

## The Use of Akhi and Ukhti Greetings in Arab-Indonesian Social Media: A Sociolinguistic Study

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### Abstract

The use of the terms "akhi" and "ukhti" (sister) has become increasingly common on Indonesian social media platforms, particularly among younger Muslim groups. These Arabic-speaking terms, originally used in kinship contexts, have shifted their role as they enter Indonesia's digital landscape. People use them not only as greetings but also as symbols of their religious identity, emotional affinity, and group solidarity. This study sought to examine the use of these two phrases, the contexts in which they appear, and their social significance. Data were collected from posts, comments, and conversations on social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok using a descriptive qualitative research approach. The researchers also spoke with several users who regularly use these terms in their daily interactions. The findings indicate that the use of the terms "akhi" and "ukhti" has shifted from being associated with family ties to becoming a sign of modern Muslim identity, a form of respect, and a technique for building intimacy within online communities. Furthermore, the fact that some consumers use the words in humorous contexts, memes, and casual conversations demonstrates the creativity and shift in how Indonesians utilize Arabic. In conclusion, this research supports the idea that social media plays a significant role in influencing how language is used and understood. Within the Indonesian Muslim community, the phrases "akhi" and "ukhti" are used to represent culture, religious identity, and social expression in digital communication, not simply as generic names.

### Keywords

Akhi, Ukhti, Sociolinguistics, Social Media, Muslim Identity, Shifting Meanings



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## INTRODUCTION

The advent of social media over the past ten years has had a profound impact on how people communicate, share their identities, and form communities not only in their daily interactions, but also in how they express their religious affiliations and social solidarity

(Pujiati et al., 2025). In Indonesia, many Muslims now use Arabic greetings such as akhi and ukhti not only as religious terminology or cultural greetings, but as expressions of identity, solidarity, and community identification in the digital realm. This is an interesting issue to examine because it points out how the meaning of language, especially greeting, can change as it moves between media and social contexts.

The fact that language is inseparable from the social context and identity of the speaker is emphasized by sociolinguistic studies, which offer a proper framework for understanding such phenomena. (Holmes, 2013) According to sociolinguistics, language variations, code choices, and greetings reflect the social structure, group identity, and values of a community. As a result, using a sociolinguistic perspective, this study explores how Indonesian Muslim users replicate, use, and redefine the words akhi and ukhti on social media. For a long time, shifting language patterns on social media have been the subject of study, not only in the context of code mixing and code switching but also in the context of the creation of new linguistic forms, expression of identity, and linguistic creativity. For example, studies on mixing Arabic and Indonesian codes on social media have revealed that users often combine elements of both languages to express religious, social, or emotional messages. This shows that Arabic is no longer limited to ritual or formal languages but has entered the digital world of everyday communication.

The dynamism of language in the digital era can be seen in the phenomenon of code mixing, variety of slang, language variations, and language adaptations on social media in adolescents and students (Furqan et al., 2025). This makes it possible to focus in particular on Arabic greetings such as akhi and ukhti, which may have different meanings from their historical usage, such as as a symbol of religious solidarity, a community of religious propagators, or contemporary Muslim identity in the digital world, rather than simply as a family greeting. Sociolinguistic studies show that language variation and expression selection within a group reflect social identity, cultural values, and people's living situation. Research in Indonesia revealed that Arabic serves as a symbol to affirm religious identity, especially among Islamic students. Research conducted by Fuadah, Mustofa, and Nandang indicates that Arabic terms such as akhi, ukhti, jazakallah, and barakallah are used not only in the context of worship, but also in students' daily social interactions, which reinforces a sense of religious solidarity and affiliation with certain Islamic communities (Fuadah et al.,

2025). In this case, the use of Arabic is not only a ritual code, but also a symbol of the religious identity of today's students.

Other sociolinguistic studies in the Muslim community have also identified the phenomenon of code-mixing between Arabic and Indonesian in online communication, such as in WhatsApp groups. Research on Arabic code mixing on social media confirms that online interactions show variations in code mixing that have social and ideological functions, where Arabic elements play a role in strengthening community solidarity and religious meaning in digital conversations.(Siti Maesaroh et al., 2025). Furthermore, the representation of Arab-Indonesian identity on social media shows how linguistic strategies such as code switching and the use of Arabic terms in digital writing (e.g. Alhamdulillah, InshaAllah) symbolize dual identity and cultural pride. Pujiati, Lundeto, and Trianto found that the combination of Arab and Indonesian elements in captions and comments on social media serves as a dynamic means of expressing cultural affiliation and strengthening the solidarity of Arab-Indonesian diaspora groups and communities (Pujiati et al., 2025).

