



# Utugrafihan CHamoru, Guåhan Guam CHamoru Orthography

**KUMISIÓN I FINO' CHAMORU YAN FINA'NÅ'GUEN I HISTORIA YAN  
LINA'LA' I TAOTAO TĀNO'**

*Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History & Culture of the  
Indigenous People of Guam*

*<kumisionchamoru.org>*

Revised and Updated  
September 2020



### About the Logo:

There are several distinct symbols that have been incorporated into how we chose to represent our work as the COMMISSION ON CHAMORU LANGUAGE AND THE TEACHING OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF GUAM. Our logo is shaped both like a sling stone, which is part of the artefactual legacy of the ancient CHamoru *latte* builders; and, an eye to represent sight or vision. Indigenous insight is known as *måta* or *mana* throughout the Island Pacific. As a Commission, we draw on the wisdom of our ancestors to interpret our reality both past and present. This wisdom allows us to see beyond the physical. It connects us with a force more powerful than our individual selves. It creates a safe space for confronting power with truth. In this state of consciousness, we discover what it means to be CHamoru.

Inside the eye are symbols which frame our way of life. The heat of the sun and the light of the moon which influence our designation of time and season are represented by the orange orb and the white *sinahi*. We are the *taotao tåno' yan tåsi* or people of the land and sea, hence the image of the green hilly landscape and buoyant blue waves of our ocean.

We express our thanks to Graphic Designer, Bryan Duenas, for his creative representation.

## **FOREWORD**

With the enactment of P.L. 33-236 re-establishing I Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru yan i Fina'ná'guen i Historia yan i Lina'la' i Tãotao Tãno' (Kumisión) came the responsibility to refine a standard way of linking the *atfabeton CHamoru* to the sounds of our indigenous language. We adopted some changes to the 1983 CHamoru orthography and hereby present this booklet so that we may embark on the Kumisión's vision and planned goals and objectives.

An orthography is simply the establishment of the norms of spelling, emphasis, capitalization, punctuation, pre- and infixes, and other rules for writing language. We also know that there are always more sounds than letters and that no alphabet fits its language exactly. We can see this in the dialectal differences of spoken CHamoru. While spoken language varies from place to place and from time to time, written language will always be less flexible than its spoken parent. Written language has a different function and is produced mechanically. It must serve everyone who speaks the language, and it does this by keeping the spelling similar from one time to another. By this adopted Orthography, the Kumisión members made great efforts to provide a more standardized approach to writing CHamoru. The Kumisión acknowledges dialectical, generational, island specific and personal preferences.

In careful consideration of our movement forward, we agreed that our own orthographic rules and use of the *Atfabeton CHamoru* must also conform to the broader norms of language systems in society, e.g. the adherence to the rule on endonyms. Other considerations of language that must be explored in the standardization and the advancement of CHamoru includes, for example, studying the desired relationship that CHamoru, a non-English language, will have with English.

Agreeing on a shared way to use our *Atfabeton CHamoru* in writing is necessary in building proficiency and therefore, building stability into CHamoru as the mother tongue of our people of the Mariana Islands. The consistency that we sought was to be able to represent all and only the distinctive sound contrasts with the fewest possible symbols and conventions including an attempt at preserving historical information, highlighting cultural affiliations and supporting dialectal or regional variation. This booklet provides guidance in order that we do just that - communicate in a more standard way in CHamoru. We hope that you will cherish this booklet and employ the rules consistently and frequently.



**HOPE A. CRISTOBAL**

Gé'helo'

September 2020



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# Symbols & Abbreviations

## ATFABETON CHAMORU YAN I NA'AN SIHA

(CHamoru Alphabet and Corresponding Names)

Guåha bente kuattro (24) na letra siha gi Atfabeton CHamoru.

Letters	Name	Example Sound in English*
'	glota	<i>uh oh</i>
A a	ae	<i>bat</i>
Å å	ah	<i>father</i>
B b	be	<i>bat</i>
CH ch	tse	<i>tsar</i>
D d	de	<i>dock</i>
E e	e	<i>bait</i>
F f	fe	<i>fast</i>
G g	ge	<i>get</i>
H h	he	<i>hot</i>
I i	i	<i>beet</i>
K k	ke	<i>king</i>
L l	le	<i>long</i>
M m	me	<i>mama</i>
N n	ne	<i>not</i>
Ñ ñ	ñe	<i>canyon</i>
NG ng	nge	<i>singing</i>
O o	o	<i>boat</i>
P p	pe	<i>pat</i>
R r	re	<i>rat</i>
S s	se	<i>say</i>
T t	te	<i>tap</i>
U u**	u/w	<i>boot/Gwen</i>
Y y	dze	<i>floods</i>

\* Examples from Topping and Dungca, *Chamorro Reference Grammar*

\*\* Examples of u as the “w” sound as in *gui•han*, *guai•ya*, *Hue•bes*, *pue•ngi*

RAPID SPEECH: Speakers of CHamoru often merge sounds in rapid speech much like English speakers who used contractions. For example:

<b>gi iya</b>	heard as	giya	<b>hagå-hu</b>	heard as	hagåo
<b>para bai hu</b>	heard as	po	<b>kao</b>	heard as	ko
<b>para un</b>	heard as	pon	<b>håfa adai</b>	heard as	haf adeh

## SIMBOLO SIHA (Symbols)

1. titda (tilde, the squiggly line ñ that appears above the letter n)
2. lonnat (dotted å; the dot that appears above the letter a)
3. a'gang na sunidu (acute/loud accent stress á, á, é, í, ó, ú)
4. dollan (hyphen [-] or clitic)

## BUET SIHA (Vowels) Sais (6) na buet

A a    Å å    E e    I i    O o    U u

## KONSONANTE SIHA (Consonants)

Disiocho (18) na konsonante

' (glota)	M m	ma mã me mi mo mu
B b	N n	na nã ne ni no nu
CH ch	Ñ ñ	ña ñã ñe ñi ño ñu
D d	NG ng	nga ngã nge ngi ngo ngu
F f	P p	pa pã pe pi po pu
G g	R r	ra rã re ri ro ru
H h	S s	sa sã se si so su
K k	T t	ta tã te ti to tu
L l	Y y	ya yã ye yi yo yu

## MANERAN SILABA SIHA (Syllable Constructions)

K = Konsonante B = Buet (C =Consonant V= Vowel)

CHamoru	English
KB	CV
KBK	CVC
BK	VC
KKB	CCV
KBKB	CVCV
KBKKB	CVCCV

Orthography Rules

Rule 1. Símbolon Atfabetu Siha (Alphabetic Symbols)

A. The following **list of consonant and vowel symbols** will be used in CHamoru spelling. They are given here in alphabetical order. Example words are given to illustrate the phonetic value of each of the spelling symbols.

Letters	Example Word	English Meaning
' (glota)	hâga'	<i>blood</i>
a	baba	<i>to open</i>
â	bâba	<i>bad</i>
b	babui	<i>pig</i>
ch	châlan	<i>road</i>
d	dâggao	<i>to throw</i>
e	ékungok	<i>to listen</i>
f	fugo'	<i>to squeeze</i>
g	ga'chong	<i>friend</i>
h	hâtsa	<i>to lift</i>
i	hita	<i>we (inclusive – dual or plural)</i>
k	kada	<i>each</i>
l	litrâtu	<i>picture</i>
m	malago'	<i>to want</i>
n	nâna	<i>mother</i>
ñ	ñâmu	<i>mosquito</i>
ng	nginge'	<i>to sniff</i>
o	oppe	<i>to answer</i>
p	pâchot	<i>mouth</i>
r	râmas	<i>branch</i>
s	sâddok	<i>river</i>
t	tâya'	<i>nothing</i>
u	uchan /kuentos	<i>Rain /to talk</i>
y	yan	<i>and</i>

- B. The following are **symbols** used in written CHamoru:
1. titda (tilde, the squiggly line ñ ñ that appears above the letter n)
  2. lonnat (dotted â; the dot that appears above the letter a)
  3. a'gang na sunidu (acute/loud accent stress â, á, é, í, ó, ú)
  4. dollan (hyphen [-] or clitic)



- C. The letters *c, j, q, v, w, x, z, ll, rr*, will be used in the spelling of proper names only. **These letters are not in the CHamoru alphabet.**

