



## The Implications of Using Fusha and 'Amiyah Arabic on Indonesian Students at Al-Azhar University in Egypt: A Sociolinguistic Perspective

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### Abstract

The use of *Fuṣḥa* and '*Amiyah* in the context of Islamic higher education in Egypt creates complex linguistic dynamics for Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University. This study aims to analyze the relationship among the choice of Arabic language varieties, academic demands, and students' social adaptation in a real diglossic environment. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through open ended questionnaires and semi structured interviews with 25 Indonesian students and subsequently analyzed using content analysis from a sociolinguistic perspective. The results show that *Fuṣḥa* functions not only as a formal academic medium but also as a symbol of scholarly authority and legitimacy of academic identity. At the same time, '*Amiyah* becomes the main instrument in building social relations, understanding local culture, and achieving practical communication effectiveness. The continuous interaction between the two varieties fosters adaptive communicative competence, characterized by strategic code switching, sensitivity to social norms, and pragmatic flexibility. These findings show that Arabic diglossia functions as a productive linguistic resource rather than merely a barrier to learning. This study provides a conceptual contribution to the study of Arabic sociolinguistics. It offers pedagogical implications for the development of Arabic language learning for foreign speakers that align with sociolinguistic realities.

**Keywords:** Bilingualism, Colloquial Arabic, Communicative Competence, Sociolinguistics, Standard Arabic

### ملخص

يخلق استخدام الفصحى والعامية في سياق التعليم العالي الإسلامي في مصر ديناميكيات لغوية معقدة للطلاب الإندونيسيين في جامعة الأزهر. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل العلاقة بين اختيارات تنوع اللغة العربية والمتطلبات الأكاديمية وعملية التكيف الاجتماعي للطلاب في بيئة ثنائية اللغة حقيقية. باستخدام نهج وصفية نوعية، تم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيانات مفتوحة ومقابلات شبه منظمة مع ٢٥ طالبًا إندونيسيًا، ثم تم تحليلها باستخدام تحليل المحتوى من منظور اجتماعي لغوي. تظهر النتائج أن الفصحى لا تعمل فقط كوسيلة أكاديمية رسمية، بل أيضًا كرمز للسلطة العلمية وشرعية الهوية الأكاديمية، بينما تصبح العامية الأداة الرئيسية في بناء العلاقات الاجتماعية وفهم الثقافة المحلية وتحقيق فعالية التواصل العملي. يشجع التفاعل المستمر بين النوعين على تكوين كفاءة تواصلية تكيفية، تتميز بالقدرة على التبديل الاستراتيجي للغة، والحساسية تجاه الأعراف الاجتماعية، والمرونة البراغماتية. تظهر هذه النتائج أن ثنائية اللغة العربية تعمل كمورد لغوي منتج، وليس مجرد عائق أمام التعلم. تقدم هذه الدراسة مساهمة

مفاهيمية في دراسة علم اللغة الاجتماعي العربي، وتقدم آثارًا تربوية لتطوير تعلم اللغة العربية للمتحدثين الأجانب بما يتماشى مع الواقع الاجتماعي اللغوي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العامية، الفصحى، الكفاءة التواصلية، ثنائية اللغة، علم اللغة الاجتماعي

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## Introduction

Language is a system of symbols that functions as the primary medium through which humans construct, negotiate, and reproduce social and cultural realities.<sup>1</sup> In an academic context, proficiency in Arabic has strategic value because it is the source language for both classical and modern Islamic scholarship.<sup>2</sup> However, learning Arabic for foreign speakers is often complicated by diglossia, the co-existence of two language varieties with different social functions: *Fuṣḥa* (standard language) and *'Amiyah* (dialect).<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon creates a gap between the language taught formally in educational institutions and the language used in everyday life by Arab communities.<sup>4</sup> Thus, learners are required not only to understand the grammatical and semantic aspects of *Fuṣḥa*, but also the pragmatic and social aspects inherent in the use of *'Amiyah*.<sup>5</sup>

The functional difference between *Fuṣḥa* and *'Amiyah* poses a linguistic dilemma for foreign students, particularly in Egypt. *Fuṣḥa* is used in academic settings, the media, and religious discourse, whereas *'Amiyah* predominates in everyday social communication.<sup>6</sup> The imbalance in mastery of both often affects the adaptability of foreign students, including Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University, both in academic and social contexts.<sup>7</sup> This situation is exacerbated by the orientation of educational institutions, which place greater emphasis on teaching *Fuṣḥa* because it is considered

<sup>1</sup> Anna M Babel, "A Semiotic Approach to Social Meaning in Language", *Journal of Sociolinguistics* (2024): 59–73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12689>

