

E-Da'wah: The message construction

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Abstract

E-dakwah (Electronic da'wah) is a term used to describe a preach that is publicly shared using the electronic media platform. In this study, the term E-da'wah refers to a message shared in social media, especially facebook fanpage. This study investigated the construction of da'wah message used by Ustadz in his facebook fanpage using the Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis. In addition, in-depth-interview was also applied to collect data. The findings show that most da'wah message shared in facebook fanpage was constructed carefully to trigger discussions, critical thinking and also increase faith of the followers.

Keywords: E-dakwah; facebook fanpage; social media; religious activity; Ustadz

1. Introduction

The word 'da'wah' (sermon) is a familiar word for Indonesian muslims because it has become a part of our daily life. Da'wah can be conducted in many forms, such as through discussion, recitation and religious assembly (tabligh akbar). Enjang and Aliyudin define da'wah activity as the process of inviting people to al-Islam by oral (da'wah bi al-lisan) or written (da'wah bi al-qalam) and can also be done through action (da'wah bi ahsan al-amal) (Fakhruroji, 2017: 3). Traditionally da'wah was conducted from one place to another whereas ustadz (preacher) speak live in front of hundreds of his jama'ah (audiences) to give speech about the religious practice accoding to Qur'an and As Sunnah. However, this tradional da'wah has several weaknessess. First, the traditional da'wah is bound to time and space means that ustadz should be in the same place and time with the audience (ummah) in order to deliver da'wah effectively. Second, shared messages in da'wah in public or private places can't be saved and shared instantly. Third, the communication flow created in traditional da'wah mostly one-way communication due to the limited time. However, these weaknessess can be overcome with the use of new media.

Communication and Information Technology (ICT) support the emergence of a new media known as cyber media or new media. The use of this cyber media is not only touch social, economic, political and legal fields but also has become part of religious life, especially in da'wah. Da'wah activity through internet-based media is referred to as e-da'wah (electronic da'wah). Nurdin (2014) asserts that e-da'wah has several advantages: (a) da'wah is not limited to time and place; (b) da'wah can be made interesting and interactive; (c) the scope area of da'wah is increasing; (d) minimal cost and time; (e) da'wah can be stored for a long time (longevity). Thus, e-da'wah helps the information shared in da'wah efficiently, effectively and instantly.

The transition from conventional *da'wah* to *e-da'wah* began in the 1990s. Donny (Ahmad, 2013) observed a number of *da'wah* sites that developed from the 1990s to 2000, including MyQur'an.com (July 1999), Ukhuwah.or.id (February 2000), Muslemworld.co.id (October 2000) and Indohalal.com (February 2000). Furthermore, based on the manual classification of Islamic sites in Indonesia, Ahmad (2013) found that within one year, 2007-2008, the number of Islamic sites that developed in Indonesia reached 420 sites with several categories of themes, such as about women, family life and children. The increasing number of Islamic sites is possible because of the increased activity of the Internet. Internet usage in Indonesia has increased significantly compared to other ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. In 2000, internet users in Indonesia

recorded only 2 million people. In 2017, facebook users in Indonesia has reached to 88 millions users alone on June 2016 with 33.4% penetration rate (Asia Marketing Research, 2017).

Founded in 2004, facebook's mission is to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. People use facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world and to share and express what matters to them (Our mission, 2017). But now, based on some research on the motive of using facebook shows that the use of this media is not just for socializing and doing business, but also to get spiritual / religious experience (Baesler & Chen, 2013). Research conducted by Baesler and Chen (2013) on undergraduate and graduate students in the United States tries to map the use of various media: SMS, facebook and Email to pray for both themselves and others. The results show that facebook ranks second as a medium of introduction to prayer. Prayer through these three media is also positively associated with affection for self, others and God. Another study that examines the use of facebook in support of religious activities conducted by Ashaari and Farahin (2012). Specifically this study discusses eight newsworthiness criteria in da'wah entries on facebook. The results show that entries with the theme of people, conflict, impact and unsual are often used by *ustadz* in preaching on facebook (M. Faisal Ashaari & N. Adhwa Farahin, 2012)

