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State-Formation Conflicts with a Linguistic Component:

Comparative Analysis of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia

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“To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war”

(Winston Churchill, 1954)

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List of Acronyms

AL	Awami League
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BRN	*Barisan Revolusi Nasional* (National Revolutionary Front)
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
Fretilin	*Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* (Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor)
GMIP	*Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Patani* (Patani Islamic Mujahidin Movement)
IMLD	International Mother Language Day
IR	International Relations
IYIL	International Year of Indigenous Languages
LESC	Language, Education and Social Cohesion [Initiative]
LHR	Linguistic Human Rights
LPP	Language Policy and Planning
LWC	Language of Wider Communication
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
PCJSS	*Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti* (United People's Organisation of the CHT)
PM	Patani-Malay
PMT-MLE	Patani Malay-Thai Multilingual Education
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organisation
SBPAC	Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VOC	*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Dutch East India Company)

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1. Introduction

Declarations of war, the launching of military operations, the terrorist discourse, nationalist narratives, hate speech, third-party mediation, or dialogues for peace: languages are intertwined with all aspects of human life and without them these and other International Relations (IR) events could not take place. Yet, the connections between languages and politics, and akin disciplines, particularly IR and the subfields of International Security and Peace Studies, have been largely overlooked if not neglected.

Nonetheless, languages constitute functional means of communication, central identity markers around which group belonginess may be decided, and a way to understand each other, to empathise. They are intimately linked with the political realm, in terms of conflict and peace. In this regard, the so-called language conflicts have been object of analysis of contact linguistics, and the power of languages to unite or divide peoples has been widely acknowledged throughout history. Meanwhile, in IR, owing to the changing nature of conflicts in the 21st century, state-formation has become one of the most compelling issues at the global level and a major challenge to international security, for these conflicts entail an endeavour to create a new nation-state, usually resorting to violence and claiming countless lives, hence defying the IR status quo and the established world order. A combination of both is best exemplified by the large number of language conflicts in the superdiverse region of Southeast Asia, where violent state-formation has been a constant.

In this sense, this dissertation is built around two pillars. Firstly, the author's enthusiasm for languages, interest in intercultural communication, and eagerness to understand the world from a linguistic perspective are the main motivations behind the selection of this topic. Secondly, a concern for security issues, such as conflicts, the need to address violence in societies, and engagement with Southeast Asia have also proved decisive in this process. The merger of these two pillars captures the essence of the author's studies in International Relations and Translation and Interpreting by providing a transdisciplinary approach cemented in the human rights framework and committed to social justice.

1.1. Research Objectives

On this basis, the aim is to shed light on the complex and underexplored gap between languages and IR with regards to 'state-formation language conflicts,' wishing to contribute to scientific research and to broaden horizons in different fields of study. For this purpose, a threefold objective is pursued:

(i) To determine the intricacies whereby a language conflict escalates into the violent extreme of state-formation: by identifying the underlying factors and inferring trends from the comparative analysis, it will be possible to understand the dynamics of language conflicts, and so, to propose different strategies to prevent future ones or to transform them through the political way.

(ii) To assess the role played by linguistic diversity[1] in state-formation language conflicts, especially in the context of globalisation, so as to discover the extent to which languages can contribute to de-escalate violence and promote peace.

(iii) To reflect upon the mere term of 'language conflict' and the extent to which it is a coherent designation taking into account the features of the object of study.

1.2. Research Questions

As such, the issues of concern and subsequent research questions to be addressed are as follows:

(i) Under what conditions do language conflicts emerge and escalate into violent state-formation conflicts?

(ii) Considering the homogeneity myth of the nation-state and the forces of globalisation nowadays,

    a. how does linguistic diversity affect the intensity of state-formation language conflicts?

    b. can linguistic diversity or communication techniques involving the use of various languages mitigate the violence of a conflict?

(iii) Do language conflicts emerge because of language or purely linguistic reasons? Is the term 'language conflict' accurate and coherent?

[1] Linguistic diversity will be here understood as diversity within one language (intralingual) and as diversity of languages (interlingual), as posited by M. Rahman (2019).

1.3. Hypotheses

Drawing from the research questions, the following hypotheses may be established:

H_1: If a language is imposed to a group, a language conflict will take place.

In politics and IR, imposition denotes a quest for power in order to dominate others and preserve the status quo. The cultural sphere, and particularly languages, are not exempted from this quest, for languages permeate all dimensions of life, given their social nature. When diversity is not embraced, for example, when a nation-state seeks to provide, or rather enforce, a common identity following an assimilationist language policy and planning (LPP) with the aim of imposing a language upon a group, then the latter will react by placing language as the primary identity marker of the group and will act according to the characteristics of the conflict setting.

It should be noted that an assimilationist LPP includes, but is not limited to, declaring official the language of the powerful group, issuing discriminatory legislation that prohibits language use in certain domains, forbidding a script or the incorporation of loanwords; and that it responds to the willingness of the nation-state to perpetuate the homogeneity myth upon which it is founded.

In this sense, the escalation of violence to the extreme of state-formation will depend upon multiple factors apart from the linguistic ones, including historical, socioeconomic or political aspects, among others, owing to the multicausal nature of conflicts. Thus, some language conflicts will take the shape of state-formation while others may inflict a lower degree of violence.

H_2: If H_1 is correct, linguistic diversity will not escalate the intensity of conflicts, but rather contribute to peace.

According to the Ethnologue (2019), it is estimated that around 7,000 identified languages are spoken in the world, which reflects the vast linguistic diversity of societies nowadays. If linguistic diversity were to escalate violence in language conflicts (or be their sole cause), more conflicts should have taken or should be taking place. In this regard and according to the first hypothesis, if language conflicts occur when a group imposes a language over another, conflict will manifest itself irrespective of the number and varieties of languages being spoken. In other words, homogeneous settings are not

exempted from entering into a language conflict and linguistically diverse nation-states may not necessarily experience language conflict. This is not to say that linguistically-diverse settings are more peaceful, but rather, that the multipolarity of these settings makes the quest for power and domination of one group over another more difficult. Hence, linguistic diversity can assure cooperation between different linguistic groups, and so, contribute to de-escalation.

Owing to the multicausal nature of conflicts, language and linguistic aspects will be just one more part of the conflict or even not the main cause, reason why conflict transformation through the political way (for example, through an accommodating LPP stance, the implementation of linguistic human rights, and similar initiatives) is necessary to reduce tensions, avoid violence, and promote peace.

1.4. Structure

Following this brief introduction, the State of the Art reviews relevant literature on the relationship between languages and conflict, identity, and globalisation, with a special focus on the construction of national identities in Southeast Asia. Subsequently, the Theoretical Framework analyses the role of languages in IR theories and additionally reflects upon the concept of power in different cultures. Once the foundational basis is presented, the Methodology section introduces the comparative analysis between Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia, as well as the variables to be assessed afterwards in the Analysis. The dissertation concludes with a series of final remarks and future research lines. Lastly, the Appendixes at the end of the paper include complementary information in general terms or specifically referring to the assessed countries[2].

2. State of the Art

2.1. Language and Conflict

As an essential foundation of human social behaviour (Chilton, 1997), languages can be defined as "social semiotic action" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 376) featuring both humanising and dehumanising traits (Gomes de Matos, 2014), thus lying at the heart of

[2] The term 'country' will be used as a synonym of 'nation-state' in order to avoid excessive repetition.

conflicts and being a critical component in conflict resolution (Kelly, Footitt, & Salama-Carr, 2019).

One of the most illustrative examples of the relationship between languages and conflicts can be observed by the mere understanding of what constitutes a conflict. According to Cargile, Giles, and Clément (1995), language plays an integral role in identifying and problematising divergences between groups, maintaining conflict by framing specific discourses and narratives, and putting an end to it, which points to the necessary articulation of conflict through language. In IR, conflicts, which are not systematically negative in nature due to their potential to make societies evolve, can be understood on the basis of competition for scarce resources between a minimum of two actors driven by real or perceived opposing opinions, needs, interests or values (Heywood, 2007; Wallensteen, 2002). They may be conducted peacefully or by means of force, in which case, violence can be understood as talk, as a form of communication, whereby groups ultimately seek to engage in a conversation to dialogue about the conflict, which reveals one more link between languages and politics (Lo Bianco, 2019).

As a research area, conflicts have received scholarly attention given their increased number in today's IR (Strand, Rustad, Urdal, & Nygård 2019). While interstate conflicts have abruptly diminished, and intrastate conflicts have tended to become internationalised, particularly worrisome for the current status quo are the prospects for state-formation conflicts, whereby a government opposes an identity-based and territorially-focused group which aims at creating a separate state (Strand, et al., 2019; Wallensteen, 2002). Nevertheless, from a linguistic perspective, language conflict research reveals the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework, among other aspects, to refer to the object of study: while 'language conflict' is the most extended term within the literature (cf. Dua, 1996; Inglehart & Woodward, 1967; Laitin, 2000; Lo Bianco, 2016a; Nelde, 1987; Vetter, 2015), academics also employ 'language in conflict' (cf. Chilton, 1997; Kelly et al., 2019; Smith, 1997) or both interchangeably (cf. Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003), alongside 'linguistic conflict' (cf. May, 2018).

Despite the lack of agreed definitions and terminology, language conflicts can be understood "not [as] a state of affairs where one linguistic system is in conflict with another system," but rather as constructed "in the person's consciousness," resulting

"from contact settings whose conditions are controversially evaluated by people who are involved" (Haarmann, 1990, pp. 2-3, quoted in Darquennes, 2015). As such, language conflicts reflect the dialectic relation between languages, users, and society at large (Nelde, 1987). In this regard, Haarmann's statement validates Nelde's Law, which asserts that there cannot be language conflict without language contact, as set out in the article *Language Contact Means Language Conflict*, since those situations in which conflict has not already manifested itself indicate its latent nature (Nelde, 1987).

Although this hypothesis was conceived within the traditional European focus of language contact and conflict research, it appears to be challenged in the region of Asia, known for its wide diversity in terms of cultures, religions and ethnicities. Laycock's analysis (1981, cited in Mühlhäuser, 2010) of Papua New Guinea demonstrates that the highlands, reporting the least linguistic diversity, obtained the highest levels of violent conflict, whereas the lowlands did not tend to resort to conflict 'despite' their diversity.

Language conflicts can be framed along the biological metaphor, whereby languages, in the same way as species, interact with their environments or ecosystems, which can set languages in competition for resources, threatening their ethnolinguistic vitality and, hence, the linguistic biodiversity as a whole, for it may result in language death (Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003; Mühlhäuser, 2010). Despite its limitations regarding intentional human action in conflict settings or criticism against its social Darwinist perspective expressed through linguistic determinism, the metaphor allows for a systematic conception of language conflict around the notion of competition, like in the field of IR (Mühlhäuser, 2010; Reagan, 2019).

In an attempt to establish a categorisation, Nelde (2017) distinguishes between natural and artificial language conflicts, defining the former as emerging from the traditional coexistence between 'majorities' and 'minorities'[3], for example Afrikaans and English in South Africa, and the latter as stemming from asymmetrical situations of multilingualism, as in the case of the European Union. Likewise, Dua (1996) classifies language conflicts along two axes formed on the basis of the functions of language. The

[3] It should be noted that the term 'minority' has negative connotations, potential for stigmatisation, and lacks an encompassing definition which overcomes different cultural understandings (Nelde, 1987). In addition, it does not effectively rely on a numeric proportion to identify minority languages, but rather, it becomes an instrument for nation-states to minoritize both groups and languages (Sallabank, 2012). Although this term may be here used, it is necessary to reflect on its meaning, as stated in Section 2.3.

first axis envisions, on the one hand, language as a symbol, in that it is a catalyst for various social processes, including nationality formation, as reflected by language loyalty and pride, for example, to a particular script; and, on the other hand, language as an instrument, an element of social mobility, to the extent that it is essential to thrive in societies. In the second axis, language is firstly understood as a resource, considering what language is (i.e., a writing system) and what language has (i.e., materials; cf. Anderson's print capitalism, 1991), and, secondly, as a source of power, according to language use, status, and prestige.

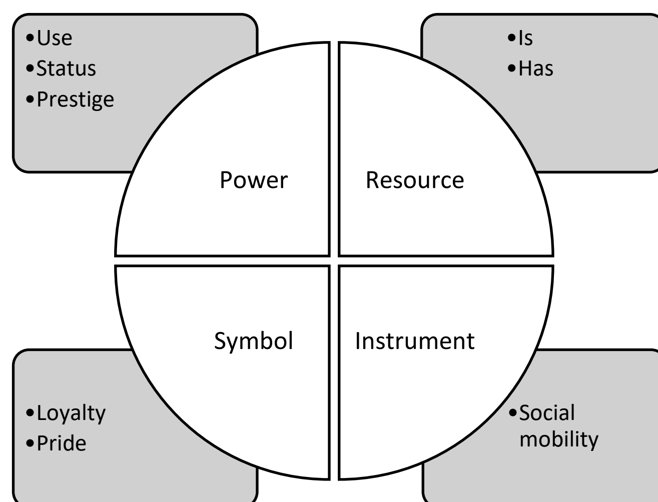

Figure 1: Nature and Scope of Language Conflicts according to the Functions of Language. Own elaboration from Dua (1996).

Overall, these four characteristics mobilise language for political purposes, thus creating the following types of language conflicts: (i) language of wider communication (LWC) versus national language, in which assumptions of a neutral and unifying LWC and a nationist-promoting national language should be avoided; (ii) national language versus minority language, where the distribution of power, the emergence of elites, and the demographic profile of languages should be studied as key factors; (iii) majority language versus minority language, owing to the powerful identification of groups with minority languages; and (iv) majority language versus majority language, in which two major languages compete (Dua, 1996).

For its part, causality is a contested issue within language conflict research, where two schools of thought can be identified. Some portray languages as a cause of conflict. As explained in Brown (2003), Bostock (1997) asserts that language grief "has been either overlooked or downplayed in its significance as a cause of ethnic conflict"

(p. 94), and Schiffman (1999) posits that linguistic diversity can be "a source of conflict" (p. 442), apart from showing concern for governments in post-independence South and Southeast Asian countries. While Lo Bianco (2016a) acknowledges the multicausal nature of conflicts, he maintains that "some conflicts are only about language" (p. 2) when studying the region of Southeast Asia, reason why he proposes a dual approach to language conflicts, whereby slow actions (language policies) and fast actions (hate speech) are addressed.

Yet, others contend that languages on their own are not a cause of conflict. Nelde (1987) notes that languages are at the surface of deep-rooted conflicts, self-servingly labelled as language conflicts for the interests of leaders in a nation-state world order. Indeed, Mattheier (1989, p. 1, quoted in Darquennes, 2015) further characterised language conflicts as *umgeleitete Sozialkonflikte* or diverted social conflicts; and Schmid (2001, p. 4 quoted in Darquennes, 2015) considers them as a proxy. For his part, Chilton (1997) resorts to the social function of language to state that it cannot be studied as an independent variable, and that linguistic grievances are "closely associated with other factors that can contribute to the justification of conflict and war, particularly if connected to discourses of nationalism, whether at the level of legitimate governments or at the level of nationalist and potentially secessionist movements" (p. 178). This line of argument is to be followed by Smith (1997), who postulates from an instrumental perspective that armed conflicts mobilise groups on the grounds of their ethnicity and language, often linked to the nation and nationalism, over questions of power and resources. In this sense, Grasa's (2014) structural, multiplicative, and triggering causes in conflict studies allow language to be classified as a multiplicative cause, that is, that comprising polarising forces which divide societies and ultimately transform radical thoughts into violent actions. In this view, language accelerates violence in a society which already suffers from political, economic, and social grievances.

Concerning manifestation, language conflicts can be expressed through peaceful or violent ways, but they should not be conceived of as negative in any case, as in the field of IR (Darquennes, 2015). In this regard, Laitin's statistical study (2000) rejects causality between language grievances and violent actions, inasmuch as minority groups tend to channel their demands through the political way. By asserting that "the greater

the language difference between the language of the minority and that of the dominant group, the *lower* is the probability of violence" (p. 99, emphasis in the original), he highlights the role of LPP[4] in mitigating the multiplier effect of languages in conflicts. LPP can be understood according to Spolsky's (2012) widely-accepted definition, who identifies three interrelated but separate elements in this field, namely, language practices of a given speech community, values and beliefs or ideologies assigned to language varieties, and efforts carried out by those in power to modify such practices. Despite being a valuable contribution from the political field, Mabry (2011) observes the risk of oversimplification in Laitin's game theory, realist approaches, and the statistical variables which may override the social nature of language (see Figure 2). Language data should be carefully interpreted to avoid misleading conclusions, as reflected in Laitin's 'language difference' variable (referring to differences between languages on the basis of vocabulary, grammar, script or phonetics), equated to 'language distance' (the relationship of languages as shown in the language tree), which leads to the study of the probability of violent conflict between more similar or dissimilar languages, rather than in cases of linguistic diversity (Mabry, 2011).

Contributions to language conflict research from the political sphere shed light on the study of state-formation conflicts. Language was an element in Lipset and Rokkan's theory of cleavages: while Lipset explored the relationship between literacy, language and class, and political and economic development, Rokkan studied the mobilisation of the periphery against the core thanks to the power of language (both cited in Pelinka, 2007). Inglehart and Woodward (1967), for their part, contended that language cleavages lead to political conflict, including separatism, depending on the level of economic and political development and on the extent to which language blocks social mobility, to conclude that linguistic pluralism does not necessarily lead to separatism. In their study, they identify language and religion as key identity markers, point of departure for DeVotta (2001) to attest to shifts between religion and language as primary and secondary markers to conveniently manipulate identities. In his view, language is a mobilising element either towards secession or towards redressing

[4] As the field is commonly referred to as 'LPP,' this term will be adopted, instead of differentiating between 'language policy' and 'language planning' (Stemper & King, 2017).

intergroup disparities in post-traditional societies. In addition, Williams (1984) identifies three preconditions for separatism, namely, a core territory; bases for community which provide for cultural infrastructure, where language and religion are included, and opposition groups. Furthermore, he holds that "linguistic concerns are often central to ethnic political activity, especially separatism" (p. 215), adding that language is a powerful mobiliser when the minority's identity is at stake, owing to the established correlation between nation and state. Likewise, Nelde (1987) introduced the variable of ethnicity in language conflicts to assert that they escalate when interests and values of a group in question are put at risk, to which external factors should be added. Whereas Dua (1996) also stressed the link between development and social change in language conflicts, he states that the symbolic power of language should be adequately addressed before assuming that minorities will assimilate, as asserted by Inglehart and Woodward (1967). Moreover, Dua (1996) affirms that language conflicts arise when differences are collectively interpreted as a source of divergence, that they can be materialised in movements or political parties, and that separatism and disintegration are the result of denied participation and justice.

2.2. Language and Identity

Beyond their instrumental function as tools of communication, languages fulfil the symbolic role of acting as an "emblem of groupness" (Edwards, 2009, p. 55), therefore being language conflicts deeply enmeshed with identity. According to Fearon (1999), identity can be defined with regards to its social and personal character. On the one hand, it is a social category, that is, "a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and (alleged) characteristic features or attributes" (p. 2). On the other hand, identity can be understood as a distinguishing feature which earns an individual's self-respect or dignity in the personal sphere. In this sense, language is a primary marker of groups, which construct their identity by "inventing similarity by downplaying difference" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 371), thus engaging in an *us versus them* discourse, whereby identity is defined in negative terms, that is, in opposition to what a group is not.

