

Language Specific Peculiarities Document for

Cebuano as Spoken in the Philippines

1. Special handling of dialects

Cebuano Visayan (henceforth Cebuano) is the most widely spoken dialect of the Visayan, or Bisayan, language group (henceforth Visayan). It should be noted that the Cebuano language is only referred to as such in the academic world and among non-Cebuano speakers. Native speakers of the language prefer the term Binisaya (or Vinisaya). This is avoided in formal contexts as speakers of discrete languages (e.g., Waray, Ilonggo) may use the term Binisaya to refer to their own language also (Endriga, 2010). There are, therefore, a number of distinct but related languages that use the name Binisaya to refer their language, and this document will focus only on the Cebuano variety of Visayan.

Cebuano belongs to the Cebuan subgroup of the Visayan languages (Zorc, 1977). The Visayan languages are a subgroup of the Central Philippine languages (where Tagalog and Bikol also belong), which is in turn a subgroup of the Meso-Philippine languages (such as Palawano and Agutaynen). The Visayan languages are divided into five subgroups: Banton, Cebuan, Central, South, and West. Cebuano is part of this language complex, and it is geographically situated between the Central Visayan and South Visayan subgroups.

Based on a study of 36 Visayan speech varieties, Zorc (1977) lists seven distinctive features and another seven distinctive lexical items that appear to be innovations of the Cebuan subgroup, thus justifying this grouping. These features are the *ug* indefinite genitive marker, *unsa* 'what', *kinsa* 'who', *unya* 'later on (same day)', *ganiha* 'earlier (same day)', the past time marker *ga*, and the loss of word-final /k/ in certain discourse particles. The seven distinctive lexical items of the Cebuan subgroup are *pa'ak* 'bite' (*kagat* in others), *ig'agaw* 'cousin', *buntag* 'morning', *du'ul* 'near' (**rapit* or **rani* in others), *dula* 'play', *singut* 'sweat', and *balibag* 'throw away' (Zorc, 1977: 279) (note the * denotes a protoform and that spellings here follow Zorc).

Cebuano is spoken by some 20 million people (Kilaton, 2011) on Cebu Island and on the western side of Leyte, adjacent to Cebu. The dialect spoken on Leyte is sometimes called Leyteño. Varieties of Cebuano are also spoken on Bohol (sometimes called Boholano), the eastern side of Negros (Negros Oriental), the northern and eastern parts of Mindanao, parts of the Zamboanga Peninsula, and in the south-west of Mindanao. See map of Philippines regions in the Appendix.

There is contemporary research focusing on the status of dialects like Boholano as discrete languages or as dialects of Cebuano (Laput, 2013). These forms of Cebuano show phonological variation including /j/ becoming a voiced palato-alveolar fricative /z/ (written <dy>) in Boholano. The 2000 census in the Philippines introduced new categories that separated Boholano and

Binisaya (spoken in Mindanao) from Cebuano, describing them as distinct languages, despite claims of mutual intelligibility with Cebuano (Endrigo, 2010).

The Cebuano spoken in Mindanao serves as a trade language that is a lingua-franca amongst native Cebuano speakers and speakers of other languages (Endrigo, 2010). The Cebuano-speaking population and populations speaking other languages are in contact in this region (Wolff 1972). As such, code-switching and a certain amount of foreign borrowings may occur in the Cebuano spoken in these regions.

Luzon, which is geographically quite far removed from the rest of the Cebuano-speaking Philippines, maintains its own dialect of Cebuano also (Endrigo, 2010). This dialect can only be loosely defined according to its distinctive characteristics since its speakers originate from many different regions in the Central Visayas and Mindanao regions (Cebuano Language, 2013). Luzon Cebuano is recognizable by the presence of many Tagalog words in its vocabulary, as well as the accents of its speakers, which can be seen to exhibit Tagalog influences.

Despite these assertions of variation, Wolff (1972) states that Cebuano is remarkably uniform in pronunciation between its dialects across geographical situations. Cebuano dialects are highly mutually intelligible, and speakers can often understand each other regardless of where they come from.

The Sialo dialect of south-eastern Cebu Island (also known as Carcar-Dalaguet dialect) is the received standard for the language, given its widespread use in the Catholic Church (Endrigo 2010). Carcar and Dalaguet are cities on the east coast of the Cebu island, south of Cebu City. Their combined population is 170,562 (Census of Population and Housing, 2010) as opposed to Cebu City which has a population of 1,547,958 (ibid.)¹.

