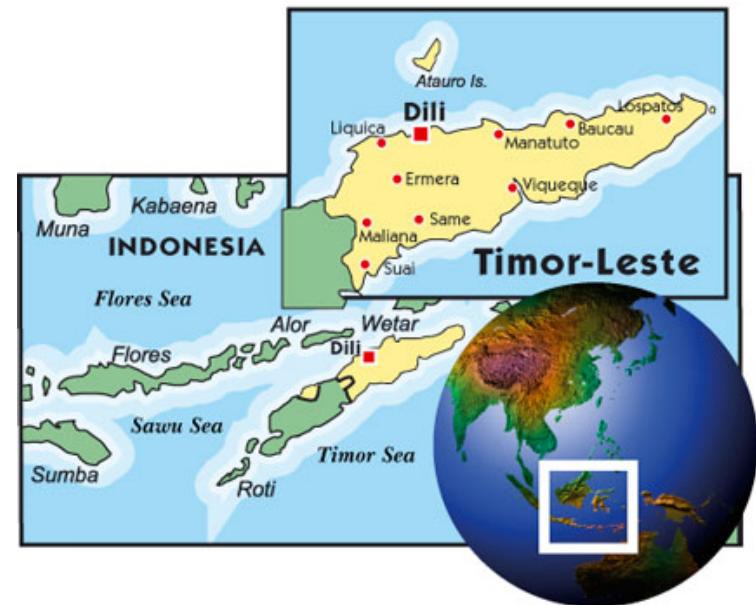




# MTB-MLE in East Timor and its bidirectional relationship with language ideologies

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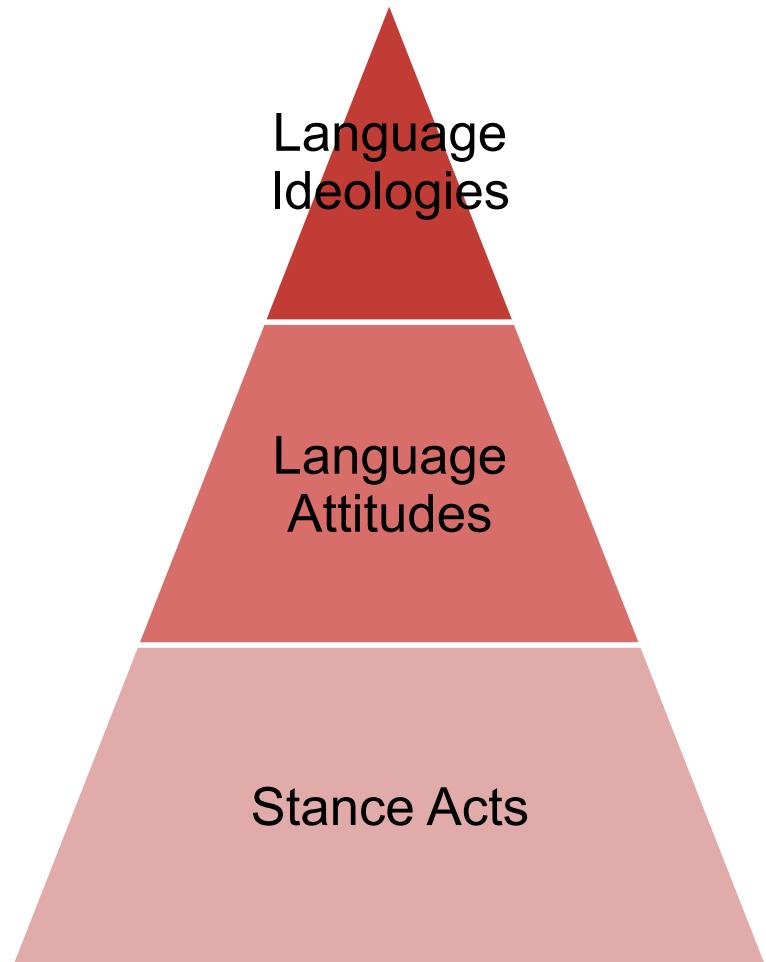


