



# “Isn’t it Japanese?”, said one Miyakoan potential bilingual pupil: An ethnographic study of code-switching and language awareness of young generation

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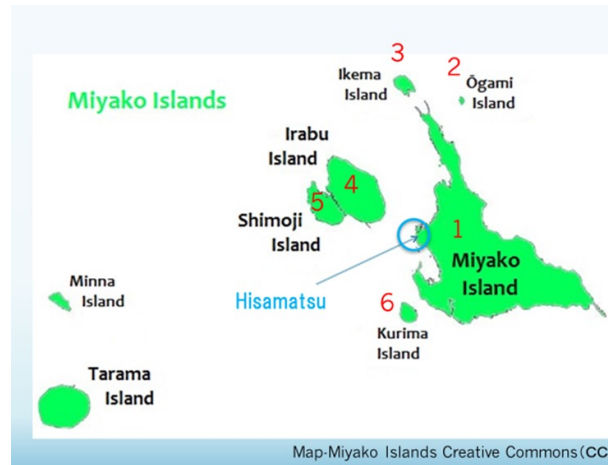
- 1) 24520586 'Rethinking Multicultural "*Kyosei*" in Japan  
Towards a community which accommodates multilingual identities'
- 2) 15K02659 'Comprehensive study of multilingualism in  
Japan: inquiring education for making multicultural kyosei (co-existence)'
- 3) 18K00695 '**Transmitting oracy of spoken memories:  
constructing digital archive of the Miyakoan language as an endangered  
language**'

Live Multilingually (Partly multilingual: Japanese, Korean, Chinese, English, Spanish)

<http://multilingually.jp> → [ 動画と写真 ]

Miyako Island folklore journey → (folk tale resources)

<Http://miyako.ryukyu>



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Concluding remarks





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Geography and multilingual Japan

- The context of 21<sup>st</sup> century bilingualism in Japan mirrors 20<sup>th</sup> century modernization where the diversity of languages in Japan is visible and public and increasingly understood. The languages we can see—though not everyone will see them—include English, Korean, Chinese, Ainu, Ryukyuan, the Deaf sign language, Portuguese, Spanish and a Japanese as a second language. (Fujita-Round, 2019)
- North border faces Sakhalin and Russian Far East, while the southern islands border faces the Korean Peninsula, China, and further Taiwan.
- Among them, Ainu in the north and Ryukyuan languages in the south are acknowledged and 'mapped' by UNESCO in 2009, as endangered languages in Japan.



## 1.2 Historical context: languages in Japan

### why are Ryukyuan languages endangered?

Japanese Modernization from Meiji Era (1868~)

#### 1) Early immigrant languages: Oldcomers

Korean, Chinese

#### 2) Indigeneous languages

Ainu (1869~), **Ryukyuan languages (1879~)**

Deaf sign language (JSL) The first deaf school in Japan was founded in 1878, in Kyoto prefecture.

#### 3) Recent language diversity (1990~): Newcomers

Portuguese (Japanese Brazilian) and Spanish (Japanese Peruvian, other Spanish speaking immigrants)

Japanese as a second language (JSL)

(Fujita-Round and Maher, 2017)

## 1.3 Endangered languages in Japan



- |        |                  |
|--------|------------------|
| ■ アイヌ語 | Ainu             |
| ■ 八丈語  | Hachijo          |
| ■ 奄美語  | Amami            |
| ■ 国頭語  | Kunigami         |
| ■ 沖縄語  | Okinawan (Shuri) |
| ■ 宮古語  | <b>Miyakoan</b>  |
| ■ 八重山語 | Yaeyama          |
| ■ 与那国語 | Yonaguni         |

