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Subtractive Effects in a Bilingual Ecosystem: Shifting Social Functions of Arabic Among University Dormitory Students

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A B S T R A C T

Arabic–English bilingual policies in Islamic higher education dormitories are institutionally designed to integrate classical Islamic scholarship with global communicative competence. However, existing studies have paid limited attention to how policy design, curriculum asymmetry, and language-enforcement practices may shape competition between languages across formal and informal domains. This study explores university dormitory students' lived experiences of bilingual regulation and examines the institutional and experiential conditions shaping the changing social function of Arabic at Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung. A transcendental phenomenological qualitative design was combined with language policy analysis. Data were collected through participant observation across formal and informal settings, open-ended questionnaires involving 138 students and 10 dormitory instructors, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of the 2026 curriculum and semester lesson plans. Data were interpreted through epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and meaning synthesis, while descriptive percentages were used to contextualize recurring patterns. The findings indicate that uniform language requirements, differences in students' prior educational backgrounds, curricular asymmetries between Arabic and English, and monitoring and sanction practices were associated with language shock, grammatical anxiety, and strategic silence. English was frequently experienced as a more flexible space for code-switching and informal interaction, whereas Arabic increasingly functioned as a formal and symbolic language in regulated settings. The study contributes to educational language policy and management by showing how institutional policy design and enforcement may unintentionally produce uneven language functions. It highlights the need for differentiated language support, communicatively tolerant learning environments, and more adaptive dormitory language governance.

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1. Introduction

The institutionalization of bilingualism in Islamic higher education dormitories (*Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah*) represents a critical site of inquiry within Arabic applied linguistics, where Arabic as the epistemic key to Islamic classical texts (*turāth*) coexists with English as a global academic medium. Mandated by the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 1595 of 2021, university dormitories across Indonesian State Islamic Universities serve as an institutional pillar designed to cultivate foundational Islamic scholarship alongside foreign language proficiency (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 2,1). Within this context, the dormitory of Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Raden Intan Lampung requires student-residents (*mahasantri*) to communicate daily in Arabic and English to integrate intellectuality, spirituality, and moral integrity (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026c, pp. 2, 15). However, as Spolsky establishes in his language policy framework, top-down institutional language management rarely guarantees congruent language practices when it conflicts with speakers' internal language beliefs and proficiencies (Spolsky, 2004, pp. 5–14). Empirical mapping conducted in June 2026 among

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138 resident students and 10 dormitory instructors (*mu'allim/ah*) at UIN Raden Intan Lampung reveals that pairing Arabic and English under uniform disciplinary mandates precipitates a severe contraction of Arabic communicative vitality in informal social spaces. Specifically, 63 students (45.65%) restrict Arabic to an institutional rule and liturgical symbol, while 90% of instructors confirm that Arabic vanishes in unsupervised peer interactions in favor of Indonesian, regional vernaculars, or English code-mixing. This functional displacement induces acute language shock (Schutz, 1970, p. 94) and cognitive language anxiety (MacIntyre, P.D. & Gardner, R.C, 1994, pp. 283–305) among novice learners confronting rigid morphosyntactic rules (*naḥw* and *ṣarf*) under covert language monitors (*jāsūs*), ultimately isolating Arabic within ceremonial domains (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026a, pp. 5–10).

Current scholarship on bilingual contact and Arabic language environments (*bī'ah lughawiyyah*) reflects an ongoing debate between additive expectations and sociolinguistic constraints. Foundational sociolinguistic theories by Fishman (1972, pp. 3–5, 45–51) and Hamers and Blanc (2000, pp. 22, 100–111) posit that additive bilinguality can be sustained when each language occupies distinct domains, receives equal functional *valorisation*, and is socialized through dense interpersonal networks (Milroy, 1980, p. 412). In recent Indonesian studies on dormitory management, scholars have largely adopted this additive assumption: Latief (2024) documented how dormitory instructors structure daily vocabulary provision (*ilqā' al-mufradāt*), conversation sessions (*muḥādathah*), and disciplinary tribunals (*maḥkamah lughah*) to build speaking habits, while Syahraini (2024, pp. 22–26, 52–53) concluded that systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation at IBS Al-Multazam Mojokerto effectively enhanced students' four language skills. Similarly, Sholihah (2020, pp. 93–95) reported a strong positive correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.72$) between classroom bilingualism and religious subject achievement at MA Darul Hikmah Tulungagung, and Syafi'i (2019, pp. 43–69, 97) claimed that strict language rules at Muhammadiyah Boarding School Yogyakarta effectively motivated students. In parallel, recent behavioral research by Aziz et al. (Aziz et al., 2024, pp. 624–637) at Hidayatullah Institute Batu demonstrated that overcoming speaking stagnation.

Conversely, critical sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic studies warn that co-mandating languages with unequal structural loads and social prestige frequently triggers subtractive language shift. Building on Lambert's (Lambert, 1972, p. 406) subtractive bilingualism construct and Mougeon and Béniak's (2009, pp. 99–126) findings on minority language erosion, Kroll and Stewart's (1994, pp. 149–174) asymmetric bilingual memory model and MacWhinney's (1987, pp. 315–327) competition model prove that a less automatized second language is cognitively suppressed during spontaneous production. Within Arabic linguistics, Abdul Qodir al-Fassi (2003, pp. 18–29, 46–48) critiques authoritarian prescriptivism (*al-nāmūsiyyah*) and punitive "language courts" (*maḥākim lisāniyyah*), arguing that rigid grammatical enforcement paralyzes competence maturation (*ta'ṭīl inḍāj al-malakah al-lughawiyyah*) and induces fatal functional fragmentation (*ta'addudāt lisāniyyah qātilah*). Recent empirical studies confirm this vulnerability in informal spaces, Alraddadi (2021, pp. 2–3) found that sacred reverence for Arabic as the Qur'anic language fails to prevent Muslim youths from shifting toward English in daily interaction, while Dinata (2021, pp. 117–120), Sari (2021), and Muslihin (2023, pp. 58–60) revealed that Indonesian Islamic university and

boarding school students restrict Arabic to formal instruction while shifting to Indonesian, regional vernaculars, or code-mixing in peer domains. Simultaneously, Lee (2026, pp. 408–423; 2025, pp. 1–21) demonstrated that multimodal affordances on TikTok and Instagram rapidly accelerate Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) within students' everyday spaces, reinforcing English's covert prestige (Holmes, 2013, p. 412) and modern appeal (Izzak, 2019, pp. 21–25).

A critical synthesis of these studies exposes a significant research gap. Previous managerial and correlational investigations (Latief, 2024; Sholihah, 2020; Syafi'i, 2019; Syahraini, 2024) evaluate bilingual programs from an institutional perspective, assuming that Arabic and English share equal curricular loads and that punitive surveillance (*jāsūs*) linearly generates speaking habits—ignoring contradictions in their own interview records where students revert to Indonesian when unsupervised. Meanwhile, behavioral studies such as Aziz et al. (2024) examine monolingual Arabic immersion without addressing ecological competition when Arabic must compete directly with English under the same dormitory regulations. No prior study has investigated how internal curricular asymmetries in Semester Lesson Plans (RPS) interact with heterogeneous student demographics and covert surveillance to produce a subtractive shift favoring English over Arabic. The novelty of this study lies in integrating Spolsky's (2004, 2012) Language Policy Theory with Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenology and Schutz's (1970) social phenomenology to formulate the concept of *Asymmetrical Subtractive Bilingualism*, demonstrating how unequal curricular cognitive loads and coercive management (*al-nāmūsiyyah*) inadvertently weaponize English's error-forgiving perception to erode Arabic's communicative function.

