



## Interplay of Speech and Meaning in Digital Da'wah: A Speech Act Analysis of Adi Hidayat's Sermon on Knowledge

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### A B S T R A C T

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This study investigates the interplay of speech and meaning in digital da'wah through a speech-act analysis of Adi Hidayat's sermon "*The Importance of Knowledge in Life*." The research is grounded in the understanding that language in a sermon is not merely an information-delivery medium but also a performative act that constructs deeper meanings and persuasive power. A qualitative descriptive method was employed on textual analysis of the sermon transcript using J. L. Austin's speech act theory, which encompasses locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. The findings reveal that the sermon contains three main types of speech acts: informative (locutionary acts) elements that explain religious concepts, directive (illocutionary acts) elements that provide guidance and exhortations to the audience, and persuasive (perlocutionary acts) elements that generate motivational effects leading to personal transformation. These acts are not presented in isolation but are strategically combined to create a symmetrical relationship between speech and meaning. Such a strategic combination enhances the effectiveness of digital da'wah by integrating cognitive,

affective, and conative dimensions of communication. In conclusion, this study affirms that speech act theory is a relevant framework for understanding digital da'wah as a performative communicative practice that not only transfers knowledge but also directs behaviour and fosters religious engagement among contemporary audiences.

## Introduction

The development of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed how people interact and access information, including in the religious sphere. Da'wah, which was once confined to physical spaces such as mosques, study circles, or face-to-face religious forums, has now expanded into the digital realm with increasing intensity. This transformation opens new opportunities for religious communication, particularly in reaching broader audiences and engaging younger generations who are deeply immersed in digital media (Nawaffani, 2023) (Alhasbi et al., 2024; Efendi, 2021). In this sense, da'wah is no longer limited to direct interactions but increasingly extends through social media, podcasts, audiovisual platforms, and other online spaces. Such a shift allows religious messages to be disseminated more widely and rapidly, but it also presents challenges, such as message fragmentation and the risk of meaning distortion (Rani, 2023).

In line with this development, the concept of *cyber-da'wah* highlights the internet as a new medium for religious communication (Rustandi, 2019). The internet enables religious messages to transcend geographical and social boundaries, allowing da'wah to appear in digital public spaces with greater inclusivity. This phenomenon has given rise to preachers who are active online, such as Habib Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar with restful podcast on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Hanum et al., 2023; Muchtar et al., 2023)"; Ustaz Khalid Basalamah with his Islamic content production house, Gazwah TV, on YouTube and Instagram; Hanan Attaki, through his official YouTube channel, has a special place for teenagers with relevant content (Syiva & Achiriah, 2025); and Ustaz Adi Hidayat, through his channel Adi Hidayat Official, became a islamic figure in Indonesia (Fahmi & Nuryana, 2022). These preachers not only disseminate information but also create new forms of communication that are more interactive and dynamic (Rani, 2023).

YouTube, as one of the most popular digital platforms, provides a space for da'wah to reach global audiences without the limitations of time and place (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). The digitalization of da'wah, where media is no longer merely an alternative channel, has become a communication strategy aligned with the culture of digital participation (Alhasbi et al., 2024; Hanum et al., 2023). This transformation not only broadens the reach of da'wah but also reshapes the dynamics of religious communication into more interactive, flexible, and accessible forms across generations and geographical boundaries. In the Indonesian context, YouTube has emerged as one of the most significant da'wah platforms (Hilmi, 2021), supported by the high penetration of internet use and the increasing consumption of audiovisual content. Among the most prominent figures is Adi Hidayat, known for his systematic rhetoric, extensive references, Qur'an- and Hadith-based arguments, and engaging communication style (Malik et al., 2023). His sermons, including "*Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan*" (The Importance of Knowledge in Life), illustrate that digital da'wah is not only a channel for transmitting religious knowledge but also a medium for shaping awareness, motivation, and spiritual behavior among audiences.

This phenomenon indicates that digital da'wah functions beyond the transmission of information; it also constitutes a performative mode of communication (Alhasbi, Ramli, et al., 2023). From the perspective of speech act theory, introduced by Austin (1962) Austin Searle (1969), language operates at three levels (Littlejohn et al., 2017): locutionary acts (conveying information), illocutionary acts (communicative intentions, such as exhortations or commands), and perlocutionary acts (the effects on the audience). The challenge and opportunity of digital da'wah lie in strategically combining these dimensions to create meaningful and persuasive communication (Budiman et al., 2025).

