

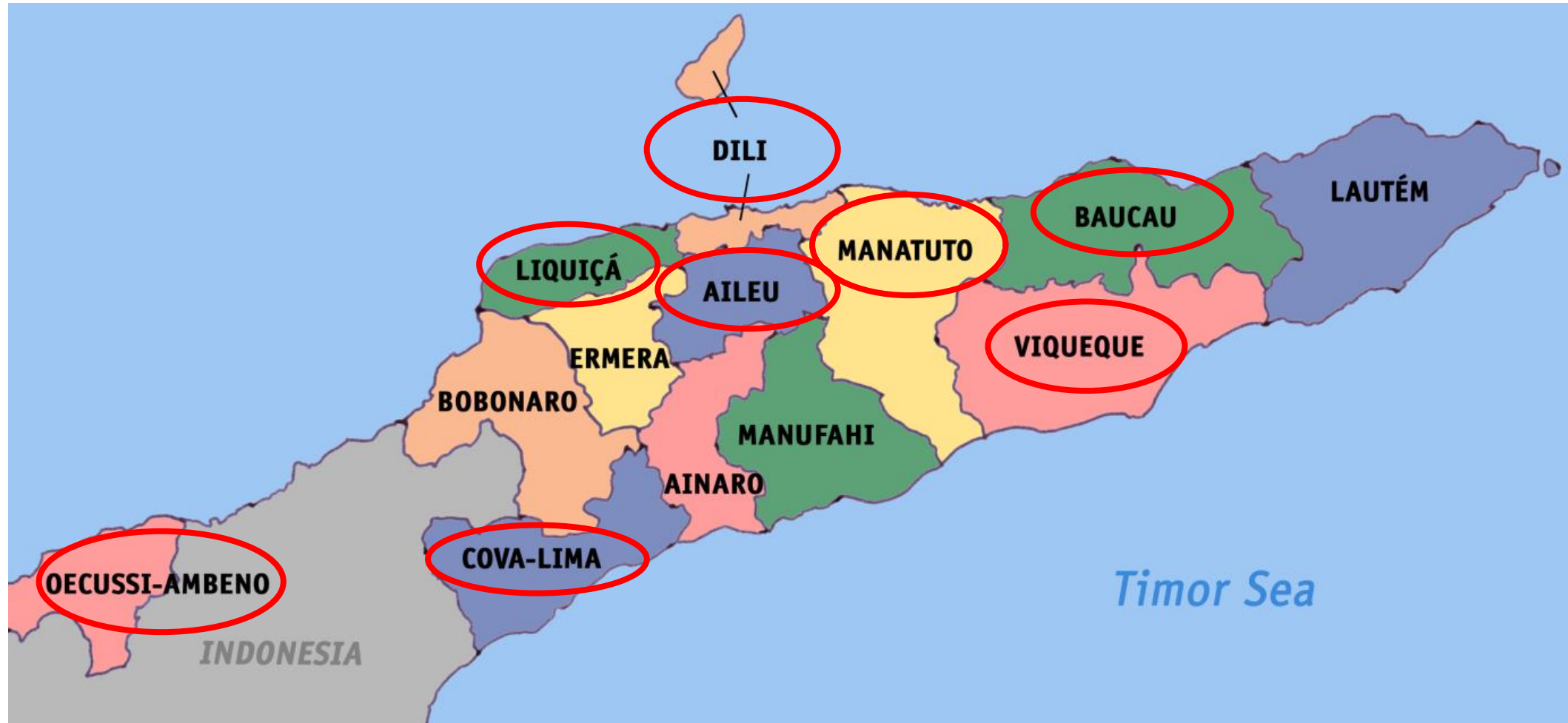


MULTILINGUALISM IN AND OUTSIDE
ADULT LITERACY CLASSES IN EAST TIMOR:
THE POSITION OF REGIONAL LANGUAGES

Danielle Boon

Leverhulme Griffith Workshop 5-6 Aug. 2014, Brisbane

Broad study:
73 literacy groups visited in 8 districts



Self-reported language proficiency by **learners** in adult literacy education in Timor-Leste

