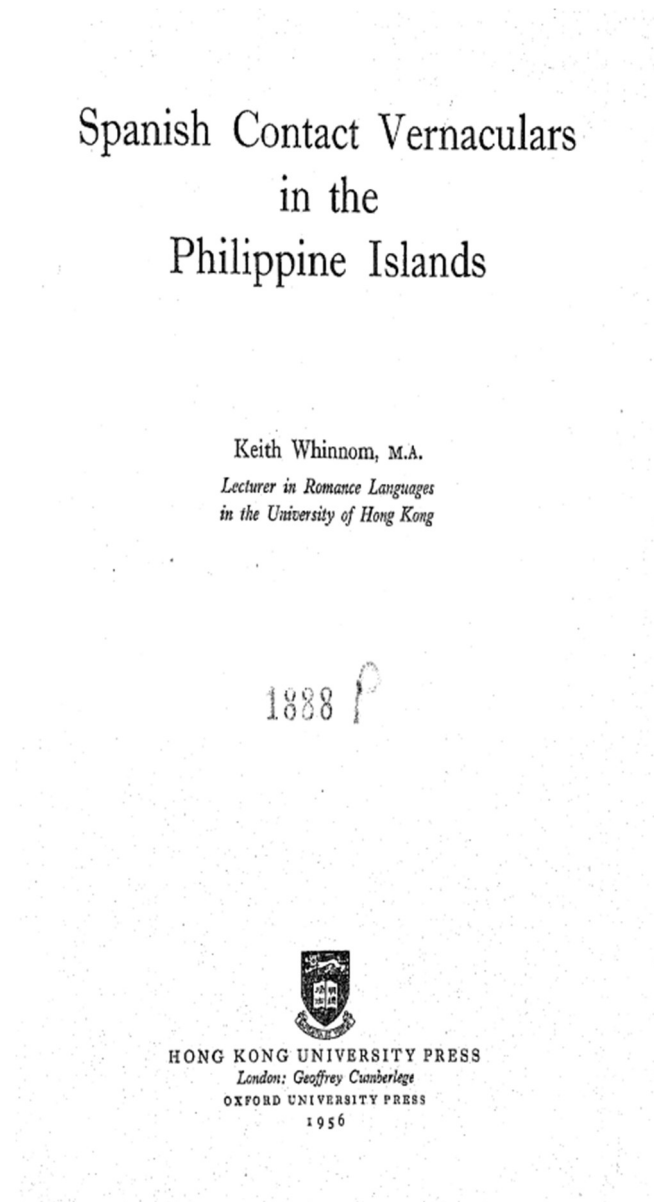


## My research on Chabacano (Philippine creole Spanish) and Philippine Spanish

I had been aware of the existence of Spanish-lexified creoles in the Philippines after reading Whinnom's monograph, widely known among creolists.



This exotic language seemed out of reach, and given that in the early 1950's Whinnom thought it all but gone, it was just a curiosity. Frake's 1971 article in the Dell Hymes pidgin/creole anthology seemed more relevant, especially since the vitality of Chabacano (Philippine creole Spanish) in Zamboanga (Mindanao) was demonstrated (Whinnom had not been able to visit Zamboanga due to political turmoil and was under the impression that it was a dying language).

I then discovered a 1980 article by Frake that was even more encouraging (later I found Forman's superb 1972 dissertation, an excellent profile of Zamboangueño grammar). Still, a visit to the Philippines seemed like a fantasy, and I was deep into other Spanish fieldwork at the University of Houston, including a 1983 Fulbright research fellowship to Andalusia/Canary Islands (a trip that enabled me to also collect pilot data in Equatorial Guinea; see that section). Then in late 1984 the Fulbright commission launched a new program for Southeast Asia, not only the continental area just emerging from the Vietnam war but also island nations including the Philippines. I put together a successful research proposal, and in the summer of 1985 I set out to spend 4 months in the Philippines, studying both Chabacano and what remained of non-creole Philippine Spanish, in what was to be one of the most amazing experiences of my life.