To further situate this phenomenon within a scholarly framework, it is essential to examine how speech act studies have evolved across different domains of communication (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Such a review not only demonstrates the versatility of speech act theory in analyzing language but also highlights the specific gaps that remain underexplored in the context of digital da'wah.

Research on speech acts has continued to develop and has been applied across various contexts. Amfusina et al. (2020) found that teachers in classroom interactions actively employed locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts as

strategies to build student engagement. Similar results were reported Kaptiningrum (2020) in a study on academic communication via WhatsApp Groups, where literal and non-literal utterances demonstrated the flexibility of digital language use. Prastio et al. (2021) further revealed that online advertisements frequently employed indirect directive speech acts as a persuasive strategy.

In the political sphere, Yusanti et al. (2022) the dominance of assertive acts was identified in Joe Biden's COVID-19 speech, while directive and commissive acts were strategically combined to enhance persuasion. From the perspective of the philosophy of language, assertions, and oaths Field highlighted the role of *commitment* in speech acts, while Field examined the normative dimension of speech acts in shaping public arguments. In the field of religious communication, Laksono et al. (2020) it was demonstrated that K.H. Anwar Zahid's sermons contained a wide range of directive acts (advising, prohibiting, inviting) and expressive acts (gratitude, praise, apology) as effective strategies for building audience engagement. Meanwhile, Dipta et al. (2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1 emphasized the importance of illocutionary speech acts in constructing implicit meaning relations, which is relevant for understanding da'wah as a performative discourse practice.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the diversity of speech act functions across domains such as education, digital communication, politics, literature, and religious preaching. However, a research gap remains in the context of digital da'wah, particularly regarding the symmetry between speech and meaning. Few studies have addressed how locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts are strategically combined to create a balance among informative, directive, and persuasive functions. This study seeks to fill that gap by analyzing Adi Hidayat's digital sermon, thereby connecting classical speech act theory with contemporary da'wah practices that demand both effectiveness and depth of meaning.

This study explored how speech acts construct meaning and persuasive power in digital da'wah, with a particular focus on Adi Hidayat's sermon "*Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan*" (The Importance of Knowledge in Life). The objective is not only to classify the locutionary, illocutionary, and

perlocutionary acts but also to understand how they operate as informative, directive, and persuasive strategies in the digital religious context. To achieve this, the sermon was transcribed, segmented into speech units, and examined through Austin's speech act theory. Each utterance was then interpreted both textually and contextually, considering verbal and non-verbal elements such as emphasis and intonation. This preparation enables the research to capture the dynamic interplay between speech and meaning, highlighting their symmetrical relationship in shaping cognitive, affective, and conative impacts on the audience. By adopting this approach, the study establishes a systematic yet flexible framework that clarifies how digital da'wah functions as a performative communicative practice.

### **Research Methods and Theory Approach**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze how Adi Hidayat constructs meaning in his sermon, *Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan* (The Importance of Knowledge in Life), through speech acts. The qualitative descriptive approach is suitable because it provides an in-depth interpretation of language use within its social and religious context, in line with the principle of performative communication (Saidah, 2024).

The theoretical foundation is based on Austin's speech act theory, which distinguishes locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (Austin, 1962). Locutionary acts represent the literal utterances that deliver information; illocutionary acts embody the intended force, such as commands or exhortations; while perlocutionary acts refer to the effects on the audience, such as persuasion or motivation (Searle, 1969). In this study, these categories are also used as indicators for analysis: explanatory utterances (informative–locutionary), directive statements (directive–illocutionary), and persuasive expressions (persuasive–perlocutionary). This framework enables systematic classification while also revealing how different acts interact strategically in the sermon (Abdulhamzah, 2025).

. The object of analysis is the sermon transcript, which was segmented into speech units and examined both textually and contextually. Attention was given not only to linguistic forms but also to non-verbal cues observable in the video, such as emphasis and intonation. To ensure validity, the analysis integrates textual excerpts with contextual observations, thus triangulating data sources. This

process allows the researcher to identify not only the presence of speech acts but also their symmetrical relationship in creating cognitive, affective, and conative impacts (Lewiński et al., 2023; Saidah, 2024).

Through this method, the study demonstrates how speech acts are strategically combined in digital da'wah, thereby enhancing its persuasive power and ensuring analytical rigor within a socially and religiously relevant framework.

