



Muhadaroh as Pesantren-Based Oral Da'wah Communication: Developing Students' Public Speaking, Religious Language, and Digital Media Readiness

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Muhadaroh as Pesantren-Based Oral Da'wah Communication: Developing Students' Public Speaking, Religious Language, and Digital Media Readiness

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Abstract

This study examines muhadaroh as pesantren-based oral da'wah communication training for developing students' public speaking, religious language use, and digital media readiness. Although practiced in a face-to-face setting, muhadaroh is relevant to the intersection of language, communication, and digital da'wah because students must construct Islamic messages ethically and contextually for physical and mediated audiences. This qualitative descriptive study with a phenomenological orientation was conducted at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School, West Tanjung Jabung Barat. Data were gathered through observation, semi-structured interviews with the pesantren head, instructor, and participating students, and documentation, then analyzed through reduction, thematic display, conclusion drawing, and triangulation. Findings show that muhadaroh is implemented through MC practice, Qur'anic recitation, sholawat, berzanji or nadzom, speech delivery, evaluation, and closing prayer. The activity strengthens speech organization, vocal delivery, confidence, audience awareness, Islamic message construction, and communicative identity. Its implementation is supported by mentoring, regulation, and a conducive environment, but constrained by low interest, limited audio facilities, anxiety, and timing. The study contributes a contextual model for linking pesantren oral communication pedagogy with future digital da'wah literacy.

Keywords: Muhadaroh; Da'wah Communication; Religious Language; Public Speaking; Pesantren; Digital Da'wah; Social Media Readiness

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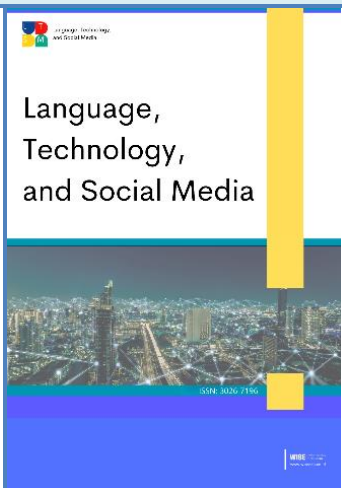
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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of religious communication in the digital era has changed the ecology of da'wah and expanded the spaces in which Islamic messages circulate. Religious communication is no longer limited to mosques, pesantren gatherings, or face-to-face sermons, but increasingly moves through short videos, livestreaming, podcasts, messaging applications, and social media interaction. This shift makes public speaking, religious language, and audience-sensitive communication central to Islamic education, because students are expected to construct messages that remain clear, ethical, persuasive, and contextually appropriate across both physical and mediated audiences [1], [2], [3], [4], [5].

Within this changing communication environment, pesantren education faces a dual task: preserving the depth of Islamic scholarship while equipping students with communicative competence for contemporary public and digital spaces. Da'wah is a normative and social obligation that requires wisdom, good advice, and dialogic communication; therefore, the ability to speak persuasively and responsibly is not an accessory skill but a core competence for Muslim learners who will interact with diverse communities [6]. In this article, muhadaroh is positioned not merely as an extracurricular routine, but as an oral language and da'wah communication practice that prepares students to translate religious knowledge into spoken messages with clarity, etiquette, and social relevance.

Pesantren have historically functioned as institutions of Islamic learning, moral formation, socialization, and community leadership in Indonesia [7], [8], [9]. Contemporary pesantren are also required to respond to child-friendly education, inclusive learning environments, and multicultural social realities [10], [11]. These roles make pesantren a strategic context for developing students' communicative agency. Students are expected not only to memorize religious texts, but also to interpret, organize, and deliver Islamic messages in language that is understandable, respectful, and relevant to community needs.

Muhadaroh is one of the most common pesantren-based activities for developing such competence. Previous studies have associated muhadaroh with confidence-building, speech practice, religious message delivery, character formation, and the habituation of students to perform in front of audiences [12], [13], [14], [15], [16]. Speech delivery in muhadaroh also relies on several public speaking methods, including impromptu, manuscript, memorization, and extempore methods, each of which has different implications for fluency, audience contact, spontaneity, and message mastery [17].

However, existing studies often describe muhadaroh as an extracurricular routine without sufficiently analyzing how planning, performance structure, mentoring, feedback, institutional rules, facilities, anxiety, and student interest interact in producing public speaking development. Many studies also discuss muhadaroh separately from broader debates on language use, religious identity, digital da'wah, and social media communication. This gap is important because students who are trained only to memorize speeches may not automatically develop adaptive communication competence for contemporary religious publics, whereas students who receive structured oral communication training may be better prepared to speak responsibly in classrooms, pesantren forums, community events, and digital media environments [1], [2], [5].

