

## PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF ARABIC EXPRESSIONS IN STUDENT INTERACTION AT UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG: A SOCIOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

Zainurrakhmah<sup>1)</sup>, Namira Choirani Fajri<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang  
Jl. Prof. Dr. Hamka, Tambakaji, Ngaliyan District, Semarang City, Central Java (024) 7606405

<sup>1</sup>E-mail: zainurrakhmah@walisongo.ac.id

<sup>2</sup>E-mail: namira.c@walisongo.ac.id

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengkaji fungsi pragmatik ungkapan Arab dalam percakapan lisan mahasiswa UIN Walisongo Semarang pada konteks interaksi akademik-keagamaan. Kajian sebelumnya cenderung menitikberatkan pada klasifikasi alih kode dan faktor sosial, sementara dimensi ilokusi, pengelolaan wacana, dan distribusi relasional belum dianalisis secara terpadu dalam konteks interaksi mahasiswa PTKIN. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi bentuk dan konteks penggunaan ungkapan Arab, menganalisis fungsinya sebagai realisasi tindak tutur, penanda wacana, dan penanda sosiopragmatik, serta menjelaskan distribusinya dalam relasi sebaya dan hierarkis. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan orientasi sosiopragmatik digunakan, mengintegrasikan teori tindak tutur Searle, prinsip kesantunan Leech, etnografi komunikasi Hymes, dan penanda wacana Schifffrin. Data diperoleh melalui rekaman percakapan alami selama dua bulan yang melibatkan 20 partisipan dari berbagai fakultas, menghasilkan 24 tipe ungkapan Arab yang diklasifikasikan secara fungsional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ungkapan Arab berfungsi sebagai sumber daya pragmatik multidimensional yang merealisasikan tindak tutur ekspresif, direktif, asertif, dan komisif, sekaligus mengelola struktur wacana dan mengindeks deferens dalam relasi hierarkis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa ungkapan Arab tengah mengalami proses stabilisasi indeksikal dalam komunitas tutur mahasiswa: tidak sekadar penanda identitas keagamaan, melainkan infrastruktur pragmatik yang mengorganisasi wacana, mengelola relasi sosial, dan mengonstruksi komitmen berbasis nilai religius bersama. Temuan ini berimplikasi bagi teori sosiopragmatik dan pendidikan bahasa di lingkungan PTKIN.*

**Kata Kunci:** *sosiopragmatik, ungkapan Arab, fungsi pragmatik, tindak tutur, PTKIN*

### Abstract

This study examines the pragmatic functions of Arabic expressions in the oral conversations of students at UIN Walisongo Semarang within the context of religious-academic interaction. Prior research has largely emphasized code-switching classifications and social factors, while the dimensions of illocution, discourse management, and relational distribution remain underanalyzed in an integrated manner, particularly in naturalistic student interaction within Indonesian Islamic higher education (PTKIN). This study aims to identify the forms and contexts of Arabic expression use, analyze their functions as speech act realizations, discourse markers, and sociopragmatic markers, and explain their distribution across peer and hierarchical relationships. A qualitative sociopragmatic approach is employed, integrating Searle's speech act theory, Leech's politeness principles, Hymes' ethnography of communication, and Schifffrin's discourse marker framework. Data were collected through two months of natural conversation recordings involving 20 participants from multiple faculties, yielding 24 functionally classified types of Arabic expressions as units of analysis. The findings indicate that Arabic expressions function as multidimensional pragmatic resources realizing expressive, directive, assertive, and commissive speech acts, while simultaneously managing discourse structure and indexing deference in hierarchical relationships. The study concludes that Arabic expressions are undergoing indexical stabilization within the student speech community: rather than functioning merely as religious identity markers, they constitute a multifunctional pragmatic infrastructure that organizes discourse, manages social relations, and constructs normatively grounded commitments within a shared religious-academic environment. These findings carry implications for sociopragmatic theory and language education in PTKIN institutions.

**Keywords:** sociopragmatics, Arabic expressions, pragmatic functions, speech acts, PTKIN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary pragmatic studies, language is no longer understood merely as a structural system but rather as a device for performing actions to achieve specific interactional goals (Rahardi, 2018). In multilingual societies like Indonesia, linguistic practices often involve multiple languages. This phenomenon is not merely a lexical variation but a significant social strategy for managing relationships, attitudes, and the flow of communication (Zein, 2020). The insertion of certain linguistic elements into utterances can function as attitude markers, regulators of interpersonal relationships, affirmations of identity, and even managers of discourse dynamics (Chaer & Agustina, 2014; Pratama & Saputra, 2024).

This phenomenon is particularly evident within State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN), where Arabic expressions are frequently interspersed into Indonesian oral conversations (Insyafiah & Azizah, 2025; Sugito, Tatang, Khoirunnisa, Islamia, & Susiawati, 2025). For instance, at Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Walisongo Semarang, students regularly employ Arabic expressions such as *insyaallah* (if Allah wills), *na'am* (yes), *tafadhal* (please), *syafakallah* (may Allah heal you), and *khalas* (finished/done). These expressions do not form complete Arabic syntactic constructions but rather integrate as lexical elements within the Indonesian language structure. They occur in both peer and hierarchical relationships, across various interactional settings such as classrooms, canteens, and informal contexts. This indicates that these expressions have become a natural part of the students' communicative repertoire.

