

Lexicography in the field: methods and results of the Muna dictionary project¹

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1. Introduction.

In this paper I will report on a specific activity in which I have been engaged over the last number of years, namely the making of a dictionary. This project has resulted in the publication of a 709-page Muna-English dictionary (van den Berg 1996) and the publication of a 451-page Muna-Indonesian dictionary (van den Berg and La Ode Sidu 2000). This contribution, therefore, is very practical: to report on how this particular project was initiated, how we got the data, how the data was processed and what decisions had to be made before and during the actual project. I believe the Muna dictionary project has been quite successful and I offer here as much background information as possible, in the hope that a similar approach might be useful for other field workers. Each language project is unique, but I believe that lessons learnt during this project can be used profitably in the process of documenting other minority languages.

2. Muna: background information.

Muna is one of the large islands situated off the southeast coast of Sulawesi, Indonesia. It is approximately 110 km long and 50 to 60 km broad. Muna is a fairly dry coral island, with no real mountains and hardly any rivers. The staple crop is maize, with occasional rice, and supplemented by yams, tubers and sweet potatoes.

The population of this island is over 200,000. All the inhabitants of this island speak one language, also called Muna. Muna, an Austronesian language, is also spoken on the west coast of the neighbouring island Buton. The total number of people speaking the language is probably around 250,000 – 300,000. The major dialect division is between the prestigious northern dialect, and the more peripheral southern dialect, which is only 87% cognate with the north. Most people under 40 are bilingual in Indonesian to various degrees of proficiency. Van den Berg (1989) is a grammatical description of the Muna language.

The majority religion on Muna is Islam (98%), although pre-Islamic beliefs and practices are still widespread. A few villages in the southern part of the island are predominantly Catholic. These Christians speak the southern dialect.

Muna does not have a written tradition, and books in the local language are all of recent date. Apart from linguistic works, there are a number of 'popular' books such as a spelling guide, a trilingual conversation book, a riddle book, some reading books, trial Scripture publications, and school books for lower and middle schools. The language is enjoying increasing prestige because of its documentation and role in the schools.

¹ This article is an abridged and updated version of a paper given at the KITLV workshop on '(The study of) Endangered languages and literatures in Southeast Asia', Leiden, December 1996. A preliminary version was presented at SIL-UK in the summer of 1996.

3. The stages of the dictionary project.

The Muna dictionary project has gone through two stages. The first stage began during our first field work period on the island in 1985-86. During that period my wife Lydia and I stayed in the district capital Raha where we focussed on grammatical analysis and text collection (in preparation for a published grammar). However, a handwritten dictionary file was begun and regularly updated, stored on handcut file cards in a wooden box, which ultimately contained some 2,200 main entries. This phase ended a few years later in 1990, when all that material was keyboarded onto computer in Ujung Pandang (now called Makassar).

The second stage began in the autumn of 1992, when our family was allowed to return to Muna for a new field work period until April 1994. We lived in Watuputih, a village some 5 km from Raha. In addition to translation work, a comprehensive trilingual dictionary project was one of the components of this field period. My main concern was to acquire as much material as possible within that time frame (only 18 months) and to make optimal use of local expertise. Fortunately, my official counterpart at the Haluoleo University in Kendari was La Ode Sidu M.S., a lecturer in Indonesian and a native speaker of Muna with a keen interest in lexicography. Even though the distance between the provincial capital Kendari and Watuputih was considerable, we were able to set up a system of cooperation and communication that worked well.

Using different methods which I will explain below, we acquired new material. This new material was immediately entered on computer. La Ode Sidu worked independently in Kendari and his target was to cover one letter a month, after which the material (on diskette) was sent to me in Watuputih. I went over his material very carefully, adding some English and noting further questions or points of discussion. A most profitable part of the process was to go over the material again with an extremely knowledgeable language helper named La Ada. For almost a year and a half, this former teacher came to our house every night to work on the dictionary. Many more new words and meanings were detected, and both of us thoroughly enjoyed the work. During this process I used Shoebox 2.0, a computer programme developed by SIL for doing lexicography.²

Trial print-outs were made of entries for several letters, which were then checked by other speakers of Muna. Upon our return to Holland at the end of April 1994, I started working more systematically on adding English glosses and translations, as well as weeding out errors, and inconsistencies.

