

# Sociolinguistic research with immigrant communities



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# Structure of the presentation

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- What does the study of multilingualism involve?
- How can researchers collect data on the use of languages?
- The sociolinguistic questionnaire
- Designing a questionnaire – some tips
- Multilingualism in the Timorese immigrant context – case study



# Studying multilingualism

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- ▶ Investigate **WHAT** languages people speak and how they use their languages:
  - ▶ Which languages people speak
  - ▶ When the languages are used, e.g. at home, with friends, work colleagues, etc.
  - ▶ When and how speakers mix languages
- ▶ **HOW** to investigate the use of the languages:
  - ▶ Census, but how reliable can they be?
  - ▶ Field work, using different methods, e.g. interviews, recording conversations, distributing questionnaires.



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# HOW CAN RESEARCHERS COLLECT DATA ON THE USE OF LANGUAGES?



# Census

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- ▶ Censuses are made in countries to collect information on the whole of the population
- ▶ They can provide initial information on the languages spoken in a country
- ▶ They are not specifically on languages and in most cases have only one or two questions related to language



# Census and multilingualism

For example in the UK  
the 2011 Census had one  
question:

*What is your main  
language?*

- ☐ English
- ☐ Other, write in  
(including  
British Sign  
Language)



# Census and multilingualism

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In East Timor the 2010 Census had two questions:

- *Mother tongue: the language/dialect usually spoken at home*
- *Can you speak, read or write in: Tetun, Portuguese, Bahasa Indonesia, English*



# Is it enough to ask which languages one speaks?

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- ▶ There is information on the languages spoken, but how speakers use their languages is not known.

## Example:

An East Timorese answers the census question on languages spoken at home: Mambae

## **BUT**

This answer does not explain how the speaker uses Mambae. E.g. Mambae may be used with the wife, but Tetun with the children.





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# THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC QUESTIONNAIRE



# The sociolinguistic questionnaire

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- ▶ Questionnaires are very versatile. They can be used to study many different topics.
- ▶ Questionnaires can be either written or oral
- ▶ You can distribute questionnaires in many ways: via people you know, email, online surveys (e.g. *SurveyMonkey*)
- ▶ You can gather a lot of information very quickly
- ▶ You can have the questionnaires in several languages spoken by the community you are studying (even if you don't speak the language yourself)



# The answers to the questions

- ▶ The answers to the questionnaire are statements of what the speakers **think** they do with languages

## Example:

Q: What language do you speak with your children?

A: Tetun



vs.



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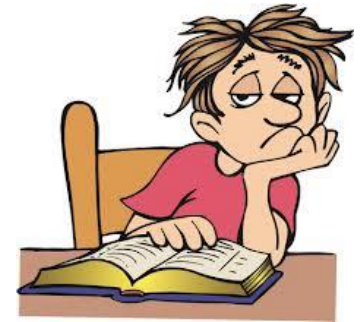
# DESIGNING YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE



# Format of a questionnaire

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- ▶ Concise questionnaire – very long questionnaires are tiring and tedious for the informant who can easily lose attention.



- ▶ Questionnaires need to collect information on age, gender, education and whatever other background is relevant to your study.

**But do not ask name, address or phone number!**

**Guarantee anonymity!**



# Formulating the questions

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- ▶ Identify what questions are crucial for your study
- ▶ Avoid yes/no questions

Example:

Q: Do you speak Portuguese? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Which option should speakers who may speak little Portuguese choose?



# Formulating the questions

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- ▶ If you do use yes/no questions, provide a space for informants to elaborate on their answers.

Example:

Q: Do you speak Portuguese? ☒ YES ☐ NO

If you chose yes, how well do you speak it? Not very well, and only when I am at the university

- ▶ **DISADVANTAGE:** informant's text make the data not quantifiable anymore
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# Formulating the questions

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- ▶ Present a scale as an alternative to text boxes

Example:

Q: When do you use Portuguese?

|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>All the time</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Often</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Rarely</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> |





# Check you are asking the right questions

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- ▶ You need to make sure a questionnaire is appropriate before collecting data otherwise you may ask the wrong questions. **HOW?**



Use your questionnaire in a ***pilot study*** and check what the speakers' reaction to the questions is:

- Are the questions sufficiently clear and appropriate for what you want to find out?
- Are the speakers giving you new ideas? The results of the pilot study may help you to formulate new questions and amend/improve others

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# **MULTILINGUALISM IN THE TIMORESE IMMIGRATION CONTEXT – CASE STUDY**



# East Timorese emigration



# Studying multilingualism in the immigration context

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- ▶ Similar to studying multilingualism in the migratory context within a country

E.g. Baikeno speakers who moved to Dili

Timorese who moved to another country

- ▶ What happens to the speakers' languages?

