Investigating grammatical coding patterns using video elicitation

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1st Affectedness Workshop

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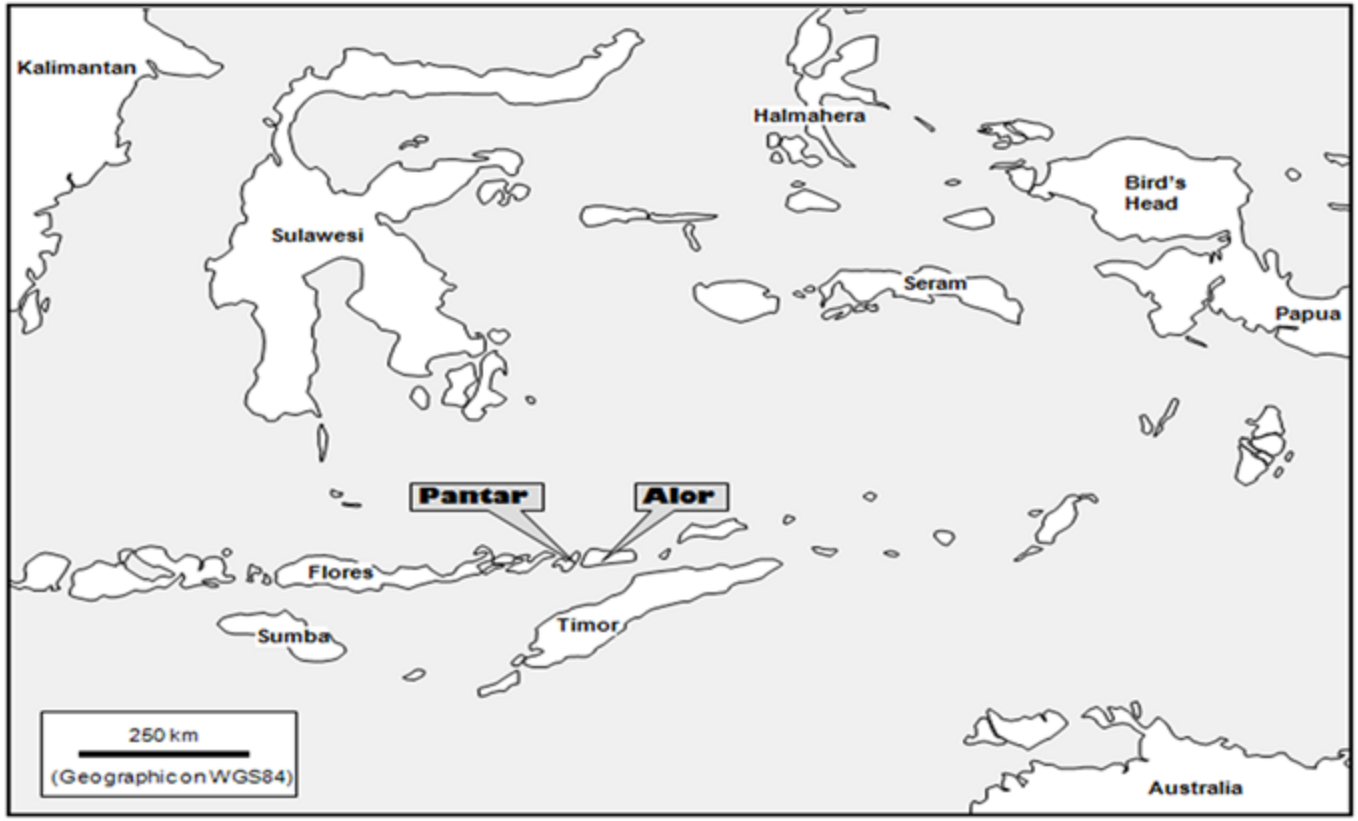
Introduction

