

THE COTABATO CHABACANO (Ct) VERB*

Maria Isabelita O. Riego de Dios, RVM
Ateneo de Manila University-Philippine Normal College Consortium

1. A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction. There is clear evidence within the past 20 years of a growing interest in Philippine Creole Spanish (PCS). Of significance is Frake's observation (1972:223):

Philippine Creole Spanish (known in the Philippines as Chabacano) is not simply a Philippine language with unusually heavy Spanish lexical influence, nor is it Spanish with a large number of Philippine loan words. It is a distinct language, easily distinguishable from both its Romance and its Austronesian progenitors. As implied by the name I gave it (this label for the language is composed according to the principles suggested by Hockett 1958: 424), Philippine Creole Spanish shares enough in common with the classic creoles of the Caribbean that no one, whatever his position in the various controversies on the subject, would, I think, challenge its assignment to the category 'creole language'.

Except for passing mention by Macansantos (1971) and Forman (1972) that there are Zamboanga Chabacano speakers in Cotabato, no study has been made of Cotabato Chabacano (Ct from hereon) as a language identified with a speech community of its own.¹

1.2 Native Ct speakers. Those who claim to speak Ct are those who belong to the old families of the original capital of the Province of Cotabato, which is now Cotabato City proper. What is considered as the speech community of Ct includes the immediate geographical environs which extend to Tamontaka, the river *poblacion* and first Christian settlement of the province (founded early 19th C), as well as the old bay *poblaciones* of Parang (1854) and its neighbor, Polloc Point, the old minor Spanish naval base.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of Ct speakers today. In this connection, a rough estimate of the number of Ct speakers in three generations of a typical Ct family was made.² Whereas the first generation had 100% Ct speakers, the second had only 98.9%, and the third generation had an abrupt drop with only 20.92% Ct speakers. The third generation represents the children born within the period of the past 20 years.

1.3 The socio-cultural background of Ct. There is always the open question of whether Ct is a distinct Chabacano variant as opposed to the other existing PCS or is a mere outgrowth of Zamboanga Chabacano (Zm from hereon).

*A longer version of this paper was presented at the International Conference of Pidgins and Creoles held in Honolulu, Hawaii in January 1975.

The summary of data which follows traces the possible process of creolization that may have taken place in the formation of Ct. Significant data was extracted from Madigan and Cushner (1961) entitled 'Tamontaka reduction: A community approach to mission work'.³

During the Spanish occupation of the Philippines, in the latter 19th C, Tamontaka, a *poblacion* some three miles south of the townsite of Cotabato (Cotabato City now) was the headquarters of a Spanish military garrison and center of Spanish authority over Central Mindanao.

In 1861, the Jesuit Superior of the Philippine Mission conceived the idea of a Catholic village community (referred to as *reducción*, patterned after the Jesuit project in Paraguay) which was to be composed of Muslim converts located in the heart of Muslim land.⁴ This community, as it was conceived, would be made up of exemplary Catholic men and women who would win the Muslims to the Faith by sheer force of good example. Because the village would be situated in or near the center of the Muslim territory, they would be on familiar terms with the Muslims of their neighborhood.

With funds in their hands, the missionaries ransomed the first group of children from the slave market on September 9, 1872. This became the nucleus of the ideal Christian village as envisioned in 1861. The ransoming of slaves was made possible because slavery was practised among the Muslim chieftains and slave children could be purchased at almost any desired age. By 1875, there were 100 boys and girls in the orphanage built for this purpose, with the boys completely segregated from the girls.

1.4 The socio-cultural situation. The children from this Christian village, who were originally Muslims, were shielded from their religion and culture during their period of formation in the orphanage. And as they grew into adulthood, the Christian culture of their community life at Tamontaka was expected to penetrate the Muslim culture of the surrounding areas without itself being weakened by the contact. The confines of the ideal village did not make it remote from the white man, because the institution needed the protection of the Spanish army and the children were educated by the Spanish priests in the Spanish language. Later, in 1875, the first group of Filipino Sisters (now known as the Religious of the Virgin Mary) arrived at Tamontaka to assist the Fathers in the formation of the children. Spanish continued to be taught. Thus the children were remote from the Muslims of the place, although their remoteness was cultural, not spatial.