Addressing this gap, this study aims to construct the essence of resident students' lived experiences in navigating bilingual regulations and to analyze the sociolinguistic determinants of Arabic's shifting social functions at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung. Specifically, the study addresses four research questions: (1) How do student demographic heterogeneity and curricular asymmetries in the 2026 lesson plans trigger language shock? (2) How do grammatical anxiety and *jāsūs* surveillance shape performative compliance? (3) How does the subtractive mechanism position English as a communicative safe zone in code-switching and code-mixing? (4) How is the spatial function of Arabic polarized between front-stage symbolism and back-stage social interaction?. This research provides theoretical contributions to Arabic applied linguistics by extending Spolsky's language policy model to polycentric dormitory ecologies, methodological insights through the integration of phenomenological reduction with curricular content analysis, and practical policy implications for Islamic higher education leaders to reform punitive surveillance into tiered, error-tolerant communicative ecosystems.

2. Methods

The research was conducted during the 2025/2026 academic year at the Technical Implementation Unit (UPT) of Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah, Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Raden Intan Lampung, a public Islamic university located in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. The dormitory complex comprises three student residential buildings (*Rusunawa*), the Director's residence (*Bait al-Mudīr*), and a shared canteen, operating as a mandatory one-year residential incubation program (Semesters I–II) for first-year undergraduates across faculties

(Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026c, pp. 1–3). Because the majority of incoming university students graduate from general public high schools with minimal prior religious and Arabic instruction, the institution officially designates itself as a foundational dormitory (*Ma'had Ibtidā'ī*) rather than an advanced seminary (*Ma'had 'Āly*), managed by a Director (*Mudīr*), dormitory supervisors (*Murabbī/ah*), division coordinators (*Musyrif/ah*), 16 dormitory instructors (*Mu'allim/ah*), and senior peer cadres (*Mudabbir/ah*, Semesters III–IV) (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 2, 2026c, pp. 3–4, 19–28).

The target population comprised all 550 active resident students and 16 dormitory instructors in the 2025/2026 academic year. The study sample involved 138 resident students as primary phenomenological participants and 10 dormitory instructors (*mu'allim/ah*) as contextual informants. Inclusion criteria for student participants required: (1) active residency in the Semester I–II mahasantri program; (2) direct exposure to compulsory Arabic (*Ayyām 'Arabiyyah*) and English (*English Days*) schedules; and (3) willingness to provide written and oral reflective accounts. Exclusion criteria eliminated non-resident students and newly inducted staff with less than one semester of dormitory experience. The 138 student participants reflected heterogeneous secondary education backgrounds: 58 general high school or vocational school graduates (SMA/SMK, 42.03%), 46 Islamic boarding school alumni (Pondok Pesantren, 33.33%), 32 Islamic senior high school graduates (Madrasah Aliyah/MA, 23.19%), and 2 non-formal equivalency graduates (1.45%). The 10 instructor informants included 3 Language Division instructors and 7 Non-Language Division instructors.

2.1. Sampling Procedures

Following Widodo et al.'s (2023, p. 159) methodological principle that systematic participant selection prevents analytical distortion, this study utilized purposive sampling with a maximum variation strategy to capture the full demographic spectrum of secondary schooling backgrounds, dormitory buildings, and study groups (*ḥalaqah*) among the 138 survey respondents. To select key informants for in-depth semi-structured interviews, purposive sampling was complemented by snowball sampling, wherein initial student participants and dormitory instructors recommended peers across *Ḥalaqah* 2 and *Ḥalaqah* 4 who exhibited contrasting experiences of language shock, grammatical anxiety, and code-mixing.

2.2. Research Instruments

Four complementary instruments and data sources were developed and validated to ensure comprehensive triangulation, as detailed in Table 1. First, a semi-structured topical interview protocol was adapted from Moustakas's (1994, p. 114) phenomenological interview guidelines to elicit descriptions of lived experiences regarding language rules, *naḥw-ṣarf* anxiety, and code-switching motives. Second, two semi-open questionnaire instruments (*Student Instrument* and *Instructor Instrument*) were developed containing structured categorical items paired with open-ended reflective prompts on every question, enabling respondents to explain their subjective reasons and write authentic code-mixing utterances[6]. Content and face validity of the questionnaires and interview guide were established through expert judgment by two senior sociolinguistics and Arabic education faculty members prior to field deployment. Third, a participatory observation field-note protocol (Patton, 1990, in Moustakas, 1994, pp. 273–274) recorded real-time speech practices

across formal and informal dormitory spaces. Fourth, a documentary review matrix was used to extract curricular load, instructional method, and disciplinary rule indicators from three official institutional documents: the *2026 Academic Guidelines*, the *2026 Curriculum Document*, and the *2026 Arabic and English Semester Lesson Plans (RPS, Code PL-5)*.

Table 1. Matrix of Data Types, Instruments, Sources, and Analytical Functions

Data Type & Technique	Instrument & Data Details	Primary & Secondary Sources	Analytical Function
Primary Phenomenological Data (In-Depth Interviews)	Semi-structured topical interview guide on language shock, *naḥw-ṣarf* anxiety, and code choices (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114).	Key student informants across educational backgrounds in *Ḥalaqah* 2 and 4.	Core basis for Individual and Composite Textural-Structural Descriptions.
Empirical Mapping Data (Open-Ended Survey)	Questionnaires with open reflection columns for subjective reasons and code-mixing examples.	138 students across four schooling typologies and 10 *mu'allim/ah* across divisions.	Mapping macro domain tendencies and triangulating student-instructor perspectives.
Primary Observational Data (Participatory Observation)	Field notes across formal *ḥalaqah*, *turāth* classes, extracurriculars, bedrooms, and canteens.	Verbal and non-verbal interactions during supervised and unsupervised hours.	Validating discrepancies between formal rules and back-stage practices (Fishman, 1972, p. 51)
Secondary Institutional Data (Document Analysis)	Content review matrix of rules, point books, learning outcomes (CPL), and lesson plans (RPS).	2026 Academic Guidelines, Curriculum Document, and Arabic/English RPS (Code PL-5).	Identifying written *Language Management* structures and curricular asymmetries.

Source: Adapted from research design matrix (Table 3.1) and fieldwork at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung (2026).

