

**FUNCTION AND LANGUAGE INFLUENCE AS A TOOL OF COMMUNICATION  
IN ISLAMIC DAKWAH****Oleh : Hj. Muzdalifah Sahib****Abstract;**

*Tulisan ini berkaitan dengan bahasa dan dakwah yang bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa dan bagaimana fungsi dan pengaruh bahasa sebagai alat komunikasi terhadap kesuksesan dakwah Islam. Adapun metode yang digunakan adalah metode deskriptif untuk menggambarkan tentang apa yang dimaksud di atas, karena bahasa dan dakwah saling berkaitan dan tidak bisa dipisahkan satu sama lain karena bahasa merupakan anugerah Ilahi yang di gunakan manusia untuk berinteraksi dalam kehidupannya termasuk berdakwah.*

*Tulisan ini menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Baik bahasa verbal maupun non verbal mempunyai fungsi yang sangat penting dalam dakwah Islam. Bahasa verbal berfungsi sebagai wahana pengenalan, wahana interaksi sosial dalam kegiatan dakwah bi al-lisan dan bi al-qalam serta bi al-hal. Sedangkan bahasa non verbal berfungsi sebagai wahana pengenalan, wahana interaksi sosial, sebagai pengganti dan pelengkap yang memperjelas bahasa verbal dalam kegiatan dakwah bi al-hal dan dakwah lewat lukisan. (2) Kesuksesan sebuah dakwah juga banyak dipengaruhi oleh penggunaan bahasa. Dengan bahasa yang lemah lembut/sopan, baik dan benar disertai tinggi rendahnya intonasi yang sesuai, insya Allah akan membawa kepada dakwah yang sukses. Sebaliknya dengan bahasa yang kasar dan intonasi yang terlalu tinggi, akan membawa kepada kegagalan sebuah dakwah. (3). Salah satu contoh dakwah lewat tulisan yang hingga kini masih berpengaruh di tengah-tengah masyarakat Indonesia khususnya di Sulawesi Selatan ini adalah dakwah Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassary lewat karya-karya mistik religious beliau sebagai salah seorang pembaharu dalam dunia mistik Islam.*

**Keywords:****Function, Influence, Language, Communication and dakwah.****I. Introduction**

Language and dakwah are interrelated and mutually influence each other, because language is a divine gift that humans use to communicate and interact in everyday of their life, including preaching. The way people speak will affect the success or failure of a missionary or dakwah, In the contrary, the way people preach can influence the style of speaking / or how one speak either for da'i or preacher himself or his audience.

All languages in this world can be used for preaching, either is on stage, in mosques, in mushalla, at school, on TV and radio or in other public places, provided in accordance with the circumstances and environmental conditions in which we are in order that the audience / the object of dakwah can understand the message delivered by the preachers.

Islamic dakwah activities are closely related to dakwah media, among others are: dakwah bi al-lisan (preaching through speech), dakwah bi al-Qalam da'wa (preaching through writing) and dakwah bi al-hal (preaching through the action / behavior) even there is one who add them to become four namely preaching through painting. This is suitable with the expression of Al Misbahy Habsyar that "To be more successful of Islamic preaching at the present time, the media of painting needs to

*have a place in dakwah media in order that its tramp can follow the tramp of every state of society which became the object of dakwah*"<sup>i</sup>. In dakwah bi al-lisan and dakwah bi al-qalam, the language plays a very important role and serves as a medium for conveying dakwah, because without language how this dakwah activities could run. However, does the language also play a very important role and serve as a transmitter of dakwah media in terms of dakwah bi al-hal and dakwah trough painting?

Language also can make a person to be sad, angry, irritable, laughing and happy. With the right language, good and gentle accompanied by a sense of humor can make sad or angry people into happy laughter men. In contrast by the harsh language with a high intonation can make people irritable and angry.

