

Hispanic Language Heritage in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Academician Manuel Seco endearingly refers to Chabacano as a *dialecto español* [Spanish dialect]. Philologist Antonio Quilis calls it the *cherished Philippine Creole Spanish*. Scholars like Keith Whinnom call it a *Spanish contact vernacular*. Some Filipinos make fun of it as *lengua de tienda*, *lengua'y tienda* [marketplace language], *castila-castilahan* [Spanish imitation], *español de entresuelo* [mezzanine Spanish], *the patois of Cavite*. In 1933, Norberto Romuáldez declared that “underneath the coarse

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characteristics of its form, the Filipino soul embraces the Spanish soul, and in the process, both are fused together as one.” The Creole lexicon of Cavite used to comprise 94 percent of its totality. A mere 6 percent of its past lexicon was Tagalog, but today Tagalog and English words have ceaselessly permeated the Chabacano-speakers’ vocabulary. Eighty-six percent of Zamboangueño was Spanish; 2.32 percent Tagalog; 1.78 percent Cebuano and 0.35 percent Hiligaynon. The Yakans, Tausugs, Subanons continue with their lexical contributions to Zamboangueño. Linguists propose the monogenetic source or One-source Theory of Chabacano, meaning the Creole language originated from Manila and Cavite and therefrom spread to Zamboanga and other parts of Mindanao during colonial times. The Chabacano language possesses its own grammar, morphology, syntax, and dictionaries. And the four variants, *i.e.*, Caviteño, Zamboangueño, Ternateño, Ermitense or Ermitaño further have literary treasures found in textbooks, souvenir programs, theses, studies, and surveys. Our article has some literary excerpts (poems, short stories, novels, sarsuwelas, folk songs, riddles) from Jose Rizal, Jesus Balmori, and Eliodoro Ballesteros. Some associations and local government units have organized classes for young and old students, promoted Chabacano culture through short films, new songs, conferences, published textbooks and dictionaries. Chabacano therefore shall continue to be the lingua franca of hundreds of thousands in Zamboanga City and among Caviteño families in the Diaspora.

KEYWORDS

Chabacano, Creole Spanish, Caviteño Ermitense, Zamboangueño, Ternatense, José Rizal, Jesús Balmori, Eliodoro Ballesteros, Chabacano poems, folksongs, dictionaries.

WHAT IS THE CHABACANO LANGUAGE?

For Dr. Manuel Seco, Spanish academician and author of *Manual de la gramática española* [Handbook of Spanish Grammar], Chabacano is a *dialecto español*. Spanish philologist Don Antonio Quilis fondly calls the Chabacano tongue *entrañable criollo hispanofilipino* [cherished Philippine Creole Spanish]. Keith Whinnom, Hong Kong scholar, termed it in 1956 as a *Spanish contact vernacular*. Some Filipinos ridicule it, dubbing it as a *lengua de tienda, lengua'y tienda* [language of the marketplace], *español del Parián* [Spanish of the Chinese district], *español de trapo* [rag Spanish], *castila-castilahan* [Spanish imitation], *lengua carihán* [eatery language] and *español de entresuelo* [mezzanine Spanish]. A Cavite historian refers to it as *the patois of Cavite*.¹ It is a supposedly crude language that impairs some Filipinos' conceitedly exquisite tastes accustomed to the literary gems in the common language of Cervantes, Rizal, and Ruben Darío. Yet, Don Norberto Romuáldez declared in 1933 that in this Philippine Creole Spanish and "underneath the coarse characteristics of its form, the Filipino soul embraces the Spanish soul, and in the process both are fused together as one."² Dr. Cesar E. A. Virata, president of Cavite Historical Society, recognized

Chabacano as “one of the oldest creole languages in the world and the only creole Spanish in Asia.”³

This Creole Spanish tongue is up to this day an active vehicle of communication in the intimacy of Filipino homes in provinces, so geographically distant from each other, yet so closely bonded by their common Filipino-Spanish heritage whose popular name is *Chabacano* or *Chavacano*. It is basically Spanish despite evident alterations in morphology, phonology, syntax, and lexicon.

