Logistics of linguistic fieldwork: Reflections from work in Indonesia *

Marielle Butters
University of Colorado at Boulder

Abstract: This paper addresses practical aspects of conducting linguistic fieldwork and illustrates the application of fieldwork methods in targeting the semantics of negation. The paper is based on the author's experiences working in various sites in Indonesia. The discussion includes important logistical challenges, such as deciding which language should be used to conduct fieldwork when the region is linguistically diverse, the benefits and drawbacks of explaining elicitation tasks, how fieldwork is impacted by collaborating with native speaker assistants or partners, and how to reconcile the researcher's interests and the community's interests. The issues explored in the paper are of value to both novice and seasoned fieldworkers, particularly those working in Indonesia or in other multilingual contexts. The paper is also of use to those pursuing analysis of negation, as it provides specific examples of how to elicit negation in a fieldwork setting where discourse contexts can be controlled.

Keywords: Fieldwork, ethics, semantics, elicitation, negation

1 Introduction

The goals of this paper are twofold: 1) to address largely non-linguistic considerations and challenges that frequently arise during linguistic fieldwork, and 2) to explore the benefits and drawbacks of various common fieldwork methodologies when applied to a single area of semantics: negation. The paper draws on experiences and illustrations from the author's fieldwork in various language communities in Indonesia, one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. The fieldwork took place from June 2018 to March 2020 and was concerned with the description and documentation of three languages, Hawu, Sundanese, and Enggano, which are spoken in widely varying regions of Indonesia. Beyond description and documentation, a large portion of the work was concentrated on analyzing and comparing the negation systems of these languages. Languages of Indonesia are poorly represented in the literature on negation, even though these languages frequently possess large inventories of negative markers with a range of diverse functions (Butters 2021).

Upon beginning my fieldwork, it quickly became evident that finding suitable solutions for the logistical aspects of fieldwork can be a greater challenge than the pursuit of one's research questions. This paper begins by addressing these logistical challenges. In Section 2.1, I discuss the various factors involved in deciding which language to use as the language of communication while conducting fieldwork. Section 2.2. comprises a discussion of how much explanation of the project is beneficial during fieldwork tasks. In Section 2.3, I address aspects that may need to be considered during the selection of consultants. Section 2.4 considers the benefits of native speaker partners or assistants and lays out various pitfalls one may encounter in choosing assistants. Section 2.5 explores a common challenge encountered by fieldworkers; that is, how to strike the right balance in involving

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oneself with additional projects beyond one's primary research questions. In Section 2.6, I discuss the importance of building rapport with the community. This first, larger section is followed by Section 3, which comprises an exploration of methodological approaches to semantic components of negation, one area of the grammar that can be difficult to analyze given its sensitivity to discourse contexts. Specifically, this section addresses the value of translation tasks, storyboards, targeted elicitation and judgment tasks, and the analysis of recorded texts. The paper thus contributes both a discussion of challenges which are not expressly linguistic and an illustration of techniques that can be used to analyze a specific area of the grammar in a fieldwork situation.

2 Logistical aspects of fieldwork

2.1 Which language to use while conducting fieldwork

The question of which language is most appropriate to use in carrying out the practical aspects of fieldwork, such as explaining tasks and presenting stimuli for elicitation, is not easily answered and will of course vary widely depending on the country of research. As previously mentioned, the three languages included in this fieldwork are spoken in geographically and culturally diverse regions of Indonesia. Hawu is a Central-Eastern, Sumba-Hawu language of the Malayo-Polynesian subgroup spoken on Sabu island in East Nusa Tenggara, the far eastern region of Indonesia. Sundanese is a Malayo-Polynesian language spoken primarily in West Java and Banten. Enggano, the precise classification of which remains debated (Blench 2014; Edwards 2015), is spoken on the island of the same name off the coast of southern Sumatra.

A good choice for the language of communication in a multi-language project in Indonesia is Bahasa Indonesia, the official language of the republic. Bahasa Indonesia, also called Indonesian, was co-opted from the centuries-old lingua franca of the archipelago to become the official language with the founding of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945. An Austronesian language of the Malayic subbranch of Malayo-Polynesian, it shares approximately 80% of its vocabulary with Standard Malay. By 1990, over 90% of the population of Indonesia between the ages of 10-49 reported knowledge of Indonesian (Steinhauer 1994) and today most Indonesians can switch fluently between at least two social registers: the Standard Indonesian learned in school and heard in broadcasting, and one or more of the various colloquial varieties. Moreover, social media and popular soap operas (*sinetron*) have led to widespread recognition of the colloquial variety of Indonesian spoken in Jakarta, even in peripheral regions.

Despite the prevalent use of Indonesian, there remain challenges to its application as the language of fieldwork in such a multi-lingual country where approximately 722 languages are spoken (Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig 2020). For instance, there are numerous regional dialects of Indonesian, as the varieties of different regions are impacted by neighboring languages. Pre-republic historical varieties of Malay are also still spoken in southwest and southeast Borneo, Sumatra, northern Sulawesi, the central Moluccas, and West Timor. In Sabu, Kupang Malay, a Malay-based creole, is more widely spoken than Indonesian.

Additionally, there remain areas of Indonesia where large swaths of the older generations do not speak Indonesian at all and knowledge of the local language is therefore necessary for communication. The ability of residents to speak Indonesian is a mark of education in many of these regions, as this is the language that is taught in schools and used in civil institutions. This reflects the role of language not only as a means of communication but also as a mechanism of power (Bourdieu

1991). The result is that a project conducted in Indonesian could alienate segments of the population. In some regions, this issue is partly remedied, as Indonesian is used in religious institutions like churches or mosques; however, while the older generations may feel comfortable listening to Indonesian, speaking it may be considered more challenging.

