

Trip Report  
Michael L Forman  
(accompanied by Sheila M Forman)  
July 8 -- July 24, 2004

This trip involved travel from Honolulu to Dili, Timor Leste, and return, via Denpasar and Singapore with a transit stop each way at Narita in Japan. The multiple objectives of Michael Forman's travel were (1) to provide support to participant Matias Fatima Gomes as his faculty advisor (to guide Matias in initiating his summer project and to gain familiarization with the Timor Leste situation so as to offer the best possible mentoring to Mr. Gomes during his subsequent study at UHM); (2) to facilitate initial discussions with UNTL in the area of social science; (3) to assist project staff in exploring the role of language diversity, to consider impact that heterogeneity might have in the transfer of technology and agricultural management processes from one watershed to another when such movement across differing ethnic and linguistic groups is involved.

The project funded Michael Forman's travel to the extent of paying for plane fare and providing a per diem, as well as covering certain incidental costs (medicines and medical insurance, airport fees). Sheila Forman accompanied Michael Forman on this trip at the Formans' expense. She did voluntarily and incidentally provide the project with certain services which will be mentioned below. It is believed that her presence contributed to the success of the trip. Neither Michael Forman nor Sheila Forman received pay for any services; their contributions were voluntary.

**Objective (1)** This objective was addressed through a number of meetings with Matias, with copies of readings relevant to his planned fieldwork which I brought with me and provided to Matias, and by support offered through attendance at his presentation to the symposium and subsequent follow-up with Subdirector Aderitu of the Institute of National Language. After the subdirector raised points about the work Matias was doing and would be doing in Hawai'i, I sought him out and responded to his concerns, assuring him that we would not be developing any new data to which he would not be able to access. We met in his office just behind the Symposium venue and had a very good discussion. I learned there that he had studied in Southern Illinois with Dr. Geoffrey Nathan, a graduate of the UHM Department of Linguistics. Perhaps most importantly, seeing Dili "from the ground" and spending time observing people in interaction allowed me to begin to develop a perspective on multilingual repertoires of the residents and on selective use of the various languages. Matias has not yet finished his summer paper; I have agreed to give him a grade of (I) (incomplete) and feel that this is reasonable given the circumstances. We have met already in Honolulu to discuss completion of this work, and I am satisfied that it will be completed in a timely manner.

**Objective (2)** The mention above of the meeting with Subdirector Aderitu represents one point of overlap between Objective (1) and Objective (2). It also happened that in

the first meeting Dr. McArthur and I had with Vice-Rector Francisco Miguel Martins that my observations and questions in the Vice-Rector's office led to his showing us the master's thesis he had written on voice in Tetun and our coming to know of his training in linguistics and his interest in pursuing further advancement in the field. I believe that this meeting with Vice-Rector Francisco (to use the Timorese style of reference) opened access to Rector Benjamim which we might not have had in quite the same manner. We were invited to meet with the Rector and again there, in the Rector's office, I noticed an ethnolinguistic map hanging in that office. We learned that the Rector too has background training in linguistics and is very interested in the role that discipline can play in the future of the country

Somewhat unexpectedly, a further development toward meeting Objective (2) arose in the afternoon meeting prior to the Symposium which Hal, Sheila and I had with First Lady Kirsty Sword Gusmao and with Lala Noronha at their Alola Foundation office. A number of points about language arose in that meeting. Something I might follow up on was discussion of language development in the orphanage setting. Both women were very interested in my discussion of the Nicaraguan developmental phenomenon and wanted to learn more about that. LN told me that her orphanage, with thirty children, is dominated by Fataluku (who are Papuan-language, not Austronesian, in my present understanding) speakers. Both women were also, incidentally, intrigued by Sheila's polished kukui lei, among other things. The three women also had a lively discussion about various groups Sheila knows of which fund work with children; also discussed was Sheila's former work as policy advisor for children and families for Gov. Cayetano, and for the Casey Family Foundation. Mrs. Gusmao subsequently spoke with interest with me about broader language issues. She told me that she is a member of the board of the Institute of National Language. She also related some of her observations about differences in language acquisition by her two sons. She also provided background information about Rector of UNTL Benjamim Corte-Real. We talked too about Barbara Andaya (who was one of my classmates in Asian Studies at Cornell; Dr. Andaya is Director of the UHM Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and hosted the First Lady when she visited the University); Mrs. Gusmao obviously appreciated Barbara's support and hospitality during her Honolulu visit.