After orientation in Manila I made many contacts for Zamboanga, and even interviewed some resident Zamboangueños. The local Peace Corps office gave me copies of their Chabacano language materials, which I eagerly devoured. I then set off for nearby Cavite along Manila Bay, site of most of Whinnom's study. My main contact was the affluent Nazareno family (Domingador "Doming" and Natividad "Nati"), owners of several businesses and together with their sons, active in politics (this was the final years of the Ferdinand Marcos regime). The Nazarenos treated me splendidly, put me up in their home and took me around to interview many Caviteño speakers. Invited to an evening garden gala, I was unexpectedly introduced to first lady Imelda Marcos! I was worried that any association of me with the autocratic Marcos regime would hinder my future fieldwork, but fortunately no one seemed to notice.

At the Nazareno home I made my first true Filipina friend, Purification "Puring" Ballesteros. Unlike the Nazarenos, Puring was from a working-class background, similar to my own blue collar upbringing, which is probably why we hit it off immediately. Puring took a personal almost motherly interest in my research and continued to help me with contacts and recommendations. Together with Nati and Puring we then traveled further to Ternate, home of the most archaic form of Chabacano, where we met the budding scholar Evangelino "Enjoe" Nigoza, who gave me some typed materials and engaged in a fascinating conversation with Nati and Puring, each speaking their own version of Chabacano. Enjoe then took us to interview several more people in Ternate. Years later Enjoe published a definite monograph on Ternateño language and culture, and founded the West Point school in Ternate, while becoming a leading exponent of Chabacano language revitalization.

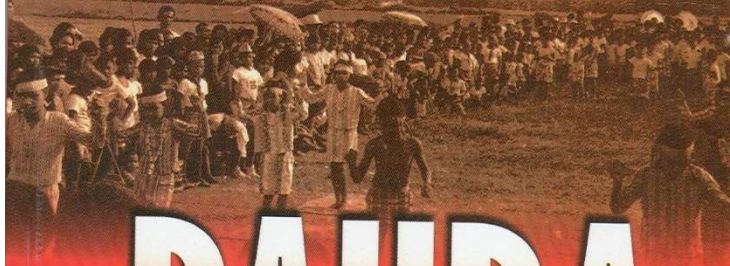


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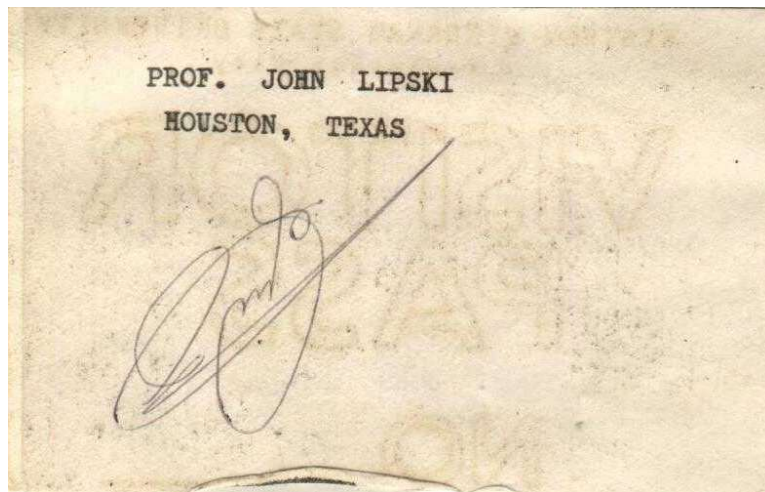
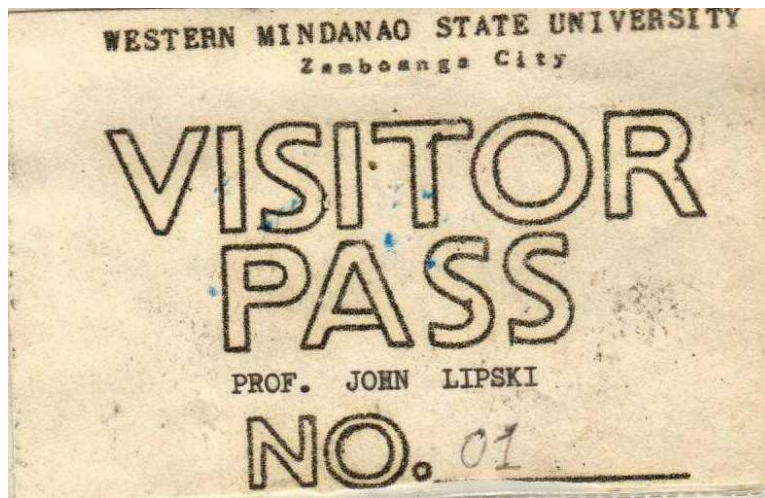
**EMMANUEL FRANCO CALAIRO  
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DLSU-D Cavite Studies Center • Cavite Historical Society

