CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF YAMI LINKING

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a description of argument-function linking in Yami. In Yami and many other Austronesian languages, argument-function linking appears to be influenced by the voice system; the first part of this chapter therefore introduces the Yami voice system. Furthermore, in Yami, the grammatical functions are shown through case marking, not through word order. The second part of this chapter thus introduces the case marking system of Yami and discusses the grammatical functions of Yami case markers. The third section summarizes different sentence types in Yami and lists the argument-function linking patterns of these sentences.

2.2 The voice system in Yami

According to Chang (2000) and Tung and Rau (2000), there are four kinds of voice (what they call "focus") constructions in Yami. They are agent voice (AV), patient voice (PV), location voice (LV) and instrument voice (IV) or benefactor voice (BV). In each voice construction, the verb is affixed with a "voice marker", and the voice marker selects an argument which bears specific thematic relation with the verb and marks it with nominative case. When the verb is affixed by the AV marker, the

agent is marked by the nominative case marker *o/si*, as illustrated in (2). When the

verb is in PV, the patient is marked nominative. Similarly, LV and IV markers,

respectively, mark location and instrument in nominative case. Examples of different

voice constructions are illustrated in (2)- (5).

(2) ya   k-om-an so soli si   yama.
    YA   eat(AV) OBL taro   NOM father
    Father eats taro.

(3) na-kan-en   o   soli   ni yama.
    he-eat-PV NOM taro GEN father
    The taro is eaten by father.

(4) ya ko   ya-kan so among   o   ipangan ya
    YA I(GEN) IV-eat OBL fish   NOM knife   YA
    I eat fish with the knife

(5) ya ko   pi-akan-an so   among   o   pasalan ya
    YA I(GEN) eat(LV)   OBL fish   NOM shore   YA
    This seashore is where I eat fish.[3]

Since each nominal is marked by a case marker, the case system of Yami is

discussed in the next section.

2.2.1 Case system of Yami

There are various case markers in Yami. Tung and Rau (2000) adopted the

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[3] NOM, OBL, and GEN are case markers. NOM refers to nominative case; OBL refers to oblique case and GEN refers to genitive case. YA is a discourse marker which is not discussed here. There are different versions of naming these case markers; here we adopt Rau and Tung (to appear)

analysis of Ho (1990) to propose two sets of case markers, one for common nouns and one for proper nouns. Each set contains four kinds of case markers: nominative, accusative, genitive and locative.

According to Tung and Rau (2000), nominative case markers mark the arguments selected by the voice marker. Agents in AV and patients in PV sentences are marked by nominative markers. Accusative markers mark patients in non-PV sentences. Genitive markers mark agents in non-AV sentences. Finally, locative case markers mark locations. Moreover, common nouns and proper nouns use different sets of case markers. The case system of Tung and Rau (2000) is in (6).

(6) Yami case markers (Tung and Rau 2000) [4]

	NOM	ACC	GEN	LOC
Common noun	o	so	no	do
Proper noun	si	X	ni	ji

However, Rau and Tung (to appear) follow Reid and Liao (2004) to modify the case system. In the latest version, the naming of the *so* marker as accusative is revised as oblique, but this marker still marks the patients in non-PV sentences. The revised version is shown in (7).

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[4] The X in both (6) and (7) indicates that the proper noun counterpart of the marker *so* does not exist. It does not only mean that the marker does not exist, it means that proper nouns can never be patients in AV sentences.

(7) Yami case markers (Rau and Tung to appear)

	NOM	GEN	LOC	OBL
Common noun	o	no	do	so
Proper noun	si	ni	ji	X

The latest system of Rau and Tung (to appear) will be adopted in this thesis. The reason will be discussed later in this chapter. Pronouns in Yami also have different cases, but pronouns demonstrate their different cases by taking up different forms instead of through case markers. Yami pronouns in different cases are presented in (8).

(8) Yami pronouns in different cases [5]

			NOM	GEN	LOC	OBL
Free	1st Person	S	yaken	niaken	jaken	N/E
		PL/E	yamen	niamen	jamen	N/E
		PL/I	yaten	niaten	jaten	N/E
	2nd Person	S	imo	nimo	jimo	N/E
		PL	inio	ninio	jinio	N/E
	3rd Person	S	Ø	nia	ja	N/E
		PL	sira	nira	jira	N/E
Bound	1st Person	S	ko	ko	N/E	N/E
		PL/E	namen	namen	N/E	N/E
		PL/I	ta, tamo	ta	N/E	N/E
	2nd Person	S	ka	mo	N/E	N/E
		PL	kamo	nio	N/E	N/E
	3rd Person	S	Ø	na	N/E	N/E
		PL	Ø	da	N/E	N/E

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[5] This table is rearranged from Rau and Tung (to appear, p40). The free-bound distinction of the pronominal system in Yami is a unique property, which is not the focus here. S is the abbreviation for singular; PL/E for plural exclusive and PL/I for plural inclusive. "Ø" signifies zero form and "N/E" means non-existent.