2016 Conference of the American Association for Applied Linguistics  
Orlando, FL  
09 April, 2016



# Language Ideologies

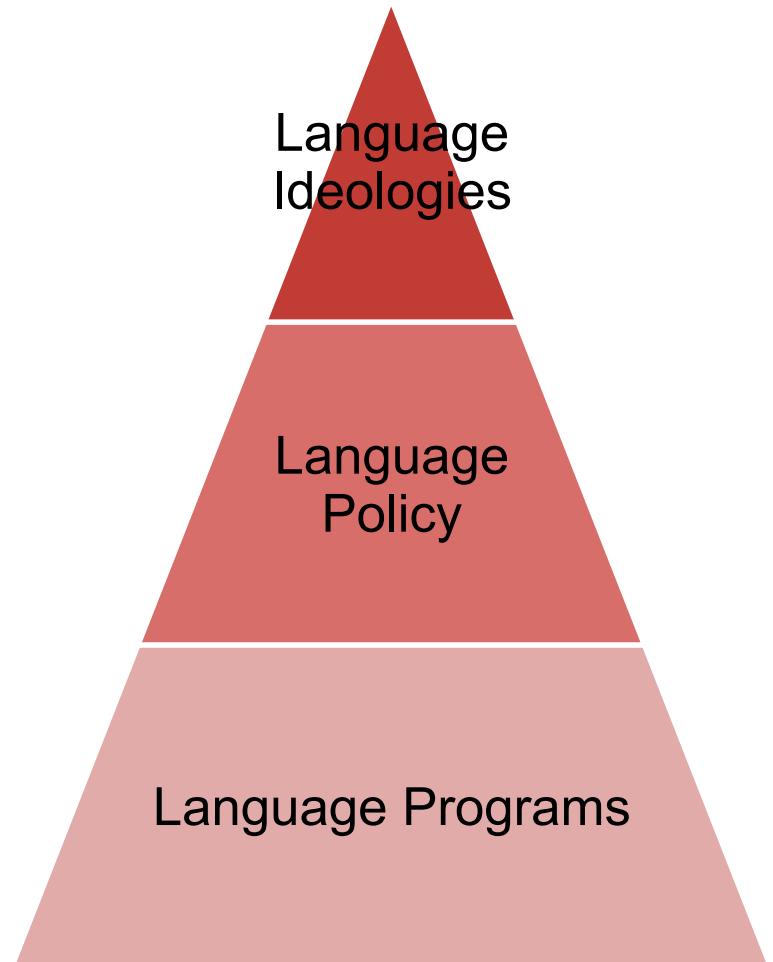
- The macro-attitude within which individual attitudes exist
- Kroskrity's “cluster concept”- overlapping but analyzable dimensions





