

Institute for
the Humanities
2013-2014
Fellows Public
Lecture

April 8, 2014
3 PM

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'Do You Bleed *Salsa* or *Sofrito*?': Inter-Latino Language and Identity among 'MexiRicans'

Emerging configurations of *latinidad* are being transformed by inter-Latino contact in urban areas around the United States, including two generations of individuals in Chicago who self-identify as "MexiRican". Despite their staunch insistence that they are both Mexican and Puerto Rican, the authenticity of this claim is frequently challenged by monoethnic family, friends, and strangers. Through an analysis of their narratives, I examine MexiRicans' fluid and situational identity performances and the tangible cultural resources mobilized therein, with the Spanish language constituting a particularly important site of ethnic identity enactment. The spoken Spanish features and the daily lived experiences of these inter-Latino subjects force an interrogation of assumptions of monolithic Latino identity while contributing to broader conversations about hybridized cultural and ethnolinguistic identity.

Kim Potowski is associate professor of Spanish linguistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research examines Spanish in the United States, including patterns of use and loss, language and dialect mixtures, and connections between language and identity among immigrants and their descendants. She is particularly interested in the role of language within bilingual immersion schools, the teaching of heritage speakers, and the challenges faced by U.S.-raised Mexican youth when incorporating into Mexican schools. Her forthcoming books include *Spanish in Chicago* (Oxford, with Lourdes Torres) and *Inter-Latino Language and Identity: MexiRicans* (John Benjamins). Past publications include *Language and identity in a dual immersion school* (Multilingual Matters, 2007) the edited volumes *Language diversity in the USA* and *Bilingual youth: Spanish in English-speaking societies*, as well as several textbooks for Spanish students and for heritage language teachers. She is executive editor of the journal *Spanish in Context* and co-directs the Language in Context Research Group at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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