

An Analysis of Error Production among Chavacano Spanish Learners

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Chavacano is widely considered to be one of the world's oldest creoles. It is influenced by Spanish, so it is expected that Chavacano learners are error-free in the Spanish language. Since there has been no study on this aspect, the current study is imperative. This study investigated the errors committed by Chavacano learners in learning Spanish as a foreign language in a conversational context, and determining which errors are more persistent. The study employed the descriptive-qualitative method, through the use of the Spanish articles and conjugation-based approach to structurally distinguish the verb's stem and its inflectional affix, as in *comer* (you eat) in which "com" is the stem and "o, es, e, emos, eis, en" is the inflection. Ten Chavacano speakers were purposively selected from Mass Communication students as informants. A set of pictures adopted from Tendero (2012) and an audio recorder were used. The data were transcribed and analyzed. Results showed that the informants committed the deviation language forms (omission, addition, misformation, and misordering). This study would provide research-based insight among Spanish teachers to anticipate error production among Chavacano learners.

Key words: *Linguistic Spanish articles, qualitative method, conjugation-based approach, Zamboanga City, Philippines.*

Introduction

In producing speech, students often make errors in speaking. The students sometimes hesitate or stop in the middle of a sentence for a moment, to think of the appropriate word to say next. And most do not prepare full planning before speaking, especially in spontaneous speech. An error is considered an inevitable and positive part of that process (Fauziati, 2009:168).

Throughout language learning, students inevitably face imperfection in their production. Learners advance through stages of second language (L2) attainment, when taught to identify their errors and understand the other language's differences in structures.

In this research, the writer uses some related theories. These are:

1. Interlanguage. 'Interlanguage' was coined by Selinker (1977). According to Fauziati (2009:157), interlanguage is a study on the language of second language learners. These terms refer to (1) Transitional Competence, (2) Idiosyncratic Dialect, (3) Approximative System. Interlanguage is divided into three concepts: Adjemian's concept, Selinker's concept, and Tarone's concept.

2. Error analysis. According to Ellis 1994, identification of error is a deviation from target language form. According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) error can be classified into many types. The first language components include phonology (pronunciation), syntax and morphology (grammar), semantics and lexicon (meaning and vocabulary). The second surface taxonomy strategies are divided into four types, namely: Omission, Addition, Misformation, Misordering.

3. Speech error. According to Fromkin (1968) and Green (1969) in Fromkin (1973: 215), "Speech errors have been investigated in an attempt to show the reality of phonological units and rules, and the relationship between linguistic competence and performance. According to Clark and Clark (1977: 263) in Fauziati (2009), there are many kinds of errors. Those are: 1) Silent pause, 2) Filled pause, 3) Repeats, 4) Unrestricted, 5) Retraced, 6) Correction, 7) Interjection, 8) Stutters, 9) Slip of tongue.

The Spanish verb system, like that of French and Italian, is highly inflected, thus providing an ideal context to further the study of variables impacting on inflectional assignment. Spanish verbs encode several semantic notions: tense, mood, aspect, person, and number. In addition, each Spanish verb involves a "thematic vowel," *a*, *e*, and *r*; easily recognized in the infinitive (e.g., *tomar*/to drink, *comer*/to eat, *subir*/ to move up, to go up). According to their thematic vowel, Spanish verbs can be classified into first, second, and third conjugation classes, depending on whether their inflectional endings follow the *-ar*, *-er*, or *-ir* inflectional patterns, respectively.

Table 1: Grammatical and Semantic Features in the Spanish Verb Paradigm

Feature	Types
Theme	-ar, -er, -ir
Tense	present, past, future
Mood	indicative, subjunctive, imperative
Aspect	imperfective, perfective
Person	first, second, third
Number	singular, plural

Using the morphological descriptions suggested by Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin (1965) and Quilis and Hernandez-Alonso (1990), the structural paradigm of a Spanish verb can be summarized as STEM + THEMATIC VOWEL + MORPHEME I + MORPHEME II, in which morpheme I stands for the tense, the mood, and the aspect, and morpheme II represents the person and the number encoded by the particular verb. It is clear that, as suggested by Quilis and Hernandez-Alonso (1990), the morphological structure of the Spanish verb can encapsulate the symbolic domain (lexeme [stem]) and the deictic domain (the speaker's conceptualization of the action).

