国立国語研究所学術情報リポジトリ

Plural Forms in Yoron-Ryukyuan and Address Nouns in Ryukyuan Languages

Plural Forms in Yoron-Ryukyuan and Address Nouns in Ryukyuan Languages

Nobuko Kibe, Hajime Oshima, and Masahiro Yamada
National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics

1   Introduction

1.1   Plural Marking in Standard Japanese and Yoron-Ryukyuan

Standard Japanese has a plural marker *-tatɕi* that attaches to human nouns and yields an associative plural interpretation. This plural marker may attach to pronouns (1a), proper nouns (1b) or kinship terms (1c) but it cannot attach to non-human nouns (1d), (1e) (see Nakanishi and Tomioka (2014) for the semantic interpretation of NP-*tatɕi*).

(1)   a.   anata-tatɕi
            2SG-AssocPL
            'a group of people represented by the addressee'

　　b.　Nagano-san-tatɕi
　　　　Nagano-ADDR-AssocPL
　　　　'a group of people represented by "Nagano-san"'
　　c.　obasan-tatɕi
　　　　aunt-AssocPL
　　　　'a group of people represented by "aunt"'
　　d.　*neko-tatɕi
　　　　cat-AssocPL
　　　　'a group of individuals represented by "cat"'
　　e.　*hana-tatɕi
　　　　flower-AssocPL
　　　　'a group of individuals represneted by "flower"'

In Yoron-Ryukyuan too, there is also an associative plural marker *-taa* that attaches to human nouns like Standard Japanese *-tatɕi*. The lexical accent, realized as a transitional pitch rise between moras, is marked by "[" following Uwano's (1999) convention.

(2)　　a.　*ʔu[ɾee-taa*　　　'2SG-AssocPL'
　　　　b.　*Nagano-[san-taa*　'Nagano-ADDR-AssocPL'
　　　　c.　*[ɸuba-taa*　　　'aunt-AssocPL'
　　　　d.　*mjaŋ[ka-taa*　　'cat-AssocPL'
　　　　e.　*pa[na-taa*　　　'flower-AssocPL'

In addition to associative plural, Yoron also exhibits a specialized expression for additive plural, which is likewise realized by *-taa*. However, this marker cannot be conflated with the marker for associative plural and has to be analyzed as a different morpheme. Indeed, while both markers are segmentally identical, they are systematically differentiated by prosody. As is shown in (3)-(4), accentless *-taa* marks associative plural, while accented *-taa* expresses additive plural (see Uwano (1999) for the accent realization of non-lexical items in Yoron).

(3)　　a.　*[ʔatɕa-taa*
　　　　　father-AssocPL
　　　　　'a group of people represented by "father"'
　　　　b.　*ʔatɕa-[taa*
　　　　　father-ADDITPL
　　　　　'a group of people with the attribute "father"'

(4)   a. *sen[sei-taa*
            teacher-AssocPL
            'a group of people represented by "teacher"'
        b. *sensei-[taa*
            teacher-AdditPL
            'a group of people with the attribute "teacher"'

Although the additive plural interpretation can be conceptualized as a special case of associative plural, *-[taa* exclusively expresses the semantically more restricted non-associative additive plural interpretation. For instance, the noun phrase in (4a) can refer to a group of individuals that includes some non-teachers, provided that the group is understood as one represented by a teacher. Contrary to that, the noun phrase in (4b) can only refer to a group composed exclusively of individuals all possessing the attribute "teacher".

Below, we show that the distribution of the Yoron additive plural marker is more restricted than that of the associative plural marker and that it is only available for a subset of human nouns which all share one specific property, namely the possibility to be used as an address term. We then enlarge the discussion to other Ryukyuan languages, and point out that in these languages too, the property of addressability plays a defining role in several different grammatical phenomena.

1.2   Yoron

Yoron-Ryukyuan refers to the linguistic variety of Kunigami language spoken in Yoron island (Yoron-town, Oshima-gun, Kagoshima prefecture, Japan). It belongs to the Northern-Ryukyuan language group and is, like other Ryukyuan languages, severely endangered. All present day speakers of Yoron are bilingual in Japanese and the youngest generations are now completely monolingual in Japanese.