E.g. They start using the languages of the host country

Use of languages changes, given the new context



# Important questions for the study

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- ▶ We organised the questionnaire (Timorese in Portugal) in four sections:
  - ▶ Languages spoken
  - ▶ Language use
  - ▶ Social Networks: who do they mix with in Portugal?
  - ▶ Language attitudes: preferred language(s)



# Languages

VAGUE

2. Quantas línguas fala? Coloque-as na seguinte tabela e, se necessário, adicione outra informação no espaço abaixo da tabela. (por exemplo, Fataluku, apenas falado, porque não aprendi na escola)

| Línguas       | Fluente<br>escrito e<br>falado | Bom nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Melhor<br>falado do<br>que escrito | Melhor<br>escrito do<br>que falado | Pouca<br>fluência<br>escrita e<br>falada | Apenas<br>falado |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Bunak         | X                              |                                  |                                    |                                    |  |                  |
| Tetum         | X                              |                                  |                                    |                                    |  |                  |
| L. Indonésia  | X                              |                                  |                                    |                                    |  |                  |
| L. Portuguesa |                                |                                  |                                    |                                    | X  |                  |
| L. Inglesa    |                                |                                  |                                    |                                    | X  |                  |
|               |                                |                                  |                                    |                                    |  |                  |

SCALE OF  
PROFICIENCY

# Languages

2. Quantas línguas fala? Coloque-as na seguinte tabela.

Give clear instructions on how to fill in the table, e.g. with a X

| Línguas   | Muito bom<br>nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Bom nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Melhor<br>nível<br>falado do<br>que escrito | Melhor<br>nível<br>escrito do<br>que falado | Nível<br>baixo<br>escrito e<br>falado | Apenas<br>falado |
|-----------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Português |   | sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Tetun     | sim                                       |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Indonesia |   | sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Inglês    |   | sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
|           |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
|           |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |

(Adicione outra informação que ache necessária no espaço abaixo, por exemplo, *Fataluku apenas falado porque não aprendi na escola*)

Manbae e Tokodede, apenas falar porque não aprendi na escola

# Languages

2. Quantas línguas fala? Coloque-as na seguinte tabela.

| Línguas               | Muito bom<br>nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Bom nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Melhor<br>nível<br>falado do<br>que escrito | Melhor<br>nível<br>escrito do<br>que falado | Nível<br>baixo<br>escrito e<br>falado | Apenas<br>falado |
|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Tetun                 | Sim                                       |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Bahasa<br>Indonesia   | Sim                                       |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Portugues<br>Espanhol |   | Sim                              | Sim   |   |                                       |                  |
| Ingles                |   | Sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
|                       |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
|                       |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |

(Adicione outra informação que ache necessária no espaço abaixo, por exemplo, *Fataluku apenas escrito, porque não aprendi na escola*)

Sobre dialetos não sei falar nenhum

You need to take into account that terms used by informants vary: dialects, local languages, first languages, national languages



# Languages - analysis

- In the immigration context, speakers say they still speak the languages they spoke in Timor, but also also speak new languages:

2. Quantas línguas fala? Coloque-as na seguinte tabela.

| Línguas             | Muito bom<br>nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Bom nível<br>escrito e<br>falado | Melhor<br>nível<br>falado do<br>que escrito | Melhor<br>nível<br>escrito do<br>que falado | Nível<br>baixo<br>escrito e<br>falado | Apenas<br>falado |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Tetun               | Sim                                       |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Bahasa<br>Indonesia | Sim                                       |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Portugues           |   | Sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
| Espanhol            |   |                                  | Sim   |   |                                       |                  |
| Ingles              |   | Sim                              |   |   |                                       |                  |
|                     |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |
|                     |   |                                  |   |   |                                       |                  |

# Language use in immigration

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- ▶ Remember this is what the informants report they do...

6. Que língua(s) fala com.....:

- 6.1. os seus filhos..... *L. Tetum e L. Portuguesa*
- 6.2. com o seu marido/esposa/companheiro(a)/namorado(a)..... *L. Tetum, L. Portuguesa e L. Indonésia*
- 6.3. com os seus amigos..... *L. Tetum, L. Portuguesa e L. Indonésia*
- 6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha..... *Macacae, L. Tetum*
- 6.5. com timorenses de uma geração mais nova..... *L. Tetum e L. Portuguesa*
- 6.6. com um grupo de pessoas que não fala a(s) mesma(s) língua(s).....  
*L. Tetum, L. Portuguesa e L. Indonésia*

# Language use in immigration

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- ▶ Some informants are more aware of what they may actually do (languages mixing):

6. Que língua(s) fala com....:

6.1. os seus filhos.....

6.2. com o seu marido/esposa/companheiro(a)/namorado(a).....

6.3. com os seus amigos:

- Falamos tétum

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha:

- Depende da geração em concreto,

6.5. com timorenses de uma geração mais nova:

- Gado-gado, quer dizer que mistura tétum, português, inglês e indonésia.

