

Austronesian Elements in Philippine Creole Spanish*

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Abstract

One hypothesis of creoles is that the superstrate or lexifier language of a creole contributes to its vocabulary, while its grammar comes directly from its substrate (Crowley 1997). A look at the lexicon and grammar of Philippine Creole Spanish or Chabacano shows that this theory works specifically for its variant Zamboangueño. Terms for numbers, days of the week, months, and body parts are obviously derived from Spanish. Some properties of its grammar, on the other hand, show obvious Austronesian traces, particularly those of Tagalog and Cebuano. Zamboangueño exhibits a prototypically Philippine-type verb-initial word order. The influence of Cebuano on Zamboangueño is conspicuously manifested in the plural personal pronoun series in the *si*-type, *kon*-type, and *di*-type pronouns. The *si*-type plural pronouns are the nominative *kame* (1p, excl.), *kita* (1p, incl.), *kamo* (2p), and *sila* (3p). Zamboangueño has also created the *di*-type and *kon*-type forms based on the Cebuano genitive pronouns *amo* (1p, excl.), *ato* (1p, incl.), *inyo* (2p), and *ila* (3p), resulting in the genitive pronouns *diamon* (1p, excl.), *diaton* (1p, incl.), *diinyo* (2p), and *diila* (3p), and the accusative pronouns *kanamon* (1p, excl.), *kanaton* (1p, incl.), *kaninyo* (2p), and *kanila* (3p). The Zamboangueño nominative noun marking *si*, which marks phrases whose heads are personal names, corresponds to the personal *si* in Tagalog and Cebuano. Finally, like Tagalog and Cebuano, the Zamboangueño plural marker *mga*, which is pronounced variously as *maga*, *mana*, and *mja*, is used when the noun it precedes is explicitly plural.

1. Introduction

Philippine Creole Spanish (PCS) is more familiar as Chabacano, whose variants include Caviteño, Ternateño, Cotabateño, Davaoëño, and Zamboangueño. Of these five variants, Zamboangueño is the only surviving PCS (Lipski 1987).

One hypothesis of creoles is that the superstrate or lexifier language of a creole contributes to its vocabulary, while its grammar comes directly from its substrate (Crowley 1997). A look at the lexicon and grammar of Chabacano shows that this theory works specifically for Zamboangueño, which is spoken in Zamboanga City. It is easy to see that Zamboangueño words are predominantly derived from Spanish. Number words, days of the week, months, and body parts are obviously Spanish-derived. Some properties of its grammar, on the other hand, show obvious traces of Austronesian influence, particularly those of Tagalog and Cebuano.

This paper attempts to answer the question: What grammatical properties, particularly of Tagalog and Cebuano, are found in Zamboangueño Chabacano? It attempts to show the similarities in the grammatical properties among Zamboangueño, Tagalog, and Cebuano to draw support for the hypothesis purporting the contribution of the substrate to the grammar of a creole. It is organized into four main parts to correspond to the four traces of Austronesian influence in Zamboangueño covered in this paper: a. word order; b. plural pronominal system; c. nominative noun marking; and d. plural noun marking. Data are drawn from the researcher's knowledge of

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Zamboangueño, as well as from previous studies done on Zamboangueño, Tagalog, and Cebuano. Some native speakers of Zamboangueño and a native speaker of Cebuano also participated in the data gathering. Each of the major parts of the paper is provided with a set of sentences presented in the order of Zamboangueño, Tagalog, and Cebuano. Each sentence is numbered consecutively throughout the paper, and is provided with its English gloss, some grammatical information, and a rough translation in English. Some of the grammatical information and translation have been altered from their original sources for uniformity of presentation.

2. Body

2.1 Word order

Like Tagalog and Cebuano, as well as many other Philippine languages, Chabacano exhibits a prototypically Philippine-type verb-initial word order, different from the SVO pattern characterized in Spanish. A number of scholars share the observation that Chabacano is a VSO language: Holm (2001), Forman (2001), and Lipski (1987). They also agree that while SVO order may occur, VSO is still the unmarked order for Chabacano. A look at the structure of Zamboangueño, Tagalog, and Cebuano shows that these languages share the same VSO structure, here demonstrated in the following major grammatical categories.

