

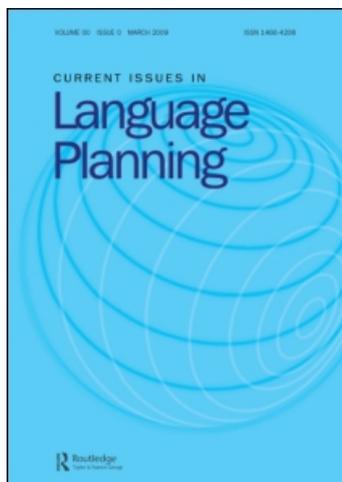
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### The language situation in Timor-Leste

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## The language situation in Timor-Leste

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Timor-Leste celebrated its formal political independence on 20th May 2002. The National Constitution of the new nation declared the endogenous lingua franca (Tetum) and the former colonial language (Portuguese) to be co-official. The remaining local languages were given the status of national languages. Indonesian and English were designated as working languages 'for as long as is deemed necessary'. In this monograph, I consider the origins and implications of these constitutional provisions. The paper consists of five parts.

1. A social and economic profile of the polity. This section also discusses migration, communications and the media in relation to language policy and practice.
2. A language profile of the country, followed by a discussion of diglossia, multilingualism, literacy and official language choice.
3. An account of the sociolinguistic consequences of language contact and an historical analysis of social policies and practices that have shaped the habitus.
4. A discussion and analysis of current language policy development in terms of goals, motives and orientations.
5. An assessment of the prospects for language maintenance with special reference to policy outcomes and options.

I advocate a rights-oriented approach to language management, arguing that in the absence of such an approach, *ad hoc* power relationships between languages will continue to dominate social discourse and language politics.

**Keywords:** Timor Leste; language policy; language practices; literacy; multilingualism; diglossia; official languages; national languages

### Introduction

The East Timorese people have endured a long history of colonialism, underdevelopment, conflict, human rights abuse, civil unrest and dramatic political change. Although independence was originally declared in 1975, it was formally celebrated on 20 May 2002 when the United Nations (hereinafter the UN) handed over administration to the independent state after over four centuries of Portuguese colonialism and 24 years of occupation by Indonesia. The composition of the present population, the language profile of the country, language choice and patterns of language use, maintenance and spread can only be fully understood in the light of these experiences. For the purposes of analysis, I have turned

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to Bourdieu (1991), whose theories provide insights into the relationship between language policy, language use and power. Bourdieu's notions of *habitus* and *symbolic violence* identify the relations of power in the formation of language dispositions and the construction of identity. Following Freeland and Patrick (2004, p. 12), I define *habitus* as a set of embodied dispositions inculcated through socialisation into particular groups and milieus. Although these dispositions do not determine behaviour, they predispose people to respond in certain ways to familiar and unfamiliar situations. The term linguistic *habitus* embraces one important set of dispositions; as Freeland and Patrick (p. 12) point out, the term encompasses not only language structure but also the pragmatics of linguistic interaction. I use the Bourdieurian notion of symbolic violence to account for the kinds of symbolic and ideological domination used to legitimise and reinforce the prevailing social and linguistic order. Sometimes accompanying overt forms of violence, symbolic violence sustains domination by both institutional and interpersonal means (Thompson, 1991, p. 24). While Bourdieu's theories focus strongly on forms of state power, the concept of core cultural value (Smolicz, 1991) helps to explain why individuals and groups attach different values to the languages with which they come into contact. The notion of core value is based on the assumption that social groups subscribe to sets of cultural values considered essential to their existence. Where language has acquired the status of a core cultural value, it is elevated to a symbol of the survival of the group and the preservation of its heritage (Smolicz, 1991, p. 76). I have also made use of Cooper's (1989) accounting scheme, Skutnabb-Kangas' (2000) linguistic human rights framework and Ruiz' (1995) language policy orientations, in order to analyse the ideological tendencies in East Timorese language policy development. Each of these three frameworks is explained at the point where it is discussed in this article.

In this monograph, I draw on information from government bodies and academic research, aid agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs), journalistic accounts and my own academic research (Taylor-Leech, 2007). I have divided this monograph into five parts. Part I provides some social and economic background information about the polity. Part I also discusses migration, communication and the media in relation to language policy and practice. Part II presents a language profile of Timor-Leste supported by figures derived and computed from the Population and Housing Census conducted by the East Timorese government in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund in 2004. Part III discusses the legacies of colonial and post-colonial policy, planning and practice with regard to language use and literacy. This diachronic account highlights the social, political and cultural variables that have combined and interacted to shape the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1991). I aim to show how language ideologies have not just determined language use but have also played a key role in forming national and social identity.

Part IV presents a discussion and analysis of contemporary language policy development. Part V concludes this monograph by speculating on the prospects for language maintenance in light of the present language policy trajectory.

### **Part I: social and economic profile of the polity**

Located on the easternmost tip of the Archipelago of the Lesser Sunda Islands (Figure 1), with a land mass of approximately 14,900 km<sup>2</sup> (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 16), the territory of Timor-Leste comprises the eastern half of the island of Timor; the Oecussi (Ambeno) exclave on the northwest portion of the island of Timor and the islands of Ataúro to the north and Jaco to the east (Figure 2). The country is a former Portuguese colony; it shares a border with Indonesia and it is a close neighbour of Australia. The sociopolitical



Figure 1. Map adapted from CIA Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>).

agendas and linguistic ideologies of these three polities have shaped the course of modern East Timorese history.

Although Timor-Leste is often described as a small country, it is relatively large in size and population compared with some of the smaller Southeast Asian and Pacific maritime nations. Timor-Leste has a greater land mass and population than Brunei, Vanuatu and Samoa, for example. However, it is tiny in comparison to its powerful former occupier, Indonesia (Table 1).



Figure 2. Map of Timor-Leste including the exclave of Oecussi, the East Timorese islands of Ataúro and Jaco and the Indonesian islands (*pulau*) of Roti, Semau, Flores, Pantar, Alor, Wetar and Kisar (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2003). Map courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, National University of Texas at Austin.

Table 1. Comparisons of land area and population (CIA, 2008).

Nation	Land area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population
Timor-Leste	14,919	1,108,777
Samoa	2,944	217,083
Brunei	5,770	381,371
Vanuatu	12,200	215,446
Indonesia	1,919,440	234,693,997

Administratively, the country has recently been divided into 5 regions and 13 districts, 65 subdistricts and 442 *sucos* (*large settlements or clusters of villages*). In 2004, the population was 923,198 (Direção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 9), and in 2008, it was estimated to be 1,108,777 (CIA, 2008). The population is expanding rapidly. Estimated population growth is 3.2% or 31,000 people per annum, an average of 85 persons a day. If this annual growth continues, the population will double in about 22 years (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 29). The population is young, with an average age of 21. According to the *World Fact Book* (CIA, 2007), just over 35% of East Timorese people are under 14 years; some 60% are aged between 15 and 64 and only about 3% are aged 65 and over. There is also an intergenerational and urban–rural divide in terms of literacy, discussed later in this paper. The effects of conflict, population displacement, starvation, terror and human rights abuse have cast long shadows in Timor-Leste. Twenty-four percent of women aged 50–54 and 30% of women aged 55–59 are widows (CIA, 2007).

A few stark statistics from the 2004 Population Census indicate the scale of the development challenges facing this new and fragile democracy. Basic income, health and literacy indicators are among the lowest in Asia. The overall infant mortality rate is 98 per 1000 live births (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 84). Average life expectancy at birth is 55.5 years (Direção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 25). Literacy rates are extremely low. According to the Census Atlas (2006, p. 72), 54.2% (at least 400,000 people over the age of 6) cannot read or write in any of the official or working languages. Some 45% of the population aged 15 and older survive on subsistence labour, whereas at least 42% live below the poverty line. According to the *World Fact Book* (CIA, 2007), the per capita GDP (PPP<sup>1</sup> US\$) was estimated at \$800 per annum. This puts Timor-Leste on a par with Afghanistan and Burundi and makes its population only marginally better off than the populations of Somalia, Malawi and the Solomon Islands. In such situations, there are conflicting social and economic priorities and complex decisions to make about language and literacy planning for small ethnolinguistic communities most of which have no written tradition.

### ***Migration and population change***

As the authors of the Census Atlas (2006, p. 29) point out, population flux and movement in and out of Timor-Leste have been influenced by the tragic events of the last three decades. People tend to migrate in search of better economic opportunities and an improved standard of living but in Timor-Leste migration has largely been the result of conflict, population displacement and forced relocation. The demographic consequences of the Indonesian transmigration policy have not been fully researched but one can assume that they had significant sociolinguistic impact, as large numbers of Indonesian transmigrants moved into East Timorese speech communities in the 1980s. Conditions of war and intense repression led to an exodus of refugees and political exiles to places as far flung as Portugal,

Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Australia, the USA, the UK and Ireland. Many East Timorese have also spent time living and studying in Indonesia. Since independence more East Timorese have gone to study abroad in Portugal, Australia, the USA and more recently, Cuba. In doing so, they have acquired international languages and transnational identities. Beneath these globalised identities, traditional values and ethnolinguistic ties remain strong, maintained through attachments to *fetsa humane* (extended families) and *uma fukun* (ancestral homelands).

The phenomenon of urban drift is particularly apparent in Timor-Leste. Having shown no change between 1990 and 2001, the population of Dili, the capital city, shot up by 12.58% a year between 2001 and 2004. Migration patterns show that older people are left behind in the country as younger people seek employment in the city (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 44). Urban drift has put pressure on infrastructure, goods and services and has created a large pool of young, urban unemployed. This situation exploded with the outbreak of the political 'crize' (crisis) of 2006–2007 – violent political and civil unrest leading to huge numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). As of September 2007, at least 100,000 IDPs remained in camps in and around Dili because their homes were damaged or destroyed or because they were afraid to return. Another 70,000 or so remained in the outlying districts (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2007).

### ***The East Timorese economy***

The East Timorese economy shows all the signs of the underdevelopment that occurs when a traditionally rural economy is geared to the interests of the colonial metropolis (see Part III). To add to this legacy, in the upheaval that followed the referendum of 1999 most homes, water supply systems, schools and virtually the whole electrical grid were destroyed. Subsistence farming still dominates agriculture (the main food crops are rice, cassava and maize). As the authors of the Census Atlas (2006, p. 48) point out, this is the single most important feature of the economy and has major implications for development plans and policies. Insufficient food production and an underdeveloped local market have led to dependence on imports and key exports such as coffee (the main cash crop) and sandalwood have suffered from generations of underinvestment and mismanagement. The production of commodities such as vanilla, candlenut and palm oil await intensive, long-term investment and ecotourism is a potential growth industry. The official currency is presently the US\$, which displaced the Indonesian rupiah and the Australian dollar. The East Timorese centavo is also used alongside US\$ notes and coins. The currently depreciating US\$ and rising oil prices are taking a toll on efforts to rebuild the economy. Although by the fiscal year 2004–05 economic growth in Timor-Leste had improved and there was some measure of economic stability, by mid-2006 economic activity in Dili had come to a virtual standstill while consumer prices had increased by about 13% (World Bank, 2007, p. 2). The World Bank (p. 2) estimates that in 2007, unemployment in Dili stood at 23% with youth unemployment at 40%, rising to 58% in the age bracket 15–19 years. According to the World Bank (p. 2), some 15,000 young people enter the labour market each year while only around 400 formal jobs per year are created. With such a large proportion of the population under the age of 18, urban youth unemployment and the problems associated with it are likely to increase unless vigorous economic growth can be promoted.

At present, the majority of the population survives in a rural, subsistence economy with few opportunities to access anything beyond basic education and literacy. The majority (78%) of the active labour force works in agriculture, fishing or forestry with the public sector a very distant second, employing only 6% of the active workforce. This tiny minority is currently

obliged to use the co-official languages as the languages of public service. Less than 1% of the active work force is employed in industries such as mining, oil extraction, manufacturing, construction and electricity (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 51). There is also significant disparity between male and female employment patterns. Women are occupied predominantly in home industries. According to the authors of the Census Atlas (2006, p. 48), 8000 women said they worked in home industries compared with 686 men who said they worked in this sector. Nine percent of men currently work in the public sector compared with 4.5% of women. In the district of Dili, the UN and other donor agencies employ 14.3% of the active labour force, whereas for the nation as a whole only 3.8% are employed in this sector (p. 51). Most aid agencies and NGOs predominantly use English, as does the UN. I discuss the implications of this language distribution issue later in the monograph.

The most important determinant of the country's economic future is likely to lie in the way it manages the substantial revenues that are predicted to derive from oil and gas. In 2005, the National Parliament approved the establishment of a Petroleum Fund in order to manage petroleum revenue. While this action gives good cause for optimism, the effective utilisation of gas and oil resources will require major development of the country's human and institutional infrastructure. The development of literacy in the languages of wider communication will be essential for improved productivity and economic growth. In the not-so-distant future Timor-Leste will find itself in the position of having to avoid the 'resource curse', a term that describes the inability of resource-rich countries to convert wealth into sustainable development (Auty, 1993; Drysdale, 2007). The country will also have to manage the socioeconomic consequences of increasing contact with the outside world. For this increasing contact, it will need to draw on one of its richest resources – the multilingualism of its people.

### *Communications and language practices in the media*

For the moment, Timor-Leste is still struggling with the effects of severe underdevelopment and conflict on its communications infrastructure. The telecommunications system was destroyed in 1999 along with most of the country's other infrastructure. While the cell or mobile telephone is widely used in the capital city and within about 2 km of district capitals, calls are expensive and coverage is patchy and unreliable. In the rural areas, at least 32% of the population and around 480 villages have never had effective telephone communications (Taylor, 2005, p. 136). Internet access is also expensive with limited availability outside Dili. A National Media Survey (NMS)<sup>2</sup> funded by US AID and conducted by the Hirondelle Foundation found that as few as 1 in 10 respondents owned a mobile telephone and 1 in a 100 had a computer at home while only half of these had Internet access (Mytton & Soares, 2007, p. 2). Moreover, Timor-Leste is one of the few countries in the world that does not have a domestic postal service. As Taylor states, the lack of communications contributes to 'an appalling neonatal death rate, a chronic lack of education facilities, difficulties with governance, isolation of communities and poor prospects for economic development' (2005, p. 136). Inadequate transport infrastructure and poor communications mean that communities are isolated and travel is difficult and time-consuming. Poor communications also slow down language spread. While this limitation on language spread might be a good thing as far as maintaining endogenous languages and sustaining local traditional culture are concerned, inadequate communications also impede the spread of standard official languages and literacy. The lack of contact between local communities and the outside world and the inability to communicate effectively in the languages of wider communication place communities at a disadvantage in a number of ways, including

their ability to access good health care and economic opportunities (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, pp. 102–103). Radio, television and newspapers play a critical role in keeping communities in touch, in enacting language reform, in promoting standardisation and in influencing public opinion. The following sections discuss the language practices in the media drawing attention to the way in which these practices not only mediate language policy but also reflect language attitudes and use.

### Radio

With poor communications infrastructure and low levels of print literacy, the East Timorese rely on a combination of radio and interpersonal communication for their news. Far more people have access to radio than they have to television, mobile phones and the Internet. The state-owned *Radio Televizaun Timor-Leste (Radio Television Timor-Leste)* broadcasts in Tetum, Portuguese and Indonesian with retransmissions from Portugal, Radio Australia and the BBC World Service. Radio Timor-Leste (RTL) was the primary media source of information about the political crisis of 2006. The NMS confirms that radio is the most important source of information in Timor-Leste. Almost half the respondents in the survey had a radio at home, two-thirds of which were powered by batteries. Radio reaches about 146,000 people daily and about 243,000 people weekly (Mytton & Soares, 2007, p. 16). RTL was the single-most relied upon source of information for the respondents in the survey. The Catholic radio station, *Radio Timor Kmanek*, had the second greatest number of listeners, although at present it broadcasts mostly music due to lack of funding to pay presenters.

In its investigation of radio listening habits, the NMS produced useful and important findings about public language preferences. In the process, it also revealed some interesting information about language practices. The NMS found that radio listening appears to be a communal rather than a solitary activity in Timor-Leste. People listen to the radio in public places such as hotels, markets, at work, in the IDP camps or at friends' and neighbours' homes. This practice would indicate that the radio is a rich forum for community information, education and debate. An important finding was that nearly everyone in the survey listened to Tetum programmes on the radio. Respondents were asked which language they listened to on radio and all languages mentioned were recorded. The survey found that 98% of respondents said they listened to Tetum broadcasts but a slight majority (63%) also listened to Indonesian broadcasts. Half the respondents (50.9%) said they listened to Portuguese broadcasts and a few (just over 13%) listened to broadcasts in English. Respondents were also asked in what languages they *preferred* to listen and again all languages mentioned were recorded. The majority of respondents (92.3%) chose Tetum while a much smaller number (28%) expressed a preference for Indonesian with a mere 9.2% preferring Portuguese (Mytton & Soares, 2007, p. 25). The most popular international radio stations were Radio Australia and the BBC, both broadcasting mostly in English.

Community radio has a strong presence in Timor-Leste. There are six community radio stations in Dili and 13 district community radio stations which broadcast round the country in many of the national languages. These stations rely on funding, training and equipment from international agencies and lack of money has sometimes resulted in the interruption of services. Poor reception is also a problem for many listeners. Nonetheless, it seems that community radio is popular with local communities; to give an illustrative example, two-thirds of families in Lautém are estimated to listen in to *Labarik Nia Lian (Children's Voices)*, a local radio programme with a focus on children's rights (UNICEF, 2005, p. 37) and similar programmes are planned for Maliana, Liquiçá, Oecussi, Aileu and Viqueque districts.

With such a large proportion of the population below the age of 24, the voices of youth are extremely important. In November 2006, the East Timorese Office for Promotion of Equality (under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister) in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched the Marta Communication Initiative (Accessed May 2, 2008, from <http://www.unmiset.org/UNMISSETWebSite.nsf>). The character of Marta was created in 2003 through a radio melodrama series *Hakarak kaer ba fitun* (*I want to reach for the stars*). Marta is based on Meena, the South Asian animation character who has become a role model for promoting the rights of girls across South Asia. In a country where the media is starved of funds, this kind of initiative is important for attracting resources and improving the quality of programming but a valuable by-product is the contribution such local programmes make to language revitalisation and modernisation. Radio is clearly a powerful medium of language use, reaching as far as it does into local communities in languages they understand. However, the same cannot be said of television and the print media, which are restricted mostly to the capital city and urban areas.

### Television

The NMS found that no more than one in five participants had a television at home (Mytton & Soares, 2007, p. 2). *Televizaun Timor Lorosa'e* (*Television Timor-Leste*) (or TVTL) appears to have large audiences only in Dili where 71% of survey respondents named it as a major source of information about current affairs (p. 13). In the remote districts of Covalima, Lautém and Manufahi not one respondent named television as a source of information, citing instead local radio stations and word of mouth as key sources of information (p. 14). TVTL broadcasts local programmes in Tetum and Portuguese as well as retransmissions from Portugal, ABC Asia Pacific from Australia and BBC World Service from the UK. The present television signal is confined to Dili with only taped broadcasts being available in the second city of Baucau. The NMS found that only two in five respondents ever watched television. No more than 45% watched television at home and the rest watched it at friends' or neighbours' homes or through various means of communal viewing – at least 103,000 people managed to watch at least some of the World Cup Football coverage by such means (p. 30). The respondents who watched television were also asked which languages they preferred to hear on television. All languages mentioned by respondents were recorded. Seventy-four percent of this small group said they most preferred to hear Tetum on television; just over 40% said they preferred to hear Indonesian; only 15.5% expressed a preference for Portuguese and a tiny 7.4% stated a preference for English. When asked which language they would prefer if there were only one language available on TV, 75% of television viewers said they would prefer Tetum while only 19.2% said they would prefer Indonesian; a mere 3.7% expressed a preference for Portuguese and as few as 0.4% stated a preference for English (p. 42). The most popular programmes among the television viewers were the news programme, *Telejornál* and a light entertainment programme, *Palku Muzikál*. Although many viewers watch Indonesian television programmes broadcast via satellite, the rate of television viewing in general is low and is restricted mainly to the affluent. The globalising influences of radio and television are still very new to Timor-Leste.

### Newspapers

At present, there are two weekly newspapers and four dailies. *Tempo Semanal* (*Weekly Times*) and *Journal Nacional Semanário* (*National Weekly Journal*) are both published weekly. *Journal Nacional Diário* (*National Daily Journal*), *Timor Pos* (*Timor Post*),

*Diário Tempo* (Daily Times) and *Suara Timor Lorosa'e* (Voice of East Timor) are published daily. The pioneering bilingual Tetum-Portuguese newspaper *Lia Foun* (New Words), which ran a weekly Portuguese-Tetum course, was forced to cease publication due to lack of funding having run for less than a year. Newspapers are sold at US\$0.50 a copy. In a country where the average daily wage is US\$3, it is not surprising that circulation is low. *Suara Timor Lorosa'e* has the widest circulation at around 2000. *Timor Pos* has a circulation of approximately 1000. *Tempo Semanal* and *Diário Tempo* are new publications each with circulations of around 500.