Within the framework of nation-states, language is not only linked to national and state identity, but also coupled with ethnicity, as stated above. Here, two chief

schools of thought can be identified. Primordialism endorses ethnic identity —which can be understood as a type of identity related to "a cluster of features or practices that are claimed by individuals or groups or assigned to them by other actors in a specific socio-historical, socio-political, and socioeconomic context" (García, 2012, p. 80)— as a biologically inherited feature, where belonging to a nation is defined through the exclusivity of *jus sanguinis* or by blood (Wright, 2012). The primordial conception of the nation derives from Romanticism and the German notions of *Volk* and *Volkgeist*, with scholars such as Herder, Fichte, and Humboldt portraying language as an essential component of the nation (Heywood, 2007). This branch contends that the nation precedes the state and hence embarks on a cultural understanding of the nation in which objective elements, including a common history, language or religion define belonginess (Meinecke, 1907, cited in Heywood, 2007). The institutionalised national and/or official language[5] is glorified to the extent that the creation of new nation-states is justified on the basis of distinct nations having distinct languages.

In contrast, the civic nationalist school of thought criticises the former against its essentialist traits, likened to a Whorfian or deterministic view of nations, pertaining to nineteenth-century European nationalist movements (García, 2012). Supporters of civic nationalism propose a political understanding of the nation based on subjective factors, such as self-awareness or personal feelings (Özkırımlı, 2005). Rooted in the spirit of the French Revolution, civic and political allegiance overrides cultural markers, since citizenship is obtained through *jus soli*, reason why it is perceived as a more inclusive branch (Heywood, 2007). Language, thus, is thought of as *a* marker of the nation instead of *the* marker.

However, both schools of thought concur in that they seek to establish or maintain statehood, because of the nation-state-based international world order formed after the Peace of Westphalia (Heywood, 2007). Although the Montevideo Convention (1933) identifies a state on the grounds of four attributes, namely, a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and a capacity to enter into

[5] It should be noted that an official language may not always coincide with the national language, which is usually declared official in nation-states (for example, Galician is a co-official language in Spain, but Spanish acts as the national language). In the political realm, nation-states tend to equate these two terms and use them interchangeably with 'state language' as well (Alvar, 1982).

relations with other states, the complexity of reality has demonstrated that multiple nations may be found within one state, reason why A. D. Smith (2001) asserts that it would be more accurate to refer to national-states or to state-nations. In addition, both branches remain equally set on homogeneity as a founding myth of the nation-state and portray nationalism's implicit paradox: it denies the principle of self-determination to other nations contained within a given state, thus rejecting heterogeneity, which, in Gellner's words (1983), constitutes an element of nationalism's self-deception. Hence, diversity, including linguistic diversity, is considered a threat to nationalism. Together with Gellner's modernist view on nationalism, Hobsbawm (1990, cited in Smith, 1997) also rejects the need for a nation to count with a (national) language so as to exist.

Following a constructivist rationale, Anderson's (1991) important contribution further defined a nation as "an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). Firstly, it is imagined to the extent that the members of a nation will never meet, although they perceive in their minds that they belong to the same group. Secondly, it is limited in that it exists in opposition to other nations. Thirdly, it is sovereign, for it seeks the preservation of the nation. Fourthly, it is a community, owing to its horizontal linkages despite the exercise of power from above. Altogether, identity needs to be understood as dynamic, changing, and multi-layered instead of fixed and static (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Apart from primordialism and civic nationalism, from a utilitarian point of view, instrumentalism identifies ethnicity as a useful mobiliser to be manipulated for political goals (Varshney, 2009). Although language conflict research has shown wide support for this viewpoint (cf. Inglehart & Woodward, 1967; Williams, 1984; Smith, 1997; DeVotta, 2001), instrumentalism is challenged by the rigid classification of members into fixed categories, which, as Horowitz (1985) maintains, denotes a prescriptivist understanding of identities. In order to bridge the gap between primordialism and instrumentalism, A. D. Smith (1986, cited in Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003) proposes the concept of *ethnie*, which refers to "the national identity, [that is,] the ethnic identity of the nation-state" (p. 32), thus encompassing a dual vision of the nation characterised both by its fluidity and its static nature. Although clearly distinguished from the political state, this notion

is essential to state identity, understood as the temporal and spatial continuation of the nation (Fearon, 1999).

A further linkage between state-formation language conflicts, nationalism and the national identity is to be found in linguistic nationalism, a potentially destructive ideology, as stated in Moreno Cabrera's *El nacionalismo lingüístico* (2014). In his work, two key ideas are expressed. Firstly, it is argued that nationalism subtly contends the de-ethnicization of standardised national and/or official languages by assuring that it lacks an ethnic component. The selected and standardised language becomes a superior entity entrenched in the national identity, while presenting ethnic features. Secondly, it is reported that nationalism exploits the language-dialect dichotomy to its favour, thus establishing a hierarchy between the national and/or official language and dialects, which are taken as subordinates, although the definition of these two terms does not find consensus within the field of linguistics, being these terms rather distinguished in the political realm. This dichotomy is a source of the ideology of linguistic legitimacy, whereby language is understood as ahistorical and atheoretical, for it is purposely depicted as fixed and singular in an attempt to produce and reproduce the language ideology of 'one nation, one language, one state,' therefore denying the plurality of language varieties and the diversity of languages (Piller, 2015; Reagan, 2019). Moreover, languages are assigned with a higher status, more prestige and greater power than dialects, coinciding with the three main areas of LPP (Haarmann, 1990). Retaking the symbolic power of language (cf. Bourdieu, 1991), it should be noted that language is able to maintain the existing dominance, to unite or divide nations, and to influentially affect its environment (Hung Ng & Deng, 2017). For this reason, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989, cited in Reagan, 2019) hold that these are clear signs of linguicism, referring to the ideologies which replicate power structures between groups on the grounds of language.

2.2.1. Language and National Identity in Southeast Asia

Language and national identity in Southeast Asia cannot be understood without considering the differences between the Western ideal of the nation-state and its exportation to other parts of the world, including Africa and Asia through the process of colonisation (Rush, 2018). In this sense, as Simpson (2007a) indicates, nationalism in Asia

may be either the result of perceived threats from colonial powers, as in the cases of Japan, China, Thailand, and Korea, or as the result of colonialism, whereby the grouping of peoples in arbitrary borders is accepted, as in Indonesia or the Philippines.

The former type of nationalism is characterised by the domination of a single and major group, as in the cases of Bangladesh, which stands out due to its homogeneity, given that one ethnic group constitutes the majority, and Thailand, where one major group dominates over a small minority; while the latter counts with a mix of ethnolinguistic groups comprised in a single nation-state, as exemplified by Indonesia (Simpson, 2007a). In this regard, Brown (2003) identifies unipolar, bipolar, and multipolar settings, being Bangladesh and Thailand both unipolar and Indonesia multipolar, and mentions the potential for politics to manage language problems. Extrapolated to the LPP adopted by Asian nation-states (see Table 1), three key guidelines need to be considered:

(i) "Governments that have embraced tolerant, inclusive, multilingual visions have generally fared better than those that have tried to impose hegemonic, exclusive, unilingual visions on their countries" (Brown, 2003, p. 428): Bangladesh's and Thailand's monolingual approach contrasts with Indonesia's multilingualism (Simpson, 2007a).

(ii) "Governments that have relied on persuasive policy instruments have generally fared better than those that have tried to impose their linguistic visions on unreceptive populations" (Brown, 2003, p. 430): the Bangladeshi coercive LPP contrasts with Indonesia's bottom-up approach or Thailand's hybrid method (Brown, 2003; Simpson, 2007a).

(iii) "One particular strategic option—the combination of unilingual visions with coercive policy instruments—is particularly problematic" (Brown, 2003, p. 431).

With regards to the key features of national identity and the connections with language, firstly, in Bangladesh, religion and language have been key identity markers in the configuration of power throughout history (DeVotta, 2001). During its formative years, despite its syncretic nature and coexistence between Hinduism and Islam, it was the latter that became widely extended in the local culture thanks to the agrarian expansion, a key economic engine (Bhardwaj, 2010). Identification along religious lines

in terms of Islamic versus non-Islamic groups was realised during the British colonisation, especially after the 1870s, during the Partition of Bengal in 1905, and during the 1930s and 1940s (Kabir, 1990). At this moment, under the Bengali Language Movement, and until its independence from West Pakistan in 1971, language became the primary identity marker (DeVotta, 2001). The nation-state was therefore founded according to the principles of: (i) nationalism, where Bengali language and culture as driving forces stand out; (ii) socialism; (iii) democracy; and (iv) secularism (Absar, 2014). However, a shift took place in 1975, when religion, and in this case, religious extremism, became a powerful force in Bangladeshi nationalism. The preponderance of these markers has since fluctuated (DeVotta, 2001).

Secondly, the foundational elements of Thailand's national-identity and so, its key sources of power, comprise: (i) the Buddhist religion, (ii) the Central Thai ethnicity, and (iii) the Thai language (Gilquin, 2005). Thaification or Thai-isation in the former kingdom of Siam was translated into a stark centralisation around the monarchy and the dominant group, subsequently involving an assimilationist policy in a multicultural setting, which aimed at creating a sense of 'Thainess' (Lo Bianco, 2019).

Thirdly, in Indonesia, the five principles of the Pancasila philosophy articulate nationalism and identity, in addition to constituting sources of power. These principles are: (i) belief in one supreme God, meaning that Indonesia is neither secular nor Islamic, but a religious state; (ii) a just and civilised humanity, that is, humanism; (iii) the unity of Indonesia or the principle of nationalism, where culture and particularly language, is promoted as a cohesive element, for example, reflected by the national motto in Old Javanese *Bhinekka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), thus overtly embracing diversity; (iv) consent or democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives; and, finally, (v) social justice for the entire people of Indonesia (Embassy of Indonesia, 2017).

2.3. Language and Globalisation

In today's world, globalisation challenges the conventional nation-state-based international order, for it entails a redistribution of power with forces from above and from below (Guibernau, 2001). According to Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) globalisation refers to a process entailing a spatial transformation "of social

relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power" (p. 16).

Within the theories of globalisation particularly relevant to language conflicts are those pertaining to culture, which can be understood as a set of ideas and practices with the ultimate goal of providing meaning and identity (Holton, 2011). Cultural globalisation is critical because it allows for the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and values, hence lying language at its heart, reason why Fairclough (2006) characterises language as both globalising and globalised. As Holton (2011) explains, homogenisation highlights the reduction of cultural diversity through the adoption of the Western model, and so it envisages a global culture based on the spread of the English language. On the other hand, heterogeneity approaches imply a reaction to globalisation based on polarisation and cultural clashes. Halfway, hybridity involves the evolution and fusion of different cultural processes.

The underlying quest behind these theories concerns territoriality, notion upon which globalisation has impinged. To reflect on how space and time have been reshaped, Giddens (1981) talks about 'time-space distanciation,' Harvey (1990) prefers 'time-space compression,' and Tomlinson (1999) resorts to 'deterritorialization,' thus challenging Vertovec's (2004) identity-borders-order triad, according to which states provide an identity to be reinforced thanks to the territory upon which common legislation is enforced. Although boundaries, understood as demarcation lines, may have remained untouched, globalisation has contributed to blur frontiers, understood as zones, to the point where political and cultural entities may not necessarily coincide (Custred, 2011).

Languages, too, have experienced a process of deterritorialization, for they have been commodified, this is to say, taken as an economic resource with power to influence global affairs, as exemplified by the case of *linguas francas*[6] (Pujolar, 2018). This mirrors Bourdieu's (1977, cited in Mac Giolla Chríost, 2003) structuralist understanding of the

[6] As posited in Brosch (2011), some authors, such as Wodak (2011, cited in Brosch, 2011) distinguish 'linguas francas', originally used to refer to trade languages, from 'vehicular languages', those serving for intergroup communication, and others, such as the European Commission (2011, cited in Brosch, 2011) classify 'linguas francas' as a type of 'vehicular languages.' Here 'lingua franca' will be taken as an hypernym, in accordance with Ammon (2001, cited in Brosch, 2011), for this term is more common in the field of sociolinguistics (CVC, 2020).

linguistic marketplace, whereby languages are compared to currencies whose value depends on their economic, cultural, and symbolic forms of capital. As a result, globalisation has further spread languages beyond the nation-state boundaries, and relying on Vertovec's (2007) concept of super-diversity, Vetter (2015) finds it useful to re-examine well-established conceptions within language conflict research, for example, 'minority,' 'language group,' and 'language' itself, as they fail to identify the multi-layered nature of identities and favour the language ideology of the nation-state.

Although new world orders have been envisaged in the forms of internationalism, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism or a network, it is within the framework of nation-states that language conflicts may find an end, given that LPP is an element of conflict resolution traditionally carried out at the national level (Spolsky, 2012). The absence of all-encompassing solutions on how to de-escalate language conflicts (Spolsky, 2012) notwithstanding, Nelde (2017) asserts that languages are a lesser evil and more easily neutralised through the application of five principles: (i) the territoriality principle, which is about granting linguistic rights to a particular territory; (ii) institutional multilingualism to avoid linguistic discrimination based on prestige; (iii) LPP measures that delve deeper into the contextual characteristics of the studied groups; (iv) positive discrimination measures based on quantitative indicators of linguistic groups; (v) and granting of rights to minorities so as to reduce ideological stances on language conflicts. Furthermore, Mühlhäuser (2010) identifies three mechanisms in language conflict resolution, namely, the use of neutral mother-in-law or referentially impoverished languages, like pidgins, to reduce tensions; the complication of a language (esotericity) so as to increase social distance and prevent *them* from entering into conflict with *us*; and the incorporation of features from other contacting languages resulting in a fused version that allows communication across communities.

At this point, it should be noted that peace may not only be understood as the absence of conflict, but also, as posited by UNESCO's former Director-General Federico Mayor, as "a dynamic, participative, long term process, based on universal values and everyday practice at all levels" (Serto, 2000). In this sense, approaches from conflict prevention, as peacekeeping and peacebuilding; from conflict management, like peace-making and peace enforcement; as well as from conflict resolution, including settlement,

transformation, or resolution itself need to be considered. From a political viewpoint, the concept of linguistic justice (cf. Piller, 2016) is essential to counter the linguistic oppression experienced by minoritized languages and groups, especially following decolonisation, the reshaping of the concept of the nation-state, and globalisation (Roche, 2020). For this reason, Kymlicka and Patten (2003) insist on the need to develop a more comprehensive framework to deal with language human rights to protect linguistic diversity. While Reagan (2019) notes that linguistic human rights (LHR) include language rights and human rights, both Reagan (2019) and Kymlicka and Patten (2003) show concern for the level at which LHR should be applied, questioning whether the international community is ready to take this mission, whether the nation-state scope is valid, and whether LHR implementation would work at the individual level. Alcalde (2014) proposed the creation of a linguistic justice index not only to prevent language conflicts, but also to serve as a conflict resolution tool. Special attention should be given to avoid replicating nation-state language ideologies, since only 'named languages' could be included in such an index (Mühlhäuser, 2010). Nevertheless, as May (2018) asserts, recognition of LHR is the path to avoid and resolve conflicts.

3. Theoretical Framework

This dissertation is based on the reflectivist paradigm of IR, which includes constructivism, critical theory, and poststructuralism, among others, to be explored herein. These theories present an alternative to traditional realism and liberalism and attest to the evolution of the discipline over time.

Firstly, constructivism emerged in the 1980s as an opposition to materialist neo-realism and neo-liberalism to contend that the world is a dynamic project under construction, where the role of ideas and culture is key to the formulation of meaning and the understanding of IR (Reus-Smit, 2009). Reality, therefore, varies depending on the subject who interprets it, being truly objective knowledge a fallacy (Cristol, 2019). From an epistemological point of view, the branch of radical constructivism would focus on linguistics to explore the meaning of IR concepts, analyse discourse, and examine the perception process and knowledge (von Glaserfeld, 1984; Adler, 2013). Remarkable constructivists like Katzenstein (1996) or Wendt (1992) additionally introduced identity

issues in IR, key in the study of language conflicts. In his essay *Anarchy Is What States Make of It* (1992), Wendt posited that anarchy and power relations are shaped by the actors' interests and identity, which are socially constructed and "constituted by collective meanings that are always in process" (p. 407). In line with the previous section on identity, he contends that states cannot be understood under a fixed and unitary lens as proposed by realists who assert that the international system is anarchic; rather, national interests are shaped by the context, where there are additional actors, such as non-governmental organisations, multinational corporations, or civil society.

Secondly, closely linked to constructivism, critical theory differs from traditional IR theories, as expressed by Horkheimer (1937, cited in Roach, 2019), and from problem-solving theory, which takes the world as given and operates within that framework to resolve conflicts, in that the former "stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about" (Cox, 1981, p. 129). As a result, critical theory questions social structures and power relations (Zehfuss, 2013). Rooted in the spirit of the Frankfurt School of thought and influenced by Kant, Hegel, and Marx, critical theorists are concerned with emancipation, understood not only in terms of freedom from oppressive forces and power relations (Ashley, 1981, cited in Devetak, 2009a), but also as reconciliation with nature (Fierke, 2010). In this sense, Habermas's communicative action theory (1981) characterised emancipation as freedom from unconstrained communication, therefore placing linguistics as key in mediation and conflict resolution (Chilton & Wyant Cuzzo, 2005). Following this line, Cox firstly introduced critical theory in IR from the point of view of International Political Economy (Roach, 2019) and drew on the Gramscian ideas of power and hegemony to present an alternative understanding of IR. Afterwards, Linklater formally developed critical theory (Devetak, 2009a) and proposed, in *The Transformation of Political Community* (1998), cosmopolitanism as a new way of organising the international system, in a breach from traditional structures and in an attempt to respond to the drastic consequences of globalisation. Furthermore, Linklater studied issues of power and identity with regards to emancipation in *The Problem of Community in International Relations* (1990), and assessed the role of dialogue and human intercultural communication, highlighting in this way the role of language in conflict resolution (Zehfuss, 2013).

Thirdly, poststructuralism, for its part, seeks to "examine the changing social practices that make international politics so as to tease out the power relations they (re)produce" (Zehfuss, 2013, p. 151). Departing from Foucault's vicious relationship between power and knowledge, whereby power is based on knowledge which creates structures that therefore reinforce power, poststructuralism deals with intersubjective interpretations of IR theory and concepts, which are in themselves "a practice of domination" (Ashley, 1987, p. 408). In this regard, Derrida (1974, cited in Devetak, 2009b) brings linguistics to the fore of IR by comparing the world to a text that will be interpreted, deconstructed, and read twice so as to critically discern power relations. Poststructuralism also deals with the demarcation of boundaries as an exertion of power, it challenges the national discourse that legitimises violence, and relates questions of identity to the field of security (Devetak, 2009b).

On the whole, these reflectivist theories will be taken as complementary, since they can nurture each other and provide a more comprehensive framework for the understanding of the relationship between language, conflicts, and IR.

