

Case marking, word order, and animacy in Vernacular Atayalic Japanese

陳彥伶

中央研究院語言學研究所

ABSTRACT

This ongoing project examines the morphosyntactic behaviors of case-marking in Vernacular Atayalic Japanese, focusing specifically on the Han-hsi variety. It seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) What type of case-marking system does Vernacular Atayalic Japanese have? and (2) How is case-marking used in relation to transitivity? Attention is also given to animacy and word order, and their relationship to differential case-marking. In this pilot study, prototypical transitive verbs are defined according to Tsunoda (1985). Preliminary results suggest that the agent is zero-marked, and that Vernacular Atayalic Japanese exhibits traits of a secundative language, in which the recipient of a trivalent predicate bears the same marker as the patient of a divalent predicate. Animacy plays a role in case-marking following both the Animacy hierarchy and the Definiteness hierarchy in Aissen (2003). It also interacts with word order. The patient in a divalent construction is more likely to be overtly marked in SOV word order than in SVO word order, as adjacent S and O arguments in SOV require one to be explicitly marked to distinguish the agent from the patient, especially when both are animate.