

*Peace Corps
East Timor*

TETUN LANGUAGE COURSE

Catharina Williams-van Klinken

3RD EDITION

(With Revised Spelling)

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Revisions to the second edition were contributed by Catharina Williams-van Klinken, with the help of Alexandre Fernandes Xavier Cham, Anabela Maia Santos and Jacinta Canossa Soares, all from Dili Institute of Technology.

Revisions to the third edition comprise spelling changes only.

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Table of contents

Preface to the first edition	ix
Preface to the second edition	x
Notes on spelling revision in the third edition	x
Acknowledgments for the first edition	xi
Acknowledgments for the second edition	xii
Introduction	xiii
Let's get started	xiii
Languages in East Timor	xiii
This textbook	xiv
Overview of Tetun structure (for the grammatical types)	xv
Pronúnsia (<i>Pronunciation</i>)	xvii
Stress and long vowels	xvii
Consonants	xvii
Vowels	xx
Compounds and reduplications	xxi
1. Hasee malu (<i>Greeting one another</i>)	1
1. Verbal clauses	4
2. Naming clauses	4
3. One word one form	4
2. Lisensa! (<i>Excuse me</i>)	7
1. Negatives	9
2. Yes-no questions	9
3. Asking permission: <i>bele</i> 'can, may'	9
4. Forbidding: <i>la bele</i> 'may not'	10
5. Wanting: <i>hakarak</i> and <i>lakohi</i>	10
3. Aprende Tetun (<i>Learning Tetun</i>)	11
1. Answers to yes-no questions	14
2. Nominal clauses and questions: What is this?	14
3. Commands	15
4. <i>laós</i> 'not'	15
4. Ita halo saida? (<i>What are you doing?</i>)	17
1. <i>baa/mai haan</i> 'go/come and eat'	19
2. <i>iha nebee?</i> 'where?'	19
3. <i>ka</i> 'or'	20

5. Bainhira? (When?)	21
1. Past and future time	23
2. Which one?	23
3. <i>nee</i> ‘this’	24
4. <i>ida</i> ‘one, a’	24
5. <i>ida nee</i> ‘this one’	25
6. <i>uluk</i> ‘in the past’	25
Liafuan tan kona ba tempu: Extra vocabulary for times of day	25
Reading Portuguese names	26
6. Númeru ho oras (Numbers and time)	27
1. Numbers	29
2. Telling the time to the nearest half-hour	30
3. Telling the time to the nearest minute	30
4. How many things?	31
5. How old? How long?	31
6. Past and future time (continued)	31
7. Eskola (School)	33
1. Speaking	35
2. <i>see?</i> ‘who?’	35
3. <i>ho</i> ‘and’	36
8. Hatudu dalan (Giving directions)	37
1. More about ‘here’ and ‘there’	39
2. <i>i, no</i> ‘and’	40
3. Which building?	40
4. <i>mak</i> focus marker	41
Vocabulary (almost) for free: nouns ending in <i>-saun</i>	42
9. Uma kain (Household)	43
1. Possessives	45
2. <i>iha</i> ‘have’	46
3. <i>nain</i> : counter for people	46
4. <i>hotu, hotu-hotu</i> ‘all’	47
More cognate nouns ending in <i>-aun</i>	48
10. Halo planu (Making plans)	49
1. Suggesting activities to do together	51
2. <i>ho</i> ‘with’	52
3. <i>atu</i> ‘about to, going to, intend to’	52
4. <i>sira</i> ‘plural definite’	52
5. Possessives again: <i>hau nia amaa nia alin</i>	53
11. Atividade loro-loron nian (Daily activities)	55
1. <i>lori ba/mai</i> ‘take, bring’	57
2. <i>fali</i> ‘again’	58
3. <i>hela</i> ‘currently’	58
4. Ways to say ‘it’	59

12. Ita haan lai! (Let's eat!)	61
1. <i>seidauk</i> 'not yet'	62
2. <i>ona</i> 'already'	63
3. <i>lai</i> 'first'	63
Cognate verbs ending in <i>-a</i>	64
13. Loro-loron haan saida? (What do you eat every day?).....	65
1. Frequency	66
2. How often?	67
3. <i>iha</i> 'there is'	67
4. <i>tanba saa?</i> , <i>tansaa?</i> 'why?'	68
14. Hau gosta ida nee! (I like this one!)	69
1. <i>gosta</i> 'like', <i>toman</i> 'be accustomed to'	71
2. <i>loos</i> 'very'	71
3. <i>laduun</i> 'not very'	71
4. More on possession	71
Cognate nouns ending in <i>-dade</i>	72
15. Halo kompras (Shopping).....	73
1. Specifying quantity	76
2. Asking price	76
3. <i>balu</i> 'some'	77
4. <i>mos</i> 'also'	77
16. Tein (Cooking)	79
1. <i>sei</i> 'will'	80
2. <i>sei</i> 'still'	81
3. <i>too</i> 'until'	81
4. <i>foin</i> 'just', <i>deit</i> 'only' and <i>kleur</i> 'a long time'	82
17. Halo festa (Having a party)	83
1. <i>foo ba / foo mai</i> 'give to'	86
2. <i>tiha ona</i> 'have already'	86
3. <i>lalika</i> 'don't, no need'	87
4. <i>Mai ita ...</i> 'Let's ...'	87
Cognate nouns ending in <i>-mentu</i>	88
18. Iha uma laran (Inside a house)	89
1. <i>hodi</i> 'to be used for'	91
2. <i>atu</i> 'to (purpose)'	91
3. <i>hanesan</i> 'same'	92
4. <i>ona</i> 'now'	92
Countries and continents	93
19. Iha nebee? (Where?)	95
1. Location	97
2. <i>nebee</i> 'which'	98
3. <i>komesa, hahuu</i> 'begin'	98
4. <i>took</i> 'have a...'	98

20. Ita nia isin lolon (<i>Our body</i>)	99
1. <i>se</i> ‘if’ and <i>karik</i> ‘perhaps’	100
2. <i>fali</i> ‘instead’	101
3. <i>hatete</i> ‘tell’ and <i>dehan</i> ‘say’	102
4. Talking about body parts	102
21. Ita nia oin (<i>Our face</i>)	103
1. <i>bainhira, kuandu</i> ‘when, whenever’	104
2. <i>tiha</i> ‘already’	105
3. <i>la ... ida</i> ‘not’	105
4. Same and different	106
22. Deskreve ema (<i>Describing people</i>).....	107
1. <i>liu</i> ‘more’ and ‘most’	109
2. Age	109
3. More on adjectives	110
4. <i>isin boot</i> and related expressions	110
23. Ropa ho kór (<i>Clothes and colours</i>)	111
1. Nobody, nowhere, nothing	113
2. <i>katak</i> ‘that’	114
3. <i>hanoin</i> ‘think; miss’	114
4. <i>oinsaa</i> ‘how’	115
Cognate nouns ending in <i>-u</i> or <i>-a</i>	116
24. Saúde 1 (<i>Health</i>)	117
1. <i>halo</i> ‘cause’	119
2. <i>senti</i> ‘feel’	119
3. <i>kedas</i> ‘immediately’	120
4. <i>hasoru, kontra</i> ‘against’	120
25. Saúde 2	121
1. Frequency: <i>loron ida dala tolu</i>	123
2. <i>rasik</i> ‘own, self; in person’	123
3. <i>ba/mai</i> ‘for’	123
4. How are you? – Not too good!	124
26. Halo... (<i>Causing...</i>)	125
1. <i>halo</i> ‘cause’ (again)	127
2. <i>ha-</i> ‘cause’	127
3. Object fronting	127
4. <i>keta</i> ‘don’t’	128
27. Moris ho mate (<i>Birth and death</i>)	129
1. <i>malu</i> ‘each other’	131
2. <i>mak (foin)</i> ‘and only then’	132
3. <i>aan</i> reflexive ‘himself, herself...’	132
4. <i>nafatin</i> ‘continue, still’	133
Cognate nouns ending in <i>-nsia</i>	134

28. Kontenti ka tristi? (Happy or sad?)	135
1. <i>maski, ... mos</i> ‘although’	137
2. <i>malu</i> ‘each other’ (again)	137
3. Sentence topics	138
4. Repeating a verb	138
29. Badinas ka baruk-teen? (Diligent or lazy?).....	139
1. <i>-dór</i> ‘one who’ in Portuguese words	142
2. <i>door</i> ‘one who’ in Tetun words	143
3. <i>-teen</i> ‘one who (negative connotation)’	143
4. <i>nain</i> ‘master’	143
5. <i>finji</i> ‘pretend’	144
30. Data ho konvite (Dates and invitations).....	145
1. <i>saa fulan?</i> ‘which month?’	147
2. Dates in Tetun	147
3. Next/last week	148
4. <i>só, só ... deit mak:</i> expressing uniqueness	148
31. Kuidadu-an (Taking care of yourself).....	151
1. <i>para</i> ‘so’	155
2. <i>ruma</i> ‘some or other’	155
3. <i>sa tag</i>	156
4. <i>nenee</i> for topics	156
5. <i>kan</i> ‘after all’	156
32. Família (Family).....	157
1. <i>nusaa?</i> ‘why?’	159
2. <i>halo nusaa?</i> ‘how?’	160
3. Final <i>-n</i> on possessives: <i>hau nia tiun</i>	160
4. <i>mesak ... deit</i> ‘all ...’	160
33. Rezolve problema (Settling disputes).....	161
1. <i>mos</i> ‘and so’	165
2. <i>la ... ona</i> ‘no longer’	165
3. <i>malu</i> idioms	165
4. Subject–object–verb	166
34. Despede malu (Farewell).....	167
1. <i>hirak</i> ‘these specific’	169
2. <i>hotu, remata</i> ‘finish’	170
3. Imperative <i>ba</i>	170
4. Really truly	170
35. Edukasaun (Education).....	171
1. Relative clauses	174
2. Duration: <i>iha ... nia laran</i>	174
3. Abstract nouns from verbs	175
Indonesian pronunciation	176

36. Ensinu superiór (<i>Higher education</i>)	177
1. Relative clause with <i>nebee mak</i>	179
2. Possessives with <i>nian</i>	180
3. <i>kiik-oan</i> ‘small’, <i>oan-ida</i> ‘a small’, and <i>uitoan</i> ‘a few, a bit’	181
Cognate adjectives ending in <i>-u</i> and <i>-a</i>	182
37. Servisu nudar saida? (<i>Work roles</i>)	183
1. <i>atu ... ona</i> ‘about to’	185
2. <i>sai</i> ‘become’	185
3. Missing subjects and objects	185
Cognate nouns ending in <i>-eiru</i>	186
38. Governu (<i>Government</i>)	187
1. <i>tuir</i> ‘according to’	191
2. <i>tuir lo-loos</i> , <i>tuir loos</i> ‘in fact, should; correctly’	191
3. ‘before’	191
4. ‘after’	192
Terms of address	193
<i>Inu nasional</i> (National anthem)	194
39. Halo uma (<i>Building</i>)	195
1. Ordinal numbers and alternatives	198
2. <i>kedas</i> , <i>kedan</i> ‘in advance’	199
3. <i>dadauk</i> progressive aspect	199
4. <i>la bele ... lai</i> ‘do not yet’	199
Cognate nouns and adjectives ending in <i>-ál</i>	200
40. Marka enkontru (<i>Making appointments</i>)	201
1. Commands and invitations revisited	204
2. <i>ida-idak</i> , <i>kada</i> , repetition ‘each’	205
3. Relative clauses with <i>ke</i> or <i>be</i>	205
4. Approximation	206
41. Enkontru (<i>Meetings</i>)	207
1. <i>Iha ema barak...</i> ‘There are many people who...’	211
2. Other verb–subject clauses	211
3. <i>hodi</i> ‘to/and’	211
4. <i>liu ... duké</i> ‘more than’	212
5. <i>husik hela</i> ‘leave behind’	212
42. Administrasaun (<i>Administration</i>)	213
1. Detransitivising prefixes <i>nak-</i> , <i>nam-</i>	217
2. Topicalise the object	217
3. Topicalise the object and omit the subject	218
4. Generalise the subject as <i>ema</i>	219
5. <i>hetan/simu</i> ‘receive’	219
6. Portuguese passives	219
7. Demote the subject with <i>hosi</i> ‘from’	220

