A Comparative Study on the Productive Proficiency Levels among Three Generations of Chabacano Native Speakers of Zamboanga City

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Abstracts: This study looks into the Chabacano speakers' degrees of productive proficiency in Zamboanga City. One hundred ten (110) people aged 12 to 70 are involved. The study uses picture-description exercises to gauge the writing and speaking abilities of Zamboanga City's Chabacano speakers. The findings showed that while writing may improve, Chabacano speakers' speaking skills are acceptable. Speaking and writing exams showed that the Senior Citizen Group performed best. The speakers' speaking and writing exam results show no discernible generational disparities. The Chabacano language is widely used at home, school, work, churches, communities, government institutions, and the media. The researcher suggests creating glossaries and dictionaries, conducting an additional study on Zamboanga Chabacano phonology, and creating more Chabacano teaching resources to make it easier to teach the language in neighborhood schools using mother tongue-based instruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The oldest Creole language in the world is the Chabacano, which has been spoken for nearly 400 years. Additionally, it is the only Creole with Spanish roots that has persisted in Asia (prezi.com/q-8tq ryvota/the Philippines for Vo). Although it shares a characteristic with Malayo-Polynesian languages—namely, the reduplication of vowels—it stands out among Philippine languages because, as Frake noted, it does not belong to the Austronesian language family (1986).

The Creole language, more commonly referred to as Chabacano, is spoken in the Philippines, primarily in Cavite, Cotabato, and other parts of Mindanao. Philippine Creole Spanish is another name for this language, which it is officially called. The largest group of speakers is located in Zamboanga City. A few linguistic differences separate the Cotabato variation of Chabacano from Zamboanga Chabacano, according to Baxter (1984) and Lipski (1986). According to Lipski (1987), the inhabitants continued use of the Zamboanga Chabacano language prevented its extinction. Chabacano, however, is used as a second language in several Zamboanga provinces and in Jolo and the Sulu Archipelago. There are substantial populations of Chabacano speakers among the Filipino diaspora. Zamboanga Chabacano has been recognized as an official regional language in Malaysia and is primarily spoken by migrant Filipinos in Semporna, Sabah (Lipski, 1987).

The researcher is motivated to write a paper to address problems about Chabacano because it has survived despite the appearance of numerous languages. As a result, it is essential to research Chabacano using sociolinguistic concepts as the main theoretical underpinning. The use and upkeep of the three generations of native speakers will receive extra consideration because the study's goal is to ascertain their levels of productive competency. Its theoretical foundation is Haugen's Ecology of Language from 1972. This study aims to compare and evaluate the degrees of productive proficiency among the three generations of Zamboanga City's Chabacano speakers.

2. RELATED LITERATURE

The advancement of knowledge in the field of linguistics led to the development of what is now known as sociolinguistics, and a flood of concepts, particularly those on the assessment of the present state and potential future of a language, entered the scene. With the development of sociolinguistic theories, it is no longer possible to conclude that a language is dying only based on its internal structure. Edwards (1985) offered one sociolinguistic

perspective on the subject, pointing out that "A language's future depends on its speakers, and if it fades or disappears, it is because those speakers' circumstances have changed (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998).

The Spanish word "Chabacano" became Chabacano (Chavacano), "which is code for cheap, inappropriate, and indecent. Chabacano has attracted several scholars from the Philippines and other countries to study it because it is the Creole language. However, linguistics has dominated the majority of the research on Chabacano. The most contentious study, which later raised concerns among many Zamboanguenos, is that of Whinnom (1957), who predicted that Zamboanga Chabacano might soon go extinct after examining its general linguistics character and discovering that it lacked a "defined standard" (Akil, 2000).

However, the Chabacano prediction was remarkably accurate for the varieties spoken in Cavite, Ternate, Ermita, and Davao rather than the Zamboanga variation (Lipski, 1987). The use of these Chabacano dialects may have declined for unknown reasons, but it is generally accepted that the area's major languages have eclipsed them. According to Himoro and Pareja-Lora (2020), the last time Chabacano predominated was in the 1980s. Even though the majority still speaks it, the number of people who can speak Chabacano has been declining at a rate of about 4% every decade. That pattern is unsettling. With 21.5% of the population speaking it, Binisaya is the second most common language in Zamboanga City, behind Tausug (18.0%).

Chabacano is the only creole language among the 135 unique Philippine languages identified by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF, 2015). Zamboanga Chabacano (ZC, also known as "Chavacano" or "Chabacano") is the most widely spoken variety of Philippine Creole Spanish and the only one that is still undergoing natural progress, according to the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (CPH) (National Statistics Office (NSO), 2014; Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 2014). The media played a significant role in preserving the language in the 1980s. According to Lipski's 1980 study, Chabacano has remained unchanged despite being exposed to new vocabulary and grammatical structures from other languages. Lipski claimed that because Chabacano is the primary language of a key cultural, commercial, and political center in the Philippines, it will always have a position in the country's linguistic landscape.

