

Glocal Da'wah: Negotiating the Banyumasan Local Dialect in the Transnational Digital Da'wah Space (A Case Study of Rri Purwokerto)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the phenomenon of “Glocal Da’wah” through the negotiation of the Banyumasan local dialect within the transnational digital space of RRI Purwokerto. The research is grounded in the shift of da’wah media from terrestrial-auditory broadcasting toward visual-digital platforms that dissolve conventional geographical boundaries. The central problem addressed is the tension between the prevailing assumption that digital da’wah must rely on standardized formal language to achieve universality, and empirical evidence showing that the “Ngapak” local dialect instead functions as a significant pull factor for transnational (diaspora) audiences. Theoretically, this research employs Roland Robertson’s framework of glocalization to dissect the dialectic between the universal and the particular, complemented by Stuart Hall’s and Zygmunt Bauman’s theories of cultural identity to analyze the negotiation of subject positions in cyberspace. A qualitative descriptive case-study method was applied to the Mutiara Pagi program of RRI Purwokerto. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with preachers, program producers, and audience members, supported by observation of audience interaction on the YouTube and TikTok channels. The findings reveal three key results. First, the Banyumasan dialect functions as a medium of “digital home-coming” that triggers diasporic collective memory amid the fragmentation of postmodern society. Second, preachers’ communication strategies demonstrate a “particularization of universalism,” whereby the universal religious message is adapted into a local linguistic frame to make it more accessible. Third, digital platforms facilitate a “universalization of particularism,” in which local identity is projected onto the global stage through new-media algorithms. The study concludes that digitalization does not extinguish locality but instead amplifies it into global symbolic capital through a “Digital Ngapak” model that provides an identity anchor for a transnational moral community.

Keywords: Glocal Da’wah; Banyumasan Dialect; Transnationalism; RRI Purwokerto; Cultural Identity

INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of religious communication has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. Da’wah (Islamic religious propagation), once confined to the auditory and territorially bounded medium of terrestrial radio, has increasingly migrated toward visual-digital platforms such as YouTube, Zoom, and TikTok. This migration does not merely change the technical channel of transmission; it dissolves the administrative and geographical boundaries that historically defined the reach of local broadcasting institutions, creating a borderless discursive space in which religious messages circulate across national and cultural frontiers.

Lembaga Penyiaran Publik Radio Republik Indonesia (LPP RRI) Purwokerto exemplifies this transformation. For decades, its religious morning program, Mutiara Pagi, was heard only within the conventional terrestrial catchment area popularly known as “Balingmascakep” (Banyumas, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, and Cilacap). Following the program’s migration to YouTube and TikTok, however, field evidence indicates that its audience

has come to include Indonesian diaspora communities in Australia, Hong Kong, and parts of Europe. This expansion raises a theoretically significant puzzle: what communicative mechanism allows a program rooted in a markedly local, even stigmatized, regional dialect to acquire transnational appeal?

The conventional wisdom within digital da'wah communication holds that universality is best achieved through linguistic standardization—that is, by employing formal Bahasa Indonesia or English so that religious messages remain intelligible to the broadest possible audience (Eickelman & Anderson, 2003; Campbell, 2012). This assumption presumes that local dialects, being particularistic and spatially bounded, constitute an obstacle to transnational reach rather than a resource for it. The empirical situation at RRI Purwokerto, however, runs counter to this assumption: rather than diluting the Banyumasan dialect (commonly referred to by its speakers as “Ngapak”) to broaden appeal, preachers who retain and even foreground the dialect appear to attract, rather than repel, transnational diaspora listeners.

Existing scholarship has examined adjacent dimensions of this phenomenon without directly addressing the puzzle at its core. Fakhruroji (2019) documents the online da'wah practices of Indonesian Muslim women, emphasizing the negotiation of gender and religious authority in digital space. Setiawan (2020) explores the broader articulation of transnational da'wah through Indonesian digital media, while Zamroni (2022) proposes a glocal da'wah strategy that integrates Islamic values with local culture at a conceptual level. Pratama and Wahyuni (2019) analyze RRI's institutional transformation into a multiplatform media organization, focusing on organizational and technological adaptation rather than linguistic content. Kurniawan (2021) investigates the maintenance of the Banyumasan dialect in mass media as a matter of cultural-identity preservation, but does not extend the analysis into the domain of transnational religious broadcasting. None of these studies, individually or collectively, accounts for how a peripheral regional dialect operates as a deliberate communicative strategy and an active pull factor for diaspora audiences within digital religious broadcasting. It is precisely this gap that the present study seeks to address.

