

## Conference Paper

# Social Identity Represented in *Dai's* Discourse

Rahmadsyah Rangkuti, T. Silvana Sinar, Eddy Setia, and Mulyadi Zulfan

University of Sumatra Utara, Medan, Indonesia

## Abstract

This research is motivated by the use of language as a marker of *da'is* (preachers) identity and ideology in the city of Medan represented in their preaching. The outbreak of the spirit of Islam which was marked by the proliferation of Islamic *da'wah* forums in urban areas, presented a treasure of language problems that could be used as new objects of linguistic analysis. In the discourse of Islamic preaching, language plays an important role that could be used to portray a personal and sociocultural identity of a *dai*. Even the use of language can also represent the ideology of the *dai*. The purpose of this study is to find out the linguistic features that shape identity and the ideology represented in the preaching discourse of *Dai* in the city of Medan. Practically, a phenomenological design was used in this study based on a critical socio-pragmatic approach. The data are in the form of speech collected purposively and analyzed by distributional and contextual method and presented formally and informally.

**Keywords:** identity, ideology, discourse, urban areas, *da'i*.

Corresponding Author:  
Rahmadsyah Rangkuti  
rangkuti@usu.ac.id

Received: 1 July 2019  
Accepted: 18 July 2019  
Published: 31 July 2019

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

© Rahmadsyah Rangkuti  
et al. This article is distributed  
under the terms of the [Creative  
Commons Attribution License](#),  
which permits unrestricted use  
and redistribution provided that  
the original author and source  
are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under  
the responsibility of the AICLL  
2019 Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

This research is motivated by two assumptions that language in the practice of Islamic *da'wah* is used as a tool to mark social identity and ideological representation of the *dai*. This is interesting to study because currently the study of the phenomenon of Islamic diversity in Indonesia is growing. Issues of intolerance, radicalization, even extremism addressed to Muslims (read, Ahnaf, 2016: 30; compare with Wildan, 2016: 188), are considered necessary to be studied based on linguistic perspectives. The reason is that the negative accusations directed at Muslims are based on the use of language carried out in the practice of Islamic *da'wah*. Evidently, at the end of 2018, Muslims in Indonesia were shocked by the news that there were 41 mosques in Jakarta that were suspected of being exposed to radical understanding. In fact, before that, in the mid-2018 past, the government of the Republic of Indonesia through the Ministry of Religion released 200 lists of names that were recommended as speakers/preachers throughout the country. This proves that the language used in the past has been indicated by the government as a medium for forming and marking identity and as a tool for representing

## OPEN ACCESS

the ideology of the *dai*, especially the ideologies that are considered threatening the integrity and unity of the Indonesian nation.

Based on the facts above, it cannot be denied that in the life of Muslims in Indonesia there is a term "hard *ustadz/dai* (preacher)". A term given to a *dai* who speaks outburstsly or has "spicy words" style needs to be explained and analyzed linguistically. In turn, the results of linguistic analysis will provide an explanation of the identity formed and the ideology represented in preaching. It is not without strong theoretical reasons to do this research. Because, in a linguistic perspective, the practice of Islamic *da'wah*/preach is a practice of pragmatic discourse, because in it there are aspects of pragmatic discourse, namely, speakers and listeners, the context of speech, the purpose of speech, speech as a form of action or activity, speech as a product of verbal acts (see Leech, 1993; Wijana and Rohmadi, 2009: 14; Hermaji, 2016). Based on this kind of understanding, the language used in preaching can be said to be the use of a series of different types of speech acts that have a specific purpose, function and are designed to produce some effects, influences, or consequences for the audience. Among the functions and meanings of the *dai* discourse are marker of identity and representation of ideology.

This research conducted in the city of Medan. Medan is a city which has a population of a fairly heterogeneous sociocultural background. In addition, as one of the autonomous regions of the city in North Sumatra province, the position, function and role of Medan are quite important and regionally strategic. Even as the capital city of North Sumatra, Medan is often used as a barometer in government development, education and administration. Moreover, for its multi-ethnicity, the city of Medan is also known as a city of diverse religions. Based on the Medan city census data in 2015, majority of the population adhered to Islam (59.68%), then Protestant (21.16%), Buddhism (9.90%), Catholic (7.10%), Hinduism (2.15%) and Confucian (0.01%) (MUI Medan, 2014) Therefore, this diversity of religions should be maintained by everyone in Medan, including the *dai* to use polite language when preaching so it shows that Islam is *rahmatan lil alamin*.

