



A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CODE-SWITCHING AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AT AL RAWABI SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

Research on code-switching in Arabic media has largely focused on linguistic forms and educational background. In contrast, the role of high-prestige language varieties in constructing social hierarchy among adolescents in global digital media remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining code-switching practices in the first season of the Netflix series Al Rawabi School for Girls. The study aims to analyze how Arabic-English code-switching functions as a socio-pragmatic resource for identity negotiation, power expression, and group differentiation among teenage girls. This research employs Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) supported by Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework and Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory. A total of 83 instances of code-switching were identified and analyzed to examine the relationship between linguistic choices and social positioning. The findings reveal that code-switching is not merely an indicator of bilingual proficiency but primarily a symbolic strategy for constructing in-group solidarity and reinforcing out-group exclusion. English is associated with power, modernity, and social dominance, while Arabic serves as a marker of relational positioning and contextual identity negotiation. Among the observed data, patterns of linguistic behavior consistently reflect identity construction shaped by peer-group dynamics and media representation. This study contributes to sociolinguistic theory by demonstrating how linguistic globalization in digital media contexts facilitates the emergence of language-based social stratification and identity performance among Arab adolescents.

Keywords: Arabic-English; Code-switching; Digital media; Social identity

ABSTRAK

Penelitian mengenai alih kode dalam media berbahasa Arab selama ini lebih banyak berfokus pada bentuk-bentuk linguistik dan latar belakang pendidikan, sementara peran variasi bahasa berprestise tinggi dalam membangun hierarki sosial di kalangan remaja dalam konteks media digital global masih belum banyak dikaji. Penelitian ini mengisi kesenjangan tersebut dengan menganalisis praktik alih kode dalam musim pertama serial Netflix Al Rawabi School for Girls. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana alih kode Arab-Inggris berfungsi sebagai sumber sosio-pragmatik dalam negosiasi identitas, ekspresi kekuasaan, dan diferensiasi kelompok di kalangan remaja perempuan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) yang didukung oleh kerangka SPEAKING dari Dell Hymes serta Teori Identitas Sosial dari Tajfel dan Turner. Sebanyak 83 data alih kode diidentifikasi dan dianalisis untuk mengkaji hubungan antara pilihan linguistik dan posisi sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa alih kode tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai indikator kemampuan bilingual, tetapi terutama sebagai strategi simbolik dalam membangun solidaritas kelompok internal (in-group) dan memperkuat eksklusi kelompok luar (out-group). Bahasa Inggris diasosiasikan dengan kekuasaan, modernitas, dan dominasi sosial, sedangkan bahasa Arab berfungsi sebagai penanda posisi relasional dan negosiasi identitas kontekstual. Di antara data yang dianalisis, pola perilaku kebahasaan secara konsisten mencerminkan konstruksi identitas yang dibentuk oleh dinamika kelompok sebaya dan representasi media. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap teori sosiolinguistik dengan menunjukkan bagaimana globalisasi linguistik dalam konteks media digital mendorong munculnya stratifikasi sosial berbasis bahasa serta performativitas identitas di kalangan remaja Arab.

Kata Kunci: Alih kode; Arab-Inggris; Identitas sosial; Media digital

INTRODUCTION

Culture plays a central role in the film industry, particularly in the contemporary era of globalization, where cultural exchange and hybridization have become increasingly prominent, including the circulation of Eastern and Western cultural elements across cinematic productions (Ma & Wang, 2024). Although this phenomenon has been widely examined, especially in relation to representation and cultural authenticity, film remains one of the most influential media of global cultural dissemination. In this context, linguistic practices reflect broader sociocultural transformations, as multilingualism has become increasingly common in everyday communication (Atay, 2019). Globalization itself is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it has historically involved the circulation of ideas, languages, technologies, and identities across societies (Jacquemet, 2015). However, the rapid development of digital technologies has significantly accelerated and intensified these processes in contemporary society. Among the cultural domains most affected by globalization, language is among the most dynamic and visible forms of change.

