

Arabic–indonesian Code-mixing in Islamic Boarding Schools: Pedagogical Strategies, Identity Construction, and Symbolic Capital

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing practices in Islamic educational settings as a linguistic phenomenon shaping learning and social interaction. It aims to analyze the forms, functions, and contextual meanings of code-mixing across academic and non-academic domains. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study involved 32 students and one ustadz as key participants. Data were collected through participant observation, audio-recorded interactions, and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed thematically. The findings reveal that code-mixing is predominantly realized through the insertion of Arabic lexical elements. In academic contexts, it functions as a pedagogical and interactional strategy to mediate conceptual understanding, while in non-academic settings it serves as a marker of identity, solidarity, and symbolic capital. These findings highlight code-mixing as a valuable linguistic resource, contributing to the advancement of educational sociolinguistics and informing bilingual pedagogical practices in Islamic educational contexts.

Keyword: *Code-Mixing, Arabic–Indonesian, Pedagogical Strategies, Identity Construction, Symbolic Capital.*

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengkaji praktik campur kode Arab–Indonesia dalam konteks pendidikan Islam sebagai fenomena kebahasaan yang berperan dalam pembelajaran dan interaksi sosial. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis bentuk, fungsi, dan makna kontekstual campur kode dalam ranah akademik dan non-akademik. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, penelitian ini melibatkan 32 santri dan satu ustadz sebagai informan kunci. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipan, perekaman interaksi verbal, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bentuk campur kode didominasi oleh penyisipan leksikal bahasa Arab. Dalam ranah akademik, campur kode berfungsi sebagai strategi pedagogis dan interaksional untuk memediasi pemahaman konsep, sedangkan dalam ranah non-akademik berfungsi sebagai penanda identitas, solidaritas, dan modal simbolik. Temuan ini menegaskan kontribusi campur kode sebagai sumber daya linguistik yang memperkaya kajian sociolinguistik pendidikan dan praktik pembelajaran bahasa dalam konteks pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Campur kode; Arab–Indonesia; strategi pedagogis; konstruksi identitas; modal simbolik.

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INTRODUCTION

Language constitutes an integral part of human life, functioning not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for constructing meaning, identity, and social relations within a community (Mailani et al., 2022). Through language, individuals are able to interact, convey ideas, and establish complex social relationships (Izzanti et al., 2025). In educational contexts, particularly within

bilingual and multilingual societies, language use is ideally expected to follow institutional policies that promote the mastery of the target language and ensure clarity of academic communication (*das sollen*). However, empirical realities (*das sein*) reveal that speakers frequently engage in language mixing, known as code-mixing, as a communicative and pedagogical strategy to negotiate meaning and social relationships (Maszein et al., 2019). This tension between institutional expectations and actual linguistic practices underscores the urgency of examining code-mixing as a socially meaningful phenomenon rather than merely a linguistic deviation.

This phenomenon not only reflects dual linguistic competence but also indicates the presence of communicative strategies shaped by social, cultural, and institutional contexts (Sofyan et al., 2025). It is therefore important to examine this phenomenon in order to trace the patterns, underlying reasons, and impacts of its use in everyday conversations (Yusyama & Dwi, 2025). Furthermore, code-mixing can be understood as a form of linguistic creativity that reflects social identity and an individual's connection to a broader community (Purba et al., 2024).

From a contemporary sociolinguistic perspective, code-mixing cannot be understood merely as a linguistic phenomenon, but rather as a socially meaningful practice. John J. Gumperz argues that language choice in interaction functions as contextualization cues that enable speakers and interlocutors to interpret the social meaning of an utterance. Accordingly, code-mixing serves as an interactional strategy employed to manage meaning, social relations, and communicative intentions within specific contexts. In a similar vein, Carol Myers-Scotton, through the Markedness Model, posits that language choice including code mixing constitutes a strategic act through which speakers negotiate social rights and obligations in interaction. Complementing these perspectives, Pierre Bourdieu conceptualizes language as a form of linguistic capital endowed with symbolic value within a social field, where language use reflects and reproduces social power relations..