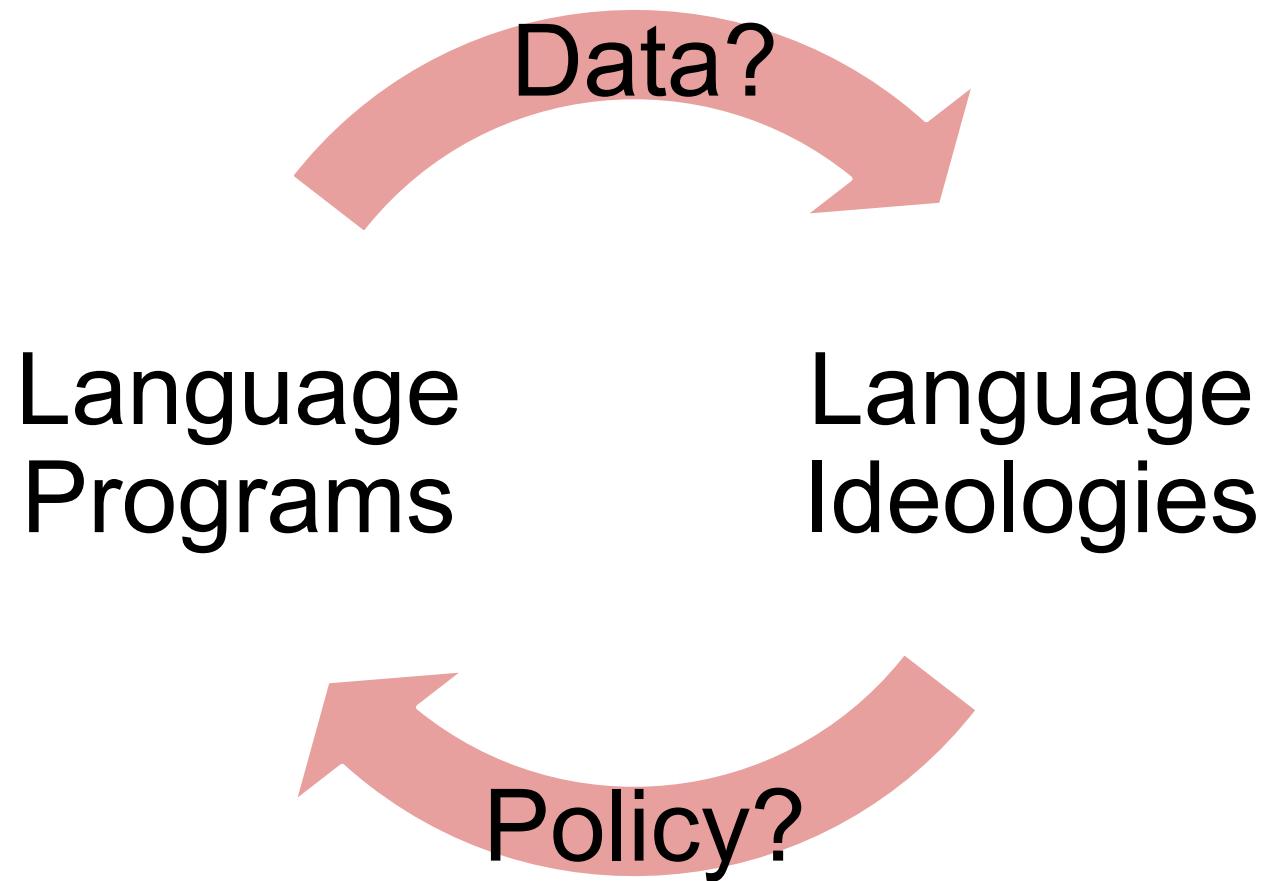
# Language Programs

- What is their role?
  - Top-down implementation as a result of language policy
  - Bottom-up initiative as a response to language policy





# Bidirectional Relationship





# Language Ideologies

- Three clusters of focus for today:
  - Language as a Resource-drain
    - Spending resources on “under-developed” languages and language programs necessarily drains resources from other sectors.
  - Language as Problem
    - Multilingualism and mother tongues are a problem that must be overcome to promote the supreme literacy.
  - Language as Divisive
    - Multilingualism is a threat to national unity.



# East Timor

- 1.2 million people, over half under 25
- 2 official languages, Tetun Dili and Portuguese
- Both languages topic of debate
  - Portuguese: former colonial language, low fluency rates, little regional relevance, nostalgia
  - Tetun Dili: creole stigma, “poor” language, identity
- 2 ‘working languages’, English and Indonesian
- 20ish indigenous languages, about half of which are undocumented
- 10-12 are endangered, 5-6 are critically endangered
- Corruption high, poverty high, development low
- 50% population is illiterate



# Language in Education

- 1769-1975
  - Portuguese; small number of students
- 1975-1999
  - Bahasa Indonesia; everyone
- 2003-?
  - Portuguese and Tetun; everyone
  - Tetun a ‘tentative, auxiliary language’
  - Portuguese fluency < 6%
  - Varies by geography and personal philosophy of teachers and principals (Quinn 2007, Shah 2012)



# Realities

- Achievement (MoE 2010)
  - Over 70% of children do not make it to Grade Nine – highest dropouts in Grades 1 & 2
  - Average of 11.2 yrs to reach Grade Six
  - 70% of Grade One students could not read a work in any language
- Language Access (2010 census)
  - L1 for ages 0-14: Tetun 43%, Portuguese 0.03%
  - More than half of Timorese children are entering a school system where they do not speak the language of education



