Approaches to Endangered Languages in
Japan and Northeast Asia:
Description, Documentation and
Revitalization, NINJAL (Tokyo)

Aug 6, 2018

Slide 1

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Description, Documentation and Revitalization
Aug. 6, 2018. Tokyo: NINJAL

Ryukyuan Languages
from a Typological Perspective:
with a Special Focus on
Marked Nominativity

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Slide 2

Ryukyuan and linguistic typology

- Japanese is one of the most well-known and oft-cited languages in the literature of LT (SOV, topic-prominent, classifier, etc.)
- "Japanese": Standard Japanese

- Much less attention has been paid to the local varieties of Japonic Family, including Ryukyuan, in the literature of LT

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## Marked Nominative alignment

- The present talk aims to demonstrate the potential contribution of Ryukyuan languages by taking up the issue of **Marked nominative.**


- Marked NOM has hitherto been considered an "exception" in LT (e.g. Greenberg 1963, Dixon 1979, Handschuh 2014, König 2006, among others) but is widespread in Ryukyuan languages (Shimoji 2015, 2018).

Slide 4

A brief overview of Marked NOM

Slide 5

Three major alignment patterns in the world's languages

Slide 6
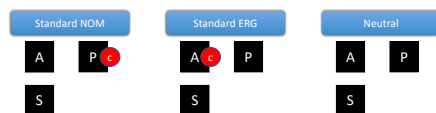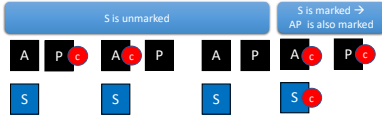
In all three major alignment types,
S is not overtly marked (morphologically unmarked)
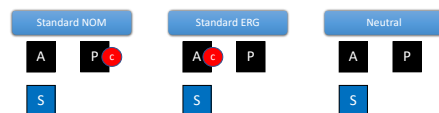
Greenberg's Universal 38

Where there is a case system, the only case which ever has only zero allomorphs is the one which includes among its meanings that of subject of the intransitive verb. (Greenberg 1963: 75)

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Slide 1: Patterns which comply with Universal 38

S is unmarked | S is marked → AP is also marked

A P **c** · A **c** P · A P · A **c** P **c**

S · S · S · S **c**

Greenberg's Universal 38

Where there is a case system, the only case which ever has only zero allomorphs is the one which includes among its meanings that of subject of the intransitive verb. (Greenberg 1963: 75)
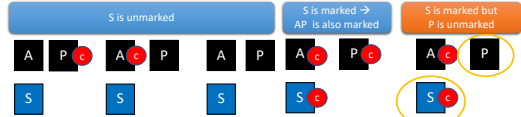
Slide 2: Marked NOM goes against Universal 38

S is unmarked | S is marked → AP is also marked | S is marked but P is unmarked

A P **c** · A **c** P · A P · A **c** P **c** · A **c** P

S · S · S · S **c** · S **c**

Greenberg's Universal 38

Where there is a case system, the only case which ever has only zero allomorphs is the one which includes among its meanings that of subject of the intransitive verb. (Greenberg 1963: 75)

Slide 3: Some examples of Marked NOM: Oirata (Timor; Donohue & Brown 1999: 66)

Marked NOM

A **c** P

S **c**

(1) **in-te**   ee   asi
1PL.EXCL-NOM   2SG.POL   see
'We saw you' [Transitive]

(2) **an-te**   ete   na'a   ippa
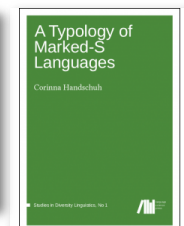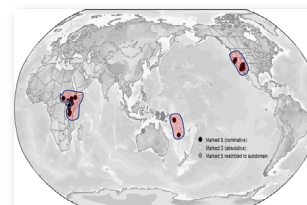1SG-NOM   tree   from   fall
'I fell out of the tree' [Intransitive]

Slide 4: Some examples of Marked NOM: Jamul Tiipay (Yuman; Miller 2001)

Marked NOM

A **c** P

S **c**

(3) **Juan-ch**   uusha.
Juan-NOM   stab
'Juan stabbed (him)' [Transitive]

(4) **peya-ch**   we-nall-xa.
this.one-NOM   3-fall-IRR-EMPH
'This one is going to fall!' [Intransitive]