In the Tamontaka situation, the Muslim child came into the institution as an isolated individual without group backing to support performance of the culture patterns which he had previously known. The child had his formation in the Muslim culture as a child. But he also possessed a child's plasticity to adapt to new social patterns. These circumstances greatly affected the resulting community culture and therefore affected the language as well.

The children were trained to speak Spanish inside the house, but were encouraged to speak Magindanao outside. This 'bilingual' situation was considered important for their later contacts with the Muslims and in achieving the apostolic vision for which the village was organized. At this point, it was noted by the chroniclers that the language that the children spoke was in fact less Magindanao than Chabacano, a mixture of Spanish and Magindanao words, expressions and grammar. (Underscoring mine.)

1.5 The Zamboanga contact. By 1879, there were 127 boys and girls in the institution. In 1882, the number had increased to 148 boys and girls. However, not all these children

were ransomed slaves. During a cholera epidemic in Zamboanga at about this time, many lives were claimed and many were left orphans. These Zamboanga orphans were sent to the Tamontaka orphanage, bringing about added language contact in the Tamontaka situation. Thus, by 1897, there were 250 children in the institution and more than 100 families made up the Tamontaka community.

With the withdrawal of the Spanish forces from Tamontaka at the advent of the Spanish-American War, the Missionaries decided to bring to safety to Zamboanga the younger children, the nuns, and some sixty-odd families, totalling about 400 people. After the war, some of these people chose to return to Tamontaka, while the rest remained and established themselves in Zamboanga. With the return of the evacuees, another wave of language contact took place.

1.6 The creolization situation of Ct. The socio-economic-cultural pressures inevitably imposed upon the initial Christian community of Tamontaka must have been the very environment which was responsible for the formation of a creolized language in the place.

That Zm had its role in the formation of Ct cannot be denied, but that Ct had its own separate point of incipience and growth is another undeniable fact.

The Ct language situation was further affected by the phenomenal population increase which was occasioned by the emigration of homeseekers and settlers to the Province of Cotabato.

Cotabato, otherwise known in the Philippines as the 'empire province', was invaded by homeseekers, agricultural pioneers, capitalists, and pioneering professionals. Later still, the American missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, took over the spiritual guidance and Christian education of the province. They contributed significantly to the cultural expansion of the province through schools, hospitals, press and radio. The waves of population invasion likewise brought about a linguistic invasion into the language situation of Ct native speakers.

2. THE Ct VERB

The Ct verb is any stem which can occur with the temporal elements of the grammar. In Ct, these elements are the preposed particles which signal the tense-aspect features of the V stem. They are:

<i>ta</i>	present/durative	+begun, -completed
<i>ya</i>	past/punctual	+begun, +completed
<i>ay</i>	future	-begun

There is a postposed particle *ya* which means 'already' and should not be confused with the preposed temporal particle *ya*. Sample: *ya akabá ya* 'It's finished already'.

2.1 Types of Ct verb stems. To describe the Ct V further, more consideration is given to the V stem, which is classified in this paper according to its language source and to the manner by which the V stem occurs in relation to the preposed temporal particles.

2.11 Type V-1. This type consists of V stems from Spanish infinitives with the final *-r* deleted. In V stems of this type, the tense-aspect features are signalled by the simple occurrence of the preposed temporal particles.

Sample:	cantar	'to sing'	Spanish infinitive
	kantá	'to sing'	Ct V-1 stem
	ta kantá	'is singing; sings'	
	ya kantá	'sang'	
	ay kantá	'will sing'	

2.12 Type V-2. The second Ct V type consists of V stems from Philippine source verbs and from English loan verbs. As V stems under this classification, they take on, obligatorily, the overt prefix and verbalizing marker *man-* before the temporal particles are preposed.

Sample:	tuktúk	'to knock'	(at the door)	Philippine language V
	mantuktúk	'to knock'	V-2 ^{Ph} stem	
	ta mantuktúk	'is knocking; knocks'		
	ya mantuktúk	'knocked'		
	ay mantuktúk	'will knock'		
	apply	'to make a request'	English V	V-2 ^{Eng} stem
	man-apláy	'to make a request as for a job'		
	ta man-apláy	'is applying for a job'		
	ya man-apláy	'applied for a job'		
	ay man-apláy	'will apply for a job'		

Ct V-2 stems cannot function without the verbalizing prefix *man-*, except in imperatives using a transitive verb in pre-position. For instance, *asé φ tuktúk* 'you knock'. It is unacceptable in the language to say: **ta tuktúk* or **ta apláy*. (For more on the transitive verb in pre-position, please refer to section 3 of this paper.)

