

THE PHONEMES OF KALAGAN

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0. Introduction

0.1 Background of Study

The Kalagan people live in the Cotabato and Davao provinces of Mindanao. Most of them live on the Sarangani Peninsula but some are reported to live across the Davao Gulf on the peninsula there. The peoples they contact on the fringes of their area are the Bilaan, Bagobo, Sarangani Manobo, and Magindanao. Some Kalagans have also had contact with the Mansaka people of Davao.¹

This study is based upon the dialect spoken around the Lumabat and Mainit river areas, beyond Malungon, Cotabato. The people of this area travel much between the Cotabato and Davao provinces. The writer has spent about 18 months among the people, and, under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics has gathered material from many native speakers who speak little or no English. The informants used for formal study were Gili Mungud, a man about thirty years old who speaks a little English and some Ilongo and Bilaan, and Ulian Angeles, a younger man of eighteen years who also has a limited understanding of English. Ulian had never lived away from his own language area and does not speak any of the neighboring dialects. The parents of both were Kalagans.

(1) The number of Kalagan speakers is uncertain, being variously estimated as 7,000 (THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, Frank C. Laubach, 1925) and 21,000 (H. Otley Beyer, 1942).

The people of the area in which this study was made do not distinguish Kalagan and Tagacaolo (Tagakolu) as two different peoples. They admit however, to a difference in the speech of their relatives living near Digos, Davao; but they prefer to speak of all as Kalagan and the mountain dwellers as Kalagan-Tagakolu, (i.e., Kalagans from the river source).

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