

## A LOVING GREETING FROM NIAS: THE MEANING, FUNCTION, AND SOCIAL VALUES IN THE WORD YA'AHOWU

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### Abstrak

Kata *Ya'ahowu* merupakan sapaan khas masyarakat Nias yang memiliki makna mendalam dan nilai budaya yang kuat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji makna, fungsi, dan nilai sosial dari kata *Ya'ahowu* sebagai simbol cinta dan identitas budaya masyarakat Nias. Metode yang digunakan adalah kajian pustaka, dengan menelaah berbagai sumber seperti jurnal, buku, dan artikel ilmiah terkait bahasa dan budaya Nias. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa *Ya'ahowu* bukan sekadar salam, tetapi juga mengandung doa dan harapan baik bagi yang disapa. Fungsi utamanya mencakup fungsi sosial, budaya, dan emosional dalam mempererat hubungan antarindividu dan memperkuat solidaritas sosial. Selain itu, *Ya'ahowu* juga mencerminkan nilai-nilai seperti kasih sayang, rasa hormat, dan semangat persaudaraan. Dalam konteks modern, kata ini tetap relevan dan memiliki potensi sebagai simbol diplomasi budaya serta alat pelestarian bahasa lokal. Kesimpulannya, *Ya'ahowu* adalah warisan budaya tak benda yang penting untuk dilestarikan, karena tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai representasi nilai cinta dan kedamaian khas Nias.

**Kata Kunci:** *Ya'ahowu; Budaya Nias; Sapaan Cinta; Nilai Sosial; Komunikasi Tradisional; Bahasa Daerah Identitas Budaya*

### Abstract

The word *Ya'ahowu* is a distinctive greeting used by the people of Nias, carrying deep meaning and strong cultural values. This study aims to explore the meaning, function, and social significance of *Ya'ahowu* as a symbol of love and cultural identity within the Nias community. The research employs a literature review method, analyzing various sources such as journals, books, and scholarly articles related to the language and culture of Nias. The findings reveal that *Ya'ahowu* is not merely a simple salutation but embodies a prayer and well-wishes for the person being greeted. Its primary functions extend beyond social interaction, encompassing cultural and emotional roles that strengthen interpersonal relationships and foster social solidarity. Moreover, *Ya'ahowu* reflects core values such as affection, respect, and a strong spirit of brotherhood. In today's modern context, this greeting remains relevant and holds potential as a symbol of cultural diplomacy and a tool for preserving the local language. In conclusion, *Ya'ahowu* is an important intangible



cultural heritage that must be preserved. It serves not only as a means of communication but also as a representation of the unique values of love and peace inherent to the Nias people.

**Keywords:** *Ya'ahowu; Nias Culture; Cultural Identity; Local Language; Social Values; Traditional Greeting; Linguistic Heritage.*

## A. Introduction

The distinctive greeting Ya'ahowu in the Nias language serves far more than just a daily salutation for the Ono Niha people of Nias Island; it carries profound cultural, social, and even spiritual meanings. Literally, Ya'ahowu can be translated as "may you be blessed" or "become a blessing," emphasizing values of brotherhood, openness, and mutual responsibility within the community. In the traditional context of the Ono Niha, this expression is used to both initiate and conclude conversations, whether in informal settings or during customary ceremonies. It embodies a tangible symbol of respect, hospitality, and togetherness that permeates social interactions. The greeting reflects the community's collective identity and reinforces social bonds by reminding individuals of their role in sustaining harmony and solidarity. Beyond its communicative function, Ya'ahowu encapsulates the spirit of warmth and unity that is central to Ono Niha culture. Even in contemporary times, the greeting remains a powerful cultural marker that bridges generations and fosters a sense of belonging. In essence, Ya'ahowu is not just a phrase but a cultural practice that nurtures respect, connection, and shared responsibility among the people of Nias.

Linguistic studies reveal that Ya'ahowu is more than just a common greeting; it functions as a verbal

mechanism that facilitates social relationships and represents the cultural orientation toward collective well-being. This greeting reflects the core social values of the Nias community, such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong), harmony, and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships. By expressing goodwill and blessings, Ya'ahowu reinforces the importance of social cohesion and shared responsibility among community members. Moreover, the cultural festival known as Pesta Ya'ahowu, which is regularly held in the Nias Islands, further underscores the significance of Ya'ahowu as a cornerstone of collective identity and as a medium for preserving local wisdom and cultural heritage (Daeli, M. J., 2007). This festival not only celebrates the greeting itself but also strengthens communal bonds and promotes the transmission of traditional values to younger generations. Through both everyday use and ceremonial contexts, Ya'ahowu embodies the spirit of unity and cultural continuity, making it a vital symbol within Nias society.