The East Timorese press currently faces the challenge of providing information to a public with an enduring oral tradition as opposed to a much more recent literary one. Journalists have shown little enthusiasm for learning Portuguese and they have also shown some resistance to the official standard orthography of Tetum, available since 2004 (see Part IV). Steele, who favours Indonesian as an official language, claims that journalists have been marginalised by language policy (Steele, 2006; Steele & MacDonald, 2007). The fact that the majority of journalists were educated and trained in what are commonly referred to as 'Indonesian times' (1999–75) cannot fail to have influenced their language preferences, as the following paragraphs show but other sociolinguistic variables are also at play.

There is a complex blend of competing language ideologies and language attitudes behind journalistic resistance to top-down language planning. This complexity can be seen in the language practices of journalists, influenced by a combination of their target readership and their political orientations and sympathies. *Tempo Semanal* uses Tetum, English and Indonesian out of a desire to reach as wide a readership as possible, especially in the rural districts where circulation is extremely low. The paper also has close sympathies with veterans of the former resistance army, *Forças Armadas para a Libertação do Timor-Leste* (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of Timor-Leste) known as FALINTIL (Cheetham, 2005). *Journal Nacional Semanário* is a Portuguese language newspaper, which also uses some Tetum. The newspaper collaborates with and receives funding from the Portuguese *Instituto Camões* (Camões Institute). The Camões Institute is the principal agency for the promotion of Portuguese language, literature and culture in Timor-Leste. Prominent contributors listed on the *Journal Nacional Semanário* website include well-known East Timorese writer Ângela Carrascalão, former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, Bishop D. Ximenes Belo and President José Ramos Horta (Accessed December 17, 2007, from www.semanario.tp). *Timor Pos* publishes in Tetum and Indonesian. *Suara Timor Lorosa'e* (STL) once published in Indonesian but now publishes in all four state languages.

These language practices reflect the complex history of the East Timorese press. Under both the Portuguese and the Indonesians, it was subject to heavy censorship and surveillance. The *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (International and State Defence Police) – the Portuguese secret police, also known as PIDE – was established in Timor-Leste in 1959 in the aftermath of one of the most recent in a long tradition of local uprisings (see Part III), known as the *Viqueque rebellion*. In the late 1960s, a Catholic newspaper called *Seara* (Harvest) was published. As a Church publication, *Seara* was exempt from normal censorship laws. The paper published in Portuguese but it also ran a Tetum teaching programme. *Seara* served as a lively forum for progressive ideas and published the writings (in Portuguese) of some of the most renowned East Timorese nationalist leaders. PIDE closed the paper down in 1973 but by that time, like-minded nationalist activists were already in close contact.

The foremost grouping in the nationalist movement, *Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente* (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor) – known as FRETILIN – was founded in 1974. It published its own newspaper known as the

*Timor-Leste Journal do Povo Maubere* (*Timor-Leste Journal of the Maubere people*). Contributors to the newspaper expressed criticism of colonialism and solidarity with African independence causes. Consistent with FRETILIN cultural policies (discussed further in Part III), the *Journal do Povo Maubere* published in Tetum and Portuguese. The newspaper published revolutionary nationalist poetry in Tetum and Portuguese as well as a series of articles written in both languages discussing its methods for teaching people how to read. FRETILIN initiated a literacy campaign at the beginning of 1975 using a Tetum-language reader entitled *Rai Timor, Rai Ita Nian* (*Timor, our Country*), which broke words into syllables and then placed them in different contexts of village life, together with associated words (Taylor, 1991, p. 34). The essence of the approach was its reflection of the East Timorese rural experience.

The role of *STL* during the Indonesian occupation has been the subject of some controversy. The newspaper's predecessor, *Suara Timor Timur* (*STT*) was founded in 1993. It was the first East Timorese newspaper to be published since the government-controlled publication of the late colonial years named *A Voz de Timor* (*Voice of Timor*), a weekly Portuguese-language newspaper, edited by José Ramos Horta, current President of the Republic (Nichol, 2002). The content of *STT* was written entirely in Indonesian. The East Timorese owner of *STT* was not only a member of the Indonesian legislative assembly but he was also a supporter of integration and a member of the powerful Indonesian political organisation, *GOLKAR*.<sup>3</sup> Steele argues that this fact has led scholars to overlook the contributions to the resistance struggle of journalists who worked for the newspaper. She claims that journalists who worked at *STT* during the occupation 'practised a kind of subterranean journalism that presented subtle challenges to the government's point of view' (Steele, 2007, p. 262). Steele claims that the newspaper's close connections with the Indonesian Information Department and the Indonesian publishing group *Kompas-Gramedia* were strategic and that its content was typical of Indonesian press culture during the Suharto years in that 'the paper was obliged to publish stories based on the statements of public officials and discouraged from reporting anything that undermined this positive view' (Steele, 2007, p. 266). However, although it is undeniable that there was intense pressure on *STT* journalists in the form of surveillance, phone calls, death threats and acts of violence from the Indonesian military, the pro-integrationist reputation of the paper still lingers. Its history has not only clearly coloured its journalists' attitudes towards the official languages but also shows the complex role that language plays in the forming of identity. The offices of *STT* were destroyed in the violence of 1999. The paper began publishing again under its new name (*Suara Timor Lorosa'e*) in 2000, at the request of the former resistance leader, Kay Rala, Alexandre (Xanana) Gusmão (Steele, 2007, p. 276), current Prime Minister of Timor-Leste.

Tensions between the press and the government have often arisen over journalistic language practices; one particular incident provides an illustrative example. Food insecurity is a recurrent problem in Timor-Leste. In 2005, *STL* ran a story about 53 tragic deaths resulting from lack of food in the subdistrict of Hatubuiliko (*Suara Timor Lorosa'e*, 2005). Then Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri evicted *STL* from its government-owned offices over the use of an Indonesian word *kelaparan* (meaning *hunger*, *starvation* or *famine*). The prime minister interpreted the word to mean *famine* and stated that the *STL* story was inaccurate and defamatory. Not only does this confrontation emphasise the urgent need for a standardised variety of Tetum in the print media but it also shows that the issue of press freedom in this young democracy is still sensitive and unresolved.

The controversy over language policy is further fuelled by the promotion of language ideologies in the English and Indonesian press, which continue regularly to attack East Timorese official language choice (see Cohen, 2002; Funnell, 2002; Khalik, 2007; Schulz

and Freitas, 2002; Sheridan, 2006; Steele and MacDonald, 2007; *The Australian*, 2001, 2002, for only a few examples). Steele (2006) has criticised the use of Tetum in the press, claiming that ‘it would be a tragedy if the journalists who helped build a sense of East Timorese identity were shut out by the language policy of the very nation they helped create’. Her claim is ironic given the circumstances in which most East Timorese acquired Indonesian (discussed in Part III). Such hostile discourses in the Australian and Indonesian press place tremendous pressure on the East Timorese government. In discussions with the international press concerning his plans for resolving the political crisis of 2006–2007, President José Ramos Horta suggested that Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian and English might be placed on an equal footing (*Canberra Times*, 2007; Mali, 2007). The president’s remark marks a significant shift from previous statements in which he has strongly supported Portuguese (Dodd, 2001). The relationship between the official and working languages is discussed in Part IV.

## Part II: the language profile of Timor-Leste

Historians consider Timor-Leste to be one of the gateways for the movement of populations to Australia (Fox, 2003, p. 3). Austronesian and Trans-New Guinea or Papuan language speakers arrived on the island of Timor as a result of migration, trade and settlement. Glover’s (1971) evidence indicates the presence of a hunter-gatherer population on the island dating from at least 11,500 BCE. First evidence of agricultural activity dates to 3000 BCE, data that are interpreted as evidence of the arrival of early seafaring Austronesian populations into the region (Fox, 2003, p. 5). It is thought that the Austronesian languages of Timor are related to the languages of eastern Flores and the islands of southern Maluku. The Trans-New Guinea phylum languages appear to form a subgroup with the languages on the Indonesian islands of Alor, Pantar and Kisar (Figure 2), which in turn appear to be related to languages in the Birdhead (Vogelkop) peninsula of West Papua.

Hull (1998a, pp. 2–4) lists the Austronesian language varieties spoken in Timor-Leste as:

- Tetum and its varieties (Tetum-Praça, Tetum-Terik and Tetum-Belu),
- Habun, Kawaimina (Kairui, Waima’a, Midiki and Naueti),
- Galoli,
- Atauran and Dadua dialects (belonging to the Wetarese language),
- Lóvaia (or Makuva),
- Mambae,
- Idalaka (Idaté, Isni, Lolein and Lakalei)
- Kemak,
- Tokodede,
- Bekais and
- Baikenu.

The non-Austronesian or Papuan language varieties are listed as Bunak, Makasae, Makalero and Fataluku. In 2007, the last speaker of a Papuan language related to Fataluku, known as Rusenu, was discovered (Noorderlicht, 2007). Hull’s research (2001, pp. 98–99) shows that these languages form a linguistic area or *Sprachbund*, having over the course of centuries replaced their individual characteristics with Timorese forms and structures in a process of mutual assimilation. Figure 3 shows the geographical distribution of the endogenous languages.

Hull suggests that Tetum and the Austronesian languages of the islands of Timor and Roti descend from a single language (Old Timorese) introduced from the Buton region

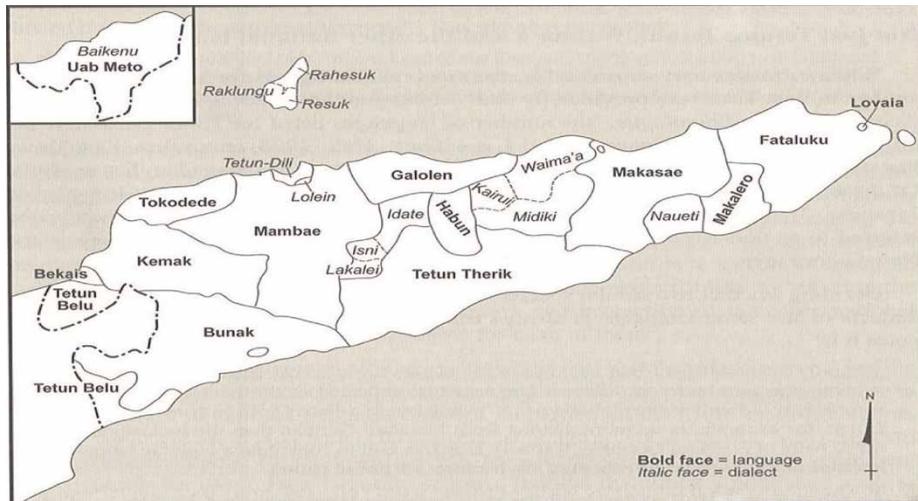


Figure 3. Language map of Timor-Leste (Bowden & Hajek, 2007, p. 266). Reproduced with kind permission of the authors.

of southeastern Celebes. According to Hull (2001, p. 101), from about the thirteenth-century CE, the dialects of Timor were influenced by a central Moluccan language (probably from Ambon), and the impact of Malay, the regional lingua franca, began to be felt in the fifteenth century. The Papuan languages with the greatest numbers of speakers are Makasae and Bunak. The three largest Austronesian languages are:

- Baikenu (also known as Dawan, Atoni or Uab Meto), spoken in the East Timorese exclave of Oecussi and in West Timor;
- Mambae, spoken in eastern Timor and
- Tetum, spoken in the east and the west of Timor island.

### *The number of East Timorese languages*

There are differences of opinion as to the precise number and classification of Timorese language varieties (Capell, 1944, 1972; Fox, 1997, 2003; Hull, 1998a; Thomaz, 1981). The most reliable figures may be drawn from *Ethnologue* (see Gordon, 2005), Hull (1998a) and the *Instituto Nacional de Linguística (National Institute of Linguistics)*, known as the INL. *Ethnologue* listed 20 languages in Timor-Leste, 19 living and 1 extinct. The Linguistic Survey of Timor-Leste Project (see Hull, 1998a) at the INL identifies 19 distinct autochthonous language varieties in the whole of Timor and the offshore islands of Wetar, Ataúro, Semau, Roti (Figure 2) and Ndao (not shown). As Bowden and Hajek (2007, p. 265) observe, the differences between Gordon's list and the INL list are based simply on different ways of classifying languages and dialects. At least 16 language varieties are spoken in Timor-Leste compared with seven in West Timor. Baikenu, Tetum, Kemak and Bunak are spoken on both sides of the border with West Timor. The Wetarese and Galoli languages (and their dialectal varieties) are spoken on both sides of the border between Timor-Leste and Maluku (Hull, 1998a, p. 4). With one exception, the endogenous languages are considered to have high linguistic vitality. Only Lóvaia, also known as Makuva, is seriously endangered,<sup>4</sup> having only a small number of speakers with the

Table 2. Languages of Papuan origin reported as a first language according to the 2004 National Census (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 80).

Language	Number of individuals	Percentage of population accounted for by the census ( $n = 741,530$ )	Main areas where used
Bunak	50,631	6.8	Central interior and Indonesia
Fataluku	28,893	3.8	Eastern tip of Timor-Leste around Lospalos
Makalero	5,981	0.8	South-east coast
Makasae	90,018	12.1	Eastern end of Timor island around Baucau

rest having shifted to Fataluku (Hajek, 2006, p. 719). As Hajek, Himmelmann, & Bowden (2003, p. 159) note, the Fataluku name of Lóvaia is considered by its speakers to be more respectful. In addition, the exogenous languages – Malay, Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese, modern Indonesian and English – are or have at some time been present in the ecology.

One of the main difficulties in studying multilingualism lies in the measurement of actual language use in society. It is always a challenge to enumerate language users in linguistically diverse polities such as Timor-Leste because research is limited by a lack of reliable statistical information. Robinson (1993, pp. 52–55) defines high language diversity as ‘a situation where no more than 50% of the population speaks the same language’ (see also Lopes, 1998, p. 445). As Tables 2 and 3 show, no language variety is spoken as a mother tongue in Timor-Leste by more than 18% of the population and most languages are used by far smaller numbers of speakers. It is also difficult to apply concepts such as *majority* and *minority* language in numerical terms. Indeed, as Skutnabb-Kangas (1990, p. 6) suggests, if the term *minority* is applied in terms of power rather than in terms of numbers of speakers, then all those groups whose mother tongues are not official in the countries where they live are linguistic minorities. In Timor-Leste, even Tetum is a minority language in certain parts of the country. According to Baker and Langeraar (2005) just over 78% of Dili residents use a variety of Tetum as a first language compared with 9% of residents in Baucau. Moreover, according to the 2004 Census estimates, no more than 1.4% of the populations of Lautém and Oecussi districts speak a variety of Tetum as a first language while in several districts less than 20% of the population can speak, read or write Tetum (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 70).

As *Ethnologue* points out (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), given the difficulty of arriving at accurate counts of speakers of a given language, all figures (even census figures) are necessarily estimates. Definitions of what constitutes a language must be operationally stated and may differ from what speakers themselves consider a language. There is also the difficult problem of defining the difference between dialects and languages (Crowley, 2000a, p. 56). Many languages are known by more than one name. As in the case of Lóvaia, some names may not be used or may not be considered respectful by certain communities of speakers. There are also differences of opinion about how to measure both proficiency and literacy. Some of these difficulties are manifested in the language statistics in the 2004 National Census of Population and Housing for Timor-Leste.

### *Language data from the 2004 Population Census*

The 2004 Census of Population and Housing was a magnificent achievement. The enumeration of the population in a mostly rural country without addresses and with a deficient land

Table 3. Languages of Austronesian origin reported as a first language according to the 2004 National Census (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 80).

Language	Number of individuals	Percentage of population accounted for by the census ( $n = 741,530$ )	Main areas where used
The Ataúran varieties (Adabe, Atauran, Raheasuk, Raklungu, Resuk)	5,576	0.75	Ataúro Island
Baikenu, also known as Vaikenu/Atoni	45,705	6.16	Oecussi
Bekais	3,222	0.43	North of Balibó and Batugadé
Dadu'a	1,242	0.16	Around Manatuto
Galoli, also known as Galolen	10,998	1.4	North coast, Laklo, Manatuto, Laleia, Wetar island and Ataúro island
Habun	1,586	0.21	South of Manatuto and north-east of Laclúbar
Idalaka (Idaté, Isní, Lolein, Lakalei)	14,201	1.91	South-east of Dili
Kairui-Midiki	13,540	1.82	Central Timor-Leste
Kemak	51,057	6.88	The far west near the border with West Timor
Makuva, also known as Lóvaia	100	0.01	North-east tip of Timor island
Mambae	131,472	17.72	Mountains of central Timor
Naueti	11,321	1.5	South-east coast, around Uatolari
Tetum, in its rural varieties, also known as Tetum-Terik, Classical Tetum, Tetum-Loos	45,944 in Timor-Leste	6.1	The central south coast of Timor-Leste and its hinterland
Tetum-Dili, also known as Tetum-Praça	133,102	17.94	In and around Dili
Tetum (unspecified varieties)	45,362	6.1	
Tokodede	31,814	4.2	Bazar-Tete, Liquiçá, Maubara
Waima'a	14,506	1.95	North coast

cadastre was carried out using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology that was able to pinpoint every household in the country. Timor-Leste was the first country to complete a census using this satellite system (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 19). Census Question 8 asked respondents to list their mother tongue. *Mother tongue* was defined in the census as 'the language usually spoken in an individual's home in his/her early childhood' (p. 46). The approximate numbers of speakers of Papuan and Austronesian languages

Table 4. Exogenous languages reported as a first language according to the 2004 National census (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 80).

Language	Number of individuals	Percentage of population accounted for by the census ( $n = 741,530$ )
Indonesian	2411	0.32
Portuguese	702	0.094
English	808	0.11
A variety of Chinese	511	0.068
Malay	146	Too small to be significant

as first or home languages and the main locations of those speech communities are listed in Tables 2 and 3. These figures were extracted by the present author from the 2004 National Census data which listed private household residents aged 6 years and over according to mother tongue. The languages are grouped according to the INL classification and percentages were calculated on the basis of a total of 741,530 people.

Census Question 8 asked respondents to name the language or dialect they spoke at home. Census Question 9 asked respondents if they could *speak, read or write* in Portuguese, Tetum, Indonesian and English. Neither question differentiated between the varieties of Tetum. Consequently, the number of respondents who declared they could speak or read or write Tetum included people who use Tetum-Praça, Tetum-Terik or other varieties (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 70). Table 4 shows the very small numbers of individuals who reported an exogenous language as a first or home language according to the 2004 National Census.

In order to collect data on language characteristics, the 2004 census employed the term *capability* – a term that was defined as ‘the capacity to speak, read or write or any combination of the above as informed by the interviewee’ (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 47). Table 5 shows the numbers of individuals who reported capability (or lack of it) in the official and working languages.

However, national percentages alone are not very meaningful because capability and literacy vary greatly according to district. The census authors also measured language use in terms of literacy and they broke down the data according to district. The census authors considered anyone who was not able *both to read and write* in any of the official and working languages (Portuguese, Tetum, English and Indonesian) to be illiterate (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 72). In terms of the proportion of the population able to *speak, read and write* in any of the official and working languages, the most literate districts were Dili, Manatuto and Baucau whilst Oecussi and Ermera had the lowest literacy rates among the districts (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 66). As the authors point out, these numbers highlight the importance of local languages in districts outside Dili as well as the extent to

Table 5. Capability in the official and working languages (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 82).

Language capability (speak, read or write)	Number of individuals	Percentage of the population accounted for by the census ( $n = 741,530$ )
Tetum	634,458	86
Portuguese	272,638	36
Indonesian	435,255	59
English	160,160	21
None of these	96,703	13

Table 6. Literacy in the official and working languages (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 69; Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, pp. 135–138).

Literacy (speak, read and write)	Number of individuals	Percentage of the population accounted for by the census ( $n = 638,478^5$ )
Tetum	295,033	46.2
Portuguese	86,917	13.6
Indonesian	276,199	43.3
English	37,136	5.8

which the educated elite are concentrated in and around the national capital. While Portuguese literacy rates tend to be higher in the eastern districts, Indonesian literacy rates are higher in the western districts where Indonesian influence was stronger. For example, the remote eastern subdistrict of Venilale had the highest literacy rates for both Portuguese and English. In terms of national literacy rates in the official and working languages, the census findings were far lower than those for capability. Table 6 shows the numbers of individuals who reported that they could speak, read and write in the official and working languages.

These figures stand in marked contrast to those for language capability. Moreover, the marked spatial variations in language use present a major challenge for language planners. For instance, although Tetum is an official language, less than 20% of the population speaks, reads or writes it in three of the four subdistricts of Oecussi. Throughout Oecussi and Lautém districts, more people could speak, read or write Indonesian than they could Tetum. The same is true of Atsabe subdistrict in the district of Ermera and Laclubar subdistrict in the district of Manatuto (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 70).

