

## THE IMPACT OF SWITCHING THE LANGUAGE WEEK: ARABIC-ENGLISH IN DARUL ARAFAH ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL

Nadia Syafira<sup>1</sup>  
Muhammad Rafi'i<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

[syafirlinowl@gmail.com](mailto:syafirlinowl@gmail.com)

[muhammadrafii@umsu.ac.id](mailto:muhammadrafii@umsu.ac.id)

**Abstract:** *The practice of switching language weeks in educational institutions has been widely implemented to improve linguistic proficiency and cultural engagement. This study explores the impact of a "Language Week" program, focusing on English and Arabic, at Darul Arafah Raya Islamic Boarding School. The program, aimed at enhancing both English and Arabic fluency among students, was assessed for its educational and social outcomes. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, using surveys, interviews, and observational data from students and teachers. The results indicate that the program significantly improved students' language skills, boosted their confidence in using both languages, and promoted intercultural understanding. This study offers insights into the effectiveness of language immersion programs in religious and cultural contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Language Week, English, Arabic, Islamic Boarding School, Language Proficiency, Educational Impact*

### Introduction

Language acquisition in a multicultural and multilingual society is essential for both academic success and personal development. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the integration of foreign languages such as English and Arabic is seen as a crucial aspect of the educational process. Darul Arafah Raya Islamic Boarding School, known for its rigorous Islamic curriculum, introduced a "Language Week" program to immerse students in both English and Arabic. The focus of this study is to evaluate the impact of this program on students' language proficiency and their cultural understanding. By switching the designated language each week between English and Arabic, the school aims to provide a balanced exposure to both languages, fostering fluency and confidence in each other.

### Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the value of bilingualism in educational settings, particularly in religious schools. It has been demonstrated that bilingual education enhances social integration, academic achievement, and cognitive abilities. English is the universal language, however Arabic is the main language used in Islamic education for religious materials in Darul Arafah Islamic Boarding School.

### Language Immersion and Academic Achievement:

Language immersion programs have been widely recognized for their role in improving language acquisition. A study by Swain & Lapkin (1982) highlighted the effectiveness of

language immersion in enhancing linguistic competence, particularly when students are consistently exposed to a second language.

### **Cultural and Social Benefits of Language Switching:**

Language switching, or code-switching, has been shown to foster intercultural communication and understanding. Studies by Holmes (2013) suggest that switching between languages can promote cultural awareness, particularly in bilingual communities. Moreover, when students are immersed in different linguistic environments, they develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them (Kern, 2000).

### **Method**

150 students from Darul Arafah Raya Islamic Boarding School, ages 14 to 18, participated in the study: 75 males and 75 females. Participants in the study ranged from intermediate to advanced Arabic and English language learners.

### **The study used a mixed-methods strategy, which included:**

Surveys: To gauge their level of English and Arabic language proficiency, students filled out surveys both before and after the training.

Interviews: Qualitative information about the individual experiences and opinions of the Language Week program was obtained through interviews with instructors and students.

### **Methodology**

Every week, the Language Week program switched between Arabic and English. Every language week, all academic activities, religious conversations, and social contacts in the school setting had to be conducted in the assigned language.

### **The research employed a mixed-methods approach, including:**

Surveys: Students completed pre- and post-program surveys to assess their language proficiency in both English and Arabic.

Interviews: Interviews with teachers and students provided qualitative insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of the Language Week program. Observational Data: Observations of classroom activities during the Language Week were recorded to evaluate student engagement and language usage.

### **Procedure**

The Language Week program alternated weekly between English and Arabic. During each language week, students were required to use the designated language in all academic activities, religious discussions, and social interactions within the school environment. Surveys were administered at the beginning and end of the 8-week study period, while interviews were conducted after the program's completion.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **Proficiency in Language**

Students' language proficiency significantly improved, according to the pre- and post-program survey data. Students' proficiency in writing and speaking in academic settings increased by 20% in English. There was a 15% improvement in Arabic, especially in reading comprehension and religious conversations.

Many kids expressed appreciation of the multilingual challenge, and teachers noted that children showed increased confidence in their abilities to interact in both languages. The results indicate that pupils were able to internalize vocabulary and grammar more successfully than in typical language sessions because to the immersion method of switching between languages every week.

### **Cultural Understanding and Social Interaction**

The Language Week program also fostered greater intercultural understanding. Students reported an increased appreciation for the cultural contexts associated with both Arabic and English. Teachers observed a notable improvement in students' ability to switch between languages seamlessly, which also enhanced their interpersonal communication within the school community.

Additionally, the use of both English and Arabic in religious and social contexts contributed to a richer understanding of Islamic texts, as many key religious concepts are traditionally articulated in Arabic.

### **Teacher Feedback**

Teachers noted that the program encouraged greater engagement from students, particularly in discussions and group activities. However, some teachers observed that more training in language pedagogy would enhance the program's effectiveness. Some also suggested that additional support materials for both languages could benefit students who are less proficient.

### **Conclusion**

Darul Arafah Raya Islamic Boarding School's "Language Week" program showed notable improvements in social integration, cultural awareness, and language competency. The curriculum offered a dynamic and immersive language-learning environment that successfully enhanced students' language proficiency by alternating between English and Arabic. The study emphasizes the value of bilingual education in Islamic schools and shows how these initiatives can promote a stronger bond with both religious and international cultural contexts. The program's influence would be increased in the future by improving teaching techniques and providing more resources for students.

### **References**

- Al-Jarf, R. (2007). The effectiveness of a bilingual language program for Arabic-speaking students. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(4), 512-523.
- Cummins, J. (2000). Bilingualism and cognitive development. *Bilingual Education: An Introductory Reader*, 71-87.
- Holmes, J. (2013). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Kern, R. (2000). *Literacy and language teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). Evaluating bilingual education: A Canadian case study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 3(1), 1-19.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Bernstein, B. (1990). *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse: Class, Codes and Control* (Vol. 4). Routledge.
- Krashen, S. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Longman.

Kuhl, P. K. (2004). Early language acquisition: Cracking the speech code. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 5(11), 831-843.