The Mexican *corrido* and its use in a music therapy bereavement group

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to describe the use of song writing in a group process with Mexican migrant farmworkers who had been in a serious van accident resulting in the deaths of two of their coworkers. The Mexican song form often used for telling the stories of the deceased was used as the structure for the song writing intervention. This song form provided a unique and culturally appropriate format for song writing in this context. This clinical example demonstrates one model of working within a culture-centered music therapy approach. The result of this work was a process through which the migrant farmworkers grew closer as a group and made connections with their friends who died. Additionally, the process resulted in a product, a recording of their song that would allow the therapeutic process to continue long after song writing had been concluded. Based on this clinical example, it is recommended that music therapists use song writing with a culture-centered approach to meet the needs of clients from other cultures experiencing grief.

Key Words: music therapy, Mexico, immigration, bereavement, song writing
More than any other form of expression, songs can tell the journey of migrants passing from one location to the next. Music can help the migrants retain identity by maintaining its forms, structures, melodies, and harmonies, or it can change to incorporate the styles of the new place. In this way, music reflects the migrant’s struggle to hold on to his or her original culture while still moving into the new culture. Lull (1992) described music as a cultural artifact which combines not only personal meaning, but also group meaning, cultural meaning, and social meaning. While Dileo and Magill (2005) described the use of song writing in music therapy from a multicultural perspective, the use of specific song forms from their respective cultures have not been discussed in the music therapy literature. This article, which describes the use of the Mexican corrido in music therapy bereavement work, helps to address this gap.

The Mexican corrido

The Mexican corrido has been described simply as a “topical ballad form characteristic of Mexican popular music (used) as a means to spread news” (Chew Sánchez, 2006, p. xi). The corrido can tell stories of heroes and heroines, revolution, and even of love. Children in Mexico learn them from a very young age, and as Chew Sánchez described it, “These corridos made me want to know more about Mexican history than the textbooks offered” (p. xii).

In an early work, Simmons (1957) examined the journey the corrido made from Spain to Mexico during the conquest of the Americas. Corridas, the feminine form of corridos, incorporated 32 syllables and 32 notes as sung by a quartet, each singing in one octave, and each of four lines containing eight syllables. As soldiers and conquerors used it throughout their voyages to tell their stories, its form gained some flexibility, even though the four, eight-syllable lines are still typical today. Since the tales told in the corrido are passed from one generation to the next through oral history, their transformations are difficult to document. However, Simmons noted specific literary themes presented in corridos including violence, catastrophe, bandits, bullfighters, matters of general public interest, social comment and satire, regionalism, love, animals, and matters of current debate. The corrido's topical, yet broad literary themes and its portability allow it to be a vehicle through which migrants tell their stories.

Those who migrate from Mexico to the United States often find themselves in many of the situations described by corridos. Migrants often face violence, bandits, and catastrophe through their travel and border crossing, regardless of legal documentation to enter the United States. They also experience social marginalization and discrimination, particularly those working in unskilled labor positions, such as migrant farmwork (Grzywacz,
2009). Peña (1999) addressed these hardships as a factor that contributed to the blossoming of the corrido in California with the arrival of Mexican immigrants. He noted that the corrido “underscored the ethnic chasm that separated the Anglos and their capitalist culture on one side from the Mexicans and their pastoral culture of the other” (p. 88).

What have the migrants said themselves about the value the corrido plays in their lives? In her fieldwork, Chew Sánchez (2006) interviewed many migrants. One participant in her study, David, a migrant living in Texas, stated, “Corridos are the best source to know what is really going on in the country, unlike the news that comes out of the government or the media...If you want to know what really happened in any situation, listen carefully to the corrido about it” (p. 71). Al Hurricane, a famous musician even discussed writing a corrido when one of his children died. He said, “Some of them (the corridos) make you cry. I cannot sing what I wrote about my child who passed away. It is like a spade on your heart, like you feel what the people from the corridos feel” (p. 73). Finally, Jorge Hernández, the leader of the famous group, Los Tigres del Norte, noted, “We are singing their life experiences. In so many ways, we are singing what migrants want to say aloud. We are communicating with them a great sense of love, of union, of peace, of tranquility. I believe that is what makes this communication possible. What makes them feel the corridos” (p. 81).

