



**KITA**  
INSTITUT KAJIAN ETNIK  
INSTITUTE OF ETHNIC STUDIES

### **KITA Discourse Series 3/2023**

**Title:**

**Language and Labour in a Sabah Palm Oil Estate**

**Presenter:**

**Dr. Andrew M. CARRUTHERS**

**Assistant Professor of Anthropology,**

**University of Pennsylvania / Fulbright Visiting Fellow**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 (Wednesday)**

**10.00 am – 12.00 pm**

**KITA Meeting Room, Level 4, Kolej Keris Mas, UKM**

**This seminar will be broadcasted via:**

**Zoom & KITA Facebook Live**

### **PROGRAMME**

10.00am – 10.10am	Introduction by moderator & welcoming remarks: Prof. Emeritus Dr. James T. Collins
10.10am – 11.10am	Seminar by Dr. Andrew M. CARRUTHERS
11.10am – 12.00 pm	Q & A Session Closing

### **About KITA Discourse Series**

KITA Discourse Series provides a platform for interested scholars and graduate students to present his or her ideas on any social issues pertaining to ethnicity which may be subsequently published in UKM Ethnic Studies Paper Series. For further information, please email [rachelchansuetkay@ukm.edu.my](mailto:rachelchansuetkay@ukm.edu.my).

## ABSTRACT

Engaging recent anthropological work on “plantation life,” this talk explores the forms of life that interactionally emerge in a palm oil plantation estate in the East Malaysian state of Sabah’s Tawau district, one whose labor force disproportionately consists of ethnically Bugis immigrants from Indonesia. Building on several years of ethnographic research in Sabah, while attending to the ins and outs of everyday and workaday life on Kadera Estate, I explore issues of language and labor, discipline and beauty, and organization and orderliness. Attention to such issues, I argue, invites an ethnographically fine-grained and semiotically sensitive understanding of plantation life as it takes shape and unfolds in the shadow of the Indonesia-Malaysia border.

## PRESENTER’S PROFILE

Andrew M. Carruthers is Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, where he teaches courses in linguistic anthropology, semiotics, and Southeast Asian Studies, in addition to topical classes on migration and globalization. An ethnographer of language and mobility in Island Southeast Asia, Carruthers studies Malay-speaking migrants’ everyday evaluative practices to better understand how they jointly navigate an archipelagic world.

Before arriving at Penn, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow with the Max Weber Foundation Research Group on “Borders, Mobility, and New Infrastructures” at the National University of Singapore, and a Visiting Fellow in the Indonesian and Malaysian Studies Programmes at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

Dr. Carruthers is overseas on research leave for the 2022-2023 academic year.

**E-mail:** [acarru@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:acarru@sas.upenn.edu)

