

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE LANGUAGE OF THE TASADAY

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 1971, it was announced in the Philippines that a group of 26 people calling themselves Tasaday had been discovered living in caves in a remote area of the rainforest of Southern Mindanao. Their existence was first revealed by a hunter named Dafal who belonged to a neighboring group that lived on the edge of the rainforest, and who claimed to have come upon them while hunting several years earlier. Manuel Elizalde, Jr., at that time head of a Marcos government agency (PANAMIN) established to assist tribal minorities in the country was notified of their existence and proceeded to bring a number of prominent scientists, both Filipino and foreign to study the group. He also contacted National Geographic, and various news agencies who were eager to send in teams of photographers and journalists by helicopter to report on what soon came to be referred to as one of the most important anthropological discoveries of modern time, a group of isolated, stone tool using people, living in caves apparently without any prior knowledge that there were people other than themselves and a couple of other small cave dwelling groups from whom they got their wives, living in the world.

After two years of international renown during which they were visited by a range of the rich and famous as well as by fewer than a dozen anthropologists, linguists and other scientists (the longest for a period of only six weeks¹), access to the group was forbidden by the government, which had by that time established a National Reserve for them, ostensibly to protect them from the otherwise inevitable encroachments of loggers, miners and other potential exploiters of the area where the Tasaday lived.

During the turmoil associated with the overthrow of the Marcos regime in 1986, a Swiss journalist, Oswald Iten, found his way into the area and later announced that he had discovered the Tasaday living in houses, and clothed in modern clothing. He claimed that the whole Tasaday hoopla had been a carefully designed hoax, set up by Elizalde for his own nefarious purposes, to further his own political claims or to gain exclusive access to the logging and mining rights in the area. There followed a new set of TV programs, a protracted Philippine Senate investigation into the whole affair, a conference at the University of the Philippines at which a local anthropologist claimed to have genealogical evidence showing that each of the Tasaday was actually a member of

¹ In 1972, Douglas Yen (botanist) spent six weeks in two visits; Carlos Fernandez (sociologist) spent four weeks in two visits; Hermes Gutierrez (botanist) spent four weeks. In the twelve years between 1974 and 1986, the only other scientist to visit the Tasaday was Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt of the Max Planck Institute, who stayed for three days in 1974.

one of the two neighboring language groups, either Blit Manobo or Tboli, and were paid actors in an elaborate scheme to defraud the general public. The Tasaday were being called the greatest hoax since Piltdown man.

I first became aware of the issues during a dinner at The International Congress on Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Zagreb, in 1988, when I found myself seated next to Judith Moses, the producer of the ABC-TV documentary, "The Tribe That Never Was." By the following day I had also had conversations with John Nance, author of the book "The Gentle Tasaday". He had been in the Philippines in 1971 when the story of the Tasaday was first announced and had managed to get invited aboard the helicopters whenever they flew visitors in to visit the group, and was absolutely convinced as to their authenticity.

I had gone to the Congress to present a paper on my research on Philippine Negrito groups, but decided to also sit in on the symposium that was being held on the so-called Tasaday Hoax. It seemed to me that there was one line of evidence that had not been explored. If a hoax was involved, surely it would be apparent in the linguistic data that was gathered by the linguists and anthropologists during the initial contacts that had been made with them in the early '70s. Tboli is not a Manobo language, in fact it is as different from Manobo languages as perhaps English is from Russian. They belong to different first order subgroups of Philippine languages. It would be interesting, I thought, to critically examine the responses that were recorded to questions posed by the first investigators, for signs of linguistic hanky-panky, or at least for evidence that there was an educated Tboli masquerading as a primitive stone-age cave-dweller.