Previous studies on Arabic-Indonesian language contact have mostly discussed this phenomenon using the perspectives of code-switching and code-mixing. Many of them focus on the forms of inserted elements, their distribution, and the social reasons behind their

use (Khoiriyah, Syihabuddin, & Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, 2023; Sakti, 2020). Other studies examine the influence of institutional and community environments on Arabic language practices (Nida, Nurfitri, & Tatang, 2025) or discuss Arabic expressions as markers of religious identity among university students (Fuadah, Mustofa, & Nandang, 2025). Although these studies provide important insights, most of them still emphasize structural categories and social motivations. The pragmatic dimensions of Arabic expressions in actual interaction have received less attention.

In particular, studies that combine speech acts, politeness, discourse management, and relational aspects within a single analytical method remain limited in Indonesian Islamic higher education. As a result, the use of Arabic expressions in student interactions is often discussed only in terms of linguistic form or symbolic identity. Their role in managing conversation, expressing interpersonal meaning, and negotiating social relations in everyday communication remains underinvestigated.

From a pragmatic perspective, meaning is closely connected to context, speaker intention, and interactional purpose (Leech, 2014). From this perspective, expressions such as *alhamdulillah*, *na'am*, or *khalas* can be understood not only as lexical items or religious symbols but also as pragmatic resources that function within speech acts, discourse organization, and social relation management.

UIN Walisongo Semarang was chosen as the study setting because Arabic expressions are widely used in daily interactions on campus. As one of the major PTKIN in Indonesia, the university brings together Islamic academic traditions, multilingual practices, and local cultural values, shaping student communication in distinctive ways. Even though Arabic expressions are commonly heard in student conversations, their pragmatic roles in interaction have rarely been examined in detail.

The institutional environment of UIN Walisongo also encourages the use of Arabic in both formal and informal communication. This situation provides naturally occurring interactional data that reflect authentic patterns of Arabic-Indonesian language contact among students. Based on this background, the present study examines how Arabic expressions function pragmatically in students' oral interaction.

This study aims to: (1) identify the forms and contexts of Arabic expression use in natural student conversations; (2) analyze their pragmatic functions in the realization of speech acts and their role as discourse markers; and (3) explain the distribution of their use in both peer and hierarchical social relationships. Thus, this research addresses the question: how do Arabic expressions function as pragmatic resources in shaping communicative actions and managing social relations within a religious academic environment?

Theoretically, this research contributes to sociopragmatic research by demonstrating that religious expressions function not only as symbolic linguistic forms but also as interactional resources with social and pragmatic significance. Empirically, it advances the documentation of language practices in Indonesian Islamic higher education, specifically about the pragmatic use of Arabic expressions in student interactions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on linguistic expressions in social interaction cannot be separated from the fundamental pragmatic assumption that utterances are forms of social action. In the tradition of speech acts, every utterance does not merely convey propositional information but realizes a specific illocutionary act. Within the framework formulated by Searle (1979), illocutionary acts are classified into five main categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. This framework provides an analytical basis for identifying the

types of actions realized through specific expressions in interaction.

The realization of these illocutionary acts does not occur in a context-free manner but is bound by social norms and the management of relationships among participants. Leech (2014) in his politeness principle, demonstrates that language use in society is regulated to maintain the balance of social relations. The politeness principle includes various maxims such as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Thus, speech act analysis needs to be extended to consider how utterances function as strategies for managing social relations.

This social dimension is further emphasized within the ethnography of communication framework introduced by Hymes (1974). Through the SPEAKING (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genres) model, Hymes stressed that the meaning of an utterance is shaped by situational configurations that include participants, ends, norms of interaction, and genres of communication. This perspective allows analysis not only to stop at the type of illocution but also to extend to its distribution and interpretation within specific social contexts.

Beyond functioning as illocutionary acts and relational strategies, certain linguistic elements can also manage conversational structure. In the study of discourse markers, Schiffirin (2012) showed that certain forms do not contribute propositional meaning but instead regulate interactional coherence, mark topic transitions, or frame the speaker's epistemic stance. An expression can function at the level of discourse organization without carrying primary illocutionary force.

Based on these theoretical foundations, this study adopts an integrative speech-act-based sociopragmatic framework. The analysis begins with illocutionary classification to identify utterance functions and is subsequently extended to two additional dimensions: the relational

dimension, examined through politeness principles and participant configuration, and the discourse dimension, focusing on the role of expressions in organizing interaction. This integrated approach enables the mapping of expressions across three levels: communicative action, social relation management, and conversational structure.

This integrative approach is particularly suitable for analyzing Arabic expressions in student interactions at PTKIN, since the phenomenon cannot be reduced to code-switching or identity marking alone, but also entails illocutionary force, relational positioning, and discourse structuring. With this framework, Arabic expressions can be analyzed as multidimensional pragmatic resources operating in an integrated manner in everyday communication practices.

Empirically, the use of Arabic linguistic elements in Indonesian Muslim society has been extensively studied. Research within the framework of language contact and religious identity reveals phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing influenced by factors such as familiarity, situational formality, and linguistic habits, as well as a positive attitude towards Arabic (Khoiriyah et al., 2023). Sakti (2020) for example, found a dominance of intersentential code-switching (50%) with Arabic nouns as the most frequently inserted elements (38.41%). Khasanah (2024) also showed that Arabic terms function as markers of religious identity differentiation at the local community level, and that this correlates with the level of religious literacy.

In the context of Islamic education, Fuadah et al. (2025) researched the use of Arabic expressions among students at Islamic campuses and found that these expressions serve as strong symbols of religious affiliation, influenced by *pesantren* educational backgrounds and social environments. In the realm of digital *da'wah*, Jannah (2024) asserted that Arabization is used as

a pragmatic strategy to build authority and symbolic proximity.