3.1. Power in IR Theories: Cultural Underpinnings

Power is a central concept to the field of IR, and especially to the understanding of conflict dynamics (Baldwin, 2013), since "virtually all conflicts directly or indirectly concern power," as Coleman (2014, p. 137) precisely observes. Consequently, this section delves into the meaning of power in IR theory and research, particularly in the cases of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia.

The first references to power can be traced to rationalist approaches: realism mainly dealt with issues of power, hegemony, order, security or the national interest (Xintian, 2004), as illustrated for example by Waltz's balance of power theory (1979); whereas liberalism focused on cooperation at the international level to resolve conflicts, with scholars such as Kant (1795) exploring a state of perpetual peace, and Keohane and Nye (1977) studying the connections between power and the interdependent nature of IR. Under this perspective, prominent scholars have characterised power as the probability of exerting one's will despite opposing forces (Weber, 1947), and have depicted the "struggle for power [as] universal in time and space and [as] an undeniable fact of experience" (Morgenthau, 1948).

Although there are many definitions of power, which may differ and present an ambiguous character (Holsti, 1964), Coleman's (2014) definition will be here used, because it reflects upon the multiple features of power in a succinct manner and identifies its dynamic and complex character, by portraying it as "the ability (or perception of the ability) to leverage relevant resources in a specific situation in order to achieve personal, relational, or environmental goals, often through using various strategies and channels of influence of both a primary and secondary nature" (p. 142). It follows from this definition that reflectivist approaches, including constructivism, post-structuralism, and critical theory, have also contributed to the study of power (Barnett & Duvall, 2005; Baldwin, 2013), inter alia, by introducing for the first time culture in IR through approaches like international political culturology after the cultural turn of the early 1970s, as well as by questioning the mere foundations of the concept of power (Xintian, 2004).

In a review of the most influential works on culture and IR, Huntington's article *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993) should be mentioned. In a multipolar and multicultural post-Cold War scenario, Huntington identifies eight major civilisations, namely, the Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and African civilisations, referring to a supreme form of cultural grouping which distinguishes human beings from other species. According to Huntington, civilisations will clash based on their cultural differences, such as distinct traditions and historical backgrounds, religions or languages, added to the process of globalisation and its impact upon identity, which will reinforce these divisions. Therefore, culture is envisaged as the main source of conflicts in the new era, particularly between the West and the rest. Although Huntington highlights the importance of culture in IR and recognises cultural diversity, his thesis still remains controversial because of its Western-centric approach or the portrayal of diversity as destabilising, among other aspects (Majie, 2002).

Secondly, Nye introduced the concept of soft power to refer to "the ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes" (2011, p. 20-21). In this sense, soft power is related to "intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions" (1990, p. 181), playing language, as part of culture, an essential role.

Following this path, Gramsci (cited in Jiemin, 2002) developed the notion of cultural hegemony to refer to the imposition of cultural values on states and ethnic groups. Galtung (1990) would further incorporate the concept of cultural violence to denote "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence [...] that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (p. 291), constituting language a key factor of cultural violence. Culture is posited, therefore, as a decisive element of national power and IR (Majie, 2002), where a smart strategy can be adopted by combining forms of soft and hard power, the latter involving coercive and military force (Nye, 2004).

Thirdly, interpretive approaches started to question the meaning of concepts conceived within a Western perspective, such as 'power,' 'conflict,' or 'peace,' realising that definitions, articulated through language, are culturally bound (Salem, 1993, cited in Castro and Coleman, 2014). In this regard, the discipline of IR was born to the Western culture, as it was created in the aftermath of World War I, and it has additionally exported the system of nation-states, rooted in the Peace of Westphalia, as well as Western cultural values and concepts to Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Jiemin, 2002). While power may be universally understood as Morgenthau indicated, the meaning of the concept will necessarily vary across cultures and contexts (Coleman, 2014), or even differ "not only from culture to culture, but also within a culture from one power structure to another", in accordance with Lasswell and Kaplan's view (1950, p. 85).

As a result, a single definition would be inadequate to grasp the cultural nuances attributed to the concept of power (Barnett & Duvall, 2005), reason why these differences between Western and Eastern, and particularly Asian, societies need to be addressed. In this regard, generalisations notwithstanding, Anderson (2006) portrays the Western concept of power as: (i) abstract, in that "it is a formula for certain observed patters of social interaction" (p. 21); (ii) emanating from heterogeneous sources, including wealth, social status, weaponry, etcetera; (iii) unlimited, since its abstract conception allows for the accumulation of power; and (iv) morally ambiguous, owing to its diverse sources.

The contrast with the notion of power in Eastern societies can be observed in Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) analysis *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*, whereby six dimensions of national culture allow for relative comparisons

between nation-states. In the Appendix, Figures 3 to 6 corresponding with the first fourth dimensions can be consulted. Regarding power, measured by the power distance index, it is said that Western cultures feature a low degree of power distance, that is, the extent to which inequality in power relations is accepted, thus questioning hierarchy and inequality; whereas Asian cultures tend to accept vertical power relations with delimited social roles. Concerning the extent to which members of a culture consider themselves as individuals or as a group, Western cultures are individualist, where personal interests are prioritised; on the contrary, Asian cultures are collectivist and place value on loyalty to group harmony.

In this sense, Zhong, Magee, Maddux, and Galinsky (2006) relate the individualist nature of Western cultures to an assertive notion of power (in accordance with the third dimension) whereby the pursuit of individual goals is justified, in contrast with the responsibility attached to power in East Asian collectivist societies. The authors recognise the importance of the Ancient Greek and Humanist traditions in the understanding of power in the West, and highlight the role of Confucianism and Buddhism in the region of Asia. Pye (1985) concurs with this point and adds the potential use of primitive forms of power in Asian societies, which may lead to authoritarianism, reflected in the prevalence of the personalisation of leaders, so as to maintain stability in social structures in the long term and to avoid drastic redistributions of power (connected with the fourth and fifth dimensions). This tolerance towards primitive power is rather questioned in the West, where a limitation of the authority of the powerful for the sake of freedom will be sought (related to the sixth dimension). In his view, power is illustrated by the hierarchical social status in the East, where its exertion is restrained by group responsibility; whereas in the West it acquires a more utilitarian stance, where the pursuit of personal goals and its subsequent corruption is normalised.

In order to leave the West-East dichotomy behind, it is essential to highlight the conceptions of power in the countries object of this analysis. As it can be observed in Graph 1, Bangladesh (scoring slightly lower), Thailand, and Indonesia are similar in terms of power distance, meaning that they accept power relations, hierarchy and the prevalence of group harmony to the same extent. Although figures vary in the third, fourth, and sixth dimensions, their intent to avoid uncertainty, that is, the fourth

dimension, is also a common aspect roughly in the same degree. Finally, the three of them are clearly collectivistic in nature and subsequently attach importance to group identity, already examined in Section 2.2.1.

The differences in the understanding of power depending on cultural factors are relevant to the study of conflicts, the adoption of conflict resolution techniques, and peacebuilding, as it will be further explored in the analysis. Nonetheless, the relativity and intermingling of cultural influences should not be forgotten when addressing these issues (Jiemin, 2002).

4. **Methodology**

The methodology will consist of a comparison using a qualitative small-N design, whereby three dissimilar cases, namely Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia, will be examined under a diachronic perspective. This triangular research method will provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of state-formation language conflicts, as well as allowing greater maximisation of the hypotheses, which could be extrapolated to future research, and so contribute to scientific production.

The rationale behind the selection of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia responds to today's power shift towards the region of South and Southeast Asia, reason why this geographical framework has recently increased its relevance in the study of IR. In turn, the traditional Western-centric approach is avoided. Furthermore, this region is renowned for its vibrant diversity and complexity in cultural terms, including a wide variety of languages, religions, and ethnicities.

Firstly, Bangladesh is a prototype of state-formation language conflicts, since it gained independence through the maximum expression of violence, that is, war. It should be noted that Bangladesh underwent the British colonisation, and that today it stands out for its homogeneity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and language (Simpson, 2007a). Likewise, it is loaded with symbolism, inasmuch as the UNESCO (2020) declared the IMLD in 1999 in commemoration of the violent revolts which took place on 21 February 1952. The study of Bangladesh will include a brief contextualisation and focus, on the one hand, on the Bengali Language Movement (1948-1952) and language issues present until its independence in 1971. On the other hand, the failed state-formation

language conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) from 1971 to 1977 will be taken as a sub-case of analysis.

Secondly, Thailand has experienced a violent and separatist protracted conflict in its Southern Provinces, where language is enmeshed. While a contextualisation of the conflict will be provided, the focus will be on the period between 2004 and 2014. The former is a key date for the relapse into violence, while the latter coincides with a coup and a decrease in violence to render account of the current situation. In contrast with Bangladesh, Thailand did not experience colonisation in its entire territory, and it is formed by one major group and a small minority (Simpson, 2007a). The differences in the time framework will allow for more conclusive outcomes to be drawn.

Thirdly, Indonesia presents a very diverse setting with a mix of ethnolinguistic groups and, in the same way as Bangladesh and Thailand, its LPP stance relies on a monolingual approach (Simpson, 2007a). Like Bangladesh, Indonesia underwent colonisation, in this case, of the Portuguese, Dutch, and Japanese, and shares with Bangladesh Islam as the major religion. Yet, state-formation claims are said not to be articulated around language (Bertrand, 2003), reason why it is appropriate for the analysis. Its historical trajectory will be examined with an emphasis on state-formation since the 1920s and until its independence in 1945, and, in parallel, from the 1970s until 2002, when the state-formation language conflict of Timor-Leste takes place. This will provide an overall understanding of Indonesia's LPP and of the object of study.

To the extent possible, primary sources of information will be included together with secondary sources, which will overall enrich the research project. The variables to be examined in each of these cases will be: (i) historical and political aspects, which will provide a contextualisation of the conflict and identify the key actors and the policies carried out; (ii) socioeconomic aspects, such as social status or class divisions according to language differences, language use and language of education, which will help identify the degree of imposition of a language over a group and its consequences; and (iii) linguistic aspects, such as the script used or methods of conflict resolution to identify the extent to which conflicts revolve purely around language.

5. Analysis

5.1. Bangladesh

5.1.1. Historical and Political Aspects

Located in the Indian subcontinent, the history of Bangladesh is deeply intertwined with that of India and Pakistan. After the British colonisation of today's territory of Bangladesh for almost two centuries, the 1940 Lahore Resolution divided India and Pakistan according to the two-nation theory, under a primordialist stance, which ended in 1947, at the expense of mass violence and riots, in the partition of a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan (Bhardwaj, 2010). Pakistan, however, was a geographical anomaly, for it was split into West and East Pakistan, the latter comprising the eastern part of the province of Bengal (see Map 1) (Husain & Tinker, 2020).

Soon after independence from India, political repression, centralisation, and dominance of West Pakistan over the East, as well as the deep social and economic divides, constructed the seeds of a separate nation-state: as religion was a shared aspect with West Pakistan, cultural traits, and particularly the Bangla/Bengali language[7], were portrayed as the differentiating marker in the identification of a new otherness (DeVotta, 2001; Kabir, 1990). However, despite claiming a more civic nature, non-Bengali population, which can be classified into the Plain and the Hill or *pahari* people, were left behind in the nationalist discourse (Mohsin, 2003; M. Rahman, 2019).

Bengali nationalism, in other words, "the political expression of ethno-national consciousness of the Bengali people, who inhabit the ethno-linguistic region of Bengal" (Absar, 2014, p. 441), was articulated around the Bengali Language Movement, or *Bhasha Andolon*, formed by a first constitutionalist phase between 1947 and 1951, and a second phase of direct confrontation starting in 1952 and culminating in 1971 (Alam, 1991). The spark of the Movement flared when Pakistan, following an assimilationist LPP which included coercive elements (Brown, 2003), sought to impose Urdu as a national language, although it was spoken as a first language only by around 3.5% of the population (Thompson, 2007). The argument that Urdu would provide equal

[7] The official language of Bangladesh is referred to as 'Bangla' by its own speakers, but as 'Bengali' in non-linguistic circles outside Southeast Asia (Thompson, 2007). As the author is not a speaker of this language, the term 'Bengali' will be here adopted.

opportunities on the basis that it was not an official language of any of the provinces of Pakistan (Khan, 1990) would nevertheless become hotly-debated, especially after Prime Minister L. A. Khan's statement in 1948:

> Pakistan is a Muslim state and it must have as its *lingua franca* the language of Muslim nation...[P]akistan has been created because of the demand of a hundred million Muslims in this subcontinent and the language of the hundred million Muslims is Urdu. It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can be Urdu and no other language. (Quoted in Alam, 1991, p. 476)

The Bengali response was institutionalised around the East Pakistan Student League, which set up a series of demonstrations demanding Bengali as an official language (Alam, 1991). Yet, Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, decisively asserted later that year, in English, not being an Urdu speaker himself (Hossain, 2015), as follows:

> But let me tell you very clearly that the state language of Pakistan will be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function. Look at the history of other countries. Therefore, so far as the state language is concerned, Pakistan's language shall be Urdu. (Quoted in Thompson, 2007, p. 42)

West Pakistan's actions during the following years included the banning of cultural elements of prominent figures, such as Tagore, an essential figure in Bengali nationalism, creator of the national anthem "Amar Sonar Bangla," and recipient of the Nobel Prize; as well as the imposition of the Arabic script in Bengali, and the substitution of Sanskrit words by Urdu, Arabic, or Persian ones (Alam, 1991; Thompson, 2007). The Movement gained momentum again in 1952, when Prime Minister Nazimuddin insisted that only Urdu could be the sole national and official language of Pakistan, which led the Awami League's (AL[8]) All Party State Language Committee for Action to subsequently convoke a strike on 21 February (Alam, 1991). It was attended by thousands, particularly by Dhaka University students, who were brutally repressed by the police, severely injured, and, four of them, shot dead (Thompson, 2007). These events became part of the collective memory, as the victims were declared national martyrs (*shahids*) and the sacrifices for the sake of language were honoured with the Shahid Minar monument, to the extent that this day is known as Shahid Dibash, Martyr's Day or, more commonly,

[8] The first political party in East Pakistan was named 'Awami Muslim League' in 1949, but renamed in 1955 as 'Awami League' in order to become a more inclusive platform, emphasising bonding based on ethnicity, instead of on religion, where non-Muslim Bengalis were welcomed (S. Uddin, 2006).

Ekushey (twenty-first) (S. Uddin, 2006). The Twenty-one-Point Formula proposed in 1954 by the United Front, a group of political parties in East Bengal, pressed to finally recognise Bengali as an official language together with Urdu (Mohsin, 2003).

During a dictatorial regime from 1958 to 1969, Bengali cultural manifestations were once again prohibited and the participation of Bengalis in political affairs was void (Thompson, 2007). Yet, the AL's victory in Pakistan's first elections leveraged the quest for political autonomy and separatism, which was materialised through the nine-month Liberation War, a violent struggle which gave birth to the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1971 (see Map 2) (Hossain, 2015). Apart from lending its name to the words language (*Bangla*) and land (*desh*), the 1972 Constitution enshrined language and secularism, in other words, acceptance of diversity, as the founding principles of the nation-state (see a selection of articles in the Appendix) (Thompson, 2007). All this validates H_1: West Pakistan's quest for power and imposition of the Urdu language articulated a language conflict whose escalation of violence resulted in the creation of a separate nation-state.

Nevertheless, an identity turn took place in 1975, when Rahman seized power and introduced Bangladeshi nationalism, whereby Islam became the distinguishing marker from the Bengalis of India's West Bengal, as well as the state religion (Absar, 2014). This assimilationist ideology would prevail until the 1990s, as it was perpetuated under Zia's and Ershad's regimes and realised through the BNP, meaning that an independent Bangladesh was now replicating the repression, discrimination, and violence once experienced under West Pakistan's rule (Mohsin, 2003; S. Uddin, 2006).

An illustrative example is the case of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), a contested territory throughout history located in the mountainous south of Bangladesh (see Map 3) and inhabited by 13 different indigenous communities, collectively referred to as the Jumma people (Mohsin, 2003; Panday & Jamil, 2009). Like East Pakistan at the time, social, economic, and political disadvantages, aggravated by Bangladesh's imposition of the Bengali language and the neglect of the several non-Bengali communities for the sake of a homogeneous and united national identity, were faced by the indigenous political party PCJSS's claims of self-determination (Mohsin, 2003; Panday & Jamil, 2009). The Jumma people accepted violence, since they lacked representation, being therefore

unable to dialogue through the political way (Panday & Jamil, 2009). As expressed by the indigenous leader Larma at the signing of the Constitution:

> You cannot impose your national identity on others. I am a Chakma[9], not a Bengali. I am a citizen of Bangladesh – Bangladeshi. You are also Bangladeshi but your national identity is Bengali ... They (Hill People) can never be Bengali. (Quoted in Mohsin, 2003, p. 98)

In the end, Bangladesh's strength in terms of weaponry impeded the creation of a new nation-state, but the violence inflicted did not end with the adoption of the top-down 1997 Peace Accord (Panday & Jamil, 2009). H_1 is also accepted: Bangladesh's imposition of Bengali over the CHT peoples reflects a quest for power which resulted in a violent language conflict, although without reaching the point of state-formation.

5.1.2. Socioeconomic Aspects

The successful state-formation conflict between West and East Pakistan, resulting in today's Bangladesh, and the attempted one between the CHT and Bangladesh, both manifested through violence in different degrees, can be partially explained from a linguistic perspective through the profound social and economic disparities faced between the opposing groups.

Regarding the first conflict, socioeconomic frontiers trace back to the ancient division between *ashrafs*, that is, the non-cultivating Urdu-speaking Muslim elites, and *atrafs*, the rural Bengali-speaking Muslim mass (Bhardwaj, 2010). During the colonial period, the British supported a class system comprising *zamindars*, or the Hindu landlord elite fluent in English, and the Muslim peasantry, from where *jotedars*, Muslim landholders, later emerged (S. Uddin, 2006). In practical terms, the socioeconomic conditions were translated into a lack of employment opportunities in the public sphere, accentuated by the requirement to learn English without access to the education system; language, therefore, blocked their social mobility (Bhardwaj, 2010). In this sense, English was the ladder to acquire a higher social status and positions of power (T. Rahman, 1990). At that time, Bengali and Muslim were perceived as compatible categories but, when religion became the primary identity marker, *jotedars* were mobilised in favour of the

[9] Chakmas are the largest group in the CHT.

creation of Pakistan to free themselves from the exploitative Hindu *zamindars*, even if this meant the partition of Bengal (Hossain, 2015; Kabir, 1990).

Disadvantaged in social and economic terms before the advent of the Language Movement (Alam, 1991), it must be noted that, in the Bengali-Urdu debate, Urdu was supported by the Urdu-speaking Muslim elite and non-Bengali Muslims inhabiting urban Bengal, who sought, however, to limit the use and scope of Urdu (S. Uddin, 2006; Khan, 1990); whereas advocates of Bengali were the newly educated Bengali-speaking Muslim rural class (S. Uddin, 2006). Both groups denote language loyalty to varying extents, but the symbolism of the Bengali language prevailed, since religion was being replaced by language during the Movement. The claim to recognise Bengali was, in part, a claim to reduce economic disparities (Hossein, 2015): the 1952 census estimated that roughly 4% of the population were high-class urban dwellers, while 96% were impoverished agricultural workers living in rural areas, which, added to the famines of 1948, 1949, and 1951, caused discontent in the East (Alam, 1991). Their scant knowledge of Urdu, especially in the case of the youth, further constrained them to access powerful job positions at the state level, thus reinforcing inequalities (Hossein, 2015). Yet, even when the cause gained its highest momentum, after independence, the socioeconomic condition of Bangladeshis did not improve (Hossein, 2015), as the 1974 famine became the turning point for an authoritative power which resorted to religion to shift attention from a deep-rooted multicausal state-formation conflict (S. Uddin, 2006). Following H_1, cultural imposition results, in part, in socioeconomic subordination: in modern economic societies, employment is translated into power, where the power of language leads to a language conflict (T. Rahman, 1996).

