Language Documentation and Description

Fataluku (Timor-Leste, Island Southeast Asia) – Language Contexts

LANGUAGE CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The Fataluku people are a community of around 41,500 individuals in Timor-Leste, a nation in Island Southeast Asia. Most members of the Fataluku community live at the eastern tip of the island of Timor, in the district of Lautém, though some have chosen to move to Dili—the capital of Timor-Leste—or abroad in search of economic advancement. The Fataluku language is a member of the Eastern Timor subgroup of the Timor-Alor-Pantar language family, which includes about thirty non-Austronesian languages spoken in Timor-Leste and eastern Indonesia. The language community is growing and expresses positive attitudes towards their language, though there are some early warning signs of language shift.

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Lautem; Lospalos; Timor-Alor-Pantar; Fataluco; Dagoda; Timor Lorosa'e; East Timor

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Language Name:	Fataluku
Language Family:	Timor-Alor-Pantar
ISO 639-3 Code:	ddg
Glottolog Code:	fata1247
Number of speakers:	41,500
Location:	Lautém district, Timor-Leste
Vitality rating:	uncertain

1. OVERVIEW

Timor-Leste, also known as East Timor, is a relatively new nation occupying portions of the island of Timor. As shown in Figure 1, it lies between Bali and New Guinea, approximately 600km northwest of Darwin, Australia. It is surrounded by the islands of eastern Indonesia in a biogeographical region known as Wallacea (Kealy et al. 2015). The island of Timor is long and narrow, extending west-southwest to east-northeast, with a mountainous ridge running lengthwise. The Fataluku people occupy the district of Lautém at the far eastern tip of the island, centered on the village of Lospalos (also spelled Los Palos), as shown in Figure 2.[1]

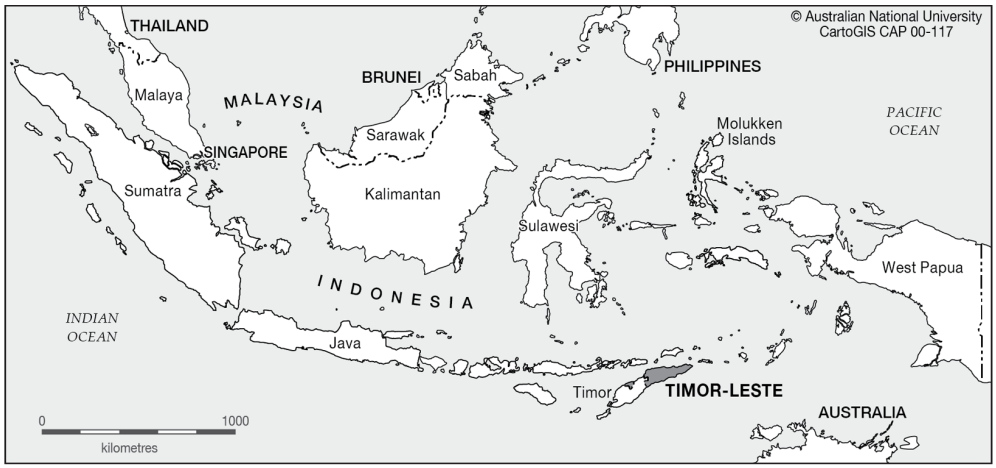

Figure 1 Timor-Leste within Island Southeast Asia. Produced by CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University.

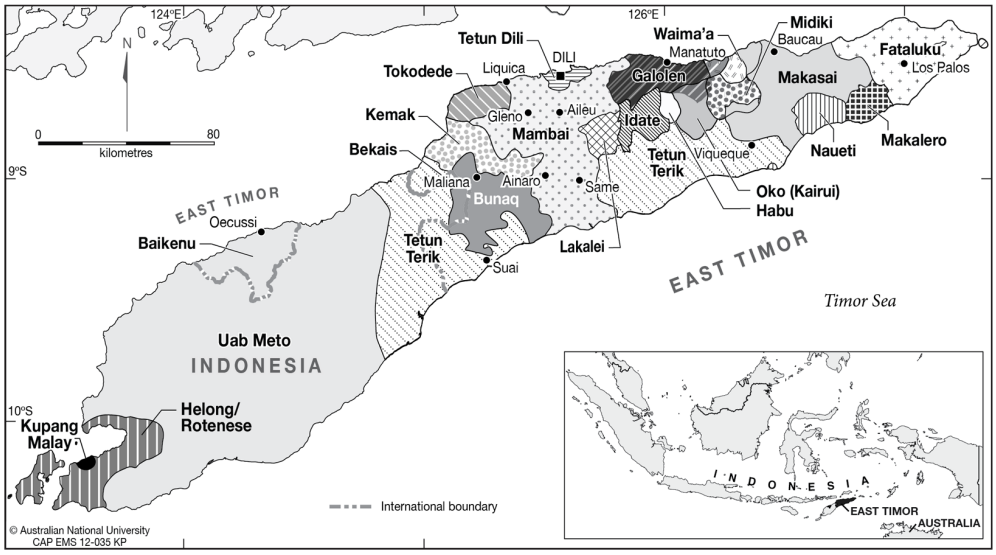

Figure 2 The languages of Timor. Produced by CartoGIS,College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University.

1 There is significant variation in the spelling of place names in Timor-Leste. Here, I follow official government spellings.

The term Fataluku refers to both the culture and the language (ISO 639-3 ddg). Community members indicate that the name is derived from two native words, /fata/ 'straight, clear, direct, correct' and /luku/ 'speak', yielding a meaning like 'clear speech' or 'correct speech' (van Engelenhoven & Huber 2020; McWilliam 2007). In older scholarly literature, the language is sometimes known as Dagoda, though this term is rarely encountered today, either in Timor or in the research community. Speakers of the related language Makasae indicate that Dagoda is an exonym originating among the other non-Austronesian communities of Timor (McWilliam 2007), an explanation supported by the presence of consonants in the name that are not native to Fataluku (namely, the voiced stops).

