

## 9. Aklanon

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### 1. Introduction

Aklanon is the primary speech variety of the northwestern section of the island of Panay in the central Philippines and has in excess of 350,000 speakers. Both the language and its speakers are named after the Aklan [<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>an] River that flows through the centre of the province of that name. People, culture and items associated with this river and region are appropriately called Aklanon [<sup>h</sup>ak<sup>h</sup>anun]; the language is called [<sup>h</sup>inak<sup>h</sup>a'nun], i.e., with the *-in-* infix and accent shift, or more simply Bisaya [<sup>h</sup>inisa'ya<sup>h</sup>], since Aklanons recognise their membership in the Visayan cultural and linguistic bloc.

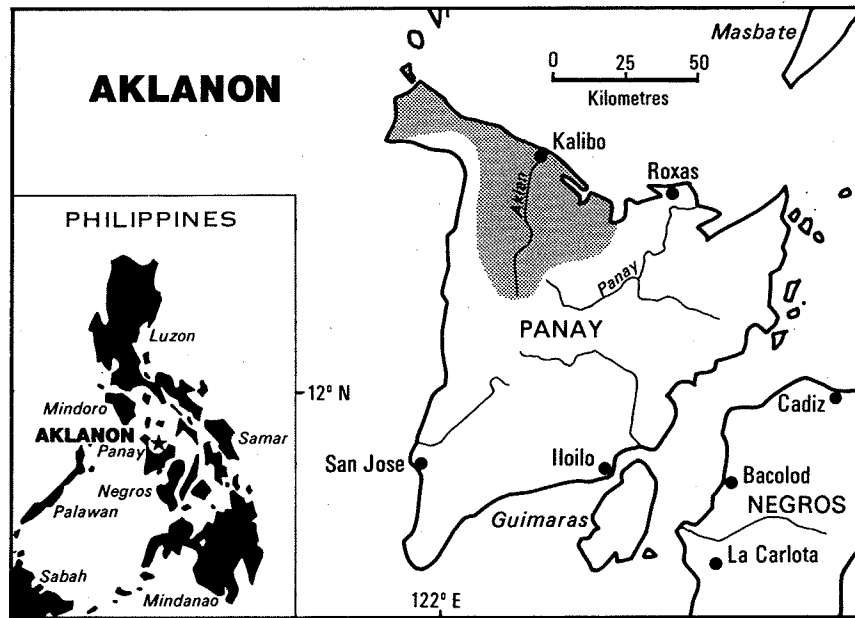
Aklanons, especially professionals, have migrated to virtually all major Philippine centres (e.g. Manila, Cebu and Cotabato) in search of employment and there are even largish enclaves in San Francisco and New York.

The dialect reported here is that of Kalibo, Aklan, the capital of the province as well as its commercial centre. Other dialects are associated with the towns of Altavas, Batan, Balete, Banga, Madalag, New Washington, Numancia, Malinao, Lezo, Makato, Tangalan, Nabas, Ibahay, and Libakaw – the latter two being quite divergent, although still mutually intelligible with the rest. Two other towns are located within the province of Aklan, but different dialects are spoken (Buruwanga is associated with Kinaray-a and Malay with various dialects of Tablas, Romblon).

The closest relatives of Aklanon are Kinaray-a and Kuyonon of the West Bisayan subgroup of Central Philippine languages (see Zorc 1972 and 1977: 16, 259-265).

### 2. Phonology

The following is a brief summary of Aklanon phonology. Additional discussion can be found in Zorc and de la Cruz (1968: 8-31).



Map 9. Aklanon language area

### Inventory of consonants

Aklanon has 17 inherited consonant phonemes. Speakers who are bilingual in English (or Spanish) have an additional four borrowed phonemes, put within parentheses below:

Table 1. Consonants

		Bilabial	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	vl	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	( <i>c</i> )	<i>k</i>	ʔ
	vd	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	( <i>ɟ</i> )	<i>g</i>	
Fricatives	vl	( <i>f</i> )	<i>s</i>			<i>h</i>
	vd	( <i>v</i> )				
Nasals		<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>		<i>ŋ</i>	
Laterals			<i>l</i>			
Trills			<i>r</i>			
Semivowels		<i>w</i>		<i>y</i>	<i>ɻ</i>	

Although *r* has phonemic status due to loan words, it is also an intervocalic allophone of *d*; similarly, *ʃ* alternates with *l* and with *d* (see morpho-phonemic changes below). Items in parentheses are of very low frequency and are generally the result of the adoption of loanwords from Spanish or English. Both *c* and *ɟ* can sometimes be heard as the result of coalescence with *y* across a syllable boundary, e.g. ['batyag] = ['bacag] 'feel, perceive' or ['budyon] = ['buɟon] 'conch, sea-shell trumpet'.