In the context of Arafah Islamic Boarding School, language practices exhibit a complex dimension as they are closely intertwined with religious values, institutional norms, and epistemic authority. Arabic occupies a distinctive position, not only as the language of religion but also as an academic medium for mastering Islamic sciences (Fikri et al., 2025). Moreover, Arabic plays a crucial role in fostering students' academic and intellectual development (Wandira et al., 2025), and serves as a primary source across various disciplines of Islamic knowledge (Gajah et al., 2023). In Arafah Islamic Boarding School that enforce intensive Arabic language policies (Norton, 2013), In educational institutions that enforce intensive Arabic language policies (Norton, 2013), students' language practices do not merely reflect linguistic competence but also demonstrate adherence to institutional language policies and the construction of religious identity (Siregar, 2025).

A number of previous studies have examined the phenomenon of code-mixing in Islamic educational environments. Alfien et al. (2022) demonstrate that code-mixing is influenced by situational changes, differences in interlocutors, and shifts in conversational topics. Rahmanudin (2022) finds that the mixing of regional languages, Indonesian, and Arabic occurs both at the sentence structure and lexical levels, highlighting the importance of language discipline. Yoda dan Mardiansyah (2020) identify forms of code-mixing such as insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization, which are shaped by habitual language use and imbalances in bilingual competence. Meanwhile, Alatas & Rachmayanti (2020) show that code-mixing manifests in various linguistic forms and is highly contextual within student interactions. Sabrina et al. (2025) further emphasize that code-mixing can function as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate understanding of religious learning materials.

Nevertheless, existing studies have predominantly focused on descriptive-linguistic aspects, particularly the forms and causal factors of code-mixing, and have not sufficiently examined its contextual functions in relation to pedagogical strategies and the construction of religious identity. Furthermore, studies that explicitly integrate interactional perspectives (John J. Gumperz), symbolic capital (Pierre Bourdieu), and language choice as a social strategy (Carol Myers-Scotton) within a unified analytical framework remain relatively limited. This gap is particularly significant given that, in the *Islamic Boarding School* context, language practices occur across multiple communicative domains, each with distinct social functions.

This study offers a clear novelty by positioning Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing as a contextual, adaptive, and multifunctional linguistic practice. Unlike previous research, this study integrates the theoretical perspectives of Gumperz, Bourdieu, and Myers-Scotton within a single analytical

framework to explain how code-mixing functions as (1) a pedagogical strategy for conceptual mediation in academic discourse, (2) an interactional resource for managing meaning, and (3) a symbolic practice for constructing identity, solidarity, and social hierarchy. Through this integrative approach, the study advances the field of educational sociolinguistics and provides a more comprehensive understanding of language practices in religious educational settings.

Accordingly, the present study aims to analyze the forms, functions, and contextual meanings of Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing across academic and non-academic domains within the context of Arafah Islamic Boarding School. By avoiding reference to a specific institution, the findings are expected to offer broader theoretical and practical relevance, contributing to the development of bilingual pedagogical practices and sociolinguistic research in religious education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing practices within a Arafah Islamic Boarding School. The research involved 32 students in a single class and one ustadz (teacher) who actively participated in bilingual communication across academic and non-academic contexts. Participants were selected purposively based on their regular engagement in Arabic-Indonesian interactions to ensure the richness and relevance of the data (Patton, 2015). The case study design enabled an in-depth exploration of language practices within their natural social context (Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2014).

Data were collected over a three-month period through participant observation, audio-recorded authentic interactions, and semi-structured interviews. Participant observation was conducted during classroom instruction and daily dormitory activities to capture naturally occurring language use. A structured observation sheet was utilized to document the forms of code-mixing, interactional contexts (academic and non-academic), communicative functions, and situational notes. Authentic verbal interactions were recorded using a digital audio recorder following a recording protocol that included information on the date, setting, and participants to ensure contextual accuracy. All recordings were transcribed verbatim prior to analysis. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the ustadz and selected students to explore their perceptions of the functions, motivations, and social meanings of code-mixing. An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions addressing pedagogical use, identity construction, solidarity, and institutional language norms was employed, with each interview lasting approximately 30–45 minutes (Creswell, 2018).

