# PATTERNS OF ADDRESS IN DILI TETUM, EAST TIMOR

*Catharina **Williams-van Klinken**, Dili Institute of Technology*

> *Catharina Williams-van Klinken is Language Unit Coordinator for the Dili Institute of Technology. Her PhD in linguistics was awarded for a grammar of Tetun Terik, later published as* A grammar of the Fehan dialect of Tetun, an Austronesian language of West Timor *(Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 1999). Her current interests include grammar, translation, teaching writing skills, and teaching of Tetun as a foreign language.*

*John **Hajek**, University of Melbourne*

> *John Hajek is Associate Professor and Head of French, Italian and Spanish Studies, and Director of the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication at the University of Melbourne. He has had a research interest in the languages of East Timor since the early 1990s and has published extensively on them. The two authors have co-authored a number of publications on Tetum, including* Tetun Dili: a grammar of an East Timorese language *(Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, 2002).*

This article focuses on a detailed description of patterns of address in Dili Tetum today. It outlines the complexities of the address system and points to considerable variation in its evolving present-day use. We find, amongst other things, that a speaker may use a range of address strategies even to the same addressee, and that the use of polite pronouns *Ita* and *Ita-Boot* appears to be spreading as the language extends into new domains not previously available to it.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to provide a detailed description of patterns of address in Dili Tetum since its rise to prominence in East Timor after the referendum on self-determination and international intervention in 1999 (independence followed in 2002). The article attempts to outline the complexities of the address system in Dili Tetum and to show the considerable variation in its evolving present-day use. A number of pragmatic factors, such as status, distance and relative age, play important roles in influencing choice of address form (or lack thereof), but our survey also points to considerable variability – within the same contexts and amongst the same speakers. Evidence suggests that such variability is triggered by grammatical, stylistic and contextual factors, as speakers of Dili Tetum move quickly to using the language in domains not previously available to it. Overall, this expansion favours an increasing tendency to use the polite pronouns *Ita* and *Ita-Boot*.

Dili Tetum (or alternatively 'Tetun Dili') is native to Dili and is the major lingua franca of East Timor. It is an Austronesian language, which developed from the vernacular Tetun Terik, spoken in the countryside, and its grammar is still firmly based in that language. However, Dili Tetum (henceforth Tetum) has been strongly influenced by Portuguese, as a result of hundreds of years of Portuguese colonisation, from the 1500s to 1975. After a period of Indonesian occupation from 1975 to 1999, the East Timorese voted for independence. Since that time, Tetum and Portuguese have been chosen as the official languages of the new nation, and Portuguese influence on Tetum has continued unabated.

Prior to 1999, Tetum was primarily an oral language of interethnic communication amongst the many ethnolinguistic groups in East Timor. The major exception to this pattern of use was the decision by the Catholic Church in 1982 to replace Portuguese with Tetum as its liturgical language. Since 1999, however, the role of Tetum in public life has rapidly expanded into entirely new domains. It is now regularly used for such functions as public speeches, television and radio news and interviews, and national professional-level conferences. It is also increasingly being used in writing, including in newspapers, reports, and public information campaigns. Almost all the new vocabulary required for these new domains is taken from Portuguese, although, in less formal contexts, many younger people also borrow heavily from Indonesian, their language of education.

Not surprisingly, Tetum is undergoing very rapid change, resulting in considerable variation as speakers adjust to using the language across a range of spoken and written domains. It can be expected that this change will continue for some years to come. There is no widely accepted normative or written tradition, although these have been under development for some years and are now operating. Tetum is also now increasingly used as a medium of education in schools throughout East Timor.

In this study we look at current patterns of address in Tetum, as used in the East Timorese capital, Dili. It is in Dili that people from the approximately twenty ethnolinguistic groups of East Timor are mixed together, and that Tetum is used for the widest range of functions.

Several overviews of address patterns in Tetum have been published to date. However, since these are included within overall grammars of the language (e.g. Hull and Eccles 2001, 24–29; Williams-van Klinken et al. 2002, 26f.) or found within language-learning manuals (e.g. Hull 1996, 15–17, 25f., 51; Peace Corps East Timor 2003, 1–3, 12), they are necessarily brief. The aims of this paper are therefore to provide a more comprehensive

and detailed picture of address, and to consider how patterns we note might be seen in the light of changes in the status and structure of the language today.