Thus the way people preach has really a great influence on the success of dakwah, either through oral, written, through the act or through painting. Similarly, how people preach will affect the way people talk, for example those who preached with gentle / polite can also make the audience is accustomed to the polite-spoken. That is make the authors are interested in discussing about the role, function and effect of language in Islamic dakwah.

Based on the information mentioned above, it can be pulled a problem "What and how is the function and effect of language as a communication tool towards the success of Islamic dakwah?"

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview to the readers especially those who involved in the world of dakwah, so that they can understand what and how the function and influence of language as a communication tool towards the success of dakwah.

The usefulness of this paper is to contribute to the readers especially those who engaged in the world of preaching about what and how the function and influence of language as a communication tool towards the success of dakwah.

## **II. Discussion**

### **A. Language, Communication and Dakwah**

Language, communication and dakwah are related each other. "*Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior*"<sup>iii</sup> In other words, communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through language. On another hand preaching that comes from the word *da'aa, yad'u* which means *call, beg or pray*<sup>iii</sup> is also a communication process that cannot take place without language.

There are two kinds of language that is used to communicate and preach, i.e: verbal language (the language that uses a phrase or sentence) and non-verbal language (the language without words).

Today, we are in the era of information (21<sup>st</sup> century). World with six billion people who inhabit the five continents as if a neighbor in a large village (global village). An amendment to the ongoing human civilization from what is called: globalization. Globalization also emerged as a result of the rapid development of communication technology.

The development of communication technology that enables the transformation of information that can penetrate the conventional boundaries: space and time quantitatively and qualitatively. Is the changing of civilization affects the behavior of human communication,

preaching media or preaching? Globally, it happened. However, one thing that can not be left by mankind including the Islamic community, i.e. is the implementation of communication and the preaching verbally and non verbally, moreover it is an obligation for every Muslim to preach. Watzlewick and Beavin in *lilwieri's book* states that human beings cannot avoid communication. If you talk, that is communication. If you dwell, that is also a communication. Schram continued in the same book that communication is a very fundamental social processes of society. *Communication is a connecting way among humans*<sup>iv</sup>. Silence is as strong as verbal messages spoken with words. With quiet then you have to communicate nonverbally.

Sometimes communication may be without a voice, without words, but with the body or limb movements, you keep doing the nonverbal communication or preaching through actions by giving good examples to others. Thus, both verbal and nonverbal language have the same important role and function in preaching, and between language, communication and dakwah cannot be separated one another.

### **B. Dakwah Activities**

Dakwah activities are closely related to the dakwah media, because by the media of dakwah, Islamic community can perform dakwah. Al Misbahy Habsyar revealed four kinds of dakwah media as follows:

- 1) Spoken/oral: Khutbah, speeches, lectures, discussions, warm-hearted, teaching, storytelling, singing and so on.
- 2) Writing: Books, magazines, newsletters, brochures, pamphlets, banners, and so on.
- 3) Action: A good example, giving alms to the poor, helping orphans and poor people, helping people in a good thing, engaging remembrance and so on.
- 4) Painting: Photos, drawings, caricatures, posters, slides, television and so on<sup>v</sup>.

Islamic dakwah activity is an attempt to invite mankind to adopt and implement the teachings of Islam wisely for the benefit and happiness in the world and the Hereafter, not by compulsion, which must be implemented for every Muslim, whether it is preaching orally, through a pen or writing, through action or through painting, this is suitable with the view of Prof.. Thoha Jahya Omar, MA. who states that: "*Dakwah according to Islam is: inviting people to the right path wisely in accordance with the command of God for their welfare and happiness in the world and the hereafter.*"<sup>vi</sup> Then the words of Allah. in QS. Al Baqarah (Q.S.2: 256).<sup>vii</sup>

(٢٥٦) .... **الْغَيِّ مِنَ الرُّشْدِ تَبَيَّنَ قَدْ الدِّينِ فِي إِكْرَاهٍ لَا**

*“There is no compulsion to religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path....”*

