



◆ I address my gratitude to **Chiyo Yonaha**, my Miyakoan teacher, who passed away in May 2024.



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The Future of Miyaakufutsu (Miyakoan Language): Vanishing Voices, Emerging Voices

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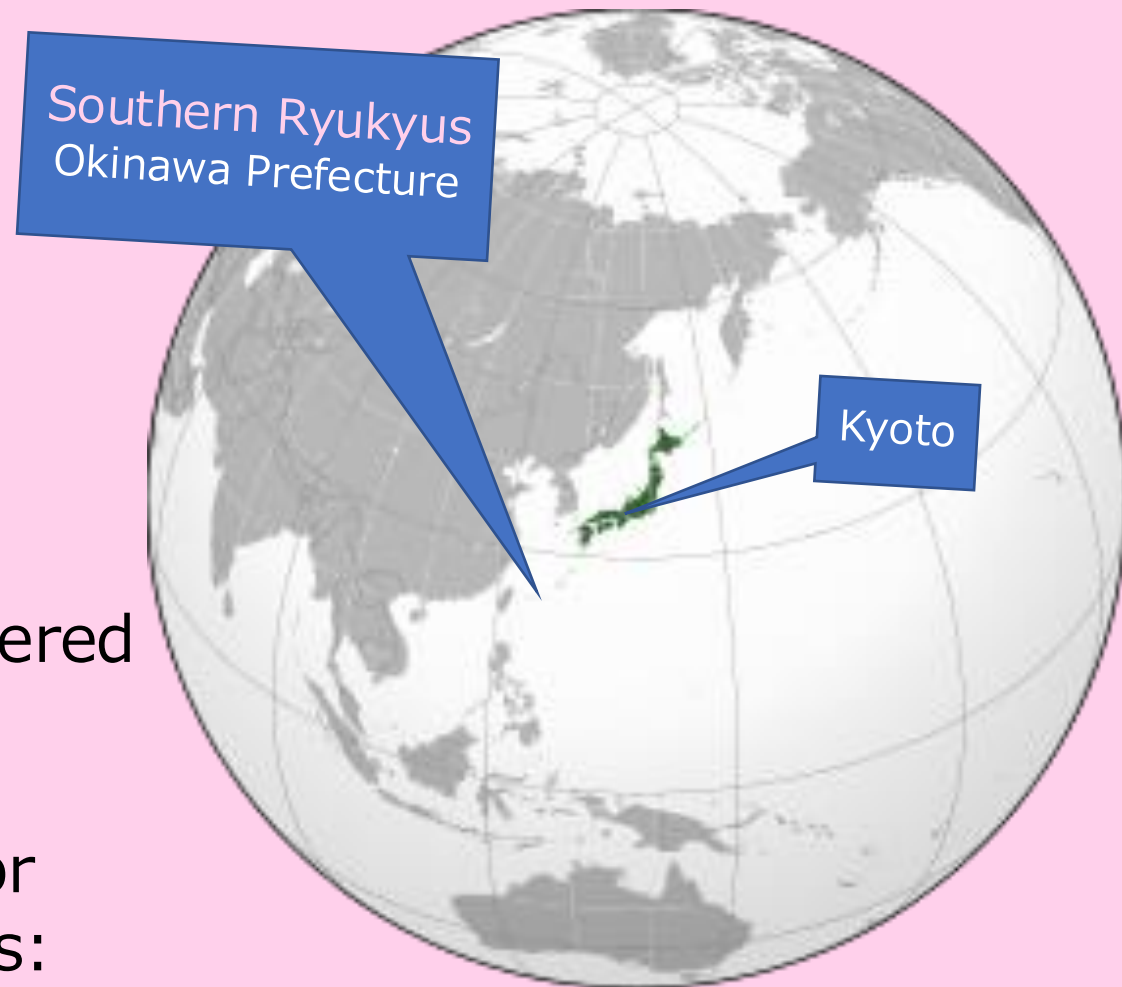
YouTube channel: Live Multilingually Project