The result of this examination of the data was that I became pretty much convinced that the hoax proponents were themselves the hoax makers. There seemed to me to be no evidence whatsoever that there had been any linguistic shenanigans going on. In fact, the types of responses given and the differences apparent in the lists of different investigators, seemed to me to be clear evidence of the linguistically unsophisticated nature of the Tasaday. I presented the results of this study in 1989, at an American Anthropological Association symposium in Washington, D.C., which had been called to evaluate the scientific evidence for and against the Tasaday. It was published last year in "The Tasaday Controversy: Assessing the Evidence," AAA Scholarly Series Special Publication No, 28, edited by Thomas N. Headland. Included in the book are three other papers dealing with the Tasaday language. One was by Carol Molony, a sociolinguist who spent a total of two weeks with the Tasaday in 1972 during which she gathered about 800 words and 45 pages of text which she subsequently published. Another was by Richard Elkins, an SIL linguist who got his Ph.D. from UH in 1964, and who by 1971 had spent 18 years doing linguistic work in the Philippines, mostly with the Central Bukidnon Manobos, whose language he spoke fluently. He spent only 4 days with the Tasaday in 1971 because of health problems that forced him to leave earlier than planned. He did however collect a list of about 350 items. The third paper was by another SIL linguist, Clay Johnston, who had spent 10 years with the Manobo group who live in the town of Kalamansig, north of the Tasaday area, and who spoke the Kalamansig Manobo language fluently. He had been asked to review the Tasaday data that had been collected in the early '70s and to compare it with the language that he knew.

Molony's paper (1992:115) concluded that "logically, it is very difficult to imagine that Elizalde or anyone else was clever enough" to create a language and choreograph events for over a year and a half so that neither adults nor children ever

slipped in their presentation to outsiders. She claimed that the speech of the Tasaday was a distinct dialect of Manobo indicating separation from other groups, though not necessarily complete isolation from them, as she had earlier claimed.

Elkins' paper (1992:117) similarly concluded that "the Tasaday, at the time of their discovery, were a speech community which had developed, to some degree, separately from the other Manobo groups nearby". He also noted that other aspects of Tasaday social behavior were atypical of other Mindanao tribal groups with which he was familiar, including the Cotabato Manobo, and that it followed that "the Tasaday were not picked at random from other groups and persuaded to perform for journalists and social scientists."

Johnston checked both Elkins and Molony's data against his own knowledge of the nearby Cotabato Manobo language, and played a taped text which had been recorded by Molony, to native speakers of that language. His conclusion was that Tasaday was a close dialect of the language that he knew, with perhaps as much as 90% shared vocabulary². The tape was recognized by native speakers as being a variety of Cotabato Manobo, but spoken "with different intonation", "having gaps", or being "clumsy, awkward" (1992:145). He did note also that vocabulary differences between the two dialects were significant, in that many were basic terms such as "sun", "moon", "star", "cloud", "rain", "tree", etc., many of which had no known equivalent in any other Philippine language, while one term, Tas *nahagtay* "dead", had completely switched its meaning from Kal *nahagtay* "alive".

During the discussion period at the end of the presentation of these papers, a husband and wife team of Filipino linguists, Araceli and Cesar Hidalgo, took the floor to briefly describe the results of their own research with the Tasaday, a three day venture in 1989, during which they were able to collect Tasaday equivalents for a modified Swadesh 100 word list. Their conclusions were extraordinary in that they claimed to have uncovered a large number of previously unrecorded terms within the basic vocabulary list that were apparently unrelated to other Philippine languages. Their calculations showed that Tasaday shared only 25% with its closest linguistic neighbor, Cotabato Manobo, and as low as about 9% with Binukid, one of the Northern Manobo languages. Using glottochronological methodology for estimating the approximate time-depth of coconvergence, they then claimed that the Tasaday had begun diverging from other Manobos about 8000 years ago, and completed their separation from Cotabato Manobo some 4,500-5000 years³, which would be great if it were true, the Southern Philippines would be the homeland for Proto-Austronesian, and Tasaday would be a first order

² This was perhaps an unwise extrapolation, given that his count was based on a couple of hundred words of basic vocabulary, where cognature could be expected to be higher than in other areas of vocabulary. Nevertheless the dialects were similar enough it seems that the Tasaday text was quite intelligible to Southern Cotabato Manobo speakers.

³ One of the linguists who had first gotten data from the group in 1971, Teodoro Llamzon, using glottochronology had estimated a period of separation from Cotabato Manobo as around 800 years, and this figure was widely reported as being the period of isolation that this group must have had from other Manobo people.

branch of the Austronesian language family, and one moreover that had developed without contact with any other language.

Their second claim was even more interesting. They claimed that the texts that Molony collected in 1972 were grammatically inconsistent.

