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## Establishing the Legitimacy of Portuguese as an Official Language in Timor-Leste<Special Theme : Nationalism in Timor-Leste>

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## Establishing the Legitimacy of Portuguese as an Official Language in Timor-Leste

Wakana Okuda\*

公用語ポルトガル語の正当性の確立に関する一考察

奥田若菜

Language policy is a governmental intervention that assigns languages a relative status. One language can thus be given priority over others by an authoritarian state, and this distinction reflects the political and social situation of the society. In this article, the author discusses the process of establishing the legitimacy of Portuguese as an official language in Timor-Leste and illustrates two pillars of the discourse upon which this legitimacy has been built. The first pillar is the invocation of history and leaders' speeches about Portuguese during the struggle for Timor-Leste's independence, and the second is the argued necessity for Timor-Leste to join the international community for greater development. Resting on these two pillars, Portuguese has begun to function as the national language in Timor-Leste.

政府によって実施される言語政策は、特定の言語にある種のステータスを定めることであり、当該社会にある他の言語よりも優遇することでもある。権力による特定言語の意味づけは、当該社会の政治的社会的状況を反映するものである。本論では、東ティモールを事例に公用語ポルトガル語の正当性確立の過程を考察する。2002年の独立と同時に公用語となったポルトガル語であるが、その決定に対する反対も根強くあった。東ティモールにはもう一つの公用語テトゥン語と、20以上の地域言語が存在する。現在でも話者人口が少ないポルトガル語の公用語としての正当性を主張する際、根拠として以下の2つが頻繁に言及される。1つは、国家史、特に独立闘争のリーダーたちによる東ティモール史である。もう1つは、今後の経済発展に欠かせない国際社会への参入の必要性である。この2つを根拠とすることで、ポルトガル語は「我われの言語」

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として受容され始めている。

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## 1 Introduction

Language policy is a governmental intervention that assigns languages a relative status. One language can thus be given priority over others by an authoritarian state, and this distinction reflects the political and social situation of the society. In this article, the author discusses the process of establishing the legitimacy of Portuguese as an official language in Timor-Leste and illustrates two pillars of the discourse upon which this legitimacy has been built.

Calvet established four factors that affect whether the language policy promoted by a state is likely to succeed (Calvet 1996). The first is that the language is spoken by a large majority of the population. The second is that it be accepted as a symbol of unification of the nation without harming the rights of subgroups. In the best case, this would be an intermediate language, a kind of '*langues véhiculaires*' in Calvet's words. In Timor-Leste, there was no language that met such prescribed conditions when the nation gained independence.

In 2002, Timor-Leste recognised more than twenty indigenous languages as national languages in its constitution; one of these, Tetun, was designated as one of the two official languages. Portuguese, the language of the colonising state before 1975, was controversially designated as the other official language. Additionally, Indonesian and English were designated as working languages.

In this complex language situation, the Timorese have begun to reclaim Portuguese as one of their own official languages based on the 500-year history of Portugal and the Catholic Church in Timor-Leste. Two pillars have been used as grounds for legitimising Portuguese. The first pillar is the invocation of history and leaders' speeches about Portuguese during the struggle for Timor-Leste's independence, and the second is the argued necessity for Timor-Leste to join the international community for greater development. Resting on these two pillars, Portuguese has begun to function as 'the national language' in Timor-Leste<sup>1)</sup>.

## 2 Language Situation in Timor-Leste

Only in the 1960s did Portugal begin working to popularise education in Timor-Leste (Tahira 2007; Fukutake 2008). In other Southeast Asian countries, governments in the colonial period prepared for education around the beginning of the twentieth century (Okada 2014); Timor-Leste turned to education about 50 years later. After the rebellion against the colonial government in 1959, public officials recognised the needs of ‘Timorese’ education and began popularising educational opportunities. Even by 1975, however, only 10 percent of the population had been able to take advantage of this opportunity (Tahira 2007).