While the choice of Indonesian as the primary language of fieldwork is not free from distorting factors based on differences in power, it is, in my view, a better choice than English, which is not widely spoken and could further widen the gap between those who speak it and those who do not. In other words, fieldwork conducted only in English in Indonesia would be heavily biased toward well-educated, urban populations, and would thus miss out on the voices of those of the largely agricultural, rural areas who have not learned English. In my own fieldwork, I used primarily Indonesian and supplemented gaps in understanding with the target language. The work in Sabu was collaborative, which meant that my research partners were able to speak both Kupang Malay and Hawu.

Fieldwork conducted in the target language – that is, the language that is being analyzed in a field situation - may bring its own drawbacks, though findings on this point have varied. Matthewson (2004) and Krifka (2011) suggest that a discourse context or stimulus provided in the contact language does not significantly influence the resulting data and that use of the target language carries risks such as priming responses. On the other hand, AnderBois and Henderson (2015) present evidence that the contact language in the context descriptions that accompany fieldwork tasks can influence the data to a minor degree, especially when taking into account sociolinguistic factors (see also Zhornik and Pokrovskaya 2018). In my view, when one is in an immersed fieldwork setting where one lives in a community where the target language is spoken on a day-to-day basis, one can rely primarily on a contact language for fieldwork tasks, but it is also wise to immediately set about learning the target language. This is helpful both to increase one's own analytical understanding of the language and to further build rapport with the community. Guérin and Lacrampe (2010: 30) put it nicely by observing that learning the target language allows a fieldworker to participate in a community at a much deeper level because "the lingua franca is spoken with community outsiders, whereas the vernacular is for fellow community members." Learning the target language is also often appreciated by the community because "being a language learner can be a role in the field community that others can relate to and help with" (Bowern 2008: 9).

2.2 Gaining permission and explaining oneself

Before even beginning a linguistic fieldwork project, it is necessary to gain the requisite permission and blessing of the community. In many parts of Indonesia, this requires reporting oneself to the local police and gaining permission from the *ketua adat* 'traditional leader', after one has already secured the necessary research permits issued by the Indonesian government.

After this permission is obtained, the next important question is how much training should be provided to participants prior to engaging in fieldwork tasks. In the past, when I have provided training or detailed explanation to consultants regarding my research goals, e.g., understanding how negation works in a given language, I have often found that the session becomes distracted by discussions of the prescriptive rules of the grammar of the language, especially by speakers who are highly educated (see also Abbi 2001 on avoiding teachers of the target language as initial consultants). It often did not matter how many times I said that I am interested in "how people actually speak" rather than "how people should speak", I was frequently provided responses that conformed

to grammar rules, if such rules were taught in any capacity, as was the case for Sundanese.

The explanations provided to consultants may involve both elucidating larger research questions, as noted above, or detailing the expectations around various fieldwork tasks. In both instances, leaving out an explanation of my purposes may lead speakers to assume I am trying to learn their language so that I can speak it myself – an assumption often complicated by the fact that I am indeed also learning the language to better facilitate fieldwork. This might lead to bemusement when I then go on to ask a multitude of questions regarding whether certain expressions are possible in the language. More than once, I have had speakers exclaim, “How come you keep asking me how to say something without trying to say it yourself?”

I have concluded that some preliminary explanation of my purposes is warranted, without going into too much detail. I often try to relate the area of the grammar in the target language to another language that consultants speak, such as Bahasa Indonesia. For instance, were I to be exploring the prevalence of negative lexicalizations in Sundanese, I might mention several of these lexicalizations and compare these with their (relative) absence in Bahasa Indonesia, stating that I would like to better understand why there are so many negative words in Sundanese. This strategy works well for some speakers and not so well for others, sometimes still triggering prescriptive explanations of grammar. Such a strategy also frequently triggers explanations of the speech levels of Sundanese, as this is one of the clearest surface-level areas of lexical difference in this language.

2.3 Selecting consultants

Not all speakers are an equally good choice for participation in all fieldwork tasks, as speakers have different insights, interests, and personalities (Dorian 1981, 1982, 1986; Grinevald 2003; Rice 2001). Most fieldwork tasks require a high level of patience, meaning that speakers who are already “on board” with the project may find the work more enjoyable. Some speakers possess additional capabilities beyond fluency in the language, including knowledge of ritual forms of language or the ability to narrate traditional stories or genealogies. Other speakers do not possess this knowledge but may express interest in storyboards or elicitation sessions.

Some speakers are naturally extremely reflective about their own language which may indicate a higher level of interest in committing the time needed for fieldwork tasks. In some cases, highly reflective speakers can complicate the fieldwork. While my team and I were developing an orthography for Hawu, some speakers had strong opinions regarding the diacritics we had chosen. One community member regularly reminded us that he was displeased by our decision to use an accent to differentiate /ə/ from /ɛ/, despite general acceptance from the community. We regularly took stock of community opinions on these orthographical decisions, but it was not always possible to meet all expectations on the matter.

Other forces that may impact consultant participation are language ideologies, such as the belief in a language’s lack of complexity or its inferiority to a more widely spoken language. Negative ideologies may prevent speakers from considering the variety of meanings encoded in their language, resulting in a lack of interest for a linguistic project. Sometimes speakers’ opinions change over the course of the project. Once, while collecting a wordlist, I asked a Sundanese speaker how to say *duduk* ‘sit’ [Indonesian]. The speaker responded flatly with *calik*. I pressed him further, noting that I had heard there were many more words than just the one he had given, demonstrating with my body that there may be different words for leaning back in a certain way or crossing one’s legs. Upon reflecting for a while, his face lit up. He told me that Sundanese indeed has many different words

for 'sit', all with slightly different meanings. A sample of the words he provided is given in (1).

