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Language name: Romblomanon  
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Request  
for  
Working Orthography for Romblomanon

## BACKGROUND

The initial orthography was granted for Romblomanon in October 5, 1981 after a spelling preference survey and linguistic researches done by Robert French. Fifteen years later, another spelling preference survey was done by Rence Law and a short term mission group in 1996. Then a Spelling survey report was submitted (Romblomanon Spelling Survey Report, 1999). After consultation with Dr. Rudy Barlaan and discussion with Gary Persons RD-N in 2001, then it was evaluated by Phyllis Rappa. Now this comes to the proposal of a working orthography after 25 years of the initial orthography approved. The requirements for requesting the working orthography set up in the Orthography Manual #1-3 have been met:

- (1) at least one, and more if needed, orthography test as presented in section 4;
- (2) presentation to the orthography consultant of a morphophonemic statement with a copy for the department file;
- (3) reports of specific experiences you have had in guiding people in reading and spelling using the initial orthography or a modification of it.

Requirements #4-5 will be included in this proposal of a Working Orthography as follows:

- (4) a statement of ease/difficulty in translation from this orthography to that of Pilipino (Tagalog) and that of the regional lingua franca;
- (5) a statement of rationale for changes made in the initial orthography.

## ORTHOGRAPHY WORK CHECK-IN SHEET

(This form is designed to provide a display for you of your orthographic problems, inform your personnel director of them, and provide a record for the Literacy and Distribution Department. Feel free to ignore answering the questions which do not apply to your current situation. Please send one copy to the orthography consultant and keep one for your files. Answer the question from #1-13)

1. Work on orthography to be undertaken at this time: seeking approval.
2. Orthography status: working orthography
3. List phonemes using notation in Pike's PHONEMICS. Do not use *ng* for  $\eta$ . List general allophonic range. List symbols approved or for which approval is sought.

Phonemes	Allophonic variation	Symbols
p		p
t		t
k		k
b		b
d		d
g		g
l		l
m		m
n		n
$\eta$		ng
h		h
ʔ		- or a grave on final vowel
r		r
y		y
w		w
s	s ~ š before i (word initial)	s
a		a
i	e word final	e in last syllable, i elsewhere
u	o word final	o in last syllable, u elsewhere

4. List problems encountered or anticipated with these symbols:  
 Vowels *o* and *u*: There is no distinction between *o* and *u* in Romblomanon. Nearly everyone spells final syllables with *o* due to the influence of Pilipino (Tagalog) and Hiligaynon (Ilongo). So I adopted a spelling rule that fits the common spelling practice: use *o* in final syllables and *u* elsewhere.

Similarly, vowels *e* and *i* do not contrast in Romblomanon. We suggest that *e* in final syllables and *i* elsewhere.

Labialized and palatalized consonants *Cuw* and *Ciy*: they are preferred spellings word initially (*guwapo* & *buwas* and *tiyan* & *niyan*) but *Cw* (*tikwas* and *sikwat*) *Cy* (*batyag* and *palya*) are preferred between vowels. This is due to syllable breaks between the consonant and *y/w* word medially, the absence of any consonant clusters, that are not ambiguous, and the influence of Tagalog spelling on pronunciation and spelling of Romblomanon.

5. Illustrate and explain what you do orthographically with morphophonemic changes.  
 Before suffixes: *himo* ‘to make’ → *himua* ‘make (imperative form)’  
 Before suffixes beginning with a vowel: *hawid* ‘to hold’ → *hawiran* ‘will hold’  
 Before prefixes ending with *n/ng*: *silhig* ‘broom’ → *manilhig* ‘will sweep’  
 Before prefixes ending with *n/ng*: *kawat* ‘steal (root form)’ → *mangawat* ‘will steal’

6. Illustrate, explain, and defend your word breaks or lack of them where pertinent.  
 No problem.

7. If applicable, explain and illustrate phonemic stress, length or geminate clusters (especially  $V_1V_1$  sequences)  
 Stress is phonemic: e.g. *pilá* ‘how much?’ and *píla* ‘queue in a line’  
 Consonant and vowel lengths are not phonemic; no contrasts have been found.  
 Length is not symbolized. Stress is symbolized only when necessary, which is rare.  
 Geminate clusters always can be analyzed a vowel and a semi-vowel consonant.

