TRANSFORMATIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING: DA'WAH AS A MEDIUM FOR EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY

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Abstract

Public speaking is a strategic communication skill in supporting the effectiveness of da'wah. From a contemporary perspective, da'wah is no longer merely understood as conveying normative messages, but also as a means of empowering the community. This article aims to analyze the relevance of transformative public speaking as a da'wah medium that is not only informative, but also participatory and drives social change. The research method used is a literature study with a descriptive-analytical approach. The results of the study indicate that transformative public speaking is able to integrate aspects of ethos, pathos, and logos in da'wah communication so that da'i can build credibility, engage the audience's emotions, and convey logical arguments that encourage critical awareness. Da'wah based on transformative public speaking has implications for increasing the spiritual, intellectual, and social capacity of the community. These findings emphasize that da'wah in the digital era needs to be oriented towards strengthening the capacity of the community through transformative public speaking skills.
Keywords: *Public Speaking, Da'wah, Transformative Communication, Empowerment, Community*

Abstract

Berbicara di depan umum adalah keterampilan komunikasi strategis dalam mendukung efektivitas dakwah. Dari perspektif kontemporer, dakwah tidak lagi hanya dipahami sebagai penyampaian pesan normatif, tetapi juga sebagai sarana pemberdayaan masyarakat. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relevansi pidato publik transformatif sebagai media dakwah yang tidak hanya informatif, tetapi juga partisipatif dan mendorong perubahan sosial. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah studi literatur dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pidato publik transformatif mampu mengintegrasikan aspek etos, patos, dan logos dalam komunikasi dakwah sehingga da'i dapat membangun kredibilitas, melibatkan emosi audiens, dan menyampaikan argumen logis yang mendorong kesadaran kritis. Dakwah berbasis pidato publik transformatif memiliki implikasi bagi peningkatan kapasitas spiritual, intelektual, dan sosial masyarakat. Temuan ini menekankan bahwa dakwah di era

digital perlu berorientasi pada penguatan kapasitas masyarakat melalui keterampilan berbicara di depan umum yang transformatif.

Kata Kunci: *Public Speaking, Dakwah, Komunikasi Transformasi, Pemberdayaan, Masyarakat*

A. Introduction

The progress of civilization, marked by advances in communication technology, has brought significant changes to how humans interact, deliver messages, and build influence.[1] In the digital era, the ability to speak in public is no longer regarded merely as a rhetorical skill but has become a strategic instrument for shaping public opinion, influencing behavior, and raising collective awareness. In the context of Islamic da'wah (propagation), public speaking occupies a central position as a medium for conveying Islamic values that are not only informative but also transformative.[2]

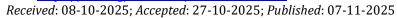This is where the urgency of transformative public speaking becomes evident—a model of da'wah communication that can touch the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of the audience, thereby encouraging positive change in both individual and collective life.

Transformative public speaking in Islamic da'wah not only emphasizes mastery of speaking techniques but also the ability to construct messages that are inspirational, persuasive, and solution-oriented. Beyond that, the transformative approach requires a da'i (Islamic preacher) to act as an agent of social change who instills values of courage, independence, and active participation among Muslims in facing global challenges. Thus, da'wah through public speaking functions not merely as a religious communication tool but also as an empowerment medium capable of improving the quality of Muslim life in various aspects—spiritual, intellectual, social, and cultural.

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[1] Deddy Mulyana, Communication Science: An Introduction (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2013), p. 45.

[2] Asep Muhyidin and Agus Ahmad Safei, Methods of Da'wah (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2002), p. 112.

However, da'wah as a communication process has a multidisciplinary dimension. It is not only related to the transmission of religious teachings but also intertwined with aspects of communication, psychology, and sociology. The development of the modern era demands that da'wah be adaptive—not only as an instrument of knowledge transfer but also as a medium for social transformation.

In this regard, public speaking becomes a fundamental competence for a da'i, as it determines how messages are delivered, received, and internalized by the audience.[3]

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that transformative public speaking is not merely a communication skill but a potential instrument of da'wah for empowering the Muslim community amid the challenges of the digital age. Nevertheless, several fundamental questions must be further formulated.[4]

First, how is the concept of transformative public speaking understood from the perspective of Islamic da'wah? This question is crucial because da'wah should not stop at delivering normative teachings but must also touch on behavioral and consciousness transformation among Muslims.

