Chapter 7

The Fetish of Verbal Inflection: Lusophonic Fantasies and Ideologies of Linguistic and Racial Purity in Postcolonial East Timor

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1 Learning How to Inflect Portuguese Verbs and How to Practice a Sound Oral Hygiene

Opening scene: a language class in a Catholic high school in Dili, East Timor, video-taped in February 2008. About thirty girls and boys in their mid teens, dressed up in neatly ironed uniforms, sit in rows of aligned wooden desks. They look busy transcribing in their notebooks what an older man in his late sixties has patiently written on the blackboard (Figures 7.1 and 7.2).

Space layout and bodily postures make the scene easily recognizable as a classroom event. While the students, bent over their desks, diligently engage in the transcription exercise, the teacher walks around with an authoritative attitude, peeking into their notebooks and occasionally stopping to make remarks on the orthographic and grammatical choices made by individual students. Earlier, when he entered the class, the teacher took roll calling out all the names of the persons enrolled in the class. He then started writing on the board under the tacit (and correct) assumption that the students would know what was expected of them. As I film the scene with my camera mounted on a tripod, I notice how the students promptly recognize the situation and react to it with the kind of responsive behavior that can be typically observed in "communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger) based on assiduous, routinary, and, at least to a certain degree, authority-laden forms of interaction. By looking more closely at the blackboard and the students, it becomes clear that the students are not simply copying the content of the blackboard in their notebooks. They also have to fill in the blanks left in the original version with the correct Portuguese verb tense.

If you are not familiar with the history of this small territory lying between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, just 400 miles away from the Australian northwestern coast, you may be surprised to discover that Portuguese is being regularly taught in Eastern Timorese schools. Indeed, in 2004, after almost five centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and three decades of Indonesian occupation, the newly independent government of East Timor mandated that Portuguese was to be the primary medium of instruction. This chapter aims to demonstrate how the
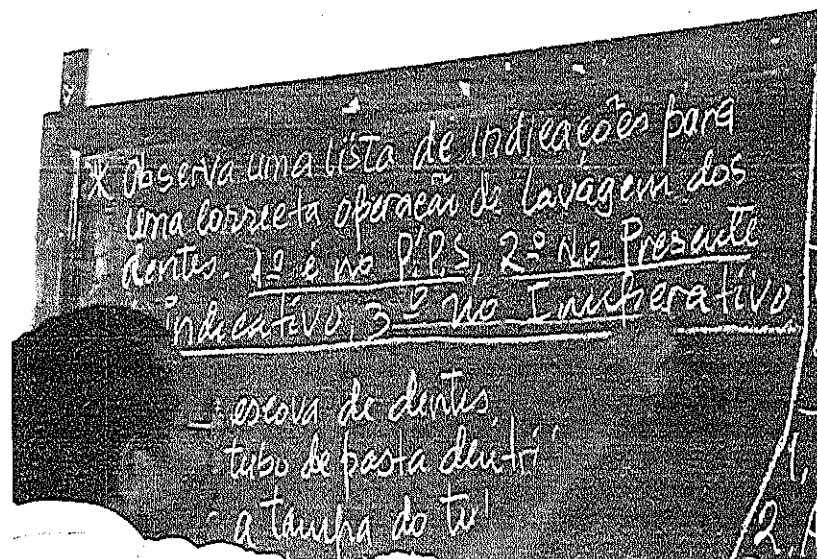
Figure 7.1   "Take note of a list of instructions for a correct process of tooth brushing. The first is in the Simple Past, the second in the Present Indicative, the third in the Imperative"

linguistic routines currently deployed in post-colonial Eastern Timorese schools to train students to memorize Portuguese verbal paradigms fetishize verbal morphology and erase other pragmatic dimensions of communicative competence. Centered on an emphasis on the difference between Portuguese verbal inflection and the tenselessness of the local languages, these verbal exercises produce an exoticization of Portuguese, thus engendering a linguistic order based on the idea of Portuguese as radically other and thus superior. This chapter will show that the linguistic ideal of a non-creolized and morphologically complex language that pervaded colonial ideologies of linguistic and racial purity is still playing a fundamental role in the reproduction of racial boundaries and models of humanity in post-colonial East Timor. In so doing, I will try to integrate the semiotic approach that characterizes contemporary scholarship on language ideologies with the analysis of the important role that fantasy and imagination play in the mutual construction of identity, typical of (post-) colonial situations. But let us first take a closer look at the participants in the Portuguese class I described above and at the activities in which they are engaged.

The teacher, Mr. R., is Eastern Timorese. Having been educated in the colonial times, he has worked as a Portuguese teacher until the mid 1970s while East Timor had still been a Portuguese colony (or, as it was called then, an "overseas
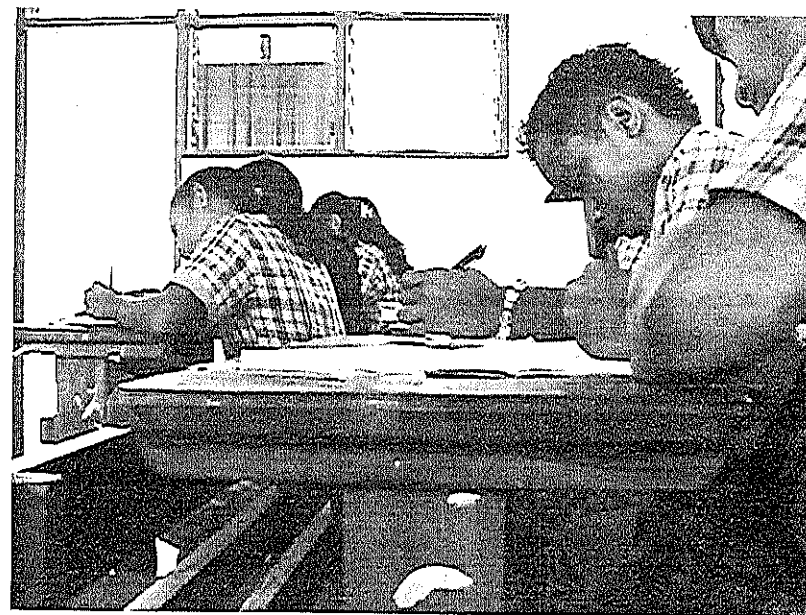
Figure 7.2   Students transcribing

province"). As he explained to me in a conversation we had soon after his class, he had to quit his job in 1975 when Indonesia invaded the country and Portuguese was banned. During the period of Indonesian occupation, he worked as a nurse for several years, but now that Portuguese is being taught again in schools, he says, he could finally resume his former job.

Mr. R.'s professional history should be connected to East Timor colonial and post-colonial history. When in April 1974, the "Carnation Revolution" overthrew the Salazar-Caetano fascist dictatorship in Portugal, the status of East Timor became uncertain.[1] On November 28th 1975, FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) proclaimed the country's independence. Due to its socialist connotations and its potential to spread the communist "threat" in the region, FRETILIN was viewed with suspicion. With the tacit support of the US and Australian governments, Indonesia invaded the island in December 1975 and formally integrated it into its own territories in July 1976.[2] When East Timor, after having suffered almost three decades of Indonesian occupation, became

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1   The "Carnation Revolution" was a pro-democracy military coup lead by a group of young military officers who participated in the pro-independence guerrillas in the Portuguese territories in Africa.