It has yet to be determined how much Chabacano is used in Zamboanga City, decades after Lipski's investigation. Given the rising "net inward" migration that Lipski noted and the widespread use of Filipino as the nation's lingua franca (Gonzales & Bautista, 1986), it is possible that, unless otherwise confirmed by evidence, it is in the process of declining. In Zamboanga City, Akil (2002) studied the usage, competence, and attitudes of native and non-native Chabacano speakers. Age, place of residence, gender, and degree of education were all considered. The study's findings indicate that ZC does not have a diglossic linguistic environment. It could stave off attacks from dominant tongues like Tagalog and English.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language ecology is the study of relationships between a language and its surroundings. The community that uses a language as one of its codes constitutes the language's valid domain. It ties users to nature, their social environments, and the natural world because it only exists in their imaginations. Its interactions with other languages in the minds of bilingual and multilingual speakers are referred to as the psychological side of its ecosystem. As emphasized by Haugen (1972), another part of its surroundings is sociological, which pertains to its interaction with a society in which it functions as a method of communication and is shaped by the individuals who learn it, use it, and pass it on to others.

It does more than only outline the interactions between language speakers. Instead, it deliberately disassembles orders in plain language. In other words, when a language, including its structure and usage, becomes so normalized that it is no longer viewed as erecting a specific ideological line, an ecological approach aims to clarify this. To make obvious what language use is valued and seen as acceptable, conventional, proper, or correct in particular classrooms and schools and who is likely to win or lose in the ideological orientations, it is necessary to "unnatural" these discourses (Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001). According to Hornberger (2002), the main objective of multilingual language policies is to establish an environment conducive to as many languages as practically and theoretically possible.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a mixed-method descriptive survey was conducted. One hundred ten people from ten distinct neighborhoods or villages in Zamboanga City participated in the data collection process. They were divided into three age groups: younger, middle, and older. A lottery mechanism was employed to choose the localities for sampling. At the same time, the local government unit assisted in the referral technique used to choose the specific participants based on inclusion criteria. A self-report questionnaire was used to gather details about each participant's personality, mainly focusing on language use. Picture Description Tasks, on the other hand, were used to gauge the participants' proficiency in speaking and writing Chabacano. The Picture Description Tasks (PDT) were also evaluated using a scale with number ratings for responses such as 3-High, 2-Fair, and 1-Poor.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Productive Proficiency Levels.

Generation	Speaking			Writing		
	M	SD	DR	M	SD	DR
Young Generation (n=21)	1.87	.827	P	1.43	.505	P
Middle Generation (n=34)	2.00	.707	F	1.49	.507	P
Senior Generation (n=55)	2.15	.755	F	1.68	.475	P
Aggregate (n=110)	2.00	.763	F	1.53	.496	P

Note: H=High, F=Fair, & P=Poor

The 110 study participants' levels of productive proficiency are shown in Table 1 where they are combined and arranged by generation. Younger generations have "poor" speaking proficiency (M=1.87, SD=0.827), middle generations have "fair" proficiency (M=2.00, SD=.707), and older generations have "fair" proficiency (M=2.15, SD=0.755). Additionally, the young generation scored "poor" in writing (M=1.43, SD=0.505), the middle-aged generation scored "fair" (M=1.49, SD=.507), and the senior generation scored "fair" (M=1.68, SD=0.475). With a weighted mean of 2.00, the speaking proficiency levels of Chabacano speakers are merely "fair" at best. The weighted mean for Chabacano speakers' writing proficiency is 1.53, considered "poor." It demonstrates that the native Chabacano speakers achieved better speaking proficiency than in writing.

The spoken form of Chabacano has always been predominant. Residents of the region where this language is spoken read most of the literary works created in it (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zamboangue%C3%B1o language). Speaking Chabacano is significantly more common than writing it, in contrast to the use of Spanish in the Philippines, which was more successful as a written language than a spoken one. When describing the image, the researchers and evaluators came across non-Zamboanga Chabacano phrases like:

"Solamente vegetables no hay. Tiene sila weighing scale."

"Tiene tamen trash can y balde tiene agua."

"Este maga shell y camaron."