Our data are drawn from a variety of sources, with heavy emphasis on actual usage. The Toolbox program (2001–2004 SIL International), was used to automatically search a corpus of over 40,000 words of transcribed oral texts, and a much larger collection of written sources and translations, including the New Testament, the longest non-technical text in Tetum. Our corpus of oral texts includes mostly narratives and interviews conducted in Tetum. Both formal and informal registers are included. This was supplemented by surveys of how terms of address were used in 128 public notices written in Tetum, nineteen radio and television interviews, and by long-term observation of a wide range of everyday interactions. In addition to data on actual usage, discussions were held with a range of various people about how terms of address 'should' and 'would' be used.

## OVERVIEW OF ADDRESS OPTIONS

The major options for addressing people in Tetum are by a kin term (e.g. *mana* 'older sister'), a noun indicating professional status (e.g. *profesór* 'teacher (male)'), *señór/señora* 'sir/madam', a name, or a pronoun (e.g. *ó* 'you' (familiar)). Alternatively, one can simply omit all reference to the addressee and allow the context to carry the meaning, as in the common greeting *Bá ne'ebé?* (lit. 'go where') 'Where are you going?'.[1] Taken in combination, the strategies of using nouns or names and omitting arguments allow pronouns to be avoided altogether if desired.

In the following sections, we will first discuss non-pronominal options for addressing an individual, before turning to singular pronouns. The choice of pronominal and non-pronominal options for addressing others depends largely on the following factors (cf. Braun 1988; Brown and Gilman 1960; Brown and Levinson 1987):

1.  Status, which correlates to a significant degree with the power that is exercised, and the respect that is culturally due to one.
    a) Some forms of status are absolute. In Tetum address, speakers frequently distinguish between those interlocutors who have professional status or other high status within the modern world (e.g. member of parliament), and those who do not have status in the modern world, even though they may be senior in other respects, such as age or traditional leadership. Interlocutors with modern status are addressed more formally and distantly.

b) Many forms of status are relative. Within the family and community, relative status is heavily tied to relative age, and choice of address terms usually depends on whether the addressee is older or younger than the speaker. Within the modern work place, relative status depends also on the relative rank of each interlocutor's position within the work hierarchy.

2.  Formality. The degree of formality of a context also affects choice of address terms. The same individuals who address each other informally when playing football together, may revert to more formal address patterns in a meeting.

3.  Distance and solidarity. Amongst same-status interlocutors, some terms of address are appropriate with strangers, others only with intimates.

# NON-PRONOMINAL ADDRESS

## KIN TERMS

Kin terms are the most widely applicable terms of address in Tetum, both within the family and outside of it. They can be used in almost all contexts except to professionals or other modern high status people in formal interactions. Kin terms reduce distance and formality, and emphasise solidarity. In Tetum, most of these terms of address are from Portuguese. Nevertheless, the custom of using kin terms to address people even outside of the family is inherited from Tetun Terik. A similar use of kin terms is also found in Indonesian (Sneddon 1996, 160–163). In the set of kin terms in Tetum we also include *anó* 'dear one' (young, m.) and *anoi/noi* 'dear one' (young, f.). Though not strictly speaking kin terms, these do reflect relative age, and are very similar in usage to kin terms.

Within the family, kin terms are commonly used instead of pronouns to address older family members. Older family members address younger ones by name, or by the familiar pronoun *ó*, while younger members are more likely to respond only with the appropriate kin term, as illustrated by example 1:[2]

**Example 1**
A father calls his son, who isn't sure he has heard correctly.

| Father: | *Lídio,* | *ó* | *mai* | *lai!* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lídio | 2S.FAM | come | first |
| | 'Lídio, come here!' | | | |

| Son: | *Pai* | *bolu* | *ha'u* | *ka?* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Dad | call | 1S | or (TAG) |
| | 'Are you ('Dad') calling me?' | | | |

Kin terms are extended to non-family members, even strangers, as shown in example 2, where a minibus driver first uses *tia* 'aunt' as a vocative, and then repeats the kin term as the subject of the sentence:

**Example 2**
A confused female minibus passenger, aged about 50, asks the young male driver where they are going.

| Lady: | *Hai,* | *supir,* | *ita* | *liu* | *hosi* | *ne'ebé* | *mak* | *ne'e?!* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Hey, | driver, | 1Pl | pass | from | where | FOCUS | this |
| | 'Hey, driver, where are we going here?!' | | | | | | | |

| Driver: | *Tia,* | *tia* | *atu* | | *bá* | *ne'ebé?* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | aunt | aunt | IRREAL | | go | where |
| | 'Auntie, where are you ('auntie') wanting to go?' | | | | | |

Most kin terms show relative age, and are therefore non-reciprocal. For instance, a young girl may address an elderly woman as *avó* 'grandparent', while receiving in return *anoi* 'dear one'. However, the use of some terms has been broadened to include wider age ranges than would normally be acceptable within the family. In particular, *maun* 'older brother' and *mana* 'older sister' can be used with strangers even if they are somewhat younger than the speaker. The pressure to broaden *maun* and *mana* to include younger people comes about in part because *alin* 'younger sibling' suggests lower status, and so is not readily accepted for professionals or married people, unless they are indeed one's family members.