<sup>2</sup> Putri Salsabila and Taufiqurrohmah, "Analisis Perbandingan Bunyi Ragam Amiyah dan Fusha Dalam Lagu-Lagu Sherine: Studi Linguistik Fonologis", *KNM BSA (Konferensi Nasional Mahasiswa Bahasa dan Sastra Arab Prodi Bahasa dan Sastra Arab Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya)* 7 (2024): 666–79. <https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/knm-bsa/article/view/2261/1732>

<sup>3</sup> Widi Astuti, "Diglosia Masyarakat Tutur pada Penggunaan Bahasa Arab (Kajian Kebahasaan Terhadap Bahasa Fusha dan Bahasa 'Amiyah Dilihat dari Perspektif Sociolinguistik)", *Al-Manar* 6, no. 2 (2017): 143–61. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36668/jal.v6i2.29>

<sup>4</sup> Kustina, dkk, "The Intercultural Aspect of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in Indonesia", *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language*, 4(1), (2024): 279–293. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiquatayr.v4i1.4086>

<sup>5</sup> Putri, Annindita Hartono, and AnisatuThoyyibah. "Exploring Arabic Diglossia in Learning Kalam: Bridging the Gap in Daily Communication", *Alsinatuna* 9, no. 2 (2024): 184–198. <https://e-journal.uingusdur.ac.id/alsinatuna/article/view/7076>

<sup>6</sup> Hafidhah Syafni dkk, "The Use of Language Variations by Native Arabic Speakers in Learning Process at University in Indonesia: A Narrative Inquiry Study", *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 8, no 2 (2025): 1445–53. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.35931/am.v8i2.4906>

<sup>7</sup> Siti Nur Hadis A Rahman et al., "Pengaruh Bahasa Ibunda dalam Penggunaan Bahasa Arab Sebagai Bahasa Kedua Pelajar INSTEDT", *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics* 14, no. 2 (2024): 60–69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15282/ijleal.v14i2.9883>

more standard and holds greater scientific legitimacy.<sup>8</sup> As a result, there is a gap between formal linguistic competence and communicative ability in social practice. This issue has become a focus of contemporary Arabic sociolinguistic studies, particularly regarding the need to integrate *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah into Arabic language learning for foreign speakers.<sup>9</sup>

The novelty of this study lies in the comprehensive approach used to examine the use of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah among Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University. This study not only examines language usage patterns in academic and social contexts, but also analyzes the factors that influence language choice and its impact on communication competence and language attitudes. Thus, this study positions language as a social practice related to identity, ideology, and power relations in the context of international Islamic education.

Previous studies have shown that the use of *Fusha* and 'Amiyah Arabic creates significant linguistic dynamics for foreign learners, including Indonesian students in Egypt. Putri & Thoyyibah show that the dominance of 'Amiyah in everyday interactions requires learners to constantly negotiate between formal and non-standard varieties to maintain smooth communication.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, Kadar found that Al-Azhar students face challenges in adapting their language code choices to academic and social contexts, thereby affecting communication fluency and confidence in interacting with native speakers.<sup>11</sup> In line with this, Nasarudin & Syafii show that excessive use of *ammiyyah* can blur the boundaries between standard and non-standard language, thereby reducing the ability to write and read formal texts in *Fusha* Arabic.<sup>12</sup> Rahmi emphasize that the language environment and interaction practices play an important role in the development of speaking skills, because formal learning alone is not enough to equip learners to communicate fluently.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the analysis by Siregar shows that speaking skills learning still tends to be structural in nature, so it does not fully accommodate contextual communication needs.<sup>14</sup>

Although previous studies have highlighted the dominance of 'Amiyah in daily interactions, the challenges of code-switching in academic and social contexts, and the impact of non-standard language use on the decline of formal literacy skills in *Fusha*, they remain limited to general aspects of language use among foreign learners. To date, no research has comprehensively examined the

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<sup>8</sup> Edi Kurniawan Farid, Mamluatun Ni, and Nur Arifah, "The Teaching of the Speaking Skill Using the Audio-Oral Method for the Students of Islamic Senior High School of Zainul Hasan Genggong Probolinggo", *Mantiqutayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v1i1.1197>

<sup>9</sup> Ainur Rofiq Sofa and Muhammad Sugianto, "Variasi Keragaman Linguistik Bahasa Arab di Negara Arab dan Implikasinya dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Indonesia", *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 7, no. 1 (April 3, 2024): 517. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v7i1.3237>

<sup>10</sup> Putri, Annindita Hartono, and Anisatu Thoyyibah. "Exploring Arabic Diglossia in Learning Kalām: Bridging the Gap in Daily Communication", *Alsinatuna* 9, no. 2 (2024): 184–198. <https://ejournal.uingusdur.ac.id/alsinatuna/article/view/7076>

<sup>11</sup> Haerani Kadar, Budi Pratama, and Islam Yusri, "Arabic Language Variation: Azharian Students' Perspectives on *Fushā* and 'Ammiyah Arabiyāt", *Arabiyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 11, no. 1 (2024): 60–71. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15408/a.v11i1.39434>

