2. Phonology

2.1   Segments

Iloko has fifteen native consonantal phonemes, and a glottal fricative used in loanwords and one native word, *haán* 'no', the colloquial variant of *saán*. Fourteen of the consonants (all but the glottal stop) may appear geminate in roots, e.g. *lawwalawwá* 'spider', *tengngá* 'center', *ballá* 'crazy', *saibbék* 'sob', *saiddék* 'hiccup', *sayyét* 'immodest lady', and *bannáwag* 'dawn'. The glottal stop only occurs geminate across morpheme boundaries: *agaC-ʔárak* [agaʔʔáːrak] 'smelling of alcohol'.

Table 1. Iloko consonants

	±Voice	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	-	p	t			k	ʔ
	+	b	d			g	
Fricative	-			s			(h)
Affricates	-			ts			
Lateral	+			l			
Tap/trill	+			r			
Glide	+	w			y		
Nasal	+	m		n		ng	

Stops are unaspirated and, in final position, unreleased. The voiceless velar stop is pronounced quite far back and tends towards slight fricativization before vowels. Unlike in Tagalog, glottal stop does not phonemically appear word-finally. Orthographically, glottal stop is not represented word-initially. Word-medially, at a morpheme boundary, it is represented with a hyphen. Since in this sketch hyphens are used to indicate morpheme boundaries, word-medial glottal stop at morpheme boundaries will be transcribed here as <ʔ>.

Syllables have mandatory onsets, so the basic syllable structure of the language is CV(C): *aba* 'taro' [ʔáː.ba], *samʔit* 'sweet' [sam.ʔít]. Consonant clusters occur in both onset and coda positions in foreign loans and recently coined slang expressions which do not follow the native phonological structure: *kláts.bag* 'handbag (f. English)', *ták.werts* 'money (slang, f. *kuartá* [Sp. *cuarta*])', and *brúha* 'witch, sorceress; mythological monster (f. Spanish *bruja*)'.

The phonemes /t/, /d/ and /s/ palatalize to [tʃ], [dʒ], and [ʃ] before the palatal glide /y/ or its equivalent (i + vowel), e.g. *siák* 'I' [ʃak], *tián* 'belly' [tʃan], *idiáy* 'there' [idʒay]. Because of many borrowings from English, Spanish, and colloquial Tagalog where these palatal sounds are not complex phoneme sequences, the phonemic status of [tʃ], [dʒ], and [ʃ] is open to debate.

All consonants except the glottal stop can appear as onsets phonemically, and all non-glottal or non-palatalized consonants may occur phonemically as codas. The glottal stop [ʔ] occurs phonetically in words beginning in a vowel, and may surface as a coda phonetically when it replaces a coda *t* or *k* preceding another onset consonant: *pukráy* 'crumbly squash' > [puʔráy].

Iloko has four native vowel phonemes /i, e, a, and u/. The new phonemes /o/ and /ɛ/ are found only in loanwords. In the northern dialects, the phoneme /e/ is pronounced as /ɛ/, not differentiated from its pronunciation in Spanish loanwords.

Table 2. Iloko vowels

	Front	Central	Centralized Back	Back
High	I		e	u
Mid	(ɛ)			(o)
Low		a		

The high vowel [u] is lowered considerably in word-final syllables, and is thus represented in the orthography, e.g. *búlo* 'kind of bamboo' /búː.lu/, *agsaó* 'to speak' /agsaú/; *ások* 'my dog' /áːsu=k/.

Sequences of two vowels other than the diphthongs /ia/, /io/, and /ua/ are pronounced as two syllables, with an intervening glottal stop in careful speech, *siít* 'thorn' [si.ʔít], *kées* 'crazy' [kéː.ʔes], *bigáo* 'winnow'

[bi.gá:.ʔo], *saán* 'no' [sa.ʔán], and *dissúor* 'waterfall' [dis.sú:.ʔor], but: *alʔaliá* 'ghost' [ʔal.ʔal.ya], *bagió* 'storm' [bag.yó], and *luá* 'tear of eyes' [lwa].