In this study, the researcher employed a conjugation-based approach that structurally distinguished the verb's stem and its inflectional affix only, as in *comes* (you eat) in which "com" is the stem and "es" is the inflection. This approach differs from a morphologically-based taxonomy that would break a verb down into its theme vowel and its different morphological components, as reported by Jarema (personal communication, April 25, 1996).

Mood

These are meanings communicated by a verb involving the "speaker's attitude to the proposition or its truth-value" (Dahl, 1985). Gili-Gaya (1989) identifies three moods in Spanish: *indicative*, *subjunctive*, or *imperative*. The indicative mood expresses actions considered real or specific (e.g., *Yo tomo vino/ I drink wine*). The subjunctive mood refers to possible, wished, or uncertain actions (e.g., *Dudo que yo tome vino/ doubt that I would drink wine*), and the imperative mood expresses commanded actions, e.g., *Tomar* (drink).

Tense and Aspect

Spanish verbs can communicate three tenses; present, past, and future, depending on when the action described by the verb occurs. However, the action expressed by the verb can involve temporal shades in meaning unrelated to tense, and resulting from the sentential context addressing the action's duration or completion. These temporal specifications are

identified as aspectual features. Comrie's (1976) terminology illustrates these fine temporal descriptions by referring to tense as situation-external time and aspect as situation-internal time. To Comrie, aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point (as tense does), but rather with the internal temporal consistency of the one situation. For instance, consider the aspectual differences in these examples of past-tense sentences; "*When she called, I was having dinner*" and "*When she called, I had dinner.*" In the first sentence, the two actions, "*Calling I*" and "*Having dinner*" occur within the same time frame, whereas, in the second sentence, "*Calling*" precedes "*Having dinner.*" Both sentences denote past tense situations yet differ in their internal temporal dynamics. Stockwell et al. (1965) describe aspect as imperfective or perfective, depending on whether we conceptualize an event regarding the course of its occurrence (imperfective) or its termination (perfective). They add that perfective forms in Spanish are necessarily past tense, and imperfective forms can be either past or non-past. The Real Academia Espanola, REA, (1985) calls perfect tenses the *preterito perfecto* simple (PR1: *to me/drunk*), and all the compound tenses such as *preterito perfecto compuesto* and *Preterito pluscuamperfecto* (PRP: *he tomado/have drunk*; PRC: *habia tomado/had drunk*) since the past participle (*tornado/drunk*) gives the auxiliary a perfective meaning. In contrast, excluding the *preterito perfecto simple*, REA calls imperfect tenses all of the simple tenses: *presente* (P: *tomo*), *preterito imperfecto* (PRI: *tomaba*) *futuro* (*tomare*), and *condicional* (C: *tomaria*) in the indicative mood; and *presente* (*tome*), *preterito imperfecto* (*tomara/tomase*), and *futuro* (*tomare*) in the subjunctive. Marcos-Marin (1975) states that the Spanish verb system does not have a different morphological marker to indicate aspect, as do Greek, Russian, and Arabic. The only exception in which the perfective-imperfective aspectual opposition is morphologically distinguished in Spanish, and does not depend on sentential or discourse context, is in the *preterito perfecto simple* (*Yo tome/I drank*) and the *preterito imperfect* (*Yo tomaba/I used to drink, I was drinking*). Otherwise, tense, mood, and aspect meanings in Spanish coalesce at the morphological level (Morpheme I in the above paradigm) thus being identified as tense-mood-aspect (TMA) notions, or, more often, as tense-aspect when referring to the temporal characteristics of a particular verb in a sentence. Person and Number: Spanish verbs also encode agreement information relating the verb form to the agent of the action and its number (Morpheme II above). In this manner, Spanish verbs can express a *first*, *second*, or *third* person for each *singular* (*yo/I, tu/you, el/he, ella/she*) or *plural* (*nosotros [masculine], nosotras [feminine]/we, ustedes/you, ellos [masculine], ellas [feminine]/they*).

