

Faculty of Education, Language and Communication

Ethnolinguistic Vitality of the Iban Language in Iban-dominant and Non-Iban-dominant Areas in Sarawak, Focusing on Language Use and Language Attitudes

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Ethnolinguistic Vitality of the Iban Language in Iban-dominant and Non-Iban-dominant Areas in Sarawak, Focusing on Language Use and Language Attitudes

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.



……

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban language in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak, focusing on language use and language attitudes. The specific objectives of the study were (1) to identify the Iban respondents' perceptions of their language use in various domains: the family domains, outside-home domains, as well as social media and new domains; (2) to examine the Iban respondents' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language in Sarawak; (3) to compare the use of Iban in interactions in the family, outside the home, and social media and new domains, and the attitudes towards Iban in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, and (4) to compare the perceived and observed language use of the participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. This study adopted a mixed method incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Two types of instruments were used in this study: a set of online questionnaires via Google Form developed based on UNESCO's nine criteria of language vitality/endangerment, and a non-participant observation sheet developed based on Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains. The questionnaire data were obtained from 1,204 Iban respondents, while the participants for the non-participant observations involved 102 respondents. Five key findings were identified from the study, namely, (1) most respondents learned Iban informally, acquired from their parents; (2) the Iban language is predominantly used at home but faces reduced transmission in non-Iban-dominant areas, especially in interactions involving Iban younger generations; (3) Iban is used to a lesser extent in communication with other ethnic groups (Malay, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Chinese, etc.) despite being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak; (4) Iban is the least used language for social and professional interactions in social media and new media domains, in which English emerges as the primary language for communication; and (5)

locality plays a significant influence on language use and attitudes within the Iban community, particularly emphasising the effect on intergenerational language transmission, religious practices, and communication in various social contexts. The language vitality of Iban can be graded as medium-level, roughly aligned with Grade 5- on the UNESCO framework. While the Iban language maintains a stable speaker base and positive community attitudes, it faces challenges from dominant languages (Malay and English) that restrict its formal and new media use. Its moderate institutional support highlights the need for proactive measures to strengthen education, literacy, and domain expansion to ensure its continued vitality and prevent future endangerment.

Keywords: Ethnolinguistic vitality, language vitality, the Iban language, language use, language attitude

Daya Hidup Etnolinguistik Bahasa Iban di Kawasan Iban Yang Dominan dan Bukan Iban di Sarawak, Memfokuskan Kepada Penggunaan Bahasa dan Sikap

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat daya hidup etnolinguistik bahasa Iban di kawasan dominan Iban dan bukan dominan Iban di Sarawak, memfokuskan kepada penggunaan bahasa dan sikap bahasa. Objektif khusus kajian adalah (1) untuk mengenal pasti persepsi responden Iban terhadap penggunaan bahasa mereka dalam pelbagai domain: domain keluarga, domain luar rumah, serta media sosial dan domain baharu; (2) untuk mengkaji sikap responden Iban terhadap nilai instrumental dan status bahasa Iban di Sarawak; (3) untuk membandingkan penggunaan Iban dalam interaksi dalam keluarga, di luar rumah, dan media sosial dan domain baru, serta sikap terhadap Iban di kawasan yang dominan dan bukan Iban yang dominan, dan (4) untuk membandingkan penggunaan bahasa yang dirasakan dan diperhatikan oleh peserta di kawasan yang dominan Iban dan bukan Iban. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah campuran yang menggabungkan kedua-dua pendekatan kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Dua jenis instrumen telah digunakan dalam kajian ini: satu set soal selidik dalam talian melalui Borang Google yang dibangunkan berdasarkan sembilan kriteria kecergasan bahasa/bahaya UNESCO, dan lembaran pemerhatian bukan peserta yang dibangunkan berdasarkan teori domain bahasa Fishman (1967). Data soal selidik diperoleh daripada 1,204 responden Iban, manakala peserta bagi pemerhatian bukan peserta melibatkan 102 responden. Lima penemuan utama telah dikenal pasti daripada kajian tersebut, iaitu, (1) kebanyakan responden mempelajari bahasa Iban secara tidak formal iaitu diperoleh daripada ibu bapa mereka; (2) bahasa Iban kebanyakannya digunakan di rumah tetapi menghadapi pengurangan penularan di kawasan bukan dominan Iban, terutamanya dalam interaksi yang melibatkan generasi muda Iban; (3) Iban sedikit

sebanyak digunakan dalam komunikasi dengan kumpulan etnik lain (Melayu, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Cina, dll.) walaupun merupakan kumpulan etnik terbesar di Sarawak; (4) Iban ialah bahasa yang paling kurang digunakan untuk interaksi sosial dan profesional dalam media sosial dan domain media baharu, di mana bahasa Inggeris muncul sebagai bahasa utama untuk komunikasi; dan (5) lokaliti memainkan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap penggunaan dan sikap bahasa dalam masyarakat Iban, terutamanya menekankan kesan ke atas penghantaran bahasa antara generasi, amalan keagamaan, dan komunikasi dalam pelbagai konteks sosial. Daya hidup bahasa Iban boleh digredkan sebagai tahap sederhana, secara kasar diselaraskan dengan Gred 5- dalam rangka kerja UNESCO. Walaupun bahasa Iban mengekalkan asas penutur yang stabil dan sikap masyarakat yang positif, ia menghadapi cabaran daripada bahasa dominan (Melayu dan Inggeris) yang menyekat penggunaan media rasmi dan baharunya. Sokongan institusinya yang sederhana menyerlahkan keperluan untuk langkah proaktif untuk mengukuhkan pendidikan, celik huruf dan pengembangan domain untuk memastikan daya hidup berterusan dan mencegah bahaya masa depan.

Kata kunci: *Daya hidup etnolinguistik, daya hidup bahasa, Bahasa Iban, penggunaan bahasa, sikap bahasa*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEDIL	Association for the Educational Development of Iban Language
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
DBNA	Dayak Bidayuh National Association
DOSM	Department of Statistics, Malaysia
EGIDS	Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
GIDS	Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
SADIA	Sarawak Dayak Iban Association
SMS	Short Message Service
PEBEDAS	Dayak Cultural Foundation, and Sarawak Dayak Youth Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPSI	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background of the study, the research problem, the aim and specific objectives of the study, the Iban language in Sarawak, the operational definition of terms used, and the significance of the study. This chapter concludes with the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Across the world, many ethnic languages are experiencing erosion of vitality due to processes like language shift, where speakers progressively abandon their mother tongues in favour of dominant majority languages, often triggered by socio-political, economic, and educational pressures (Grenoble, 2021; Fishman, 1991). This trend not only threatens linguistic diversity but also undermines the cultural knowledge and identity embedded within these languages, making the study of ethnolinguistic vitality crucial for the development of effective language maintenance and revitalisation strategies (Crystal, 2000; Tsunoda, 2005).

Research has shown that language vitality strongly depends on active intergenerational language transmission, wide usage, and strong institutional support, such as education and media presence (Fishman, 1991; Philip, 2017). Yet, even languages with large speaker populations may be endangered if these conditions are not met (Brenzinger et al., 2003). The increasing dominance of national and global languages exerts pressure on minority and indigenous languages, leading to domain contraction and shifts in language attitudes, particularly among younger generations (Al-Khaza'leh, 2023; Ting et al., 2021).

Given these global realities, understanding and evaluating ethnolinguistic vitality provides important insights into the sustainability of ethnic languages and the sociocultural dynamics that shape their future.

The Iban language is an interesting case to study because the Iban is the largest ethnic group in Sarawak and has institutional support because the language is taught as a subject in school and used in radio channels, and yet some studies suggest decreasing intergenerational transmission and reduced use in public domains (Philip, 2017; Ting et al, 2021). The Iban ethnic group is the largest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak, Malaysia, accounting for approximately 833,600 people and constituting around 28% of the state's total population, which is higher than the Malay (23%) and Chinese (22%) (DOSM, 2020). The Iban language is widely used in all 11 divisions of Sarawak, serving as a key marker of ethnic identity. See Sarawak's map as illustrated in Figure 1.

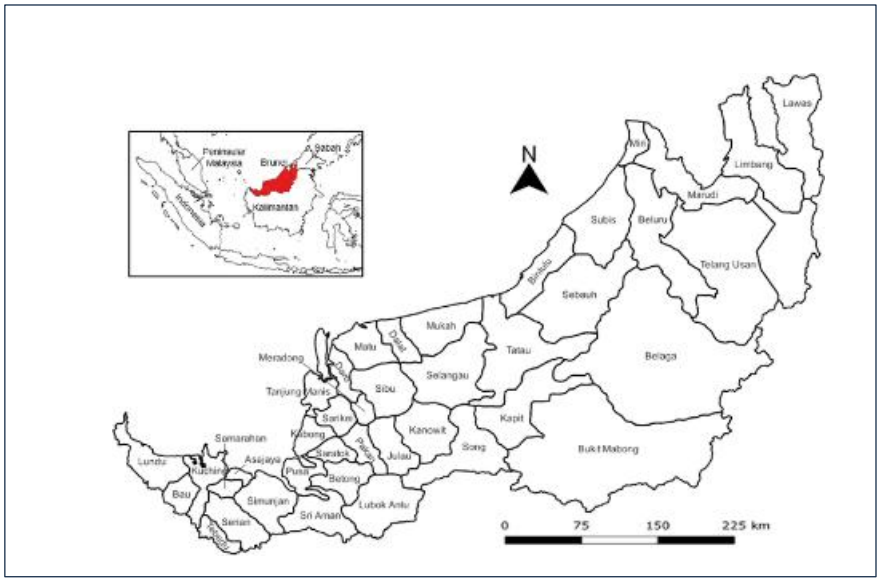


Figure 1: Map of 40 districts in Sarawak, Malaysia (Piau et. al., 2023)
Insert: Location of Sarawak (highlighted red) and its neighbouring regions

The Iban belong to the broader Dayak peoples of Borneo and possess a rich cultural heritage deeply tied to their traditional social structures and customs. Historically, the Iban were known as skilled warriors and navigators, migrating along the inland river systems of Borneo (Sandin, 1967; Metcalf, 2011). Central to their social organisation is the longhouse (*rumah panjang*), a communal residence that serves both as a home and social institution, fostering strong kinship ties and collective identity (Freeman, 1970). Community life revolves around agriculture, particularly hill rice farming, customary laws (*adat*), spiritual ceremonies such as *Gawai Dayak* (the harvest festival), and vibrant oral traditions including epic chants and ritual songs (Jensen, 1966; Rousseau, 1990).

The Iban language, classified within the Austronesian language family and more specifically the Malayo-Polynesian branch (DOSM, 2020; Sercombe, 2023), serves as a fundamental pillar in preserving the ethnic identity and cultural continuity of the Iban people, the largest indigenous group in Sarawak, Malaysia. The language functions as a vibrant medium of communication that captures the community's collective memory, traditional knowledge, social values, and norms, thereby shaping and sustaining their distinctive worldview (Philip, 2017). The Iban language plays its critical role not merely as a means of communication but as a living repository of cultural heritage and collective identity (Coluzzi, 2010; Umbat, 2020).

The contemporary geopolitical context of Sarawak has a direct and profound influence on its language landscape, particularly regarding the use, maintenance, and institutional status of indigenous languages, such as Iban. Sarawak's historically distinct entry into the Malaysian Federation under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) granted the state certain rights and autonomy, including partial control over its own education, immigration, and cultural policies (Chin, 2019; Min, 2023). The persistence of these state

rights and recent assertions of greater autonomy mean that Sarawak's government has more latitude to support the promotion and preservation of local languages than most other Malaysian states, where educational and administrative decisions are more tightly controlled by federal authorities (Chin, 2019; Hutchinson & Lee, 2025). This capacity for local agency creates opportunities to incorporate indigenous languages in schools, public media, and official domains, going beyond symbolic recognition to potentially more substantive institutional support (Min, 2023). In addition, the rise of Sarawak-based political coalitions, especially Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS), has further empowered state-level leadership to demand greater attention to cultural diversity and multilingualism as integral parts of Sarawak's identity. Political leaders frequently leverage the state's distinctiveness in negotiations with the federal government, strengthening local pride and fostering policy environments more favourable to ethnic languages (Chin, 2019; Hutchinson & Lee, 2025). However, despite these advantages, challenges remain. Federal dominance in areas such as national curriculum design means that Malay and English continue to dominate the formal education sector and broader public life, often at the expense of indigenous languages. Disparities in rural development, especially among remote Iban and other indigenous communities, limit equitable access to education and media in the mother tongue (Chin, 2019). In urban and semi-urban settings, economic pressures and interethnic mixing have accelerated language shift to Malay or English, particularly among younger generations (Grenoble, 2021; Fishman, 1991).

Currently, the Iban language in Sarawak occupies a complex sociolinguistic position. It remains the dominant language in many everyday domains, such as family interactions, religious ceremonies, and local transactions, ensuring its continued relevance within the community (Ting et al., 2020; Metom et al., 2021). Its formal status is supported by

standardised orthography and its inclusion as a subject in primary and secondary schools since 1968, as well as its availability in national examinations (Metom & Ting, 2024; Philip, 2017). The language also enjoys media presence through radio programmes and some print publications, bolstering its visibility and cultural resonance. However, there are growing concerns about its vitality due to a notable decline in the proportion of younger generations, who are actively learning and using Iban as their first language. Recent data show a drop from 53.9% of parents' generation students studying Iban to only about 33.4% among the current youth (Metom & Ting, 2024). This decline signals weakening intergenerational transmission, further impacted by a shortage of qualified Iban language teachers, limited institutional resources for language development, and the pervasive influence of Malay and English, especially in educational and official contexts (Sanders, 2025). Urbanisation, migration, and mixed-ethnic marriages also contribute to reduced daily usage, while the absence of dedicated research and language development centres hampers systematic efforts towards language sustainability (Philip, 2017; Umbat, 2020).

1.2 Research Problem

Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that language forms the essence of a speech community and explains the social norms and the speakers' behaviours in relation to how they interact with others in communication. Language shift is a key sociolinguistic phenomenon, which is defined as the process whereby a community of speakers collectively replaces their ancestral language with another, often a dominant majority language (Grenoble, 2021). Language shift can occur rapidly within a single generation or gradually over several generations due to complex social, political, and economic factors (Crystal, 2000; Fishman, 1991; Trudgill, 2000). The process usually begins with bilingualism and

proceeds as the dominant language increasingly occupies domains such as education, government, and media (Grenoble, 2021). Language shift directly impacts language vitality, which is the ability of a language to be transmitted and used across generations, and is the leading cause of language endangerment and eventual language death if intergenerational transmission ceases (Fishman, 1991). Grenoble (2021) further argued that language shift occurs widely among both majority and minority language groups. It is commonly seen in immigrant populations who adopt the dominant language of their new country, abandoning their native tongue. For minority language communities, language shift usually results from multiple causes, especially colonisation. A combination of historical, political, social, and economic influences typically drives a community to stop using its ancestral language and adopt the majority language, which often corresponds to the politically dominant group. Thus, language shift is fundamentally a social phenomenon frequently associated with broader social challenges.

Interest in language shift and language death has gained attention in sociolinguistic research, particularly relating to ethnic languages spoken by speech communities. The works by Crystal (2000), Fishman (1991), and Trudgill (2000) have produced insights that offer important perspectives on these sociolinguistic occurrences. Crystal (2000) discussed the worrying rate at which languages are dying worldwide and stressed that language death is not just a linguistic problem but also a cultural one, as every language represents a distinct cultural identity and set of knowledge systems. Fishman (1991) developed a tool for preserving and reviving minority languages by introducing the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), which helps assess the vitality of a language by taking into account the intergenerational transmission from the older generation to the younger generation. This scale identifies stages of decline and possible intervention sites for language revitalisation

initiatives by classifying languages from robust use among youngsters to near extinction. Fishman (1991) emphasised the importance of domains, namely, family, education, and media, where languages are used. A move towards a dominant language is frequently indicated by a decline in these categories for minority languages. Trudgill (2000) investigated how social factors, such as social networks, prestige, and power dynamics, affect identity, ethnicity, and social class, emphasising the importance of understanding the sociolinguistic landscape and assessing the vitality of a language. In terms of social networks, weak relationships within a community may cause a shift towards a dominant language, while strong ties within a group might sustain a language. In relation to power dynamics, less valuable languages are frequently replaced by languages with higher social status.

Language shift and language death are issues of language vitality that are often related to multilingual communities because of the power dynamics among languages. In Malaysia, national language policies, socio-economic pressures, and urbanisation may cause minority languages to gradually disappear in favour of more widely spoken ones. Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that endangered languages may eventually become extinct. Languages do not suddenly become extinct; rather, their use and transmission gradually decline over time across generations. All over the world, native languages are increasingly abandoned by members of ethnolinguistic minorities, whereby another language is more favoured in daily interactions, which includes parenting and formal education. There is a danger of extinction if children do not pick up the language as their first language. When the number of speakers decreases, and if the speakers are primarily older generation, the language may become endangered.

Some studies on indigenous languages in Borneo have provided empirical evidence, which shows that dominant languages are taking over the daily communication of indigenous communities. In Sabah, Al-Khaza'leh (2023) discovered that the Rungus young generations are shifting away from their mother tongue, whereby Malay and English are frequently used in various domains that concern social and career growth. Some of the youngsters are even embarrassed to speak their mother tongue due to the low status, in which they perceive Rungus is incapable of serving their goals of securing jobs or being active members in Malaysian society. In line with Al-Khaza'leh's (2023) finding, Renddan et al. (2020) also found that the Bajau Sama community in Kota Belud, Sabah, is shifting away from their mother tongue and choosing Malay instead. Bajau Sama is rarely spoken at home among family members, which leads to a rapid decline in intergenerational language transmission. Similarly, the same finding is also found by Dani et al. (2019) on the Dusun language. Although Dusun has not come to its immediate extinction, its status is moribund since the speakers have gradually switched to Malay, especially among the young generations. Although Sabah's responsible party has continued to provide pre-school and post-school reinforcements, shifting community demands for education and economic achievements have also resulted in a shift in the language vitality of the community. Furthermore, another study by Ting and Tham (2014) also revealed that there is a shift from the Kadazandusun language to the Sabah Malay dialect, particularly in religion, friendship, and education domains, even for communication within the Kadazandusun community. Even though the Kadazandusun is dominant in Sabah, its status would not expand to national, regional, or trade uses due to its endemic attribute.

The same findings on declining ethnic language use and language shift to dominant languages are also identified in Sarawak. Ting et al. (2021) investigated the Iban

community's subjective ethnolinguistic vitality in Song, Sarawak, by examining the speakers' language use and attitudes. The study revealed that Iban is the dominant language in family, friendship, transaction, religion, education, and work. However, with regards to education and work, a majority of the respondents (75%) spoke Malay, especially with people in higher positions. Differentiation in function between Malay as the "high language" and Iban as the "low language" shows evidence in the language use patterns of the Iban community. In another study by Joan and Ting (2016), the researchers examined the status of Kejaman in Sarawak, which revealed the current threatened status of the ethnic language by English and Malay. Joan and Ting (2016) assessed the vitality of Kejaman at Level 6b (Threatened). Without the strength in population size, it is difficult for the community to preserve the Kejaman language, as people living among other ethnic groups in mixed marriages and cosmopolitan town centres would not speak Kejaman but other languages. In the same vein, Wan et al. (2015) also found that there is a possible danger of language loss among the Kayan community in Sarawak. The younger generations are more inclined to speak English and Malay rather than their ethnic language. Similarly, Coluzzi et al. (2013) investigated the language vitality of the Bidayuh in Sarawak. Their study found that even though there is strong language maintenance and intergenerational transmission among the Bidayuh community today, the future status of Bidayuh is deemed unsafe due to the dominant influence of Malay. Bidayuh will eventually perish if it is used less by succeeding generations in the Bidayuh belt.

In a nutshell, all these studies of the indigenous communities in Borneo show a shift in the indigenous languages towards more dominant languages, namely, Malay and English. Local languages are seriously threatened by the dominance of national and international languages.

The latest estimated Sarawak population was 2,907,500 in 2020, which comprised multi-ethnic groups, namely, the Malay, Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau, Chinese, other Bumiputera, Indian, and non-Malaysian citizens (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). It may seem that the Iban language is strong due to the large number of speakers in the ethnic group and the assumption of its maintenance. However, according to Brenzinger et al. (2003), the number of speakers is not always a clear indicator of a language's vitality. Languages spoken by thousands of people might be endangered, while others with a few hundred speakers may be vital and stable for the time being. Vitality is not defined by the speaker population but by whether the language is spoken or not by the young generations. The recent update on Iban highlights the challenges facing the ethnic language, resulting in the loss of domains once strongly dominated by it (Ting et al., 2021).

Current research on the ethnolinguistic vitality of Iban in Sarawak is limited concerning the use, attitudes, and sociolinguistic dynamics of the ethnic language within the Iban community. A few related studies have been carried out involving the Iban ethnic group in the region. Ting and Ling (2012) examined the link between the strength of ethnic identity and the extent of ethnic language use by the younger generation of indigenous communities in Sarawak that involved Iban teenagers aged 15 years old. Ting and Ling (2012, p. 15) also stated that "the propagation of the national language as the official language can harm the maintenance of ethnic languages because of the access it provides into sociopolitical and economic contexts." Coluzzi (2010) also investigated language use and attitudes involving the Iban in Temburong, Brunei. Although the Iban language is found to be relatively vital at present, its condition is unsafe due to the dominant status of Malay in the country. Coluzzi (2010) further stated that if language planning activities are not carried out for the Iban, the ethnic language will be endangered if fewer future generations use their heritage languages,

which may result in the gradual influence of a more dominant language, such as the Malay language. With the influence of contemporary trends and growth, Iban in Brunei may plunge into disuse within a couple of generations that may lead to the loss of the ethnic language in the long run.

Furthermore, Omar and Teoh (1994) earlier claimed that the Iban language was at risk of becoming obsolete due to the strong promotion of Standard Malay and English, which are two major languages used in Malaysia's national education system. The claim was made at the 2nd Borneo Research Council Conference held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, in 1992. Omar and Teoh (1994) associated the Iban language marginalisation with wider socio-economic and political factors. McLellan (2018) revisited the arguments made by Omar and Teoh (1994) and presented his analysis of Borneo indigenous languages in the intervening period of 26 years – that is, to identify if the languages are more or less marginalised today. According to McLellan (2018), the fears about marginalisation in Omar and Teoh's argument were groundless, as they "have been instrumental in raising awareness of the need to be more proactive in efforts to maintain the Iban language." Even though McLellan (2018) mentioned that the Iban language in Sarawak and Brunei shows positive evidence of language maintenance, the argument is based on a small-scale survey that may be limited to the population in Brunei, precisely in Belait District, which merely involved eight Iban participants. In other words, the small-scale study may not be conclusive in explaining the Iban language in Sarawak. A bigger sample of the population is needed to elicit reliable and significant data that can be representative of the whole population. Besides, McLellan's (2018) analysis was also based on non-first-hand information from the literature search. Although the status of Iban is safe according to MacLellan (2018), when associating with Omar and Teoh's (1994) argument that the Iban language's marginalisation is subjected to

wider socio-economic and political factors (they expressed the hope that the rise of "Dayakism" as part of the awakening of political consciousness by indigenous peoples of Borneo might lead to a raising of the status of the Iban language in the educational domain), MacLellan (2018, p. 7) stated that this aspect "remains to be seen what changes may result from the very recent political realignments in Sarawak and in all of Malaysia following the parliamentary election of May 2018." According to Jugah Muyang, Lubok Antu member of parliament ("Ministry Asked to Hire More Iban Language Teachers", 2019), a recent update on the Iban language points out a significant shortage of Iban language teachers in schools in Sarawak. This shortage will affect efforts to improve the Iban language proficiency among the younger generation of Sarawak. The acute shortage of Iban teachers in Sarawak schools was also called out by Iban politicians, namely, Wilson Nyabong Ijang and Christopher Gira Sambang (Chua, 2023; Tawie, 2023). In a press statement, Tamin assemblyman Christopher Gira also questioned why the Malaysian Teacher Education Institutes and the Ministry of Education decided not to offer the Iban Language Bachelor's Degree Programme (PISMP) between 2022 and 2023, particularly for Sarawak's primary school teachers (Wong, 2024). In the most recent update, currently, 1,741 primary school teachers who are teaching the Iban language lack the proper qualifications to do so effectively. Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas highlighted that the situation is similar at the secondary school level, where out of 277 Iban language teachers, only 79 are formally qualified, leaving 198 teachers either untrained or without the necessary credentials to teach the subject in secondary schools (Sanders, 2025). This indicates that in the face of competing linguistic pressure from dominant languages, the Iban language's survival may remain vulnerable unless proactive steps are taken to improve teacher preparation and successfully integrate it into the curriculum.

A few past empirical studies have highlighted issues on Iban's ethnolinguistic vitality in Sarawak and Brunei. This concerns the enforcement of Malay and English as the mediums of communication in schools. Although Iban is dominant in Sibu and Sri Aman divisions, students are discouraged from speaking Iban within the school compound. As students are used to speaking Malay in school, they continue to use the school language at home. As a result, the displacement of indigenous languages by Standard Malay and Local Malay may occur in the far future, which is emerging as the lingua franca among the Sarawak indigenous for interethnic communication (Ting & Campbell, 2017). In addition, Ting et al. (2021) found that being a low language, Iban in Song, Sarawak has limited functions that exists together with Malay as a high language even though it is populated by 95% of Iban people. Although Iban is still strong because it is the main language used in the six domains studied (family, friendship, transactions, religion, employment, and education), the extensiveness of Iban language use varies, giving way to Malay and English in education and employment domains, particularly in interactions with colleagues in higher positions. Ting et al. (2021) showed that there is an imminent language shift in the Iban speech community in the study. Likewise, Coluzzi (2010) revealed that the Iban language in Temburong, Brunei, shows a weakening status in the country. Iban is "not safe, as slow language shift is taking place at the same time that the influence of Malay is growing stronger" (Coluzzi, 2010, p. 136). Nevertheless, because it is a non-Iban-dominant area, it is expected that the status of the Iban language is weakening in the locality.

The Iban language in Sarawak is considered a "strong" indigenous language because it has a standardised orthography and has been formally taught in Malaysian schools since 1968. Specifically, Iban is offered as a subject in both primary and secondary schools, and as an elective in the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) since 2008, reflecting its

institutional support in the education system (Metom & Ting, 2024; Metom & Ting, 2022; Philip, 2017). Despite this formal recognition, the vitality of the Iban language is somewhat questionable. While over 93% of Iban respondents can speak and understand the language fluently, and a majority can read and write in it, the proportion of students learning Iban in school has decreased from 53.9% in the parents' generation to 33.39% in the children's generation (Metom & Ting, 2024). This decline raises concerns about intergenerational transmission and the long-term sustainability of the language. Furthermore, in formal meetings, Iban is the least used due to its lack of official status (Philip, 2017; Metom & Ting, 2024). Another key factor in challenging its vitality includes a shortage of qualified Iban language teachers in schools, with many educators lacking formal training, which could impact the quality of instruction and further discourage younger generations from mastering the language (Sanders, 2025).

There are more worrying issues that are emerging concerning Iban's ethnolinguistic vitality. Philip (2017) argued that Iban's progress in its preservation efforts is stagnant in lexicography and diction. Without any effort to establish a research centre for the Iban language, the ethnic language will only be useful as a vernacular. Umbat (2020) expressed a similar opinion on the crucial need for a local research centre for the Iban language. The research centre is needed to sustain the development in literacy and local documentation skills of the ethnic language. To date, there is an absence of a government-funded research centre for Iban in Sarawak. Omar and Teoh (1994, pp. 121-122) argued that the Dayak elite "have not encouraged the continuous production of textbooks and materials for the development of Iban as a viable language." Venting a similar view, Embas ("Limited Resources", 2017) pointed to the lack of effort by the Iban community in developing the language in the form of reading materials. Despite years of robust production of written

materials by various public and private media agencies, and in particular, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), there has yet to be a single journal or magazine published on a regular basis as far as the Iban language is concerned. Furthermore, the negative effects of mass media, community migration from rural to urban areas, mixed marriages, the influence of local Malay, and pedagogical challenges in motivating students to learn the Iban language are contributing factors towards the decline of Iban in Sarawak (Umbat, 2020).

The ideal situation for the Iban language would encompass robust intergenerational transmission, where children consistently learn and use Iban as their primary language at home, ensuring natural language acquisition and cultural continuity. The language would be widely used across diverse societal domains, including education, government, media, religion, and commerce, holding an equal prestige alongside Malay and English within Sarawak and beyond. Comprehensive educational frameworks would include well-trained Iban language teachers and curricula that foster proficiency and pride in the language. Institutional support would extend to active media representation, research centres dedicated to Iban lexicography and language planning, and the production of extensive literary and cultural materials. Most importantly, positive attitudes and active participation by the Iban community, particularly youths, would sustain the language as a vibrant symbol of cultural identity and practical communication in Malaysia's multilingual landscape. Such a scenario would secure the Iban language's survival and allow it to thrive as a living heritage that adapts to contemporary realities while preserving its unique linguistic and cultural essence.

Thus, researching the Iban language in this contemporary setting is essential to fill the knowledge gap for the study. In line with the changing patterns of human communication (Crystal, 2000; SIL, 2020) and emerging issues concerning the Iban language, the meaning

of language vitality is now extended beyond the concern of minority groups. Language vitality is now measured for any large group of language users (How et al., 2015). While past literature has extensively reported on minority groups, sociolinguistic studies concerning large groups are rather limited. Studies reveal that large groups, such as the Iban in Sarawak, are also threatened by language shift. Based on the limited literature review concerning Iban's ethnolinguistic vitality studies, despite being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak (DOSM, 2020), sociolinguistic research has not adequately represented the Iban language, which is under-researched. Philip (2017) stated that assessing the Iban language's ethnolinguistic vitality is important, given its potential as a lingua franca in Sarawak to determine the extent of whether the Iban language is vital or endangered in this contemporary setting. Omar (1992) also justified that researching language shift issues is imperative, particularly when speech communities in Sarawak are experiencing changes in their language use during this modern time. Similarly, Tsunoda (2005) mentioned that language use of larger ethnic groups should be given focus in research, whereby studying the language dynamics of numerically dominant groups is important to find out what makes them withstand the tide of shifting towards standard languages and to assess whether language shift is happening.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban language in Sarawak, focusing on language use and language attitudes. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to identify the Iban respondents' perceptions of their language use in various domains: the family domains, outside-home domains, as well as social media and new domains;
2. to examine the Iban respondents' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language in Sarawak;
3. To compare the use of Iban in interactions in the family, outside the home, and social media and new domains, and the attitudes towards Iban in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas; and
4. to compare the perceived and observed language use of the participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas.

1.4 The Iban Language in Sarawak

Iban is the language spoken by a third of Sarawak's population. The ethnic language is also spoken in Kalimantan by the Iban who live on the north bank of the Kapuas River and in various dialects by closely related "Ibanic" peoples of Kapuas and probably further to the south. Sutlive (1994) stated that within Sarawak, Iban is used as a lingua franca wherever the people have settled. However, this may be true in the 1990s, but the situation at present has changed. Although Iban belongs to the Western Austronesian family, it is not readily intelligible to a speaker of the Peninsular or Indonesian Malay. Despite the disbursement of Iban over considerable territory, the language is characterised by a remarkable homogeneity, which may be attributed to the relatively recent arrival and spread of Iban over western Borneo and the relatively high frequency of contact between the different groups of Iban. Dialect words are few, and differences between areas of settlement are mostly in the accent and details in customs and rituals. There is no barrier or difficulty

in understanding between any of them (Omar, 1981). Known as *Malayik-Dayak* (*Ibanik*), Iban is an ethnic language from the Malay group (Usop, 2013; Usop, 2015). Thus, being closely related to Malay, Iban shares many cognates with the language, whereby basic words of Iban and Malay have approximately 60 percent cognates (Sutlive, 1994; Karim, 2004).

The Iban language is one of the few indigenous languages in Malaysia with an orthography and the privilege of being taught as a subject in government schools (Philip, 2017; Ting & Campbell, 2017). During the Brooke era in the 1940s, the language was taught in schools in Sarawak as a vernacular in the school curriculum. Iban has been included in the school curriculum in some primary schools since 1968, and in a few secondary schools since 1988. However, there are no Iban-medium schools in Sarawak (Ting & Tensing, 2010). Even though Iban was offered as an elective subject in a teacher's training college in 1968-1969, it was not until 1988 that the central Curriculum Committee formalised it as part of the national curriculum (Smith, 2003). In 1992, the Education Department of Sarawak initially proposed to introduce the Iban language into the upper secondary subject. However, the Education Ministry did not respond to the proposal because Iban was not yet included in the national education system as stipulated in the Education Act 1961. Consequently, the Curriculum Development Division of Malaysia's Ministry of Education established a unit under the Post-Education Act of 1996 to oversee the teaching and learning of ethnic languages (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). Today, the Iban language can now be offered in primary and secondary schools at parental request, with sufficient Iban teachers and funds available to support the committee's needs in addition to other subjects. In subsequent years, Iban was also taught as a language subject at the university level. At present, only three higher education institutes are responsible for certifying teachers to teach Iban. Nonetheless, few graduates will teach Iban because it is given as a minor subject alongside Malay in the

teaching degree programme (Lim, 2021). Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) is the first tertiary institution to offer the Iban language as a minor subject. Led by Dr. Chemaline anak Osup as the first coordinator of the Iban Language Programme, 20 students were offered to study the ethnic language at UPSI's July 2010–2011 intake (Sandai & Ong, 2015). *Institut Perguruan Kampus Rejang* and *Institut Perguruan Kampus Miri* are the other two institutions that conduct training for Iban teachers. The degree programme at *Institut Perguruan Kampus Rejang* began with 25 students, and it has since trained 322 teachers (2013–2021). There will be 146 more graduates before the programme closes in 2026. Meanwhile, *Institut Perguruan Kampus Miri* began its Iban Language Programme with 30 students, and it has since trained 57 teachers (2015–2020). However, the offer for the in-service six-week training programme at the institute is no longer available. Since then, the original excitement surrounding Iban teacher training has subsided into apathetic support for its continuation (Metom & Ting, 2024).

1.5 Operational Definition of Terms

This section explains the operational definition of terms used in this present study.

1.5.1 Ethnolinguistic Vitality

The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality was introduced by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) as a comprehensive theoretical framework to analyse intergroup relations within contact situations involving different ethnolinguistic groups. Giles et al. (1977, p. 308) defined "vitality" as a term that is closely related to the development of ethnolinguistic vitality or group vitality, which "makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations." The concept emphasises the component of the

language as the main feature rather than other group variables, defined as the language's degree of survival or extinction (Bourhis et al., 1981; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Garrett, 2010). This concept is pivotal in explaining why certain language communities manage to sustain their linguistic and cultural identity over time, while others experience language shift or assimilation.

Ethnolinguistic vitality comprises three primary categories of socio-structural variables that determine a group's potential for survival and persistence (Giles et al., 1977):

1. Status: This refers to the perceived social, economic, and symbolic prestige of the group and its language in the broader society. It includes factors such as socio-economic position, historical influence, and language prestige, which shape how the group is valued and recognised (Bourhis et al., 1981).

2. Demography: This encompasses quantitative aspects such as the size of the ethnolinguistic population, its geographic concentration or dispersion, birth rates, migration patterns, and rates of mixed marriage. These demographic factors influence the group's sustainability and ability to maintain intergenerational language transmission (Bourhis et al., 1981; Giles et al., 1977).

3. Institutional Support: This category refers to the extent to which formal and informal institutions, such as schools, media, government bodies, religious organisations, and community groups, recognise and promote the group's language and culture. Strong institutional backing is critical for language maintenance and vitality (Giles et al., 1977; Bourhis et al., 1981).

Together, these components interact to shape the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language, understood as the degree of a language's survival or risk of extinction within a social context (Garrett, 2010; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). Groups with high vitality demonstrate strong collective identity and cohesion, enabling active maintenance of their language and cultural practices. Conversely, groups with low vitality are more vulnerable to assimilation and language loss.

Subsequent expansions to the theory recognise not only objective structural factors but also subjective vitality, the group members' perception of their own vitality, which influences their motivation to sustain their language and identity (Bourhis et al., 1981; Ehala, 2015). Moreover, vitality is increasingly understood as encompassing emotional attachments, social cohesion, and continuing intergenerational transmission of language and cultural practices (Ehala, 2015).

1.5.2 Respondents' Perceptions

In this study, the term "perceptions" refers to the Iban speakers' attitudes, beliefs, and subjective evaluations regarding their language use and the vitality of their ethnolinguistic identity, which reflects how they perceive their language's role and strength in their daily lives and social interactions in various domains (Fishman, 1967; Bourhis et al., 1981; Giles et al., 1977). Specifically, these "perceptions" include how the Iban speakers feel about the importance, usefulness, and appropriateness of their ethnic language (Bourhis et al., 1981; Giles et al., 1977) in various domains (Fishman, 1967), such as within the family, in public spaces, among friends, at work, in social media, and in emerging communication platforms. Furthermore, Giles et al. (1977) stated that the vitality of a language, that is, the likelihood of its survival, is linked to subjective and objective factors. Subjective vitality refers to the

perceptions and attitudes of the community members about their language's status, prestige, and usefulness in different domains, which influence their motivation to maintain the language. Objective vitality refers to measurable aspects like demographic strength, institutional support, and formal education in the language. In this study, the perceptions are systematically gathered and analysed through online questionnaires adapted from Ting et al. (2020) and Coluzzi et al. (2013). The data collected were on Section E: Language Use in Family, Section F: Language Use Outside Home, Section G: Language Use in New Media, Section H: Attitudes towards Iban, Section I: Formal Use of Iban, and Section J: Iban Speakers in Sarawak (see Appendix C for details of the items in the questionnaire).

1.5.3 Domains of Language Use

Fishman (1972, p. 442) defined domain of language use as "a socio-cultural construct abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication in accord with the institutions of a society and spheres of a speech community." This concept emphasises that language use is linked to the social settings in which communication takes place and is not just about the spoken words. According to Fishman (1972), there are five typical domains in a speech community: family, religion, education, employment, and friendship. Each of these domains represents specific social functions and circumstances in which the participants, setting, and topic of the conversation all have an impact on language use. For example, informal language use may be more common in the family domains, whereas formal language use is usually limited to domains such as work or education. This present study examined three selected domains of the Iban participants' language use, as follows:

1) the family domains: language use with parents, wife/husband, children, siblings, grandparents, and relatives (e.g., cousins, uncles, and aunts);
2) outside-home domains: language use with neighbours, friends, classmates, workmates, for prayers, in government departments, and when buying things at shops; and
3) social media and new media domains: language used in emails for work communication, for searching or reading internet information, in social media communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), when watching YouTube content, and for writing SMS or WhatsApp texts.

In the context of this study on the Iban community in Sarawak, the focus on three specific domains is justified for the following reasons:

1. Family Domain: The family domain is crucial as it typically serves as the primary environment for the intergenerational transmission of language, culture, and identity. Patterns of language use at home often reflect both heritage maintenance and tendencies towards language shift or assimilation. Examining this domain provides insight into how Iban is maintained or replaced among family members, especially children and elders.

2. Outside Home Domain: This domain includes contexts, such as interactions with friends, neighbours, classmates, and workmates, or in public places. It is essential because language use outside the home highlights how the participants navigate multilingual environments and adapt to broader community norms. Here, the use of Iban versus other languages (such as Malay or English) can indicate the vitality or vulnerability of Iban in communal and informal contexts.

3. Social Media and New Media Domain: With technological advances, social media and digital communication have become integral to daily life, particularly among younger generations. Focusing on this domain allows the study of language use in contemporary, dynamic, and possibly globalised settings. Investigating how Iban is used (or not used) on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, or Instagram reveals patterns of language maintenance, identity expression, and the influence of digitalisation on traditional language practices.

Thus, by selecting these three domains, the study captures the intimate, foundational role of language in family; the negotiation and adaptation of language practices in public and communal life; and the evolving linguistic behaviours in the rapidly changing sphere of digital media, which is increasingly relevant for language preservation or shift. This concentrated focus provides a balanced understanding of language use across traditional-personal, communal, and modern-technological spaces, illustrating a comprehensive picture of the Iban language's current status and future prospects among its speakers.

1.5.4 Language Attitudes

Garett (2010, p. 20) defined attitude as "an evaluative orientation to a social object of some sort, whether it is a language, or a new government policy, etc., and as a 'disposition'." Language attitudes are further defined in accordance with three components (Garett, 2010, p. 23), as follows:

1) Cognitive: "beliefs about the world, and the relationships between objects of social significance": e.g., judgements of standard language varieties tending to be associated with high-status jobs;
2) Affective: "feelings about the attitude object", which refers to the extent "we approve or disapprove of the attitude object"; and

3) Behavioural: "the predisposition to act in certain ways, and perhaps in ways that are consistent with our cognitive and affective judgements."

In line with Garett's (2010) definition, in the present study, language attitude is measured in terms of participants' perceptions of the social status of Iban (how Iban is perceived in relation to pride/shame of Iban identity and social status of the Iban language use), and instrumental value of Iban (how Iban is perceived in relation to education and career prospects). This measurement includes identifying their responses to whether they consider themselves Iban because they can speak Iban and that their parents are Iban (either father and/or mother is Iban). The measurement of attitude also provides empirical evidence on whether they speak Iban due to its symbolic meaning (i.e., to express their culture, heritage, and identity), to show they belong to the Iban ethnic group, or because they were born as Iban. Furthermore, the measurement also comprises whether they feel proud of the Iban cultural history, the Iban people's achievements over the years, and their perceptions if the ethnic language is an important language due to its large number of speakers, the Iban people being powerful in politics and successful in business, and whether there is a need for Iban students to learn the Iban subject in school. The attitude measurement also includes whether Iban is an important language because it is highly respected in Sarawak (specifically) and Malaysia (generally). The final measurement of attitude focuses on which languages are most useful for the participants' career and study development, and the most cherished and strongest in Sarawak.

1.5.5 Iban-dominant Areas and Non-Iban-dominant Areas

In the present study, the terms "Iban-dominant areas" and "non-Iban-dominant areas" are used to refer to the distribution of the Iban people throughout the state of Sarawak

(DOSM, 2020). Iban-dominant areas include localities that are populated by Iban speakers as the majority. These areas comprise Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, Saratok, Maradong, Julau, Pakan, Kanowit, Selangau, Bintulu, Tatau, Kapit, Song, and Miri. Meanwhile, non-Iban-dominant areas consist of localities that are less populated by the Iban community since there are other ethnic groups who form the highest majority in the areas. These areas include Kuching, Bau, Lundu, Samarahan, Serian, Simunjan, Asajaya, Betong, Sarikei, Sibu, Mukah, Dalat, Matu, Daro, Belaga, Marudi, Limbang, and Lawas (DOSM, 2020).

1.6 Significance of the Study

This present study is significant in terms of theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the existing body of knowledge related to ethnolinguistic vitality concerning large ethnic groups.

In terms of theoretical significance, this present study expands the theory of ethnolinguistic vitality on large ethnic groups, such as the Iban in Sarawak, which holds that the vitality of a group is influenced by factors of demographics, status, and institutional support (Giles et al., 1977). By applying this concept to the UNESCO framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003), the study improves the knowledge of how these factors interact in a multilingual setting such as Sarawak, where the Iban language is experiencing varying degrees of vitality despite being numerically dominant. Brenzinger et al. (2003) mentioned that a language's vitality is not only defined by the speaker population but whether the language is spoken or not by the young generations. Thus, specific factors stipulated in the UNESCO framework that need focus were identified in the study, for instance, a lack of formal learning of the Iban language, reduced intergenerational language transmission involving the younger Iban generations, minimal use of Iban in social media and new media

domains, a lack of instrumental value of Iban for study and professional growth, and so forth. What we know about the Iban language is that it is considered "very safe" (Omar, 2017), considering it is spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak. Ting et al. (2021) discovered that although the Iban people in Song, Sarawak, comprise 95% of this Iban-dominant area, the Iban language is losing domains to Malay and English in education and employment. This reveals that even a numerically dominant language like Iban can also face a reduction in domains of its use due to current trends of linguistic pressure. Hence, the present study would offer insightful findings on language use and attitudes of the Iban people in Sarawak, which may contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the Iban's language vitality in this Malaysian state.

In terms of methodological significance, a thorough examination of the language use and attitudes of the Iban people was made possible by using both quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire and non-participant observations. This allows a more comprehensive understanding of ethnolinguistic vitality on language use and attitudes of the Iban people in the study. Past related studies on the Iban concentrated on quantitative measures of language vitality in the data collection. Coluzzi (2010) used a survey to measure the degree of language shift towards Malay (the national language), which involved 168 Iban in Temburong, Brunei. Similarly, Ting et al. (2021) used a set of printed questionnaires for collecting data that involved 200 Iban participants living in Song, Kapit, whereby the main purpose was to examine the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban community. Likewise, Ting and Ling (2012) also used a survey among 568 indigenous adolescents, of which 323 participants were Iban. In this present study, by observing the language interactions of the Iban participants in natural settings, this study offers accurate insights into

the actual language behaviours of the Iban speakers in different domains, instead of relying on self-reports of Iban participants in questionnaires.

In terms of practical significance, the findings of this study offer empirical evidence to explain the ethnolinguistic vitality of Iban in Sarawak with regards to language use and attitudes of the Iban people in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. Most importantly, the study is useful to provide a point of reference for setting up the timely needed government-funded language centre for the Iban in the state. This language centre will be an important platform for promoting the Iban language education, revising Iban educational materials, and developing Iban literature to enhance resources for teaching and learning Iban. Unlike the Bidayuh people, the second largest ethnic group in Sarawak after the Iban, they have long benefited from the establishment of the Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA). Since its premise opening on 28th December 1963, DBNA has grown stronger over the decades, with its vision to provide more "towards the educational, economic, cultural and social betterment of the Bidayuh people, through greater unity of the community and through cooperation with all other racial groups in Malaysia." Today, DBNA boasts 16 branches and 12 units of premises for the Bidayuh community throughout Sarawak (DBNA, 2025). It is unfortunate that despite being spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, there is no government-funded language centre attributed to the Iban's existence. Moreover, the study would provide an empirical basis and guide for material developers and teachers on updated pedagogical materials for education and literacy in existing and new media. As well, the study would create awareness among Iban parents and community leaders on the importance of transmitting the ethnic language to the children to preserve the language and sustain its vitality. It is hoped that more parents will enroll their children to learn the language formally in school. The study would also serve as a guide for

Iban associations in Sarawak, such as Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA), Dayak Cultural Foundation, and Sarawak Dayak Youth Association (PEBEDAS) in their community engagement by providing language activities that will interest the younger generations to learn and master the knowledge of Iban. Engaging these associations will help promote preservation efforts for raising pride and use of the Iban language among younger generations, especially in non-Iban-dominant areas.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This present study focused on language use and attitudes of the Iban people in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak, Malaysia. There are other Iban communities that live outside Sarawak, such as Johor, Sabah, Kalimantan, and Brunei. However, these Iban communities were not included as the study was only confined to the Iban people residing in Sarawak during the conduct of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review related to the current study. It begins with the concepts of ethnolinguistic vitality, followed by language vitality and endangerment of ethnic languages. The chapter proceeds with reviews of past research on language vitality in the region, comprising Brunei and Malaysia. Reviews on language shift and the changing patterns of language use in relation to ethnic communities are also included, along with related findings from past research. The chapter continues with reviews on domains of language use and language attitudes towards ethnic languages. Towards the end of the chapter, the theoretical framework for the assessment of a language's vitality/endangerment status is included, which ends with reviews of past studies on language vitality using the UNESCO framework.

The importance of the terms "ethnolinguistic vitality" and "language vitality" is highlighted in this chapter. Both terms are concerned with language communities and their ability to sustain languages. Ethnolinguistic vitality represents a group's potential to act as a distinctive and collective entity within a multilingual environment. It encompasses not only language but also social, cultural, and institutional supports that foster a distinct group identity (Giles et al., 1977). Meanwhile, language vitality refers to the likelihood that a language will continue to be used across generations. It is commonly measured by factors, such as the number of speakers, intergenerational transmission, and settings in which the language is used (Brenzinger et al., 2003). The two terms are interrelated as strong ethnolinguistic vitality can support language maintenance. However, they are not identical, whereby a group may maintain its sense of identity even if its language is endangered, and

a community speaking a vibrant language could still face challenges to its group. While language vitality captures the prospects for a language's continuity, ethnolinguistic vitality evaluates the broader resilience of a group's identity beyond language maintenance. This distinction is important because strong group cohesion may persist even if the language weakens, and conversely, a threatened community may still speak its language fluently (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Giles et al., 1977). Thus, using both terms offers a holistic understanding of the Iban language community in this study.

It is also noted that the term "ethnolinguistic group" refers to a group of people unified by both a common ethnicity and language, where language serves as a significant basis of their ethnic identity (Fishman & García, 2010; Holloman & Arutiunov, 1978). It is an established sociolinguistic and anthropological concept emphasising that language is a core marker of the group's distinctiveness, especially in relation to neighbouring groups. Ethnolinguistic groups typically share a first language and cultural heritage, making language inseparable from their broader ethnic identity. In relation to "ethnolinguistic vitality," these concepts are closely connected but not synonymous. Ethnolinguistic vitality is considered the capacity of an ethnolinguistic group to maintain and sustain its language and ethnic identity over time (Giles et al., 1977). Vitality is assessed through factors like demographics, institutional support, and social status, influencing the group's ability to survive as a distinct entity. Therefore, an ethnolinguistic group is the entity or community defined by shared ethnicity and language, whereas ethnolinguistic vitality is a measure or characteristic of that group's resilience and sustainability.

The following section further defines the related terms used in this study.

2.1 Concepts of Ethnolinguistic Vitality

According to Harwood et al. (1994), the term "ethnolinguistic vitality" emerged within the discipline of sociolinguistics when the idea of vitality as a framework was applied to "a broad range of issues related to language, ethnicity, bilingualism, and intergroup communication" (p. 167). Giles et al. (1977) suggested the concept of developing sociolinguistics in terms of vitality to facilitate the analysis of socio-structural factors that directly affect the strength of ethnolinguistic communities in an intergroup context. Giles et al. (1977) defined ethnolinguistic group vitality as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within the intergroup setting" (p. 58). This means that a group's chances of surviving as a whole increase with its level of vitality. Three components were initially recognised as important determinants of a group's vitality: status, institutional support, and demographic considerations (Giles et al., 1977).

According to Harwood et al. (1994), demographic factors are related to "the sheer number of members composing the ethnolinguistic group and their distribution throughout a particular urban, regional, or national territory" (p. 168). Distribution and numbers are the two aspects that make up the demographic elements. The term "distribution" describes the group's numerical concentration with respect to the members of the national out-group. The term "number factor" describes the specific demographic characteristics of the group as a population; these include the birth rate, mixed marriages, as well as immigration and emigration trends. Since groups are said to be empowered by their numbers, demographic factors are considered a key advantage for ethnolinguistic groupings (Bourhis & Sachdev, 1984).

The extent to which an ethnolinguistic group is represented in the formal and informal contexts is linked to institutional control aspects. Government, the media, business, religion, and culture are examples of formal contexts, which are thought of as decision-making levels. Informal contexts are pressure groups that protect certain interests within the ethnolinguistic group, such as those in commerce, education, the media, and finance. The degree to which a group has influence over the results of the in-group's providence can be used to quantify institutional control. Accordingly, institutional control over the group's language or languages is crucial for subordinate ethnolinguistic groups to achieve and preserve a favourable position in terms of vitality (Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins, 1988).

The status element consists of three factors, namely, economic, social, and socio-historical status, with linguistic and cultural prestige serving as its primary component. An ethnolinguistic group will have a significant social standing if it has achieved favourable institutional support elements (Harwood et al., 1994). It is important to note that the status element measures both the immediate context and international levels. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), as well as Sachdev and Bourhis (1987), assessing an ethnolinguistic group's status position is more difficult to measure than demographic and institutional support factors. This could be a drawback if predicting ethnolinguistic vitality is the goal. Nevertheless, Harwood et al. (1994) suggested that "the more status a linguistic community is ascribed to have on these items [different status factors], the more vitality it could be said to possess as a collectivity" (p. 170). Concisely, the concepts of ethnolinguistic vitality are important for comprehending ethnic languages' strength and liveliness within the framework of sociolinguistics. These concepts are significant as they can evaluate how different socio-structural factors influence language shift and preservation of languages, which inform the vitality or endangerment status of the languages. The following section further reviews the

language vitality/endangerment of ethnic languages along with past findings to illustrate the crucial factors impacting a language's sustainability.

2.2 Language Vitality/Endangerment of Ethnic Languages

A language that possesses strong vitality is one that is used broadly by all generations of the speech community, both inside and outside the home domain (Brenzinger et al., 2003). According to Trudgill (2003), language vitality or ethnolinguistic vitality refers to "the amount of dynamism present in a particular linguistic community. The term is normally used with reference to linguistic minorities and the likelihood of their languages surviving or becoming subject to language shift and language death" (p. 46). Tsunoda (2005) stated that the world is composed of a continuum that comprises two categories of languages – those that are totally flourishing and lively languages and dialects at one end, and those that are extinct at the other end.

Studies on language vitality have been carried out by investigating the domains of language use, transmission across generations, motivation for use, governmental policy regarding language use, and distinctive niches, especially contexts where the language is used. For instance, researching people's motivations for utilising a particular language gives clues about their interest and desire to continue using one language or acquiring a new language. The respondents are also requested to identify the youngest generation in which the language is used daily in all domains of life during interviews (Brenzinger et al., 2003; SIL, 2020). Furthermore, the language vitality of a speech community is measured using variables such as the specific purposes for which the language is used, social contexts, opportunities to use the language, and frequency of use. Conducting the assessment of language vitality enables a researcher to understand the factors contributing to language shift

(Fishman, 1972; Lewis & Simons, 2010). Language vitality is determined by the degree to which the language is employed in a speech community as a communicative channel in diverse social contexts for specific purposes.

Many scholars have pointed out the endangerment of languages. According to Krauss's (1992) estimation, by the year 2100, 90% of the world's languages will be critically endangered. Crystal (2000), as well as Nettle and Romaine (2000), estimated that 50% of the languages may become extinct in time. Simons and Lewis (2013) stated that considerable interest among scholars, practitioners, and the broader public has been sparked by numerous published works on language vitality/endangerment, which creates awareness of the possible disastrous loss of linguistic diversity. Harmon and Loh (2010) reported that global linguistic diversity has reduced by 20% over the period 1970-2005. The results were obtained from time-series population data based on a sample of 1,500 languages worldwide.

Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that the sociolinguistic phenomenon of language endangerment may be caused by external forces (e.g., military, economic, religious, cultural, or educational subjugation) and internal forces (e.g., negative attitude of the speech community towards its heritage language). Internal pressures usually stem from external pressures, whereby both are contributing factors that cease the intergenerational transmission of linguistic and cultural traditions. Many ethnic communities with underprivileged social positions abandon their heritage languages due to their belief that they are not worthy of preservation. By abandoning the heritage language, the communities hope that they will overcome discrimination, procure a better livelihood, boost social flexibility, or adapt to the global market sphere. Hale et al. (1992) asserted that when a language is extinct, there is an irreversible loss of knowledge in ecology, history, and culture. The knowledge inherent in

languages is possibly the key to solving future fundamental questions, as all languages are unique expressions of human experiences. When a language perishes, this means a potential loss of an important part of human knowledge, where there will be less evidence for comprehending patterns in human prehistory, the structure and function of language, and the preservation of diverse ecosystems (Brenzinger et al., 2003). Primarily, language death may lead to the loss of the unique ethnic and cultural identities of speech communities.

In Asian countries, such as Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the ethnic languages of indigenous groups may not be endangered to the stage of extinction at present. A few researchers have conducted studies on these indigenous groups to examine their language vitality, which shows different levels of vitality status. The following section reviews several studies of language vitality in Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

2.2.1 Language Vitality Research in Brunei

In Brunei's multilingual setting, studies on language vitality of its indigenous languages, for instance, Dusun, Iban, and Lun Bawang, show a worrying trend towards the decline and potential loss of the languages in the future. The decreasing use of indigenous languages among younger generations in daily interactions seems to threaten the survival of the languages in Brunei (Chuchu & Noorashid, 2015; McLellan, 2014; Noorashid & McLellan, 2018). Chuchu and Noorashid (2015) conducted a language vitality study on Dusun in Brunei. Dusun is a minority language spoken by the indigenous Dusun ethnic group in the country. The study was based on Giles et al.'s (1977) framework of ethnolinguistic vitality. A total of 35 Dusun native speakers were interviewed to elicit data on language use, the current situation, language shift, and motivations for the use of Dusun among the native speakers. Chuchu and Noorashid (2015) identified several factors that reduce the vitality of

Dusun in Brunei. The dominance of Malay and English is one of the major factors that prompts the ethnic group to shift towards these languages. Furthermore, there are very minimal efforts to use Dusun within the family domains, particularly when interacting with the young ones. The declining intergenerational transmission of Dusun in the family domains and the older generations' tendency to teach Brunei Malay to the younger generations have reduced the practicality and importance of Dusun. This is intensified by the inferior low status of Dusun that causes educated Dusun native speakers to avoid speaking the language, whereby they are inclined towards modern adaptation and assimilation. While facing the globalisation forces, there is no assurance for Dusun in the future. Other factors, such as migration and religion, also contribute to the decaying vitality of the Dusun language. Chuchu and Noorashid (2015) concluded that the vitality of Dusun in Brunei is low as it is encountering gradual extinction.

Prior to Chuchu and Noorashid's (2015) study, Coluzzi (2010) carried out a survey to measure the vitality status between two indigenous minorities living in Temburong, Brunei – the Iban and the Lun Bawang. To assess the status of these ethnic languages, patterns of language shift were examined by comparing the results obtained from the younger and older age groups in the two communities. In the study, 168 Iban and 68 Lun Bawang filled in a questionnaire on language use and attitudes, which were 8.9% and 8.4% (respectively) of the total number of Iban and Lun Bawang living in Temburong. From the survey, both Iban and Lun Bawang seem to be vital and healthy, with a majority of the two ethnic groups asserting their mother tongue as their first language. The Iban language appears stronger and more widely used compared to Lun Bawang. In family communication, Malay is used more by the Lun Bawang than by the Iban, although the heritage languages distinctly prevail on their own or together with the Malay use. As the official language in

Brunei, Malay is used in formal work domains, such as healthcare and workplaces, and it is commonly used in mixed-ethnic communication at school and shopping. With friends and neighbours, the heritage language prevails on its own or together with Malay. In addition, both the Iban and Lun Bawang people appreciate their ancestral languages and hope that they will be officially recognised and used more at school and in the media. In the Iban community, the youngsters tend to speak more and better Malay than the elderly, and they are not as fluent in Iban and use it less than their seniors. Coluzzi (2010) stated that the comparison between age groups showed a clear language shift towards Malay. A similar situation was also found in the Lun Bawang community. While Malay is acknowledged more, Lun Bawang is less known by the younger generation. Language shift towards Malay is gradually happening within the Lun Bawang community at a faster pace than in the Iban. Coluzzi (2010) concluded that despite the seemingly vital status of Iban and Lun Bawang in Brunei, these ethnic languages will face endangerment if fewer future generations use their heritage languages due to the preference for speaking Malay. Hence, if no effort is made to preserve the languages in the country, they could become disused within a couple of generations.

The studies on Brunei's indigenous languages, namely, Dusun, Iban, and Lun Bawang, reveal a concerning pattern of language shift towards dominant languages, primarily Malay and English. Dusun is critically endangered, with limited use among younger generations, low intergenerational transmission, and socio-cultural pressures causing speakers, especially the educated ones, to favour assimilation and discontinue its use (Chuchu & Noorashid, 2015). In contrast, Iban and Lun Bawang currently maintain relatively stronger vitality, with most community members still using their heritage languages at home and socially; however, younger generations in both groups are

increasingly adopting Malay, which indicates the early stages of language shift and potential endangerment, particularly for Lun Bawang (Coluzzi, 2010). These studies emphasise the urgent need for effective preservation efforts, including institutional support and promotion of these indigenous languages in education and media, to ensure their survival and sustain Brunei's multilingual heritage.

2.2.2 Language Vitality Research in Indonesia

Studies in language vitality that examine large ethnic groups are limited, largely because their languages are assumed to be secure and not in need of research attention. There are some studies in Indonesia that examined the language vitality of the large ethnic groups, namely, the Sundanese and the Javanese.

The Javanese people constitute the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, comprising about 40% of the country's population and amounting to more than 80 million individuals (Ananta et al., 2015; Shuhufi & Purkon, 2023). Insani et al. (2025) examined the vitality of the Javanese language in a multilingual society in Solo, Central Java. As a language spoken by a large ethnic group of the Javanese people, the language holds a prominent position in Indonesia, particularly in the culturally rich city of Solo (Surakarta) in Central Java. One of the central features of Javanese language use in Solo is its domain-specific application. The study used sociolinguistic theory to examine language in relation to society by employing a mixed method for a comprehensive understanding of local language vitality in Solo. Data were collected via interviews with 40 Javanese speakers of varied ages, genders, education levels, and language abilities. The study used the "Interview Package of *Basa Urang*" to categorise language use across five domains: family, friendship, religion, education, and work, and analysed patterns of language use. Conducted in a tourist area with exposure to

multiple languages, Insani et al. (2025) followed Miles and Huberman's six-step method, including data collection through recordings and interviews. The findings revealed that Javanese is mainly spoken within families and during close personal interactions, supporting Fishman's (1991) idea that intergenerational transmission is crucial for language vitality. However, younger generations are increasingly shifting to Bahasa Indonesia, which threatens Javanese's survival. This shift is driven by the higher status of Bahasa Indonesia as the national language and its dominance in schools, formal, educational, and governmental domains. This division limits the Javanese's broader use and prestige by confining it to informal settings. Insani et al. (2025) also noted the weakening of intergenerational transmission in Solo, where younger people prefer Bahasa Indonesia due to education, media exposure, and social mobility. The traditional passing of fluent and culturally rich Javanese from parents to children is declining, endangering especially the formal and traditional varieties. In addition, urbanisation and globalisation, especially tourism growth in Solo, increase pressure on Javanese vitality as Bahasa Indonesia and foreign languages become essential for communication and economic opportunities. These factors reduce the Javanese's functional range and prestige in public and commercial domains. Sociolinguistic factors like age, gender, and education further influence language use patterns, with older and culturally rooted speakers using Javanese more than younger, formally educated individuals who prefer the national language.

The Sundanese people constitute one of the largest ethnic groups in Indonesia, ranking second after the Javanese, with around 36.7 million people or 15.5% of the population (Shuhufi & Purkon, 2023). Kurniawati et al. (2021) examined the language vitality of Sundanese in Cianjur City using UNESCO's framework. The study employed a qualitative research method using a case study approach. Data collection in this study was

conducted through document analysis, drawing on a variety of written sources, such as books, journal articles, and other relevant documents related to the research theme. The data analysis process consists of four key stages. The first stage was data collection, where information derived from observations was converted into a clear and comprehensible written format. Next, during data reduction, the gathered information was summarised and refined to focus on the research objectives. This step involved identifying important themes and patterns while excluding any irrelevant data. The third stage was data presentation, which involved organising and explaining the summarised data in a coherent and narrative form that communicates the findings effectively. Finally, the fourth stage was drawing conclusions based on the analysis, which allowed the researcher to synthesise insights and answer the research questions. The findings revealed that language transmission, especially in children's language acquisition, is insecure, contributing to a decline in overall language vitality. The number and proportion of Sundanese speakers, particularly within the 2 to 14-year age group, are classified as unsafe, highlighting ongoing concerns over language maintenance. In addition, Sundanese functions within a multilingual context, where each language serves different roles, yet the vitality of Sundanese across these domains continues to weaken. Kurniawati et al. (2021) found that the use of Sundanese in new media and specific domains remains dynamic. The language is actively used in education, employment, broadcast media (television and radio), the internet, and cyberspace. Its vitality is considered strong, with potential expansion into scientific and technological fields. Furthermore, teaching materials and literacy resources for Sundanese are diverse and widely employed in schools as an educational language; however, Sundanese is not used in administrative functions. Despite this limitation, literacy-related vitality remains good, supported by comprehensive and high-quality language documentation.

