

**CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE SPANISH:  
COMMENTS ON VESTIGIAL USAGE**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

Of all the dialect zones that once belonged to the Spanish empire, and in which the Spanish language is still spoken in some form, one of the least studied from the linguistic point of view is the Philippines. Naturally, the indigenous Philippine languages have been amply covered in an ever-expanding bibliography, and within the Hispano-Philippine dimension, studies have been carried out along two lines: the incorporation of Spanish elements into native Philippine languages, and the formation of Philippine Creole Spanish (PCS) dialects, variously known as Chabacano (the generic term), Caviteño, Ternateño, and Zamboangueno.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, while it is well known that the continuous Spanish linguistic presence in the Philippines lasted more than 300 years, that Spanish is still one of the nation's three official languages, and that some Filipinos still speak Spanish, there is relatively little information about the characteristics of contemporary Philippine Spanish. Despite the lengthy Spanish presence in the Philippines, the Spanish language never became firmly implanted among speakers of indigenous languages, as occurred in Latin America, nor even became the common denominator among the entire Eurasian population which naturally arose through cross-cultural contacts. The failure of the Spanish language to establish itself in the Philippines has been the subject of much prior commentary; suffice it to say that this linguistic situation stems from a combination of factors, among which are: the Spanish government's official and non-official policy of using the vernacular languages, particularly in religious functions; the relatively small number of Spanish natives in comparison with the indigenous Philippine population; the lack of significant demographic shifts among native groups in the Philippines which would have precipitated the necessary use of Spanish as a *lingua franca*.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the PCS dialects, which arose around Spanish military garrisons and spread in multilingual commercial centers, Spanish never became the native language of any large sector of the native-born Filipino population, nor even became a widely used *lingua franca* outside of those (*mestizo*) groups most closely aligned with the colonial administration. With the coming of the American administration and the rapid and effective implementation of educational programs in English, Spanish was pushed ever further into the background, and its status as an obligatory part of the school curriculum is currently being called into question, as an apparent anachronism.<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, despite the failure of the Spanish language to situate itself among the native Philippine languages and its later inability to resist the inroads of English, the number of Spanish borrowings in the Philippine languages far exceeds that of any native American or African language. These Philippine Hispanisms have been carefully studied, since they permit partial reconstruction of the Spanish of earlier centuries, which was responsible both for the formation of the PCS dialects and for the lexical modification of native Philippine languages.<sup>4</sup> These studies indicate beyond a doubt the markedly

<sup>1</sup> An essential minimal bibliography would include the following: Whinnom (1954, 1956, 1965), Frake (1971), Forman (1972), Riego de Dios (1976a, 1976b, 1978), Molony (1973, 1977), Miranda (1956), Evangelista (1972), German (1932), Llamado (1969, 1972), McKaughan (1954), Nigoza (1985), Batalha (1960), Quilis (1970, 1980, 1984), Santos y Gomez (1924), Tirona (1924), Batausa (1969), Domingo (1967), Macasantos (1971), Maño (1963).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Whinnom (1954), Agoncillo and Guerrero (1984), Phelan (1959), Sibayan (1971), Bowen (1971), Quilis (1980).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Morales Goulet (1980: 13), Hayden (1947: 603), Gonzalez (1980).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Wolff (1973-4), Quilis (1973, 1976, 1980), Oficina de Educacion Iberoamericana (1972), C. Lopez (1965).