## PROFESSIONAL TITLES AND GENERIC *SEÑÓR/SEÑORA* 'SIR/MADAM'

People of certain professions can be called by their professional title, even outside work. These include *doutór/doutora* for doctors (male/female), *mestre/mestra* for teachers, *padre* or *amu* for priests, and *madre* for nuns. In addition there is the generic *señór* 'sir' and *señora* 'madam', which can be used to address professionals or other modern high status individuals or their spouses. *Señór* and *señora* are sometimes used in combination with professional titles such as *señór primeiru ministru* 'sir prime minister'. All these terms reflect absolute status within the community, and are used both informally and

formally, though not normally within the family or amongst close friends. An exception is that family members who are priests or nuns can have their religious title appended to their kin term, such as *tia madre* 'aunt mother' to address an aunt who is a nun.

## NAMES

East Timorese tend to have multiple names, including Christian names, surnames (often at least two), and nicknames. Children and close adult friends (especially youth and adults who do not have high status) can reciprocally call each other by name. In non-reciprocal use, older higher-status individuals call younger lower-status individuals by name, while the latter typically reply with a kin term. This includes parents to children, older siblings to younger ones, teachers and lecturers to students, and bosses to junior staff.

When using a name to address someone whom one normally calls by a kin or professional term, the name must be preceded by the kin term or title. It is normally the Christian name or (in informal contexts) a nickname that is used, for instance, *maun Atoi* 'older brother Atoi (common nickname for *António*)', *madre Jacinta* 'mother (nun) Jacinta', *señora Carolina* 'Mrs Carolina'. Combinations of title and first name, e.g. *doutór António* 'Dr. António', combine respect for status and/or achievement with familiarity or friendship normally associated with the first name alone. This same type of combination is also common practice in Portuguese, e.g. *senhor João* 'Mr. João', and Indonesian, e.g. *Pak Bambang* 'Mr Bambang'.

## ZERO ADDRESS

Grammatically, arguments of the verb, i.e. subjects and objects, are not obligatory in Tetum. Where it is obvious who is speaking or being spoken about, it is thus possible to simply omit the argument which refers to them. This is very common in informal speech. However, it seems to be avoided in formal speech and in writing, where arguments are made more explicit.

The ellipsis or omission of arguments is of course very useful when addressing others since it neatly avoids making any explicit reference to relative status of interlocutors and thereby potentially causing offence. This strategy is most evident in, but certainly not restricted to, two very common greeting questions in Tetum, generally posed without explicit subjects: *diak ka lae?* (lit. 'good or not?') 'how are you?' and the previously cited *bá ne'ebé?* (lit. 'go where?') 'where are you going?', both of which may be addressed to complete strangers. Because argument ellipsis is so common, it is pragmatically unmarked and does not indicate to the addressee that his/her interlocutor is trying to avoid explicit

address. It occurs just as easily amongst same-age friends as it does amongst strangers. In the following exchange, note that both second person (lines 1 and 3) and first person (line 2) arguments are omitted:

**Example 3**
Two male university student friends meet at the bus terminal, just before the start of the new semester. Ellipsed arguments appear bracketed in the English translation.

| Azé: | *Ai* | *bonitu,* | | *di'ak* | *ka* | *lae?* | | |
|------|------|-----------|--|---------|------|--------|--|--|
| | hey | handsome | | good | or | not | | |
| | 'Hey handsome, how are (you)?' | | | | | | | |

| Dion: | *Di'ak* | *hela* | | *de'it* | *sa,* | *hanesan* | *baibain* | *sa.* |
|-------|---------|--------|--|---------|-------|-----------|----------|-------|
| | good | CONTINUOUS | | just | what | like | usual | what |
| | '(I'm) just fine, like usual.' | | | | | | | |

| Azé: | *Nu'usá,* | *rejistu* | *tiha* | *ona?* | | | | |
|------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|
| | how | register | PERF | ANT | | | | |
| | 'How is it, have (you) registered [for the new university semester] yet?' | | | | | | | |

# PRONOMINAL ADDRESS

### OVERVIEW OF TETUM PRONOUNS

The full set of Tetum personal pronouns is listed in Table 1. These pronouns are full phonological words, which have the same distribution as nominal noun phrases. There is no clitic form of pronouns, and no subject marking on verbs. As is to be expected in an Austronesian language, first person plural distinguishes between inclusive (i.e. including the addressee) and exclusive (excluding the addressee), and there is no marking of gender or case (Himmelmann 2005, 149). Although plural address pronouns are also listed in the table, they are not discussed in this article.