## Discussion and Result

The analysis of Ustadz Adi Hidayat's (UAH's) sermon "*Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan*" (The Importance of Knowledge in Life) reveals that the use of speech acts functions not only as a medium for conveying religious information but also as a performative instrument that organizes the relationship between utterance and meaning. In general, the three dimensions of speech acts, as introduced by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969), consistently appear in the sermon in varying proportions and functions. This indicates that the preacher does not merely transfer messages but strategically integrates different forms of utterance to achieve harmony among the informative, directive, and persuasive functions (Lewiński et al., 2023; Marsili, 2021).

Three main themes are identified from the sermon: (1) preserving the purity of knowledge from deviation, (2) the importance of attaining understanding (*tafakkuh*) in knowledge, and (3) developing a holistic understanding of the essence of prayer. Each theme demonstrates the interconnectedness of locution, illocution, and perlocution that mutually reinforce one another.

The interpretation of the table above demonstrates that speech acts in the sermon do not operate in isolation but form a consistent symmetrical pattern. Locution provides the textual basis through references to the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly authority; illocution strengthens the utterance through guidance, exhortation, or admonition; while perlocution instills emotional and motivational effects in the audience. In other words, the effectiveness of UAH's digital da'wah lies in the symmetry between these three dimensions. This interplay of utterance and meaning resonates with Laksono et al. (2020), who highlight the prominence of directive speech in religious preaching, and Dipta et al. (2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in

Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1, who underline the role of illocutionary acts in deepening implicit meaning. In the digital context, audiovisual media such as YouTube further extend the reach of sermons and enhance the potential for value internalization (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

**Table 1.** Symmetry of Locution, Illocution, and Perlocution in UAH's Sermon

Theme	Locution (Information)	Illocution (Directive/Advisory)	Perlocution (Effect/Action)
Preserving the Purity of Knowledge from Deviation	<i>"The very first thing given to Adam before descending to earth was not wealth, not position, but knowledge... Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah 31"; "One who studies knowledge is called muta'alim, with the Qur'an as the highest source of revelation."</i>	An exhortation to pursue knowledge from primary sources (Qur'an and Hadith); an advice to learn from scholars with a chain of transmission to safeguard authenticity.	The audience is encouraged to honor knowledge as a divine gift. Motivation emerges to become a serious <i>muta'alim</i> . Raised awareness to prevent the distortion of religious understanding.
The Importance of Attaining Understanding in Knowledge	<i>"Knowledge is light; do not be half-hearted in seeking knowledge."</i>	A call for the audience to deepen their study, not to remain on the surface; a reminder to pursue tafakkuh seriously.	Inspires motivation to seek a comprehensive and profound understanding. Builds commitment to position knowledge as a foundation of life.
Developing a Holistic Understanding of Prayer	<i>"How can one pray if they have no knowledge?"</i>	A call for the audience to urgently learn the fiqh of prayer and zakat properly; a warning not to delay learning religious knowledge.	Awareness that worship must be based on knowledge. Motivation to improve the quality of prayer. – Internalization of the spiritual meaning of prayer as the pillar of religion.

### Theme 1: Preserving the Purity of Knowledge from Deviation

This theme provides an entry point to examine how speech acts create a symmetry between informative explanation (the divine origin of knowledge) and persuasive intent (the call to safeguard its authenticity).

In his lecture "*Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan*" (The Importance

of Knowledge in Life), Ustadz Adi Hidayat (UAS) emphasizes that knowledge is the foundation of human existence, as illustrated in two key quotations. The first quotation highlights that the very first gift given to Prophet Adam was knowledge, as mentioned in Qur'an Surat Al-Baqarah 2:31. Allah granted him comprehensive knowledge before sending him to earth, enabling him to live properly and wisely. The second quotation underlines that the Qur'an, as the highest form of divine revelation, must serve as the ultimate source of learning, positioning the *muta'alim* (student of knowledge) as someone who seeks guidance from authentic and authoritative sources.

These statements do not stand in isolation but form a coherent communicative flow. The locution provides the conceptual basis, knowledge as a divine gift more valuable than wealth or status, and *muta'alim* as the identity of a true learner with the Qur'an as the foundation. The illocution then directs the audience to prioritize knowledge, follow the chain of transmission (*sanad*), and safeguard authenticity. Finally, the perlocution emerges in its effect: motivating the audience to be cautious, selective, and committed learners.

