

The Difference Between Bisaya, Binisaya, Visayan and Cebuano

These four terms have been used widely, yet some learners have not truly understood how one differs from the others. Many have asked me whether or not *Cebuano* is similar to *Binisaya* or *Bisaya* spoken in Cagayan de Oro and the rest of Mindanao. In addition, some of my clients in the translation industry ask me from time to time whether *Cebuano* and *Bisaya* are one and the same language.

Bisaya refers to the people of the Visayas and the non-Muslim population of Mindanao. We have the Lumads of Mindanao, of course, with their own languages like the Manobos, Bagobos, Bukidnons, among others but majority of them speak Bisaya. Yes, ***Bisaya*** may also refer to the language spoken. Just like Filipino, the people; and Filipino, the language.

On the other hand, ***Binisaya*** is literally "in Bisaya" just like "*Tinagalog*" ("in Tagalog") or "*Iningles*" ("in English"). This can also refer to the language. For example, "Unsay *binisaya* niana" (What's [the term for] that in *Bisaya*). When we affix a verbal affix to it like "*magbinisaya* kita" then we have "let's speak Bisaya." Thus, my *Magbinisaya Kita* series.

Cebuano is the language of the people of Cebu. It's also known as ***Sugbuhanon*** or ***Sinugbuhanon***. It's *Bisaya*. As a matter of fact, that is how *Bisaya* is known the world over and even in the academe which encodes it as *Sebwano*. However, people from Mindanao shy away from calling their language *Cebuano* which they consider the language of the people of Cebu. They call it *Bisaya* or *Binisaya* instead. So I often use both terms interchangeably.

Bisaya, however, should not be confused with *Visaya*, which is a subgroup of Philippine languages that includes *Cebuano/Bisaya*, *Hiligaynon*, *Waray*, *Aklanon*, *Kinaray-a*, etc.

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The [Magbinisaya Kita Primer 1](#), the result of over a decade of scholarship is Dr. Rubrico's latest work. She also publishes papers and articles and FREE Cebuano Lessons at her website www.languagelinks.org

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