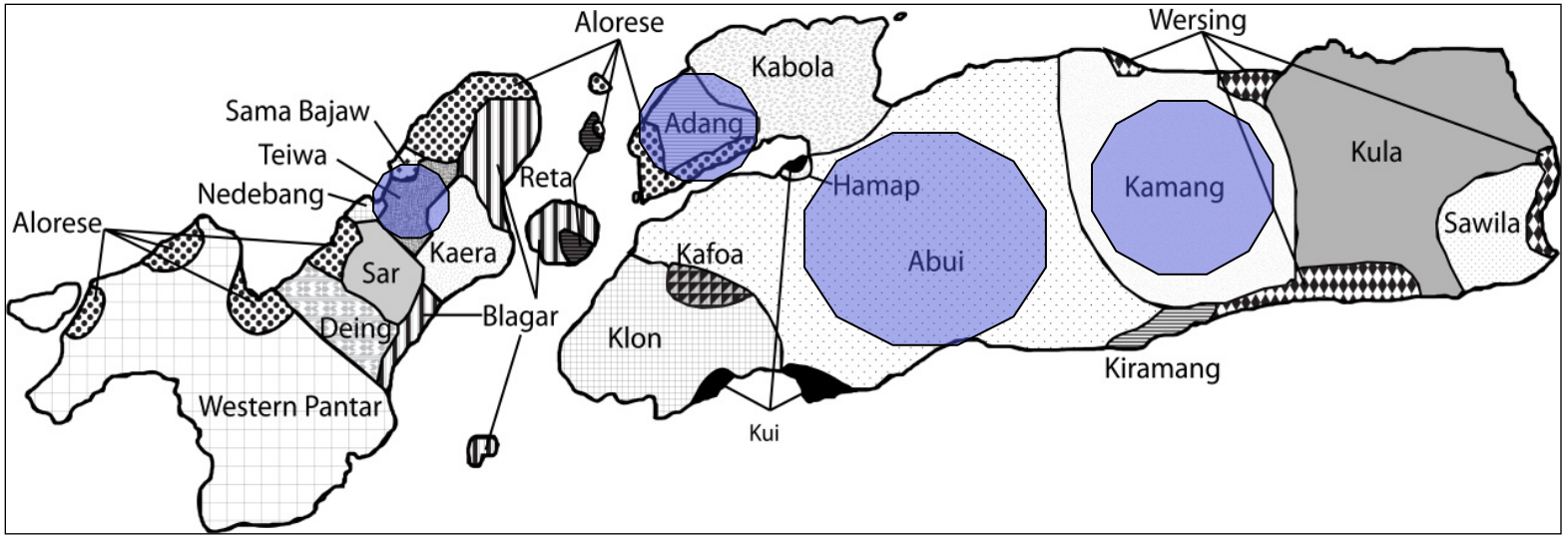
- EuroBabel project (Alor-Pantar languages: origins and theoretical impact)
  - Surrey: Patterns of argument marking, particularly pronominal indexing
  - Leiden: Extended documentation (numeral systems, demonstratives and language of space)
  - Fairbanks: Historical reconstruction

The Alor-Pantar languages



Map 1. The islands Alor and Pantar in eastern Indonesia

Sample



Map 2. The Alor-Pantar languages

Introduction

- None of the AP languages have morphological case marking
- BUT: all AP languages have verbs that index one argument with a prefix

Interest of the AP languages

- They show considerable within-group variation as to what the relevant semantic parameters or conditions are which govern the indexation patterns

Conditions on pronominal indexing

- E.g. Teiwa (Pantar)
- Syntactic alignment (of the 'accusative' type)
  - S and A are expressed with a free pronoun
  - Indexing of P's is associated with animacy (Klamer 2010: 171)

- Marking of only the object/undergoer on the verb is rare, occurring in only 7% of the languages from the WALS sample (Siewierska 2013)

Teiwa indexing: intransitives

(1) Teiwa (Klamer 2010: 169)
A her
3SG climb
'He climbs up.'

(2) Teiwa (Klamer 2010: 388)
[…] bui una' esan ta taxaa.
[…] betelnut also place TOP fall_down
'… as well as the betelnut fell down.'