Data analysis was conducted iteratively following the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), integrating the procedures of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The analysis began with the transcription and repeated reading of all observational and interview data to achieve data familiarization. During the open coding stage, segments of data containing instances of code-mixing were identified and labeled with initial codes such as lexical insertion (e.g., *fi'il madhi*, *nahwu*), interactional clarification, pedagogical scaffolding, and identity or solidarity markers. In the axial coding stage, these initial codes were systematically grouped into broader analytical categories, including linguistic forms (lexical, phrasal, and clausal), functional dimensions (pedagogical, interactional, and social), and social meanings (identity, solidarity, and symbolic capital). The selective coding stage then integrated these categories into a central interpretive theme, conceptualizing Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing as a multifunctional linguistic practice that connects pedagogical mediation, interactional meaning management, and the construction of symbolic identity within the educational setting.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed, including source and methodological triangulation, member checking, and the maintenance of an audit trail (Lincoln & Denzin, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). Source triangulation involved comparing data obtained from students and the ustadz, while methodological triangulation integrated findings from observation, audio recordings, and interviews. Member checking was conducted by sharing selected transcripts and preliminary interpretations with participants to confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations. Additionally, an audit trail documenting all stages of the research process, including data collection, coding decisions, and analytical procedures, was maintained to enhance the dependability and confirmability of the study. To complement the textual description of the research

design, a visual diagram illustrating the research procedure from participant selection, data collection, transcription, and coding stages to interpretation and validation should be included in the manuscript as a figure to facilitate readers' understanding of the study's methodological flow.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic Patterns of Arabic–Indonesian Code-Mixing in Student Interactions

The findings indicate that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing practices in student interactions are predominantly characterized by the insertion of Arabic lexical elements into Indonesian syntactic structures. Indonesian functions as the primary grammatical framework, while Arabic lexical items are embedded to convey specific scholarly and religious concepts. Empirical data reveal that these inserted elements are mainly associated with terms such as *fi'il madhi*, *wajib*, *nahwu*, and *shorof*. For instance, in the utterance, "Ini termasuk *fi'il madhi*, jadi sudah terjadi," the Arabic term is directly integrated into the Indonesian sentence without translation, indicating its specialized conceptual meaning. In addition to lexical insertion, less frequent instances of phrasal and clausal insertions were also observed, particularly in more elaborate explanations. These patterns demonstrate that code-mixing occurs systematically across both academic and everyday interactions within the educational environment.

To synthesize the empirical findings and theoretical perspectives, this study proposes a conceptual model illustrating the multidimensional nature of Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing within Islamic boarding school communities. This model aims to provide a holistic overview of how linguistic forms, interactional functions, and social meanings are interconnected within the institutional context. Rather than explaining operational mechanisms, the model serves as a theoretical framework that captures the broader relationships among these dimensions, positioning code-mixing as a socially and pedagogically meaningful linguistic practice.

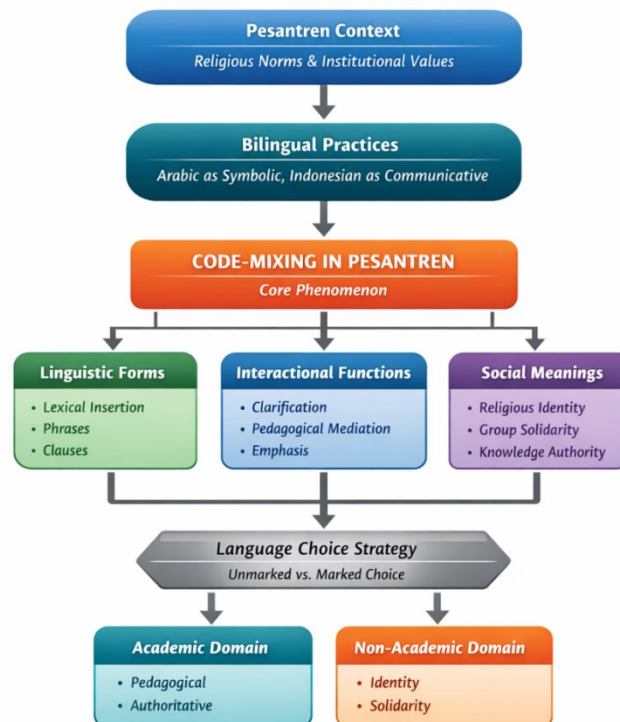


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Arabic–Indonesian Code-Mixing in Islamic Boarding School

As illustrated in Figure 1, Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing emerges from the interaction between institutional language policies, bilingual communicative practices, and the sociocultural values embedded within the educational environment. Linguistically, the phenomenon is predominantly realized through lexical insertion, which preserves the conceptual precision of Islamic scholarly terminology. Interactionally, it functions as a communicative and pedagogical resource that facilitates meaning negotiation and instructional mediation. Socially, the practice contributes to the construction

of identity, solidarity, and symbolic capital. Thus, the conceptual model provides a macro-level understanding of code-mixing as a multidimensional linguistic resource situated within a specific sociocultural context.