There are thus three second person pronominal options for addressing an individual, and two plural options. It is important to note that, as in many other Austronesian languages (Cysouw 2005; Lichtenberk 2005), the polite singular pronoun *Ita* 'you' is in origin the first person inclusive pronoun *ita* 'we' (both seen in the table). This is a common politeness strategy in this language family: notionally at least the speaker is included with the addressee, and direct address is thus avoided (see discussion below).

| | Singular | Plural |
|---|---|---|
| **1st** | *ha'u* 1S: 'I' | *ita* 1PI: 'we' including addressee |
| | | *ami* 1PE: 'we' excluding addressee |
| **2nd** | *ó* 2S.FAM: 'you' (singular, familiar) | *imi* 2P.FAM 'you' (plural, familiar) |
| | *Ita* 2S.HON 'you' (singular, polite) | |
| | *Ita-Boot* 2S.FORM 'you' (singular, polite formal) | *Ita-Boot sira* 2P.FORM 'you' (plural, formal) |
| **3rd** | *nia* 3S: 'he, she' | *sira* 3P: 'they' |

**Table 1** Personal pronouns in Tetum

## *Ó* '2S FAMILIAR'

The familiar pronoun *ó* is used in much the same situations as personal names without titles, although it is somewhat more restricted, requiring either greater solidarity or greater status differential.

*Ó* is used reciprocally amongst children (4), amongst youth friends (5), and, albeit less commonly, amongst close, older adult friends, especially if they are not high status or the situation is especially male-oriented, such as cock-fights or football matches. As two acquaintances get to know each other better, they can both initiate the change to *ó*; one is not requested to change. Love songs make generous use of *ó*.

**Example 4**
Maria (nicknamed 'Meri', 5 years old) calls out to invite her neighbour Joanina (nicknamed 'Nina', 6 years) to come out of her house and play. Note the use of *ó* and nicknames.

| Meri: | *Nina,* | *ó* | | *iha* | *ne'ebé?* | | |
| | Nina, | 2S.FAM | | LOC | where | | |
| | 'Nina, where are you?' | | | | | | |

| Nina: | *Meri.* | *Ha'u* | *iha* | *uma* | *laran.* | ... | |
| | Meri | 1S | LOC | house | inside | | |
| | 'Meri. I'm in the house.' ... | | | | | | |

| Meri: | *Mai,* | *ó* | *mai,* | *ita* | *halimar* | *telepón* | *ba* | *malu.* |
| | come | 2S.FAM | come | 1PI | play | telephone | to | each.other |
| | 'Come, you come, (and) we'll play at telephoning each other.' | | | | | | | |

| Nina: | *Hein* | *lai!* | *Ó* | *hein* | *iha* | *li'ur.* |
|-------|--------|--------|-----|--------|--------|----------|
|       | wait   | first  | 2S.FAM | wait | LOC   | outside  |

'Wait a sec! You wait outside.'

## Example 5

Nivi and his cousin Joio (both university students aged 20), had arranged to go out together in two days' time. But when the time comes, Joio is still sick, and Nivi pretends it is his fault.

| Nivi: | *Ó* | *ne'e* | *di'ak,* | *Joio.* | *...* | *ita* | *atu* | *bá,* |
|-------|-----|--------|----------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|       | 2S.FAM | this | good | Joio | ... | 1PI | IRREAL | go |
|       | *ó* | *moras* | *tiha* | *fali.* | | | | |
|       | 2S.FAM | sick | PERF | instead | | | | |

'You're a fine one, Joio! [... You said] we'd go, (and) instead you're sick.'

| Joio: | *Hoi,* | *ó* | *ne'e,* | *ó* | *hanoin* | *...* |
|-------|--------|-----|---------|-----|----------|-------|
|       | EXCL   | 2S.FAM | this | 2S.FAM | think | ... |

'Good grief, you think [my sickness would just disappear?!]'

Within families, informal *ó* can be used to younger members, including younger siblings, who normally respond with kin terms. Husbands and wives normally address each other by name, nickname or kin terms (e.g. *apaa* 'dad') rather than with *ó*.

