
THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS & ASIAN/MIDDLE
EASTERN LANGUAGES IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE
A FACULTY CANDIDATE TALK BY

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Wednesday, January 25th

9:00-10:00 am Love Library 430

“SAN DIEGO IS ALMOST A LITTLE
CAVITE CITY”: DOCUMENTING SPEAKERS’
PERCEPTIONS OF CHABACANO WITH
PERCEPTUAL DIALECTOLOGY

Perceptual dialectology is concerned with how speakers of a language perceive other dialects in relation to their own (Preston 1999, 2002). Studies in this field tend to focus on monolingual settings, and in the U.S., they are usually done on college campuses, which skew toward a relatively homogeneous and privileged population. In this talk, I demonstrate that perceptual dialectology methods are also a powerful way to explore language variation and attitudes in more diverse field settings, focusing mainly on the case of Cavite Chabacano, an endangered Spanish-Tagalog creole language spoken in Cavite City, Philippines.

Analysis of interviews and a map-labeling task shows where Chabacano is believed to still be spoken, what kind of dialectal variation speakers notice, what their attitudes are toward it, and how they believe the different dialects to be influenced by other languages in Cavite (Spanish, Tagalog, and English). The participants linked particular differences in vowel pronunciation and second pronoun usage to social class, and they considered the dialect that retains vowel features from pre-colonial Tagalog to be more prestigious. I argue that these language ideologies are related to historical shifts in power, class structure, and ethnic identity in Cavite (Lesho to appear).

This study demonstrates how perceptual dialectology can be expanded beyond its traditional focuses. It can be used to document endangered or marginalized language varieties. It is also a useful tool for investigating the sociolinguistic dynamics of creole or other multilingual settings and for analyzing the attitudes that can influence the structural development of a language.

References

- Lesho, Marivic. To appear. Folk perception of variation in Cavite Chabacano. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages*.
Preston, Dennis R. (ed.). 1999. *Handbook of perceptual dialectology*. Volume 1. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Preston, Dennis R. 2002. Perceptual dialectology: Aims, methods, findings. *Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs* 137. 57-104.