Mexican character of the Spanish brought to the Philippines, which is hardly surprising in view of the flourishing galleon trade, which provided the Philippines with its only commercial and administrative link to Spain, via the Mexican port of Acapulco. On the other hand, the small number of native Spanish speakers in the Philippines has contributed to the lack of studies of contemporary Philippine Spanish; the majority of works which lay claim to such a description in reality deal with Hispanic lexical items in native Philippine languages, or with some aspect of the PCS dialects. At times, the latter dialects are mistakenly referred to as "Philippine Spanish," as though there were no legitimate non-creolized variant of metropolitan Spanish currently available in the Philippines. One example of this confusion is the statement that<sup>5</sup> "En la actualidad la situación del español es bastante precaria . . . el dialecto español que se habla en aquellas islas recibe el nombre de chabacano" [currently, Spanish is in a precarious situation in the Philippines . . . the Spanish dialect spoken in that country is known as Chabacano]. A more serious assessment<sup>6</sup> states that "the modern Spanish of Manila has none of the characteristics of the South American or Andalusian Spanish . . . the Philippine Spanish of today is the result of the second stage of the Spanish contact with the Philippines." National census data representing both the American administration and the Philippine national government provide confusing information, since PCS or Chabacano dialects are lumped together with modern Spanish,<sup>7</sup> while there is a tendency to overlook potential Spanish speakers who have no formal training in that language. As a consequence, and despite a wide variety of anecdotal comments and extrapolations, there is no widely available description of contemporary Philippine Spanish, although all will agree that true Spanish speakers remain in the Philippines. In the following paragraphs, some general remarks will be offered on the salient linguistic features of Philippine Spanish, not with the aim of providing an exhaustive description, but rather of updating earlier studies, offering brief comparisons between Philippine Spanish and the PCS dialects, and fitting Philippine Spanish in among other transplanted varieties of modern peninsular Spanish.

## 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF SPANISH-SPEAKING FILIPINOS

Currently, the majority of Spanish-speaking Filipinos belong to *mestizo* (Eurasian) families, directly descended from Spanish settlers. Moreover, this Spanish parentage is usually quite recent, in that nearly all current Spanish speakers have at least one grandparent who was born in Spain; few *mestizo* Spanish speakers are found who cannot claim a Spanish-born relative at least two generations in the past. This Spanish-speaking nucleus is strengthened by intermarriage, since most *mestizo* Spanish speakers have married other Spanish speakers or have otherwise reinforced their Spanish language environment, including membership in clubs or in the Casino Español (in Manila and Cebu), trips to Spain, and choice of residential area.

It is also possible to find non-*mestizo* Filipinos who for one reason or another learned Spanish through contact with previous generations of Spanish speakers, but the number of such individuals is small in comparison with the totality of Philippine Spanish speakers. Spanish is still an obligatory subject in the university curriculum (despite current pressure to remove the requirement), and formerly Spanish was widely taught in the public schools. Although the majority of Filipinos who have studied Spanish under such circumstances have very little useful language ability, many individuals have a degree of passive competence which allows them to grasp the general meaning of Spanish phrases and expressions. Naturally, the high proportion of Hispanisms in the native Philippine languages aids in the recognition of current Spanish forms, and older Filipinos may recall the presence of Spanish priests, nuns and lay teachers, particularly in private schools, all of whom helped spread an awareness of the Spanish language. Lawyers in the Philippines

<sup>5</sup> Diez, Morales, Sabin (1977: 85).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Whinnom (1956: 2).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the explanation offered by Frake (1971).

have often studied Spanish more carefully, since much of the legal code was written in Spanish, and until relatively recently it was possible to use the Spanish language in the courtroom. Many Filipina nuns studied in convents directed by Spanish priests and nuns, where Spanish was the language of daily communication, and even today they may recall some aspects of that language. It thus becomes clear that, while the majority of true Spanish speakers come from *mestizo* families, there is an undetermined but not inconsiderable number of Filipinos with some knowledge of Spanish, below the level of native speakers but superior to that of foreign students.

A concomitant feature of most Philippine Spanish speakers is their socioeconomic level, which is usually toward the top of the scale. *Mestizo* Spanish speakers are frequently members of old Spanish landowning and commercial families, which have managed to retain and even expand their fortunes throughout the various post-colonial administrations in the Philippines. Naturally, not all such families have retained their wealth and social position, and there are other Spanish-speaking families which clearly belong to the middle classes, but among the wealthier Spanish speakers, use of the language is regarded as a source of pride and an unmistakable mark of aristocratic authenticity. These Spanish speakers continue to use the language at home, although it is difficult to use Spanish in public due to general lack of interlocutors and a certain resentment among other Filipinos. Despite efforts of Spanish speakers to teach the language to their children, few true Spanish speakers under the age of about 40 are to be found, and it is unlikely that the language will survive another generation. Most Philippine Spanish speakers are also proficient in English, but few hold native Philippine languages in high esteem, often regarding with resentment and scorn the establishment of Tagalog (Pilipino) as a national language. These individuals are forced to use Tagalog and other regional languages out of necessity, and their abilities range from total fluency to minimally adequate levels, but few *mestizo* Spanish speakers feel comfortable using native Philippine languages in all settings, nor do they feel that these languages have any long-term potential as cultural or social vehicles.