The Hidalgos' concluded that at the time Molony did her field work, the Tasaday were in the process of becoming bilingual in Blit Manobo the language of the geographically closest Manobos, and that it was their clumsy attempts at speaking Blit that Molony recorded. It is interesting in this respect that early Blit Manobo interpreters claimed to understand less than half of what the Tasaday said, and the journalist John Nance discusses instances in his book when the Tasaday switched to speaking some form of language that nobody understood, at times when they did not wish anybody to know what they were talking about. The Hidalgos end their paper with a plea to record and study the real Tasaday language before it becomes extinct.

This was the state of affairs when I went to the Philippines in January, 1990 to do five months research with several of the Negrito groups of Northern Luzon. In March of that year, I had returned to Manila after gathering a set of data from the last remaining speakers of the Arta language, a group of about 13 Negritos, most of whom were intermarried with speakers of other languages. In response to their pleas for assistance I called the then Under-Secretary for Agriculture in charge of special projects, to see if some sort of government aid might be available to the Arta. After discussing my request, I was surprised to be asked if I would like to visit the Tasaday. It turned out that the Under-Secretary for Agriculture was Carlos Fernandez, a sociologist who had visited the Tasaday on several occasions in 1971 and subsequently. As I understood it, he had just returned from a visit to Tboli town to investigate reports of loggers attempting to enter the Tasaday reserve. He told me that a group of Tasaday had temporarily left their homes and were staying in the house of the town mayor, and that it would be an excellent opportunity for me to get some Tasaday data without the difficulty of hiking into the rainforest if I could drop what I was doing and immediately go south to Mindanao. He said all expenses would be taken care of. A hasty meeting was arranged with Elizalde, whom I had never met before. A Filipino anthropologist, Amy Rogel-Rara, who had spent approximately a year in the area collecting genealogical data in 1988-89 was asked to accompany me, and in three days we were face to face with a group of Tasaday that included Dul and her husband Udelen, four of their children, Maman, Okon, Klohonon, and Fasel; Lobo and Funding, the second of his three wives; Natek and Dego, sons of Bilangan and Etut; and Adug. Also present at various times during the next eight days of my visit were several speakers of Blit Manobo, including Datu Mafalo, Dudim and his sister Bol, and Igna Kilam, a speaker of Sdaf Manobo, all names familiar to any who have followed the saga of the Tasaday. There was also an educated young man who spoke Kalamansig Cotabato Manobo and a considerable number of speakers of Tboli, including Mai Tuan, the mayor, and one or another of his 13 or so legal wives, and several of his children. My main language assistants were the woman Dul, and the young man Lobo. I also gathered data from speakers of both Blit and Sdaf, as well as from the speaker of Kalamansig, who requested a copy of my Tasaday wordlist, so he could learn to speak the language. He obviously did not understand it well enough to be able to communicate easily with them, as would be expected if Johnston's claims reflected the situation as it was at the time I was there.

I worked with a wordlist of over 600 items, not all of which were collected, and I also elicited equivalents of a set of sentences chosen to reveal the syntactic patterns commonly found in other Philippine languages. The anthropologist Amy Rogel-Rara, who was well-known to most of the members of the group because of her prior research in the area, conveyed my questions in Tagalog to Igna, who has acted as an interpreter for visitors since the earliest contacts with the Tasaday. Igna then conveyed them to Dul, speaking in what was said to be Blit Manobo. By the end of the period I was directly eliciting from Lobo, using simple Tasaday questions.

Because I had not been expecting to make this trip to the Tasaday, I did not have any of the previous Tasaday data with me, which handicapped me somewhat, but it also meant that I was not influenced by the other data sources and I ended up with a completely independent set of data against which I could compare the previous materials. Knowing the claims that the Hidalgos had made, I made it clear that I wanted to get words from the real Tasaday language that they used to speak before. The forms that I recorded seemed to me to confirm that the language is more lexically aberrant than had been claimed by Johnston, but probably not as aberrant as the Hidalgos had claimed. A sound change that had not been noted was found, and at least one other phonological difference from Cotabato Manobo was discovered. Explanations were also available for some of the so-called syntactic irregularities that the Hidalgos described.

