

The Puzzling Case of Chabacano: Creolization, Substrate, Mixing and Secondary Contact¹

Patrick O. Steinkrüger

ZAS (Centre for General Linguistics)

Commonly known as "Chabacano" are the different varieties of the Spanish-based Creole in the Philippines. Until the present, the (socio-)historical origin of the Chabacano varieties is far from being entirely explained (e.g. Lipski 1988 and 1992). In addition, nearly all publications on Chabacano refer to Zamboangueño and not to the variety of Ternate (Manila Bay) which is the oldest variety and more conservative. Also, the constant contact between India, Macau and the Philippines has been neglected. Consequently, it seems to be necessary to classify the morphosyntactical features and lexical items of Chabacano as of Malayo-Portuguese origin or of the (Mexican) Spanish superstrate origin, or finally as of Philippine origin by later contact. The analysis of these features and their comparison with Portuguese-based creoles in Asia could also lead to more clarity explaining the (socio-)historical origin of Chabacano.

It is the aim of my paper to discuss some external and internal aspects of the Chabacano varieties in the Philippines, considering their historical background (e.g. Francisco 2002) and focussing on morphosyntactic 'typical' features of creole languages considering Zamboangueño in Mindanao but also the variety spoken in Ternate (Manila Bay). Nevertheless, it is true that Chabacano has in some respect a mixed character by language contact in the Philippines, but this fact is not an argument against its original structure as a creole (against the status as an "intertwined language"). Besides, code switching as in example (1) is quite widespread among young speakers:

(1) Zamboangueño

Dale kumigo dituyo cellphone number
Give I:OBJ you:POSS cellphone number

para I can call you later.
so-that I can call you later.

'Give me your cellphone number so that I can call you later.'

The presentation will focus on selected lexical items and morpho-syntactic features in both varieties of Chabacano. It is then the aim to compare these features with other Spanish-based Creoles (Papiamentu and Palenquero), other creoles in Asia with Malayo-Portuguese substrate (?) and with varieties of Spanish (especially in Mexico). For example:

- Lexical items from the putative substrate (like from Malay *maskin* 'even') and the superstrate (e.g. Mexican Spanish *sakate* 'grass' from Nahuatl), considering also the formal similarity of many Malay and Philippine words.
- Comparison of the pronominal system (e.g. Ternateño shows more similarities with Indo-Portuguese and Macaísta than with

¹ Most of the linguistic data were collected during a fieldwork trip to the Philippines in summer 2004.

Zamboangueno).

- Differential object-marking with the particle *kun* in Zamboangueno and Ternateño (similarities with Spanish or with creoles which share the same substrate?).
- Aspects concerning the function and form of the preverbal TMA-markers (*ta-*, *ya-*, *ay-* in Zamboangueno and *ta-*, *a-*, *di-* in Ternateño).