This gap is also visible within the broader literature on digital religion and mediatized religious authority. Eickelman and Anderson (2003) argue that new media technologies have expanded the “public sphere” of Muslim societies by lowering the threshold for participation in religious discourse, allowing previously marginal voices and vernacular forms of expression to enter mainstream circulation. Building on this trajectory, Campbell (2012) develops the concept of “digital religion” to describe how religious communities and authorities adapt established practices to the affordances and constraints of new media environments, often through hybrid negotiation rather than wholesale replacement of offline norms. Read alongside one another, these accounts suggest that digital media does not simply transmit religious content across distance; it actively reshapes how religious authority is constructed, recognized, and contested. Yet, as in the more locally focused Indonesian literature discussed above, this strand of scholarship has rarely engaged with regional dialect specifically as a constitutive element of religious-media authority, rather than as incidental local color. The present study addresses this lacuna by treating the Banyumasan dialect not as a backdrop to religious communication but as its central analytic object, examined through the combined lenses of glocalization and cultural-identity theory.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in Roland Robertson's (1992) theory of glocalization. Robertson defines globalization as the compression of the world into a single place coupled with an intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole. Unlike world-systems perspectives that treat globalization primarily as an economic process, Robertson insists that culture—and religion as a constitutive part of culture—constitutes a primary, not merely epiphenomenal, dimension of global transformation. Central to his framework is the proposition that globalization institutionalizes two simultaneous processes: the “universalization of particularism,” whereby locally specific phenomena are projected onto and consumed within a global arena, and the “particularization of universalism,” whereby globally circulating values are adapted into locally specific idioms to be made meaningful within a bounded community. Robertson further observes that the boundaries of societies have become increasingly “porous” as a consequence of global media penetration, and that contemporary globalization has entered what he terms “Phase V,” a phase of heightened uncertainty marked by the renewed salience of religion, ecological concern, and questions of collective identity, including ethnicity.

This study also draws on cultural-identity theory as developed by Stuart Hall (1996) and Zygmunt Bauman (1996). Hall argues that identity should not be understood as a fixed essence or a matter of “being,” but rather as a continuous process of “becoming,” constructed relationally through difference and articulated strategically and positionally according to context. He distinguishes between identity as “roots” (a static origin to which one returns) and identity as “routes” (a trajectory of adaptation through which the subject negotiates belonging across shifting circumstances). Bauman, for his part, characterizes the postmodern condition as one of dislocation, describing a shift “from pilgrim to tourist” in which the modern certainty of a singular, linear identity gives way to fragmented and provisional attachments. In response to this fragmentation, Bauman suggests, individuals and communities often resort to strategies of “cultural defense,” among which the search for a sense of “home” amid “homesickness” figures prominently. Taken together, these frameworks furnish the conceptual apparatus through which this study interprets the Banyumasan dialect simultaneously as a glocal communicative strategy and as a resource for diasporic identity negotiation.

Research Problem and Questions

Building on the tension between the assumption of linguistic standardization and the empirical pull-factor effect of local dialect, this study poses the following main research question: How is the Banyumasan local dialect negotiated and constructed as a communicative instrument in the practice of transnational digital da’wah at RRI Purwokerto? This main question is elaborated through four specific sub-questions: (1) How do preachers at RRI Purwokerto strategically employ the Banyumasan dialect in packaging religious messages so that universal value is retained within the digital space? (2) Why has the local “Ngapak” dialect become a significant pull factor for transnational (diaspora) audiences in consuming digital da’wah content? (3) How do preachers negotiate between local cultural identity and the demand to reach a broader, non-Banyumasan audience on digital platforms? (4) To what extent does the use of local dialect in digital da’wah contribute to strengthening preachers’ religious authority in the eyes of diaspora congregations?