The increasing use of English as a global lingua franca is closely associated with its status as a de facto international language. In many countries, elite, internationally oriented educational institutions use English as the primary medium of instruction. Roushdy, for instance, notes that in the Egyptian context, the internationalization of education, particularly the prioritization of English over Arabic, is perceived by some segments of society as contributing to a decline in national identity (Roushdy, 2023). Similar dynamics can be observed across different sociolinguistic contexts, where bilingualism is largely shaped by formal education systems that introduce English from primary to tertiary levels. This educational dominance has elevated English to a language of high prestige, often associated with modernity, global access, and social mobility (Zaheer et al., 2025). Consequently, bilingualism has expanded beyond institutional settings into everyday social interaction.

The widespread use of multiple languages has contributed to the development of various sociolinguistic frameworks. One such concept is diglossia, introduced by Ferguson, which describes the functional distribution of language varieties in which a high-status variety is used in formal contexts and a low-status variety in informal settings (Alrwaita et al., 2022). In multilingual interactions, this phenomenon often leads to code-switching, the alternation between linguistic codes within a single communicative event. Code-switching is influenced by multiple contextual factors, including speaker intention, interlocutor identity, topic shift, and social context (Manel et al., 2019; Maszein et al., 2019). These variations demonstrate that language use is not merely structural but also socially and identity-driven.

Hoffmann further conceptualizes code-switching as the shift between languages or language varieties within discourse, occurring in specific communicative functions such as topic change, quotation, emphasis, clarification, emotional expression, group identity marking, and spontaneous interjections (Hoffmann, 2014). This multifunctionality has made code-switching a widely studied phenomenon in sociolinguistics. However, despite extensive scholarly attention, it continues to generate new theoretical insights due to its dynamic relationship with identity, culture, and power.

Previous studies have examined code-switching in various sociolinguistic contexts. For example, Muhajir and Karamah investigated Arabic language use in an Islamic boarding school in Yogyakarta, identifying code-switching, code-mixing, and interference influenced primarily by students' native language (Muhajir & Karomah, 2021). However, their study largely focused on structural classification without broader sociocultural interpretation. Similarly, Tembraz analyzed code-switching in doctor-patient interactions in Galicia, Spain, highlighting its role in

communicative accommodation, yet without a detailed exploration of structural linguistic patterns (Rodriguez Tembras, 2024). In literary discourse, Akhtar et al. examined code-switching in Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* using the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, revealing ideological and sociocultural meanings embedded in linguistic choices (Akhtar et al., 2020). In audiovisual media, Haq et al. analyzed the forms and factors of code-switching in the film *Assal Eswed* (Haq et al., 2026), while Lestari et al. examined code-mixing in *Alrawabi School for Girls*, focusing primarily on linguistic forms and influencing factors (Lestari et al., 2023).

Although existing research has addressed code-switching in Arabic media and related sociolinguistic contexts, there remains a significant gap in understanding how adolescent identity and social hierarchy are negotiated through language practices in global digital media environments. Most previous studies, including Lestari et al, tend to emphasize descriptive categorization of linguistic forms without sufficiently integrating code-switching analysis with identity-based theoretical frameworks (Lestari et al., 2023). Moreover, limited attention has been given to how prestige language varieties function as instruments of power, inclusion, and exclusion among adolescents in transnational media contexts.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing the first season of the Netflix series *Al Rawabi School for Girls*. It integrates Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework with Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory to examine how code-switching operates as a mechanism of social categorization, particularly in-group and out-group formation, and as a tool for negotiating power relations among adolescent girls. In this sense, the study not only contributes empirically to Arabic sociolinguistics but also provides a theoretical extension of how language globalization intersects with identity construction in digital media representations of youth.