This study therefore investigates the implementation of muhadaroh activities at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School in West Tanjung Jabung Barat. Specifically, the study aims to analyze the planning, implementation, and evaluation of muhadaroh; identify supporting and

inhibiting factors; and examine improvement efforts used to overcome implementation barriers. The novelty of the study lies in positioning muhadaroh as a pesantren-based oral da'wah communication model that connects religious language practice, public speaking pedagogy, and foundational readiness for ethical communication in digital media. In doing so, the study contributes to scholarship on language, communication, and social media by explaining how traditional face-to-face speech training can prepare students for broader mediated religious communication, while acknowledging that the present data remain grounded in an offline pesantren context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhadaroh, Oral Religious Language, and Pesantren-Based Da'wah Communication

Muhadaroh can be interpreted as a structured oral performance activity through which students practice delivering Islamic messages before an audience. In pesantren culture, it is not merely a speech contest or ceremonial event, but a pedagogical space that integrates religious knowledge, language practice, discipline, leadership, and social confidence. It also trains students to use religious language appropriately by combining Qur'anic references, moral advice, narrative examples, polite address, and persuasive appeals. The pesantren tradition emphasizes embodied learning: students learn not only from books and teachers, but also through repeated practice, social imitation, correction, and habituation [7], [8], [9].

The da'wah dimension of muhadaroh is essential because it connects speech training with the ethical responsibility of communicating Islamic values. When students deliver speeches, read Qur'anic verses, lead prayers, or perform berzanji and nadzom, they are trained to communicate through verbal, vocal, textual, and performative modes. This makes muhadaroh a bridge between religious education, oral language development, and public communication. Recent studies show that muhadaroh can improve students' confidence, courage, religious expression, and readiness to participate in community preaching activities [12], [13], [14]. Other studies emphasize its contribution to communicative discipline, leadership, and students' capacity to convey messages in understandable language [15], [16].

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of muhadaroh depends on its instructional design. A program that is compulsory but weakly guided may produce formal participation without deep skill development. Conversely, a program that combines clear scheduling, appropriate themes, speech preparation, mentoring, peer observation, and constructive evaluation can function as a sustainable communication laboratory. Speech methods must also be selected carefully. Memorization may strengthen content mastery and reduce dependence on manuscripts, while extempore speaking can develop flexibility, audience adaptation, and natural delivery [17].

Public Speaking Competence, Communication Apprehension, and Self-Efficacy

Public speaking competence involves more than the courage to stand in front of an audience. It includes topic selection, message organization, linguistic clarity, vocal control, eye contact, body language, audience awareness, ethical persuasion, and the ability to manage unexpected situations. One of the most persistent barriers to public speaking development is communication apprehension, which refers to anxiety or fear associated with real or anticipated communication with others [18], [19], [20].

Studies on student oral performance show that fear of public speaking commonly emerges from evaluation anxiety, fear of forgetting material, lack of preparation, negative previous experiences, and concern about audience judgment [21], [22], [23]. Such fear can affect voice stability, memory retrieval, gestures, and the ability to maintain audience contact. Research on public speaking anxiety also indicates that anxiety is not simply a personal weakness; it is shaped by learning environment, preparation opportunities, self-perception, and the availability of supportive feedback [24], [25], [26].

Self-efficacy theory provides a useful lens for understanding students' development in muhadaroh. Learners become more confident when they experience repeated mastery, observe peer models, receive verbal encouragement, and manage emotional arousal during performance [27], [28], [29]. In instructional settings, self-efficacy influences motivation, persistence, self-regulation, and willingness to attempt challenging tasks [30], [31]. Therefore, students who repeatedly perform in muhadaroh with supportive mentoring are more likely to transform nervousness into controlled performance readiness.

Feedback, Evaluation, and Digital Da'wah Readiness in Oral Communication Learning

Oral communication learning requires clear performance criteria. Rubrics and performance-based assessment help students understand what counts as effective delivery, including structure, content accuracy, fluency, eye contact, vocal variation, and audience engagement [32]. Research on oral presentation competence shows that design principles such as repeated practice, authentic audience exposure, observation, reflection, and feedback are central to improvement [33]. Feedback source also matters: instructor feedback, peer feedback, and self-reflection can play complementary roles in developing presentation competence [34], [35].