Also in Manila, I met Brother Andrew Gonzalez, a distinguished linguist and president of De la Salle University, and Sister Maria Isabel Riego de Dios, author of a multi-dialect Chabacano dictionary.

All the Filipinos I met in Manila urged me not to go to Zamboanga because of political violence, while the folks at the American Embassy and even the Filipinos at the Fulbright office assured me that all was well. But of course it wasn't.

My research site in Zamboanga was Western Mindanao State University, where I was welcomed by Dr. Grace Rebollos, director of the research office, and her colleagues. For the next couple of months this was my home base, where I made many interviews on the WMSU campus and was taken all around the area to make other interviews. I was one of only a literal handful of non-Filipinos in Zamboanga, the others being Jesuit priests, and at first I was greeted on the streets as *buenos dias padre*. Then after a couple of radio and tv interviews, it seemed like everyone knew that I was in town to study Chabacano, and I got a lot of friendly comments as I rode the jeepneys from Tetuan to downtown Zamboanga, where I transferred to another route to get to WMSU. After only a few days in Zamboanga I was interviewed in Zamboangueño on a local radio station by Romy Enriquez in his "Tienda da Gulud" talk show. I was still learning the language but with Romy's encouragement I pulled it off. At one point he asked me to say a few words in Spanish, which almost no one understood. Over the coming weeks I participated as a judge in a televised literary contest, in a charismatic Catholic group, as an impromptu Spanish teacher, and lots of other enjoyable activities that made me a true participant-observer.



I spent the first night in what was then the only real hotel in Zamboanga, the Hotel Lantaka, with air conditioning and its own generator, given the daily/nightly rolling power outages. The Fulbright grant would have allowed me to stay there for the entire duration of my visit, but Grace took me to visit a small boarding house in Tetuan, on the outskirts of Zamboanga, run by Hilda Araneta and her husband, the lawyer Rodolfo "Po" Araneta. The room offered to me was tiny, with no air conditioning or fan, and full of mosquitos (kept in check by the dozens of tiny gecko lizards call butiki all of the walls and ceiling of the room. There were absolutely no creature comforts, but I knew at once that if I stayed with the Aranetas I would really learn about the community, instead of being a pampered hotel guest. It was the best decision I ever made.



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a friend of  
ours. He'd like  
to know more  
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Thanks.*

*Mayor Gregorio Imperial  
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Office of the City Mayor  
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Regards from Hilda Araneta  
& Choling Boya*

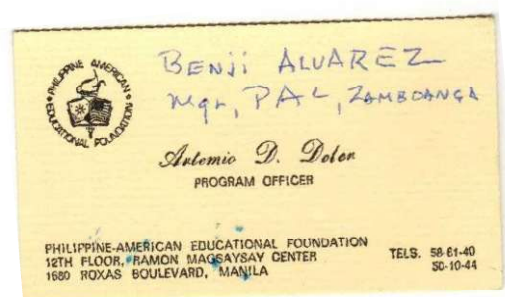
Hilda taught Spanish at the Ataneo de Zamboanga high school (a Jesuit school), and her husband was the president of the local Rotary Club. Hilda took a real interest in my research and went out of her way to give me interview opportunities, in her home and around the city. I was the only non-Filipino among the half dozen or so boarders, all of whom spoke a variety of Philippine languages, and our dinner conversations were very interesting. Best of all, the

Rotarians did volunteer work in the mountains on weekends, and Po and Hilda always took me along to remote mountain villages where only very “pure” Chabacano was spoken, with no mixture of English, Spanish, Visayan, or Tagalog, as was often the case in Zamboanga. In the mornings we would work, building latrines or putting on roofs, then after lunch (usually served on banana leaves), I was free to interview local residents, who were amazingly friendly and encouraging. Some had worked with local Peace Corps volunteers, and the PCers I met also spoke very good Chabacano.