The study further explores the relationship between language use and identity formation, drawing on the notion that language attitudes are reflected in emotional and social interpretations of speakers within particular contexts (Mashaqba et al., 2023). Language, in this regard, serves as a symbolic resource through which individuals are categorized according to social identity, psychological disposition, and group membership. Previous research suggests that code-switching in media often serves functions such as solidarity marking, topic management, and identity reinforcement (Nazri & Kassim, 2023). Furthermore, film and series as media forms play a strategic role in shaping public perception and cultural understanding (Al-Murshidi & Mahdi, 2025)

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: What are the patterns of code-switching in *Al Rawabi School for Girls* Season 1, and how do these patterns contribute to the construction of adolescent identity? Finally, this study contributes to the integration of sociolinguistic and social psychological approaches by employing Social Identity Theory (Turner et al., 1979). This theory posits that identity is constructed through processes of categorization, identification, and social comparison, through which individuals define their position within social groups. Language plays a central role in this process, as linguistic choices often reflect group affiliation and social alignment. Since language is fundamentally tied to identity construction, sociolinguistic analysis provides a crucial lens for understanding how identity is formed, expressed, and maintained in social interaction.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) as developed by Mayring (Mayring, 2019). A qualitative approach was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of sociolinguistic phenomena, particularly code-switching, through systematic analysis of textual data (Musthafa & Hermawan, 2018). QCA is a rule-based and theory-driven method that enables structured yet interpretive analysis of linguistic patterns (Dunn et al., 2022).

The primary data consist of dialogue transcripts from six episodes of Season 1 of *Al Rawabi School for Girls*, directed by Tima Shomali. The data were collected using a total sampling technique, in which all episodes were transcribed manually. The transcription followed a verbatim approach, capturing all spoken utterances while excluding non-verbal elements unless they contributed to meaning. From the complete corpus, 83 utterances containing code-switching were selected based on explicit inclusion criteria, namely: (1) the presence of two or more languages within a single utterance or discourse segment, and (2) contextual relevance to character interaction. Utterances without clear code-switching or with ambiguous linguistic boundaries were excluded. Each unit of analysis was coded using episode number and timestamp to ensure traceability.

Data analysis followed Mayring's structured QCA procedure. First, all transcripts were segmented into meaningful units containing instances of code-switching (Mayring, 2019). Second, a deductive category system was developed by integrating multiple theoretical frameworks. Linguistic forms of code-switching were classified using Hoffmann's typology (intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag switching) and Suwito's distinction between internal and external code-switching (Arsidi et al., 2023; Maduwani et al., 2024). Third, contextual analysis was conducted using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model to examine communicative situations and sociocultural contexts (Setyawati, 2022). Fourth, functional interpretation was carried out using Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner), in which code-switching was analyzed as a strategy for identity construction, group affiliation, and social differentiation (Turner et al., 1979). These frameworks were applied sequentially, starting from linguistic form, followed by contextual interpretation, and finally sociopsychological meaning, ensuring analytical coherence.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study adopted criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with the data and peer debriefing with an academic supervisor. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a detailed audit trail of coding procedures and category development. Confirmability was strengthened through reflexive practices, including re-coding after a four-week interval and systematic comparison of results. In addition, intracoder reliability was applied by consistently using predefined coding rules (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

Ethical considerations were also addressed. The data were obtained from publicly accessible media (Netflix series), and the study was conducted solely for academic purposes. All data were used responsibly without altering original meanings, and proper acknowledgment of the source was maintained. To enrich interpretation, a pragmatic-functional and syntagmatic analysis was applied to selected utterances, allowing deeper examination of discourse structure and communicative intent (Fahmi, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of the analysis of Al Rawabi School for Girls Season 1 regarding its language practices, following an intracoder reliability procedure with a four-week interval, led the researcher to refine the findings from 85 speech data units containing code-switching to 83 code-switching data units by clarifying category boundaries, in accordance with the procedures of Mayring, O'Connor, and Joffe. Two data units were excluded because they were deemed too ambiguous to be classified as code-switching, as their form and function were closer to code-mixing. Of the 83 data units, 59 fell under inter-sentential switching, 12 under intra-sentential switching, and 12 under tag switching. All data units demonstrated internal code-switching, with Arabic shifting to English in accordance with the code-switching types defined by Suwito (Maduwani et al., 2024).