(1) Sundanese words for ‘sit’

a. *Calik* ‘sit’

b. *Diuk* ‘sit’

c. *Adegléng* ‘to sit in a place that is higher than another person’

d. *Anjeucleu* ‘to sit in a peaceful way in a high place’

e. *Méwok* ‘to sit alone in a hidden place’

f. *Candeluk* ‘to sit for quite a while as if waiting for something’

g. *Déngkak* ‘to sit in the position of riding a horse’

h. *Gépor* ‘to sit with no mat, i.e. directly on the floor’

i. *Dayagdag* ‘to sit with your body leaning slightly back’

j. *Gupek* ‘to sit directly on the soil’

k. *Jémprak* ‘to sit cross-legged, but a bit loose’

l. *Sangheuy* ‘to sit with your chin supported by a pillow’

m. *Sanghunjar* ‘to sit with your legs stretched out’

n. *Ngajogo* ‘sit with legs to the back (only for animals)’

Once the speaker’s attention was directed toward these numerous semantic distinctions in Sundanese, he exhibited a new pride in the language and was more interested in helping with my project going forward.

Consultants’ level of confidence in participating in fieldwork tasks appears to be quite gendered in Indonesia, with women often deferring to the knowledge of their husbands or other male family members. In many rural areas, women are less likely to work outside the community and may possess lower levels of education. Many women express fears that they do not speak the language “the right way”, apparently referencing an understanding of prescriptive aspects of the language or the belief that they have begun to code-switch too much with Indonesian. It is often necessary to build up trust with women over a longer period of time and let them see through daily interactions that it is the quotidian aspects of language that are of interest for the project, rather than formal structures used in a classroom environment. Of the languages addressed herein, this last point is only relevant to Sundanese, which is taught in classrooms throughout West Java. Hawu and Enggano are not taught in school and there is thus no attachment to ideas of pedagogical formality in those languages, but there remain attachments to perceived “pure” ways of speaking.

Ultimately, I strive to find tasks for everyone who is interested in participating in a fieldwork project. If, for instance, a consultant is enthusiastic about my project but struggles with elicitation, I might ask whether they would be willing to help with the transcription and translation of my recordings to Indonesian. I always translate my recordings first into Indonesian then into English, to maintain a clear record of the original translation provided by consultants. This can be tedious work and takes a certain personality to maintain interest and attention, though some find it to be very engaging work.

2.4 Native speaker assistants and community perceptions

It can be enormously beneficial to have the collaboration of native speakers in the field for numerous reasons, including the ability of native speakers to explain or read out target language stimuli to the consultants or elaborate on additional semantic senses of lexical items, both during elicitation and during analysis. Native speakers are also of invaluable assistance for transcribing and translating the target language in ELAN and helping to prepare the data to be glossed and archived. Over time, a non-native speaker becomes better accustomed to the word boundaries in a language and can do some transcription on their own, but it is much more streamlined with the help of a native speaker. Native speakers are also frequently able to provide insightful comments during this period of transcription and translation. For instance, speakers may be able to indicate when a lexeme belongs to a different dialect because of their experiences working or living in various regions. They may also observe generational differences in the language, such as when an older speaker uses a word that they, as a younger speaker, do not recognize. Additionally, native speakers may pass judgments on the grammaticality of an utterance which can then be compared with judgments made by other speakers.

Beyond the strictly linguistic aspects of conducting fieldwork, native speakers are also exceedingly helpful in overcoming some of the practical challenges, such as ascertaining where certain speakers live who might possess specialized knowledge such as oral narration, as well as arranging meetings, comprehending permissions that may be needed, and understanding and/or negotiating payment expectations. As previously mentioned, my work in Sabu was collaborative, meaning that I had two native Hawu-speaking partners, Jacklin Bunga (JB) and Leonardo Lede Lay (LLL). Once, while my team and I met with a traditional priest in Sabu to record genealogies known by this priest, JB and LLL were able to ascertain that the priest expected to be paid with a red rooster, which he required to be ritually slaughtered before he was willing to speak with us. We were a great distance away from a place where such a rooster could be procured and it had already been an expensive journey to come as far as we had, given that the price of petrol was very high at that time in that region of Indonesia. JB and LLL were able to negotiate with the priest such that we could pay him the equivalent cost of the rooster in Indonesian rupiah which he would then use to purchase the rooster and ritually slaughter it after we had left. This negotiating power was extremely helpful, especially in a more remote area where Indonesian and Kupang Malay were not widely spoken.

Despite the enormous advantages of having the assistance of native speakers, there can be unanticipated challenges as well. One issue is that an outside linguist does not always fully understand the background of speakers or how they are perceived in the community before hiring them, especially when one is new to a field community. In one village, the name of which I will not mention here for anonymity purposes, I immediately befriended an individual who had lived outside the community for many years and spoke Indonesian fluently, unlike many others in the community. I quickly hired this person as a research assistant. It was only later that I learned that this individual was believed by the community to possess *ilmu hitam* 'black magic'. As a result, some in the community were reluctant to work with us and it became quite difficult to extract myself from the agreement. As a result of this experience, I began to select assistants with much greater care, even if it meant delays to my project(s). This challenge can be difficult to surmount, as time and funding is often quite limited.

Those who become assistants to a fieldwork project often seem to differ from target language communities in some respects. When the linguist is a foreigner, potential research assistants will

often be people who speak English or a lingua franca of the country of research, which tends to mean the speaker has lived in a large city – such as the capital - for an extended period and may not have participated regularly in the daily life of rural communities. Given that I needed to work with assistants who spoke Indonesian, this immediately biased the speakers as being more highly educated than many of the other speakers with whom I interacted. In many instances, assistants had not lived all their lives in the areas of research, often having spent years away in big cities for education or work opportunities. This can be partially balanced by having one or two primary research assistants, but also several informants who have spent more time in the area and understand the local dynamics to a greater degree.