As a result of these attitudes and behavior patterns, Philippine Spanish is characteristically refined, aristocratic, precise, and linguistically conservative, with none of the popular, regional and rural forms which are essential ingredients of the PCS dialects, and which are widespread in the Spanish dialects of Latin America. Also of note are the distinctly Castilian (i.e., central and northern Spain) traits of contemporary Philippine Spanish, where virtually no hint of Andalusian, Galician, Canary Island, Catalan, Valencian, or other regional features of vocabulary or pronunciation are found, despite the fact that many of the last wave of Spanish immigrants to the Philippines came from those regions. The highly precise and Castilianized Philippine Spanish reflects the influence of Spanish teachers, administrative personnel and religious figures, as well as literary and journalistic standards which were in wide usage until well after World War II, among the numerous newspapers, magazines and other documents published in Spanish.

Currently, the largest number of Spanish-speaking Filipinos is found in metropolitan Manila, although significant smaller groups are located in many provincial capitals, particularly in those regions characterized by large plantations and estates which have existed since the Spanish period. Among the latter zones are the sugar-producing regions of Negros (particularly in Bacolod but also around Dumaguete) and the fruit-producing regions of Mindanao, especially around Cagayan de Oro and Davao. Other nuclei of Spanish speakers are found in the Bikol area (Legaspi City and Naga), Iloilo, Tacloban, Cotabato, Vigan, Cebu and Zamboanga, being in the latter case bicultural Spanish-Chabacano speakers. Although the totality of the regions mentioned above represents a wide selection of regional languages, including Tagalog, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Cebuano/Visayan, Waray, etc., there has been virtually no regionalized influence of these languages on Philippine Spanish, in that it is in general impossible to distinguish the geographical origin of a Spanish-speaking Filipino through features of spoken Spanish (unlike the case with spoken English).

For the purposes of the following brief remarks, a sample of 20 Philippine Spanish speakers was selected,<sup>8</sup> nearly all from *mestizo* backgrounds. These speakers reside in Manila, Iloilo, Cebu, Davao, Dumaguete and Cagayan de Oro, and the age range of the informants was 37-95. The interviews were taped in their entirety, with each interview lasting about 45 minutes; the format was free conversation with minimal prompting on the part of the investigator. It must be pointed out from the outset that the following remarks represent common denominators and that there is considerable idiolectal variation among Philippine Spanish speakers, above all among the last generation, whose proficiency ranges from total fluency to the level of vestigial or semi-speaker.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. PHONETIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PHILIPPINE SPANISH

The following remarks will signal the outstanding phonetic features of contemporary Philippine Spanish, particularly in those cases where significant differences exist with other varieties of Spanish throughout the world, and/or with PCS dialects.

(a) One of the most noticeable aspects of contemporary Philippine Spanish is the uniformly occlusive pronunciation of intervocalic /b/, /d/ and /g/,<sup>10</sup> which normally receive a fricative pronunciation in other Spanish dialects. This is especially noticeable in the case of intervocalic /d/, which may even overlap with the [r] articulation of /r/ in the Philippines, particularly when /d/ is given an alveolar articulation instead of the more universal dental pronunciation. Few current Philippine Spanish speakers utilize the fricative pronunciation of intervocalic and word-final /d/; those that do usually have at least one parent born in Spain, or have spent considerable time in that country. This same trait has been carried over to the PCS dialects and to Hispanisms borrowed into native Philippine languages; an identical pronunciation is found among Spanish speakers in Equatorial Guinea, the only Spanish-speaking region of sub-Saharan Africa,<sup>11</sup> and among bilingual indigenous-Spanish speakers in many regions of Latin America.