The words of the Messenger of Allah-may Allah bless and grant him peace:

(الحدث) **اية ولو عني بلغوا**

“Convey what is come from me even if only one verse (hadits).”<sup>viii</sup>

### **C. Language functions as a Tool for Communication in Dakwah Activities**

Dakwah bi al-lisan is dakwah by oral, words or sentence expressions. Therefore, without language, this mission or dakwah could not run. With any language in this world, everything can

be used either for preaching on stages, in mosques, in mushalla, at schools, on TV and Radio, or in other public places, provided in accordance with the circumstances and environmental conditions in which we exist. Dakwah or preaching could also even be implemented through an expression such as singing songs of H. Rhoma Irama or expression through poetry of a poet. Da'wah bi al-qalam means preaching by pens or through writing. A Muslim man who invites others to implement the teachings of Islam, calling for ma'ruf and prevent against the wrong or bad deed through his writing by using beautiful and polite words touch the soul of readers in various mass media whether by newspapers, magazines or books, then that means he has performed the Islamic da'wah. Like dakwah Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassary as a reformer in Islamic mystic world or a Neo Sufist,<sup>ix</sup> which still has an influence on the Indonesian society especially in South Sulawesi till the present day. One of his dakwah through one of his treatises for example in Mathalib al-Salikin, which is told as follows:

وَيَرْضَى، يُحِبُّ لِمَا وَإِنَّا اللَّهُ وَقَفَّكَ أَحْيَى يَا إِعْلَمُ  
وَعِبَادَةٌ وَمَعْرِفَةٌ تَوْحِيدٌ: أَشْيَاءُ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنْ لَكَ بَدٌّ فَلَا

وَأُورَاقٍ، كَأَعْصَانٍ وَالْمَعْرِفَةَ كَشَجَرَةٍ، فَالتَّوْحِيدُ  
أَغْصَانًا وَجَدَّتْ [فَإِذَا] وَإِذَا كَثَمَرَةٍ، وَالْعِبَادَةُ  
تَمْرَةٌ الشَّجَرَةُ هَذِهِ تُجِيءُ بِأَنْ رَاحَ فَأَنْتَ وَأُورَاقًا  
فَوْجُودٌ وَأُورَاقًا، أَعْصَانًا الشَّجَرَةَ فِي تَجْدٍ لَمْ وَإِنْ  
تَفْهَمُ لِأَنَّ قُلْنَا مَجَازِيٌّ مِثْلًا وَهَذَا مِحَالٌ التَّمْرَةَ  
الْحَقِيقِيَّ الْمِثَالِ

“You should know o’ my brother. May Allah give you and us guidance towards what He loves, that you should have the three things, i.e. ‘Tauhid, Ma’rifat’ and Praying.

‘Tauhid’ is like a tree, and ‘ma’rifat’ is like the branches and leaves of it and praying [2] is like its fruit. If you got the tree, you will get its branches and leaves, and if you got them, even you look for fruit of the tree. If you did not get its branches and leaves, it is impossible for getting its fruit. This is ‘majāzi’/metaphor sample that we said, in order that you can understand the sample of the real nature (actually).<sup>x</sup>

If we paid attention on how he preach through his writing, then we will find how beautiful his words which can touch every Muslim who read it and who has God’s blessing. This is only one example from many other of his writings. He usually used polite words and good metaphor example which can touch the mind of one, especially one who has guidance from our God (Allah).

Similarly, writing a letter of one companion to another companion that contains ‘amar ma’ruf nahi munkar’ and the writings of poems of the famous Islamic poets including the poem of Rabiah al-Adawiyah that all use the language.

Dakwah bi al-hal means dakwah through acting or behavior as a combination of dakwah bi al-lisan and dakwah bi al-qalam. This type of dakwah not only can be performed by the preachers, but also it can be performed by every Muslim to fellow Muslims. In this case, the language also plays a

role and a very important function, especially non-verbal language. In linguistic terms, it is often heard about the language of body gestures, known as *kinesick*.

