

# Language and Cultural Identity: Cross-Cultural Communications Among the Vernacular Communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak Border Region in Indonesia.

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## Abstract

In border areas, multi-ethnic communities may experience both positive and negative impacts of being in a border area. On the one hand, being in a border area has a unique beneficial effect since traveling overseas is now easy and affordable. People move across the borders. However, on the other hand, there can be negative impacts because they are prone to conflicts due to several factors, such as differences in language, culture, social aspects, politics as well as economic differences.

In this context, the language identity of multiethnic communities in the Kalimantan-Sarawak border area in Indonesia can be seen in the language situation and the factors that influence it. This research examines this issue.

The study uses a qualitative method. Data collection employs surveys, observations, interviews and focus group discussions. As techniques.

The findings demonstrate that: multi-ethnic communities in border areas are often bilingual. They have the abilities to speak languages other than their own ethnic language; they also exhibit flexibility in cross-language interactions; and the linguistic situation in border areas, particularly regional languages is preserved in families, homogeneous environments, traditional ceremonies, and religious activities. A linguistic identity is characterized by a strong sense of ethnicity: ethnic culture, regional geography, social groups, family and surroundings, regional history, education, as well as economic activities. These are aspects that influence the linguistic identity of the multiethnic population in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Language identity, multiethnic communities, border area, West kalimantan-sarawak.

## Introduction

Border areas are at the forefront of a country's resilience. However, they could have many issues involving all aspects of life. For example, territorial claims by neighboring countries often occur due to many factors, including unclear boundaries. Borders have a paradoxical nature, meaning that on the one hand they are special because of access to foreign countries and on the other hand they are problematic because they are prone to conflicts.

Territorial and language claims are among the factors that lead to conflicts in border regions. Unsurprisingly, language use and territorial claims are prevalent along borders, particularly in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region of Malaysia. Because of both countries' intricate, multi-ethnic societies, border area claims arise. The language used in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region demonstrates the multiethnicity of the area. People converse in Malay, Bidayuh, and Iban, the languages of both countries, on the border. Everybody has always travelled to the border—locals as well as immigrants from various multi-ethnic regions of Indonesia. Due to these conditions and the existing discrepancies, there is an increase in the number of people visiting the border area.

This multi-ethnicity has recently become a trigger for conflicts in border communities because of the similarities that exist and are inherent in both countries. Mutual territorial claims and language claims often occur because both countries feel they belong to them. The Malay language, Bidayuh language and Iban language, for example, are clamped by both countries as originating from their country (West Kalimantan-Sarawak). From this language clamp, another problem has emerged, related to border disputes which has led to territorial identity problems.

Due to transnational exchange, multiethnic groups in border areas have unique linguistic identities and linguistic contexts. Transnational living is more prevalent than ever. The complex social ties that bind populations of origin and their settlements are created and maintained by transnational corporations using language (Basch et al., 1994; Hirsch & Kayam, 2021). Various cross-cultural investigations have shown that the universality of speech acts is far from being true and that pragmatic, linguistic, and socio-pragmatic variations do exist in the realization of speech acts. The use of partnership principles and the unique linguistic characteristics of each ethnic group are closely related (Dewirahmadanirwati et al., 2023).

High rates of regional development and economic progress are correlated with multiethnicity. This condition affects regional growth on the one hand, but multiethnicity can also lead to new issues in the community. Tamburian (2018) also notes that persons who identify as multi-ethnic or from diverse backgrounds are susceptible to horizontal conflicts in their lives. To create harmony in relationships and avoid conflicts, certain cross-cultural communication tactics are therefore required.

The way individuals and ethnic groups define themselves in the context of language is referred to as the language identity of a multiethnic society. The concept of ethnicity departs from the need and ability of a group of people to identify themselves in society until there is recognition of a set of objective features that indicate the ethnicity of society (Zarinov, 2000). He shows that identification, vitality, and competence in out-group language are factors that predict language use. On the other hand, less mediation effect of strategy is predicted. Anzaldúa (1987) discusses the urgency of language as a key aspect in identity formation. He speaks about the language conflicts faced by people living in border areas and the impact these conflicts had on his sense of identity. This is in agreement with Tsapko et al (2018) who argues for building a unifying identity through a common language as an alternative to the concepts and practices that are most widespread in the modern world. This is understood as the construction of a single ethnic identity.

Research on language identity, in general, abound, but almost no research has been conducted on multiethnic communities in border areas, especially the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border. Multi-centrist societies in border areas face complex linguistic situations due to their "proximity" to other countries. Interactions occur not only between people of different ethnicities but also between different nationalities.