Some simply love to describe Chabacano as the linguistic Filipinization of Castilian Spanish. For them, the Chabacano spoken extensively in southern Mindanao is the “*Visayization*” of the Spanish language. Similarly, the Cavite Chabacano is the “*Tagalization*” of Spanish. It is also accurate to affirm that both are Hispanized Filipino dialects. Chabacano was a means of communication of communities in the past that attempted to do away with language barriers that separated them from their colonial rulers. Chabacano was indeed the outcome of the continuous efforts of local entrepreneurs who strove to talk business with their colonizers and fortunately succeeded in their endeavor through the originally pidgin tongue.

All the editions of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, including that in 1956, gave us only two meanings of *chabacano*, which as translated are the following: 1. of poor taste, of low quality, ridiculous, unworthy of esteem and appreciation, vulgar, tacky, coarse, crass; 2. Mex. apricot. The 1992 edition already

included—fortunately—the third meaning of *chabacano*: *lengua mixta de español y dialectos indígenas, hablada en Mindanao y otras islas filipinas*. Nine years later, in its 2001 edition, the third meaning was revised to finally give us the correct definition: “language spoken in the Philippine cities of Zamboanga, Basilan, and Cavite [Provinces] where the Spanish vocabulary and phrases predominate over the Tagalog or Bisayan grammatical structure.”⁴

During the Spanish regime, it was a widespread practice for Spaniards themselves, both *peninsulares* and *insulares*, to adapt and use the creole tongue in their dealings with townsfolk in haciendas, in shipyards, in the marketplace, at church, and in the street. With minimal effort and practice, Spanish residents spoke the language with ease. Cavite Chabacano is essentially the simplification of Castilian morphology, patterned after Tagalog syntax with a naturally developed adaptation of Spanish phonetics, which has autochthonous phonetics as basis.

From studies made in the 1990s, we learn that the Spanish lexicon of Chabacano Caviteño comprised 94 percent of its totality. A mere 6 percent of its lexicon was Tagalog. Eighty-six percent of Zamboangueño was Spanish; 2.32 percent Tagalog; 1.78 percent Cebuano and 0.35 percent Hiligaynon. The Yakans, Tausugs, Subanons, or Subanens continue with their lexical contributions to Creole Spanish. English and Tagalog through the mass media as well as social media have relentlessly stepped up their permeating influences in the Chabacano de Zamboanga.

HISTORY AND ORIGINS

Two theories have been advanced to trace the roots of Chabacano. Linguistics Professor Keith Whinnom advocates one sole origin of this creole Spanish. His *One-source Theory* is as follows: In the mid-17th century, Spain shipped a group of two hundred families from Ternate in the Moluccas Isles to Manila Bay. These migrants known as *márdikas* were sent to fortify the Spanish defense posts against the Chinese corsair Koxinga. These families spoke a pidgin tongue that had a mixture of Creole Portuguese, Spanish, and Malayan. In the beginning, they took root in what is now Bagumbayan. On account of quarrels with the residents, they had to move to the modern communities of Tanza and Ternate. Not long afterward, the Caviteño dialect was formed. Its source would be the creole tongue of Ternate, mixed with the Spanish spoken by native troops and with some elements of Tagalog. When Spain occupied Zamboanga again in 1718, the troops assigned there spoke the Filipino creole Spanish that traced its roots to Manila Bay. The Zamboanga creole Spanish originated in Zamboanga City that soon after spread to Basilan, Jolo, Cotabato, and Davao.

The *Two-source Theory* is advanced by Charles Frake. In a 1971 article, he suggests two sources of Chabacano, independent of and distinct from each other. Equipped with semantic and lexical arguments, Frake propounds total independence insofar as the development of Zamboangueño and Caviteño is concerned. Zamboanga scholars, except for Hermenegildo Malcampo, Roberto Torres, and Rolando Santos, reject Charles Frake's *Two-*

source Theory. Hence, the minimal divergences in lexical content cannot do away with the tremendous weight of syntactical and morphological similarities of both homogenous dialects. Such preponderance postulates to a greater degree Whinnom's *One-source Theory*.