<sup>12</sup> Nasarudin and Ahmad Helwani Syafii, "Pelatihan Penggunaan Bahasa Arab Ammiyah Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Kemampuan Komunikasi Bahasa Arab di Desa Sesela Lombok Barat NTB", *IJOCS: Indonesian Journal of Community Service* 1, no. 1 (2021): 216–22. <https://ijocs.rcipublisher.org/index.php/ijocs/article/view/52/31>

<sup>13</sup> Eisy Nautika Rahmi dkk., "A Phenomenological Study of Arabic Language Learning Environment to Improve Students' Speaking Skills at Modern Islamic Boarding School", *Mantiqutayr: Journal of Arabic Language*, 4, no 1, (2024): 232–256. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v4i1.4085>

<sup>14</sup> Siregar, J., Masrun, & Hikmah, "Analisis Bentuk Soal Keterampilan Berbicara dalam al-'Arabīyyah Bāynā Yādāik Kitāb āth-Tholīb ās-Tsāni", *Mantiqutayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no 2, (2024): 676–688. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v4i2.4614>

implications of the use of these two language varieties among Indonesian students in Egypt, particularly with respect to usage patterns in academic and social contexts.

Theoretically, this study is based on the concept of Arabic diglossia, sociolinguistic theories of language choice and code-switching, and the concept of communicative competence. This framework allows for the analysis of language not only as a linguistic system, but also as a social phenomenon influenced by context, institutional norms, and speaker identity.

This research is relevant to the development of sociolinguistic studies of Arabic and Arabic language learning for foreign speakers (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language/TAFL), particularly in the context of Islamic higher education. The research focuses on the use of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah by Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University in academic and social settings.

The research questions in this study include: what are the patterns of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah usage in academic and social contexts? What factors influence students' language choices? What are the implications of using these two language varieties on communication competence and language attitudes?

This study is based on the formulation that *Fuṣḥa* is more prevalent in academic contexts, whereas 'Amiyah is more prevalent in social interactions. In addition, it is assumed that balanced mastery of both varieties of language contributes to improved communicative competence, although it may pose challenges for maintaining formal language accuracy.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah among Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, particularly regarding their communication and learning experiences as foreign speakers. This approach was chosen because it allows exploration of students' perceptions, experiences, and language choices in both academic and social contexts.<sup>15</sup>

In this study, the research procedure was detailed to ensure that the data obtained were valid and representative. First, the tool used was a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, which was designed to reveal the perceptions, experiences, and preferences of Indonesian students regarding the use of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah in academic and social contexts. In addition, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to obtain more in-depth qualitative data, especially regarding students' motivations and personal experiences in choosing language varieties. Second, the sampling procedure was carried out purposively, with the criteria being Indonesian students who actively use *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah in the academic and social environments of Al-Azhar. The research sample consisted of 25 Indonesian students from various faculties and language programs, which was considered sufficient to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study. With this procedure, each stage of the research was designed to ensure that the data collected accurately reflected the real experiences of Indonesian students in using both varieties of Arabic.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rizka Widayanti and Yelfi Dewi, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 1st ed., (Malang: PT. Literasi Nusantara Abadi Grup, 2024), hlm. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Naihua Duan and Kimberly Hoagwood, "Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research," *Administration and Policy in Mental Health* 42, no. 5 (2013): 533–544. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

The participants in this study were Indonesian students enrolled in various faculties and language teaching programs at Al-Azhar University. They were selected because they actively used *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* in academic activities and social interactions. The participants varied in their study programs and lengths of study in Egypt, allowing researchers to obtain diverse perspectives on the use of both language varieties. Participants were purposively selected to ensure that each individual had relevant experience with the research focus, there by ensuring that the data obtained reflected the reality of language use among Indonesian students.<sup>17</sup>

Data collection was conducted using a Google Forms based questionnaire, designed to explore students' experiences, preferences, and attitudes towards *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah*. In addition, semi structured interviews were conducted to obtain further explanations and deeper perspectives on students' reasons for choosing certain language varieties. Data analysis was performed through content analysis, focusing on the contextual interpretation of questionnaire and interview responses.<sup>18</sup> The research results were then integrated with a theoretical framework, including Ferguson's diglossia theory, Hymes' sociolinguistic competence, and Fishman's concept of language attitudes, to reveal the relationship among language practices, social contexts, and students' motivations for using both varieties of Arabic.

## Result and Discussion

### A. Patterns of *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* Usage in Academic and Social Contexts

Based on the results of a qualitative questionnaire, it appears that Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University use two varieties of Arabic, *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah*, interchangeably depending on the context of communication. In academic contexts, *Fuṣḥa* is preferred because it is regarded as the language of science and religion.<sup>19</sup> This language is used when attending lectures, reading classical books, writing papers, and conversing with lecturers. Meanwhile, *'Āmiyah* is used in almost all daily social activities, such as talking to the local community, shopping at stores, or socializing with local friends.