Yoron island is situated at the southernmost edge of the Amami islands, approximately 22km away from the Northern tip of Okinawa's main island. The island is divided into nine administrative districts and is characterized by systematic dialectal variations. The data reported in this paper is provided by a consultant from (Mugiya-)Higashi-district, Hidenori Kiku, born in 1957 (see Nakamoto (1976) and Kibe (2016) for Yoron's typological characteristics and its dialectal variations).

Figure 1. Location of Yoron island

According to Yoron-town (2015), there are 5186 inhabitants in the island, including 650 in Higashi-district. The accurate number of fluent speakers of Yoron is not known. However, based on personal accounts from local community members, we assume that fluent speakers are all above fifty. Based on Yoron-town's population statistics (Table.1), the number of fluent speakers is then estimated to be 2919 (i.e. population above fifty, approximately 56% of the total population). Assuming that the age distribution in Higashi-district is the same as that in the whole town, the number of fluent speakers in Higashi-district is estimated to be 366 (Table.2).

Age Group	Population	Ratio	Age Group	Population	Ratio
40-49	544	10.49%	40≤	3463	66.78%
50-59	815	15.76%	50≤	2919	56.29%
60-69	820	15.81%	60≤	2104	40.57%
70-79	578	11.15%	70≤	1284	24.78%
80≤	706	13.61%			
Total	5186				

Table 1. Population and Ratio of Yoron-town (as of 2015)

Age Group	Estimated Pupulation	Age Group	Estimated Population
40-49	68	40≤	434
50-59	102	50≤	366
60-69	103	60≤	264
70-79	72	70≤	161
80≤	88		
Total	650		

Table 2. Estimated Population of Higashi-district (as of 2015)

2 Yoron's Two Plural Markers

2.1 A Puzzle

The distribution of the additive plural marker is more restricted than that of the associative plural marker. For example, both markers can attach to *jaka* 'elder.brother' and *sensei* 'teacher', yielding two different contrastive interpretations (5)-(6). However, only the associative plural marker can attach to *ʔutʃtubi* 'younger.sibling' and *seito* 'students', the additive plural marker being in that case ungrammatical (7)-(8).

(5)   a.   *ʃjaka-taa*   'elder.brother-AssocPL'
        b.   *jaka-ʃtaa*   'elder.brother-AdditPL'
(6)   a.   *seɴʃsei-taa*   'teacher-AssocPL'
        b.   *seɴsei-ʃtaa*   'teacher-AdditPL'

(8)   a.   *ʔutʃtubi-taa*   'younger.sibling-AssocPL'
        b.   **ʔuttubi-ʃtaa*   'younger.sibling-AdditPL'
(7)   a.   *ʃseito-taa*   'student-AssocPL'
        b.   **seito-ʃtaa*   'student-AdditPL'

At first sight, the difference in distribution seems puzzling since all nouns in (5)-(8) belong to the same macro-category, namely human nouns (note also that Standard Japanese -*tatɕi* can attach to all of them). Furthermore, this distribution cannot be accounted for by the nominal hierarchy usually proposed in the literature. For example, Tsunoda (2009) divides common nouns into four classes: kinship, non-kinship human, non-human animate, and inanimate nouns. However, both the pair (5)-(6), in which the additive plural marker is allowed, and the pair (7)-(8), in which the same marker is ungrammatical, each include one kinship term (higher in the hierarchy) and one non-kinship human noun (lower in the hierarchy). Therefore, the data in (5)-(8) compels us to look for some other factor explaining the distribution of plural markers in Yoron.

