



ARAMAITI AS A LINGUISTIC CODE FOR DAILY CASUAL EXPRESSION: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISM AND SOCIAL COHESION IN SABAH

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Abstract Although social cohesion in Sabah is widely recognised, the micro-mechanism through everyday communication that binds this harmony is still underexplored. This review paper explores the role of aramaiti as an everyday linguistic code and symbol of casual expression of friendliness, openly used by Sabah's multicultural community without touching on religious and ethnic sensitivities. A systematic narrative review was conducted using a hand-searching method based on purposive sampling. A total of 29 literature articles were selected and analyzed thematically. Based on the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory, the findings this paper proposes a conceptual model suggesting that the use of aramaiti in everyday conversation may function as a sociolinguistic cue that help attenuate intergroup anxiety and linguistic bias. Based on the Cognitive Compartmentalization Theory, the symbol of everyday casual interaction allows the community to create inclusive and safe social spaces without touching the boundaries of personal theology. The synthesis of global studies shows that aramaiti represents a natural manifestation of everyday cosmopolitanism. The spirit of togetherness eliminates the desire to dominate between races in the daily lives of the multi-ethnic communities. The implications of this study suggest that ethnic harmony in Sabah is maintained through the sharing of peaceful cultural codes that are free from religious and ethnic sensitivities. Hence, future empirical studies are recommended to examine the extent to which this casual expression can contribute to the sustainability of ethnic relations.

Keywords: Aramaiti, linguistic code, social cohesion, social psychology, Sabah's multi-ethnicity

Abstrak Walaupun kesepaduan sosial di Sabah diiktiraf secara meluas, mikro-mekanisme menerusi komunikasi harian yang mengikat keharmonian ini adalah masih kurang diterokai. Kertas sorotan ini meneroka peranan *aramaiti* sebagai kod linguistik harian dan simbol ekspresi kemesraan santai, yang digunakan secara terbuka oleh masyarakat pelbagai budaya di Sabah tanpa menyentuh sensitiviti agama dan etnik. Satu sorotan naratif sistematik telah dijalankan menggunakan kaedah carian manual berasaskan persampelan bertujuan. Sebanyak 29 artikel literatur telah dipilih dan dianalisis secara tematik. Berdasarkan Teori Kontak Antara



Kumpulan dan Teori Identiti Sosial, dapatan kertas kerja ini mengemukakan satu model konseptual yang mencadangkan bahawa penggunaan *aramaiti* dalam perbualan harian mungkin berfungsi sebagai isyarat sosiolinguistik yang membantu mengurangkan kebimbangan antara kumpulan dan bias linguistik. Berdasarkan Teori Kompartementalisasi Kognitif, simbol interaksi santai harian ini membolehkan masyarakat mewujudkan ruang sosial yang inklusif dan selamat tanpa menyentuh sempadan teologi peribadi. Sintesis kajian global menunjukkan bahawa *aramaiti* mewakili manifestasi semula jadi kosmopolitanisme harian. Semangat kebersamaan menghapuskan keinginan untuk mendominasi antara kaum dalam kehidupan seharian masyarakat pelbagai etnik. Implikasi kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa keharmonian etnik di Sabah dipelihara menerusi perkongsian kod budaya yang aman dan bebas daripada sensitiviti agama serta etnik. Justeru, kajian empirikal pada masa hadapan disyorkan untuk mengkaji sejauh mana ekspresi santai ini mampu menyumbang kepada kelestarian hubungan etnik.

Kata Kunci: *Aramaiti*, kod linguistik, kesepaduan sosial, psikologi sosial, kepelbagaian etnik Sabah

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of social cohesion within the ecosystem of a diverse society is no longer determined by forced cultural assimilation. Instead, it is sustained through society's cognitive flexibility in managing everyday differences. In East Malaysia, the state of Sabah has been recognised as a unique model of social harmony, described by Malaysian sociologist Shamsul Amri (2012) as unity in diversity. This cohesion occurred naturally through the reality of community life, rather than being shaped solely by formal integration policies implemented by the authorities, such as the Rancangan Integrasi Murid Untuk Perpaduan (RIMUP) program (Hasnul Husna & Mohd Syarieffudin, 2018). Within this sociocultural development, there is an indigenous concept known as *aramaiti* that has been widely used by multi-ethnic communities in Sabah. Originally, this term refers to the expression of joy and togetherness in the ritual festive traditions of the Kadazandusun community (Pugh-Kitingan, 2012). However, in the context of modern multiculturalism, the concept has undergone cultural secularization. Its usage has transformed from explaining the tradition of ritual festivities for a specific ethnic group to a daily linguistic code and a symbol of casual expression shared naturally by all levels of society regardless of race and religion (Puyok & Bagang, 2011).

Nevertheless, the existing literature has largely discussed *aramaiti* only from a superficial level, simply viewing it as a cultural artifact, manifestation of a harvest festival, or a recreational subculture (Reid, 1997; Tangit, 2017). Anthropological perspectives often overlook the sociolinguistic role and cognitive mechanisms of concepts in everyday communication. There is an important sociological paradox to unravel: how can the pronunciation of the *aramaiti* code in casual conversation serve as a cognitive switch that unites societies with diverse backgrounds without triggering any theological conflict or undermining individual religious beliefs? This gap can be addressed by highlighting the concept of a cosmopolitan mind as expressed by Pnina Werbner (2006) through the perspective of local cosmopolitanism. By integrating the framework of the cosmopolitan mind (Werbner, 2006) with the psychological mechanism of cognitive compartmentalization (Showers, 1992), the multi-ethnic communities in Sabah were found to have an adaptive cognitive structure. This code of casual expression allows them to maintain the boundaries of their religious doctrines



within their personal space while activating an inclusive identity that facilitates safe and harmonious communication with individuals from other religious backgrounds.

Therefore, this review paper aims to fill this academic gap by developing a conceptual interpretation of the concept of *aramaiti* within an established social psychological framework. This analysis integrates the Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), which emphasizes the reduction of intergroup anxiety through casual interaction on an equal status, with the Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) on superordinate identity. Using a systematic narrative review approach, this paper synthesizes cross-disciplinary literature to propose how these local cultural tools may be interpreted as potential sociolinguistic mediators in mitigating language bias and social dominance tendencies. The importance of this paper is not only in documenting the local wisdom of East Malaysia, but also in offering a theoretical contribution to the discourse on everyday cosmopolitanism at the global level (Bhabha, 1996). This SNR study suggests that the harmony in multicultural societies can be strengthened naturally through the development of a flexible mind structure without the need for cultural assimilation or compromising religious identities. In addition, the development of a conceptual framework through literature synthesis is expected to provide a solid theoretical foundation to guide further empirical studies in the future and measure the direct implications of this communication code for the peace index among Sabah's multi-ethnic communities.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This paper adopts a systematic narrative review (SNR) design to synthesize cross-disciplinary literature. To lower selection bias and enhance methodological transparency, the review process was executed through four key phases; database search, eligibility screening, quality assessment and thematic coding.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across international databases included Scopus and Web of Science, as well as local academic repositories, such as Google Scholar, MyCite, and MyJurnal to examine the corpus of writings by local scholars relevant to the sociocultural patterns in Sabah. The publication timeframe was set from 1954 to 2026 to capture both foundational theoretical literature (e.g., Allport, 1954; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and contemporary empirical research on Sabah's social dynamics. Search terms were conducted manually using specific themes related to the study variables ('aramaiti' OR 'Kadazandusun' OR Sabah vernakular') and ('social cohesion' OR 'ethnic relation' OR 'intergroup contact' OR 'everyday peace' OR 'cognitive compartmentalization').

Inclusion criteria were established based on three categories, namely: (i) peer-reviewed journal articles; (ii) writings that focus on ethnic diversity, religious tolerance, and everyday harmony; and (iii) published in either Malay or English. Exclusion criteria focused on : (i) Non-peer-reviewed commentaries, popular media articles, and unpublished conference abstracts; (ii) Purely technical linguistic studies (e.g., phonetics or syntactic parsing) devoid of social or psychological mechanisms; and (iii) Literature lacking theoretical applicability to intergroup relations.



The initial search yielded 74 records. After removing duplicates and screening title and abstracts, 42 full-text articles were retrieved for eligibility assessment. Following full-text evaluation against the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 29 articles were selected for in-depth analysis.

The concept mapping process was carried out using a thematic approach that was classified into two theoretical clusters, which are: (1) micro-interpersonal social psychological mechanisms (anxiety reduction, language bias neutralization, and social dominance elimination); and (2) macro-sociological and cognitive framework (Cognitive Compartmentalization Theory and Local Cosmopolitanism). The integration of these theoretical clusters is essential to capture the dimensional nature of *aramaiti*. The cluster (micro-interpersonal level) justifies how linguistic cues conceotually reduce anxiety and social dominance in real time interactions, while the second cluster (macro and cognitive level) provides the conceptual framework for how deeply ingrained religious boundaries are managed to sustain long-term everyday peace. Data Triangulation from these two clusters allows the indigenous concept of *aramaiti* to be examined not only from the local anthropology perspective but also through an international analytical perspective. Table 1 provides the details of the manual thematic mapping.

Table 1 Thematic Mapping Systematic Narrative Review Corpus Explicit Literature (N=29)		
Cluster	Core Focus	Literature Sources
Micro-Interpersonal Social Psychological Mechanisms	Reduce Anxiety & Social Trust	Allport (1954); Pettigrew & Tropp (2006); Najeemah (2006); Jones et al., (2000); Stet & Fares (2019); Barlocco (2011); Pekerti et al., (2021); Bardach et al., (2026)
	Neutralization of Language Bias & Shared Identity	Tajfel & Turner (1979); Hsu (2011); Budi & Saidatul (2020); Halina Sendera et al. (2022); Watters et al., (2020)
	Elimination of Social Dominance & Communication Equality	Pratto (1999); Halina Sendera et al., (2022); Pekerti et al., (2021)
Macro-Sociological and Cognitive Framework	Adaptive Capacity of Religious Boundaries & Cognitive Compartmentalization	Showers (1992); Puyok & Bagang (2011); Koch (2020)
	Manifestations of Everyday Cosmopolitanism	Bhabha (1996); Werbner (2006); Schueth & O'Loughlin (2008); Shamsul Amri (2012) Woods (2018); Manuel (2023)
	Practical functions of local cultural symbols	Reid (1997); Pugh-Kitingan (2012); Tangit (2017)



DISCUSSION

Contextualization of *Aramaiti*

Based on the socioculture perspective, the historical background of the concept of *aramaiti* needs to be understood first before examining how this concept evolved into everyday linguistic practice. Traditionally, this term is rooted in the linguistic heritage and cultural traditions of the Kadazandusun community in Sabah. Initially, this expression was associated with expressions of joy, gratitude, and the value of communal togetherness during the celebration of cultural rituals, namely the Kaamatan Festival. At the local community level, the use of this concept initially functioned to strengthen solidarity within the groups through emotional sharing and local recreational activities (Barlocco, 2011). However, with modernization and increasingly complex social interactions, this term is no longer limited to the cultural artifacts or physical activities alone. Instead, the concept of *aramaiti* has undergone a form of functional adaptation from a specific ethnic festival term to a cultural code that acts as an inclusive everyday linguistic code for all levels of society without regard to ethnic boundaries.

This sociolinguistic transformation enables *aramaiti* to function as a symbol of friendliness that creates natural shared space within the daily interaction of Sabah communities. Based on the study by Halina Sendera, Totu, Siti Aidah, Suraya and Nadiawati (2022), it was found that the use of inclusive cultural symbols is very important in creating a communal identity that goes beyond narrow ethnic interests. When the term *aramaiti* is adopted as part of everyday vernacular, indirectly it acts as a moderating agent in eliminating social barriers between different groups. A study of ethnic relations by Budi and Saidatul (2020) proves that casual sharing of cultural codes is very effective as a social connector that can eliminate cognitive prejudice, thereby narrowing social distance among diverse ethnic groups. In the context of everyday life, the use of these terms creates an atmosphere of transparency, friendliness, and openness, thus transforming demographic diversity into a natural social intimacy.

Another critical dimension in the contextualisation of modern *aramaiti* is related to the maturity in managing and organizing religious boundaries that exist within Sabah's multi-ethnic society. The ability to maintain harmony without triggering religious sensitivities and conflicts is the key benchmark for sociopolitical maturity in the state of Sabah (Budi, 2008). Empirical data from Budi and Saidatul (2020) show that although ethno-religious issues are sensitive matters in micro-politics, Sabah communities are found to have high social competence in negotiating their respective spaces of belief. When faced with the *aramaiti* code, the cognitive structure of society operates maturely by establishing clear boundaries between firm religious doctrine within the private space and flexible practices of tolerance in the public space. This linguistic code is accepted as a neutral communication zone that is free from any threat of faith, enabling followers of various religions to joke, interact, and share moments of joy without being overshadowed by suspicion or threat (Spolsky, 2004). The maturity in managing these boundaries ensures that the sustainability of race relations is maintained from the tension of religious sensitivities (Shamsul Amri, 2001).

Overall, the sociocultural evolution of *aramaiti* from a traditional ritual expression into a casual everyday code provides a practical illustration of the theory of unity in diversity proposed by Shamsul Amri (2012). The integration model in Sabah proves that sustainable social cohesion does not depend on cultural assimilation that forces or eliminates the original identity of the minority groups. Instead, it is preserved dynamically through the freedom to maintain local



wisdom while establishing a psychological readiness to accept each other in daily life. Through the adaptation of the *aramaiti* as an everyday linguistic tool, the Sabah community has successfully translated the abstract concept of tolerance into concrete, safe, and effective sociolinguistic practices. The formation of this collective positive emotion is a significant indicator of sociology in Sabah. This is because the harmony among various ethnic groups and religions is not just a political rhetoric, but also a reality of life that is naturally maintained through everyday casual language (Shamsul Amri, 2001).

Micro-Interpersonal Social Psychological Mechanisms

The use of the term *aramaiti* in the daily interactions of Sabah's multi-ethnic communities is not just a static cultural remnant of the past but rather serves as an active social-psychological agent at the micro-interpersonal level. Based on the thematic analysis of the SNR that was conducted, three social psychology mechanisms were identified in this communication code, namely the reduction of group anxiety, the neutralisation of language bias, and the elimination of social dominance and the promotion of communication equality.

Reduce Group Anxiety and Build Trust

Within the framework of social psychology, interactions in environments densely populated with ethnic diversity are often characterized by feelings of awkwardness or a tendency to cause psychological discomfort. Based on the Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), interactions between groups that meet the conditions of equality can effectively reduce levels of prejudice. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) empirically demonstrated that positive casual contact has a significant relationship with decreased levels of group anxiety. At the domestic level, these daily interaction patterns are able to develop understanding at the grassroots level (Najeemah, 2006).

Extrapolating from the general intergroup literature, the term *aramaiti* in daily Sabahan conversations may be conceptually interpreted as a sociolinguistic cue that potentially fosters an inclusive interactional climate. While empirical contract theory demonstrates that positive contract reduce anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), we propose that the *aramaiti* code may function as a localized linguistic catalyst supporting Jones et. Al's (2000) diversity hypothesis, rather than a direct empirical switch.

The positive emotional effects resulting from the decrease in this group's anxiety further accelerate the process of harmonious cross-cultural adaptation. This process resembles the mechanism of social support and social closeness analysed by Pekerti et al. (2021) in reducing culture shock within complex social spaces. As a result of the frequent use of this casual expression of friendliness code, a form of general trust can be developed among followers of various religions and ethnicities because suspicion has been neutralized at the initial stage of communication (Spolsky, 2004). This situation is reflected in Shamsul Amri's (2020) ideas about everyday social realities and aligns with Putnam's (2000) view that casual relationships within communities are a strong element in the foundation of social trust built through casual daily relationships.

Neutralization of Language Bias and Formation of Shared Identity

Language is not just a tool for transferring information or facts, but also acts as a space for interaction that determines how individuals manage relationships and social distance with each other. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains that humans have a cognitive tendency to prioritize individuals from their own group in order to preserve their group's self-esteem from external discrimination. In terms of communication, this tendency gives rise to



the phenomenon of intergroup language bias, a sociolinguistic tendency to see minor mistakes of other groups as a reflection of their true character, which perpetuates ethnic stereotypes. However, in a sociocultural context that embraces the value of normative multiculturalism, psychological pressures that separate these groups can be overcome by the cultivation of sustainable social cohesion.

In Sabah, the practice of expressing the *aramaiti* code across ethnic boundaries actively serves as a neutralising agent against language bias. When individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds (such as Kadazandusun, Bajau, Murut, Malay or Chinese) collectively use the same indigenous linguistic code as a symbol of casual friendliness, the dialect or mother-tongue language differences that once separated these groups can be unified. This adaptation of local cultural symbols is in line with the argument by Halina Sendera et al. (2022), which states that inclusive cultural symbols and local festivities in Sabah have a major role as platforms for sociocultural integration and the construction of a unified community identity.

Through the shared sociolinguistic code, the cognitive orientation of the diverse community undergoes a significant shift. Casual interactions through the sharing of local heritage act as a social bridge that connects social distances between ethnic groups (Budi & Saidatul, 2020). The use of *aramaiti* may facilitate the focus of society's minds from rigid micro-ethnic identities towards the development of a broader shared identity. Interaction is no longer seen as a clash between groups with the concept of 'us' or 'them', but rather as a unity of the Sabah community that shares the equal value of togetherness, joy and peace.

Elimination of Social Dominance & Communication Equality

The structure of a multicultural society often faces the risk of polarisation as a consequence of status hierarchies. Social Dominance Theory posits that group-based hierarchies are often sustained through overarching societal doctrines (Pratto, 1999). This social dominance ego is usually reinforced by legitimising myths that place a certain ethnic group at a higher hierarchy. To address these sociopolitical challenges that can threaten social cohesion, communities require an alternative space that can eliminate the gap of hierarchical myth.

Viewed through the lens of Social Dominance Theory, the *aramaiti* communication code may offer a conceptual interactional space that temporarily mitigates perceived social hierarchies. Through the expression of *aramaiti* in daily life, formal status, economic background, political class, or even narratives of ethnic superiority will be temporarily set aside. As explained by Turner (1969), through certain cultural expressions, humans will give up their formal identity and interact based on absolute equality as fellow human beings. The space that forms turns into a peer-based social learning ecosystem based on the principle of absolute equality that places all individuals on the same level without feeling threatened (Oldenburg, 1989).

In this casual space, the ability to form a safe and inclusive identity occurs freely. The practice of this shared linguistic code could potentially encourage a cognitive shift that minimizes social dominance tendencies in everyday interactions (Bistin, Green & Sarrasin, 2021). As a result, any potential ethnic conflicts or competition that exists in the macro structure is successfully overcome at the micro level. The phenomenon of focusing on peace at the grassroots level aligns with Mac Ginty's (2021) concept of everyday peace, which shows how everyday communication practices function as agents of disruption that prevent sociopolitical tensions from permeating neighborhood relations. Through this sociolinguistic approach, *aramaiti* functions as a unique social psychological defence mechanism in Sabah. Such natural spaces



are critical to ensuring that communication equality is consistently maintained, thereby safeguarding the sustainability of community relations against the threat of extreme polarization of sociopolitical structures (McCoy & Somer, 2021).

Macro-Sociological and Cognitive Framework

In contemporary sociology, the concept of the cosmopolitan mindset serves as a macro-theoretical framework that explains how demographic and religious diversity in Sabah is sustainably managed through the transition of the *aramaiti* function, namely from the physical ethnic celebration aspect to linguistic codes and symbols of casual friendliness. To develop a holistic understanding, the argument is elaborated through three sub-themes, namely the adaptive capacity of religious boundaries and cognitive compartmentalisation, the manifestation of everyday cosmopolitanism, and the practical function of local cultural symbols.

Adaptive Capacity of Religious Boundaries & Cognitive Compartmentalization

Managing a multicultural society with diverse religious backgrounds is a challenge when the boundaries of religious doctrine are brought into the space of public interaction. At the global level, managing this diversity of beliefs frequently requires strictly structured policies to ensure that no violations of religious beliefs occur. However, Showers (1992) offers a different perspective through the concept of compartmentalization, which is the ability of human cognitive structures to separate positive and negative knowledge about a subject into different thoughts to maintain the stability of daily social functioning.

In the context of the sociocultural reality in Sabah, this concept of cognitive compartmentalization is translated in the form of maturity in managing religious boundaries at the local level. Although empirical data indicates that ethno-religious issues often become polarizing tools in macro sociopolitics, local communities in Sabah continue to demonstrate a high level of social competence in managing the boundaries of their religious beliefs and faiths (Puyok & Bagang, 2011). This maturity is practically reflected in their ability to negotiate and balance indigenous customary laws with personal theological doctrines, such as Islamic jurisprudence (Syamsul Azizul Marinsah, Abdul Hair Beddu Assis & Mohammad Firdaus Hasmin, 2022).

When the communication code of *aramaiti* is utilized, it can be conceptually linked to the compartmentalization process. Through this theoretical lens, the use of such codes suggests a strategy where society aims to negotiate the responsibility of religious doctrine within a stable personal space, while opening up spaces of inclusive social openness at the public level. The *aramaiti* code acts as a neutral zone that ensures casual interactions are free from assimilation agendas or threats to individual religious beliefs. This cognitive maturity allows communities from different religions to share the same social space with a sense of safety, comfort, and harmony without giving rise to religious conflict.

Manifestations of Everyday Cosmopolitanism

Modern sociological debates no longer limit the concept of cosmopolitanism to the world's elite; instead, the focus has shifted towards understanding vernacular cosmopolitanism. Vernacular cosmopolitanism refers to the cultural openness that is practiced naturally by local communities (Werbner, 2006). Based on the framework by Werbner (2006), cosmopolitanism is not necessarily formed through exposure to Western culture; instead, it can emerge from below as a form of openness among local communities living within their local geography. This everyday space forms an 'in-between' area that allows different cultural identities to



exchange expressions of friendliness without losing their original identities. This phenomenon reflects the element that was described by Shamsul Amri (2012) as unity in diversity, where harmony is established naturally through the community's daily practices rather than through formal coercion or legal doctrines.

Through the theoretical lens of Werbner (2006), the daily usage of *aramaiti* offers a plausible conceptual model for everyday local cosmopolitanism in Sabah. This openness exhibits a pattern of rural or small-town cosmopolitanism (Woods, 2018), where the community has a psychological readiness to accept cultural differences maturely. This pattern of practical tolerance based on local geographical boundaries has been found to have clear similarities with several models of everyday harmony at the global level (Schueth & O'Loughlin, 2008). For example, the inclusive cosmopolitan lifestyle in the city of Maputo demonstrates how modern communities celebrate mutual prosperity through sharing of social space (Manuel, 2023).

This phenomenon reflects the community relations in Sabah, where local communities are found to develop social resilience in managing ethnic diversity through inclusive daily interaction (Rosazman Borhan, 2018; Puyok & Bagang, 2019). This similarity suggests that a sense of belonging and the ability to manage diversity without requiring radical assimilation policies are naturally driven by experiences with a flexible cultural code within the context of local geography.

Practical Functions of Local Cultural Symbols

To understand how this term has survived and remained relevant in managing modern communities, anthropological literature emphasizes the importance of examining the historical evolution of the symbol. The initial phase of the use of this term was linked to the manifestation of gratitude of the Kadazandusun community towards agricultural products (Pugh-Kitingan, 2012). However, due to modernisation and the rise of ethno-nationalism, heritage symbols often face the challenge of functional shifting when they collide with the formation of more complex political identities.

To prevent this term from becoming static or marginalized in modern diversity, the Sabah community has collectively adapted the function of this sociocultural symbol. The term *aramaiti* has undergone a process of positive secularization of meaning, whereby its function has shifted from a term for a specific ethnic physical ritual to a type of cultural code that acts as a code for daily communication. Analysis by Halina Sendera et al. (2022) strengthens this argument by stating that local festival symbols in Sabah have evolved into effective mediators for social integration. This aligns with communication-based perspectives highlighting how indigenous cultural symbols and artifacts continuously function as key communicative manifestations of ethnic identity among Sabah's native communities (Halina Sendera & Andreas Totu, 2016).

As a pragmatic communication tool, this code is intentionally activated in daily communication to encourage positive emotions, ease interpersonal tension, and activate casual expression of friendliness that can be understood universally by all ethnic groups. Through this sociolinguistic functional shift, *aramaiti* is no longer seen as an ethnic divider; instead, it becomes a practical tool shared among the broader Sabah community to ensure that social relations remain sustainable and are protected from the threat of polarization.



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

A systematic synthesis of the literature summarizes that the *aramaiti* term used in daily interaction in Sabah is not just a static traditional culture, but also functions as a communication tool that supports social stability. This unique contribution of this paper lies in the paradigm shift from a descriptive cultural approach to the development of a multidisciplinary theoretical synthesis that connects sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, and sociology. At the micro-interpersonal level, this review demonstrates that sociolinguistic code serves as a sociopsychological mechanism that reduces group anxiety, lowers rigid social hierarchy, and narrows the gap in intergroup language bias. Meanwhile, at the macro-sociological level, this review offers a new perspective on the management of interfaith harmony through the mechanism of cognitive compartmentalism, whereby communities maturely isolate the absolute boundaries of religious doctrine in their personal space. At the same time, inclusive social openness in public spaces can be maintained to prevent sociopolitical polarization from undermining the stability of community relations at the field level.

This paper provides significant theoretical implications for the expansion of the application of Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory in the context of Borneo indigenous sociolinguistics. At the same time, this paper also challenges the classical cosmopolitanism narrative, which often limits the nature of global openness to urban elites. Through conceptualization of rural and small-town cosmopolitanism, as well as the natural model of everyday peace, this study demonstrates that reducing prejudice and building shared identity do not necessarily depend solely on formal institutional interventions. However, it can also be achieved through the experience of collectively agreed cultural keywords. From a practical view, this bottom-up model of cohesion provides an important conceptual reference to national integration policymakers regarding the importance of preserving neutral interaction space, free and flexible from forced assimilation, to ensure the sustainability of a diverse society in the face of challenges posed by polarization of public structures.

To address the identified literature gaps and strengthen the conceptual novelty that has been established, future research needs to shift the methodological focus from a qualitative SNR approach to a quantitative empirical design to directly measure the effects of this cultural code in decreasing social dominance orientation scores and implicit racism among the communities in Sabah. In conclusion, the application of the Everyday Peace Indicators framework is proposed to assess the effectiveness of this sociolinguistic model with other multi-ethnic regions, thus examining the potential of the local practice as a universal reference for conflict resolution at the micro level.

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