Formative feedback is most effective when it is specific, timely, supportive, and linked to the next step of improvement. Feedback should help learners answer where they are going, how they are doing, and what they need to do next [36]. In performance-based activities such as muhadaroh, feedback should not merely criticize mistakes after the event; it should also guide preparation before performance, encourage reflection after performance, and identify concrete targets for subsequent appearances [37].

The digital-media relevance of muhadaroh is also increasingly important. Digital da'wah, livestreamed sermons, short-form Islamic videos, podcasts, and religious content on social media require speakers who can build credibility, maintain ethical language, organize messages concisely, and adapt to audiences beyond the immediate room [1], [2], [3], [5]. Although the present study does not measure students' social media production, muhadaroh can be understood as foundational training for mediated communication because it develops the core oral competencies needed before students transform speeches into digital content. Studies on technology-supported exposure and presentation practice also show that repeated exposure, simulation, and controlled practice environments can reduce anxiety and improve public performance readiness [38], [39], [40]. Thus, future muhadaroh development may integrate video reflection, audio recording, peer feedback, and digital ethics training while preserving the pesantren values of adab, sincerity, and moderation.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a phenomenological orientation. The design was selected because the study aimed to understand how muhadaroh activities are experienced, organized, and interpreted by pesantren actors rather than to measure the statistical effect of a treatment. Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring meanings, practices, and context-specific processes, while thematic analysis provides a flexible but systematic way to identify patterns across observation, interview, and documentation data [42], [43].

Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School, RT 03, Suak Labu Village, Kuala Betara District, West Tanjung Jabung Regency. The site was selected because muhadaroh is implemented as a mandatory pesantren program and is regularly conducted every Thursday night. The research participants consisted of the head of the Islamic boarding school, the muhadaroh instructor, and students who participated in or performed during muhadaroh activities. Participants were selected purposively because they had direct experience with the planning, implementation, evaluation, and impact of the program.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through three techniques. First, observation was conducted during the implementation of muhadaroh to record the sequence of activities, student participation, speech delivery methods, audience responses, and evaluation practices. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants to explore institutional expectations, student difficulties, supporting factors, and improvement strategies. Third, documentation was used to examine activity photos, pesantren archives, schedules, and other materials related to muhadaroh. The combination of these techniques strengthened data triangulation and reduced dependence on a single source of evidence.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Observation notes, interview responses, and documentation were first selected and organized according to the research objectives. The data were then coded into thematic categories, including program planning, implementation structure, speech methods, evaluation, supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and improvement efforts. The findings were displayed narratively and comparatively to identify relationships among categories. Trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation, repeated reading of the data, consistency checks across sources, and reflexive interpretation [44], [45].

Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, the researchers obtained permission from the pesantren management. Informants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the use of data for academic publication. The researchers maintained confidentiality by focusing on roles and experiences rather than sensitive personal information. Visual documentation was used only to support the description of activities and should be published with institutional permission.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Structured Implementation of Muhadaroh Activities

The findings show that muhadaroh at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School is implemented as a structured and mandatory weekly program. The activity is conducted every Thursday night from 20.00 to 22.00 WIB and involves male and female students. Its routine character is important because public speaking competence develops through repetition, habituation, and progressive exposure. In this context, muhadaroh functions as a pesantren-based performance cycle in which students prepare, perform, receive feedback, and return to the next practice opportunity.

The activity begins with a master of ceremony segment, followed by reading Ummul Qur'an, tilawah of the Qur'an, sholawat, berzanji or nadzom, speech delivery, evaluation, and closing prayer. This sequence reflects the religious character of the pesantren while also distributing speaking roles among students. Students do not only practice formal speeches; they also practice leading, reciting, organizing events, regulating voice, and maintaining etiquette before an audience. This finding supports previous studies that view muhadaroh as a medium for confidence-building and religious communication practice [12], [13], [14].

Table 1. Structure of Muhadaroh Activities at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School

Activity Component	Description	Public Speaking Competence Developed
Opening and MC	Students guide the event, manage transitions, and maintain order.	Leadership, audience control, formal language, confidence.
Ummul Qur'an and tilawah	Students open the activity with Qur'anic recitation.	Religious expression, voice control, pronunciation, solemn delivery.
Sholawat, berzanji, or nadzom	Students perform devotional texts and rhythmic religious expression.	Intonation, rhythm, memorization, collective spiritual atmosphere.
Speech performance	Students deliver a prepared speech within the allocated time.	Message organization, argumentation, eye contact, gestures, confidence.
Evaluation	Instructors provide comments, corrections, and motivational advice.	Formative feedback, reflection, identification of improvement targets.
Closing prayer	Students close the activity with prayer.	Religious leadership, vocal clarity, public composure.