Another phenomenon related to this study is the use of Arabic expressions and code mixing on various social media platforms such as WhatsApp. Research on code mixing shows that the mixing of Arabic-Indonesian elements occurs in digital communication patterns, reflecting linguistic interference as well as the use of varied expressions, which contributes to the dynamics of Arabic in the social context in Indonesia (Siti Maesaroh et al., 2025). On the other hand, the study of the use of Arabic in the delivery of da'wah through social media also shows that Arabic is carefully chosen to convey relevant religious messages to online Muslim audiences, so that the role of Arabic in social media is not only communicative but also persuasive and identity in the digital Muslim community (Raodah, 2022a).

Based on these results, the phenomenon of using the terms akhi and ukhti on social media requires more in-depth research. Currently, there are not many studies that specifically examine Arabic greetings in digital communication in Indonesia, even though the use of these terms reflects language dynamics, religious identity, and community solidarity. This research aims to fill these shortcomings by investigating the patterns of use of the terms akhi and ukhti, their social functions, and how the two terms are defined in the context of digital communication among Indonesian Muslims (Al Yamin, 2023).

This study is needed because there is still a lack of research that specifically analyzes Arabic greetings (instead of just words or code mixing) in the context of Indonesian social media (Fuadah et al., 2025). Previous studies have mostly focused on slang, code switching in general, and adolescent diversity, but very few have examined how Arabic greetings can represent religious and community identities in the digital realm (Furqan et al., 2025). As a result, it is anticipated that this study will advance the latest knowledge in sociolinguistics, particularly in the area of how Arabic adapts to non-Arab socio-economic situations and how its significance shifts in response to the demands of its users.

## **METHODS**

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach through sociolinguistic analysis to examine the use of the greetings "akhi" and "ukhti" in online communication (Moleong, 2010). The qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of language that occurs in specific social contexts, especially the use of Arabic as a symbol of identity and a sense of solidarity among members of Islamic student organizations. Sociolinguistic studies are used to explore the relationship between language use and the social factors behind the emergence of language in social media interactions.

The data for this study was taken from conversations that occurred in the WhatsApp group of the Student Activity Unit of the Campus Da'wah Institute (UKM LDK) UIN SMH BANTEN (Rosenfeld dkk., 2018). The data collected included messages, comments, greetings, and expressions in Arabic used by group members in daily communication. The research focused on the use of the greetings "akhi" and "ukhti", as well as other Arabic words that appear in interactions between group members. This data was chosen because it is considered to represent the digital communication practices in the campus da'wah community.

Information collection is carried out by using indirect observation techniques and documentation (SUGIYONO 2022 *Research Methods | PDF*, t.t.). In this study, the researcher could not directly participate in the WhatsApp group that was the subject of the study because they were not members of the LDK UKM concerned. Therefore, access to the group is limited to authorized members of the organization. To overcome this limitation, the information collection process was assisted by a member of the LDK UKM who acted as a

field facilitator. Field facilitators act as a bridge between researchers and data sources by helping to collect and record conversations relevant to the research focus. In addition, the field facilitator also ensured that the data obtained came from communication interactions that occurred naturally in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group, so that the information used in the study still reflected the actual state of communication.

The existence of field facilitators is crucial in this study, as it serves as a bridge between researchers and data sources (Moleong, 2010). The facilitator helped document conversations that included the use of the greetings "akhi", "ukhti", as well as mixed code variations between Arabic and Indonesian detected in the LDK UKM Whatsapp group. Once the data was collected, it was selected and broken down according to a predetermined classification, including the frequency of use of Arabic words and the linguistic patterns that appeared in group communication.

The data analysis process is carried out through several steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles dkk., 2014). At the data reduction stage, the researcher filters and groups data that is relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the data is displayed in the form of a frequency table to observe the tendency to use Arabic greetings and words in digital communication. The last stage is the interpretation of data from a sociolinguistic perspective to explain the social function of the use of the greetings "akhi" and "ukhti", as well as the phenomenon of code mixing that occurs in the LDK UKM Whatsapp group.

