CHAPTER 7
CHAMORRO ORTHOGRAPHY
(SPELLING RULE)

§7100. Proper Names.
§7101. Capitalization.
§7102. Choice of Alphabetic Symbols and Corresponding Sounds.
§7103. Diphthongs.
§7104. Consonant Symbols in Final Position.
§7105. Unstressed Vowels in Open Syllables in CVCV and CVCCV Constructions.
§7106. Unstressed Vowels in Closed Syllables.
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§7112. Gemminate Consonants and Syllable-Final h.
§7113. Vowel Harmony.
§7114. Free Words.
§7115. Affixes.
§7116. Clitics.

NOTE: Rule-making authority for formulation of Chamorro Orthography, 17 GCA Chapter 46.

§7100. Proper Names. (a) Names of people will retain their spelling.

(b) Family names which have never been written before will be Chamorrorized in spelling.

(c) Proper names will not conform to 5 GAR §§6108 and 8109.

(d) Place names that are of Chamorro origin will be Chamorrorized in spelling.

For example: Inarajan -- Inalahan

Ritidian -- Litekyan

(e) Newly names places with no known Chamorro names will retain their written names.

For example: Banzai Cliff Nimitz Hill

(f) Months, days and numerals shall conform to Chamorro spelling rules.

§7101. 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.
(b) The affixed forms of proper names shall be capitalized.

For example:

-um- + Sablan = Sumablan
-in- + Sablan = Sinablan
-um- + Afaisen = UmAfaisen
-in- + Afaisen = InAfaisen
-um- + Angoco = UmAngoco
-in- + Angoco = InAngoco

N.B. The affixed forms of proper nouns beginning with vowels will have both the affix and the name capitalized.

(c) When the plural subject marker (man- is affixed to a proper name, m will also be capitalized.

For example:

man- + Chamorro = ManChamorro

man- + Juan = ManJuan

(d) The conventional practice of capitalizing pronouns relating to the divinity itself will be followed.

§7102. Choice of Alphabetic Symbols and Corresponding Sounds. (a) The following list of consonants and vowel symbols and their corresponding sounds will be used in Chamorro spelling. They are given here in alphabetical order. Example words are given to illustrate the phonetic value of each of the spelling symbols.
### Symbol Sound | Example Word | English Meaning
--- | --- | ---
' /ʔ/ | haga' | blood
a /ae/ | baba | open (note: the same symbol a used to represent two sounds)
b /e/ | baba | bad
ch /ch/ | chalan | road
d /de/ | dagga' | throw
e // | ekungok | listen
f /fe/ | fugu' | squeeze
g /ge/ | ga'chong | friend
h /he/ | hatsa | lift
i /i/ | hi'ta | we (inclusive)
k /ke/ | kada | each
l /le/ | litratu | picture
m /me/ | malago' | want
n /ne/ | nana | mother
n /ne/ | namu | mosquito
ng /nge/ | nginge' | sniff
o /o/ | oppo | answer
p /pe/ | pachot | mouth
r /re/ | ramas | branch
s /se/ | saddok | river
t /te/ | taya' | nothing
u /u/ | uchan | rain
y /ye/ | yan | and

(b) The letters c, j, q, v, w, x, z, ll and rr will be used in the spelling of proper names only.

For Example: **Symbol** | **Proper Names**
--- | ---
C | Carmen, Cecilia
J | Jose, John
Q | Quichocho
V | Vicente
W | Wilfred
X | Xavier, Xena
ll | Quintanilla
rr | Chamorro, Barrigada

(c) The glottal stop will be used in alphabetizing words.

For Example: gua'gua' na'na' ba'ba'
§7103. **Diphthongs.** (a) The diphthongs in the writing system will be treated as sequence of vowels. The most common diphthongs are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diphthong</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>tao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td>taitai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oi</td>
<td>boi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>io</td>
<td>bakasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>siette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ia</td>
<td>estoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iu</td>
<td>presiu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) All the letter combinations of the above listed diphthongs shall be treated as diphthongs, unless the glottal stop is distinctively heard between the two (2) vowels.