Previous estimates and census figures offer interesting comparison with the 2004 census. Basing his estimates on the Indonesian census of 1990, Hajek (2000, p. 409) estimated that between 60% and 80% of the population spoke some form of Tetum. He put the number of Portuguese speakers at anywhere between 5% and 20%. Indonesian census figures suggest that by 1991, some 60% of the population spoke Indonesian (Himmelman & Hajek, 2001, p. 90). The Indonesian statistical system did not distinguish between native-born East Timorese and the children of non-East Timorese (e.g. the children of transmigrants, government servants and the military). Consequently, statisticians approached estimates by dividing populations according to whether heads of household were born in the country (Hull, 2003, p. 31). Jones (2003, pp. 44–45) computed the 1990 Indonesian census data using this method and found that the proportion of males able to speak Indonesian where the head of the household was born in Timor-Leste was 56.4% while the proportion of females was 39.4%. The younger cohorts, who had been schooled in the Indonesian language, contained large proportions able to speak Indonesian – 85% of males and 77% of females aged 15–19 – but the numbers dropped off sharply to 35% for males and 17% for females at age 40–44 and even lower at more advanced ages (p. 48). At present, the younger generation is still more proficient in Indonesian. If one compares the figures for the same age groups in the 2004 census one finds that 82% (39,388 individuals) of males and 83% (38,288 individuals) of females aged 15–19 reported capability in Indonesian (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 82). Among 40–44-year olds, 67% of males (15,034 individuals) and 36% of females (8545 individuals) reported capability in Indonesian (p. 82). It is reasonable to assume that those people who had been in the 15 to 19 year age group in 1990 would be in the 30–34 year age group in 2004. The members of this cohort (61,970 individuals) who reported capability in

Indonesian came to 84.6% for males (27,022 individuals) and 66% females (19,994 individuals). Overall, these figures indicate that knowledge of Indonesian is still high amongst the population below 35 years of age.

### *Diglossia and multilingualism in Timor-Leste*

The study of diglossia is of great value in understanding processes of linguistic change in multilingual societies. Diglossia is an indication of change in the social functions of languages and in the social organisation of speech communities (Hudson, 1991, p. 1) as well as changing language attitudes as Hudson points out (p. 8). In Ferguson's (1959) definition, the term *diglossia* refers to two varieties of the same language that are functionally specialised and used in mutually exclusive domains by the same speech community. Fishman (1967) extended and elaborated the concept of diglossia to include the distribution of one or more language varieties to serve different functions in a society. Fishman suggested that diglossia exists not only in multilingual societies that officially recognise several languages but also in societies that use vernacular and classical varieties, registers or functionally different language varieties of whatever kind. Fishman distinguished diglossia from bilingualism, which he described as an individual's ability to use more than one language variety. Fasold (1984) also distinguished between bilingualism, which he described as an individual phenomenon and multilingualism, which is societal. Using these definitions, the current language situation in Timor-Leste is both diglossic and multilingual with varying levels of individual bi-, tri- and quadrilingualism. Some individuals, for example many Baikenu speakers, are monolingual. Indeed, in the 2004 Census, some 25% (192,692 individuals) reported capability in Tetum alone. Table 7 provides a selective indication of the numbers of individuals who reported capability in one or more of the official and working languages. Note that not all language combinations are reported and those combinations that are not reported contain numbers that are so low they are not considered significant.

It is also important to note that Indonesian itself is marked by diglossia. The varieties of Indonesian used and understood all over the archipelago vary along a continuum from the formal high (H) variety taught through the Indonesian education system to the highly informal, colloquial low (L) varieties used in everyday activities. Sneddon (2003, pp. 532–533) has observed that the difference in functions between H and L in Indonesian is not as strict as in Ferguson's model of diglossia (see also Wardhaugh, 1998, p. 88). Sneddon also notes

Table 7. Capability in one or more of the official and working languages (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 84).

Language capability (speak, read or write)	Number of individuals	Percentage of the population accounted for by the census ( $n=741,530$ )
Tetum only	192,692	25
All four official and working languages	143,684	20
Portuguese, Tetum and Indonesian	113,008	15
Portuguese and Tetum	12,522	1.69
Tetum and Indonesian	158,001	21
Tetum and English	963	0.1
Indonesian and English	644	0.09
None of these	96,703	13

that while H and L Indonesian are associated with most formal and informal situations, there are a number of intermediate forms associated with semiformal situations. At present, Indonesian is still used in social life, in small businesses, in the daily work of NGOs and in secondary and tertiary education. The Portuguese language is undergoing revival in the education system, in the civil service and in the formal justice system. The dynamism and complexity of the language situation was enhanced by the sudden arrival of English in 1999. Tetum is also increasingly used in traditionally H domains such as the courts and parliament as well as in primary education. Even in traditionally non-Tetum speaking areas, its use appears to be increasing (Himmelman & Hajek, 2001, p. 93).

In both Ferguson's (1959) and Fishman's (1967; 1972a) discussions of diglossia, the languages in an individual's repertoire are highly compartmentalised, although Ferguson later revised his analysis to say that there is always a continuum between H and L. Even so, as Ferguson (1959, p. 337) notes, 'no segment of the speech community in diglossia regularly uses H as a medium of ordinary conversation and any attempt to do so is felt to be either pedantic or artificial [...] and in some sense disloyal to the community [...]'. Hudson (1991, p. 13) suggests that rigid compartmentalisation is a necessary requisite for the long-term maintenance of diglossia. While Ferguson and Fishman argue that this compartmentalisation in diglossic situations contributes to stable bilingualism and language maintenance, others claim that diglossia tends to be unstable when the changing balance of power between the two languages leads to language shift (Schiffman, 1993). Domain intrusion, as Appel and Muysken (1987, pp. 39–41) observe, is a clear sign of language shift. I suggest that the changing language situation in Timor-Leste has led to a form of unstable diglossia, reflecting the changing relationship and status of languages in society.

### *Tetum and Portuguese locales (domains) of use*

As Ager (2005) notes, the status of a language in a particular society is defined by its position or standing in relation to other languages. The status of a language can also be measured by the number and nature of domains in which it is used. High status domains such as the elite, parliamentary, judiciary, educational systems and the forces of law and order represent the public domains. Low status domains include domestic and private situations and where powerless groups wish to distinguish themselves from those in power or where such groups are marked as powerless because they are unable to deploy linguistic skills in the high status language (Ager, 2001, p. 1040). For the purposes of this discussion, it is more appropriate to talk in terms of *locales* because they describe a less complex situation than does the term *domain* which in both Fishman's (1972b) and Romaine's (1995) definitions includes the parameters of reciprocal language choices by classes of interlocutors on kinds of occasions to discuss particular topics (Fishman, 1972b, p. 437). Tables 8 and 9 make rough classifications of the main locales of use for Tetum and Portuguese and the H or L registers of each language. It is important to point out, however, that speakers do not use these languages exclusively in these locales; rather, they tend to be reserved for these languages. There is a great deal of code switching and mixing in all locales. Tables 8 and 9, therefore, serve primarily as a guide for evaluating the vitality of Tetum and the extent of its repertoire.

As Tables 8 and 9 show, although Tetum is increasingly used in H locales, it is still used predominantly in L registers (or in a combination of H and L registers where it primarily plays an L role), whereas Portuguese is used in H locales for mainly H registers. A seemingly obvious conclusion is that for its standardisation to be successful and its status elevated, Tetum needs to extend its repertoire into locales such as the professions,

Table 8. Tetum locales of use.

Tetum locales of use	H or L registers
The National Parliament. The majority of members of parliament use Tetum in debate and questions, in addition to Portuguese	H
The Police and Armed Forces	L
Church services	H
The District Courts	H
The Civil Service/public administration	L
Political meetings, speeches, conferences, rallies and other cultural events (Portuguese, Indonesian and English are also used when international audiences are present)	H and L
The press, radio and television (mainly news and public information programmes)	H and L
The marketplace	L
The home and family gatherings	L

the media, education and the sciences, high culture and refined social interaction. As previously stated, diglossia in which Indonesian dominates still exists in secondary and higher education, in many professions and in small businesses. The arrival of English has added another component because of its widespread use together with Indonesian in NGO activities and many working situations where foreign aid workers and volunteers are employed. English is also the working language of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Portuguese dominates the telecommunications and education sectors. The health sector is truly multilingual, being heavily reliant on international medical and health professionals. The language of technology (as elsewhere) is for the most part English.

### *Literacy*

The management of literacy is one of the many complex challenges currently confronting the independent state. Fifty-eight percent of women and 50.2% of men are illiterate (Census Atlas, 2006, p. 72). Not surprisingly Dili district has the highest literacy rates with only 25.8% of the population over the age of 6 unable to read or write in any of the official and working languages. More than half the population in each of the other 12 districts is illiterate, and female illiteracy rates are consistently higher than those for males. The highest rate of illiteracy (i.e. 71.1%) occurs in the rural highland district of Ermera (p. 72).

The Census Atlas used a very specific definition of literacy. As stated earlier, the census authors, following the UN standard definition, considered anyone aged 6 and older who was

Table 9. Portuguese locales of use.

Portuguese locales of use	H or L registers
The National Parliament, in the rubric of legislation and written documents	H
Pre-primary and primary education	H
The Court of Appeal	H
In church services in hymns and in funeral prayers and ceremonies	H
The Civil Service/Public Administration	H
Conferences, seminars and meetings	H
Customs and Excise	H
Diplomatic activities involving Portugal and other Portuguese-speaking countries	H
The press, radio and television (news and popular entertainment)	H and L

unable to *both read and write in any of the four official and working languages* to be illiterate (p. 72). According to the Census Atlas, 27% of people between the ages of 15 and 24 are illiterate. Very large numbers of people over the age of 40 are illiterate. Sixty-two percent (28,393 individuals) of 40–44-year olds and 76% (25,054 individuals) of 50–54 year olds cannot read or write (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 133). Such high levels of illiteracy constitute a serious limitation to prospects for raising educational standards and improving socioeconomic development. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that between 10% and 30% of primary-age children still do not attend school (UNDP, 2006, p. 1), a finding that raises two key issues concerning the role and function of literacy in East Timorese society that will need to be addressed:

- (i) what kind of niche can be found for vernacular literacy and
- (ii) what the current language policy and planning trajectory means for literacy in the languages of wider communication.

Figure 4 indicates by district the proportion of the population between the ages of 15 and 24 years who can read or write. It also highlights the urban–rural divide in terms of literacy. According to this map, 90% of 15–24-year olds in the relatively urbanised district of Dili are literate. In contrast, only 66% of this age group in the isolated and under-resourced district of Oecussi are literate. The lowest rates of youth literacy occur in the highland districts of Ainaro (59%) and Ermera (49%).

Perceptions of literacy have shifted away from the view that it is an autonomous, value-neutral set of skills towards the view that literacy is inseparable from its social context (Street, 1994, 1995). As Grenoble and Whaley (2006, p. 110) point out, literacy is more than a bounded set of technical instructions on how to form letters, how to connect written symbols with words and how to derive meaningful utterances from text; rather literacy is a social practice embedded in social networks and in other cultural practices. Street (1984, p. 28) defines literacy as ‘a social construction, not a neutral technology [whose]

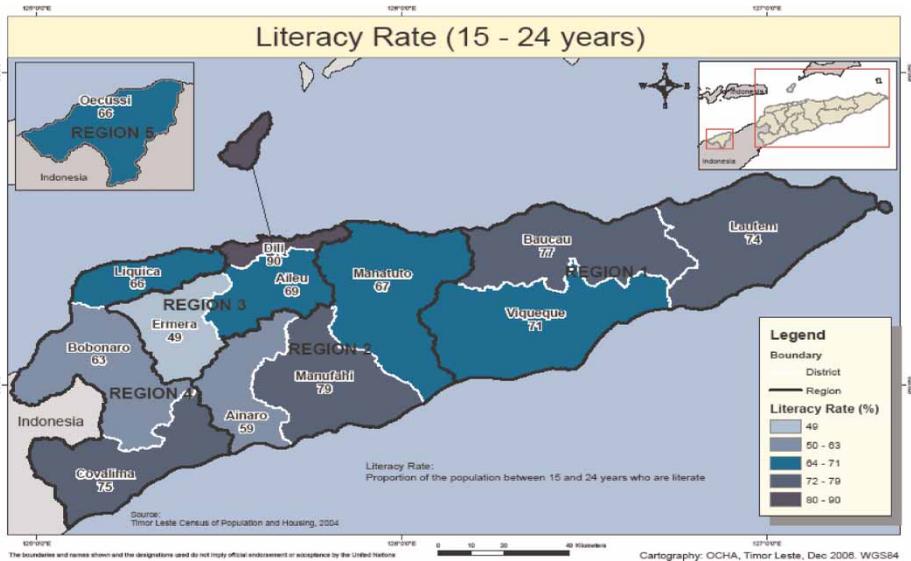


Figure 4. Literacy rates (15–24 years) according to district (Baker & Langeraar, 2005) Reproduced with kind permission of the authors.

uses are embedded in relations of power and struggles over resources'. Literacy also has an ideological dimension as I hope to show in the following discussion of the history of literacy education in Timor-Leste.

The parlous state of literacy in Timor-Leste reflects the fact that it has long been the instrument of colonialism. The consequences of Portuguese and Indonesian literacy planning and practices have shaped both the culture of Timor-Leste and the course of its history. Literacy has been seen as cultural missionary work (bringing the light of the gospel to the unenlightened and uncivilised natives), as a means of social exclusion and as a means of social control. In 'Portuguese times' literacy was a mechanism for bringing about the compliance of the indigenous leaders by incorporating them into the colonial enterprise and by excluding the vast majority of the population from the colonial elite. Under the Indonesians, literacy was a mechanism for the social and ideological control of the masses. Contemporary literacy rates in Timor-Leste and their distribution reflect both deep social inequality and alienation from an education system that has never reflected the needs and cultural realities of most of the population.

Yet ironically, literacy education has played a central role in shaping national identity in Timor-Leste. For the Indonesians in their independence struggle, literacy in the language of the coloniser (Dutch) had enabled wider communication and access to modernity. Increased educational provision in the Indonesian language under the Indonesian administration offered greater numbers of East Timorese access to literacy. As far as the East Timorese were concerned, under Portuguese colonial administration, mass education was never a policy<sup>6</sup> and Indonesian literacy teaching on a national scale had the opposite effect to that which was intended. As Almeida (2001, p. 601) points out, while the spread of literacy in 'Indonesian times' failed to incorporate the East Timorese people into the Indonesian development project, literacy enabled new generations to make contact with each other and with the outside world and thus to agitate for support for national independence.

The failure to inculcate universal literacy in 'Indonesian times' serves to support the recognition that literacy is not merely the mechanical ability to read and write but rather is determined by social and political conditions. Language planning for literacy not only makes statements about perceptions of literacy but it also allocates status and functions to particular languages as languages of literacy. Where literacy is defined only in terms of the formal, written official language, literacy in minority or endogenous languages becomes marginalised and the many forms of literacy developed in other languages can be misrecognised ( Bourdieu, 1991, p. 153) and undervalued. Current education policy in Timor-Leste focuses on literacy in Portuguese and Tetum. Where access to literacy is solely defined in terms of literacy in the official language(s), learners who do not know these languages are often regarded as deficient in some way. Their linguistic and cultural identities are 'remediated' through the process of education in the language(s) of wider communication (Manyak, 2004). An alternative perception of literacy is that it is a set of language processes that are independent of any particular language and can be carried over to other languages. This concept enables literacy skills to be initially developed in vernacular languages and then introduced in the official language(s) at a later stage.

### *Post-independence literacy projects*

Among the few projects that produce literacy materials in Tetum for schools in Timor-Leste is a religious organisation known as *Mary MacKillop East Timor*. Its members have been working in Timor-Leste since 1994 (see <http://www.mmiets.org.au>). *Mary MacKillop East Timor* produces a Tetum literacy programme entitled *Mai hatene Tetum (Let's learn*

*Tetum*) that comprises books for children and literacy resources for teachers from Kindergarten to Grade Six. *Mary MacKillop East Timor* is currently working with UNICEF to introduce Tetum readers that use the official orthography in all schools (Sister Irene Macinante, *Mary MacKillop East Timor*, personal communication, February 24, 2007). The children's educational magazine series *Lafaek Ki'ik* (*Little Crocodile*<sup>7</sup>) for children in Grades 1 and 2, *Lafaek Prima* for children in Grades 3 and 4 and *Lafaek* (*Crocodile*) for children in Grades 5 and 6 published in Tetum by the NGO *Care International* are shining examples of reading material in an endogenous language that go beyond the classroom. The *Lafaek* series is the main source of reading and learning material for some 300,000 students in schools across the country. *Care International* also runs a radio program (*Radio Lafaek*) and a pen pal programme in which some 6000 children participate (Accessed February 4, 2008, from <http://www.careinternational.org.uk>).

As far as adult literacy is concerned, there is a tradition of popular literacy campaigns that harks back to the days of the literacy campaign organised by FRETILIN in the 1970s. However, such projects have suffered from lack of coordination and aid dependency leading to a mixture of programmes being implemented with varying degrees of success. The government is heavily dependent on international donors for assistance with adult literacy programmes. Multilateral aid agencies support and sponsor various literacy programmes largely in partnership with government or local NGOs. Oxfam, for example, has a comprehensive adult education programme that includes adult literacy. UNICEF has also funded adult literacy activities for young mothers as part of its focus on maternal and child health and welfare. However, influenced by the World Bank's view that adult education was not a priority and that donor efforts in education should instead focus on primary schooling, UNICEF shifted its focus to life skills programmes for young people (Boughton & Durman, 2007, p. 212).

In 2005, Cuba sent a small team of advisors with a model for a mass literacy campaign that had been used in several South American countries. They began planning for a programme known in Portuguese as *Sim eu posso* (*Yes I can*). In this programme, each Cuban advisor has an East Timorese counterpart. Four hundred and forty-two tutors have been recruited, one from more or less every *suco* (see Part I). Tutors also include volunteer university students. In June 2007, in the week before the elections for the National Parliament, the first classes opened and by September, several thousand people had enrolled (Boughton, 2007). The classes follow a distance education format using televised classes shown on DVD. The classes are supervised by the Cuban-trained East Timorese tutors. By the end of the course of 65 lessons the learner is expected to be able to write simple sentences about themselves. The teaching manual is written in Portuguese and Tetum (Retrieved April 9, 2008, from <http://www.sydney-acfs.org/news/Sydney-ACFS-News-letter-June-2007.pdf>). The programme appears to rely on support from the top-down through the establishment of a National Literacy Commission; this kind of literacy campaign has been successfully employed in North Korea (Yang & Chee, 1963), the former Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and other socialist states (Bhola, 1984).

Important lessons can be learned about the need for local engagement from the experiences of one particular adult literacy project implemented with the aid of the *Agência Brasileira de Cooperação* (*Brazilian Cooperation Agency*) known as the ABC. In 2000, the Division of Non-Formal Education, within the Ministry of Education, coordinated a community literacy project known as *Alfabetização Solidária* (*Solidarity in Literacy*), after the Brazilian NGO that developed the methods with Brazilian adults. *Alfabetização Solidária* (also known as *AlfaSol*) works in partnership with Brazilian universities and local governments, under the overall coordination of the ABC. The programme was designed to teach

adults and young people over the age of 15 to read and write and to broaden provision of youth and adult education (*La'o Hamutuk [Walking Together] Bulletin*, 2003, p. 14). The pilot phase of the Community Literacy project began in Dili in October 2000. A team of 20 East Timorese teachers, coordinators and instructors undertook a short training course in Brazil. The project opened 11 classrooms in Dili, catering for around 275 students. The methodology and materials were the same as those used in Brazil and the project aimed to teach students to read and write Portuguese, as part of the ABC efforts to promote the Portuguese language in East Timor. The pilot phase ended in December 2001 and in January 2002, the second phase extended the project to the rest of the country. Community Literacy classrooms were opened in all 13 districts, each with 10 teachers, a coordinator and a pedagogic instructor, totalling 156 staff. Staff training was done in Dili by a team of Brazilian teachers. The second phase ended in December 2002. According to *La'o Hamutuk*, the implementation of *AlfaSol* was marked by problems flowing mainly from the fact that *AlfaSol* used Portuguese and its early materials expressed Brazilian rather than East Timorese realities. In addition, the project was managed from Brazil. Consequently, East Timorese project officials located in the districts were responsible for implementing the project but had no decision-making powers. Teams of two Brazilian teachers came to East Timor every 2 months for periods of 10 days, to visit project sites, check project implementation and make decisions. Each team was responsible for three districts, alternating their visits so that each district was visited only approximately every 6 months for no longer than 4 days. According to *La'o Hamutuk Bulletin* (2003, p. 17), many East Timorese working in the project at the local level reported that they considered the Brazilian management too geographically distant and not well informed about the situation in East Timor. In the third and final phase, the management of the project was transferred to the Ministry of Education, which assumed administrative and financial responsibility, including the payment of staff salaries. The Ministry of Education modified the project so that the first 6 months of the classes were dedicated to teaching basic literacy in Tetum, before the teaching of Portuguese literacy was undertaken. In its current form, the project aims to initiate 205 classes, serving some 6000 students across all 13 districts. In this last phase, the role of the ABC was redesigned to concentrate on capacity building for the Ministry of Education team, developing teaching materials and supporting the writing of a curriculum for non-formal education in partnership with the Ministry of Education (*La'o Hamutuk Bulletin*, 2003, pp. 15–17).

