



## Background and language of the Narum community in Marudi, Sarawak

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### Abstract

The Narum community is located in Marudi, Sarawak and belongs to a minority language community that is heading towards language extinction. In terms of language cognate, there are similarities between the language of the Narum community and the Kenyah community. However, the number of speakers of this language is declining and the number who can master the Narum language well, especially the younger generation is very limited. This puts the language of this minority community in a threatened position. This is a preliminary study aimed to introduce this language community. Data collection was gathered to document the linguistic and cultural situation practised in this language community. In this study, qualitative methods were applied. The data was collected by interviews to obtain data directly from this language community. The findings of this study describe the linguistic and cultural situation of the Narum language community. The attitude of the native speakers who do not pay much attention to their heritage has become one of the causes of the language of this community is increasingly threatened, in fact, this community is also increasingly unknown for their existence. In addition, intermarriage also contributes to the loss of the language of the Narum community and will also destroy the identity of this community. Indeed, it would be a huge loss if this minority community became extinct. Therefore, immediate action needs to be taken to save and preserve it. It not only needs to be immediately recorded and documented, but more importantly, these language communities need to use and know their history and language actively in order to preserve and revitalize their language and cultural heritage for future generations.

**Keywords:** Ethnic group, language community, language extinction, minority group, Narum language, Swadesh list

### Introduction

The Narum community is one of the minority ethnic groups of Sarawak. Hose (as reported in Hasan Mat Nor, 1979) categorized the Narum as the Sebob ethnicity sub-group. Leach (1950)

however classified Narum ethnicity as para-Malay and from the sub-group of the Kayan. The Narum people are located mainly in a village named Kampong Narum (Narum Village). The village lies alongside the Baram River and is not far from the town of Marudi. Between Kampong Narum and Marudi town is another kampong or village called Kampong Dagang. These villages are the home of most of the Sarawak Malays.

Not much historical knowledge or information had being passed on to the younger generation. The salient point about historical discourse among the Narum is that it is disappearing. Since very little historical information has been passed on, the history of the Narum will not be acquired by the younger generation. Among the numerous young people interviewed, only a few seemed genuinely interested in asking their parents and grandparents about their past.

According to the accounts gathered from interviews with older members of the Narum community, long ago there were two Narum men called Sunta and Awang. They were from Narum Meting/Lemeting race. One day they moved from Meting River (now known as Tinjar River) to a place called Karap. In Karap, they built their longhouse.

Reported in Leh & Datan (1997:16), an account of an event about Narum was: "One day, the two longhouses celebrated a wedding. The newly married couple had to undergo a two-week trial period during which they were not allowed to cross the river. Unfortunately the bridegroom forgot about the superstition and built a new canoe to cross the river. The bride, while sending some food to her husband was washed up when the log she was paddling on turned into a sea-dragon. Following the incident, occupants of the two longhouses poisoned the river with 'tuba' and killed the monster. The Narum who cooked and ate the monster died from its poison while those who did not, fled from the terrible scene".

Leh & Datan (1997) also reported many people of Narum suffered from cholera or 'sakit ta'oun' and only a few hundred survived the poison and cholera. Those who survived fled to Bakong, a tributary of the Baram. Later they moved from Bakong to Miri and some of them migrated to Belait and Tutong. Afterwards those who went to Miri returned to Bakong and lived near Melalot River. Their two leaders, Panglima Gamun and Panglima Baleng embraced Islam on the advice of the Brunei government. Since then, the Narum became Muslims and they reside in Kampong Narum, Marudi.

The way of life for the Narum community has undergone many changes. Since becoming Muslim, the Narum people have adopted the Malay way of life (Hasan Mat Nor, 1979). For example, the people no longer live as their ancestors did in the traditional Sarawak "longhouses" but have a separate home for each family. They also practice Malay customs for birth, marriage and death.

