties of West Texas and New Mexico is the use of the first-person plural morpheme *-nos* for *-mos* found also in the rural varieties of Mexico and among rural migrants from Texas and New Mexico in the other Southwestern states. As is evident in the episode recorded by Yolanda Roblez, the *-nos* morpheme is constant in all first-person plural verb forms in the imperfect tense:

teníanos	estábanos	necesitábanos
usábanos	vivíanos	comprábanos

Other recordings and personal observations indicate that this phenomenon occurs in other tenses as well, as follows:

Imperfect tense:	vivíanos	estábanos
Conditional tense:	comeríanos	estaríanos
Imperfect subjunctive:	estuviéranos	hubiéranos

All of these forms share one feature: they are all *esdrújulas,* that is, the stress falls on the antepenult syllable. All of these forms are normally stressed in the antepenult syllable in Standard Spanish. There is one more form which through rule simplification regularizes the verb stems and produces verb forms with proparoxytonic stress. Consider the following examples taken from Standard Spanish:

Present subjunctive:	pueda	podamos
	puedas	
	pueda	puedan

Verbs in Spanish with an underlying *O* vowel diphthongize when stressed:

$$O \rightarrow we \; / \; \underline{\qquad}_{+\text{ stress}}.$$

For this reason the *standard* first-person plural form which takes the stress in the penult syllable does not diphthongize. In *popular* varieties of Spanish in both Latin American and peninsular Spanish, the first-person plural forms are regularized to conform to the rest of the paradigm as follows:

pueda	escriba	venga
puedas	escribas	vengas
pueda	escriba	venga
puédamos	escríbamos	véngamos
puedan	escriban	vengan

In the Southwest these newly regularized verb forms fall into the pattern of forms with the stress in the antepenult syllable. Consequently we have the following first-person plural forms:

Present subjunctive:	vénganos .
	vuélvanos
	piénsenos

The reason for this morphological change is probably found in the stress rule, for none of the other popular verbal tenses have shifts of *-mos* to *-nos.* This particular proparoxytonic stress is peculiar to verbals with enclitic pronouns as in:

viéndonos	Vénganos tu reino (from "The Lord's Prayer")
hablándole	Tráiganos una

It is probably the case, then, that this shift is purely phonetic and involves a rule at the lower levels which changes a *-mos* to *-nos* when it appears in a verb form with the stress on the antepenult syllable.

The Roblez interview also contains a number of other changes typical of popular Spanish varieties and of intimate, familiar and informal styles throughout the Spanish-speaking world, such as the following:

a) loss of voiced fricatives in intervocalic position after stressed vowel:
ganado → ganáo
comprábamos → comprá'anos
luego → lo'o
todo → to'o

b) loss of initial syllable or vowel = apheresis:
estaba → 'taba
había → 'bía

c) simplification of consonant clusters:
también → tamién
colectando → coletando

d) loss of final syllable or sound = apocope; syncope = loss of middle sounds:
para → pa necesitábamos → necitábanos

e) change of verb stem:
verb: venir standard: venía vino
popular: viníа vino

f) change of conjugation pattern:
traer conjugated like -ar verb: traiba
standard: traía

g) old case of epenthesis:
mucho → muncho

h) epenthesis: insertion of palatal glide between two vowels:
me cayí for me caí

i) prothesis: addition of preposition *a* to interrogative pronoun:
¿de acuál pueblo se iban? for ¿de qué pueblo se iban?
or ¿de cuál pueblo se iban?

Another example of paradigm regularization appears in the informant's rule simplification of the verb *haber.* Where the standard conjugation has an *e-a* distinction, the popular variety has regularized the stem as follows:

Standard:	he	hemos	Popular:	ha	hamos
	has			has	
	ha	han		ha	han

A popular variant that appears in many of these varieties is the contraction of *alguna otra* to produce *algotra* (algún otro = algotro). Another frequent rural form is *en veces* rather than *a veces.* Some of the rural markers are lexical and semantic. Thus, for example, "ir al pueblo" is a frequent phrase in small towns or rural areas where Saturday's shopping means going into town; the phrase has been retained in urban life to mean "to go downtown" or "to go shopping." Another frequent term in Texas is the use of the term *huerco* or *huerquito* or *huerquillo* to refer to a child when one is annoyed. Episode A contains a few loanwords which we will discuss separately in another section.

