house] The house BE BIG,' means that the interviewee should imagine that he/she is standing in front of a house and makes the statement that the house is big.

3. Grammatical structure questionnaires contain questions about the existence of particular grammatical structures, e.g. 'Does the language make any distinction between direct speech and quoted speech?' or 'Are there adjectives that take arguments? optionally/obligatorily?' (Comrie and Smith 1977). A similar checklist is given by Aikhenvald (2007: 63–4) for the analysis of 'word-formation', while other articles in Shopen (2007) unfortunately lack such lists. For some critical remarks on the questionnaire compiled by Comrie and Smith (1977), see Mosel (2006b).

In comparison to translational questionnaires, scenario questionnaires are less likely to produce data that are influenced by the contact language, especially when they are used in the manner and tone of a casual conversation. The grammatical construction questionnaires cannot directly be used for the elicitation of data, but only serve as a checklist for the design of translational or scenario questionnaires or for the analysis of data that have already been gathered from texts and elicitations. Bowern (2008: 214–18) presents 'a basic morphology/syntax checklist' that is 'loosely based on the *Lingua* Questionnaire by Comrie and Smith 1977,' but it looks more like the table of contents of a particular grammar because it lists the terms of grammatical categories, e.g. 'causatives', 'passives', 'copular clauses', 'auxiliary verbs', without any further comments. This kind of list creates the impression that these categories are universal and can be elicited in any language. But passive constructions are, for example, far from being universal; in her survey of 373 languages, Siewierska (2008) found that 211 languages lack a passive construction.

3.5.2.2 Kinds of elicitation techniques

None of the linguistic fieldwork guides systematically describes:

- what kind of questions would trigger what kind of answers;
- what kind of questions would be useful for which area of grammar;

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- ↳ which areas of grammar would be most efficiently investigated by what kind of questions;
- how different kinds of questions could possibly complement each other.

Samarin (1967: 77) distinguishes between 'translational' and 'non-translational' elicitation, while Bouquiaux and Thomas (1992: 186–397) exclusively rely on translations from the contact language into the target language. Others mix both methods, but often do not explicitly state how the questions are actually to be worded in an interview on a particular grammatical topic, although the way you ask is crucial for the kind of answer you get. In her section on data manipulation, for example, Bowern (2008: 81) simply lists a number of transformations without further comment:

- Turn sentences into questions (and vice versa).
- Manipulate voice and valency possibilities; e.g., active–passive/antipassive... (Bowern 2008: 81)

In order to test if the sentences produced by translations, scenario descriptions or sentence manipulations express the intended meaning, the consultant should always be asked for a translation from the target language into the contact language. Ideally such back-translations are not done on the same day.

A third type of elicitation mentioned in fieldwork textbooks is that the researcher constructs sentences in the target language by him- or herself and then asks native speakers for a so-called 'grammaticality judgement', i.e. telling him or her if the sentences sound right (Abbi 2001: 108, 118; Bowern 2008: 76, 78) This method cannot be recommended because the acceptance or rejection of a sentence created by a non-