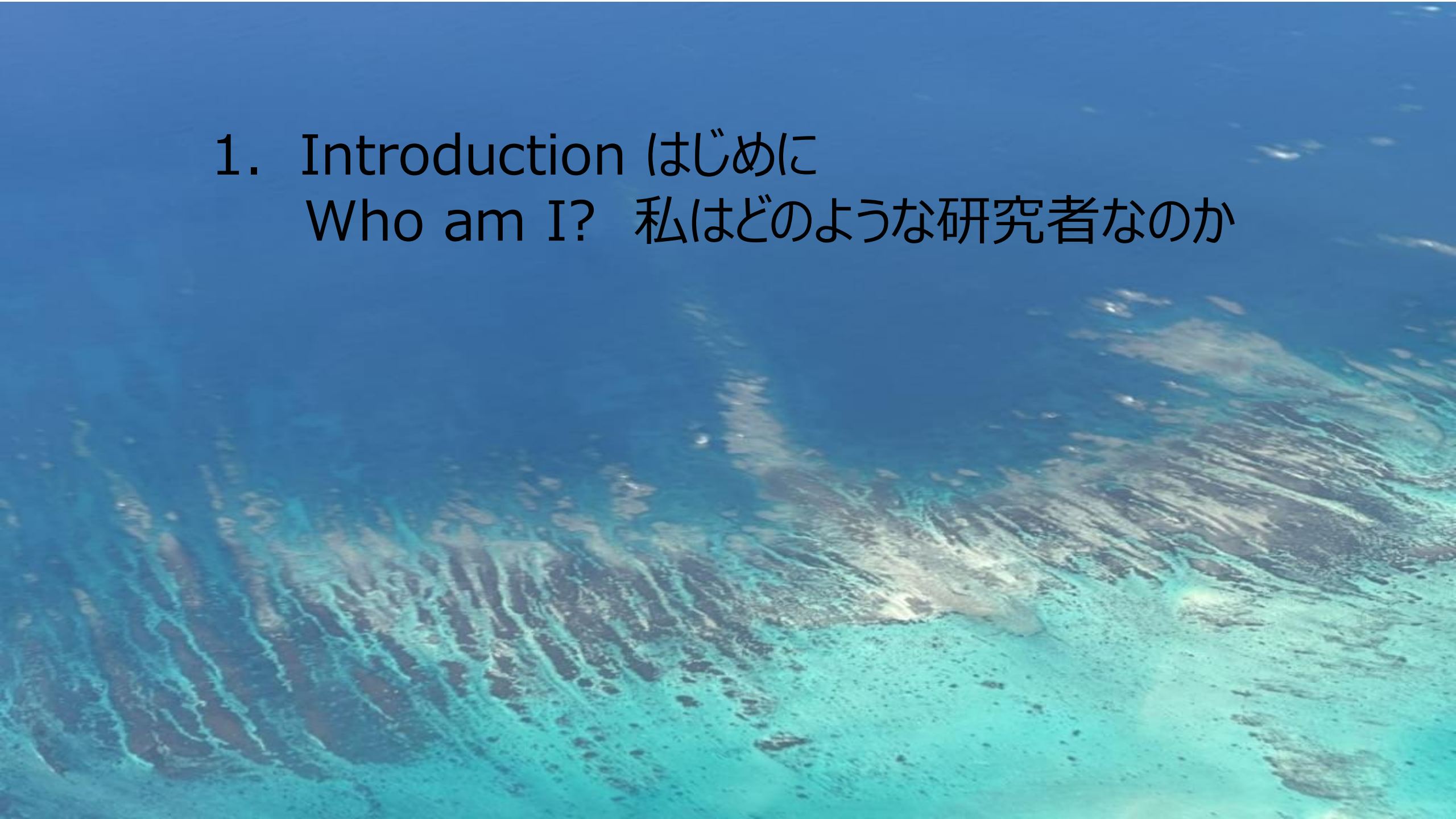
Acknowledgement :

Research Grants

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- (2022) **Linguapax Asia** research grant
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'Research praxis in language education for the revitalization of Ryukyuan languages: transitioning from language endangerment to language transmission' (PI: S. Fujita-Round)
- (2024~) **JSPS Kakenhi (A) 24H00092**
'Revitalization and Documentation of Endangered Languages, centering on Okinoerabu-Ryukyuan' (PI: M. Yamada)



1. Introduction はじめに
Who am I? 私はどのような研究者なのか



Three decades of bilingual research 30年間のバイリンガル研究

Bilingualism in childhood 子ども期のバイリンガリズム Bilingual 'domain' and the age ことばの「場」と年齢

1. Intermarriage family (Japanese/English infant)
Japanese/English bilingual



Family

2. Japanese as a second language in Shinjuku ward, Korean/Japanese bilingual

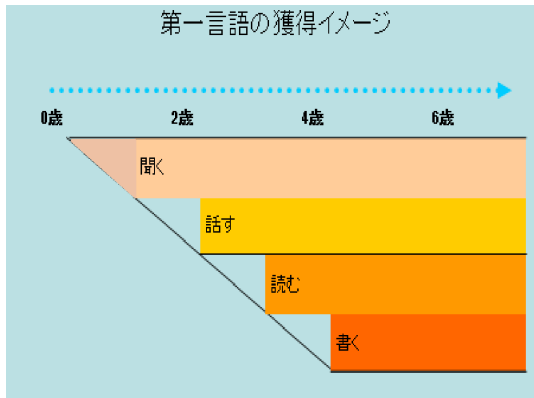


School

3. Endangered language, Miyakoan/
Japanese bilingual (2012-)
科研費研究24520586, 15K02659, 18K00695, 23K25334



Community




Life cycle
ライフサイクル

Infant and preschool age
乳幼児・子ども期 (0 - 6歳)

elementary school
子ども期 (小学校 6 - 12歳)

junior high school
子ども期 (中学校 13 - 15歳)

An aerial photograph of a coral reef system. The water transitions from deep blue to shallow turquoise and light green, revealing the intricate patterns of the reef. A small, low-lying island is visible in the center-right of the frame, surrounded by a shallow lagoon. The overall scene is a vast, natural marine environment.

2 . The Context of Miyako Island 宮古島が置かれた状況

Russia

North Korea

South Korea

China

Taiwan



Japan

Source: Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger retrieved from:
<http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/> (2011/12/31)