The two studies reveal that despite being among Indonesia's largest ethnic groups, the Sundanese and Javanese languages face significant challenges to their vitality largely due to weakening intergenerational transmission and shifting language preferences within multilingual contexts. Wati et al. (2021) found that while Sundanese remains vibrant in education, media, and new digital domains (supported by diverse teaching and literacy materials), its use among younger children is declining, signalling potential long-term vulnerability. Insani et al. (2025) showed that Javanese in Solo thrives primarily in informal, domestic settings but is increasingly marginalised in formal and public domains, with younger generations preferring Bahasa Indonesia due to education, media exposure, and urbanisation pressures such as tourism.

2.2.3 Language Vitality Research in Malaysia

Similar to Brunei and Indonesia, the multilingual setting in Malaysia also reveals challenges the indigenous languages have to face in maintaining their language vitality. It is noted that the indigenous languages of Sarawak have gained little attention in sociolinguistic research (Akter, 2014). The reliance of Sarawak on researchers from outside the state, such as those from Peninsular Malaysia and other countries, is part of the factor causing the lack of research on its indigenous languages (Omar, 2003). Only in recent years has language vitality research gained interest in the sociolinguistic field involving indigenous groups in Sarawak. The following section presents reviews of related studies on language vitality of these indigenous groups in Malaysia.

2.2.3.1 Language Vitality Research in Peninsular Malaysia

Several studies were conducted to examine the vitality of indigenous languages in Peninsular Malaysia, namely, Kensiu in Kedah and Mah Meri in Selangor. Kensiu, an

endangered Austroasiatic language, is spoken by the Orang Asli (Negrito) community in the region. A study by Hamzah et al. (2024) on the vitality of Kensiu in Kedah focused on intergenerational language transmission, patterns of language use, and community attitudes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two male native speakers from the Kensiu village: the village head, aged 41, and a younger community member, aged 19. These participants were chosen to represent the older and younger generations of Kensiu speakers. Interviews took place within the village to create a natural setting conducive to open and authentic discussions about their language experiences and attitudes towards their mother tongue. For data analysis, Hamzah et al. (2024) utilised ATLAS.ti version 8 to code the interviews, develop thematic categories, and explore relationships among these categories, providing detailed insights into the language's vitality and challenges. Hamzah et al. (2024) found that Kensiu is spoken by fewer than 300 Orang Asli in Kedah, and is mostly used with family and close friends. The Kensiu people speak Malay in formal domains, such as education. The absence of literacy materials and formal educational support weakens Kensiu's vitality, making it vulnerable to attrition. Moreover, older and younger speakers differ in attitudes, where the older generations show a strong attachment to the Kensiu identity, while the younger speakers favour Malay for social mobility, which reduces their motivation to learn and use Kensiu. These generational differences reveal shifting language attitudes that may threaten the intergenerational sustainability of Kensiu. Hamzah et al. (2024) mentioned that even though there are indications of intergenerational transmission in the family domain, Kensiu's overall vitality is still at risk.

The vitality of the Mah Meri language is also weak. Mah Meri is spoken by approximately 2,800 members of the Mah Meri ethnic group on Carey Island, Selangor, Malaysia. Coluzzi et al. (2017) studied 86 respondents aged 15 and above (30 males and 50

females), who represent about 7% of the island's Mah Meri population. Questionnaires on language use and attitudes, prepared in Malay and English, were distributed between June and September 2013. Younger participants completed the questionnaire independently, while older respondents were interviewed due to low literacy. Two Mah Meri assistants helped translate questions when needed. The study was facilitated by community leaders to gain access and support during fieldwork. The findings revealed that the Mah Meri in Selangor exhibits only moderately strong vitality, and the language is used mostly in family and informal domains. Mah Meri's decline is evident in decreased use with children and grandchildren and in increasingly Malay-influenced lexical and structural features emerging in younger speakers. Coluzzi et al. (2017) also discovered that diglossia manifests with Malay dominating formal "high" domains and increasingly preferred even in "medium" formal settings, thereby eroding Mah Meri's functional domains. Many Orang Asli communities have assimilated into the larger Malay community or have transformed themselves into "Proto-Malay", which leads to the gradual language death of the Orang Asli languages. Despite positive language attitudes and expressed desires for language maintenance and institutional support, the Mah Meri community faces accelerating assimilation risks due to high contact with Malay and ongoing socio-cultural integration (Coluzzi et al., 2017).

Kensiu and Mah Meri reveal a fragile state of indigenous language vitality among the Orang Asli communities. Both languages are mainly used within the family domains, with limited use in formal domains dominated by Malay. Hamzah et al.'s study (2024) showed that Kensiu faces significant challenges, such as a lack of literacy resources and shifting generational attitudes that prefer Malay for social progress, which threatens its intergenerational transmission. Similarly, while showing moderately strong vitality, Coluzzi

et al. (2017) revealed that Mah Meri is gradually losing functional domains due to diglossia and increasing assimilation pressures from Malay dominance. Despite positive community attitudes towards language preservation, ongoing socio-cultural integration and dominance of Malay continue to fuel language shift and potential language loss.

2.2.3.2 Language Vitality Research in Sabah

Past research in language vitality among indigenous groups in Sabah also reveals a weakening pattern of language vitality. Al-Khaza'leh (2023) examined the status of Rungus, the language spoken by the Rungus ethnic group in Kudat, Sabah. The research specifically focused on assessing the interest of Rungus youth in their ethnic language and their attitudes towards it. The study involved 25 Rungus undergraduates, 15 males and 10 females, who were purposefully selected based on their youth, education, and multilingual abilities. Data were collected through unstructured online interviews conducted in synchronous chat rooms. This online method minimised the constraints of face-to-face interviewing (Hooley et al., 2012) and provided participants with greater flexibility and opportunities for open-ended discussion, allowing them to freely share their experiences and opinions regarding the Rungus language. Al-Khaza'leh's (2023) thematic analysis identified several key themes: language use, language competence, language policy, language identity, and language literacy. The findings revealed that Rungus is endangered due to low fluency among younger speakers, use is limited primarily to elderly family members, and a strong preference for Malay and English in daily communication and education. This shift is intensified by Malaysia's language policy focusing on Malay and English, which marginalises minority languages like Rungus. Moreover, negative attitudes such as embarrassment among young Rungus to identify with the ethnic language may hasten language loss and perhaps loss of a

unique ethnic identity in the future. Furthermore, Rungus is not taught in school, and the Rungus people do not have literacy skills in Rungus, which limits the functionality of Rungus for career or interethnic communication, further diminishing its vitality, suggesting imminent risk of language extinction without community-driven maintenance efforts (Al-Khaza'leh, 2023).

Dani and Seruji (2024) carried out a study on language vitality involving the younger generations of Bisaya in Sabah. The Bisaya language, which belongs to the North Borneo linguistic family, is spoken by a group of minority people residing in Beaufort, Sabah. The study aimed to assess the vitality of Bisaya among the younger generations of the ethnic speakers. Using the UNESCO framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003), Dani and Seruji (2024) evaluated nine factors affecting the Bisaya language's vitality among the younger generations. The study surveyed 205 students (115 females and 90 males) from three secondary schools in Beaufort, Sabah, using questionnaires. These students were in Forms 4 to 6 and represented the younger generation of Bisaya speakers. The researchers used a quantitative approach, scoring responses from 0 to 5, and calculated frequency, percentage, and average scores to assess language vitality. Dani and Seruji (2024) found that the Bisaya language is severely endangered. Intergenerational transmission is at significant risk (Grade 3: definitively endangered), with Malay increasingly used over Bisaya in family communications. The Bisaya community is a relatively small group within the larger population of Sabah, with less than 10,000 people who can speak Bisaya. There are no monolinguals, which rates the language as threatened (6b status). Although most Bisaya speakers use the language, a majority of the Bisaya-speaking children and family members do not speak Bisaya as their first language, classified as Grade 4, unsafe. Language use domains are dwindling (Grade 3), with many parents shifting to Malay, which results in

children becoming semi-speakers. Bisaya is only coping in new domains and media (Grade 2), despite some cultural media efforts. Educational materials exist but are limited, and Bisaya is not included in school curricula (Grade 2), which restricts language learning opportunities. In addition, government support exists mainly in private rather than public domains (Grade 3). Community attitudes are mostly supportive (Grade 4), but some members avoid or feel ashamed of Bisaya. Documentation is moderate (Grade 3) but lacks quality, everyday media. Overall, socio-economic challenges and pressure from dominant languages are driving the rapid decline of Bisaya among younger generations.

The Dusun language in Sabah is also experiencing endangered intergenerational transmission within home domains. Dani et al.'s (2020) study of the Dusun community in Ranau aimed to assess the current state of Dusun language transmission by identifying factors affecting its vitality. The study involved 120 teenagers (74 males and 46 females) aged 15 from two secondary schools in the area 95 Central Dusun, which includes ten Dusun-inhabited villages. The Dusun language in this area has been classified as threatened (Wurm & Hattori, 1981). The participants have learnt the standard Kadazandusun in primary school, but have fewer interactions with other ethnic groups compared to urban Dusun youth. The data were collected through questionnaires administered in sessions of 8-12 students as part of an educational project to revise the standard language curriculum. Dani et al. (2020) applied four factors adapted from Dwyer (2011) to analyse language endangerment: intergenerational language transmission, native speakers within the Dusun speech community, current language settings, and responses to new domains. Each factor was measured on a five-point scale to evaluate the degree of threat to the Dusun language and help determine urgent revitalisation efforts. The study found that the Dusun language in Ranau has a "severely endangered" status in terms of home transmission, with usage largely

confined to older generations. The domains for Dusun use are highly restricted, and the language has minimal presence in new domains like media and education. This reduction in functional domains, coupled with the perception among Dusun parents that Malay offers greater academic and career advantages, accelerates language shift and code-mixing with Malay. Educational efforts to teach Dusun have had limited success in reversing declining use, suggesting that formal programmes have limited impact in safeguarding the language. Socio-economic factors make other languages more useful than the Dusun language (Dani et al., 2020).

The studies on indigenous languages in Sabah consistently reveal a worrying decline in language vitality among the minority groups. Al-Khaza'leh (2023) showed that Rungus is endangered due to low youth fluency, strong preference for Malay and English, lack of literacy and institutional support, and negative attitudes, such as embarrassment, that threaten ethnic identity maintenance. Similarly, Dani and Seruji's (2024) study on Bisaya found it severely endangered, with intergenerational transmission at risk as Malay dominates family communication, limited educational inclusion, and dwindling use of domains despite some community support and cultural media efforts. Dani et al. (2020) also documented the endangered status of the Dusun language in Ranau, where intergenerational transmission is failing, language use is restricted mainly to older generations, and sociolinguistic pressures favour Malay for socio-economic advancement; formal educational measures appear insufficient to reverse decline. These indigenous languages in Sabah face parallel challenges: dominance of national and global languages in education and daily life, minimal institutional backing, shrinking functional domains, and complex social attitudes, including stigma and language shift driven by perceived economic benefits. These factors contribute to weakening vitality and threaten cultural identity, which signifies an urgent need for comprehensive,

community-driven revitalisation and policy interventions to sustain these languages before irreversible loss occurs.

2.2.3.3 Language Vitality Research in Sarawak

Studies on Sarawak indigenous languages have focused on the Bidayuh language more than the Iban and Kejaman languages. Kayad and Ting (2021) examined the Bidayuh people's perceptions on the importance of Bidayuh in Sarawak. Identified as an Austronesian language, Bidayuh is renowned for its several varieties, some of which may be unintelligible to speakers of the language from various areas (Rensch et al., 2006). This descriptive study comprised 61 Bidayuh from Sarawak, where a majority of them spoke two Bidayuh varieties (44.26% spoke the Bau variety and 40.98% spoke the Biatah variety). Most were aged between 32 and 50, with nearly equal numbers of men and women. Most participants (72,13%) had university degrees, and more of them studied in Malay than in English at both primary and secondary schools. The study used a questionnaire to collect data on the participants' demographics, their proficiency, the Bidayuh usage, language use in nine domains, the importance of the Bidayuh language, and its connotative associations. The Bidayuh participants were contacted via WhatsApp texts and emails, where they were sent the Google form link to the questionnaire. Responses were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and averages. Kayad and Ting (2021) found that educated Bidayuh who reside in cities tend to speak Bidayuh well and have positive attitudes about their ethnic language. Nearly 70% of the Bidayuh participants still speak Bidayuh daily since they can understand and converse in it to a large extent. Nevertheless, only in the family domain and for 45.90% of the participants, the Bidayuh language is the most commonly spoken. Moreover, the Bidayuh language is important primarily for ethnic identity and social cohesion, more than

for its instrumental values. The participants see the Bidayuh language as important for their ethnic identity (4.43/5) and social connection (3.98/5), where they view it as a respected language for its heritage value, even though it is not acknowledged for employment. This indicates that the Bidayuh language is an important distinguishing marker of the Bidayuh identity in Sarawak.

In another study on the Bidayuh language, Coluzzi et al. (2013) investigated the language vitality of Bidayuh in Sarawak by measuring the level of language shift towards Malay and/or English within the Bidayuh ethnic group. The study employed a set of questionnaires for data collection that comprised 26 questions on language use and attitudes, prepared in Malay and English. The data collection using questionnaires was conducted in four Bidayuh villages, where the four main Bidayuh dialects are spoken. They are Pasir Hilir (Rara), Serasot (Bau-Jagoi), Benuk (Biatah), and Gahat Mawang (Bukar-Sadong). A total of 266 participants aged 15 years or above filled in the questionnaires: 56 from Pasir Hilir, 84 from Serasot, 71 from Benuk, and 55 from Gahat Mawang. Coluzzi et al. (2013) reported that the Bidayuh language exhibits relatively strong vitality in familial and local community settings, with high fluency and intergenerational transmission, but their study was conducted in the Bidayuh villages. The study shows that although many respondents continue to speak Bidayuh fluently and primarily in the family domains, there is a discernible trend of growing use of Malay when interacting with younger members. The spread of Malay into many spheres of life indicates that the Bidayuh language may struggle to remain vibrant in the face of contemporary influences if proactive steps are not taken for language preservation and teaching (Coluzzi et al., 2013). The study also found signs of the vitality of Bidayuh language weakening, as shown by younger Bidayuh individuals demonstrating greater bilingualism

and code-switching. These transitional language practices may foretell language shift if not addressed.

Joan and Ting (2016) investigated the Kejaman, which is a small indigenous group in Sarawak. There are approximately 1200 Kejaman speakers who reside in the interior town of Belaga, Sarawak. Their mother tongue, the Kejaman language, belongs to the Rejang-Baram group (Wurm & Hattori, 1981) and functions entirely as an oral language, although there are some ongoing efforts to document the language. Due to the people's migration out of their homeland, the number of Kejaman speakers in Belaga has begun to dwindle. Joan and Ting (2016) studied the vitality status of the Kejaman language using the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) to determine the language repertoire and language choices of Kejaman teenagers. The study involved 28 Kejaman teenagers, aged 16 to 17. Data elicitation was carried out using a language choice questionnaire that consists of sections on language repertoire, ability to speak Kejaman, and language choices in the family, friendship, education, neighbourhood, mass media, transaction, and religious domains. The study found that the rural-urban migration, small speaker population, and functional usefulness of Malay, English, and increasingly, Iban in formal and public domains have led to decreased use of Kejaman. Now, Kejaman is mostly used for family communication. Kejaman's restricted use to home domains and diminished presence in education, mass media, and interethnic communication reduce the vitality of the Kejaman language. Intermarriage further weakens language transmission, which signals an unstable vitality status. Thus, when classified in a polyglossic framework, the ranking is English, Malay, Kejaman, and Iban from high to low. In the EGIDS context, it is currently endangered by English and Malay, and it will eventually be threatened by Iban (Joan & Ting, 2016).

Ting et al. (2021) explored the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban community in Song, Kapit, Sarawak, by analysing language use and attitudes among Iban respondents in the region. The Song area is predominantly inhabited by Iban speakers, who comprise 87.55% of the population (DOSM, 2017). The questionnaire data were obtained from 200 Iban residents, with an average age of 31 years (range: 13-85) on language use across six domains (family, friendship, transactions, religion, employment, and education), and language attitudes. The questionnaires were distributed by the second researcher, an Iban native of Song, to residents in both longhouses and town areas. Out of the 230 questionnaires distributed, 200 were returned, resulting in an 86.96% response rate. To capture respondents' perceptions of the vitality of the Iban language, six language attitude measures were categorised into three structural components of ethnolinguistic vitality: (1) demographic variables represented by the Iban language use; (2) institutional support variables that encompass the Iban language's instrumental value and intergenerational transmission; and (3) status variables that include the status of Iban speakers, the language itself, and Iban identity. Ting et al. (2021) assessed the Iban language in Song as having medium to high vitality. Despite numerical majority and strong intergenerational transmission, Malay is used more than Iban in education, employment, and interethnic interaction. The evident functional differentiation and shrinking of domains for Iban language use suggest an emerging language shift, worsened by increased intergroup contact. Positive attitudes and ethnic pride coexist with limited instrumental and prestige value for the Iban language. This indicates that favourable attitudes alone do not guarantee language maintenance. Ting et al.'s (2021) study provides a new perspective on language shift, that is, it reveals that an ethnic group that is dominant in number may not be totally safe from language shift, as shown by the

medium to high vitality of the Iban language in Song, where the population is predominantly Iban.

Akter (2014) studied Remun in Sarawak using the UNESCO framework, aimed at finding out if the indigenous language is endangered, the reasons behind the endangerment, and ways to revitalise it. Data were collected by employing structured interviews. A total of 37 respondents from three Remun villages were selected for the study, which comprised Remun, Triboh, and Semukoi. Each village was represented by 12 to 13 respondents. The selection was carefully done to ensure a cross-section of the respondents in terms of gender, educational levels, and marital status. In administering the questionnaires, the researcher was assisted by a Remun native speaker, who is well-versed in English. The researcher stayed with a Remun family during the conduct of the study for two months. The stay enabled a close mix with the Remun people and observation of the ethnic group's use and attitudes to their language in their daily activities, as well as religious and cultural festivals. The findings revealed that Remun is at risk of disappearing. People aged 31 to 60 can speak Remun well, but the younger generations aged 15 to 30 are not competent at it. Only 47% of parents speak Remun to their children, and some children cannot speak it at all. Many children use Malay instead, which shows that the language is not being passed down properly. Other languages like English and Iban are also becoming more common at home. The use of Iban is growing because many Remun people marry into Iban families and live near Iban communities. This causes the Remun language and culture to mix with Iban, which threatens the Remun's identity. Besides, Remun holds minimal economic functionality, which leads to the community's pessimistic attitude towards it. Remun is also poorly recorded and rarely appears in the media. It does not have its own writing system and instead uses the Iban alphabet. Furthermore, English, Malay, and Iban are stronger languages that are taking over

many areas where Remun was used before. Although Remun possesses a strong vitality in the home domains since most of its younger speakers still use it as the primary language of communication, while all the elderly generations are reasonably competent in it, the Remun language is "an instable polyglossic community with a declining trend of intergenerational language transmission" (Akter, 2014). The Remun community appears to be optimistic about their mother tongue and does not seem to be concerned with the gradual language shift, which may lead to language loss in future generations if there is no effort to maintain its survival.

The findings in the studies reveal varying degrees of vitality among the indigenous languages in Sarawak. Research on the Bidayuh language shows relatively strong vitality, particularly among educated urban speakers who maintain daily use primarily in family domains, and emphasise its role in ethnic identity and social cohesion, though Malay increasingly encroaches on interactions with younger generations (Kayad & Ting, 2021; Coluzzi et al., 2013). In contrast, the Kejaman language faces more serious endangerment due to migration, small speaker numbers, and limited functional domains, with Malay, English, and Iban posing significant threats to its transmission and use (Joan & Ting, 2016). The Iban language, while numerically dominant in areas like Song, shows medium to high vitality but with signs of domain reduction, especially in education and employment, where Malay dominates. This suggests that numerical dominance alone does not guarantee language maintenance (Ting et al., 2021). The Remun language is at risk of decline due to weak intergenerational transmission, increased use of Malay, English, and Iban, and poor institutional support, compounded by community ambivalence towards language loss despite some home domain vitality (Akter, 2014). These studies highlight that positive language attitudes and ethnic pride do not necessarily prevent language shift; external

sociolinguistic pressures such as migration, education policies, economic factors, and interethnic contact significantly influence language vitality. While Bidayuh benefits from some urban educated support and community identity, smaller languages like Kejaman and Remun face urgent challenges, emphasising the need for targeted documentation, revitalisation efforts, and policy interventions to sustain linguistic diversity in Sarawak.

2.3 Language Shift and the Changing Patterns of Language Use

This section presents the concepts and empirical findings on language shift and its significance in understanding the changing patterns of language use in ethnic languages. According to Fasold (1984), language shift refers to the changes in language use among speakers of a speech community, such as when the members begin to use one language in domains and functions in which its members had previously used another language. Romaine (2000) argued that this shift is inevitable when two languages rival for use in similar domains. Language shift happens due to the choices made by speakers of a speech community based on their motivations, expectations, and goals, which they may or may not share with other members (Coulmas, 2005). In minority communities, individual members may choose to shift from their mother tongue to a new language, resulting in the abandonment of their heritage language. The choices these members make will leave a collective impact on the future of a speech community and its language. According to Schiffman (1993), language shift happens domain by domain, rather than speaker by speaker, or community by community, until the abandoned language controls no domains at all.

The whole process of language shift takes place in speech communities where the ethnic language has a minority status, that is, the language has low prestige in official

contexts, and it experiences no institutionalised support in language policy and planning. Due to candid or implicit stigmatisation of their language, speakers of the minority language are inclined to develop an ambiguous attitude towards maintaining their imbalanced bilingualism (Dressler, 1982; Fishman, 1972). Once the dominant language replaces the minority language of the speech community, this will lead to gradual restructuring of language use that results in modified patterns of language acquisition. Speakers of the older generations are fully proficient in both minority and dominant languages. However, as the younger speakers are more exposed to the dominant language, the use of the ethnic language among them will gradually become restricted to specific settings and/or particular speakers (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dressler, 1982; Weinreich, 1968).

In most related literature, factors that motivate language shift are categorised into two: internal factors (those elements that lie within the speech community), and external factors (those elements that reside outside) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; David & Dealwis, 2008). In their report of a study on language shift in Sabah and Sarawak, David and Dealwis (2008) stated the macro-level language shift factors, which refer to urbanisation, increased mobility, and education. The researchers also listed the micro-level language shift factors, which involve exogamous marriages, locality, network density, language attitudes, and the lack of a lingua franca. David and Dealwis's (2008) division of language shift variables into internal and external dimensions reflects the focus on community-driven and societal influences on language vitality, respectively, as stated by Brenzinger et al. (2003). Language shift is the shift from the use of one language to the use of another for two main reasons. Firstly, language shift encompasses changing patterns of language use in different domains, and secondly, language shift occurs in a speech community that should be studied within its wide social and cultural contexts. David and Dealwis (2008) remarked that there are too few

studies on language use patterns of multilingual people in Borneo. The following section presents the few related studies in the region's indigenous languages with regards to language shift and the changing patterns of language use in the ethnic communities.

2.3.1 Language Shift and Language Use Research

Language shift and language use research in the region reflects comparable patterns of challenges faced by the ethnic communities. Renddan et al. (2020) investigated the phenomenon of language shift among the Bajau Sama community in Kota Belud, Sabah. The Bajau population is a minority group with fewer than 10,000 people in Sabah (Eberhard et al., 2020). In the study, Renddan et al. (2020) examined the factors contributing to language shift in the Bajau Sama community in Sabah, guided by Fishman's (1991) language shift theory. A total of 300 participants from the Bajau Sama community in Kampung Taun Gusi 1, Kota Belud, were selected and categorised into four age groups: 20–29 years (G20s), 30–39 years (G30s), 40–49 years (G40s), and 50–59 years (G50s). An open-ended questionnaire focusing on first language use before and after schooling, daily language practices, comprehension of Bajau Sama vocabulary, attitudes towards the Bajau Sama language, and language choices in informal settings. Renddan et al. (2020) found that after entering school, Bajau Sama speakers increasingly shifted to Malay, with only 9% of the G20s age group using Bajau Sama compared to 79% for Malay. There was a clear generational decline in mother tongue use, indicating a risk of language abandonment among the younger generations. The G20s group showed the lowest comprehension of Bajau Sama vocabulary (26.9% nouns, 33.9% verbs, 32% adjectives), and their attitudes towards the language were the least positive compared to older groups. In the family and neighbourhood domains, younger groups preferred Malay. Malay was also preferred in public domains like

shops due to its wider intelligibility. Overall, Bajau Sama is no longer the primary language for younger generations, and its transmission within homes is at an endangered level. The Bajau Sama are shifting towards Malay as the dominant language serves better prestige in economic and social affairs (Nawaz et al., 2012; Renddan et al., 2020).

Kijai et al. (2012) studied social and economic factors influencing language shift among the Tindal community in Kampung Ratau, Kota Belud, Sabah. The Tindal language is a Dusunic language, and the Tindal speakers are a minority group. To see if language shift affected different age groups, the participants were divided into two groups: under 25 years old (younger) and over 30 years old (older). The study used a set of questionnaires, comprising items on demographics, attitudes towards using Tindal and Malay, and open-ended questions about why parents might not speak Tindal to their children. Kijai et al. (2012) found that the Tindal language in Kampung Ratau shows language shift dynamics driven by Malay's socio-economic dominance. The older generations prefer Tindal while the younger members are increasingly using Malay for everyday communication, in which the use reflects pragmatism tied to education and employment. The community's ambivalence between cultural preservation and pragmatic assimilation highlights the broader tension indigenous groups face under national language pressures. Furthermore, the prevalence of Malay makes it more difficult for the Tindal language to be passed down across generations, even though the people want to preserve their linguistic heritage. The survey data also stated that all of the respondents are bilingual. Bilingualism is a precursor to language shift (Moelleken, 1983; Holmes, 2008). Because of the small Tindal population, the Tindal language faces imminent extinction within one to two generations if there is no active intervention.

Martin (2005) carried out a case study on language shift and language mixing in the Belait community of Brunei. The Belait are one of seven original groups in Brunei with their own culture and language. The Brunei Nationality Enactment of 1961 (Government of Brunei 1961) defines the Belait community as "Malay". For data collection, Martin (2005) used a short questionnaire, observations, and recordings of the speakers' spontaneous interactions in two locations where Belait is conversed, namely, the coastal town of Kuala Belait and the small village of Kiudung. In the initial stage of data elicitation, 180 potential respondents in the Belait-speaking areas of Brunei were identified and given a short questionnaire. In total, 64 respondents from Kuala Belait and 35 from Kiudung completed the questionnaires. The respondents were divided into six age groups, whereby their language choices were analysed by comparing the reported language use and the intergenerational patterns within each area under study and between the two different areas. Martin (2005) found that there were clear differences in language use across generations and between two Belait communities in Brunei. Urban Kuala Belait exhibits advanced language shift with younger generations preferring Malay and only older speakers maintaining Belait, often engaging in inter-sentential code-switching. Conversely, in the more rural Kiudung village, the shift was less distinct, differentiated by intra-sentential mixing and sustained use of mother tongue across age groups. Martin (2005) stated that the lack of Belait language transmission from parents to children in Kuala Belait indicates a late stage of language shift, with Brunei Malay becoming the main language used by family members. Nevertheless, grandparents still played a role in teaching some Belait to children in this urban setting. Language mixing was prevalent, with older and middle generations switching between Belait and Malay both between sentences (inter-sentential) and within sentences (intra-sentential), especially when addressing younger speakers. Kiudung residents showed more

intra-sentential mixing, where they often incorporate multiple languages creatively. Nonetheless, the prevailing trend highlights Malay's dominance and language shift, particularly among youth.

The findings of the studies reveal the unstable state of indigenous languages like Bajau Sama, Tindal, and Belait. Each of these indigenous languages experiences progressive decline mainly due to Malay's dominance, which functions not only as a lingua franca but also as a symbol of national identity and economic opportunity (Kijai et al., 2012; Martin, 2005; Renddan et al., 2020). While the community members express a strong desire to preserve their linguistic heritage, this ambition is challenged by the weakening intergenerational transmission. This weakening suggests that younger generations are increasingly shifting away from their ancestral tongues, influenced by external factors, such as formal education, media, and social mobility that favour Malay. Moreover, bilingualism, often perceived as an asset, ironically acts as a transitional phase towards full language shift rather than stable bilingual maintenance (Holmes, 2008; Moelleken, 1983). These minority languages risk becoming endangered or extinct, which reflects a broader regional challenge faced by the indigenous groups in balancing cultural preservation against modernisation and assimilation pressures.

2.4 Language Attitudes Towards Ethnic Languages

Understanding the concept of language attitudes is important for measuring how ethnic members perceive their mother tongue and the impact on the language's survival. Following Garett's (2010, p. 20) definition, attitude can be described as a "disposition" and an evaluative orientation towards a social object of any kind, like a language or a new government policy. Language attitudes are further characterised according to three

components: affective, cognitive, and behavioural. The affective component refers to "feelings about the attitude object" – that is, the degree to "we approve or disapprove of the attitude object". The cognitive component refers to "beliefs about the world, and the relationships between objects of social significance". For example, judgments of standard language varieties are typically associated with high-status jobs, while the behavioural component relates to "the predisposition to act in certain ways, and perhaps in ways that are consistent with our cognitive and affective judgements" (Garett, 2010, p. 23). Other scholars, such as Cargile and Giles (1997), argued that attitude not only delivers intentional referential information but also signifies the expression of language that incorporates important and powerful social strength.

The speakers' attitude towards the ethnic language and other languages has an association with their patterns of language choice. Cargile et al. (1994) also stated that the dimensions of social status and in-group solidarity are features of language attitudes that are particularly related to multilingual contexts. Language research often uses attitude as a key indicator of a language's ethnolinguistic vitality, which assists in predicting the survival of the ethnic language. Furthermore, in accordance with SIL (2020), people generally express their attitudes about their language and the languages of others. For instance, they may have mixed feelings, such as their spoken language is not a "real" language. As such, they may feel embarrassed when other people hear their language. They may also feel that the national language is the best language for expressing patriotism, securing a job, and improving their children's future.

Research on attitudes helps to identify "how people of one language group view the personal character and social status of speakers of another language and how they form

associations about other languages" (SIL, 2020). Thus, the measurement of language attitudes aids in grouping communities based on their intergroup affinities. Because attitudes cannot be examined directly, one has to ask relevant questions in relation to other aspects of life when assessing language attitudes. For instance, the researcher can ask the respondents about their opinions of people and their languages on some recordings, called the matched guise technique and the verbal guise technique. These opinions and attitudes will indicate whether the respondents are willing to accommodate or otherwise to the people and languages. Although attitudes are individualistic beliefs, there are patterns of attitudes throughout a community, in which these patterns can aid in developing the community's profile (SIL, 2020). The following section presents related studies that were carried out on ethnic communities' attitudes towards their languages in Sabah and Sarawak.

2.4.1 Language Attitudes Research

Studies on language attitudes within the indigenous communities in Sarawak reflect the ongoing pressures between preserving the ethnic languages and adapting to changes. Wan et al. (2015) investigated the language attitudes of the Uma Beluvuh. Uma Beluvuh is a Kayan minority group in Sarawak. The study used an ethnographic approach, relying on observations and interviews conducted by the first researcher, who is a member of the Kayan community. This insider status allowed her to closely observe daily life, conversations, language use, behaviours, and non-verbal communication. Data were collected during two field trips in March and July 2014, including visits to the longhouse during events like Christmas and weddings. Participants were chosen based on three criteria: they had to be over 50 years old, be permanent or regular residents of the longhouse, and come from families with three generations living there (not necessarily all permanently). Older

respondents were selected because their long-term experience gives them insight into past language use and ongoing shifts. The inclusion of the three generations allowed the study to examine intergenerational language changes within families. The interviews focused on participants' views of language use in their longhouse and family, with special attention to how language is passed down between generations, revealing patterns of language use and attitudes within families. Wan et al. (2015) found that the Kayan language faces pronounced endangerment among younger generations, especially those in urban areas, where there is a rapid shift to Malay and English. The ethnographic data reveal that despite the elders' strong ethnic identification and emotional attachment to Kayan, reduced proficiency among children and grandchildren indicates a weakening in the community's intergenerational language transmission. The migration of educated youth to urban areas further disrupts language continuity, which reinforces the risk of language loss. Moreover, the community's recognition of dominant languages' socio-economic instrumental values intensifies this trend. This matter stresses the tension between preserving their culture and adapting to the pragmatic values of the dominant languages. Wan et al. (2015) warned of a potential threat of language loss within the Kayan community, as fewer younger generations continue to speak Kayan. For the Uma Beluvuh people to fully appreciate and preserve their linguistic heritage and the historical knowledge embedded in the Kayan language, they must maintain a strong connection to their language, which serves as a vital means of expressing and transmitting their community's past and present identity.

Ting and Ling (2012) examined the sustainability status of Sarawak indigenous languages via a survey on adolescents' language use using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). The study looked at six domains (mass media, school, buying and selling, friends, religion, and family), where languages are used,

involving six towns in Sarawak, namely, Kuching, Sibu, Miri, Semariang, Durin, and Bario. The data were collected from 568 students aged 13 to 17, from one school in each town. The students were from lower-income families, where most were Iban, while the rest belonged to other ethnic groups. The researchers used a 61-question survey about background, language use in the six areas, and ethnic identity. The study also adopted Phinney's (1992) questionnaire on multi-group ethnic identity measure that pertains to questions on ethnic identity. The researchers calculated how often ethnic languages were used in each area based on the answers. Ethnic identity was measured in four parts – how much people achieve their ethnic identity, their ethnic behaviours, how they see other groups, and their feeling of belonging. The findings indicate that, especially for smaller groups like the Penan, the ethnic language's domains are reducing due to the dominance of Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay. The ethnic language is still strong in the family and religious domains, but has little place in the education and mass media domains. While the ethnic language is used for intra-ethnic communication, the Malay varieties are used for inter-ethnic communication in the ethnically diverse public domains of friendship and transaction. The Iban's relative vitality benefits from standardised orthography, formal education, and large population size, whereas groups like the Bidayuh face internal dialectal disintegration, which hinders widespread use beyond the family domains. Moreover, groups with stronger assimilation to Malay, such as the Melanau, show reduced ethnic language use linked to socio-political motivations and urban residence, which illustrates how identity construction and power dynamics associated with the Malay influence language choice. The study also found no direct correlation between ethnic language use and strength of ethnic identity. Despite the strong sense of identification with their ethnic group, the use of ethnic language varies across the selected respondents. The Penan, Saban, Iban, and Kelabit groups frequently use their

mother tongue, whereas the Kenyah, Melanau, Murut, Kayan, and Bidayuh depend more on other languages, such as Standard Malay, Sarawak Malay, and the ethnic languages of other indigenous groups. This indicates that a strong identity does not necessarily translate into active language maintenance.

Cullip (2000) investigated the language use of Remun in Kampong Remun. The Remun language belongs to the Austronesian language stock, spoken by an ethnic group known as Remun and Iban Remun. The ethnic community was officially categorised as Milikin in the early colonial times. For data elicitation, Cullip (2000) used structured, open-ended interviews and participant observation. A total of 45 adult respondents participated in the study, who represented half of Kampong Remun's household population. A Remun research assistant was employed, who played a key role in eliciting and interpreting the data. There were four major sections in the interview schedule: demographics and family language proficiency, language use in family domains, language use in community and town domains, and language attitudes (towards Remun and other languages spoken in the community). Cullip's (2000) study of the Remun community further elucidates how external socio-economic pressures and demographic changes shape domain-specific language patterns. The study found that despite intense macro-level pressures, such as urbanisation, migration, and the high status of Malay and English in formal domains, Remun sustains vigorous intergenerational transmission at home and remains the primary language within the community and family domains. The Remun community's strong linguistic identity, marked by differentiation from the closely related Iban language, and social factors like resistance to Iban migration and supportive informal education contribute to this resilience. However, domain reduction is evident where Malay and English dominate public, official, and formal domains, particularly among younger generations, while Iban and Sarawak Malay serve as

intermediate lingua francas. Language shift is minimal but present in peripheral villages through lexical borrowing, which signals subtle erosion.

In Sabah, Ting and Tham (2014) studied the Kadazandusun teenagers in Kota Belud, Sabah, focusing on the Kadazandusun teenagers' proficiency in Kadazandusun, which aimed to identify their language choice in various domains (family, religion, friendship, and education) and describe their sense of ethnic identity that is associated with the Kadazandusun language. An established framework of the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2009) was used to collect data. The study involved a total of 205 Kadazandusun students from eight secondary schools in Kota Belud, comprising 87 (42.4%) males and 57.6% (118) females, aged between 13 and 19 years old (from Form 1 to Upper Sixth Form) with Kadazandusun parentage. The Kadazandusun teenagers were the focus of the study as they were at a cognitively and linguistically critical period in their multilingual development. The questionnaire items were adapted from Ayeomoni (2006) and Yeh et al. (2004), which were prepared in Malay. The questionnaire elicited data on language background, proficiency in Kadazandusun, language choice, and language attitudes of the respondents. Ting and Tham (2014) found that despite strong intergenerational transmission within the Kadazandusun community, a steady decline in ethnic language use occurs from grandparents to teenagers, who nonetheless hold positive attitudes towards Kadazandusun. The language's vitality, assessed via the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), situates Kadazandusun around Levels 4 to 6b. This indicates that while institutional literacy and home use persist, increasing infiltration of Sabah Malay into domains like religion, friendship, and education threatens its stability. Even though Kadazandusun is dominant in Sabah, the language would not expand to national use (Level 1), regional use (Level 2), or trade use (Level 3) because it is an indigenous group

that is endemic to Sabah, which does not allow its widespread use outside the state. This suggests that positive attitudes and institutional support are insufficient to counterbalance encroachment by higher-prestige languages in broader social contexts.

While minority languages such as Kayan, Remun, and others show resilient ties to community identity, especially within family and religious domains, they face significant pressures from dominant languages (Malay and English) that are associated with education, urban migration, and economic opportunity. This creates a tension between cultural preservation and pragmatic adaptation, where strong ethnic identity does not translate into active language maintenance. This indicates that language vitality depends not only on emotional attachment but also on structural factors like domain accessibility, policy support, and power dynamics within multi-ethnic societies (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Giles et al., 1977). The gradual domain reduction and intergenerational disruption observed reveal how modernisation and assimilation are reshaping linguistic landscapes, often subtly through factors, such as rural-to-urban migration and youth language choices. Thus, preserving these indigenous languages should include promoting language use in diverse social domains and supporting community-driven initiatives. This holistic approach is essential for safeguarding Sarawak's rich linguistic heritage and ensuring its transmission to future generations.

2.5 Assessing a Language's Vitality/Endangerment

The development of assessment frameworks has begun since the early 1990s, whereby scales for language categorisation were proposed by researchers to assess the degree of vitality levels (Chen, 2023). These frameworks, like those proposed by Schmidt (1990), Krauss (1992), and Wurm (1998), mainly focused on intergenerational language transmission, with little attention paid to factors such as domains of language use and

language policies. These scholars offered four to five levels of vitality, which only provided brief explanations of indicators on each level. However, using too few levels or categories could also pose problems when evaluating a language's vitality/endangerment. For instance, in the 11th edition of Ethnologue published in 1988, Krauss (1992) evaluated the vitality of about 6000 languages and categorised them into four groups: safe, endangered, moribund, and extinct or dead. A prediction was made by Krauss (1992) that only 10% of these languages could be deemed "safe". Based on a reasonable estimate and if current trends continue, this would mean that 90% of the world's languages would die or extinct in the next century. Krauss's analysis was criticised by Simons and Lewis (2013), arguing that it was unclear, generalised, and exaggeratedly pessimistic due to the insufficient availability of sources at that time. From a 21st-century standpoint, Simons and Lewis (2013) proposed that language loss of the kind that Krauss (1992) predicted is unlikely to occur outside of North America and Australia, the two continents the scholar was most familiar with.

According to Grenoble and Whaley (2006), it is a complex venture to evaluate and understand language vitality, yet the degree of language vitality is the fundamental indicator used in determining the appropriate type of language revitalisation programmes. Thus, assessment tools should be comprehensive to provide key indicators that can inform action plans suited to the speech community's needs. Assessment tools are important for measuring the degree of vitality or endangerment of a language. Over the past decades, these tools have undergone continuous development and improvement to reflect the dynamic nature of research in language vitality. Scholars researching language vitality/endangerment adapt these tools to best fit the research contexts. Since Fishman (1991) developed the Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) to help guide the assessment of language endangerment or vitality, several ensuing frameworks have tended to evaluate world

languages more in terms of their shift than their revitalisation. The following section focuses on three more comprehensive and mature frameworks, namely, Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (Fishman, 1991), the Extended Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) (Lewis & Simons, 2010), and the UNESCO Language Endangerment Framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003). These frameworks are among the most influential assessment methods that have been used by many researchers all over the world. They have been proposed, applied, developed, improved, and modified in the research context of international collaboration. These assessment frameworks have significantly contributed to language vitality and endangerment research that helps describe the sociolinguistic phenomena of the world's speech communities. Earlier frameworks proposed by Schmidt (1990), Krauss (1992), and Wurm (1998) will not be included due to their limitations.

2.5.1 Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS)

The focus of Fishman's (1991) Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) is on the central role of intergenerational transmission in maintaining a language. For a language to sustain its existence in future generations, it needs to be transmitted by the parents to the children. However, if the children do not acquire the mother tongue from their parents, it is likely that the children will not be able to transmit the language to their offspring. Fishman's GIDS considers that intergenerational transmission is individual decisions made by parents. In addition, societal and institutional choices are also the contributing factors that influence parents' decisions with regards to their children's language behaviour, creating social spaces where languages are employed.

Research identifies these social spaces as “domains of use”, comprising the participants, location, and topic, which are closely related to a particular language (Fishman, 1991; Dwyer, 2011). Lewis and Simons (2010, p. 5) stated that this “choice of language becomes sedimented over time as a social norm so that the use of a particular language in a particular participant-location topic context comes to be expected.” Language shift will occur as these norms of use start to erode due to the loss of language domains (Fishman, 1991). When a language begins to lose its domains in the speech community, parents may decide not to transmit it to their children. This is because they perceive the language as less valuable in terms of its resourcefulness to their children. As a result, other dominant languages will take over household communication, leading to the loss of users of the particular language, that is, the mother tongue. Fishman’s GIDS framework provides a means of measuring a language on this scale of disruption. Table 2.1 presents a summary of GIDS, which describes the levels more explicitly in accordance with domains and salient patterns of language use.

Table 2.1: Summary of Fishman's GIDS (1991)

GIDS LEVEL	Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (1991)
	DESCRIPTION
1	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the nationwide level.
2	The language is used for local and regional mass media and governmental services.
3	The language is used for local and regional work by both insiders and outsiders.
4	Literacy in the language is transmitted through education.
5	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form throughout the community.
6	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language.
7	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it with their elders but is not transmitting it to their children
8	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation

Based on the perspective of the assessment of language status and vitality, Fishman's GIDS focuses more on the disruption level than on the maintenance level (Lewis & Simons, 2010). In evaluating the language, the analyst reads from top to bottom by commencing at the level of least disruption on the scale (Level 1) and reading down till the level of disruption that describes the situation being examined is found. In general, on the GIDS scale, the trajectory of minority language communities is downwards, and the stage descriptions are framed based on the loss of functions and domains, as well as users. According to Fishman (1991), most minority communities are at Level 6. Since efforts on revitalisation and maintenance emphasise the reinforcement of language status, it can be concluded that there are five levels above that require attention and efforts to acquire the safest status at Level 1.

However, Lewis and Simons (2010) argued that this suggested agenda for revitalisation and maintenance of minority languages is almost impossible, which is unattainable in majority language communities, even with external support.

Since its introduction, GIDS has provided new insights into the dynamics of language shift and its reversal. However, Lewis and Simons (2010) discovered several apparent flaws following its application in the context of language preservation, language revitalisation, and language development efforts. In addition, its application to particular situations has led to some restatement and reformulation of the levels, especially with regards to the higher levels in which the role, format, and nature of education are factors of significance. The following are several shortcomings in GIDS found by Lewis and Simons (2010). Firstly, the descriptions of GIDS disruption levels use fairly stagnant expressions. In its description of the changes that take place as intergenerational transmission is interrupted, the framework inadequately explains the directionality of language shift as opposed to language development. Lewis and Simons (2010) further debated that a speech community that is identified at Level 6 but moving towards Level 7, where language shift is in progress, needs a different set of interventions than one that is at Level 6 and moving towards Level 5, where language development is in progress. Hence, to facilitate these distinctions, GIDS requires an expansion at Level 6. Secondly, there are no sufficient descriptions on the possible statuses of languages in GIDS. For GIDS to function adequately as a framework, it needs to include several additional levels that must be distinguished to enable it to explain languages at any and all stages of their life cycle. Thirdly, language intergenerational transmission is distinctly identified by Fishman (1991) as the single most crucial factor in language shift. This denotes that individuals within the home domain and local community are the focus of language revitalisation efforts – that is, the clear case for Level 6 and below. Yet, above

Level 6, the increasingly significant role of institutions outside the home is observed as there is expansion in interaction and use. Levels 7 and below clearly deal with intergenerational disruption, while Levels 5 and above focus more on institutional development as drivers for securing ever-wider transmission. Although Fishman (1991) identified this distinction, there are no clear indications in most representations of the framework. In the expanded GIDS, as the community moves towards the strongest levels of language use on the scale, the important role of institutions and homes is made clearer, especially the higher-level institutions outside the home. Finally, also being most marked, even though Fishman's (1991) tool seemingly focuses on the disruption level where the disruption levels are the greatest, there is little elaboration at the lowest end of the scale. Its simpler set of categories may be applicable to explain language shift and loss, but not for the aims of evaluating language revitalisation. Thus, a more detailed set of categories is required that could assist the investigation of the latter. Upon identification of this limitation, Lewis and Simons (2010) proposed an elaborated assessment scale based on GIDS, which encompasses an expanded set of analytical categories with more distinct elements of societal factors that require research attention.

2.5.2 Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

Lewis and Simons (2010) incorporated elements from various existing standards to propose a new and more effective methodology called the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). The framework can address the needs of different regions of the world. The researchers expanded both the GIDS developed by Fishman (1991) and the UNESCO Language Endangerment Framework (2003) and proposed a harmonisation of their scales, comprising more levels of language

endangerment/vitality. Thus, Lewis and Simons (2010) presented 13 levels of language endangerment/vitality by introducing more distinctive categories to the languages, which are grouped as 'Safe' in the UNESCO Language Endangerment Framework (2003). The researchers also proposed the expanded version to develop an assessment scale that is more dynamic as compared to Fishman's eight-level GIDS. To facilitate and harmonise a large number of assessments, Lewis and Simons (2010) also proposed a diagnostic tree, which encompasses five key questions. The modifications include three entirely new levels: Level 0 (International), Level 9 (Dormant), and Level 10 (Extinct) – they describe languages at any and all stages of their life cycle. In addition, Level 6 is split into 6a (Vigorous) and 6b (Threatened), while Level 8 is further divided into 8a (Moribund) and 8b (Nearly Extinct). The splits are necessary to sufficiently deal with the directionality of language shift against the development of language. EGIDS has been used by language analysts in describing the disruption levels of the examined languages. Table 2.2 presents EGIDS, that also includes UNESCO's descriptors and factors for comparison.

Table 2.2: Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), adapted from Fishman (1991) (Lewis & Simons, 2010)

Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (adapted from Fishman 1991)*			
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	Trade	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	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.	Safe
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

Here, the vitality assessment of a language using the EGIDS levels is explained. EGIDS enables a language to be evaluated based on the answers to five key questions: identity function, vehicularity, state of intergenerational language transmission, literacy acquisition status, and a societal profile of generational language use (Lewis & Simons, 2010). These five key questions are as follows:

Key Question #1: What is the current identity function of the language?

Key Question #2: What is the level of official use?

Key Question #3: Are all parents transmitting the language to their children?

Key Question #4: What is the literacy status?

Key Question #5: What is the youngest generation of proficient speakers?

An assessment can be conducted by employing the five key questions and the decision tree diagram (see Figure 2.1), which will arrive at a description of each language community in terms of one of the EGIDS levels. In addition, some of the main factors that require attention in any language maintenance, revitalisation, or development can also be identified using the questions, which provide a reference for language planners to form an action plan for their efforts (Lewis & Simons, 2010).

Figure 2.1 presents an overview of a decision tree that serves as a guide in diagnosing and evaluating processes. Only five questions are encompassed in the decision tree. For the two levels at the bottom of the scale, it is adequately diagnostic to acquire an answer to only the first question. For the four levels at the top of the scale, it is mandatory to answer the first two questions. Meanwhile, only three questions must be answered to identify the EGIDS levels for the rest of the remaining cases. Although responses to the five key questions may well result in a good deal of research, the process is fairly focused. Hence, the research

should make it possible to create a much more thorough and rapid categorisation of the world's languages (Lewis & Simons, 2010).

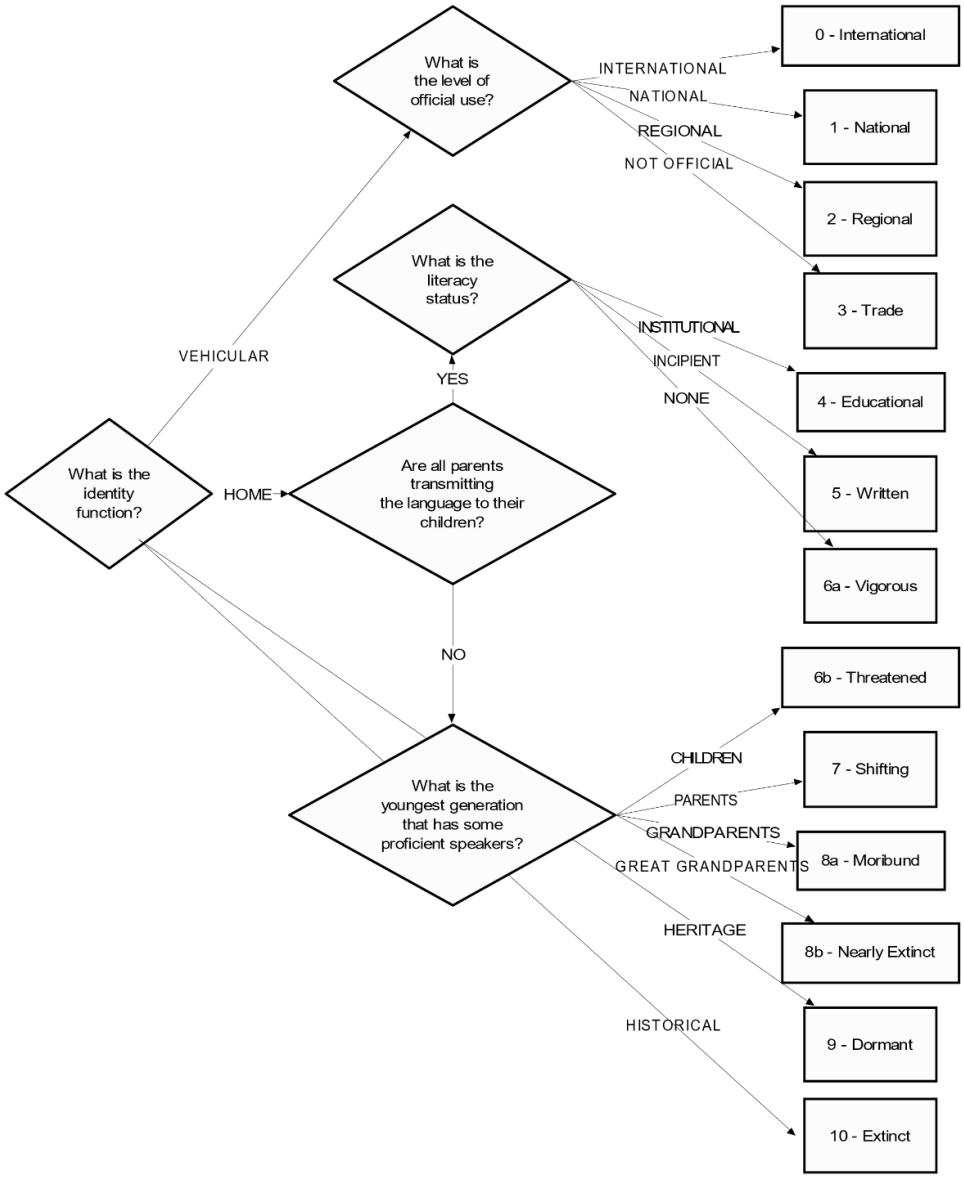


Figure 2.1: EGIDS Diagnostic Decision Tree (Lewis & Simmons, 2010)

2.5.3 UNESCO Language Endangerment Framework - The Nine Factors

As mentioned earlier, this current study adopted UNESCO's Language Endangerment Framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003). There are nine factors in the framework that are used to measure a language's vitality. Even though the framework does not pledge comprehensive precision, much research has benefited from its quantitative nature that can determine the level of a language's endangerment. Akter (2014) argued that developing a concise and broadly applicable framework to assess a language's endangerment has proven challenging due to the complex phenomenon of dynamic interaction between language and society. Hence, using the UNESCO framework provides a quantitative nature that can precisely determine the level of a language's endangerment, and which findings are 'reasonable' and 'feasible'. According to Puthuval (2016), one of the great strengths in the UNESCO framework is its capability to guide future research and language revitalisation work. By breaking language vitality and endangerment down into multiple dimensions, the framework enables evaluators to focus on one thing at a time, which prevents a language's weakness in one dimension from being unnoticed or overshadowed by strengths in another dimension, and vice versa. Simultaneously, this allows the evaluators to triangulate across different factors and note the interactions between them, making more effective strategies for language revitalisation. In addition, important gaps in the information available about the situation of a language can also be revealed when the dimensions are separated (Puthuval, 2016). Similarly, Labrada (2017) found the UNESCO framework useful due to its granularity, particularly the attention given to a group of factors that has constantly been proven in research to impact language, such as community attitudes and the amount and quality of existing documentation.

UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003) establishes six degrees of vitality/endangerment based on nine factors. The most prominent feature is intergenerational transmission, which pertains to whether or not a language is used in the family. Fishman (1991) stated that this factor is commonly acknowledged as the gold standard of researching the vitality of languages. In addition, compared to the assessment in EGIDS, the tool is made simpler that may pose a caveat. EGIDS does not consider the absolute or relative speaker numbers, community language attitudes, government policies, and existing documentation (Dwyer, 2011). UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment framework comprises a set of governing factors that enables a speech community or outsiders to measure the vitality or endangerment of a language. It is an alternative framework for evaluating the status and vitality of endangered languages, structured as a set of nine factors. Each of the nine factors is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 is the safest and 0 is the most endangered. The factors are sub-categorised into three groups: vitality factors (1-6), attitudinal factors (7-8), and the documentation factor (9). Each factor has its own 0-5 scale, and each is to be evaluated separately. The intergenerational transmission factor from Fishman's (1991) GIDS is retained in the UNESCO framework. Moreover, the framework also includes new elements for measuring the important influence of language attitudes towards a language's vitality. As documentary materials are considered important in the framework, whether or not they exist, this aspect is also included to determine the exigency of counter-measures to language attrition (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011). The nine major factors are as follows:

Factor 1: Intergenerational language transmission

Factor 2: Absolute number of speakers

Factor 3: Proportion of speakers within the total population

Factor 4: Trends in existing language domains

Factor 5: Response to new domains and media

Factor 6: Materials for language education and literacy

Factor 7: Language attitudes and policies

Factor 8: Community members' attitudes towards their own language

Factor 9: Amount and quality of documentation

The following section presents detailed descriptions of the scoring mechanism of the UNESCO framework.

2.5.3.1 Factor 1 – Intergenerational Language Transmission

Of the nine major factors, Factor 1 - Intergenerational Language Transmission (see Table 2.4), is the most significant element in the UNESCO framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Lewis & Simons, 2010). Endangerment can be ranked on a continuum from stability to extinction. For a language to receive grade 5 and be categorised as Safe, it must be used by all ages of the speech community and transmitted from one generation to the next. The language is considered stronger if there is more transmission occurring in the community (Akter, 2014; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.3: Factor 1 – Intergenerational Language Transmission

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Speaker Population
safe	5	The language is used by all ages, from children up.
unsafe	4	The language is used by some children in all domains; it is used by all children in limited domains.
definitively endangered	3	The language is used mostly by the parental generation and up.
severely endangered	2	The language is used mostly by the grandparental generation and up.
critically endangered	1	The language is used mostly by very few speakers of the great-grandparental generation.
extinct	0	There exists no speaker.

2.5.3.2 Factor 2 – Absolute Number of Speakers

Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that it is impossible to obtain a valid interpretation of the absolute numbers of speakers. Having mentioned that, a small speech community is much more at risk of annihilation due to elements, such as ailment, warfare, or natural disaster, as compared to a larger one. A small speech community may lose its ethnic language and culture if it merges with a neighbouring group. In addition, a language is critically endangered if it only has very few speakers using it. The absolute number of speakers can be misrepresentative due to two main reasons. Firstly, many sources will confuse population numbers with speaker numbers, resulting in a large overestimate of speakers. Secondly, language groups can have even a million speakers, but if other factors, such as intergenerational transmission, and/or literacy/education/media in the language are absent, a language can still be at risk of endangerment. Thus, Factor 1 (intergenerational transmission) and Factor 3 (proportion of speakers within the total population) should be compared to make the absolute number of speakers more meaningful. Moreover, a reference date, a source, and

the reliability of the source should also be documented (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

2.5.3.3 Factor 3 – Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Population

The number of speakers in relation to the total population of a group provides a more important indicator of language vitality than the absolute number of speaker population (see Table 2.5) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.4: Factor 3 – Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Proportion of Speakers Within the Total Reference Population
safe	5	All speak the language.
unsafe	4	Nearly all speak the language.
definitively endangered	3	A majority speaks the language.
severely endangered	2	A minority speaks the language.
critically endangered	1	Very few speak the language.
extinct	0	None speaks the language.

2.5.3.4 Factor 4 – Trends in Existing Language Domains

For Factor 4, where and with whom the language is used, and for what range of topics it is used are elements that need to be determined by language assessors. The more consistently and persistently a language is used, the stronger it is in terms of vitality. An ideal language is one that is used universally in all domains (universal use) (see Table 2.6) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.5: UNESCO Factor 4 – Trends in Existing Language Domains

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	Domains and Functions
universal use	5	The language is used in all domains and for all functions
multilingual parity	4	Two or more languages may be used in most social domains and for most functions.
dwindling domains	3	The language is in home domains and for many functions, but the dominant language begins to penetrate even home domains.
limited or formal domains	2	The language is used in limited social domains and for several functions.
highly limited domains	1	The language is used only in very restricted domains and for very few functions.
extinct	0	The language is not used in any domain and for any function.

2.5.3.5 Factor 5 – Response to New Domains and Media

New language domains may transpire as the living conditions of the community change. Some language communities have achieved success in spreading their ethnic language into the new domains, while most have failed in doing so. Education premises (schools and higher learning institutions), new work settings, and new media (broadcast media and the Internet) only generally function to spread the scope and authority of the dominant language at the expense of endangered languages. A speech community may become irrelevant and stigmatised if it fails to meet the challenges of modernity with its language. In conducting an assessment of an endangered language, it is imperative to consider the community's responses to all new domains (employment, education, or the media) (see Table 2.7) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.6: Factor 5 – Response to New Domains and Media

Degree of Endangerment	Grade	New Domains and Media Accepted by the Endangered Language
dynamic	5	The language is used in all new domains.
robust/active	4	The language is used in most new domains.
receptive	3	The language is used in many domains.
coping	2	The language is used in some new domains.
minimal	1	The language is used only in a few new domains.
inactive	0	The language is not used in any new domains.

2.5.3.6 Factor 6 – Materials for Language Education and Literacy

For language vitality, education in the language is essential, whereby having instruction in the relevant language for the school day period is far preferable to having instruction in a dominant language, with an occasional hour per day or week of the relevant language as a subject language. Some language communities maintain their strong oral traditions, while some do not wish their language to be written. In addition, some communities take pride in their ethnic language. However, literacy is directly associated with social and economic development. Books and materials are required, which cover all topics catering to various ages and language abilities. A language will receive grade 5 if education is carried out in the language, with plenty of materials in both spoken and printed forms. The more assortments of resources in the language are employed for education, the stronger the language is (see Table 2.8) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.7: Factor 6 – Materials for Language Education and Literacy

Grade	Accessibility of Written Materials
5	There is an established orthography, literacy tradition with grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and everyday media. Writing in the language is used in administration and education.
4	Written materials exist, and at school, children are developing literacy in the language. Writing in the language is not used in administration.
3	Written materials exist and children may be exposed to the written form at school. Literacy is not promoted through print media.
2	Written materials exist, but they may only be useful for some members of the community, and for others, they may have a symbolic significance. Literacy education in the language is not a part of the school curriculum.
1	A practical orthography is known to the community, and some material is being written.
0	No orthography available to the community.

2.5.3.7 Factor 7 – Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, including Official Status and Use

This factor focuses on the attitudes of those external to the language community towards the relevant language. There are overt policies and implied attitudes of the government and institutions with respect to dominant and subordinate languages. A region or nation in which the use of all languages is supported for public domains (in media, education, business, and government) would receive grade 5. The more positive official attitudes and policies are towards the language of the community, the stronger the language is (see Table 2.9) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.8: Factor 7 – Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes and Policies, Including Official Status and Use

Degree of Support	Grade	Official Attitudes towards Language
equal support	5	All languages are protected.
differentiated support	4	Minority languages are protected primarily as the language of private domains. The use of the language is prestigious.
passive assimilation	3	No explicit policy exists for minority languages; the dominant language prevails in the public domain.
active assimilation	2	The government encourages assimilation to the dominant language. There is no protection for minority languages.
forced assimilation	1	The dominant language is the sole official language, while non-dominant languages are neither recognised nor protected.
prohibition	0	Minority languages are prohibited.

2.5.3.8 Factor 8 – Community Members' Attitudes Towards Their Own Languages

This factor deals with the attitudes of those internal to the language community towards the relevant language. Speech communities may not usually be neutral towards their ethnic language. Some community members may view their language as crucial to their community and identity, thus promoting its use. When the attitudes towards the language are very positive, members of the speech community may see the language as a key symbol of their group identity. Moreover, they may see their ethnic language as a cultural core value, which is crucial to their community and ethnic identity. On the contrary, if the language is perceived as a barrier to economic progress and assimilation into mainstream society, the community members may form negative attitudes towards their ethnic language. The more positive their attitudes are and the prouder they are towards the language and its traditions, the stronger the language is (see Table 2.10) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.9: Factor 8 – Community Members' Attitudes Towards Their Own Language

Grade	Community Attitudes towards Language
5	All members value their language and wish to see it promoted.
4	Most members support language maintenance.
3	Many members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
2	Some members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
1	Only a few members support language maintenance; others are indifferent or may even support language loss.
0	No one cares if the language is lost; all prefer to use a dominant language.