Slide 5: Some examples of Marked NOM: Tennet (Surmic; Randal 1998)

Marked NOM

A **c** P

S **c**

(5) **ákát**   **Lowór-ɪ**   **yomá**
PFV.spear   Lowor-NOM   Yoma
'Lowor speared Yoma' [Transitive; V A P]

(6) **úk**   **mányúdí-ɪ**   **mgínáátí**
go.PFV   squirrel-NOM   there
'Squirrel went there.' [Intransitive; V S]

Slide 6: Handschuh (2014: 13): Marked NOM is "geographically highly skewed"

A Typology of Marked-S Languages

Corinna Handschuh

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Notice that Ryukyuan is out of issue in the typology

A Typology of Marked-S Languages

Corinna Handschuh
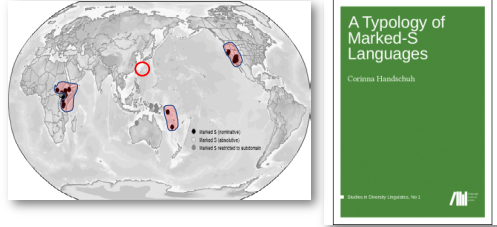
Marked NOM in Ryukyuan

Marked NOM in Ryukyuan: Okinoerabu (NR; Amami, Yokoyama-Tokunaga 2017)

Marked NOM

| A | c | P |
| S | c | |

(7) **wa=ga**   **taroo**   **abit-a-N.**
1SG=NOM   Taro   call-PST-IND
'I called Taro.' [Transitive]

(8) **fattee=cji=wa**   **wa=ga**   **ic-ju-N.**
field=DIR=TOP   1SG=NOM   go-NPST-IND
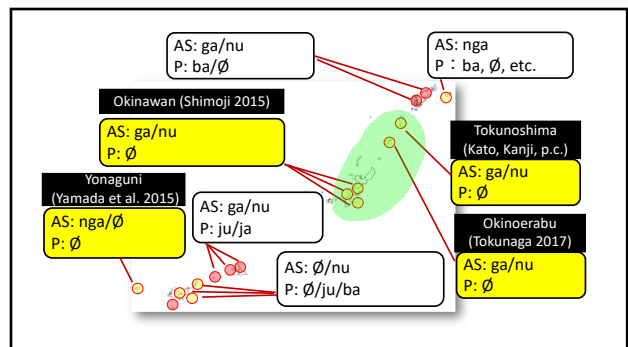'I will go to the field.' [Intransitive]

Yokoyama-Tokunaga (2017: 270-271) explicitly states that Okinoerabu is typologically interesting with the rare Marked NOM system

---

Marked NOM in Ryukyuan: Kudaka (NR; Okinawan, Shimoji 2015, Niinaga p.c.)

Marked NOM

| A | c | P |
| S | c | |

(9) **anmaa=ga**   **kosikake**   **jantan**
mother=NOM   chair   broke
'Mother broke (a/the) chair.' [Transitive]

(10) **anmaa=ga**   **nzjan.**
mother=NOM   went
'Mother went.' [Intransitive]

Marked NOM in Ryukyuan Yonaguni (SR; Macro-Yaeyama; Shimoji 2016)

Marked NOM

| A | c | P |
| S | c | |

(11) **khari=nga**   **anbidungu**   **dandasjan.**
3SG=NOM   toy   broke
'S/he broke (a/the) toy.' [Transitive]

(12) **khari=nga**   **khagurun.**
3SG=NOM   hid
'S/he hid.' [Intransitive]

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General patterns

- Marked NOM distributes from **the upper end of Animacy Hierarchy**
- **All languages being examined allow (or require) zero-marking for S at the lower end of AH**. That is, Marked NOM pattern disappears at the lower end of AH.

| Pronoun | Human | Animal | | Inanimate |
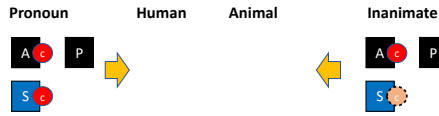
- Why is it the way it is?