In addition to facebook, other internet-based media that are used as a forum to express beliefs / religions are blogs (Cheong, Halavais, & Kwon, 2008). In his research, Cheong, Halavais & Kwon (2008) analyzed 200 blogs that have religious-themed content, especially Christianity. Cheong's research results show that blogs provide an integrated spiritual experience for pilgrims, a place where personal and common experiences are unified, and what is sacred and ordinary. This study breaks the general assumption that blogging is just a 'fun' activity. By looking at this phenomena, it can be said that the social media has also become the place for religious activities, where people share their faith and religious point of view. Moreover, people also search for religious information using social media. However, not every religious messages in social media can be considered as da'wah. Da'wah messages are usually carefully constructed by ustadz so that they're able to inform, educate as well as generate religious discussion or even deepen the audiences' faith. Thus, this research questioning on how the da'wah messages are constructed by ustadz.

This research aims to find out the *da'wah* message construction using framing analysis model of Zhongdan Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki. Pan and Kosicki (1993) used framing as an approach to media discourse. They argued that public policies issue in news media are carefully constructed by politicians and interests groups. Framing analysis, by far, is widely use to analyse news media. However, the use of framing analysis is not limited to news media only. It can be applied to analyse all written messages published in news media, press releases, company profile and social media. Quoting Hallahan, An and Gower (2009) argue that framing research isn't only use to analyse media framing but also potentially useful for identifying strategic messages in areas such as public relations. Based on this premise, we evoke the use of framing analysis to analyse *da'wah* messages in facebook fanpage.

Da'wah messages shared in facebook fanpage mostly written by famous ustadz. On pre-research observation, we found some active facebook fanpages belong to some ustadz, namely: Yusuf Mansur, K.H. Muhammad Arifin Ilham, KH.Abdullah Gymnastiar and Felix Siauw. These ustadz's fanpages are liked by millions of people on facebook. Thus, their messages on their page are liked, read, and shared by at least hundreds to thousands of people each day. For this research, we focused on da'wah messages in ustadz Felix Siauw facebook fanpage. The followers (likes) of Ustad Felix Siauw reached 3.383.060 people in 2016. In May 2017, the followers (likes) increase to 3.970.326 people. In August 2017, the followers has reached to 4.009.195.

2. Method

This is a qualitative research. Qualitative research emphasizes conducting detailed examination of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life (Neuman, 2003: 139). Quoting Deacon, Daymon and Holloway (2002; 4) assert that qualitative research concerns itself with the way that people 'make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings through language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals'. In addition, this research explores people's intentions, motivations and subjective experiences (Daymon and Holloway, 2005; 4).

The method used in this research is framing analysis by Zhongdan Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki. Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis has four empirically four dimensions – syntactical, script, thematic and rhetorical structures. The *da'wah* messages analyzed were those shared in Ustad Felix Siauw facebook fanpage. The four dimensions used to breakdown the messages construction shared by Ustadz Felix Siauw in his facebook fanpage during Ramadhan 1438 H/ 27 May – 25 June 2017. For this research, we analysed forty-two messages shared in his facebook fanpage. In one day, he shared one to three *da'wah* messages. In addtion to textual analysis, indepth interview is also used as primary data collection. The informan of this research is Ustadz Felix Siauw as the owner and administrator of the facebook fanpage.

