

# **Assessing the Usability of the Draft Minasbate Working Orthography vis-a-vis An Maayo na Barita Hali sa Dios and the Actual Usage of Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers**

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## **Abstract**

One of the challenges that Masbatenyo teachers face in the implementation of the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) under the K to 12 Reform is the lack of standardized writing conventions that they could use in the preparation of instructional materials (Bermudo et al., 2018; Blancaver, 2015; Williams et al., 2014). To address this, a working orthography was developed in 2016

through the initiatives of Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa, Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMCAT), in partnership with the local government unit of Masbate. From 2018–2019, the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Masbate Province gauged the orthographic practice of Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers before and after the orientation on the draft Minasbate Working Orthography (MWO). To contribute to the refinement of the draft MWO, this paper examines the usability of the draft MWO by comparing it with *An Maayo na Barita Hali sa Dios* (The Good News from God) and the utilization of teachers of the draft MWO. The study aims to identify the alignment and consistency of draft MWO with the written literature in the language and actual practice of the target users of the MWO. It also points out the potential areas of orthographic confusion and proposes recommendations on the revision and refinement of the draft MWO.

## 1 Introduction

The implementation of the K to 12 Reform in the Philippines, initiated by the passage of the Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013,” provides an opportunity for more than 180 languages in the country to be utilized and developed as media of instruction and languages of literacy by their users and speakers, alongside English and Filipino.

This approach, called the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), allows for the utilization of more than two languages for the purpose of literacy and instruction. It starts from “where the learners are and from what they already know” (Nolasco, 2008, p. 2). The MTB-MLE program involves learning to read, write, and think in one’s first language or L1 (Cebuano, Tagalog, Ilocano, Waray, etc.), and teaching Mathematics, Science, Health and Social Studies in the said L1 (Nolasco, 2008).

Specifically, Section 4 of RA 10533 stipulates that:

Basic education shall be delivered in languages understood by the learners as the language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners.

For kindergarten and the first three (3) years of elementary education, instruction, teaching materials and assessment shall be in the regional or native language of the learners. The Department of Education (DepEd) shall formulate a mother language transition program from Grade 4 to Grade 6 so that Filipino and English shall be gradually introduced as languages of instruction until such time when these two (2) languages can become the primary languages of instruction at the secondary level.

For purposes of this Act, mother language or first Language (L1) refers to language or languages first learned by a child which he/she identifies with, is identified as a native language user of by others, which he/she knows best, or uses most. This includes Filipino sign language used by indi-

viduals with pertinent disabilities. The regional or native language refers to the traditional speech variety or variety of Filipino sign language existing in a region, area or place.

RA 10533 also encourages the production and development of “locally produced teaching materials subject to the approval of the regional and division education units.” This is in adherence to the provision of RA 10533 that requires that the curriculum be “flexible enough to enable and allow schools to localize, indigenize and enhance the same based on their respective educational and social contexts.”

The Department of Education (DepEd) issued the DepEd Order (DO) No. 16, s. 2012 to provide guidance on the implementation of the MTB-MLE program. The DO identified 12 languages which will be offered as a language learning area and language of instruction. This included Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, and Chavacano. It also listed the requirements that a language must fulfill to be used in the MTB-MLE implementation. Referred to as the “four minima,” the requirements are as follows:

1. orthography that is acceptable to the stakeholders, adequately representative of the language in written form, easy to learn, transfer, and reproduce;
2. officially documented vocabulary, may be in a form of glossary, dictionary, encyclopedias or thesaurus;
3. grammar book, containing the grammar structure of the language which should include spelling rules, alphabet tables and charts, dictionary section; and

4. literature, such as big books, small books, listening stories, picture stories/wordless picture books, big picture books.

Minasbate was not chosen as one of the languages of instruction identified by DepEd during the initial implementation of the MTB-MLE program. This can be attributed to the lack of research on the language and the relatively low status afforded to the language (Williams et al., 2014). Schools in Masbate have been designated to use Bicolano, the lingua franca of Region 5. This posed a challenge to Masbatenyo teachers as Bicolano is very distinct from Minasbate. Adhering to DO No. 74, s. 2009, which first institutionalized the MTB-MLE in the country, Minasbate was used as medium of instruction in Masbate (Bermudo et al., 2018; Blancaver, 2015; Williams et al., 2014). This was reinforced by DO No. 21, s. 2019, which states that:

In situations where 1) the language of the learners and the lingua franca are totally different; 2) the language of the learners is not included in any of the 19 languages; and 3) the community where the learners belong has developed its own working orthography, writing system, grammar and spelling rules and other learning materials, the school may use the language as a subject for literacy development and as MOTL [medium of teaching and learning].

However, the lack of standardized spelling conventions remains a challenge to schoolteachers in the preparation and development of their instructional materials. In the division of Masbate Province, Blancaver (2015, p. 2) reported that teachers in the province of Masbate do not have the “basis for the correct usage and spelling of the words and tend to spell based on their own interpretation.” The development of

inexpensive and culturally appropriate instructional materials, such as working orthography and books written in local languages as well as training of teachers in mother tongue instruction, is considered a vital prerequisite to the use of mother tongue.

In response to this, Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa, Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology (DEBESMCAT) hosted the 1st Minasbate Orthography Congress held on July 15–16, 2016 at Mobo, Masbate, which involved different stakeholders, such as faculty members of the higher education institution, basic education teachers, local government executives and members, members of the religious sector, university students, and media practitioners. The participants of the Congress established the Minasbate Language Society, which developed the first draft of Minasbate Working Orthography (MWO) based on the discussions in the Congress (Rosero & Balbuena, 2016).

From June 2018 to 2019, the Schools Division Office (SDO) of Masbate Province commenced the tryout of the Minasbate Working Orthography. They investigated the orthographic practice of the K to 3 teachers before and after they were oriented on the draft Minasbate Working Orthography. The study identified issues and concerns in the utilization of the draft MWO as well as identified points for improving the orthography.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

This study investigated the existing orthographic practice in Minasbate through the examination of the set of orthographic rules used in the Masbatenyo Bible (henceforth MB) and the actual usage of K to 3 teachers. This study argues that the development and further refinement

of the draft MWO must be informed by existing literature. In Minasbate, the most important written work is the Bible, which is consistently used by the members of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the translated Bible was crafted by trained linguists and translators, and the set of writing conventions they used may provide practical information in the refinement of the MWO.

This study also drew upon the results of the study conducted by the researchers of SDO Masbate Province as a means of triangulation. It identified areas of consistency and gaps among the three sources of data to further inform the improvement and refinement of the draft MWO.

### 1.2 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to learner, teachers, school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders as it aims to contribute to the refinement of the draft MWO. The MWO, once finalized, will guide the teachers in teaching mother tongue and will also serve as the basis for the Learning Resource Management System (LRMDS) in quality assuring learning materials in Minasbate developed by teachers for the Masbatenyo learners (Bermudo et al., 2018). The orthography will also guide the young learners in understanding the overlooked features of Minasbate language such as the glottal stop and the stress. It could also guide other users of the language, such as church members, local government units, media, and other stakeholders for academic, scientific, literary, and other practical purposes.

The draft MWO was informed by the existing literature and local studies in the language, as well as the knowledge and experiences of the users of the language. The inclusion of the MB in the discussion

of the development of the draft MWO may further provide additional information on how to improve the existing draft. The Bible is often translated into many languages and translators have to make certain rules or decisions in translating the original text into local languages. Thus, it is beneficial to know what rules were followed by the translators of MB and determine whether the MWO are consistent with these rules.

Furthermore, it is also essential to know the baseline knowledge and practice of the target users of the MWO, among which are the K to 3 teachers. This will provide information as to what kind of challenges and issue they might encounter in the use of the MWO. Finally, the feedback obtained from them may help inform the revision of the MWO before it is fully implemented.

### **1.3 Scope and Limitations**

This study is limited to the analysis of the following orthographic issues: (a) the use of “o” and “u”; (b) the use of “i” and “e”; (c) symbolizing the glottal stop; (d) symbolizing stress or accent; (e) the use of hyphen; (f) the use of apostrophe; and (g) writing consonant clusters, including those that result from vowel dropping.

### **1.4 Review of Literature**

The Minasbate language (ISO 639-3: msb), also known as Masbatenyo (or Masbateño), belongs to the Bisayan subgroup of Central Philippines, which is a member of the Western Malayo-Polynesian subgroup of the Austronesian language family. It is the statutory language of Masbate



province and spoken as a first language by around 470,000 speakers and as a second language by 250,000 speakers (Simons & Fennig, 2018). It is most closely related to Capiznon (with 79% lexical similarity) and Hiligaynon (76% lexical similarity), according to Ethnologue (Simons & Fennig, 2018). Wolfenden (2001) identified three major dialects of Masbatenyo: the western dialect centered around the town of Balud on the western coast, which is close to Capiz; the southern dialect centered about the town of Cataingan in the southeastern part of Masbate; and the northern dialect covering the whole northern half of Masbate and centered on Masbate City. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the dialects identified by Wolfenden (2001).

Brillante and Hipolito (2013) posited that there is no “native” Masbatenyo, as evidenced by the influence of the four major languages (Bicolano, Waray, Cebuano, and Hiligaynon) on the language, although a “standard” Masbatenyo can be established on the basis of the presence of common forms and the frequency of usage of particular words.

Blancaver (2015) conducted a survey of the varieties used in different municipalities of Masbate. The study utilized a survey questionnaire that contained terminologies lifted from the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Tagalog Learner’s Material for Grade 3. The questionnaire was distributed to selected respondents in each barangay of all the municipalities in the province of Masbate. Participants were asked to provide the equivalent of the Tagalog words in their speech varieties (Blancaver, 2015). The study identified the variety/dialect used and the level of influence of the neighboring languages, as shown in Figure 2.

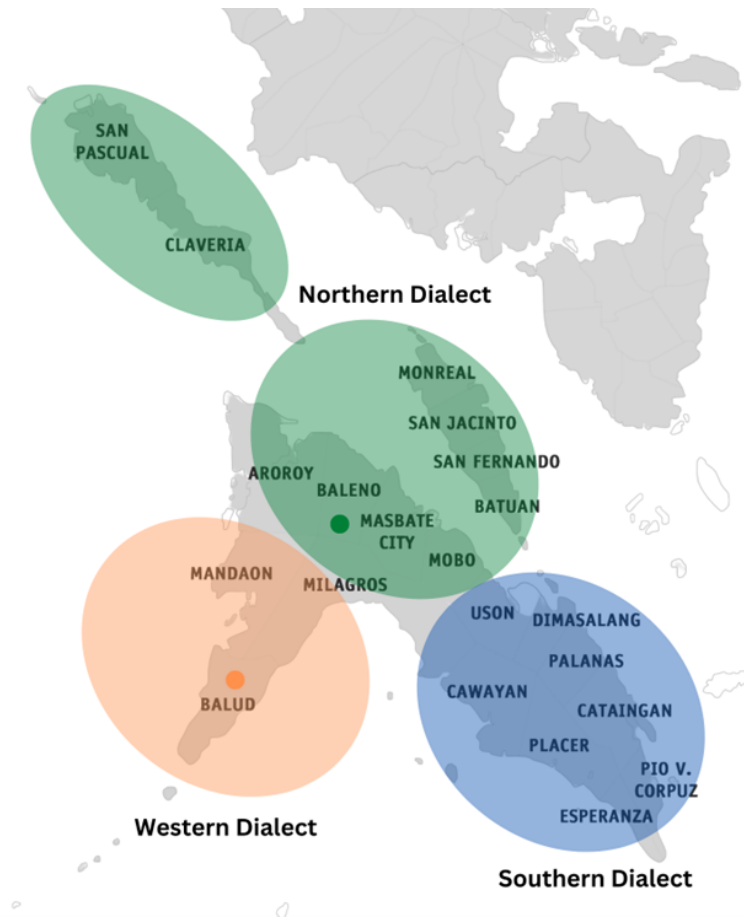


Figure 1. Major Dialects of Masbate (Wolfenden, 2001)

Figure 2 shows the varieties spoken in the municipalities of Masbate and the presence and influence of other languages in Masbate.