The description demonstrates that, in fact, other languages have an impact on native speakers' oral delivery because they tend to use English or Tagalog more frequently than Chabacano, except at home. Since most older Zamboanga Chabacano speakers still use Spanish spelling and pronunciation, this was another area that needed improvement. The Chabacano term for the same is "tamen," although the Spanish word "tambien" means "also." Another Spanish term that means "here" is "aqui," although the equivalent word in Chabacano is "aki," though "aqui" is still most frequently used by Zamboanga Chabacano speakers.

"Dol mucho maga ventera mujer."

Because the word "bentera" is a Spanish loan, Zamboanga Chabacano speakers prefer to use the word "ventera" instead of "bentera." Instead of the Spanish word "mujer," Barrios and Bernardo (2012) use the word "muher," which refers to a woman or lady. The issue is that there needs to be a standard uniform Zamboanga Chabacano that the populace should adhere to, which is why words are frequently spelled differently. In some

words, the Filipino alphabet's b, k, s, p, and ny stand in for the original Spanish v, c, z, and f. Hence Filipino pronunciations also differ, as noted by Camins. Vowels a, e, i, o, and u have varied ethnic intonations (1999).

Local terminology, or words of a Philippine etymology, should be spelled in Filipino. Words with a Spanish origin and their variations should be spelled using the original form. However, this rule is only sometimes followed, as some words have lost touch with their original Spanish pronunciations. For example, the verb escoger, which means "to choose," is more frequently written as iscuji or iscugi rather than escogé because these spellings are more in line with modern pronunciation. The grammar of Zamboanga Chabacano is wholly but briefly described in Semorlan's paper Grammatika ng Wikang Chabacano from 1983. She started by describing the language's phonemes, such as the digraph /hr/, the vintage voiceless dental fricative /ө/, and the voiceless alveolo-palatal affricate / tɕ /. However, she did not detail the phonological processes occurring in Zamboanga Chabacano. In recent years, more has been done to advance written Chabacano. However, aside from a few releases from the print media, they have mostly been tokenistic and limited to works of religious and folkloric literature.

The media, Catholic Church, education, and local government in Zamboanga City all use Chabacano in their transactions. The public needs simply access to these resources because there are few books in Chabacano yet. Additionally, Semorlan (1983) only covered word classes, focus, tenses, and aspects when he spoke about morphology. Semorlan demonstrated the major structural components of Zamboanga Chabacano sentences. Most of Zamboanga's vocabulary is borrowed from Spanish and used to describe more typical and recent items. Few Zamboanga words (such as "Puerco," "puelco," and "pig") exhibit the neutralization of the syllable-final /l/ and /r/ that is so typical of Caviteño and Ternateño. In Zamboanga, a few rustic/archaic vocabulary words are still used in informal or rural Spanish. As a result, they cannot be utilized to determine the date of Zamboanga's founding. However, most of the Zamboanga lexicon needs to be more concerned with the chronology of the input Spanish dialects because Philippine Creole Spanish lacks verbal morphology, one of the most critical indicators of a language's marginal or archaic state.

Writers of Chabacano must agree on an alphabet. In the writing portion of the test, most participants used "letrato" rather than "retrato." Some people also used the word "mga," a Filipino word, not a Chabacano word, meaning "maga." Speaking to senior adults in different places in Spanish is remarkably similar. Most interview participants were aware of subsequent usage accumulations typical of modern Zamboanga-Chabacano, especially in terms of more Philippine vocabulary items and syntactic particles. The group achieved a speaking mean of 2.00 and a writing mean of 1.53.

Most of the senior citizens who were interviewed spoke Spanish fluently but occasionally struggled to distinguish between "Spanish" and "Zamboanga Chabacano," suggesting that the latter term had once been used to describe Spanish derivatives that were much less creolized than modern Zamboanga-Chabacano. Some elderly Zamboanga Chabacano speakers combined pure Spanish features, including conjugated verbs, gender, number agreement, and more Spanish-like word order. In contrast, only younger Zamboanga inhabitants and a few radio announcers occasionally utilize Spanish writing systems. On the other hand, the participants in the middle-aged group were able to think of lexical elements. However, they had not explicitly commented on the Spanish morphological inflection usage.

The younger generation of volunteers frequently needed to understand more than the bare minimum when the researcher requested them to utilize Zamboanga Chabacano. At the same time, some remarked (maybe inaccurately) that their great-grandparents or grandparents talked similarly. Senior citizens who have weathered the winds of change that brought English and Tagalog into Zamboangueños' daily lives make up a more significant percentage of those who use Chabacano in this dimension; some of the oldest can still remember the last days of the Spanish era.