Intra-sentential switching is a type of code-switching that occurs within a single complete sentence, typically marked by punctuation such as a period or a comma. However, in this study, the original data is in audiovisual form, so determining the exact location of commas or periods carries a significant risk of inconsistency. To address this, the researchers strictly adhered to coding guidelines, categorizing inter-sentential switching according to whether the sentence is complete and can stand alone. If the sentence is incomplete, it falls under the category of intra-sentential switching, which refers to code-switching that occurs within a single sentence without a delimiter or pause. The following is a sample of the data presented in a summary table after undergoing the coding guidelines procedure as described in the methods section:

Table 1. Code-Switching Data Classification and Identity Function Analysis 1

Data ID	Episode	Timestamp	Character	Dialogue Snippet	CS Type	Identity Function
CS-4	1	09:34	Maryam	يعني شوي... only if you have eyes.	Inter-sentential switching	Solidarity within the group: Maryam answered Dina's question honestly but carefully so as not to offend her. The code-switch to English serves to demonstrate emotional closeness, indicating that Maryam did not intend to offend.

The table presents a classification of code-switching instances alongside their corresponding identity functions within the dialogue. In Data ID CS-4, Maryam employs inter-sentential switching by combining the Arabic expression "...يعني شوي..." with the English clause "only if you have eyes." This type of switching occurs across sentence or clause boundaries, indicating a more deliberate and controlled linguistic shift compared to other forms such as tag switching. The juxtaposition of Arabic and English here reflects Maryam's bilingual competence and her ability to select linguistic resources to convey meaning effectively and strategically. Structurally, the Arabic segment functions as a hedging device that introduces hesitation or mitigation, while the English clause delivers the core message in a concise and slightly humorous manner.

From a functional perspective, this code-switching instance serves to express solidarity and interpersonal sensitivity within the peer group. Maryam's response to Dina's question balances honesty with politeness, thereby maintaining social harmony. The use of English plays a crucial role in softening the potential bluntness of the statement, transforming what could be perceived as criticism into a more playful and less confrontational remark. This suggests that code-switching operates as a pragmatic strategy for managing face-threatening acts, allowing speakers to navigate delicate social situations while preserving group cohesion. In this context, Maryam's linguistic choice not only conveys information but also indexes emotional closeness, shared understanding, and a cooperative stance within the interaction.

Table 2. Code-Switching Data Classification and Identity Function Analysis 2

Data ID	Episode	Timestamp	Character	Dialogue Snippet	CS Type	Identity Function
CS-5	1	11:14	Rania	Yes, Ma'am!	Tag Switching	Out-group comparison: Rania emphasizes her defiant, bold character. This code-switching occurs when responding to Miss Abeer's command, demonstrating a slightly defiant obedience.

The table presents an example of code-switching along with its communicative and identity-related functions in classroom interaction. In Data ID CS-5, Rania produces the utterance "Yes, Ma'am!" as a response to Miss Abeer's instruction. This instance can be categorized as tag switching, which involves the insertion of a short, fixed expression from another language, here, English, without altering the grammatical structure of the main utterance. Such forms are commonly used as discourse markers or formulaic expressions and typically serve pragmatic rather than structural purposes. In this case, the use of English reflects not only linguistic variation but also carries sociocultural connotations associated with formality and institutional discourse.

From a functional perspective, the code-switching in this utterance performs an out-group comparison function, subtly positioning Rania as distinct while negotiating her social identity within the classroom. Although the response appears to signal compliance, the choice of English introduces a nuanced tone that may indicate confidence or mild defiance. This suggests that code-switching operates as a strategic communicative resource, enabling speakers to express stance, attitude, and identity. Within the hierarchical context of teacher–student interaction, Rania's linguistic choice simultaneously acknowledges authority. It reconfigures her position, demonstrating that code-switching serves not only as a linguistic feature but also as a pragmatic tool for managing social relationships.

Table 3. Code-Switching Data Classification and Identity Function Analysis 3

Data ID	Episode	Timestamp	Character	Dialogue Snippet	CS Type	Identity Function
CS-6	1	14:05	Rania	هَذَا مَكَانَ لِيَانِ، Keep moving!	Intra-sentential switching	Out-group comparison: Rania demonstrated group differences toward Noaf, a new student, by preventing Noaf from sitting in Layan's seat (who was absent) in front of her.