Second, how can transformative public speaking be positioned as an instrument of ummah empowerment in the digital era? This question is significant considering that da'wah cannot be separated from social dynamics and the advancement of communication technology, which influence how Muslims receive, interpret, and respond to religious messages. By formulating these two main questions, this study is expected to elaborate on the strategic role of transformative public speaking in da'wah while demonstrating its contribution to building awareness, independence, and

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[3] Arifin, M. (2018). The Science of Islamic Communication. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.

[4] Hamzah, A. (2021). Public Speaking from a Da'wah Perspective. Journal of Islamic Communication, 11(2), 155–170

critical capacity among Muslims amid the overwhelming flow of global information.

Based on the background and problem formulation above, this research aims to:

1. Analyze the concept of transformative public speaking from the perspective of Islamic da'wah. This objective seeks to develop a deep understanding of how public speaking functions not merely as an oral communication skill but also as a da'wah approach capable of fostering awareness, evoking emotion, and guiding audiences toward positive transformation.

2. Explain the relevance of transformative public speaking as an instrument of ummah empowerment in the digital era. This objective focuses on identifying the role of transformative public speaking-based da'wah in empowering Muslims to become more critical, adaptive, and capable of addressing rapidly evolving social, cultural, and technological challenges.

Overall, this research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of contextual Islamic da'wah discourse while offering practical implications for da'i and da'wah practitioners in optimizing transformative communication strategies to build ummah empowerment in the digital age.

In addition to its objectives, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretical Benefits

a. This study enriches the body of knowledge in Islamic da'wah, particularly concerning transformative communication and public speaking.

b. It contributes to the development of da'wah theory that emphasizes not only normative aspects but also ummah empowerment.

c. It serves as an academic reference for future studies examining da'wah from the perspective of modern communication.

2. Practical Benefits

a. It provides inspiration and practical guidance for da'i, mubaligh, and da'wah practitioners in developing more transformative and contextually relevant public speaking methods.

b. It helps Muslims understand that da'wah is not merely a spiritual call but also an empowerment movement to improve their quality of life.

c. It offers recommendations for da'wah institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and organizations in designing public speaking training programs oriented toward community empowerment.

B. Literature Review

1. Public Speaking and Rhetoric

Public speaking is defined as the art of speaking in front of an audience to influence, inspire, or move an audience.[5] Aristotle proposed three main components of rhetoric: ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic). This concept remains relevant in the context of preaching, as preachers are required to possess moral credibility, the ability to appeal to the congregation's emotions, and sound argumentative logic.

2. Islamic Communication

Islamic communication is the delivery of Islamic teachings through various media, with the goal of transforming the understanding, attitudes, and behavior of the audience in accordance with Islamic teachings. The effectiveness of Islamic communication is influenced by the competence of the communicator (da'i), the social context, and the appropriateness of the communication method.[6]

3. Transformative Da'wah

The concept of transformative da'wah shifts the paradigm of da'wah from mere knowledge transfer to social transformation. This model of da'wah positions the da'i as a facilitator, motivator, and agent of change.

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[5] Griffin, E. (2019). *A First Look at Communication Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill .

[6] Rakhmat, J. (2019). Communication Psychology. Bandung: Rosdakarya Youth

4. Empowering the Community

Empowerment is understood as an effort to increase the capacity of individuals and groups to become independent, critical, and effective in social life. From a da'wah perspective, empowerment is not only spiritual but also encompasses intellectual and social aspects.

C. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the practice of da'wah through transformative public speaking. This approach allows researchers to understand the meaning, values, and experiences of both da'wah practitioners and the community as recipients of da'wah messages. Qualitative research not only measures the success of da'wah quantitatively (number of audiences or activities), but also emphasizes the process, meaning, and changes that occur at the spiritual, intellectual, and social levels of the community.

The research used is descriptive-analytical. Descriptive research aims to objectively describe the reality on the ground, namely the forms and practices of da'wah based on transformative public speaking. Meanwhile, the analytical nature is intended to allow researchers not only to describe but also to analyze the process, strategies, and impact of da'wah on community empowerment.

D. Results And Discussion

In this study, several theoretical aspects were identified, including:[7]

1. The Concept of Transformative Public Speaking in Da'wah

Transformative public speaking is defined as a style of public speaking that emphasizes changing the paradigm, behavior, and actions of the audience.