This stage was finished in the autumn of 1995 in England, to which we had moved earlier that year. At that point I started concentrating on preparing the Muna-English version for official publication, while the Muna-Indonesian edition was only produced in temporary format. I found out that we needed four rounds of corrections and proofreading of the Muna-English edition. Just before the end we also produced a reverse index English-Muna. The speed with which the book was typeset, printed and bound may well be a record in the history of the KITLV Press: just over three months. It came off the press in the middle of April 1996, just a week before I made a long-planned trip to Indonesia, and consequently I was able to present the official Muna-English dictionary and the preliminary Muna-Indonesian edition at two formal ceremonies: to the rector of Universitas Haluoleo in Kendari and also to the *bupati* (district head) of Muna and the head of the education office in Raha.

Needless to say, this whole project could not have been completed without the help of many people. The last page of the introduction to the dictionary contains their names.

4. Preliminary decisions.

² Editor's note: The Linguist's Shoebox version 5 is now available for purchase on CD-ROM at http://www.ethnologue.com/tools_docs/shoebox.asp.

Any dictionary project requires that considerable time is spent thinking about important preliminary questions. Sources that I found useful in this respect before and during the project were Bartholomew and Schoenhals (1983) and Newell (1986), the latter in its final version as Newell (1995). After finishing my own project I also looked at the excellent works of Al-Kasimi (1977) and Svensén (1993), but these works were not available to me on the field. Preliminary questions are important, because the answers to them determine both the process and the final outcome. In the case of the Muna project the following factors needed to be addressed.

a. Priority and time. How important is it? How much time is available? We felt that after the grammar, the next project should naturally be a good comprehensive dictionary. Because of the contract situation between SIL and the Indonesian National Institute of Science (LIPI) only 18 months were available on the field. This meant that our time was limited and that good planning and optimal use of resources was essential.

b. Audience. We felt that our target audience was two-fold: first of all Muna people, as a documentation of their language. Users may want to consult a dictionary for matters of spelling, word classes, Indonesian equivalents, or just to browse in and discover the riches of their own language. All this would be especially valuable for teachers. Indonesian should therefore be the target language.

The second audience we perceived to be outside of Indonesia: researchers such as linguists and anthropologists. For them an English target language would be necessary. At the same time such a dictionary would put the language on an official, recognized level by raising its status and prestige. It was therefore decided that a trilingual dictionary (Muna-Indonesian-English) would be our target. However, the end result was two bilingual dictionaries, as will be explained below.

c. Funding and co-workers. Earlier attempts to obtain funding for a dictionary project had failed in 1989. As a result, money was scarce and I was unable to carry out my original plans to employ a team of co-workers and set up an office. Instead, I could only employ three part-time co-workers, two of whom were introduced earlier:

- La Ode Sidu in Kendari, my official counterpart. I loaned him a computer and gave him some basic training in using it for our purposes; he was paid on a monthly basis. He is responsible for much of the Muna material and for most of the Indonesian translations.
- La Ada, an extremely able elderly man who also lived in Watuputih; he became a close friend and our main source of information. Surprisingly, he refused to be paid.
- Syahrudin, a recent university graduate who lived in the nearby village of Dana. He wrote many of the semantic field essays.

After our return to the Netherlands in 1994 I made another attempt at obtaining funds, this time for the final English checking, proofreading and publication. Again, I was unsuccessful. Thanks to our move to England and our stay on the Wycliffe-centre there, we found enough volunteers to help with the English check and the proofreading. Fortunately no further funding was needed for the Muna-English publication once the KITLV Press had accepted the manuscript.