1.1 Multilingual Japan

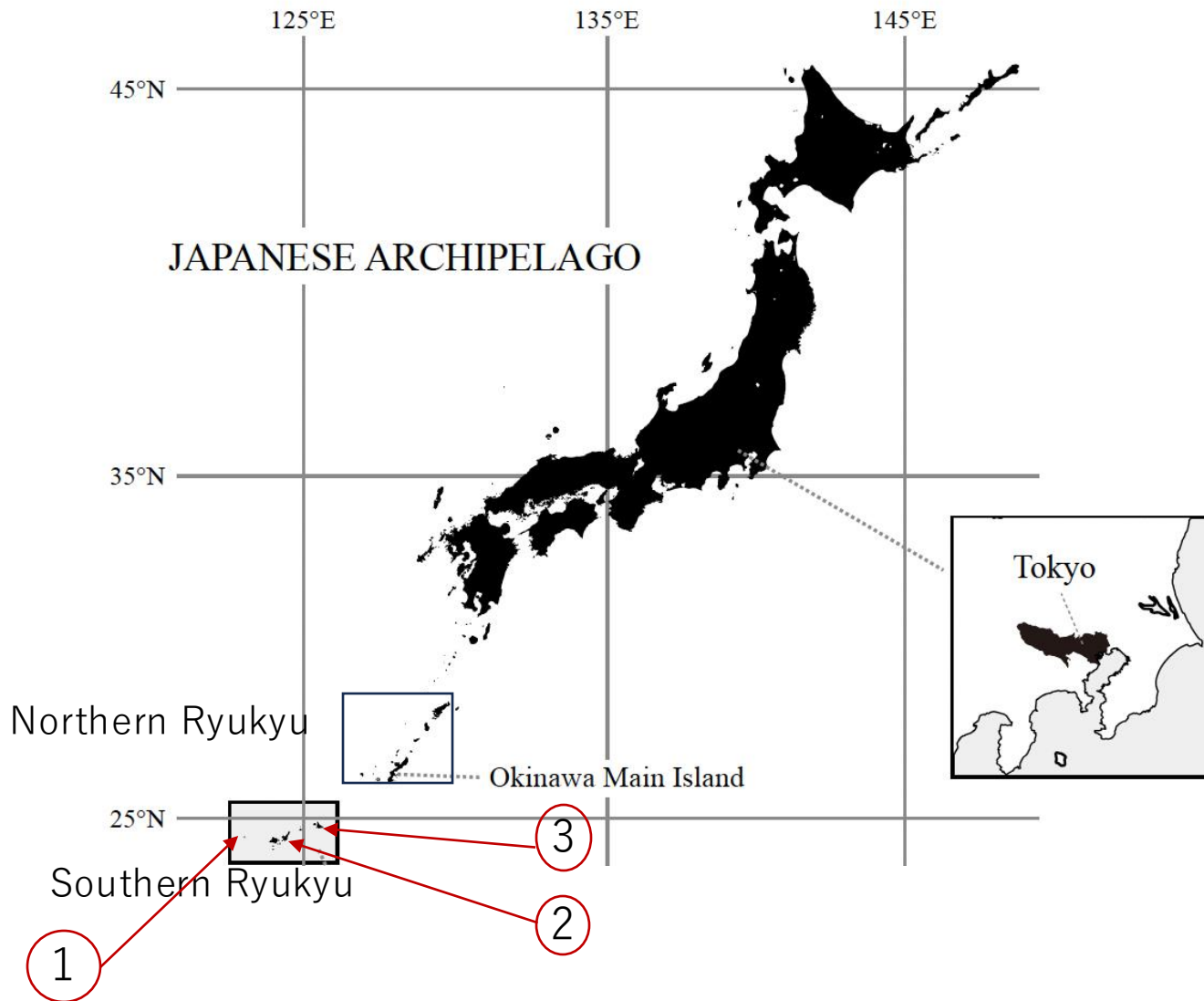
- The context of 21st-century multilingualism in Japan mirrors 20th-century modernization (colonizing Taiwan and Korean Peninsula), where the diversity of languages in Japan is visible and public and increasingly understood.

- The languages we can see: Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, Ainu, **Ryukyuan**, Japanese sign language, Portuguese, Spanish, and Japanese as a second language (Fujita-Round and Maher, 2017), Vietnamese, Urdu and more (Maher, 2022).

- **Myaakufutsu (meaning 'Miyakoan language' in Miyakoan)** is marked as 'definitely endangered' in UNESCO Map.



南琉球と言語の再活性化 Southern Ryukyus and Language Revitalization



Copyright: Kojima & Fujita-Round

南から From the South

① 与那国島、与那国語

どうなんむぬい **Dunan munui**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdmyvIBlnfQ>

② 石垣島、八重山語

やいむむに **Yaima muni**

<https://youtu.be/KKcJPTotv0E>

② 宮古島、宮古語

みゃーくふつ **Myaaku futsu**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5wFuOKfj0k>

