

The segmental phonemes of Maranao are much the same as those in many other Philippine languages. There are voiceless and voiced stops, and nasals, at bilabial, alveolar, and velar points of articulation: /p,t,k/; /b,d,g/; and /m,n,ng/. Note that we use a digraph to represent the velar nasal. A sibilant and two liquids occur at the alveolar point of articulation: /s,l,r/. The last is flapped. Glottal stop // occurs frequently in word final position, contrasting with its absence as well as with other consonants. It also interrupts vowel sequences, though there are many instances of vowel sequences which are not interrupted by any consonant. Since glottal stop is often lost in syntactic sequences, its frequency is very low in our text material. This phoneme thus has a very low functional load.

There are four vowels: /i/, /o/, /e/, and /a/. In running text material, a count of some 8 to 10,000 phonemes gave the following relative frequencies: /a/ somewhat more than 50 percent; /i/ and /o/ somewhat less than 20 percent each; and

/e/ less than 10 percent. The last seems to carry the least functional load of the four. It is a central mid to high vocoid. /i/ and /o/ when vocalic are mid-high to high, front and back respectively. We have used *o* as a symbol rather than *u* since it is used by Maranaos who write their language with the Roman script.

The high vowels have syllabic and non-syllabic allophones. We present evidence here in more detail since others have written semi-vowels for the non-syllabic variety. Though somewhat complicated, the distribution cited below seems the best analysis since it saves describing automatic morphophonemic variation elsewhere.

1. All high vocoids are syllabic adjacent to consonants: [somoa] /somoa/, [soi'] /soi'/, [koa] /koa/, [pagoitan] /pagoitan/, [miailai ran] /miailai ran/.

2. When not adjacent to consonants, the front high vocoid is always non-syllabic. [aya] /ai/, [ilay] /ilai/, [laoyagoyag] /kaoiagoiag/, [oyag] /oiag/.

3. In sequences of high vocoids, the high back vocoid is syllabic even non-adjacent to consonants if there are three or more contiguous vocoids. Otherwise, the high back vocoid is non-syllabic non-adjacent to consonants. [witoit] /oitait/, [wuta'] /oata'/, [pagoawawan] /pagoaoaoan/; but [kaoyagoyag] /kaoiagoiag/, [oyag] /oiag/, [somioa] /somioa/, [somioi'] /somioi' / [liolioan] /liolioan/.

Note that there is a slight glide in transition from a syllabic high vocoid to another vocoid especially from the back variety to /a/: ['o^way] /'oi/, [somio^wa] /somioa/. These glides are phonetically distinguished from the non-syllabic variety of the phoneme by their shorter duration, and less lip rounding.