<i>iw</i> in <i>isiw</i>	‘baby chick’	<i>ay</i> in <i>baybay</i>	‘beach or sand’
<i>aw</i> in <i>panaw</i>	‘walk’	<i>oy</i> in <i>mabahoy</i>	‘big’
<i>wi</i> in <i>bawi</i>	‘to take back by force’	<i>ya</i> in <i>wayà</i>	‘none, negation’
<i>wa</i> in <i>waya</i>	‘left’	<i>yo</i> in <i>tuyo</i>	‘three’

8. What are you doing about loanwords? Proper names which are loanwords?  
 We suggest loanwords change spellings to fit Romblomanon/Cebuano spelling and pronunciation patterns:

<i>ch</i> → <i>k</i>	<i>Kristo</i>	‘Christ’	<i>gu</i> → <i>g</i>	<i>gid</i>	‘guid’
<i>f</i> → <i>p</i>	<i>Betpage</i>	‘Betfage’	<i>qu</i> → <i>k</i>	<i>kita</i>	‘quita’
<i>v</i> → <i>b</i>	<i>Dabid</i>	‘David’	<i>j</i> → <i>h</i>	<i>Hesus</i>	‘Jesus’
<i>z</i> → <i>s</i>	<i>Sebediyo</i>	‘Zebedee’	<i>c</i> → <i>k</i>	<i>kag</i>	‘cag’

Until now *q* and *x* in Tagalog do not appear in any Romblomanon words. However, Romblomanon prefer to retain *ñ* for some proper names, e.g. *Santo Niño*.

9. Within your sphere of influence, what percentage of folk between 15 and 30 years of age are literate in any language? 93.42% (Data from 1990 Census of Population and housing Report No. 3-73D)
10. What is the lingua franca of your area? Tagalog.
11. Do you speak the lingua franca? Yes, some.  
If not, are you familiar with its orthography? Yes.
12. Are you familiar with the orthography for Pilipino? Yes

(Next page follows)

13. List below symbols or junctures which are different in your orthography, Pilipino and the lingua franca and calculate the number of changes of habit which must be made for literates in one to learn to read one of the others.

The following chart shows that Romblomanon orthography nearly parallels that of Tagalog and is identical with Cebuano in the writing of common words.

<u>Filipino (Tagalog)</u>	<u>Cebuano</u>	<u>Romblomanon</u>
a	a	a
b	b	b
k	k	k
d	d	d
e	e <sup>1</sup>	e
g	g	g
h	h	h
i	i	i
l	l	l
m	m	m
n	n	n
ng	ng <sub>1</sub>	ng
o	o <sup>1</sup>	o
p	p	p
r	r	r
s	s	s
t	t	t
u	u	u
w	w	w
y	y	y
-	-(glottal stop)	- <sup>2</sup> (glottal stop) or a grave mark on top of final vowel
Ch		
f		
j		
q		
x		
z		

<sup>1</sup> *e* and *i* do not contrast phonemically nor do *o* and *u* in fact, in some orthographies for Cebuano only *i* and *u* are used. Romblomanon will follow the 5 vowels system for the social-linguistic considerations.

<sup>2</sup> Used to a degree in Pilipino as outlined on p.4 of the SIL Orthography Manual. (-) is the written representation of glottal catch when it occurs as the second member of a medial consonant cluster as in *bag-o* /bagʔo/ 'new'. And it is marked as a grave on the vowel of word final *batà* /bataʔ/ 'child'. Otherwise, glottal catch is unmarked, but it occurs word initial and breaking up vowel clusters as *itaas* /itaʔas/ 'up'.

The only change between the initial orthography and this working orthography is the dropping of the foreign letters to be substituted by closest letters in pronunciation in Romblomanon. That means spelling for those loanwords will be changed to fit Romblomanon/Cebuano spelling and pronunciation patterns. (Section 8)

## CONCLUSION

This proposal is suggesting the symbols used for words that are usually original to Romblomanon as follows: a, b, k, d, e, g, h, i, l, m, n, ng, o, p, r, s, t, u, w, y and – (for consonant cluster) or a grave marked on the vowel of word final.

As in Pilipino, glottal will be symbolized by a hyphen ‘-’ when it occurs between a consonant and vowel. It will also be symbolized at the word final as a grave, e.g. ‘à’, ‘è’, ‘ì’, ‘ò’ and ‘ù’. In addition, the following letters will be used for spelling borrowed words and proper names: ñ, q and x.

In common words, *o* and *e* will be used only in the final syllable, *u* and *i* elsewhere. Borrowed words with letters different from original Romblomanon letters will be substituted to a near correspondent letter, such as *c* by *k*; *f* by *p*; *j* by *h*; *v* by *b*; *ch* by *k* and *z* by *s*.

Based on Romblomanon syllable structure and the results from the Spelling Preference Survey 1999, consonant-semivowel sequences will be written as Cy/Cw intervocalically and Ciy/Ciw elsewhere.

Re-submitted by Rence Law on November 22, 2006.