Adult literacy programmes in Timor-Leste appear to focus on the provision of functional, print-based literacy with the long-term aim of poverty reduction and economic growth in line with the UN's *Education for All* policy. Aid-funded literacy programmes in Timor-Leste so far appear to have adopted an autonomous literacy approach with an emphasis on low-level text encoding and decoding. Autonomous models of literacy are characterised by a view of literacy as 'an autonomous set of skills which are considered separately from their contexts and literate practice is seen as mainly print-based' (Liddicoat, 2004, p. 7). To date, literacy programmes appear to have taken little account of the literacy needs and goals of the learners themselves. Bi and multiliteracies are not addressed. A further problem lies in lack of coordination across sectors leading to patchy and inconsistent provision. According to Boughton and Durnan (2007), at the first National Literacy Conference in September 2004, there was broad agreement between both government and non-government participants that literacy should be a priority but delegates expressed frustration at the uncoordinated nature of adult education programmes being delivered by a range of government, local and international agencies. As Boughton and Durnan assert, it is questionable whether these efforts can achieve the desired results in view of 'the

tendency for different agencies and even different personnel within the same agencies to take new directions with little understanding of what has gone before or of what might already be underway in other agencies' (p. 212). Among other things, Boughton and Durnan question whether the total value of this effort contributes towards achieving national development priorities or indeed toward strengthening East Timorese national culture and identity. An effective and coordinated literacy strategy will require international agencies and NGOs to maintain their focus on this area rather than moving on to other priorities; operating organisations need to come to a shared understanding of the possible range and purposes of literacies that can be promoted in urban and rural communities.

### ***Official, working and national languages***

The National Constitution of Timor-Leste declares:

- *Tetum and Portuguese shall be the official languages in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.*
- *Tetum and the other national languages shall be valued and developed by the State.*

National Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Section 13, p. 16 (Constituent Assembly, 2002).

In addition to the high status accorded to these languages, there is also a paragraph in a section entitled 'Final and Transitional Provisions' which declares:

- *Indonesian and English shall be working languages within the civil service side by side with the official languages for as long as deemed necessary.*

National Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Part VII, Section 159, p. 64. Working Languages (Constituent Assembly, 2002).

According to Faingold's (2004, p. 17) typology of provisions, the language provisions in the National Constitution of Timor-Leste conform to 'Type 17: Official language; national language; provisions for official language and national language' in common with the constitutions of Cameroon (1973), Ireland (1973) and Switzerland (1998). That is to say, the Constitution:

- (a) designates one or more official and national languages and
- (b) establishes provisions to protect these languages.

Via this set of constitutional provisions, Timor-Leste has also joined a small group of nations that have granted an endogenous language equal official status with a former colonial language. Other polities that have recently officialised an endogenous language include Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Singapore, Tanzania and Vanuatu; India constitutes an important earlier example.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, pp. 511–512; 524–525) developed a framework that classified language policy types from a linguistic human rights perspective, broadly dividing the treatment of languages and the rights of their users into four tendencies, either implicit or explicit, termed:

- (a) Assimilation-oriented elimination or prohibition of language use (which forces speakers to assimilate to the dominant language).
- (b) Assimilation-oriented tolerance of language use (which describes a situation where the use of language(s) is neither explicitly nor implicitly forbidden).

- (c) Non-discriminatory prescription (which describes a situation where people are granted permission to enjoy their own culture and to use their own language – overt or explicit non-discriminatory prescription forbids discrimination against people on the basis of language, a condition that also amounts to a form of implicit toleration).
- (d) Maintenance-oriented permission or promotion of language use (which is aimed at maintaining and encouraging the use of a particular language or languages. Maintenance-oriented promotion of language use includes the provision of government resources for the use of minority languages in public domains, the prohibition of linguistic discrimination and the institutionalisation – in principle if not always in practice – of the use of minority languages in public domains. These goals may not be overt but may be implicit in equal rights or anti-discrimination laws<sup>8</sup>).

Provisions for official language status in legal covenants constitute an important dimension of linguistic human rights. The treatment of language rights makes a fundamental statement about how identity is perceived by the state. Following Skutnabb-Kangas (pp. 512–513), Section 13 of the East Timorese Constitution makes a definitive statement of national identity in officialising Portuguese and Tetum and privileging them over the national languages. In terms of the treatment of language rights, Clause One of Section 13 previously cited constitutes an example of *assimilation-oriented prohibition* (see also Lopes, 1998, pp. 460–461). It implicitly prohibits the use of languages other than Portuguese and Tetum for official functions and it requires all speakers to use Portuguese and Tetum for official purposes instead of their own languages or the shared use of all languages. Clause Two of Section 13 previously cited constitutes an example of *maintenance-oriented permission*. The national languages are not forbidden; rather their use is permitted and supported but not in official situations. Taken together, the two clauses amount to *assimilation-oriented tolerance* in that the endogenous languages are not forbidden but their use is restricted to non-official situations. The clauses that provide for international relations and language also privilege Portuguese. Although Section Eight (Constituent Assembly, 2002, p. 14) of the Constitution acknowledges Timor-Leste as an Asia-Pacific nation, ‘proclaiming special ties of friendship and cooperation with its neighbouring countries and the countries of the region’, Section Eight provides that ‘the Republic shall maintain *privileged ties* with the countries whose official language is Portuguese’.

As Cooper (1989, p. 100) points out, there are three types of official language. *Statutory official languages* have been defined as legally appropriate languages for all politically and culturally representative purposes on a nationwide basis. Statutory official languages have been granted legal preference over other languages in given territories (see also Shohamy, 2006, p. 61). There are two other types of official language: a language (or languages) used for day-to-day activities in business and the workplace, known as *working languages*; and a language (or languages) used for symbolic purposes, i.e. as a symbol of the state, known as *symbolic official languages*. In Ireland and Israel, Irish and Hebrew are both statutory and symbolic official languages (Cooper, 1989, p. 103). In Timor-Leste, Portuguese is both a statutory and symbolic official language whereas Tetum is a statutory and symbolic official language as well as a national language.

Working languages hold powerful positions in polities. English is both a statutory and a working language in Ireland. English has also functioned as a working language in Israel since its independence. French is a *de facto* working language in former French colonies, such as Algeria, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia (Cooper, 1989, p. 101). The UN has six working languages and the European Union has three. In Eritrea, although there are no

official languages there are two working languages (Arabic and Tigrinya). Some working languages have special status and function as *de facto* official languages (Hailemariam, Kroon, & Walters, 1999, p. 486). Faingold (2004, p. 21) and Cooper (1989) assume the term *working language* to mean the same as *official language* in the context of the Ethiopian constitution, which declares Amharic to be the working language of the Federal Government because Amharic is the day-to-day language of the Ethiopian legislature, judiciary and administration. The positions of English and Indonesian are not as clear-cut in Timor-Leste. Indonesian is still widely used as a language of administration, business and education. As for English, although it is not the language of the judiciary or the civil service, it is used in certain formal legislative domains particularly in those where the UN is involved. English is also used in the Timor Sea Office and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, both English and Indonesian are used on a daily basis in other professional domains.

The exact meaning and purpose of Section 159: 'Working Languages' in the East Timorese Constitution is a matter of some debate. The phrase 'as long as is deemed necessary' is understood by many people to imply that the language clauses are temporary and open to change. The 2004 Census National Priority Tables (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 46) make the following statement regarding Section 159: 'The working languages of Timor-Leste are English and Indonesian. They have been approved in the Constitution to allow for working communication purposes until such time as the official languages [...] are fully integrated'. Following Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, p. 512), Section 159 can be interpreted as an example of *assimilation-oriented toleration*. While Indonesian and English are certainly not forbidden, the objective seems to be to contain them in this category until Portuguese and Tetum are established.

An official language is a language that a government uses for its activities in settings such as legislation, public administration, the courts, education, the military, law enforcement and so on, whereas a national language is a language (or languages) that a nation adopts as symbolic of its traditional heritage. According to the East Timorese Constitution, Tetum has both official and national status, while the other endogenous languages have only national status. At present, the national languages of Timor-Leste have symbolic rather than substantive status. Scholars from the INL and universities in the Netherlands and Australia are engaged in the study and documentation of several endogenous languages (Mambae, Naueti, Bekais, Lóvaia and Fataluku). However, I suggest that policymakers need to consider specific statutory provision to protect the linguistic rights of endogenous language users if their protection and promotion are to become substantive.

Three defining discourses serve to reconstruct national identity in the Constitution. The most central discourse is found in the 'Valorisation of Resistance' clause (Section 11, p. 15) commemorating the struggle for national liberation. As Leach (2002) notes, this clause embeds the official conception of East Timorese history in the statement: 'The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste acknowledges and values the secular resistance of the People to foreign domination and the contribution of all those who fought for national independence' (Section 11, clause 1). This same clause valorises the Catholic Church for its role in uniting the different language groups and facilitating the emergence of Tetum as an expression of national identity (Section 11, clause 2). The admirably humane 'Solidarity' clause (Section 10, p. 15) declares solidarity with other national liberation struggles to be a guiding principle of the new State (Section 10, clause 1) and commits the Republic to providing asylum to all people persecuted in struggles for national liberation (Section 10, clause 2). These discourses invoke the memory of Indonesian occupation and the resistance struggle. The national anthem and flag deploy the emblematic symbols of *funu* (*resistance*), *patria* (*homeland*) and *solidariedade* (*solidarity*) against imperialism. Yet the national anthem,

first used on 28 November 1975, at the original declaration of independence, is written only in Portuguese. The Indonesians prohibited this anthem during the occupation and it was readopted at the restoration of independence in 2002. To date, it is still sung in Portuguese, as there has been no translation into Tetum.

While the language clauses of the East Timorese Constitution acknowledge societal multilingualism and attempt to deal with its complexities, their provisions are more conservative than the provisions in the language clauses of the constitutions of Eritrea and South Africa, especially with regard to the maintenance and promotion of the endogenous languages. South Africa is one of the few nations in the world that recognises the linguistic rights of both individuals and groups. In the East Timorese National Constitution, the right to speak and understand a language of one's choice is an implicit component of individual freedom of speech and freedom from discrimination making the East Timorese Constitution one of the most progressive in the world. It enshrines the rights of freedom of speech and information (Section 40, clauses 1–2), along with the right to enjoy one's cultural heritage (Section 59: p. 5). It guarantees the right of freedom from discrimination on grounds of colour, race, marital status, gender, ethnic origin, language, social or economic status, political or ideological convictions, education and physical or mental condition (Section 16, clause 2). Unlike the South African Constitution, it does not mention the language rights of groups. The drawback of the East Timorese *laissez-faire* approach to language planning is that it stops short of the active promotion of language rights for minority or national languages – that is, it enacts a constraint that can effectively mean that the domination of certain language groups goes unchallenged. To understand the discourses of the Constitution, it is necessary to situate them in their historical context. In order to understand the symbolic power of language in Timor-Leste, this monograph now returns to the past to consider the influences that have shaped the habitus.

### Part III: language contact and spread

As Thomaz (2002) attests, there has been a long association between the East Timorese and the Malays. The Tetum word *malae* used to describe all foreigners comes from Malay. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Malay words constituted the majority of loanwords in Tetum. Place names, numerals and occupational words, especially those having to do with fishing and agriculture, reflect a long and close relationship with the Malays. As Malay declined in use, Portuguese took its place as the primary lexifier language for Tetum until the Indonesian occupation – a time when words from modern Indonesian began to influence the language.

The Portuguese arrived on the island of Timor in 1514, attracted by the opportunity to exploit the island's sandalwood forests. Missionary work began after 1566 when the Dominicans erected a fortress-settlement on the island of Solor. The descendants of Portuguese sailors who married local women at the original settlement on Solor were known as the *Topasses*.<sup>9</sup> The *Topasse* population had two distinctive features: the first feature was its use of Portuguese in addition to Malay as well as the local languages; the second feature was its devout Catholicism. The *Topasses* allied themselves to the Dominicans and although they were reluctant to accept any outside appointee of the Portuguese crown, they were fiercely loyal to the language. After the Dutch attacked the settlement on Solor in 1613, they allowed the *Topasses* to leave. Thereafter the *Topasses* moved their base to Larantuka in Flores and from there they came to command the trade routes between Solor, Larantuka and Timor. In 1641, the *Topasses* established a settlement at Lifau in Oecussi, and in

1642, they attacked the Tetum-speaking kingdom of Wehali on the central south coast of Timor with the objective of gaining control of the sandalwood trade.

Although various scholars have described the history of Tetum (Fox, 1997, 2003; Hull 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Schulte Nordholt, 1971; Thomaz, 1981, 1994, 2002), very little is known about the process of language change and how or why the dialects of Tetum have diverged from one another. The expansion of Tetum-speaking people from their traditional place of origin on the central south coast to the north and along the south coast resulted in several distinct forms of Tetum (Figure 3). *Tetum-Terik* or rural Tetum (also known as Classical Tetum as well as *Tetum-Loos* or *True Tetum*) is the name given to the language variety spoken along the central south coast and its hinterland. The language variety spoken around the border region in a north–south strip from the Ombai Strait to the Timor Sea is known as *Tetum-Belu*. The variety spoken in the capital city of Dili and its surrounds became known as *Tetum-Praça*, the city being traditionally referred to by the Portuguese as a *praça forte* (*fortress*) and also as *Tetum-Dili* because it established itself as the vernacular of Dili as the area became urbanised.

According to Fox (2003, pp. 11–12), in 1777, the Portuguese regarded the island of Timor as divided into two provinces: the western province of *Servião*, consisting of 16 *reinos* (*kingdoms*) situated in the western part of the island of Timor and inhabited by the Vaiqueno (Baikenu or Atoni) people; and the eastern province of *Belu* (*Provincia dos Bellos*) dominated by the Tetum-speaking *datos* (*lords*) of *Belu* and comprising at least 46 kingdoms extending across the central eastern part of the island of Timor.<sup>10</sup> Thomaz (1981, p. 58) surmises that the spread of Tetum was the result of the influence of the powerful Tetum-speaking Belu kingdom of Wehali, traditionally known as the ritual centre of Belu. Dili was traditionally a Mambae-speaking area and this language is still spoken outside a four or five mile radius of the town. Thomaz (1981, pp. 58–59) suggests two plausible reasons for the spread of Tetum:

- (i) that Tetum-Praça spread in Dili because as the capital of the territory, it was a natural place for language contact;
- (ii) that assisted by Catholic evangelism, Tetum came to play a unifying and differentiating role, similar to that of the national languages in Europe.

The combination of aggressive Topasse activities together with constant skirmishes with the Dutch eventually led the Portuguese to relocate from Lifau to Dili, where they established a settlement in 1769. As Fox (2003, p. 17) observes, European colonialists had difficulty in conceptualising the power of native rulers. The Portuguese used the royal designation of *rei* (*king*) and instituted a hierarchy of military ranks from colonel to lieutenant before they settled on the title *liurai* (*in its original meaning 'surpassing the earth'*), as equivalent to a local king. Most *liurais*, fearing Dutch domination but also influenced by the Dominican friars, who were anxious to prevent the spread of Calvinism, transferred their allegiance to the king of Portugal. The territory slowly came under colonial control from the 1860s onwards but the Portuguese found it very difficult to control the territory and there were constant local rebellions that have entered East Timorese historical discourse as 300 years of *funu* or resistance to colonial rule. While the details of the bitter rivalry, recurrent disputes, battles and negotiations between the Dutch and the Portuguese over the island of Timor from 1816 to 1916 make fascinating reading, they remain beyond the scope of this monograph. Nevertheless, it is essential to appreciate that this rivalry and the complex web of alliances between indigenous rulers and colonialists were fundamentally connected with the formation of identities. With the division of the island, the East Timorese were increasingly committed

to the Portuguese colonial project and consequently increasingly disconnected from events that were to shape post-colonial Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Gunn, 1999, p. 156).

As Fox (2003, p. 11) notes, it was only after relentless incursions from Dili into the interior that the Portuguese were able to establish some degree of control over the native polities and their rulers. At least 60 military missions were sent to subdue the East Timorese between 1847 and 1913 (p. 16). It was only at the time of the 1913–14 *Manufahi rebellion*<sup>11</sup> (triggered by an increased poll tax), when the Portuguese succeeded in organising an alliance with several kingdoms, that they were able to effectively establish colonial domination and were able to spread their control gradually throughout eastern Timor. The seriousness of the *Manufahi rebellion* made it clear to the colonial powers that further rebellions could not be tolerated. The Portuguese practice of conferring military ranks on indigenous leaders was an effort to construct allegiances and exert some degree of control. A colonial army was raised from each kingdom and every *liurai* organised his own civilian militia or *Companhia de Moradores*. This system gave rise to a creolised variety of Portuguese in the Dili suburb of Bidau after 1851 (Albarran Carvalho, 2001; Baxter, 1990). This creole, which had become obsolete by the 1950s, had its origins in the form of Portuguese spoken by the Timorese troops who took the place of the Malay-speaking troops from Sika in Flores. The creole spoken by these troops came to be known as the *Portuguese of Bidau* (Thomaz, 1981).

Continuous wars maintained this colonial military system almost into the twentieth century and many Tetum words originate from this system (Thomaz, 2002, p. 112). By about 1845, the use of Tetum and Portuguese was well established and had begun to displace Malay. Tetum was used as a contact language throughout the colony. The use of Malay is presently confined to the Muslim community, the descendants of Arabs from Hadramaut who came to Timor via Java, in the *Kampung Alor* suburb of Dili, once also known as the *Campo Mouro* (the Moorish area). At present, this community is isolated and somewhat ostracised.

### ***Japanese military occupation 1942–45: untold sociolinguistic history***

The island of Timor became a part of the Pacific theatre of operations during the Second World War. The Japanese occupied Portuguese Timor between 1942 and 1945 – a period of extreme hardship for the East Timorese. Some 40,000 people died resisting the occupation and assisting Australian troops. By the time the Japanese surrendered, the East Timorese population was close to starvation. Women suffered particular abuses of their human rights through the system of sexual slavery (women enslaved as ‘comfort women’ by the Japanese) that existed throughout Timor-Leste during the 3.5-year Japanese occupation (CAVR, 2006; Turner, 1992). Gunn (1999, p. 226) mentions that, as in other parts of Japanese occupied Southeast Asia, the colonial education system was dismantled and Japanese language teaching was introduced (also see Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003). However, as Gunn comments, it is difficult to imagine this practice being enforced outside Dili given the instability of the situation. At present, there are no data that I am aware of concerning the sociolinguistics of the Japanese occupation of Timor-Leste. This aspect of the period can therefore only be treated as part of untold history.

### ***Post-war Portuguese colonial policy, planning and practice: the promotion of Portuguese as the language of the elite***

After the Second World War, Portugal began to invest more extensively in the social development of its colony. The development of an authoritarian, corporatist state under the

dictator, António Salazar (1932–68), developed a colonial economic policy based on maximum wealth extraction coupled with autarchic trading policies that made the colonies captive markets for Portuguese goods. Foreign investment in the colonies was discouraged because commercial opportunities were reserved for the exploitation of the Portuguese alone. This strategy was accompanied by the compulsory production of raw materials in the colonies in order to support the industries of Portugal. Compulsory crop production was supplemented by forced labour and high taxation (Meijer & Birmingham, 2004; Smith, 1974). This process was accompanied by an ideology that emphasised Portugal's mission to bring civilisation to the benighted natives who inhabited the colonies. A conservative, triumphalist Catholicism was promoted by the State and propagated in its colonies. This ideological framework was elaborated into the discourse of *lusotropicalism*, claiming that Portugal had a special affinity with peoples of the tropics enabling them to fulfil a civilising mission free of racism (Almeida, 2001; Ellsworth, 1999; Ferreira-Mendes, 1940). Portugal continued to govern by means of a combination of direct and indirect rule, managing the population through traditional power structures rather than by using colonial civil servants as the British and Dutch had in their colonies. This Portuguese practice encouraged the ongoing incorporation of traditional society into the colonial system (UNDP, 2002, p. 71). Colonial policy permitted educated members of a small elite group to become full Portuguese citizens with Portuguese civil rights. In order to qualify for membership in the elite, an individual had to assimilate fully into the Portuguese way of life and faith, a practice requiring a shift to the Portuguese language.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Charter of the United Nations affirmed the right of subject peoples to independence and rejected colonialism, placing Portugal under intense pressure to relinquish its colonies (Retrieved February 28, 2008, from [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/ch-cont.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/ch-cont.htm)). In anticipation of admission to the UN, Portugal sought to bring about the integration of its colonies by amending the Portuguese Constitution in 1951. The amendment erased the word *colonies* and replaced it with the term *overseas territories*. Hence, there could be no justification for refusing Portuguese membership of the UN (Ferreira, 1974, p. 13). The Organic Law (Number 2066) of Portuguese Overseas Territories, enacted by the Salazar dictatorship in 1953, affirmed that all colonies were *provincias ultramarinas* (*overseas provinces*) of Portugal. Resolution 1542 of 15 December 1960, carried by the UN General Assembly listed territories then under the administration of Portugal as *non-self-governing territories* within the meaning of Chapter XI of the UN Charter (Article 73 Declaration regarding non-self-governing territories. Retrieved May 2, 2008, from <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/ch-cont.htm>). This designation persisted until as recently as the 1970s when the Portuguese Overseas Organic Law of 1972 designated all territories as *autonomous regions of the Portuguese Republic* (Ferreira, 1974, p. 38).

