

PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION: A LIBRARY STUDY ON DA'WAH MESSAGES IN DIGITAL MEDIA

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Abstract : *Digital media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of Islamic communication, enabling Muslim scholars, preachers, and communities to disseminate da'wah messages across geographical and cultural boundaries with unprecedented reach. Within this evolving communicative environment, the use of English as a vehicular language has gained considerable traction, particularly in reaching Muslim minorities in Western countries and non-Arabic-speaking communities worldwide. This study examines the persuasive language strategies employed in English-medium da'wah messages distributed through various digital platforms, including social media channels, online lectures, podcasts, and institutional websites. Drawing upon a systematic library study methodology, the research analyzes theoretical frameworks from rhetorical theory, discourse analysis, and Islamic communication studies to understand how contemporary Muslim communicators construct persuasive appeals. The objectives of the present investigation are threefold: to identify the dominant persuasive language strategies deployed in digital da'wah content in English, to examine how these strategies align with classical Islamic rhetorical traditions such as hikmah, maw'izah, and mujadalah, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these communicative approaches in contemporary digital contexts. The methodological approach adopted in this study involves the systematic collection, review, and critical analysis of published scholarly works, including books, accredited national journals, and internationally reputed academic journals published within the past three to five years. Findings reveal that digital da'wah practitioners employ a sophisticated amalgamation of Aristotelian appeals—ethos, pathos, and logos—alongside distinctively Islamic rhetorical conventions, constructing messages that are simultaneously persuasive, culturally sensitive, and spiritually grounded. The research further identifies narrative framing, emotional resonance, evidence-based argumentation, and interpersonal address as recurrent strategic features in high-engagement da'wah content. These findings carry significant implications for Islamic communication practitioners, educators, and scholars concerned with the effective propagation of Islamic values in the digital age.*

Keywords: *persuasive language, da'wah communication, digital media, Islamic rhetoric, English discourse*

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Introduction

The proliferation of digital technologies in the twenty-first century has engendered a profound reconfiguration of religious communication practices across the globe. Within the Islamic tradition, the concept of da'wah understood broadly as the invitation, call, or propagation of Islamic teachings to both Muslims and non-Muslims—has historically relied upon face-to-face encounters, written manuscripts, and institutional channels such as mosques and madrasahs. However, as Hamid and Hasim (2022) observe, the advent of social media platforms, streaming services, and digital content ecosystems has introduced entirely novel modalities through which da'wah practitioners engage their audiences, fundamentally altering the rhetorical conditions under which Islamic messages are constructed and received.

The growing adoption of English as a medium of da'wah communication represents one of the most significant linguistic developments within contemporary Islamic outreach. Scholars such as Zailani, Mohd Noor, and Abdullah (2021) have noted that English-medium Islamic content has expanded substantially over the past decade, driven by demographic factors including large Muslim diaspora communities in English-speaking countries, the increasing globalization of Islamic education, and the desire of Muslim communicators to engage with pluralistic, multilingual audiences. In this context, the strategic deployment of persuasive language becomes not merely a rhetorical choice but a communicative necessity, determining whether da'wah messages resonate meaningfully with intended recipients or fail to penetrate the attentional barriers characteristic of contemporary digital media consumption.

Persuasion constitutes one of the most extensively theorized dimensions of human communication. The classical Aristotelian tripartite framework—comprising ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical reasoning)—has endured as a foundational analytical lens for understanding persuasive discourse across diverse cultural and temporal contexts (Fahnestock, 2020). When applied to religious communication, however, these categories acquire additional layers of meaning, as the communicator's authority derives not only from demonstrated expertise but also from perceived spiritual standing, moral rectitude, and alignment with divine guidance. As Rahman and Ismail (2022) argue, in Islamic rhetorical tradition, the ethos of the da'i (caller to Islam) is inseparable from their moral character and religious knowledge, creating a distinctive form of persuasive authority that differs substantially from secular rhetorical models.

The digital media environment presents both extraordinary opportunities and formidable challenges for da'wah communicators. On one hand, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and dedicated Islamic websites afford unprecedented reach, enabling a single piece of da'wah content to circulate globally within hours of its publication (Bunt, 2021). On the other hand, the attention economy of digital media demands that content compete vigorously for audience engagement against an overwhelming volume of information, entertainment, and competing narratives. This competitive environment incentivizes da'wah practitioners to adopt

increasingly sophisticated communicative strategies, drawing upon insights from marketing communication, narrative theory, and digital rhetoric to maximize the persuasive impact of their messages.