43. Uza telefone (<i>Using the telephone</i>)	221
1. How many?	224
2. Reduplicating numbers: operating as a group, ‘every’	224
3. Reduplicating adjectives: plural	225
4. ... <i>mak nee</i> ‘What on earth!’	225
More cognate nouns ending in <i>-ia</i>	226
44. Ekonomia (<i>Economics</i>)	227
1. Becoming versus being	230
2. <i>tiha ona</i> ‘have already’	230
3. <i>ona</i> ‘already’	231
4. <i>tiha</i> perfective aspect	232
5. Doing calculations in Tetun	232
45. Halo toos ho natar (<i>Farming</i>).....	233
1. Generic-specific compounds: <i>ai teka</i>	236
2. Plant part compounds: <i>hudi tahan</i>	236
3. Categorisation	237
Cognate adverbs ending in <i>-mente</i>	238
46. Tempu (<i>Seasons</i>)	239
1. Possibility and probability	241
2. Hedging and fudging	242
3. Compounds with <i>foo</i> ‘give’	243
4. <i>nebaa</i> ‘there’	244
47. Animál ho ikan (<i>Animals and fish</i>)	245
1. Sex and age of animals: <i>aman, inan, oan</i>	248
2. Giving something to use: <i>foo ba ... haan</i>	248
3. <i>mos ... mos...</i> ‘both ... and’, ‘either ... or’, ‘neither ... nor’	249
4. Allowing: <i>husik, hataan, foo</i>	249
5. <i>baku mate</i> ‘beat to death’	250
48. Númeru ho lian Portugés (<i>Numbers in Portuguese</i>).....	251
1. Portuguese numbers	252
2. Quantity	252
3. Time	252
4. Date	253
5. Portuguese gender and number agreement	253
Cognate nouns and adjectives ending in <i>-i</i>	254
49. Númeru ho lian Indonézia (<i>Numbers in Indonesian</i>)	255
1. Price	256
2. Date	256
3. Time	256

Appendix	257
1. Numerals	257
2. Imperial-metric conversion	259
3. Alphabet	260
4. Punctuation	260
5. Personal pronouns	261
6. Determiners	261
7. Question words	261
8. Tense-aspect	262
9. Intensifiers	262
10. Prepositions and conjunctions	263
11. Spelling	265
Bibliography.....	267

Preface to the first edition

As the first Country Director of Peace Corps in East Timor, I take great personal pride and pleasure in presenting the First Edition of the Tetun Language Course for Peace Corps East Timor. The manuals constituting the Language Course were developed by Peace Corps specifically to enable American Volunteers to work effectively in rural areas of East Timor, and get to know the people of the country in the fullest sense.

Peace Corps is the agency of the United States government that promotes development at the grass-roots level by recruiting Volunteers to work with local communities. Peace Corps Volunteers are U.S. citizens who have agreed to serve for two years to lend a hand in countries around the world to help people improve their quality of life. In 2003, Peace Corps has about 7,000 Volunteers working in over 77 countries. Since President John F. Kennedy inaugurated the Peace Corps in 1962, over 200,000 Volunteers have served in over 110 countries in all regions of the world.

Peace Corps was invited to work in East Timor in early 2002, by His Excellency, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, on behalf of the Government of East Timor. Soon after the new country's independence, the first Volunteers arrived to work in local communities (at District and Sub-District level) to promote local governance, and to promote community health education. During the next years, more Volunteers will arrive to continue working in those areas and in other projects that are priorities of the East Timorese government. In the future, most Volunteers will be working in *sucos* and *aldeias*, where the needs for assistance are the greatest.

Aside from the agency's primary goal to assist with local development efforts, Peace Corps has two other important goals which most define the character of the organization and the way that it works. First, Volunteers working around the world provide Americans with an opportunity to know other peoples and cultures, and to promote peace through understanding. Second, Peace Corps Volunteers allow other peoples around the world to know Americans on a personal basis, and appreciate how American people might differ from the stereotypes presented in the popular media. These two goals are known as the "cross-cultural" goals of the Peace Corps.

Because Peace Corps Volunteers work at the most local levels, in the smallest towns and villages, it is essential that Volunteers learn to speak fluently the language that the people themselves speak. In fact, the ability to communicate fluently in the local language is the greatest determinant of Volunteer success in achieving development and cross-cultural goals. Peace Corps is widely recognized as providing some of the best foreign language training for native speakers of English in the world—indeed, Peace Corps language programs set the standard for teaching materials and methods for dozens of national or "minority" languages in many countries around the world. Most important to Peace Corps' own goals, the agency strives to create language programs that teach language as it is "popularly" spoken, with sensitivity to local customs, habits, and forms of address. Therefore, Peace Corps language programs often teach language that would be described as "slang" or "dialect" by language purists, but which, in fact, enables Volunteers to become fully integrated with the communities where they live and work.

The Peace Corps Tetun language training materials, prepared by and under the supervision of Dr. Catharina Williams-van Klinken, are the newest contribution by Peace Corps in promoting the use of national languages. Although these materials were developed specifically to help train American Volunteers to speak the most widely spoken indigenous language in East Timor, we sincerely hope that these materials will become part of a larger national patrimony, to promote the culture of the people of the world's newest nation. We hope that Tetun will be recognized around the world as a

national language of the people of East Timor, and that knowledge of the Tetun language will become synonymous with a deep appreciation of Timorese history, the Timorese people, and Timorese culture.


James Diego Hay - Director

Preface to the second edition

In the eight years since this book was first produced, Tetun has undergone rapid change, and become firmly entrenched in government, the media, and schools, in addition to its earlier roles as a community and church language. One effect has been a large increase in the number of Portuguese loan-words which are used by general educated speakers, even if they do not themselves speak Portuguese.

This second edition was produced partly to reflect changes in Tetun and in Timor over the last eight years, and partly to benefit from Dili Institute of Technology's experience in using the first edition to provide Tetun courses to over one thousand foreigners from over fifty countries and many walks of life. For more information on these courses, see <http://www.tetundit.tl>.

This book is designed to be used together with a Tetun-English dictionary. Dili Institute of Technology has produced the pocket dictionary *Word-finder*, as well as a larger interactive dictionary. Both are available from selected bookshops in Dili, from Dili Institute of Technology, and for free download from <http://www.tetundit.tl>



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Notes on spelling revision in the third edition

This edition has a slightly altered spelling to the first edition. Firstly, the sounds that are written as 'nh' and 'lh' in Portuguese, we now write that way in Tetun too. The previous edition used 'ny' and 'ly', to avoid confusion with three Tetun words that have an 'n h' sequence, namely *bainhira*, *bainhaat* and *bainhitu*. Secondly, the reflexive marker *aan* is now written as a separate word, no longer attached to a preceding verb (e.g. *foti aan*, not *foti-an*).

Acknowledgments for the first edition

The author gratefully acknowledges the encouragement of Dr Diego Hay as Country Director of Peace Corps East Timor. It is through his vision that time and resources were made available to produce these lessons. We acknowledge too the support of Minister José Ramos-Horta for Peace Corps East Timor as a whole.

Many people have contributed to developing these lessons. For the first part of the book, Mr Nuno Gomes patiently answered many questions about Tetun and about Timorese customs. Peace Corps teachers, Mr Ponciano da Cruz Leite, Mrs Terezinha Araujo Cardoso Gusmão, and Mr Simeão Brites Seixas continued this process, as well as writing many dialogues and texts. Along with the other pioneer Peace Corps teachers (Mrs Rosel de Fatima do Rego Magno, Mr Jorge de Orleans Alberto Magalhães, Mr Tobias Pinto Fernandes, Mr Fransisco Cruz Simões de Gonzaga Soares, and Mr Domingos Belo da Cruz) they tested the first draft of the materials with the first intake of Peace Corps trainees. Mr Antonio Rosario advised on the finance chapter.

Peace Corps Volunteers Jeff Sinanian and Mike Michel, and staff member Mr Jose Avelar, did wonders for the physical appearance of the book, Mike concentrating on general formatting, and Jeff and Jose selecting the graphics.

The first batch of Peace Corps volunteers in Timor contributed their ideas on what should be included, introduced me to their life in various townships around East Timor, and in some instances helped check wordlists in their communities. Miss Maxine McKinney commented in detail on some lessons and on the health terms wordlist. Various Timorese tutors trialled the lessons in one-to-one teaching of foreigners. This resulted in some useful feedback, especially from Dr Patti Delaney.

This course book is only one part of a set of materials being developed by Peace Corps East Timor for teaching Tetun to volunteers. Many people have contributed in major ways to developing the rest of the program.

Mr Antonio Sequeira has been the primary translator of the first part of this textbook into Tetun, to allow non-English-speaking teachers to use it.

Peace Corps Volunteer Luann Grondhovd has written a guide called “*Matadalan ba Hanorin Língua*”, which presents useful activities for language teaching.

The first group of Peace Corps teachers (named above), as well as Mr Nuno Gomes and Mr Antonio Sequeira, have developed a wide range of exercises, texts, lesson plans and teaching materials to facilitate presentation of these lessons.

Finally, the teachers benefited from excellent training by Miss 'Elenoa Kauvaka, the Language Coordinator in Peace Corps Tonga.

Acknowledgments for the second edition

This second edition was prepared with much assistance from Dili Institute of Technology's Tetun teachers, Alexandre Fernandes Xavier Cham, Jacinta Canossa Soares, Anabela Maia Santos, Guido Diamantino de Jesus, Hendriana da Costa Marçal, and Helio Brites da Silva. Thank you to you all.

On the artistic front, I am thankful to Elena Tognoli for her delightful drawings of Timor through a newcomer's eyes, and to Cynthia Bacon for the artistic flair she brought to the cover.

Finally, I am grateful to the leadership of Dili Institute of Technology, and particularly its rector, Mr Estanislau de Sousa Saldanha, for wholeheartedly supporting the development of Tetun, to the extent of employing five full-time Tetun teachers, and giving the language team encouragement, resources and free rein to work towards this goal.

Obrigada barak

Introduction

Let's get started

The goal of this textbook is to help you get started in learning Tetun, one of the two official languages of East Timor.

Timorese will love it when you try to learn their language. Tetun has fairly simple grammar, and is mostly easy to pronounce, so it is relatively easy to get started.

Languages in East Timor

East Timor has a large number of languages, each with their own function in society, and their own influence on Tetun.

The majority of Timorese, especially in rural areas, speak their own ethnic language at home. Most, such as Mambae (the one with the largest number of speakers) and Tokodede, are related to Tetun, belonging to the Austronesian language family. Some, such as Bunak, Makassae, and Fataluku, are totally unrelated to Tetun.