The findings of Blancaver (2015) supported Wolfenden (2001)'s claim. As shown in Figure 2, the speech variety spoken in the municipalities of Balud and Mandaon is highly influenced by Hiligaynon. The municipalities of the first and second congressional districts are speaking

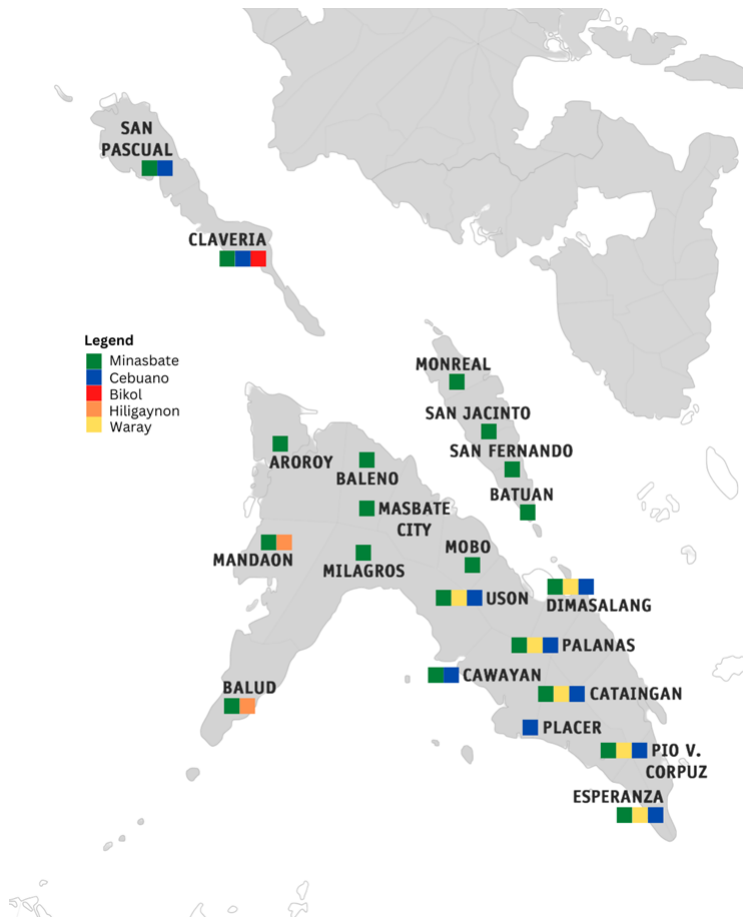


Figure 2. Speech Varieties in Masbate

Minasbate, with the exception of Claveria and San Pascual, which is influenced by Bikol. On the other hand, the variant spoken in the third congressional district is highly influenced by Waray and Cebuano.

Compared with its neighboring languages, Minasbate is not well-researched and lacks materials in its written form. Among its written literature is a translation of the New Testament of the Bible, *An Maayo*

*na Barita Hali sa Dios* (The New Testament in Masbatenyo) which was published by Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in 1954, 1967, 1972, and 1993. A more recent version of the Bible in the language was published by Wycliffe Translators, Inc. in 1993 (republished in 2015 and 2017) titled *An Maayo na Barita Hali sa Dios* (The Good News From God). This version of the Bible can be accessed through an application called YouVersion.

Another comprehensive work on the language is the *Masbatenyo-English Dictionary* published by Wolfenden (2001). The dictionary contains a preliminary description of the Minasbate grammar and includes a phonological sketch of Masbatenyo, which describes the 22 symbols in the practical Masbatenyo alphabet, the conventions and problems of writing consonants and vowels, vowel and consonant clusters, and loanwords. Wolfenden's sketch was used as a basis for the development of the working orthography.

Other written materials in the language include *Magbasa Kita San Masbatenyo 1-3* (1981) and *Mga Kanta sa Simbahan*.

An unpublished undergraduate thesis by Rosero (2011) described the salient points of the Minasbate grammar and was utilized to inform current works in Masbatenyo, e.g., the Minasbate Working Orthography. Rosero (2011) noted that the sound system of Minasbate shows that the language does not pose a lot of problems in establishing a working orthography. Its segmental sounds roughly correspond to what is represented in the present way of spelling using the Latin alphabet. Table 1 shows the Minasbate sounds and their orthographic representation.

In his sketch, Rosero (2011) identified the following orthographic issues in Minasbate: (a) the orthographic representation of glottal stop;

**Table 1. Minasbate Sounds and Their Orthographic Representation**

Phones																			
[p]	[t]	[k]	[b]	[d]	[g]	[ʔ]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ]	[l]	[r]	[s]	[h]	[ʃ]	[w]	[j]	[a]	[i]	[u]
p	b	k	b	d	g	-/`	m	n	ng	l	r	s	h	sy	w	y	a	i	u
Letters																			

(b) the sequence of “u” and “o” sounds; and (c) the case of borrowed words. Rosero (2011)’s grammatical sketch of Masbatenyo served as a guide in the development of the draft Minasbate Working Orthography.

The Minasbate language was included to represent the small language contexts in the first phase of the study of the Assessment, Curriculum and Technology Research Centre (ACTRC), through the partnership of the University of Melbourne and the University of the Philippines, in 2014. The study sought to identify the strategies that selected schools in different contexts use, as well as the challenges they face, aimed at providing advice and informing the Philippine education system through curriculum, teaching and assessment research. The ACTRC identified four language contexts in their study: (a) large language contexts, in which schools use an MT with more than 2 million speakers (excluding Tagalog), such as Cebuano, Iloko and Hiligaynon; (b) small language (SL) contexts, in which schools use an MT with fewer than 2 million speakers; (c) Tagalog contexts, in which schools use a Tagalog dialect (distinct from Filipino) as an MT; and (d) linguistically diverse (LD) contexts, where schools and community members speak a number of MTs (Williams et al., 2014).

Williams et al. (2014) found out that among the challenges faced by Masbatenyo teachers were the lack of standardization of the Mother

Tongue and the need for “school-level standardization based on spelling, pronunciation, and word choice of terms with several version.” Williams et al. (2014) also learned that there is a mismatch between pupils’ MT and the language used in learning materials. Among other issues identified in the small language contexts in the different dimensions are presented in Table 2.

Blancaver (2015), an education program supervisor of SDO Masbate Province, reported the following findings based on the collection and analysis of terminologies and their equivalents in Minasbate:

- Most of the words have their Minasbate equivalents.
- There are terminologies that do not have Minasbate equivalents. Masbatenyos preferred to use the Tagalog terms or their English equivalents.
- There are English terms that are spelled according to how they are pronounced by Masbatenyo speakers. Some of the spellings are retained.
- Terminologies with the least frequencies have many variants.
- The variants of Minasbate orthography are due to the different terms, the different affixes, the deletion of vowels, the change of vowels, the addition of suffixes, the placement of a hyphen, and use of English and Tagalog terms.

Blancaver (2015)’s study surveyed 194 speakers of Masbatenyo from the Masbate City and municipalities of Aroroy, Baleno, Milagros, and Mobo. The respondents were asked to identify the Masbatenyo equivalents of the Tagalog terms lifted from the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education Tagalog Learner’s Material for Grade 3.

**Table 2. Challenges of MTB-MLE Implementation by Dimension (Williams et al., 2014)**

Language	Instruction	Materials	Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited use and value of the MT in areas outside the community</li> <li>Lack of standardization of the MT</li> <li>Some pupils' use of non-academic register of the MT</li> <li>Preference for Filipino because of prestige or practicality</li> <li>Parents' low proficiency in the MT</li> <li>Perception that the MT is a less challenging language to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long MT words for math</li> <li>Teachers' low proficiency in the MT</li> <li>Parents' perception of children's difficulty in adjusting to the MT as MOI</li> <li>Parents' perception that children lag behind in other languages</li> <li>Pupils' perceived repetition of lessons in language classes</li> <li>Parents' preference for English as MOI in math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incomplete or late delivery of instructional materials (IMs) in MT</li> <li>Limited use of technology</li> <li>Time and expenses demanded by materials production</li> <li>Mismatch between pupils' MT and language used in LMs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' feeling of forced compliance with the policy</li> <li>Limited program advocacy</li> <li>Mismatched MOI and MT</li> <li>Weak stakeholder support</li> <li>Inconsistency between program policies and activities</li> <li>Limited number of teachers sent to training</li> </ul>

The study recommended the development of a standard Minabate orthography.

Balbuena and Escarlan (2016) also investigated the orthographic systems preferred by Masbatenyo Mother Tongue teachers in writing. Their study focused on the transcriptions of a Minasbate-based story entitled “Si Bayabas kag si Sapat.” Twenty-one Minasbate-speaking primary grade level teachers in Aroroy East District teaching Mother Tongue as a subject and medium of instruction were asked to transcribe a 224-word oral story in Minasbate. They identified and examined orthographic inconsistencies such as spelling, word breaks, and hyphenation. The study revealed that teachers tend to (a) use “o” and “u” and “i” and “e” interchangeably, and (b) separate the prefix and the root word using a hyphen or a space (Balbuena & Escarlan, 2016).

To address the challenges encountered by Masbatenyo teachers in teaching the Mother Tongue, particularly the absence of guidelines in spelling or representing Minasbate words, the members of the Minasbate Language Society, an organization composed of various stakeholders from Masbate established, developed a working orthography of the language.

Dekker and Young (2005, p. 193) stressed the need for a clear writing system for the development of instructional materials and literature to be successful. There is also need for collaboration among key stakeholders to develop an orthography based on “descriptive linguistic research and community input.”

Dr. Ricardo Nolasco of the UP Department of Linguistics (as cited in Hernandez, 2012) mentioned that an essential component of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is the development of contextualized instructional materials. A vital prerequisite to this is a working orthography that consists of written symbols that



represent the important sound features of the language and the rules for using these symbols. Nolasco (as cited in Hernandez, 2012) also clarified that a working orthography is not the standardized version of the language but rather the embodiment of all spelling conventions actually used and decided on by the language user for official and academic purposes at a particular point in time. Furthermore, such orthography needs to be tested, revised, and retested in the “crucible of practice” (Nolasco, as cited in Hernandez, 2012) before the standardization and final decision can be made by the language community.

Meanwhile, Stone and Zamora (2010, p. 2) highlighted community involvement in the development of the orthography:

Orthography development is a participatory process. It should be designed, implemented, and managed by the language community. During the process, participants must make many decisions related to factors that affect orthography development.

As participants become more and more aware of the structures of the language, they will need to make orthography revisions. During the process of testing and revising, a developing orthography is classified according to the type of revisions it has undergone.

The following stages are proposed by Stone and Zamora (2010):

Guided by Nolasco (2013)’s “Some Writing Issues in the First Language,” the following questions were considered by the participants of the 1st Minasbate Working Orthography Congress:

- Is it easy to teach?

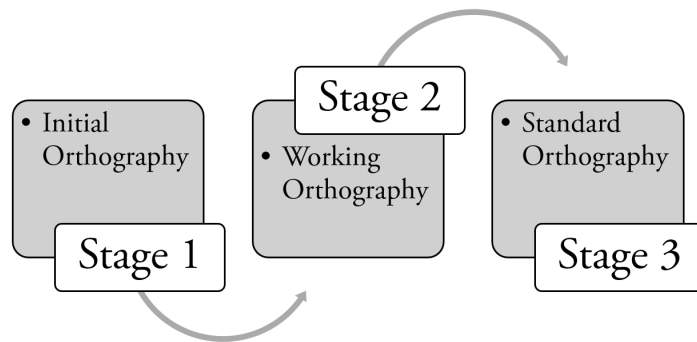


Figure 3. Stages of Orthography Development

- Is it easy to read?
- Is it easy to write?
- Can it be typed?
- Will words be too long?
- Will bridging to Tagalog be difficult?
- Do people like it?

