Cebuano Grammar Notes
Jessie Grace U. Rubrico

1. Cebuano phonemes

Sixteen consonants and three vowels constitute the segmental phonemes of the Cebuano language, while stress and length constitute its suprasegmentals.

1.1 Consonants according to their points of articulation

Bilabial	Labio-velar	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
/ p /		/ t /		/ k /	/ ? /
/ b /		/ d /		/ g /	
/ m /		/ n /		/ ? /	
		/ s /			/ h /
	/ w /	/ l / / r /	/ y /		

1.2 Vowels according to tongue advancement (1) and position (2), lip rounding (3).

	(1) Front	Central	Back
(2) High	/ i / [i]		/u/ [u] (3)
mid	[I]		[o] (3)
low		/ a /	

Phoneme /i/ has two phonetic representations, [i] and [I] which freely alternate. The phoneme /u/ has also two allophones which may be considered to be in complementary distribution, to wit:

/ u / ⟶ [u] / ___ C#   Example: *ug, uy!*

        ↘ [o] / (V) C___# Example: *ko, mo, ako, imo*
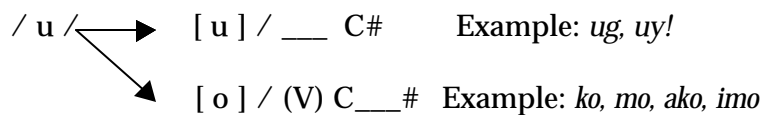
1.3 Suprasegmentals. Stress and Vowel length are phonemic in Cebuano.

1.3.1   Stress. Cebuano lexical items may be accented:

a) on the penultimate vowel as in *dayon , unya, ligo*;

b) on the final vowel as in *dayón, walá, sukád*;

c) on both vowels in a two-syllable word, if these vowels are glottal as in *sab-?a; ?ak-?ak;*

d) the position of the stress on the stem (i.e., final or penult) is retained when suffixation is applied as in *palit > palitan*

e) in word reduplication, the stress of the base is carried over as primary stress on the second component while the initial component gets the secondary stress. Example, *gamaygamay, hinayhinay*

f) the glottal stress - whether in the initial, medial, or final position- is retained whenever affixation is applied. Example: *?ayo - ma?ayo*

1.3.2 Vowel Length - Stressed vowels in Cebuano may have length which is an element in contrasting phonemes da:pit (invite) - dapít (place) ba:y (house) - bay (vocative for friend)

2 Morphophonemic processes

Some phonemic changes occur in certain environments. These may be due to the following morphophonemic processes.

2.1 Assimilation. This process generally occurs during affixation when a phoneme takes the point of articulation of its neighbor. Note the changes that occur when affix *mang- [maN]* is prefixed to roots which begin with nasals.

(a) maN- + palit > mangpalit > mampalit > mammalit > mamalit
(b) maN- + kahoy > mangkahoy > mangngahoy >mangahoy
(c) maN- + dakop > mangdakop > mandakop > mannakop > manakop

In Example (a) the N is bilabial, /m/, it takes the point of articulation of /p/, afterwhich it is totally assimilated and the affixed form become "mamalit" after degemination. This is progressive assimilation, where the preceding phoneme is influenced by the one following it. Example (b) is regressive assimilation,

where the initial consonant of the root is totally assimilated by the velar nasal before it. In Example (c) the N becomes alveolar to partially assimilate with /d/, and /d/ in turn is totally assimilated to come up with "manakop."

2.2 Deletion.

a) Final vowel of the base may be deleted after suffixation

Examples:

Base	Affix	For Deletion	
sukod	+ -on	sukodon	sukdon
agad	+ -on	agadon	agdon
kaon	+ -an	kaonan	kan-an
higot	+ -i	higoti	higti

b) The phoneme /l/ may be deleted when it is between two / a /. The initial / a / is then lengthened and the final / a / deleted.

Examples: base   a.   b.
balay >   baay >   ba:y
sala >   saa   >   sa:

2.3 Alternation

a) [l] alternates with [w]   when it is between /a/ and /u/

Examples: balud ~` bawud, bulad ~ buwad, salud ~ sawud

b) [d] > [r] after suffixation

Examples: badbad + on = badbadon > badbaron

tugkad + an = tugkadan > tugkaran

tul-id + on = tul-idon   > tul-iron

2.4 Metathesis.This process of reordering the phonemic sequence after suffixation is often accompanied by the deletion of the final vowel of the base. See examples below:

Base	Affixation		Deletion	Metathesis
bilin	+ -an	bilinan	bilnan	binlan
inom	+ -a	inoma	inma	imna
sulod	+ -i	sulodi	suldi	sudli
tanum	+ -an	tanuman	tanman	tamnan