Building upon the macro-level relationships presented in the conceptual model, this study further develops an analytical model to explain the operational mechanisms through which Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing functions in practice. While Figure 1 offers a holistic theoretical overview, Figure 2 focuses on the dynamic processes that connect structural factors, communicative domains, and the resulting linguistic functions. This analytical model provides a more systematic explanation of how code-mixing is enacted across academic and non-academic interactions within the Islamic boarding school context.

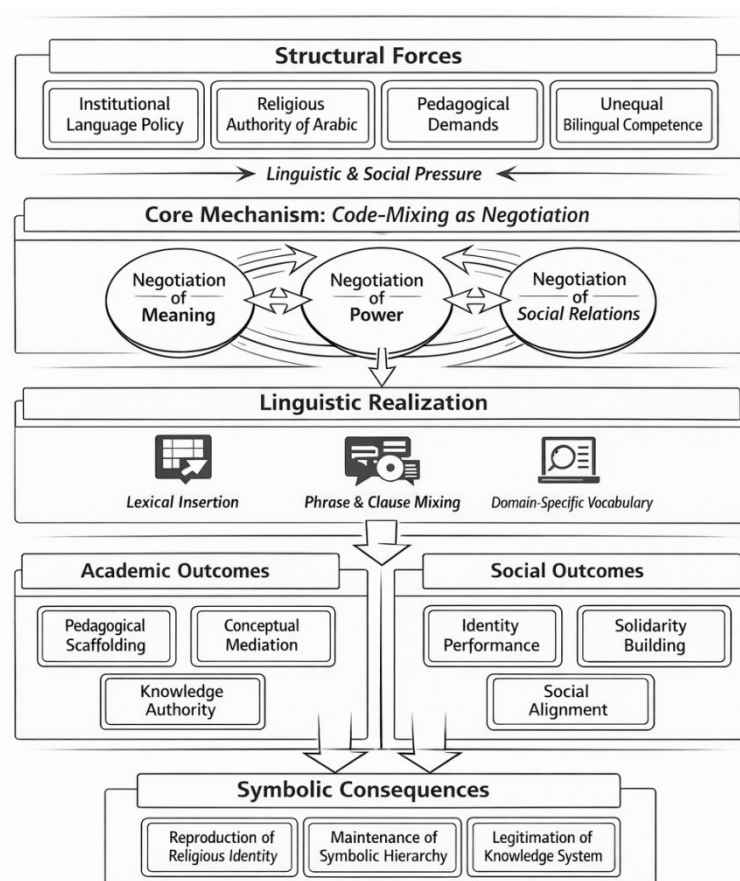


Figure 2. Analytical Model of Arabic–Indonesian Code-Mixing in Islamic Boarding School

As depicted in Figure 2, the operation of Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing is shaped by structural influences such as institutional language policies and religious values, which interact with communicative domains to produce specific functional outcomes. In academic contexts, code-mixing primarily serves pedagogical and interactional purposes, enabling conceptual mediation and effective knowledge transmission. In contrast, within non-academic settings, it functions as a marker of identity, solidarity, and symbolic capital, reflecting the social organization of the community. By outlining these relationships, the analytical model offers a micro-level and process-oriented explanation that complements the broader conceptual insights presented in Figure 1, thereby reducing redundancy and enhancing the clarity of the overall argument. The model illustrates that code-mixing practices are shaped by structural factors such as language policies and religious values. To further clarify the distribution of code-mixing functions across academic and non-academic domains, the key findings of this study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Functional Distribution of Arabic–Indonesian Code-Mixing Across Communication Domains

Domain	Function	Description
Academic	Pedagogical	Scaffolding and conceptual mediation
Academic	Interactional	Meaning management in instructional discourse
Non-academic	Identity	Marker of religiosity and group affiliation
Non-academic	Solidarity	Expression of group membership
Non-academic	Symbolic Capital	Indicator of social hierarchy and epistemic authority

While the dominance of lexical insertion identified in this study aligns with previous sociolinguistic research (Nurfaiqa et al., 2025 ; Samosir et al., 2024). the present findings extend these studies by demonstrating that such insertions are not merely structural phenomena but are systematically associated with the transmission of specialized Islamic knowledge. Unlike earlier research that primarily emphasized linguistic typologies, this study reveals the epistemic function of Arabic lexical items in maintaining conceptual precision within Arabic grammatical and religious discourse. Consequently, the findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of code-mixing as a knowledge-mediated linguistic practice in Islamic boarding schools.

