

Stories and Struggle: Translating the Thai Leftist Movement (1970s-early 1980s)

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ABSTRACT

Despite previous studies extensively focusing on the domestic aspects of the Thai radical and left-wing movement, Thai left-wing publications, and its cultural politics, little is known about the comparative and transnational perspectives. This thesis examines the Thai Leftist Movement and its articulations from the 1970s to the early 1980s in Thailand and Europe, demonstrating how translation plays out as a form of political activism. Employing critical discourse analysis of left-wing publications, the thesis reveals the insurgency of language that forms Leftist discourses of resistance, justice and solidarity. Additionally, the findings suggest that translation can be seen as a political act and intervention that connects and facilitates the Thai Leftist Movement across space.

Keywords:

Thai Leftist Movement, Left-wing publications, Critical Discourse Analysis, Translation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Aims, purpose and research questions.....	2
1.3 Academic contribution.....	3
1.4 Thesis disposition.....	3
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
2.1 Local-Global Linkage of the Thai Radical Left Ideas.....	5
2.2 Circulation of Ideas: Print Media and the Movement.....	8
2.3 The Insurgency of Language and the Politics of Translation.....	10
2.4 Transnational Solidarity and Exiles during the 1970s-the early 1980s Europe.....	12
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	14
3.1 Diffusion Theory.....	14
3.2 Translation as Rewriting Theory.....	15
3.3 Translation as Political Acts and Interventions.....	17
3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).....	18
4. METHODOLOGY.....	20
4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning.....	20
4.2 Research Design.....	20
4.3 Data Collection and Sampling.....	21
4.3.1 Left-wing bulletins published outside Thailand.....	21
Thai Campaign Bulletin (UK).....	22
Thailand Information Bulletin (France).....	22
Mitt Thai and THAIS (Stockholm, Sweden).....	22
TIC News (Malmö, Sweden).....	23
4.3.2 Unstructured Interviews.....	23
4.4 Data Analysis.....	23
4.4.1 Reading Language(s) in Historical Sources.....	23
4.4.2 Fairclough’s Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis.....	24
4.5 Positionality and Reflexivity.....	26
4.6 Limitations and Challenges.....	27
4.7 Ethical Considerations.....	28
5. DISCUSSION.....	29
5.1 A Snapshot into the Leftist Language of Left-Wing Publications.....	29
5.2 The Insurgency of Language.....	30
5.2.1 Language that Opposes the Regime.....	30
Inflammatory Language of Thai Left-Wing Publications.....	31

Inflammatory Language of Non-Thai Left-Wing Publications.....	32
5.2.2 Language that Mobilises.....	34
A Form of Address: Sahai and more.....	34
Emphasis on Togetherness.....	36
5.2.3 Language that Demands Justice.....	37
Livelihood Problems.....	38
Political Prisoner, State Violence and Impunity.....	38
5.3 Discourses and Practices of the Thai-Leftist Movement.....	40
5.3.1 The Diffusion of Leftist Discourses.....	40
5.3.2 Intertextuality in Practice: Translation as Political Acts and Interventions.....	41
6. CONCLUSION.....	45
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	48

ABBREVIATIONS

ATP– Athipat

CPS – Communist Party of Siam

CPT – Communist Party of Thailand

MT– Mitr Thai

PD – Pirap Daeng

PLAT– People’s Liberation Army of Thailand

RN – Rud Nah

SS – Samakkee Surop

TCB – Thailand Campaign Bulletin

TIC – Thailand Information Centre

TICN – Thailand Information Centre News

TMPLA – Thai Moslem People’s Liberation Army

TNLMB – Thai National Liberation Movement Bulletin (Kabuankarn Gu Chart Thai)

TP – Thong Patiwat

VOPT – Voice of the People of Thailand

NOTES ON THAI LANGUAGE, TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

For all Thai scholarly works cited in this thesis, I follow the custom of using the first name rather than the surname. All translations in this thesis are mine unless otherwise stated. The Thai words in this thesis have been transliterated in Roman characters following the guidelines of the Royal Institute outlined in “Principles of Romanization for Thai Script by Transcription Method.”

Therefore, any errors made in this thesis are mine alone.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the sweltering month of April 2020, against the backdrop of student-led protests (2020-2021) Thailand, the wave of the pro-democracy hashtag “MilkTeaAlliance” spread in the digital world and on street protests. It ignited an informal network of students, activists, politicians, and people spanning the breadth of Asia. Their activism blossomed through a tapestry of memes, artworks, and translations across languages. Each thread of expression voiced solidarity against authoritarianism and demand for justice (Huang & Svetanant, 2022, pp. 130-132). This phenomenon captures my feeling and hope.

As a person growing up and witnessing successive military rules and increased oppression in the Thai political landscape, I always maintain hope and thus, often, turn to past struggles to remember what more needs to be done. Like many other Thais, I find *sipsi tula* and *hok tula* people’s uprisings (14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976), when ordinary people, including the left, radicals, peasants, labourers and intellectuals, challenged the dictatorial military regime, hold a firm place in the hearts and minds of later generations. As Puangthong, a political scientist at Chulalongkorn University, (2021) said in her interview on the 45th anniversary commemorating the 6th October massacre, “[...] the younger generation is interested and care so much about *hok tula* because it is an important issue that unites them with that they are fighting: the abuse of power by the Thai state, injustice and state impunity [...]” Listening to her reminds me that perhaps we are still fighting for the same cause.

During my early exploration of left-wing materials for this thesis, a particular phrase caught my attention: ‘published in Stockholm, Sweden.’ This seemingly innocuous detail intrigued me, suggesting a connection between the Thai Leftist Movement of the 1970s and individuals abroad, especially in Sweden, which I later discovered extended to other European countries as well. Against the backdrop of transnational solidarity movements in the West since the 1960s, there emerged a central focus on radical imagination, intertwining New Left and civil rights

movements with anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and anti-fascist struggles (Maasri, Bergin, and Burke, 2022, pp. 1-2). As a member of a later generation, my involvement with and the spirit of the MilkTeaAlliance provided a glimpse into transnational solidarity, drawing me into this historical nexus.

Current literature and academic gaps point to a possibility to study the movement in the new light, focusing on language, and translation. This is because previous studies on the Thai Leftist Movement and the flow of radical ideas have extensively focused on the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), its regional China and Southeast Asian counterparts, and the cultural politics of the Leftist Movement within the Thai domestic context. Much less is known beyond the confines of the domestic context, potentially overlooking external contingencies, more minor actors and activities that could have impacted the movement. Although other Southeast Asian examples point to meaningful interactions of global-local radical movements in lasting ways, for example, in John T. Sidel's (2021) and Matthew Galway's (2022) works, there has been less focus on such comparative analyses in the Thai context. Additionally, academic gaps pointing to the necessity of such study also involve evidence of circulation of ideas about the Thai Left through print media in Europe. Thai and Non-Thai left-wing publications are kept in libraries and archives in Europe and have rarely been utilised as primary materials. This implies that topics on the flow of ideas beyond the Thai nation state have been understudied.

Therefore, this lacuna in academia raised questions about the extent to which the Thai Leftist Movement is interwoven with the world and through which means it communicates across languages. It also sparked my curiosity about the potential to view Thai leftist activism during the 1970s-1980s and its radical articulations in Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications from a transnational perspective, ultimately prompting the focus of this study.

1.2 Aims, purpose and research questions

The thesis aims to contribute to understanding the ideas and discourses of Thai leftist and radical expressions in Thailand and Europe from the 1970s until the early 1980s. It also seeks to explain how the Thai leftist movement extended beyond the borders of Thailand by exploring the impact of language and translation during the insurgency. I critically engage with historical contexts of

Thailand and Europe, Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications, their linguistic operations and features, and translation to explore how the Thai Leftist Movement disseminated their ideas and continued their activism abroad.

Therefore, in this thesis I ask the following research questions:

1. How did the Thai Leftist Movement and their ideas travel beyond the borders of Thailand during the 1970s until the early 1980s?
2. What themes and arguments characterised the discourse of the Thai Leftist Movement in Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications from the 1970s to the early 1980s?
3. In what ways did translation contribute to the Thai Leftist Movement during the period spanning from the 1970s to the early 1980s?

1.3 Academic contribution

While most studies have focused on the domestic aspects of the Thai radical and left-wing movement until fairly recently, little is known about its connection with the international and transnational aspects. Therefore, this thesis is a contribution on two levels. Firstly, it contributes to the scholarship of the international leftist movement, where the discussion of Thailand as a case study can fill the gap. Secondly, it hopes to contribute theoretically to the study of diffusion of ideas within and across social movements as well as an overlooked aspect of studying translation as political activism in any social/political movement.

1.4 Thesis disposition

This thesis has six chapters, divided into an introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, discussion, conclusion. In Chapter 2, I review literature that brings insight into understanding the historical contours of the Thai Leftist Movement and printing activities in Thailand. Furthermore, I include critical works focusing on language, translation, and transnational solidarity movements that become this thesis's main discussion point and background. In chapter 3, I outline research design and methods focusing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and unstructured interviews. I present the data and discuss the ethics of my research and my positionality concerned with this thesis. In chapter 4, I situate the thesis within

social movement study and present theoretical frameworks of diffusion theory, rewriting concept and translation as political acts and intervention and Critical Discourse Analysis. In Chapter 5, I examine and discuss the Thai non-Thai left-wing publications with a supplement of interviews to identify the discourse and practice of the Thai Leftist Movement. Lastly, I conclude in chapter 6, where I summarise the main points and point to other potential research topics that spring from this thesis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Local-Global Linkage of the Thai Radical Left Ideas

This section will trace the historical contours of the Thai radical movement, showing how international/transnational in flow of ideas is crucial. First of all, it will discuss the contentious term—the Thai left, that is central to this study. Secondly, this section will trace the outset of radical thought circulated within Siam/Thailand from close reading of the previously existing literature.¹

Flood (1975) explains that the left and radical are those who oppose and challenge the exploitative and absolutist Thai state with the alternative ideology. The definition of radical, or the left in the view of Wedel (1983) is similar to what Flood described: “those who desire rapid and fundamental changes in Thailand.” (p.3). Nevertheless, she notes that the term ‘radical’ when used in the Thai context contains a slightly different interpretation from the West in the sense that what seems to be democratic and liberal in the West is seen as radical and revolutionary in Thailand due to centuries of autocratic rule (Ibid., p.3). Thus, the Thai radicals and leftists can be seen as reformists in other societies. In the context of the 1970s Thailand, radicals include students, farmers, intellectuals, and bureaucrats who were discontent with the established power and tried to create changes from within (Ibid., p.4).

In addition, in terms of the outset of radical left ideas in Thailand, from the previous literature, there were two main lines of radical thoughts that circulated within the Thai Left from the 1920s onwards. These spread from different social classes: one from the top, notably educated Thai elites, another from the lower class of overseas immigrants. Both had international origins.