CHABACANO GRAMMAR IN ITS FOUR VARIANTS: ERMITENSE/ ERMITAÑO, CAVITEÑO, TERNATEÑO, ZAMBOANGUEÑO

The Chabacano Ermitense, Ermiteño or Ermitaño, before fading into the sunset had given birth to Chabacano Ternateño, now known popularly as Bahra, the Ermita district of Manila—Ermitense, although the two hundred Ternate families later moved to Cavite. It is believed that Ermitense had preserved the Ternateño dialect in its archaic form. Dr. Jaime de Veyra believes that Ermitense differs from Caviteño “only by its greater correction, by contact with correct Spanish.”⁵

The pre-war years found Ermita with 12,000 people who spoke Creole Spanish. World War II and the disastrous Liberation forces reduced Ermita to shambles. The Liberation of Manila by the American soldiers eventually freed the capital from the atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese Imperial Army Forces. In the process, the American troops especially through shelling demolished the once-plush district of Ermita.⁶ Intramuros was almost totally destroyed during the Liberation of Manila in February 1945. The residents of Ermita abandoned the land of their birth. In Cavite City, the language could not die easily because the Chabacano-speaking family members return to their birthplace for their roots during

Semana Santa liturgical rites, Christmas holidays, All Saints' Day, and family reunions stemming from baptism, demise, or interment of relatives. Most of all, they go back on those two weekends of November for the solemn rites of the Feast of *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad de Porta Vaga*. Caviteño emigrants in the Diaspora—in Metro Manila and the United States of America—do not easily forget their language, which is still spoken in the intimacy of their homes. Thus the Caviteño language stubbornly refuses to fade away.

Some pessimistic observers surmise that the Chabacano of Cavite will perish with this present generation. In their opinion, what will be left fifty years from now is nothing but the fond memories of that beloved Philippine creole Spanish where the Filipino and Spanish souls were once in firm embrace and were fused as one. There have been many prophecies regarding the eventual death of Caviteño and Ternateño. In fact, in 1956 Whinnom—author of the classic *Spanish Contact Vernaculars in the Philippine Islands*—predicted: “This language is doomed to extinction, probably in the space of another generation.” In 1996, retired Prof. Librada Llamado of the Philippine Normal University, Manila, revealed to us at the Cavite City Library: “*Cuando ya escribí mi tesis [An Analysis of the Basic Structures of Cavite Chabacano] el año 1969, ya predicé yo qui dentro de veinte años di desaparací ya el chabacano na nisó ciudad. Gracias a Dios qui tiene pa rin mga ta platicá Chabacano hasta ahora*” (“When I wrote my thesis in 1969, I prophesied that within twenty years Chabacano would vanish from our city. Thank God, there are still people who speak Chabacano until now”).

Chabacano/Chavacano de Zamboanga is the *lingua franca* today of Zamboanga City and Basilan province, Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay. It is also spoken in Semporna in eastern Sabah, Malaysia which is close to the Zamboanga Peninsula and Sulu. Some Tausugs, Samals, the Yakans of Basilan, Muslims of Tawi-Tawi also speak the Chabacano of Zamboanga.⁷ Chabacano de Davao or Davaoeño is spoken in some parts of Davao. Cotabateño is Creole Spanish in Cotabato City; some families from Zamboanga were taken by a Jesuit missionary in the late 19th century to Tamontaka. The Chabacano then spread to other parts of Cotabato.⁸

The Chabacano in these places went through the strong influence of Cebuano Visayan, Yakan, Tagalog, Subanen, Hiligaynon, Tausug, Sama-Banguingui, and Ilocano. With the continuous invasion of Tagalog and English mass media, it is not strange to hear code-switching and loan words in ordinary Chabacano conversations. Languages being dynamic, code-switching and loan words are inevitable.