For nation-wide inter-ethnic communication there are currently four languages in use in Timor. Of these, Tetun and Portuguese are designated in the constitution as official languages, while Indonesian and English are recognised as 'working' languages.

1. Tetun has been a lingua franca in East Timor for centuries. It is spoken by the majority of Timorese in the majority of districts. The main exceptions are Los Palos and Oecussi, where Tetun is not traditionally spoken as a lingua franca, although it appears to be gaining ground.
2. Portuguese was the language of Portuguese colonisation for over four centuries, and hence the language of education, government and church prior to the Indonesian invasion in 1975. It has since been re-introduced as an official language, and as the language of education, initially starting from the lower grades of primary school. Portuguese has had an enormous impact on Tetun. This is particularly so in the area of vocabulary. In Dili even a casual Tetun conversation is likely to consist of 25% Portuguese words, while the percentage of Portuguese used in Tetun in the media is much higher (up to 80-90% for nouns and verbs!) Portuguese has also contributed many new sounds to Tetun (e.g. 'j' and 'ly'), new constructions, and even a new suffix (*-dór*, used to derive agent nouns).
3. Indonesian was the language of Indonesian rule from 1975 to 1999. It is hence the language in which younger people were educated, and was the language of government and commerce during this period. As a result, many people use Indonesian words when speaking Tetun, particularly when talking about work-related matters. Many people try to avoid Indonesian loans when writing Tetun, however, with the result that they may try to use lesser-known Portuguese loans when writing, but better-known Indonesian ones when speaking.
4. English had a very limited role prior to 1999, except as a foreign language taught at school. Since then it was the language of the UN body overseeing the referendum in August 1999, and of the UN mission overseeing East Timor's transition to full independence in May 2002. It is still the main working language used in many international agencies in Timor.

There are two main varieties of 'Tetun' spoken in Timor. One is 'Tetun Terik', an ethnic language spoken along both sides of the border with West Timor, and also along parts of the south coast. Relatively few people speak Tetun Terik unless they belong to that ethnic group.

The other is variously called ‘Tetun Dili’, ‘Tetun Prasa’ or just ‘Tetun’. This is the lingua franca variety of Tetun taught in this book. Tetun Dili has evolved from Tetun Terik, but the changes have been so great that speakers of the two varieties of Tetun have difficulty understanding each other. One huge difference is that Tetun Dili has been strongly influenced by Portuguese, whereas Tetun Terik has been much less influenced. In other respects, Tetun Dili is significantly simpler than Tetun Terik; for instance it has lost most of the word-building possibilities.¹

Tetun Dili is not a standardised language. You will find large differences in how different people speak it, and also in how the same person speaks it in different contexts. One major difference is in the influence of other languages on Tetun Dili. For instance, some people (especially in formal contexts such as writing) borrow many more words from Portuguese than other people do, others borrow more from Indonesian, while yet others (particularly in formal contexts such as church sermons) borrow more from Tetun Terik. In addition, there are alternative pronunciations for some words (e.g. *hosi* or *husi* ‘from’).

This textbook

What type of Tetun does this book teach? Our aim is to teach you to understand Tetun as it is spoken in Dili and in all other areas where it is a lingua franca, and to speak it in a way which is widely acceptable. In addition to everyday casual Tetun, you will learn many Portuguese loans and some constructions which are appropriate to formal situations such as meetings, even though they are not used much in conversation. You will also learn some common Indonesian loans, which are marked with ‘(I)’ in the wordlists. It is widely considered inappropriate to mix Indonesian with Tetun in formal contexts and in writing; nevertheless you will inevitably hear many Indonesian loans, and so need to at least understand them. This textbook does not teach liturgical Tetun, which is much more influenced by Tetun Terik than everyday spoken Tetun is, and which many Timorese hold up as a model for refined public speech.

This book was primarily designed for use in class, by people living in Timor. As such it does not include exercises, and omits many names for everyday things such as animals and household items, which you can either pick up in the community or learn from a dictionary. *Word-finder*, the pocket dictionary written to accompany the book, can be bought in book form or downloaded from www.tetundit.tl. A larger interactive dictionary is available from the same site.

There is not yet a widely-accepted spelling system for Tetun. The spelling system provisionally used in this book is outlined in the Appendix, along with alternative systems.

Here are a few points about layout:

- Footnotes are used for those readers who have a more technical interest in language, or in the origins of words. If you are not in this category, or find the footnotes boring, please skip them!
- “(I)” in wordlists indicates that the word is from Indonesian. English loans are marked as “(Eng)”, and some Portuguese loans are marked as “(P)”. Portuguese loans that are well known and fully integrated into Tetun are not marked as such, nor are lesser-known words which occur in technical wordlists.
- An asterisk indicates that the following example is incorrect. e.g. **Hau la mestri* (which should be *Hau laós mestri*).
- In examples, “P:” stands for *pergunta* ‘question’, while “H:” stands for *hataan* ‘answer’.

¹ For a fuller picture of the differences between Tetun Terik and Tetun Dili, and of the development of Tetun Dili, see Thomaz (1981) or Williams-van Klinken (2002b).

Overview of Tetun structure (for the grammatical types)²

Phonology

Tetun has a simple five vowel system: /a, e, i, o, u/. A large number of consonants and almost all types of consonant clusters have been borrowed from Portuguese. On native Tetun words, stress is always on the second-last syllable; e.g. *Uma* ‘house’, *haTEne* ‘know’, *haREe* ‘see’.

Portuguese loans

Tetun Dili has borrowed numerous words from Portuguese. This is especially obvious in technical and abstract vocabulary. However almost all greetings and common terms of address, as well as many prepositions, conjunctions and other common words, also come from Portuguese. In addition, Portuguese numbers are used in Tetun along with native Tetun and Indonesian numbers. Portuguese verbs are normally borrowed in the third person singular form (e.g. *kanta* from Portuguese *canta* ‘(he/she) sings’). Portuguese nouns and adjectives are normally borrowed in the masculine form (e.g. *falsu* from Portuguese masculine *falso* ‘false’), unless the feminine form specifically refers to women (e.g. *noiva* ‘bride, fiancée’).

Morphology

Tetun Dili has numerous compounds (e.g. *uma nain* ‘landlord, lady of the house’ from ‘house’ plus ‘master, owner’). However it has very few productive prefixes or suffixes. The most common is the prefix *ha-*, which derives transitive causative verbs from intransitive verbs and adjectives (e.g. *habokon* ‘make wet’ from *bokon* ‘wet’).

Syntax

In clauses, the order is usually subject-verb-object; e.g. *Hau buka nia* ‘I seek him’. There are no passives, but the object can be highlighted by placing it before the subject slot.

Tetun Dili has no agreement marking whatsoever – e.g. verbs do not agree with subjects (as they do in Tetun Terik), and there is no agreement between nouns and adjectives (as in Portuguese), or nouns and their possessors (as in some varieties of Tetun Terik). There is also no case marking (equivalent to English ‘he/him’).

Tense-aspect is marked by separate words, not (as in English or Portuguese) by changing the form of the verb (e.g. ‘sit’ versus ‘sat’).

Within a noun phrase, the modifiers follow the noun; e.g. ‘a big house’ is *uma boot ida*, lit. ‘house big one/a’. The exception is that possessors can either precede or follow the noun; e.g. ‘women’s rights’ can be either *feto nia direitu*, lit. ‘woman POSSESSIVE right’, or *direitu fetu nian*, lit. ‘right woman POSSESSIVE’.

Pronouns and determiners are listed in the appendix, along with some other closed sets of words, such as numbers, prepositions and conjunctions, and intensifiers.

² This overview is based on that found in Williams-van Klinken, Hajek and Nordlinger (2002: 5–6). Many of the grammar notes in this textbook draw on that book.

Pronúnsia (Pronunciation)

Stress and long vowels

In Tetun, most words are stressed on the second-last (penultimate) syllable. This syllable tends to be longer and slightly louder than the others.

hakarak	haKAraK	want
lao	LAo	walk, go

Some words are stressed on the last vowel.¹ The difference between stressing the last vowel and the second-last one can be very important! We are spelling final long vowels as double vowels, except in long words of Portuguese origin, where we mark them with an accent to learners of Tetun (e.g. *nasionál* nasioNAL); such accents are not commonly used for Timorese audiences. Note that some writers don't distinguish between long and short vowels, so writing both *haree* 'see' and *hare* 'rice' as 'hare'.

haree	haREE	see
hare	HARe	rice (unhulled)
kabeen	kaBEEN	saliva, spittle
kaben	KABen	marry; spouse

Some words of Portuguese origin are stressed on the third-last syllable. We mark these with an accent.

siénsia	science
régua	ruler (for measuring)

Consonants

Stops: All stops are unaspirated. That means that there is no puff of air escaping when you release your tongue. By contrast, English 'p', 't' and 'k' sounds are usually aspirated.

tata	bite	(Contrast English 'potato')
hatete	say	
papa	Pope	(Contrast English 'paper')
okupa	occupy	
koko	try	(Contrast English 'cocoa')
hateke	look at	

Final consonants are unreleased. That is, when a word ends in a consonant, your tongue goes to the position for that consonant, but you don't let out the air afterwards. You may need practice to be able to hear consonants at the ends of words. Usually the consonant is clearer when the next word starts with a vowel. (Note that the only words ending in 'p' are those which are borrowed from Indonesian.)

¹ For the phonologists: it is not clear whether such final long vowels in Tetun Dili should be analysed as one syllable, or as two (e.g. *ha.ree* or *ha.re.e* 'see'). In Tetun Terik, which hasn't been significantly influenced by Portuguese, there is evidence for analysing them as two syllables; therefore, in Tetun Terik, stress is consistently on the penultimate syllable.

mikrolét	minibus	mikrolét ida	a minibus
boot	big	ema boot ida	a ‘big person’ (VIP)
hamutuk	together	hamutuk iha nee	together here
seidauk	not yet	nia seidauk iha	he isn’t here yet
map (I)	folder	map ida	a folder
sirup (I)	syrup	sosa sirup aban	buy syrup (medicine) tomorrow

Variation: Some sounds are pronounced differently by different speakers, especially consonants which are borrowed from Portuguese. These tend to be pronounced as per (European) Portuguese by those who are Portuguese-educated, but to be assimilated to the nearest native Tetun sound by some other speakers (especially more rural ones), or in words which were borrowed into Tetun a long time ago.

Sound (in our spelling)	Educated Portuguese pronunciation	Alternative pronunciations	Example
v	‘v’	‘b’	servisu / serbisu ‘work’ avoo / aboo ‘grandparent’
p	‘p’	‘b’, ‘f’ ²	paun / baun / faun ‘bread’
s	‘x’ (English ‘sh’) at end of Portuguese words	‘s’ everywhere	Portugés ‘Portuguese’ piris ‘saucer’
	‘x’ before ‘t’, ‘k’ or ‘p’	‘s’	festa ‘party’ eskola ‘school’ esperiénsia ‘experience’
	‘s’ elsewhere	‘s’	asina ‘sign (do a signature)’ moras ‘sick’ ³
‘z’	‘j’ at ends of words	‘z’ everywhere	páz ‘peace’ tréz ‘three’
	‘j’ before ‘m’	‘z’	ezmola ‘alms’ azma ‘asthma’
	‘z’ elsewhere	‘z’	zero ‘zero’ onzi ‘eleven’
x	‘x’	‘s’	xaa / saa ‘tea’ taxu / tasu ‘wok’
j	‘j’	‘z’ ⁴	janela / zanela ‘window’ ajuda / azuda ‘help’
ny	‘ny’	‘n’	Junyu / Junu ‘June’ senhora / senora ‘madam’
ly	‘ly’	‘l’ or ‘il’	barulyu / barulu / baruilu ‘noise’
rr	‘rr’	‘r’ ⁵	karreta / kareta ‘car’

² This pronunciation depends largely on the person’s native language.