The first line of radical thoughts spread from educated Thai elites. Flood (1975) traces the early stages of the people’s social consciousness development back in the 1920s and the 1930s when elite Thai intelligentsia was exposed to alternative ideologies, such as socialism when they

¹ The name ‘Siam’ was used as official name until it was change to Thailand in 1939

studied in France (p.57). As a result of retrieving those ideas, one of the conclusions was the 1932 revolution, which abolished the absolute monarchy and replaced it with the implementation of the constitutional monarchy. Since the 1930s, alternative and progressive ideas, such as socialism and egalitarianism, were adopted by radical intelligentsia in opposition to the old power.

It is to be noted that ideas are ever dynamic and never static; they flow and diffuse from all directions, whilst the movement and exchange of such ideas are never limited to merely one group of people. On the horizontal level, ordinary people were also on the move to mobilise the alternative ideology of the left against exploiting historical conditions and capacities of the Thai state, encompassing not only themselves but the transboundary suffering of the oppressed, peasantry, and labour workers.

The second path of circulation came extensively from the Chinese and Vietnamese immigrant communities mobilising in parallel with the far away causes of their motherlands, such as anti-imperialism and liberation movement, as well as the oppression of the Thai state. The 1930s, with the establishment of the Communist Party of Siam (CPS), saw significant movements and mobilisations by the overseas Chinese and later joined by Vietnamese immigrants and unidentified number of ethnic Thais (Kasian, 1992, pp. 18-19; Baker, 2003, p. 520; Murashima, 2012, p.74). Hence, from these periods on, radical ideas, such as socialism, communism, anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, slowly and gradually flooded into Thailand.

During WWII, Southeast Asia and the world witnessed communist and socialist movements, which were all influenced by the nationalist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in which the left had been able to expand its political space and ideas. While external factors contributed to the culmination and the flow of radical ideas, domestically, military domination had been established in Thailand. It grew more autocratic and conservative and would move closer to fascist regimes in Europe and Japan during WWII (Hewison & Rodan, 1994, p. 245). The oppressive political climate and deteriorating living conditions, both internally and externally, allowed the flow of ideas and people to bloom, resulting in the establishment of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in 1942. The CPT brought changes into momentum through

the mobilisation against the fascist government and anti-Japanese movement during the 1940s and the mass campaign of the party to the countryside in the 1950s.

With the work of the CPT in motion and the bloom of Marxist, communist and socialist ideas, it produced several Thai radical thinkers, for example, Gulap Saipradit, Jit Phumisak, and Asani Ponlajan, who later attempted to Thaiify Marxist ideas into Thai context by choosing bits and pieces of Marxism and changing them to fit with a Thai framework, for example, they mixed Marxist ideas with Buddhist terminology (Wedel, 1982, p.3). They had become a primary force in expanding the leftist ideas and radical articulations through their writings to the extent that, as Reynolds (1994) observed, in Thailand, "...there was a distinctly Left orientation in Bangkok public discourse for a decade or so after WWII." (p. 25)

In 1957, the military figure Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat took centre stage with a coup that not only solidified his authority but also marked the beginning of a significant shift in Thailand's political landscape. His forceful quelling of the radicals through the implementation of the Anti-Communist Act pushed the dissemination of leftist ideas and activities underground and discretely throughout the 1960s. Students were among those who most enthusiastically embraced those ideas, and universities served as environments where these ideas continued to flourish. Nonetheless, the Thai Leftist was not limited to the urban frontier, such as Bangkok, other parts of Thailand, such as the northeast, witnessed the ardent activities of the Communist Party of Thailand.

As Ungpakorn (2006) argues, the Sixties, especially the year 1968, was indeed a pivotal moment for the world and Thailand (Ungpakorn, 2006, p. 570). The political ferment gradually culminated: anti-colonial/anti-imperialist movements gained strength in Africa and Asia, the presence of the United States as an imperialist power and its troops in Indochina and Thailand, the anti-Vietnam War movement and its Tet offensive, and the growing influence of communism throughout the region. Those situations ignited movements around the world, and in the case of Thailand, it led to the increased numbers of Thai Leftists, including students, activists, labour workers and peasants who learned and were inspired by the world, linking the local and the global (Ibid., p. 571; Deumert, 2021, pp. 107-108).

Students emerged as the main radicals in action at the urban front of Thailand, playing a pivotal role in the Leftist Movement. Throughout the 1970s, two events, 14 October 1973 uprising, and 6 October 1976 massacre, marked the important moment where flows of ideas and people were dynamically vibrant. As Prajak Kongkirati (2012) observes, a number of students had become readers of radical publications, then developed themselves as producers and distributors of the ideas. They shared the imagination of the global movement of student activists that were inspired by their exposure to stories of the year 1968 and the ideas of the New Left in the United States and Europe (p. 241). Through the network of people, both urban and rural, they finally developed “a network of discourse” that brought the political activism of students to the momentum (p. 244). With radical students predominantly dominating the urban arena on one hand, and with peasants and workers in the northern part of Thailand (Haberkorn, 2011, pp.3-28), and the communist movement under the CPT turning to armed struggle on the other hand, the left-wing movement reached its peak and surged (Jeamteerasakul, 1991, p. 16; Baker, 2003, p. 517).

2.2 Circulation of Ideas: Print Media and the Movement

This section will delve into the role of print media, first, in the Southeast Asian context and more specifically Thailand and its relation to the leftist movement.

In Southeast Asia, where all states apart from Thailand were directly colonised by imperial powers, the expansion of printing technology and the publishing industry played a pivotal role in disseminating ideas and information. Florence Mok (2022) notes that the majority of left-wing content circulating in Southeast Asia originated from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its New China News Agency (NCNA), strategically disseminated through Hong Kong from 1949 onwards and reached the peak in the 1960s (p.1401). Under British colonial rule, Hong Kong provided a more open environment for left-wing ideas, facilitating the spread of communist propaganda. She observes that the CCP produced a diverse range of literature genres in Hong Kong, incorporating core concepts such as ‘the courage to struggle and change’ and ‘sympathising with the suppressed masses,’ akin to communist ideologies in China (Ibid., p.1409).

Thailand, or Siam, also encountered increasing printing technology and the colonial powers in the nineteenth century (Limapichart, 2009, p.366). This resulted in the emergence of the public sphere and a new generation of ideas that questioned and contested the prevailing discourse of the ruling elites. Print capitalism had continued to be the main source where ideas were proposed and circulated even within the left and radical in the following decades. Limapichart (2009) discusses the drastic transformation in Siamese society when the newspapers were introduced as a new channel for the people to express their views which had become more critical and concerning to the ruling class (p.361). For example, during the reign of King Rama VI [R. 1910-1926] marked the birth of the 'political journalism' era where the radical newspapers published extremely critical opinions concerning not only the abusive and corrupted habits of the officials but also the role of the King (Copeland, 1993, p. 67). Thus, the emergence of print media and the practice of criticism transformed the way ideas were produced, distributed, and consumed. It also dismantled the monopolisation of the political and cultural discourses and power that was once in the hand of the ruling elites (Limapichart, 2009, pp. 393-394). The dissemination of ideas through print media thrived in Thailand, culminating in a crucial moment when this practice became associated with radicals and their movement.

Moreover, scholars also studied the impact of print capitalism on the left-wing movement in Thailand. Kasian's pioneer work (2001) takes a materialistic perspective of commodifying Marxism to explain the process that facilitates the blossoming of leftist ideas and circulation. Through this process, several radical publications, such as *Mahachon* [1942-51], *Aksornsarn* [1949-52], and *Karnmuang* [1944-51], were disseminated to more people in places like universities, libraries, and bookstores (Kasian, 2001, pp. 59-176). Despite differences in contents, these publications all shared the characteristic of presenting left-leaning ideas. While *Mahachon* emphasised anti-imperialism and support for socialist and communist-led independence movements in Thailand and colonial countries, it also served as the mouthpiece for the Communist Party of Thailand. In contrast, the other two newspapers had a less critical tone, sharing rhetoric of radical socialism and democracy with a sympathetic stance toward communism (Kasian., 2001, pp.152-82; Thikan, 2009, p.57-86). Flood (1975) also points out the impact of printing publications and journals as they played a crucial role in disseminating leftist ideas and radical culture to young readers and laying a foundation for their intellectual formation

(p. 61). With these radical publications being circulated, they pushed for the outburst in the two October incidents and afterwards.

Despite the consistent dissemination of radical publications since the nineteenth century, which has contributed to the circulation of ideas among the Thai population, the literature has not shed light on this practice outside Thailand. There are left-wing publications regarding Thailand's radical culture published around the same time, distributed and subscribed to by Thai and European readers. Hence, the gap of the previous study is addressed, this thesis aims to broaden the scholarly perspective along this aspect.

2.3 The Insurgency of Language and the Politics of Translation

Language, a constant presence, has played a pivotal role in times of revolutionary and political fervour, serving as a tool for achieving revolutionary goals and as a marker of new beginnings by revolutionary leaders. Consider the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the Chinese Revolution (1927-1949), where languages were standardised for the wider public under the guidance of the revolutionary leaders, marking a significant shift in societal norms and power structures.²

Ordinary people, or the subaltern, have also used language to seek to liberate and emancipate themselves from either colonial occupation or the dominating power in many parts of the world. For example, the colonised Caribbean during the 1950s and the 1960s developed an underground language using words, sounds, and rhythms to be distinct from the colonial mother tongue (Deumert, 2021, p.106). This constant defiance ingrained in language, termed by Vincente L. Rafael (2016) as “the insurgency of language”, refers to the resistance expressed through ideas, vocabulary, syntax, sounds, and rhythms of the popular idioms of subordinate languages (p.193). Thus, language and words, just like people, can be insubordinate and insurgent when linguistic action fuses with political action through the politics of translation.

² For the utilisation of language during the French Revolution see Flaherty, P. (1987); Djité, P. G. (1992). For the Chinese case see Hsia, T. T. (1956); Yuan, Kuiper &, Shaogu, S. (1990).

As Rafael (2016) sees, translation is not a transparent, unbiased process of converting one language into another; it is political; it involves not only transferring meaning but also struggling with the challenges of controlling the process of transferring meaning (Ibid., p.193). Thus, translation can be seen as a site for contending power with bellicose function. Examples can be seen in the cases of the Philippines and Thailand. Despite different socio-historical backgrounds, the former had been under colonial rule for over a decade, whilst Thailand arguably had a distinct position under semi-colonialism.³ Both countries utilised language, notably English and French, through translation to make and remake their language versions.

In the Philippines, language and the war of translation played out by both the colonial rule and the oppressed in the high imperialist time. The imperial power, namely, the United States, has instrumentalised translation by imposing American English as the sole communication medium in the school system as part of its empire-building project aiming to create monolingualism throughout the island. The oppressed Filipinos played with the language and politics of translation by transforming American English into the Filipinised version, such as saying *gu* instead of go, and transforming American slang to Tagalog slang, for example, T-Y (thanks) siba (call boy). (Rafael, 2016, pp. 43-50, 55-6, 65, 192).

