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INTRODUCTION¹

The Bikol region dominates the southernmost peninsula of the island of Luzon and extends into the island provinces of Catanduanes and Masbate. The provinces on the mainland include Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon.

Most of the languages spoken in this region are subsumed under the heading 'Bikol', and differences are attributed to dialect variation. Some of these dialects, however, are so different from the standard dialect that they may upon further investigation eventually be declared languages in their own right. The languages spoken in these provinces which are not considered to be Bikol are (1) Tagalog, spoken throughout most of Camarines Norte up to a line running roughly NE-SW in the general vicinity of the capital city of Daet, and (2) Masbateño, spoken on the main island of Masbate, which is generally thought to be more closely related to the Visayan languages to the south.

Under the heading 'Bikol' the standard dialect is usually attributed to the traditional cultural center of Naga City and its immediate environs. This dialect is spoken without major variation in Camarines Norte southeast of Daet, Camarines Sur, except for a section called Rinconada near Western Albay, Eastern Albay including Legazpi City, and most of Northern Sorsogon. The major influences on this dialect are from the neighboring language areas. Thus, standard Bikol as it approaches Tagalog speaking areas tends to become more similar to Tagalog, as is the case in Camarines Norte and Western Camarines Sur. As it approaches Visayan

The island of Cantuanduanes is usually classified into two dialect areas, the Northern and the Southern. The Buhi' dialect is spoken only in a small area around Lake Buhi' in Camarines Sur. Towns speaking the Rinconada dialect are Baa, Bula', Iriga,

1 Parts of this introduction, especially those which deal with pronunciation and grammar, are taken from the BIKOL TEXT and BIKOL GRAMMAR NOTES where they appear in a fuller form. This dictionary was prepared as the third volume in a series which contains the above texts as the first two parts.

BIKOL DICTIONARY

Nabua, and Bato, all located between Pili in Camarines Sur and the Albay provincial line. The Western Albay dialects are spoken in a group of towns between the Rinconada section of Camarines Sur and Legazpi City, including sections of Northern Sorsogon. A significantly different dialect is spoken in each town. This dictionary is based on the standard Bikol dialect spoken in Naga City.

THE BIKOL ALPHABET

Table I

A	a
BA	ba
C	c
DA	da
E	e
F	f
GA	ga
HA	ha
I	i
J	j
KA	ka
LA	la
MA	ma
NA	na
NGA	nga
O	o
PA	pa
Q	q
RA	ra
SA	sa
TA	ta
U	u
V	v
WA	wa
X	x
YA	ya
Z	z
'A	'a (Glottal Stop)

Consonants in the table followed by the vowel a appear in natural Bikol words. Other consonants are used only in loan words from English and in Spanish names.

ORTHOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

Bikol, as written in this dictionary, is spelled as it is pronounced with very few exceptions. The new spelling is patterned basically after the spelling adopted for Pilipino, the national language. (See Table I, The Bikol Alphabet) Bikol however, as written in the Bikol region, is based for the most part on the spelling system of Spanish. This system is still in wide use, though it is gradually being supplanted under the influence of Pilipino. The following explains the changes from a Spanish based orthography to that used in this dictionary.

THE POLICY ADOPTED IN WRITING SPANISH LOAN WORDS

The c when written in Spanish to convey the sound of [k] as in 'kite' is written /k/ in Bikol.

cuarto	KUÁRTO
comedor	KOMEDÓR
secreto	SEKRÉTO

The c when written in Spanish to convey the sound of [s] as in 'self' is written /s/ in Bikol.

cine	SÍNE
bendicion	BENDISIÓN

The qu when written in Spanish to convey the sound of [k] as in 'kite' is written /k/ in Bikol.

queso	KÉSO
ataque	ATÁKE

The v in Spanish is written /b/ in Bikol.

viernes	BIÉRNES
salvar	SALBÁR

ORTHOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

The f in Spanish is written /p/ in Bikol.

fundar	PUNDÁR
difícil	DIPÍSIL

The ch in Spanish is written /ts/ in Bikol.

cheque	TSÉKE
muchacha	MUTSÁTSÁ

The x is written /ks/.