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was executed chronologically over a four-month period from June to August 2026. In the first phase (June 2026), official institutional documents, including the newly ratified *2026 Academic Guidelines*, *2026 Curriculum Document*, and *2026 Arabic and English RPS*—were collected and cataloged to map the formal language management structure. In the second phase, participatory observations were conducted across daily, weekly, and monthly dormitory routines, covering dawn vocabulary sessions (*ilqā' al-mufradāt*), dusk Qur'anic recitation (*Yanbu'a*) and memorization (*taḥfīẓ*), worship practicums (PPI), classical text (*turāth*) classes, Thursday night public speaking (*muḥāḍarah*), extracurricular rehearsals (*hadrah* and *syarḥ al-Qur'ān*), and unsupervised interactions in bedrooms, bathrooms, corridors, and canteens. In the third phase (July -August 2026), open-ended questionnaires were administered to the 138 resident students and 10 dormitory instructors. In the final phase, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in a non-threatening, egalitarian setting to validate survey reflections and probe students' affective experiences of grammatical anxiety and code-switching.

2.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative phenomenological data from interviews, open survey reflections, and observational notes were analyzed using Moustakas's (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 118–122) modification of the Stevick–Colaizzi–Keen method, integrated with Schutz's (1970, pp. 108–

110, 180) motivational analysis. The analysis proceeded through five rigorous stages: (1) *Epoche* (*bracketing*), wherein researchers suspended normative pedagogical assumptions so candid student admissions—such as leaving exam papers blank or avoiding Arabic in bedrooms—were interpreted empathetically as lived consciousness rather than indiscipline[7]; (2) *Phenomenological Reduction* and *Horizonalization*, where every relevant statement was accorded equal weight and tested against Moustakas's two validation criteria (Abd Hadi et al., 2021, p. 28), whether it contained a necessary and sufficient moment of the experience and whether it was explicit and compatible (*work together without conflict*)—eliminating repetitive or invalid entries to cluster invariant meaning units into four core themes; (3) *Individual and Composite Textural Descriptions* (ITD), detailing *what* students experienced using verbatim excerpts; (4) *Imaginative Variation* and *Structural Description*, analyzing *how* schedules, *jāsūs* surveillance, and curricular asymmetries shaped those experiences by distinguishing isolated memorized words (*Wörter*) used as symbolic compliance (*in-order-to motive*) from predicative discourse (*Worte*) blocked by *i'rāb* rules and prior schooling (*because motive*) (Schutz, 1970, pp. 108–110, 180), and (5) *Synthesis of Meanings and Essences*. Simultaneously, institutional documents were analyzed using Philipp Mayring's qualitative content analysis model (Abd Hadi et al., 2021, pp. 79–80) to link regulatory texts with real-world dormitory conditions, while survey frequencies were tabulated descriptively to map macro domain tendencies.

2.5. *Validity and Reliability / Trustworthiness*

To ensure qualitative methodological rigor and trustworthiness, four criteria were established: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Abd Hadi et al., 2021, pp. 28–29; Moustakas, 1994, pp. 81–82). Credibility was achieved through methodological triangulation (combining participatory observation, open-ended surveys, in-depth interviews, and document analysis), source triangulation (cross-verifying student claims against the evaluations of 10 *mu'allim/ah* across Language and Non-Language Divisions), and participant validation (*member checking*), wherein synthesized textural-structural descriptions were returned to key informants to verify that their experiences of fear and anxiety were accurately represented (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 81–82). Dependability and confirmability were maintained through a transparent audit trail of horizonalization matrices and reflexive bracketing memos that monitored researcher positionality. Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the *Ma'had Ibtidā'ī* institutional context and demographic profiles.

2.6. *Ethical Considerations*

This study adhered strictly to institutional and qualitative research ethics protocols (Abd Hadi et al., 2021, p. 90; S. Y. Lee & Kim, 2025, pp. 8–9). Official institutional permission to conduct fieldwork and access curriculum documents was obtained from the Director (*Mudīr*) of UPT Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung. Prior to data collection, all 138 resident students and 10 instructors were informed of the research purpose, procedures, and their right to voluntary participation and withdrawal at any time without academic penalty. Written informed consent was secured from all participants, and strict confidentiality was guaranteed by shielding all candid disclosures of language rule violations from dormitory disciplinary authorities (*maḥkamah lughah*).

3. Results

The empirical findings are presented systematically in alignment with the four research objectives, integrating descriptive survey mappings from 138 resident students and 10 dormitory instructors, documentary curriculum comparisons, observational records, and verbatim phenomenological excerpts.

3.1. Demographic Typology, Curricular Asymmetries, and Language Shock

a. Distribution of Students' Secondary Educational Backgrounds

Empirical survey mapping of the 138 resident students reveals a highly heterogeneous student body dominated by non-pesantren graduates. As illustrated in Figure 1, general public high school and vocational school graduates (SMA/SMK) constitute the largest cohort at 58 students (42.03%), followed by Islamic boarding school alumni (Pondok Pesantren) at 46 students (33.33%), Islamic senior high school graduates (Madrasah Aliyah/MA) at 32 students (23.19%), and non-formal equivalency pathways at 2 students (1.45%). Combining general high school and non-boarding MA graduates demonstrates that 90 of the 138 students (65.22%) had never experienced compulsory Arabic dormitory immersion prior to university entry. Figure 1 further shows that 63 students (45.65%) perceive Arabic strictly as an institutional rule and religious symbol, whereas 75 students (54.35%) view it as an adaptive or mixed communicative medium.

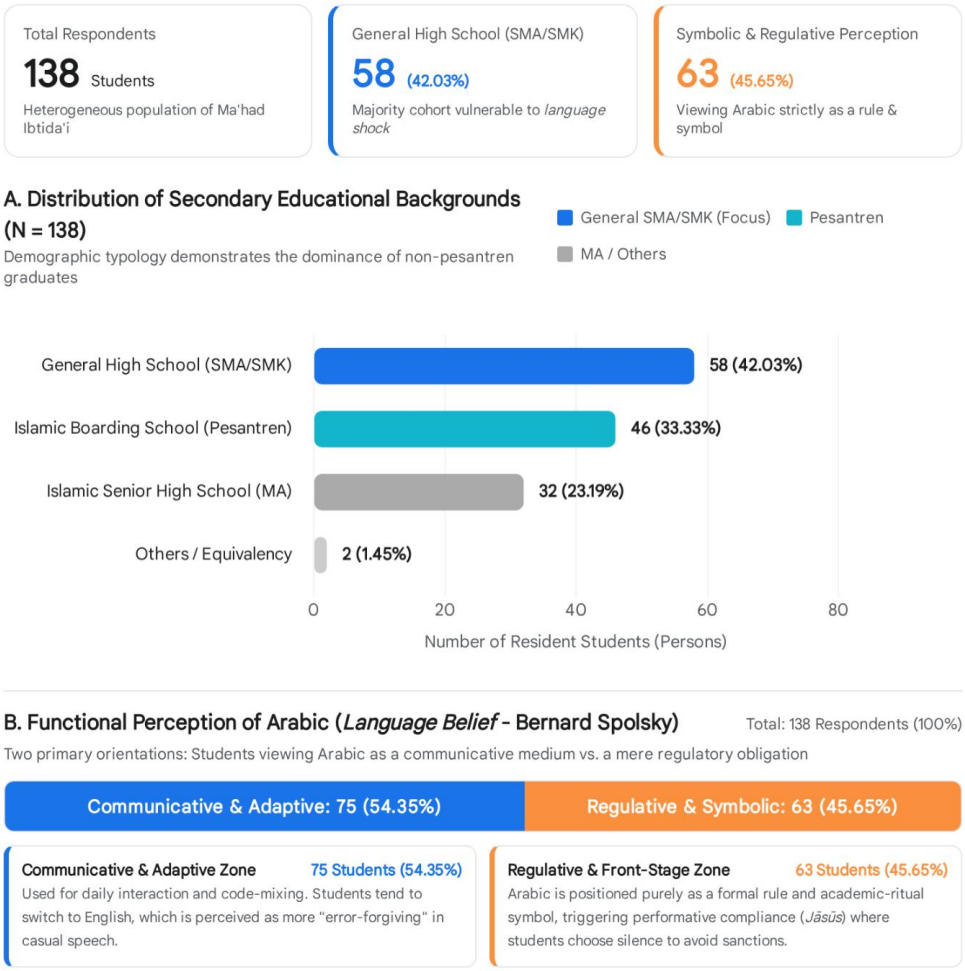


Figure 1. Dominance of General School Graduates and Symbolic-Regulative Perceptions of Arabic Among Resident Students (N = 138) (Source: Primary Student Survey Data, 2026)

