

# Language Approaches in Da'wah: A Review from an Islamic Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Language is a fundamental determinant of effectiveness in Islamic da'wah, functioning not only as a means of conveying religious messages but also as a strategic instrument that shapes understanding, emotional response, and behavioural change among da'wah recipients (*mad'u*). This paper examines the phenomenon of da'wah failure resulting from preachers' inadequate mastery of language, emphasizing that ineffective da'wah often stems not from weaknesses in religious content but from inappropriate linguistic approaches. Drawing on Qur'anic principles, Prophetic traditions, and relevant empirical studies, the discussion highlights how the use of overly technical terminology, uncontextualized Arabic expressions, harsh or judgmental language, and culturally insensitive communication can create language barriers, distort meaning, and lead to rejection of da'wah messages. The paper further demonstrates that such linguistic challenges are particularly significant in multicultural, multilingual, and digital contexts, where audiences possess diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. In contrast, effective da'wah language is grounded in Qur'anic and Prophetic values of wisdom (*hikmah*), gentleness (*rifq*), clarity, and contextual adaptation. Language that is simple, persuasive, relatable, and culturally responsive is shown to foster trust, enhance comprehension, and strengthen the acceptance of Islamic teachings. In the contemporary era, the study underscores the need for preachers to adapt da'wah language to modern communication platforms, including digital and social media, to reach younger and global audiences effectively. Ultimately, this paper argues that mastery of da'wah language is a core competency for preachers and a crucial factor in ensuring that Islamic da'wah remains relevant, inclusive, and impactful in addressing contemporary societal challenges.

**Keywords:** Da'wah language, Islamic da'wah, Islamic communication, contemporary media

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental tool in every human communication process, and its function in the context of Islamic da'wah is highly important and multidimensional. In Islam, da'wah is not merely the transmission of information, but also touches the hearts, minds, and behaviours of the *mad'u* (recipients of da'wah) so that they understand and internalize Islamic teachings comprehensively (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024). Therefore, the linguistic approach used by da'wah preachers (*da'i*) must be carefully planned so that the da'wah message not only reaches the audience but is also accepted, understood, and practiced in their daily lives.

The content and style of da'wah language are deeply rooted in the principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah SWT commands that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent "in the language of his people," highlighting the

importance of using language that the target community can understand in conveying divine messages (Al-Quran, 16:125; Mursam, Jabbar, & Herlambang, 2025). The selection of linguistic concepts such as *qaulan sadida* (correct and precise speech), *qaulan maisura* (speech that is easily understood), and *qaulan layyina* (gentle and wise speech) constitutes essential elements in the Islamic da'wah language approach (Rahman, 2025). Additionally, rhetorical elements and the art of communication, including word choice, sentence structure, narrative techniques, and the use of emotion and logic, further strengthen the reception of da'wah messages (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024; Rahman, 2025).

Language also plays a crucial role in shaping the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviour of the *mad'u*. Through the precise use of language, da'wah preachers can convey Islamic values and principles clearly, fostering awareness and a deep understanding of religious teachings.

Effective da'wah is not merely the transmission of facts or rulings but also emphasizes the development of morality and thinking aligned with Shariah (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024; Rahman, 2025). Therefore, selecting a linguistic approach appropriate to the social, cultural, and educational background of the *mad'u* is essential to ensure the da'wah message is well-received and has a positive impact on their lives.

Communication challenges in contemporary da'wah are increasingly complex, especially within societies with diverse cultures, native languages, and literacy levels.

Mistakes in language choice, style, or communication medium can result in da'wah messages being misunderstood, misinterpreted, or rejected by the audience (Ismail et al., 2021; Zikmal Fuad, 2022). Furthermore, negative perceptions of da'wah sometimes arise from language approaches that are inappropriate or insensitive to social norms (Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017). Therefore, research on effective language strategies in da'wah is important to identify methods that reduce confusion, build acceptance, and enhance the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah.

In the era of globalization and digitalization, linguistic approaches in da'wah have also expanded from traditional media to digital platforms such as social media, online lectures, podcasts, and multimedia content.

