Chicano English
Questions

• What is the meaning of 'Chicano'?

• Do you know any features of Chicano English?

• Is there a difference between Mexican-American English and Chicano English?
Breaking the Myths

• Chicano English is not an "interlanguage" or "Learner English."

• Not all Chicano speakers are Spanish-English bilingual.

• Chicano speakers are native English speakers

• Chicano English is not Spanglish
Salient Linguistic Characteristics:

- Alternation of /ch/ and /sh/

*Can you chow me the sheck?*

*vs*

*Can you show me check?*

- How do you pronounce Chicago?
Reduction of consonant clusters in word-final position (Not pronouncing consonants at the end of words)

- Common with the /d/ and /t/ sounds

E.g. "har" for "hard"
E.g. "Is" for "It's"

"Is not too har" vs "It's not too hard"

- This also has a syntactic influence on past-tense markers

She wan me to wor for her yesterday.
vs
She wanted me to work for her yesterday.
Changing of the /th/ sound for the /d/ or /t/ sound

"dey" instead of __________

"der" instead of __________

"Ting" instead of __________

Do you know any other language varieties that share this characteristic?
Double Negation

*I don't know nothing.*

*vs*

*I don't know anything.*

*He don't have no shoes.*

*vs*

*He doesn't have any shoes.*
Codeswitching and the use of Spanish phrases/vocabulary

"Don't be so tapado, ese... this vato is cool"
-Oscar Zeta Acosta, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973)

"So, I took the car into the dealer and he said, 'Yeah, the repairs gonna run you about $250.' Two-fifty? Estas loco?"
"So, I took the car into the dealer and he said, 'Yeah, the repairs gonna run you about $250.' Two-fifty? Estas loco? Hell, just give me a pair of pliers and some tin foil. I'll fix it - I'm a Chicano mechanic. Two-fifty, mis nalgas."

-Cheech Marin imitating his Uncle Rudy
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What makes Chicano English a marginalized language?

Historical Influences
Chicano Movement

1884
- The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
  - Mexico was forced to give up territory that is now known as the Southwestern United States
  - English and Spanish contact helped form Chicano English
  - The Mexican-American Identity took shape

1966
- Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales
  - His poem, "I am Joaquin," defined what it means to be Chicano
  - His activism united Chicanos

1967
- César Chávez leads farm workers in protests
  - Nonviolent demonstrations for better pay and working conditions
  - The workers boycotted produce from farms owners who did not change their ways
  - The farm workers formed a union and many received better pay

1968
- Los Angeles high school "blow-outs"
  - High school students and members of the Chicano community protested unequal school conditions, dropout rates and the lack of Mexican-American teachers
  - Robert F. Kennedy met with student leaders and offered his support

1966
- Reies Lopez Tijerina and The Land Grant Movement

2016
- How has the status of Chicano English changed?
  - Mexican-American representation in politics
  - Chicano English is studied in PhD programs and recognized as a dialect by linguists
  - The population of Chicano English speakers has increased
  - However, Chicano English remains marginalized in politics and education.
The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

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However, Chicano English remains marginalized in politics and education.
Media portrayal has contributed to the stigmatization of Chicano English

"...they [the major networks] rarely reported on the Mexican American civil rights movement..., and when they did cover events, it was often through a very narrow filter in which Chicanos and Chicanas were framed as threats to the integrity of the nation" (Ontiveros, 2010, para. 2).

Hollywood portrayal of Chicanos has also been historically negative...
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Hollywood portrayal of Chicanos has also been historically negative

"...the underlying social issues affecting Latino life in the United States have seldom been addressed in Hollywood films, and hardly ever have Latinos been portrayed as people in control of their lives, capable of standing up for their rights, or having an interest in their own future" (Salvador-Treviño, 1985, para. 8).

How is Chicano English portrayed in the media and film today?
Further marginalization of Chicano English in education

- Teachers still often hold "traditionally negative attitudes" towards Chicano English, despite having taken linguistic courses that give instruction about the linguistic equality of Chicano English (Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia, 1985, p. 72).

- Perhaps some teachers consider Chicano English features "incorrect" compared to academic English.
Advocacy through education, art and popular culture

Los Angeles Unified School District Teacher's Guide

Celebration and study of Chicano art and literature
References


