

## DEIXIS AND LOCATION: TETUN

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### 1. Which language is this questionnaire on and where is it spoken?

Tetun is spoken in central and eastern Timor. The Fehan dialect described here is a conservative rural dialect spoken on the agricultural plains on the south coast of West Timor, near the East Timor border.

### 2. Are this language and its speech community indigenous to the region?

Yes.

### 3. Describe the pronominal system of the language.

Description		Full pronoun	Reduced form	Subject marking prefix	Genitive clitic
I	1s	<i>ha'u</i>	<i>ha, h</i>	<i>k-</i>	<i>-n</i>
we, excluding addressee	1pe	<i>ita</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>h-</i>	<i>-n, -r</i>
we, including addressee	1pi	<i>ami</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>h-</i>	<i>-n, -r</i>
you singular	2s	<i>ó</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m-</i>	<i>-n</i>
you singular respectful	2s respect	<i>ita</i>	-	<i>h-</i>	<i>-n</i>
you plural	2p	<i>emi</i>	<i>em</i>	<i>h-</i>	<i>-n, -r</i>
he, she, it	3s	<i>nia</i>	<i>ni, na</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>-n</i>
they	3p	<i>sia, sira</i>	<i>si, sa</i>	<i>r-, n-</i>	<i>-n, -r</i>

Full pronouns can be used in all positions within a sentence, e.g. subject, object, possessor, object of preposition.

Reduced pronouns are used in speaking but not in writing. They are restricted to subject (e.g. *Si la'o-n* 'They went') and preposed possessor (e.g. *h-ina* 'my mother'), so long as the pronoun is neither emphasised nor modified.

The subject marking prefix is used on /h/-initial verbs, in which the prefix replaces the initial /h/ (e.g. *k-á* '1s-eat' from *há* 'eat'). The 1s subject marking prefix is also used on verbs beginning with other consonants, in which case it precedes the initial consonant (e.g. *k-la'o* '1s-walk' from *la'o* 'walk'). This is consistent with the fact that the only consonant clusters in Tetun are those beginning with /k/ (e.g. *ktodan* 'heavy').

Variants shown in the table above reflect the influence of different subdialects (3p *sia* and *r-* apparently being native Fehan, with *sira* and *n-* being introduced from neighbouring dialects), language change (plural genitive clitic *-r* being replaced by a generic *-n* for younger speakers), and phonology (1s reduced form *h-* can be used only preceding a vowel-initial word; the third person reduced forms *na* and *sa* reflect the tendency for vowels in unstressed antepenultimate syllables to gravitate towards /a/).



*sia* '3p' is used for persons only; *nia* '3s' too is not readily used of individual objects (e.g. a chair) though it can be used for a place ('there'), way ('(like) that'), or generically ('rust'... 'it').

*ita* '1pi' is also used as an impersonal pronoun (like British English 'one').

Possessive pronouns have two forms: either the reduced form of the pronoun (e.g. *ni to 'os* 'his/her garden'), or the full form of the pronoun followed by possessive *-kan* (on preposed possessors, e.g. *nia-kan to 'os* 'his/her garden') or *-k* (on postposed possessors, e.g. *to 'os nia-k* 'house 3s-POS' = 'his/her garden').

#### **Does it distinguish singular from plural?**

Yes

#### **Does it have separate forms for dualis or trialis?**

There are no dualis or trialis forms. But dual reference is commonly done by adding *ruas* 'two' after a plural pronoun (e.g. *ita ruas* 'we two'). Some say it is possible to use the same construction for trialis (e.g. *sira tolus* 'they three'); however in practice it isn't used. *ruas* is an adjectival form of the numeral *rua* 'two', and is used without a numeral classifier.

#### **Does it display an exclusive-inclusive distinction?**

Yes

#### **Are there separate deferential pronouns or special nouns as deferentials?**

*ita* is used for both inclusive 'we' and for deferential 'you' (singular). Even more polite is to use *ita bót* (lit. 'you big'); this is used primarily for God and for nobles, particularly in formal contexts. It is common to use the appropriate title rather than a pronoun in referring to the addressee (e.g. *Ama* 'father'), regardless of one's relative rank.