In Thailand, language and translation are central to the left-wing movement. The war of translation was fought between the educated elite and the Thai Left both struggling for hegemony in political space. Scholars note that the modern cultural elite was conscious of the politics of translation as many of the critical political coinages were invented by Prince Wan, an Oxford-educated member of the royalty, the highest authority of Thai official neologism. Among those terms, he invented are *pattiwat* (revolution), *patiroop* (reform), *wiwat* (evolution), *mualchon* (masses), *kradumph* (bourgeoisie) (Kasian, 2001, p. 198; Tan, 2012, pp. 33-34). The radicals and communists find themselves compelled to join the war of translation to challenge the control of language and its implications. For example, the word *Pattiwat* (revolution) contains a conservative connotation of “restoration” instead of denoting the radical break with

³ Conservative objections to post-colonial analysis often claim Siam/Thailand to be unique among the Southeast Asian countries in not having been colonised while Marxist readings of Siam/Thailand as a semi-colony of Western empire have shown that Siam/Thailand’s economy, culture, polity and social structure were deeply impacted by Western imperialism, seeing the country in a similar way as other direct colonies. For further discussion on the issue also see Loos (2006), Jackson (2007), Hong (2008), and Harrison (2010).

the past or progressive change. Thus, the retranslation of Marxist words include using *aphiwat* (super-evolution) instead of *pattiwat*, *Phaessaya* (bourgeoisie) and *Kammakorn* (workers) (Kasian, 2001, pp.197-199). It can be seen that this alternative translation by the Thai Left opened the floor for the translation war between two political actors aiming for hegemony at a particular moment in history.

2.4 Transnational Solidarity and Exiles during the 1970s-the early 1980s Europe

There is a growing body of work by scholars working on European solidarity movements with the Global South against the backdrop of the Cold War and decolonisation. It focuses on two watershed moments: the American War in Vietnam and Pinochet's coup in Chile. In this section, I explore global radical movements in Europe on behalf of the Global South, then imagined as the Third World, seeking to address the gap in situating Thailand within a broader perspective.⁴

Stressed across literature, the year 1968 was an eventful year of the so-called 'radical internationalism of 1968', marked by political and cultural changes bringing forth people together under the common cause with heterodox models of Marxist revolution, national liberation and global struggle against the bipolar and imperialist constellations. This also gave rise to the European campaigns against 'Fascist' dictatorships and superpower involvement in the Third World (Kim, 2017, p.933). In Britain, thousands of anti-Vietnam War protestors stormed the US Embassy and several demonstrations came up to plead for disarmament. Under this pretext, it also gave birth to the New Left groupings blooming throughout European countries (Jones, 2018, pp. v-vii).

In France, 1968 is best remembered for *les événements* of May and June when a wave of street demonstrations and leftist students heavily influenced by the New Left started revolt (Jones 2018, v-vii). The French radical students extended their protest by claiming "to liberate man from all the repression of social life." This was further exacerbated by the cause in Vietnam that expanded the scale and forged a strong solidarity committee in France (Siedman, 2004, pp.17-18;

⁴ The term "Third World" refers to historically specific Cold War configurations and power relations.

Gildea, Mark & Pas, 2011, p. 556). In Sweden, with the support from Olof Palme himself and his government, the 1960s-1970s Sweden built internationalist movements, such as in Vietnam and Chile, when hundreds of demonstrations were held across the country (Ösgård & Westguard-Cruice, 2020). The country also forged a strong solidarity movement which came to manifest especially during Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973. According to Padilla (2015), during the bloody military crackdown, the Swedish embassy and personnel in Chile tried to help many persecuted politicians when they were under arrest by giving them diplomatic protection and permission for exile from the country (p. 133). The help extended to endangered activists, leftist and Chilean people (Ibid., 2015 & Bonnefoy 2016, 25). Soon thereafter, more than 30,000 refugees arrived in Sweden during Pinochet's regime, the most popular destination outside Latin America (Olsson, 2009, 663).

Behind this radical internationalism of Europe, Britain, France and Sweden during the 1970s had become places where diplomats and activists met, and they attracted dozens of delegations of anti-war activists from all over Europe (Kim, 2017, p.941). Moreover, as Göran Therborn's sharp eye observed, "It is no accident that all over the advanced capitalist world—in the USA, Japan, Germany, Sweden, France, Italy and England—the new social force which has been the vanguard of the struggle against American imperialism is the student, high-school and youth population." (1968, p.9), this very same group of protesters, yet from the Third World, also took the front in fighting against the exact cause.

In Thailand, at the same moment in history, students and progressive wings of 14 October 1973 and 6 October 1976 unprecedentedly challenged the long military rule, nevertheless resulting in violent crackdowns. Several Thai students and activists who identified themselves as leftist radicals became political exiles in the West. While stories of prominent Thai figures, leaders, elites, politicians, particularly those involved in politics, seeking refuge and becoming exiles in other countries are not uncommon in Thai political history (Anderson, 1985, pp. 15-17), exiles and overseas political movements from lower social classes are barely mentioned in any scholarly works.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework employed to address research questions concerning the languages and discourses of the Thai Leftist Movement in transnational context during the 1970s-the early 1980s. It engages with the cross section of theories which attempt to show the relationship between language, power, ideology, and translation.

The chapter first examines diffusion theory, focusing on the ideational diffusion, or the flows and spreads of ideas, in order to situate this thesis within social movement studies. Second, it delves into ‘translation studies’ perspective, which helps elucidate the languages and discourses of the Thai Leftist Movement within the transnational context of Europe during the 1970s-the early 1980s. It focuses on André Lefevere’s theory of rewriting, proposed during the ‘cultural turn’ in translation. Following this, the discussion extends to the practical application of translation, drawing from Mona Baker’s framework that views translation as political acts and interventions. Finally, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is introduced as a theory linking ideas, languages, translation and political activism. Ultimately, the aim is to contextualise the movement within a broader theoretical landscape.

3.1 Diffusion Theory

Diffusion theory in social movement is a concept used to investigate diffusion and flow of social movement activity within social movement. The objects of the study can be categorised into three aspects: behaviours, ideas and organisation structure (Soule and Roggeband, 2018, p.237). This study focuses on ideation diffusion, or the spread of new ideas and collective actions frame, a central topic that aligns with the question that asks how the ideas of the Thai Leftist Movement flow within the movement and beyond the Thai nation state. Ideological diffusion involves the investigation of direct and indirect models of diffusion mechanisms. ‘Direct diffusion’ refers to the spread of ideas through relationships, specifically interpersonal networks or relational ties between individuals. These connections facilitate the mobilisation and/or exchange of ideas.

‘Indirect diffusion’ refers to non-relational ties, such as newspaper, radio and television, that facilitate the movement of ideology (Ibid., p. 239).

Although diffusion theory recognises the flow of objects under investigation across movements regardless of spatiality, the emphasis on the ‘transnational’ aspect of diffusion also raises a consideration on the role of language and translation in bridging, as well as blurring, national boundaries. Roggeband (2007) argues that ideas and practices undergo transformation as they travel; this is particularly evident in the international diffusion of social movements, where perception, interpretation, and translation play essential roles in the process (p.246). Thus, diffusion theory, with a focus on ideational diffusion, when incorporating translation as part of intercultural communication, can help shed light on whether adopters negotiate and transform ideas. Olga Malets and Sabrina Zajak (2014) also suggest social movement and transnational activism focusing on the issue of the flow of ideas and practices across borders to view translation “... as conscious efforts and creativity that social movement actors – individuals and organisations–employ for changing.” (Ibid. p.251-52). Therefore, the following sections discuss the concept of translation and its translational practice in social movement.

3.2 Translation as Rewriting Theory

A conventional understanding of translation can be defined as a replacement of an original text in one language with a text in another language. According to House (2014), translation is at its core a linguistic-textual operation (p.1). However, this definition and practice of translation that focused on linguistic matters had been challenged by the ‘cultural turn’ in translation studies during the 1970s. Scholars, such as André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, responded to this phenomenon by suggesting translation studies to focus beyond linguistic character by “looking at the historical and cultural background of texts, trying to understand the complexity of manipulation of texts and factors that influenced translators’ translating strategies.” (Bassnett, 2004, p. 32). In other words, translation is not made independently from the context and has always served special purposes from the very beginning of the process. For example, the choice to translate a work is shaped by certain forces, such as the translator’s political ideology or the socio-political environment at the time the translation is carried out. This turn offered new insights into translation studies to engage with other fields (i.e. humanities and social science)

since texts and the process of translation is much more than a linguistic exercise; it is interconnected with literary, cultural, social, and political factors (Forrai, 2018, p. 30).

The concept of translation as rewriting that is employed in this thesis emerges from the so-called 'cultural turn' in translation studies. André Lefevere (1992) put forward this concept, proposing that 'translation is a rewriting of an original text' (p. vii). This concept implies that all rewritings depart from the original and reflect a certain ideology and poetics, manipulating literature to function within a specific society in a particular manner. According to him, matching the words with the original text is not the most important aspect; rather, it is crucial to understand how and why it was chosen and translated in a manner that aligns with social, literary, and ideological considerations of the translator as well as that particular context and time (Ibid., p.81). Translation as rewriting is when the translated text has a life of its own, undertaken to serve specific interests and agenda. Therefore, it is not a matter of pure, simple, and transparent language, but involves factors such as power, ideology, patronage, poetics, and language (Shuping, 2013, p.56).

The materials, including bulletins and pamphlets, used in this thesis were published from the 1970s until the early 1980s and are available in three languages: Thai, English, and Swedish. When sorting them out and reading them alongside each other, they reported and discussed similar events, incidents, social and political situations as well as political campaigns. It thus appears that the same stories were translated between the languages. It is, however, impossible to pinpoint the individuals that carried out the translations since the activity of publishing was conducted by an underground group of collective who were involved the Thai Leftist Movement and/or the Communist Party of Thailand. One evidence is clear and acute that a news report published using the source from Voice of the People of Thailand (VOPT), a clandestine radio, first broadcasted in Thai then translated into English and other languages such as Swedish, and French (Marks, 1994, p.245).

This thesis will not compare and evaluate all the original texts with the translated ones, given that the retrieval of the former is not only beyond my own capacity, but also beside the point of this study. Instead, by applying the concept of translation as rewriting, the author will treat each

of the translated texts as a text with a life of its own. Since each of them was translated under certain circumstances, forces, and factors at a particular moment in time, the author will try to uncover underlying agendas and discourses. Additionally, as will be in the next section, the author seeks to connect and place the ‘rewriting concept’ with translational practice and broader political actions that can help explain the Thai Leftist Movement during the 1970s-1980s through the lens of translation as political acts and interventions.