In Philippine Spanish, intervocalic /d/ is frequently elided, particularly in the verbal affix *-ado*, used to form past participles, following the patterns current in peninsular Spanish dialects. Unlike the dialects of Spain, and like those of Africa and bilingual areas of Latin America, Philippine Spanish intervocalic /d/ never passes through the fricative stage en route to deletion; the loss of /d/ is an imitation of an originally phonetically-motivated process, but there is no active reduction of /d/ among new words introduced into Philippine Spanish, or in other intervocalic contexts which in other Spanish dialects are also being gradually affected by the reduction process.<sup>12</sup>

(b) In Philippine Spanish, the phoneme /s/ is given a uniformly sibilant pronunciation [s] in all contexts, including syllable- and phrase-final positions. This is surprising in view of the large number of Andalusian speakers among the last generation of Spaniards who emigrated to the Philippines, since implosive and word-final /s/ is aspirated or deleted in Andalusian Spanish. Many Philippine Spanish speakers use the apicoalveolar variant [ʃ], found in many regions of central and northern Spain, although this is not uniform in the Philippines. The extraordinarily high rates of retention of [s] in Philippine Spanish reflect the influence of northern peninsular dialects in the shaping of the last generations of Philippine Spanish speakers. The data in Table 1 give a clearer perspective

<sup>8</sup> Work in the Philippines was carried out in 1985 thanks to a Fulbright advanced research fellowship, administered by the Philippine-American Educational Foundation. I gratefully express my thanks to the personnel of PAEF, as well as to the many scholars and private citizens of the Philippines who so generously gave of their time to make the investigation a success.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lipski (a, b) for a comparison of the vestigial Philippine Spanish data with other vestigial dialects of Spanish throughout the world, and the parallels with creole Spanish.

<sup>10</sup> Bowen (1971) has also observed this pronunciation, which is also found in Hispanisms incorporated into the native Philippine languages.

<sup>11</sup> Lipski (1984a, 1985), Granda (1985).

<sup>12</sup> The same distribution is found in the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea, as reported in the preceding note. It is also found in some bilingual indigenous areas of Latin America.

of the behavior of /s/ in Philippine Spanish, as compared with key peninsular and Latin American dialects, including contemporary Mexico City (the metropolitan standard for Mexico) and Acapulco (the port of departure of the Manila galleons during the Spanish colonial period). In the PCS dialects, reduction of /s/ frequently occurred during the formative periods, so that no trace remains to be tabulated currently; for example, Spanish *nosotros* 'we,' and *vosotros* 'you (pl.)' gave Ternateño *mihotro* and *buhotro*, respectively. In Caviteño, the respective forms are *nisos* and *busos*, variously pronounced with and without final [ s ]. Only in the Zamboangueno dialect is there still an active process of reduction of syllable - and word-final /s/, particularly among older rural speakers.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1: Behavior of /s/ in key Spanish dialects**

Dialect	/s/C			/s/ #C			/s/##			/s/#V			/s/#v		
	[s]	[h]	[Ø]	[s]	[h]	[Ø]	[s]	[h]	[Ø]	[s]	[h]	[Ø]	[s]	[h]	[Ø]
Phil.	100	0	0	96	2	2	98	0	2	100	0	0	100	0	0
Mexico C.	96	4	0	65	32	3	95	2	3	100	0	0	98	2	0
Acapulco	15	82	3	2	87	11	10	20	70	58	42	0	2	82	16
Madrid	94	6	0	69	29	2	82	12	6	92	8	0	96	4	0
Cáceres	2	91	7	0	94	6	9	8	83	23	77	0	0	95	5
Sevilla	0	95	5	0	91	9	5	2	93	69	10	21	1	46	54
Las Palmas	2	85	13	0	89	11	2	17	81	75	25	0	0	92	8
Cuba	3	97	0	2	75	23	61	13	26	48	28	25	10	53	27

*Legend:* C = consonant; V = stressed vowel; v = unstressed vowel; # = word boundary; ## = phrase boundary

(c) Word-final /n/ receives a uniformly alveolar articulation [ n ] in Philippine Spanish, despite the high frequency of word-final velar [ ŋ ] among the native Philippine languages, and the strong tendency to velarize word-final /ŋ/ in the Spanish dialects of Andalusia, Galicia and other areas of Spain whence came many immigrants. Once more, velarization of /n/ is not a characteristic of the dialects of central and norther Spain that influenced the last periods of Philippine Spanish, which undermines claims that the presence of word-final velar [ ŋ ] among the native languages will necessarily cause bilingual transfer of this feature to Spanish. A similar distribution is found in the Spanish of Equatorial Guinea, where word-final /n/ is never velarized (reflecting the same Peninsular standards that shaped current Philippine Spanish), despite the high frequency of occurrence of word-final [ ŋ ] among the languages of that country.