For example:

Letters	Proper Names	
C	Carmen	California
J	Jose	San Jose
Q	Quichocho	Quebec
V	Vicente	Venice
W	Wilfred	Washington
ll	Quintanilla	Magallanes
rr	Terry	Tarrytown

- D. The **glottal stop** [ ' ] is a consonant in the alphabet. It is **never used at the beginning of a word**. It is usually found within or at the end of the word after a vowel. For example:

gua'gua'	<i>to gag</i>	nå'na'	<i>to hide</i>	ba'ba'	<i>to pat gently on back side</i>
guagua'	<i>basket</i>	nå'an	<i>name</i>	bå'ba'	<i>undeveloped seed</i>
guaguan	<i>expensive</i>	nåna	<i>mother</i>	baba	<i>to open</i>
				båba	<i>spoiled</i>

## Rule 2. Buebuet (Diphthong)

- A. A **diphthong** is two vowels that come together to make one sound in a single syllable. The most common diphthongs are as follows:

### CHamoru buebuet

ao	taotao	<i>person</i>
	paopao	<i>fragrant</i>
ai	taitai	<i>read</i>
	lålai	<i>chant</i>
oi	hagoi	<i>pond or lake</i>

### Borrowed buebuet

io	bakasiön	<i>vacation</i>
ie	siette	<i>seven</i>
ia	estoria	<i>story</i>
iu	presiu	<i>price</i>

- B. All the **vowel combinations** listed below are considered diphthongs, unless the two vowels are separated into different syllables. This separation can be made by a glottal stop, distinctly heard between the two vowels.

For example:

Letter Combination	Diphthongs	Not Diphthongs
ie	siette	li'e'
io	adios	fi'on
ia	estoria	Tini'an
ai	gaige	Ma'ina
ao	måpao	få'om
iu	presiu	di'u
oi	hagoi	to'i

A sure test of a diphthong is when both vowels reduplicate.

For example:

Letter Combination	Diphthongs
ie	siésiente
io	bumakasiosion
ia	umestoriáriayi
iu	presiusiuyi

- C. The **letter h** shall be used to separate vowels in spelling of non- diphthong combinations of **i+o**, **i+e**, **i+a**, and **i+u**,

For example:

<b>i+o</b>	esgai <b>h</b> on	not esgaion
	hi <b>h</b> ot	not hiot
<b>i+e</b>	li <b>h</b> eng	not lieng
	si <b>h</b> ek	not siek
<b>i+a</b>	bi <b>h</b> a	not bia
	ti <b>h</b> a	not tia
	di <b>h</b> a	not dia
<b>i+u</b>	fi <b>h</b> u	not fiu

### **Rule 3. Simbolon Konsonante gi i Finakpo' na Pusisión i Silåba** **(Consonant Symbols in the Final Position of Syllables)**

A. The following consonants are never used at the end of a word:

***b ch d g h l ñ r y***

In other words, CHamoru words do not end with these letters.

For example:

maole <b>k</b>	NOT maoleg/mauleg
idá <b>t</b>	NOT edád/idád
gåp <b>g</b> a <b>p</b>	NOT gåbgab
tug <b>a</b> p	NOT tugab
tom <b>m</b> o	NOT tommoh

B. The consonants ***b, d, g,*** and ***l*** may appear as the last letter of a syllable (except in the final syllable) only when the consonant is geminate (refer to Rule 11 for definition).

For example:

yab• <b>b</b> ao	<i>to chop something down</i>
hab• <b>b</b> on	<i>soap</i>
god• <b>d</b> e	<i>to tie</i>
sod• <b>d</b> a'	<i>to find</i>
hål• <b>l</b> a	<i>to pull</i>
bål• <b>l</b> e	<i>to sweep</i>
meg• <b>g</b> ai	<i>many</i>
cheg• <b>g</b> ai	<i>cowrie shells</i>

### **Rule 4. Propiu Nå'an Siha (Proper Names)**

A. **The Names of Persons** will retain their spelling.

B. **Clan/Family Names (cultural or ‘also known as’ names)** should be spelled using orthographic rules herein.

C. **Proper Names** will not conform to Rule 7 (Spelling of Borrowed Words) and Rule 8 (Consonant Alternation).

D. **Place Names** that are of indigenous origin will be written using the orthographic rules herein. For example:

**Guam Village Names**

Hagåtña	<i>Hagatna</i>
Tutuhan	<i>Agana Heights</i>
Hågat	<i>Agat</i>
Assan	<i>Asan</i>
Barigåda	<i>Barrigada</i>
CHålan Pågu	<i>Chalan Pago</i>
Dédidu	<i>Dededo</i>
Inalåhan	<i>Inarajan</i>
Ma'ina	<i>Maina</i>
Maite'	<i>Maite</i>
Mangilao	<i>Mangilao</i>
Malesso'	<i>Merizo</i>
Mongmong	<i>Mongmong</i>
Otdot	<i>Ordot</i>
Piti	<i>Piti</i>
Sånta Rita	<i>Santa Rita</i>
Sinahånña	<i>Sinajana</i>
Talo'fo'fo'	<i>Talofofo</i>
Tamuneng	<i>Tamuning</i>
To'to	<i>Toto</i>
Tomhom	<i>Tumon</i>
Humåtak	<i>Umatac</i>
Yigu	<i>Yigo</i>
Yo'ña	<i>Yona</i>

**Tåno' Låguas yan Gåni (Islas Marianas)**

Guåhan	<i>Guam</i>
Luta	<i>Rota</i>
Aguiguan	<i>Aguiguan</i>
Tini'an	<i>Tinian</i>
Sa'ipan	<i>Saipan</i>
No'os	<i>Farallon de Medinilla</i>
Anatåhan	<i>Anatahan</i>
Saligan	<i>Sariguan</i>
Guguan	<i>Guguan</i>
Alamågan	<i>Alamagan</i>
Pågan	<i>Pagan</i>
Akligan	<i>Agrihan</i>
As Songsong	<i>Asuncion</i>
Må'ok	<i>Maug (Maug Islands)</i>
Ulåkas	<i>Farallon de Pajaros</i>

E. **Places with no known CHamoru names** will retain their spelling.

For example:      Banzai Cliff  
                          Paseo de Susanna  
                          Plaza de España  
                          Jonestown  
                          Kaiser  
                          Marbo Cave  
                          Agafa Gumas

NOTE: In its role as the official Guam Place Names Commission, the Kumisión is responsible for approving new place names and reviewing established placed names.

F. **Months, Days, and Numerals** shall conform to CHamoru spelling rules. Days of the week, months of the year, years, decades, and centuries as follows:

<b>Traditional Lunar Months</b>	<b>Contemporary Months</b>	<b>Days of the Week</b>
Tumaiguini	Ineru	Damenggo
Maimo'	Fibreru	Lunes
Umatañlaf	Måtso	Måttes
Lumuhu	Abrit	Métkoles
Makmamao	Måyu	Huebes
Manañaf	Hunio	Betnes
Semu	Hulio	Såbalu
Tenhos	Agosto	
Lumåmlam	Septiembre	
Fangguålo'	Oktubri	
Sumongsong	Nubiembre	
Umayanggan	Disiembre	
Umagåhaf		

Years will be written as follows:

Dos Mit Bente for 2020

Decades will be written as follows:

Mit Disinuebi Sisentai Tåntos  
for the 1960s

Centuries will be written as follows:

Siklon Disisiette for the 1700s  
Siklon Disinuebi for the 1900s

G. The word **CHamoru** is spelled as CH-a-m-o-r-u in accordance with the Guam Orthography as specified in 5 Guam Code Annotated, Chapter 88.

## **Rule 5. Ma Kapitalisa (Capitalization)**

A. **Proper Names** of people, places, animals, things, institutions and organizations, titles, days of the week, months of the year and the beginning of sentences will be capitalized. For example:

- People: Carmen, Jose
- Places: Hagåtña, Malessó'
- Animals: Spot, Bunita, Tiger
- Things: Puntan Dos Amantes, Insular Guard
- Institutions: Unibetsedát Guåhan, Kulehon Kumunidát Guåhan
- Organizations: Konsilión Mahót Guåhan Siha, Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru
- Titles: Siñot Teria, Siñora Flores, Maga'láhi Roberto, Maga'hága Esperansa
- Days: Damenggo, Sábalu
- Months: Hunio, Disembre
- Beginning of sentences: Maolek este na fina'che'cho'!