Da'wah preachers must master both spoken and written language skills, as well as understand how to deliver messages concisely, engagingly, and relevantly to younger generations through digital language (Salsabila, 2025). This approach is essential to reach global audiences with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Accordingly, this study focuses on two main objectives: (1) *What are the concepts and roles of language in da'wah according to the Islamic perspective?* and (2) *What linguistic approaches are commonly used by da'wah preachers in conveying messages to the public?* Language functions as a bridge between the da'wah preacher and the audience, facilitating understanding of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW (Al-Quran, 16:125; Al-Ghazali, 2003).

Previous studies have shown that the use of polite, ethical, and strategic language increases the effectiveness of da'wah and enhances public acceptance of its messages (Ibrahim, 2017; Khan, 2019; Nasir, 2018; Rahman, 2020). This study is expected to provide both practical and theoretical contributions in strengthening the use of language as a primary tool of Islamic da'wah in contemporary contexts.

Moreover, a language approach that is adaptive and sensitive to both local and global contexts allow da'wah to reach diverse segments of society. Research on da'wah communication strategies shows that using language appropriate to the social, cultural, and native language background of target communities can increase message acceptance and foster positive changes in societal values and thinking (Zulkefli, Don, Mokhtar, & Ahmad Fauzi, 2025; Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017).

By integrating Qur'anic and Sunnah principles with modern approaches, da'wah can be delivered more effectively, inclusively, and relevantly to contemporary society.

Finally, this study emphasizes that the linguistic approach in da'wah is not merely a theoretical aspect of communication and linguistics but also examines how Islamic principles are translated into contemporary da'wah practice. This includes the use of polite language, wisdom (*hikmah*), adaptation to local and global contexts, and mastery of modern media, ensuring that da'wah messages reach, are understood by, and accepted by the community comprehensively (Mursam, Jabbar, & Herlambang, 2025; Zulkefli, Don, Mokhtar, & Ahmad Fauzi, 2025).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on contemporary da'wah consistently emphasizes language as a core element in the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah delivery. From an Islamic perspective, language is not merely a communication tool but a strategic medium that influences the thoughts, emotions, and behaviour of the *mad'u*. This aligns with Qur'anic injunctions emphasizing effective communication through principles such as *qaulan sadida*, *qaulan maisura*, and *qaulan layyina* as foundational linguistic approaches in da'wah (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024; Rahman, 2025). Allah's command in Surah An-Nahl [16:125] to invite others with wisdom, good counsel, and the best form of argument demonstrates that da'wah language must be contextual, persuasive, and grounded in wisdom rather than formalistic or one-way communication.

Contemporary Qur'anic studies further assert that the linguistic approach of revelation contains persuasive strategies emphasizing politeness, gentleness, and clarity as means of fostering understanding and faith among the *mad'u*. Mursam, Jabbar, and Herlambang (2025) explain that the linguistic structure of the Qur'an is designed to engage human psychology, thus serving as a primary guide for preachers in conveying Islamic messages effectively. Hence, mastery of da'wah language requires not only linguistic competence but also an understanding of the psychological dimensions of communication and the social context of the audience (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024).

In higher education and community-based da'wah contexts, studies indicate that linguistic approaches play a crucial role in the success of practical da'wah programs such as the *Kursus Amali Dakwah* (MPU 2613) at IPDAS. Field-based da'wah programs enable students to apply da'wah theories in real societal settings, fostering soft skills such as interpersonal communication, leadership, and adaptability of language to the social realities of target communities (Rahman, 2020; Monib et al., 2025). However, several studies reveal that da'wah failures often result from inappropriate language use that does not align with cultural backgrounds, educational levels, and community understanding (Yusof & Ahmad, 2018; Ismail et al., 2021).

Research on da'wah implementation among ethnic communities in Sabah, including the Sungai, Murut, and Bugis ethnic groups, reinforces the finding that da'wah success heavily depends on the preacher's ability to adapt language to the cultural and psychological context of the target community. Da'wah approaches employing gentle, dialogical, and non-confrontational language are found to be more effective in building trust and acceptance of Islamic teachings (Mokhtar et al., 2021a; Mokhtar et al., 2025a; Mokhtar et al., 2025b). Conversely, overly formal, technical, or culturally misaligned language often creates distance between preacher and *mad'u*, thereby reducing da'wah effectiveness (Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017).