2.2.2 Voice markers

In addition to case marking, the other important part of the voice system is the voice markers. Voice markers in Yami are affixes attached to verbs. Different voice markers choose different argument roles to mark in nominative. The case marking of other roles then changes accordingly. Some of the voice markers are introduced below:

2.2.2.1 The *–en* affix

In previous studies (Ho 1990, Tung and Rau 2000), *-en* suffix is treated as a PV suffix. When a verb is affixed by *–en*, the patient is marked in nominative case while the agent is marked in genitive, as in (9).

> (9) cita-en   mo   o   anak mo
>   see-PV you(GEN) NOM child your
>   Watch out for your children.

In Yami, a bare verb stem also has the same case marking pattern as a verb with *–en* suffix. For example, the verb "*cita*" in (9) can also be used with no affix at all as in (10). And the nominative case still goes to the patient while the genitive case goes to the agent.

(10) to   ko   a   cita   si   apen   Kalalanet   ito
     then I(GEN) LINK see   NOM grandfather   that
     Then I see grandpa Kalalanet. [6]

Though the case marking patterns for the –*en* suffixed verbs and the non-affixed

verbs are identical, we could still identify some special functions of the suffix –*en*.

First, compared with the non-affixed form, it can be used to emphasize the patient.

For example, in (9) *cita-en* means "to watch out," but in (10) *cita* only means "to see".

According to the dictionary of Rau and Tung (to appear), *cita-en* sometimes also

means "to visit". Compared with "to see", "to visit" and "to watch out" both place

more emphasis on the patient.

Secondly, the –*en* suffix also indicates that the sentence is in the present tense

because the –*en* suffix is in complementary distribution with the past tense marker

"*ni*". For example, the verb stem –*kan* means "to eat."   With this stem, there are

ni-kan and *ni-k-om-an* (*om* is an AV infix), but never *nikanen.

2.2.2.2 The m-form affix

In Yami, there are several affixes that include "*m*" in them. They all have similar

functions and therefore are called as m-form affixes in Ho (1990). We shall take a

look at some of them:

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[6] *a* is a marker which plays several different functions in Yami. Here it is a linker linking complements
and predicates, thus marked LINK. It may also be a relativizer and be marked REL.

a. *–om-* affix

The marker *-om-* is said to be an AV affix in Ho (1990). It is sometimes a prefix and sometimes an infix, determined by phonological factors. In (11) *–om-* is an infix while in (12) it is a prefix.

(11) ka   k-om-an   so   soli
     you(NOM) eat(AV)   OBL   taro
     You eat taro.

(12) yaken   o   ya ni- om- bakbak   do   ino
     I(NOM)NOM YA   PAST-AV-beat   LOC dog
     It is I that beat at the dog.

The *–om-* affix identifies the agent or actor as nominative. When the verb is *–om-* marked, the patient is marked in oblique case. The oblique patient can be omitted. For example, (13) is also a grammatical sentence.

 (13) ka   k-om-an.
      you(NOM) eat (AV)
      You eat (something)

b. *man-* affix

The prefix *man-* functions like *–om-*, for example, sentence (12) above can be compared to sentence (14)

(14) yaken   o   ya ni- man- bakbak   so   ino
     I(NOM) NOM YA   PAST-AV-beat   OBL dog
     It is I that beat the dog.

The case assignment patterns of *man-* and *–om-* are similar. Due to the lack of sufficient data, the difference between *man-* and *–om-* is still not clear. It seems that *-om-* is always affixed to action verbs while *man-* can be affixed both to action and non-action verbs. When *man-* and *-om-* are attached to the same verb, the *man-*affixed verb marks its patient with oblique "*so*" while *-om-* affixed verb with the locative "*do/ji*". Sentence (15) and (16) are a set of examples for this, taken from Tung and Rau (to appear, p376).

(15) man-dep   so   kavahayan   a   manakaw   so   pzapzatan   a.
      enter(AV) OBL house   LINK steal   OBL   things   LINK
      Enter other's house to steal things.