(d) Philippine Spanish exhibits the palatal lateral phoneme /ʎ/ (written *ll*), which has also been preserved in Spanish borrowings among the Philippine languages, except for the first contacts, such as the Ternateño dialect of PCS. At times, /ʎ/ is realized as [ly] among the last generation of Philippine Spanish speakers, but merger with /y/, as has occurred in most dialects of Spain and Latin America, is extremely rare, and occurs only as an idiosyncratic trait.

(e) In theory, the distinction between the two trill phonemes /r/ and /r̄/ is maintained in Philippine Spanish, but at times a partial neutralization occurs, in favor of the single variant [ r ]. This is most frequent among the last generation of vestigial Span-

<sup>13</sup> Collection of the comparative data is described in Lipski (1983, 1984b).

ish speakers, some of whom use [r] in all contexts. None of the major Philippine languages has a multiple trill phone [r̄], and the behavior of /r/ in contemporary Philippine Spanish is similar to patterns established in other bilingual areas, such as Latin America and Africa. The preaspirated or devoiced multiple trill [h̄r], found in most PCS dialects and typical of Caribbean Spanish, is conspicuously absent in Philippine Spanish.

(f) The liquid phonemes /l/ and /r/ are clearly distinguished in syllable-final position, following Castilian patterns, and in contrast with the dialects of southern Spain and the Antilles, in which neutralization and loss of syllable-final /l/ and /r/ is frequent. Earlier Hispano-Philippine contacts represented such dialects, as evidenced by the high proportion of interchange of implosive /l/ and /r/ in the PCS dialects, particularly those in the Manila Bay area.

(g) There is a noticeable tendency to reduce unstressed vowels in contemporary Philippine Spanish, especially /a/, /e/ and /o/, with resulting centralized articulation [ə] or [ə̃]. This has the effect of partially neutralizing morphological distinctions, such as between indicative *hablan* and subjunctive *hablen* 'they speak'. On the other hand, unstressed vowels are never elided, for example in contact with /s/ as occurs in many areas of contemporary Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

(h) Although the majority of Philippine Spanish speakers pronounce the phoneme /f/ as a labiodental fricative [f], it is possible to hear the occasional substitution of [p], as has occurred in Hispanic borrowings into Philippine languages, and in the PCS dialects. This substitution, apparently virtually unknown among earlier generations of Spanish speakers, is frequently found in the speech of vestigial speakers.

(i) The velar fricative /x/ is given a highly fricative articulation [x], although the occasional pharyngeal aspiration [h] is heard. The central and northern Spanish dialects are characterized by a highly fricative /x/, while the aspirated variant is more common in southern Spain and the Caribbean and Central American regions.

(j) The phoneme /y/ is pronounced virtually without palatal friction, and rarely exhibits an affricate variant [j] in initial absolute position or in syllable-initial post-consonantal contexts, as occurs in other Spanish dialects (e.g. in *yo* 'I', *inyectar* 'to inject'). On the other hand, intervocalic /y/ in contact with /e/ or /i/ is almost never elided in Philippine Spanish (e.g. *silla* > *sía* 'chair'), as is common in much of Mexico and Central America.

(k) Unlike any dialect of Latin American Spanish or of PCS, contemporary Philippine Spanish exhibits the voiceless dental fricative phoneme /θ/ (written *z* or, before *e* and *i*, as *c*), used in accordance with Spanish etymology and the norms of contemporary Castilian speech, although occasional discrepancies are observable. None of the informants consulted for the present study had completely neutralized /s/ and /θ/ such as occurs in all of Latin America and in southern Spain and the Canary Islands, but particularly among the last generation of vestigial Philippine Spanish speakers, inconsistency of pronunciation occurs, at times even affecting the same word.

(l) Another outstanding characteristic of Philippine Spanish is the frequency of the glottal stop [q] at the beginning of words which nominally begin with a vowel:<sup>15</sup> *el hombre* [el-qom-bre] 'the man'. This is contrary to the normal Spanish phonotactic linking of word-final consonants to syllable-initial position if the following word begins with a vowel; in other Spanish dialects, the corresponding pronunciation would be [e-lom-bre]. The glottal occlusion [q] is also heard in some hiatus combinations, such as *maiz* [ma-qis] ['corn.'] the same pronunciation as is used among the native Philippine languages. Due to the extraordinary use of [q], the normal consonantal linking typical of Spanish phonetics does not as frequently occur in Philippine Spanish, with the result that phonetic boundaries between words are clearly perceivable in the spoken chain. This feature, evidently the result of influence from

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lope Blanch (1963); for an overview of Latin American Spanish pronunciation, cf. Canfield (1981).