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Combination</th>
<th>Diphthongs</th>
<th>Not Diphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>siette</td>
<td>li'e'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>io</td>
<td>adios</td>
<td>fi'on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ia</td>
<td>estoria</td>
<td>espiha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iu</td>
<td>presiu</td>
<td>fihu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sure test of diphthong is when both vowels reduplicate.

(c) The letter h rather than the glottal stop ' shall be used in spelling of non-diphthong combinations of io, ie, ia and iu, which are sometimes confused with diphthongs.
§7104. Consonant Symbols in Final Position. (a) The following consonants will not appear at the end of a word: b, ch, d, g, h, l, n, r, y.

(b) The consonants b, d, g and l may appear at the end of a syllable only when the consonant is geminate, i.e., when the following syllable of the same word begins with the same sound.

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Final Consonant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yabbaio</td>
<td>slash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goddo</td>
<td>to tie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>halla</td>
<td>pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meggai</td>
<td>many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Chamorro and Barrigada are not geminate. Rule 1 applies.

§7105. Unstressed Vowels in Open Syllables in CVCV and CVCCV Constructions. (a) The letters i and u will be used to represent unstressed vowels in open syllables (where C = consonant, V = vowel).

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lahi</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hagu</td>
<td>you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na'i</td>
<td>give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lagu</td>
<td>north</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same rule applies to unstressed vowels in open syllables of poly-syllabic words except when the preceding is o or e.

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sangani</td>
<td>tell how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dalalaki</td>
<td>follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trianggo</td>
<td>a triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangkolo</td>
<td>big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proksemo</td>
<td>approximate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of dangkolo, etc., the first o results from the preceding consonant cluster ngk (cf. Rule 6B); the final o results from the preceding o through vowel harmony.
(b) The unstressed vowels in open syllables following a sequence of consonants will be represented by e and o.

For Example: tatte listo
           ho'ye halla
           hamyo

N.B. The sounds represented by some of the vowels above may appear to be misrepresented (i.e., tatte_ instead of tatti_). However, all of the examples under Rule 6 are unstressed vowels when their pronunciation may vary. The "true" sounds are assumed to exist thus the vowels are stressed as in tatte-ku.

(c) The letter a (ae) will be used in unstressed open syllables in both the CVCV and CVCCV constructions.

For Example: mata

(d) The following blends/digraphs will be considered as one consonant for spelling purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>br</th>
<th>pr</th>
<th>pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brongko</td>
<td>prensa</td>
<td>pluma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brohas</td>
<td>preba</td>
<td>platu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bruha</td>
<td>prugrama</td>
<td>planta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bl</td>
<td>fl</td>
<td>tr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blangko</td>
<td>aflitu</td>
<td>troso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tapbla</td>
<td>flores</td>
<td>trangka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misirable</td>
<td>flecha</td>
<td>trongko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fr</td>
<td>kl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresko</td>
<td>changkletas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruta</td>
<td>klasifika</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fritada</td>
<td>mesklao</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

§7106. Unstressed Vowels in Closed Syllables. The vowels e, o and a, will be used to represent the unstressed vowels in closed syllables, i.e., syllables which end with a consonant.

For Example: huyong go out
halom  go in
lapes  pencil
li'e'  see
hakmang  eel

§7107. Stressed Vowels. All vowels will be used to represent stressed vowels in both closed and opened syllables when the quality of the sound in the word is clearly that which is associated with the vowels.

Examples: asu  blue  tisu  stiff
         hatdi'n  garden  tubu  tube
         yu'  I  leche  milk
         hotno  oven  botiq  boat
         batsala  pull  tata  father

§7108. Spelling of Borrowed Words. (a) English, Spanish and Japanese words which have been assimilated into Chamorro will be spelled according to the general rules for Chamorro spelling. The spelling will reflect the changes in pronunciation.

For Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Chamorro</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lavador</td>
<td>labadot</td>
<td>sink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verde</td>
<td>betde</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paloma</td>
<td>paluma</td>
<td>dove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caballo</td>
<td>kabayu</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Chamorro</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zori</td>
<td>yore'</td>
<td>thongs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dengke</td>
<td>dengke'</td>
<td>light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Chamorro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ice cream</td>
<td>aiskrim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cake</td>
<td>kek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaser</td>
<td>chesa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Recently borrowed English words will retain their English spelling and will be placed in single quotation when in print. When an English word contains Chamorro affixes, then it will be spelled according to the general rules for Chamorro spelling. Examples of the latter type are:

pumipiknik  on a picnic  
bumabasketbo' playing basketball  
manekspleplen explaining

§7109. Consonant Alternation. (a) When the pronunciation of consonants changes due to affixation, the spelling will be changed accordingly to represent the change in pronunciation. Most of the changes in consonants are caused by the affixation of the prefix man-, as in the following examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{man- + po'lo} & = \text{mamo'lo to put} \\
\text{man- + tana'} & = \text{manana' to taste} \\
\text{man- + kati} & = \text{mangati to cry} \\
\text{man- + saga} & = \text{managa to stay} \\
\text{man- + chalek} & = \text{manalek to laugh} \\
\text{man- + fegge'} & = \text{mamegge' to make a footprint}
\end{align*}
\]

N.B. In some dialects of Chamorro the sounds are not assimilated. For example, in Rota, it is usually mansaga instead of managa.

(b) The following are examples of poly-syllabic words in which the initial consonant of the baseword is not deleted:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{man- + pachakati} & = \text{manpachakati} \\
\text{man- + pagamento} & = \text{manpagamento} \\
\text{man- + pendehu} & = \text{manpendehu} \\
\text{man- + pentura} & = \text{manpentura} \\
\text{man- + piligru} & = \text{manpiligru}
\end{align*}
\]

(c) The pronunciation of the first person singular possessive pronoun hu is determined by the stem to which
it is attached. For example, it pronounced tu when it follows a stem ending with t, as in pachot-tu, my mouth. It is pronounced su when it follows a stem ending with s, as in lassas-su, my skin. And, it is pronounced ku when it follows a stem that ends with a vowel preceded by two (2) consonants, as in lepblo-ku, my book. However, for purposes of spelling, only hu and ku will be used.

§7110. **Excrescent Consonants**. (a) When additional consonants are added through affixation, they will be represented in the spelling system. The underlined in the following are examples of excrescent consonants.

n - lepblo + -mami = lepblo + n + -mami = lepblon-mami, our book

n - saga + -naihon = saga + n + -naihon = sagannaihon, stay a while

g - hanao + -i = hana + g + u + -i = hanague*, go for someone's behalf

y - sangan + -i = sangan + i + y + -i = sanganiyi, tell for someone

' - a + agang = a + ' + agang = a'agang, be calling

*3 GAR §6105 applies here.

§7111. **Superfluous Consonants**. When the pronunciation of the consonant t before ch is predictable, and a midvowel follows ch, only ch will be written.

For Example:

leche eskabeche ganggoche

pacha noche ocho

§7112. **Gemminate Consonants and Syllable- Final h.** Although the pronunciation of geminate consonants and syllable-final h varies among different speakers of Chamorro, they will be included in the spelling. Some example words are:

tommo knee sahngge strange

langgua parrot fish mamahlao be bashful

fatto come halla pull
§7113. Vowel Harmony. (a) **Vowel Fronting.** When the pronunciation of a vowel is changed due to vowel fronting, this change will be reflected in the spelling, as in the following examples:

- foggon → i feggon  the stove
- guma' → i gima'  the house
- suni → i sini  the taro

(b) **Vowel Raising.** When the syllable construction (CVC) of a word is changed through affixation, the vowel change - raising - will be reflected in the spelling in consistence with 5 GAR §6107.