To ensure that the data obtained is valid, the researcher verified the information collected from the field facilitators and analyzed the results obtained based on the sociolinguistic theory of the function of language as social identity and group solidarity as described by Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina.(Chaer & Agustina, 1995) With this approach, it is hoped that the results of the research will be able to provide an accurate representation of the use of the greetings "akhi" and "ukhti" in social media platforms, especially in the context of digital communication among LDK UKM members.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **Overview of Community and Communication Context in LDK SME WhatsApp Group**

Before explaining the use of akhi and ukhti greetings, it is important to first

understand the characteristics of the community that is the focus of the research. The data obtained from the study states that the interaction that occurs in the LDK UKM WhatsApp group occurs in the structure of the campus da'wah organization which has specific members, communication patterns, and activities. This situation is an important social context to understand the application of Arabic greetings in digital interactions between members.(Rosyadi, 2024)

Based on the data collection carried out, six WhatsApp groups that function as a means of communication for LDK UKM members, namely the LDK UMMFIK Group 2025-2026, the LDK Ummul Fikroh Forever Family Group, the Big Family Group, the Cabinet Group, the Akhwat Special Group, and the Ikhwan Special Group. The large number of these groups shows that communication in this organization takes place in various interaction spaces with different functions according to needs.(Vania dkk., 2025) Some groups are intended for the coordination of work programs, while others are used for more general and familial communication. The number of active members involved in digital communication reached 91 people, consisting of 63 ikhwan members and 28 akhwat members. This composition shows that the members of the brotherhood dominate the participation in this community more than the members of the akhwat. Even so, the two groups continue to actively contribute to various communication activities within the WhatsApp group (Khairunnisa et al., 2024).

Based on the observations, the discussions that took place in the LDK UKM WhatsApp group were quite varied and were not limited to religious topics. Group members often discuss the condition of lectures, organizational work programs, study activities, and hot issues. In addition, they also discussed self-development, academic activities, and social issues related to student life. This variety of topics shows that the LDK SME WhatsApp group functions as a communication tool that supports the various needs of its members, both in terms of organization and in daily life.

The patterns of communication that take place in groups tend to be natural, similar to conversations on social media in general. The group members not only discussed the organization's agenda, but also had casual conversations, shared daily experiences, discussed campus activities, and reminded each other to carry out worship such as Qur'anic recitation, dhikr, and various other religious activities. These informal interactions create an

atmosphere of familiar and dynamic communication among community members (Rosyadi, 2024).

In this context, the use of the greetings akhi and ukhti appears quite significantly, especially in formal communication, official forums of organizations, or when members are not close to each other. The use of these two greetings aims to create closeness, show respect, and reflect Islamic identity in digital communication. This greeting also serves as a symbol of brotherhood that strengthens social relations between community members (*Assimilation of Arabic Language and Culture in Indonesian Muslim Society: A Sociolinguistic Study* | Aziz | *Ihya al-Arabiyyah: Journal of Arabic Language and Literature Education*, t.t.).

However, the application of akhi and ukhti greetings is not mandatory or rigidly applied by all members. According to the information obtained, when the relationship between members has become more intimate, some members prefer to use other greetings such as "kang", "kak", "tea", or directly say each other's names. This condition shows that the use of Arabic greetings in the LDK SME community is more part of the communication culture and a form of social politeness than a rule that must be strictly followed (Chaer & Agustina, 1995).

In addition, topics that are often discussed in the interaction of LDK UKM members include discussions about faith, individual capacity building, academic activities, social issues, as well as organizational work programs and da'wah on campus. These topics show that communication in a group is not only focused on organizational matters, but also serves as a means to train religion, develop intellectuals, and strengthen social relationships between members. In this context, the use of the terms akhi and ukhti is part of the communication culture that supports the formation of an atmosphere of religious, familiar, and full of solidarity interaction among LDK UKM members (Sahrani et al., 2025).

### **Frequency of Use of Arabic Vocabulary**

To evaluate how often Arabic vocabulary is used in digital interactions, the researcher identified and recorded the number of appearances of a number of Arabic words and phrases that were most commonly used by members of the UKM LDK WhatsApp group. The data from the calculation of these frequencies are presented in Table 4. 1 below. Through the collection of data from conversations through groups on social media, we found

some of the most commonly used Arabic vocabulary. This data is then analyzed based on how often these words appear to understand the form of dominance of Arabic in communication in the digital world.

