

Two Chamorro Orthographies *and their differences*

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An Ideal Orthography

- Systematic
- Accurate
 - true to the structure of the language
- Easy to learn
- Connected to earlier ways of spelling the language
 - some legacy features are preserved

What's Special about Chamorro

- Language loss
 - more recent in the CNMI than in Guam
- Ethnically and linguistically diverse classrooms
- The easier it is for children to learn Chamorro spelling, the better the chances that the language will survive

Two Principles of Orthography

- Two principles involved in designing a good orthography
 - “One sound, one symbol”
 - “One word, one spelling”

“One sound, one symbol”

- This principle means: spell a given sound the same way everywhere
 - The sound /k/ is spelled the same way wherever it occurs, not **k** sometimes and **g** other times
 - kulu, dikiki', maolik
 - Glottal stop is spelled the same way wherever it occurs
 - li'i', palão'an, sa'

Ex. of “One sound, one symbol”

- Languages whose orthographies obey “one sound, one symbol”
 - Hawaiian
 - Spanish (mostly)
 - Turkish
- ... But not English*

“One word, one spelling”

- This principle means: spell a given word the same way in all its different forms
 - The word *electric* is spelled the same way in all of its forms and in all the words derived from it

electricu, electricity, electrician

/k/

/s/

/š/

Ex. of “One word, one spelling”

- Languages whose orthographies obey “one word, one spelling”
 - Hawaiian
 - English
 - Chinese

Spelling and Real Languages

- Some languages, like Hawaiian, have an orthography that obeys both principles
- The sound structure of other languages makes it impossible for their orthography to obey both principles *at the same time*
 - English
 - Chamorro
 - and many other languages

Two Ways of Coping

- Choose one principle and stick with it
- Pick & choose among the principles, using each in different contexts

Two Chamorro Orthographies

- **CNMI**: “one sound, one symbol” throughout
- **Guam**: “one sound, one symbol” in some contexts and “one word, one spelling” in other contexts

The Result

- The **CNMI** orthography sometimes doesn't obey "one word, one spelling", but it is transparent, accurate, and easy to read and write
- The **Guam** orthography sometimes doesn't obey "one sound, one symbol", other times doesn't obey "one word, one spelling", and has a more complicated set of spelling rules

Shared History

- Both the **CNMI** spelling and the **Guam** spelling are descended from the standard orthography developed by the Marianas Orthography Committee in 1971



Shared Letters

- The **CNMI** spelling and the **Guam** spelling use the same letters of the alphabet
- The letters **ch** and **ng** are digraphs
 - Digraph: a 2-letter combination that represents 1 sound
- The letters **å** and **ñ** have diacritics
 - Diacritic: a mark on a letter that represents a difference in sound
- The letter **y** corresponds to the sound /dz/
 - This is a legacy feature from older Chamorro spelling systems

Summary of the Differences

More important

- How the mid and high vowels are spelled
- How the geminate consonants are spelled
- How the diphthong /aw/ is spelled
- How digraphs are capitalized

Less important

Difference 1: Mid and High Vowels

- Chamorro has six vowel sounds
 - Two high vowels, /i/ and /u/
 - Two mid vowels, /e/ and /o/
 - Two low vowels

Letters for Vowels

- Here are the letters that represent them
 - Two high vowels: **i** **u**
 - Two mid vowels: **e** **o**
 - Two low vowels: **a** **å**

Sidebar: Low Vowels

- In both the **CNMI** orthography and the **Guam** orthography, the spelling of the low vowels as **a** and **ã** obeys the principle “one sound, one symbol”

‘bad’ **bãba**

‘open’ **baba**

Sidebar: Low Vowels

- This sometimes means that words spelled with **a** and **å** do not obey the principle “one word, one spelling”

‘spouse’ **asagua**

‘my spouse’ **asaguå-hu**

‘mother’ **nåna**

‘my mother’ **nanå-hu**

Mid and High Vowels

- In the **CNMI** orthography, the spelling of the mid and high vowels as **e, o, i, u** also obeys “one sound, one symbol” -- *but not “one word, one spelling”*
 - So, this orthography has a uniform system of spelling for vowels (and, more generally, for sounds)

CNMI Spelling

'group'

gurupu

gurupu-mu

'knife'

se'si'

si'se'-mu

'knowledge'

tingu'

tingo'-mu

'do'

cho'gui

cho'guem-mu

'big'

dangkulu

dangkulon-ña

or

dangkulon-ña

Mid and High Vowels

- In the **Guam** orthography, the spelling of the mid and high vowels as **e, o, i, u** obeys “one word, one spelling” -- *but not “one sound, one symbol”*
 - So, this orthography treats the spelling of low vowels differently from the spelling of the other vowels

Guam Spelling

'group'	gurupu	gurupu-mu
'knife'	se'se'	se'se'-mu
'knowledge'	tingo'	tingo'-mu
'do'	cho'gue	cho'gue-mu
'big'	dangkolo	dangkolo-ña