## 1.4 Language policy of 'standardized Japanese'

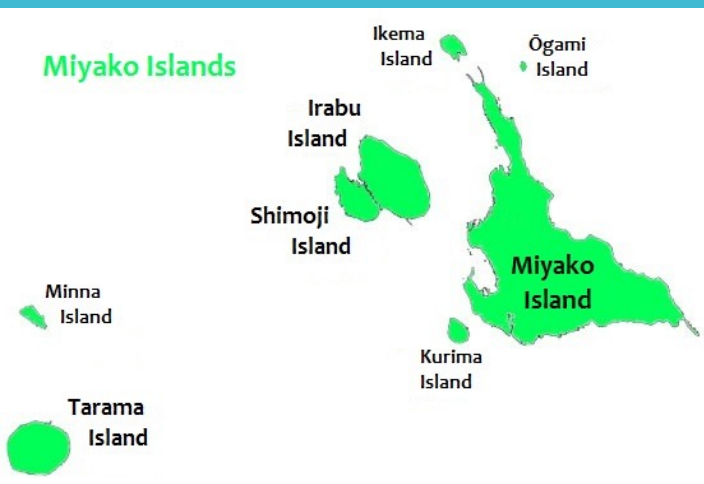
(1)

- Due to Japanese modernization dating back to the Meiji era, the government's language standardization policy pushed local languages aside.
- The problematic issue of this standardization was that central government used the school as a vehicle to spread the standard language, Japanese, through education. The language user was punished by language tag/dialect tag at school.(Fujita-Round & Maher, 2017).
- In this early history of Japanese modernity, Japanese language and education policy are directly connected with the nation building and overt colonization.
- As well as this language policy, language use in the island has been influenced by other social changes and complex dilemmas in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## (2) Post war history of Ryukyu

- The return of the Ryukyuan islands to Japan from the United States' control in 1972 accelerated the decline of Ryukyuan. *Standard Japanese (Hyojungo) is the medium of instruction throughout the Ryukyuan school system* while Standard Japanese is employed in all media, magazines, books, official documents, public signs, etc. Ryukyuan languages (琉球諸語) plays no official role in public education in the Okinawan education system and its use has traditionally been *discouraged* in schools (Fujita-Round & Maher, 2008:400).



