

# **Hide and Seek in the Deer's Trap:**

## **Language Concealment and Linguistic Camouflage in Timor Leste**

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### Abstract

This contribution discusses the original language of East Timor's easternmost sub district Tutuala. Its speakers do not have a name for their language nor for their own ethnic identity. Nowadays, all inhabitants speak Fataluku, 'the correct speech', a non-Austronesian language of which the introduction in the region was only completed in the 60-ies of the 20th Century.

Their original language became known in the literature through its Fataluku exonym Lovaia epulu 'language of the Civet Cat's Oil' (Lovaia epulu). The location called Lovaia later became known as the 'Deer's Trap' (Porlamanu) of which the inhabitants were referred to in Fataluku as Makuva 'idiots'.

This paper intends to provide an anthropological linguistic insight in the strategies with which speakers attempt to safeguard their language from extinction in a society that only acknowledges one 'correct speech'.