The Two Spellings Compared

CNMI

Guam

'group'

gurupu

gurupu

'knife'

se'si'

se'se'

'knowledge'

tingu'

tingo'

'do'

cho'gui

cho'gue

'big'

dangkulu

dangkolo

How the Guam Spelling Works

- In the **Guam** orthography, if a word is pronounced with the sounds /e/ or /o/ in any of its forms, then the word is always spelled with the letters **e** or **o**

Guam & CNMI Compared Again

Guam

gurupu

se'se'

tingo'

cho'gue

dangkolo

CNMI

gurupu

se'si'

tingu'

cho'gui

dangkulu

CNMI

gurupu-mu

si'se'-mu

tingo'-mu

cho'guem-mu

dangkulon-ña

or

dangkulon-ña

One Outcome

- Syllables that sound the same, and are spelled the same in the **CNMI** orthography, are sometimes spelled *differently* from each other in the **Guam** orthography

	CNMI	Guam
'sibling'	che'<u>lu</u>	che'<u>lu</u>
'put'	po'<u>lu</u>	po'<u>lo</u>

Pushing the Generalization

- In indigenous Chamorro words, the vowels that are sometimes pronounced **e** or **o**, and other times **i** or **u**, occur in syllables that either (i) end in a consonant, or (ii) *follow* a syllable that ends in a consonant

Pushing the Generalization

- In the **Guam** orthography, the spelling rules require vowels in these positions to be spelled with **e** or **o**, even if they are never pronounced /e/ or /o/ in *any* of their forms

‘from’

ginen

‘you (pl.)’

hamyo

Difference 2: Geminates

- Geminate (long or doubled) consonants occur in the Guam and Saipan dialects and are recognized in both orthographies
- Geminate consonants are spelled by doubling the consonant, except that geminate /ts/ is spelled **tch**, geminate /dz/ is spelled **ty**, and geminate /ñ/ is spelled **nñ**.

Difference 2: Geminates

- In the **Guam** orthography, geminate consonants formed from /f, s, ts, dz/ are sometimes spelled with single consonants

	CNMI	Guam
'touch'	patcha	pacha
'that'	atyu	ayu
'together'	danña'	daña'

Difference 2: Geminates

- The consonants of the possessive suffixes *-hu*, *-mu*, *-ña*, *-ta* are geminated under certain conditions. This gemination is spelled with double consonants in the **CNMI** orthography but not the **Guam** orthography

	CNMI	Guam
'your door'	i pettåm-mu	i pettå-mu
'your time'	tiempom-mu	tiempo-mu
'your letter'	kattåm-mu	kattå-mu

Difference 3: Diphthongs

- The diphthongs /aj/ and /aw/ both begin with a low vowel, which is front in /aj/ and back in /aw/
- Diphthongs can be treated as complex vowels or combos of a vowel plus a glide
- The **CNMI** spelling treats diphthongs as complex vowels; the **Guam** spelling treats them as vowel-glide combinations

Difference 3: Diphthongs

- The **CNMI** orthography spells /aw/ as **âo** except when vowel fronting occurs
- The **Guam** orthography spells /aw/ as **âo** when it is stressed and there is no vowel fronting, and as **ao** otherwise

	CNMI	Guam
'go'	hâno	hâno
'person'	tâoto	tâoto
'the person'	i taoto	i taoto

Difference 4: Capitalization

- Digraphs are two-letter combinations that represent single sounds
- Chamorro has two digraphs, **ch** and **ng**

Difference 4: Capitalization

- In languages with Roman orthographies, the first letter of a sentence or a name is capitalized (made bigger) by convention
- In almost all these languages, capitalization affects the first letter of a digraph but not the second, e.g. *This page...*, *Christmas*, *Shell Oil*
- Almost no language capitalizes all digraphs at the beginning of a sentence

Difference 4: Capitalization

- The **CNMI** orthography capitalizes the first letter of a digraph but not the second; the **2017 Guam** orthography capitalizes *both* letters

	CNMI	Guam
'Chamorro'	Chamorro	CHamoru
'bring'	Chuli'	CHuli'
'when?'	Ngai'an	NGai'an

Difference 4: Capitalization

- Although the **Guam** spelling convention is supposed to affect all digraphs at the beginning of a sentence or name, it is not clear whether in practice it affects the spelling of any word except the important word *CHamoru*.

Which Orthography is Which?

- O sino manaplika hão para un facho'chu'. Un tungu' ha' na guaha bakânti para atyu na cho'chu'... Matãgu' hão para un tugi' pãpa' i kapasidât-mu na klasin cho'chu'
- O sino manaplika hao para un facho'cho'. Un tungo' ha' na guaha bakãnte para ayu na cho'cho'... Matãgo' hao para un tuge' pãpa' i kapasidât-mu na klasen cho'cho'

Si Yu'us Ma'åsi'!

Or, in a different orthography,

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'!