The goal of this paper is to provide a broad overview of the geographical, historical, and cultural context in which the Fataluku language is spoken. Section 2 surveys the geographical context, including both physical geography and regional linguistic variation. The next sections discuss the historical context of the island of Timor, addressing both prehistory (Section 3) and recorded history (Section 4). Section 5 overviews selected topics in Fataluku culture, with a particular focus on the intersection between culture and language. Section 6 discusses the language choices of multilingual Fataluku speakers in different domains of life, while Section 7 discusses prospects for the vitality of the language. The paper concludes with a discussion of published linguistic work and suggestions for future research.

2. GEOGRAPHY

2.1 PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The majority of the people living in Timor-Leste's Lautém district speak Fataluku, though in the southwest corner of the district, other non-Austronesian languages predominate. In the Iliomar subdistrict, the primary language is Makalero, while in Luro, it is the Sa'ani dialect of Makasae. Lautém's capital and largest village, Lospalos, lies at the center of the district, as shown in Figure 3. Lospalos is about 220 km east of the nation's capital, Dili, and is reached by following the main road along the northern coast until the coastal village of Lautem.[2] From here, one goes south about 27 kilometers, gaining around 400 meters of elevation. The full journey can take anywhere between six and ten hours by bus, truck, or motorbike, due to the variable quality of the roads. From Lospalos, there is a passable road east, a smaller road west, and a more difficult road south. The physical conditions of the roads deteriorate precipitously as one leaves the thoroughfares between larger villages, especially during the rainy season.

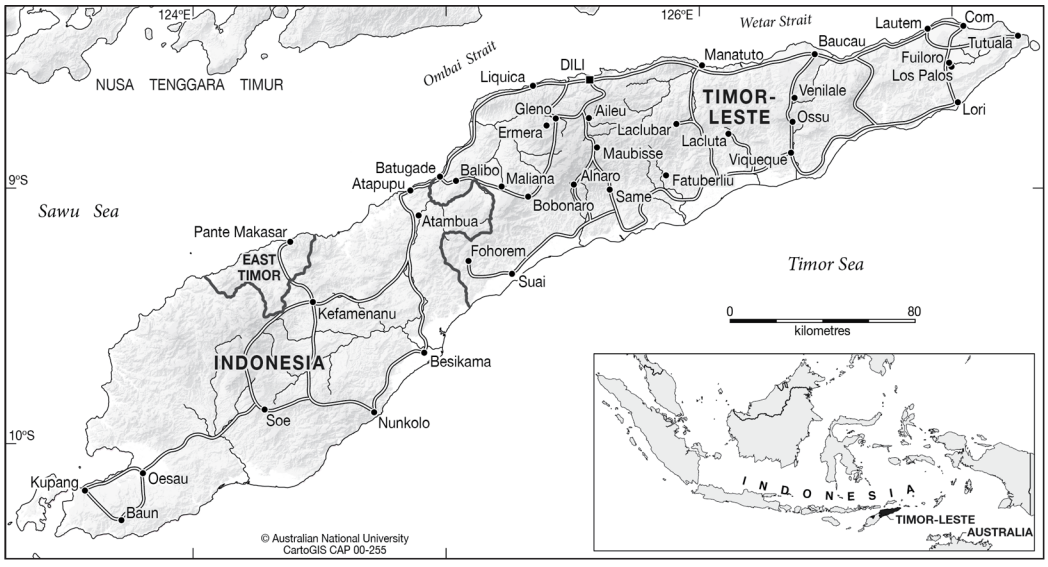

Figure 3 The major roads and larger villages of Timor. Produced by CartoGIS, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University.

2 The district of Lautém derives its name from the village of Lautem, which was its capital until 1946. Note, however, the spelling difference.

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The weather of the region is dominated by a tropical monsoon pattern. The wet season is centered on the months of December–April and the dry season May–November, but there is significant variation in the length of these seasons and the amount of rainfall across the island. In the north, it is typical to have a long dry season with three or fewer wet months. In contrast, the southern coast may have nine or more wet months and receive more than 200cm/79" of rain in a year (Cocks 2011; Cowie 2006).

2.2 DIALECTAL VARIATION

Most researchers accept the existence of at least five geographically-defined dialects of Fataluku (van Engelenhoven 2009a; Hull 2001; cf. McWilliam 2007, who reports as many as seven). Accepted dialects include North, South, East and Central. Most authors include a fifth, Northwest dialect, around the village of Baiduro. Justino Valentim, however, a native speaker of the language who has conducted a significant amount of documentary work, prefers to combine the North and Northwest dialects and treat western Cacavei as a separate dialect region (Valentim 2002, summarized in English by van Engelenhoven 2009a). A rough outline of these dialect regions is given in Figure 4.