In the era of modernization and increased social mobility, regional languages, including Nias language, face significant challenges in maintaining their relevance and existence. The integration of the greeting Ya'ahowu into daily interactions and cultural activities serves as a strategic means to preserve cultural values and strengthen community bonds.



This traditional greeting acts not only as a cultural symbol but also as a tool for sustaining the continuity of local identity amidst rapid societal changes. Recent research on the philosophy of Ya'ahowu as a foundation for inclusive peace theology highlights its potential to function as a medium for intercultural dialogue and as a platform for imparting social values within multicultural education (Amirrudin Zalukhu, 2025). Through this lens, Ya'ahowu transcends its role as a simple greeting, becoming a bridge that connects diverse cultural perspectives and promotes mutual understanding. Its continued use fosters respect, empathy, and peaceful coexistence, which are essential in today's pluralistic societies. Therefore, embracing Ya'ahowu within modern contexts not only preserves linguistic heritage but also enriches social harmony and educational frameworks aimed at cultivating inclusive communities.

Therefore, an in-depth study of the meaning, function, and social value of the greeting Ya'ahowu is essential to understand how the Nias language serves as a "language of love" within the framework of interpersonal communication and Nias cultural life. Such research opens up important discourse on how elements of local language can be contextualized in education, cultural preservation, and the development of collective identity (Harefa, D., 2024). This study aims to explore the multifaceted role of Ya'ahowu beyond a simple greeting—as a cultural expression that nurtures social bonds and transmits local wisdom. The title "The

Greeting of Love from Nias: Meaning, Function, and Social Value in the Word Ya'ahowu" reflects an effort to delve deeper into how this salutation contributes to preserving, interpreting, and actualizing local wisdom in the contemporary life of the Nias community. By highlighting Ya'ahowu, the research seeks to emphasize the importance of indigenous languages in maintaining cultural heritage and fostering a sense of belonging amidst modernization and globalization. Ultimately, this study underscores the vital role of language as a living repository of identity and values in Nias society.

## **B. Research Method**

This study employs a library research approach as its primary method to explore and analyze the meaning, function, and social value of the greeting term Ya'ahowu within the Nias community. Library research is particularly suitable for this study because it allows for a thorough examination of existing literature, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the topic through an exploratory and analytical lens. The sources reviewed include a wide range of materials such as books, scholarly journal articles, previous research studies, and other relevant documentary evidence that discuss the language, culture, and local wisdom of the Nias people.

By utilizing this method, the study avoids direct fieldwork, instead focusing on synthesizing and interpreting secondary data to uncover deeper insights into how Ya'ahowu functions not only as a linguistic expression but also as a social and cultural symbol. This approach



facilitates an interdisciplinary understanding, linking linguistic aspects with cultural values and social dynamics.

Furthermore, the library research method is effective in identifying patterns, themes, and theoretical frameworks from existing knowledge, which strengthens the validity and reliability of the findings. This method provides a solid foundation for appreciating the role of *Ya'ahowu* in preserving cultural identity and promoting social cohesion in contemporary Nias society.

In this process, the researcher collected data from a wide range of academic and non-academic sources available both online and in print. The primary focus of the literature review encompassed several key areas: (1) linguistic studies concerning regional languages and forms of greetings within traditional communities; (2) anthropological research on the culture and local wisdom of the Nias people; (3) semiotic and sociolinguistic approaches to interpreting the social functions of greetings in society; and (4) cultural representation and constructivist theories, particularly those proposed by scholars such as Jerome Bruner and Clifford Geertz.

By integrating insights from these diverse fields, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of *Ya'ahowu* not just as a linguistic expression but as a multifaceted cultural phenomenon. The linguistic studies shed light on how greetings function within the structure of regional languages, while anthropological sources provide context regarding the customs, traditions, and

social norms of the Nias community. Semiotic and sociolinguistic perspectives help decode the symbolic and communicative roles that greetings play in social interactions. Meanwhile, theories of cultural representation and constructivism offer a framework to understand how meanings are constructed, maintained, and transformed within cultural contexts.

Together, these interdisciplinary sources enable a rich and nuanced analysis of the social and cultural significance of *Ya'ahowu* in Nias society.