³ Some people pronounce the final ‘s’ in native Tetun words as ‘x’ (English ‘sh’) as well; for instance in *moras* ‘sick’ or *haas* ‘mango’. This is mainly in situations such as news broadcasts, where people are striving for Portuguese-style pronunciations.

⁴ Many people cannot hear the difference between ‘j’ and ‘z’, and it is quite common for these two letters to be confused in writing. For instance, many people spell *uza* ‘use’ as *uja*.

⁵ In the Portuguese pronunciation used in Timor, Portuguese words distinguish between a trilled ‘r’ (spelled ‘rr’) and a shorter tapped ‘r’ (spelled ‘r’). Very few speakers make this distinction in Tetun, however, and we are not marking it in our spelling.

Initial ‘k’ plus a consonant: In Tetun Terik, many words start with ‘k’ followed by another consonant. Most of these consonant sequences have disappeared from Tetun Dili, either because the ‘k’ has been dropped (e.g. Tetun Dili *todan* ‘heavy’ versus Tetun Terik *ktodan*) or because a vowel has been inserted after it (e.g. Tetun Dili *kamaan* ‘light (weight)’ versus Tetun Terik *kmaan*). However a few remain, particularly in the register of Tetun used in church. In these, the ‘k’ may be weakly pronounced, or pronounced followed by a short vowel off-glide.

kbiit ‘power’	kmanek ‘wonderful’	knuu ‘hamlet’
knaar ‘duties’	knuuk ‘nest’	ksolok ‘happiness’

Note however that initial ‘kr’ and ‘kl’ are common, and pronounced with a full ‘k’.

klaran ‘middle’	klamar ‘soul’	klosan ‘single person’
krekas ‘skinny’	krimi ‘crime’	krúz ‘cross’

Final ‘n’ may be pronounced as ‘n’ or ‘ng’. Some speakers instead nasalise the preceding vowel.

Tetun ‘Tetun’	naran ‘name’	kalan ‘night’
folin ‘price’	manaan ‘win’	jardín ‘flower garden’

‘l’ tends to sound slightly different depending on whether it is at the beginning of a word, between two vowels, or at the end of a word. Basically, the tongue tends to be further forward in the mouth (lamino-alveolar) when ‘l’ is at the beginning of a word, somewhat raised at the back of the mouth (velarised) at the end of a word, and intermediate when it occurs between vowels or before a consonant. Listed carefully to your tutor pronounce the following words.

laran ‘inside’	janela ‘window’	Portugál ‘Portugal’
lae ‘no’	fali ‘again’	Abríl ‘April’
loron ‘day’	hola ‘take’	azúl ‘blue’

‘r’ is unlike English ‘r’. It tends to be a trill at the beginning of words, and a tap (almost like a fast ‘d’) at the end of a word or syllable.

raan ‘blood’	maran ‘dry’	fiar ‘believe’
redi ‘net’	barani ‘bold’	batar ‘corn’
roda ‘wheel’	parte ‘part’	dadeer ‘morning’
rua ‘two’	sorti ‘fortunate’	diretór ‘director’
hamriik ‘stand’	harii ‘erect’	doutór ‘doctor’
patraun ‘boss’	karoon ‘sack’	fitar ‘scar’

Glottal stops: Tetun Terik has a consonant called a ‘glottal stop’, which is rather like a catch in the throat, as per the middle consonant of the Cockney pronunciation of ‘butter’. This consonant has been largely lost in Tetun Dili, but you will nevertheless hear it from time to time. Some speakers use it much more than others, and in some words it is more common than in others. When people represent it in writing, they use the apostrophe: e.g. *la’o* ‘walk’.⁶

makaas / maka’as ‘strong’	hiit / hi’it ‘lift’
sae / sa’e ‘rise’	siak / si’ak ‘reprimand’
nai / na’i ‘lord’	toos / to’os ‘garden’
lao / la’o ‘walk’	kous / ko’us ‘cradle’
nee / ne’e ‘this’	mear / me’ar ‘cough’

⁶ The main reason we do not represent glottal stops in our orthography is that many Timorese either don’t use glottal stops when speaking Tetun, or pronounce them in only a few words. As a result, most do not know which words ‘should’ have glottal stops (according to Tetun Terik), and therefore often place apostrophes in the wrong places.

Vowels

Tetun has five vowels: a, e, i, o, u. Listen carefully to how they sound. ‘a’, ‘i’ and ‘u’ tend to have relatively fixed sounds, while ‘e’ and ‘o’ vary according to speaker and context.⁷

a:	matan ‘eye’	para ‘stop’	ajenda ‘diary’
i:	litik ‘pester’	bibi ‘goat’	idade ‘age’
u:	hamutuk ‘together’	tunu ‘bake’	utu ‘lice’
e:	hatete ‘say’	tebe ‘kick’	eduka ‘train’
	hetan ‘get’	feto ‘woman’	hemu ‘drink’
o:	horon ‘smell’	koko ‘try’	oferese ‘offer’
	tohar ‘break’	koi ‘scratch’	tohu ‘sugarcane’

Vowels stay pure: In English, unstressed vowels often have a schwa-like (unclear) quality. In Tetun, they tend to keep their pure quality.

ida ‘one’
karu ‘expensive’
kopu ‘glass, tumbler’
mana ‘older sister’
hatene ‘know’
sanulu ‘ten’
universidade ‘university’

The difference is clear when you compare Timorese and English pronunciation of English words. In the following, listen particularly for the final vowel:

mister	Mister
misez / misiz	Mrs
Washington	
dolar	dollar
kuarter	quarter (25 cents)

Vowel sequences: In native Tetun words, sequences of two vowels are heard as distinct vowels when people are speaking carefully. However they may become diphthongs when people speak fast. (Sequences which are missing from the following table, such as ‘ie’, don’t occur in native Tetun words.)

	-a	-i	-u	-e	-o
a-	-	fai ‘hit end on’	karau ‘buffalo’	sae ‘ascend’	lao ‘walk’
i-	nia ‘he, she’	-	liur ‘outside’		
u-	suar ‘smoke’	ruin ‘bone’	-		
e-	mean ‘red’	tein ‘cook’	haleu ‘surround’	-	neon ‘mind’
o-	koa ‘cut’	oin ‘face’	mout ‘sink’	soe ‘throw’	-

Portuguese loans, however, do have diphthongs. Some of these (particularly ‘ei’ and ‘ou’) tend to be pronounced as pure vowels when people are speaking normally.

kadeira / kadera ‘chair’	keiju / keju ‘cheese’
senoura / senora ‘carrot’	doutór / dotór ‘doctor’

⁷ For more details, see Williams-van Klinken, Hajek and Nordlinger (2002:11).

Initial 'es': Portuguese loans beginning in 'est', 'esp' and 'esk' tend to have the initial 'e' pronounced as 'i', or weakened or dropped altogether:

eskola / iskola / skola 'school'
estrada / istrada / strada 'street'
espada / ispada / spada 'sword'

Compounds and reduplications

When two words are joined together to make a single compound, or a word is repeated to make a single reduplicated word, the first word is often shortened. Usually the final consonant is deleted; the remaining final vowel is often weakened or deleted. Sometimes people write the full words, and sometimes the shortened version.

manu + tolun 'bird + egg'	mantolun 'bird egg'
masin + midar 'salt + sweet'	masi-midar, mas-midar 'sugar'
diak 'good'	di-diak 'well'
loron 'day'	loro-loron, lor-loron 'daily'
fulan 'month'	fula-fulan, ful-fulan 'monthly'

However when a word of more than two syllables is reduplicated, there is usually no shortening involved.

dadeer 'morning'	dadeer-dadeer 'every morning'
Janeiru 'January'	Janeiru-Janeiru 'every January'

1. Hasee malu (*Greeting one another*)

Objetivu (*objectives*)

In this chapter you will learn to:

- Greet people and take your leave
- Address people appropriately
- Ask and answer ‘*How are you?*’
- Use the singular personal pronouns (I, you, he/she)
- State your name and country of origin



Liafuan foun (*new words*)

Greetings

bondia	good morning (until about 11.30am)
botardi	good afternoon (until sunset) ²
bonoiti	good evening, good night

Leave-takings

até amanhã	see you tomorrow ³
ate logu	see you later today
adeus	goodbye

Terms of address ⁴

senhór	sir, mister
senhora	Madam, Mrs
tiu	uncle
tia	aunt
maun	older brother
mana	older sister
alin	younger brother/sister

Personal pronouns ¹

hau	I, me
ita	you (singular respectful)
nia	he, she, him, her; POSSESSIVE

Interrogative pronouns

saa	what
nebee	where

Other

naran	name
hosi, husi	from, originate from
diak	good; well; OK
obrigadu / -a	thank you

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun (*Comments about new words*)

- ❖ These common greetings are all from Portuguese. Some people will tell you that the ‘true’ Tetun greetings are expressions like *loron diak* (lit. ‘day good’). However these are translations from the Portuguese greetings, and are rarely used. Traditional Tetun greetings focus more on things like where people are going, as taught in chapter 2.
- ❖ *Até amanhã* literally means ‘until tomorrow’, but is often used more loosely than that, even if people don’t expect to meet for a few days.

¹ The rest of the personal pronouns are in chapter 3.

² Portuguese is *boa tarde*, but the ‘a’ is omitted by most Tetun speakers.

³ Note for Portuguese speakers: many people stress *até* on the first syllable, rather than on the final syllable, as in Portuguese.

⁴ Note for Portuguese-speakers: the Portuguese titles are used without an article; e.g. you say *senhór*, not **o senhór*.

- ❖ For ‘thank you’, men say *obrigadu*, women say *obrigada*.⁵

Komentáriu kona ba títulu (comments about titles)

- ❖ Titles are very important in Timor, and are used frequently. For instance, it is more common, and more polite, to greet a schoolmate with *Bondia maun* than with just a bare *Bondia*.
- ❖ In many of the common titles, you address the other person as if he or she is a member of your family, even though you may not be related at all, and may not in fact have even met before.
 - *Senhór* and *senhora* are used mainly for modern, formally educated people, such as professionals, government officials, and other people with ‘desk jobs’. These are relatively formal terms.
 - *Tiu* and *tia*, when used outside the circle of family and friends, are mainly used for people older than oneself, who have little formal education. These are appropriate terms of address for older vegetable sellers, cleaners, and farmers. You may also be addressed as *tiu* or *tia* by the children of friends, since these terms are less formal than *senhór* and *senhora*.
 - *Maun*, *mana* and *alin* are relatively informal terms. *Maun* and *mana* may be used for people older than oneself. Often it is also used for people slightly younger; for instance, university students call each other *maun* and *mana*. However if the other person is much older, it is safer to use *tiu* and *tia*. *Alin* may be used for people younger than oneself. These terms may be used, for instance, for shop assistants or waiters. During the Indonesian occupation, resistance leader Xanana Gusmão was often referred to with affection and respect as *maun boot* (lit. ‘older.brother big’).
- ❖ Titles are very often used where in English we would say ‘you’ or ‘he/she’. So, *Senhór hosi nebee?* can mean either ‘Where are you from?’ (when speaking to someone whom you call *senhór*) or ‘Where is he from?’ (when talking about someone whom you call *senhór*).