**Table 2.** Locution-Illocution-Perlocution in Theme 1

Quotation (locution)	Illocution (Directive/ Advisory)	Perlocution (Effect on audience)
<i>“The first thing given to Adam (peace be upon him) before descending to the Earth was not wealth, nor position, but knowledge. [This is mentioned in] the Qur’an, Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 31, where Allah taught Adam all the names (i.e., all kinds of potential knowledge)...”</i>	Emphasizing that knowledge is the very first and most valuable divine gift, urging the audience to view ‘ilm as a priority.	Audience recognizes knowledge as the foundation of life, valuing it above wealth or status, and is motivated to pursue it seriously.

The table shows that speech acts do not operate in isolation but complement each other. The symmetry between locution, illocution, and perlocution ensures that the message doesn't stop at the informative level but moves toward practical guidance and eventually behavioral transformation.

The combination of assertive, directive, and persuasive speech acts

strengthens the sermon's persuasive power (Yusanti et al., 2022). Religious communication becomes effective when it integrates informative explanations with normative direction (Laksono et al., 2020), and illocutionary acts help build implicit meaning relations that deepen audience impact (Dipta et al., 2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1. Thus, UAH's strategy aligns with recent findings: communication succeeds when different types of speech acts are orchestrated into a coherent and symmetrical whole.

The effectiveness of this symmetry is reinforced by rhetorical devices such as repetition and contrast, "*bukan harta, bukan status, tapi pengetahuan*" (not wealth, not status, but knowledge), which highlight the primacy of knowledge. The use of the term *muta'alim* conveys the authority of Islamic tradition and confers religious legitimacy on the message. Within the YouTube setting, intonation and vocal emphasis on *'ilm* amplify its illocutionary force. The digital platform also enables the message to spread more widely amidst the flood of information, thereby enhancing its persuasive effect (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

The call to preserve the purity of knowledge becomes especially relevant in today's digital age. Amidst overwhelming information flows, the appeal to seek *sanad* and hold fast to the Qur'an equips audiences with a critical framework for filtering sources. Thus, digital da'wah is not only about transmitting knowledge but also about fostering collective awareness to resist distortion and safeguard religious authenticity.

In sum, the interplay of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in this theme illustrates a functional symmetry that strengthens both the clarity and persuasiveness of UAH's message. The effectiveness lies not merely in presenting knowledge but in orchestrating speech-meaning symmetry that guides audiences toward both critical awareness and faithful adherence.

#### Theme 2: The Importance of Attaining Understanding in Knowledge

In this theme, the speech acts reveal how the balance of informative, directive, and persuasive elements constructs symmetry, ensuring that knowledge is not only transmitted but also deeply comprehended and lived. Ustadz Adi Hidayat (UAH) emphasizes the necessity of pursuing knowledge earnestly, not merely receiving it at a surface level, but attaining deep understanding (*tafakkuh*). His lecture

underscores that success in both worldly and spiritual terms requires knowledge that is thoroughly learned, internalized, and applied. This message is reinforced through references to Imam Shafi'i, Qur'anic verses, and advisory speech that link the pursuit of knowledge with success in this world and the hereafter. In the context of digital da'wah, the theme demonstrates that religious communication functions not only to transfer knowledge but also as a motivational force that frames knowledge as the foundation of holistic living.

Three quotations illustrate this theme clearly. The first stresses, through Imam Shafi'i's dictum, that worldly success requires mastery and expertise. The second highlights that knowledge should be integrated into life principles and consistently put into practice. The third, with the phrase "*jangan tanggung-tanggung*" (do not be half-hearted), warns against superficial study and emphasizes the Qur'anic imperative of *tafakkuh*, comprehensive understanding that enables discernment and teaching.

**Table 3.** Locution-Illocution-Perlocution in Theme 2

Quotation (locution)	Illocution (Directive/Advisory)	Perlocution (Effect on audience)
<i>"If you want to succeed in this world, said Imam al-Shafi'i, increase your knowledge and study until you understand, until you become an expert in your field."</i>	Urging the audience to seek excellence through persistent study and mastery.	Encourages audiences to value knowledge as an investment for worldly and spiritual success.
<i>"We are asked to study diligently, integrate knowledge into our life principles, then practice it consistently; as a result, by Allah's will, we will succeed in this world and the hereafter."</i>	Advising learners to transform knowledge into a way of life.	Motivates audiences to apply knowledge beyond theory, fostering discipline and faith-based living.
<i>"Do not be half-hearted; the Qur'an teaches us to pursue tafakkuh ... so that we can distinguish right from wrong and teach others."</i>	Emphasizing the obligation of deep religious understanding.	Inspires audiences to study seriously, avoid superficiality, and embrace the responsibility of sharing knowledge.