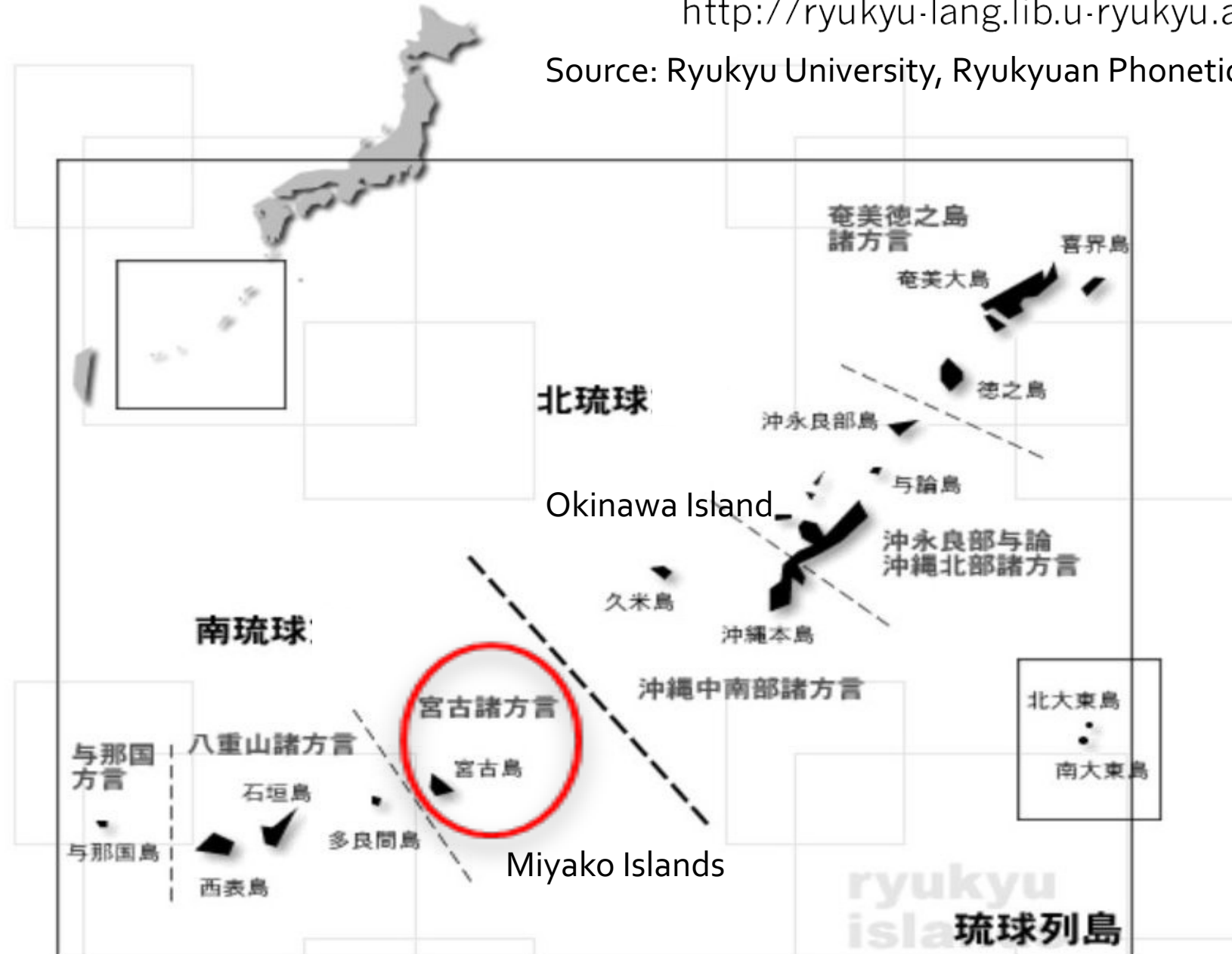


## 2. The demography of Miyakoan language and Miyakoan Islands

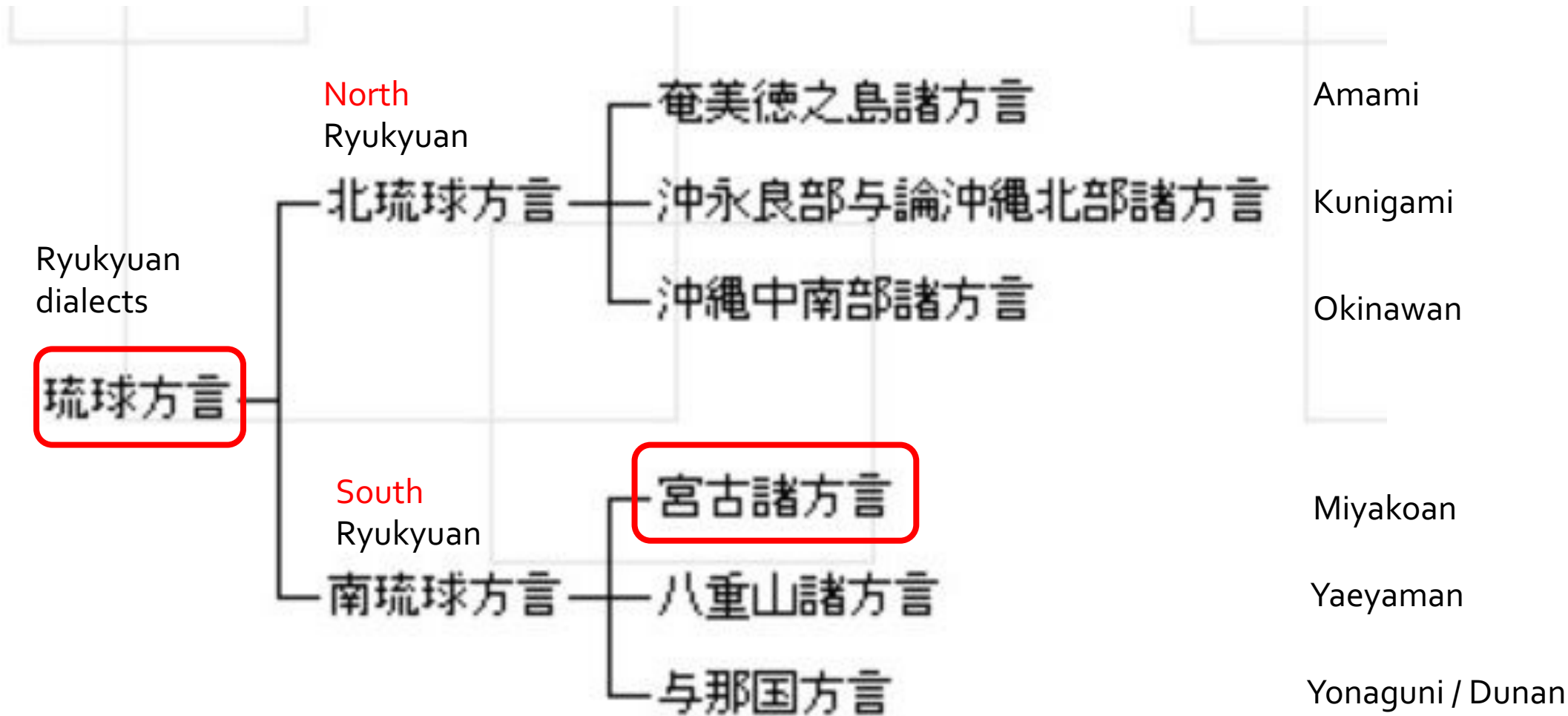
# Ryukyuan languages

出典元: 琉球大学琉球語音声データベース、琉球語概説  
<http://ryukyu-lang.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/intro/index.html>

Source: Ryukyu University, Ryukyuan Phonetics Database Introduction



At the point when Ryukyu Univ created this database, they did not recognize Ryukyuan as languages, but dialects of Japanese. However, now