2.2   Address Nouns

In Yoron, human nouns can be classified into two groups using the criterion of addressability. Nouns refering to senior people (e.g. *[jaka* 'elder brother', *[ʔupu* 'grandfather') or to people with a higher social rank (*ɕa[tɕoo* 'CEO', *seN[sei* 'professor') can be used as such as address terms (equivalent in their addressative function to, for example, English "Sir"). The other human nouns (e.g. *ʔut[tubi* 'younger sibling', *[seito* 'student') cannot be used as address term, in which case the name of the referent has to be used. (see Suzuki (1973) and Takubo (1997) for Standard Japanese and Pellard (2010) and many others cited below for Ryukyuan). Pellard (2010; 132) groups the nouns allowing the addressative function into one category he calls "address nouns". This category of nouns contain "kinship terms for elders ('father', 'elder sister', etc.) and status or function names ('teacher', 'chief' etc.)". We show below examples of address nouns and non-address nouns in Yoron. Here, it is important to note that the category of address nouns cross-splits across both the category of kinship terms and that of non-kinship human nouns.

(9)   Expressions that can be used to address someone
      a.   *[ʔupu*   'grandfather'
      b.   *paa[paa* 'grandmother'
      c.   *[ʔatɕa*   'father'
      d.   *ʔam[maa*   'mother'
      e.   *[jaka*   'elder brother'
      f.   *aɲ[ɲaa*   'elder sister'
      g.   *[ɸudʑa*   'uncle'
      h.   *[ɸuba*   'aunt'
      k.   *seN[sei*   'teacher'
      l.   *ɕa[tɕoo*   'CEO'

(10)   Expressions that cannot be used to address someone
     a.   *ʃmiikwaa*   'nephew/niece'
     b.   *ʔutʃtubi* 'younger sibling'
     c.   *ʃseito*   'student'
     d.   *niʃsee*   'young man/woman'

2.3   Nouns allowing the Additive Plural Markers are Address Nouns

Upon closer inspection, we find that the distribution of the additive plural marker is exactly correlated with the addressability property of human nouns. In other words, the additive plural marker can attach to address nouns, but not to the other human nouns, whether they be kinship terms (Table.3) or non-kinship human nouns (Table.4).

Adress Nouns	Gloss	Singular	Associative Plural	Additive Plural
YES	grandfather	*ʃʔupu*	*ʔuʃpu-taa*	*ʔupu-ʃtaa*
YES	grandmother	*paaʃpaa*	*paaʃpaa-taa*	*paapaa-ʃtaa*
YES	father	*ʃʔatɕa*	*ʃʔatɕa-taa*	*ʔatɕa-ʃtaa*
YES	mother	*ʔamʃmaa*	*ʔamʃmaa-taa*	*ʔammaa-ʃtaa*
YES	elder brother	*ʃjaka*	*ʃjaka-taa*	*jaka-ʃtaa*
YES	elder sister	*aɲʃɲaa*	*aɲʃɲaa-taa*	*aɲɲaa-ʃtaa*
YES	uncle	*ʃɸudʑa*	*ʃɸudʑa-taa*	*ɸudʑa-ʃtaa*
YES	aunt	*ʃɸuba*	*ʃɸuba-taa*	*ɸuba-ʃtaa*
NO	nephew/niece	*ʃmiikwaa*	*ʃmiikwaa-taa*	N/A
NO	younger sibling	*ʔutʃtubi*	*ʔutʃtubi-taa*	N/A

Table 3. Address Nouns and Plural Forms, Kinship Terms

Adress Nouns	Gloss	Singular	Associative Plural	Additive Plural
YES	teacher	*seɴʃsei*	*seɴʃsei-taa*	*seɴsei-ʃtaa*
YES	CEO	*ɕaʃtɕoo*	*ɕaʃtɕoo-taa*	*ɕatɕoo-ʃtaa*
NO	student	*ʃseito*	*ʃseito-taa*	N/A
NO	young people	*niʃsee*	*niʃsee-taa* / *nisee-ʃtaa*	N/A

Table 4. Address Nouns and Plural Forms, Human Nouns[1]

---

[1] Many other human nouns take a third expression *-(bi)nɛaa* for plural form.

