Spanish-Language Radio Routine

- Where are you calling from?
  - Chicago.
- Where are you from in Mexico?
  - Michoacán.
- Bueno! Y en Chicago, Michoacán, qual manda? (OK! And in Chicago, Michoacán, what (station) rules?)
- La Ley manda! (The Law rules!)
Transnational Community

- Frequent communication (telephone, travel)
- Urban planning projects for rancho
- Homes in both places
- Rancho full of Chicago items, English print
- Mexican neighborhoods in Chicago very ranchero (Western Mexico), Spanish
The Mexican Setting

- northwestern Michoacán
- Township (municipio) of Tingüindín 10,000
- Town of Tingüindín 5,000
- Rancho 400
- Indian and non-Indian (ranchero) communities throughout area
- Identities distinct
Micro-Region

• Sierra: Tarascan villages
• West of Sierra, Spanish settlement: cattle ranches, hacienda
• 1800: Island of Spaniards and mulattoes surrounded by Tarascans
• Today, Indian and ranchero villages distinct
Rancho

• Nestled in small hilly plain on edge of mountains at 1700 meters
• Traditional economy: subsistence farming & cattle raising
• Rancho transformed with Chicago $$
• Current economy: commercial agriculture (Avocados)
• Nine packing plants established in 1990s
Chicago Setting

- Mexican experience in Midwest distinct
  - Followed European immigrants
  - No history of conquest & subordination
  - Urban settlement like European immigrants
  - White diversity
  - Large presence of African-Americans
Mexican Migration to Chicago

- Recruited for railroads, meat-packing and steel industries
- Three original neighborhoods close to work
- Neighbors European immigrants
  - Catholic
  - Inter-marriages
  - Labor unions
History of Migration

• 1916-1929
• Repatriation in 1930s
• Post World War II, Braceros
• 1960 – 2000, massive numbers
• Puerto Ricans since 1950s
• Cubans, other Latin Americans
• Identities distinct
Chicago Neighborhoods

- Pilsen / Little Village corridor (#31, 30)
- South side Community Areas (#58, 61, 63, 65, 66, 52)
- North side Community Areas (with other Spanish-speaking populations: #19-24,1)
- Follow Eastern Europeans (jobs, housing)
- Do not move into African American areas
Description of Study

• Man as *bracero* to Chicago 1964
• Since 1965 undocumented
• Study began 1989, help with documentation
• Dense & multiplex social network
• Long-term, intense participant-observation
• Audiotaping
• Collaborative work, personally rewarding
Ways of Speaking and *Ranchero/a* Identity

• *franqueza* (frank, candid, and direct speech) as Primary Framework
• *respeto* (respectful speech based on gender and age hierarchies)
• *echando relajo* (joking around)
• *Respeto / Relajo* opposition
• Gender tensions
**Respeto**

- Moral ideology of social relations
- Attitudes toward individuals / family roles
- Ensures *dignidad* (dignity) of both speaker and hearer
- Honor / shame of Mediterranean
- Egalitarian rural “plebians” only honor-virtue, not honor-status: *vergüenza*
- *Sin vergüenza!*
Language and *Respeto*

- Avoid taboo language (*maldicitíones*)
- Public face very important
- *Tú/usted*: informal-intimate/formal-distant you
- Reciprocal / Non-reciprocal *tú/usted*
- Choice communicates attitude (relative status)
Traditional norms

• Wives and husbands use usted in public
• Reciprocal tú between women
• Between men, reciprocal tú or usted, depending on formality
• No cross-gender use of tú (unless men talking down to women)
Relajo

- Diversion and fun, teasing, *not* serious
- Poetics and politics
- Performances of verbal art
- Critiques / inverts social order of *respeto*
- Rarely goes awry (1 instance, 130 tapes)
Talk about Talk

• Previous *relajo* in *rancho* quoted in Chgo.
• Embedded speech events
• Constructed dialogue enlivens stories
• Framing devices (*not* serious talk)
• Uses *ranchero* dialect features: *caiva, naiden, muncho*
• Performer uses two gendered voices
Female Voice

• Ay, güerita de mi alma, aún que sea una cama, aún que- (Oh, Güerita my dear, at least a bed, at least-) parody dominant femininity (lines 29-30)
• Quoted speech anchored in event in Mexico
• Implicitly critiques unstated assumption: women should be deferential / submissive to men
• High pitch, diminutive –ita suffix, phrase of adornment de mi alma
• Alternates with ordinary direct speech anchored in here-and-now (lines 30-31)
Male Voice

- Blunt, direct statements, no verbal frills
- Self-assertive, willing to defend her land
- Male-inflected *franqueza*
- Indexical references to masculinity: swearing, owning land, shooting gun
- Lines 41-47, climax of story
Gender

- Language "unmarked" for men, but "marked" for women
- Indirectly indexes gender
- Turns established gender order upside down
- Retired to *rancho*, did buy land
Conclusion

• Importance of linguistic form in discourse analysis
• Most literary and sociological studies of identity treat only explicit semantic content
• Meta-pragmatic language (talk about talk) full of implicit meaning signaled by linguistic devices (intonation, pronoun choices, diminutive suffixes, reported speech)
• such meanings linked to larger cultural context via ethnography