3.3 Translation as Political Acts and Interventions

Since the ‘cultural turn’ in translation studies, the approach to study translation has expanded beyond linguistic considerations to encompass historio-socio-cultural contexts in which translation takes place as discussed above. As a result, the broader perspectives on translation prompt a reevaluation of translation and fosters theoretical advancements. One of the examples is the edited volume on *The Politics of Translation in International Relations* (Capan et al., 2021) which suggests an understanding of translation beyond interlingual sense to encompass translation as a recurrent social and political practice and translation as transformation (p.2).

Hence, this section advances from the idea of ‘translation as rewriting theory’, aiming to associate it with the understanding of translation as social and political activities. To put translation into practice, I turn to Mona Baker’s concept of translation as political acts and interventions in relation to social movements. Baker (2015) suggests that translation holds significant potential for disseminating transnational messages across a variety of languages and mediums. She proposes that translation can be viewed as a form of political activism fostering solidarity. Furthermore, Baker contends that both verbal and non-verbal interventions enable protest movements to establish connections and exchange experiences across different temporal and spatial contexts. For example, in the case of the Egyptian revolution, activists and ordinary people involved in the movement have used linguistic translation, subtitling and social media as a way to broadcast independent news to international audiences of supporters (Ibid., pp.1-7).

I employ Baker’s conceptualisation of translation—as political acts and interventions—in social movement to investigate how in a precise historical moment in the 1970s-1980s, some of the Thai Left carried out such means of translation, mostly through print media, and formed a

transnational communicating network to report independent and uncensored news to wider international audiences and to create a chain of solidarity. Baker highlights the importance of translators as “full participants within non-hierarchical, solidarity activist communities” (2015, p.1). In this thesis, I will not seek to identify individual translators both out of ethical concerns that some are now political exiles and because they operated in an underground structure. Moreover, the working conditions often remained concealed and operated within identity-concealed organisational structure. Thus, working groups of the left-wing publications might be able to pinpoint.

Nevertheless, the merit of seeing social movement, in this case the left-wing publications produced by the Thai Left Movement, through the perspective of translation as political acts and interventions by people who challenged the existing power is valid as it reveals that translation has always played a key role in fighting oppression and hegemony in their many guises, from resistance against racism, fascism, to colonisation and dictatorship.

3.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

In this thesis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to examine the language and discourses within the Thai Leftist Movement and its left-wing publications. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that CDA is not merely an analytical tool; it also holds significant theoretical implications. These perspectives not only inform its usage in analysis but also shape the entire research framework, thereby impacting the findings, particularly in exploring the perpetuation of power structures through discourse.

CDA is used for the empirical study of the language in use and the role of discursive practices—through which texts are produced and consumed—in the maintenance of the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63). The concern of CDA is not merely on the language or language use per se but extends to the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures as well as visual images (Ibid. 2002, p.61 & Richardson, 2017, p.26). This means CDA sees the use of language as a form of social practice, which aligns and compliments Baker’s concept, tied to a specific historical context and, thus, all social practices are produced and consumed within social relations. The approach takes into account the relationship between

ideologies, power relations and hegemony. Power and ideologies are central interests in CDA, as both may have an effect on each other, which in turn affects the production, consumption, and interpretation of discourse (Richardson, 2017, p.29). CDA also sees power exercised through discourse as domination and control, thus linking it to struggles against and for hegemony and remaining open for competition.

Moreover, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) complements the other theories– diffusion theory, translation as rewriting and translation as political acts and intervention– presented in this chapter. Most of the research which has been done within translation and social movement studies using CDA as an approach focuses on translation as a social action. It answers questions such as: who is translating for whom, what is being translated, when is it being translated and what are the effects on the receiving culture (Chilton cited in Schäffner 2002, p.60). Thus, when using CDA, it helps us see, for example, ideologies–hidden and unhidden–, attitudes, and emotions of the people involved in producing such texts as well as being able to see those who were involved as participating in social and political movements through the act of translation.

Therefore, the main objective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to discover and shed light on languages in use and its hidden social action. And, in applying it with the discourses of the Thai Leftist Movement, it opens the way to see words are at the service of transferring the power or ideologies of one group or nation to the other.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, data collection and sample, and the method used in the data analysis process. It also discusses the limitations and challenges as well as ethics and self-positionality.

4.1 Ontological and Epistemological Positioning

The thesis focuses on discourse, language and context as the focal point in qualitative research. Language is considered the bearer of “meaning, context, and power” and treated “as significantly more than a medium through which social research is conducted, and it becomes a focus of attention in its own right” (Bryman, 2016, p. 526). The ontological perspective questions “how the nature of reality is understood?” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p.54). The epistemological standpoint concerns itself with defining what qualifies as knowledge or what should be acknowledged as such (Bryman, 2016, p.30).

This thesis situates its research in a critical paradigm which seeks to “address political, social, and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle, and power structures at whatever levels these might occur” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 35). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is critical, as its aim is to bring to light the “role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63).

This positioning to understand realities that are socially constructed entities that are under constant internal influence and power structures, is linked to the choice of method, CDA, which will be later discussed in the research design subsection.

4.2 Research Design

In order to examine the Thai Leftist Movement and its circulation of ideas beyond the Thai nation state, this thesis relies on a qualitative approach, which was assessed to be the most appropriate method for this study because of its emphasis on explorative manners, words and conversations rather than quantification in data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2016, 374).

Thus, by taking a qualitative approach, the process was mainly inductive, informing from the raw materials which then consequently formed the theoretical framework of the study (Bryman 2016; Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

4.3 Data Collection and Sampling

The primary source materials for this research include publications such as newspapers, bulletins and pamphlets as well as interviews. Secondary data are drawn from scholarly works regarding broader contextual circumstances.

In seeking answers to how the Thai Leftist Movement and their ideas travelled as well as the pattern of expression and discourse during the 1970s-the early 1980s, I examined a collection of communist and left-wing publications written in Thai language that were circulated within the Thai Leftist Movement, mostly in Thailand. Publications from the 1970s-the early 1980s well kept at the Thammasat University Archive describe the ongoing situation of Thailand and the movement, strategies used in the jungle area, the manifesto of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), essays, literature as well as discussions of ideas and ideology. I have collected these materials since I was studying for a Bachelor's degree in Thailand. For this thesis, I chose to analyse **seven** different left-wing publications from the Thai-language side. These are underground newspapers published with unknown locations by working groups who were part of the CPT and other wings. They include Thai National Liberation Bulletin (1973), Mitr Thai (1977), Athipat (1977), Thong Pratiwat (1979), Samakkee Surop (1979), Pirap Daeng (1979), Rud Nah (1979).

4.3.1 Left-wing bulletins published outside Thailand

It should be noted that there is a lack of comprehensive scholarly works on Thai political exiles/activists abroad and their activities. The only work until recently that mentions these publications is in Zackari's dissertation (2020). The materials utilised in this thesis provide insight into the potential political engagements of those who resided overseas in Europe where the environment for political activism was more open during the 1970s-1980s. Publications sourced from France, the United Kingdom, and Sweden are examined, available in Thai, English,

and Swedish languages. While this thesis does not delve into tracing and analysing these interconnected networks and activities, it aims to initiate a conversation and open up research avenues on the transnational aspect of the Thai Leftist Movement, Thai political exiles as well as their political activities by focusing on these specific materials.

I have analysed **four** bulletins (total **thirteen** issues) published outside of Thailand, particularly those distributed between the 1970s and the early 1980s. This timeframe is significant as it follows the two October incidents: the 14th October 1973 and the 6th October 1976, a period during which numerous students, leftists, activists, and intellectuals fled the country and sought refuge in foreign nations. Moreover, this selection is also influenced by the accessibility and availability of materials in the archive and from other private sources.

Thai Campaign Bulletin (UK)

Thai Campaign Bulletin is an English-language newsletter published by the Ad Hoc Group For Democracy in Thailand in the United Kingdom. It was published quarterly. The issues used in this thesis focus on the year 1979. **Three** issues from the Thai Campaign Bulletin were used.

Thailand Information Bulletin (France)

Thailand Information Bulletin was a monthly newsletter published by Comité De Solidarité Avec Le Peuple Thaï, or Union of Democratic Thais in France (UDTF). The first issue can be dated back to 1976, and the last issue was published in 1982. This set of publications was written in both French and English. The issues used in this thesis focused on the English version, which comprises 16 issues from 1978 to 1981. **Five** issues of the Thailand Information Bulletin were analysed.

Mitt Thai and THAIS (Stockholm, Sweden)

Mitt Thai (1971-1973)–later known as *Thailand Bulletinen* and *THIS*–was published by Arbetsgruppen för stöd åt Thailands Patriotiska Front (the Working Group for Support of Thailand's Patriotic Front) in Stockholm. It was a bulletin with a goal to disseminate information about the current economic and political situation in Thailand. The bulletin opened for a yearly subscription and was published in English and Swedish quarterly. **One** issue of *Mitt Thai* (1971), and **one** issue of THAIS (1977) were used.

TIC News (Malmö, Sweden)

TIC News (1977-1984) was a bi-weekly newsletter published by the Thai Information Center branch in Malmö, Sweden. It was duplicated and re-published from the originals sent from the United States in English language. The publication reported on the current economic and political situation in Thailand, as well as the progress of the left and progressive wings. **Three** issues of TIC News were analysed.

In total, I analysed **twenty** Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications.

4.3.2 Unstructured Interviews

Additionally, two unstructured interviews were used to complement the primary materials used in this thesis. The interviews accompanied the securing of primary materials from private individuals, when I conversed with source providers – previous editors and contributors to some of these outlets—who explained the process of distributing and translating the materials. The decision to use unstructured interviews was governed by the researcher’s epistemology and the study’s objectives. This means that to make sense of the participant’s world, researchers must approach it from their perspective and in the participant’s terms (Denzin, 1989; Robertson & Boyle, 1984, as noted in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p.2). Therefore, I follow the interviewees’ narration and generate questions spontaneously based on their reflections on that narration. The unstructured interviews were conducted in October 2023 and March 2024, and have been anonymised.

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Reading Language(s) in Historical Sources

Given that the study focuses on the Thai Leftist Movement and the dissemination of leftist/radical ideas through print media during the 1970s to the early 1980s across various contexts, and texts, it appears that languages (Thai, English, and Swedish) play a central role in this thesis. Therefore, this section explores the importance of reading language as one of the methods in analysing and interpreting historical sources.

Peter Burke (1987) emphasises the significance of language in interpreting historical sources, particularly in amplifying the voices of historically marginalised groups such as the working class, children, women, refugees, and migrants. He elucidates four fundamental points regarding the interplay between society and language. Firstly, different social groups use different varieties of language; secondly, one individual can use different varieties of language in different contexts; thirdly, languages reflect the culture in which it is spoken; and lastly, language plays a pivotal role in shaping the societies in which it operates.