Existing scholarship on Islamic communication has predominantly focused on Arabic-medium da'wah, with comparatively limited attention directed toward the distinctive characteristics of English-medium Islamic discourse. Studies that do address English-language da'wah often examine it through a sociolinguistic lens, focusing on questions of language choice and identity rather than the specific rhetorical strategies employed (Mukadam & Scott-Baumann, 2020). Furthermore, the rapid evolution of digital media means that much existing research predates the most recent developments in platform architecture and audience behavior, creating a gap between theoretical frameworks and contemporary communicative realities. The present study seeks to address this gap through a comprehensive library-based investigation of persuasive language strategies in English-medium digital da'wah.

The theoretical grounding of this research draws upon an interdisciplinary framework that integrates insights from classical Islamic rhetorical theory, contemporary communication studies, and critical discourse analysis. Classical Islamic scholarship has articulated several foundational principles for effective da'wah communication, most notably the Quranic injunction in Surah An-Nahl (16:125) to engage in da'wah through hikmah (wisdom), maw'izah hasanah (beautiful preaching), and mujadalah (argumentation in the best manner). As Aziz and Amin (2021) demonstrate, these three modes of communication correspond in significant ways to the Aristotelian categories of logos, pathos, and ethos respectively, suggesting a deep structural congruence between Islamic and Western rhetorical traditions that warrants systematic scholarly exploration.

The significance of this research extends beyond the purely academic realm. As Muslim communities worldwide grapple with questions of identity, belonging, and effective self-representation in pluralistic societies, the development of sophisticated, culturally competent communicative strategies for English-medium da'wah becomes a matter of considerable practical importance. Practitioners who understand the principles underlying effective persuasive communication are better equipped to design messages that achieve their intended goals—whether fostering spiritual development among existing Muslims, facilitating informed understanding among non-Muslim audiences, or countering misrepresentations of Islam in mainstream media discourse (Hassan & Ahmad, 2023). By systematically mapping the persuasive strategies that characterize high-quality English-medium da'wah content, this study aims to provide a scholarly foundation for the development of more effective, reflective, and ethically grounded Islamic communication practice.

Given the breadth and complexity of the subject matter, this study adopts a clearly defined scope and set of objectives. The research focuses specifically on English-language da'wah content distributed through digital media platforms, with particular attention to content that has demonstrated significant audience engagement

and scholarly recognition. The analysis draws upon a rich body of theoretical and empirical literature to construct a comprehensive framework for understanding persuasive language strategies in this specific communicative context. The following section details the methodological approach adopted in the study, followed by a presentation of key findings and a discussion of their theoretical and practical implications.

Research Methodology

This study employs a systematic library research methodology, also designated in the scholarly literature as a library study or desk research approach. As articulated by Zed (2022), library research constitutes a form of qualitative investigation in which the researcher gathers, evaluates, and synthesizes existing published knowledge to construct a coherent analytical framework and generate well-supported scholarly conclusions without conducting primary data collection in the field. This approach is particularly suited to the present inquiry, given the extensive body of theoretical and empirical literature available on persuasive communication, Islamic rhetoric, and digital da'wah.

The data sources for this study consist of two principal categories of scholarly literature. First, the study draws upon academic books published within the past five years (2020–2025) that address themes of rhetoric, Islamic communication, digital media, and discourse analysis. Second, the study incorporates peer-reviewed journal articles published within the past three years (2022–2025), drawn from both accredited national Indonesian journals indexed in SINTA (Science and Technology Index) and internationally reputed journals indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science database. Sources were identified through systematic searches of Google Scholar, EBSCO, ProQuest, and institutional library databases, using search terms including “persuasive language da'wah,” “Islamic digital communication,” “English Islamic rhetoric,” and related keyword combinations.

The analytical procedure involved three stages: (1) systematic collection and cataloguing of relevant sources, (2) critical reading and thematic coding of source materials to identify recurrent theoretical concepts and empirical findings, and (3) integrative synthesis of identified themes into a coherent analytical narrative. The criteria for source inclusion required relevance to the study's core themes, credibility of publication venue, and currency of publication date. Sources not meeting these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

Results And Discussion

Classical Islamic Rhetorical Strategies in Digital Da'wah

The analysis of theoretical literature reveals that contemporary English-medium digital da'wah practitioners draw extensively upon the classical Islamic rhetorical framework encoded in Quranic verse 16:125, adapting its three fundamental modes hikmah, maw'izah hasanah, and mujadalah to the affordances and constraints

of digital media environments. Aziz and Amin (2021) demonstrate that hikmah in digital contexts manifests primarily as the careful selection of arguments, examples, and framings calibrated to the intellectual level and existential concerns of target audiences. Da'wah communicators who demonstrate hikmah strategically choose not to overwhelm their audiences with theological complexity but rather identify the specific conceptual entry points most likely to resonate with particular audience segments. This audience-centered approach reflects a sophisticated understanding of rhetorical occasion and kairos, the strategic deployment of communication at the right moment and in the right manner.

