# Languages in Education in East Timor

Katrina Langford , Agustinho Caet, Prof. John Hajek

### Saturday 23 July 2011, Brunswick Town Hall, Melbourne

Katrina-	- The Languages of Timor		
	- Some Timor language myths		
	- Language in Education		
	- Current Education		
Agustinho	<ul><li>What does mother tongue mean?</li><li>What is mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB-MLE)?</li><li>Why MTB-MLE is needed</li></ul>		
John	<ul><li>Some mother tongue resources</li><li>How can you help?</li></ul>		

#### **The Languages of Timor** Katrina Langford

- May 2002- constitution of RDTL comes into effect
- Recognizes Timor as multilingual society
- Tetum and Portuguese are co-official languages (constitution article 13.1)
- English and Indonesian are working languages (article 159)
- Tetum and other national languages should be valued and developed by the state (13.2)

Local languages of East Timor

- Adabe (atauro)
- Baikeno (oecussi)
- Bunak (central interior Timor)
  - Fataluku (lautem)

- Galolen (manatutu, laleia)
- Habun (laclubar)
- Idate (laclubar)
- Kairui-Midiki (baucau)
- Kemak (maliana)
- Lakelai (same)
- Makasae (baucau)
- Mambae (ermera, aileu, ainaro)
- Nauete (Uato lari)
- Tetun Terik (south coast- suai and atambua)
- Tukudede (liquica)
- Waima'a (baucau)

# Some Timor Language Myths

- Tetun Dili comes from Portuguese
- Tetun Dili and Tetun Terik are the same language
- Other languages are 'dialects' of Tetun
  - Languages not written yet
  - Not 'real' languages

Dialect- mutually intelligible

#### **Multilingualism in Timor-Leste**

L1s:The national languages (community, indigenous, heritage languages). Tetum is L1 for around 30% of population (increasing).

L2:Currently Tetum is L2/3 for most people (around 86%).

L3/4:Portuguese (around 36%) and/or Indonesian (around 60%) depending on age West close to border (Maliana, Oecussi, Suai- Increased levels of Indonesian)

L5:English (around 20%).

*Capability*, i.e. "the capacity to speak, read or write or any combination of the above as informed by the interviewee" (Direcção Nacional de Estatística, 2006, p. 47) Adult literacy rates

#### **Current Enrolment Levels**

- 70% of kids drop out of school by grade 6

-14% of children in primary school are repeating a class level.

34% of these children are repeating Grade 1

(ministry of education data: April 2008 data for 2006/7)

East Timor is not unique!

Same problems in many other countries

No one problem

Language issues large part of problem

#### Languages in Education

Portuguese and Tetun. Base Law for Education (Law 14/2008) "The teaching languages of the Timorese education system are Tetun and Portuguese" (Article 8)

- Tetum is L1 for around 30% of population (increasing). -Portuguese not L1

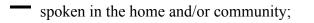
-Tetum is L2/3 for most people (around 86%). - Portuguese L3/4 (around 36%)

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

- Initiative of Ministry of Education through establishment of National Education Commission
- Focus- initial years of schooling
- Aim- overcome some current problems
- Support from many at all levels
- Potential lack of support from some
  - Perception that this initiative is 'anti' Portuguese / Tetun
  - BUT... Will support better learning of official languages Portuguese and Tetun

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Timor-Leste Saturday 23 July 2011 Brunswick Town Hall, Melbourne Agustinho Caet, Ministry of Education, Timor-Leste

What is meant by mother tongue/ lian-inan ou língua materna? A language or languages:



that one has learnt first (L1);

one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others;

one knows best; and/or

one uses most.

UNESCO 2003, Education in Multilingual World, p. 15

## What is mother tongue-based multilingual education?

A structured program providing a strong foundation in the L1 and successful bridging to additional languages.

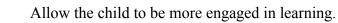
MTB-MLE enables the use of all languages in the curriculum for lifelong learning.

Children able to operate equally in their community language and their additional language(s).

Dekker, Malone, 2001

# MTB-MLE curriculum and teaching methods ...

- Build on what is known about how children learn best.
  - Begin with what children know (mother tongue) and then move to the unknown (new language).



Use culturally familiar concepts to teach basic concepts in the curriculum.

#### MTB-MLE curriculum and teaching methods ...

- Use the language the child knows best to teach reading and writing.
- 6. Build on child's known vocabulary in their L1 and adds the L2 vocabulary using the L1 as medium of instruction.
- Allow the child to develop cognitive skills in a language they are already using for thinking.
- Emphasise understanding, meaning and communication as well as accuracy and correctness.