Okinawa Prefecture
沖縄県

Okinawa Islands
沖縄諸島

Kume
久米島

Naha
那覇

Kerama Is.
慶良間諸島

Okinawa
Island
沖縄本島

Southern Ryukyus

Northern Ryukyus

Miyakoan 宮古語

Yaeyaman 八重山語

Dunan 与那国語

Miyako Islands
宮古諸島

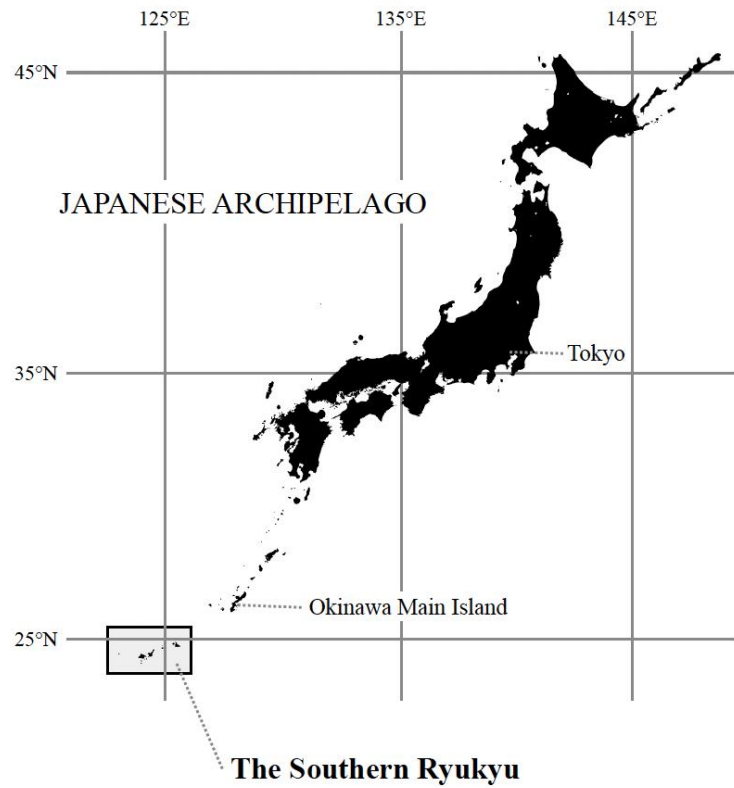
Yaeyama Islands
八重山諸島

Miyako
宮古島

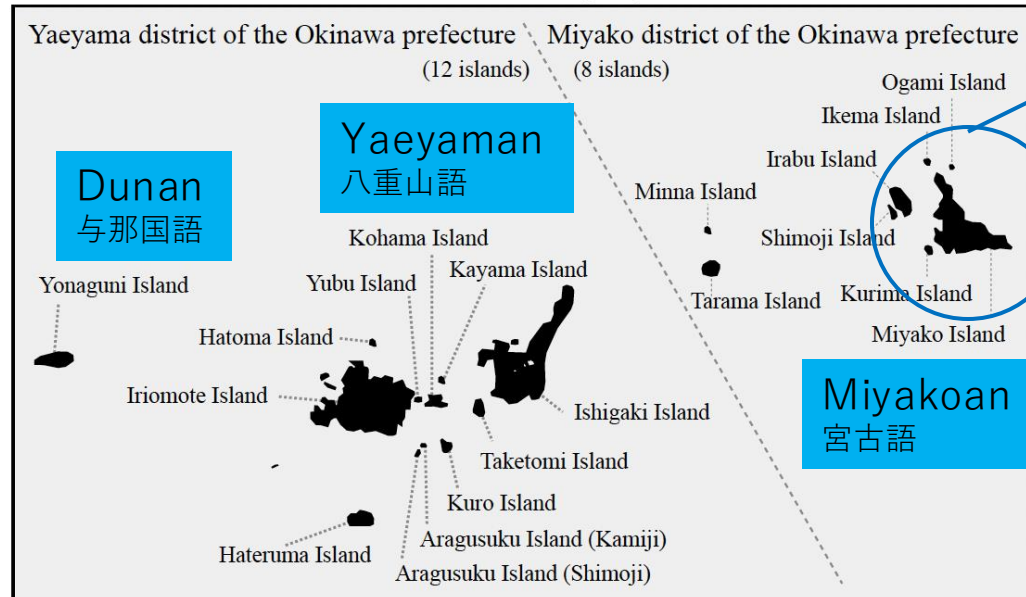
Iriomote
西表島

Ishigaki
石垣島

Geography of the Southern Ryukyus



The Southern Ryukyu



Source: Fujita-Round (2022a, 2023)



Figure 1. The map of Miyako Islands. Source: Author added information on Creative Commons Map.

- Ryukyuan languages are roughly divided into two groups: Northern Ryukyu (Amami, Kunigami, Okinwawa) and Southern Ryukyu (Miyako, Yaeyama, Yonaguni) (cf. Maher, 2022)