The issue of da'wah failure due to inappropriate language is widely discussed in the literature. Rahman (2025) and Ismail et al. (2021) find that preachers who use complex religious terminology without explanation or fail to adjust tone and style to the audience's social context frequently encounter communication barriers. Studies on Orang Asli communities show that preachers who lack understanding of the linguistic and cultural background of the community struggle to influence acceptance of Islamic values, even when the message content is doctrinally accurate (Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017). This demonstrates that mastery of da'wah language must align with the Qur'anic emphasis on audience comprehension as the foundation of successful da'wah.

Technological developments and digital media have introduced new dimensions to linguistic approaches in da'wah. Globalization and the rise of social media require preachers to master digital language and modern communication styles to effectively reach younger generations and international audiences (Salsabila, 2025). Mokhtar et al. (2023b) show that digital media holds great potential as a da'wah platform when language use is clear, ethical, and authentic. However, key challenges include uncontrolled language use, dissemination of inaccurate religious information, and limited linguistic and technological skills among contemporary preachers.

In this regard, Qur'anic da'wah language principles such as wisdom, gentleness, and clarity must be embedded in digital da'wah planning to maximize effectiveness (Mursam et al., 2025; Salsabila, 2025).

Beyond verbal communication, the literature also emphasizes that linguistic approaches in da'wah cannot be separated from the character and personality of the preacher. Studies on *da'wah bi al-nafs* and *da'wah bil akhlaq*

indicate that good language must be supported by conduct and attitudes that reflect Islamic values (Mokhtar et al., 2023a; Mokhtar et al., 2021c). Preachers who fail to demonstrate noble character, despite using eloquent language, risk losing credibility in the eyes of the *mad'u*. This aligns with Islamic principles emphasizing consistency between words and actions in *da'wah*.

Overall, the literature shows that linguistic approaches in *da'wah* are a decisive factor in the success of Islamic *da'wah* across educational, ethnic community, institutional, and digital media contexts. Qur'anic guidelines on *da'wah* language emphasize politeness, gentleness, clarity, and contextual adaptation as the foundation of effective communication. *Da'wah* failure often occurs when these principles are neglected, whereas linguistic adaptation aligned with Islamic teachings and contemporary needs enhances the effectiveness of *da'wah* delivery. Therefore, the study titled *Language Approaches in Da'wah: A Review from an Islamic Perspective* is significant in strengthening understanding of the role of language as a holistic and relevant strategic instrument of *da'wah* in addressing contemporary challenges.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach with a specific focus on the linguistic requirements of *da'wah* as contained in the Qur'an. The qualitative approach is chosen because it enables in-depth textual analysis of Qur'anic verses and facilitates understanding of linguistic principles used in *da'wah* and their implications for contemporary preacher communication (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study also employs content analysis as the primary method for examining Qur'anic verses related to linguistic strategies in *da'wah*.

The study population consists of Qur'anic texts from recognized translations and exegeses, as well as previous scholarly studies on Qur'anic *da'wah* language. Samples are selected using purposive sampling, whereby verses that explicitly emphasize communication principles, linguistic politeness, the use of wisdom, gentleness, and appropriateness to the *da'wah* audience are chosen for analysis (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The research instrument consists of a content analysis guide form, enabling the researcher to identify and record *da'wah* language characteristics in each selected verse. Analytical criteria include word choice, sentence structure, narrative techniques, tone, and persuasive principles such as *qaulan sadida*, *qaulan maisura*, and *qaulan layyina* (Rahman, 2025).

Data collection involves three main stages. First, relevant Qur'anic verses are collected from primary sources and exegeses such as *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Tafsir al-Munir*, and contemporary tafsir works addressing *da'wah* communication. Second, content analysis is conducted to identify themes and linguistic patterns emphasizing *da'wah* effectiveness. Third, triangulation is performed through comparisons between classical and contemporary tafsir and recent academic studies on *da'wah* language to ensure interpretive accuracy (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024; Mursam, Jabbar, & Herlambang, 2025). Data are analyzed using thematic analysis, involving coding, theme identification, sub-theme grouping, and interpretation of Qur'anic meanings related to *da'wah* linguistic approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The study also adheres to academic ethical principles, including full acknowledgment of referenced tafsir and prior studies and ensuring that Qur'anic interpretation follows valid and recognized exegetical methodologies (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). This approach allows the study to systematically highlight Qur'anic linguistic requirements in *da'wah*, emphasizing persuasive elements, gentleness, politeness, and linguistic wisdom that can serve as guidance for contemporary preachers.