Sialo is the standard dialect for Cebuano translations of religious publications which include the Bible, printed prayers, novenas, and other materials. It is both a written and spoken vernacular that is recognisable primarily through the retention of intervocalic /l/, which is realized as /w/ in some other Cebuano dialects.

However, the Cebu City dialect is more widely spoken than Sialo, given the large population of Cebu City itself. The Cebu City dialect has also been adopted by some writers who choose to represent their dialect in their own writing (Endrigo, 2010). The Cebu City area encompasses towns and cities in the immediate vicinity (including the contiguous cities of Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue) but does not extend into rural parts of Cebu Island. The Cebu City dialect can be considered a second standard for the language, as it is the centre of the Cebuano-speaking population, although it is also noticeably 'urbanized', with English words frequently mixed into speech.

A survey of one of the most common systematic dialectal differences in the pronunciation of Cebuano shows the following variation in the treatment of intervocalic (and post-consonantal) /l/ in word roots:

- Intervocalic /l/ is retained in Negros, the southern half of Cebu, and most of Mindanao

¹ Note that this is the combined population of the contiguous cities of Cebu, Lapu-Lapu, and Mandaue.

- Intervocalic /l/ is dropped in areas east of Cebu and on the northern half of Cebu
 - a) Intervocalic /l/ may also become /j/ in “isolated dialects” (Wolff 1972), e.g., *tingali* → *tingayi* ‘perhaps’.
 - b) Less frequent is dropping of post-consonantal /l/ which is most common in the same areas that drop intervocalic /l/, e.g., *danglug* → *dangug* ‘slippery’.

Note that spelling of the examples here follows Wolff (1972).

Table 1 below shows the dialects of Cebuano that are represented in the data collection, along with the region and major cities where the dialect is spoken.

Table 1: Cebuano Dialects

Dialect	Region	Cities
Cebu-North Kana	Northern Cebu Island, Northern Leyte	Cebu City, Ormoc City
Sialo	Southern Cebu Island, Negros Oriental	Carcar, Dalaguete, Dumaguete City
Mindanao	Mindanao Island	Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Korondal

The Luzon “dialect” has been omitted entirely from this table since it does not exhibit any defining features that would allow it to be classed as a single dialect. Instead, Cebuano as spoken in the Luzon region reflects the variation that is present throughout the Central Visayas, Northern Mindanao, and Davao Regions, as speakers from these parts of the country have moved to the Tagalog-speaking north.

Speakers of the “Bohol-South Kana” dialect, spoken in Bohol Island and Southern Leyte, are excluded from this collection. There is significant lack of clarity around whether this is actually a dialect of Cebuano, both among speakers in the region and in academic work on the subject. This would have created the risk of including non-Cebuano speakers in the database. In addition, the population size (around 1.2 million) posed a risk to recruiting a sufficient number of speakers from the region (Census of Population and Housing, 2010).

2. Deviation from native-speaker principle

No deviation from the native-speaker principle. Only native speakers of Cebuano born in the Philippines were recruited for this project.

3. Special handling of spelling

Firstly, although there are so-called ‘standard’ spellings in Cebuano devised by publishers (Cebuano Language: Characteristics, 2013), Cebuano speakers are not generally aware of them. Instead, the spelling of a word in Cebuano is usually a representation of its pronunciation. This approach can introduce significant inconsistency as people differ in the extent to which they represent phonetic changes in the orthography of a word.

A more ‘traditional’ variety of Cebuano spelling is maintained by Bisaya Magasin, and this standard is detailed on their website (Lagda Sa Espeling, 2009).

For the purpose of transcription, we developed an internal standard based on the style guide developed by the publishers of Bisaya Magasin in order to ensure consistency in orthographic conventions. As a further reference, we used Wolff’s (1972) dictionary of Cebuano Visayan. We captured pronunciation variation with variants in the pronunciation field of the lexicon (e.g., the variation cited in Section 1 between intervocalic /l/ and /w/).

The sections below (§§3.1, 3.2, and 6) outline some of the areas that presented challenges for the standardization of Cebuano spelling.

3.1 Variation in native Cebuano spelling

There are canonically only three vowel sounds in Cebuano: /i/, /u/, /a/. There is, however, some inconsistency in representing them in the orthography. The /i/ vowel in particular can be written as <i> or <e>. The /u/ vowel is generally represented with <u> and sometimes <o>, especially in final syllables.

Examples:

nasunug / nasunog ‘burned’

sugu / sugo ‘(an) order/command’

kulut / kulot ‘curly’

santul / santol ‘<name of a fruit>’

As can be seen from these examples, there is significant variation in representing the /u/ vowel in word-final syllables. It may either be <u> or <o>.