The verbalizing prefix *man-*, however, is not to be confused with the post-initial emphatic adverbial particle *man*. Sample: *Nuway man!* 'There's nothing!' (emphatic stress).

2.2 The equivalent of inflectional processes. Like most creoles, Ct tends to lack an inflectional morphology (Kay and Sankoff 1972), thus the semantic functions which are ordinarily accomplished by the inflectional processes are accomplished by the use of certain functional devices. In the Ct verbal system, these devices which function inflectionally are the following: the three particles that mark tense and aspect — *ta*, *ya*, *ay* — and the three negative markers — *no* for imperative, *hendedq* for durative and future verbal predications, and *nuway* for completed action and existential predications. (See Table 1.)

2.3 Ct verbal derivations. Derivations in the Ct verbal system involve three main processes, namely: the affixing of a small set of verbalizing affixes to full noun (N) stems and descriptive (D) stems; the reduplication of certain simple V stems; the stress shift to the next syllable to the right of simple N stems.

2.31 The verbalizing affixes

2.311 The prefix *man-* is a process marker when affixed to N stems and D stems. This is not to be confused with the second type of Ct V stems where *man-* is the verbalizing marker affixed to V-2 stems.

TABLE 1: Ct TENSE-ASPECT MARKERS IN AFFIRMATIVES AND NEGATIVES^a

TENSE AND ASPECT		AFFIRMATIVE			NEGATIVE		
Imperative	IMP						
	V-1	bené	'come'	no + V-1	no bené		'don't come'
	V-2 ^{Ph}	mantabás	'cut grass'	no + V-2 ^{Ph}	no mantabás		'don't cut grass'
	V-2 ^{Eng}	man-enról	'enrol'	no + V-2 ^{Eng}	no man-enról		'don't enrol'
Future	AY						
	V-1	ay bañá	'will bathe'	hende + (ay) V-1	hende (ay) (φ) baña		'won't take a bath'
	V-2 ^{Ph}	ay manpaspás	'will speed up'	hende + (ay) V-2 ^{Ph}	hende (ay) (φ) manpaspás		'won't go speeding up'
-begun	V-2 ^{Eng}	ay man-apláy	'will apply'	hende + (ay) V-2 ^{Eng}	hende (ay) (φ) man-apláy		'won't apply'
Present Durative +begun -completed	TA						
	V-1	ta durmí	'is sleeping; sleeps'	hende + V-1	hende ta durmí		'not sleeping'
	V-2 ^{Ph}	ta mantuktúk	'is knocking; knocks'	hende + ta V-2 ^{Ph}	hende ta mantuktuk		'is not knocking'
	V-2 ^{Eng}	ta man-tréyn	'is training; trains'	hende + ta V-2 ^{Eng}	hende ta man-tréyn		'is not training'
Past Punctual +begun +completed	YA						
	V-1	*ya tapá	'covered'	nuway + φ V-1	nuway tapá		'didn't cover'
	V-2 ^{Ph}	ya mantisud	'slipped by foot'	nuway + φ V-2 ^{Ph}	nuway mantisud		'didn't slip'
	V-2 ^{Eng}	ya manpás	'passed'	nuway + φ V-2 ^{Eng}	nuway manpás		'didn't pass'

2.3111 *man-* + N stem

bóteq n. 'a small flat-bottomed boat, usually handpaddled'

mambóteq v. 'to go boating or to go sailing on a small flat-bottomed boat'

(The final *n* of *man-* undergoes assimilation depending on the consonant it immediately precedes. In this case, it precedes a bilabial stop, hence *mambote*.)

2.3112 *man-* + D stem

blándo d. 'soft; tender'

mamblando v. 'to become soft, tender'

2.312 The prefix *man-* and the suffix *-han* / *-an* when affixed to a V stem and a D stem form reciprocal or associative derived verbs.