Concerning the CHT conflict, the same pattern is observed: a Bangladeshi high urban class opposed to the CHT rural and low-class peoples, devoted to the *jum* (shifting) cultivation system, from which the name Jumma people is originated, living in an economically stagnant region (M. A. Uddin, 2010). Despite having been mobilised during the Liberation War against West Pakistan as a common enemy with other non-Bengali communities, Bangladesh's linguistic and cultural imposition has resulted in the marginalisation of the CHT in the economic sphere, for they cannot communicate with the wider society or contribute to it with their unique economic models (Mohsin, 2003).

In this regard, it must be noted the government's policy of dispossessing CHT from their land, highly valued by indigenous peoples, is best exemplified by the Kaptai Hydro-Electric Dam built in 1962, which absorbed around 40% of CHT peoples' arable land and forced the relocation of 100,000 indigenous peoples, especially of Chakmas, reason why the *paharis* referred to the Dam as the "death-trap" (Panday & Jamil, 2009, p. 1055). Their cultural traditions and lifestyle were further eroded by a series of planned settlements of Bengali population in the CHT between 1979 and 1984 (Mohsin, 2003). Finally, socioeconomic disadvantages are also rooted in an assimilationist education system, whereby Bengali is the language of instruction up until high school, even though Bengali is not the mother tongue of CHT peoples, who speak a wide variety of languages, classified as dialects by Bangladesh, whose status, use, and prestige is therefore undervalued (Mohsin, 2003; M. A. Uddin, 2010). As a consequence, a higher dropout rate is observed, ultimately lowering the opportunities to access high-rank job positions and to thrive in society (Mohsin, 2003). Once again, this imposition resulted in a language conflict, according to H_1.

5.1.3. Linguistic Aspects

As partially envisaged in the two previous sections, language has been present in independent Bangladesh and the CHT, where the historical, political, social, and economic relationships between language and conflict have been studied, to be here reviewed under a linguistic perspective.

Firstly, concerning Bangladesh, the Urdu-Bengali debacle has been framed in the political sphere as a central issue for the nation-state. The assertions of Khan, Jinnah, and Nazimuddin reflect the language ideology of 'one nation, one language, one state,' ultimately seeking to provide, or rather to impose, a national identity which highlights objective elements, such as language (shifting with religion), to define group belonginess, following a primordialist stance (M. Rahman, 2019). The identification of Urdu as an Islamic language justified its selection as both a national and official language of Pakistan, in the same way that the connections of Bengali with Hinduism constituted, to a degree, the seeds of the state-formation conflict (M. Rahman, 2019). These relations, however, are not related to pure linguistic aspects. On the one hand, Urdu became a symbol of Muslim identity during the British colonisation, when translations of the Quran and

other religious texts were carried out and afterwards printed (S. Uddin, 2006). The fact that Urdu was written in an Arabic script, and so was the Quran, explains the popular association between language and religion, but it lacks a linguistic underpinning (M. Rahman, 2019). On the other hand, as literacy in rural and densely populated Bengal was low and only *ashraf* Muslims were knowledgeable in Urdu, Bengali became the language to spread Islam in these areas, usually in an oral form and printed in the late nineteenth century (S. Uddin, 2006). Bengali is an Indo-European language written in Devanagari script, closely related to Sanskrit, hence, being associated with Hinduism, a relation lacking linguistic reasons (M. Rahman, 2019). These ideological and political differentiations between Urdu and Bengali sustained the Arabisation of Bengali during the Language Movement and before independence. Pakistan attached importance to Urdu because it was "a part of the ideology of Muslim separatism in India and was later projected as a major symbol of national integration" to be related with "the hegemony of the centre in Pakistan" (T. Rahman, 2002, p. 4557). The differences behind the languages' use, status, and prestige would also help in the marking of distinct socioeconomic backgrounds. As such, linguistic aspects were not pivotal, but because independence was linked to the Language Movement, language has been portrayed as central or as the main cause of this state-formation conflict (Kabir, 1990).

Secondly, regarding the CHT conflict, the Jumma people stand out for their distinct ethnicities, religions, and languages (cf. Mohsin, 2003), contributing in this way to Bangladesh's diversity: while the country is noted by its ethnic homogeneity (Bengalis constitute 99% of the total population who, in turn, are chiefly Bengali speakers), it is not entirely monolingual (non-Bengali communities represent the remaining 1%) (Thompson, 2007). Reproducing the pattern experienced under West Pakistan's rule, Bangladesh's LPP, which included the promotion of the Bengali culture and language, for example, through the Bangla Academy or through the use of Bengali in the radio, TV or road signs, made other languages invisible (Mohsin, 2003). Although language was present in this conflict, it is not rooted in linguistic aspects. Rather, the political ideology of the nation-state led Bangladesh to select Bengali as the national and official language to be the basis of a common national and state identity (M. Rahman, 2019). On these grounds, the languages of the Jumma people are considered as dialects which lack recognition (Mohsin, 2003). The impossibility to use these languages in spheres such as

education, the administrative level, or law further contributes to discrimination and inequalities reflected in the socioeconomic status (Mohsin, 2003).

No evidence of linguistic diversity mitigating violence in the conflict between West and East Pakistan nor in CHT has been found. Indeed, a cultural approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding has only emerged in the post-conflict phase. For example, the Liberation War Museum counts with a school bus travelling around the country where students have the opportunity to take part in facilitated dialogues and in intergenerational storytelling, being language at the core of the activities (Naidu-Silverman, 2015). Likewise, in the CHT, multilingual education projects in Bengali and the language of the community stand out (Murshed & Imtiaz, 2020).

Overall, H_1 is confirmed in Bangladesh and the CHT, but H_2 is not completely validated, as the success of the mentioned programmes needs to be assessed. Yet, as the 2019 IYIL theme reads, "indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation" (UNESCO, 2019), in this sense linguistic diversity constitutes a cornerstone for "understanding, tolerance, and dialogue" (UN, 2020).

5.2. Thailand

5.2.1. Historical and Political Aspects

The current form of the deep-rooted and protracted conflict in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, comprising Narathiwat, Pattani[10], Yala, and some districts of Songkhla, collectively known as the Deep South (see Maps 4 and 5), dates back to the 1990s but, after certain stability, in a post-9/11 scenario, 2004 marked a turning point in the resurge of violence: on 4 January a group of gunmen attacked a military camp in Narathiwat, shooting four soldiers dead, followed by the bloody Krue Se Mosque incidents on 28 April, and the brutal repression of the Tak Bai demonstration on 25 October (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). This initiated a cycle of continuous violence, whereby beheadings, beatings, murders, bombings, arson attacks, and other types of attacks targeting the military and governmental institutions, state schools and teachers, Buddhist monks and civilians, and Malay Muslims thought to be opposed to Islam or in

[10] 'Pattani' with a double 't,' pronounced as 'Pat-ta-ni,' refers to the province of modern-day Thailand, while 'Patani,' with one 't' and pronounced as 'Paa-ta-ni,' has secessionist connotations (Lo Bianco, 2019).

favour of the government (Burke, Tweedie & Poocharoen, 2013; Melvin, 2007). Until the 2014 coup, which marks a relative decline in violence (see Graphs 2 and 3), around 6,000 people lost their lives in what has been regarded as "Southeast Asia's most violent internal conflict" (ICG, 2012; Horiba, 2014), which, in general lines, pitted ethnic Malays professing Sunni Islam and speaking Patani Malay[11] (PM) against ethnic Thais professing Theravada Buddhism and speaking Thai (Lo Bianco, 2019). As reality is much more complex than mere pairings, the conflict needs to be further addressed.

The Deep South has historically constituted a partially independent entity from the Kingdom of Siam, formally annexed in 1909 through the Anglo-Siamese Treaty against a backdrop in which colonial powers posed a threat to modern-day Thailand's territorial integrity and exerted pressure to transform the kingdom into a nation-state (Lo Bianco, 2019). This nation-building exercise was characterised by an assimilationist policy, as posited in H_1, which aimed at providing a common and overarching national identity by suppressing diversity (Keyes, 2003). In its early stages, the promotion of Thai-ness was materialised in the 1921 Compulsory Primary Education Act, which imposed the Thai language and Buddhist ethics in schools throughout the country while it forbade the use of Malay or other dialects and the spread of the Islamic faith (Chantra, 2019). It must be noted that implementation was softened in the South, which provided a period of stability (Melvin, 2007). This contributes to accept both H_1 and H_2, since embracement of linguistic diversity, as opposed to imposition, helped in the de-escalation of tensions.

Later, in the 1930s, the transition from an absolutist to a constitutional monarchy entailed a stark process of centralisation, reflected in the Thai Cultural Mandates (*Ratthaniyom*), issued by Field Marshal and Prime Minister Phibul, who was the son of a Cantonese-speaking Chinese migrant, and his assistant Wichit Wattakan between 1939 and 1942 (Keyes, 2003; Joll, 2017). The first edict changed the name of Siam to Thailand in a reference to the Tai[12] peoples, as a Sino-phobic response to the increasingly wealthy Chinese community, and to promote a pan-Thai movement (Gilquin, 2005; Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007). Likewise, the second edict reinforced cultural assimilationism

[11] Patani Malay (PM) is a dialect of the Malay language (Lo Bianco, 2019).

[12] The term 'Tai' refers to the group of languages pertaining to the Kra-Day language family, while 'Thai,' which means 'free,' is commonly used to refer to citizens of Thailand, as well as to the Thai ethnicity and language, usually in its standardised form, i. e. Standard Thai (Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007).

by presenting 'Thai people' as a unitary identity, as stated in the third and fourth mandates (Keyes, 2003; Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007). The ninth edict specifically deals with language, asserting that "the Government deems that the continuity and progress of Thailand depends on the usage of the national language and alphabet as important elements" (quoted in Keyes, 2003, p. 204), prioritising the Standard Thai variety, thus damaging non-Tai languages, such as PM, its status, and its Jawi[13] script (Lo Bianco, 2019). Other cultural and religious traits, like names or clothing, were also object of Thailand's policy (consult a selection of *Ratthaniyom* in the Appendix) (Chantra, 2019).

After WWII, in 1947, the Malay Muslim leader Haji Sulong, a renowned figure of resistance, issued seven demands, including a request for greater local autonomy, as well as the recognition of Malay as an official language, and its use as a medium of instruction in schools (Burke, Tweedie & Poocharoen, 2013). In this sense, it is proved that the previous linguistic imposition through the mandates laid the ground for a language conflict, validating $H_{1.}$ It is around this time, and particularly during the 1960s, influenced by Malaysia's independence, when the first separatist movements emerge and political parties are created, such as the BRN, and later on PULO and GMIP, although they suffered a fragmentation during the 1980s, moment in which the SBPAC was established to engage in a dialogue for peace (Gilquin, 2005; Horiba, 2014; Melvin, 2007). However, the 2001-2006 Thaksin government, who wryly resorted to propaganda in Jawi (see an example in the Appendix; cf. McCargo, 2012), opted to replace this institution for the use of force to counter the conflict, a strategy which ended in his deposition through a coup (Chantra, 2019; Gilquin, 2005). While the 2007 amendment to the Constitution implied some devolution of powers, Thailand still remains highly centralised (Burke, Tweedie & Poocharoen, 2013). Until 2014, Thailand's political turmoil and the insurgent's modus operandi of not identifying themselves nor expressing their demands, in a 'conspiracy of silence' in Abuza's (2009) words, has prevented peacebuilding, although Yingluck Shinawatra's premiership started a mediated peace process by Malaysia with the BRN in 2013 (Horiba, 2014). The Deep South conflict reveals how cultural and identity elements are present in a failed state-

[13] PM is commonly written in Jawi, which may also be referred to as 'Yawi' as a result of the phonological influence of Thai, but it can also resort to the Roman and Malay Rumi script (Joll, 2013).

formation conflict, contributing factors which include Thailand's stark repression or the fragmented nature of insurgent actors, among others.

5.2.2. Socioeconomic Aspects

In order to understand the dynamics of the Deep South conflict, it is essential to consider the interrelationship between language and socioeconomic aspects. It must be noted that around 80-85% of the population of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala identify as ethnically Malay, religiously Muslims, and mostly PM speakers (see Graphs 4 and 5), while in the southern provinces of Satun and Songkhla, where Thai is widely spoken, this figure represents 50% and 30%, respectively (Engvall & Andersson, 2014; Gilquin, 2005; Lo Bianco, 2019). Although Muslims also inhabit city centres such as Bangkok, they constitute a clear, geographically concentrated majority in the Deep South, an already far-from-the-heart region, within a vastly Buddhist, Thai, and Thai-speaking country, reason why they represent only 2,5% of the total population (Gilquin, 2005; Lo Bianco, 2019). Interestingly, Muslims in Thailand are referred to as *khaek* or guests, which reflects certain tolerance within the existing framework (Gilquin, 2005).

Differences are further accentuated by the urban-rural divide, inasmuch as the towns are inhabited by ethnically and linguistically Thai Buddhists, who enjoy high positions in the government, and Sino-Thai merchants, who constitute an economic elite, while the countryside is populated by Malay Muslim villagers, whose opportunities to thrive in society are limited by Thailand's assimilationist policy (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). In this regard, according to Melvin (2007), the Deep South provinces are among the poorest in Thailand (see Figure 7), which is an economically powerful country, and they score high rates of poverty and underdevelopment, being education and unemployment key challenges to be addressed, areas in which language acts as a barrier of communication, hence, fostering "linguistic segregation" (Gilquin, 2005, p. 53), inequalities and overt marginalisation (Lo Bianco, 2019).

Regarding education, state schools and teachers are symbolic targets in the conflict, given that the education system has been central in Thailand's efforts to culturally and linguistically assimilate minorities throughout the country (Joll, 2013). As a matter of fact, Malay Muslims prefer to send their children to *pondoks* or *ponoh* in Thai (see Graph 6), namely, traditional Islamic schools, or to private Islamic schools

instead of to secular state schools, as the former use PM as a medium of instruction and include cultural elements (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). As Lo Bianco (2019) outlines, state schools face two primary issues: on the one hand, they follow a Thai-only policy, whereby teachers give lessons in Thai, as PM is forbidden, even though it is not the mother tongue of the children, who may speak a variety of languages at home, hence putting them at a disadvantage with the rest of students and contributing to the language divide (Keyes, 2003). On the other hand, they fail to incorporate in their curricula cultural elements pertaining the Muslim Malay community, thus fostering a feeling of non-belonginess. Altogether, literacy in written and spoken Thai (see Graph 7), as well as overall performance among Muslim Malays, remains very poor and they report higher dropout rates (Burke, Tweedie & Poocharoen, 2013).

Concerning employment, *pondoks* and private Islamic schools provide few prospects for job opportunities, and often in rural areas, which do not improve in the case of the reduced number of university students (see Graph 8), who are also unemployed, being this one of the reasons why the youth engages in violent activities (Horiba, 2014). Additionally, the Thai-only policy is also applied in prestigious domains: Thai is used in official communications, at the governmental level, and in public spaces, whereas PM and other dialects of Thai are relegated to private interactions, at home, and in less prestigious spheres, thus affecting its status, prestige, and use (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). In the current context of globalisation, it is essential to consider that *linguas francas*, such as English, and LWC, like Mandarin Chinese, French, Japanese, or Malay, constitute key assets when applying for jobs in Thailand, which represents another source of linguistic discrimination, as access to this type of education is limited (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016). Given that languages evolve, the youth is replacing PM for Thai, which stresses an intergenerational cultural divide and points to the endangerment, loss, and potential death of the former (Lo Bianco, 2019; Premsrirat, 2011; Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007). Nevertheless, it is perhaps the strength of identity markers that may increase linguistic loyalty in PM, despite the above-mentioned levels of socioeconomic discrimination (Joll, 2017).

Overall, given that language permeates all spheres of life, it clearly affects socioeconomic aspects, for inequalities and disparities are related to language access

and education, where PM is forbidden and Thai is imposed. The result has been an overt and brutally violent series of attacks on behalf of insurgent groups on the state school system, a symbol of cultural assimilation, which has created a feeling of non-belonginess and a barrier of interaction and communication with the government (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). This form of linguistic discrimination is ultimately reflected in Malay Muslims' blocked social mobility and unequal opportunities to thrive, all of which helps confirm H_1: when the Thai language is imposed over PM or other dialects, a language conflict emerges, in this case, extremely violently, because of the configuration of insurgent groups.

5.2.3. Linguistic Aspects

This section seeks to examine the extent to which Thailand's Deep South conflict is based on purely linguistic aspects, as well as to address whether linguistic diversity can contribute to the de-escalation of violence and conflict resolution.

The diverse Kingdom of Siam gave way to the modern nation-state of Thailand, diverse as well, thanks to its over 70 languages belonging to the Kra-Dai, Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Mien language families (Joll, 2017). Thailand's centralisation policy responds to a context of colonial threat, thus pointing to ideological and political reasons for carrying out an assimilationist policy, which has been termed in LPP as a "linguistic diversity [within] national unity policy" (Smalley, 1994, quoted in Keyes, 2003, p. 178). In this sense, the value attached to cultural elements, and particularly to language, may be thought of as a national security issue under the realist theory of IR: the Thai state had to assure its effective control over its territories in order to preserve the status quo and remain in power, reason why it endeavoured to provide an overarching Thai identity, articulated around religion, ethnicity, and language, to be complemented with Thai nationalism, best reflected in Phibul's *Ratthaniyom*. This primordial type of nationalism highlights objective values in group belonginess and follows the ideology of 'one nation, one, language, one state' and so rejects diversity, on account that it may jeopardise the national integrity. Indeed, Thailand does not recognise the term 'Malay' and officially refers to this ethno-linguistic group as 'Muslim-Thai' instead of 'Malay-Thai' (Simpson & Thammasatien, 2007).

Thai-isation, which was originally devoted to providing a writing system for those languages which lacked one in order to prevent endangerment and to foster linguistic diversity, was taken at Thailand's advantage by starting a process of cultural domination, so the pressure to write PM in Thai or Rumi instead of in Jawi, which is based on Persian or Arabic writing, has political underpinnings, rather than linguistic ones (Kanchanawan, 2011; Keyes, 2003). The same can be stated about the prohibition of Malay in television from 2011 to 2014 (Kummetha, 2016). It can be observed, therefore, that languages are associated with religions: for Thailand, PM is foreign, as is Islam, while PM speakers consider the translation of the Quran into Thai a blasphemy (Gilquin, 2005).