The Congress also focused on the orthographic issues identified in the previous studies (Balbuena & Escarlan, 2016; Blancaver, 2015; Rosero, 2011), such as:

- use of “o” and “u”
- use of “i” and “e”
- symbolizing the off-glides (e.g., *sya*, *bwaya*)
- symbolizing the glottal stop and stress (– / ´ / ^ / `)
- representation of the juncture of “n” and “g” when they do not form “ng”
- readability of reduplication and the use of hyphen (e.g., *na-gakaraon*, *tag`urusad*, *buru-bugsay*)
- hyphenation

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- vowels that are dropped from words during affixation; also in fast speech, despite being normally written in full (*dakupon* > *dakpon*)
- contractions (e.g., *wara'n* vs. *waran*)
- pronoun attachment (e.g., *nagkaonako* vs. *nagkaon ako*)
- compound words

The Minasbate Language Society captured these concerns in the drafting of the Minasbate Working Orthography.

The draft Minasbate Working Orthography is an embodiment of all spelling conventions actually used and decided by language users for official and academic purposes. It includes a set of graphic symbols, as well as diacritics and punctuation marks, and describes the rule and conventions for using these symbols.

The draft MWO distinguishes between the native Minasbate orthography and the extended working orthography. The symbols used in the native Minasbate orthography are *Aa, Bb, Dd, Gg, Hh, Ii, Kk, Ll, Mm, Nn, NGng, Pp, Rr, Ss, Tt, Uu, Ww, Yy, `* (for glottal stop). To accommodate the inclusion of borrowed words in native Minasbate vocabulary, an extended orthography was also included in the MWO. The extended orthography consists of the native orthography and the borrowed letters, such as the vowels *Ee* and *Oo* and consonants *Cc, Ff, Jj, Ññ, Qq, Vv, Xx, Zz*.

The draft Minasbate Working Orthography (2016) also sets rules for the following: (a) the representation of the glottal stop; (b) symbolizing stress or accent; (c) the sequence of “u” and “o”; (d) the use of “i” and “e”; (e) the use of hyphen; (f) the representation of consonant clusters; and (g) writing borrowed words.

Cognizant of the need for the orthography to be tested, revised and retested in the “crucible of practice” (Nolasco, as cited in Hernandez, 2012), the SDO of Masbate Province investigated the actual practice of the K to 3 teachers, who are the implementers of MTB-MLE and target users of the draft MWO (Bermudo et al., 2018). The participants were tested before they were introduced to the draft MWO, and retested to investigate the effect of the MWO to the existing orthographic practice of teachers. Using a quasi-experimental research design, the researchers selected forty-nine K to 3 teachers through a quota sampling so that the areas where Minasbate dialects are used will be represented. These included the municipalities of Aroroy, Baleno, Milagros, Mobo, Dimasalang, Palanas, Cataingan, Claveria, Ticao island, and Masbate City. The researchers identified issues and concerns in the use of the draft MWO before and after they were introduced to the MWO. They also recommended points for improvement on the identified issues.

Figure 4 shows the steps that were undertaken in the development of the Minasbate Working Orthography, including the tryout in DepEd schools.

## 2 Research Methodology

The study employed descriptive research to see the alignment and consistency of Minasbate Working Orthography with the written literature in the language, particularly the Masbatenyo Bible *An Maayo na Barita Hali sa Dios*. Descriptive studies aim to “describe and interpret the

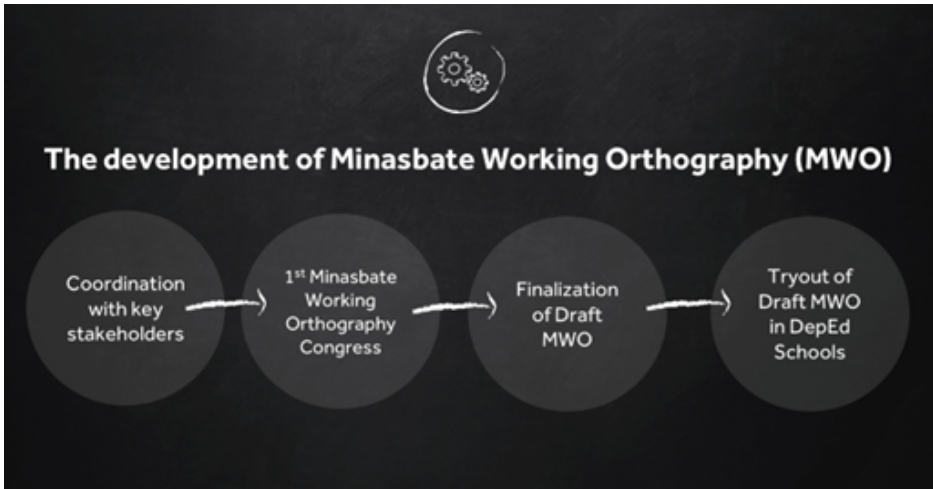


Figure 4. The Development of Minasbate Working Orthography

status of individuals, settings, conditions, or events” (Mertler, 2014, as cited in Mertler, 2016, p. 111).

This study examined the Wycliffe Translators, Inc. (1993) version, *An Maayo na Barita Hali sa Dios* (henceforth MB). The translation of the Bible is a historic milestone in the development of the written form of Minasbate. Furthermore, the Catholic Church in Masbate consistently uses Minasbate in its written form through the Bible and other religious writings. Lastly, there is a lack of written materials in the language and the Bible is one of the available texts that can be found online. This study used the version used by Wycliffe Translators, Inc. because of its availability. The Bible can be downloaded online and can also be accessed through a mobile application called YouVersion.

Specifically, the study utilized document analysis to “gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1) on the orthographic practice in the MB. Drawing from the MB and

the actual usage of teachers, document analysis was employed to “seek convergence and corroboration through the use of different data sources and methods” (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Furthermore, the study investigated and identified the orthographic rules followed by translators in the MB in the following areas:

- use of “o” and “u”;
- use of “i” and “e”;
- symbolizing the glottal stop and stress/accent;
- use of the hyphen; and
- writing consonant clusters, including off-glides.

The study also included the results of the analysis of the actual usage of 49 Masbatenyo K to 3 teachers before and after they were introduced to the draft MWO (Bermudo et al., 2018). The study involved an experimental design where the participants were asked to write selected words, phrases, and sentences in Minasbate. A total of 49 K to 3 teachers were selected through of a purposive sampling technique employed considering the representation of all the municipalities in the entire Masbate province.

The study involved workshops which consisted of three exercises: (a) Exercise 1 included 40 items, which consists of unique root words; (b) Exercise 2 included 20 items, 10 of those were affixed forms and 10 were phrases/sentences; and (c) Exercise 3 comprised 11 sets of minimal pairs used in phrases/sentences. The spelling variants obtained from the participants were recorded and analyzed in terms of frequency. The exercises were done to identify potential areas of orthographic confusion and areas for improvement and to inform the revision of the draft Minasbate Working Orthography.

### 3 The Applicability of Minasbate Working Orthography

This section presents the rules set in the draft Minasbate Working Orthography and compared them with the orthographic practice in the Masbatenyo Bible and Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers before and after they were introduced to the draft MWO.

The Bible translated in Minasbate may provide additional information as to what set of orthographic rules were followed by the translators and whether these rules are consistent with the draft MWO that is supposed to be used by teachers, writers, and other stakeholders. It is important that the working orthography captures the existing orthographic practice of the users and speakers of the language.

Furthermore, the identified potential areas of orthographic confusion may inform the refinement of the MWO to make it applicable for educational, scientific, literary, and other purposes.

#### 3.1 The Use of “o” and “u”

With regard to the use of “o” and “u”, the draft MWO states that:

- (a) If the word has only one back vowel sound that occurs in the ultimate position, “o” is used, e.g., *pitó* ‘seven,’ *lisód* ‘difficulty,’ *li`og* ‘neck,’ *didto* ‘there,’ *`amó* ‘anaphoric pronoun,’ *itóm* ‘black,’ *nano* ‘what,’ *ka`aralo* ‘shameful.’
- (b) If the word has more than two back vowels, “u” is used in the second or third to the last syllable and o is used in the final syllable, e.g., *kudkód* ‘grate,’ *bukbók* ‘weevil,’ *gu`ól* ‘fatigue,’ *pumuluyo`*

‘citizen, resident,’ *burubaruto* ‘toy boat,’ *uru`adlaw* ‘every day,’  
*alu`alo* ‘shy,’ *tudló* ‘finger,’ *katuninungan* ‘tranquility.’

(c) “o” is retained in writing in borrowed words, e.g., *ospital* ‘hospital,’  
*obra* ‘work,’ *oro* ‘gold.’

Table 3 shows the comparative usage of “o” and “u” in the Masbatenyo Bible (Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc., 1993). Overall, “o” occurred more frequently than “u” with a ratio of 1:0.60.

**Table 3. Comparison of Usage of “o” and “u” in the Masbatenyo Bible**

Position	Use of o		Use of u		Ratio (o:u)
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Initial	711	1.34	1,336	31.30	1:1.88
Medial	33,405	58.31	32,929	96.09	1:0.99
Final	23,172	40.44	4	0.11	1:0.00
Total	57,288	100.00	34,269	100.00	1:0.60

As shown in Table 3, “o” occurred more in the final position (40.44%), compared to merely 1.34% in the initial position. This indicates that “o” is most likely to occur in the final position may suggest consistency with the MWO rules (a) and (b) that prescribes the use of “o” in the ultimate position or syllable.

When it occurred in the initial position, the “o” was used in borrowed words, e.g., *oportunidad* ‘opportunity,’ *opisyales* ‘officials,’ *otro* ‘again,’ *otoridad* ‘authority,’ *oras* ‘time; hour,’ which is consistent with MWO rule (c).

The “u”, on the other hand, occurred more in the initial position (31.30%) compared with the final position (0.11%). The “u” was



used scarcely in the final position (0.11%), and two instances of which involved proper names.

Looking into the sequence of “o” and “u”, there are 2,646 instances (7.72%) that “u” was written before “o” while “o” was only written before “u” once, i.e., *Talita koum*. This indicates that the MB is consistent with the draft MWO rule (a) on the use of “o” and “u”. In reduplicated words, the MB also followed the “u-o” sequence, e.g., *damu-damo* ‘many,’ *himu-himo* ‘made up,’ *bu-bo* ‘to pour,’ *luku-luko* ‘crazy.’

There were also 691 instances (2.01%) that “o” appeared consecutively in words such as *Ginoo* ‘Lord’ and *oo* ‘yes.’

This is also supported by the results of the pretest and posttest on the utilization of the draft MWO, as shown in Table 4. The highlighted terms are the MWO-prescribed spelling.

Table 4 shows pretest and posttest performance of K to 3 teachers in the utilization of the draft MWO. It can be observed that they improved after they were oriented on the draft MWO as evidenced by the fewer number of variants and high percentage of the MWO-prescribed spelling in terms of rule (a). For instance, in the pretest, *lisod* had 3 variants and 84% of teachers got it correct, *didto* had two variants with 96% correct responses, and *nano* had two variants with 80% correct responses. In the posttest, *biko* and *liko* had only two variants with both yielding 97% correct responses, while *li`og* yielded 100% correct responses.