Rather than reflecting linguistic deficiency, this pattern indicates an adaptive communicative strategy that allows speakers to maintain conceptual precision within specific epistemic domains (Maesaroh & Riyadi, 2025). This finding also highlights the dynamic role of Indonesian in accommodating linguistic variation in response to communicative demands across different contexts (Dzakirah et al., 2025).

From the interactional perspective of John J. Gumperz, the use of Arabic lexical elements can be interpreted as contextualization cues that signal shifts in discourse domains and guide interlocutors' interpretation of meaning. Arabic indexes the domain of Islamic scholarship, while Indonesian enhances accessibility and comprehension. Furthermore, when analyzed through Pierre Bourdieu's framework, the preference for Arabic lexical items reflects the operation of symbolic capital within the educational environment, where Arabic carries high legitimacy as the language of knowledge and religion. Consequently, code-mixing functions not only as a communicative resource but also as a mechanism for reproducing social hierarchy and epistemic authority within the community. Variations in the form of phrases and clauses, although less frequent, further indicate that code-mixing is selective and functional rather than random (Puteri et al., 2024). These findings support the argument that code-mixing constitutes a systematic and meaningful linguistic practice shaped by social context and communicative needs, consistent with previous research emphasizing its role as a natural communicative strateg (Suwarna (2022).

Code-Mixing as an Interactional Strategy in Academic Discourse

The findings indicate that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing in the academic domain functions as a strategic interactional resource for managing meaning during the learning process. Classroom observations reveal that teachers frequently combine Arabic and Indonesian when explaining religious and linguistic concepts, enabling students to grasp complex terminology while maintaining the authenticity of the original Arabic sources.

This interactional practice is particularly evident when teachers elaborate on key lexical items by linking their morphological structure to Indonesian explanations. For example, the following excerpt illustrates how code-mixing is employed to facilitate conceptual understanding:

Table 2. Interactional Functions of Code-Mixing in Academic Discourse

Data	Excerpt (Original Utterance)	Type of Code-Mixing	Context	Analytical Description
1	"Ma makna aqwalun? Aqwalun dari asal kalimat qala-yaqulu yang artinya perkataan."	Meaning clarification	Teacher	Arabic terminology is maintained while Indonesian provides clarification, facilitating conceptual understanding.

1a	<i>"Perhatikan kata maf'ul bih di sini, artinya adalah objek dari suatu pekerjaan."</i>	Conceptual explanation	Teacher	Code-mixing helps explain grammatical roles in a comprehensible manner.
1b	<i>Santri: "Ustadz, apakah jumlah fi'liyah selalu diawali dengan fi'il?"</i>	Meaning negotiation	Student	The student employs Arabic terminology to engage in academic discourse.
1c	<i>"Al-'ilmu nur, ilmu itu adalah cahaya."</i>	Classroom management	Teacher	The Arabic expression functions as an interactional cue to guide classroom participation.

In this instance, the teacher maintains the Arabic term *aqwalun* while providing an Indonesian explanation of its morphological origin and meaning. Similar patterns were consistently observed across instructional interactions, where Arabic served as the carrier of epistemic content and Indonesian functioned as a medium for clarification and elaboration. These findings demonstrate that code-mixing is systematically utilized to support comprehension and to structure classroom discourse.

The interactional use of Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing can be interpreted through the lens of John J. Gumperz's concept of contextualization cues, whereby language choice signals shifts in discourse domains and guides interlocutors' interpretation of meaning. In this context, the insertion of Arabic terminology indexes the domain of Islamic scholarship, while Indonesian enhances accessibility and facilitates students' understanding of complex concepts. Consequently, code-mixing operates as an interactional mechanism for managing meaning within instructional communication.