All in all, the project has run on a very low and limited budget, mainly drawn from personal funds. Looking back now, it seems a miracle in more than one way that it ever materialized.

d. Spelling. This issue had already been resolved by the Muna language team in 1991, the results of which are reflected in the *Pedoman Ejaan Bahasa Daerah Muna* (Muna spelling guide). As much as possible Muna spelling conforms to Indonesian, with a few exceptions for sounds that are not present in Indonesian, e.g. <gh> stands for a voiced uvular fricative, as in *ghome* 'to wash'.

e. Dialects. The northern dialect is prestigious and forms the basis of the grammar, the spelling guide and of the current school material being developed. It was therefore a natural decision to limit the project to this variety. Another factor which facilitated the choice of dialect was that La Ode Sidu was born in Watuputih, the village where we lived during the project, located in the northern part of the island.

f. Role of computer. Working with a CAF laptop (368SX, 60MB) on the field, I first entered the data simply using standard field markers in Word-for-DOS. However, searches took a long time, alphabetization was not automatic and finally I was persuaded to try Shoebox (version 2.0). That was a real help, although as a simple computer user, I still needed expert help with creating printfiles in order to make publishable printouts. The computer helped the project in several other ways. First an Interactive Concordance (IC) programme created lists of words or roots as found in texts and secondly the computer created a blank Muna dictionary (see below). Creating the reverse index could also not have been done without the computer. Finally, proofreading and typesetting were also greatly facilitated by the computer.

g. Publisher. While I was planning the second phase of the project in late 1992, I contacted the KITLV Press in Leiden to find out whether they were interested in publishing a Muna-Indonesian-English dictionary. Since a trilingual dictionary of the neighbouring Wolio language had already appeared in 1987 there was at least a precedent. Dr Poeze, the director of the KITLV Press, agreed in principle to publishing a Muna dictionary, but only to a Muna-English edition for practical reasons (size and cost). A Muna-Indonesian edition would have to be published separately, preferably in Indonesia. Since the current Muna-English edition is 709 pages and costs DFL 125 (around \$60), this decision seems to have been well-founded.

5. Data collection: how do you get what you want?

The first concern of a good lexicographer is to get adequate material. When you start from scratch this need is all the more pressing. Two Indonesian sources were of limited value, but in combination with our own handwritten database there was at least a base to begin work from. We acquired our lexical material by means of the following three methods:

a. From oral literature texts, both prose and poetry. During the first phase (1985-86) we had collected some 75 texts. Most of these were written by native speakers, while others were recorded live and transcribed later. At the end of phase two we had some 130 texts of various genres and of different lengths, such as 'The tortoise and the monkey'; 'My experiences in teaching English' and 'The inauguration oath of the King of Muna'.

These texts were processed by reading them carefully and noting down any new vocabulary. New words or new meanings were entered on new cards (during phase one) or into the computer (later). After they had been keyboarded, these texts also served as the basis for making a computerized concordance, using the Interactive Concordance programme mentioned above. The following example shows part of such a concordance on three roots: *gholi* 'to buy'; *ghohi* 'to tell a lie' and *ghondo* 'to look'. The first number refers to the text number, the second to the line.

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----- gholi -----
9 44:          pasina noalamo \se44. Gholino kansuru negholiane mbololo
9 44:          Gholino kansuru negholiane mbololo \se45. Pada aitu
36 9:          \se9. Barangka noala negholianemo kahitela bhahi o mafusau
36 13:         Miina nakodoi so naegholighoo kaago sigaaahano \se14.
----- ghohi -----
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13 29:          pikore \se29. Gara neghohi \se30. Dadi o karambau notalomo
40 230:         we panda watu degohi \se231. Ane ta miehi andohi
40 265:         ndoke \se265. Omeghohiimu ihintuumu itu \se266. Ingka
43 81:         isahihino \se81. Kaghohindo \se82. Dofolo-fololuhi a
----- ghondo -----
1 40:          ndokea Soba dokala doghondoegho Dosikalahamo \se41.
1 68:          kapoluka tora Tameghondohighoomo wutomu \se69. pata
3 5:          sau melangke noghoo-ghondomo fatowalae so neweino maitu
6 12:         sikola ingka ama \se12. Ghondofaanda aihimu itu \se13.
10 27:        aitu adhi-adhinia noghondohimo tora apa-paando \se28.