2.5.3.9 Factor 9 – Amount and Quality of Documentation

The type and quality of existing language materials must be identified as a guide to measure the urgency of language documentation. For this factor, ideally, a language community would have plenty of resources that are well-documented, transcribed, translated, and analysed, which comprise comprehensive grammar and dictionaries, extensive texts, as well as copious annotated high-quality records of audio and videos. The more historical and modern language resources there are, the stronger the language is. Furthermore, Factor 9 measures the urgency of (further) documentation. Along with assessments from other factors above it, communities or governments will be able to focus on maintenance, revitalisation, and documentation of the language. The language community members can formulate particular tasks based on the type and quality of existing materials. In addition, linguists can design research projects along with the members of the speech community. The materials also assist non-government organisations (NGOs) to

devise ways to support documentation efforts (see Table 2.11) (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Table 2.11: Factor 9 – Amount and Quality of Documentation

Documentation	Grade	Language Documentation
superlative	5	There are comprehensive grammars and dictionaries, extensive texts, constant flow of language materials. Abundant annotated high-quality audio and video recordings exist.
good	4	There are one good grammar and a number of adequate grammars, dictionaries, texts, literature, and occasionally updated everyday media; adequate annotated high-quality audio and video recordings.
fair	3	There may be adequate grammar or a sufficient amount of grammar books, dictionaries, and texts, but no everyday media; audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality or degree of annotation.
fragmentary	2	There are some grammatical sketches, word lists, and texts useful for limited linguistic research, but with inadequate coverage. Audio and video recordings may exist in varying quality, with or without any annotation.
inadequate	1	Only a few grammatical sketches, short word-lists, and fragmentary texts. Audio and video recordings do not exist, are of unusable quality, or are completely unannotated.
undocumented	0	No material exists.

There are a few important caveats in the UNESCO framework. Brenzinger et al. (2003, p. 7) noted that "no single factor alone can be used to assess a language's vitality or its need for documentation." In measuring language vitality, the nine factors are proposed to be collectively applied to the assessment. Caution is also asserted against treating all factors as equally important, adding together a language's grades for each factor, and then comparing languages based on these simple quantitative results. Exclusive local conditions may cause one factor to be more important to language vitality than others, while the assessor compares unweighted quantitative results that may certainly generate an estimated degree of vitality. Hence, Brenzinger et al. (2003) proposed that factor weighting should be considered

in the assessment. The UNESCO approach needs a fairly detailed on-site local and national survey of language use, whereby much of this information can be acquired in multiple sociolinguistic surveys on a small scale. However, some data, for instance, the proportion of speakers in a population, are unavailable from the national censuses or cannot be realistically acquired by a small language survey team. For these cases, assessors of language use must then make an informed approximation in accordance with the interviews, as well as local or national sources (Dwyer, 2011).

The UNESCO framework has been successfully used in past studies on indigenous languages' vitality in Malaysia, as mentioned in the section of this chapter. These studies managed to obtain important data that provide insights into the strengths and challenges that these languages have to face. Dani and Seruji (2024) found that in the Bisaya community of Sabah, the younger speakers' preference for the Bisaya language is rapidly changing as a result of Malay's increasing dominance. Social factors that promote the adoption of Malay over minority languages in Sabah aggravate this shift among the youngsters. Akter (2014) identified the Remun language in Sarawak as endangered. Even though Remun is not at immediate risk of extinction, it is "an unstable polyglossic community with a declining trend of intergenerational language transmission" (Akter, 2014, p. 26). Likewise, Mohamed and Hashim (2012) evaluated the language status of the Sihan using the UNESCO framework and identified that Sihan is "stable yet threatened." Although Sihan is extensively used in the family and agricultural domains, it has minimal importance in the education and government domains due to the dominance of Malay and English. The mentioned studies emphasise a strong community connection to their languages, which suggests revitalisation potential if pre-emptive measures are carried out. As well, the UNESCO framework has proven useful in assessing languages' vitality in other parts of the world, namely, Arem in Vietnam,

Gochang in China, Mako in Venezuela, and Azerbaijani Turkish in Iran. Using the UNESCO framework, Nguyen et al. (2023) found that Arem is the most "conservative" among the Viet group in Vietnam. At present, Arem is a critically endangered language based on the UNESCO assessment criteria. Meanwhile, Roche and Tsomu (2018) identified that Gochang in China is "definitely endangered". The researchers regarded Gochang as "invisible" – a language that the ethnic and linguistic policies overlook, resulting in its vulnerability to societal changes brought forth by development. On the contrary, Labrada (2017) demonstrated that the Mako language in Venezuela is not in a dire state as previous research has claimed. Mako is found to play a crucial role in its local environment. However, the researchers asserted that the language is at risk due to its position in regional and national settings. In Iran, Nouri (2015) found that intergenerational language transmission of Azerbaijani Turkish in the country is significantly disrupted. Azerbaijani Turkish loses the majority of its domains in the immigrant families to Persian. Currently, although Azerbaijani Turkish is not endangered, it is pressured by Persian as the dominant language in Iran.

In a nutshell, Lewis (2005) stated that the UNESCO framework is "reasonable and feasible", which embodies a valuable "research agenda" for researchers in language studies. Maffi (2005) also agreed on the relevance of the framework in providing researchers with useful guidance for assessing linguistic vitality for the development of linguistic diversity indicators. Brenzinger et al. (2003) emphasised the need to use the nine factors for a comprehensive assessment of language vitality/endangerment. Using the UNESCO framework, researchers have managed to identify varying degrees of language vitality status across nations, revealing the challenges and issues that ethnic languages have to encounter. From the mentioned studies, there were similarities and differences found in the research findings. In terms of similarities, the dominance of national or more commonly spoken

languages, such as Malay in Malaysia (Dani & Seruji, 2024; Akter, 2014; Mohamed & Hashim, 2012), Vietnamese and Ma Coong in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2023), Mandarin in China (Roche & Tsomu, 2018), Spanish in Venezuela (Labrada, 2017), and Persian in Iran (Nouri, 2015), puts smaller linguistic groups at risk in every region examined. The studies also highlight that intergenerational language transmission is declining in the family domains as younger speakers favour dominant languages for socio-economic reasons. Furthermore, community members' attitudes towards their native languages show a mixed attitude. Even though many express they would like to preserve their mother tongues, social, educational, and economic pressures have caused them to shift towards dominant languages. In terms of differences, there are wide variations in the degree of government support for minority languages. In contrast to China's strict Mandarin promotion (Roche & Tsomu, 2018), Malaysia, for example, has taken some steps to preserve its indigenous languages. Moreover, strong community ties help maintain language use in some areas, such as Sarawak in Malaysia, in spite of outside influences (Akter, 2014). Communities in Venezuela (Labrada, 2017), on the other hand, might not have this kind of unified identity because of political instability. Hence, this analysis drawn for the UNESCO framework emphasises the necessity for focused interventions that take into account both social dynamics and the linguistic heritage of languages across various locations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design, the participants, the data collection instrument, the conceptual framework of the study, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

The study used an online questionnaire and non-participant observations, combining a mixed-method approach. This mixed research method was chosen primarily for its pragmatic approach, which emphasises using multiple approaches and data types to obtain the best possible understanding of a complex research problem (Creswell, 2014). Incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data allows researchers to explore different dimensions of the issue, leading to richer and insightful data in a single study (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2014). In addition, mixed methods harness the strengths of both qualitative approaches, such as exploring meanings, experiences, and context, and quantitative approaches, such as measurement, testing, and generalisability). By combining these strengths, the study can balance depth with breadth, enhancing validity and reliability. Furthermore, Terrel (2011) also argued that mixed methods emerged as a response to the "paradigm wars" that historically separated qualitative and quantitative research. By bridging these paradigms, mixed methods resolve their respective limitations and present a more holistic mode of inquiry, making it very suitable when neither qualitative nor quantitative approaches alone can fully address the research questions.

In this study, the questionnaire serves as a valuable tool for collecting data on the respondents' perceptions regarding their own language use, as well as their attitudes towards the Iban language. This data primarily depends on the respondents' self-reports, reflecting how they view and interpret their language practices and sentiments in relation to the Iban language. However, self-reported data can sometimes be limited by factors, such as social desirability bias, memory recall issues, or subjective interpretation. Hence, to address these limitations and to gain a deeper, more accurate insight into language use, the study also incorporated non-participant observation. This method involved carefully observing the participants without direct interaction or influence, allowing researchers to witness real-life language behaviours as they naturally unfold in various settings, such as at home, in educational environments, workplaces, and during social interactions. Through these observations, the study aimed to uncover actual language use patterns and contextual dynamics that participants might not explicitly report or even be consciously aware of when answering questionnaires. Thus, while the questionnaire captures subjective perceptions and attitudes, the observations reveal objective and authentic language practices across different social domains, enriching the overall findings of the research.

Figure 3.1 presents the conceptual framework of this study, which is developed based on the UNESCO framework (Brenzinger, 2003) that comprises nine factors on language vitality/endangerment. The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality, based on Giles et al. (1977) (status, demographics, and institutional support), is incorporated into UNESCO's framework. The connection between the two frameworks is explained here. Language use captures patterns of Iban use across family, outside-home, and social/new media domains, addressing traditional and emerging contexts of language transmission. Language attitudes are also included to measure the Iban community members' beliefs, feelings, and values

towards their ethnic language's instrumental value and status, influencing motivation for language maintenance or shift. The sociolinguistic setting distinguishes between Iban-dominant and non-dominant areas, recognising how population density and regional differences affect language use and attitudes. Furthermore, to ensure comprehensive findings, the framework employs both questionnaire data, which gather subjective perceptions, and non-participant observations, which provide objective evidence of actual language behaviour. This triangulation method improves reliability and validity by cross-verifying self-reports with observed practices across various domains.

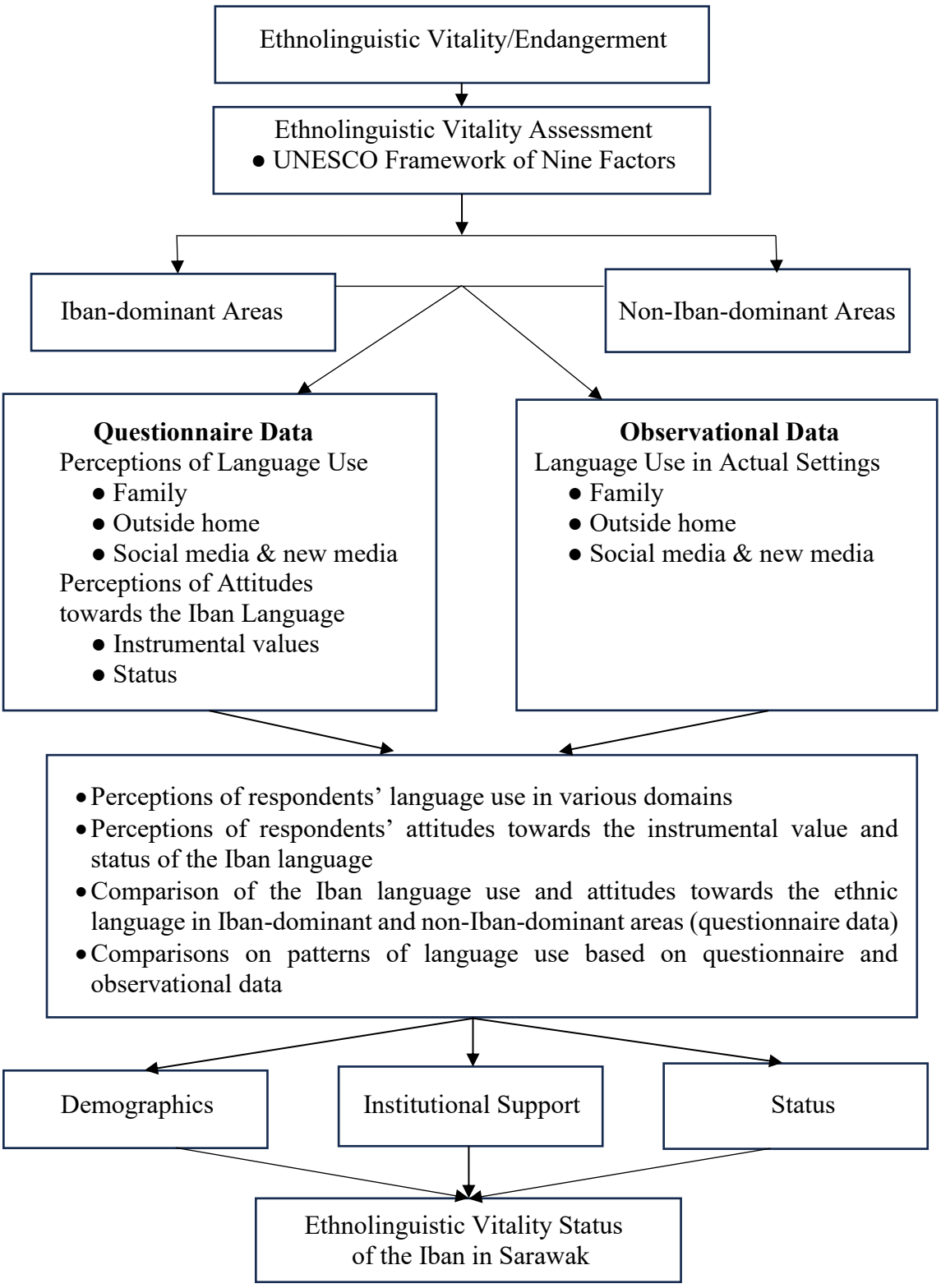


Figure 3.1: The Conceptual Framework of the Study

In alignment with the conceptual framework, the questionnaire is carefully constructed to reflect and operationalise the UNESCO nine factors relevant to language vitality. It collects demographic information, such as age, geographic location (differentiating between Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas), and ethnic lineage to capture population distribution and sociolinguistic settings. This demographic data is crucial for understanding the community context of Iban speakers. Moreover, the questionnaire probes into language use domains by asking respondents to report the frequency and patterns of their Iban language use within the family, outside the home, and in social and new media contexts. This design directly corresponds to UNESCO's focus on existing language domains as well as emerging platforms that influence language transmission and maintenance. The instrument also assesses language attitudes towards Iban by eliciting respondents' beliefs, feelings, and values regarding their ethnic language. Focused items on the instrumental value and perceived status of the language align with UNESCO's emphasis on community attitudes as critical to language vitality.

Finally, questions about institutional support and language status are included to capture respondents' perceptions of governmental and institutional backing for Iban, as well as the social prestige associated with using the language. These items implicitly address UNESCO factors related to institutional attitudes and language policy, which can significantly influence language vitality. Table 3.1 presents the flow to the questionnaire, which illustrates how the nine UNESCO factors are integrated into the conceptual. Each factor is measured by corresponding questionnaire questions or observational data that capture demographic information, language usage patterns, attitudes towards the language, and perceptions of institutional backing.

Table 3.1: Flow to the questionnaire design

UNESCO Nine Factors	Incorporation	Operationalisation
Intergenerational language transmission	Language use factor	Questions on language in the family domains and observation of actual use
Absolute number and proportion of speakers	Sociolinguistic setting (Iban-dominant vs. non-Iban-dominant areas)	Demographic questions, regional respondent sampling
Trends in language domains	Language use factor	Self-reports and observations on language use outside of home domains
Response to new domains and media	Language use domains	Self-reports and observations on language use in social media and new media domains
Institutional attitudes & support	Attitude and institutional Support factors	Questionnaire items on support, policy, community backing
Language community attitudes	Language attitude factor	Respondents' perceptions on language status and values
Documentation and materials	Part of institutional support and vitality	Questions on the possession of Iban materials

The online questionnaire, prepared in Google Form, was used to collect data as the quantitative part of the mixed-method employed. Dewaele (2018) stated that the prevalent availability of the Internet has assisted the development of web-based tools for researchers at all levels, ranging from undergraduates who collect data for small research projects to master's students who gather information for their dissertations, and Ph.D. students who gather large amounts of quantitative data for their theses. Even established researchers use these web-based tools, such as Google Forms and SurveyMonkey, to reach out to the general public and collect data for their research projects (Dewaele, 2018). Hence, using the online questionnaire in this current study was not solely for its systematic and thorough manner of assessing the Iban language's ethnolinguistic vitality; it also enabled the researcher to reach broader and more diverse Iban speakers in the Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas of Sarawak. This helped increase the sample size and enhance the data representativeness.

The online questionnaire was used to collect data on the respondents' demographic background, language use, and attitudes in three selected domains, namely, family domains, outside the home domains, and social media and new media domains. For the questionnaire data, the selection of Iban participants for this study was based on several key criteria that ensured the relevance and representativeness of the sample. Firstly, the participants must be of Iban origin, whether through their father's, mother's, or both parents' lineage, to guarantee that they have a legitimate cultural and linguistic connection to the Iban community. This criterion is essential for accurately capturing authentic language use and attitudes within the group. Secondly, the age range of 18 to 60 years was chosen to encompass a broad spectrum of adult speakers, including young adults who may be influenced by modern social factors and older individuals who may reflect more traditional language practices. This range helps in understanding language dynamics across different generations. Lastly, the inclusion of participants from both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak allows the study to explore the sociolinguistic impact of varying community language densities on language use and attitudes. By comparing these distinct settings, the study can better assess how environmental and community factors influence the vitality and patterns of the Iban language. Overall, these selection criteria ensure that the participants are well-positioned to provide comprehensive and meaningful insights into the linguistic landscape of the Iban community.

On the other hand, for the non-participant observations of actual language use among the Iban participants, the criteria and selection of interactions/events to observe were guided by the goal of capturing authentic, natural language behaviour across various social domains. Specifically, observations were likely focused on settings where the Iban language is typically used, such as within family environments (e.g., residential homes), among peers

outside the home (e.g., offices), in community (e.g. hospitals, shop, and market) or social media and new media contexts (e.g., Facebook posts and WhatsApp texts) related to everyday social interactions. These domains reflect where actual language use can reveal patterns that might not be fully disclosed in self-reported questionnaire data. In addition, the criteria for choosing which interactions or events to observe would include relevance to the participants' daily life and different social settings, namely, home, school, workplace, market, social gatherings, and media usage, particularly in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak. The intention was to document naturalistic language use events that reflect genuine communication in the Iban language, without the researcher's interference, enabling a more accurate picture of language vitality, use frequency, and contextual language choice dynamics. The observation events were therefore selected to provide evidence about intergenerational transmission and domain-specific use manifested in actual practice (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016; Unluer, 2012).

Furthermore, for the non-participant observations concerning the actual language use of the Iban participants in Sarawak, an important advantage was that the researcher was an Iban insider with direct access to the Iban community. This insider status facilitated smoother and more natural observations, as the researcher was already familiar with the Iban culture, social customs, and language practices of the community. Being a member of the Iban community enabled the researcher to navigate social settings with ease, gain the trust of participants, and observe authentic language behaviours without causing disruption or suspicion. This embedded position allowed the researcher to capture subtle interactional patterns and unspoken cultural norms that might be overlooked or inaccessible to an outsider. Moreover, established relationships and shared cultural understanding helped in selecting relevant interactions and events that reflect genuine language use across diverse social

domains, including family, social media, and community settings in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. Overall, the researcher's insider perspective enhanced the accuracy, depth, and contextual sensitivity of the observational data, contributing to a richer understanding of real-life language use among the Iban people in Sarawak.

There are several other reasons for adopting the online questionnaire in this study. Firstly, the online questionnaire is time-efficient as it allows respondents to complete the Google Forms at the time most convenient for them (Ha, 2022). Since there is no time constraint, the respondents can carefully consider the questions and their answers, which allows them to think more deeply about the questionnaire items; thus, making the research process more introspective. Online questionnaires can be completed at the respondents' convenience, in contrast to time-constrained settings like in-person interviews. This also allows flexibility, enabling a wider range of participation that contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of language vitality. Secondly, as massive data can be collected within a short period from a large number of respondents, using online questionnaires is relatively cost-effective (Kabir, 2016). Compared to other data collection methods, such as focus groups or face-to-face interviews that may include greater logistical costs and participant incentives, the costs of creating and distributing questionnaires online are typically lower (Ha, 2022). Thirdly, online questionnaires provide anonymity and confidentiality for getting the respondents' informed consent, which ensures the privacy of personal information in the study (Habibullah et al., 2022; Kang & Hwang, 2023). In the current study, the respondents' confidentiality was assured by not requesting their names, emails, or contact information. In the consent form, the respondents were assured that all responses in the questionnaires were solely for research purposes. Furthermore, since online questionnaires do not involve face-to-face interactions, respondents are not pressured to

participate or worry about being judged, which enhances the honesty levels in responses. Besides, when the interviewer is absent, this can reduce bias that can affect respondents' answers. The respondents are also less likely to be persuaded to exaggerate their answers in order to appease the questionnaire's creators since there are no social consequences for taking part (Dörnyei, 2007; Ong & Weiss, 2000). Fourthly, online questionnaires provide convenience to the researcher in collecting the responses, as after the launch of questionnaires, they function on their own without input from the researcher. They keep count of the respondents' number until enough data are gathered to begin harvesting, where the data are downloaded into a spreadsheet (Dewaele, 2018). Fifthly, this current study used the online questionnaire for data collection due to social distancing measures and lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the conduct of this research, travel restrictions and distancing guidelines were imposed as a means to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the online questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect data without face-to-face contact. Besides, it was also cost-effective and time-efficient, allowing data collection without interview requirements (Habibullah et al., 2022; Singh & Sagar, 2021). Finally, the use of an online questionnaire via Google Forms ensures completeness of responses. The Google Form provides functions or features that are useful to ensure responses are complete before submission. Before moving on to the following question, the respondent must answer a mandatory response; thus, avoiding questions left unanswered. The overall quality of the data is further enhanced by this completeness (Ha, 2022).

Non-participant observations were also carried out to observe the participants' actual behaviours of their language use in the three domains. This qualitative approach involves the researcher observing a group, a social environment, or people without taking part in the events under study. The use of this approach in this study is beneficial for two main reasons.

Firstly, by using non-participant observation, events can be examined in their natural settings without the researcher's interference with the ongoing activities. This is especially important in settings where active participation could interfere with the normal course of events. Richer data can be collected that reflects actual interactions (Parke & Griffiths, 2008). Secondly, non-participant observation enables the researcher to maintain a more objective view of the phenomenon under study since the direct detachment avoids biases, which could come from a personal involvement in the observed situation. Employing the detached approach enables more authentic data as participants are less likely to alter their behaviour while the observer is present. Non-participant observation can highlight differences between people's statements and actions, leading to a more complex comprehension of social dynamics (Cooper, Lewis, & Urquhart, 2004; Williams, 2008).

3.2 Participants

There were two categories of participants in this study: (1) the participants from the online questionnaire, and (2) the participants from non-participant observations. The following section presents the details of the participants.

3.2.1 Participants from the Questionnaire

The total number of participants from the online questionnaire was 1,276. However, after careful assessment of the participants' background information, 72 responses were removed as the participants did not fulfill the requirement for the reason that they are not Iban – neither the father nor the mother is of Iban descent. The study adopted purposive sampling in selecting the participants; thus, to participate in the questionnaire, it required only speakers of Iban origin. Table 3.2 summarises the demographic information of the Iban

participants from the questionnaire. After a careful selection, the data of 1,204 Iban participants were taken for the study. In determining the location of the respondents, they were asked to specify the town of their birth and their current place of residence. Providing the names of these towns helps indicate whether they originate from, or currently live in, areas predominantly inhabited by the Iban community or in non-Iban-dominant regions. Of this number, 63.70% (*n*=767) were from non-Iban-dominant areas (where the Iban population is larger than other ethnic groups, namely, Sri Aman, Miri, Saratok, Lubok Antu, Kapit, etc.), and 36.30% (*n*=437) were from Iban-dominant areas (where the percentage of Iban people is low, namely, Kuching, Samarahan, Betong, Limbang, Sibu, Sarikei, etc.).

Table 3.1 shows that almost equal numbers of female and male participants were involved in the questionnaire; 53.1% female (*n* = 639) and 46.9% male (*n* = 46.9). The age of the participants ranged from 19 years old and below to 60 years old and above, with the largest percentage of participants aged 20-29 years old. For marital status, 40.7% of the participants (*n* = 490) reported being single, while 55.2% (*n* = 665) and 4.1% (*n* = 49) of them reported being married and divorced/widow/widowed, respectively. A large percentage of the participants are Christians, 92.5% (*n* = 1114). Of the total sample, 43.5% (*n* = 524) reported that they are government servants, whereas 25.8% (*n* = 311) stated that they worked in the private sector. Meanwhile, small percentages of the participants also reported being homemakers, retirees, self-employed, and unemployed. Furthermore, 17.9% (*n* = 216) of the participants were students. In addition, the participants' monthly income varied, ranging from less than RM2,000 to RM10,000 and above. Some participants also reported not working, which was due to them being students or unemployed. A majority of the participants (59.4%, *n* = 715) were bachelor's degree holders or possessed higher education

attainment, while the rest of the participants' highest level of educational qualification ranged from Primary 6 to diploma level.

Table 3.2: Participants' demographic profiles from the online questionnaire (*n*=1204)

Demographic Profiles		**Frequency *n*=1204**	**Percentage %**
Current town of residency	Iban-dominant areas	437	36.3
	Non-Iban-dominant areas	767	63.7
Gender	Female	639	53.1
	Male	565	46.9
Age	19 years old and below	67	5.6
	20 – 29 years old	378	31.4
	30 – 39 years old	237	19.7
	40 – 49 years old	275	22.8
	50 – 59 years old	202	16.8
	60 years old and above	45	3.7
Marital Status	Single	490	40.7
	Married	665	55.2
	Divorced/Widow/Widower	49	4.1
Religion	Christian	1114	92.5
	Muslim	59	4.9
	Other	9	0.7
	Bahai	6	0.5
	Buddhist	5	0.4
	Hindu	1	0.1
	No religion	10	0.8
Current Job	Civil Servant	524	43.5
	Private Servant	311	25.8
	Homemaker	40	3.3
	Retiree	37	3.1
	Self-employed	31	2.6
	Student	216	17.9
	Unemployed	45	3.7
Monthly Income	Less than RM2,000	107	8.9
	RM2,000-RM3,999	268	22.3
	RM4,000-RM5,999	192	15.9
	RM6,000-RM7,999	181	15.0
	RM8,000-RM9,999	76	6.3
	RM10,000 and above	84	7.0
	Not working	296	24.6
Highest Level of Educational Qualification	Primary 6	5	0.4
	Form 3	18	1.5
	Form 5	132	11.0
	Form 6	75	6.2
	Certificate	26	2.2
	Diploma	233	19.4
	Degree and higher	715	59.4

3.2.2 Participants from Non-Participant Observations

The non-participant observation involved 102 participants in three selected domains. For the family domains, 32 participants were observed: 16 from Iban-dominant areas, and 16 from non-Iban-dominant areas. The participants included parents, spouses, children, siblings, grandparents, and relatives.

For language use outside the home domains, 39 participants were involved: 17 from Iban-dominant areas, and 22 from non-Iban-dominant areas. These interactants comprised neighbours, friends, classmates, and workmates. In addition, the observations were also carried out on the participants' language use for prayers, as well as at government departments (hospitals) and shops (market). For language use in the social media and new media domains, 31 participants were observed: 15 from Iban-dominant areas, and 16 from non-Iban-dominant areas. The new domains include language use in emails for work communication, searching or reading Internet information, in social media communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), and for writing SMS or WhatsApp texts.

3.3 Instrument

The study employed two types of instruments: a set of questionnaires and an observation guide sheet. The following section provides details on the instruments used for collecting data.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was used to investigate the Iban language's ethnolinguistic vitality, focusing on the speakers' language use and attitudes. The questionnaire items were

based on UNESCO's nine criteria for assessing language vitality/endangerment (Lewis 2006, 4; Brenzinger et al., 2003). UNESCO's nine factors characterise the overall sociolinguistic situation of a language, where each factor has a unique predominance level in which its essence is measured in conjunction with one another. The quantitative nature of the tool accurately assesses the level of a language's vitality or endangerment. Lewis (2005) experimented with the tool on 100 languages from all corners of the world and found its application practical and sufficient in research.

Factor analysis was run to test the validity of the questionnaire, where it revealed 20 components explaining 80.81% of the variance. For internal consistency/reliability, the evaluation measure was found reliable and consistent at Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .722, which is an acceptable internal consistency (more than the cut-off value α = .700) (Igbaria et al., 1994). As for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), the total variance explained test (with an eigenvalue of 1.00 or higher) on the item-grouping or pattern loadings revealed 80.809% of the variance in the items, specifically in the items' variance-covariance matrix. Variance should not be less than 60% for the data to be considered useful. Thus, the data in the study were highly useful and reliable (Hair et al., 2014).

The questionnaire was prepared both in English and Malay for ease of respondents' understanding. It comprised 80 items arranged in 11 SECTIONS: demographic questions, multiple choice questions, rating scale questions, and Likert scale questions, tailored to the UNESCO framework. The following presents the sections:

Section A: Background Information

Section B: Iban Language Skills

Section C: Malay Language Skills

Section D: English Language Skills

Section E: Language Use in Family

Section F: Language Use Outside Home

Section G: Language Use in New Media

Section H: Attitudes towards Iban

Section I: Formal Use of Iban

Section J: Iban Speakers in Sarawak

Section K: Iban Materials in My Home

Section A contains items concerning the respondents' background information. These items consist of the town where they were born and are living currently, gender, age, race, parents' race, marital status, spouse's race (if married), religion, current job, household monthly income, and highest level of educational qualification.

Section B has items on the respondents' Iban language skills. Questions include the language they first learned as a child, whether they and their children learned Iban in school, how they first learned Iban, and their perceived proficiency in speaking, following conversations, reading the content of printed materials (e.g., books, newspapers, articles, and magazines), and writing in Iban.

Sections C and D consist of items on the respondents' language skills in Malay and English, respectively. Similar to Section B, questions also include their perceived proficiency in speaking, following conversations, reading the content of printed material (e.g., books, newspapers, articles, and magazines), and writing in Malay and English, respectively.

Section E pertains to language use in the family domains. This section consists of items on which language the respondents normally use when speaking to their family members, such as parents, wife/husband, children, siblings, grandparents, and relatives (e.g., cousins, uncles, and aunts).

Section F pertains to language use outside the home domains. The respondents were asked which language they normally use with neighbours, friends, classmates, workmates, for prayers, in government departments, and when buying things at shops.

Section G pertains to items related to language use in social media and new media domains. These items concern with which language they usually use in emails for work communication, for searching or reading internet information, in social media communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), when watching YouTube content, and in writing SMS or WhatsApp texts.

Section H deals with the respondents' attitudes towards the Iban language. They were asked whether they consider themselves Iban because they can speak Iban and that their parents are Iban (either father and/or mother is Iban). The respondents were also asked whether speaking Iban symbolises their culture, heritage, and identity, because they were born Iban, and to show they belong to the Iban ethnic group. In addition, the items also asked the respondents whether they feel proud of the Iban cultural history and the Iban people's achievements over the years. This section proceeds by requesting the respondents to express their perceptions of whether Iban is an important language due to its large number of speakers, as well as the Iban people being powerful in politics and successful in business. There were also items on whether the Iban students need to learn Iban in school and whether Iban is an important language because it is highly respected in Sarawak and Malaysia. This

section ends with items asking the respondents which languages are most useful for their career and studies, as well as the most cherished and strongest in Sarawak.

Section I pertains to the formal use of Iban in Sarawak, such as whether their teachers spoke Iban in kindergarten, whether Iban is used in school meetings, and whether Iban teachers are adequate for teaching the Iban subject in schools. Other questions were on the availability of radio and television programmes in Iban throughout the week, and whether the Iban community groups promote the written use of the Iban language.

Section J consists of items on Iban speakers in Sarawak. The questions include the respondents' opinion on the number of people who can speak Iban in Sarawak, that is out of 2.6 million of Sarawak's population. They were also asked about the percentage of Sarawak people who can speak the language, and whether more and more non-Iban people can speak Iban in the state. The rationale for asking respondents about their opinion on the number of people who can speak Iban in Sarawak, out of the state's population of about 2.6 million, is that it is an essential part of UNESCO's factors, since the framework for language vitality includes the absolute number of speakers and proportion within the population as key factors. Thus, asking the respondents' opinions aligns with assessing this element of vitality from the community's perspective. Besides, it is also to tap into their perception of the language's vitality and prevalence within the broader population. This question helps reveal the perceived speaker base size. Hence, understanding how respondents view the number of Iban speakers provides insight into their awareness of the language's presence and importance in Sarawak.

Lastly, Section K is concerned with the respondents' Iban materials kept in their homes. The items include which printed Iban material they most often read. They were also

asked about the number of copies that are kept at home, namely, dictionaries, books for studying Iban (e.g., textbooks and grammar books), story books, magazines, as well as audio and video recordings in Iban. See Appendix A for the complete items in the questionnaire.

3.3.2 Non-Participant Observation Guide Sheet

An observation guide sheet was developed for non-participant observation based on Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains. Domains are specific institutional contexts, in which one language or language variety is more likely suitable than another based on factors: speaker, topic, and location. The non-participant observation sheet was prepared after several rounds of thorough checks with the supervisor (see Table 3.3). Using this observation guide sheet, the participants' conversational exchanges involving different speakers, topics, and locations were observed and recorded during non-participant observations.

Table 3.3: A Non-Participant Observation Sheet

SECTION A: SETTING			
Place			
Date			
Time			
SECTION B: EVENT			
SECTION C: PARTICIPANT(S)			
Details	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
a) Age: b) Gender: c) Race: d) Family relationship: e) Role: f) Educational level: g) Attire:			
SECTION D: TOPIC & LANGUAGE USE			
Topic			
Language Use			
Language expressions			
Main language use			

The non-participant observation, guided by Fishman's (1967) domain theory, provides a structured framework for analysing language use by focusing on the participants, topics, and settings within social interactions. According to Fishman, a domain is defined by who is involved in the communication, where it takes place, and what is being discussed, all of which influence language use patterns. In line with this theory, the researcher observed the Iban participants themselves, noting their interactions and communication behaviours in naturalistic contexts. The topics of conversation were carefully considered to understand the situational themes that emerged, while the settings, ranging from family gatherings, social media platforms, workplaces, to community events, were recognised as distinct

sociolinguistic environments shaping actual language practices. Attention was also given to specific language use and expressions, including word choice, code-switching, and linguistic features unique to the Iban language in real-life contexts. By applying Fishman's (1967) domain analysis, the observation systematically captured how language use among Iban speakers varies and adapts dynamically according to the social domain, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural and communicative functions of the Iban language across diverse domains.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Before the main study was carried out, a pilot study was conducted in October 2020 using an online questionnaire that involved 86 Iban participants. According to Teijlingen and Hundley (2002), pilot studies are primarily carried out to help researchers improve their methods and research instruments. For the main study, data collection for the online questionnaire was conducted in March 2021. The participants were contacted via online WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook personal texts. Before data collection began, ethical clearance (see Appendix B) was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee, UNIMAS, to ensure that all research protocols adhered to established ethical standards. This process included a thorough review of the study's objectives, methods, and potential impacts on participants to safeguard their rights, confidentiality, and well-being throughout the research. The respondents' involvement in the questionnaire was completely voluntary, and no pressure was placed on them to cooperate in this study. All information was kept confidential and used for academic purposes only. The questionnaire did not require the names and addresses of the participants. Consent from the participants was obtained before they responded to the questionnaire. For non-participant observations, ethical consideration

regarding consent was not directly obtained because the researcher adopted a passive, "fly on the wall" role, in which the participants were unaware of being observed. This approach aligns with established ethical guidelines for non-participant observation, especially when conducted in naturalistic settings where individuals have limited or no expectation of privacy, such as public social events or community gatherings. According to ethical frameworks discussed in research literature, non-participant observation that involves no direct interaction or intervention by the researcher typically does not require explicit consent from participants if the data collected do not identify individuals and if privacy expectations are minimal (Liu & Maitlis, 2010; York University HPRC Guidelines, 2024). This approach ensures that the observations remain natural and unobtrusive, thereby capturing authentic language behaviours without influencing participants' actions or raising concerns of coercion. Nonetheless, researchers must remain vigilant to privacy and confidentiality considerations, ensuring that any identifiable information is anonymised in reporting to uphold ethical standards. Thus, the real names of the participants have been changed to protect their identity. The passive nature of the observation in this study justifies the absence of formal consent procedures while maintaining adherence to ethical research practices for observational data collection.

Non-participant observations were conducted over an extended period from March 2022 to July 2022, requiring multiple visits to observation sites in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. For example, one notable interaction occurred between three sisters (mixed Iban and Malay) and their mother (Iban) as they stood together in the living room, sharing a light-hearted moment about a fat cat belonging to the host of the house host. The sisters appeared relaxed and engaged, occasionally laughing as they described the cat's size and antics of the cat, while their mother

responded with playful remarks. Throughout their exchange, Sarawak Malay was consistently used as the main language despite the mother being an Iban. The choice of Sarawak Malay reflected the dominance of the language in the family. During the visit, the researcher was given multiple opportunities to observe natural conversations as guests gathered in the house to celebrate the festival, largely due to her status as an insider (an Iban) and an advantage as a member of the community. This insider status facilitated access to private and authentic social settings that might otherwise be difficult for an outsider to enter. Being part of the community allowed the researcher to participate more seamlessly in daily life, gaining trust and building rapport with family members and visitors alike. This enabled the researcher to witness authentic, genuine interactions and linguistic behaviours without the filter or performance sometimes present when outsiders are present. The insider perspective also empowered her to conduct observations in a natural, unobtrusive manner, capturing the typical language use patterns and the social context during the festival gathering.

Using a prepared non-participant observation guide sheet, the researcher took on the role of a passive observer during visits to homes, particularly during significant social events, such as *Gawai Dayak* and *Hari Raya* celebrations, which offered rich opportunities for naturalistic field observations. As a lifelong member of the Iban community, the researcher's insider status granted her access to the intricate details of conversations not only among Iban speakers but also with individuals from other racial groups. To capture these interactions accurately, some conversations were recorded and later transcribed using a smartphone, ensuring precise documentation of linguistic features and expressions. At times when recording was not feasible or appropriate, such as in a noisy environment, detailed field notes were taken to document the conversations and contextual elements. This combination of

audio recordings and field notes supported a thorough analysis of authentic language use in natural settings, enhancing the depth and reliability of the observational data.

For instance, on 3rd May 2022, the researcher visited her brother's house for the Hari Raya celebration, located in Sri Aman, Sarawak, which is an Iban-dominant area. The visit provided opportunities for observing conversations among other visitors who came to the house to celebrate the festival. There was a conversation between three siblings (sisters) and their mother. They were talking about a fat cat that belonged to the house host. The researcher also made a trip to the longhouse located in Lubok Antu, Sarawak, on 28th May 2022, which was during the Gawai Dayak celebration. It is noted that the researcher is also a resident of the longhouse. The trip was necessary for data collection pertaining to an Iban-dominant area. The researcher grabbed any opportunities that arose to observe social conversations that took place at the longhouse during the stay. For instance, while sitting at the *ruai* (an Iban word for the communal hall that stretches along the veranda of the longhouse), there were conversations that provided rich data for the researcher to record and take notes of the events, such as the conversation between two sisters dated on 29th May 2022, where the topic was on picking grey hair. It is common to see the longhouse folks carrying out this kind of social activity at the *ruai* as a way to pass the time while resting after the day's work. In another instance, dated 30th May 2022, three cousins were observed speaking to each other about buying the Gawai dish for the coming celebration. Their conversations were observed and recorded while they were engrossed in discussing the Gawai preparation. On 31st May 2022, another conversation between a mother and her 9-year-old son was observed in the kitchen, located in the same longhouse. They were discussing the son's homework. On 1st June 2022, a conversation between a grandfather and his grandchild was observed while they were conversing about the menu for dinner. In

addition, several visits to the homes of family members, relatives, and friends were carried out to collect data from non-Iban-dominant areas. The selected places were Kuching, Kota Samarahan, and Lundu. On 27th May 2022, the researcher was invited to a friend's house located in Kota Samarahan for a pre-*Gawai* celebration. During the visit, the researcher managed to capture the conversation between two sisters and the mother-in-law of one of the sisters. They were talking about the making of *kuih sarang semut*, which is a local dish commonly served during the Gawai celebration. On 11th June 2022, there was another invitation for a Gawai visit, which gave the researcher more opportunities for social conversations involving Iban speakers in a non-Iban-dominant area. Located in a residential house in Kota Samarahan, a conversation between a mother and her children (a son and a daughter) was recorded, where they were talking about preparing for a Gawai lunch before the guests came. In the same event, the researcher also managed to observe a conversation between three friends, aged 45 and 46 years old, who were talking about performing an Iban song. In addition, a conversation between three young friends, who are also schoolmates aged 15 years old, was also observed where they were enjoying the Gawai lunch. The visit provided abundant opportunities for the researcher to observe various conversational events. The conversations were recorded using a Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

For outside home domains involving various settings, the researcher observed her neighbours, multi-racial friends, classmates, workmates, churchgoers, staff working at the hospital (e.g., doctors and nurses), and government offices (e.g., clerks and officers), as well as vendors and buyers at the local wet markets. As a multilingual speaker with a strong Iban background and a common local member in the different settings, this gave the opportunities to the researcher to observe the linguistic behaviours of the participants in their natural settings. For instance, on 21st March 2022, the researcher visited the general hospital located

in Kuching, Sarawak, which is a non-Iban-dominant area. Being a frequent visitor to the hospital, as the researcher had to accompany her father for his routine eye checks, this allowed her to observe conversational events between the hospital staff and the patients. While waiting, several conversations between the nurses and the eye patients were recorded at the eye clinic. In another instance, on 8th April, a conversation between two university colleagues was also observed, which took place in a lounge located in a local university in Kota Samarahan. The conversation involved several topics that ranged from formal to personal matters, such as preparing for an Invention, Innovation, and Design (IID) project, fetching children from school, pasar Ramadhan, and holidays.

Finally, the selection procedures for observing language use on social media and new media platforms involved several steps to ensure that the linguistic data were authentic, relevant, and representative of the Iban participants' actual language behaviours. First, the researcher leveraged their position as a Facebook friend to gain direct access to posts made by Iban friends, family members, colleagues, classmates, and acquaintances. This insider access enabled the collection of naturalistic data without intruding on or disrupting the participants' online interactions. In selecting data for analysis, posts by Iban individuals were carefully chosen based on their relevance to the study, focusing on language use patterns in everyday conversations, cultural expressions, and social interactions. For WhatsApp, the study concentrated on text messages within group chats involving Iban friends and colleagues, capturing the spontaneous linguistic exchanges typical in informal digital communication. In addition, emails received from Iban colleagues were analysed to observe language use in formal work-related communication. The selection criteria prioritised interactions that occurred in natural, diverse social contexts reflective of the participants' daily lives, including family, social media, workplace, and new media domains. This multi-

platform and multi-source approach, facilitated by the researcher's embedded status within the Iban community, provided a rich and comprehensive dataset that reveals authentic language use patterns beyond what self-reported questionnaires could capture. These procedures ensured that the observations were inclusive of the varied sociolinguistic environments in which the Iban language is actively used.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

For the questionnaire, the data from 1,204 participants were analysed to establish an overview of the participants' demographics, language abilities in Iban, Malay, and English, language use in the three selected domains, as well as language attitudes towards the instrumental values and status of the Iban language. Descriptive statistics were employed, where values for frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. An independent t-test was also run to ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the means of those Iban participants' self-reports about their language use and attitudes towards the Iban language in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas.

For Objective 1 (descriptive statistics) – that is, to show the Iban participants' perceptions of their language use in different domains for Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak, an Excel spreadsheet and the SPSS software were used to tabulate frequencies and percentages on language use of the three selected domains as reported by the participants. For Objective 2 – that is, to examine the participants' attitudes towards the instrumental values and status of the Iban language, descriptive statistics were also used to show patterns of these attitudes in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant. Values of means, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were computed using the Excel spreadsheet and SPSS software. For Objective 3 – that is, to compare the use of Iban

in interactions in the family domains, outside of home domains, as well as social media and new domains between the Iban participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, the results from the two different localities in Sarawak were further analysed and compared using the Excel spreadsheet and SPSS software. An independent *t*-test was carried out to determine if there is any significant difference between the means of those Iban participants' self-reports in language use and attitudes towards the Iban language in the two localities.

As for the analysis on non-participant observations, the non-participant observation sheets (prepared earlier) were examined using the deductive coding of a thematic analysis, guided based on Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains. Thematic analysis was carried out following these three procedures as suggested in Miles and Huberman's (1994) model: data reduction, data display, and data conclusion-drawing/verifying. The observation notes were coded following different domains of language use (family, outside home, and social media and new media domains), which were further sub-categorised into interlocutors, topics, and locations (Fishman, 1967). The observed Iban conversations were transcribed and translated into English. The conversational exchanges were coded according to the categories of domains (family domains: FP = Family Participant; F = Female; M = Male; outside home domains: OHP = Outside Home Participant; F = Female; M = Male; new media domains: NMP = New Media Participant; F = Female; M = Male). The transcriptions were analysed and categorised according to their themes: participants, topics, events, and language use. Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 9 present samples of the participants' conversational exchanges for the family domain in an Iban-dominant area and a non-Iban-dominant area, respectively. The italicised sentences show the original conversations of the participants in Iban, Malay, and other languages, while the sentences below each conversation (in brackets) were the English translation.

Excerpt 1 (from an Iban-dominant area)

FP1: *De ka meli senapang pia? Sapa ka timbak de?*

(You want to buy a gun? Who are you shooting?

FP2: *Enggau jaga rumah.*

(For house protection.)

FP1*: Meda de? Nimbak sembarang ja legi. Timbak ninga munyi ja pia?*

(Can you see? You will shoot at anything. You hear the shooting sound only?)

FP2: *Kitai bisi pesaka, nya jadi pesaka.*

(We have an heirloom, it will become an heirloom.)

FP1: *Jadi pesaka .. kumbai de murah rega senapang nya.*

(As an heirloom … you think the gun price is low?)

Excerpt 9 (from a non-Iban-dominant area)

FP17: *Tolong ambi kontena hijau tu, mak.*

(Please get the green container, mother.)

FP18: Aunty *buat sendiri kah? Nyamanlah.*

(You made this yourself, aunty? So delicious.)

FP19: *Ya, lama mau bikin ni, letak dalam tempurung kelapa, lepas tu pusing* slow-slow. (showing the circling motion with her hands)

(Yes, took a long time to make, put in the coconut shell, then stir slowly.)

3.6 Limitations of the Study

There are two main limitations of the current study that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, non-participant observations could only be conducted after the travel ban was lifted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This delayed the process of data collection, which hindered the ability to collect timely data necessary for the study. The limited timeframe for observations post-lockdown may have constrained the depth and variety of interactions observed, thereby impacting the robustness of the qualitative insights. Secondly, the study's scope was geographically restricted to Iban speakers residing exclusively in Sarawak, which limits the generalisability of the findings. Given that the Iban population is dispersed not only in Sarawak but also in Sabah and other parts of Malaysia, excluding these regions means that variations in cultural practices, dialects, socio-economic conditions, and language use among the Iban communities elsewhere were not captured. This narrow geographical focus means that the results primarily reflect the linguistic and social dynamics of the Iban speakers in the selected Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas within Sarawak only. Consequently, any conclusions drawn may not be applicable to the broader Iban population, especially those residing in different environments or under different social influences outside Sarawak.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results from the online questionnaires and non-participant observations to address the following objectives:

(1) to identify the Iban respondents' perceptions of their language use in various domains: the family domains, outside-home domains, as well as social media and new domains;

(2) to examine the Iban respondents' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language in Sarawak;

(3) to compare the use of Iban in interactions in the family, outside the home, and on social media and new domains, and the attitudes towards Iban in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas; and

(4) to compare the perceived and observed language use of the participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas.

The chapter ends with a discussion of the results.

4.1 Perceptions of the Respondents' Language Use in Various Domains

This section presents the results of the respondents' perceptions on their language use in the three selected domains.

4.1.1 The Family Domains

Table 4.1 shows the results for the respondents' perceived language use in the family domains in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas of Sarawak. The results are given

for languages used when interacting with different family members in home settings, namely, parents, spouses, children, siblings, grandparents, and relatives.

Table 4.1: Respondents' perceived language use in the family domains (N=1,204)

Items	Language Use	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. Which language do you usually use with your parents?	English	10	2.3	28	3.7
	Iban	413	94.5	693	90.4
	Sarawak Malay	5	1.1	20	2.6
	Standard Malay	4	0.9	8	1.0
	Other Languages	5	1.1	18	2.3
2. Which language do you usually use with your wife/husband?	Not married	179	41.0	317	41.3
	English	14	3.2	37	4.8
	Iban	218	49.9	345	45.0
	Sarawak Malay	14	3.2	35	4.6
	Standard Malay	4	0.9	18	2.3
	Other Languages	8	1.8	15	1.7
3. Which language do you usually use with your children?	No Children	195	44.6	357	46.5
	English	38	8.7	99	12.9
	Iban	186	42.6	276	36.0
	Sarawak Malay	9	2.1	10	1.3
	Standard Malay	4	0.9	14	1.8
	Other Languages	5	1.1	11	1.5
4. Which language do you usually use with your brothers and sisters?	No siblings	4	0.9	8	1.0
	English	10	2.3	36	4.7
	Iban	404	92.4	669	87.2
	Sarawak Malay	7	1.6	23	3.0
	Standard Malay	2	0.5	8	1.0
	Other Languages	10	2.3	23	2.9
5. Which language do you usually use with your grandparents?	Bidayuh	3	0.7	14	1.8
	English	-	-	6	0.8
	Iban	425	97.3	731	95.3
	Sarawak Malay	3	0.7	7	0.9
	Standard Malay	2	0.5	1	0.1
	Other Languages	4	0.9	8	1.1
6. Which language do you usually use with your relatives (e.g., cousins, uncles, and aunts)?	Bidayuh	3	0.7	12	1.6
	English	7	1.6	31	4.0
	Iban	418	95.7	690	90.0
	Sarawak Malay	6	1.4	19	2.5
	Other Languages	3	0.7	15	2

As presented in Table 4.1, for language use with parents, the respondents in Iban-dominant areas are more likely than those in non-Iban-dominant areas to use Iban when speaking with their parents, with a higher percentage of 94.5% (*n* = 413) as compared to

90.4% (n = 693) for the non-Iban-dominant areas. Nevertheless, the high percentages in both Iban areas demonstrate how much the Iban language influences parent-child communication in the Iban community. In addition, English is a notable language for interacting with parents, with a usage rate of 2.3% (n =10) in Iban-dominant areas and 3.7% (n =28) in non-Iban-dominant areas. The use of English in this family domain may signify multilingual family communication and the influence of urbanisation on the respondents' linguistic norms. Urbanisation is often linked to language shift, especially in areas with an ethnically diverse population. Official and national languages are more useful as shared languages for interethnic communication. In Sarawak's ethnically diverse metropolitan areas, such as Kuching and Kota Samarahan, the likelihood of speaking Malay and English rather than one of the minority local languages may increase with urbanisation.

For language use with spouses, the results showed 59.00% (n = 258) (Iban-dominant areas) and 58.70% (n = 450) (non-Iban-dominant areas) of the respondents were married. The Iban language use among the married respondents showed 49.9% (n = 218) and 45.0% (n = 345) usage in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, respectively. Furthermore, the percentages of English used with spouses were 3.2% (n = 14) for Iban-dominant areas and 4.8% (n = 37) for non-Iban-dominant areas. The data suggest that these respondents are probably in mixed marriages. Based on the respondents' demographic statistics, 39.3% of the married respondents identified as Iban, while 27.6% were made up of other ethnic groups. Another interesting finding is the use of Sarawak Malay for spousal communication, with 3.2% (n = 14) and 4.6% (n = 35) of the language being used in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, respectively. The respondents are probably married to Malays. In mixed marriages, the choice of couples to use Sarawak Malay, English, and Malay may lead to future language shift.

For language use with children, the results showed reduced use of Iban in communication involving the Iban youngsters; 42.6% (n = 186) for Iban-dominant areas and 36.0% (n = 276) for non-Iban-dominant areas. Moreover, English is also found to be the language that is frequently used with children in some Iban families, in which there were 8.7% (n = 38) and 12.9% (n = 99) use in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, respectively. The growing use of English among the younger generations in the family domains indicates language shift in the Iban households, which is more prevalent in non-Iban-dominant areas.

For language use with siblings, the Iban language dominates. This may highlight the more important role that the Iban language plays in family interactions in Iban-dominant areas than in non-Iban-dominant areas; 92.4% (n = 404) and 87.2% (n = 669) of the Iban respondents, respectively. English is also used among siblings, especially in non-Iban-dominant communities.

For language use with grandparents, the Iban language is dominant in interactions with grandparents. The usage rate was higher in Iban-dominant areas, with 97.3% (n = 425), while for non-Iban-dominant areas, the rate was 95.3% (n = 731). For language use with relatives (cousins, uncles, and aunts), the results also showed greater use of Iban in Iban-dominant areas (95.7%, n = 418) than in non-Iban-dominant areas (90%, n = 690). In addition, the presence of English in communication with relatives revealed a language shift among the speakers, especially involving the Iban youngsters. In Iban-dominant areas, only 1.6% (n = 7) speak English with their relatives, whereas in non-Iban-dominant areas, the percentage was higher, showing 4.0% (n = 31) of the respondents speak English with their relatives.

Whether or not a language is passed down from one generation to the next is the most widely used factor for assessing a language's vitality (Fishman, 1991). The vitality or endangerment of a language can be graded on a continuum that ranges from stability to extinction. The Iban language is spoken by most Iban generations in the family domains. While the Iban language is extensively used for family communication, there is a small percentage among younger Iban who prefer to speak in English and Sarawak Malay with their siblings and relatives, which may pose a worrying trend in the Iban community.

4.1.2 Outside the Home Domains

Table 4.2 shows the results for language use outside the home domains for the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak.

Table 4.2: Respondents' perceived language use outside the home domains

Items	Language Use	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. Which language do you usually use with your neighbours?	English	36	8.2	114	14.9
	Iban	252	57.7	288	37.5
	Sarawak Malay	101	23.1	271	35.3
	Standard Malay	40	9.2	84	11.0
	Other Languages	8	1.8	10	1.3
2. Which language do you usually use with your friends?	English	47	10.8	122	15.9
	Iban	259	59.3	310	40.4
	Sarawak Malay	96	22.0	263	34.3
	Standard Malay	33	7.6	65	8.5
	Other Languages	2	0.5	7	0.9
3. Which language do you usually use with your classmates?	English	57	13.0	162	21.1
	Iban	178	40.7	200	26.1
	Sarawak Malay	128	29.3	267	34.8
	Standard Malay	65	14.9	123	16.0
	Other Languages	9	2	15	2.1
4. Which language do you usually use with your workmates?	Not working	55	12.6	82	10.7
	English	86	19.7	194	25.3
	Iban	107	24.5	85	11.1
	Sarawak Malay	102	23.3	259	33.8
	Standard Malay	83	19.0	140	18.3
	Other Languages	4	0.9	7	0.9
5. Which language do you usually use for prayers?	English	87	19.9	269	35.1
	Iban	290	66.4	387	50.5
	Sarawak Malay	14	3.2	34	4.4
	Standard Malay	40	9.2	60	7.8
	Other Languages	6	1.3	17	2.3
6. Which language do you usually use in government departments?	English	58	13.3	175	22.8
	Iban	31	6.9	18	2.3
	Sarawak Malay	107	24.5	179	23.3
	Standard Malay	241	55.1	393	51.2
	Other Languages	1	0.2	2	0.2
7. Which language do you usually use when buying things at shops?	English	40	9.2	110	14.3
	Iban	72	16.5	43	5.6
	Sarawak Malay	200	45.8	403	52.5
	Standard Malay	121	27.7	197	25.7
	Other Languages	4	0.9	14	1.8

Based on Table 4.2, for language use with neighbours, the results reveal that the respondents in Iban-dominant areas use Iban at a higher percentage (57.7%, n = 252) than those in non-Iban-dominant areas (37.5%, n = 288). Similarly, this pattern matches the language used with friends, where the respondents in Iban-dominant areas use Iban at a higher percentage (59.3%, n = 259) than those in non-Iban-dominant areas (40.4%, n = 310).

Because there is a higher number of Iban speakers in these domains (neighbours and friends), there may be a higher percentage of Iban language use there as well, leading to more frequent use of Iban in daily interactions.

In the same way, for language use with classmates, more respondents in Iban-dominant areas (40.7%, n = 178) used Iban than in non-Iban-dominant areas (26.1%, n = 200). In addition, language use with workmates exhibits a similar pattern as well, with more Iban respondents in Iban-dominant locations using Iban (24.5%, n = 107) than Iban respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas (11.1%, n = 85). Overall, more Iban is used in school and employment domains than in the neighbourhood and friendship domains.

For language use in prayers, more respondents in Iban-dominant areas (66.4%, n = 290) use Iban than the respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas (50.5%, n = 387). This is because many churches in Iban-populated areas still conduct Sunday services in Iban, where the Bible is recited in the Iban language. Iban has become the predominant language used for prayers and worship in these areas occupied by the Iban majority. In contrast, in areas where there are fewer Iban people, church services in non-Iban-dominant areas such as Kuching, Samarahan, and Serian are conducted in other languages like English, Bidayuh, and Malay.

For language use in government departments, Iban is among the least used in this domain, with 6.9% (n = 31) of respondents from Iban-dominant areas and 2.3% (n = 18) of respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas. Standard Malay is the most preferred language for interaction in government departments (55.1%, n = 241 for Iban-dominant areas; 51.2%, n = 393 for non-Iban-dominant areas). Standard Malay is the official language of Malaysia

in government premises and Iban is not used formally. The people may speak Iban to one another informally.

For language use in buying things at shops, Iban was also used less than Sarawak Malay. Only 16.5% (n = 72) of the respondents in Iban-dominant areas speak Iban, and the percentage is even smaller (5.6%, n = 43) in non-Iban-dominant areas. In non-Iban-dominant areas, over half of the respondents (52.5%, n = 403) speak Sarawak Malay when buying things, compared to 45.8% (n = 200) of the respondents in Iban-dominant areas. This trend may be explained by the greater number of Sarawak Malay speakers in non-Iban-dominant areas, such as Kuching and Samarahan, where the Iban people are the minority. As a result, this leads to a greater frequency of Sarawak Malay use for daily interactions.

Overall, in Iban-dominant areas, the frequency of Iban language use in everyday communication with neighbours, friends, classmates, and workmates is higher, indicating a higher concentration of Iban speakers in these domains. The greater frequency of Iban language use in religious rites is another indication of the Iban language's cultural and religious significance in Iban-dominant communities. However, Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay are the preferred languages in communication at government departments and when buying things at shops, respectively, in which Iban is rarely used. This shows that although Iban is widely used in informal or casual encounters, it has a limited functional purpose in formal situations and interethnic communication, where the Iban people are small in number.

4.1.3 Social Media and New Media Domains

Table 4.3 shows the results for language use by the respondents in social media and new media domains. The respondents were asked which languages they usually use for work emails, searching or reading Internet information, social media communication, watching YouTube content, and writing text messages in SMS or WhatsApp.

Table 4.3: Respondents' perceived language use in social media and new media domains (N=1,204)

Items	Language Use	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. Which language do you usually use in emails for work communication?	Not working	68	15.6	90	11.7
	English	213	48.7	413	53.8
	Iban	7	1.6	7	0.9
	Sarawak Malay	24	5.5	34	4.4
	Standard Malay	125	28.6	220	28.7
	Other Languages	0	0	3	0.4
2. Which language do you usually use in searching or reading Internet information?	English	324	74.1	586	76.4
	Iban	4	0.9	5	0.7
	Sarawak Malay	28	6.4	26	3.4
	Standard Malay	80	18.3	145	18.9
	Other Languages	1	0.2	5	0.7
3. Which language do you usually use in social media communication (e.g., FB, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)?	English	260	59.5	505	65.8
	Iban	77	17.6	98	12.8
	Sarawak Malay	35	8.0	52	6.8
	Standard Malay	59	13.5	101	13.2
	Other Languages	6	1.4	11	1.4
4. Which language do you usually use when watching YouTube content?	English	360	82.4	651	84.9
	Iban	6	1.4	16	2.1
	Sarawak Malay	17	3.9	24	3.1
	Standard Malay	51	11.7	63	8.2
	Other Languages	3	0.6	13	1.6
5. Which language do you usually use in writing SMS or WhatsApp?	English	100	22.9	239	31.2
	Iban	244	55.8	279	36.4
	Sarawak Malay	52	11.9	137	17.8
	Standard Malay	39	8.9	103	13.4
	Other Languages	2	0.5	9	1.2

As shown in Table 4.3, English dominates all the domains for social media and new media, except for writing text messages in SMS and WhatsApp. English is widely used by the respondents in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. A majority of the

respondents use English for work-related email communication, with 48.7% (n = 213) of the respondents in Iban-dominant areas and 53.8% (n = 413) of the respondents in non-Iban-dominated areas. For searching and reading the Internet information, English is the most often used language, with 74.1% (n = 324) of the respondents in Iban-dominant areas and 76.4% (n = 586) in non-Iban-dominant areas using it. For social media communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), English is also the most often used language according to 59.5% (n = 260) of the respondents in areas populated by the Iban and 65.8% (n = 505) in areas less populated by the Iban. For watching the YouTube content, English is the most widely used language, with 82.4% (n = 360) of the respondents in Iban-dominant areas and 84.9% (n = 651) in non-Iban-dominant areas. However, Iban is the preferred language for writing SMS or WhatsApp texts, with 55.8% (n = 244) for Iban-dominant areas and 36.4% (n = 279) for non-Iban-dominant areas. Iban has minimal importance in social media and new media domains, in which its use is predominantly for writing SMS text messages to friends, acquaintances, and family members, most of whom may be Iban and are more personal. The dominance of English in social media and new media domains demonstrates its significance as a language for the world and how it affects language use among the Iban community.

4.2 Attitudes Towards the Instrumental Value and Status of the Iban Language in Sarawak

This section presents the results of the respondents' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language among the community.

4.2.1 The Iban's Attitudes Towards Their Ethnic Language

According to Brenzinger et al. (2003), speech communities may not always be impartial about the language of their ethnic group. Some members of the community could encourage language use because they see it as crucial to their identity and community. Members of the speech community may view the language as a crucial sign of their shared identity when perceptions towards it are particularly positive. Furthermore, they can consider their ethnic language to be an important component of their culture and ethnic identity. On the other hand, community members may develop negative attitudes towards their ethnic language if they believe it to be a barrier to assimilation into mainstream society and economic advancement. The stronger the language, the more positive the community members' attitudes and pride in the language and its traditions are. The following sections present the results, which are presented in three tables according to the respondents' feedback: (i) pride in Iban identity, (ii) social status of Iban speakers, and (iii) use of Iban.

4.2.1.1 Pride in Iban Identity

Table 4.4 presents the results for pride in Iban identity. The questionnaire items relate to the respondents' ethnic identity, cultural significance, birthright, sense of belonging, as well as pride and heritage.

Table 4.4: Pride in Iban Identity (N=1,204)

Items	Likert scale	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. I am an Iban because I can speak Iban.	Strongly Disagree	37	8.5	62	8.1
	Disagree	36	8.2	142	18.5
	Unsure	22	5.0	37	4.8
	Agree	129	29.5	187	24.2
	Strongly Agree	213	48.7	339	44.2
2. I am an Iban because my father and/or my mother are Iban.	Strongly Disagree	6	1.4	2	0.3
	Disagree	4	0.9	8	1.0
	Unsure	5	1.1	14	1.8
	Agree	123	28.1	206	26.9
	Strongly Agree	299	68.4	537	70.0
3. I speak Iban because it symbolises my culture, heritage, and identity.	Strongly Disagree	5	1.1	3	0.4
	Disagree	2	0.5	10	1.3
	Unsure	8	1.8	15	2.0
	Agree	100	22.9	193	25.2
	Strongly Agree	322	73.7	546	71.2
4. I speak Iban because I am born as an Iban.	Strongly Disagree	4	0.9	6	0.8
	Disagree	10	2.3	24	3.1
	Unsure	13	3.0	18	2.3
	Agree	106	24.3	194	25.3
	Strongly Agree	304	69.6	525	68.4
5. I speak Iban to show that I belong to the Iban ethnic group.	Strongly Disagree	6	1.4	11	1.4
	Disagree	21	4.8	44	5.7
	Unsure	8	1.8	25	3.3
	Agree	118	27.0	204	26.6
	Strongly Agree	284	65.0	483	63.0
6. I feel proud of the Iban cultural history.	Strongly Disagree	8	1.8	1	0.1
	Disagree	-	-	1	0.1
	Unsure	3	0.7	10	1.3
	Agree	75	17.2	145	18.9
	Strongly Agree	351	80.3	610	79.5
7. I feel proud of the Iban people's achievements over the years.	Strongly Disagree	9	2.1	12	1.6
	Disagree	15	3.4	30	3.9
	Unsure	27	6.2	52	6.8
	Agree	102	23.3	213	27.8
	Strongly Agree	284	65.0	460	60.0

As presented in Table 4.4, more respondents from Iban-dominant areas (78.2%, *n* = 342) believed that the identity of an Iban is distinguished based on the Iban members' ability to speak the ethnic language than the respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas (68.4% *n* = 526). This shows a strong connection between identity and language proficiency in Iban-dominant places.