The table presents an instance of intra-sentential code-switching produced by Rania, where elements from Arabic and English are combined within a single utterance. In Data ID CS-6, Rania says, " (هَذَا مَكَانَ لِيَانِ) Keep moving!", blending Arabic structure with an English imperative. This type of switching occurs within the same sentence and reflects a high level of bilingual competence, as the speaker seamlessly integrates linguistic elements from both languages. The insertion of "Keep moving!" adds emphasis and urgency to the statement, reinforcing the directive tone of the utterance.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this code-switching serves an out-group comparison function. Rania's utterance positions Noaf as an outsider by preventing her from occupying Layan's seat, thereby highlighting group boundaries. The use of English strengthens the assertiveness of the command and underscores Rania's authority in the interaction. This suggests that code-switching is strategically employed not only to convey meaning but also to construct social distinctions, assert dominance, and regulate group membership within the conversational context.

Code-Switching, Identity Construction, and Social Power among Al Rawabi Teenage Girls in Amman

The shift from the local language to English in the language practices of the Al Rawabi teenage girls is quite widespread. Numerically, out of 83 data units containing code-switching, 42 data units were produced by the "Popular" group or the "Layan" group, which consistently emphasizes bold and powerful characters; 31 data units were produced by the "Maryam" group, which is the victim of bullying by the "Layan" group; while parents or teachers produced the remaining 10 data units. In general, these numerical data reveal a tendency among Al Rawabi teenage girls to use English even in their daily lives, not just during lessons. The bilingual phenomenon among Jordanian teenage girls depicted in the series reflects social and linguistic urbanization. International school standards reinforce a high level of English proficiency alongside Arabic as the primary language.

Language practices in the city of Amman, Jordan, have become a site of massive linguistic contact, influenced by the large number of immigrants from outside the region who have settled there for social and economic opportunities and urbanization. The interaction of people arriving from various regions has ultimately given rise to a new dialect. These new dialects emerged from contact between dialects from Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan. However, while many regions influenced the formation of these new varieties, the most significant influences were the Jordanian and urban Palestinian dialects (Daoud et al., 2025; Jarrah et al., 2024). This new dialect adopts many features of urban dialects, one of which is the use of a glottal stop in place of the /g/ sound. This newly emerged dialect, which embodies these urbanization characteristics, was subsequently introduced by Jarrah et al. as the Urban Ammani Arabic dialect.

In their study, Jarrah et al. explain that adult women in Amman choose to speak the Urban Ammani Arabic dialect as a convergence strategy to achieve social benefits. UAA is regarded as a high-prestige, urban-elite dialect that signifies modernity, education, and economic success. This indicates that in Amman, UAA has become the dominant choice among adult women for speaking, self-expression, and identity assertion. In line with Roushdy's research and as depicted in the series, elite international schools in Amman also use English, which is considered highly prestigious, as their everyday language. Both studies provide a clear picture of the dynamics of language use in Amman, particularly among women, namely the use of UAA and English in international educational institutions.

The choice of the Urban Ammani Arabic dialect is influenced by several factors, such as serving as a tool to achieve social goals (in this case, improving job opportunities and marriage prospects), highlighting educational attainment, indicating economic class, conveying gentleness, and fostering social harmony (Jarrah et al., 2024). After analyzing the frequent code-switching between Arabic and English among Al Rawabi adolescents, the researcher identified various expressions in their speech that, compared with those in Jarrah et al.'s study, may appear somewhat contradictory. While adult women in Amman choose to use the Urban Ammani Arabic dialect to convey gentleness and charm, Al Rawabi teenage girls use code-switching to English as an assertion of power. This is evident from the 83 data points identified; after analysis and examination using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework and interpretation through Tjfel and Turner's social identity theory, 59 data points were found to contain in-group and out-group categorizations within the speech.