Teiwa indexing: transitives

(3) Teiwa (Klamer 2010: 159)
Name ha'an n-oqai g-unba.
Sir 2SG 1SG-child 3SG-meet
'Sir, did you see (lit. meet) my child?'

(4) Teiwa (Response to video clip C18_pull_log_29, SP3)
Bif eqar kopang nuk tei baq kiri.
child female small one tree log pull
'A little girl is pulling a log.'

Conditions on pronominal indexing

- E.g. Abui (Alor)
- Semantic alignment system (Mithun 1991; Donohue and Wichmann 2008)
  - More agent-like arguments (actor) are coded with a free pronoun or NP and *no* prefix
  - More patient-like arguments (undergoer) are coded with a prefix

Conditions on pronominal indexing

- Volitionality is an important determinant of pronominal marking on verbs with one argument

Abui indexing: volitionality

(5) Abui (Kratochvíl 2007: 15)
Na laak.
1SG leave
'I go away.'

(6) Abui (Kratochvíl 2007: 15)
No-laak.
1SG.REC-leave
'I (am forced to) retreat.'

VIDEO CLIP DESIGN

Aim of our video clips

- Explore the role of various semantic conditions on pronominal indexing across AP languages using a fixed set of non-linguistic stimuli
- Data from clip descriptions allow a more precise comparison of the patterns across languages than standard elicitation
- 42 short video elicitation stimuli (Fedden, Brown, Corbett and Baerman, n.d.; Fedden and Brown 2014)

Video clip design

- Design inspired by the video elicitation tools developed by the MPI for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen
  - Cut&Break (Bohnemeyer, Bowerman and Brown 2001)
  - Put (Bowerman, Gullberg, Majid and Narasimhan 2004)
  - Reciprocals (Evans, Levinson, Enfield, Gaby and Majid 2004)

Video clip design

- Test the role of conditions which have been identified either for semantic alignment (Abui) or for their salience in marking grammatical relations such as objects (Teiwa)
- Animacy, as evidenced in the nominative-accusative language Teiwa (Klamer 2010: 171; Klamer and Kratochvíl 2006)

Video clip design

- Arkadiev (2008) identifies four different semantic notions that govern semantic alignment system in the languages of the world:
  - Stative/dynamic: Loma (SW Mande language from Liberia and Guinea)
  - Telicity: Georgian (Kartvelian, S Caucasus)
  - Volitionality: Bats and Tabassaran (Nakh-Dagestanian, N Caucasus)
  - Affectedness: Central Pomo (Pomoan, California)

Five factors

- (1) Number of participants: 1 vs. 2
- (2) Volitionality: Volitional vs. Non-volitional
- (3) Telicity: Telic vs. Atelic
- (4) Animacy: Animate vs. Inanimate
- (5) Dynamicity: Stative vs. Dynamic

Possibility space

- Systematic variation of all values
- Animacy only varies for S or P, i.e. the single argument of 1-participant predicates and for the second argument of 2-participant verbs.
- Volitionality only varies with respect to the first argument of 1- or 2-participant predicates

2^5 = 32 logical possibilities

- Elimination of logically incompatible values
- Combination of [-Animate] and [+Volitional] and the combination of [+Telic] and [-Dynamic]

- No volitional inanimates or telic states

Minus 7, minus 4 cases

- For one-participant verbs there are 4 telic states and 3 additional volitional inanimates (the fourth case with the combination “volitional inanimate” is also a telic state)
- For two-participant verbs, only four cases have to be eliminated (4 telic states)
- Volitionality and animacy are coded for different participants, a combination of these is no problem

21 cases (32-7-4= 21)

- For each remaining cell (i.e. combination of values) we selected two predicates which illustrate this specific combination of values (= a total of 42 clips)
- One for a core set, one for a peripheral set
- Clips in each set were randomized and then fixed in that order to be presented to speakers

Choosing suitable verbs/events

- Four ranked criteria
- Appropriateness: Is the event possibly inappropriate to show? Although practicality issue come in as well, this gets rid of *‘give birth’, *‘vomit’, *‘die’