The research procedure began with the identification and selection of relevant literature through various academic databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda, and university journal portals. Keywords used during the search included terms such as "*Ya'ahowu*," "greetings in Nias culture," "local wisdom," "language of love," and "Nias cultural identity." This strategic search aimed to gather a comprehensive collection of sources that would provide insight into the linguistic, cultural, and social dimensions of *Ya'ahowu* within the Nias community.

After gathering the literature, the next step involved qualitative analysis focusing on three main aspects. First, the symbolic meaning of the word *Ya'ahowu* was explored to understand its deeper connotations beyond a simple greeting. Second, the research examined its function within social interactions among the people of Nias, highlighting how it facilitates communication, fosters social bonds, and reflects communal values. Lastly, the study analyzed the socio-cultural values embedded in *Ya'ahowu*,



emphasizing its role in expressing collective identity, solidarity, and local wisdom.

By emphasizing these aspects, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how *Ya'ahowu* operates as more than just a verbal expression, but as a significant cultural symbol that sustains and reflects the heritage of the Nias people.

The researcher employed a thematic content analysis approach to systematically organize the collected data according to recurring themes. These themes included the use of *Ya'ahowu* in various contexts such as traditional customs, religious ceremonies, everyday communication, and as a symbol of brotherhood and solidarity within the Nias community. By categorizing the data thematically, the study was able to highlight the multifaceted roles that *Ya'ahowu* plays in different social and cultural settings.

In addition to thematic analysis, an interpretative approach was applied to gain deeper insight into the underlying meanings embedded in the use of *Ya'ahowu*. This interpretive lens focused on understanding how concepts of love, peace, and unity are embodied and expressed through this greeting. The approach allowed the researcher to explore not only the explicit functions of *Ya'ahowu* as a form of verbal communication but also its symbolic significance as a cultural representation of shared values among the Nias people.

Together, these methods provided a comprehensive framework to analyze *Ya'ahowu* beyond its surface-level use,

revealing its critical role in reinforcing cultural identity, social cohesion, and the perpetuation of local wisdom within the community.

Using this method, the research is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the preservation of the oral cultural heritage of the Nias community. Oral traditions, including local greetings like *Ya'ahowu*, carry deep cultural meanings that have been passed down through generations, serving not only as forms of communication but also as vessels of cultural identity and values. By examining these greetings in their social and cultural contexts, this study aims to highlight how such expressions reinforce interpersonal relationships and community solidarity rooted in shared cultural norms.

Moreover, this research offers a fresh perspective on the importance of local salutations as more than mere words; they are vital tools for building and maintaining social cohesion within traditional societies. Understanding the symbolic and functional roles of *Ya'ahowu* can provide insights into how language shapes social interactions and preserves cultural continuity amid modern challenges such as globalization and cultural homogenization.

Ultimately, the findings are expected to support efforts in cultural preservation and revitalization, emphasizing the need to integrate local languages and traditions into contemporary social practices and education. This study thus contributes to broader discussions on cultural sustainability and the dynamic role of language in shaping community identity.



## C. Results and Discussion

### Research Findings

From the conducted literature review, it was found that the greeting *Ya'ahowu* in the Ono Niha culture (the Nias community) carries a meaning that goes beyond a simple everyday salutation. Firstly, from a semantic and etymological perspective, the word *Ya'ahowu* can be broken down into two parts: *ya* meaning "may" or "hope" and *howu* meaning "blessed" or "blessing." Thus, literally, it translates to "may you be blessed." This greeting embodies an expression of care and affection that is both communicative and interpersonal. Therefore, it can be considered the unique "language of love" specific to the Nias people.

Moreover, *Ya'ahowu* is not only a form of polite greeting but also a profound cultural symbol that reinforces social bonds and mutual respect within the community. It reflects the values of compassion, solidarity, and spiritual goodwill, which are central to the social fabric of Ono Niha society. This shows how language, particularly in the form of greetings, plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural identity and fostering harmonious relationships.

These findings emphasize the importance of preserving such local expressions, as they serve as carriers of intangible cultural heritage and continue to nurture a sense of belonging and shared values among the Nias people.

Secondly, from a socio-cultural function perspective, *Ya'ahowu* is used in a wide range of interactions: from opening and closing everyday conversations, to traditional ceremonies, and even ritual

and religious functions. Its usage helps to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, reinforces a sense of brotherhood, and strengthens communal identity. By expressing goodwill and blessing, *Ya'ahowu* serves as a powerful social tool that fosters cohesion and solidarity among community members.