**Table 1 Frequency of use of Arabic vocabulary**

| Yes | Arabic Vocabulary    | Frequency |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|
| 1   | Akhi                 | 483       |
| 2   | Ukhti                | 500       |
| 3   | Assalamualaikum      | 185       |
| 4   | Masya allah          | 200       |
| 5   | Ikhwan/Ikhwon fillah | 198       |
| 6   | Alhamdulillah        | 430       |
| 7   | Tamam                | 100       |
|     | Total                | 2.096     |

Based on the information contained in the table above, it can be seen that the most frequently used Arabic word on Arab-Indonesian social media is ukhti with a total of 500 uses. The high frequency of this word indicates that ukhti greetings have become an important element in digital interactions, especially among Muslim women (Fuadah et al., 2025.) This greeting serves to express a sense of brotherhood, politeness, and religious identity in relationships on social media. The second position is filled by the word akhi with a frequency of 483 times. This indicates that Islamic greetings for men are also in high demand on social platforms. The widespread use of akhi and ukhti shows the tendency of Muslim communities in the digital world to build more intimate and religious relationships through terms in Arabic.

Then, the expression thank God appeared 430 times. The high frequency of use of this expression reflects that expressing gratitude is a powerful form of communication on social media. This word is usually used in posts about achievements, daily activities, or expressions of happiness. The word masya Allah was found 200 times. This phrase is often used to show a sense of admiration or appreciation for something that is considered positive and beautiful. The use of this term shows that religiosity is not only found in greetings, but also in the

expression of feelings of social media users. In addition, the term *ikhwan* or *ikhwan fillah* was recorded 198 times. This term generally appears in the *da'wah* community or certain Islamic study groups. The use of this word serves to strengthen the sense of social solidarity and brotherhood between members of the Muslim community.

The expression *assalamualaikum* has been used 185 times. Although it is not as frequent as the use of *akhi* and *ukhti*, this Islamic greeting is still an important part of digital communication. The use of this greeting shows an effort to maintain Islamic communication ethics in interactions on social media. Meanwhile, the word *tamam* has the least usage, which is 100 times. This word serves as an informal form of expression that means "good", "ready", or "okay". The low frequency of use of the word *tamam* indicates that the term is not as popular as other Arabic vocabulary words that are more commonly used in religious contexts (Siti Maesaroh et al., 2025).

Overall, these findings show that the use of Arabic in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group does not only play a role as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of Islamic identity and social unity among community members. The use of Arabic vocabulary reaches a total of 2,096 frequencies. This data shows that Arabic has a significant influence on Arab-Indonesian social media communication. The use of Arabic vocabulary not only serves as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of religious identity, social solidarity, and digital interaction style of the Indonesian Muslim community (Fuadah et al., 2025). Based on the information contained in Table 4.1, it can be seen that the use of Arabic in digital communication by LDK UKM members is quite varied. The vocabulary used is not only limited to greetings, but also includes religious expressions and terms related to social relations among the Muslim community. This shows that Arabic plays a significant role in the daily interaction of the members of the LDK UKM WhatsApp group (Sahrani et al., 2025).

In general, the use of Arabic in the group is inseparable from the unique character of LDK UKM which focuses on *da'wah* and the development of Islamic values in the university environment. Thus, the disappearance of various Arabic terms in the conversation of group members is natural, considering that Arabic is often used as a tool to express religious identity, build social closeness, and strengthen a sense of brotherhood among members. The data contained in the table shows that there is a difference in the frequency of Arabic usage

found. Some terms have a high frequency rate because they are used regularly in everyday communication, while others appear in smaller numbers because their use is limited to a specific context. This difference in frequency indicates a tendency to choose words that are considered more familiar and relevant to the communication needs of its members.

In addition to functioning as a means of communication, the use of Arabic also reflects the integration of Arabic into the digital communication practices of the Indonesian Muslim community. Words such as greetings, greetings, and religious expressions not only serve to convey information, but also become symbols that reflect the Islamic values held by community members. Therefore, the use of Arabic in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group can be seen as part of the formation of social and cultural identity in the digital communication space. The findings contained in Table 4.1 are then analyzed based on the frequency of occurrence of each understanding to identify the forms of use that most often appear in the communication of group members. This analysis provides a discourse on the tendency of LDK UKM members to use Arabic vocabulary as part of their social interaction on digital platforms.

#### **Pattern of Arabic-Indonesian Language Use**

In addition to examining how often Arabic vocabulary is used, the study also found language patterns seen in group members' interactions. This research aims to understand the form of code mixing and the tendency to use Arabic and Indonesian in online communication.