The influence of Tagalog is mirrored in the Chabacano spoken in some parts of historic Cavite City and in the coastal Cavite town of Ternate. The peripheral influences of Cebuano and Tagalog are summed up in syntactic, morphological, and phonetic structures and forms. The predominant lexical base of both Chabacano dialects is Spanish, over 90 percent of it. Doubtless, a “legitimate” Cavite Puerto resident can perfectly understand a Basilan-born Filipino. Both can fully communicate with each other in their common Chabacano language.

**CHABACANO-SPEAKING POPULATION:
ZAMBOANGA, TERNATE, CAVITE CITY,
ERMITA (MANILA)**

It would not be untimely to recall that in 1600 only 200 families in the Philippines could express themselves in Chabacano. The Zamboangueño variant is doubtless very much alive. We hate to disappoint Dr. Whinnon, but the Chabacano language is not extinct. The 1995 population figures disclosed that in Zamboanga City about 214,000 speak the language or a little less than 50 percent of the total population. But nationwide the Chabacano-speaking population was 307,000 in 1995. In the same year, Cavite City had 3,316 people who spoke Chabacano as mother tongue, or 3.59 percent of the total population of 92,391. Ternate had 3,194 or 22.47 percent of its 1995 population of 14,215. Statistics further revealed that Cavite City’s Chabacano is spoken by 34,215 and Ternateño by 6,843 speakers in the entire country.

In 1990 the total number of Filipinos who spoke Chabacano as mother tongue reached only 292,630. The 1990 census did not specify the five variants or dialects. What follow are very interesting figures covering the entire archipelago. They were culled from the 1995 national census and presaged a bright future of Chabacano:

Cavite City Chabacano		34,215 (0.05%)
Ternate Chabacano		6,843 (0.01%)
Cotabato Chabacano		20,529 (0.03%)

Davao Chabacano		54,744 (0.08%)
Zamboanga Chabacano		307,940 (0.45%)
Total Philippine Population (1995)		68,431,213

Today we have identified the Chabacano de Zamboanga-speaking localities in the Philippines including Zamboanga City, Cotabato City (Tamuntaca), Cavite City, Ternate (Cavite), Davao City, Basilan Province, Margosatubig in Zamboanga del Sur, and other localities in the Zamboanga Peninsula. A recent research survey conducted by Dr. Cecilia Fortun-Genuino claimed that Davaoeño is dead and so is Ermiteño.⁹

According to the 1995 national census, there were 424,273 Filipinos who spoke Chabacano as their mother tongue. In the national census taken in the year 2000, the Chabacano speakers had gone up to 607,200 dispersed all over the Philippines, their total population reaching 76.51 million.¹⁰ In 2009, Dr. Chester Coronel of WMSU surmised that the Chabacano speakers must already be over a million in the whole Philippines and the Filipino Diaspora. The 2010 census showed the population of Zamboanga City alone as 807,129.

**CHABACANO LITERATURE
(NOVEL, PLAY, POEMS, ESSAY)**

It has been our ardent desire, as part of our crusade, to preserve and promote Chabacano and collect literary

works. Through these two decades of research on Chabacano language variants, we have gathered theses, dictionaries, textbooks, articles, newspaper columns, cds, research journals, anthologies, and fiesta souvenir programs. Likewise, we compiled short stories, plays, folk songs, essays, proverbs, riddles, and most of all poems, which shall be preserved for the next generations of Filipinos. In our private collection, we have Chabacano poetry or versions of famed poems that “speak about individual feelings,” relate a story of a person who sees the world from a viewpoint all his own, or “on behalf of a nation or community,” or “communicate(s) unspeakable aspects of human experience.” In the process we can take pride in this cherished and persistent Hispanic legacy termed Philippine Creole Spanish. The Creole language is perpetuated in the classical works of Filipino heroes and poets: José Rizal, Jesús Balmori, and Eliodoro Ballesteros. Here now is a Chabacano excerpt from Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo*:

José Rizal

En Manila, en una dulcería que había cerca de la Universidad, muy frecuentada por estudiantes, se comentaban las prisiones de esta manera:

—*Ya cogí ba con Tadeo?* preguntaba la dueña.