(percentages; N=756)

	Regional language	Tetum (Terik)	Portuguese	Indonesian	English	Total
L1	87.7	12.3	–	–	–	100.0
L2	4.4	70.3	0.9	2.0	–	77.8
L3	1.9	2.9	5.0	17.3	–	27.2
L4	0.5	0.1	2.9	2.1	0.1	5.8

Self-reported language proficiency by teachers in adult literacy education in Timor-Leste

(percentages; N=110)

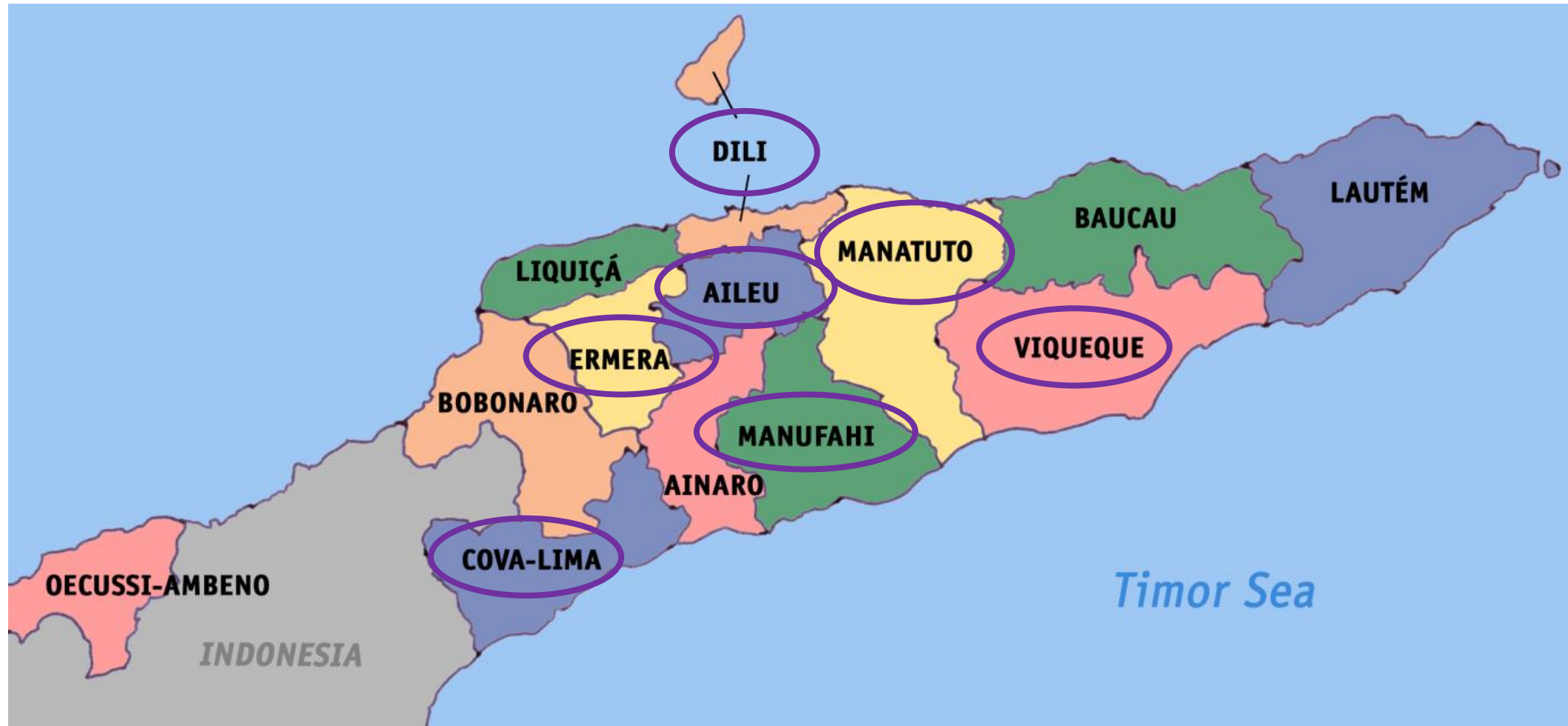
	Regional language	Tetum (Terik)	Portuguese	Indonesian	English	Total
L1	80	20	–	–	–	100
L2	6.3	70	6.4	17.3	–	100
L3	4.5	10	25.5	55.5	0.9	96.4
L4	1.8	1.8	53.6	20	5.5	82.7
L5	0.9	–	3.6	0.9	20.9	26.4