To refer to oneself humbly, particularly in prayer or when speaking with nobles, one can use *ata* 'slave' after the relevant first person pronoun (e.g. *ami ata* 'we slaves').

#### **Does it use lexical parallelism, for example for honorific address?**

I don't think so.

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#### **Does it have a special set of possessive pronouns relating to the categorisation of the possession noun.**

No. Alienability does however affect the construction of a possessive NP (whether the possessor can be postposed, and whether a possessive affix and genitive clitic are used).

#### **4. Is the language's deictic system related to the environment in which this language is spoken?**

Perhaps. The commonly used deictics are all speaker-centred ('come/go', 'here/there'). There is no reference to mountains (nearby, but not visited much), the sea (within a few hours walking distance, but a fearful place and not much visited), or direction of flow of the river (in any case not easy walking distance away).

In contrast, Tetun Dili, the Tetun-based creole spoken near the mountains on the north coast, makes extensive use of terms meaning 'up/down' when talking about motion, even when the slope is minimal. This is not the case in the Fehan dialect, which is spoken in the flat coastal plains, albeit not far from the mountains.

**Is the system maintained or modified when the language is spoken outside its indigenous location?**

I don't know.

**5. How many sets of deictic terms does the language have (1, 2, 3 or more?).**

Tetun has a two-way deictic distinction.

Deictic	Spatial	Temporal	Time of reference (anaphoric)
(n)e'e	'this'	'now' (if combined with a noun e.g. <i>oras e'e</i> 'time this' = 'now')	'mentioned very recently'
nia	'that'	'then' (if combined with a noun: e.g. <i>oras nia</i> 'time that' = 'that time')	'mentioned very recently' (always a minor participant; used very little, except by Indonesian-influence speakers)

Spatial deixis is alternatively encoded by *nemai* 'here, this' (near speaker) and *nebaa* 'there, that' (away from speaker). These are derived from *ne'e* 'this' (or perhaps *nia* 'that') in combination with *mai* 'come' (towards speaker) and *baa* 'go' (away from speaker). In addition, *bá* and *mai* can mark preceding place names as distant or local respectively (e.g. *iha Kupang bá* 'over in Kupang'; *iha Betun mai* 'here in Betun').

**Do they encode number and/or noun class?**

No. Plurality can be marked by a following plural marker (e.g. *ema ne'e sia* 'person this PL' = 'these people').

**Are the deictic categories (person, spatial, temporal and 'psychological') encoded by separate sets, or are they combined?**

Personal and spatial overlap, with *nia* being a personal pronoun ('3s') and a demonstrative ('that').

Spatial, temporal and time of reference are combined (see table above). However for time of reference, it is the proximal *ne'e* that is mainly used (e.g. *ema ne'e* 'this person (that I was just talking about)'); with distal *nia* used disproportionately often by people whose Tetun is influenced by Indonesian (in this case perhaps by *itu?*).

**6. If the deictic categories are encoded by means of separate sets, ...**

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**7. How is location encoded?**

By a locative preposition *iha* and a postnominal location noun. Many of these nouns are linked to body-part terms, as shown below.

Location noun	Location meaning	Body part meaning
<i>oin</i>	in front	face
<i>kotuk</i>	behind	back
<i>sorin</i>	beside	side
<i>kbelan</i>	beside	side
<i>leten</i>	at the top of, on top of	
<i>fohon</i>	on top of	
<i>kidun</i>	underneath, at the bottom of	buttocks, bottom
<i>ohak</i>	underneath, at the bottom of	
<i>laran</i>	interior	character, emotion
<i>klaran</i>	middle	
<i>molin</i>	outside	

**8. What landmarks does the language prefer in its spatial expressions. In how far is it deictically anchored to the Speaker/Hearer? Does it also use landmarks in the environment?**

Most commonly used deictic terms are anchored to the Speaker/Hearer (see answers to 5, 12).

