Dialect contact has been explained from two different, yet related, approaches. One side has stressed the effect of the contact on the systemic configuration, often focusing on the changes that characteristic features and patterns undergo due to the pressures of contact; the other side has paid more attention to the affective repercussions that emerge under contact. In terms of the latter, work carried out in different contact environments confirms the reinforcement of attitudes that uphold speaker values and beliefs about dialects and the speakers associated to these.

In this presentation, evaluations about language are discussed by looking closely at the testimonials of Salvadorans in Houston, Texas who openly or tactfully hint that fellow Mexicans tend to judge their speech. These speakers agree that Mexicans systematically target dialect features, such as the lexicon or phonological differences present in the Salvadoran variety. For Salvadorans, the linguistic awareness that is brought about by contact has important psychological repercussions, because their linguistic output plays an important role in asserting or rejecting group identity and association.

Biography

José Esteban Hernández is Associate Professor of Hispanic Linguistics in the Languages and Literature Departments of the University of Texas-Pan American. He received his M.A. from the University of Houston and his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico. His research interests include sociolinguistic variation, dialect and language contact, and discourse analysis and discourse markers. Most recently, he has focused on the construction of identity in contact situations. He has authored and co-authored in venues such as Journal of Sociolinguistics, Studies in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics, Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana, Revista de Filología y Lingüística, and Southwest Journal of Linguistics. He has taught courses on the dynamics of language variation and change, and the sociolinguistics of U.S Latino communities.