Community members often have their own opinions not only toward native speaker assistants or partners, but also toward the dynamics of the research project more generally. This can create uncomfortable situations. Once, at the beginning of the language documentation project in Sabu, my team and I were using the picture task 'The jackal and the crow' (Carroll et al. 2011; Kelly and Gawne 2011) as a stimulus for recording. The consultant skillfully told the story of a crow that sees a fish in a basket, snatches it, and flies off to perch on a tree branch. A jackal sees the crow and licks his lips at the sight of the fish in the crow's beak. The jackal cunningly tricks the crow by praising the crow's singing abilities and asking whether he might hear the crow's mellifluous voice. The crow is flattered and, upon opening his beak to sing, the fish falls from his beak into the jackal's open jaws, as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The jackal tricks the crow into releasing the fish (Carroll et al. 2011)

Upon finishing his narration of this story in Hawu, the informant chuckled and told us that he would like to tell his own version. He switched to Indonesian so I could understand and told the story of how a foreigner (supposed to represent me) has a fish (supposed to represent money) but was tricked out of the fish by two clever Hawu people (supposed to represent my research partners). This version of the informant's story revealed his perception that I, in his view a wealthy foreigner, was tricked out of my money by my two friends and associates. He did not realize, of course, that the money was not my own, but rather a grant that had been secured for the project and that my research partners and I were all equals in the project. The retelling of the story was very uncomfortable for all of us and highlighted the way power differentials were viewed within the community.

The views held by communities toward research projects are further impacted by previous experiences they have had with other researchers in the past. On one occasion in Sabu, my team and I had made an appointment to record ritual parallelisms with a well-known family. We waited outside

their home for two hours and it became increasingly evident that something was wrong. Finally, the wife emerged and spoke to my partners in Hawu, occasionally pointing to me. It turned out that the family had had a negative experience with a previous foreign researcher and were thus unwilling to have anything to do with our project. Bowern (2008: 164) summarizes the issue well: “previous history will have consequences for your research even if it’s nothing to do with you personally.”

2.5 Getting involved in unintended projects

It is rarely possible to restrict our energies to the projects that we set out to complete. Community members often have their own ideas about what is important and may view foreign fieldworkers as a means to convey messages from the community to a wider audience. While working in one small, rural village, I befriended a teacher at a local school, who I will call Siti to protect her identity. One day, I was spending time with her and a group of other women, when Siti turned to me and spoke to me in an unrecognizable language. The other women had gone silent and asked whether I understood what Siti had said. I replied in the negative and they quickly explained that they could not understand either; in fact, Siti spoke a language that no one else in the community could understand. Intrigued, I visited Siti the next day at the house she shared with her husband. Over sweet tea, she explained to me that the language had come to her suddenly some months before. At that time, there had been a mud slide that had destroyed some 30 homes in a neighboring hamlet and killed many of the inhabitants. Local belief held that those families had begun to build their houses and cultivate the land in a manner that was not in accordance with the beliefs and practices of their ancestors and they had been punished as a result. Siti had gone to help the community clean up the damage and, as she stood among the rubble of the destroyed houses, she was visited by a goddess figure. The goddess spoke to her in the aforementioned language and at once, effortlessly, Siti was able to understand. She was tasked by the goddess with warning the community of the danger of diverging from the traditions of their ancestors. Siti would often speak the language in the community and translate the messages to those around her. Sometimes she could be heard singing the songs of the goddess.

There was a great intensity to my conversations with Siti, which rotated between Indonesian, the local language of the area (anonymized here to protect Siti’s identity), and the language she spoke. At times, Siti assumed the voice and personality of the goddess. She implored me to share with the Western world the dangers the planet would face with continued deforestation, use of chemical fertilizers, and farming in a manner that reduces the fertility of the soil. In the weeks that followed, when Siti saw me engaging in my linguistic fieldwork, she would often say, “Remember what your true purpose is here”.

This experience placed me in an unusual ethical dilemma, where I felt compelled to ensure that Siti’s story was heard, while also completing the project I had set out to complete and was bound to complete by grants, sponsorship, and doctoral committee agreements. I was able to land on a compromise by engaging in several interviews with Siti and recording the language she spoke, both in the form of speeches and songs. Though I had to put aside those interviews while I focused on the analysis of my initial projects, I was later able to return to them and begin to find venues for publication. Guérin and Lacrampe (2010) write of the challenge of foreign linguists being perceived as “lone wolves” within communities, seeking a one-way relationship in pursuit of academic goals. Given limited time and funds, this can indeed be a challenge. In my view, if a fieldworker is requesting the time of those in a community to engage with their project, it is reasonable to expect

that there will be requests on the fieldworker's time as well. Finding the balance between competing requests, given limited time and energy, is something that each fieldworker must work out on their own.

2.6 Building rapport with the community

Graduate fieldwork courses seem to imply that one will be able to engage in elicitation the moment one arrives in a new community, but that is often not the case. When one has first entered a field situation in which one is perceived as an outsider, a great deal of time is spent chatting, getting to know people, gauging interest in the project, and establishing who might be suitable assistants and consultants in the future. A critical component of fieldwork is thus building rapport and mutual respect with the communities with whom we work. Some members of the community are understandably reticent to participate in fieldwork tasks before they have a better understanding of the fieldworker's purpose(s).