Taken together, these studies share a common analytical orientation: they approach Arabic expressions primarily as sociolinguistic phenomena as markers of identity, affiliation, or contact dynamics rather than as functional resources within situated interaction. While this body of work has produced a rich map of when and why Arabic expressions appear in Indonesian Muslim communication, it has given comparatively little attention to what these expressions do interactionally: how they realize speech acts, manage conversational structure, or negotiate social relations in real time. The tendency to treat Arabic insertions as indices of identity rather than as active pragmatic tools reflects a broader gap between sociolinguistic and pragmatic research traditions in this domain. Crucially, most existing studies rely on elicitation, interviews, or media data rather than on naturally occurring conversation, which further limits the visibility of micro-level pragmatic functions that emerge only in unscripted interaction.

A review of prevailing research orientations in the field further confirms this tendency. The majority of studies on Arabic expressions in Indonesian Muslim communities concentrate on macro-level concerns: patterns of language contact, identity construction, and community affiliation, rather than on the micro-level pragmatic functions these expressions perform in moment-to-moment interaction. Studies that explicitly examine Arabic expressions as speech acts, discourse markers, or relational management tools in naturalistic conversational data remain scarce, particularly in the PTKIN context. This gap motivates the present study's focus on an interactional-pragmatic analysis grounded in naturally occurring student conversation.

In sum, while prior scholarship has established that Arabic expressions are socially

meaningful phenomena in Indonesian Muslim communication, the field has yet to sufficiently address how these expressions function as integrated pragmatic resources that simultaneously perform illocutionary acts, manage social relations, and organize discourse in naturally occurring student interactions. No study, to the authors' knowledge, has operationalized a unified sociopragmatic framework combining Searle's speech act taxonomy, Leech's politeness principles, Hymes' ethnography of communication, and Schiffrin's discourse marker analysis to examine this phenomenon within the specific institutional context of PTKIN student interaction. The present study is designed to address this gap, contributing both a theoretical model for analyzing religious language as a pragmatic resource and an empirical account of communicative practices within Indonesian Islamic higher education.

### 3. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach within a pragmatic framework and a sociopragmatic orientation. This approach was chosen because the research objective is not to test quantitative hypotheses but rather to understand how utterance meanings are constructed and negotiated in real interactional practices (Creswell, 2023). The pragmatic framework allows for the analysis of meaning in actual language use, while the sociopragmatic orientation situates illocutionary functions in relation to social norms and the configuration of relationships between speakers (Leech, 2014). This study focuses on mapping the pragmatic functions of Arabic expressions interspersed within Indonesian utterances by students of UIN Walisongo Semarang, as well as their distribution across different social contexts.

The research data consist of recordings of natural conversations involving 20 students from UIN Walisongo Semarang. Participants were

purposely selected based on the following criteria: (1) active engagement in campus life, and (2) willingness to be recorded after providing informed consent. The participants were drawn from multiple faculties, including the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTIK), the Faculty of Islamic Law (FSH), and the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication (FDK), representing diverse academic and socioreligious backgrounds. Among the participants, 13 had prior *pesantren* educational experience, while 7 came from non-*pesantren* backgrounds, a distinction considered relevant given its potential influence on the use of Arabic expressions. They were all enrolled in the second to fourth semesters at the time of data collection. The recorded interactions encompassed both peer and hierarchical relationships, as well as academic-informal, social-affective, and ritual-spiritual situations. Data collection was conducted over two months through audio recordings in natural interaction contexts.

From the entire set of transcripts, 24 types of Arabic expressions were identified, appearing as formulaic lexical units within the Indonesian language structure. The number 24 refers to the count of distinct types, not the total frequency of their occurrences (tokens). Importantly, the typological classification adopted in this study is primarily functional rather than linguistic. Expressions were grouped based on their consistent pragmatic roles across observed interactions rather than on grammatical categories such as nouns, verbs, or interjections. Consequently, two expressions belonging to the same grammatical class may be assigned to different functional types if their interactional functions consistently differ, while expressions of different grammatical classes may be grouped together if their pragmatic roles are equivalent across contexts. While some expressions appeared multiple times, the analysis primarily focused on the variation in pragmatic functions across types. The unit of analysis was defined as

an utterance unit that (1) contains an Arabic expression and (2) exhibits an interactional function identifiable within its context. Thus, this study is not oriented towards the statistical quantification of frequencies but rather towards an in-depth analysis of functions and the social configurations of their occurrences.

The data collection process was supported by limited participant observation to record situational context, including non-verbal expressions, pauses, emphasis, and intonation. Brief clarifying interviews were conducted after certain interactions to confirm the intended meaning of potentially ambiguous utterances. All participants' identities and specific locations were anonymized to uphold research ethics.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2018), encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Recordings were transcribed verbatim with attention to pragmatic features. Utterances containing Arabic expressions were examined within their situational context using Hymes' (1974) ethnography of communication framework. The illocutionary functions of these expressions were classified based on Searle's (1979) speech act theory, while expressions functioning in interactional organization were identified as discourse markers following Schiffrin (2012). Their social-interactional meanings were then interpreted with reference to Leech's (2014) politeness principles and speech community norms. Conclusions were drawn inductively from recurring functional and social patterns in the data.

Data validity was maintained through technical triangulation, comparing findings from recordings, observations, and clarifying interviews. Interpretations were reviewed iteratively through peer debriefing to minimize analytical bias. Additionally, some key findings were confirmed with participants (member checking) to ensure that interpretations aligned with the speakers' intentions.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Forms and Contexts of Arabic Expression Usage

Verbatim transcription and systematic coding of naturally occurring conversations identified 24 Arabic expressions functioning as pragmatic resources in UIN Walisongo students' interactions. All forms were fixed formulaic units embedded in Indonesian syntactic structures and used productively in academic and socio-religious contexts. Their recurrent distribution suggests that they function as conventionalized pragmatic devices rather than incidental lexical insertions.