2   Indonesia already controlled the western part of the island that had formerly been a Dutch colony.

independent in 2002, Portuguese was proclaimed one of the two official languages of the country (the other being Tetum). Indeed, the Language Directive and the Educational Policy Framework for 2004–2008, issued in 2004, displayed a strong Portuguese focus. Despite the language being very little known by the Eastern Timorese, this new language policy stated that Portuguese should be reintroduced in schools as the universal medium of instruction (Taylor-Leech 162). Despite Portugal's financial and practical commitment to provide Eastern Timorese teachers with Portuguese language training, due to the lack of a local contingent of Portuguese speaking teachers, the "old guard" of retired colonial teachers became an important asset.[3] For several retired teachers of Mr. R.'s generation, this situation presented an interesting opportunity for employment.

Mr. R.'s teaching style seems to bear the traces of this colonial matrix. He speaks in a distinctly authoritarian tone, displaying his preference for using short directives marked by a uniform intonation contour and a very regular rhythm. Interestingly, Mr. R. also deploys an explicit strategy for legitimizing his authority by making frequent and direct references to the State's official language policy. In his own words: "Portuguese is a national language and it has to be studied." After having focused on Mr. R., the objective of my camera shifts back to the blackboard, the notebooks, and the content of the "fill-in-the-blanks" exercise. Entitled "steps to a correct dental hygiene," the exercise is based on a template made of a brief sequence of actions related to routines of morning hygiene. As Mr. R. explains, students need to position the verbal/corporeal routine in different temporal and modal frames (see Figure 7.1), thus accordingly inflecting the tenses and the aspects of the verbs listed in the infinitive on the blackboard. The text of the exercise is reproduced below:

1. Pegar na escova de dentes (Take the toothbrush)
2. *Pepar no tubo de pasta dentrífica (*Pick up the toothpaste tube)
3. Retirar a tampa do tubo (Remove the cap of the tube)
4. Colocar um bocado de pasta na escova (Put a bit of toothpaste on the toothbrush)
5. Tapar o tubo e voltar a pô-lo no lugar (Close the tube and put it back in place)

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3 "The 2007–10 Co-operation Program between Portugal and East Timor allocated 46 million Euros to fund development targets including the education sector and the reintroduction of the Portuguese language" (Taylor-Leech 157). In 2008, at the time of my fieldwork in East Timor, the two main Portugal-sponsored agencies aimed at promoting teachers' training in Portuguese were the *Centro de Lingua Portuguesa* (CLP), which was part of the *Universidade Nacional de Timor-Leste* (UNTIL) and which worked with the official and financial support of *Instituto Camões* (the Institute, connected to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign affairs, that is officially in charge of the international promotion of the Portuguese language and culture), and the *Projecto de Reintrodução da Lingua Portuguesa em Timor-Leste*, which was sponsored by the Portuguese government in partnership with the Ministério da Educação da República Democrática de Timor-Leste.
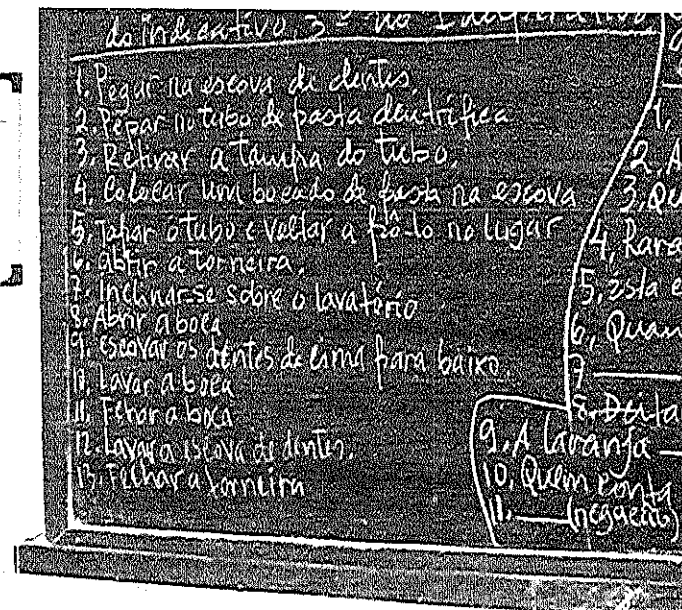
Figure 7.3 Steps to a correct dental hygiene

6. Abrir a torneira (Open the tap)
7. Inclinar-se sobre o lavatório (Lean over the sink)
8. Abrir a boca (Open your mouth)
9. Escovar os dentes de cima para baixo (Brush your teeth from top to bottom)
10. Lavar a boca (Rinse your mouth)
11. Fechar a boca (Close your mouth)
12. Lavar a escova de dentes (Rinse your toothbrush)
13. Fechar a torneira (Close the tap)
14. Colocar a escova no lugar (Put the brush in place)
15. Sair da casa de banho e sorrir para mostrar que está tudo em ordem (Exit the bathroom and smile to show that everything is in order)

As I observe the students diligently inscribing in their notebooks these multiple chronotopic representations of the "steps to a correct dental hygiene," I start to ask myself what this exponential multiplication of short narratives of personal hygiene routines is all about. As I will try to show in the next few pages, the interactional practices observed in this Dili high-school contribute to the reproduction of larger structures of meaning that go well beyond the inculcation of Portuguese verbal morphology. Although extracted from an apparently ordinary moment of classroom learning, the scene captured by my video-camera partakes in broader socio-political and ethno-linguistic processes entailing not only the construction

of certain ideologies of language and of its competent (ideal-)speaker, but also the shaping of specific racialized models of humanity. Drawing on Gal and Irvine's insight that humans' conceptualizations of language encode important beliefs and ideas not only about language, but also about "people, events and activities that are significant to them" ("The Boundaries of Languages and Disciplines" 970), the following pages aim at placing this scene into historical, socio-political and cultural context. In so doing, I will show how the morphology of Portuguese language (characterized, as it is the case for Romance languages, by remarkable verbal and nominal inflection) became a salient practical and ideological dimension of language and human contact in not only colonial but also post-colonial East Timor.

If we understand acquiring a language as an activity always embedded in a culturally and historically specific context, which entails "*socialization through the use of language* and *socialization to the use of language*" (Schieffelin and Ochs 163), we can appreciate how learning the inflection of Portuguese verbs and a practice of a sound oral hygiene may be strictly related endeavors. The disciplined child leaving the bathroom smiling to show his tooth-brushing diligence is the counterpart of an idealized speaker of Portuguese who correctly inflects the verbs according to person, tense, and mood, rather than committing the typical "mistake" of simplifying Portuguese verbal morphology. Indeed, Portuguese verbs are commonly assimilated into Tetum and used without inflection in the third person singular present form (Clements 48; Holm 268). Thus, engaging in a practice of oral hygiene that clearly presupposes familiarity with a life-style and referents (toothbrush, sink, tap, toothpaste) that are not local (see, Schieffelin) becomes also a means to prevent the erosion of verbal inflection that characterizes the assimilation of Portuguese words in Tetum, as well as the emergence of a local variety of Portuguese.