experiencia	EKSPERIÉNSIA
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The cc with the sound of [ks] as in 'jinx' is written /ks/.

leccion	LEKSIÓN
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The j written in Spanish to convey the sound of [h] like in 'house' is written /h/ in Bikol.

jefe	HÉPE
trabajo	TRABÁHO

The ñ in Spanish is written /ny/ in Bikol.

baños	BÁNYOS
-------	--------

The ll is written /ly/.

llave	LYÁBE
sencillo	SENSÍLYO

The g preceding an e in Spanish is written /h/

general	HENERÁL
---------	---------

The g preceding an i is written /h/.

gigante	HIGÁNTE
---------	---------

All other g sounds are written /g/.

THE POLICY ADOPTED IN WRITING ENGLISH
LOAN WORDS

English loan words in Bikol are far more recent than Spanish, but because of the wide spread use of English as a medium of instruction in schools, a large number of words have entered Bikol in most educational and professional fields. There are other English words which have entered through American books and movies, and still others, because of the second World War and the presence of American troops.

The following general rules have been adopted in the spelling of English words.

Where the word is wide spread through the population, the spelling has been changed to fit the general pronunciation.

EBÁKUET	evacuate
KÁWBOY	cowboy

KÁWBOY MAG-, -ON to lasso. Kawbóyon mo an báka. 'Lasso the cow.'

When English words have been used for a long time by the general population, they may be hard to recognize as English. It has been suggested the following word is of English derivation.

BULAKBÓL: to roam around in a carefree manner neglecting your work.

The derivation suggested is from the word 'blackball'. There are many other examples where only a guess can be made as to an English origin.

There are also cases where a brand name has been adopted for the general name of its contents. The spelling of these words has also been adopted to the sound system of Bikol.

DÉLKO	generator
KÓLGET	toothpaste
KLÍNEKS	facial tissue

When an English word is used mostly by the educated or the young and has only begun to gain widespread use and acceptance, the word is generally written in its English spelling. These words are followed by the symbol (E) to indicate the pronunciation in Bikol is the English pronunciation.

BIKOL DICTIONARY

DÁTE (E)	a date (e.g. to go to the movies)
CÚTE (E)	cute
PÁRTY (E)	party

In a few cases the spelling has been regularized in minor ways.

APOÍNTMENT (E)	appointment
TÉNIS (E)	tennis

When English words begin with an *s* followed by another consonant, the Bikol speaker will usually place an [i] sound before the consonant cluster.

'small' will then be	ISMÓL
'smuggle' will be	ISMÁGUL
'straw' will be	ISTRÓ

When these bases are made into verb forms which have reduplication, it is the *i* which the Bikol speaker adds that is reduplicated.

The infinitive or command form of ISMÁGUL is MAGIS-MÁGUL.

The conjugation is as follows.

Future	MAISMÁGUL
Progressive	NAGIISMÁGUL
Past	NAGISMÁGUL

SOUNDS WHICH HAVE ENTERED THE BIKOL SOUND SYSTEM THROUGH THE GENERAL USAGE OF FOREIGN WORDS

A Bikol speaker who is familiar with the foreign language from which words have been borrowed, will pronounce those words as closely as he can to the way they are pronounced in that foreign language. If he is not familiar with the other language, he will adopt the sound to his own sound system. It is often a sign of education, however, to be able to pronounce words as they are pronounced in the languages from which they have been borrowed.

CONSONANTS

F The f is not included in our list of sounds. We have written all words with f as /p/ since the sound system of Bikol makes no distinction between the [p] and the [f] sound.

The Spanish word difficil may be pronounced dipísil with no loss of comprehensibility. Where, however, words are definitely recognizable as Spanish, the Spanish pronunciation would be preferred among certain groups of people.

V The v is also not included in our list of sounds. We have written all words with v as /b/ since the sound system of Bikol makes no distinction between the [v] and [b] sound.

The Spanish word convénto may be pronounced kombénto with no loss of comprehensibility. Among certain groups of people, however, the Spanish pronunciation is preferred.