Although previous studies have highlighted the role of code-mixing in facilitating classroom communication (Marbun & Galingsing, 2019), this study advances the discussion by illustrating how Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing operates as an interactional mechanism for managing meaning through contextualization cues, as conceptualized by Gumperz. In contrast to earlier research that focused primarily on communicative efficiency, the present findings demonstrate that code-mixing also functions to signal epistemic authority and to structure instructional discourse. This interactional perspective provides a deeper sociolinguistic interpretation of bilingual classroom practices within Islamic boarding schools.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the interactional deployment of Arabic also signifies the symbolic authority associated with the language. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, the use of Arabic in classroom discourse represents not only a communicative choice but also a marker of epistemic legitimacy and institutional authority. Teachers' strategic use of Arabic terminology reinforces hierarchical structures of knowledge while simultaneously facilitating student comprehension.

In addition, the observed practices align with the concept of translanguaging, whereby bilingual speakers mobilize their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning in a flexible and dynamic manner. Rather than indicating a deviation from language policy, code-mixing emerges as an adaptive and purposeful strategy that integrates communicative, pedagogical, and symbolic dimensions within the academic discourse. Thus, Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing should be understood as a systematic interactional practice that mediates understanding while sustaining the cultural and epistemic foundations of Islamic education.

Code-Mixing as a Pedagogical Practice in Arabic Language Learning

The findings reveal that Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing in Arabic language instruction functions as a systematic pedagogical practice that facilitates students' conceptual understanding. Classroom observations indicate that teachers consistently integrate Arabic terminology with Indonesian explanations to bridge the gap between complex linguistic concepts and students' cognitive accessibility. This practice was particularly evident during the explanation of grammatical and semantic features of Arabic terms.

For instance, in the instructional interaction presented below, the teacher maintained the original Arabic terminology while providing morphological and semantic clarification in Indonesian:

Data 2

“Ma makna aqwalun? Aqwalun dari asal kalimat qala–yaqulu yang artinya perkataan.”

This example demonstrates that the teacher not only translated the term aqwalun but also traced its morphological origin (qala–yaqulu), enabling students to understand the concept more comprehensively. Similar patterns were repeatedly observed across classroom sessions, where Indonesian served as a mediating language to scaffold comprehension while Arabic remained the primary carrier of disciplinary knowledge. These findings indicate that code-mixing is systematically employed as an instructional strategy to support effective learning in a bilingual educational environment.

The pedagogical use of Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing reflects a scaffolding mechanism that facilitates the mediation of complex concepts in bilingual learning contexts. By employing Indonesian as a supportive linguistic resource, teachers enable students to internalize Arabic-based knowledge without losing its conceptual authenticity. This practice aligns with the notion that bilingual instruction can enhance comprehension by connecting new information with learners’ existing linguistic repertoire (Puteri, 2020).

From an interactional sociolinguistic perspective, this pedagogical strategy also resonates with John J. Gumperz’s concept of contextualization cues, where language choice guides the interpretation of meaning during instructional discourse. The retention of Arabic terminology signals the epistemic domain of Islamic scholarship, while Indonesian functions to expand accessibility and facilitate cognitive processing.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that code-mixing enhances clarity of meaning and communicative effectiveness in educational settings (Marbun & Galinggig, 2019). This study also extends the work of Assiddiqi & Rahmi, (2025), the present study offers a more comprehensive account by conceptualizing code-mixing as a structured scaffolding strategy that mediates the acquisition of Arabic grammatical and morphological knowledge. Unlike earlier studies that treated code-mixing primarily as a facilitative communication tool, this research demonstrates its systematic integration into instructional practices aimed at preserving conceptual authenticity while enhancing learner comprehension. This finding contributes to the field of educational sociolinguistics by positioning code-mixing as a deliberate and pedagogically grounded instructional resource.

In addition, the dominance of lexical insertion observed in this study aligns with the insertional typology proposed by Pieter Muysken (2000), indicating that code-mixing functions as a structured linguistic strategy rather than a random phenomenon. From Pierre Bourdieu’s perspective, the sustained use of Arabic terminology represents the deployment of symbolic capital, reinforcing the epistemic legitimacy of religious knowledge within the educational environment.

Moreover, this pedagogical practice can be understood within the framework of translanguaging, whereby bilingual speakers mobilize their full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning in a flexible and dynamic manner. Rather than signifying a deviation from institutional language policies, code-mixing emerges as an adaptive instructional strategy that supports conceptual mediation, enhances student engagement, and preserves the cultural and epistemic integrity of Arabic language learning.