**Grief in Mexican culture**

Doran and Hansen (2006) noted that Mexicans who have migrated to the United States may alter their grief patterns and develop new ways of coping. While familismo or the sharing of functions within the family (Andres-Hyman, Ortiz, Anez, Paris, & Davidson, 2006) has been noted to be an important aspect of the Latino culture, these functions may change as family members are separated by long distances. In a similar study, Grabowski and Frantz (1992) discovered that Hispanic individuals who had lost loved ones suddenly experienced more grief than Anglos who had experienced similar tragic losses. Doran and Hansen (2006) also described the novenario, or a nine-day period after death, during which time the family comes together for mourning. During this time, the authors noted that supportive conversation and prayers were conducted at the home of the person who had died. Additionally, Doran and Hansen described the continued bond that many family members have with loved ones who have died. These bonds were maintained through dreams, story telling, and pictorial remembrances among others. Similarly, Sandell (2010) found that emptiness caused by the death of a migrant loved one “marks a connection to the dead and part of a person’s life, eliciting reminiscence and pain of loss” (p. 179). He discussed this emptiness as a separation from the normal social connections that exist within a family or community.
Music therapy to cope with loss

Music therapy has been used extensively in hospice and palliative care (Groen, 2007; Hilliard, 2004; Trauger-Querry & Haghighi, 1999; West, 1994). As an extension of this work, music therapy has been used in bereavement settings (Hilliard, 2001; Register & Hilliard, 2008; Roberts, 2006). The majority of this research focused on those who have lost loved ones through illness such as cancer, resulting in a slower death. However, the techniques used could be applicable in groups who have experienced sudden losses, particularly if all of the individuals had experienced the same event that led to the loss.

One of the techniques that has been used extensively in bereavement groups is song writing. Writing in general has been found to be an effective method in lessening grief for adults (Range, Kovac, & Marion, 2000), so it is no wonder that song writing would have an even greater impact as it combines both lyrical content and music. Rolvsjord (2005) stated, “Creation of songs is a way of expressing and communicating feelings” particularly those that may be more difficult to discuss simply with words (p. 114). She also discussed how the therapeutic process continues long after the song has been written each time the song is listened to or played. It does not end simply when the song writing process has concluded. Song writing may include pre-composed music (Baker, 2005; Derrington, 2005), therapist-composed music (Krouth, 2005a, 2005b; Rolvsjord, 2005), or improvised melodies co-created by the clients and therapist (Rolvsjord, 2005). Regardless of the melodic content used, all of the authors suggested a systematic approach to song writing.

Culture-centered music therapy

Culture-centered music therapy requires that the music therapist take into context the role of music in the culture, the context in which the music therapy is taking place, and how that relates to the large community (Stige, 2002).

In his work with First Nation individuals in Canada, Smith (2007) incorporated aspects of culture-centered music therapy. His work focused on song writing and recording music to increase empowerment as these individuals were often marginalized due to their status in the community. When music therapists are working in a culture-centered approach, challenges such as needing an interpreter may arise. Zharinova-Sanderson (2004) discussed her work with a man from Turkey and the role of the interpreter throughout the process. In this setting, the interpreter became an integral part of the music therapy process. He co-created music with the client and the music therapist.
While using culture-centered music therapy can present challenges, it is vital for music therapists to use this approach when working with clients from a culture other than their own. Firstly, music therapists must consider how music is used within the culture in which they are working (Stige, 2002). He also noted that the music therapy sessions need to be conducted in the participant’s context, and change is not just for the individual, but the whole community. Additionally, culture-centered music therapy is not simply for the purposeful change of the client, but the overall change of the community.

The purpose of this paper is to describe a series of four, culture-centered music therapy sessions with a group of Mexican migrant farmworkers. Initially the sessions focused on creating a corrido dedicated to two friends who had recently died in a serious car accident. However, over the course of the music therapy process, it became important for the men to process the events of the accident and their feelings surrounding the event.