Inspired by the recognition of the need "to treat metropole and colony in a single analytic field" (Stoler xi), this chapter explores the interplay between language ideologies and racial categories in colonial and post-colonial East Timor. My attempt is to show how quotidian communicative practice presents an important arena for the shaping of the Portuguese-Eastern Timorese colonial encounter. In showing the mutual constitution of these two linguistic spaces, I will argue that, while in the colony Portuguese language became a salient principle for the structuring of racial boundaries, in the metropolis it became a key factor for the construction of an acceptable representation of the colonial Empire, based on the fantasy of an imaginary homogeneous and all-encompassing Lusophone speech community.

The term "Lusophony" itself has become a popular way to refer to the constitution of a transnational community of Portuguese speaking countries. Founded in 1996, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) constitutes a type of Commonwealth marked by the sharing of a common language and by the more ambiguous and problematic ambition of sharing a similar cultural heritage. As Lourenço rightly pointed out, this "immaterial continent," spread across different countries where Portuguese is (to some extent) spoken, has the character of a mirage or a dream (174). But, if Lusophony is a dream, who is its

dreamer? In other words, what are the real linguistic contours of this "imagined community"? What is the variety of Portuguese actually spoken by its members? What are the language ideologies that partake in the production of the fantastic interplay between language, culture, and place evoked by the idea of Lusophony and by its underlying colonial matrix?

I will try to answer some of these questions and show how the emphasis on verbal morphology, so apparent in the practices through which Portuguese is currently being taught in post-colonial East Timor, is the product of a complex colonial and postcolonial trajectory. While speaking proper Portuguese and conforming to an imagined European etiquette were important markers of the racially, legislatively, and socially privileged status of *assimilados* ("the assimilated ones") in colonial East Timor, the high value given to preserving Portuguese verbal inflection against the risk of creolization can also be connected to the official Lusophonic discourse that currently pervades Portuguese public culture.[4]

2   Ideologies of Language, Models of Humanity, and Technologies of the Self in East Timor

The newly independent República Democrática de Timor-Leste occupies the eastern part of the island of Timor, as well as the two islands of Ataúro and Jaco and the small enclave of Oecussi. This relatively small territory (roughly 15,000 km²), located in the largest and easternmost of the Lesser Sunda Islands and inhabited by a population of roughly 800,000 citizens, is characterized by an incredible degree of linguistic diversity. The languages actually spoken in East Timor range between 16 and 32 (see Hull; Hajek). The term "*dialectos*," often used as a derogatory and diminishing term to refer to the different indigenous languages in Portuguese colonial sources (see, for example, Felgas 171–6; Oliveira 3), is somewhat misleading, in that it presupposes a degree of commonality between the different languages that does not correspond to the actual linguistic reality. Not only are the different local linguistic variants generally mutually unintelligible, but they also belong to two different language families: Austonesian and Papuan. Tetum (in its creolized variety known as *Tetum Praça*) is often learnt as a second language to be used as medium of inter-ethnic communication. This high degree of linguistic diversity, not uncommon in Southeast Asia, intertwined with the island's colonial and postcolonial history and resulted in a unique sociolinguistic situation.

Although Portuguese presence in East Timor dates back to the sixteenth century (Thomaz, "The Formation of Tetun-Praça" and *Babel Loro Sa'e*; Fox 9–12), Portuguese colonial control started to intensify only at the end of the nineteenth century, reaching a peak in the 1930s (Felgas 261–86). The intensification of

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4   This ideology of linguistic purism is a recurrent theme in Portuguese linguistic descriptions of East Timor linguistic situation; see Thomaz, "The Formation of Tetun-Praça" 76–7.

Portuguese rule during the twentieth century also resulted in heightening the diffusion of Portuguese language. However, even though its influence is markedly perceivable in a great amount of lexical borrowings in the variety of Tetum spoken in the capital of Dili (Thomaz, "The Formation of Tetun-Praça"), Portuguese remained always the language of the colonial elite and of the restricted number of *assimilados* and *mesticos* (more on this later). Soon after having proclaimed its independence in 1975, after almost five centuries of Portuguese colonial rule, East Timor was invaded by the Indonesian troops. The actual number of speakers of Portuguese at the time of the Indonesian invasion was anything between 5% and 20% of the total population (*Babel Loro Sa'e*). In the early 1980s, the Indonesian administration started massive programs of scholarization and alphabetization aimed at promoting the diffusion of the Indonesian language within the territory of East Timor that, by then, had become the 27th Indonesian province. In 1981, "Portuguese was prohibited in school, public administration, the media, and the Mass" (Taylor Leech 158). Although several of my interlocutors reported to have kept on using Portuguese language in their daily intercourse, this linguistic choice was regarded as suspicious by the Indonesians and could lead to a serious trouble.

As it could be easily imagined from this entangled political and linguistic history, the current sociolinguistic situation of the newly independent Eastern Timor state is characterized by a high degree of multilingualism and even multiliteracy. Article 13 of the 2002 Eastern Timorese Constitution proclaimed Portuguese and Tetum to be the two co-official languages, while Indonesian and English were recognized the status of "working languages." The decision of choosing as the primary medium of instruction a language (such as Portuguese) that is estimated to be unknown by the great majority of the local youth in a country in which 50% of the total population is below the age of 15 and only 2% is over 64 years (UNFPA Report 2005: "Population Dynamics in East Timor") and where illiteracy affects over 50% of the total adult population, has been the object of a lively internal and international debate (see Taylor-Leech). Suspended between an ambiguous display of colonial nostalgia, a pragmatic choice aimed at minimizing Australian and Indonesian political-economic influence, and the attempt at constructing a new sense of national identity, the reintroduction of Portuguese in East Timor undoubtedly requires some deeper analysis in the light of recent anthropological scholarship on language ideologies.

In the last two decades, the North American linguistic anthropological community has shown a growing interest in language ideologies (see the two seminal contributions: the Special Issue on Language Ideologies in *Pragmatics*, edited by Kroskrity, Schieffelin, and Woolard in 1992; and *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities*, edited by Kroskrity in 2000). Encompassing all tacit or explicit ideas and beliefs that members of a speech community have with respect to their linguistic repertoire (Woolard and Schieffelin),[5] language

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5   In addition to the common people's ideas (i.e., vernacular language ideologies), scholars also show great interest in disciplinary language ideologies – that is, more or

ideologies are complex semiotic constructs that play a fundamental role in linking "microcultural worlds of language and discourse to macrosocial forces" (Kroskrity 2). One of the major claims made by the emerging field of research on "language ideologies" is that people's ideas and beliefs about linguistic varieties are never circumscribed to language, as they always partake in constructing culturally and historically specific models of humanity. However, this emphasis on the performative power of language ideologies to shape humanity has been marked by a tendency to give priority to the consequences stemming from processes of association of certain "linguistic varieties with typical persons" (Irvine and Gal, "Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation" 403), thus neglecting the analysis of practices and "technologies of the self." This, it seems to me, is the unsurprising result of the emphasis given, within language ideology scholarship, to a Peircean framework that views semiotic processes as the major engines for the production and formation of language ideologies.[6] Centered on signs as standing for relations, this Peircean framework played a major role in shifting the attention from the domain of routinary micro-practices to that of associative links.[7]

Building on Louis Althusser's claim that "ideas about a human subject exist in his actions" (168), we could add that ideas about language—which, as we have seen, are implicitly ideas about humans—also exist in human subjects' actions. Thus the prosaic and mundane interactional practices that often contain tacit and implicit language ideologies, should not, in my view, only be analyzed as ideational or practical semiotic constructs, but also as practical structures for the production of subjectivity, something Foucault called "technologies of the self." In order to illustrate this idea I would like to go back to the ethnographic scene I have described at the beginning of this chapter and show how several of the practices I observed in an ordinary Portuguese language class contain and reproduce complex ideas about race, language, and humanity.

