

Pragmatic Small Talk in the Osing Community of Banyuwangi: An Ethnographic Communication Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the variety, function, and dynamics of small talk in the communication of the Osing community in Banyuwangi. This study uses a qualitative approach with a communication ethnography framework. The results show that small talk in the communication of the Osing community in Banyuwangi has various forms of patterned speech and is bound by social context, including differences in interaction backgrounds, interlocutors, and communication situations. Small talk appears consistently in daily interactions, both in public and domestic spaces. Small talk serves as a means of opening and maintaining interaction, maintaining harmonious social relations, and expressing empathy, humility, and concern through phatic and expressive speech acts. The practice of small talk shows a shift in form along with generational differences and the development of digital media, especially through the use of short messages, emojis, and visual symbols, without eliminating its basic sociocultural function. These findings indicate that small talk is not just a conversation filler speech, but a communication practice that is pragmatically and culturally meaningful. Small talk functions as a mechanism for maintaining social cohesion, a medium for transmitting local cultural values, and a marker of the collective identity of the Osing community that is adaptive to social and technological changes. These findings are significant in expanding the study of pragmatics

and cultural communication by showing that small talk is a strategic communicative practice to maintain social cohesion, reproducing local cultural values, and ensuring the sustainability of the Osing community identity amidst social and digital changes.

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INTRODUCTION

In pragmatic studies, small talk is a universal communication practise present in various ethnic cultures as a means of building social relations, negotiating politeness, and maintaining harmony in daily interactions (Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Malinowski & Redfield, 1992). However, the development of digital technology and text-based communication has shifted face-to-face interactions towards fast and minimal context, so that politeness strategies and pragmatic sensitivity are increasingly reduced, especially among the younger generation (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Several studies have shown that this change has an impact on weakening the social function of small talk as a community glue and a marker of local cultural values. Amidst these tendencies, the Osing Community of Banyuwangi offers a unique local context because small talk still functions as a communication practice based on solidarity, social hierarchy, and the values of oral wisdom that live in daily interactions (Geertz, 2009; Hymes, 2010).

The Osing community is a social ethnic group that resides in Banyuwangi Regency, a geographical area located at the eastern end of Java Island, Indonesia. This ethnic group, also referred to as the indigenous community of Banyuwangi, practice a cultural tradition, characterised by the adoption of a unique language used in daily communication. As a traditional society, the people are hospitable and care for fellow members as well as foreigners. This attitude led to the development of oral tradition in the community communication known as

small talk, which plays a role in maintaining social cohesion and cultural sustainability. Additionally, small talk tradition is a verbal interaction that functions as casual conversation and a reflection of politeness, social hierarchy, including harmonious relationships. Based on shared norms and values, the small talk tradition is a symbolic act of respect, empathy, and solidarity (Geertz, 2009; Hymes, 2010).

Oral traditions within the Osing community have shifted with the penetration of globalisation and digital communication technology. The younger generation increasingly relies on fast and direct text-based communication, thus marginalising face-to-face interactions, which are rich in social and cultural context. This shift in communication patterns has resulted in the decline of small talk as part of everyday informal interactions.

From a linguistic anthropology perspective, small talk serves not only as a conversation starter but also as a verbal art form that embodies values of politeness, managing social distance, and strengthening community ties (Finnegan, 1992). Through positive and negative politeness strategies (J. Brown et al., 2007), small talk in the Osing community plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony, negotiating roles, and indirectly avoiding conflict. However, lifestyle transformations and external cultural influences have led to this interaction pattern being increasingly marginalised.

This weakening of oral communication practices not only marks a change in communication medium but also indicates

the potential loss of intangible cultural heritage and the community's collective identity. When the sociolinguistic context and cultural meaning of speech are no longer practiced, the function of communication as a means of social cohesion and informal community governance is also reduced. Therefore, in line with UNESCO's, (2013) affirmation of the importance of protecting communication traditions as part of cultural heritage, scientific studies on small talk in the Osing community are crucial as an effort to document, analyse, and revitalise endangered linguistic practices.