<sup>15</sup> Bowen (1971) also mentions this phenomenon.

native Philippine languages, is found in the speech of nearly all contemporary Philippine Spanish speakers, regardless of their claimed or actual proficiency in Philippine language; it is possible, however, that earlier generations of Spanish speakers, many of whom were nearly monolingual, may not have exhibited this trait, which is not found in any peninsular Spanish dialect.

#### 4. MORPHOSYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS

(a) In the pronominal system, use of the second person familiar plural *vosotros* is common in Philippine Spanish, although this pronoun has long since disappeared in Latin America, is not present in any of the PCS dialects, and is infrequent in many dialects of southern Spain. In the clitic series, *le* is used for (3rd s.) masculine direct object, whereas *lo* is the normal Latin American variant. Contemporary Philippine Spanish speakers employ the familiar pronoun *tu* with great ease, even in cases where the Philippine languages and other dialects of Spanish would require a more respectful pronoun. It is not clear whether this is due to an actual shift in linguistic usage among Philippine Spanish speakers, or merely to the existence of a small, closed community which currently uses Spanish almost under siege, and which, through lack of contact with large Spanish-speaking groups, is simply unaware of more widespread patterns of pronominal selection.

(b) Among the last generation of vestigial Spanish speakers or even semi-speakers in the Philippines, errors of nominal and verbal agreement and misuse of reflexive verbs are relatively common, although this presumably did not occur among earlier generations of fluent Spanish speakers.<sup>16</sup> Partial loss of grammatical agreement is a feature of vestigial language usage, and is found in the speech of Spanish semi-speakers in other regions; in the Philippines, this indicates lack of constant practice in Spanish for the majority of Spanish speakers. Some examples from the present corpus are:

*Por aquí entra [entran] los barcos internacionales* 'international ships enter here'

*Cuando vino [vinieron] los japoneses* 'when the Japanese came'

*Esa [ese] restaurante* 'that restaurant'

*Secuestran a niñas y gente rico [rica]* 'they kidnap girls and rich people'

*Cuando me fue casado [me case]* 'when I got married'

*Los oficiales que siempre habla [hablan] contra el español* 'the officials who always speak against Spanish'

*Ellos sabe [saben] palabras españolas, no acuerda [no se acuerdan]* 'they know some Spanish words, they don't remember'

*¿En que parte de Davao estuve [estuvo] usted?* 'what parts of Davao were you in?'

(c) Also found among the last generation of vestigial or semi-speakers is the avoidance of embedded constructions, particularly those making use of the subjunctive. The result is an infinitival construction which usually stands in violation both of metropolitan and of popular Spanish norms. Examples from the present corpus include:

*dos años antes de nosotros nos trasladamos [antes de que nos trasladáramos] aquí* 'two years before we moved here'

*antes tú que llegarte [antes de que llegues] al monumento* 'before you get to the monument'

*antes de poder [de que puedas] tu salir de allí* 'before you can leave here'

*lo quieren quitar y a no ser [a que no sea] obligatorio* 'they want to get rid of it [Spanish] and for it not to be obligatory'

*para los alumnos ver [para que vean]* 'so that the students could see'

*Antes yo de morir [antes de que you muera]* 'before I die'

[A] *estos [les] llamamos moros, nunca quiere llamarles [nunca quieren que les llamemos] moro[s]* 'we call them Moros: 'they don't want us to call them Moros'

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also Lipski (a) for similar examples.