Note: Spanish distinguishes between /b/ and /v/ only in writing, not in pronunciation. But in many schools in the Bikol region the written v is taught as the [v] sound in English. In actuality it is pronounced in Spanish as neither [b] nor [v], but a single sound somewhere between the pronunciation of the two.

The policy in Pilipino, the national language, is to write all [f] and [v] sounds in foreign loan words as p and b respectively. This has given a new respectability to the pronunciation of words such as DIPÍSIL and KOM-BÉNTÓ, which, among the young, rivals the respectability once offered by pronouncing the words as Spanish: dificil and convénto.

The following palatal series of sounds in Bikol (except the [y]) has entered through the adoption of foreign loan words to the Bikol language.

SY The sy has been used on our sound chart (see Table II) to represent the sound [sh] as in the English word 'shirt'. This sound occurs only in loan words from English and the orthography reflects the English spelling. In other words, 'shirt' is written in Bikol as SHÍRT.

The reason we have used sy on our chart is to show that, among people who are not familiar with English but who do say the word 'shirt', the sound tends to break apart into two sections: [si] and [y] which exist in the Bikol sound system. The pronunciation then of 'shirt' by Bikolanos who do not speak English would be SIYÍRT.

TY The sequence ty has been used on our sound chart to represent the [ch] as in the word 'check'. In the writing system of Bikol we have used the orthography adopted for Pilipino and have written /ts/.

We have again used the ty on our chart to show that, among people who are not familiar with English but who do use words that have the [ch] sound, the sound tends to break apart into two parts: [ti] and [y], both of which exist in the Bikol sound system.

It is interesting to look at two words which are almost identical in the pronunciation of the initial sound: chèque from the Spanish meaning a check (e.g. for money) and

CHÉCK from the English meaning to check something. The word *chèque* has been used for so long and has been so wide spread in the Bikol population that the sound has been split by many speakers into two and the pronunciation often is TIYÉKE.

The word CHÉCK, however, is used mostly in schools and offices, by teachers, students or officials who all speak English. This word is usually pronounced as in English.

DY The dy has been used on our sound chart to represent the sound [j] as in 'jeep' or 'janitor'. It also represents the sound combination [di] in the Spanish word diés as pronounced in Bikol, or the [ge] in English 'generator'. With few exceptions these words are written as they are written in the language from which they are borrowed. One exception is the English word 'duet' which is written as it is pronounced in Bikol; DYÚET. There are also some apparently native Bikol words which contain the sound [dy]. These are written as /dy/.

The reason for the choice of the symbol dy on our chart is the same as that given for the choice made for the other palatals.

NY The ny enters Bikol through Spanish loan words like báñ^os. Such loans are written with /ny/ in Bikol: BÁNYOS.

LY The ly also enters Bikol through Spanish loan words like llave and sencillo. These loans are written with /ly/ in Bikol: LYÁBE and SENSÍLYO.

VOWELS

Native words in Bikol contain a system of three vowels and four diphthongs: /i/, /a/ and /o~u/; /iw, aw, ay, uy~oy/. Spanish words, however, have brought two new vowels into the language: e and o.

In the writing system adopted for Bikol, as explained in the previous pages, these vowels are usually written as in Spanish or in English.

lente

LÉNTE

'lens'

BIKOL DICTIONARY

ehe	ÉHE	‘axel’
sencillo	SENSÍLYO	‘change’ (money)
amenudo	AMENÚDO	‘by the piece’
tennis	TÉNIS	‘tennis’
evacuate	EBÁKUET	‘evacuate’
cobra	KÓBRA	‘to collect money’
colgate	KÓLGET	‘toothpaste’
color	KOLÓR	‘color’
costumbre	KOSTÚMBRE	‘custom’

Bikol contains the single sound [i], which serves the purpose of the [i] and the [e] sounds in Spanish or English. As a result, the [e] sound in Spanish, or in English, particularly when the speaker is not familiar with those languages, is pronounced as [i] in Bikol.

lente	LÍNTI
ehe	ÍHI
sensilyo	SINSÍLYO
amenudo	AMINÚDO
tenis	TÍNIS
ebakuwet	EBÁKUIT

Bikol does have both the sounds [o] and [u]. These sounds are generally pronounced as either one or the other according to the position in the word. The first is pronounced [o] only if it occurs in the last syllable of the word. The second is pronounced [u] only if it occurs in any syllable but the last of the word. As a result an [o] sound written in Spanish or in English which occurs in any syllable but the last syllable in the word will often be pronounced [u] by Bikol speakers.

kobra	KÚBRA
kolor	KULÓR
kostumbre	KUSTÚMBRE
kolget	KÚLGET

SOUNDS IN BIKOL

The following describes Bikol sounds. See Table II.