Previous research on linguistic politeness has generally focussed on formal, dominant speech contexts, and Western or urban settings (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). As a result, politeness practices in informal, community-based and indigenous communication, such as small talk, have received little systematic study and often neglect their local sociocultural logic. Existing pragmatic frameworks tend not to fully accommodate non-Western linguistic ecologies, necessitating the expansion of politeness studies into local community speech contexts.

This study examines this issue by analysing politeness strategies in small talk, particularly their variations, functions, and dynamics of change. This research aims to uncover the forms and functions of politeness in Osing small talk, which are threatened by social and digital change. Methodologically, this study uses a communication ethnography approach (Duranti, 1997; Hymes, 2010), with the

SPEAKING framework and P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to examine speech practices within an authentic cultural context.

The main difference between this study and previous studies lies in its focus on small talk as an oral tradition of indigenous communities, rather than solely on formal speech or Western pragmatic frameworks. The novelty of this research lies in the systematic documentation and analysis of Osing small talk as a community-based communicative practice that reveals cultural values, social functions, and the dynamics of politeness amidst the flow of digitalisation, which has until now been rarely studied (Himmelmann, 1998).

In line with the above description, theoretical contributions were made by expanding pragmatic inquiry into localised communication cultural, including critically engaging with the dominance of Euro-American models in politeness theory (Wierzbicka, 2003). Based on the context, the theory reported that a contextualised pragmatic recognised cultural diversity in speech behaviour and outlined the value of ethnographic data in influencing global linguistic discourse. The documentation of small talk led to the formulated model for community-rooted linguistic analysis that informed language preservation and culturally-responsive communication education. This study focussed on cultural significance of small talk as a communicative and identity-forming practice. Furthermore, the need for context-sensitive linguistic models was showed, contributing to the

broader project of decentralising linguistic science by strengthening minoritised voices and communicative systems.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Linguistic politeness is a key concept in pragmatic studies that explains how language is used as a social strategy to maintain harmony, manage interpersonal relations, and respect social order in everyday interactions. P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory positions politeness as a speaker's effort to protect positive face (the need for social acceptance) and negative face (the need for freedom of action), which is manifested through positive, negative, direct without mitigation (bald on record), and indirect (off record) politeness strategies, taking into account social distance, power relations, and the level of burden of speech (J. Brown et al., 2007). In a cultural context, politeness is not universal, but is bound by the norms, values, and social hierarchies that apply in a speech community (Lakoff, 1973). Linguistic politeness is therefore understood as a cultural practice inherited and reproduced through communication habits, including small talk as a form of phatic speech that functions to build social affiliation, maintain relational balance, and minimise potential conflict (Jeng et al., 2024).

In traditional societies, politeness functions as an adaptation to cultural norms to build solidarity and regulate social distance (Ide, 1989; Lakoff, 1973), and needs to be instilled to shape positive

language behaviour (Mayrita et al., 2023). One such politeness strategy is manifested through small talk, which serves to maintain balance in interactions and social cohesion while reflecting cultural symbolic meanings (Geertz, 2009). Small talk also plays a role in opening conversations and creating emotional comfort, primarily building social affiliation rather than exchanging substantive information (Jeng et al., 2024; Malinowski & Redfield, 1992).

The form and function of small talk vary across cultures and reflect prevailing power relations and communication norms (R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2001; Talukder & Barner-Rasmussen, 2024). In traditional societies, small talk functions as an informal social control mechanism that reproduces collective values through subtle linguistic cues (Finnegan, 1992; Goody, 2007; Gudykunst, 2003). Therefore, small talk is understood as a cultural discourse analysed through Cultural Discourse Studies and Hymes's ethnographic communication model, using the SPEAKING framework (Hymes, 2010). This approach is in line with the view that language is a symbolic resource that reproduces meaning, power, and cultural order (Amerian & Tajabadi, 2020; Blommaert, 2005; Fairclough, 2009).