**Objective (3)** In exploring the role of linguistic diversity in the work of the program, there were a number of events and developments which I could not have anticipated. There was a lively meeting at Farol Hotel with the participants, the stated purpose of which was to do last-minute checking on preparations for the symposium presentation. After the basic tasks had been completed, I got into a very animated and informative discussion with the student participants about proverbs and riddles (ai nasiik). This led to the students' telling me about singing at an earlier Venilale meeting through which village participants tried to use traditional song and verse to communicate about the project. I have begun to study (as time allows) project materials supplied by Dr. McArthur which may elucidate this further.

I began to learn more about the individual language backgrounds of participants: that, for example, Krispin is a Fataluku speaker. He did not hesitate to speak for the project in

reply to one audience member at the Symposium, and he used Tetun in so doing. I have been told, however, that he much prefers to work in English or in Bahasa Indonesia, given the chance. (What it would help the project to know is more about the factors which make up these perceived “chances”). Certain people had not, earlier, been identified to me as Kemak speakers (when I had asked, with respect to Matias’s project). In the course of shopping in the crafts market, however, I learned by observation that Nina has considerable background with Kemak and spoke it comfortably in assisting in the activity of purchasing cloth and handicrafts. Given what is known about differences among men and women in other Austronesian speaking communities, particularly with respect to ready provision of information, versus very guarded and reluctant provision of information, this matter deserves further exploration. I believe this could be useful to know with respect to the Student Internship Program. Social and linguistic factors affecting (facilitating? inhibiting?) group work, shared tasks, cooperative endeavors might well be involved, and it should be useful to learn more about this.

Fidelis, whom I met one evening at a restaurant where members of the project had gathered, is, I learned, a Bunak speaker. As his schedule did not permit him to participate in the Symposium, I did not have much opportunity to observe him in interaction with others. At the evening event, he spoke English readily and fluently with his companions.

Flavia demonstrated her willingness and interest in discussing with me various accents in the speaking of Tetun.

I also started learning about culturally important matters such as lafaek here. Hal subsequently has obtained for me a complete (?) set of the publication Lafaek, a magazine aimed at children readers and produced by CARE. I hope to find time to study these materials in Honolulu.

Initially I had imagined that the day of the students’ presentations would be a light day for me. It was not to be like that. Nearly two days passed with no time at all for my writing up the day’s events. On that presentation day, Hal and Nina and Francisco and Sheila and I went to inspect the auditorium site for the symposium. Selection of lexical label for this event seems to have posed some difficulty; “symposium” alternated with “workshop” and with “conference”. I wonder if this contributed to some apparent misunderstandings regarding just how much in the way of research findings the students were expected to present.

When we met with vice-rector Fransisco [check spelling; this is the spelling given in Williams et al. 2002:128, citing his thesis] Miguel Martins, I noticed on his chalk board “C. ling” and beneath that “phonology” and “syntax”. It was when I asked about this that I learned that the vice-rector is a linguist, trained at Gadjah Mada University.

Hal and I hosted Peace Corps Volunteer Teresa Michael and our other project companions to a delicious seaside lunch, Francisco selecting some excellent seafood to be grilled. Sheila contributed substantially to the success of this lunch as well, as she knew quite a bit about the UHM programs which Teresa indicated she might be interested

in. Surrounding this luncheon were two stops at Peace Corps headquarters, to pick up Ms Michael and to return her. While there we met with PC Director Frances Ruddick. We also met a young Asian-American female PCV whose name I have forgotten. We also chatted with three newly-arrived male PCVs, one of them like Teresa Michael assigned to Manatuto. These young men showed considerable interest in what I might know about linguistic diversity in Timor Leste

Then later that afternoon, Hal and I returned to UNTL. It transpired that, after our visit with the vice-rector, Rector Corte-Real did in fact have some time to meet with us. I thought this a very good meeting and the Rector a very impressive person. I thought he was especially attendant to how we listened to him. He made a forceful presentation of his bottom-line concern that the scarce human resources of the country not be damaged or wasted in any way.