CONSONANTS

1. Sounds Made with the Lips

Bikol has four sounds made with the lips: /p/, /b/, /m/ and /w/. Three of these sounds are pronounced in Bikol basically as they are pronounced in English: /b/, /m/ and /w/.

The /p/ is pronounced like the p in 'spin'. It is not pronounced like the p in 'pin'. The difference in pronunciation lies in what is called aspiration. The p in 'spin' is not followed by any puff of air. The p in 'pin' is. All /p/ sounds in Bikol are unaspirated. In other words, they are not followed by any puff of air and are like the p sound in 'spin'.

2. Sounds Made with the Tip of the Tongue Placed on the Teeth

Bikol has three sounds made with the tip of the tongue placed against the teeth: /t/, /d/ and /n/. In English, all of these sounds are made with the tip of the tongue placed behind and above the teeth. Of the three sounds, /d/ and /n/ are most similar to their pronunciation in English. (Except for the fact that the tongue is behind and above the teeth in English and not against them as in Bikol.)

The /t/ is pronounced like the t in 'stop'. It is not pronounced like the t in 'top'. The difference in pronunciation lies in the lack of aspiration.

3. Sounds Made with the Front of the Tongue Placed Behind the Teeth

Bikol has three sounds made with the front of the tongue placed behind the teeth: /s/, /l/ and /r/. The /s/ sound is pronounced basically like the s sound in English.

THE SOUND SYSTEM OF BIKOL

Table II

BIKOL DICTIONARY

The Consonants:

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	p b	t d			k g	'
Fricatives			s	sy		h
Affricates				ty dy		
Nasals	m	n		ny	ng	
Laterals			l	ly		
Flap			r			
Semi-Vowels	w			y		

The Vowels:

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

The Diphthongs:

i + u	iw
a + i	ay
a + u~o	aw
o~u + i	oy~uy

The l sound in English is pronounced with the front of the tongue placed above and behind the teeth. In Bikol the front of the tongue is placed closer to the teeth. Except for this, the pronunciation of /l/ in Bikol is basically similar to that in English.

The r sound in English is made in a completely different manner from the /r/ sound in Bikol. In English the tip of the tongue is retroflexed. In Bikol the front of the tongue rises to tap the front of the roof of the mouth and then is immediately released. The most similar sound in English to the pronunciation of /r/ in Bikol is the dd sound in the word 'ladder'. For this sound, the front of the tongue quickly touches a position behind the teeth and is then released.

4. Sounds Made with the Tongue Placed Near the Roof of the Mouth

SOUNDS IN BIKOL

Bikol has six sounds made with the tongue placed near the roof of the mouth: /sy/, /ty/, /dy/, /ny/, /ly/ and /y/.

The /sy/ is found only in loan words from English and is pronounced like the sh in 'shirt'.

The /ty/ is found in loan words from Spanish and English and is pronounced like the ch in 'check'.

The /dy/ is found basically in loan words from English and is pronounced like the j sound in 'jeep'.

The /ny/ is found in loan words from Spanish and is pronounced like the ñ in baños. In English it is pronounced basically as a sequence of n and y as in 'canyon'.

The /ly/ is found in loan words from Spanish and is pronounced like the ll in llave and sencillo. The closest pronunciation in English is the pronunciation of lli in the word 'million'.

The /y/ is pronounced like the y sound in English.

5. Sounds Made with the Back of the Tongue Placed Against the Back of the Mouth

Bikol has three sounds made with the back of the tongue placed against the back of the mouth: /k/, /g/ and /ng/.

The /g/ is pronounced basically as it is pronounced in English.