In the case of rule (b), the test items had multiple variants and the percentage of the correct response is not that high. For instance, *kudkod* had 4 variants, *gu`ol* had 6, *burubaruto* had 14, and *alu`alo* had 7. This improved in the posttest as seen in the fewer number of variants, e.g.,



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
(b) If the word has more than two back vowels, “u” is used in the second or third to the last syllable and o is used in the final syllable, e.g., <i>kudkód</i> ‘grate,’ <i>bukbók</i> ‘weevil,’ <i>gu’ól</i> ‘fatigue,’ <i>pumuluyo</i> ‘citizen, resident,’ <i>burubaruto</i> ‘toy boat,’ <i>’uru’adlaw</i> ‘every day,’ <i>alu’alo</i> ‘shy,’ <i>tudló</i> ‘finger,’ <i>katuninungan</i> ‘tranquility.’	<i>kudkod</i> ‘grate’	kudkod	33	67	<i>kusmod</i> ‘frown’	kusmod	39	100
		kodkod	1	2				
		kud-kud	1	2				
		kudkud	14	29				
	<i>guol</i> ‘fatigue’	guol	41	84	<i>bukbok</i> ‘weevil’	bukbok	32	82
		gool	3	6		bokbok	5	13
		guul	2	4		bukbuk	2	5
		go-ol	1	2				
		goul	1	2				
		gu-ol	1	2				
	<i>burubaruto</i> ‘toy boat’	burubaruto	9	18	<i>natultulan</i> ‘found’	natultulan	33	85
		burubaroto	3	6		natultolan	6	15
		burobaroto	3	6				
		buru-baruto	8	16				
buru baruto		1	2					
buro baruto		1	2					
buro-baruto		2	4					

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		burobaruto	12	24				
		borobaroto	3	6				
		buru-baroto	1	2				
		boru baroto	1	2				
		buro-baruto	3	6				
		buro-baruto	1	2				
		burobaroto	1	2				
	<i>alualo</i>	alualo	0	0	<i>damu-damo</i>	damu`-damo	29	74
	'shy'	alo-alo	29	59	'many'	damo`-damo`	7	18
		alu-alu	3	6		damu-damu	3	8
		alo-alu	1	2				
		alu-alo	11	22				
		alu alo	1	2				
		alo alo	4	8				

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
(c) “o” is retained in writing in borrowed words, e.g., <i>ospital</i> ‘hospital,’ <i>obra</i> ‘work,’ <i>oro</i> ‘gold.’	<i>ospital</i>	ospital	49	100	<i>’obra</i>	obra	37	95
	‘hospital’				‘work’	ubra	2	5
	<i>oro</i>	oro	43	88	<i>’orgulyo</i>	orgulyo	22	56
	‘gold’	uro	4	8	‘pride’	urgolyo	7	18
						orgolyo	6	15
						urgulyo	4	10

*kusmod* with only 1, *bukbok* with 3, *natultulan* with 2, and *damu`damo* with 3. The percentage of correct responses also increased.

Inconsistencies were observed in rule (c), where posttest results yielded lower scores compared with the pretest, as in the case of *`orgulyo* with 4 variants and 56% correct responses.

### 3.2 The Use of “i” and “e”

In writing “i” and “e”, the draft MWO states that:

All Minasbate words with an “i” sound will be written as “i”, e.g., *kilmi`* ‘dent,’ *di`in* ‘where,’ *didi`* ‘here,’ *silhig* ‘broomstick,’ *ikog`* ‘tail,’ *tindog`* ‘stand,’ *ini`* ‘this,’ *sin`* ‘nominal marker.’ The “i” will also be used to represent the front vowel that is added in the original form of borrowed words, e.g., *istorya`* for ‘storia,’ *isponsor`* for ‘sponsor,’ *ismagol`* for ‘smuggle.’ On the other hand, “e” will be retained in writing, e.g., *eroplano`* ‘airplane,’ *ahente`* ‘agent,’ *karné`* ‘meat,’ *onse`* ‘eleven,’ *dose`* ‘twelve,’ *nwebe`* ‘nine,’ *kwento`* ‘story.’

**Table 5. Comparison of Usage of “i” and “e” in the Masbatenyo Bible**

Position	Use of i		Use of e		Ratio (i:e)
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Initial	10,571	13.54	633	5.87	1:0.06
Medial	51,877	66.42	9,113	84.56	1:0.17
Final	15,651	20.04	1,031	9.57	1:0.07
Total	78,099	100.00	10,777	100.00	1:0.14

The data shows that “i” was used overwhelmingly over “e” in the Masbatenyo Bible, with a ratio of 1:0.14. This may suggest that “i” is the most preferred letter to represent the “i” sound, which is consistent with MWO rule (a). Moreover, the occurrence of “e” is limited only to borrowed words. This indicates that the MB is consistent with the MWO-prescribed use of “e”, particularly rule (b).

The “e” occurred in a total of 10,777 instances, which were all borrowed words, e.g., *mensabe* ‘message,’ *espírito* ‘spirit,’ *gyera* ‘war,’ *karne* ‘meat,’ *pwede* ‘can,’ *pobre* ‘poor,’ *pirme* ‘always.’ This is consistent with MWO-prescribed use of “e”, particularly rule (b).

Furthermore, in borrowed words where a front vowel is inserted, “i” was used, e.g., *istorya*, *iristoryahan*. The “i” was also used in some borrowed words that begin in “e”, such as *ispada* ‘espada’, *insigida* ‘enseguida’, *istar* ‘estar’. This is consistent with MWO rule (c).

Table 6 shows the usage of “i” and “e” by Masbatenyo K to 3 teachers.

In the posttest, the K to 3 teachers showed improvement on their knowledge and understanding of the rules of the draft MWO on the use of “i” and “e”, specifically rule (a), as shown in the higher percentage of correct spelling and fewer number of variants. With the exception of *ipali*, which had two variants, there seems to be no confusion on the use of “i” to represent the “i” sound.

In the case of rule (b) however, some inconsistencies were found in spelling of the borrowed words with “e”. The use of “i” to represent the front vowel added to the original form of the borrowed, as in rule (c), still remains an area of confusion for teachers as they used “e” instead of “i”.

**Table 6. Usage of “i” and “e” by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total		
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%	
(a) All Minasbate words with an “i” sound will be written as “i”, e.g., <i>kilmi`</i> ‘dent,’ <i>di`in`</i> ‘where,’ <i>didi`</i> ‘here,’ <i>silhig`</i> ‘broomstick,’ <i>ikog`</i> ‘tail,’ <i>tindog`</i> ‘stand,’ <i>ini`</i> ‘this,’ <i>sin`</i> ‘nominal marker.’	<i>kilmi`</i>	kilmi	30	61	<i>ikid`</i>	ikid	39	100	
		kilme	16	33	<i>tiptoep`</i>				
		kil-me	1	2					
		kelmi	1	2					
		<i>silhig`</i>	silhig	49	100	<i>ligid`</i>	ligid	39	100
		‘broomstick’				‘roll over’			
		<i>tindog`</i>	tindog	49	100	<i>nagtiriwi`</i>	nagtiriwi`	39	100
		‘stand’				‘distorted’			
		<i>sin`</i>	sin	46	94	<i>ipali`</i>	ipali`	37	95
		‘nominal marker’	sen	3	6	‘turn the page over’	epali`	2	5



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total		
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%	
(b) “e” will be retained in writing of borrowed words, e.g., <i>eroplano</i> ‘airplane,’ <i>ahente</i> ‘agent,’ <i>karné</i> ‘meat,’ <i>onse</i> ‘eleven,’ <i>dose</i> ‘twelve,’ <i>nwebe</i> ‘nine,’ <i>kwento</i> ‘story.’	<i>ahente</i> ‘agent’	ahente	49	100	<i>ahente</i> ‘agent’	ahente	35	90	
						ahinte	3	8	
						ahenti	1	2	
		<i>onse</i> ‘eleven’	onse	45	92	<i>onse</i> ‘eleven’	onse	38	97
			onsi	2	4		onsi	1	3
			unse	1	2				
		<i>nwebe</i> ‘nine’	nwebe	7	14	<i>dose</i> ‘twelve’	dose	39	100
			nuwebe	14	29				
			nuebe	19	39				
			nieve	1	2				
			nueve	4	8				
			nweve	1	2				
			nowebe	1	2				
		noybi	1	2					
		nuybe	2	4					

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
<i>espeho</i> 'mirror'	espeho	5	10	<i>karne</i> 'meat'	karne	37	95	
	espejo	3	6		karni	2	5	
	ispiho	11	22					
	speho	1	2					
	spiho	3	6					
	ispeho	3	6					
	espihu	1	2					
	espijo	1	2					
	espiho	21	43					
<i>ehemplo</i> 'example'	ehemplo	39	80	<i>ehemplo</i> 'example'	ehemplo	28	72	
	ejemplo	1	2		ehimplo	4	10	
	ehimplo	5	10		ihemplo	3	8	
	ihemplo	4	8		ihimplo	4	10	

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total		
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%	
(c) The “i” will also be used to represent the front vowel that is added in the original form of borrowed words, e.g., <i>istorya</i> for ‘storia’, <i>isponsor</i> for ‘sponsor’, <i>ismagol</i> for ‘smuggle’.	<i>istorya</i>	istorya	25	51	<i>ispat</i>	ispat	32	82	
	‘story’	esturya	3	6	‘spot’	espat	7	18	
		storya	1	2					
		estorya	20	41					
		<i>ismagol</i>	ismagol	22	45	<i>isponsor</i>	isponsor	22	56
	‘smuggle’	ismagul	2	4	‘sponsor’	esponsor	14	36	
		esmagol	18	37		sponsor	3	8	
		esmagul	2	4					
		smagol	1	2					
		smugol	1	2					
		smugol	1	2					
		smugle	1	2					
		smuggle	2	4					

### 3.3 Symbolizing the Glottal Stop

The MWO identified the glottal stop as a distinct consonant sound in Minasbate and part of its alphabet. The Congress adopted the grave accent ( ` ) to represent the glottal stop.

- (a) The glottal stop may occur between a C and V, e.g., *pus`on* ‘abdomen,’ *bag`o* ‘new.’
- (b) It may also occur in the final position of the word, e.g., *túro`* ‘leak,’ *pakó`* ‘wing.’
- (c) The glottal may also occur between two V, e.g., *ti`il* ‘feet,’ *di`in* ‘where,’ *gu`ol* ‘fatigue.’
- (d) The glottal stop is also the obligatory onset of the written syllable that begins with a vowel. It will be symbolized when the word begins with a vowel, e.g., *`adlaw* ‘sun; day,’ *`ako* ‘I,’ *`amó* ‘monkey.’

The Masbatenyo Bible used the hyphen ( - ) to symbolize the glottal stop when it is found in the middle of words, particularly between a consonant and a vowel, as shown in the examples below:

*gab-i* ‘night,’ *naghaw-as* ‘come up out of,’ *pan-o* ‘how,’ *malaw-ay* ‘lewd,’ *gintin-o* ‘took notice of,’ *kamut-an* ‘to cherish,’ *bag-o* ‘new,’ *namumut-an* ‘cherish someone/something,’ *ginasul-ot* ‘wearing,’ *kaluy-i* ‘show mercy,’ *makasal-anon* ‘sinner,’ *sin-o* ‘who,’ *maluluy-on* ‘merciful,’ *pagakaluy-an* ‘be merciful of,’ *maghiram-os* ‘to wash the face,’ *kasal-an* ‘sin,’ *kasan-o* ‘when,’ *makit-an* ‘be seen,’ *kapaw-an* ‘clarity,’ *mawar-an* ‘lose something.’

The hyphen was also used when a prefix is attached to vowel-initial words. The following examples illustrate this:

*gin-anak* ‘to be given birth by someone,’ *pag-ako* ‘take responsibility,’ *pag-alang-alang* ‘hesitating,’ *nag-anak* ‘gave birth,’ *nag-arabot* ‘arrived,’ *nag-udong* ‘stopped,’ *nag-abot* ‘arrived,’ *nag-uli* ‘went home,’ *gin-agihan* ‘passed by,’ *gin-upod* ‘included,’ *mag-udong* ‘to stop,’ *nag-istar* ‘resided,’ *pag-abot* ‘arrival,’ *gin-uritan* ‘got scolded by someone,’ *nag-ayuno* ‘fasted,’ *mag-ataman* ‘took care of a pet/animal,’ *nag-arapiki* ‘approached,’ *ma-ingkod* ‘will sit,’ *nag-arapiki* ‘is/was approaching,’ *ma-asawa* ‘will get married,’ *pag-ato* ‘fighting,’ *pag-irog* ‘copying,’ *mag-ayuno* ‘fasting,’ *gin-unat* ‘straightened,’ *gin-ayo* ‘fixed,’ *gin-umaw* ‘praised,’ *tag-iya* ‘owner.’