Other Pertinent Features

Spanish verbs are also subject to other variables, such as the stress-assignment rules of the language and frequency patterns in daily discourse.



Stress

Lexical stress placement in Spanish, which can be graphically shown in the word (PRI: *sublet*, Appendix A) or only acoustically detected upon speech production (P: “*tomo 2*”), can occur on the last syllable or any of the preceding syllables of a word. Hence, stress placement along the verb syllabic structure can highlight the stem or its inflection as seen in the verb “*Tomar*” whose stem is *tom-*, “*tomo*” (I drink), “*tomamos*” (We drink/drank), and “*tomaria*” (I would drink) (Appendix A). Harris (1969, 1983) notes that each paradigmatic form (all inflected forms for the different tenses) and non-paradigmatic form (infinitive, gerund, and participle) of Spanish verbs has a characteristic stress pattern involving the penultimate syllable that admits no variation. Except for the infinitives and some forms of the preterite and the future, with the stress on the final syllable, Spanish verbs are *always* stressed on the penultimate syllable. Similarly, Ch. Cairns (H. S. Cairns, personal communication, March 5, 1996) notes that Spanish has a basic trochaic, Strong-Weak syllable pattern.

Many other researches relate to this study. The first is done by Rakhmawati (2011) UMS, titled “A psycholinguistic Analysis of Speech Errors Made by Rachel Ray on TV Show.” The second is conducted by Fadhila (2013) UMS, in her research paper “Errors in Speaking English Made by Students of English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.” Wijayanti (2013) UMS conducts the third. In her research titled “Speech Errors in a Talk Show Program of Metro TV Face to Face with Desi Anwar Broadcasted from January to June 2012”. The fourth is done by Ilmiani (2014) UMS, in her research “Error in Oral Production Made by English Department Students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.” Saad (2014) University conducts the fifth research, from the Kuala Lumpur British Malaysian Institute, in his research paper titled “Error Analysis in Role-Play Presentation among Less Proficient L2 Malaysian learners”. The theory of contributions is based in part on the analysis of repairs by Schegloff et al. (1977). According to that analysis, repairs are organized according to the participants’ opportunities for making repairs. These opportunities occur only at certain points in a conversation, and this leads, for example, to a preference for self over other-repair and a choice for self-over other initiation of repair. Yet the notion of contribution cannot be reduced to the notions of repair and repair opportunity. The idea is needed to capture one of the goals people have in talking- the satisfaction of the grounding criterion. It helps define what counts as trouble, and what counts as repairing trouble. It also helps specify how people reach that goal, namely via a process of mutual acceptance, which includes elements other than troubles and their repair. In short, contributions have an organization that goes beyond the organization of repair.

It is inevitable that learners make mistakes when they attempt to use the target language before they have mastered it. Teachers, therefore, should be prepared to handle the variety of errors that could occur in learners’ speech (Burt, 1975). The role of corrective feedback in the

process of learning a second language has been debated. As Krashen (1982) argues, corrective feedback may not benefit learners in acquiring the correct form, if they are not ready to learn. Then the question is whether treating errors will facilitate a fast acquisition of the correct form, or will be futile if the learners reach a stage of interlanguage development where they can make use of such feedback to modify their ill-formed utterances. However, if a teacher chooses not to treat an error in one learner's utterance, the other learners in the classroom may assume that the form is correct.

Consequently, this assumption could lead some learners to internalize incorrect forms, i.e., fossilization. The next question is whether teachers should deal with errors immediately or wait until learners finish the messages they are trying to convey. Immediate error correction may inhibit a learner's willingness to speak in class at all because it can interrupt the learner in the middle of a sentence. On the other hand, although delayed feedback can allow the learner time to finish what the learner is trying to say, the feedback may become less effective as the time between the error and treatment increases.

