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Title of Research	Description and Documentation of the Ogami Dialect of Miyako Ryukyuan	
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<p><b>【Invitation Period】</b>      January 8, 2009 ~ March 31, 2009</p>		
<p><b>【Counterpart at Kyoto University】</b>  Counterpart Professor / Counterpart Graduate School:  Yukinori Takubo / Graduate School of Letters</p>		
<p><b>【Report of evaluating your results / achievements of this GCOE Asian Erasmus Pilot Program】</b></p> <p>My research topic was about the description and documentation of the Ōgami dialect of Miyako Ryukyuan. All varieties of Ryukyuan are highly endangered, but this is particularly true of the Ōgami dialect, which counts at most a hundred of really fluent speakers. Most of the speakers are over 60 years old, and the intergenerational transmission has been severed for long. This dialect is spoken in the small Ōgami Island located in the Miyako islands of the Okinawa prefecture, Japan. The island is nowadays populated by no more than 30 persons, whose mean age is over 70. Another community exists in the Takano village of the Miyako main island, formed by younger generations who have moved there many years ago, but, as they acknowledge themselves, their dialect has been profoundly influenced by the neighboring dialects. I have thus decided to restrain my investigations to the main community of the Ōgami Island.</p> <p>While highly endangered, Ōgami Ryukyuan has barely been documented, and the few existing descriptive sketches are highly problematic and have raised several controversies. My goals were thus twofold: to document this dialect by collecting as much linguistic data as possible and to produce an in-depth description explicitly based on these data. During my stay in Japan I conducted two 2-weeks long field trips to the Ōgami Island. I had the privilege to work with several very good and cooperative informants. I had met several of them during a previous fieldtrip in 2008, and this time I had the chance to become more accepted by the community and the opportunity to meet and work with several new native speakers.</p> <p>I have managed to collect a great wealth of high quality audio data which enabled me to produce a detailed acoustic description of this dialect, coupled with video data of articulatory movements of</p>		

the speakers' mouths. This high quality phonetic data is crucial to an accurate description of Ōgami Ryukyuan's sound system. I am now able to prove that, contrary to the claims of most previous works, this dialect has neither vowel devoicing process nor voice distinction for stops, but has the particularity to allow words made up of voiceless stops only. This last fact is of particular importance since it is a feature very rare cross-linguistically: only two other languages in the world have been reported to allow voiceless consonant-only words.

I did not restrict my investigations to phonetics and phonology only, but I have also investigated the grammatical system. I have relied on both elicitation techniques and on recorded spontaneous speech. One of my main findings concerns the very interesting converb forms system and the constructions where such forms can, quite surprisingly, appear as the head of a main clause. This process has come to be known as *insubordination* in recent typological literature, and the Ōgami Ryukyuan case constitutes a very interesting case for this area of research.

Besides my purely linguistic focus on description, I have also tried to produce some documentation material on Ōgami Ryukyuan. I have thus recorded several stories and conversations in audio and for some them in video too. This kind of data is not only essential for a proper linguistic description, but has also a separate value as a material on the traditional culture of the community. I have thus collected several folklore stories and life stories as well as daily conversations. Most important, I have been able to collect some data on the religious habits and beliefs of the Ōgami community. This community is well known for having very strict taboos on religious practices and for never sharing any information on this matter with strangers, but I have gained the confidence of the community and got some information about non sensitive religious matters. The recorded material is for the first time in the original native language and not in the investigator's contact language, i.e. Standard Japanese.

I made a great step toward gaining the community's confidence when I circulated copies of audio material recorded by previous researchers in the 60's and 70's, after I realized not a single member of the community was aware of their existence. It is unnecessary to tell how pleased people were when they could hear the voice of their now deceased relatives and neighbors.

Part of my preliminary results has been reported during a public talk at the Kyoto University (March, 26<sup>th</sup> 2009), and my new findings will be incorporated into my PhD thesis and in several articles to be published in international academic journals.