Contextual analysis, drawing on Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication and its SPEAKING components, shows that Arabic expressions cluster in three primary interactional domains: academic-informal, socio-affective, and ritual-spiritual. Each domain reflects distinct configurations of participants, communicative goals, and normative expectations within the student speech community.

The distribution of expressions across interactional domains and participant relations is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Distribution of Arabic Expressions Based on Interactional Domain**

Interactional Domain	Example Expressions	Dominant Relationship	Contextual Function
Academic - Informal	<i>Na'am, Sahih, Mumtaz,</i>	Vertical & Horizontal	Confirmation, academic evaluation
Socio-Affective	<i>Masyaallah, Syukran, Mabruk, Yalla</i>	Horizontal	Solidarity & rapport
Ritual-Spiritual	<i>Bismillah, Fii Amanillah, Syafakallah</i>	Horizontal & Vertical	Symbolic religious marker

In the academic–informal domain, expressions such as *na'am*, *sahih*, and *mumtaz* frequently function as concise evaluative and confirmatory responses during task discussions, clarification exchanges, and peer coordination. These forms occur in both horizontal (peer-to-peer) and vertical (student-to-senior) interactions, indicating their acceptance as neutral yet authoritative markers of academic alignment.

The socio-affective domain is characterized by expressive forms such as *masyaallah*, *syukran*, *mabruk*, and *yalla*, which predominantly appear in horizontal relationships. Within this domain, the primary communicative orientation is relational rather than informational. The expressions contribute to rapport-building, emotional alignment, and interactional warmth, reinforcing peer solidarity.

The ritual-spiritual domain includes forms such as *bismillah*, *fii amanillah*, and *syafakallah*, typically used at the opening or closing of activities, or in situations involving prayer and well-wishing. These expressions function as symbolic religious markers that frame interactional episodes within a shared spiritual orientation. Their presence in both horizontal and vertical relations suggests that ritual expressions transcend hierarchical distinctions and operate as communal identity signals.

In terms of participant configuration, two principal relational patterns emerge: horizontal relationships (among peers) and vertical relationships between students and seniors or *musyrifah* (campus dormitory administrators). Vertical interactions tend to incorporate deferential forms such as *na'am*, *antum*, and *jazakallah khairan*, indexing respect and social distance. Conversely, horizontal interactions exhibit a higher frequency of expressive and affective forms that emphasize solidarity and relational closeness.

The patterned distribution of Arabic expressions across interactional domains and relational configurations indicates that their use

aligns with specific situational contexts and participant relationships. The data show that these expressions recur in consistent functional roles within the student speech community.

### Pragmatic Functions

Based on the identification of 24 Arabic expressions, the data were classified into three analytical domains: (1) illocutionary act categories according to Searle's (1979) theory; (2) discourse markers based on Schiffrin's (2012) framework; and (3) sociopragmatic markers. The results of the analysis indicate that not all data could be categorized into Searle's five illocutionary categories. Several forms were more appropriately understood as discourse markers or sociopragmatic markers because they did not involve a commitment to the truth of a proposition, did not directly guide actions, and did not alter institutional status. The distribution of these categories is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Classification of Illocution, Discourse Markers, and Sociopragmatic Markers**

Analytical Category	Subcategory	Count	Percentage
Illocutionary Acts (Searle)	Expressive (E)	15	62.50%
	Directive (D)	2	8.30%
	Assertive (A)	2	8.30%
	Commissive (C)	1	4.20%
	Declarative	0	0%
Discourse Markers (Schiffrin)	DM (Transition, Ritual, Intent Framing)	3	12.50%
Socio-pragmatic Marker	Honorific ( <i>antum</i> )	1	4.20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 indicates that 20 data points (83.3%) were classified as illocutionary acts following Searle's taxonomy, while 3 data points (12.5%)

functioned as discourse markers, and 1 data point (4.2%) as a sociopragmatic marker (*antum*). No declarative speech acts, understood as institutionalized performatives that effect changes in institutional status, were identified in the dataset.

Of the illocutionary categories, 15 data points were classified as Expressive, referring to utterances that convey the speaker's psychological attitude or evaluative stance. These include expressions of gratitude, admiration, praise, regret, congratulation, and prayer. The following examples illustrate the expressive category:

- (E1) *Alhamdulillah, sudah selesai tugasnya.*  
*Alhamdulillah* (Praise be to Allah), the task is finished.
- (E2) *Masyaallah, bagus banget hasilnya!*  
*Masyaallah* (What Allah has willed), the result is really good!
- (E3) *Astaghfirullah, aku lupa ada tugas.*  
*Astaghfirullah* (I seek forgiveness from Allah), I forgot about the assignment.
- (E4) *Mabruk! Selamat ya.*  
*Mabruk* (Congratulations)!  
Congratulations.
- (E5) *Wah, syukran, bro! Sangat membantu.*  
Wow, *syukran* (Thank you), bro! Very helpful.
- (E6) *Syafakallah, semoga cepat sembuh.*  
*Syafakallah* (May Allah heal you), hope you get well soon.
- (E7) *Barakallah fii umrik, doa terbaik buat kamu ya*  
*Barakallah fii umrik* (May Allah bless your life), best wishes for you.
- (E8) *Aku pulang dulu ya, fii amanillah.*  
I'm going home now, *fii amanillah* (In Allah's protection).
- (E9) *Ma'an najah! Semoga dimudahkan dan mendapatkan hasil terbaik.*  
*Ma'an najah* (With success)! May it be easy and may you get the best results.