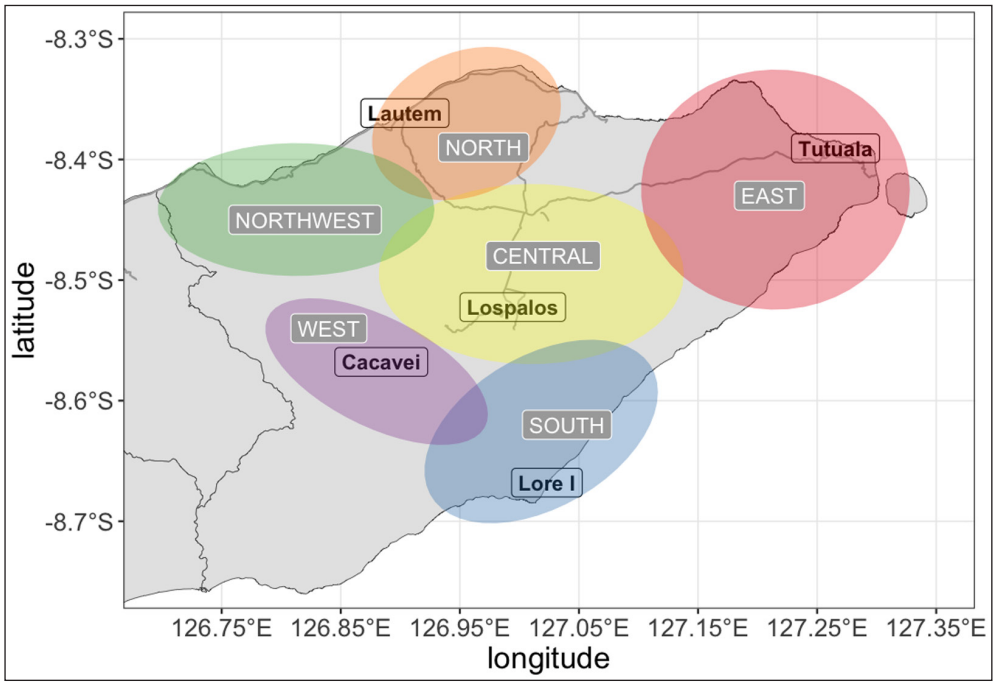

Figure 4 The approximate boundaries of the dialect regions identified by Hull (2001, 2005), van Engelenhoven (2009a), van Engelenhoven and Huber (2020), and Valentim (2002). District boundaries and roads from www.openstreetmap.org and www.mapcruzin.com.

Empirical evidence supporting these dialectal divisions is meager but has been growing. Van Engelenhoven (2009a) supports his five-way division with the data given in Table 1. Van Engelenhoven & Huber (2020) provide several other examples from the Central, South, and East dialect regions, though they note that still very little is known of the North or Northwest regions. More detailed investigation of sociolinguistic variation presents a promising avenue for future research.

	NORTHWEST	NORTH	CENTRAL	SOUTH	EAST
'deed'	faʔifaʔinu	faʔifaʔinu	faifainu	faifainu	faifaino
'horse'	kuɖa	kuɖa	kuca	kuca	kuca
'wife'	zeu	zeu	zeu	zeu	ɟeu
'sleep'	taza	taza	taza	taja	taja
'exist'	ane	ane	ane	ạne	ane

Table 1 Regional variants from van Engelenhoven (2009a: 335).

3. PREHISTORY

The languages of New Guinea and Wallacea are typically categorized into two broad groups, Papuan and Austronesian languages. Papuan languages—brought to the region by early settlers—exhibit significant diversity, representing perhaps a few dozen language families (Dunn et al. 2002; Foley 1986, 2000; Ross 2005). While researchers have identified some prevalent typological traits, the term Papuan is defined as a language that is not Austronesian. In contrast to the Papuan languages, the Austronesian languages form a clearly-defined language family for which extensive reconstructions are available (see, e.g., Blust and Trussel 2010). The prevailing view sees a migration of Austronesian speakers from Taiwan across Island Southeast Asia and into the Pacific beginning about 3,500 years ago, significantly after the first "Papuan" settlers of the area. (For an overview of evidence from linguistics, genetics, and archeology, see Bellwood et al. 2011).

Fataluku itself is uncontroversially recognized as a non-Austronesian, or Papuan, language. Its closest relative is Oirata (ISO 639-3 oia), spoken on nearby Kisar island, and it is closely related to Makasae (mkz) and Makalero (mjb) in Timor-Leste. These four languages together comprise the Eastern Timor subgroup (Schapper et al. 2012). Together with the Bunaq (bfn) language of central Timor and the many Papuan languages spoken on the nearby Indonesian islands of Alor and Pantar, these form the Timor-Alor-Pantar (TAP) language family (Schapper et al. 2014).

The broader genetic relationships of this language family have been a matter of some debate. A number of researchers have suggested a genetic relationship between the Timor-Alor-Pantar family and Papuan languages on the west end of New Guinea (see Hull 2004 and the literature reviews in Schapper et al. 2012 and Usher and Schapper 2022), and the TAP languages have been included in some versions of the large Trans-New Guinea Phylum (Ross 2005). Most of these claims, however, lack strong empirical support (see critiques in Holton et al. 2012; Holton and Robinson 2014), as lexical data from the TAP family's putative relatives only became more widely available in the late 2010s. More recently, Usher and Schapper (2022) presented a promising reconstruction connecting the Timor-Alor-Pantar languages with several languages spoken near the western end of New Guinea in a unit they call the Greater West Bomberai family. This is an area in which research is progressing rapidly as more data becomes available.

The fact that Timor-Leste is home to both Austronesian and Papuan languages raises interesting questions about the history of settlement. The island of Timor is located along one of several island chains connecting mainland Asia with New Guinea and Australia and was thus likely encountered in the earliest human settlements of the region (Kealy et al. 2015). Remains from the Jerimalai cave in Lautém district reveal evidence for complex, open-ocean fishing practices dating from as early as 42,000 years ago (O'Connor et al. 2011), well before the Austronesian expansion.