As folks back in Manila had warned me, the security situation in Zamboanga was very bad. In a city of perhaps 100K residents at the time, there were at least a dozen people killed every day/night, usually with automatic weapons or rocket grenades. These were the days of the New Philippine Army (NPA) rebels, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) Muslim separatist guerrillas, local police and the Philippine Constabulary, and lots of private militias. It was common to see jeepneys full of barefoot men in t-shirts and carrying Armalite rifles, just prowling around. No one knew who they worked for but everyone stayed out of their way. There was a 6:00 p.m. curfew for all but essential travel, and gunshots and automatic weapons fire could be heard every night. One day a policeman had been killed in a drive-by, and at the wake that evening rebels fired a rocket grenade into the funeral home, killing many more; I heard it all broadcast live on the radio. Romy played me a tape of a radio broadcast in which the announcer had been shot to death while live on the air. His agonizing screams were horrible. The previous outspoken anti-Marcos mayor Cesar Climaco had been assassinated the year before, and one day one of the witnesses to his murder was gunned down at noon in downtown Zamboanga, right in front of the stop where I changed jeepneys every day (I had been at that very spot only shortly before). Hilda Araneta was always waiting for me to come home every afternoon/evening, but after a few days I became numbed to the threat of violence. Scary how quickly we slip into such situations.

I also traveled to Cotabato to interview Chabacano speakers there, more numerous than I would have expected. Then on to Davao, where the once flourishing Davaoeño was all but gone. Also the nearby island of Jolo, where there were many mostly L2 Chabacano speakers.

While based in Zamboanga, I was able to travel to several other cities to collect data on remaining non-creole Philippine Spanish; Cebu, Iloilo, Dumaguete, etc.



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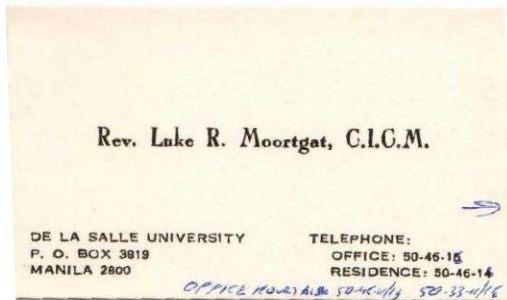
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When I returned to Manila for the final week of my fellowship after a couple of months in Zamboanga, I again looked up Puring Ballesteros. By this time I was quite proficient in Zamboagueño Chabacano, which has many more (southern) Philippine elements than in Cavite and Ternate, including numerous particles and half the pronoun system (in C and T all pronouns are Spanish-derived). Puring was very amused during our cross-Chabacano conversations. When I took her out to lunch during my last days in Manila, I thought this would be the last time I would see her or any of my other Philippine friends. Happily, this turned out not to be true.

In the fall of 2000, shortly after I had arrived at Penn State, I was invited to a Chabacano conference at the Instituto Cervantes in Manila, at that time directed by the creolist Mauro Fernández (University of La Coruña, Spain). Several luminaries were also invited, including John Holm, Sally Thomason, Angela Bartens, and Mike Forman. Things had changed dramatically in 15 years. Chabacano speakers were now proud of their language, and no longer considered it to be “broken Spanish,” “kitchen Spanish,” “bamboo Spanish,” and all the other derogative terms I had formerly heard. There were delegations from Zamboanga, Cotabato, and Cavite, and for the first time people were referring to themselves as “Chabacanos,” in effect adopting the name of the language as a de facto ethnic designation. Much to my delight, Puring Ballesteros was in the audience, and we quickly reestablished our friendship. We also met Jocelyn “Joy” de la Rosa, head librarian of the Cavite City Library. During our spare time I organized an impromptu visit to Cavite, where we toured the library and met and interviewed some elderly Chabacano speakers.