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Such a concordance is helpful in several ways. It facilitates finding example sentences, recurrent collocations of the word, the most frequent and regular affixation of the root and anything unusual which may have gone unnoticed. Since this IC programme was slow (on my computer) and could not run concurrently with Shoebox, processing took longer than I expected and consequently I have used this method only for a limited number of items. Ideally one should have a concordance of the whole corpus, although it is easy to get drowned in the data.

b. Although collecting such texts is worthwhile, one quickly discovers that the number of unknown words in a new text diminishes considerably with time. I therefore employed a second method, which I call the 'semantic domains approach'. I drew up a list of some seventy topics and I had my assistant Syahrudin write lists of words or prose essays about these. Topics included:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - kinship terms | - the loom |
| - diseases | - birds and fish |
| - feelings | - house parts |
| - clothes | - furniture |
| - ornaments | - making fire |
| - food crops | - ways of preparing food |
| - food and drink containers | - ways of preparing fish |
| - making palm wine | - getting and storing water |
| - children's games | - musical instruments |

When he had written an essay, I would read it, underline any new or unknown words and then ask him to provide an Indonesian equivalent or explanation. This was an excellent way of acquiring new material, as well as learning more about the culture.

c. The third method was the so-called blank dictionary (or dictionary shell). The suggestion for using a blank dictionary comes from Carroll (1966) who used it as an elicitation technique in Polynesian lexicography. This technique provides the lexicographer with a computer-generated list of all possible disyllabic word shapes in the language, to be checked by native speakers as to whether or not these words actually occur. Since syllable structure in Muna is very simple (only V and CV), this method worked particularly well. Barbara Friberg, a colleague in Sulawesi, made the computer programme and a print-out, consisting of some 19,000 possible words, printed in five columns on 91 pages. Words that actually do exist as bases were then circled by speakers of the language. La Ode Sidu had his own list in Kendari from which he worked, but our village friend La Ada was especially good at this.

The next step is to elicit the meaning of the circled words if not yet known. By careful use of this method, the lexicographer can be sure he obtains at least close to 100% of all disyllabic roots in his dictionary. Since these do constitute between 50 and 60% of all roots in Muna, one can be reasonably sure that in combination with the other data the resulting dictionary is a good sample of the lexical richness of the language. Roots of three or more syllables have to be found using

methods 1 or 2, although La Ada sometimes added syllables when longer words came to mind. The non-existent root *ghoghe*, for example, triggered the word *ghoghea* ‘dry leaf of coconut palm’.

6. Organization of entries: what information should be included?

Another big issue was the actual organisation of the database, as illustrated by the following questions.

a. What should the basic arrangement of the data be? We decided to follow the common practice in Austronesian lexicography of presenting entries in root arrangement. The advantage is that all related words come under the same entry, but the obvious disadvantage is that a word needs to be stripped of its affixes before the dictionary user can locate it. In a morphologically complex language like Muna this requires considerable grammatical sophistication, not only for the native speaker but also for the foreign researcher, who first has to learn about some basic morphological processes before he knows that *dakumalamo* ‘we will go’ is to be found under *kala* ‘go’. I spent a considerable section in the introduction to the dictionary on this process of affix-stripping.

b. How much grammatical information should there be? We decided to give part of speech abbreviations for all entries (nouns, verbs, numerals etc.), with subdivision for verbs into transitive, intransitive and stative verbs and also into their morphological class: *a-*, *ae-* or *ao-*. The introduction explains Muna verbal morphology in quite some detail.

c. How much productive morphology should be included? Since Muna has a very rich morphology, it would be very impractical to give all possible word shapes. On the basis of *gholi* ‘to buy’, for example, the following list is completely predictable, and this is only part of the the first person singular!

<i>aegholi</i>	‘I buy/bought (an indefinite object)’
<i>agholi</i>	‘I buy/bought (a definite object)’
<i>agholie</i>	‘I buy/bought it’
<i>aegholiane</i>	‘I buy/bought (an indef. object) for her/him’
<i>agholiane</i>	‘I buy/bought (a def. object) for her/him’
<i>aegholighoo</i>	‘I buy/bought (an indef. object) for someone’
<i>aegholimo</i>	‘I already bought (an indef. object)’
<i>agholiemo</i>	‘I already bought it’
<i>aegholianemo</i>	‘I already bought (an indef. obj.) for her/him’
<i>aegholighoomo</i>	‘I already bought (an indef. obj.) for someone’
<i>aghumolie</i>	‘I will buy it’
<i>aghumoliane</i>	‘I will buy it for her/him’

And so on.

