

Multilingualism in Timor-Leste

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Multilingualism, Migration and the Multilingual City

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Questions

- ▶ What are the languages used in Timor-Leste?
- ▶ What are they used for?
 - ▶ Home
 - ▶ Church
 - ▶ Government
 - ▶ Education
 - ▶ Non-government sector
 - ▶ Media and advertising
- ▶ Is the situation changing? If so, how?

Languages

- ▶ About 26 local languages: 5 Papuan, the rest Austronesian (Williams-van Klinken & Williams, 2015).
- ▶ Official languages: Tetun and Portuguese (Constitution, article 13).
- ▶ “Working languages”: Indonesian and English (Constitution, article 159).
- ▶ Tetun Dili is the main language of public life.

History

Two Tetun-speaking kingdoms in south: east and central

- ▶ Tetun became lingua franca in most of eastern Timor (Thomaz, 1981).

Portuguese arrived early 1500s, traded then ruled to 1975.

- ▶ Portuguese the language of government and education.
- ▶ In capital Dili spoke Tetun and Portuguese.

Indonesian rule 1975-1999.

- ▶ Indonesian the language of government and education.

UN interim rule: 1999-2002.

- ▶ English the language of UN agencies and international NGOs.

Restoration of independence: 2002.

- ▶ Tetun and Portuguese the official languages.

Vernacular languages

Language	2004	2015	Change
Baikenu + Atoni	6.2%	5.9%	-5%
Fataluku	3.9%	3.5%	-10%
Galoli	1.5%	1.4%	-7%
Kemak	6.9%	5.8%	-16%
Idate	1.3%	1.2%	-8%
Kemak	6.9%	5.8%	-16%
Makasae + Sa'ani	12.1%	11.0%	-9%
Mambai	17.7%	16.6%	-6%
Midiki	1.2%	1.2%	-
Naueti	1.5%	1.4%	-7%
Tokodede	4.3%	4.0%	-7%
Waima'a	2.0%	1.8%	-10%

All reduced, except perhaps those with very low percentages.
Tetun Terik data unclear, but percentage reduced.

(Direcção Geral de Estatística Timor-Leste, 2016; National Statistics Directorate, 2006)

Functions of the vernaculars

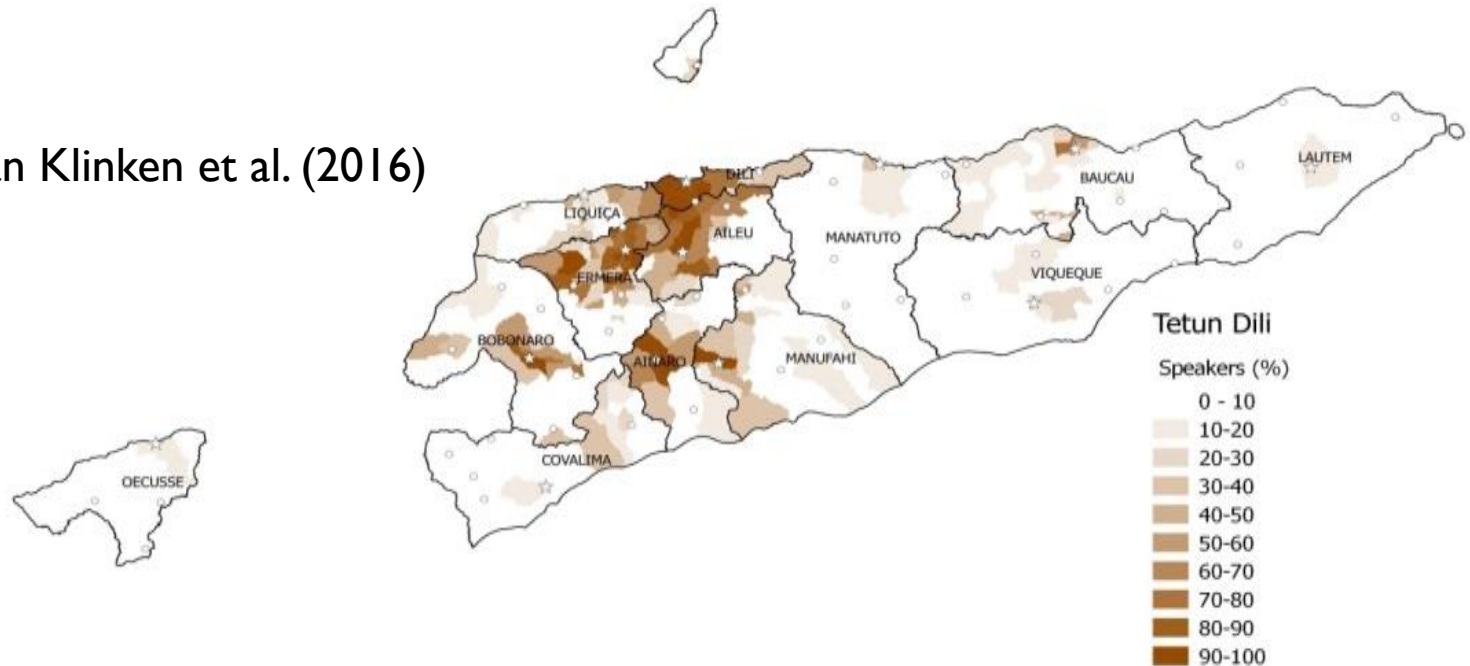
- ▶ Traditional cultural events, rituals, traditional poetry, praying to the ancestors – 100%
- ▶ Informal communication in local communities:
 - ▶ family, friends, shopping, markets
 - ▶ community radio
 - ▶ Facebook
- ▶ Limited formal (non-ritual) communication:
 - ▶ Some homilies in church
 - ▶ Mother-tongue education in some languages for the initial years of primary school, 2014 on.