6.6. com um grupo de pessoas que não fala a(s) mesma(s) língua(s):

- Tétum.

# Language use in immigration: analysis

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- ▶ Which languages do informants speak with their children?

6.1. os seus filhos... Tetum e Português

6.1. os seus filhos... Tetum e Português

6.1. os seus filhos... Tetum

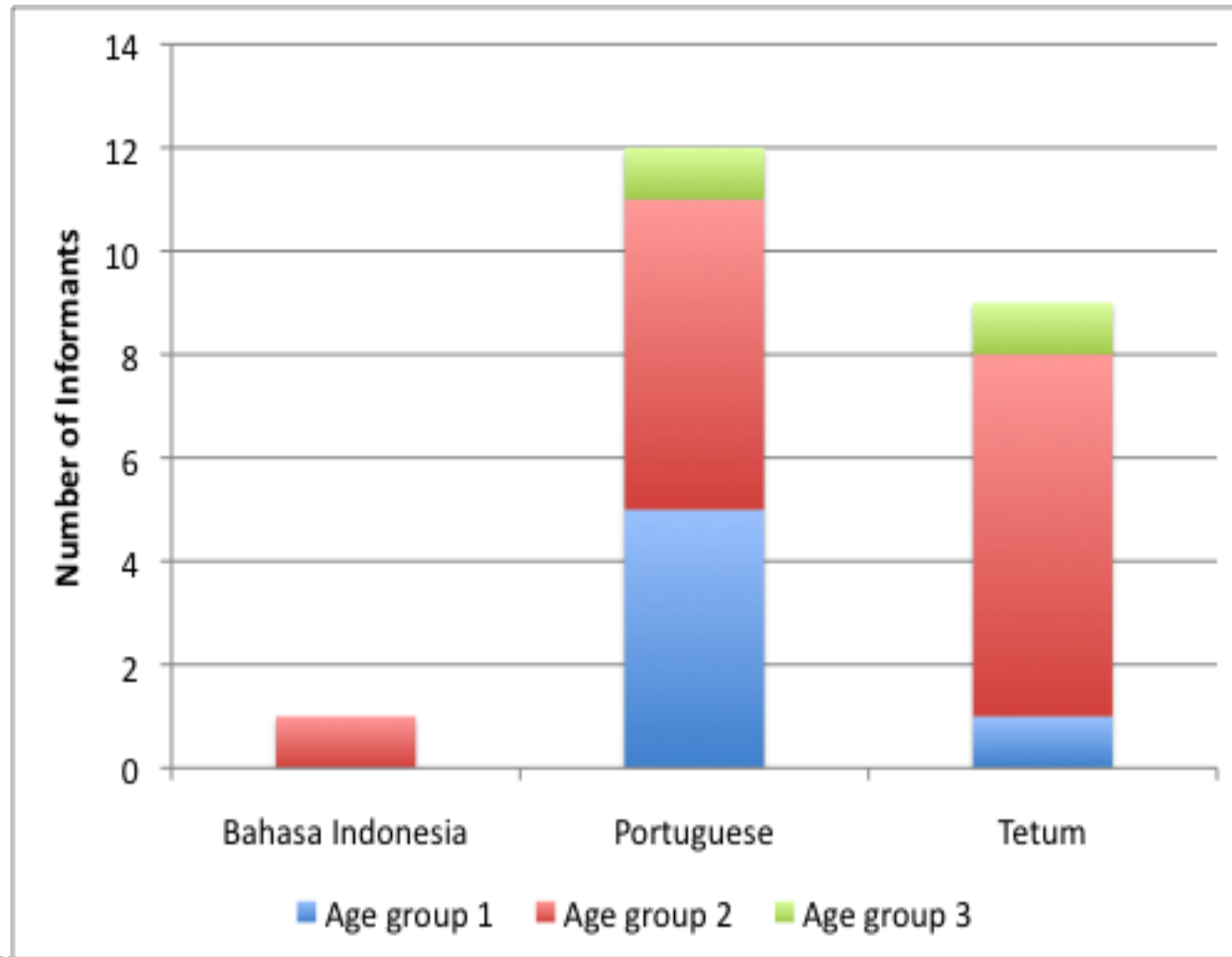
6.1. os seus filhos... Indonésia e Tetum

6.1. os seus filhos... Tetum e Português, porque os filhos estão a aprender português na escola



# Which languages do informants speak with their children?

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# Language use in immigration: analysis

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## ► When are the local languages used?

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha ..... *Tetum e Macasae*

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha ..... *ketum, manasae, manes*

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha ..... *L. Macasae, L. Tetum*

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha ..... *Mambae e tetum*

6.4. com timorenses de uma geração mais velha ..... *Tetum, Tokodede e português*

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Obrigadu!  
Obrigado!  
Thank you!

Ita iha pergunta?  
Há alguma pergunta?  
Any questions?

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