Important issues related to border disputes lead to territorial identity issues. The territorial identity referred to in this research refers to the meaning formed by factors such as

strengthening regional identity. The problem posed here is the language identity of multiethnic communities in Sajingan Besar Regency and Jagoi Babang Regency in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region. This problem can be examined based on the situation and conditions of the border area which has the potential to give rise to territorial boundary conflicts and identity issues in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area. Therefore, this research will identify the use of language to build cultural identity: Cross-Cultural Communication among Vernacular Communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak Border Region.

This paper examines how the language identity of multiethnic communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region is. Its aim is to reveal the nuances of language identity of multi-ethnic communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region. Its objectives are as follows.

1. To contribute to preserving local languages and strengthening the linguistic identity of multiethnic communities in border areas.
2. To promote prioritizing the national language in order to foster harmony in cross-cultural and cross-country communication without giving up one's identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Identity refers to the particulars of an individual or member of a particular group or social category. It contains the meaning of similarity or unity with others in a certain area or thing (Rummens, 1993). This is in line with Burke's (2003) opinion that identity is "self-meaning — what it means to be someone". According to Duszak (2002), identity is part of an individual's self-concept that comes from knowledge about his or her membership in a social group, along with the emotional significance attached to it. Johnstone (2008) says that identity signifies the result of an identification process in which others are deliberately or strategically dichotomized based on their similarities and inequalities.

Identity possessed by an individual can be in the form of personal identity (persona/identity) and social identity. Social identity is the result of self-identification by other people and is an identification that a social actor approves or gives to an individual (Rummens, 1993). More clearly, social identity is an individual's knowledge and self-recognition as a member of a group as well as the group's recognition of the individual as a member (Giles & Johnson, 1987).

Cultural identity is a concept that is intimately tied to social identity. It is a basic awareness of the special characteristics of a person's group in terms of living habits, customs, language and values (Santoso, 2006). Ethnic identity is closely related to cultural identity, because to categorize a society, one must know the characteristics of their culture, or in other words, ethnic identity can indicate the cultural identity of a group.

On the other hand, the concept of identity, according to Zotzmann and O'Regan (2016), is related to the view that language use is not only a cognitive effort but also an immanent social effort. This concept makes us think about the reasons and conditions in which people use language, the way they are perceived by others as language users, the meaning they want to convey in certain situations, and the resources they use to do so. Language as the identity of a country has an impact on the habits of local people in using language as a national identity (Léglise, 2019; Martono et al., 2021). It is very important for developing social groups to demonstrate their national defense and nationalism behaviorally.

Identity is how a person views himself as an individual and as a member of society based on the idea of difference or similarity (Furmuzachi, 2007; Riley, 2007). Ideas about differences or similarities can be shown through certain symbols, including language, as markers (Chassy, 2015; Drummond, 2018; Riley, 2007).

Zenker (2018) highlights the significance of language as a marker of identity, saying that language is a genuine and adaptable way to communicate identity. Every individual expresses who they are and the group to which they aspire to belong to. For others, language is a representational object that serves as an identity.

Language identity relates to the characteristics of language as a marker by and for the language users. Several general characteristics have been recognized to indicate language.

Structurally, markers are related to phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and lexicon. Part of this structure can be a marker of a language, which makes it different compared to other languages (Bloomfield, 1992; Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1984). Labov, for example, has shown that the sounds of just one consonant [r] and [R] can be a tell-tale sign of a person's background.

Bucholtz & Hall (2005) have a framework for analyzing identities produced in linguistic interactions, including:

- a). identity is a product of linguistic resources and other semiotic practices;
- b). identity includes macro-level demographic categories, temporary and interactional attitudes and roles of participants, and local cultural positions that emerge ethnographically;
- c). identity can be indexed linguistically through labels, implications, stances, styles, or linguistic structures and systems;
- d). identity is built relationally through several aspects of the relationship between oneself and others which often overlap, including similarity/difference, authenticity/falsehood, and authority/delegitimization; and
- e). identities may be partly intentional, partly habitual, and less than entirely conscious, partly the result of interactional negotiations, partly the construction of others' perceptions and representations, and partly the result of larger ideological processes and structures.

Regarding linguistic interactions, McConvel (2017) describes that complex social interactions are not disputes but jokes and choices of language varieties used in an activity as a matter of fact to negotiate the quick allocation of an event to relatives and the society. This means that linguistic interaction is needed to convey something to create reciprocal communication in society.

