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Power and Solidarity across the Miami/Havana Divide: Patterns of Pronominal Address in Cuban Spanish

The study presented in this talk explores concepts of power and solidarity as manifested in patterns of pronominal address (*tú* versus *usted*) among successive groups of Cuban immigrants in Miami, from the 1960s early exiles to the more recent arrivals of the 2000s. Following Brown and Gilman's (1960) classic proposal, the study highlights the expansion of *tuteo* on both sides of the Florida Straits, as well as other sociolinguistic and discourse variables in Cuban Spanish that reflect the ideological binary of power vs. solidarity. Posing the initial hypothesis that *tuteo* would be accelerated by the communist ideology of equality and solidarity in Cuba, the findings revealed that preferences for *usted* were actually highest among 2000s immigrants. There was a significant linear correlation between time in Miami and preference for *tú*, both intra- and inter-generationally, when addressing people in positions of power, those who work in stores and restaurants, and in seeking possible favor. This was true even among older, Spanish-dominant early exiles who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s. It is argued that, concomitant with the influence of English language structure, the discourse solidarity dynamic of US-style capitalism and neoliberal economic marketplace ideology drives the rapid expansion of *tuteo* in Miami, which is a microcosm of a general societal trend across the Spanish-speaking world.