One respondent said, "In class we have to use *Fuṣḥa*, but outside campus everyone speaks *'Āmiyah*. If you can't speak *'Āmiyah*, it's hard to socialize."<sup>20</sup> This statement illustrates the diglossic situation described by Ferguson, namely, the co-existence of two forms of language with different social functions.<sup>21</sup> In practice, Indonesian students at Al-Azhar not only study Arabic formally but are also required to develop adaptive skills to adjust their language to social contexts. This shift between *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* demonstrates the phenomenon of situational code-switching as described by Gumperz, which is a linguistic strategy used by speakers to adapt to the situation and their conversation partners.<sup>22</sup> This indicates that students' language competence extends beyond

<sup>17</sup> Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan R&D*, (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019), hlm. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Sapto Haryoko, Bahartiar, dan Fajar Arwadi, *Analisis Data Penelitian Kualitatif (Konsep, Teknik, dan Prosedur Analisis)*, cet. ke-1, (Makassar: Badan Penerbit Universitas Negeri Makassar, 2020), hlm. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Mubayyinah Mohammad Zainal Hamdy, "The Dynamics of Arabic Linguistic Variation", *Al-Wazan: Journal of Arabic Education*, 3, no 2 (2025): 2962–0732. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58223/al-wazan.v3i2.427>

<sup>20</sup> Hasil kuesioner daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

<sup>21</sup> Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15, no. 2 (1959): 325–340. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1959.11659702>

<sup>22</sup> John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), hlm. 131.

their mastery of structure and vocabulary to include sensitivity to social norms and the communicative context.<sup>23</sup>

Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University use *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah according to the needs of the situation. In educational contexts, *Fuṣḥa* is used because it is considered most appropriate for conveying religious knowledge, scientific concepts, and formal discussions.<sup>24</sup> A student explains, "I always use *fuṣḥa* in lectures and when reading classical texts because it feels more precise and respectful for academic discussions."<sup>25</sup> This condition aligns with Ferguson's diglossia theory, which posits that in societies with two language varieties, the "high" variety is used for official and educational matters. Students indirectly practice this pattern by viewing *Fuṣḥa* as a more standard, prestigious language, better suited to academic contexts. This demonstrates that they understand the social function of language and place *Fuṣḥa* in a role considered noble within the scientific community.<sup>26</sup>

Conversely, in social life in Egypt, students more often use 'Amiyah because this variety is used by the local community in everyday conversation. They need 'Amiyah to interact practically, such as shopping, making friends, and communicating with their surroundings. A student explained, "When I go to the market or hang out with local friends, I always use 'amiyah because it's the only way to be understood naturally." This condition shows that they perform a "low" function in diglossia, as explained by Ferguson, whereby a variety is used for informal needs and spontaneous communication. By choosing 'amiyah in a social context, students demonstrate their ability to adapt to the linguistic norms of Egyptian society, while also showing that they prioritize the value of effective communication over the formality of language in informal situations.<sup>27</sup>

The automatic switching between *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah performed by students is in accordance with the concept of situational *code-switching* in Gumperz's theory. According to Gumperz, speakers switch language varieties to adapt to changes in their interlocutors, the purpose of the conversation, or the communication context.<sup>28</sup> This is very evident among Indonesian students: when they talk to lecturers, they immediately switch to *Fuṣḥa*; however, when interacting with the local community, they use 'Amiyah to make communication more comfortable and familiar. This switch indicates that students not only understand language grammatically but also the social rules that govern language use across contexts.<sup>29</sup> Thus, their *code-switching* is not just a habit, but a conscious communication strategy.

<sup>23</sup> Baiq Intan Afrianingsih, dkk. "Characteristics of Arabic Language Learning in Indonesia Era 4.0", *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language*, 5, no 1 (2025): 1–23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v5i1.5098>

<sup>24</sup> Rabab Hashem, "A Qualitative Investigation into the Impact of Diglossia on the Self-Learning of an Arabic Spoken Dialect by Arabic as a Foreign Language Learners", *Journal of Arts, Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 80 (2022): 112–26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33193/JALHSS.80.2022.685.112>

<sup>25</sup> Hasil Kuesioner Daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

<sup>26</sup> Pahrul R, "The Phenomenon of Arabic Diglossia: A Linguistic Review and Its Implications for Foreign Language Teaching", *Eloquence: Journal of Foreign Language* 4, no. 2 (2025): 148–60. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58194/eloquence.v4i2.2757>

<sup>27</sup> Ilham Rara Salvia Sari, Widiya Yul, Riko Andria, "Understanding Students' Perceptions of Arabic Learning Challenges", *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 5, no. 2 (2025): 233–253. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v5i2.5821>

<sup>28</sup> John J. Gumperz, "Conversational Code-Switching," *Language and Social Identity*, ed. oleh John J. Gumperz, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), hlm. 59–99.