there is an ongoing debate how to recognize Ryukyuan. Below, I translated according to the original figure.



出典元：琉球大学琉球語音声データベース、琉球語概説  
<http://ryukyu-lang.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/intro/index.html>

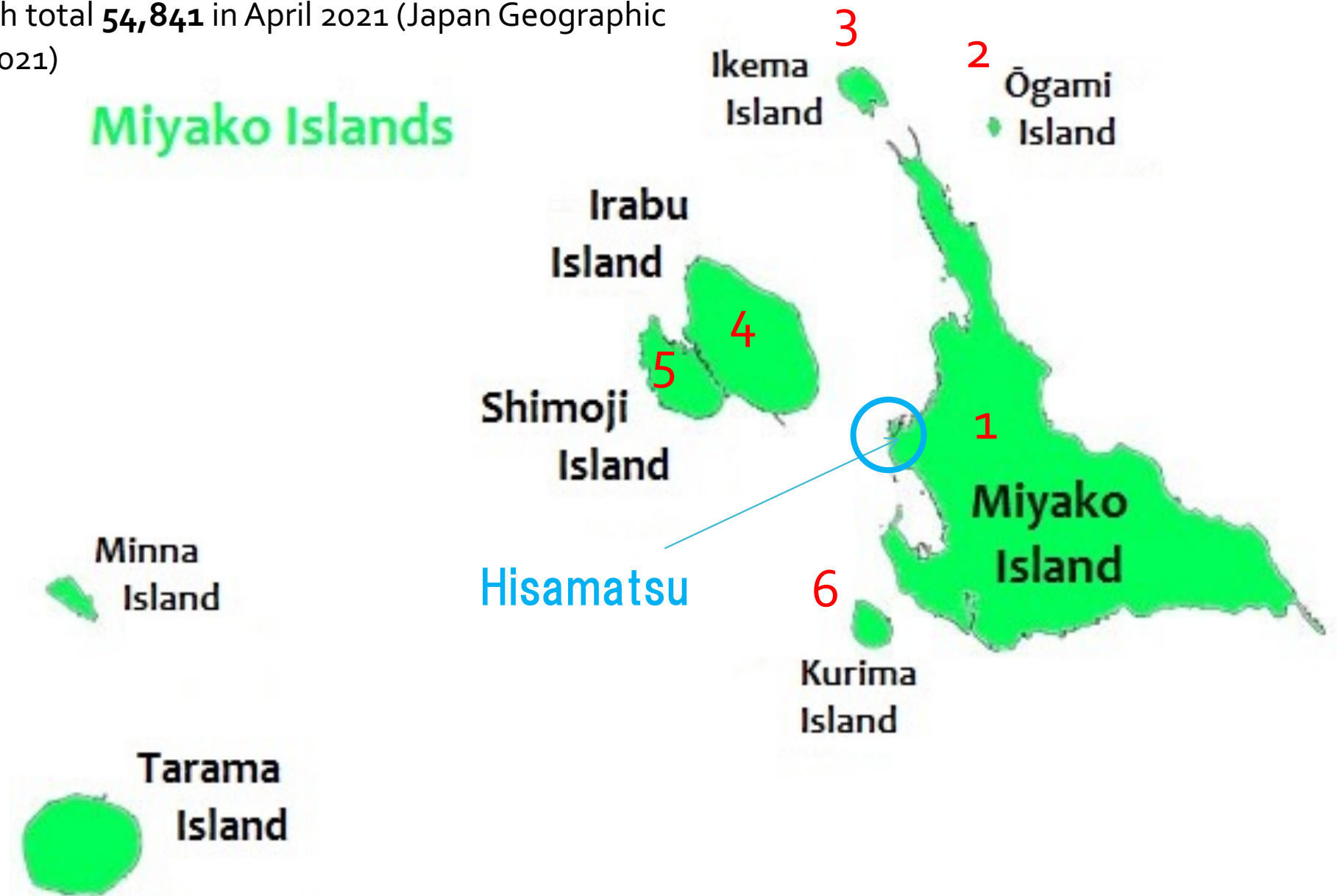
	ありがとう	いらっしやいませ
Amami (Nase variation)	奄美名瀬	アリガテサマリャオタ イモリィ
Okinawan (Naha variation)	沖縄那覇	ニフェーデービル メンソーレー
Miyakoan (Hirara variation)	宮古平良	タンディガータンディ ンミヤーチ
Yaeyama (Ishigaki variation)	八重山石垣	フコーラサーン オーリトーリ