(16) ya   s-om-dep   o   ino   do   vahay.
      YA   enter(AV) NOM dog   LOC house
      The dog entered into the house.

2.2.2.3 The *–an* affix

The *-an* affix, a suffix, is the LV (location voice) marker. As its name suggests, its function is to identify the location as nominative marked. For example:

(17) ya   ko   ni- pi-yakan-an   so   among   o   pasalan   ya
      YA   I(GEN) PAST-eat(LV)   OBL   fish   NOM   shore   this
      This shore is where I ate fish.

Therefore, most of the time, with *–an* affixed on the verb, there are three arguments: the location taking the nominative case, the agent in the genitive case and

the patient in the oblique case. However, exceptions also exist. For example, in (18), there are only two arguments, and it is the patient that is marked as nominative. Indeed it is quite common to see an –*an* marked verb mark the patient in nominative, showing a similar linking pattern as a PV verb.

An explanation to this is that the patient is also the "location" on which the verb acts. When there are no real locations, the LV affixes thus choose the patient to be marked nominative, as in (18).

(18) na-ni-bakbak-an   yaken   ni   yama
     he-PAST- beat-LV   I(NOM) GEN father
     Father beat me.

2.2.2.4 The *i-* affix

The *i-* affix is the IV affix, and IV stands for instrumental voice. When the verb is in IV, the instrument is marked as nominative, as in (19).

(19) ya ko   i-akan so among o   ipangan ya
     YA   I(GEN) eat(IV) OBL fish   NOM   knife   this
     I use this knife to eat fish.

The knife is the instrument used to eat fish and it is nominative marked when the verb is in IV. At the same time, the agent is in the genitive case and patient in the oblique case. However, similar to the –*an* affix, the *i-* affixed verb does not always take three elements. For example, in (20) there are only two elements (this is an

imperative sentence, a nominative "it" is omitted, which is the thing that the addressee

runs with).

    (20) i-palayo   mo
       Run(IV)   you(GEN)
       Run with it!

Similar to (18), the absent nominative argument, which is the thing one runs with,

may not be the typical "instrument". The explanation we try to give is that the IV

marker just chooses a peripheral argument (which is marked oblique in AV or PV

sentences) or an extra argument (which does not appear in AV or PV sentences) to be

marked nominative.

The LV marker *–an* also serves a similar function. The *–an* marker often marks

nominative such arguments that are *do/ji* marked in AV or PV sentences, while *i-*

nominative marks arguments that are "*no*" marked. This *no* here is different from the

genitive *no*. This *no* is the instrument marker in PV or AV sentences. For example, in

(21) the agent is already marked genitive; therefore the *no* here is the instrument

marker.

    (21) ko   pokpok-en no bozo si   wari
       I(GEN) throw (PV)   INS ball   NOM brother
       My brother is hit by me with a ball.

2.3 Case and grammatical functions

While the case system of Yami is discussed above, the function of the case markers remains unclear. This section draws attention to the grammatical functions of these case markers and their relationship with the voice system.

The first case marker to be discussed is the nominative case marker, which is used to mark the nominals selected by the voice markers.

It is mentioned that Chang (1997) has termed the voice system as a "subject-selecting mechanism", which means in his opinion, what is "selected" by the voice marker is the grammatical subject. Evidence is provided to show that in Yami the nominative element is the grammatical subject.

2.3.1 Evidence for the nominative elements as subjects

The definition of grammatical subject remains controversial. What is certain is that the grammatical subject is on top of the grammatical hierarchy and may have some distinguishing properties. In this section, the universal subject properties proposed in Keenan (1976) and the test Bresnan (1994) used for locative subjects in Chichewa are consulted to examine the Yami data. Several pieces of evidence show that the nominative argument is the grammatical subject in Yami.

1. Indispensability

Keenan (1976) proposed that subjects can not be simply eliminated from a sentence. Most of the time a sentence will have a subject. This is also the statement of

EPP in generative grammar (Carnie 2002, p 175), and Subject Condition in Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) (Falk 2001, p108). Thus when there is only one argument in a sentence, most possibly it will be the subject. In Yami this only argument is almost always in the nominative case.

    (22) k-om-an   si   yama
         eat(AV)   NOM father
         Father is eating.

    (23) ya   ma-saray   si   ina.
         YA   PV-happy NOM mother
         Mother is happy.