—*Abá, ñora*, contestaba un estudiante que vivía en Parián, *pusilau ya!*

—*¡Pusilau! ¡Nakú! ¡No pa ta pagá conmigo su deuda!*

—*¡Ay! No jablá vos puelte, ñora, baká pa di quedá vos cómplice. ¡Ya quemá yo ñga el libro que ya dale prestau conmigo! ¡Baká pa di riquisá y di encontrá! ¡Andá vos listo, ñora!*

—*¿Ta quedá dice preso Isagani?*

—*Loco-loco también aquel Isagani, decía el estudiante indignado; no sana di cogí con ele, ta andá pa presentá! ¡O, bueno ñga, que topá rayo con ele! ¡Siguro pusilau!*

La señora se encogió de hombros.

—*Connmigo no ta debí nada! ¿Y cosa di jasé Paulita?*

—*No di faltá novio, ñora. Siguro di llorá un poco, luego di casá con un español.*¹¹

Jesús Balmori, poet, essayist, novelist, short-story writer

The prolific Filipino poet, short-story writer, essayist, and novelist Jesús Balmori was born on 10 January 1887 in Ermita, Manila. He studied at Colegio de San Juan de Letrán, where he graduated with *Bachiller en Artes* and later at the University of Santo Tomas. At age 17, the precocious young man published his first book of poetry titled *Rimas malayas* (1904). Also in 1904, Balmori published a zarzuela *Aves de rapaña*. His novel *Bancarrota de almas* saw print in 1910. His satirical work *Se deshojó la flor* as well as his last novel *Pájaros de fuego* were published in 1915. In 1928, his book of satirical poems *El libro de mis vidas manileñas* came out in 1928. A collection of his best poems *Mi casa de nipa* was published in 1938. One of the three sonnets by Balmori that we discovered is the following:

Por causa del sirena

*Ya amanesé na playa, hinchado como un bola.
Seguro que ele joben todobía y hermoso...*

*Na su cuerpo tendido ta rebrincha el maná ola,
 Ele no ta miñeá na profundo reposo.
 El ojos negro de ele ta todobía abierto.
 El ropas destrosado, el cuerpo con herida.
 Seguro más de un día que ta flota ele muerto.
 Seguro no hay quien sabe que ya perdé ele el bida.
 Y ta jablá un soltera que ta quita el arena
 Del ojos de ele:—Pijo que ya canta un sirena
 Y ya quedá encantado el pobre pescador...
 Pijo.... porque na bida ta disgrasiá el mana hombre
 Por causa de ese mana Sirena o cosa nombre
 Que ilotros y nisós ta podé llamá Amor...*

Balmori likewise wrote a short story *Na maldito arena* [On the accursed sand], whose first paragraphs are the following:

Na maldito arena

*Ta sumí el sol na pondo del mar.
 Y el mar, callao el boca, ta jugá con su mana marejadas como
 un muchacha nerviosa con su mana pulseras.
 El biento no más el que ta alborotá; el biento y el pecho de
 Pelisa, que ta lleno de sampaguitas na puera y ta lleno de
 suspiros na dentro. Y ele, tan guapa, que ta compará todo el
 gente con el Vílgen Santísima de Guía, que ta llena de piores y
 candelas na iglesia; ele, tan pelís, que ta jablá el mana soltera,
 su mana compañera, como pájaro, no hay más bida sino bolá y
 cantá, ta llorá agora, ta suspirá agora y ta clabá bueno el bista
 na olas y na cielos.*

Eliodoro Ballesteros y Aquino¹²

The poet was born at Barrio Soledad, San Roque, now part of Cavite City, on 18 February 1891. His parents were Pedro and Consolacion and his siblings were Pura, Esteban, Jose, and Jesus. Eliodoro married Purificacion Jose y Cresini, by whom he had two children, Edgardo and Elena. Ballesteros joined the *Confederación de los Caballeros Libres del Oriente* and the *Caballeros de los Trece Mártires de Cavite*. He was an illustrious member of Circulo Chavacano which was established on 26 September 1964. At age 82, he died of toxemia on 21 June 1973 and was buried at the Cavite City public cemetery.