# Timeline of MTB-MLE

- 2009 – Portuguese MoE officials recommend to East Timor MoE to use local lgs in grades 1-4
- 2010 – National Education Commission working group spend one year drafting a policy
- 2011 – MTB-MLE policy was unveiled on Intl Mother Tongue Day
- 2012, April – Pilot programs begin in 12 schools in 3 districts



## “Yes, but it’s failed”

- 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2012 – Interview with rural teacher and his university-educated son

PI: Have you heard about the *Lian Inan* program?

M: Yes, but it’s failed. It’s failed.



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# Headlines from *The Dili Weekly*

## Implementa lian maternal iha Ensino Baziku, ME tenki esplika ba PN

About the implementation of mother tongues in basic education, the Minister of Education must appear before the National Parliament



*Relasiona ho planu Ministeriu Edukasaun nian iha atu implements maternal education baziku lian, membru Parlamentu Husu ba Ministru Joao Cancio esplika ba*

Relasiona ho planu Ministeriu Edukasaun (ME) *Publika iha 15-02-2012* ne'ebe sei implementa lian maternal iha Ensino Baziku iha tinan ne'e, Membru Parlamentu Nasional husi Bankada Opozisaun FRETILIN no bloku Aliansa Maioria Parlamentar (AMP) husu ba meza Parlamentu National atu bolu Ministru Edukasaun, Dr. Joao Cancio Freitas, atu mai iha PN atu halo esplikasaun klaru ba projetu implementasaun lian maternal.

"Rezolusaun ida mak ita aprova iha ne'e kona ba ensino lian maternal ninian, hau hanoin iha ne'e distintus Deputadus hotu-hotu husi AMP ninian mak proponente para Governu hapara tiha implementasaun hanorin lian materna ida ne'e," hateten Deputado Inacio Moreira, FRETILIN, semana kotuk (30/01), iha Parlamentu Nasioanl, Dili. Maibe tuir Deputado Moreira saida mak akontese Governu la respeita ba rezolusaun ne'e tanba kontinua la'o atu halo implementa ba lian maternal iha ensino iha rai laran.



# Headlines from *The Dili Weekly*

## ME kansela lansamentu lian materna



*Implementasaun ba lian materna ne'ebe lolos halo iha 21 Fevereiru, maibe kansela tanba presiza iha preparasaun ne'ebe diak ba iha implementasaun ne'e.*

Asesorr Lian iha Ministeriu Edukasaun (ME)

*Publika iha 13-03-2012*

Agustino Caet hateten lansamentu ba lian

maternal ne'ebe lolos lansa iha 21 Fevereiru maibe kansela tanba seidauk iha preparasaun ne'ebe diak.

“Ami sei halo preparasaun didiak lai, preparasaun fo formasaun ba formador sira, sosializasaun tenki barak tan, tanba komunidade barak mak seidauk komprende diak kona ba liafuan ne'e,” dehan Asesor Caet, semana kotuk (28/02) iha nia knar fatin Vila Verde, Dili.

Tuir Asesor Caet, nia parte presiza fo formasaun ba professores sira no halo sosializasaun iha baze depois sente ba diak ona mak bele halo lancamentu ba lian materna ne'e.



Ministry of Education cancels the launch of mother tongues



# Language Ideologies

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  - Language as Divisive
    - Multilingualism is a threat to national unity.



# Headlines from *The Dili Weekly*

## PM Gusmao: Lian materna atu ajuda la'os atu destroi

Prime Minister Gusmao:  
Mother tongues will help, not  
hinder

Implementasaun lian Materna iha Ensino  
Baziku iha primeiru siklu hamosu pro no  
kontra iha sosiedade nia le'et. Hatan ba kestaun ne'e Primeiru Ministro  
Kayarala Xanana Gusmao dehan lian maternal la'os atu destroi unidade  
nasional maibe atu ajuda labarik sira atu bele komprende lalaís materia  
ne'ebe professores sira fo.