Related Literature

The study was anchored on Skinner (1957) and Chomskyan (Lado and Wilkins, 1974) studies. Skinner adheres that language is learned through a process of 'habit formation' and 'verbal behaviour.' This is usually referred to as the Behaviouristic theory, while Chomskyan theory states that children are born with an innate capacity for acquiring language. This inherent ability helps them in a creative-construction of language. While learning a second language students commit errors. Errors are indispensable to learners since the making of errors is an effective, meaningful means of improving and accurate learning. These are two ways to identify or analyze the errors: Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. Contrastive analysis is based on 'habit formation.' It reflects the essential truth of the behaviourist view that "We learn what we do" (Wilkins, 1974: 197). According to this theory, 'habit' plays an important role in the acquisition of the first language, as the learner is considered to have mastered his mother tongue through the imitation of adult utterances. Applied linguistics used the contrastive analysis distinction between the learner's first and second language, to predict errors. The importance of contrastive analysis as stated initially by Lado and then reiterated by others is as follows: 'The interference of our mother tongue causes the errors and difficulties that occur in our learning and use of a foreign language. Whenever the structure of the second language differs from that of the mother tongue, we can expect both difficulty in learning and errors in performance (Wilkins, 1972: 198). From the behaviourists' perspective, the learner uses his previous mother tongue experiences as a means of organizing the second language data. So, if the structure of both languages is similar, learning will be easier. But, when the system of each language is different, it creates problems. Contrastive



analysis is helpful in locating those problematic areas, and efforts could be made to solve them.

On the whole, contrastive analysis has a prognostic value, i.e. to predict the errors, difficulties, and problems faced by learners, while learning a second language. These views are also put forward by Lado who says that ‘individuals tend to transfer the forms and meaning and the distribution of types and meaning of their native language and culture—both productively when attempting to speak the language and act in the culture, and receptively when trying to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practised by natives’ (Wilkin, 1972:198). Contrastive analysis is the method of analyzing the structure of any two languages intending to estimate the differential aspect of their system, irrespective of their genetic affinity or level of development.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to identify the errors made by Chavacano speakers in learning Spanish as a foreign language. Specifically, this research aimed to determine (a) the errors students do commit in a conversational context; and (b) the errors that are more persistent.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive-qualitative method. It described the existence of error production in a conversational context among Chavacano Spanish learners, particularly in the errors of verbs and articles.

Informants and Sampling Technique

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to determine the 10 Chavacano Spanish learner informants. Informants were selected according to two criteria: First, he/she has to be a Chavacano speaker, second he/she must have been enrolled in a Spanish conversational class in the second semester of the school year 2017-2018 at the College of Liberal Arts, Western Mindanao State University.

Instrument

The instrument used was a set of pictures adapted from Tendero (2012). It had a reliability index of 84%. Picture 1 shows a lady teaching the students. The second picture is a lady congratulating a man and the last picture is a vessel (see translational research).



Data Gathering Procedure

To obtain the necessary data for analysis and interpretation, the picture was administered among informants with audio-recordings. Informants were properly oriented in a closed room, and they were given 10 minutes to organize their thoughts. After ten (10) minutes informants were called individually while the rest of the informants stayed in another room. The task lasted a maximum of twenty (20) minutes.

Data Analysis

The recorded conversations were transcribed manually (by Spanish teachers who are proficient and licensed to teach the subject). Based on the transcripts the errors were analyzed thematically. Similar errors were grouped under one theme. For instance, all errors of omission were placed under the theme "omission," all errors on addition were also grouped as one under the theme "addition", and same with misformation and misordering.

Results and Discussion

The errors and difficulties that occur in our learning and the use of foreign language differ from that of a mother tongue, so whenever the interference of our mother tongue affects the structures of a second language, we can expect both difficulties in learning and errors in performance (Wilkins, 1972, and as put forward by Lado).