b. Lexical and Methodological Asymmetries in the 2026 Curriculum and Lesson Plans

Although all resident students are uniformly required to attend dawn *ilqā' al-mufradāt* sessions and observe scheduled Arabic Days (*Ayyām 'Arabiyyah*) and English Days (UPT Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 15)[1], documentary content analysis of the Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) and 34-session Semester Lesson Plans (RPS, Code PL-5) exposes a sharp structural asymmetry between Arabic and English instruction, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Curricular Loads, Methods, and Materials in the 2026 Arabic and English Lesson Plans

Curricular Component (Code PL-5)	Arabic Instruction Design (Coordinator: Shofia Aulia, S.Pd.)	English Instruction Design (Coordinator: Aslihatullatifah, S.Pd.)	Cognitive & Functional Asymmetry
Specific Skill & Knowledge Outcomes (CPL)	**KK-5, KK-7 & P-4:** Basic daily conversation (*muḥādathah*), reading *turāth* texts using *naḥw-ṣarf*, and mastering at least 500 active words (*mufradāt*)(Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 8, 2026c, p. 5).	**KK-6 & P-7:** Basic daily conversation and expressing Islamic ideas, mastering at least 300 active words (*vocabulary*)(Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 8, 2026c, p. 1).	Arabic mandates a 66.7% higher lexical load (500 vs. 300 words) plus classical morphosyntactic analysis from Semester 1.
Core Instructional Methods	**Qawā'id wa Tarjamah** (Grammar-Translation), Audio-Lingual Method, Turn-taking, and **Lecturing** (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026a, pp. 6–10).	**Direct Method** and **Turn-taking** through interactive conversational pairs across all sessions (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026a, pp. 1–4).	Arabic emphasizes written grammatical dissection, whereas English directly trains oral production.
Core Syllabus Topics (34 Sessions)	Textbook *'Arabiyyah Sahlah*: *Ism Makān/Zamān*, *Mudhakkar/Mu'annath*, *Mufrad/Muthannā/Jam'*, *Jāmid/Mushtaqq*, *Ism Fā'il*, *I'rāb* (*Raf'*, *Naṣb*, *Khafḍ*, *Jazm*), *Majzūmāt al-Af'āl*, *Al-Adawāt al-Jāzimah*, and *Al-Ṣifah*.	Textbook *Easy English*: *Colors*, *Greeting People*, *Stationery*, *Appearance & Personality*, *Expression of Thanks*, *People & Nationality*, *Common Complaints*, *Change in Future*, and *Asking for Permission*.	English topics directly equip students for daily dormitory speech acts; Arabic topics focus on abstract case endings (*i'rāb*).

Source: 2026 Curriculum Document (Tables 1.3 & 1.5) and 2026 Arabic and English RPS of Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah.

c. Empirical Evidence of Language Shock Among Novice Learners

As shown in Table 2, the collision between zero prior Arabic exposure among general school graduates and a 500-word Grammar-Translation curriculum triggers acute language shock. SMA/SMK graduates (such as Dilla Fahka Sari and Hawa Virginia in *Ḥalaqah* 2) reported never having studied Arabic previously, resulting in severe disorientation due to vocabulary deficits (*kurang mufradāt*) and inability to assemble sentences[7]. Even MA and Pesantren graduates (Asifah Lutfiah Rahman, M. Yusuf Ramadani, and Ade Mukminatul Afifah) reported struggling to construct spoken sentences due to *naḥw-ṣarf* complexities, as reflected in the following accounts:

"*Arabic is rarely used in speaking because even the instructors rarely practice it. Especially in Dormitory 2, Arabic during halaqah alone remains a huge challenge for them; they are still learning the most basic mufradāt, so they have no confidence to speak Arabic.*" (Primary Instructor Survey Data, Non-Language Division, June 24, 2026).

"*Honestly, I have studied Arabic at the Ma'had for almost two years, yet during the final Ma'had examination (UAM) I could not answer anything because I understood nothing. In high school I frequently studied English so it is much easier, whereas in Arabic I feel insecure seeing boarding school peers speak fluently and find it hard to arrange words into a sentence.*" (Compiled Primary Student Survey & Interview Data, M. Yusuf Ramadani & Asifah Lutfiah Rahman, *Ḥalaqah* 4, MA Graduates, June 3, 2026).

"*Some students already try to speak the language, but it depends on their interlocutor; if Student A speaks Arabic but Student B does not understand what Student A means, Student A automatically stops speaking Arabic too.*" (Primary Instructor Survey Data, Language Division, June 24, 2026).

3.2. *Affective Dynamics, Grammatical Anxiety, and Performative Compliance (Jāsūs)*

a. Triggers of Grammatical Anxiety in Dormitory Interactions

Survey data from the 138 students indicate that the primary psychological barriers to speaking Arabic are fear of making grammatical or vocalization errors (*takut salah menyusun kalimat/harakat*), fear of peer ridicule (*takut ditertawakan*), and low self-confidence (*merasa rendah diri*). Under the *2026 Academic Guidelines* (2026b, p. Chapters III.B & VI.F, 10, 37), language discipline is enforced through the *Language Point Control Book*, language courts (*maḥkamah lughah*), tiered punishments (on-the-spot *speak up*, wearing a *jāsūs* vest, public *storytelling*, and Warning Letters SP1–SP3), and covert jāsūs monitors.

