Austronesian Elements in Philippine Creole Spanish

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One of the theories of creoles is that the superstrate or lexifier language contributes to its vocabulary, while its grammar comes directly from the substrate(s) (Crowley 1997). A look at the lexicon and grammar of Philippine Creole Spanish (PCS) or Chabacano shows that this theory works specifically for its variant Zamboangueño, which is spoken in Zamboanga City and is the only surviving PCS.

It is easy to see that Zamboangueño words are predominantly derived from Spanish. Terms for numbers, days of the week, months, and body parts are obviously derived from Spanish. Some number words are uno ‘one’, dos ‘two’, tres ‘three’, mil nueve cientos setenta y seis ‘1976’; days of the week are Lunes ‘Monday’, Martes ‘Tuesday’, Viernes ‘Friday’, Domingo ‘Sunday’; terms for months are Enero ‘January’, Febrero ‘February’, Agosto ‘August’, Diciembre ‘December’; and terms for body parts include ojos ‘eyes’, boca ‘mouth’, nariz ‘nose’, and cara ‘face’.

Some properties of its grammar, on the other hand, show obvious traces of Austronesian influence, particularly that of Tagalog and Cebuano. These grammatical properties include basic constituent order, pronominal system, nominative noun marking el and si, and the use of the particle mga.

Like Tagalog and Cebuano, as well as many other Philippine languages, Zamboangueño exhibits a prototypically Philippine-type verb-initial word order, different from the SVO pattern characteristic of Spanish. A sentence in Zamboangueño consists of a verb phrase followed by noun phrases. The verb phrase consists of a temporal aspectual marker (ya-past/perfective, ta-present/imperfective, and ay-future irrealis) and a stem which is usually derived from the Spanish infinitive without the final /r/.

The influence of Cebuano on Zamboangueño is conspicuously manifested in its pronominal system, particularly in the plural pronoun series in all the three basic cases: nominative, which functions as the subject of both transitive and intransitive clauses; accusative, serving as the direct object; and possessive (or genitive, to use the Latinate term), as a possession marker. These three cases of pronouns correspond to the si-type, kon-type, and di-type pronouns, respectively. The si-type plural pronouns are kita (1P.INCL.), kame (1P.EXCL.), kamo (2P), and siya (3P). Zamboangueño has also created the kon-type and di-type forms based on the Cebuano genitive pronouns amo (1P.EXCL.), ato (1P.INCL.), inyo (2P), and ila (3P), resulting in the accusative case pronouns kanamon (1P.EXCL.), kanatón (1P.INCL.), kaninyo (2P), and kanila (2P), and diamon (1P.EXCL.), diaton (1P.INCL.), diinyo (2P), and diila (2P) in the genitive case.

The Zamboangueño noun marking el, which marks phrases whose heads are common nouns or place names, and si which marks phrases whose heads are personal names correspond to the non-personal ang and the personal
si, respectively, in Tagalog and Cebuano. In all three languages, these markers are used in nominative noun phrases. A common noun is preceded by ang in Tagalog and Cebuano and el in Zamboangueño, while si precedes a name of a person in all three languages.

Finally, like Tagalog and Cebuano, the Zamboangueño plural marker mga, which is pronounced variously as maga, mana, and maga, is used when the noun it precedes is explicitly plural. It is, in some instances, optional, especially when the noun is marked by the plural marker -(e)s suffix.

In summary, traces of Austronesian elements, particularly 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, and plural noun marking.
APPENDIX

Word Order

(1) ZAMBOANGUEÑO
Ya come el perro con el pescao.
Past eat DET dog OBJ.marker fish
'The dog ate the fish.'

(2) TAGALOG (Schachter and Otanes 1972:294, in Reid and Liao 2004:441)
Humawak=siy ng libro.
hold=Nom.3s gen book.
'He held a book.'

(3) CEBUANO (Dryer 1977:1)
Nag-palit ang babaye sa saging.
Actor-buy Topic woman non-topic banana
'The woman bought the bananas.'

B. Pronominal System

(4) ZAMBOANGUEÑO
Ay anda kita na aplaya mañana.
Fut go 1p.incl. prep beach adv
'We will go to the beach tomorrow.'

(5) CEBUANO
Kita ang muadtu sa balay ugma.
1p go lcv house adv
'We will go to the house tomorrow.'

(6) ZAMBOANGUEÑO
Ta pasya kame na pueblo ahora.
Pres stroll 1p.excl. prep town adv
'We are strolling around town now.'

(7) CEBUANO (Bell 1976:59)
Mo'ani kami ug humay sa bulan sa Nobyember.
Act.harvest we.nom obl rice obl month gen November
'We harvest rice in the month of November.'

(8) ZAMBOANGUEÑO
entra kamo na casa, pronto!
enter 2p prep house adv
'Enter the house, hurry!'

(9) CEBUANO (Dryer 1978:9)
Sumonod kamo kanako!
Actor.focus.follow you.topic me.nontopic
'Follow me!'
Ya anda sila na Lamitan.

‘They went to Lamitan.’

Sila nanag-lakaw sa lungsod.

‘They walked in the town’ or ‘They walked to the town.’

Ta olestia el comida adentro aparador.

‘The food smells inside the cabinet.’

Pumasok ang babae.

‘The woman entered.’

Kanang mga artista, pulus artipisyal ang lihok.

‘Those artists, their behavior is totally artificial.’

Ya kema si Conching con el letrato.

‘Conching burned the picture.’

Si Fidel ang bumili sa kotse ko.

‘The one who bought my car was Fidel.’

Higala naku si Rowena.

‘Rowena is my friend.’

Ya ri el maga miron konele.

‘The onlookers laughed at him.’

Wala sa bahay ang mga dalaga.

‘The maidens are not in the house.’
Ni’adóng panahona, lima ka kinhasong daw salamin
OBL.that=LN time.SPEC five LN seashell=LN like mirror
Nakaplagan sa mga batang nagsulat sa babayon.
find.REF GEN PL child=LN ACT.write REF beach

‘At that time, five shining seashells were found by children
who were playing on the beach.’

**References**


