

# Language Death

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# “ Language death?

- **When speakers stop regularly using a language**
- **When children stop learning a language**
- **When the last proficient speakers die**
- **Not a sudden process: slow loss over time**

# You have all seen this.



- East and Southeast Asia are **hotspots of language death.**
- What language do your parents use?
- Do you use that language that much?
- Do kids these days speak differently?

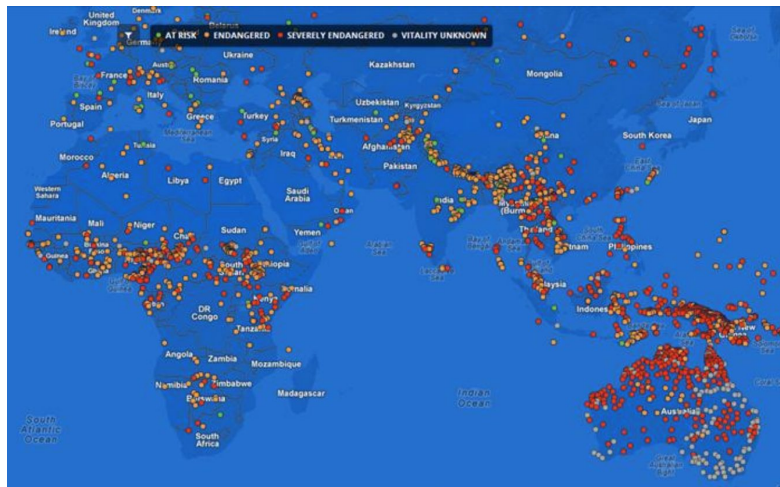
“ In your hometown:

- Does our generation speak the local thing?
- Do we speak it as well as their parents?
- Do kids in SD use it?
  
- What about you?

1.

# Linguistic Mass Extinction

Language diversity in the 21st  
century



7,000

Languages are spoken today

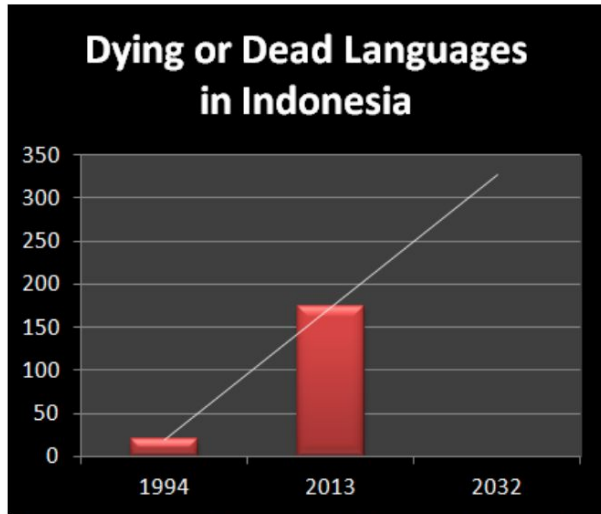
4,000

Will be fully extinct by 2,100

Every 2 Weeks

Another language goes extinct

# Indonesian languages are dying.



- **Indonesia: >700 regional languages**
- **2019: one of the most linguistically diverse regions on the planet.**
- **2100: ?**





2.

**Where is this happening?**

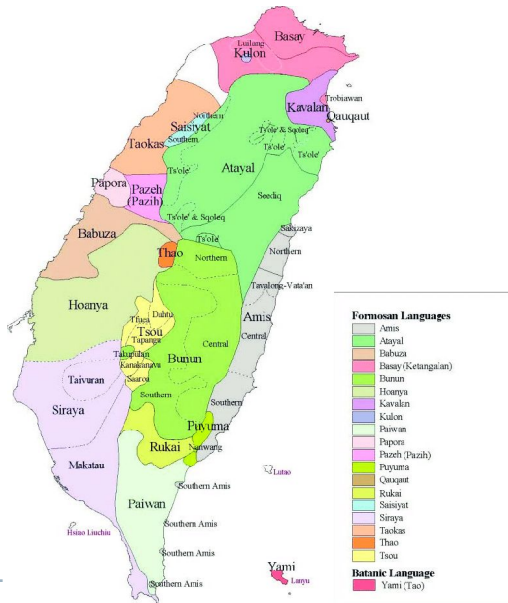
Everywhere.

# China: Everything



- **Eight Primary Groups of Chinese**
  - Wu (Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi)
  - Min (Hokkien, Teochew)
  - Cantonese (Hong Kong, Taishan)
  - Hakka (Too many to count!)
- Intense pressure to speak Mandarin
- Don't ask about Western China...

# Taiwan: Formosan



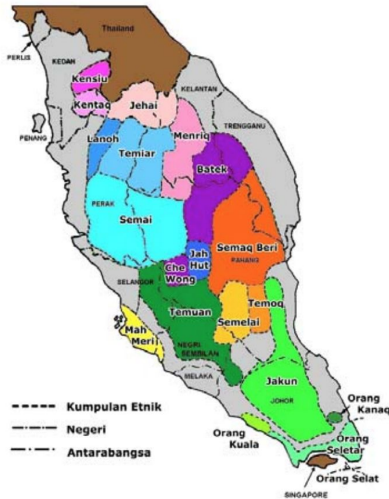
- **26 indigenous languages of Taiwan**
- **Indigenous peoples: 2.3% of country**
- **Languages suppressed in schools**
- **10 languages dead, 4 moribund**
- **Only ~3 will last another generation**
- **Not even including Taiwanese!**

# Vietnam: Chamic



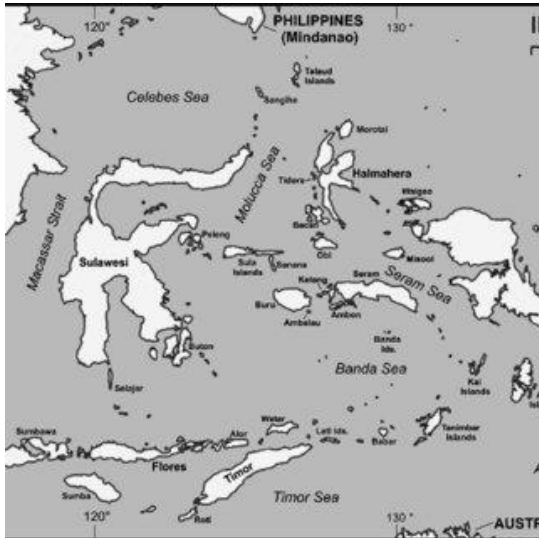
- **10 languages of Southern Vietnam**
- First written language of SEA (350)
- Subfamily spread to Aceh, Hainan
- Vietnamese government just ended policy of Chamic-language schools
- **All** Chamic langs in Viet. threatened

# Malaysia: Aslian



- **20 langs of the Malay Peninsula**
- Roughly 50,000 speakers in total
- Related to Khmer, Vietnamese, and extinct languages of Borneo
- Only seven schools in all of Malaysia
- Roughly 75% to vanish by 2070

# Indonesia: Everything



- **Indonesian is swallowing everything**
- Eastern Indonesia: over 400 langs
- 60% of these already dying or dead
- Educational system: Indonesian only
- Say goodbye to the most linguistically diverse area on the