<sup>29</sup> Citra Eka Wulandari et al., "Code-Switching in Digital Communication: A Study", *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sastra Inggris* 3, no. 1 (2025): 21–31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55606/jupensi.v5i3.5795>

The choice between *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah is also related to language attitudes, as explained by Fishman. Students express a positive attitude toward *Fuṣḥa* because they consider it essential for their studies, highly valuable in religious terms, and reflective of their academic identity. At the same time, they also have a positive attitude towards 'Amiyah because this language gives them access to social life, facilitates social interaction, and makes them accepted in the community. According to Fishman, language attitudes strongly influence language choice, as evidenced by students who select language varieties based on the values and functions they perceive.<sup>30</sup> This combination of positive attitudes toward both varieties enables them to become flexible, strategic language users who are sensitive to contextual demands.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 1.** Patterns of *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah Usage among Indonesian Students at Al-Azhar University

Context	Language Variety	Main Functions	Typical Situations
Academic context	<i>Fuṣḥa</i>	Formal communication, transmission of religious and scientific knowledge, and academic legitimacy	Lectures, reading classical texts, writing papers, presentations, and interaction with lecturers
		Practical communication, social bonding, cultural adaptation	Daily conversations, shopping, interacting with local friends, and community activities
Transitional context	<i>Fuṣḥa</i> & 'Amiyah (code-switching)	Pragmatic adjustment, interactional efficiency	Informal discussions on campus, explanations by lecturers, and mixed academic-social interactions

Table 1 illustrates clear functional distinctions between *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah in the linguistic practices of Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University. *Fuṣḥa* predominantly functions as the “high” variety used in academic domains, reinforcing scholarly authority, religious legitimacy, and formal accuracy. In contrast, 'Amiyah operates as the primary medium for everyday social interaction, enabling students to communicate effectively with the local community and adapt to Egyptian sociocultural norms.

The data also indicate the frequent occurrence of situational code-switching, particularly in transitional contexts where academic and social domains intersect. In such situations, students strategically alternate between *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah depending on interlocutors and communicative goals. This pattern supports Gumperz's concept of situational code-switching, in which language choice is shaped by context, social relationships, and communicative purposes rather than rigid linguistic rules.

These findings confirm Ferguson's diglossia theory, demonstrating that *Fuṣḥa* and 'Amiyah are not competing systems but complementary resources. Indonesian students develop adaptive

<sup>30</sup> Joshua A. Fishman, *Language and Nationalism: Two Integrative Essays*, (Rowley MA: Newbury House, 1972), hlm. 45–47.

<sup>31</sup>Hafsah Anjani dan Tatang, "Fenomena Diglosia Berbahasa Arab pada Pelajar", KLAUSA: Kajian Linguistik, Pembelajaran Bahasa dan Sastra 9, no. 1 (2025): 102–13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33479/klausu.v9i1.1137>

communicative competence by recognizing the functional boundaries of each variety and employing them strategically to achieve both academic legitimacy and social integration.

## B. Factors Affecting Language Choice

The choice between *Fuṣḥa* and '*Āmiyah*' among Indonesian students at Al-Azhar is not solely influenced by the context of formality, but also by social views, ideological values, and practical needs.<sup>32</sup> Most respondents regard *Fuṣḥa* as a sacred and scientific language because it is associated with the Qur'an and the Islamic scholarly tradition. Therefore, the use of *Fuṣḥa* in academic situations not only demonstrates language proficiency but also a form of respect for religious values.

On the other hand, '*Āmiyah*' is considered a practical and communicative language in everyday life.<sup>33</sup> Some respondents admitted that they were initially reluctant to use '*Āmiyah*' because they were afraid of being considered "unfluent" in Arabic. However, after interacting with the Egyptian community, they realized that the ability to communicate in '*Āmiyah*' was very helpful in understanding the local culture. One respondent said, "At first I was embarrassed to use '*Āmiyah*', but it turned out that it was what allowed me to get closer to the Egyptian people."

In addition to personal perceptions and experiences, environmental factors also play a role. Students living in international dormitories tend to use *Fuṣḥa* more frequently because their environment comprises people from various countries. In contrast, students living in villages around Al-Azhar more often use *Āmiyah*. One student shared, "When I stayed in the dormitory with students from different countries, I mostly spoke *Fuṣḥa* to make myself understood, but in the nearby village, I naturally switched to '*āmiyah*' with locals." Thus, students' attitudes toward *Fuṣḥa* and *Āmiyah* change over time. Initially, they prioritized *Fuṣḥa* because it was considered more academically superior, but later they began to accept '*āmiyah*' as an essential part of the real communication process.