Tetun Dili as home language

Year	% home language	Comment
1999	about 7%	Almost all in Dili
2004	24.1%	
2010	36.2%	Only 53% in Dili
2015	30.6%	

(Williams-van Klinken & Williams, 2015)

Williams-van Klinken et al. (2016)



Language knowledge and literacy

Year	Use	Tetun	Port-uguese	Indon-esian	English
2015	Home language	31%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%
2015	L2 or L3	57%	6%	2%	1%
2004	Can speak, read or write	86%	37%	59%	22%
2004	Can read and write	42%	12%	39%	5%
2015	Can speak, read or write	92%	61%	62%	39%
2015	Can read and write	63%	31%	37%	16%

(Statistics Timor-Leste 2017)

Church

- ▶ Tetun replaced Portuguese as the language of the liturgy in the Catholic Church in 1981.
- ▶ Developed a unique “liturgical” Tetun, with some Tetun Terik words and grammar (Williams-van Klinken, 2002)
- ▶ Catholic and Protestant use Tetun for most church services, with special service times for Indonesian, Portuguese or English.
- ▶ Songs:
 - ▶ In rural areas, sing in Tetun and Portuguese.
 - ▶ Some urban masses and some Protestant services sing in Tetun, Portuguese, Indonesian and/or English, plus Latin for some Catholic masses.

Government

- ▶ Parliament: mainly Tetun, some Portuguese, with simultaneous interpretation
- ▶ Political speeches to the people:
 - ▶ Tetun or Portuguese
 - ▶ By charismatic leaders or in political campaigning: Tetun, occasionally vernacular.
- ▶ Government offices:
 - ▶ Speak Tetun
 - ▶ Forms in Portuguese, most with Tetun translation, some with English translation.
 - ▶ Signs are in Portuguese, Tetun and/or English.

Government publications

	Tetun	Portuguese	Indonesian	English	Comment
Justice		constitution, law, Jornal da República. website, reports.			Tetun translation unofficial 2017 Tetun equal status (de Albuquerque & Almeida, 2020:1207)
Min. Finance	some after 2015	most	forms only	much	Much translation.
Min. Education	Facebook press releases	website			
Min. Agriculture	website, Facebook				
Min. Health	website, Facebook			Twitter	

Primary school

Curriculum (Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2007; Ogen, 2017:15)

- ▶ 1999: Start phasing in Portuguese, with Tetun as auxiliary
- ▶ 2007: Start in Tetun and Portuguese, by grade 4 Portuguese only
- ▶ 2013: Start in Tetun, then introduce Portuguese, by grade 7 Portuguese only
 - ▶ Limited mother tongue program, 2014 on, with excellent results (Walter 2016)

But: “Teachers’ ability in Portuguese is very minimal.” (Coordinator of Rede Edukasuan Timor-Leste (Coalition for Education), Jose Monteiro, The Dili Weekly, 1/7/2021)

Reality: Tetun

- ▶ “I teach in Portuguese, explain in Tetun.”
- ▶ School online (TV program 2020-21): Tetun

Other options:

- ▶ Escola Portuguesa Ruy Cinatti, government “reference schools” (1 per district): Portuguese
- ▶ Private international schools (at least 9): English.

Secondary school (years 7-12)

- ▶ **Curriculum:** All to be taught in Portuguese, except Tetun and English classes
- ▶ **Language testing** of new university entrants, 2012, using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Godinho, Ximenes, Luan, & Williams-van Klinken, 2012)

	Tetun	Port- uguese	Indon- esian	English
listening	B2-	A2-	B1-	A1
reading	B2	B1	B2	B1
grammar	-	A1	-	A1
writing: majority	A2	A1	A1-A2	A1
writing: best students	B1-	A2-	B1-	A2-

Need B2 to be effective at high school or university.

Have not noted any significant improvement since, at least for Portuguese and English.