- (E10) *Nilai ujian TOEFL kamu bagus, mumtaz!*  
Your TOEFL score is good, *mumtaz* (excellent)!

Expressions of prayer such as *syafakallah* (may Allah heal you), *barakallah fii umrik* (may Allah bless your life), *fii amanillah* (in Allah's protection), and *ma'an najah* (with success) are categorized as Expressive because they primarily realize the speaker's psychological attitude in the form of hope, empathy, or benevolent regard toward the addressee. In the interactional contexts observed, these expressions occur in situations such as responding to illness, celebrating milestones, closing encounters, or offering encouragement before academic tasks. Their function is not to direct the addressee to perform a specific action, nor to commit the speaker to a future course of action. Rather, they publicly display an affective stance framed within a shared religious orientation.

Although prayer formulas may semantically invoke divine agency and thus appear directive in a theological sense, within the present data their illocutionary force is centered on expressing goodwill and solidarity. The utterance *syafakallah*, for instance, accompanies expressions of concern toward a sick peer; *barakallah fii umrik* marks congratulatory or celebratory moments; *fii amanillah* appears in leave-taking sequences; and *ma'an najah* is used to convey encouragement before examinations or presentations. In each case, the primary communicative effect is the articulation of the speaker's evaluative or emotional stance rather than an attempt to alter institutional reality or solicit immediate action. For this reason, these forms are analytically treated as Expressives within Searle's taxonomy.

Two data points were classified as Directive, which are utterances intended to prompt action from the addressee.

- (D1) *Tafadhal!*  
*Tafadhal!* (Please/Go ahead).
- (D2) *Yalla! Kita berangkat.*  
*Yalla* (Let's go/Come on), let's depart.

In both cases, the illocutionary force is oriented toward influencing the addressee's immediate action. *Tafadhal* functions as a prompt that grants or invites participation, such as encouraging someone to speak or proceed. *Yalla*, in the recorded interaction, operates as a mobilizing cue that urges collective movement or initiation of activity. The directive force, therefore, lies not merely in the lexical item itself, but in its integration within the utterance as an attempt to guide or accelerate action.

Two data points fell into the Assertive category, which comprises utterances that state a commitment to the truth of a proposition.

- (A1) *Na'am, jadwalnya seperti biasa.*  
*Na'am* (Yes), the schedule is as usual.
- (A2) *Informasi itu shahih kok.*  
That information is *shahih*  
(correct/valid), you know.

In these examples, *na'am* and *shahih* function as confirmatory elements that reinforce the propositional content expressed in Indonesian. Their assertive force does not reside solely in the Arabic form, but in their role in affirming the truth-value of the accompanying statement. Thus, the Arabic expressions operate as pragmatic reinforcers of epistemic commitment within the interaction.

One data point was classified as Commissive, which refers to utterances containing the speaker's commitment to a future action.

- (C1) *Inshaallah aku bisa datang.*  
*Inshaallah* (If Allah wills), I can come.

Although framed conditionally through a religious expression, the utterance functions as a commitment to attend. The formula, *insyaallah*, does not cancel the commissive force; rather, it mitigates and religiously frames the commitment by indexing humility and the acknowledgment of divine will. Within the interactional context, the expression is interpreted by participants as a declaration of intended future action, thereby fulfilling the criteria of a Commissive speech act.

In addition to the illocutionary categories, three data points were classified as Discourse Markers because they did not fulfill the defining criteria of Searle's primary speech acts. Specifically, these forms do not commit the speaker to the truth of a proposition (assertive), do not impose or request an action from the addressee (directive), do not bind the speaker to future action (commissive), and do not effect institutional change (declarative). Instead, they function at the level of discourse organization and interactional framing. The distribution of these forms is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Types of Discourse Markers**

Code	Form	Function
(DM1)	<i>Bismillah</i>	Opening/ritual initiation marker
(DM2)	<i>Khalas</i>	Topic transition or closure marker
(DM3)	<i>Lillahi ta'ala</i>	Intention-framing / conflict-mitigation marker

In data (DM1), for example:

- "*Kita coba dulu yuk, bismillah.*"  
"Let's try it first, *bismillah*"

The invitational force is realized in "*kita coba dulu yuk*" (let's try it first). The form *bismillah*, which means "in the name of God," operates as a ritualized marker of action initiation, framing the upcoming activity within a religious register. It does not independently carry directive force but accompanies the collective move into action.

In data (DM2):

“*Khalas, selanjutnya!*”

“*Khalas, next!*”

The topical shift is structurally carried by the word “*selanjutnya*” (“next”). The form *khalas*, which means “done,” “finished,” or “enough,” signals that the previous segment of discussion is treated as complete. Its function is therefore transitional, marking a boundary between discourse segments rather than contributing propositional content.

In data (DM3):

“*Sudahlah, masalah ini jangan diperpanjang. Lillahi ta’ala saja, kita ikhlaskan.*”

“Let it be, don’t prolong this issue. *Lillahi ta’ala*, let’s let it go sincerely.”

The directive force lies in “*kita ikhlaskan*” (let us sincerely let it go). The expression *lillahi ta’ala*, which means “for the sake of God,” does not introduce a new commitment or performative act; rather, it frames the intended action within a religious orientation. In this context, it functions to reinforce sincerity and to mitigate potential interpersonal tension by invoking a shared moral frame grounded in religious values.