In contrast to the efforts of Portugal, the government of Indonesia utilised education to establish its reign in Timor-Leste. Education was part of an assimilation policy to educate Timorese peoples as Indonesians. The teaching of the national philosophy ‘Pancasila, Five Principals of Founding Country’ in Indonesian accomplished the assimilation policy by teaching history and moral education as well as language education (Furusawa and Matsuno 1993). The government adopted Indonesian as the language of education and administration and minimised the use of Tetun (Brito and Bastos 2007; Severo 2011). In 1999, the rate of total enrolment of primary education reached 93.4% (Tahira 2007). The Indonesian government created a scholarship programme to other Indonesian islands, thereby offering Timorese people a chance to pursue higher education. In this way, Indonesian spread in Timor-Leste.

The language of education was changed relatively rapidly across four distinct periods. In the first period, lasting until 1975, Portuguese was taught. In the second period, from 1975 to 1999, Indonesian was taught. The third period spanned from 1999 to 2002 and can be characterised as the interim administration period. Lastly, starting from the fourth period with independence in 2002, Portuguese has been taught. The establishment of the education system in Portuguese was slow; it was standardised only after 2010.

Thus, in Timor-Leste, each generation has been taught in different languages. People in their teens, those in the first half of their twenties, and those over fifty were educated in Portuguese. Those in their thirties and forties received education in Indonesian.

## 3 The Present Situation of each Language

With the establishment of the constitution in 2002, Tetun and Portuguese were defined as official languages, *linguas oficiais*<sup>2)</sup>, while Tetun and other regional languages were declared national languages, *linguas nacionais*. Government documents from 2004, which mentioned the orthography of Tetun, stated that Tetun would be an ‘official and national language at the same time’. During my research

in Timor-Leste, workers in administration or education explained the position of Tetun differently, explaining, for example, that ‘Portuguese is an official language and Tetun is a national language’, or ‘Tetun is an official language and not national language’. There is confusion regarding the understanding of official and national languages.

Tetun spread in Timor-Leste as a Church language during the era of Portugal’s rule. After independence from Portugal, Tetun spread further, especially when the use of Portuguese was prohibited under Indonesian occupation in 1981<sup>3)</sup>. It was not used, however, for reading and writing. In fact, Tetun does not have an original writing system. Therefore, before 1975, the written language was Portuguese, and from 1975 to 1999 it was Indonesian. Today, in order to use Tetun as an educational language, it is necessary to use other vocabulary that does not exist in Tetun. When speaking in Tetun, people use primarily original Tetun vocabulary, but in order to write in Tetun, such as in a textbook or newspaper, it is necessary to use a great deal of borrowed words from Portuguese. Figure 1 shows a banner for the commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FALINTIL (Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste). The Tetun word ‘obrigadu’ is a borrowed word from Portuguese that means ‘thank you’.

Figure 2 shows a notice about computer lessons written in Tetun. In this notice, there are more than thirty-five borrowed words (Table 1); it is therefore relatively easy to understand for Portuguese speakers. A student I interviewed at the national university told me that today’s Tetun is mixed with Portuguese, and that this explains why Timorese people cannot understand Tetun writing; according to this student, only Portuguese-speaking foreigners can use this written language, and



Figure 1 Banner with a borrowed word. Photograph by the author, 2015.

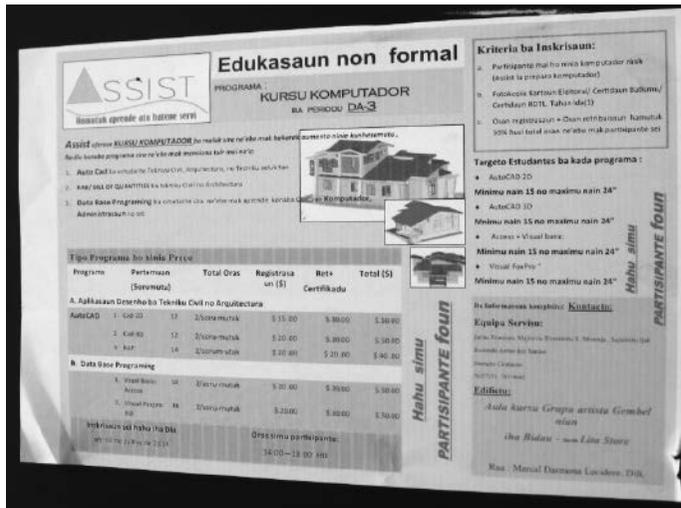


Figure 2 Notice about computer lessons. Photograph by the author, 2015.