**Therapeutic process**

**Participants**

The 14 men who participated in this group were Mexican migrant farmworkers working on Christmas tree farms in Western North Carolina. Some had been involved in the van accident that killed their friends, Emiliano and Jose Felix, and others were their roommates. Many of the men who participated in the music therapy sessions had not only experienced the loss of their friends, but also a traumatic event, and had developed their own health issues as a result of the accident. The men ranged in age from 20 to 50 and had all been in the United States for at least a year or more as a part of the short-term agricultural visa program. While the details of the accident are important, they are described in the song, so they will not be described here. Pseudonyms are used throughout in order to protect the identities of the participants.

**Music therapist**

The music therapist who led the sessions had been a board certified music therapist for nine years. She had extensive clinical experience working with Latinos in oncology, school, and home-settings.

**Farmworker health professionals and interpreter**

Three health-care professionals who worked with this population were also present at the music therapy sessions. One served as an interpreter. These health care professionals were close to the participants in the study and had developed a strong bond with them over the course of the months since
the accident. The healthcare professionals served as ancillary contacts as described by Doran and Hansen (2006).

**IRB approval**

Institutional Review Board approval was obtained after the men had expressed a desire to share their song and their story with the larger community. All names and dates have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants, the men who died, and their loved ones.

**Funding for this project**

This project was supported in part by Aalborg University, where the primary author was completing research on the effects of music therapy with migrant farmworkers. This project was an extension of that work.

**Music therapy sessions**

The day after the car accident, the farmworker health professionals and the music therapist went to the farmworkers’ homes to see if they needed additional health care service and to provide culturally appropriate information regarding mental health issues that may arise after a traumatic event. Many of the farmworkers shared their feelings associated with the event and the loss of their two friends. Many of them needed to focus on taking care of their own health issues and were concerned with getting back to work as soon as possible. The farmworker healthcare workers suggested many bereavement group ideas, including song writing. Almost two months after the accident, the farmworkers approached the health care outreach staff to request the song writing-based group. The farmworkers participated in four music therapy sessions in their home. Roberts (2006) and Magill (2009) recommended home-based music therapy. The number of sessions was not set at the beginning of the group meeting, however Hovey and Magaña (2002) recommended that farmworker mental health groups be short-term and educative in nature, based on their heavy work schedules and time constraints. The farmworkers determined that the main goal of the sessions was to create and record a song describing the events of the car accident and the two friends who were killed.

The therapeutic process used in this setting with the Mexican migrant farmworkers came directly from the use of the corrido in Mexican culture as a means of telling stories of important events, and from the music therapy literature. This music therapy approach could be best described as culture-centered music therapy as defined by Stige (2002).
Session one

During the first session, the farmworkers, the music therapist, the interpreter, and the farmworker health care professionals participated in group-singing of farmworker-requested songs and lyric analysis. This opening exercise allowed everyone to make music together as a group and to establish rapport. After a few songs had been sung, with the help of the interpreter the music therapist led the farmworkers through an initial brainstorming. During this time the farmworkers retold the events of the accident and shared stories about Emilio and Jose Felix. One of the group members, Miguel, already had been working on one verse of the song and shared this with the group (See Appendix B). When asked if the farmworkers were still interested in using the corrido form, they had already picked out the exact corrido and the version of the corrido that would serve as a model for their song. They chose the song, El Corrido de los Peréz (Appendix A), which discusses the death of two brothers at the hands of a coward. They also requested that the version recorded by Los Rehenes on the album Para ti...Nuestra Historia be used. This version is upbeat and played quickly, at approximately 180 bpm.

Some men in the group expressed their confidence in lyric composition, while others felt more comfortable expressing their feelings and their experiences, but were unsure of how to put these into lyrics. At the end of the session, the group and music therapist agreed to have the music therapist take the thoughts that group members had shared, write a draft of the song, and bring it back to the group for their edits and input. This clinical decision was supported by Krout’s (2005a) use of therapist-composed songs. As this was a short-term intervention similar to Krout’s, it was necessary to facilitate the process of song writing in a timely manner.

