

Project Report for 關於布農語狀語動詞的分析及研究, 2022-09 – 2022-12  
Research Grant for Foreign Scholars in Chinese Studies 2022, Center for Chinese Studies,  
Taipei.  
Victor Bogren Svensson

The project can be divided into two stages, a preparatory stage and a fieldwork stage. During the preparatory stage, lasting approximately three weeks, I was in Taipei. During this time, I was preparing the final details for the fieldwork, and I spent time meeting with experienced researchers in the field of Formosan linguistics, as well as partaking in activities offered by the Center for Chinese Studies. I met with researchers from Academia Sinica, Taiwan Normal University, and National Chengchi University. This was a very valuable exchange for me as I was able to get detailed information and practical advice regarding conducting fieldwork with speakers of Austronesian languages in Taiwan.

The fieldwork was conducted in Nantou. I was working together with speakers of the Takituduh variety of Bunun. The Bunun language is primarily spoken in the central mountainous areas of Taiwan, and is divided into five distinct varieties, one of which is Takituduh Bunun. Takituduh Bunun was the focus of my research. It is one of the northernmost varieties of Bunun, and is spoken primarily in the villages Zhongzheng, Fazhi and Wanfeng. I conducted my fieldwork in the Zhongzheng Village, where I was also living for the duration of the fieldwork. Upon arrival in the village, I went to the local police station, the Health and Culture station, and one of the local churches to introduce myself to the community and to explain my purpose for staying in the village. This is also a useful way of recruiting participants for my study.

Throughout my fieldwork, I worked primarily with five native speakers of Takituduh Bunun. The fieldwork sessions were primarily conducted in the homes of the participants. Informed consent was gathered during the first meeting with each participant. Due to the advanced age of many of the participants, a session would only last between 40 and 60 minutes. I met with the participants several times a week, thus favoring shorter but more frequent sessions. When not gathering data, I spent my time transcribing and analyzing the data that I had already collected, as well as preparing up-coming sessions.

A few primary methods were used during the interviews with the native speakers to elicit the relevant data. One method is known as Translation Elicitation. Put simply, the linguist will ask the native speaker to translate a word, phrase or sentence from the contact language (Mandarin Chinese in this case) to the target languages (Takituduh Bunun in this case). Another method that I used was Acceptability Judgement. The linguist will present the native speaker with a sentence in the target language, and then the native speaker is asked to judge the sentence, saying if it sounds natural and grammatical, or if it sounds strange and unnatural. Finally, I also used visual stimuli, for instance showing the native speaker a short video and then asking them to relate in Takituduh Bunun what they saw. All three methods could be used within a single session.

The fieldwork was successful and I managed to gather the data necessary to complete the proposed project, in no small part due to the kindness of the speakers of Takituduh Bunun that were willing to share their knowledge and their language with me. I extend my thanks to them.