Publika iha 27-02-2012

“Implementasaun lian maternal ne'e ba labarik sira nebe maka foin tama  
eskola nebe lahatene Tetun. Sira nebe hatene Tetun nafatin kolia Tetun,  
ne'e para professores sira labele lakon tempu atu tradus Tetun ba lian  
inan ba labarik sira. E ida ne'e la'os atu sai nasional nebe ita hotu-hotu  
oras ida ita kolia Mambai oras ida ita aprende ida, ne'e la'os hanesan  
ne'e, ajuda labarik sira nia lian inan iha fatin nebe sira



# Headlines from *Lusa*

## Português como língua oficial é fundamental para afirmar identidade de Timor-Leste

08 de Abril de 2015, 17:30

Lisboa, 08 abr (Lusa) - A manutenção do português como língua oficial em Timor-Leste é fundamental para a identidade do território e "como forma de afirmação contra o 'lobby' do inglês e do indonésio", disse à Lusa o investigador timorense Luís Costa.

"Para o bem de Timor-Leste, para a afirmação da sua identidade nacional e da sua situação geoestratégica, ter o português como língua oficial é factível. De Austrália e da Indonésia à Lusa, à CPLP, Iago à América, à

"Além disso, se as línguas timorense são apenas de índole oral, como vamos fazer quando quisermos trabalhar o abstrato? Que termos vamos, então, usar? Teremos sempre de recorrer ao português", explicou à Lusa, sustentando que "o tétum e o português devem ser ensinados desde a instrução primária ou até pré-

Além disso, se as línguas timorense são apenas de índole oral, como vamos fazer quando quisermos trabalhar o abstrato? Que termos vamos, então, usar? Teremos sempre de recorrer ao português", explicou à Lusa, sustentando que "o tétum e o português devem ser ensinados desde a instrução primária ou até pré-

Also, since the Timorese languages are only oral in nature, what do we do when we want to work in the abstract? What terms, then, will we use? We will always have to resort to the Portuguese"

"O tétum e o português vão caminhar lado a lado, vão-se reforçando, e o português vai-se afirmando cada vez mais em Timor-Leste conforme os seus termos técnicos integrarem o tétum", língua que, por seu lado, progredirá "à medida que o português se enraizar na sociedade timorense", explicou o docente de língua e cultura timorense, a residir em Portugal há 30 anos.

O investigador reagiu ainda ao facto de o Parlamento Nacional timorense ter voltado a adiar, a 23 de março, desta vez por falta de quórum, o debate sobre os decretos dos currículos do pré-escolar e ensino básico, em que se privilegia o uso das línguas maternas como componente curricular, num modelo que introduz o tétum e o português, as duas línguas oficiais, de forma progressiva.

No caso do português, só começará a ser língua de instrução a partir da 4.ª classe, e o seu ensino terá apenas 25 minutos por semana no 1.º ano.



# Interviews

- F, 20yo - *Tuir hau nia ita bele aprende lian materna iha liur maibe labele aprende iha eskola tanba se wainhira ita aprende lian materna iha eskola ita nunka hatene lian sira seluk hanesan portugues ho inglesh.*
- According to my view, you should learn mother tongues outside of school- not inside, because when you're learning your mother tongue in school, you can't learn other languages like Portuguese or English.
- (2013)



# 2015 – 5 words to describe language in East Timor

**interesting** unique  
shame

**confusing** retarding  
organic

intelligent **confused** **diverse**  
flexible capable  
discussion beautiful **difficult**

related adaptable controversial undefined  
tradition contentious ad charged hoc surprising  
dynamic barriers cousins learning  
roots developed broad

**exclusive** **complicated**  
work important development progress  
politically disempowering  
**rich** **frustrating** unequally  
population