For example, the *Pesta Ya'ahowu* festival held in the Nias Islands adopts the term *Ya'ahowu* as its motto, symbolizing togetherness and cultural pride. This festival showcases not only the traditional customs and practices of the Nias people but also highlights the importance of *Ya'ahowu* as a unifying emblem. It acts as a cultural anchor that connects individuals to their heritage and encourages the preservation of local values amidst modernization.

In this way, *Ya'ahowu* transcends being just a verbal greeting and becomes an essential part of cultural expression and identity. Its continuous use in social and ceremonial contexts underscores its role in maintaining the social fabric and cultural continuity of the Nias community.

Thirdly, from a social values perspective, elements such as love, solidarity, mutual respect, and social responsibility are deeply embedded in the practice of using the greeting *Ya'ahowu*. Philosophical analysis suggests that *Ya'ahowu* serves as a foundation for an inclusive theology of peace within the Nias community and across different cultures. This implies that the greeting is not merely a form of communication but also a carrier of profound ethical and



moral principles that promote harmony and understanding.

In educational and cultural preservation contexts, *Ya'ahowu* functions as a vital instrument for strengthening local wisdom and fostering sustainable social values. By incorporating this greeting into daily interactions, educational programs, and cultural events, the community actively nurtures a sense of belonging and respect for tradition while encouraging peaceful coexistence. This dual role makes *Ya'ahowu* an important cultural asset that bridges past and present, linking generations through shared values.

Moreover, its role in promoting inclusivity and social cohesion positions *Ya'ahowu* as more than just a local custom; it becomes a powerful symbol of collective identity and moral guidance. Thus, *Ya'ahowu* contributes significantly to maintaining social harmony and cultural continuity in an increasingly globalized world.

Overall, the greeting *Ya'ahowu* functions as much more than a simple polite salutation; it plays a vital role in maintaining social relationships, preserving cultural identity, and fostering love and solidarity among members of the Nias community. This study highlights that to fully understand *Ya'ahowu*, it must be viewed as a linguistic phenomenon rich with symbolic meaning, social functions, and deeply ingrained cultural values.

*Ya'ahowu* serves as a social glue that strengthens interpersonal bonds and communal ties, reflecting the community's collective ethos of mutual respect, care, and togetherness. Its use in everyday

interactions, traditional ceremonies, and cultural events reveals how language can embody shared histories and collective aspirations. The greeting not only communicates goodwill but also reinforces a sense of belonging and cultural pride that is essential for the community's cohesion.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes that *Ya'ahowu* is a dynamic cultural practice that adapts over time, yet remains rooted in the values of harmony, peace, and social responsibility. Understanding this greeting in its full context enriches our appreciation of how language functions as a carrier of identity and social continuity, especially within indigenous communities facing modernization and globalization pressures.

### Discussion

In this study, the greeting *Ya'ahowu* from the Ono Niha community (Nias) is interpreted as a "language of love" encompassing three essential dimensions: meaning, function, and social value. According to the literature, the etymological meaning of this greeting contains elements of a prayer *howu-howo* ("blessings") and *ya* ("may" or "hopefully") thus it can be translated as "may you be blessed." This meaning reflects a deep concern for the well-being of others and emphasizes social responsibility in the daily interactions of the Nias people.

The greeting is not merely a verbal formality but a sincere expression of goodwill and communal care. It embodies the cultural values of empathy and solidarity, serving as a social mechanism that nurtures harmony and mutual respect



within the community. Through this lens, *Ya'ahowu* functions as a bridge connecting individuals and strengthening social bonds.

Moreover, this expression plays a crucial role in preserving local wisdom by continuously reinforcing cultural identity and social cohesion. Its use in various social and ritual contexts demonstrates how language can transmit intangible cultural heritage, contributing to the sustainability of Nias traditions in a rapidly modernizing world.

Functionally and culturally, *Ya'ahowu* serves as a powerful symbol of solidarity, community unity, and collective identity. It plays an essential role in traditional rituals, conversational openings and closings, as well as cultural festivals such as the *Pesta Ya'ahowu*. In these contexts, the greeting embodies warmth, brotherhood, and mutual respect among members of the Ono Niha community.