Language identity is related to a person's attitude and desire to be recognized according to his wishes. A person can play around by using certain languages at certain times according to the desired recognition. Block (2007) says that there is a certain relationship and purpose between a person and the language, dialect or sociology he uses. It is related to language skills, language affiliation, and language inheritance. Gasiorek (2016) adds that there are adjustments in communication through verbal and nonverbal behavior in certain contexts.

These adjustments occur not only in the form of language repertoire but also in several features, such as register, accent, and speed of speech, accompanied by various paralinguistic features such as smile and posture (Edwards, 2009; Goebel, 2010; Zenker, 2018). According to Castells (2001), there is a fear of ostracism if they cannot participate actively in community groups. They must adapt their language for this reason, even if it affects their sense of who they are.

Linguistic strategies applied in communication adjustments enable speakers to pursue positive personal and social identities (Dragojevic et al., 2016). Regarding group membership, the adjustments people make are sometimes due to their need to have their existence recognized (Chassy, 2015; Edwards, 2009).

Language users are positioned in a wider social network, so that according to Bourdieu (1977), language symbolically symbolizes the relationship between identity and power. The perception of their speech depends on their place in this network, in the social context, because "speech always owes a large part of its value to the value of the person who utters it". Warwick (2005) suggests that language users' perceptions of the world and their activities in it are shaped by what they have experienced so far. Given that they have experienced a world based on inequality and domination, different power relationships will be reflected in their interpersonal interactions with others. Norton (2006) says that a speaker's position in a social context can empower or marginalize them, but because they need "not only to be understood but to be trusted, obeyed, respected, and distinguished", they must fight for the right to speak.

Linguistic identity can also be defined as an "act of identity," meaning that all utterances simultaneously refer to the identity of the speaker and his or her ethnic, national, gender, and social class dimensions. In other words, by producing utterances, speakers express other aspects of their identity (Piasecka, 2019). Denissova et al (2019) state that cross-cultural professional

communication assumes that all kinds of ambiguous communicative situations occur in content-specific contexts and therefore require the development of language awareness, especially in professional communication.

Although the development of a secondary language identity in professional communication on the surface looks different from that of a general secondary language identity, its successful formation depends on solving the most important methodological problems, mainly including the following. First, understanding the process of intercultural communication as a form of joint activity that is realized through sharing basic categories and concepts; secondly, forming internal mechanisms of awareness of tasks, and conditions, and equalizing the means and methods of communicative activity in the context of certain "subject matter-oriented" activities (Nechayev, 2014). The theoretical basis for such awareness lies in linguistics and linguadidactics, and speech psychology.

## Literature Review

Research on language identity and cultural identity has been carried out by many scholars: Iskandar (2004), Santoso (2006), Abdullah & Sari (2014), Yusriadi & Ismail (2015), and Sormin (2021). For example, Iskandar (2004) reviews cultural identity from the perspective of intercultural communication, inter-ethnic conflict starts from differences in cultural identity that are communicated by ethnocentrism. Santoso (2006) identifies the language use of a group with a certain social or ethnic status, Abdullah & Sari (2014) examine the administrative-political boundary that divides the Dayak Iban ethnic group into two parts, creating tensions in state-people relations at the border because the demands of nationalism come face to face with ethnic identity. Yusriadi & Ismail (2015) examine the choice of identity and language used in communicating in the Riam Panjang community, which is the Indonesian-Malaysian border region in Sintang. Sormin (2021) examines national identity as a determinant of the character of the Indonesian nation with westernized behavior that tends to be pragmatic, hedonistic and consumerist. This ideology is contrary to the Pancasila ideology which threatens the Indonesian nation in strengthening national identity.

Research on cross-cultural communication has also been widely carried out; Julijanti (2010), Dhamayanti (2015), Basri (2016), Lutfi (2018), Saleh & Oktavianus (2023), Purba, Christian & Chontina (2022), Chairawati & Putra (2022). For example; Julijanti (2010) examines language barriers in intercultural communication, Dhamayanti (2015), presents a study of cross-cultural communication between four ethnic groups in Lubuk Pakam Village, and concludes that communication plays an important role in creating assimilation and acculturation. Basri (2016) examines cross-cultural perspectives that can be used to defuse social conflicts that are rooted in ethnicity and customs. Lutfi (2018) shows that the effectiveness of communication is determined by the communicator and communicant in conveying a message, even though they are from different cultures.

Chairawati & Putra (2022) engage in cross-cultural communication research, studying the Acehese and Pakpak ethnic communities in the frame of acculturation to find out the process of intercultural communication between the Acehese and Pakpak tribes in the acculturation process as well as the obstacles in the acculturation process of the Acehese with Pakpak tribe. Purba, Christian, & Chontina (2022) examine the effectiveness of intercultural communication based on the language used, participants tended to be more comfortable using Indonesian. Saleh, Saleh, & Oktavianus (2023), examine good communication between Javanese, Bugis and Timorese immigrants.

On the other hand, research related to border area communities has also been carried out, including: Siburian (2012), Setyowati (2015), Sikwan (2017), Suwartiningsih, Samiyono, & Purnomo (2018), Wahyudi et al (2021), and Aminuyati et al (2022). Research on the Indonesia-Malaysia border area includes: Siburian (2012), this article attempts to explore the dynamics of economic conditions in Sebatik as a border area, its economic potential, the use of dual money currency, and economic predictions for Sebatik without Tawau. Setyowati (2015), examines the views of border area communities who have a negative image regarding their sense of nationalism due to the lack of up-to-date information.



Sikwan (2017) reveal the dynamics of interactions between three large ethnic groups (Dayak, Malay, and Tinghoa) who live in Entikong District, West Kalimantan. Suwartiningsih, Samiyono, & Purnomo (2018) conclude that the Indonesia-Malaysia border community (especially in Jagoi Babang Regency) is able to respect each other in the context of national integration. Wahyudi et al (2021) review building national character in the border communities of Sebatik Island, realized through daily life practices that are oriented towards the interests of the nation and state in various aspects, such as economic, political, educational and social aspects. Aminuyati et al (2022), examine the impact of uneven development implementation, in terms of culture, infrastructure, facilities and human resources on the border of Sarawak, East Malaysia.

These studies demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between language, culture and identity.

### **Research Methodology**

This research employs qualitative methods to explore, reveal and describe the aspects studied holistically. It reveals the meaning that exists in terms of ideas and linguistic forms in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region. Language identity of multiethnic communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area in two sub-districts, namely Sajingan Besar District and Jagoi Babang District have been examined,

The data sources relate to three aspects.

1. The linguistic, cultural and philosophical meaning of the form of territorial identity;
2. The expressions of the informants from the community in the border area of Sajingan Regency and Jagoi Babang District, West Kalimantan-Sarawak, especially those who have good knowledge regarding language issues.
3. Documented material related to language issues.

Based on these data sources, the research data is as follows.

1. Information obtained from selected informants
2. Information from written data sources (documents, manuscripts, and identity symbols)
3. Events in the field related to language, cultural meaning and philosophical identity in border areas.

Informants were selected based on special criteria:

- a. having a good knowledge of territorial identity on the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border
- b. aged between 25-70 years.
- c. having the information needed for research,
- d. being referred by previous informants, and
- e. being willing to provide information.

The proportion of men and women, parents and children, mobility, or multiple moves abroad and stays were also considered. The informants come from the local communities and include community leaders, traditional leaders and religious leaders who live in Sajingan Besar District (Sambas Regency) and Jagoi Babang District (Bengkayang Regency). Informants also included artists, cultural figures, and lecturers or teachers who live and/or know about ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity issues at the research location.

Data is collected using survey or observation methods, interviews and focus group discussions. Data collection was carried out from 21 to 29 October 2022 with the following details. On October 21 to 26, data was collected at the Sajingan Besar District (Aruk-Sarawak State Border) and October 27 to 29 in Jagoi Babang District (Jagoi Babang border, West Kalimantan-Sarawak) and October 27 to 29.

The intention was to see directly the linguistic situation of the people in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area. It looked at communications when interacting, between the local people from West Kalimantan and people from Sarawak. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants who had knowledge of the multiethnic identity of the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border community.

Focus group discussions (FGD) totaling 60 people at the two borders, West Kalimantan-Sarawak were carried out. The FGD featured sub-district heads, village heads, hamlet heads, community leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, Karang taruna, representatives of family welfare empowerment, teachers and other community members.

The resource persons of the FGD activity are Alexander Rombonang (Head of BPPD West Kalimantan) and Dr. Ismail Ruslan (Postgraduate Director of IAIN Pontianak) who focused on issues of language situation and national loyalty. Informants and sources provided information about the language that is their identity in the border area.

## **Finding and Discussion**

The results of data analysis show that languages in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area can be grouped into language identity and linguistic situations related to Sajingan Besar District and Jagoi Babang District. This is analyzed in detail below.

### **Linguistic Situation**

In Sajingan Besar District, Sambas Regency (West Kalimantan-Sarawak border, Aruk boundary), the dominant ethnic groups include Dayak, Malay, Javanese, and Batak. Similarly, in Jagoi Babang District, Bengkayang Regency (bordering West Kalimantan-Sarawak), these ethnicities are predominant. The language employed in interethnic communication in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region provides insight into the linguistic condition there. It can also serve as a local or national identifying mark. A person's relationships with others and life events have an impact on how their identity is formed. According to Beisembayeva & Issina (2022), a person in modern societies goes through significant transformations that affect every facet of life.

The linguistic situation and ethnic diversity of the neighboring regions of Sajingan Besar and Jagoi Babang are intricately intertwined. Multiethnic societies face many serious challenges. These include issues that are critical to resolve to effectively manage racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Social, cultural, political, and economic issues are visible in border communities. Multiethnic communities can foster beautiful diversity and enrich culture. However, resolving the problem requires strategies that are wise, inclusive, focused on human rights, and being peaceful. The ability of multiethnic communities to understand, accept, and enjoy ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity is necessary for a peaceful and welcoming environment.

Discrimination and racism, conflict between ethnic groups, identity and recognition, social and economic disparities, language and communication, education, integration and acculturation, identity politics, social harmony, and demographic change are problems that are thought to be easily encountered in multiethnic societies. One of the few issues that can quickly turn into a fight in interactions between members of a multiethnic community is language and communication.

The use of language by multiethnic societies often reflects the complexity of linguistic and cultural variations in their daily lives. Language is related to many different things that can sometimes cause problems. It's not just a tool to communicate with people. Language as a source of inter-ethnic conflict, language in education, language in media and popular culture, mixed languages or pidgins, the use of language in politics, language teaching and learning, the influence of globalization, language as a tool of integration, and the protection of minority languages are some of the alleged language problems that emerge in the life of multiethnic communities. Muthuswamy (2023) says that the marker of shared linguistic practices is language as a communication tool that facilitates human integration into certain social, cultural or ethnic communities.

The language situation in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area is examined using the seven domains of language use, with a particular emphasis on the districts of Sajingan Besar and Jagoi Babang. The seven realms of language use are trade, education, government, traditional ceremonies, family, neighbourhood, and religion. The following describes the linguistic environment of the multi-ethnic communities in the districts of Jagoi Babang and Sajingan Besar.

## Sajingan Besar District

Most of the ethnic groups in Sajingan Besar consist of Dayak, Malay, Chinese and Javanese (Aminah et al, 2021). The four majority ethnicities in Sajingan Besar have their own regional languages. Sajingan Besar (West Kalimantan) is a sub-district that borders directly with Biawak Sub-district (Malaysia). This multiethnic community not only communicates with people of different ethnicities but also with people abroad.

The situation of language use in Sajingan Besar is presented in the table 1. The analysis in table 1 was obtained from the results of surveys, interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with the community and resource persons in the Sajingan Besar area which borders Sarawak (Malaysia). Language is used by these border communities in seven domains: family, neighbors, celebrations, religion, education, government and trade.

**Table 1:** Language Situation in Sajingan Besar District

Source: Authors, 2022

No.	Realm	Languages Spoken
1	Family	Each other's mother tongue
2	Neighborliness	Indonesian, Malay Sambas, Bakatik, their respective mother tongues
3	Ceremonies	Each other's mother tongue
4	Religious	Indonesian, each other's mother tongue
5	Education	Indonesian, Malay Sambas
6	Government	Indonesian, Malay Sambas, Bakatik
7	Trade	Indonesian, Malay Sambas, Bakatik, Badamia

Each ethnic group tends to speak their mother tongue within the family. The language used in the family is the mother tongue, which is the first language that people learn from birth through interactions with other members of their language community, such as their family and environment. By transferring it to the next generation, each ethnic group retains its mother tongue. In other words, the mother tongue is the first language introduced to the baby. In Sajingan Besar, ethnic groups such as Chinese, Javanese, Sundanese, and Batak all have Dayak as their first language and Malay as their second language.

In families experiencing mixed marriages, the tendency is that the first language taught is the language of their father or mother, which is their first environment. This means that if a Malay woman marries a man of a different ethnicity, and this young family lives in the woman's family environment, then the language passed down to the child is Malay.

The fact that every ethnic group speaks its mother tongue in daily family conversations is another factor contributing to the survival of each ethnic regional language in a multiethnic society. Despite the fact that this mindset primarily benefits the preservation of regional languages, their use is limited to the family.

Environmental regions are areas that can be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Some hamlets are homogeneous, inhabited only by one ethnic group, but more are inhabited by heterogeneous communities. Homogeneous people use their mother tongue because they come from the same family and are generally related. In this heterogeneous multiethnic society, there are three tendencies in language use.

1. The use of Indonesian in a multiethnic society consisting of various ethnicities that have prominent language differences; for example, Malays tend to use Indonesian when communicating with Javanese or Batak ethnic groups.
2. The use of Sambas Malay as a means of communication for ethnic groups that are closer in terms of language; for example, Dayak people will use Malay Sambas when communicating with Malays.
3. The use of Bakatik language in communication between the Dayak people who come from various Dayak Bakatik tribes is the language of communication between Dayak tribes, which have different languages.



The realm of traditional ceremonies is the area where each regional language is used. Dayak people use the Dayak language; Malays use Malay; Chinese people use Chinese; and other ethnic groups, theirs. Thus, it can be said that traditional ceremonies are a means of preserving regional languages; on the contrary, regional languages revive traditional ceremonies.

Religion is a factor that unites and divides ethnic groups. That is, by using a common language for religious activities, religion connects people of all ethnic backgrounds who practice the same beliefs. Indonesian is the language used in religious events by every community, but if only one ethnic group participates, then the mother tongue of each ethnic group is used.

The education sector in Sajingan Besar uses Indonesian and Malay Sambas. The use of Indonesian is certainly a function of Indonesian as a language of instruction in the world of education. The use of Malay in Sajingan Besar District is found at the lower education level, namely elementary school. Although not dominant, some elementary schools use Sambas Malay as the language of instruction.

The use of language in public is relatively fluid and flexible. In formal government activities including meetings, counseling, official texts, and public services, language is chosen based on circumstances. The official Indonesian language is used when necessary. However, Sambas or Malay Bakatik is used if circumstances and situations allow the use of regional languages. Communication participants reported using both regional languages.

The trading world is a mixed area of various ethnicities in the Sajingan Besar District. The trade domains in question are markets, shops, restaurants, tourist attractions, business premises and terminals. Based on observations made and respondents' answers, it can be stated that the languages used in the trade domain are Indonesian, Malay Sambas, Bakatik and Badamia.

### Jagoi Babang Sub District

This subdistrict has a diverse population, with the majority being Dayak, Malay, Javanese, and various other ethnic groups. Table 2 below presents the state of language use in the Malaysian district of Jagoi Babang, which borders Sarawak.

The results presented in the table 2 were obtained from surveys, interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with the community and resource persons in the Jagoi Babang area which borders Sarawak (Malaysia). Language is used by these border communities in seven domains: family, neighbors, celebrations, religion, education, government and trade.

**Table 2:** Language Situation in Jagoi Babang District

Source: Authors, 2022

No.	Realm	Languages Spoken
1	Family	Each other's mother tongue
2	Neighborliness	Indonesian, Bidayuh, Bakatik, their respective mother tongues
3	Ceremonies	Each other's mother tongue
4	Religious	Indonesian, each other's mother tongue
5	Education	Indonesian
6	Government	Indonesian, Bidayuh, Bakatik
7	Trade	Indonesian, Bidayuh, Bakatik

As in the Sajingan Besar District, every ethnic group in the Jagoi Babang District tends to use their mother tongue in the family sphere. The inheritance of the mother tongue in the Family goes well. This means that the multi-ethnic communities in this area are trying to maintain their ethnic languages by passing them on to the younger generation and making their ethnic languages their first languages.

Mixed marriages also tend to inherit the first language, namely the language of the first environment. Thus, children use ethnic languages in the early years of development and eventually develop ethnic language skills. Similarities with Sajingan Besar exist when it comes to neighbors, where homogeneous communities use their mother tongue and heterogeneous communities have two linguistic orientations. Indonesian is used by multiethnic communities

that have prominent language differences. For multiethnic communities of the same family, Bidayuh and Bakatik languages are used.

The homogeneous community of Jagoi Babang speaks their ethnic language, same like in Sajingan Besar. The striking difference between these two areas is that Sambas Malay dominates in Sajingan Besar, whereas in Jagoi Babang, this language is inferior. Another difference is that the use of Indonesian in Jagoi Babang is more dominant than in Sajingan Besar.

In the context of traditional and religious ceremonies, the language used in Jagoi Babang District is identical to that used in Sajingan Besar District. The realm of traditional ceremonies uses each ethnic language. The religious realm uses the same language in religious activities. The language used in religious activities by the community is Indonesian if it is multiethnic; On the other hand, each ethnic language is used only by one ethnic group.

For education, in Jagoi Babang only uses Indonesian. This condition shows that the national language has a stronger existence in Jagoi Babang. The languages in meetings, counseling, public services and official texts used in the realm of government in Jagoi Babang are Indonesian, Bidayuh and Bakatik. This choice of language is based on situations and conditions.

As in Sajingan Besar, in conditions that require the use of Indonesian, the national language is used. Dayak people prefer Bidayuh and Bakatik languages because more people speak the two languages of the Dayak subtribe than speak the languages of the other Dayak subtribes. Apart from that, the Bidayuh and Bakatik languages have had a strong existence since ancient times because they were used as communication languages between the Dayak subtribes in Jagoi Babang.

The use of language for trade in Jagoi Babang is dominated by three majority languages, namely Indonesian, Bidayuh and Bakatik. The multiethnic community in Jagoi Babang tends to use one of these three languages when interacting in markets, shops, restaurants, tourist attractions, businesses and terminals.

## Language Identity

Analysis of the language identity of multiethnic communities in border areas, especially in Sajingan Besar and Jagoi Babang, is determined by the linguistic situation that occurs in the area. The discussion of the linguistic situation in the two border regions is formulated as follows:

- a. Government, education, business, religion, and neighborhoods all employ Indonesian. The existence of Indonesian is quite good as a language for inter-ethnic relations and a language of instruction in formal situations.
- b. The mother tongue is used in traditional and family ceremonies. Traditional ceremonies use various regional languages which contain ancient parables and proverbs inherited from ancestors.
- c. In the family, the first language taught to children is the local language or mother tongue. This means that the inheritance of the mother tongue took place well in both research locations.
- d. The dominant regional languages in inter-ethnic communication in Sajingan Besar Regency are Sambas, Melayu and Bakatik. Sambas Malay is used in the fields of government, education, trade and neighbourhoods. In general, Sambas Malay is used in cross-cultural communication, various ethnicities. For fellow Dayak ethnic groups, in Sajingan Besar, Bakatik language tends to be used, while in Jagoi Babang, Bidayuh language is used. The choice of language depends on the significance and objectives to be fulfilled. Al-Qenaie and Naser (2023) claim that language is a communication tool with the main aim of promoting effective interaction between speakers.
- e. The use of a foreign language (Malay Sarawak Malaysia) is casuistic. For example, an Indonesian citizen who migrated for many years to Sarawak uses Sarawak Malay when he returns home. However, that didn't last long. After 2-3 years, he returns to his mother tongue or his own ethnic language.
- f. Another finding is that Dayak people generally tend to have good linguistic

competence. They quickly learn other languages and use them when interacting with other ethnicities. In general, Dayak people speak more than two languages. Apart from mastering ethnic languages, they also master Indonesian, Malay and other Dayak sub-ethnics.

Referring to the linguistic situation that occurs in Sajingan Besar and Jagoi Babang, it can be said that the language identity of multiethnic communities in border areas has shaped social reality and reflects individual language attitudes. They show high linguistic identity, but on the other hand, they also have high linguistic adaptability.

In terms of identity, it can be said that this choice comes from the pragmatic awareness of a person or group to use language as a signifier. Pragmatic awareness is a consideration in making this choice on the one hand (Erikson, 1979; Syamsul, 2001). On the other hand, they have a lot of stock identities to choose from. Therefore, experts argue that identity is not single or fluid and can change according to conditions (Yusriadi & Ismail Ruslan, 2015). Regardless of whether you call it a code, a language, or linguistic proficiency, identity is undoubtedly not the same as language. On the contrary, language can be considered as an enhancing element that can enhance identity (Siebenhütter, 2023).

Based on the data obtained, the factors that influence the language identity of multiethnic communities in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border area are as follows:

- a. Ethnic culture. Maintaining culture requires the use of language. People often use language to express their identity and associate themselves with different cultural groups. This is because it is believed that language, culture and ethnicity are closely interrelated. People who live near the borders often speak languages that are influenced by the cultures on both sides of the line. For example, languages in border areas are very likely to contain words or expressions from both countries. Especially if the border areas of the two countries share cultural traditions and racial heritage. The borderlands offer cultural pursuits that are distinctive from a cultural standpoint. Ba'aek and Bkomok traditions as well as Dayak gawai celebration rituals represent social capital. Dayak technology provides a means for people living in border areas to develop friendly relations, teamwork, unity and mutual care between individuals and groups which can be converted into political capital (Adnan et al., 2023)
- b. Several factors, including historical, political, economic, and social factors, influence how a region's topography influences its linguistic identity. While certain regions may be better able to preserve their mother tongue, others may experience considerable linguistic change due to many internal and external influences. Territorial isolation, language interactions, terrain, physical environment, climatic conditions, population settlement, and urbanization are some of the geographic variables that impact the cultural identity of a person or ethnic group. The West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region has an active multiethnic population that frequently communicates with each other and with speakers of other languages. They are able to engage with people of other ethnicities despite their area's high topography, surrounding lush forests, and tropical climate. They have gone through government procedures to resettle people in new areas, but that doesn't change their linguistic identity. Like how urbanization happens, it ends up being short-lived and cyclical. They will then return to their original ethnic identity.
- c. Social groups: Social groups have a significant impact on the way people speak, including their accent and word choice. A person's social and cultural identity is closely linked to their linguistic identity. The social group to which they belong determines the form of linguistic identity displayed. Social class, religion, gender, occupational group, age group, and social existence are social factors that influence the language identity of a person or group. An individual usually adopts a language or accent that is considered higher or more prestigious according to his social class. In formal settings, Dayaks, Malays, and Chinese often speak Indonesian to project an image of being highly educated and connected to the country. As said by Tran & Hach (2022) language is a phenomenon resulting from the formation, continuation and

development of a society. At a social level, language reflects not only the shared characteristics of ethnic groups but also the unique circumstances of different residential and industrial areas. The survival and expansion of human civilization, the emergence and evolution of artisan villages, and (Adnan & et al., 2023) the formation of separate social classes all have an impact on language.

- d. One important factor in understanding how language develops and becomes an important component of a people's cultural identity is the history of the region. The Dayak ethnic kinship in Indonesia and Malaysia is closely related to the history of indigenous peoples in the West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region. Dayak elders claim that the Dayak populations in both countries generally share the same ancestry. The sub-ethnicity of the Dayak family is where the differences lie; Iban Dayak speak a different language than Bugau Dayak, for example. However, if they were both Iban, they would speak the same language in Malaysia and Indonesia. In other words, these differences are not due to unequal nationality but rather the subethnic origin of the ancestors. The ancestral sub-ethnicity with whom we share a common past is the Dayak. The linguistic identity of a community group is greatly influenced by its history. The way a language is spoken and understood by its speakers can be influenced by the history of a region. Language identity is an important component of a society's cultural identity. Language evolution, socio-political changes, and language origins are some aspects of regional history that influence people's language choices.
- e. Family and environment: A dynamic component of cultural identity is language identity. Throughout life, many factors may impact it. Language identity is significantly shaped by one's family and environment. The language used at home and in the environment impacts how the family and environment shape language identity. According to the linguistic situation among families and neighbors, most of the houses in multiethnic settlements in Sajingan Besar and Jagoi Babang speak their respective regional or ethnic languages. English is not the only language used in various fields. The formation of their family identification impacts the linguistic identity they desire.
- f. Education has such a profound impact on language identity that it has the power to create an entirely new identity. The way we speak, understand and identify ourselves through language is one approach to observing the identification of new identities. The language of instruction, the learning of another language, and the use of language in literature are elements of education that influence language identity. Understanding, critical thinking, and a broader sense of cultural identity are all developed through education. With education and life experience, a person's language identity can develop and change. The change also has an impact on many young people from border areas who study at universities outside the region. They display a linguistic identity that combines the languages they have mastered due to education, experience, and other circumstances.
- g. Community financial activities in border areas are involved in relatively broad commercial activities with various parties, some on a scale between hamlets, villages, sub-districts, districts, and even states. Different languages occur in economic operations communications depending on the participants, setting, and dominant language of transportation. Economic activities greatly impact the language identity of a person or community group. Trade language, labor migration, occupations and professions, and the use of language in marketing (advertising) are some examples of economic factors that are thought to influence language identity.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of research, it can be concluded that:

- The West Kalimantan-Sarawak border region has a multiethnic society, using Malay, Bidayuh and Iban languages in both countries.
- The condition of multiethnicity in this border region can have positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, access to foreign countries makes this region special.

However, it is also prone to conflict due to linguistic, cultural, social, political and economic factors.

- The research results show that regional languages are preserved in homogeneous environments, traditional ceremonies and religious activities. Multiethnic communities have the ability to speak languages other than their ethnic language (bilingualism) and flexibility in language identity characterized by a strong sense of ethnicity.
- Factors influencing the language identity of multiethnic communities in border areas are ethnic culture, regional geography, regional history, social groups, family and education, and economic activities.

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