From the author's experience visiting Kampong Narum for research, it was found that they no longer need to go to the river for their daily needs because the village is now supplied with electricity and running water. Communications with neighbouring villages have improved. There is now a road from Marudi to Kampong Narum. Therefore, visitors can reach Kampong Narum by using the new road and they no longer need to depend on water transportation.

This community traditionally celebrates certain festivals together which facilitates the development and maintenance of friendships and other social relationships among the community members. Most individuals in this community marry someone from their own village rather than someone from outside the community or from a different ethnic group.

## Literature review

In many different settings, minority groups have been observed to shift from using their mother tongue to using the majority language (Clyne, 1985; Gal, 1979; Lieberman & Waters 1988; Veltman, 1979). Next to this global finding, however, there are also situations in which this shift is less abrupt, and a more stable bilingualism has been observed (Fishman, 1968; Fishman, Cooper & Ma, 1971; Rubin, 1968). When talking about the linguistic behavior of linguistic minority groups, then, we are looking at a continuum of language usage, from a stronger tendency to maintain the mother tongue in at least some areas of everyday life for some groups to a weaker tendency to maintain the mother tongue, eventually leading to language shift, for others. Most commonly, language shift has been found to happen within these groups.

It is a consequence of the contact of two or more languages or traditions. In the case of the ethnic community of Narum in Sarawak, where they are a small part of a larger community, their language usage is changing over time due to changes in their cultural values in response to modernization and their assimilation into the surrounding society. The replacement of the Narum language by other languages spoken outside the community is taking place especially among the younger generation of Narums. The phenomenon is not unusual for an ethnic community living among other communities or belonging to a larger community. Language shift among ethnic minority children of immigrants living in a new community is common, for example as was documented by Li (1982) on Chinese language maintenance and language shift among Chinese American immigrants.

However, researches on the Narum community from an anthropological and sociological perspective have been conducted (Hasan Mat Nor, 1979; Missiah Ramblee, 2001). Major language shifts, i.e. the decreasing use of minority language by minority groups, have induced researchers to study this phenomenon. The Narum community is a minority group affected by the multicultural and multilingual surroundings of the majority languages. However, according to Sa'adiah & Teo (2016) the use of the mother tongue by the older generation to the younger generation plays a major role in preserving their language.

## Method

The methods of this study were determined by the data required to assess the Narum community's language situations. In this case, qualitative methods were chosen for the study. The data gathering was conducted by interviews. In this research, 30 informants were involved with the interviews regarding the the cultural identity and the Narum language, which is discussed in this article.

The qualitative methods are used because because of the advantages (Queirós et al., 2017). Qualitative Descriptive used in this study aims to describe, explain and validate the social phenomena that are the subject of research. Qualitative studies are flexible because the design does not prescribe specifically what and how a study should be conducted at the beginning of the study. Instead, studies using qualitative methods involve inductive reasoning to understand a particular situation including the history and experience of the individuals (Trochim, 2006). The data collection process in this study also uses the opinion of Bryman (2012) which begins by asking general research questions, followed by selection of relevant subjects or topics. The next process is data collection related to the topic discussed and the writing of the findings or conclusions drawn from the collected data.

This study also applied the Swadesh list in order to collect the language vocabulary of the Narum community. The Swadesh list was developed by Moriss Swadesh (1952) and is applied as one of the widely used methods to compile a list of words of a language, especially the language of an endangered society. The Swadesh list is also used as the basic concept of arrangement of a language for the purpose of linguistic information.

Swadesh expands several versions of the list. The idea is to identify certain universal concepts that can be used to study and depicts the language under study. The Swadesh list is mostly suitable to collect vocabulary and grammar information specifically of a minority language. The wordlist in the Swadesh list applied is suitable to extract basic informations of the Narum language. Although it is based on western contacts, the list is applicable with the information under study on language of the Narum community.