2.3121 *man-* + V stem + *-han* / *-an*

alkansá v. 'to reach; to overtake'

manalkansáhan v. 'to reach each other; to overtake each other'

2.3122 *man-* + D stem + *-han* / *-an*

alboróto d. 'noisy; boisterous'

manalborotóhan v. 'to outdo each other in noise and boisterousness'

'to be noisy and boisterous among members of a group'

2.3123 In the case of Ct V-2, which uses the verbalizing marker *man-* in the basic V stem, the derivation of a reciprocal or associative verb is formed with the simple suffixation of *-han* / *-an*

tabás Ct V-2^{Ph}

mantabás v. 'to cut grass'

mantabásan v. 'to cut grass in each other's lot as a form of mutual help'

'to cut grass in one's own lot simultaneously with another cutting grass in his own lot'

2.313 The compound verbalizing prefix *manpa-* (by assimilation *mampa-*) is made up of *man-* as the initial affix, and *-pa-* as the second part immediately following *man-*.

Man- is a verbal causative, while *-pa-* denotes pretense. The combination of the two intensifies the pretense and connotes that something has to be or ought to be done in the context of an imperative form. The compound prefix *mampa-* is affixed to a D stem.

mapwérsa d. 'strong; vigorous'

mampamapwérsa v. 'to pretend to be strong; try to be strong (imp); to show that one is strong'

2.32 The reduplication of certain V stems and D stems

The reduplication of certain V stems signals one of the following:

- a. intensification of the action
- b. action takes place over an extended length of time
- c. action that is performed casually or one that is not taken seriously

2.321 Reduplication of V stem

- aserká v. 'to approach; to go near'
- aserka-aserká v. 'to approach slowly or step by step or hesitatingly'
- hipá v. 'to pant'
- hipa-hipá v. 'to appear panting; to pant heavily or laboriously'

2.322 Reduplication of V stem with *ki/y* as connective which intensifies the action

- raská v. 'to scratch (itch)'
- raska ki raska' v. 'to scratch and scratch; to scratch at long stretches;
- raskayraská to do nothing but scratch'
- gritá v. 'to shout'
- grita ki gritá v. 'to shout long and loud;
- gritay-grita 'to shout and shout'

2.323 Reduplication of N stems and D stems prefixed by the compound *tampa-* coming from *ta-* signalling durative action; *man* signalling action being performed; and *pa* to signal pretense

- réyna n. 'queen'
- tampareyna-réyna v. 'pretending to be queen'
- kalyáw d. 'quiet; silent'
- tampakalyaw-kalyáw v. 'pretending to be quiet; pretending to be quiet or a silent type'

2.324 There are, however, Philippine source descriptives which are reduplicates in their original form, but do not occur in non-duplicate form. With the prefix *man-*, they form a derived verb.

- duha-dúhaq d. 'hesitating; hesitant'
- manduha-dúhaq v. 'to go about hesitatingly'
- utay-útay d. 'slowly by stages'
- man:utay-útay v. 'to go slowly by stages or step by step'

2.33 Stress shift to the next syllable to the right in N stems and D stems

2.331 Simple stress shift to the right in N stems

- gíya n. 'a guide' (referring to a person or an object like a manual or a signboard)
- giyá v. 'to guide; to lead'

2.332 Stress shift to the right with some vowel change in basically irregular Spanish source words

hwégo n. 'a game; a play'
 hugá v. 'to play a game; to play'
 bénta n. 'a sale'
 bendé v. 'to sell'

2.333 Stress shift to the right with some vowel change in D stems

límpyo d. 'clean; free from dirt'
 limpyá v. 'to clean'
 lléno d. 'full; filled up'
 llená v. 'to fill up'

3. A Ct COMPLEX VERBAL EXPRESSION

3.1 Introduction. Ct has complex verbal expressions where a series of verbs occur in consecutive sequence forming a chain. A preliminary investigation is made here of a certain occurrence in such verbal chains which may throw light on how a creole compensates for what it lacks in the area of syntactic devices.⁶

This section, therefore, looks into such a verbal expression to determine the possibility of its functioning similarly, if not in form, at least in semantics, with the complex derivational processes of Tagalog.