The structured sequence indicates that muhadaroh is not a single speech activity but a complete communicative event. Each component trains a different aspect of oral performance. From a public speaking perspective, this is valuable because students are exposed to varying communicative roles rather than only one-way lecturing. The activity also creates a safe but authentic audience setting, allowing students to experience the social pressure of speaking while still being supported by familiar peers and mentors.



Figure 1. Female students delivering muhadaroh performance at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School



Figure 2. Group documentation of students at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School

Speech Methods and the Development of Speaking Confidence

The implementation of muhadaroh uses several speech methods: impromptu, manuscript, memorization, and extempore. In practice, the pesantren places stronger emphasis on memorization, especially after new students pass the first or second month of adaptation. The instructor allows new students to use texts temporarily, but later requires them to perform without reading. This policy aims to prevent students from depending on scripts and to encourage mastery of material before appearing in front of an audience.

The emphasis on memorization has pedagogical advantages and limitations. It can help students organize content, reduce hesitation, and show seriousness in preparation. However, excessive memorization can also make delivery rigid if students focus only on recalling words rather than communicating meaning. Therefore, the memorization method should gradually lead to

extempore delivery, where students prepare an outline and key arguments but speak more naturally. This transition is consistent with public speaking pedagogy that emphasizes content mastery, audience adaptation, and communicative presence [17], [32], [33].

A major challenge identified in the field data is stage fright. New students, especially at the lower level, often experience nervousness, forget prepared material, and lose confidence when facing the audience. This finding is consistent with research showing that public speaking anxiety is common among students and can be triggered by fear of evaluation, fear of forgetting, and lack of performance experience [21], [22], [23]. From a self-efficacy perspective, repeated performance, supportive verbal persuasion, and observation of senior students can gradually increase students' belief in their own ability [27], [28], [29].

Supporting Factors in Muhadaroh Implementation

Three main supporting factors were identified: professional mentoring, institutional regulation, and a conducive pesantren environment. First, the muhadaroh instructor plays a central role in organizing schedules, assigning performers, correcting speech materials, guiding delivery technique, and motivating students. The presence of a mentor prevents muhadaroh from becoming a routine ceremonial activity without learning direction. Second, muhadaroh is supported by pesantren regulation that requires all students to participate. Because students live in the same boarding school environment, attendance and supervision are easier to manage. Third, a quiet, orderly, and religiously supportive environment helps students focus and strengthens the seriousness of the activity.

These factors demonstrate that public speaking development is not only an individual matter but also an institutional practice. Students become more willing to perform when the pesantren provides clear expectations, consistent scheduling, role distribution, and mentoring. In other words, muhadaroh works because it is embedded in a culture of obligation, discipline, and religious purpose. This confirms that effective pesantren communication training depends on the interaction between curriculum, environment, mentor guidance, and student participation [7], [10], [15].

Inhibiting Factors and Improvement Efforts

The study also found several inhibiting factors. Some students participate because of obligation rather than intrinsic interest, which affects their preparation and seriousness. Inadequate facilities, especially problematic microphones and speakers, sometimes make student voices unclear and reduce audience attention. Timing is another challenge because the activity is conducted at night, when students may already be tired after daily learning and pesantren routines. These barriers influence performance quality and the effectiveness of feedback.

To overcome these barriers, the pesantren uses motivational coaching, direct advice, institutional involvement, and facility supplementation. Instructors encourage students to see muhadaroh as preparation for community life, not merely as a compulsory activity. The pesantren also involves different elements of the institution to maintain discipline and support students' readiness. Facility improvement, especially audio equipment, is important because public speaking training depends on audibility and audience engagement. More systematic scheduling and rotation can also prevent fatigue and ensure that students have adequate time to prepare.

A stronger improvement model should integrate pre-performance guidance, performance observation, post-performance feedback, and follow-up targets. Before performing, students should

receive guidance on topic structure, Qur'anic or hadith evidence, language appropriateness, opening and closing strategies, vocal technique, and gestures. During performance, instructors can use a simple rubric. After performance, feedback should identify strengths, priority corrections, and specific targets for the next appearance. Such formative feedback is essential because feedback that is timely, specific, and improvement-oriented has stronger effects on learning than general criticism [36], [37].

