“I am proud to speak a language once banned in school”
Community-based initiatives to document Dela-Oenale in eastern Indonesia

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Sociolinguistic Profile
- West Rote
- ± 7,000 speakers
- native speaker
- Most bilingual in Indonesian & Kupang Malay

Community-based initiative projects:
- Collection of natural texts
  - Dela students collected texts for linguistic analysis
  - Dela community and local NGO’s collected natural texts about:
    - History of land and caves
    - Traditional dyes for weaving
    - Weaving process
**Dictionaries**

- Toolbox
- following MDF lexicography laid out in Coward & C. Grimes (2000)
- Lexicon: 1576 words
- Work in progress
- Done by native speakers

**Toolbox dictionary**

**Linguistic Analysis**

- 7 young Dela speakers with linguistics background have done linguistics analysis on:
  - Homonym
  - Pronouns
  - Genitive case
  - Nouns
  - Synonyms

**Linguistic Analysis**

- Morphology
- TAM
- Collocations
- Comparative study of verb morphology of Dela and Termanu
- Denotative and connotative uses of kinship terms

**A Trilingual phrase book:**

- Work in progress
- Language learning
- surfers/tourists at Dela
- Dela speakers learn English
- English & Indonesian speakers learn Dela

**Bible translation**

- 10 steps to translate each book
- Native speakers are in involved in each step of translation
- Community check is done where the language is spoken and involved wider community
- Check clarity and naturalness
Community Checks

Bible translation
- 3 books are published
- 5 books are ready to be published
- 3 books are ready for community checking

Language use: past
- A language of the home
- A language for informal situations
- The language of traditional ceremonies
- It was thought to contribute to the poor learning of Indonesian and banned from use in schools

Language use: new domains of language use
- A language of instruction at elementary school
- Language of communication between students at all levels of schooling
- Church meetings and prayer meetings
- Sunday schools
- It can now be read
- Reading competition
- It is now a foreign language to be learned

Traditional language use

New domains
Future projects:

- Literacy materials
- Pre-recorded material for radio broadcasts
- Materials on the web
- D-O scripture for cell phones
- These new projects will create new domains for language use