In da'wah (Islamic preaching), this means that the da'i (preacher) acts not

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[7] Qodir, Z. (2020). Da'wah and Community Empowerment. Journal of Da'wah and Social Affairs, 8(1), 23–39

only as a messenger but also as an inspiration and mobilizer of the community. The main characteristics of transformative public speaking are:

a. Using a participatory approach (providing space for dialogue).
b. • Engaging the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of the audience.
c. • Directing the audience towards concrete action as a form of ongoing da'wah.

Throughout the history of communication, public speaking skills have consistently been viewed as an essential skill inherent in leaders, educators, and religious figures.

This is because da'wah is not merely about conveying religious teachings, but also an effort to internalize Islamic values in people's daily lives. Therefore, public speaking in da'wah goes beyond verbal aspects and delivery style, but rather extends to the realm of changing awareness, behavior, and even social structures.

2. Philosophical Foundations of Transformative Public Speaking

The concept of transformative public speaking rests on the idea that communication can transform social reality. Critical communication theory asserts that language is never neutral, but rather has the power to shape meaning, ideology, and social practices.

In the context of Islamic preaching, this means that every word a preacher delivers is not merely empty "religious information," but carries moral, ethical, and even political value. Therefore, public speaking in preaching must be directed not only toward understanding the congregation, but also toward mobilizing them, empowering them, and experiencing change for the better.

This philosophy aligns with the essence of da'wah as mentioned in the Qur'an, namely "Ud'u ilā sabīli rabbika bil-ḥikmati wal-mau'idhatil ḥasanah, wa jādilhum billatī hiya aḥsan" (Call people to the way of your Lord with wisdom, good advice, and the best dialogue) (QS. An-Nahl: 125). This verse suggests that

da'wah must be transformative: containing wisdom (intellectual dimension), good advice (moral-spiritual dimension), and dialogue (social-interactive dimension).

Characteristics of Transformative Public Speaking in Da'wah [8]. To understand more concretely, transformative public speaking in da'wah can be broken down into several key characteristics:

a. Awareness-Oriented, Not Just Information-Oriented

Transformative da'wah doesn't just fill the congregation with knowledge, but also awakens their critical awareness. For example, a Friday sermon discussing social justice issues doesn't stop at explaining verses but instead invites the congregation to reflect and take action in real life.

b. Integrating Emotional and Spiritual Dimensions

Transformative public speaking is not cold and dry communication. A preacher needs to touch the hearts of the audience with empathy, stories, and spiritual reflection, so that the message of da'wah is not just heard, but felt.

3. Integration Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in Da'wah.

Da'wah in Islam is a communication process with a noble purpose: conveying divine messages to humanity so that they may attain enlightenment, guidance, and transformation in life. However, da'wah is not merely about conveying the material or content of the message. More than that, da'wah is an art, a skill, and even the art of building trust and a connection between a da'wah preacher and his audience.

The history of classical communication, particularly that inherited from the Greek philosopher Aristotle, introduced three main dimensions in the art of rhetoric: ethos, pathos, and logos. These three elements later became important milestones that

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[8] Mulyana, D. (2018). *Ilmu Komunikasi: Suatu Pengantar*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya

are not only relevant in the world of general communication but also possess a very strong depth of meaning when integrated into the context of Islamic da'wah.

The da'i's moral credibility is the primary asset for building trust. Without integrity, the da'wah message loses its impact.

Ethos in rhetoric refers to the speaker's credibility. A da'wah preacher must not only master the da'wah material but must also present himself as a figure worthy of trust. This credibility can be seen from several aspects:

a. Knowledge and Understanding

A preacher with extensive religious knowledge will be viewed as more authoritative. The congregation will feel confident that the message conveyed is not merely personal opinion, but rather the result of in-depth study of the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic literature.

b. Morals and Exemplary Conduct

No matter how powerful a preacher's rhetoric is, if their behavior is not in line with the teachings they convey,

their ethos will be undermined. In Islam, a good example is worth more than a thousand words. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best example in this regard; he not only spoke but also demonstrated noble morals in his daily life.

c. Consistency and Commitment

Ethos is also built through consistency. The preaching delivered must be continuous, not fleeting, and demonstrate a long-term commitment to the community.