### **The Narum community**

Kampung Narum consists of 110 houses and a population of 700 (of which only 457 of them are the Narum). The village is located near the Marudi town, along the Baram River (Figure 1). The structure of Kampong Narum is divided into the jungle, field and the village area. The jungle is an area that is uninhabited by the villagers. This includes the padi field left by the older people long ago. The field area is usually located near the jungle area and is usually at the end of the village. This field area is planted with rubber and fruit trees. In addition, the Narum also plants vegetables for their needs.

The village area consists of valuable land which is now lived on not only by the Narum but also other ethnics living in the village because some of the land have been sold by the Narum. The houses are built close to each other. The way the houses were built is parallel along the river. The villagers built their houses along the river because in the past the river was the main mode of transportation, and the people also relied on the river to wash and get their drinking water. Now, although new houses are built, it still follows the previous pattern where houses are built close to the river. There are now roads to the village which are the Lintang Road and Tungku Abdul Rahman Road. Previously, access to the village is by means of water transportation or using the earth roads. As mention earlier, the houses were built along the river but after these roads were built, the new houses have been built near to the road for easy access. Moreover, the area near the river is completely occupied.

From the village structure of the population, most of the houses belong to the same family members. The family members, such as parents, children and siblings build houses on the land that belongs to them because the land is usually passed down by their ancestors. This is why the houses in the Narum Village are so very close to one another. This pattern is not so much different from those of other ethnicity in Sarawak where family members live near each other.



Source:[http://www.fallingrain.com/world/MY/11/Kampong\\_Narum.html](http://www.fallingrain.com/world/MY/11/Kampong_Narum.html)

Figure 1. Location of Narum Village (Kampong Narum).

### **The cultural identity of the Narum community**

The identity of a society, especially the minority language community becomes very important because the identity of the society could be seen from the angle of the 'sense of belonging' as well as a symbol of survival of a society (Hasni & Novel, 2014). The identity of the Narum community includes elements that highlight the unique distinguishing features between their group and another. These elements are religion, language, economy, customs, values, norms and culture of the community.

#### *The economy of the Narum community*

Agriculture is among the economic source of Sarawak. In 2015, Sarawak produced 1,547.0 tonne of raw pal oil besides rubber, black and white pepper (Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak, 2015). The economic organization of the Narum community is usually associated with agricultural activities. The economic activities that they carry out are mostly small scale businesses to support their own families. These small scale economic activities are suffice for the family's needs due to several factors such as lack of capital, manpower, land and lack of knowledge about modern agricultural techniques. In addition, natural factors such as the land location, which is low land, often causes the land to be submerged in water. This reduces the agricultural activities.

Other than agricultural activities, they also carry out activities like fishing and small home industries. Many have also worked for and have been employed by the government or private firms. Some of the Narum people do not have permanent jobs. They have unsteady jobs but for them, as long as they are able to support their family they feel satisfied. For example, some of them plant various types of crops that can be benefited by their family. Types of agriculture that are carried out by the Narum community:

#### a) Agricultural activity

Agricultural activity in Narum village is carried out in small scales. Various types of crops are planted but none of them are planted commercially.

### i) Padi Huma (Hill Rice)

Previously, padi huma (rice hill) was the main source in Kampong Narum but this plantation was planted by three families only. They planted it for the purpose of their own family only. This rice plantation was grown in their land area or near the house near the terrains. However, the rice plantation is the traditional type which can be harvested only once a year. When the rice is ready to be harvested, the owner would bring the unprocessed rice to the Chinese factory to be processed before they can use it. Therefore, the products were not for sale and only for their own consumption.

### ii) Rubber tree

Rubber also used to be an important crop for the Narum community where every family would have at least 1/2 acres of land that was planted with rubber. For those who have more land, they would plant up to five or six acres of rubber trees. Nevertheless, rubber cultivation can no longer be an important activity because no new rubber has been planted since. The rubber trees they have now do not produce much latex because of the old trees. This happens because the younger generation is not interested in continuing with farming activities.