The Social Dimensions of Code-Mixing: Identity, Solidarity, and Hierarchy

The findings indicate that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing in non-academic contexts constitutes an integral part of students’ everyday communication and reflects broader social meanings within the educational environment. Observations conducted in dormitory and informal settings reveal that students frequently incorporate Arabic lexical items into Indonesian utterances, demonstrating the normalization of bilingual practices in daily interactions.

This phenomenon is illustrated in the following examples:

Table 3. Social Meanings of Code-Mixing in Non-Academic Contexts

Data	Excerpt (Original Utterance)	Social Function	Context	Analytical Description
3	"Dimana na'luka? Dari tadi ana cari nggak ketemu."	Identity	Dormitory	The use of <i>ana</i> and <i>na'luka</i> indexes religious and community identity.
3a	"Ayo ke masjid dulu, akhi, sudah hampir waktu maghrib."	Solidarity	Informal interaction	The term <i>akhi</i> strengthens interpersonal bonds among students.
3b	"Antum sudah makan? Kalau belum kita makan di math'am."	Group membership	Dormitory	Arabic lexical items signal belonging to the Islamic Boarding School community.
3c	"Syukran ustadz atas penjelasannya, ana jadi lebih paham."	Hierarchy	Student-teacher interaction	The use of <i>syukran</i> and <i>ustadz</i> reflects respect and social hierarchy.

These utterances show the integration of Arabic terms such as *ana*, *antum*, *na'luka*, and *hammam* into informal Indonesian discourse. Interview data further indicate that the use of such expressions is influenced not only by limited vocabulary among lower-level students but also by institutional norms encouraging the use of Arabic in daily life. Students reported that employing Arabic elements in conversation fosters a sense of belonging to the educational community and reinforces shared religious values.

Additionally, variations in the frequency and sophistication of Arabic usage were observed among students. Those with higher proficiency in Arabic tended to employ more complex expressions, which were often associated with greater recognition and respect within the community. These findings suggest that code-mixing functions not only as a communicative practice but also as a marker of identity, solidarity, and social differentiation.

The social meanings of Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing can be interpreted through the lens of language and identity theories. According to Bucholtz and Hall, identity is constructed through dynamic and context-dependent discursive practices. In this study, the incorporation of Arabic lexical elements into everyday interactions functions as an index of religiosity and membership within the educational community. This interpretation aligns with the findings of Masyita (2025), who emphasizes that language actively constructs social identity through interaction.

Consistent with previous studies emphasizing the role of code-mixing in expressing group identity and solidarity (Setiaji & Mursalin, 2023; Islamiah et al., 2025), this study further extends the analysis by uncovering its function in reproducing symbolic capital and social hierarchy within Islamic boarding schools. Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, the findings reveal that proficiency in Arabic not only signals group affiliation but also indexes epistemic legitimacy and institutional authority. This sociological interpretation moves beyond the predominantly interactional focus of earlier research, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the stratifying effects of language practices in religious educational communities.

From the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu, the preference for Arabic lexical items can be understood as the deployment of symbolic capital within the educational environment. Arabic holds high symbolic value due to its association with religious knowledge and scholarly authority. Consequently, students who demonstrate higher proficiency in Arabic may attain greater epistemic legitimacy and social recognition. This dynamic illustrates how language practices contribute to the reproduction of social hierarchies, as linguistic competence becomes a marker of status within the community (Maesaroh, 2025).

Moreover, these findings reinforce the argument that code-mixing should not be interpreted merely as a linguistic deviation or a consequence of limited bilingual competence. Instead, it represents a multilayered social practice that interconnects identity construction, solidarity formation, and the negotiation of social hierarchy. Such an interpretation extends previous studies by highlighting the symbolic and relational dimensions of code-mixing within religious educational settings.

Language Choice Strategies in Student Interaction: A Markedness Perspective

The findings reveal that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing in student interactions represents a strategic form of language choice shaped by contextual and social considerations. Observations and interview data indicate that the integration of Arabic lexical items into Indonesian utterances is generally perceived as a normal and expected mode of communication within the educational environment. Students frequently employed Arabic expressions in both academic and non-academic interactions without perceiving them as deviations from linguistic norms.