El Chavacano caviteño

*Nisós el maná heraldo di esti local dialecto
 Qui ta anunciá na mundo bajo el brillo del sol,
 Como un herencia santo, grandioso y nuay depecto
 Compuesto del lenguaje tagalo y español.
 Desde tres cientos año di convivencia grato
 Qui ya tini Cavite cun el Conquistador,
 Ya nací el chavacano qui nisós cada rato
 Ta plática cun gusto, cun orgullo y honor.
 Formao esti di un mezcla di culurao y blanco
 Qui ya resulta di rosas esti combinación;
 Culurao el tagalo, el castellano el blanco
 Y rosas el chavacano—nisós conversación.*

Rosa Sevilla de Alvero

The Filipino educator and foundress of Instituto de Mujeres (1900) in Manila, Rosa Sevilla de Alvero published

the play *Prisionera de Amor* in Tondo in 1922. Dialogues in Chabacano Ermitense abound in the three-act play and they thus show the deftness of the Fil-Hispanic author in the Creole tongue. It was shown in several theaters in Manila. But the greatest success was the presentation of *Prisionera de amor* on an improvised stage in Cavite City. The residents wildly applauded the play. What had most caught the attention and interest was the fact that Rosa Sevilla de Alvero, who “grew up in a Tagalog-speaking district in Manila was able to perfectly assimilate the Creole language, even its language nuances.” Here follow some lines from the Spanish play *Prisionero del amor* delivered by a character named Juan about their guests’ extramarital affairs:

—*Si mirá vos ñol Chengoy tan impiñao para admití con ele na sociedad del gran carabao y ñol Popiong na sociedad del gran venado. ¡Aba! No quiere vos creé. Agora el mana marido el que ta empeñá de sel colnudo. Mira vos ñol Melendres. El mismo el que ta jablá que aquel ñora María Luisita ta poní cuernos con ele.*

**CHABACANO SONGS: NO TE VAYAS DE
ZAMBOANGA, CAVITEÑO SOY;
EL LENGUAJE CHABACANO**

Maria Clara L. Lobregat, then mayor and later representative of Zamboanga City, and her son Celso who followed her footsteps, both left no stone unturned in promoting Chabacano culture, sponsoring song-writing contests, reprinting the *Bernardino Camins Dictionary and Chabacano de Zamboanga Handbook*, producing

compact discs of new and old Chabacano folk songs and pop music.¹³ They constantly used Chabacano on formal occasions and in informal situations. The Chabacano musicians Tranquilino Gregorio and Titang Jaldon were encouraged to bring out their musical compositions. The following is by Titang Jaldon, who composed the music and wrote the lyrics:

El Lenguaje Chabacano
Music and lyrics: Titang Jaldon

*El chabacano ya salé na lengua español
Difícil entendé si jende na Zamboanga ya salé
El chabacano original, bien diferente, ay que bien formal
Semejante na español, pero si no hay tu sabé
Difícil entendé.*

*Mezclao y aumentao maga palabra, pero mucho siempre el español
Mezclao palabra muslim, poco chino, visaya y tagalog pa
Por eso al oír este lenguaje difícil entendé
Maga palabra aumentao ya queda bien complicao
El chabacano.*

FUTURE OF THE CHABACANO LANGUAGE

Since 1999, several conferences on this Philippine creole Spanish as our cherished Hispanic Heritage have been convened in various universities and cities in our country. The objective was mainly to bring some degree of awareness and interest among Filipinos and foreign

audiences. The programs for promotion and preservation grew by leaps and bounds through the decades.

In October 2000, Ateneo de Manila University and Instituto Cervantes Manila co-sponsored an international conference titled *Shedding Light on the Chabacano Language*. Scholars from foreign countries, like John Holm, Michael Forman, John Lipski, and Stephen Wurm read their interesting papers on the Philippine Creole Spanish.¹⁴ The year before, in November 1999, there was a national conference on the present and future of Chabacano Zamboangueno at the Ateneo de Zamboanga, co-sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Culture.