Table 1 Borrowed words on the notice about computer lessons

| PORTUGUESE    | TETUM          | PORTUGUESE   | TETUM        |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| administração | administrasaun | formal       | formal       |
| aprender      | aprende        | fotocópia    | fotokopia    |
| arquitetura   | arquitetura    | gestão       | gestaun      |
| batismo       | batismu        | inscrição    | inskrisaun   |
| cada          | kada           | máximo       | maximu       |
| cartão        | kartaun        | mencionar    | mentiona     |
| certidão      | certidaun      | mínimo       | minumu       |
| certificado   | certifikadu    | obra         | obra         |
| computador    | komputador     | oferecer     | oferece      |
| conhecimento  | kunhesemetu    | participante | partisipante |
| contato       | kontaktu       | período      | periodu      |
| critério      | kriteria       | preparar     | prepara      |
| curso         | kursu          | programa     | programa     |
| dia           | dia            | registração  | registrasaun |
| edifício      | edificiu       | retribuição  | retribuisaun |
| educação      | edukasaun      | serviço      | servisu      |
| eleitoral     | eleitoral      | tipo         | tipo         |
| equipa        | equipa         | total        | total        |
| estudante     | estudante      |              |              |

this enables them to get better jobs.

Table 2 displays the elementary school curriculum published by the Ministry of Education. All of these words are borrowed, none are original Tetun words.

**Table 2** Elementary school curriculum

| Área Konesimentu            | Komponente Kurrikulár  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Dezenvolvimentu Linguístiku | Literasia Tetun        |
|                             | Literasia Portugés     |
|                             | Apoiu Linguístiku Orál |
| Dezenvolvimentu Sientífiku  | Matemátika             |
|                             | Siénsia Naturál        |
|                             | Siénsia Sociál         |
| Dezenvolvimentu Pesoál      | Arte no Kultura        |
|                             | Saúde                  |
|                             | Edukasaun Fíziku       |
|                             | Relijiaun              |

Inconsistent orthography is a main problem regarding the use of Tetun. Even though Tetun spread as a common language for speakers of other languages, there are many variants of Tetun. One Timorese remarked, ‘My Tetun is different from my friend’s Tetun. That’s a weak point of our Tetun’. Additionally, many Timorese point out the necessity of additional governmental efforts to improve Tetun language education.

The official orthography of Tetun was developed by the National Language Institute (Instituto Nacional de Linguística) and approved by the government in March 2004. The law regarding orthography states that ‘Tetun is an essential tool for the establishment of our nation. In the process of developing the language, orthography should be unified’. Acknowledging the regional variations of Tetun, the law described the Tetun developed by the National Language Institute as the ‘Official Tetun (*Tétum Oficial*) which is based on Tetun Praça’, stating that the government and Institute have an obligation to spread ‘the right Tetun’. Despite these efforts, this standard orthography of Tetun is rarely actually used. For example, there are four ways to write *Tetun*: *Tétum*, *Tétun*, *Tetum*, and *Tetun*. Another example is the word *aviso*, which means ‘announcement’ and is borrowed from Portuguese. It also has four different spellings: *aviso*, *avisu*, *avizo*, and *avizu*.

Research in 2010 showed that Tetun users who can speak, read, and write the language account for 56.1% of the population of Timor-Leste (NSD and UNFPA 2010). Regional differences are vast: in urban areas, that number reaches 80.9%, while in the countryside, it is only 44.6%. As for Portuguese users, the total national percentage is 25.5%: 40.1% in urban areas and only 18.3% in the country-

side. Regarding Indonesian, the total percentage of speakers country-wide is 45.3%: 74% in urban areas and 31.8% in the countryside (NSD and UNFPA 2010). However, it is possible that there are more Tetun and Portuguese and fewer Indonesian speakers today than in 2010.