The objective of this research is to analyze the strategies of cultural-identity negotiation embedded within transnational digital da’wah messages, using the case of RRI Purwokerto’s Mutiara Pagi program as an empirical anchor. Theoretically, the study contributes a novel concept, “Digital Ngapak,” which extends Robertson’s glocalization framework into the domain of religious broadcasting and extends Hall’s notion of identity-as-“routes” into the specific context of diasporic religious-media consumption. Practically, the study offers broadcasters and preachers an evidence-based rationale for retaining, rather than abandoning, local linguistic identity when designing digital da’wah content intended for transnational reach.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using a single embedded case-study design (Yin, 2018). The case is bounded as the Mutiara Pagi religious program produced and broadcast by RRI Purwokerto across three interconnected channels: terrestrial radio, YouTube, and TikTok. RRI Purwokerto was selected as the research site because preliminary observation indicated an information-rich case (Stake, 1995): despite its institutional identity as a local public broadcaster historically confined to the Balingmascapek catchment area, its religious program content was reported to reach diaspora audiences in Australia, Hong Kong, and Europe—an empirical anomaly well suited to theory-building inquiry into glocal religious communication.

Informants were selected purposively to represent three vantage points on the phenomenon under study: (1) preachers who deliver the religious content and consciously negotiate linguistic strategy; (2) program management personnel responsible for production and platform strategy; and (3) listeners, including diaspora and domestic audiences, who consume and respond to the content. Table 1 summarizes the profile of the principal informants.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

No.	Informant	Role / Position	Relevance to the Study
1	Ustaz Mintaraga	Preacher (program icon)	Emblematic figure of Banyumasan-dialect da’wah; reports diaspora recognition from Hong Kong and Europe

2	Ustaz Sofy	Preacher	Articulates contrasting view on language adaptation for global YouTube audiences
3	Ustaz Enjang	Preacher	Reports Australian audience reach; reflects on Gen-Z format preferences
4	Ustazah Ning	Preacher	Female preacher perspective on dialectal voice recognition
5	Iskandar	Program Director	Institutional/production strategy; religious neutrality and moderation policy
6	Budi	Producer	Platform-migration strategy and audience-consumption pattern shift
7	Muningah	Listener (domestic)	Re-transmission of program content to local congregation
8	Risto Moyo	Listener (digital)	Comparative experience of radio versus YouTube interactivity
9	Wid	Listener (terrestrial radio)	Practical motivations for continued terrestrial-radio consumption

Data were collected through three complementary techniques. First, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with preachers regarding their linguistic strategy and perceived audience reach, with program management regarding production and platform strategy, and with listeners regarding their motivations and emotional responses to dialect-based content. Second, non-participant digital observation was carried out on da'wah video content and its associated comment sections on YouTube and TikTok, with particular attention to linguistic markers of dialect use and indicators of viewers' geographic origin. Third, documentary study was conducted on program archives and institutional records pertaining to RRI Purwokerto's platform migration.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Thematic coding proceeded deductively, guided by the constructs of glocalization (Robertson, 1992) and cultural identity (Hall, 1996; Bauman, 1996), while remaining open to inductively emergent themes from the field data. Credibility was enhanced through source triangulation (comparing accounts among preachers, producers, and listeners) and method triangulation (comparing interview accounts with digital observation data), supplemented by informal member-checking in which preliminary interpretations were relayed back to key informants for confirmation.

Informed consent was obtained from all informants prior to data collection. Given their public role as broadcasters, preachers and program management personnel are referred to by their real names with their explicit consent; general listeners are referred to by the first names or honorifics by which they are commonly addressed within their community, consistent with conventions in Indonesian qualitative religious-communication research.

Several methodological boundaries should be noted at the outset. First, claims regarding the geographic distribution of the diaspora audience (e.g., listeners in Australia, Hong Kong, or parts of Europe) rest on informants' self-reported recollections of audience interaction—through direct messages, comment-section exchanges, and anecdotal encounters—rather than on verified platform analytics such as YouTube Studio geolocation data. This choice was deliberate: the study's aim is to understand how preachers and listeners themselves interpret and narrate the meaning of transnational reach, not to produce a definitive demographic audit of the audience. Second, because informants were selected purposively for their direct involvement in or close proximity to the phenomenon under study, the sample does not aim at statistical representativeness; its purpose is analytic depth rather than population-level inference. These boundaries shape the scope of the claims advanced in the Results and Discussion sections below and are revisited in the Conclusion.