発表者補足：宮古島の中心として発展してきた町が平良であり、言語学上、宮古島内のいわば「標準語」だと考えられている。

出典元：琉球大学琉球語音声データベース、琉球語概説  
<http://ryukyu-lang.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/intro/index.html>



The total of the city (6 islands) is the size of 204 km<sup>2</sup> and the population with total **54,841** in April 2021 (Japan Geographic Data Center, 2021)





# 3. Fieldwork research in the Miyako Island

## 3.1 Linguistic ethnography: theoretical issue

McKay and Hornberger (1996)  
*macro and micro*  
two levels of social and linguistic analysis

Simplified quadrant matrix by McKay and Hornerger (1996:x)

		Levels of Social Analysis	
		Macro	Micro
Levels of Linguistic Analysis	Macro	Language and society	Language and culture
	Micro	Language and variation	Language and interaction



## 3.2 Linguistic ethnography: interdisciplinary

The British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) provided an arena among researchers interested in international sociolinguistics, literacy studies, critical discourse analysis, language and cognitive development and interpretively oriented applied linguistics. (quoted from Rampton, Tusting, Maybin, Barwell, Creese, and Lytra, 2004 in Snell, Shaw, & Copland, 2015)

- 1) Interdisciplinary approach (language and education)
- 2) Strengthening the epistemological status of ethnography

### 3.3 Fieldwork in Hisamatsu (1)

#### Macro:

Fieldwork from 2012-present

Ex-fishing village the total population

#### Micro:

Interviewing the same 2 class  
school pupils

Duration from  
AY2013-2015,  
3 years.

In 2013, 41 pupils  
In 2014 and 2015,  
16 pupils  
(4 pupils in 4 groups)

Age of pupils  
between 13 and 15  
years old

Development of the research domains and key persons

	school	village/community	key person
2012	elementary school		
2013	junior high school	pupil's parents	Key person A
2014	junior high school	pupil's parents & grandparents	Key person A & B
2015	junior high school	pupil's parents & grandparents, elder bilinguals	Key person A, B & C
2016		elder bilinguals	Key person C
2017		elder bilinguals	Key person C
2018		elder bilinguals	Key person C

February, 2016  
(AY2015, Grade 3, Group 3)