### iii) Different crops

Other plants grown by the Narum community are crops such as tapioca, banana, corn, sweet potato and vegetables. Usually they are grown quite a distance away or on the plantation land. However, some Narum people grow these crops in the compound of their house. They prefer to plant these types of crops because plants like these are easy to sell. Some of them already have fixed customers. There are also customers who buy wholesale from them. Although they plant crops on just a small scale, the earnings can accommodate their family.

The banana, tapioca and corn cultivation also bring income for these people because the home industry and the small village industry can use these produce to make confectioneries. Additionally, coconuts are also cultivated because demands for coconuts are also very encouraging as coconut is one of the basic ingredients in cooking. Besides, there are also many other uses of the coconut.

### b) Fishery

Narum village is located near the river. Therefore, one of their economic resources is fishing. They catch fish and prawns from the river. Some of the people even make fishing as their permanent job. They use seine, fishing nets and fish traps to catch fish and prawns in the river for their living. Fish which they always get from fishing are the red eye type of fish, such as tilapia, catfish, patin, and a few other types of river fish.

In Kampong Narum there are also people who breed freshwater fish in cages. The breeding activities are located by the river side which has many fish. This freshwater fish breeding industry is under the cooperation with the Agriculture Department. The Agriculture Department contributes the capital and lodgings in the breeding area. The persons involved in this are from the Narum community that is interested in this field. According to the plan of the Agriculture Department,

they will set up more projects and will encourage more Narum community to join the programme in the future.

### c) Forest produce

Apart from self-cultivation, Narum communities also generate their income from forest products. The forest products include wild vegetables such as ‘pucuk paku’, ‘lemidin’, ‘tongkat langit’ and ‘umbut rotan’. Besides that, they also find forest fruits such as ‘asam paya’ and swamp ‘asam kelubi’. These forest products are very profitable because they do not need any capital. They just need to look for them at or on the edge of the forest. Prices for the forest fruits and vegetables are also relatively high because many people like to buy these vegetables.

### d) Small industries

At present, in the village there are two workshops run by the Narum community. These workshops undertake small village industry projects. Both of the projects include traditional food processing and traditional sewing. They also get help from the Department of Agriculture. Women’s Economic Development Program (KEMAS) conducted by the department which has successfully encouraged some women to join the Narum village industry.

The assistance provided is intended to increase the income of the Narum women. Most women in the rural areas have no jobs because they have low education level. This project is opened to all the Narum community women, no matter if they are married or not. Usually rural women have the skills in hand-crafts and domestic work. It is therefore a loss if the skills that they have are not channeled properly. In fact, by being involved in this small industry activity, it will help them to increase their family income.

### *The Customs of the Narum community*

Every nation in the world has their own customs and so does the Narum community. Among the customs that are still practiced are the ceremony of marriage, birth and death.

#### a) Marriage

Narum community marriage is still bound by tradition. Marriage in the Narum community usually includes the ceremonies that are held before and after the marriage ceremony. Marriage is not only subject to common rules that have to be followed but also to fulfill the regulations related to the value of local beliefs and practices.

Before a marriage is held, some events are carried out such as ‘merisik’ (seeking), propose, engaged, marriage and ‘bersanding’. ‘Merisik’ is customary to determine if a girl has not been married. If the woman agrees, a proposal ceremony will be held. During the ceremony to propose, the man’s family will send a delegation as a representative and brings a ring to the future bride. During this ceremony, the date of engagement and the amount of money that will be given to the woman will be decided and agreed upon.

The engagement ceremony is usually held in the afternoon. On this occasion, relatives are invited to attend. The woman’s family is ready with goods or gifts which will be exchanged with the man’s gifts. The man will bring the engagement ring and also gifts for the woman. On this

occasion, the wedding date will be decided. Usually the engagement period will last until a year. However, the length of the engagement period varies according to the willingness of both the man and woman.