This episode illustrates the maintenance of Spanish as a code for communication among young (university undergraduate) Chicanos in Texas. The text at the same time reveals the interviewee's status as the *troquero*'s (truckdriver-contractor) daughter, whose housing was better than that of the workers and who profited from sales of soft drinks to the migrant workers. The interviewee cannot understand how Chicano Studies classes (Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas–Austin) can speak of the oppression of migrant workers; for her it was an idyllic time; the housing was poor but clean; they worked hard during the week but had a good time on the weekends; there was a sense of community with several families residing in the same migrant quarters where the children could gather around a tree for storytelling and the death of a baby was a communal tragedy. Yet her higher status allowed her to go to school when the other children didn't go and to pay for her lunch at school when the other children received free lunches. For her it really was a pleasant experience, but she is aware that there is something wrong with that interpretation. Yet she is able to laugh off her discomfort by recalling falling off her father's truck as he moved the vehicle around the ranch. It is the fall that made her forget the bad part, she says.

Thus her rural experiences as a migrant worker indicate lifelong contact with the Mexican-origin community in a context of relative isolation, although she was one of the few partly integrated into larger society through the school system, as a consequence of her relatively better economic situation.

The conversation is narrated primarily in an informal style, but there are cases when her friendship with the interviewer leads her into an intimate style, with increased use of an intimate pronunciation or vocabulary as in the following examples:

Informal:	ibanos con mi *papá*
Intimate:	mi *apá* las iba a comprar
Intimate:	me cayí de la troca de mi *daddy*

Clearly these texts are proof that rural Spanish is alive and well in some parts of Texas.

The next episode recorded by UCSD student Wendy Borst presents a New Mexican woman, the descendant of immigrants, who resides now in California. The first part of the text is presented to give the woman's background. She grew up in a Spanish-speaking home and began her process of acculturation in the school system, as related in the anecdote recalling the Anglicization of family names. This New Mexican woman no longer functions within a Spanish-speaking context and feels uncomfortable with her Spanish. The interview was conducted in English except for the translation of several phrases which are partly reproduced here as samples of rural Spanish. This type of elicitation can only be valuable if one is able to recognize the sentences as authentic; otherwise the researcher would not know whether the translations reflected a widespread use. Since these sentences reflect a rural variety spread throughout West Texas

and New Mexico and are part of our own community's repertoire, we have included a segment of this interview here (Episode B).

Recording of a New Mexican Chicana by Wendy Borst. Episode B

WB: — Your brothers' and sister's names, tell me what they were when they were born.

NMC: — My oldest brother's name was Casimiro but they called him Cas . . . another brother was named Onofre, but they called him Joe; uh another brother's name was, uh what was Dale's name? Delaidio, Delaidio.

WB: — Delaidio?

NMC: — And they called him Dale; uh, the sister's name was uh Dulcinea and they called her Daisy, uhm,

WB: — And your name?

NMC: — My name is María Inés; all my school records are Mary Agnes.

WB: — And probably all your brothers' and sister's school records were changed.

NMC: — Uh huh.

. . . . . .

WB: — . . . but, why don't, tell me why you don't speak Spanish.

NMC: — Because I'm not comfortable with the language.

WB: — Just because you haven't spoken it in so long?

NMC: — No, uh, for instance if I listen to uh the news I could pick up a lot of what's being said, but then there's a lot of, a lot of the words that are foreign to me.

WB: — . . . When you were little and first went to school, how was your English?

NMC: — . . . I believe that my English was quite poor.

WB: — Really?

NMC: — I really do, because we, you know, we spoke Spanish at home.

(Interviewer requests translations of vocabulary and sentences.)

. . . . . .

WB: — Did you go to church already?

NMC: — ¿Juites a la iglesia?

WB: — Where did you put the light bulb?

NMC: — ¿Onde pusites la luz?

WB: — My teacher taught us in English.

NMC: — Mi maestra los enseñó en inglés.

WB: — What did you buy?

NMC: — ¿Qué mercates?

WB: — What did you do in school today?

NMC: — ¿Qué hicites en la escuela?

WB: — We had a good time.

NMC: — Tuvimos un buen tiempo.

WB: — He brought the books.

NMC: — Trujo los libros.
WB: — I saw the boy.
NMC: — Yo vide el muchacho.

Since these sentences were asked out of context, we cannot comment on the style or function of particular usage. The first sentence, however, besides reflecting aspiration of the labiodental fricative *f,* a common phenomenon throughout Latin America, also reveals a common rural variant for the II person-number morpheme in the preterit tense. Consider the person-number morphemes in the Spanish of Latin America and Mexico:

	Singular	Plural
I	-	-mos
II	-s	
III	-	-n

As we can see, Standard Spanish has an *-s* person-number morpheme. It occurs in all verb tenses except the preterit. Thus we have:

Present tense:	com - e -s
Imperfect tense:	com - i - a - s

but:

Preterit tense:	com - i - ste

Extension of the person-number morphological rule explains the following preterit forms common in the Southwest:

Rural:	com - i · tes
Urban:	com - i · stes

Here the *-s* morpheme rule has been extended to apply in the case of all tenses without exception. The loss of internal *-s-* could be a case of aspiration followed by loss. More likely it is a rejection of the consonant cluster in initial morpheme position, with metathesis (-ste → tes).