2.2 Stress and vowel length

Stress is phonemic, e.g. *siká* 'you, familiar' vs. *síka* 'dysentery'. There, are, however, certain environments that attract stress. Stress falls on the last syllable if the penultimate syllable is closed, i.e., the last vowel is preceded by two consonants (including a sequence of glottal stop + consonant): *paltóg* 'gun', *takkí* 'excrement', *kulagtít* 'jerking movement', *tig-ʔáb* 'belch', *lisʔá* 'nit, lice egg', *pugtó* 'guess'. Exceptions to this rule include words of foreign origin or words with a velar nasal coda preceding a final syllable: *súngka* 'kind of native game', *bibíngka* 'rice cake', *karámba* 'jar' (Spanish loan), *kuárto* 'room' (Spanish loan).

    Stress also falls on the last syllable if the last vowel is preceded by a consonant and glide: *sadiá* 'renowned', *bituén* 'star', *aniá* 'what'. Exceptions include borrowed words: *aránia* 'chandelier, from Spanish', *hópia* 'bean cake, from Chinese'.

    Orthographic vowel sequences, which comprise two syllables, usually take stress on the first vowel when following two consonants, e.g. *manabtúog* [ma.nab.tú:.ʔog] 'thump', *kulláaw* [kul.lá:.ʔaw] 'owl'. Words that include two identical CVC sequences separated by a vowel usually will carry the stress on the vowel separating them: *salísal* 'compete', *batíbat* 'nightmare', *arimasámas* 'red skies at moonrise', *bugábog* 'mixed varieties of rice'. There are, however, a few exceptions: *yakayák* 'sieve', and *pidipíd* 'closely set together'.

    Vowels before geminate consonants and in stressed open (CV) syllables are automatically lengthened: *sála* 'dance' [sá:.la], *babbái* 'females' [bà:b.bá:.ʔi]. Open reduplicated syllables in roots that contain a vowel sequence also bear secondary stress/lengthening : *na.ka-bà-baín* (POT-RDP-shame) 'shameful'.

2.3 Reduplication

    Reduplication in Iloko is used for both inflectional and derivational purposes. Formally speaking, there are six possible shapes of the reduplicant with the most common uses given in Table 3. Aside from the consonant gemination found in animate and kin plurals, all reduplicative morphemes in Iloko are prefixal, copying the first part of a given stem (root or prefix+root):

Table 3. Reduplication

Reduplicant Shape	Use	Examples
-C-	Animate/kin plurals	*laláki* 'male' > *lalláki* 'males' *babái* 'female' > *babbái* 'females' *ubíng* 'child' > *ubbíng* 'children'
CV-	Plural argument Animate plural	ag-*pi*-p<inn>a-básol=da AV-PL-CAU<RCP>-blame=3p.ABS 'they are blaming each other' ka-ili-án 'townmate' > *ka*kailián 'townmates'
CVC-	General plurals Imperfective aspect Comparison	*kald*íng 'goat' > *kal*kaldíng 'goats' ag-básа 'read' > ag-*bas*básа 'reading (in the process of)' *dakkél* 'big' > *dak*dakkél 'bigger' na-samʔít 'sweet' > na-*sam*samʔít 'sweeter'
CVC(C)V-	Lexical iterativity	ag-tilmón 'swallow' > ag-*tilmo*tilmón 'swallow repeatedly'
CVC(C)V+N-	Mutuality	*rúpa* 'face' > *rupan*rúpa 'face to face'
Full Reduplication	Lexicalized items	*bánga* 'pot' > *banga*bánga 'skull' *tukák* 'frog' > *tukak*túkak 'wart'

Rubino, Carl. 2002. Iloko. In Nikolaus Himmelmann, and Sander Adelaar (eds.) The Austronesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar. London: Curzon Press.