RESULTS

Analysis of interview and digital-observation data yields five interrelated thematic findings, presented below in turn: (A) the Banyumasan dialect as a medium of digital home-coming; (B) the negotiation of message strategy between religious authority and local idiom; (C) the transnationalism of da'wah reaching audiences from

Australia to Europe; (D) the negotiation of authority and moderation in digital space; and (E) digital transformation as a “third space.” These five findings are not independent of one another; rather, they form a cumulative sequence in which dialectal recognition (A) motivates and is sustained by deliberate linguistic strategy (B), which in turn enables transnational reach (C), which then requires institutional moderation to remain inclusive (D), within an overarching hybrid communicative environment (E). The presentation below follows this sequence before the Discussion section reinterprets the findings through the lens of glocalization and cultural-identity theory.

The Banyumasan Dialect as a Medium of Digital “Home-Coming”

Field data indicate that the Banyumasan dialect functions as more than a linguistic vehicle; it operates as an emotional instrument that triggers recognition and a sense of shared origin among listeners, including those located well beyond the program’s traditional catchment area. Ustaz Mintaraga recounted that his dialectal voice has become a marker of recognition that precedes face-to-face encounters:

“Orang tuh mengenal saya diantar lewat RRI... saya kalau ngisi ke Banjar, ke Cilacap, ke mana itu pada penasaran... ‘Loh, oh ini yang biasa di RRI kayak gitu’. Oh, ternyata RRI itu dulu menjangkau banyak banget.” [“People come to know me through RRI... whenever I give a sermon in Banjar, in Cilacap, wherever, they become curious... ‘Oh, so this is the one who is usually on RRI like that.’ It turns out RRI used to reach so many people.”]

A parallel pattern emerged in the account of Ustazah Ning, who reported being identified by her distinctive radio voice when visiting institutions outside her usual circuit, and in the account of listener Bu Muningah, who described re-transmitting program content to her own congregation at Masjid Darussalam, explicitly naming the RRI preacher as the source of the message she shares. Taken together, these accounts suggest that the dialect-marked voice of RRI Purwokerto’s preachers constitutes a recognizable cultural signature that, even prior to its transnational digital extension, already functioned regionally as an instrument of “home-coming” recognition—foreshadowing the more expansive transnational pattern documented in finding C below.

Negotiating the Message: Between Religious Authority and Local Idiom

A second finding concerns the deliberate, evolving strategy preachers use to balance religious authority with linguistic accessibility. Ustaz Mintaraga, despite holding formal religious education credentials from Egypt, explained his conscious shift toward dialect for the sake of clarity and code-mixing across platforms:

“Inti dari pesan dakwah adalah tersampainya pesan itu... ora dadi mikir bundet gitu bahasane kepenak dicerna... saya (ceramah) di radio, di YouTube, di Zoom, TikTok ya ada Banyumasannya tapi ada bahasa Inggrisnya karena jangkauannya luas.” [“The essence of the da’wah message is that it gets across... so it does not make people’s minds tangled, the language is comfortable to digest... when I preach on radio, YouTube, Zoom, or TikTok, there is Banyumasan in it, but there is also English because the reach is wide.”]

Ustaz Sofy, by contrast, articulated a more platform-contingent stance, suggesting that dialect use should be calibrated to the scope of distribution:

“Kecuali siarannya itu masih lokal itu ya bisalah pakai bahasa Banyumas. Tapi kalau luas kayak YouTube ini kan bisa dari luar negeri juga... kita butuh adaptasi pada bahasa yang sekiranya itu bisa diterima, tidak perlu kerja dua kali lah (menerjemahkan).” [“Unless the broadcast is still local, then Banyumasan can be used. But if it is broad, like on YouTube, where viewers can come from abroad too... we need to adapt the language so that it can be accepted, without having to do the work twice, that is, translating.”]

Ustaz Enjang added a complementary observation regarding format rather than language per se, noting a generational shift in consumption preference: “Kalau yang Gen Z mungkin lebih ke tapping atau podcast” [“For Gen Z, the preference may lean more toward recorded segments or podcast format”], while also emphasizing discretion in addressing sensitive matters before mixed digital audiences. These accounts jointly demonstrate that dialect retention is not a uniform or unreflective habit but a calibrated strategy, negotiated differently across

preachers and platforms, in pursuit of the same underlying goal: ensuring that religious authority is not compromised by either excessive formality or excessive localism.