2. Relativization and question

According to Keenan (1976), an NP which can be relativized, questioned and cleft must contain a b(asic)-subject. In Yami, only nominative arguments can be relativized and questioned. It is thus reasonable to suggest that the nominative argument is the grammatical subject.

    a. Question

    (24) ikong kan-en   mo?
         what eat-PV   you(GEN)
         What do you eat?

In Yami, only nominative elements can be questioned. In (24), the verb is in PV, and the patient is questioned. On the other hand, when a verb is in AV, only the agent

can be questioned, not the patient. For example, (26) is ungrammatical.

    (25) sino ni-k-om-an   so   kanen mo?
         who PAST-eat(AV) OBL food your
         Who ate your food?

    (26) *ikong k-om-an   ka?
         what   eat(AV) you(NOM)
         What do you eat?

The same rule also applies to questions regarding the location. The verb must be

in LV when location is questioned, as illustrated in (27).

    (27) jino   mo   angay- an?
         where you(GEN) go-LV
         Where are you going?

b. Relativization

In Yami, only nominative elements can be relativized, therefore, the verb in the

relative clause must be in a voice that is in accordance with the thematic role of the

relativized noun.

    (28) [ko ni- pangay   do   vanga] a   wakay
         I   PAST- put (PV) LOC   pot   REL   yam
         The yam that I put in the pot.

    (29) [pangay- an   namen   so   rahet] a   kakanan
         put-LV   we(GEN) OBL fish   REL   dish
         The dish that we put fish into. [7]

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[7] (28) and (29) are not complete sentences; they are just used to show the relation between relativized

nouns and voice. REL here stands for relativizer.

c. Control

In Yami, the nominative argument may control the empty subject of the lower phrase, as in (30). According to Keenan (1976), co-referential control is also a property of the subject

In sentence (30), the nominative argument "many people" controls the empty subject of the embedded clause and is the subject of the lower verb "come around". In sentence (31), the agent and the patient of the lower clause both appeared in the previous clause, but in the lower clause the genitive agent has to be repeated as a pronoun while the nominative patient is totally omitted. Thus the element marked as nominative is the one that controls the omitted element of the lower clause.

    (30) ma- cita ni Yeso o aro a tao a ma-ngay olimot
          See(PV) GEN Jesus NOM many LINK people LINK go(AV)   surround
          Jesus sees many people come around. [8]

    (31) cita-en ni Yeso o tao ori am ikarilaw na.
          See(PV) GEN Jesus NOM people that AM   love   he(GEN)
          Jesus sees this man and loves him.

In sentence (30) and (31) the verb in the major clause is in PV, that is, the nominative element is the patient. In sentence (32) the major clause is in AV, and the nominative agent still controls the empty subject of the lower clause.

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[8] Sentence (30) and (31) are quoted from Yami New Testament. *Am* is a discourse marker in Yami.

(32) om-alam   ta   ma-ngay do   Jimowrod.
     AV-Walk we(NOM)   AV-go   LOC Jimowrod
     We walk to go to Jimowrod.

Therefore the nominative element determines the co-reference control whether it is an agent or a patient. According to Keenan (1976), co-reference control is a subject property. Thus the nominative element in Yami may be the subject of the sentence.

2.3.2 Evidence supporting the genitive nominal as the object

While the property of the nominative element is now clear, the next to be discussed is the function of the genitive element. The name "genitive" is often used on noun complements; however, here it is used on an argument of the verb. As mentioned before, there are two versions of case systems in Yami. In the first version, the *so* marker which marks the AV patients is termed accusative. When *so* is accusative marker, AV sentences are transitive. Non-AV thus can be seen as a derived voice (similar to the English passive). And since genitive case markers mark agents in a derived voice, they may serve oblique functions such as the English preposition "by" in passive sentences.

In the second version, the *so* marker is analyzed as an oblique marker. This structure indicates that AV sentences are intransitive since their patients are in oblique. At the same time, non-AV sentences may be transitive sentences. If we want to see non-AV sentences as transitive, the genitive elements should be terms and not

obliques. In fact, Wechsler and Arka (1998) have argued that in Balinese (an Austronesian language that has a similar voice system as Yami) the genitive elements are terms. In Balinese this is quite straightforward because non-terms in that language are in PP while the genitive agents are not. In Yami it is not so clear.

However, we can still find evidence to show that genitive agents in Yami are terms while elements marked with *so* are obliques. The first evidence is that the patient marked with *so* in an AV sentence can be omitted while the genitive agent of a non-AV sentence can not. For example, sentence (33) is an AV sentence. In this sentence the element marked with *so* can be omitted as in (34).