We thus have the following forms in the Borst interview:

Rural:	juites	pusites	mercates	hicites
Standard:	fuiste	pusiste	mercaste	hiciste

The text also includes two archaic forms prevalent in the rural Spanish of West Texas and isolated rural areas of Latin America: *vide* and *truje.* It would be important to recall that *truje* was once part of the *español culto* spoken by members of the king's court as indicated by Juan de Valdés in *Diálogo de la lengua* (1536).[2] In addition to a loan translation (tener un buen tiempo) and some laxing of initial voiced stops to the point of total loss (donde = onde), we also have a case of nasal lateralization, frequent in rural Spanish:

Rural:	Mi maestra *los* enseñó en inglés.
Standard:	Mi maestra *nos* enseñó en inglés.

As we have mentioned previously, first- and second-generation Chicanos are more likely to be bilingual, with Spanish functioning as the language of the home, while third-generation Chicanos often have adopted English as their usual language. The degree of social and language contact, however, is stronger than the generational factor as is evident in the next episodes recorded by Robyn Richter in Stockdale, near San Antonio, Texas. Here we find a 63-year-old third-generation Chicano who grew up in South Texas and had limited contact with the English-speaking community. He had only six years of segregated schooling, five months out of the year. Despite little instruction in English, he was able to develop his proficiency in English as contact increased in work situations:

RR: — ¿Dónde aprendió su inglés? Porque habla muy bien.
JF: — Pues mayor, la mayoría lírico. Lírico es, por ejemplo, aquí en el trabajo, porque yo la id . . . no estudié mucho la gramática en inglés, nomás yo, llegué nomás al seis, en esos tiempos las, las escuelas 'taban muy lejos, no daban más que cinco meses de escuela, 'taba muy lejos la escuela.

This Spanish-dominant Chicano however has grandchildren who no longer use the language. Only the grandchildren who are in daily contact with the grandparents, while their mother works, speak some Spanish, but as he observes their Spanish is jumbled:

JL: — los niños los cuida mi esposa; esos sí le entienden . . . ésos sí hablan, revuelto, pero les entiende ella [ea]. Porque hablan al revés, la idioma, como decir, "ya vine" dicen "ya vino *me*," que ya volvió a la casa, pero comoquiera se le entiende; necita uno mucho trabajo pa hacerlos que entiendan derecho, parejo, la idioma español; la inglés sí la hablan bien pero como comienzan aquí a la edad de cuatro años en el Head Start, well, kindergarten, de mo'o que ya pa cuando entran a la escuela ya saben hablar bien inglés y lo hablan en la casa pero hablan al revés el español, lo hablan al revés. Se entiende uno, pero no pueden ellos desarrollar una conversación.

Urbanization, education and occupational shifts affecting both men and women have placed the fourth and fifth generations in positions where English is the usual medium of communication. In this case, the impact of Spanish-speaking grandparents will no doubt enable some of his grandchildren to have a limited proficiency in Spanish but their usual and dominant language will be and is already English.

This older Chicano also speaks a variety of rural Spanish, as is evident in the previous and the following text:

JL: — Y una gente que aprende la idioma inglés asina, nunca va a hablar bien porque le faltan muchas palabras . . . . Los que hablamos aprendemos lírico. Hay mucha gente que nos habla asina para que entiéndamos, bueno, y asina va aprendiendo uno la idioma inglés. Lo mismo que el que va estudiar español

y el que le está hablando, le está hablando mocho pa que le entienda y lo'o así va a hablar él porque así lo aprendió.

. . . . . .

Nosotros dicemos "pa" y la palabra es "para" p-a-r-a "para" y nosotros la mochamos a "pa" [. . .] . . . . Por eso el que estudia, bueno, habla correcto y el que pesca de aquí y de allá pos no, porque, no están las palabras completas. Lo mismo que una cosa le nombran de dos, tres maneras. Por ejemplo, unos dicen miel de colmena. Unos le nombran de un modo y otros de otra manera. Y el propio nombre es miel de colmena. Otros dicen miel de abeja y hay diferencia entre la abeja y la colmena; son diferentes los animales. La colmena es la que nombramos que fabrica la miel aquí y como en el valle donde está la abeja y hace los panales así lo mismo que l'avispa, los yellow jackets, son más chiquitas y prietas y hacen miel igual a esa pero no tienen cajón.