An essential component of this highly centralised colonial policy was the designation of Portuguese as the official language of instruction in all of Portugal's colonies. The acquisition of Portuguese was promoted through both the education system and the Church. Although the early missionaries in Portuguese Timor had used Tetum, the language used by the Church during this period was Portuguese. According to Aditjondro (1994, p. 40), by 1975, almost a quarter of the population had converted to the Catholic faith. In 1952, the first *liceu* (*high school*) opened in Dili and the first vocational school opened 4 years later. Staffing numbers indicate the small scale of the project. By the end of 1974, there were 200 teachers in Portuguese Timor, of whom 16 were Portuguese and the rest were East Timorese. According to Nichol (1978, pp. 21–22), only a small percentage of the group had any teacher training. Taylor (1991, p. 17) reports that the numbers of

East Timorese children attending primary school between 1954 and 1974 increased from 8000 to 57,000. These children were subjected to a classically subtractive model of schooling. Education – for those who completed primary school education and for the still smaller number who graduated from secondary school – required that children use Portuguese. As the person who was mainly responsible for education in the colonies, then Overseas Minister Silva Cunha stated in 1972:

Education must [therefore] be eminently pragmatic in this sense. It cannot have as its objective the mere spreading of knowledge but rather the formation of citizens capable of feeling to the full the imperatives of Portuguese life, knowing how to interpret them and making them a constant reality in order to secure the continuation of the nation (English translation in Ferreira, 1974, pp. 80–85).

The Portuguese language was compulsory – the only one to be used in education. Elsewhere Silva Cunha asserted: ‘We must be obstinate, intransigent and insatiable in the intensification and use of the Portuguese language’ (English translation in Ferreira, 1974, p. 85). There was strict enforcement of the language in the classroom. As reported in Pinto and Jardine (1997, p. 35) and in my own interview data (Taylor-Leech, 2007), the punishment for speaking anything other than Portuguese in school could be a *palhada* (a slap in the face) or a beating with the *palmatória* (a thick piece of wood with a handle and a disc with holes in it so that there was no air to cushion the blows, raising painful welts on the hands). This is a classic feature of assimilation in which teachers act as its agents by punishing students for using their native languages. This type of punishment has been traditionally used to enforce linguistic assimilation in many colonial environments – e.g. Australia, the UK, the USA and across Latin America and Asia.

The small number of East Timorese who reached junior secondary school formed the core of the intellectual elite. There was a high school, a technical school and a teacher training college. The seminaries provided education for students who were destined to enter the priesthood or the civil service. A privileged few *assimilado* (*assimilated*) students obtained the opportunity to study in Portugal but by 1974 there were only a handful of university graduates (Taylor, 1991, p. 17). The irony of colonialism was that this tiny group of educated *assimilados* provided the leadership and momentum for its eventual defeat; this elite group emerged as the major actors in the movement for independence. Most graduates took up posts in government, administration, the health sector, education or the army. In this process, as Taylor (1991, p. 18) writes, ‘they came up against the familiar realities of their childhood: rigid political control, colonial hierarchies, propaganda masquerading as education in poorly resourced schools and a rural sector where basic diseases were endemic’. In the 1960s, it began to seem possible that new political and social groups could emerge, having the ability to express their aspirations for national development within the framework of indigenous social values (Taylor, 1991, pp. 18–19). They used Portuguese and Tetum to express their awareness of the country’s potential for independence. These developments mirror similar events in other colonised territories, including Portugal’s African colonies (see Davidson, 1972; Ferreira, 1974). The Philippines is a neighboring case (see Gonzales, 1980).

### *Chinese as an immigrant language*

Chinese speakers have been present on the island of Timor since at least 1699. Merchants from Macao and Taiwan were extensively engaged in the sandalwood trade and in import–export businesses. The Official Census of 1970 estimated the Chinese community at 6120

persons (Dunn, 1983, p. 8). According to Dunn (p. 8), in the early 1960s of the 400 or so wholesale and retail enterprises in the Portuguese colony all but three or four were in Chinese hands; however, as Dunn notes, since this figure omitted the large number of Chinese-Timorese (who considered themselves Chinese in cultural terms), the real figure was perhaps twice that number. The Chinese maintained a close-knit social group, remaining socially segregated from the endogenous communities. Even at the end of the Portuguese colonial period very few Chinese individuals held Portuguese citizenship, most of them holding Taiwanese passports. The Chinese established a separate Mandarin-medium schooling system (Hajek, 2000, p. 403). Following the Taiwanese curriculum, the students studied Mandarin, Chinese history and Chinese culture, a system that was tolerated by the Portuguese colonial administration on the proviso that all students also studied Portuguese. This schooling system produced a population that was literate in Mandarin and Portuguese. The children usually used Hakka at home (John Hajek, University of Melbourne, personal communication, 18 July, 2007). In addition, they commonly spoke Tetum and in some cases another vernacular language depending on the locality in which they lived. The links between China and Macao were important not only because of commerce but also as far as the Church was concerned. Indeed, Portuguese Timor was part of the diocese of Macao. In the Indonesian invasion of 1975, the invading forces killed many Chinese; some groups were deliberately targeted while others were killed in random attacks. Most survivors fled the country, abandoning their schools and businesses. At present, as the 2004 census data show, speakers of Chinese varieties constitute only a small minority in Timor-Leste (Table 4). The Census Tables do not specify which varieties of Chinese are spoken.

### ***The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste: the popularisation of Tetum as the language of the common people***

The process of decolonisation in East Timor was initiated in 1974 following from revolution that overthrew the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal. In July 1975, the Portuguese government promulgated Constitutional law 7/75 providing for the formation of a transitional government in Timor-Leste in preparation for the election of a popular assembly in October 1976. The popular assembly was to be responsible for determining the future of the territory. Political groupings in Timor-Leste began to prepare for independence. In the 1970s, the *Associação Social Democrática Timorese (Timorese Social Democratic Association)* – known as ASDT – was the first political grouping to use local languages in addition to Portuguese at its meetings. As Taylor (1991, p. 42) notes, this strategy offered an effective means of reaching the mass of the population who spoke no Portuguese and were relatively unaffected by European culture. FRETILIN (see Part I) was the ASDT's successor organisation. FRETILIN used Tetum-Praça as the language of the *maubere* i.e. the common people; the term *maubere* being taken from the name of a character in Mambae mythology. Whereas the Portuguese had used the word in a derogatory sense, FRETILIN transformed it into a symbol of cultural identity and national pride using the phrase '*the Maubere people*' as an expression of solidarity. FRETILIN also promoted Tetum in its literacy campaigns in the rural areas, using volunteers to teach adults to read and write.

The founding declaration of FRETILIN in 1975 stated its intention to retain Portuguese as the official language, while establishing a programme for the study of Tetum and the vernacular languages. However as Jolliffe (1978, p. 335) notes, FRETILIN was not the only organisation to support the retention of Portuguese. Support for the officialisation of Portuguese was spread across the political spectrum. FRETILIN's political rival, the *União*

*Democrática Timorese (Timorese Democratic Union)* – known as UDT – advocated ‘the integration of the Timorese people through the use of the Portuguese language’ (p. 337). Even the party that supported integration with Indonesia, the *Associação Popular Democrática Timorese (Popular East Timorese Democratic Association)* – known as APODETI – stated that it would support the right ‘to enjoy the Portuguese language’ as well as the use of Indonesian as the language of instruction (p. 326). FRETILIN stood out from the other political parties in that, although it adopted Portuguese as its official language, it went even further in promoting traditional cultural forms, a feature evident in its literacy program, following the Freirean principles designed to change the consciousness of the oppressed through educational dialogue, praxis (or informed action) and *conscientização*, better understood as *awareness raising* (Freire, 1972). FRETILIN’s founding programme declared the objective of fostering the literature and art of the various ethnic groups through cultural exchanges and ‘the enrichment not only of East Timorese culture as a whole, but also as a contribution to universal culture’ (Jolliffe, 1978, p. 335).

As Gunn acknowledges (1999, p. 267), the construction of the *maubere* identity was a masterstroke on the part of FRETILIN. Identification with the values of *mauberism* in no way weakened one’s kinship or tribal alliances. Currently, the term *maubere* provokes mixed reactions (see Esperança, 2001, pp. 49–156). Some reject it because of its masculine, patriarchal connotations. Nevertheless, *mauberism* represents the construction of a unique ethnonational identity for the East Timorese, an identity that enabled a unified national resistance movement to come together as a force for change. The development of other such indigenous cultural forms as music, poetry and dance as well as the use of vernacular languages enabled FRETILIN to express their ideas in ways with which the common people could identify. FRETILIN first declared independence in 1975 after gaining the upper hand in the short civil war that followed a coup d’état by the UDT. This declaration was made in the hope that there would be UN support for a sovereign state. Following the norms of the time, FRETILIN opted for the former colonial language as the language of wider communication. Ten days after the declaration of independence, the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)* (or the TNI) invaded the territory. In the 24-year occupation that followed the linguistic landscape changed dramatically.

To this point, this monograph has followed the history of Malay, Tetum and Portuguese from the sixteenth to the late-twentieth century in order to explain their continuity and their place in the habitus. However, Timor-Leste then experienced a second very different form of colonialism. The following sections trace the impact of coercive language shift under Indonesian occupation.

### ***Indonesian language planning 1975–99: coercive language shift***

The Indonesian invasion of 1975 resulted in the integration of Timor-Leste into Indonesia as its 27th province, ushering in a long period in which the human rights of the East Timorese people were ignored – a period during which the linguistic landscape changed dramatically. Saturation bombing by the TNI during the invasion and in the pacification campaigns that followed caused massive loss of life among the East Timorese. The TNI conducted a series of encircling movements and annihilation campaigns in order to cut off and contain the resistance forces, which also caused great loss of civilian life. By 1980, an estimated 200,000 East Timorese out of a pre-invasion population of less than 700,000 had died (Robinson, 2003, p. 16). In 1975–76 some 4000 refugees fled to Portugal and Australia (Liddle, 1992, p. 22) and another 40,000 people fled over the border to West Timor

(CAVR, 2006, p. 75). Immediately after the invasion, most East Timorese took refuge in the mountains where they survived for 3 years outside Indonesian control behind FRETILIN lines. In these areas, FRETILIN organised its popular education programmes. After an intensive campaign of bombing and air attacks by the TNI, many of those East Timorese who had taken refuge in the mountains were forced down into the lowlands where they were met and killed by Indonesian soldiers. Those who survived were relocated by the TNI into the newly established resettlement villages, known as 'strategic hamlets'. This forced resettlement of East Timorese communities resulted in starvation because the strategic hamlets did not have accessible plots of land that could be cultivated. Forced resettlement also led to the dispersal of traditional speech communities. The Indonesian government designated Timor Timur, as they called the annexed territory, a *transmigrasi* (*transmigration*) area. The transmigration programme was an important vehicle for the spread of Indonesian among the highly concentrated East Timorese populations. By 1980, there were a reported 150 transmigration sites for incoming Javanese and Balinese (Hajek, 2002, p. 193).

The standardisation and modernisation of Indonesian has been rightly hailed as a monumental achievement in linguistic planning and reform, carried out over a relatively short period of time (see, e.g. Alisjahbana, 1975; Fishman, 1978; Sneddon, 2003). Indonesian represents what Gellner refers to as *high culture*. It is a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom that has been 'codified for the requirements of a reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication' (1983, p. 57). Besides the official communicative functions that Indonesian now serves, it is also 'expressly the symbol of national pride and identity and a tool for the unification of Indonesia's diverse ethnic, cultural and language groups' (Lowenburg, 1992, p. 66). Indonesian language ideology in the annexed province of Timor Timur was propagated through the aggressive spread of the Indonesian language and the targeting of Portuguese and Chinese for elimination. The use of Portuguese was prohibited in schools, in administration and in the media and Portuguese was overtly vilified as a colonial language (Hajek, 2000, p. 406). A person who was heard using Portuguese risked arrest, torture and accusation of being *kepala dua* (*two-headed*), in other words, a FRETILIN sympathiser or a spy.

As part of their strategy of assimilation, the Indonesians increased the school population. As Nicolai (2004, p. 44) comments, despite the many criticisms that can be made of Indonesian education policy in Timor Timur, one thing that could be said in its favour was that it introduced the concept of education for all. By 1985, nearly every village had a primary school (UNDP, 2002, p. 48); however, as Nicolai (2004, p. 46) also observes, although on the face of it education was available from the early years through to university, the reality was that for most people basic education lasted only about six years. By 1990, even in the 15–19-year-old age group who grew up under Indonesian administration, less than half of both males and females had completed primary school or gone on to further education (Jones, 2001, p. 48). The proportion of East Timorese who had achieved senior secondary education did not exceed 23% for males and 9% for females (Jones, 2003, pp. 257–258).

Assimilation was important for the integration of Timor Timur into the Indonesian state structure. This integration also served as a means of social control since most Indonesians did not speak Portuguese or the local vernacular languages. According to Budiarjo and Liong (1984, p. 111) Indonesian was strictly enforced as the medium of instruction. In the early years of the occupation, the use of Indonesian in schools disqualified most East Timorese teachers who did not have proficiency in Indonesian. Indonesian military personnel served as teachers in the rural areas and throughout the occupation period, the majority

of teachers in the province were Indonesian (Arneburg, 1999, p. 85); i.e. 427 out of 3698 teachers in the province were East Timorese (Jones, 2003, p. 49). The curriculum was devoid of information about East Timorese history and culture and the quality of the teaching was notoriously poor (Budiarjo & Liong, 1984, pp. 110–112). Student and teacher absenteeism were rampant (Jones, 2003, p. 50). Assimilation into the Indonesian language and state ideology were also promoted through compulsory membership of the scouting organisation, *Gerakan Pramuka*. In this regard, the Indonesians appeared to have learned the strategy of organising strenuous, time-consuming physical activities and military-style training in secondary schools from the Japanese (Murray-Thomas, 1966, p. 632). Between 1978 and 1981, the numbers of young people joining Pramuka more than doubled from 10,000 to 22,455 (CAVR, 2006). Youth martial arts groups were also encouraged. Such activities played an instrumental role in promoting a culture of gangs and militarism. Gangs and martial arts groups, often with political affiliations, have proved to be an intractable problem in East Timorese society; gangs of disaffected youth played a central role in the 2006–07 violence (Murdoch, 2006).

Events in the 1990s demonstrated that universal education had not succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of young people who by that time had begun to emerge as among the most vocal critics of the Indonesian regime. As Nicolai (2004, p. 50) remarks, many young people rebelled against the prescriptive and centralised education system, which ironically had been designed to assure the formation of good East Timorese Indonesian citizens. The imposition of the Japanese language in Korea immediately following the end of the Russo-Japanese war (1904–05) produced similar results (see Rhee, 1992). Parallels can also be found in the Norwegianisation of the endogenous languages of Sàmi and Finnish. Such policies exemplify the overt prohibition of native languages in order to promote assimilation (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989, p. 25). By the 1990s, students' active rebellion and passive resistance in schools had become a serious problem. Indeed, as Jones (2003, p. 50) observes, an Indonesian education did not lead to improved employment prospects, as there were so few jobs for educated East Timorese people. In the 1990s, the schooling of young people suffered severe disruption because of increasing civil activism and the violent responses of the TNI. The visit of Pope John Paul II to Dili in October 1989 prompted the first of many demonstrations led by young people; 40 demonstrators were arrested, interrogated and tortured in the aftermath (Carey & Carter Bentley, 1995, p. 247). On 12 November 1991, Indonesian troops fired on young East Timorese demonstrators in the notorious Santa Cruz Massacre, the event regarded as setting the trajectory for independence and bringing the situation to world attention. According to popular estimates, 271 people (mostly in their 20s) died, 382 were injured and 250 simply disappeared (Retrieved October 12, 2006, from <http://www.etan.org/timor/sntaCRUZ.htm>). In the academic year before the 1999 referendum, students barely attended school as they took up an increasingly central role in the campaign for independence. The orchestrated violence that followed the referendum of 1999 destroyed the education sector. Most of the teaching force fled and large numbers of students became displaced persons.

By 1999, Indonesian was in common use in its 27th province. The use of Tetum as a medium of instruction was tolerated in Catholic primary schools by the 1990s (Aditjondro, 1994, p. 40) but as children progressed through school, they were forbidden to use Tetum in the schoolroom. Intensive borrowing from Indonesian further influenced and altered Tetum, compounding the process of grammatical simplification which had already been reinforced by the predominance of Portuguese as the prestige language used for all public written functions. By the 1990s, Portuguese was no longer openly spoken or taught in schools

and transmission to new generations became virtually impossible. Despite – or perhaps because of – this phenomenon, Portuguese acquired deep symbolic value as the language of the clandestine resistance. According to Albarran Carvalho (2003, pp. 70–71), most resistance fighters' chose to write their correspondence in Portuguese rather than in Tetum. Members of the clandestine resistance used Portuguese for writing internal documents; for personal and external communication; for secret reports, coding and letters and for writing memorial texts and poetry (see also Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2008, for a discussion of Portuguese and Tetum literacy practices in the resistance between 1975 and 1999). In addition, the Church retained Portuguese as the language of external communication.

This monograph would not be complete without mentioning the human cost of social policies and practices in the Indonesian era. At least 102,800 East Timorese people are estimated to have been killed or to have died of hunger or illness directly attributable to the occupation of their country (CAVR, 2006). A study published in the British medical journal *The Lancet* (Modvig et al., 2000), based on a survey of 1033 East Timorese households, found that 97% of people in the sample had experienced at least one traumatic event during the occupation. The effects of torture and post-traumatic stress remain widespread. Overall, the occupation subjected the East Timorese habitus to sustained physical and symbolic violence.

### ***Language planning for liberation: National Council of Timorese Resistance language planning discourses***

The *Conselho Nacional da Resistência Timorense* (*National Council of Timorese Resistance*) (or CNRT) was formally established at a meeting in Portugal in 1998. This was the first broadly representative gathering of East Timorese nationalists since 1975. A key outcome of the convention was the acclamation, on 25 April 1998, of the charter of freedoms, rights, duties and guarantees for the people of Timor-Leste known as the *Magna Carta*. The *Magna Carta* was to serve as the basis for the future Constitution of the independent state. The *Magna Carta* stated that it was committed to the following (Walsh, 1999):

- upholding human rights and constructing a pluralistic, democratic society;
- respecting the environment;
- building relationships with other Portuguese-speaking nations;
- supporting the Association of East Asian Nations, Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation and the South Pacific Forum.

The CNRT adopted Portuguese as the official language and declared Tetum the national language of the future independent Timor-Leste (Hajek, 2000, p. 408). There appeared to be different opinions as to the status of Indonesian. José Ramos Horta, then roving ambassador for the CNRT, stated that English would be taught at school from primary level but that there would be no place for Indonesian. Other Indonesian-educated representatives argued that Indonesian should be maintained and that there should be multifaceted co-operation with Indonesia. At the CNRT Strategic Development Planning for Timor-Leste Conference held in Melbourne, Australia from 5 to 9 April 1999, East Timorese intellectuals, academics and professionals again discussed language policy issues. As part of the gradual transformation of the education sector, the CNRT conference recommended that Indonesian should be phased out of public administration and of the education system

over a 10-year period. As Hajek (p. 408) comments, there is little doubt that the progressive elimination of Indonesian from all public domains was an important objective. Portuguese and Tetum would take its place and there would be space for English. Neither of these two documents or any subsequent documents gave any recognition to the endogenous languages. A 10-year timeframe was agreed upon to allow for the systematic replacement and retraining of Indonesian-speaking teachers. However, events after 1999 rapidly overtook the CNRT vision of orderly language planning for Timor-Leste (Hajek, 2000).

***1999–2002: the UN Transitional Administration: the arrival of English and the revival of Portuguese***

In 1997/98, the Suharto New Order collapsed in Indonesia, shaken by economic crisis leading to widespread protests in Jakarta and demands for political change. In a total break with previous policy, President B.J. Habibie declared that he no longer wanted to shoulder the burden of its dissident province and offered the East Timorese people autonomy within the Indonesian Republic. The Portuguese agreed on a referendum to be held in May 1999 under the auspices of the UN. On 30 August 1999, 78.5% out of a 98.6% turnout of a population of 450,000 voted for full independence from Indonesia (Hajek, 2002, p. 193). In retaliation, militia groups were actively encouraged by the TNI to perpetrate extreme violence against the population. Pro-integration militia gangs subjected the country to a frenzy of attacks, massacres, looting and burning, resulting in the deaths of at least 1200 East Timorese civilians (Robinson, 2003, p. 1). Some 60,000 people were forcibly displaced from their normal places of residence and 250,000 individuals were forcibly relocated to refugee camps over the border in West Timor (CAVR, 2006, p. 85). One effect of the violence and forced movements of populations was the further dislocation and disruption of speech communities. Fortunately, this dislocation appears to have been relatively short-term, as many people have returned to their original communities. At the present time, only a small number of people remain in militia-controlled camps in West Timor or have not returned for other reasons.