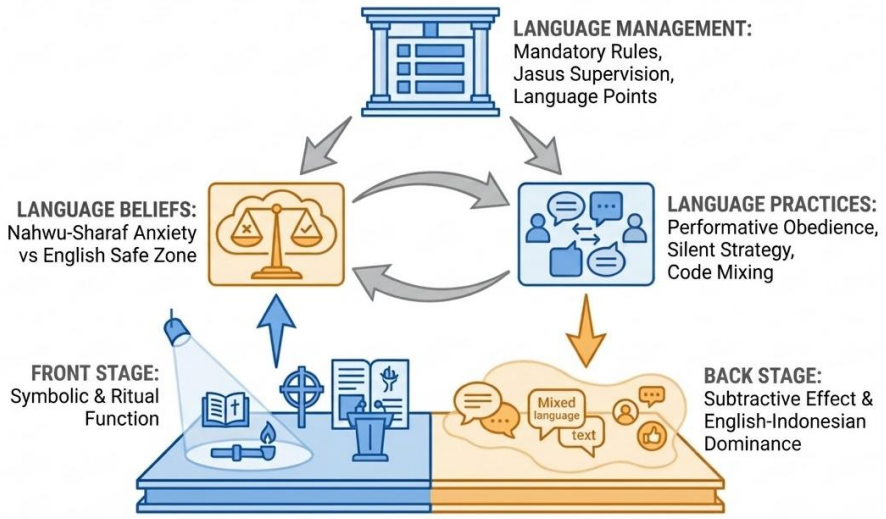


Figure 2. Mechanism of Subtractive Effects Within Spolsky's Language Policy Triangulation at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah (Source: Adapted from Spolsky, 2004, p. 5, and Primary Fieldwork Data, 2026)

b. Instructors' Evaluation of Language Mandates and *Jāsūs* Surveillance

As conceptualized in Figure 2 and quantified in Table 3, *jāsūs* surveillance fails to internalize communicative habits and instead generates distorted compliance. Survey data from the 10 instructors reveal that 80% of instructors view compulsory language

rules as operating merely as formal regulations rather than habits (50%) or running inconsistently (30%), while 70% of instructors report that the *jāsūs* system produces only superficial discipline without habit formation (40%), makes students afraid to speak (20%), or requires educational reform (10%).

Table 3. Distribution of Instructors' Evaluations of Compulsory Language Rules and *Jāsūs* Surveillance (N = 10)

Policy Evaluation Dimension	Instructor Assessment Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Empirical Impact Categorization
Status of Compulsory Arabic & English Rules	Stronger as a formal rule than an actual habit	5	50.0%	Fails to internalize into a communicative habitus.
Status of Compulsory Arabic & English Rules	Not yet running consistently	3	30.0%	Fluctuating enforcement and weak instructor modeling.
Status of Compulsory Arabic & English Rules	Very clear and running consistently	2	20.0%	Normative claim by a minority of Language Division staff.
Impact of *Jāsūs* Surveillance System	Effective for discipline, but does not form habits	4	40.0%	Generates surveillance-bound performative compliance.
Impact of *Jāsūs* Surveillance System	Makes some students afraid to speak	2	20.0%	Triggers grammatical anxiety and oral paralysis.
Impact of *Jāsūs* Surveillance System	Very effective in habituating Arabic	2	20.0%	Affirmative view of punitive enforcement.
Impact of *Jāsūs* Surveillance System	Makes students more cautious	1	10.0%	Increases grammatical self-monitoring, hindering fluency.
Impact of *Jāsūs* Surveillance System	Needs evaluation to be more educational	1	10.0%	Internal critique from Language Division staff.

Source: Primary Survey Data from the Instructor Questionnaire (June 2026).

c. Avoidance Strategies: Silence and Monosyllabic Responses

Consistent with Table 3, student questionnaires and interviews demonstrate three defensive avoidance strategies when confronting *jāsūs* monitors: (1) choosing silence ("*Saya lebih memilih diam agar tidak salah*") as reported by Windi Fitri and Hawa Virginia; (2) uttering monosyllabic responses ("*Menjawab pendek karena takut salah*"); and (3) speaking Arabic solely when watched by instructors ("*Karna kewajiban di mahad agar tidak di jasus*") as stated by Mahasantri 5 and 6:

"*Implementing Arabic and English as daily languages in the Ma'had is quite difficult because students also attend classes outside the dormitory where they do not use foreign languages... Furthermore, many students lack a bilingual background, so most students use the language solely out of fear of being caught by the jāsūs.*" (Primary Instructor Survey Data, Language Division, June 24, 2026).

"*I use Arabic because of the Ma'had obligation so I do not get caught by the jāsūs... However, when addressed in Arabic that I do not understand or when afraid of making sentence errors, I prefer to remain silent so I do not make mistakes, or I reply very briefly because I feel ashamed and afraid of being laughed at.*" (Compiled Primary Student Survey & Interview Data, *Ḥalaqah* 2, June 3, 2026).

3.3. Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and the Dominance of English as a Safe Zone

a. Hybrid Utterance Constructions in Daily Dormitory Interactions

When students encounter Arabic lexical gaps while under bilingual obligations, they systematically resort to code-switching and code-mixing into English or Indonesian[6]. As documented in Table 4, Arabic syntactic frames are replaced by casual English or Indonesian clause matrices embedded with isolated Arabic nouns or pronouns (Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 260).

Table 4. Empirical Evidence of Students' Code-Mixing and Code-Switching Constructions

Respondent & Schooling Background	Authentic Utterance / Code Pattern	Dormitory Context	Strategy When Lacking Arabic Vocabulary	Morphosyntactic & Sociolinguistic Feature
Mahasantri 1 (Pesantren, *Ḥalaqah* 2)	**"i wanna take na'lun"** (*I want to take sandals*)	Daily peer conversation in dormitory rooms.	Switches to English due to difficulties with "*Nahwu and Sharaf in sentences*".	Informal English (*I wanna take*) serves as the matrix clause (Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 260); Arabic is reduced to an uninflected noun (*na'lun*)[7].
Mahasantri 2 (General SMA, *Ḥalaqah* 2)	**"ana no mandi"** (*I am not bathing*)	Spoken interaction in bathroom areas.	Switches to English as the easiest alternative when Arabic feels hard[7].	Arabic pronoun (*anā*) acts as a symbolic compliance token, followed by English negation (*no*) and Indonesian verb (*mandi*)[7].
Mahasantri 3 (MA, *Ḥalaqah* 4)	Inserting **"Ana"** within English (*conversation*) or Indonesian speech.	Answering senior instructors or chatting with peers.	Switches to English because "*English is better and peers understand it*".	Lexical tokenism: a single Arabic pronoun fulfills bilingual rules while actual communication occurs in English/Indonesian.
Mahasantri 4 (General SMA, *Ḥalaqah* 2)	Mixing English words like **"gymnastic"** with brief Arabic expressions.	Sports and daily recreational activities.	Mixes Arabic with Indonesian or English due to limited vocabulary retention.	Direct lexical substitution into English when Arabic equivalents cannot be retrieved.

Source: Primary Open-Ended Survey Data from Resident Students at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah (June 2026).

b. Student Perceptions of English as Modern, Inclusive, and Error-Forgiving

Survey responses explain why the patterns in Table 4 favor English: students perceive English as easier to deploy in casual conversation, faster for explaining ideas, familiar from secondary schooling and daily social media exposure (M. Lee et al., 2026,

pp. 408–423), and forgiving of grammatical errors (*error-forgiving*) compared to Arabic, which demands strict gender, number, and case concordance. Instructor survey data confirm this subtractive competition: 50% of instructors (5 of 10) observed that English displaces Arabic by "*becoming a competitor to Arabic in conversation*" (10%), "*being chosen more frequently in casual talk*" (10%), and "*being more appealing to students*" (30%):

> "*When speaking daily in the dormitory and forgetting the Arabic word or struggling to arrange words due to nahwu and sharaf rules, I immediately replace it with English like saying 'i wanna take na'lun'... English feels much easier and faster for explaining things because students here understand English better.*" (Compiled Primary Student Survey & Interview Data, Mahasantri 1,2, & 3, June 3, 2026).