These utterances reveal a clear interplay: locution provides a strong informational basis through authoritative sources, illocution functions as exhortation and directive speech urging seriousness in learning, and perlocution produces motivational effects that move the audience to internalize knowledge, live by it, and transmit it to others. In this way, the speech acts generate cognitive clarity, affective motivation, and conative readiness for action.

The analysis of this table shows how UAH integrates informative, directive, and persuasive elements into a symmetrical flow. Locution anchors his statements in Qur'anic verses and scholarly tradition, establishing textual authority. Illocution delivers normative direction—insisting that knowledge must be pursued seriously and completely. Perlocution, in turn, fosters audience motivation to internalize learning, deepen faith, and translate knowledge into action.

This pattern resonates with recent research. Illocutionary acts are crucial for shaping implicit meaning in religious discourse (Dipta et al., 2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1. The dominance of directive speech in sermons is a strategy for maintaining audience engagement (Laksono et al., 2020). In the digital da'wah context, audiovisual communication enhances the likelihood of behavioral change by amplifying the affective and persuasive dimensions of speech (Alhasbi et al., 2024; Rani, 2023). These findings confirm that UAH's sermon exemplifies the effective orchestration of locution, illocution, and perlocution in symmetrical relation.

Rhetorically, the phrase "*jangan tanggung-tanggung*" (Don't be half-hearted) sharpens the directive force, functioning simultaneously as an admonition and a motivator. The theological term *tafakkuh* provides both epistemological grounding and emotional weight. On YouTube, the emphatic tone and serious yet communicative delivery magnify these speech acts, making the directives not only understood but also felt (Dipta et al., 2024)

In sum, Theme 2 demonstrates that symmetry in Adi Hidayat's da'wah emerges from the combination of textual references, exhortative directives, and motivational appeals. This interplay ensures that knowledge is not merely

delivered but deeply internalized and enacted, guiding audiences toward reflective understanding and lived transformation in both worldly and spiritual life.

### Theme 3: Developing a Holistic Understanding of the Essence of Prayer

In this theme, Uastad Adi Hidayat (UAH) underscores that prayer (*ṣalāh*) as the pillar of Islam can't be validly performed without the foundation of knowledge. He emphasizes that worship is not merely physical performance but must be grounded in correct understanding, which requires systematic study of the Qur'an, ḥadīth, and Islamic scholarship. Moreover, he situates prayer within a broader intellectual and civilizational framework, highlighting the mosque's historical role as not only a place of worship but also a center of education and social progress.

Table 4. Locution-Illocution-Perlocution in Theme 3

Quotation (locution)	Illocution (Directive/ Advisory)	Perlocution (Effect on audience)
<i>"How can one pray without knowledge? ... how can one give zakat correctly without knowledge? ... some even think subḥ has four rak'āt."</i>	Warning against ignorance and urging audiences to study fiqh.	Recognition that worship requires proper knowledge; motivation to study to avoid invalid practices.
<i>"The discussion of prayer is arranged systematically in chapters, each containing Qur'anic verses and ḥadīth as its legal foundation."</i>	Advising that worship must rely on authoritative and systematic sources.	Reinforces trust in Qur'an and ḥadīth as primary references, encouraging structured study.
<i>"My experience in America taught me that the mosque once served not only as a place of worship but also as a center of education, community building, and social activity."</i>	Encouraging audiences to revive the mosque's civilizational role in modern contexts.	Inspires pride in Islamic intellectual heritage; motivates renewed engagement with mosques as learning hubs.

This message is articulated through three central quotations. The first stresses that ignorance of religious sciences can lead to grave mistakes in worship, such as assuming *ṣalāt al-subḥ* has four rak'āt. The second point is how Islamic scholarship has structured the study of prayer into systematic chapters, supported by Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīth*, to ensure both authenticity and practical application. The third draws on Hidayat's personal experience in America, where he reflects on the mosque's broader function as a hub for education, community, and intellectual life in Islamic civilization.