2.5 Epenthesis The insertion of a vowel or a consonant into some borrowed words is practised in Cebuano in accordance with its phonotactics. This brings about euphony, which is characteristic of the language. Also, it makes the word easier to pronounce. For example, Spanish: tia > tiya; viaje >biyahe;   English: smart > esmarte; ball > bola

3. Phonotactics: Sequencing of Phonemes

3.1. Consonant Clusters-

C_1	C_2	
p	l, r, w, y	- plano, prangka, pwerto pyano
k	l, r, w, y	- klima, krus, kweba, kyugpos
b	l, r, w, y	- blangka, brilyante, bwinggit, Byernes
t	r, w, s, y	- trapo, twerka, tsuper, tyabaw
d	r, w, y	- drayber, dwende, dyamante
g	r, w	- grabe, gwano
n	w, y	- mwebles, myerkules
m	w, y	- nwebe, nyebe
s	w, y	- swapang, syagit
h	w	- hwes

3.2 Diphthongs

/ aw /	/ ay /	/ iw /	/uy /.
lugaw	balay	kagiw	kahoy
bahaw	tinapay	taliwtiw	pahoy
kawkaw	lubay		bugoy

3.3 Syllabification. A Cebuano syllable may consist of:

a Vowel	(V)	a-ko, i-mo, ad-to-a
Consonant + Vowel	(CV)	ka-ma, ta-na, ba-to
Vowel + Consonant	(VC)	us-us, un-ya, ug-ma
Vowel between two Consonants	(CVC)	u-moy, kal-ye, balde
two Consonants + Vowel	(CCV)	kla-ro, gru-po, pla-to
two Consonants + Vowel + Consonant	(CCVC)	krus, trak-tor, hwes, ak-syon, kwar-ta
Vowel + two Consonants -	(VCC)	eks-tra

4. Word classification

4.1 **Nouns** are name words. They refer to things, places, people and events. They may come with or without markers and can be replaced by pronouns --personal or demonstrative. Root nouns can stand alone. By affixation, they can become other nouns, adjectives, or verbs. Some of the affixes used with nouns are as follows:

> a) Nouns > Nouns - *ka-, ka-...-an, isigka-, pagka-, taga-*
> b) Nouns > Adjectives - *an, -in-, -on, maki-;*
> c) Nouns to Verbs - verbal affixes   [*211098*]

4.2 **Verbs** are actions words. Some verbs express feelings, conditions, emotions. In Cebuano almost all words can become verbs by affixation. Verbal affixes give the verbs their inflection with respect to VOICE, MOOD, and ASPECT.

4.2.1 **Voice** "is the difference in affix formation of a verb to indicate whether the subject acts or receives the influence of the action." Voice is either ACTIVE or PASSIVE. It is Active if the subject is the doer of the action, and Passive when the subject is the object or instrument of the action.

Verbs in the Passive Voice fall into three categories:

a) Direct Passive when the direct object of the verb is subjectivalized -- that is,it is made the subject of the passive sentence. Direct object is that which receives the action of the verb. Affixes in this group are -on, gi-, -a. Examples: *lutoon* (to cook); *giluto* (cooked); *lutoa* (command)

b) Indirect Passive when the indirect object is subjectivalized. This includes the locative and the benefactive objects which may be the experiencer, benefaciary of,or the place affected by the action. Affixes in this group are *-an, gi-...-an,* and *-a.* Examples: *sakay -- sakyan -gisakyan-sakyi*

c) Instrumental Passive when the thing or instrument through which the action is performed is subjectivalized. Affixes in this group are i-, and gi-. Examples: *palit -- ipalit - gipalit*

Active verbal affixes are *mo-, mag-, ma-, maka-,* and the pluralizer *mang-*.

4.2.2 **Mood** is the "inflection form of a verb: to express whether the action or state it denotes is conceived as fact or in some other manner as command, possibility or wish." Mood for Cebuano verbs may be classified as follows:

a) Temporal when the action is instantaneous or immediately completed.
  Example: *Mitindog siya* (He stood up).
b) Durative when the action lasts over a longer period of time.
   Example: *Magsulat siyag libro.* (He'll write a book)
c) Aptative when the action expresses ability, possibility,or when it is accidental or unintentional.
   Example*: Makabasa ako ug hinapon* (I can read Japanese)
                Nakapalit ra gyud siya ug balay (He finally managed to buy a house*)*
                Nakaligis sila ug bata (They accidentally ran over a child).
d) Stative when the action expresses emotions, feelings or conditions.
   Example*: Nasuko siya nimo* (He's angry at you).
                 Nahigugma siya kang Maria (He loves Maria).

e) Reciprocal when it expresses exchange of action between two or more actors.
   Makigkita siya nako karon (He wants me to meet him today).
   Magbinayloay kami ug hunahuna labot niana (We'll discuss that).