Far beyond being a routine salutation, *Ya'ahowu* operates as a vital verbal mechanism that helps preserve and nurture social bonds within the community. It fosters a sense of belonging and reinforces shared values, acting as a social glue that connects individuals and strengthens communal ties. This cultural function highlights the greeting's importance in maintaining continuity of tradition and upholding the social fabric of Nias society.

Through repeated use in both everyday interactions and ceremonial occasions, *Ya'ahowu* sustains collective memory and identity, enabling members to affirm their cultural heritage. Therefore,

this simple yet profound expression plays a crucial role in ensuring the persistence of social cohesion and cultural vitality within the Ono Niha people, especially in the face of modernization and social change.

The social values embedded in the greeting *Ya'ahowu* encompass love, respect, unity, and shared responsibility. For instance, Daeli (2007) notes that the use of *Ya'ahowu* reflects an active awareness of others' needs and expresses the sentiment, "I know you from the core of my being, not just from the surface." This powerful statement illustrates how the greeting encapsulates the cultural ethos of the Nias people, where humanity and togetherness form the foundation of communal life.

By expressing genuine care and deep connection, *Ya'ahowu* transcends mere words, becoming a symbolic gesture that strengthens interpersonal bonds and fosters social harmony. It promotes a collective identity rooted in mutual respect and the commitment to support one another. This sense of solidarity is vital in nurturing a community where individual well-being is intertwined with the welfare of others.

In this way, *Ya'ahowu* embodies not only a form of communication but also a social contract that emphasizes empathy, cooperation, and the importance of maintaining strong relationships. It highlights the cultural priority placed on living in harmony and fulfilling shared responsibilities within the Nias society, reflecting values that remain relevant in both traditional and contemporary contexts.



Within the framework of social linguistics and semiotic theory, *Ya'ahowu* can be understood as a symbolic sign that connects the speaker with their community and the values it upholds. As discussed in the literature on social representation, the use of cultural greetings goes beyond the mere transfer of words; it conveys cultural meanings, identity, and social relationships. This highlights that greetings like *Ya'ahowu* are rich with symbolic significance, acting as bridges between individuals and their shared cultural heritage.

In modern contexts such as education, tourism, and media, the continued use of *Ya'ahowu* demonstrates its relevance as a living and adaptive cultural communication tool. Rather than being a static relic of the past, it evolves with societal changes, maintaining its role in fostering community bonds and expressing collective identity. This adaptability ensures that *Ya'ahowu* remains a vital part of everyday interactions, helping to preserve cultural continuity amidst globalization and modernization.

Moreover, the greeting serves as a means of cultural diplomacy, offering outsiders insight into Nias values and ways of life. By embedding tradition within contemporary communication, *Ya'ahowu* acts as a powerful symbol of resilience and cultural pride, affirming the importance of maintaining local wisdom in a rapidly changing world.

Thus, the greeting *Ya'ahowu* functions as a vital bridge between local values and contemporary social dynamics. This study emphasizes that understanding

*Ya'ahowu* means appreciating how a simple, seemingly small word can carry profound meanings of love, responsibility, and brotherhood. It highlights the power of language as a vessel for cultural identity and social cohesion within the Nias community.

Further research potentially through field studies or analyses of verbal interactions would deepen the understanding of how this greeting is actively practiced and lived by the younger generation of the Ono Niha people. Such studies could explore how *Ya'ahowu* adapts to modern communication contexts, its role in shaping social relationships, and its influence on cultural continuity in an era of rapid change.

By examining the practical usage and evolving meanings of *Ya'ahowu*, future research can contribute valuable insights into the resilience of local languages and traditions in a globalized world. Ultimately, this work underscores the importance of preserving and revitalizing indigenous expressions as integral components of cultural heritage and identity, fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity across generations.

#### D. Conclusion

The word *Ya'ahowu* is not merely a form of greeting in the culture of the Nias people (Ono Niha), but rather an expression of love, respect, and meaningful prayers towards others. Based on the conducted literature review, it is found that *Ya'ahowu* carries deep spiritual and social meanings. Literally, the term can be interpreted as "may you be



blessed,” reflecting a heartfelt wish for goodness, well-being, and affection toward the person being greeted.

This expression goes beyond a simple salutation; it embodies the values of care, solidarity, and communal responsibility that are central to Nias society. *Ya'ahowu* serves as a verbal manifestation of the cultural identity and collective harmony of the community, fostering unity and mutual respect among its members.