According to Ellis (1994), identification of error is a deviation from the target language form, and the Chavacano Spanish learners demonstrated this error. Additional errors were committed like the insertion of *ta* and *na*. These words do not exist in Spanish. *Ta* is a Chavacano word which is the BE form of the verb and *na* is a preposition. Nonetheless, it must not be present in a well-formed utterance. The misformation errors are characterized by the use of unacceptable forms of morpheme or structure, like the use of the article. Informants used *un profesora* instead of *una profesora*. *Profesora* is feminine in gender because it ends with the letter *a*. Misformation was also the error committed, in the sentence, *La alumnos escuchan* (the students are listening) the subject is *alumnos* (students). *La* is a misformation; it must be *Los*. It is also misordering because it must occur before the subject.

Table 2: Errors committed by the Chavacano Spanish learners.

Deviation Error	Informant 1	Informant 2	Informant 3	Informant 4	Informant 5	Informant 6	Informant 7,8,9 10
Omission							
Addition	ta	na		ta			ta
Misformation	Un profesora	Uno estudiantes	podemos				el
Misordering					Alumnus la		

Translational Research

Informant 1

Una foto *ta* significa *un* profesora enseñando lecciones en una clase. Segunda foto *ta* significa un profesora otorgado por un trabajo. Ultimo foto *ta* significa *un* profesora *viajar* para relajarse como recompensa por ella misma.

(The first picture is a teacher teaching in her class. The second picture shows a teacher is assigned for work and the last photo shows a professor will travel to unwind)

Informant 2

Uno de los *estudiantes* esta presentando un studio a los panelistas. En *na* segunda foto, los tres son appreton del manos despues de la presentacion exitosa. El tercero, los dos chicos que son mejorees amigos continuaron navegando para delajarse y disfrutar de momentos libre de stres en el mar.

(One of the students is presenting a study to the panellists. In the second photo, the three shakes their hands after the successful presentation. The third photo shows the two boys are better friends, and they will continue to sail to enjoy the moments for stressed free.)

Informant 3

Erazo una ves, *un estudiante* llamado Carlo se esfuerza por estudiar donde *podemos* ver en la imagen uno. Tebido a su deligencia, *se graduo* con gran exito, como le que *podemos* ver



en la imagen dos. Después de todas sus dificultades y el éxito que tiene ahora, recuerda la época en que todavía era un pescador que luchaba por ganarse la vida, como podemos ver en la imagen tres.

(Once upon a time, a student named Carlo strives to study where we can see in image one. Who is Diligent, graduated with great success, as you can see in picture two. After all his difficulties and the success, he has now, he is still a fisherman who is striving for a living, as we can see in image three.)

Informant 4

Una foto *ta* significa un profesora enseñando a sus estudiantes. Segunda foto *ta* significa una chica recibiendo su premio. Último foto *ta* significa dos amigos navegando en un barco.

(The photo is a teacher teaching her students. The Second photo is a girl receiving her prize. The last photo is two friends sailing on a boat.)

Informant 5

La profesora y los alumnos están en la aula. Ella está explicando sobre algo y sus *alumnos* la escuchan. Las dos personas también están platicando, quizás sobre la discusión de la profesora. Aquí tiene tres personas. Probablemente son profesionales. El caballero tiene el gusto de conocer a la mujer, así como para una colaboración mutua. Claro que los dos caballeros ya son colegas. Las dos personas están en el bote que está intentando encontrar una forma de atravesar las grandes olas en el mar.

(The teacher and the students are in the classroom. He's explaining something, and her students listen. The two are also talking, maybe about the discussion of the teacher. They're probably pros. The gentleman has the pleasure of knowing the woman, as well as for mutual collaboration. Of course, the two gentlemen are already colleagues. The two people are in the boat that is trying to find a way to cross the big waves in the sea.)

Informant 6

Como percibi de esas cifras, mostrar que el barco representa ir al extranjero, y el maestro está solicitando ese puesto en otro país. Significa que, en nuestra sociedad, especialmente en el entorno de Filipinas, el salario o el salario es lo suficientemente mínimo como para soportar un día. Otros gastos como vestimenta y otras cosas no son sostenibles. Es por eso que la mayoría de nuestros compañeros filipinos están trabajando con la esperanza de obtener una mayor cantidad de salario.