METHODS

Study Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a communication ethnography framework to examine the practice of small talk in

the socio-cultural context of the Osing community. Referring to (Hymes, 2010), communication ethnography is used to analyse speech events by considering the situational, cultural, and social functions of language. In its application, this study adopts an ethnographic case study, which is understood as an ethnographic research strategy that focusses in-depth study on a particular social case within a clear context. The case studied is the practice of small talk in everyday communication of the Osing community, which is treated as a single ethnographic case to capture traditional norms, intergenerational relations, and pragmatic strategies that develop amidst the process of modernisation. This methodological design integrates Hymes' (2010) communication ethnography, P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, and a pragmatic perspective to produce a comprehensive analysis of

language practices as a sociocultural phenomenon.

Location and Participants

This research was conducted in Gladag Village, Banyuwangi Regency, East Java, where the majority of the population is Osing and actively uses the Osing language in daily life, including small talk practices in markets, community meetings, and families. Participants were selected purposively to represent specific generational groups and communicative roles, including culturally competent adults and elderly figures, the younger generation, as well as cultural figures and informal social actors. A total of 10 participants aged 23-79 years were involved and grouped into three generational categories, with identities maintained through the use of pseudonyms. The three generation categories of the 10 participants are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1
List of the participants

No.	Categories	Initial Name	Male/ Female	Age	Occupation
1		SU	F	68 years old	Retired civil servant, native Osing resident
2		MND	M	64 years old	Osing community elder
3		AY	F	67 years old	Osing cultural figure
4	Elderly	YNR	M	64 years old	A resource person who conveys personal experience
5		SLM	M	62 years old	RT head, farmer
6		KML	M	79 years old	Housewife, farmer
7		MI	M	58 years old	Banyuwangi dance artist, farmer
8	Middle	TTK	F	56 years old	Housewife
9		MTW	M	50 years old	Young Osing figure and teacher
10	Young	APK	F	23 years old	Student

Data Sources and Instruments

Primary data consisted of naturally occurring speech, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation records. Meanwhile, specific data sources included (1) audio/video recordings of daily small talk during informal activities (e.g., morning markets, traditional ceremonies, household visits), (2) fieldnotes from immersive observations at cultural events and communal interactions, and (3) transcripts of interviews exploring participant interpretations, values, and intentions behind communicative choices. The instruments comprised (1) observation protocol, designed based on Hymes' SPEAKING model (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, Genre), (2) interview guideline, in line with P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory which was adopted to explore face strategies, intentions, and perceptions of social roles, and (3) audio-visual equipment for real-time, in-situ documentation.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted over four months through three stages: pre-field preparation, field immersion, and interviews. The pre-field phase included location mapping, participant selection, and instrument testing, while the field immersion phase involved participant observation of natural interactions. Interviews were conducted individually and in groups, recorded, transcribed, and annotated with contextual information such as location, speaker relationships, and speech purposes to support multi-layered analysis.

Data Analysis Method

Data were analysed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2020), which includes condensation, presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the condensation stage, Osing-language small talk data were transcribed verbatim and translated through two stages (Osing-Indonesian-English) literally and contextually, taking into account the function of speech acts and politeness strategies. They were validated through limited back-translation and researcher discussions. The data were then segmented based on speech events, coded using Hymes' SPEAKING model, annotated using P. Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, and analysed for indexical markers such as lexical choice and speech act types. The results of the analysis were presented in a thematic matrix, intergenerational comparison tables, and narrative vignettes, then verified through triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing to explain the role of small talk in negotiating social relations and cultural identity.

FINDINGS

Various Small Talk in the Daily Communication of the Osing Community

Data on the variety of small talk within the Osing community were obtained through direct observation in natural settings and supported by in-depth interviews with local informants. The findings proved that small talk (phatic communication) played a role

in maintaining social harmony, politeness, and relational intimacy, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 displays variations in small talk in everyday Osing communication based on context and participants. On public streets and at home, small talk ranges from brief greetings to longer friendly expressions.