Transnationalism of Da'wah: Reaching Audiences from Australia to Europe

The third finding directly documents the transnational reach attributed to dialect-marked content. Ustaz Mintaraga reported unsolicited recognition from diaspora listeners: “Ada juga yang malah sampai ke luar negeri dari Hongkong, di Eropa itu banyak ikut karena apa? Ternyata orang Banyumas yang ke luar negeri... kok ada ceramah bahasa Banyumasan.” [“There are even those reaching abroad, from Hong Kong; in Europe many follow along—why? It turns out they are Banyumas people who went abroad... surprised to find a sermon in the Banyumasan language.”] Ustaz Enjang corroborated this pattern with reference to a different continent: “Ternyata ketika RRI menggunakan YouTube terjangkau sampai ke Australia... kalau kita di dunia digital kan tidak lagi ada batas wilayah.” [“It turns out that once RRI used YouTube, the reach extended as far as Australia... in the digital world there are no longer territorial boundaries.”]

Ustaz Sofy further reported domestic-to-urban interaction illustrating the same mechanism at a smaller geographic scale: “Sekarang yang di Jakarta ada sempat nge-chat... saya mengikuti kajiannya Ustaz di YouTube... kebaikan itu lebih luas kesampaian dan jelas banget.” [“Recently someone in Jakarta messaged me... saying they follow the sermons on YouTube... the good message reaches more widely and very clearly.”] From the production side, producer Budi described a parallel shift in the modality of audience consumption: “Sekarang, konsumsinya sudah melalui WhatsApp dan voice note... pendengar setia RRI Purwokerto yang tadinya hanya mendengar suara ustaz, sekarang bisa menyaksikan secara langsung melalui kanal YouTube.” [“Nowadays, consumption already occurs through WhatsApp and voice notes... loyal RRI Purwokerto listeners, who previously only heard the preacher’s voice, can now watch directly through the YouTube channel.”] Collectively, these accounts depict a broadcasting institution whose terrestrial reach, once bounded by the Balingmascakep region, has been re-territorialized into a transnational digital footprint precisely through, rather than despite, its retention of local dialect.

Negotiating Authority and Moderation in Digital Space

A fourth finding concerns how RRI Purwokerto, as a public broadcasting institution, manages religious plurality and institutional neutrality amid an increasingly diverse digital audience. Program director Iskandar described an explicit institutional safeguard: “Kita melibatkan Kemenag yang di mana Kemenag itu menjadi representatif agama yang netral. Itu juga salah satu cara kita juga untuk menjaga ini tidak berat di sebelah.” [“We involve the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which serves as a neutral religious representative. That is also one of our ways of ensuring this does not lean to one side.”] Ustaz Sofy described his own discursive strategy for handling contested doctrinal matters: “Saya jelaskan bahwa posisi itu adalah bagian ikhtilafiah... saya jelaskan dengan sesuai dengan pemahaman moderasi beragama.” [“I explain that such a position is a matter of legitimate scholarly disagreement (ikhtilafiyah)... I explain it in accordance with the understanding of religious moderation.”] Ustaz Mintaraga, in turn, described a deliberate avoidance of divisive topics given the program’s heterogeneous listenership: “Kalau di RRI jangan banyak bicara khilafiah... karena pendengarnya dari berbagai macam... cari tema-tema yang lebih membangun, yang lebih mencerahkan menggembirakan.” [“On RRI, one should not dwell on disputed doctrinal matters... because the listeners come from many different backgrounds... one should look for themes that are more constructive, more enlightening, and uplifting.”] These accounts demonstrate that the program’s transnational appeal is sustained not only by linguistic strategy but also by an institutionalized commitment to doctrinal moderation, which preserves the program’s acceptability across a religiously and culturally heterogeneous, geographically dispersed audience.