After the period of engagement, the wedding ceremony will be held. Before the wedding ceremony begins, there are events which will take place such as 'berbedak' and 'berinai'. During the wedding ceremony, there is a 'bersanding' event. 'Bersanding' is the peak event where the groom will be accompanied to the bride who is waiting. While in the house, both the bride and groom will be seated on a beautifully decorated dais. The last event after 'bersanding' is eating together. In this event, the groom and bride will feed each other.

#### b) Birth

Every birth will bring joy to both the husband and wife. Hence, a celebration would be held by the whole family with the birth of a baby in the Narum community. At the time of birth, there are taboos which will be observed. After 44 days, the baby will undergo a custom which involves the shaving of the baby's hair. At the ceremony, the baby's head is sprinkled with rose water and around five or seven strands of the baby's hair will be cut. Then the hair is put in a bowl of water. A gold ring is then rubbed on the forehead of the baby by all those present at the event. Finally, the baby's hair is shaven thoroughly. The ceremony ends with a prayer of well-being which is read as thanksgiving to God to ensure safety for the baby.

#### c) Death

The Narum community's lives are greatly influenced by Islam. Therefore, for the burial ceremony, from bathing the dead body to burying it, it is all done according to law as followed by Islam. When death occurs in the Narum community, many people would visit the family of the deceased. It has also become a custom to have a feast on the first day, third, seventh, twentieth, twenty-fourth and the hundredth day. After the days mentioned have passed, the feast will be made annually only. Bean porridge is one of the dishes which are to be served for the first three days at the feast.

#### *The education in Narum community*

Education is very important in the modern world. Without education, it is difficult for someone to keep up with others. Previously, the Narum community did not take heed about the importance of education but today they have realised that education is very important. If we view the education pattern of the respondents, generally the older generation is educated up until primary school level only. However, the younger generation has continued their education up to the higher education level (based on Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak)

In Marudi, there exist 67 primary schools and seven secondary schools which helps in the high literacy level of 97% in town and 87% rural areas (Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak, 2015). In kampong Narum on the other hand, there is only a kindergarten executed by KEMAS. In this kindergarten school, the Narum people send their children to get early education. For adult illiteracy on the other hand, they can obtain education for adults organised by KEMAS also. Here they have the chance to learn to read, write and count. This basic literacy class aims to reduce the rate of illiteracy among the rural society such as the Narum society.



The Narum society can now feel proud of their children's education achievement because many children of the Narum society have successfully continued their studies up to the college and university level. With good education, their children have also successfully held respectable posts in the government offices and also in the private sectors. However, it is also discovered that there is a small number of children from the Narum society who are still not yet aware of the importance of education and they often refused to continue with their schooling. However, the number is small. Usually these children come from the less capable family group or those with large number of family members. For these families, school expenditure also is a burden, hence the older children are forced to sacrifice to help their parents to find income for the family.

### *The health care in Narum community*

Marudi owns a hospital run by local authority. There is a hospital in Marudi, 17 health clinics and 5 dental clinics. Besides, Marudi also provides mobile clinic services for the local communities to get health services (Buku Tahunan Perangkaan Sarawak, 2015). Although there is only one hospital, this hospital provides sanitation facilities to people in the Marudi district. The staffs which run this hospital consist of a doctor who is aided by hospital assistants, a nurse, a pharmacy officer and a few other staff. The illnesses treated here are mainly light diseases. Nevertheless, serious illnesses such as cancer which is still at the early early stage, accidents, including operations are also treated here. Illnesses which are not able to be treated at this hospital would be referred to bigger hospitals such as the ones in Miri, Bintulu, Sibul or Kuching.

The hospital in Marudi is the place for Narum's society to get treatment. This hospital is located about 2 kilometres from the Narum village. Apart from the government hospital, there is also a private clinic but the Narum society does not go to get treatment there because it is costlier compared to the government hospital.

Apart from that, the older generation still prescribes by their native remedies. Among the Narum society, the medicine man that cures diseases by the traditional method can also be found. In fact, the medicine men from outside of the Narum community are also sometimes called in to give their services to treat patients in the Narum village. To sum up, the Narum community follows both the modern and traditional ways in taking care of their health.

