

PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN MUSLIM FORUMS IN MEDAN CITY: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rezky Khoirina Tarihoran¹, Tasnim Lubis², Ratna Sari Dewi³, Vera Kristiana⁴, Ayu Melati Ningsih⁵

^{1,3,4,5} Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al-Washliyah, Indonesia

² Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

¹ Rezkykhoirina@umnaw.ac.id, ² tasnimlubis@usu.ac.id, ³ ratnasariidewi@umnaw.ac.id,

⁴ verakristiana@umnaw.ac.id, ⁵ ayumelati@umnaw.ac.id

Abstract

The objective of this study is to ascertain the types of participation exhibited by individuals engaged in a Muslim forum, specifically presenters, speakers/ustadz, and residents as participants of the forum. The primary objective of this study is to identify performance trends within the Muslim forum process through the application of an anthropological methodology. The observed patterns of involvement can be elucidated by examining the phenomena of speaking activity within the context of the Muslim forum process. The primary sources of data utilized in this study consist of video recordings, interviews, and observations. The present study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. The findings of this study demonstrate that the presenter's performance include the initiation, conclusion, and facilitation of the event. The primary function of the speaker is to provide a lecture and provide guidance. The performance of the inhabitants includes the act of posing inquiries, providing answers, and reacting to both questions and jokes presented by the speaker. The Muslim forum primarily facilitates a lecture-based form of participation, characterized by limited interaction between participants throughout the lecture sessions.

Keywords: Performance; Participation; Muslim Forum; Anthropological

INTRODUCTION

Muslim forums are widely regarded as a prominent religious engagement within the Muslim community in Indonesia. Muslim forums typically encompass a range of activities, including the dissemination of religious lectures, engaging in discussions pertaining to Islamic teachings, and the recital of the Quran. In the Indonesian language, forums dedicated to the discussion of Islam are commonly referred to as "pengajian," a term that can be loosely translated as "Quran recitation." Recitation, derived from the etymological root "kaji" denoting teaching (KBBI: 2010), is a non-formal religious instructional endeavor prevalent within society. Its purpose is to cultivate religious devotion and enhance communal bonds, while also serving as a medium for the profound exploration of religious messages (Muin: 2008). The learning relationship during the recitation involves the dynamic interaction between religious leaders and their followers. In this context, the participants who engage in the recitation are expected to actively participate in the process. The outcome of the learning interaction process is significantly influenced by the level of participation exhibited by individuals involved. The expectation is that the interaction process, which contributes to the construction of participation performance, will yield informative data regarding the speaking patterns exhibited by the speaker community. The Muslim forum process commences with the active involvement of religious leaders or ustadz and the community. The process of participation in a Muslim forum typically involves

religious leaders delivering instructional material in the form of lectures, followed by a question-and-answer session. This session serves as an opportunity for interaction between the religious leaders and the community, who actively participate by listening, learning, and gaining understanding from the teachings.

This research is grounded in the anthropolinguistic approach put forth by Sibarani (2004). According to Sibarani (2015), the study of oral tradition based on anthropolinguistics involves three distinct stages. The initial stage focuses on the identification of the structure, pattern, or formula of oral tradition, and encompasses the examination of the interrelationship between text, co-text, and context. Subsequently, the next step involves engaging in a comprehensive examination of the substance of oral traditions, specifically focusing on ascertaining their inherent worth (valuability). This entails analyzing the significance and purpose, values and norms, and the local wisdom encapsulated within an oral tradition. Following this, the subsequent phase entails critically evaluating and devising a framework for revitalizing and safeguarding oral traditions. In summary, the concept of meaning can be comprehended through its association with functions, values, norms, and local wisdom, whereas patterns can be represented by rules, structures, and formulas.

The performance notion utilized in this study is derived from the oral tradition. According to Finnegan in Lubis' (2018) scholarly work, performance is a distinct mode of human communication and behavior that sets it apart from ordinary descriptions or routine actions. In addition, Finnegan asserts that performance can manifest in various contexts, encompassing both structured and unstructured settings.