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less explicitly articulated theoretical principles and methodological practices that orient the work undertaken by linguists and anthropologists engaged in language documentation and analysis, as well as by colonial functionaries and missionaries who provided earlier accounts of linguistic difference. See, for example, Makihara and Schieffelin; Irvine and Gal, "Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation"; Errington, "Colonial Linguistics" and *Linguistics in a Colonial World*.

6   The three main semiotic mechanism of linguistic ideological production are: Iconization (i.e. "when a linguistic feature is seen as an iconic representation of a social group, activity, or value"), Fractal Recursivity (i.e. "the projection of an opposition salient at some level of a relationship, onto some other level"), and Erasure (i.e. "when a certain sociolinguistic phenomenon get erased or removed from people's awareness") (Irvine and Gal, "Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation" 403–4).

7   But see Makihara and Schieffelin's emphasis on the embodied dimension of language ideologies and their attention for the ambiguities always underlying processes of linguistic contact and mimesis (Makihara and Schieffelin).

2.1 Inscribing Portuguese Linguistic Hierarchy

Let me start with the incredible emphasis on and the time that was devoted to the modality of writing in this class. Engaging in the apparently time-consuming (for students and teachers alike) activity of copying long sets of sentences previously written by the teacher on the board is a common practice in contemporary Eastern Timorese schools and students normally spend over half of the class-time transcribing from the blackboard. This custom is motivated by strong practical and material reasons. Textbooks (books in general) and Xerox machines are rarities in a country that is gradually re-emerging from years of occupation, civil war, violence, and political turmoil.[8] However, this practice seems also to have other functions and origins. Through this patient and meticulous process, students and teacher do more than simply transcribe words. They actually inscribe in the public domain of classroom and in the private space of their notebooks a linguistic order marked by the deferential posture towards the Portuguese language that characterized the colonial times, thus physically enacting the superiority once allocated to Portuguese. As Luís Thomaz pointed out, Portuguese enjoyed a position of great prestige during the colonial era, similar to that of Latin in medieval Europe or Classic Arab in the Arab-speaking world (see *Babel Loro Sa'e*). Timorese colonial ecology shared many similarities with other documented forms of diglossia, that is, a highly compartmentalized linguistic situation marked by a rigid distribution between the regional dialect: the low (L) variety and a superposed variety, termed the high (H) variety, "which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most *written* and formal spoken purposes" (Ferguson 88; my emphasis).

The internalization of this colonial belief in the higher value of Portuguese over the local languages constitutes a common trope in contemporary Eastern Timorese metalinguistic discourse. While in the field, I often came across a derogatory portrayal of Tetum, which was often represented as inadequate to convey articulate and complex juridical or scientific reasoning. My local interlocutors would often represent Tetum as lexically poor and incapable of conveying abstract concepts such as those required to write a country's constitution. In a long interview (recorded in February 2008) during which the Cabinet Chief of the Ministry of Education explained to me the numerous reasons for proclaiming Portuguese the official language, this stigmatization of Tetum was clearly stated: "The Tetum language is stagnant ... it is scientifically poor, it lacks scientific and political terms for people to express themselves adequately. If Eastern Timorese were to graduate with Tetum as the official language, they would be condemned to stagnation. So we are obliged to learn other languages" (Interview with Cabinet Chief of the Ministry of Education, 22 January 2008). This is a common theme in Portuguese linguistic descriptions that represent Tetum as lexically "poor" and lacking syntactical structures for expressing "abstract ideas" as well as "logical,

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8   Shortage of books is interestingly contrasted with a relatively high number of pirate DVDS (mostly American and Asian blockbusters) available for sale in Dili.

elaborate, and structured thought" (Thomaz, "The Formation of Tetun-Praça" 66, 78, 59). Indeed, as demonstrated by Irvine and Gal ("Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation" 421) and Errington (*Shifting Languages*), among others, the outsider's gaze (or its internalization as in the case of the above quoted excerpt) often establishes iconic links between morpho-syntactic structures and the supposedly inherent simplicity of a language and of its speakers. In a similar fashion, Portuguese observers iconically projected the lack of verbal inflection and original orthography common to East Timorese languages into the assumption that local languages were lexically and logically deficient. Through physically bending over their desks and notebooks to engage in transcription exercises, students and teachers contribute to the reproduction of the idea of the higher position of Portuguese within the local linguistic order and at the same time they reinforce the idea of the higher value of the written over the spoken word. Indeed, one of the key arguments for the assertion of Tetum lower position has traditionally been its lack of a standardized orthographic system. The essentialization of this lack originated the conviction that Tetum is inherently disorderly and thus "primitive." Similarly to many other Indonesian contexts (see Errington; *Shifting Languages*; Donzelli), the lack of a local historical system of graphical conventions for representing local languages becomes "iconized," that is, transformed into an iconic representation of supposedly essential and natural features of the language and its speakers who are represented as irremediably illiterate.

But, aside from the semiotic process of iconization that connects the lack of a writing system to the idea of an intrinsic form of disorder and irrationality inherent in Tetum and other local codes, the practice of transcription partakes in other meaning-making and subject-building processes. Centred either on individual transcription or on collective recitation of previously transcribed verbal and nominal paradigms, the participant structures associated with the teaching of Portuguese give absolute priority to the transmission of an abstract system of grammatical rules (i.e., how to inflect verbs and nouns) over the acquisition of "communicative competence" (Hymes).

2.2 The Fetish of Verbal Inflection

In order to illustrate this point, let us take a closer look at the linguistic routines deployed by our teacher (Mr. R.) for imparting Portuguese verbal paradigms. Pointing at the board, Mr. R. instructs the students to inflect the verb in the first person of the simple past, the imperative,[9] and in the present indicative. As the students carry out the exercise, Mr. R., with strict and inquisitive composure, walks through the rows of desks to check the content of the students' notebooks (Figure 7.4).