3   The Noun Class "Address Terms" Plays a Role in the Grammar of Ryukyuan Languages

The result above shows that the category of "address nouns" plays an important role in the grammar of Yoron, since, beyond the adressability property of the relevant nouns, it can also account for the distribution of the additive plural marker. Actually, the category of "address nouns" plays an important role in other Ryukyuan languages too (Shigeno and Shirata (2016) make a smilar claim).

The noun class "address nouns" correlates with the choice of different plural markers in Kamikatetsu-Kikai and Onotsu-Kikai (Shirata et al. 2011, Shigeno and Shirata 2016), Ura-Amami (Shigeno and Shirata 2016), Yuwan-Amami (Niinaga 2010, 2015), Okinoerabu (Yokoyama 2014), and Ōgami-Miyako (Pellard 2010).

For example, Ōgami-Miyako has two (associative) plural markers *-ta* and *-nummi* and Pellard (2010:131) reports that "*-ta* attaches to pronouns referring to humans as well as address nouns, while *-nummi* attaches to other animate nouns".

(11)   a.   *kama=n=tu*   *taɾo-ta=ka*   *uu*.
           there=DAT=FOC   Taro-PL=NOM   be
           'Taro and the others are over there.'
       b.   *uɾɛ=ɛ*   *an-ta=ka*   *faa-nummi*.
           PROX=TOP   I-PL=NOM   child-PL
           'These are our children.'
           (Pellard's (2010) (29a) and (29c))

Niinaga (2010: 57) describes associative plural ("approximantive" for him) markers in Yuwan-Amami and says that "*-taa* can attach to demonstratives, human names, elder kinship terms, and profession names" and "kinship terms which refer to younger people do not take the approximative suffix *-taa*, but take the approximative clitic *=nkja*".

(12)   a.   *zjuu-taa=ga*   *ik-ju-i*.
           father-APPR=NOM go-IPFV-NPST
           '(My) father and some people will go.'
       b.   *maga=nkja=nu*   *ik-ju-i*.
           grandchild= APPR=NOM   go-IPFV-NPST
           '(My) grandchild and some people will go.'
           (Niinaga's (2010) (43) and (44))

In addition to the domain of the plural marking, the noun class "address nouns" also correlates with the choice of nominative and/or genitive case markers in Irabu-Miyako (Shimoji 2017) and Yonaguni (Yamada 2015) in addition to those languages just mentioned (see van der Lubbe & Tokunaga (2016) for Okinoerabu in this respect).

For instance, according to Pellard (2010: 143), Ōgami-Miyako's nominative-genitive marker "*ka* is used with nominals located on the upper part of the hierarchy (pronouns and address nouns), and *nu* with the other nominals".

(13)   a.   *a=ka=tukss*.
                I= NOM= FOC   come
                'Here I come!'
        b.   *mii-tau=nu*   *pstu=nu*   *kss-i.*
                three-CLF= NOM   person=NOM   come-CVB
                'Three people came.'
                (Pellard's (2010) (50a) and (50b))

Irabu-Miyako's genitive marker alternation also correlates with the noun class "address nouns". Furthermore, Shimoji (2017: 142) explains the special status of the noun class "address nouns" in terms of personal pronominal system and claims that the alternation of genitive markers *=ga* or *=nu* in Irabu-Miyako is "dependent primarily on whether a given nominal is integrated into personal pronominal system". He gives an interesting pair of examples (14a-b) (provided in the text withotu the gloss) and explains the difference as follows: "there are certain nouns that are used in place of pronouns in Irabu, such as proper names, kinship terms for elders (e.g. *uja* 'father'; *ani* 'elder sister') and a restricted set of social status terms (e.g. *sinsii* 'teacher';*soncjoo* 'mayor'), and they are marked by *=ga* when they are used in place of personal/demonstrative pronouns, as in [(14a)]. Such nouns may be marked by *=nu* when they are not used pronominally, as in" (14b).