3.2 The Ct verbal chain. There are some Ct V's which, when drawn from their matrix constituent and when functioning singly, do so like any other single verb with a simple literal meaning. However, they behave differently when occurring in verbal chains which consist of two or more verbs. In such an occurrence, they take on an added function, but not that of an auxiliary verb. Rather, they act like a series of causatives, one V acting on the other, down the chain. It is the verb in primary position which occurs with the temporal particle and which signals the tense-aspect feature of whole verbal expression. Thus all the other verbal elements in the chain function as complementary causatives.

Some such verbs functioning singly, are:

asé	'to make'
dále	'to give'
llibá	'to bring'
mandá	'to command; to let; to allow; to send'
pwéde	'to be able'

Ordinarily, the first three verbs function as transitives and therefore take on objects.

ase kása	'to make a house'
dale regalo	'to give gift'
lliba libro	'bring a book'

In the case of *mandá*, if it were to mean 'to send', it can be used in this manner:

manda pakéte 'to send a package'

However, *pwéde* denotes ability (able to) and will therefore require another V for a complement.

pwede lé 'able to read; can read'

Of the verbs above, *asé* seems to be the most productive. It can transitive an in-transitive verb in the following manner:

<i>asé</i>	'to make'
<i>bañá</i>	'to take a bath'
<i>ase bañá</i>	'to make (somebody) bathe (someone)'
	'to make (somebody) take a bath'

The verbal chains are evidently causatives which through some underlying process add another agent to an expression which originally already had an explicitly expressed agent.

<i>mandá</i>	'to command; to let; to allow'
<i>asé</i>	'to make'
<i>akordá</i>	'to remember'
<i>manda ase akordá</i>	'to let (someone) cause (another) to remember'

As a creole, Ct exhibits obvious simplicity in the area of verb morphology; compare its simple system with the complex system of verbal affixes of Tagalog and other major Philippine languages. However, with Ct verbal chains of causatives which function similarly, if not in form at least in semantics, to the morphological possibilities of Tagalog, this apparent inadequacy is compensated for.

Ct: Ya pwede yo manda ase birá el pwérta konele
[(past) able I let make tum the door him]

Tag: Napagawaq ko siyang paikutin ang pintoq.
[was able I him make turn the door.]
'I was able to make him turn the door.'

TABLE 2 — Comparing the Ct Verbal Chain and the Tagalog Verb

AFFIXES	TAG	GLOSS	Ct
	<i>gawaq</i>	'to make'	<i>asé</i>
pa- (causative)	<i>pagawaq</i>	'to let make'	<i>manda asé</i>
na- (past)	<i>napagawaq</i>	'was able to let make'	<i>ya pwede manda asé</i>
	<i>ikut</i>	'to tum'	<i>birá</i>
-in (goal)	<i>ikutin</i>	'to let (something be turned)'	<i>ase birá</i>
pa-	<i>paikutin</i>	'to let (someone) turn (something)'	<i>manda asé (konele) birá (pwerta)</i>

Whereas the Ct verbal chain has four verbs, the primary V being *pwéde*, which occurs with *ya* (to indicate past), the Tagalog statement has only two V's, namely *gawaq* 'to make' and *ikut* 'to turn'. With the occurrence of corresponding affixes to indicate focus (the semantic relationship between the verb and the agent or goal of the action), the Tagalog statement employs only two verbs in surface structure where a Ct verb chain has a series of causatives.

The full extent of the syntactic function of a Ct verbal chain of causatives has to be investigated further to contrast it with the more complex properties of the Tagalog verb and its derivational processes. This may shed light on how the reduced and simplified grammatical structures of a creole take care of the various linguistic needs of its speakers.

NOTES

¹In a course on Philippine Contact Vernaculars under Dr. Carol Molony in 1972-1973, I had the occasion to listen to a recording of what was claimed to be Davao Chabacano. Discounting the fact that the recording was poorly done, I had the impression that what I heard was the usual pidgin that we, native Chabacano speakers, use with Chinese merchants and storekeepers across the bargain counter. The same pidgin is still in evidence in Cotabato and Zamboanga even today.

It is my opinion that even if there were a Davao Chabacano as claimed, the recording just mentioned would not be the authentic specimen of said language.