B. The **Affixed Forms of Proper Names** beginning with consonants shall be capitalized.

For example:

<b>-um-</b>	+ Taitano =	<b>Tum</b> aitano
<b>-in-</b>	+ Taitano =	<b>Tin</b> aitano
<b>-um-</b>	+ To'to =	<b>Tum</b> o'to
<b>-in-</b>	+ To'to =	<b>Tin</b> e'to

C. The **Affixed Forms of Proper Nouns Beginning with Vowels** will have both the affix and the name capitalized.

For example:

<b>-um-</b>	+ Afaisen =	<b>Um</b> Afaisen
<b>-in-</b>	+ Afaisen =	<b>In</b> Afaisen
<b>-um-</b>	+ Assan =	<b>Um</b> Assan
<b>-in-</b>	+ Assan =	<b>In</b> Assan

D. When the **Plural Subject Marker (PSM) man-** is affixed to a proper name, the **M-** will also be capitalized.

For example:

<b>man-</b>	+ Juan =	<b>Man</b> Juan
<b>man-</b>	+ Rosario =	<b>Man</b> Rosario
<b>man-</b>	+ Dueñas =	<b>Man</b> Dueñas
<b>man-</b>	+ Babauta =	<b>Man</b> Babauta

- E. The conventional practice of **Capitalizing Pronouns or Nouns Relating to the Divine** itself will be followed.

For example:

<b>Yu'os</b>	<i>God</i>
<b>Saina</b>	<i>God</i>
<b>Gui'/Guiya</b>	<i>He</i> (referring to the Divine)

- F. The **Letters CH and NG** are considered one character and will be capitalized in proper nouns and at the beginning of sentences.

For example:

<b>CHamoru</b>	Familian <b>NG</b> ånga'
<b>CH</b> argualaf	<b>NG</b> ångas i na'-mu,
<b>CH</b> amoru yu'.	<b>NG</b> inge' si Nåna.
<b>CH</b> ocho fan!	<b>NG</b> ai'an i mafañagu-mu?

## Rule 6. A'gang na Buet (Stressed Vowels)

- A. The vowel sound of the stressed syllable is emphasized by being pronounced longer, louder, and often at a higher pitch than the surrounding syllables.

In the stressed syllable (the loudest syllable in the word), the **stressed vowel** will be represented by the distinct vowel sound that you hear. Stressed vowels can be in both **closed** (a syllable that ends in a consonant) and **opened** (a syllable that ends in a vowel) syllables.

### Vowel Positioning Chart

Vowels are labelled according to the positioning of the tongue when pronouncing the vowels. **High vowels** are when your tongue is towards the roof of your mouth. **Low vowels** are when your tongue is low in your mouth. **Mid vowels** are when your tongue is midway between the two.

**Front vowels** are when your tongue is toward the front of your mouth whereas **back vowels** are when your tongue is towards the back of your mouth.

	Front Vowels	Back Vowels
High Vowels	I i	U u
Mid Vowels	E e	O o
Low Vowels	A a	Å å

Note: Vowel positioning becomes important in later rules.

Examples of **opened syllable words**:

<b>tu•bu</b>	t(u)bu- high vowel u	<i>tube</i>
<b>bo•ti</b>	b(o)ti- mid vowel o	<i>boat</i>
<b>le•che</b>	l(e)che- mid vowel e	<i>milk</i>
<b>ti•su</b>	t(i)su- high vowel i	<i>stiff</i>
<b>pa•se•hu</b>	pas(e)hu- mid vowel e	<i>to stroll leisurely</i>
<b>sa•bå•na</b>	sab(å)na- low vowel å	<i>mountain</i>

Examples of **closed syllable words**:

<b>yu'</b>	y(u)'- high vowel u	<i>I, me</i>
<b>ta'•lo</b>	t(a)'lo- low vowel a	<i>again</i>
<b>hot•no</b>	h(o)tno- mid vowel o	<i>oven</i>
<b>påt•ma</b>	p(å)tma- low vowel å	<i>(hand) palm</i>
<b>ma•tak•nga</b>	mat(a)knga- low vowel a	<i>brave</i>
<b>hi•nas•so</b>	hin(a)sso- low vowel a	<i>a thought</i>

- B. The General Stress Rule of CHamoru is called the **Penultimate Stress Rule (PSR)**. The primary stress is predictable for most CHamoru words. It usually falls on the **next to the last syllable**.

For example:

<b>to'•å•ya</b>	<i>towel</i>	<b>a•sa•gua</b>	<i>spouse</i>
<b>cho•cho</b>	<i>to eat</i>	<b>ku•mā•ti</b>	<i>cried</i>
<b>tu•hong</b>	<i>hat</i>	<b>dog•ga</b>	<i>footwear</i>
<b>ga'•lå•gu</b>	<i>dog</i>	<b>ma•māh•lao</b>	<i>embarrassed</i>
<b>ta•yu•yu•ti</b>	<i>to pray for</i>	<b>fi•na'•pos</b>	<i>past event</i>
<b>li•sā•yu</b>	<i>rosary</i>	<b>ku•se•cha</b>	<i>harvest</i>

- C. There are **exceptions** to the Penultimate Stress Rule in CHamoru. When a CHamoru or CHamorurized word does not adhere to the PSR then the stressed vowel, that is the loudest syllable, is made visible by marking the stressed vowel with the acute stress marker [ ´ ], above the loudest vowel (á, â, é, í, ó, ú) in that syllable.

For example:

<b>a•sút</b>	<i>blue</i>	<b>tá•tai•tai</b>	<i>to be reading</i>
<b>bát•sa•la</b>	<i>to pull</i>	<b>lá•la'•la'</b>	<i>still alive, living</i>
<b>é•kung•ok</b>	<i>listen</i>	<b>su•mé•se•na</b>	<i>eating dinner</i>
<b>hat•dín</b>	<i>garden</i>	<b>á•sa•gua</b>	<i>to wed, to marry</i>



## **Rule 7. Dinilitrehan Inayao na Palåbra Siha** **(Spelling of Borrowed Words)**

- A. English, Spanish and Japanese **words which have been assimilated** into CHamoru will be spelled according to the general rules for CHamoru spelling. The spelling will reflect the changes in pronunciation. For example:

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>CHamoru</b>	<b>English</b>
lavador	labadót	<i>sink</i>
verde	betde	<i>green</i>
paloma	paluma	<i>dove</i>
caballo	kabåyu	<i>horse</i>
nueve	nuebi	<i>nine</i>
asul	asút	<i>blue</i>
Abril	Abrít	<i>April</i>
Viernes	Betnes	<i>Friday</i>

<b>Japanese</b>	<b>CHamoru</b>	<b>English</b>
zori	yore'	<i>flipflops</i>
daikon	daigo'	<i>pickled radish</i>
kairo	kairo'	<i>toad</i>
bento	bento'	<i>meal tray</i>
chirigami	chirigame'	<i>toilet tissue</i>

<b>English</b>	<b>CHamoru</b>
<i>ice cream</i>	ais krim
<i>cake</i>	kek
<i>chaser</i>	chesa
<i>email</i>	imel
<i>check</i>	chek
<i>website</i>	huebsait
<i>technology</i>	teknolohía
<i>movie</i>	mubi
<i>telephone</i>	tilifón

- B. Some technical **borrowed English words** can retain their English spelling in which case they should be paced in '*single quotation marks*' when in print. For example:

'x-ray', 'computer', 'badge', 'cellphone', 'WhatsApp'

- C. When **CHamoru affixes** are used with **CHamorrurized English words**, then it will be spelled according to CHamoru orthographic rules.

For example:

<b>pumiknek</b>	<i>picnicked</i>	<b>fanmiteng</b>	<i>meeting</i>
<b>maneksplen</b>	<i>explained</i>	<b>yumom</b>	<i>Zooming</i>
<b>shumåpeng</b>	<i>shopping</i>	<b>fumesbok</b>	<i>on Facebook</i>
<b>bumakasin</b>	<i>vacationed</i>	<b>gumugol</b>	<i>on Google</i>

## **Rule 8. Ma Tulaikan i Konsonånte (Consonant Alternation)**

Consonant Alternation occurs when specific prefixes like **man-** and **fan-** are added to the beginning of a root word. The first consonant of the root word may change and/or be deleted.

