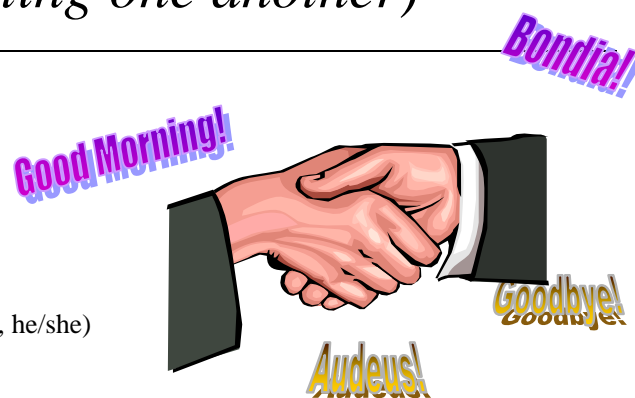


1. Hasee malu (*Greeting one another*)

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) ¹
bonoiti	good evening, good night

Leave-takings

ate amanyá	see you tomorrow ³
ate logu	see you later today
adeus	goodbye

Terms of address ⁴

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

Other nouns

naran	name
Amérika	America

Personal pronouns ²

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

Interrogative pronouns

saa	what
nebee	where

Other

hosi, husi	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.

¹ Portuguese is *boa tarde*, but the ‘a’ is omitted by most Tetun speakers.

² The rest of the personal pronouns are in chapter 3.

³ Note to Portuguese speakers: many people stress *ate* 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 *senyór*, not **o senyór*.

- ❖ *Ate amanyá* literally means ‘until tomorrow’, but is often used more loosely than that, even if people don’t expect to meet for a few days.
- ❖ For ‘thank you’, men say *obrigadu*, women say *obrigada*.⁵

Komentáriu kona ba título (*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.
 - *Senyór* and *senyora* 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 *senyór* and *senyora*.
 - *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, President Xanana 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, *Senyór hosi nebee?* can mean either ‘Where are you from?’ (when speaking to someone whom you call *Senyór*) or ‘Where is he from?’ (when talking about someone whom you call *Senyór*).

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.

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.

- Indonesian men may be addressed as *bapa* (from Indonesian *bapak* ‘sir, mister’) and women as *ibu*.
- ❖ 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, Senyór

Miguel:	Bondia, Senyór Antonio. Diak ka lae?	Good morning Mr Antonio. How are you?
Antonio:	Diak, obrigadu. Senyór 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. Where are you from?
Maria:	Hau hosi Baucau. Ate amanyá.	I’m from Baucau. ⁶ See you tomorrow.
Alda:	Ate amanyá.	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. *Senyór 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 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 lingua nian (*language structure*)

1. Verbal clauses

Intransitive clauses (i.e. those without an object) follow the order subject-verb or subject-adjective.⁷ 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.⁸ 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 Amérika.	I am from America.
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 Gonsalves.	My name is Maria Gonsalves.

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 Gonsalves.	My name is Maria Gonsalves.

3. One word one form

One thing that makes Tetun easier to learn is that each word has only a single form.⁹

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; these 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.

⁷ There are so few differences between adjectives and verbs, that adjectives in Tetun can be considered a type of verb.

⁸ The object can however be put first, in a construction you will learn in chapter 28.

⁹ 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. Kolisensa! (*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

Kolisensa!

Liafuan foun

Intransitive verbs/adjectives

hamrook	thirsty
hamlaha	hungry
kolen, kole	tired
moras	sick
deskansa	rest
hariis	bathe
pozitivu	positive
negativu	negative

Transitive verbs

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

Interjections

kolisensa	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.

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

Tia: **Diak. Ate logu.**

Marta: **Ate logu.**

Martha wants to go home.

I'm going now, aunt.

See you later.

See you later.

(2) Senyór Abel baa eskola

Senyór Abel baa eskola.

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

Senyór Abel: **Diak.**

Alfredo: **Senyór baa nebee?**

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

Alfredo: **Sín, hau baa uma.**

Senyór Abel: **Diak. Ate amanyá.**

Alfredo: **Ate amanyá.**

Mister Abel goes to school.

Good morning, sir. How are you?

Well.

Where are you going?

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

Yes, I'm going home.

OK. See you tomorrow.

See you tomorrow.

Kostumi

- ❖ *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 *kolisensa*. 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 lingua 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 23.) *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 *ka* (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 *ka lae* (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 lesson.

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.



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

Transitive verbs

kompriende	understand
hatene	know (something) ⁵
aprende	learn
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
------------------	---------------------

¹ We are following Portuguese conventions in writing country names with a capital letter, but country-based adjectives (like *portugés*) with lower case.

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 *konyese*.

⁶ Literally ‘favour one’.

Komentáriu kona ba liafuan foun

- ❖ *Tetun* or *Tetum*? In Portuguese the language name is spelled *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’.
- ❖ *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 *Senyora* ‘Where are you going?’, it is more common to say *Senyora 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!* ‘We’ll go home!’), and *ami* when asking for help or advice from the hearer (*Ajuda ami.* ‘Help us’). Until you get the distinction right, it is probably better for your social relationships to use inclusive *ita* too much than to use exclusive *ami* when you really meant to include the other person.
- ❖ *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. In writing, some people capitalise *Ita* ‘you’ but use lower case for *ita* ‘we’.

