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Slang in Tetun Dili: *Nee U!*

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Objectives

- Identify slang expressions in Tetun Dili
- Analyze the structure and source of the these expressions

Tetun Dili

- 88% are speakers of Tetun Dili (2015 Census)
- Tetun Dili has influence from other languages:
 - 57 % speak Tetun Dili but have another mother tongue.
 - Adults aged 25 to 55 were educated in Indonesian.
 - Satelite TV uses Indonesian with English words.
 - Teenagers are being educated in Tetun and Portuguese.

What is slang?

- “ typical of the spoken, colloquial, informal aspects of human interaction
- typical words are restricted and metaphorical
- vague in meaning and are notoriously difficult to define.
- secretive” (Klerk 2006)

"the poetry of everyday life" (Hayakawa 1941)

Where does slang come from?

Internationally (Klerk 2006):

- Factory workers
- Sailors
- Miners
- Mass social
- Adolescents

Tetun slang:

- Young people: speaking, Facebook, WhatsApp
- Politicians: campaigning

Why do people use slang?

Internationally (Klerk 2006):

- To play with language : for fun for it, to be different, to be creative
- To identify with a group, to exclude others

Research method

- Listed slang expressions (over 100)
- For each expression identified:
 - The meaning
 - Who uses it
 - When did it start being used
 - Its structure
 - Source language(s)

Transformation

- Playing with structure
- Types in Tetun Dili:
 - Blending
 - Initials
 - Using letters to represent the name of the letter
 - Use numeral to represent sounds
 - Use numerals for the for associations with the shape

Blending

Slang	Source	Language	Literal translation	Meaning
urkeke	UR usan KE t- KE tak	Indon. & Tetun	business separate	It's none of my business
hapsun	HAP py SUN day	English		Happy Sunday
memi	ME tan MI dar	Tetun	black sweet	good-looking dark-skinned person
pateo	PA traun TE e O san	Tetun, also supermarket in Dili	boss defecate money	filthy rich
sanfrus	SAN fradu FRU stradu	Port, also Dili suburb	shabby frustrated	untidy (person)
portugal	P erkumpulan OR ang TU a G ata L	Indon, also country	group person old itchy	dirty old men

Initials

Slang	Source	Language	Literal translation	Meaning
PU	Pak Untung	Indon.	Sir advantage	those who get advantage from others
OTW	On The Way	English		on the way
PML	Pasukan Makan Lari	Indon.	group eat run	eat and run
MTD	Mate Tiha Deit	Tetun	die already just	You're dead!
BMW	Body Menang Wajah	Eng. + Indon	body defeat face	ugly but sexy

Letters to represent name of letter

Slang	Stand for	Language	Pronunciation of letter	Meaning
pxx	<i>posisi</i>	Indon.	Port.	position
amorq	<i>amor ku</i>	Port. + Indon	English	my love
my	<i>mai</i>	Tetun	English	come
mybe	<i>maibee</i>	Tetun	English	but
nx	<i>nian</i>	Indon.		POSSESSIVE

Numerals to represent sounds

Slang	Stand for	Language of word	Language of numeral	Meaning
H5r	halimar	Tetun	Tetun + Indon.	play
92	nain rua	Tetun	English	two (people)
D8	deit	Tetun	English	only
S3	strês	Port. + Indon.	Portuguese	stress
8an	oituan	Tetun	Portuguese	little
7an	tujuan	Indon.	Indon.	objective

Use numerals for associations with the shape

Numeral	Language of numeral	Meaning
8	Port. (<i>oitu</i>)	spy on
11	Indon. (<i>seblas</i>)	walk
11	Indon. (<i>seblas</i>)	runny-nosed
69	Indon. (<i>enam sembilan</i>)	sex position
7	Indon. (<i>tujuh</i>)	pistol

Semantic

- playing with meaning

Body part expressions

Slang	Language	Literal translation	Meaning
garganta paralon	Port + Indon.	throat pipe	talks too much and unreliable
kidun gazolina	Tetun + Port.	backside petrol	woman who likes to get lifts on motorbike or in car
matan haat	Tetun	eye four	drunk
garganta DVD	Port + Eng.	throat DVD	smoke any type of cigarette
kabun boraxa	Tetun + Port	stomach rubber	eat a lot but never feel full

Comparisons

Slang	Language	Literal translation	Meaning
tsunami	Japanese	tsunami	a lot of people
silu batar	Tetun	harvest corn	receive salary
turista	Port.	tourist	come empty-handed
nehek metan	Tetun	black ant	PSHT martial arts group
tetak	Tetun	chop finely	slander someone behind their back
halo ahi	Tetun	make fire	famous (briefly)

Metonym

Slang	Language	Literal translation	Meaning
xapeu metan	Tetun	hat black	Muslim
trezi	Port.	thirteen	play cards (there are 13 cards in a suit).
ai kabelak walu	Tetun	wood plank eight	coffin
aldeia la fila	Tetun	subvillage not come	cemetery

Other

Slang	Lang.	Literal translation	Meaning	Process
DEP	Port.	Descansa em Paz	Rest in Peace	Acronym on Port. expression
tuda fatuk subar liman	Tetun	throw stone hide hand	irresponsible	calque on Indon.
fitun monu	Tetun	star fall	there is beer	describes Bintang logo
hemu bee	Tetun	drink water	lose, defeated	describes loser's options

Other

Slang	Language	Literal translation	Meaning	Process
jinjan	onomatopeia	-	Chinese person	sound of language
dua dua	Indonesia	two two	code for PSHT martial arts group	established 1922
satu dua dua	Indonesia	one two two	code for police Task Force	phone number 122

Conclusion: structure

- Native Tetun structures, e.g. body part expressions, comparisons
- Indonesian structures, e.g. blending, using numbers to represent the sound, using numerals for the meaning of the shape
- Indonesian, Portuguese and English structures, e.g. initials

Conclusion: source languages

Source languages in our database of
111

Language	No. examples
Tetun	78
Indonesian	32
English	17
Portuguese	8
Proper nouns	7

A final example: *urusan* 'business'

Slang	Language of 2nd word	Literal translation	Meaning
U			your business (not mine!)
U boot	Tetun	business big	really your business
U grande	Port.	business big	
U Plaza	name of mall	-	I really don't care!

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