A key question, therefore, is the relationship of today's communities of Papuan language speakers to early pre-Austronesian peoples. There is some evidence that the Papuan languages spoken on the island today were brought there by a westward migration from New Guinea after the Austronesian expansion (McWilliam 2007). For instance, one finds cave paintings consistent with Austronesian decorative motifs deep within the Fataluku-speaking region (O'Connor 2003),[3] suggesting that Austronesian speakers were already living in the area by the time the ancestors of the Fataluku people arrived. There is also linguistic evidence that Fataluku has spread across areas in which Austronesian languages were previously spoken. Within Lautém, we find a nearly extinct Austronesian language, known as Makuva or Lóvaia (lva), which has been almost entirely replaced by Fataluku (van Engelenhoven 2009b, 2010a; McWilliam 2007). The language family tree Usher and Schapper (2022) reconstruct for the Greater West Bomberai language family also identifies New Guinea's Bomberai peninsula as the region of greatest linguistic diversity of the family, and thus its likely homeland. Our understanding of the arrival and relationships of the many communities who have inhabited Timor remains incomplete, however, and is the subject of ongoing interdisciplinary research.

3 The sedimentary history of the sites make radiometric dating difficult, but the materials and motifs employed indicate a date after the Austronesian expansion (Standish et al. 2020).

4. RECORDED HISTORY

From the time of the earliest written records until the 20th century, the island of Timor was politically divided into numerous small kingdoms. In spite of over 400 years of European claims to rule the island, the historical record shows remarkable continuity of local rule. As Fox (2003: 11) puts it, "Despite continuing contact with Europeans, dating to the early sixteenth century, Timor was never colonized as were other parts of the Indies. For most of the colonial period, control was a matter of pretense and veneer."

Fox (2003) observes that historical interactions between local Timorese kingdoms and foreign states revolved around the trade of sandalwood, *Santalum album* L., a type of tree with wood prized for its aromatic properties. Extensive trade of Timor's sandalwood dates from at least the 1300s, as evidenced by the records of Chinese and Japanese merchants.

In the early 1500s, European explorers encountered the island of Timor and its valuable sandalwood. The Portuguese government was the first European nation to attempt to exploit Timor's natural resources, establishing a base on the nearby island of Solor. In 1613, the Portuguese fort at Solor was taken by the Dutch, prompting the Portuguese to relocate to Lifao on the northern coast of Timor (in the modern district of Oecusse, Timor-Leste). In the 1700s, the Portuguese relocated their base again, this time moving farther east along the coast of Timor to Dili. The Dutch government, on the other hand, established a base on the far western end of the island of Timor. At various times, both Portugal and the Netherlands claimed large, often overlapping, swaths of the island of Timor, though neither achieved any lasting political control of regions much beyond the borders of their own settlements. Instead, it was the children of locals and Portuguese settlers, known as Topasses, who developed control of the sandalwood trade and became the dominating mercantile and political force in the region (Fox 2003).

In the early 1800s, tensions around piracy and battles between Timorese kingdoms led both the Dutch and the Portuguese to develop a keen interest in defining the precise boundaries of their alleged dominions. This led to nearly a century of debate and negotiation on the precise boundaries dividing Portuguese and Dutch colonial claims, which were not finalized until 1916 (Fox 2003). Following the Japanese withdrawal after the conclusion of the second world war, Dutch-occupied territory in Island Southeast Asia won independence as the nation of Indonesia, while Portugal maintained its colonial claims in Timor for three more decades. Ideals of a Portuguese-speaking global empire inspired Portugal to become more involved in Timor, leading to educational and agricultural initiatives as well as increasing political censorship (Hajek 2000b; McWilliam & Traube 2011). In the wake of dramatic political changes in Portugal in 1974, however, the nation of Timor-Leste, or East Timor, was declared independent on 28 November, 1975.

This period of independence for Timor-Leste, however, would last for less than two weeks. On 7 December that same year, Indonesia invaded and quickly conquered the newly-formed nation. During the Indonesian takeover, many citizens of Timor-Leste were killed. Many died in air raids, and many others died from the famine caused by the interruption of food production. Those that survived fled into the jungle or were forcibly relocated. One man I spoke with, who was seven years old at the time of the Indonesian takeover, recounts his experience fleeing his home in Lospalos as follows (Heston 2012: TH1-138):

> The airplanes were very terrible, continually shooting day and night. They kept shooting at us, and shooting, and shooting, and shooting. Many people died, but some, like us, survived, and some were able to run away. Whenever we would go out to look for food, they would shoot at us, so we would run away until the airplanes left and we could return to look for food. […] Water was very scarce, so we would all always have to line up for water. Whoever was first would get the water first, with others following in turn, until the water was gone. But some of us who couldn't get water through the lines would take it, and some killed each other.

In 1999, there was a referendum, and an overwhelming majority of Timorese people voted for independence from Indonesia. However, the aftermath of the referendum saw violent reprisals

from both the Indonesian government and pro-Indonesia militia, leading many Timorese people to again flee to the mountains. The Indonesian government has admitted to both committing and supporting "gross human rights violations targeted against [Timorese] civilians", including "murder, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, illegal detention, and forcible transfer and deportation" (CTF, 2008: xiv). The widespread violence prompted the United Nations to intervene, and after three years of political upheaval, Timor-Leste was reestablished as an independent nation on 20 May, 2002 (da Conceição Savio et al. 2011; Government of Timor-Leste 2015; Hajek 2000a, 2006).

5. LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

5.1 OVERVIEW

Several authors have dealt with various topics in Fataluku culture (Bovensiepen & Delgado Rosa 2006; Collins et al. 2007; Gomes 1972; McWilliam 2011; Pannell 2006; etc.). A full review of this literature is outside the scope of the present paper, so after a few general remarks drawn from my own fieldwork, discussion here will focus on areas of intersection between language and culture.