Although Indonesian is not currently an official educational language in Timor-Leste, most schools still teach in Indonesian or Tetun. This is because most teachers are educated in Indonesia, so few teachers can actually teach in Portuguese. Moreover, there were no available textbooks in Portuguese. This was the situation until 2010, but it is now showing signs of change. Local informants have reported that around 2010, textbooks written in Portuguese gradually began to spread to schools across Timor-Leste (interview by Okuda in 2014). Despite the limitations of the educational system up to that point, the literacy rate of the youth, that is, people from 15 to 24 years old, had already increased to 79.1% in 2010 (INE 2012).

When Portuguese became an official language, there was an expectation that the official language might be changed back to Indonesian eventually because the younger generation feels less resistance towards Indonesia. Hence, they may choose to use Indonesian, which seems more practical. However, today, Timor-Leste is moving away from Indonesian faster than expected. While some do support Indonesian as an official language, the number of non-Indonesian users in the younger generation has continued to increase.

The younger generation, that is, people aged twenty-five or younger, use their mother tongue with their family. At school, teachers use Tetun as the language of instruction, and students use Tetun as a common language to communicate with their classmates who have different mother tongues. The textbook they use is written in Portuguese. In this situation, primary and secondary school students encounter Indonesian only through TV shows from Indonesia. Thus, some can understand Indonesian but cannot speak, read, or write. In the research that I conducted from 2014 to 2016, I encountered many children around ten years old who could not understand interview questions in Indonesian. For instance, one twelve-year-old boy was learning Tetun and Portuguese at school, and he spoke in Tetun with his parents. The mother tongue of his parents was another regional language, but they speak in Tetun at home because they live in Dili. He understands Indonesian because he watches Indonesian TV programs every day, but he cannot speak the language. Three nineteen-year-old boys I interviewed similarly could not answer questions in Indonesian. They used Tetun and some Portuguese at school. Another interviewee who was in the first half of his twenties could not understand Indonesian at all, as he did not watch TV programs from Indonesia.

#### 4 Functions of Tetun and Portuguese

Having experienced a long and bloody struggle for independence, resistance plays a key part in the narrative of the state in Timor-Leste (Myrtilinen 2013: 213). Most leaders of the fight against Indonesian occupation had resided in Portugal, Angola, or Mozambique. As the language of these leaders, Portuguese symbolised a resistance language. Even nowadays, those who did not agree with Portuguese becoming an official language refer to it positively saying 'Portuguese is our leaders' language' (interviewed by Okuda 2015, 2016). In discussions about the official language, those who prioritise their identity as a Timorese tend to support Portuguese as an official language. On the other hand, those who prioritise practicality or economics tend to support the use of Indonesian or English (Taira 2007).

Portuguese is predominant over other languages for public information. On the government of Timor-Leste's official homepage, important information is written only in Portuguese; there is public concern that the information will not reach non-Portuguese speakers. The primary education textbook and notices regarding school activity are also written in Portuguese. However, the teaching language is Tetun or other regional languages. Here, we can see the roles of each language; Portuguese serves as a written language, and Tetun as a communication language.

In the language research I conducted with 100 Timorese people, I found that Tetun functions as an intermediate language. Ninety-nine of the 100 Timorese spoke Tetun as well as their mother tongue; only one did not speak Tetun. On the other hand, Portuguese functions more as a written language. Tetun is thus the more dominant spoken language as an intermediate language, while Portuguese is the more dominant written language.

Other regional languages, meanwhile, are always subordinate to these two languages. Urbanisation is one of the reasons for the spread of Tetun and Portuguese and the decrease in the number of other regional language speakers. When a child's mother and father have different mother tongues, the child usually speaks Tetun at home and learns Portuguese at school. As a result, there is an increase in children who do not speak a regional language other than Tetun as their mother tongue. As with Arabic in Sudan, family members with different mother tongues may be an advantage for the spread of Tetun.