The population of Japan

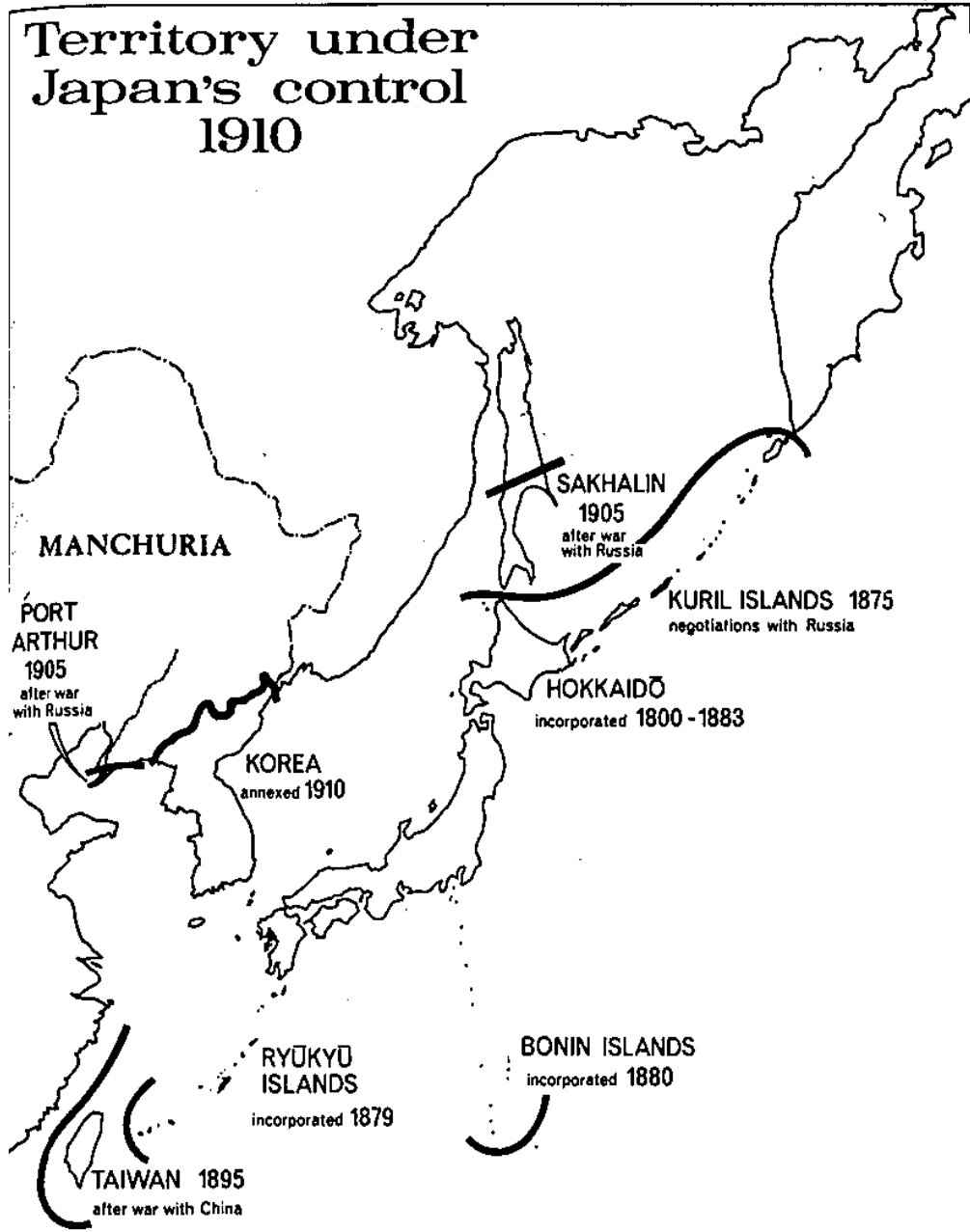
2014	2025
127,083,000	123,300,000

Japanese population growth saw a spurt, from 72 million in 1945 to more than 120 million in 1989, when Japan became the seventh most populous nation in the world (Fujita-Round, 2019: 174).

3. Language standardization and endangerment 言語標準化と危機言語



During the colonization period of the 19th and 20th centuries, governments imposed national language standards on 'dialect' and "assimilated immigrants and indigenous peoples to the standardized 'proper' language of the colonizer" (The New London Group, 2000: 14).



Japanese history in relation to language and education

1868 Meiji Restoration

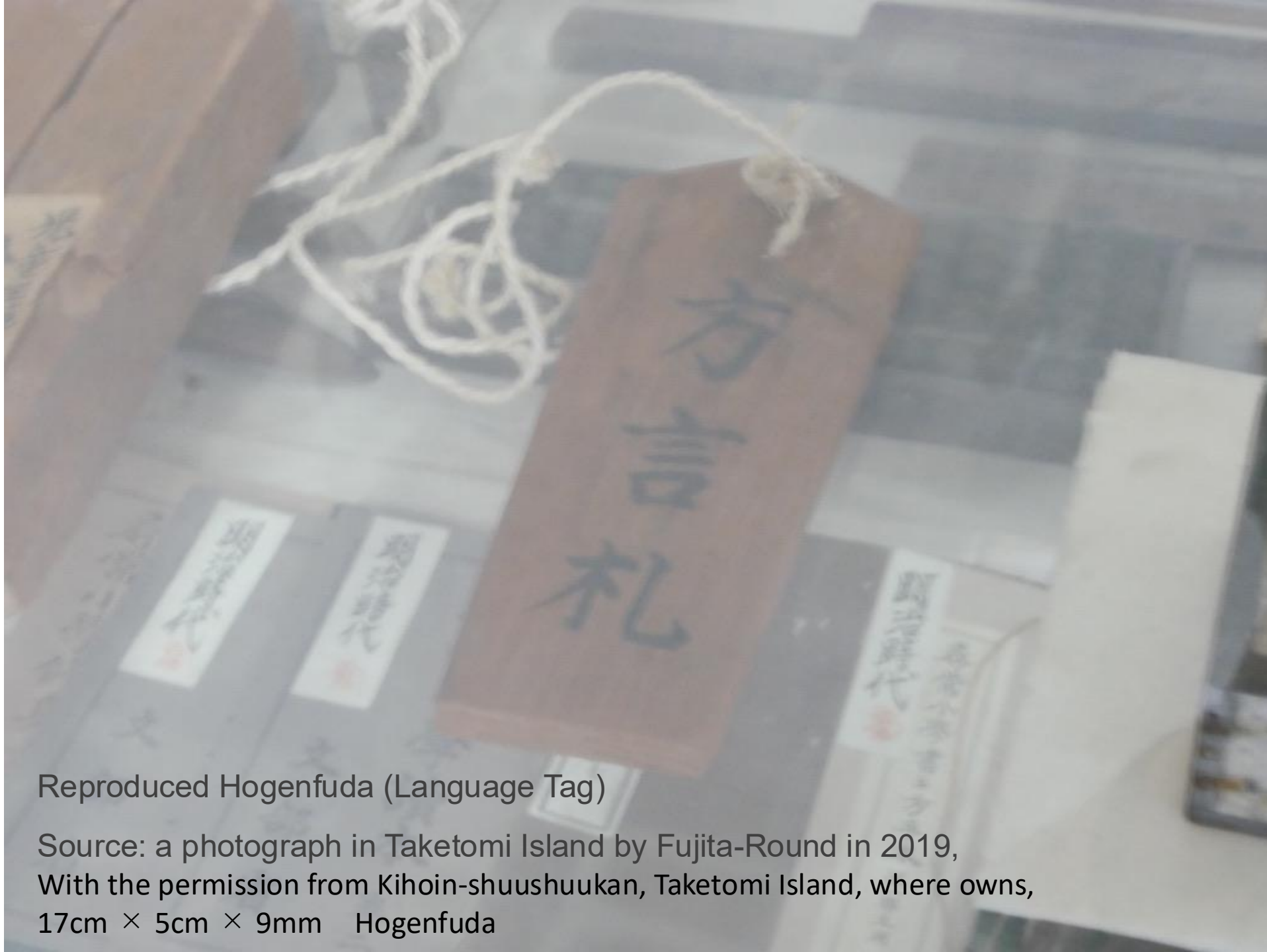
1879 Ryukyuan Islands were incorporated into Japan in 1879