## 3.4 Fieldwork in Hisamatsu (2)

### Demography of the research:

Population: Hisamatsu community

In 2014 **1,084**

1960, 3,552. Matsubara (2001)

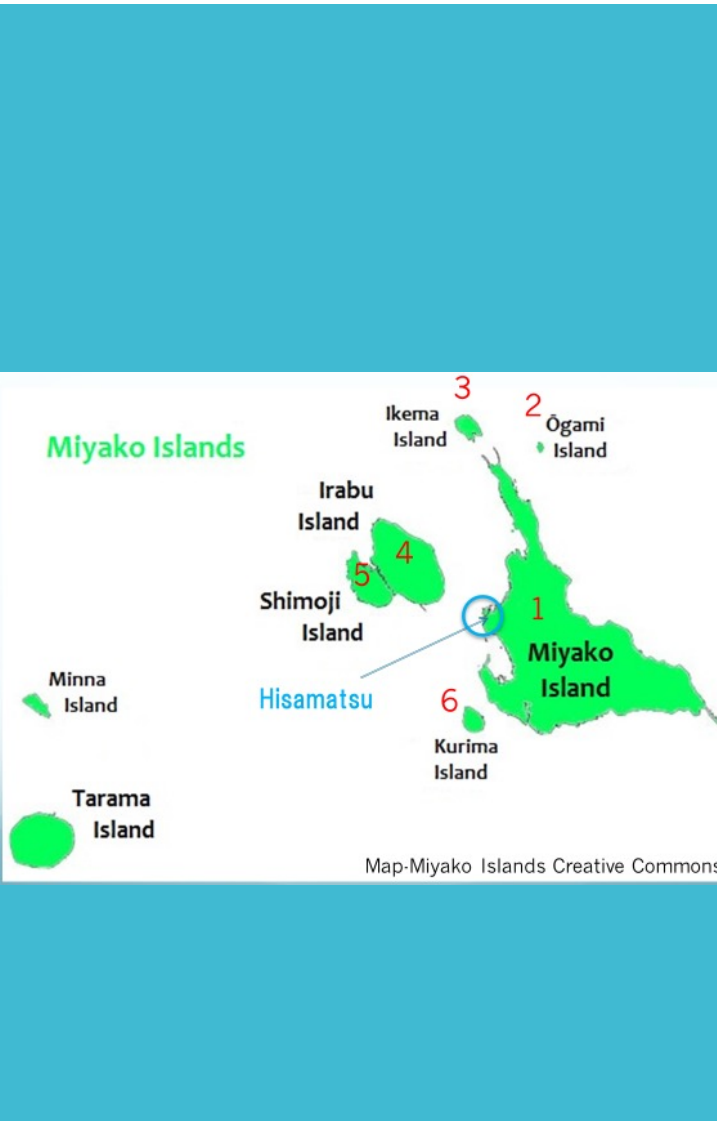
Hisamatsu elementary school children

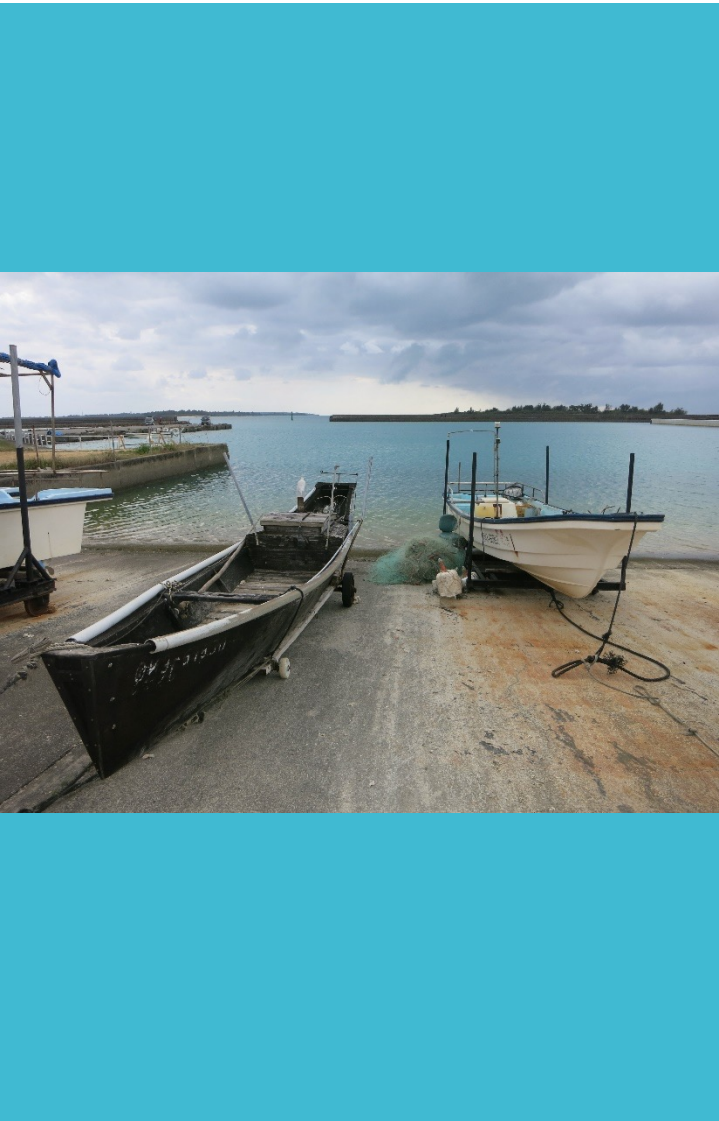
In 2014 308 pupils

1960 683 pupils