**Table 2 Arabic-Indonesian Language Use Patterns**

| Yes | Language Patterns    | Frequency |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|
| 1   | English + Arabic     | 198       |
| 2   | Arab + Indonesia     | 270       |
| 3   | Arabic Full          | 80        |
| 4   | English Full         | 580       |
| 5   | Arabic Greetings     | 300       |
| 6   | Non-Arabic greetings | 90        |
| 7   | No Greetings         | 78        |
|     | Total                | 1.596     |

Based on the table above, the most common form of language use is Bahasa Indonesia in full with a total of 580 frequencies. This data shows that Bahasa Indonesia remains the main language in communicating on social media among Indonesian people. Social media users usually prefer to use Bahasa Indonesia as a whole because it is easier to understand and is the language commonly used in digital interactions. Furthermore, the use of greetings in Arabic is second with a frequency of 300 times (Raodah, 2022b). The high frequency of the use of greetings in Arabic shows that terms such as akhi, ukhti, and ikhwan have become a significant part of the digital communication of the Muslim community. These greetings are used to reflect religious identity, a sense of brotherhood, and social solidarity among social media users.

The pattern of Arabic + Indonesian usage was recorded 270 times.(Siti Maesaroh et al., 2025) This pattern shows that social media users often start conversations in Arabic and then followed by Indonesian. An example would be, "Akhi, don't forget to attend tonight's study." This way of communicating shows a tendency to maintain a religious element in daily interactions. Meanwhile, the Indonesian + Arabic pattern was found 198 times. This form generally occurs when the user prioritizes Indonesian and at the same time inserts words in Arabic such as *masya Allah*, *alhamdulillah*, or *insha Allah*. The use of this mixed code indicates the integration of Arabic in digital communication among Indonesian people.

The use of non-Arabic greetings has a frequency of 90 times.(Made et al., 2023) This shows that some social media users still use common greetings such as "friend", "kak", or "bro" in digital interactions. However, this number is less than the use of Arabic greetings, suggesting that Islamic greetings are more dominant in certain communities. In addition, the full use of Arabic was recorded 80 times. Although this figure is relatively low, it shows that there are some users who use Arabic completely, especially in the context of da'wah, Islamic studies, or interactions between certain religious communities.

On the other hand, the pattern of communication without greeting was recorded as the lowest with a frequency of 78 times. This shows that the majority of social media users tend to stick to certain forms of greeting in their communication, both Arabic and general greetings, to build closer and more polite social relationships.

Overall, the results of the study show that the use of akhi and ukhti greetings as well

as the practice of mixing codes between Arabic and Indonesian are the characteristics of communication in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group. Arabic is used not only as a tool to convey information, but also as a symbol of religious identity, social solidarity, and closeness between community members. The total frequency of language usage patterns reaches 1.596 data. The findings of this study prove that social media is an important forum in the development of the phenomenon of mixed codes between Arabs and Indonesians. The use of Arabic in social media not only serves as a communication medium, but also as a symbol of religious identity, social solidarity, and modern ways of communicating among Indonesian Muslim communities.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the research, the use of the terms *akhi* and *ukhti* in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group shows that these two words have become an important part of how to communicate boldly among community members. The high frequency of use of *ukhti* (500 times) and *akhi* (483 times) compared to other Arabic terms shows that this greeting is not just a call between members, but also contains a deeper social meaning. In sociolinguistic studies, this phenomenon can be seen as a way of using language that reflects social identity and membership in a particular group (Wardhaugh, t.t.). According to Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina, language is more than just a means of communication; It is also a way to show the social identity of the speaker. In the context of this study, the use of *akhi* and *ukhti* is seen to dominate as symbols of Islamic identity used by members of LDK UKM when interacting online. By using this greeting, the members of the group not only convey a message, but also display their identity as part of a Muslim community that shares similar values and culture.

The results of the study show that *akhi* and *ukhti* are the most frequently used forms of language in the digital interaction of LDK UKM members. This can be seen from the high frequency of the two greetings compared to other Arabic terms. From a thorough data analysis, the word *ukhti* appeared 500 times, while the word *akhi* appeared 483 times. This high frequency reaffirms that both terms have become an important component of communication patterns among community members. These findings support the view of Abdul Chaer and Leonie Agustina (2010), who stated that language is not only used to convey information, but also serves as a marker of the social identity of a particular group.

Chaer and Agustina argue that the language choices that individuals choose often reflect the social background, group, and identity they want to show in social interactions. In this study, the use of akhi and ukhti shows that LDK UKM members use language as a means to express their Islamic identity in the digital world.