As in the examples of utterances in the table above, data CS-5 and CS-6 demonstrate self-categorization. Rania switches to English to demonstrate her personal character, one that is not easily influenced, assertive, unyielding, and exclusive or unwilling to accept others outside her social group. This is evident in how Rania responds to Miss Aabeer's instruction to tidy her school

uniform, not by tying it but by tucking it into her skirt to keep it neat. With a clear voice and a bold tone, Rania replies, "Yes, Ma'am," raising her hand to salute Miss Aabeer. Rather than an act of obedience, Rania's response sounds more like an expression of her bold character and authority, given that Rania is one of the characters in the series' most popular group. The next example comes from a scene in which Noaf arrives as a new student, looking for an empty seat to sit in and join the class. Noaf's intention to sit in the seat directly in front of Rania's was immediately rejected by Rania, who said, "هذا مكان ليان", keep moving!" in a cold, unsmiling tone. Rania's unfriendliness demonstrates social out-group differentiation, emphasizing that the addressee is not part of the same group as the speaker.

The code-switching to English that occurs in the series *Al Rawabi School for Girls* mostly takes the form of in-group solidarity or out-group comparison. In-group solidarity typically manifests as internal support or banter. Out-group comparison, on the other hand, usually takes the form of statements of refusal or defiance against an order. The phenomenon of code-switching in the series demonstrates the linguistic concept that language reveals social dynamics and power (Al-Issa & Sulieman, 2024). In the series, Layan is the daughter of a strict, conservative, and authoritarian father. Layan's father places great importance on family honor, so he exercises significant control over Layan's life. The power exemplified by her father is subsequently reflected in Layan in various ways, one of which is her manner of speaking and language, which reveal a character that is tough, bold, and powerful. The language choices, tone of voice, and self-categorization of the *Al Rawabi* teenagers are deeply rooted in their self-identity, which is shaped by dynamics within the home, thereby shaping their character. They then begin to categorize themselves into groups they perceive as similar to them.

Discussion

The present study demonstrates that code-switching in *Al Rawabi School for Girls* Season 1 constitutes a systematic sociolinguistic practice that indexes identity construction, interactional positioning, and power negotiation among bilingual adolescent speakers. The predominance of inter-sentential switching (59 out of 83 instances) indicates that language alternation primarily operates at discourse boundaries, suggesting a pragmatic rather than a structural motivation. This finding aligns with contemporary research, which argues that inter-sentential switching is frequently employed in bilingual youth discourse to manage stance, emotion, and social alignment rather than to compensate for linguistic deficiency (Indah & Rachmawati, 2025; Makrifah & Intan Sari, 2023).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the data reveal that code-switching is strongly implicated in identity construction processes, particularly through in-group solidarity and out-group differentiation. The use of English among adolescent characters functions as a symbolic resource that indexes group belonging and exclusivity. This supports the claim that bilingual code-switching is inherently tied to social identity formation, in which language choice serves as a mechanism for drawing symbolic boundaries between social groups (Ja'far & Hasanah, 2024). In this regard, code-switching in the series should not be interpreted as random alternation but as a deliberate semiotic strategy for managing interpersonal relations and group membership (Fahri et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the disproportionate distribution of code-switching across character groups, particularly the dominance of the "Layan group" (42 instances), suggests that linguistic practices are stratified according to social hierarchy within the narrative. English functions as a marker of prestige and authority, reinforcing the construction of elite adolescent identity (Najib Halim et

al., 2022). Recent studies similarly indicate that English in bilingual Arab youth contexts functions as linguistic capital associated with modernity, education, and social privilege (Muna et al., 2024). Thus, the findings extend prior research by demonstrating that English is not merely a communicative code but also a symbolic instrument of dominance in peer-group interaction.

When situated within the broader sociolinguistic ecology of Amman, the findings resonate with research on Urban Ammani Arabic (UAA) as a high-prestige dialect associated with social mobility, urban identity, and gendered linguistic practices. Malkawi et al. emphasize that UAA is often employed as a convergence strategy among adult women to signal refinement, socioeconomic status, and social acceptability (Malkawi et al., 2025). However, the present study reveals a generational reconfiguration of linguistic prestige, in which adolescent speakers in elite educational contexts privilege English over local dialects as a primary index of status. This indicates a shift in the semiotic economy of language prestige in contemporary urban Arab youth culture.