On the other hand, the glottal stop is not represented when it occurs in the initial and final positions.

Initial: *ama* ‘father,’ *iya* ‘his/her,’ *iloy* ‘mother,’ *asawa* ‘spouse,’ *aram* ‘known,’ *ini* ‘this,’ *idto* ‘that,’ *agihan* ‘pathway,’ *agod* ‘so that,’ *igadabok* ‘firewood; fuel’

Middle: *nagkaigwa* ‘obtained something,’ *naaraman* ‘learned/knew something,’ *paagi* ‘way; means,’ *maraot* ‘ugly,’ *himuon* ‘do something,’ *sugua* ‘ask someone to do something’

Final: *dili* ‘no,’ *kalahi* ‘descendant,’ *hali* ‘from,’ *pakabati* ‘the way something was heard,’ *hadi* ‘kind,’ *nagabakho* ‘sobbing’

Overall, the orthographic practice in the MB is not consistent with the draft MWO. The draft MWO advocates for symbolizing of the glottal stop and introduces the use of a symbol that does not overlap with other symbols so that young learners will be able to grasp its concept properly. The glottal stop has always been overlooked in the past and considered a suprasegmental feature of a vowel. The presence of many symbols used to represent the glottal stop attests to this.

Table 7 shows the usage of the K to 3 teachers in the field in relation to the representation of the glottal stop.

Compared with the MWO-prescribed rule, the pretest results indicated that K to 3 teachers preferred not to symbolize the glottal stop, as evidenced by the higher percentage of spelling variants without glottal stop in all test items:

- *gisi* (59%) vs. *gisi`* (14%) for ‘torn’
- *gin-agihan* (80%) vs. *gin`agihan* (0%) for ‘passed by someone’
- *gintahi* (43%) vs. *gintahi`* (2%) for ‘sewed’
- *nagtiriwi* (76%) vs. *nagtiriwi`* (2%) for ‘distorted’
- *pagakadtuon* (55%) vs. *pagakadtu`on* (55%) for ‘will be visited’
- *tiil* (90%) vs. *ti`il* (0%) for ‘foot/feet’
- *diin* (57%) vs. *di`in* (0%) for ‘where’
- *ibubo* (43%) vs. *ibubo`* (0%) for ‘pour into something’

They also used different symbols, such as the hyphen and the apostrophe.

However, the posttest results showed improvement in the knowledge and use of glottal stop as more than 50% of the participants were able to use the proposed symbol, the grave accent, in most of the test items. It can also be observed that teachers were still confused with

Table 7. Usage of the Glottal Stop by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
(a) The glottal stop may occur between a C and V, e.g., <i>pus'on</i> 'abdomen,' <i>bag'o</i> 'new.'	<i>gin`agihan</i>	gin`agihan	0	0	<i>sin`o</i>	sin`o	28	72
	'passed by someone'	gin-agihan	39	80	'who'	sin-o	6	15
		gin agihan	7	14		sin'o	4	10
		guin-agihan	1	2				
(b) The glottal stop may also occur in the final position of the word, e.g., <i>túro`</i> 'leak,' <i>pakó`</i> 'wing.'	<i>gisi`</i>	gisi`	7	14	<i>la`</i>	la`	23	59
	'torn'	gisi	29	59	'only'	la	11	28
		gisi	3	6		lá	4	10
		gise	3	6		`la	1	3
		gisi	3	6				
	<i>gintahi`</i>	gintahi`	1	2	<i>nadusmo`</i>	nadusmo`	24	62
	'sewed'	gin-tahi	16	33	'tripped on something'	nadusmò	4	10
		gintahi	3	6		nadusmó	2	5
		gintahi	21	43		nadúsmo	3	8

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		ginhatí	1	2		nadus'mo	1	3
		gintahe	1	2		na'dusmo	1	3
		guin-tahi	1	2				
		gìntahi	1	2				
		gin tahi	1	2				
		gintàhi	1	2				
		gin'tahi	1	2				
	<i>nagtiriwi`</i>	nagtiriwi`	1	2	<i>nagturo`</i>	nagturo`	29	74
	'distorted'	nagtiriwi	37	76	'leaked'	nagturo`	5	13
		nagteriwe	2	4		nagturu`	2	5
		nagtiriwî	1	2		nagtu'ro	2	5
		nag-tiriwi	5	10		nag`turo	1	3
		nagtiriwi	1	2				
		nag tiriwi	1	2				



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
(c) The glottal may also occur between two V, e.g., <i>ti`il</i> ‘feet,’ <i>di`in</i> ‘where,’ <i>gu`ol</i> ‘fatigue.’	<i>pagakadtu`on</i> ‘will be visited’	pagakadtu`on	1	2	<i>ma`isog</i>	ma`isog	17	44
		pagakadtuon	27	55	‘brave’	ma`isog	3	8
		pagakadtoon	4	8		maisug	2	5
		paga-kadtuon	5	10		ma`isug	3	8
		paga kadtoon	1	2		maisog	11	28
		paga kadtuon	2	4		maisog`	1	3
		pagakadtu-on	2	4		maiso`g	2	5
		paga-kadtu-on	2	4				
		pagakadto-on	1	2				
	pagakadtuôn	1	2					
	<i>masakit`an`iya</i> <i>ti`il</i> ‘his foot is aching’	masakit`an`iya	0	0	<i>himu`a</i>	himu`a	20	51
		ti`il			‘do this’	himua`	1	3
		masakit an iya	44	90				
		tiil				himo`a	3	8
		masakit an iya	1	2				
		tiil						

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		masakit an iya ti-il	2	4		himua	5	13
		masakit an iya teil	1	2		himua`	3	8
						himo'a	2	5
						himu-a	1	3
	<i>di`in banda may kilmi`?</i>	di`in banda may kilmi`?	0	0	<i>pagaka`unon</i> 'will be eaten'	pagaka`unon	17	44
	'which part has a dent?'	di`in banda may kilmi?	3	6		pagaka'unon	1	3
		diin banda may kelmi?	1	2		pagakaonon	5	13
		diin banda may kilmi`?	2	4		pagakaunon	12	31
		diin banda may kilmi?	28	57		pagakaon`on	1	3

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		diin banda may kilmî?	3	6		pagaka`onon	3	8
		diin banda may kilme?	10	20				
		diin banda an kilmî?	1	2				
(d) The glottal stop is also the obligatory onset of the written syllable that begins with a vowel. It will be symbolized when the word begins with a vowel, e.g., `adlaw 'sun; day,' `ako 'I,' 'amó` 'monkey.'	`ibubo` 'pour into something'	`ibubo` ibubo ibubò ibùbo ibûbo ibu-bo ibobu ibubò ibobo i-bubo ibubu	0 21 3 2 2 4 3 2 1 1 6	0 43 6 4 4 8 6 4 2 2 12	`amo` 'monkey'	`amo` amu` amò `amu` amó amo` a`mo`	19 4 4 4 1 8 1	44 9 9 9 3 19 2

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
				ibu bu			1	2
	ibu'bu	1	2					
	ibûbô	1	2					

the orthographic rules involving the glottal stop as evidenced by the number of spelling variants and use of varying symbols.

The results of the posttest showed promise that given proper orientation and sufficient time to get used to the MWO rules on the glottal stop, K to 3 teachers would be able to follow the draft MWO rules. The participants of the Congress agreed that teachers should represent it first so that the learners would be able to grasp the concept of the glottal stop. The teacher can then gradually make it optional until it is no longer needed to be symbolized.

The Congress adopted the proposal of Rosero (2011) to use the grave accent ( ` ) to represent the glottal stop in Minasbate. The preference to use the grave accent over other traditional symbols such as the circumflex ( ^ ) and the hyphen ( – ) solves certain problems: (a) the hyphen is used in other instances, e.g., reduplication, compound words, time expressions, among others; and (b) aesthetic concerns. This, however, might be a problem for teachers as the data has shown that they do not recognize the usage of such symbol. The apostrophe ( ' ) symbol may also be used as an alternative.

### 3.4 Symbolizing Stress or Accent

In the MWO, stress or accent is represented by the acute accent ( ´ ) above the vowel (V), e.g., *buháy* ‘alive’, *dakó* ‘big’, *ribók* ‘noise’.

- (a) A stressed non-final syllable is usually lengthened. For example, in the case of *búhay* ‘life’ versus *buháy* ‘alive’, the syllable *bú* in ‘life’ is longer than the syllable *bu* in ‘alive’.
- (b) It is possible to have more than one stress in a word, e.g., *hámbáw* ‘shallow,’ *ámamáknit* ‘weaver ant.’

- (c) The stress is symbolized by the acute accent ( ´ ) if it falls on the last syllable, e.g., *hubág* ‘swollen,’ *sulód* ‘inside.’ The stress may not be symbolized if it falls on the penultimate syllable, e.g., *gab`i* ‘night’, *kiray* ‘eyebrow’.

The MWO suggests that the stress be marked “in all the necessary places to assist the learners/users in learning the language.” The Masbatenyo Bible, however, did not represent stress or accent.

Table 8 shows some illustrative examples from the questionnaire regarding the practice of K to 3 teachers.

K to 3 teachers had difficulty in symbolizing stress in both the pretest and posttest. For instance, for the first rule, teachers came up with 12 versions of the spelling of *punó* ‘full’ in the pretest, 9 versions of *latá* ‘mushy’ and 13 versions of *paká* ‘frog’. Only 36% got the MWO-prescribed spelling of *punó* ‘full’ and *latá* ‘mushy,’ while only 28% got *paká* ‘frog’ correctly. In the posttest, although the number of variants in each item decreased, the percentage that got the MWO-prescribed version correctly also decreased. Only 26% got *sunóg* ‘burned’ and 28% got *lutó* ‘cooked’ in accordance with the MWO rule. The results also showed that teachers did not symbolize the concurrence of glottal stop and the stress, as seen in the words *lutó* ‘cooked,’ *paká* ‘frog,’ and *salá* ‘sin.’

In the pretest of orthographic practice of K to 3 teachers, majority of them preferred not to symbolize the stress that falls on the penultimate syllable, as seen in *puno* (45%), *lata* (60%), and *nagpaka* (26%). This somehow still follows the MWO rule as it does not strictly prescribe the symbol for stress on the penultimate syllable. After the orientation on the draft MWO, the percentage of teachers who were able to represent

Table 8. Representation of Stress by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
The stress is symbolized by the acute accent ( ´ ) if it falls on the last syllable, e.g., <i>hubág</i> , <i>sulód</i> .	<i>punó` na `an</i>	punó	17	36	<i>`an sinapna`</i>	sunóg	10	26
	<i>balde</i>	punu`	1	2	<i>sunóg na</i>	sunòg	10	26
	‘the bucket is	puno	6	13	‘the rice is	sunog	7	18
	full’	puno’	1	2	already burnt’	súnog	7	18
		poño	1	2		sunog`	1	3
		puño	2	4		sùnog	1	3
		pùno	2	4		su`nog	2	5
		punù	1	2				
		punô	6	13				
		punò	2	4				
		puño	3	6				
		punô	6	13				
		<i>latá` `an luto</i>	latá	17	36	<i>lutó` na `an surâ</i>	luto`	19
‘the rice is	lata	8	17	‘the viand is	luto	2	5	
mushy’	latâ	8	17	already cooked’	lutó	11	28	

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		lata'	1	2		lutò	3	8
		láta	2	4		lùtò	2	5
		latà	5	11		lúto	1	3
		lata	1	2		lùto	1	3
		latâ	5	11				
		laŦa	2	4				
	<i>nakakita` san</i>	paká	13	28	<i>wara`n kwarta</i>	salá	14	36
	<i>paká`</i>	paka	7	15	<i>kay may salá`</i>	salà	5	13
	'I saw a frog'	paka'	1	2	'he has no	sala`	15	38
		paŦa	4	9	money because	sála`	1	3
		páka	3	6	he made a	sàla	1	3
		paká	3	6	mistake'	sala	2	5
		pàka	1	2				
		pakâ	10	21				
		pakà	3	6				
		páka	1	2				
		pakâ	1	2				