Outside of family and friends, *ó* is used non-reciprocally to people of significantly lower status. For instance, it can be used by adults to children, school teachers to pupils, and bosses to junior staff. However, while university lecturers can freely call students by name, tertiary students do not appreciate being addressed with *ó*. If *ó* is used too freely, it is interpreted negatively, for instance as emphasising the superior status of the speaker relative to the addressee.

### *ITA* '2S POLITE'

The pronoun *Ita* can be used in reciprocal fashion amongst adult strangers and adult acquaintances. Children do not use it at all, and amongst youth it is rare. *Ita* is also used in formal media interviews, although *Ita-Boot* is more common particularly if the interview is very formal or the person being interviewed is of high status. It can also be used non-reciprocally, e.g. with *ó* in return, where there is a clear status difference between interlocutors.

This pronoun is far more common in writing than in spoken interactions. This is no doubt partly because writing is more explicit, with arguments (subjects and objects) not being readily omitted. Additionally, many types of writing are not specifically directed to specified interlocutors, making it impossible to use kin terms to address people. Another contributing factor is that a large proportion of material currently being written in Tetum is in fact translation, often from English (e.g. within United Nations agencies and other international organisations), but also from Portuguese and Indonesian. This favours an increased use of *Ita* over non-pronominal address to translate the pronoun 'you', which is relatively more frequent in English than in Portuguese and Indonesian (cf. Araújo Carreira 2005; Sneddon 1996). (In this context it is noticeable that many foreigners from English-speaking backgrounds over-use *Ita*.)

The Bible translations also frequently use *Ita* 'you'. This is how many people address Jesus, with Jesus in turn addressing his disciples and many others as *ó*, (6), and some individuals as *Ita*:

**Example 6**
John 13:6 (*Liafuan di'ak ba imi*, 2000) (re-spelled)

| *Simão* | *Pedro* | *...* | *dehan:* | *'Na'i,* | *Ita* | *atu* | *fasi* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Simon | Peter | | say | Lord | 2S.HON | IRREAL | wash |

| *atan-ha'u* | *nia* | *ain?'* |
|---|---|---|
| slave-1S | POS | foot |

'...Simon Peter ... said, 'Lord, are you about to wash my feet?''

| *Jesus* | *hatán* | *ba* | *nia:* | *'Oras-ne'e* | *ó* | *la* | *bele* | *komprende* | *...'* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jesus | answer | to | 3S | hour-this | 2S.FAM | not | can | understand | |

'Jesus answered him, 'Now you can't fully know [what I am doing ...]''

As already noted, *Ita* is also the first person plural inclusive pronoun. The extension of this pronoun to function as a polite address form can be understood as a way of avoiding direct address as well as obviating any need to make explicit reference to the relationship status of the interlocutors. Some writers, but not all, distinguish between the two uses of the pronoun by capitalising *Ita* when it means 'you'. In many cases, it is clear whether 'you' or 'we' is intended, either from the context or from certain grammatical clues. For instance, in example 7 below, life experience teaches that 'I' would ask 'you' for assistance, rather than asking 'us'; and *mai ita* is a standard phrase meaning 'let us'. However, ambiguity is also possible, and at times useful. In example 7, drawn

from an email, the ambiguity between 'if you can' and 'if we can' neatly avoids putting full responsibility on to the recipient of the email:

**Example 7**
The following comes from an email to one of the authors.

| Ha'u | husu | ba | Ita | se | ita | iha | posibilidade |
|------|------|----|-----|----|-----|-----|--------------|
| 1S | ask | to | 2S.HON | if | 2S.HON/1PI | have | possibility |

'I ask you, if you/we have the possibility,

| mai | ita | hamutuk | loke | eskola | ... |
|-----|-----|---------|------|--------|-----|
| come | 1PI | together | open | school | |

let's together open a school [for little children in Dili].'

At other times, however, the very possibility of ambiguity encourages people to avoid *Ita* in favour of other options for expressing 'you'.

### *ITA-BOOT* '2S POLITE FORMAL'

*Ita-Boot*, literally 'big you', in the past reflected very high status. It can still be used non-reciprocally in certain contexts, for instance to address God or members of the traditional leadership, who in turn address individuals as *ó*. It was not used traditionally to address members of the general public.

Now, however, *Ita-Boot* is a favoured form of reciprocal address in formal media interviews and in meetings, being used even amongst good friends in these contexts. It can also be used for adult strangers, and to adult friends and work colleagues, particularly amongst professionals and other high status people:

**Example 8**

| Señór | Adérito, | tuir | Ita-Boot | nia | hanoin, | ... |
|-------|----------|------|----------|-----|---------|-----|
| Mr | Adérito | follow | 2S.FORM | POS | think | |

'Mr Adérito, in your opinion, ...'