- A. There are two **man-** prefixes in CHamoru – (1) the Plural Subject Marker (PSM) referring to 3 or more subjects or actors, and (2) the Indefinite Object Marker (IOM) where the object is not specific (lepblo vs. i lepblo).

A transitive verb is a verb that takes a direct object. An intransitive verb is a verb that does not require and often cannot take a direct object. When the **man-** prefix is attached to the root word, a transitive verb may change to an intransitive verb. For example:

**man-** as PSM: **man- + boka**

**Mamboka** i babui siha.

The pigs (3 or more) ate.

**Bumoka** i babui.

The pig ate.

**man-** as PSM: **man- + misa**

**Manmisa** i mañaina (siha).

The elders (3 or more) attended mass.

**Mumisa** i saina.

The elder attended mass.

**man-** as IOM: **man- + fåhan**

**Mamåhan** si Jose guihan.

Jose bought fish.

**Ha fåhan** si Jose i guihan.

Jose bought the fish.

**man-** as IOM: **man- + chule'**

**Mañule'** i påtgon fina'mames.

The child picked up dessert.

**I påtgon, chumule'** i fina'mames.

The child picked up the dessert.

- B. When **consonants change due to affixation**, the spelling will be changed accordingly. Some consonants are dropped and/or become different consonants. Most of the changes in consonants are caused by the affixation of the prefix **man-**. For example:

<b>man-</b>	+	po'lo	=	mamo'lo	<i>to put</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	puti	=	mamuti	<i>to hurt</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	tunu	=	manunu	<i>to barbeque</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	tanña'	=	mananña'	<i>to taste</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	kâti	=	mangâti	<i>to cry</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	sâga	=	mañâga	<i>to stay</i>
<b>man-</b>	+	châlek	=	mañâlek	<i>to laugh</i>

In the Luta dialect of CHamoru, the consonant sounds do not change when affixed. For example, it is usually mansâga instead of mañâga. These are personal or dialectal preferences. ManCHamoru instead of Mañamoru is another common example.

Exception: There are **poly-syllabic words in which the initial consonant of the root word is not altered**. Some exceptions are found with words beginning with b or p where **man-** is clearly heard and written as **mam-**. These exceptions are usually found amongst borrowed words. For example:

<b>man-</b>	+	bendisi	=	<b>man</b> bendisi
<b>man-</b>	+	bunita	=	<b>man</b> bunita
<b>man-</b>	+	pachakâti	=	<b>man</b> pachakâti
<b>man-</b>	+	pagamento	=	<b>man</b> pagamento
<b>man-</b>	+	piligru	=	<b>man</b> piligru
<b>man-</b>	+	bubula	=	<b>mam</b> búbula*
<b>man-</b>	+	babaila	=	<b>mam</b> bábaila*
<b>man-</b>	+	bibiha	=	<b>mam</b> bíbiha*
<b>man-</b>	+	piniti	=	<b>mam</b> piniti*

\*In these examples, the **man-** is written as **mam-** when it is clearly distinguished in pronunciation.

- C. The **first person singular possessive pronoun is written as –hu** except for some borrowed words that use **–ku** instead. Possessive pronouns are attached to the root word using the dollan (hyphen) symbol. The sounds **–hu** and **–ku** are clearly audible. With some consonants, the **h** in **–hu** is swallowed and becomes inaudible so you may hear an elongated consonant at the end of the word. This occurs with words ending in the consonants **k, s, or t**.

For example:

- It is written as **-hu** when it follows a word ending with **-t**, as in pachot**-hu** (*my mouth*) even though you may hear pachot-tu.
- It is written as **-hu** when it follows a word ending with **-s**, as in lassas**-hu** (*my skin*) even though you may hear lassas-su.
- It is written as **-hu** when it follows a word ending in **-k** as in kalaguå**-hu** (*my side*) even though you may hear kalaguåk-tu.
- It is written as **-ku** when it follows a word that ends with a **vowel preceded by two consonants** as in lep•blo. By adding the **-ku**, the stressed syllable shifts to the penultimate syllable in the affixed word, as in lep•blo-ku (*my book*).

### **Rule 9. Inimentan Konsonante para Linakse'** **(Excescent [Added] Consonants)**

**Excescent consonants are added before an affix for ease in pronunciation.** When written, these consonants are added. For example:

**n:** lepblo + **n** + -mâmi = lepb**l**on-mâmi (*our book*) **NOT** lepblo-mâmi

**n:** neni + **n** + -ñiha = nen**e**n-ñiha (*their baby*) **NOT** neni-ñiha

**n:** sâga + **n** + ñaihon = sâga**n**ñaihon (*stay a while*) **NOT** sâgañaihon

**n:** chocho + **n** + ñaihon = choch**o**nñaihon (*eat a while*) **NOT** chochoñaihon

**':** â + ' + âgang = â'agang (*to be calling someone- contingent upon another action*) **NOT** âagang because the two consecutive vowels are not a diphthong.

**':** é + ' + éguihan = é'eguihan (*to be fishing*) **NOT** éeguihan because the two consecutive vowels are not a diphthong.

**g:** hãnao – hãna(o) + **g** + u [we] + i = hanå**g**ui (*to go on someone's behalf*) **NOT** hanaogui because if a word ends in the diphthong ao then the variation of –i which in this case is –gui is what will be added. Also, the o is deleted in hãnao to make it sound better.

**g:** saonao – saona(o) + **g** + u [we] + i = saonâgui (*to proxy for someone*)

**NOT** saonaogui because if a word ends in the diphthong ao then the variation of –i which in this case is –gui is what will be added. Also, the o is deleted in saonao to make it sound better.

Note: If the word ends in the diphthong **ai** or ends in a vowel then the variation –yi is used. For example, dibi/apåsi when affixed with –i which in this case is –yi is what will be added. The new word will be dibiyi/apasiyi. In all other instances, then the suffix –i will be used. For example, li'of when affixed with –i will be written at li'ofi. Tuge' when affixed with –i will be written as tuge'i.

### **Rule 10. Ti Nisisåriu na Konsonånte Siha** **(Superfluous [Unnecessary] Consonants)**

When the consonant **t** is heard before **ch**, but is not part of the syllable, then it should not be written. When the consonant **t** is an integral part of the syllable, then it should be written. For example:

#### **Not part of the syllable:**

le•che	NOT letche	<i>milk</i>
ku•se•cha	NOT kusetcha	<i>harvest</i>
es•ka•be•che	NOT eskabetcha	<i>fried fish with vegetables</i>
gang•go•che	NOT ganggotche	<i>gunny sack</i>
pe•cho	NOT petcho	<i>chest</i>
pa•cha	NOT patcha	<i>to touch</i>
ga•cha'	NOT gatcha'	<i>caught in the act</i>

#### **Part of the syllable:**

tot•che	NOT toche	<i>dip into liquid, to extend</i>
bat•che•go'	NOT bachego'	<i>slanted eyes</i>
kot•chon	NOT kochon	<i>mattress; cushion</i>
måt•cha	NOT mårcha	<i>to march</i>
påt•che	NOT pårche	<i>to patch</i>

**Rule 11. Dinga' Konsonante yan i -h gi i Finakpo' i Silåba**  
**(Geminate [Twin] Consonants and Final –h in a Syllable)**

- A. **Geminate or twin consonants** are often heard as a single sound, but both consonants should be written because they are part of different syllables. The pronunciation of geminate or twin consonants may vary among speakers of CHamoru but should be **spelled out as two consonants**.  
For example:

tom•mo	<i>knee</i>	lem•mai	<i>breadfruit</i>
meg•gai	<i>many</i>	låg•gua	<i>parrot fish</i>
fåt•to	<i>come</i>	kuåt•to	<i>room</i>
gol•lai	<i>vegetable</i>	hål•la	<i>to pull</i>
dåk•kot	<i>to knock</i>	dåk•kon	<i>liar</i>
chad•dek	<i>fast</i>	sod•da'	<i>to find</i>
gop•pe	<i>to jump over</i>	påp•pet	<i>paper</i>

- B. The **Final –h in a syllable** may not be heard but will be spelled out because it is part of the syllable.  
For example:

moh•mo	<i>to chew</i>	NOT	mo•mo
sah•nge	<i>separate</i>	NOT	sa•nge
ma•mål•lao	<i>bashful</i>	NOT	ma•mål•lao
toh•ge	<i>to stand</i>	NOT	to•ge

**Rule 12. Ti A'gang na Buet gi i Mababa na Silåba**  
**(Unstressed Vowels in Open Syllables)**

This rule applies to unstressed vowels in open syllables in the B, KB, KBKB, and KBKKB (V, CV, CVCV, and CVCCV) constructions.