(33) ko   man-bakbak   so   ino
     I(NOM) AV-beat   OBL dog
     I beat the dog.

(34) ko   man-bakbak
     I(NOM) AV-beat
     I beat (something)

On the other hand, if the genitive agent of a non-AV sentence such as (35) is omitted it would be an ungrammatical sentence.

(35) na-bakbak-an yaken   ni   yama
     he-beat(LV)   I(NOM)GEN father
     Father beat me.

(36) * bakbak-an yaken
     beat(LV) I(NOM)
     I was beaten.
     .

Thus the *so* marker may play the oblique function and AV sentences are intransitive while the genitive markers are object markers and non-AV sentences are transitive. Other evidence supports this as well.

1. Morphological marking evidence

Ho (1990) noticed that in Yami, when the agent is the subject, the verb is always morphologically marked. But when the patient is the subject, the verb may have no marking. For example, in (37) the verb did not have any morphological marking, and the patient is the subject. This may suggest that the patient as subject is the basic transitive sentence type in Yami, and the genitive agent is thus the object of a transitive sentence.

(37) to   ko   a   cita si   apen   Kalalanet ito
     then I(GEN) LINK see   NOM grandfather Kalalanet that
     Then I see grandpa Kalalanet.

2. The individuation of the patient

This point is also provided by Ho (1990). It is found that the marker for AV patients is only applied to common nouns but not to proper nouns and pronouns. The marker on PV agents, which is the genitive marker, can be used on all three. Since

proper nouns and pronouns are both more specific than common nouns, AV patients are less specific, or individuated, than PV agents. According to Hopper and Thompson (1980), the individuation of the patient could determine the transitivity of a sentence. Therefore in Yami the PV sentences are more transitive than AV sentences. And the genitive nominal would become the object in a transitive sentence.

3. Agreement

In Yami, there is a special agreement device that the third-person-bounded pronoun (cliticized on the verb) may agree with a full counterpart that appears later in the sentence. This agreement device, however, is found only when the pronoun is in the nominative case or genitive case. For example, in (38) the agreement is on the nominative nominal while in (39) the agreement is on the genitive nominal. So far we find no evidence that the nominal marked with *so* controls agreement of this kind.

    (38) ni-   t-om-anek-sira   o   kanakan
         PAST- stand(AV)-they(NOM) NOM   child
         The children stood up.

    (39) na-   kan- en o   soli ni   yama.
         he(GEN) eat –PV NOM taro GEN father
         The taro is eaten by father.

According to the accessibility hierarchy in Keenan and Comrie (1977), the subject and the object are the two highest functions in the hierarchy. Since control of agreement is one of the subject properties proposed in Keenan (1976), it is then

possible to suggest that the control of agreement also follows the accessibility hierarchy. Therefore, the genitive nominal is higher than the nominal marked by *so* in the hierarchy of grammatical functions since the *so* marked nominals do not control agreement.

Furthermore, from a universal perspective, the genitive marker should be the object marker since these markers mark the only argument other than the subject in a transitive sentence. The issue of applying the concept of object will be further discussed in Chapter 5. .

2.4 Argument-function linking patterns in Yami.

With the different voice constructions, we can summarize several different sentence patterns in Yami. AV sentences are intransitive, thus if there is a patient in an AV sentence, it would be marked in oblique. PV sentences are transitive. Normally a PV sentence would have a patient as the subject and an agent as the object. Sometimes a PV sentence may also only have a theme. Finally, an LV or IV sentence would have the agent as the object while its subject is the location or instrument. The patient is thus demoted into oblique. Sometimes an IV or LV sentence will have an agent but no patient. In such cases the agent is still marked as objects. Examples of these different sentence types are shown below:

1.AV:

  a. AV without pt/th: V<ag >[9]

    (40) ko   man-bakbak

        I(NOM) AV-beat

        I beat (something)

  b.AV with oblique pt/th: V <ag, pt/th >

    (41) ko   man-bakbak so   ino

        I(NOM) AV-beat   OBL dog

        I beat at the dog.

2. PV:

  a. PV with agent and pt/th: V <ag, pt/th >

    (42) cita-en mo   o   anak mo

        see-PV you(GEN)) NOM child your

        Watch out you children.

  b. PV with only pt/th: V <pt/th >

    (43) ya   m-lavi

        YA   PV-cry

        He cries.

  c. PV with theme and location: V <th, loc>

    (44) ya ma-pno do yala   o   ko   ni-kali   a   wakay

        A PV-full LOC basket NOM I(GEN) PAST-dig REL sweet-potato

        The basket is full of the sweet potatoes I dug.