The economy of the Lautém District is based primarily on small-scale agriculture, augmented with animal husbandry, hunting, and (for communities near water) fishing. There are also a limited number of opportunities in the district for monetary employment, including work in education, government, construction, tourism, and shopkeeping. It is common for families to have a small tract of land on which they grow several kinds of crops, even for families with a source of monetary income or a family member who has a job outside of the district. The local staple starch is corn, though among families with slightly more means, rice (most of which is imported) is a common food. Other crops include cassava, taro, gourds, sweet potatos, beans, coconuts, bananas, and papayas. Meals typically consist of corn or rice and flavorful stir-fried vegetables, occasionally augmented with meat. A spicy and sour condiment made from chilis and shrimp paste is often available, though there is significant variation in individual preference for spice. Coffee is a common drink; while it is not grown on the Lautém plateau, coffee is an important cash crop in Timor's central highlands.

Animals that are raised include water buffalo, pigs, chickens, cows, sheep, and goats. Animals that are hunted for food include deer and cuscus. Near the coast and bodies of freshwater, a variety of aquatic harvesting and management practices are employed, including spearfishing, net fishing, fishing with rods and hooks, catching fish in woven traps (called /roso/), harvesting shellfish at low tide, night fishing with torches, and using fish poisons (including /tsaʔa/, which Collins [2005] identifies as *Derris sp.* B Lour). Besides a wide range of fish, fare by the coast includes octopus, shellfish, gastropods, and certain kinds of starfish.

5.2 RELIGION

According to the last census, over 97% of those living in Lautém identify as Catholic (General Directorate of Statistics 2015), but this statistic by itself does not adequately capture the diversity of religious identity and experience found there. This statistic must be understood in the context of the impacts Indonesian occupation has had on religious identity. The Indonesian government requires its people to identify with one of only a handful of major world religions, including Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity.[4] Among the available options, most people chose to identify with the Catholic tradition of the Portuguese. The Timorese Catholic church also gained great favor with Timorese people by its role in resisting the Indonesian occupation.

Even among those who identify as Catholic, there is substantial variation in both belief and practice. Some people adhere most closely to the Catholic faith, eschewing practices associated with their Fataluku religious heritage. For others, it is the traditional Fataluku belief system that

4 Because the Indonesian government's typology of religions treated "Christianity" as distinct from "Catholicism", many Timorese people identify as Catholic, but not as Christian, as they associate the latter term with Protestantism. The term "Protestante", meanwhile, refers to a specific (Protestant) denomination in Timor, creating further potential for misunderstanding for those not familiar with Timorese perspectives on religion.

most shapes their spiritual worldview, and while they may attend Mass on special occasions, the tenets of the Catholic belief system have less impact on their daily lives. Many people (perhaps the majority) adopt a syncretistic perspective, combining elements from local and Catholic belief systems in a Catholicism that is uniquely Fataluku.

5.3 AUSTRONESIAN CULTURAL TRAITS

The culture of the Fataluku people bears witness to their long history of contact with Austronesian-speaking peoples. In fact, in an influential paper, McWilliam (2007) goes so far as to call them "Austronesians in linguistic disguise". In this paper, McWilliam calls into question traditional dichotomies between "Austronesian cultures" and "Papuan cultures". Instead, he finds that Fataluku culture evidences the same suite of characteristics associated with Austronesian-speaking communities.

For example, McWilliam (2007) echoes Fox (1988) in finding "a concern—indeed an obsession—with the specific knowledge of origins", which form the basis for present day hierarchical cultural structures. McWilliam also finds extensive use of characteristically Austronesian metaphors for Fataluku social structures. Not only does the Fataluku clan system closely mirror the systems found in nearby Austronesian societies, but the same older/younger sibling analogy is used to express seniority relationships between clans. Similarly, marriage forms an important cultural institution for establishing and maintaining relationships between clans, as women take on the clan membership of their husbands when they marry, and here also, quintessentially Austronesian metaphors are used to express the relationships involved (McWilliam 2007).

5.4 AUSTRONESIAN LANGUAGE CONTACT

Extended contact with Austronesian languages has also shaped Fataluku's lexicon and grammar. While Fataluku's core vocabulary is overwhelmingly non-Austronesian, it is possible to trace numerous strata of Austronesian loans. Perhaps most obvious are the recent loans from Tetun and Indonesian. Many of these deal with foreign concepts or newly introduced technology, but this stratum also includes a few conjunctions and a few verbs dealing with modality (such as /harus/ 'must', from Indonesian).

Fataluku has two numeral systems, both of which show evidence of Austronesian contact. There is an older system that is primarily Papuan but incorporates some very old borrowings from Austronesian, including /fate/ 'four', /lime/ 'five', /neme/ 'six', /fitu/ 'seven', and all numbers above 99 (Heston 2015b; McWilliam 2007). Fataluku has also borrowed an entire series of numbers from Indonesian, used the alongside the older system. The older system is generally used for numbers in grammatically-integrated contexts, while the Indonesian system is used for numerals in isolation, such as prices, phone numbers, and dates. This pattern parallels in some respects the usage of multiple numeral systems in Tetun Dili (Williams-van Klinken & Hajek 2018), though a more complete sociolinguistic study of numeral usage in Fataluku is needed to determine the precise extent of the parallel.

There is also other evidence for early Austronesian loans. McWilliam finds the vocabulary for several of Fataluku's core cultural concepts and institutions is actually Austronesian in origin. For instance, there are clear Austronesian origins for the terms /ratu/ 'clan, ruler', /kaka/ 'older brother', and /maalai/ 'foreigner, ruler', as well as a few other basic terms such as /tahi/ 'ocean', and /mara/ 'to go' (Heston 2015b; McWilliam 2007). Schapper et al. (2014) even identify a few Austronesian loans which may predate the breakup of the Timor-Alor-Pantar family (TAP), including /pura/ 'sell' (cf. Proto-TAP *boL 'price', Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *bəli 'price, bride price') and /laka/ 'to walk' (cf. Proto-TAP *lak(Vr) 'to walk', Proto-Malayo-Polynesian *lakaj 'stride, take a step').