**3.**

# **Zooming in on Indonesia**

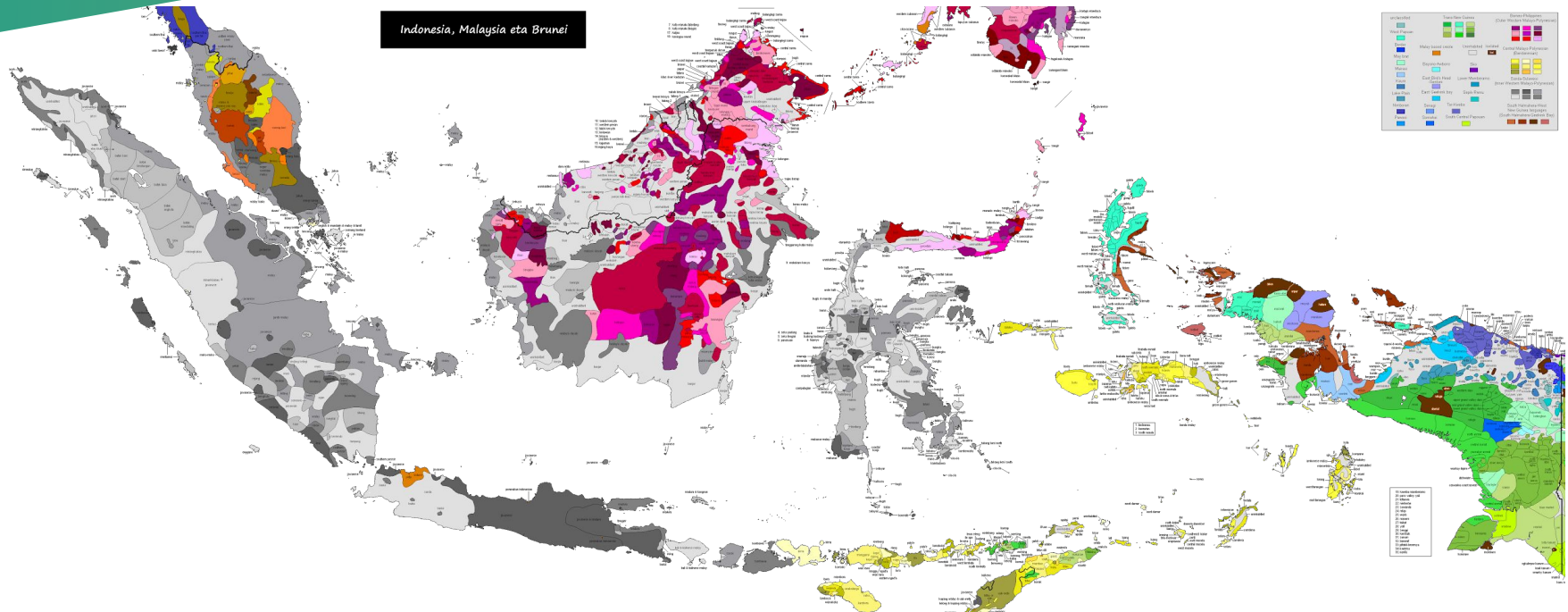
700 of the world's languages in focus

# “ How diverse is Indonesia?

- **700 languages: 10% of World Total**
- Some big guys:
  - Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese
  - Minangkabau, Batak, Aceh
  - Bugis, Gorontalo



# And a LOT of little guys.



# Levels of linguistic health

LEVEL	LABEL	DESCRIPTION	UNESCO
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.	Safe
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, government at the nationwide level.	Safe
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.	Safe
3	Wider Communication	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.	Safe
4	Educational	Literacy in the language is being transmitted through a system of public education.	Safe
5	Developing	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe

# Levels of linguistic health

6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.	Safe
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.	Vulnerable
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children	Definitely Endangered
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency.	Extinct
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct

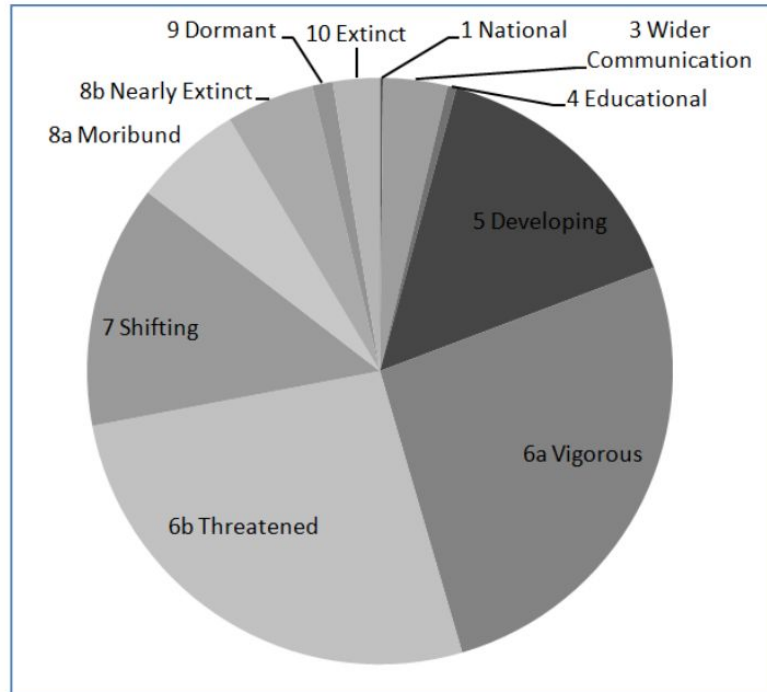
# Levels: Summary

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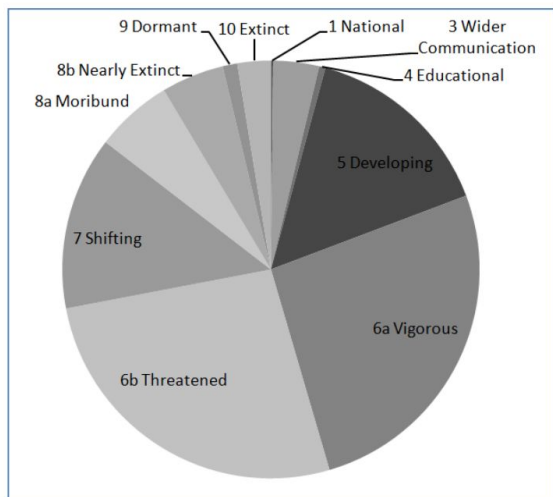
- Levels 1-2: Official State Support
- Levels 3-4: Healthy and Stable
- Levels 5-6: Healthy but at Risk
- Levels 7-8: Not learned, dying out
- Levels 9-10: Dead.

**Where do you  
think most  
Indonesian  
languages are?**

# More than half are not safe.

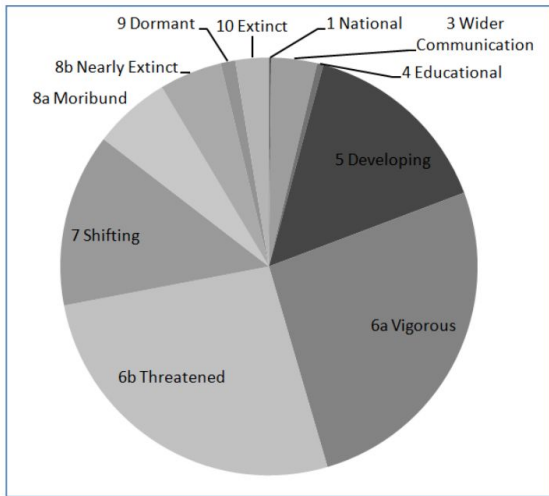


# Over 50% threatened or worse.



- **Over 50% of Indonesian languages: Level 6B (threatened) or worse.**
- World average: **36%** of languages at risk.
- Indonesia: **54%**, or **150%** the average.
- The situation is particularly bad here

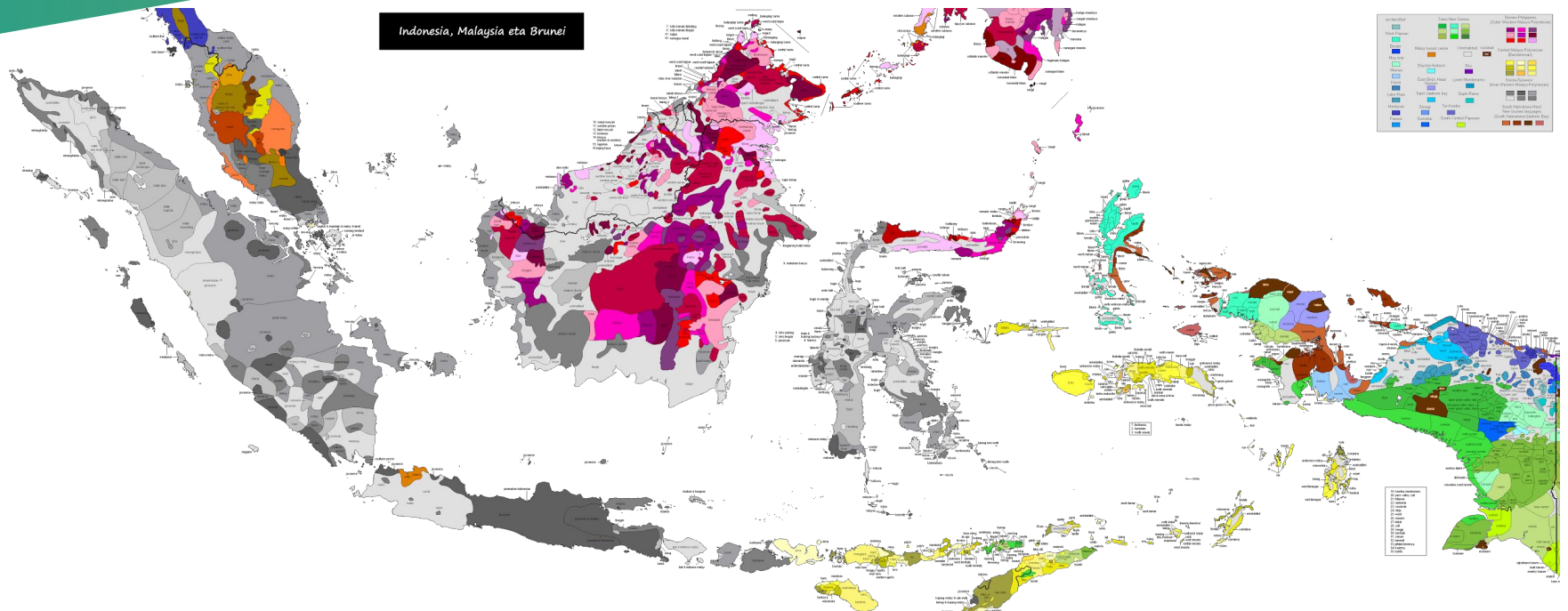
# Some Examples



- Level 1 (National): Indonesian
- Level 3: Javanese, Bugis
- Level 5: Minangkabau, Balinese
- **Level 6: Aceh, Lampung, Batak Toba, Betawi, Osing, Makassar, Gorontalo, Manggarai, Bima, Buru, Sula**

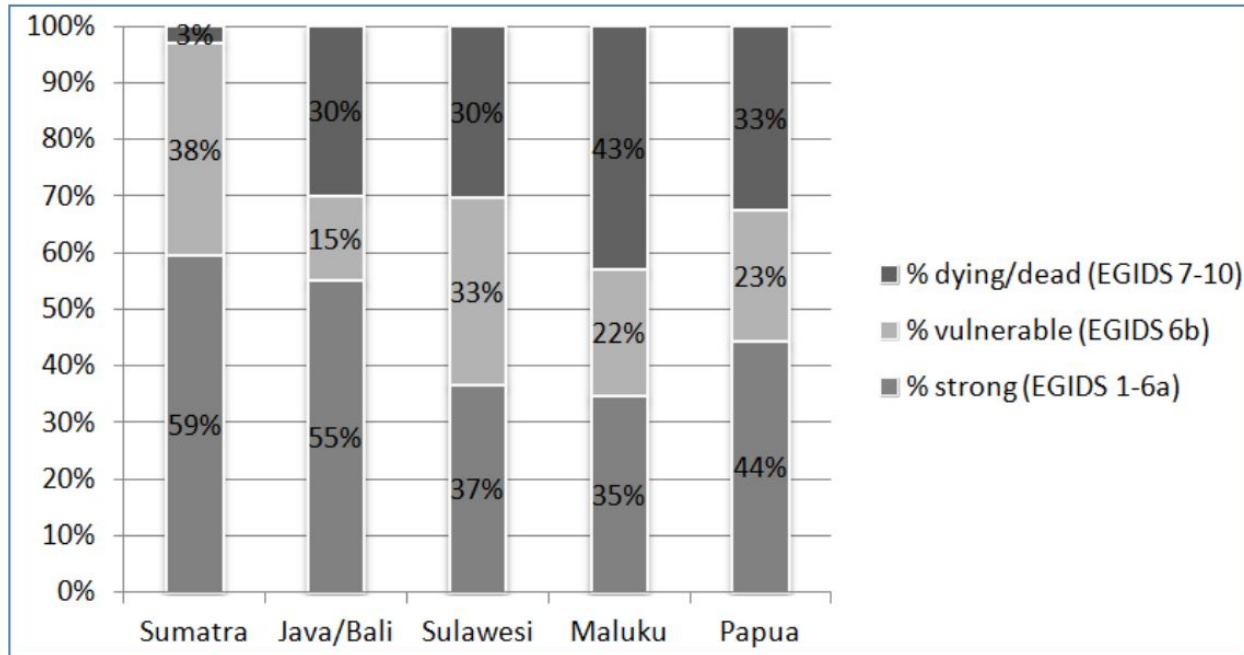


# Languages from all over.

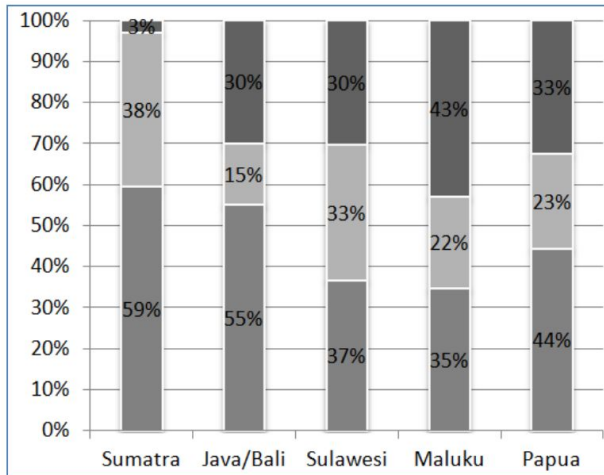


**Which regions  
are experiencing  
the WORST loss?**

# Regional Breakdown



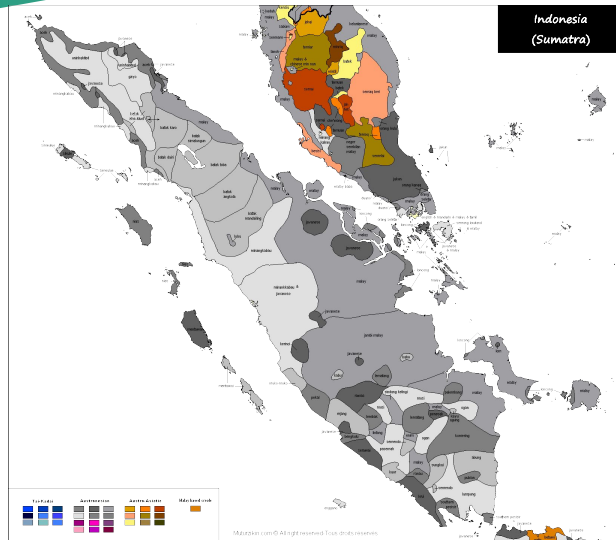
# Regional Breakdown



- Sumatra: 41% threatened or worse.
- Java: 45% threatened or worse.
- **Sulawesi: 63% threatened or worse.**
- **Maluku: 65% threatened or worse**
- **Papua: 56% threatened or worse**



# Who is dying where?

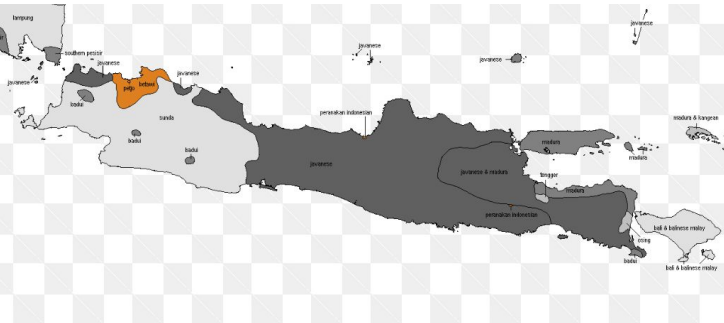


- Sumatera
  - Small languages in the North.
    - Batak (Karo, Mandailing)
  - Island languages
    - Enggano, Nias
  - Languages hit by transmigrasi:
    - Batak Toba, Lampung

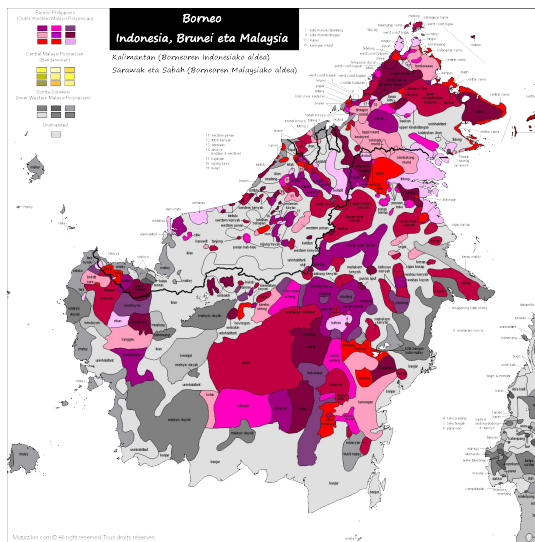
# Who is dying where?

## ■ Java

- Javanese and Sundanese are stable.
- Rapid loss of levels in cities:  
omens of serious future loss
- Who is dying out?
  - Chinese languages that have been here forever!
  - Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese!



# Who is dying where?

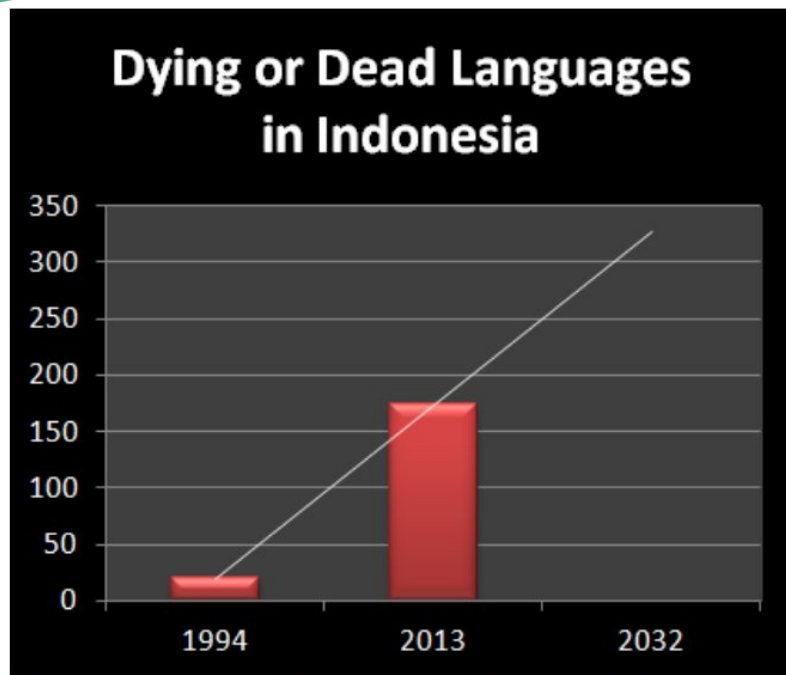


- Kalimantan
  - We really do not know very well.
    - Very little documentary work.
  - Coastal areas: Bahasa Banjar
    - Malay-like language that has swallowed up many, many little regional languages all over.

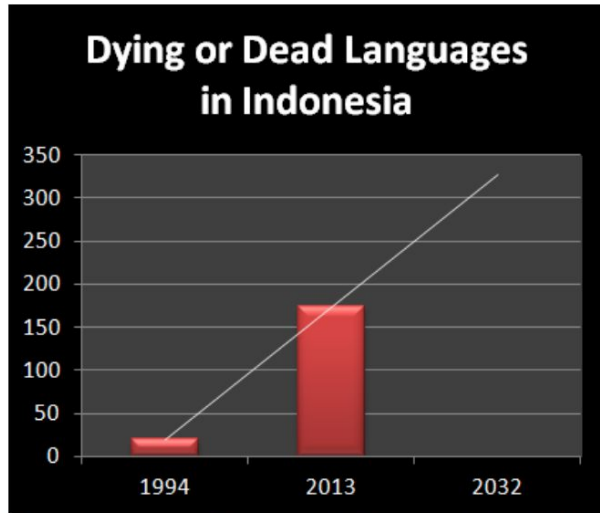


# What will happen next?

Rates of loss will only go up.



# Rates of loss will only go up.



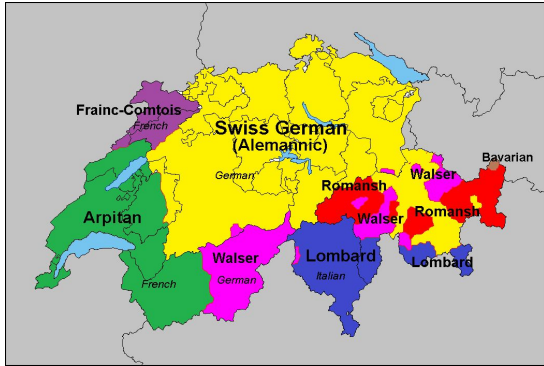
- 1994: ~20 languages at risk
- 2013: ~173 languages at risk
  
- **2019: ?**
- **2032: ??**
- **2100: ???**

4.

# Why is this occurring?

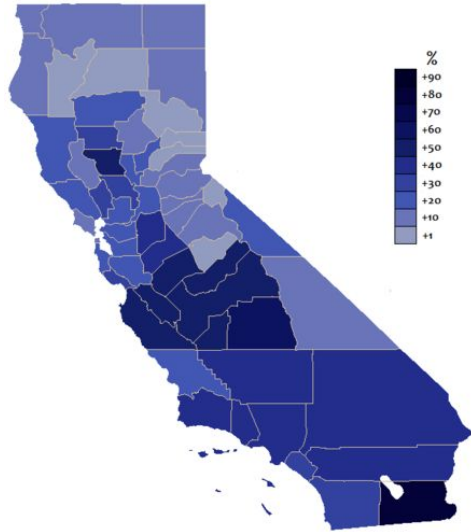
We've got a couple ideas.

# Language Death: NOT inevitable



- **Historical global norm: multilingualism**
- Most humans speak >1 language
- Successful multilingual societies:
  - Switzerland
  - Canada
  - India
  -

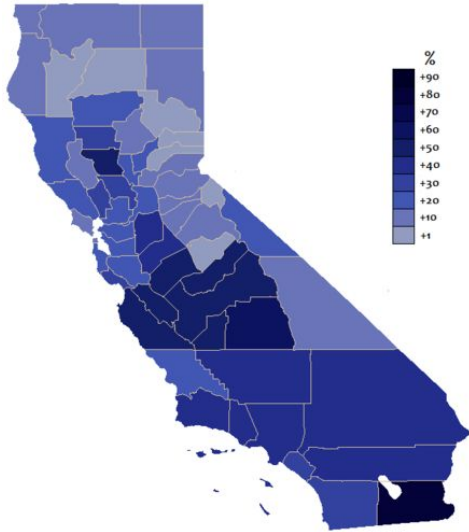
# America: English and Spanish



## ■ California

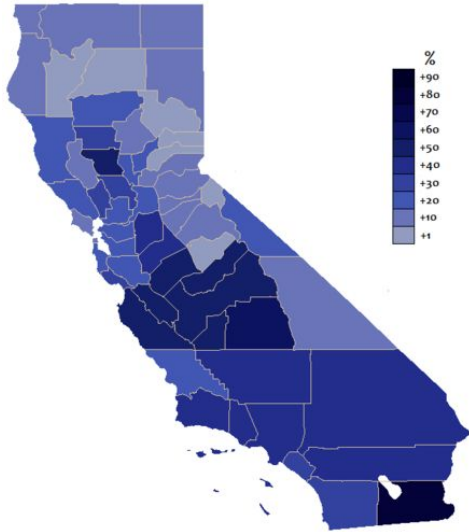
- America's largest, richest state
- **30% of people use Spanish at home**
- All government services available in both English and Spanish.
- Los Angeles: 2nd largest city in USA
  - **50% of population uses spanish**

# How can we use Spanish?



- California's language laws:
  - **You can do this in Spanish:**
    - Pay your taxes
    - Go to school
    - Run a business
    - Go to court
    - Sue the government

# Stable Multilingualism



- The state puts little pressure on parents and children to linguistically assimilate.
- **The number of Spanish speakers is not declining- actually, it's rising!**
- Californian situation:

**Stable multilingualism**



# Sounds good, huh?

- Ideally, we would do this all over.
  - Indonesia could be the same!
- Sadly, that's not what's happening.
  - **Why is that?**

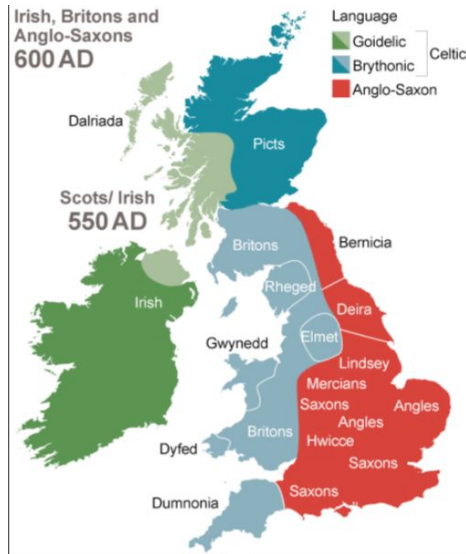


# Why do languages shift?



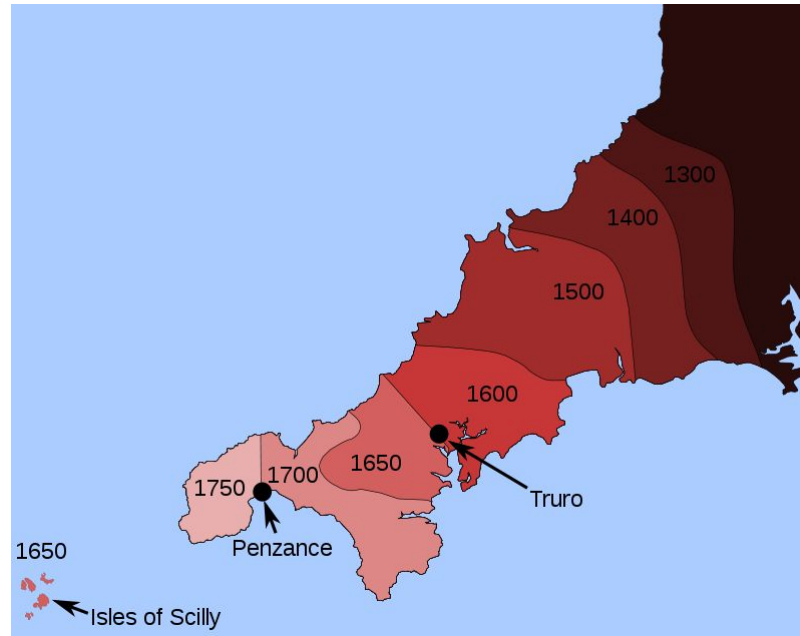
- **Two reasons:**
  - Complex Sociolinguistic factors
    - Economic dynamics
    - Social power dynamics
- **School-induced language shift**

# England: Internal Colonialism

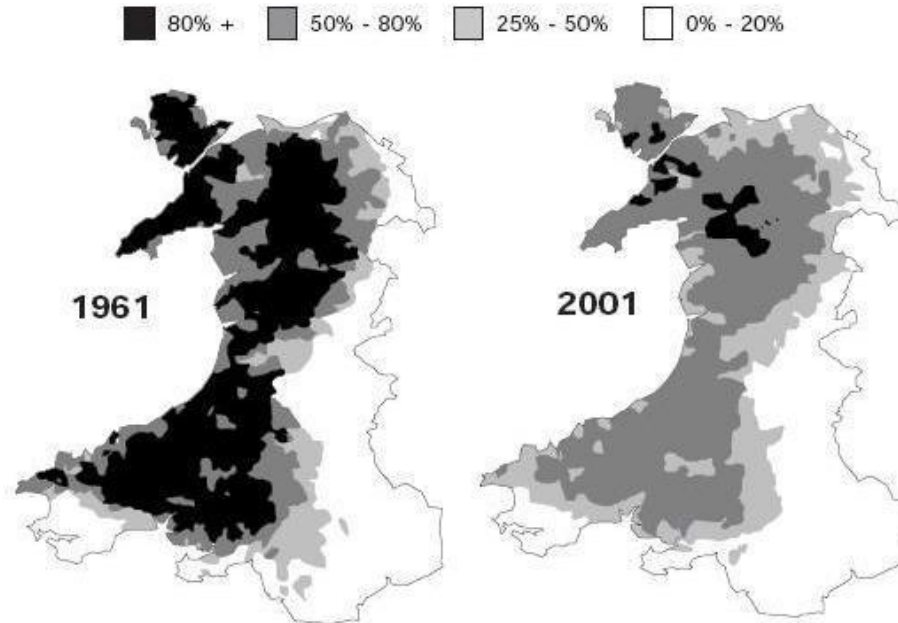


- **British Isles: once multilingual!**
  - English, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Irish
- **Today: Almost Only English**
  - Irish, Welsh, Gaelic: killed by the English government

# Cornwall: Internal Colonialism

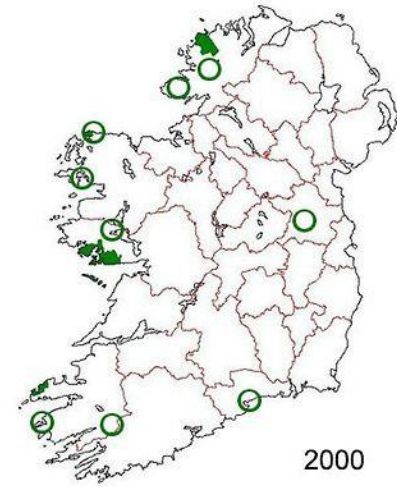


# Wales: Internal Colonialism



# Ireland: Internal Colonialism

**Decline of Ireland's native Irish speakers (1800-2000)**



# Killing languages in school



- **The Welsh Not**
  - England, **19th-20th centuries**
  - Children caught speaking Welsh had this hung on their necks.
  - At the end of the day, the child wearing it would get beaten.
  - The state killed Welsh in schools!

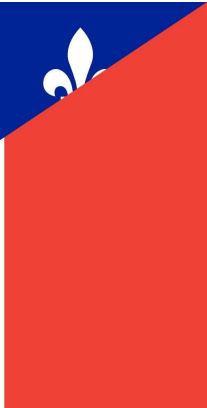
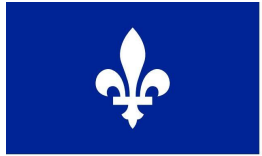
# English, French, and Quebec



- French-Speaking province in Canada
  - Taken from France in 1775
  - English becomes official language
  - Montreal (capital city) becomes primarily English-speaking



# English, French, and Quebec



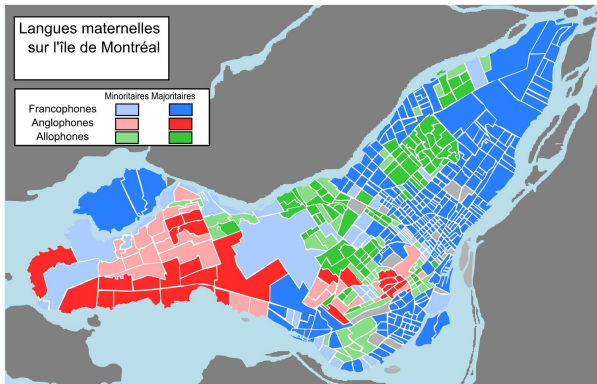
- 1950's: 60% of people in Montreal are **monolingual English speakers.**
- 1974: French becomes **the only** official language in Quebec.
- **2019: only 10% speak only English!**

# English, French, and Quebec



- Bill 101 and Education Policies
  - All immigrant children are forced **to attend French-language school!**
- Government position:
  - Canadians learn english naturally, **but only schools can preserve local language and culture**

# English, French, and Quebec



- The result: complete success!
  - French has come back to Montreal
  - Local language and culture have been saved by the state.
- Conclusion:
  - **School-based language policies** can have radical effects on society!

**5.**

# **School-Based Language Shift in Asia**

# State-Building and National Languages

漢語  
汉语  
中文

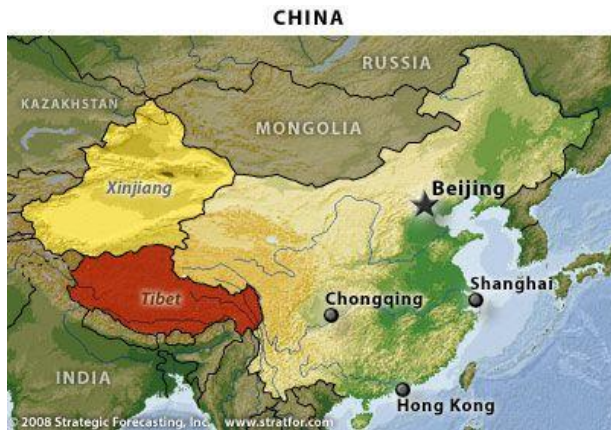
- Modern states frequently use language policy to unify themselves.
- Three radical cases:
  - **China, Indonesia, Israel**
- Two good counterexamples:
  - **India, the Philippines**

# China: The Rise of Mandarin



- China: 302 regional languages
  - 8 major sub-families of Chinese: completely separate groups!
  - More than 50 local ethnic groups
  - 66% of the population speaks Mandarin (Standard Chinese)
- Schools aggressively enforce this!

# China: Enforcement of Mandarin



- 2015 Guidelines: increased use of Standard Chinese **in the schools**
  - Tibetan languages phasing out
  - Xinjiang: Uyghur languages undergoing the same fate.
- **The Government is changing Chinese linguistic landscape in the schools.**

# Israel: Revival of Hebrew



- Hebrew: 7,000,000 speakers today
  - Before 1947: Dead for 2000 years!
- How did this occur?
  - The Israeli government used schools to create a national language!



# Israel: Revival of Hebrew



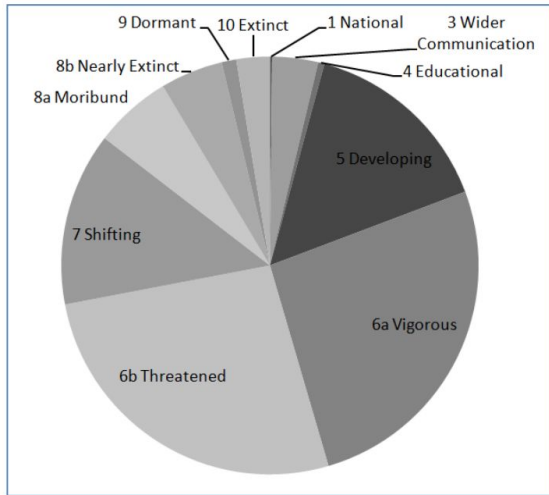
- Israel: originally multilingual
- Government chose to run schools and the government exclusively in Hebrew
- Today: the only successful example of 'language revitalization' **in the world.**
- **Same phenomena as Indonesia!**

# Indonesia: Creation of Indonesian



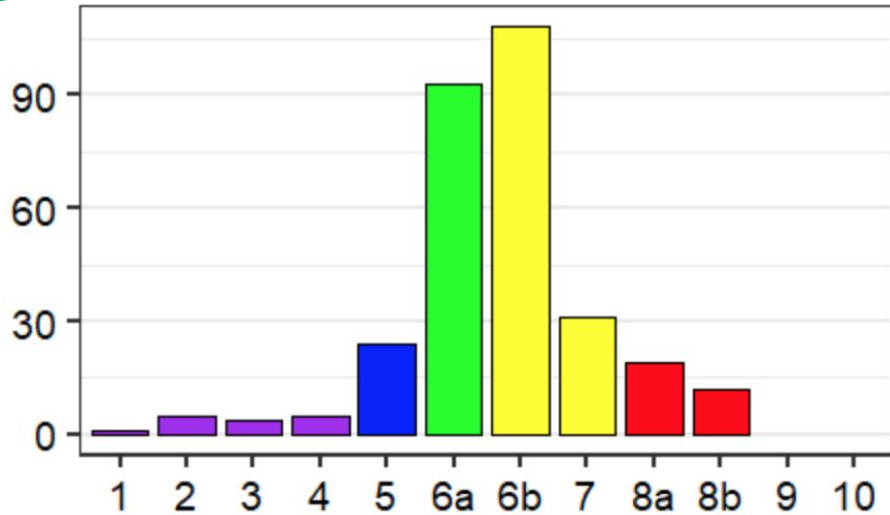
- Indonesia, like Israel: originally spoke hundreds of distinct languages
- Government chose to run schools and the government exclusively in a new language, Indonesian
- Today: almost everyone speaks it!

# The other side Of the same coin.



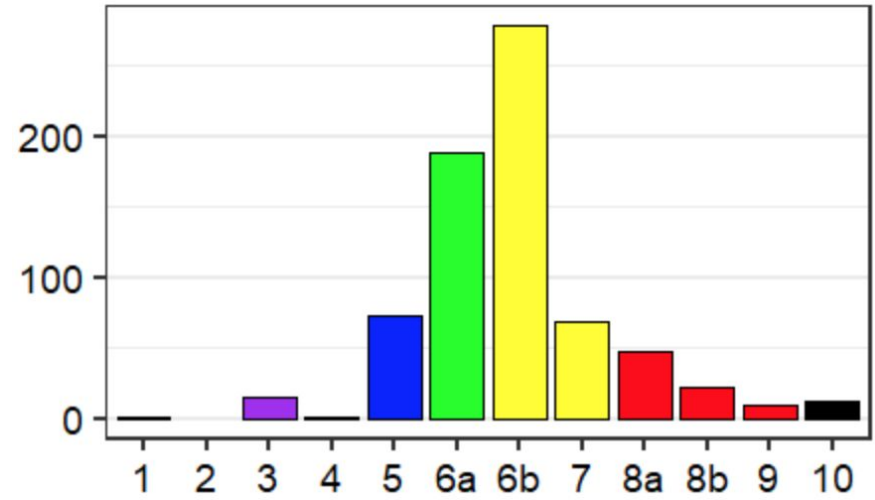
- Indonesia: all schools use Indonesian.
  - Only small amounts of time allowed for local language classes.
  - Same problem as most countries.
- The result: local languages decline.
  - And in Indonesia: **much faster**

# Brief Comparison Of Language Health



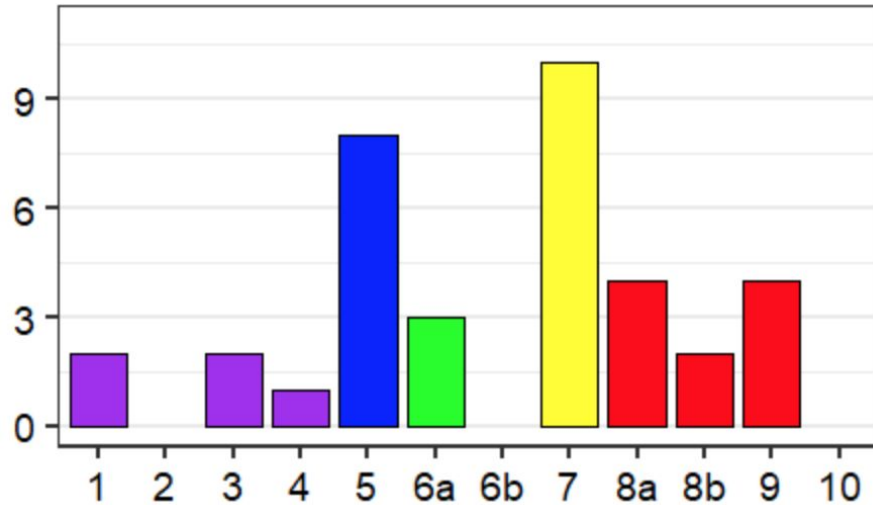
China

vs

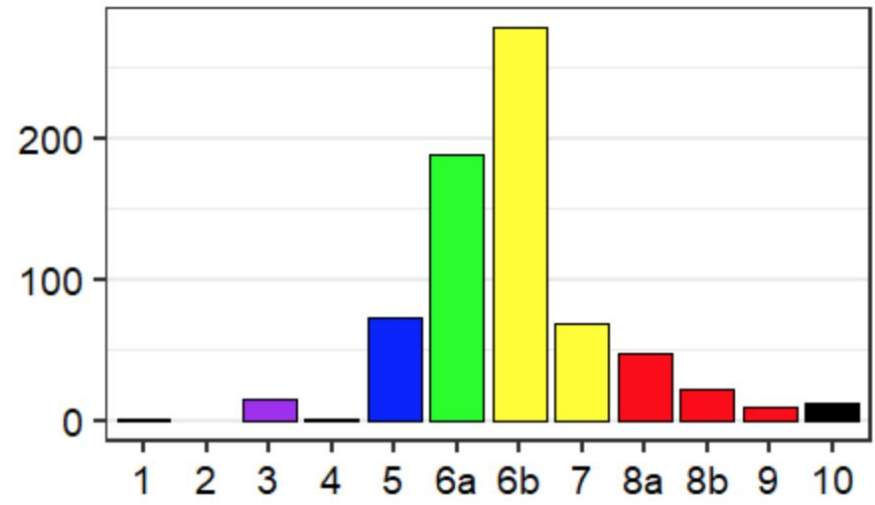


Indonesia

# Brief Comparison Of Language Health



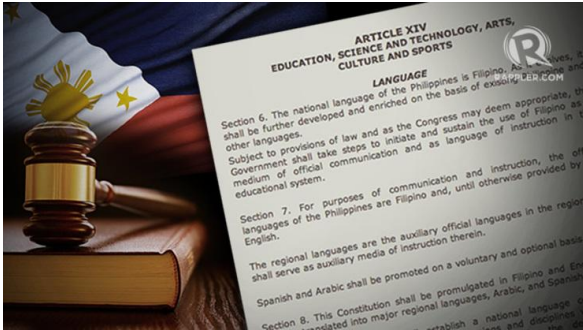
Israel



Indonesia

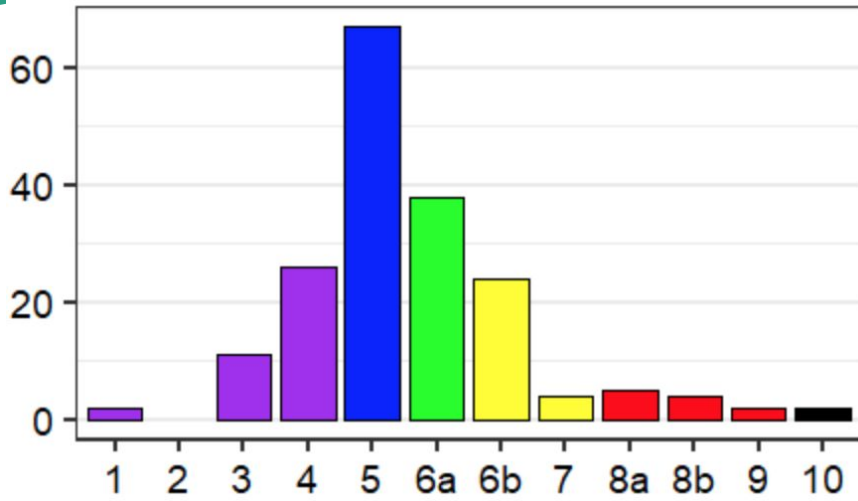
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# Asian Success Stories

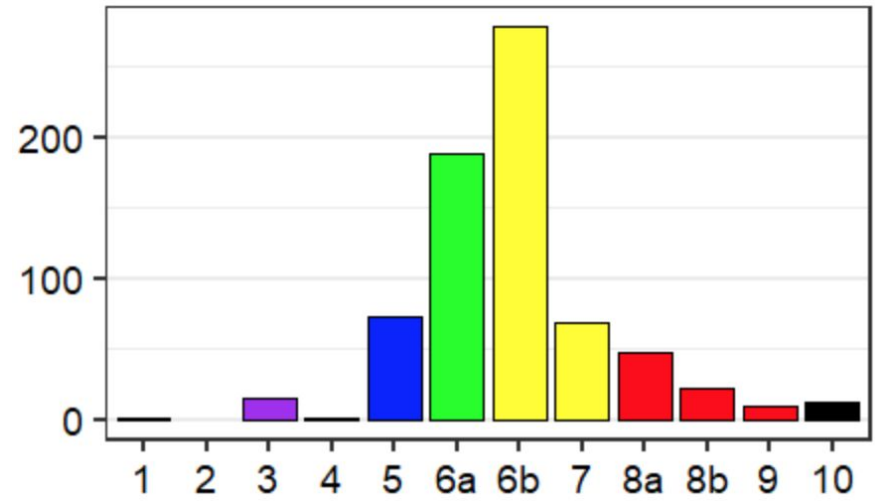


- The Philippines: Article XIV
  - Local language schooling!
    - Everyone has the right to have education conducted entirely in their local language!
  - **Philippine languages are healthy!**

# Brief Comparison Of Language Health



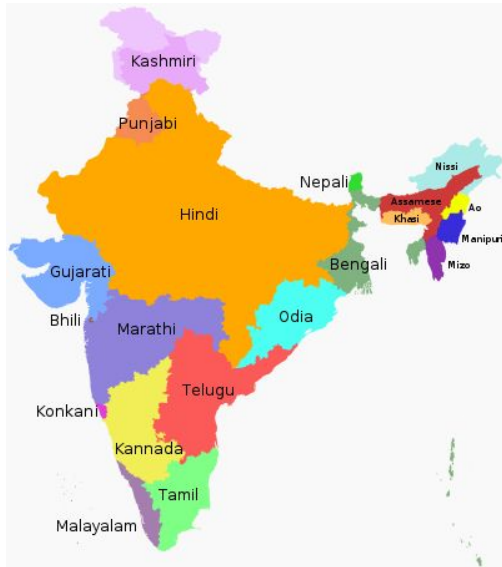
The Philippines



Indonesia

vs

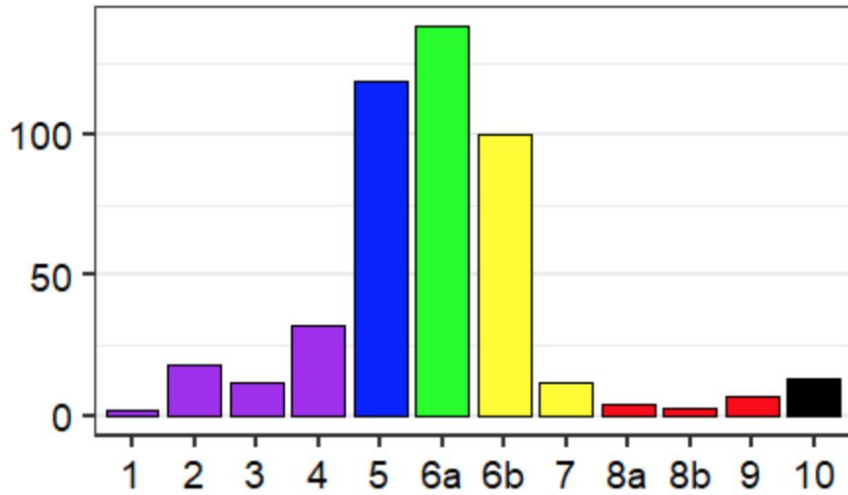
# Asian Success Stories



- India: another strong system
  - Local provinces choose their own official languages: government runs in regional languages!
- **Twenty-Two Official Languages**

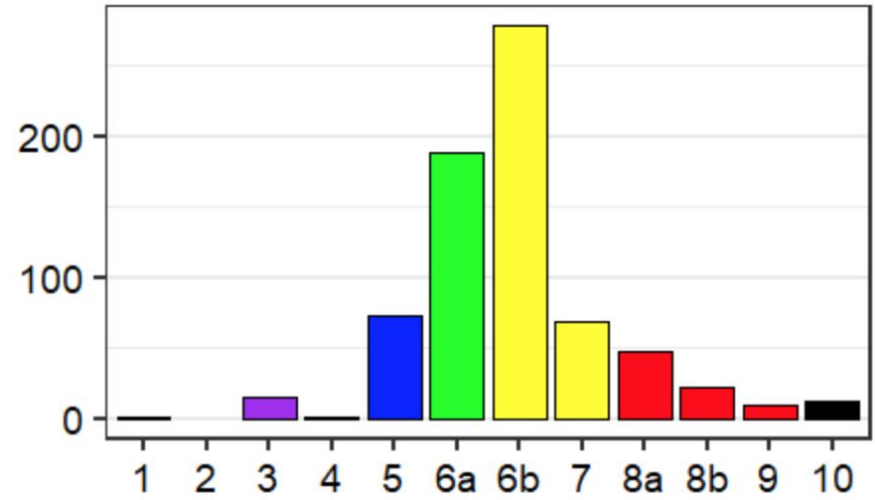


# Brief Comparison Of Language Health



India

vs



Indonesia

6.

# So, takeaways?

What's up with language loss?

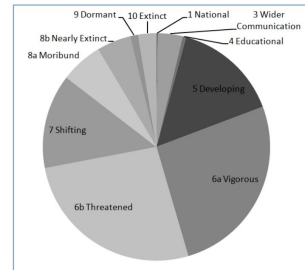
# Languages are dying across the world.

Globalization, modernization, and the consolidation of state power are driving us towards a less diverse planet.

# In Indonesia, things are rough.

Indonesian languages are vanishing at a faster rate than those spoken in most other countries.

More than 50% are endangered or worse.



# Linguistic behavior is tied to school policy.

States can **kill** minority languages in schools- or they can raise them up and **preserve** them.

**England vs Canada**

**China vs India**

**Indonesia?**

# Indonesian languages need more support!

Indonesia's the most linguistically diverse country on the planet!

We should work to preserve this diversity- not erase it!

How can we improve the situation?

**The schools!**

# Thanks for listening!

Find me at:  
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