It is obvious that including all these words is both impractical and undesirable. Therefore some familiarity with the morphology of the language is assumed (this is treated in the introduction) and only some derivational affixes are treated as subentries. Under *gholi*, for example, one finds *gholifi* ‘buy (many items), shop’. This derivation is included because of the unpredictable thematic consonant *f* in the suffix *-fi*. Another derivation listed there is *mansogholi* ‘buy anything’ the affix *manso-* is not productive on transitive verbs. Everything else (literally hundreds of derived forms!) is predictable from the fact that *gholi* is a transitive verb of the *ae*-class.

d. Should example sentences be included? We decided illustrative examples are very important, because they enhance understanding, show the word in a live context, reinforce the grammatical information and provide an opportunity for showing cultural information. For some verbs and nouns, we used more than one example sentence, in which the second contains another form or shows another sense. For example, under *ala* 'take, get' the first example sentence is *Dakumala daeala sau* 'Let us go and get wood'. The second is *Sau hae nealamu itu?* 'What kind of wood have you taken?' In this instance, the forms *daeala* (first person plural irrealis) and *nealamu* (passive participle with second person agent) illustrate the regular inflections of *ala*. Some of the illustrative examples have come from texts, but the majority have been provided by La Ode Sidu and La Ada as they worked on the entries.

e. Should we include pictorial illustrations? At first this was not really considered, since we did not have an artist on the team. However, it turned out that La Ada had great skill in drawing and often made useful sketch drawings during elicitation sessions to illustrate words. As a result I gave him a list of words for which he drew pictorial illustrations. These are included in an appendix of the dictionary. Although some of them are rough and not drawn to scale, they do give an adequate idea of the shapes of many of the lesser-known artefacts, such as tools and weapons, musical instruments, the loom, the house, containers, ornaments, fish traps etc. Many of these items are now obsolete on Muna, which obviously increases the documentary value of the dictionary.

f. Should loanwords be included? The general feeling of my co-workers was that Indonesian loans should be excluded since they are not 'true' Muna. However, many loans have undergone changes in sound or meaning and are an integral part of the language. I therefore decided to include them generously and consequently one will find words such as *arilodhi* 'wristwatch' (through Indonesian *arloji* from Dutch *horloge*) and *banara* 'right, true' (from Indonesian *benar*). I only made an exception for very recent unadapted borrowings from Indonesian. In most cases the Malay/Indonesian origin of such words has been indicated at the very end of the entry in square brackets.

g. How much cultural information should be presented? I strongly believe that a good dictionary is not just a list of words, but acts as a window on the culture, offering interesting explanations and insightful illustrative examples. Thus under *karia* 'puberty ritual for girls' one finds the following extra information:

'they are secluded in a dark, closed room for about four days and nights with very little food (*kaghombo*); afterwards they are dressed up and adorned, then led out of the house (*kafosampu*) to a platform where they sit in a row and are prayed over and touched with dirt; finally each one in turn performs a short dance during which presents are thrown to them (*kaghoru*). After a week the *kafolantono bhansa* ceremony is held, to find out who will marry soon'.

This is exceptionally long and clearly oversteps the boundary of a traditional dictionary. However, without an existing proper Muna ethnography, such information is in my view not redundant and definitely captures the meaning and spirit of the *karia* festival.

h. Is a reverse index needed? The answer is clearly yes, for the benefit of both native speakers and foreign researchers who want to find the Muna equivalent of an Indonesian or English word. Here the electronic age brings its blessings by making an automatic reversal possible, although some work remained to be done beforehand. Notice that a reverse index is nothing more than a wordlist, it is definitely not meant to be a full-fledged English-Muna dictionary.