Tertiary education

- ▶ 2014 survey of 11 tertiary education institutions (Freitas et al., 2015):
 - ▶ National University actual teaching:
 - ▶ law and education: Portuguese
 - ▶ medicine: Spanish
 - ▶ others: mixed
 - ▶ 58% of lecturers had elementary Portuguese or less.
 - ▶ Private universities: mixed Tetun, Indonesian (also Newman (2019:206))
 - ▶ Dili Institute of Technology aiming for Tetun and English.
- ▶ Source texts: Indonesian, English, Portuguese
- ▶ All students study Tetun, Portuguese and English as subjects.
- ▶ Overseas study:
 - ▶ National University: 80% in Portuguese, 20% in English
 - ▶ medicine: Spanish (Cuba)
 - ▶ private universities; in Indonesian or English
 - ▶ scholarships: English
 - ▶ privately funded: Indonesian, Portuguese, English.

Tertiary education

- ▶ Observation of 8 classes in 3 tertiary education institutions: (da Conceição Soares & dos Santos, 2020)
 - ▶ 5 lecturers used textbook in Indonesian, 1 in Portuguese, 2 in English
 - ▶ PowerPoint language and technical terms followed the textbook language, except 1 translated from Indonesian to Tetun.
 - ▶ All instruction, explanation and discussion was in Tetun.

Reporting in non-government

NGOs:

- ▶ Tetun: for Timorese readers
- ▶ English: for international donors, some for MYOB

Research reports:

- ▶ Final-year undergraduate reports: Tetun, Portuguese (mainly national university)
- ▶ Academic journals:
 - ▶ National University law: Portuguese; philosophy: Portuguese, Tetun, English
 - ▶ Dili Institute of Technology business, engineering: English
 - ▶ Articles in the Timor-Leste Studies Association conference proceedings:

TLSA	Tetun	Portuguese	Indonesian	English
2009	5	15	5	31
2013	11	18	4	38
2019	36 (21 agriculture)	12	none	37

Media

- ▶ Television, radio: Almost all locally-produced programs are in Tetun.
- ▶ Government station offers news in Portuguese.
- ▶ GMN has one interview program in Portuguese/English.
- ▶ Newspapers more mixed, but Tetun growing (Williams-van Klinken & Hajek, 2018)

	Titles	Tetun	Portuguese	Indonesian	English
2000	1 title	First Tetun reporting		Most articles	
2009	5 titles	National news, editorial 4-7 pages	International 2 had ½ to 1 page, 1 had 4 pages:	Mainly international some national, opinion 3 had 4-6 pages.	International 1 had ½ page Dili Weekly: half English, same articles as Tetun
2016	7 titles	National, editorial, opinion, some international. 6-10 pages	International, national A few locally written articles ½ to 1 page .	International, some opinion 2-4 pages Only Business Timor had almost half Indonesian.	International, national, opinion 5 had ½ to 1 page

Advertising in newspapers

Year	Tetun	Portuguese	Indonesian	English	Mixed
2009	23%	2%	24%	32%	20%
2016	44%	2%	15%	31%	7%
2019	54%	0%	2%	34%	10%

(Williams-van Klinken, 2020)

Linguistic landscapes

	Sample	Monolingual				No. of languages				
		Tet	Port	Ind	Eng	1	2	3	4	5
Lautem 2012	298	9%	10%	14%	8%	11%	47%	29%	13%	1.3%
other districts	322					40%	36%	20%	4%	
Motael Dili recent	161	31%	41%	5%	14%	56%	30%	5%		
Colmera Dili 2011 official	48	44%	36%	3%	-	87%	13%			
Colmera Dili 2011 unofficial	113	7%	3%	9%	46%	65%	35%	2%		

(Boon, da Conceição Savio, Kroon, & Kurvers, 2020:43-47; da Conceição Savio, 2016; de Albuquerque & Almeida, 2020:1214-1216; Taylor-Leech 2012)

- ▶ Percentage of Tetun is rising.
- ▶ Street names are in Portuguese.

Conclusion

Language	Function	Change over last 10 years	
Vernacular	Ritual	√	Stable (100%)
	Home, community	×	Falling (with move to Tetun)
Tetun	Home	√	Rising
	Church	√	Stable (100%)
	Parliament, government: oral	√	Rising. Under pressure to use Portuguese
	School, university: esp. oral	√	Rising. Under pressure to use Portuguese
	Justice	√	Rising.
	Media: newspaper, TV, radio	√	Rising
	Advertising, signage	√	Rising
	Portuguese	Education. Head office, law, elite schools. Most schools: mainly for writing	
Law			Fairly stable (very high)
Indonesian	Education, media, advertising, songs TV shows from Indonesia	×	Falling. Stable.
English	Finance, reports for internationals.		Stable.
	Private schools, academic reports.	√	Rising.

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