Session two

The first draft of the song that the music therapist brought back to the group included Miguel’s lines (13-16). The group, which included the health care professionals and the interpreter, sang this version with the music therapist. After singing, the farmworkers made changes that included correcting misspellings, changing word order, deleting lines, adding lines, and changing the overall ordering of the song. Additionally, since the previous session one of the group members, Arturo, had written his own version of the song that he had been working on with other group members. They sang a version of the song a capella, which the music therapist recorded on her mobile phone.

During this session, Arturo also shared his own personal history as a musician. As a euphonium player, he was in a band with the rest of his family members. They were professional musicians who toured around Mexico.
playing for parties and other special events. However, when he was in the United States, he no longer had access to making music. He shared pictures of his family band and shared with the group one of the recordings they had made. Another individual, Martín, also shared with the group that he played the guitar in his church band, and like Arturo, was disconnected from his identity of being a musician while in the United States. The other group members expressed their pride in having two knowledgeable and experienced musicians in their group. The farmworkers requested that the group sing through a few of their favorite songs from Mexico before ending the session.

During the second session, the farmworkers began to open up more to each other and to the music therapist. They shared more of their life experiences, more about their families, and more about their fears concerning being in the United States and separated from their families. In addition, the music therapist learned that the farmworkers had not told their families about their traumatic experience, as they did not want their families to worry about their safety. Out of desire to protect their families, the role of family, familismo within the grieving context was interrupted. Not being able to share this experience with their families intensified the need for these feelings to be expressed in some manner within the group sessions.

**Session three**

During the third session, many of the farmworkers were beginning to talk about travelling home to Mexico for the holiday season and their three-month break from farm work. During this session it appeared as though the farmworkers were ready to wrap up the song writing process and begin recording. However, many of them were worried that they would not have time to practice and prepare for the recording. The Christmas season was nearing, so intensified work schedules for tree harvesting would begin soon. Additionally, there were two different songs. The group agreed that they wanted to combine the two songs together to create one, unified song. This would be the song that they wanted to record. The music therapist left two guitars for them to use for practicing and overall group music-making and left additional preferred songs for them to play as well. They requested that the music therapist record a version of the song in case they were not able to practice it to perfection. The overall energy of this session was quite low and the group members did not seem as interested in the song as they had in the two previous sessions. The men noted that they had been working long days, and they were beginning to anticipate the long trip home. This time of the growing season has been found to elevate anxiety and depression levels in this population (Grzywacz, 2009).
Session four

As session four began, the farmworkers first wanted to listen to the version created by the music therapist. They listened intently and decided to make a few additional changes. Final edits were made to the song, and a concluding verse was added (Appendix C). The group agreed by consensus that this would be the version of the song they would record. They practiced it together with the music therapist and then independently. The group decided that Arturo and Martín, the musicians, would ultimately be the ones to make the final recording. Arturo would sing, and Martín would play the guitar and sing. The two made seven recordings of the song before they were satisfied with the final version. When the recording was finished, the rest of the group members clapped and shouted and expressed their praise and gratitude for the Arturo and Martín’s work.

During this final session, with the help of the interpreter, the music therapist asked the farmworkers how they felt about putting the events of the accident into the song. The farmworkers said that it made them sadder to continually sing about the events and that the music made them feel the sadness more deeply. However, one of the group members, Juan, said that even though singing made him quite sad, he felt that the more he sang the song, the more the feelings moved away from him, almost like a release. The music therapist also asked if the group members would be willing to share their song with the families of Emiliano and Jose Felix. The group was quite reluctant to do so. They questioned whether it would be good enough to share with them, and they also worried that it might make their families sad to listen to the events described in the song.

Throughout the process the farmworkers wanted to share their story with the larger community. They wanted to educate others on vehicle and seat belt safety. When asked if the music therapy process and songs could be shared with the larger health care community anonymously, they were interested in again sharing their story and the song writing process.