Contact with Austronesian languages has also shaped the language structurally. Like the other Papuan languages of Timor, it shows several characteristics normally associated with Austronesian languages, such as an inclusive/exclusive distinction in the first person plural pronouns, a

phonological contrast between /l/ and /r/, and an isolating morphological type with little bound inflection (Schapper 2009). Reconstructing the historical scenarios that led to these linguistic effects and identifying the particular donor languages involved is a complex task that is the subject of ongoing investigation (see, e.g., Schapper & Huber 2023).

5.5 KINSHIP

Fataluku also shares similarities with Austronesian languages in the organization of its kinship terminology. A key feature of the Austronesian languages of the area is a distinction between those related through same-gender siblings of one's parent ("parallel" relations) versus through cross-gender siblings ("cross" relations). Blust (1994) reconstructs this distinction for Austronesian at the level of Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, along with an asymmetrical system of marriage alliance between a man and his female cross-cousin (i.e., his mother's brother's daughter). Blust's reconstruction is reflexed most conservatively among the Austronesian languages spoken in Timor and eastern Indonesia.

While study of kinship in the languages of the TAP family is still in its infancy, Holton (2014) identifies evidence for progressive diffusion of Austronesian-like kinship systems across the TAP languages of eastern Indonesia. In the TAP languages of the more remote Alor highlands, cross-cousin relationships play little role in social organization, while the languages with the most contact have systems closely paralleling those of nearby Austronesian languages. They only rarely, however, borrow Austronesian terms, instead calquing Austronesian concepts with native vocabulary. As a result, Holton finds very few cognates, even among languages with similar categories.

While Holton (2014) does not explicitly address kinship in Timor, similar patterns to those just described are found there. Fataluku kinship terminology closely parallels Austronesian patterns, though most terms are not Austronesian in origin (except for /kaka/ 'older brother'; see McWilliam 2007). In contrast to the scarcity of cognates among the Alor-Pantar languages analyzed by Holton, however, a number of Fataluku's kinship terms are cognate with its relatives (cf. Fataluku /noko/, Makalero/Makasae /noko/ 'younger sibling'; Fataluku /nami/, Makalero/Makasae /nami/ 'male, husband'; see Correia 2011; Huber 2011). More research is needed to determine the relative chronology of the changes induced by Austronesian contact.

Here, the contrast between parallel- and cross-cousins in Fataluku is briefly sketched out, based on my own fieldwork.[5] The sisters of one's mother are known as /naal kaka/ 'elder mother' or /naal noko/ 'younger mother', and the brothers of one's father are known as /paal kaka/ 'elder father' or /paal noko/ 'younger father' (depending on the birth order of the parent and their siblings). If a mother's sister marries, her husband is called /paal/ 'father', while if a father's brother marries, his wife is called /naal/ 'mother'. Their children, one's parallel cousins, are referred to with the same terms used for siblings, e.g., /kaka/ 'older brother', /noko/ 'younger brother', and so forth.

These "parallel" relatives are contrasted with "cross" relatives, those related through a parent's opposite sex sibling. These include /pa?in/ 'mother's older brother', /pa?in noko/ 'mother's younger brother', /tamu kaka/ 'father's older sister', and /tamu noko/ 'father's younger sister'. Mother's brother's wife is /pa?in tupur/, while the father's sister's husband is /pa?in matu/. The mother's older brother holds a privileged role, and is also sometimes referred to with the Portuguese loanword /tiu/.

It is traditional to marry one's cross cousins, the children of either father's sister or mother's brother. In fact, the word /jeu/ 'wife' also applies to a man's mother's brother's daughter, whether or not they are married. For the same reason, there are no special terms for affines—in-laws—because marrying one's cousin means that there are already kinship terms for a spouse's family members. While traditionalists uphold the practice of cross-cousin marriage, among younger generations it is becoming increasingly common to marry outside of one's family, or even outside of one's language and culture group, especially in the highly multicultural city of Dili.

5 Terms are from the male perspective. Spot checks suggest that terms are the same for either a male or female ego, though I have not been able to confirm this in all cases.

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5.6 PERSONAL NAMES

An individual is often given two names, a Portuguese name and a Fataluku name, in addition to an inherited family name. It is very common for speakers to go by a shortened form of their Portuguese name, such as Lina for Adelina or Lito for Hipolito, both among new acquaintances and among friends. The unshortened Portuguese name is used in more formal domains, such as educational, professional, and legal contexts, while I have only observed the use of Fataluku names among close family members. Fataluku naming traditions present a fertile ground for further investigation, as, in spite of their complexity, they have received very little attention in the literature.

5.7 MUSIC AND SINGING

The Fataluku people have a rich tradition of singing, including a variety of genres associated with particular agricultural tasks (Yampolsky 2022). While much of this singing tradition remains poorly documented, the genre with the largest repertoire, known as *vaihoho* (phonemically /vaihoho/, also sometimes spelled *waihoho*), has been a particular focus of ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky over the past decade. This genre consists of poetic couplets which are unrhyming, but which follow a strict trochaic meter, sung as a duet. While most *vaihoho* couplets deal with topics of grief and tragedy, there are others that are lighter or more humorous in their content.

One interesting feature of this musical tradition is that the poems and the melodies to which they are sung are independent from one another. That is, any *vaihoho* couplet, or any new couplets that are composed, may be sung to any one of 35 or so melodies. Additionally, each melody contains certain syllables that are interspersed throughout the couplet. For instance, the melody *Jolai* is so named because [jolai] (meaning uncertain) is prefixed to any line sung in this melody. For further details on the *vaihoho* singing tradition and the challenges it raises for theories of text setting and metricality, readers are encouraged to consult the work of Yampolsky (e.g., Yampolsky 2022).