**Vowel Positioning Chart (see Rule 6 for definitions)**

	Front Vowels	Back Vowels
High Vowels	I i	U u
Mid Vowels	E e	O o
Low Vowels	A a	Å å

A. The **high front vowel *i*** and **high back vowel *u*** will be used to represent **unstressed vowels in open syllables**.

For example:

lâ•hi	<i>male</i>	NOT	lâ•he
pu•ti	<i>pain</i>	NOT	pu•te
lâ•gu	<i>north</i>	NOT	lâ•go
tu•pu	<i>sugarcane</i>	NOT	tu•po
tâ•si	<i>ocean</i>	NOT	tâ•se

Examples with polysyllabic words:

ni•si•si•ta	<i>necessary</i>	NOT	ne•se•si•ta
tu•tu•hon	<i>start</i>	NOT	to•tu•hon
ma•lâ•ngu	<i>sick</i>	NOT	ma•lâ•ngo
u•mâ•chu•le'	<i>to resemble</i>	NOT	o•mâ•cho•le'
mu•bi•men•to	<i>movement</i>	NOT	mo•be•men•to
ri•sis•te	<i>resist</i>	NOT	re•sis•te
mu•châ•chu	<i>male worker</i>	NOT	mo•châ•cho

**Exception:** This rule does not apply in polysyllabic words (usually borrowed words) when the preceding unstressed vowels are *o* or *e*. In KKB/CCV construction, the vowel in the following syllable will be either *o* or *e*. For example:

tri'•âŋ•go•lo*	<i>triangle</i>	NOT	tri'•âŋ•gu•lu
dâŋ•ko•lo*	<i>big</i>	NOT	dâŋ•ku•lu
prók•se•mo	<i>approximate</i>	NOT	prók•si•mu
sép•te•mo	<i>seventh</i>	NOT	sép•ti•mu

\*In the case of *tri'âŋgolo* and *dâŋkolo*, the first *o* results from the preceding consonant cluster ng+g and ng+k. The second *o* is *harmonized* with the first; this is known as vowel harmony.

B. The **use of mid vowels in unstressed open syllables**

The unstressed vowels in open syllables following a cluster of two consonants will be represented by front mid vowel *e* or back mid vowel *o* (instead of *i* or *u*).

For example:

tât•te	<i>back, behind</i>	NOT	tât•ti	ho'•ye	<i>agree</i>	NOT	ho'•yi
lis•to	<i>ready</i>	NOT	lis•tu	tom•mo	<i>knee</i>	NOT	tom•mu

For example:

T    â   t   t   e

C   V   C   C   V

Although you hear tâtti in a CVCCV construction you will use front mid vowel *e*.

The sounds represented by some of the vowels above may appear to be incorrect (i.e., *tâtte* instead of *tatti*). For CHamoru speakers, one way to see if the correct vowel is being used is to apply the singular possessive test, adding *-hu* or *-ku*, *-mu*, *-ña*, or *-ta* to the word.

- C. The front low vowel *a* instead of the back low vowel *â* will be used in unstressed open syllables in both the CVCV and CVCCV constructions.  
For example:

mâ•ta	<i>face</i>
hâl•la	<i>to pull</i>
châ'•ka	<i>rat</i>
kon•tra	<i>against</i>

- D. The following **consonant blends or combination of letters (digraphs)** will be considered as one consonant for spelling purposes.  
For example:

<b>br</b>	<b>pr</b>	<b>pl</b>
brong•ko	pren•sa	plu•ma
bro•has	pre•ba	plâ•tu
bru•ha	pru•grâ•ma	plân•ta
<b>bl</b>	<b>fl</b>	<b>tr</b>
blâng•ko	a•fli•tu	tro•su
tâp•bla	flo•res	trâng•ka
mi•si•râp•ble	fle•cha	trong•ko
<b>fr</b>	<b>kl</b>	
fres•ko	chang•kle•tas	
fru•ta	kla•si•fi•ka	
fri•tâ•da	mes•kláo	



### **Rule 13. Ti A'gang na Buet gi i Machom na Silåba** **(Unstressed Vowels in Closed Syllables)**

The mid vowels *e* and *o* and the low front vowel *a* will be used to represent the unstressed vowels in closed syllables, i.e., syllables which end with a consonant.

For example:

hu•yong	<i>to go out</i>	NOT	huyung
hå•lom	<i>to go in</i>	NOT	hålum
lå•pes	<i>pencil</i>	NOT	låpis
li'•e'	<i>to see</i>	NOT	li'i'
hak•mang	<i>sea eel</i>	NOT	håkmang
tu•gan	<i>to pick/take out</i>	NOT	tugån
ta•pon	<i>type of clam</i>	NOT	tåpon
Guåhan	<i>Guam</i>	NOT	Guahån

### **Rule 14. Inå'achilong na Buet (Vowel Harmony)**

Vowel Harmony means that **vowels in words may change to become more like their preceding vowels**. Vowels in CHamoru words must, under certain conditions, agree with each other in terms of whether they are front or back vowels, and whether they are high, mid, or low.

#### **Vowel Positioning Chart (see Rule 6 for definitions)**

	Front Vowels	Back Vowels
High Vowels	I i	U u
Mid Vowels	E e	O o
Low Vowels	A a	Å å

#### **A. Vowel Fronting**

Vowel fronting is the **change that occurs when a back vowel is drawn forward to become a front vowel**. When specific particles (*i*, *ni'*, *gi*, *in* [pronoun], *en*, *-in-* [infix], *sin*, *mi*) are placed in front of a word, if the proceeding vowel is a back vowel it becomes a front vowel. When the pronunciation of a vowel is changed due to vowel fronting, this change will be reflected in the spelling.

For example:

i	+	foggon	=	i	feggon	<i>the stove (back vowel o becomes front vowel e)</i>	
i	+	potta	=	i	petta	<i>the door (back vowel o becomes front vowel e)</i>	
gi	+	i	+	guma'	=	gi i gima'	<i>at the house (back vowel u becomes front vowel i)</i>
ni'	+	suni	=	ni'	sini	<i>the taro (back vowel u becomes front vowel i)</i>	
-in-	+	ångang	=	inagang	<i>was called (back vowel å becomes front vowel a)</i>		
i	+	låhi	=	i	lahi	<i>the boy (back vowel å becomes front vowel a)</i>	

Some borrowed words are not fully fronted and may be written without fronting.

With borrowed numbers, the vowel fronting rule does not apply.

For example:

dos remains **i dos** not i des  
dosse remains **i dosse** not i desse  
ocho remains **i ocho** not i echo  
onse remains **i onse** not i ense

B. **Vowel Raising**

Vowel Raising is the change that occurs when certain suffixes (-on, -an,- i, -iyi; see Rule 16C for definitions) are attached to CHamoru words causing one of the two mid vowels, *e* or *o*, to be raised to its corresponding high vowel, *i* or *u*.

The change caused by vowel raising will change the syllable construction from CVC to CVCV (KBK to KBKB).

For example:

CVC	→	CVCV	
tågo'	+ on =	tågu'on	<i>someone who is reliable</i>
fan + maigo'	+ an =	fanmaigu'an	<i>place for sleeping</i>
tuge'	+ i =	tugi'i	<i>to write for someone</i>
chenchule'	+ i =	chenchuli'i	<i>to reciprocate for someone</i>
kuentos	+ iyi =	kuentusiyi	<i>to speak for someone</i>

### C. Vowel Lowering

Vowel Lowering is the change that occurs when the excrescent consonant **n** is added to words to show a modifying relationship, the KB/CV structure at the end of the word will cause one of the two high vowels, **i** or **u**, to be lowered to its corresponding mid vowel, **e** or **o**.