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 esta?	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 Amérika. Nia la hatene liafuan 'bee'.	Maria is from America. 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 want to drink water.

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 need something in your host family, 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 America, nodding your head means 'yes' and shaking it means 'no'.

Estrutura lingua 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 them:

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?
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.
Ita see?	Who are you?
Hau Mario.	I am 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.

3. Commands

Note the following commands:

Koalia tetun.	Speak Tetun.
Favór ida, senyór, 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 *senyór* ‘sir’.

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

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.

4. Kapítulu 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, ... (preposition)
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!
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

- ❖ Within households there is a clear division of labour, although of course there is variation from family to family. Generally, women are in charge of the house, taking responsibility for cooking, shopping and cleaning. They may be aided in cleaning, washing and food preparation by children and teenagers. Men's responsibilities primarily lie outside the house.
- ❖ 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 lingua 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'). Notice that you can use each of these without any verb to talk about where someone or something is, or use it after a verb to talk about where an event takes place.

Nia iha nebee?	Where is he?
Nia iha uma.	He is at home.
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).

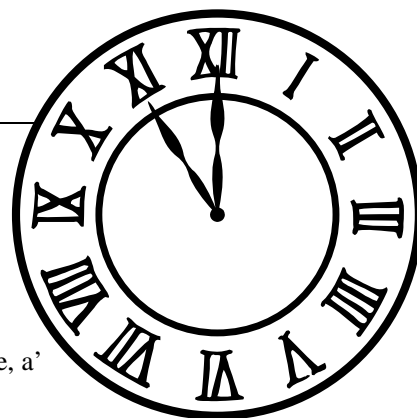
¹ Such sequences of verbs are far more common in Austronesian languages than European ones. In linguistics, they are called 'serial verb constructions'. There are other examples of serial verb constructions in the 'common sequences' column of the vocabulary section, such as *lao koalía halimar* (lit. '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, koalía 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) ⁴
ohin	just now, earlier today; 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)

Other

nee	this, these, the
ida	one, a
Corpo da Paz	Peace Corps ³

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, which you will learn in subsequent chapters, 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* contrasts with *orsida* ‘later today’. So, ‘this afternoon’ is *ohin lokraik* if it is now *lokraik* or later, but *orsida lokraik* if it is still morning. However, *ohin* can also be used to mean ‘today (any time)’. *Ohin loron* is unambiguously ‘today’.
- ❖ *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 is Portuguese, and pronounced ‘korpu da pás’.

⁴ This derives from *loro kraik* ‘sun low’.

Diálogo

(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 Amérika. Nia hatene koalia tetun.

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

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

Olivio: **Hau hosi Amérika.**

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 America. 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 America.

When did you come to Timor?

I came yesterday afternoon.

Where do you work?

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

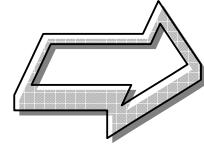
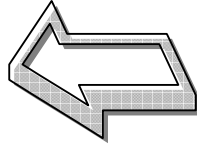
That's good.

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, exact time is not important; everyone waits until the most important 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 lingua 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.⁵

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|
| P: | Senyora mai hori-bainhira? KA | When did you (<i>Senyora</i>) come? |
| | Hori-bainhira mak Senyora 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 horiseik. | I read this newspaper yesterday. |

To ask about future time, use *bainhira*. It usually occurs at the beginning of the sentence, followed by *mak*.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| P: | Bainhira mak Senyora 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 la baa eskola. | Yesterday he didn't go to school. |
| Hau aban hanorin iha Corpo da Paz. | I'm teaching tomorrow at Peace Corps. |

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 Portugal. | 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'.

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.⁶ *Nee* as a pronoun is not used for people; instead, use *nia* 'he, she' to refer to one person, or *sira* 'they' to refer to more than one.

⁵ 'P' here stands for *pergunta* 'question', and 'H' for *hataan* 'reply'.

⁶ In grammatical terms, *nee* is definite, and neutral with respect to number.

- . **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 stays in the 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 / These uncles are from Ermera.
- . **Hau hasoru Senyora Catarina. Senyora nee hosi Los Palos.** 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 Corpo da Paz. Nia nee koalía lalais!** José works at Peace Corps. 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’.⁷

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

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.



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’.

⁷ 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).

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.⁸

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Uluk hau servisu iha Embaixada Brazil. Agora hau la servisu. . Ami uluk hela iha Dare. Agora iha Liquiça. | <p>In the past I worked for the Brazilian Embassy. Now I don't have a job.</p> <p>We used to live in Dare. Now (we live) in Liquiça.</p> |
|--|--|

When it means 'first', it comes after a verb (e.g. *lao uluk* 'walk ahead').

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 (P)	very early morning (3-5am)
rai huun mutin	the crack of dawn (as it is starting to get light)
dadeer-saan	early morning (5-8am)
loro manas (TT)	midday (11-2.30); some interpret this as 'midday' as per Tetun Terik, others as 'it's hot'
rai nakaras	dusk (evening, as it starts to get dark)
kalan boot	late at night, in the middle of the night when everyone is normally asleep



⁸ *Uluk* also means 'first (before doing something else, or before someone else)'; 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	Virjílui
ga, go, gu + consonant	ga, go, gu	Gusmão	Guzmaun
gu + vowel	g	Miguel	Migél
h	- (not pronounced)	Henrique	Henriki
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’. 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 or 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.