

## Phonological Sketch

### 1. The Orthography

The 22 symbols in the practical Masbatenyo alphabet used in this dictionary are as follows:

A B D E G H I K L M N N G O P R S T U W Y, [-] and ['] (symbols for glottal stop) and [ˆ] which symbolizes stress or accent.

The symbol [ˆ] represents the concurrence of stress and glottal stop on the same syllable. Though stress or accent is symbolized in this dictionary, it is not marked in Masbatenyo texts or in the practical orthography.

#### 1.1. Vowels

The vowels are displayed in Table 1. Note that the vowels are placed in the Table according to where they are pronounced in the mouth.

Table 1: Vowels of Masbatenyo

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	
		['] (Accent)	

The two vowels [e] and [o] are distinctive only in loan words from Spanish or English. Otherwise they are variants of /i/ and /u/ respectively.

#### 1.2. Consonants

The consonants are displayed in Table 2 according to how and where they are pronounced in the mouth.

Table 2: Consonants of Masbatenyo

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops:					
voiceless	p	t		k	(-, ˆ)
voiced	b	d		g	
Fricatives		s			h
Nasals	m	n		ng	
Lateral		l			
Flapped		r			
Semivowels	w		y		

In this dictionary, glottal stop, symbolized as (-) or (ˆ) in Table 2, is not symbolized in word-initial position. That gives some words the appearance of being

vowel-initial, e.g. *unom* 'six', *abot* 'arrive', *itsa* 'throw'. The glottal appears when the words are affixed by a consonant-final prefix, e.g. *abot* 'arrive', *nag-abot* 'arrived'. It is symbolized by [-] when it is a member of a consonant cluster in the middle of words, and by a grave accent [˘] on a vowel with a following glottal stop. In the practical orthography used for texts, neither word-initial nor word-final glottal stop is symbolized.

The digraph [ng] represents the velar nasal as in English words 'ring', 'sing', 'bring'. The [r] is flapped like the 'dd' in the English word 'ladder'.

## 2. Problems

### 2.1. Writing Loan Words

Nine consonants, C CH F J Ñ Q V X Z, do not occur in native words but are needed for the writing of proper noun loan words from Spanish and English which have not been fully assimilated into Masbatenyo, e.g. Javier, Quezon, Roxas.

Assimilated loan words are respelled using normal Masbatenyo letters. Thus the borrowed consonants listed in the left column of Table 3 are assigned the Masbatenyo equivalents listed on the right.

Table 3: Masbatenyo equivalents of borrowed consonants

Borrowed letters	Masbatenyo letters
c when followed by o, u or a	k
c when followed by i or e	s
ch	ts
f	p
j (in Spanish)	h
ll	y or ly
ñ	ny
q	k
v	b
x	ks
z	s

Only three vowels occur in native Masbatenyo words. They are the high front vowel *i*, the low central vowel *a* and the high back vowel *u*. However, there is variation between *i* and *e* on one hand and between *o* and *u* on the other in the pronunciation of individual speakers.

## 2.2. Writing the Vowels *i* and *e*

The practical orthography or alphabet used in this dictionary uses only *i* for the high front vowel in native Masbatenyo words. However, both *i* and *e* are used as needed in borrowed words. If alternate pronunciations are common, the alternate form is listed with a cross reference to the main entry of the word.

Example: *priparar* [priparár]. v. prepare. See main entry: *preparar*.

## 2.3. Writing the Vowels *u* and *o*

To handle the variation between the sounds *u* and *o*, the practical orthography used here follows the spelling system of the national language, Filipino. Thus, *u* is written in non-final syllables and *o* in final syllables. The one exception to this rule is that the word for 'if' is spelled *kun*.

Example: *budbod* 'sprinkle'

## 2.4. Writing Vowel Clusters

There is a possibility of confusing the pronunciation of vowel clusters in Masbatenyo. This arises because glottal stop is not written in the practical orthography when it occurs between two vowels. Thus, for example, *ayo* 'request' + *-on*, Objective voice affix, becomes *ayuon*, with an unwritten glottal stop pronounced between the two vowels /-uo-/.