1886 First school education policy (*Gakko-rei*)

1896 The opening of the Governor General's national language school in Taiwan.

The process of Japanese modernization dates back to the Meiji Era (1868–1912). Language standardization, the language policy in Japan, was concomitant with imperialism (Fujita-Round and Maher 2017). The Japanese government adopted a *hyōjungo* (standard language) policy for the nation (Carroll 2001). For the implementation of this policy, a centralist approach to the issue of standardization was applied (Gottlieb 2005).

As a result, four geographic areas were crucially affected; **Hokkaido**, inhabited by the indigenous Ainu people, was incorporated into Japan in 1869, and the **Ryukyu** Archipelago that once was the Ryukyuan kingdom was incorporated as Okinawa Prefecture in 1879; outside of Japan, Japanese rule was imposed on **Taiwan** (1895–1945) and the **Korean** peninsula (1910–1945) (Morris- Suzuki 1998).



Reproduced Hogenfuda (Language Tag)

Source: a photograph in Taketomi Island by Fujita-Round in 2019,
With the permission from Kihoin-shuushukan, Taketomi Island, where owns,
17cm × 5cm × 9mm Hogenfuda

Hogen fuda

方言札 (language tag)

A photo in 1969 in Okinawa Island
before the Reversion of Okinawa to Japan
(Japanese administration)

Source of the photograph:

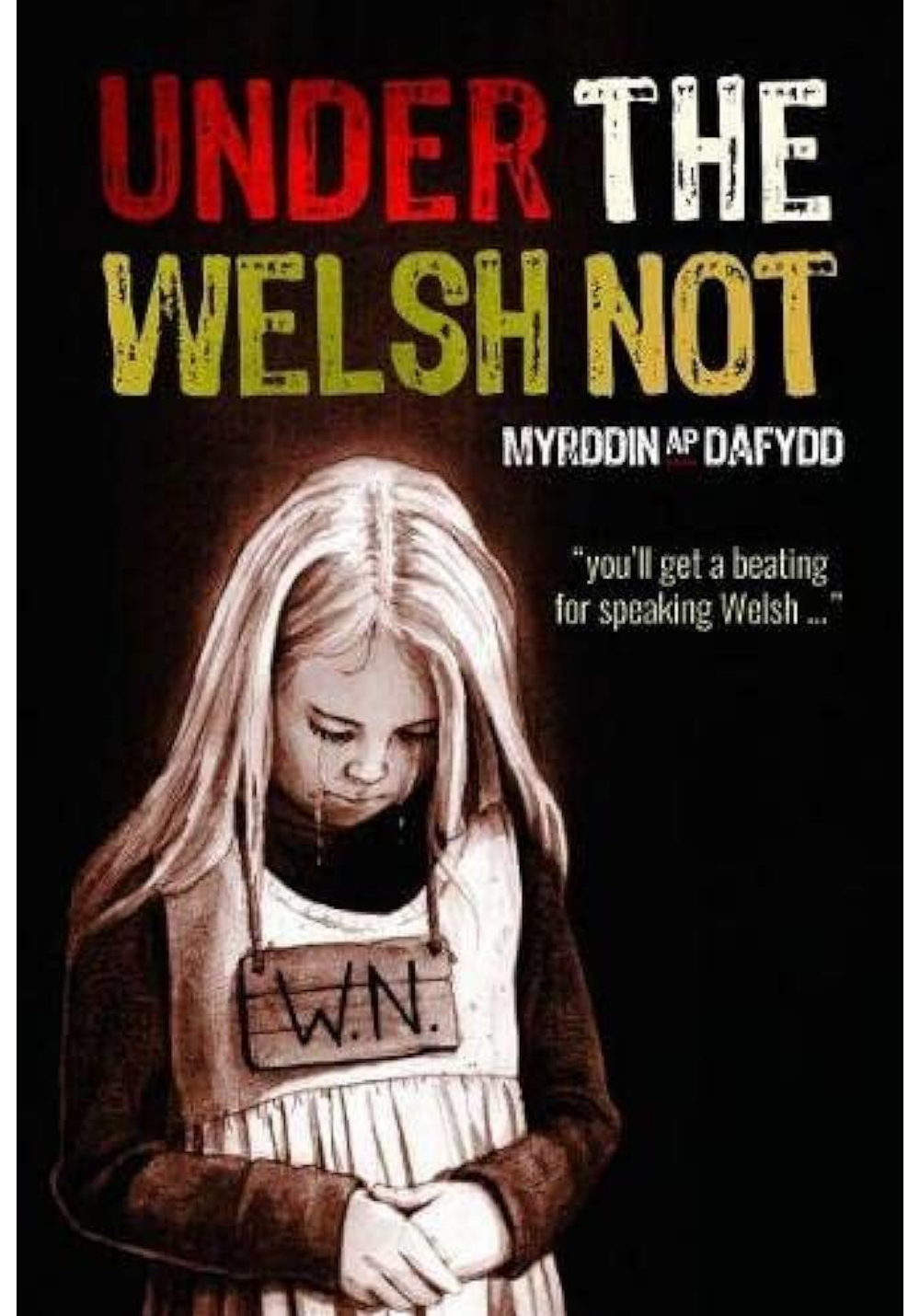
<https://coralway.jugem.jp/?eid=4947>





Source 1: Welsh Not - A Form of Punishment(FelinFach)
<https://www.felinfach.com/pages/welsh-not-welsh-knot?srsItd=AfmBOorn41XiVGWaU2KZ8NOtaaLQG0wLHFw9aLX-66WOQpussDXceFu1>