Digital Transformation as a “Third Space”

The fifth finding concerns the hybrid communicative space created by the convergence of local content and global platforms. Program director Iskandar framed this hybridity as a production challenge and an opportunity: “Tantangannya ada di konten... bagaimana membuat program ini bukan cuma sekedar kayak ceramah, tapi bisa se-interaktif itu. Kelebihannya kita dibanding TV kan kita bisa langsung interaksi langsung dengan pendengarnya.” [“The challenge lies in the content... how to make this program not merely a sermon, but

something this interactive. Our advantage compared with television is that we can interact directly with the listeners.”] Listener Risto Moyo described how this interactivity compensates for radio’s lack of face-to-face contact: “Kalau di radio kan tidak tatap muka langsung atau malah lewat ketikan WA atau komentar... sangat memuaskan dan misal belum bisa dipahami bisa ditanyakan lagi lewat kolom komentar YouTube.” [“On radio there is no direct face-to-face contact, or it is only through WhatsApp text or comments... it is very satisfying, and if something is not yet understood, one can ask again through the YouTube comment column.”] Listener Bu Wid, meanwhile, voiced the continued practical relevance of terrestrial radio alongside this digital expansion: she described listening via an electric household radio as practical and valuable for broadening her religious knowledge. Taken together, these accounts indicate that RRI Purwokerto’s digital transformation has produced a hybrid communicative space in which terrestrial and digital modalities, local content and global infrastructure, and one-way sermonizing and interactive exchange coexist and reinforce one another rather than displacing one another wholesale.

DISCUSSION

Space-Time Compression: From Terrestrial to Transnational

The findings reported in section C directly instantiate Robertson’s (1992) concept of the compression of the world into “a single place.” RRI Purwokerto’s migration of the Mutiara Pagi program onto YouTube and TikTok has reduced the institutional catchment area once bounded by “Balingmascakep” into a transnational, real-time communicative space. The reported reach into Australia, Hong Kong, and Europe corroborates Robertson’s observation that the boundaries of societies have become increasingly porous as a consequence of global media penetration: a local public broadcaster, without any deliberate internationalization strategy at the level of organizational mandate, finds its content circulating among diaspora audiences precisely through the affordances of platform algorithms rather than through institutional design.

This pattern is theoretically significant because it reverses the conventional directionality assumed in much transnational-media scholarship, in which global reach is typically the product of deliberate institutional internationalization—dedicated foreign-language services, satellite distribution agreements, or international correspondent networks. In the case of RRI Purwokerto, by contrast, transnational reach emerges as an unplanned by-product of platform migration undertaken primarily for domestic audience retention. The compression of space and time, in this instance, is mediated not by institutional strategy but by algorithmic recommendation systems that surface dialect-marked content to geographically dispersed users who share a cultural or familial connection to the Banyumas region. This suggests that, in the contemporary platform-mediated media ecology, transnationalization can occur as an emergent property of local authenticity rather than as a planned outcome of deliberate global outreach—a nuance that extends Robertson’s largely macro-structural account of glocalization down to the level of everyday institutional practice.

Glocal Dialectics: The Particularization of Universalism in the “Ngapak” Dialect

The communicative strategy described in finding B—most explicitly in Ustaz Mintaraga’s deliberate shift from formal religious register toward Banyumasan dialect so that the message does not “membuat pikiran bundet” (confuse the mind)—constitutes a clear empirical instance of what Robertson terms the “particularization of universalism.” The universal ethical and theological content of the message is preserved, while its linguistic packaging is deliberately localized to maximize comprehensibility and emotional resonance for a specific cultural audience. Simultaneously, as documented in finding C, this same dialect-marked content is consumed transnationally once distributed via YouTube and TikTok—an instance of the complementary process, the “universalization of particularism,” whereby a highly local linguistic register is elevated into global circulation and becomes consumable by audiences far beyond its original speech community. The coexistence of these two processes within a single case substantiates Robertson’s claim that glocalization is not a one-directional flow but a continuous, mutually reinforcing dialectic.