Based on the background of the problems that have been raised, basically this research seeks to find linguistic features of the identity and the ideology of the *dai*, and the factors that cause the *dai* to form an identity and represent its ideology. Based on the description of the facts above, this research proposed to use speech act theory, politeness theory and critical linguistics to analyze linguistic features that mark identity and ideology of the *dai* and reveal the ideological linguistic factors.

There are several important reasons that make this research worth realized, first, the reality that there is a term "hard *ustadz*" whose language style of preaching needs to be explained linguistically. The second reason is that a person must pay attention to the

language he uses. The use of language that is not appropriate, not polite, expressive, that is not in accordance with the context will give a negative impact on the image of Islam and *dai* itself. That's why *da'wah* must be delivered in a language full of wisdom and politeness. The third reason is that linguistics is a science that seeks to understand human life through its language, so linguistics needs to contribute to other sciences such as the science of *da'wah* which uses language as its tool.

## 2. Literature Review

There are three theories chosen as state of the art in the implementation of this research. The first is speech act theory and politeness theory, both of which are fields of Sociopragmatics. The third theory used is critical linguistic theory. Sociopragmatics is based on the fact that languages are used differently in each sociocultural context of the speaker. In other words, pragmatics essentially examines the meaning of speakers based on context and associated with certain social conditions. Thus Sociopragmatics is a meeting point between sociology and pragmatics (see Leech, 1993: 15). In turn, sociopragmatics tries to discuss politeness strategies that are expressed by speakers through their logical actions. That is because the realization of politeness is always related to power and solidarity (Kuntjara, 2011: 45). From this kind of understanding we will know the strategy of an addresser in positioning and representing himself into a group's identity, and representing his addressee into one particular group identity (see Thornborrow, 2007: 223; Bariyadi, 2012: 12; Anshori, 2017: 126).

The speech act was first delivered by Jhon L. Austin in his work entitled "How To Do Things With Words". According to him when someone says something, he also does something. That's what he calls a speech act. At least according to Austin, there are three types of speech acts namely locution, illocution and perlocution (Austin, 1962: 94). As the core of speech acts study, Searle develops and classifies illocutionary speech acts into five types namely, assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative (1979: 12). The main point of classification is the illocutionary point or illocutionary purpose.

According to Leech (2014: 3) language politeness is a form of communicative behavior that is influenced by sociocultural factors found in a given society. Accordingly, Leech (2014: 87-88) said that the purpose of speaking politely is to avoid disputes or conflicts in a communication event. In other words, harmonizing communication is the main goal of polite language. To say that someone speaks politely, that someone must show his politeness while using language.

Based on two politeness strategies namely neg-politeness and pos-politeness, Leech (2014) develops what he calls the General Strategy of Politeness (GSP), a model that consists of ten maxims. By utilizing the General Strategy of Politeness speakers can avoid disharmony with listeners. Furthermore, According to Leech (2014: 88) there are two scales to show the appropriate degree of politeness to achieve the goal of harmonious communication, namely the pragmalinguistic scale and sociopragmatic scale. According to him, the pragmalinguistic scale is based on linguistic resources of certain languages, such as:

1. Use of honorifics.
2. Use of modalities.
3. Use of various forms that refer to self and others. For example in French *tu* and *vous*.
4. Diminutif.
5. Deletion of referent for first and second person, for example in Chinese (*Wáng láoshi*).

The sociopragmatic scale according to Leech (2014: 105) is based on the adjustment of socio and cultural context of a particular language society, namely:

1. Vertical relation between self and others (such as status, power and age).
2. Horizontal relation between self and others (such as intimacy, kinship, familiarity and ignorance).
3. Loss and gain: refers to the amount of loss and profit attained from a speech to self or others.
4. Social power that can be defined as the rights and obligations, for example, a teacher can oblige his students to do something.
5. "Self territory" and "other territories" (applies to people who have rules of in-group membership and out-group membership, as in the traditions of Korean, Japanese and Chinese).

The use of real language is always arranged and patterned in such a way that it contains power and ideology hidden in linguistic structures. According to Fowler (1986: 6-7) language studies based on pure linguistics cannot reveal the relation of power and ideology reside in language. Therefore a critical linguistic analysis is needed to uncover

and dismantle it. Critical linguistics is a branch of linguistics which aims to reveal hidden power relations and ideological processes that appear in oral or written texts (Crystal, 2008: 123).