For example:

- CVC → CVCV (5 GAR §6107)
  - fugo' + -i = fugu'i
  - toktok + -i = toktuki

(c) **Vowel Lowering.** When the syllable construction of a word is changed through a semantics construction the vowel change - lowering - will be reflected in the spelling in consistence with 5 GAR §6108.

For example:

- CVCV → CVCVC (5 GAR §6106.)
  - suni + n = sunen-mami
  - lahi + n = lahen Maria

**N.B.** Vowel lowering occurs when excrescent consonant n is added to words that have CV structure at the end. (See above)

§7114. **Free Words.** (a) All content words (adjectives, verbs, nouns) will be written as separate words in Chamorro. Some examples of content words are:
kareta  car

dangkolo  big

fugo'  squeeze

(b) The following function words (articles, particles, etc.) will be written as separate words in Chamorro:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Word</th>
<th>Example Phrase</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i palao'an</td>
<td>the woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni'</td>
<td>ni' palao'an</td>
<td>from, which (relational term) woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>si</td>
<td>si Juan</td>
<td>(honorific) John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>as Juan</td>
<td>(located at) John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nu</td>
<td>nu guahu</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na</td>
<td>dangkolo na taotao</td>
<td>big man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha'</td>
<td>Hu tungo' ha'</td>
<td>I already know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fan</td>
<td>Nangga fan</td>
<td>Wait a minute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un ratu</td>
<td>please.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ni</td>
<td>ni hayi</td>
<td>no one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>Para u hanao.</td>
<td>He will go.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bai</td>
<td>Para bai hanao.</td>
<td>I will go.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) **Exceptions.** The word **gof** functions both as an intensifier and as a derivational prefix.

For Example:  **gof** (intensifier)

\[
\text{Ha gof li'e' i patgon.} \\
\text{He/She sees the child very well.}
\]

**gof** (derivational)

\[
\text{Ha gofli'e i patgon.} \\
\text{He/She loves the child very much.}
\]

The words **gai** and **tai** function both as derivational prefixes and as function words.

For Example:

**____ tai** (derivational)

\[
\text{Ti taiguenaao macho'gue'-na i che'cho'}. \\
\]

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That's not the way to do the work.

(function word)

Tai magagu i patgon.
The child does not have clothes.

\textit{gai} (derivational)

Gai'ase' nu guahu.
Have mercy on me.

(function word)

\textit{Gai} salape' i palao'an.
The woman has money.

(d) Function words \textit{sen}, \textit{sin}, \textit{tai} and \textit{gai}. The spelling of these words change when they are infixized with -um- and prefixized with \textit{man-}.

For Example:

\begin{align*}
\text{sen} & + \ -\text{um}- & = & \text{sumen} & = & \text{sumen dangkolo} \\
\text{sin} & + \ -\text{um}- & = & \text{sumin} & = & \text{sumin magagu} \\
\text{tai} & + \ -\text{um}- & = & \text{tumai} & = & \text{tumai salape'} \\
\text{gai} & + \ -\text{um}- & = & \text{gumai} & = & \text{gumai salape'} \\
\text{man-} & + \ \text{sen} & = & \text{mansen} & = & \text{mansen dangkolo} \\
\text{man-} & + \ \text{sin} & = & \text{mansin} & = & \text{mansin magagu} \\
\text{man-} & + \ \text{tai} & = & \text{mantai} & = & \text{mantai salape'} \\
\text{man-} & + \ \text{gai} & = & \text{manggai} & = & \text{manggai salape'}
\end{align*}

For the purpose of spelling, these function words should not be combined with any content word.