Similarly, the antepenultimate vowel may be sporadically changed to /a/ in pronunciation, and this is represented in the orthography.

Examples:

batiis / bitiis ‘leg’

kumusta / kamusta ‘how is/are’ (Wolff, 1972)

The phonemic sequence /ng/ is often, but not always, indicated in writing by a hyphen to distinguish it from the velar nasal /ŋ/.

Examples:

san-glas / sanglas, pronounced with /n.g/

langit, ‘heaven’, pronounced with /ŋ/

If two consonants precede y or w, then an epenthetic vowel may be inserted. The inserted vowel is <i> or <u>, respectively (Wolff, 1972).

Examples:

pinsiyunada / pinsyunada, ‘one who receives a pension’

nagkuwarisma / nagkwarisma, ‘have a sad expression’ (but note the exception *Kwarisma* ‘Lent’).

Epenthetic /i/ and /u/ may also be added in the pronunciation and orthography after a glide in closed syllables.

Examples:

baynti / bayinti ‘twenty’

dawnggan / dawunggan ‘ear’

Omission or deletion of one or more letters at the beginning / end of the word is another common occurrence in Cebuano speech and writing.

Examples:

eksakto → *sakto*

mahilom → *hilom*

banganga → *nganga*

taliwala → *taliwa*

sinag-ulo → *sinag-u*

The loss of one or more sounds and letters within a word is also possible in spoken Cebuano.

Examples:

alugbati → *agbati*

kalaha → *kaha*

Finally, metathesis (the change of position/sequence of letters in a word) without any concomitant change of meaning is possible. In the examples below, both forms are accepted spellings.

Examples:

hulom / humol

daktol / takdol

aluhipan / ulahipan

Metathesis and elision of phone sequences (with consequent variation in written forms) provide challenges for the standardization of Cebuano spelling.

3.2 Variation in foreign word spelling

Cebuano vocabulary has been strongly influenced by Spanish, with many Spanish words coming into common usage and becoming nativized in Cebuano.

Examples:

kuros, from *cruz* ‘cross’

suwirti, from *suerte* ‘luck’

guwapa, from *guapa* ‘beautiful’

mirkado, from *mercado* 'market'
briliyanti, from *brillante* 'brilliant'

More recently, English loan words have been introduced into the language, some with a greater degree of nativization than others. The words may be altered in their pronunciation (and thus spelling) to conform to the phonemic inventory of Cebuano.

Examples:

brislit 'bracelet'
hayiskul 'high school'
siyaping 'shopping'
drayiber 'driver'

Standards such as the Bisaya Magasin orthography retain the <e> and <o> in borrowed words, rather than adapting them to the native <i> and <u>, respectively. However, this approach is not necessarily adopted in informal writing.

Examples:

bentana instead of *bintana* 'window'
polis instead of *pulis* 'police'

Some foreign words and symbols remain in their original form when adopted into Cebuano.

Examples:

- **Scientific Symbols** (Note that there are equivalent Cebuano *words*):

H₂O *tubig* 'water'
NaCl *asin* 'salt'
Ca *kalsiyum* 'calcium'
CaC₂ *kalburo* 'calcium carbide'
CaO *apog* 'lime'
Sn *istanyo* 'tin'

- **Foreign-sounding names:**

Churchill
Guillermo
Elizabeth
Jerez
William

- **The names of places:**

Brazil
Vietnam
Zambia

- **Business names, trade names and trademarks:**

Band-Aid
Bristol
Coke
Colgate
Jockey
Levi's
Mitsubishi
Pentax
Rolex
Volkswagen
Xerox

- **Mother-tongue translation of names of places and organizations are also used:**

Alemanya	'Germany'
Aprika	'Africa'
Asya	'Asia'
Ehipto	'Egypt'
Espanya	'Spain'
Gresya	'Greece'
Hapon	'Japan'
Indiya	'India'
Inglatera	'England'
Italya	'Italy'
Palestina	'Palestine'
Pransiya	'France'
Roma	'Rome'
Romanya	'Romania'
Rusya	'Russia'
Tsina	'China'
Uropa	'Europe'
Tinipong Kanasoran	'United Nations'
Istados Unidos o Tinipong Bansa sa Amerika	'USA'

See §8 for a comprehensive list of phonemes and characters that may be used in adopting foreign words into Cebuano.

4. Description of character set used for orthographic transcription

Written Cebuano does not use any diacritized letters. The Cebuano alphabet is a subset of the Latin-script English alphabet. It is comprised of 19 letters.