As language is always situational and as much embedded in gesture as in the texts themselves, the methods described below aim to reveal the dynamic and interplay between the Thai Leftist Movement and the circulation of ideas across different contexts.

4.4.2 Fairclough's Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis

The primary approach used for analysing the data and the discourses provided is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As outlined earlier in the theoretical framework, CDA emphasises power dynamics, knowledge construction, and the influence of discourses on shaping social realities. Thus, this makes CDA particularly applicable to this thesis's aims and research questions.

Within CDA, there are several approaches, whether the social-psychological approach of Wetherell and Potter (1992) or the widely used social-cognitive model of Van Dijk (1998, 2001). However, the approach to CDA that is most clearly structured is Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model (2013).

Fairclough's model for CDA is a comprehensive framework that encompasses three interrelated processes of analysis: textual analysis (description), discursive practices (interpretation), and social practices (explanation). Firstly, textual analysis involves the examination of the way texts are structured, combined and sequenced. From the perspective of CDA, every aspect of textual content must be scrutinised in terms of its functionality, as every aspect of textual content is a 'choice' –the choice to use one way of describing or constructing the text over another. Secondly, discursive practice examines how languages and discourses are produced and consumed. It asks

what kind of processes and changes the text has gone through and why the text can be seen in different versions (Richardson, 2007, p.40).

Moreover, it includes the examination of ‘intertextuality’, which refers to the presence of other texts across the sea of language, either implicitly or explicitly and a way of looking at a text’s interactions with prior texts, writers, readers, and conventions (Wang, 2012, p.73). Lastly, social practice examines the social context of the discourse and how text interacts with power relations and ideologies in broader society (Fairclough, 1992, p.57; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 68; Richardson, 2017, pp. 38-42; Statham, 2022, p.22).

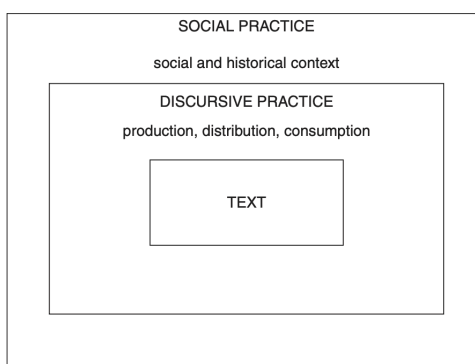


Figure 1: Three-dimensional model of CDA (Statham, 2022, p.23)

Text analysis

Textual analysis concentrates on two important keys: first, the interrelated nature of textual form and textual content. Second, the notion of levels of analysis is examined by combining propositions of rhetoric and narrative (Richardson, 2017, p.46). To do so, I first identify the most recurring themes and arguments in Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications. Secondly, I compare texts from different sources. I will look at word choices by tracing the meaning of each selected word and analysing the use of inflammatory lexicons, or words containing dramatic, emotive, confrontational linguistic features chosen and employed in specific contexts (Poole, 2022, p.5). I also examine modality, which appears in modal verbs, rhetorical tropes, and literary devices, to reveal attitudes and levels of certainty within the language, persuasiveness, and emotional appeal. This investigation sheds light on the language and discourse used within the left-wing publications.

Discourses and Social Practices

The next step is to examine discursive practice and social practice together. This is because Fairclough's approach to CDA does not claim to have strict rules for ordering or separating the three elements—textual analysis, discursive practices, and social practices—and it is up to each researcher to decide based on the purposes and emphases of the study (Fairclough, 2006,). Additionally, as argued by Jørgensen (2009), it is difficult to determine precisely where and how the discursive and non-discursive moments divide and how they influence and change one another (p.89). I view discursive practice and social practice as embedded in a dialectical relationship. Thus, by analysing them together, I aim to create a comprehensive understanding of how Leftist discourses function within a specific social context and shed light on social interactions and practices.

As this thesis focuses on languages and discourses of the Thai Leftist Movement in Thailand and abroad, I first apply diffusion theory to explain how discursive practice operates transnationally under specific contexts. Secondly, I look at the relationship between translation and intertextuality using examples from Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications. In the translation process, I treat translation as transforming text and meaning between languages. Therefore, if we consider the original text as a previous text, the translation should be the generated text of the previous text (Yi & Yu, 2020, p.1108). However, if I cannot retrieve the original texts, I will use the secondary source as a supplement.

I examine the translation process by comparing the previous and translated texts and identifying whether they undergo recontextualisation, reinterpretation and rewriting (Levere, 1992, p. vii). Thirdly, I trace the texts' intertextual chain to the translational practice carried out under Leftist discourses and specific contexts. Lastly, I incorporate insights from the unstructured interviews to bridge the gap between intertextual relations and the socio-political practice of the Thai Leftist Movement.

4.5 Positionality and Reflexivity

Given the epistemologically critical nature of this study, the author's position and role are pivotal in interpreting the reality portrayed in left-wing publications from Thailand, the UK, France, and

Sweden. The author's rigorous reflexivity is a key tool, enabling a deeper understanding of how personal perspectives, positionality, and individual traits may have influenced or introduced bias into this study.

As an individual Thai born after the period under study, I do not possess first-hand experience and, thus, approach the phenomenon as an outsider. My understanding of the Thai Leftist Movement, Thai politics during the 1970s-1980s, and the European historical context has been informed by academic literature, novels, memoirs, and conversations with individuals in the publishing industry and those involved with the movement. Moreover, as a person who is interested and involved in Thai politics and discussions and strongly supports the anti-authoritarian and the left-wing movement, I am aware that my political leanings might influence the writing of the thesis.

4.6 Limitations and Challenges

The challenges and limitations posed to this thesis were the search for archival materials, the choice of method, and the language barrier. The materials used in this thesis are retrieved from many sources, though I did not conduct an onsite archival fieldwork. For left-wing newspapers published outside Thailand, I retrieved them from the Swedish National Library (Libris) with the help of our librarians at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies. I also generously received digitised versions from Karin Zackari. Furthermore, materials published in Malmö, Sweden, were retrieved from an informant's archive, the location of which I cannot disclose for ethical reasons.

In addition, all publications were printed using an old method of Mimeograph and Roneo paper. Thus, converting them into computer-typed letters and using a function of Ctrl+F to search for particular words or phrases is impossible. As time flies and the ink on each paper fades, computer technology, such as an OCR reader, limits its function. Instead, the data and observations in the present paper are the result of reading and taking notes in the old-fashioned way, which could result in human errors unintentionally.

Regarding the limitation of choosing CDA as a method, criticisms have been directed towards the lack of a systematic approach to texts, potentially leading to the researcher's subjectivity rather than capturing the actual phenomenon (Breeze, 2011, p.508). This could result in personal biases. However, I am aware of this criticism and try to navigate this problem by reading each publication closely twice and noting headlines, words, and sentences to identify discourses.

As for language barriers, analysing materials published in Swedish presented challenges. My proficiency in Swedish is elementary, necessitating occasional reference to a dictionary. While I see the significance of comparative research, I am aware of this situation and, hence, chose to reduce the number of materials in Swedish. These limitations may impact the outcomes of the study.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns in this investigation revolve around incorporating potentially sensitive material from historical sources into the study, despite originating from past decades. Some aspects of these materials remain relevant to ongoing political discussions in Thailand. This challenge is exacerbated by conversing with people who were involved in the movement and by obtaining materials from a private source, which necessitates careful negotiations regarding the contributor's consent, including the possibility of anonymity.

The individual who provided the private materials permitted the author to use them, expressing hope for their usefulness in academic pursuits. The person mentioned the extensive involvement of numerous individuals in creating the publication but acknowledged the difficulty in contacting many due to lost connections over time. Due to the large number of people involved in making the publication and the desire to credit all parties involved and avoid taking all credit, the contributor asked me to consider whether the contributor should be named. In light of this, I opted to designate the source as anonymous and private.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 A Snapshot into the Leftist Language of Left-Wing Publications

Before delving into the complete textual analysis of publications, this section provides the first glimpse into the language of the left. What struck me when I first got my hands on these materials was the cover. I found that the names of left-wing publications demonstrate the provocative use of language that reflects their political stance and implications. Rhetorical and literary devices, used in Fairclough's textual analysis level (1995), are extensively found when analysing these publication names (see Figure 2.)



Figure 2. Examples of Thai-left wing publications: TD (1980) (left), RN (1979)(middle), and TNLM (1973)(right). Retrieved from Thammasat University Archive.

For example, Tawan Daeng (1980) [The Red Sun] carries a political connotation in Thai. It can be interpreted as the rise and dawn of the Red, symbolising socialist-communist forces opposing existing power. This can also be seen in Pirap Daeng (1979) [The Red Pigeon], which can be interpreted as the near-coming peacetime brought by the Red. Moreover, the use of the imperative mood, an expression of command or request, is pervasive in Thai left-wing publications. For instance, Rud Nah (1979) [Dashing Forward] invokes a particular mood and motion of speed. It implies the backwardness of the current state while conveying an urgent need for change. This is also evident in publications such as Samakkee Surop (1977) [Militant Unity], where language functions in a regulatory manner that commands someone to do something.

Word choices reflect the strong political commitment of the left and often use emotionally provocative lexicons. Other publications like the *Kabuankarn Gu Chart Thai* (1973) [Thai National Liberation Movement bulletin] and *Athiphat* (1980) [The Sovereignty] Thong Pattiwat (year)[Flag Revolution] use names that convey their mission and political goals.

The names of Thai left-wing publications reveal an intrinsic aspect of resistance conveyed through their ideas and vocabularies. In contrast, the names of non-Thai left-wing publications demonstrate less use of political rhetoric and tend to be more generic. The words used as the names of these publications are predominantly neutral, such as ‘news’ or ‘bulletin’. Examples include the *Thai Campaign Bulletin*, published in the United Kingdom; *Thailand Information Bulletin*, published in France; *THAIS*, and *Thailand Information Centre News (TICN)*, published in Sweden.

One notable example of a left-wing publication with nuanced connotations and the use of puns (Richardson, 2017, p.70) is *Mitt Thai* (1971), a Swedish-based publication published in English. The literal translation of the publication’s name, ‘Mitt Thai’, is ‘My Thai’, while ‘Mitt’ is a homophone of the Thai word ‘Mitr’, meaning ‘friend’.

5.2 The Insurgency of Language

Language functions not only as threads of words conveying meaning but also as an active agent in insurgency and resistance, as argued by Rafael (2016, p. 193). In doing the first level of textual analysis in CDA, devices to analyse the language’s functions include the use of modality, literary devices, rhetorical strategies, inflammatory (confrontational) lexicons, and vocabulary choices. I shall deal with the textual analysis under the three most recurring themes in left-wing publications: opposing the regime, mobilising the people and demanding justice.

5.2.1 Language that Opposes the Regime

The first theme of the language found in the left-wing publications is condemnation and critique of the regime.