Related to that, Santoso (2012: 101) emphasizes that the study of language based on critical linguistic analysis does not only want to answer "what" and "how" language is used, but also answers "why" certain language features are used, and aims to enlighten language awareness to its users. Furthermore, according to him, critical linguistic studies that are much influenced by systemic functional linguistic theory of Michael Halliday, is the forerunner of critical discourse analysis, especially the analysis model of Norman Fairclough (Santoso, 2012: 117, compared with Titscher, et al., 2009: 235-236; Darma, 2009: 68). According to Fairclough (1989: 110-138), the power and ideology representation hidden behind the use of language by speakers can be revealed through three dimensions of language text, namely vocabulary, grammar and structure. It is stated that the three dimensions of language text consist of lexical processes, meaning relations, metaphor, transitivity, nominalization, passivation, negation, text sequencing, euphemism, formal and informal words, greetings, names and references, sentence mode, modalities, speech acts, personal pronouns, interactional conventions, positive and negative evaluations.

### 3. Research Method

The paradigm of this research is phenomenology which is based on subjective assumptions on social reality and history of language use (Creswell, 2017: 10). Bungin states that phenomenology is a theory assumed as the basic of a qualitative research (2007: 44). For him phenomenology investigates all human behavior that is "hidden" conceptually at the head of the subject. The main objective of qualitative research is to interpret the meanings that others have about their world. In this study, of course the goal is to interpret the illocutionary meanings uttered by *dai* and identified as marker of identity and representation of ideology of the *dai*. In addition, the result of qualitative research is to discover patterns built from a number of information which is in turn categorized and used to form a model (Creswell, 2017: 11). In this research, model that is based on a number of information that has been categorized is personal and social identity, and ideology of *dai* while preaching in the city of Medan.

This research is a field research in which, data are obtained directly from speakers, especially in the religious realm (Rahardi, 2009: 5). Daily preaching in some mosques in Medan such as Al-Jihad Mosque, Medan Baru; Nur Chadijah Mosque, East Medan; USU

Dakwah Mosque, Medan Baru are the objects of this research. The data of this study are speeches in the form of words, phrases and sentences. The data come from the speeches of Dai in preaching. The data collected by listening and interview methods (Sudaryanto, 2015: 202) and carried out purposively (Creswell, 2017: 253). The listening method is used to listen to the use of language done in the discourse of *da'wah*. The interview method is used to get information from the *dai* related to the ideology that he understands and adheres to. The collected data then analyzed by distributional and contextual methods along with its basic techniques and advanced techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015: 15) and finally presented formally and informally (Sudaryanto, 2015: 240).

## 4. Results and Discussion

Based on preliminary observations of the research data, there are several words observed as markers of identity used by *dai* in the *da'wah*/preaching. The words were then championed by *dai* so they could be embedded and naturalized into the minds of the listeners. In turn these words not only become part of what is believed by the listeners, but also become reasons, beliefs, and motivations that can encourage the listeners to act as *dai* wanted. The followings are words observed in dai utterances.

### 4.1. Al-Asy'ariyah and Ash-Syafi'iyah

*Al-Ash'ariyah* are followers of Abu Hasan Ali ibn Isma'il al-Ash'ariy, who later developed into one of the important theological streams in Islam, which was subsequently known as the *al-Ash'ariyah* school, namely the name attributed to *Abu Hasan al-Ash'ariy* as the founder of this sect (Hasyim, 2004: 1). *Shafi'iyah* are people who are oriented to the thought of Imam *Muhammad ibn Idris ibn al-Abbas bin Syafi' ibn al-Saib ibn Ubaid ibn Abdu Yazid ibn Hashim ibn al-Mutholib bin Abdi Manaf* or better known with Imam Shafi'i. The use of these two ideological words can be seen in the following utterances.

... Moslems in Indonesia can be regarded as followers of Imam *Shafi'i* for his jurisprudence whereas for tauhid/monotheism, they abide themselves to Imam Asy'ari (FZN.08.T).

... Mostly we follow *Shafi'i* [...] (HFZ.79.T)

Utterances (1) and (2) are to explain to the addressees that Moslems in Indonesia follow the jurisprudence as proposed by Imam *Shafi'i* and theologically follow Imam

*Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari's* credits. The explanation was carried out to make the listeners really understood that *dai* and his listeners were part of the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah, not followers of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah who were referred to as Salafiyah, although the salafi group also called their group as Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah. But for the salafi group Islamic principles do not lie in theological schools or religious hierarchies, but in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Faizah, 2012: 389).