A case study of Yonaguni Ryukyuan

Yonaguni: alignment splits between Marked NOM and Split S (Shimoji 2016)

	Pronoun	Proper	Human	Animal	Inanimate
A		G	G	G	G
S₁ (agentive)	G				GØ
S₂ (in-between)		GØ	GØ	GØ	
S₃ (patientive)					Ø
P	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	
	Marked NOM	Split S			

Pronominal arguments: Marked NOM

Marked NOM

(15) khari=**nga**(=du) anbidungu dandasjan.
3SG=NOM(=FOC) toy broke
'S/he broke (a/the) toy.' [Transitive]

(16) khari=**nga**(=du) uti minun.
3SG=NOM(=FOC) hid PRF
'S/he fell down.' [Intransitive]

Non-pronominal arguments: **Transitive**

(17) agami=**nga**/*Ø dadu uti=du butaru.
child=AGT door hit=FOC PROG.PST
"The child was knocking on the door."

(18) agami=**nga** /*Ø inu nni butan.
child=AGT dog look.at PROG.PST
"The child was looking at the dog."

(19) thama=**nga** /*Ø hisasi hugasi minun.
bullet=AGT brim penetrate PRF
"The bullet penetrated the brim (of the hat)."

A	S₁	S₂	S₃	P
nga				
				Ø

A is consistently marked by the agentive case =nga.
P is always unmarked

Non-pronominal arguments: **Intransitive**

S₁ (near-prototypical agents) align with A

A	S₁	S₂	S₃	P
nga				
				Ø

WALK (20)	ttu=**nga**/*Ø	aiti hjun.
	person=AGT	walk PRF
	"Someone walked away."	

MOVE (21)	munu=**nga**/*Ø	uiti=du buru.
	living.thing=AGT	move=FOC PROG
	"Some living thing is moving."	

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Non-pronominal arguments: **Intransitive**

S$_3$ (near-prototypical patient) align with P

	A	S$_1$	S$_2$	S$_3$	P
nga					
					Ø

BREAK
(22)

khi=*nga/Ø	buri=du	buru.
person	break=FOC	PRF

"The branch of the tree has snapped."

FALL
(23)

khi=gara	nai=*nga/Ø	uti	bun.
tree=from	nut	fall	PROG

"The nut fell from the tree."

Non-pronominal arguments: **Intransitive**

S$_2$ (a range of in-betweens) align with either A or P

	A	S$_1$	S$_2$	S$_3$	P
nga					
					Ø

HIDE
(24)

agami=nga/Ø	khagurun.
child=AGT	hid

"The child hid (behind something)."

GET TIRED
(25)

ija=Ø/nga	khutandi=du	buru.
old.man=AGT	get.tired=FOC	RSL

"The old man is tired."

A sample of 38 intransitive verbs (Shimoji 2016)

S$_1$	S$_2$ (in favor of nga)	S$_2$ (in favor of Ø)	S$_3$
4	12	17	5
WALK MOVE LEAVE RUN	TALK, HIDE, LAUGH, BARK, GO ROUND, FLY, ROLL, GO UNDERWATER, STAY, FALL, FLASH	SPIN, DRAWN, CRY, TWINKLE, FALL ASLEEP, QUAKE, EXIST, GET SURPRISED, GET DRUNKEN, GET SUNNY, GET TIRED, DIE, SINK, OPEN, BLOOM, BOIL	SPROUT CRACK BEND FALL BREAK

Agentive S (S$_A$)
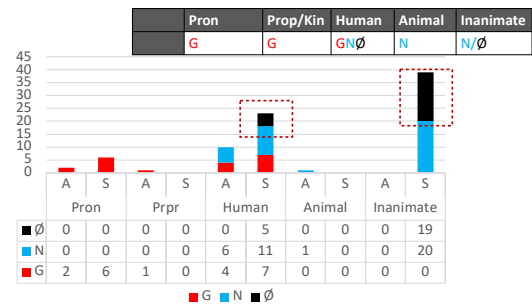
Patientive S (S$_P$)

Case study (2): Okinawan

The Sesokojima dialect of Northern Okinawan

Endangered Languages Database of NINJAL
(http://kikigengo.ninjal.ac.jp/danwashiryo.html)

The total 106 tokens of A/S (non-topic)

Subject focus	Adnominal C	Fragment	Thetic, etc.
9	10	4	83

	Pron	Prop/Kin	Human	Animal	Inanimate
	G	G	GNØ	N	N/Ø

	A Pron	S Pron	A Prpr	S Prpr	A Human	S Human	A Animal	S Animal	A Inanimate	S Inanimate
Ø	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	19
N	0	0	0	0	6	11	1	0	0	20
G	2	6	1	0	4	7	0	0	0	0

■ G ■ N ■ Ø

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Zero marking for S in Okinawan: some generalisations (Shimoji 2015, 2018)

- As compared with Yonaguni, zero-coding for S occurs with **a much narrower range of predicates**, with no clear split based on agentivity (S_A and S_P).