In essence, *Ya'ahowu* is a vital cultural symbol that preserves and communicates the ethical and emotional foundations of the Nias people. This research highlights the importance of such indigenous expressions in maintaining cultural heritage and encouraging social cohesion. Preserving and promoting *Ya'ahowu* within both traditional and modern contexts ensures the continuity of the Nias cultural legacy for future generations.

The social function of *Ya'ahowu* is extensive, as it is used in a wide range of contexts, both formal and informal. Whether in traditional ceremonies, religious events, or everyday interactions, this greeting serves as a powerful symbol of communication that emphasizes values such as equality, peace, and brotherhood. It goes beyond being just a simple salutation to embody a deeper social connection among members of the Nias community.

Moreover, *Ya'ahowu* holds significant social value because it promotes attitudes of mutual respect and understanding. By consistently using this greeting, community members strengthen their cultural bonds and reinforce their collective identity. It acts as a social glue that unites individuals within the community, fostering harmony and solidarity.

In addition to its role in daily communication, *Ya'ahowu* helps preserve cultural traditions by embedding local wisdom and ethical values into routine interactions. This makes it not only a linguistic expression but also a cultural practice that sustains and nurtures the social fabric of Nias society. Therefore, *Ya'ahowu* is essential in maintaining the cohesion and cultural continuity of the Nias people across generations.

The use of the word *Ya'ahowu* in social interactions also demonstrates the power of local language in preserving cultural heritage and building emotional bridges between individuals. This greeting is more than just a verbal exchange; it carries deep emotional and cultural significance that strengthens interpersonal connections within the community. By using *Ya'ahowu*, speakers actively participate in the transmission of their unique cultural identity and values.

In the context of globalization, where cultural homogenization often threatens local traditions, *Ya'ahowu* stands as a



symbol of cultural resilience. It showcases how regional languages can serve as effective tools of cultural diplomacy—conveying respect, warmth, and meaningful communication beyond mere words. This greeting bridges not only individuals within the Nias community but also connects diverse cultures by promoting mutual understanding and appreciation.

Thus, *Ya'ahowu* exemplifies how local languages hold the potential to foster cultural dialogue and peacebuilding in a rapidly changing world. Its use emphasizes the importance of maintaining linguistic diversity as a vital component of cultural identity, heritage preservation, and global cultural exchange. Through *Ya'ahowu*, the Nias people contribute to a broader conversation about cultural respect and emotional connectivity across borders.

Suggestions

### 1. Cultural Preservation

It is highly recommended that local government authorities and traditional leaders of Nias continue to actively preserve the use of the word *Ya'ahowu* across various platforms and activities. This includes integrating it into educational curricula, cultural festivals, and social media campaigns. Such efforts are vital to ensure that this traditional greeting does not fade away amidst the rapid forces of modernization and globalization.

By promoting *Ya'ahowu* in schools, younger generations can learn not only the language but also the deep cultural values embedded within the greeting. Similarly, featuring *Ya'ahowu* prominently in cultural events and celebrations reinforces its role as a living symbol of Nias identity and communal solidarity. Moreover, utilizing social media platforms provides a modern avenue to reach broader audiences, including diaspora communities and global observers, helping to keep the tradition alive and relevant.

Ultimately, these preservation efforts will contribute to sustaining the cultural heritage of the Nias people, fostering pride in their unique identity, and promoting intercultural understanding. The continuation and revitalization of *Ya'ahowu* as a cultural marker will ensure that this meaningful greeting endures as a bridge between past and future generations.

### 2. Integration into Education

The local Department of Education and educational institutions are encouraged to integrate the understanding of the meaning and values of *Ya'ahowu* into the local content curriculum. This integration aims to help younger generations develop a deeper appreciation and love for their own culture. By embedding *Ya'ahowu* into educational programs, students can learn about the cultural significance of this



traditional greeting, fostering a stronger cultural identity and pride among the youth.

### 3. Further Research

It is essential to conduct more in-depth studies, both linguistic and anthropological, on the various uses of *Ya'ahowu* across different dialects and subcultures within the Nias community. Such research would provide a broader understanding of the cultural diversity within Nias society and how this greeting functions in different social contexts. This would also contribute to preserving the richness of the language and its cultural expressions.

### 4. Cultural Promotion

The greeting *Ya'ahowu* deserves to be promoted as a symbol of Nias tourism and cultural heritage at both national and international levels. Its universal values of love, peace, and blessings make it an excellent cultural ambassador. By appreciating and understanding *Ya'ahowu*, we not only preserve the local language but also spread a profound message of love from the land of Nias to the wider world.

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