According to Sibarani (2015), performance can be defined as the comprehension of the organization of the text, co-text, and context, which reveals the arrangement of both verbal and non-verbal components within an oral tradition. This comprehension aims to foster a comprehensive grasp of the particular form being analyzed. The understanding of language can be elucidated by examining its role in communicative activities, actions, and performances that necessitate the application of creativity (Lubis, 2019).

Performance, within the context of oral tradition, is a distinct kind of human communication and behavior that sets it apart from mere descriptions of typical or mundane practices. Certain acts of communication can be identified as performances due to a recurring quality that is situated inside a specific "frame" or topic (Finnegan, 2005).

According to Duranti in Lubis (2018), the notion employed to denote a significant component of certain activities, namely speaking, has been commonly referred to as participation. The initial stage of investigation into spoken language was examined by a group of three researchers, who subsequently referred to it as "participation" (Lubis, 2018). The researchers propose two fundamental aspects of participation, namely the structure and framework. Philips suggests that the structure of participation refers to a specific sort of framework for facilitating involvement. Hymes' research on various forms of participation was subsequently expanded upon by Goffman, who introduced the concept of "footing." This concept refers to the role assumed by an individual when conveying a linguistic expression. Goffman categorized participants into three roles: principal, author, and animator. The principal refers to an individual or institution that holds a position of authority and represents a collective entity. The author is responsible for the choice of words and the emotional tone conveyed in the expression. The animator, on the other hand, is the person who physically produces the speech containing the intended message, often referred to as a "sounding box."

Muslim forum serves as a non-formal religious educational practice that holds significant significance in nurturing religious practices within society. It also plays a crucial and strategic role in the establishment of a learning society, characterized by the preservation of traditions across various demographics, including age (long life education), gender, educational

attainment, and social standing. Moreover, muslim forum serves as an effective tool for fostering a sense of camaraderie and imparting religious teachings (Muin, 2008).

According to Muhzakir in Arifin's study conducted in 1997, the term "recitation" is commonly used to encompass many forms of religious learning. Additionally, Prasodjo in Dirdjosanjoto's work in 1999 elucidates that individuals who engage in religious activities with a focus on learning are typically ustadz or kyai. Based on the aforementioned reasoning, it can be inferred that recitation is an educational endeavor conducted by religious authorities, specifically kyai or ustadz, to disseminate knowledge to the broader public or community.

METHOD

The research employed a qualitative ethnographic model technique, as established by Spradley (1979, 1980), which encompasses a total of 12 interview steps and 12 observation steps. The individuals included in this study consist of religious leaders and the community residing in environment IX, namely inside the Harjosari I sub-district of MedanAmplas, a practicing Muslim, regularly participates in the community's customary religious study sessions, which are conducted on Friday evenings. The data utilized in this study originates from the researcher's recordings during the regular recitation sessions in Environment IX, Harjosari I subdistrict. Subsequently, these recordings were transcribed into written form, namely orthographic transcription. The employed methodology for data collecting involved the utilization of observation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Muslim forum activity, conducted by Muslim residents in Neighborhood IX, Harjosari I sub-district, serves as a way of maintaining communication and connection. In addition to this, the primary objective of this activity is to engage in the act of listening to tausiyah, which refers to religious lectures presented by a ustadz. The examination of a Muslim forum as a component of communal life might be approached via an anthropolinguistic lens.

The action within this Muslim forum is typically categorized into three distinct stages, namely the opening, major, and closing phases. During the initial phase, the communal recitation commences as individuals residing in the vicinity gather and assume their positions in the allotted area. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a discernible shift in the venue for recitation sessions. Previously, these sessions were conducted at the residences of participants on a rotational basis. However, they have now been relocated to the RidhoShobirin Mosque, situated in neighborhood IX of the Harjosari I sub-district. Following the conclusion of evening prayers, the residents commenced their arrival and proceeded to wait until the commencement of the event.