Hisamatsu junior high school

In 2014 141 pupils





## 4. Micro discourse analysis

Longitudinal interview with pupils at Junior high school

Duration: School year 2013-2015 (Age 13-15)

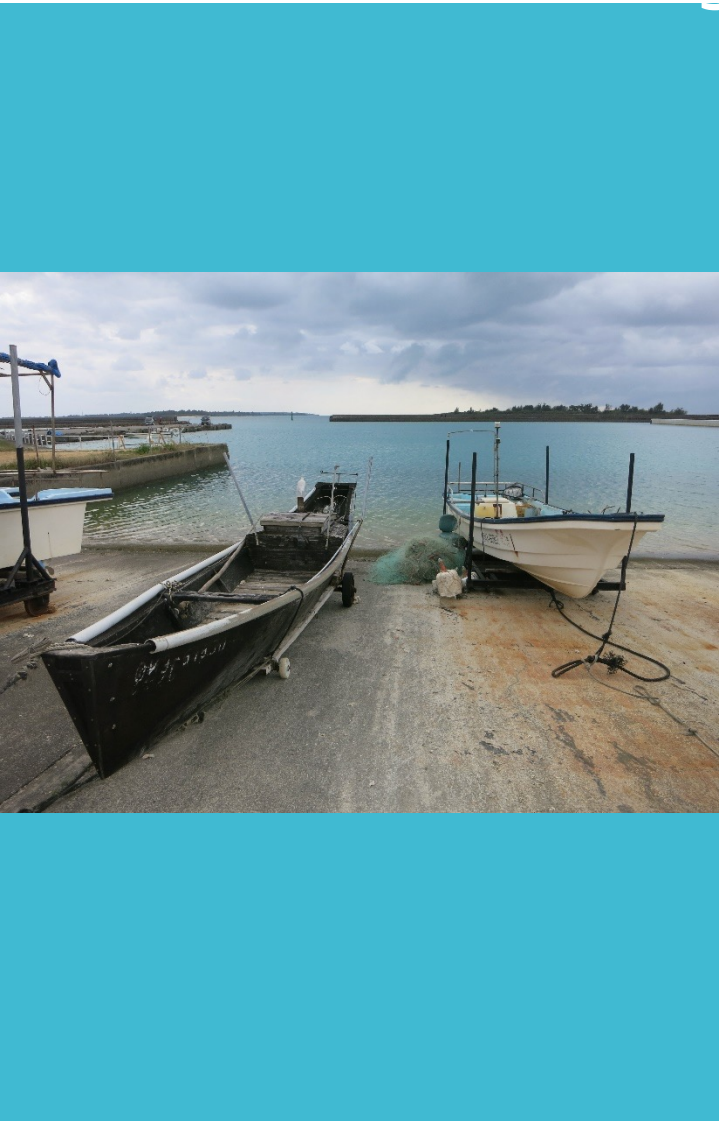
Grade 1 2013 Group Interview, divided in three groups according to gender by the school