#### **Basic Education Act 2008**

- Article 12d: To "guarantee the mastery of Tetum and Portuguese."
- Article 12e: To provide learning of a first foreign language.\*
- English to be taught from Grade 5 according to the National Education Strategic Plan.
- Article 12g: To "develop knowledge and appreciation of the official and national languages."

#### Why mother tongue-based multilingual education for Timor-Leste?

- Appropriate for a nation seeking to interact with the wider world and maintain its distinctive identity.
- Promotes equal access to education.
- Need for disadvantaged, minority and rural populations to attend and succeed at school. Promote EFA.
- All East Timorese languages are fundamental elements of local and national identity.
- Facilitates learning of the co-official languages, Portuguese and Tetum.

### LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION MODEL

Pre Primary -	- Moth	er Tongue
		Oral Tetun Introduced
Grade 1-3 -		Mother Tongue
		Oral Tetun continued
		Oral Port. introduced
Grade 4-	12	Bilingual Tetun/Port.
		Mother tongue if possible



English is taught as a foreign language from Grade 7. Some schools may begin teaching it at Grade 5 depending on capacity of the schools.



Indonesian is taught as an elective in Grade 7.

At lower secondary level, Portuguese and Tetum are languages of instruction.

#### **Necessary elements**

Orthography (spelling system) development

Production of learning materials

- Teacher training
- Public awareness / socialization
- Community involvement
  - Political commitment and funding

#### **Demonstration schools**

To introduce national languages at pre-primary level in three districts in six willing pre-primary schools linked to six primary schools (Oecusse, Manatuto, Lautem).

Expected to begin in early 2012.

# Teaching assistants

Where qualified teachers do not speak the students' local language, they are supported by *teaching assistants (TAs)* from the local community.

TAs are phased out as more teachers are trained and teaching assistants themselves train as qualified teachers.

#### Councils for the promotion of mother tongues

Representatives from local communities to work voluntarily with local and international linguists to advise in development of orthographies and dictionaries of their languages.

Two councils already functioning in Manatuto and Oecusse.

To work closely with teachers to develop reading and teaching materials in the national languages.

The INL works towards production of harmonised and agreed orthographies and additional linguistic resources, e.g. dictionaries for the national languages.

### How can stakeholder groups help promote MTB-MLE?

Speech Communities: Local knowledge, support, teacher aides, materials writing.

Donor agencies: Encourage positive climate; develop policy; develop curriculum guidelines; train teachers and trainers; provide funding.

NGOs: Linguistic expertise; train teachers; develop curricula; facilitate development of literature; provide funding.

Academic institutions: Collect information; train teachers and speakers, provide linguistic expertise.

### **Resources for Mother Tongue Literacy**

John Hajek

- Why mother tongue literacy?
- How to support official language policy?
- What is currently available in mother tongue resources?
- How are resources developed?
- Myth: making resources is expensive and requires special technical skills

### Chicken Little (1)

- Adaptation of traditional story presented in Indonesian children's book
- Pictures drawn by hand with pen, pencil, and \$2 pack of textas
- Editing in Microsoft word

Governing principles: no special skill, no cost

#### Chicken Little (2)

- Availability worldwide
- www.rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au
- In what formats? Why?
- New applications translation into non-ET languages many previously unwritten

• Developing new orthographies

# Graded 'little readers series'

- Currently 20 books and more on the way
- Networking---- Sue Worcester, qualified teacher, educator and publisher of kid's book in Tetun.
- Series of kids books produced with excellent quality pictures and based on teaching methodology (readers graded from simple to complex) Kids producing own books
- Many hands- kids books with drawings by Timorese children
- Community involvement and engagement

# Translation into local languages

• Native speaker together with linguist (to ensure consistency in writing)

### CURRENTLY:

- Many Hands books: Tetun and Fataluku
- Chicken Little reader series: Tetun, Fataluku, Waima'a, Baikenu
- Chicken little books: 15?? Local languages as well as many other languages

#### Cost so far....

•	Writing /adaption of books	\$0
•	Illustrations	\$0
•	Translations	\$0
•	Editing	\$0
•		

Production cost of printing

# How can you help?

- Subsidizing printing costs
- Taking books across to Timor if printed in Australia
- Networking (writers, illustrators, teachers, education specialists, <u>schools</u>)
- Producing new materials

Thank you - any questions?