In many rural parts of Indonesia, one cannot walk far without someone calling out *mampir dulu!* 'come and stop by!' at which point it is polite to sit a while and chat with the host, often sharing tea or coffee with snacks at the very least. This cultural structure provides ripe opportunities to quickly get to know those in the community and establish friendships. Social integration in a field situation is of crucial importance, both for the well-being of the linguist (Macaulay 2004) and for the wider goals of the project, by allowing the linguist to witness and record a range of communication practices (Everett 2001). In developing relationships in a field situation, I have found it helpful to volunteer participation in various projects. In my case, my tasks in West Java often included preparing the harvest of rice to be stored in barns, helping to feed the water buffalo, assisting with English classes at the local school, and taking family photos of the community that I would later have printed in town. Though such experiences are primarily aimed at building rapport, there is an additional benefit in that one may encounter a plethora of terms that do not exist in the lingua franca or national language, let alone in English. In West Java, such terms included the names for parts of traditional houses, the stages of the rice harvest, special tools, and the names of rituals and celebrations. Even if the focus of the project is not the least bit anthropological, inability to understand the numerous special terms employed in the community will hinder interpretation and analysis of elicitations later on, not to mention one's ability to select or produce culturally appropriate storyboards.

Once one has established oneself in a field, the day-to-day activities become geared more toward the project goals. By this point, most in the community have at least a rough sense of the linguist's purpose(s) in the community and, if one drops by, there is already an understanding that the visit probably has something to do with the linguistic project.

3 Methods to conduct semantic research on negation

Immersed fieldwork is an excellent arena to explore semantic research questions, as natural use of the language can be observed while one simultaneously engages in controlled tasks. In this final section, I address the application of specific linguistic fieldwork methods to just one semantic area of the grammar: negation. The goal is to provide tangible examples of how negation can be elicited in a field situation via translation tasks, storyboards, targeted elicitation and judgment tasks, and the analysis of texts procured and transcribed during fieldwork.

Those familiar with the elicitation and analysis of negation will have observed that its expres-

sion often entails far more than simply adding a negative word to an otherwise positive utterance. Rather, negative utterances frequently contain accompanying asymmetries, to use Miestamo's term (2000, 2003, 2005), which may take the form of syntactic, morphological, phonological, or semantic constraints on various categories, including 1) finiteness, where the finiteness of the lexical verb is either reduced or lost in the negative, 2) reality status, where the distinction between realis and irrealis is lost in the negative, 3) emphasis, where the marking of emphasis differs in affirmative utterances compared to negative ones, and 4) grammatical categories, where the expression of tense, aspect, mood, or person-number-gender differs in affirmative utterances compared to negative ones. Miestamo (2005) accounts for these asymmetries with fundamental semantic and pragmatic explanations, including 1) stativity vs. dynamicity, where affirmative utterances can report both stative and dynamic states of affairs, but negatives are typically restricted to stative ones, 2) reality status, where negative utterances belong to the realm of the unrealized, while affirmatives belong to the realm of the realized, and 3) discourse contexts, where negatives tend to be used in denials and the corresponding affirmative is somehow presupposed, while affirmatives are not restricted in this same way. As will be demonstrated, these functional differences between affirmative and negative utterances play an important role in how negation is assessed in a fieldwork situation where one has greater opportunities to control and manipulate discourse contexts than one has in consulting grammars for a comparative study of negation, for example. It is worth noting that helpful questionnaires on negation have been developed for use by typologists and linguistic fieldworkers, including Miestamo's (2016) Questionnaire for Describing the Negation System of a Language and Veselinova's (2020) Questionnaire on Iamitives 'already' and Nondums 'not yet', based on similar questionnaires by Dahl (1985) and Olsson (2013). These questionnaires outline common cross-linguistic distinctions in the coding of negation and provide accompanying examples. Such questionnaires are desirable in that they provide the opportunity for replicability and comparison across languages (Bochnak and Matthewson 2020). What follows is an illustration of how I have used various methodologies beyond questionnaires to assess negation in field situations.

3.1 Translation tasks

The methods one employs depend to some degree on how long one has been in a field situation or how long one has been examining a particular feature. In my view, the translation method – providing an utterance in a contact language and asking for its translation in the target language – can be an excellent early tool for exploring a domain of the grammar for the first time. Presumably, when one begins fieldwork, one already possesses some knowledge of expected typological features of the target language. For instance, if one is working with an Austronesian language, one would not necessarily expect to encounter a robust evidential system, though an examination of a Tibeto-Burman language entails a reasonably high expectation of finding such a system based on the available typological studies.

Translation tasks are useful in investigating these typologically expected elements in a language. When I began fieldwork on Sundanese, for instance, I was already aware from my review of the Malayo-Polynesian literature that many linguists had observed the presence of special negative lexemes like NOT KNOW, NOT WANT, NOT NEED, and NOT DARE in various Malayo-Polynesian languages. Therefore, a useful first step was to identify whether such lexicalizations existed in Sundanese as well, via translation tasks using Indonesian. The sets in (2-4) demonstrate three different stimuli I provided in Indonesian, along with the Sundanese translations I received from the consul-

tant.