None use landmarks.

**9. Does the language distinguish separate levels or dimensions?**

No.

**10. Which cardinal directions (North, South etc.) exist in the language?**

*loro sa'en* 'east' (lit. 'sun-rising')

*loro monun* 'west' (lit. 'sun-setting')

North and south are designated by the names of the seas to the north and south of Timor; these terms are presumably not used by Tetun speakers away from Timor.

*tasi mane* 'south sea' (lit. 'male sea')

*tasi fetu* 'north sea' (lit. 'female sea')

Beyond Timor, in any direction, is *tasi balu* 'overseas' (lit. 'sea (other) side').

**10a. Are the cardinal directions linked to other axes?**

Not as far as I know.

**11. Does the language have a deictic and/or an inherent reference frame? Is the front or back region of an object always determined with reference to a landmark in the environment or with reference to the Speaker. Do all or some objects have a front and back region of their own that is not related to the Speaker and/or an environmental landmark. Are there objects that lack a front or back region.**

In the corpus 'front'/'back' are applied mainly to humans, animals, and houses: the front of a house has the main entrance door, and traditionally has a verandah; the 'front door' is the door at front of the house. Other examples include: in front of a goal (defending it), in front of a crowd (in the direction in which they are facing).

I don't know whether other objects have a front/back, but the lack of examples in my corpus suggests that is at best not a common way of speaking.

Rivers and roads have 'sides', which are referred to as *sorin balu bÁ* 'side part go' = 'other side' and *sorin balu mai* 'side part come' = 'this side'.

**12. How does the language encode direction in motion events?**



The following terms introduce source or goal direction NPs. They follow a verb of motion or of putting/sending. This is core layer verb serialisation, except for *hori*, which is a preposition.

Term	Gloss	Part of speech
<i>hori</i>	from (along a vertical axis - i.e. up/down)	Prep
<i>hosi</i>	originate from, go via	Vt
<i>bá (iha)</i>	go, to (usually away from speaker)	Vt
<i>mai (iha)</i>	come, to (in direction of speaker)	Vt
<i>ho'i</i>	go to (reaching destination)	Vt
<i>hatutuk</i>	go directly to (without detour or delay)	Vt
<i>hola</i>	via, go past	Vt
<i>to'o</i>	reach, arrive at	Vt

e.g. *solok surat bá Australia* 'send (a) letter to Australia'.

The following verbs specify intrinsic direction, and are often used immediately following a verb of motion. This is nuclear verb serialisation.

Verb		Example	
<i>sa'e</i>	'ascend, up'	<i>semo sa'e</i>	'fly ascend' = 'fly up'
<i>tún</i>	'descend, down'	<i>la'o tún</i>	'walk descend' = 'walk down'
<i>tama</i>	'enter, in'	<i>hamán tama mai</i>	'walk.[noble] enter come' = 'come in'
<i>sai</i>	'exit, out'	<i>n-akfút sai</i>	'3S-spurt exit' = 'spurt out'

The following deictic particles specify direction with respect to speaker and addressee. They are often used at the end of clauses headed by verbs of motion or verbs of giving to indicate the direction of the motion/giving. Although very common, they are not obligatory.

Term	Gloss	Example	Gloss
<i>bá</i>	'go' (not towards speaker)	<i>fó bá</i>	'give (it) to him/her'
<i>mai</i>	'come (to speaker)	<i>fó mai</i>	'give (it) to me/us'
<i>tone</i>	'go (usually to addressee)	<i>fó tone</i>	'give (it) to you'

These 3 terms are also commonly used as verbs in serialisation with a following verb, to mean 'come/go and then do...'. e.g. *bá te'in* 'go and cook', *mai há* 'come and eat'.

**13. Are the deictic and locative expressions in the first language copied into the contact language? Is the 'social' or temporal deictic function of lexical parallelism, if any in the indigenous language, pursued maintained in the contact language?**  
I don't know.