For Example:

\textit{manggai kareta} --prefixed function

\textit{manggai} content word,

\textit{kareta}

\textbf{§7115. Affixes.} (a) Prefixes. The following list contains the prefixes of Chamorro which will be written as part of the word to which they are attached:
a- umapacha touch each other
acha- achalokka' same height
an- ansopbla left over
chat- chatbunita slightly pretty
e- & o- esapatos shop for shoes
otenda go shopping
fa'- fa'na'an to name
ga'- ga'maigo' likes to sleep
ge'- ge'papa further down
ha- hapoddong prone to falling
hat- hattalom move in
ka- kama'gas having some authority
ke- kehatsa about to lift
la- lage'hilo' further up
ma- mataitai was read (passive marker only)
man- manaitai yu' I prayed (indirect object marker)
man- manhas'pok They are full. (plural subject marker)
mi- misalape' lots of money
mina'- mina'tres third
na'- na'gasgas to make clean
san- sanme'na toward the front
tai- taiguenao like that
tak- takhilo' way up high
talak- talakhiyong look towards the outside
ya- yamo'nana way up front

NOTE: The classifiers na', ga', gimen and iyo will be written as separate words or with a clitic when used with a possessive pronoun.

For Example:

na'ga'lagu dog food
ga'-na guaka his/her cow
gimen-hu kafe my coffee
iyon patgon thing belonging to a child

(b) Infixes:
(1) The following infixes -um- and -in- will be written as part of the word:

hugando -- humugando
huyong -- humuyong
na'i - nina'i
magof -- minagof

(2) The syllable, la-, is frequently inserted into Chamorro words that represent sounds as in kaskas - kala-skas, pangpang - palangpang, pakpak - palakpak, paspas - palaspas.

(c) Suffixes. The following list contains the suffixes of Chamorro which will be written as part of a word to which they are attached. The first item on the list is called a discontinuous affix. The prefix fan- is dependent upon the suffix -yan to give a complete meaning of the word.

For Example:

fan- -yan = fanbinaduyan  place of deer
-yan = fama'gasiyan  place for washing
-on = guasa'on  sharpener
-yon = guaiyayon  lovable
-naihon = sagannaihon  stay for a while
-guan = pinalakse'guan  slip of the tongue
-na = bunitana  prettier
-i = saganî  to tell to someone
-yi = sanganiyi  to tell to someone
-an = minigu'an  having secretion from the eyes

N.B. The -an suffix has an allomorph variant -guan as in paguan (from pao + -an). This is not the same as the -guan suffix. Other suffixes also have allomorphs variants. The most common is -gue for the suffix -i as in hanaigue.

(d) Reduplication. Reduplicated syllables are written as part of the word:
(1) In the case of diphthongs other than ai or ao, the entire diphthong is repeated.

For Example:

Siesiette but taitai bakasiosion but sasaonao

(2) In closed syllables, the final consonant is not repeated.

For Example:

toktok -- toktoktok
tohge -- totohge

**N.B.** Reduplicated syllables and infixes will be written as part of the word even though the resulting words may contain an unusually large number of letters. Words will be divided on the basis of the rules presented in this paper, not on the basis of length. Some examples of the long words resulting from multiple affixation and reduplication are given here:

- ma'anao -- manachachama'nao
- ge'hilo' -- na'lage'hilulu'i
- guaiya -- manmangguaguaiya

§7116. Clitics. The clitic will be used to show the special relationship that possessive pronouns, directional words and others have with the stem to which they are attached.0

Examples: **Possessive**

- rilos-hu: my watch
- rilos-mu: your watch
- rilos-na: his/her watch
- rilos-ta: our (incl.) watch
- rilos-mami: our (excl.) watch
- rilos-miyu: your (plural) watch
- rilos-niha: their watch

**Directional**

- hanao-guatu: on your way over go to
chule'-magi               bring it on your way over here
po'lon-guatu              drop it on your way there

**N.B.** The same mark used to represent a clitic will also be used to hyphenate syllables when breaking a word.