### *The Narum language*

Narum language is used to communicate with each other. Narum language is not used frequently by the younger generation, but the interaction that took place in Narum is still comprehensible to them. Usually, the elderly will translate the meaning in Narum into the Sarawak Malay language. It is unfortunate that now many parents prefer their children using the Sarawak Malay language. In addition, at school, the children interact using Malay language because Malay is the medium of education. Therefore, the young people of the Narum community are exposed to other language the use more in school and use less Narum language.

The Swadesh list at the beginning was initiated by a language expert, Morris Swadesh in 1950-s, when Swadesh expands a list of 100 words and 207 words comprising parts of the abdomen, verbs, natural phenomena, as well as other words in order to collect the information of a language. The Swadesh list is also a tool used to learn a language, and can be used to easily access the basic of a language. This is because, for a basic communication, the knowledge of vocabulary

is important compared to the knowledge of grammar and syntax. Therefore, the current study has chosen to use Swadesh list 207 because it is more precise than the list of 100 words.

Below is the Swadesh list of 207 words in the English, Malay, Sarawak Malay and Narum language. This table is only a depiction of the words in Narum. The words are based on the list put forward by Swadesh, but include Malay, Sarawak Malay as well as the Narum language. No comparison is made in terms of the language content as it functions only to give brief information about the words in Narum language.

Table 1: Word list of English, Malay, and Sarawak Malay to Narum language.

No.	English words	Malay words	Narum words
1	I	Saya	Kau
2	You	Awak	Heau/Hau/Ninau
3	He	Dia (Male/Female)	Nyeh (Male/Female)
4	We	Kami	Hamai
5	You (plural)	Kamu	Hauw
6	They	Mereka	Leau
7	This	Ini	Itau
8	That	Itu	Ain
9	Here	Sini	Itau
10	There	Sana	Gig
11	Who	Siapa	Nyi
12	What	Apa	Umbaig
13	Where	Mana	Embah
14	When	Bila	Su-dheg/museeh
15	How	Bagaimana	Yau-mbah
16	Not	Tidak	Kaek
17	All	Semua	Samoa
18	Many	Banyak	A-deauw
19	Some	Sedikit	Sikik
20	Few	Beberapa	Su-deeh
21	Other	Yang lain	Noug le-ngan
22	One	Satu	Cheh
23	Two	Dua	Debeyh
24	Three	Tiga	Telau
25	Four	Empat	Phat
26	Five	Lima	Limah
27	Big	Besar	Rayarh
28	Long	Panjang	Bit
29	Wide	Lebar	Rayarh
30	Thick	Tebal	Haparl
31	Heavy	Berat	Breet
32	Small	Kecil	Dhek
33	Short	Pendek	Dibac
34	Narrow	Sempit	Me-nat
35	Thin	Tipis	Melipyeh
36	Woman	Perempuan	Turaey
37	Man (adult male)	Lelaki (dewasa)	Lahai
38	Man (human being)	Manusia	Manusiarh
39	Child	Kanak-kanak	Anag-anag
40	Wife	Isteri	Awah
41	Husband	Suami	Baneh
42	Mother	Emak	Tenah/mak
43	Father	Bapa	Aparh/ tamarh

