

# The Non-Verbal Sentences in Cuyonon: A Minimalist Approach

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Cuyonon had been the lingua franca (language used for communication) of the province of Palawan until recently when migration flow rapidly increased. 43% of the total population of Palawan during the late '80s spoke and used Cuyonon as a language. But later studies show a significant decrease in the number of Cuyonon speakers.

The Cuyonon language is classified by the Summer Institute of Linguistics as belonging to the Central Philippine, West Bisayan, Kuyan subgroup. The biggest number of speakers lives in the Cuyo Group of Islands, which is located between Northern Palawan and Panay Island.

So far, only a few studies have been done about the Cuyonon language. This fact motivated me to initiate this research on the Cuyonon language.

The non-verbal sentence, or sentence whose predicate head is not a verb, is a characteristic of Austronesian languages, including those belonging to the Philippine subgroup. An analysis of this type of sentences has not been considered so much in the formulation of major grammatical theories, like those of Chomsky (Principles and Parameters) and Perlmutter and Postal (Relational Grammar). I therefore decided to uncover the characteristics of the non-verbal sentences of Philippine languages, by initializing a study on Cuyonon's non-verbal constructions.

This study seeks to present an analysis of the non-verbal sentences in the Cuyonon language. It aims to tackle as much as it could the structures and characteristics of Cuyonon's non-verbal sentences using the Minimalist Program. This will allow me to test the applicability of this theory to a Philippine language.