The phenomenon of using this prominent greeting in sociolinguistic theory is often called a sign of group identity. A group identity sign is a way of using language that is intended to indicate a person's membership in a particular social community. In this study, the use of the words akhi, ukhti, and ikhwan fillah reflects the efforts of community members in developing a sense of togetherness and solidarity through the choice of language used in daily communication. This phenomenon can also be understood as a tool to articulate cultural and religious identities. The greetings akhi and ukhti are basically terms in Arabic that mean "my brother" and "my sister". However, in social media, the two terms not only serve as markers of family relationships, but have also evolved into symbols of identity for the Muslim community. Thus, the use of these two greetings is a representation of identity that is consciously displayed by its users in their digital interactions.

This is in line with the opinion put forward by Joshua Fishman in 1972, who posited that language has symbolic value as a benchmark for the identity of a group. Fishman explains that the choice of a particular language is often used by members of the community to show their sense of belonging to the same social group (Holmes, 2013). In this study, the use of the terms akhi and ukhti plays a role as a symbol of unity in Muslim communities that have uniform values, norms, and communication cultures. Therefore, the greeting functions more than just a means of communication; but also as a sign of social solidarity and collective identity. In addition, the high frequency of use of the expressions alhamdulillah, masya Allah, and assalamualaikum shows that communication in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group is not only informative, but also rich in deep religious values. According to Joshua Fishman, language is a symbol of cultural and religious identity in a community group. In this context, the use of Arabic expressions plays a role in strengthening the religious identity of group members while maintaining Islamic values in digital interactions.

The results of this study also reveal that language plays a role in creating social solidarity (Meyerhoff, 2018). This can be seen from the frequency of use of the words brotherhood and brotherhood of fillah which appeared 198 times. In the context of group

communication, these terms are used to strengthen bonds between members and form a stronger sense of brotherhood. Based on the theory of the function of language in society, the use of collective terms can foster a sense of belonging to the group and increase social cohesion among community members. The widespread use of greetings in Arabic can also be read through the concept of social solidarity described by Fishman (1972). Fishman explains that language has an affective function related to the formation of emotional connections among group members. In this study, the words *akhi*, *ukhti*, and *ikhwan fillah* not only function as greetings, but also contain emotional meanings that reflect closeness and brotherhood. Therefore, the use of greetings in Arabic in the UKM LDK WhatsApp group is understood as a linguistic strategy to strengthen social relations between community members.

On the other hand, the high frequency of greetings in Arabic compared to non-Arabic greetings indicates a tendency among members of this community to retain symbols of the language related to religion. According to Chaer and Agustina (2010), one of the functions of language in society is as a tool for social integration. Language plays a role in strengthening relationships between group members and fostering a sense of togetherness. In this study, the use of *akhi*, *ukhti*, and *ikhwan fillah* reflects the real efforts of community members in creating a sense of brotherhood through terms that have religious meaning. In addition to reflecting religious identity, the dominant use of *akhi* and *ukhti* greetings in this study can also be interpreted as language choices influenced by the speaking community. According to Dell Hymes, the speaking community has language rules that are agreed upon and shared by its members (Saville-Troike, 2008.) In the context of the UKM LDK WhatsApp group, the use of greetings in Arabic seems to have become a norm of communication that is agreed upon and understood by all members. Therefore, both new and long-time members will tend to adjust to the communication patterns that prevail in the community.

In addition to serving as markers of social identity, the use of the terms *akhi* and *ukhti* in the research data also reflects the process of forming language norms within certain communities. According to Dell Hymes (1974), the use of language cannot be separated from the social context in which it is used. Hymes explained that each community has communication rules and norms that affect the way members communicate and interact. The results of the study show that the high use of the greetings *akhi* and *ukhti* indicates that

these two terms have become a strong communication norm in the LDK UKM WhatsApp group. Group members understand the meaning and function of the greeting so that its use becomes a natural thing in daily interactions (Johnstone, 2017). This result can be seen from the high number of uses of greetings in Arabic which are much more than non-Arabic greetings. Data shows that Arabic greetings are used up to 300 times, while non-Arabic greetings only appear 90 times. This striking difference suggests that group members are more likely to choose greetings that reflect their community's identity. In the theory of the speaking community, this phenomenon indicates the existence of an unwritten agreement on the terms of language that are considered appropriate to be used in a particular communication context.