Identity Negotiation: Dialect as the Diaspora’s Strategy of “Becoming”

Drawing on Hall’s (1996) distinction between identity as “roots” and identity as “routes,” the diaspora listeners’ attachment to Banyumasan-dialect da’wah content, documented in findings A and C, should not be read merely

as a nostalgic return to origin. Rather, it represents an active strategy of “becoming” through which diaspora listeners deploy their mother tongue as a resource for navigating their present circumstances abroad. The dialect functions as what Hall calls a “point of temporary attachment” between a universal religious message and the listener’s particular cultural subjectivity—a discursive resource mobilized strategically and positionally, rather than a fixed essence passively inherited. This reframing matters theoretically because it shifts the analytical register from cultural nostalgia to cultural agency: diaspora listeners are not simply consuming a relic of home, but actively constructing religious and cultural belonging through dialect-mediated content.

Dialect as an Identity Anchor amid Postmodern Fragmentation

Bauman’s (1996) account of the postmodern shift “from pilgrim to tourist” illuminates why the recognition described in finding A—listeners identifying preachers by their distinctively Banyumasan voice across unexpected and far-flung contexts—carries such emotional weight. In a condition characterized by dislocation and fragmented attachment, the dialect-marked voice supplies a stable, recognizable cultural signature, functioning as a “cultural defense” against the anonymity of global cyberspace. For diaspora listeners specifically, this dialect operates as an articulation of “homesickness” resolved, momentarily, through digital “home-coming”: the act of encountering a familiar dialect within an unfamiliar geographic and cultural environment provides a sense of cultural proximity and belonging that counteracts the disorientation Bauman associates with postmodern identity.

It is worth noting that this anchoring function operates asymmetrically across the audience segments documented in the findings. For domestic listeners such as Bu Muningah, who re-transmits program content within her own local congregation, the dialect reinforces an already-present sense of communal belonging, functioning primarily as a marker of continuity. For diaspora listeners, however, the same dialect performs a more compensatory function, supplying a substitute for face-to-face community ties that geographic distance has interrupted. This distinction suggests that the “cultural defense” function of dialect is not a uniform effect but one whose intensity varies with the listener’s degree of spatial and social dislocation from the Banyumas region—an observation that refines, rather than simply applies, Bauman’s general theoretical claim within the specific empirical context of transnational religious broadcasting.

Media Hybridity and the Emergence of a “Third Space”

Finding E demonstrates the emergence of a hybrid communicative “third space” in which universal religious teaching, global digital infrastructure, and local cultural identity converge. Within this space, as finding D indicates, preachers’ religious authority is no longer constituted solely through formal theological credentialing but also through their capacity to construct culturally resonant “images of the world” that remain intelligible and appealing across a heterogeneous, geographically dispersed audience. The institutional moderation strategy described by program director Iskandar—deliberately involving the Ministry of Religious Affairs to maintain neutrality—further indicates that this third space requires active institutional management, not merely organic platform affordances, to remain a sustainable and inclusive site of transnational religious encounter.

Toward a “Digital Ngapak” Model: Theoretical Contribution

Synthesizing the findings above, this study proposes “Digital Ngapak” as a community-based da’wah model characterized by global resonance achieved through, rather than despite, the deliberate retention of a stigmatized or peripheral regional dialect. This contribution extends Robertson’s glocalization theory by demonstrating its applicability to a domain—religious broadcasting via a public, non-commercial institution—that has received comparatively little attention relative to commercial media or transnational religious organizations. It also extends Hall’s identity-as-“routes” framework into the empirical context of diasporic religious-media consumption, showing concretely how a regional vernacular operates as a vehicle of cultural and emotional connection across national borders in the digital era.

Positioned against prior literature, this study’s contribution can be specified as follows. Where Fakhrurroji (2019) foregrounds gender and authority negotiation in Indonesian women’s online da’wah, this study foregrounds linguistic-dialectal negotiation as an analytically distinct axis of digital da’wah authority. Where Pratama and

Wahyuni (2019) document RRI's organizational transformation into a multiplatform media institution, this study supplies the linguistic-content dimension that their organizational-level analysis does not address. Where Kurniawan (2021) examines Banyumasan-dialect maintenance as a matter of cultural-identity preservation in mass media generally, this study narrows and extends that inquiry into the specific, transnationally consequential domain of religious broadcasting. Where Setiawan (2020) and Zamroni (2022) theorize transnational and glocal da'wah strategy at a relatively general conceptual level, this study grounds those concepts in a single, richly documented empirical case, yielding the more specific "Digital Ngapak" construct as a theoretical refinement applicable to comparable regional-dialect broadcasting contexts elsewhere in Indonesia and, potentially, in other multilingual Muslim-majority societies.