Music and lyric analysis

In order to fully appreciate the value of the song written by the migrant farmworkers, an analysis of the music and the lyrical content was undertaken. The song written by the farmworkers stayed true to the corrido style and form. The song also stayed with the original melody, as is the case with many corridos except for the final verse, where Arturo and Martín unexpectedly changed the melody at the last line in the final recording. Instead of ending on a descending pattern, as is the case with each of the previous lines, they ended the song on an ascending pattern, giving the last line a melodic lift.
The original song, *El Corrido de los Peréz* was performed at 180 bpm, and the farmworkers’ song was at a similar tempo. At 150 bpm, it was slightly slower, but still upbeat. Finally, Martín, the guitar player, recorded the song in the key of D major, and played the guitar using a root-strum-strum pattern typical of music in ¾ time. The original recording used a variety of instruments and vocal parts creating a large, full sound. While the men expressed a desire to record their song with a full band, due to time constraints, it was necessary to record it with only guitar and two voices.

Initially, the first two versions of the songs focused on the event that took place and the men who died. As the versions progressed, the song primarily focused on the event, and less so on the two farmworkers who died. Four verses were dedicated to the event itself, one verse was dedicated to the two men who died, and the final verse discussed God’s role in giving and taking away life. The four verses about the accident are quite specific. The date, time, and place are all given. One potential reason for the accident is briefly addressed by mentioning that the brakes gave out; however, the words state, “en realidad no se sabe, que fue lo que sucedió” (“in reality no one knows what it was that happened”).

*Asustada* (fear) is the only emotion explicitly mentioned and its relation to not knowing what to do. In this verse it appears as though the men are maintaining *machismo* (Andrés-Hyman et al., 2006). The fear can only be in relation to not knowing what to do, rather than fear of something greater outside of themselves. In the fourth verse, the last two lines, “Al ver a dos compañeros, Que acaban de fallecer” (“To see the two friends that had just passed away”) are particularly strong, as this was an image that must have stood out in the farmworkers’ minds repeatedly.

The only verse about Emiliano and Jose Felix simply states where they are from and that they were good friends who will never be forgotten. Their stories and more about their lives were omitted in the final version. Finally, Martín added the specific line about God. It is important to note that he used the diminutive form of God, *Diosito*, rather than *Dios*, suggesting a kinder, gentler God. In this verse, the men show a type of acceptance to the balancing act of life and death. Neither is in their control.

**Outcomes**

The farmworkers’ goals for the short-term music therapy group were met. The group worked together to create a *corrido* that described the events of the accident. They also created music together as a group. Three of the group members contributed more directly to the final product of the song: Raul wrote lines for the song, and Arturo and Martín contributed to the overall music. The other group members contributed to the process of writing the *corrido* by providing many edits and opinions and supporting their friends’ musical talents. In this way, each group member participated at the
level that he wanted. The result of this work was a process through which the migrant farmworkers had the opportunity to share their experience of the events of the horrific accident. This sharing led to creation of a product, a recording of their song.

The song writing process provided an opportunity for group members to support one another. Each group member defined his role in the group by contributing to lyric writing and editing, music playing, singing, and/or supporting other group members. Group members shared their experiences and opened up to one another. As a result, the group became more cohesive.

The music therapist and the farmworker healthcare providers initially approached this process as a bereavement group. However, as the song developed over the course of the sessions, the music therapist realized that the farmworkers needed a place to express the events of the day and their emotions related to it, as much as they needed to eulogize their deceased friends. The music therapy sessions allowed for flexibility in addressing immediate needs of the group rather than just focusing on the loss of friends.

**Discussion**

The positive outcomes of this short-term song writing based music therapy group can be attributed to two main points: 1) the use of a culture-centered music therapy approach; and 2) the use of the *corrido* song form in group-song writing. Levels of participation by the group members are important to note. Group members contributed in a way that felt natural and authentic to them as participant or musician throughout the process. While not explicitly stated, the role of musicians in the Mexican culture is often clearly defined (Margolies, 2009; Sheehy, 2006), and those individuals who would not necessarily consider themselves to be musicians may find it difficult to contribute to the same extent as those who are musicians.

Culture-centered music therapy also necessitated a need for culture-specific music. In this clinical example, the Mexican migrant farmworkers accessed music from their culture in the music therapy bereavement sessions. Music has been noted to be important in defining identity (Stokes, 1994), particularly migrant identity (Lull, 1992). In his ethnographic research of Mexican musicians in North Carolina, Margolies (2009) discussed the role that one particular band’s song, *Raleigh, NC*, played in defining this new location on “the symbolic map of Latino migrant identity in a place where it did not previously appear” (p. 199). In defining the location, the time, and the date of the accident, the farmworkers in this clinical project also placed this event on their own maps of migrant identity.