Kinesics include gestures of the body, such as greetings, aspects of face, gaze / eye contact, hand gestures etc.<sup>xi</sup> Liliweri grouped the gestures of the body into three, i.e.: eye contact, facial expressions and movement of limbs.<sup>xii</sup> When someone expresses his face with a smile to someone else in front of a child that means he has preached since the Prophet saw- may Allah bless and grant him peace said that smile to fellow human is charity.

(الحديث) صدقة لك اخيك وجه في تبسمك

“Your smile on your brother’s face for you is charity (*sadaqah*).”<sup>xiii</sup>

Another hadits states that:

(الحديث) الله رسول من تبسما اكثر احد رايت ما

“Never I have seen anyone smile more than the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and grant him peace)”<sup>xiv</sup>

Similarly if a Muslim gives an example to other people with eating and drinking, or giving and receiving something by using his right hand, that would mean he is preaching by using non-verbal language / language of gestures. On the other hand, if a Muslim gives an example to others by giving respect to elder or to a teacher / *kyai* when he met each other or by kissing two arms of his parents / teachers as a sign of affection and respect for them, would not that also mean he is preaching using non-verbal language. And when a Muslim seriously hears lectures / advice of his parents with a serious eye, means he has set a good example to others even though through non-verbal language. The Prophet Muhammad also preached by using the language of body gestures to express intentions contained in the spoken language and clarifying the meaning to the object, like when he taught his friends praying and commanded them to imitate his movements. His words:

(الحديث) اصلي رايتوني كما صلوا

“Perform prayer as you all saw me to perform prayer”<sup>xv</sup>

Therefore, if a Muslim gives an example of how to perform good and true praying to a child, it means he has been preaching through the language of gestures. Dakwah through painting is one kind of Islamic dakwah activity. For example, a painter who paints about a boy who sat by bowing his head in front of a *kyai* / teacher as a sign of respect to him, and even then it contains language meaning of dakwah how one should respect elder people than us, including the teacher / *kyai*. On the other hand, if a Muslim painter to paint a beautiful universe while carving calligraphy "Allahu Akbar" at the top of his painting, even this language implies dakwah that God is the greatest Who has created a world so vast and so beautiful. Similarly if a Muslim painter wanted to show of how cruel the war in Iraq and how beauty of peace are through his painting, and it also contains language preaching even though through painting which is containing the meaning of the language of painting.

When someone introduced the teachings of Islam, or the abstract concept of justice, truth and evil to others either verbally or in writing, even through the behavior / body gestures and painting, then the language that serves as a vehicle identifier in the Islamic dakwah. And when the language is used to preach through social interaction, then the language that serves

as a vehicle for social interaction in the Islamic dakwah. This is suitable with the expression of Liliweri that language serves as a vehicle of identification, vehicle of social interaction, vehicles of catharsis and manipulative.<sup>xvi</sup> And when non-verbal language is used as a substitute and complement of verbal language, which clarifies the purpose that contained in verbal language then the language that serves as a vehicle for substitutes and complements in the Islamic dakwah. This is suitable with the expression of Furuta about the function of non-verbal expressions such as: as a substitute for verbal messages, as a complement to reinforce the verbal message and ignore the words that are pronounced.<sup>xvii</sup>

Thus the language both verbal and non verbal play a very important role and serves as a vehicle of identification, vehicle of social interaction, as substitutes and complements that clarify verbal language (especially non-verbal language) in the Islamic dakwah.

