$$\begin{split} &A\cos(ct-\varphi)\\ &=A(\cos ct\cos(-\varphi)-\sin ct\sin(-\varphi))\\ &=A(\cos ct\cos\varphi+\sin ct\sin\varphi) &(\cos is \ \text{even and sin is odd})\\ &=\sqrt{a^2+b^2}\big(\frac{a}{\sqrt{a^2+b^2}}\cos ct+\frac{b}{\sqrt{a^2+b^2}}\sin ct\big) &(\text{substitution})\\ &=a\cos ct+b\sin ct. \end{split}$$