Some variants found in rural Spanish are, of course, typical of informal varieties or styles of Spanish, like for example the reduction of *para* to *pa*, the reduction of the diphthong *ue* to *o* in *pos* and various cases of apheresis, syncope and laxing of voiced fricatives to produce glides or loss of glide, as in *ella*: [eya] → [ea]. His Spanish, however, includes some rural markers like the use of the archaic *asina*. His Spanish also has the stress-shift rule in the present subjunctive tense that produces proparoxytonic forms, but here the *-mos* morpheme has been retained: *entiéndamos*. Another case of regularization is evident in the gender assigned to nouns ending in *-a*; these are automatically marked as feminine: *la idioma*. The last text presented also includes a common rural variant of present tense *-ir* verbs: "nosotros dicemos." To understand this phenomenon we have to look at what happens to *-er* verbs in the present and preterit tenses:

verb:	comer	*Present tense*	*Preterit tense*
		como	comí
		comes	comiste
		come	comió
		comemos	comimos
		comen	comieron

In the case of *-er* verbs we see that the thematic vowel *-e* shifts to *-i* in the preterit tense. The *-ir* conjugations however maintain the *-i* vowel in the present tense:

verb:	vivir	*Present tense*	*Preterit tense*
		vivo	viví
		vives	viviste
		vive	vivió
		vivimos	vivimos
		viven	vivieron

As we can see, the conjugations of both *-er* and *-ir* verbs are identical in the present tense except for the first-person plural form. In the popular rural varieties, however, the *-ir* verbs follow the *-er* patterns without exceptions to produce the following forms. Note that verbs with mid vowels in the stem (*-e-* and *-o-*) dissimilate to the mid vowels that follow in the next syllable:

Present tense:	*Standard*	*Popular*
	vivimos	vivemos
	decimos	dicemos
	sufrimos	sufremos
	sentimos	sintemos
	salimos	salemos
	morimos	muremos
	dormimos	durmemos

These shifts thus regularize the *-e* vowel for all present tense *-er* or *-ir* verbs:

Popular present tense	*Preterit*
salgo	salí
sales	saliste, salistes, salites
sale	salió
salemos	salimos
salen	salieron

The last episode from Stockdale also gives evidence of shifts occurring at the semantic level. Thus for our senior Chicano, *colmena* denotes a type of "bee," the type that is artificially set up in a man-made beehive, rather than the hive itself as in other Spanish varieties. We then have the following denotations:

colmena — d. "hive"
colmena — d. "bee" (circ.) Mexican varieties in Texas

(d = denotation) (circ. = circumstance)

In some parts of Texas (West Texas, for example), the only word for "bee" is *abeja*. For the Stockdale Chicano, *abeja* refers to a smaller, darker bee that makes its own honeycomb, its *panal*, a term common throughout the state. Where denotational shifts occur, meanings assigned to lexemes previously are subsequently denoted by other signs. We can represent these semantic differences in terms of sign-vehicles (s.v.) assigned to different denotations or connotations:

	d. "hive"	s.v.	*colmena*
	d. "honeycomb"	s.v.	*panal*
circ. Tex.	d. "bee"	s.v.	*abeja* (context: *panal*)
		s.v.	*colmena* (context: *box-cajón*)

Regional variants exist for numerous lexical items. Selecting the appropriate term becomes a problem in the preparation of bilingual materials for educational programs, for common items like "kite" can have several sign-vehicles:

d. "kite"
- s.v. *güila*, circ. Texas, Mexico
- s.v. *papalote*, circ. New Mexico, Mexico, California
- s.v. *cometa*, California, Latin America, Mexico
- s.v. *kite*, Southwest

All of the terms may exist in one region but with different denotations. A term like *papalote* for example, is very common in Texas, but generally with the denotation "windmill" and "pinwheel." Some vocabulary in the Southwest is typically rural in origin, but immigration, industrialization and urbanization have also changed the denotation as in the following examples:

arrear
- d. "round up livestock," "ride herd," circ. ranch
- d. "to drive a car," circ. Southwest

manear
- d. "to hopple," "stop an animal," circ. ranch
- d. "to apply the brakes," circ. automobile

apear
- d. "to dismount," circ. a horse
- d. "to get off," circ. any motorized vehicle

Thus the rural origin of many of the Mexican immigrants who have come to this country, especially during the first half of this century, is marked clearly in the Spanish of a large number of Chicanos, whether it be in the vocabulary, the archaic terms which have disappeared in urban, metropolitan Spanish, the regularized verbal forms, the cases of epenthesis and metathesis (pared → pader), and the aspiration of labiodental fricatives. Rural varieties are undoubtedly the base of the Spanish spoken in the Southwest.