44	Animal	Binatang	Binatang
45	Fish	Ikan	Pu-targ
46	Bird	Burung	Manau
47	Dog	Anjing	Asau
48	Louse	Kutu	Gu-teau
49	Snake	Ular	Yipah
50	Worm	Ulat	Ulat
51	Tree	Pokok	War
52	Forest	Hutan	Ta-laun
53	Stick	Kayu	Ha-yeau
54	Fruit	Buah	Uwon
55	Seed	Biji	Seih/sheie
56	Leaf	Daun	Deoun
57	Root	Akar	Ra-mout/te-raey
58	Bark	Batang pokok	Batieng war
59	Flower	Bunga	Bungar
60	Grass	Rumput	Umah
61	Rope	Tali	Lah
62	Skin	Kulit	Hu-led
63	Meat	Daging	Dagien
64	Blood	Darah	Smach
65	Bone	Tulang	Tu ah
66	Fat	Gemuk	Gemok/rayarh
67	Egg	Telur	Ti-jieu
68	Horn	Tanduk	Tanoug
69	Tail	Ekor	E-houh
70	Feather	Bulu ayam	Buluk all
71	Hair	Rambut	Faorf
72	Head	Kepala	U-houh
73	Ear	Telinga	Talingah
74	Eye	Mata	Matah
75	Nose	Hidung	Si-ngot
76	Mouth	Mulut	Mu-naung
77	Tooth	Gigi	Gigik
78	Tongue	Lidah	Zi lih
79	Fingernail	Kuku	Ilau
80	Foot	Kaki (bawah buku lali)	Bu hau sam
81	Leg	Kaki (keseluruhan)	Paah
82	Knee	Lutut	Alaktut
83	Hand	Tangan	Ngan
84	Wing	Kepak	Bara we
85	Belly	Perut	Pijen
86	Guts	Isi perut	Cheh pijen
87	Neck	Leher	Batogh
88	Back	Belakang	E hau/pu-ngarh
89	Breast	Buah dada	U-ngeoun rouk
90	Heart	Jantung	Kek tai
91	Liver	Hati	Atai
92	Drink	Minum	Sap
93	Eat	Makan	Human
94	Bite	Gigit	Tukok
95	Suck	Hisap	I-serf
96	Spit	Ludah	Farr ju-lieh
97	Vomit	Muntah	Ta-jin
98	Blow	Tiup	Pumbar
99	Breath	Nafas/bernafas	Shour/Loung shour

100	Laugh	Ketawa	Sheng
101	See	Lihat	Dheng
102	Hear	Dengar	Le-thap
103	Know	Tahu	Hanarn
104	Think	Fikir	Pikir
105	Smell	Bau	Beau
106	Fear	Takut	About
107	Sleep	Tidur	Me-kel
108	Live	Hidup	Mu-norn
109	Die	Mati	Matai
110	Kill	Bunuh	Bunoh
111	Fight	Perang	Pararn
112	Hunt	Memburu	Mulki/mukiah
113	Hit	Pukul	Phok
114	Cut	Potong	Tutark
115	Split	Pisah	Sari
116	Stab	Tikam	Tuchork
117	Scratch	Garu	Reau
118	Dig	Gali	Hukai
119	Swim	Berenang	Metar
120	Fly	Terbang	Tu-laot
121	Walk	Jalan	ahau/jalien
122	Come	Datang	Necok
123	Lie	Bohong	Mahappa
124	Sit	Duduk	Hudukh
125	Stand	Bangun	Ge-keig
126	Turn	Belok	Pasong
127	Fall	Jatuh	Ge-togh
128	Give	Beri	Tukee
129	Hold	Pegang	Pi-tein
130	Squeeze	Perah	Pichet
131	Rub	Gosok	Sappu
132	Wash	Cuci	Au-ree/uree
133	Wipe	Lap	Lap
134	Pull	Tarik	Atart
135	Push	Tolak	Nyurt
136	Throw	Buang	Ngehk
137	Tie	Ikat	I-get
138	Sew	Jahit	Arui
139	Count	Kira	Hi-rarh
140	Say	Kata	Turarn/itwoh
141	Sing	Nyanyi	Balagok
142	Play	Main	Saruma
143	Float	Timbul	Lu-theing
144	Flow	Mengalir	Mangaler
145	Freeze	Beku	Ma-nite/bakog
146	Swell	Bengkak	Bangkak
147	Sun	Matahari	Matarh deuw
148	Moon	Bulan	Beliak
149	Star	Bintang	Pa-tark
150	Water	Air	Farh
151	Rain	Hujan	Prair
152	River	Sungai	Li-hawai
153	Lake	Tasik	Daneau
154	Sea	Laut	La-ot
155	Salt	Garam	Wyey