Table 1. Da'wah messages in Ustadz Felix Siauw's Facebook Fanpage in Ramadhan 1438 H

No	DATE	TIME	TITLE	No	DATE	TIME	TITLE	
1	27/5	19:48	Iman yang bertanggungjawab	22		13:54	Sejauh mana kita berbekal?	
2	28/5	16:03	Bila Amal ini Penentunya	23	11/6	14:08	Pelajaran dari para pemaksiat taubat	
3	29/5	20:06	Siapa yang tak suka kebaikan?	24	13/6	3:02	Cinta yang bawa bahagia	
4	30/5	3:35	Sejauh mana Ramadhan mengantar?	25		14:32	Rahasia meminta	
5		15:54	Keutamaan adab dari ilmu	26	14/6	14:22	Taat itu pasti dimudahkan	
6	31/5	14:03	(tanpa judul)	27		21:38	Mencari takwa	
7		20:19	Apakah negara selalu benar?	28	15/6	14:04	Tentang hafalan Al-Qur'an	
8	1/6	16:21	Siapa yang dimuliakan penguasa?	29	16/6	13:54	Hakikat Itikaf	
9	4/6	14:03	Puasa seharusnya	30	17/6	18:15	Islam itu yang benar	
10		19:57	Islam agama dunia	31	18/6	2:32	Muslim anti-mainstream	
11	5/6	14:20	Kebenaran hanya dari Allah	32		4:11	Ramai dan sunyi sama baiknya	
12		20:41	(tanpa judul)	33	19/6	14:29	Bahagia tiap berbuka	
13	6/6	14:17	Andai nikmat dunia bisa menyelamatkan	34		20:53	Lebih jahil kaum Quraisy Jahilliyyah	
14	7/6	4:30	Taat dan Maksiat kecil	35	20/6	14:23	Yang pasti dan yang tidak	
15	8/6	5:45	Al-Qur'an itu solusi Indonesia	36	21/6	7:10	Ayat pluralisme maksa	
16		7:45	Negeri muslim terbesar yang Islamophobia	37		14:36	Ada keindahan dibalik ujian	
17		7:50	Unit kerja khusus, pembinaan ideologi Al-Qur'an (ngarep)	38		21:26	Tak ada yang lebih tinggi dari Islam	
18	9/6	23:24	Sedikit logika	39	22/6	7:13	Apakah surah Al-Baqarah 62 berbicara pluralisme?	
19		23:38	Bersama Al-Qur'an	40		13:14	2 hari dan 1 malam tersisa	
20		23:56	Al-Qur'an yang istimewa	41	23/6	2:17	Asal jangan menyinggung penguasa	
21	10/6	13:42	Istiqamah dalam kebaikan	42	24/6	21:25	Perpisahan itu tiba	

3. Result and discussion

Facebook fanpage was introduced in November 2007. Pages are public profiles that let artists, public figures, businesses, brands, organizations, and non-profits to connect with the facebook community. In fanpage, someone can express one's recent thoughts and share pictures or videos with their fans/ followers. When someone likes or comments on a page post, that activity may be shared with their friends and increase the Page's exposure and reach (Products, 2017).

Ustadz Felix Siauw facebook fanpage created in 2009 but his facebook account was created in 2007 in Jakarta. At first, the followers of his facebook fanpage was only about 3.000 follower but it didn't stop him from doing da'wah. For him, da'wah is a must in order to pass and share Islam to a broader audiences.

"Pertama kali saya berkenalan dengan media sosial itu 2007 ketika saya di Jakarta itu saya pertama kali saya buat akun facebook. Saat itu belum banyak orang-orang yang masuk lalu berdakwah di situ tapi saya sudah mulai karena kan bagi saya tuh kan pertanyaannya selalu ketika saya masuk islam, ketika saya mulai dakwah pertanyaannya adalah selalu bagaimana menghantarkan ide ini ke lebih banyak orang lalu kemudian kita aktif di facebook dan sebagainya. Kemudian masuk fanpage itu di tahun 2009 tapi enggak terlalu banyak pengikutnya, sangat sedikit sekali, di bawah 3.000-an pada masanya di facebook fanpage yang sekarang sudah 3 juta-an itu" (Felix Siauw, 2017)

Based on Felix Siauw's statement, facebook fanpage is a useful media for its ability to reach many audiences. Moreover, from his statement we can also conclude that the number of followers or audience increase from year to year. In 2009, ustadz Felix Siauw's followers in his facebook fanpage was only about 3000 followers, but currently there are 4 millions followers. So, the increasing number of follower is quite significant. In addition, it also means that more people read *da'wah* messages written and shared by ustadz Felix Siauw.