I must emphasize that my conclusions must be considered very tentative. I was not adequately prepared for the research, the elicitation conditions were far from ideal, with crowded noisy rooms and lots of on-lookers, and a three-way interpretation procedure for elicitation. Moreover, I only have Johnston's unpublished Cotabato Manobo dictionary available for comparative purposes. There is another more extensive dictionary by Errington available in computer printout, but I have not yet been able to acquire a copy of it.

2 PHONOLOGY

The Tasaday phonology is very similar to each of the Manobo speech varieties spoken in Cotabato province. with 6 vowels: *i, u, o, ə, ə, a*; and 15 consonants: *f, t, k, ʔ, b, d, g, m, n, ŋ, s, h, l, w, y*. The mid front vowel is relatively infrequent. It does not occur in forms in Tasaday that are unique, and even in forms that appear to be cognate with Kal forms having a midfront vowel, Tasaday, and sometimes also Blit and Sdaf have a corresponding central vowel. For example: Tsd, Blt, Sdf *bələŋ*, Kal *bələn* "cheek"; Tsd *tukəʔəy*, Kal *tukəʔəy* "few, small"; Tsd *ówəʔ*; CM *owəʔ* "term of address for female friend"; Tsd *mətəʔəl* "strong", Kal *təʔəl* "fast".

There is a sound change which seems to be in progress in Tasaday, but not in any of the other surrounding Manobo languages (although it does occur in some Manobo languages spoken outside Cotabato) by which the phoneme /l/ loses its lateral feature and is pronounced as [y] intervocalically, and as either a vowel, [a] or [ə], or sometimes [əɭ] word finally. In other Manobo languages in which a similar change has taken place, it is blocked by an adjacent high front vowel. The same condition is probably true also for Tasaday. Examples:

Loss of *l in Tasaday

	Tasaday (R)	Other	Gloss
1.	bəyad	Kal bəlad	hand, arm
2.	məbuyaʔ	Kal məbulaʔ	white
3.	əgá	Kal əgəl	vein
4.	abá	Kal əbəl	smoke
5.	fundua	TsdH fondol	walk
6.	mətoloa	TsdH matolol	pretty, good
7.	kunua	Kal kunul	skin
8.	təbua	TsdH tobul	water

3 LEXICON

Previous work by Johnston and others has confirmed that Tasaday has a number of lexical innovations, many in the area of basic vocabulary. Table 1 lists the terms in my data that are possibly lexical innovations. Many of these terms have been elicited by others, and are surely innovations. Those which appear only in my data, are possibly elicitation errors. There are about 45 possible innovations in my data that were also recorded by one or more other researchers. They are: belly, bite, blood, cloud, crow, drink, earth, eat, eye, father, female, fish, four, full, give, go, good, g-string, head, hear, hot, house, intestines, lonely, moon, new, nose, path, rain, say, sleep, snake, spider, spouse, star, stone, sun, swim, tree, two, vein, water, white, and wing. Nevertheless, there are extensive differences between the data that the Hidalgos and I independantly collected, and that reported by Molony 1976. Hidalgos' claim that much of her data appears to be much closer to Blit Manobo than what they collected, does indeed seem to be a fact. But whether the explanation that the Hidalgos have given is correct, or whether there are other factors that have brought about the differences is unclear at this point.

4 PRONOUNS

The pronominal data that I present in this section must not be taken too seriously. Although some of it is fairly clear, there appear to be a number of alternate forms in use, and at this time I am unsure whether these are the result of borrowing from surrounding Manobo dialects, or whether the sets of pronouns are being restructured. It should be remembered also that with only a relatively small number of speakers of the language, all of whom are illiterate, there is no "standard Tasaday", one expects considerable variation, and that is what we get. There are gaps in the charts where I do not find appropriate

forms in my data. There are a number of clear differences between these sets and those recorded for other Manobo languages, but because of time constraints, I shall not outline them here.

Set I Genitive Enclitic Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	-ku	kə(nami), -nami
2	-ko	-yu
1,2	-ta	-ta(kəyu)
3	-di	

Examples:

1. idəŋku
mother-my
my mother
2. faʔis kə(nami) sini
knife our (ex) this
This is our knife.