Source 2: The cover of the book by Myrddin ap Dafydd
“Undr the Welsh Not” Gwasg Carreg Gwalch



UNESCO (2009) World Atlas of Languages in Danger



8 endangered languages in Japan

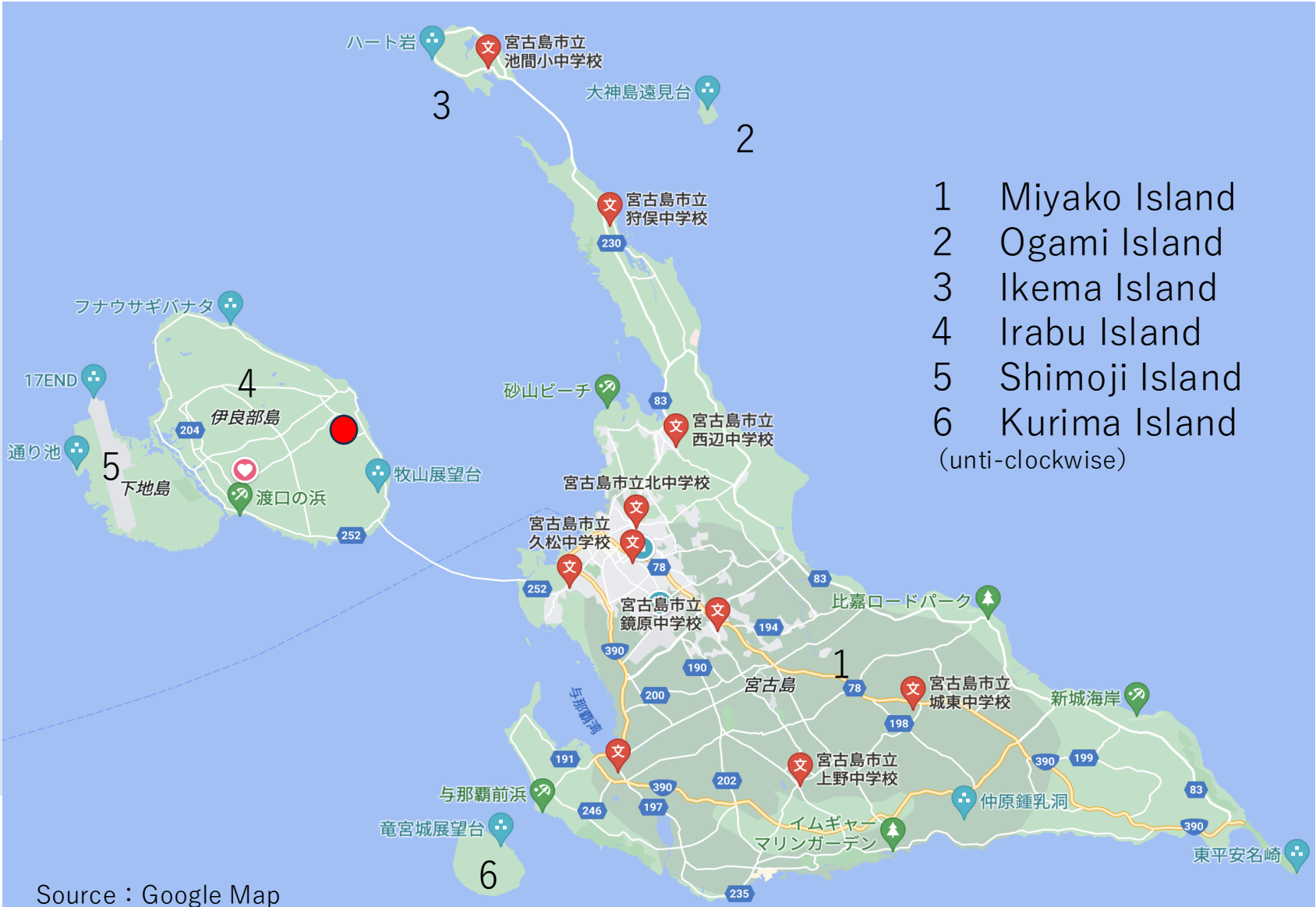
- Ainu
- Hachijo
- Amami
- Kunigami
- Okinawa
- Miyako
- Yaeyama
- Yonaguni

6 Ryukyuan languages

Miyakoan is no longer transmitted in the family.

1.2 Demography of Miyakojima City

- Six Islands are unified under Miyakojima City in **2005**.
- Current population **55,538** (May 2023, Miyakojima City Hall)



4 . Ethnographic research and outcomes 民族誌的研究とその成果



The importance of documenting the linguistic data of an endangered language is beyond question; however, linguistic documentation should be followed or accompanied by an understanding of how to use **the language system in real life**. My sociolinguistic research goal is not to document the linguistic system but rather to construct a pedagogy or method of educational practices to revitalize the endangered language and maintain bilingualism in the communities.