In 2009, having finished my department head gig at Penn State and having accumulated some research funds, I returned to the Philippines to update my Chabacano research. In Zamboanga, my former research hostess Dr. Grace Rebollos was now president of WMSU, and she invited me to give a series of lectures, and also provided many more interview opportunities. It was here that I observed the increasing influence of Tagalog on Zamboangueño, which ultimately resulted in my *IJB* article.

Lipski, J. M. (2013). Remixing a mixed language: The emergence of a new pronominal system in Chabacano (Philippine Creole Spanish). *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 17(4), 448-478.

During my visit, I was interviewed by Congresswoman Maria Isabel “Beng” Climaco (later mayor of Zamboanga) for her Chabacano tv program, and was received by Zamboanga mayor Celso Llobregat. I also met former Zamboanga mayor Jose Atilano, and got valuable information from Dr. Hermenegildo Malcampo.



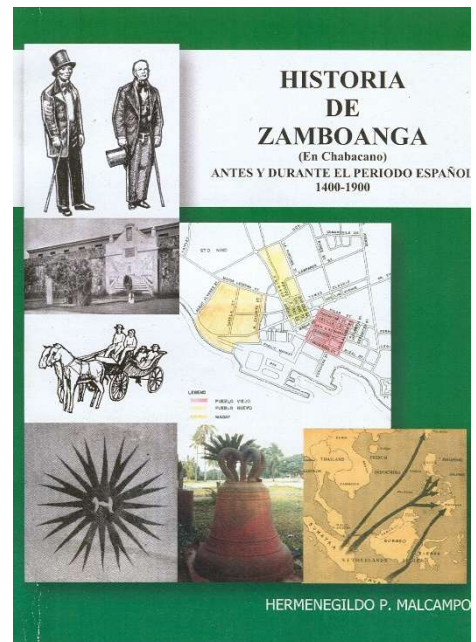
Dr. Grace Rebollos, president WMSU (2009)



Congresswoman Maria Isabel “Beng” Climaco (2009)



Dr. Hermenegildo Malcampo





With former Zamboanga mayor Jose Atilano











Back in Manila, I was invited by the Instituto Cervantes to give a lecture on Chabacano (in Spanish). It was announced in the media and other channels, but only symbolic attendance was expected, namely by the small group of elitist Filipino Hispanophiles, who often show up to IC events just to show off. Much to the astonishment of everyone, including the Spanish ambassador (who was in the audience together with his staff), the auditorium was filled to overflowing, with people standing and sitting on the floor. Almost all were Chabacano speakers, including some from Zamboanga as well as Cavite, and they swarmed us after the lecture and during the reception. And my old friend Puring Ballesteros was there front and center.

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Conferencia Lecture  
Conferenciante Lecturer John M. Lipski

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Puring Ballesteros (Instituto Cervantes, Manila 2009)