- However, there is little descriptive work available in which zero-coding for S is noted and discussed in detail. We need more descriptive works (grammars) of Okinawan which explicitly state in which case S must be overtly marked and in which case it is optional (or even impossible, in the case of Yonaguni).

Zero marking for S in Okinawan: some generalisations (Shimoji 2015, 2018)

- Recurrent patterns of zero-coded S:
  - S of Phenomenal Sentence (i.e. sentence designating a weather or particular natural phenomenon)

(26) Nago (NR; Northern Okinawan)
ai,   ami   puttasa.
Oh   rain   has.started.falling
"Oh, it's raining!" [Shimabukuro 2006: 124-125]

(27) Shuri (NR; Central-Southern Okinawan)
Tida {?ga/nu/Ø}   agatoon.
sun   has.risen.
"The sun has risen." [Chamberlain 1895]

Zero marking for S in Okinawan: some generalisations (Shimoji 2015, 2018)

- Recurrent patterns of zero-coded S (Shimoji 2018):
  - S of Phenomenal Sentence (i.e. sentence designating a weather)
  - **S of Cognition verbs (verbs denoting the speaker's initial cognition of the emergence/occurrence of an entity)**

(28) Yonabaru (NR; Central-Southern Okinawan)
ee,   ooruu{=nu/Ø}   dikitoon=doo.
Hey   bruise   has.been.formed=EMPH
"Hey, there's a bruise (on your leg)."

Zero marking for S in Okinawan: some generalisations (Shimoji 2015, 2018)

- Recurrent patterns of zero-coded S (Shimoji 2018):
  - S of Phenomenal Sentence (i.e. sentence designating a weather)
  - S of Cognition verbs (verbs denoting the speaker's initial cognition of the emergence/occurrence of an entity)
  - **S of "Double Subject Construction" (where Inner S is almost always within the focus domain)**

(29) Yonabaru (NR; Central-Southern Okinawan)
(wannee)   [wata{=nu/Ø}   jamun]_F
1SG.TOP   stomach{=NOM/Ø}   ache
Outer S   Inner S
"I have a stomachache." (lit. As for me, (my) stomach aches.)

Benoki (NR; Northern Okinawan) (Nohara 1998: 203)

gwata jamuŋ	"lit. (As for me) the stomach aches."
ɸudu magisan	"lit. (As for him) the body is tall"
tʃiburu jari juɸutoːŋ	"lit. (As for me), the head aches and so (I) am taking a rest."

Marked NOM in Ryukyuan: summary

- **Implicational generalization**
  If a language has a Marked NOM pattern, then it is always found in the upper end of the Animacy Hierarchy

- **S may be zero-coded at the lower end of AH**.
  - Patientive and inanimate S (S_3 in Yonaguni)
  - S of Phenomenal Sentence (i.e. sentence designating a weather/natural phenomenon)
  - S of Cognition verbs (verbs denoting the speaker's initial cognition of the emergence/occurrence of an entity)
 - S of "Double Subject Construction"

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Marked NOM: why "exceptional"?
Or, is it exceptional?

Why does Marked NOM look "exceptional"?

- It is agreed in LT that Marked NOM is rare and exceptional (König 2008, Handschuh 2014).
- But **rarity** does not equate with **exceptionality**. Exception is something excluded or unexpected from a theory. (If there is no theory, there is no exception!)

- What makes Marked NOM exceptional:
  Overt Marking Hypothesis (a term used by Handschuh 2014) suggested by Comrie (1978), Dixon (1979), Aissen (2003), de Hoop and Malchukov (2008), etc.