Practical Implications

For religious broadcasters and preachers, these findings suggest that local dialect should be regarded as a communicative asset rather than a liability when designing digital da'wah content intended for diaspora or transnational reach. Calibrated code-mixing—as practiced variably by the preachers in this study—appears more effective than uniform standardization in balancing local emotional resonance with broader intelligibility. Institutionally, the deliberate involvement of neutral religious authorities, as practiced by RRI Purwokerto, offers a transferable model for public broadcasters seeking to sustain doctrinal moderation while serving an increasingly diverse, digitally dispersed audience.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze how the Banyumasan local dialect is negotiated and constructed as a communicative instrument within transnational digital da'wah at RRI Purwokerto. The findings demonstrate that preachers strategically calibrate dialect use and code-mixing according to platform and audience scope (addressing sub-question 1); that the dialect functions as a significant pull factor for diaspora audiences by triggering collective memory and cultural proximity, thereby operating as a medium of digital home-coming (sub-question 2); that preachers negotiate local identity against broader reach demands through deliberate linguistic adaptation and institutionalized doctrinal moderation rather than through abandonment of local idiom (sub-question 3); and that dialect use appears to strengthen, rather than weaken, preachers' religious authority among diaspora congregations by furnishing a distinctive and recognizable cultural signature (sub-question 4).

Theoretically, the study concludes that digitalization does not extinguish locality through homogenization; instead, it amplifies local identity into a form of global symbolic capital. This conclusion is encapsulated in the proposed "Digital Ngapak" model, which extends Robertson's glocalization framework and Hall's conception of identity-as-"routes" into the domain of community-based, dialect-mediated religious broadcasting, while illustrating Bauman's notion of cultural defense in a concrete digital setting.

This study is subject to several limitations. As a single embedded case study relying on purposively selected informants, its findings are not statistically generalizable to other regional-dialect broadcasting contexts, although analytic generalization to theoretically similar cases is plausible. Claims regarding transnational audience reach rely on informants' self-reported accounts and qualitative digital observation rather than verified platform analytics, which may not fully capture the scale or demographic composition of the diaspora audience. Future research could address these limitations through comparative case studies across other regional-dialect broadcasting institutions in Indonesia, quantitative analysis of platform analytics to verify and measure transnational audience reach, and longitudinal qualitative inquiry into how diaspora listeners' religious and cultural identities evolve through sustained engagement with dialect-mediated digital da'wah.

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Ethics Statement

This research involved human informants and was conducted in accordance with prevailing ethical principles for social and humanities research, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Prior to data collection, all informants—preachers, program management personnel, and listeners—were informed of the research objectives, procedures, and intended use of the data, and verbal or written informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interview process began. Participation was voluntary, and informants were free to withdraw at any point without consequence. Preachers and program management personnel are identified by their real names in this article with their explicit consent, in view of their public role as broadcasters; general listeners are referred to by the first names or honorifics by which they are customarily addressed within their community, in order to balance contextual transparency with reasonable privacy. No sensitive personal data unrelated to the research focus were collected, and audio-visual material drawn from publicly accessible YouTube and TikTok content was treated as data on publicly disseminated broadcast content rather than as private communication. This study did not involve any medical, clinical, or physically invasive procedures and therefore did not require review by a human-subjects medical ethics committee; nevertheless, it was conducted under the supervision of the corresponding author's doctoral program at Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, consistent with the institution's research-ethics guidance for qualitative social-science studies.

Conflict Of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial, institutional, or personal interests that could have influenced the conduct, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this research. The first author is professionally affiliated with LPP RRI Purwokerto, the broadcasting institution examined in this study; this affiliation provided valuable access to informants and institutional documentation, but the authors affirm that data collection and analysis were conducted with reflexive attention to this dual positionality, and that the findings and interpretations presented here reflect the authors' independent scholarly judgment rather than any institutional directive of RRI Purwokerto. The second author served in a supervisory academic capacity and had no financial or organizational interest in RRI Purwokerto. No funding body, sponsor, or third party had any role in the design of the study, the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data, the writing of the manuscript, or the decision to submit the article for publication.

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