Consider the following example. There are at least seven words for ‘lice’ in Muna, four of which are listed below:

<i>kahama-hama</i>	‘very small louse’
<i>kaghughi</i>	‘small chicken louse’
<i>otu</i>	‘louse’
<i>tuma</i>	‘clothes louse’

Some of the reversal process had to be done manually, such as pruning modifying words and putting the most general equivalent first (*otu*). The final result is as follows:

louse	<i>otu, kaghughi, kahama-hama, tuma</i>
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i. What should the final result look like and in which format should all the diverse information be presented? There are of course dozens of possibilities, but in consultation with the director of the KITLV Press we decided to print main entries bold and capitalized, to print subentries (derivations, compounds) bold but not capitalized on a new line in alphabetical order, and to print example sentences in italics. No columns were used, as we anticipated problems with long words. These would all have to have been broken off manually.

7. Difficulties.

It may be useful in this section to look briefly at a few areas where I experienced difficulties. The first was the most persistent one: the difficulty of finding correct equivalents in English and Indonesian. This does not only apply to technical terminology, but also to what appear to be simple concepts such as bodily positions. For example, there are many Muna words corresponding to ‘to sit’, and often native speakers were unable to provide me with Indonesian equivalents, but rather acted it out. Here are some illustrations (with Indonesian equivalents):

<i>ngkora</i>	‘sit’ (generic) [Ind <i>duduk</i>]
<i>kapala</i>	‘sit (on something raised, with legs downwards, not on the floor)’ [Ind <i>duduk (dengan kaki ke bawah)</i>]
<i>ghimpo</i>	‘(of women) sit politely on the floor with the legs bent to one side’ [Ind <i>duduk bersimpuh</i>]
<i>miminsoro</i>	‘sit on the floor with outstretched legs (considered very impolite)’ [Ind <i>duduk dengan kaki lurus ke depan</i>]
<i>tangkughase</i>	‘sit with the hands under the chin’ [Ind <i>duduk sambil menopang dagu</i>]

It takes patience, persistence and a good command of the target language to come up with these definitions, including their cultural connotations.

With technical vocabulary this gets even worse. In the case of flora and fauna the expert help I needed was simply not available, and with only a few books on fish and birds and nothing on trees, little more could be done than say ‘k.o. fish’ or ‘k.o. tree’ (k.o. = kind of).

Only in two selected areas have I made a conscious effort to obtain technical vocabulary: house-building and the loom. Since I had obtained detailed illustrations, I was able to work on this in England. As a result, one finds construction terminology such as *dolo* ‘purlin; horizontal beam which supports the rafters’ and *garaga* ‘strut beam to stiffen the floor joists’.

Another very difficult but interesting area of vocabulary is that of sound words or onomatopoeia. Like other languages in the area, Muna has dozens of words describing various

sounds. Again, attempting to find a correct translation equivalent is a major undertaking. Consider the following examples:

<i>bheghu</i>	‘sound of mangoes falling in mud or slapping a full stomach’
<i>dhepa</i>	‘sound of pillow falling on the ground, of flapping wings of fighting cocks’
<i>kagha</i>	‘kind of choking sound (as when holding a cat by its neck)’

Given adequate resources and better communication channels (especially time and expert help through e-mail) some of these difficulties could have been overcome. However, I personally view this dictionary as only the first important step in Muna lexicography. It is my hope that native speakers will build on it and make refinements and additions leading to a revised edition. However, Dr Poeze informed me that he considered this the only published Muna dictionary for both the 20th and the 21st century!

A last difficulty that may be mentioned concerns conflicting information from native speakers. It is not uncommon, especially for low-frequency words, to have native speakers disagree on what a certain word means. In such cases La Ada and La Ode Sidu have always had the last say; in the few cases they disagreed I have listed both meanings or forms.

8. Reception and Indonesian version.

Of the Muna-English dictionary only 200 copies were printed. To date, some 85 have been sold. Several scholarly reviews have appeared (by Bernard Comrie in *Linguistics*; by Mark Donohue in *Language*, by Robert Blust in *Oceanic Linguistics* and by Bernd Nothofer in *Bulletin of SOAS*), which have all been favourable.

When the Muna-English publication came out, I also made a preliminary 480-page print-out of the Muna-Indonesian version, with the purpose of having it checked for mistakes and typos by my counterpart, La Ode Sidu, and our assistant Syahrudin. This preliminary version was also presented to the district head and the head of the department of education in 1996. Later I found out that La Ode Sidu had worked hard to get this preliminary version formally acknowledged as a resource book for the schools on Muna. As a result, copies of this version were circulating in the primary and middle schools all over Muna, as I found out during subsequent visits.