Set II Genitive Full Form Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	hənak / akən	kənami
2	niko	niyu / kəyu
1,2	kənita	kənita
3	kagdi	nagda

Examples:

3. akən idəŋ
my mother
my mother

4. faʔis hənak sini
knife mine this

This knife is mine.

5. kəyu (mə) sini
yours Nom this

This is yours.

Set III. Locative Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	kənak	
2	kəniko	kəyu
1,2	kənita	kənami
3	doto	kagda

Examples:

6. kagda, əndaʔ duʔən atuŋ nami
them not exist thing our

To them, we do not have anything.

Set IV Nominative Clitic Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	-ʔa	-kə
2	-ka	-taniyuʔ
1,2		-takeyu
3	---, iyaʔi	-da

Examples:

7. əndaʔ gəfələŋaʔa əgoh dələman
not able-sleep-I last night

I could not sleep last night.

8. kumundum taniyu?
eat you (pl.)

You (pl.) are eating.

9. sətɪʔidəm takəyu
talk we (incl.)

Let's talk.

Set IV Nominative Long Form Pronouns

	Singular	Plural
1	akən, si akən	nami, kami
2	kana, si niko	
1,2		
3		hagdi

Examples:

10. duən siniko (Molony 1976:40)
exist you

There you are.

11. idəŋku kana
mother-my you

You are my mother.

12. umibəg hagdi tufasanke
desire they land-our (ex.)

They desire our land.

13. kami tuʔu klawawan, tuʔu kəʔətawan
we (ex) true body true people

We are real people.

5 PREDICATION TYPES

5.1 Nominal

14. faʔis hənək sini
knife mine this

This is my knife.

15. iyaʔi si lobo
this Det Lobo

Lobo is that one (near).

5.2 Verbal

5.2.1 Intransitive

5.2.1.1 One argument

Examples:

16. fənuʔuʔa daʔatas mətuluk
sit-I on rock
V Nom Loc

I am sitting on a rock.

17. fəgomaska
bath-you
V Nom

Take a bath.

18. amayan di fəsuʔuʔa
very tired-I
Adv V Nom

I'm very tired.

5.2.1.2 Two argument

Examples:

19. dumuntot kaʔəyaʔi təbolan sini bliboy
 drank of-that water this child
 V Loc Nom

This child drank some of the water.

20. əgfələkətəda baŋiʔ
 wear-they clothes
 V Nom Gen

They are wearing clothes.

5.2.2 Transitive

5.2.2.1 Two argument

Examples:

21. nutubku təfəs
 chew-I betel
 V Gen Nom

I'm chewing the betel.

22. haʔaku lakifəs əgoh məlum
 saw-I civet yesterday
 V Gen Nom Loc

I saw a civet yesterday

23. tiniliŋaku bəŋit bliboy
 heard-I cry child
 V Gen Nom

I heard the crying child.

24. fiŋəŋomasko talakakayko
 cause-bath-you sibling-your
 V Gen Nom

Bathe your sibling.

5.2.2.2 Three argument

25. tigʔimadi kənak sini faʔis
 gave-he to-me this knife
 V Gen Loc Nom
 He gave this knife to me.

5.2.2.3 Word Order

Tasaday sentences are either predicate initial (ex 26-27,30), or subject initial (ex. 28-29, 32-33). The notional object of what is probably an antipassive construction may also occur at the beginning of a sentence (ex 31).

26. ʔadan ənuko
 name what-you
 prdc Nom
 What is your name?

27. hənak sini faʔis
 mine this knife
 prdc Nom
 This knife is mine.

28. sini akən tinlomin
 this my spouse
 Nom prdc
 This is my spouse.

29. laʔun bliboy gumanan
 all child cry
 Nom prdc
 All the children are crying.

30. dumuntot kaʔəyaʔi təbolan sini bliboy
 drank of-that water this child
 prdc Loc Nom
 This child drank some of the water.

31. kaʔəyaʔi təbolan dumuntot sini bliboy
of-that water drank this child

This child drank some of the water.

32. sini bliboy dumuntot kaʔyaʔi təbolan
this child drank of-that water

This child drank some of the water.

33. təbolan dinontotku
water drank-I
Nom prdc-Gen

I drank the water.