### **III. Language Influence on the Islamic Dakwah**

Language is very influential on the success of a mission or dakwah. Language that is soft and polite, kind and true, so beautiful to touch the hearts of listeners with a corresponding high or low intonation, of course, will draw the listener / audience to hear it so that dakwah can be successful. For example the following expression:

"Prayer is the pillar of religion. Prayer includes mid of worship. Why it is said like that, because it is not light nor heavy. It is said that prayer is not light because it should be undertaken regularly 5 times a day and night, and said that it is not heavy because prayer does not require many costs, for women just wear mukena and gloves, for men can simply wear clothes that cover his nakedness from the navel to the knee. Prayer does not need fancy and beautiful clothes, but the most important is the clothing must be clean. Therefore, let us all enforce prayer together in order that we will get the joy of living in the world and the Hereafter. "

"The smile includes a light worship. Why it is light? Because a smile is not a necessity that must be implemented as the five daily prayers as well as easy to do, also do not cost that much like when going for Haj So, let us multiply the smile because the smile is sadaqah as the words of the Prophet saw-may Allah bless and grant him peace: "Tabassumuka fi wajhi akhika laka sadaqah". So the more we smile the more we give alms, but not too often smiled, a little smile again, then people say maybe she is mad. "

Instead we should not use abusive language with too high intonation. As an example: "Everyone who does not pray includes an absolute infidel. So whoever of you does not pray is an absolute infidel!!! "

With language like that is not only uninteresting for the audience, can even make the audience feel offended, especially for those who have not been praying five times continuously so that they leave the speaker of dakwah and eventually dakwah become unsuccessful. Although it is known that man who does not pray is infidel or unbeliever in the sense of denying God's command, but not an absolute infidel and it sounds rude if one who is not praying called an absolute infidel. However if the preacher uses gentle and good language with the appropriate intonation so touched the hearts of the audience, then people who are rarely in performing prayer outwardly will become diligent people in performing prayer or in worshipping to God 'Allah swt.'

Thus in using the language, the preacher should preach polite in order that the audiences are interested in hearing / reading it. Do not use offensive language so that the audiences do not feel offended, do not also use the language that push / force due to Islamic dakwah is not coercion or propaganda. This is in accordance with the verse of the Qur'an (QS.al-Nahl [16]: 125) as an accurate method of dakwah:

(١٢٥).... أَحْسَنُ هِيَ بِالَّتِي وَجَادِلُهُمُ الْحَسَنَةَ وَالْمَوْعِظَةَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ رَبِّكَ سَبِيلٌ إِلَىٰ ادْعُ

"Invite (mankind, O Muhammad عليه الله صل وسلم) to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'an), and fair preaching or good advice, and argue them in a way that is better..."<sup>xviii</sup>

In addition to this, the preacher must also use good language and right intonation an appropriate sentence in order that the audience is interested in hearing it and does not feel boring, even if he wanted to make a joke though, do not ever use pornographic language / language that is not good because it can cause damage to the morality of the audience.

In connection with the use of intonation, Nugroho said that in order that person's speech can attract, so one should be able to process low and high tone of the sound pressure varies. How can he say regular expressions and how he speech the words that need to be emphasized to his audience.<sup>xix</sup>

Thus, the success of a mission or dakwah is also much influenced by the use of language. With meek / polite language, kind and true as well as the high-low of the appropriate intonation, if God wills, will lead to a successful mission or dakwah through any media, whether on stage, in the mosque / mushalla, at school or it is aired on television and radio and so on. In contrast with the coarse language and too high intonation, will lead to failure of a mission or dakwah.

Impressions picture via the TV as a medium of dakwah or preach also contains language of preach although there are bad things / porn and some others are good, then do not imitate the bad, but imitate the fine. This should be communicated to all Muslims in a good, gentle and polite with the appropriate intonation in order to be understood and practiced it correctly.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded as follows:

- 1) Islamic missionary or dakwah activity is an attempt to invite mankind which aims of adopting and implementing the teachings of Islam by wisely not by coercion that must be implemented for every Muslim, whether it be dakwah bi al-lisan, bi al-qalam, bi al-hal or preach through painting. Both verbal and non verbal language have a very important function in the Islamic dakwah. Verbal language serves as a vehicle of identification, a vehicle of social interaction in the activities of dakwah bi al-lisan or oral preach and dakwah bi al-Qalam or written preach. While non-verbal language serves as a vehicle identification, vehicle of social interaction, as substitutes and complements That clarify verbal language in dakwah bi al-hal or preach through action activities and preach through painting.