Furthermore, Haji Sulong's demands to recognise Malay as an official language added to current demands to do likewise with PM can be understood as a political act and as a symbol, rather than an intrinsically linguistic aspect (Lo Bianco, 2019). However, this recognition could lead the way to transformative changes, given that providing access to education in PM could tackle the socioeconomic inequalities Malay Muslims encounter. In Thailand's hierarchical organisation of languages (see Figure 8), Central Thai, which is the royal variety from which Standard Thai stems, sits at the top, while the Southern dialects of Thai are at the bottom (Joll, 2017), thus reflecting the political and socioeconomic structure of the country.

Linguistic aspects *per se* may not constitute the foundations of the multicausal Deep South conflict, but the presence of language is clear, so it may contribute to conflict resolution through various ways, as Joll (2017) and Lo Bianco (2019) assert. One of the first signs that linguistic diversity can de-escalate violence is found in the SBPAC, which, apart from focusing on economic development and political participation in the Deep South, included cultural elements as part of the reconciliation programme, for example, by providing training courses on language and culture for non-Malay personnel in order to foster understanding and communication between the government and Malay Muslims, experiencing the period from the 1980s to the 1990s a decrease in violence and in separatist demands (Chantra, 2019). The suspension of the SBPAC during Thaksin's government and the peak of violence in 2004 help to validate H_2. Secondly, the NRC stressed cultural elements in its 2006 report, such as the need for dialoguing with insurgent groups, the importance of counting with culturally-competent personnel,

the provision of education in PM, which should be declared a working language, as well as the promotion of cultural diversity (Burke, Tweedie & Poocharoen, 2013). The NRC recommendations point to the direction that linguistic diversity can contribute to conflict resolution and to sustain peace, as stated in H_2.

A shift from compulsory education in Thai to education in mother tongue is thus essential to reduce tensions (Premsrirat, 2008). With this aim, the PMT-MLE pilot programme, started in 2008 by the Mahidol University, encompasses education in PM and in Thai, being one of its objectives “to benefit the peace and reconciliation process in the South as the government school system honors the local language and culture” (Premsrirat, 2016). Its successes include an increased awareness about culture or the protection of PM from endangerment, and it has been awarded with the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize (Premsrirat, 2008; UNESCO, 2016). However, it is not exempted from challenges, such as Thailand’s unease with the use of PM or PM speakers’ concerns about diglossia and the prospects of children who may not be completely proficient in Thai at the end of the programme, nor be able to speak English (Premsrirat, 2016).

Other education programmes include the UNESCO LESC Initiative in the Deep South provinces, which seeks to foster social cohesion, mutual understanding, and exchange knowledge through facilitated dialogues, that aim to “mitigate conflict, acknowledge language rights and encourage societies to adopt a culture of dialogue” (Lo Bianco, 2017, p. 1; UNICEF, 2016). Examples in Thailand comprise the High-Level Policy Making Forum multi-stakeholder dialogue celebrated in Bangkok on 9 November 2013 or the Language and Peace in South Thailand dialogue in Hat Yai in February 2014 (Lo Bianco, 2016b). In this line, storytelling activities also cultivate intercultural dialogue and understanding (Anjarwati & Trimble, 2014). Nevertheless, it must be noted that the most of the Thai population is bidialectal, that is, they speak a regional variety of Thai apart from standard Thai (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016), which indicates that linguistic diversity may not always contribute to de-escalate violence.

In conclusion, H_1 is validated in the case of Thailand, as in Bangladesh, and H_2, although pointing to clearer signs of confirmation in comparison with Bangladesh, is again partially confirmed.

5.3. Indonesia

5.3.1. Historical and Political Aspects

The fourth largest populated country in the world, host of over 300 ethnicities, more than 700 languages and dialects, and the five major religions, standing out for being the largest Muslim country, is Southeast Asia's most extensive archipelago, namely, Indonesia (see Map 6) (LOC, 2004). 'Despite' such an impressive diversity, it is regarded to have experienced "little violent conflict around language issues" which "have not been politicized" (p. 263), but rather, around ethnic, political, economic, regional, and religious lines (Bertrand, 2003). In this sense, Bahasa Indonesia[14] is considered not only as a crucial and unifying element of the modern nation-state, but also as a contributing factor to peace (Bertrand, 2003; Simpson, 2007b).

The underlying political and historical aspects of this success can be traced, nevertheless, to a previous and what could be referred to as a state-formation language conflict, that is, the independence of Indonesia. Following the brief colonisation by the Portuguese, the Dutch settled down in the 16th century, established the VOC in the 17th century as a strategic trading network, and ruled until the 20th century (McDivitt, et al., 2020). They desisted from learning Javanese —an esoteric and complex language counting with a detailed system of honorifics, which apart from expressing courtesy also reflect power, hierarchy and status in society (Errington, 1992)—, and instead resorted to a simplified form of Malay known as *dienstmaleisch* or 'service Malay,' being Malay in its origins a pidgin and trade language (*Bazaar* or *Pasar Malay*, meaning 'market Malay') used as a *lingua franca* in the Malay Archipelago[15] (Simpson, 2007b; Wright, 2004). As will be examined in the following section, the Dutch remained loyal to their language, to be spread and imposed through their education system (Bertrand, 2003).

As a result, and as posited by H_1, the first nationalist movements, with a special focus on language, started to emerge around the 1920s (Anderson, 2006). Although parties such as Budi Utomo, the Taman Siswa Movement or Sarekat Islam, and various

[14] 'Bahasa Indonesia,' the language (*bahasa*) of Indonesia, may be also referred to as 'Indonesian' in nation-state of this name or as 'Bahasa Melayu,' 'Bahasa Malaysia,' or 'Malaysian' in Malaysia (Dorren, 2018). Both are mutually intelligible, but the former differs from the latter in its loanwords (from Dutch and Javanese in Indonesian, and from English in Malaysian), and the pronunciation (Simpson, 2007b).

[15] The Malay Archipelago encompasses Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, an area populated by the Austronesian settlers in pre-colonial times (Simpson, 2007b).

student organisations had different political orientations, they all emphasised the role of Malay as “the language of unity against the Dutch” (Bertrand, 2003, p. 273). The presence of Malay was further strengthened thanks to the Balai Pustaka (Literature Office) which fostered translations in the High Malay variety, and to the publication of newspapers (Paauw, 2009; Simpson, 2007b). In 1927, Sukarno managed to group the disaggregated factions together under the Federation of Indonesian Nationalist Movements, which embraced Malay as a working language, even if communication still took place in Dutch, and emphasised this identity marker in order to create an overarching national identity (Simpson, 2007b). One year later, the Second Youth Congress renamed Malay as ‘Indonesian’ and stated in their Pledge:

> First: We the sons and daughters of Indonesia acknowledge that we have one birthplace, the Land of Indonesia (Tanah Air Indonesia)
> Second: We the sons and daughters of Indonesia acknowledge that we belong to one people, the People of Indonesia (Bangsa Indonesia)
> Third: We the sons and daughters of Indonesia uphold the language of unity, the Language of Indonesia (i.e. Indonesian) (Bahasa Indonesia) (quoted in Simpson, 2007b, p. 323).

However, despite the momentum of nationalism, the 1929 Great Depression, the increased Dutch authoritarian control, and the imprisonment of Sukarno dispirited the movement (Simpson, 2007b). It would not be until the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 that Indonesian truly gained relevance, since the Japanese, in a failed attempt of Japanization, prohibited the use of Dutch in favour of Malay, which gained a renewed status and experienced an impressive growth in terminology (Anderson, 2006; Alisjahbana, 1949). As such, at the declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, which also confirms H_1, Indonesian was adopted as the official and national language, reason why it underwent an unprecedented development or *pembangunan* (Errington, 1992; Paauw, 2009). Yet, the Dutch re-occupation led to the four-year violent Indonesian Revolution until the former surrendered, also pressed by the international community (Anderson, 2006). Both the Dutch and Japanese colonisation set the foundations for state-formation in Indonesia, which was achieved, in part, thanks to the context of decolonisation and the actors’ unification, although through violent means. In this sense, Indonesian became not only the language of unity, but also the language of rebellion, being key emotive words such as *merdéka* (freedom), *kedaulatan*

(sovereignty), or *semangat* (dynamic spirit), all related to violence (Anderson, 2006; Simpson, 2007b). Furthermore, for the purpose of national unity, words such as *permusyawaratan* (deliberation) or *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) were used in the Pancasila, as the former appeared in the Quran and the latter resonated to Javanese, the largest ethnic group in the country (Bertrand, 2003).

Indonesia's LPP has been regarded as remarkably successful (cf. Fishman, 1978; Woolard, 2000; Bukhari, 1996), since linguistic diversity was respected: while Bahasa Indonesia was the national and official language of the new nation-state, used in inter-group and inter-ethnic communication, local languages were simultaneously protected (Paauw, 2009; Simpson, 2007b). This further proves H_1, because when a language is not imposed over a group, a language conflict does not emerge.

Although Indonesia's LPP has been outstanding, it has also encountered some failures, as in the case of Timor-Leste, which can be classified as a state-formation language conflict on account of the following reasons. First, the territory known at the time as East Timor has been a historically contested domain, disputed between the Dutch and the Portuguese and finally a colony of the latter since the 16th century and until 1975 (see Map 7) Lutz, 1991). Second, its cultural identity was distinct from that of Indonesia in terms of religion, being Christianism instead of Islam the main faith in the islands, and in terms of language, being Tetum a *lingua franca* widely spoken, coinciding with the largest ethnic group, although it counts with a diverse Malayo-Polynesian population and a wide range of languages (East Timor Government, 2012). In this regard, Malay was associated with Islam, for it was written in the Arabic script (although nowadays it uses the Roman script) and it was the language employed in religious texts, thus reinforcing the *us versus them* narrative (Wright, 2004). Third, in accordance with H_1, following the *assimilado* policy the carried out by the Portuguese, whereby the Portuguese language and traditions were imposed, a language conflict emerged and it resulted in state-formation, as the Fretilin resistance group unilaterally declared independence in 1975 (Goglia & Alfonso, 2012).

Nevertheless, Indonesian troops occupied the territory in 1976 to fight potential communism and aggressively imposed Bahasa Indonesia in place of Portuguese with the hope of creating a sense of national identity (Taylor-Leech, 2008). The outcome of this

language conflict (H_1), however, was a strengthened role of Tetum as a national and symbolic language of resistance (Goglia & Alfonso, 2012). After 24 violent years of dominance, the international community pressed for the celebration of a referendum, which favoured independence in 1999 and was finally materialised in 2002, not without further violence (Asia Foundation, 2017). Finally, as language was a part of the conflict, it was also present in its aftermath: the Timorese Constitution included Tetum and Portuguese as co-official languages, local languages were proclaimed as national languages, and both Indonesian and English were declared as working languages so as to balance the linguistic mosaic of the newborn nation-state (Taylor-Leech, 2009).

5.3.2. Socioeconomic Aspects

The relation between language and socioeconomic aspects is evident both in the state-formation language conflict of Indonesia and that of Timor-Leste, being education and employment key cornerstones, which need to be explored.

In the state-formation language conflict of Indonesia, on the one hand, regarding education, throughout the 19th century, the Dutch established a hierarchical and restricted system, whereby children were segregated and sent to different schools according to their status of Dutch, aristocrats, or natives (Bertrand, 2003). Although Malay and other local languages were permitted as a medium of instruction in primary schools, Dutch remained the main language of instruction in primary education, as well as the language of access to secondary and tertiary education, which was subsequently blocked for the indigenous youth (Bertrand, 2003; Simpson, 2007b). On the other hand, this linguistic discrimination was translated into a lack of employment opportunities in high-level positions, typically occupied by the Dutch, which resulted in political resistance and the advent of nationalism in the first decades of the 20th century (Cribb & Brown, 1995; Simpson, 2007b). Notwithstanding the fact that Dutch proficiency among the population at large improved, discrimination based on social status still took place, and it was further perpetuated during the Japanese period, when natives were forced to perform unskilled jobs under deplorable conditions (Simpson, 2007b). Given that the imposition of Japanese would be a lengthy process, in the meanwhile, Malay took on the previous functions of Dutch, as its use was extended to high domains, thus

improving its status (Simpson, 2007b). As asserted in H_1, enforcing a language leads to a language conflict, and generates socioeconomic disparities.

Secondly, in the case of Timor-Leste, during the Portuguese colonisation, Portuguese was the language of the government, religion, and education, to which only a few had access (Lutz, 1991). *Assimilados* could opt for administrative positions and enjoyed certain privileges, thus creating a social divide with the rest of the population (Taylor-Leech, 2008). In parallel, in independent Indonesia, Bahasa Indonesia was also the language used in commercial relations, at the governmental level and in education, time at which the LPP focused on language development through the coining of new words, the publication of texts, and the production of materials (Bertrand, 2003). During the Indonesian regime over East Timor, it is estimated that around 400 teachers were sent to educate young Timorese in Bahasa Indonesia; that more than 200,000 textbooks stressing Indonesian values and the principles of the Pancasila were printed; and that more schools were built between 1975 and 1980 in comparison to the previous century of Portuguese colonisation (Bertrand, 2003; Lutz, 1991). Despite efforts to achieve universal literacy, poor quality of education and a centralised curriculum contributed to high dropout rates among the Timorese youth (Taylor-Leech, 2008). Although no information on the employment opportunities for Timorese based on their language proficiency has been found, it is manifest that education has constituted a key area through which a language can be imposed, subsequently creating a language conflict, as stated in H_1.

5.3.3. Linguistic Aspects

In this section, the Indonesian and Timor-Leste state-formation language conflicts will be examined from a linguistic perspective, and the degree to which languages contribute to conflict resolution will be determined.

Firstly, Indonesia's state-building process put emphasis on the role of Bahasa Indonesia since its inception, being this choice strategic. On the one hand, Dutch was the language of the oppressor and coloniser (the *other*, reinforced during the Japanese period), only accessible to a small elite, vested with high status, and not familiar to the population at large (Bertrand, 2003). Although it counted with a comprehensive series of literary works and it was used in international communication, its status was not close

to the value of English or French, so it was discarded (Paauw, 2009). On the other hand, Javanese was complex to learn and spoken by the largest ethnic group (45%) (Bertrand, 2003). Hence, its promotion could cause a "high level of resentment for their perceived dominance in the political and economic domains" (Wright, 2004, p. 85). However, its influence over Bahasa Indonesia should not be overlooked (Bertrand, 2003). Accordingly, Malay, a *lingua franca* known to the majority but the mother tongue of only 5% of the population, was considered more inclusive, as it "would not appear to confer unfair native language advantages on any *major*, numerically dominant ethnic group in the archipelago" (Simpson, 2007b, p. 323; emphasis in the original).

As such, the rationale behind the selection of the national language was intrinsically political, instead of relying on a linguistic basis, given that the three languages in consideration were equally apt, from a linguistic point of view, for performing this task as any other language could be. In this sense, language became the primary identity marker of the nationalist movement in order to appeal to the wider public, and to downgrade ethnic and religious differences by emphasising this new common aspect, which was capable of providing a sense of belonging to the Indonesian nation-state under the prism of primordialism (Brown, 2003). Nevertheless, Indonesian nationalism was civic in nature, for it aimed to encompass its extremely diverse population and it encouraged the learning of Bahasa Indonesia as a civic duty (Wright, 2004). In addition, Malay was renamed as Indonesian for political reasons, in order to comply with the language ideology of 'one nation, one language, one state,' as best exemplified by the Pledge of the Youth, which further contributed to provide an overarching national identity (Simpson, 2007b). In this regard, at the same time that the language was developing itself it became the language of development (Errington, 1992). Its status was thus enhanced, because it was portrayed as the language of modernity, of technical advancement, and social mobility (Wright, 2004).

Yet, in contrast with other nation-states, diversity was celebrated, as stated in the national motto *Bhinekka Tunggal Ika*. In this sense, the success of the Indonesian LPP can be attributed to: (i) its gradual approach; (ii) its flexibility at the implementation phase, since local languages were allowed as medium of instruction during the first stages; (iii) its continuity over time, because Sukarno and Suharto pursued the same

objectives; (iv) its recognition and embracement of diversity, given that local languages were offered protection and supported for their development, even though this would not be wholly realised in practice; and (v) its top-down approach translated into wide acceptance of Bahasa Indonesia by the population, for the language was not forcefully imposed (Bertrand, 2003; Simpson, 2007). As Simpson (2007b) indicates without taking into consideration state-formation movements, “there has never been an attempt to impose the national language on speakers in their private life and everyday informal communication. [...] Indonesian and regional languages [...] exist in a generally stable complementarity of distribution” (p. 333).

Despite the successes of Indonesia’s LPP, the state-formation language conflict of Timor-Leste represents one of the failures of this policy, given the fact that a stark cultural assimilationist policy was carried out, particularly in the field of education, which was accompanied with a high degree of violence and abuses, as well as with strong socioeconomic implications (Bertrand, 2003). This fostered nationalism around Tetum, which was granted a renewed value and vested with symbolism against the *other*, repeating the pattern of Bahasa Indonesia during the 1920s (Taylor-Leech, 2008).

Overall, it has been noted that “the policy of adopting and promoting Bahasa Indonesia has generally been successful in preventing intensely violent ethnic conflict in Indonesia” (Bertrand, 2003, p. 263), which has tended to happen in a lower scale in comparison with other multicultural countries. As such, language can be considered as a potential factor contributing to peace, according to H_2. In the case of Timor-Leste, an equilibrium has been achieved thanks to the 2002 Constitution, but the role of languages in peacebuilding must also be considered: although no information has been found on conflict resolution and peace activities related to language, bi- or multilingualism, or to a multicultural approach, peacebuilding activities can contribute to peace (H_2), for example, in terms of the language used: Indonesian could reproduce patterns of power, while Tetum could demonstrate respect for this identity marker despite possible limitations; there are also advantages and disadvantages of resorting to English and local languages, so stakeholders will need to make an informed decision (Neufeldt, 2016).

Indonesia and Timor-Leste point to the confirmation of H_1 in different occasions. Although further research is needed to fully confirm H_2, it has been observed is that languages permeate all spheres of life, including politics.

6. Conclusion and Proposals

Throughout this research project, the relation between languages and conflicts, particularly state-formation language conflicts in the region of Southeast Asia, has been examined with the aim of bridging the gap between linguistics and politics, in what constitutes an interconnected yet underexplored area of study.

Framed around the ideals of nationalism and national identity in an increasingly globalised world order, two key research questions have been addressed. On the one hand, the dynamics of state-formation language conflicts have been explored in a diachronic comparative analysis between three dissimilar nation-states, namely, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia. Despite their differences, it has been observed in all instances that language conflicts emerge when a language is imposed over a group, thus validating H_1 as follows.

First, the language of the powerful minority, Urdu, was imposed over Bengali, unleashing the Bengali Language Movement, typically associated with the Liberation War waged between West and East Pakistan, as well as with the achievement of independence. In modern-day Bangladesh, language is an issue of contention for the CHT peoples, on whom Bengali has been imposed over their indigenous languages, repeating history. Second, Thailand's efforts to centralise power entailed the enforcement of Thai, the language of the powerful majority, in the Deep South provinces where PM is widely spoken, thus leading to a language conflict. Third, imposition of Dutch during the colonial period created a language conflict in today's Indonesia. Here, the adoption of Malay, an initially creole and minority language that would become a *lingua franca*, as the national and official language together with the acceptance of linguistic diversity has proved decisive to avoid further language conflicts. While imposition of a language has not been mainstream, when this imposition has taken place, as in the case of Timor-Leste, the same pattern can be observed. Further references in

support of the research hypothesis can be consulted in the Comparative Table in the Appendix, which summarises at first glance key points, generalisations notwithstanding.