The change caused by vowel lowering and the addition of the excrescent consonant will shift the syllable construction from CVCV to CVCVC (KBKB to KBKBK). For example:

CVCV	→	CVCVC	
sunì + <b>n</b>	=	sun <b>e</b> n agaga'	<i>red taro</i>
tup <u>u</u> + <b>n</b>	=	tup <b>o</b> n rayáo	<i>striped sugarcane</i>

## Rule 15. Difirensiáo na Palåbra Siha (Free Standing Words, Function Words, and Derivational Prefixes)

A. Adjectives, verbs, and nouns are words that do not need to be associated or appended to other words. They are considered **free standing words**.

B. The following **function words** (articles and particles of speech) will be written as separate words in CHamoru:

Function Word	Example Phrase	English Meaning
i	i palao'an	<i>the woman</i>
ni'	<b>ni'</b> palao'an	<i>from, which (relational term) woman</i>
si	<b>si</b> Juan	<i>(honorific) John</i>
sin	<b>sin</b> guinaiya	<i>without love</i>
as	<b>as</b> Juan	<i>(specifically) John</i>
nu	<b>nu</b> hãgu	<i>you are the one/for you</i>
na	dãngkolo <b>na</b> taotao	<i>big man</i>
ha'	Hu tungo' <b>ha'</b> .	<i>I already know.</i>
fan	Nangga un rãtu <b>fan</b> .	<i>Wait a minute, please.</i>
ni	<b>ni</b> hãyi guini	<i>no one here</i>
u	para <b>u</b> hãnao	<i>she/he/it will go</i>
bai	para <b>bai</b> hu hãnao	<i>I will go</i>
góf/géf*	<b>góf</b> malãngu	<i>very sick</i>
gós/gés*	<b>gós</b> maolek	<i>very good</i>

\*Note: The use of góf/géf or gós/gés are dependent on the speaker. The terms are dialectally different but the function is the same.

### C. Examples of Derivational Prefixes

1. The word **góf-** functions as a derivational prefix, where it attaches to the word and changes its meaning. For example:

**góf-**

**Ha gófli'e' si Juan i che'lu-ña.**

*Juan likes/loves his sibling.*

*[As compared to: Ha gof li'e' si Juan i litrátu.*

*Juan saw the picture very clearly. – which is not derivational]*

2. The word **tai-** functions as a derivational prefix, where it attaches to the word and changes its meaning. For example:

**tai-**

**Taimagagu si Rosa.**

*Rosa doesn't have clothes.*

**Taimamahlao macho'gue-ña i che'cho'.**

*That's not the way to do the work.*

3. The word **gai-** functions as a derivational prefix, where it attaches to the word and changes its meaning. For example:

**gai-**

**Gai'ase' nu guåhu.**

*Have mercy on me.*

4. The word **sen-** functions as a derivational prefix, where it attaches to the word and changes its meaning. For example:

**sen-**

**Senmannge' i néngkanno'!**

*The food is delicious.*

D. Use of derivational prefixes **sen-**, **tai-** and **gai-** and the function word **sin** with **infix -um** and **prefix man-**. The spelling of these function words change when they are infixed with **-um-** or prefixed with **man-**. These function words should not be combined with any content words. For example:

<b>sen</b>	+	<b>-um-</b>	=	sumén	=	<b>suméndángkolo</b>
<b>tai</b>	+	<b>-um-</b>	=	tumái	=	<b>tumáisalappe'</b>
<b>gai</b>	+	<b>-um-</b>	=	gumái	=	<b>gumáisalappe'</b>
<b>man-</b>	+	<b>sen-</b>	=	mansén	=	<b>manséndángkolo</b>
<b>man-</b>	+	<b>tai-</b>	=	manái	=	<b>manáisalappe'</b>
<b>man-</b>	+	<b>gai-</b>	=	manggái	=	<b>manggáisalappe'</b>
<b>sin</b>	+	<b>-um-</b>	=	sumín	=	<b>sumín</b> magågu
<b>man-</b>	+	<b>sin</b>	=	mansín	=	<b>mansín</b> magågu

## Rule 16. Totche Siha (Affixes)

An affix is a general term to describe the smallest unit of sounds that have meaning which are then attached to a word (bound morphemes). Affixes do not stand alone as separate words. Derivational affixes will change the meaning of the word it attaches to. There are five types of affixes: (1) prefix, (2) suffix, (3) infix, (4) circumfix, and (5) reduplication.

### A. Prefixes

Prefixes are affixes that come **before** the word. When prefixes are attached, they become part of the word. The following list contains the **prefixes of CHamoru**:

Prefix	Meaning/Function	Example	Meaning
<b>á-</b>	reciprocal	<b>árespeta</b>	<i>to respect each other</i>
		<b>águaiya</b>	<i>to love each other</i>
<b>achá-</b>	similarity, sameness, equally	<b>achálokka'</b>	<i>same height</i>
		<b>achábunita</b>	<i>same beauty</i>
<b>án-</b>	what remains	<b>ánsopbla</b>	<i>leftover</i>
		<b>ánusa</b>	<i>what was used</i>
<b>chát-</b>	not very/not quite/ negative marker	<b>chátbunita</b>	<i>not very pretty</i>
		<b>chátmasa</b>	<i>not well-cooked</i>
<b>é-</b>	to look for, to hunt for	<b>épanglao</b>	<i>to hunt for crabs</i>
<b>ó-</b>		<b>ótenda</b>	<i>to shop for</i>
<b>fa'-*</b>	to pretend, to change to to cause, to make	<b>fa'guaha</b>	<i>to pretend to have</i>
		<b>fa'maolek</b>	<i>to take care, to make good</i>

<b>ga'-</b>	to like something very much	<b>ga'maigo'</b>	<i>likes to sleep</i>
<b>gé-</b>	more in that direction	<b>gé'papa'</b>	<i>further down</i>
<b>gi-</b>	person from	<b>giBarigåda</b>	<i>from Barigåda</i>
<b>há-</b>	often	<b>hápoddong</b>	<i>prone to falling</i>
<b>hát-</b>	more in the direction of	<b>háttaalom</b>	<i>move further in</i>
<b>ká-</b>	having, exhibiting	<b>káma'gas</b>	<i>having some authority</i>
<b>ké-</b>	about to, try	<b>kéhatsa</b>	<i>about to lift</i>
<b>lá-</b>	comparative	<b>lámaolek</b>	<i>better</i>
<b>ma-</b>	passive marker	<b>mataitai</b>	<i>was read</i>
<b>man-</b>	indirect object marker	<b>Manâyuyot</b>	<i>I prayed.</i>
		yu'.	
<b>man-</b>	plural subject marker	<b>Manhåspok</b>	<i>They (3 or more) are</i>
		siha.	<i>full.</i>
<b>mí-</b>	have lots of	<b>mísalappe'</b>	<i>having lots of money</i>
<b>mina'-</b>	ordinal marker	<b>mina'tres</b>	<i>third</i>
<b>na'-</b>	to cause, make, let do something	<b>na'gåsgas</b>	<i>to make clean</i>
<b>ná-</b>	adjective	<b>náchalek</b>	<i>funny</i>
<b>pinat-</b>	majority of/mostly	<b>pinatdonne'</b>	<i>mostly hot peppers</i>
<b>san-</b>	in the direction of	<b>sanme'na</b>	<i>toward the front</i>
<b>tai-</b>	like	<b>taiguennao</b>	<i>like that</i>
<b>ták-</b>	in the direction of	<b>tákhelo'</b>	<i>way up high</i>
<b>talak-</b>	look towards the direction of	<b>talakhiyong</b>	<i>look towards the outside</i>
<b>ya-</b>	towards the direction of	<b>yamó'nana</b>	<i>way up front</i>

\*Note: The prefix **fa'** - when attached to words that require the addition of the particle **i** will be attached to the root word with the use of a dollan (hyphen). For example:

**fa' + i + macheng** = **fa-i-macheng**     *to act like or pretend to be a monkey*

The classifiers **na'**, **ga'**, **gimen** and **iyon** will be written as separate words or with a hyphen (*dollan*) when used with a possessive pronoun. For example:

<b>na'</b> ga'lågu	<i>dog food</i>
<b>na'</b> babui	<i>pig food</i>
<b>ga'</b> taotao	<i>animal belonging to a person</i>
<b>ga'</b> Juan	<i>animal belonging to Juan</i>
<b>gimen</b> neni	<i>drink for baby</i>
<b>gimen</b> gå'ga'	<i>drink for an animal</i>
<b>iyon</b> nãna	<i>thing belonging to a mother</i>
<b>iyon</b> ma'estra	<i>thing belonging to a teacher</i>

With possessive pronouns:

<b>na'</b> -hu	<i>my food</i>	<b>na'</b> -ña	<i>his/her/its food</i>
<b>ga'</b> -mu	<i>your animal</i>	<b>ga'</b> -ta	<i>our animal, inclusive</i>
<b>gimen</b> -ña	<i>his/her/its drink</i>	<b>gimen</b> -miyu	<i>your drink, exclusive</i>
<b>iyon</b> -ñiha	<i>their thing</i>	<b>iyon</b> -ku	<i>my thing</i>

## B. Infixes

Infixes are affixes that occur within the word. They always immediately occur before the first vowel in the word, but if the word begins with a vowel then the infix will precede that vowel. When infixes are attached, they become part of the word. In CHamoru, there are two infixes **-um-**, **-in-**, and **-l-**.

For example:

<b>-um-</b> + hugândo = humugândo	<b>-in-</b> + nâ'i = nina'i
<b>-um-</b> + huyong = humuyong	<b>-in-</b> + magof = minagof
<b>-l-</b> + dingding = dilingding	<b>-l-</b> + pângpang = pâlângpang

When the word begins with a vowel:

<b>-um-</b> + o'mak = umo'mak	<b>-in-</b> + ayuda = inayuda
<b>-um-</b> + ékungok = umékungok	<b>-in-</b> + ipe' = inipe'

## C. Suffixes

Suffixes are affixes that come after or follow the word. When suffixes are attached, they become part of the word. The following list contains the **suffixes of CHamoru**:

Suffix	Meaning/ Function	Example	Meaning
<b>-an/-guan</b>	attributive	minigu'an/ pâguan	<i>having secretion from the eye/smelly</i>
<b>-guan</b>	unintentional, covertly	pinalakse'guan	<i>slip of the tongue</i>
<b>-i/-yi/-gui</b>	referential marker	sangâni/nâ'iyi/ li'ofgui	<i>to tell/give/dive for someone</i>
<b>-iyi/-guiyi</b>	benefactive	sanganiyi/ hanâguiyi	<i>tell /went for or on behalf of someone</i>
<b>-ña</b>	comparative	bunitaña	<i>prettier</i>
<b>-ñaihon</b>	for a little while	sâganñaihon	<i>stay for a while</i>
<b>-on/-yon</b>	abilitative/ capable of	guasâ'on/ guaiyayon	<i>sharpener/loveable</i>

D. Circumfixes – Part Prefix, Part Suffix

CHamoru has a **discontinuous affix**. The prefix **fan-** is dependent upon the suffix **–yan** or **–an** to give a complete meaning of the word. The suffix **–yan** is used when the word ends with a vowel and the suffix **–an** is used when a word ends with a consonant.

**fan- ... -yan or fan- ... -an**

For example:

<b>fan-</b> + binådu + <b>-yan</b> =	<b>fambinaduyan</b>	<i>place of deer</i>
<b>fan-</b> + pika + <b>-yan</b> =	<b>famikåyan</b>	<i>cutting board</i>
<b>fan-</b> + uchan + <b>-an</b> =	<b>fanuchånan</b>	<i>rainy season</i>
<b>fan-</b> + halom + <b>-an</b> =	<b>fanhaluman</b>	<i>entrance, gate</i>

E. Reduplication

Reduplication is a special type of affix which results from the repetition of a syllable up to the first true vowel (not a diphthong) in a root word. There are three types of reduplication:

- 1. Reduplication of the stressed syllable (alters the penultimate stress):

<b>hu•chom</b> + hu = <b>hú•hu•chom</b>	<i>closing</i>
<b>bi•ra</b> + bi = <b>bí•bi•ra</b>	<i>turning</i>
<b>bu•la</b> + bu = <b>bú•bu•la</b>	<i>filling</i>
<b>ma'•á'•ñao</b> + á' = <b>ma'•á'•a'•ñao</b>	<i>being scared</i>
<b>bai•la</b> + ba = <b>bá•bai•la</b>	<i>dancing</i>
<b>kon•ne'</b> + ko = <b>kó•kon•ne'</b>	<i>taking (live person/animal)</i>
<b>tok•tok</b> + to = <b>tó•tok•tok</b>	<i>hugging</i>
<b>guai•ya</b> + gua = <b>guá•guai•ya</b>	<i>loving</i>
<b>é•kung•ok</b> + e = <b>é'•e•kung•ok</b>	<i>listening</i>
<b>gé'•he•lo'</b> + ge = <b>gé•ge'•he•lo'</b>	<i>moving up</i>
<b>eg•ga'</b> + e + man- = <b>man•é'•egga'</b>	<i>watching</i>
<b>op•pe</b> + o + fan- = <b>fan•ó'•op•pe</b>	<i>answering</i>

- 2. Reduplication of the first syllable (nominalizer): The stress will shift to the first a.

fa'nå'gue	+ fa' = fáfa'nå'gue	<i>teacher</i>
fa'tinas	+ fa' = fáfa'tinas	<i>cook</i>
fa'ñague	+ fa' = fáfa'ñague	<i>ghost, scary thing</i>



3. Emphasis Reduplication:

The final vowel and consonant pair in the final syllable of the word is reduplicated.

bu•la	+ la =	bú•la•la•la•la	<i>very very full</i>
ya•yas	+ ya =	yá•ya•ya•yas	<i>very very tired</i>
ña•lang	+ la =	ñá•la•la•lang	<i>very very hungry</i>

## **Rule 17. Klå'an Gai Iyo yan Palåbran Kinalamten Siha**

### **Possessive Pronouns and Compounded Movement Words**

The **hyphen (*dollan*)** will be used to show the special relationship that possessive pronouns, directional words and others have with the root word to which they are attached.

#### **A. Possessive Pronouns**

**Possessive Pronouns are suffixes that are attached to root words to signify ownership. The hyphen (*dollan*) will also be used to attach possessive pronouns to the root word.**

For example:

rilos- <b>hu</b>	<i>my watch</i>
rilos- <b>mu</b>	<i>your watch</i>
rilos- <b>ña</b>	<i>his/her/its watch</i>
rilos- <b>ta</b>	<i>our (inclusive) watch</i>
rilos- <b>måmi</b>	<i>our (exclusive) watch</i>
rilos- <b>miyu</b>	<i>your (dual, plural) watch</i>
rilos- <b>ñiha</b>	<i>their (dual, plural) watch</i>
matå- <b>hu</b>	<i>my face</i>
matan- <b>måmi</b>	<i>our face</i>

## B. Compounded Movement Words

Compounded Movement Words are two words (a verb and a location word) that are attached to each other to describe motion in a direction or to a location. In CHamoru, these compound words describe an action that happens while one is traveling in a given direction. The hyphen (*dollan*) will be used to attach the verb to the location word. The stressed vowel will shift to the last syllable of the verb when attached to the location word.

For example:

haná̌o- <b>guatu</b>	<i>on your way over, go to</i>
haná̌o- <b>huyong</b>	<i>on your way out, go out</i>
chulé'- <b>halom</b>	<i>bring (it) on your way in</i>
chulé'- <b>magi</b>	<i>bring (it) on your way over here</i>
po'lón- <b>hulo'</b>	<i>drop (it) on your way up</i>
po'lón- <b>papa'</b>	<i>drop (it) on your way down</i>
na'én- <b>guatu</b>	<i>give (it) on your way over there</i>
na'én- <b>magi</b>	<i>give (it) on your way over here</i>

## Glossary of Terms

<b>affix</b>	General term to describe the smallest unit of sounds that have meaning which are then attached to a word (bound morphemes).
<b>closed syllable</b>	A syllable that ends with a consonant.
<b>consonant cluster</b>	Two or more consonants that follow each other without an intervening vowel.
<b>dialect</b>	The variety of a language spoken in a specific area or by a certain group of people.
<b>diphthong</b>	Two vowels that come together to make one sound in a single syllable.
<b>excrement consonant</b>	Consonants added to the end of the word before an affix for ease in pronunciation.
<b>function word</b>	A word that has little meaning on its own, but is grammatically significant.
<b>geminate consonants</b>	Two identical consonants that come together across a syllable boundary. They are often heard as a single sound, but both consonants should be written because they are part of different syllables.
<b>infix</b>	Affixes found within the root word. When attached, they become part of the word.
<b>intransitive verb</b>	A verb that does not require and often cannot take a direct object.
<b>open syllable</b>	A syllable that ends with a vowel.
<b>orthography</b>	A system of spelling in a language.