Choosing suitable verbs/events

- Centrality: Is the event a clear exponent of a particular value combination? For instance, ‘run towards somebody’ is a more central candidate for a telic 2-participant event than the semelfactive event ‘hit somebody’ (which some would categorize as atelic) (cf. Comrie 1976)

Choosing suitable verbs/events

- Degree of cognacy: How many cognates or groups of cognates does a verb have within AP?
  - E.g. ‘lie down’ is in our cognate list, whereas ‘sit down’ is not
  - ‘laugh’ shows two groups of cognates (one with 7 languages and another with 3), while ‘dance’ shows 3 groups of cognates (one group with 3 languages and 2 groups with 2 languages each)

Choosing suitable verbs/events

- Practicality: Is the event easy to film? (‘run’ rather than ‘fly’)

Part	Vol	Tel	Anim	Stat	Event	Description
1	+	+	+	-	**1 *sit down***	**Person sitting down.**
					2 *stand up*	Person standing up.
1	+	-	+	+	3 *stand*	Person standing.
					4 *lie*	**Person lying on the ground.**
1	+	-	+	-	**5 *dance***	**People dancing.**
					6 *run*	Person running.
1	-	+	+	-	7 *wake up*	Person waking up suddenly.
					8 *fall asleep*	**Person sitting, falling asleep.**
1	-	+	-	-	**9 *fill up***	**Glass being filled from bottle.**
					10 *go out*	Flame goes out.
1	-	-	+	+	**11 *sleep***	**Person sleeping.**
					12 *be tall*	Two people, tall and short
1	-	-	+	-	**13 *laugh***	**Person laughing.**
					14 *fall*	Person slipping and falling.
1	-	-	-	+	15 *be big*	One big and two small stones.
					16 *be long*	**One long, three short logs.**
1	-	-	-	-	**17 *fall***	**Coconut falling.**
					18 *burn*	Burning house.

Part	Vol	Tel	Anim	Stat	Event	Description
2	+	+	+	-	19 *wake s.o. up*	Person waking another person up.
					20 *run to s.o.*	**Child running longer distance to parent.**
2	+	+	-	-	**21 *eat sth***	**Person eating a banana.**
					22 *wash sth*	Person washing plate.
2	+	-	+	+	**23 *lean on s.o.***	**Child leaning on parent.**
					24 *hold s.o.*	Person holding child.
2	+	-	+	-	**25 *pull s.o.***	**A pulling B.**
					26 *smell s.o.*	A sniffing at B, makes disgusted face
2	+	-	-	+	**27 *lean on sth***	**Person leaning on house.**
					28 *hold sth*	Person hugging a tree.
2	+	-	-	-	**29 *pull sth***	**Child pulling a log.**
					30 *smell sth*	Person sniffing food, making disgusted face.
2	-	+	+	-	31 *fall onto s.o.*	Banana drops on person's stomach
					32 *step on s.o.*	**Child stepping on lying person.**
2	-	+	-	-	**33 *step on sth***	**Person stepping on a banana.**
					34 *fall onto sth*	Banana falling onto log.
2	-	-	+	+	**35 *be afraid of s.o.***	**Child afraid of snake.**
					36 *bend person*	Rock bending someone's back
2	-	-	+	-	37 *hear s.o.*	A hears B calling out and turns head
					38 *bump into s.o.*	**A bumping into B**
2	-	-	-	+	39 *bend sth*	Log lying on a plank and bending it.
					40 *be afraid of sth*	**Person afraid of axe**
2	-	-	-	-	41 *hear sth*	A hears noise and turns head
					42 *bump into sth*	**Person walking into a tree.**

General usability of the clips

- Videos clips designed for the cross-linguistic study of languages with argument indexing rather than case-marking
- BUT as the clips show relations between participants and an event they will be useful for case elicitation as well