Self-reported language use by adult literacy **teachers** in social and institutional domains

(percentages; N=110)

	Regional language	Tetum (Terik)	Tetum / TT & Reg. lang.	Portuguese	Indonesian	Combinations	Total
Parents	49.1	21.8	28.2	–	–	0.9	100.0
Husband/wife	30.0	27.3	19.1	–	–	2.7	79.1
Children	12.7	47.3	23.6	–	–	4.5	88.1
Family	14.5	33.6	49.9	–	–	1.8	100.0
Neighbours	24.5	33.6	40.9	–	–	0.9	100.0
Friends	11.8	41.8	28.1	–	–	18.1	100.0
Market	4.5	60.9	26.3	–	–	8.1	100.0
District admin	0.9	93.6	0.9	–	–	4.5	100.0
Government	0.9	85.4	–	2.7	–	10.9	100.0
Church	–	92.7	3.6	–	–	3.6	100.0

20 classes observed in in-depth study



Multilingual classroom interaction in adult literacy education in TL (1)

- 4 different languages were used: Tetum, the regional language, Portuguese, Indonesian.
- Literacy teaching primarily in Tetum (target language and LOI).
- Regional languages used for extra explanations, repetitions of teaching points, translations, and small talk.
- Portuguese letter names like (/zi'gɛ/ for *g*, /'ʒɔtɛ/ for *j*, /hɛgɛ/ for *h*, and /ɛli/, /ɛmi/, /ɛni/ for *l*, *m* and *n*) were used in 14 classes.
- Subject-related language was in Tetum, with frequent use of Portuguese and Indonesian words.
- Numbers (quantity, ages, amounts of money) were referred to in Indonesian and Portuguese, sometimes in Tetum.

Multilingual classroom interaction in adult literacy education in TL (2)

- On some occasions, the contrast between different languages was used as a meaning-making resource: switches distinguished different kinds of talk.
- On other occasions, teachers and learners simply drew on the communicative resources available to them without attributing particular meanings to the use of particular languages, 'polylinguaging' (Jørgensen et al., 2011).
- Overall impression: people were getting things done multilingually.
- The extensive use of regional languages and Tetum and the limited use of Portuguese in adult literacy classes deviates from the language-in-education policies for formal education in Timor-Leste.
- Regional languages appeared to serve as key communicative resources.

Multilingual classroom interaction in adult literacy education in TL (3)

- Tetum would be the ‘on-stage’ language in adult literacy classes in Timor-Leste, and the regional languages the ‘backstage’ languages (Arthur, 2001).
- The teachers and learners seemed to use the full repertoires of linguistic resources available to them (Blommaert, 2013) to make meaning and to make sense of the things they teach and learn.
- Teachers and learners tried to find ‘local pragmatic solutions’ (Lin, 2001) to the challenges involved in taking on a – for most – new language of teaching and learning.