## DISCUSSION

### Language Errors in Social Media Speech and Contemporary Preachers

In today's digital era, social media has become a primary platform for daily communication, both in written form and digital speech. Adolescents and young adults frequently use platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp to interact quickly, spontaneously, and casually. However, this freedom often leads to language errors, particularly in speech that is read or viewed by a wide audience. This phenomenon is most evident in the form of "rojak" language, a mixture of Malay with English or other languages, without adhering to correct grammatical rules (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka [DBP], 2025). For example, a sentence like, "Aku nak pergi shopping, nanti balik kena attend meeting pula," illustrates the informal combination of English and Malay,



which can obscure the intended meaning and affect the fluency of standard speech (Berita RTM, 2025; The Star, 2024).

Besides rojak language, errors in digital speech also include abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, as well as intentional grammatical mistakes for emotional or humorous expression. For instance, a message such as, “btw, gmbn aku tak faham ” uses abbreviations and symbols without considering standard language structure, which can confuse readers who are unfamiliar with these codes (Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia [UTHM], 2025). Moreover, the use of mild profanity or slang frequently occurs in digital speech, especially when users want to express anger or dissatisfaction, which can lead to misunderstandings or interpersonal conflicts (MCMC, 2024).

Language errors are not only prevalent among ordinary users. Contemporary preachers who use social media or live-streaming platforms also sometimes employ imprecise, mixed, or informal language, whether intentionally or due to terminological confusion. For example, some preachers say, “Kita kena istiqamah in performing solat, jangan sampai kita slack, nanti pahala kurang,” which combines Malay, English, and religious terms without proper explanation (DBP, 2025; Berita RTM, 2025). Additionally, the use of Arabic or English terms without clear clarification, such as “Tawakal itu macam surrender, jangan terlalu anxious,” can cause confusion and misinterpretation among followers, particularly those who are new to religious terminology (UTHM, 2025). Such language errors reduce the quality of preaching and can damage the credibility of the speaker if not corrected (The Star, 2024).

The social implications of language errors in social media speech are broad and serious. First, they can cause misunderstandings or interpersonal conflicts, as spontaneous or humorous messages may be interpreted negatively (Berita RTM, 2025). Second, the repeated use of rojak language and vulgar language can weaken the fluency of young people in standard Malay, including in academic contexts, formal communication, and professional interactions (DBP, 2025). Third, imprecise or offensive language can also be a basis for cybercrime and cyberbullying, where insulting or threatening messages can cause psychological harm to victims and serve as evidence under enforcement actions pursuant to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998 (MCMC, 2024).

To address these issues, several measures can be implemented. Digital language education that emphasizes the use of standard language, precise terminology, and correct grammar should be integrated into school curricula and adult training programs. For preachers, formal communication training and mastery of accurate religious terminology are crucial to ensure that preaching messages are delivered clearly and correctly without compromising language fluency (DBP, 2025). Public awareness campaigns on using polite and ethical language on social media can also help reduce the prevalence of rojak language, grammatical errors, and offensive speech (The Star, 2024; Berita RTM, 2025).

Therefore, language errors in social media speech, whether by young users or preachers, present significant challenges to fluency, comprehension, and the dignity of the Malay language. Although social media provides a flexible and creative space for expression, linguistic awareness, communication training, and formal education are essential to ensure that messages are delivered effectively, politely, and respectfully, while preserving cultural identity and the national language (DBP, 2025; UTHM, 2025; MCMC, 2024).

### **Failure of Preachers Due to Lack of Language Proficiency**

Language proficiency is a fundamental and critical element in ensuring effective da’wah communication. In the context of Islamic da’wah, language is not merely a medium for conveying information or ideas, but serves as the primary tool for building understanding, forming interpersonal relationships, and connecting Islamic teachings with the everyday realities of the *mad’u* (da’wah recipients). The language used by a preacher reflects their ability to understand the background of the target audience, whether in terms of culture, educational level, emotions, or life experience. A preacher’s failure to master appropriate language may result in ineffective communication, misinterpretation of da’wah messages, and ultimately the failure to achieve da’wah objectives. This situation demonstrates that language mastery is a crucial prerequisite to ensuring that da’wah messages are conveyed clearly, effectively, and in a manner that touches the hearts of the *mad’u* (Rahman, 2023).