Table 2. Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
High	<i>i</i>		<i>u</i>
Mid	( <i>e</i> )		( <i>o</i> )
Low		<i>a</i>	

Vowel length is phonemic and therefore differentiates root words:

<i>'bāgaʔ</i>	'lungs'	<i>ba'gaʔ</i>	'swollen'
<i>'hāpun</i>	'afternoon'	<i>ha'pun</i>	'Japan(ese)'
<i>'ʔit̩ik</i>	'tickle'	<i>'i'tik</i>	'duck'
<i>'sūʔud</i>	'fine tooth comb'	<i>su'ʔud</i>	'enter'

Stress is a feature of penultimate vowel length (vs shortness) and of syllable shape. Long vowels can only occur in an open penult. If the penult vowel is long, that syllable is accented, e.g. ['tūbo] 'pipe, tube'. If the penultimate syllable is open and short, accent falls on the ultima, e.g. [tu'boh] 'sugarcane'. If the penult consists of a closed syllable, i.e. CVC, accent falls on the penult, e.g. ['tuktuk] 'mince, chop into little pieces'.

Basic syllable shape is CV(C). There are no vowel initial syllables; a word spelled as beginning with a vowel actually begins with the glottal stop. Some sample types include:

CV	<i>sa</i>	[locative marker]
CVC	<i>may</i>	'there is' [existential marker]
CV.CV	<i>'ʔāgi</i>	'pass (by)'
CV.CVC	<i>bu'say</i>	'waterfall'
CVC.CV	<i>'ʔanyo</i>	'whose?'
CVC.CVC	<i>'tambuk</i>	'fat'

### 3. Morphophonemic changes

1. NG assimilation. The morphophoneme NG assimilates to the point of articulation of the first consonant of the root:

<i>saNG-</i> + <i>bātu</i>	<i>sambātu</i>	'one (piece)'
<i>paNG-</i> + <i>dulsi</i>	<i>pandulsi</i>	'dessert'
<i>kasiNG-</i> + <i>bug?at</i>	<i>kasimbug?at</i>	'equally heavy'

2. N change. This morphophoneme assimilates to the point of articulation of the first consonant of the root, which is subsequently lost:

<i>paN-</i> + <i>pasyar</i>	<i>pamasyar</i>	'roam around'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>bāhaw</i>	<i>pamāhaw</i>	'eat breakfast'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>dāpat</i>	<i>panāpat</i>	'use extensively'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>tābas</i>	<i>panābas</i>	'tailoring'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>simbah</i>	<i>panimbah</i>	'worship'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>dumdum</i>	<i>panumdum</i>	'remember'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>kalisud</i>	<i>pangalisud</i>	'suffer'
<i>paN-</i> + <i>?isda?</i>	<i>pangisda?</i>	'go fishing'

3. Vowel loss occurs with several roots with closed final syllables when suffixation takes place.

<i>sakay</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>sakyan</i>	'will be ridden'
<i>patay</i>	<i>-un</i>	<i>patyun</i>	'will be killed'
<i>sakit</i>	<i>na--an</i>	<i>nasaktan</i>	'was injured'
<i>tawag</i>	<i>-un</i>	<i>tawgun</i>	'will be called'
<i>lisud</i>	<i>na--an</i>	<i>nalisdan</i>	'was encumbered'

4. Vowel change occurs when the vowel in the last syllable is open: *i* changes to *y*, *u* changes to *w*, but *a* is lost and a glottal stop is inserted:

<i>?āgi</i>	<i>gin--an</i>	<i>gin?agyan</i>	'was bypassed'
<i>?ābi</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>?abyan</i>	'friend'
<i>tubu</i>	<i>ka--an</i>	<i>katubwan</i>	'sugarcane farm'
<i>sūsu</i>	<i>pa--ah</i>	<i>pasuswah</i>	'be breastfed'
<i>kutāna</i>	<i>-un</i>	<i>kutan?un</i>	'will be asked'
<i>taka</i>	<i>na--an</i>	<i>natak?an</i>	'was fed up with'

5. Metathesis occurs after vowel loss when *h* or *?* would occur before another consonant, when *l* would occur before another apical consonant, or when *n* would occur before *m*:

<i>tahup</i>	-ih	<i>taphih</i>	'winnow (it)!'
<i>gahum</i>	-anan	<i>gamhānan</i>	'powerful'
<i>mūʔuk</i>	ha--an	<i>hamukʔan</i>	'slept deeply'
<i>daʔug</i>	-un	<i>dagʔun</i>	'will be defeated'
<i>suʔud</i>	-un	<i>sudlun</i>	'enter (it)!'
<i>ʔinum</i>	-ah	<i>ʔimnah</i>	'drink (it)!'
<i>tanum</i>	-an	<i>tamnan</i>	'be planted in'

6. *ʔ* changes. The phoneme *ʔ* changes to *l* when in an environment with an apical consonant (*t*, *d*, *n*, or *s*) or with the vowel *i* (such as when the infix *-in-* is added):

<i>suʔud</i>	ka--an	<i>kasudlan</i>	'entrails'
<i>puʔus</i>	ka--anan	<i>kapuslānan</i>	'value, worth'
<i>duʔun</i>	ha--an	<i>hadunlan</i>	'choked on food'
<i>kāʔut</i>	-an	<i>katlan</i>	'itchy'
<i>ʔubung</i>	-in-	<i>linubung</i>	'was buried'
<i>ʔāhaʔ</i>	-in-	<i>lināhaʔ</i>	'was cooked'