(2) a. Mereka tidak menolong kami
3PL NEG AV.help 1PL.INCL[2]
'They don't help us.' [Indonesian]

b. Batur heunteu nalungan urang
Other NEG AV.help 1PL
'They don't help us.' [Sundanese]

(3) a. Hena tidak mau makan sekarang
H. NEG want eat now
'Hena does not want to eat now.' [Indonesian]

b. Hena alim emam ayeuna
H. NEG.want eat now
'Hena does not want to eat now.' [Sundanese]

(4) a. Maaf saya tidak bisa ber-bicara bahasa Sunda
Sorry 1SG NEG can MV-speak language Sunda
'Sorry, I can't speak Sundanese.' [Indonesian]

b. Hapunten abdi teu tiasa nyarios Sunda
Sorry 1SG NEG can AV.speak Sundanese
'Sorry, I can't speak Sundanese.' [Sundanese]

From the translations in (2-4), I gained early evidence that the Sundanese standard negator *(heun)teu* is not used to express NOT WANT; instead, there is a special negator, *alim*. However, Sundanese encodes NOT ABLE through ordinary means, i.e. the lexeme 'can, able' is negated by the standard negator. Despite these tempting findings, I follow Matthewson (2004) in treating translations as clues rather than results, as one can encounter various obstacles in using translation alone. After receiving the translations in (2-4), I soon learned through targeted elicitation and analysis of recordings that *alim* 'NOT WANT' occurs far more frequently in replies than in other discourse contexts. I also learned that it is possible to negate the lexeme 'want' through the standard negator in Sundanese. Finally, I learned that there is a special negator *duka* 'NOT KNOW' that never appeared in any of the translations because of its restricted discourse contexts. Had I relied only on translation, I would have missed a great deal of information about these forms.

The usefulness of translation tasks may also depend on the nature of the language under study. These tasks are extremely beneficial in languages that possess differences in register or considerable dialectal variation. Depending on the region, Sundanese has as many as four different speech levels:

[2] 1=first person; 2=second person; 3=third person; ADD=additive particle; AV=active voice; CAUS=causative marker; COM=comitative; DEF=definite marker; DM=discourse marker; EX=existential predication; HORT=hortative; INCL=inclusivity; LOC=locative particle; MV=middle voice; NEG=negation; NON=nondum ('not yet'); NONPST=non-past marker; PL=plural; POL=polarity item; PROH=prohibitive; PROX=proximate; RED=reduplication; REL=relativizer; SG=singular

i) *lemes pisan* ‘very polite’, ii) *lemes* ‘polite/deferential’, iii) *kasar* ‘ordinary/colloquial’, iv) *kasar pisan* ‘vulgar’ (Lezer 1931, cited in Wessing 1974). As a result of these speech levels, there are numerous lexical differences in all parts of speech, as demonstrated in (5), translated from the Indonesian *saya belum makan* ‘I haven’t eaten yet.’

(5) Sundanese

a. Polite/deferential:
Abdi mah teu acan neda
1SG DM NEG POL eat
‘I haven’t eaten yet.’

b. Ordinary/colloquial:
Kuring mah can dahar
1SG DM NON eat
‘I haven’t eaten yet.’

a. Vulgar:
Sia can nyatu
1SG NON eat
‘I haven’t eaten yet.’

By asking consultants to translate utterances into all registers, these tasks are helpful in disentangling whether certain forms possess different functions or simply represent different speech levels. While examining negative existential predication in Sundanese, a translation task of the Indonesian *Tidak ada rumah di sini* ‘There is no house here’ provided a clue that the alternate negative existential *euweuh* was not necessarily a special negative existential of the type described in Croft (1991), but perhaps merely the means to encode negative existential predication in a lower register. These register differences are shown in (6).

(6) Sundanese

a. Ordinary/colloquial:
Heunteu aya bumi di dieu
NEG EX house LOC PROX
‘There is no house here.’

b. Vulgar:
Euweuh imah di dieu
NEG.EX house LOC PROX
‘There is no house here.’

Given that languages carve up the world in different ways (Jakobson 1971: 260-267), it is difficult to use translations alone when trying to understand meaning. After gaining initial clues, it is therefore crucial to explore the grammar of the target language via other methods.

3.2 Storyboards

An excellent way to break the ice early on in fieldwork while also gathering data is to use storyboards, which are essentially comic strips that tell a particular story to elicit the target language (Burton and Matthewson 2015). Storyboards are a helpful early tool because they require little contextual explanation as the discourse context is conveyed visually. I have found that the open-ended nature of storyboards means that speakers appear less self-conscious about providing “incorrect” answers and seem to enjoy the unexpected elements in the stories. Moreover, given that little explanation is needed for storyboards on the part of the linguist, there is minimal contact-language influence (Burton and Matthewson 2015).

Speakers vary widely in their approach to storyboards, sometimes asking to practice several times before agreeing to be recorded, or else requesting to be recorded immediately. Storyboards can also be a great collaborative activity, with several different speakers weighing in at the same time – a situation that has its benefits and drawbacks (San Roque et al. 2012; Silva and Anderbois 2016). When there are multiple speakers on the same recording speaking all at once, this of course significantly reduces the clarity of the recording, but it also provides rich meta-linguistic data, such as how teasing, refutation, and praise occur in the target language. The presence of multiple contenders often allows for fruitful discussions over lexical meanings and alternative lexemes for a given concept that appears in a storyboard. Speakers may vehemently argue for different forms that reveal divergences in dialects or speech levels depending on the background and status of the speakers. There may be intense debate surrounding ambiguous meanings, which allows the linguist to gain insight into polysemy that might be less easily ascertained while working with a single speaker.

There are websites where storyboards may be accessed freely, such as the Totem Field Storyboards website.[3] Storyboards must be selected with care, as some storyboards may not be culturally appropriate to the region in which one is working. For instance, a storyboard depicting a woman cleaning her home with a vacuum cleaner may not be appropriate in a rural area where such amenities do not exist. One can also specifically choose storyboards that are likely to trigger the usage of areas of the grammar under study, as has been demonstrated, for instance, in Vander Klok (2019) where storyboards are used to investigate modal-temporal interaction. This method is easily employed with negation as well. For instance, a storyboard of a mother scolding a child for spilling a glass of milk is likely to elicit prohibitives and negative deontic expressions.