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		paĶa	1	2				
		pa'ka	1	2				
The stress may not be symbolized if it falls on the penultimate syllable, e.g., <i>gab`i</i> ‘night’, <i>kiray</i> ‘eyebrow’.	<i>`an púno san sirigwelas</i> ‘the sirigwelas tree’	púno	8	17	<i>may súnog sa luyo</i>	súnog	14	36
		punó	5	11		sunog	14	36
		pûno	5	11	‘there’s a fire on the other side’	sùnog	6	15
		puno	21	45		sunóg	1	3
		pu'no	1	2		sunòg	1	3
		punò	4	9		sùnóg	1	3
		þuno	2	4		su'nog	1	3
		pùno	3	6				
	<i>may luto sa láta</i> ‘there’s cooked food in the can’	latá	7	15	<i>lutô na `an lúto</i>	lúto	17	44
		lata	30	64	‘the rice is already cooked’	luto	7	18
		la'ta	1	2		lùto	5	13
		lotó	1	2		lùto`	1	3
		láta	3	6		lutò	5	13
		latà	1	2		lutó	2	5
látà		1	2		lùtó	1	3	

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		láta	1	2		lutò	1	3
		lâta	2	4				
		làta	1	2				
		la'ta	1	2				
	<i>nagpáka an</i>	nagpáka	4	9	<i>damo'n kwarto</i>	sála	14	36
	<i>magmanghod</i>	nagpáka	6	13	<i>kag may sala</i>	sala	16	41
	'the siblings	nag paka	3	6	'there are many	sàla	6	15
	arm-wrestled'	nagpaka	12	26	rooms and a	salà	2	5
		nagpa'ka	2	4	living room'	salá	2	5
		nagpakà	2	4				
		nag-páka	1	2				
		nagpáka	2	4				
		nag-paka	2	4				
		nag paká	1	2				
		nagpaká	3	6				
		nag-þaka	0	0				
		nagpakâ	1	2				

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
				nagpàka			2	4
	nagpakā	1	2					
	nagpàka	2	4					
	nag-pakà	1	2					
	nag pakâ	1	2					
	nag paKa	1	2					
	nag paka	1	2					

the stress increased significantly. This is evident in *púno* (17%) versus *súnog* (36%), *láta* (2%) versus *lúto* (44%), and *nagpáka* (13%) versus *sála* (36%).

The results also showed that the teachers used different symbols to represent stress, such as ` , ' , and ^, which they put above the vowels and even consonants. Examples of these are *latà*, *nagpá'ka*, and *sàla*. Some also used uppercase letters to indicate stress as evident in the transcribed words, e.g., *paKá*, *laTá*.

### 3.5 The Use of Hyphen

The draft MWO proposed that the hyphen should be used in the following instances:

- reduplication of full words, e.g., *tawu-tawo* 'toy', *balay-balay* 'little house', *kalan-kalan* 'improvised stove';
- compound words, e.g., *tagúm-matá* 'conjunctivitis', *supa`-tulon* 'very easy', *atras-abante* 'indecisive';
- affixation of borrowed words that are proper names, e.g., *pa-LBC* 'will be sent via LBC,' *pa-Manila* 'going to Manila;'
- time expressions, e.g., *`alas-dose* 'twelve o'clock,' *`ala-una* 'one o'clock,' *`alas-diyes* 'ten o'clock; and
- expressions derived from Spanish that use *de-* affix which denotes 'through' or 'made through the process', e.g., *de-kolór* 'with color,' *de-kalidad* 'of quality.'

On the other hand, the hyphen may not be used in:

- partial reduplication of the word, e.g., *burubaruto* 'small boat', not *\*buru-baruto*; *burubugsay* 'small paddle', not *\*buru-bugsay*;

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- affixation of native root words, e.g., *ginaka`on* ‘being eaten’, not \**gina-kaun*; *ginsusog* ‘adhered to’, not \**gin-susog*;
- affixation of borrowed verbs and nouns, e.g., *magtext* ‘to text’, not \**mag-text*; *pamerkado* ‘to the market’, not \**pamerkado*; and
- linkers, e.g., *duha ka bilog* ‘two pieces’, not \**duha ka-bilog*.

In the Masbatenyo Bible, the hyphen is used for the following instances:

- representation of the glottal stop, e.g., *gab-i* ‘night’, *kinab-an* ‘world’, *kasal-an* ‘sin’;
- reduplication, e.g., *manlain-lain* ‘different’, *pag-alang-alang* ‘hesitation’, *daku-dako* ‘very big’;
- affixation of borrowed words that are proper names, e.g., *taga-Galilea* ‘from Galilea’, *taga-Judea* ‘from Judea’, *dili-Judio* ‘non-Jew’, *Jesu-Cristo* ‘Jesus Christ’, *pa-Ehipto* ‘to Egypt’;
- word formation/affixation, e.g., *gin-giyahan* ‘guided’, *nag-arabot* ‘arrived’, *nag-upod* ‘went together’; and
- compound words, e.g., *pakita`n-tawo* ‘pretension’.

Table 9 shows the comparison between the draft MWO rules and the orthographic rules in the MB on the use of hyphen. As shown, the Masbatenyo Bible is consistent with the draft MWO on the use of items in almost all cases, except in the case of affixation of root words that begin with consonant, and time expressions.

**Table 9. Comparison of the Orthographic Rules Between the Draft MWO and the MB (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

	Draft MWO	Masbatenyo Bible	Remarks
Reduplication of full words	<i>tawu-tawo</i> ‘toy’ <i>balay-balay</i> ‘little house’ <i>kalan-kalan</i> ‘improvised stove’	<i>balay-balay</i> ‘every house’ <i>sinda-sinda</i> ‘them’ <i>daku-dako</i> ‘very big’	Consistent
Compound words	<i>tagúm-matá</i> ‘conjunctivitis’ <i>supá</i> - <i>tulon</i> ‘very easy’ <i>atras-abante</i> ‘indecisive’	<i>pakita’n-tawo</i> ‘pretention’	Consistent
Affixation of borrowed words that are proper names	<i>pa-LBC</i> ‘going to LBC’ <i>pa-Manila</i> ‘going to Manila’	<i>taga-Ehipto</i> ‘from Egypt’ <i>pa-Jerusalem</i> ‘going to Jerusalem’	Consistent
Time expressions	<i>’alas-dose</i> ‘twelve o’clock’ <i>’ala-una</i> ‘one o’clock’	<i>alas dose</i> ‘twelve o’clock’ <i>ala una</i> ‘one o’clock’	Inconsistent
Expressions derived from Spanish that use <i>de-</i> affix	<i>de-kolór</i> ‘with color’ <i>de-kalidad</i> ‘of quality’	—	Not applicable

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	Draft MWO	Masbatenyo Bible	Remarks
Partial reduplication of the word	<i>burubaruto</i> , not <i>*buru-baruto</i> ‘small boat’ <i>burubugsay</i> , not <i>*buru-bugsay</i> ‘small paddle’	<i>burubaryo</i> ‘every barrio’ <i>lurulungsod</i> ‘every city’	Consistent
Affixation of native root words that begin with consonant	<i>ginaka’on</i> , not <i>*gina-kaun</i> ‘being eaten’ <i>ginsusog</i> , not <i>*gin-susog</i> ‘adhered to’	<i>ginakaon</i> ‘being eaten’ <i>ginasabi</i> ‘being told’ <i>gin-galangan</i> ‘respected’ <i>gin-giyahan</i> ‘guided’	Inconsistent
Linkers	<i>duha ka bilog</i> , not <i>*duha ka-bilog</i> ‘two pieces’	<i>duha ka bilog</i> ‘two pieces’	Consistent

Before they were oriented on the draft MWO, teachers performed poorly on the use of hyphen, as shown in the low percentage of teachers who got the MWO-prescribed spelling correctly and the presence of multiple spelling variants. For instance, *tagum-mata* ‘conjunctivitis’ had eight versions and only 35% got it correctly. The other rules also yielded low percentage, such as *alas-dyis* ‘ten o’clock’ (2%), *de-kalidad* ‘of quality,’ (20%), *pa-Masbate* ‘going to Masbate’ (38%). The teacher’s performance increased after they were oriented on the draft MWO. More than 60% of teachers got the correct use of hyphen in all the rules, except for the expressions that use *de-* ‘made of’ affix. In both pretest and posttest results, teachers preferred not to use the hyphen.

**Table 10. Usage of Hyphen by Masbateno K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
Compound words	<i>tagum-mata</i> 'conjunctivitis'	tagum-mata	17	35	<i>supa`-tulon</i>	supa-tulon	26	67
		tagum mata	1	2	'very easy'	supa tulon	11	28
		tagumata	16	33		sopa-tulon	2	5
		tagu-mata	8	16				
		tago-mata	2	4				
		tagom mata	1	2				
		tagu mata	1	2				
		tagomata	3	6				
Time expressions	<i>alas-dose</i> 'twelve o'clock'	alas-dose	24	49	<i>alas-tres</i>	alas-tres	32	82
		alas dose	25	51	'three o'clock'	alas tres	6	15
					alastres	1	3	
	<i>alas-dyis</i> 'ten o'clock'	alas-dyis	1	2	<i>alas-otso</i>	alas-otso	30	77
		alas dyes	17	35	'eight o'clock'	alas otso	5	12
		alas-dyes	9	18		alaso	1	3



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
		alas-diyes	6	12		alas-utso	2	5
		alas diyes	4	8		alas otsò	1	3
		alas dyis	2	4				
		alas dies	9	18				
Expressions derived from Spanish that use <i>de-</i> affix	<i>de-kalidad</i> 'of quality'	de-kalidad	10	20	<i>de-kalidad</i> 'of quality'	de-kalidad	16	41
		di-kalidad	1	2		dekalidad	18	46
		de kalidad	6	12		di-kalidad	1	3
		de kaledad	1	2		dikalidad	3	8
		dekalidad	24	49		de kalidad	1	3
		dikalidad	7	14				
Affixation of borrowed words that are proper names	<i>pa-Masbate siya</i> 'he is going to Masbate'	pa-Masbate s'ya	15	38	<i>pa-Gaisano</i> 'going to Gaisano'	pa-Gaisano	27	69
		pa Masbate siya	11	28		pa-Gaizano	1	3
		paMasbate sya	9	23		pa Gaisano	5	13
		pamasbate sya	4	10		paGaisano	3	8
						pa-gaisano	1	3

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest				
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
					PaGa`isano	1	3	
					pa`gaisano	1	3	
Affixation of native root words	<i>gintahi`</i> 'sewed'	gintahi`	1	2	<i>ginpilit</i> 'stick something on something'	ginpilit	28	72
		gin-tahi	16	33		ginpilit	1	3
		gintahi	3	6		gin pilit	2	5
		gintahi	21	43		ginpilit`	1	3
		ginhatî	1	2		gin`pilit	6	15
		gintahe	1	2		ginpilit	1	3
		guin-tahi	1	2		ginpilit	1	3
		gintahi	1	2				
		gin tahi	1	2				
		gintàhi	1	2				
		gin'tahi	1	2				
	<i>gin`agihan</i> 'passed by'	gin`agihan	0	0	<i>pabukid</i> 'to the field'	pabukid	32	82
		gin-agihan	39	80		pa-bukid	6	15
		gin agihan	7	14		pa bukid	1	3
		guin-agihan	1	2				

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest				Posttest			
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total		Minasbate Term	Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%			<i>n</i>	%
'the dog is barking'	<i>nagausig`an`ido</i>	nagausig`an`ido	0	0	<i>nagturutalibod</i>	nagturutalibod	29	74
		naga-usig an ido	27	55	'went round and round'	nagturo talibod	1	3
		naga osig an ido	3	6		nagturu-talibod	1	3
		naga-usig an idò	3	6		nagturo`talibod	3	8
		nagausig an ido	7	14		nagturotalibod	1	3
		naga-usig an idò	1	2		nagturotalibod	3	8
		naga usig an ido	4	8		nagturutalibud	1	3
		naga usig an `ido	1	2				
		naga usig an idu	1	2				
		daga usig an ido	1	2				
Affixation of borrowed verbs and nouns	<i>magtext ka</i>	magtext ka	19	39	<i>magreply</i>	magreply	25	64
	'text me'	mag-teks ka	2	4	'to reply'	mag-reply	4	10
		magtxt ka	2	4		mag`reply	3	8
		mag-text ka	9	18		magreplay	4	10
		mag text ka	8	16		magre`ply	1	3
		mag teks ka	5	10		mag reply	2	5
		magtex ka	1	2				

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Pretest			Posttest		
	Minasbate Term	Response	Total	Minasbate Term	Response	Total
			<i>n</i> %			<i>n</i> %
		magteks ka	1 2			
		mag tex ka	1 2			

The results also showed that in the pretest, the teachers used the hyphen to separate the prefix and the root or stem, as shown in *gin-tahi* ‘sewed’ (33%), *gin-agihan* ‘passed by someone’ (80%), *naga-usig* ‘barking’ (55%). After the orientation on the draft MWO, the teachers did not use the hyphen in the affixation of Masbatenyo root words, as shown in *ginpilit* ‘stuck something on something’ (72%), *pabukid* ‘to the field’ (82%) and *nagturutalibod* ‘went round and round’ (74%). There was also an increase in the correct use, i.e., non-use, of the hyphen in the affixation of borrowed words, following the rules in the draft MWO.