Studies in the field of da’wah reveal that weak language mastery is among the main factors causing many preachers to face difficulties in delivering da’wah messages to society. Preachers who lack proper linguistic

communication skills tend to use terminology that is overly complex, technical, or culturally inappropriate for the *mad'u*. In addition, the use of foreign terms particularly Arabic terms without sufficient explanation often prevents *mad'u* from fully understanding the intended message. Zikmal Fuad (2015) explains that failure to select appropriate language results in many da'wah messages failing to reach recipients because the *mad'u* are unable to grasp the message deeply. This occurs when preachers fail to adjust their language to the audience's level of understanding, educational background, and life experience, causing da'wah to lose its meaning and relevance (Zikmal Fuad, 2015; *Contemporary Issues in Da'wah Studies*, 2024).

Furthermore, studies discussed in *Contemporary Issues in Da'wah and Usuluddin Studies* emphasize that preachers who lack language proficiency frequently encounter communication barriers that prevent da'wah messages from being conveyed clearly and effectively. In societies composed of diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, inappropriate language use makes it difficult for *mad'u* to understand the content of da'wah and may even lead to rejection of the message. The use of overly academic or technical language without contextual adaptation renders da'wah one-directional and fails to engage the intellectual and emotional dimensions of the audience. This demonstrates that da'wah failure does not stem solely from weaknesses in content, but also from the preacher's inability to manage linguistic and communicative aspects effectively (*Contemporary Issues in Da'wah and Usuluddin Studies*, 2024).

In the Malaysian context as a multiethnic and multilingual nation, language mastery becomes even more significant in da'wah activities. Preachers who fail to adapt their language to the linguistic background of the *mad'u* often face challenges in ensuring that da'wah messages are accepted and deeply understood. Studies on da'wah communication among Orang Asli communities in Selangor found that preachers who do not master local languages or dialects are less successful in building trust with these communities. Preachers must not only master the Malay language but also understand local dialects, terminology, and traditional communication styles to deliver da'wah messages in a more approachable and effective manner. Limited language mastery hinders preachers from responding spontaneously to questions and explaining religious concepts clearly, thereby weakening the overall effectiveness of da'wah (Aini et al., 2018).

Issues of da'wah failure due to language weakness are also evident globally and are not limited to Islamic da'wah alone. Siswanto's (2023) study on language barriers in church sermon delivery found that religious speakers who use language not understood by the target community prevent audiences from fully internalizing spiritual messages. The use of highly specialized and abstract religious terminology without suitable explanation reduces listener comprehension and undermines the effectiveness of religious communication. This situation demonstrates that language mastery is a universal factor in the effectiveness of religious communication, regardless of religious or cultural background (Siswanto, 2023).

In general, a language barrier refers to communication difficulties that occur when the sender and receiver do not share the same language or when the terminology used is not understood by the target audience. Such barriers not only cause misunderstandings but may also generate boredom, frustration, and loss of interest among the *mad'u*. More seriously, failure to overcome language barriers prevents the formation of strong interpersonal relationships between preachers and target communities, ultimately undermining the objectives of da'wah itself (Wikipedia, 2025).

In the contemporary context, several clear examples of da'wah failure due to language issues can be observed. One such example is da'wah among Orang Asli communities, where preachers who rely solely on the Malay language without understanding local dialects struggle to explain Islamic concepts accurately and meaningfully. As a result, *mad'u* may not fully understand the da'wah message and, in some cases, reject it because the message does not align with their communication style and cultural practices (Aini et al., 2018). Similarly, in the context of Christian churches in Indonesia during the GKII Mission 2022, the use of sermon language that was overly specialized and not adapted to the audience resulted in many listeners failing to grasp the core message, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the mission (Siswanto, 2023).

At the international level, preachers who use only one language without providing translation or local adaptation often find their messages misunderstood by global audiences, particularly on social media platforms that involve multilingual and multicultural users (Salsabila, 2024).

