

A SYSTEMATIC ORTHOGRAPHY FOR WRITING IFUGAO¹

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1. SYMBOLS

A simple way of writing Ifugao requires only 19 lowercase letters (5 vowels and 14 consonants) and 1 long mark.

typed:	handprinted: ²
i e a o u	i e a o u
m n ŋ l -	m n ŋ l -
b d g w y	b d g w y
p t k h q	p t k h q

There is no standard dialect of the Ifugao language. Instead, there are many local variants, each with its slightly differing vocabulary and rules of pronunciation. These 20 signs, however, are sufficient for representing phonemically most if not all dialect forms (words, particles, phrases, etc.) in a systematic and accurate manner with internal consistency and without ambiguity. In the alphabetic listing of symbols that follows, illustrative examples derive from current usage in Baynñan, where this system of orthography has been employed effectively since 1962.

¹I wrote this note in early 1991 in Baynñan, Banaue, in response to requests from Ifugao friends who had observed this orthography in use but who did not understand certain symbols and conventions. After three decades, the system described here has spread both geographically and through several generations.

²Printed by Buwāya Tindūngan.

3. PHONETIC NOTES

Ifugao words always begin with a consonant (C), though they may end in either a consonant or a vowel (V). Intervocally, consonants occur as -C-, -C₁C₁-, or -C₁C₂-. Vowels may occur medially or finally as -V, -V₁V₁, or -V₁V₂. In prefinal syllables they may occur in long (V̄) as well as in short, unmarked (V) form.

In syllable-initial position, the lax, voiced stops, *b*, *d*, and *g*, show a wide variety of affrication and other types of coarticulation.⁷ Similarly, in syllable-final position, the lateral *l* and fricative *h* cover a broad phonetic range from [l] to [ʃ], as in the American English *r*] and from [h] and [x] to [s], respectively. These noncontrastive positional variants are automatically determined by the phonological rules of each dialect and do not require minute differentiation orthographically. This phonetic richness, however, partly accounts for the many and frequently inconsistent and consequently confusing ways these phonemes have been written over many decades by different foreign and local writers. For example, /q/ has been indicated by a hyphen, an apostrophe, grave and circumflex accents, j, h, or nothing; /b/ by b, f, bf, ph, py, or wf; /d/ by d, ts, or ch; /l/ by l, r, g, or e; /h/ by h, j, s, or nothing.

The display below summarizes some of the pertinent data for Baynān Ifugao. Similar tables can be drawn up for any Ifugao dialect and in most cases the phonemic orthography used will remain intact. (The system used on the maps and in the text of the *Ethnographic Atlas of Ifugao* is congruent with the analysis presented here. Vowel length is marked identically, glottal stop is always indicated by a raised comma, *ŋ* is written as *ng*; and in initially capitalized proper names, /qV-/ becomes V-, e.g., Amgānad. Similarly congruent, since 1968, are the orthographies used in Summer Institute of Linguistics works on Batad Ifugao lexicography.)

/ŋ ^h /	[ŋ]
/q/	[ʔ] ~ [ʃ]
/V̄/	[V̄] ~ [V:]
/p/	[p̣]
/t/	[ṭ ^s]

⁷In some dialects, these three consonants occur initially as fricatives.

⁸Virgules / / enclose phonemic symbols, square brackets [] set off subphonemic, allophonic variants. Diacritics used to indicate phonetic detail include: ◻ tenseness, ◻ laxness, ◻ palatalization, and ◻ unreleased closure; ◻ stands for a nonsyllabic retroflexed unrounded mid central vowel.

On typewriters and computers lacking means of representing the two nonstandard English keyboard signs, *h* and *ḥ*, the former can be typed as N, as r (a letter not used in the Ifugao 'alphabet' so that only the hooked lower right 'tail' needs to be added by hand: *g*), or in most cases as *ng*; in place of the latter, a following colon (:), or any available accent can be used (e.g., -, ^, or ') inasmuch as only one phonemic mark is needed. Thus, *bu:tung*, *bātun* or *bātun* for *bātuṇ*. Where [s] has become a noncontrastive but common pronunciation for *ḥ* in positions other than after /l/, underscoring may be employed. Thus, *ḥeṇḥuḥ* as well as *heṇḥuḥ*, for 'census'.

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- /k/ [k'] ~ [k]
- /b/ [p'(a)-], [p-], [-b']
- /d/ [g-] ~ [ç-], [-d']
- /g/ [k'(a)-], [k-], [-g']
- /l/ [l-], [-ʃ-] ~ [Eng. “-r”]
- /h/ [h-], [-(i)s], [- { a / o / u } x]

4. SAMPLE TEXT* (and free translation)

nan qāat di panūdoqtuqud baynīnan

nan panūdoqtuqud baynīnan ya maphod ti qagqagah bahāon muqun qinnīla nan naqohha ya nan naduwwan kanhenen qumat goh nan naqohha ya nan naduwwan bāwel, qihaqqādan hi gālih nan baqtun di bāwel qan maqāyun di paṅali, ya quhalon go nan q ya nan ṅ hi qawadan di qahapūlanda, ta qinnilāon hi nahamad di qaton. nan meklon (˘) ya quhalon qan paṅalih hinan baqtun di bāwel qan maqāyun di paṅali, qumat hinan *qīme*, *qūyun*, *qaligūyun*, *baṅbaṅ*, *ballūha*, ya *pentōlan*. nan *q* ya qohan kanhenen qan quhalon muqun makohhēpet di bagaṅ qun qayyon hinan hīpun, gawwāna, ya diqpuh di hāpet qumat hinan *qamat*, *qemog*; *bāqi*, *bīqal*; *baqlo*, *hulqud*; ya *habloq*, *qaggeq*, *qayyoq*, ya *qālaq*. ya nan ṅ ya padduṅ nan paṅalih nan ‘ng’ qan qohay kanhenen qan qumat hinan *ṅādan*, *qoṅal*, *gīṅa*, *botṅe* ya *baṅbaṅ*

Our System of Writing in Baynīnan

Baynīnan writing works well, it’s easy to read because we distinguish single and double consonants as well as single and double vowels, place a line over long vowels, and always use *q*’s and *ṅ*’s to mark needed glottal stops and back nasals, respectively. More explicitly, a macron (˘) is used to mark the vowels in long syllables, such as in *qīme*, *qūyun*, *qaligūyun*, *baṅbaṅ*, *ballūha*, and *pentōlan*. A *q* marks initial, internal, and final glottal stops, such as in *qamat*, *qemog*; *bāqi*, *bīqal*; *baqlo*, *hulqud*; and *habloq*, *qaggeq*, *qayyoq*, and *qalaq*. An *ṅ* stands for the digraph ‘ng’ when it represents a single consonant, such as in *ṅādan*, *qoṅal*, *gīṅa*, *botṅe* and *baṅbaṅ*.

Conklin, Harold. 1991. A systematic orthography for writing Ifugao. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics* 22:1-2:31-36.

* Written by Būgan Doyog.