Overt Marking Hypothesis

- Overt case-marking is motivated iff **the distinction between A and P is necessary**.
- Hence, overt S marking should be excluded from the theory.
- Thus, Marked NOM is viewed as a "weird" pattern, i.e. an exception.

Standard NOM	Standard ERG	Neutral	Marked NOM-ACC
A P c	A c P	A P	A c P
S	S	S	S c
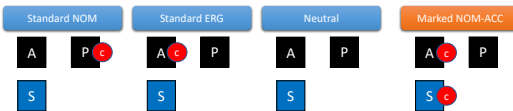
Beyond Overt Marking Hypothesis: the Ryukyuan perspective

A new hypothesis:
Topicality-driven Overt Marking Hypothesis

- Topicality: the likelihood for A/S to occur as a topic.
- For example:
  - **あいつ**_帰っちゃった。 **He** has left.
  - **時計**_壊れちゃった。　 **The/a clock** has broken.
- AH is a hierarchy of topicality ("Topic-worthiness Hierarchy" Payne 1997). Pronouns are most topic-worthy.

	Pronoun	Lexical NP	
		Human	Inanimate
A/S	More Topic-worthy	Less Topic-Worthy	

A new hypothesis:
Topicality-driven Overt Marking Hypothesis

- Topicality: the likelihood for A/S to occur as a topic
- AH is a hierarchy of topicality ("Topic-worthiness Hierarchy" Payne 1997). Pronouns are most topic-worthy.
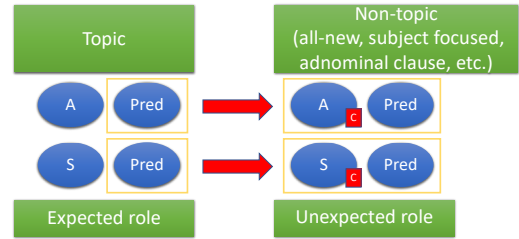- Givón's (1994) Generic Topic Hierarchy:
  Human > Non-human, Agent > Patient

		Pronoun	Lexical NP	
			Human	Inanimate
A/S	Most topic-worthy	A	More Topic-worthy	
		S_A		
		S_P		Least Topic-Worthy

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A new hypothesis:
Topicality-driven Overt Marking Hypothesis

- Nominative marking occurs only when A/S is not a topic.
- Nominative marking is **anti-topic marking**, whereby the NP in question is explicitly marked as non-topic.
- Thus, nominative marking is more likely to occur if the NP in question is more topic worthy, as the non-topic function is unexpected.

	Pronoun	Lexical NP	
		Human	Inanimate
A/S	Most topic-worthy (NOM)	A — More Topic-worthy (NOM) →	
		S_A ↓	
		S_P	Least Topic-Worthy

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Pronominal A/S are most topic-worthy. Hence, they are most likely to be **marked if it is not a topic**

Topic → Non-topic (all-new, subject focused, adnominal clause, etc.)

Expected role → Unexpected role

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Zero-marking for S revisited:

- **S may be zero-coded in the following environments:**
  - Patientive S (S_3 in Yonaguni)
  - S of Phenomenal Sentence (i.e. sentence designating a weather/natural phenomenon)
  - S of Cognition verbs (verbs denoting the speaker's initial cognition of the emergence/occurrence of an entity)
  - S of "Double Subject Construction" (where Inner S is almost always within the focus domain)
- S of these environments are arguably **less topic-worthy**: they are less likely to occur as a topic of the sentence than agentive/animate S and A

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Agentive S is more topic-worthy than Patientive S: Split S is a result of anti-topic marking

	Topic	Non-topic
Agentive: Topic-worthy	A — Pred, S_A — Pred →	A[G] — Pred, S_A[G] — Pred
Patientive: Non-topic-worthy	S_P — Pred →	S_P — Pred

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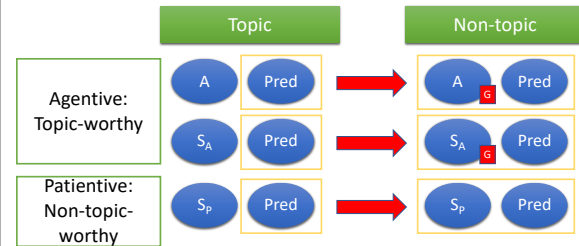
saban	barun
bowl	broke
'The bowl broke.'	