Upper case	Unicode upper case (U+00XX)	Lower case	Unicode lower case (U+00XX)
A	0x41	a	61
E	0x42	e	65
I	0x45	i	69
O	0x44	o	6f
U	0x47	u	75
B	0x49	b	62
K	0x48	k	6b
D	0x4b	d	64
G	0x4d	g	67
H	0x4c	h	68
L	0x4f	l	6c
M	0x4e	m	6d
N	0x50	n	6e
P	0x53	p	70
R	0x52	r	72
S	0x55	s	73
T	0x54	t	74
W	0x57	w	77
Y	0x59	y	79

For foreign words, which are unavoidably used in the language, foreign letters are utilized. These include <Cc>, <Ff>, <Jj>, <Ññ>, <Qq>, <Vv>, <Xx>, <Zz>. These characters are adopted to reflect foreign pronunciations and spellings, but they do not form an integral part of the native alphabet.

Upper case	Unicode upper case (U+00XX)	Lower case	Unicode lowercase (U+00XX)
C	0x43	c	63
F	0x46	f	66
J	0x4a	j	6a
Ñ	0xd1	ñ	f1
Q	0x51	q	71
V	0x56	v	76
X	0x58	x	78
Z	0x5a	z	7a

Examples:

/f/ in *sofa, soft drinks*

/v/ in *vodka, Valentines*

5. Description of Romanization scheme

Not Applicable.

6. Description of method for word boundary detection

Word boundaries are indicated by the use of white space.

Hyphens are used inconsistently in the situations outlined below. Note that in some of these cases, the hyphen is sometimes replaced by an apostrophe. Appen has created a standard for the use of both hyphen and apostrophe.

- a. To indicate a closed syllable when a consonant-final syllable is followed by a vowel in the orthography. (The hyphen effectively represents a glottal stop, as there are no vowel-initial syllables. Instead, the vowel is preceded by a glottal stop).

Examples:

bag-o 'new'

pas-an 'to carry on the shoulder'

bun-og 'bruise'

(Otherwise these would be initially (and mistakenly) read as 'ba-go', 'pa-san', and 'bu-nog')

- b. To separate two consecutive vowels. Again, this hyphen represents a glottal stop.

Examples:

la-in 'different/other'

tu-ig 'year'

pa-it 'bitter'

- c. Used in some reduplications.

Examples:

natuhay-tuhay

But note that they are not used in others: *tuwaytuway*.

- d. To separate prefixes from vowel initial roots in borrowings.

Examples:

pag-espeling 'how (a word) is spelled'

gi-hold 'to hold (an event); to be detained'

mag-Internet 'to use the Internet'

Contraction occurs when a vowel-final or semi-vowel-final word is followed by one of the particles *sa*, *ing*, *nga*, *ang*, or *ug*.

Examples:

nanago sa luyo sa katre → *nanagos luyos katre* ‘hiding behind the bed’

ako ing → *akoy* ‘I am (the one who)’

babayi nga bata → *babaying bata* ‘female child’

mabaw ug buot → *mabawg buot* ‘quick tempered’

bahaw nga pagkaon → *bahawng pagkaon*

pula ug ngabil → *pulag ngabil*

baga ug ngabil → *bagag ngabil*

imna ang tuba → *imnang tuba*

hugasi ang baso → *hugasang baso*

kuhaa ang libro → *kuhaang libro*

Acronyms and initialisms occur in Cebuano and are pronounced as in English. That is, initialisms are pronounced with the individual letters as they would be found in the alphabet, while acronyms are pronounced as a string of letters in the form of a word

Examples:

PGH (Philippine General Hospital)

CIT (Cebu Institute of Technology)

UC (University of Cebu)

CAT (Civilian Army Training), pronounced /kat/

7. Table containing all phonemes in the stipulated notation

The phonemic transcription of the words in this database uses X-SAMPA symbols, which can be found at <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/sampa/x-sampa.htm>. The total number of phonemes is 22. There are 17 consonants, 2 semi-vowels, 5 vowels (5 monophthongs), and no tones. There are 6 additional foreign phonemes.