Thus, failure among preachers due to inadequate language mastery is a serious and significant issue in contemporary da'wah communication. Insufficient command of appropriate language not only causes da'wah messages to be misunderstood or fail to reach the audience but also renders da'wah irrelevant to the needs and realities of the *mad'u*. Therefore, preachers must emphasize language mastery, clear terminology selection, and communication strategies that align with the linguistic and cultural background of their target groups. The success of da'wah lies not only in the quality of its content but also in the preacher's ability to convey that content through language that is understandable, relatable, and effective for the *mad'u*.

### The Role of Language in Da'wah

Language plays a vital role in Islamic da'wah, as it functions not only as a medium for message delivery but also as a tool for influencing the hearts, character, and understanding of da'wah recipients. The Qur'an emphasizes effective da'wah communication through Allah's command in Surah An-Nahl [16:125]: *"Invite (people) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good counsel and argue with them in the best manner."* This verse demonstrates that the effectiveness of da'wah depends not only on message content but also on delivery method, including word choice, tone, and contextual suitability (Al-Jalalayn, 2019). Tafsir al-Jalalayn explains that *hikmah* refers to wise communication strategies, while good counsel implies gentle language that avoids conflict and hostility.

In the Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, *"Convey from me even one verse"* (Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim), emphasizing that da'wah does not need to be lengthy or complex, but must be clear, simple, and appropriate to the audience's capacity. The Prophet ﷺ also emphasized gentleness in advice, stating, *"Indeed, whoever is gentle in dealing with people, Allah will increase them in honor"* (Narrated by Muslim), highlighting gentleness as a key factor in effective da'wah.

Appropriate da'wah language adheres to Qur'anic and Prophetic principles: clarity, simplicity, gentleness, and contextual adaptation. For example, preachers may say, *"Let us understand Islam with open hearts and clear minds"* (Haji Yusoff & Amran, 2024). Everyday analogies can help explain concepts such as *tawhīd*, for instance describing Allah's oneness like the sun that illuminates the world without assistance. Narratives and prophetic stories are also effective persuasive tools, as the Prophet ﷺ often used stories to instill moral lessons (Rahman, 2025). Adapting language to cultural background, age, and educational level has also been shown to enhance da'wah effectiveness (Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017).

Conversely, inappropriate da'wah language can undermine message delivery. Harsh or fear-based language, such as *"If you do not follow Islam, Hell awaits you,"* although theologically valid, may provoke rejection among *mad'u* (Ismail et al., 2021). Excessive use of Arabic terms or complex religious jargon without explanation can confuse audiences (Rahman, 2025). Language that is irrelevant to audience context, such as delivering complex Qur'anic exegesis to children or low-literacy communities, also results in misunderstanding and rejection. Judgmental or condescending language contradicts the Prophet's emphasis on gentleness and may create social conflict and negative perceptions of Islam (Ismail et al., 2021; Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017).

In contemporary contexts, preachers must adapt da'wah language to modern media, including digital sermons, social media, and video content. Salsabila (2025) highlights the importance of mastering digital language and modern communication styles to reach younger generations and international audiences. Mursam, Jabbar, and Herlambang (2025) emphasize that Qur'anic persuasive principles wisdom, gentleness, and clarity can be effectively applied in modern communication. In conclusion, contemporary preachers must prioritize politeness, gentleness, comprehension, and contextual adaptation to ensure that Islamic da'wah is conveyed effectively and harmoniously in accordance with the Qur'an and Hadith.

### The Importance of Language in Islamic Da'wah

Language is a core element in the implementation of Islamic da'wah, as it functions as the primary medium that connects divine messages with human understanding, emotions, and the realities of daily life. In the context of da'wah, language is not merely a tool for conveying information, but a strategic instrument that shapes how the *mad'u* (da'wah recipients) understand, accept, and internalize Islamic teachings. The effectiveness of da'wah greatly depends on the preacher's ability to select and use language that is appropriate, clear, gentle, and contextual, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

## Language as a Medium for Conveying Divine Messages

The Qur'an emphasizes that language is fundamental in delivering the messages of the prophets. Allah SWT states that every messenger was sent "with the language of his people" so that the message could be clearly understood (Surah Ibrahim, 14:4). This principle highlights that the understanding of the *mad'u* is a priority in da'wah, and language plays a central role in ensuring that Islamic messages are conveyed accurately. Preachers who use language that is not understood by their target audience risk delivering messages that are unclear or misinterpreted, even if the content is theologically sound. For example, in da'wah to new converts or non-Muslim communities, the use of Arabic terms such as *tawhīd rubūbiyyah* or *shirk khafī* without simple explanations may lead to confusion. In contrast, simple expressions such as "Allah is One and He alone deserves to be worshipped" are more effective in building foundational understanding.