### 3.6 The Use of Apostrophe

In the Masbatenyo Bible, the apostrophe symbol ( ’ ) is used in contracted words, e.g., *pakita’n-tawo* ‘pretentious,’ *baga’n* ‘like something’ (*baga* + *an*), *wara’n pulos* ‘nonsense’ (*wara* + *sin* + *pulos*).

In the MWO, it is specified that the apostrophe symbol ( ’ ) should be used in contracted words. In such cases, the particles *san* and *sin* are often contracted to the immediately preceding word if it ends in either a glottal or vowel sound. The unstressed vowel is also deleted in fast speech.

<i>wara`sin tawo</i>	>	<i>wara’n tawo</i>
‘no people’		
<i>darahán</i>	>	<i>dar’hán</i>
‘bring someone something’		
<i>nano man</i>	>	<i>na’mán</i>
‘whatever’		

K to 3 teachers, however, do not use apostrophe in writing contraction of words, as shown in Table 11. Teachers preferred not to use the apostrophe in the contracted form of *waran* (92%). The posttest, however, did not include the use of the apostrophe in contracted words so there was no data about how teachers' practice changed after the draft MWO was introduced to them.

**Table 11. Usage of Apostrophe by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Minasbate Term	Pretest		
		Response	Total	
			<i>n</i>	%
The apostrophe symbol ( ' ) should be used in contracted words.	<i>wará'n tawo</i>	wará'n tawo	1	2
	'no people'	waran tawo	45	92
		waran tawò	1	2
		waran tawu	1	2

### 3.7 Writing Borrowed Words

In writing borrowed words, it is proposed that equivalent sounds in the native Minasbate will be used to represent the borrowed sounds in common nouns. Table 12 lists the symbols to be used to represent the borrowed sounds.

The letters used in the Masbatenyo Bible are consistent with the draft MWO. Table 13 shows how the foreign letters were represented in both MWO and MB.

The testing of the draft Minasbate Working Orthography did not include the use of borrowed words.

**Table 12. Proposed Minasbate Equivalentents of Foreign Letters (Rosero & Balbuena, 2016)**

Foreign Letter	Minasbate Equivalent	Example
<i>c</i> , if followed by <i>o</i> , <i>u</i> , or <i>a</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>kwarto</i> (for <i>cuarto</i> ) <i>kwarta</i> (for <i>cuarta</i> )
<i>c</i> , if followed by <i>i</i> or <i>e</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sentimo</i> (for <i>centimo</i> )
<i>ch</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>tsokolate</i> (for <i>chocolate</i> )
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pyesta</i> (for <i>fiesta</i> )
<i>j</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>Hulyo</i> (for <i>Julio</i> )
<i>ll</i>	<i>y</i> or <i>ly</i>	<i>lyabe</i> (for <i>llave</i> )
<i>ñ</i>	<i>ny</i>	<i>Hunyo</i> (for <i>Juño</i> )
<i>q</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>kwestyon</i> (for <i>question</i> )
<i>v</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>lyabe</i> (for <i>llave</i> )
<i>x</i>	<i>ks</i>	<i>taksi</i> (for <i>taxi</i> )
<i>z</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sigsag</i> (for <i>zigzag</i> )

### 3.8 Writing Consonant Clusters

The following clusters of consonants exist in both native and borrowed Minasbate words:

As shown in Table 14, a type of consonant cluster involves glides or semivowels. The so-called off-glides are formed when the vowel is dropped, forming a cluster of a consonant and a semivowel (*w/y*). Examples of this are *pw* (*pwerta*), *tw* (*twerka*), *by* (*Byernes*), and *sw* (*swerte*). The draft MWO adopts these consonant clusters without the vowel.

On the other hand, the consonant clusters used in the Masbatenyo Bible are listed in Table 15.

Consonant clusters consist of glides or semivowels are also found in the Masbatenyo Bible. The so-called off-glides are formed when the vowel is dropped, forming a cluster of a consonant and a semivowel

**Table 13. Representation of Foreign Letters in MWO and MB**

Foreign Letter	MWO	Example	MB	Example
<i>c</i> , if followed by <i>o</i> , <i>u</i> , or <i>a</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>kwarto</i> (for <i>cuarto</i> ) <i>kwarta</i> (for <i>cuarta</i> )	<i>k</i>	<i>kwarto</i> (for <i>cuarto</i> ) <i>kwarta</i> (for <i>cuarta</i> )
<i>c</i> , if followed by <i>i</i> or <i>e</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sentimo</i> (for <i>centimo</i> )	<i>s</i>	<i>sentimo</i> (for <i>centimo</i> )
<i>ch</i>	<i>ts</i>	<i>tsokolate</i> (for <i>chocolate</i> )	<i>ts</i>	<i>diretso</i> (for <i>derecho</i> ) <i>kapritso</i> (for <i>capricho</i> )
<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>pyesta</i> (for <i>fiesta</i> )	<i>p</i>	<i>pamilya</i> (for <i>familia</i> )
<i>j</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>Hulyo</i> (for <i>Julio</i> )	<i>h</i>	<i>huwes</i> (for <i>juez</i> )
<i>ll</i>	<i>y</i> or <i>ly</i>	<i>lyabe</i> (for <i>llave</i> )	<i>y</i> or <i>ly</i>	<i>lyabi</i> (for <i>llave</i> ) <i>milyon</i> (for <i>millon</i> )
<i>ñ</i>	<i>ny</i>	<i>Hunyo</i> (for <i>Juño</i> )	<i>ny</i>	<i>demonyo</i> (for <i>demonio</i> )
<i>q</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>kwestyon</i> (for <i>question</i> )	<i>k</i>	no example found
<i>v</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>lyabe</i> (for <i>llave</i> )	<i>b</i>	<i>lyabi</i> (for <i>llave</i> )
<i>x</i>	<i>ks</i>	<i>taksi</i> (for <i>taxi</i> )	<i>ks</i>	<i>boksingero</i> (for <i>boxer</i> )
<i>z</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>sigsag</i> (for <i>zigzag</i> )	<i>s</i>	<i>kasal</i> (for <i>cazar</i> )



**Table 14. Consonant Clusters in the Draft MWO**

Consonant Cluster	Example	Consonant Cluster	Example
pl	<i>plato</i> 'plate'	bw	<i>bweno</i> 'well'
pr	<i>prito</i> 'fried'	by	<i>Byernes</i> 'Friday'
pw	<i>pwerta</i> 'door'	dr	<i>drama</i> 'drama'
py	<i>pyano</i> 'piano'	dw	<i>dwende</i> 'dwarf'
tr	<i>trapo</i> 'rag'	dy	<i>dyis</i> 'ten'
tw	<i>twerka</i> 'screw'	gl	<i>glorya</i> 'glory'
ty	<i>tyan</i> 'stomach'	gr	<i>grasya</i> 'grace'
kl	<i>klaro</i> 'clear'	gw	<i>gwapo</i> 'handsome'
kr	<i>krus</i> 'cross'	my	<i>myintrás</i> 'while'
kw	<i>kwento</i> 'story'	sw	<i>swerte</i> 'luck'
bl	<i>blangko</i> 'blank'	sy	<i>sya</i> 'him/her'
br	<i>braso</i> 'arm'	hw	<i>Hwebes</i> 'Thursday'

**Table 15. Consonant Clusters in the Masbatenyo Bible**

Consonant Cluster	Examples
pl	<i>templo</i> 'temple,' <i>plata</i> 'silver'
pr	<i>syimpre</i> 'of course,' <i>pinapriso</i> 'jailed,' <i>properta</i> 'in haste'
tr	<i>traynta</i> 'thirty,' <i>maestro</i> 'teacher,' <i>trabahador</i> 'worker'
kl	<i>klase</i> 'class,' <i>reklamo</i> 'complaint,' <i>klarado</i> 'cleared,'
kr	<i>sikreto</i> 'secret,' <i>Kristyano</i> 'Christian'
bl	<i>obligasyon</i> 'obligation,' <i>dyablo</i> 'devil'
br	<i>libre</i> 'free,' <i>sobra</i> 'excess,' <i>libro</i> 'book'
dr	<i>Pedro, Andres, Cedron</i>
gl	<i>gloryoso</i> 'glorious,' <i>glorya</i> 'glory'
gr	<i>grasya</i> 'grace,' <i>peligro</i> 'danger,' <i>grabe</i> 'severe'

Table 16. Occurrence of Consonant Clusters with Semivowels in the Masbatenyo Bible

Consonant Cluster	Without Vowel			With Vowel			Total	
	Examples	<i>n</i>	%	Examples	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
p-w	<i>kapwa</i> ‘other people’	284	100.00	no data	0	0.00	284	100
p-y	<i>impyerno</i> ‘hell’	67	93.06	<i>ispiya</i> ‘spy’	5	6.94	72	100
	<i>pyista</i> ‘festival’			<i>piyar</i> ‘entrust’				
t-w	<i>twalya</i> ‘towel’	5	100.00	no data	0	0.00	5	100
	<i>istatwa</i> ‘statue’							
t-y	<i>patyon</i> ‘to be killed’	55	77.46	<i>tiyan</i> ‘stomach’	16	22.54	71	100
	<i>pantyon</i> ‘tomb’							
	<i>intyindiha</i>							
	‘understand’							
	<i>Kristyano</i> ‘Christian’							
k-w	<i>kwarto</i> ‘room’	165	100.00	no data	0	0.00	165	100
	<i>kwarta</i> ‘money’							
	<i>kweba</i> ‘cave’							
	<i>Paskwa</i> ‘Passover’							
b-w	no data	0	0.00	<i>buwis</i> ‘tax’	147	0.00	147	100
				<i>buwa</i> ‘lie’				

Consonant Cluster	Without Vowel			With Vowel			Total	
	Examples	<i>n</i>	%	Examples	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
b-y	no data	0	0.00	<i>biyo</i> ‘separate’ <i>biyuda</i> ‘widow’ <i>biyabe</i> ‘travel’	113	100.00	113	100
d-y	<i>guardya</i> ‘guard’ <i>dyutay</i> ‘small’ <i>dyablo</i> ‘devil’ <i>pangadyi</i> ‘prayer’	287	100.00	no data	0	0.00	287	100
g-w	<i>guardya</i> ‘guard’ <i>lenggwahi</i> ‘language’	44	100.00	no data	0	0.00	44	100
m-y	<i>myintras</i> ‘while’ <i>myimbro</i> ‘member’ <i>mamyista</i> ‘will go to the festival’	192	100.00	no data	0	0.00	192	100
s-w	<i>swerte</i> ‘luck; lucky’ <i>sweldo</i> ‘salary’	8	100.00	no data	0	0.00	8	100
s-y	<i>disyerto</i> ‘desert’ <i>nasyon</i> ‘nation’ <i>probinsya</i> ‘province’	675	22.28	<i>siya</i> ‘his/her’	2,354	77.72	3,029	100
h-w	no data	0	0.00	<i>huwes</i> ‘judge’	12	100.00	12	100

(*w/y*). It can be written in two ways: (a) with a vowel in between consonants; or (b) without a vowel.