CEBUANO PHONE CHART

TYPICAL CEBUANO CORRESPONDENCE	IPA	SAMPA	COMMENTS
CONSONANTS			
p	p	p	unaspirated
f (foreign only)			
b	b	b	
v (foreign only)			
m	m	m	
t	t	t	unaspirated
d	d	d	
n	n	n	
s	s	s	
c (foreign only)			
l	l	l	
r	r	ʀ	realized as /r/ word-initially
r	r	r	
y	j	j	
k	k	k	unaspirated
c / q (foreign only)			
g	g	g	
ng	ŋ	N	
'	ʔ	ʔ	
h	h	h	
w	w	w	
VOWELS			
a	a	a	
e	ɛ	E	
i	i	i	
u	u	u	

TYPICAL CEBUANO CORRESPONDENCE	IPA	SAMPA	COMMENTS
o	o	o	
FOREIGN PHONEMES			
f / ph	f	f	
v	v	v	
z / s	z	z	
sh / ti / siy	ʃ	S	
ch / tch / tiy	tʃ	tS	
j / g	dʒ	dZ	

OTHER SYMBOLS	
"	primary stress
%	secondary stress
.	syllable break
#	word boundary

Note:

Stress is phonemic in Cebuano although it is only rarely indicated in Cebuano writing. Some academic texts such as dictionaries indicate stress using an acute accent over the stressed vowel.

As described above (§6), the hyphen can be sometimes used to represent a glottal stop. There are also some cases in which a glottal stop should never be represented in the orthography. In these cases there is no representation of word initial or intervocalic glottal stops.

Examples:

naa 'to have/exist', not *na-a*

maayo 'good', not *ma-ayo*

kaon 'to eat', not *ka-o*

Post-consonantal glottal stops may either be written using an apostrophe or a hyphen, or they may not be represented in the orthography with any symbol. We provided a consistently standardized form for words with glottal stop represented in the orthography (either hyphen or apostrophe).

Examples:

tan'aw/tan-aw 'to see'

kan'on/kan-on 'food'

pas'an/pas-an 'to carry on the shoulder'

7.1 List of rare phonemes

Not Applicable.

7.2 List of foreign phones

/f/ may be used in careful pronunciation of foreign words that are spelled with <p>. Loan words may retain the phonemes /f/ and /v/, especially from Spanish.

Examples:

por favor (Spanish) → *por pabor* (Cebuano)

/z/, /s/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/ may also occur in the careful pronunciation of foreign words.

7.2.1 Other foreign phoneme phenomena

There is a large set of foreign phonemes that cannot be reproduced in native Cebuano writing. Although sophisticated foreign pronunciations are possible, the closest equivalent Cebuano phoneme is generally used, which also corresponds with a native character in the orthography.

The following Cebuano consonants may be used to substitute foreign consonants (Kilaton, 2011), although it should be noted that these standards are not consistently followed in everyday writing. Instead, complete foreign spellings, partial adaptations, or full adaptations of foreign spellings, may be used in Cebuano.

Cebuano Spelling	Foreign Correspondence	Comment
	<p>	
	<v>	
<k>	<c>	
<k>	<ch>	
<k>	<ch>	
<k> + <e/i>	<que(i)>	
<k> + <s>	<cc>	
<k> + <s>	<x>	
<k> + <uwa/e/i>	<cua(e/i)>	
<k> + <ya>	<quia>	
<d>	<r>	
<d> + <y>	<j>	
<d> + <y>	<gy>	
<g>	<j>	
<h>	<j>	
<h>	<g>	
<l>	<r>	(Spanish)
<l>	<n>	(Spanish)

8. Other language specific items

8.1 Table of Digits

Digit	Cardinal*		Ordinal
	Cebuano	Spanish	
0	wala'	siro	n/a
1	usa	uno	una
2	duha	dos	ika-duha
3	tulo	tris	ika-tulo
4	upat	kuwatro	ika-upat
5	lima	singko	ika-lima
6	unom	sayis	ika-unom
7	pito	siyiti	ika-pito
8	walo	utso	ika-walo
9	siyam	nuwibi	ika-siyam

* For cardinal numerals, the first of the pair is the Cebuano word for the number and the second is borrowed from the Spanish. The Cebuano word is used for simple counting, while the Spanish word is used for expressing bigger and more complex numbers, as well as money, time, etc.

8.2 Other Numbers

Digit	Cebuano
10	napulo', diyis
100	(usa) kagatos '(one) LIG-hundred'*
500	kiniyintos
1,000	(usa) kalibo '(one) LIG-thousand'
10,000	napulo' kalibo, diyis mil
10 million	napulo' kamiliyon 'ten LIG-million'

* LIG is used to refer to a ligature, or linking word.

Examples:

utso bayinti-singko 'eight twenty-five'

utso pisos ug bayinti-singko sintabos 'eight pesos LIG twenty-five cents'

9. References

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