The /k/ is pronounced like the k in 'skip'. It is not pronounced like the k in 'keep'. The difference lies again in the lack of aspiration. All /k/ sounds in Bikol are unaspirated. In other words they are not followed by any puff of air and are like the k sounds in 'skip'.

The /ng/ is pronounced like the ng sound in the English words 'sing' and 'long'. In English, however, ng occurs only in the final and medial positions of a word (e.g. 'singer', 'ringer'). In Bikol it occurs at the beginning, middle and end of words.

6. Sounds Made in the Throat

Bikol has two sounds which are made in the throat. The glottal stop /ʔ/ which is made by closing the vocal cords, and the /h/ which is made by constricting the vocal cords.

The /h/ in Bikol is like the h in English.

BIKOL DICTIONARY

The glottal stop // is the sound between the two o's of 'Oh Oh'. There are also some words where the t sound occurring before an n sound is pronounced as a glottal stop ['].

mountain
fountain

mou'n
fou'n

The glottal stop is made by cutting off the air that passes out from the lungs through the mouth by closing the vocal cords. To the non-native speaker of Bikol it often sounds as if the vowel sound which precedes the // is suddenly and sharply cut off.

VOWEL

Bikol has three basic vowels, /i, a and o~u/, and /e/ and /o/ from Spanish loan words.

/i/ The /i/ sound in Bikol is most similar to the sound of ee in 'beet'. There is a difference, however. In English the tendency is to combine the vowel sound i with the consonant sound y. When you pronounce the ee in 'beet' you can feel the back of your tongue moving upward before the ee sound is completed. The upward movement of the back of the tongue is the pronunciation of the y. The pronunciation of /i/ in Bikol is the pronunciation of ee in 'beet' without the upward movement of the back of the tongue. The tongue must be kept from moving upward throughout the whole time that the /i/ is being pronounced.

/e/ The sound /e/ in Bikol (which is found almost exclusively in words borrowed from Spanish) is most similar to the ai sound in 'wait'. The same difference, however, occurs with this sound as with ee of 'beet'. In English the tendency is to combine the vowel sound e with the consonant sound W. When you pronounce the ai in 'wait' you can feel the back of your tongue moving upward before the pronunciation of ai is completed. The upward movement of the back of the tongue is the pronunciation of the y. The pronunciation of /e/ in Bikol is the pronunciation of ai in 'wait' without the upward

movement of the back of the tongue. The tongue must be kept from moving upward throughout the whole time that the /e/ is being pronounced.

/a/ The /a/ sound in Bikol is the same as the pronunciation of the sound o in 'got'.

/o/ The /o/ sound in Bikol is most similar to the sound of oa in 'boat'. There is a difference, however. In English the tendency is to combine the vowel sound o with the consonant sound w. When you pronounce the oa in 'boat' you can feel your lips begin to close before the oa sound is completed. The closing of the lips is the pronunciation of the w. The pronunciation of /o/ in Bikol is the pronunciation of oa in 'boat' without the closing of the lips. The lips must be kept rounded and open throughout the whole time that the /o/ is being pronounced.

/u/ The /u/ sound in Bikol is most similar to the sound of oo in 'boot'. There is a difference, however. In English the tendency is to combine the vowel sound u with the consonant sound w as explained above with oa of 'boat'. The pronunciation of the /u/ in Bikol is the pronunciation of oo in 'boot' without the closing of the lips. The lips must be kept fixed throughout the whole time that the /u/ is being pronounced.

The Distribution of /u/ and /o/

The vowel sound /o/ is pronounced [o] only if it occurs in the last syllable of the word. If it occurs elsewhere, then it is pronounced [u].

In like manner, the vowel sound /u/ is pronounced [u] only if it occurs in a syllable that is not final. If it occurs in a final syllable it is pronounced [o].

The Policy Adopted in the Writing of /u/ and /o/

The following orthographic rules have been adopted for the writing of /o/ and /u/ in this dictionary.

/u/ is written in any syllable that is not final in a word.

BURÁT

DAKÚLA'

TUKÁ'

/o/ is written only in the final syllable of the word.