On 29 September 1999, the UP Diliman Department of European Languages held a *Symposium on the Chabacano of Cavite and Zamboanga* with two lecturers. Benjamin L. Saavedra read a highly informative paper on *The Chabacano de Zamboanga*. The most applauded part of the program was the *Sarsuwela Chabacana*, which was hitherto unheard of. The musical farce was performed by a group of college students from Saint Joseph College, Cavite City with Nicolo Santo Tomas as director. Music history scholars and zarzuela enthusiasts were surprised to watch the *Sarsuwela Chabacana*.

On 15 February 2008, with the support of the European Languages Department under its Chair Wistan de la Peña, we successfully celebrated the unique *Pestibal del Chabacano na UP Diliman* that took place at the Jorge Vargas Museum and Filipiniana Center as its departmental

contribution to the UP Centennial (1908-2010). It was attended by the Spanish ambassador, UP administrative officials, students, faculty members, linguists, and cultural enthusiasts. The academic-cultural event was held with the cooperation of the Cavite Historical Society, former Prime Minister Cesar E. A. Virata, Zamboanga Representative Isabel Climaco, Cavite City Mayor Bernardo Paredes, and the UP College of Arts and Letters.

During the whole-day *Pestibal del Chabacano na UP Diliman*, leading promoters and experts read papers on the Chabacano Zamboangueño, Caviteño, Ternateño (or Bahra) and the now-extinct Ermitaño or Ermitense. Zamboanga City Representative Isabel Climaco spoke of the incessant institutional efforts to promote and maintain the language in her district. Several pupils from Julian Felipe Elementary School of San Antonio, Cavite City, did a skit entitled *O muchachita muy guapita* and choral recitation of the poems *El ponu* and *El Trece Mártires del Ciudad de Cavite* written by Dr. Enrique Escalante. We read a paper on the extinct Chabacano Ermitense which continues to live in poems, novels and short stories penned by José Rizal, Jesús Balmori, Rosa Sevilla de Alvero and Eliodoro Ballesteros.

In July 2009, a national conference entitled “Chabacano Language Revisited” was held at De La Salle University-Dasmariñas with Chabacano teachers and scholars from Cavite City, Ternate, and Zamboanga City as speakers. On 19-20 November 2010, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Western Mindanao State University, and DLSU-Dasmariñas sponsored the *National*

Chabacano Conference: Commemorating the Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2010. The national conference invited a wide array of experts who spoke on the history, development, teaching strategies, proposal for the collection of literary works, preservation, and private and government efforts for the awareness, interest, and promotion of Chabacano. Participants from Zamboanga City spoke of their *Consejo de Lenguaje de Zamboanga*, chaired by Roberto B. Torres, who was tasked with formulating its vision, mission, and goals as well as the organizational structure to guide its operations. Shortly after, a seminar workshop on teaching Chabacano to kindergarten and Grade 1 pupils, using the textbook written by Torres, was held at the same university.

In 2012, Zamboanga City Councilor Vincent Paul Elago authored City Ordinance No. 374 which celebrates the annual Foundation Day of the Chabacano Language every 23rd of June. The official *Día de Fundación de Chabacano* commemorates the laying of the cornerstone of Fort Pilar on 23 June 1635. They held the usual programs with speeches, and contests of every genre.

On 2-3 July 2012, the Instituto Cervantes de Manila invited Filipino and American scholars to talk about Zamboangueño and Caviteño. Native speakers from Zamboanga City, Cavite City, and Ternate conversed in their native dialects and understood one another to the pleasant surprise of the audience. Two musicians spoke about their musical creations and played them before the audience on the second day at the *Salón de Actos*. Earlier that afternoon, four independent short films by Zamboanga

directors, curated by Teddy Co, were showcased at the Cine Chabacano.