There are also vowel clusters which do not have a glottal stop between them. So, for example, *tao* 'person', *sia* 'it, he, she', *babai* 'female'. These types of vowel clusters typically have a high vowel as one member of the cluster. Therefore to avoid confusion in the pronunciation of these clusters, the semivowel counterpart of the high vowel involved is written between the two vowels. Thus, for example:

<i>tao</i>	is written	<i>tawo</i>
<i>sia</i>	is written	<i>siya</i>
<i>babai</i>	is written	<i>babayi</i>

## 2.5. Contrastive Accent

There is a meaningful contrastive accent in Masbatenyo. Accent, or stress, is manifested as length on the vowel nucleus of open syllables, but in closed syllables, prominence usually consists of voice emphasis, or loudness. A pitch difference is not consistent. Accent is written as [´] before the vowel to be stressed in the following examples, but is not written in literature outside the dictionary. Compare the following pairs, for example:

<i>kita</i>	[k´ita`]	'see'
<i>kita</i>	[kit´a]	'we inclusive'

<i>ubos</i>	[´ubos]	‘depleted’
<i>ubos</i>	[ub´os]	‘lower area’

## 2.6. New Consonant Clusters

In native words, there are few syllable-initial consonant clusters and no word-medial consonant clusters of more than two consonants. Most of the syllable-initial consonant clusters have been introduced into Masbatenyo by loan words from Spanish and English.

### 2.6.1. Syllable-initial Consonant Clusters

The syllable-initial consonant clusters are combinations which have various consonants as the first member but for the second member are restricted to either *l*, *r*, *w* or *y*.

Those having *l* as the second member are:

*pl, bl, kl, gl*

Those having *r* as the second member are:

*br, dr, gr, kr, tr*

Those clusters having *w* as the second member are:

*bw, gw, kw, pw, sw*

Those clusters having *y* as the second member are:

*by, py, dy, ty, my, sy.*

### 2.6.2. Medial Three-member Consonant Clusters

There are a few three-member consonant clusters which have been introduced by borrowed words.

<i>ntr</i>	<i>myintras</i>	‘while’
<i>spl</i>	<i>esplikar</i>	‘explain’
<i>nts</i>	<i>plantsa</i>	‘press clothes’

### 2.6.3. Affricates in Borrowed Words

Borrowed words containing affricates are usually reinterpreted using Masbatenyo phonemes.

The voiceless alveopalatal affricate *ch* is reinterpreted as the consonant cluster *ts*.

Example: *icha* (Sp.) ‘throw’ is written and pronounced *itsa*.

The voiced alveo-palatal affricate *j* is reinterpreted as the consonant cluster *dy*.

Example: *jeep* (Eng.) is pronounced and written *dyip*.

### 3. Morphophonemic Changes in Masbatenyo

Under certain conditions the joining of words or parts of words in Masbatenyo speech precipitates changes in the sounds at the borders where they meet. The types of changes are consonant addition, assimilation, loss of sounds, metathesis, accent shift, and combinations of these. Changes occur both within words and across word boundaries.

#### 3.1. Consonant Addition

When vowel-final stems are suffixed with vowel-initial suffixes, an *h* is appended to the stem before the suffix is attached. Examples:

*asikaso* 'take care of someone' + *-a* = *asikasuha*

*intindi* 'understand' + *-an* = *intindihan*

#### 3.2. Changes Due to Assimilation

The process of assimilation in Masbatenyo involves primarily the nasal phonemes.

##### 3.2.1. Assimilation of Morphemes Ending with *ng*

Prefixes ending in *ng* assimilate to the point of articulation of the following stem-initial consonant. In the following examples the glottal stop is written as *q* to give it a visible symbol.

<i>-ng + b-</i> → <i>-mb-</i>	<i>-ng + g-</i> → <i>-ngg-</i>
<i>-ng + d-</i> → <i>-nd-</i>	<i>-ng + q-</i> → <i>-ngq-</i>
<i>-ng + l-</i> → <i>-nl-</i>	

Examples:

*nagpang + batuta* → *nagpambatuta* 'was clubbed'

*pang + gasto* → *panggasto* 'expense'

*nagapang + lambat* → *nagapanlambat* 'is netting for fish'

The examples show how the nasal *-ng* changes, but the consonants which cause assimilation are more numerous than just those in the examples: *-ng* assimilates to *-m* before any bilabial consonant (*p, b, m, w*), to *-n* before alveolar consonants (*t, d, s, n, l*), and remains *-ng* before velar and glottal consonants (*k, g, ng, h*).