Table 2. Supporting, Inhibiting, and Improvement Factors in Muhadaroh Implementation

Factor	Observed Influence	Recommended Improvement
Professional mentor	Guides planning, corrects material, evaluates performance, motivates students.	Maintain mentoring, use simple rubrics, and document progress.
Mandatory regulation	Ensures participation and creates routine practice opportunities.	Balance obligation with meaningful motivation and student ownership.
Conducive environment	Supports concentration, religious atmosphere, and confidence.	Keep room orderly and minimize distractions.
Low student interest	Some students perform only because of obligation.	Use peer modeling, recognition, topic choice, and relevance to community da'wah.
Inadequate facilities	Faulty audio equipment reduces clarity and audience attention.	Prioritize microphone and speaker maintenance or replacement.
Ineffective timing	Night schedule may cause fatigue and weak preparation.	Improve rotation, preparation deadlines, and rehearsal opportunities.

Discussion

The findings indicate that muhadaroh at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School is best understood as a situated oral communication pedagogy. Its value lies not only in requiring students to deliver speeches, but also in embedding speech practice within religious routines, institutional discipline, peer audiences, and mentor feedback. This confirms the broader role of pesantren as institutions that integrate knowledge transmission, moral formation, and social leadership [7], [8], [9].

Compared with previous studies, the present study confirms that muhadaroh strengthens confidence, courage, and public performance readiness [12], [13], [14], [15], [16]. However, it also extends prior findings by showing that implementation quality depends on the coherence of planning, performance structure, feedback, regulations, facilities, and student motivation. A mandatory program can create participation, but participation alone does not guarantee competence. Competence emerges when students repeatedly perform, receive targeted feedback, observe peers, and gradually move from text dependence toward more flexible delivery.

The persistence of stage fright among new students should not be interpreted as failure. Public speaking anxiety is a normal part of oral performance learning, especially for students who are still adapting to the pesantren environment and audience expectations [21], [22], [23]. What

matters is how the institution transforms anxiety into learning. Supportive mentoring, gradual exposure, peer modeling, and constructive evaluation can help students develop self-efficacy and emotional control [27], [29], [30].

The study also directly contributes to scholarship on language, technology, and social media. First, it documents how religious language is learned through repeated oral performance, including Qur'anic recitation, devotional texts, persuasive speeches, and audience-sensitive delivery. Second, it shows how pesantren-based communication training shapes students' Islamic communicative identity before they enter wider public and digital spaces. Third, it provides a pedagogical bridge to digital da'wah: students who master ethical speech, message structure, vocal clarity, and audience adaptation are better prepared to produce responsible sermons, podcasts, recorded speeches, livestreams, and short-form religious content. However, because the study did not collect data from social media platforms, its digital contribution should be understood as foundational and pedagogical rather than as direct evidence of online engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that muhadaroh activities at Mafatihul Huda Islamic Boarding School function as a structured pesantren-based oral da'wah communication model that develops students' public speaking competence, religious language use, and communicative identity. The activity is implemented through MC practice, Qur'anic recitation, sholawat, berzanji or nadzom, speech delivery, evaluation, and closing prayer, thereby exposing students to multiple verbal, vocal, and performative roles. Professional mentoring, institutional regulation, and a conducive environment support implementation, while low student interest, limited audio facilities, stage fright, and timing problems constrain it. The study contributes to language, communication, and digital media scholarship by showing that traditional pesantren speech training can provide foundational competencies for ethical and audience-sensitive digital da'wah, although future studies should directly examine how muhadaroh-trained students transfer these skills to social media, podcasts, livestreams, and other mediated religious communication practices.

LIMITATIONS

This study is limited to one Islamic boarding school and uses qualitative data from observation, interviews, and documentation. Therefore, the findings are context-specific and should not be generalized statistically to all pesantren. The study also does not measure students' public speaking competence quantitatively before and after participation, nor does it analyze actual digital da'wah content produced by students on social media platforms. Future studies may use mixed-methods designs, oral presentation rubrics, video-based performance analysis, digital portfolio assessment, or comparative studies across several pesantren to examine how face-to-face muhadaroh training transfers into recorded sermons, livestreams, podcasts, and social media-based religious communication.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

S.M.A. was responsible for conceptualization, field data collection, observation, interview administration, documentation, initial analysis, and manuscript drafting. J. contributed to supervision, methodological validation, interpretation of findings, manuscript revision, and final approval. Both authors reviewed the final manuscript and agreed to the submitted version.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF AI IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

The author used AI-assisted technology solely to support language refinement and clarity in the writing process. The author takes full responsibility for the content of the manuscript, including its accuracy, integrity, and originality.

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