4.2.3 **Aspect** is "the nature of action of a verb as to its beginning, duration, completion or repetition and without reference to its position in time." Cebuano verbs are inflected for aspect, to wit:

   Action Not Begun (ANB) may be one that is PLANNED or given as COMMAND;
   Action Begun (AB). This includes COMPLETED ones and those that are still IN PROGRESS.
                              _

A summary of verbal inflections for VOICE, MOOD, AND ASPECT.

VOICE/CASE		AGENTIVE	P A S S I V E		
M O O D	A S P E C T		DIRECT	INDIRECT	INSTRUMENTAL
TEMPORAL	COMPLETED	MI-, NI-	GI-	GI-...-AN	GI-
	PROGRESSIVE	GA-	GI-	GA-... .-AN	GI-
	PLANNED	MO-	-ON	-AN	I-
	COMMAND	PAG-/ROOT	-A/I-	-I/I-	I-
DURATIVE	COMPLETED	NAG-	GI-	GI-...-AN	GI-
	PROGRESSIVE	NAG-, NAGA-	GINA-	GINA-...-AN	GINA-
	PLANNED	MAG-	ON-	-AN-	I-
	COMMAND	PAG-	-A/I-	-I/I-	I-
APTATIVE	COMPLETED	NAKA-	NA-	NA-	GIKA-
	PROGRESSIVE	NAKA-	GAKA-	GAKA-...-AN	GIKA-
	PLANNED	MAKA-	MA-	MA-	IKA-
STATIVE	COMPLETED	NA-		NA-....-AN	
	PROGRESSIVE	GAKA-		GIKA-...-AN	
	PLANNED	MA-		MAKA-..-AN	
	COMMAND	PAGKA-/KA-		KA- ... -I	
RECIPROCAL	COMPLETED	MAG-, NAKIG-			
	PROGRESSIVE	NAGA-, NAKIG-			
	PLANNED	MAG-, MAKIG-			
	COMMAND	PAG-/PAKIG-			

4.3 **Pronouns** are noun-substitutes.They are inflected for person (First, Second, Third), number (singular and plural) and case (nominative, genetive 1 (preposed), genetive 2 (postposed), oblique. They can be personal, demonstrative and relative. Below is a table showing the different forms of personal pronouns.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN CEBUANO

NUMBER	PERSON	CASE	NOMINATIVE	GENETIVE 1	GENETIVE 2	OBLIQUE
SINGULAR	SPEAKER (1)		AKO	AKO (-NG)	NAKO	KANAKO
	ONE TALKED TO (2)		IKAW, KA	IMO (-NG)	NIMO	KANIMO
	ONE TALKED OF(3)		SIYA	IYAN (-NG)	NIYA	KANIYA
PLURAL	KAMI UG KAMO (1)		KITA	ATO (-NG)	NATO	KANATO
	KAMI UG SILA (1)		KAMI	AMO (-NG)	NAMO	KANAMO
	KAMO UG SILA (2)		KAMO	INYO (-NG)	NINYO	KANINYO
	SILA AT SILA (3)		SILA	ILA (NG-)	NILA	KANILA

3.4 **Adjectives** are picture words; they describe nouns. They are inflected for number and comparison. They take the infix -g- as pluralizer (as in *dako*, pl. = *dagko*). For comparison, the *expresssions sama sa, mas...kay, pinaka- or labing* +Adj. are used. An adjective may also be reduplicated to denote diminutive degree. With the use of *DILI* adjectives can be negated as in *dili gwapa*.

Adjectives can become nouns,other adjectives and verbs. The affixes *na-, nanga-, nagka-, mo-* create adjectival verbs. Adjectival nouns are derived by the affixes *ma-, ka-, pagka-*. Some affixes used to derive adjectival verbs are *ma-, ma-...-an, ka-...-an, ika-*. The prefix ma- is used to derive adjectival adjectives.

3.5 **Adverbs** are words that refer to the time, manner and frequency of the action. They are also adjective intensifiers. Some examples of adverbs are*: kagabii, kapila, kaduha, inigkabuntag, kaayo, karon, diin.*

3.6 **Particles** are without inflections and they are used for emphasis or to amplify the meaning of the words they modify. Some particles are *ug, man, bitaw, diay, ra, gud, pa, na.*

3.7 **Conjunctions** are words that connect. They connect words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Examples of conjunctions are *ug,kon, kung, o, pero, apan.*

3.8 **Prepositions** are locational or time words. Here are some prepositions*: sa, tupad, atbang, kilid, luyo.*

3.9 **Interjections** are words or expressions used as an exclamation. *Pagdali*! (Hurry!); *Maayo!* (Good!); *Pagkawala'y buot*! (Fool!).