Separate from the Discourse Marker category, one data point, *antum*, was classified as a Sociopragmatic Marker. In the example:

“*Antum besok jadi imam ya?*”

“*Antum*, will you lead the prayer tomorrow?”

The request is structurally encoded in the clause “*jadi imam ya*” (please be the prayer leader, okay). The form *antum*, which means “you” (second-person masculine pronoun in Arabic), does not regulate discourse flow but indexes social positioning and respect, particularly in vertical relationships. Its function lies in signaling deference and acknowledging relational hierarchy within the interaction.

These findings indicate that Arabic expressions in this dataset operate across multiple functional layers: propositional (illocutionary), organizational (discourse structuring), and relational (sociopragmatic indexing).

### Distribution Based on Social Relations

Following the classification of illocutionary acts, discourse markers, and sociopragmatic markers, the data were further analyzed to map their distribution across social relations and interactional contexts. The mapping reveals consistent patterns across four major socio-interactional dimensions, indicating that the selection of Arabic expressions is not random but systematically associated with relational configurations and communicative purposes.

First, the affiliative–solidarity dimension. Expressions such as *alhamdulillah*, *masyaallah*, *subhanallah*, *jazakallah khairan*, *syafakallah*, *mabruk*, and *mumtaz* predominantly occur in peer interactions. Most of these forms fall under the category of Expressives in the classification proposed by Searle (1979), as they convey the speaker’s psychological attitude, including gratitude, admiration, prayer, or appreciation. Within student interactions, these expressions frequently appear in response to academic achievements, personal news, or individual accomplishments. This pattern suggests that religious expressions function as resources for reinforcing group cohesion and interpersonal solidarity. They therefore operate not only at the level of propositional meaning but also as mechanisms for constructing social closeness.

Second, the regulative–coordinative dimension. Expressions such as *yalla* and *tafadhal* are classified as Directives (Searle, 1979) because they prompt the addressee to act. In contrast, *bismillah* and *khalas* function as discourse markers in line with the framework proposed by Schiffrin (2012). In actual interaction, *yalla* and *tafadhal* often undergo pragmatic softening, functioning less as

commands and more as inclusive invitations to act. Meanwhile, *bismillah* marks the initiation of an action within a religious frame, and *khalas* signals closure or topic transition. Their distribution highlights the role of Arabic expressions in managing interactional flow and facilitating coordination, particularly within informal-academic settings.

Third, the hierarchical–confirmative dimension. Expressions such as *na'am* and *shahih*, categorized as Assertives (Searle, 1979), appear more frequently in contexts involving clarification or responses to figures of academic authority, such as lecturers or senior students. The use of *antum*, classified as a sociopragmatic marker, is also dominant in vertical relationships. This form indexes respect and acknowledgment of the addressee's social position. The data indicate that its occurrence is significantly more frequent in hierarchical interactions than in peer exchanges. This pattern suggests that lexical choice serves as an index of social positioning and operates as a politeness strategy grounded in shared religious norms.

Fourth, the religious–normative commitment dimension. The expression *insyaallah* is categorized as a Commissive (Searle, 1979) because it conveys a commitment to future action, albeit conditionally framed in reference to divine will. Meanwhile, *nawaitu* and *lillahi ta'ala* function as discourse markers that frame intention and action within a religious orientation (Schiffrin, 2012). Their distribution indicates that statements of plans, intentions, or motivations within the PTKIN community are frequently articulated through a religious frame. Personal commitment is not presented solely as an individual intention but is constructed within a shared normative-religious horizon.

Taken together, these distributional patterns demonstrate that the use of Arabic expressions in student interactions at UIN Walisongo Semarang is significantly shaped by social relations and communicative context. These forms function not

merely as linguistic elements but as indexical resources that signal solidarity, coordination, hierarchy, and religious orientation in everyday speech practices.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that Arabic expressions in UIN Walisongo students' interactions function as systematically organized pragmatic resources rather than as incidental instances of code-switching. Three interrelated dimensions emerge from the data: illocutionary action, relational management, and discourse organization. This discussion situates these findings within a broader sociopragmatic framework and engages with relevant international scholarship to interpret their theoretical and contextual significance.

The patterns identified should not be interpreted as constituting a fully stabilized pragmatic system. Rather, the findings are more appropriately understood as functional tendencies that emerge from students' interactional practices within a specific institutional context.

### Arabic Expressions as Social Action and Affective Illocution

The findings demonstrate that the insertion of Arabic expressions into students' conversations at UIN Walisongo cannot be reduced to structural code-switching alone. Rather than functioning merely as lexical alternations between languages, these expressions operate as socially meaningful pragmatic resources embedded in interactional norms.

The dominance of Expressive acts (62.50%) indicates that the primary function of Arabic expressions lies in the affective and affiliative domain rather than in propositional information exchange. Within Searle's (1979) framework, Expressives represent the speaker's psychological attitude toward a state of affairs. In the present data, religiously grounded Expressives such as *alhamdulillah*, *masyaallah*, and *mabruk* not only express personal feelings (e.g., gratitude,

admiration, congratulations), but also activate shared religious orientations within the speech community.

This finding is particularly significant when considered against the backdrop of prior research. Most studies on Arabic expressions in Indonesian Muslim communities, such as Fuadah et al. (2025) and Khasanah (2024), treat these expressions primarily as markers of religious identity or community affiliation. The present data, however, suggest that their pragmatic role extends beyond identity signaling: they actively construct affective bonds and manage relational dynamics in real time. This distinction aligns with Wierzbicka's (1999) observation that emotional expression in language is culturally scripted and community-specific. In the UIN Walisongo context, religious formulae such as *syafakallah* and *barakallah fi umrik* function as culturally embedded affect displays, performing interpersonal work that transcends their theological content.