- 2) The success of a mission or dakwah is also much influenced by the use of language. With meek / polite language, kind and true as well as the high-low of the appropriate intonation, if God wills, will lead to a successful mission or dakwah. In contrast with the coarse language and too high intonation, will lead to failure of a mission or dakwah
- 3) One of the things that should be remembered and emulated by Muslims in preaching is how Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari preaching constantly use polite and nice language as well as he put forward metaphor examples that makes sense and it is interesting to read and easy to understand, especially those who have direct guidance from God.

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### Endnotes

- <sup>i</sup> Al Misbahy Habsyar. *Jihad dalam Dakwah*. (Makassar: Al Ahkam, 2000) p. 81
- <sup>ii</sup> Webster, A.M. *Webster Ninth New Colligiate Dictionary*. (U.S.A.: Merriam Webster Inc. Publisher, 1991), p. 226.
- <sup>iii</sup> Al Misbahy Habsyar, *op. cit.*, p. 16
- <sup>iv</sup> Liliweri, Alo, Dr, MS. *Komunikasi Verbal dan Nonverbal*. (PT. Citra Aditya Bakti, Bandung: 1994), p. v - vi.
- <sup>v</sup> Al Misbahy Habsyar, *op. cit.*, p. 16
- <sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60
- <sup>vii</sup> Al-Hilali Taqiuddin Muhammad, Dr and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*. (Dar-us-Salam Publications: Riyadh-Saudi Arabia, 1995). p. 63
- <sup>viii</sup> Al-Misbahy Habsyar. *loc.cit.*, p. 66
- <sup>ix</sup> See Sultan, Sahib, *Allah dan Jalan Mendekatkan Diri kepada-Nya dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Yusuf*. (Yapma. Makassar: 2008), p. 236
- <sup>x</sup> Sheikh Yusuf al-Makassari, F or 13b [3], MSKGB 108 Leiden, p.1-2
- <sup>xi</sup> Sahib, Muzdalifah, Dra. Hj., M. Hum. *A Cross Cultural Study on the Use of Polite Expression in English and Makassar*. (Makassar: Yayasan Fatiya Makassar, 2003), p. 64
- <sup>xii</sup> Liliweri Alo, Dr., M.S. *op.cit.*, p. 143
- <sup>xiii</sup> Muhammad, Isa Abu bin Saurah Al Turmudzy. *Sunan Al Tirmidzy*. Juz IV (Beirut: Dar Al Kutub Al Ilmiah, 1408 H/1987 M), p. 299
- <sup>xiv</sup> Muhammad, Isa Abu bin Saurah Al Turmudzy. *Sunan Al Tirmidzy*. Juz V (Beirut: Dar Al Kutub Al Ilmiah, 1408 H/1987 M), hal. 561
- <sup>xv</sup> Al-Misbahy Habsyar. *loc..cit.*, hal. 80
- <sup>xvi</sup> Liliweri Alo, Dr., M.S. *op.cit.*, hal. 14
- <sup>xvii</sup> Furuta. *Komunikasi Antarbudaya: Sebuah Perbandingan antara Jepang-Amerika*. Tranlated by Dr. Arifin Bey. (Jakarta: CV. Antarkarya, 1994), hal. 84
- <sup>xviii</sup> Al-Hilali Taqiuddin Muhammad, Dr and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*. (Dar-us-Salam Publications: Riyadh-Saudi Arabia, 1995). p. 421
- <sup>xix</sup> Nugroho, Adi. *Tehnik Mahir Berpidato Disertai Contoh*. (Surabaya: Indah, 1996). Hal. 13

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