

# 1 Pronunciation and Spelling

## 1.1 Vowels

People who speak Cebuano or Filipino as their mother tongue may have trouble pronouncing and spelling Manobo.

When we write Manobo we use seven basic vowels: *a*, *ae*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, *ue*. But there are two additional vowels: *ey*, which is similar to *e* but longer, and *iy*, which is similar to *i* but longer.

Cebuano is written with five vowels: *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*. Only three sounds are actually ever pronounced, however, because *e* and *i* are pronounced as the same sound, and *o* and *u* are pronounced as the same sound.

Manobo has these three same vowel sounds as Cebuano. We write them with *a*, *i* and *u*. We cannot write the sound *u* with *o*, or the sound *i* with *e*, like Cebuano, because in Manobo the letters *o* and *e* are used to represent DIFFERENT sounds.

The following is a table to help you pronounce and spell Manobo words. Non-Manobo words such as English words are included to guide you, but you must be careful. There are many different ways to pronounce English! The best way to learn to pronounce Manobo words correctly is to ask a native speaker of Manobo to say the Manobo words for you. The pronunciation guide should only be used if you cannot find a native speaker of Manobo. The pronunciation guide should be used with a native speaker of English.

**TABLE 1 Vowel Chart**

<b>Vowels</b>	<b>Manobo</b>		<b>Pronunciation Guide</b>
<i>a</i>	<i>a'baga</i>	'shoulder'	<i>f<u>a</u>ther</i>
<i>ae</i>	<i>'aehu</i>	'pestle'	<i>c<u>a</u>t</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>sed</i>	'inside'	<i>b<u>e</u>d</i>
<i>ey</i>	<i>meydu'on</i>	'there is'	<i>gr<u>e</u>y</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>i'nay</i>	'mother!'	<i>ki<u>w</u>i</i>
<i>iy</i>	<i>'abiy</i>	'lip'	<i>ke<u>y</u></i>
<i>o</i>	<i>o'nom</i>	'six'	<i>ab<u>o</u>ve</i>
<i>u</i>	<i>'ubu</i>	'cough'	<i>d<u>o</u></i>
<i>ue</i>	<i>'kambue</i>	'basket type'	Not found in English French <i>t<u>u</u></i> or German <i>ü<u>b</u>er</i>

If the letter *o* is not used to spell the *u* sound, what sound does it represent? It does not represent the sound written with the letter *o* in Filipino, such as in the Filipino word *ngayon* 'now'. Instead, in Manobo, it represents what we call a *schwa* or *pepet* sound. The tongue and lips are in the same position as when making the *a* sound, but the mouth is not opened as wide, only half as wide.

If the letter *e* is not used to spell the *i* sound, what sound does it represent? It represents the same sound written with the letter *e* in Filipino as in the word *ate* 'older sister'.

The vowel sound *ue* is not found in Filipino, Cebuano or English. To pronounce this sound, first make the sound *i*. You will notice that your tongue is high up and in front of the mouth, and your lips are spread. Without moving the tongue, round your lips as when making the sound *u*. Or, first make the sound *u*. You will notice that your tongue is high up and at the back of the mouth, and your lips are rounded. Without moving the lips, move your tongue in front of the mouth as when making the sound *i*. This vowel sounds like a cross between *i* and *u* because the lips are in the same position as when making the sound *u* but the tongue is in the same position as when making the sound *i*.

## 1.2 Glottal Stop

One ‘sound’ is not always written. That is the glottal stop. The glottal stop is the ‘catch in the throat’ between the *uh* and the *oh* of the English *uh-oh* or the way some English speakers pronounce the *tt* in words like *button*.

In Manobo, we do not write the glottal stop when it is at the beginning of a word, as in *abaga* ‘shoulder’, or when it is between vowels, as in *baaw* (pronounced *ba-aw*) ‘trail food’. We do write glottal stop with a dash (-) when it is after a consonant, as in *agid-id* ‘body-dirt’, or when it is between two vowels and one of the vowel sounds is written with two letters (*ae* or *ue*), as in *a-ae* ‘for a boar to pant’. In this dictionary, the glottal stop is also written with a grave accent (‘) when it is at the end of a word, as in *bakà* ‘jaw’. The word looks like it ends with a vowel but it really ends in a glottal stop. If you do not write the glottal stop, then it may be difficult to tell if the word is *baka* ‘cow’ or *bakà* ‘jaw’.

## 1.3 Stress

Stress in Manobo words is usually a longer syllable with a slightly louder volume. Stress is very important in Manobo in telling words apart. Therefore, stress is written in this dictionary. We write it with an apostrophe (‘) before the stressed syllable. For example, the only difference between *‘hilu* ‘thread’ and *hi’lu* ‘poison’, is stress. In the first word, the first syllable is stressed. In the second word, the second syllable is stressed.

## 1.4 Consonants

The sixteen consonants of Manobo are spelled with the following letters:

**TABLE 2                      Consonant Chart**

<b>Consonants</b>	<b>Manobo</b>	
<i>b</i>	<i>'baktas</i>	'hike'
<i>d</i>	<i>dadu'wa</i>	'two'
<i>g</i>	<i>gu'yangán</i>	'forest'
<i>h</i>	<i>hi'ngow</i>	'be drunk'
<i>j</i>	<i>ja'bu</i>	'spill'
<i>k</i>	<i>'kanta</i>	'sing'
<i>l</i>	<i>la'ba</i>	'launder'
<i>m</i>	<i>ma'mà</i>	'betelnut chew'
<i>n</i>	<i>ni'pis</i>	'thin'
<i>ng</i>	<i>'ngadan</i>	'name'
<i>p</i>	<i>'panow</i>	'walk'
<i>r</i>	<i>ri'pulyu</i>	'cabbage'
<i>s</i>	<i>so'dà</i>	'viand'
<i>t</i>	<i>ti'yahù</i>	'cry'
<i>w</i>	<i>wo'hig</i>	'water'
<i>y</i>	<i>'yukos</i>	'male'

Most Manobo consonants are pronounced the same as in Filipino or Cebuano. One exception is the letter *j*. Manobo *j* is the same as the Filipino sound usually written with the letters *dy*, as in *alédyik* 'allergic'. That is, it is the same as the English *j*.

# **MANOBO**

## **DICTIONARY**

*of Manobo as spoken in the  
Agusan river valley and the  
Diwata mountain range*

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