3. LV or IV

  a. LV with agent and patient: V <ag, pt/th, loc>

    (45) ya ko   ni- pi-yakan-an so   among   o   pasalan ya

        YA I(GEN) PAST-eat(LV) OBL   fish   NOM   shore   this

        This shore is where I ate fish.

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[9] Here abbreviations for the argument roles are used: ag for agent; pt for patient; th for theme; loc for location; and ins for instrument.

b. IV with agent and patient: V <ag, pt/th, ins>
(46) ya   ko   i-akan   so   among   o   ipangan   ya
     YA I(GEN) IV-eat   OBL fish   NOM   knife   this
     This knife is what I use to eat fish.

c. IV with only agent and instrument: V <ag, ins>
(47) ya   ko   i-pivatvatek   o   ipivatvatek   ya
     YA I(GEN) IV-write   NOM pen   this
     This pen is what I used for writing.

When we see the nominative elements as subjects and genitive elements as objects, the table of the case markers can be revised according to their grammatical functions, as shown in (48).

(48) The grammatical functions of case markers in Yami.

	subject	object	location	oblique
Common noun	o	no	do	so
Proper noun	si	ni	ji	X

Therefore, according to the grammatical functions of the case markers and the basic Yami sentence types just mentioned, Yami's argument-function linking pattern can be summarized as:

1. AV:
   a. AV without pt/th: V<ag > → <subject>
   b. AV with oblique pt/th: V <ag, pt/th > → <subject, oblique>

2. PV:
   a. PV with only pt/th: V <pt/th > → <subject>
   b. PV with agent and pt/th: V <ag, pt/th > → <object, subject>
   c. PV with theme and location: V <th, loc> → <subject, oblique>

3. LV or IV:

    a. LV with agent, patient, and location:

      V <ag, pt/th, lc> → < object, oblique, subject>

    b. IV with agent, patient and instrument:

      V <ag, pt/th, ins> → <object, oblique, subject>

    c. IV with agent and instrument:

      V <ag, ins> → V <object, subject >

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, the patterns of argument-function linking in Yami are described.

We first introduced the voice system in Yami since this system heavily influences the

linking. A sentence in Yami could have two or three different voices – not unlike the

way an English sentence may use both the active and passive voice. In Yami we have

the agent voice, the patient voice and the location or instrument voice.

These different voices give Yami sentences the capacity to have two or three

kinds of linkings. While the linking system is somewhat complex, a pattern could still

be identified. Case markers play an important role here. The nominative marker marks

the argument selected by the voice marker. The genitive marker marks the agents in

non-AV sentences. The oblique markers mark the patients in non-PV sentences.

Indeed, these case markers help point to the grammatical functions of Yami since

the language does not have a fixed word order. However, most previous studies of

case markers seem to treat case marking in Yami as an independent system and do not

connect it with the concept of grammatical functions. For example, the term

"genitive" is used just because this marker is the same as the genitive marker which

marks the possessor in Yami.

Therefore, in this chapter we try to apply the concept of subject and object to Yami. We try to find evidence that the nominative maker can be a subject marker and the genitive marker can be an object marker and summarize the linking patterns in Yami.

After examining the linking patterns of Yami, we found that Yami displays some features of ergativity both morphologically and syntactically. According to Dixon (1994), if transitive agent is A, transitive patient is O, and intransitive subject is S, an ergative morphology will group S and O together. In Yami, the patient in a transitive PV sentence (O) is marked nominative morphologically just as the subject of an intransitive AV sentence (S).

Syntactically, the evidence that the nominative elements have some subject properties shows that Yami to some extent displays an S/O pivot syntactically because in Yami the nominative elements are O/S in basic transitive and intransitive sentences. The concept of syntactic pivot is provided in Dixon (1994) to identify the central elements in inter-clausal linking and some grammatical operations.

In fact, in the literature of Austronesian language studies, Liao (2004) in dealing with several Philippine and Formosan languages and Wang (2004) in dealing with the Thao language both apply similar syntactic and morphological tests to identify the

ergativity of these languages which have similar voice systems as Yami.

However, the linking patterns of Yami create problems for grammatical theories. In the next chapter, the argument-function linking mechanism in different theories is examined, and some problems are laid out.