A comparable pattern has been observed in other Muslim-majority multilingual settings, including research on Persian religious formulae in informal conversation (Sharifian, 2011) and on Arabic loanword functions in Islamic educational discourse in Southeast Asia (Zein, 2020). What distinguishes the UIN Walisongo context, however, is the systematic co-occurrence of these affective expressions with hierarchically sensitive forms within the same speech community, suggesting that solidarity and social distance are managed simultaneously through a single repertoire of religiously indexed expressions.

Importantly, the classification of prayer expressions as Expressives is maintained on analytical grounds based on their actual interactional function. In the observed contexts, these forms index empathy, goodwill, and collective affect rather than directing action or committing the speaker to future conduct. This suggests that the sincerity condition of

Expressives, traditionally understood as an individual psychological state, may in certain communities be mediated by collectively shared religious norms. The affective stance conveyed is therefore both personal and communal, contributing to emotional bonding and identity alignment among participants.

### **Managing Social Relations: Politeness and Sociopragmatic Indexicality**

The distribution of forms across horizontal and vertical relationships reveals how politeness principles operate within this speech community. Arabic expressions serve as pragmatic strategies for negotiating solidarity and hierarchy in ways that align with, though are not reducible to Leech's (2014) politeness framework.

In peer (horizontal) interactions, the prevalence of Expressives reflects tendencies consistent with the Agreement and Sympathy Maxims. Students use religious expressions to affirm achievements, respond empathetically to personal news, and reinforce mutual support. These forms minimize social distance and enhance group cohesion, functioning as affiliative devices within the student community.

In vertical relationships involving seniors or authority figures, different pragmatic patterns emerge. Assertive forms such as *na'am* and *shahih* frequently appear in confirmation or clarification sequences, signaling alignment with academic authority. More significantly, the sociopragmatic marker *antum* indexes respect and hierarchical positioning. Its function lies not in structuring discourse but in signaling deference and acknowledging relational asymmetry. In this sense, lexical choice becomes an index of social positioning, consistent with Hymes' (1974) view that linguistic forms negotiate and reproduce social structure within communicative events.

What is particularly notable in this context is the co-presence of solidarity-oriented and hierarchy-marking forms within the same speech community and, at times, within the same

interactional sequence. This simultaneity distinguishes the PTKIN interactional context from settings where solidarity and deference tend to index distinct registers. The data suggest that Arabic expressions in this community function as what Hymes (1974) would call a 'key' resource, adjusting the social meaning of an utterance without altering its propositional content. This finding extends Leech's (2014) framework by demonstrating that, in religiously inflected academic settings, politeness strategies are not merely interpersonal but are co-constituted with shared normative-religious values.

Research on language use in other Islamic educational contexts provides a useful comparative frame. Zein (2020) notes that in Indonesia's multilingual landscape, language choice functions as a marker of social and ideological positioning. The present findings complement this observation at the micro-interactional level: rather than language choice in a broad sense, it is the selection of specific Arabic expressions within an otherwise Indonesian utterance that performs the relational work of positioning, solidarity, and deference. This granular level of analysis represents a contribution that macro-level sociolinguistic accounts do not address.

These patterns indicate that Arabic expressions are systematically associated with particular relational configurations. Their distribution is not random but sensitive to participant roles, institutional context, and normative expectations.

### **Discourse Markers and Religious Framing of Interaction**

The presence of discourse markers such as *bismillah*, *khalas*, and *lillahi ta'ala* demonstrates that Arabic expressions also function at the level of discourse organization. In Schiffrin's (2012) terms, discourse markers contribute to coherence management and interpersonal alignment rather than to propositional content.

*Bismillah* operates as a ritualized marker of action initiation, framing forthcoming activity within a religious register. *Khalas* signals topical closure or transition, marking boundaries between segments of talk. *Lillahi ta'ala* frames intention within a religious orientation, often mitigating interpersonal tension by invoking a shared moral horizon. These markers show that religiosity permeates not only the content of utterances but also the structural organization of interaction.

This finding carries important theoretical implications. In canonical discourse marker theory, markers such as 'well,' 'so,' or 'anyway' are understood as pragmatic particles that organize sequential structure without contributing to propositional meaning (Schiffrin, 2012). The present data show that Arabic religious expressions perform analogous structural functions but carry an additional layer of normative framing: they do not merely mark transitions or initiate sequences but simultaneously position the ongoing interaction within a shared religious value system. This dual functionality, organizing discourse while invoking religious norms, represents a distinctive feature of religiously inflected multilingual interaction that standard discourse marker frameworks do not fully capture.

This observation resonates with research on religious discourse in other traditions. Fraser (1999) notes that discourse markers in institutional settings often carry social indexical properties beyond their organizational function. In the present data, *bismillah* as a turn-initiating marker does not simply signal the beginning of an action; it also frames that action as undertaken within a religious commitment shared by all participants. The marker thus functions simultaneously as a community-building device and a sequential organizer. This finding suggests that future research on discourse markers in multilingual religious communities may need to

expand analytical frameworks to account for this normative-organizational duality.

In coordinative contexts, directive forms such as *yalla* and *tafadhal*, alongside discourse markers like *bismillah* and *khalas*, facilitate efficient management of interaction. Their use tends to soften directive force and maintain interpersonal balance, contributing to smooth turn-taking and collaborative action in academic-informal settings.