In the marketplace, it occurs in buying and selling interactions, often through situational questions and humour. At traditional events and in public queues, small talk is used to respond to environmental conditions and shared situations.

Table 2
Varieties of small talk in Osing daily communication

No.	Setting	Participants	Small Talks
1	Public road (when meeting neighbours/relatives)	Neighbours, relatives, old friends	Where are you going, bro? Not stopping by first, huh?
2	Private house (when welcoming/receiving guests)	Hosts-guests	It's rare to be home, Miss? Please come in, Sir, sorry the house is messy. I just stopped by for a moment... I want to meet you, I miss you, it's been a long time since we last met.... Come here often, so we can keep in touch.... Have you had breakfast yet?
3	Market/stall (interaction in transactions)	Sellers-buyers	Why are you alone? Who took you where? Why are you shopping so much? Are you going to celebrate? Please, Sir, I'll (eat) first, okay...? I hope you're always healthy, Ma'am...
4	Traditional events and public queues	Among residents across ages and genders	The air is hot. Why hasn't the event started yet? Wow, the queue is long...? We have to be patient, everyone wants it to finish quickly...!

Quote 1:

In our village, small talk is essential, it is formal—and maintains relationships. On the street, people ask, Where are you going? If not, it may seem arrogant. Even with an untidy house, people say, Please come in, sorry it is untidy. That is the acceptable way of being polite and humble. [Informant: SU (68), former civil servant, Rogojampi]

SU outlined the social expectations surrounding small talk as a marker of humility and respect in Osing community. It functions as a greeting and social inclusion mechanism.

Quote 2:

Small talk has become a habit with valuable meaning, reflecting care, emotional intelligence, and

attentiveness—including the following values *ngemong*, *ngapurancang*, and *tanggap rasa*. For example, statements such as long time no see rekindles social bonds. [Informant: MI (58), dance artist and farmer, Banyuwangi]

MI introduced the concept of cultural pragmatic, where small talk reflected and reinforced local moral values and relational etiquette unique to Osing traditions.

Quote 3:

Small talk is important, because in the past, children were taught to greet elders or guests using the following phrases Have you eaten yet? Currently, digital communication dominates, but I still teach my grandchildren to show respect through small talk. [Informant: MND (64), community elder]

This view confirmed an intergenerational transmission of politeness norms, reflecting concerns about cultural erosion in the digital age.

The Function of Small Talk in the Daily Communication of the Osing Community

To deepen the understanding of the communicative role of small talk among the people, observations and open-ended interviews with cultural figures, local elders, and residents was performed. The data showed that small talk served various pragmatic and sociocultural functions. Meanwhile, selected interview excerpts and synthesised data were reported as follows.

Interview Excerpts

Quote 4:

Small talk is like a habit in the community life, when people meet, specifically the elderly or close neighbours, light questions are asked such as Where are you going, Sir? or Have you just come back from the market, Ma'am? It is not just a question, but a sign that the people care and intend to keep the relationship cordial. The atmosphere becomes rigid and feels strange if small talk is omitted. Familiarity is important in this village to help each other and enable living in harmony.” [Informant: Mrs. TTK (56), resident of Kemiren Village]

Quote 5:

Speech such as where are you going, Sir? or Please come in, my house is a untidy is phatic expression and contains deep meaning as part of cultural communication strategy. In the Osing tradition that upholds the values of togetherness, harmony, and responsiveness, small talk is a means to convey empathy, politeness, and respect indirectly but effectively. For example, when receiving guests, the people say sorry, the house is untidy, even though it is clean. However, that is not a lie, but an etiquette to show humility.” [Informant: AY (67), Osing cultural figure]

Quote 6:

Supposing my child is going out, I would say, be careful, and do not forget to eat, although in several occasion I am completely aware he has eaten. Personally, it is a form of love. For example, when a sick neighbour is met, people say, ‘Get well soon, Mom.’ It feels trivial, but fosters a sense of care for each other. [Informant: YNR (64), community elder]

The analysed field data showed several prominent communicative functions of small talk among the people, as in Table 3.