6. LANGUAGE DOMAINS

Timor-Leste is linguistically diverse and highly multilingual. It is not uncommon to find native Fataluku speakers who are proficient in two or three other languages. Over half of the Fataluku participants surveyed by da Conceição Savio et al. (2011) report proficiency in Tetun Dili. Tetun Dili (also known as *Tetun*, or in Portuguese as *Tétum Praça* or *Tétum*) is a contact variety lexified from both Portuguese and local Austronesian languages. Tetun is a co-official language with Portuguese, playing a significant role in the day-to-day life of the nation as the de facto lingua franca. In contrast, less than 15% of all respondents report proficiency in Portuguese, and proficiency is less common among speakers under 40. Just under half of survey respondents reported proficiency in Indonesian, which was the language of education for the last quarter of the 20th century and remains the primary language in which television programming is available (as little television programming is produced in Timor-Leste). It is not uncommon to find Fataluku speakers who are also proficient in one of Timor-Leste's other indigenous languages, including especially the related Papuan languages Makalero or Makasae.

Da Conceição Savio and colleagues (2011, 2016) find that Tetun Dili plays an important role in most domains of life in the Lautém district. One in five of their survey respondents use both Fataluku and Tetun Dili at home, and over half use Tetun with friends, often in combination with either Fataluku or Indonesian. Tetun is also the official language of the Catholic church in Timor and is used alongside Fataluku in shops, markets, and local administration.

There is ongoing controversy in Timor-Leste regarding the language of instruction in schools. From independence in 2002 until 2010, Timorese educational policy specified Portuguese as the primary language of instruction, with Tetun to be used in a supplementary role. In 2011, the Timorese Ministry of Education initiated a new program of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), in which lower grades are taught in the predominant indigenous language of each region. After children have developed basic literacy in their native language, literacy in Tetun

and Portuguese is introduced. This project has been piloted among three language communities—Fataluku, Galolen, and Baikenu—with ambitious plans to expand to other languages (Caffery et al. 2014; Taylor-Leech 2019, 2021).

Mother tongue-based education in Timor has had an extremely polarized reception. The debate is tied not only to differing pedagogical ideals, but also concerns of nation building and national identity. Supporters of mother tongue literacy highlight the opportunities it creates for more accessible education, especially for children in underprivileged rural communities. Detractors highlight the potential for discord between cultural groups, and many even see the project as deleterious to national unity. While Portuguese is the main language in very few Timorese homes, it serves as an ideological common ground, highlighting the shared colonial experiences of Timor-Leste's linguistically- and culturally-diverse population. Besides its prestigious association with Portugal, Portuguese is associated for many with the struggle for independence from Indonesia and evokes solidarity with other former Portuguese colonies around the world (Quinn 2013; Taylor-Leech 2019, 2021).

Evaluations of the success of the mother tongue pilot programs are mixed. While the results of the project have fallen short of some expectations, Taylor-Leech (2021) greets the project as a success, citing parental involvement in education and the development of local literacy materials as two concrete examples of its positive impact. At least in the case of Fataluku, the materials created as part of the mother tongue education project represent a significant proportion of the total written corpus.

Other contexts in which Fataluku is written include text messages and social media, including Fataluku language-only social media groups. There remains significant orthographic variation, especially in informal contexts. While there exists an official Fataluku orthography based on Tetun Dili, literacy experts do not unanimously accept this orthography, and it is not well known among speakers. Most speakers who write Fataluku use an orthography based roughly on that of Indonesian, but there is significant inter-speaker (and often even intra-speaker) variation, especially in the representation of the phoneme /z/, the glottal stop, diphthongs, phonemic vowel length, reduplication, and word boundaries.

7. VITALITY

Fataluku's vitality status is difficult to ascertain precisely. On the positive side, there is a growing speaker community, correlating with high birth rates throughout Timor. In particular, the Fataluku speaker community was estimated at 41,500 in the 2015 census, which is up almost 10% since 2010 (General Directorate of Statistics 2015; Williams-van Klinken & Williams 2015). The Fataluku community also exhibits very positive attitudes towards their language and culture. Throughout Timor-Leste, Fataluku speakers have established a reputation for their pride in their cultural heritage and language.

On the other hand, we find a number of signs that Fataluku is in the early stages of language shift. As the language of broader communication across Timor-Leste, it is Tetun Dili which exerts the greatest pressure on Fataluku. The scarcity of jobs and educational opportunities in Lautém is pushing some younger Fataluku speakers to move to the capital city of Dili, leaving their traditional homeland and entering contexts that require the use of Tetun (McWilliam 2011). As mentioned above, even in the Lautém district, Fataluku is losing domains to Tetun. The only domain in which da Conceição Savio (2016) finds Fataluku dominant is "traditional ceremonies", and even here we find attrition. For instance, the singing genre of *vaihoho* is now known only by elderly speakers, primarily older women, and the younger speakers with whom I have worked are not only unable to produce *vaihoho* but cannot even understand it. The present situation is in stark contrast to the pervasive role of *vaihoho* and other genres of song in the life of speakers of all ages at the time of the Campagnolos' fieldwork in the 1970s (Yampolsky 2022; primary recordings available at Campagnolo 1966–1973: CNRSMH_I_1970_068, CNRSMH_I_1976_015, CNRSMH_I_1979_021).

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Fataluku's extent of intergenerational transmission has not been the primary focus of any studies to date, and it forms an important direction for future research. The youngest speaker I had a chance for significant interaction with during past fieldwork was a girl of about 5 years old, and though she grew up in a Fataluku-speaking family, she refused to speak Fataluku, instead using only Tetun. It is not clear how widespread this failure of intergenerational transmission is. Census data does not show any clear trend in apparent time: the percentage of the Lautém district population that claims Fataluku as their mother tongue is essentially invariant across age brackets (General Directorate of Statistics 2015). However, there is some question as to exactly what is being measured, especially at the youngest age bracket (0–4 years). Historically, the category "mother tongue" has been used to encompass identity, as well as language use, and thus it is not clear whether caregivers are reporting children's linguistic competence or ethnic identity. More fine-grained measures are needed to reveal the progression of intergenerational transmission in Lautém's highly multilingual linguistic landscape.