A second trip to the Peace Corps office to pick up a package from Teresa Michael led to a second meeting with Frances Ruddick, and this time we met her second-in-command Richard Stoll; he was with WHO in Manila when I was there in the Peace Corps. His wife is Tongan. It sounds, from what he says, that his boys mix languages.

On my last full day in Dili, Hal and I again met at his request with Rector Corte-Real. The rector addressed me and asked me if I had concrete proposals to make; I told him I thought that it would be inappropriate for me to do so, as I was present only as observer and as mentor for Matias. I asked if he might have areas of interest for which proposals might be developed. He indicated that he did, he named a few areas, and Hal and I assured him that we would follow up. We learned among other things that the rector had been Brigida da Silva's classmate at one time. He made a point that it was good that I was working with Matias, that Matias was an UNTL student. Nina had accompanied us once again to assist in any translation that might be necessary and to advise us on protocol. No translation was necessary; I am told that the rector is "fluent at the professional level" in five languages. But Rector Benjamin expressed the hope that Nina might continue to serve as liaison in our interactions. This was a very cordial meeting.

Returned 7-24 to Honolulu (after one day of vacationing in Bali): United 882 from Singapore to Narita, United 880 to Honolulu. UA 882 departed Singapore at 720a; UA 880 departed Narita at 1900 and arrived (crossing the dateline) at 720a on Saturday 24 July Honolulu time/date. We were quite exhausted and happy to be home again, but appreciative of the experience.

**List of People Met, with indication of date(s), from my notes**

Hal, in mentioning to me that a trip report might be expected of me, said that one of the things such a report might contain would be a list of people met. Here I supply such a list, arranged alphabetically, with information on person's role, and in parentheses, the day(s) in July on which we met. Please note that project members have not been included even though I was meeting many of them for the first time.

Benevides, Francisco, Vice-Minister for Agriculture (15)  
Brillantes, Alex (PhD, Professor at University of the Philippines, Diliman; in TL as consultant for Asian Development Bank, project on local government; is UHM and EWC graduate) (11, 12)  
Correia, Aderito Jose Guterres, subdirector Institute of National Language (15)  
Corte-Real, Benjamim de Araujo e, Rector, UNTL (PhD) (15, 20)  
da Costa, Horacio Correia; census taker, Faculty of Education, Dept. of English, UNTL, (21)  
da Silva, Estanislao, Minister for Agriculture, TL (11)  
Espada, Toots – Habitat project reconstructing houses (11)  
Etches, Geoff -- recruiting students for EWC (15, 17)  
Gapasin, Dely P, PhD; entomologist, senior advisor, SEAMEO-SEARCA (18)  
Gusmao, Kirsty Sword – First Lady, Alola Foundation (13, 15)  
Jones, Kimberly -- AID, project oversight (15)  
Martins, Fransisco\* Miguel, Vice-Rector UNTL (14, 15, 20) [Fransisco? Francisco?]\*  
Michael, Teresa, Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to Manatuto  
Noronha, Lala, Alola Foundation (13)  
Pearl, Jessica, director of Catholic Relief Services (16, 17)  
Rees, Ambassador Grover Joseph (15)  
Ruddick, Frances, Peace Corps TL director (15, 19)  
Stoll, Richard, Peace Corps TL associate director (19)  
Wada-san [given name not available], JICA (11, 12, ...)  
Williams-van Klinken, Catharina, PhD, Dili Institute of Technology (19)

### **List of Issues**

Probably the principal matter is the interest of UNTL Rector Corte-Real in future proposals.

It seems evident that translation and matters surrounding translation needs (competency of translators, time needed to produce quality translations, cost, basic understanding of what is involved, some general appreciation of what can go wrong) will remain an issue, the more so as the project expends efforts to expand beyond the Seical watershed.