Inflammatory Language of Thai Left-Wing Publications

Thai left-wing publications reveal the consistent use of inflammatory lexical choices that invoke emotive and confrontational connotations, many of which contain political implications. One of the most striking lexical features of Thai left-wing texts is that words like “fascism/fascist” and “reactionary/reactionist” (*patikiriya*) were used to describe and attack the string of Thai governments over the period of the 1970s-1980s. It is found in almost all articles criticising the government. Such use of antagonising lexicons is evident, for example, in the TNLMB (1973), published right after the 14th October 1973 incident. The article describes the regime as follows:

“On the 14th of October 1973, the **dictatorial fascist military** (*phuak phadetkan fascist thahan*) regime led by Thanom-Prapas-Narong committed the most **atrocious and vicious karma** (*prakop kam thi chuocha leosam*), an unprecedented crime in Thai history.” (p.5).

Another lexical choice above appears to be embedded in the Thai Buddhist context, for example, instead of using a phrase, such as “atrocious and vicious ‘crime’”, the excerpt turns to the word ‘*prakob kam*’ (karma). On the one hand, the Buddhist concept of ‘karma’ here is used to measure the moral justice of the government, in which killing is sorted as ‘heavy karma.’ (Suwanna, 2002, pp.74-75). On the other hand, it implies and emphasises the consequentialist outcome of such a karmic act that the regime could receive.

The description of the government using inflammatory lexicons continues after the 6th October 1976 event. This can be seen in SS (1977) and PD (1979):

“ [...] Thailand has been invaded and dominated by the US imperialism and its co-optation with the **Thai reactionary ruling class** (*chonchan patigiriya thai*) [...]” (1977, p.2).

“ [...] to expose the treasonous **dictatorial fascist regime** (*karn pokkrong thi kai chart padetkarn fascist*) of Kriangsak [...]” (1979, p.33).

Apart from using words that contain political implication of “moving backward” and “preserving the establishment” like reactionary and fascism. Thai left-wing publications also reveal a use of the modal verb ‘must’ (modality) to indicate obligation for responsibility and heavy use of Thai curse words that are confrontational (inflammatory lexicons) when criticising a string of regimes throughout the period of the 1970s-early 1980s, which extend to the monarchy. For example:

“The King **must** be responsible for the massacre” (headlines, TNLMB, 1973).

“The bloodbath tragedy on the 14th of October 1973 **must** be **forever and ever** (*chua kanlapawasan*) marked in Thai history, as students and all patriotic people sacrificed their blood and flesh for the constitution and our utmost desire for democracy for all Thais. Nevertheless, the just and brave cause of students, university students, and the masses led to the loss of their lives due to the **arbitrariness** (*karn kratham un uk-at*) and obscenity (*so-mom*) of criminal animals (*sat atchayakon*) like Thanom-Prapas [...]” (TNLMB, 1973, p.5)

Inflammatory words in Thai left-wing publications condemn the regime’s actions and evoke emotive responses. For instance, the term ‘*chua kanlapawasan*’ is uncommon in everyday language but is used in contexts related to venerating the monarch. To illustrate, ‘May thy almighty forever and ever last!’ (*kor hai phra kiatikhun wiboonyos pragot sakonlok chua kanlapawasan*), a phrase used to hail the monarch. However, in these publications, it highlights the injustices of the regime, serving as both linguistic negation and insurgent language.

Moreover, instead of using words that appear less emotionally provocative, *run raeng* (severity) or *leo* (bad/evil). Phrases, such as *karn kratham un uk-at* (arbitrariness), emphasise violence in action unrestrainedly committed by the authority. Typically, the word is used in the legal provision to describe an act of crime in the criminal code. Thus, an underlying intention in using the phrase also ironically points out that the regime, an authority of the law, is those who themselves violated it.

In sum, most Thai left-wing publications reveal the use of modalities such as ‘must’ and inflammatory lexical choices when criticising the regime, as noted in the bold examples above. This also demonstrates how language is used to establish the legitimacy of certain commands and significantly heighten the emotional impact of the rhetoric on the reader.

Inflammatory Language of Non-Thai Left-Wing Publications

A shared aspect of the politically charged lexical choice of the Thai and non-Thai is words such as ‘fascism/fascist’ used when criticising the regime after the 6th October 1976 incident under Thanin Kravichien’s government, this is found across both in Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications as first observed in Zackari (2020, p.37). This lexical feature is most prominent and emotive in THAIS (1977), a Swedish language left-wing publication. For example, in “Thailand: Six months after the coup d’état” the regime was referred to as ‘a group of fascist gangsters’ (*ett gäng fascistiska gangsters*), and royalist-fascist politicians (*rojalistiska-fascistiska politiker*) (p.

2). Another word that is frequently used is ‘reactionary/reactionist’. For example, TIB published in Paris, France, reveals this shared aspect. The regime is consistently referred to as:

“[...] the **reactionary fascist** Sgnad-Thanin regime had perpetrated numerous atrocities. They frantically concentrated their forces to suppress and **slaughter** the people [...]” (Jan 1978, pp. 27-28).

“Kriangsak’s government is a government which installed itself into power through realignment among the **reactionary ruling classes**” (Nov 1978, p. 1).

Moreover, TCB, which was published in the United Kingdom, also uses these two terms in multiple issues when criticising the government. In of the articles, it criticises the Kriangsak government as ‘reactionary fascism’ and also gives the regime a specific reference as “the Brandy prime minister” and “the Brandy government”, these description were used sarcastically to delegitimise and mock the regime as illegitimate (TCB, Feb 1979, p.4).⁵

Regarding criticism against the head of state, non-Thai left-wing publications appear to use less demanding lexicons, found in letters to the King. One example appears in TICN (1977), which calls for the king’s responsibility. It states that:

“[...] as a ‘traditional head of state’ the king **should** restore justice and dignity to Thai people [...]” (p.1).

The modal verb ‘should’ here conveys a mild impression and appears less confrontational compared to the Thai usage of ‘must.’ Therefore, by using ‘should,’ it implies that there is room for discretion or choice regarding whether to act or not.

Thai left-wing publications tend to be more provocative when criticising the King – the head of state. This could potentially be because some of them are published under the CPT, whose main criticism is directed at the king as the head of state. Meanwhile, non-Thai left-wing publications are more focused on the global struggle of the anti-authoritarian regime. Arguably, this is not due to less strongly felt anti-monarchism overseas. Rather, it is more of a matter of the audience: discussing anti-authoritarianism could resonate more abroad.

⁵ The origin of this nickname came from the fact that Kriangsak was a heavy drinker and in one of his pictures taken during his visit to a slum he held a glass of brandy in his hand. (TCB, 1979).

In sum, both Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications demonstrate the use of linguistic operation, such as rhetorical strategies, and modality, as well as inflammatory words to convey the newspaper and contributor's attitudes when criticising the string of Thai government and the head of state since the 1970s. The difference lies in the fact that Thai left-wing publications utilise emotionally provocative words and phrases with heavy reference to the Thai context than the publications published outside the country. This given that readers or subscribers of the non-Thai left-wing bulletins are demographically diverse. Despite linguistic differences, both publications serve their purposes in struggling for the same goal.

5.2.2 Language that Mobilises

The second theme in the Thai Leftist Movement found in left-wing publications is mobilisation language. It can be found mostly across headlines and articles through the employment of collective terms, and the emphasis on togetherness.

A Form of Address: Sawai and more

In Thai left-wing publications, “*Sawai*” is one of the most commonly used collective terms, translating to “comrade” in English, meaning fellow or companion (Sipka, 2021, p.175). In Thai-Thai Royal Institute Dictionary, “*Saha-*” prefix signifies togetherness, mutual support, and joint effort. At the same time, the word originates from an old Khmer term, “*Sahaay*,” rooted in Sanskrit. In Thai, it also embodies the idea of ‘friends through thick and thin’ (*puen ruam took ruam sook*). Despite its origins and neutral implication, the term later expanded to encompass those with similar political aspirations within communist societies (Ibid., p.175). In the context of Thai left-wing publications, ‘*sawai*’ connotes a specific political ideology of socialist-communist ideas of joint struggle and the elimination of hierarchical forms of address, which are dominantly used in the Thai context.⁶ The term ‘*sawai*’ is consistently used throughout in publications issued under the name of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) on various occasions. For example, in publications like TP (1979) and SS (1980), terms such as ‘*sawai*’ and ‘*sawai teerak*’ (Dear comrades) are employed. In addition, the term is used to mobilise people to perceive and empathise with the same cause:

⁶ Traditionally, Thai citizens are socially categorised into hierarchically ordered groups and classes that govern many aspects of life and codes of conduct, including social behaviour, verbal and non-verbal expression, relationship dynamic and more. See Baker & Pasuk (2022); and Vorng (2017).

“Dear beloved **comrades** (*sahai teerak*), and our respected fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers, the current state of Thailand, a country **we** love and cherish dearly, has fallen into a semi-feudal and semi-colonial state due to the aggression and domination of US imperialism.” (SS, 1980, p. 4).

Another frequently used collective term that implies political affiliation is the proletariat class (*chonchan kammachip*), a word coined and translated by Prince Wan, that the radical leftists generally accept (Kasian, 2009, p.311). For instance, in one of the Thai left-wing publications, the term *chonchan kammachip* is employed to describe individuals who unite under a common cause, thus fostering a sense of ‘we’ and ‘us’ against ‘they’ and ‘them’.

“In this imperialist era, the laboured masses belong to **“the proletariat class”** (*chonchan kammachip*), so we must adjust ourselves accordingly” (ATP, 1980, p.13)

By contrast, in non-Thai left-wing publications, the term *sahai* or its English equivalent word ‘comrade’ is not widely used. The term is however found in some issues of TICN, in news reports about the CPT and the armed struggle, and in solidarity letters. For example, a statement on the 15th anniversary of the armed struggle issued by the PLAT reprinted in TICN shows the use of collective and emotionally lifted terms and style of writing:

“Dear **comrades**, let **us** uphold the spirit of revolutionary heroism and revolutionary optimism which are the glorious tradition of **our** Army [...]” (TICN, 1980, p.1).

Similarly, in TIB, the term ‘dear comrades and friends’ is used throughout in a message sent to the revolutionary base in Thailand (Feb 1978, p.1), but in editorial declarations to other international solidarity groups, TIBs tend to reduce the word ‘comrade’ and maintain only ‘Dear Friends’ (TIB, Nov 1978, p.2) This can be interpreted as that the readers of non-Thai left-wing bulletins are demographically diverse and not limited to the fellows of CPT. Thus, instead of frequently using words common in the communist bloc like ‘comrade,’ non-Thai left-wing publications opt for a more neutral lexical choice when referring to collective. Two of the most prominent terms are ‘Friends’ and ‘the Patriotic (Thai) People’ (TICN, 1980, p.3).