3.4. Spatial Polarization and the Functional Shift of Arabic Across Domains

a. Mapping Front-Stage Vitality versus Back-Stage Collapse

Triangulated survey and observational data demonstrate acute spatial polarization in Arabic usage across domains (Fishman, 1972, pp. 45–51). As shown in Figure 3, 90% of instructors reported that Arabic is strong exclusively in formal, supervised domains: Academic/Classroom Learning (40%), *Turāth* Study/*Ḥalaqah* (20%), Only When Supervised (20%), Conversations with Instructors (10%), and Religious Worship (10%)[6]. Conversely, 90% of instructors confirmed that Arabic collapses in back-stage domains: When Unsupervised (40%), Social Media/Chat (30%), and Casual Peer Conversation (20%).

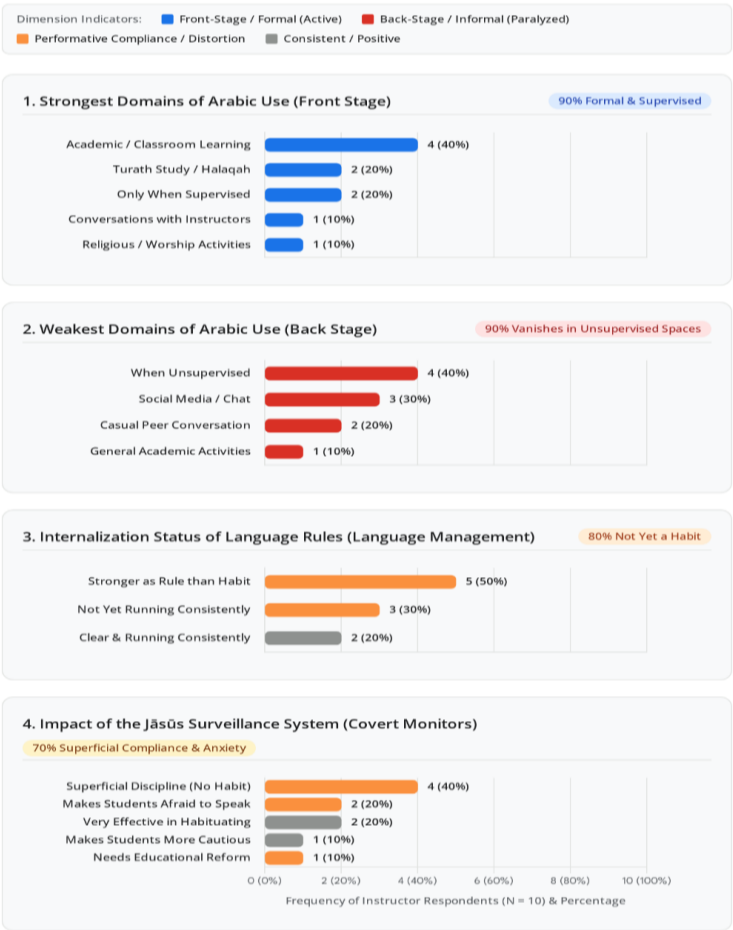


Figure 3. Instructors' Evaluations Confirming Spatial Polarization and Performative Compliance in Arabic (N = 10) (Source: Primary Instructor Survey Data, 2026)

b. Dichotomy Between Front-Stage Ritual Symbolism and Back-Stage Social Interaction

Participatory observation confirms that Arabic thrives on the front stage, but its production is receptive, textual, liturgical, and scripted: (1) during worship practicums (PPI) and *Yanbu'a/taḥfīẓ* Qur'anic sessions monitored via Tajwid Control Cards, students recite Arabic texts reverently; (2) in *turāth* classes (*Ta'līm al-Muta'allim*, *Mabādī' al-Fiqhiyyah*, *Al-Ājurrūmiyyah*, *Safīnah al-Najāh*), instructors read Arabic texts aloud but explain content in Indonesian because students cannot follow full Arabic explanations; and (3) in extracurricular arts (*Hadrah*, *Syarḥ al-Qur'ān*) and Week 2 Arabic *Muḥāḍarah* speeches, students perform memorized Arabic lyrics and scripts. Conversely, on the back stage, bedrooms, bathrooms, corridors, canteens, rehearsal breaks, and WhatsApp chats—Arabic vanishes immediately when supervision ends. Even during *Hadrah* and *Syarḥ al-Qur'ān* rehearsals, all technical coordination regarding drum tempo and turn-taking occurs in Indonesian or regional dialects, as summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Dichotomy of Spatial Functions of Arabic Between Front Stage and Back Stage at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah

Spatial & Domain Dimension	**Front Stage (Formal, Religious & Supervised)**	**Back Stage (Informal Social, Private & Digital)**
Physical Locations & Activities	Mosque, dawn/dusk *ḥalaqah*, *turāth* classes, Week 2 *Muḥāḍarah* podium, *Hadrah* and *Syarḥ al-Qur'ān* performances (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026c, pp. 15–18).	Dormitory bedrooms, bathrooms, corridors, canteens, rehearsal coordination, and social media chats (Primary Survey Data, 2026).
Actual Language Practiced	Classical/Standard Arabic (*Fuṣḥá*) for liturgical reading and memorized scripts; Indonesian for *turāth* explanation.	Indonesian, regional vernaculars, and English code-mixing ("*i wanna take na'lun*", "*ana no mandi*").
Nature of Speech Production	Receptive, text-bound, scripted recitation, and surveillance-triggered performative compliance (Schutz, 1970, p. 180).	Productive, spontaneous, expressive, humorous, and peer-solidarity oriented (Holmes, 2013, pp. 22–24)
Perceived Meaning & Status	**Symbolically Dominant (90% instructors; 45.65% students):** Sacred Qur'anic language and institutional rule.	**Communicatively Paralyzed (90% instructors):** Abandoned as rigid, inefficient, and unmandated inside bedrooms.

Source: Participatory Observation and Student/Instructor Survey Data (2026).

"*Arabic is highly dominant in prayer, dhikr, wirid, and Qur'anic recitation because it touches the heart... However, for casual conversation with friends in bedrooms, canteens, joking, or social media chats, it is almost never used because it feels stiff, inefficient, and bedrooms are exempt from mandatory language rules, so peers use Indonesian, regional languages, or English.*" (Compiled Primary Student Survey & Interview Data, Mahasantri 7, 8, & 9, June 3, 2026).

4. Discussion

The empirical findings demonstrate that the shifting social function of Arabic at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung is driven by four interrelated mechanisms: curricular-demographic language shock, surveillance-induced grammatical anxiety, subtractive competition from English, and spatial-functional polarization.