Alo mister!

- ❖ Some titles are only used for foreigners.
 - *Mister* and *misez* may be used to address English-speakers. “*Alo mister!*” was a common cry of the children when meeting the highly welcome Interfet soldiers in 1999.
 - *Malae* is used for any foreigners other than Indonesians. It is not really translatable, since (unlike ‘foreigner’) it is a term of respect, reflecting the high status which is generally assigned to foreigners in East Timor. When Timorese are told that some foreigners take offence at being called *malae*, they are astounded that people could so misinterpret its connotations. *Malae* is used much more for talking about people than for addressing them.
 - Indonesian men may be addressed as *bapa* (from Indonesian *bapak* ‘sir, mister’) and women as *ibu*.

⁵ Some Timorese may tell you that *obrigadu* is used when speaking to men (or mixed groups), and *obrigada* when speaking to women. If you observe their behaviour, however, you will find that most follow the Portuguese rule, whereby the ending is determined by the gender of the speaker, not the listener.

- ❖ How can you respond to such terms? Firstly, try to accept the situation as normal in Timor. If people address you politely as *malae* or *mister* on the street, stop and talk with them – this will almost always be well received. Once people know you, they will usually address you with other, more local, terms, from then on. (Remember though that if you are young or single, it is wiser to initially be reserved with young people of the opposite sex.)

Diálogu (*dialogue*)

(1) Bondia, senhór

Miguel:	Bondia, senhór Antonio. Diak ka lae?	Good morning Mr Antonio. How are you?
Antonio:	Diak, obrigadu. Senhór diak ka lae?	Well, thanks. How are you?
Miguel:	Hau diak. Ate logu.	I'm well. See you later.
Antonio:	Ate logu.	See you later.

(2) Ita naran saa?

Maria:	Botardi, mana. Ita naran saa?	Good afternoon, older sister. What is your name?
Alda:	Hau naran Alda. Alin naran saa?	My name is Alda. What is your name?
Maria:	Hau nia naran Maria. Mana hosi nebee?	My name is Maria. Where are you from?
Alda:	Hau hosi Amérika. Alin hosi nebee?	I'm from America. ⁶ Where are you from?
Maria:	Hau hosi Baucau. Até amanhã.	I'm from Baucau. ⁷ See you tomorrow.
Alda:	Até amanhã.	See you tomorrow.

Kostumi (*customs*)

- ❖ Timorese usually have several names. In formal situations or non-close relationships, the Christian name is used with a title (e.g. *Senhór José*). It is rare to address people by their surname. In informal situations and as a term of endearment, some Christian names are shortened to two syllables, and preceded by *a-* (e.g. *Carmelita* to *Alita*, *Bernardino* to *Adino*). In addition, some people still use code names from the resistance movement (e.g. *Lu Olo*, *Xanana*), and some have nicknames unrelated to their Christian name.
- ❖ “How are you?” is *Ita diak ka lae?* (lit. ‘you well or not’). Both participants in the conversation can ask the question in the same way. There is no short-cut equivalent to “And you?”
- ❖ When you meet new people in Timor, it is common to shake hands. Usually when shaking hands, you just hold hands briefly and not very firmly; there is no up-and-down movement. Some people will touch their right hand to their chest afterwards, in the Indonesian manner. People who worked together in the resistance movement (and sometimes close male friends outside of this circle) may grasp the thumb after the handshake, meaning ‘unity forever’. There is no equivalent to the English comment “I’m pleased to meet you.”

⁶ There is a list of country names at the end of chapter 18.

⁷ Baucau is the second-largest city in East Timor, about 3 hours drive to the east of Dili.

- ❖ Take the initiative in greeting people. Many Timorese will want to talk with you, but will be too shy, assuming you will have no language in common.

Estrutura língua nian (*language structure*)

1. Verbal clauses

Intransitive clauses (i.e. those without an object) follow the order subject-verb or subject-adjective.⁸ Note that adjectives directly follow the subject; there is no equivalent to the English copula ‘be’.

Hau diak.	I am well.
Maria bonita.	Maria is pretty.
Nia monu.	He/she fell.

Transitive clauses typically follow the order subject-verb-object.⁹ Note the position of *nebee* ‘where’ in the questions below. In information questions, the question word slots into the same position in the sentence as does the answer.

Ita hosi nebee?	Where are you from?
Hau hosi Fransa.	I am from France.
Nia sosa sigaru.	He/she buys cigarettes.
Hau haan xokolati.	I eat chocolate.

2. Naming clauses

Naming clauses typically consist of a subject, followed by *naran* ‘name’ and then the name. To ask a person’s name, put *saa* ‘what’ into the name slot.

Ita naran saa?	What is your name?
Hau naran Maria de Jesus.	My name is Maria de Jesus.

An alternate, and equally common way of asking someone’s name, is to put the possessive marker *nia* before *naran*. (This possessive marker is taught more fully in chapter 9.)

Ita nia naran saa?	What is your name?
Hau nia naran Maria de Jesus.	My name is Maria de Jesus.

3. One word one form

One thing that makes Tetun easier to learn is that each word has only a single form.¹⁰

Nouns do not distinguish singular from plural. So *Hau hasoru maun* (lit. ‘I meet older.brother’) can mean either that you met one older brother, or more than one. If you really want to be specific, you just add extra words; some are listed in appendix 6 and taught in subsequent lessons.

There is no grammatical gender either (with the exception of some words borrowed from Portuguese). So, unlike Portuguese and other Romance languages, you don’t have to learn lists of masculine and feminine nouns.

⁸ There are so few differences between adjectives and verbs, that adjectives in Tetun can be considered a type of verb.

⁹ The object can however be put first, in a construction taught in chapter 26.

¹⁰ Some words, like *hosi/husi* ‘originate from’ do have variant pronunciations, but these reflect differences between speakers.

Pronouns do not mark case. There is no difference between ‘he’ and ‘him’, for example. Instead, you work out which is the subject and which is the object by their position in the sentence.

Hau hasoru nia.

I meet him/her.

Nia hasoru hau.

He/she meets me.

Verbs, too, have a constant shape. They do not agree with the subject, and do not mark tense. For instance, *Hau baa Ermera* (lit. ‘I go Ermera’), can mean ‘I went to Ermera’, ‘I am going to Ermera’, or ‘I will go to Ermera’, depending on the context. Of course, there are various expressions which you will learn in later chapters which help to make the time explicit; these are listed in appendix 8. Here are some examples for those of you who can’t wait.

Orsida hau baa Ermera.

Later today I will go to Ermera.

Aban hau baa Ermera.

Tomorrow I will go to Ermera.

Horiseik hau baa Ermera.

Yesterday I went to Ermera.

Hau sei haan.

I will eat.

Hau atu haan.

I’m about to eat.

Hau haan hela.

I am eating.

Hau haan tiha ona.

I have already eaten.

2. Lisensa! (*Excuse me*)

Objetivu

In this chapter you will learn to:

- Greet and take leave in more traditional ways
- Thank, apologize, and excuse yourself
- Request permission to do something
- State basic feelings and wants
- Make negative statements

Lisensa!

Liafuan foun

Intransitive verbs/adjectives

hamrook	thirsty
hamlaha	hungry
kolen, kole	tired
moras	sick
deskansa	rest
hariis	bathe

Transitive verbs

mai	come, come to
baa	go, go to ²
haan	eat
hemu	drink
hakarak	want
lakohi, lakoi	don't want, refuse

Interjections

lisensa	excuse me
deskulpa	sorry
nada	you're welcome

Nouns

uma	house, building, home
eskola	school
bee	water ¹

Other

bele	can, may, be able to, be allowed to
la	not
lae	no
sín	yes
ka	QUESTION TAG; or

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun (*comments on new words*)

- ❖ *Nada* is a standard response to being thanked, somewhat like English 'You're welcome' or 'Don't mention it'.³
- ❖ *Mai* 'come' indicates movement towards where you are now, while *baa* 'go' is used for movement in any other direction. English 'come' and 'go' are a bit different, since they aren't so closely tied to where you are at the moment when you are speaking. For instance, in English I can, while in the office, invite you to 'come' to a party at my house tomorrow. In Tetun I would have to invite you to 'go' (*baa*) to my house, since I am currently somewhere else.

¹ *Bee* is also a common filler like English 'umm' – don't let it confuse you into thinking that everyone talks about water a lot!

² *Ba* (the unstressed form) is also a preposition meaning 'to'.

³ *Nada* in Portuguese literally means 'nothing'.

Diálogu

(1) Marta baa uma

Marta hakarak baa uma.

Martha wants to go home.

Marta: **Hau baa ona, tia.**

I'm going now, aunt.

Tia: **Diak. Ate logu.**

OK. See you later.

Marta: **Ate logu.**

See you later.

(2) Senhór Abel baa eskola

Senhór Abel baa eskola.

Mister Abel goes to school.

Alfredo: **Bondia, senhór. Diak ka lae?**

Good morning, sir. How are you?

Senhór Abel: **Diak.**

Well.

Alfredo: **Senhór baa nebee?**

Where are you going?

Senhór Abel: **Hau baa eskola. Ita baa uma ka?**

I'm going to school. Are you going home?

Alfredo: **Sín, hau baa uma.**

Yes, I'm going home.

Senhór Abel: **Diak. Até amanhã.**

OK. See you tomorrow.

Alfredo: **Até amanhã.**

See you tomorrow.

Kostumi

- ❖ *Lisensa* (or, for more Portuguese influenced people, *kolisensa*) 'excuse me' is said when you pass in front of someone, or interrupt them, or otherwise inconvenience them. Try to avoid walking through a group of people who are talking, especially people of high status. If it cannot be avoided, some people follow the Indonesian custom of bending over slightly, holding the right hand forward and the left hand backwards, and saying *lisensa*. However there are other Timorese who disapprove of the custom, and it is in any case not followed if you repeatedly need to pass people, for instance in a crowded work situation.
- ❖ *Deskulpa* 'sorry' is said when one has committed an offence, or when one is about to say a word or expression that may be considered impolite (e.g. referring to bodily functions), or about to make a comment or question that may be considered too personal or offensive. It is not, as per English 'sorry', used in response to sad news.
- ❖ Traditionally, when you meet people who are walking, you ask where they are going (*Baa nebee?*). This can be answered with specifics like *Baa uma* 'going home', or with a vague expression like *Baa leten* 'up the hill'. This greeting is much like the English 'How are you?', in that it is conventional, not intended to be nosy, and the addressee is not expected to give much information.
- ❖ Alternatively, if you can tell where the person is going, you can greet them by "asking" them whether they are going there. For instance, you can greet children who are obviously walking to school with *Baa eskola ka?*, and they can reply *Baa eskola*.
- ❖ As you leave the house to go anywhere, a standard expression is *Hau baa ona* 'I'm going now'. Such a greeting is considered very important. If you are staying with Timorese people, your hosts will likely want to know where you are going, both because this is customary, and because they feel responsible for finding you if the need should arise. Again, it is more important to state that you are going somewhere than to give details. On return home, one should again greet the hosts, this time with *Bondia* 'good morning', *Botardi* 'good afternoon' or *Bonoiti* 'good evening'.
- ❖ Most people bathe before the evening meal. It is widely believed that women should not bathe late in the evening.