Consultants frequently ask to listen to the recording they have just completed and may offer alternative words or expressions to those that were recorded the first time around. This can provide an abundance of information on language attitudes, competing constructions, and various meanings encoded in the language. Sometimes important data surfaces in the process of explaining or discussing a storyboard. For example, while talking over the events of a storyboard, I once asked a Hawu consultant, "Why is the lion chasing the crocodile?". The consultant responded with (7).

(7) Hawu

I'a	ou	aa	ta	pe-mari	he	ke	dou	he	hino
able	2SG	DM	NONPST	CAUS-laugh	DEF	DM	people	DEF	maybe

'I don't know [Lit. Oh, you are able] maybe they were joking with each other.'

The expression, *i'a ou aa* 'you are able' or 'you are intelligent', in practice means 'I don't know' as it offloads the responsibility for providing an account of a situation to the interlocutor via conversational implicature. An analysis of the body of texts gathered throughout fieldwork demonstrated that *i'a ou aa* appeared on multiple occasions with this ignorative meaning, but my awareness of its existence began with this interaction with a consultant while working on a storyboard.

3.3 Targeted elicitation and judgment tasks

As noted at the beginning of this section, negation can be challenging to elicit due to its sensitivity to discourse context or its 'pragmatic dependence', to draw on the term from Frajzyngier (2004); that is, negatives tend to be used in denials and the corresponding affirmative is thus somehow

[3] http://totemfieldstoryboards.org

presupposed. In Givón's (1979: 103-104) famous example, responding *My wife is not pregnant* in answer to the question *What's happening?* would be deemed very strange unless it were presupposed that the wife in question were pregnant. The discourse context must thus be carefully established and controlled in order for negation to be felicitous. If one were to rely on translation tasks alone and ask, for instance, how to say 'there is no man', this may be strange to consultants as it entails counter-expectation and requires further explanation as to why it is that one would expect there to be a man in the first place. Alternatively, consultants may expect qualifying information like *There is no man who does not like music.* The discourse context of the affirmative utterance, *There is a man*, is not limited in the same way, as one function of affirmative existential predication is to introduce referents to a scene. This sentence is thus less problematic if uttered out-of-the-blue. In general, out-of-the-blue contexts require careful construction to control for interlocutor's belief states, as there is always a risk that consultants are quietly forming their own interpretations (Bochnak and Matthewson 2020).

A key aspect of an assessment of any negation system is puzzling out the individual functions or semantic distinctions of numerous negative forms. Elicitation can be a powerful tool because it allows for direct and systematic testing of hypotheses, as one cannot gather adequate information about meaning from spontaneous discourse alone (Matthewson 2004). While engaging in linguistic fieldwork where the purpose is to understand semantic and pragmatic dimensions of language, the sessions often take on the form of a conversation where possible meanings are discussed (Berthelin 2020).

While working on Hawu, I noticed there were competing negative existential predicators. I applied targeted elicitation in order to better understand the distribution of these forms, and ascertained consultant judgments not only regarding what is possible but also what is not possible. This negative evidence begins to form the boundaries of if and how competing negative forms differ. In (8) I provide an example from a targeted elicitation section, where I establish a context as I explore the use of negative existentials in Hawu.

(8) Hawu
Me: Suppose your mother asks you to bring water from the well. You go to the well and see that unfortunately it is completely dry. When you return to your mother, what do you say?
Consultant:
Ad'o do era ei
NEG REL EX water
'There is no water.'
Me: Can you remove *do* and just say *ad'o era ei*?
Consultant: No.
Me: Can I say *d'o era ei*? (*d'o* is the standard negator)
Consultant: No, but you can say *b'ule d'o ei.*

Thus far from the elicitation session, I have learned that the negator *ad'o* appears to form a noun phrase with the relativizer *do* and that it is not possible to remove the relativizer and maintain a grammatical utterance. I have also learned that the standard negator is not felicitous with the existential predicator *era*, but the consultant has offered a new form *b'ule* which appears to replace *era*. Further targeted elicitation now needs to be conducted to understand whether, and how, *b'ule d'o* differs from *ad'o do era*. In a subsequent elicitation session I learned that the presumed negative

existential *b'ule d'o* also performs verbal functions in emphatic utterances when accompanied by the comitative, as shown in (9).

(9) Hawu

a. Me: Suppose you stayed home all day, working on various chores. When your mother returns home, she asks where you went today. What would you say?
Consultant:
Kako d'o yaa lamii-mii
Go NEG 1SG where-RED
'I didn't go anywhere.'

b. Me: Now let's say that your mother accuses you of lying. She says that she knows that you didn't finish your chores and that you were out because she saw you with your friends in the market. You are very frustrated with your mother because of this accusation (which is not true) and you want to insist that you didn't go anywhere. What do you say?
Consultant:
B'ule le d'o yaa nga kako lamii-mii
EX ADD NEG 1SG COM go where-RED
'I didn't go anywhere at all!'
Me: Can I remove *nga* and just say *b'ule le d'o yaa kako lamii-mii*?
Consultant: No, that doesn't make sense.
Me: Can I say *ad'o yaa nga kako lamii-mi*?
Consultant: No, you have to use *b'ule d'o*.

Through this elicitation session and others, I established the felicity conditions of the two negative existential predicators as well as distinctions in their functions. Later I also uncovered the use of a negative existential as a verbal negator in an emphatic situation in Enggano by establishing a similar context, as shown in (10).

(10) Enggano
Me: Suppose you were living in Bengkulu away from your friends and family. You were trying to meet new people and so you went to a gathering. You were so frustrated and lonely because you didn't know anyone at the gathering. Later, you were on the phone with your mother and you wanted to complain that you didn't know anyone at the gathering. What would you say?
Consultant:
U **keam** pakoə̃ ahã henap mo kiki te?
1SG NEG.EX know who just REL EX there
'I didn't know anyone there.'