SAMPLE CLIPS

Animate P

Inanimate P

Volitional S

Non-volitional S

ELICITATION TASK INSTRUCTIONS

1. Materials

- 42 video clips to be described by the consultants
- Short clips, most are between 5 and 10 seconds long
- Randomly ordered and afterwards been numbered from 01 to 42

2. Requirements

- Laptop with Windows Media Player (or indeed any player which handles MPEG-2 or 4 video files) or Quicktime (for Mac/Windows)
- With sound track (sometimes ambient noise, sometimes sound is essential to the event)
- Record responses on audio- and/or video-tape with an external microphone

3. Number of speakers

- 4-5 would be ideal to have a firm basis for analysis and cross-language comparison
- Meta-data for each speaker (age, sex, language used, etc.)

4. Procedure

- Audio- and/or video-tape
- You and your speaker sit in front of the laptop
- Instruct speaker
- Cue speaker after each clip, saying for example “What did the man/woman do?” OR “What happened?”
- Make sure the cue sentence is phrased in such a way that participants really describe any actor-less event without an actor

5. Problems and solutions

- What we are after is a description of the event depicted in the clip that includes a verb which roughly corresponds to English verb in the clip label
- Probe if that doesn't happen
- E.g. description of a scene in which a man is "lying" on the ground as either "He is sleeping" or "There is a man on the ground"

5. Problems and solutions

- Or description of possible intentions the agent might have, like “He’s cleaning up” (for *wash plate*) or “She wants him to come to her” (for *pull person*)
- Or a very general description of a scene, like “There’s a man” (for *hear someone*)
- If a speaker uses a SVC make sure this is the most basic way of encoding the event

6. Further probing and elicitation

- Further probing might be helpful
- This does not have to be done with every single speaker, especially not when in an “opportunistic setting”

6. Further probing and elicitation

- Follow up on any alternative verbs which a speaker might have used in the description
- What is the exact meaning? What are the indexing patterns?

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE

AFFECTEDNESS STIMULI

Lessons learned from the AP video stimuli

- In general:
  - Fewer clips
  - Fewer factors

Lessons learned

- Make sure the stimuli are natural.

Inanimate P (first version)

Lessons learned

- Use clear events only, no obscure stuff
  - Some difficult factor combinations, e.g. [2 part, -vol, -tel, +an, +stat]

“Rock bends person”

Lessons learned

- Make sure participants can be easily identified

“Hear someone”

Lessons learned

- Make sure the number of participants is clear.

“Fill glass”

Lessons learned

- Make sure stimulus in experience events are realistic

“Afraid of snake”

“Afraid of axe”

Lessons learned

- Make sure the clip is technically OK.

“Wash plate”

Ideas for the Affectedness stimuli

- Change of state: *break*, *smash*, *bite*, *cut*, *clean*, *paint*, *delouse*
- Movement: *push*, *pull*, *shove*, *roll*
- Potential change of state: *hit*, *kick*, *poke*
- Consumption: *eat*, *drink*
- Unspecified for change (control cases): *see, laugh at, smell, follow, ponder, ogle* (Beavers 2011: 358)

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- Video elicitation is a great way to obtain comparable data
- Obviates some of the difficulties and dangers of elicitation
  - Responses can be heavily biased towards the constructions of the metalanguage
  - What is the consultant making a judgment about? Are they accommodating the researcher?

the end

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APPENDIX

TASK PARTICIPANTS

Task participants

Table 1. Basic metadata for task participants

Speaker code	Language	Age	Dialect
SP1	Western Pantar	Not discussed	
SP2	Teiwa	31	Lebang
SP3	Teiwa	36	Lebang
SP4	Teiwa	48	Lebang
SP5	Adang	47	Kokar
SP6	Adang	37	Otfai
SP7	Adang	27	Tang'ala
SP8	Abui	~25	Takpala
SP9	Abui	~70	Takpala
SP10	Abui	~60	Takpala
SP11	Abui	~60	Takpala
SP12	Kamang	70+	Atoitaa
SP13	Kamang	~60	Sama
SP14	Kamang	~40	Maumang
SP15	Kamang	~60	Sama