Estrutura língua nian

1. Negatives

Note the pattern below.

Hau baa Ermera.	I am going to Ermera.
Hau la baa Ermera.	I am not going to Ermera.
Inês moras.	Inês is sick.
Inês la moras.	Inês is not sick.
José hemu bee.	José is drinking water.
José la hemu bee.	José is not drinking water.



To negate a verb or adjective, place *la* ‘not’ immediately in front of it. (Most other expressions are negated by *laós*, taught in chapter 3.) *La* cannot stand alone, and cannot be stressed, and so may sound like it is part of the following word. Sometimes people write it attached to the following word, especially for *la bele* (sometimes written *labele*) ‘not able’.

2. Yes-no questions

To turn a statement into a yes-no question, you can do any of the following. Listen carefully to the intonation used by your tutor.

Use intonation only:	Ita naran Antonio?	Is your name Antonio?
	Ita hosi Amérika?	Are you from America?
	Ita moras?	Are you sick?
Add <i>ka</i> (lit. ‘or’):	Ita naran Antonio ka?	Is your name Antonio?
	Ita hosi Amérika ka?	Are you from America?
	Ita moras ka?	Are you sick?
Add <i>ka lae</i> (lit. ‘or not’):	Ita naran Antonio ka lae?	Is your name Antonio?
	Ita hosi Amérika ka lae?	Are you from America?
	Ita moras ka lae?	Are you sick?

The most common option is to use *ka* (often pronounced *ga* at the end of questions) – this clearly marks the utterance as a question, and doesn’t sound as pedantic as *ka lae*. However you cannot shorten the fixed greeting *Ita diak ka lae?* ‘How are you?’ to **Ita diak ka?*

A positive answer may be *sín* ‘yes’. For a negative answer, you can say *lae* ‘no’. It is also common to answer with an echo of the question; this is taught in the next chapter.

3. Asking permission: bele ‘can, may’

To ask permission, place *bele* ‘can, may’ before the verb, and signal that this is a question, for instance by adding a final question marker *ka*. The answer is either *Bele* ‘(You) may’ or *La bele* ‘(You) may not.’

Hau bele hemu ka?	May I drink?
Hau bele baa uma ka?	May I go home?
Hau bele hariis ka?	May I bathe?

If you don’t yet know how to say what you want, but you can make it obvious by sign-language, just ask *Bele?*

4. **Forbidding: la bele 'may not'**

La bele is often used in prohibitions.

Ita la bele deskansa!

Don't rest!

La bele baa uma!

Don't go home!

Alin la bele hemu wiski!

You (little brother/sister) can't drink whisky!

5. **Wanting: hakarak and lakohi**

To say that someone wants to do something, simply say *hakarak* followed by what is wanted. *Hakarak* is only used in positive sentences.

Hau hakarak haan.

I want to eat.

Nia hakarak deskansa.

He/she wants to rest.

Tiu hakarak baa uma.

He (uncle) wants to go home.



The opposite of *hakarak* is *lakohi* 'don't want, refuse'; people don't say **la hakarak*.

Alin lakohi haan.

Younger brother/sister doesn't want to eat.

Nia lakohi deskansa.

He/she doesn't want to rest.

Hau lakohi baa uma.

I don't want to go home.

If you noticed that *lakohi* looks like *la* 'not' plus *kohi*, you are correct; however *kohi* on its own doesn't mean anything in Tetun Dili.

As you might expect, you do not use *lakohi* to turn down an offer. Instead you may say things like 'I've just eaten', or 'Sorry, I'm not accustomed to drinking coffee'. For now, you can simply smile and hold up your hands palm forward.

3. Aprende Tetun (*Learning Tetun*)

Objetivu

In this chapter we focus on expressions that facilitate language learning.

You will learn to:

- Ask: What is this? Who?
- Request clarification: Please repeat, please speak slowly.
- Answer yes-no questions.
- Use various terms meaning ‘you’ and ‘we’.
- Give simple commands.
- Deny statements using *laos*.



Liafuan foun

Nouns

Tetun	Tetun ¹
Inglés	English
Portugés	Portuguese
Indonézia	Indonesia
lian Indonézia	Indonesian language ²
Bahasa (I)	Indonesian language ³
lisaun	lesson
liafuan	word, short segment of speech

Transitive verbs

kompriende	understand
hatene	know (something) ⁵
aprende	learn
hatete	tell, say
hatete fali	say (it) again

Intransitive verbs/adjectives

koalia	speak
loos	true, correct, straight, right
sala	wrong; error

Pronouns

ita boot	you (singular formal)
o	you (singular familiar)
imi	you (plural)
ami	we, us (excluding ‘you’)
ita	we, us (including ‘you’)
sira	they, them
nee	this ⁴
saida	what

Adverbs

lalais	quickly
neineik	slowly, softly

Other

favór ida	please ⁶
laós	not, indeed not

¹ In Portuguese, language names are written with lower case. We are using upper case because most language names in Tetun are derived from place names, which are, as per international convention, written with a capital letter; e.g. *lian Rúsia* ‘Russian’, *lian Sumba* ‘Sumbanese’.

² Literally ‘language Indonesia’.

³ This Indonesian word literally means ‘language’; used on its own it always refers to the Indonesian language.

⁴ For ‘that’ one can sometimes use *nebaa* ‘there’; however *nee* is far more common, and is often used where English would use ‘that’.

⁵ Knowing ‘someone’ is *konhese*.

⁶ Literally ‘favour one’.

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun

- ❖ *Tetun* or *Tetum*? In Portuguese the language name is spelled with final ‘m’ as *Tetum*; in Tetun itself it is spelled *Tetun*, and in English both spellings are found. However the final consonant sounds like ‘n’ (or for some people ‘ng’); it is not pronounced with final ‘m’. Note that this word is, like most Tetun words, stressed on the second-last syllable, that is, ‘te’.
- ❖ *Sala* has a quite general meaning of ‘be wrong, incorrect; do wrong, err, make a mistake’; it is also a noun meaning ‘error’ or ‘sin’.
- ❖ *Saida* (from *saa ida* ‘what one’) is often pronounced *se-da*. It has the same meaning as *saa* ‘what’, but is used in many more contexts. *Saa* is mainly used to ask someone’s name (*naran saa?*) and what someone is doing (*halo saa?*). *Saida* can be used in these questions (*naran saida?*, *halo saida?*) as well as in any other ‘what’ question, such as *Nee saida?* ‘What is this?’
- ❖ ‘You’: there are a variety of ways of saying ‘you’ in Tetun, and the differences are very important. Here are the options:
 - The most common option is to use the person’s title (or, in the case of younger people, perhaps their name). This is appropriate with any age or status of person. For instance to ask someone whom you address as *senhora* ‘Where are you going?’, it is more common to say *Senhora baa nebee?* than *Ita baa nebee?*
 - *Ita* is appropriate for one adult or older teenager.
 - *Ita boot* (lit. ‘you big’) too is used to address one adult, mainly in formal situations such as interviews with the media, medical consultations, or with relatively high-status people. You could use it with your counterpart, or with local and national leaders.
 - *O*, too, is singular, but is used for close family and friends, and for children up to about the age of 14.⁷
 - *Imi* is used for addressing more than one person (like ‘y’all’).
 - *Ita boot sira* (lit. ‘you big PLURAL’) is used for addressing more than one person in formal situations.
- ❖ ‘We’: Tetun distinguishes two terms for ‘we’: *Ita* includes at least the speaker and hearer (i.e. me and you, and possibly some others). *Ami* includes the speaker and others, but it excludes the hearer (i.e. me and others, but not you). So, for instance, use *ita* for suggestions as to what you and the hearer can do together (*Ita baa uma*. ‘Let’s go home.’), and *ami* when asking for help or advice from the hearer (*Ajuda ami*. ‘Help us.’).
- ❖ *Ita*: Notice that *ita* has two meanings. It is both ‘we (inclusive)’ and ‘you (singular polite)’. That is, it always includes ‘you’ (the hearer), but sometimes includes ‘me’ (the speaker) as well. Usually context helps you interpret the difference, but sometimes it is genuinely ambiguous.

⁷ Timorese usually interpret the English word ‘you’ as being equivalent to Tetun *o*, and hence as being impolite. In fact, until the 18th century, when ‘thou’ disappeared from standard English, it was ‘you’ that was the formal pronoun (like Tetun *ita*), with ‘thou’ being used for close family and friends, God, and social inferiors (hence more like Tetun *o*).

Diálogu

(1) John la kompriende

	Carla koalia Portugés.	Carla is speaking Portuguese.
Carla:	Como está?	How are you? (in Portuguese)
John:	Deskulpa. Hau la hatene Portugés. Favór ida koalia Tetun.	Sorry. I don't speak Portuguese. Please speak Tetun.
Carla:	Bele. Ita hatene Tetun ka?	OK. Do you know Tetun?
John:	Sín. Hatene.	Yes, I know it.

(2) Nee saida?

	Maria hosi Austrália. Nia la hatene liafuan 'bee'.	Maria is from Australia. She doesn't know the word 'water'.
Tia:	Maria, ita hakarak hemu saida?	Maria, what do you want to drink?
Maria:	Deskulpa, tia, hau la hatene: nee naran saa?	Sorry, aunt, I don't know: what is this called?
Tia:	Nee naran 'bee'. Ita hakarak hemu bee ka?	This is called 'water'. Do you want to drink water?
Maria:	Hakarak.	(Yes), I do.

Kostumi

- ❖ How have people responded to your attempts to speak Tetun? Enjoy those big smiles you are probably getting! Remember them when you get looks of puzzlement...
- ❖ *Obrigadu/obrigada* 'thank you'. This expression is used far less often in Tetun than in English. It is appropriate in formal relationships or with strangers, in response to significant help, or at significant moments in a relationship (e.g. when leaving your host family). It is not generally appreciated if you say *obrigadu/a* in response to being given food or drink at home. Seek other ways of showing appreciation, such as a smile, or a comment on how you like the cooking (*Nee diak!*). Returning a favour (either immediately or at some other time) is very appropriate; for instance, if a neighbour sends you some treats, you could return some of your own.
- ❖ If you are living with a Timorese host family, and need something, say so. This is generally interpreted as a sign that you want to fit in, rather than as an imposition. If you just keep quiet about your needs, people may be upset.
- ❖ As in the West, nodding your head means 'yes' and shaking it means 'no'.

Estrutura língua nian

1. Answers to yes-no questions

In the previous chapter you learned to answer a yes-no question with *sín* ‘yes’ or *lae* ‘no’. Here is another common way of answering:

Alex:	Ita baa eskola ka?	Are you going to school?
Maria:	Baa. / La baa.	I am. / I’m not.
Alex:	Ita hatene Inglés ka?	Do you know English? (i.e. Can you speak it?)
Maria:	Hatene. / La hatene.	I do. / I don’t.

That is, a positive answer consists of the key verb or adjective from the question. A negative answer is preceded by *la* ‘not’.⁸

When a question asks *bele* ‘can, may’, a positive answer is *bele*, and a negative answer is *la bele* ‘can not, may not’.

Inês:	Hau bele baa ka?	Can/May I go?
Amaa:	Bele. / La bele.	You can. / You can’t.

It is also common to combine the two strategies for answering a question. In this case, a positive answer consists of *sín* ‘yes’ or *loos* ‘true’, followed by the key word. A negative answer consists of *lae* ‘no’, followed by *la* and the key word.

