

# Declension Cases of Cebuano Personal Pronouns

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Revised October 3, 2024.

Further revised October 5, 2024.

## 1. Introduction.

Let's face it. The personal pronouns of the Cebuano Language, as with Austronesian languages do have Case Declensions. Many grammarians, to veer away from Latin, Spanish, and English models, have often stated the the concept of Case Declensions does not exist in the Cebuano Language. This is not the case with respect to personal pronouns. Case declension of personal pronouns is a grammatical function and is found in every language regardless of language family.

It is hoped that this essay will help increase knowledge and appreciation of not only the Cebuano Language but all Visayan languages.

## 2. Declension Case of Cebuano Personal Pronouns

### A. Nominative Case

Ako - I

Ikaw.

(familiar) - You

Siya - He, she

Kami. (excluding)- We

Kita.

(including) - We

Kamo (plural) -You

Sila - They

Notes: The pronoun Ikaw may be used indifferently before or after the verbs. The nominative case ka must be placed before the verb in the negative and final sentences; in other cases. always after them (Jimenez).

### B. Ergative Case

Nakò. By me

Nimo - By you

Niya - By him, her

Namó (excluding)

- By us

Natò (including)

- By us.

Ninyo - By you

Nila - By them.

Notes. Cebuano is an ergative language. at least with respect to personal pronouns . Cebuano is consistent with other ergative languages in having an antipassive construction. (Adapted from E Aldridge, ScienceDirect.com [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com) ), The antipassive voice (abbreviated antip or ap) is a type of grammatical voice that either does not include the object or includes the object in an oblique case. This construction is similar to the passive voice, in that it decreases the verb's valency by one – the passive by deleting the agent and "promoting" the object to become the subject of the passive construction. (Wikipedia.)

The Ergative Case Declension was unknown to the Spaniards who compiled grammars of the Philippine languages, although it exists in the Basque language. In fact it was unknown in Europe and the Americas until recently. The earliest citation in the OED was a quotation from French: 1943 J.

Marouzeau Lexique Terminol. Linguistique (ed. 2) 89 Ergatif (Ergativ, Ergative). Cas désignant l'agent dans les langues comme le basque. The first English citation is dated 1950. So, quite recent, at least in English. Though note that ergative is often paired with nominative instead of absolutive, so the use of that term is a separate issue. –

(jlawler Commented Feb 23, 2022).

Ergativity in Basque is contrasted with the “nominative-accusative” scheme used by English and most European languages. Some early European linguists, fixated on the grammatical structures of Latin and Greek, and never having encountered an ergative-absolutive language before, suggested that all Basque transitive verbs were in fact passive.

There are lots of ergative-absolutive languages in the world, btw, including many Native American and aboriginal Australian languages. Some languages have what is called “split ergativity”, where some verb tenses (especially the past) are ergative-absolutive, while other verb tenses are nominative-accusative – examples of split ergativity include Hindi (spoken in India) and Georgian (spoken in Georgia).

(Rich Wales, Quora.).

Since Cebuano is a VSO language, sentences generally start with a verb. it is intuitive to use the ergative declension of the pronoun when a transitive verb is used.

### C. Genitive Case

Nakò, ko - Of me

Nimo - Of you

Niya - Of him, her

Namó (excluding)

- Of us

Nató (including)

- Of us

Ninyo. - Of you

(Plural)

Nila - Of them.

Notes: Possessive pronouns are formed by the genitives of the personal pronouns, and are always joined to a noun. There are two forms. preposted to the nouns and post posted (Jimenez).

The genitive and the possessive case look very similar because they both pertain to ownership. However, where the possessive case always refers to ownership of a noun, the genitive case is not strictly used for ownership ([writingexplained.org](http://writingexplained.org)).

### D. Possessive Determinants (or Possessive Adjectives).

(1) Pre posted

Akong,

Akoang. - My

Imong,

Imohang

(singular) - Your

Iya,

Iyahang - His, her

Among. Amoang

(excluding) - Our

Atong. Atoang

(Including) - Our

Inyo. Inyohang

(Plural) - Your

Ila, Ilahang - Their

(2) Post posted

Nakò - Of Mine

Nimo - Of Yours

Niya - Of his, her

Namò

(excluding) -Of Ours

Natò

Including) - Of Ours

Nila - Of Theirs

Notes: Possessive pronouns are pronouns that are used to indicate the ownership (possession) of something or someone by something or someone else. The English possessive pronouns are mine, ours, yours, his, hers, theirs, and whose.

Possessive pronouns are closely related to possessive determiners.

Possessive pronouns always replace a noun and stand on their own.

Possessive Determiners modify a noun but do not replace it (ibid).

The possessive determiners are my, our, your, his, her, its, their, and whose. (Ibid.)

## E. Oblique Case

(1) Sialo Standard, Literary

Kanakò - To. Me

Kanimo (Singular)

- To You

Kaniya - To Him, Her

Kanamo (excluding)

- To Us

Kanatò (including)

- To us

Kanila - To Them

(2) Cebu Urban (Cebu City, Ormoc City, northern Cebu. a northwestern Leyte, western Biliran, southern Masbate)

Nakó - To Me

Nimo (singular)

- To You

Niya - To Him, Her

Namò (excluding)

- To Us

Natò (including)

- To Us

Ninyo (plural)

- To You

Nila. - To them

Notes: The term objective case is generally preferred by modern English grammarians, where it supplanted the Old English's dative and accusative. (Wikipedia.) In other words it functions as direct or indirect object.

The Filipino public first became aware of Oblique as a grammatical term from the Jesuit Fr. Rodolfo Cabonce's An English-Cebuano Visayan Dictionary which was published by National Book Store in 1983.

Finally, note that the Cebu Urban version of the oblique case can be confused with the Genitive and Ergative Cases as they are identical.

3. Sample sentence to illustrate.

Below is an example of a Cebuano sentence using ergative, oblique and possessive case pronouns. Cebuano is, as earlier stated, a VSO (verb - subject - object) language where sentences start with the verb. On the other hand, English is an SVO (subject - verb - object) language where sentences start with the subject.

The sample sentence.

Ihatag nakò kanimo ang libro niya. (in English "I will give you his book.")

Analysis

Ihatag - transitive verb

Nakò - ergative

Kanimo - oblique, Sialo Standard Cebuano, literary.

Ang libro - object

Niya - possessive

Translation

Ihatag - Will be given

nakò - by me

kanimo - to you (singular)

ang libro - the book

niya - of his.

Transposition to correct English.

I will give you his book.