In Timor-Leste, there is no language that meets the prescribed conditions to be accepted as a symbol of unification for the nation. There are some regions in which Tetun is not spoken. Moreover, Tetun's orthography is still incomplete, and Tetun needs many borrowed words to function as a national language. Portuguese did not have the function of an intermediate language. In other words, it did not perform the role of a common language to allow communication between speakers of different language. Additionally, it would be difficult to say that Portuguese did not harm the rights of any groups because only the elite could speak the language

when it became official. Having no broadly accepted language, the government chose Portuguese as the official language, and this decision inevitably caused controversy.

Today, Portuguese remains the dominant language both socially and politically. It is used mainly by elites as a language of authority. It defines the borders of the elite group, and its function is to exclude, limiting their communication with non-elites. On the contrary, Tetun is the dominant language culturally and statistically. It helps to intermediate between different language speakers and expands the possibility of domestic communication.

## 5 The Presence of CPLP and the Portuguese Language in Timor-Leste

The government's language policy and its execution in Timor-Leste is dependent on the support of CPLP members. CPLP is a community of Portuguese-speaking countries; the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa. It was organised in July 1996 by Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and São Tomé e Príncipe. The objective of this community is to foster cooperation between countries that have common identities through Portuguese, and to establish a cooperative relationship socially, culturally, and economically. Timor-Leste joined CPLP in May 2002 as the eighth member country.

Timor-Leste's participation in CPLP engenders language education support from other members, an expectation of cooperation, and the opportunity to gain a foothold in international society.

The government of Timor-Leste has requested to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) since 2002, but has not yet been accepted, as ASEAN members are concerned with the unstable social conditions in the country. Until Timor-Leste can gain enough power as an established nation, it will have difficulty becoming a member of an association that attaches importance to economic and political relations between members.



Figures 3, 4 Welcome banners for CPLP members. Photograph by the author, 2014.

On the other hand, every country that uses Portuguese as an official language has the right to be a member of the CPLP (CPLP statute, Article 6<sup>4)</sup>). In short, the basis of the community of CPLP is the Portuguese language. The CPLP's goal is to build the community's political and economic strength using their common language. Timor-Leste has taken advantage of this opportunity to show its viability as a nation to the international community. For example, Dili hosted a CPLP assembly in July 2014 (Figure 3 and 4), and it was careful to make its hosting of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN Peoples' Forum a success. In a 2017 interview, President Araujo said, 'We already have many experiences of hosting international conferences', arguing against concerns about the country's capacity as a host.

In short, CPLP membership is now essential to the establishment of the nation of Timor-Leste. This is why the government must keep Portuguese as an official language and publicise the position of Timor-Leste in the international community to the Timorese people.

## **6 National Consciousness through Education and the 'Imagination' and 'Creation' of the Position of the Portuguese Language**

The national language has the potential to be used as a political symbol; it is related to the historical perspective of a nation, national history, as well as the origins and history of peoples within the nation. In Timor-Leste, the national language question became a topic for dispute about the ideology of officiality and nationality (Severo 2011). Language history and national history underlie and contribute to the establishment of a people (Asamura 2015). In contemporary Timor-Leste, fifteen years after the enactment of the constitution, resistance to the Portuguese language has diminished and the language has begun to be recognised in a positive manner. This process of change also represents a change in the process of constructing a national consciousness.

Since independence, the government has pushed for the construction of a national consciousness. As previously mentioned, before 1975, Timorese people were presented with few opportunities to receive education. In Southeast Asia, nationalism developed up to the 1940s according to the education provided by the colonial government. For example, in Indonesia, for those who had lived in the Dutch East Indies and possessed different traditions, cultures, and languages, this represented an opportunity to recognize each other as Indonesians, in other words, as members of the same nation. Matters such as how far the territory of a nation-state reaches and which peoples are considered citizens of the state were 'artificially' created by western colonisation (Okada 2014: 16).

In the case of Timor-Leste, an 'East Timorese consciousness' did not arise during the Portuguese colonial period. During the 1970s, at the end of the Portuguese rule, this sentiment began to gradually mount because of the influence

of national movements in emerging African countries (Furusawa and Matsuno 1993). The period of resistance against Indonesia was the driving force for the construction of an East Timorese consciousness. Indonesian assimilation policies triggered the formation of a national sentiment in younger generations (Furusawa and Matsuno 1993: 4).