Collaborative efforts by the researchers in the Southern Ryukyus

Miyakoan Proverb card game



Tarama card game

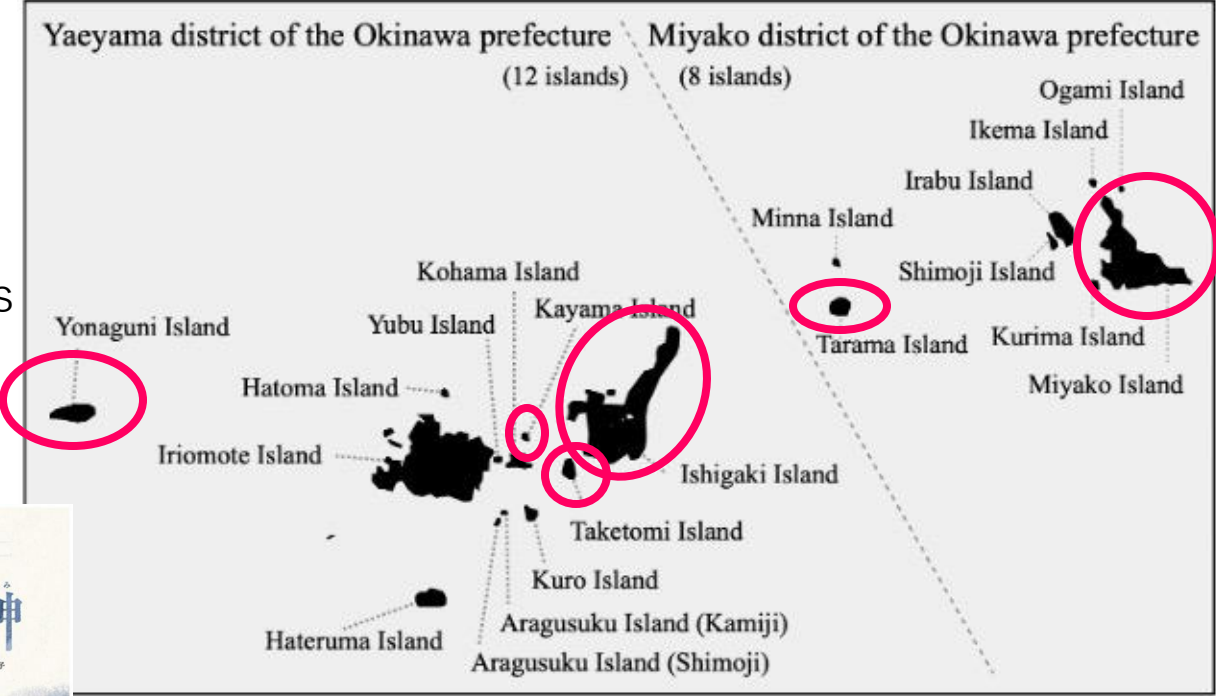
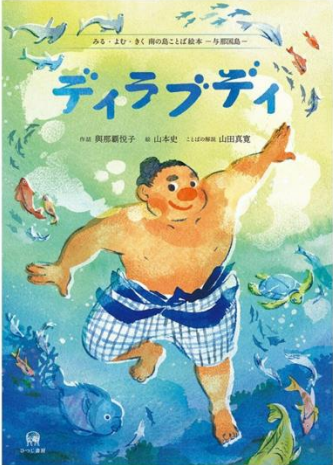


Yonaguni card game



Folk tale
Picture book with 3 languages

- Taketomi
- Tarama
- Yonaguni



Source: Map created by Kojima and Fujita-Round

Free access papers

1) Fujita-Round, S. (2022) 'Weaving the voices of speakers of endangered languages into an ethnographic documentary film: "The Future of Miyaakufutsu (Miyakoan language): Vanishing Voices, Emerging Voices"' in *Linguapax Review 10: Cinema and Language Revitalisation*, <https://www.linguapax.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Linguapax-2022-Cinema-and-language-revitalisation.pdf>, 47-58.

2) Fujita-Round, S. (2022) 'Language revitalization and the classroom: video workshops at an elementary school in Miyakojima' in *Languages*, 8, 4, <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8010004>

YouTube Videos: Live Multilingually Project

- 1) Language revitalization efforts of children, schools, groups of volunteer, singers, etc, and documentation of traditional dances and community practices in Miyako, Tarama, Ishigaki, Taketomi and Yonaguni.
- 2) 3 Albums with English subtitles

Hisamatsu Album,

Ikema Album,

Sarahama Album

- 3) Language learning videos

NEW series of Yaeyaman →



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- Carroll, Tessa (2001) *Language Planning and Language Change in Japan*. Richmond: Curzon.
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- Fujita-Round, S. (2022b) 'Weaving the voices of speakers of endangered languages into an ethnographic documentary film: "The Future of Miyaakufutsu (Miyakoan language): Vanishing Voices, Emerging Voices"' in *Linguapax Review 10: Cinema and Language Revitalisation*, <https://www.linguapax.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Linguapax-2022-Cinema-and-language-revitalisation.pdf>, 47-58.
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- Gottlieb, Nanette (2005) *Language and Society in Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morris-Suzuki, Tessa (1998) *Re-inventing Japan. Time, Space, Nation*. Armonk: Sharpe.
- New London Group (2000) *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies designing social futures*. In *Multiliteracies: literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.

From endangerment to revitalization and reclamation

たんでいがーたんでい ぷからす (宮古語 Miyakoan)

しっかいとう みーはいゆー (八重語 Yaeyaman)

あらぐ ふがらさ (与那国語 Dunan)

ご清聴、ありがとうございました。 (日本語 Japanese)

イヤイライケレ (アイヌ語 Ainu)

Diolch yn fawr! (ウェールズ語 Welsh)

Thank you very much for listening. (英語 English)



Sea God Festival and traditional Lion Dance in Hisamatsu. Video available on Youtube Page, Live Multilingually