A large majority of the respondents agreed that one is called an Iban because one's father and/or mother are Iban (96.5%, *n* = 422) in Iban-dominant areas, (96.9% *n* = 743) in non-Iban-dominant areas. This may indicate that one does not necessarily have to be proficient in Iban to be identified as an Iban as long as one's parents (either one or both) are Iban descendants. Iban respondents believed that identity is linked to lineage and is inherited from parents. In addition, most of the respondents from Iban-dominant (96.6%, *n* = 422) and non-Iban-dominant (94.2%, *n* = 739) areas also agreed that an Iban member will speak the ethnic language as doing so symbolises one's culture, heritage, and identity.

According to the majority of respondents in Iban-dominant (93.9%, *n* = 410) and non-Iban-dominant (93.7%, *n* = 719) areas, speaking Iban is a result of being born into an Iban family. The belief that speaking Iban is a means for the people to demonstrate their ethnic group membership is also strong among the respondents in Iban-dominant areas (92.0%, *n* = 402) and in non-Iban-dominant areas (89.6%, *n* = 687).

Moreover, almost all the Iban respondents expressed their pride in Iban cultural heritage (97.5%, *n* = 426 in Iban-dominant areas, 98.4%, *n* = 755 in non-Iban-dominant areas). They also take pride in the accomplishments of the Iban people over time (88.3%, *n* = 386 in Iban-dominant areas, 87.8%, *n* = 670 in non-Iban-dominant areas). In the Iban community, the Iban culture and language are highly respected.

4.2.1.2 Social Status of Iban Speakers

Table 4.5 presents the results on social status of Iban speakers with regards to the respondents' attitudes towards the Iban language. The questionnaire items relate to the

respondents' attitudes towards the importance of Iban concerning their numerical dominance, politics, and business.

Table 4.5: Social Status of Iban Speakers (N=1,204)

Items	Likert scale	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. I think Iban is an important language because there are a lot of Iban speakers.	Strongly Disagree	6	1.4	3	0.4
	Disagree	5	1.1	15	2.0
	Unsure	17	3.9	47	6.1
	Agree	114	26.1	238	31.0
	Strongly Agree	295	67.5	464	60.5
2. I think Iban is an important language because Iban people are powerful in politics.	Strongly Disagree	29	6.6	41	5.3
	Disagree	57	13.0	119	15.5
	Unsure	137	31.4	229	29.9
	Agree	101	23.1	183	23.9
	Strongly Agree	113	25.9	195	25.4
3. I think Iban is an important language because Iban people are successful in business.	Strongly Disagree	24	5.5	39	5.1
	Disagree	51	11.7	115	15.0
	Unsure	133	30.4	247	32.2
	Agree	124	28.4	196	25.6
	Strongly Agree	105	24.0	170	22.2

Based on the findings, most of the respondents believed that Iban is an important language because there are many Iban speakers (93.6%, *n* = 409 in Iban-dominant areas, 91.5%, *n* = 702 in non-Iban-dominant areas). Being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, the respondents attributed the importance of the Iban language to the numerical dominance of the Iban people in Sarawak.

On the other hand, about half of the respondents (49.6%, *n* = 214 in Iban-dominant areas and 49.3%, *n* = 378 in non-Iban-dominant areas) believed that Iban is an important language because the Iban people are powerful in politics. There are several prominent Iban politicians in Sarawak of the past and present, namely, Jugah anak Barieng, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, Tawi Sli, and Douglas Uggah Embas (to name a few). Jugah anak Barieng was the second Paramount Chief of the Dayak people and Sarawak's key signatory to the Malaysia

Agreement (Ho, 1995). Stephen Kalong Ningkan was the first Chief Minister of Sarawak (Ho, 1992), while Tawi Sli was the second. At present, Douglas Uggah Embas is the Deputy Premier of Sarawak, who is also the second minister for Finance and New Economy and the Minister for Infrastructure and Port Development. However, given that the Iban community comprises a relatively small portion of Malaysia's overall population, the Iban people's political participation at the federal level is not prominent. Moreover, approximately half of the respondents (52.4%, n = 229) in Iban-dominant areas and 47.8% (n = 366) in non-Iban-dominant areas) think that Iban is an important language because the Iban people are successful in business. There are few Iban entrepreneurs, and the Iban economy is mostly focused on agriculture.

The high percentage of respondents who perceived that Iban is a vital language because it is spoken by many people indicates that the ethnic language is still widely spoken and valued by the Iban community, which is assumed safe from endangerment at present. On the contrary, a relatively low percentage of respondents believed that Iban's importance stems from its political and economic power, which raises concerns about the ethnic language's potential for future struggles and not being fully integrated into the wider society.

4.2.1.3 Attitudes Towards the Use of Iban

Table 4.6 presents the results of the respondents' attitudes towards the use of Iban. The questionnaire items relate to various aspects of the Iban language, namely, respect towards the Iban language, its importance in personal, educational, and career development, as well as its strength in the Iban community.

Table 4.6: Attitudes towards the Use of Iban (N=1,204)

Items	Likert scale	Iban-dominant areas		Non-Iban-dominant areas	
		n=437	%	*n*=767	%
1. I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in Sarawak.	Strongly Disagree	9	2.1	15	2.0
	Disagree	8	1.8	36	4.7
	Unsure	56	12.8	84	11.0
	Agree	121	27.7	241	31.4
	Strongly Agree	243	55.6	391	51.0
2. I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in Malaysia.	Strongly Disagree	16	3.7	26	3.4
	Disagree	28	6.4	70	9.1
	Unsure	118	17.0	227	29.6
	Agree	120	27.5	227	29.6
	Strongly Agree	155	35.5	217	28.3
3. It is important for Iban students to learn the language in school.	Strongly Disagree	6	1.4	3	0.4
	Disagree	3	0.7	4	0.5
	Unsure	16	3.7	30	3.9
	Agree	130	29.7	235	30.6
	Strongly Agree	282	64.5	495	64.5
4. Which of these languages is the most useful for your career?	English	273	62.5	536	69.9
	Iban	50	11.4	34	4.4
	Sarawak Malay	15	3.4	22	2.9
	Mandarin	9	2.1	18	2.3
	Standard Malay	81	18.5	148	19.3
	Other Languages	9	2.1	9	1.2
5. Which of these languages is the most useful in your studies?	English	308	70.5	594	77.4
	Iban	46	10.5	30	3.9
	Sarawak Malay	15	3.4	16	2.1
	Standard Malay	68	15.6	118	15.4
	Other Languages	0	0	9	1.3
6. Which of these languages do you most cherish?	English	54	12.4	113	14.7
	Iban	367	84.0	605	78.9
	Other Languages	16	3.8	49	6.3
7. Which of these languages is the strongest in Sarawak?	English	44	10.1	92	12.0
	Iban	320	73.2	458	59.7
	Sarawak Malay	59	13.5	186	24.3
	Standard Malay	10	2.3	20	2.6
	Other Languages	4	1	11	1.5

The results revealed that most of the Iban respondents believed that the Iban language is an important language because of its high respect in Sarawak (83.3%, *n* = 364 in Iban-dominant areas, 82.4%, *n* = 632 in non-Iban-dominant areas). However, the percentages are lower when it comes to the perception that Iban is highly respected in Malaysia (63%, *n* = 275 in Iban-dominant areas, 57.9%, *n* = 444 in non-Iban-dominant areas). In the context of the whole country, Iban becomes just one of the indigenous languages.

The Iban respondents believed that it is important for Iban students to learn the language in school (94.2%, *n* = 412of respondents in Iban-dominant areas, and 95.1%, *n* = 730 of respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas). Iban has little value in the eyes of the Iban respondents for employment because only 11.4% (*n* = 50) in Iban-dominant areas believed so, and even less (4.4%, *n* = 34) in non-Iban-dominant areas. Likewise, only 3.9% (*n* = 30) of the respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas and 10.5% (*n* = 46) in Iban-dominant areas perceived that Iban is the most useful language for their studies. Due to the dominance of English and Standard Malay as the national and global languages (respectively), it appears that Iban is not as useful for career and study purposes. Its vernacular status may be the main factor that contributes to the low preference for academic and professional development.

On the other hand, 84.0% (*n* = 367) and 78.9% (*n* = 605) of the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, respectively, claimed that Iban is their most cherished language. This shows a strong emotional connection to the Iban language, which may contribute to its survival and continued use in the community. As well, 73.2% (*n* = 320) from Iban-dominant areas and 59.70% (*n* = 458) from non-Iban-dominant areas claimed that Iban is the strongest language in Sarawak. The findings showed a higher percentage in those from Iban-dominant areas, which corresponds to the importance of communicating in Iban in areas populated by the Iban people. In areas where the Iban people are inferior in number, the respondents perceived that other dominant languages, such as Sarawak Malay and English, are more important and useful to the speech community.

Giles et al. (1977) argued that language attitudes and perceptions of language value are important variables in language maintenance and change. The large percentages of respondents who regard Iban as an important language in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-

dominant areas indicate a strong level of language vitality that reflects their attitudes towards the ethnic language (Brenzinger et al., 2003). However, the lower percentages of respondents who perceived Iban as useful for studies and careers, especially in non-Iban-dominant locations, indicate a possible danger of language shift in these places towards more dominant languages, such as Standard Malay and English.

Thus, with respect to UNESCO's language vitality framework (Brenzinger et al., 2003), the high percentages of agreement among the respondents regarding pride in Iban identity imply strong ethnolinguistic vitality within the Iban community. The high percentages are a result of their pride in the Iban culture that defines them as part of the speech community members. The findings also underscore the value of language and cultural identity within the Iban community in Sarawak, emphasising the need to conserve and advance the Iban language for upcoming generations. In addition, the large percentage of respondents attributing the Iban language's social status to its speakers' numerical dominance in Sarawak suggests a positive attitude towards the language and its speakers. Conversely, the low percentage of respondents who perceived that the language's importance stems from its political and economic power indicates that Iban may not have a high status in the wider society. With regards to the usefulness of Iban, despite Iban being the language spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, it is poorly perceived by a majority of the respondents for its usefulness in their academic and professional development. The perceived value of Iban for education and careers is even lower in non-Iban-dominant areas, suggesting a possible risk of language shift towards more dominant languages, such as Standard Malay and English. Even though most of the respondents agreed on the importance of the Iban students to learn the ethnic language in school, they are rather indifferent towards the usefulness of Iban for advancing their studies and careers in the wider

context. However, the strong emotional connection to Iban in terms of cherishing it the most points to the ethnic language's ongoing vitality.

4.3 A Comparison on the Use of Iban and the Attitudes Towards Iban in Iban-Dominant and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

This section presents the comparison on the respondents' use of Iban and their attitudes towards the ethnic language in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. Independent-sample t-tests were carried out to investigate whether locality has any effect on the respondents' perceptions of language use and attitudes in various domains. The term 'locality' refers to whether or not the Iban people are the main ethnic group in the area. This study comprised two groups of respondents: Iban speakers from Iban-dominant areas (Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, Saratok, Maradong, Julau, Pakan, Kanowit, Selangau, Bintulu, Tatau, Kapit, Song, and Miri) and Iban speakers from non-Iban-dominant areas (Kuching, Bau, Lundu, Samarahan, Serian, Simunjan, Asajaya, Betong, Sarikei, Sibu, Mukah, Dalat, Matu, Daro, Belaga, Marudi, Limbang, and Lawas). In particular, the t-test investigated the language use of the two respondent groups in the family, outside home, and new media domains, as well as their attitudes towards the Iban language, namely, pride in Iban identity, social status of Iban, and use of Iban.

4.3.1 Language Use in Family Domains

Table 4.7 presents the t-test results for the Iban respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas on language use in family domains.

Table 4.7: T-Test Results of the Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Language Use in Family Domains (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Language use in family domains	Parents	4.03	.609	4.02	.728	-.009	-.224	1202	.823
	Spouses	3.46	2.186	3.44	2.244	-.026	-.199	1202	.843
	Children	3.18	2.068	3.11	2.147	-.068	-.533	1202	.594
	Siblings	4.99	.702	5.01	.857	.012	.251	1202	.802
	Grandparents	4.03	.473	3.97	.525	-.063	-2.085	1202	.037
	Relatives	4.00	.392	3.97	.601	-.028	-.966	1180.369	.334

As shown by the independent t-test results, language use with parents, spouses, children, siblings, and relatives by the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak is not statistically different, except for language use with grandparents: Iban-dominant areas (M = 4.03, SD = 0.473) and non-Iban-dominant areas (M = 3.97, SD = 0.525); t (1202) = -2.085, $p < 0.05$. The results suggest that locality has no effect on the respondents' language use with these family members. From the findings, Iban is mostly used by a majority of the respondents in family conversations regardless of their locality. The prevalent use of Iban in the family setting suggests strong intergenerational language transmission in the Iban community. However, numerical dominance of the Iban population in the areas reveals an effect on language used with grandparents, in which the result shows a statistical difference, p = 0.037. In non-Iban-dominant areas, such as Kuching, Samarahan, Serian, Bau, Lundu, Betong, and so forth, Iban is not mainly spoken among the multi-ethnic communities in the areas, particularly among youngsters in the cities. In this study, the Iban youngsters reported using Bidayuh, English, and Sarawak Malay when speaking with their grandparents. This suggests that the Iban youngsters use other languages as they may not be fluent in Iban. This also implies that some Iban families are composed of extended members, who consist of other ethnic groups, such as Bidayuh, Malay, Chinese, or

Indian, especially in mixed marriages. The results suggest that grandparents have an important role in fostering the use of Iban with their grandchildren.

4.3.2 Language Use Outside Home Domains

Table 4.8 presents the t-test results of the Iban respondents from Iban-dominant areas and non-Iban-dominant areas on language use outside the home domains.

Table 4.8: T-Test Results of the Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant Areas and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Language Use Outside Home Domains (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Language use outside home domains	Neighbours	4.55	4.62	1.403	1.403	.069	.884	997.885	.377
	Friends	4.43	4.52	1.281	1.281	.096	1.317	968.241	.188
	Classmates	3.97	3.99	1.946	1.946	.015	.134	1202	.893
	Workmates	3.77	3.80	2.235	2.235	.033	.246	1202	.806
	Prayers	4.22	4.02	1.347	1.347	-.205	-2.536	1202	.011
	Government departments	5.32	5.06	2.111	2.111	-.269	-2.228	964.791	.026
	Buying things at shops	5.49	5.41	1.701	1.701	-.079	-.781	1202	.435

As shown in Table 4.8, the t-test results reveal that the locality of the respondents has no effect on their perceptions of language use outside the home domains, that is when speaking with neighbours, friends, classmates, and workmates, as well as buying things at shops. Regardless of whether there are a lot of Iban people in their area, the scores for mean difference are almost similar between the Iban respondents who live in areas with a lot of Iban people and the Iban respondents who live in areas where the Iban community is not the dominant ethnic group. However, the results show significant differences in language use for prayers (Iban-dominant areas: M = 4.22, SD = 1.351; non-Iban-dominant areas: M =

4.02, SD = 1.347, t(1202) = -2.536, $p < 0.05$) and at government departments (Iban-dominant areas: M = 5.32, SD = 1.956; non-Iban-dominant areas: M = 5.06, SD = 2.111, t(964.791) = -2.228, $p < 0.05$).

The findings show that the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas use mostly Iban when speaking with their neighbours, friends, and classmates. However, when speaking with their colleagues or co-workers, the respondents prefer using Sarawak Malay and English for conversations at their workplace. Iban is less used with the workmates as the ethnic language may be unintelligible to other ethnic speakers at the work premises. The use of Sarawak Malay and English accommodates intercultural communication among colleagues, who may include other ethnic groups of different cultural backgrounds and mother tongues, such as Malay, Bidayuh, Chinese, Orang Ulu, and others. Moreover, the respondents' self-reports on language use also reveal almost a similar pattern in choosing Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay when they buy things at shops (e.g., markets and departmental stores). Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay provide the means for wider communication among the diverse races in the two areas of Iban residence, which facilitates understanding in business transactions.

On the contrary, locality reveals to have an effect on the mean scores for language use for prayers, p = 0.011, and at government departments (e.g., public hospitals and clinics, post offices, courthouses, city halls, and others), p = 0.026. For language use in prayers and worship, Iban is mostly used by the respondents in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. Since the Bible was translated into Iban many years ago, it is expected that most Iban people are now Christians and that the ethnic language has become the primary language used for prayers and worship. To date, Iban is continuously used in many churches

in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak, such as Kuching, Samarahan, Serian, Miri, Sri Aman, Betong, and Lubok Antu. Sunday services are conducted in Iban as a medium for the congregations. However, the respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas use more English in Christian practices as compared to the respondents in Iban-dominant areas, who use more Iban in prayers and worship instead.

Next, locality also has an effect on the respondents' language use at government departments (e.g., public hospitals, clinics, courthouses, municipal halls, etc.). The respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas use more Standard Malay at government departments, whereas the respondents in Iban-dominant areas use more Sarawak Malay instead. The result also indicates that the respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas use more English at government premises compared to those in Iban-dominant areas. In urban towns where the Iban people are the minority, such as in Kuching, Samarahan, and Serian, it is likely that English is also used in government departments, as a large number of city dwellers are fluent in English. City dwellers who work at government premises normally consist of educated people who are conversant in English. In addition, in rural areas where the Iban people are dominant in number (e.g., Sri Aman, Kapit, Lubok Antu, Saratok, Simunjan, etc.), the need to converse using English at government premises is minimal since the speakers prefer to use more Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay when doing their business.

4.3.3 Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains

Table 4.9 presents the t-test results of the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas on language use in social media and new media domains.

Table 4.9: T-Test Results of the Respondents from Iban-Dominant and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Language use in social media and new media	Email for work communication	4.24	2.544	4.30	2.482	.054	.358	1202	.721
	Searching or reading Internet information	3.68	1.209	3.63	1.208	-.050	-.685	1202	.494
	Social media comm.	3.00	1.702	2.93	1.703	-.072	-.706	1202	.481
	Watching YouTube content	3.69	1.640	3.48	1.436	-.211	-2.240	812.044	.025
	Writing SMS or WhatsApp	4.35	1.591	4.56	1.921	.202	1.962	1048.808	.050

The independent t-test results on language use in social media and new media domains are as follows:

1. There was a significant difference in language use for watching YouTube content in Iban-dominant areas (M = 3.69, SD = 1.640) and non-Iban-dominant areas (M = 3.48, SD = 1.436); t(812.044) = -2.240, $p < 0.05$.
2. There was a significant difference in language use for writing SMS or WhatsApp texts in Iban-dominant areas (M = 4.35, SD = 1.591) and non-Iban-dominant areas (M = 4.56, SD = 1.921); t (1048.808) = 1.962, $p < 0.05$.

As shown in Table 4.9, there was no significant difference in language use for writing work emails, searching or reading Internet information, and communicating on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc.). The results show that locality has no effect on language use for writing work-related emails, searching or reading Internet information, and communicating on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok,

Twitter, etc.). Both respondents from the Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas reveal almost similar patterns in their perceptions. The respondents reported using English the most, followed by Standard Malay. Iban was the least used language in social media and new media domains, which explains its minimal use by the respondents. Iban is not as useful in social media and new media domains because it is a vernacular language in Sarawak compared to English, which is more globally prestigious and widespread.

On the contrary, there was a significant difference in language use for watching YouTube content (Iban-dominant areas: M = 3.69, SD = 1.640; non-Iban-dominant areas: M = 3.48, SD = 1.436, t(812.044) = -2.240, $p < 0.05$) and writing text messages via SMS or WhatsApp (Iban-dominant areas: M = 4.35, SD = 1.591; non-Iban-dominant areas: M = 4.56, SD = 1.921, t(1048.808) = 1.962, $p < 0.05$). The respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas used more English in these two domains than those in Iban-dominant areas. Instead, the respondents in Iban-dominant areas used more Standard Malay when watching YouTube content compared to their counterparts in non-Iban-dominant areas. Specifically, locality seems to impact the respondents' language use in writing SMS or WhatsApp messages, which results in a significant difference in the mean scores. The respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas reported using more English and Sarawak Malay in writing their text messages via SMS and WhatsApp, while those respondents in Iban-dominant areas used more Iban instead. The respondents in Iban-dominant areas likely opted for Iban due to their numerical dominance, especially in group chats. Thus, this explains the higher use of Iban among the respondents in writing their SMS or WhatsApp text messages, which also suggests that locality influences the extensive use of Iban in this domain.

4.4 Independent Samples T-Test on Attitudes Towards the Iban Language

Independent samples t-tests were also conducted to compare the means of attitudes towards the Iban language between the two groups of Iban respondents: the respondents from Iban-dominant areas and the respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas. This test was performed to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of these Iban respondents' self-reports on pride in Iban identity, social status of Iban speakers, and use of Iban.

4.4.1 Pride in Iban Identity

Table 4.10 presents the results of the respondents' perceptions on pride in Iban identity.

Table 4.10: Descriptive Statistics and T-Test Results Comparing Two Groups of Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant Areas and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Their Means of Attitudes Towards the Iban Language – Pride in Iban Identity (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Pride in Iban identity	I am an Iban because I can speak Iban.	4.02	1.278	3.78	1.383	-.237	-3.007	967.067	.003
	I am an Iban because my father and/or my mother are Iban.	4.61	.693	4.65	.598	.040	1.050	1202	.294
	I speak Iban because it symbolises my culture, heritage, and identity.	4.68	.649	4.65	.625	-.021	-.541	1202	.589
	I speak Iban because I was born as an Iban.	4.59	.741	4.57	.757	-.018	-.393	1202	.694
	I speak Iban to show that I belong to the Iban ethnic group.	4.49	.861	4.44	.910	-.055	-1.026	1202	.305
	I feel proud of the Iban cultural history.	4.74	.653	4.78	.473	.034	.965	700.292	.335
	I feel proud of the Iban people's achievements over the years.	4.46	.909	4.41	.895	-.051	-.943	1202	.346

The findings reveal that all items (except for one – whether one considers oneself an Iban because one can speak the ethnic language) show no significant difference since the mean scores of the respondents from both areas of the Iban population were almost similar. The respondents show almost similar patterns, in which they mostly agreed that one is considered an Iban because either the father and/or mother is/are Iban; one speaks Iban because it symbolises one's culture, heritage, and identity; and one speaks Iban because one

is born as an Iban. Similarly, the respondents also agreed that one speaks Iban to show that one belongs to the Iban ethnic group, as well as one feels proud of the Iban people's cultural history and achievements over the years. Hence, it is evident that locality has no impact on the respondents' perceptions of pride in Iban identity, which is not influenced by whether they reside in areas where the Iban are the majority or minority.

On the other hand, locality has an effect on the respondents' perceived belief in whether one considers oneself an Iban because one can speak the ethnic language ($p = 0.003$). Although the respondents in non-Iban-dominant areas agreed on this item, a large number of the respondents also showed disagreement, which suggests that the Iban people do need to speak the language in order to be considered as Iban. Unlike those from the Iban-dominant areas, their responses garnered less disagreement. They believed that to be considered an Iban, one should speak Iban as a requirement of the ethnic identity. This reveals that locality affects the respondents' perceptions of the condition to be identified as an Iban in the speech community. The respondents in urban areas, such as Kuching and Samarahan (where Iban are the minority), do not see the need to speak Iban in order to be distinguished as an Iban. Most Iban youngsters in urban areas view themselves as Iban even though they are not fluent in the ethnic language. This means they identify themselves as Iban since their parents are Iban, or either their father or mother is an Iban. In contrast to the respondents in Iban-dominant areas, they believed that an Iban person must be fluent in Iban to be identified as an Iban member of the community. The ability to speak the ethnic language establishes the person's identity as an Iban. Hence, one's locality seems to have an impact on this item that results in a significant difference in the respondents' mean scores for pride in Iban identity.

4.4.2 Social Status of Iban Speakers

Table 4.11 presents the results of the respondents' perceptions on the independent t-test for social status of Iban speakers.

Table 4.11: Descriptive Statistics and T-Test Results in Comparing Two Groups of Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant Areas and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Their Means of Attitudes Towards the Iban Language – Social Status of Iban Speakers (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Social status of Iban speakers	I think Iban is an important language because there are a lot of Iban speakers.	4.57	.747	4.49	.733	-.079	-1.792	1202	.073
	I think Iban is an important language because the Iban people are powerful in politics.	3.49	1.196	3.49	1.179	.000	-.002	1202	.999
	I think Iban is an important language because the Iban people are successful in business.	3.54	1.138	3.45	1.139	-.091	-1.327	1202	.185
	I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in Sarawak.	4.33	.914	4.25	.961	-.082	-1.446	1202	.149
	I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in Malaysia.	3.85	1.091	3.70	1.078	-.144	-2.218	1202	.027

Mean scores for the items related to the importance of Iban due to the people's numerical dominance in Sarawak and the Iban are powerful in politics reveal that locality did not affect the respondents' perceptions from both areas of the Iban population. Similarly, locality also did not impact their perceptions towards the importance of Iban due to the

success of the Iban people in business, and whether the Iban are given high respect in Sarawak. Regardless of the locality, the mean scores were almost similar between the respondents in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. The respondents correspondingly acknowledged the importance of Iban because there are many Iban speakers in Sarawak, and Iban is highly respected in this Malaysian state. With regards to their perceptions on whether Iban is an important language because the Iban people are powerful in politics and successful in business, both of the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas were unsure of the two items. In contrast, locality shows an impact on the respondents' perceptions on the status of Iban speakers. While the respondents from Iban-dominant areas agreed that the Iban language is highly respected in Malaysia, those in non-dominant Iban areas were uncertain about this view instead. A majority of the respondents from non-Iban-dominant areas also agreed that Iban is highly respected in the country; however, some of the respondents were unsure of whether Iban is given high respect in Malaysia. They did not believe that the ethnic language is given high respect in the country, which is probably due to its vernacular status in the country. Besides, even though the Iban community is the largest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak, its population is dwarfed by the total Malaysian citizens, which is only 2.8% of Malaysia's total population. Hence, the various respondents' perceptions resulted in a significant difference ($p = 0.027$) in their mean scores on the status of Iban speakers.

4.4.3 Use of Iban

Table 4.12 shows the independent t-test results of the respondents' perceptions on the use of Iban in the speech community.

Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics and T-Test Results in Comparing Two Groups of Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant Areas and Non-Iban-Dominant Areas on Their Means of Attitudes Towards the Iban Language – Use of Iban (N=1,204)

Variables		Iban-dominant areas n = 437		Non-Iban-dominant areas n = 767		Mean diff.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Use of Iban	It is important for Iban students to learn the language in school.	4.55	.726	4.58	.632	.030	.757	1202	.449
	Which of these languages is the most useful for your career?	3.15	1.943	3.15	1.991	.000	.002	1202	.999
	Which of these languages is the most useful in your studies?	2.95	1.798	2.89	1.834	-.067	-.611	1202	.541
	Which of these languages do you most cherish?	3.95	.687	3.93	.874	-.020	-.433	1084.758	.665
	Which of these languages is the strongest in Sarawak?	4.15	.800	4.22	.899	.072	1.426	995.732	.154

From the results, locality did not affect the respondents' perceptions on the use of Iban. The respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas had almost similar mean scores on the importance of Iban students learning the ethnic language in school. Likewise, to which language is the most useful for one's career and studies, almost similar mean scores were also obtained for the two items. The respondents stated that English is the most useful for their career and study growth, followed by Standard Malay. English and Standard Malay are undeniably useful languages for careers and studies because these languages have strong instrumental value and are used widely in professions and education. Seemingly, Iban was the least-used language due to its low status and limited functions in

professional and study growth. As for which language one most cherishes, the respondents reported Iban due to its heritage value among the speech community, which explains no significant difference in the respondents' mean scores. Meanwhile, the mean scores for which language is the strongest in Sarawak were also almost similar between the Iban respondents in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas, in which the respondents reported Iban as the strongest language in Sarawak. This suggests that they perceived Iban as the strongest language in the state, as the Iban people are the biggest indigenous ethnic group in Sarawak.

4.5 Comparisons of Perceptions and Attitudes of Iban Respondents from Iban-Dominant and Non-Dominant Areas

Based on the independent-samples t-test results comparing the perceptions and attitudes of Iban respondents from Iban-dominant areas and non-Iban-dominant areas, it is evident that locality plays a significant role in some aspects. While the results revealed that there were no significant differences in language use within the family and outside the home domains for most settings, there were significant differences in language use with grandparents, during prayers, and at government departments. In addition, the findings also showed a significant difference in language use for watching YouTube content and writing text messages via SMS or WhatsApp between the respondents from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas. In conclusion, the results revealed the influence of locality on language use and attitudes within the Iban community, particularly emphasising the effect on intergenerational language transmission, religious practices, and communication in various social contexts. The study provides valuable insights into how geographical location can shape language use and attitudes among the Iban population, reflecting the complex relationship between language, culture, and social dynamics in diverse settings.

4.6 Comparisons between Language Use from the Questionnaire Results and Language Use from Non-participant Observations

This section presents the comparisons of language use between the results obtained from the online questionnaire and non-participant observations. Comparing the results from the questionnaire with those from observations is essential because these two methods capture different, complementary aspects of language use and attitudes, providing a more comprehensive and accurate understanding overall. By comparing these results, researchers can identify consistencies or discrepancies between what participants say about their language practices and what they actually do, which strengthens the validity of the findings and helps explain complex sociolinguistic dynamics. This triangulation enriches the data interpretation, ensuring that conclusions about language use, attitudes, and vitality are grounded in both subjective perspectives and objective behaviours across various domains and social contexts. Furthermore, the use of a questionnaire may be inclined towards bias in social desirability, as the participants may respond based on socially acceptable answers instead of providing their actual experiences. On the other hand, non-participant observation is less susceptible to this bias since language behaviours are directly examined. Hence, this offers a more profound contextual understanding of the study. The questionnaire method may be lacking in this context as the results depend on the respondents' perceptions (Creswell, 2014).

4.6.1 Observed Use of Iban and Other Languages in Three Selected Domains (Family, Outside Home, and New Media)

The observation results show the language use of the Iban speech community in actual settings. The field notes from non-participant observations were analysed using the

deductive coding of a thematic analysis guided by Fishman's (1967) domain analysis framework. According to Fishman's theory, domains are the theoretical concepts that can be used to explain the phenomena of language use and choice. The observation data, which were organised in observation forms specifically prepared before the conduct of the non-participant observations, were coded based on three selected domains of language use, namely, family, outside home, and social media and new media domains. These data were sub-categorised into interlocutors (participants), topics (events), and locations according to Fishman's (1967) domain framework. The following sections present the results of non-participant observations of language use in the family, outside the home, as well as social media and new media domains.

4.6.1.1 Observed Language Use in the Family Domain

This section presents the results of non-participant observations on language use in the family domains. The interactants comprised parents, spouses, children, siblings, grandparents, and relatives (cousins, uncles, and aunties). A total of 14 events were observed, involving 32 participants: 16 from Iban-dominant areas and 16 from non-Iban-dominant areas. The speech events were observed in different home settings that involved two Iban-dominant areas (Sri Aman and Lubok Antu) and three non-Iban-dominant areas (Kuching, Samarahan, and Lundu). Tables 4.13 and 4.14 summarise the speech events, participants, and language use in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas during the non-participant observations for the family domains.

Table 4.13 presents seven events comprising observed language use in family interactions, where the Iban people predominate (Sri Aman and Lubok Antu). The table highlights the main languages spoken in Iban-dominant areas in a variety of contexts,

including everyday activities, get-togethers with family, and cultural customs. Iban is the main language used in family interactions involving the participants. This is seen in various family gatherings and everyday activities, including purchasing a gun, sending a daughter to continue her tertiary studies, doing homework, removing grey hair, handling a fat cat, cooking chicken in bamboo, and preparing a customary dish for *Gawai. Gawai* is a harvest festival celebrated annually by the Dayak people in Sarawak on 1st and 2nd June. Code-switching between Iban, Malay, and English was occasionally noticed. Sarawak Malay is also spoken during family activities. This implies that although Iban is the primary language, families may occasionally use other languages depending on the circumstances. Generally, Iban is the main language spoken in families in Iban-dominant areas, while other languages, such as English and Malay, are also used in some family activities.

Table 4.14 also shows seven events of observed family interactions in non-Iban-dominant areas (Kuching, Samarahan, and Lundu). A variety of languages were used by the Iban participants with their family members, including Sarawak Malay, Iban, and English. Code-switching between these languages at family get-togethers and activities was also observed. The mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, and siblings spoke mostly in Sarawak Malay and Iban during the pre-*Gawai* festival; whereas the husband and wife conversed in Iban while preparing food for the *Gawai* festival, occasionally code-switching using English and Malay. English was the main language used for making *Gawai* lunches and for the university study programme, with very minimal use of Iban. The participants' favourite language was English in more casual family situations, including replenishing the fish tank or boxing training. Nonetheless, the conversation between a grandfather and a grandson was in Iban with a focus on college life, which demonstrates the family's continued use of Iban. Generally, the multilingual nature of family communication in non-Iban-dominant areas

reveals observed language use of Sarawak Malay, Iban, English, and code-switching in various family activities and exchanges.

Table 4.13: A Summary of Observed Language Use in the Family Domains for Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Family	Participants	Language Use
1	Buying a gun	• Father and son	• FP1 – Iban, M, 44 (son) • FP2 – Iban, M, 80 (father)	FP1 + FP2 = Iban
2	Sending daughter for further study	• Spouses	• FP3 – Iban, M, 51 (husband) • FP4 – Iban, F, 35 (wife)	FP3 + FP4 = Iban (with code-switching in Malay and English)
3	Doing homework	• Mother and son	• FP5 – Iban, F, 35 (mother) • FP6 – Iban, M, 10 (son)	FP5 + FP6 = Iban
4	Pulling out the grey hair	• Siblings	• FP7 – Iban, F, 33 (sister) • FP8 – Iban, F, 34 (sister)	FP7 + FP8 = Iban
5	Handling a fat cat	• Mother and children • Siblings	• FP9 – Iban + Malay, F, early • 30s (daughter) • FP10 – Iban + Malay, F, 24 (daughter) • FP11 – Iban + Malay, F, 17 • (daughter) • FP12 – Iban, F, mid 50s (mother)	FP9 + FP10 + FP11 + FP12 = Sarawak Malay
6	Cooking chicken in bamboo	• Grandparent and grandchild	• FP13 – Iban, M, mid 70s • (grandparent) • FP14 – Iban, M, 9 (grandchild)	FP13 + FP14 = Iban
7	Preparing a *Gawai* dish	• Relatives – 1st and 2nd cousins	• FP14 – Iban, M, 51 (cousin) • FP15 – Iban, F, 35 (cousin) • FP16 – Iban, F, 36 (cousin)	FP14 + FP15 + FP16 = Iban

Note: FP = Family Participant; F = Female; M = Male

Table 4.14: A Summary of Observed Language Use in the Family Domains for Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Family	Participants	Language Use
1	Pre-*Gawai* celebration	• Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law • Siblings (sisters)	• FP17 – Iban, F, 32 (daughter-in-law of FP3; sister to FP2) • FP18 – Iban, F, 35 (sister to FP1) • FP19 – Bidayuh, F, late 50s (mother-in-law of FP1)	FP17 + FP19 = Sarawak Malay FP18 + FP19 = Sarawak Malay FP17 + FP18 = Iban
2	Preparing dishes for *Gawai* celebration	• Spouses (husband and wife)	• FP20 – Iban, F, 45 (wife) • FP21 – Iban, M, 46 (husband)	FP20 + FP21 = Iban (with code-switching in English and Malay)
3	Preparing for *Gawai* lunch	• Mother and children	• FP22 – Iban, F, 46 (mother) • FP23 – Iban, F, 10 (daughter) • FP24 – Iban, M, 14 (son)	FP22 + FP23 + FP24 = English (with minimal use of Iban)
4	Study programme at university	• Mother and child	• FP25 – Iban, F, 46 (mother) • FP26 – Iban, F, 22 (daughter)	FP25 + FP26 = English (with minimal use of Iban)
5	Filling up the fish tank	• Sibling (brothers)	• FP27 - Iban, M, 23 • FP28 - Iban, M, 16	FP27 + FP28 = English
6	University life	• Grandparent and grandson	• FP29 – Iban, M, 80 • (grandparent) • FP30 – Iban, M, 21 (grandson)	FP29 + FP30 = Iban
7	Boxing training	• First cousins	• FP31 – Iban, M, 23 (cousin) • FP32 – Iban + Indian, F, 28 (cousin)	FP31 + FP32 = English

Note: FP = Family Participant; F = Female; M = Male

4.6.1.1.1 Results for Language Use in the Family Domains in Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the detailed results for non-participant observations in Iban-dominant areas. These areas cover the towns of Sri Aman and Lubok Antu, located in the Sri Aman Division, which is one of the divisions densely populated by the Iban people.

4.6.1.1.1.1 Language Use with Parents in an Iban-dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section presents the encounter between a father and a son in an Iban-dominant area. FP1 is an Iban male, aged 44. FP1's educational level is Form 5, and he is the son of FP2. Meanwhile, FP2 is an Iban male in his early eighties. The conversation took place in the living room of a residential house, located in Sri Aman. Excerpt 1 shows their conversation conducted completely in Iban, except for one word, "*lisin*" (license).

Excerpt 1

FP1: *De ka meli senapang pia? Sapa ka timbak de?*

(You want to buy a gun? Who are you shooting?

FP2: *Enggau jaga rumah.*

(For house protection.)

FP1*: Meda de? Nimbak sembarang ja legi. Timbak ninga munyi ja pia?*

(Can you see? You will shoot at anything. You hear the sound of shooting only?)

FP2: *Kitai bisi pesaka, nya jadi pesaka.*

(We have an heirloom, it will become an heirloom.)

FP1: *Jadi pesaka .. kumbai de murah rega senapang nya.*

(Become an heirloom … you think the gun price is low?)

FP2: *Nadai sampai seribu lebih nya.*

(It won't reach more than a thousand.)

FP1: *Lisin aja dah 60 ribu*.

(The license alone is 60 thousand.)

The Iban speakers' topic of discussion was buying a gun. Iban was solely used throughout the conversation between the father and his son. In the conversation, the word "*lisin*" was used, which is a borrowed word from English, "license". The Iban language seems to borrow words from other languages, such as Malay and English, as some words are absent in the ethnic language. Nevertheless, the main use of Iban in the conversation suggests that the ethnic language is still strong between the father and the son in this Iban-dominant area (Sri Aman), which shows strong intergenerational language transmission in the family.

4.6.1.1.1.2 Language Use with Spouses in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports the language use with spouses in an Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved a husband and a wife, which took place in the dining room of a residential house, located in Sri Aman. FP3 is an Iban male aged 51 years old, who is the husband of FP4. FP3 is a master's degree holder and works as a teacher in a public school. Meanwhile, FP4 is an Iban female, aged 35, who is a diploma holder and works as a nurse at a government hospital. Excerpt 2 shows their conversation, where Iban was mainly used but with many occurrences of code-switching in Malay and English.

Excerpt 2

FP3: *Bisi Aisyah madah ka pulai lok enggau kitai udah ya* register*, asai ku enda ulih keluar sida ya pama dah* register *ila.*

(Aisyah mentioned she will return with us after she registers, I think they cannot leave after registration.)

FP4: *Ukai pia, pulai meli barang lok ko ya*.

(Not like that, she is returning to buy things first.)

FP3: *Barang nama gi ka beli ya?*

(What else does she want to buy?)

FP4: *Sida beledi, penyangkut baju, bantal*, *semua nya meh.*

(Those pail, cloth hangers, pillow, and all that.)

FP3: *Ukai bisi kedai ba* campus *nya kah? Enda patut nadai kedai dia. Ulih beli ba din magang.*

(Isn't there a shop on campus? There should be a shop there. Can buy all the stuff there.)

FP4: Standby *ja lah kitai, nangi ke nadai ila. Nadai nya jauh keluar kin meli deh.*

(We just stand by, just in case it is not available. It won't be far to buy the things.)

FP3: *Pama dah* register*, engka alu* start activity *sida ya. Enti ulih bai ari rumah manah gi, ila kiruh begiga ke barang perlu nya.*

(After registration, perhaps their activity will start. If we can bring the stuff from home, it's better, it will be a hassle to look for the necessary stuff then.)

FP4: *Ya.. ni ke ulih bai, bai ga ila, enggai ke sekut keta.*

(Yes, bring the ones that we can bring, we don't want the car to be over-stuffed.)

The couple was talking about sending their daughter for further study at a public university in Kota Samarahan. Iban was mostly used in their conversation. However, there were many instances of borrowing from English, such as “register”, “campus”, “standby”, and “start activity”. The couple also used several Malay words in the conversation, namely, “*meli barang*”, “*beledi*”, “*penyangkut baju*”, “*bantal*”, “*keluar*”, and “*keta*”, whereby in Iban, these words are referred to as “*ngalu utai*”, “*empelaku*”, “*pengait gari*”, “*panggal*”, “*pansut*”, and “*mutu*”, respectively. It is noted that the word “*empelaku*”, which means “pail” in English, is rarely used today by Iban speakers as the word “*beledi*” (“*baldi*” – a word borrowed from Malay) is more favoured. The researcher has never heard the word “*empelaku*” being used by her parents or grandparents, which suggests that it could be an archaic term for the word “pail”. Even though the Iban words for the borrowed terms are available in Iban, they were not used in the conversation. Instead, Malay and English words were used to facilitate the conversation, which shows the influence of these two dominant languages in their daily conversations. Furthermore, considering their educational background, today’s educated Iban speakers seem to borrow a lot from other dominant languages such as English and Malay in their family interactions, even in Iban-populated areas like Sri Aman.

4.6.1.1.1.3 Language Use with Children in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports the results of language use with a child in an Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved a mother and her young son, which took place in the kitchen of a longhouse, located in Lubok Antu. FP5 is an Iban female aged 36, while FP6 is a nine-year-old Iban male. Excerpt 3 shows their conversation during the non-participant observation, where Iban was the main language.

Excerpt 3

FP5: *Dah tembu kerja skula de?*

(Have you done your homework?)

FP6: *Dah.*

(Done.)

FP5*: De anang bula ka aku de, legi ku ngechik bik dek. Bai kitu bup tulis de.*

(Don't you lie to me, I will check your bag. Bring your writing book over here.)

FP6: *Dah.. mimit da gi bedau gaga.*

(Done.. a bit more to go.)

FP5*: Nya, amat jaku ku, bisi bedau tembu. Sesari ku meda main tipun nya, enda ngeleka ari jari de tipun nya. De bisi ari anuk cikgu ila.*

(See, I was right, still not done yet. I saw you playing with the phone all day, the phone never leaves your hand. The teacher will scold you.)

FP6: *Nya dah tembu, nya bedau. Enda nemu ku ngaga nya.*

(This one is done, that one is not yet. I don't know how to do it.)

FP5: *Matematik tu. Legi yak de ngajar de, badu de main tipun nya, juling mata de legi udu main tipun.*

*(*This is Mathematics. Your aunt will teach you later, stop playing with the phone, you'll get crossed eyes if you play it too much.)

FP6: *Ha, bula mai. Nadai urang kala juling.*

(Ha, completely untrue, no one ever gets crossed eyes.)

The conversation between the mother and her son was focused on the son's homework. Although Iban was mainly used throughout the conversation, instances of borrowing from English were found. Words like "*skula*", "*ngechek*", "*bik*", "*bup*", and "*tipun*" were Ibanised pronunciations of the English words for "school", "check", "bag", "book", and "telephone", respectively. Furthermore, Malay words were also used, such as "*kerja*", "*main*", and "*cikgu*", in which the Iban words for these borrowed terms are available in the ethnic language, referring to "*pengawa*", "*ngayam*", and "*pengajar*", respectively. The use of borrowed words is common in Iban conversations, although the words are present in Iban. Borrowed words seem to ease the understanding of the messages, especially when the conversations involve youngsters who are exposed to the terms in schools.

4.6.1.1.1.4 Language Use with Siblings in an Iban-dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

The results for this section are based on a conversation between two sisters in Lubok Antu, an Iban-dominant area. FP7 is an Iban female, aged 33 years old, who is a degree holder and works as a clerk at a government premise in Lubok Antu. FP8 is an Iban female aged 34 years old, whose educational level is Form 5, and a stay-at-home mother. Their conversation took place in the backyard of a longhouse, located in Lubok Antu in the Sri Aman Division. Their conversational exchanges were carried out completely in Iban, as shown in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4

FP7: *Mayuh mai uban de.*

(You have lots of grey hair.)

FP8: *Ba ya, lama enda entun.*

(Yes indeed, long time it's been pulled out.)

FP7: *Enti entun abis, lalak bok de legi.*

(If it's all pulled out, you will become bold.)

FP8: *Ambik ke mit nya aja, nya ke gatal mai.*

(Just take the short ones, those are the itchy ones.)

FP7: *Enda ulih pilih tu, mayuh mai. Nya, peda de.*

(Can't choose, too many. See, look here.)

The topic of the conversation centred on picking grey hair. This is a common activity among longhouse dwellers, where it forms a family bond among them. Iban was used entirely throughout the conversation between the two Iban speakers. As Lubok Antu is largely populated by the Iban ethnic group, it is common to see the Iban language dominating conversations in the family domains. In fact, Iban is also spoken by other races, such as the local Chinese and Malays, when any Iban speakers are present. This indicates the possible role of Iban as a lingua franca in Lubok Antu, which has a large Iban population. In Lubok Antu, the Iban community comprises 28,900 people over a total of 33,100 (DOSM, 2020).

4.6.1.1.1.5 Language Use with Parents and Siblings in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section presents the findings on language use between a parent (mother) and her daughters in an Iban-dominant area. The conversations took place in the living room of a residential house located in Sri Aman. Four interlocutors were observed during the conversational exchanges. FP9 is a mixed Iban and Malay female in her early thirties. She is a diploma holder and the daughter of FP12. FP10 and FP11 are also mixed Iban and Malay females, aged 24 and 17, respectively. FP10 has a diploma degree, while FP11 is a Form 5 student. FP12 is an Iban female who is in her mid-fifties. FP9, FP10, and FP11 are

sisters, and they are daughters of FP12. With regards to the family background, FP12 is married to a Malay. Hence, the children are mixed with Iban and Malay. Sarawak Malay is completely used as the language of communication at home. Excerpt 5 presents their conversational exchanges.

Excerpt 5

FP9: *Besar na nya tok. Pegangnya lok, kamek maok ambik gambarnya.*

(You are so big. Hold it first, I want to snap its picture.)

FP10: *Cepat gik, larinya kelak, ya rabii.. gemoknya kau!*

(Make it fast, it will run away, gosh… you are so fat!)

FP11: *Jangan kuat megangnya, takut nya kelak. Sik macam Ciko kita nya tok, takut niat orang nya.*

(Don't hold it too tight, it will get scared. It's unlike our Ciko, it's scared of people.)

FP6: *Lari ya kelak, mesti pegang ngan penuh kasih sayang. Kau tok…*

(It will run, you must hold it with affection. You …)

FP10: *Kedak tok ba, pegang rah badannya tok, macam ngendong baby bah.*

(Like this, hold its body, like holding a baby.)

FP9: *Cam tok?*

(Like this?)

FP10: *Aok.*

(Yes.)

FP12: *Ya baru betul, sik nya takut.*

(That's right, it won't get scared.)

The conversational topic centred on how to handle a fat cat, which they found while visiting a relative's house during the Hari Raya celebration. Despite having an Iban parent from the mother's side, the siblings and their mother used Sarawak Malay entirely when speaking to each other, and Iban was hardly used. This shows that Sarawak Malay is the main language spoken in the family. The fact that mostly Malays surround the family in the village also suggests the dominance of Sarawak Malay in their daily family conversations, which reduces the use of Iban. Contrary to the belief that children learn the ethnic language through their mothers, this is not the case in this family, as FP12 seems to put minimal effort into speaking Iban to her children.

4.6.1.1.1.6 Language Use with Grandparents in an Iban-dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section presents the results of language use between a grandfather and his grandson in an Iban-dominant area. The conversation took place in the backyard of a longhouse located in Lubok Antu. FP13 is an Iban male aged in the mid-seventies, while FP14 is another Iban male, aged 9. The grandson is a Primary 3 student, while the grandfather's educational background is unknown. However, as in most elderly people in longhouses, the grandfather may not have acquired any formal learning in school. Excerpt 6 shows that Iban was the main language in this grandparent-grandson interaction.

Excerpt 6

FP13: *Ambi ke aki pemantik api nya, chu. Minta ba ini de din.*

(Get me a lighter, grandson. Get it from your grandmother there.)

FP14: *Nama pansuh de aki?*

(What do you *pansuh*, grandfather?)

FP13: *Manuk tuai.*

(Old chicken.)

FP14: *Ka ku nya.*

(I want that.)

FP13: *Ya sigi nyamai utai sumai aki de. Bah, jauh gi de, kena api legi.*

(My cooking is always delicious. Bah, go far a bit, you'll catch the fire.)

Sua aku kain nya.

(Pass me the cloth.)

The conversation centred on cooking chicken meat in a bamboo stalk. Chicken "*pansuh*" is a typical dish in the Iban community, commonly prepared during festivals. "*Pansuh*" refers to the Iban's traditional way of cooking any dish (normally meat like chicken and pork, as well as river fish and prawns) prepared in a bamboo stalk, where a small amount of water is also added to the dish along with the seasonings. In the conversation, Iban was solely used between the grandfather and his grandson, with only one word borrowed from Malay: "*kain*". In the Iban language, "*kain*" refers to "*gari utai*". FP13 used "*kain*" instead of the Iban term, as it facilitated the meaning he wanted to convey. FP14 had no difficulty in understanding the word. The conversation clearly shows strong intergenerational language transmission in this Iban-dominant area located in Lubok Antu.

4.6.1.1.1.7 Language Use with Relatives in an Iban-dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports the conversation between three close relatives (first and second cousins) in an Iban-dominant area. FP14 is an Iban male, aged 51, who is a master's degree holder and works as a teacher at a government school. FP15 is an Iban female aged 35, who has a bachelor's degree and works as an assistant registrar to a district officer in Engkilili, Lubok Antu. Both FP14 and FP15 are first cousins on their mother's side. Meanwhile, FP16

is an Iban female, aged 36, who holds a master's degree and works as a police officer. FP16 is a second cousin to FP14 and FP15. Their conversation took place at the *ruai* (veranda) of a longhouse, located in Lubok Antu in Sri Aman Division. Excerpt 7 shows their conversational exchanges carried out mainly in Iban.

Excerpt 7

FP14: *Meli manuk mit segala pegila, guring segala pia.*

(Buy a small whole chicken tomorrow, fry it whole.)

FP15: *Dini de meli?*

(Where do you buy it?)

FP14: *Ila ka pulai ke Sri Aman enda lama, ka ngambi baju burung ku.*

(Will return to Sri Aman tomorrow for a while, want to fetch my *baju burung*.)

FP16: *Nyangkung ku, nadai manuk segala. Nyangkung 2 iko.*

(Buy for me too, don't have a whole chicken. Buy two.)

FP15: *Nyameh, enggau kami abis tetak aba magang, kerat mit-mit gi nya.*

(Yes, ours have been chopped by father, cut into small pieces.)

FP16: *Guring segala pia?*

(Fry whole right?)

FP14: *Au, sida ya empu netak ya ila, engkah ja ba pinggai, ka makai manuk, tetak.*

(Yes, they will cut it themselves, just place it on a plate, want to eat the chicken, they will cut it.)

FP15: *Engku pia meh ila, sempoi ja. Guring baka* Singapore Chicken Rice.

(Mine is also like that, just simple. Fry like Singapore Chicken Rice.)

The conversational topic was focused on preparing a *Gawai* dish for the coming communal celebration. The conversation occurred during a pre-*Gawai* celebration, where Iban people, near and far, return to the longhouse to celebrate the festivity in Sarawak on June 1-2 every year. Iban was mainly used in the conversation among these cousins. However, there were several instances of borrowed words from Malay, such as "*meli*" and "*guring*", where the Iban equivalences for these words are "*ngalu*" and "*girau*", respectively. The word "*sempoi*" was also used, which was borrowed from the English term for "simple". Although the whole conversation was in Iban, borrowed words from Malay and English characterise the Iban speakers' language use in this longhouse located in Lubok Antu, where a large majority of the villagers are Iban.

4.6.1.1.2 Results for Language Use in Family Domains in Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the findings for non-participant observations in three non-Iban-dominant areas. These areas include Kuching, Samarahan, and Lundu, which have lower Iban population densities.

4.6.1.1.2.1 Language Use with Parents and Sisters in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the results on language use that involved three female interlocutors in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversations took place in the living room of a residential house, located in Kota Samarahan, during a pre-*Gawai* celebration. FP17 is an Iban female aged 32, who is a sister to FP18 and a daughter-in-law to FP19. FP18 is also an Iban female, aged 35, who is a sister to FP17. Both FP17 and FP18 are degree holders. Meanwhile, FP19 is a Bidayuh female in her late fifties, who is FP17's mother-in-law. Her educational background is unknown to the researcher. Their conversation centred on the

making of a Sarawak traditional delicacy called "*Kuih Sarang Semut*". The three participants were sitting at a dining table, munching cookies and cakes while talking to one another. Both Iban and Sarawak Malay were used in the conversation when discussing the local delicacy. Precisely, Iban was mainly used between the two Iban sisters (FP17 and FP18) when they talked to each other.

Excerpt 8 shows that Iban was mainly used in the sisters' conversation.

Excerpt 8

FP17: *Bisi kuih sarang semut ba kontena besai nyin. Gaga mak.*

(There is *kuih sarang semut* in the big container there. Mom made it.)

FP18: *Ai*, best *mai, ka ku, meri ku mimit legi, bai ku pulai.*

(*Ai*, best indeed, I want, give me a bit later, to bring home.)

The term "*kuih sarang semut*" was used by FP17 when referring to the local delicacy. It is a term used normally by the Iban in Samarahan and Kuching divisions, which seems to be a borrowed term from Malay. In other parts of Sarawak, for instance, Sri Aman and Lubok Antu, the traditional delicacy is commonly referred to as "*penganan*" by the Iban community in these areas. This suggests that Iban speakers in Samarahan and Kuching are influenced by the Malay language in their daily interactions at home. Furthermore, the use of the word "*kontena*" in FP17's speech also shows evidence of borrowing from the English word "container". The Iban equivalences for "container" are "*kandi*", "*sarang*", and "*tungkin*" (Sutlive, 1994), which are rarely used by the Iban people in modern times, especially among the young generations. The Iban speakers' conversation was mixed with other languages, namely, Malay and English, which suggests the influence of these dominant languages on Iban at present.

Meanwhile, the Iban speakers switched to Sarawak Malay when speaking to their Bidayuh mother-in-law. This suggests that Sarawak Malay serves as a means of communication within this mixed family. Iban was not used in their interaction with the Bidayuh mother-in-law, indicating that Iban may not be intelligible to the Bidayuh speaker. Besides, even though the Bidayuh mother-in-law may understand Iban, it does not serve as the family's means of communication, as Sarawak Malay is preferred instead, which shows the dominance of the language in Iban. Having been related to the Bidayuh community through marriage, FP17 and FP18 switched to Sarawak Malay when speaking to their Bidayuh mother-in-law. Excerpt 9 shows the dominance of Sarawak Malay in the family conversation, indicating that when there are mixed marriages involving Iban and Bidayuh, Sarawak Malay may emerge as the family language.

Excerpt 9 shows that Sarawak Malay was mainly used in the conversation between the Bidayuh mother-in-law and the Iban sisters.

Excerpt 9

FP17: *Tolong ambi kontena hijau tu, mak.*

(Please get the green container, mother.)

FP18: Aunty *buat sendiri kah? Nyamanlah.*

(You did this yourself, aunty? So delicious.)

FP19: *Ya, lama mau bikin ni, letak dalam tempurung kelapa, lepas tu pusing* slow-slow. (showing the circling motion with her hands)

(Yes, took a long time to make, put in the coconut shell, then stir slowly.)

In the excerpt, FP18's use of "Aunty" is evidence of borrowing from English, which is a common term when addressing an elderly female in the community. Based on the observation, Iban was exclusively used by the Iban speakers (two Iban sisters) when speaking to each other at home. However, in this family context, Sarawak Malay was mainly used as the means of family interaction within this mixed marriage.

4.6.1.1.2.2 Language Use with Spouses in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the analysis of a conversation between a husband and a wife in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversation took place in the kitchen of a residential house located in Samarahan. FP20 is an Iban female, aged 45. She has a master's degree and works as a senior lecturer in a public university in Samarahan, while FP21 is an Iban male, aged 46, who works as an auditor for a private company located in Kuching. The husband is a degree holder. Both participants were preparing dishes for their guests during a *Gawai* festivity. Excerpt 10 shows that Iban was mainly used in the conversation, with some borrowing from Malay and English.

Excerpt 10

FP20: *Bisi bulih de ruas?*

(Did you get the bamboo?)

FP21: *Bisi, tang mit mai ke tinggal. Umbas mesai tu?*

(Got, but only the small ones are left. Is it big enough?)

FP20: *Umbas meh nya. Manuk dah tepu ku dalam* pressure cooker*, ikan nya intu de legi.*

(Should be enough. I already put the chicken in the pressure cooker, you do the fish later.)

FP21: Ok.

FP20: *Dah idup api tadi. Kambin bisi beli de?*

(The fire is ready. Did you buy the mutton?)

FP21: *Nya ba plestik mirah. Dah perap, nganti ka manggang ja.*

(In the red plastic there. Already marinated, just waiting to be roasted.)

FP20: *Peda de api ba luar nya, enggai ke enda idup. Nama mayuh mai asap tama kitu?)*

(Watch the fire outside, don't want it to go out. Why so much smoke here?)

FP21: *Tutup pintu nya.*

(Close the door.)

FP20: *Sua ku bisin nyin.*

(Pass me that basin.)

The topic of conversation centred on preparing *Gawai* dishes for the guests. Even though Iban was the main language used in the conversation between the spouses, there were several borrowed words from English and Malay. English words such as "pressure cooker", "*plestik*", and "*bisin*" were used. The words "*plestik*" and "*bisin*" were the Ibanised pronunciation of the English words "plastic" and "basin", respectively. The use of these words may be due to the absence of such terms in Iban. In addition, words such as "*mirah*", "*perap*", and "*tutup*" are also borrowed from Malay, in which their Iban terms are "*mansau*", "*gerami*", and "*tikup*", respectively. This shows that although the terms are available in Iban, borrowed terms were preferred in the spouses' conversation, which facilitated their interactions and revealed the influence of Malay. Nevertheless, Iban was mainly used throughout the conversation, despite borrowing from other languages.

4.6.1.1.2.3 Language Use with Children in Non-Iban-Dominant Areas (Samarahan)

This section reports the analysis of a conversation between two children and their mother in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversation took place in the kitchen of a residential house located in Samarahan. FP22 is an Iban female, aged 45, with a master's degree. She works as a senior lecturer at a public university in Samarahan. Meanwhile, FP23 is an Iban female, aged 10, while FP24 is an Iban male, aged 15. Both FP23 and FP24 are daughter and son of FP22, respectively. Excerpt 11 shows their conversation was mostly spoken in English with a few Iban words.

Excerpt 11

FP22: After you cook the pasta, you help Mummy set the fire.

FP24: For *manuk pansuh*, right My?

FP22: *Au lah*. Then you get the bowl from the rack there, put the pasta in it.

(Yes indeed. Then you get the bowl from the rack there, put the pasta in it.)

FP24: Ok.

FP23: My, someone coming!

FP22: *Aii..* open the door *lah*, bring them in.

FP23: Okay!

FP22: Afterward, you take the Tupperware containers, put all the biscuits and candies in them.

FP23: This one, My?

FP22: That's too small, get a bigger one. The blue one there, the Christmas one… aa.. correct!

FP25: My, where's the lighter?

FP22: *Giga ba dalam* drawer *dia*, or maybe in the box there.

(Look in the drawer there, or maybe in the box there.)

FP24: Found it!

FP23: Done, My. Where to put them?

FP22: Bring them outside, *sadung* to the guests.

(Bring them outside, serve to the guests.)

The conversational topic centred on preparing a *Gawai* lunch for the guests. English was mainly used throughout the conversation. Nevertheless, there were a few utterances in Iban, namely, "*manuk pansuh*", which refers to chicken meat cooked in a bamboo stalk, and "*sadung*", which means "serve" in English. Although all the speakers are Iban, there was very minimal use of the Iban language between the mother and her two children. Furthermore, whenever Iban was used in the conversation, such as by FP22, "*Giga ba dalam* drawer *dia* ... (Look in the drawer there …)", there was also borrowing from the English word "drawer", in which its Iban equivalence is "*lachi*". Despite the presence of the Iban word, FP22 preferred to use "drawer" instead, as it facilitated the message in the conversation. Furthermore, FP24 may not be familiar with the Iban term, which made FP22 use the English term. This shows that English influences the Iban conversations, revealing the dominance of the language in this family's conversation located in a non-Iban-dominant area. This also suggests that English has penetrated the home domain, which shows a lack of intergenerational language transmission. Whether the dominant use of English is due to the high education of the mother is uncertain. It is noted that the father is also an Iban (FP21).

This section presents another conversation between a mother and a daughter in a non-Iban-dominant area. The non-participant observation was carried out in the living room of a residential house located in Samarahan. FP25 is an Iban female aged 46, who has a master's degree and works as a senior lecturer at a public university in Samarahan. She is the mother of FP26, who is a young Iban female, aged 22. FP26 is a university student who is currently pursuing her degree programme at a local university. Excerpt 12 shows their conversational exchange.

Excerpt 12

FP25: *Dah ulih tama* campus *kitak?*

(Can you enter the campus?)

FP26: Not yet, maybe this coming semester.

FP25: *UiTM dah ulih tama* stage by stage, *kitak ga agi* online.

(UiTM can be entered stage by stage, you are still online.)

FP26: *Yalah,* it's so boring doing it online, *ngantuk lah* mummy.

(That's right, it's so boring doing it online, so sleepy mummy.)

FP25: Are you in touch with your friends?

FP26: Sometimes, they are also busy with their work.

FP25: How are your lecturers? They alright?

FP26: Okay, so far, some are strict.

FP25: Good! *Kasih ga kitak alu empai tama* campus. Never mind, soon you'll be on campus.

(Good! Pity you guys can't enter the campus yet. Never mind, soon you'll be on campus.)

The topic of conversation was FP26's study programme at the university. The conversation shows the mother's concern about her daughter's campus restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. English was mainly used in the conversation, with a few instances of Iban words. While Iban was used more by the mother, the daughter's responses were mostly in English. There were borrowed English words in FP25's utterances, namely, "campus", "stage by stage", and "online" while speaking in Iban to her daughter. The use of Iban was minimal in this family domain, where English seems to dominate the conversation.

4.6.1.1.2.4 Language Use among Siblings in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section presents the results on language use in conversations between two brothers in a non-Iban-dominant area. FP27 is an Iban male, aged 23, who has recently graduated with his bachelor's degree at a public university. Meanwhile, FP28 is also an Iban male aged 16, who is a student at a public school in Kuching. The conversation took place in the living room of a residential house located in Kuching, Sarawak. Excerpt 13 shows that their conversation was conducted solely in English.

Excerpt 13

FP27: Watch out for the tank, ok. Let me know if it's full. Alright, open the tap.

FP28: You want me to open full? The tank looks full.

FP27: Ya, there's another tank, wait… ok, you can turn it off now.

FP28: Ok

FP27: Ok, good job. Get the mop, floor is wet.

FP28: Where's the mop?

FP27: In the toilet *lah*.

FP28: There.

FP27: Aii.. mop the floor *lah*.

FP28: Alright, boss!

The topic revolved around filling up the fish aquarium. From the observation, it is clear that English was solely used in their interactions. Despite their Iban parentage, Iban was absent in their conversations, which indicates the presence of language shift in the home domain. English dominated the whole conversation between the two siblings, where Iban was hardly used. Today, it is common to observe the Iban siblings in urban areas, such as Kuching and Samarahan, speaking to one another in English as it is one of the main languages spoken at home in many modern Iban families.

4.6.1.1.2.5 Language Use with Grandparents in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area

This section presents the findings on language use between a grandfather and a grandson in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversation took place in the living room of a residential house located in Kuching. FP29 is an Iban male aged 80, while FP30 is an Iban male aged 21. FP30 is a university student at a private university located in Shah Alam. He was spending his break in Kuching when this conversation occurred. Excerpt 14 shows that Iban was mainly used, but there were some instances of borrowing from Malay and English as well.

Excerpt 14

FP29: *Dini de diau din?*

(Where do you stay there?)

FP30: *Diau ba asrama.*

(In the hostel.)

FP29: *Asrama din de diau kediri pia?*

(Do you live alone in the hostel there?)

FP30: *Au, Tingkat 17.*

(Yes, Level 17.)

FP29: Amma Kuty?

FP30: Amma Kuty*, enda nemu ku.*

(Amma Kuty, I don't know.)

FP29: *Dini endur ya? Sama enggau de din ga?*

(Where is she? Together with you there?)

FP30: *Ukai, aku rasa ya diau ba Melaka.*

(No, I think she lives in Melaka.)

FP29: Melaka.

FP30: *Au.*

(Yes.)

FP29: *Deven kati deh?*

(How about Deven?)

FP30: *Deven ba Kajang, bisi ya* message *aku sari nya. Ya ba* hostel *din.*

(Deven is in Kajang, he messaged me that day. He is at the hostel.)

FP29: *Nyamai de ba Kuala Lumpur din?*

(Are you comfortable in Kuala Lumpur?)

FP30: *Enda kelalu nyamai, ukai baka Sarawak ditu. Nadai.*

(Not too comfy, not like Sarawak here. No.)

The topic of the conversation focused on the university life of the grandson (FP30). Malay words, such as "*asrama*", "*tingkat*", "*rasa*", and "*champur*" were used as these words seem to facilitate the conversation between the grandfather and the grandson. On the other

hand, English words, for instance, “message”, “hostel”, and “course” were used by the grandson, which may denote his tendency to prefer English words when talking to his grandfather. Apparently, the grandfather did not find it difficult to understand the English words, as they may be commonly used in their conversation. Hence, while Iban was the main language, borrowing from the dominant languages was seen as necessary in order to convey meanings.

4.6.1.1.2.6 Language Use with Relatives (First Cousins) in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section presents the results of language use between two close cousins in a non-Iban-dominant area. The non-participant observation was carried out in a living room at a residential house located in Kuching. FP31 is an Iban male aged 23, who has a bachelor’s degree, while FP32 is a female of mixed parentage (Iban and Indian), aged 28, who also has a bachelor’s degree. Their conversation was carried out mainly in English, as shown in Excerpt 15.

Excerpt 15

FP31: You must practise at least once a week. Not easy to balance.

FP32: Yeah, some of my friends, they must balance the training because they have to work. I wanted to do this too, but I have no time yet.

FP31: That’s ok, *akka*. Take it easy.

FP32: Ha… yeah, will adjust soon.

FP31: This boxing at first is very troubling. But you’ll get used to it over time.

FP32: Ya, I asked my other friends because I wanted to go boxing too. Most of them told me to go to the gym, so I have to follow the majority *la*.

FP31: That's alright, you need a punching bag, you know.

FP32: Yeah.

The topic of the conversation was focused on boxing training at the gym, which is a form of exercise for youngsters in urban areas these days. English was mainly used in the conversation, which shows the absence of Iban despite both of them being of Iban heritage. There was an instance when FP31 used a Tamil word, "*akka,*" to refer to his female cousin. This seems to suggest that although the English word sister is available to substitute for the word "*akka*", FP31 seemed to acknowledge FP32 as an Indian person, which could be assumed as a form of respect for her Indian parentage from her father's side. Nevertheless, English completely dominated the whole conversation between these young Iban, where the Iban language was hardly used in this non-Iban-dominant area.

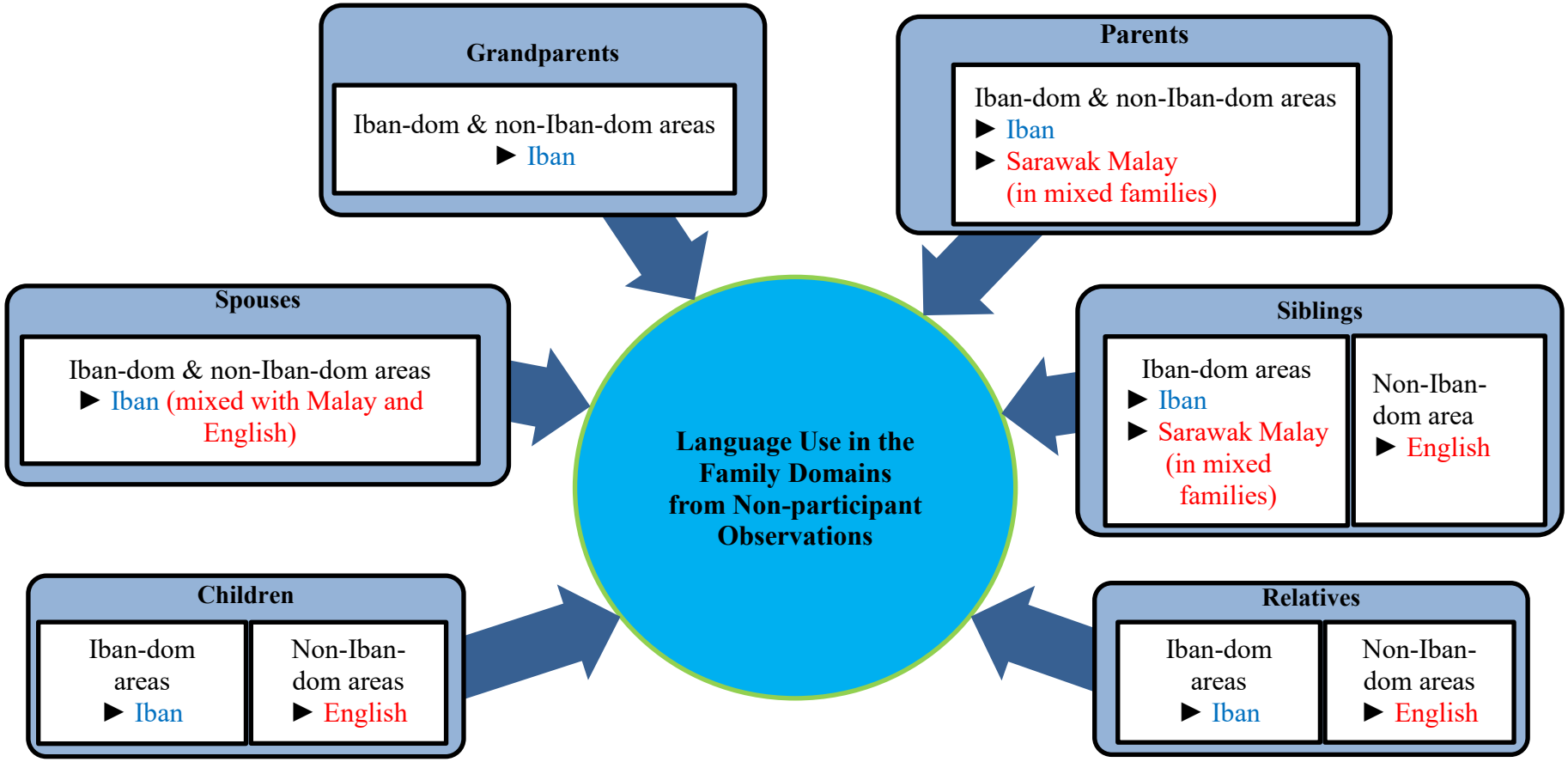
4.6.1.1.3 Conclusion for Observed Language Use in the Family Domains

Figure 4.1 presents the summary of language use in the family domains for non-participant observation. The observation results show that in Iban-dominant areas, Iban is widely used in all the family domains. Sarawak Malay is predominantly used with spouses, parents, and siblings, particularly in families with mixed marriages. Borrowing from Malay and English is also observed in Iban-dominant areas. In non-Iban-dominant areas, even though Iban is spoken as the main language for communication with parents and spouses, it is mixed with Malay and English in conversations involving family members. It is also evident that English is the primary used language among children, siblings, and relatives in non-Iban-dominant areas, such as Kuching and Samarahan.

English tends to be used by the younger Iban generations. This is primarily observable in non-Iban-dominant areas involving young Iban speakers, where the home

domains have been penetrated by English, resulting in a lack of intergenerational language transmission. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that Iban is still very much relevant among the older generation in some family interactions, such as those between grandparents and grandchildren. Iban is the primary language spoken in these situations, while English and other more dominant languages, such as Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay, are occasionally borrowed to assist communication. The findings also emphasise the role of Iban as a language of social bonding and identity within the family domains. Activities like picking grey hair and preparing traditional meals for guests during the *Gawai* festival are instances of how the Iban language and culture are preserved and passed down through generations within the family domains. These activities function as opportunities for bonding, which reinforces the importance of maintaining cultural heritage among the Iban community.

In general, the findings highlight the complex nature of language use within the family domains in the Iban community of Sarawak, which is influenced by ethnic composition (participants), social events (topics), and geographical location (setting). While English and Sarawak Malay may dominate in certain contexts, the findings also signify the resilience of the Iban language in maintaining its existence and significance within the family domains. Hence, further research in this area can provide a deeper understanding of the language dynamics of the Iban people in Sarawak and contribute to the community's language preservation efforts in diverse cultural contexts.



(note: dom = dominant)

Figure 4.1: Language Use in the Family Domains from Non-Participant Observations

4.6.1.2 Observed Language Use Outside Home Domains

This section presents the results on language use outside the home domains, namely, neighbours, friends, classmates, workmates, for prayers, at government departments (hospital), and shops (market). A total of 18 events were observed, involving 39 participants: 17 from Iban-dominant areas, and 22 from non-Iban-dominant areas. The observations were conducted from March 2022 to September 2022.

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 summarise the speech events, participants, and language use during the observations for outside home domains. Table 4.16 shows eight events of language use outside the home domains in Iban-dominant areas, while Table 4.17 presents the results on language use outside home domains in non-Iban-dominant areas.

Table 4.15: Summaries of Observed Language Use Outside Home Domains in Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Role	Participants	Language Use
1	Hari Raya Invitation	Neighbours	• OHP1 – Iban, M, 51 • OHP2 – Chinese, M, mid 50s	OHP1 + OHP2 = Standard Malay
2	Buying Raya biscuits and cakes	Friends	• OHP3 – Iban, F, 35 • OHP4 – Malay, F, early 40s	OHP3 + OHP4 = Sarawak Malay
3	Attending a fashion show contest	Classmates	• OHP5 – Iban, F, 14 • OHP6 – Iban, M 14 • OHP7 – Iban, F, 14 • OHP8 – Iban, M, 14	OHP5 + OHP6 + OHP7 + OHP8 = Iban
4	Celebrating Father's Day	Workmates	• OHP9 – Iban, M, early 50s • OHP10 – Iban, M, late 40s	OHP9 + OHP10 = Iban
5	Blessing of a meal	Lay reader, relatives, and friends	• OHP11 – Iban, M, mid 40s • A group of Iban (the longhouse villagers)	OHP11 + a group of all Iban = Iban
6	Paying the hospital bill	Clerk and client	• OHP12 – Iban, F, early 30s • OHP13 – Iban, F, early 40s	OHP12 + OHP13 = Iban
7	Buying fish at the wet market	Seller and buyer	• OHP14 – Malay, F, early 30s • OHP15 – Iban, F, early 50s	OHP14 + OHP15 = Iban
8	Buying a local vegetable at the wet market	Buyer and seller	• OHP16, Iban, F, early 50s • OHP17, Iban, F, late 50s	OHP16 + OHP17 = Iban

Note: OHP = Outside Home Participant; F = Female; M = Male

Table 4.16: Summaries of Observed Language Use Outside Home Domains in Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Role	Participants	Language Use
1	Asking about job and orchard	Neighbours	• OHP18 – Iban, M, 46 • OHP19 – Chinese, M, late 50s	OHP18 + OHP19 = Standard Malay
2	Performing an Iban song	Friends	• OHP20 – Iban, M, 46 • OHP21 – Iban, F, 45 • OHP22 – Iban, F, 45	OHP20 + OHP21 + OHP22 = Iban
3	Enjoying a meal during a *Gawai* visit	Friends	• OHP23 – Iban, M, 15 • OHP24 – Iban, F, 15 • OHP25 – Iban, M, 15	OHP23 + OHP24 + OHP25 = English
4	Preparing a school group project	Classmates	• OHP26 – Iban, M, 15 • OHP27 – Iban, M, 15 • OHP28 – Melanau, M, 15	OHP26 + OHP27 + OHP28 = English
5	Preparing for an Invention, Innovation, and Design (IID) project Discussion on personal matters, i.e., fetching children from school, pasar Ramadhan, and holidays	Workmates	• OHP29 – Iban, M, 55 • OHP30 – Malay, M, 56	OHP29 + OHP30 = English (formal matter); Standard Malay (informal matter)
6	Blessing of a meal	Friends	• OHP31, Iban, F, mid-60s • A group of multi-racial people (Iban, Bidayuh, and Kayan)	OHP31 + a group of multi-racial people = English

7	Treatment at the Eye Specialist Clinic	Nurses and patients	• OHP32, Iban, M, late 20s • (nurse) • OHP33, Iban, M, late 20s • (nurse) • OHP34, Iban, M, early 80s • (patient) • OHP35, Chinese, M, mid • 70s (patient)	OHP32 + OHP33 = Iban OHP32 + OHP33 + OHP35 = Standard Malay & Sarawak Malay OHP33 + OHP34 = Iban
8	Buying gifts at a shop	Customer and shop worker	• OHP36, Iban, F, early 40s • (customer) • OHP37, Chinese, M, late • 20s (shop worker)	OHP36 + OHP37 = English
9	Buying fish at the wet market	Buyer and seller	• OHP38, Iban, M, mid-40s • (buyer) • OHP39, Malay, M, late • 30s (seller)	OHP38 + OHP39 = Sarawak Malay

Note: OHP = Outside Home Participant; F = Female; M = Male

4.6.1.2.1 Results for Language Use Outside the Home Domains in Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the results for non-participant observations in Iban-dominant areas. The observations were carried out in the town of Sri Aman and Lubok Antu. These two areas in Sarawak are densely populated by the Iban people.

4.6.1.2.1.1 Language Use with Neighbours in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports the conversation between two neighbours of different ethnicities in an Iban-dominant area. OHP1 is an Iban male, aged 51 years old, who has a master's degree and works as a teacher at a government school in Sri Aman, while OHP2 is a Chinese male, in his mid-fifties, who has a bachelor's degree and also works as a teacher in a government school. Their conversation took place in the backyards of residential houses in Sri Aman. Both participants were talking to each other over the fences that divide their residential houses while attending to their chores, such as watering the plants and clearing leaves in their backyards. Excerpt 16 shows the neighbourly exchanges, where Standard Malay was the main language used.

Excerpt 16

OHP1: *Tak pegi mana-mana kah ni hari?*

(You're not going anywhere today?)

OHP2: *Ehh, Selamat Hari Raya, kawan.*

(Ehh, Happy Raya, friend.)

OHP1: Thank you.

OHP2: *Nanti mau pegi* visit my parents.

(Later will visit my parents.)

OHP1: *Datang jemput ke rumah.* Anytime, *tengah malam pun boleh.*

(Come over to the house. Anytime, midnight also can.)

OHP2: *Ha, tengah malam pun jadi hoh,* okay.

(Ha, midnight also can *hoh,* okay.)

The topic focused on the Hari Raya celebration, in which Standard Malay was used throughout the conversation. Some English words were also used to ease the conversations, namely, "thank you", "visit", and "anytime". Even though OHP2 (a Chinese neighbour) has been living in the Iban neighbourhood for a long time and both participants have been neighbours for more than 10 years, the Chinese neighbour had not picked up Iban and still relied on Malay and English. When it comes to inter-racial social communication, Iban is not the shared language.

4.6.1.2.1.2 Language Use with Friends in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section focuses on a conversation between two friends in an Iban-dominant area. OHP3 is an Iban female, aged 35, who has a diploma degree and works as a nurse at a government hospital. OHP4 is a Malay female, aged in her early forties, who has a bachelor's degree and works as a teacher in a public school. Their conversation took place in the living room of a residential house in Sri Aman. Excerpt 17 shows their conversational exchanges during the non-participant observation, which were mainly carried out in Sarawak Malay.

Excerpt 17

OHP3: *Jemput makan biskut ya. Sik banyak molah taun tok, gago bena.*

(Please eat the biscuits. Didn't bake many this year, very busy.)

OHP4: *Yalah ya, kamek pun gago ngan kerja, main tunjuk ja biskut kamek .. ha ha ha… nyaman kek tok!*

(Yes indeed, I am busy too with work, my biscuits are bought too .. ha… this cake is delicious!)

OHP3. *Ada riya* staf *kamek ngambik order kek, ada juak kamek* ngoder *dari nya, kamek maok molah dah sik tekabir koh.*

(Our staff took cake orders that day, I ordered from her too, I wanted to make it, but couldn't afford the time.)

OHP4: *Nang ya, mun ada masa bukan nya boleh molah pun, ney maok ngemas bilit segala macam ya.*

(That's true, I can't bake even if there is spare time, need to clean the rooms and all that.)

OHP3: *Samalah kita.*

(We are the same.)

The topic centred on the preparation of Raya biscuits and cakes during OHP3's visit to OHP4's house. Sarawak Malay was mainly used throughout the conversation in this inter-racial interaction. There were instances where English words were used, namely, "staff" and "*ngorder*" (to order), whereby the usage helped ease their conversation. The English word "order" has been Ibanised, so-called by adding a nasal sound in front of it ("ng"). There were no Iban words used in their conversational exchanges, which seems to denote the dominance

of Sarawak Malay in this Iban-dominant area. Even though the location is in an Iban-dominant area, the Iban individual accommodated and gave way by speaking her interlocutor's language, which is Sarawak Malay.

4.6.1.2.1.3 Language Use with Classmates in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports a conversation between four classmates in an Iban-dominant area. OHP5 and OHP7 are both Iban females, aged 14, while OHP6 and OHP8 are both Iban males, aged 14 as well. All four of the speakers are classmates in a government school located in Engkilili, Lubok Antu. Their conversation took place at a rest stop in their school compound during their recess time. They were talking about a fashion show contest that they would be attending that afternoon, which was an event conducted by their school as part of the student activities. Excerpt 18 shows that Iban is the primary language in the conversational exchanges involving Iban people.

Excerpt 18

OHP5: *Eh, asai de, sapa menang* Fashion Show *legi?*

(*Eh*, who do you think will win the Fashion Show?

OHP6: *Asai ku Marcella Ijau menang legi. De deh?*

(I think Marcella Ijau will win. How about you?)

OHP7: *Asai ku engka Angelina. De deh?*

(I think maybe Angelina. How about you?)

OHP8: *Au, manah baju Angelina, kasut tunjik, a.*

(Yes, Angelina's dress is good, high heels, yes.)

OHP6: *Au, baka malam kemari.*

(Yes, like last night.)

OHP5: *Asai ku Ijau menang, pekayan Ijau manah mat, enda nemu antara dua ya.*

(I think Ijau will win, Ijau's attire is so good, not sure between the two of them.)

OHP7: *Kitai enda meh nemu. Aku ngundi ja.*

(We also don't know. I will only vote.)

OHP6: *Mayuh urang legi. Pukul brapa* start *legi?)*

(There will be many people. What time will it start?)

OHP7: *Pukul 3. De nyadi nama legi Sinki?*

(At 3. What will you become, Sinki?

OHP6: *Aku nyadi nya legi.. urang ba .. ngatur ke sida ya.*

(I will be that later … people … managing them.)

OHP8: *Kami meda ja.*

(We watch only.)

OHP6: *De penonton, kan?*

(You are the audience, right?)

OHP8: *Au.*

(Yes.)

The four Iban classmates used a few borrowed words from English and Malay. The English term "Fashion Show" was used by OHP5, which may be due to the missing term in Iban. However, the use of the English word "started" by OHP6 seems to denote the influence of English in the conversation, despite there being an available term in Iban, "*belabuh*". In addition, OHP6 also used the Malay word "*penonton*" – a word that refers to "audience" in English. Although there is an equivalent term present in Iban for "*penonton*", i.e., "*bala*

urang mayuh", the Iban term itself is quite a mouthful to utter. Hence, borrowing from Malay eases the conversation. The Iban speakers all understood the Malay word "*penonton*" because they went to school using Malay as the medium of instruction. English and Malay words creeping into conversations among Iban teenagers is a phenomenon to take note of because it shows a dispreference for Iban words.

4.6.1.2.1.4 Language Use with Workmates in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports the languages used in a conversation between two colleagues in an Iban-dominant area. OHP9 is an Iban male, aged in his early fifties, who holds a bachelor's degree, while OHP10 is an Iban male, aged in her late forties, who also holds a bachelor's degree. Both participants are teachers at a government school located in Engkilili, Lubok Antu. Their conversation took place at a coffee shop during their recess time. Their conversational exchanges were carried out mainly in Iban, as shown in Excerpt 19.

Excerpt 19

OHP9: *Cikgu Albert, de mesti bersedia nyadi bapa awak ke ulih nyambut* Father's Day. *Kami malam tadi* celebrate birthday Nia *enggau skali* Father's Day. So coming soon, *de akan* celebrate Father's Day *lah*.

(Teacher Albert, you must prepare to become a father so you can celebrate Father's Day. Last night we celebrated Nia's birthday, together with Father's Day. So coming soon, you will celebrate Father's Day.)

OHP10: *Ya meh nya.*

(Yes indeed.)

OHP9: So *bersedia de, meri kami makai, ngagau ke kami, nyemput kami.*

(So you get prepared, sponsor us eating, call us, invite us.)

OHP10: *Sapa enggau malam tadi?*

(Who joined last night)

OHP9: *Malam tadi? Tok* special guests *malam tadi. Orang baru, bala anak Cina, bala-bala sida* krew *ke selalu makai ba kedai nya. Aa…* so *nya kangau ka ku. Nadai lah sida mayuh, empat iko ja, semadi enggau kami makai baka nya aja lah.* Simple *ja, nadai nama-nama.*

(Last night? These were the special guests last night. New guys, those Chinese children, those crew members who always eat at the shop. Aa.. so I called them. Not many of them, only four, so they can join us for a meal. Just simple, not much.)

The topic centred on celebrating Father's Day. Iban was mainly used throughout the conversation, with a few instances of borrowing from English. OHP9 also code-mixed his interaction between his Iban expressions when he uttered "So coming soon" and "celebrate birthday". Some English words were adopted, such as "Father's Day", "so", and "simple". While the terms are also present in Iban, namely, "*Ari Apai*", "*nya alai*", and "*mudah*", respectively, the use of English words seemed to facilitate the conversation between the two Iban participants. However, no Iban words for "crew" exist, so OHP9 switched to English. Furthermore, the Malay word "*cikgu*" was used in their conversation when addressing the teaching profession – that is, a reference to teachers. In fact, the Iban's equivalence is "*pengajar*", which is a common word in the ethnic language. However, "*cikgu*" has almost become an honorific, a term used out of respect rather than just a noun to refer to educators. Nevertheless, Iban was the main language for communication among the Iban colleagues in this Iban-dominant area located in Lubok Antu.

4.6.1.2.1.5 Language Use for Prayers in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports the language use for prayers in an Iban-dominant area. The speech event involved OHP11, in his mid-forties, who is an Iban male and serves as a lay reader for the Iban longhouse community located in Lubok Antu. A lay reader is a layperson in the Anglican Church who is authorised to preach and hold some services but is not authorised to celebrate the Eucharist (this is a Christian service or sacrament that commemorates the Last Supper, where bread and wine are consecrated and consumed). A majority of the Iban longhouse dwellers are Christians from the Anglican church. The evening event involved a wake ceremony upon the demise of a longhouse's older member. OHP11 led the prayers for the wake, where he also recited the prayer for the blessing of a meal for dinner before the group of longhouse villagers, who were close relatives and friends to each other. Excerpt 20 shows prayers recited by OHP11 solely in Iban for the wake service.

Excerpt 20

Part 1 (prayer for the wake)

OHP11: *Laban Penebus kitai, udah ngajar kitai, nya alai kitai nyebut.*

(As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.)

All: *Apai kami di serega, kudus meh nama nuan, datai meh perintah nuan, jadi meh peneka nuan, baka dalam serega baka nya dalam bumi. Beri ka kami pengidup tiap hari. Ampun penyalah kami baka kami ngampun orang ti salah ngelaban kami. Intu kami ari penguji, lepas ka kami ari penyai. Kera nuan ti bempu perintah enggau kuasa, enggau mulia, datai ka belama-lama iya. Amin.*

(Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.)

Part 2 (prayer for blessing of the meal for dinner):

OHP11: *Kita diau jenuh dulu. Aram kitai bersampi agai Allah Taala, nyuruh Ya datai kitu alu ngulur jari Ya ti kudus. Aram kitai besampi merkat ke tiap iti pemakai enggau tiap iti ai irup ke udah disedia bala ba luar nya, awak ke semua pemakai enggau ai nya jadi ke tubuh enggau semengat kami lalu mulai ke pengerai kami mega. Semua sampi tu dipinta kami, dalam nama Anak Nuan, Jesus Kristus, Tuhan Kami. Amin.*

(Let us remain quiet first. Let us pray to the Almighty God that He may come and extend His Holy hands. Let us pray to bless each type of dish and drinks, which have been prepared by those outside there, so all the food and drinks will be part of our body and soul, as well as our well-being. All request all these prayers, in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.)

Part 1 and Part 2 of Excerpt 20 show prayers for a wake and blessing of the meal before dinner, respectively. For both prayers, Iban was solely used by OHP11 for the recital. As the group of longhouse villagers comprised all Iban, it was likely that Iban was used throughout the prayers in this Iban-dominant area located in Lubok Antu. This shows the adequacy of the Iban language for religious purposes in the Iban community, assisted partly by the fact that Iban is a written language that is taught as a subject in school.

4.6.1.2.1.6 Language Use in a Government Premise in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports the language use at a government premise (hospital) located in an Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved OHP12, who is an Iban female, who works as a clerk, aged in her early thirties. Meanwhile, OHP13 is also an Iban female, aged in her early forties. OHP13 is a relative of a patient, who paid bills at a billing counter of a government hospital in Sri Aman, speaking mostly Iban (see Excerpt 21).

Excerpt 21

OHP12: *Nuan anak ya kah? Anak menantu?*

(Are you his daughter? Daughter-in-law?)

OHP13: *Anak ya.*

(His daughter.)

OHP12: *Apai de bisi bil tertunggak, RM38.*

(Your father has an outstanding bill, RM38.)

OHP13: *Nama ya bisi surat* pinchin *deh, perlu bayar kah? Ngelama tu nadai bayar pen enti ya ke* spital.

(But he has a penchant letter, still need to pay? All this while he doesn't need to pay if he goes to the hospital.)

OHP12: *Laban nadai dikepil ke surat pinchin ya, engka nya sida enda perasan. Legi nuan meri siti salinan, anjung kitu.*

(Because there's no attachment of his penchant letter, due to this, they did not notice. Later, you send a copy, send it here.)

OHP13: Ok.

When the exchange on bill discharge payment was going on, there were several code-switching instances from Iban to Malay, such as "*tertunggak*", "*kepil*", "*perasan*", and "*salinan*". These words have their equivalences in Iban, namely, "*laun*", "*tampil*", "*kiboh*", and "*turai*", respectively. OHP12 might not be familiar or used to these Iban words. English words also appeared in the conversation, namely, "*bil*", "*spital*", and "*pinchin*" (for "bill", "hospital", and "penchant", respectively). The word "hospital" was shortened to "*spital*", which is a common characteristic of how Malay words are shortened, such as "*begitu*" (like that) to "*gitu*". The spelling and pronunciation of the word "penchant" were also given an Iban flavour when it is pronounced as "*pinchin*". Another instance is the word "action", which will be Ibanised to "*isin*". The incorporation of words from English and Malay is interesting in that it is not only code-switching because some words are Ibanised in the pronunciation.

4.6.1.2.1.7 Language Use at Market in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports the language use at a market located in an Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved OHP14, who is a Malay female in her early thirties and works as a fish seller. Meanwhile, OHP15 is an Iban female, aged in her early fifties. OHP15 stopped at OHP14's fish stall to buy some tilapia (a type of freshwater fish). The speech event occurred at a market in Sri Aman. Excerpt 21 shows their conversational exchanges, where Iban was mainly used.

Excerpt 21

OHP14: *Ni ka de, ibo?*

(Which one do you like, aunty?

OHP15: *Brapa sekilo ikan nya?*

(How much is per kilo for that fish?)

OHP14: *RM28 sekilo.*

(RM28 per kilo.)

OHP15: *Pama mar ya.*

(Quite pricey.)

OHP14: *Ambi ari Batang Ai tu ibo, ukai ikan pegung.*

(Took it from Batang Ai, aunty, not pond fish.)

OHP15*: Ambi ku siko nya, enggau nyin ga. Nibuh buai perut, engkah ais mimit legi.*

(Give me that one, and that too. No need to take out the guts, put some ice later.)

The topic centred on buying tilapia fish at a market. Even though OHP14 is a Malay (as she appeared with a hijab covering her hair, which is a typical look of a Malay female in the area), she used Iban when talking to her Iban customer (OHP15). Iban was used throughout the conversation between the two speakers. In Iban-dominant areas, such as Sri Aman, it is common to see other races converse in Iban as they have frequent encounters with the Iban community. Besides, it may be the fish vendor's strategy to attract and connect with her Iban customer by speaking in Iban, which resonates with the buyer, making her feel understood and valued. Being a vendor servicing the community, picking up Iban as the language spoken by the Iban majority seems to give her the advantage of attracting Iban buyers to her stall. However, note that, in this case, the non-Iban individual is a Malay woman. The earlier case of the Chinese neighbour speaking English and Malay with his Iban neighbour shows that possibly Chinese individuals are less likely to pick up Iban, compared to the Malay. However, there is an observation that needs to be verified in future studies.

4.6.1.2.2 Results for Language Use Outside Home Domains in Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the results for non-participant observations in non-Iban-dominant areas. The observations were conducted in Kuching, Samarahan, and Lundu, where these areas are less populated by the Iban people.

4.6.1.2.2.1 Language Use with Neighbours in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the conversation between two neighbours of different ethnic groups in a non-Iban-dominant area. OHP18 is an Iban male, aged 46 years old, who is a bachelor's degree holder and works as an engineer in a private company located in Kuala Lumpur. Meanwhile, OHP19 is a Chinese male, in his late fifties, whose educational background is unknown to the researcher. OHP2 is a businessman who owns a few shops selling stationery located in Kuching. Their conversation took place at the front gate of a residential house in Kuching. The following was their conversation during the non-participant observation. Standard Malay was mainly used in the conversational exchanges (Excerpt 23).

Excerpt 23

OHP18: *Apa macam tokey?*

(How are you, *tokey*?)

OHP19: *Bagus.. bagus.. lama tidak nampak lu.*

(Good .. good.. have not seen you for a long time.)

OHP18: *Jarang pulang sekarang, banyak kerja.*

(I rarely return home now, too much work.)

OHP19: *Masih kerja* offshore?

(Still working offshore?)

OHP18: *Masih.*

(Still.)

OHP19: *Masih sana KL?*

(Still in KL?)

OHP18: *Masih.. sampai pencen lah ini macam.*

(Still .. until retirement seemingly.)

OHP19: *Bagus ma… banyak luit masuk. Lihai kamu.*

(Good *ma* … lots of money comes in. You are great.)

OHP18: *Ayaa.. rasa mau pencen, duduk rumah, jaga kebun.*

(*Ayaa ...* feel like retiring, stay at home, look after the orchard.)

OHP19: *Mana lu punya kebun?*

(Where is your orchard?)

OHP18: *Sana Siburan, dekat itu Police Station.*

(At Siburan, near the Police Station.)

OHP19: *Oh.. Apa lu tanam sana?*

(Oh.. What do you plant there?)

OHP18: Banyak… *liulian*, rambutan, langsat …

(A lot … *durian, rambutan, langsat* ..)

OHP19: *Dabai ada?*

(Got *dabai*?)

OHP18: *Ada ... masih kecil lagi, tak tau mau buah ke tidak.*

(Got ... still very small, not sure if it will bear fruit or not.)

The conversation covered topics on the job and the orchard. The colloquial version of Standard Malay was mostly used throughout the conversation, with some borrowing from a Chinese dialect. No Iban words were used by the speakers when talking to each other during the encounter. Some Chinese terms were adopted, such as "*tokey*", "*lihai*", and "*liulian*", which refer to "shop owner", "great", and "durian" in English, respectively. The English word "offshore" was also used by the Chinese man when enquiring about OHP18's job.

4.6.1.2.2.2 Language Use with Friends in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the conversation between three friends in a non-Iban-dominant area. OHP20 is an Iban male, aged 46, who has a bachelor's degree and works as an auditor in a private company in Kuching. OHP21 is an Iban female, aged 45, who has a master's degree and works as a senior lecturer at a public university. Meanwhile, OHP22 is another Iban female, aged 45, who also has a master's degree and works as a senior lecturer at a public university. Their conversation took place in the living room of a residential house in Samarahan. Excerpt 24 shows their conversational exchanges during the non-participant observation. Iban was the main language used in their conversations.

Excerpt 24

OHP20: *Ka ninga lagu gaga ku?*

(You want to hear a song I made?)

OHP21: *Te lagu seduai de Sirai nya?*

(The song with Sirai?)

OHP20: *Bisi de ninga?*

(Did you hear it?)

OHP22: *Nama lagu gaga de?*

(What song did you make?)

OHP20: *Aku seduai Sirai belagu. Bisi sumbang laban ya lelak ba, baru dah ngajar urang* tuition.

(Sirai and I sang. It was out of tune because he was tired after being done with the tuition.)

OHP21: *Kasih meda Sirai, baru abis ngajar alu asuh belagu .. yarabii.. "Eh, kena kami* destress *meh tu", ko ya. Nadai baju giga ke ya baju*.

(Poor Sirai, just done with the tuition and was told to sing … oh my God, "*Eh*, we used it to destress," he said. He found a shirt for himself.)

OHP20: *Ya abis ngajar pukul 9.30 malam, asuh ku ya belagu.*

(He finished teaching at 9.30 at night, I told him to sing.)

OHP22: *Udah di*-record *de?*

(Did you record it?)

OHP20: *Dah, gaga sigi-sigi..* slow-slow *lah aku ngadu ke ya. Tapi semua* record *dalam rumah magang.*

(Done, did it one by one ... I did it slowly. But the recording was all done in the house.)

The conversation about performing an Iban song was mostly in Iban. There were a few instances of borrowing from English, such as "tuition", "destress", and "record". There are no equivalent Iban words for these terms. There is a different category of words where English is used, for example, "slow-slow" which was also a borrowed English word that may refer to the Iban word "*lubah-lubah*". The use of "slow-slow" instead of the Iban word "*lubah-lubah*" may suggest the speaker's preference to use English, which helped ease the

conversation. Iban is exclusively used among Iban themselves when talking to each other, regardless of whether they are in an Iban-dominant or non-Iban-dominant area. This seems to be a common phenomenon among adult Iban speakers aged between their forties and fifties.

4.6.1.2.2.3 Language Use with Friends in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports another conversation between three young Iban friends in a non-Iban-dominant area. OHP23 is an Iban male, aged 15. OHP24 is an Iban girl, aged 15, while OHP25 is another Iban male, aged 15 as well. The three friends are classmates in a government school located in Kuching. Their conversation took place in the kitchen of a residential house in Samarahan. Excerpt 25 shows that English was the main language used in their conversation.

Excerpt 25

OHP23: Put my sister's phone there.

OHP24: You guys gonna drink this?

OHP25: Pour some for me.

OHP24: Pass me the spoon, please.

OHP23: You like the *pansuh*?

OHP25: The pasta finished already?

OHP23: A bit left.

OHP25: Someone outside.

OHP23: Who is it?

The conversational topic centred on enjoying a meal during a *Gawai* visit to OHP25's house. These young Iban speakers used mainly English in their interaction with friends, even though all of them are Iban. When it comes to interacting with friends, a dominant language like English is preferred by the young Iban speakers as they have been using the language in their social interactions in school. This occurs particularly if the school is located in an urban area like Kuching. Iban was hardly used in the youngsters' social speech. It is noted that the Iban word "*pansuh*" was used by OHP25 to refer to the chicken cooked in bamboo. This is a culture-specific dish, and there are no English words that can describe the dish, apart from describing how it is cooked. Another interesting finding is that the conversation among the young Iban speakers during the observation was short and brief as they were busy surfing their phones, which is a typical phenomenon among smartphone users these days.

4.6.1.2.2.4 Language Use with Classmates in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports a conversation between three classmates in a non-Iban-dominant area. OHP26 and OHP27 are both Iban males, aged 15, while OHP28 is a Melanau male, aged 15 as well. These three participants were in the same class. Their conversation took place in a study room of a residential house in Kuching. They were discussing how to build a wooden bridge for their group assignment. The conversation was solely in English, perhaps because OHP28 is Melanau and could not speak Iban (Excerpt 26).

Excerpt 26

OHP26: What you guys think?

OHP27: I think we have to make a strong base first.

OHP28: We have to make double.

OHP26: Did Cikgu Abibah answer?

OHP28: No, not yet. Oh wait … “Not yet, dear, maybe after office hours. “Smart face” ”.

OHP26: What’s with the smart face?

OHP27: Ha!

OHP26: Who said we need to do it?

OHP27: Cikgu Abibah said it in class.

OHP28: Yeah.

OHP26: Alright, Fauzan, you do this. Get the cutter to smooth this part.

OHP28: Where’s the cutter?

OHP26: Over there.

As shown in Excerpt 26, English was mainly used throughout the conversation, which shows the dominance of the language in the youngsters’ daily conversations. This implies that they commonly use English in school, which reveals their ease in using the language when interacting socially with one another. Iban words were hardly present in their conversational exchanges in the speech event. Besides, as OHP28 is a non-Iban (Melanau), the other two Iban friends accommodated themselves by speaking English. Furthermore, talking about projects is an academic conversation, and it is more convenient to speak English as the reference materials are normally in English.

4.6.1.2.2.5 Language Use with Workmates in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the analysis of a conversation between two colleagues of different ethnic groups in a non-Iban-dominant area. OHP29 is an Iban male, aged 55, who holds a PhD degree, while OHP30 is a Malay male, aged 56, who also holds a PhD degree. OHP30 originates from Johor and has been in Sarawak for more than two decades. Both

participants are senior lecturers at a public university in Samarahan. Their conversation took place at a lecturers' jubilee lounge located in Samarahan, where the two discussed issues about work and family. Excerpt 27 shows their conversational exchanges on preparing for an Invention, Innovation, and Design (IID) project. English was the main language used in this conversation.

Excerpt 27

OHP29: When is the deadline again?

OHP30: Sometime in July. There's a section where you need to write an introduction to phonological awareness. This should be easy, as it is part of your PhD.

OHP29: Yes, doc, sure, no problem on that.

OHP30: Later, we will ask Shelly to write the abstract for the coming IID. And one more thing, we will divide the three levels of proficiency skills among the three of us.

Excerpt 28 shows their second encounter on personal matters, on fetching children from school, Ramadhan pasar, and holidays. Standard Malay was mainly used instead, as they switched to non-formal topics.

Excerpt 28

OHP29: I've to leave in a while. *Nak ambil anak* and wife.

(I've to leave in a while. Want to fetch the kid and wife.)

OHP30: *Saya pun nak ambil anak juga.*

(I want to fetch my son, too.)

OHP29: *Pasar Ramadhan kat Satok tu ok ke* bro*? Saya belum pegi lagi, asyik tak sempat je.*

(Is Ramadhan Bazaar at Satok okay, bro? I haven't been there yet, always not in time.)

OHP30: *Saya pun tak pergi lagi, tengok lah petang ni.*

(I haven't been there either, will see this afternoon.)

OHP29: *Kita ni banyak kerja nak siap, pas ni nak cuti lah bro.*

(We have lots of tasks to complete, will take leave after this.)

OHP30: *Ya, kita siapkan mana yang* priority *dulu, lepas tu dah boleh ambil cuti.*

(Yes, we'll complete those priorities first, then we can take leave.)

In Excerpt 27, English was mainly used when the participants discussed a formal topic on preparing for their IID project. The English sentences were formally uttered as well when discussing the formal topic. No Iban or Malay words were present in the conversation as shown in Excerpt 27, which denotes the importance of English in conveying formal matters, such as the IID project. In Excerpt 28, the topic switched to informal matters, namely, fetching the family members from school, visiting the Ramadhan bazaar, and taking leave. Standard Malay was the main language used in their interactions on these informal matters. Although English was used interchangeably, Standard Malay seemed to dominate the conversation, showing its significance as a lingua franca for inter-racial communication. Besides, Iban was not used at all throughout the conversations in both formal and informal topics, as OHP30 could not speak Iban.

4.6.1.2.2.6 Language Use for Prayers in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Lundu)

This section reports the language use for prayers in a non-Iban-dominant area. The speech event involved OHP31, aged in the mid-sixties, who is an Iban female and acted as the representative for blessing the meal for a group of friends and family members during a get-together. The group comprised people of various races, such as Iban, Bidayuh, and Kayan. The event occurred at a homestay located in Lundu. Excerpt 29 shows that English was solely used for a prayer recited by OHP31.

Excerpt 29

OHP31: Lord, once again, for the beautiful moment, we gather here today, and since yesterday, thank you for the food before us, the family and friends beside us, and the love between us. Amen.

The topic of the event was the blessing of the meal before dinner. The sole use of English in the prayer for the meal blessing was not a surprise, as most Christians in non-Iban-dominant areas today normally attend churches, where sermons are delivered in English. OHP31 did not use any Iban words in the prayer since the use of English serves as a means of communication for the multi-racial group who attended the social gathering. This is different from another conversation observed in this study, where Iban was used for the wake service and blessing of a meal in an Iban-dominant area. They most probably attend church services in Iban. In town areas, the Iban Christians are likely to go to churches that use English or Malay as the language for preaching, and this makes it natural for them to pray in English or Malay, but not in Iban.

4.6.1.2.2.7 Language Use in a Government Premise in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the language use at a government hospital in a non-Iban-dominant area. The speech event involved OHP32 and OHP33, who are both Iban males, aged in their late twenties. They work as nurses at the eye clinic in the specialist department of a government hospital, dressed in their work uniforms. Meanwhile, OHP34 is an Iban male, aged in his early eighties, who is a patient at the clinic. OHP35 is a Chinese male in his mid-seventies who is also a patient there. The event occurred at an eye specialist clinic, where both OHP34 and OHP35 were seeking treatment for their eye problems. OHP32 and OHP33 attended to OHP34 and OHP35 for their eye checks before being sent to the specialists' rooms for further treatment. Excerpts 30-32 show the conversational encounters that involved checking the patients' eyesight ability in reading the eye chart. In Excerpt 30, Iban was the main language used in the encounter between OHP32 and OHP33. In Except 31, Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were used in the conversation between OHP32, OHP33, and OHP34. In Excerpt 32, Iban was the main language used between OHP33 and OHP34.

Excerpt 30

OHP32: *Ni kad klinik patient tu*?

(Where is this patient's clinic card?)

OHP33: *Siko tu bedau* check *tadi*.

(This one has not been checked.)

OHP32: *Tulis te mit nya enda ulih peda ya*.

(He couldn't read the small print.)

OHP33: *Baris 4 ke baruh enda ulih peda ya*.

(He couldn't read from Line 4 below.)

Excerpt 31

OHP32: *Boleh nampak yang di bawah tu?*

(Can you see those below?)

OHP35: *Boleh, baris 5 ada kabur.*

(Can. Line 5 is blurry.)

OHP32: *Boleh nampak nombor yang di bawah tu?*

(Can you see the number below?)

OHP35: *Bawah tak nampak.*

(The bottom is not visible.)

OHP33: *Baca direk pun* uncle*, kira dapat nangga sampei siney?*

(Read it on your own, uncle, till which line can you see?)

OHP35: 3, 6, 4 …

OHP33: *Baris 4 ya dapat tangga sik?*

(Can you see Line 4?)

OHP35: *Tak dapat.*

(Cannot.)

Excerpt 32

OHP33: *Ulih peda nuan lumor nyin,* uncle*?*

(Can you see that number, uncle?)

OHP34: *Bayang-bayang aja, nadai peda.*

(Just shadows, not visible.)

OHP33: Lumor *brapa? Sebut baru.*

(What number? Say it again.)

OHP34: *6… ba atas enda ulih peda.*

(6 .. . can't see the above.)

OHP33: *Dah* uncle*, nganti* lutor *ngangau tama.*

(Done, uncle, wait for the doctor to call you in.)

The conversation was about eyesight checks. In Excerpt 30, OHP32 and OHP33, who are colleagues in the same department, spoke Iban with one another. It is common for people to use the shared ethnic language when there is nobody from another ethnic group present. In the excerpt, there was some borrowing from English words, namely, "*kad klinik patient*" and "check". The term "*kad klinik patient*", translated as "patient's clinic card", may not be available in Iban, which propelled OHP31 to use it. Meanwhile, the word "check" has an equivalence in Iban, that is "*peresa*". OHP33 may not be aware of the word in Iban, which resulted in him borrowing from English instead. Borrowing seemed to facilitate their conversations and helped ease their understanding of their daily tasks. However, in Excerpt 31, when another speaker of a different ethnicity was present in the encounter, Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were used instead to convey conversational meanings. In this case, the presence of the Chinese speaker (OHP35) had made OHP32 and OHP33 code-switch from Iban to Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay as they assumed that the Chinese patient may not understand Iban. In Excerpt 32, OHP33 and OHP34 used Iban in their interactions as both of them are Iban. OHP33 deliberately switched to Iban when attending to OHP34. There was some borrowing of words from English, namely, "uncle", "*lumor*", and "*lutor*". Although the word "uncle" has an Iban equivalence, that is "*aya*", OHP33 seemed to prefer using the English word instead, as it has become a norm in non-Iban-dominant areas to address the elderly males using the term. Besides, young Iban speakers

tend to use English or Malay terms in their conversations since most Iban people are already familiar with the terms. In addition, the use of "*lumor*" and "*lutor*" by OHP33, which refer to "number" and "doctor" in English, also denotes borrowing as they resemble the English words. In short, during the non-participant observations at the eye clinic located in Kuching, Iban was exclusively used among the Iban speakers, with borrowing from English and Malay, while Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were mainly used between the Iban speakers and the Chinese patient.

4.6.1.2.2.8 Language Use at a Gift Shop in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the language used for buying things at a gift shop located in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved OHP36, who is an Iban female, aged in her early forties. Her educational background is unknown to the researcher. OHP37 is a Chinese male, aged in his late twenties, who is one of the workers at the gift shop. The speech event occurred in Kuching. OHP36 was browsing through some gifts on the shelves. She was observed inspecting some of the porcelain mugs displayed on one of the shelves near the cashier counter, where OHP37 was seated. Excerpt 33 shows the conversational exchange between OHP36 and OHP37. English was mainly used in the conversation.

Excerpt 33

OHP36: Do you have seven sets of this? (pointing to a mug)

OHP37: Let me check… got.

OHP36: Got a discount for them?

OHP37: Sorry, net price already.

OHP36: Alright, I get all of them, please check ya, *takut ada* cracks. This one also net price? (pointing to a fake pot of orchids)

(Alright, I get all of them, please check ya, fret there are cracks. This one also net price?)

OHP37: Ya, net price also.

OHP36: They look so real!

OHP37: You want me to carry for you? (pointing to the mugs)

OHP36: No need, not that heavy, my car is just across there, *dekat ja.*

(No need, not that heavy, my car is just across there, just nearby.)

They were talking about buying gifts at a gift shop in English because they were from different ethnic groups. In non-Iban-dominant areas, especially in urban cities such as Kuching, using English as the language for social communication is common among multiracial people. OHP36 also code-switched to Malay in her utterances, where she used "*takut ada*" ("fret there are…") and "*dekat ja*" ("just nearby") as she attempted to emphasise her messages. Both English and Malay are commonly used as languages for interethnic communication in Sarawak.

4.6.1.2.2.9 Language Use at the Market in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the analysis of a conversation at a wet market located in a non-Iban-dominant area. The conversation involved OHP38, who is an Iban male, aged in his mid-forties. OHP38 is a buyer at the market. Meanwhile, OHP39 is a Malay male, aged in his late thirties, who is a seller at the market. Both speakers' educational backgrounds were unknown to the researcher. The speech event occurred at a market located in Samarindah, Samarahan. Excerpt 34 shows the conversational exchange between OHP38 and OHP398, where Sarawak Malay dominated.

Excerpt 34

OHP38: *Brapa sekilo tenggiri ya?*

(How much is this mackerel per kilo?)

OHP39: *Mun ambik seko, RM35 sekilo, bang.*

(If you take one whole fish, it's RM35, brother.)

OHP38: *Mun isi ja?*

(If only the flesh?)

OHP39: *Isi ja, lain rega, RM40.*

(Only the flesh, different price, RM40.)

OHP38: *Ok, timbang seko ya.*

(Ok, weigh that one piece.)

OHP39: *Sekilo lebih, RM45.30. 45 ja lah.*

(More than a kilo, RM45.30. Just 45.)

OHP38: Ok.

OHP39: *Maok potong kah bang?*

(Need cutting, brother?)

OHP38: *Aok, buang perut,* slice *nipis-nipis.*

(Yes, take out the guts, slice thinly.)

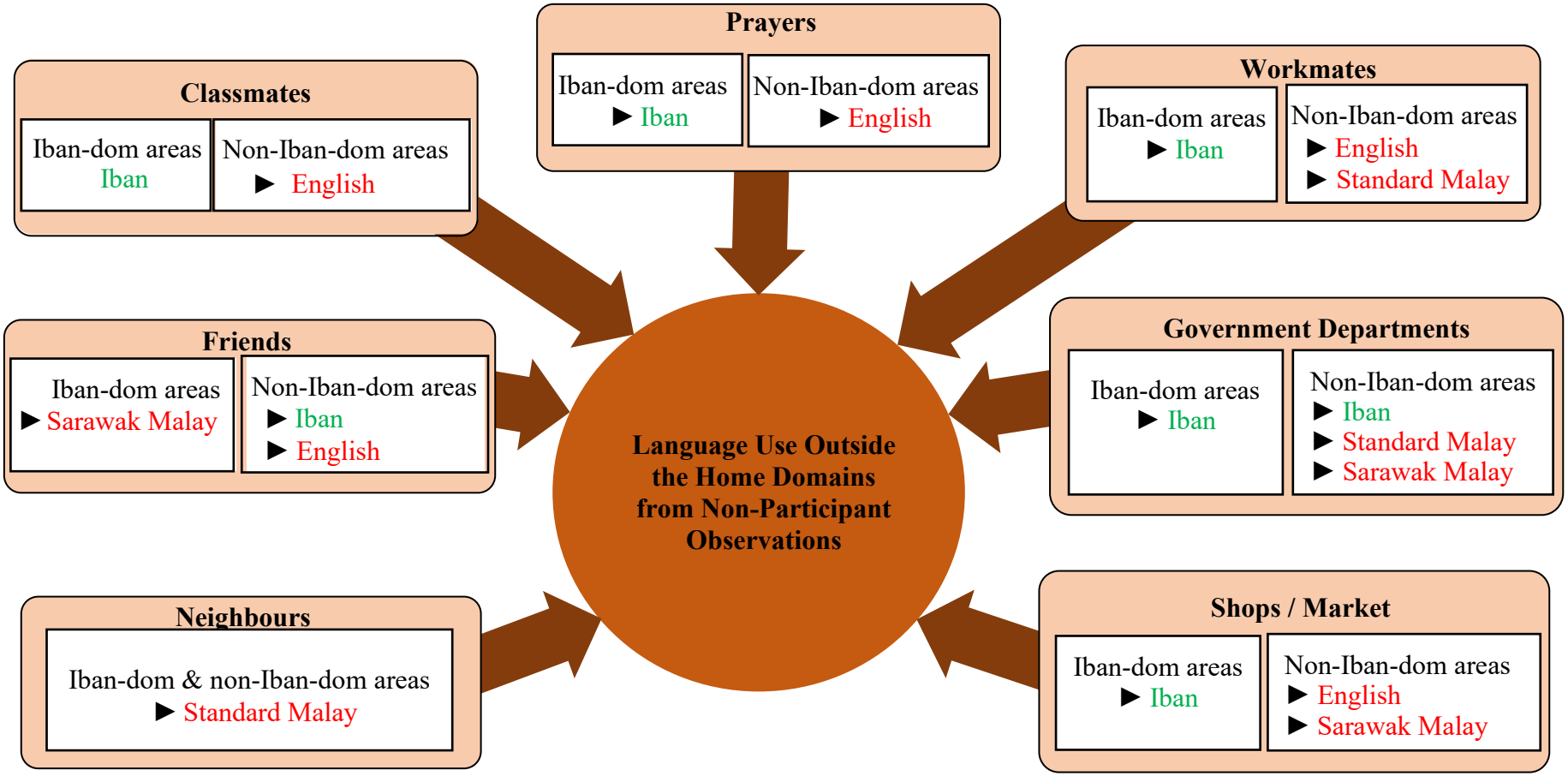
The conversation was about buying fish at the wet market located in Samarindah, Kota Samarahan. Sarawak Malay was used throughout the conversation. Samarindah is a popular wet market, frequently visited by buyers from nearby vicinities. The vendors comprise Iban, Malays, and Chinese who sell all sorts of things, such as local produce, fish and meat, live plants, fruits, and vegetables. It is common to hear the vendors speaking to one another in Sarawak Malay if they are from different ethnic groups (e.g., Iban and Malay),

while those Iban vendors and buyers who are familiar with each other will use Iban in their conversations. The English word “slice” was also used by OHP38, and the fish vendor OHP39 understood the term with ease.

4.6.1.2.3 Conclusion for Observed Language Use Outside Home Domains from Non-Participant Observations

Figure 4.2 shows the summary for language use outside the home domains for non-participant observations. In Iban-dominant areas, Iban remains the most dominant language used outside the home, followed by Standard Malay. Iban dominates five domains (out of seven domains observed), namely, communication among classmates and workmates, reciting prayers, interacting at government premises, and purchasing things at the shops/markets. This indicates that Iban is the main language of communication in these areas. When both Iban and non-Iban people interact, such as among friends and neighbours, the preferred languages are Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay, respectively. Clearly, in Iban-dominant areas, Iban is still widely used in both informal and formal settings. On the contrary, in non-Iban-dominant areas, the dominance of Iban is reduced. Where both Iban and non-Iban communities coexist, English is the most commonly used language (especially among Iban youngsters), followed by Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay. This indicates that English is the preferred language for communication among friends, classmates, and workmates, as well as for praying and buying things at shops/markets, covering five domains. Iban is still used outside the home domains in non-Iban-dominant areas, but to a lesser extent in comparison to English, Standard Malay, and Sarawak Malay. This is possible because other ethnic groups may not understand and speak Iban, making it necessary to use English and the Malay varieties for inter-ethnic interactions.

In a nutshell, the findings highlight the stronghold that Iban has on communication outside the home domains in Iban-dominant areas, but English is replacing Iban usage in non-Iban-dominant areas, particularly among the younger Iban generations. This emphasises the role of English as a widely used language in non-Iban-dominant areas, which is potentially impacted by its status as a global language for communication and the importance of the language in education and employment.



Note: dom = dominant

Figure 4.2: Language Use Outside Home Domains from Non-Participant Observations

4.6.1.3 Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains

This section presents the results of non-participant observations on language use in social media and new media domains. These domains include language use in emails for work communication, language use in searching or reading Internet information, language use in social media communication (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok), and language use in writing texts for SMS or WhatsApp. A total of 17 events were observed, involving 31 participants:15 from Iban-dominant areas and 16 from non-Iban-dominant areas. The speech events were observed in different home settings that encompassed two areas of Iban-dominant areas (Sri Aman and Lubok Antu) and non-Iban-dominant areas (Kuching and Samarahan). The observations were carried out from March 2022 to September 2022. The speech events, participants, and language use during the observations for social media and new media domains are summarised in the following tables (Tables 4.17 and 4.18).

Table 4.17 presents a summary of language use in social media and new media domains for Iban-dominant areas. Drawing from the observation data, Standard Malay was used for official emails on school matters. For searching or reading Internet information, English was used to read mystical and horror content, as well as crime stories. English and Iban were used to post content about paintings, greetings, wishes, and recollections on social media by the Iban undergraduates. In addition, English and Standard Malay were used for social media posts to discuss things that concern the wider audience. However, Iban was used instead when the social communication was exclusively intended for Iban friends and family members. For watching YouTube content, such as music and cookery videos, and Korean variety programmes, Korean (with English subtitles) and Standard Malay were used

instead. For writing SMS or WhatsApp texts, Iban was used among friends. In short, the observations show that Iban is not sufficient for communication in social media and new media domains.

Table 4.18 presents the summary of language use in social media and new media domains for non-Iban-dominant areas. For email communication, the senior lecturers (comprising different ethnicities) primarily communicated with the English Department staff in English and with general staff in Standard Malay when sending work-related emails. For Internet information, the Iban intern read and searched for English-language content on the Internet, with an emphasis on sites like Timeline, Al Jazeera, VICE, and films from Deutsche Welle. As for social media communication, posts on Facebook entail a range of tasks, such as expressing grief and joy in friendship while using English for a diverse audience. Gawai greetings, family get-togethers, and SPM results (where the language used varies according to the audience and subject matter) encompass Standard Malay, Iban, and code-mixing in English. Furthermore, a bank manager, an educator, and recent graduates used English, Iban, and Standard Malay when discussing events, travel, celebrations, motivating speeches, and friend meetings. For YouTube content, the Iban new graduate watched motivational lectures and English-language movies on YouTube. For writing SMS and WhatsApp messages, friends text each other in Sarawak Malay and Iban, mentioning things like running into old acquaintances and coping with scammers. The summary shows that the Iban use in social media content and text messages is minimal and restricted to an Iban audience.

Table 4.17: A Summary of Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains for Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Role	Participants	Language Use
1	Emails for work communication • Receiving formal emails of school-related matters	Public school teacher	NMP1 – Iban, M, early 50s	Standard Malay
2	Searching or reading the Internet information • Crime stories • Mystical and horror content	Student (Form 6)	NMP2 – Iban, F, 18	English
3	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • Painting • Mother's and Father's Day greetings • A birthday wish • An expression of gratification	Undergraduate	NMP3 – Iban, M, early 20s	English
4	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • A mother's birthday wish • A motivational message • Recalling memories	Undergraduates	NMP4 – Iban, F, mid-20s NMP5 – Iban, F, mid-20s	NMP4 + wider audience = English NMP4 + and NMP5 = Iban
5	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • Importance of reading • School weekend duties • Personal shopper • Mispronunciation	Friends	NMP6 – Iban, F, late 30s NMP7 – Iban, F, late 30s	NMP6 + wider audience = English NMP7 + colleagues = Standard Malay NMP6 + Iban friends and family members = Iban NMP6 + NMP7 = Iban
6	Watching YouTube content • Music videos by Blackpink and Stray Kids • Cooking videos by Khairulaming and Che Nom • Korea's Variety Shows, e.g., Runningman, Run BTS, and Weekly Idol	Diploma student	NMP8 – Iban, F, 18	Korean (with English subtitles) Standard Malay
7	Writing SMS or WhatsApp texts • A dog's death	Friends	NMP9 – Iban, M, mid 50s NMP10 – Iban, M, early 60s NMP11 – Iban, F, early 40s	Iban

8	Writing SMS or WhatsApp texts • Buying new clothes	Friends	NMP12 – Iban, M, mid 50s NMP13 – Iban, F, late 40s NMP14 – Iban, F, late 40s NMP15 – Iban, F, late 40s	Iban

Note: NMP = New Media Participant; F = Female; M = Male

Table 4.18: A Summary of Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains for Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

No	Events	Role	Participants	Language Use
1	Emails for work communication • Receiving and sending formal emails of work-related matters	Senior lecturer	NMP16 – Iban, F, late 40s	Standard Malay for emails received and sent to the general staff English for emails received and sent to the English Department staff
2	Searching or reading the Internet information • Al Jazeera /Timeline / VICE / Deutsche Welle (DW) documentaries	Intern	NMP17 – mixed Iban and Indian, F, mid-20s	English
3	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • Grieving the loss of a loved one • Celebrating the friendship of mixed-race friends • Celebrating the friendship of an Iban friend	Facebook friends	NMP18 – Iban, F, late 50s NMP19 – Iban, F, mid 50s	NMP18 + general audience of multi-ethnicities = English NMP18 and NMP19 = English with code-mixing in Iban and Standard Malay
4	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • *Gawai* greetings • Family gathering • SPM results	School teacher	NMP20 – Iban, F, early 50s	Iban – when the topics relate to the Iban community (*Gawai* celebration) and target the Iban friends, family members, and relatives (family gatherings) Standard Malay – when the topic relates to school matters (SPM results)
5	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • Meeting friends • Vacation • Motivational Talk	Bank manager	NMP21 – Iban, M, early 50s	English

6	Social media communication (Facebook posts) • Mulu Adventure • Gawai celebration • Sebako Waterfall • Miri Crocodile Farm	Fresh graduate cum vlogger	NMP22 – Iban, M, mid-20s	English (when addressing the wider audience) Iban (when addressing the Iban audience)
7	Watching YouTube content • English movies • Motivational Talks	Fresh graduate	NMP23 – the Iban, M, early 20s	English
8	Writing SMS or WhatsApp texts • Meeting old friends	Friends	NMP24 – Iban, F, late 40s NMP25 – Iban, F, late 40s NMP26 – Bidayuh, F, late 40s NMP27 – Kayan, F, early 50s	Sarawak Malay
9	Writing SMS or WhatsApp texts • Scammers	Friends	NMP28 – Iban + Bidayuh, F, late 40s NMP29 – Iban, F, late 40s NMP30 – Iban + Orang Ulu, F, early 50s NMP31 – Iban, F, late 40s	Iban

Note: NMP = New Media Participant; F = Female; M = Male

4.6.1.3.1 Results for Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains for Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the results for non-participant observations on language use in social media and new media domains in Iban-dominant areas. The observations were conducted involving the participants located in Sri Aman and Lubok Antu, which are densely populated areas by the Iban people.

4.6.1.3.1.1 Language Use in Emails for Work Communication in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section reports the language use for work communication in an Iban-dominant area. NMP1 is an Iban male, aged in his early fifties. NMP1 has a master's degree and works as a teacher at a government school in Engkilili, Lubok Antu. Excerpt 35 shows some samples of NMP2's emails for work communication.

Excerpt 35

Topic 1: *Pelaksanaan Kursus Pentaksiran Bilik Darjah Sekolah Menengah Tahun 2022*

(Implementation of Classroom-Based Assessment for Secondary Schools in 2022)

Semua guru SM Gred DG48 WAJIB mengikuti kursus ini melalui platform DELIMa menggunakan ID moe-dl mulai 1-30 Oktober 2022 dengan melayari google site berikut: https://sites.google.com/moe-dl.edu.my/kursus-pbd-2022

(All SM Grade DG48 teachers MUST attend this course through the DELIMa platform using the moe-dl ID from 1-30 October 2022 by visiting the following Google site:

Topic 2: Hebahan Seminar Kajian Tindakan & Inovasi Peringkat Daerah Batu Pahat Tahun 2022

(Announcement of the 2022 Batu Pahat District Level Action & Innovation Study Seminar)

Jemput beramai-ramai untuk menonton siaran secara langsung di pautan di atas. Mata kredit untuk SPLKPM juga disediakan.

(All are invited to watch the broadcast live at the link above. Credit points for SPLKPM are also provided.)

Topic 3: *Kolokium Pendidikan Negeri Perak 2022*

(Perak State Education Colloquium 2022)

Sukacitanya Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Perak dengan kerjasama Majlis Pengetua Sekolah Menengah, Majlis Guru Besar, Majlis Guru Cemerlang membawakan Kolokium Pendidikan Negeri Perak seperti ketetapan berikut:

Tarikh: 27 ~ 29 September 2022

Masa: 2.30 ptg - 5.00 ptg

Tempat: Melalui saluran YouTube Anjung Ilmu dan Facebook JPN Perak

(It is the pleasure of the Perak State Education Department, in collaboration with the Council of Secondary School Principals, the Council of Head Teachers, the Council of Outstanding Teachers to

present the Perak State Education Colloquium as per the following regulations:

Date: 27-29 September 2022

Time: 2.30 PM – 5.00 PM

Venue: Via the Anjung Ilmu YouTube channel and JPN Perak Facebook)

The emails received by NMP1 centred on school-related matters. Standard Malay was mainly used for all emails to the school staff in this Iban-dominant area. As part of the government staff, receiving and sending emails in Standard Malay for formal matters is a requirement, as it is the national language of Malaysia. Because it is the first formal language in Malaysia, Standard Malay is used in all government departments (particularly public schools) or offices for delivering work-related emails on formal matters. Meanwhile, Iban is hardly used in formal emails even though the school where NMP1 is servicing is populated by the Iban community. In formal matters concerning school, Iban is not used at all because Standard Malay is the official language. Iban seems to have no place in formal communication. The emphasis on dominant languages with strong economic and instrumental values, such as Standard Malay and English, results in the inability of Iban to rise and assume a position as a language for formal communication in school settings.

4.6.1.3.1.2 Language Use in Searching or Reading Internet Information in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports the language used for searching or reading Internet information in an Iban-dominant area. NMP2 is an Iban female, aged 18, who is a Form 6 student at a

government school located in Sri Aman. Figures 4.3 to 4.6 show samples of search information by NMP2, which are all in English.

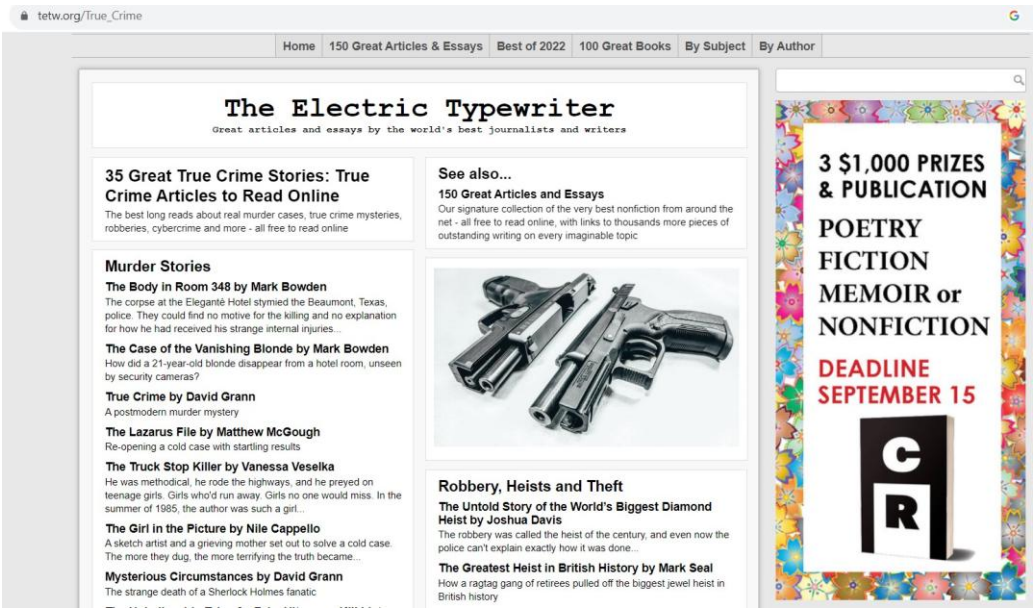


Figure 4.3: Crime Stories



Figure 4.4: Horror Stories



Figure 4.5: Mystical Stories

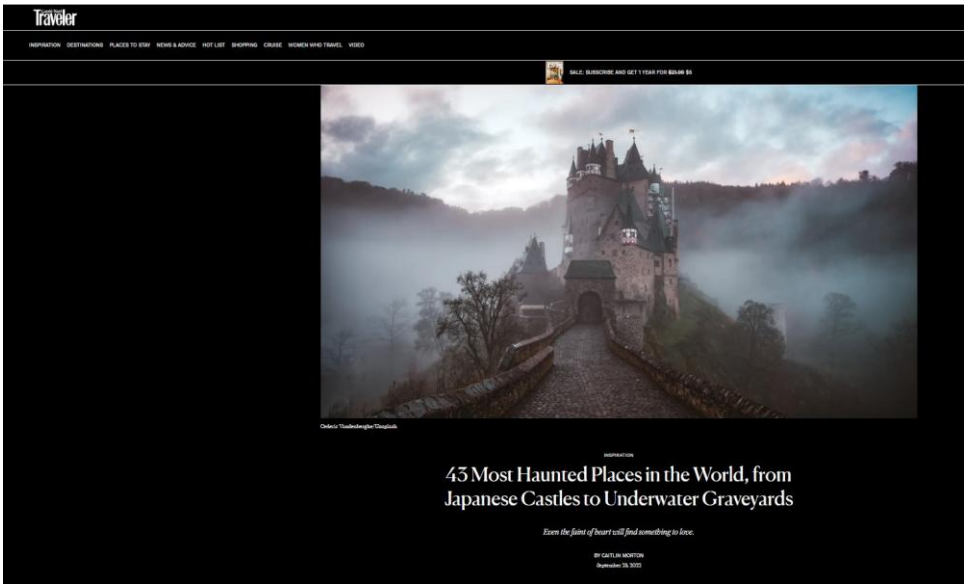


Figure 4.6: Stories of Haunted Places

When searching or reading the Internet information, NMP2 searched for and read topics on documentaries in English that relate to crime stories, such as homicide and serial killers. NMP2 also reads the Internet information on mystical and horror content, such as

haunted houses and places, ghost stories, etc. All these informative websites use English as their medium of delivery for readers. English was solely used by NMP2 for searching and reading the Internet information in Sri Aman (an Iban-dominant area), in which Iban is hardly used. There is no doubt that English is the Internet language for NMP2 and other young people like her.

4.6.1.3.1.3 Language Use in Social Media Communication (Facebook) in Iban-Dominant Areas (Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, and Kapit)

This section reports language use in social media communication, i.e., Facebook, in three locations of Iban-dominant areas: Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, and Kapit. The observations involved five respondents: NMP3, NMP4, NMP5, NMP6, and NMP7.

NMP3 is an Iban male, aged in his early twenties, who is an undergraduate at a public university. Excerpt 36 shows NMP3's Facebook posts, where English was solely used.

NMP4 is an Iban female, aged in her mid-twenties, who is an undergraduate at a public university. In her Facebook posts, NMP4 exclusively addressed her Iban friend, NMP5, who is probably her close friend. NMP5 is also an undergraduate at a public university. Excerpt 37 shows NMP4's Facebook posts, where English and Iban were used interchangeably according to different topics and speakers.

NMP6 is an Iban female, aged in her late thirties, who is an English teacher at a public school in Kapit. Meanwhile, NMP7 is a close friend of NMP6, who is also an Iban female in her late thirties. In NMP6's Facebook posts, she used English and Standard Malay when addressing issues on school-related matters. However, when addressing her Iban friends who reside in Kapit with regards to her being their personal shopper, she used Iban

instead. Excerpt 38 shows the clear demarcation in topic for the use of Iban in NMP6's Facebook posts.

Excerpt 36

Topic 1: Painting

- Haven't got a lot of time to finish this piece, but patience is a virtue. (posted on 27 March 2022)
- It's a small piece, but a hectic progress. (posted on 7 April 2022)
- Simple Saturday's sketch, make your weekend productive. (posted on 16 April 2022)

Topic 2: Mother's and Father's Day Greetings

- Happy Mother's Day to Mommy, love you always, Mom, and Daddy hehe. (posted on 8 May 2022)
- Happy Father's Day to daddy, love you always, and mom too! Hehe. (posted on 19 June 2022)

Topic 3: A birthday wish

- Happy Birthday, Mom, love you and dad always! (posted on 6 July 2022)

Topic 4: An expression of gratification

- Yet again, I just want to thank you, God, families, my loved ones, and lecturers for never never-ending support, quite an unexpected achievement for this semester, hoping to get a better performance for this upcoming semester. (posted on 3 July 2022)

Excerpt 37

Topic 1: A Mother's Birthday Wish

Happy birthday to the woman who helped to make all my dreams and aspirations possible, my darling *Mak*! May your birthday be filled with delight this year. (posted on 6 July 2022)

Topic 2: A motivational message for friends (wider audience) (posted on 26 March 2022)

Until you step into the unknown, you don't know what you're made of.

Topic 3: Recalling memories (exclusively for her Iban close friend)

Pandai mai sida ya bejugit agi biak suba. (posted on 12 July 2022)

(They really could dance when they were young.)

NMP4: *Bulan nyin menya sida ya install tu*. (posted on 4 August 2022)

(They installed this last month.)

NMP5: *Nundi mai ga wechitt tuk.*

(This WeChat is teasing us.)

Excerpt 38

Topic 1: Importance of reading (posted on 25 August 2022)

Reading strengthens brain activity. I always love reading to gain knowledge. Nowadays, I read online because trending news and updated research (I read the established ones) are mostly digital these days. If you're willing to improve, reading is the first step. But of course, if you're illiterate, then you have to learn reading first.

Topic 2: School Weekend Duties (posted on 21 August 2022)

Hujung minggu pun kita kerja, sebelum hari kejadian, kita kena test *dulu supaya boleh cari solusi. Buat* project-based learning *memang kena ada* planning, and definitely not a one-day progress. Big thanks to contributors and sponsors.

(Even on weekends, we also work. Before the event, we have to test first so we can find the solution. Doing project-based learning needs planning and is definitely not a one-day progress. Big thanks to contributors and sponsors.)

Topic 3: Personal Shopper (posted on 2 September 2022)

Sapa ka meli dress GUESS, *madah tumu ahhh awak ku nulung meli.* Personal Shopper *kiterr hehehehe harga dari 600++ jadi 200++ je heheheeh.*

(Who wants to buy a GUESS dress, please inform me early so I can help you buy it. Your Personal Shopper, hehehehe price from 600++ only heheheeh.)

Topic 4: Mispronunciation (posted on 10 August 2022)

NMP6: *Ya tu pama nusi utai lucu, ketawa dulu.* Portion *tau nyadi* position.

(If this person tells you a funny story, you can laugh first. Portion becomes position.)

NMP7: *Manuk betelo dalam babas, sebedau bejaku ketawa dulu*.

(Chicken lays eggs in the bush, before talking, laugh first.)

NMP6: *Nama nya enda* rhyme.

(It's not rhymed.)

NMP7: *Baka ke nyebut position nya meh.*

(Just like saying position.)

In Excerpt 36, the topics comprise painting, Mother's and Father's Day greetings, a birthday wish, and an expression of gratification. English was solely used in NMP3's Facebook posts. Despite being an Iban, the ethnic language was hardly used in NMP3's social media posts. Iban youngsters such as NMP3 seem to prefer using English in their social media posts as it reaches out to the wider audience who reside in different places of the world, as Facebook is a platform easily accessed by the global communities with Internet coverage. Besides, English is a universal language for inter-ethnic communication that is understood globally by the Facebook audience.

In Excerpt 37, the topics of the posts include a mother's birthday wish, a motivational message for friends, and recalling memories. In the first topic, English was used by NMP4 when she conveyed her birthday wish to her mother, despite her being an Iban. Using English in birthday wishes seems to be a common trend among youngsters today, as it eases understanding and reaches a wider audience. It will likely generate more likes among her Facebook readers who are not only Iban. Likewise, in the second topic, English was also used in NMP4's post, which she targeted to a wider audience as well. The motivational message was conveyed to all her Facebook friends and followers. In the third topic, Iban was used instead when NMP4 exclusively posted the message to her Iban close friend, NMP5. Hence, Iban was mainly used with NMP4's Iban close friend, while English was used with other friends of different races, as well as a birthday greeting to her mother.

In Excerpt 38, the topics covered include the importance of reading, school duties, personal shopper, and mispronunciation. In the first topic (the importance of reading), NMP6

posted a message in English on her Facebook page, targeted at a wider audience. As an English teacher, NMP13 seemed to share her passion for reading as a way for her to motivate herself and her readers (who may include her students). However, in the second topic with regards to school duties, NMP7 resorted to Standard Malay with some code-switching in English. The message may be confined to her colleagues or readers within her vicinity in Kapit. Standard Malay is the official language for school-related matters, and Iban does not have a place in communication with her superior or colleagues, who may consist of multi-ethnic people, such as Malay, Melanau, Chinese, and others. On the contrary, in the third topic, NMP6 used Iban instead, in which her message was exclusively addressed to her Iban friends or family members, who use her service as their personal shopper. Similarly, in the last topic on mispronunciation, NMP6 addressed NMP7, who may be her Iban close friend. Iban was mostly used in their conversations when discussing the issue. In short, both English and Standard Malay are used for Facebook posts related to school activities, while Iban is used for personal matters relating to Iban friends and family members.

4.6.1.3.1.4 Language Use Watching YouTube Content in an Iban-Dominant Area (Sri Aman)

This section reports language use for watching YouTube content in an Iban-dominant area located in Sri Aman, Sarawak. NMP8 is an Iban female, aged 18, who is a diploma student at a public university. When watching the YouTube content, NMP8 used different languages, such as Korean and Standard Malay. These include YouTube videos, namely, music movies, cooking videos, and variety shows. Figures 4.7 to 4.13 show some samples of YouTube content watched by NMP8, where Korean (with English subtitles) and Standard Malay are predominantly used.

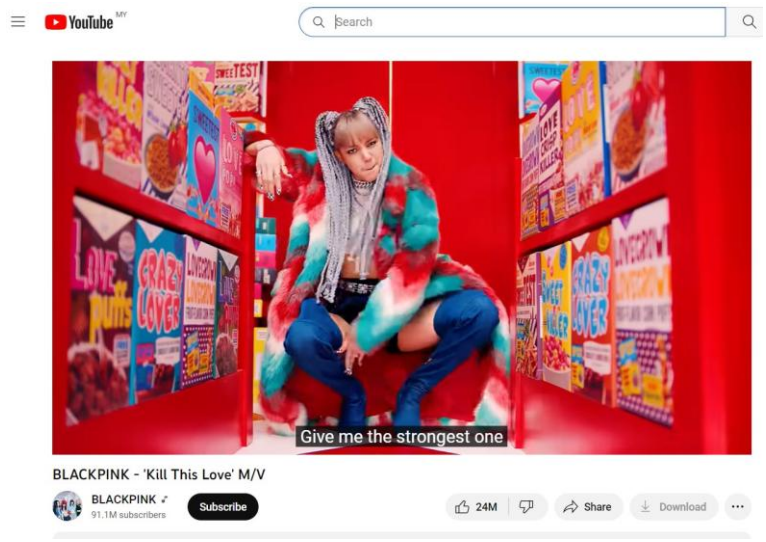


Figure 4.7: A Music Video by Blackpink (with English Subtitles)

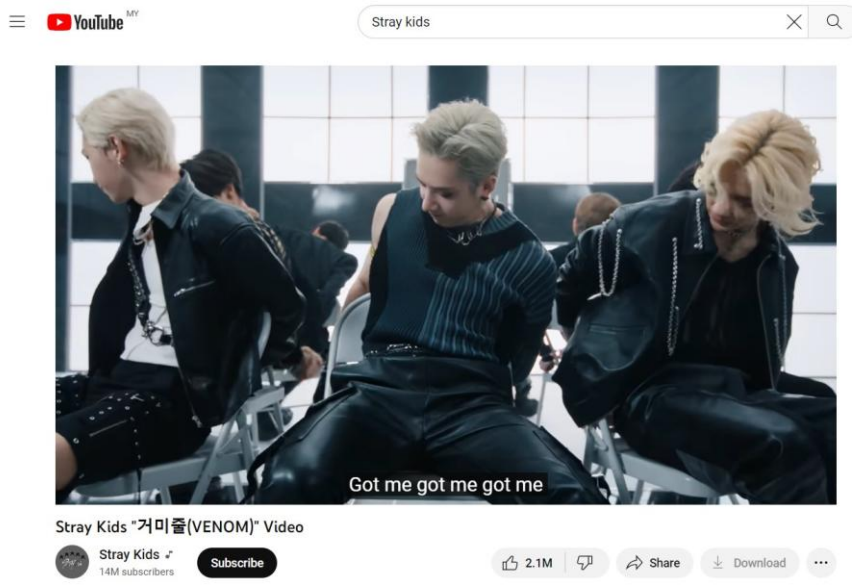


Figure 4.8: A Music Video by Stray Kids (with English Subtitles)

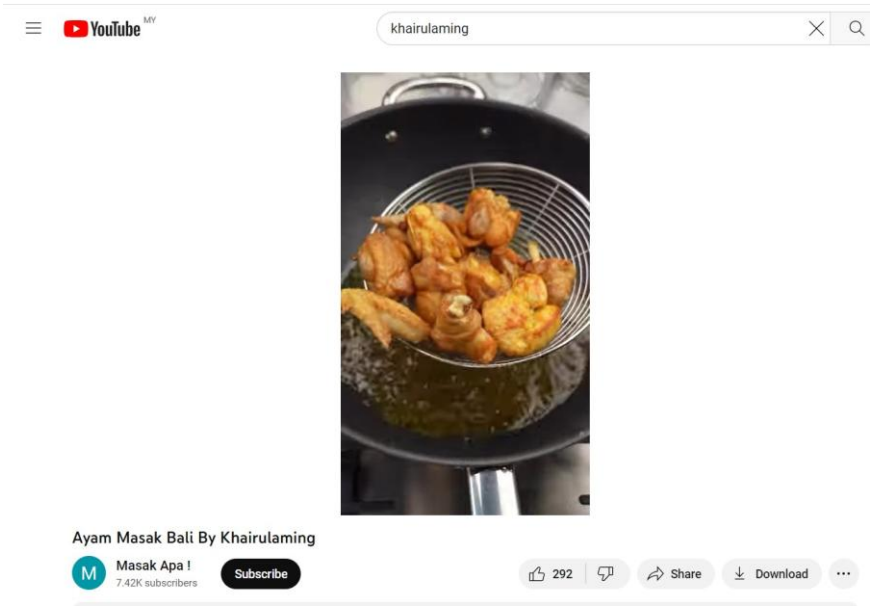


Figure 4.9: A Cooking Video by Khairulaming (Hosted in Standard Malay)

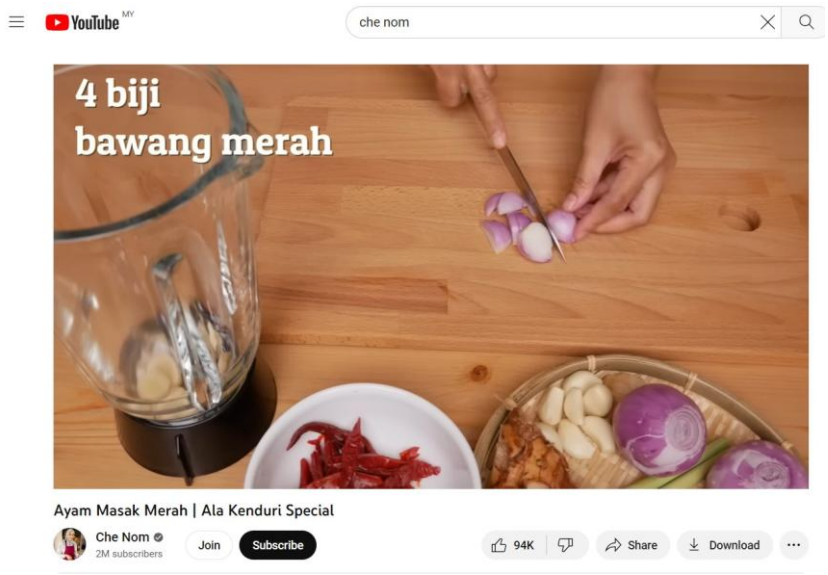


Figure 4.10: A Cooking Video by Che Nom (Hosted in Standard Malay)



Figure 4.11: Runningman (with English Subtitles)

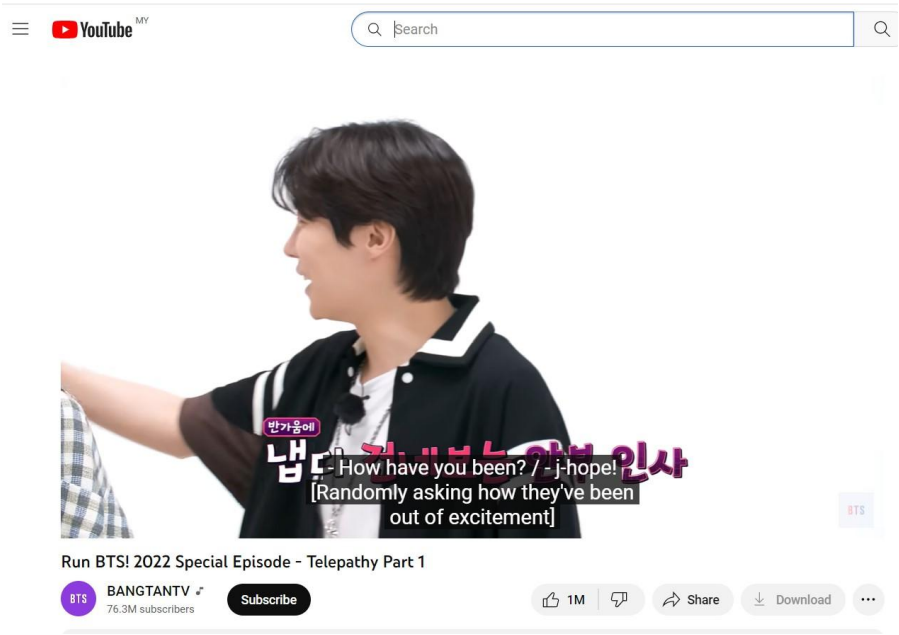


Figure 4.12: Run BTS and Weekly Idol (with English Subtitles)



Figure 4.13: Weekly Idol (with English Subtitles)

The music videos visited by NMP8 comprise those featuring Korean groups, like Blackpink and Stray Kids. NMP8 also watched cooking videos by Khairulaming and Che Nom, which are hosted in Standard Malay. Besides, NMP8 also watched Korea's Variety Shows, such as Runningman, Run BTS, and Weekly Idol, which are hosted in Korean and equipped with English subtitles. Even though NMP8 is not well-versed in Korea, the English subtitles help her understand the content of the shows. Iban is not relevant in YouTube content because there are few videos in Iban compared to Korean (with English subtitles) and Standard Malay videos.

4.6.1.3.1.5 Language Use in Writing SMS or WhatsApp Texts in an Iban-Dominant Area (Lubok Antu)

This section presents the findings on language use in writing WhatsApp texts in two observations from an Iban-dominant area located in Lubok Antu. The observations involved seven respondents: NMP9, NMP10, NMP11, NMP12, NMP13, NMP14, and NMP15.

NMP9, NMP10, and NMP11 are three friends who reside in the same longhouse located in Lubok Antu, Sarawak. NMP9 is an Iban male, aged in his mid-fifties, who works as a farmer. Meanwhile, NMP10 is another Iban male, aged in his early sixties, who also works as a farmer in Lubok Antu, whereas NMP11 is an Iban female, aged in her late forties, who is a housewife. The participants are neighbours to each other at an Iban longhouse, who are also closely related to each other. The WhatsApp group chat is formed to convey and share any related social and formal matters on a daily basis. Excerpt 39 shows their conversation carried out mainly in Iban.

NMP12, NMP13, NMP14, and NMP15 are friends as well as neighbours in the same longhouse located in Lubok Antu, Sarawak. NMP12 is an Iban male, in his late fifties, who has a diploma degree from a public institution. NMP12 also works as a public servant at a government premise in Lubok Antu. Meanwhile, NMP13, NMP14, and NMP15 are Iban females, in their late forties, who are Form 5 school leavers. All of them are housewives and occasionally work as part-time helpers at a nearby palm oil plantation. Their chats were mostly in Iban, as shown by Excerpt 40.

Excerpt 39

NMP9: *Ukoi ku ke benama Nyadok udah parai saritu tadi 25/9/22, jam 10.50 pagi, bangkai ia udah ditumbak ba tuchong Bukit Rua kena ka 2.30 lemai, slamat beserara ngagai nuan ukoi ku dikesayau laban pemerti ia sanggup ngulu nguan aku setiap maia leboh ku nurun kerja ke tanah.*
(My dog named Nyadok died today, 25/9/22, at 10.50 AM, its remains were buried on top of Bukit Rua at 2.30 PM, farewell to you, my

beloved dog, because of your obedience in accompanying me every time I went to work at the farm.)

NMP10: *Sinu meda anak ia nya.*

(Sorry to see its puppy.)

NMP11: *Nya meh OD.. baka ke nemu reti indai ia parai.*

(Indeed OD .. Like it realised the mother has died.)

NMP10: *Uduk pan lebih kurang baka kitai mensia.*

(Dogs are more or less like humans, too.)

NMP9: *Amat nya, mak Jinggan ke ngambar ia tinggal nyau bebasu, mak jinggan nyau nyabak ga meda ia lama amai duduk nunga kubur indai ia.*

(That's right, Jinggan's mother took the picture when I went out to clean myself, Jinggan's mother cried when seeing it waiting for a long time at its mother's grave.)

Excerpt 40

NMP12: *Meli baju kena ngambi indu ila.*

(Buying a suit to propose to a bride.)

NMP13: *Ngambi indu sapa, Anggat?*

(Who are you proposing, Anggat?)

NMP14: *Nadai permit ba ruai, pia wai.*

(There is no permit for the veranda, right.)

NMP15: *Anang ragak tua sis.. bala sida Sabat benung nyual gari.*

(We just keep quiet, sis… Sabat and the gang are selling clothes.)

NMP13: *Au ga.*

(Yes indeed.)

NMP15: *Sewa ba ruai mahal. Nya Runti bejual ba luar dia.*

(Veranda rental is expensive. That's why Runti sells her stuff outside there.)

NMP13: *Anang ragak kitai 3, anuk bala sida sis Sabat kitai.*

(We three just keep, sis Sabat and the gang will scold us.)

NMP15: *Nadai sida nganu. Nuan enda nguda baju nya wai Wina?? Wai Riau mayar ke nuan dulu.*

(They won't scold. Don't you want to order that shirt, Wina?? Riau will pay for you first.)

In Excerpt 39, the three friends were talking about a dog's death, which is considered a family matter. The matter concerns the passing of a beloved pet, who had been a loyal companion and guard dog to NMP9. Iban is mainly used throughout the conversations. The sole use of Iban in the texts was not surprising as the ethnic language is a stronghold in this longhouse located in Lubok Antu (a densely Iban-populated area).

In Excerpt 40, the four friends were talking about buying new clothes as a preparation for a marriage proposal in the Iban culture, called *Ngambi Indu*, as mentioned by NMP12. This term is literally translated as "to take the bride". The term relates to the Iban wedding ceremony called *Melah Pinang* (splitting of the Areca beetle), which is celebrated with merriment and ritual. When the *Melah Pinang* ceremony is taking place, the groom's entourage will go to take the bride (*Ngambi Indu*) (Nazri, 2018). During the ceremonial occasion, the beating of gongs and traditional drums accompanies the groom's entourage till

they reach the bride's place. Throughout the conversations in the WhatsApp texts, Iban was mainly used as a means of communication. This is no surprise as Iban is the lingua franca in this densely populated Iban area. There was borrowing of the English word "*nguda"*, which refers to "order". It is common to see English words being assimilated in conversations among the Iban speakers, regardless of the locality, as the use helps convey meanings to the listeners. Besides, as the Iban people in Iban-populated areas (such as Lubok Antu) come in contact with other ethnic groups and their exposure to other languages through social daily encounters and school, borrowing from other dominant languages like English and Malay is a common phenomenon in their conversational exchanges with others, either with their own group members or with other ethnic speakers.

4.6.1.3.2 Results for Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains for Non-Iban-Dominant Areas

The following sections present the results for non-participant observations on language use in social media and new media domains in non-Iban-dominant areas. The observations were carried out on the participants who reside in Kuching and Samarahan, which are less populated areas by the Iban people.

4.6.1.3.2.1 Language Use in Emails for Work Communication in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Samarahan)

This section reports the language used for work communication in a non-Iban-dominant area. NMP16 is an Iban female, aged in her late forties. NMP16 holds a master's degree and works as a senior lecturer at a public university in Samarahan. Excerpts 41-44 are some samples of NMP1's emails for work communication, where Standard Malay and

English were mainly used. Excerpts 41-42 were emails sent to UiTM Sarawak staff, whereas Excerpts 43-44 were emails received from UiTM Sarawak colleagues.

Excerpt 41

> *Penundaan Bengkel Suntingan Video Dalam Pengajaran & Pembelajaran Kepada Jam 2.30 petang, 10 Jun, 2022*
>
> (Postponement of Video Editing in Teaching & Learning Workshop to 2.30 PM, 10 June 2022.)
>
> *Dimaklumkan bahawa Bengkel Suntingan Video Dalam Pengajaran & Pembelajaran untuk pensyarah UiTM Sarawak akan ditunda ke pada jam 2.30 petang. Sebarang kesulitan amat dikesali.*
>
> (It is informed that the Workshop on Video Editing in Teaching & Learning for UiTM Sarawak lecturers will be postponed to 2.30 PM. Any inconvenience is deeply regretted.)

Excerpt 42

> *Bengkel Penggunaan UFUTURE dalam Pengajaran & Pembelajaran (P&P)* (Workshop on the Use of UFUTURE in Teaching & Learning (P&P))
>
> *Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa Unit e-Pembelajaran UiTM Sarawak akan menganjurkan Bengkel Penggunaan UFUTURE dalam Pengajaran & Pembelajaran (P&P) untuk pensyarah UiTM Sarawak pada ketetapan berikut:*

(Please be informed that the UiTM Sarawak e-Learning Unit will organise a Workshop on the Use of UFUTRE in Teaching & Learning (P&P) for UiTM Sarawak lecturers on the following schedule:)

Excerpt 43

Submission of Exam Result Analysis Sem 20222 (MARCH 2022-AUGUST 2022)

Please ensure you have submitted your hard and soft copies of eRES to Bilik Gerakan HEA before submitting to the APB link. Deadline to upload exam results analysis forms: 11.59 PM, 15 AUGUST 2022 (MONDAY)

Excerpt 44

ELC231 MODERATION

Hello, everyone!

For the purpose of moderation, please ensure that the following are moderated;

a) 3 scripts of Mid-Term Test (high, mid, and low)

b) Scores for all assessments

For junior/new lecturers, please get a senior lecturer to assist you. Kindly upload the completed form to the given link and keep a copy for your own records.

Standard Malay was mainly used for emails sent to the general staff of UiTM Sarawak for both support and academic departments, while English was mainly used in work-related matters in the English language department only. As the university staff comprised various ethnic groups, such as Malays, Iban, Bidayuh, Chinese, and others, Standard Malay was used to deliver messages about work-related matters to the general staff. Meanwhile, since NMP16 is one of the staff members in the English Department, it was likely that English was used instead to send emails to her colleagues for work communication. It was apparent that Iban was hardly used at all for writing formal emails related to work in this non-Iban-dominant area.

4.6.1.3.2.2 Language Use in Searching or Reading Internet Information in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the language used for searching or reading Internet information in a non-Iban-dominant area. NMP17 is a mixed Iban and Indian female, aged in her mid-twenties. NMP17 has a bachelor's degree and works as an intern at a law firm located in Kuching. When reading the Internet information, NMP17's favourite search was on the world's current issues. Figures 4.14 to 4.17 show samples of NMP17 searching or reading the Internet information, which are all in English.

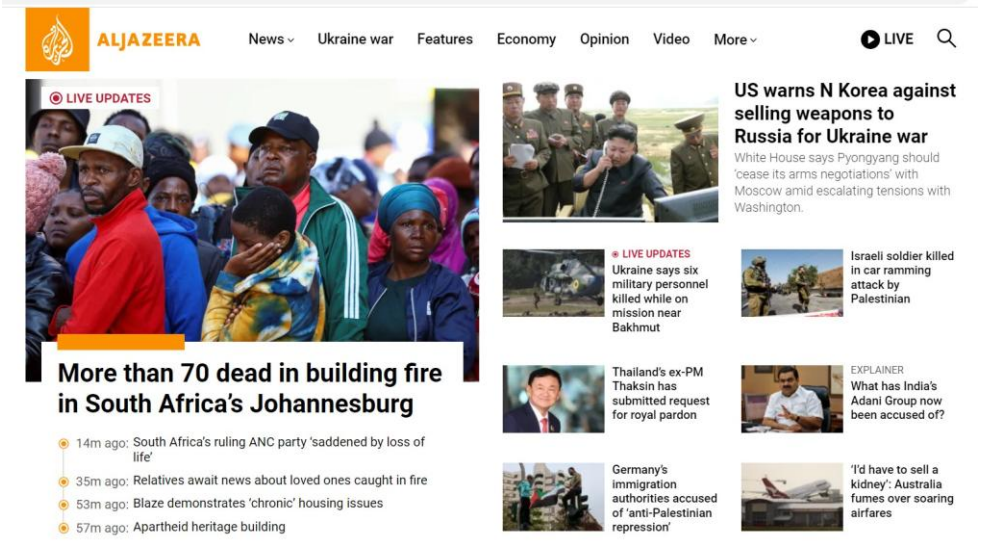


Figure 4.14: Al Jazeera

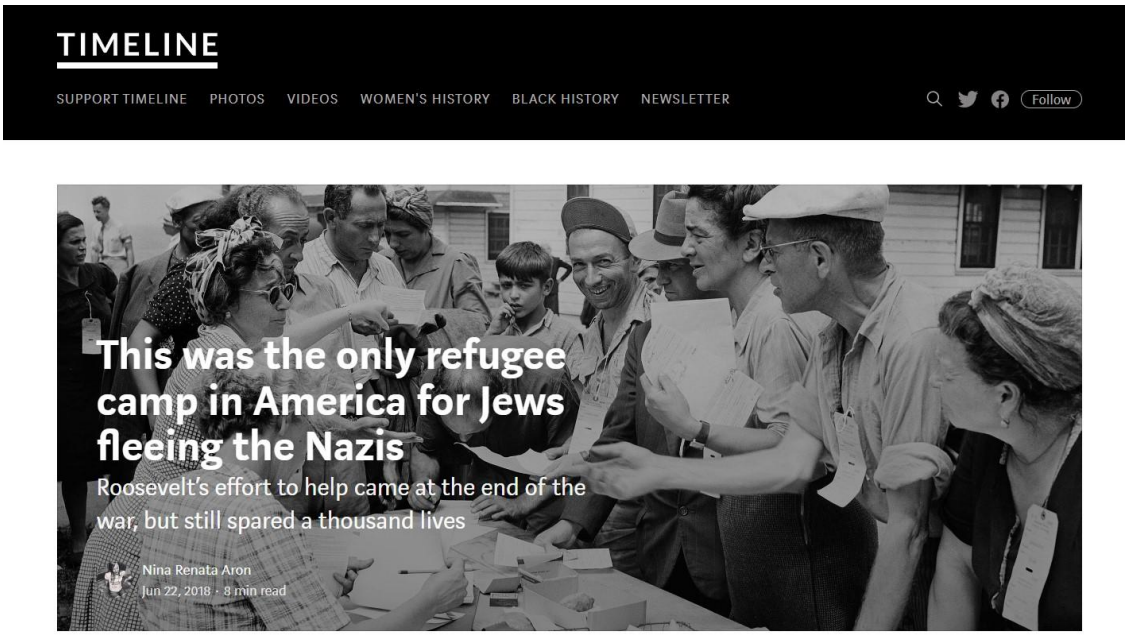


Figure 4.15: Timeline

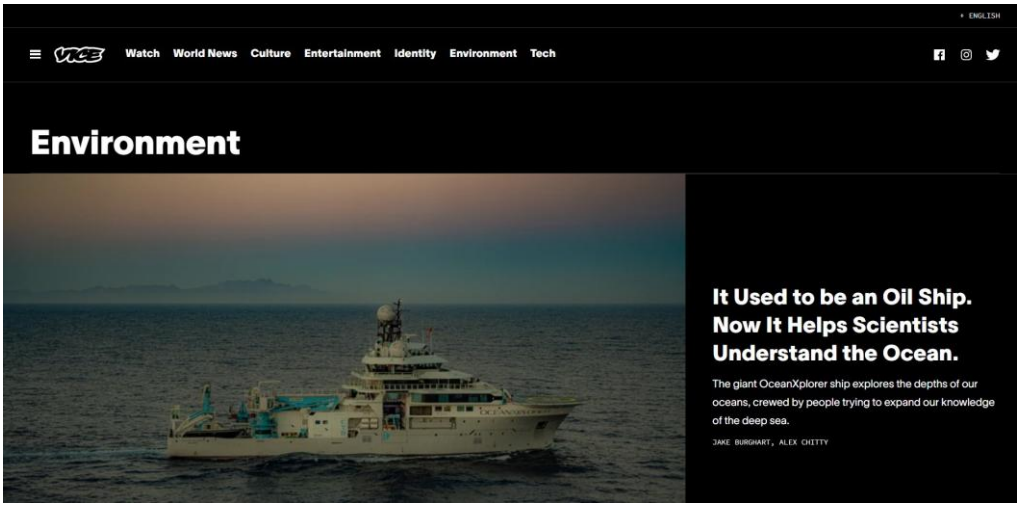


Figure 4.16: VICE

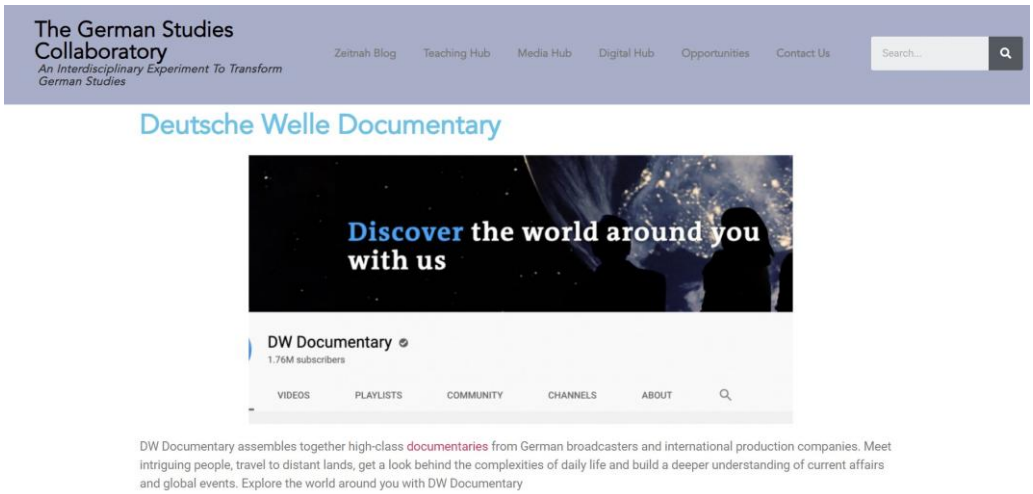


Figure 4.17: Deutsche Welle (DW) Documentaries

Topics of the Internet search and reading cover mostly the world's issues. Websites such as Al Jazeera, Timeline, and VICE News were frequently visited by NMP17, in which English is the medium for all of them. NMP17 also reads documentaries in English, particularly Deutsche Welle (DW) documentaries. DW documentaries belong to Germany's public state-owned international broadcaster, funded by the German Federal Tax Budget, whose service is available in 32 languages. Its satellite television comprises channels in

English, German, Spanish, Persian, and Arabic. Despite being half Iban, NMP17 never reads or finds any information on the Internet in the Iban language. For NMP17, English is her Internet language.

4.6.1.3.2.3 Language Use in Social Media Communication (Facebook) in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the language use in social media communication, namely Facebook, involving four participants: NMP18, NMP19, NMP20, and NMP21. All these participants reside in Kuching, Sarawak, which is a non-Iban-dominant area.

NMP18 is an Iban female, aged in her late fifties. She has a bachelor's degree; however, her profession is unknown to the researcher. Meanwhile, NMP19 is another Iban female who is a close friend to NMP18, aged in her mid-fifties, and holds a bachelor's degree. Her profession is also unknown to the researcher. Excerpts 45-47 show Facebook posts of NMP18, where NMP19 was her recipient. English was solely used for messages aimed at the general audience, whereas a mixture of English, Iban, and Sarawak Malay was used between the Iban speakers.

NMP20 is an Iban female, aged in the early fifties. She has a bachelor's degree and works as a teacher in a government school located in Kuching. Excerpts 48-51 show NMP20's Facebook posts, where Iban was solely used for messages aimed at Iban speakers, while Standard Malay was mainly used for messages related to formal matters like school and work.

NMP21 is an Iban male in his early fifties. He has a master's degree and works as a branch manager in a bank located in Kuching. Excerpts 52-54 show NMP21's Facebook posts, where English was solely used.

NMP22 is an Iban male, aged in his mid-twenties, who has recently graduated from a public university. NMP22 is also a vlogger who documents his daily activities on Facebook. Excerpts 55-58 show NMP22's Facebook posts, where English was solely used.

Excerpt 45

Grieving the loss of a loved one:

> I have no new stories to share. This year it juz plain sorrow and pain (posted on 5th June 2022)
>
> My heart and my soul bleed at losing you. PLS dear God, Grant me the strength and the wisdom to go thru this journey the way your blessed mother did. I keep trusting in your plans for me, even though life doesn't make sense at this very moment. (posted on 23 July 2022)

Excerpt 46

Celebrating the friendship of mixed-race friends:

> The Good Company. That's what friends are for. (posted on 27th August 2022)

Excerpt 47

Celebrating the friendship of an Iban friend (posted on 2 September 2022):

> NMP18: 50+ yrs of *ngeluit nyangkul nyungkit numbuk together. Ini baru makan minum sama, cari apek sama, apek* all go to heaven *pan sama*.

(50+ years of toiling together. This is the real eating and drinking together, looking for husbands together, now all husbands go to heaven together too.)

NMP19: *Tipu dis FB ahhhh.* More than 13 yrs friendship *tua ok*!!!!

(This FB is bluffing ahhh. We have more than 13 years of friendship, ok!!)

In Excerpts 45-47, the topics centred on grieving for a loved one, celebrating the friendship of mixed-racial friends, and celebrating the friendship of an Iban friend. In the first topic (grieving for a loved one), English was mostly used by NMP18 in her messages as she mourned the loss of her beloved husband, who recently passed on. Her message was targeted to the general audience on her FB post, who consist of multi-ethnic friends and acquaintances. In the second topic (celebrating the friendship of multi-ethnic friends), NMP18 used solely English, denoting that the message was not conveyed exclusively to her Iban audience. However, in the third message, NMP18 used English along with code-mixing of Iban ("*ngeluit nyangkul nyungkit numbuk*" – these Iban terms are idiomatic expressions referring to one's hard labour over the years) and Standard Malay ("*Ini baru makan minum sama, cari ahpek sama sama…*" – "This is the real eating and drinking together, looking for husband together…") in her Facebook post when addressing her Iban friend, NMP19. NMP18 and NMP19 used English, which was code-mixed with Iban ("*tua*" – "us") and Standard Malay ("*tipu*" – "bluff*"*). It was apparent that English was the main language used in NMP18's Facebook posts because her audience on social media is not confined to the Iban community.

Excerpt 48

Topic 1: Gawai greetings (posted on 31 May 2022)

Meri Selamat Hari Gawai ngagai semua kami sebilik, kaban belayan enggau bala pangan. Besampika Tuhan merkat kitai belama. Besampi gayu guru gerai nyamai betuah belimpah lantang senang nguan menua. Oooha!!

(Happy Gawai to all family members, relatives, and friends. Pray that God bless us always. Pray for longevity, good health, and prosperity. *Oooha*!!)

Excerpt 49

Topic 2: Family gathering (posted on 10 July 2022)

Puji Tuhan. Ngerami bala anak enggau anak menyadi ti udah mujur graduate *serta bulih* degree*. Besampika Tuhan terus meri pemujur enggau pengelantang dalam pengidup sida. Besampi dalam nama Tuhan Jesus Kristus.* Amen.

(Praise be to God. Celebrating our son and brother's son who have graduated and obtained their degree. Pray that God will continue to bless them in life. Pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.)

Excerpt 50

Topic 3: SPM results (posted on 16 June 2022)

Tahniah buat anak-anak murid yang memperoleh keputusan SPM hari ini. Semoga terus berjaya. Cikgu tumpang gembira.

(Congratulations to the students who got their SPM results today. Pray for your continuous success. I am happy too.)

Excerpt 51

Topic 4: Annual School Sports (posted on 12 August 2022)

Kejohanan Sukan Tahunan 2022 SMKBL- 10-12.8.2022. Tahun ni bertugas sebagai penjaga masa.

(Annual Sports Tournament 2022 SMKBL – 10-12.8.2022. This year on duty as a timekeeper.)

In Excerpts 48-51, the topics covered are *Gawai* greetings, family gatherings, SPM results, and annual school sports. In Excerpts 48-49, Iban was solely used in NMP20's Facebook posts, in which the messages (*Gawai* greetings and family gatherings) were targeted to her Iban family members, relatives, and friends. As *Gawai* is celebrated by the Iban people in Sarawak, Iban was used exclusively in NMP20's post to convey the greeting to her Iban family members, friends, and relatives for the festive season. Iban was also used to address the family members in the second topic, which suggests that they are composed of Iban speakers. Meanwhile, in Excerpts 50-51, Standard Malay was used instead when NMP20 posted a congratulatory message to her students and an announcement of her school's annual sports event. Since the messages relate to formal matters concerning school and work, Standard Malay was solely used. There was borrowing from English in the second topic ("graduate" and "degree"), which may account for the missing terms in Iban. Iban speakers normally borrow from other languages, such as English, in order to convey meanings in their messages to others.

Excerpt 52

Topic 1: Meeting Friends (posted on 6 June 2022)

Bintangor-Sibu-Kanowit-Melugu – catching up with families and relatives after a 2-year hiatus.

Excerpt 53

Topic 2: Vacation (posted on 25 April 2022)

After 2 years of vacation-starved, this is what solo travelling looks like post-pandemic. The tiny and microscopic Covid-19 has put the world terribly fragile state; however, this doesn't put our *bejalai* culture to a complete stop under the new normal. We thrive.

Excerpt 54

Topic 3: Motivational Talk (posted on 17 March 2022)

No brouhaha on what you're doing until it's done. What you need is clarity, execute well, and follow on course until success (focus).

In Excerpt 52-54, the topics covered are meeting friends, vacations, and motivational talk. English was mainly used by NMP21 to address the public audience. Despite being an Iban, NMP21 used English in most of his Facebook posts, which suggests that he is reaching out to a wider audience, who may not be literate in Iban. It was interesting to note that in the second topic (vacation), the Iban term "*bejalai*" was used. This Iban term is a cherished custom in the Iban community that signifies the rite of passage for the Iban individuals,

especially the male members. In the custom, it is expected that "particularly young [Iban] men--should periodically leave their long-house and venture out into the world to seek their fortunes. These journeys, or *bejalai*, frequently last several years on end, and often extend to the most remote corner of Borneo, and even Malaya and the islands of Indonesia. They have two main aims: the acquisition of valuable property and social prestige" (Freeman 1970:24, as cited in Langub, 2011). NMP21's use of the Iban term may signify his pride in sharing this cultural term, which has been made popular by the Discovery Channel in a six-part television series titled "Surviving Borneo", in which Henry Golding was the host who popularised the term "*bejalai*". Golding himself is half Iban from his mother's side and half British from his father's side.

Excerpt 55

> Topic 1: Mulu Adventure (posted on 7 May 2022)
>
> Mulu Adventure | Day 1: Lang Cave
>
> Right after visiting Deer Cave, we entered Lang Cave, which is just right next to it. It's a small cave compared to Deer Cave, but the best thing about this cave is the stalactite formation. Each has its own unique shape. One of them even looked like a jellyfish. For me, this is the most interesting cave out of all the caves we visited. Stay tuned for 2 more caves!

Excerpt 56

> Topic 2: Gawai Celebration (posted on 5 June 2022)
>
> Gawai Day 1 at Sebangki Panjai, Lubok Antu.
>
> On the first day of Gawai, it's a normal culture to visit each other's house, or room in this case, since it's a longhouse. For our longhouse, as we have

too many rooms, we split into 3 different groups. That means, if we have groups A, B, and C, group B and C would be visiting group A first. Therefore, group A had to prepare all the food. Once they're done, group A and C will visit group B, and then you should know the last sequence. But our longhouse didn't simply use A, B, and C. Our groups are named Pulau Nyabung, Empirah, and Bukit Rua. Panjai.

Excerpt 57

Topic 3: Sebako Waterfall (posted on 18 September 2022)

Sebako Waterfall (Sematan/Lundu).

One of the best waterfalls I've ever seen because it has multiple tiers of waterfalls (12 or 13 tiers? Correct me in the comments). We only managed to visit up to tier 7 due to time and weather constraints. But still, the view there was SPECTACULAR. The hike only took us 2 hours (slow pace). It was difficult in the beginning because there are flights of stairs in which they call "*Tangga Penyesalan*".

Excerpt 58

Topic 4: Miri Crocodile Farm (posted on 18 March 2022)

Engka bisi ke bedau meda vlog tu. Nah.

(Maybe some have not seen this vlog yet. There.)

In Excerpts 55-58, the topics covered multiple subjects, such as Mulu Adventure, Gawai Celebration, Sebako Waterfall, and Miri Crocodile Farm. For all topics, except for Topic 4 (Miri Crocodile Farm) in Excerpt 58, English was solely used by NMP22 in his Facebook posts. Similarly, like most Iban youngsters today, English is the preferred language for social media posts as it is widely understood by the global audience, who may

not be intelligible in Malay or English. Furthermore, the use of English stretches out to more readers, which will generate likes and comments on their posts. Meanwhile, in Excerpt 58, the Facebook message was exclusively aimed at NMP22's Iban readers or Facebook followers, who enquired about Miri Crocodile Farm. Undoubtedly, English is the language of social media communication with the audience that goes beyond the Iban community.

4.6.1.3.2.4 Language Use for Watching YouTube Content in a Non-Iban-Dominant Area (Kuching)

This section reports the language use for watching YouTube content in a non-Iban-dominant area located in Kuching, Sarawak. NMP23 is an Iban male, in his early twenties, who has recently graduated from a public university. When watching YouTube content, such as movies, NMP23 preferred English movies, such as Batman, Top Gun, American Sniper, and The Avengers. Besides, NMP23 also watched YouTube motivational talks in English, such as TED Talks. The YouTube motivational talks, where TED stands for technology, entertainment, and design, are public speaking presentations that are dedicated to researching and sharing knowledge perceived as important and relevant via short talks and presentations, aimed at informing and educating audiences worldwide. Figures 4.18 to 4.19 show samples of NMP23's favourite YouTube content, which is solely in English and includes TED Talks from the YouTube Channel.

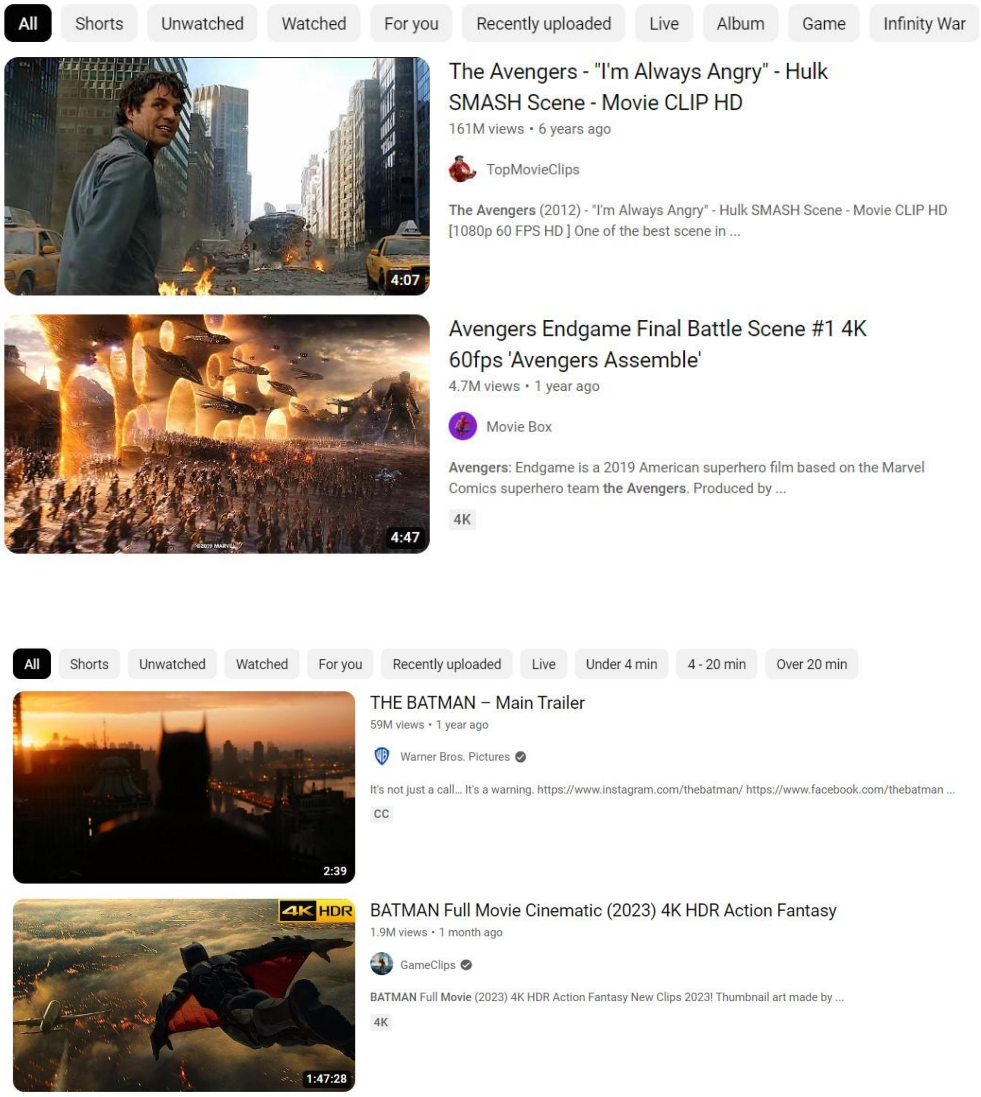


Figure 4.18: English Movies on YouTube

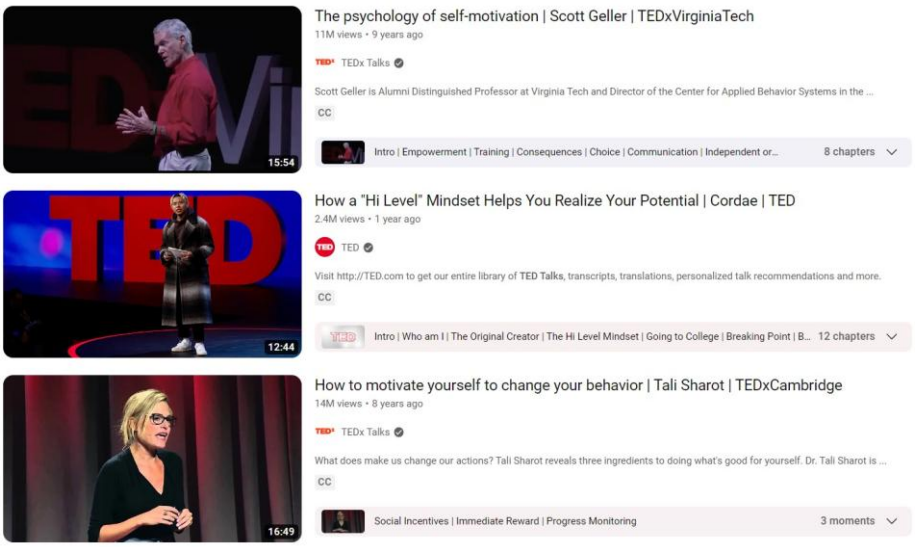


Figure 4.19: Motivational Talks on YouTube

NMP23 used mainly English as the medium for watching YouTube content based on the preferences. These days, it is common for the Iban youngsters who reside in the cities (such as Kuching) to use English when watching YouTube content. Despite being an Iban, NMP23 hardly used the ethnic language, which is probably due to a lack of interest in watching YouTube content in Iban. Furthermore, the lack of YouTube content in Iban that offers quality movies and motivational talks may further discourage NMP23.

4.6.1.3.2.5 Language Use in Writing SMS or WhatsApp Texts in Non-Iban-Dominant Areas (Kuching and Samarahan)

This section presents the findings on language use in writing WhatsApp texts that involved eight participants from two non-Iban-dominant areas located in Kuching and Samarahan, Sarawak: NMP24, NMP25, NMP26, NMP27, NMP28, NMP29, NMP30, and NMP31.

NMP24, NMP25, NMP26, and NMP27 are university mates from a public university. Both NMP24 and NMP25 are Iban females, aged in their mid-forties and holding bachelor's degrees in their respective fields. NMP26 is a Bidayuh female, in her mid-forties, who also has a bachelor's degree, while NMP27 is a Kayan female, aged in her early fifties, with a PhD degree. NMP24 works as a health inspector at a government hospital located in Kuching. NMP25 and NMP26 are school teachers at government secondary schools located in Kuching, while NMP27 is a senior officer at a museum in Kuching. Excerpt 59 shows their conversation, carried out mainly in Sarawak Malay.

Meanwhile, NMP28, NMP29, NMP30, and NMP31 are also university mates from a public university in Malaysia. NMP28 is a female of mixed Iban and Bidayuh parentage, aged in her late forties. She has a master's degree and works as a teacher at a public secondary school in Siburan. Both NMP29 and NMP31 are Iban females, aged in their late forties, with bachelor's degrees from their respective fields. Both of them are teachers at public secondary schools in Kuching. NMP30 is a female of mixed Iban and Orang Ulu parentage, aged in her early fifties. NMP30 holds a PhD degree and works as a senior lecturer at a public university in Samarahan. Excerpt 60 shows their conversational exchanges, which were carried out mainly in Iban.

Excerpt 59

NMP24: *Berjumpa di AKM*.

(Met at AKM.)

NMP26: *Semua gojes-gojes*.

(All are gorgeous.)

NMP25: *Macam baru melapor di UKM ... muda-muda semua*.

(It's like you just reported at UKM … all look so young.)

NMP26: *Aok, mukanya 3 semua muda-muda ooo, apakah rahsianya ooo?*

(All three faces look so young ooo, what is the secret ooo?)

NMP25: *Sama laa.. you pun sama… muda-muda semua.. syukur semua sihat-sihat dalam lindungan Tuhan.*

(It's the same .. you are the same too … all are so young .. thankfully all are healthy in God's protection.)

NMP24: *Hampir mauk bersila buka cerita tek.*

(I almost wanted to sit cross-legged to start the story.)

NMP25: *Kaki manok.. leher manok kenak reunion ilak aok lu… kah kahh..*

(Chicken feet, chicken necks for reunion okay dear … kah kahh..)

NMP24: *Um riya figure jak Grace, yang penting ati mauk muda selalu. Iboh stress and elak banyak ngerepak.* Collagen *tinggi ya bagus pakey awet muda, lu.*

(Um that day was just a figure, Grace. The important thing is that the heart must always feel young. Don't get stressed out, and no need to rant. High collagen is good for staying young, dear.)

Excerpt 60

NMP28: *Bisi urang cuba* akses account *aku. Hati2 semua.*

(Someone tried to access my account. Be careful, everyone.)

NMP29: *Apuuu…*

(Apuuu ….)

NMP28: *Ni alah kitai ka ngeluar semua gaji tiap kali hari gaji nehhh. Bank maya tu semua enda ulih arap.*

(We can't afford to take out all the salary every payday. Today's banks are all hopeless.)

NMP29: *Kawan aku Cigu Julia lenyau 1200* last month *sulu ... akaii .... sakit hati aok .. aku ngau ia ngaga* report polis.. *RHB. Bank ngasuh ke balai ... balai ngasuh ke bank .... ba Sg Maong dia .. Bahaya.*

(My friend Teacher Julia lost 1200 last month, … ouch … such a headache … I accompanied her to do the police report.. RHB. The bank told her to go to the police station … the police station told her to go to the bank … at Sg Maong there.. Dangerous.)

NMP28: *Apuuhh .. RHB nya bank gaji aku. Maybank tu kena bejual beli. Dua-dua enda selamat. CIMB paling bahaya.*

(*Apuuhh*… RHB is my bank. Maybank is for my online transactions. Neither is safe. CIMB is the most dangerous.)

NMP29: *Aduuhh.. bahaya arr.. Tapi macam bisi kaitan ngau orang dalam ajak oo.*

(Ouch … so dangerous .. But it seems to have something to do with the inside people.)

NMP28: *Memang.*

(Indeed.)

NMP29: *Enda patut. Tapi bank mati-mati madah* scammer...

(No way. But the bank strongly says it's the scammer.)

NMP30: My colleague *hilang* RM15,000.00 recently *laban* scammer. Kad kredit *aku kala diguna ba* US *tang duit* less than RM100. MBB refunded the money.

(My colleague lost RM15,000.00 recently because of the scammer. My credit card had been used in the US, but the money was less than RM100. MBB refunded the money.)

NMP31: *Anang ngena segala macam* Apps banking *di* phone... CIMBClicks Apps, M2U Apps, etc., *enti ka ngaga* transaction *ngena* browser ja, type url banking. *Anang ngena segala macam* shortcut Apps *nya.*

(Don't use those phone banking Apps .. CIMBClicks Apps, M2U Apps, etc., if you want to do any transaction, only use the browser, type the URL banking. Don't use those shortcut Apps.)

NMP29: Thanks for sharing, sis.

In Excerpt 59, the topic centres on meeting old friends. Although there were two attempts made by NMP24 and NMP25 to use Iban within the conversations, the others did not respond in Iban but maintained using Sarawak Malay instead throughout the conversations. Those who are not Iban may understand the Iban sentences; however, they deliberately replied in Sarawak Malay. This shows the dominance of Sarawak Malay for inter-ethnic communication, even though two of the friends are Iban. This also signifies that despite being the language spoken by the biggest ethnic group in Sarawak, it is the least preferred in conversations involving different ethnic speakers, especially in non-Iban-dominant areas, such as Kuching. Sarawak Malay dominated the four friends' conversational exchanges in writing their WhatsApp texts.

In Excerpt 60, the WhatsApp messages were about bank scammers. Even though Iban was the main language in the conversations, there were several borrowings from English and Malay. English words, namely, "akses account", "last month", "report polis",

"scammer", "my colleagues", "recently", "less than", "refunded the money", "phone", "transaction", "browser", "type url banking", and "shortcut" were embedded among the Iban sentences throughout the conversations. There are many financial and technical terms that are not available in Iban. Nevertheless, the adoption of English terms seems to facilitate the conversations among the speakers. In addition, a few Malay words, such as "*hilang*", and "*kad kredit*", which refer to "lost" and "credit card" in English, respectively, were also used to convey meanings on the related topic. Nevertheless, despite the borrowing from English and Malay, the main language of the conversation among the four Iban friends is Iban. There was also code-switching to English when NMP29 uttered "Thanks for sharing, sis.", which shows English was used as part of the means for expressing one's gratitude to others. Nevertheless, when Iban speakers come together in a setting, they resort to their ethnic language, which signifies their solidarity and sense of belonging to the ethnic group.

4.6.1.3.3 Conclusion for Observed Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains from Non-Participant Observations

Figure 4.20 summarises the language used by the Iban participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in work emails, Internet searches, writing texts in social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok), and sending messages via SMS or WhatsApp. There are several conclusions reached based on the analysis of the observation data.

Firstly, English is undoubtedly the most preferred language for social media and new media domains. It is prevalent for searching and reading Internet information because of its status as a global language. The Iban participants used mainly English when they accessed the online content. This may be due to the accessibility of English-language websites and

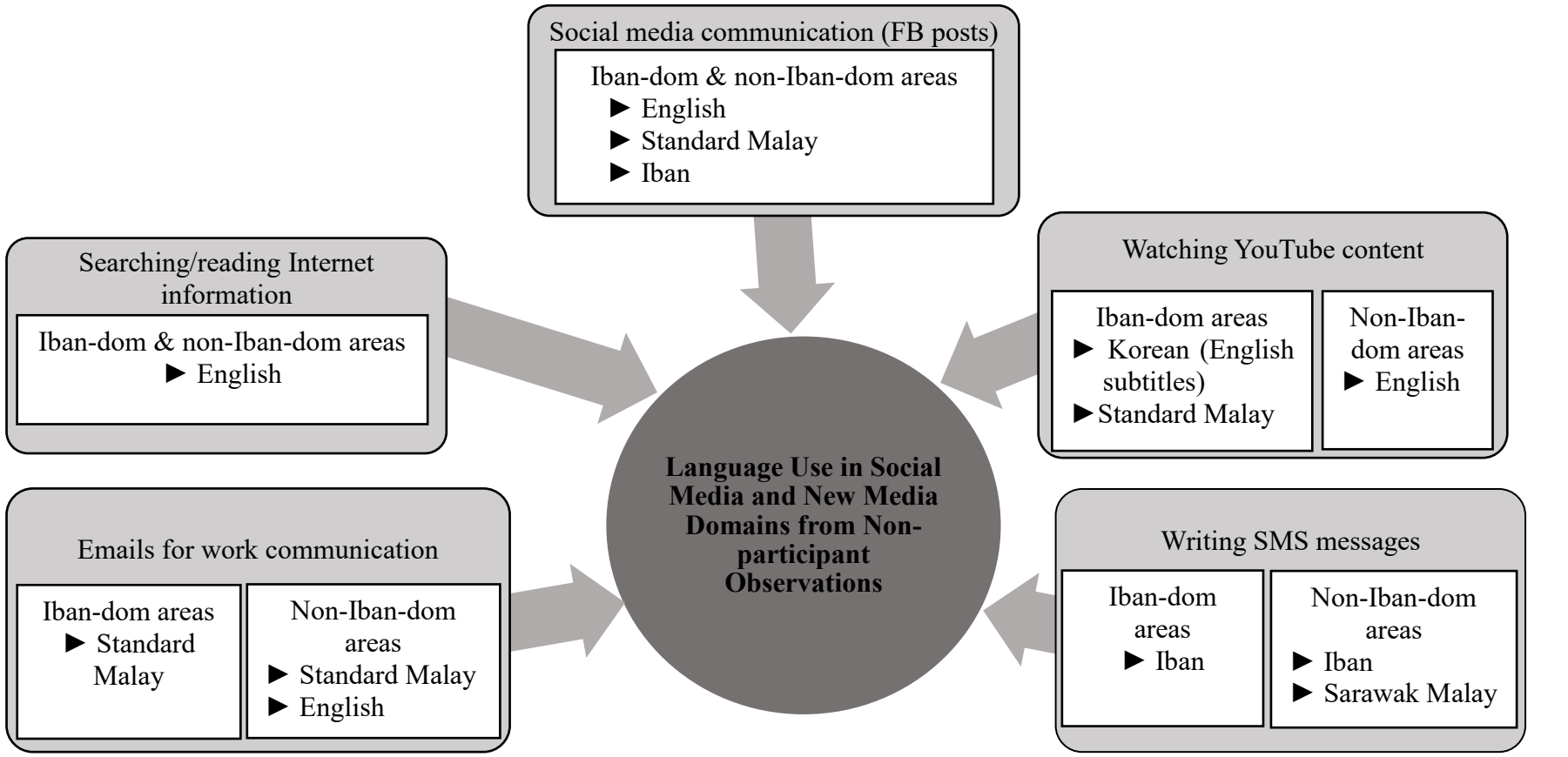
global reach platforms, such as Al Jazeera, Timeline, and VICE news. Furthermore, using English enables the participants to engage in inter-ethnic communication and reach a wider audience on their social media platform (Facebook). In this domain category, Iban is hardly used at all.

Secondly, Iban still dominates personal communication, especially in Iban-dominant areas. In the WhatsApp texts involving longhouse friends (who are also neighbours), the participants mainly used Iban when discussing the day's topics in their group chats. This reveals the importance of Iban in preserving the community's cultural identity and communication. When the Iban people come in contact with each other, the ethnic language is mainly used in conversations.

Finally, Standard Malay is the main language used in school-related matters in Iban-dominant areas. This shows that Standard Malay functions as the main language for delivering official communication and educational matters related to the school system. However, in non-Iban-dominant areas, English and Standard Malay are mostly used for communicating work-related concerns. English is exclusively used in government departments where English is the medium of instruction (e.g., the university's English Language department), while the use of Standard Malay is aimed at communicating with the general staff. The Iban usage is absent in this domain.

In general, the findings reveal that the influence of several variables (the accessibility of Internet resources, the requirement for inter-ethnic communication, and the need for preserving cultural identity) have impacted language use in social media and new media domains. The absence of Iban in most new media domains (searching/reading the Internet

information, writing emails for work communication, and watching YouTube content) indicates that English and Standard Malay may replace Iban in the future.



Note: dom = dominant

Figure 4.20: Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains from Non-Participant Observations

4.7 Comparisons of Language Use from the Questionnaire and Observational Data

The following section presents the comparisons of language use based on the questionnaire and observational data.

4.7.1 Language Use in the Family Domains based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Table 4.19 presents the data on the family domains from the online questionnaire and non-participant observation results between the Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak. Several similarities and differences were obtained from the analysis.

Table 4.19: Language Use in the Family Domains based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Language Use		Questionnaire Data	Observational Data
Family Domains	Parents	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ➢ Sarawak Malay (in mixed family)
	Spouses	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban (mixed with Standard Malay and English)
	Children	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Siblings	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ➢ Sarawak Malay (in mixed family) ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Grandparents	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban
	Relatives	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English

Note: dom = dominant

As shown in Table 4.19, in the family domains, both results from the perceived language use (questionnaire results) and observed language use (non-participant observation results) revealed that Iban was predominantly used in most of the domains within the family unit, especially in Iban-dominant areas. This implies that Iban is still profoundly used in family communications regardless of the Iban locality in Sarawak, which denotes strong intergenerational language transmission. Iban is passed down from one generation to another, that is, from parents or grandparents to the children generation, which could be influenced by the respondents' positive language attitudes towards Iban and their language proficiency. This also shows that Iban is extensively preserved within the Iban speech community, where the people are the majority, reflecting the respondents' effort to preserve their mother tongue and maintain social unity among family members.

On the other hand, there are discrepancies in the findings from the observed language use in non-Iban-dominant areas. While Iban was mainly used among family members in Iban-dominant areas, the observation results revealed that English was predominantly used among children, siblings, and relatives (who were composed of young Iban respondents) in non-Iban-dominant areas, as shown in Excerpt 13:

Excerpt 13

FP27: Watch out for the tank, ok. Let me know if it's full. Alright, open the tap.
FP28: You want me to open full? The tank looks full.
FP27: Ya, there's another tank, wait… ok, you can turn it off now.
FP28: Ok
FP27: Ok, good job. Get the mop, floor is wet.
FP28: Where's the mop?
FP27: In the toilet *lah*.

In Excerpt 13, this conversation between two brothers, who are both Iban, FP27 and FP28, demonstrates a notable use of English as the main language of interaction, despite their Iban background. Conducted in a casual domestic context, the dialogue revolves around everyday household tasks involving water tanks and cleaning. Their exchange is largely in English, with only a few inserted Iban discourse particles like "*lah*," reflecting a bilingual speech pattern common in urban or non-Iban-dominant settings. The siblings' preference for English over Iban in this routine communication suggests the strong influence of their surrounding environment, likely urban or mixed-language, and possibly education or media exposure, which encourages the gradual shift towards English use even within family interactions.

In another instance, Excerpt 15 also shows the use of English over Iban by two young Iban speakers.

Excerpt 15

FP31: You must practise at least once a week. Not easy to balance.

FP32: Yeah, some of my friends must balance the training because they have to work. I wanted to do this too, but I have no time yet.

FP31: That's ok, *akka*. Take it easy.

FP32: Ha… yeah, will adjust soon.

FP31: This boxing at first is very troubling. But you'll get used to it over time.

FP32: Ya, I asked my other friends because I wanted to go boxing too. Most of them told me to go to the gym, so I have to follow the majority *la*.

In Excerpt 15, this conversation between two young Iban speakers, FP31 and FP32, illustrates their predominant use of English despite their Iban heritage. Conducted in a residential setting in Kuching, a non-Iban-dominant area, their interaction reveals English as the medium of daily communication between close relatives. Both participants, educated with bachelor's degrees, comfortably switch to English, reflecting its role as a lingua franca within their social context. Notably, the bulk of their exchange focuses on topics like balancing boxing training and work commitments, expressed primarily in English. This tendency highlights the influence of urban and educational environments on language preference among young Iban speakers, contributing to a gradual shift away from exclusive use of their indigenous language.

The findings revealed that a broader range of language use was captured from the observation results, whereby English is dominating the linguistic repertoire of the Iban youngsters. The observed language use among these young Iban, with the age range of 15-28 years old, from the non-participant observations, denotes a more nuanced insight into language preference that highlights the dominance of English in their daily conversations. Nowadays, it is common to see English spoken at home among modern Iban families who have migrated from their Iban hinterland and settled in the cities, such as Kuching and Samarahan. It is common to observe Iban youngsters speaking in English with one another as they have been exposed to the language since childhood. Furthermore, for family communication, the younger Iban are increasingly using English rather than Iban, which could be due to several factors, namely, language shift, influence in education, the dominance of English within the larger communities, and loss of linguistic diversity. In order to communicate with their families, some urban Iban youngsters in mixed marriages have acquired English. This is further emphasised by the influence of education, where written

language and formal instruction have contributed to the expansion of Iban youngsters' local knowledge and use of dominant languages. According to Nadarajan and Balan (2017), nearly 67% of Iban youth respondents were unable to understand or utilise Iban terms, indicating a potential loss of useful knowledge. Moreover, the Iban and nearby communities' linguistic and cultural exchanges have led to the Iban youngsters' dynamic language use, as evidenced by their adoption of borrowed phrases from English and Malay to express regret (Lau & Runggol, 2023). Looking at the current trend now, younger Iban generations are more prone to use English in their speech as the language has dominated their linguistic repertoire since they were exposed to it at a young age; thus, this influences their choice of language. Nadarajan and Balan (2017) further argued that the languages of Sarawak in Borneo, such as Kelabit, Kayan, Kenyah, Melanau, and Bidayuh, are at risk in light of the rapid loss of linguistic diversity. Regional languages and languages of wider communication are shrinking in usage as English (the world language) and Standard Malay (the national language) become more functional and dominant. In this case, the Iban language is not spared as well.

While younger Iban respondents in their mid-thirties and below tend to use English more frequently in their everyday conversations in this study, the respondents in their mid-thirties and above were found to communicate with each other using Iban. The observed language use findings also showed a preference for Sarawak Malay among family members in Iban-dominant areas. This particular linguistic phenomenon was observed when different ethnic groups co-exist in a family unit, such as in mixed families, where the speakers interchangeably code-switch and code-mix between Iban and Sarawak Malay in order to convey meanings in the conversations. Because of the linguistic dynamics caused by the sociolinguistic setting of Sarawak, the Iban people speak Sarawak Malay in family

communication. Although Iban is the most common language in the family, friendship, and religious domains, its use is dwindling outside of the family domain as English and Malay become more prevalent in communications between spouses and children (Metom et al., 2021; Ting et al., 2020). The use of code-switching and code-mixing between Iban and Sarawak Malay in mixed families is apparent where several ethnic groups live side by side, such as in Iban-dominant areas. This phenomenon reflects how language use can adapt to different social circumstances and the challenges of communicating across different family units in Sarawak.

In general, the comparison between the questionnaire results and non-participant observations provides a deeper understanding of the perceived and observed language use among the Iban speakers in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas within the family domains. While Iban maintains its dominance in most of the family domains, especially in Iban-dominant areas, English seems to infiltrate the family unit in conversations involving the younger Iban generations, while Sarawak Malay is used alongside Iban in mixed families in non-Iban-dominant areas.

4.7.2 Language Use Outside Home Domains based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Table 4.20 presents a comparison of results between perceived language use and observed language use outside home domains. There are several similarities and differences that can be derived from the analysis.

Table 4.20: Language Use Outside Home Domains based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Language use		Questionnaire Data	Observational Data
Outside Home Domains	Neighbours	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Standard Malay
	Friends	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Sarawak Malay ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ➢ English
	Classmates	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Sarawak Malay	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Workmates	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Sarawak Malay	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English ➢ Standard Malay
	For prayers	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Government premises	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Standard Malay	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ➢ Standard Malay ➢ Sarawak Malay
	Shops / Markets	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Sarawak Malay	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English ➢ Sarawak Malay

Note: dom = dominant

Based on Table 4.20, the results from both the questionnaire and non-participant observations showed reduced use of Iban in several domains outside the home setting. Nevertheless, Iban was mainly used in communications among friends, classmates, workmates, and for prayers in both findings. It is noted that for prayers, the focus was on prayers and religious services in private or public settings (e.g., church masses/services, social gatherings, funerals, etc.).

The results from the observed language use indicated an assortment of other languages in the respondents' communications. Language use in social and formal interactions outside the home domains from the respondents' self-reports in Iban-dominant areas showed the dominance of Iban in most of the domains, namely, neighbours, friends, classmates, workmates, and prayers. However, in areas less populated by the Iban community, Iban was used to a lesser extent as other languages came into prominence. English seemed to invade communications in domains like friends, classmates, workmates, prayers, and at the shops. Furthermore, in non-Iban-dominant areas, Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were also occasionally used for interactions among neighbours, workmates, as well as government premises and shops/markets. These findings suggest that even though Iban maintains its dominance as the main language for formal and social interactions in several domains, English, Standard Malay, and Sarawak Malay have shown their significant presence in communications outside the home settings. In areas less populated by the Iban people, the use of these languages is more appropriate as they provide the means for inter-ethnic communication, where the use of Iban may be unintelligible to non-Iban speakers. Consequently, this could eventually result in these languages assuming the Iban domains currently occupied by Iban speakers.

The results may suggest several reasons for the common use of Standard Malay, Sarawak Malay, and English when the Iban respondents interact with others outside of the home domains, especially in non-Iban-dominant areas. One of the reasons is linguistic integration. Although Iban is a language spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, using Standard Malay, Sarawak Malay, and English provides the means for integrating the diverse ethnic groups. This enables multi-ethnic people to effectively communicate with a wider audience, in which Iban may be unintelligible to others outside the Iban community.

Furthermore, due to Sarawak's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual territory with a varied range of cultures and ethnicities, these languages assist these disparate speech communities to interact with each other. Another reason for preferring to use English and Malay in communication is due to their prestigious status. In Sarawak, these two languages are widely used in official and public spheres as they are the official languages. According to Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg, the Premier of Sarawak, the state has the advantage of having Malay and English as official languages, enabling Sarawak to stay ahead in terms of people's ability to interact in both languages (Malay Mail, 2023). In addition, the educational emphasis on English in teaching Science and Mathematics is also another reason for using English outside the home domains. The use of English for pedagogical instruction in the two subjects aims to improve students' language skills in preparation for future employment prospects. This results in English being more prevalent in social interactions because of the emphasis on education. This brings us to the final reason for the preference of the dominant languages in interactions – the economically and politically powerful languages of Malay and English. As these languages are economically and politically powerful, this poses a threat to indigenous languages, which has caused a change in the language use patterns of Malaysia's minority groups, including the Iban (Metom et al., 2021). The Malay languages enjoy higher institutional support than other indigenous languages, as there are more Malay people in Malaysia's ruling government than there are people from other ethnic groups. The Malay variant found in the region is given life by the Malay people's political dominance. This benefit is further enhanced by the promotion of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language of Malaysia through language-in-education planning. Following the Federation of Malaya's 1957 independence from the British, Bahasa Malaysia was established as the official national language. Henceforth, as Bahasa Malaysia is taught in schools, it has become a shared

language among the multi-ethnic communities in Sarawak (Ting, 2012). Thus, the Iban language is giving way to English and Malay in communications outside the home domains.

In a nutshell, while Iban still maintains its dominance in a few domains, there is the presence of other languages, namely, English, Sarawak Malay, and Standard Malay, in communications outside the home setting during non-participant observations. English and Malay are becoming more and more influential, particularly in multi-ethnic settings where inter-ethnic communication is crucial. This pattern draws attention to how Sarawak's linguistic environment is changing and how intricate interactions between language, culture, education, and sociopolitical variables influence the language use of the Iban respondents.

4.7.3 Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains Based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Table 4.21 presents the data on social media and new media domains with regards to perceived language used based on the questionnaire results and observed language use based on non-participant observations between the Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak. Several similarities and differences were obtained from the analysis.

Table 4.21: Language Use in Social Media and New Media Domains based on Questionnaire and Observational Data

Language Use		Questionnaire Data	Observational Data
New Media Domains	Work emails	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English	❖ Iban-dom-areas ➢ Standard Malay ❖ Non-Iban-dominant areas ➢ Standard Malay ➢ English
	Searching/reading Internet information	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Social media communication	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English ➢ Iban ➢ Standard Malay
	Watching YouTube content	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English	❖ Iban-dominant areas ➢ Korean (Eng. subtitles) ➢ Standard Malay ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ English
	Writing texts for SMS or WhatsApp	❖ Iban-dom & non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban	❖ Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ❖ Non-Iban-dom areas ➢ Iban ➢ Sarawak Malay

Note: dom = dominant

In social media and new media domains, both findings from the perceived language use and observed language use revealed the dominance of English in all the domains, except for writing texts in WhatsApp. These domains comprise the use of English for writing work emails, searching or reading Internet information, communicating on social media (Facebook), and watching YouTube content. This shows English strongly influences the platforms of modern communication. Being an international language for communication, English provides the essential means for personal, social, and professional growth. In fact, due to its extensive instrumental values, English is widely spoken today by local and global communities and has become the main language for communication in many aspects of human activities, such as education, social media communications, entertainment, trading,

politics, and so forth. In addition, the prevalent use of English as the main medium for communication in the new media domains enables the Iban speakers to stay updated with the latest trends, which Iban lacks in this function. Language use patterns are changing as a result of the widespread availability and popularity of social media platforms, with users favouring international languages like English over regional vernacular languages, such as Iban. English has long been the most widely used language on the Internet due to its prestige and global reach, which draws users from all over the world. English is widely used on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which is indicative of its status as a lingua franca that makes communication easier amongst people from different linguistic origins. As English is globally recognised, it is more inclusive and accessible to non-native speakers. Furthermore, social media has been instrumental in the globalisation of English, increasing its inclusivity and ease of use for non-native speakers. This 'Global English' allows users to interact with material in a widely understood language while accommodating a variety of linguistic origins (Patel et al., 2021). Nevertheless, in writing texts using WhatsApp, Iban was the main language used as reported by the respondents and as observed in the actual setting. However, for non-Iban-dominant areas, the non-participant observation findings revealed that Sarawak Malay was also used alongside the Iban language in the Iban speakers' conversational texts. Results from the observed language used also showed differences in language use, where Standard Malay was mainly used in three domains, namely, work emails, social media communication, and watching YouTube content. It is interesting to note that in Iban-dominant areas, Korean with English subtitles was also used for watching the YouTube content, which the results from the questionnaire did not capture. This indicates the significance of integrating non-participant observations with self-reported data to gain a thorough understanding of the respondents' language use patterns.

In conclusion, both results showed the strong dominance of English in social media and new media domains regardless of the Iban speakers' locality. There were differences in the language use, where Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were also captured in communication among the Iban speakers from the non-participant observation data. There was minimal use of Iban in social media and new media domains in both results, where it was only used for writing texts in WhatsApp. In comparing the results from both methods, there was more diverse language use in this domain category, which revealed the minimal need to use Iban in social media and new media domains.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the major findings from this current study.

4.8.1 Issues in the Current Ethnolinguistic Vitality of the Iban Language

This section discusses the key findings of the study. Ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban language in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak is examined with regards to the respondents' perceptions of language use and language attitudes. The following key findings will be discussed:

1) Most respondents learned Iban informally, acquired from their parents.
2) The Iban language is predominantly used at home but faces reduced transmission in non-Iban-dominant areas, especially in interactions involving younger Iban generations.
3) Iban is used to a lesser extent in communication with other ethnic groups (Malay, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Chinese, etc.) despite being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak.

4) Iban is the least used language for social and professional interactions in social media and new media domains, in which English emerges as the primary language for communication.

5) Locality plays a significant influence on language use and attitudes within the Iban community, particularly emphasising the effect on intergenerational language transmission, religious practices, and communication in various social contexts.

4.8.1.1 Informal Learning of Iban in Sarawak

The first key finding of this study is that most Iban people in Sarawak acquire the ethnic language mainly through informal learning from their parents. According to Igiri et al. (2020), informal language acquisition refers to the unstructured and often unconscious process through which individuals learn language, particularly their first language, without deliberate instruction. This type of learning occurs naturally through immersion in a language-rich environment, such as interacting with family, peers, and through daily experiences. Children, for example, acquire their first language by being exposed to it constantly in their home and community, internalising linguistic norms, accents, and vocabulary without formal lessons. Informal language acquisition involves implicit learning that happens unconsciously through natural exposure to language in real-life contexts, where learners are motivated by necessity or social interactions and continuously receive input.

In contrast, formal language education is characterised by systematically designed curricula that outline specific learning goals and sequencing, which facilitate progressive acquisition of language knowledge and skills. Formal programs include clear objectives and assessment criteria aligned with these goals (Ellis, 1994). In addition, formal instruction

involves trained teachers who play a crucial role by providing explicit teaching, corrective feedback, and scaffolding to help learners master complex linguistic forms. Teacher feedback in classrooms promotes deeper processing and aids error correction (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Formal language education typically occurs in institutional settings such as schools or language institutes and makes use of textbooks, multimedia, and digital tools to facilitate learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Such environments offer controlled opportunities for practice and interaction within structured lessons.

In this study, the results in a low level of formal Iban language education in Sarawak schools. Informal learning of the Iban language at home lacks the crucial formal attributes of language acquisition, especially in written skills in Iban, which may pose future predicaments for Iban's vitality. Fewer and fewer Iban parents enrol their children to learn the language formally in school in these modern times, which should be seen as a red flag for Iban's vitality. Table 4.22 shows the declining enrolment of Iban students who take the Iban subject in school (Metom & Ting, 2024) (note: data are not available for 2011 and 2012; the 2023 data were obtained via personal communication from Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sarawak on 22 November 2023).

Table 4.22: Statistics on the Number of Iban Students and Teachers

Level	Statistics	2011	2012	2023
Primary School	Total Number of Schools	641	693	693
	Total Number of Classes	-	-	5,139
	Total Number of Students	23,000	48,967	67,308
	Total Number of Teachers	-	1,650	2,662
	Total Number of Teachers with the Iban Language Option	-	-	352
Secondary School	Total Number of Schools	-	95	83
	Total Number of Classes	-	-	1,320
	Total Number of Students	32,000	22,512	20,070
	Total Number of Teachers	-	291	502
	Total Number of Teachers with the Iban Language Option	-	-	79

According to the statistics generated by Sarawak's education department (Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Sarawak), in 2023, out of 67,308 students, only 20,070 students who took Iban as a subject in primary school continued with Iban in secondary school, which was less than one-third of the total enrolment from the primary schools. While the number of senior schools providing Iban as a subject has decreased (from 95 in 2012 to 83 in 2023), the number of primary schools offering the subject has remained steady at 693 since 2012. In primary schools, there is a sufficient number of Iban language teachers (2,662 teachers); however, in secondary schools, there are hardly enough teachers (502 teachers). In primary school, the teacher-to-student ratio is 1:25, whereas in senior school, it is 1:40 (Metom & Ting, 2024).

The scarcity of qualified Iban teachers is one of the major obstacles to the growth and maintenance of the Iban language in the educational system. This challenge not only affects the standard of instruction given to Iban students but also gets in the way of the Iban language and culture's general promotion and sustainability. Students may find it difficult to understand difficult language concepts in the absence of trained teachers who are fluent in the language, which could jeopardise their academic achievement and native language proficiency (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). Since language is a vital component of identity and community membership, this could cause a conflict between the children and their cultural heritage. As language is the means by which customs, values, and knowledge are passed down through the generations, it is an essential part of cultural identity. The lack of qualified Iban teachers endangers the preservation of the Iban cultural legacy in addition to making it difficult to teach the language. Language erosion and a fall in the dissemination of traditional knowledge and practices are risks associated with the absence of qualified teachers who can convey language proficiency and cultural insights. The existing Iban language teachers

comprise those teachers of other subjects, namely, teachers of Malay, English, Science, Art Education, Malay Literature, Geography, Mathematics, and so forth. The teachers are those of the Iban ethnicity, who are instructed to teach the Iban language subject despite having no training in handling the subject. These assigned teachers are from various backgrounds, specialisations, and experiences. Some of the teachers only had the experience of learning the Iban language subject while studying it in school when they were students (Nor & Mahamod, 2014). In addition, teachers of the Iban subject often encounter challenges while attempting to teach literature or works like poems because they are not exposed to Iban literature. Without resources and manuals to help them teach concepts like vocabulary comprehension, teachers take the initiative on their own (Banseng et al., 2022; Sandai et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Sarawak Education Department Director Datu Dr. Azhar Ahmad (Dayak Daily, 2024) and several Iban politicians, such as Wilson Nyabong (Lim, 2021) and Munan Laja (Chua, 2023), also addressed the issue of acute shortage of trained Iban language teachers to teach the subject in schools and urged the Malaysian government to take action. Nyabong (Lim, 2021) voiced his concern about the small number of trainees in Malaysian Teachers' Training Institutes committed to teaching the Iban language at the primary and secondary levels. The Iban language subject is available as an elective at the Form 3 Examination (PT3) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) levels, but these teachers are only prepared to teach the language at the primary school level. This indicates that to maintain continuity from the primary level, there is a need for more qualified instructors to teach Iban at the secondary school level. Nyabong (Lim, 2021) also mentioned that it would be advantageous to learn how to utilise the language appropriately, even as an Iban. One may be able to learn vocabulary, grammatical rules, and lexical semantics by systematically

studying the language. According to Laja (Chua, 2023), secondary schools required 26 of these teachers, while primary schools lacked 2,100 of them. Since the Education Ministry has decided to freeze the admission of new teachers for 2022 and 2023, Laja (Chua, 2023) urged the ministry to take up this matter.

The severe lack of Iban teachers has a direct impact on the availability of Iban as a subject. Nonetheless, the state education department's figures for the 2023–2024 school year indicate that more teachers are working in elementary and secondary schools than they had anticipated. However, given the total number of teachers with the Iban language option, there might be a problem with quality. There are only 352 (or 13.2% of 2,662 teachers) in elementary school and 79 (or 15.7% of 502 instructors) in secondary school. It is possible for native Iban speakers to teach certain Iban classes without any pedagogical training (Metom & Ting, 2024).

The language policy of Malaysia heavily favours Malay and English, which adds to the scarcity of teachers for indigenous language subjects like Iban in schools (David et al., 2009; Omar & Teoh, 1994). Fewer students may enrol in Iban teacher training programmes as a result of the perceived lack of demand for Iban language teachers. It goes back to the perception that Iban has less utility value than Malay. The decreased use of Iban in Sarawak can be attributed to the widespread use of Sarawak Malay and pedagogical obstacles in encouraging students to learn the language (Umbat, 2020). In addition, Iban is a low-status language that is primarily spoken at home by family members, demonstrating its limited use in comparison to Malay and English, which are powerful languages in terms of politics and economy (McLellan, 2014).

Antau and Jamaludin (2023) mentioned in their study that among the issues students encounter while learning the language formally in school is the belief that Iban is their mother tongue. Hence, the students do not need to learn it formally as they assume they have mastered the Iban subject. Those who learn the subject in school show little interest in mastering the language. As a result, most Iban students are confused about the use of market language for appropriate Iban language usage, such as the issue of 'messaging' in Iban. For instance, words like "*enggai*" ("don't want") become "*ngai*", and "*enggau*" ("and") become "*ngau*", which are contractions of the Iban words. This market language has posed a worrisome trend among Iban students today (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). Banseng and Sandai (2017) also argued that many younger Iban generations today struggle to understand the metaphorical language contained in "*sampi*" due to the knowledgeable elders' lack of emphasis on it ("*sampi*"– translated as "mantra", is an Iban traditional poetry that belongs to the category of invocation and serves as a prayer request for support or safety). The situation becomes more critical when the population of knowledgeable and experienced elders also decreases, while increasing the difficulty of getting guidance in the arrangement of the language and rules of the "*sampi*" (Sandai, 2011). The difficulty of understanding the oral tradition makes Iban youngsters less interested in their own culture.

Specified under the Education Act, the Iban language education is an elective subject in Sarawak's primary and secondary schools (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). Despite the government policy to require the acquisition of Mother Tongue Language, which aims to improve indigenous languages, there are considerations that hinder the practicality of the policy in the country. In Singapore, Malay students in the country are required to take Malay, whereas Chinese students are required to take Chinese. In primary school, Mother Tongue Language is made a compulsory subject which is offered as a second language (Government

of Singapore, 2023). If this policy were implemented in Malaysia, this could raise the prestige of the Iban language. This would lead to an alteration in language use among the Iban in areas where they are the majority. This could also result in an increased inclination to use Iban for formal communication exchanges instead of using Standard Malay or English (Metom & Ting, 2024). However, because Iban is an indigenous language, it is difficult for the Malaysian government to mandate that Iban students study it in school. Many other indigenous languages, namely, Kelabit, Kayan, Melanau, and Selako, are not even taught in schools and lack a standard orthography. The decision to make Iban a compulsory subject will prompt debate about whether other indigenous languages should be subjected to the same regulations. If Iban were made compulsory in Sarawak's primary and secondary schools, this would also result in a significant increase in student enrolment that would possibly lead to a teacher shortage. A similar issue is found in Sabah. The debate over whether or not Kadazandusun should be made mandatory in the state has highlighted the shortage of teachers for the language (Ralon, 2010). Christina Liew, a politician from Sabah, disagreed with the idea of making Arabic calligraphy or Khat mandatory, citing the already extensive syllabus as justification (Chan, 2019). Given the current political climate, Standard Malay and English will probably continue to be the sole languages required in Malaysia's educational system. Because parents do not want more language subjects to be required of their children, the decision to study the Iban language in school or higher learning institutions is still a personal option.

The attitude of the teachers and students is another issue concerning Iban Language Education in Sarawak. Because this subject is not as prevalent as Science and Mathematics, many teachers and students dislike it. As a result, teachers frequently decline to teach this subject in school (Antau & Jamaludin, 2023). In addition, conflict of multiple languages is

also one of the challenges faced by Iban language teachers. Nor and Mahamod (2014) stated that the integration of Iban and other languages has an impact on the future course of Iban language instruction. It is challenging for the Iban students to distinguish between the official Iban language and the Iban language of the marketplace.

Furthermore, the lack of official status in Iban also contributes to the Iban people's low confidence in their ability to perform formal communication functions, which is not due to their lack of competency. The Iban language would gain prestige if the government implemented a policy mandating that all Iban students study the Iban subject in school. The status of Iban needs to be raised. Crystal (2002) stated that elevating the status and affluence of the minority group's language might effectively revitalise it by strengthening its perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the majority population. Iban now lacks prestige due to its status as an indigenous language in comparison to more powerful languages like English, which is an international language, and Malay, which is the official language of Malaysia (Ting et al., 2020).

This finding highlights the necessity for Iban language maintenance initiatives to integrate formal education, foster public and policy support, and encourage the development of written skills, building on the strong foundation of oral intergenerational transmission. Drawing from Welsh, Manx, and Cornish experiences, strong community engagement combined with institutional backing offers the best prospects for sustainable language vitality. Metom and Ting (2024) pointed out that the majority of Iban speakers continue to acquire their language informally at home via intergenerational transmission. The study involving 1204 Iban respondents found that over 93% reported fluent spoken proficiency in Iban, with 96% able to follow conversations in the language. However, the study also

highlights that written skills in Iban are weaker; about 88% could read Iban materials, and 82% could write, but 11-18% lacked literacy in Iban, posing challenges for moving the language into formal domains such as education, government, and media. Another study by Sercombe (2023) focusing on Iban in the Sri Aman Division (an area that has a large Iban population) noted that while Iban language identity remains strong, influences from dominant languages and lifestyle changes are causing shifts in some domains. Comparing the revitalisation efforts of minority languages elsewhere, namely, Welsh, Manx, and Cornish, is useful to draw parallels for Iban language maintenance.

According to Mackie (2018), research on Welsh revitalisation strategy (e.g., Cymraeg 2050) emphasises two core pillars: increasing acquisition (via education) and retention (by encouraging day-to-day use among both children and adults). Efforts focus not just on boosting speaker numbers but also on improving language quality and prestige. The approach used in Wales strongly leverages the formal education system and public policy, with explicit government targets, such as reaching one million speakers, while also struggling with the tension between encouraging broader acquisition and maintaining high social use and fluency. In another study on a minority language, Ó hIfearnáin (2015) stated that Manx, once considered extinct, has experienced a structured revival spearheaded by language activists, linguists, and enthusiasts. The revitalisation of Manx depended largely on community-driven efforts, the institutionalisation of language courses, and the reconstruction of the language for new generations. The emergence of a new "speaker community", including non-native learners, has been key, with authenticity and community support viewed as crucial to its sociolinguistic vitality. Based on these efforts done by these minority languages, there are lessons for the Iban language. Firstly, with regards to intergenerational transmission, like Iban, Welsh emphasises the importance of family-based

language transmission. However, reliance solely on informal transmission, as with Iban, may risk loss of literacy and formal domain usage (Metom & Ting, 2024; Mackie, 2018). Secondly, in terms of education and policy, the revival of Welsh and Manx underscores the necessity of institutional support and the central role of schools and policy frameworks in effective revitalisation. Where efforts are driven almost entirely at the community level, as with grassroots Welsh and Manx, sustainability depends on mobilising activists and securing population legitimacy (Mackie, 2018; Ó hIfearnáin, 2015). Thirdly, in terms of prestige and public use, Welsh strategies focus on raising the status of the language, not merely acquiring more speakers but ensuring that language use is valued and prestigious. This insight can inform Iban efforts, particularly regarding the language's role in public, governmental, and media contexts (Mackie, 2018).

4.8.1.2 Language Shift and Intergenerational Transmission

The second key finding of this study is that the Iban language is predominantly used at home but faces reduced transmission in family domains. The study revealed that even though Iban is mainly used in family settings, its use is reduced in interactions involving the Iban youngsters, especially in non-Iban-dominant areas. In comparison to Ting et al.'s (2020) study conducted in Song, Kapit (an Iban-dominated area), 97.5% of Iban respondents reported choosing Iban as the language for family communication. This is a very high rate of Iban usage since Song is an Iban-dominated town where even non-Iban also speak the Iban language. When comparing the language use of Iban who have relocated outside of their homeland, this is the standard by which they should be measured.

Similar findings involving young generations who shift to other dominant languages, such as Malay and English, are also found in several studies among other ethnic groups. In

a study by Al-Khaza'leh (2023), 25 Rungus-educated speakers, comprising 15 males and 10 females from a public higher learning institution, were interviewed concerning their attitudes towards Rungus. The young generations of the Rungus ethnic group are adopting other languages, namely, English and Malay. Being the more popular languages among a majority of Rungus youngsters in Kudat, English and Malay are the preferred options in their interactions. They do not speak Rungus fluently or effectively enough, so they speak Malay in everyday conversations with friends and family members. Unlike the case of the Iban in Sarawak, where most Iban parents transmit the language to their children, Rungus parents' lack of concern for teaching their children Rungus is the primary cause of the youngsters' lack of fluency in the ethnic language. This suggests that the language's status will deteriorate, and it may eventually die if the older generations do not make an effort to preserve their mother tongue and teach it to their children. Rungus is only used in limited domains by the elder generations, showing a lack of intergenerational language transmission in the Rungus community today (Al-Khaza'leh, 2023). However, while most young Iban show a positive attitude towards their ethnic language in this study, in which they are proud of Iban and it is the most cherished language for their ethnolinguistic identity, the Rungus youngsters' attitude towards their ethnic language is the opposite. They express shyness when identifying as Rungus and view their ethnic language as a low-status language that prevents them from achieving their goals of getting employment or participating actively in Malaysian society. Concerning the Iban youngsters in this current study, even though they show pride in being associated with the Iban language, a majority of them are not motivated to learn the language formally due to the lack of instrumental values it offers to their academic and professional development. The positive attitude of the Iban younger generation does not contribute to the vitality of the ethnic language. As mentioned by Antau

and Jamaludin (2023), the Iban students in their study believe that there is no need to learn Iban formally in school since it is their mother tongue. Thus, either way, the positive or negative attitude of the younger Iban generations towards the importance of formal learning in Iban may affect the status of the language in the future.

Another study by Coluzzi (2010) also showed similar results in the Iban and Murut (Lun Bawang) communities in Temburong, Brunei. The researcher conducted a survey on language use and attitudes among the Iban and Murut (Lun Bawang) that involved 168 Iban and 68 Lun Bawang respondents. Even though Iban and Lun Bawang are still vital languages with a very high degree of intergenerational language transmission, the vitality status is unsafe because language shift is slowly occurring in the communities, owing to the Malay influence being increasingly stronger. Moreover, the younger Iban generations in Temburong, Brunei tend to speak more and better Malay than people in the oldest group. They are also not as fluent in Iban and use it less than their seniors. Coluzzi (2010) discovered a similar situation among the Lun Bawang youngsters. While the Malay language is acknowledged more, the mother tongue is less known by the younger generations. Language shift towards Malay is gradually happening within the Lun Bawang community at a faster pace than among the Iban, even though the ethnic language is still quite resilient and vital. The same scenario can be seen in the Iban youngsters, where language shift to English and Malay is slowly happening in the family domains. Furthermore, both the Iban and the Lun Bawang also have very positive attitudes towards their ancestral languages. Similar to the youngsters in the Iban community of Sarawak, they value and cherish their ancestral languages and would like to see them officially recognised as well as used more in the media and at schools.

In a study by Dani et al. (2020), the researchers examined intergenerational language transmission of Dusun in the speech community. The study surveyed 120 Dusun students comprising 74 males and 46 females, who resided in the Ranau district of Sabah, Malaysia. There was a weakening intergenerational language transmission of Dusun, whereby the use of mother tongue at home is severely limited. Intergenerational language transmission in the Dusun community is 'severely endangered' or ranked at 2 on the language endangerment scale for the group as a whole. Dusun is predominantly used by grandparents and older generations of the speech community. Most of the young Dusun concurred that the current trends in the Dusun language domain are very restricted. The Dusun language has lost its status as a privileged language in the family domains due to the dominance of Sabah Malay Dialect. As a language of dominance, the use of Sabah Malay Dialect is ubiquitous in the region and tends to take precedence over the Dusun language as a mother tongue. This is similar to the case of the Iban youngsters in Sarawak, where Sarawak Malay and English have started to encroach into the family domains. Comparable findings can also be found in the study conducted by Ting and Tham (2014) on the Kadazandusun language in Sabah. Although intergenerational transmission of Kadazandusun is taking place, the use of Kadazandusun from the grandparents' generation to the teenagers' generation seems to be depleted, seeing that Sabah Malay Dialect dominantly infiltrates a number of significant domains, comprising the family domains.

In another case of the Sundanese people in Indonesia, which is the second biggest ethnic group in the country (second after the Javanese), Indrayani (2011) found that the region's linguistic diversity makes it challenging for the Sundanese language to hold onto its prominence and vitality. As a means of overcoming communication difficulties, the Sundanese language is replacing Bahasa Indonesia and English in West Java Province,

especially in Bandung, the province's capital. These two languages serve as the mediums for more extensive communication; thus, causing Sundanese to gradually become marginalised in the region, threatening its vitality. It is a fact that Sundanese individuals tend to favour learning and using languages that are beneficial to them both socially and economically. This most likely explains the negative attitudes that the younger generations of Sundanese speakers have developed against their ethnic language.

Research undertaken across several ethnic groups in the regions, including the Rungus, Iban, Lun Bawang, Dusun/Kadazandusun, and Sundanese, has exposed a worrisome pattern of linguistic change and a decline in intergenerational language transfer. Within these groups, the younger generations are replacing their original tongues with other dominant languages, such as English, Malay, and Sabah Malay. Their preference for these languages in daily contact is indicative of this transition, which is causing a fall in the use of mother tongues within the family domains. Hence, indigenous languages, comprising Iban in Sarawak, are in danger of disappearing because of the growing impact of dominant languages like Malay and English, which are progressively diminishing their significance and vitality.

4.8.1.3 Declining Use of Iban in Sarawak

The third key finding of this study is that despite being the biggest ethnic group in Sarawak, the Iban language is used less frequently in contact with other ethnic groups, such as the Malay, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Chinese, and so forth. The study shows that outside the home domains, especially in places where the Iban people are the minority, the use of Iban is decreasing. In Iban-dominant areas, Iban still has the upper hand when it comes to social interactions and prayers, but in official settings and when interacting with other ethnic

groups, Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay are gaining traction on Iban. The restricted use of Iban in public and official contexts is partly due to Malaysia's national language policy, which establishes Standard Malay as the common language for intercultural communication.

Outside the home domains, there is a decline in the use of Iban, especially in locations where the Iban people are the minority group. The study revealed that Iban is still widely used in Iban-dominant areas for a variety of purposes, namely, in prayers and interactions with co-workers, friends, and neighbours. However, in areas where there are fewer Iban people, namely, Kuching, Samarahan, Serian, Betong, and Lundu, Iban is only used for praying and interacting with friends and neighbours. Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay outweigh Iban in more formal contexts and affairs with other ethnic groups, indicating Iban is losing out to these dominant Malay varieties.

Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that a language with strong vitality is one that is widely utilised by all generations of the speech community, both in the home contexts and further afield. The degree to which a language is used for communication in diverse social contexts for specific purposes determines the vitality of the language. Based on the findings in this study, it is essential for the Iban speakers to communicate in other widely spoken languages, such as Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay, as doing so facilitates interethnic communication. The interactions outside the home settings necessitate the Iban speakers to switch to Malay as Iban may not be intelligible to other ethnic groups, specifically where the Iban community is inferior in number. Moreover, it is expected that a greater variety of ethnic groups reside in the regions where Sarawak Malay is necessary to be used, in which it is the language conversed by both speakers of Malay and other ethnicities. As they cater to all ethnicities, Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay dominate interethnic communication.

Moreover, a further purpose of Malaysia's national language policy is to designate Standard Malay, which is the nation's official language, as the common language for intercultural communication, given the country's multi-ethnic context (Ting & Campbell, 2017). The national language of Malaysia serves as a symbol of the country for fostering a sense of unity while preserving a sense of cultural value and identity (How et al., 2015). Consequently, the national language has made Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay the main linguistic means of interethnic communication in Sarawak, resulting in the restricted use of Iban in public and government premises.

The results of this current study on the use of Iban in Iban-dominant areas are consistent with the findings in the study carried out by Ting et al. (2020). The study was conducted in Song, Kapit, where the Iban people were the majority in the area. In Song, although Iban serves as a lingua franca in friendship and transaction domains, it loses out to Malay in education and employment domains. This indicates a shrinking in Iban's functional domains despite the fact that the Iban community in Song constitutes the largest number of residents in the area. The reduction in the ethnic language's functional domains, which it once occupied, and the disappearance of strict domain separation show the deteriorating role of the ethnic language in the community that flags an impending language shift (Tsunoda, 2005).

Despite being the largest ethnic group, there are indications that Sarawak Malay and English are sharing space with Iban in the domains of friendship, education, occupation, religion, and business in non-Iban-dominant areas. In this context, the patterns of Iban language use in non-Iban-dominant areas are similar to other minority ethnic groups in Sarawak, Sabah, and Selangor. Joan and Ting (2016) identified that outside the home

domains, the Kejaman community in Sarawak frequently used Malay and English as the main languages for prayers, interactions with neighbours, shopkeepers, teachers, friends, and for accessing entertainment in mass media. English and Malay are the high languages for formal use in mass media, education domains, and interethnic communication because they are comprehensible and used by various ethnic groups. Currently, the Kejaman is threatened by English and Malay, and by Iban in the future, as compared to other indigenous languages in Sarawak.

In the same vein, a study by Mohamed and Hashim (2012) pointed out that the vitality of Sihan in Sarawak is depreciating due to its functional load decreasing in many domains, particularly concerning the public. Unlike Iban, Sihan does not possess orthography and documentation; hence, this has made it more difficult for the language to be considered a prestige language. The dwindling number of speakers and increasing encounters with outsiders have also raised bilinguals/multilinguals among the Sihan people in Sarawak, which further fuels the decline in the use of Sihan in daily activities.

In another study by Kijai et al. (2012), the researchers found that the older respondents of Tindal in Ratau, Kota Belud, Sabah use Tindal, whereas the younger ones use Malay almost all the time, revealing evidence of a language shift in the ethnic community. Being proficient in Malay is deemed crucial due to its utilitarian values, whereby it is the instructional medium in all national schools and the official language used in most government interactions. It was concluded that the Tindal community in Ratau, Sabah, will cease to exist in the next one or two generations if the use of the ethnic language continues to dwindle due to the dominance of Malay.

Likewise, a study conducted on the Mah Meri language in Carey Island, Selangor, by Coluzzi et al. (2017) found that although the ancestral language is still spoken and valued by the Mah Meri community, evidence shows that Mah Meri is used less and less by and to younger generations. The increasing use of Malay seems prevalent among the younger ones, given its status as the official language, which signifies a relatively high degree of endangerment for the Mah Meri. There is also a strong influence of Malay on the Orang Asli languages, particularly from the lexical point of view, as it slowly dominates vocabulary and structures of the inferior variety. Even though these ethnic languages are passed down from one generation to the next to a certain extent, their use is marginal outside the family unit in these minority groups.

The incorporation of Malay and English words in the respondents' conversations during non-participant observations is also a matter of concern with regards to the declining use of Iban in interactions. The use of Malay and English words in conversations was to fill lexical gaps when the respondents could not find suitable words in Iban. There were many instances of code-switching and borrowing from English and Malay words, especially when referring to cyber terms and modern terminology, such as "akses account", "scammer", "refunded the money", "transaction", "browser", "type url banking", "shortcut", "*bil*", "*spital*", and "*pinchin*". This finding was in line with Ting and Felix (2023), who found that 59.26% of the code-switching instances were for referential function, which dominated the code-switching in the Iban radio programmes. The referential function primarily entails single-word switches that can occasionally occur due to Iban's absence of lexis for terms related to cyber and medical emergencies, i.e., "emergency cases", "on call", and "booster". The study showed that lexis, especially in terms of technology and other modern concepts, is still lacking in Iban. One explanation for some of this code-switching is a dislike of Iban

lexis. Since there is no specific term for “sentimental” feelings, the radio presenters in the Iban radio programmes used the Malay word “*jiwang*” to convey their meaning. In another example, the expression “*Selamat Ari* Valentine's Day *ngagai semua kitai*” is unrelated to lexical problems but is brought on by terminology that the speaker is familiar with in a different language. Ting and Felix (2023) argued that using other languages in Iban broadcasts will have an impact on the preservation of Iban’s uniqueness.

Generally, studies conducted on different ethnic groups in Sarawak, Sabah, and Selangor show that these populations are experiencing a worrying trend of language transfer and endangerment. The results reveal how dominant languages, such as English and Malay, have an impact on indigenous languages, causing a reduction in their vitality and use. Furthermore, due to Malay’s official status and practical significance, younger generations are adopting it more frequently, posing issues for communities, such as Iban, Kejaman, and Sihan in Sarawak, Tindal in Sabah, and Mah Meri in Selangor. For certain communities, such as the Iban in Sarawak, intergenerational language transmission may offer a sense of stability, which denotes an important factor for a language’s vitality evaluation; however, this finding may present a false sense of security to the community. A language’s vitality can be assessed by looking at how well its legacy language is being passed down to the next generation (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Fishman, 1997; Lewis & Simons, 2010). Some communities may get a false sense of security from these findings, as was the case with the Iban in Sarawak. In accordance with the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), vitality is considered adequate only when more than 80% of the children are learning the heritage language (Lewis & Simons, 2010). Based on the current study, just around one-third of the Iban respondents conversed in Iban with their children in both Iban-dominant areas (37.5%) and non-Iban-dominant areas (33.3%). The data suggest that less

than 80% of the youngsters are picking up the Iban language. Furthermore, families with mixed-race parents or those who are married to someone else end up speaking different languages throughout the interactions (Umbat, 2020). The current study also provides evidence for the high rate of intermarriages because 39.3% of respondents, or out of 67.9% of married respondents, had spouses who were Iban. Comparing this percentage with the findings on Iban use by parents with their children suggests that Iban may not be the primary language in some Iban households. Umbat (2020) blamed community migration from rural to urban areas, the overwhelming influence of Sarawak Malay, and the negative effects of mass media (shortening of words when sending short text messages that affects spelling and structure) for the younger Iban's lack of motivation to learn Iban. The empirical findings of this study support this assertion on migration, showing that the Iban respondents use Iban less frequently in non-Iban-dominant areas (typically urban areas) than in Iban-dominant areas (typically rural areas). Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay are becoming the lingua franca for multiracial interactions. Besides, the main language used in Malaysia's educational system has become more prevalent in keeping with its function in the country's daily lives, hence, reducing the use of mother tongue (Izman & Mahamod, 2023).

4.8.1.4 Minimal Use of Iban in Social Media and New Media Domains

The fourth key finding of this study is that Iban is the least used language for social and professional interactions in social media and new media domains. It is comprehensible that most content on YouTube and the Internet is available in English and that professional communication needs to take place in a language that is both formal and accessible to people of all ethnic backgrounds. Writing SMS texts is the only sub-domain where Iban is still functional. Text messages are sent to friends and family members, most of whom may be

Iban and are more intimate. From the study, the Iban respondents who lived in non-Iban-dominant areas were more likely to use English while writing SMS messages, which suggests that their social network may be more ethnically varied and include more contacts from other ethnic groups that necessitate the use of English. Iban is less common in this new domain since social media communication on Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and TikTok reaches a wider audience that may not be Iban. Even among the Iban, communication via social media is expected to increase in the use of English, Sarawak Malay, and Standard Malay as its prevalence grows. Communication is made easier by using Standard Malay and English, which are both accepted languages. Given that so many indigenous people are fluent in the dialect, the rise of Sarawak Malay suggests that this Malay dialect has the potential to become a lingua franca in Sarawak.

In this study, whether or not the respondents lived among the Iban people, the expansion of social media and new media domains for communication has an impact on how Iban is used. English is the primary language of choice, whether for business (e.g., composing emails) or personal matters (e.g., viewing YouTube videos, communicating on social networking platforms, and obtaining Internet information). A lot of content on the Internet and YouTube is available in English. As stated by Brenzinger et al. (2003, p. 10), English usage in these new domains and media represents its “mesmerising power”, in which this claim is hardly surprising given English’s standing as the universal language. In addition, Brenzinger et al. (2003, p.10) mentioned that schools, modern workplaces, and new media, such as the Internet and broadcast media, usually only help to increase the dominating language’s reach and influence at the expense of endangered languages. This language is preferred because "speakers may consider the dominant language to be the language of social and economic opportunity". Iban is not an instrumental language for broader

communication. Writing SMS messages is the only sub-domain where the respondents who live in Iban-dominant areas still use the ethnic language more frequently than English. This suggests that the space for Iban use in social media communication may continue to diminish in the future as fewer younger Iban people use their ethnic language and as more of their social and professional contacts are non-Iban.

It should be mentioned that the researcher in this study did not look into the respondents' use of the Internet to access radio and television shows. In Malaysia, Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), an entity owned by the government, broadcasts mainstream radio and television shows in the country. Nonetheless, today, a lot of live Internet radio stations are available through entertainment portals run by the business sector, like FM Radio. Those who enjoy radio and television programming can still find something to watch or listen to on non-mainstream Internet channels. Despite being categorised as "old media" in contrast to "new media" platforms like Instagram or TikTok, these niche entertainment portals are also considered to be part of the "new" social media landscape because they are now accessible online. More research should be done on the popularity of live Internet radio stations, especially concerning their contribution to the continued use of Iban.

It is evidenced that Iban is not very important in the new media domains, where its only use is for sending SMS texts to friends, family members, and acquaintances among the Iban community in Sarawak. Due to Iban's vernacular status in Malaysia, despite it being taught in Sarawak's primary and secondary schools, it is perceived not as beneficial in these new domains and media in comparison to English, which has a more prestigious and worldwide position. Even if ethnic languages are the best at expressing the feelings of their speakers, dominant languages like English are typically used in serious circumstances, such

as occupations, economics, research, and technology (Crystal, 2000). This is a result of ethnic languages lacking instrumental values in important domains, like the Iban language. English maintains its dominant position in the new media domains because it is the primary language for science and technology, as well as the primary language for international commerce and politics (Smith, 1981).

The study's research patterns also showed that speakers' percentages of English use were greater in non-Iban-dominant areas (Kuching and Samarahan) than in Iban-dominant areas (Sri Aman, Lubok Antu, and Saratok) when it came to reporting usage. A similar case is found among the Dusun in Sabah. Perceived as a low-status language as compared to Malay and English, the study by Dani et al. (2020) found that there was little use of Dusun in new contexts and media, mainly due to changes in the social needs of the Dusun youngsters. Even though Sabah's responsible party has provided and continues to reinforce the use of Dusun at pre- and post-school levels, shifts in the community's requirements have also resulted in a shift in the ethnic language's vitality, which results in the minimal use of Dusun in social media and new media domains. Like the case of Iban in Sarawak, mother tongues are becoming more and more marginalised at the same time that the formal learning environment and the instrumental significance of Malay and English have dominated social interaction (David et al., 2009).

The use of code-switching and borrowing from Malay and English was evidenced in the respondents' social media posts. This was in line with the findings of the study carried out by Ramio et al. (2024). The researchers revealed the problem of language use by the Iban community on the Facebook page "*Aku Anak Iban*". Although nearly every member of the Facebook page speaks the Iban language, the influence of Malay was observed in their

language expressions of their Facebook statuses. Terms like "*adalah*", "*hati*", "*maksud*", "*manusia*", "*tapi*", and "*yang*" had the highest frequency. This was due to the informants' limited vocabulary of the Iban language. According to Ujai and Mohammad (2017), motivating factors, attitudes, and environment are the main social factors influencing language learning. Thus, the Iban language may contain the correct vocabulary, but some Iban people do not master it. As a result, Malay is used as a substitute for the vocabulary. Furthermore, the Iban informants use Malay since there are users of other languages on the Facebook page than the Iban, such as Malay, Kayan, Bidayuh, and so forth. Hence, using Malay creates a means of understanding the Facebook statuses, where the use of Iban may cause awkwardness and mutual disdain.

The limited use of Iban in the new domains is highlighted by the respondents' employment of English and Malay vocabulary in their social media posts. When respondents could not find appropriate words in Iban, they frequently used words from Malay and English to bridge lexical gaps, showing a high frequency of code-switching and borrowing from Malay and English.

4.8.1.5 The Impact of Locality in the Iban Community

The fifth key finding of this study is that locality has a significant influence on language use and attitudes within the Iban community, particularly emphasising the effect on intergenerational language transmission, religious practices, and communication in various social contexts. There are signs of language shift among the younger generations in domains where English predominates over Iban. Iban is gradually losing its status as the dominant language in family communication. The dominance of the Iban language is thus called into question, particularly in urban areas less populated by the Iban community.

Outside the home domains, Iban is still prevalent in several settings in Iban-dominant areas, namely, for reciting prayers and communicating with neighbours, friends, classmates, and co-workers. However, there is a decline in the dominance of Iban in non-Iban-dominant areas, where Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay assert their supremacy over the ethnic language, particularly in official settings. There is less use of Iban outside of home domains, especially when interacting with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The study has identified the religious and education domains as those that endure the most significant decline in Iban use when the Iban people relocate from Iban-dominant areas to non-Iban-dominant areas. Although the domains of friendship, employment, and transactions are less impacted, the presence of other ethnic groups has inevitably led to an increase in the use of English, Sarawak Malay, and Standard Malay, which dwindles the space for Iban use.

In social media and new media domains, the study revealed that English is becoming more and more prevalent, particularly on websites like social networking, business correspondence, and online information. In these fields, regardless of the location of Iban speakers, English has emerged as the primary language for communication. This suggests a declining space for Iban use in social media communication as more Iban people use English for social and professional communications. Social media communication is one area of language use where Iban is virtually non-existent. Nonetheless, some Iban people still type SMS messages in Iban nowadays with their close friends and family members.

Overall, the study's results point to challenges facing the Iban language in preserving its vitality, particularly in locations where English and Malay are shared languages in non-Iban-dominant areas. The younger Iban generations' lack of motivation to formally acquire and use Iban widely has been attributed to several key factors, namely, migration from rural

to urban regions, intermarriages, the overwhelming impact of English, Standard Malay, and Sarawak Malay as dominant languages, as well as the detrimental effects of modern media.

4.9 Language Vitality of Iban

Based on the findings, Table 4.23 displays the summarised evaluation of the Iban language in this study based on UNESCO's nine factors. The evaluation reveals both the strengths that sustain the language and the weaknesses that may threaten Iban's long-term sustainability.

Table 4.23: A summary of the findings on Iban's vitality status in Sarawak based on UNESCO's nine factors

UNESCO Factor	Grade / Status	Summary of Findings
1. Intergenerational language transmission	Grade 5- (Stable yet threatened)	All generations of Iban people speak the Iban language in most situations, and it has been passed down without interruption; however, younger generations also use English and Sarawak Malay for some important conversations.
2. Absolute number of speakers	833,600 people	Relatively large speaker population providing demographic strength.
3. Proportion of speakers in the total population	Grade 4 (Unsafe)	Low proportion relative to the total population of Malaysia, 34.1 million (DOSM, 2025); the Iban speakers comprise approximately 2.6% of the population.
4. Trends in existing language domains	Grade 2 (Limited formal domains)	Used mainly in informal and traditional domains; limited use in formal and official domains.
5. Response to new domains and media	Grade 1 (Minimal)	Minimal presence in new media and digital domains; used only for WhatsApp texts with Iban family members, friends, and colleagues.
6. Availability of materials for language education and literacy	Grade 3	Written materials exist and are used in schools; however, limited literacy promotion via print media.
7. Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use	Grade 4 (Differentiated support)	Minority language protections exist mostly in private domains; weak public/institutional support, as dominant languages (e.g. Malay and English) are prioritised.
8. Community members' attitudes towards their own languages	Grade 4	Most community members support language maintenance and preservation.
9. Type and quality of documentation	Grade 3 (Fair)	Fair documentation available; moderate foundation for preservation.

Factor 1 (Intergenerational Language Transmission) reveals one of Iban's most encouraging indicators of vitality. According to the UNESCO framework on language vitality (Brenzinger et al., 2003), Iban is rated as Grade 5-, stable yet threatened. This grade means that while Iban continues to be spoken fluently across all generations, from elders to youth, it is vulnerable to displacement in certain communication contexts due to increasing multilingualism (Metom et al., 2021). Over 87.5% of respondents in a study by Metom et al. (2021) reported using Iban in family communication, regardless of whether they lived in Iban-dominant or non-Iban-dominant areas. The study revealed an encroachment of English and Sarawak Malay, particularly in conversations with spouses and children, where in non-Iban-dominant areas, only about one-third of parents reported speaking Iban to their children at home. The increased use of English and Sarawak Malay within family communications, especially in urban areas, may pose a risk to the vitality of Iban. This suggests that, although Iban's intergenerational transmission is currently stable, it is not immune to domain reduction and shift (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Metom et al., 2021).

The precise number of speakers relating to Factor 2 (Absolute Number of Speakers) is difficult to determine (Brenzinger et al., 2003). However, an estimated number for the total speaker population can be measured over the whole population based on the population census. It is noted that during the conduct of the questionnaire, the estimated Sarawak population was 2.6 million based on the 2010 population census (DOSM, 2017). The latest census was carried out in 2020, showing an increased figure of the total Sarawak population, i.e., 2.9 million people. DOSM (2020) stated that the latest estimated Sarawak population was 2,907,500 million, comprising multi-ethnic groups, namely, the Malay (671,000), Iban (833,600), Bidayuh (226,000), Melanau (149,400), Chinese (640,200), other Bumiputera (188,700), Indians and others (17,500), and non-Malaysian citizens (181,100). The Iban

population is 28% (833,600) of the total Sarawak population, which may reflect the absolute number of Iban speakers in Sarawak. However, there are some Iban speakers who live outside of Sarawak, which makes this factor difficult to assess. Furthermore, as the strength in number is relative, the study is unable to give the language a score based on the component. When the population strength is taken into consideration, the Iban people are perceived as strong, as they are the biggest ethnic group in Sarawak. In this case, the total number of speakers may not be accurate for two major reasons (Brenzinger et al., 2003). First, a significant overestimation of speakers will arise from the confusion of population and speaker numbers in many sources. Second, even if a language group has a million speakers, it may still be endangered if other elements like intergenerational transmission, literacy, education, and media in the language are lacking. To make the absolute number of speakers more significant, Factor 1 (intergenerational language transmission) and Factor 3 (percentage of speakers among the overall population) should be compared as well. Documentation should also include a source, a reference date, and an assessment of the source's credibility (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011).

Factor 3 (Proportion of speakers in the total population) shows no doubt that the Iban people benefit from a sizable speaker base of 833,600 individuals (DOSM, 2020). Such a robust population provides a critical buffer against rapid language loss that smaller groups might face. Despite this, Iban speakers represent only about 2.6% of the total Malaysian population, 34.2 million (DOSM, 2025), positioning the language within a minority framework nationally. This limited proportion presents a layer of vulnerability, especially when dominant languages like English and Malay enjoy broad institutional and social support, which the Iban language is still lacking. In this study, the Iban language is rated at Grade 4 for Factor 3, where nearly all the Iban members speak the ethnic language according

to the UNESCO framework. This indicates that the Iban language is unsafe (Brenzinger et al., 2003).

The evaluation for Factor 4 (Trends in Existing Language Domains) reveals that Iban is mainly used for informal and traditional domains, such as the home and community functions. Its presence in formal or official sectors, namely, government, education, and public life, is minimal. In Iban-dominant areas, the frequency of Iban language use in everyday contacts with neighbours, friends, classmates, and workmates is higher, indicating a higher concentration of Iban speakers in these domains compared to non-Iban-dominant areas. The greater frequency of Iban language use in religious rites is another indication of the Iban language's cultural and religious significance in Iban-dominant communities. However, Standard Malay and Sarawak Local Malay are the preferred languages in communication at government departments and when buying things at shops, respectively, in which Iban is rarely used. This shows that although Iban is widely used in non-formal or casual encounters, it has a limited functional purpose in formal situations and interethnic communication, where the Iban people are small in number. According to Brenzinger et al. (2003) and Dwyer (2011), the stronger a language's vitality, the more consistently and persistently it is employed. An ideal language is used universally in all domains, in which the Iban language is lacking. In this respect, the Iban language is rated at Grade 2 (limited formal domains) for Factor 4, which indicates that the ethnic language's limited functions show its lesser importance outside the home domains. Iban is used in limited formal and social domains at government premises and for retail transactions, respectively.

Factor 5 (Response to new domains and media) reveals that the expansion of Iban into new domains, particularly in digital media, is similarly limited. Iban is among the least used in these domains, except for writing SMSes or WhatsApp texts. Its use for writing

WhatsApp texts tends to be personal and family-oriented, without significant penetration into wider social media or digital content creation. Instead, English is widely used by both the respondents in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in the new media domains. This demonstrates the significance of English as a global language and how it affects language use among the Iban in Sarawak. Furthermore, Malay is also preferred when writing statuses on social media like Facebook pages (Ramio et al., 2024). This limited digital footprint restricts the Iban language's visibility and relevance among younger, tech-savvy generations, who increasingly inhabit these virtual spaces. According to Brenzinger et al. (2003), as the community's living conditions shift, new language domains could emerge as well. While most linguistic communities have failed to successfully introduce their ethnic language into new sectors, others have succeeded in doing so. New work environments, educational facilities (e.g., schools and universities), and new media (e.g., the Internet and broadcast media) all typically serve to expand the reach and authority of the dominant language at the expense of endangered languages. If a speech community cannot adapt its language to meet the demands of modernity, it risks becoming obsolete and stigmatised. The community's reactions to all new areas (jobs, schools, or the media) must be taken into account when assessing an endangered language (Brenzinger et al., 2003; Dwyer, 2011). In this respect, since Iban is only used actively for writing SMSes or WhatsApp texts, it is rated at Grade 1 (minimal use) for Factor 5. For a language to be considered dynamic, it must be used in every new domain (Brenzinger et al., 2003).

Factor 6 (Availability of materials for language education and literacy) shows limited possession of Iban printed materials at home for language learning. This can be attributed to a lack of interest in owning education and literacy materials in Iban, as the language is merely a means of oral communication to the Iban community (Metom & Ting, 2024). However, it

is possible that there is a lack of variety in Iban written materials, which are inadequate to motivate the Iban people to read in their indigenous language (Philip, 2017). In addition, Embas (2017) argued that the Iban community has made insufficient efforts to develop the language through reading resources. Formal education support for Iban exists, with Iban taught in schools and some availability of trained teachers, but challenges such as a decline in the number of students learning the Iban language and a shortage of qualified teachers affect resource development and availability. These combined challenges contribute to the low ownership of Iban language resources, indicating the need for improved access, awareness initiatives, affordable materials, and strengthened educational support to promote Iban literacy and formal language use in the community (Metom & Ting, 2024). Brenzinger et al. (2003) stated that education in the language is crucial for maintaining the vitality of the language. Books and other materials covering all subjects and appropriate for all language levels and age groups are needed for the language to sustain its relevance and vitality. However, literacy in Iban is not promoted through print media in a rigorous manner. In fact, formal literacy education in the Iban language is only an elective in school, where it is not compulsory for the Iban students to enrol in the subject despite its inclusion in Sarawak's school curriculum (Metom & Ting, 2024). This also explains the lack of possession of the Iban printed materials at home among the respondents. In this respect, Iban is rated at Grade 3 for Factor 6.

Factor 7 (Governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use**)** reveals that Iban faces an uphill battle. There are overt policies and implied attitudes of the government and institutions concerning the dominant and subordinate languages. Governmental policies tend to prioritise Malay, the national language, and English, the global language, limiting public sector support for Iban's growth.

Protection exists primarily in the private sphere, which, while valuable, is insufficient to encourage the language's prestige and functional scope. This lack of formal endorsement affects the language's status and its potential for expansion into official use. Brenzinger et al. (2003) and Dwyer (2011) stated that the more positive official attitudes and policies are towards the language of the community, the stronger the language is. The stronger the language, the more favourable official attitudes and policies are for the community's language. In this respect, the fact that Iban-language television news and radio programmes are available every day of the week indicates that the language is supported and acknowledged by the authorities in media outlets. The regular occurrence of Iban language content in mainstream media suggests a level of institutional and governmental acceptance and promotion. The necessity of maintaining the Iban community's cultural and linguistic identity is highlighted by the inclusion of Iban language content in media and community projects. Support for these projects from the government and other institutions can help preserve and advance the Iban language and culture. Furthermore, the agreement that Iban community groups support the Iban language's written usage is indicative of community-based initiatives to protect and advance the language. However, potential issues with the educational system are highlighted by the availability of Iban teachers and the use of Iban in school meetings. The findings indicate that there are worries about the incorporation and support of Iban within educational institutions, despite possible media campaigns to promote the language. This may suggest that schools need to support Iban education and have more explicit language policies. Campbell and Ting (2017) mentioned that the Iban students are discouraged from speaking their ethnic language in the school compound due to the enforcement of Malay and English. There is a need for thorough language planning and implementation, as indicated by the conflicting responses about the availability of Iban

teachers and the use of Iban in school settings. The institutional attitudes and policies towards the Iban language show discouraging responses towards the education sphere, as well as in government premises and retail transactions. Thus, Iban is rated at Grade 4 (differentiated support) for Factor 7, which indicates minority languages are protected primarily as the language of the private domains.

Factor 8 (Community members' attitudes towards their own languages) reveals that the Iban community's attitudes offer vital hope for the Iban language's vitality. The Iban people express strong positive feelings towards their ethnic language, whereby they value it as a key part of their identity and culture. Such attitudes form the cornerstone of language maintenance and are critical for mobilising support for revitalisation efforts. The high percentages of the respondents expressing their pride in their Iban identity imply strong ethnolinguistic vitality within the Iban community. The findings also highlight the value of language and cultural identity within the Iban community in Sarawak, stressing the need to conserve and advance the Iban language for upcoming generations. In addition, the large percentage of the respondents attributing the Iban language's social status to its speakers' numerical dominance in Sarawak also suggests a positive attitude towards the language and its speakers. However, the perceived value of Iban for education and careers is lower in non-Iban-dominant areas, which suggests the lack of instrumental values of the ethnic language in these domains. Nevertheless, the strong emotional connection to the ethnic language in both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas points to the language's ongoing vitality. Thus, drawing from the findings, the Iban language is rated at Grade 4 for Factor 8 on UNESCO's language vitality/endangerment scale. Most of the Iban members show their strong support for Iban language maintenance, where they exhibit a positive attitude towards their ethnic language and wish to see it maintained in the future.

Factor 8 (Community members' attitudes towards their own languages) reveals that the Iban community's attitudes offer vital hope for the Iban language's vitality. The Iban people express strong positive feelings towards their ethnic language, valuing it as a key part of their identity and culture, which forms the cornerstone of language maintenance and is critical for mobilising support for revitalisation efforts (Metom et al., 2021; Ting & Ling, 2021). The high percentages of respondents expressing pride in their Iban identity imply strong ethnolinguistic vitality within the community. The findings highlight the value of language and cultural identity in Sarawak, underscoring the need to conserve and advance Iban for future generations (Metom et al., 2021; Ting et al., 2020). Furthermore, the large proportion of respondents attributing the Iban language's social status to the numerical dominance of its speakers in Sarawak suggests a positive attitude towards the language and its users, reinforcing ethnolinguistic solidarity. However, the perceived instrumental value of Iban for education and careers is lower in non-Iban-dominant areas, indicating that the language's practical utility in these domains is limited. Despite this, the strong emotional and identity-based connection with the Iban language in both dominant and non-dominant areas points to ongoing language vitality. Consequently, based on these findings, the Iban language is rated at Grade 4 for Factor 8 on UNESCO's language vitality/endangerment scale, with most community members showing strong support and positive attitudes towards maintaining their ethnic language into the future (Metom et al., 2021; Ting et al., 2020).

Factor 9 (Type and quality of documentation**)** reveals that documentation of the Iban language is fair but not comprehensive. While this finding supports preservation initiatives, the depth and accessibility of materials require enhancement, particularly in the context of digital resources and language revitalisation programmes (Philip, 2017; Embas, 2017). Compared to non-Iban-majority areas, households in Iban-majority areas revealed a slightly

higher percentage of Iban materials present at home. This may suggest a stronger effort in cultural preservation or easier access to the Iban resources within the community in Iban-populated areas. However, both households in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas lack Iban materials (e.g., magazines, audio and video recordings), which indicates that most Iban members place minimal effort or interest in owning these Iban materials at home for language learning or conservation. Giles et al. (1977) highlighted the influence of social identity and intergroup ties on cultural transmission and maintenance. Brenzinger et al. (2003) also mentioned that to measure the urgency of language documentation, the type and quality of available language resources must be determined. A language community should ideally have an abundance of well-documented, transcribed, translated, and analysable resources for this element of Factor 9. These resources should include vast texts, thorough grammar and dictionaries, and numerous high-quality recordings of audio and videos that have been annotated. The "*Jaku Iban Enggau Pengelandik Jari Tikas Sarawak*" symposium, held in Miri, Sarawak, on August 2nd and 3rd, 2024, called for the establishment of a committee to revise the Iban Language System books used in schools, as these materials have not been updated for over 15 years. This resolution is part of broader efforts to revise the 2009 Iban language system in schoolbooks to align with current language standards and improve Iban language education (Raphael, 2024). A language is perceived as stronger if it has more resources, both historical and contemporary. In addition, Additionally, Factor 9 measures how urgently (additional) documentation is needed. With respect to Factor 9, the low percentages of Iban materials in both Iban areas can be seen as a poor indicator of the possession of Iban materials in the community's households; thus, the Iban language is rated at Grade 3 (Fair) for Factor 9.

Overall, viewed through UNESCO's framework with the incorporation of Giles et al.'s (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality concept that emphasises status, demographic strength, and institutional support, the Iban language embodies a complex status. Its strong demographic base and intergenerational language transmission, as well as positive community attitudes, reflect an optimistic future in its vitality. However, lower institutional support and restricted language domains outside the home may place its overall vitality at a moderate level. Without enhanced policies and expansion into formal, educational, and digital spheres, the vitality of Iban may be at risk. Thus, this places the Iban language at a mid-level vitality status (5-), where it is "in vigorous use" in the home but not secure in public or official domains.

4.10 Conclusion

The findings in this study show that there are major obstacles standing in the way of Iban's continued ethnolinguistic vitality in Sarawak. The Iban language is displaying worrying trends that may threaten its vitality in Sarawak. In terms of demographics, in the encounters with younger Iban speakers, particularly in non-Iban-dominant areas, Iban is used less frequently, which signposts a progressive shift in language towards English and Malay. When compared to the speakers' proficiency in Iban, exposure to Malay and English through formal education and media greatly improves their proficiency in the dominant languages. In terms of social status, Iban is not as prestigious as English and Malay, which is not commonly used in official domains, media, and education. This lowers Iban's perceived prestige and legitimacy. Iban's lack of governmental status and formal education shapes how people perceive them. In comparison to Iban, the respondents indicated a strong instrumental value for both Malay and English, relating them to improved educational and

career prospects. The study results show that although Iban is associated with a sense of cultural pride, the Iban people frequently prioritise studying Malay and English for social mobility and absorption into a globalised society due to pragmatic reasons. Furthermore, the challenges that Iban faces are intensified by the dominance of English and Malay in social media domains. Younger generations' engagement with the Iban language is impacted by the limited visibility and relevance of Iban in mainstream media. In terms of institutional support, fewer Iban students are enrolling in Iban language classes, which indicates a decline in Iban language instruction in schools. There is a rising concern about the Iban language transmission to future generations, as parents reported that their children also did not acquire the Iban language formally. The scarcity of language teachers for teaching the Iban subject in school also adds to the educational issue of Iban language education. This shows that Iban is not receiving enough institutional support to be maintained. Furthermore, the Iban people are increasingly using English and Malay for digital communication. Thus, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Iban in Sarawak is gradually declining. The evaluation of Iban's objective ethnolinguistic vitality based on the three criteria was medium to high. Institutional support (education, government, mass media, religious bodies, and cultural associations), and status (sociohistorical prestige, social status of notable Iban individuals, and the Iban language's position in the Sarawak context) all lend support to this medium to high vitality. As mentioned by King (1986), Ting (2012), and Aung et al. (2018), the low income of most Iban people is the sole status variable that detracts from the high objective ethnolinguistic vitality.

Overall, even though the Iban language remains a vital part of many Iban speakers' cultural pride and identity marker in Sarawak, its survival is threatened by the decreasing formal education among the community, changing social dynamics that favour dominant

languages, and minimal presence in the new media. Thus, in the context UNESCO framework, the Iban language's vitality is currently rated at a mid-level vitality status (/5-), where it is "in vigorous use" in the home.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the summary, implications of the findings, and directions for future research, which ends with the conclusion.

5.1 Summary

The study aimed to investigate the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban language in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak, focusing on language use and language attitudes. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to identify the Iban respondents' perceptions of their language use in various domains: the family domains, outside-home domains, as well as social media and new domains;
2. to examine the Iban respondents' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language in Sarawak;
3. To compare the use of Iban in interactions in the family, outside the home, and on social media and new domains, and the attitudes towards Iban in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas; and
4. To compare the perceived and observed language use of the participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas.

This study adopted a mixed-methods design involving quantitative (online questionnaire) and qualitative (non-participant observation) data on language use and language attitudes. Two types of instruments were used in this study: a set of online questionnaires and a non-participant observation sheet. The questionnaire was based on

existing language vitality surveys and aligned to UNESCO's Nine Factors of language vitality/endangerment (Lewis, 2005; Brenzinger et al., 2003).

The selection criteria for the respondents are Iban people living in Sarawak, and they must have at least one parent who is Iban. Those not living in Sarawak, like in West Malaysia, Sabah, and overseas, were excluded because they experience a different language environment. For the analysis, the respondents were divided into Iban-dominant areas and non-Iban-dominant areas based on their self-reports of the town they lived in at the study's time. The questionnaire data were obtained from 1,204 Iban respondents. As for the qualitative data, the study adopted non-participant observation in order to obtain evidence of actual language behaviours of the participants in their natural settings that reveal language use patterns in various domains. The participants for the non-participant observations were selected from Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas that involved 102 respondents from three domains: the family domains, outside-the-home domains, and social media and new domains.

Data collection for the online questionnaire was conducted in March 2021, while the non-participant observations were carried out from March 2022 to September 2022. For the online questionnaire, a Google Form was used to obtain the data, while for non-participant observations, a non-participant observation sheet was used to record the participants' conversational details and speech events, guided by Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains. As for data analysis, the questionnaire data were analysed and reported using a spreadsheet and SPSS software (Version 26), where mean scores, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were tabulated to show patterns of the Iban respondents' language use and attitudes. For data analysis on non-participant observations, the non-

participant observation sheets were examined using the deductive coding of a thematic analysis, guided by Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains.

For Objective 1 (to identify the Iban respondents' perceptions of their language use in the family domains, outside-home domains, and social media and new domains), the following section summarises the results of the study by comparing the data obtained from the questionnaires and non-participant observations on language use in the three selected domains. In the family domains, both results from the perceived language use (online questionnaires) and observed language use (non-participant observations) revealed that Iban was predominantly used in most of the domains within the family settings, especially in Iban-dominant areas. This implies that the Iban language is still profoundly used in family communication regardless of the Iban locality in Sarawak, which denotes strong intergenerational language transmission in the Iban community. However, the non-participant observation results revealed that English was predominantly used among children, siblings, and relatives (who were composed of young Iban participants) in non-Iban-dominant areas. English is dominating the linguistic repertoire of the Iban youngsters. Although Iban is the most common language in the family, friendship, and religious domains, its use is dwindling outside of the family domains as English and Malay become more prevalent in communication between spouses and children (Metom et al., 2021; Ting et al., 2021). Outside the home domains, results from both questionnaires and non-participant observations showed reduced use of Iban. Iban was mainly used in communication among friends, classmates, workmates, and for prayers in both the questionnaire and observation data. Results from the observed language use indicate an assortment of other languages in the participants' communication. From the questionnaire data, the respondents in Iban-dominant areas reported that for social and formal interactions

outside the home domains, they used mostly Iban in most of the domains, namely, neighbours, friends, classmates, workmates, and prayers. However, in non-Iban-dominant areas, Iban was spoken to a lesser extent because of the use of other languages. English seemed to invade communication in domains involving friends, classmates, workmates, prayers, and at the shops. Standard Malay and Sarawak Malay were also occasionally used for interactions among neighbours, workmates, as well as at government premises and shops/markets. Although Iban is a language spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, using Standard Malay, Sarawak Malay, and English is more appropriate as they are shared languages across diverse ethnic groups, where Iban may not be understood by non-Iban speakers. In social media and new domains, both the questionnaire and observational results revealed the dominance of English in all the domains of new media, except for writing texts in WhatsApp. For non-Iban-dominant areas, the non-participant observation findings revealed that Sarawak Malay was also used alongside the Iban language in the participants' conversational exchanges. Results from the observed language use also showed differences, where Standard Malay was mainly used in three domains, namely, work emails, social media communication, and watching YouTube content. It is interesting to note that in Iban-dominant areas, the participants preferred watching YouTube content in Korean with English subtitles – a result that was not captured in the questionnaire data.

For Objective 2 **(**to examine the Iban speakers' attitudes towards the instrumental value and status of the Iban language), the results showed that fewer respondents, particularly in non-Iban-dominant areas, believed Iban is instrumental for education and employment. In view of this, there may be a risk of language shift in these areas towards more dominant languages like Standard Malay and English. Nevertheless, the high percentages of the respondents who felt proud of their Iban identity indicate strong

ethnolinguistic vitality within the Iban community (Brenzinger et al., 2003). The results also highlight the importance of language and identity for the Iban community, emphasising the necessity of preserving and developing the Iban language for future generations. Furthermore, a large percentage of the respondents ascribed the social status of the Iban language to the speakers' numerical superiority in Sarawak, indicating a positive attitude towards the language and its speakers. This is also because Iban is not only the largest indigenous group in Sarawak but also the largest ethnic group in the state, with a population surpassing that of the Malays and Chinese. On the contrary, the small percentage of respondents who attributed the importance of Iban to its political and economic power suggests that the ethnic language may not be highly respected in Malaysia's larger society. The majority of respondents did not find Iban to be useful for their academic or professional growth, even though it is the language spoken by the majority of ethnic groups in Sarawak. In non-Iban-dominant areas, the perceived value of Iban for education and employment is even lower, indicating a potential risk of language shift towards more prevalent languages like Standard Malay and English. A majority of the respondents agreed that Iban students must learn the language at school, although they have mixed feelings about the usefulness of Iban for advancing their academic and professional development in the wider context. Nonetheless, Iban's ongoing vitality is indicated by the respondents' strong emotional attachment to it and deep regard for it.

For Objective 3 (to compare the use of the Iban language in interactions in the family, outside of home, as well as social media and new domains in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas), the results revealed that locality plays a crucial role in determining language use and attitudes among the Iban people. The presence of many Iban people around the respondents can affect intergenerational language transmission and the language used in

religious practices and social communication. In the home domains, there are indications of a shift in language use, especially among younger generations in areas where Iban is losing ground to English as the primary language spoken in families. This raises doubts about the dominance of the Iban language, particularly in urban areas where the Iban community is not that abundant. Outside of home domains, the Iban language is still widely used for several purposes in Iban-dominant areas, which include praying and interacting with neighbours, friends, classmates, and coworkers. On the other hand, Sarawak Malay and Standard Malay show their superiority over Iban, especially in official settings in non-Iban-dominant areas. This is not a decline in the dominance of Iban, but that Iban had not made much inroads into formal situations, such as meetings where either English or Malay tends to be used (Metom et al., 2021). When Iban individuals move from Iban-dominant areas to non-Iban-dominant areas, the study found that the religious and education domains suffer the greatest decline in Iban usage. The existence of other ethnic groups has unavoidably resulted in a rise in the use of English, Sarawak Malay, and Standard Malay, which reduces the space for Iban usage, even though the domains of friendship, employment, and transactions are less affected.

For Objective 4 (to compare the perceived and observed language use of the participants in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas), the results present a comprehensive comparison of language use among the Iban community in Sarawak across family, outside-home, and social media/new media domains, based on both questionnaire data (self-reported) and non-participant observational data. Key findings reveal that within family domains, Iban remains the dominant language, especially in Iban-dominant areas, reflecting strong intergenerational transmission and positive attitudes towards preserving the mother tongue. However, in non-Iban-dominant areas, English increasingly dominates

among younger Iban speakers, signalling a language shift influenced by education, mixed marriages, and urbanisation. Outside the home, Iban usage decreases with increased use of English, Standard Malay, and Sarawak Malay, particularly in multi-ethnic contexts where these languages facilitate broader inter-ethnic communication. English and Malay also dominate formal and social interactions beyond the home, driven by their institutional prestige and educational emphasis. In social media and new media domains, English is overwhelmingly preferred, especially for work emails, internet searches, social media communication, and YouTube content, although Iban persists mainly in WhatsApp texting, with Sarawak Malay appearing in non-Iban-dominant areas. The observations also revealed code-switching and mixing between Iban and Sarawak Malay in mixed families, highlighting linguistic adaptation in diverse sociocultural settings.

Generally, there are five key findings of this study, as follows:

1. Most respondents learned Iban informally, acquired from their parents at home.
2. The Iban language is predominantly used at home but faces reduced transmission in non-Iban-dominant areas, especially in interactions involving Iban youngsters.
3. Iban is used to a lesser extent in communication with other ethnic groups (Malay, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Chinese, etc.) despite being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak.
4. Iban is the least used language for social and professional communication in new media because of the dominance of English.
5. Locality influences language use and attitudes within the Iban community, particularly intergenerational language transmission, religious practices, and communication in various social contexts.

This study shows that there are major obstacles standing in the way of the ethnolinguistic vitality of Iban in Sarawak. Based on the framework proposed by Giles et al. (1977), Iban is displaying the following trends, which may threaten the vitality of the Iban language. In terms of demographics, even though the Iban community is the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, intergenerational language transmission to the younger generations is decreasing. While 94.60% of the respondents said they acquired the language from their parents, only 33.39% of their children attended formal Iban education (Metom & Ting, 2024). The low enrolment rate suggests a decline in intergenerational language transmission, which is important for sustaining the Iban language's vitality. In terms of institutional support, it is insufficient to advance the Iban language's vernacular status. Even though Iban is recognised as Pupil's Own Language (POL) and has been taught in Malaysian schools since 1968, the ethnic language is offered as an elective rather than a compulsory subject. The POL policy in Malaysia allows students from minority ethnic groups to learn their native language in national schools if there is sufficient demand, typically requiring at least 15 students for a language class to be offered (Riget & Campbell, 2020; Stephen et al., 2022). While this provision, available since 1997, aims to support linguistic and cultural diversity, its implementation faces significant challenges. Research highlights frequent shortcomings, such as the scarcity of trained teachers, a lack of suitable textbooks, inadequately developed syllabuses, and the practical issue that minority groups often do not meet the minimum student number required to start classes (Stephen et al., 2022). In practice, indigenous languages like Kadazandusun, Iban, or Semai are taught only on a very limited basis, and POL classes are sometimes scheduled after regular school hours, reducing their accessibility and effectiveness. Despite these hurdles, the presence of POL reflects Malaysia's recognition of the importance of mother tongue education for ethnic identity and cultural preservation,

although more robust measures and resources are needed for these goals to be fully realised (Riget & Campbell, 2020; Stephen et al., 2022).

This absence of mandatory instruction for formal learning lowers the perceived value of the Iban language in the educational setting and contributes to low enrolment rates (Metom & Ting, 2024). The respondents may perceive Iban as of lower status because it is not taught in school, except if enough parents request it to be taught as a subject. At present, less and less Iban students are enrolling in the Iban language programmes, which reduces the Iban language instruction in schools. Furthermore, there is a significant lack of certified Iban language teachers, which is made worse by the lack of qualified language teachers to teach the Iban subject in schools (Chua, 2023; Tawie, 2023). In terms of social status, Iban is not as prestigious as English and Malay and does not have much place in official domains, new media, and education. Many Iban people believe that studying Iban is less advantageous than being proficient in Malay or English, which are thought to be more advantageous for social integration and economic mobility. This lowers the perceived prestige and legitimacy of Iban in the eyes of the Iban community. The results also show that English is preferred more in professional and new media domains, which further challenges the status of the Iban language. Due to its limited relevance in larger societal contexts, this view affects the Iban community's interest in formal learning of the ethnic language, where students may choose not to learn Iban. This change in language preference is indicative of larger social trends and emphasises the necessity of focused initiatives to advance the Iban language use across a range of contexts (Metom & Ting, 2024).

5.2 Implications of Findings

This study contributes to the field of sociolinguistics, particularly in the context of majority language vitality in Sarawak, Malaysia. Its significance lies in providing methodological precision, theoretical depth, and practical implications for language revitalisation efforts.

Researching the Iban language today is essential to fill the knowledge gap, especially within the evolving framework of language vitality. Traditionally, studies of language vitality concentrated mainly on smaller, minority languages at risk of extinction (Fishman, 1991; UNESCO, 2003). However, current research widens this scope to include large language communities, recognising that vitality applies not only to endangered languages but also to those spoken by millions, such as Mandarin, Spanish, English, Hindi, and Arabic (How et al., 2015; Kurniawati, 2021).

Large language communities, despite their population size, also face challenges that may threaten their vitality. These include language shift induced by globalisation, urbanisation, and the dominance of global lingua francas like English, which affects intergenerational language transmission and domain use (Lloyd-Smith et al., 2023). For example, some Chinese dialects such as Hakka are in decline even while Mandarin expands, illustrating that vitality depends not only on the absolute number of speakers but also on factors like positive language attitudes, institutional support, intergenerational transmission, and use in education and media (Lloyd-Smith et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2003). Sociolinguistic research on large language communities remains relatively limited, emphasising the importance of studying languages like Iban within this broader context of vitality assessment. Considering the challenges faced by large language communities enriches

understanding of the sociolinguistic factors affecting language maintenance and can inform effective preservation and revitalisation strategies for indigenous languages with substantial speaker populations (How et al., 2015; Lloyd-Smith et al., 2023).

Hence, this study produces new findings on the ethnolinguistic vitality of an indigenous language of a large group in Sarawak, Malaysia, that is, even a numerically dominant ethnic language can face a reduction in the domains of its use. Because it is spoken by the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, the Iban language is considered "very safe" (Omar, 2017). However, the ethnic language is often overlooked in research due to the assumption of continuous maintenance of the language. Furthermore, there are many studies on smaller indigenous languages in Sarawak, such as the Bidayuh (Coluzzi et al., 2013; Kayad et al., 2022; Kayad & Ting, 2021), the Kejaman (Joan & Ting, 2016), the Sihan (Mohamed & Hashim, 2012), and the Remun (Akter, 2014).

The study employed UNESCO's nine criteria for language vitality and endangerment (Brenzinger et al., 2003), incorporated with Giles et al.'s (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality theory. The quantitative component includes structured online questionnaires developed from UNESCO's criteria, capturing broad language use and language attitude patterns, while the qualitative aspect involves detailed non-participant observation based on Fishman's (1967) theory of language domains, which allows for contextualised insights into language attitudes and behaviours. This triangulation enables the study to access both the macro-level trends and micro-level sociolinguistic realities that enhance the comprehensiveness of the findings. In addition, there is a marked discrepancy in the results between the questionnaire and observational data. An important empirical finding of this study is that while the questionnaire reports the language use of the Iban respondents based on their self-reported perceptions, the observation provides a direct and objective means of collecting actual data

on the Iban participants' language use in real-time contexts. Observation involves systematically watching and recording participants' language behaviour as it naturally occurs, thus capturing the variations in language use that respondents might overlook or fail to report accurately. This observational data reveals a wider and more complex assortment of language use in practice, which highlights code-switching, context-dependent variations, and spontaneous language choices that the questionnaire might not capture. By combining both methods, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how the Iban language is actually used in everyday interactions versus how it is perceived by its speakers.

Furthermore, the findings on the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Iban language are important in highlighting the crucial research gap between the subjective and objective vitality of indigenous languages in Malaysia, especially in Sarawak. This research goes deeper into the attitudes and perceptions of the Iban community towards their language. Previous related studies by Coluzzi (2010) and Ting et al. (2021) have concentrated on single places, namely, Temburong in Brunei and Song in Sarawak. These studies evaluated the Iban language's vitality mainly through the use of questionnaires. Coluzzi (2010) found that Iban in Temburong is still a vital language with a very high degree of intergenerational transmission due to these four main factors: endogamy, close-knit social networks, larger communities present outside Brunei, and institutional support. Meanwhile, Ting et al. (2021) assessed the vitality status of Iban in Song, Sarawak, to be medium despite Song having 95% of Iban speakers. This current study examined both Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas to obtain a thorough picture of the Iban language's vitality status in Sarawak. Moreover, no studies have examined the impact of informal learning on language use and attitudes of the Iban people, making the findings of this current study especially important for the Iban language's future directions. There is no doubt that the Iban language has strong

intergenerational language transmission, institutional support, and a large population presence in Sarawak, but the results point to a number of factors that can threaten its long-term survival, namely, reduced use of Iban outside of home domains and minimal use in new media domains.

The study has direct practical implications, producing findings that are of immediate relevance to several stakeholders, namely, government, policymakers, parents, the Iban community, educational institutions, and cultural organisations. These stakeholders can support the Iban language by playing their important roles through a variety of initiatives within the community and educational system. These initiatives should aim at improving the Iban language's status in Sarawak, accessibility, and quality of instruction in the following ways.

Firstly, the study calls for setting up a local research centre for the Iban language. Despite being the largest ethnic group in Sarawak, to date, there is an absence of a government-funded research centre for the Iban language (Umbat, 2020). The establishment of a dedicated research centre for the Iban language in Sarawak is both timely and critical to the continued vitality, development, and documentation of the Iban language and its rich cultural heritage. While the Sarawak government has recently allocated RM150,000 to the Association for the Educational Development of Iban Language (AEDIL) to support language development initiatives (Edward, 2025), this funding is directed towards educational programmes and not towards the establishment of a full-scale research centre. This gap leaves the Iban language vulnerable amid broader language shift pressures and educational challenges. A research centre would provide a strategic platform for sustaining Iban literacy and documentation skills (Philip, 2017). It would serve as a hub for scholarly work, resource development, linguistic standardisation (including the advancement of the

Dunging alphabet), and teacher training. The forum of *'Jaku Iban Enggau Pengelandik Jari Tikas Sarawak'* (Raphael, 2024) has produced formal resolutions calling for such a centre, emphasising broad-based community support and recognition at both grassroots and governmental levels. Evidence from broader Indigenous language research affirms the transformative impact of localised and Indigenous-led research centres, such as the initiatives by the First Nations University of Canada and the Research Unit for Indigenous Language at the University of Melbourne (University of Melbourne, n.d.; UNESCO, 2023; Wejak, 2024). These centres demonstrate how such institutions can drive revitalisation, curriculum innovation, and digital documentation, setting benchmarks for similar efforts in Sarawak. These centres not only empower communities by restoring agency, but also produce culturally-relevant research methodologies, and safeguard local traditions and knowledge systems. They also generate vital resources for education, promote intergenerational language transmission, and enable collaborative projects that address community priorities. This also highlights the need for a research centre that can systematically address teacher education, resource development, and community outreach in a holistic manner. Without such coordinated efforts, the risk of language decline or even extinction is real, as highlighted by state leaders and language advocates who have pointed to the declining language proficiency among younger Iban generations (Lim, 2021; Philip, 2017; Umbat, 2020).

Secondly, there should be more programmes for training Iban language teachers. To produce competent Iban language teachers, local universities, such as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), should design and implement Iban language teacher training programmes to produce trained teachers to teach Iban. This would address the considerable proportion of inexperienced teachers now teaching the language. Only three higher learning

institutions handle the certification of teachers for the teaching of Iban. Currently, *Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris* has offered a degree programme in the teaching of Iban since 2010 (Sandai & Ong, 2015). However, only a few graduates would become Iban teachers because the subject is offered as a minor subject in the degree programme alongside Malay (Lim, 2021). There are two teacher-training colleges in Sarawak that also train Iban teachers. *Program Pensiswazahan Guru Bahasa Iban* first commenced at *Institut Perguruan Kampus Rejang* with 25 participants. Since then, the programme has trained 322 teachers from 2013 to 2021. By 2026, another 146 trained Iban teachers will graduate from the programme; however, the programme is scheduled to be discontinued in 2029. Meanwhile, 30 teacher trainers were enrolled at *Institut Perguruan Kampus Miri* when it first opened. Since then, the institution has trained 57 Iban teachers from 2015 to 2020; however, the six-week in-service training programme is no longer available. Initially enthusiastic about Iban teacher training, support for its continuation has now waned (Metom & Ting, 2024). Hence, the government should increase the recruitment of Iban language teachers. Given the recent decline in enrolment, it is imperative that the Ministry of Education aggressively seeks out candidates for its Iban language teaching programmes. This would guarantee that Iban language instruction is properly supported and contribute to the replenishment of the pool of trained teachers. The training and hiring of Iban language teachers will ensure that the language is taught effectively and preserved for future generations. More importantly, the formal teaching of Iban accords a prestige and a recognition to the Iban language, and this would spur the Iban community to value their language more and pass it on to the younger generation.

Finally, community involvement should be promoted in the Iban language preservation, emphasising that active participation by parents and community organisations

is essential for sustaining the ethnic language. Initiatives, such as language seminars, cultural events, and community-based language programmes, can reinforce the Iban language's relevance in daily life and encourage intergenerational transmission. There are some recent updates on the Iban language preservation efforts, such as the "*Jaku Iban Enggau Pengelandik Jari Tikas Sarawak*" symposium, which was held in Miri, Sarawak, on August 2nd and 3rd (Raphael, 2024). The symposium marks an important occasion dedicated to promoting and safeguarding the Iban culture, language, and heritage. The call to establish a Unit for Other Languages (UNIFOL) in Sarawak is one of seven motions included in the 'Iban Language Resolution' that will be presented to the state government of Sarawak. Other important key motions include the third motion, which called for revising the Iban Language System used in school textbooks published in 2009, to ensure it aligns with the updated Iban language system; the fourth motion, which proposed establishing a committee responsible for improving the Iban Language System books in schools, since the existing materials have not been revised for over 15 years; the fifth motion, which requested that competitions and traditional games related to the Iban language be included in the District Education Office (PPD) calendar of activities, to encourage youth participation and foster a love for Iban literature; the sixth motion, which aimed to expand the enrollment for the Bachelor's Degree in Iban Language Studies at the Teachers Education Institute (IPG) to 100 students per intake, starting from the 2025-02030 academic term, to address the growing demand for Iban language teachers; and the seventh proposal, which recommended introducing a Bachelor's Degree in Iban Language Education at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) (Raphael, 2024). Furthermore, with regards to community-based programmes, radio programmes, like *"Pengigat Tuai"* on Wai FM, serve as an effective medium for preserving oral traditions, such as *ensera* (Iban folktales), exposing all generations to Iban language stories

and oral literature regularly (Laing & Muyan, 2022). In addition, the Association for the Educational Development of Iban Language (AEDIL) has also taken the initiative to advance Iban language education across Sarawak, in which it was allocated RM150,000 by the Sarawak government in showing support for its effort. The Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (SADIA) also plays an important role in preserving and promoting Iban culture and language. As a key protagonist in these efforts, Sadia has been organising a variety of programmes aimed at safeguarding Iban heritage, in which part of the goals is to preserve and promote the traditional '*ngajat*' dance and the Iban language (Edward, 2025).

This study also stresses the importance of equipping parents with resources and educational materials to support at-home Iban language acquisition, particularly for young children. Such measures can strengthen the language's transmission within families and enhance children's linguistic competence before formal schooling (Sandai et al., 2013). An important inspiration for the Iban language initiative is drawn from the DBNA/UNESCO Multilingual Education (MLE) Project, launched in 2006 for the Bidayuh community in Sarawak. This project pioneered a mother-tongue-based early childhood education model, starting children's schooling in their indigenous language before gradually introducing *Bahasa Malaysia* and English. Establishing kindergartens and playschools that use the Bidayuh language as the medium of instruction fostered cultural identity, as well as literacy and numeracy skills among participating children. Evaluations demonstrated excellent literacy outcomes and cultural understanding, confirming the project's effectiveness (Joyik et al., 2010; Kayad et al., 2016). The project successfully developed curricula and materials for five Bidayuh dialects and established pilot playschools and kindergartens, which helped children build cultural identity and literacy. However, the project faced several significant challenges. UNESCO funding supported the initial development phase from 2006 to 2009,

but funding ceased afterward. As a result, maintaining ongoing teacher salaries and training became difficult, with village councils often struggling to pay teachers. DBNA had to shoulder some costs, making further expansion challenging (Joyik et al., 2017; Naeg, 2010). Teachers also reported that some parents had misconceptions about the purpose of mother-tongue-based education, financial problems, and writing material problems (Kayad et al., 2022). Another main challenge was the language standardisation issue, pointing to the Bidayuh language's significant dialectal diversity. The five primary Bidayuh dialects, namely, Biatah, Bau, Serian, Salako, and Rara, differ in vocabulary and pronunciation that complicates which dialect to choose. This further hinders the development of a unified orthography and the promotion of one standardised form for all (Wai & Ben-Said, 2024). Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, the Iban language project can emulate and adapt such community-based initiatives, where it can create immersive language environments for preschoolers, using traditional literature and storytelling as core learning tools. These grassroots efforts are vital to enhancing intergenerational language transmission and preserving the language for future generations. This is particularly urgent given that although many Iban speakers remain fluent, formal education and use of the Iban language among younger generations are declining compared to their parents (Metom & Ting, 2024).

5.3 Directions for Future Research

Future research should adopt a longitudinal approach. Studies monitoring the Iban's ethnolinguistic vitality across time through longitudinal research would provide important insights regarding language shift and maintenance within the community. This could involve conducting follow-up surveys or interviews with the same individuals to regularly track changes in language use, attitudes, and generational transmission. In addition, future studies

should use observational data, language competency tests, and self-reported data to increase the reliability of the findings. To triangulate the results, this could involve recording conversations in the real world, observing classrooms, and administering standardised language competence tests. Furthermore, future research should explore specific domains in depth. To find complex patterns of language use and attitudes, researchers should investigate specific domains of language use, such as religious settings and workplaces. To have a deeper understanding of the function of the Iban language in various contexts, case studies of specific institutions or organisations may be necessary. Finally, future studies should look into how language policies affect the Iban language's ethnolinguistic vitality at the federal and state levels. This could involve reviewing policy documents, speaking with decision-makers, and evaluating how well language policies are being implemented in the Iban community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Journal Publications

1. **Metom, L.,** & Ting, S. H (2024). Formal use of the Iban language among the Iban community in Sarawak, Malaysia. *Language Documentation & Conservation*, *18*, 216-238. https://hdl.handle.net/10125/74806
2. **Metom, L.,** Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021). The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia: Ethnic language losing ground to English and Sarawak Malay. *Human Behavior, Development and Society* 22(3). 54–65. (https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index. php/hbds)
3. Ting, S. H., Tinggang, A., & **Metom, L.** (2021). Language use and attitudes as indicators of subjective vitality: The Iban of Sarawak, Malaysia. *Language Documentation and Conservation, 15*, 190–218. http://hdl.handle.net/10125/24973

Proceedings

1. **Metom, L.,** & Ting, S. H. (2022). Pride in ethnic language and numerical dominance: A case study of the Iban in Sarawak, Malaysia. *The Proceedings of the 2022 Spring Conference of the Joongwon Linguistic Society of Korea,* 47.
2. **Metom, L.,** Ting, S. H., & Ling, H. N. (2021, September 8–9). Language use of the Iban people in Iban-dominant and non-Iban-dominant areas in Sarawak. *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Language Studies (iCLS2021),* Kota Samarahan, Malaysia.
3. **Metom, L.,** & Ting, S. H. (2023). Extent of formal use of Iban among the Iban community in Sarawak. In *The International Conference on Global Issues, Trends*

and Directions across Disciplines (ICGD), Hoa Sen University, Vietnam., 26-27 May 2023, Zoom.

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

Bahagian Penerbitan
Publication Division

UNIMAS/NC-09/03-21 (30)

15 Julai 2021

Prof Madya Dr Ting Su Hie
Fakulti Bahasa dan Komunikasi
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
94300 Kota Samarahan

Prof Madya Dr Ting,

Kelulusan Etika Penyelidikan:
- ***Vitality of The Iban Language in Sarawak***
No. kelulusan Etika: HREC(NM)/2020(1)/05

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas dirujuk.

Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa etika untuk penyelidikan di atas telah **DILULUSKAN**. Penyelidik-penyelidik yang terlibat adalah seperti dibawah:

Penyelidik Utama
- Prof Madya Dr Ting Su Hie
  Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Segala rekod dan data subjek adalah SULIT dan hanya digunakan untuk tujuan penyelidikan dan semua isu serta prosedur mengenai kerahsiaan data mesti dipatuhi. Kebenaran daripada Ketua Pusat Tanggungjawab di mana kawasan kajian yang terlibat mesti diperolehi terlebih dahulu sebelum penyelidikan dimulakan.

Untuk makluman, kelulusan ini adalah sah untuk tempoh selama **1 tahun** bermula dari **15 Julai 2021** sehingga **14 Julai 2022** sahaja. Sebarang urusan surat-menyurat berkaitan dengan penyelidikan ini haruslah dinyatakan nombor rujukan kelulusan etika bagi melancarkan proses yang berkaitan.

Sekian, terima kasih.

Yang benar,

Professor Dr Lela Hj Su'ut
Pengerusi
Jawatankuasa Etika Penyelidikan (Bukan Perubatan)

MSC-Status

94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, MALAYSIA | Tel + 60 82 582 287 / 1185

Appendix C: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE: VITALITY OF THE IBAN LANGUAGE IN SARAWAK

I am conducting a study on "Vitality of the Iban Language in Sarawak" as a requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Your participation in the study is very much appreciated. Lilly Metom (lillymetom@gmail.com or WhatsApp: +60128730409)

Saya sedang menjalankan kajian mengenai "Kekuatan Bahasa Iban di Sarawak" sebagai syarat untuk memperolehi Ijazah Doktor Falsafah di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Penyertaan anda dalam kajian ini adalah amat dihargai. Lilly Metom (lillymetom@gmail.com atau WhatsApp: +60128730409)

Participant Agreement to Participate in the Study
Persetujuan Peserta Untuk Mengambil Bahagian Dalam Kajian Ini

Please tick the following if you consent to participate in the study.
Sila tandakan yang berikut jika anda bersetuju untuk menyertai kajian ini.

a) I have read the participant information and understand that I have agreed to participate in a study on Iban people's views on the Iban language, which involves filling in a questionnaire.
Saya telah membaca maklumat peserta dan memahami bahawa saya telah bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam kajian mengenai pandangan orang Iban terhadap Bahasa Iban, yang melibatkan pengisian soal selidik.

Yes Ya ○

b) I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary, and that if I no longer wish to participate, I can withdraw at any time during the survey. I do not have to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. I have been provided with details of whom I should contact if I wish to withdraw.
Saya faham bahawa penyertaan saya dalam kajian adalah secara sukarela, dan jika saya tidak lagi mahu mengambil bahagian, saya boleh menarik diri pada bila-bila masa semasa tinjauan. Saya tidak perlu memberikan alasan atau penjelasan untuk melakukannya. Saya telah diberi maklumat mengenai siapa yang harus saya hubungi sekiranya ingin menarik diri.

Yes Ya ○

c) I understand that all data I provide will be kept confidential and stored securely at UiTM Sarawak and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Only the researchers will have access to this.
Saya faham bahawa semua data yang saya berikan akan dirahsiakan dan disimpan dengan selamat di UiTM Sarawak dan Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Hanya penyelidik yang dapat mengaksesnya.

Yes Ya ○

d) I understand that the results of the study will be disseminated through conferences and/or published articles. I understand that my data will remain anonymous at all times.
Saya faham bahawa hasil kajian akan disebarkan melalui persidangan dan / atau artikel yang diterbitkan. Saya faham bahawa data saya akan kekal tanpa nama sepanjang masa.

Yes Ya ○

e) I have read and understood this information and consent to take part in the study.
Saya telah membaca dan memahami maklumat ini dan bersetuju untuk mengambil bahagian dalam kajian ini.

Yes Ya ○

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION
BAHAGIAN A: MAKLUMAT LATAR BELAKANG

1. Town where you were born: _____
   Bandar tempat anda lahir

2. Town you are living in now: _____
   Bandar tempat anda tinggal sekarang

3. Gender
   Jantina

Female	Perempuan	○
Male	Lelaki	○

4. Age Umur

19 years old and below	19 tahun ke bawah	○
20 – 29 years old	20 – 29 tahun	○
30 – 39 years old	30 – 39 tahun	○
40 – 49 years old	40 – 49 tahun	○
50 – 59 years old	50 – 59 tahun	○
60 years old and above	60 tahun ke atas	○

5. Race
   Bangsa

Berawan	Berawan	○
Bidayuh	Bidayuh	○
Bisaya	Bisaya	○
Bukitan	Bukitan	○
Chinese	Cina	○
Eurasian	Eurasian	○
Iban	Iban	○
Indian	India	○
Kayan	Kayan	○
Kedayan	Kedayan	○
Kejaman	Kejaman	○
Kelabit	Kelabit	○
Kenyah	Kenyah	○
Lahanan	Lahanan	○
Lun Bawang	Lun Bawang	○
Malay	Melayu	○
Melanau	Melanau	○
Penan	Penan	○
Punan	Punan	○
Remun	Remun	○
Sa'ban	Sa'ban	○
Sebob	Sebob	○
Sekapan	Sekapan	○
Selako	Selako	○
Sihan	Sihan	○
Ukit	Ukit	○
Others	Lain-lain	○

6. Father's race
Bangsa bapa

Berawan	Berawan	○
Bidayuh	Bidayuh	○
Bisaya	Bisaya	○
Bukitan	Bukitan	○
Chinese	Cina	○
Eurasian	Eurasian	○
Iban	Iban	○
Indian	India	○
Kayan	Kayan	○
Kedayan	Kedayan	○
Kejaman	Kejaman	○
Kelabit	Kelabit	○
Kenyah	Kenyah	○
Lahanan	Lahanan	○
Lun Bawang	Lun Bawang	○
Malay	Melayu	○
Melanau	Melanau	○
Penan	Penan	○
Punan	Punan	○
Remun	Remun	○
Sa'ban	Sa'ban	○
Sebob	Sebob	○
Sekapan	Sekapan	○
Selako	Selako	○
Sihan	Sihan	○
Ukit	Ukit	○
Others	Lain-lain	○

7. Mother's race
Bangsa ibu

Berawan	Berawan	○
Bidayuh	Bidayuh	○
Bisaya	Bisaya	○
Bukitan	Bukitan	○
Chinese	Cina	○
Eurasian	Eurasian	○
Iban	Iban	○
Indian	India	○
Kayan	Kayan	○
Kedayan	Kedayan	○
Kejaman	Kejaman	○
Kelabit	Kelabit	○
Kenyah	Kenyah	○
Lahanan	Lahanan	○
Lun Bawang	Lun Bawang	○
Malay	Melayu	○
Melanau	Melanau	○
Penan	Penan	○
Punan	Punan	○
Remun	Remun	○
Sa'ban	Sa'ban	○
Sebob	Sebob	○
Sekapan	Sekapan	○
Selako	Selako	○
Sihan	Sihan	○
Ukit	Ukit	○
Others	Lain-lain	○

8. Marital status
Status perkahwinan

Single	Bujang	○
Married	Berkahwin	○
Divorced/Widow/Widower	Bercerai/Balu/Duda	○

9. Wife/Husband's race (if married)
Bangsa isteri/suami (sekiranya berkahwin)

Berawan	Berawan	○
Bidayuh	Bidayuh	○
Bisaya	Bisaya	○
Bukitan	Bukitan	○
Chinese	Cina	○
Eurasian	Eurasian	○
Iban	Iban	○
Indian	India	○
Kayan	Kayan	○
Kedayan	Kedayan	○
Kejaman	Kejaman	○
Kelabit	Kelabit	○
Kenyah	Kenyah	○
Lahanan	Lahanan	○
Lun Bawang	Lun Bawang	○
Malay	Melayu	○
Melanau	Melanau	○
Penan	Penan	○
Punan	Punan	○
Remun	Remun	○
Sa'ban	Sa'ban	○
Sebob	Sebob	○
Sekapan	Sekapan	○
Selako	Selako	○
Sihan	Sihan	○
Ukit	Ukit	○
Others	Lain-lain	○
Not Married	Tidak Berkahwin	○

10. Religion
Agama

Bahai	Bahai	○
Buddhist	Buddhist	○
Christian	Kristian	○
Hindu	Hindu	○
Muslim	Muslim	○
Others	Lain-lain	○
No Religion	Tiada Agama	○

11. Your current job: _____
Pekerjaan anda sekarang

12. Household monthly income
Pendapatan bulanan isi rumah

Less than RM2,000	Kurang dari RM2,000	○
RM2,000 – RM3,999	RM2,000 – RM3,999	○
RM4,000 – RM5,999	RM4,000 – RM5,999	○
RM6,000 – RM7,999	RM6,000 – RM7,999	○
RM8,000 – RM9,999	RM8,000 – RM9,999	○
RM8,000 – RM9,999	RM8,000 – RM9,999	○
RM12,000 and above	RM12,000 ke atas	○

13. Highest level of educational qualification
Tahap kelayakan pendidikan tertinggi

Primary 6	Darjah 6	○
Form 3	Tingkatan 3	○
Form 5	Tingkatan 5	○
Form 6	Tingkatan 6	○
Certificate	Sijil	○
Diploma	Diploma	○
Degree	Ijazah	○
Master	Sarjana	○
PhD	PhD	○

SECTION B: YOUR IBAN LANGUAGE SKILLS
BAHAGIAN B: KEMAHIRAN BAHASA IBAN ANDA

14. Which language did you first learn as a child?
Bahasa manakah yang pertama kali anda pelajari semasa kecil?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Others	Lain-lain	○

15. Did you learn Iban in school? If yes, what is the highest level?
Adakah anda belajar Bahasa Iban di sekolah? Sekiranya ya, apakah tahap tertinggi?

Did not learn Iban in school	Tidak mempelajari Iban di sekolah	○
Primary 6	Darjah 6	○
Form 3	Tingkatan 3	○
Form 5	Tingkatan 5	○
Form 6	Tingkatan 6	○
Certificate	Sijil	○
Diploma	Diploma	○
Degree or higher	Sarjana Muda atau lebih tinggi	○

16. Do/Did your children learn Iban in school? If yes, what is the highest level?
Adakah anak anda belajar Bahasa Iban di sekolah? Sekiranya ya, apakah tahap tertinggi?

I have no children	Saya tidak ada anak	○
My children did not learn Iban in school	Anak saya tidak belajar Bahasa Iban di sekolah	○
Primary 6	Darjah 6	○
Form 3	Tingkatan 3	○
Form 5	Tingkatan 5	○
Form 6	Tingkatan 6	○
Certificate	Sijil	○
Diploma	Diploma	○
Degree or higher	Sarjana Muda atau lebih tinggi	○

17. How did you first learn Iban?
Bagaimanakah anda mula-mula belajar bahasa Iban?

from my parents dari ibubapa saya	○
from my brothers and sisters dari adik-beradik saya	○
from my grandparents dari datuk dan nenek saya	○
from my relatives dari saudara-mara saya	○
from school dari sekolah	○
from social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) dari media social (cth. Facebook, Twitter, dll.)	○
from radio dari radio	
others lain-lain	○

18. I can speak fluently **in Iban**.
Saya boleh bercakap dengan lancar dalam Bahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

19. I can easily follow a conversation **in Iban**.
Saya dapat mengikuti perbualan dalam Bahasa Iban dengan mudah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

20. I can easily understand the contents of books, newspapers, articles, and magazines **in Iban.**
Saya dapat memahami isi buku, surat khabar, artikel, dan majalah dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

21. I can easily write anything **in Iban**.
Saya boleh menulis apa sahaja dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

SECTION C: YOUR MALAY LANGUAGE SKILLS
BAHAGIAN C: KEMAHIRAN BAHASA MELAYU ANDA

22. I can speak fluently **in Malay**.
Saya boleh bercakap dengan lancar dalam Bahasa Melayu.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

23. I can easily follow a conversation **in Malay**.
Saya dapat mengikuti perbualan dalam Bahasa Melayu dengan mudah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

24. I can easily understand the contents of books, newspapers, articles, and magazines **in Malay**.
Saya dapat memahami isi buku, surat khabar, artikel, dan majalah dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Melayu.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

25. I can easily write anything **in Malay.**
Saya boleh menulis apa sahaja dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Melayu.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

SECTION D: YOUR LANGUAGE SKILLS IN ENGLISH
BAHAGIAN D: KEMAHIRAN BAHASA INGGERIS ANDA

26. I can speak fluently **in English**.
Saya boleh bercakap dengan lancar dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

27. I can easily follow a conversation **in English**.
Saya dapat mengikuti perbualan dalam Bahasa Inggeris dengan mudah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

28. I can easily understand the contents of books, newspapers, articles, and magazines **in English**.
Saya dapat memahami isi buku, surat khabar, artikel, dan majalah dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

29. I can easily write anything **in English**.
Saya boleh menulis apa sahaja dengan mudah dalam Bahasa Inggeris.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

SECTION E: LANGUAGE USE IN FAMILY
BAHAGIAN E: PENGGUNAAN BAHASA DALAM KELUARGA

30. Which language do you normally use with your **parents**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan ibubapa anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

31. Which language do you normally use with your **wife/husband**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan isteri/suami anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○
Not Married	Tidak Berkenaan	○

32. Which language do you normally use with **children**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan anak-anak anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○

Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○
No Children	Tidak Berkenaan	○

33. Which language do you normally use with your **brothers and sisters**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan adik-beradik anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○
No Brothers and Sisters	Tidak Berkenaan	○

34. Which language do you normally use with your **grandparents**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan datuk dan nenek anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

35. Which language do you normally use with your **relatives** (e.g. cousins, uncles, and aunts)?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan saudara mara anda (cth. sepupu, bapa saudara, ibu saudara)?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

SECTION F: LANGUAGE USE OUTSIDE HOME
BAHAGIAN F: PENGGUNAAN BAHASA DI LUAR RUMAH

36. Which language do you normally use with your **neighbours**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan jiran anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○

Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

37. Which language do you normally use with your **friends**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan rakan-rakan anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

38. Which language do you normally use with your **classmates**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan rakan sekelas anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

39. Which language do you normally use with your **workmates**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dengan rakan sekerja anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Not Working	Tidak Bekerja	○

40. Which language do you normally use for **prayers**?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna untuk berdoa?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

41. Which language do you usually use in government departments?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna di pejabat kerajaan?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○

Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

42. Which language do you usually use when buying things at shops?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna semasa membeli barang di kedai?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

SECTION G: LANGUAGE USE IN NEW MEDIA
BAHAGIAN G: PENGGUNAAN BAHASA DALAM MEDIA BARU

43. Which language do you usually use in email for work communication?
Bahasa manakah yang biasa anda gunakan dalam emel untuk urus niaga kerja?

I'm not working	Saya Tidak Bekerja	○
Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

44. Which language do you usually use in searching or reading internet information?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna untuk mencari atau membaca maklumat internet?

I do not read internet information	Saya tidak membaca maklumat internet	○
Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

45. Which language do you usually use in social media communication (e.g. FB, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, etc.)? Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dalam komunikasi media sosial (cth. FB, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, dll.)?

I do not use social media	Saya tidak menggunakan media sosial	○
Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○

Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

46. Which language do you usually use when watching YouTube contents?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna semasa menonton kandungan YouTube?

I do not watch YouTube	Saya tidak menonton YouTube	○
Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

47. Which language do you usually use in writing SMS or WhatsApp?
Bahasa apakah yang biasa anda guna dalam menulis SMS atau WhatsApp?

I do not write SMS or WhatsApp messages	Saya tidak menulis mesej SMS atau WhatsApp	○
Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

SECTION H: ATTITUDES TOWARDS IBAN
BAHAGIAN H: SIKAP TERHADAP BAHASA IBAN

48. I am an Iban because I can speak Iban.
Saya dianggap sebagai orang Iban sebab saya berbahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

49. I am an Iban because my father and/or my mother are Iban.
Saya dianggap sebagai orang Iban sebab ibu dan/atau bapa saya adalah orang Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

50. I speak Iban because it symbolises my culture, heritage, and identity.
Saya bercakap Bahasa Iban sebab ia melambangkan budaya, warisan, dan identiti saya.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

51. I speak Iban because I was born an Iban.
Saya bercakap Bahasa Iban sebab saya dilahirkan sebagai orang Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

52. I speak Iban to show that I belong to the Iban ethnic group.
Saya bercakap Bahasa Iban untuk menunjukkan bahawa saya tergolong dalam kumpulan etnik Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

53. I feel proud of the Iban cultural history.
Saya berasa bangga dengan sejarah kebudayaan Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

54. I feel proud of the Iban people's achievements over the years.
Saya berasa bangga dengan kejayaan orang Iban selama ini.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

55. I think Iban is an important language because there are a lot of Iban speakers.
Saya rasa Bahasa Iban adalah bahasa penting kerana terdapat banyak penutur Bahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

56. I think Iban is an important language because the Iban people are powerful in politics.
Saya rasa Bahasa Iban adalah bahasa yang penting kerana orang Iban adalah kuat dalam politik.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

57. I think Iban is an important language because the Iban people are successful in business.
Saya rasa Bahasa Iban adalah bahasa yang penting kerana orang Iban berjaya dalam perniagaan.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

58. It is important for Iban students to learn the language in school.
Adalah penting bagi pelajar-pelajar Iban untuk mempelajari Bahasa Iban di sekolah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

59. I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in SARAWAK.
Saya rasa Bahasa Iban adalah bahasa yang penting kerana bahasa Iban sangat dihormati di SARAWAK.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

60. I think Iban is an important language because Iban is highly respected in MALAYSIA.
Saya rasa Bahasa Iban adalah bahasa yang penting kerana bahasa Iban sangat dihormati di MALAYSIA.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

61. Which of these languages is the most USEFUL FOR YOUR CAREER?
Bahasa yang manakah paling BERGUNA UNTUK KERJAYA anda?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

62. Which of these languages is the most USEFUL IN YOUR STUDIES?
Bahasa yang manakah paling BERGUNA DALAM PENDIDIKAN ANDA?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○

Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

63. Which of these languages do you most CHERISH?
Bahasa yang manakah paling anda SAYANG?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

64. Which of these languages is the STRONGEST in Sarawak?
Bahasa yang manakah PALING KUAT di Sarawak?

Bidayuh	Bahasa Bidayuh	○
Chinese Dialect	Dialek Bahasa Cina	○
English	Bahasa Inggeris	○
Iban	Bahasa Iban	○
Local Malay	Bahasa Melayu Tempatan	○
Mandarin	Bahasa Mandarin	○
Melanau	Bahasa Melanau	○
Standard Malay	Bahasa Melayu Standard	○
Tamil	Bahasa Tamil	○
Other Ethnic Language	Bahasa Etnik Lain	○

SECTION I: FORMAL USE OF IBAN
BAHAGIAN I: PENGGUNAAN BAHASA IBAN SECARA FORMAL

65. My teacher spoke Iban in kindergarten.
Guru saya bercakap dalam Bahasa Iban di tadika.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

66. I think Iban is often used in school meetings.
Pada pendapat saya, Bahasa Iban sering digunakan dalam mesyuarat sekolah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

67. I think there are enough Iban teachers for teaching the Iban subject in schools.
Pada pendapat saya, terdapat cukup guru Iban yang mengajar subjek Bahasa Iban di sekolah-sekolah.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

68. I think radio programmes in Iban are available throughout the week.
Pada pendapat saya, program radio dalam Bahasa Iban adalah bersiaran sepanjang minggu.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

69. I think television news in Iban is available throughout the week.
Pada pendapat saya, berita televisyen dalam Bahasa Iban adalah bersiaran sepanjang minggu.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

70. I think Iban community groups promote the written use of the Iban language.
Pada pendapat saya, kumpulan komuniti Iban mengalakkan penggunaan bahasa Iban secara bertulis.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

SECTION J: IBAN SPEAKERS IN SARAWAK
BAHAGIAN J: PENUTUR IBAN DI SARAWAK

71. The Sarawak population is 2.6 million. In your opinion, how many people can speak Iban in Sarawak? Penduduk Sarawak sebanyak 2.6 juta. Pada pendapat anda, berapa ramaikah orang boleh bertutur dalam Bahasa Iban di Sarawak?

Less than half a million people	Kurang dari setengah juta orang	○
About 1 million people	Kira-kira 1 juta orang	○
About 1.5 million people	Kira-kira 1.5 juta orang	○
About 2 million people	Kira-kira 2 juta orang	○
More than 2.5 million people	Lebih daripada 2.5 juta orang	○
Unsure	Tidak pasti	○

72. In your opinion, what percentage of Sarawak people can speak Iban?
Pada pendapat anda, berapakah peratusan penduduk Sarawak boleh bertutur dalam Bahasa Iban?

Less than 25%	Kurang dari 25%	○
25% - 49%	25% - 49%	○
50% - 75%	50% - 75%	○
75% - 100%	75% - 100%	○
Unsure	Tidak pasti	○

73. Nowadays, more and more non-Iban people can speak Iban.
Pada masa kini semakin ramai orang bukan Iban boleh bertutur dalam bahasa Iban.

Strongly Disagree	Sangat Tidak Setuju	○
Disagree	Tidak Setuju	○
Unsure	Tidak Pasti	○
Agree	Setuju	○
Strongly Agree	Sangat Setuju	○

SECTION K: IBAN MATERIALS IN MY HOME
BAHAGIAN K: BAHAN-BAHAN IBAN DI RUMAH SAYA

74. Which of these printed materials in Iban do you MOST often read?
Bahan bercetak dalam Bahasa Iban manakah yang anda PALING KERAP baca?

None	Tiada	○
Bible	Alkitab	○
Story books	Buku Cerita	○
Magazines	Majalah	○
Newspapers	Suratkhabar	○
Textbooks	Buku Teks	○

75. How many Iban DICTIONARIES do you have at home?
Berapa jumlah KAMUS Iban yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

76. How many Iban BOOKS FOR STUDYING IBAN (e.g., text books, grammar books) do you have at home? Berapa jumlah BUKU UNTUK BELAJAR BAHASA IBAN (contohnya, buku teks, buku tatabahasa) yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

77. How many Iban STORY BOOKS do you have at home?
Berapa jumlah BUKU CERITA Iban yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

78. How many Iban MAGAZINES do you have at home?
Berapa jumlah MAJALAH Iban yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

79. How many AUDIO RECORDINGS in Iban do you have at home?
Berapa jumlah RAKAMAN AUDIO dalam Bahasa Iban yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

80. How many VIDEO RECORDINGS in Iban do you have at home?
Berapa jumlah RAKAMAN VIDEO dalam Bahasa Iban yang ada di rumah anda?

None	Tiada	○
1 – 5 copies	1 – 5 salinan	○
6 – 10 copies	6 – 10 salinan	○
11 – 15 copies	11 – 15 salinan	○
16 – 20 copies	16 – 20 salinan	○
More than 20 copies	Lebih dari 20 salinan	○

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you would like to give other views about the Iban language, please email me at lillymetom@gmail.com or WhatsApp: +60128730409.

Terima kasih kerana meluangkan masa untuk melengkapkan soal-selidik ini. Sekiranya anda ingin memberi pandangan lain berkenaan Bahasa Iban, sila emel saya di lillymetom@gmail.com atau WhatsApp: +60128730409.