Utterances (1) and (2) can be understood as the way of *dai* to position or form his and listeners identity as followers of Imam Asy'ari and Imam Syafi'i. Utterance (2) also emphasizes the ideas and opinions of jurisprudence to Imam Shafi'i. Moreover, utterance (2) uses the 'we' pronoun which emphasizes more that he and his listeners are truly followers of Imam Shafi'i. Based on socio-historical facts, the arguments of *Dai* can be justified, for example, Asy'ari (2012: 240) states that in the compilation of Islamic law in Indonesia, the books of jurisprudence which are used as references dominated by the books of Islamic jurisprudence from the Shafi'i school. According to him, the history notes that the beginning of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago was brought by Arabs who were of Shafi'ite school. In line with Asy'ari's statement, Burhanuddin (2012: 12) states that in the early 19th century Islamic boarding schools in the archipelago taught the books of Imam Shafi'i Islamic jurisprudence. Therefore, for Indonesian Moslems, the Syaifi school has been attached to and integrated into their lives both personally and socially (see, Rohidin, 2004: 1).

Regarding Asy'ariyah, Nahdatul Ulama as one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia asserted that their theological reference is Ahlu sunnah wal jamaah as initiated by Imam Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari. Therefore, the majority of Indonesian Moslems are of Asy'ariyah, which is different from the salafiyah whose pioneer is Imam Ahmad Bin Hambal (Supriadin, 2014: 78). The difference, later became the battle of Islamic theology discourse between Ash'ariyah and salafiyah, and there were words that were fought for ideologically.

## 4.2. Jihad and Mujahid

The other linguistic features observed as identity markers used in preaching are the words *jihad* and *mujahid*. The word *jihad* itself comes from Arabic which means serious (Bisri and Fatah, 1999: 88). But in the preaching, the naturalized word of *jihad* does not mean serious, but the word is understood as a maximum effort in defending (maintaining) religion with the soul and property of infidels attacks (Nasution, 2013: 142).

In the tradition of Islamic studies the word jihad is widely discussed, starting from the era of classical Islam to contemporary Islam. Moreover, after the tragedy of the bombing of the twin towers of the WTC in the past 2001, this word was increasingly being discussed (Azra, 2016: 135). In the development of thought and the course of history, jihad has also become a basic concept of Islamic teachings that has a multi-dimensional bias in theological, social, cultural, political, economic, scientific and technological dimensions (Yamamah, 2016: 9). Furthermore, this word is often used in the context of after subuh preaching, commonly held after the Bela Islam III. To see the use of this word, consider the following utterance;

3. Defending religion is the highest amaliyah in fiqh. People who prepare their lives, offer their lives, dedicate their lives obtaining the honor from Allah by getting the title as mujahid, and if they fall, die, or killed in the amaliyah, they get glory from Allah so that they are designed as martyrs/syahid... jihad is the amaliyah which is most favored by the previous generation of this people, namely the generation of shalafus sholeh, companions, tabi'in, and tabi 'tabi'in (HRYN.07.SB).

Another utterance that shows the identity of the dai as acting jihad or mujahid can be seen in the following;

4. That we were being colonized and now we are undergoing a new form of jihad which is against the hegemony of these Chinese conglomerates (HRYN.39.SB-08/04/2016)

The utterance (4) above is intended to inform the listeners that currently Moslems in Indonesia are doing jihad against the hegemony of the Chinese conglomerates. The meaning of jihad that defends the country can be observed in the following utterance;

5. And that day we can say we are in jihad against them, so it is not jihad against the police or the army, but jihad with the police and the army to fight the forces that want to blackmail Indonesia until it destroys our bones and make us valueless (FL.88.BB)

Based on the utterance (5) presented above, it can be observed that the dai intends to deny the accusation that Moslems in Indonesia are intolerant of the plurality but must stand side by side with the police and army to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.



## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the data analysis that has been done, it can be concluded that the linguistic features used by dai as marker of identity are the words syafi'iyah, asy'ariyah, mujahid and jihad. The word Syafi'iyah is used to show and affirm its identity as a person who practices the fiqh of Imam Shafi'i. Then, the word Ash'ariyah is used to show and affirm its identity as a person who has a theological foundation initiated by Imam Asy'ari. The word mujahid and jihad are used to assert the identity as someone who is serious in defending religion and the country he loves. Based on this fact, it can be said that from the Islamic discourse, the identity built by Dai was that he was a follower of Imam Asy'ari and Imam Shafi'i, and he seriously defended and championed the glory of Islam and the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge that the present research is supported by Rector and Research Division of University of Sumatera Utara. The support is under research grant TALENTA University of Sumatera Utara of year 2019

contract number: 4167/UN5.1.R/PPM/2019.