Under a veil of censorship and media silence, the events and abuses of the previous two decades had largely gone unreported in the international media. In contrast, the conduct of the militias, the TNI and the Indonesian authorities at the time of the referendum received worldwide media attention. In response to international pressure, the UN Security Council authorised a multinational peacekeeping force under Australian command to restore order. The UN established the *United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor* (UNTAET), responsible for the administration of the country during its transition to independence. On 30 August 2001, on the anniversary of the referendum, elections were held for political representatives whose task was to draw up a new constitution. To date, the five UN missions in Timor-Leste have used English as an official and a working language. There are currently 15 UN agencies operating in Timor-Leste. Large numbers of English-speaking aid workers have come into Timor-Leste, creating a demand for interpreters and translators who are proficient in English. However, as the Census Atlas shows, this demand is concentrated in Dili. In the more remote areas, the use of English is far less widespread. The number of job opportunities for English speakers in the capital gives a somewhat misleading impression of the spread of English – in fact, English has fairly specific uses (mostly interpreting) in a limited range of urban locales. The census results should serve as a reality check on the strident calls in some circles for enhancing the status of English.

At the same time the Portuguese began investing in the revival of their language. Portugal is the largest single contributor of foreign aid to Timor-Leste. Of all donors,

Portuguese annual disbursements for the education and training sector have been the largest (Nicolai, 2004, p. 101). In the main, this funding focuses on strengthening Portuguese as the language of instruction. Among its other initiatives, these funds have provided language training for teachers, procured textbooks and supported scholarships for the further education of East Timorese students. By 2004, the Camões Institute had sent 350,000 schoolbooks, 650,000 textbooks and 410 cooperating teachers to Timor-Leste (da Cruz, 2004, p. 2). Portuguese aid has also funded the reconstruction of the education infrastructure. In the academic year 2001/02, some US\$59,090 went into establishing a Portuguese Language Centre and US\$156,407 was invested in Portuguese language and other forms of development training via the Dili Distance Learning Centre (DDLCC),<sup>12</sup> located in the offices of the World Bank. Portugal also donated US\$ 36,023 for teacher training (MECYS, 2004a, pp. 49–53). Brazil has also provided assistance based on its language ties with Timor-Leste. Its funds go primarily into non-formal education in the form of literacy teaching (see Part II) and vocational education.

On the occasion of East Timorese independence, an editorial in *Camões Revista de Letras e Culturas Lusófonas* (*Camões Journal of Lusophone Letters and Cultures*) declared:

... uma das principais tarefas que a nossa política cultural externa terá de prosseguir nos tempos vindouros: a consolidação do português como língua oficial do futuro Estado de Timor-Leste. Este desafio enquadra-se nos objectivos que traçamos para a nossa política externa e para a futura acção do Instituto Camões: por um lado, preservar e promover uma identidade lusófona, reforçando a ligação entre todos os que falam português no mundo, e, por outro, ser um dos instrumentos da nossa política externa, contribuindo assim para um novo recorte na afirmação de Portugal.

... one of the principal tasks that our foreign cultural policy will have to pursue in coming times is the consolidation of Portuguese as [the] official language of the future state of Timor-Leste. This challenge forms part of the objectives that delineate our foreign policy and the future action of the Camões Institute: on the one hand, to preserve and promote a Lusophone identity, reinforcing the connection between all those in the world who speak Portuguese[,] and on the other, to be an instrument of our foreign policy, contributing in this way to a new contour in the affirmation of Portugal (da Cruz, 2004, p. 2, author's translation).

As Kukanda (2000) notes, the existence of international organisations based on a common language is an important feature of post-colonial language planning. The *Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa* or CPLP (*Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries*) was formed in 1996. Its function is to maintain links between Portugal and its former colonies. The CPLP member states are: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe. Timor-Leste became a member of the organisation on 31 July 2002. Among the objectives of the CPLP are social, cultural, economic, legal, technical and scientific cooperation among its member states and the promotion of the Portuguese language. The discourse of *lusofonia* – or family of Portuguese-speaking nations – has also arisen as a grand theme for reconfiguring Portuguese identity in the post-colonial period and following Portugal's incorporation into the European Union (Almeida, 2001, p. 597). This discourse is nothing if not ambiguous in its oscillation between a neocolonialist ethos and a multinational political project, as Almeida (2001, p. 598) observes. Other former colonial powers – most notably France – have also promoted such discourses: the discourse of *francophonie*, the modern Francophone movement, serves to construct a useful bloc in the fight for markets and against English and American influence (Hagège, 1996). France is a major donor in Francophone initiatives and this nation is currently educating a greater number of Vietnamese than it did when it was a colonial power (Wright, 2004, p. 133). A similar phenomenon can be observed with the

promotion of *lusofonia* and the teaching of the Portuguese language in Timor-Leste. The 2007–10 Indicative Cooperation Program, signed on September 3, 2007, by Portugal and Timor-Leste was estimated to have a total operating budget of 60 million euros. Forty-six million euros were allocated to the area of ‘Sustainable Development and Combating Poverty’ including the education sector and the reintroduction of the Portuguese language into the curriculum (Macauhub Economic Information Service, 2007, ¶5).

### **Language and religion**

It is necessary to look again to history in order to understand how language and religion have interacted in Timor-Leste. Religion has played a fundamental role in the shaping of East Timorese identity. The 2004 Population Census affirms that the vast majority of the East Timorese people (715,285) identify as Catholic. There are 16,616 Protestants; 2455 Muslims; 484 Buddhists and 191 Hindus; 5883 people identified themselves as followers of what the census called ‘traditional religions’ (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 78), a term referring to the highly spiritual Animist belief system still followed in Timor-Leste. The links between Catholicism and East Timorese nationalism have their origins in colonial history. The following sections discuss five important historical instances that highlight the role of the church and religious ideology in shaping the habitus.

One of the grand contradictions of Portuguese colonialism was that while the Catholic Church acted as its central ideological apparatus, the Church was also perhaps the most critical agency in shaping East Timorese national identity. The first Dominican missionaries established close and privileged relationships with the *Topasses*, for whom Catholicism and the use of Portuguese were marks of their identity. As local indigenous leaders converted to Christianity, they too formed close associations with Catholic priests. The Catholic missionaries appreciated that they needed to learn the local languages if they were to reach out to the native peoples. The early missionaries provided the first context in which endogenous languages were used as written languages. The seminary schools were at the heart of the early Portuguese evangelical, civilising mission and the Catholic schools formed the sole basis of the education system well into the twentieth century. Education was confined largely to the children of baptised *dato* and *liurai* families who were schooled in Portuguese literacy and Catholicism (see Part III). In the late-twentieth century, East Timorese church leaders strove to provide safe haven where they could against the depredations of the TNI (Smythe, 1998) but with tragic consequences, neither the TNI nor the militias respected the sanctity of the Church. Two of the worst massacres of civilian refugees occurred at Liquiçá Church in April and at Suai Cathedral in September of 1999. A number of priests and nuns gave their lives protecting and defending the East Timorese people, their culture and their spiritual values. East Timorese church leaders were also a vital source of information about human rights abuses despite relentless intimidation by the TNI; Bishops Martinho Costa Lopes and Carlos Ximenes Belo provide two well-known examples of such courageous leadership.

### **Missionary language activity**

The promotion of Tetum by the Catholic Church was an important element in the establishment of Tetum as a lingua franca. According to Hull (2000), Tetum became so closely associated with Christianity that it was called *a lingua dos baptisados* (*the language of the baptised*). Although at first, the clergy seem to have used Galoli as much as Tetum (Fox, 1997, p. 14), according to Fox (p. 20), Tetum was only seriously taken up in the

nineteenth century as the Portuguese territories in the region were reduced to the island of Timor. Crucial to the development and spread of Tetum was the establishment of the highly influential Jesuit seminary at Soibada in the Samoro district in 1898. The Soibada seminary was the only secondary school in Portuguese Timor; it was intended for the training of *mestre-escolas* (*schoolmasters*) who would teach basic literacy, numeracy and catechism in rural schools. These *mestres* were the only educated indigenous group in the country and they had great prestige (Thomaz, 1981, p. 67).

The Portuguese missionaries' decision to evangelise the population in their home languages led to the production of catechisms and liturgical and biblical texts in various vernaculars. Missionary priests also compiled dictionaries and grammars intended to assist newly arrived missionaries in communicating with the local peoples. The most notable dictionary was the work of Father Sebastião da Silva who produced a Portuguese-Tetum dictionary in 1889 (Hull, 1998a, p. 8). Father Manuel da Silva wrote a grammar of Galoli in 1900 and a Portuguese-Galoli dictionary in 1905. Various priests prepared catechisms, prayer books and Gospel translations in Tetum, Galoli, Midiki and Mambae in the first decades of the twentieth century (pp. 8–9). As Hull observes, the Portuguese missionaries were enthusiastic lexicographers. Father Manuel Mendes and Father Manuel Laranjeira collaborated to produce a larger Portuguese-Tetum dictionary, printed in 1935, which contained some 8000 entries. Two important works by Fathers Conceição Fernandes and Campos were unfortunately destroyed during the Second World War (p. 10) and according to Hull (1998a, p. 8), dictionaries of Waima'a, Makasae and Baikenu have also sadly been lost. In 1937, Father Abílio Fernandes published a Portuguese-medium Tetum course for Europeans. Father Artur Basílio de Sá was the first trained linguist to take an interest in East Timorese languages. He studied the phonology of Tetum and his principles for an orthography of Tetum published in 1952 (see Hull, 1998a) laid the basis for a phonetic spelling system. Father Abílio Fernandes' Tetum primer (originally written in 1937) was reprinted for the use of Portuguese military officers to help them fraternise with the natives in order to spread the Portuguese language. The notice in the back of the soldiers' handbook made no secret of this policy:

Na convivência futura, o soldado tem por dever, progressivamente, ir substituindo o tétum por português [...] aproxima-te dos mais isolados e sé merecedor da sua confiança, para que depois eles te sigam (Fernandes, 1967/1937).

(In our future co-existence, soldiers must consider it their duty progressively to replace Tetum with Portuguese [...] Approach only those most isolated and be worthy of their confidence so that later they will follow you) (Trans. Hull, 1998a, p. 15).

### ***The Portuguese civilising mission***

In 1940, a Portuguese Concordat with the Vatican established the Diocese of Dili, thereby ending its subordination to the See of Macao. The Concordat established the Catholic Church as the instrument of colonial policy. As the accord declared in grand colonial manner, 'Portuguese Catholic missions are considered to be of imperial usefulness; they have an eminently civilising influence' (Taylor, 1991, p. 13). Lundry (2000) takes a strong view of the acculturating influence of the Catholic Church on the East Timorese, arguing that becoming Christian and becoming culturally Portuguese amounted to almost the same thing. Indeed, as Cabral and Martin-Jones (2008, p. 154) observe, a Catholic education provided access to higher social status and the opportunity of higher education in Portugal. A significant number of the future leaders of Timor-Leste were educated at Catholic schools or seminaries. This was to be an important factor contributing to the emergence of East Timorese political elites in the 1950s and 1960s.

### ***Catholicism and social justice***

The Jesuit seminary of *Nossa Senhora de Fatima* was opened at Daré in 1958 with the aim of producing an indigenous clergy and providing secondary education for young men. Although Vatican II (1962–65) made social justice issues part of the call to evangelisation, as Lundry (2000) observes, the discourses of Vatican II had little impact in Portuguese Timor. In fact, during the 1960s, the East Timorese church had a reputation for being aloof and deeply conservative. Church leaders such as Bishop José Joaquim Ribeiro were suspicious of what they perceived as FRETILIN's communist sympathies. Yet as the atrocities during the occupation worsened, many priests and nuns came to identify with the suffering of the people and started to become more engaged with the struggle. The clergy distributed aid, provided refuge for the persecuted and sent information to the outside world about human rights abuses. In doing so, they made a substantial contribution to the nationalist movement. As Lundry (2000) suggests, perhaps the single most important element in the growth of nationalism in Timor-Leste was the enculturation of the clergy. A shared sense of betrayal at the withdrawal of the Portuguese administration and the departure of many Portuguese church officials after 1975 were instrumental in bringing the Church and Resistance together. Indeed, it is widely felt in Timor-Leste that without the support of the Catholic Church, the Resistance would have collapsed and the use of Tetum might not have withstood the pressure of Indonesian language ideology.

### ***The prestige of liturgical Tetum***

The evolution of Tetum into a language of national identity is inextricably linked with the evolution of the East Timorese Church. Portuguese suffered a severe blow when it was banned from public use in 1981. The Catholic Church established a form of liturgical Tetum or *Tetum-Ibadat* (Fox, 2003, p. 43). As Fox points out, this variety of Tetum is widely understood because of its use in church services but it is not what people speak in everyday communication. As Williams van Klinken (2002) observes, the religious register of Tetum was strongly influenced by the fact that most of its writers had been educated at the Soibada Seminary. Liturgical Tetum uses many Tetum-Terik forms and has fewer Portuguese loanwords than Tetum-Praça, making it more difficult to understand for Tetum-Praça speakers. Nonetheless, the use of Tetum as a religious language raised its status and made it prestigious in the eyes of its users. In acceding to East Timorese Church leaders' request for recognition as a diocese separate from Indonesia, the Vatican indicated its implicit disapproval of the occupation and Tetum was upgraded to a full liturgical language in 1981. Tetum as a medium of instruction in the lower grades was also introduced into Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of Dili. Aditjondro (1994, p. 40) reported that during the Indonesian occupation, the use of Tetum was spread substantially through Church activities.

### ***Pancasila, Catholicism and identity***

*Pancasila* is a set of guiding principles for the Indonesian state. Its philosophy emphasises consensus and group unity, particularly in its vision of democracy (Wright, 2004, p. 85). *Pancasila* consists of five principles:

- faith in one God;
- humanitarianism;

- national unity;
- representative government and
- the pursuit of social justice.

These principles form the basis of a contract between the citizen and the state in much the same way as the French state invokes liberty, fraternity and equality in its relationship with its citizens (Wright, 2004, p. 263). *Pancasila* requires that everyone must subscribe to one of five officially recognised religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Protestantism or Catholicism – probably the main factor that led to the conversion of most of the remaining Animist population in Timor-Leste to Catholicism. The number of professing Roman Catholics rose from only 27.8% in 1973 to 81.4% in 1989 (Aditjondro, 1994, p. 34). The number of Catholics also increased as a result of the influx of Catholic transmigrants from West Timor. In fact, as Aditjondro (1994, p. 37) reported, other religions also saw an exponential growth in this period, mainly among Protestants and Muslims.

There are various explanations for the dramatic increase in the rate of conversion. Aditjondro (1994, p. 35) suggests that Catholic icons substituted for the *lulics* or sacred objects used in Animist ancestor worship, since it became difficult to conduct Animist rituals and celebrations for fear of their being seen as resistance gatherings. Smythe (1998, p. 154) suggests that given the anticommunist views of the Indonesian regime, it was safer to be a Catholic. While both these explanations are probably true, it is undeniable that the East Timorese Church stood by the people and supported them through a period of terrible repression and intimidation. As Smythe (1998, p. 158) suggests, Catholicism came to symbolise identity to the extent that Catholicism fused with nationalism. Aditjondro (1994, p. 37), himself an Indonesian, declared that he felt Catholicism served as an expression of East Timorese collective identity. The Church provided a form of cultural space for the East Timorese. It was almost the only place where people could associate freely and publicly in large numbers. Additionally, the translation of the liturgies into Tetum raised its prestige in the eyes of ordinary people. This combination of factors contributed to the transformation of Tetum into a core cultural value and ensured its survival.

### ***The shaping of the East Timorese habitus***

This preceding account of languages in contact has identified a combination of six social, political and cultural variables that have helped to shape the East Timorese habitus.

1. The first was the formation of an educated Portuguese-speaking leadership influenced by European culture and ideas.
2. The second was the deep symbolic value of Portuguese as the language of the resistance.
3. The third was the successful elevation of Tetum from a language and culture despised and denigrated in Portuguese colonial discourse into a symbol of independence and national identity.
4. The fourth was the exponential growth of the Catholic Church and its stance against human rights abuses, leading to its acquisition of core cultural value for the East Timorese people.
5. The fifth was the expansion of education and literacy under the Indonesian administration and the spread of Indonesian through the education system, which facilitated the growth of pro-independence sympathies and networks, especially among East Timorese youth frustrated by the lack of opportunities.

6. The last arose out of the terror tactics used by the Indonesian security forces together with appalling human rights abuses and disrespect for East Timorese religious and cultural values. These tactics, abuses and disrespect have entered collective memory and have, to use Anderson's (1983, p. 15) phrase, 'engendered particular solidarities'.

In order to describe and understand post-colonial language policy, it has been necessary to delve into social policies and practices that have had a direct influence on official language choice and public use. I now turn my attention to language policy development in the independent republic of Timor-Leste.

#### Part IV: language policy and planning

Language policy and planning theory is rich in frameworks with which to examine instruments of policy development. Two such frameworks are particularly helpful in contextualising these processes in Timor-Leste, i.e.:

- (1) Cooper's (1989, p. 98) accounting scheme consisting of eight components indicating the variables that need to be attended to in the language planning process:
  - (i) what actors,
  - (ii) attempt to influence what behaviours,
  - (iii) of which people,
  - (iv) for what ends,
  - (v) under what conditions,
  - (vi) by what means,
  - (vii) through what decision-making process,
  - (viii) with what effect?
- (2) Ruiz's (1984) framework for analysing the ideological orientations of language policy development suggesting that there are three possible orientations underlying language policies, particularly in multilingual settings:
  - (i) The first and most common orientation perceives linguistic diversity as a *problem*. The kinds of action taken to deal with the problem take the form of eradicating, minimising or alleviating the problem.
  - (ii) The second orientation perceives language and multilingualism as a *right* and acknowledges legal, moral and natural rights to local identities (often these rights are more assumed than actual).
  - (iii) The third and most progressive orientation perceives languages and their communities as social *resources*.

Ruiz' schema allows for the fact that a polity might adopt a combination of these ideological orientations. Using the frameworks outlined in this monograph, the following section analyses four key instruments of language policy development:

- The Language Decree (2004);
- The orthography of Official Tetum (2004);
- The Language Directive (2004) and
- Medium of instruction policy goals for 2004–08.

### *The Language Decree of 2004: language as right*

On 14 April 2004, the Council of Ministers issued Government Decree No 1 of 2004, entitled ‘Orthographical Standard of the Tetum Language’, popularly known as the Language Decree. In the East Timorese legal context, the term used to describe sovereign laws enacted since independence is a *Decree Law*. In the preamble to the Language Decree, a *language as right* orientation to Tetum is discernable. In its English version, the preamble states . . .

Tetum given its dual status as an official and national language must be used in a consistent manner in the entire administration of the State [and in other institutions] as well as by the mass media. Tetum is an essential element in the construction of the Nation and in the affirmation of East Timorese identity. For this reason, its utilisation is a constitutional imperative and its implementation a matter of urgency. To this end it is essential that its orthography be made uniform as part of the process of developing the language. Conscious of the strategic importance of the Tetum language in the cementing of national unity, the Government hereby decrees in the terms of paragraph 0 of Article 115 of the Constitution of the Republic, as a regulation with the force of law, the following: Adoption and Implementation of the Orthographical Standard for Tetum (Retrieved June 6, 2006, from [www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL](http://www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL)).

The Decree adopts the standardised spelling system developed by the INL (Article One). The Decree confirms that . . .

The official and [first] national language is Official Tetum, a modern literary form of the vernacular, most widespread in the country and based on Tetum-Praça with the proviso that this choice is made without prejudice to those varieties of Tetum circumscribed to particular regions, which the State preserves and fosters as national languages. (Article Two, English version).

The Decree provides that the orthographical standard of Official Tetum must be used in three high status public domains: in the general education system, in official publications, and in social communication. It further provides that . . .

English and Indonesian, as simple working languages, must not be used in public images and priority must be given to Official Tetum and to Portuguese in public images and signs unless they are accompanied by texts in Tetum and Portuguese with greater visual prominence (Article Three, English version).

The Language Decree enacts three measures to reinforce the status of the official languages:

- (i) It reaffirms Tetum as a defining symbol of East Timorese identity. The preamble makes the status of Tetum as a nation-building tool very clear.
- (ii) The Decree legitimates the joint co-official status of Tetum and Portuguese.
- (iii) The Decree adopts the official orthography of Tetum.

The decree requires that the co-official languages should take priority in public images and signs. Reflecting a *language as problem* orientation towards English and Indonesian, the Language Decree addresses the issue of the ongoing and widespread use of English and Indonesian by many NGOs. The Decree contains a mixture of sanctions and incentives to enhance the status of Official Tetum and Portuguese. Articles One through Three institutionalise Tetum and Portuguese, implying a *language as right* view of the official languages. The Decree legitimates the acrolectal or high form of Tetum as the prestige variety or standard. The three articles have the effect of ensuring space for the official languages. The symbolic uses of language in forms such as bilingual public signage, in

street and place names, on public formal occasions, in education and in the arts creates space in which a limited range of language can be used to achieve great impact on community perceptions and revive a sense of cultural identity. Article Four establishes the INL as the Language Academy – the authority on standardisation. The INL also has the task of producing orthographies for the other national languages. In general, language academies are also established to preserve language purity. Part of their rationale is to keep the language free from foreign and politically undesirable influences. The INL has acquired some sweeping powers in order to achieve this remit. Breach of these provisions can lead to the cancellation of a researcher's visa. Among other provisions concerning linguistic research, Article Four sets out the role and function of the INL as follows:

- The INL is the scientific custodian of Official Tetum;
- The INL must develop the scientific activities necessary to the preservation and protection of the other national languages, devising orthographical standards for each of them (English version).