Alex:	Ita baa uma ka?	Are you going home?
Maria:	Sín. Baa. / Lae. La baa.	Yes, I’m going. / No, I’m not going.

2. Nominal clauses and questions: What is this?

Note the following pattern:

Nee saida?	What is this?
Nee uma.	This is a house.
Nee saida?	What is this?
Nee eskola.	This is a school.
Nee see?	Who is this?
Nee Mario.	This is Mario.



Sentences such as this have no verb in Tetun. There is no equivalent of the English copula verb ‘to be’. Note too that there is no equivalent of ‘a’ or ‘an’ in these sentences.

To ask what something is, use *Nee saida?* The question word is at the end of the sentence – that is, in exactly the same place as the answer.

⁸ There are variations on this. For instance, you can repeat the subject along with the verb (e.g. *Hau baa*). However a bare verb is probably the most common.

3. Commands

Note the following commands:

Koalia Tetun.	Speak Tetun.
Favór ida, senhór, koalia neineik.	Please, sir, speak slowly.

There is no special grammar for commands in Tetun. Often a command starts with the verb, as in the above examples. You can precede a request with *Favór ida* ‘please’, and/or a term of address such as *senhór* ‘sir’.

In later chapters you will learn words which can be added to commands to soften them or strengthen them (e.g. *lai*, *ona*).

4. *laós* ‘not’

Tetun has two basic ways of saying ‘not’. *La*, which you know already, is used to negate verbs and adjectives (e.g. *la baa* ‘not go’, *la diak* ‘not good’).

The second negator is *laós*. (It is either stressed on the ‘o’, or given equal stress on both vowels.) *Laós* can negate almost anything.

Pedro:	Uma nee boot!	This house is big!
Atoi:	Nee laós uma. Nee eskola!	That’s not a house. It’s a school!
Atina:	Ben hosi Xina ka?	Is Ben from China?
Marta:	Lae, laós hosi Xina. Nia hosi Singapura.	No, not from China. He’s from Singapore.
José:	Marta koalia Portugés lalais.	Marta speaks Portuguese fast.
Linda:	Nee laós Portugés; nia koalia Espanhól!	That’s not Portuguese, she’s speaking Spanish!

As the examples above show, *laós* tends to be strongly contrastive. Very often, the statement which is denied is immediately preceded or followed by a statement which is claimed to be true.

4. Ita halo saida? (*What are you doing?*)

Objetivu

In this chapter you will learn to:

- Ask what someone is doing
- Talk about some daily activities
- Ask and state where something is: where, here, there
- Use *ka* 'or'



Liafuan foun

Transitive verbs

halo	do, make
rona	hear, listen to
haree	see, look at
lee	read



Intransitive verbs

pasiar	go for an outing
halimar	play, relax
lao	walk
tuur	sit
hamriik	stand
servisu	work, have a job
hela	live, stay, reside

Nouns

rádiu	radio
televizaun	television
jornál	newspaper
fraze	sentence



Other

depois	and then
tenki	must, have to
iha	in, at
iha nebee?	where?
iha nee	here
iha nebaa	there

Common sequences

halo saida?	what is ... doing?
Rona mai!	Listen here!
Ita haree saida?	What do you see?
baa pasiar	go out for a walk or drive
koalia halimar	chat
lao halimar	stroll (with no purpose)
tuur halimar	sit and relax
hamriik iha nee	stand here
halo servisu	do work
... hela iha nebee?	where does ... live?
rona rádiu	listen to the radio
haree televizaun	watch television
lee jornál	read a newspaper
halo fraze	make a sentence
tenki baa	must go

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun

- ❖ *Depois* is ubiquitous in story-telling. If you want to encourage someone to continue with a half-finished story, you can simply prompt with *Depois?* 'And then?'
- ❖ *Tenki* 'must, have to' always precedes the verb, and nearly always indicates obligation; e.g. *O tenki baa eskola* 'You must go to school.' You can't use it to translate 'must' in the sense of 'be inevitable; therefore I conclude...' (e.g. 'I'm hungry; it must be lunch time.')

- ❖ Both *Ita halo saa?* and *Ita halo saida?* are common, and mean ‘What are you doing?’ It is a common question to ask of people you meet, on a par with *Baa nebee?* The reply is often very general, such as *Hau halimar* ‘I’m playing / not working.’
- ❖ *Servisu* is usually interpreted as paid work. So, many farmers and other self-employed people will tell you *Hau la servisu*. In contrast, *halo servisu* (lit. ‘do work’) does not imply paid work, and includes housework, farming, and selling things on the streets.
- ❖ *Hela* means ‘live’ in the sense of *Ita hela iha nebee?* ‘Where do you live?’ ‘Live’ in the sense of ‘be alive, not dead’ is *moris*.

Diálogu

(1) Halo saida?

Paulo lao, haree Domingos tuur iha uma.	Paulo is walking, and sees Domingos sitting at home.
Paulo: Bondia maun.	Good morning, older brother.
Domingos: Ei, bondia Paulo. O baa nebee?	Hey, good morning, Paulo. Where are you going?
Paulo: Hau baa Lecidere. Maun halo saida?	I’m going to Lecidere. What are you doing?
Domingos: Aii, hau tuur halimar, rona rádiu. O baa Lecidere, halo saida?	I’m just sitting relaxing, listening to the radio. What are you going to Lecidere to do?
Paulo: Hau baa servisu, halo uma iha nebaa. Alin Zelia halo saida, maun?	I’m going to work, building a house there. What is Zelia doing, older brother?
Domingos: Nia haree televizaun.	She’s watching television.
Paulo: Ah, diak. Hau tenki baa ona. Ate logu.	Oh, OK. I have to go now. See you later.
Domingos: Ate logu.	See you later.

(2) Maria lakohi tuur

Maria lao.	Maria is walking.
Ana: Maria baa nebee?	Where are you (‘Maria’) going?
Maria: Hau baa servisu.	I’m going to work.
Ana: Mai tuur!	Come and sit down!
Maria: Deskulpa, hau la bele tuur. Hau tenki baa lalais. Adeus!	Sorry, I can’t sit. I have to go quickly.
Ana: Adeus!	Bye!
	Goodbye!

Kostumi

- ❖ Most work within the house is the responsibility of women, including cooking, cleaning, and household finances. They may be aided in cleaning, washing and food preparation by children and teenagers.

- ❖ To point, people often use a whole outstretched arm, or hold their face in that direction and jut out their chin and lips. It is fine to point at objects with an outstretched index finger, but not to point to people that way.

Estrutura língua nian

1. *baa/mai haan 'go/come and eat'*

If the person you are talking about needs to go somewhere before doing something, you usually put *baa* or *mai* before the action verb.¹

Hau tenki haan.	I must eat. (This is suitable if you are currently in the place where you will eat.)
Hau tenki baa haan.	I must go and eat. (This is more usual if you first have to go to the place where you will eat, even if it is only in the next room.)
Haan ona!	Eat up! (said to someone already in position to eat)
Mai haan ona!	Come and eat! (said to someone who has to move first)
Depois nia hariis.	Then she bathed.
Depois nia baa hariis.	Then she went and bathed.

2. *iha nebee? 'where?'*

Tetun has one very general marker of location, *iha*. Depending on context, it can mean 'in', 'at', or 'on', amongst other things. In chapter 22 you will learn how to combine it with other words to indicate such locations as 'inside', 'beside', and 'in front of'.

To ask where something is, use *iha nebee* (lit. 'at where'); 'here' is *iha nee* (lit. 'at this') and 'there' is *iha nebaa* (lit. 'at there'). You can use each of these without any verb to talk about where someone or something is.

José iha nebee?	Where is José?
Nia iha uma.	He is at home.

You can also use these expressions after a verb to talk about where something takes place

Nia hamriik iha nebee?	Where is he standing?
Nia hamriik iha nebaa.	He is standing there.
Hau bele tuur iha nebee?	Where can I sit?
Ita bele tuur iha nee.	You can sit here.

Iha also means 'have' (see chapter 9) and 'exist' (see chapter 14).

¹ Such sequences of verbs are far more common in Austronesian languages such as Tetun than in European ones. In linguistics, they are called 'serial verb constructions'. Other examples of serial verb constructions include *tuur halimar* (lit. 'sit play') meaning 'sit and relax', and *koalia halimar* (lit. 'speak play'), meaning 'chat'.

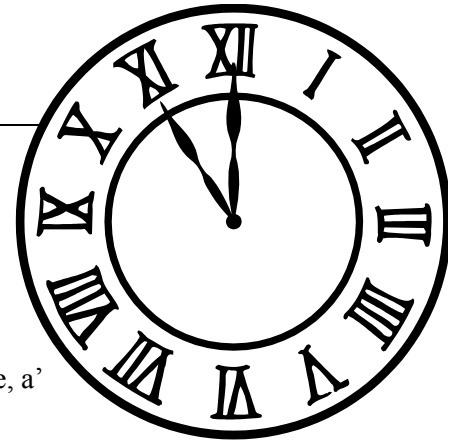
3. ka 'or'

To specify 'or', place *ka* between the two options. Unlike English, there tends to be a pause after the *ka* rather than before it. You can use *ka* to coordinate a wide range of constituents, including single words, and whole clauses.

- . **Ita rona rádiu ka televizaun?** Are we hearing a radio or a television?
- . **Favór ida, koalia Tetun ka Inglés.** Please speak Tetun or English.
- . **Tia hakarak baa pasiar ka, halimar iha uma?** Do you (aunt) want to go out, or just relax at home?



5. Bainhira? (*When?*)



Objetivu

In this chapter you will learn to:

- Ask and state when something will happen
- Name the times of day, and terms for ‘yesterday’, ‘today’, etc.
- Specify which item you mean, using *nee* ‘this, the’ and *ida* ‘one, a’

Liafuan foun

Time words¹

uluk	formerly, in the past
horiseik	yesterday
ohin loron	today
aban	tomorrow
aban-bainrua	in the future
loron	day
kalan	night
loron-kalan	day and night
dadeer	morning (to about 11 am)
meiudia	midday (about 11 - 2.30pm)
lokraik, loraik	afternoon (about 2.30-dark) ³
ohin	just now, earlier today
agora	now

orsida, oras ida	soon, later today ²
hori-kalan	last night, yesterday evening
orsida kalan	this evening
bainhira	when? (for future)
hori-bainhira	when? (for past)
sedu	early
tardi	late
ho oras	on time

Other

nee	this, these, the
ida	one, a

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun

- ❖ Notice that the compounds *loron-kalan* ‘day and night’ and *aban-bainrua* ‘in the future’ both follow the same pattern, of coordinating two words which have related meanings. Some other common expressions fitting this pattern are: *baa-mai* ‘to and fro’, *tuun-sae* ‘up and down’, *midar-siin* ‘sweet and sour’, *inan-aman* ‘parents’ (lit. ‘mother-father’), and *maun-alin* ‘brothers and sisters’ (lit. ‘older brother – younger sibling’).
- ❖ Usually, *ohin* ‘earlier today’ contrasts with *orsida* ‘later today’. So, ‘this afternoon’ is *ohin lokraik* if it is now evening, but *orsida lokraik* if it is still morning. For ‘today’ as a whole day, use *ohin loron*.
- ❖ *Loron* means ‘day’ both in the sense of ‘a 24-hour period’, and in the sense of ‘daytime’ as opposed to ‘night’.