## References

- [1] Ahnaf, Mohammad Iqbal. (2016). "Aksi Bela Islam", Akankah Mengubah Lanskap Muslim Indonesia? *Maarif*. 11 (2). 30-43.
- [2] Austin, J.L. (1962). *How to Do Things With Words*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- [3] Baryadi, Praptomo. (2012). *Bahasa, Kekuasaan, dan Kekerasan*. Yogyakarta: University Sanata Dharma.
- [4] Bungin, Burhan. (2007). *Penelitian Kualitatif: Komunikasi, Ekonomi, Kebijakan Publik, dan Ilmu Sosial Lainnya*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- [5] Burhanuddin, Jajat. (2012). *Ulama & Kekuasaan Pergumulan Elite Muslim dalam Sejarah Indonesia*. Jakarta: Mizan Publika.
- [6] Darma, Yoce Amaliah. (2009). *Analisis Wacana Kritis*. Bandung: Yrama Widya.
- [7] Faizah. (2012). Pergulatan Teologi Salafi Dalam Mainstream Keberagaman Masyarakat Sasak. *Jurnal Studi Keislaman*. 16 (2). 375-402.
- [8] Fairclough, Norman. (1989). *Language and Power*. New York: Longman Group.

- [9] Fowler, Roger. (1986). *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [10] Hasyim, Muhammad Syarif. (2004). Al-Asy'ariyah (Studi Tentang Pemikiran Al-Baqillani, Al-Juwaini, Al-Ghazali). *Jurnal Hunafa*. 2 (3). 209-224.
- [11] Hermaji, Bowo. (2016). *Teori Pragmatik*. Yogyakarta: Magnum Pustaka Utama.
- [12] Kuntjara, Esther. (2011). *Gender Bahasa dan Kekuasaan*. Jakarta: Libri PT BPK Gunung Mulia.
- [13] Leech, Geoffrey. (1993). *Principles of Pragmatics*. New York: Longman.
- [14] MUI Medan. (2014). *Penganut Agama di Kota Medan*. Retrieved on Feb 2019 from <https://muimedan.or.id/petadakwah>.
- [15] Nasution, Agus Salim. (2013). Jihad dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam. *Jurnal Ushuluddin*. 20 (2). 145-151.
- [16] Rahardi, Kunjana. (2009). *Sosiopragmatik*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- [17] Rais, Ahmad Imam Mujadid dan Zainal Abidin Bagir. (2016). Setelah "Bela Islam": Gerakan Sosial Islam, Demokratisasi, Dan Keadilan Sosial. *Maarif*. 11 (2). 4-14.
- [18] Rohidin. (2004). Historisitas Pemikiran Hukum Imam Asy-Syafi'i. *Jurnal Hukum*. 11 (27). 97-105.
- [19] Samarin. (1988). Ilmu Bahasa Lapangan (Translated by J.S Badudu from *Field Linguistics: A Guide to Linguistic Filed Work*). Yogyakarta: Kanisius
- [20] Santoso, Anang. (2012). *Studi Bahasa Kritis Menguak Bahasa Membongkar Kuasa*. Bandung: Mandar Maju.
- [21] Searle, John R. (1979). *Expression and Meaning: Studies in The Theory of Speech Act*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [22] Sudaryanto. (2015). *Metodedan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa Pengantar Penelitian Wahana Kebudayaan secara Linguistis*. Yogyakarta: Sanata Dharma University Press.
- [23] Supriadin. (2014). Al-Asy'ariyah (Sejarah Abu Al-Hasan Al-Asy'ari dan Doktrin-doktrin Teologinya). *Sulesana*. 9 (2). 61-80. Creswel, Jhon W. (2017). *Research Design: Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan Campuran* (Translated by Achmad Fawaid dan Rianayati Kusmini Pancasari from *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- [24] Sulistiyowati, Rini Indah. (2013). Perilaku Tindak Tutur Ustad Dalam Pengajian: Kajian Sosiopragmatik Dengan Pendekatan Bilingual. Retrieved from [http://eprints.ums.ac.id/24310/17/02.\\_Naskah\\_Publikasi.pdf/](http://eprints.ums.ac.id/24310/17/02._Naskah_Publikasi.pdf/) on December 24 2016.

- [25] Thomas, Linda and Shan Wareing. (2007). *Bahasa Masyarakat dan Kekuasaan* (Translated by Sunoto et. al from *Language, Society and Power*). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- [26] Wildan, Muhammad. (2016). *Aksi Damai 411-212. Kesalehan Populer, dan Identitas Muslim Perkotaan Indonesia*.
- [27] Yuliza, et. al. (2013). *Kesantunan Berbahasa Indonesia Dalam Tindak Tutur Ilokusi Para Dai di Mesjid Nurush Shiddiq Kelurahan Gunung PANGILUN kecamatan Padang Utara*. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/ibs/article/view/1614/1386/>. On December 24 2016.