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9   Inflecting the imperative in the first person singular seems to be a logical paradox. However, since the students only got to work on the first part of the exercise that concerned the simple past, I cannot report how they dealt with this paradoxical section of the prompt.
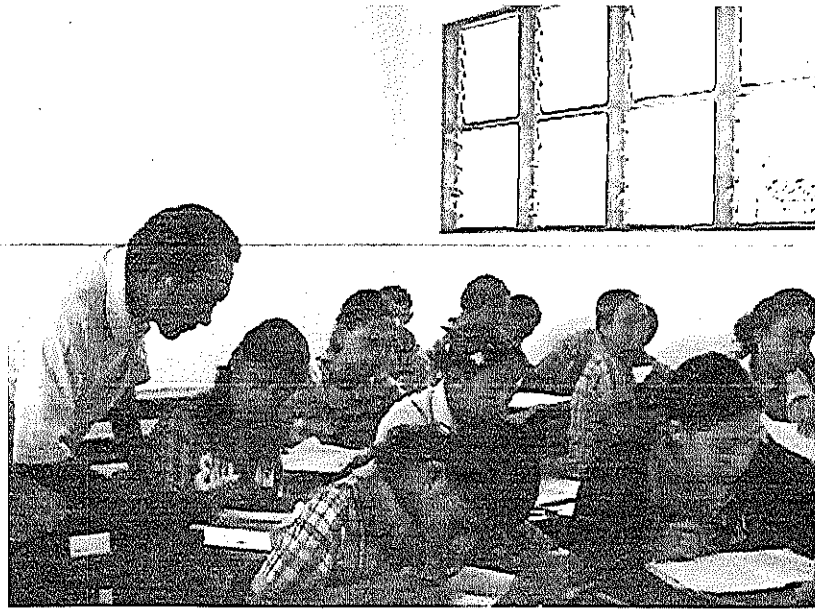
Figure 7.4   The teacher checking the students' notebooks

Mr. R. completely avoids praising the students when they are right, but he never fails to remark on their mistakes, often ridiculing them and invoking the threatening imminence of the *exame nacional* ("national exam").[10] Mr. R.'s remarks mostly consist of metalinguistic commentaries on the inflectional mistakes made by the students:

> Aqui é o quê?
> *Here, what's this?* (peeking into a student's notebook and pointing to a verb that the student conjugated)
>
> -
> ...
>
> '*Peguiu?'
> *'*Peguiu'?* (showing indignation and extreme amazement)
>
> não é '*peguiu!'
> *It is not '*peguiu'!*

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10   Mr. R. is here referring to the national exam that students (who were then in their senior year of high school) will have to take at the end of the year in order to gain entry to university.

> ...
>
> 'peguei.' ai ai ai ai ... um aluno do terceiro ano, pá!
> *[It is] 'peguei' [I took/held] tsk, tsk, tsk ... a student of the third grade! Oh my goodness!*
>
> não sabe o ... o verbo 'pegar', pá.
> *[Still] does not know the ... the verb 'to hold,' oh my goodness! ...*
>
> ...
>
> ai ai ai ai ai. o verbo não é '*pepi.'
> *tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk. The verb is not '*pepi'!*
>
> ...
>
> (moving on to check another student's notebook)
>
> o '*pepi,' pá! '*pepi' também. ai ai ai ai.
> *Oh '*pepi,' oh my goodness! '*Pepi' again! tsk, tsk, tsk, tsk!*
>
> ...
>
> o verbo é 'pegar' não é '*pepar.'
> *The verb is 'pegar,' not '*pepar.'*

In the face of Mr. R.'s harsh reprimand, it should be noted that the students' errors are due to Mr. R.'s own mistake. Indeed, he misspelled on the blackboard the verb and, instead of "pegar," he wrote "pepar," inevitably confusing the students, who, quite tellingly, without trying to rectify the original mistake attempted to inflect the inexistent verb "pepar."

In order to contrast the general tendency of using uninflected Portuguese verbs in the third person singular, Mr. R. strongly encourages the students to inflect the verbs in the first rather than in the third person and keeps on repeating the formula:

> não é os ou ... não é os outros que ...
> *It is not the oth ... it is not the others who ... [speak].*
>
> você é que fala.
> *[It is] you who speak.*

As he moves on to yet another student, Mr. R. gets particularly upset with the fact that, aside from confusing the verb *escovar* ("to brush") with the *escavar* ("to excavate"), the student also inflected the verb in the third rather than in the first

person singular. Thus, performing a very authoritarian and intimidating teacher persona, Mr. R. impatiently shouts again:

> Escreve lá: é a primeira pessoa que fala.
> *Write there: it is the first person who speaks.*

> você é que fala. Não é a terceira pessoa.
> *It is you who speaks. It is not the third person!*

> que estás a fazer? 'escavou'?
> *What are you doing? 'he/she excavated'?* (stressing his amazement and indignation)

> não é 'escavar.'
> *It is not 'to excavate.'*

> ...

> escovou com a escova dos dentes.
> *[It is] he/she brushed [his/her teeth] with a toothbrush.*

> oh meu palerma!
> *oh what a fool!* (in a tone of utmost indignation)

Continuing his inspection, Mr. R. comes across a different, though related, mistake:

> Esta aqui é o quê?
> *This one here is what?*

> Student (timidly): '*abrei.'
> *'abrei.'*

Modeling the inflection of the verb *abrIR* ('to open') onto that of *escovAR*, the student had coined the form "abrei" (instead of the correct "abri"), which unsurprisingly triggered Mr. R.'s protests:

> R.: '*abrei' não!!
> *No! [It is not] 'abrei'!*

However, if we look at the very morphology of Mr. R.'s metalinguistic directives, we note that Mr. R.'s own way of inflecting Portuguese verbs ironically displays a remarkable lack of modal, temporal, and pronominal consistency.[11] While giving

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11   I am grateful to Mário Martins for pointing this out to me.

instructions to his students on how to conduct the exercise, Mr. R. often uses the indicative instead of the imperative, which in Portuguese (unlike what is the case in English) are clearly distinct. Let us take a closer look at some of Mr. R.'s directives that *he addresses to the class as a whole* (in order to facilitate the analysis, lines have been numbered):

1.   portanto a pri... a primeira coisa vocês **descrevem** esta, nestas frases
                                     [**Describe.2.PL.Present.Indicative**]
      *Therefore the fir.. first thing ... (that) you **describe** this, in this sentence*

2.   é o **pretérito perfeito simples**
      *is the **simple past***

3.   de manhã o que é que vocês **fazem**
                              [**Do.3.PL.Present.Indicative**]
      *[that is,] what is that you **do** in the morning*

4   a segunda frase
      the second sentence

5.   **escrevem** no
      [**Write.3.PL.Present.Indicative**]
      *you **write** [it] in ...*

6.   **fazem** a conjugação no presente do indicativo
      [**Do.3.PL.Present.Indicative**]
      *you **do** the conjugation in the present of the indicative*

7.   a terceira frase
      the third sentence

8.   a terceira frase
      the third sentence [repeated]

9.   **faz** a conjugação dos verbos
      [**Do.2. SG.-Hon.Imperative**]
      ***You** (singular/informal) do the conjugation of the verbs*

10.   no pr ... no im-pe-ra-ti-vo
      in the ... in the im-pe-ra-tive

These sentences illustrate a very interesting disconnect between the formal and the functional dimensions of verbal morphology. Although formally correct (if taken out of context), the verbs in the prompts that Mr. R. gives to the students (before starting to correct their inflectional mistakes!) are clearly not aligned with the pragmatic norms of standard European Portuguese. At line 5 and 6, for example, speaking to the class, Mr. R. uses the indicative forms "escrevem" and "fazem" instead of the imperative "escrevam" and "façam". At line 3, explaining what is

meant by the simple past, Mr. R. invokes the habitual present ("what you **do** in the morning"), instead of providing the more expected gloss: "what you **did** this morning" ("o que é que vocês **fizeram** hoje de manhã"). R. also keeps on shifting from the solidarity (*tu*) to the respect form (*você*). As several other Romance languages, European Portuguese has two pronominal forms: *você* (+ honorific) requires inflecting the verb in the third person singular and *tu* (– honorific) requires inflecting the verb in the second person singular. Once the use of one form versus the other is established, interlocutors are generally expected to stick to either *tu* or *você*. Mr. R.'s speech displays a continuous morphological alternation between second (*tu*) and third person (*você*), thus violating the pragmatic norm that requires being consistent in the use of solidarity (second person) versus respect pronouns (third person).[12]

Far from being the product of a lack of pedagogical competence, Mr. R.'s teaching style should be seen as the outcome of a language ideology that elevates morphological complexity as a marker of sociolinguistic distinction. Rather than being treated as a linguistic phenomenon that can and should be systematized and understood in its semantic and pragmatic terms, verbal morphology is thus reified. As I noticed in several other Portuguese language classes that I attended in this and in two other schools, rather than trying to pinpoint morphological patterns shared by the three major Portuguese verb conjugations and highlighting irregular verbs, teachers tended to teach verbal inflection exclusively relying on students' mnemonic abilities, emphasizing rote learning and the written modality. Instead of focusing on developing conversational skills and pragmatic understanding of how to use the different tenses and aspects available within Portuguese grammar, students were trained to memorize complex verbal inflections that may often seem completely unpredictable. Thus Portuguese is almost taught as a dead (or semi-dead) language, as if it were Latin or Ancient Greek.

Mr. R.'s lack of pronominal and modal consistency inevitably reinforces the deep disconnect between the understanding of Portuguese as an abstract morphological puzzle versus its status as a real language that can be used to do things in the world. Stripped of their semantic and pragmatic values, Portuguese verbs thus become floating signifiers operating through a mysterious morphological mechanics. But what is the origin and function of this obsession with Portuguese verbal inflection?

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12   As, for example, in *você é que fala*, "it is **you** (+ honorific) who speak" and *o que estás a fazer*, "what are **you** (– honorific) doing?". Or in the sentence "*tira a sua mão*," with which Mr. R. urged a student: "Take away your hand [from the notebook page]." An emblematic example of lack of pronominal consistency, Mr. R.'s utterance merges the solidarity form of the imperative with the respect form of the pronoun. Indeed, it should be either "tire a **sua** mão" or "**tira** a **tua** mão." As Mário Martins (personal communication) suggests, although very common in spoken Brazilian Portuguese, this lack of pronominal consistency is very unusual in European Portuguese.

2.3   *The Exoticization of Portuguese*

One of the major differences between Portuguese and the great majority of the languages spoken in East Timor is that the latter (like all Austronesian languages) are partly isolating and mostly agglutinating languages, while Portuguese (like the other members of the Romance language family) is an inflected language. Austronesian languages are tenseless. By tenselessness it is meant that there is no morphological indication on the verb with respect to a time reference. Given that the verb is unmarked for tense, reference time is generally established through context, temporal markers, and time expressions. Hence while the local languages of East Timor do not exhibit any morphological indication of tense and aspect of the verb, Portuguese verbs are obligatorily marked for tense and aspect. Teachers' emphasis on Portuguese verbs can be undoubtedly traced back to this salient aspect of cross-linguistic difference.[13] Indeed, as it is argued by Svalberg and Chuchu, who present a case study of the major difficulties that Southeast Asian learners experience in the acquisition of tense and aspect, a tenseless L1 (first language) is often responsible for the "frequency and persistence" of tense and aspect errors in the TL (target language) (27). However, this practical necessity does not fully account for the special saliency given, in Timor, to Portuguese verbs; nor does it explain the special mode through which Portuguese verbal paradigms are inculcated.

Recent linguistic anthropological work on colonial language ideologies clearly shows how a substantial part of the colonial linguistic project consists in making languages "objects of knowledge, so that their speakers could be made subjects of power" (Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World* 3; Cohn; see, also, Irvine, "Mastering African Languages" and "Subjected Words"; Rafael). As in the other dimensions of colonial encounter, colonial linguistics engendered representations of linguistic otherness that were functional to its project of taming "unfamiliar tongues" (Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World* 4). Indeed, as shown, for example, by Errington, and Gal and Irvine, in order to legitimize their epistemological authority, colonial linguists often "exaggerated" the otherness of the vernacular languages they aimed at describing. But the languages of the colonized were not the only ones to be exoticized. In a similar way to the ideologies of linguistic otherness that Stasch found in Korowai approach to Indonesian, representations of Portuguese in colonial and postcolonial Timor strongly centered on the "strangeness of the foreign code" (Stasch 97).

This exoticization of Portuguese as morphologically complicated language seems to constitute a key device for the reproduction of a linguistic order based on the idea of Portuguese as a radically other and thus superior. Unsurprisingly, during

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13   What further complicates language acquisition of tense and aspect distinctions for tenseless L1 learners is the fact that the past tense "can denote other kinds of distance than a temporal one" (Svalberg and Chuchu 32). This is illustrated, for example, by the Portuguese use of the *Imperfeito do Indicativo* to express politeness.

my fieldwork in East Timor and Portugal, one of the most recurrent observations made by my Eastern Timorese interlocutors who were learning Portuguese, was precisely how difficult were its "verbos." Aside from otherness and superiority, there is a third property characterizing local representations of Portuguese: purity. Indeed, as it is normally the case in situations marked by high degrees of linguistic heterogeneity and contact, languages tend to mix and generate creolized varieties. As we will see in the next section, Portuguese colonial sources display a strong ideology of linguistic purism, which is deeply connected to colonial concerns for the maintenance of racial boundaries.

3 Miscegenation, Lusophony, and the Portuguese Colonial Ideologies of Linguistic and Racial Purism

As mentioned earlier, despite the intensification of the Portuguese rule during the twentieth century and the increased diffusion of the Portuguese language, Portuguese remained always the language of the colonial elite and of a restricted number of *assimilados* and *mesticos* for whom the use of Portuguese, together with other cultural and material practices (dressing and hair styles, table manners, etc.), was a marker of social distinction and a component of what Pierre Bourdieu would call a self-distinguishing *habitus*. In the narratives of my Eastern Timorese interlocutors table manners, dressing style, together with proper Portuguese grammar and orthography, played a major function as markers of a distinctively European persona.

Speaking "pure Portuguese" has been strictly connected to other material elements considered indices of Portuguese acculturation. A middle-aged Timorese woman who had agreed to share with me her life history through a series of long interview sessions and more informal chats once explained to me that the main reasons why her in-laws had always disapproved of their son's decision to marry her was due to her lower status as a "native." As Ms. Isabel explained to me, her in-laws were a distinguished family of *mestiços* who occupied an important position in Dili:

My husband's family was not an ordinary family. You should have seen their house! Whenever they would dine they would always set the table with glasses and plates of different sizes and always made sure to have at least two or three different spoons and forks! For this reason they could never accept the fact that my mother was a simple Timorese woman, clad in *cambátic* [a tube of fabric wrapped around the waist and worn by both men and women] and *cabaia* [a traditional blouse typically worn by women throughout Southeast Asia]. (Interview with Ms. Isabel, 9 January 2008, TL X)

Within Portuguese colonial literature, differences in clothing and dining styles figure as prominent markers of a local versus a more Europeanized demeanor. Felgas, for example, distinguishes between the "more civilized" *mestiços*, accustomed to wearing skirts, trousers, shirts, and blouses of European

type and the natives who would normally leave the upper part of their bodies naked or occasionally covered with a traditional blouse (*cabaia*) and wear the traditional cloth around the waist (*tais, cambátic*, or *sarong*) or (for men only) simply a *langotim* to cover their sexual organs (168). Felgas also contrasts instances of Europeanized architecture with native houses marked by the absence of furniture and by the use of wooden plates and bamboo glasses, instead of the glassware and china utilized by the local elites (178-180). This should not come as a surprise. Indeed, the *assimilados* "were indigenous people who had to undergo a probation period and exams in order to prove that they were Christian, that they dressed in European fashion, that they were monogamous, and that they spoke Portuguese" (Almeida, "Portugal's Colonial Complex" 6; see, also, Castelo 108).

The life narratives of Eastern Timorese that I have collected during my fieldwork are replete with testimonies of how Portuguese language and demeanor constitute key markers of racial and social distinction. One of the most significant biographical elements in the narrative of Tio Manuel, for instance, was his painful endeavor to get a high school degree during the colonial times. Being a Timorese (i.e., a native) born in the 1950s in the district of Same, Tio Manuel was soon confronted with the colonial political economy of language. After having finished elementary school, he wanted to continue his studies, but his aspirations clashed against the resistance of the Portuguese Salesian padres who were running the local school and who clearly told him that "[f]ourth grade is enough for the Timorese! As for the Timorese… once they have completed their fourth grade, they can go to dig potatoes!" (Interview with Tio Manuel, 19 January 2008, TC 16:00). Despite these challenges, Tio Manuel managed to find enough money to pay for school fee and uniform and continue his studies in Dili. As he told me in his narrative, classroom interaction in Dili was based on ideologies of strong linguistic purism. *Pure* Portuguese was the only language allowed in class and any instance of linguistic interference with the local languages was harshly punished. Students were given a long wooden ruler and invited to beat their peers' hands if they heard them using a word in Tetum or wrongly inflecting a Portuguese verb. Teachers were also very strict in monitoring the preservation of standard Portuguese orthography. Failing to write or misplacing *accents* (acute, grave, and circumflex) and other diacritic markers (tilde, cedilla) used in Portuguese to express vowel quality, stress, and nasalization was counted as a full error (Interview with Tio Manuel, 19 January 2008, TC 24:00).

The Portuguese colonial project has been often associated with a celebration of hybridism and miscegenation. As Vale de Almeida effectively pointed out, though, this general rhetoric of *mestiçagem* only characterized a later period of Portuguese colonialism (see, Almeida, "From Miscegenation to Creole Identity"). Indeed, it was only in the 1950s that Portugal was obliged to change its colonial policy in order to become a member of the United Nations. "This was done," writes Almeida, "by changing the designation 'colonies' to 'overseas provinces' and by adopting the rhetoric that the empire was a unified national and

multicultural community—a fact that marked the beginning of the influence and political impact of Gilberto Freyre's theories of 'Lusotropicalism'" (Almeida, "Epilogue of Empire" 594). As the Portuguese historian Cláudia Castelo has eloquently showed, the ideas developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1933) concerning the Portuguese's "special capacity of assimilating themselves to the tropics [... thus developing] multiracial societies marked by *mestiçagem* and cultural interpenetration" were appropriated by the dictatorial regime in Portugal during the 1950s and 1960s (Castelo 108; see, also, Almeida, all works cited).

However, before Lusotropicalism and the related representation of Portuguese expansionism as a "hybridizing humanist endeavor" became in the 1950s and 1960s a trope for the legitimation of the last phase of Portuguese colonial expansion in Africa, Portuguese colonial imagination was marked by a very strong "concern with the racial definition of the Portuguese" (Almeida, "From Miscegenation to Creole Identity" 108). Indeed, the development of anthropology in Portugal during the last decades of the XX century mostly originated from a very specific political agenda. As revealed by Santos's historical and critical account, between 1885 and 1950 the major objective of the anthropological school of Coimbra was precisely to demonstrate how colonial contact had not affected the racial purity of the Portuguese people of the metropole (see Santos, *A escola de antropologia de Coimbra*). Through meticulous studies of blood groups, somatic features and cranial measurements, the practitioners of this school aimed at establishing biological distinctions between the Portuguese and the inhabitants of the colonies, in order to demonstrate how the Portuguese people had managed to maintain its original racial purity (for an overview of Portuguese colonial literature on the Timorese physical types, see Schouten).

Portuguese colonial sources show great fascination with what they termed the "Timorese somatic heterogeneity" (Felgas 144; Corrêa; Oliveira [1949] 2004: 36), emphasizing the connection between the lack of "racial homogeneity" (Felgas 146) and the high degree of linguistic diversity found on the island (Oliveira 30). Linguistic diversity and linguistic mixing appear to be important tropes within the Portuguese colonial imagination. Felgas, for example, suggests that the high degree of linguistic diversity in East Timor triggered a lack of cohesion among the different chiefdoms (171). Oliveira also links the remarkable linguistic diversity to the belligerence that supposedly characterized the local population (44).

In line with this strict liaison between representations of race and representations of language, Portuguese colonial sources display a strong belief that the civilization and "the integration of the indigenous populations [of Timor] into the nation ... [was to be achieved] primarily through the diffusion of the Portuguese language," which would in turn prompt the diffusion "of the way of being metropolitan" (Felgas 331, 332). However, this faith in the civilizing power of the Portuguese language was often accompanied with various forms of exclusion and a concern for the preservation of linguistic and racial boundaries;

these, to a large extent, survive in the strong ideologies of purism that characterize Portuguese language pedagogy in post-colonial East Timor. As we saw earlier, linguistic ideologies and pedagogies in colonial East Timor were pervaded by a radically critical stance with respect to human and linguistic forms of creolization. The great concern with proving that the Portuguese were white and a strong opposition to miscegenation were both reflected in an attitude of great suspicion towards processes of linguistic contact and creolization. This could be clearly seen in a 1902 statement by Eusébio Tamagnini, the historical leader of the Coimbra school of anthropology. In a unique expression of the ideology of linguistic purism, Tamagnini declared with respect to the linguistic contact in São Tomé: "... the dialect of São Tomé, being a Creole ... must be seen as a degenerate version of Continental Portuguese" (Tamagnini, quoted in Santos, Topografias Imaginárias 43).

4   Conclusion: The Ambiguity of Colonial Discourse

Drawing on the insight that ideas about language—and ideas about humans—exist in people's actions, this chapter has aimed to show that, aside from the semiotic processes implicitly linking disparate ideological formations and presenting them as naturally connected, certain communicative practices and routines can become important loci for the construction of models of humans (and idealized speakers). Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the emphasis on memorizing Portuguese verbal paradigms is not only key to the reproduction of a certain linguistic hierarchy, but it is also instrumental to the affirmation of complex ideas about race, language, and humanity. We have seen how socialization to the Portuguese language both in colonial discourse and in contemporary post-colonial pedagogical practices intertwines with the production of a certain model of subjectivity. Similarly to what has been observed about the techniques for literary instruction developed in the 1830s by Christian missionaries in Western Samoa (Duranti, Ochs and Ta'ase) and Papua New Guinea (Schieffelin), the teaching of Portuguese in East Timor is not simply a process of acquisition of a foreign language, but also a way to introduce students to the "worlds of Christianity and foreign objects" (Duranti, Ochs and Ta'ase 59). We have also seen how, in addition to being a "vehicle of westernization" (Duranti, Ochs and Ta'ase 71), the Portuguese language constitutes a powerful device for the reproduction of human boundaries. As Makihara described for the different context of Rapa Nui, purist ideologies can become fundamental tools for "drawing ethnolinguistic boundaries" (51). Thus, the ideologies of linguistic purism that surround the teaching of Portuguese in East Timor nowadays can be utilized to emphasize distinction and produce exclusion.

In this fashion, Portuguese comes to occupy the paradoxical position of both an instrument of assimilation and a marker of racial and social distinction. This paradox clearly partakes in the profound ambivalence that Bhabha has identified as

a prerogative of colonial discourse. While the emphasis given to verbal morphology in colonial and postcolonial teaching reflects the idea that speaking proper (i.e. standard European) Portuguese is a performative index of (white) Europeaness, the fetishization of verbal inflection is also revealing of the Portuguese anxieties about the perceived threat of linguistic and racial hybridization that pervaded colonial discourse. Thus, the present-day insistence on verbal inflection can be seen as a linguistic parallel to what Bhabha described as the "scopic drive;" this parallel underlies the copious work on Timorese racial taxonomies that was produced by Portuguese colonial scholars as a response to the perceived threat of the "return of the look" (Bhabha 81). Indeed, if, as Bhabha showed, the colonial other appears *"as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite"* (122; emphasis in the original), the encounter with someone who is "almost white, but not quite" is a threatening reminder of the fact that no one could ever be quite white.

As I have mentioned, the new field of research on language ideologies has been characterized by the strong emphasis given to a Peircean semiotic framework. Although heuristically very useful and productive, I believe that a framework centered on the notion of semiotic (standing for) relations has two major limits. It shifts the attention from the domain of practices to that of the associative links and it, at least partially, neglects the important role that fantasy and imagination play in the mutual construction of identity, typical of the colonial and post-colonial situation. Therefore, as I sought to demonstrate, an exclusively semiotic paradigm may fail to capture the ambivalences and paradoxes inherent in colonial and post-colonial encounters.

In this chapter, I have also tried to show how the routines adopted in Eastern Timorese schools to train students to memorize Portuguese verbs constitute micro-linguistic technologies of the self that partake in the construction of the Lusophonic fantasy, which has been a key notion in recent redefinitions of national identity in the Portuguese postcolonial metropole. As a contemporary "avatar" of the colonial ideology of Lusotropicalism, the idea of Lusophony is doubly ambiguous as it tacitly endorses a conflation between fantasy and reality as well as that between language and place, projecting the dream of an imaginary continent where an imaginary homogeneous variety of Portuguese is spoken (see, Almeida, "From Miscegenation to Creole Identity"). This recent linguistic re-elaboration of the old imperial rhetoric centers on the idea of a Portuguese post-colonial world language, which aims at being completely isomorphic with the territory of the former Portuguese Empire (see, also, Almeida, "Epilogue of Empire").

However, in spite of the official discourse's attempts to affirm a perfect equivalence between language, place, and culture, and erase the power-laden dynamics that are always inherent in language, the ironies and the paradoxes of Lusophony are difficult to silence. One way of illustrating them is through the words of the director of the Project for the Reintroduction of the Portuguese Language in East Timor (PRLP) who, while explaining to me the challenges triggered by the uncertain status of Portuguese as a non-native national language in East Timor,

explicitly discussed the difficulties of teaching Portuguese verbal morphology to Timorese students (Interview with the Director of PRLP, 15 January 2008, TC 17:40): "Portuguese language has very specific characteristics because a great part of its structure comes from Latin and therefore it is a complex language." In order to overcome this difficulty, he and his team had just developed a new type of classes aimed at prioritizing "orality" and at making Portuguese grammar less intimidating. As he explained to me:

> It is important that people understand that it is not necessary to know the entirety of [Portuguese] grammar in order to speak Portuguese. ... With these new open courses aimed at the youth, the message that I would like to convey is that it is possible to communicate [in Portuguese] having just a minimal knowledge of Portuguese. ... We wish that the people who enroll in these classes became [more] motivated and did not always say: 'Professor this is so hard! Portuguese is so difficult! It has I don't know how many verbs!' ...

He then made his point clearer, by explaining what was the key strategy underlying these open courses.

> I myself am Portuguese and I say: "Tomorrow I go to stroll" (amanhã = tomorrow + eu= 1 p. sing. + vou= go 1 p. sing. Present indicative + passear= to stroll Infinitive). The correct form should be: "I will stroll" (eu= 1 p. sing. + irei= go 1 p. sing. Future indicative + passear = to stroll Infinitive), it is the future! But we say: "I go — [which is] present — to stroll (eu + vou + passear).[14] We thus utilize a compound verb tense (um verbo composto) in order to give an idea of future ... Tetum also utilizes ba ("to go"), which is as if it were the future and ona[15] ("already"), which indicates the past. Therefore ... in order to be a speaker of Portuguese it is not necessary [to use] the pluperfect ... the future or past perfect subjunctive, the personal infinitive, etc. ... (Interview with the Director of PRLP, 15 January 2008, TC 17:13)

Drawing on this parallelism between Portuguese auxiliary verb constructions and Tetum usage of optional tense-aspect markers, the director of PRLP continued to speak at great length, offering an elaborate metalinguistic discussion of the differences and overlaps between Tetum and Portuguese. I sat and listened as he articulated further the idea that the two languages were not so far apart after all. I was finally presented with a new linguistic ideology that stood in complete opposition to the exoticization of Portuguese I had encountered earlier. I let him

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14 "Vou + infinitive" is a compound construction commonly used in Portuguese to convey the future tense.

15 This is a perfective aspect marker used in Tetum to indicate that "the event/state is underway or has already happened" (Williams-van Klinken, Hajek, and Nordlinger 36).

speak as he was describing the details of the "new open courses" and I marveled at the revelation of the flip side of colonial mimicry: Portuguese that imitates Tetum.

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