2.1.1 Nominal predicate clauses

In sentence (1) *un maestra yo* ‘I am a teacher’, the predicate noun phrase *un maestra* ‘a teacher’ is a combination of the determiner *un*, which means ‘a’, with the base word *maestra* ‘teacher’, to form a constitute with a nominal use (McKaughan 1954). The noun phrase in the subject position *yo* ‘I’ is a first person singular nominative, serving as the subject to the predicate NP *un maestra*. The same construction can be seen in the Tagalog sentence (2) *nars si Maria* ‘Maria is a nurse’ where the predicate is the noun *nars* ‘nurse’, and in the Cebuano sentence (3) *higala naku si Rowena* ‘Rowena is my friend’ where the predicate is the noun + genitive first person singular pronoun combination *higala naku*.

2.1.2 Adjectival clauses

Predication in Zamboangueño may also consist of an adjective such as *bien sabroso* ‘very delicious’ in sentence (4) *bien sabroso el comida* ‘the food is very delicious’ where the intensifier *bien* ‘very’ (Forman 1972) combines with the adjective *sabroso* ‘delicious’ to form an adjectival phrase serving as predication to *el comida* ‘the food’. Such a construction is evident in the Tagalog sentence (5) *maganda ang babae* ‘the woman is beautiful’ where the adjective *maganda* ‘beautiful’ forms the predicate of the sentence to the subject *ang babae* ‘the woman’, and in the Cebuano sentence (6) *buutan ang bata nga gamay* ‘the little child is good’ where the adjective *buutan* ‘good’ precedes the subject *ang bata nga gamay* ‘the little child’.

2.1.3 Verbal clauses

A verbal clause in Zamboangueño consists of a verb phrase followed by noun phrases. The verb phrase consists of tense markers: /*ya-*/ (punctual, perfective); /*ta-*/

(habitual, durative, present or past imperfective); and /ay-/ or /ey-/ or /el/ (future) and a verb. In cases where the verb is unmarked, the meaning may be understood from the context (Forman 1972).

A verbal clause is demonstrated in sentence (7) *ya come el perro konel pescao* ‘the dog ate the fish’ where the verbal clause *ya come* ‘ate’ precedes the subject *el perro* ‘the dog’ and the direct object *konel pescao* ‘the fish’. We see the same verb-initial construction in the Tagalog sentence (8) *humawak siya ng libro* ‘he held a book’ where the verb *humawak* ‘held’ precedes the rest of the sentence, and in the Cebuano sentence (9) *nagpalit ang babaye sa saging* ‘the woman bought bananas’ where the verb *nagpalit* ‘bought’ serves as the predication.

2.1.4 Prepositional predicate constructions

In sentence (10) *para contigo este cancion* ‘this song is for you’ the predicate contains a preposition *para* ‘for’ and the second person singular locative pronoun *contigo* ‘you’ which takes on a locative thematic role. This prepositional phrase comes before the nominative phrase *este cancion* ‘this song’ composed of a deictic determiner *este* ‘this’ and the noun *cancion* ‘song’. Tagalog shares this construction where we see a prepositional phrase construction in sentence (11) *nasa mesa ang pambura* ‘the eraser is on the table’ where the locative *nasa mesa* ‘on the table’ serves as predication to *ang pambura* ‘the eraser’. We also see the same construction in Cebuano where the prepositional phrase *gikan naku* ‘from me’ in sentence (12) *gikan naku ang singsing* ‘the ring comes from me’, where *gikan* means ‘from’ and *naku* is a first person singular genitive pronoun.

The grammatical categories discussed demonstrate a similarity in word order among Zamboangueño, Tagalog, and Cebuano, giving evidence to the Philippine-type word order characterized in Zamboangueño, which departs from the word order of its superstrate.