Using culture-centered music therapy also required the use of an interpreter. While the music therapist was comfortable in functional use of Spanish, she felt that having an interpreter was important due to the nature of the group. The interpreter would help with any idioms or strong emotions that
the migrant farmworkers might express during the song writing process. In this case, the interpreter was fluent in Spanish and was also a strong guitar player. This experience was similar to that of Zharianova-Sanderson’s (2004) work, where the interpreter also played an important musical role.

Having the migrant farmworker health professionals as a part of the initial interactions and sessions with the migrant farmworkers was a way of reaching out to the larger community, which is also congruent with culture-centered music therapy. Their participation acknowledged the farmworkers’ experiences and in many ways provided the farmworkers a means of reciprocity. Reciprocity may exist in various forms, but typically involves the clients or participants an opportunity to contribute to the overall process in some way. Allowing space for reciprocity in mental health work with the Latino community has been found to increase participation and overall group involvement (Simoni & Perez, 1995). Through this form of reciprocity, the farmworkers shared their music with those who had been near to them in such a tragic time.

Grief work across cultures may prove to be a challenge to music therapists. However, when engaging in this type of work, using the elements of culture-centered music therapy may provide the foundation for working effectively with a variety of cultural backgrounds, particularly those marginalized in mainstream society. It is important for music therapists to understand how music is used within the clients’ cultures and what role it could play in the bereavement process. Additionally, allowing the clients to co-create the process as suggested in Rolvsjord (2005) may allow space for the clients’ own knowing and ways of working through their grief.

In the present study, the music therapist may have initially directed the song writing a bit too much, however, by encouraging the farmworkers to focus on the death of the men, rather than their own experience with the tragic event or the connection they needed to make with the friends who died (Doran & Hansen, 2006; Sandell, 2010). However, in the process of co-creation, the migrant farmworkers were able to direct the lyrics of the song in a way that was more meaningful to them.

The initial idea behind starting the music therapy group was to help memorialize the men who died and to find a place to express the traumatic events of the accident. As was noted in the musical and lyrical analysis, however, the focus on the songs changed rather dramatically. The farmworkers primarily focused on the events of the day of the accident, rather than on their friends. What meaning can be taken from this? Perhaps their experience of the traumatic event and their sense of helplessness to prevent the deaths of their friends had more meaning for the farmworkers. Or perhaps it was too difficult to share the stories of the Emiliano and Jose Felix.

Their choice of the particular corrido as the musical basis of their song may be significant. El Corrido de los Pérez is based on the story of a
cowardly killing of two brothers. In this way the farmworkers could have indirectly been judging the actions of the driver of the van (who denied responsibility for the accident) as cowardly. While the driver never meant any harm, the farmworkers could have had feelings towards him that were difficult to say aloud. It is also possible that expressing these feelings was not the most important point. These feelings may also explain the reluctance to share the song with the family members. As it says in their song, “In reality, no one knows.”

Composing this song was a way for the farmworkers to remain connected with their friends who died as described by Doran and Hansen (2006). While the context for this clinical example was different from that in Doran and Hansen, maintaining the bond with deceased loved ones does exist. In addition, this group provided a potential replacement for the grieving that takes place within the family context through familismo. The corrido, as a folk-art musical form, was a way of maintaining cultural roots and expressing loss through music.

On the other hand, perhaps there is simpler explanation for the song choice. The farmworkers may have needed simply to sing the events over and over to decrease its power. As one of the participants noted, singing the song often made him sad, but every time it was sung he lost a little more sadness. In a way, they were able to place all of the feelings and memories of that horrible day into the song. The song was able to contain the tragedy and the feelings for them. It is possible to return again to the corrido. Without such a familiar form and without its role in the Mexican culture to tell the real story, the song may not have been possible. In writing this song, the farmworkers identified exactly what they needed. Song writing served well as a vehicle for the participants both from therapeutic and cultural perspectives. Given the position and importance of songs in all cultures, the example in this therapeutic process demonstrates the powerful nature of lyrics and music to contain and express difficult and often unspoken feelings through the process of song writing.