Unlike *Ita*, *Ita-Boot* is referentially unambiguous: it cannot potentially include the speaker, as *Ita/ita* ('you/we') can, and always refers directly to the addressee.

In some contexts, *Ita* is used instead of or alongside *Ita-Boot*. In formal interviews on television, for instance, some participants use *Ita-Boot*, some use *Ita*, and some use both in the same interview when addressing the same person. In the Catholic liturgy (Paroquia de S. João Bosco, n.d.), the mass uses slightly more *Ita* than *Ita-Boot*, while

the prayers for private use at home use almost exclusively *Ita-Boot*. Some people, particularly Protestants, also use *ó* to address God, indeed even alternating between *ó* and *Ita-Boot*.

It appears that the use of *Ita-Boot* has been expanding to the detriment of *Ita*. A major factor favouring a shift in favour of *Ita-Boot* is undoubtedly the dramatic elevation in status of Tetum from mostly spoken lingua franca to an official language, and its consequent appearance in formal contexts that were once reserved exclusively for Portuguese or Indonesian. The unstable or inconsistent use of *Ita-Boot* which can appear, in a seemingly unmotivated fashion, mixed with *Ita*, and even *ó*, also supports the hypothesis of recent expansion of use.

## SINGULAR PRONOUNS TO PERSONALISE A PUBLIC MESSAGE

The singular familiar pronoun *ó* is sometimes used when addressing groups to personalise the message, as in example 9, even when the speaker would not normally address the individuals in the group as *ó*. As one East Timorese expressed it, it is to make the listener think 'Perhaps s/he is speaking to me.' In public speeches, this use seems to be restricted to – or at least more common amongst – senior Portuguese-educated people:

**Example 9**
A minister, addressing a large congregation during the Sunday service, uses a singular address noun and *ó* to issue a personal challenge to each person present. During the rest of the sermon, this preacher favours *ita* 'we (to include the speaker)' and plural address nouns such as *irmaun doben sira* 'beloved brethren'.

| *Ó-nia* | *ain* | *Jesus* | *fasi* | *ona* | *irmaun?* |
|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|-----------|
| 2S.FAM-POS | foot/leg | Jesus | wash | ANT | brother |

'Has Jesus washed your feet, brother/sister?'

People can also suddenly switch to *ó* as well, not to refer to the addressee, but to make some sort of general statement in which no-one in particular is specifically addressed. Such use of the informal pronoun is of course known in other languages, e.g. Spanish (Jenssen 2002; Lebsanft 1990). In written notices, the singular formal pronoun *Ita-Boot* serves the same purpose.

# HIERARCHY OF ADDRESS OPTIONS

A wide range of address strategies, pronominal and non-pronominal in nature, are available to the Tetum speaker, albeit with somewhat differing value with regard to social status and rank between interlocutors. The terms of address in Tetum can be ranked approximately as follows, with the most respectful and most formal terms at the top, and the least respectful and most informal ones at the bottom.

- *Ita-Boot* '2S.POLITE FORMAL'; professional titles; generic titles *señór/señora* 'sir/madam'
- *Ita* '2S. POLITE'; professional/generic title + name
- kin terms; *anó, anoi* 'dear one (young, male/female)'; *menina* 'miss'; kin term plus name
- names (without title or kin term); nicknames
- *ó* '2S.FAMILIAR'

Outside this hierarchy is of course zero address, which neatly avoids identifying the relative status of and presumed relationship between interlocutors.

What is striking about the address system in Tetum is how pliable it is in practice. There is often more than one way to address someone in a particular situation: in this case, the options will typically be adjacent to one another in the hierarchy. For instance, one can normally only address someone as *ó* if it is also acceptable to address them by name, as in example 4. At the other extreme, one may alternate between calling someone *señór* 'sir', *señór* + name on the one hand and *Ita-Boot* on the other in the one interaction, as in example 10, but not between *señór* and a bare name:

**Example 10**
Pedro (a coconut seller on the street) greets his old school friend João, who is walking past. Both are about 40 years old. They address each other as *señór*, with or without a Christian name, and omit many second person arguments. In the final clause, where the change of topic from 'my business' to 'your business' makes a zero argument impossible, the speaker opts for *Ita-Boot*. Although they are friends, it appears that public interaction on the street favours the use of more formal address. Ellipsed arguments appear in brackets in the English translation.

Pedro: *Botarde   señór, bá ne'ebé?*
    good.afternoon sir go where
    'Good afternoon sir, where are you going?'