With a strong ethos, a preacher will gain the trust of his audience. This trust is the main foundation for a well-received message.

Pathos (audience emotion): The emotional language used by preachers can foster empathy, enthusiasm, and psychological bonding with the congregation. If ethos relates to "who the speaker is," then pathos concerns "how the audience feels." Pathos is the power of emotion in communication. In preaching, pathos plays a crucial role because

humans are not only rational beings, but also emotional and spiritual.

Stories have great power in touching hearts. The Qur'an also contains many stories of prophets, previous people, and historical events that are full of moral lessons. A preacher who is good at telling stories will find it easier to attract the congregation's attention.[9]

The third element, logos, is a dimension related to reason, evidence, and logic. In the context of Islamic da'wah, logos is manifested in the form of arguments based on verses from the Quran, hadith, and empirical evidence from life, including:

a. Naqli Arguments

A strong da'wah message is always rooted in the Quran and Sunnah. Every message must have a clear foundation so that the congregation understands that what is being conveyed is not merely an opinion, but part of Islamic revelation and teachings.

b. Aqli Arguments

Islam also encourages the use of reason. Transformative da'wah must be able to answer the congregation's logical questions, connect religious values with everyday life phenomena, and provide rational explanations.
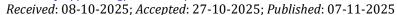
c. Social Data and Facts

In the modern era, logos can be enriched with scientific data, research results, or relevant social facts. For example, when discussing the dangers of drugs, a da'wah preacher can cite medical data or statistics to strengthen the da'wah message.

In Islamic preaching, these three dimensions cannot stand alone. They must be closely intertwined, strengthen each other, and unite into one unified whole.

The integration of ethos, pathos, and logos makes da'wah not only aesthetically beautiful in terms of communication, but also effective in building awareness, arousing feelings, and guiding people to the truth.

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[9] Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press.

4. Integrating Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in Da'wah

Although ethos, pathos, and logos each have their own roles, effective da'wah will be achieved when all three are harmoniously combined.

Ethos without pathos and logos will only produce a preacher who is trusted, but whose da'wah message is dry and unpromising.

Pathos without ethos and logos may touch the heart occasionally, but it is short-lived due to a lack of credibility and argumentation.

Logos without ethos and pathos will only produce sermons full of arguments and theories, but difficult to touch the soul.

Therefore, an ideal da'i is someone who possesses high credibility (ethos), is able to arouse emotions (pathos), and presents logical and strong arguments (logos).

For example, a Friday sermon delivered by combining these three aspects will be an effective sermon. The da'i opens with ethos: presenting himself as a person of knowledge and morals. He then builds on the pathos: using stories or illustrations that touch the congregation's hearts.

He then reinforced it with logos: providing evidence from the Quran, hadith, and social facts. This integration is what makes the sermon not only heard, but also felt and thought about.

5. Da'wah as a Medium for Empowering the Community

Da'wah, from an Islamic perspective, is not merely understood as a ceremonial religious activity taking place in mosques, religious study groups, or pulpits. More than that, da'wah is a social communication process oriented toward transformation, but a conscious effort to guide humanity toward goodness, free them from ignorance, and direct them toward a more dignified way of life. In this sense, da'wah can be positioned as a medium for empowering the community a means to empower society to recognize its potential, resolve problems, and play an

active role in the development of civilization.

The idea of da'wah as empowerment arose from the realization that Muslims need not only spiritual enlightenment but also social, economic, political, and cultural capacity building. A da'wah (preacher) is not merely a transmitter of normative verses, but also a facilitator of change, a motivator of awakening, and an agent of empowerment.

Through transformative public speaking, da'wah functions as:

a. Spiritual Empowerment

Emphasizes the strengthening of faith and spiritual awareness. A preacher whose communication is transformative not only emphasizes ritual obligations but also evokes a profound religious experience in the audience.

b. Intellectual Empowerment

Increases religious and social literacy, so that the congregation is not only religious but also critical. Da'wah must be a means of enlightening the congregation. Transformative public speaking not only conveys dogma or rules but also provides space for reason, logic, and critical thinking.

Effective preachers are able to connect Islamic teachings with the realities of contemporary life, so that audiences can understand the meaning of religious teachings rationally and contextually.