Da'wah messages written and shared by Ustadz Felix Siauw are about two to three messages a day. In Ramadhan 2017 (1438 H), there are 42 messages on his facebook fanpage. From these 42 messages, 22

messages (in bold letters, see table 1) discuss about the activities and rituals that muslims can do during Ramadhan and the importance of the Ramadhan. While the other 20 messages discuss about Islam in general. According to ustadz Felix Siauw, he doesn't have specific themes for special events/ months in writing and sharing da'wah messages. For example, during Ramadhan, his messages can be about Ramadhan but they can also discuss about politics and other aspects of life. "Iya kan karena Islam itu kan tidak dibagi-bagi ya artinya bagaimana mungkin seseorang misalkan contoh ketika Ramadhan udah kita jangan bahas politik, udah bahas yang tenang-tenang aja karena lagi bulan Ramadhan...ya mungkin ada yang begitu tapi kalau saya enggak." (Because we can't separate Islam from other aspects of life. It means that, for example, since it's Ramadhan, let's not discuss about politics, just be calm and quiet..well, some people may do that, but not me) (Felix Siauw, 2017).

In writting da'wah messages Ustadz Felix Siauw has specific formulas. These formulas help him and his followers to identify and recognize which messages written by him and which aren't. These formulas are important since there are so many hoax messages, including da'wah messages shared in social media. By having these formulas, people will find difficulties in imitating or writing false da'wah messages using his name. He said: "saya punya...saya punya rumus sih kalau untuk....untuk membuat pesan itu ya.. Nah itu ada beberapa ke-khas-an yang orang pasti tau ya berarti itu tulisan saya. Nah makanya kalau ada yang berlainan dengan itu pasti orang bertanya-tanya ini tulisan felix bukan" (I have formulas to write da'wah messages...there are some signatures that people will directly recognize my writings) (Felix Siauw, 2017). Based on this statement, we'd like to explore further about Ustadz Felix Siauw's da'wah messages using Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis.

The concept of framing, as Entman (1993; 51) claimed, "offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text." Through framing analysis, the influnce-source of an information over human consciousness can be tracked by exploring the messages construction in form of speech, utterance, news report or novel. Pan and Kosicki (1993) specifically mentioned four dimensions to breakdown messages. First is syntactical structures. Syntactical structures refer to the stable patterns of the arragement of words or phrases into sentences (Pan and Kosicki, 1993; 59). In most news stories, syntactical structures can bee seen from a headline, a lead and objectivity. There are three ways to use these framing devices effectively: claiming empirical validity or facticity by quoting experts or citing empirical data, linking certain points of view to authority by quoting official sources, and marginalizing certain points of view by relating a quote or point of view to a social deviant.

In *Ustadz* Felix Siauw *da'wah* messages in his facebook fanpage, the syntactical structures can be found in the first and second paragraph. His da'wah messages usually began with rationalization or facts or data. For example in a *da'wah* message tittled *Iman yang bertanggungjawab* shared in May 27, 2017 at 19:48, the first sentence in the first paragraph says, "*Allah sampaikan dalam surah Ibrahim 24, bahwasanya kalimat syahadat itu seperti pohon yang kuat akarnya, tinggi menjulang rantingnya, dan memberi buah tiap masanya".* (Have you not considered how Allah presents an example, [making] a good word like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [high] in the sky? QS. Ibrahim verse 24). Another example is in a message tittled *Hakikat Itikaf* on Friday, 16 June 2017 at 13.54, he wrote "*Itikaf berarti diam, fokus dan bersungguh-sungguh dan tekun, asal katanya "akafa" yang ditambahkan alif dan ta untuk menunjukkan proses yang serius tentangnya.*" (Itikaf means doing nothing, focus and has a strong will and dilligent, the origin is "*akafa*" added by *alif* and *ta'* to show serius process). From these two *da'wah* messages, it can be concluded that the syntactical structure of ustadz Felix Siauw's da'wah messages can start with quoting a verse from the Holly Qur'an or giving a definition of a word that becomes the main theme of the message.