The person with whom you are speaking is also a significant factor. When interacting with lecturers, campus administrators, or in other formal contexts, students automatically use *Fuṣḥa* to demonstrate respect and politeness. However, when talking to local friends, merchants, or neighbors, they use *Āmiyah* so that they are more easily understood and accepted. One student remarked, "I always speak *fuṣḥa* during class or official meetings, but with neighbors or shopkeepers, I switch to '*āmiyah*' because it feels more natural and friendly."<sup>34</sup> This condition aligns with Gumperz's concept of situational code-switching, whereby language choice varies with social status, interpersonal relationships, and communication goals. This means that students read social cues before determining which language variety to use.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Eiman Mustafawi et al., "Perceptions and Attitudes of Qatar University Students Regarding the Utility of Arabic and English", *Language Policy* 21, no 1, (Springer Netherlands, 2022):75–119. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-021-09590-4>

<sup>33</sup> Doni Wahidul and Zainul Abidin, "Egyptian *Amiyah* Speaking Training in the Muhammadiyah Darul Arqom Islamic Boarding School, Depok", *Abdimas Umtas: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 6, no 2, (2021): 3882-3888. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35568/abdimas.v6i2.3309>

<sup>34</sup> Hasil Kuesioner Daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

<sup>35</sup> John J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), hlm. 61–63.

Social needs and ease of communication also play a significant role. Many students believe that without mastering *'āmiyah*, they will have difficulty interacting in everyday life.<sup>36</sup> One student explained, "I realized that speaking only *fusha* made it hard to join conversations in the market or with neighbors, so I had to learn *'āmiyah* to communicate naturally." Therefore, the desire to be accepted into the local community and the need to fit in make *'āmiyah* a frequently used choice outside of campus. Meanwhile, proficiency in *Fuṣḥa* is maintained because it remains an essential asset for participation in academic activities. This combination of educational and social needs results in a flexible choice of language that is highly contingent on environmental demands.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, language attitudes play an essential role in determining the variety of Arabic that students choose. According to Fishman's theory, positive attitudes toward *Fuṣḥa* arise because this language is considered sacred, prestigious, and close to the Islamic scholarly tradition. Meanwhile, a positive attitude towards *'āmiyah* stems from its practical value as a living language used by the community daily.<sup>38</sup> One student reflected, "I enjoy using *fusha* in class because it feels formal and precise, but I prefer *'āmiyah* when talking with friends because it's natural and easy to understand."<sup>39</sup> This dual attitude allows students to appreciate both varieties equally, enabling them to choose the language according to their needs, values, and communication goals. Thus, language choice is influenced not only by external factors but also by how students view and evaluate each language variety.

### C. Implications of the Use of *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* in Communication and Attitudes Towards Language

From the analysis results, the balanced use of *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* has a positive effect on the communication skills of Indonesian students in Egypt. Mastery of *Fuṣḥa* enables them to understand academic material, religious texts, and scientific discussions, while mastery of *'Āmiyah* facilitates communication in social life and helps them understand nuances of meaning that do not appear in formal language. One respondent said, "Lecturers often mix *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah*. If we can't understand both, it's difficult to follow the explanation." This statement confirms that both varieties of language complement each other and are necessary in academic activities at Al-Azhar.

In terms of linguistic attitude, the majority of students showed positive acceptance of the existence of two varieties of Arabic. They no longer view *'āmiyah* as a deviation, but as part of the dynamic linguistic reality of the Arab world. A student explained that, "At first, I thought *'Āmiyah* was incorrect, but now I see it as a normal part of daily communication, and it actually helps me interact naturally with locals."<sup>40</sup> This reinforces Badawi's view that *Fuṣḥa* and *'Āmiyah* form a unified

<sup>36</sup> Siregar, J., Masrun, & Hikmah, "Analisis Bentuk Soal Keterampilan Berbicara dalam al-'Arabiyah Baynā Yadaik Kitāb āth-Tholib ās-Tsāni", *Mantiqū Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language* 4, no 2, (2024): 676–688. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v4i2.4614>

<sup>37</sup> Ulrikke Rindal, "Explanations for Language Choice in the Social Context of the L2 Classroom," 2024, 846–65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12960>

<sup>38</sup> Doni Wahidul and Zainul Abidin, "Egyptian Ammiyah Speaking Training in the Mubammadiyah Darul Arqom Islamic Boarding School, Depok", *Abdimas Umtas: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 6, no 2, (2021): 3882-3888. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35568/abdimas.v6i2.3309>

<sup>39</sup> Hasil Kuesioner Daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Hasil Kuesioner Daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

linguistic spectrum that supports each other in Arab society.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the ability to master both is not only a matter of linguistics but also a form of social and cultural intelligence that enables students to adapt to two domains simultaneously: academic and social. The use of *fusha* in educational settings has a substantial impact on linguistic accuracy.<sup>42</sup> Students become accustomed to neat sentence structures, formal vocabulary, and appropriate expressions, thereby improving their ability to read scientific texts, write papers, and engage in structured discussions.<sup>43</sup> This reinforces the grammatical competence dimension emphasized by Dell Hymes, in which accuracy of form is one of the essential foundations of language competence.<sup>44</sup> However, the dominance of *fusha* in formal contexts often makes students less flexible in spontaneous speech, as this variety does not reflect everyday communication practices.<sup>45</sup>