(As you perceive these figures, the ship represents going abroad, and the teacher is applying for that position in another country. It means that, in our society, especially in the Philippine environment, wages or wages is not sufficient minimum to withstand a day. Other expenses like the dress and other things are not sustainable. Most Filipinos are working abroad in the hope of obtaining a greater amount of salary.)

Informant 7

De alguna manera esta imagen se relaciona entre si. En el momento un maestro ensena sus cuatro estudiantes y ella fue promovida y ella tuvo un viaje gratis a otro pais.

(Somehow this image relates to each other. At the time a teacher teaches his four students, and she was promoted, and she had a free trip to another country.)

Informant 8

La primera imagen muestra que el grupo de *personas se encuentra* en una reunion formal encabezada por la mujer que eta de pie sosteniendo un papel y el resto del grupo escucha y los demas habla con cada uno. La imagen muestra que el tema del que se habla es serio como un problema, ofertas de la empresa o una cita importante basada en la gente que se muestra en la imagen. Parece que el grupo discute el tema dentro de ellos mismos para que den su decision, decision acordada por todos ellos, a la mujer frente a ellos que encabezada la reunion. Ademas, la imagen de bajo de la primera imagen muestra que basandose en la decision tomada por el grupo durante su reunion, el grupo acordo finalmente hacer un trato dentro de la otra compania tal vez. Con la mujer dandose mano con la otro se asegura que los dos estuvieron de acuerdo con un trato determinado que puede dar beneficio entre ellos. El hombre y la mujer parecen estar de acuerdo con el trato, ya que parecen sonreir el uno con otro. Al equal que una cita, un grupo a los dos personas necesitan aclarar las cosas para que tomen una decision que sea acordada por la mayoria y que sea Buena y beneficiosa para los demas. La tercera foto muestra que la decision acordada por las dos partes de la cual de *grupo hablo* seriamente fue para viajar donde los miembros se devierten y se sienten libres de entres sin los problemas de la oficina ya que los trabajos de oficina pueden ser tan estresantes y complicados que puede dar la enfermedad mental y fisica que es mala para a la salud de cuerpo.

(The first photo shows that the group of people is in a formal meeting headed by the woman standing in front holding a paper while the rest of the group listens and the others talk with each other. The picture shows that the topic being talked about is serious as a problem in a company that deals or a major appointment based on the people's seriousness shown in the



picture. It seems that the group discusses the topic within themselves as for them to give out their decision agreed by all of them, the woman in front of them headed the meeting. Below the first picture shows that based on the decision taken by the group during their meeting the group agreed to make a deal with the other company perhaps finally. With the woman shaking hands, is giving assurance on a certain deal which can give benefit to them. It seems that the woman and the man agreed on their deal. The third photo shows that the two parties agreed seriously, to travel and have fun or to be stress-free and avoid sickness.)

Informant 9

La primera foto *ta* significa la profesora habla con los alumnos despues *el* segunda foto, la jefe dar su saludo a profesora.

(The first picture shows a professor teaches her student than the second picture, the boss congratulates the professor.)

Informant 10

Creo la foto muestra buen exito porque la jefe dar su saludo a profesora, *ta* significa que la profesora haga su trabajo por eso oferta un vacacion a ella.

(I believe the picture shows that the professor did her work well that is why she was offered to have a vacation.)

Conclusion

The researcher concluded that the errors committed by the Mass Communication students, particularly Chavacano speakers, who took Spanish with the description of Conversational Spanish, deviated from the language forms as to addition, misformation and misordering.

Evidently, 5 out of 10 informants displayed the deviation error of addition, and it can be concluded that this is due to the first language interference, for *ta* (be form of the verb) and *na* (preposition) are Chavacano words, moreover, the errors as to misformation were found in the conjugation of the verb.



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