Article Four also charges the INL with responsibility for maintaining and preserving the endogenous languages. As Bowden & Hajek (2007, p. 268) observe, the Constitution provides a rare degree of recognition for the national languages. The Language Decree is an example of the *maintenance-oriented promotion* of Tetum. It charges the INL specifically with developing Official Tetum as the national language. The goal is to prescribe the use of English and Indonesian and consolidate the status of Official Tetum in the public domain. Politically, Official Tetum is a powerful symbol of national identity and potentially an equally powerful symbol of national unity. The appointment of a language-planning agency is important for the development of a modern lexicon, requiring the investment of significant resources over the long term.

### ***The orthography of Official Tetum, 2004: language as resource***

The new orthography of Official Tetum is an instance of the *maintenance-oriented promotion* of a language. The INL aims to achieve the standardisation of Official Tetum through a set of four principles for renovating the lexicon (Hull & Eccles, 2001). These principles are powerful statements of identity:

- (i) Tetum-Praça will form the basis of the literary language.
- (ii) Indonesian loanwords are to be avoided and eventually eliminated.
- (iii) There is to be a distancing from Indonesian-influenced idiom in favour of Tetum-Terik and Portuguese-based higher vocabulary.
- (iv) All loanwords are to conform to the rules of the orthography.

The standard orthography unifies previous systems into a more linguistically coherent one. The removal of Indonesian words is a first step in returning Tetum to its authentic endogenous origins. A contiguous aim is to devise a system that avoids the imposition of ethnocentric Portuguese or Indonesian-influenced spelling onto Tetum sounds. Hull and Eccles (2001, p. 222) declare that the orthography of Official Tetum aims to be true to the work of earlier orthographers while avoiding ethnocentric, Portuguese-influenced and macaronic spelling. The principles of renovation also aim to establish a systematic approach to word formation, establishing three key conventions:

- (i) A clear set of rules for hyphenation of words (there are many hyphenated words in Tetum).

- (ii) A set of rules for the use of accents to mark regular and irregular stress.
- (iii) The Tetum-Terik phoneme /w/ is replaced by /b/ so that, for example, the Tetum-Terik word *lawarik* (*child*) becomes *labarik* in Official Tetum.

The orthography follows spelling principles introduced by FRETILIN in 1974, when it launched its national literacy campaign and the reforms introduced by the Catholic Church when it adopted Tetum as the liturgical language. These involved the simplification of Portuguese words. To give some illustrative examples, *educação* (*education*) is transliterated as *edukasaun* and *colonialismo* (*colonialism*) as *kolonializmu*. However, in other respects, the orthography departs from these traditions. One innovation that has proved controversial to a public schooled in Portuguese orthographic conventions is the transliteration of the Portuguese sequences *lh* and *nh*, which were imposed onto Tetum sounds, into *ñ* and *ll* as found in Galician, a language closely related to Portuguese. To give two illustrative examples, *senhor* (*sir*) as written in Portuguese is written as *señor* and *trabalhador* (*worker*) as *traballadór*. These conventions were previously completely unknown in Timor-Leste. Another reform that departs from Portuguese orthographic conventions is the consistent replacement of the grapheme *c* and the digraph *qu* with *k* as in *kareta* (*car*), *kaneta* (*pen*) and *kolega* (*friend*), although place names such as Bacau and Viqueque have not changed their spelling. A further change consistently transliterates the *ch* combination in Portuguese *ch* as *x*. Hence, *cha* (*tea*) is written *xá*. Actual pronunciation is closer to *sá*. A final reform occurs with the replacement of the diphthong *ou* with *o* so that, for example, *mouris* (*to live*) is spelt *moris* (Hull & Eccles, 2001, p. 222).

In a situation in which literacy levels are low and the concept of spelling rules is new, some people find the rules for hyphens complex while others find the functions of accents difficult to perceive. Indeed, there are many examples from other languages showing that not all attempts at orthographic reforms are successful (see Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003, p. 216, for a discussion of successful and unsuccessful reforms of Malay spelling). In short, the long-term adoption of the orthography depends on the willingness of users to change and the degree of fit between the orthography and concurrent popular notions of identity.

### ***The Language Directive of 2004: language as problem***

In the civil service, the reintroduction of Portuguese and the introduction of Tetum are already in progress. Law 8/2004, which came into force on 16 July 2004, established a number of requirements including the obligation of public servants to use the official languages as the languages of the public service. Article 2 (3) of this law specifies that the law applies to:

- Civil servants of the Defence Forces.
- The Police and administrative staff of the office of the President of the Republic.
- The National Parliament.
- The courts.
- The Public Defenders Unit.
- The Prosecution Unit (JSMP, 2004, p. 23).

The current language issues in the formal justice sector are a legacy of three drastic system changes in the formal justice sector. Indonesian public policy imposed a shift from a Portuguese to an Indonesian justice system. To complicate matters further, UNTAET Regulation 2000/11 (as amended by Regulation 2001/25, Article 35) had allowed for the use of four working languages (Portuguese, Tetum, Indonesian and English) in the courts during what was known as the Transitional Period, referring to the period between 1999 and 2002.

On 27 February 2004, the Superior Council of Magistrates adopted the Directive on the Use of Official Languages in the Judicial System, known as the Language Directive (the term *Directive* refers to a lower-level class of laws passed by UNTAET). The Language Directive established that after an interim period of seven months, all court documents were to be written in the official languages (JSMP, 2004, p. 4). One of the main justifications given by the Superior Council of Magistrates for its decision was the need for the courts to follow developments in other institutional areas such as public administration and the ministries, where Portuguese is currently in use.

The Language Directive reflects a *language as problem* orientation in the formal justice sector. It requires every court actor to use the official languages. The directive instructs all court actors<sup>13</sup> to use Portuguese in *actos procesuais* (*procedural acts*), correspondence, requests, official documents and letters (JSMP, 2004, p. 13). The directive allowed for the use of working languages in documents concerning sentences and appeal submissions up to September 30, 2004; after that date, judicial secretaries and other court officials were instructed not to accept documents that were not written in Portuguese. The judicial secretaries and other court officials would be subject to disciplinary action if they failed to follow this directive. According to the directive, all documents not submitted in the official languages must be returned to their authors and given eight days for translation to be completed before resubmission. To understand the full significance of the Language Directive, it is necessary to know something of the impact of several previous changes in the formal justice system.

The Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP) is a national NGO (funded by a number of English-speaking donors: Aus Aid, US Aid, The Asia Foundation, New Zealand Aid and the International Commission of Jurists. It is also funded by the Finnish Embassy) set up to monitor the courts, provide legal analysis and produce thematic reports on the development of the justice system. In 2004, the JSMP produced a report on the use of language in the formal justice system. The report was produced as an argument against the Language Directive and for retaining the use of working languages in the justice system until such time as court actors become fully bilingual. Although the report reflects the language attitudes of its writers, it also provides a glimpse into the realities of language change and shift. During the UNTAET period, regulations in the district courts were written in English with translations, mostly into Indonesian (JSMP, 2004, p. 8). Court actors in the district courts used Indonesian in hearings and for administrative purposes. UNTAET adopted 72<sup>14</sup> regulations, all written in English; 63 of these were translated into Indonesian and nine into Tetum. The Special Panel for Serious Crimes (set up by the UN and disbanded at the end of 2005) used English. From 2003 to 2004, the JSMP stated that it did not see a single case from the district courts where the court actors spoke Portuguese in hearings. During the same period in the district courts, the JSMP observed a gradual shift from Indonesian to Tetum, although Indonesian was still used for writing. The JSMP noted that in the district courts more hearings were conducted in Tetum in 2004 than in the previous year. However, in practice, the JSMP observed that court actors used Indonesian when writing long documents. Prosecutors still tended to use Indonesian for reading out indictments and sentencing. Appeal statements up to April 2004 were written in Indonesian.

In the Appeals Court too, the effect of multiple system changes on language practices was chaotic. Up to April 2004, the JSMP noted that only two written court decisions were issued in Tetum. According to the JSMP, during appeal hearings originating from the districts, the court actors used Tetum when they spoke. The JSMP noted that after April 2004, in compliance with the Language Directive, every document from the Court of Appeal had been written in Portuguese, although as the JSMP pointed out, these documents are all based

on a set form that does not require high levels of linguistic ability to complete. The majority of indictments were written in Tetum. The JSMP observed that court clerks were complying with the Language Directive but for documents that were more complex, they usually made use of Indonesian. After 2004, according to the JSMP, two out of the three appeal judges who were fluent in Tetum had started to write decisions in Portuguese. On the other hand, the JSMP also noted some reluctance on the part of certain international judges to allow the translation of documents into Tetum from Portuguese, indicating an expectation that court actors should function fully in the Portuguese language. As the Appeal Court judges invariably work under international contract, there is also frequent turnover of personnel that leads to a lack both of continuity and consistency of practice.

There are two equally important sets of competing issues in the debate over language reform in the formal justice sector, neither of which have quick nor easy resolutions. On the one hand, the right to a fair trial implies that it is imperative to avoid any injustice arising out of errors of linguistic interpretation or delays caused by translation, possibly resulting in loss of public confidence in the system. On the other hand, the use of official languages in the judicial system enhances their prestige. Tetum does not yet possess a full set of legal terms that could be used in the formal justice system; this is due not only to the imposition of the Indonesian system but also to the fact that East Timorese communities have used an informal justice system based on oral traditions, known as *Lisan*, so no formal source of legal reference has existed for legal terms in Tetum. The INL produced a glossary of legal terms in Tetum in early 2005; in mid-2005, the first cohort of 23 students graduated from a course in legal translation and court interpreting using Official Tetum. The Asia Foundation, a US-funded NGO, also set up a project to develop and clarify legal terms in Tetum. Only a very small number of laws and decrees have been officially translated into Tetum. One of the tasks of the translators on completion of their training is to translate the applicable laws into Tetum. Simultaneous translation facilities have been available (although not always fully operational) in the Appeals Courtroom since April 2004.

This period of linguistic transition in the East Timorese justice system is likely to continue for quite some time. As Powell (2004, p. 111) points out, some 25 years after independence, Malaysia still ran its judicial system in English. Despite decades of sophisticated, well-resourced terminological development, there was still reluctance to shift to the full use of Malay in the Malaysian courts system (p. 109). Language shift in such a powerful domain is never straightforward. Moreover, the legal system in most countries is deeply linguistically conservative because words that have been tested in previous legal decisions have a known meaning and force whereas new wording may not be deemed to have the same connotations (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003, p. 120). The delicate matter of the relationship between language and justice remains an important human rights issue. As Powell states of the legal profession in Malaysia, it has a long way to go before it operates in a language most people know best but that does not mean it is less just (2004, p. 126). The sentiment may be applied with some confidence to the legal system in Timor-Leste, which still faces a massive task of reconstruction and linguistic renovation. Indeed, the numerous sound and valid criticisms of the East Timorese legal system made by the JSMP since its inception have not so far included any serious miscarriages of justice on account of language.

The Language Directive, like the Civil Service Law of 2004, is an example of *assimilation-oriented prohibition* in placing an obligation on all court actors to use the official languages, in an effort to carve out a niche for the official languages in this high-status domain. The implicit objective is to eliminate Indonesian and English from the legal domain. The longer English and Indonesian dominate in such key domains, the greater

the threat they continue to pose to the successful reintegration of the official languages. This has important implications with regard to the work of NGOs and aid agencies.

***Medium of instruction policy goals for 2004–08: language as problem***

A few brief statistics illustrate the scale of the task of rebuilding education in post-conflict Timor-Leste. According to the World Bank (2004, p. xvii), in 2001, 57% of the adult population had little or no schooling. Only 23% of the population had received primary education, 18% had received secondary education and a mere 1.4% had received tertiary education. Following the violence of 1999, most buildings had been burnt to the ground and a great number of non-East Timorese teachers had left the country, precipitating the collapse of the education system. The system was not operational again until the start of the October 2000 school year. From 2002, enrolment increased rapidly across the whole education sector in spite of the lack of adequate buildings, furniture and equipment, in spite of unsanitary, unsafe conditions in most classrooms and in spite of a severe shortage of both teachers and teaching materials. Between 2001 and 2003, the number of primary school teachers increased from 2992 to 4080 and the pupil–teacher ratio dropped from 67:1 to 45:1. At junior secondary level, the number of students increased from 29,586 to 38,180 and the number of teachers rose from 884 to 1103 (World Bank, 2004, p. xviii). Although this growth implies an improvement, the situation is still far from ideal. According to the development indicators published in the Education and Training Sector Investment Program (MECYS, 2004a, p. 1), net enrolment (i.e. the percentage of all children of primary age) in 2001 was 75%. This compares poorly with 99% net enrolment in Indonesia. Net enrolment of children of secondary age was 26%, compared with 43% in Indonesia and 67% across East Asia and the Pacific. The mean youth literacy rate (i.e. the percentage of the population aged between 15 and 24 who can read or write in any official language) is 73% compared with 98% for Indonesia. The Ministry of Education currently employs more than 7825 teachers, all recruited after 1999 (MECYS, 2004a, p. 20). Most of these are primary school teachers who were educated under the Indonesian system. At secondary level, a significant percentage of teachers are drawn from among university students who have not completed teacher training (UNDP, 2002, p. 52). A large segment of university teachers do not hold basic teaching qualifications let alone postgraduate qualifications. Many recently recruited teachers were employed simply on the strength of being able to speak Portuguese.

The negative outcomes of two assimilation-oriented education systems have left a legacy of low-level, low-quality educational, personal, social and economic development along with confusion, anger and controversy over the issue of national identity. Education remains in a state of crisis. It is estimated that at least a quarter of all students currently fail the school year in which they are enrolled and at least 10% abandon their studies at each year of primary and pre-secondary education (World Bank, 2004, p. 25). A significant number of parents still do not see education as a worthwhile investment. Rural parents in particular remain unconvinced of the value of education for their children. The World Bank Education Report of 2004 provides an index of the level of parental disengagement. This document reported that 32% of the poorest families and 26% of the richest families had ‘no interest’ in sending their children to school (World Bank, 2004, p. xix), citing poor educational quality (including in this category, instruction in a language that children did not understand) and lack of access to schools as the main deterrents. The World Bank (2004, p. xix) has predicted that only 47% of those who enter Grade 1 will complete Grade 6, while 53% will drop out. Dropout rates are consistently higher among boys than among girls (p. 25) and they are generally higher in the poorest social quintiles. On average,

school dropouts will only complete 4 years of schooling, leaving school with very low levels of basic literacy and numeracy. The outcomes of this situation are low levels of skill and productivity in the workforce. Such high levels of school dropout and repetition also increase the costs of education. However, a much greater challenge to achieving universal basic education is the evidence that both parents and children remain alienated from two successive education systems that failed to acknowledge or respect East Timorese languages and culture or to meet educational needs.

Educational language reform in Timor-Leste is being phased in through the formal primary school system. The structure of the East Timorese education system consists of:

- 2 years of non-compulsory preschool or kindergarten, known in Portuguese as *escola pre-primária* (*pre-primary school*);
- 6 years of *escola primária* (*primary school*);
- 4 years of *escola pre-secundária* (*lower secondary school*); and
- 2 years of *escola secundária* (*upper secondary school*).

Upon completion of this structure, pupils sit for the *Ensino Secundário Diploma* (*Secondary School Diploma*). Curriculum and language planning for the pre-primary years takes place outside the formal school system. Currently, there are 70 preschools catering for around 4700 children. Only eight of these pre-schools are public and they are mostly situated in the urban areas. Not more than 2% of children between the ages of 3 and 5 years attend any sort of preschool programme (UNICEF, 2005, p. 18). Consequently, crucial opportunities for early language and literacy development are lost. In the first instance, the medium of instruction policy focused exclusively on the reintroduction of Portuguese. In 2000, UNTAET updated the primary school curriculum and Portuguese was designated as the language of instruction. This reform moved up a grade every year after that, reaching Grade 5 in the academic year 2003–04. This curriculum model delivered Portuguese as a subject for 4 hours a week. However, the practical difficulties caused by the fact that so few teachers spoke the language let alone wrote it led the Ministry of Education (under the FRE-TILIN government it was designated the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) to relax its policy and allow teachers to use Tetum to explain things to the children. Following intense debate over the issue of early literacy in the child's first language, in 2005 the Ministry accepted Tetum as the medium of instruction in the first 2 years of schooling, i.e. from Grade 1 in primary school.

The Education Policy Framework for the years 2004–08 set out a vision, goals and priorities for education. Education policy objectives include hastening the reintroduction of Portuguese as well as hastening the revival of Tetum in all schools. Under the new national curriculum framework, policy mandated the use of Portuguese as the medium of instruction from Grades 1 to 6 (World Bank, 2004, pp. 28–29). The new curriculum framework was introduced into each grade, commencing from September 2005 with Grades 1 and 2, with the objective of instituting the framework in all primary schools by 2009.

The new curriculum designated:

- 4 hours a week of Tetum and Portuguese as subjects in Grades 1–3;
- 5 hours a week of Portuguese and 3 hours a week of Tetum in Grade 4 and
- 6 hours a week of Portuguese and 2 hours a week of Tetum by Grade 6.

The new syllabus framework was introduced through the *Hundred Schools Parent-Teacher Association Project*, a pilot programme set up to encourage parent and community involvement in schools.

Colonial legacies continue to pose significant problems in the curriculum. Although Portuguese was introduced as a subject in the junior secondary grades from 2005, at the time of writing, the curriculum in junior high schools and senior high schools still runs on the Indonesian model. Indonesian is the most common language of instruction in the universities and high schools. Moreover, textbooks are still largely in Indonesian. At the National University, the degree structure, syllabi and methods of assessment remain predominantly Indonesian. By 2003, Indonesian was no longer taught as a subject in schools or in the national university; however, junior secondary and secondary school students have continued to use Indonesian books, while learning Portuguese up to the time of writing (World Bank, 2004, p. 29). In this educational context, a *language as problem* orientation is inevitable.

A key goal of the Education Policy framework was to reintroduce Portuguese and Tetum as languages of instruction (MECYS, 2004b, p. 10). The Ministry also committed itself to developing teaching materials for the official languages in addition to improving the educational standards and qualifications of its teaching staff. This improvement included:

- language development in Portuguese;
- the development of bilingual Portuguese/Tetum teaching materials;
- the development of parent–teacher associations and
- the reinforcement of the role of parents and of communities in school life (MECYS, 2004b, pp. 20–24).

One particularly striking statement in the MECYS Policy Document for 2004–08 stands out as an indicator of attitudes towards the use of Tetum and the national languages as medium of instruction:

Overall, since Tetum is at a preliminary stage of development, the implementation of Portuguese will have precedence, and Tetum may be used as a pedagogic aide in the teaching of disciplines related to the environment, social sciences, history and geography (MECYS, 2004b, p. 11, English version).

Despite its co-official status, this statement firmly places Tetum in the role of junior partner to Portuguese and effectively states that it is an inferior medium for educational purposes. An educational policy containing the implicit assumption that endogenous languages are deficient contributes to the low esteem in which people tend to hold their native languages. This phenomenon frequently fosters a downward spiral of underachievement among their speakers; moreover, in this policy document, the national languages are not even mentioned.

The high level of multilingualism in Timor-Leste means that first language-based or vernacular medium schooling presents a major challenge. In almost all cases, the first language is unwritten. Appropriate terminology for education purposes is yet to be developed in Tetum, let alone in the national languages. School-based educational materials in the national languages are simply not available. Another logistical challenge lies in the employment and placement of adequately trained teachers who speak the local languages in the appropriate communities. To date, the medium of instruction policy appears to combine *maintenance-oriented promotion of Portuguese* with *assimilation-oriented toleration of Tetum*. Timor-Leste is not unique in encountering this kind of dilemma; the country shares such problems with small island states across the South Pacific faced with managing the continuing influence of colonial languages. As Lotherington (1998, p. 65) notes in the context of these small island states, ‘postcolonial education policies continue to oscillate between the security of instituted colonial models and the pressing need to shelter and nourish [. . . indigenous] cultures and languages’.

As the draft curriculum framework for 2004–08 (MECYS, 2004b, p. 8) affirms: ‘Portuguese and Tetum are the languages of instruction’. The framework describes one of the curriculum objectives for the teaching of languages as: ‘the development of two languages at the same time in a process of mutual enrichment’ (p. 9) and it goes on to state that early literacy will be taught in Tetum under the assumption that the transfer of literacy skills to Portuguese will occur, although it does not state clearly how such a transfer will be achieved. This position indicates that the new curriculum has shifted from a submersion model of bilingual education to a transitional one. At a policy level, it would appear that children are intended to acquire basic skills in Tetum while building up a threshold level in Portuguese sufficient to cope with the demands of schooling (World Bank, 2004, p. 29). After the introduction of Tetum in Grade 1, the emphasis changes gradually to Portuguese by the end of Grade 6. In reality, practice varies from school to school and teachers seem to be using a variety of language and content teaching strategies. Nevertheless, according to policy, children are learning to read in Tetum, which is a second language for many children and in Portuguese, which is an unknown language for the majority of children. A further issue lies in the reality that teachers are working in a low or no resource situation.