Hence, the comparison between Thai left-wing publications and their non-Thai counterparts reveals intriguing differences in linguistic features. In Thai publications, terms like ‘*sahai*’ and ‘*chonchan kammachip*’ are prevalent, reflecting a deeply ingrained socialist ideology and resonating with readers due to their localisation through translation into Thai. Contrastingly,

non-Thai left-wing publications tend to adopt specific socialist words for specific contexts and sections. At the same time, a more neutral vocabulary like ‘dear friends’ is used throughout because people who subscribe to the newspaper might differ demographically and not be restricted to those identified as leftist.

Emphasis on Togetherness

Both Thai left-wing publications and non-Thai left-wing publications emphasise togetherness, often expressed through emotionally provocative messages, letters, and songs. As observed, words whose meanings are semantically related to togetherness, such as cooperation, unity, and solidarity, are frequently employed. Some examples are provided below:

“[...] the urgent need for increased **coordination** of international **solidarity** in view of the continuing harsh suppression of the Thai people [...]” (TIB, Mar 1978, p.16)

“‘March **together**, be **united!**’ [...] a spirit of **unity** in **solidarity**.” (TCB, July 1979, p.5)

“Far away from home, **united** in faith, no longer afraid.
She is headed for the mountains and forests
And one day the people will grab victory” (*To the Jungle*, TCB, July 1979, p.8)

Non-Thai left-wing publications also feature international solidarity letters and statements received and sent across places and groups. This feature is absent on the Thai side. Examples of these are in ‘the Statement of Solidarity from the Support Committee for Chilean Resistance’, ‘the Statement from the Communist Labour Party of the United States of North America’s Political Bureau’ (TICN, Aug 198, p.6), and ‘the Solidarity Message to the Namibian People (TIB, Jan 1979, pp. 4-5). These materials suggest that a network of solidarity is forged with other world movements despite being less notable and discussed in the Thai counterparts.

While there is an absence of such correspondence, Thai left-wing publications use words that emphasise togetherness or oneness in mobilising the people from within. For example, Thai words such as ‘*ruam palang*’ or ‘*pha nuek kam lang*’ can be translated as ‘unite’ or ‘unity’ in English. These are words that describe a pursuit of similar goals and actions.

“We must **unite together** and fight against the dictatorial fascist regime!” (*rao ja tong pha nuek kam lang ruam gun tor su kap klum pha det kan tha han fascist*) (TNLM, 1973, p.8)

“**Unity** is a big chain that binds the red heart of all revolutionaries as one” (*kwam samakkee pen huang so yai tee roi rat duang jai daeng kong nak pattiwat tua took saratit hai pen duang jai deaw kan*) (Rud Nah, 1979, p. 48).

When comparing the Thai and non-Thai publications, one striking lexical choice found heavily in non-Thai publications that has no equivalent translation in Thai is the word ‘solidarity’.⁷ The closest Thai term to solidarity is ‘*pha ra don phap*’ (fraternity), although its English counterpart tends to lean towards ‘brotherhood’.

Despite the semantically similar meaning of the term ‘*pha ra don phap*’ and solidarity, ‘*pha ra don phap*’ is not widely used as it contains Christian connotation and thus found less relevance in Thai Buddhist context. While the term solidarity is often linked with the Left and international solidarity and is prominent in non-Thai publications, it is notably absent in any Thai left-wing publications.⁸ Instead, the most frequently used word that has similar semantic meaning is ‘*kwam samakkee*’ (unity), a malleable and manipulative notion used in various Thai historical contexts as argued by Pavin (2010).⁹ It is worth observing that ‘*kwam samakkee*’ and ‘*pha nuek kam lang*’ used in the Thai context ingrain the ‘inward-looking’ and ‘us within’ mentality. This makes the international discourse of solidarity less prominent within the Thai context.

5.2.3 Language that Demands Justice

The last recurring theme, in both Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications, centres on the experiences of individuals in Thailand under a repressive military regime. These narratives use a language that demands justice, through various formats such as news reports and essays, and frequently employing rhetorical devices such as metaphors (a non-literal comparison between

⁷ Initially, the concept ‘solidarity’ has been used widely in explaining society as in the classic works of Durkheim and Christian tradition see Weiss (2017). Using the term ‘solidarity’ linking to political solidarity with the Left movement, see Featherstone (2012).

⁸ This is not a generalisation but an assessment from the available materials used in this study.

⁹ Unity as a political discourse and device can at times be violent and repressive used by the conservative and right-wing politicians to create the sense of Thainess as well as to mobilise arbitrary killing of Thais. See Pavin (2010).

two unlike things), anaphora (a repetition of words to enhance emotion), and irony (a conveying of opposite of literal meaning) to address the injustice received.

Livelihood Problems

Thai left-wing publications tell stories using rhetorical devices that appeal to emotions. This can be seen, for example, in the interview in Athiphat (1980) that:

“I’ve had to work like an adult since I was 12. Whatever job grown-ups can do, I can do too. [...] Life... the more I do, the poorer I become. The harder I work, the less I have, the deeper into misery I fall [...]” (*chan ayu sipsong pi kotong het ngan thao kap phuyai khon nueng phuyai het a yang chan ko het dai mot thuka yang [...] chiwit ying tham ko ying chon ying het ko ying bo mi ying thukyak [...]*). (pp. 38-39).

Literary devices, such as metaphors and anaphora, were employed to vividly portray and underscore the magnitude of the injustice being addressed. The repetition of the action emphasised and contrasted the idea that whatever she did under this current state yielded no results for her well-being and life. The fact that the interviewee spoke in the Isan dialect reveals her rural origins and highlights the challenges faced by women in such areas, where they are often deprived of welfare and a decent quality of life. Moreover, the language that seeks to address justice is expressed by highlighting the gap between reality and expectations, through the use of irony. For instance, the publication RN (1979) points out that in the case of Kraingsak’s campaign claiming that ‘this year is the year of all farmers,’ the reality was quite different. Not only did the farmers’ living conditions fail to improve, but the government also increased the prices of commodities and oil (pp.9-10).

Political Prisoner, State Violence and Impunity

While most Thai left-wing publications focus on stories at the front and revolutionary progress, non-Thai left-wing publications prioritise the language of human rights and justice. This observation was first made by Zackari (2020) in her analysis of solidarity publications. These publications frequently report campaigns advocating for political prisoners, particularly in connection with the 6th October 1976 incident. For instance, a protest letter to Kraingsak’s government demanding the release of political prisoners explicitly cites the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (TIB, Feb 1978, p.4). Additionally, during the trial of 18 defendants linked to the 6th Oct incident, protesters chant slogans, such as “84 witnesses, 84

years of trial!”), to highlight the intentionally prolonged legal proceedings (TIB, Mar 1978, p. 10).

Injustice is also expressed through rhetoric related to state impunity following the two October incidents. Articles in TIC and TCB extensively report on police brutalities arbitrarily committed against farmers, workers, detainees, students, and ordinary people, with increasing frequency. These articles condemn the police, by ironically referring to them by their claimed name as ‘Protectors of Peaceful Citizens.’ The use of irony as a rhetorical device underscores the vast disparity between reality and expectation (TICN, 1978, p.11 & TCB, Dec 1979, p.2). This reflects the injustice committed by the state, which remains unpunished. There is also a use of rhetorical strategies in questioning the state to address and serve as emotionally cry out for injustice received, for example, “what crimes have these people actually committed? (TCB, Jul 1979, pp.1-3); which had caused *Seng* to die? (TRS, 1980, p.32).”

This chapter reveals themes and linguistic features used to oppose the regime, seek justice, and mobilise which can be overlapping. Both Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications ultimately convey similar goals and aspirations, painting a picture of resistance against prevailing socio-political norms. Although they use different linguistic approaches due to socio-cultural differences and differing contexts, they share a language of the dissent, illustrating the common struggle.

5.3 Discourses and Practices of the Thai-Leftist Movement

5.3.1 The Diffusion of Leftist Discourses

The language found in left-wing publications provides clear evidence that the ideas of resistance, justice advocacy, and mobilisation put forth by the Thai Leftist Movement transcended national boundaries. According to diffusion theory, which examines the spread of ideas within and across social movements, such diffusion can occur through direct and indirect channels (Soule and Roggenband, 2018, p.237). In the case of the Thai Leftist Movement, these ideas were primarily disseminated through individuals and working groups involved in domestic and international publishing activities. Another mode of ideological diffusion is the non-relational model expressed and propagated through various forms of print media, evident in both Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications. As two informants expressed:

“I was an amateur student of Thai [studies] so I got a chance to go there. So, my first time I went in 1973 and brought my family, our sons were just 2-3 years old. We stayed in Bangkok when I was in contact with Thai writers and friends [...] we left after *hok tula* (6th October 1976), but are still in contact with some of our friends.” (Informant A, 2023).

“The publications were sent to my mailbox address in Denmark by a third person” (Informant A, 2023).

“I received the publications sent by people and friends from Laos, where publishing activities were very active back then.” (Informant B, 2024).

Thus, through direct and non-direct ties, two diffusion modes work together to spread ideas and discourse within and across the Thai Leftist Movement, facilitating the continuity of the flow.

Nevertheless, addressing the socio-political milieu that fosters these flows of ideas is also essential. According to Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), there is a mutually constitutive relationship between discourses and the social contexts in which they operate (as noted in Jørgenson, 2002, pp. 31-32). In other words, Leftist discourses from the 1970s to the early 1980s, as realised through linguistic features in the preceding discussion, vividly portray the struggles of the Thai Left against the regime, their calls for justice, and their appeals for mobilisation and solidarity, influenced and was influenced by the socio-political environment existing at the time, both domestically and internationally.

The movement and its political activism took place against the backdrop of the Cold War and the US imperialism of the 1960s, the long military dictatorship and authoritarian culture in Thailand since the 1950s-1980s, and the influences of the New Left ideas from the United States and Europe in the late 1960s that moved students and the radical left to explore the Thai socialist discourse of the previous decades and lessons from movements elsewhere to the extent that it became a new public discourse that the Thai Left used to struggle against the regime (Pasuk & Baker, 1995, p. 275; Prajak, 2012, p. 242). Thus, counterhegemonic discourse against the ruling regime found its place in the Thai Leftist sphere under this political climate.

Additionally, the two October incidents in the 1970s (14th October 1973 and 6th October 1976), severe livelihood problems, arbitrary killings and arrests, strict censorship in the press and media, and students and radical leftists seeking political refuge overseas fostered and merged the discourse of resistance with those of justice and unity/solidarity. These factors intertwined with the counterhegemonic discourse at the particular political juncture of the 1970s-1980s, resulted in the Thai Left within and outside Thailand continuing to oppose dictatorial regimes, calls for justice and human rights, and the fostering of unity and solidarity within and with other international movements. This has become one of the discursive practices that the Thai Left used to challenge the existing power. As a result, the diffusion of these discourses materialised through left-wing publications in Thailand and abroad, becoming a practice that intertwined with Leftist discourses and political practice and movement in its time.

5.3.2 Intertextuality in Practice: Translation as Political Acts and Interventions

What synergises the movement and Leftist discourses across space is translation. In other words, within the Thai Leftist activism abroad, translation acts as a linguistic operation and political manoeuvres that enables and bridges Leftist discourses from the 1970s until the early 1980s to function within and across space. The translations found in these left-wing publications can be understood through two interconnected aspects: the intertextual aspect (text) and the practical political aspect (the act of translation). The first aspect involves examining how texts rely on other texts (intertextuality). Non-Thai left-wing publications often draw from Thai sources as their previous texts. This reliance can be implicit or explicit. For instance, the human rights reports column in TIB (1978-1979) and TICN (1978-1983) draws information heavily from Thai

news outlets, particularly Thai Rath (1962-) and Siam Rath (1950-). Typically, Thai newspapers do not categorise news reports under the “human rights” section; they simply narrate and report the cases. For example, On 27 September, Thai Rat newspaper reported that the police were involved in the hanging of the two activists; on 4 October, someone bombed the Thai Rat office with an M79 grenade (Haberkorn, 2011, p.150). However, when these texts are translated and recontextualised in the receiving countries—such as France and Sweden—they undergo processes of translation, interpretation, and rewriting by the translator. Consequently, they are categorised as “human rights reports,” and “human rights in Thailand” thus recontextualising the news within specific discourses.

Another example is the translation of the declaration of the formation of the Thai Moslem People’s Liberation Armed Forces (TMPLAF). The document was first broadcasted in the Yawi language, a Malayan language of Southern Thailand, by the VOPT United Front in 1978 (Marks, 1994, p. 232). It was then translated into Thai and reported in SS (1978), and later translated into English and republished in TIB (Mar 1978). (see figure 2).

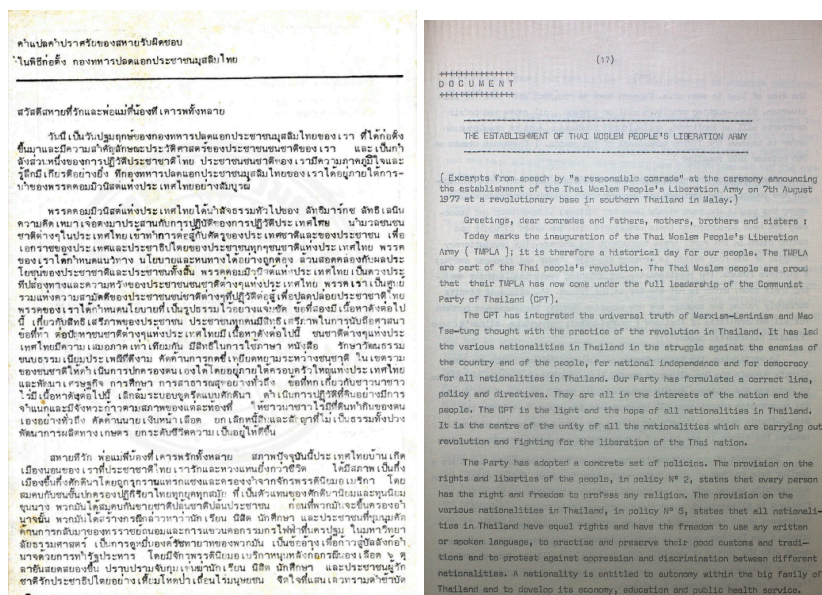


Figure 2. Speech on the Establishment of Thai Moslem People’s Liberation Army. (Courtesy of Thammasat University Archive and Karin Zackari)

Similarly, the English version tends to have a life of its own, a rewriting that goes beyond matching the words with the original text (Lefevere, 1992, p. vii). In the Thai version, the focus is placed on addressing the misery and grievance received by Thai and Thai Muslims,

condemning the regime and imperialist power, venerating the lives lost on the 14th October incident, and discussing Thailand's state as a semi-feudal semi-colonialist country. Despite these fall under Leftist discourses of resistance, justice and unity, the translated text had gone through the process of recontextualisation, reinterpretation and rewriting by the translator. It emphasises on the policy announced by the CPT in 1976 that spells out explicitly rights (*sith*) and freedom (*seriphap*) to religion, ethnic and nationalities. Thus, through the process of 'three-re' applied to previous texts, the translated text in TIB focuses on the language of 'rights/human rights'. This focus is particularly well-received in Western contexts, especially in the 1970s when the concept of 'human rights' became firmly established in the West following the egregious repression in Latin America (Kim, 2017, p.933). This discourse is deemed more suitable and accepted than discussions on Thailand's nature as semi-colonial. Thus, it becomes clear that when viewing these texts together translation itself is intertextual, complicating and reinforcing one another. This aligns with Venuti's view that the translation process is affected by an intertextual chain of texts, as it disrupts its smooth communication and allows for diverse interpretative pathways shaped by the cultural context of the audience receiving the translated text (2009, p. 157).

On a deeper and interconnected level, an intertextual chain of texts implies that translation, often being perceived as an invisible craft and overlooked, also serves transnationally to disseminate ideas and as a form of activism within a movement and under specific discourses. To illustrate the case, the Thai Leftist Movement during the 1970s-early 1980s was repressed, and underwent two crackdowns after the two October incidents led to many of them turning to underground activities and fleeing the country to continue their struggle (Informant B, 2023). Additionally, freedom of expression and press freedom faced severe news censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression (Sorapong, 2008, p.51). Under this context, translation bridges and enables Leftist discourses of resistance, justice and solidarity to continue to bloom overseas. As one of the interviewees who aptly puts it:

“After I received the publication, I translated it into English and mostly Danish. [...] to spread the news about Thailand and help our friends.” (Informant B, 2023).

While the thesis refrains from seeking to map the intricate networks of people and overseas publishing activities across various languages, it becomes evident that there existed a small

group of translators, though possibly not formally self-identified as such, who operate to facilitate communication and forge a connection between those who shared the same struggle.

Therefore, these intertextual creations and contentious actions illuminates language as means of insurgency and translation as political acts and interventions, in which the Thai Leftist Movement sets in motion Leftist discourses of resistance, justice, and solidarity to the wider social world. As Baker (2015) put forth that “translation holds significant potential for disseminating transnational messages across a variety of languages and mediums” (pp. 1-2). Through the use of language and the act of translation, the Thai Leftist Movement and overseas working groups engage in a form of political activism. This subtle act involves exhibiting the spirit of internationalism to communicate, facilitate, and perpetuate the movement’s struggle with as many people as possible on a global scale. On the other hand, they also seek to intervene yet subtly in the West’s cultural, social, and political contexts. This intervention entails asserting the dialogue of the Thai Leftist Movement and translating texts from one language into others, notably hegemonic languages.

6. CONCLUSION

The Thai Leftist Movement of the 1970s-early 1980s and their radical articulations as seen in Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications are closely tied with the remarkable use of languages and its minute yet powerful details of linguistic operations as well as translation in facilitating the flow of ideas beyond the boundaries of the Thai state. As critically analysed in this thesis, similarities and differences emerged. The most notable aspect is its linguistic operations. Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications reveal a careful selection and usage of lexical choices and modalities to assert the writers' attitudes and rhetorical strategies to criticise the regime. Strikingly, the Thai side employs words embedded in the Thai socio-cultural and religious context to enhance and evoke the emotions of the Thai audience. Additionally, both Thai and non-Thai left-wing publications employ mobilisation language by emphasising collective and egalitarian terms and words that imply togetherness.

Moreover, these publications utilise literary devices, such as metaphors and anaphora, to convey stories of unjust treatment, such as political imprisonment, state impunity, and livelihood problems, to address injustice received and demand justice. Consequently, these linguistic operations allude to discourses of the Thai Leftist Movement which can be seen as discursive practices employed to resist, mobilise, and demand justice. The movement and its articulations ultimately reach a broader audience overseas through the group's social practice of translation.

The thesis seeks to contribute to understanding the Thai Leftist Movement and the circulation of ideas in Thailand and Europe. It aims to illuminate how the Thai Leftist Movement transcended national boundaries by delving into the use of language and translation amidst the insurgency. As I have argued, the Thai Leftist Movement and its discourses of resistance, solidarity and justice during the 1970s until the early 1980s spread and diffused transnationally through people and paper. Beyond analysing languages and varied patterns of expression that subtly challenge the opposing power and hegemony, the overlooked aspect of their actions, namely translation, can also be seen as one form of political activism contributing to the flow and continuity of ideas and movements within and across spaces.

These findings also reflect previous scholarly works reviewed in this thesis. As I built on Limapichart's (2009) analysis of print media as the Siamese public sphere, the thesis aligns with the view that left-wing publications served as public spheres for political contestation in Thailand and transnationally. Moreover, it expands on Rafael's (2016) argument that language and translation can be seen as acts of insurgency. By underlining these perspectives, the thesis underscores the profound role of language and translation in contributing to the flow of ideas and as a potential and contentious tool of political resistance within and beyond the Thai nation-state.

This thesis also highlights potential future research on several overlooked and understudied issues—for instance, the comparative analysis of Thai right-wing and left-wing publications. In addition, topics exploring the stories and networks of individuals engaged in the Thai Leftist Movement abroad remain an overlooked academic research area. The potential linkage of this movement with other internationalist movements and the global struggles of the 1970s-1980s needs to be more present in scholarly discourse. Moreover, this historical instance also sheds light on contemporary topics such as migration, political exile, and overseas political activism. For example, a comparative investigation of Thai political exiles and their political activism abroad during the 1970s, the 2010s Red Shirt movement and the current exiles under the persecution of *lèse-majesté* (Article 112) represents a gap in contemporary studies of Thailand. Thus, these research topics present significant opportunities for further investigation.

Looking at this historical case, which is four to five decades apart, the political discourse and conversation seem familiar to the past years of the Thai political climate. It is a similar story of a shared struggle: the use of language to criticise and condemn the military regime and the monarchy, which has persisted and even escalated; the use of language to mobilise the people against the authoritarian regime as seen in the formation of the MilkTeaAlliance; and the use of language to demand justice for those lives taken arbitrarily. Translation, again, facilitated through the digital space, bridges and enables these conversations and discourses, as seen in many transnational solidarity campaigns.

Political change from below is a long and slow process indeed and sometimes can come to a halt when an air of normality seems to resume. In the case of Thailand, last year marked the 50th anniversary of the 14 October 1973 incident, the 47th anniversary of the 6 October 1976

massacre, the 13th year of the Red Shirt crackdown, and the 2nd anniversary of the recent student-led protest. This year, with a new government in place that seems to recall the breath of democracy, no political prisoners have been granted bail. No justice is given to those lives lost under the violent power abuse of subsequent regimes. As a young generation Thai, I repeatedly heard stories of the past recounted by older generations that “there was a time when the world seemed bound together in a common cause and struggle.” Perhaps our generation should revive those aspirations.

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