Exploration of the possibilities of using regional languages also as target language (alongside Tetum) in adult literacy classes

- Advantages and disadvantages; pros and cons seen from the perspective of:
 - learners
status, school, future, modern
 - teachers, coordinators
easier because own language, spelling, materials, organisation
 - literacy scholars
 - Literacy in L1 facilitates literacy in L2 (Benson, 2005; Bühmann & Trudell, 2008; UNESCO, 2007)
 - L1 seen as 'only of limited modern utility', leading to segregation (Coulmas, 1984:15)
 - Discussions use of mother tongues in prim. ed in TL (Cabral, 2013; Taylor-Leech, 2013)
- Experience in 2007 with *Hakat ba Oin* in Fataluku

References

- Arthur, J. (2001). Codeswitching and collusion: Classroom interaction in Botswana primary schools. In M. Heller & M. Martin-Jones (Eds.), *Voices of authority: Education and linguistic difference* (pp. 57–75). Westport, CT: Ablex.
- Benson, C. (2005). *Girls, educational equity and mother tongue-based teaching*. Bangkok: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001420/142049e.pdf>
- Blommaert, J. (2013b). *Language and the study of diversity*. Tilburg Papers in Culture studies, 74. Tilburg: Tilburg University.
- Boon, D. (2011). Adult literacy teaching and learning in multilingual Timor-Leste. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 41(2), 261-276.
- Boon, D. (2013). Multilingual classroom talk in adult literacy education in Timor-Leste: Teachers and learners doing literacy and numeracy tasks. *Language and Education*, 27(4), 356-373. doi:10.1080/09500782.2013.788190
- Boon, D. (forthcoming, 2014b). *Adult literacy education in a multilingual context; Teaching, learning and using written language in Timor-Leste*. PhD-thesis at Tilburg University, the Netherlands.
- Boon, D. (forthcoming, 2014). Adult literacy education in Timor-Leste in recent years: From research to practice. In *Proceedings TLSA Conference 'Understanding Timor-Leste 2013'*.
- Boon, D. (forthcoming, 2015). Adult literacy in Timor-Leste: Insights from ethnographic research with teachers, learners and coordinators of current literacy programmes. *International Journal on the Sociology of Language*.
- Boon, D. & Kurvers, J. (2012a). Adult literacy in multilingual Timor-lest: First results of a study. In M. Leach, N. Canas Mendes, A.B. da Silva, B. Boughton & A. da Costa Ximenes (Eds.), *New research on Timor-Leste* (pp. 349-354). Swinburne: Timor-Leste Studies Association.
- Boon, D. & Kurvers, J. (2012b). Ways of teaching reading and writing: Instructional practices in adult literacy classes in East Timor. In P. Vinogradov & M. Bigelow (Eds.), *Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition, 7th symposium, September 2011* (pp. 67-91). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Boon, D. & Kurvers, J. (forthcoming, 2015). Adult literacy education in Timor-Leste: Multi-layered multilingualism. *International Journal of Multilingualism*.
- Bühmann, D. and Trudell, B. (2008). *Mother tongue matters: Local language as a key to effective learning*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Cabral, E. (2013) The development of language policy in a global age: the case of East-Timor. In J. Arthur Shoba and F. Chimbutane (Eds.), *Bilingual education and language policy in the global south* (pp. 83–103). New York: Routledge.
- Coulmas, F. (1984). Linguistic minorities and literacy. In F. Coulmas (Ed.) *Linguistic minorities and literacy: Language policy issues in developing countries* (pp. 5–20). Trends in Linguistics; Studies and Monographs 26. Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton Publishers.
- Jørgensen, J.N., Karrebæk, M.S., Madsen, L.M. & Møller, J.S. (2011). Polylinguaging in superdiversity. *Diversities*, 13(2), 23-37.
- Lin, A.M.Y. (2001). Symbolic domination and bilingual classroom practices in Hong Kong. In M. Heller & M. Martin-Jones (Eds.), *Voices of authority: education and linguistic difference* (pp. 139–168). Westport, CT: Ablex.
- Taylor-Leech, K. (2013) Finding space for non-dominant languages in education: language policy and medium of instruction in Timor-Leste 2000–2012. *Current issues in language planning*, DOI 10.1080/14664208.2013.766786.
- UNESCO. (2007). *Mother tongue-based literacy programmes: Case studies of good practice in Asia*. Bangkok: UNESCO.

Thank you for your attention

d.a.b.boon@uvt.nl or d.a.b.boon@tilburguniversity.edu

daanboon@yahoo.com