### **Toward Enregisterment and Social-Religious Style Formation**

Compared to previous studies on Arabic usage in Indonesian Muslim communities, which often focus on code-switching patterns or symbolic identity, this study contributes at the micro-pragmatic level by integrating speech-act classification, discourse-marker analysis, sociopragmatic indexing, and relational distribution within a unified framework.

The relatively stable association between particular forms and specific relational contexts suggests a process of indexical stabilization within this speech community (Agha & Frog, 2015). Arabic expressions in this context appear to be acquiring conventionalized pragmatic associations: particular forms are consistently linked to particular relational configurations and communicative purposes, suggesting that their use is governed by community-internal norms rather than individual stylistic variation.

It is important to note that the concept of enregisterment, as developed by Agha & Frog (2015), entails not only patterned use of linguistic forms but also metapragmatic awareness among community members: speakers must recognize and orient to the social meaning of a register for it to be considered enregistered. The present study does not include direct evidence of such metapragmatic awareness, as participant reflections on their own language use were not systematically elicited. The claim advanced here is therefore more circumscribed: the data indicate

consistent functional patterning that is compatible with an emerging or incipient register, rather than a fully enregistered one. Future research incorporating stimulated recall interviews or ethnographic follow-up could provide the metapragmatic evidence needed to substantiate a stronger enregisterment claim.

Nevertheless, the implications of even incipient indexical stabilization are theoretically significant. If Arabic expressions in PTKIN student interaction are acquiring stable pragmatic associations, this suggests that religious language in this community is undergoing a process of functional specialization: from broad markers of Islamic identity (as documented in prior sociolinguistic research) to finely differentiated pragmatic tools organized according to interactional domain, relational configuration, and communicative purpose. This trajectory parallels what Silverstein (2003) describes as the ‘pragmatic reanalysis’ of indexical forms, whereby expressions originally associated with a broad social meaning acquire more specific interactional functions through repeated use within defined community contexts.

Taken together, these findings indicate that religious language in the PTKIN context operates not merely as an expression of belief or an index of identity, but as a multifunctional pragmatic infrastructure that simultaneously organizes discourse, manages social relations, and constructs normatively grounded commitments. This reconceptualization of Arabic expressions from identity markers to interactional resources has broader implications for how linguists and language educators approach multilingualism in Islamic educational institutions. Rather than treating Arabic insertions as evidence of diglossia or code-switching, this study suggests they constitute an integral component of students’ pragmatic competence, a competence that is both linguistically and religiously grounded.

For language education in PTKIN contexts, these findings underscore the importance of

developing pragmatic awareness alongside structural language competence. Students who use Arabic expressions fluently in interaction are not merely demonstrating knowledge of vocabulary; they are enacting a sociopragmatic repertoire shaped by institutional norms, relational positioning, and shared religious values. Recognizing this complexity has practical implications for language program design, assessment of communicative competence, and the development of pedagogical materials that reflect the actual communicative practices of the learning community.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Arabic expressions embedded in the everyday interactions of students at UIN Walisongo Semarang function as systematically organized pragmatic resources rather than incidental instances of code-switching. The predominance of expressive illocutionary acts indicates that these expressions primarily operate within the affective domain, reinforcing solidarity and shared religious orientation within peer interactions. At the same time, assertive, directive, commissive, discourse-marking, and sociopragmatic forms are distributed in patterned ways across hierarchical and situational contexts.

The findings show that Arabic expressions contribute simultaneously to illocutionary realization, discourse organization, and social indexing. Their usage is shaped by relational configurations, both horizontal and vertical, and by communicative purposes within academic-informal, socio-affective, and ritual-spiritual domains. In this respect, the study extends previous research that has largely emphasized structural code-switching by demonstrating the multidimensional pragmatic functions of these forms at the micro-interactional level.

Conceptually, the patterned and context-sensitive use of Arabic expressions suggests an emerging process of indexical stabilization within

the student speech community, indicating the formation of a religious-academic communicative style. Thus, Arabic expressions in this setting are not merely linguistic insertions but integral components of social action, relational management, and identity construction within an Islamic higher education environment.

These findings carry both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study contributes a reframing of Arabic expressions in PTKIN contexts: from identity markers, as they have been predominantly treated in prior sociolinguistic research, to active pragmatic resources that perform differentiated interactional functions across relational configurations and communicative domains. This reframing has implications for how multilingualism in Islamic educational institutions is conceptualized and studied. Practically, the findings suggest that language programs within PTKIN institutions may benefit from incorporating pragmatic awareness into their curricula, recognizing that students' use of Arabic expressions reflects not only vocabulary knowledge but a sociopragmatically grounded communicative competence shaped by institutional norms and shared religious values.

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. The participant pool was relatively small ( $n = 20$ ) and drawn from a single institution, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other PTKIN settings or to Indonesian Islamic student communities more broadly. The study was conducted over a two-month period at one university, precluding longitudinal assessment of how pragmatic patterns evolve across different academic cycles or institutional contexts. Furthermore, the absence of metapragmatic data, such as participants' own reflections on their language choices, means that claims regarding indexical stabilization remain inferential rather than directly empirically grounded. Future research should consider comparative multi-institutional designs involving

several PTKIN campuses to assess the consistency of these patterns across different institutional cultures. The integration of stimulated recall interviews or focus group discussions would also allow researchers to assess participants' metapragmatic awareness, thereby providing stronger empirical grounding for claims about register formation. Longitudinal studies tracking the same cohort of students across academic years could further illuminate how pragmatic repertoires develop in relation to increasing institutional socialization.

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