When a non-topic-worthy S (S_P) occurs as a non-topic S — **Unmarked**

khari=*nga*	nni=nki	nun.
3SG=AGT	ship=DIR	rode
'S/he rode the ship.'		

When a topic-worthy NP (S_A) occurs as a non-topic S — **Overt Marking**
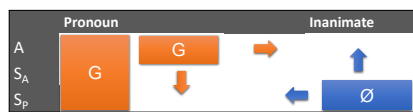
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	Pronoun	Proper	Human	Animal	Inanimate
A	G	G	G	G	G
S_1 (S_A)					GØ
S_2			GØ	GØ	GØ
S_3 (S_P)					
P	∅	∅	∅	∅	∅
	Marked NOM	Split S			

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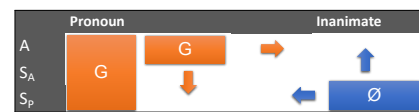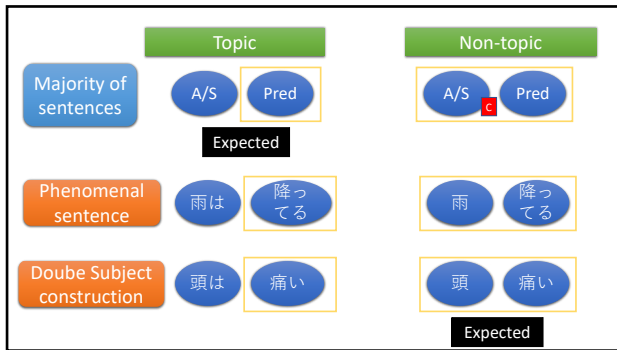
S of Cognition verb is likely to occur in an all-new (thetic) sentence: S is unlikely to be topic

Karimata's (2008: 13-14) crucial observation of the Kooki dialect of Nago (NR; Northern Okinawan)	Zero-coded S tends to occur **if the sentence is all-new.**
ʔarihja:, kuruma kuN=do:	Hey, there's a car coming.
ʔarihja:, d^uNsa kuN=do:	Hey, there's a sheriff coming.
ma:-ni patʃi uiN=do:.	There's a bee here.
ʔai, ʔami: puttaN.	The rain is falling (i.e. It's started raining)
ʔagid^a, mid^i paiN	Oh, there's water leaking.

Summary:

- Nominative marking in the Marked NOM languages of Ryukyuan functions to mark A/S as non-topic.
- Hence:
- There is a motivation for overt marking for S, as long as it is topic-worthy (e.g. a pronoun, agent, etc). We do not need to view overt S marking as "weird" anymore.
- On the other hand, S may be left unmarked if it is less topic-worthy, by its patientive feature (S$_P$), or by its occurrence in phenomenal sentences, all-new cognition sentences, etc.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion

- **Topicality-driven Overt Marking Hypothesis,** as opposed to the currently influential **GR (grammatical relation)-driven Overt Marking Hypothesis,** seeks for the motivation for overt case-marking **without referring to the distinction between A and P.**

- **T-OMH** is still a working hypothesis which aims to explain Marked NOM in Ryukyuan, but it might be extendable to other Marked NOM languages, especially to those languages where Marked NOM occurs only in information-structurally special environments (Marked NOM of "emphatic subject"; Handschuh 2014).

Waskia (PNG; Ross 1978: 37, 13)

(35) Subject focus: Marked NOM pattern (S/A marked by **ke**)
    nu   **ke**   **taleng duap**
    3SG   NOM policeman
    'He is a policemen (i.e. not someone else)'

(36) Topic: Neutral pattern (S/A unmarked)
    aga **bawa**   **takeng duap**
    my   brother   policemen
    'my brother is a policeman.' (topic-comment)

This subject marking only in the "emphatic" context is common especially in the Pacific region (Handschuh 2014: 124)

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In conclusion

- Thus, a detailed look at Marked NOM in Ryukyuan provides a new perspective from which Marked NOM can be viewed, and it will have implications for the cross-linguistic typology of Marked NOM.
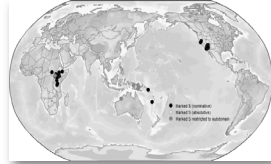
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