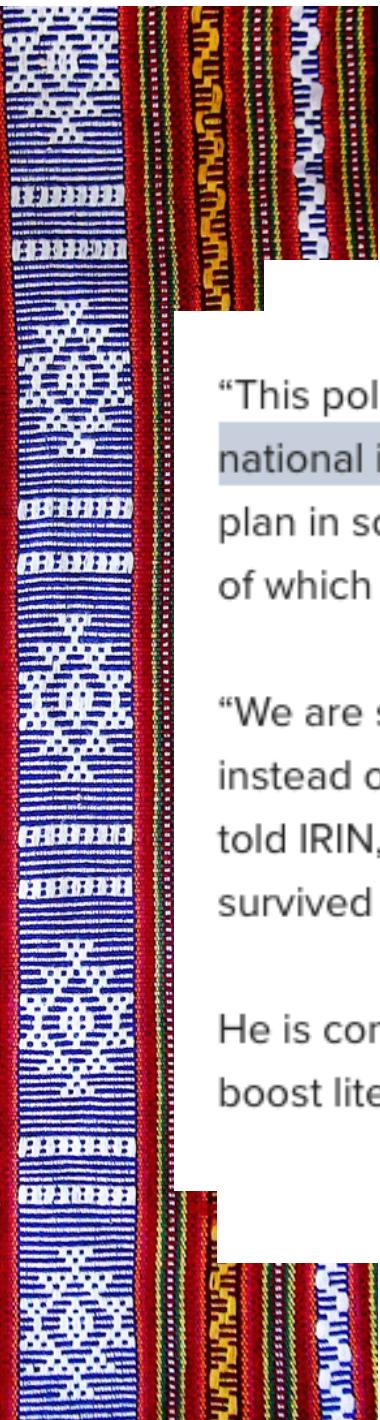
# 2015 Survey

- It is more important to know Tetun than a local language.
  - 63% Agree
  - 33% Disagree
- Children feel confused when they learn Tetun and Portuguese at the same time.
  - 74% Agree
  - 25% Disagree



# Language Ideologies

- Three clusters of focus for today:
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## Headlines from *IRIN*

“This policy would inculcate a sense of division... it would slowly start to destroy national identity and unity,” said a statement reflecting the strong opposition to the plan in some parts of the country. It was released by a coalition of local NGOs, some of which later withdrew their support.

“We are struggling to consolidate unity so that everybody thinks as East Timorese instead of thinking, I’m a Mumbai, I’m a Fataluco, etc.,” President José Ramos-Horta told IRIN, referring to two of the country’s ethnic groups. In 2008, Ramos-Horta barely survived an assassination attempt that stemmed, in part, from regional factionalism.

He is concerned that a rollout beyond the 12 schools may detract from efforts to boost literacy in Tetum, but proponents of the programme see the opposite.



# 2015 Survey

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  - 63% Agree
  - 33% Disagree
- Children feel confused when they learn Tetun and Portuguese at the same time.
  - 74% Agree
  - 25% Disagree



# Response to Negative Ideology

- Ideologies are not one-way, but:
  - Programs must aggressively advocate for themselves
- Language as Resource-Drain
  - Development as simultaneous, non-competitive processes
  - Education as the long game, and ultimately the most important



# Response to Negative Ideology II

- Language as Problem
  - Language as Bridge
  - Language as Instrument
- Language as Divisive
  - Language as valuable cultural resource
  - Culturally unique to East Timor, unity in diversity, multiple identities



# But how?

- Data!
  - Surveys, Assessments, EGRA, Test Scores, anything
  - There is a timidity in East Timor's MTB-MLE program regarding this type of activity
- Advocacy/Publicity
  - Televised debates, commercials, showcases, school festivals, international mother tongue day, social media
  - Increasing interest in this type of activity



# Recommendations

- MTB-MLE programs must plan for program socialization
  - This is as important as implementation and should be part of regular assessment practices
- Use ideologies as a resource
  - Investigate the specific ideologies that are having a negative impact on your program and address them head-on



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# Mahalo, Obrigada, Thank You

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa,  
Department of Linguistics



EAST-WEST  
CENTER

The East-West Center Student  
Affiliate Program

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,  
Ministry of Education



The United Nations Educational,  
Scientific, and Cultural Organization

US Department of State,  
Institute of International Education,  
The Fulbright-Clinton Public Policy  
Fellowship





*Obrigada ba tempu!*