Although all of these conflicts demanded state-formation, they have rendered different outcomes. Bangladesh, for example, achieved independence from West Pakistan, in the same way as Indonesia from the Dutch, both by means of violence in brutal wars; and, within the latter, Timor-Leste followed suit. While the CHT conflict has been relatively settled thanks to the Peace Accords, Thailand's Deep South conflict is ongoing, all of which points to the influence of the context, at the local, regional, and international levels, as an explanatory factor of such differences, and to the use of violence to achieve this goal.

On the other hand, linguistic diversity, against a backdrop of theoretically homogeneous nation-states, has been explored as a possible element to de-escalate violence and contribute to peace, in accordance with the second research objective and corresponding question. In this regard, homogeneous Bangladesh resorts to storytelling and dialogue activities in the framework of the Liberation War Museum, as well as to multilingual education projects in the CHT, an approach further expanded in the case of Thailand thanks to the Mahidol project, among many other initiatives. For its part, the LPP of superdiverse Indonesia is considered as essential in the contribution to peace, and the equilibrium achieved in Timor-Leste with the recognition of languages in the Constitution may point to the validation of H_2. While there are other examples in favour of this premise, there is no sufficient evidence of linguistically diverse initiatives in the conflicts analysed in Bangladesh; the bidialectal population of Thailand has not exempted the country from extreme forms of violence; and Indonesia's failures in its LPP have shown mixed results. Further research is needed to completely confirm H_2.

In this sense, it is important to remember that linguistically diverse settings will not systematically be more peaceful, but politics can help in different ways, making language a key element in conflict resolution. It has been proven that recognition of a language, while being a symbolic political act, can constitute the starting point to reduce inequalities; that the provision of mother-tongue education decreases socioeconomic disparities and respects human rights; that a communication channel is essential to convey demands; and that an accommodating LPP as that of Indonesia is helpful to

reduce tensions. As such, acceptance of diversity instead of assimilationism is decisive to avoid future state-formation language conflicts. However, the exportation of these measures to other contexts also needs to be studied in more detail, given the importance of considering culture in IR.

Finally, with the aim of meeting the last research objective and providing an answer to the corresponding question, the terms 'language conflict' and 'state-formation language conflict' have been indirectly addressed in the three cases. It can be inferred that language is an issue of national security and that this 'securitisation of language' is part of the nation-building exercise and the creation of a national identity, a strategy of survival for the nation-state, an attempt to maintain the status quo, a quest for power. In this regard, it is essential to reflect upon the notion of power and to delve into its different understandings depending on cultures in order to be able to dialogue, to communicate. As it has been observed in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia, language has been a component of the conflicts, but not the main or sole cause, given the multicausal nature of conflicts. The enmeshment of languages with historical, political, ideological, social, economic, ethnic, religious, and other aspects cannot be overlooked, and, in this regard, language can further inequalities, grievances, discriminatory attitudes, etcetera, for it permeates all spheres of life. For these reasons, it is here proposed to accurately define the term 'language conflict' in the academic field of study; otherwise, this could allow nation-states to problematise certain issues but not others depending on their interests. Alternatively, it is here proposed to resort to the terms 'conflict with a linguistic component' and 'state-formation conflict with a linguistic component' in the case of the present analysis, as they portray more explicitly the relation of languages and conflict.

Similarly, it is important to note the limitations of the present project. On the one hand, the author is not knowledgeable in the languages object of study, reason why the amount of primary information is reduced. On the other hand, information varies depending on the country, this is to say, although the same type of information has been researched, in some cases some countries provided more information on one topic than others, and in other cases it has not been possible to collect data. The analysis has nevertheless tried to balance these limitations.

Overall, future research lines should include the study of other state-formation conflicts with a linguistic component in the selected countries, for example, the cases of other indigenous groups in Bangladesh, similar movements in the north of Thailand, or the conflicts with Aceh or the Chinese community in Indonesia. Furthermore, it would be interesting to expand the analysis to neighbouring countries, such as Pakistan, Malaysia or Papua New Guinea; to other Southeast Asian nation-states, such as India and Sri Lanka, where language has also been portrayed as a central issue in their conflicts; as well as to other regions of the world, particularly Africa, Latin America and the Pacific, where linguistic diversity is outstanding. A shift towards the investigation of languages instead of nation-states as objects of study could also prove fruitful in this regard and adjust better to the current context of globalisation. In the same way, the scope could be broadened by considering other types of conflicts in which language is present so that the hypotheses could be endorsed or rejected in different scenarios. Likewise, a research avenue that combines both disciplines could focus on linguistic justice, LHR, and the development of mechanisms to de-escalate violence in conflicts through linguistic diversity, so that all languages and peoples can peacefully live together.

7. References

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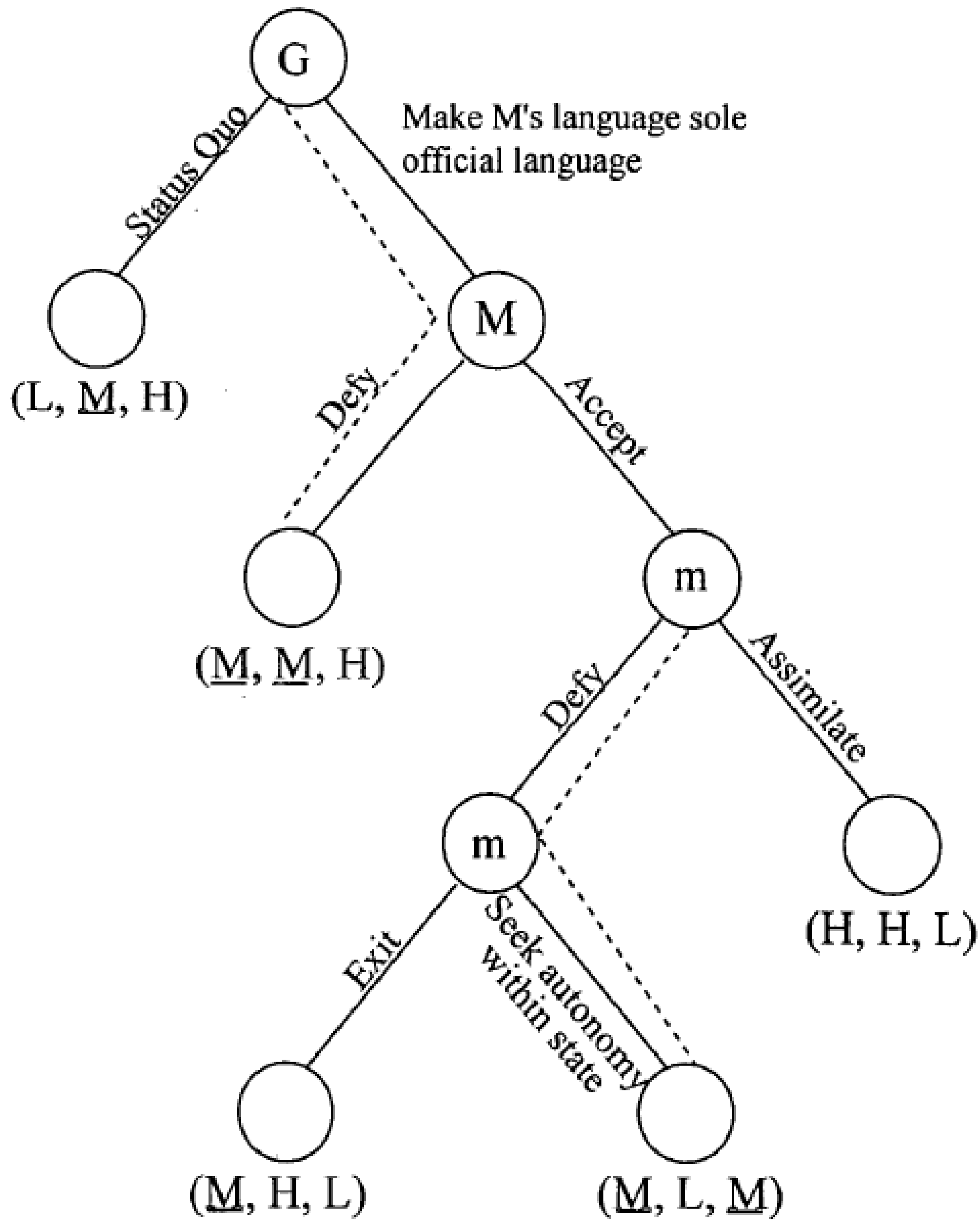
8. Appendixes

8.1. General

Figure 2: Laitin's (2000) official language game under the prism of Realism.



G = Government
M = Majority Group
m = minority group
Values (G, M, m); H = High; M = Medium; L = Low
- - - - - - - - = Equilibrium path

Table 1: LPP and Ethnolinguistic Strategies in Southeast Asian Nation-States (Brown, 2003).

	Persuasive Instruments	Coercive Instruments
Unilingual Goals	Thailand	Bangladesh Burma China (until late 1970s) Laos Malaysia Pakistan Sri Lanka (until late 1970s) Taiwan (until mid-1980s)
Mixed Goals	Indonesia Philippines	China (since late 1970s) Vietnam
Multilingual Goals	India Papua New Guinea Taiwan (since mid-1980s)	Singapore Sri Lanka (since late 1970s)

Figure 3: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) first dimension: Power in West and Eastern Societies.

TABLE 3.5 Key Differences Between Small- and Large-Power-Distance Societies III: The State and Ideas

SMALL POWER DISTANCE	LARGE POWER DISTANCE
The use of power should be legitimate and follow criteria of good and evil.	Might prevails over right: whoever holds the power is right and good.
Skills, wealth, power, and status need not go together.	Skills, wealth, power, and status should go together.
Mostly wealthier countries with a large middle class.	Mostly poorer countries with a small middle class.
All should have equal rights.	The powerful should have privileges.
Power is based on formal position, expertise, and ability to give rewards.	Power is based on tradition or family, charisma, and the ability to use force.
The way to change a political system is by changing the rules (evolution).	The way to change a political system is by changing the people at the top (revolution).
There is more dialogue and less violence in domestic politics.	There is less dialogue and more violence in domestic politics.
Pluralist governments based on the outcome of majority votes.	Autocratic or oligarchic governments based on co-optation.
The political spectrum shows a strong center and weak right and left wings.	The political spectrum, if allowed to exist, has a weak center and strong right and left wings.
There are small income differentials in society, further reduced by the tax system.	There are large income differentials in society, further increased by the tax system.
Scandals end political careers of those involved.	Scandals involving power holders are usually covered up.
Participative theories of management: Christian New Testament, Marx.	Power-based practice of management: Confucius, Plato, Machiavelli.

Figure 4: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) second dimension: Collectivism-Individualism in West and Eastern Societies.

TABLE 4.5 Key Differences Between Collectivist and Individualist Societies IV: Politics and Ideas

COLLECTIVIST	INDIVIDUALIST
Opinions are predetermined by group membership.	Everyone is expected to have a private opinion.
Collective interests prevail over individual interests.	Individual interests prevail over collective interests.
State has dominant role in the economic system.	State has restrained role in the economic system.
Low per capita GNI	High per capita GNI
Companies are owned by families or collectives.	Joint-stock companies are owned by individual investors.
Private life is invaded by group(s).	Everyone has a right to privacy.
Laws and rights differ by group.	Laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all.
Lower Human Rights rating	Higher Human Rights rating
Ideologies of equality prevail over ideologies of individual freedom.	Ideologies of individual freedom prevail over ideologies of equality.
Imported economic theories are unable to deal with collective and particularist interests.	Native economic theories are based on pursuit of individual self-interests.
Harmony and consensus in society are ultimate goals.	Self-actualization by every individual is an ultimate goal.
Patriotism is the ideal.	Autonomy is the ideal.
Outcome of psychological experiments depends on in-group–out-group distinction	Outcome of psychological experiments depends on ego-other distinction.

Figure 5: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) third dimension: 'Femininity'-'Masculinity' Divide in West and Eastern Societies.

TABLE 5.6 Key Differences Between Feminine and Masculine Societies V: Politics and Religion

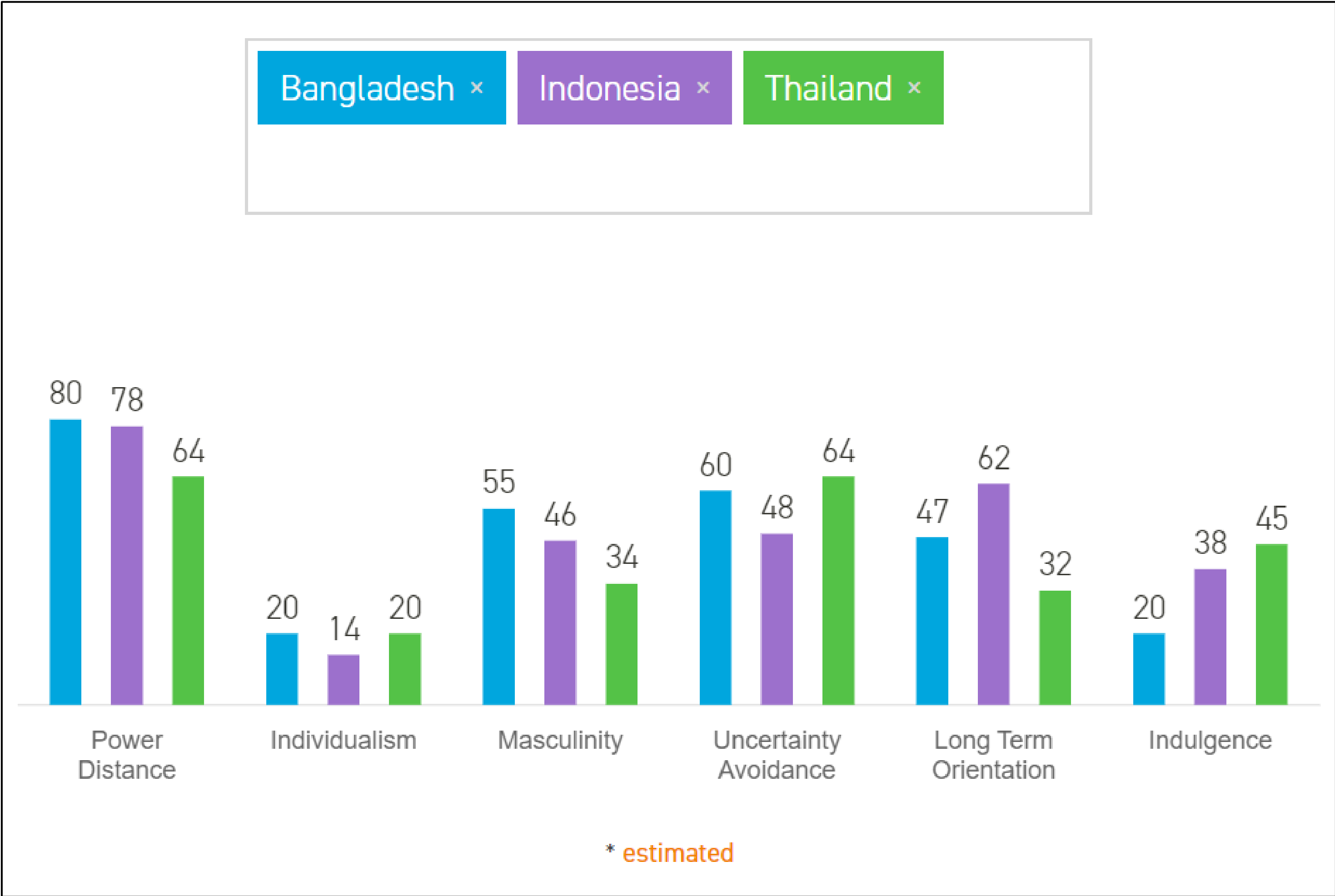
FEMININE	MASCULINE
Welfare society ideal; help for the needy	Performance society ideal; support for the strong
Permissive society	Corrective society
Immigrants should integrate.	Immigrants should assimilate.
Government aid for poor countries	Poor countries should help themselves.
The environment should be preserved: small is beautiful.	The economy should continue growing: big is beautiful.
International conflicts should be resolved by negotiation and compromise.	International conflicts should be resolved by a show of strength or by fighting.
More voters place themselves left of center.	More voters place themselves in the political center.
Politics are based on coalitions with polite political manners.	The political game is adversarial, with frequent mudslinging.
Many women are in elected political positions.	Few women are in elected political positions.
Tender religions	Tough religions
In Christianity, more secularization; stress on loving one's neighbor	In Christianity, less secularization: stress on believing in God
Dominant religions give equal roles to both sexes.	Dominant religions stress the male prerogative.
Religions are positive or neutral about sexual pleasure.	Religions approve sex for procreation rather than recreation.

Figure 6: Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) fourth dimension: Uncertainty Avoidance in West and Eastern Societies.

TABLE 6.5 Key Differences Between Weak and Strong Uncertainty-Avoidance Societies
IV: The Citizen and the State

WEAK UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE	STRONG UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE
Few and general laws or unwritten rules	Many and precise laws or unwritten rules
If laws cannot be respected, they should be changed.	Laws are necessary, even if they cannot be respected.
Fast result in case of appeal to justice	Slow result in case of appeal to justice
Citizens are competent toward authorities.	Citizens are incompetent toward authorities.
Citizen protest is acceptable.	Citizen protest should be repressed.
Civil servants do not have law degrees.	Civil servants have law degrees.
Civil servants are positive toward the political process.	Civil servants are negative toward the political process.
Citizens are interested in politics.	Citizens are not interested in politics.
Citizens trust politicians, civil servants, and the legal system.	Citizens are negative toward politicians, civil servants, and the legal system.
There is high participation in voluntary associations and movements.	There is low participation in voluntary associations and movements.
The burden of proof for identifying a citizen is on the authorities.	Citizens should be able to identify themselves at all times.
Outside observers perceive less corruption.	Outside observers perceive more corruption.
Liberalism	Conservatism, law and order
Positive attitudes toward young people	Negative attitudes toward young people
Tolerance, even of extreme ideas	Extremism and repression of extremism

Graph 1: Comparison of Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2010) six cultural dimensions between Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia (Hofstede Insights, 2020).



8.2. Country-Specific Appendixes

8.2.1. Bangladesh

Key Maps in Bangladesh

Map 1: West and East Pakistan after the 1947 Partition of India (Jones, 2014, p. 4)

Map 2: Bangladesh after Independence in 1971 (Thompson, 2007, p. 34)

Map 3: The CHT in Bangladesh (Islam, Faisal, & Rashid, 2020, p. 429)

A Selection of Articles from the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh

Quoted from Ministry of Law (2019a).

Article 3:

The state language of the Republic is [1][Bangla][16].

Article 9:

1[The unity and solidarity of the Bangalee nation, which, deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Bangalee nationalism.][17]

Article 23:

The State shall adopt measures to conserve the cultural traditions and heritage of the people, and so to foster and improve the national language, literature and the arts that all sections of the people are afforded the opportunity to contribute towards and to participate in the enrichment of the national culture.

[16] The original footnote indicates as follows: “Substituted for the word "Bengali" by the Constitution (Eighth Amendment) Act, 1988 (Act XXX of 1988), section 3.” (Ministry of Law, 2019b).