Except for the vowels with the acute accent (á, é, ó,), the vowel u with diaeresis (ü), and words with Spanish roots in Chabacano are written using the Latin script. Locally derived words in Chabacano are likewise written in the Latin script and are spelled appropriately. As a result, the letter k is most common in terms with Austronesian roots or loanwords borrowed from other Philippine languages (words such as kame, kita, kanamon, kaninyo). In Chabacano writing, there are some additional characters as well, such as the ñ (eñe, representing the phoneme /ɲ/, a letter distinct from n, although typographically composed of an n with a tilde), the digraph ch (che, representing

the phoneme /tʃ/), the ll (elle, representing the phoneme /ʎ/), and the digraph rr (erre with strong r).

Spanish orthography is typically used to write and spell words of Spanish origin (fiesta, casa). When words are pronounced locally (manok, kanon; see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chabacano language), they are written and spelled using the native orthography for those languages. However, words with local origins, such as jendeh or cogon, are written and spelled in their respective languages using Spanish spelling conventions. In the past, regardless of their origin, all Chabacano nouns were written using the Spanish spelling (kita = quita, kame=came). In addition, several letters (gente=jente, cerveza=serbesa) were orthographically swapped because they had identical phonetic values. Acute accents and diaeresis are rarely utilized in modern Chabacano compositions and are typically reserved for linguistic or highly structured texts. Additionally, in informal communications, the letters ñ and ll are occasionally swapped out for /ny/ and /ly/. The significant difference between the levels of productive proficiency was ascertained using ANOVA. The results revealed no discernible difference between the individuals' speech and writing abilities. When data are sorted by generation, the speaking test results of the Chabacano speakers are comparable (younger, middle adult, and senior citizen groups). The F value of 1.244 has a probability value of 0.292, which is higher than the alpha value of 0.05. It indicates that there is no significance to the probability value. It also demonstrates that, when grouped by a generation of Chabacano speakers, the speaking test results of Chabacano speakers are comparable. Given that all three generations received fair interpretations for their weighted averages, it suggests that the generation of Chabacano speakers—younger, middle-aged, or senior citizen groups—does not affect their speaking abilities. When data are categorized by generation, there is no discernible variation in the writing test results for Chabacano speakers (younger, middle adult, and senior citizen groups). The F value of 2.083 has a probability value of .130, which is higher than the alpha value of 0.05. It indicates that there is no significance to the probability value. It demonstrates that when divided by generation, the writing test results of Chabacano speakers remain relatively the same. The 110 study participants used the Zamboanga Chabacano language very much at home, school, work, community, church, government offices, and media, according to data from the self-report questionnaire. In addition, Chabacano and other family members are used by every household member, including the mother, father, sister, brother, and grandparents.

The Zamboangueño creole is thriving and serves as the regional lingua franca in elementary education, broadcasting, and to a lesser extent, the press (Reinecke et al., 1975). In contrast to dialects in the north, Zamboangueño has also been influenced by the Visayan and Hiligaynon languages of the region, which, together with Tagalog, account for approximately 20% of its lexicon (Frake, 1971). Creole dialects are "very easily mutually comprehensible" (Molony, 1977). According to Valles-Akil (2000), who cited census data from 1995, 44.5% of people in Zamboanga speak Chabacano as their mother tongue. Languages spoken in Zamboanga City ranked: First, Chabacano Cebuano 2. Tausug 3. 4. Samal; also, Subanon, Hiligaynon, Chinese (Hokkien), and Spanish. Chabacano is developing as a second language in the area and is also used as a lingua franca.

CONCLUSION

The researcher was able to reach the following conclusions after doing a thorough examination of the information gleaned from the sources above. Speaking is moderately fruitful for Chabacano speakers, but writing is not. The middle-aged group, the younger generation, and the senior citizen group all scored higher on the speaking test. All received justifications. In writing tests, the senior citizen group performed best, followed by the middle-aged and younger generations. All, however, required more accurate readings. When data are categorized by generation, no discernible variations are found in the speakers' speaking and writing test results. The Chabacano language is widely spoken at home, school, work, churches, communities, government institutions, and the media.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests that an intervention be implemented to raise the speaking and writing proficiency of native Chabacano speakers from poor to fair. To create a lexicography and orthography for the Zamboanga Chabacano language that is standardized, and acceptable to all, in-depth research should be done on the language's phonology including other productive skills such as reading and listening. Additional research is needed to determine the degree to which Spanish fossilized grammatical elements such as the copula, passivity, and pluralization among others, to assess their extent of use in the language It is necessary to distinguish between formal, casual, and common vocabulary and structure to highlight the Zamboanga Chabacano language's

distinctiveness and honorific system. Additional research is being done to standardize the Zamboanga Chabacano spelling to make it easier to teach the language in schools as part of mother tongue-based training.

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