4.1. Cognitive Disorientation of *The Stranger* and Curricular Asymmetry as Roots of Language Shock

The first major finding reveals that imposing uniform Arabic mandates on a student population dominated by general high school graduates (42.03%), compounded by a 500-word Grammar-Translation syllabus (*RPS*), induces acute language shock and communicative breakdown. Interpreted through Schutz's (1970, pp. 94–98) social phenomenology of *The Stranger*, general school graduates enter the dormitory carrying a stock of knowledge constructed entirely within Indonesian and regional vernaculars. When dormitory regulations abruptly invalidate their habitual interpretive schemes (*thinking as usual*) without transitional scaffolding, newcomers experience the institutional culture not as a protective incubator (Ma'had Ibtidā'ī. Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026c, p. 3), but as "a labyrinth in which he has lost all sense of his bearings" (Schutz, 1970, p. 94).

Within Spolsky's (2004, p. 15) Language Policy Theory, this finding validates the axiom that language proficiency sets an absolute structural limit on language choice and acts as the strongest implicit language management mechanism[3]. This deficit is exacerbated by internal curricular asymmetry: whereas the English RPS employs the Direct Method targeting 300 functional expressions (*Greeting People, Asking for Permission*), the Arabic RPS mandates 500 words taught via *Qawā'id wa Tarjamah* with heavy morphosyntactic analysis (*Jāmid/Mushtaqq, Ism Fā'il, I'rāb*) (Ma'had al-Jami'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2026b, p. 8, 2026a, pp. 1–10). According to Krashen's (1982, pp. 10–11) acquisition-learning hypothesis (in Syahraini, 2024, pp. 22–23), oral fluency develops through subconscious acquisition during natural conversation when learners are not consciously obsessed with grammatical rules ("*not consciously aware of the rules*"), whereas formal rule-drilling only produces conscious *learning* that inhibits spontaneous speech. Furthermore, Kroll and Stewart's (1994, pp. 149–174) asymmetric bilingual memory model (in Hamers & Blanc, 2000, pp. 189–193, 406) demonstrates that novice bilinguals cannot directly retrieve second-language words without conceptual mediation. Forcing complex *i'rāb* rules in Semester 1 locks students into grammatical over-monitoring and collapses the dormitory's interpersonal social network, which Hamers and Blanc (2000, pp. 110–111) and Milroy (1980, p. 412) identify as the primary locus of language socialization, causing Pesantren alumni (33.33%) to abandon Arabic when general-school roommates fail to understand them. This contradicts Syahraini's (2024, p. 25) assumption that managing alternating daily bilingual schedules automatically yields communicative efficiency, and refines Latief's (2024) findings by showing that morning *mufradāt* programs fail to build speaking habits without curricular differentiation for general school graduates.

4.2. Critique of *Al-Nāmūsiyyah* Prescriptivism and the Failure of *Jāsūs*-Based Management

The second major finding shows that *Language Management* defined by Spolsky and Edwards as deliberate efforts by authorities to modify speakers' practices, that relies on covert *jāsūs* spies, language courts, and point deductions breeds grammatical anxiety and performative compliance, with 80% of instructors admitting that rules fail to form habits and students resorting to silence strategies. Theoretically, this corroborates Abdul Qadirs's (2003, pp. 46–48) critique of al-nāmūsiyyah (authoritarian grammatical prescriptivism), wherein language authorities act as individual censors (*ruqabā' fardiyyīn*) and establish "linguistic

courts that adjudicate language errors" (*maḥākim lisāniyyah*), stripping Arabic of its communicative service and extinguishing generative creativity.

In psycholinguistic terms, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, pp. 283–305; and in Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 410) establish that language anxiety triggered by fear of ridicule and punitive surveillance subtly disrupts cognitive processing across input, processing, and output stages, causing oral freezing. Consequently, in Schutz's (1970, pp. 179–180) terms, students' brief Arabic utterances in front of *jāsūs* monitors are not genuine communicative acts (*Kundga behandlungen*), but stage acting driven by a defensive *in-order-to motive* to avoid sanctions. This contradicts linear claims from previous studies. While Sholihah (2020, pp. 94–95) found a positive correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.72$) between bilingual instruction and passive classroom test scores, and Syafi'i (2019, pp. 68–69) concluded that disciplinary rules motivate santri, a critical inspection of Syafi'i's (2019, pp. 97–99) own interview transcripts with *mudabbir* Muhammad Abror and student Berlian Biru Nusantara reveals that many senior cadres still spoke Indonesian and lack of guidance from the language division caused students to stop speaking Arabic when peers did not reciprocate. Contrasted with Aziz et al.'s (2024, pp. 630–633) findings at Hidayatullah Institute Batu, oral fluency requires behavioral reproduction to occur without pressure (*dūna ḍaghṭ*), supported by active instructor modeling, positive reinforcement (*al-ta'zīz al-ījābī*), and gentle error correction (*bi-uslūb laṭīf lā yusy'iru al-ṭālib bi-al-iḥrāj*) that preserves linguistic safety (*al-amān al-lughawī*).

4.3. Subtractive Mechanisms and Digital Affordances of English as a Safe Zone

The third major finding proves that the dormitory's bilingual ecosystem operates subtractively: English dominates code-switching and code-mixing ("*i wanna take na'lun*", "*ana no mandi*") as a communicative "safe zone" that displaces Arabic. Through Hamers and Blanc's (2000, pp. 100–103, 260) *valorisation* and *intrasentential code-switching* framework, MacWhinney's (1987, pp. 315–327) competition model, and Spolsky's (2004, p. 14, 2012, p. 90) *Language Beliefs* (instrumentality versus identity), this displacement stems from asymmetrical functional value and grammatical load. Even in "*i wanna take na'lun*" uttered by a Pesantren graduate, informal English acts as the *base/matrix language* governing the predicate clause because its syntax is simpler and automatized, whereas Arabic is subordinated into an isolated lexical insertion (*na'lun*) to bypass verb conjugation and *i'rāb* rules.

Within the dormitory's polycentric normative environment, which Blommaert (in Spolsky, 2012, p. 403) defines as simultaneous orientation toward competing centers of normativity, students orient toward peer-group norms where English holds covert prestige, a concept Holmes (Holmes, 2013, p. 412) uses to explain positive solidarity attitudes toward casual varieties outside formal institutional models, alongside modern instrumental appeal (Cenoz & Gorter, 2012 in Spolsky, 2012, p. 317; Izzak, 2019, pp. 21, 24). In the dormitory, this translates into an error-forgiving ideology where grammatical deviations in casual English are tolerated without ridicule, unlike Arabic which is burdened by sacred prescriptivism (al-Fihri, 2003, p. 47). Moreover, as Lee (2026, pp. 408–423; 2025, pp. 1–21, 50–52) demonstrates, university students are immersed daily in Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) via multimodal TikTok and Instagram content within their everyday spaces, supplying subconscious English vocabulary (Krashen, 1982, p. 10; in Syahraini, 2024, p. 22) unavailable for Arabic in students' social media networks. Pairing Arabic and English without methodological parity thus provides a "legal escape hatch" that accelerates Arabic's

functional contraction, extending García's (in Spolsky, 2012, pp. 90–93) *language under threat* pattern to Islamic higher education dormitories.