As shown in Table 16, clusters involving semivowels are generally written without a vowel between consonants. However, there are a few exceptions, such as *p-y*, *t-y*, *b-w*, *b-y*, *s-y* and *h-w* clusters where vowels are written between consonants.

**Table 17. Usage of Consonant Clusters Without Semivowels by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

Pretest			
Minasbate Term	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<i>plato</i> 'plate'	<i>plato</i>	49	100
<i>trapo</i> 'rag'	<i>trapo</i>	48	98
	<i>trapu</i>	1	2
<i>krus</i> 'cross'	<i>krus</i>	49	100
<i>blangko</i> 'blank'	<i>blangko</i>	29	59
	<i>blanko</i>	20	41
<i>drama</i> 'drama'	<i>drama</i>	49	100
<i>grasya</i> 'grace'	<i>grasya</i>	49	100

The teachers have no issues in writing consonant clusters that do not involve semivowels, even before they were introduced to the draft MWO, as shown in Table 17.

However, the confusion seems to have stemmed from clusters that have semivowels, as evident in several spelling variants that they have written.

The teachers still preferred to use the original version of the words that involved off-glides, as shown in the higher percentage of *bueno* (61%), *mientras* (51%), and *siya* (45%).

**Table 18. Usage of Consonant Clusters With Semivowels by Masbatenyo K to 3 Teachers (Bermudo et al., 2018)**

Pretest			
Minasbate Term	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<i>pwerta</i> 'door'	<i>pwerta</i>	29	59
	<i>puwerta</i>	7	14
	<i>pwuerta</i>	1	2
	<i>puerta</i>	8	16
<i>bweno</i> 'ten'	<i>bweno</i>	12	24
	<i>buweno</i>	6	12
	<i>vueno</i>	1	2
<i>dyis</i> 'ten'	<i>bueno</i>	30	61
	<i>dyis</i>	2	4
	<i>diyes</i>	10	20
	<i>dyes</i>	26	53
<i>myintras</i> 'while'	<i>dies</i>	11	22
	<i>myintras</i>	0	0
	<i>myentras</i>	11	22
	<i>mientras</i>	25	51
	<i>mintras</i>	2	4
	<i>mentras</i>	1	2
<i>sya</i> 'his/her'	<i>meintras</i>	1	2
	<i>miyentras</i>	9	18
	<i>sya</i>	20	41
	<i>s'ya</i>	4	8
	<i>sia</i>	1	2
	<i>sha</i>	1	2
	<i>siya</i>	22	45

The posttest conducted by Bermudo et al. (2018) did not include the writing of consonant clusters so there was no data on how teachers' practice changed after the draft MWO was introduced to them.

## 4 Summary of Findings

Table 19 shows the summary of findings of this study. As shown, the rules set in the draft MWO are found consistent with the writing conventions in the Masbatenyo Bible and the actual usage of teachers, in the following areas:

- use of “o” and “u” rules (a), (b), and (c);
- use of “i” and “e” rules (a), (b), and (c);
- use of the hyphen, specifically in reduplication, affixation of borrowed words, and compound words;
- use of apostrophe in contracted words;
- writing borrowed words using equivalent sounds to represent borrowed sounds; and
- writing consonant clusters.

On the other hand, in the following areas, the draft MWO rules are inconsistent with the Masbatenyo Bible and the actual usage of teachers:

- use of “o” and “u” rule (b), specifically in the case of reduplicated words;
- symbolizing the glottal stop;
- use of hyphen, specifically in the case of time expressions and affixation; and
- writing consonant clusters involving off-glides.

Compared with the actual practice of teachers after they were introduced to the draft MWO, the following remain areas of confusion, which may be revisited in the refinement of the draft MWO:

- use of “o” and “u” in reduplicated words or more than two syllables;
- use of “i” and “e” in borrowed words;

Table 19. Summary of Findings

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Comparison with MB	Comparison with Teachers' Actual Usage	Possible Areas of Confusion
The use of “o” and “u”			
(a) If the word has only one back vowel sound that occurs in the ultimate position, “o” is used, e.g., <i>pitó, lisód, li`og, didto, `amó, itóm, nano, ka`aralo</i> .	Consistent	Fairly consistent	Inconsistencies were still observed in: rule (b), specifically in the case of reduplicated words; and rule (c), especially when it involved a less frequently used word.
(b) If the word has more than two back vowels, “u” is used in the second or third to the last syllable and “o” is used in the final syllable, e.g., <i>kudkód, bukbók, gu`ól, pumuluyo`, burubaruto, `uru`adlaw, alu`alo, tudló`, katuninungan</i> .	Consistent	Consistent	
(c) “o” is retained in writing in borrowed words, e.g., <i>ospital, obra, oro</i> .	Consistent	Fairly consistent	

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Comparison with MB	Comparison with Teachers' Actual Usage	Possible Areas of Confusion
<b>The use of “i” and “e”</b>			
(a) All Minasbaté words with an “i” sound will be written as “i”, e.g., <i>kilmi</i> , <i>di`in</i> , <i>didi</i> , <i>silbig</i> , <i>ikog</i> , <i>tindog</i> , <i>ini</i> , <i>sin</i> .	Consistent	Consistent	Some teachers used “i” and “e” interchangeably; they used “i” in writing borrowed words that involved “e” (rule b) and used “e” in place of “i” in borrowed words where the front vowel is added to the beginning.
(b) “e” will be retained in writing of borrowed words, e.g., <i>eroplano</i> , <i>ahente</i> , <i>karné</i> , <i>onse</i> , <i>dose</i> , <i>nwebe</i> , <i>kwento</i> .	Consistent	Fairly consistent	
(c) The “i” will also be used to represent the front vowel that is added in the original form of borrowed words, e.g., <i>istorya</i> for ‘storia’, <i>isponsor</i> for ‘sponsor’, <i>ismagol</i> for ‘smuggle’.	Consistent	Fairly consistent	
<b>Symbolizing the glottal stop</b>			
(a) The glottal stop may occur between a C and V, e.g., <i>pus`on</i> , <i>bag`o</i> .	Consistent (but use the hyphen)	Fairly consistent	K to 3 teachers preferred not to symbolize the glottal stop and still used different symbols to represent it.
(b) It may also occur in the final position of the word, e.g., <i>túro`</i> , <i>pakó`</i> .	Inconsistent	Fairly consistent	



Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Comparison with MB	Comparison with Teachers' Actual Usage	Possible Areas of Confusion
(c) The glottal may also occur between two V, e.g., <i>ti`il, di`in, gu`ol</i> .	Inconsistent	Inconsistent	
(d) The glottal stop is also the obligatory onset of the written syllable that begins with a vowel. It will be symbolized when the word begins with a vowel, e.g., <i>`adlaw, `ako, `amó`</i>	Inconsistent	Inconsistent	
Symbolizing stress or accent			
In the MWO, stress or accent is represented by the acute accent ( ´ ) above the vowel V, e.g., <i>buháy</i> 'alive', <i>dakó</i> 'big', <i>ribók</i> 'noise'.	Inconsistent	Inconsistent	Teachers represented the stress differently. They used various symbols to indicate stress, which included use of ` , ´ , and ^ , use of capital letters (e.g., <i>paĶa, laĴa</i> ), and use of apostrophe before or after the stressed syllable.

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Comparison with MB	Comparison with Teachers' Actual Usage	Possible Areas of Confusion
The stress is symbolized by the acute accent ( ´ ) if it falls on the last syllable, e.g., <i>hubág</i> , <i>sulód</i> . The stress may not be symbolized if it falls on the penultimate syllable, e.g., <i>gab`i</i> 'night', <i>kiray</i> 'eyebrow'.	Inconsistent	Inconsistent	Majority of K to 3 teachers preferred not to symbolize the stress that falls on the penultimate syllable.
The use of hyphen			
Reduplication of full words	Consistent	Fairly consistent	Teachers still used the hyphen to indicate the glottal stop and to separate the root word/stem from the prefix.
Compound words	Consistent	Consistent	
Affixation of borrowed words that are proper names	Consistent	Fairly consistent	
Time expressions	Inconsistent	Consistent	
Expressions derived from Spanish that use <i>de-</i> affix	Not applicable	Fairly consistent	
Partial reduplication of the word	Consistent	Inconsistent	
Affixation of native root words that begin with consonant	Inconsistent	Fairly consistent	

Minasbate Working Orthographic Rules	Comparison with MB	Comparison with Teachers' Actual Usage	Possible Areas of Confusion
Linkers	Consistent	Not included in the study	
The use of apostrophe			
In the MWO, it is specified that the apostrophe symbol ( ' ) be used in the contracted words.	Consistent	Inconsistent	Teachers preferred not to use the apostrophe in contracted words.
Writing borrowed words			
In writing borrowed words, it is proposed that equivalent sounds in the native Minasbaté will be used to represent the borrowed sounds	Consistent	Not included in the study	The pretesting of the draft Minasbate Working Orthography did not include the use of borrowed words.
Writing consonant clusters			
Consonant clusters involving off-glides are without the vowel.	Consistent	Inconsistent	Teachers were not very consistent in writing off-glides, as evident in the number of spelling variants that they have written.

- symbolizing the glottal stop;
- symbolizing stress or accent;
- use of hyphen in affixation; and
- writing off-glides.

The use of apostrophe in writing contracted words should also be further discussed and tested as the pretesting only had one item in the questionnaire. There is also a need to include the writing of borrowed words and correspondences between foreign letters and native Minasbate words.

It can be inferred from the results of the pretest and posttest on the utilization of the draft MWO that teachers were able to follow the rules after the orientation. This study concurs with the researchers of SDO Masbate Province that teachers should be given time to familiarize themselves with the draft MWO and to use it in teaching. Over time, the teachers will be able to demonstrate understanding and knowledge on the use of the draft MWO.

## **5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

As shown in this study, the draft Minasbate Working Orthography is generally consistent with the Masbatenyo Bible. It is recommended that other literature as well as discourse media in the language be also examined to obtain “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p. 110, as cited in Bowen, 2009). In 2021, the DepEd Region 5 received learning resources donated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for students from K to 3. Over 44,000 supplementary materials, including 67 Minasbate language de-

codable and leveled reader books, were developed in an adaptation project that involved Masbatenyo teachers, writers, illustrators, and quality evaluators. These materials should also be included in further studies to examine the orthographic practice of teachers.

The Division of Masbate Province should be commended for their initiatives on the development and refinement of the draft Minasbate Working Orthography. It is recommended that in the subsequent try-outs and workshops, various key stakeholders, e.g., writers, government officials, should be involved and tested for their orthographic practice. The utilization of learners of the MWO, including the feasibility of learning and symbolizing the concepts of glottal stop and stress, should also be considered.

Further, it is recommended that the MWO be also tested in terms of its speech community's access to typographical and/or word-processing technologies. The speech community should be able to produce instructional materials in the language using the technology available to them, e.g., digital or print. The introduction of the grave accent ( ` ) as a symbol for the glottal stop might be a challenge.

There is a need to determine the influence of the neighboring languages and how the MWO corresponds to the existing orthographies of these languages, e.g., Tagalog, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray and Bikol. The transfer back and forth between Minasbate and these languages should be made possible when using the MWO.

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