Table 3 shows the seven functions of small talk in Osing communication: building and maintaining social relationships, expressing concern, and maintaining politeness. Small talk also serves to foster

intimacy, preserve local values such as friendliness, avoid tension, and build a positive social identity through compliments.

The Dynamics of Small Talk in the Osing Community

This section presented the findings of interviews conducted with four representatives from the Osing community in Banyuwangi two community leaders (SLM and MTW), a housewife (KML), and youth informant (APK). The analysis showed significant transformation in small talk practices across generations. Thematic patterns were classified into seven major aspects, namely interaction medium, politeness norms, frequency, emotional expression, social appraisal, conversation topics, and communicative function. In this context, the data excerpts were categorised and discussed accordingly.

Table 3
Function of small talk in the Osing society communication

No.	Function	Example Expressions	Description
1	Building and maintaining social relations	“Where are you going, Sir?”, “Where are you from, Ma’am?”	Opens interaction, preserves social connectedness
2	Showing concern and empathy	“Have you eaten yet?”, “Get well soon.”	Verbal expression of care and empathy
3	Maintaining politeness and social harmony	“Please come in, my house is a mess.”	Signals humility and politeness, specifically to guests
4	Fostering familiarity and warmth	“Wow, you’re getting healthier!”, “You’re looking younger!”	Softens social distance and strengthens emotional bonds
5	Preserving local traditions and values	“If you pass by my house, stop by.”	Reinforces values of communal living, cooperation, and hospitality
6	Avoiding tension and facilitating neutrality	“The weather is nice, huh?”, “The queue is long, huh...”	Manages face-threatening acts, prevents conflict, neutralises interaction
7	Building positive social identity	“Smart, huh, following in his father’s footsteps.”	Offers positive affirmation, boosts social pride and recognition

Theme 1 Medium of Interaction

Traditional: In the past, small talk was face-to-face, people would ask: Where are you going, sir? or Have you eaten yet, ma'am? (SLM, 62)

Contemporary: Currently, people just send messages like Where are you? through WhatsApp or Instagram. Even the use of emojis are enough. (APK, 23)

There is a significant shift from direct interpersonal communication to text-based digital interaction. Although the intention of maintaining social bonds remained, the delivery was briefer and mediated through technology.

Theme 2 Politeness and Norms of Humility

Traditional: People used to say, Please come in, my house is untidy, as a way of showing humility. (KML, 79)

Contemporary: Young people currently say, Just come in, it is my house,—more casual, less self-effacing. (KML, 79)

The shift reflects a transformation from deferential expressions of humility to more egalitarian and practical social etiquette. This is indicative of evolving values favouring comfort and authenticity over formality.

Theme 3 Frequency of Public Small Talk

Traditional: People used to talk to anyone at the market, Where are you

from? or Is the weather good? was normal. (MTW, 50)

Contemporary: Presently, people tend to remain silent in public and just look at their phones. (MTW, 50)

Direct interactions in public have declined, signalling a more individualised social orientation, caused by digital absorption and decreased dependency on spontaneous community interaction.

Theme 4 Emotional Expression

Traditional: When someone was missed, both parties would meet and talk at length. (SLM, 62)

Contemporary: Currently, people say *Kangen ngobrol* through chat, or just use stickers. (APK, 23)

In this context, while the emotional purpose of small talk remains—expressing longing or affection—the medium has become symbolic and minimalist, often relying on visual cues such as emojis.

Theme 5 Compliments and Social Appraisal

Traditional: People complimented one another, by saying *You still look young!* or *You dress well.* (MTW, 50)

Contemporary: Currently, the people tend to say *You glow differently,* or *Your style is cool!* (APK, 23)

Expressions of social praise are presently more creative, hyperbolic, and

stylised, influenced by global pop customs and digital expression trends.

media-driven, trend-oriented discourse, in line with the digitisation of social life.

Theme 6 Topics of Conversation

Traditional: People talked about the weather, how the kids were doing, or how clean the house was. (KML, 79)

Contemporary: People currently talked about TikTok trends or Instagram posts such as, Your nephew is cute on IG! (APK, 23)

A generational transition in conversational topics reflects a move from domestic and environmental themes to

Theme 7 Communicative Function

Traditional: Small talk built togetherness and kept neighbours close. (SLM, 62)

Contemporary: Even online chatting keeps friendships intact, just faster and less formal. (APK, 23)

The social function of small talk endures—to maintain bonds and show presence, despite changes in form and medium. However, this function was increasingly abstracted into digital convenience. The change of small talk was summarised in Table 4.

Table 4
Shifting small talk practices in the Osing community

Aspects	Traditional Practices	Contemporary Practices	Description of the Shift
Medium of interaction	Face-to-face greetings in daily contexts	Chatting via digital apps (WA, DM, emojis)	Shift towards fast, technology-mediated interaction
Norms of politeness	Humble, self-effacing expressions	Casual, egalitarian phrases	Shift from formal humility to relaxed authenticity
Public frequency	Frequent spontaneous encounters in shared spaces	Reduced verbal interaction; increased silence in public	Decline in social spontaneity due to individualism and gadget use
Emotional expression	Extended verbal expressions of longing	Short texts or emojis conveying similar sentiment	Compression of affect through symbolic communication
Social appraisal	Simple and sincere compliments	Hyperbolic or trend-based compliments	Rise in stylised praise, influenced by online language
Conversation topics	Daily life, weather, family	Social media, digital trends	Substitution of intimate content with viral/popular media conversations
Communicative function	Deepening intimacy via direct interaction	Maintaining ties via efficient symbolic communication	Continuity in function; transformation in tools and tone

Table 4 shows the shift in Osing people's small talk practices from face-to-face interactions to digital media. Politeness norms have become more relaxed, public interactions have decreased, and emotional expressions are conveyed concisely through text and emojis, while the function of maintaining social relationships remains.

DISCUSSION

This study identifies diverse varieties of small talk in the Osing community that are contextually embedded across settings, participants, and interactional situations. Small talk appears in public roads, homes, markets, and ritual spaces, involving neighbours, relatives, elders, and strangers. These varieties are realised through formulaic utterances such as “Where are you going, Sir?”, “Please come in,” or “Have you eaten yet?” which consistently precede or accompany main conversations. In line with ethnography of communication (Hymes, 2010), these patterned forms demonstrate that Osing small talk is not random but socially organised, showing stable interactional routines that frame everyday communication. Compared to previous studies on phatic expressions in local communities (Holmes & Wilson, 2022b; van Zoonen et al., 2024), this finding confirms that Osing small talk operates as a recurrent communicative practice tied to specific sociocultural contexts.

The findings show that small talk in Osing communication serves multiple pragmatic functions, particularly initiating interaction, maintaining interpersonal

relations, and reducing social distance. From a pragmatic perspective, these utterances function as phatic speech acts, where the illocutionary force lies in sustaining social harmony rather than transmitting information (Malinowski & Redfield, 1992; Searle, 1970). Small talk also functions as a politeness strategy, managing face needs and preventing interactional tension, especially in intergenerational or asymmetrical relationships (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987). This aligns with earlier pragmatic studies that emphasise the role of small talk in establishing a conducive interactional climate (Goffman, 1982; R. Scollon & S. Scollon, 2001), while extending them by showing how these functions are realised within Osing-specific norms.