²The study was made of my own family for a paper entitled 'The segmental phonemes of CCh' (1974).

The following is a table of the three-generation sampling. I belong to the second generation of Ct native speakers.

THREE-GENERATION SAMPLING OF Ct NATIVE SPEAKERS

Generation	Population	Ct Speakers	Per- centage	Non-Ct Speakers	Per- centage	TOTAL
First	16	16	100%	0	0	100%
Second	43	39	98.9%	4	1.1%	100%
Third	67	14	20.92%	53	79.08%	100%

³There were available, to this researcher, historical sources from works of Combes, Pastels, and *Cartas edificantes de los Misioneros de la Compañía de Jesus en Filipinas*. However, for the purpose of summarizing pertinent data in this paper, the Madigan-Cushner paper was used. The latter drew heavily from the above-mentioned historical sources.

⁴The present peace and order problem in Mindanao has brought to the attention of the whole country several socio-cultural matters of great importance. One of them is the problem of the biggest cultural minority group, popularly known as the Moros, who have expressedly asked that they be called Muslims, not Moros, a name which has always carried some pejorative connotation.

However, in the context of the Madigan-Cushner article which had drawn data from

18th and 19th Century materials, the word Moro is still used without the least intention of using the word in a pejorative manner.

⁵In contrast to the Ct tense-aspect markers, Zm has for the future, *el/di*. It also has *ay*. They are variants of the same tense-aspect marker (future).

ay andá 'will go'
di
el

Ternate and Cavite use *di*.

A few of the old folks of Tamontaka use *di*; however, *ay* is predominantly used in Cotabato.

⁶ In a preliminary investigation of 'The generative semantics of Ct' (1973), I wrote: To compensate for the lack of adequate and complex case markers and affixes, in contrast to Tagalog, Ct has to have obligatory topicalization and embedding to signal an N that is +agent - subject.

Sample: Tag: Pinatay ng bata ang tao. (killed the child the man)

The man was killed by the child.

The Tag. infix *-in-* in the verb *pinatay* as well as the marker *ng* signal

+de finite, -unique +agent, -subject

Because Ct does not have such surface affixes and the *ng* marker, it has first to topicalize obligatorily *the child* and then embed *is he who killed*.

Thus: Ct: El bata el kyen ya matá kon el hente.

(the child the man)

the who killed [to whom]

'The child is he who killed the man.'

REFERENCES

- Cartas edificantes de los Misioneros de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas, 1898-1902. 1903. Barcelona: Imprenta de Henrich y Compañía en Comandita.
- COMBES, FRANCISCO, S.J. (1667) 1897. Historia de Mindanao y Joló: Saca nuevamente a luz con la colaboración del Pablo Pastels, S.J. y W.E. Retana. Madrid.
- FORMAN, MICHAEL L. 1972. Zamboangueno texts with grammatical analysis. Doctoral dissertation, Cornell University.
- FRAKE, CHARLES O. 1972. Lexical origins and semantic structure in Philippine Creole Spanish. Pidginization and creolization of languages, ed. by Dell Hymes, 223-43. Cambridge: University Press.
- KAY, PAUL and GILLIAN SANKOFF. 1974. A language-universals approach to pidgins and creoles. Pidgins and creoles: Current trends and prospects, ed. by David DeCamp and Ian F. Hancock, 61-72. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press
- MACANSANTOS, ARMANDO. 1971. A contrastive analysis of Spanish and Chabacano concordance of forms and structures of noun-head modifications. M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines.

- MADIGAN, FRANCIS C., S.J. and NICHOLAS P. CUSHNER, S.J. 1961. Tamontaka Reduction: A community approach to mission work. Reprinted from *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 17.81-94.
- PASTELES, PABLO, S.J. 1916. *Misión de la Compañía de Jesús de Filipinas en el siglo XIX: Relación histórica*, 3 tomos. Barcelona: Tip. y Lib. Editorial Barcelona.
- RIEGO DE DIOS, MARIA ISABELITA O., R.V.M. 1973. A preliminary investigation: The generative semantics of Cotabato Chabacano. Typescript, Ateneo-PNC Linguistics Consortium.
- _____. 1974. The segmental phonemes of Ct.CCh. Typescript, Philippine Normal College.