These findings indicate that language not only reflects social circumstances, but also plays a role in the shaping of social reality itself. When group members regularly use the terms *akhi* and *ukhti*, they are unconsciously creating a distinctive communication culture. This communication culture then becomes a common identity that distinguishes this community from other digital communities. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this condition suggests that language choices can be a means of establishing group identity and maintaining shared social values. The results of this study also strengthen the view of Chaer and Agustina (2010), who stated that language variations arise due to differences in social functions in society. In the UKM LDK WhatsApp group, the use of Arabic and Indonesian represents a variety of languages adapted to the purpose of communication. Indonesian is used to convey information clearly, while Arabic serves to affirm religious identity and strengthen social ties among members. Thus, the language variation found in this study is not a form of deviation, but a communication strategy that is in accordance with the social needs of the community.

The results of this study are also related to previous research on the use of Arabic terms on social media. Some previous research has revealed that the greetings *akhi* and *ukhti* are usually used to indicate the similarity of vision in terms of religion, *da'wah* affiliation, and ideological closeness among members of the Muslim community. The findings in this study reinforce this view because most of the use of Arabic greetings is identified in the context of Islamic and fraternal communication. However, the study also found slightly different results. From the analysis carried out, the use of the greetings *akhi* and *ukhti* does

not always reflect the similarity of vision or overall views among its users. In some interactions, the greeting appears as a language habit that has been integrated into the community communication culture, without necessarily reflecting approval of all the views or ideas of other members. These findings suggest that Arabic greetings on social media can serve as a form of politeness and social identity, not just a sign of ideological similarity.

Thus, the results of this study present a more comprehensive perspective compared to various previous studies. If previous studies tend to associate the use of akhi and ukhti with similarities in certain da'wah or ideologies, this study shows that factors of communication habits, organizational culture, and interaction norms in the digital community also influence the use of these two greetings. Therefore, not all communities that use the words akhi and ukhti always indicate a complete common vision. These findings are in line with research that states that language in digital communities often undergoes an expansion of functions. Certain words or expressions that initially served as symbols of group identity can evolve into a more universal means of communication due to the influence of ongoing social interaction. In this case, the greetings akhi and ukhti not only serve as a symbol of religious identity, but also as a strategy to build closeness, maintain politeness, and create a warmer atmosphere of communication within the group.

Furthermore, the results of this study can be compared with several previous studies that examined the use of Arabic terms among the digital Muslim community. Some studies show that the use of greetings in Arabic is often linked to increased religiosity among young generations of Muslims on social media platforms. The findings of this study support these results because the data obtained show that the use of Arabic greetings and religious expressions often appears in the communication of LDK UKM members. This signifies that social media has become a significant platform for expressing religious identity. However, the study also produced findings that differed from previous studies. Some previous studies have argued that the use of the terms akhi and ukhti is a strong indication of the similarity of ideologies or affiliations in certain da'wah. However, the analysis of the data in this study reveals that the use of these two terms does not necessarily reflect the same overall views. In some interactions, the term is used as a form of communication habits that have become part of the organization's culture. Therefore, the use of akhi and ukhti cannot always be used as the only indicator to assess the direction of one's thought.

Code Mixing Patterns and Social Bilingualism. On the other hand, the fact that Bahasa Indonesia is used 580 times shows that although the Islamic identity is clearly seen through greetings in Arabic, the language most widely used to convey information is still Bahasa Indonesia. The findings are interesting because they reflect the balance between religious identity and the need for practical communication. The members of the group did not completely switch to Arabic, but instead used only certain elements of Arabic as a symbol of identity and social closeness.

This study also indicates that the most dominant language usage pattern is Full Indonesian with a frequency of 580. On the other hand, there is an Arabic + Indonesian pattern that appears 270 times and Indonesia + Arabic 198 times. These findings show the existence of code mixing practices in communication between group members. According to Suwito's (1985) theory, this phenomenon is called code mixing, which is the incorporation of elements from other languages into the main language used in a conversation. This phenomenon is in line with the concept of social bilingualism put forward by Joshua Fishman (Wei & Li, 2000). He argues that bilingual societies tend to use different languages for various social functions. In this study, Bahasa Indonesia serves as the main tool for conveying information, while Arabic is used to show religious identity, strengthen solidarity, and create a more Islamic atmosphere of communication. In other words, the two languages have different but complementary functions in the interaction between group members.