(14)   a.   *sinsii=ga*   *ffa=a*   *umukutukam=mi.*
                '(addressing teacher) your child is smart, teacher.'
        b.   *sinsii=nu*   *ffa=a*   *umukutukar*   *kutu=nu*
                uu-kam.
                '(in general) a teacher's child tends to be smart.'

4   Conclusion

We have shown that Yoron has a designated additive plural marker in addition to the associative plural marker. Both markers are segmentally

identical but are suprasegmentally differentiated. We have pointed out that only a subset of kinship terms and non-kinship human nouns can host the additive plural marker. It was demonstrated that the nouns that can host the additive plural marker are the ones that can be used to address someone.

The class of nouns that can be used to address someone is what Pellard (2010) call "address nouns". We pointed out that the noun class "address nouns" plays a role in several other grammatical domains of many Ryukyuan languages. Although it is yet unclear what the linguistic or grammatical basis is for such a noun class, we believe that further investigation will deepen our understanding of Ryukyuan languages or Japonic languages in general.

Acknowledgments

References

Kibe, N. (eds.). 2016. *General Research for the Study and Conservation of Endangered Dialects in Japan: Research Report on Yoron and Okinoerabu Dialect*. NINJAL.

Nakamoto, M. 1976. *Ryukyu-hoogen on'in-no kenkyuu* ("Study of the phonology of Ryukyuan dialects"). Hosei University Press.

Nakanishi, K. and S. Tomioka. 2004. Japanese Plurals Are Exceptional. Journal of East Asian Linguistics 13.2: 113-140.

Niinaga, Y. 2010. Yuwan (Amami Ryukyuan). Shimoji, M. and T. Pellard (eds.) *An Introduction to Ryukyuan Languages*. 35-88. ILCAA.

Niinaga, Y. 2015. *A Grammar of Yuwan, a Northern Ryukyuan Language*. Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Tokyo.

van der Lubbe, G. and A. Tokunaga. 2016. Okinoerabu grammar. Heinrich, P., S. Miyara, and M. Shimoji (eds.) *Handbook of Ryukyuan Languages*. 345-378. Muton de Gruyter.

Shimoji, M. 2017. *A Grammar of Irabu*. Kyushu University Press.

Shigeno, H. and Shirata, R. 2016. Kitaryukyu amiami hougen-ni okeru yuuseisei-kaisou ("Animacy hierarchy in Amami, Northern-Ryukyuan"). *Working Papers of Hiroshima University of Economics* 38.4: 111-133.

Shirata, R., M. Yamada, C. Ogino and Y. Takubo. 2011. Common Nouns as Proper Names in Kamikatetsu-Kikai Ryukyuan. Paper presented at the 21st Japanese/Korean Linguistics Conference, Seoul National University.

Suzuki, T. 1973. *Kotoba-to Bunka* ("Language and Culture"). Iwanami Shoten.

Takubo, Y. 1997. Nihongo-no ninshou hyoogen ("Personal nouns in Japanese"). Takubo, Y. (ed.) *Shiten-to Gengo Koudou* ("Point of view and linguistic act"). 13-44. Kuroshio.

Tsunoda, T. 2009. *Sekai-no Gengo-to Nihongo* ("Japanese and World's Languages"). Kurosiho.

Uwano, Z. 1999. Yoronjima higashiku hoogenno takei akusento taikei ("Takei-accent system of Yoron-higashi dialect). *Kokugogaku* 199: 188-174.

Yamada, M. 2015. 'Rajio taisoo daiichi Dunan-munui'-de oboeru Dunan-munui (Yonaguni-go) ("Learning Dunan-munui (Yonaguni-Ryukyuan) by Dunan version of Radio Calisthenics 1"). Karimata, S. (ed.) *Ryukyu Shogo Kijutsu Bumpoo I* ("Descriptive Grammars of Ryukyuan Languages I"): 231-245. University of Ryukyus.

Yokoyama, A. 2014. Amami Okinoerabu hoogen-no hukusuu setsubiji ("On the plural markers in Okinoerabu-Amami-Ryukyuan"). *Proceedings of Japanese Language Variation and Change Conference 2014*. National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics.