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From Communicative Action to Linguistic Capital: Arabic 'āmiyyah as an Economic Communication Strategy in Multicultural Competition in Pasuruan

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Abstract

In Indonesia's local economy, language plays a crucial role not only as a medium of communication but also as a strategic resource for fostering trust, building social networks, and creating economic opportunities. While existing research on Arabic in Indonesia predominantly examines its role in religious, educational, and diplomatic settings, its use in daily commercial interactions, particularly in local markets, has remained underexplored. This study addresses this gap by investigating the role of Arabic 'āmiyyah as both a form of communicative action and a type of linguistic capital in the multicultural marketplace of Pasuruan. Using a qualitative sociolinguistic ethnographic approach, the research was conducted in the Kauman and Jalan Jawa areas of Pasuruan City. Participants included Arab Jamaah traders, customers from Arab, Javanese, and Chinese backgrounds, as well as key informants. Data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and recordings of market interactions, and analyzed using discourse and thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Arabic 'āmiyyah, particularly through code-switching and lexical choices, serves as a key tool for building trust, enhancing customer loyalty, and generating economic value. This highlights the significance of language as a vital microeconomic resource in a multicultural economic context, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of linguistic capital in economic communication.

Keywords: Arabic 'āmiyyah, Linguistic Capital, Communicative Action, Local Economy



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1. Introduction

In Indonesia's local economy, language is not just a tool for information exchange but also a means to build networks, credibility, and access to economic opportunities. Studies on young entrepreneurs demonstrate that effective conversational opening strategies serve as linguistic assets for building trust, professional identity, and business networks, thereby positioning language as symbolic capital convertible into business access and economic prospects (Risa Amalia Muzrifah et al., 2025a)

On the international stage, mastery of certain languages has proven to boost economic competitiveness. For instance, learning Portuguese in Macau is perceived by students as a way to access economic, social, and cultural capital; language proficiency becomes capital convertible into job opportunities, networks, and social mobility (Gong et al., 2023). Bourdieusian approaches highlight that language competencies in specific "linguistic markets" are always linked to capital distribution and power structures (Dimov & Güneştepe, 2024; Gong et al., 2023).

Other research underscores the relevance of foreign languages, including Arabic, for business communication. In Nigeria, Arabic skills for business purposes are seen to enhance employability, foster an entrepreneurial orientation, and build confidence in transactions with Arab partners, while reducing reliance on translators (Habibullahi et al., 2025a). In Indonesia, Arabic itself has been identified as playing a role in economic and political diplomacy; it serves as a negotiation and investment medium, particularly in relations with the Arab world (Shidiq et al., 2023). Yet, these studies remain at the macro level (between nations), failing to reach micro-practices of Arabic as a local community language in traditional markets or trader networks.

From a business sociolinguistics perspective, numerous studies show that language forms, communicative strategies, and code choices significantly determine transaction success. Research on small-scale traders (Machinga) in Tanzania found that loanwords, code-mixing, registers, accents, and parallelism were used as strategies to facilitate business communication and affirm community membership (Prosper & Borra, 2025). Studies on Javanese ethnic traders in Palu's Manonda Market also revealed the use of connotative and euphemistic expressions as persuasive tactics to influence potential buyers and maintain politeness in high-context cultures (Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia. et al., 2023).

In multicultural settings, language plays an even more pivotal role in structuring economic and social relationships. Research in Bandar Lampung shows how the Chinese community uses the Hokkien dialect to maintain socio-economic ties with indigenous groups, where mismanagement of language can disrupt social harmony (Lampung University, Indonesia et al., 2023). Similarly, studies on the use of French in the Maje border market illustrate how foreign languages function as lingua franca, influencing business negotiations and providing traders with competitive advantages, often through code-switching and language accommodation strategies (Oriakpono, 2024).



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Theoretically, the concepts of language as communicative action and as linguistic capital have evolved separately. Habermas' theory of communicative action posits that language serves as a tool for achieving rational consensus and building trust through ideally non-dominant speech situations (Bonell & Melendez-Torres, 2023; Denysenko & Shchyrytsia, 2023). Conversely, Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital asserts that language's value is determined by the social-economic field and is convertible into various forms of capital economic, social, and symbolic (Dimov & Güneştepe, 2024; Gong et al., 2023). Recent studies have applied Bourdieu's notion of capital to explore how language can serve as a vehicle for accessing economic capital, such as in the case of Portuguese language proficiency in Macau (Gong et al., 2023) or how entrepreneurial narratives can "capitalize the future" through strategic linguistic practices (Dimov & Güneştepe, 2024). However, an explicit integration of Habermas' communicative rationality with Bourdieu's linguistic capital, particularly in the context of everyday economic communication practices in local communities, remains notably underexplored.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the role of Arabic 'āmiyyah (colloquial Arabic) in the multicultural marketplace of Pasuruan. Specifically, it examines how Arabic 'āmiyyah functions both as a communicative strategy to foster trust and as a form of linguistic capital that facilitates economic transactions within a diverse cultural context. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the intersection between language, economy, and power in local market environments.

2. Literature Review

Studies on the Arabic language in Indonesia often revolve around Arabic's role as a marker of religious identity, a scholarly language, and a macro-level economic and diplomatic language (Shidiq et al., 2023), or around issues of identity and diglossia between Classical Arabic and other varieties (Habibullahi et al., 2025a). There are also studies on 'āmiyyah usage in pesantren environments, highlighting the emergence of local dialects through Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing, focusing on identity and language preservation (Habibullahi et al., 2025b). Nevertheless, no specific research appears to investigate Arabic 'āmiyyah as an economic resource in local market settings, especially in multicultural competition configurations (Arab, Javanese, Chinese) like those in Pasuruan.

Indeed, literature on language and trade indicates that mastering particular languages in multicultural markets can become an economic lingua franca, forming trust networks, mediating negotiations, and presenting competitive advantages, as observed in French language studies in border markets (Oriakpono, 2024) and immigrant traders' language strategies in tourist areas building horizontal social capital (Mendoza et al., 2025). In this context, it can be assumed that the Arab Jamaah trader community in



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Kauman and Jalan Jawa, Pasuruan, utilizes Arabic 'āmiyyah not only as an ethnic-religious identity symbol but also as an economic communication strategy to build trust, customer loyalty, and manage competition with Javanese and Chinese traders.

Starting from this context, this study considers it necessary to deeply explore how the practice of using Arabic 'āmiyyah in daily economic interactions functions simultaneously as communicative action (Habermas) and linguistic capital (Bourdieu) within the “field” of multicultural economic competition in Pasuruan. Its focus is not merely on language forms (words, phrases, code-switching), but also on how this language constructs communicative rationality, produces customer trust and loyalty, and mobilizes as a strategy to maintain or seize positions in the local market.

A summary of prior research from 2023–2026 reveals consistent threads: language is not merely a “message delivery tool,” but rather a social resource convertible into economic benefits. In the context of young Indonesian entrepreneurs, for example, conversational opening strategies are positioned as linguistic practices that build credibility and expand networks. These findings stress that speaking styles intonation, expression choices, and even interaction initiation strategies can function as symbolic capital, later converted into business access and economic opportunities (Risa Amalia Muzrifah et al., 2025a). Thus, the premise that linguistic practices operate as economic capital receives strong empirical grounding.

Outside Indonesia, studies on Arabic for business communication in Nigeria broaden views of Arabic as an economic language. Mastery of Arabic for business needs correlates with increased employability, greater entrepreneurial orientation, and strengthened self-confidence, while reducing reliance on translators. Meaning, Arabic functions practically: becoming a competency, expanding work mobility, and enhancing negotiation capacity in transactions (Habibullahi et al., 2025b). These findings reinforce the idea that Arabic is not confined to religious realms but also has material utility in contemporary economic spaces.

Meanwhile, studies on small-scale traders' language practices in Machinga, Tanzania, underscore that informal market dynamics indeed spark high linguistic creativity. Loanwords, code-mixing, accents, and registers are utilized to effectively communicate and build a sense of community between sellers and buyers. Language acts as a device to “bridge social distances,” making transactions smoother and trading relationships more stable (Prosper & Borra, 2025). Similarly, research on the Maje border market shows that French can serve as a lingua franca uniting multicultural groups; code-switching and language-accommodation strategies can even become competitive advantages by facilitating market integration and extending customer reach (Oriakpono, 2024). These two studies provide rich comparisons for your research, particularly for understanding how foreign languages or specific language variations can transform into competitive capital in heterogeneous economic arenas.



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In the Indonesian landscape, research on Javanese ethnic traders' communication behaviors highlights persuasion strategies grounded in politeness: the use of euphemistic and connotative expressions employed to protect buyer face, negotiate objections, and maintain a comfortable interaction atmosphere. This practice illustrates that trading success is often supported by subtle and socially considered speech management (Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia. et al., 2023). Such findings provide crucial comparative foundations for comparing Javanese traders' language strategies with those of Arab traders in Pasuruan, specifically to map differences in utterance choices, politeness norms, and persuasion techniques.

Beyond micro-strategies in transactions, there are also studies providing language-based frameworks for inter-ethnic relations. Research on Chinese-indigenous ethnic communication in Bandar Lampung demonstrates how Hokkien usage not only maintains internal social relations but also mediates socio-economic inter-group connections, including potential friction that can be mitigated or triggered by language choices (Lampung University, Indonesia et al., 2023). At a higher macro level, studies on the Arabic language and identity in Indonesia position Arabic as an international communication language tied to economic and political diplomacy and as a strategic role in national economic arenas (Shidiq et al., 2023). These dual directions of research micro-inter-ethnic relations and macro-Arab position in economy-politics provide a complementary context for your study: your research can fill the middle ground, namely how Arabic operates as an economic resource in daily practices in markets or local commercial spaces, intertwined with identities and intergroup relations.

Overall, this series of studies implies that language-economy relations can be interpreted through three interconnected layers: (1) micro-linguistic strategies in interactions (conversational openings, euphemisms, registers), (2) language's function as a competency-enhancing mobility and business capacity, and (3) language's role in shaping inter-ethnic and inter-regional socio-economic relations. By placing the Pasuruan case in this map, your research potentially offers specific contributions: illustrating how Arab traders' linguistic practices in negotiation, persuasion, and network formation operate as tangible capital in the local economy, alongside their comparison with Javanese linguistic practices and intersection with inter-ethnic dynamic relations. (Habibullahi et al., 2025b; Lampung University, Indonesia et al., 2023; Oriakpono, 2024; Prosper & Borra, 2025; Risa Amalia Muzrifah et al., 2025a; Shidiq et al., 2023; Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia. et al., 2023).

Prior research indicates that Arabic-language studies tend to focus on international or formal education contexts, such as diplomacy, learning, or cross-border business. These studies discuss Arabic as a business medium or curriculum tool in Nigeria, in diplomacy, or in academic learning (Gong et al., 2023; Habibullahi et al., 2025b; Shidiq et al., 2023). However, research examining Arabic 'āmiyyah as local economic practices at the community trader level in Indonesia remains very limited. The 'āmiyyah dialect used



by the Arab Jamaah community in local markets, as part of daily economic interactions, has not received adequate empirical attention.

Furthermore, the micro-multicultural market context in Pasuruan, involving interactions among Arab, Javanese, and Chinese traders, presents a unique socioeconomic configuration. Previous studies on language use in multicultural interactions appear in various locations, such as Chinese-indigenous interactions in Lampung, border markets in France, or small traders in Africa (Lampung University, Indonesia et al., 2023; Oriakpono, 2024; Prosper & Borra, 2025). Yet, no specific study examines Pasuruan's market dynamics, particularly the position of Arabic 'āmiyyah in economic competition with Javanese and Chinese traders. This highlights a research gap regarding local economic practices rooted in the linguistic competencies of minority Arab communities in Indonesia.

Additionally, existing literature tends to use Habermas theory to analyze communicative rationality in social policy or labor fields, while Bourdieu's theory is frequently applied to study language as capital in education or entrepreneurship (Bonell & Melendez-Torres, 2023; Denysenko & Shchyrtsia, 2023; Dimov & Güneştepe, 2024; Gong et al., 2023; Risa Amalia Muzrifah et al., 2025a). Explicit integration of both perspectives to explain the effectiveness of community-local-language-based economic communication has yet to emerge. In other words, synthesis between communicative actions and linguistic capital for analyzing microeconomic interactions remains minimal. Moreover, although some studies address language's role in building trust and networks, ethnographic descriptions outlining how daily speech practices shape customer loyalty and long-term economic networks in local markets are rarely encountered (Mendoza et al., 2025; Prosper & Borra, 2025; Risa Amalia Muzrifah et al., 2025b).

This study brings several novelties. First, the research location and subject are unique: the Arab Jamaah trader community in Kauman and Jalan Jawa, Pasuruan, an empirically untouched area in the literature. Second, Arabic 'āmiyyah is analyzed not merely as a language variation or identity symbol but as a form of linguistic capital mobilized to build trust, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage in the multicultural Arab-Javanese-Chinese market. Third, this study develops a theoretical synthesis of Habermas and Bourdieu, resulting in a conceptual model that explains how communicative rationality interacts with linguistic capital in microeconomic transactions. This synthesis enriches communicative action theory with a capital dimension while expanding the linguistic capital perspective with normative and dialogic aspects. Fourth, the study applies a micro-sociolinguistic approach to provide detailed descriptions of utterance forms, code-switching, lexical choices, and pragmatic strategies used by Arab Jamaah traders to build mutual understanding and perceptions of economic credibility.

Regarding contributions, this study offers theoretical, empirical, and practical values. Its theoretical contribution includes proposing an integrated Habermas-Bourdieu model



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to analyze community-local-language-based economic communication, applicable to other multicultural markets, thereby broadening Indonesian Arabic sociolinguistics studies from identity and education focuses to local economy and multicultural competition domains. Its empirical contribution introduces new ethnographic data on Arabic 'āmiyyah practices in economic transactions among Pasuruan Arab Jamaah traders and depicts economic communication strategies of Arab, Javanese, and Chinese ethnicities in one city space, relevant for multiculturalism and local economy studies (Lampung University, Indonesia et al., 2023; Universitas Tadulako, Palu, Indonesia. et al., 2023). Practically, the study's findings provide inputs for local governments and business actors on the importance of cross-ethnic linguistic competence as an economic development strategy and for strengthening social cohesion, offering insights for entrepreneurship education and business communication training, with the integration of community-local language strategies as economic capital.

Based on the above discussion, problem formulations can be structured (four points) as follows; How is the practice of using Arabic 'āmiyyah in daily economic interactions among Arab Jamaah trader communities in Kauman and Jalan Jawa, Pasuruan? How does this Arabic 'āmiyyah practice shape communicative rationality between traders and customers in economic transactions (achieving consensus, negotiation, and trust-building)? How does Arabic 'āmiyyah function as linguistic capital contributing to trust, customer loyalty, and the formation of Arab Jamaah traders' economic networks? How is Arabic 'āmiyyah utilized as an economic communication strategy in multicultural competition among Arab, Javanese, and Chinese traders, and how does the synthesis of Habermas' communicative action theory and Bourdieu's linguistic capital theory explain the effectiveness of this strategy? These formulations narrow from general language-economy-multicultural issues to a specific focus on Pasuruan Arab Jamaah trader communities, using the Habermas-Bourdieu theoretical framework.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a sociolinguistic ethnographic design, which, in certain contexts, can also be associated with communication ethnography and discourse analysis. The qualitative ethnographic approach was chosen because it is well-suited to exploring language practices within ethnic and multilingual communities, especially when the research focus encompasses social interactions, identity, and economic relations. Such studies can capture life experiences, daily language practices, and meaning dynamics that emerge naturally within community environments (Faculty of Bisnis, University "Haxhi Zeka", Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2023; Park, 2025). By placing researchers directly in the field, communication and sociolinguistic ethnography allow direct observation of speech events, interaction patterns, social norms, and language functions within local contexts (Faculty of Bisnis, University "Haxhi Zeka", Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Heller, 2011; Mauk et al., 2025;



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Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). In studies of minority and ethnic communities, the qualitative approach provides opportunities to deeply understand how language functions as a connector of social relations, a negotiation tool, and a means of maintaining community identity (Maharani et al., 2023; Park, 2025).

The research site is focused on the Kauman and Jalan Jawa areas in Pasuruan City, with primary subjects being Arab Jamaah traders who use Arabic 'āmiyyah in economic transactions. Additional subjects include customers from various ethnicities, including Arab, Javanese, and Chinese, as well as key informants such as community leaders, association board members, and local religious figures. The selection of these groups and locations aligns with qualitative research principles emphasizing bounded cases and rich natural contexts, enabling deep, contextual analysis (Grenier, 2023; Negou et al., 2023; Qolamani, 2023).

Data collection occurs through various techniques. Participant observation serves as the primary method to capture sales interactions directly, including greetings, bargaining processes, transaction closures, and code-switching between Arabic 'āmiyyah, Indonesian, and Javanese. This technique has proven effective in studies of traditional market traders and other local communities (Faculty of Bisnis, University "Haxhi Zeka", Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Khatima et al., 2025; Mauk et al., 2025; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). Additionally, interactions are recorded in audio and video and transcribed to analyze conversation structures, speech acts, and code-switching patterns (Mauk et al., 2025; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). Semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted with both Arab Jamaah traders to elicit their perceptions of Arabic 'āmiyyah's functions and with customers to understand how language influences trust, comfort, and shopping choices (Faculty of Bisnis, University "Haxhi Zeka", Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2023; Mirhosseini & Pearson, 2025; Park, 2025). Supplementary documentation, including photographs, shop sign texts, transaction notes, and other linguistic symbols, is used to trace Arabic 'āmiyyah's use as symbolic capital, while fieldnotes record social contexts, market atmospheres, inter-ethnic interactions, and researcher reflections during the ethnographic process (Faculty of Bisnis, University "Haxhi Zeka", Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Heller, 2011).

Data analysis is performed through a qualitative thematic approach to interviews and fieldnotes, including coding, categorization, and theme extraction related to communicative rationality, trust, loyalty, and linguistic capital (Beckett et al., 2025; Carradini et al., 2025; Dolan et al., 2023; Qolamani, 2023). Furthermore, discourse or conversation analysis is applied to transcripts of buying and selling interactions, including conversation openings, adjacency pairs such as question-answer or bargain-agreement, and politeness strategies and price negotiation techniques (Carradini et al., 2025; Mauk et al., 2025; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). Triangulation of sources, methods, and theories is used to ensure finding credibility, involving traders, customers, documents, observations, interviews, recordings, and the Habermas-Bourdieu



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theoretical framework (Carradini et al., 2025; Dolan et al., 2023; Mirhosseini & Pearson, 2025).

The choice of qualitative-ethnographic methods is driven by the need to gain rich contextual understanding of community language practices, life experiences, and local meanings that cannot be captured through quantitative methods alone (Faculty of Biznis, University “Haxhi Zeka”, Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2023; Mauk et al., 2025; Park, 2025; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). In studies of informal economies and market communications, observation, interviews, and case studies are recommended approaches to understand behavior in authentic contexts, including hidden power dynamics (Carradini et al., 2025; Cartwright & Igudia, 2024; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). This approach aligns with critical sociolinguistic perspectives that emphasize the combination of ethnography and discourse analysis to uncover how language shapes social differences and inequalities, consistent with the Habermas-Bourdieu theory synthesis (Heller, 2011).

The selection of Pasuruan City, particularly Kauman and Jalan Jawa, has strong scientific justification. The city offers a complex multicultural context consisting of Arab-Java-Chinese interactions within local economic networks, including shops, wholesale, and family businesses. The presence of concentrated Arab Jamaah trader communities in Kauman and Jalan Jawa facilitates clear observation of characteristic language practices, while traditional markets serve as natural laboratories for researching social-economic interactions, negotiations, and solidarity in daily transactions (Faculty of Biznis, University “Haxhi Zeka”, Pec/Pejë, Kosovo et al., 2023; Maharani et al., 2023; Mauk et al., 2025; Park, 2025; Tanimu & Nwaobasi, 2024). Daily interactions involving Arabic 'āmiyyah, Indonesian, Javanese, and sometimes Chinese create high language contact, suitable for analysis through contact sociolinguistics and linguistic capital frameworks (Kashima et al., 2025; Stanford, 2023). Theoretically and empirically, this location enables testing the Habermas-Bourdieu theory synthesis at the micro-transactional level within real-world multicultural economic competition contexts, which are rarely studied in Indonesia (Heller et al., 2024; Maharani et al., 2023; Park, 2025). Therefore, selecting this case-rich location supports the principle of bounded-case contextual case studies and strengthens the research's theoretical relevance and empirical contributions (Grenier, 2023; Negou et al., 2023; Qolamani, 2023)

4, Result and Discussion

4.1. Linguistic Practices and Communication Strategies of Arab Jamaah Traders

Based on participant observation and interaction recordings in the Kauman and Jalan Jawa areas of Pasuruan, the use of Arabic 'āmiyyah by Arab Jamaah traders is not monolithic but dynamic and contextual. Data show that 'āmiyyah functions primarily as



a linguistic code for building rapport (closeness) with customers, regardless of their diverse ethnic backgrounds (Javanese, Chinese, or other Arabs).

In property transactions at Perumahan Karya Bakti, marketers use phrases like “Lā taqlaq” (don’t worry) and “Al-bayt wāsi” (large house) to provide certainty and security. This language creates an informal atmosphere, unlike formal Indonesian, which is often associated with bureaucracy. As noted by Muzrifah et al. (2025), appropriate conversational opening strategies serve as linguistic assets for building trust. Here, trust is established through sincerity (honesty) expressed via familiar language.

In retail sectors (Toko Nabila HP) and culinary ones (Restoran Tarim Gonna), similar patterns emerge. Sellers use technical terms in Arabic (“Khilfī camera,” “Kabuli rice”) to emphasize product authenticity, while inserting Indonesian to ensure technical comprehension. This aligns with Prosper & Borra’s (2025) findings in Tanzania, where loanwords and code-mixing enhance communication and foster a sense of community. Arab traders sell not just goods but also Islamic identity and Middle Eastern authenticity linked to quality and blessings.

4.2. Communicative Rationality: Building Consensus and Trust (Habermas Perspective)

Within Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action framework, economic transaction success depends not only on money exchange but also on achieving *Verständigung* (consensus) free from domination. Data indicate that Arab Jamaah traders consciously avoid aggressive pricing manipulation, opting instead to persuade customers rationally and emotionally through language.

For instance, in a dialogue at Restoran Tarim Gonna, the restaurant owner doesn’t pressure customers to buy but explains menu differences (“*Kabuli: fragrant, soft... Kabsah: strong spices*”). This reflects efforts toward “truth” (truth claims) in product propositions. Customers feel autonomous in their choices, informed by clear information. This supports Denysenko & Shchrytsia’s (2023) argument that ideal communicative actions aim for rational consensus.

Moreover, using greetings like “*As-salāmu ‘alaikum*” and closing prayers like “*Mabrūk*” or “*Barokah*” goes beyond rituals; they’re strategies to create psychologically “domination-free” speech situations. Customers feel valued as humans, not mere sales targets. Here, the Arabic language serves as a negotiation medium, mitigating potential conflicts. As stated by Bonell & Melendez-Torres (2023), ideal speech situations enable trust formation, which is foundational to long-term economic transactions.



4.3. Arabic Language as Linguistic Capital and Competitive Advantage (Bourdieu Perspective)

While Habermas sees language as a tool for understanding, Bourdieu views it as capital convertible into economic gains. In Pasuruan, Arab traders' command of 'āmiyyah yields unique linguistic capital. In markets dominated by Javanese and Chinese merchants, Arabic stands out as a differentiator, adding value. Data from Toko Nabila HP show that when sellers offer technical specifications in Arabic

"Seller: As-salāmu 'alaikum, ente ṭālib HP jadid walla bas tshūf?"

Customers: Wa 'alaikum as-salām. Ana really looking for a new phone. The old one is slow, the battery runs out quickly, and the camera is blurry.

Seller: Zain. 'Indana al-yawm thalātha models ajib: the latest iPhone, the latest Samsung, the latest Xiaomi. Kul wāḥid lah mizāyatuh. Do you want us to demonstrate it directly?"

Customer: Yes, I want to see all of them.

Seller: Al-awwal iPhone: RAM 6 GB, kamera khilfī 48 MP, dufūq 12 MP, battery 4000 mAh. Price 9 million. Switch the camera, try a selfie.

Customer: Wow, it's really clear. Awesome.

Seller: Al-thānī Samsung: layar AMOLED 6.5 inch, RAM 8 GB, kamera khilfī 64 MP, dufūq 16 MP. Price 8 million, big screen comfortable for watching videos"

it fosters a perception of exclusivity. Customers feel they get "special" or "Middle Eastern-quality" products. This confirms Gong et al.'s (2023) findings that language competence in specific "linguistic markets" is linked to capital distribution. Here, linguistic capital (Arabic ability) converts to economic capital (sales profits) and symbolic capital (store reputation as "quality").

Additionally, customer loyalty stems not just from prices but from identity. Regular visitors to Restoran Tarim will return feeling "connected" to the culture on offer. This represents social capital mobilized through language. As Dimov & Güneştepe (2024) state, entrepreneurial narratives can "capitalize the future" through word power. In this case, Arabic words construct a narrative that "shopping here is a blessing investment," indirectly boosting product value.

4.4. Dynamics of Multicultural Competition: Comparison of Arabic, Javanese, and Chinese Language Strategies

To grasp the Arabic language's strategic position in Pasuruan's economic competition, this study also observes and interviews Javanese and Chinese ethnic traders in the area. Below are found communication strategy comparisons:



4.4.1 Javanese Ethnic Traders (Batik & Cloth Shop on Jalan Jawa)

Javanese traders typically use refined Ngoko Javanese to show politeness (unggah-ungguh).

Dialogue:

Seller: *"Ayo Mbak, cobak batik iki weh. Motifé parang rusak, pas banget kanggo acara resmi."*

Customer: *"Pira regané, Mas?"*

Seller: *"Monggo Mbak. Regané Rp350.000. Nanging yen njupuk loro, aku kasih murah sithik."*

Analysis: This strategy strongly prioritizes face-saving (maintaining dignity) and social harmony. Price offers occur indirectly (euphemistically). Jamiluddin et al. (2023) note that Javanese traders use connotatively nuanced expressions to preserve politeness. Its weakness lies in quick markets, where this seems less efficient than more direct language.

4.4.2 Chinese Ethnic Traders (Electronics & Accessories Store in Kauman)

Chinese traders use highly efficient Indonesian, mix codes with Hokkien or Mandarin for technical terms, and heavily focus on prices/promotions.

Dialogue:

Seller: *"Hari ni promo, beli satu gratis satu. Garansi resmi setahun loh. Mau ambil ta?"*

Customer: *"Boleh nego kan?"*

Seller: *"Bisa sih, tapi Cuma Gomban (lima puluh ribu rupiah) saja. Kalau mau, aku bungkus sekarang juga."*

Analysis: This strategy emphasizes efficiency and rapid transactions. Little emotional chitchat occurs. This aligns with Oriakpono's (2024) study of border markets, where language functions as a lingua franca, accelerating market integration. Its strength is speed, though it lags behind Arab traders in building long-term emotional bonds.

4.4.3 Synthesis of Comparisons.

These comparisons show Arab Jamaah traders hold a unique position. They aren't as efficient as Chinese traders but more direct than Javanese ones. Their advantage rests in identity. Arab traders use language to build "community" (as found by Mendoza et al., 2024, regarding horizontal social capital). Javanese and Chinese customers buying at Arab stores often feel "accepted" in religiously familiar spaces unavailable elsewhere.

4.5. Theoretical Synthesis: Integration of Habermas and Bourdieu in Local Economy

Research findings offer a novel synthesis between Habermas' communicative rationality and Bourdieu's linguistic capital. In the context of Pasuruan's micro-economy,

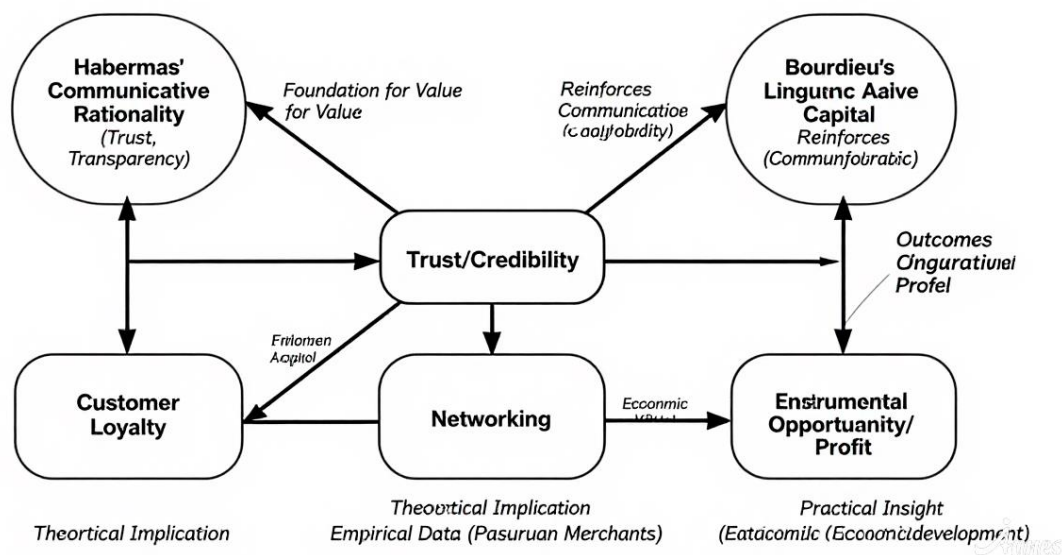


these theories run neither in isolation nor in opposition, but rather mutually reinforce one another.

Rationality as the Foundation of Capital: Trust built through honest, transparent communicative actions (Habermas); prerequisites for valuing Arabic language as capital (Bourdieu). If Arab traders use Arabic deceitfully (e.g., hiding product defects), this linguistic capital crumbles, violating Habermas' truth principles. Capital as Enhancer of Rationality: Conversely, once the Arabic language symbolizes trust (capital), communication processes ease. Customers are more likely to accept Arab explanations as "truth" because of positive associations with Arab identity. Capital Conversion: Illustrated in property and restaurant data, Arabic 'āmiyyah converts to customer loyalty. This proves Muzrifah et al.'s (2025) premise that conversational opening strategies are linguistic practices that build credibility and expand networks.

This synthesis fills the research gap separating language analysis as a communication tool (Habermas) and language as a power/economic instrument (Bourdieu). In Pasuruan, Arabic 'āmiyyah bridges normative values (religion/identity) with instrumental ones (economy).

Theoretical Synthesis: Habermas & Bourdieu in Local Economy



4.6. Theoretical Implications and Research Contributions

This study makes significant contributions across three domains; Theoretical: Proposes an integrative Habermas-Bourdieu model for analyzing community-local-language-based economic communication. This expands communicative action theory by



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incorporating capital dimensions and extends the linguistic capital perspective by incorporating normative and dialogic aspects. Relevant for sociolinguistic studies in other multicultural markets.

Empirical: Provides new ethnographic data on Arabic 'āmiyyah practices in economic transactions among Pasuruan Arab Jamaah traders. This complements the literature, which mostly discusses Arabic in diplomacy or education contexts (Gong et al., 2023; Shidiq et al., 2023).

Practical: Offers insights for local governments and businesspeople regarding the importance of cross-ethnic linguistic competence as an economic development strategy. Entrepreneurship education can integrate community-local language strategies as economic capital, as suggested by Kartika et al. (2023) in social harmony contexts.

Overall, this study affirms that in Indonesia's local economy, language is not merely an information-exchange tool but also a means of building networks, gaining credibility, and accessing economic opportunities. Arabic 'āmiyyah in Pasuruan empirically proves minority linguistic competence as a strategic resource in multicultural economic competition, transforming cultural identity into tangible economic capital.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Arabic 'āmiyyah is dynamically and contextually used by the Arab Jamaah traders in Pasuruan's Kauman and Jalan Jawa areas to facilitate economic transactions. The use of Arabic 'āmiyyah, along with code-switching between Arabic, Indonesian, and Javanese, is evident in greetings, product descriptions, and transaction closures. This linguistic practice is inclusive and serves as a tool for identity signaling, while also enhancing transactional success. The traders utilize 'āmiyyah to establish trust, reduce uncertainty, and foster mutual understanding, aligning with Habermas' theory of communicative action. Phrases such as "Lā taqlaq" and "Al-bayt wāsi'" demonstrate how language is employed to convey sincerity and honesty, creating a "domination-free" environment that fosters positive interactions and trust between traders and customers.

From Bourdieu's perspective, Arabic 'āmiyyah also functions as a form of linguistic capital that provides economic advantages. Proficiency in Arabic sets Arab traders apart from their competitors, enhancing customer loyalty by associating the language with authenticity and quality. This linguistic capital translates into economic benefits, such as increased sales and stronger customer networks. In the multicultural competition between Arab, Javanese, and Chinese traders in Pasuruan, Arabic serves as a unique differentiation strategy, combining cultural identity and trust. The synthesis of Habermas' communicative rationality and Bourdieu's linguistic capital offers a comprehensive model for understanding how language functions as both a tool for trust-building and a valuable economic resource. This integrative framework can be applied to



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other multicultural markets, providing insights into the role of language in economic development and social cohesion.

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