(d) A characteristic of vestigial Spanish and also of creole language is the categorical use of ordinarily redundant subject pronouns. Philippine Spanish has traditionally not exhibited this feature, but among the last generation of speakers this may be observed, as in the following examples from the corpus:

*Yo soy [estoy] sola por la mañana* 'I am alone in the morning'

*Cuando yo dije que yo enseño español en Silliman* 'when I said that I teach Spanish in Silliman'

*Cuando yo voy a PNB yo hablo español con el gerente* 'when I go to PNB, I speak Spanish with the manager'

(e) Also found among vestigial Philippine Spanish speakers is the loss of direct and indirect articles, another feature of vestigial and creole speech in other areas. Examples include:

*Hay tanta gente que saca agua de bajo de [la] tierra* 'So many people get water from underground'

*Esta arriba, fuera de [del] tráfico* 'it's up high, away from the traffic'

*Casi todo es por medio de [del] inglés* 'almost everything is done by means of English'

(f) Errors of prepositional usage and elimination of common prepositions occur among the last generation of Philippine Spanish speakers:

*mi yerno es descendiente [de] italiano[s]* 'my son-in-law is of Italian descent'  
*en España me tomaban como [por] francesa* 'in Spain they took me for a French woman'

*Cuando yo trabaje [trabajaba] por [para el] señor Miguel ...* 'when I worked for Mr. Miguel ...'

## 5. LEXICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The lexical dimension is the most thoroughly studied aspect of Philippine Spanish, largely because of the study of Spanish borrowings among the Philippine languages. In the present discussion, only a few of the most noteworthy lexical characteristics of contemporary Philippine Spanish will be commented on. First it must be noted that the number of indigenous borrowings into Philippine Spanish is quite low, and is limited almost entirely to the flora and fauna which have no equivalent expression in Spanish, and to the formation of nicknames via the suffix *-ng*: *Pedring* (*Pedro*), *Doming* (*Dominador*), *Carling* (*Carlos*), *Puring* (*Purificación*), *Badong* (*Salvador*), etc. In a few cases, a Tagalog root is combined with a Spanish morphological suffix, as in *babaero*/*babayero* 'woman-chaser,' from Tagalog *babae* 'woman.' Among the last generation of Philippine Spanish speakers, the use of the Philippine *oo* [oqo] instead of or in addition to the Spanish affirmative particle *si* is relatively frequent, particularly in unguarded moments of reflection; presumably this did not occur among earlier generations of essentially monolingual Spanish speakers. Unlike current Philippine Spanish, the PCS dialects have absorbed numerous Philippine elements, Tagalog in the case of the Manila Bay dialects, Visayan in the case of Zamboangueno.

Among the strictly Spanish elements in Philippine Spanish, there are a number of Americanisms, most of which are clearly Mexican in origin.<sup>17</sup> These evidently date from earlier days of Hispano-Philippine contacts, when the Manila Galleon departed from the port of Acapulco, since recent linguistic contacts with Mexico have been almost nonexistent in the Philippines. Among the most prominent Mexicanisms still in use among current Philippine Spanish speakers are: *zacate* 'grass,' *petate* 'sleeping mat,' *changue* [*tianguie*] 'market,' *chili* 'pepper,' *camote* 'sweet potato,' *chongo* [*chango*] 'monkey,' *palenque* 'market,' *sayote* [*chayote*] 'a type of vegetable.' In order to ask for something not quite heard to be repeated, use of *¿mande?* is the rule in Philippine Spanish, as in Mexico, and the three daily meals are *el almuerzo* 'breakfast,' *la comida* 'lunch' and *la cena* 'dinner,' following rural Mexican usage, and contrasting with more

<sup>17</sup> This logically follows from the galleon trade between Acapulco and Manila; cf. Schurz (1985).



general Spanish *el desayuno*, *el almuerzo* and *la cena*, respectively. PCS speakers also use Mexican curses based on *chingar*, *chingon* and *chingador*, all derived from the word for the sexual act, and these words are not unknown in contemporary Philippine Spanish, although the peninsular Spanish curses *coño* and *puñeta* are more frequent, together with universal Spanish obscenities. Curiously, despite the decidedly aristocratic character of modern Philippine Spanish, there is comparatively less reluctance to use these forms in mixed company or among women, perhaps reflecting lack of contact with contemporary sociolinguistic norms of Spanish-speaking nations. Other lexical items of probable Mexican/Latin American origin include *amarrar* 'to tie up' instead of *atar*, *pararse* 'to stand up' instead of *ponerse de pie*, *hincarse* 'to kneel' instead of *arrodillarse*, and the nickname *Chu* for *Jesus*. Oddly enough, the word for 'peanut' in Philippine Spanish is the Caribbean/Canarian Spanish *mani*, instead of the Mexicanism *cacahuate* or the derived term current in Spain, *cacahuete*.