However there are some word roots which do not participate in these changes. Examples:

*pangbanlaw* 'for rinsing'

*pangtagbo* 'for dripping'

*nanglainlain* 'various, different'

*nangdadakop* 'are catching'

Across word boundaries there is assimilation in speech of the final nasals in the noun case marking particles *an*, *san*, and *sin*, and in the sequencing particles *man* and *naman*. However, this assimilation is not written in the practical orthography. Examples:

*am pagsasakay* is written *an pagsasakay* 'the riding'

*sam mataba* is written *san mataba* 'of the fat ones'

*madulom namang ngani* is written *madulom naman ngani* '...then it was really dark...'

### 3.2.2. Assimilation with Consonant Loss

In some words there is a combination of assimilation and consonant loss. This happens in the following way. The final nasal consonant of the affix assimilates to the initial consonant of the stem, then the stem consonant is deleted. Examples:

*pang-* + *batyagon* → *pamatyagon* 'feelings'

*nang-* + *buhay* → *namuhay* 'lived'

*nang-* + *kuha* → *nanguha* 'got'

*mang-* + *kita* → *mangita* 'to earn'

*nang-* + *tukdo* → *nanukdo* 'taught'

*mang-* + *siguro* → *maniguro* 'be sure'

When a word-final nasal assimilates to another nasal across word boundaries, the geminate cluster of nasals is reduced to only one. However, the original nasals are written. Examples:

*an manga maati* → *amanga maati* 'the dirty ones'

*Hugason mo na la.* → *Hugasumon la.* 'Just wash (it).'

### 3.3. Changes Due to Loss

When a vowel cluster results from the deletion of a glottal stop, the cluster is usually reduced. Examples:

...*amō idto na maayo* → *amidto na maayo* '...that is that good...'

Certain words lose the vowel of the last syllable when suffixed but retain the word-final consonant. Examples:

*nalimot* + *-an* → *nalimtan* 'forgot'

*nahangad* + *-an* → *nahangdan* 'looked up'

In a few words the loss of the vowel in the final syllable of the stem is coupled with metathesis of the two consonants thus brought together. Examples:

*na-* + *sulod* + *-an* → *nasudlan* 'was entered'

*kapawà* + *-an* → *kapaw-an* 'light'

*ir-* + *inom* + *-on* → *irimnon* 'a drink'

*punò* + *-on* → *pun-on* 'to fill'

Following vowel-final words the particles *an*, *na*, and *sa* undergo a double change. The vowel is lost and the consonant is attached to the preceding word. Examples:

*Amo na la ini.* → *Amon la ini.* 'It's just this.'

*Nakita na dayon.* → *Nakitan dayon.* 'It was immediately seen.'

*Hugason mo na la.* → *Hugasumon la.* 'Just wash (it).'

*...nakakadi sa San Jacinto.* → *...nakakadis San Jacinto.* '...were-able-to-come-here to San Jacinto.'

*Sin-o an malampaso?* → *Sin-on malampaso?* 'Who will scrub the floor?'

The particles *san* and *sin* are often contracted to the immediately preceding word if it ends in either a glottal or vowel. The glottal is first deleted and the first CV of the particles are also deleted, then the remaining *-n* is attached to the preceding word. Examples:

*...minsan wara sin kwarta.* → *...minsan waran kwarta.* '...once without money.'

*...karaon kami san pangalasdosi.* → *...karaon kamin pangalasdosi.* '...we-excl ate lunch.'

*...damo sin tawo.* → *...damon tawo.* '...many people.'

Some vowel-final words which add an [h] when suffixed, lose the final vowel before the suffix is attached but retain the [h]. Examples:

*dara* 'carry' + *-on* → *darhon*

*dara* 'carry' + *-a* → *darha*

*nalaba* 'laundered' + *-an* → *nalabhan*

### 3.4. Devoicing

There is an optional devoicing of vowels when they follow voiceless consonants. The voice articulators are heard to move and the air stream is perceived to be affected, but the particular sounds devoiced are identified primarily by recognition of the lexical unit uttered. This devoicing is not written in the practical orthography since it is an optional feature, but in the following examples the devoiced vowels are written with capital letters. Examples:

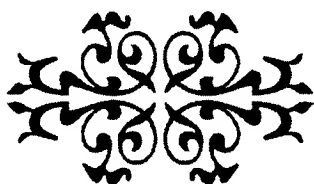
*...sin madakop sa akon.* → *...sin madakOp sa akon.* '...the one who will catch me.'

*...igwa sin hianti...* → *...igwa sin hIganti...* '...there was a giant...'

*kaugalian...* → *kAugalian...* 'a habit...'



# A MASBATENYO-ENGLISH DICTIONARY



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Manila, 2001