

Philippine Script Series

About the Writing Systems

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General Overview

The Philippine Script Series is a series of Philippine writing systems adapted for use in Toki Pona. The Series aims to:

- 1) Serve as (further) proof-of-concept of Toki Pona's adaptability to other scripts
- 2) Include the Philippine writing systems to the list of writing systems that can be adapted for Toki Pona
- 3) Serve as a showcase of Philippine culture to the Toki Pona Community

Coverage

Covered in this series are the following writing systems:

- **Baybayin**
- **Hanuno'o**
- **Kulitan**

Not covered in this Series are the following:

- **Tagbanwa**, Used by the Tagbanwas of Palawan. Deemed to be unadaptable to Toki Pona for lack of a character or method to unambiguously represent syllable-final nasal consonants without radical adjustment. A Toki Pona adaptation may be considered once an accepted method is found or introduced.
- **Buhid**, used by the Buhid of Mindoro. Unadaptable for the same reasons as Tagbanwa. If the use of the *pamudpod* is approved by the tribe's elders, an adaptation may be considered.
- **Eskayan**, A syllabic, constructed script for the language (technically a relex) of the Eskaya of Bohol. A lack of computer support makes it difficult and time-consuming to produce on a computer.

Common Characteristics

All Philippine writing systems featured in this series are unicameral abugidas which descend from Kawi (also an abugida); all characters have an inherent vowel /a/ which can be altered by the use of diacritics. In the case of Hanuno'o and Buhid, the vowel diacritics are combined with the characters, forming unique glyphs. Except for Kulitan, all of them use only three vowels: /a/, /i/ (allophonic with /e/), and /u/ (allophonic with /o/).

Common Challenges

Due to the allophony of /i/ and /e/ in Baybayin and Hanuno'o, one major concern among native Toki Pona words was differentiating between 'kin' and 'ken'. One workaround for this is to give a special spelling for 'ken', which will be rendered as 𐄆𐄇 in Baybayin, 𐄆𐄇 in Hanuno'o. 'kin' will then maintain a proper spelling (𐄆𐄇, 𐄆𐄇)

While this workaround may be useful to native Toki Pona words, ambiguities may arise when non-native (non-official) words and names are used. Consider the following example:

ᄀᄁ ᄃᄄ ᄆ ᄇᄈ ᄆ ᄉᄀ

The above sentence can be read two ways:

- 1) *jan mute li kama li tawa* (Many people come and go)
- 2) *jan Muti li kama li tawa* (Muti comes and goes)

While context may be used to determine the intended reading, the sentence illustrates how the ambiguous nature of Toki Pona may be heightened by the lack of separate characters for /e/ and /o/.

Baybayin ᄀᄁᄁᄀᄁ

Baybayin, also erroneously known as *Alibata*, is the most common of the Philippine writing systems. Mostly used for Tagalog, it has been adapted to several other Philippine languages including Visayan, Ilokano, and Bikolano. While it did co-exist with the Latin system during the early Hispanic times, it eventually fell into disuse as people who learned the Latin system were seen to be more educated.

Toki Pona Syllable Table

Writing System:	Baybayin						Proposed by: jan Pusa			
	-a	-an	-e	-en	-i	-in	-o	-on	-u	-un
Ø-	ᄀ	ᄀᄁ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ
j-	ᄁ	ᄁᄀ	ᄄ	ᄄᄀ			ᄈ	ᄈᄀ	ᄈ	ᄈᄀ
k-	ᄇ	ᄇᄀ	ᄈ	ᄈᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄁ	ᄁᄀ	ᄁ	ᄁᄀ
l-	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ	ᄆ	ᄆᄇ
m-	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ
n-	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ
p-	ᄁ	ᄁᄀ	ᄄ	ᄄᄀ	ᄄ	ᄄᄀ	ᄈ	ᄈᄀ	ᄈ	ᄈᄀ
s-	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ
t-	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ			ᄃ	ᄃᄄ	ᄃ	ᄃᄄ
w-	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ	ᄉ	ᄉᄀ				

Fig. 1: Syllable Table for Baybayin

Most of the -e and -en columns, as well as the whole of the -o and -on columns have been grayed out. This is because they are the same as the -i/-in and -u/-un columns, respectively. Syllable-final nasals are represented by the “na” with a *sabat*, a cross symbol (or in more modern times, an x). This cancels the vowel ‘a’ of the character before it, similar to a *virama* in Devanagari.

Hanuno’o ꝛꝛꝛꝛ

Hanuno’o (alternatively spelled *Hanunuo*) is used by the Hanuno’o tribe of the island of Mindoro for the Hanuno’o language. Along with the Buhid, they form part of a loose confederation of Indigenous Peoples collectively called *Mangyans*.

The isolation of the Mangyan peoples allowed them (for the most part) to continue using the Hanuno’o script. Modern-day preservation efforts, founded on the work of the Dutch missionary Antoon Postma have allowed it to survive to the present-day.

One characteristic of of Hanuno’o is its directionality. While it is read from left to right and top to bottom by default, it is possible to read from right to left simply by mirroring the glyphs.

Toki Pona Syllable Table

Writing System:	Hanuno'o						Proposed by:	jan Pusa			
	-a	-an	-e	-en	-i	-in	-o	-on	-u	-un	
Ø-	ꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	
j-	ꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ			ꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
k-	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
l-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
m-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
n-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
p-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
s-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
t-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ			ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	
w-	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ	ꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛꝛ					

Fig. 2: Syllable Table for Hanuo’o

Most of the -e and -en columns, as well as the whole of the -o and -on columns have been grayed out. This is because they are the same as the -i/-in and -u/-un columns, respectively. Syllable-final nasals are represented by the “na” character with a *pamudpod*, a special character introduced by Postma. This cancels the vowel ‘a’ of the character before it, similar to a *virama* in Devanagari.

Kulitan

Kulitan is used in Pampanga and is specially adapted for its language, Kapampangan. It is notable for being the only Philippine writing system that is read only from top to bottom and from right to left, as well as having separate characters for /e/ and /o/.



Fig. 3: “Kulitan” as rendered in Kulitan

Toki Pona Syllable Table

Writing System:	Kulitan					Proposed by:	jan Pusa				
	-a	-an	-e	-en	-i	-in	-o	-on	-u	-un	
Ø-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
j-	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ᳗᳗	ᳵ᳗᳗᳚			ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	
k-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
l-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
m-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
n-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
p-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
s-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
t-	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚			ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚	
w-	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ᳗	ᳵ᳗᳚	ᳵ	ᳵ᳚					

Fig. 4: Syllable Table for Kulitan

Syllable-final nasals are represented by placing the “na” character to the right-hand side of a syllable.

Because there are no special characters for the y- and w- series, their rows are formed by the use of diphthongs. Thus, the words *jelo* and *walo* are rendered as “*ielo*” and “*ualo*”.

Because of its directionality, one key challenge is that it requires special techniques in order to be properly produced on a computer.

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Resources

The following articles were very helpful in helping me understand each writing system:

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