On the contrary, the use of *'amiyah* in social life has a positive impact on the fluency of natural communication. Students become more attuned to social cues, idiomatic expressions, and speech variations used by the local community.<sup>46</sup> This variety strengthens their ability to understand the conversational context and adapt their language to the situation, which is central to sociolinguistic competence in Hymes' framework. One student noted, "At first I was hesitant to speak in *'amiyah*, but it helped me communicate naturally and understand local expressions." Through the use of *'amiyah*, they learn to scan situations and respond in a more appropriate and socially acceptable manner. The alternating use of two varieties also yields a high level of linguistic adaptability. Students are accustomed to switching codes when moving from formal to social situations, thereby further developing their pragmatic skills. This skill is essential for maintaining smooth communication across domains, and reflects an understanding that each situation requires a different choice of language.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the ability to switch from *fusha* to *'amiyah* is not only a technical skill, but also a form of linguistic sophistication, as emphasized by Hymes in his discussion of the appropriateness of language to context.

From a linguistic perspective, intensive use of both varieties shapes students' perceptions of the social value of each. Joshua Fishman emphasizes that language is always related to identity and social roles; therefore, the choice of variety reflects an awareness of that language's function and status. *Fusha* is perceived as carrying prestige and intellectual value, while *'amiyah* is understood as a

<sup>41</sup> El-Said Badawi, *Mustawayāt al-'Arabīyah al-Mu'aṣirah fī Miṣr*, (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1973), hlm. 25–29.

<sup>42</sup> Saiful Anwar and Guntur Cahaya Kesuma, "Development of *al-Qawaid an-Nabwīyah Learning Module Based on Qiyasiyah Method for Arabic Language Education Department Students | Pengembangan Modul Pembelajaran al-Qawaid an-Nabwīyah Berbasis Metode Qiyasiyah untuk Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*", *Mantiq Tayr: Journal of Arabic Language*, 3, no. 1, (2023): 11–24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25217/mantiqutayr.v3i1.2830>

<sup>43</sup> John M. Swales dan Christine B. Feak, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*, ed. ke-3, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), hlm. 1–3.

<sup>44</sup> Dell Hymes, "On Communicative Competence," dalam *Sociolinguistics*, ed. J. B. Pride dan Janet Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), hlm. 269–293.

<sup>45</sup> Reem Bassiouney, *Arabic Sociolinguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 8–10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748623730.001.0001>

<sup>46</sup> Zulkifli Ardian Saputra, "Penerapan Pendekatan Sociolinguistik Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa di Sekolah Menengah", *Journal of Language Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 37–43. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70716/jols.v1i1.29>

<sup>47</sup> Ohod Faisal Ahmed, Wiwik Yulianti, and Henry Yustanto, "Exploring Language Attitudes and Identity Construction in Arabic Diglossia", *Translation and Linguistics (Transling)* 4, no. 2 (2024.): 120–30. <https://jurnal.uns.ac.id/transling>

language of closeness and solidarity.<sup>48</sup> One student explained, "At first I was embarrassed to use 'āmiyah, but it turned out that it was what allowed me to get closer to the Egyptian people." Another added, "Using fuṣḥa in class discussions makes me feel more confident and respected, especially when explaining complex topics." These statements indicate that students are not only learning linguistic forms but also internalizing the social meanings and values associated with each variety.

A more profound impact is seen in students' ability to position them selves in various social and academic contexts. With fuṣḥa, they feel accepted in broader scientific and religious circles; with 'āmiyah, they experience a sense of belonging and stronger interpersonal bonds in local communities. As one student reflected, "When I speak fuṣḥa during presentations, my ideas are taken seriously, but chatting in 'āmiyah with my friends makes everyone feel comfortable and close." Other students added, "I can participate in both online academic forums and local social gatherings because I know which variety to use in each situation."<sup>49</sup> Fishman's concept of language use domains supports this: each variety occupies a distinct social domain, and successful communication depends on selecting the variety appropriate to the context.<sup>50</sup> Through daily practice, students not only become fluent speakers but also develop the ability to interpret social cues and use language in ways that reflect both identity and social relationships.<sup>51</sup>

#### D. Sociolinguistic and Pedagogical Implications

The sociolinguistic implications of using two varieties of Arabic are evident in students' ability to navigate the different functions of fuṣḥa and 'āmiyah in various spheres of life.<sup>52</sup> These differences create situations that require speakers to understand the social role of language in interaction, as Fishman explains through the concept of language use domains.<sup>53</sup> Students must be able to distinguish when fuṣḥa is used as a language of prestige in academic contexts, and when 'āmiyah is used to foster everyday social relationships. This condition indicates that language proficiency depends not only on mastery of structure but also on awareness of the social value of each variety.