According to Suwito, code mixing often arises out of the need to indicate a specific identity, clarify meaning, or adjust to the social environment in which the conversation takes place. The results of this study show that the use of terms such as akhi, ukhti, alhamdulillah, and masya Allah in Indonesian sentences is an example of mixed codes that aim to affirm the religious identity of the speakers. Therefore, the results of this study support Suwito's theory of the social function of code mixing among bilingual communities. The findings of this study also show that Arabic does not take over the role of Indonesian as the main language. This can be seen from the dominance of the Full Indonesian pattern which reached 580 data. These findings confirm that group members still rely on Bahasa Indonesia as the main means of communication. However, elements of Arabic are still used as symbols of religious identity and expression. This phenomenon is in line with the opinion of Suwito (1985) who stated that code mixing often appears in bilingual societies because of social needs that

cannot be fully conveyed in one language alone.

In the context of this study, the use of Arabic in Indonesian conversations can be understood as an identity strategy. Users do not rely on Arabic because of a lack of understanding of Bahasa Indonesia, but because Arabic has a stronger symbolic value in a religious context. Therefore, terms such as akhi, ukhti, alhamdulillah, and masya Allah are still used even though there are equivalents in Indonesian. These findings suggest that language selection is often influenced by the social meanings contained in the language, not just by its communicative function. In addition, the high frequency of use of a combination of Arabic + Indonesian and Indonesian + Arabic languages indicates that group members are actively adapting to the language in online communication. This adaptation indicates that Arabic does not replace Indonesian, but rather coexists through the practice of mixing codes. This phenomenon illustrates that the development of social media contributes to the emergence of new forms of communication that combine local and religious elements in one interaction.

Furthermore, the use of the terms akhi and ukhti in this study can be considered as an effort to maintain language in the digital environment. Based on Fishman's (1972) view, language preservation occurs when a group of individuals continues to use certain language elements to maintain their cultural and social identity. Although the group members use Bahasa Indonesia as their primary language, they still adopt Arabic terms in various communication contexts. This shows that the Arabic language has an important symbolic meaning for this community and serves as a symbol of the Islamic identity they want to preserve. These findings suggest that the social meaning of a language can change depending on the context in which it is used. In sociolinguistic studies, this phenomenon is known as the expansion of language functions, where language forms are no longer used only for their original purpose, but rather evolve to meet broader social needs. Initially, the greetings akhi and ukhti were used as terms of kinship in Arabic, but among the digital Muslim community in Indonesia, these two terms have transformed into symbols of politeness, closeness, and community identity.

In addition to supporting existing sociolinguistic theories, the results of this study also provide a new view that is different from previous studies. Previous research states that the use of the greetings akhi and ukhti is always associated with the similarity of certain

da'wah ideologies or orientations. However, the results of this study show that the use of the two greetings does not always reflect the overall similarity of vision. In some conversational contexts, the greetings *akhi* and *ukhti* are used as part of the communication habits that have become the norm in the community without necessarily reflecting the same views in all areas of life. These results show that the social meaning of a language can evolve according to the needs of the people who use it. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this change in function shows that language has a flexible character and continues to adapt to the social context of society. Therefore, the use of *akhi* and *ukhti* on social media cannot be understood only as a symbol of a certain ideology, but also as a form of politeness, social solidarity, and cultural identity that develops in the digital Muslim community.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of the greetings *akhi* and *ukhti* in the WhatsApp group of UKM LDK UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten has become an integral component of members' digital communication practices. Their frequent use indicates that these expressions function not only as interpersonal greetings but also as markers of Islamic identity, social solidarity, and a shared sense of brotherhood within the organization. In addition, the consistent use of Arabic expressions such as *alhamdulillah*, *masya Allah*, *ikhwan fillah*, and *assalamualaikum* illustrates the important role of Arabic in shaping a religious atmosphere and reinforcing Islamic values in everyday online interactions. From a sociolinguistic perspective, these linguistic choices highlight how language serves as a symbolic resource for expressing collective identity and strengthening social cohesion among community members.

Furthermore, the findings reveal a recurring pattern of Arabic-Indonesian code-mixing, reflecting the bilingual sociolinguistic environment of the organization. While Indonesian remains the primary language for conveying information, Arabic lexical items are strategically integrated to express religious identity, respect, and interpersonal closeness. This study also indicates that the use of *akhi* and *ukhti* should not be interpreted solely as evidence of affiliation with a particular Islamic movement or ideological orientation. Instead, their usage is strongly influenced by communication habits, organizational culture, and interactional norms that have evolved within the digital community. Consequently, Arabic functions not merely as a medium of communication but also as a powerful cultural and

symbolic resource that fosters identity construction, strengthens solidarity, and cultivates a distinctive communication culture among Muslim university students in digital spaces.

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