Preparing the final Muna-Indonesian version still involved a lot of work. I reread the whole book again, and corrected all the mistakes, including those found by the proofreaders. To reduce the number of pages for the Indonesian version (and hence the cost) I decided to use a smaller font and a double-column format. This meant rechecking the whole document again after it had been printed in order to get rid of overlong white spaces between words. This was accomplished by manually breaking off long words.

Finding an Indonesian publisher for the Muna-Indonesian version was not easy. I contacted a number of publishers on Java, but they all required substantial amounts of money to be paid up front (\$ 8-10,000 for 500 copies). What I was hoping for was a publisher who was willing to take the risk of funding this publication, but of course from a business perspective the market for a vernacular dictionary is very small, essentially only one island in a remote province. Only one publisher was willing to take some risk, but it still required a substantial lump sum, and the final book prize was to be rather high for an Indonesian book (around Rp 60,000 or \$6-8). In the end we had to abandon the idea of working with a commercial publishing house. Instead, on the advice of colleague Charles Grimes I contacted Artha Wacana Press in Kupang (West-Timor), a young non-commercial academic publisher specialising in eastern Indonesia. They were willing to be the publisher, while a printer in Makassar (Intisari) was prepared to print at a reasonable cost. Still, money had to be paid up front to the printer. My hopes that the provincial Department of Education

in Southeast Sulawesi would have money available was unfounded. Fortunately a businessman on Muna who runs a book and photocopy shop was prepared to invest in this project. We agreed on the final prize (Rp 25.000 or \$2.5 – 3.5), and with his investment money for 500 copies I needed only an extra \$700 to subsidize the publication. Most of that money came from a SIL hip money project. The Indonesian version was printed in May 2000, shipped to Muna and is now available in the bookshop.

9. What has been most helpful?

In my view, a number of factors have contributed substantially to the successful completion of this project. In the first place, a limited field period of 18 months provided a strong incentive to treat this project as a manageable undertaking. In my opinion many dictionary projects suffer from the fact that there is no fixed end time to the data collection phase; as a consequence the project may become a never-ending enterprise. Also, with such a short fieldwork period adequate and resourceful planning is an absolute necessity.

In the second place, I was very lucky to have such excellent field collaborators: my official counterpart La Ode Sidu in Kendari, our trusted village friend La Ada, whose knowledge of words was truly amazing and whose willingness to help was even more astounding, also our village assistant Syahrudin who patiently wrote the many essays on semantic domains.

Thirdly, our move to the Wycliffe-centre in England at the beginning of 1995 put me in an environment where adequate help was available, both in terms of checking English, help with computer issues and proofreading.

Finally, the promises and encouragements of a sympathetic publisher provided strong incentive to bring the project to a fruition. I contacted the KITLV Press at a very early stage of the data collection, and after a provisional print-out had been approved by the editorial board, the prospect that the book would actually be printed definitely helped me to keep the end result in view during the whole process.

10. What would I do differently?

If I had to do it again (for another language), would I roughly do it the same way? The answer is a modified yes. In addition to the helpful factors that I listed above, I would probably add or change a few matters. Firstly, it would be helpful to have a larger budget so that more local co-workers could be employed and trained, and several computers bought. Ideally, an office would be set up with several people working concurrently on different parts: some collecting literature, some writing essays, some writing entries, some checking with groups of native speakers, some proofreading etc. A larger budget would also allow national or foreign specialists to visit the area and identify birds, fish, plants and trees. If more time, people and computers were available, the use of concordance lists could also be maximized. With a good e-mail connection on the field, quick advice and answers can also be obtained from others.

Another area that was not really considered either by myself or by the KITLV Press is electronic dissemination (see Svensén 1993). Since all the material is on computer, it could easily be disseminated on CD-ROM. This may be especially useful for researchers since the search possibilities are considerably greater than in the printed book. This issue has not been given proper attention for the present project.

However, given the various limitations mentioned earlier, I am very grateful that both the Muna-English and the Muna-Indonesian version have come to fruition.

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