The second dimension of Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis method is script structure. A script refers to an established and stable sequence of activities and components of an event that have been internalized as a structured mental representation of the event (Pan and Kosicki, 1993; 60). Quoting Vandijk, Pan and Kosicki inserts that there are rules called story grammars in a script. These story grammars include the five Ws (What, Who, When, Where and Why) and one H (How). The presence of script in a message convey that this message is an independent unit because it appears to contain complete information of an event with a beginning, a climax, and an end. In addition, it also pushes our attention to drama, action, characters and human emotions in the message.

The script structure in ustadz Felix Siauw's da'wah message mostly include the story grammars (5Ws and 1H). For example, in a da'wah message tittled Sejauh Mana Ramadhan Mengantar on 31 May 2017 at 03:35, the story grammars are as follow: What – intropeksi diri apa saja yang sudah dilakukan selama bulan Ramadhan; Who – Umat Islam; When – bulan Ramadhan; Why – sejauhmana Ramadhan dan puasa sudah memberi kebaikan; How – kualitas puasa, shalat, dan interaksi Al-Qur'an dengan mengamalkannya. Another example is a da'wah message tittled Keutamaan Adab dari Ilmu on the same day at 15:54. The story grammars of this message are: What – adab dan ilmu; Who – orang yang mencari ilmu; Where – majelis ilmu; Why: keutamaan adab dari ilmu; How - adab datang dari pembiasaan. Terbiasa dengan lisan yang baik, memperlakukan orang lain secara mulia, tawadhu, memperbaiki hubungan dengan Allah dan manusia merupakan adab. Dan ilmu menjadi adab ketika menghantarkan kita ke jalan ibadah dan ketakwaannya.

The script structure in Ustad Felix Siauw da'wah message isn't always complete the 5Ws and 1H story grammars. Some messages contain three to four Ws and 1H, but others complete the story grammars. It means that in da'wah messages the story line also important in order to attract the readers and trigger discussion. Furthermore, it can also create emotional bound between *ustadz* and his followers as seen in fig.1. One of the comment stated, "semoga tulisan antum bisa memotivasi kami selalu untuk memperbaiki diri." (hopefully your written message can motivate us to be a better person). Another comment, "...sungguh membuat saya yang sudah muslim dari keturunan iri dengan begitu banyak ilmu pengetahuan agama.." (...i'm a muslim-born but i'm jealous with you who has lots of knowledge about Islam religious teaching). These comments show followers' affection toward the da'wah message written by ustadz Felix Siauw.



Figure 1. Da'wah message and the comments

The third Pan and Kosicki's framing dimension is thematic structures. Thematic structures reflect the tendency of journalists to impose a causal theme on their news stories, either in the form of explicit causal statements or by linking observations to the direct quote of a source (Scheufele ,1999;111). Pan and Kosicki (1993; 59) define theme as an "an idea that connects different semantic elements of a story (e.g., descriptions of an action or an actor, quotes of sources, and background information) into a coherent whole". In a da'wah message tittled Keutamaan Adab dari Ilmu posted on May 30, 2017 the main theme is about the importance of behaviour in seeking knowledge. In order to highlight this theme, ustadz Felix Siauw told a story told by Imam Adz-Dzahabi about Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal's religious assembly. "5000 orang atau lebih menghadiri majelis Imam Ahmad. 500 orang menulis, sisanya memperhatikan keluhuran adab dan kepribadiannya" (5000 people or more attending Imam Ahmad's religious assembly. 500 people wrote, others paid attention to his good behaviour and personality).