¹ For a fuller list of the times of day, see the list at the end of the chapter.

² Literally *oras ida* ‘hour one’.

³ This derives from *loro kraik* ‘sun low’.

Diálogu

(1) Bainhira mak baa eskola?

Martinho tenki baa eskola agora.

Tia: **Martinho, o halo saida?**

Martinho: **Hau halimar, tia.**

Tia: **Halimar? Bainhira mak o baa eskola?**

Martinho: **Aban mak hau baa.**

Tia: **La bele! O tenki baa agora.**

Martinho: **Diak.**

Martinho has to go to school now.

Martinho, what are you doing?

I'm playing, aunt.

Playing? When are you going to school?

I'm going tomorrow.

You can't! You have to go now.

OK.

(2) Ita mai hori-bainhira?

Olivio mai hosi Brazíl. Nia hatene koalia Tetun.

Olivio: **Botardi, senhór. Diak ka lae?**

Manuel: **Botardi. Aa! Ita hatene koalia Tetun? Ita hosi nebee?**

Olivio: **Hau hosi Brazíl.**

Manuel: **Ita mai iha Timor hori-bainhira?**

Olivio: **Hau mai horiseik lokraik.**

Manuel: **Ita servisu iha nebee?**

Olivio: **Hau servisu iha Viqueque. Aban dadeer hau baa.**

Manuel: **Diak.**

Olivio has come from Brazil. He can speak Tetun.

Good afternoon, sir. How are you?

Good afternoon. Oh! You know how to speak Tetun? Where are you from?

I'm from Brazil.

When did you come to Timor?

I came yesterday afternoon.

Where do you work?

I work in Viqueque. I'll go there tomorrow morning.

That's good.

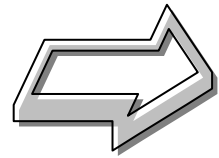
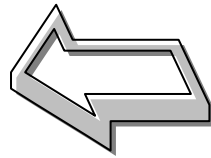
Komentáriu kona ba diálogu

- ❖ *Hatene* in Manuel's first utterance means 'know how to'.

Kostumi

- ❖ For Timorese, relationships tend to be more important than schedules, especially work schedules. For many events, such as parties and meetings, everyone waits until the most senior people have arrived before commencing. However school, office and church services tend to run on time. In any case, transport and communication difficulties often make keeping to exact time difficult.

Estrutura língua nian



1. Past and future time

To ask about past time, use *hori-bainhira*. It can occur either at the end of the sentence, or at the beginning. If it is at the beginning, it is usually followed by the focus marker *mak*. (For a discussion of *mak*, see chapter 10.) The answer is normally at the end of the sentence.⁴

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|
| P: | Senhora mai hori-bainhira? KA | When did you (<i>senhora</i>) come? |
| | Hori-bainhira mak senhora mai? | |
| H: | Hau mai horiseik. | I came yesterday. |
| P: | Ita lee jornál nee hori-bainhira? KA | When did you read this newspaper? |
| | Hori-bainhira mak ita lee jornál nee? | |
| H: | Hau lee jornál nee hori-kalan. | I read this newspaper last night. |

To ask about future time, use *bainhira*. It usually occurs at the beginning of the sentence, followed by *mak*. The answer may be at the end of the sentence, or at the beginning followed by *mak*.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| P: | Bainhira mak Senhora Rita mai? | When will Mrs Rita come? |
| H: | Nia mai aban. | She's coming tomorrow. |
| P: | Bainhira mak ita baa pasiar? | When will we go for an outing? |
| H: | Orsida mak ita baa. | We'll go soon. |

When mentioning time, the time phrase can occur at the beginning of the sentence, the end, or (especially if it is very short) in the middle.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Nia mai horiseik. | He came yesterday. |
| Horiseik nia baa eskola tardi. | Yesterday he went to school late. |
| Mestri Pedro aban hanorin Portugés. | Teacher Pedro is teaching Portuguese tomorrow. |

2. Which one?

In Tetun you do not have to say whether you are talking about one item or more (i.e. singular or plural) or whether you are talking about a particular item or 'any old one' (i.e. definite or indefinite).

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| . Mestri baa Portugál. | Teachers / the teacher / a teacher went to Portugal. |
| . Nia baa eskola. | He went to school / the school / a school. |

However it is possible to make such distinctions. (See appendix 6 on determiners for an overview of the options.) In this chapter we will concentrate on *nee* 'this, it, the' and *ida* 'one, a'.

⁴ 'P' here stands for *pergunta* 'question', and 'H' for *hataan* 'reply'.

3. *nee* ‘this’

Nee is used in two main ways. Firstly, it is a pronoun meaning ‘this, these, it’. You can use it for something that you are pointing to or already talking about, regardless of whether it is a single object, or more than one.⁵ Just as in English, you can also use *nee* to refer to someone you are looking at or pointing at, for instance to ask *Nee see?* ‘Who is this?’ However once you have started talking about people, you no longer use *nee*, instead using *nia* ‘he, she’ to refer to one person, or *sira* ‘they’ to refer to more than one.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| . Nee naran saa? | What is this called? |
| . Nee saida? | What is this? |

Secondly, *nee* can modify a preceding noun to mean ‘this, these, the’. Again, this indicates that you expect the other person to know which entities you are talking about, either because you have pointed to them, or because you have already mentioned them.

- | | |
|---|---|
| . Nia hatene uma nee. | He knows this house / these houses. |
| . Hau servisu iha eskola nee. | I work in this school / these schools. |
| . Nia lee jornál. Maibee jornál nee la diak! | He read newspapers / a newspaper. But the newspaper(s) weren’t/wasn’t good! |
| . Nia hela iha Otél Timór. Otél nee karun. | He is staying in Hotel Timor. It is expensive. |

Note that when it modifies a noun, *nee* is used not only for things and places, but also for people. In fact, it can follow proper names and pronouns if the person has already been mentioned.

- | | |
|--|--|
| . Tiu nee hosi Ermera. | This uncle is from Ermera. |
| . Horiseik hau hasoru Senhora Catarina. Senhora nee hosi Los Palos. | Yesterday I met Mrs Catarina. She is from Los Palos. |
| . Ohin hau haree Ela. Ela nee servisu iha Viqueque. | Just now I saw Ela. She works in Viqueque. |
| . José servisu iha Oxfam. Nia nee koalia lalais! | José works at Oxfam. This guy speaks fast! |

4. *ida* ‘one, a’

Like *nee*, *ida* ‘one’ can stand on its own.

- | | |
|---|---|
| . Ida naran Miguel, ida naran Sam. | One is called Miguel, one is called Sam. |
| . Ida hira? | How much is one? (i.e. how much does one cost?) |

Ida can also follow a noun. In this case it is often best translated as ‘a, an’ rather than ‘one’.⁶

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| . Senhora ida hakarak baa Suai. | A lady wants to go to Suai. |
| . Depois tiu ida koalia. | Then an uncle spoke. |
| . Hau haree rádiu ida. | I see one/a radio. |

⁵ In grammatical terms, *nee* is definite, and neutral with respect to number.

Note that Tetun also has *nebaa* ‘that’, which can be used when referring to things which are further away. *Nebaa* can modify a noun (e.g. *uma nebaa* ‘that house’) or *ida* (e.g. *ida nebaa* ‘that one there’). However *nebaa* is used relatively little, except in the fixed phrases *hosi nebaa* ‘from there’, *iha nebaa* ‘there’, and *baa nebaa* ‘go/to there’.

⁶ In grammatical terms, *ida* is often interpreted as indefinite, unless you add some other marker of definiteness (such as *ida nee* in the next subsection).

5. ida nee ‘this one’

To emphasise that you are referring to one particular item, use the sequence *ida nee*. Again, this can stand alone, or can follow a noun.

Ida nee diak.

This one is good.

Ida nee la diak.

This one isn’t good.

Hau lee jornál ida nee.

I read this (one) newspaper.

Tiu ida nee naran Virgilio.

This uncle is called Virgilio.



6. uluk ‘in the past’

Uluk ‘in the past’ comes at the beginning of the sentence or after the subject.⁷

. **Uluk hau servisu iha Embaixada Brazil.**

In the past I worked for the Brazilian

Agora hau la servisu.

Embassy. Now I don’t have a job.

. **Ami uluk hela iha Same. Agora iha**

We used to live in Same. Now (we live) in

Liquiça.

Liquiça.

Liafuan tan kona ba tempu: *Extra vocabulary for times of day*

Note that all times given are approximate. People generally agree as to what the central portion of a time period includes; for instance all would include noon as *meiudia*, and all would count 4pm as *lokraik*. However the boundaries are not clear.

dadeer-saan nakukun	very early morning before sunrise (3-5am)
madrugada	very early morning (3-5am)
rai huun mutin	the crack of dawn (as it is starting to get light)
loro sae	sunrise (lit. ‘sun rise’)
dadeer-saan	early morning (5-8am)
loro monu	sunset (lit. ‘sun fall’)
kalan boot	late at night, in the middle of the night when people are normally asleep

⁷ *Uluk* also means ‘first (before doing something else, or before someone else)’. In this case, *uluk* comes after the verb; e.g. *Nia lao uluk* ‘He walks ahead (of the others)’.

Reading Portuguese names

Most letters in Portuguese are pronounced in about the same way as they are in Tetun. The following basic rules will allow you to read most Portuguese names correctly. Note that the ‘pronounced as’ columns use the spelling which is used in this book for Tetun (so ‘x’ for instance corresponds to English ‘sh’).

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Pronounced as</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Pronounced as</u>
ç	s	Marçal	Marsál
ce, ci	se, si	Jacinto	Jasintu
ca, co, cu	ka, ko, ku	Baucau	Baukau
ch, x	x	China	Xina
ge, gi	je, ji	Virgilio	Virjília
ga, go, gu + consonant	ga, go, gu	Gusmão	Guzmaun
gu + vowel	g	Miguel	Migél
h	- (not pronounced)	Henrique	Enriki ⁸
lh	ly	Julho	Julyu
nh	ny	Martinho	Martinyu
que, qui	ke, ki	Liquiça	Líkisa
qua, quo	kua, kuo	quarto	kuartu
s (initial)	s	Saturnino	Saturninu
s (medial followed by vowel)	z	Cesaltina	Sezaltina
s (followed by unvoiced t, c, f, p)	x / s	Sesta	sesta / sesta
s (followed by voiced b, d, g, m, n, r)	j / z	Ismael	Ijmaél / Izmaél
ss	s	Maubisse	Maubisi
z (initial, medial)	z	Zelia	Zélia
z (final)	s	da Cruz	da Krús
ão	aun	Simeão	Simeaun

In Portuguese, word-final ‘o’ is pronounced ‘u’, while final ‘e’ is pronounced in Timor as either ‘i’ or ‘e’ (depending partly on the word, and partly on the speaker). With place names in Timor, it is not always predictable whether a final ‘o’ means ‘u’ as in Portuguese (e.g. *Manatuto*, *Atauro*, *Gleno*, *Ainaro*) or ‘o’ as in native languages (e.g. *Suai Loro*, *Beco*).

o (final)	u	Manatuto	Manatutu
e (final)	i / e	Viqueque	Vikeke
		Maubisse	Maubisi

Many names which in Portugal are written with accent marks, are usually written without such diacritics in Timor; e.g. *António* is usually written *Antonio* in Timor.

⁸ Some people do pronounce the initial ‘h’ in some names, such as Henrique, under the influence of Indonesian.