<b>penultimate</b>	The next to the last; frequently used to refer to syllables. The primary stress in most CHamoru words falls on the penultimate stress.
<b>prefix</b>	Affixes that come before the root word. When attached, they become part of the word.
<b>reduplication</b>	A special type of affix which results from the repetition of the stressed vowel in a root word plus the preceding consonant in that syllable if there is one present.
<b>root</b>	A word which cannot be reduced any further. It may take affixes to form other words.
<b>stress</b>	The degree of loudness of a syllable. Sometimes the term “accent” is used to describe stress.
<b>superfluous</b>	A consonant that is part of a syllable, but is not always heard.
<b>syllable</b>	A unit in the sound system of the language which has a vowel to provide its essence.
<b>suffix</b>	Affixes that come after the root word. When attached, they become part of the word.
<b>transitive verb</b>	A verb that takes a direct object.
<b>vowel fronting</b>	The change that occurs when a back vowel is drawn forward to become a front vowel. When specific particles ( <i>i</i> , <i>ni'</i> , <i>gi</i> , <i>in</i> , <i>en</i> , <i>-in-</i> , <i>sin</i> , <i>mí-</i> ) are placed in front of a word, if the first vowel is a back vowel it will then become a front vowel.
<b>vowel harmony</b>	The process where vowels in words may change to become more like their preceding vowels. Vowels in CHamoru must, under certain conditions, agree with each other in terms of whether they are front or back vowels, and whether they are high, mid, or low vowels.

- vowel lowering**      The change that occurs when the excrescent consonant *n* is added to words that have the CV structure at the end causing one of the two high vowels, *i* or *u*, to be lowered to its corresponding mid vowel, *e* or *o*.
- vowel raising**      The change that occurs when certain suffixes are attached to CHamoru words causing one of the two mid vowels, *e* or *o*, to be raised to its corresponding high vowel, *i* or *u*.

## SPELLING OF CHAMORU

CHamoru or Chamorro? While the origin of the word that is synonymous with the first nation people or indigenous people of the Marianas and our indigenous language does not have its roots in Fino' Håya, it gained currency during the 1800s and has been used ever since to refer to the Taotao Tåno' and our Mother Tongue. The orthographically correct spelling of the word CHamoru was established during the tenure of the first CHamoru Language Commission and first designated as such in the 1983 Orthography. (*see Rule 7, Spelling of Borrowed Words*) Because it varied from the customary Spanish spelling of the word Chamorro, this rule was challenged by many reputable community advocates and educators. Hence, its inconsistent use in the past thirty-five years.

“Why CHamoru? Why not use the spelling we have always used?” Chamorro, as a word, was first introduced into our vocabulary by the Spaniards to reference the *indios* or *nativos* during the Spanish colonial period. In Spanish it means bald or shorn. It's easy to see how they applied this word to the indigenous inhabitants as Spanish chroniclers documented how our male ancestors wore their hair. There is another common Spanish definition of the term which literally means, beef shank. Our ancestors did not call themselves or their language Chamorro. It was a name given to the indigenous people and language of the Marianas during the Spanish colonial period.

As part of its mandate to engage in CHamoru language revitalization, the current Kumision is charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a standard set of rules to guide written CHamoru. The Orthography is our spelling system. It is based on patterns of usage by first language speakers. The grammatical structures which have shaped our Orthography are embedded in our spoken language.

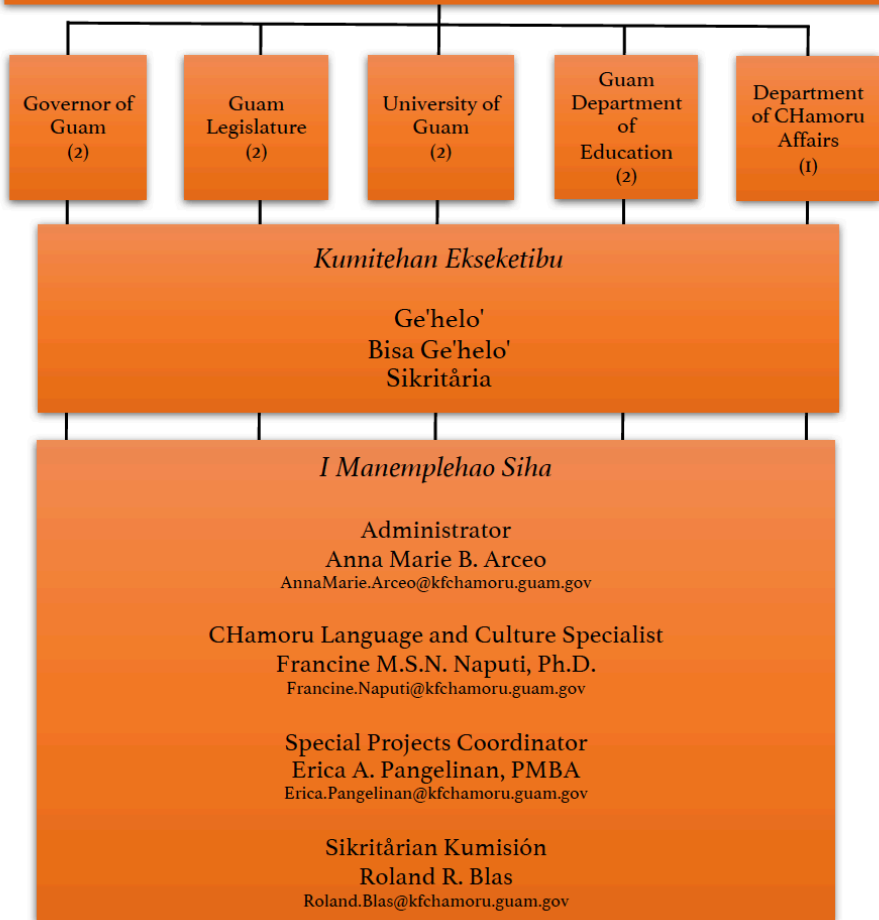
The CHamoru alphabet is different from the English alphabet. The letter “c” and “z” do not exist in CHamoru, nor does the Spanish “*dobles rr*”. To capture the “tze” - a common sound in spoken CHamoru - the 1983 Orthography established that the combined letters “ch” would constitute one CHamoru letter representing that one sound. This is the reason that the “ch” at the beginning of the word CHamoru is always capitalized, as it is the first letter of a proper noun. (*See Rule 5 F. Capitalization*) CH is one letter representing one sound. The letter “u” is used at the end of the word rather than “o”. (*See Rule 12 A. Unstressed Vowels in Open Syllables*) This also reflects a pattern of speech in spoken CHamoru.

Standardization is key to developing written literacy in our language. These rules have become spelling guidelines especially for those who are learning CHamoru as a second language or for those who write in CHamoru. The CHamoru Heritage Act of 2016, which established the current Kumision I Fino' CHamoru yan I Fina'na'guen I Historia yan I Lina'la' I Taotao Tano, codified the spelling of CHamoru in the enabling legislation. The Kumision urges government agencies, the media, public and private organizations, educational institutions, churches and all segments of our island community to honor and uphold this rule. Biba CHamoru!

# CHamoru Heritage Commission Act of 2016

5GCA CH.88§ 88101-88108

The Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the  
History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam



**KUMISIÓN I FINO' CHAMORU YAN I FINA'NÅ'GUEN I HISTORIA  
YAN I LINA'LA' I TAOTAO TÅNO'**

*Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of  
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