## Language as a Tool to Influence Emotions and Behavior

Effective da'wah language not only conveys information but also touches emotions and encourages changes in attitude and behavior. The Qur'an calls upon preachers to invite others with wisdom, good counsel, and the best form of dialogue (Surah An-Nahl, 16:125). This indicates that gentle, empathetic, and non-judgmental language is more effective in influencing the hearts of the *mad'u*. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ exemplified the use of compassionate and gentle language in da'wah. He stated that gentleness adorns everything it accompanies, and when it is removed, it spoils it (Narrated by Muslim). Harsh or fear-based language may provoke rejection, even when the message itself is true. For instance, the statement "Prayer is an opportunity for us to speak to Allah and find inner peace" is more effective than "If you do not pray, you will be punished," particularly in da'wah to youth or that newly approaching religion.

## Language as a Bridge to Culture and Social Context

In societies characterized by ethnic, cultural, and educational diversity, adapting language to the social context of the *mad'u* is essential. Language that is culturally sensitive helps build trust and prevents misunderstanding. Studies on da'wah among Orang Asli communities show that the use of local language, cultural analogies, and traditional communication styles enhances community acceptance of Islamic messages (Nur Damia Husna Nor Sad & Zulkefli, 2017). For example, in da'wah to rural communities, the use of analogies related to agriculture or village life is more easily understood than abstract or academic examples.

## Language as a Determining Factor in the Success or Failure of Da'wah

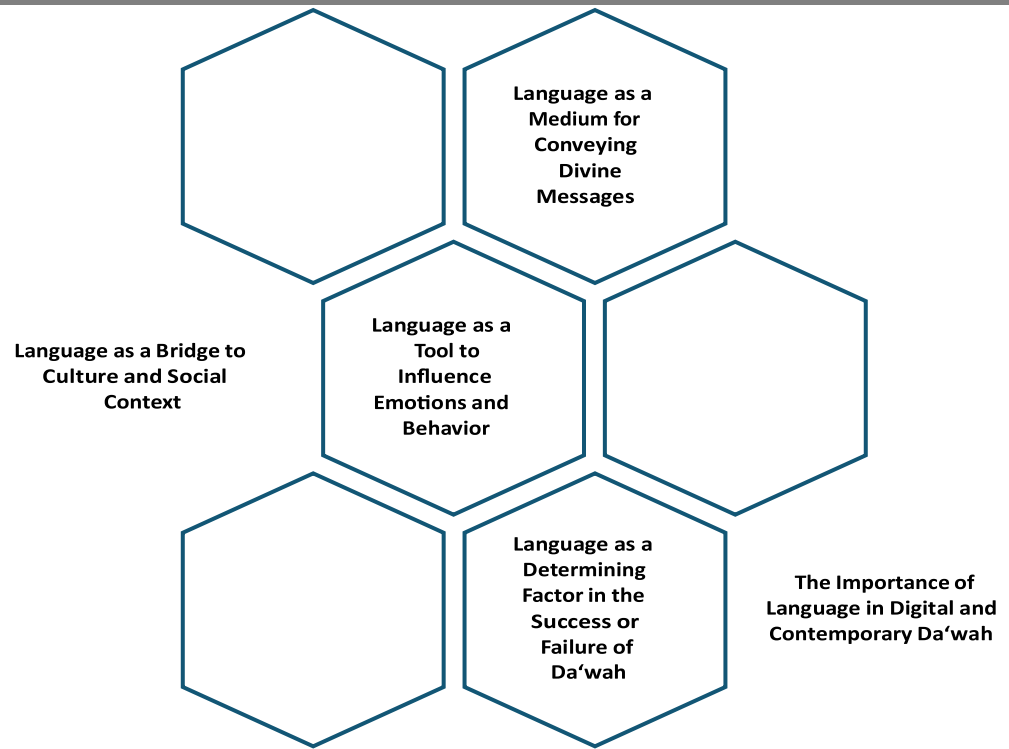
Da'wah failure often results from the use of language that does not match the *mad'u*'s level of understanding. Language that is overly technical and filled with fiqh or academic terminology without explanation renders da'wah one-directional and difficult to comprehend. Ismail et al. (2021) found that inappropriate language choice is among the main factors contributing to ineffective da'wah, even when the message content is accurate. For example, explaining the concept of zakat to the public through detailed legal rulings and jurisprudential debates without practical explanation may cause loss of interest. Conversely, describing zakat as "Islam's way of caring for society and purifying wealth" is more closely aligned with everyday realities.