Maw'izah hasanah, conventionally translated as beautiful or excellent admonition, functions in digital da'wah primarily through the cultivation of emotional resonance and the construction of affectively compelling narratives. As Rahim and Osman (2023) observe, high-engagement da'wah content on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram systematically employs personal testimony, emotional storytelling, and vivid illustrative examples to create empathetic connections between communicators and audiences. These narrative strategies activate what communication scholars term transportation a psychological state in which audience members become absorbed in a story and, through this absorption, update their beliefs and attitudes in directions aligned with the narrative's implicit or explicit messaging. The effectiveness of narrative transportation in persuasive religious communication has been documented across multiple cultural contexts, suggesting its cross-cultural applicability as a da'wah strategy (Green & Clark, 2020).

The third classical mode, *mujadalah* or argumentation, corresponds most directly to the *logos* dimension of Aristotelian rhetoric. In English-medium digital da'wah, argumentative strategies typically involve the marshaling of textual evidence from the Quran and hadith, scientific data that is interpreted as consistent with Islamic teachings, philosophical reasoning addressing fundamental questions of existence and meaning, and comparative religious analysis. Hamid and Hasim (2022) note that contemporary da'wah practitioners, particularly those engaging with educated Western audiences, increasingly employ what might be termed evidential da'wah, constructing carefully reasoned cases for Islamic theological positions that engage seriously with secular intellectual frameworks rather than simply asserting religious authority.

Ethos Construction in English-Medium Da'wah

A particularly significant finding of the literature review concerns the distinctive mechanisms through which ethos communicative credibility and authority is constructed in English-medium digital da'wah. Unlike traditional Islamic scholarly authority, which derives primarily from formal education in recognized Islamic institutions and the transmission of knowledge through established chains of scholarship, digital da'wah practitioners must construct and communicate their authority through the semiotic resources available within digital media platforms. As Hassan and Ahmad (2023) document, this typically involves the strategic deployment

of credentials, institutional affiliations, and endorsements from recognized scholars, combined with the consistent demonstration of deep Quranic and hadith knowledge within content itself.

Rahman and Ismail (2022) further identify what they term relational ethos as a distinctive feature of successful English-medium digital da'wah, wherein communicators cultivate perceived closeness, accessibility, and genuine concern for audience wellbeing as complementary dimensions of their persuasive authority. This relational dimension is constructed through conversational register, direct audience address, responsive engagement with audience comments and questions, and the strategic disclosure of personal struggles and spiritual journeys. The effect is to position the da'i not as a remote authority figure but as a trusted companion and guide, significantly reducing psychological resistance to persuasive messaging. This finding aligns with broader research on parasocial relationships in digital media, which documents the profound influence that perceived interpersonal connection with digital communicators exerts on audience attitudes and behaviors (Chung & Cho, 2022).

Emotional Appeals and Pathos in Da'wah Discourse

The role of emotional appeals in persuasive da'wah communication emerges as a central theme across the reviewed literature. Drawing on cognitive-affective models of persuasion, scholars have demonstrated that religious messages that engage both rational and emotional processing pathways tend to achieve more durable attitude change than messages that rely exclusively on logical argumentation (Petty & Cacioppo, as cited in Fahnestock, 2020). In Islamic communication specifically, the cultivation of *tawadu'* (humility), *khushu'* (reverence), and *mahabbah* (love) as emotional states in audiences is recognized as both a goal and a mechanism of effective da'wah, providing religious legitimation for the strategic use of emotional appeals.

Zailani et al. (2021) identify several specific emotional appeal strategies in their analysis of English-medium da'wah content, including appeals to spiritual longing and the universal human desire for meaning and transcendence, appeals to communal belonging and the emotional resonance of Muslim identity and brotherhood/sisterhood, appeals to gratitude and the cultivation of appreciation for divine blessings, and appeals to hope and the promise of divine mercy and spiritual transformation. Significantly, these emotional appeals are typically embedded within larger argumentative structures rather than deployed in isolation, creating what the authors describe as integrated persuasive architectures that engage multiple psychological pathways simultaneously.