5.2.3 Case Marking

5.2.3.1 Nominative

(*ma*) common noun

(*si*) proper noun

Examples:

34. dumuntot (ma)sini bliboy
drink Nom this child

This child is drinking.

35. *dumuntot ma təbolan sini bliboy

36. dinuntot bliboy (ma) təbulan
drank child Nom water

The child drank the water.

37. əgləsut (si) momoʔ əgoh məlum
arrived Nom Momoʔ last night

Momo arrived last night.

5.2.3.2 Genitive

((**n**)**i**) proper noun

(**si**) indefinite common noun

38. tigʔima (ni) momoʔ kənak fuyut dugi
gave Gen Momoʔ to me cover foot

Momo gave the shoes to me.

39. kələsut i momoʔ muna səbaŋ.
arrival Gen Momoʔ last month

Momo arrived last month.

40. dumilək si balawaŋ mahagtay ətaw (Molony 1976:37)
puncture Gen trap kill person

If he is hit by a trap, a person will be killed.

5.2.3.3 Locative

si Temporal noun

41. əgləsut da (si) momoʔ si əgoh di
arrive already Nom Momoʔ Loc before ??

Momo arrived then.

6. COMMENTS ON TASADAY SYNTAX

The Hidalgos commented on a number of points of Tasaday syntax which they considered to be evidence that the speakers did not properly know the language that they were using. They remarked specifically on the following points taken from a published text recorded by Molony in 1972 (Molony 1976:28-73). Some of the apparent inconsistencies are not real inconsistencies, these are cases where the Hidalgos were expecting Tasaday to be like Kalamansig Cotabato Manobo, or other Philippine languages which they know about. In other cases, especially with the use of pronouns, I also found variation in the pattern of forms used. I think that the language is undergoing syntactic change, and that the pronominal system, especially, is in a period of restructuring.

1. The inconsistent affixational pattern of verbs like **haʔa** "to see".

They noted that this verb sometimes occurred unaffixed in sentences that appeared to be "actor-focus" where *humaʔa* would be expected, and sometimes in sentences that appeared to be "non-actor focus" where *hawaʔin* would be expected. They further noted that *hinaʔa*, which one would expect to be the completed aspect form ("definite past"), sometimes occurred in contexts that were "future time, or unrealized action". The same distribution of forms appears in the data that I collected. The reason is fairly clear. Neither Tasaday nor Blit, any longer marks verbs for completive aspect, whereas Kalamansig Cotabato Manobo continues to do so. In the latter language, at least in the limited data that I collected, completive aspect is marked by the prefix *eg-* on actor focus verbs that are completive, whereas *-um-* is used on actor focus verbs that are non-completive.⁴(ex. 40-41). Similarly, with non-actor focus verbs, Blit does not have different verb forms, marking completed action only by adverbs, or past time phrases, whereas Kalamansig uses different verb forms. For example:

MboKC

42. sumulatʔa diyaʔ kəniko kani sigəf
 write-I to you later night
 I'll write to you tonight.

43. əgsulatʔa diyaʔ kəniko əgoh sigəf
 wrote-I to you last night
 I wrote to you last night.

MboBlt

44. sumulatʔa diyaʔ kəniko sini sigəf
 write-I to you this night
 I'll write to you tonight.

45. sumulatʔa diyaʔ kəniko əgoh sigəf
 write-I to you last night
 I wrote to you last night.

MboKC

46. aʔatanku kuna kani sigəf
 await-I you later night
 I'll await you tonight.

⁴ Kerr (1988:6) labels *eg-* present continuous, although numerous examples in his description do not agree with this characterization. Johnston (1975) calls this affix neutral time aspect.

47. egʔaʔatanku kuna egoh sigəf
awaited-I you last night
I awaited you last night.

MboBlt

48. aʔatanku kuna sini sigəf
await-I you this night
I'll await you tonight.

49. aʔatanku kuna egoh sigəf
await-I you last night
I awaited you last night,

MboKC

50. kaʔənənku iniʔi kani sigəf
eat-I this later night
I'll eat this tonight.

51. kinaʔənku iniʔi egoh sigəf
ate-I this last night
I ate this last night.

MboBlt

52. kaʔənənku siniʔi sini sigəf
eat-I this this night
I'll eat this tonight.