Other common Spanish words have undergone semantic shifts in Philippine Spanish. The word *lenguaje* has shifted from 'style of speech' to 'national language'; *tambien no* is used instead of *tampoco* in the sense of 'not either,' possibly reflecting old Spanish usage; the expression *hay que ver* 'it must be seen' is the most frequently used to express surprise or admiration. Also extremely frequent is the idiomatic expression *la mar de* 'a lot of,' now outmoded in Spain, and the use of *gracia* for 'given name' (as in *¿cual es su gracia?* 'what is your name?') now typical only of some marginal areas of the Spanish-speaking world. *Seguro*, meaning 'certain, sure' in standard Spanish, means 'probably, maybe' in PCS and in contemporary Philippine Spanish; 'sure' is rendered by (a) *segurao* 'assured.'

The most striking lexical innovation in Philippine Spanish is the conjugation of the word *cuidado*<sup>18</sup> (pronounced *cuidao*) 'caution, concern' in combination with subject pronouns; the derived meaning is roughly 'whatever ... want(s)' or '... will take charge of it.' Combinations include *tu cuidao*, *usted cuidao*, *ustedes cuidao*, 'it's up to you'; *yo cuidao* 'I'll take care of it,' etc. This expression probably reflects the syntax of Tagalog *bahala* in combinations like *ako ang bahala/bahala ko*, corresponding to *yo cuidao*, *ikaw ang bahala/bahala ka*, equivalent to *tu cuidao*, etc., and represents the only widespread case of syntactic transfer from Philippine languages to non-creole Philippine Spanish. Expressions with *cuidao*, frequent in the PCS dialects, are also used by all native Philippine Spanish speakers, although not by those who have learned Spanish only in school, and these expressions have traditionally been commented on by visitors to the Philippines, although Spanish-speaking Filipinos themselves are quite unaware of the uniqueness of this combination.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the preceding remarks, it is possible to see that currently spoken Philippine Spanish retains few of the Mexican/Andalusian features that participated in the formation of the PCS dialects in the 16th and 17th centuries. Modern Philippine Spanish represents the last wave of Spanish emigration to the Philippines, the privileged status of the Spanish-speaking *mestizo* families, and the linguistic effects of religious and secular education in Spanish during the final stages of the Spanish empire. The identifiable regional characteristics found in Philippine Spanish come from central and northern Spain, and belong properly to conservative and aristocratic language of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Spain and among Spanish expatriates. Spanish never became a true national language in the Philippines, but was restricted to a limited sociocultural domain. Following the American occupation of the Philippines, the Spanish

<sup>18</sup> This expression occurs in the comments by V. Lopez (1893: 109-10), and is also found in Montero y Vidal (1876: 94) and Retana (1921: 81).

language has lost ground constantly, and what remains of Spanish is clearly a marginal and vestigial language.<sup>19</sup> which has already embarked on the inexorable path ultimately leading to language death. At the same time, despite the severe geographical and political constraints on the development and spread of Philippine Spanish, a uniquely identifiable dialect was formed, which even today retains its distinctive characteristics, against the onslaught of English and Tagalog, and justifies the designation of 'Philippine' Spanish.

The preceding remarks are in no way exhaustive; they are offered as a brief summary of the fundamental defining characteristics of Philippine Spanish, as well as an overview of the sociocultural milieu in which that language continues to survive. Spanish linguistic traces will endure in the Philippines even after the Spanish language itself has disappeared, but the description of the final stages of Spanish usage in the Philippines is an urgent task which must be completed in the present generation.

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<sup>19</sup> The case of Guam may also be mentioned, given the similar historical antecedents. Despite the strong Spanish influence on the native Chamorro, true Spanish speakers disappeared from Guam more than a generation ago; my interviews conducted in 1985 turned up two elderly citizens who could carry on a conversation in Spanish, halting and vestigial to be sure. Apparently, earlier Guamanian Spanish was similar although not identical to that of the Philippines. Cf. also Topping (1973), Carano and Sanchez (1964), Thompson (1947), Chamorro Language Commission/Kumision i Fino' Chamorro (1983).

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