The Curriculum Framework states that its literacy goals are:

- to ensure the effective mastery of both national languages, both oral and written skills and
- to develop good habits of reading and writing in practical and recreational situations (MECYS, 2004b, p. 9).

These policy goals focus on literacy in the co-official languages. However, the goals do not address the many forms that literacy can take. As observed earlier, these forms include local literacies or literacy practices associated with local or regional identities (Street, 1994, 1995) as well as vernacular literacies. As Hornberger (1994) argues, literacy planning needs to engage with different forms of literacy and with the uses to which literacy will be put. Decisions concerning these options have important implications for the wellbeing of those citizens for whom literacy is being planned. In a situation in which teachers cannot give sufficient oral support for the second language and in which there is inadequate support for children’s first language or lingua franca, transitional bilingual education can become submersive in effect. Moreover, if children’s first languages are educationally and socioculturally devalued through continued emphasis on the colonial language, one potential long-term outcome could be continuing deficient mass literacy and poor home and community support for children’s literacy acquisition. As Lotherington (1998, p. 72) advises, bilingual education requires careful attention:

- if it is to avoid failing to acknowledge the importance of maintaining and facilitating the languages of the home and community;
- if it is successfully to enrich and maintain children’s linguistic repertoires; and
- if it is to value their first languages.

There is a substantial evidence to support the view that providing children with educational support for cognitive and social development in their first language enhances the acquisition and development of the second language by augmenting general language development, increasing language awareness and sharpening a sense of cultural identity. Such reinforcement is especially important for children in low-status speech communities (Baker, 2001; Cummins, 2000). Providing education in the home language also helps to

enhance opportunities for increased community participation in education. Siegel (1997) reports that in Papua New Guinea, vernacular medium literacy programmes for children in community preschools resulted in substantial benefits for children when they entered formal education (see also Crowley, 2005, p. 36). However, such a goal is far from realisation in Timor-Leste, where print material in the vernacular languages is virtually non-existent and where the absence of graphisation for the majority of the national languages makes vernacular literacy education impossible to implement at present.

The use of a language as the medium of instruction provides a powerful tool for maintaining and reviving that language and its culture. The use of a language as the medium of instruction is also an important instrument for intergenerational language transmission (Fishman & Fishman, 2000). The prestige enjoyed by colonial languages together with the low status accorded to endogenous languages have jointly resulted in a universal lack of confidence in endogenous languages as being adequate and suitable for schooling. Like many former colonies, Timor-Leste has fallen victim to this popular interpretation. Its extreme poverty and aid dependency have worked to slow down corpus planning efforts and to impede serious commitment to literacy in the national languages. As Alidou (2004, p. 209) asserts, the absence of standardisation frequently becomes a convenient delaying tactic serving to maintain the power of colonial languages since little meaningful effort is devoted to the use of national languages as the medium of instruction. Although the World Bank (2004, pp. 89–90) has advocated the teaching of literacy in the first language in the early grades as a policy option, there is little evidence of a practical commitment to making this a reality in Timor-Leste. This situation is by no means unique to Timor-Leste. As Alidou (2004, p. 205) observes, the World Bank demonstrates continuing reluctance to embark on programmes to promote comprehensive bilingual education in Africa.

In summary, the medium of instruction problem in Timor-Leste is the legacy of two colonial powers, which imposed their own languages as medium of instruction for economic, political and cultural reasons. In the post-colonial era, the search for effective solutions to the problem has been constrained not only by inadequate physical and human resources and by the hesitancy of the Ministry of Education to promote the instructional use of East Timorese languages but also by the economic power of western agencies to influence development policies. Table 10 attempts to synthesise the goals, motives and orientations of language policy development using Cooper's (1989, p. 98) accounting scheme to draw the activities together into a process. The instances of language policy development discussed in this paper are classified according to:

- (i) their societal or linguistic focus (Haugen, 1983),
- (ii) their treatment of language rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1989) and
- (iii) their ideological orientations (Ruiz, 1984).

The implications of this state of affairs for the maintenance of the national languages are discussed in Part V of this monograph.

### **Part V: language maintenance and prospects**

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste came into existence in 2002 at 'ground zero'. Since then there has been a massive drive for the reconstruction of:

- basic infrastructure, governance, civil society and the economy;
- the formal legal system and the judiciary;

Table 10. Five instruments of language policy development classified by focus, activity type, goals, treatment of multilingualism and policy orientation.

Who?	Does what?	To whom or what?	By what means?	To what ends?		With what effects?	
				Policy goals (the formal role of language in society)	Planning goals (the function of languages in society)	Treatment of multilingualism and linguistic human rights	Policy orientation
Constituent Assembly	National Constitution of 2002	Societal focus: Directed at the <i>uses</i> of language(s)	Status planning	Officialisation of Tetum and Portuguese as co-official languages Officialisation of English and Indonesian as working languages Nationalisation of 16 endogenous languages including Tetum	Revival of Portuguese	Maintenance/promotion of Tetum and Portuguese Tolerance of endogenous languages	Language as right
Council of Ministers	Language Decree of 2004	Societal focus: Directed at the <i>uses</i> of language(s)	Status planning	Prescription of language use	Tetum reinvigoration and spread	Maintenance/promotion of Tetum	Language as right

INL	Orthography of Official Tetum 2004	Linguistic focus: directed at the <i>structure</i> of language(s)	Corpus planning	Standardisation of Tetum Praça	Renovation of Tetum	Maintenance/promotion of Tetum	Language as resource
Superior Council of Magistrates: Ministry of Justice	Language Directive of 2004	Societal focus: directed at the <i>image</i> of language(s)	Prestige planning	Reversal of language shift	Extension of repertoire: modernisation and stylistic development of Tetum	Maintenance/promotion of Portuguese and Tetum	Language as problem
Ministry of Education	Medium of Instruction Policy Goals 2004–08	Societal focus: directed at language <i>users</i>	Acquisition planning	Redistribution of languages in society	Language revival and (re)acquisition through schooling	Promotion of Portuguese  Tolerance of Tetum Elimination of Indonesian	Language as problem

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- agriculture, information and communications and
- health, education and human resource development.

The government has had to manage the process of social reconciliation and building diplomatic relationships with Portugal, Australia and Indonesia as well as with the rest of the international community. The East Timorese have also had to manage their relationship with the UN and the international aid industry. Although in some quarters it has been called a potential failed state, modest progress has been made, particularly in the field of education (for a more detailed discussion, see Anderson, 2006). Despite the recent upheavals, Timor-Leste is still an independent democracy, albeit a somewhat precarious one. The development challenges and achievements of the period between 1999 and 2006 have been described and evaluated in detail elsewhere (Anderson, 2006; Kingsbury & Leach, 2007; Nicolai, 2004). In this final part, I discuss the prospects for language maintenance and some possible future directions for language policy and planning.

### *Language revival efforts*

Language revival efforts like other social reforms have been impeded by political instability and lack of funding. Competing language ideologies that disparage Tetum while promoting Portuguese, Indonesian and English have also hampered language revival and reform. At present, the languages of Timor-Leste coexist in an uneasy, hierarchical relationship. Language politics and *ad hoc* language practices on the part of NGOs aid agencies and peacekeeping forces contribute to a situation of *asymmetrical multilingualism* (Clyne, 1997, p. 306) in which:

- Indonesian and English compete with the official languages;
- Portuguese has greater prestige than Tetum in most formal domains and
- the endogenous languages have a lower sociolinguistic profile than do all four official and working languages.

While the constitutional provisions for language allow for the development of scientific activities to protect and preserve the national languages, the main focus has been on reintroducing the co-official languages as quickly as possible. As Bowden and Hajek (2007, p. 272) point out, if the experience of other countries may be taken as providing some guidance, the concentration of resources on developing Portuguese and Tetum may prove to be economically of only short-term benefit. As the following examples show, current language revival projects are small scale and dependent on outside funding. There is still a long way to go for the endogenous languages actually to be maintained and promoted.

Three projects have achieved modest success in the face of funding constraints, lack of local expertise and political instability.

- (1) The Linguistic Survey of East Timor, a collaborative project between the INL at the University of East Timor and the University of Western Sydney, was launched in 1995. It aimed to produce language profiles of selected vernaculars in East Timor. The East Timor language profiles are a series of basic descriptions of the national languages intended as introductions for linguists and non-linguists working in Timor-Leste. Language profiles have been published for Tetum-Praça, Waima'a, Southern Mambae, Baikenu and Galoli (Accessed February 4, 2008, from [www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL/profiles.html](http://www.asianlang.mq.edu.au/INL/profiles.html)).

- (2) The Waima'a Documentation Project (see <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/linguistics/projects/waimaha/eng/team.html>) focuses on developing and documenting Waima'a and on investigating the effects of its contact with a neighbouring language, Makasae. In addition to producing an orthography for Waima'a, the project participants have prepared two collections of children's stories, an alphabet book and a Waima'a–Tetum–Portuguese–English–Indonesian glossary for local distribution. The investigators report that the proposed orthography (based on the INL official orthographic conventions) and materials have been well received by the local community.
- (3) Lastly, the Fataluku Language Project has produced a dictionary, a proposed orthography and recordings of songs and stories in Fataluku. The only written text ever published in Lóvaia is published on its website (Available April 30, 2008, at [www.fataluku.com](http://www.fataluku.com)).

### *Potential policy outcomes*

To return to the models used in my analysis of language-policy development, policy approaches in Timor-Leste combine non-discriminatory prescription, assimilation-oriented tolerance and maintenance-oriented promotion. A mixture of language-as-problem, language-as-resource and language-as-right orientations is discernable and no clear picture of a coherent overall orientation emerges. Mixed language-policy orientations are a product of deferential attitudes towards colonial languages, which are associated with modernity and progress while endogenous languages tend to be associated with backwardness and tradition (Fishman, 1990; Pattanayak, 1986; Ruiz, 1995). There are three potentially negative outcomes from this kind of policy approach.

#### *The marginalisation of the national languages*

According to the provisions of the Constitution, the national languages are not forbidden. Their use is permitted and supported but not for functions that are performed in an official language. The best outcome that can be expected from this policy approach is that the national languages will continue to be restricted to oral usage in rural domains. However, the worst outcome could be that as language shift begins to occur on a wider scale, the national languages might be expected to decline or even to start to disappear, an outcome that has occurred to a number of smaller languages in Indonesia (Florey, 1991; Hajek, 2006).

#### *The failure of Tetum to thrive in higher domains*

The orthography of Official Tetum, the Language Decree and the Language Directive are all examples of maintenance-oriented promotional language policies; however, in view of the overall policy approach and without evidence of greater support and engagement from social actors at both community and individual levels together with the cooperation of international donors, these maintenance-oriented promotional policies are unlikely to fully achieve the desired outcome of ensuring that Tetum thrives in the designated domains.

#### *Subtractive language learning and lack of teacher/parent support*

Initially, the medium of instruction planning followed a typical submersion model of language instruction. The recent change to a transitional model including an early shift to Portuguese is encouraging but it is still likely to result in subtracted competence in both Portuguese and Tetum in later grades. Submersion education not only affects the

self-esteem of learners but also that of teachers and parents, who are themselves often survivors of such systems. The experience of being socialised into considering their own language to be inferior can lead teachers and parents to take a negative view of the use of first languages in the classroom. Parents also often want their children to learn the colonial language because they realise that it is the language of opportunity. Lack of parental support and understanding has been the cause of bilingual education policy failure in a number of contexts where the former colonial language is regarded as the only language of opportunity and upward mobility (Hornberger, 1987; Kamwangamalu, 2001).

### **Future directions**

In view of the issues raised in this monograph, I would like to discuss four final recommendations, based on linguistic research and on the experiences of many small countries struggling with the legacies of colonialism that might underpin a more proactive, rights-oriented approach to language management in Timor-Leste.

#### *Additive bilingualism offers the best model for valuing endogenous languages*

The literature provides convincing international evidence that early immersion in the first language rather than in the former colonial language has educational, psychological, social and cultural benefits (UNESCO, 2003). The results from such immersion programmes have been positive in many parts of the world (Romaine, 2001, p. 529). The model of additive bilingualism, promoted through the education system, is widely regarded as the best model for valuing not only the official languages but also the endogenous languages and cultures and for exploiting the potential of those languages as resources for development and growth. An additive approach to language teaching and learning would demonstrate the value of Tetum by granting it equal status with Portuguese as a language of instruction and, as Alidou (2004) and Lopes (1998) suggest, would allow for vernacular-medium schooling at least as an oral medium through the early primary years. Such an approach can facilitate the transfer of literacy to the official language(s) at a later stage in education as has been demonstrated to be ideally the case with the 'Three Language Formula' in India (Khubchandani, 1978; Schiffman, 1996).

Lopes (1998, p. 31), writing in the context of Mozambique, has recommended an 'initial bilingualism model'. Applied to Timor-Leste, the initial bilingualism model would mean that the changeover to Portuguese would only occur after a period of at least 3 years in which Portuguese and Tetum were used as joint medium of instruction. This recommendation resembles the current Ministry of Education policy goals. However, I contend that policymakers should place greater emphasis on Tetum as a language of instruction and literacy. Such emphasis would not only validate Tetum but would also reduce the risk of under-proficiency in Portuguese in the later grades. There is abundant evidence that the Tetum language has become an overarching core cultural value for the East Timorese people, suggesting that the young people and newly literate adults who emerge from an additive bilingual and biliteral education will do so with a good command of both Portuguese and Tetum. Young people and newly literate adults will also have the self-respect that comes from the knowledge and affirmation of their own linguistic and cultural identity and from the awareness that it is genuinely valued in society and by the state.

While schools cannot be expected to bear exclusive responsibility for language maintenance and revival, they can play an important role in forging links with parents and local communities to raise awareness and encourage cooperative engagement in language

planning. It is vital that parents be convinced of the value of additive bilingual education. The Hundred Schools Parent-Teacher Association Project in Timor-Leste presents a golden opportunity to engage with parents on the issues of bi and multilingual education. In an additive approach to language teaching and learning, parents can play a useful role as models of the local languages. Parents and children can be more involved in the life of the school when the school validates the language that is used at home.

### ***Successful literacy is indigenised into peoples' cultures***

While the promotion of vernacular literacy cannot protect endogenous languages against possible threats from languages of wider communication, there are other very good reasons for encouraging literacy in the endogenous languages. In addition to the positive psychological and educational benefits, speakers of such languages can be informed about their own histories, cultures and traditions as well as empowered to make informed choices about their place in the world. Developing literacy can imbue a language with prestige and make it suitable for use in modern social domains. Dictionaries and grammars also enhance the status of languages in the eyes of their users. At the same time, however, as Grenoble and Whaley (2006, p. 102) point out, it is important to understand that the pursuit of vernacular literacy is not an end in itself. Local literacies require contexts of use. Ideally, the emergence of local literacies should increase the social and economic advantages of local languages for literate speakers. In addition, the objective should be to develop multiple literacies including literacy that:

- (1) empowers people in their activities outside their immediate environment and
- (2) emboldens people to use a local language by creating social spheres where reading and writing the local language is expected (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 118).

However, as Grenoble and Whaley warn, it is important to be cautious when it comes to introducing literacy to an endogenous, oral culture. As they point out (p. 103), literacy has a complex relationship with other aspects of culture and inevitably its introduction initiates changes in a traditionally oral culture. The introduction of literacy also implies that there is a literate group within the culture who can act as teachers and the creation and emergence of this group invariably calls for outside expertise and funding. The influences of external expertise and funding as well as the creation and emergence of a literate elite add another level of complexity. It is essential to assess the costs and benefits to a community that may accompany the introduction of literacy. Most unsuccessful attempts at literacy implantation occur when outsiders impose orthographies and prescribe forms of the language or reading materials that are unacceptable to those being asked to adopt them. Ideally, as Grenoble and Whaley suggest, literacy develops best from grassroots movements within the communities themselves.

According to Crowley (2000b, p. 379), the experience of literacy projects in many Pacific island populations demonstrates that literacy should be incorporated into people's cultures in order to permit them to be successful. This experience implies that while literacy has been introduced from outside, successful literacy becomes indigenised into the language ecology. A critical issue in Timor-Leste will be the production in both Tetum and the endogenous languages for both children and adults of literacy materials that go beyond the classroom and reflect East Timorese culture, values and realities so that literacy can have a purpose and can flourish. As Crowley (2000b, p. 384) has observed in the context of literacy teaching in Vanuatu, language policymakers should be encouraged to

promote vernacular literacy in such a way that it promotes local rather than exclusively national or international interests. Crowley (2005, pp. 31–49) wisely recommends a very gradual introduction of initial vernacular literacy, over a period of at least 15 years in order to avoid losing public support through errors in implementation or poor planning.

### ***Language policy success grows from changes in perceptions of language and from community decision-making***

As I have discussed at length in this monograph, colonial language planning has fostered the impression that endogenous languages are inferior and as a consequence less suitable for use at higher levels of national life. Successful planning for language revival needs to grow from community changes in the perception of language and from community involvement in decision-making processes. Such processes can make a positive contribution to reconciliation and social reconstruction. Community engagement through the multitude of networks and NGOs that exist in Timor-Leste could yield rich lexical resources and encourage interest in the standardisation of Tetum.

### ***Language policy can promote social inclusion***

As Almeida (2001) observes, the era of post-colonial studies has been marked by the revelation of the dependency of post-colonial societies on representations of their identity by the colonisers. A language policy approach that invites an inclusive and accommodating view of identity should be able to incorporate the different narratives that have grown out of the experience of occupation and diaspora. Following May (2001, p. 311), I suggest that through the recognition of the collective language rights of all language groups, the nation state can be re-imagined (Anderson, 1983) to accommodate greater diversity, while still acknowledging the historical and cultural forces that have shaped the identities and the habitus of its speech communities.

On a final note, I suggest that successful nation-building in the present political climate makes social inclusion in Timor-Leste not so much an ideal as an imperative. A language policy that moves towards the maintenance-oriented promotion of language rights needs to acknowledge that language planning is a *niche*d activity (i.e. it states unequivocally what languages should be used for which purposes). In closing, I suggest that such a rights/resource orientation to language management can avoid a situation in which *ad hoc* power relationships between languages continue to dominate social discourse and language politics. It can also enable the speakers of all East Timorese languages to participate in the nation-building process and to confront the challenges of social reconciliation and national development on their own terms.

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### **Notes**

1. PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) designates a rate of exchange that accounts for price differences across countries, allowing comparisons of real output and incomes. PPP US\$ rate has the same purchasing power in the domestic economy as \$1 has in the USA.

2. The survey was conducted over 2.5 years (August 2003 to December 2006). The representative sample of 1272 adults (aged 15 and over) was selected using random methods from all districts.
3. *GOLKAR* (*Sekretariat Bersama Golongan Karya or Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups*) was the ruling party during the Suharto regime (1966–98). It is the biggest party in the current ruling coalition in Indonesia.
4. The last surviving Lóvaia speakers live in Porlamano in the Mehara *suco* in the district of Lautem. They are surrounded by the Fataluku language, which is used for daily communication across all generations. Fataluku linguistic vitality is very high. Although intergenerational transmission of Lóvaia has long been in decline, particularly since the Second World War, it is thought that ‘cultural concealment’ has contributed to its demise (Hajek et al., 2003, p. 165). Cultural concealment is a process in which subordinate ethnic groups mask their linguistic identity outside certain physical boundaries. Severe population loss in the Indonesian period and the advancing age of speakers also account for the drop in the number of Lóvaia speakers. It has recently been suggested that Lóvaia is not so much moribund as ‘in a coma’ because its speakers are only introduced to the language by someone who wants to transfer their knowledge of Lóvaia. This usually implies that the recipient will be in their 60s (Engelenhoven & Cailoru, 2006).
5. The figures for literacy appear to have omitted the data for the age group 6–9 years. In other words, the percentages for language use shown in Table 18 of the Census Atlas are for the population over the age of 10 and are based on the ability to speak, read and write in any of the official languages.
6. The constriction of mass-education policy was the same throughout Portugal’s colonies. To illustrate, vernacular education was outlawed in Angola in 1921 and by 1950, all schools in Angola were Portuguese-medium (Powell, 2002, p. 271).
7. The crocodile is an important symbol in East Timorese mythology and culture.
8. Note, however, that such provisions may create conflict or violate other legal conditions (Youmans, 2007).
9. The word *topasse* is derived from *tupassi*, a Dravidian word, meaning interpreter. They were also called *os casados* (*lit. the married ones*) because they were the product of mixed race marriages, a practice originating in Goa and Malacca where there are many people of Eurasian origin (Albarran Carvalho, 2003, p. 74).
10. For an interesting discussion of the historiography of the island of Timor, see Hägerdal, 2006.
11. The *Manufahi rebellion* was a serious challenge to Portuguese control. It has been invested with nationalist sentiments, and the liurai *Dom Boaventura*, who led the rebellion, has gone down in the discourses of East Timorese history as a nationalist hero.
12. The DDLC is supported by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the Portuguese National Parliament. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Portugal and the Portuguese government also provide funding (see Timor Links, Accessed February 4, 2008, from [www.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/TIMORLES/TEEXTN/O](http://www.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/TIMORLES/TEEXTN/O)).
13. Court actors include judges, prosecutors, lawyers and court clerks.
14. The figures given in the JSMP report are mathematically inconsistent. The figures quoted here must therefore be regarded as approximate.

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