During Indonesian rule, the East Timorese identity could be described as ‘we who fight for independence from Indonesia’; Indonesia was necessary as a reference point to build this ‘we-consciousness’. After gaining independence in 2002, it was necessary for Timor-Leste to build a national consciousness without the existence of this reference point.

In the process of creating an East Timorese common identity, the connection to Portugal and the Portuguese language were viewed positively and began to be used to serve that purpose. Many various and conflicting factors could form the national identity. Since these complex factors clash, people form their national narrative only from factors that are easiest to understand and craft into a story. The keys to this narrative construction are written historical accounts, the politicians who lead the independence conflict, and the media’s narrative. For instance, publicising the hosting of the CPLP summit spread the idea of ‘Timor-Leste as a member of CPLP’, allowing for Portuguese to naturally be accepted as the official language. The celebration of 500 years of Catholicism in 2015 also served the purpose of improving the interpretation of relations with the former coloniser, Portugal.

To embrace a language that has not been properly disseminated in Timor-Leste



**Figure 5** Motael Church in Dili, ‘Tinan 500 Fe Catolica iha Timor – 500 years of Catholic faith in Timor’. Photograph by the author, 2015.

as a valid language, it is necessary to recognise it as having been ‘our language’ in the past. During interviews regarding the national language, the upper social and economic classes presented similar answers in resembling terms. They emphasise the affection (*afeto*) towards the Portuguese language and the 500 years of history with Portugal, the language itself, and Catholicism (see Figure 5). The following headlines have been displayed on the government’s official website: ‘500th Anniversary of the Interaction of Two Civilizations’ and ‘Timor-Leste and Portugal and the Affirmation of Timorese Identity 1515–2015’. Statements that emphasise the 500-year-long connection with Portugal are expressed not only by the government but also by college students who have received education after independence, and by the younger generation.

An interesting point regarding the legitimisation of the Portuguese language can be raised about a statement by the prime minister from September 2016. After discussing support from CPLP countries, especially Portugal, Brazil, and Cabo Verde in the dissemination of the language, he moved on to state that he ‘would work hard to ensure that Portuguese was once again the language most spoken in Timor-Leste’. Previous research calls into question the fact that Portuguese was ever the language most spoken in Timor-Leste. Since during the period of Portuguese rule only a portion of the population had access to education, use of the language was partial and restricted. Of all the regional languages, Tetun, which was the language used by the church during masses, is considered to be the most widely used. However, a Timorese citizen expressed the following opinion regarding the prime minister’s statement:

His statement is not mistaken. It depends on what you mean by ‘most spoken language’. He was surely referring to the language most used in the East Timorese public sphere. Portuguese was used in public places, such as schools. From this social context, Portuguese (at some point in the past) was the most-spoken language.

Aside from whether Portuguese was the most-spoken language at some point in the past, the fact that the prime minister’s statement did not cause discomfort among the East Timorese people (and especially among those who read the news) deserves attention. The interpretation of the statement as ‘correct in a way’ shows that the language of the former coloniser was accepted as ‘our language’. Another case that emphasise the legitimacy of Portuguese is a post on Facebook that was shared by East Timorese users. The title of the post is ‘Why Timor-Leste adopted Portuguese as its official language’. It includes the writing of Nico Konis Santana, who was one of the leaders of the struggle for independence. Santana points out the importance of cultural identity and the necessity of raising the nation’s cultural level in order to reach an advanced level of development. He believed that in the struggle to do so, the linguistic multiplicity of Timor could be an obstacle.

The future government of independent Timor-Leste must adopt a national policy that guarantees the unity of the people, sanitising the elements influenced by colonialism, regardless of their origin (Portuguese or Indonesian). As for the Portuguese, it verifies, realistically, that it is spoken only by the clergy, some people formed during the Portuguese colonial period and members of the Armed Forces of the Resistance - but it was through this that the resistance was made known to the world. Moreover, it is fundamental for the preservation of Timorese identity, because it depends on the historical and cultural heritage that expresses its character as an independent nation. Without the Portuguese, Timor-Leste would be an eternal slave of the Javanese culture.