2.2 Plural pronominal system

The influence of Cebuano on Zamboangueño is conspicuously manifested in its pronominal system, specifically in the plural personal pronoun series with the exception of *nosotros* ‘we’ (1p, dual, formal), *bosotros* ‘you’ (2p, familiar), and *ustedes* ‘you’ (2p, formal), which are Spanish-derived. The Cebuano influence is demonstrated in all the three basic cases: nominative, which functions as the subject of both transitive and intransitive clauses; genitive as a possession marker; and accusative, serving as the direct object. Note in Table 1 that the *kon*-type pronouns in Chabacano take an accusative case, different from the *kang*-set in Table 2. Nolasco (2005) argues that Chabacano exhibits an accusative system, rather than the ergative actancy structure characteristic of most Philippine languages, explaining further that this is one feature that Chabacano has inherited from Spanish and Portuguese.

2.2.1 Si-type pronouns

The *si*-type plural pronouns are *kame* ‘we’ (1p, excl.), *kita* ‘we’ (1p, incl.), *kamo* ‘you’ (2p), and *sila* ‘they’ (3p). This set is similar to the *si*-set nominative case pronouns categorized by Dryer (1977) as shown in Table 2: *kami* ‘we’ (1p, excl.), *kita* ‘we’ (1p, incl.), *kamu* ‘you’ (2p), and *sila* ‘they’ (3p).

Sentence (13) *ta pasea kame na pueblo ahora* ‘we are walking around town now’ shows the use of the first person plural exclusive *kame* ‘we’, which is similar to *kami* in sentence (14) *mo’ani kami ug humay sa bulan sa Nobyembre* ‘we harvest rice in the month of November’. A number of sources attest that *na* in sentence (13) is a general locative preposition which is derived from Portuguese: McWhorter (2000), Forman (1993), and Lipski (1986). In particular, Lipski states that the Zamboangueño *na* is identical to the Portuguese *na*, which is a contraction of the preposition *em* and the feminine definite article *a*. In Zamboangueño, *na* means *at* or *in* (Camins 1999). In addition, Forman (1972) explains that *na* marks phrases whose head is a common or proper name of a place.

2.2.2 *Di*-type pronouns

The genitive plural pronouns in Zamboangueño are formed via the preposition *di* which means *of*, *from*, *by*, or *with* (Camins 1999) and the Cebuano genitive pronouns *amu* ‘our’ (1p, excl.), *atu* ‘our’ (1p, incl.), *inyu* ‘your’ (2p), and *ila* ‘their’ (3p), resulting in the plural genitive pronouns *diamon* ‘our’ (1p, excl.), *diaton* ‘our’ (1p, incl.), *diinyo* ‘your’ (2p), and *diila* ‘their’ (3p) (Lipski 1986).

Sentence (21) *no quiere si Fe konel diamon hermano* ‘Fe does not like our brother’ is an example of a sentence containing *diamon* ‘our’ which combines the preposition *di* + *amo*. Cebuano uses *amu* + the ligature *ng* for preposed genitive personal pronoun as in sentence (22) *nalipay amung Mama* ‘Our mother was happy’. Sentence (21) also exhibits negation of verbal predication (Forman 1972) with the negator *no* preceding the verb *quiere* ‘like’. Sentence (23) *tiene pa lugar na diaton aparador* ‘there is still space in our cabinet’ is an example of existential predication (Forman 1972). Both sentence structures also occur in Tagalog and Cebuano. Moreover, the particle *pa* in sentence (23) is also Philippine. Tagalog and Cebuano *pa* means ‘still’ (Schachter and Otones 1972; Trosdal 1992), among other meanings, which the particle *pa* in sentence (23) carries.