[17] The original footnote reads: “Substituted for the former article 9 by the Constitution (Fifteenth Amendment) Act, 2011 (Act XIV of 2011), section 9.” (Ministry of Law, 2019c).

8.2.2. <u>Thailand</u>

Key Maps in Thailand

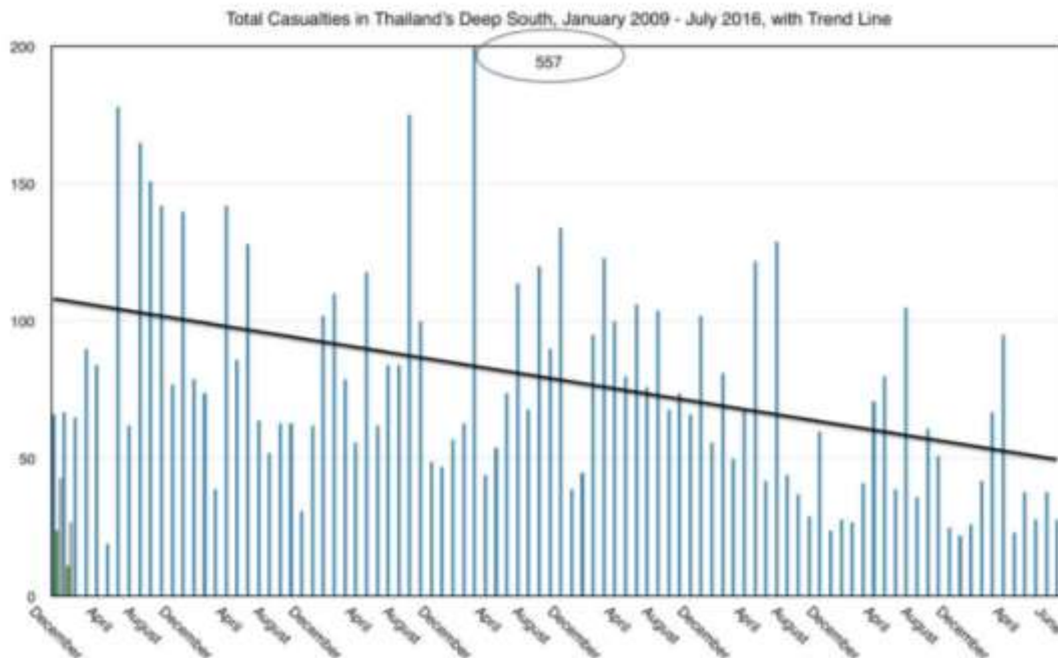
Map 4: Thailand (Simpson & Thammasathien, p. 392).

Map 5: Thailand's Deep South Provinces (Bangkok Thailand, 2019).

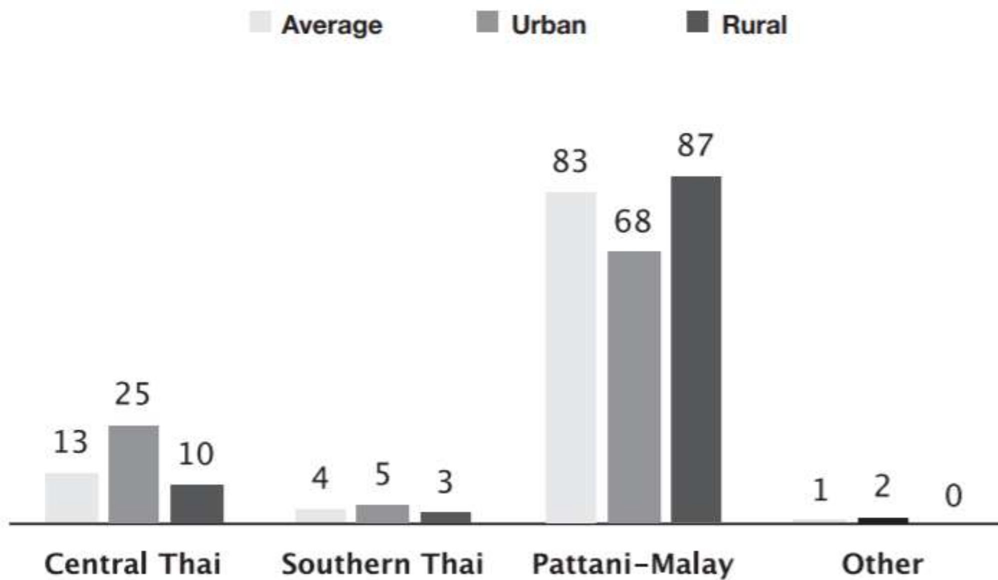
Graphs and Figures

Graph 2: Violence in the Deep South: Killed Persons from 2004 to 2016 (Abuza, 2017)

Graph 3: Evolution and Violence in the Deep South Conflict: Casualties from 2008 to 2016 (Abuza, 2016)



Graph 4: Demographics of Thailand: Language and the Urban-Rural Divide (Klein, 2010)



Graph 5: Demographics of Thailand: Language and Religion (Klein, 2010)

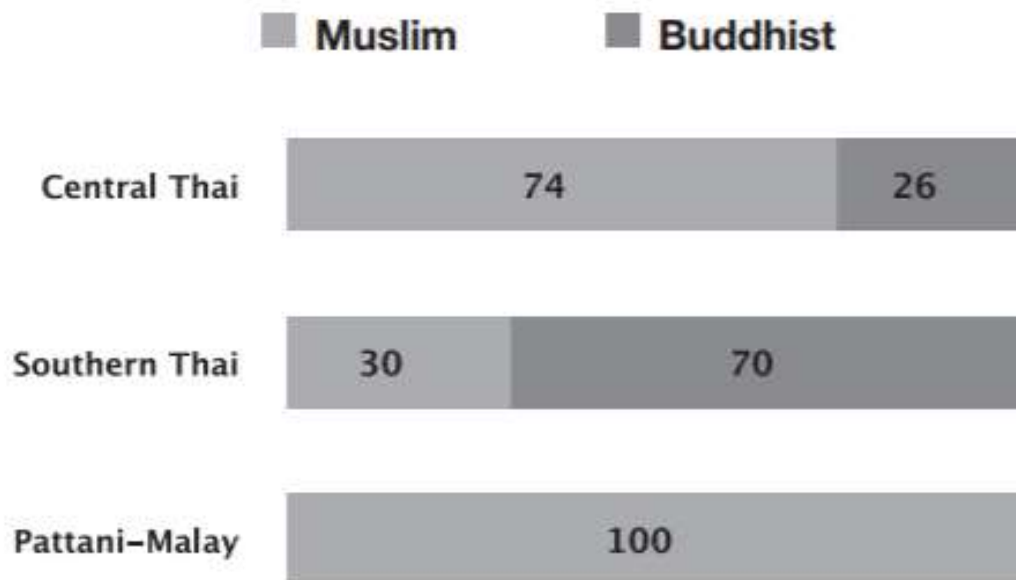
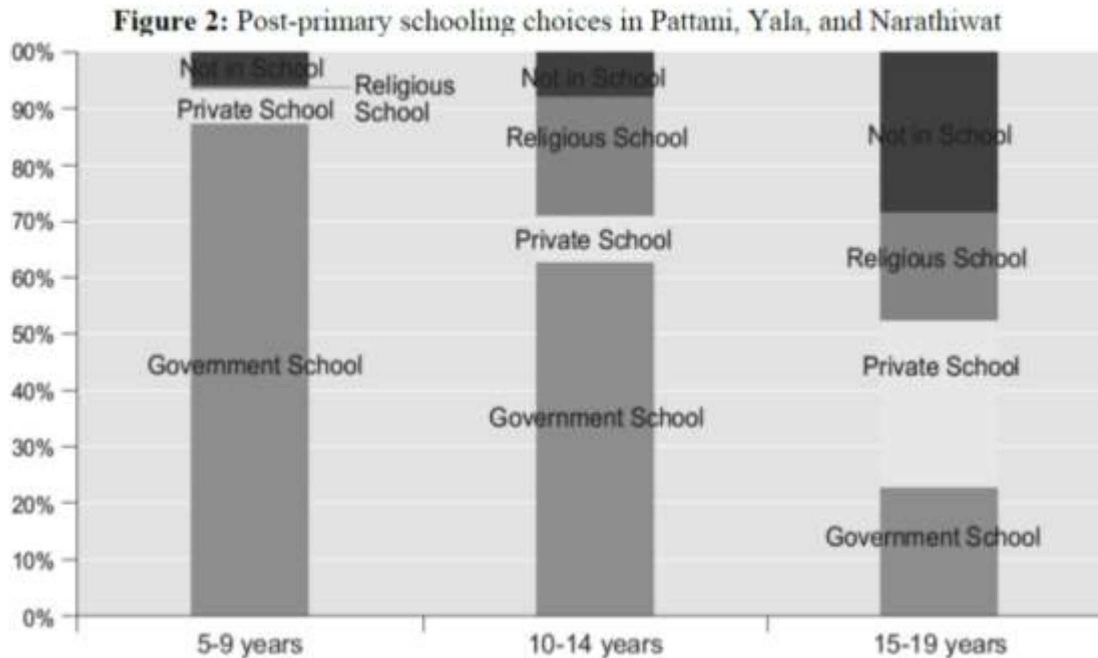


Figure 7: Demographics of Thailand: Socioeconomic Indicators (Melvin, 2007)

Table A.1. Data on the Patani region and Thailand

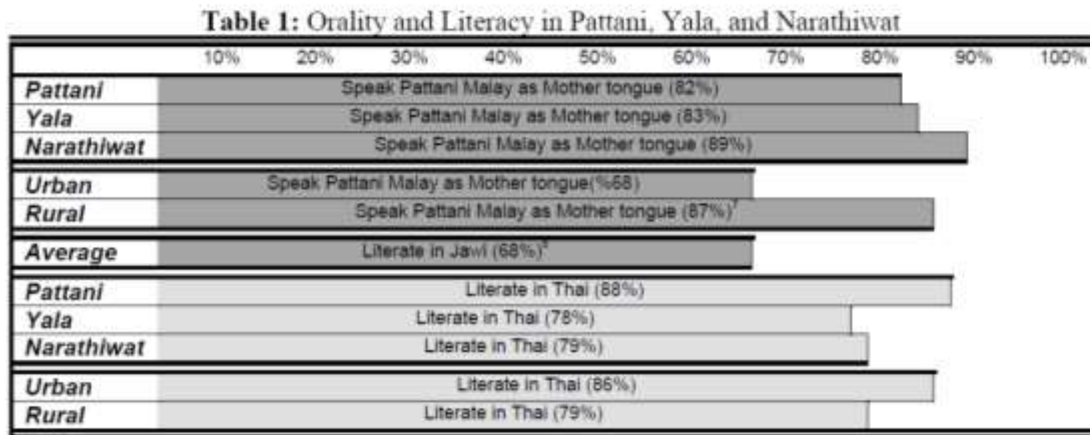
Entity	Total population, 2006[a]	Muslim population, 2000 (% of total population)	Human Achievement Index grading[b]	Unemploy-ment rate, 2005 (%)	Poverty incidence, 2004 (%)	Household income, 2004 (Thai baht)
Narathiwat province	707 171	*83*	Very low	*1.9*	*18.15*	9 214
Pattani province	635 730	*81*	Very low	*2.1*	*22.96*	11 694
Yala province	468 252	*71*	Medium	*0.6*	*10.00*	11 880
Southern region[c]	8 600 436	. .	. .	*1.4*	*7.82*	14 237
Thailand	62 828 706	*5*	. .	*1.3*	*11.25*	14 778

Graph 6: School Preferences of Malay Muslims in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat (Joll, 2013)



(Source Suwannarat, 2011, p. 43)

Graph 7: Thai Literacy Levels in Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (Joll, 2013)



Graph 8: Percentage of Students across Education Levels depending on Religion (Burke, Tweedie, & Poocharoen, 2013)

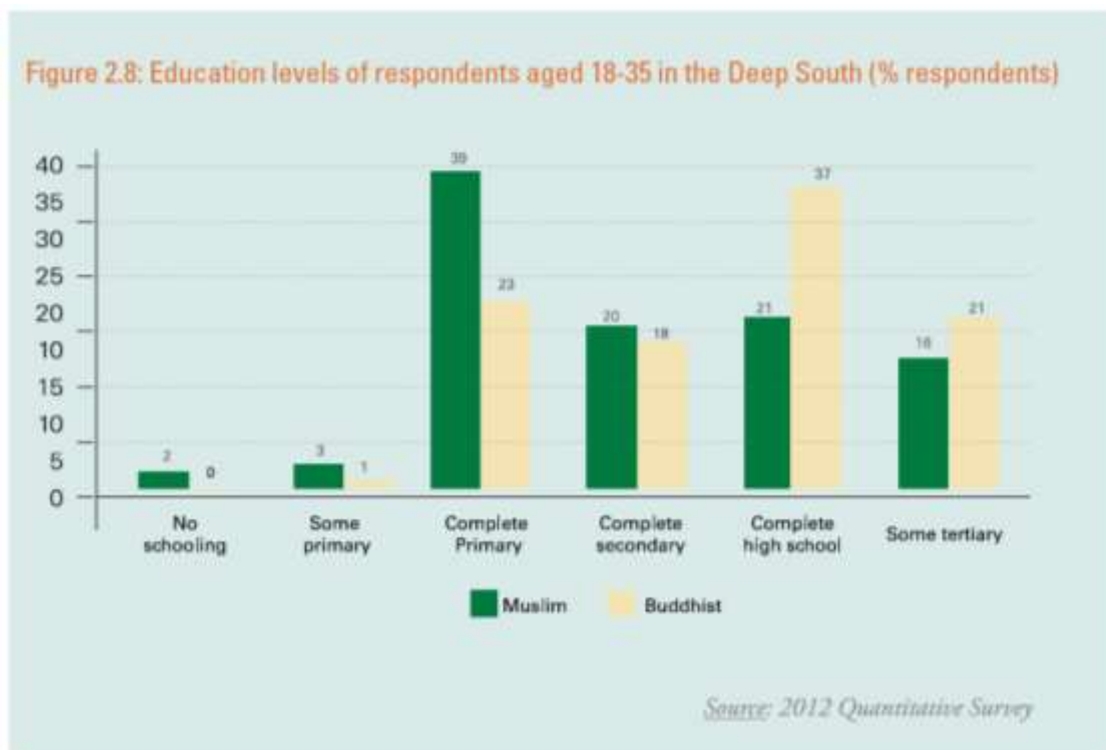
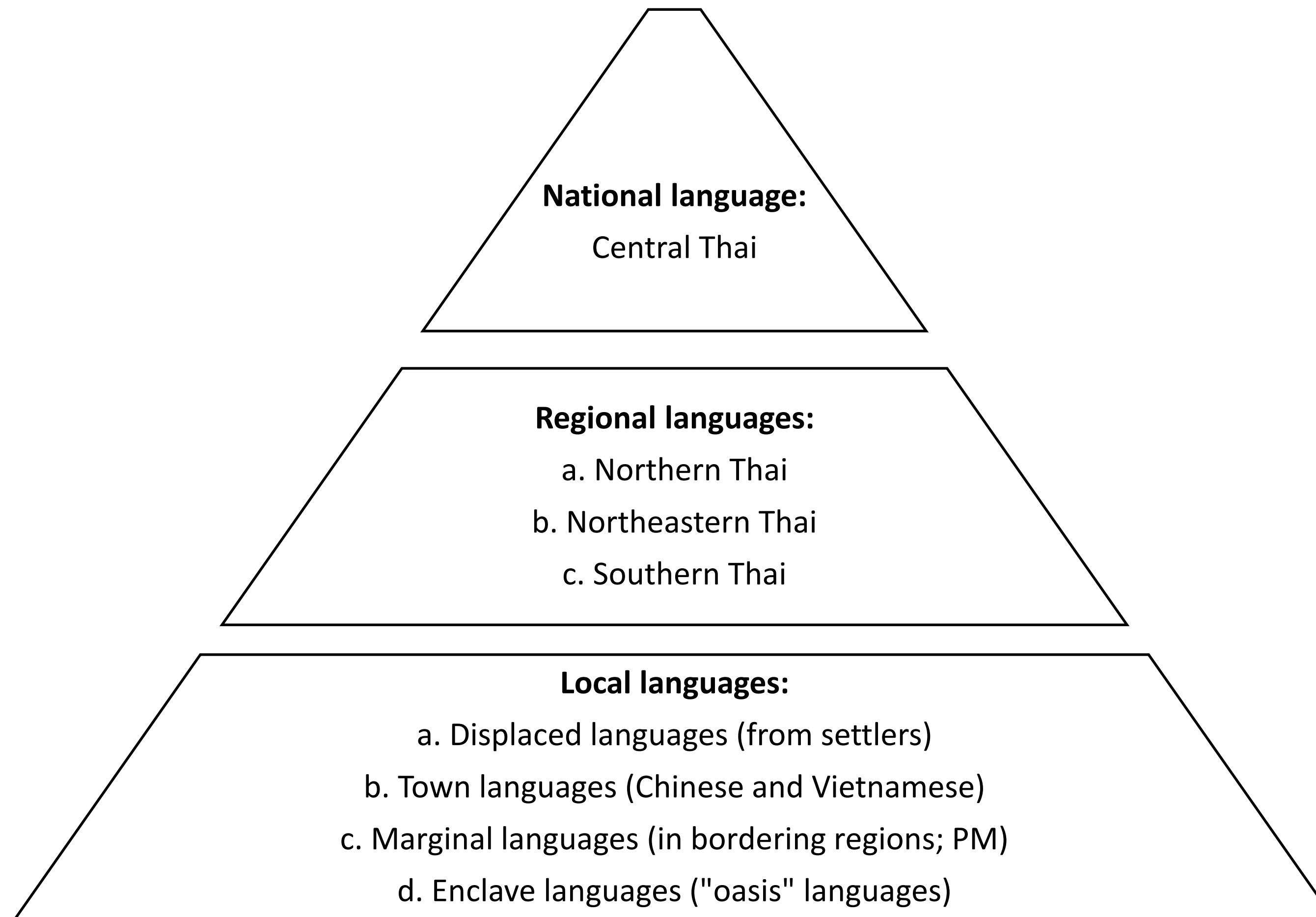


Figure 8: Hierarchy of Languages in Thailand (own elaboration from Joll, 2013; Premsrirat, 2005)



Thailand’s Ratthaniyom

Quoted from Nakhata (1978) in Aphornsuvan (2003).

Ratthaniyom No. 3: The appellation of the Thai people

As the Government is of the opinion that the names by which the Thais in some parts of the country have been called do not correspond to the name of the race and the preference of the people so called, and also that the appellation of the Thai people by dividing them into many groups, such as the Northern Thais, the North-Eastern Thais, the Southern Thais, Islamic Thais, is not appropriate for Thailand is one and indivisible.

It thereby, notifies that the State Preference is as follows:

1. Do not call the Thais in contradiction to the name of the race or the preference of those referred to.

2. Use the word “Thai” for all of the Thais without any of the above-mentioned divisions.

Ratthaniyom No. 4: Respect for the national flag, the national anthem and the anthem for His Majesty the King

As the Government considers that the national flag, the national anthem, and the anthem for His Majesty the King are of great importance to the nation which deserve reverence from all Thais, it thereby proclaims the following as State Preferences:

1. Whenever one sees the national flag being raised or lowered from any government office at the prescribed times, or hears a solo trumpet of whistle announcing that flag is to be raised or lowered, one must pay due respect in the manners prescribed for uniformed personnel or other customary practices.