João: *Ou, señór João, di'ak ka lae?*
   oh mister João good or not
   'Oh, mister João, how are (you)?'

Pedro: *Di'ak.*
    good
    '(I) am well.'

João: *Ha'u mai hosi Comoro, agora atu bá sorin.*
   1S come from Comoro now IRREAL go side
   'I've just come from Comoro, now (I) am heading elsewhere'

Pedro: *Atu bá saida nian? Servisu ruma mak ne'ebá karik.*
    IRREAL go what POS work some FOCUS there perhaps
    'What are (you) going for? (You) must have some work there.'

João: *Lae. Ha'u bá família nia uma, … Be Ita-Boot fa'an saida?*
   no 1S go family POS house LINK 2S.FORM sell what
   'No. I'm going to my relatives' house, …. So what are you selling?'

Children do not use the formal pronouns *Ita-Boot* and *Ita*, despite the fact that even pre-schoolers use *señór/señora* 'sir/madam' as a form of polite address. We have not made a study of child acquisition, but it appears from observation and discussion with various adults that children learn *Ita* followed by *Ita-Boot* some time after the age of ten, and that they should have mastered both by the time they complete secondary school in their late teens. This late acquisition of the formal pronouns reflects the fact that these pronouns are restricted to formal situations and adult-adult interactions in which children do not participate.

When expressing anger or annoyance, particularly towards an equal or an inferior, it is common to use terms further down the hierarchy than one would normally use. For instance, a wife who normally addresses her husband by name may use *ó* when berating him, as may a boss to junior staff. This pattern is recognised by East Timorese, who say that when berating people, '*ó* always comes in!'. The Bible translators also recognise it, having the devil address Jesus as *ó*. However, normally, people avoid lowering their terms of address when addressing interlocutors of higher status or age, as illustrated by example 11:

**Example 11**

Rita (36 years, married) calls out for her younger sister Joana (20 years, single, nicknamed 'Ana') to come. She starts with a name and term of endearment, but when Joana does not reply at once, gets irritated and goes down the scale to *ó*. As younger sister, Joana consistently uses *mana* 'older sister', even when unfairly accused.

| Rita: | *Ana,* | *noi* | *mai* | *lai!* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ana, | dear.one | come | FIRST | | | | |
| | \'Ana dear, come here a sec!\' [Joana doesn\'t hear, so doesn\'t answer.] | | | | | | | |

| Rita: | *Ana,* | *ó* | *mai* | *lai!* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ana, | 2S.FAM | come | first | | | | |
| | [Irritated] \'Ana, you come here!\' | | | | | | | |

| Joana: | *Mana.* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | older.sister | | | | | | | |
| | \'Older sister.\' [Titles are used to acknowledge that one has heard.] | | | | | | | |

| Rita: | *Ó* | *nu'usá* | *mak* | *hanesan* | *ne'e* | *tiha* | *ona?* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2S.FAM | why | FOCUS | like | this | PERF | ANT |
| | *Bolu* | *ohin* | *la* | *rona!* | | | |
| | call | just.now | not | hear | | | |
| | \'Why have you become like this? (I) just called (you and you) didn\'t hear!\' | | | | | | |

| Joana: | *Hau* | *la* | *rona* | *mana.* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1S | not | hear | older.sister | | | |
| | \'I didn\'t hear, older sister.\' | | | | | | |

When seeking to calm a tense situation, the term of address chosen may be further up the scale than one would otherwise use. Both going down and going up the scale are illustrated in example 12:

**Example 12**

A rascal of a boy, aged about 8, tries to put a nail into a bus tyre. The bus conductor, aged about 20, berates him using *ó*. The boy swears, calls the conductor '*ó*' (normally not acceptable across such an age difference) and calls his older brothers over. While they are still standing at a distance, the conductor starts to talk appeasingly, using the kin term *alin* 'younger brother'.

| Cond.: | Ó | keta | tau | pregu | iha | roda! |
|--------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | 2S.FAM | don't | put | nail | LOC | tyre |

'Don't you put a nail in the tyre!'

| Boy: | ... | Ó | la | bele | manda | ha'u! |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2S.FAM | not | can | order | 1S |

[Swears] 'You can't order me around!'

| Cond.: | Alin, | | mai | ita | ko'alia | di-di'ak. |
|--------|-------|---|-----|-----|---------|-----------|
| | Younger.sibling | | come | 1PI | speak | REDUP-good |

'Younger brother, let's talk properly.'