2.2.3 *Kon*-type pronouns

Like the genitive plural pronouns, the accusative plural pronouns also exhibit this Cebuano influence in *kanamon* (1p, excl.), *kanaton* (1p, incl.), *kaninyo* (2p), and *kanila* (3p). Lipski (1986) further suggests that these accusative pronouns may have been influenced by the use of *con* + subject pronoun, which is supported by their popular pronunciation such as *konamon* and *konaton*.

This discussion shows that Cebuano has greatly influenced the plural personal pronoun series in Zamboangueño.

2.3 Nominative noun marking *si*

Like *si* which marks a personal subject NP in Tagalog, as well as Cebuano (Forman 1993), as in sentence (38) *bumili si Rosa ng bigas* ‘Rosa bought some rice’ and sentence (39) *nagbasa si Inday ug libru gahapun* ‘Inday read a book yesterday’, the Zamboangueño noun marking *si* marks phrases whose heads are personal names. An example is sentence (37) *ya quema si Conching konel retrato* ‘Conching burned the picture’.

The Zamboangueño *el* corresponds to the non-personal *ang* in Tagalog and Cebuano as used in sentence (41) *pumasok ang babae* ‘the woman entered’ and sentence (42) *guwapa ang bata* ‘the child is pretty’. Sentence (40) *jendeh ta olvida el madrina konel disuyo ahijado* ‘the godmother does not forget her godson’ contains the NP *el madrina* ‘the godmother’ where *el* marks the common noun *madrina* ‘godmother’. Sentence (40) contains *jendeh* ‘not’, which is another example of negation of verbal predication (Forman 1972). Both Forman and Lipski (1986) share the observation that *jendeh* ‘not’ is Philippine. Lipski is more specific in saying that it is from the Tagalog or Hiligaynon *hende* ‘not’.

In all three languages, these markers are used in nominative noun phrases.

2.4 Plural noun marker *mga*

Finally, like Tagalog and Cebuano, the Zamboangueño Philippine plural particle *mga*, which is pronounced in three variants (*maga*, *mana*, and *mja*) (Lipski 1986), is used when the noun it precedes is explicitly plural. Forman (1972) posits that *maga* as in sentence (43) *ya ri el maga gente konele* ‘the people laughed at him’ has a Filipino connotation of lower status, while *mana* carries a Spanish connotation, and is more elite, reflecting further that Spaniards had difficulty pronouncing the velar nasal. *Mga* carries a younger Filipino connotation and is the more central and important plural marker (Forman 1972) as used in the Tagalog sentence (44) *wala sa bahay ang mga dalaga* ‘the maidens are not in the house’, and the Cebuano sentence (45) *gimingaw sila sa ilang mga ginikanan* ‘they miss their parents’.

The Zamboangueño plural noun marker *mga* is, in some instances, optional, especially when the noun is marked by the plural marker *-(e)s* suffix. However, both the plural marker and the plural suffix may also occur in the same noun phrase (Forman 1972).

3. Conclusion

In summary, traces of Austronesian elements, specifically those of Tagalog and Cebuano, can be found in the grammatical properties of Zamboangueño, particularly in its verb-initial word order, plural pronominal system, nominative noun marking *si*, and plural noun marking *mga*.

This discussion is, in no way, exhaustive. This paper suggests further study on the finer influence of the substrates on the grammar of Zamboangueño Chabacano. It suggests using data from the recently completed Chabacano Language Corpus Project, which is available at the Institute of Cultural Studies in Western Mindanao based in Ateneo de Zamboanga University in Zamboanga City. This recommended study will serve to assess the current state of Zamboangueño Chabacano, and possibly, to provide empirical analysis to support the drive for the conservation of the language.

Abbreviations

DET	determiner
NOM	nominative
GEN	genitive
LIG	ligature
ACC	accusative
OBL	oblique
LCV	locative
Asp	aspect
Pres	present
Fut	future
Prog	progressive
Adv	adverb
Adj	adjective
Prep	preposition
Neg	negator
Plrl	plural
incl	inclusive
excl	exclusive
1s	first person singular
1p	first person plural
2p	second person plural
3s	third person singular
3p	third person plural

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