*ʔ* changes to *d* when resyllabified from syllable initial position to syllable final position on some roots (which historically derive from a Proto-Bisayan \**d* < PAN \**d*, \**D*, or \**Z*):

<i>waʔaʔ</i>	na--an	<i>nawadʔan</i>	'was left without'
<i>ʔāʔa</i>	-in--an	<i>linadʔan</i>	'was in pain'
<i>muʔuʔ</i>	na--an	<i>namudʔan</i>	'was noticed'
<i>pasipaʔa</i>	-an	<i>pasipadʔan</i>	'will be cursed'

Contrast the following where *ʔ* remains:

<i>duʔum</i>	kaCV--an	<i>ka-du-duʔm-an</i>	'darkness'
<i>sapaʔ</i>	ka--anan	<i>kasapaʔānan</i>	'sin, sinfulness'

7. R changes. Final *r* in Spanish loanwords changes to *h* when suffixed:

<i>tukar</i>	pa--ah	<i>patukahah</i>	'make play music'
<i>ʔandar</i>	pa--un	<i>paʔandahun</i>	'run (a machine)'
<i>tumar</i>	-ah	<i>tumahah</i>	'drink (medicine)'

After instances of vowel loss, *r* changes to *d*:

<i>kurut</i>	-un	<i>kudtun</i>	'will be pinched'
<i>sarah</i>	-ih	<i>sadhih</i>	'close (it)!'
<i>turus</i>	-ah	<i>tudsah</i>	'squeeze (pimple)!'
<i>туруʔ</i>	-an	<i>tudʔan</i>	'be taught!'

When *d* becomes intervocalic after affixation, it changes to *r*:

<i>bāyad</i>	- <i>an</i>	<i>bayāran</i>	'will be paid'
<i>būkid</i>	<i>ka--an</i>	<i>kabukīran</i>	'mountain range'
<i>sūgid</i>	- <i>i</i>	<i>sugīri</i>	'be told'

8. Reduplication involves either the prefixation of the first consonant and first vowel to the root word (CV-) or the full reduplication of the root (R2). The former indicates repetitive activity while the latter marks diminution or artificiality:

<i>bakaʔ</i>		'buy'
<i>ma-</i>	<i>mabakaʔ</i>	'may be bought'
<i>maCV-</i>	<i>mababakaʔ</i>	'may always be bought'
<i>R2</i>	<i>bakaʔ-bakaʔ</i>	'pretend to buy, window shop'

#### 4. Verb morphology

Aklanon verbs are conjugated for one of four voices depending on the focus or agreement of the verb with the semantic role of the topic.

Active emphasises an actor (*adtu* 'go') or a meteorological event (*uʔan* 'rain')

Passive emphasises an object affected or taken in (*bakaʔ* 'buy', *kāʔun* 'eat', *patay* 'kill')

Instrumental emphasises an object moving away or parted with (*baligyaʔ* 'sell', *ʔubung* 'bury', *pilak* 'throw away')

Local emphasises an object partially affected, cleansed, or removed (*hūgas* 'rinse', *ʔabah* 'launder', *bāyad* 'pay', *tāwad* 'discount')

All verbs are inflected for six tenses (three of the key tenses are presented below):

	Inf	Past	Imp
Active	<i>mag-</i>	<i>nag-</i>	<i>pag-</i>
Passive	- <i>un</i>	<i>gina-</i>	- <i>a</i>
Instrumental	<i>i-</i>	<i>gina-</i>	- <i>'an</i>
Local	- <i>an</i>	<i>gina--an</i>	- <i>i</i>

In addition, nouns or adjectives can be used as stative or affective verbs, such as *na-gu'tom* 'was hungry' or *ma-tamʔis-'an* 'found (something too) sweet':

Stative	<i>ma-</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>gi--a</i>
Affective	<i>ma--an</i>	<i>na--an</i>	<i>gi--i</i>

Complete information on any given root should include alternate root shapes (due to the operation of any of the morphophonemic changes discussed above). Thus,

<i>kāʔun</i>	‘eat’	<i>kanʔ-un</i>	‘be eaten’
<i>inum</i>	‘drink’	<i>imn-un</i>	‘be drunk’
<i>tuʔun</i>	‘swallow’	<i>tunl-un</i>	‘be swallowed’

### 5. Notes on the orthography

There is considerable confusion in the written work of Aklanons as to the spelling of *o* vs *u* [the former is, in most instances apart from loanwords, an allophone of the latter], but *u* is generally used throughout in inherited items occurring in the comparative lexicon.

In the traditional orthography, glottal stop is indicated by a hyphen when it occurs post-consonantly (e.g. *bug-at* ‘heavy’, *sin-o* ‘who?’, or *mag-abot* ‘to arrive’), and is sometimes marked by the same method after a vowel final prefix (e.g. *ma-abot* ‘will arrive’). In the data below, all occurrences *other than in initial position* are indicated by the appropriate linguistic symbol.

Aklanons spell the velar semivowel as ‘e’, but *ʔ* is used herein. In other central Philippine languages (like Tagalog, Hiligaynon or Cebuano) [l] is the cognate sound.

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