Digital Platform Affordances and Rhetorical Adaptation

The distinctive technical affordances of specific digital platforms significantly shape the rhetorical strategies available to da'wah communicators. Bunt (2021) provides a comprehensive analysis of how platform-specific features including

character limits, video duration constraints, algorithmic content recommendation systems, and audience interaction mechanisms—function as rhetorical constraints that both limit and enable particular communicative choices. On Twitter/X, brevity requirements demand extreme distillation of da'wah messages into memorable, shareable formulations, often drawing upon Quranic verses, prophetic sayings, and pithy wisdom formulations. On YouTube, the longer-form video format permits more complex argumentative development and narrative construction, enabling the kind of sustained persuasive engagement that approximates traditional lecture-based da'wah.

Mukadam and Scott-Baumann (2020) note that algorithmically mediated content distribution introduces a significant new dimension to da'wah rhetoric, as communicators must design content not only for human audiences but also for computational systems whose recommendation logic determines the reach of da'wah messages. This creates pressures toward sensationalist framing, controversy, and emotionally provocative content that may sometimes conflict with the ethical principles of Islamic communication. The tension between algorithmic optimization and ethical communicative practice represents an emerging area of concern in the scholarly literature, with scholars increasingly calling for the development of distinctive Islamic digital ethics frameworks that can guide da'wah practitioners in navigating these tensions responsibly.

Cross-Cultural Linguistic Adaptation in English-Medium Da'wah

A further dimension of persuasive language strategy in English-medium da'wah concerns the negotiation of cultural and linguistic identities within communicative practice. As Mukadam and Scott-Baumann (2020) observe, effective English-medium da'wah typically involves a sophisticated code-mixing practice in which Arabic Islamic terminology is strategically embedded within English discourse, creating what might be termed a hybrid Islamic English register that simultaneously signals in-group cultural membership and maintains accessibility for broader audiences. Key Arabic terms such as Alhamdulillah, Subhanallah, In sha Allah, and mashallah function as affective markers of Islamic identity and spiritual attunement, while their frequency and manner of deployment signal important information about the intended audience and the communicator's rhetorical positioning.

Hassan and Ahmad (2023) further argue that the most effective English-medium da'wah practitioners demonstrate what they term bicultural rhetorical competence: the ability to draw fluently upon both Islamic and Western communicative conventions, deploying each in contexts where it maximizes persuasive impact. This bicultural competence enables them to engage credibly with both Muslim audiences seeking spiritual guidance and non-Muslim audiences seeking understanding of Islamic perspectives, without sacrificing the authenticity and integrity of their Islamic communicative identity. The development of such competence, these authors suggest, should constitute a central goal of Islamic communication education in the digital age.

Conclusion

This library-based investigation has systematically examined the persuasive language strategies deployed in English-medium da'wah messages within digital media contexts. Through the critical synthesis of theoretical and empirical literature, the study has identified a sophisticated and multidimensional repertoire of communicative strategies that draws upon both classical Islamic rhetorical traditions and contemporary insights from communication science, digital media studies, and cognitive psychology.

The findings demonstrate that effective English-medium digital da'wah is characterized by the integrated deployment of ethos, pathos, and logos—corresponding to the Islamic rhetorical triad of hikmah, maw'izah hasanah, and mujadalah within communicative frameworks specifically adapted to the technical affordances and audience expectations of digital platforms. Ethos construction in this context involves both demonstrated religious knowledge and relational warmth; pathos appeals draw upon narrative transportation, emotional resonance, and appeals to spiritual longing; and logos strategies employ evidence-based argumentation that engages seriously with secular intellectual frameworks. These three dimensions function not as isolated techniques but as mutually reinforcing elements of integrated persuasive architectures.

The study further highlights the critical importance of platform-specific rhetorical adaptation and bicultural communicative competence as enabling conditions for effective English-medium da'wah in digital environments. Da'wah practitioners who understand and skillfully navigate the distinctive affordances and constraints of specific digital platforms, while maintaining the ethical integrity and spiritual authenticity of their Islamic communicative identity, are best positioned to achieve meaningful communicative impact.

These findings carry significant implications for Islamic communication education, da'wah practice, and scholarly research. From an educational standpoint, they suggest the need for systematic training in digital rhetoric and platform-specific communicative competence as components of contemporary da'wah education. From a practical standpoint, they provide a theoretically grounded framework that practitioners can draw upon in designing and evaluating their communicative strategies. From a scholarly standpoint, they identify several productive directions for future empirical research, including quantitative analysis of audience engagement with different persuasive strategies, longitudinal studies of da'wah content effectiveness, and cross-platform comparative analyses. This study ultimately affirms that the ancient Islamic imperative of da'wah and the contemporary realities of digital media are not fundamentally incompatible—but their productive synthesis requires sophisticated, reflective, and ethically informed communicative practice.

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