156	Stone	Batu	Ba-teau
157	Sand	Pasir	Ret
158	Dust	Habuk	Abok
159	Earth	Dunia	Du-niyarh
160	Cloud	Awan	A-warn
161	Fog	Kabus	Amun
162	Sky	Langit	La-ngeit
163	Wind	Angin	Ba-reui
164	Snow	Salji	Salji
165	Ice	Air batu	Farh ba-teau
166	Smoke	Asap	Sharp
167	Fire	Api	E-goun
168	Ashes	Abu	A-beau
169	Burn	Bakar	Undarp
170	Road	Jalan raya	La-laung rayarh
171	Mountain	Gunung	Gunoong
172	Red	Merah	Ma-ang
173	Green	Hijau	Bi-rurh
174	Yellow	Kuning	Hu-neing
175	White	Putih	Pu-theik
176	Black	Hitam	Itam
177	Night	Malam	Malem
178	Day	Hari	Dew
179	Year	Tahun	Ta-aun
180	Warm	Suam	Sadeing manoug
181	Cold	Sejuk	Sa-joug
182	Full	Penuh	Penoug
183	New	Baru	Breau
184	Old	Tua	Muhouk
185	Good	Baik	Geig/jeyau/sehat
186	Bad	Jahat	Jaet
187	Rotten	Busuk	Bu-rork/loung beau
188	Dirty	Kotor	Kutor
189	Straight	Lurus	Lu-rosh
190	Round	Bulat	Bulaat
191	Sharp	Tajam	Te-ngan
192	Dull	Bosan	Louh sukarh/le joug
193	Smooth	Licin	Malasa
194	Wet	Basah	Beeh
195	Dry	Kering	Mara
196	Correct	Betul	Tulein
197	Near	Dekat	Janech
198	Far	Jauh	Jaoh
199	Right	Kanan	Tuk ri yau
200	Left	Kiri	Habing
201	At	Di	Kat
202	In	Dalam	Dalem
203	With	Dengan	A-ti
204	And	Dan	Atee
205	If	Jika	Sahirah
206	Because	Kerana	Sabeb
207	Name	Nama	Na-dein

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Source: Adapted from Swadesh 200 words list (1952)

## Conclusion

There are a number of indigenous groups in Sarawak that surround the small Narum community. Among these are indigenous groups such as the Iban, Dayak, Melanau. Each indigenous community shares a common lingua franca in order to facilitate social interaction. However, their individual languages, cultures and lifestyles are still being unique. In fact, some aspects of their language and culture have been integrated into smaller indigenous communities. This is what that has happened to the Narum indigenous people. Currently, there are less than a thousand Narums in Sarawak (Zulkarnain, 1998). The language and culture of the Narum is being influenced and slowly replaced by the languages and cultures of the major indigenous groups.

From the socio-economic aspect of the Narum community, there are various forms of different networks depending on individuals' needs. For instance; fishermen, farmers and office workers. The aspect of health is also of concern to the community by getting services from the clinics and hospital. Similarly, in terms of culture, the Narum community retains the culture from their ancestors including the culture of marriage.

It is clear from the information provided in this article that Narum language community is different from most of the other ethnic indigenous people in Sarawak. The Narum community also shows concern of their need for good education. However, as a minority group, the high concentration on majority languages such as Sarawak Malay, Malay, English and other majority ethnic languages, used by non-Narums and the younger generation has placed the Narum language at risk of dying out. Therefore, there is a need to provide Narum language community with information and encouragement about the importance of using their mother tongue when interacting with their children and exposing them as much as possible to their own language and culture. It is hoped that when the Narum community recognizes the importance to maintain their language, it may pay more attention to language issues, the importance of language retention and ways to achieve it.

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