53. kaʔənənku siniʔi egoh sigəf
eat-I this last night
I ate this last night.

MboKC

54. ibuʔoŋku kani
throw-I later
I'll throw it away later.

55. igbuʔoŋku əgoh
 threw-I before

I threw it away before.

MboBlt

56. ibuʔoŋku kani
 throw-I later

I'll throw it away later.

57. ibuʔoŋku əgoh sigəf
 throw-I last night

I threw it away last night.

Tasaday appears to have the same verb forms as Blit in most cases, but retains -*in-* (formerly completive aspect marker) as the object focus marker for both completive and not-completive aspect.

2. The inconsistent distribution of particles like *si*. Whereas in Kalamansig, this particle marks only Nominative personal nouns, in Tasaday, it has a wider distribution, occurring as the marker of some long Nominative pronouns, a retention from Proto-Manobo. It also marks what is apparently an indefinite Genitive noun phrase carrying the MNS (Means) case relation (ex. 58). Indefinite Genitive phrases in some Cordilleran languages of Luzon are similarly marked (ex. 59.). There are also a couple of examples of the time adverb *əgoh* being preceded by *si*, suggesting that it may also mark some Locative phrases, as it also does in some Cordilleran languages. The example that the Hidaigos provide of *si* appearing before a Nominative common noun (*ilib* "cave"), is incorrectly interpreted. This was also the given name of one of the children in the group, and in the instances where the phrase *si ilib* occurs in the Molony text, the reference is clearly to the child (ex. 60).

58. dumələk si balawaŋ mahagtay ətaw (Molony ibid, p.37)
 puncture Gen trap die person

If punctured by a trap, a person will die.

59. (Bontok) kinnan si utut nan ubi
 eaten Gen rat Nom sweet.potato

The sweet potato was eaten by a rat.

60. əndaʔ suminigaw dəʔisək bataʔ, əndaʔ si ilib
 not cry little child but Nom Ilib

suminigaw
 cry

The small baby is not crying, but Ilib is crying. (Molony's translation, p. 32).

3. The inconsistent form of pronominals, particularly the first person singular. Philippine languages differ remarkably on the structure of their pronominal systems. Although all languages use three or four different sets, with short, non-case marked clitic, and free (non-clitic), case-marked forms for both Genitive and Nominative pronouns, there has been much analogical levelling, and substitution of forms from one set to another. Ilokano, for example, has several sets of competing Locative pronoun forms, with speakers sometimes freely drawing from one set for one person, and from another for another person.

4. The absence of noun-function markers and sentence linkers in several sentences. Not only Tasaday, but most of the languages in the southern Philippines rely more heavily on word order than on case-marking prepositions to mark syntactic relations than the northern languages typically do. There are no obligatory case-markers in Tasaday. The Hidalgos also commented on the fact that sentences such as ex. 56 above had a conditional clause at the beginning of it, but without any form meaning "if" to introduce it. Such structures are not at all untypical of Philippine languages, and have been described for several languages, including Bontok (Reid).

7. CONCLUSION

There is no conclusion to this story. It is apparent to any unbiased observer that the Tasaday have a form of speech that is distinct from the surrounding communities, but how distinct it is remains a question. Both the lexicon and the verbal morphology, and probably also the syntax is much more different from Kalamansig Manobo than was described by Johnston. There are also differences in lexicon with Blit, although the verbal morphology appears to be more similar than either is with Kalamansig. However, there is no way at the present time to give an adequate account of these differences, simply because no linguist has spent more than a few days at a time with the group.

I reiterate the call that the Hidalgos gave for a careful study of the language that the Tasaday speak, before they are completely assimilated by the surrounding groups. Most of the young members of the original group are now nearing middle age, and it is probably only the few older members of the community who are still alive who can still use the language that was spoken by them prior to the events of the early 1970's. The conditions for doing linguistic research in the area are far from ideal, because of the political tensions in the area, and the physical and emotional strains that are put upon outsiders who attempt to live in a tropical rain forest environment. But the rewards of the research, not only from the linguistic knowledge acquired and the puzzling problems

that can be solved, but also from the real pleasure of working with this unique group of warm, outgoing individuals, should far outweigh these considerations.