## The Importance of Language in Digital and Contemporary Da'wah

The growth of digital media requires preachers to master language that is concise, engaging, and persuasive. Da'wah through social media demands linguistic styles that resonate with younger generations and global audiences. Language that is overly formal or lengthy is less effective on fast-paced, visual digital platforms (Salsabila, 2025). For instance, expressions such as "Charity is easy. Even RM1 a day can bring blessings" are more effective in short videos than lengthy lectures filled with technical terminology.

Language is therefore the lifeblood of effective Islamic da'wah. Mastery of clear, gentle, persuasive, and contextual language enables Islamic messages to be conveyed effectively, received with open hearts, and practiced in daily life. Preachers must recognize that the success of da'wah lies not only in the truth of its content, but also in the wisdom and appropriateness of the language used to deliver that message. The summary for this discussion is as follows Figure 1.





**Figure 1: The Importance of Language in Islamic Da‘wah**

**Source: Research Study 2026**

## CONCLUSION

Overall, this discussion affirms that language is a core element and a primary determinant of the effectiveness of Islamic da‘wah. Language is not merely a medium for conveying messages; rather, it functions as a strategic instrument that shapes the understanding, emotions, attitudes, and behavioural changes of the *mad‘u* (da‘wah recipients). Based on analyses of the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and contemporary empirical studies, this study has demonstrated that one of the key concepts of da‘wah language is its role in bridging the gap between divine teachings and human comprehension, making the message accessible, relevant, and persuasive. In this way, the first research objective understanding the concepts and roles of language in da‘wah from an Islamic perspective has been successfully addressed.

The study also shows that failures in da‘wah often stem not from weaknesses in the content of Islamic teachings, but from inadequate mastery and inappropriate use of language that does not align with the audience’s context. The use of overly technical language, mixed terminology without explanation, judgmental or harsh expressions, and language that lacks sensitivity to the cultural background and level of understanding of the *mad‘u* creates communication gaps that hinder acceptance of da‘wah messages. These challenges are further intensified in today’s pluralistic societies and digital environments, where linguistic, cultural, and educational differences are increasingly diverse.

Conversely, the study establishes that effective linguistic approaches, grounded in Qur’anic and Prophetic principles such as *hikmah* (wisdom), *qaulan layyina* (gentle speech), *qaulan maisura* (clear and accessible speech), clarity, politeness, and contextual adaptation, can enhance understanding, build trust, and strengthen acceptance of Islamic teachings among the *mad‘u*.

The second research objective identifying the linguistic approaches commonly used by preachers to convey da‘wah messages has thus been fulfilled. Approaches that are simple, persuasive, contextually relevant, and reinforced by the preacher’s noble character are more effective in delivering da‘wah holistically and impactfully. In the contemporary context, particularly in the era of social media and digital communication, mastery of da‘wah language must also include the ability to apply Islamic principles through concise, engaging, and ethical modern communication. Preachers are therefore required not only to possess sound religious knowledge but also strong communication skills and linguistic sensitivity to ensure that da‘wah remains relevant, inclusive, and

responsive to contemporary challenges. In conclusion, mastery of da'wah language is a fundamental competency for every preacher. The success of da'wah depends not only on the truth of the message but also on the wisdom exercised in selecting and using language appropriate to the *mad'u*. This study confirms that understanding the roles of language and applying effective linguistic approaches are crucial to enhancing the impact of Islamic da'wah. Consequently, concerted efforts to strengthen training, awareness, and linguistic competence among preachers must be prioritized to ensure that Islamic da'wah continues to serve as a source of mercy, guidance, and solutions for humanity.

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