It was crucial to establish and control the discourse contexts in order to elicit the emphatic verbal function of the negative existentials in these two languages. Once I had established that this context worked for eliciting the emphatic negative, I was able to effectively apply it across languages.

3.4 Drawing on examples from recorded texts

The glossing and analysis of texts including narratives, conversations, and recountings of genealogies (as is common in Hawu) offer numerous examples of the distribution of constructions that may be further examined through targeted elicitation. Text collection alone may lead to a poverty in data (Matthewson 2004), but when paired with other methodologies it can provide important insights.

Hawu possesses a rich tradition of oral folk stories, some of which my team and I recorded, transcribed, translated, and glossed. One story is illuminative in demonstrating the different function of two of the Hawu negators: the prohibitive *b'ole* and the nominal negator *ad'o*, both of which can be used to mean 'no' in responses. The story, *Hengi'u Nameo* ('A Kitten'), is about a kitten who takes her own mother for granted and goes around asking others to be her mother, including Moon, Cloud, Mountain, and Mouse. In (11), Kitten asks Moon to be her mother. Moon uses the prohibitive *b'ole* to reject Kitten's proposal and goes on to urge Kitten to ask Cloud to become her mother instead.

(11) Hawu:

a. Kitten:

Ta ma ina nga ou j'e yaa haku mai ma d'è … do woie ou
NONPST DM mom COM 2SG then 1SG SO HORT DM DEF REL good 2SG
ne keb'ale ma rai-wawa ngèddi hari-hari worowu
DEF ask.SG DM realm-world see all-RED everything
'I want you to become my mother because your bright light illuminates the whole universe!'

b. Moon:

B'ole … ki tèbbe yaa ri merèmmu do ta ele weo yaa
PROH if cloud 1SG by cloud REL NONPST lose illuminate 1SG
'No! If Cloud covers me up, my light is lost and I can no longer illuminate the world.'

Later in the story, Kitten asks Mouse to be her mother, but Mouse expresses her worry that she will be eaten by Kitten. Kitten uses *ad'o* to assure Mouse that this is not her intention, as in (12). In this case, it is Mouse's presupposition (being eaten by Kitten) that is rejected rather than the proposal.

(12) Hawu

a. Mouse:

Eeee… meda'u ta nga'e yaa ri ou rowi ta heleo ou ri yaa
Huh… worry NONPST eat 1SG by 2SG because NONPST see 2SG by 1SG
do menganga tèrra-tèrra Ke haku wae d'o yaa ta peabu nga ou
REL hungry really-RED DM SO want NEG 1SG NONPST meet COM 2SG
'Huh?? I worry that you will eat me because you look so frightening and so hungry after your long journey, such that I will not even meet with you.'

b. Kitten:

Ad'o … nga'e d'o ou ri yaa rowi yaa ma d'e do nga pedèb'o do woie
NEG eat NEG 2SG by 1SG because 1SG DM DEF REL COM purpose REL good
'No! I am not going to eat you because my purpose for coming here is good!'

Having identified this difference in the text, I conducted a follow-up elicitation session to further assess the distinctions between *ad'o* and *b'ole*, where I could control the context, as shown in (13).

(13) Hawu

a. Me: Suppose you are in a shop with your friend and she is thinking of buying a shirt that is too bright. How do you tell her that you think she shouldn't buy that shirt?
Consultant:
B'ole nane
PROH PROX
'Not that one!'
Me: Okay, in the same situation, can you also say *ad'o nane*?
Consultant: (Thinks for a while.) I guess so, but it sounds a little strange to me.

b. Me: If you pointed to a shirt that you like better, could you tell her:
Yaa d'ei do nad'e, ad'o do nad'e
1SG like REL PROX NEG REL PROX
'I like this one, not this one'
Consultant: Yes, that's exactly right.

By providing consultants with specific contexts, I was able to determine that *ad'o* is more operative in contrastive negation, while the prohibitive *b'ole* conforms to the general pragmatics of imperative mood by expecting the interlocutor to ignite or maintain some state of affairs, e.g., to withdraw the request for motherhood in the narrative and to prevent a friend from making an unfortunate purchase in the follow-up elicitation. Thus, despite both negators meaning 'no' in response to a question, they can be further semantically and pragmatically distinguished, as one expresses rejection and the other expresses denial and contrast. The task of semantic fieldwork using elicitation is therefore to prepare questions that not only yield judgments with respect to given expressions but also allow for additional reflections in order to get a more detailed picture of their potential meaning (Berthelin 2012, 2020).

This section has aimed to demonstrate through the narrow lenses of a single domain of the grammar – negation – the usefulness of engaging in various methods throughout fieldwork. While translation tasks, storyboards, and analysis of collected texts may provide clues to the functions and distribution of various areas of language under analysis, these findings must be further explored through targeted elicitation where the context can be controlled and where follow-up questions can be asked.

4 Conclusion

This paper addressed a broad range of challenges confronted during fieldwork, based on the author's experiences in Indonesia, a country with a high level of linguistic and ethnic diversity. Many of the complexities of fieldwork go beyond mere linguistic challenges and instead concern practical issues that arise while conducting research. The second section of the paper provided an assessment of the usefulness of various linguistic fieldwork methodologies as applied to a single semantic domain of the grammar: negation. Negation can be a challenging area of the grammar to analyze given its presuppositional complexity; however, it is also a fundamental function of daily conversation and is thus ripe ground for analysis in a broad range of data. Precise distinctions in negative functions are

best analyzed through targeted elicitation where the discourse context can be controlled.

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