The fourth Pan and Kosicki's framing device is Rhetorical structures. Rhetorical structure refer to the stylistic choices made by journalists (Pan and Kosicki, 1993; 62). Rhetorical can also be used to invoke images, increase salience of a point, and increase vividness of a report. In ustadz Felix Siauw's da'wah messages, rhetorical structures are reflected in phrases used to highlight the message and improve his point. Some of the phrases usually used as the tittle of his da'wah messages, such as "Iman yang bertanggungjawab" (27/5), "Islam Agama Dunia" (4/6), "Puasa seharusnya" (4/6), "Bahagia tiap berbuka" (27/6), and "Muslim antimainstream" (18/6).

Based on Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis on ustadz Felix Siauw's *da'wah* messages, it can be inferred that *da'wah* message posted in facebook fanpage is carefully constructed by the writer, in this case, ustadz. As expressed by ustadz Felix Siauw:

"saya punya rumus sih kalau untuk....untuk membuat pesan itu ya. Kalau saya kan pesannya berbait-bait kalau sebenarnya. Kenapa? Kalau kenapa supaya orang bacanya gak capek dan biasanya ketika saya menulis ya saya pasti pertama mendahulukan data, yang kedua adalah pandangan, yang ketiga adalah solusi. Nah itu ada beberapa ke-khas-an yang orang pasti tau ya berarti itu tulisan saya." (I have my own formula in writing da'wah messages. My messages are written in stanzas. Why? So that readers don't feel tired reading them. When I write, I always start it with data. Then, my point of view, afterthat solution. Well, that's my messages characteristics that people would recognize)

From his statement it can be inferred that da'wah messages are not merely religious messages that reflect the writer's faith and beliefs but also as an expression of ideas or thoughts of ustadz. Da'wah messages are not just sharing Islamic way of life and practice but also touching the social, economic and even political issues that is happening on in the country. In addition, da'wah messages in social media is constructed using informal language and occasionally use imaginary sentences. By using informal language, these messages are easily understood by the readers.

The practice of da'wah in online media or e-da'wah is actually in accordance to Hjarvard's (2011; 114) concept of 'mediatisation of religion'. Mediatisation of religion relies on mass media to distribute religious issues. However, Hjarvard argues that mediatisation of religion is not a universal phenomenon that characterises all cultures and societies. It is primarily took place in a media-literate society, especially in a networked society. Furthermore, the nature of the mediatisation of religion may be differ from one society to another depending on the specific religion, media and context in question. Although it doesn't occur in any societies, in general mediatisation entails the transformation of three aspects of religion (Hjarvard, 2008): first, the media become an important, if not primary source of information about religious issues; second, religious information and experiences, and interactive media provide a platform for the expression and circulation of individual beliefs; third, media – as cultural and social environment – provide spiritual guidance, moral orientation, ritual passages and a sense of community belonging.

4. Conclusion

Electronic da'wah (e-da'wah) as displayed in facebook fanpage wall messages are well-designed messages. These messages fulfil the four dimensions of Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis: syntactical, script, thematic and rhetorical structures. These four dimensions eventually make the messages more understandable and practical for the followers or readers. Furthermore, they also potray the power of the messages to generate discussion, create emotional bound between ustadz and his followers, and provide spiritual guidance for the followers. These are possible since the theme of da'wah messages are varied. They are not just about religious practice or teachings but also about social, political, and economic issues.

The practice of e-da'wah can be considered as 'mediatisation of religion' in which religious messages are spread through mass media. Mass media becomes the main tool to connect the source of religious teaching (ustadz) with the audiences or followers. Considered as one of the most popular and widely used media platform, facebook fanpage transform the traditional religious assembly into cyber religious assembly where people obtain their religious fulfilment by reading the messages written by certain ustadz.

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