

# THE SIGNIFICANT SOUNDS OF IVATAN

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## 0. Introduction

The Province of Batanes is composed of 9 islands, only 3 of which are inhabited: Itbayat, Batan, and Sabtang. These islands, located approximately 150 miles north of the northern tip of Luzon and 100 miles southeast of Formosa, form the northern boundary of the Philippines. The 11,000 inhabitants are linguistically divided into 3 dialects:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Itbayat (approximately 2,000 speakers).
- (b) Northern Ivatan, spoken mainly in Basco, the provincial capitol, located on Batan Island (approximately 3,000 speakers).
- (c) Southern Ivatan, spoken in the other towns of Batan Island and on Sabtang Island (approximately 6,000 speakers).

The Itbayat dialect is linguistically the most complex, employing 25 significant sounds. Northern Ivatan uses 24 significant sounds and Southern Ivatan, 23. The following symbols, used in accordance with the remainder of this paper, are considered adequate for these three dialects: a, b, k, d, dy, e, g, h, i, l, m, n, ny, ng, o, p, r, s, t, ts, v, w, x, y, and ʔ. Wherever practicable, this orthography conforms to that of the National Language.

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(1) The authors began a study of these dialects under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in February 1955 while residing in Manila, and established their residence in Mahatao, Batanes in January 1956, where they are continuing their study. The chief informants for materials for this paper have been Alvilino Milyan, Donato Viola, and Ricardo Facuri, speakers of Itbayat, Northern Ivatan and Southern Ivatan dialects respectively. The authors are indebted to Alan Healey, of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, whose advice and valuable contributions in the organization of the data have made this paper possible in its present form.

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