This kind of frequent quotation of a leader's words about the Portuguese is evidence that the legitimacy of the Portuguese language still might be unstable. In any case, we can see here that Portuguese is firmly connected with the struggle for independence. Leaders' words often seem to be the most effective in making a statement acceptable. Portuguese has moved from the stage of receiving legal status as an 'official language' to the stage of establishing its status as a 'legitimate language based on historical grounds'. The narrative of legitimisation assisted by history has begun to be shared.

Alongside the positive evaluation of the Portuguese language, it was transformed into an authoritarian language. Since the period of confrontation for independence, the language one uses has been related to one's political and social position. Portuguese language skills attest to the fact that the person was in a social position to receive a high-level education. An elite consciousness is shared among those who can correctly use Portuguese<sup>5</sup>). There is also a tendency for negotiations at public agencies to prevail when they are conducted in Portuguese, rather than in Indonesian or Tetun. Fifteen years after independence, one hears various criticisms of those who do not learn Portuguese: 'since there are opportunities now to learn Portuguese, people should work hard', 'it is not possible to oppose it forever' and 'Portuguese is difficult, but those who do not try to learn it are lazy'. One's social position might depend on one's level of Portuguese language acquisition.

## 7 Conclusion

In the former American colony of the Philippines, Okada describes education during the colonial period either in a positive manner as a 'blessing' for triggering the citizenship of the population, or critically as questioning the power of the foreign culture it inculcated in students. Further, the idea that the American rule was unjust was particularly strong amongst Filipinos during the colonial period (Okada 2014).

However, in the case of Timor-Leste's national history, Indonesia bears the responsibility for 'unjust rule'. Acknowledging independence as a positive event

means criticising Indonesian rule. Feelings of hesitation towards Indonesia often originate in the memories of the disorder around the period of independence. Such feelings tend to lead to positive opinions towards Portugal, despite the fact that during the Portuguese colonial period there was a substantial anti-colonial movement and many people were killed and tortured. However, when discussing Timor-Leste after independence, the reality of Portuguese rule is rarely mentioned. Elementary education books dedicate only a few lines to the matter, and most of the historical accounts are restricted to the fight for independence.

One of the factors that accounts for the power of a language is its historical prestige. It is important that the speakers of the language believe that they have a shared past, whether it is a real past or a created one (Calvet 1996). In current Timor-Leste, the merits of Portuguese rule are not discussed in terms of concrete legacies, such as the educational system in the Philippines, but rather in terms of abstract legacies, such as ‘500 years of connection with Portugal, instead of 24 years with Indonesia’ and ‘500 years of Catholicism’. The current situation in Timor-Leste is thus an ongoing process of legitimisation<sup>6)</sup> of its two official languages based on historical ties.

## Notes

- 1) In the process of conducting my research in 2014 and 2015, I used Portuguese and English. However, because Portuguese is not the daily language in Timor-Leste, I needed the help of my co-researchers to communicate with Tetun speakers and Indonesian speakers. In 2016, I interviewed a professional interpreter of Portuguese-Tetun.
- 2) In the Code of FRETILIN in 1974, Portuguese was established as the official language, while Tetun was the national language and educational language (Tahira 2007). At that time, the three main political parties had inherited the use of Portuguese (Kimura 2005).
- 3) Tetun also spread with the abolishment of long-distance-movement restrictions in 1989. With the declaration of the release of East Timor in 1989, people in East Timor could once again move across long distances after 16:00.
- 4) The last statute of CPLP was released in 2007.
- 5) In Goa, India, which was an overseas province of Portugal, elementary and secondary education was taught in Portuguese until the beginning of the 1960s. People over 70 years old use Portuguese in their daily life. One’s Portuguese abilities or relations to Portugal are seen as a manifestation of the social fact that one occupies a dominant position in the community (Matsukawa 2014).
- 6) Arguments against the use of regional languages in school education are present and are supported by the idea that the unification of language is necessary for the unification of the nation (Nunes 2014).

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