BIKOL DICTIONARY

BAKÓ'

BATÓK

DAGÓM

Examples with words containing both /u/ and /o/

SUSÓ'
SÚGOK

MUNDÓ'
DÚ'OT

PU'ÓN

Exceptions

1. The orthographic convention of writing /u/ and /o/ applies only to the writing of the base. When a base is suffixed, thereby making a syllable that contains an /o/ no longer in final position, the spelling of the base is not changed. But the rule for the pronunciation of /u/ and /o/ still applies. In other words, GÍBO, when suffixed with -HON for the infinitive/command form, will be written GIBÓHON, but will be pronounced as [GIBÚHON].

2. Words that are formed by the joining of two identical syllables will be written with the /u/ sound in both. These bases are further distinguished by stress which falls equally on both on both parts.

KÚLKÚL
KÚTKÚT
TÚGTÚG

KÚKÚ'
PÚKPÚK

KÚKÚ'
GÚ'GÚ'

The base KÚKÚ consists of two identical syllables each containing two sounds: KÚ.

The base KÚ'KÚ' consists of two identical syllables each containing three sounds: KÚ'.

A base like SUSÓ' is not considered to have two identical syllables. It is considered to have one syllable consisting of two sounds: SU and one syllable consisting of three sounds: SO'. The stress, too, is not placed evenly on both syllables, but is located quite noticeably on the second. We therefore apply our regular rule for the writing of /u/ and /o/.

The Policy Adopted for the Writing of /i/ and /e/

All words which are identified as being natively Bikol are written with /i/. The pronunciation of some of these words with the vowel sound [e] is dialectal.

SOUNDS IN BIKOL

The pronunciation of the vowel sound [i] as the sound [e] will not change its meaning: HÁLE' or HÁLI' both mean 'to leave' and HÉRAK or HÍRAK both mean 'pity'

THE DIPHTHONGS

Bikol has a set of four diphthongs: /ay, aw, oy~uy, and iw/.

/ay/ The /ay/ in Bikol is the combination of the vowels /a + i/. It is not a combination of /a + y/ although that is the symbol used in the writing system we have adopted. As a result of /ay/ being two vowels which are pronounced successively, the tongue goes through the movements of producing both those sounds. The pronunciation of /a/ in Bikol should present no problem for the English speaker since it is pronounced similarly in English as in Bikol (see the section on Bikol vowels).

The pronunciation of /i/ in Bikol has also been explained in the section on Bikol vowels.

The pronunciation of the y in the English 'by' close to the pronunciation of the Bikol /ay/.

/aw/ The /aw/ in Bikol is the combination of the vowels /a + u/ or /a + o/. (The distinction between /u/ and /o/ is lost in the diphthong. We will use the /o/ in our explanation). It is not a combination of [a + w] although that is the symbol used in the writing system. As a result of /aw/ being the combination of two vowels which are pronounced successively, the tongue and the lips go through the movements of producing both those sounds. The pronunciation /a/ presents little problem for English speakers (see the section on Bikol vowels).

The pronunciation of /o/ is also explained in the section on Bikol vowels.

The pronunciation of ow in 'cow' is most similar to the pronunciation of /aw/ in Bikol. It must be remembered however, that you are pronouncing a Bikol /o/ and so the lips remain fixed.

/oy~uy/ The distinction between /u/ and /o/ is lost in the diphthong. We will use /oy/ in our explanation. The diphthong /oy/ is the combination of the two vowels /o/ plus /i/ and not a combination of /o + y/ although this is the symbol used in writing Bikol.

The pronunciation of /o/ and /i/ is explained in the section on Bikol verbs.

The pronunciation of *oy* in the English word 'boy' is most similar to the pronunciation of /oy/ in Bikol. It must be remembered however, that you are pronouncing the Bikol /o/ and that the lips must remain fixed in rounded position.

/iw/ The /iw/ in Bikol is the combination of the vowels /i + u/. It is not a combination of /i + w/, though that is the symbol used in writing.

The pronunciation of both /i/ and /u/ is explained in the section on Bikol vowels.

The pronunciation of *ue* in the English word 'cue' is similar to the pronunciation of /iw/ in Bikol. It must be remembered however, that you are pronouncing the Bikol /u/ and that the lips must remain rounded.