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**Timor-Leste: Finding appropriate spaces for indigenous vernacular languages in education**

One of the most controversial challenges facing East Timorese education planners concerns the role of languages in the curriculum. Low literacy levels amongst schoolchildren have prompted debates in educational circles about the effectiveness of using a dominant language as sole medium of instruction. In this paper I discuss recent policy initiatives advocating mother tongue-based multilingual education in East Timorese schools. Questions of sustainability and transfer into classroom practice remain critical. The focus of this paper is the means by which appropriate educational spaces can be found and sustained for the indigenous vernacular languages of Timor-Leste. [95 words]