With Puring Ballesteros



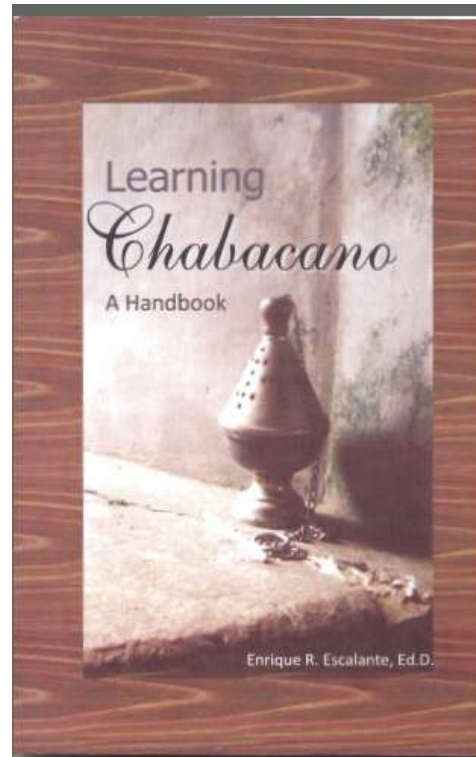
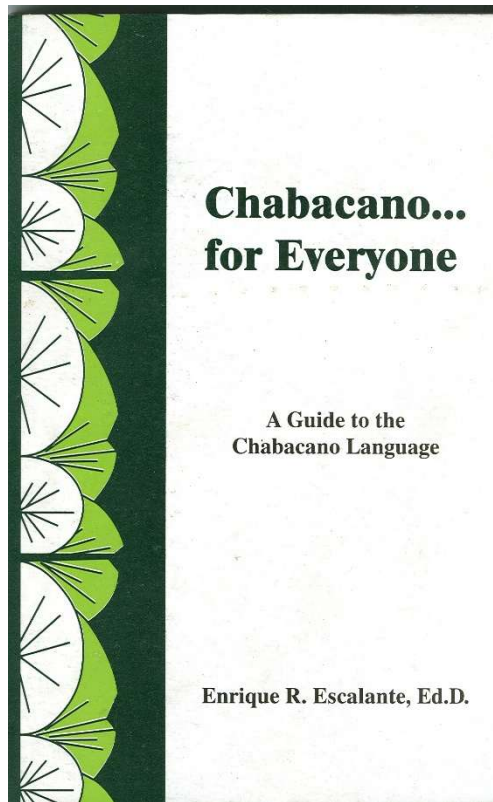
With Puring Ballasteros (l.), Enrique "Ike" Escalante (r.) (Instituto Cervantes, Manila 2009)



At the Institute Cervantes in Manila, 2009



I also met professor Enrique “Ike” Escalante of Cavite, author of excellent pedagogical materials on Cavite Chabacano, who was actively promoting revitalization of the rapidly fading Cavite variety.





Puring Ballesteros and family in Cavite, 2009

The Spanish ambassador was so impressed by the turnout for a public lecture on Chabavano that in 2012 he invited me as featured speaker in the annual Hispano-Philippine cultural week. Traditionally, this had featured the Spanish language, but by 2012 the Instituto Cervantes folks realized that the truly viable Spanish linguistic presence in the Philippines was Chabacano. This time I was a guest of the Spanish embassy, not the Instituto Cervantes, which opened up all sorts of possibilities. They assigned me a driver, who took me to Cavite and Ternate, where I met with Enjoe Nlgoza, now the head of the West Point school. I also interviewed several Chabacano speakers in Ternatye, including some who had collaborated with Eeva Sippola in her excellent dissertation on Ternate Chabacano. When the driver and I approached the home of a woman suggested by Enjoe, walking along a back alley, she peered out warily and appeared to be uneasy. Then I greeted her in Chabacano and told her that folks at the West Point school had suggested that I visit her, and her frown immediately turned to a welcoming smile. She confessed to being a bit scared when she saw us, since no one in Ternate looks even remotely like me. We had a great conversation.

I also gave lectures at several universities in the greater Manila area, and during one of my lectures (which I dedicated to the memory of Puring Ballesteros, who had recently passed away), her nephew came up to greet me warmly.

During my visit, the (then) queen of Spain, Doña Sofía, visited the Philippines to oversee some cooperation projects. As a guest of the Spanish embassy I was invited to an evening reception at the ambassador's home. I expected the queen to make a symbolic appearance, but instead there was an enormous reception line in the garden, including every Hispanophile in the Philippines as well as resident Spaniards, and the queen was greeting them one by one (an aide briefly introduced each person to her). So when my turn came she asked what had brought me to the Philippines, and I mentioned my work on Chabacano (all in about 5 seconds). Then, as I

was chatting with some of the Instituto Cervantes folks, another aide came up to me. He was organizing impromptu one-on-one meetings with the queen at her request, and among other things, she had asked to speak with me. Wow. It turns out that she was traveling to Zamboanga the next day, and she peppered me with questions about Chabacano, how it was formed, whether she would be able to understand it, and other probing questions worthy of a good graduate student. With a degree in archaeology (and another in music), she was clearly under-employed as queen. I later learned that in Zamboanga she had insisted on visiting a Chabacano-language school (not on her official agenda). Who'd have thunk it?

Ike Escalante and Enjoe Nlgoza can be seen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3vZhmgVNmo>

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Ternate 2012