Beyond pragmatic functions, small talk in the Osing community acts as a medium for expressing and transmitting local cultural values such as *ngemong* (nurturing), *ngapurancang* (maintaining emotional harmony), *responsiveness* (empathy), and *ngalah* (humility). These values are enacted through routine expressions that symbolically encode care, hospitality, and mutual respect. Such findings resonate with Geertz's (2009) view of language as symbolic action and Kaszynska's (2024) notion of values as intersubjectively justified cultural meanings. Compared with previous studies on cultural communication, this research highlights small talk as a micro-level cultural ritual that sustains Osing ethical frameworks in everyday interactions, reinforcing cultural identity through ordinary discourse.

The study further reveals dynamic shifts in small talk practices across generations and communication media. While older speakers predominantly employ face-to-face verbal small talk, younger speakers increasingly use brief messages, emojis, and stickers in digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Despite changes in form, the core sociocultural functions—maintaining bonds, expressing concern, and signaling politeness—remain intact. This supports mediation theory (Hjarvard, 2013) and recent studies on digital pragmatics (Gao, 2023; Mutheu, 2023), which argue that digital media reconfigures, rather than replaces, social interaction norms. The Osing case demonstrates a glocalised communicative pattern, where local values persist through globally shared semiotic resources, confirming that small talk remains a resilient marker of social continuity amid technological change.

Overall, this study makes four main contributions: mapping the variety of small talk in various Osing communication contexts, revealing the pragmatic and social functions of small talk in maintaining harmonious interactions, interpreting small talk as a medium for transmitting local cultural values, and analysing the dynamics of small talk in the context of cross-generational digital communication. Unlike previous research, which generally views small talk in general or detached from specific cultural contexts, this study shows that Osing small talk is a patterned communicative practice, has symbolic value, and functions strategically in

building social cohesion. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of pragmatics, communication ethnography, and digital cultural dynamics to explain the sustainability of small talk as an adaptive cultural practice. Thus, this research not only enriches studies of pragmatics and social communication but also emphasises the role of language as a marker of identity and local cultural continuity amidst social and technological change.

CONCLUSION

This section concludes that small talk in Osing society can be understood as a systematic, patterned, and contextual pragmatic-cultural practice, thus broadening the understanding of the functions of phatic and expressive speech acts in the study of pragmatics and ethnography of communication. These findings indicate that small talk functions not only as conversation filler, but as a linguistic mechanism that integrates politeness, emotion, and cultural values in building and maintaining social relations. The findings of this study contribute to strengthening the theoretical framework that views language as a sustainable and culturally oriented social act. The results of this study have implications for language education, particularly in the development of pragmatic competence and cultural awareness through the use of authentic communication practices based on local culture. Furthermore, small talk plays an important role in cultural preservation because local values are continuously reproduced through daily interactions. In the

context of intergenerational communication, small talk has proven to be adaptive and has the potential to become a communicative bridge that maintains the continuity of social relations and cultural identity amidst social change and technological developments.

Implications of the Study

This study makes important contributions to the fields of pragmatics, communication ethnography, and intercultural linguistics, especially regarding minority communities in the digital age. The significance of the study centered on enlightening how small talk, often considered trivial, played a major role in cultural logic by maintaining social cohesion and transmitting traditional values. This offered a meaningful scholarly contribution to pragmatic, ethnographic communication and intercultural linguistics by showing that language functioned as a medium of exchange and symbolic ritual that sustained cultural identity, particularly within minority and digitally evolving communities.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research is limited to a specific social and regional context within the Osing community, so its findings cannot be broadly generalised. This study only focused on small talk practices in everyday interactions and did not include formal or institutional communication contexts. Furthermore, the analysis of the dynamics of digital small talk has not been conducted longitudinally, so changes in communication practices

over time cannot be fully described. Based on these findings and limitations, further research is recommended to expand the scope of locations and social contexts to obtain a more comprehensive picture, including cross-cultural comparisons. Further research should also examine small talk in formal and institutional contexts, such as education and public services, as well as conduct longitudinal studies of digital small talk. Ethnographic approaches can also be combined with conversation analysis or experimental pragmatics to deepen understanding of the relationship between speech forms, contexts, and the social meaning of small talk.

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