NOTES

- 1 “The dialect of the common people in a region, differing fundamentally from the literary language,” points out the *Concise English Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 1001. Another dictionary refers to *patois as the dialect of the uneducated or illiterate residents of a city district*.
- 2 “*En este criollo hispanofilipino y bajo las tosquedades de la forma, el alma filipina y la española se abrazan y confunden*,” says Don Norberto Romuáldez, Hispanist, linguist and academician.
- 3 Culled from the keynote speech of Dr. Cesar E .A. Virata at the National Chabacano Conference commemorating Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2010 at Zamboanga City, cf. Evelyn C. Luceño, *National Chabacano Conference: Preserving a Cultural Heritage*, in <http://wmsu.edu.ph/national-chabacano-conference-preserving-a-cultural-heritage.html>. Retrieved June 5, 2013.
- 4 The online dictionary enumerates three meanings: 1. adj. Sin arte o grosero y de mal gusto. 2. m. *Lengua hablada en las ciudades filipinas de Zamboanga, Basilan y Cavite, en la que predomina el vocabulario y las frases españolas sobre una estructura gramatical tagala o bisaya*; 3. m. Méx. albaricoque. *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, 22^a edición, *chabacano*, in <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=chabacano>. Retrieved 7 February 2010. The Royal Spanish Academy had included that meaning in its *Diccionario esencial de la lengua española*, published in Madrid in 2006 on page 314. In its 23rd edition, the voluminous *Diccionario de la Real Española* (Madrid 2014) gives the third meaning of *chabacano* as *lengua criolla de base española y con la estructura gramatical de lenguas nativas, que se habla en Mindanao y otras islas filipinas* [Creole language with Spanish base and with the grammatical structure of native languages, spoken in Mindanao and in other Philippine islands]. See page 495.

- 5 Keith Whinnom, *Spanish Contact Vernaculars in the Philippine Islands* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1956), 12.
- 6 Interview with Guillermo Gómez Rivera of *Academia Filipina de la Lengua Española Inc.*, on 12 March 2013 at the Ateneo de Manila University campus.
- 7 Chester Bernardo Coronel, "Preservation and Promotion of Chabacano Language," in National Historical Commission of the Philippines, *Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2009* (Manila: NHCP, 2011), 29.
- 8 Hermenegildo P. Malcampo, "Origen y formación del Chabacano Zamboangueno," in National Historical Commission of the Philippines, *Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2009* (Manila: NHCP, 2011), 129.
- 9 Cecilia Fortun-Genuino, "Is Chabacano Dying?," in National Historical Commission of the Philippines, *Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2009* (Manila: NHCP, 2011), 20.
- 10 Coronel, 29.
- 11 José Rizal, *El Filibusterismo* (Manila, 1908): 227. Below is León Ma. Guerrero's version:

At a sweetshop in Manila, frequented by students because it was near the University, the following comments on the arrests were being made:

'Has Tadeo been arrested yet?' asked the owner.

'Missis, he has been shot already!' answered a student who lived in the Chinese sector.

'Shot! My sainted mother! But he hasn't paid me his accounts yet!'

'Not so loud, missis. You might be taken for an accomplice. I've already burnt the book he lent me! They might have searched my house and found it. Look sharp, missis!'

'They say Isagani was also arrested.'

'That Isagani was an idiot,' said the indignant student. 'He wasn't going to be arrested at all but he went and gave himself up! Whatever happens to him he deserves it. Shot maybe.'

The shop-owner shrugged her shoulders.

'He didn't owe me anything. But what will Paulita do?'
'She won't lack for sweethearts, missis. Maybe she will cry a little,
then marry a Spaniard.' The translation is in *El Filibusterismo*,
 Manila 1996, 194. *Tatakut* is rendered by Guerrero as *Panic*.

- 12 Willie Pangilinan. *Eliodoro Ballesteros y Aquino (1891-1973). Makatang Caviteño sa Kastilyano at Chavacano*, in *Operation Exposé* 4, no.11 (Septiembre 24-30, 2006): 6.
- 13 Rolando A. Santos, "Chavacano de Zamboanga," in National Historical Commission of the Philippines, *Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day 2009* (Manila: NHCP, 2011), 135.
- 14 *Estudios de Sociolingüística. Linguas, sociedades y culturas*, vol. 2, núm. 2 (2001) Special Issue: Mauro Fernández [ed.] *Shedding Light on the Chabacano Language* (Vigo: Universidad de Vigo, Galicia, 2001).

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