## CONCLUSION

In addition to the inherent and often pragmatically conditioned pliability of the address system, variability of address patterns in Tetum is also fostered by the need for the language to adjust to new domains and circumstances. Overall, most factors conspire to encourage the explicit use of a polite pronoun over other address strategies. Before 1999 it was simply inconceivable that the language could be used freely and widely in the media, education, business and officialdom – in either spoken or written form. Speakers of Tetum have had to adjust swiftly to the language's new circumstances. While the traditionally dominant spoken register favours zero address and the use of kin terms, current expansion into more formal domains, especially the written register, discourages both of these patterns. The restricted range of informal *ó* is incompatible with the need to interact in formal situations, while contact with other languages, including English, has also encouraged the explicit use of an address pronoun, typically *Ita* but also more formal *Ita-Boot*. In the absence of a longstanding normative tradition, it is not surprising we often find contemporaneous use of *Ita-Boot* and *Ita* with the same interlocutor in media interviews and in meetings. The accession of Tetum to high domains such as government, and its use today in formal written and spoken registers, have undoubtedly encouraged the spread of what was previously very formal *Ita-Boot* both to and amongst high status individuals, but also to and amongst the general public (e.g. (11)). The current trends we have observed and report here suggest that the use of *Ita* but especially *Ita-Boot* will continue to increase in Dili Tetum within a general context of continuing variability.[3]

# ENDNOTES

1   The omission of subjects and objects (whether nouns or pronouns) is very common in Tetun Dili, as in many other languages spoken elsewhere in the wider Indonesian area, e.g. Malay. Although there is no marking of number or person on verbs, listeners are able to infer who is being spoken about by context.

2   The following is a list of abbreviations used in the glossing of examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | first person |
| 2 | second person |
| ANT | anterior |
| EXCL | exclamation |
| f | feminine |
| FAM | familiar |
| FORM | formal |
| HON | honorific |
| IRREAL | irrealis |
| LOC | locative |
| m | masculine |
| p | plural |
| PE | plural exclusive |
| PERF | perfective |
| PI | plural inclusive |
| POS | possessive |
| REDUP | reduplicated |
| s | singular |

The dot (e.g. 'each.other') means that the single item in Tetum is translated into English with more than one word – these cannot be separated in the gloss.

3   Thanks to Isaias Nivio Pereira, Alberto Coreia, Carvarinho Bento, Marito da Silva Alves and Maia Faria for their assistance.

# REFERENCES

Araújo Carreira, M.H. 2005. 'Politeness in Portugal: How to address others'. In *Politeness in Europe*, edited by Hickey L.; Stewart, M. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Braun, F. 1988. *Terms of address. Problems of patterns and usage in various languages and cultures*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brown, R.; Gilman, A. 1960. 'The pronouns of power and solidarity'. In *Style in language*, edited by Sebeok, T.A. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Brown, R.; Levinson, S. 1987. *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cysouw, M. 2005. 'A typology of honorific uses of clusivity'. In *Clusivity, typology and case studies of the inclusive-exclusive distinction*, edited by Filimonova, E. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Himmelmann, N. 2005. 'The Austronesian languages of Asia and Madagascar: typological characteristics'. In *The Austronesian languages of Asia and Madagascar*, edited by N. Himmelmann, N.; Adelaar, K.A. London: Routledge.

Hull, G. 1996. *Mai kolia Tetun: a beginner's course in Tetum-Praça: The lingua franca of East Timor*. North Sydney: Australian Catholic Relief and the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

Hull, G.; Eccles, L. 2001. *Tetum reference grammar*. Winston Hills (NSW): Sebastião Aparício da Silva Project, in conjunction with Dili: Instituto Nacional de Linguística, Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosa'e.

Jenssen, M.H. 2002. 'La referencia en algunas expresiones impersonales'. *Romansk forum* 16: 127–139.

Lebsanft, F. 1990. 'Die Anredeforschung und das Spanische'. *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 106: 146–165.

*Liafuan di'ak ba imi* [Good news for you] 2000. Dili.

Lichtenberk, F. 2005. 'Inclusive-exclusive in Austronesian: an opposition of unequals'. In *Clusivity, typology and case studies of the inclusive-exclusive distinction*, edited by Filimonova, E. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Paroquia de S. João Bosco. (n.d.). *Via Sacra*. Laga (East Timor).

*Peace Corps East Timor Tetun language course*. 2003. Dili: Peace Corps East Timor.

Sneddon, J.N. 1996. *Indonesian: a comprehensive grammar*. London: Routledge.

Williams-van Klinken, C.; Hajek, J.; Nordlinger, R. 2002. *Tetun Dili: A grammar of an East Timorese language*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics.