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Writing the Resistance: Literacy in East Timor 1975–1999

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This paper provides an account of the ways in which literacy, in different languages, was embedded in the East Timorese struggle against the Indonesian invasion and subsequent occupation, from 1975 to 1999. Our account is primarily historiographical in nature and is based on a corpus of written texts gathered during four phases of the struggle, on photographs of people 'writing the Resistance', on published resources, on Estêvão Cabral's own historical account of the Resistance and on his direct observation of literacy practices on three broad fronts: the armed, the clandestine and the diplomatic front. We describe the ways in which literacy mediated the struggle on each of these fronts. We also document the diverse and multilingual nature of the literacies associated with the political work of the Resistance and the values generated through the use of different languages for the production of particular kind of texts. We take account of texts produced and circulated within the Resistance and those produced for a wider audience. In addition, we chart the changes in literacy practices ushered in by the advent of new technologies and, at the same time, by the changing political, economic and cultural conditions of the struggle.

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Introduction

Over the last two decades, a critical strand of research within the New Literacy Studies has kept a steady focus on the specific, situated ways in which literacy is bound up with asymmetrical relations of power in different historical contexts. Street's (1993: 7) assertion that 'literacy practices are aspects not only ''of culture'' but also of power structures' has had enduring resonance. The role of reading, writing and of uses of texts in contributing to the production, reproduction or contestation of power asymmetries has been explored in close detail through ethnographic research in different domains of social and institutional life: in individual households, in local community contexts, in adult literacy and basic education programmes, in schools and classrooms, in colleges and universities, in religious institutions, in bureaucratic settings and in different kinds of workplaces.

While most ethnographies of literacy have been conducted in post-industrial contexts in Europe and North America, a distinct body of work

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has also been developed in countries of the South that have undergone radical social and political change and has documented some of the ways in which literacy practices and discourses about literacy have been transformed as a result of such changes. For example, early work by Lankshear (1987) and Freeland (1988) focused on discourses about literacy, the literacy education practices and literacy debates associated with the Adult Literacy Campaign launched in different regions of Nicaragua (1980–81), in the years immediately following the Sandanista Revolution. Reflecting on this early work, Lankshear (1987: 227) made a remark that still holds true two decades later: 'we have still much to discover about the political significance of literacy and its ideological character'.

More recent work has been conducted in South Africa and South Asia. A landmark collection of articles, edited by Prinsloo and Breier (1996), charted some of the changes in local literacies and in discourses about literacy that occurred in the wake of the far-reaching social and political changes in South Africa in the mid-1990s. Holland (2006) focussed on the new literacies entering the lives of different groups of women in Nepal in and through the pro-democracy campaign. She showed, in close detail, how particular events in social movements are lived in and through literacy activities and how these activities centre on particular semiotic artefacts, such as texts, maps, songs or computer codes. Offering more general reflections on the study of literacy in social movements, she identified three possible foci: (1) the contribution of literacy activities to the formation and dissemination of ideologies, (2) the ways in which literacy serves as a means of imagining or evoking 'liberated' worlds and (3) the processes of inclusion or exclusion set in motion by the introduction of new literacy practices among particular groups of historical actors.

Our intention is to make a contribution to this small but distinctive body of work within the New Literacy Studies by providing a historiographical account of the role of literacy in Portuguese, and in other languages, in the East Timorese struggle against the Indonesian invasion and subsequent occupation of their territory, from 1975 to 1999. We focus on the role of literacy in mediating the political participation of different groups of people involved in the broad Resistance movement. We also examine its role in organising and sustaining the struggle and in representing the East Timorese cause to an increasingly global audience. We know from numerous accounts of the recent history of East Timor (e.g. Budiardjo & Liong, 1984; Cabral, 2002; Dunn, 1996; Ramos Horta, 1986; Taylor, 1999) that the Resistance was conducted on three fronts: on an armed front in the mountains of East Timor, on a clandestine front in the urban areas of the territory and within different cities in Indonesia, and on a diplomatic front, further afield, principally in Australia, Portugal, Mozambique and at the UN, in New York. We describe the key role of literacy, in different languages, in sustaining the lines of communication between these groups during four different phases of the struggle. We also reflect on the ways in which the changing social and political conditions of the struggle, over a 24-year period, contributed to changes in the symbolic value and strategic significance of literacy in different languages.

Our paper is based on published accounts, on archival material, on Estêvão Cabral's historical study of the Resistance (Cabral, 2002) and on his direct experience of involvement in the Resistance on all three fronts: on the armed front (1975–1979), on the clandestine front (1979–1986) and on the diplomatic front in Europe (1986–1999), while supporting the Resistance within East Timor. We also draw on a corpus of 73 handwritten and typed texts collected by Estêvão Cabral, during different phases of the struggle, and on still photographs of people in the Resistance reading and writing 'behind the lines'.

Our approach to this topic is an explicitly interdisciplinary one because, as co-authors, we have different backgrounds, in Politics and in Sociolinguistic Ethnography respectively. The work we present here falls at the interface between two specific fields within each of these disciplines: (1) the study of nationalist movements, local struggles for self-determination and resistance to military occupation; (2) the study of literacy as a social and political practice, building on the New Literacies tradition (Street, 1993, 1995), and on recent research in multilingual literacy (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000). We are therefore addressing two broad audiences. Our purpose in addressing readers who have a particular interest in nationalist movements is to show how insights from research on the role of different historical actors in such movements can be deepened through detailed analyses of language and literacy practices and of discourses about language and literacy, laying bare the cultural and symbolic dimensions of such movements. Our purpose in addressing readers with a particular interest in literacy and/or multilingualism is to draw attention to the specific ways in which language and literacy practices mediate political participation and political action, sustain political networks and enable individuals and groups to contribute to the making of their own history.

This paper is organised into four main sections: the first section provides a brief overview of the political history of East Timor. We focus here on the last years of Portuguese colonialism, the Indonesian invasion in 1975 and the East Timorese Resistance to the 24 years of military occupation. The second section shows how successive political changes ushered in changes in the socio-linguistic order, shaping the literacy repertoires of different generations of East Timorese. In the third and central section of the paper, we take a closer look at different phases of the East Timorese Resistance and at the ways in which the work of the Resistance changed over time on the armed, the clandestine and the diplomatic fronts. We then illustrate, in some detail, some of the ways in which literacy, in different languages, mediated and sustained this work. Our account is built around Estêvão Cabral's corpus of texts and on the purpose and practices associated with production and circulation of these and other similar texts. In the fourth section, we draw out three main themes from our detailed account of the literacies of the Resistance.

The Political History of East Timor: A Brief Overview

In this section, we give a brief overview of the political history of East Timor, focusing, in particular, on the years of resistance to occupation by the Indonesian armed forces. Much fuller accounts of the social and political

history of East Timor are already available (Budiardjo & Liong, 1984; Cabral, 2002; Dunn, 1996; Hill, 2002; Lemos Pires, 1991; Taylor, 1999), along with analyses of the international dimensions of the conflict (Hainsworth & McCloskey, 2000; Martin, 2001; Smith, with Dee, 2003; Tanter *et al*., 2001). Our focus here is on the specific aspects of East Timorese history that can throw light on the far-reaching changes that have taken place in the sociolinguistic order in East Timor.

Portuguese colonial rule 1516–1975

The Portuguese first established a colonial government outpost in East Timor in 1516 (Lemos Pires, 1991). However, for the next three and half centuries, they did little more than maintain control of trade in the region and export natural resources. At the end of the 19th century, they began to impose greater military and political control over the territory, with a view to transforming the local subsistence economy into an agricultural system based on cash crops, such as coffee, for export. The harsh implementation of these colonial policies triggered numerous local uprisings, from the mid-19th century to the second decade of the 20th century. However, unlike Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, East Timor saw no extended war of liberation against Portuguese colonialism. Political organisation on a national scale only emerged in East Timor after the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal.

Decolonisation in East Timor and the emergence of political parties

The Carnation Revolution in Portugal was led by military officers who had fought in Africa during the colonial wars. The aims of the Revolution were twofold: (1) to bring to an end a long period of Fascist dictatorship; (2) to initiate the process of decolonisation in Africa and in East Timor (Barbedo Magalhães, 1992; MacQueen, 1997).

Two main political parties emerged in East Timor and began to prepare for elections. The first was UDT (União Democrática Timorense – The Timorese Democratic Union). At the time, UDT advocated 'federation with Portugal as an intermediate stage between the present position and complete independence' (Dunn, 1996). The second was FRETILIN (Frente Revolucionário do Timor-Leste Independente – The Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). FRETILIN defended the right of the East Timorese to independence from the outset.

On 20 January 1975, due to changes in decolonisation policies in Portugal, FRETILIN and UDT formed a coalition to work for independence. However, the coalition was short lived. Indonesia, East Timor's immediate neighbour, had geopolitical ambitions in the region and had been closely observing the emergence of political parties in East Timor. The military government in Indonesia was also vehemently opposed to the presence of a small left-leaning group within the broad FRETILIN leadership. Indonesia began making approaches to the UDT leadership with a view to destabilising the decolonisation process. After two visits to Jakarta, the leaders of UDT broke off the coalition with FRETILIN. From this time onwards, there were increasing

tensions between the two political parties. In the summer of 1975, UDT launched a military coup in a bid to seize power (Taylor, 1999). In response, FRETILIN formed a military wing, FALINTIL (Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste – The Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor), and launched a counter-coup on 20 August 1975. UDT was soon defeated militarily. By September, FRETILIN was already in control of most of the territory.

The Indonesian invasion and the East Timorese Resistance

This provided the Indonesian government with the pretext that they needed for an invasion. In December 1975, Indonesian troops invaded and occupied East Timor. The occupation lasted for 24 years. For the first decade, resistance to the occupation was organised and sustained by FRETILIN and FALINTIL. The mid-1980s finally saw a rapprochement between FRETILIN and UDT. In March 1986, they formed a national resistance front called CNT (Convergência Nacionalista Timorense – The Timorese Nationalist Convergence) (TAPOL, 1986). This united resistance front grew in size and significance over the remaining years of the struggle against the occupation, including not only political parties but other groups and individuals from within the Catholic church and from civil society. This broader front was reconstituted in 1998 as CNRT (Consello Nacional da Resistencia Timorense – National Council for Timorese Resistance).

As we have already indicated, the Resistance was organised on three broad fronts: first, on an armed front, up in the mountains of East Timor; secondly, on a clandestine front in the urban areas of the East Timorese territory and in cities in Indonesia; and, thirdly, on a diplomatic front outside East Timor. As we will show later in this paper, the role of each of these fronts varied in different phases of the Resistance, with one or more of the fronts being the main focus of activity. This had significant implications for the nature and scope of the literacy practices bound up with struggle.

The Transformation of the Sociolinguistic Ecology of East Timor

The languages of East Timor

Since pre-colonial times, multilingualism and cultural diversity have been salient characteristics of the population of the island of Timor. Estimates vary as to the total number of languages spoken, depending on how different local varieties get classified – as languages or dialects. Hull (1993, 1998) lists 14 languages and Hayek (2000) notes that estimates range from 15 to 20. The most widely spoken is Tetum. It is spoken as a vernacular language in two regions on the island. In the early colonial period, the Portuguese colonisers and Catholic missionaries used Tetum as a lingua franca. After Dili was established as the capital in the mid-18th century, a new contact variety of Tetum began to emerge. This incorporated the basic structures of Tetum and a substantial body of Portuguese lexis. According to Hull (1996), this contact variety, known as

Tetum-Praça (literally Tetum of the [town] square) or Tetum-Dili, was well established as the main language of the capital city by the early 20th century.

The Portuguese colonial era and the imposition of Portuguese

For over four and half centuries, from 1516 to 1975, Portuguese was the sole official language of the colonial order in East Timor. It was used in all institutions in the colonial administration. It was also the sole medium of instruction in schools run by the Catholic Church. These were organised primarily for the children of Portuguese colonialists and *mestiços*. There was very little in the way of educational provision for native East Timorese until the 20th century and then only in the three decades from the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s (Themudo Barata, 1998).

In 1940, a Concordat was signed between the Vatican and the Portuguese government, paving the way for the development of church schools. This tied the Catholic Church more closely to the implementation of the policies of the government in Lisbon and as Smythe (2004: 35) remarks: 'The church ... became the principal agent of Portugal's ''civilising mission'''. A Catholic education also became a route towards higher social status and/or higher education in Portugal. A significant number of the future founders of East Timor's political parties had attended a Catholic school or seminary. Some had had the opportunity to enter universities in Portugal.

The Indonesian occupation and the imposition of Bahasa Indonesia

From 1975 onwards, the Indonesian government imposed Bahasa Indonesia as the sole official language across East Timor. Bahasa Indonesia was used in all dimensions of institutional life. Street names, public signs, the names of schools and of public buildings were all changed.

Bahasa Indonesia was also imposed as the sole medium of instruction in schools. There was also a rapid expansion in the number of schools. It was estimated that, by the mid-1980s, there was a primary school in every village (Nicolai, 2004). Alongside the expansion in state-provided primary education, there was a significant growth in provision at secondary level. Sources vary but the available statistics suggest that, by the end of the 1990s, the secondary sector was transformed from one which offered minimal provision for the children of urban elites in the mid 1970s to one in which well over a third of the children had access to junior high school and about 20% to senior high school (Nicolai, 2004). A university was established in Dili in 1992, although this was not able to cater for the demand for tertiary-level education. By that time, about 50% of all secondary school students in East Timor went on to university in Indonesia (Nicolai, 2004).

This transformation of the education system in East Timor, from 1975 to 1999, under the Indonesian occupation, had far reaching consequences. Education was clearly used by the occupying power as an agency of social and ideological control, especially in the secondary school context, with students having to prepare for further study in Indonesia. Moreover, it had profound consequences for the shaping of the language and literacy repertoire of a whole generation of students. Neither Portuguese nor Tetum were

included in the language curriculum, only Bahasa Indonesia, with English being taught as a foreign language.

The Indonesian occupation and the spread of Tetum

The massive social upheavals brought about by the Indonesian invasion and occupation also led to the rapid spread of Tetum. The dispersal of local populations speaking different languages created a need for a common language: many people moved up into the mountains of East Timor, immediately after the invasion, and lived or fought alongside people who spoke other East Timorese languages. A lingua franca was also needed when the civilians were forced to abandon the mountain strongholds of the armed front and were moved by the Indonesian forces into strategic hamlets. Tetum thus became a key language of communication in the urban centres of East Timor, as well as in the mountains.

Another increasingly significant social space for the use of Tetum was the Catholic Church. There was a steady growth in the size of Catholic congregations in East Timor during the Indonesian occupation, especially after the Church began to play a role in supporting the East Timorese Resistance (Cabral, 2002). The church became an important institutional base for the use and cultivation of Tetum, including literacy in Tetum. Throughout the occupation, mass was held in Tetum and in Portuguese, as well as in Bahasa Indonesia. Also, during this period, the Catholic liturgy was translated into Tetum (Smythe, 2004).

Writing the Resistance: Four Broad Phases of the Struggle

In this section of the paper, we now take a more detailed look at each phase of the Resistance to the Indonesian occupation, showing how and why activities on particular fronts – the armed front, the clandestine front and the diplomatic front – were more or less prominent during each phase. We then illustrate the nature and scope of the literacy practices that were embedded in these activities.

The first phase of the Resistance: 1975–1978

During this phase, the Resistance movement was primarily conducted on two broad fronts: the armed front and the diplomatic front. The armed front constituted the core of the Resistance. FALINTIL forces and FRETILIN political leaders and cadres retreated to the mountain bases they had prepared in anticipation of the invasion. Thousands of civilians also fled into the mountains seeking refuge behind FALINTIL lines (Taylor, 1999). At the time, the diplomatic front consisted only of a few members of Central Committee of FRETILIN (CCF). They were also dispersed across continents, with some in Portugal, some in Australia and some in Mozambique and Angola. They were only able to operate with support from former Portuguese colonies in Africa, which had now become independent countries. Most of their diplomatic efforts focused on the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly in New York, and on ensuring the adoption of UN Resolutions on East Timor.

Ten UN Resolutions in all were adopted condemning the Indonesian invasion of East Timor and calling for the withdrawal of Indonesian troops (TAPOL, 1991).

The first phase of the Resistance on the armed front came to an end on 22 November 1978, with the fall of the stronghold on Mount Matebian. The Resistance suffered heavy losses, including key members of the FRETILIN leadership and FALINTIL commanders. The civilian population behind FALINTIL lines had already been forced to 'surrender' to the occupying forces from September 1977 onwards following an Indonesian military operation which involved saturation bombing of the mountain areas (Cabral, 2002).

Literacy on the armed front and behind the lines

With FALINTIL forces providing a line of defence for the civilian population up in the mountains of East Timor from December 1975 onwards, FRETILIN political activists were, at first, able to continue with some of the education and welfare programmes initiated in 1974, during their election campaign. For example, they continued the literacy campaign initiated by António Carvarinho, one of the members of CCF. This campaign focused on the teaching of literacy through the medium of Tetum and was based on a handbook produced by FRETILIN in 1974. The handbook was entitled *Rai Timor, Rai ita nian* (the Land of Timor is our Land) and it incorporated some of the ideas about literacy and some of the teaching approaches first developed by Paulo Freire in Brazil in the 1960s (Taylor, 1991).

Alongside the adult literacy campaign, schools, medical care and communal gardens were organised behind FALINTIL lines. Literacy was embedded in different ways in these activities. FRETILIN cadres also attended regular sessions of Formação Política (Political Education). Each of these lasted a month, with most of the sessions being devoted to presentations in Portuguese by FRETILIN leaders on aspects of political thought and social change or to discussion sessions. Participants generally took notes during these sessions (personal experience, Estêvão Cabral).

Literacy also entered the lives of those 'behind the lines' through the songs and poems that were sung or recited on more light hearted occasions. These had been written by members of the Resistance. In 1974, each political party had its own songs, some written in Tetum and some in Portuguese. One of the first members of CCF to be killed during the invasion was Francisco Borja da Costa, an East Timorese poet. In addition to writing poetry about East Timor in Portuguese, he had also written the words of several songs for FRETILIN in Tetum, along with the national anthem.

In the early days of the armed Resistance, a postal service operated between the six 'sectores' (Sectors) behind the lines. This postal service was operated by a network of couriers known as 'estafetas'. The main purpose of this postal service was to maintain coordination across the 'sectores'. Military commanders exchanged written proposals for military strategy. Political leaders and FRETILIN cadres circulated policy documents and convened conferences behind the lines as well as holding meetings with members of the clandestine front in the urban areas. Most of these documents, reports and letters were

written in Portuguese. Although the writers were highly literate, they found themselves taking on new ways of reading and writing, such as compiling reports on troop movements, on military engagements or reconnaissance activities. They also took on new styles of writing in correspondence associated with the Resistance, using terms of address like 'Camarada' (Comrade) and using a *nom de guerre* for security reasons.

Much of the reading and writing that was done up in the mountains during the first phase of the Resistance was done by hand, although some typewriters were available. These had either been taken to the mountains by FRETILIN cadres or by supporters in local urban centres. They had been acquired from the empty offices of the Portuguese administration. There were, inevitably, occasional shortages of paper, so people resorted to strategies like using the back of propaganda leaflets dropped by Indonesian aircraft. Supplies of paper and other stationery, along with typewriters, did however come through periodically from the clandestine front.

Communication with supporters in the towns of East Timor was very difficult at this stage. It was even more difficult to maintain communication with the members of the External Delegation of FRETILIN (EDF). The Resistance had occasional access to radio communication but the main means of communication was handwritten or typed documents. Most of the writing was done in Portuguese and it constituted a significant part of the work of the Resistance.

Literacy on the diplomatic front

In this initial phase of the Resistance, the EDF relied primarily on correspondence and exchange of written reports, policy proposals and documents sent abroad. They also communicated by telephone over huge distances and travelled to meetings. They took on a range of diplomatic work in the early years, addressing a wide range of audiences. They did this primarily in Portuguese, though some members developed considerable facility with English and French. They gained considerable experience of lobbying at the UN, making contacts with political parties in different countries and with government representatives, preparing presentations for political party congresses, for UN meetings and for intergovernmental conventions. As they took on this diplomatic work, they were caught up in a complex web of literacies and in writing and interpreting different kinds of official texts, written in different languages.

The second phase: 1978–1981

The realities of the second phase of the Resistance, after the fall of the stronghold in Mount Matebian, were much starker. This was a difficult and dangerous moment for the Resistance. Many leaders had been killed on the armed front and the main focus was on survival. Despite these overwhelming odds, new political and military structures were formed. The Resistance was substantially reorganised under the leadership of Xanana Gusmão, one of the three surviving members of CCF. FALINTIL was restructured for guerrilla-style warfare, with smaller and more mobile units. Communication with the clandestine front in the urban areas was now much easier, as a large

proportion of the FALINTIL fighters and the political activists behind the lines had 'surrendered' to the Indonesian forces and were relocated in the towns and strategic hamlets.

The main role of the political leadership of FRETILIN was now to coordinate communication between the armed front, the clandestine networks in the urban areas and the diplomatic front. A FRETILIN conference was convened behind the lines in 1981. Details of policy decisions taken at the Conference were sent, in writing, out of East Timor. This was a pattern of communication that was to be repeated throughout the years of the Resistance, with policy decisions taken within the core of the Resistance having the greatest authority and being transmitted through the clandestine networks to those on the diplomatic front.

Literacies of resistance inside East Timor

During this phase of the Resistance, literacy began to mediate the political work of FRETILIN leaders and activists on the clandestine front in new ways, as they became the main conduit for the flow of information about policy decisions and about the changing military and political situation under the occupation. Most of the new documentation was produced in Portuguese. Initially, those who had received a Portuguese-medium education took the lead in the production of these texts.

Literacy in community contexts outside East Timor

In addition to their diplomatic work, members of the External Delegation of FRETILIN who were based in Portugal and in Australia became increasingly involved in community work, because of the growing size of the refugee communities in both countries. UDT engaged in similar community work in the two countries. They organised political meetings, fundraising activities and cultural events, they produced bulletins on East Timor and they coordinated different organisations within the party, such as a youth group and a women's group. Literacy in Tetum and Portuguese mediated this community work in Portugal, while English was increasingly used in Australia, alongside Tetum and Portuguese.

The third phase: 1981–1989

This was the phase when participation in the Resistance widened considerably. This paved the way for the rapprochement between UDT and FRETILIN and the establishment of a new coalition (CNT), in 1986, in Lisbon. The forging of this nationalist convergence facilitated coordination between the parties within the clandestine and diplomatic fronts. It also facilitated the participation of a wider range of individuals and organisations, including members of the Catholic clergy. Activity on both fronts continued to expand. The status of the armed front now changed. The FALINTIL fighters were no longer known as the 'Guerrilheiros da FRETILIN' (the FRETILIN guerrillas) but as the armed forces of the National Resistance.

Literacy linking fronts and bearing witness

As the involvement of the Resistance widened and activities on the clandestine and diplomatic fronts expanded, a wider a range of literacies in

different languages were drawn upon. Many of the literacy activities that we have described for the second phase continued, and, in addition, there was a new preoccupation, within the clandestine front, with compiling and sending out of East Timor reports on human rights violations. As more battalions of Indonesian troops were stationed in the territory and as security tightened, the conditions of the occupation worsened. The reports on human rights violations were written in Tetum and Portuguese and, as the new generation of students educated through the medium of Bahasa Indonesia were drawn into the Resistance, the reports were also written in Bahasa Indonesia. During this period, there was also increasing correspondence to and from NGOs and church bodies outside East Timor. This took place mostly in Portuguese or English. The NGOs provided support with the process of producing written testimonies, based on interviews with refugees, and in presenting these texts, with members of the East Timorese Resistance, at the UN Commission for Human Rights (UNHCR) in Geneva.

The fourth phase: 1989–1999

In the final decade of the struggle against the Indonesian occupation, FALINTIL served a primarily symbolic function, embodying the principles: Resistir é Vencer (To Resist is to Win). The activity on the armed front was restricted to occasional engagement with the occupying forces. The core of the Resistance remained within East Timor, on the armed and clandestine fronts and, as before, policy decisions within the core carried the greatest authority. The main activities of the Resistance now took place on the clandestine and diplomatic fronts. These fronts now had widening communication networks as the conflict was internationalised.

The most significant breakthrough in terms of the international dimension of the conflict in East Timor came in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to the events inside East Timor. These included the demonstrations organised by the clandestine front on the occasion of the visit of the Pope to East Timor and the US ambassador's visit and then, in 1991, the massacre at Santa Cruz cemetery of students involved in a demonstration. These events were the first to be photographed and filmed by Western journalists and gave rise to intense interest in East Timor on the part of the international media. This, in turn, raised public awareness of the situation in East Timor worldwide and led to the formation of a plethora of new NGOs and local solidarity groups, which were eventually coordinated into an international network. This also put pressure on the Portuguese government to act and to provide diplomatic and economic support for the East Timorese Resistance Front (for further details see Cabral, 2002, 2003).

Images of writing behind the lines

In the 1990s, images of the Resistance inside East Timor began to circulate as equipment became more readily available and as more journalists ventured into the territory. Photographs, such as those below, were sent out via the clandestine front. These are taken from Estêvão Cabral's archive. Figures 1–4 show photos taken between the mid 1980s and early 1990s, on the armed front.

Figure 1 Xanana Gusmão, leader of the resistance, writing behind the lines

The first photograph (Figure 1) is a close-up of Xanana Gusmão. He is writing by hand on a bamboo table with the gun propped up against the table. This photograph appeared on the cover of a book: *Timor Leste-Um Povo, uma Pátria* (*East Timor – A People, a Country*) published in 1994 in Portugal, two years after his capture by Indonesian troops in 1992. This book is a collection of Xanana Gusmão's written work. He continued to write and to send letters when he was in prison in Jakarta. It is interesting to see how literacy is foregrounded in this photograph in representing the leader of the Resistance.

The second photograph (Figure 2) is one of David Alex, one of the military commanders of FALINTIL. The photograph was taken in the mid 1980s in the

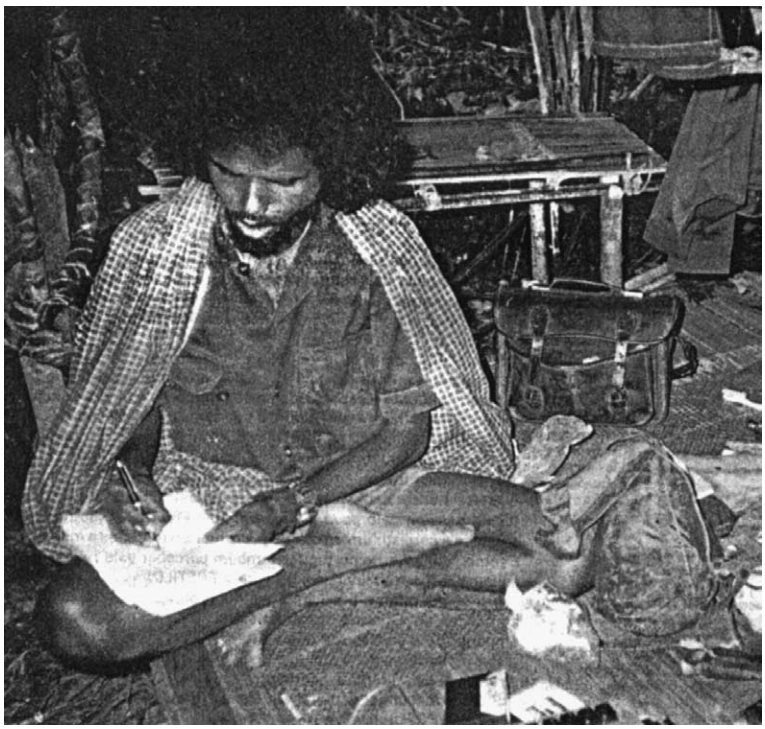

Figure 2 David Alex, a FALINTIL commander, writing behind the lines

Figure 3 A literacy event shared between two FALINTIL members, behind the lines

Figure 4 Two FALINTIL members discussing a text behind the lines

mountains of East Timor and sent to Portugal. Max Stahl, a journalist who met him in October 1990, wrote the following to Estêvão Cabral (David Alex's cousin), on his return to the UK: 'David has a short wave radio and an audio-recorder supplied by the clandestine front. He listens to the BBC Portuguese section everyday and records news broadcasts'.[1] In this photograph, David Alex is sitting on the floor and writing on his knees despite having a makeshift table at his disposition. In front of him there is an audio-recorder with a cassette on top. Behind him, there is a bag. David regularly sent out reports on Indonesian troop movements and on the military situation. Writing was a central part of his Resistance work.

The third and fourth photographs (Figures 3 and 4) show shared literacy events up in the mountains. The third photograph shows two members of FALINTIL engaged in a literacy event, with one acting as a scribe. The fourth shows one FALINTIL fighter discussing a text with another. In both photographs, other people are clearly involved in the events, but they are only partly visible. Photographs such as these, made possible by the supply of new equipment to the armed front in the mountains of East Timor, contributed to the visibility of the armed front and to the consolidation of its symbolic role. Literacy was often represented in such photographs.

Text production and political participation on the clandestine front

With the expansion of the clandestine front came a diversification of literacy practices. The Indonesian treatment of prisoners had, by now, became a central preoccupation. Letters and messages were sent out from prisons in East Timor and Indonesia and reports on human rights violations were compiled. These were written in different languages, in Tetum, Portuguese and Bahasa Indonesia depending on the language and literacy repertoire of the writer or

the identity of the intended addressee. East Timorese outside East Timor who received these reports played a key role in passing them on to human rights organisation such as Amnesty International and sometimes acted as translators. Reports on human rights violations make up the largest proportion of texts in Estêvão Cabral's corpus. Other texts include appeals or petitions written on behalf of individual prisoners or particular groups. These kinds of texts had been jointly produced and had been signed by a number of people. For example, there is an appeal addressed to Hilary Clinton, which was written in 1993 by 48 East Timorese mothers. The appeals of behalf of prisoners all have lists of names attached.

The joint production of texts, such as petitions, clearly provided a means of political participation for individuals and groups. The production of news bulletins about developments in East Timor served the same purpose. One of the texts in Estêvão Cabral's corpus is one of four issues of a bulletin produced by a group of students involved in the clandestine Resistance in the early 1990s. The bulletin had a Tetum title: *Funu* (meaning 'war'), but it was written in Portuguese. Attached to the issue is a version in Bahasa Indonesia. This provides evidence of the increasing importance of translation as a Resistance literacy practice. The East Timorese students producing the bulletin had been at secondary school, studying through the medium of Portuguese, when the invasion took place. They had spent several years in the mountains within the armed front and had then moved into the clandestine network. After this, they had found ways of continuing their studies through Bahasa Indonesia at Indonesian universities. They spoke Tetum to each other and were most comfortable when writing Portuguese. However, they needed to produce a version of their bulletin in Bahasa Indonesia to address two audiences: a younger generation of East Timorese students in Indonesia who had been educated through the medium of Bahasa Indonesia and Indonesian students who supported the East Timorese struggle for independence.

Reading, writing and translating on the diplomatic front

During the final decade of the struggle, the East Timorese Resistance abroad grew considerably in size. Different groups now specialised in different types of activity, using textual resources in different ways. Those in the leadership were primarily involved in international diplomacy and in preparing for independence (for example writing a draft Constitution for an independent East Timor). Others worked with the leadership in liaising with the clandestine front in East Timor, in dealing with the media, NGOs and church bodies and in putting out press releases and news bulletins. Yet others were involved in documenting the history of the struggle and providing in-depth analysis through the publication of articles in the media and in academic journals. A few members of the leadership wrote books in Portuguese or English (Araújo, 1977; Ramos Horta, 1986; Xanana Gusmão, 1994).

These different groups came together at meetings where political participation took place through talk about texts. Examples of texts of this kind are also represented in Estêvão Cabral's collection. They include: policy documents, reports on and analysis of the political situation in East Timor, minutes of key meetings, the draft Constitution for the future nation of East Timor. All of these

internal documents, produced for readers within the Resistance movement, were written in Portuguese. Portuguese was also used in documents that marked key events in the history of the Resistance. For example, two other texts in Estêvão Cabral's collection are: (1) the declaration made by António João Gomes da Costa (Ma-Huno Bulere Karataiano), when he took over as commander of FALINTIL after the capture of Xanana Gusmão; (2) a message sent by Xanana, from prison in Jakarta, in April 1998, to the first national convention of the Resistance held in Peniche, Portugal. This message was read out to the delegates at the conference.

In communication outside of Resistance networks, the literacy practices became more multilingual in nature. With the internationalisation of the conflict, those outside East Timor were increasingly positioned as translators of texts, originally written in Tetum, Portuguese or Bahasa Indonesia, into languages as diverse as English, Dutch, French, Japanese and Swedish. Also, as we have already indicated, the advent of new technology completely changed the nature of communication by the Resistance and within the Resistance itself. Thus, for example, the production of paper copies of bulletins on East Timor was, in the early 1990s, complemented by the creation of an electronic bulletin board by Green Net. In addition, the East Timorese Resistance now had access to computers and to electronic mail. In 1993, the clandestine network was supplied with a laptop and was trained in the use of encrypting procedures. From this time onwards, the members of the clandestine front were able to communicate with greater ease and greater speed with colleagues on the diplomatic front.

Literacies in and for the Resistance

Constituting, sustaining and representing the struggle

As we have endeavoured to show in this paper, literacy played a significant role in constituting, sustaining and representing the Resistance. It was embedded, in different ways, in political, organisational and cultural practices but also gave these practices significance. Reading and writing were not the only means of communicating within Resistance networks or of representing the struggle. As we have noted, when audio and video equipment became available, audio and video communication was also employed, but written language remained one of the principal communicative resources available to the Resistance.

Literacy mediated the struggle in a number of different ways. First, it made it possible for members of the Resistance to communicate over considerable geographic distances and in difficult conditions: across mountain ranges, between the urban areas of East Timor and the mountains, and within diaspora stretching from East Timor to Australia, Africa and to Portugal. Second, literacy facilitated the organisational practices and record-keeping of the Resistance. Third, writing was a means of creative expression, particularly the composing and performance of songs and anthems. These songs and anthems helped to cultivate solidarity within the movement. Fourth, it made it possible to communicate with and represent the Resistance movement to

different audiences outside the Resistance. These audiences became larger and increasingly diverse as time went on. Fifth, literacy played a key role in documenting particular events and in contributing to the building of an archive of the Resistance. Sixth, literacy mediated political participation, particularly when texts were jointly produced or prepared with a view to opening up debate or to taking the movement in new directions. And, last but not least, literacy was one of the means of engaging in international diplomacy.

Diverse textual resources and languages with different symbolic and strategic value

Our account has also drawn attention to the complex and multifaceted nature of the literacy practices associated with the political work on different fronts. Starting as we did from Estêvão Cabral's corpus of texts, this aspect of the role of literacy in the Resistance became immediately apparent. Table 1 provides an overview of all the types of texts and the different written genres represented in the corpus.

Table 1 shows how literacy practices differed across the different Resistance fronts. The table also shows the multilingual nature of the literacy practices of the East Timorese Resistance. Particular languages were used for particular purposes and, in this way, the languages took on particular meanings and values. Tetum was the main lingua franca and a unifying language. It was used in informal correspondence and in email, in its different varieties. It was also used in composing songs and anthems. Portuguese was used for most of the formal internal political affairs of the Resistance. This extensive use of Portuguese to 'write the Resistance' and, in the later years, to prepare the ground for Independence transformed the symbolic value of the language from that of a code solely associated with the Portuguese colonial order. This gradual redefinition of Portuguese by the East Timorese, in opposition to Bahasa Indonesia, is similar to the process described in South Africa by Peirce (1989, 1990: 108): a process that led to English being defined, in opposition to Afrikaans, as a 'People's English'.

Inevitably, those who had access to Portuguese literacy during the last decades of Portuguese colonialism were those who took a leading role in the production of texts in Portuguese. But they also chose to write in Tetum and made it possible for others to do so. The two languages were used in tandem.

Changes in literacy practices and modes of communication over time

As we have seen in this paper, the political, economic and cultural conditions of the East Timorese struggle changed substantially over time and this ushered in significant changes in literacy practices, particularly on the clandestine and diplomatic fronts. We drew attention above to the shift towards greater use of Bahasa Indonesia, as a new generation became involved in the Resistance, and greater use of English, as the question of East Timor took a higher profile in international politics. External communication became more multilingual and translation assumed more importance as a literacy practice. We have tried to capture this particular change in the

Table 1 The diverse textual and linguistic resources drawn upon by the East Timorese Resistance on different fronts

Written genres	*Resistance fronts*		
	Armed front	*Clandestine front*	*Diplomatic front*
Letters between members	T/P	T/P	T/P
Email messages	-	T/P	T/P
Letters to/from prison	-	T/P	T/P
Records e.g. equipment, food supplies	T/P	T/P	T/P
Song lyrics and anthems	T/P	T/P	T/P
Announcements and declarations	T/P	T/P	T/P
Policy documents	P	P	P
Rules and regulations of organisations within the Resistance (e.g. student bodies)	P	P	P
Draft constitution for the future nation	P	P	P
Speeches and messages to East Timorese in the diaspora	P	P	P
Presentations at conventions of East Timorese political parties/National Resistance Front	P	P	P
Reports on the military situation	P	P	P/E Trans*
Reports on and analyses of the political situation	P	P	P/E Trans*
Testimonies (to NGOs, at the UN)	-	T/P	P/E Trans
Reports on human rights violations	T/P	T/P/BI	P/E Trans*
Appeals and petitions	T/P	T/P/E	P/E Trans*
Letters and circulars to East Timorese communities in the diaspora	-	-	T/P (E in Australia)
Leaflets and posters related to events in East Timorese diaspora	-	-	T/P (E in Australia)
Responses to 'interview' questions from NGOs, journalists	P	P/E	P/E Trans*
Bulletins	-	P/E/BI	P/E Trans*
Press releases	-	-	P/E Trans*
Letters to newspapers	-	-	P/E Trans*
Leaflets and posters for a wider audience			P/E Trans*
Correspondence with the UN, EU, political parties in Portugal, Australia, etc.	P	P/E	P/E Trans*

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Written genres	***Resistance fronts***		
	Armed front	***Clandestine front***	***Diplomatic front***
Correspondence with NGOs, church bodies	P	P	P/E Trans*
Presentations at other political congresses, governmental functions, intergovernmental conferences, United Nations committees	-	-	P/E Trans*
Presentations at academic conferences	-	-	P/E Trans*
Articles (in newspapers & academic journals)	-	-	P/E Trans*
Books	-	-	P/E Trans*

Languages: T, Tetum; P, Portuguese; E, English; BI, Bahasa Indonesia
Trans, some translation work involved
*Additional languages used e.g. Dutch, French, Japanese and Swedish

literacy practices of the Resistance, in Table 1, through the use of asterisks, in Column 4 – the column devoted to the texts produced on the diplomatic front.

The other major change in literacy practices came with the advent of new technologies. As mobile phones, fax machines and computers became more available to the Resistance, communication across the East Timorese diaspora was greatly facilitated. East Timorese on the diplomatic front were able to react swiftly to events within East Timor and make human rights violations more 'visible' through the international media. The acquisition and use of new digital literacies was part of a continuing process of change in the literacy histories of individual East Timorese. They added new languages and literacies to their repertoire as they opened up new means of 'writing the Resistance'.

Concluding Comments

In choosing a title for this paper, our intention was to foreground the active agency involved in the reading, writing and uses of texts during the long years of the Resistance in East Timor. In our account we have tried to document some of the specific ways in which East Timorese men and women, inside and outside East Timor, drew on literacy in different languages while taking and making places for themselves on different Resistance Fronts. We have also shown how they adapted their literacy repertoires and practices as the nature and conditions of the Resistance changed over time.

The struggle for Independence in East Timor lasted almost a quarter of a century. The corpus of texts gathered by Estêvão Cabral spanned this whole period and his lived experience of the circumstances in which different kinds of texts were used and produced enabled us to build this historiographical account. The value of such accounts lies in the way they enable us to get closer to real historical actors and to the power dynamics of social and

political movements, to the ways in which agentive spaces are created, in different social and political conditions, and to the ways in which the symbolic value of different languages and literacies gets defined and redefined. As Blommaert (1999: 8) has observed: 'A study of language which aims at dealing adequately with power has to rely on the precise identification of conditions, actors, structures and patterns over time'. It is through the building of comparative, historiographical accounts of literacy practices in different political movements that we are most likely to be able to make real headway in meeting Lankshear's (1987) challenge and developing a deeper understanding of the political significance of literacy and its ideological character.

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Note

1. Max Stahl is the British journalist who filmed the Santa Cruz massacre on 12 November 1991. He met both Xanana Gusmão and David Alex several times before the massacre took place. His meetings with the two men were arranged by the clandestine front.

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