The program of the Muslim forum is afterwards initiated by the individual serving as both the Chair of the Muslim forum and the host. In this instance, the individual holding the position of Chair within the Muslim forum might be referred to as the Principal, as they bear the responsibility for ensuring the ongoing operation of the forum. The individual assuming the role of the leader inside the Muslim forum initiates the activity by commencing with the recitation of the Basmallah. Subsequently, the individual in charge of the Muslim forum will proceed to present the esteemed ustadz who has been graciously asked to conduct a lecture, along by a brief overview of the talk's content.

Discussion

Subsequently, the focus of the event shifted to the primary segment, which entailed the dissemination of *tausiyah*. The initial *tausiyah* often conducted by *ustadz* entails the following:

Ustadz: Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Residents : Waalaikumsalam Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Ustadz :Alhamdulillahirobbilalamin washolatuwassalamu ala asrofilanbiyawalmursalin Sayyidinawa Maulana Muhammadinwa ala alihiwashohbihiajma'in Amma ba'du.

In Muslim forum activities, the religious lecturer or *ustadz* can be considered the author, as he or she is the one who determines the ambiance of the event. *Ustadz* can also be considered an animator, alongside the locals, of course.

In the context of the Muslim forum, the *ustadz*, in their capacity as an author, assumes a significant responsibility in shaping a certain ambiance. Given the customary occurrence of this activity during the late hours on Fridays, it is anticipated that a tranquil ambiance would prevail. It is not uncommon for the *ustadz* to incorporate humor in order to enhance the liveliness of the ambiance. The following are examples from the research:

Ustadz: Dokter gigi, kalau dia yakin semua rejeki dari Allah sumbernya, maka dia akan insyaAllahtawadlu. Berlimpah rejekinya. Kenapa? Untung Allah menciptakan gigi dengan penyakitnya. Kalau gigi tidak ada penyakit, ga ada dokternya! Ga ada kerja dokter giginya!

Warga: (tertawa)

(*Ustadz: Dentist, if he believes that all his good fortune comes from Allah, then he will, God willing, be humble. Lots of luck. Why? Luckily Allah created teeth with the problems. If you don't have toothache, there's no dentist! They all will be jobless!*

Citizen: (laughs))

The performance exhibited by the residents in general was that of amusement, as demonstrated in the aforementioned example. There appears to be limited engagement between the religious lecturer and residents during *tausiyah* sessions. In addition to exhibiting laughter, as illustrated in the aforementioned example, there were several instances in which locals responded to inquiries posed by the religious lecturer.

Ustadz: Sekarang saya tanya ibu-ibu, mahal gigi atau mahal kawat gigi?

Warga: (Tertawa)

Ustadz: Jawab ibu-ibu. Kalau bisa jawab lanjut ceramah ini. Kalau gak, langsung doa aja biar pulang gitu. Tanya lagi, mahal gigi apa kawatnya?

Warga: Gigiiii.

Ustadz: Alhamdu-?

Warga: lillah..

(*Ustadz: Now I ask ladies, which one is more expensive: the teeth or braces?*

Citizen: (Laughs)

Ustadz: Answer me ladies. If you can answer, we can continue this lecture. If not, we can just go straight to pray and then go home. Let me ask you again, which one is more expensive: teeth or braces??

Citizen: Teeeeeetthh

Ustadz: Alhamdu-?
Citizen: lillah..)

The aforementioned example illustrates the active participation of citizens in responding to inquiries posed by Ustadz. Occasionally, it involves the continuation of the discourse initiated by the ustadz. The ustadz implemented this strategy to foster engagement among residents, hence generating interest in the lecture. Additionally, this approach aimed to prevent residents from experiencing boredom and drowsiness during the delivery of the lecture.

Typically, religious lecturers are allocated approximately 15 minutes for their presentation. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for the prescribed time limit of the *tausiyah* session to be disregarded, resulting in its duration being extended to 30 minutes. It might be argued that during *tausiyah* sessions, the religious lecturer tends to limit the extent of resident interaction. The nature of interaction is limited to the exchange of questions designed to capture individuals' interest, followed by concise responses.

