

12. Kagayanen

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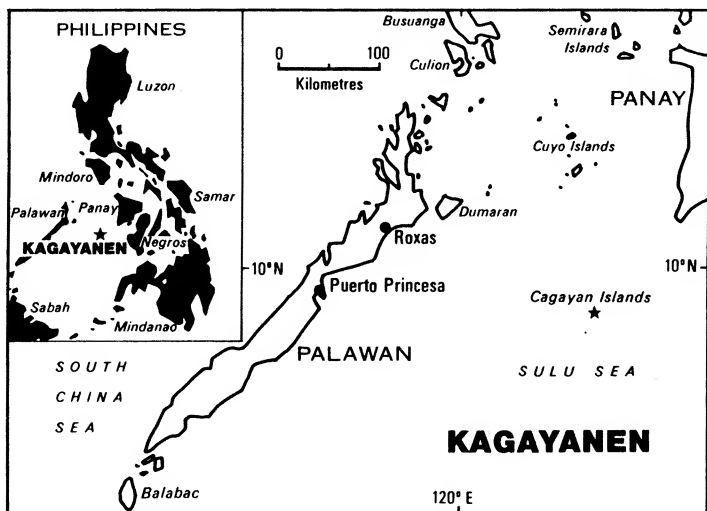
1. Introduction

Kagayanen is one of many languages spoken in the Province of Palawan, Philippines. The municipality of Cagayancillo, which consists of the Cagayan Islands in this province, is the ethnocentre for the language and the only municipality in which Kagayanen is the predominant language spoken. The Cagayan Islands are located in the central area of the Sulu Sea between the island of Negros to the east and the main island of the Province of Palawan, which is also called Palawan, to the west. Large numbers of Kagayanen have moved to the island of Palawan during this century, so that many villages now exist scattered up and down its eastern coastal plains in which Kagayanens predominate. Kagayanens can also be found as far north as Busuanga Island and as far south as Balabac Island. The municipalities of Roxas, Puerto Princesa City, and Narra, in particular, have barrios with high concentrations of Kagayanens. Kagayanen is spoken by approximately 15,000 to 20,000 people, of whom about 5,000 live in the Cagayan Islands.

A dialect of Kagayanen called Kinagayanen is spoken on the island of Coron in the northern part of the Province of Palawan. No research has been conducted to determine how this dialect compares with Kagayanen as spoken in the Cagayan Islands. Differences between the Kagayanen spoken in the Cagayan Islands and on mainland Palawan continue to develop. Tagalog has a strong influence on the languages for those living on Palawan, whereas the trade language of Hiligaynon has greater influence on those living in the Cagayan Islands. In the comparative lexicon the abbreviation (CGC) marks those items more common to Cagayancillo and the abbreviation (PAL) marks those items more common to mainland Palawan, where such differences occur.

The major linguistic work done to date on the Kagayanen language is the unpublished 1977 doctoral dissertation of Carol Jean W. Harmon. In her dissertation she argues that Kagayanen should be classified as a Manobo language, not a Visayan one. While it has a heavy overlay of vocabulary from Hiligaynon, the language of southern Panay Island and the Province of

Negros Occidental, its grammar and functors are distinctly Manobo. Harmon links Kagayanen roots to the northern Manobo groups on the island of Mindanao. No tradition, however, exists among the Kagayanens concerning their Mindanao origins. It is surmised that the arrival of the first “Kagayanens” to Cagayancillo would have occurred more than 200 years ago based on the age of the Spanish built structures there and the date of the first known “president” of the islands.



Map 12. Kagayanen language area

Data on the Kagayanen language have been collected by the author and her husband (Scott W. MacGregor) since late 1976 during periods of residence in Caguisan, Narra, Palawan and shorter visits to Cagayancillo. Mr Javier C. Carcelar, a retired teacher and native of Cagayancillo, was of special help in preparing the wordlist for this volume. Fieldwork was conducted under the auspices of The Summer Institute of Linguistics which serves in cooperation with the Philippine government’s Department of Education, Culture, and Sports. Our work would not have been possible without the gracious assistance given by various officials and especially our neighbours in Caguisan.