The next implication concerns the development of communicative competence. Fuṣḥa reinforces structural accuracy and mastery of scientific terminology, while 'āmiyah strengthens the ability to adapt language to social contexts and understand the norms of interaction in Egyptian society.<sup>54</sup> As a result, their communicative competence develops more balanced and realistic, as their abilities are not only formal but also functional in everyday life. These sociolinguistic implications also shape students' linguistic identity. Students who master fuṣḥa gain legitimacy as seekers of

<sup>48</sup> Britt-Marie Lindgren, Berit Lundman, and Ulla H Graneheim, "Abstraction and Interpretation during the Qualitative Content Analysis Process," *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 108 (August 2020): 103632. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2020.103632>

<sup>49</sup> Hasil Kuesioner Daring melalui Google Form terhadap Responden Anonim Mahasiswa Indonesia di Universitas Al-Azhar, 2025.

<sup>50</sup> Joshua A. Fishman, *Language in Sociocultural Change*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), hlm. 22–24.

<sup>51</sup> Tom Leijnse and Tom Leijnse, "The Arabic Language, Nationalism, and Nation-Building in the Mashriq and the Maghrib: the Case of Iraq and Morocco", *National Identities* 27, no. 4 (2025): 393–412. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2024.2442080>

<sup>52</sup> Misran Misran, "Dialek 'Amiyyah dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Arab untuk Pariwisata di Indonesia", *Adabiyāt: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra* 12, no. 2 (2013): 398–423. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajbs.2013.12208>

<sup>53</sup> Joshua A. Fishman, *Language and Nationalism: Two Integrative Essays*, (Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1972), hlm. 35–38.

<sup>54</sup> Mellinda Raswari Jambak and Abdul Basid, "Dialectal Variations in the Egyptian Edraak Media Video Podcast: A Dialectological Study", *Tsaqofiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Arab* 7, no. 1 (2025): 155–73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21154/q5hx1v69>

religious knowledge and members of the international academic community. At the same time, mastery of 'āmiyah makes them accepted as part of the local community.<sup>55</sup> This experience shapes a dual identity: a scientific identity rooted in *fusha* and a social identity reinforced through the use of 'āmiyah. Both serve as social and cultural capital that help students adapt in a multicultural context.

Pedagogical implications arise when this phenomenon is applied to the practice of teaching Arabic to foreign learners. The experiences of students at Al-Azhar show that Arabic language teaching cannot only emphasize *fusha* as the standard variety, but also needs to integrate a basic understanding of 'āmiyah as a functional communication tool. This approach aligns with Hymes' view that the goal of language learning is to develop speakers who can communicate appropriately across contexts. Learning that focuses only on the standard variety risks producing students who are structurally proficient but have difficulty interacting in real situations.

These pedagogical implications open opportunities to design a curriculum that is more responsive to speakers' social realities. Teachers can incorporate code-switching exercises, simulations of everyday conversations, and an introduction to basic 'āmiyah expressions as part of their learning strategies.<sup>56</sup> This effort aligns with sociolinguistic findings that successful communication is not determined solely by the "formality" of language, but by the ability to select the appropriate variety for the social context.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the integration of *fusha* and 'āmiyah in teaching not only enriches students' linguistic skills but also equips them with relevant adaptation skills in the real world.

## Closing

This study demonstrates that the alternating use of *Fuṣṣha* and 'Āmiyah by Indonesian students at Al-Azhar University is a purposeful communicative strategy shaped by academic demands and social realities, rather than a random linguistic practice. This finding is significant because it confirms, in line with Ferguson's diglossia, Gumperz's situational code-switching, and Fishman's language domain theory, that adequate Arabic competence requires sensitivity to context as well as structural mastery. By showing how students successfully navigate both varieties to gain academic legitimacy and social acceptance, this study contributes to the broader sociolinguistic discussion on Arabic diglossia. It offers a realistic implication for Arabic language education, emphasizing the need to integrate both *Fuṣṣha* and 'Āmiyah to prepare learners for authentic communicative contexts.

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<sup>55</sup> Christina Hedman and Ulrika Magnusson, "Researching the Complexities of the School Subject Swedish as a Second Language: A Linguistic Ethnographic Project in Four Schools", *Languages* 6 (2021): 205. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages6040205>

<sup>56</sup> Karin C. Ryding, *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language: A Guide for Teachers*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), hlm. 155–158.

<sup>57</sup> Mellinda Raswari Jambak and Abdul Basid, "Dialectal Variations in the Egyptian Edraak Media Video Podcast: A Dialectological Study", *Tsaqofiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Arab* 7, no. 1 (2025): 155–73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21154/q5hx1v69>

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