References


therapy clinicians, educators and students (pp. 206-223). London: Jessica Kingsley.


Appendix A

*El Corrido del Los Perez* (traditional)

En mil novecientos once, les voy a explicar muy bien, mataron a dos hermanos y a un primo hermano tambien.

El jueves veinte de abril como a las tres de la tarde, murió Don Mariano Pérez en las manos de un cobarde.

Carreras tan desgraciadas, esas carreras del cerro, perdieron vida y caballos, y perdieron su dinero.

El Don Monico de Luna, fue el que la mecha prendió, y a los primeros balazos, fue el primero que corrió.

Gabino Pérez decía, muy macizo en sus razones, yo también muerdo en la raya, no soy criía de correloes.

Isidro Pérez le dijo, dejala ya por la paz, pues así nos convendría, sea por Dios no digo mas.

Gabino Pérez decía, nos pegaron a la mala, si hubieran hablao al derecho, otro gallo les cantará.

Isidro cayó pal' sur, pal' norte cayó Jesús, Mariano para el oriente, como pintando una cruz.

Vuela, vuelo palomita, vuelo paloma querida, dile al padre de Los Pérez, que así terminaron sus vidas.

In 1911, I am going to explain this well two brothers were killed And one cousin also

Thursday, the 20th of April about three in the afternoon Died Don Mariano Pérez At the hands of a coward

Running from misfortunes These underground workers of the hills They lost life and horses And lost their money

Mr. Monico de Luna, It was he that lit the fuse, and at the first shots, he was the first that ran.

Gabino Pérez said, very solid in his reasons, I also die on the line, I was not raised by cowards.

Isidro Pérez told him, Leave it now in peace, So on this we agree But for God I say no more.

Gabino Pérez said, They stuck us with the bad, If they had spoken to the right, Another rooster would be singing it.

Isidro fell to the south, to the north fell Jesus, Mariano to the east, As if painting a cross

Fly, fly little dove, Fly dear dove, Tell the father of Los Pérez, That this is how their lives ended
Appendix B

Miguel’s Song

Era un 4 de mayo
Presente lo tengo yo
como a la 1 de la tarde
Esto fue lo que pasó
en el estado de Carolina
Una van se volteó
con 14 pasajeros
4 maromas hecho
dicen que eran los frenos
que fue lo que le falló
en realidad no se sabe
que fue lo que pasó
toda la gente asustada
no hallaban que y hacer
al ver a dos compañeros
que acaban de fallecer

It was the 4th of May
What I present to you
At one in the afternoon
This was what happened
In the state of Carolina
A van turned over
With 14 passengers
It turned 4 times
They said it was the breaks
That were the fault
In reality, no one knows
What happened
All of the people were scared
No one knew what to do
To see the two friends
That had just passed away
Appendix C

Final Song

Era un cuatro de mayo
Presente lo tengo yo
Como a la una de la tarde
Esto fue lo que pasó
En el estado Carolina
Una van se volteó
Con catorce hombres a bordo
Cuatro maromas hechó

Dicen que fueron los frenos
Que fue lo que les falló
en realidad no se sabe
que fue lo que sucedió
Toda la gente asustada
No hallaba ni que hacer
Al ver a dos compañeros
Que acaban de fallecer

Emiliano era de San Luis
Jose de Michoacán
Eran buenos compañeros
Nunca se van a olvidar

Diosito nos da la vida
Y el nos la ha de quitar
Aquí terminó el corrido
De Emiliano y de Jose.

It was a 4th of May
I present it
About one in the afternoon
This is what happened
In the state of Carolina
A van rolled over
With 14 men on board
Four times it turned

They said it was the breaks
That were at fault
In reality, no one knows
What really happened
All of the people were scared
No one know what to do
To look at the two friends
That had just passed away

Emiliano was from San Luis
Jose from Michoacán
They were great friends
No one will forget them

God gives us life
And he will take it from us
Here ends this song
Of Emiliano and Jose