The contrast between adult convergence strategies and adolescent divergence strategies highlights an important sociolinguistic divergence. Whereas adult speakers tend to adopt UAA to achieve social harmony and affiliation, adolescent speakers employ English code-switching as a strategy of distinction, assertiveness, and group exclusivity. This supports the broader argument that code-switching practices are dynamically shaped by age, institutional context, and shifting ideological valuations of language (Al-Musthofa & D'Angelo, 2024).

Additionally, applying Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework to interpret interactional episodes demonstrates that code-switching is highly context-sensitive, emerging at moments of affective intensity, power assertion, and social boundary negotiation. Rather than being random or stylistically decorative, switches to English systematically coincide with pragmatic shifts in speaker stance, particularly in acts of resistance, command, or affiliation marking. This finding is consistent with recent interactional sociolinguistic studies, which conceptualize code-switching as a discourse strategy embedded in moment-to-moment identity work (Akhtar et al., 2020).

Overall, the study contributes to sociolinguistic scholarship by demonstrating that bilingual practices in Al Rawabi School for Girls reflect broader ideological structures in which language operates as both a communicative system and a symbolic resource. Code-switching emerges as a multifunctional practice that simultaneously indexes solidarity, enacts exclusion, and reproduces social hierarchies. These findings reinforce the view that language use in contemporary Arabic-speaking youth contexts is deeply embedded in globalized linguistic economies, where English is gaining increasing symbolic value.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that code-switching in Al Rawabi School for Girls Season 1 is not a random linguistic occurrence but a systematic sociolinguistic practice closely linked to identity construction, interactional positioning, and power negotiation among bilingual adolescents. The dominance of inter-sentential switching indicates that language alternation primarily serves pragmatic and discourse-level functions, particularly in expressing stance, emotion, and social alignment.

Furthermore, code-switching functions as a key semiotic resource in constructing social identity. The use of English consistently marks in-group solidarity, exclusivity, and out-group differentiation, showing that language choice operates as a boundary marker within adolescent peer groups. The unequal distribution of code-switching across character groups also indicates that linguistic practices reflect underlying social hierarchies, where English is associated with prestige, authority, and elite identity formation.

When contextualized within Amman's sociolinguistic environment, the findings reveal a generational shift in language prestige. While adult speakers tend to use Urban Ammani Arabic (UAA) as a convergence strategy for social affiliation and refinement, adolescents in elite educational settings increasingly use English code-switching as a strategy of distinction and assertiveness. This shift indicates a changing semiotic economy in which English functions as a dominant marker of social value among youth. In addition, the analysis using the SPEAKING framework confirms that code-switching is highly context-dependent and emerges in relation to shifts in power, affect, and interpersonal relations. English switching is systematically associated with pragmatic functions such as resistance, command, and identity performance, rather than being merely a stylistic variation.

Overall, the study highlights that bilingual practices in Al Rawabi School for Girls reflect broader sociocultural and ideological dynamics in contemporary Arab youth society. Code-switching operates as a multifunctional strategy that simultaneously constructs solidarity, reinforces social boundaries, and reproduces hierarchical relations, demonstrating the central role of language in shaping modern identity and social meaning.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

[APA] contributed as the research conceptualizer and designer, conducted data collection through analysis, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. [MAA] contributed to data analysis, assisted in the development of the research framework, and participated in refining the manuscript draft. [AKF], as the academic advisor and supervisor, provided continuous guidance throughout the research process, critically reviewed the manuscript, and offered strategic direction for the study. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our deepest gratitude to all authors who have contributed, provided guidance, and offered direction, enabling this research to be written and published with high quality. We also express our thanks and appreciation to the editorial team of the *Tadris Al-'Arabiyyah* journal for their assistance and meticulous review process, which enhanced the quality of the final research manuscript. Thank you for all your support and contributions.

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