This phenomenon is illustrated in the following example:

Table 4. Language Choice Strategies Based on the Markedness Model

Data	Excerpt (Original Utterance)	Type of Choice	Context	Analytical Description
5	<i>"Ustadz, ini termasuk fi'il madhi atau bukan? Soalnya ana masih kurang faham."</i>	Unmarked choice	Classroom	Code-mixing is perceived as a normal and expected mode of communication.
5a	<i>"Akhi, nanti malam ada muhadharah, jangan lupa hadir ya."</i>	Unmarked choice	Informal interaction	The integration of Arabic terms reflects internalized community norms.
5b	<i>"Afwan ustadz, hal yumkin an u'ida al-su'al?"</i>	Marked choice	Formal interaction	Increased use of Arabic signals politeness and respect.
5c	<i>"Kalau berbicara dengan ustadz sebaiknya kita menggunakan bahasa Arab agar lebih sopan."</i>	Pragmatic awareness	Interview	The statement reflects speakers' awareness of strategic language choice.

In this utterance, the student combines Indonesian with Arabic lexical items such as *ustadz*, *fi'il madhi*, and *ana*. The use of these terms occurs naturally and reflects the internalization of bilingual communicative norms. Interview responses further indicate that students consciously adjust their language choices depending on the interactional context. While code-mixing is commonly used in routine communication, a more intensive use of Arabic tends to occur in situations that require the expression of respect, authority, or religious identity. These findings suggest that language choice among students is dynamic and context-dependent rather than random.

The strategic use of Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing can be effectively interpreted through Carol Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which conceptualizes language choice as a negotiation of social rights and obligations in interaction. The findings indicate that code-mixing primarily functions as an unmarked choice, representing the normative and expected mode of communication within the educational community. The routine use of Arabic terms such as *ustadz*, *akhi*, and *fi'il madhi* reflects shared sociolinguistic norms that regulate everyday interaction.

While previous research has applied the Markedness Model to examine language choice in multilingual contexts (Lirong & Sartini, 2021), this study expands its applicability by analyzing Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing within face-to-face interactions in Islamic boarding schools. Unlike earlier studies that primarily focused on digital or institutional discourse, the present findings demonstrate how students strategically employ both marked and unmarked language choices to negotiate respect, authority, and religious identity in everyday communication. This extension not only reinforces the relevance of the Markedness Model but also highlights its explanatory power in understanding language practices within religious educational settings.

Collectively, these findings move beyond confirmatory comparisons with previous studies by offering a multidimensional interpretation of Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing that integrates linguistic, pedagogical, interactional, and sociological perspectives. By situating code-mixing within the frameworks of Gumperz's contextualization cues, Bourdieu's symbolic capital, and Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, this study provides a more comprehensive theoretical synthesis than earlier research. Consequently, it contributes to the advancement of educational sociolinguistics by demonstrating how bilingual language practices function as mechanisms for knowledge transmission, identity construction, and the negotiation of social hierarchy in Islamic boarding schools.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the advancement of educational sociolinguistics by offering an integrated theoretical perspective on Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing. By synthesizing Gumperz’s concept of contextualization cues, Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital, and Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model, this research demonstrates that code-mixing operates as a multidimensional practice encompassing linguistic, pedagogical, interactional, and sociological functions. Unlike previous studies that tended to examine these dimensions in isolation, the present study provides a comprehensive framework that situates code-mixing as a mechanism for knowledge transmission, identity construction, and the negotiation of social hierarchy within Islamic boarding schools. This integrative approach enriches the theoretical understanding of bilingual language practices in religious educational contexts.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, this study offers several practical implications for language education in Islamic boarding schools. The findings suggest that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing should be recognized as a legitimate pedagogical resource rather than a linguistic deficiency. Teachers can strategically employ code-mixing as a scaffolding technique to facilitate students’ comprehension of complex Arabic grammatical and religious concepts. Additionally, educational policymakers and curriculum developers may consider integrating bilingual instructional approaches that acknowledge students’ linguistic repertoires while maintaining the epistemic authenticity of Arabic. These insights also provide guidance for teacher training programs aimed at enhancing pedagogical effectiveness in bilingual Islamic educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Arabic–Indonesian code-mixing is a systematic practice integrating pedagogical, interactional, and social functions in Islamic educational contexts. It advances educational sociolinguistics by demonstrating how code-mixing mediates conceptual understanding, constructs identity, and reflects symbolic capital, thereby positioning it as a valuable bilingual pedagogical resource. Future studies are recommended to investigate its effects on learning outcomes using mixed-methods designs and to conduct comparative research across diverse institutional contexts to strengthen the generalizability of findings.

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