In conclusion, the *ustadz* conveyed his gratitude to the committee and attendees for their presence and attentiveness throughout his talk. The practice of incorporating rhymes or songs by the *ustadz* is frequently observed, serving to enhance the overall impact of the presented lesson.

Ustadz : Saya kira ini saja yang bisa saya sampaikan. Menutup, mari kita nyanyikan "Selimut Putih" biar kita sadar pulang dari sini. "Bila Izrail datang memanggil, Jasad terbujur di pembaringan. Bila Izrail datang memanggil, Jasad terbujur di pembaringan. Seluruh tubuh akan menggigil. Tak adalagi gunanya harta. Kawan karib sanak saudara. Tiada lagi gunanya harta. Kawan karibsanaksaudara. Jikalau ada amal di dunia. Itulahhanyapembelakita."

(Ustadz: I believe this is all I can say. As a farewell, let's sing "Selimut Putih (White Blanket)" so we can return home. "When Izrail arrived, the body was lying on the bed. When Izrail arrived, the body was lying on the bed. Your entire body will tremble. There is no longer any use for prosperity. An intimate friend of a family member. There is no longer any use for prosperity. An intimate friend of a family member. If there were kindness in the universe. This is our sole defence.)

The *tausiyah* session was afterwards accompanied by a question-and-answer session. The presenter briefly assumed control of the event in order to facilitate inquiries from attendees, which were afterwards addressed by the *ustadz*. It is noteworthy that the inquiries frequently exhibit a lack of correlation with the subject matter previously expounded about by the *ustadz*.

Pembawa Acara: Demikianlah Bapak-bapak, Ibu-ibu, tausiyah dan tanya jawab yang telah disampaikan oleh Ustadz Ali. Selaku pembawa acara saya memohon maaf apabila ada kekurangan dalam acara kita kali ini. Kiranya acara kita dapat memberi manfaat dan keberkahan bagi kita semua. Aamiinyarabbalalamin. Saya tutup pengajian ini dengan membaca hamdalah. Alhamdulillahirabbilalamiin. Wabillahitaufiqwalhidayah. Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Silakan bapak dan ibu untuk menikmati hidangan yang telah disediakan oleh ahli bait.

(Presenter: That concludes the *tausiyah* and questions and answers presented by Ustadz Ali, ladies and gentlemen. As MC, I sincerely apologize for any

shortcomings in our event this time. We hope that our activity today will bring us all benefits and blessings. Rabbalalamin, amen. I finish this recitation with hamdalah. Alhamdulillahirabbilalamin. Taufiq walhidayah, Wabillahitaufiqwalhidayah. As-salamualaikum, warahmatullahiwabarakatuh. Ladies and gentlemen, please enjoy the food served by the host.)

Following the conclusion of the program, Muslim forum attendees were extended an invitation to partake in the prearranged refreshments offered by the host. Despite being conducted within a mosque, this event entails the presence of a designated host who assumes responsibility for providing sustenance to all individuals engaged in the recitation. The moderator of this Muslim forum event rotates on a weekly basis, ensuring that all participants have an opportunity to take their turn.

CONCLUSION

Based on the presentation of the research findings, it was determined that the recitation process for residents in neighborhood IX, Harjosari I Village District, commenced with an introductory speech by the recitation chairman, who also served as the event host. This was followed by a *tausiyah* delivered by the lecturer, a session of questions and answers involving both the participants and the lecturer, and finally, the conclusion was reiterated by the Master of Ceremony. The role of the MC includes the initiation, conclusion, and coordination of the event's proceedings. The primary function of the religious lecture is to provide a lecture and provide guidance. The performance of the attendees encompasses the act of posing inquiries, providing responses, and reacting to both questions and jests presented by the *ustadz*. The Muslim forum session mostly involves a lecture-style format, characterized by limited opportunities for discussion between participants. Nevertheless, participants are afforded the chance to inquire about the subject matter being presented, whether it pertains to the topic at hand or deviates from it.

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