4.4. Textual-Sacralization Trap, Diglossia Leakage, and Phenomenological Essence

The fourth major finding confirms that Arabic is confined to a front-stage ritual and academic symbol (*ḥalaqah*, PPI worship, *turāth*, *muḥāḍarah*, *hadrah*, *syarḥ al-Qur'ān*) while vanishing from back-stage social spaces (bedrooms, canteens, social media), as reported by 45.65% of students and 90% of instructors. In Fishman's (1972, pp. 3–5, 26, 45–51) sociology of language, a language survives as a living vernacular only when its *verbal repertoire* is supported by egalitarian interpersonal *role-relationships* across everyday domains. At Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah, Arabic is caught in a textual-sacralization trap. As documented in the diglossia frameworks of Ferguson (in Izzak, 2019, p. 25), Fishman (Fishman, 1972, p. 62), Geertz (in Holmes, 2013, pp. 143, 260–261), and Holmes (2013, pp. 32, 72), when a High (*H*) variety imposes complex morphosyntactic co-occurrence rules where a wrong choice risks social embarrassment, speakers rationally shift to a simpler, egalitarian lingua franca (Indonesian or casual English) for ordinary conversation.

Drawing on Gans's (1979, in Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p. 394) concept of *symbolic ethnicity*—where group attachment is expressed through low-cost ritual symbols rather than daily practice and Schutz's (Schutz, 1970, pp. 20, 97–98, 108–110) semiotics, teaching Arabic as isolated vocabulary lists (*Wörter*) and passive text translation reduces it from a communicative sign (*Worte* carrying emotional *fringes*) into a second-order transcendental symbol. Supporting Alraddadi's (2021, pp. 2–3) finding that religious reverence alone cannot halt youth shift toward English and Dinata's (2021, pp. 117–120) observation of out-of-class shift to Indonesian, religious reverence preserves Arabic's front-stage liturgical prestige but cannot prevent diglossia leakage on the back stage (Izzak, 2019, p. 25). Synthesizing textural and structural dimensions (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 121–122), the universal essence of students' bilingual experience is an existential tension between sacred reverence, surveillance-induced grammatical anxiety, and the quest for communicative safety: students venerate Arabic spiritually during worship, yet experience it as an intimidating structural burden in oral interaction, resolving this tension by surrendering the front stage to Arabic symbolism while claiming English and Indonesian as back-stage sanctuaries.

4.5. Contributions, Practical Implications, Limitations, and Future Research

Theoretically, this study advances Arabic applied linguistics by formulating the concept of Asymmetrical Subtractive Bilingualism, extending Spolsky's language policy model to show how coercive *Language Management* (*al-nāmūsiyyah*) under unequal curricular cognitive loads amplifies negative *Language Beliefs* (grammatical anxiety) and drives subtractive *Language Practices* toward an error-forgiving competitor. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of combining Moustakas's transcendental phenomenology with documentary lesson-plan analysis to uncover structural roots of learner anxiety.

Practically, these findings yield four actionable implications for Islamic higher education dormitory managers and curriculum designers: (1) implement tiered ecological differentiation, focusing general high school graduates in Semester 1 on 300 functional daily expressions via simplified interlanguage (*al-lughah al-bayniyyah al-mubassaṭah*) without *i'rāb* penalties; (2) separate *naḥw-ṣarf* instruction for *turāth* reading (KK-7) from daily *muḥādathah* (KK-5), teaching conversation via the Direct Method, educational drama, language games,

and multimodal social media content, while fostering learning autonomy; (3) replace punitive *jāsūs* spies with supportive peer-scaffolding facilitators; and (4) train all *mu'allim/ah* via *PSDM* to model casual Arabic in bedrooms, canteens, and WhatsApp groups. Because this study is limited to a single foundational dormitory (*Ma'had Ibtidā'ī*) with a one-year residency period and descriptive cross-sectional survey mapping, its findings cannot be generalized to multi-year advanced seminaries (*Ma'had 'Āly*) without caution. Future research should conduct multi-site comparative studies across PTKI dormitories and employ longitudinal quasi-experimental designs to test digital-assisted *al-lughah al-bayniyyah* interventions on students' oral retention and anxiety reduction.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the shifting social function of Arabic within the bilingual ecosystem of Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah UIN Raden Intan Lampung is a direct consequence of structural dissonance among institutional language management, speaker language beliefs, and daily communicative practices. In answering the four research questions, the synthesis of findings establishes that uniform bilingual mandates imposed on a student body dominated by general high school graduates, combined with an asymmetrical Arabic syllabus emphasizing grammar-translation over direct communicative practice, induce acute language shock and fracture peer conversational networks. Rather than cultivating organic speaking habits, punitive surveillance through covert monitors (*jāsūs*) and point deductions generates grammatical anxiety and performative compliance, prompting students to adopt silence strategies when supervised. Consequently, the bilingual environment operates subtractively: bolstered by communicative classroom methods, daily social media affordances, and an error-forgiving peer ideology, English is co-opted as a safe zone for code-switching and code-mixing, while Arabic is polarized into a revered front-stage ritual and textual symbol that vanishes from back-stage social life.

The principal scholarly contribution of this research to Arabic applied linguistics lies in conceptualizing *Asymmetrical Subtractive Bilingualism* and the *textual-sacralization trap*, proving that institutional co-mandating of Arabic and English without curricular and pedagogical parity inadvertently erodes Arabic's vernacular vitality. These findings imply that Islamic higher education policymakers and dormitory managers must reform coercive, prescriptivist language management (*al-nāmūsiyyah*) into tiered, error-tolerant communicative curricula supported by active peer modeling across informal and digital spaces. While bounded by the single-site, one-year incubation context of a foundational university dormitory, this study lays the groundwork for future multi-site and experimental investigations into simplified interlanguage (*al-lughah al-bayniyyah*) pedagogies. Ultimately, preserving Arabic as a living language in Islamic higher education requires liberating it from the fear of the disciplinary tribunal so it can thrive as an inclusive, everyday voice of student solidarity.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

Fakhrurrozi, as a graduate student in the Magister of Arabic Education program, conceived and designed the study, developed the research instruments, conducted participatory observations at Ma'had al-Jāmi'ah, administered the open-ended questionnaires to 138 resident students and 10 dormitory instructors, conducted the in-depth semi-structured interviews, performed the transcendental phenomenological analysis, and wrote the original draft of the manuscript.

Mohammad Samsul Ulum, serving as the first advisor, supervised the overall research conceptualization and methodological rigor, guided the documentary content analysis of the 2026 curriculum and semester lesson plans, validated the Spolsky language policy domain mapping, and critically revised the manuscript. Achmad Nashichuddin, serving as the second advisor, supervised the refinement of the sociolinguistic and Arabic applied linguistics theoretical framework, verified the phenomenological horizonalization and textural-structural synthesis, conducted critical substantive editing, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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Data Availability Statement

The anonymized survey datasets (Student Instrument and Instructor Instrument), phenomenological horizonalization and thematic coding matrices, and institutional curriculum documents supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Full individual interview transcripts are restricted in accordance with ethical confidentiality agreements to protect student participants from institutional disciplinary repercussions.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

AI Use Statement

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used a generative artificial intelligence tool to assist in generating the data visualization figures and designing the general structural outline of the manuscript. All AI-assisted visual and structural outputs were critically reviewed, rewritten where necessary, and verified against the empirical study data and cited primary sources by the authors, who remain fully accountable for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the published work.

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