2. Whenever one sees a regimental flag, a national ensign, a flag of the Youth Corps or a Boy Scout’s flag being officially paraded or displayed by the troops, the Youth Corps or the Boy Scouts, one must pay due respect in the manners prescribed for uniformed personnel or other customary practices.

3. Whenever hearing the national anthem officially played at any official function or privately played at any ceremony, those who participate in the event or are in the vicinity are to pay due respects in the manners prescribed for uniformed personnel or other customary practices.

4. Whenever the anthem of His Majesty the King is officially played at any official function or privately played at any theatre or party, those who participate in the event or are in the vicinity are to pay due respects in the manners prescribed for uniformed personnel or other customary practices.

5. Whenever one sees a person not paying due respect as stated in clauses 1- 4, one must admonish him to indicate the importance of paying respect to the national flag, the national anthem and the anthem of His Majesty the King.

Ratthaniyom No. 9: The Thai language and alphabet and civic duties of good citizens

As the Government deems that the continuity and the progress of Thailand depends on the usage of the national language and alphabet as important elements, the Council of Ministers has thereby unanimously voted to proclaim the following to be the State Preference:

1. Thais must respect, show esteem, and venerate the Thai language, and must feel honoured to speak or to use the Thai language.

2. Thais must recognition that one of the civic duties of a good Thai citizen is to study Thai which is the national language, at least until being literate. Secondly, people of Thai nationality must consider as their duty to help, advise, and convince other citizens who do not know the Thai language or are not able to read Thai to become literate in Thai.

3. Thais must not regard the place of birth, domicile, residence or local dialects which varies from locality to locality as marks of differences (rift). Everyone must consider that being born as a Thai means that he has Thai blood and speaks the same Thai language. There is no (inherent) conflict in being born in different localities or speaking the Thai language in different dialects.

4. Thais must consider it their duty to be good citizens, to help, advise and also to convince those who do not know and understand the civic duties of good citizens of the Thai nation to know and understand such duties.

Ratthaniyom No. 10: The dress code of the Thai people

As the Government has observed that the mode of dress of the Thai people in public or populous places is not proper in accordance with the culture of the Thai nation, The Council of Ministers thereby unanimously voted to proclaim the following to be the State Preference:

1. Thais should not appear in public, populous places, or in municipal areas without proper clothing, for instance, wearing only underwear (drawers), no shirt or with loose shirt-tails.

2. Clothing considered to be proper for the Thai people are as follows:

A. Authorized uniform worn as the occasion require.

B. Western clothing properly worn.

C. Traditional clothing properly worn.

Example of a Multilingual Leaflet in Thai and Jawi dating from 2005

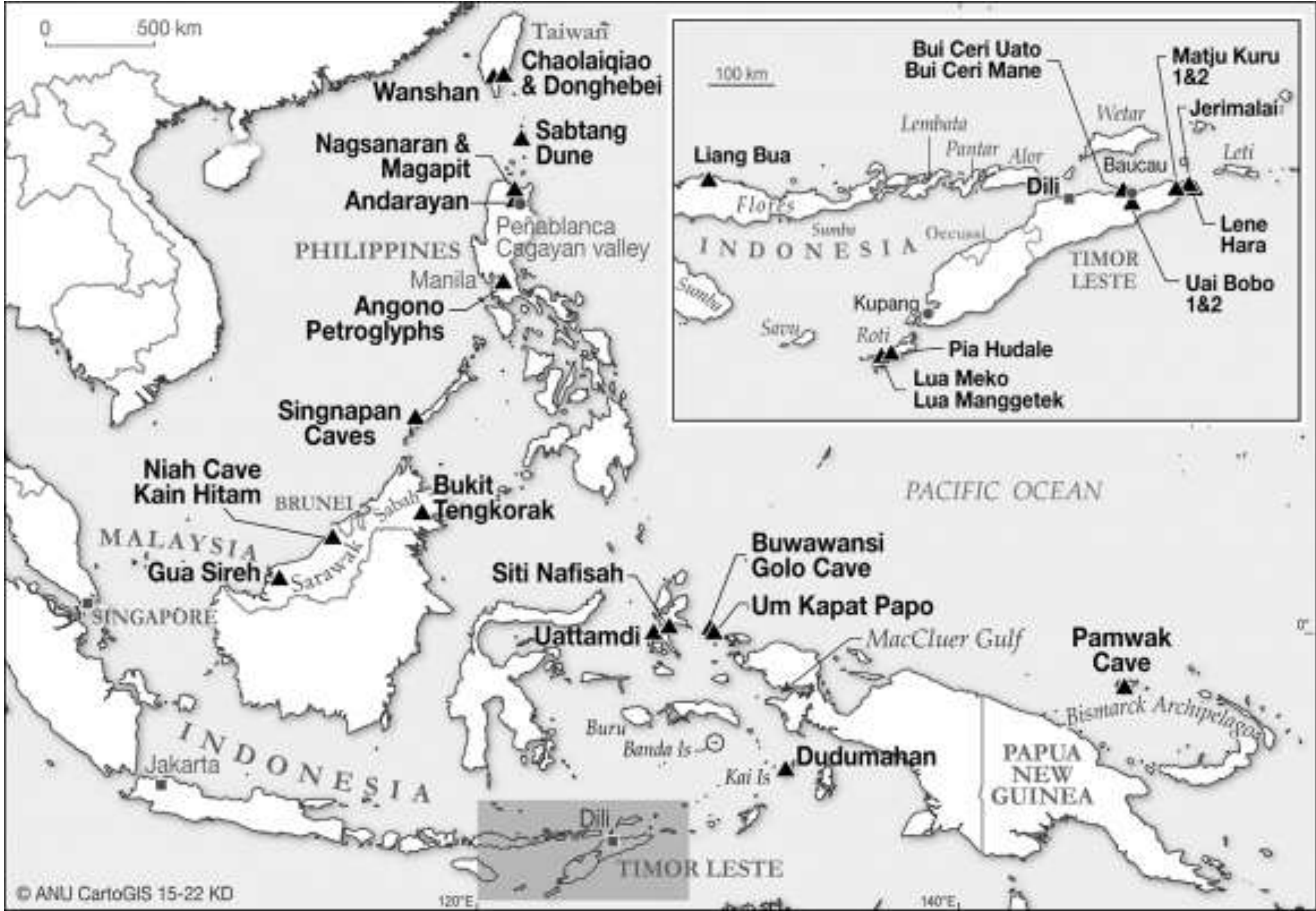
“Oh! All Malayan nationals, you should not educate your child to be blind from the language of Malaya, which is recorded in the Koran. You are destroying the religion...” (ICG, 2007, p. 20).

8.2.3. Indonesia

Key Maps

Map 6: Indonesia (Simpson, 2007b, p. 313).

Map 7: Timor-Leste (O'Connor, 2015).



8.2.4. Comparative Table

Table 2: Comparative Table of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Indonesia (own elaboration from the sources used throughout the dissertation).

Cases / Variables	Bangladesh		Thailand	Indonesia	
	East Pakistan	**CHT**		**Indonesia**	**Timor-Leste**
Historical and political aspects					
Actors	East Pakistan vs. West Pakistan	CHT peoples vs. Bangladesh	Deep South Provinces vs. Thailand	Indonesia vs. Dutch & Japanese	East Timor vs. Portuguese & Indonesian
Summarised timeline of the conflict	1947: Creation of Pakistan	1975-90s: Dictatorial regimes	1900s: Thai nation-state and assimilationism (1921 Education Act; 1939-42 Cultural Mandates)	1920s: First nationalist state-formation movements	16th c. – 1975: Portuguese colony and first state-formation attempts
	1947-51: First phase of the Language Movement	1962: Kaptai Hydro-Electric Dam issue	1960s: First separatist movements	1928: Malay renamed as 'Indonesian'	1976-99: Indonesian rule and resistance
	1951-71: Second phase of the Language Movement	1979-84: Planned relocation of Bengalis	2004: Peak of violence (camp, Krue Se, Tak Bai)	1942-45: Japanese period and Japanization	1999: Referendum of independence
	1971: Liberation War and independence of Bangladesh	1997: Peace Accords	2007-2014: Devolution, attempted peace dialogues, coup	1945: Independence 1945-49: Revolution against the Dutch	2002: Official declaration of independence of Timor-Leste
Key language-related events — Imposition	West Pakistan's cultural domination: Urdu-Bengali debacle (statements of leaders), banning of Tagore, script, and Sanskrit loanwords. Urdu as the language of the powerful minority.	Bangladesh's cultural assimilationist ideology (Bangladeshi nationalism): imposition of Bengali (Bangla Academy) and neglect of non-Bengali communities. Bengali as the language of the powerful majority.	Thailand's cultural assimilationist policy (Thai-isation): imposition of Thai in education, prohibition of PM, Malay, the Jawi script, and cultural elements (faith, clothing, etc.); issuing of the Cultural Mandates. Thai as the language of the powerful majority.	Dutch cultural imposition: in the education system and high domains, neglect of Malay despite coexistence. Japanese failed assimilationist policy. Dutch and Javanese as the languages of the powerful minority.	Portuguese cultural *assimilado* policy. Indonesian policy: imposition of Indonesian (Balay Pustaka), prohibition of Tetum, acculturation. Portuguese and Indonesian as the languages of the powerful minority.

Demands	Bengali as an official language through the Bengali Language Movement and demonstrations (21 Feb). Achieved in 1954 thanks to the Twenty-one-Point Formula. Importance reflected in the country name and in the Constitution (Bengali nationalism).	Respect for cultural diversity; recognition of CHT languages as such (instead of dialects) to avoid discrimination in other areas.	Secessionist claims or greater local autonomy, recognition of PM as medium of instruction in education, and of the term 'Malay'; respect for a distinct identity; promotion of cultural diversity.	Secessionist claims, state-formation demands articulated around the Bahasa Indonesia *lingua franca* language as the primary identity marker against the *other* (Dutch, Japanese); embracement of cultural diversity.	Respect for a distinct cultural identity; sate-formation demands articulated around the Tetum *lingua* franca as the primary identity marker against the other (Portuguese, Indonesian); embracement of diversity.
Geography	Geographical anomaly (two-nation theory); regional concentration in the East.	Regional concentration in the mountainous or Hill south, separated from the core. Disputed territory throughout history.	Regional concentration in Thailand's Far-South, known as *chaiden phak tai*, the southern frontier (Gilquin, 2005, p. 52). Partially independent entity until 1909.	Southeast Asia's most extensive archipelago.	Located in the East of the archipelago, comprising the eastern part of the island of Timor, apart from other small islands. Independent from Indonesia until 1976.
Colonisation	British colonisation (1747-1947)		No	Portuguese (16th c.) Dutch (16th – 20th c.) Japanese (1942-1945) Dutch (1945-1949)	Portuguese (16th c. – 1975) Indonesian rule (1976-1999)
Political parties or movements	Bengali Language Movement: - East Pakistan Student League - Awami League and its Language Committee - United Front	PCJSS	BRN, PULO, GMIP Key role of the youth	Budi Utomo, the Taman Siswa Movement, Sarekat Islam, student organisations to be comprised under the Federation of Indonesian Nationalist Movements	The Fretilin Group
Prominent figures	*Shahids*	Chakma Indigenous leader Larma	Haji Sulong	Sukarno, Suharto	Leader Ramos-Horta and Bishop of Dili Belo
Factors in the degree of state-formation	West Pakistan's repression, control, and centralisation.	Bangladesh's repression, control, and centralisation.	Thailand's stark repression, control, and centralisation.	First period of economic depression, imprisonment of Sukarno, and increased	Actor's organisation and conflict setting: international support for

	East Pakistan's lack of political representation, socioeconomic disparities, mobilisation around identity (language as primary marker).	CHT's lack of voice leading to the use of violence, but agreement to a peace process.	Fragmentation of the Deep South actors, agreement to autonomy instead of state-formation; international aid to resolve the conflict but conspiracy of silence.	authoritarian control of the Dutch, followed by the Japanese occupation. Second period of actor's unification, international context of decolonisation.	a self-determination referendum.
Outcome	State-formation through war	No state-formation	No state-formation	State-formation through war	War against Indonesia and state-formation through referendum
Peace Status	Resolved conflict.	1997 Peace Accords; contested effectiveness.	1980s SBPAC peace efforts; 2013 mediation process. Ongoing insurgency.	Resolved conflict	1999 referendum and independence in 2002; violence present today.
LPP of the actor in power (Brown, 2003)	Assimilationist, coercive with a unilingual goal.	Assimilationist, coercive with a unilingual goal.	Assimilationist, persuasive with a unilingual goal.	Persuasive, with a multilingual goal.	(Not considered) Persuasive, with a multilingual goal.
Social and economic aspects					
Demographics	East Pakistan's dense population, in comparison with West Pakistan, was primarily made up of Bengali Muslims, chiefly speakers of Bengali, although there were important minorities such as Bengali Hindus.	13 indigenous communities (Jumma people), being the Chakmas, Marmas, and Tripuras majority groups in the Hill Tracts. Non-Bengali communities represent 1% of the total population in Bangladesh (mostly Bengali and Bengali-speaking) and they speak a wide variety of languages (cf. Mohsin, 2003).	80-85% of the population in Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala is Malay Muslims and mostly speaker of PM, although some speak Malay or some dialects of Thai (cf. Klein, 2010). In Satun and Songkhla this figure goes down to 50 and 30% respectively. They represent 2,5% of the total population in Thailand (mostly Thai, Buddhist, and Thai-speaking).	Fourth-largest populated country in the world, host of over 300 ethnicities, more than 700 identified languages and dialects, and the five major religions, apart from others. Indonesia is made up of a mix of ethnolinguistic groups, being Javanese one of the largest.	Timor-Leste's population is widely diverse, being the Tetum ethnic group one of the most important, although there are many other groups, such as the Malayo-Polynesian. Tetum is a *lingua franca* widely spoken in this country, but the Constitution also recognises Portuguese, local languages, Indonesian, and English.
Religion	Islam (shared religion in West and East Pakistan	Various (Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianism,	Islam as opposed to Buddhism	Islam (largest Muslim country in the world)	Christianism as opposed to Islam

	following independence from Hindu India)	Animism, etc.) as opposed to Islam			
Social divides	In precolonial times, *ashrafs* (non-cultivating Urdu-speaking Muslim urban elites) vs. a*trafs* (Bengali-speaking Muslim rural mass). During colonisation, *zamindars* (Hindu English-speaking landlord elite) vs. Muslim peasantry and *jotedars* (Muslim landholders). 4% high-class urban dwellers and 96% agricultural rural workers in the 1952 census.	A Bangladeshi urban high class vs. a CHT rural low class.	A Thai Buddhist urban class and a Sino-Thai urban elite vs. a Malay Muslim rural class.	Society divided into a Dutch elite, an aristocratic class, and the population at large, made up by natives. During the Japanese period, social status is still important (Japanese prevail).	Society divided in a Portuguese elite, *assimilados* enjoying certain privileges, and society at large. During the Indonesian period, the importance of social classes is adapted to the new powers (Indonesians).
Economic situation	Economically stagnant region lacking major industries and primarily agricultural (a key engine of the economy), subject to various famines over time.	Economically stagnant region lacking major industries and primarily agricultural (*jum*). Lack of communication with the wider society to contribute with their economic models.	The Deep South provinces are among the poorest in Thailand, an economically powerful country. They score high rates of poverty and underdevelopment.	Major economic actor in the region.	Extremely poor economy.
Education	Lack of access to education system during the colonial period; requirement to learn English and Urdu to improve employment prospects.	Assimilationist education system where Bengali, instead of mother tongue, is the medium of instruction. Higher dropout rates.	The state school system is taken as a symbolic target in the conflict because of the Thai-only policy and cultural alienation, preferring Malay Muslims Islamic schools or *pondoks*.	During the Dutch period, there was a hierarchical education system with Dutch as the main language of instruction, especially in secondary and tertiary education (no access for population at large).	During the Portuguese period: Portuguese as the language of instruction. During the Indonesian period: Indonesian was enforced as the medium of instruction. Poor quality of education and a restricted curriculum

				During the Japanese period, Dutch was forbidden in place for Malay.	translated in high dropout rates.
Employment	Restricted access to high-level government positions; mostly agricultural workers. Blocked social mobility.	Reduced opportunities to access high-rank job positions; mostly agricultural workers. Blocked social mobility.	Thai literacy remains poor and there are high dropout rates. *Pondoks* offer rural job opportunities which do not improve for university graduates. Other LWC (English, Chinese, etc.) are demanded for high-level positions. Blocked social mobility.	During the Dutch period: high-level positions occupied by the Dutch; proficiency in Dutch required. During the Japanese period: low-skilled jobs under deplorable conditions. Blocked social mobility.	During the Portuguese period: *assimilados* had access to administrative jobs. During the Indonesian period, no information on job opportunities based on language proficiency has been found. Blocked social mobility.
Linguistic aspects					
Language diversity and language families	Bengali as a major language belonging to the Indo-European family.	Wide variety (cf. Mohsin, 2003).	Over 70 languages of the Kra-Dai, Austroasiatic, Austronesian, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Mien families, hierarchically organised.	Linguistic mosaic, with *Bahasa Indonesia* (≈ Malay) as the *lingua franca*.	Linguistic mosaic, with Tetum as the *lingua franca*.
Script and connotations	Bengali in Devanagari and Urdu in Arabic (religious associations with Hinduism and Islam, respectively).	Wide variety (cf. Mohsin, 2003).	Jawi (based on Persian or Arabic writing) associated with Islam, in contrast to the Rumi or Thai scripts for Thai, associated with Buddhism.	No issues reported.	No issues reported.
Key issues in the LPP	Declaration of an official language. Damaged status, use, and prestige.	Category of ‘dialects’ instead of ‘languages.’ Damaged status, use, and prestige.	Stark assimilationist policies. Damaging of PM’s status, use, and prestige.	Language development, coining of new words, and protection of local languages.	Equilibrium in the LPP, protection of languages so that their status, use, and prestige is not damaged.

Peace initiatives	Liberation War Museum school bus including facilitated dialogues and storytelling.	Multilingual and mother tongue-based education projects.	- Lifting of restrictions following the 1921 Compulsory Primary Education Act in the Southern Provinces. - SBPAC's dialogue for peace during the 1980s: language training and intercultural communication courses. Yet, its suspension in 2004 resulted in a peak of violence. - NRC recommendations on acceptance of cultural diversity. - The PMT-MLE Mahidol Programme. - Third-party mediated peace process in 2013. - The UNESCO LESC Initiative. - Facilitated Dialogues. - But bidialectal population.	- A LPP of institutionalised multilingualism (cf. Nelde, 2017). - Use of a neutral mother-in-law or referentially impoverished language, in this case, a creole (Mülhäuser, 2010). - Esotericity of the Javanese language to prevent conflict (Mühlhäuser, 2010). - Successful implementation of the LPP: top-down approach, acceptance of diversity, etc. (cf. Bertrand, 2003; Simpson, 2007). - But assimilationism in the field of education.	- Recognition of diversity in the Constitution. - Language choice in peace activities can shape power relations.