This makes da'wah a medium for intellectual enlightenment, which not only increases religious knowledge but also fosters critical and progressive thinking.

c. Social Empowerment:

Encouraging the active involvement of the congregation in social, economic, and cultural activities. Da'wah is not only about the individual and their vertical relationship with God, but also plays a significant role in building social life. Transformative public speaking encourages audiences to care for others, develop solidarity, and embody Islamic values in community life.

Social empowerment through da'wah can take the form of invitations to participate in social activities, care for the

poor, uphold justice, and strengthen brotherhood.

Thus, da'wah serves as a driving force for social change toward a more just, harmonious, and prosperous society.

6. Challenges of Transformative Preaching in the Digital Era

Entering the digital era, preaching has undergone a significant transformation. Developments in information technology present significant opportunities for the dissemination of Islamic messages, but at the same time, they also present significant challenges for preachers. Transformative preaching, which previously focused on physical spaces, must now encompass the virtual space with all its complexities.

There are at least three main challenges facing transformative preaching in the digital era: discourse competition, media adaptation, and multiculturalism.

First, discourse competition: the abundance of religious content on social media requires preaching to be authentic and engaging. The digital era is characterized by a rapid flow of information and a deluge of content across various social media platforms. In the religious context, countless individuals, communities, and organizations contribute to disseminating preaching content with diverse styles and perspectives.

This situation creates intense discourse competition. Preachers are no longer the sole source of reference, as congregants can easily find diverse opinions with just a click. This requires preachers to be able to present preaching that is authentic, relevant, and engaging.

The strength of personal branding, the quality of the material, and the delivery style are crucial aspects that distinguish transformative preaching from ordinary religious content. Without authenticity, the message risks being lost in a sea of information.

Second, Media Adaptation: Public speaking takes place not only on physical stages but also in virtual spaces (YouTube,

podcasts, Zoom, etc.). Preaching is no longer confined to the pulpit or a physical stage, but has also expanded into the virtual space. Platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, podcasts, and even virtual conferencing applications like Zoom have become new mediums for delivering preaching.

This requires preachers to acquire new public speaking skills, including technical mastery of camera and microphone use, video editing, and digital content management. Preachers are required to communicate effectively not only with audiences in person but also with those listening from behind a screen.

The different dynamics between the physical stage and the virtual space also pose a challenge, as emotional interactions that typically occur in person must now be presented through digital media.

Third, Multiculturalism: Preaching must be inclusive, able to address the diverse backgrounds of the audience. The digital era has expanded the reach of preaching beyond geographical boundaries. Preaching posted on social media can be viewed by people from diverse cultural, ethnic, and even religious backgrounds.

This requires preachers to prioritize an inclusive, tolerant, and wise attitude. Preaching material cannot focus solely on a specific group but must be able to address a diverse audience.

Preachers need to pay attention to social sensitivity, language, and cultural context to avoid misunderstandings. This is where transformative preaching is tested: to what extent it can serve as a medium that not only strengthens Islamic identity but also contributes to building social harmony amidst diversity.

E. Conclusion

Transformative public speaking is a strategic communication skill in contemporary da'wah. Through the integration of ethos, pathos, and logos, a da'i not only acts as a conveyor of normative messages but also as an agent of social change capable of raising the

critical, emotional, and spiritual awareness of the congregation.

The implication is that da'i need to master public speaking skills based on ethos, pathos, and logos, and adapt to digital media to make da'wah more relevant to the challenges of the times. Thus, transformative da'wah based on public speaking can be a driving force for sustainable social change.

Da'wah based on transformative public speaking has implications for three important aspects spiritual empowerment, namely strengthening faith and deepening religious experience. Atransformative public speaking invites the congregation to experience Islamic teachings more deeply, beyond just formal rituals. Through heartfelt delivery, a da'i is able to awaken existential spiritual awareness namely, faith that lives within and becomes a concrete guideline in daily life. Intellectual empowerment, namely increasing religious literacy and critical thinking skills; Transformative da'wah also plays a role in educating the community. Social empowerment, in the form of active community involvement in building solidarity, justice, and social harmony. Transformative public speaking emphasizes that da'wah must not be isolated from social reality. Thus, transformative public speaking can be an effective instrument in realizing da'wah that is participatory, solution-oriented, and oriented towards empowering the community.

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