Grade 2 2014 Questionnaire (all), 4 focus group interview

**Grade 3 2015 Questionnaire (all), 4 focus group interview**

- The number of the particular pupils in my study

Year (April 1)	No of Pupils	Age of pupils
2013	44	13
2014	45	14
2015	44	15



## 4.1 Interviewee data

Date: Feb 4,5,8,9, 2016

Time: After school, before sports extracurricular activities

Place: Hisamatsu JH, individual counselling room

Four focus groups:

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | 4 female, outspoken pupils              |
| Group 2 | 2 female/1 male, local Hisamatsu origin |
| Group 3 | 2 female/2 male, local Hisamatsu origin |
| Group 4 | 4 male, outspoken pupils                |



## 4.2 Discourse data

Focus on A (female pupil in Group 1)  
whose mother is from Hisamatsu, and  
whose family and relatives are still living in  
the village.

Excerpt 1 and 2 are followed:



## 4.3 An analysis of data: Excerpt 1

Group 1, Pupil A

■ “aga あが”

= 「痛いとき (utter this word when you had a pain)」

■ “aijyara あいじゃら”

= 「水がかかったとき (utter this word when you had a shower/water on you unexpectedly and surprisingly)」

■ “uwari うわり”

= 「だいた」 **Miyakoan word**, a synonym to “uwari”

= (「とても」) Japanese word, an adverb to emphasize the condition

## 4.4 An analysis of data: Excerpt 2

Group 1, Pupil A

- 「あっ、先生には言わない。ため口を使う人に。」  
“Ah, not to teacher. To the person you speak casually.”
- 「ぱっと思いつくのはそのくらいかなあ。」  
“It is what I can come up with now”

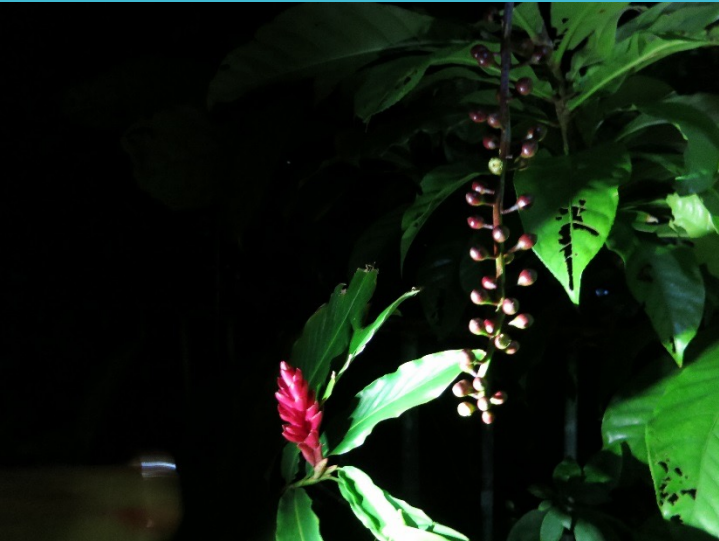
## 5. Concluding remarks

### 1) Unaware code-switching

Miyakoan is still used, however limited, among peers as a casual language.

### 2) Negotiation between two languages

Miyakoan is recognized as a casual language, thus in the formal language use at school, it is selected not to be used. In this course, Miyakoan will be not used.





### 3) Future researches

#### Narrative interviews

Interview the same group of ex-pupils, who are now 20 years old. Specifically, Pupil A and N.

#### Making language resources of Miyakoan to confirm awareness of younger generation

#### Method and pedagogy of language revitalization to raise 'new speakers'



## Working on the awareness of Miyakoan people

- As Maher (2017: 131) articulates “language plays an important role as a symbol of the cohesion of community and cultural transmission”. Making young generation at school aware of their language, it will be benefitted for the maintenance of the community/local culture in Miyako Islands. This indicates the awareness to the younger generation’s belongings to their root and community?

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