8. EXISTING DESCRIPTION

Fataluku has remained largely undocumented until quite recently. In the 1950s, the anthropologist Ruy Cinatti, at the request of Arthur Capell, collected some Fataluku lexical data and texts. These data were later both published and archived with PARADISEC (Capell 1962, 1972), though little descriptive work on the language was published until nearly twenty years later. Henri Campagnolo is generally recognized as the first to discuss Fataluku in any detail. His work includes an overview article, a doctoral dissertation, a book elaborating on the theoretical portions of the dissertation, an article on Fataluku prosody and oral literature coauthored with his wife, and a much later multilingual word list (Arnaud & Campagnolo 1998; Campagnolo 1972, 1973, 1979; Lameiras-Campagnolo & Campagnolo 1979). Over 300 hours of primary recordings from the Campagnolos and their colleagues have also been digitized and archived (Campagnolo 1966–1973: CNRSMH_I_1970_068, CNRSMH_I_1976_015, CNRSMH_I_1979_021). Henri Campagnolo's work is notable for including the first book-length academic treatment of the language, though because of the unclear theoretical perspective and the limited amount of primary data included in his descriptions, the utility of his analyses are quite limited.

The Indonesian government did not encourage research on the languages and cultures of eastern Timor, and extensive research on the language has only been undertaken after the reestablishment of Timor-Leste's sovereignty. After Timor-Leste's independence in 2002, several publications on Fataluku were published under the auspices of the Instituto Nacional de Linguística (INL) of Timor-Leste. The INL's primary focus is on the "development" of Tetun Dili (such as the establishment of an official orthography), though they have also published a series of booklets describing the grammar of Timor's other indigenous languages, including one on Fataluku (Hull 2005). This booklet focuses primarily on morphosyntax, though there is also a short section on phonology and a Biblical text translated into Fataluku, Tetun Dili, and English. Hull's work is helpful in many respects, especially in the numerous examples provided, though the analyses are heavily influenced by the equivalent constructions in Tetun Dili. The INL was also involved in the publication of a short Fataluku-Tetun/Tetun-Fataluku wordlist (Hull 2006) and a Fataluku-Portuguese dictionary of approximately 3,000 words, compiled by the priest P. Alfonso Nácher (Nácher 2003, 2004).

In 2005, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research funded a project on Fataluku, led by Aone van Engelenhoven and Ruben Stoel. This work has led to descriptions of Fataluku derivational morphology (van Engelenhoven 2009a), verb serialization (van Engelenhoven 2010b), word prosody (Stoel 2008), and lexicon (previously hosted at www.fataluku.com, though now no longer accessible). Van Engelenhoven, collaborating with Juliette Huber, has also written the most extensive grammar sketch of the language published to date (van Engelenhoven & Huber 2020).

In 2007, Langford wrote a thesis analyzing Fataluku grammar from the perspective of Greenburg's proposed language universals, highlighting several grammatical patterns in Fataluku of relevance to linguistic typology (Langford 2007). Edegar da Conceição Savio, a native of Lospalos, wrote a dissertation and coauthored several articles taking a sociolinguistic perspective on the relationship

of Fataluku to other languages in Lospalos's linguistic landscape (Boon et al. 2021; da Conceição Savio et al. 2011; da Conceição Savio 2016). Relying primarily on survey data, he describes language proficiency, use, and attitudes in the Lospalos community, with particular attention given to attitudes towards literacy and education. The late Justino Valentim, another native of Lautém, was also very involved in documenting his native language and culture. His monolingual dictionary is the most extensive resource available on the Fataluku lexicon, with over 4,000 headwords, and his collection of traditional *vaihoho* poetry is an invaluable resource (Valentim 2002, 2004).

9. ONGOING RESEARCH

I began work on Fataluku in 2012, focusing on its phonetics and phonology. Much of my work has addressed its suprasegmental phonology, which is notable for the challenge it has posed to description (Heston 2014a, 2014b). Experimental methodologies helped establish the presence of weight-sensitive intonational peaks, explaining several behaviors that challenged both stress-based and tonal analyses (Heston 2015a, 2015b, 2016b). The significant prosodic differences between Fataluku and its close relatives also led me to investigate the history of prosody and related phenomena within the language family (Heston 2016a, 2017, 2018). Besides this work, I have been involved in the curation of an archived documentary corpus, a reanalysis of Fataluku's "postpositions" as serial verbs, and an overview of Fataluku's phonetic structures (Heston 2012, 2021; Heston & Locke 2019). My current project addresses phonological and phonetic variation in Fataluku, with a particular focus on the role of place. A pilot investigation has already been published (Heston 2019), and a more extensive coauthored article is currently under review. I have also been collaborating with Philip Yampolsky on several phonologically interesting aspects of *vaihoho* poetry.

A great many unanswered questions remain in all aspects of the language. Phonologically, little is known of rapid speech processes, and the intonational system is only just beginning to be worked out. Another promising line of inquiry is how speakers use variation to index identity in various social contexts. Fataluku's isolating morphological structure, combined with the multifunctional nature of the few grammatical morphemes that do exist, also present significant challenges to grammatical analysis. No full grammar of the language has been published to date, and even basic questions about syntactic categories and grammatical relations remain poorly established. It is an exciting time for research on the Fataluku language and the languages of Timor-Leste in general, promising great rewards for those willing to learn from this island's people and discover the richness that is there.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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