These three quotations demonstrate how locution, illocution, and perlocution interlock to form a coherent message. Locution provides the factual and theological foundation for the claim that knowledge is indispensable for valid worship. Illocution directs audiences through admonition and exhortation to study and internalize that knowledge. Perlocution manifests as motivational effects, inspiring listeners to correct their religious practices, deepen their knowledge, and reimagine the mosque as a space for both spiritual and intellectual development (Alhasbi et al., 2023).

The functional symmetry between these speech acts ensures that the sermon moves beyond information delivery. Locution establishes authority through Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and scholarly tradition; illocution provides normative guidance for acting on this knowledge; and perlocution fosters transformation by motivating audiences toward deeper devotion and improved practice.

These findings resonate with recent scholarship. Dipta et al. (2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1 Highlight the role of illocutionary acts in constructing implicit meaning in religious discourse, while Laksono et al. (2020) noting that directive acts dominate sermons as a strategy for sustaining audience engagement. Integrating Qur'anic authority with systematic explanation enhances both understanding and ritual accuracy. Similarly, the fusion of informative, directive, and persuasive speech in sermons strengthens the relationship between religious discourse and behavioral change. Together, these studies affirm that UAH's emphasis on symmetry between speech and meaning aligns with wider scholarly insights into the performativity of religious communication.

Rhetorically, Hidayat combines humor ("*subḥ four rak'āt*") with theological authority, creating an accessible yet authoritative delivery. His integration of

systematic references and historical anecdotes about the mosque situates prayer within both theological and civilizational contexts. Digitally, YouTube amplifies this by combining tone, gesture, and narrative, which enhances both illocutionary force and perlocutionary impact.

In conclusion, Theme 3 illustrates how the symmetry of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts not only clarifies the theological and legal basis of prayer but also motivates audiences to embody its essence in practice. By orchestrating this balance, UAH's digital da'wah guides believers toward a holistic understanding of worship, anchoring ritual in knowledge, deepening its spiritual meaning, and reconnecting prayer to its social and civilizational functions.

### **Cross-theme symmetry and the Implication for Digital Da'wah**

Beyond the individual themes, the analysis shows that the strength of Ustaz Adi Hidayat's sermon lies in the cross-theme symmetry of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. This symmetry not only structures each theme internally but also weaves a consistent communicative pattern throughout the sermon, creating broader implications for digital da'wah.

The three themes together form a coherent progression. The first emphasizes the authenticity of knowledge sources to avoid deviation, the second underscores the importance of deep learning (*tafakkuh*) so that knowledge becomes understanding rather than mere memorization, and the third highlights the application of knowledge in prayer, the pillar of Islam. Taken together, these themes create a logical flow: source → process → application. Locution provides strong conceptual foundations, illocution delivers normative direction, and perlocution motivates audiences to adopt a change in attitude and behavior.

This coherence is reflected through three key utterances. In the first theme, "*Not wealth, not position, but knowledge,*" the locution prioritizes knowledge; the illocution urges the audience to do the same; and the perlocution raises audience awareness of its value as a life's foundation. In the second theme, "*Do not be half-hearted*", the locution performs the importance of *tafakkuh*; the illocution explains admonition to learn seriously; and the perlocution shows motivation to integrate knowledge into life. In the last theme, "*How can you pray without knowledge?*", the locution explains knowledge as a requirement for valid worship; the illocution

shows a call to study fiqh; and the perlocution shows motivation to correct worship practices. This mirrors Dipta et al.'s (2024) these utterances were collected through documentation and a rater of linguistics to check the data accuracy. Later, the data were analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. It was found that the types of illocutionary speech acts in Yasmin Mogahed's speech included: (1 insight into the role of illocutionary acts in constructing implicit meaning, as well as Laksono et al.'s (2020) finding that directive speech sustains audience engagement in religious sermons.

**Table 5.** Cross-theme symmetry through Locutin-Illocution-Perlocution

Theme	Locution (information)	Illocution (Directive/ Advisory)	Perlocution (Effect on audience)
Preserving the Purity of Knowledge	Knowledge as a divine gift; Qur'an as primary source.	Urging to preserve authenticity through <i>sanad</i> and reliable sources.	Motivation to become active and selective learners.
Attaining Understanding in Knowledge	Importance of <i>tafakkuh</i> ; references to Qur'an & Imam Syafi'i.	Call to study seriously, not half- heartedly.	Motivation to internalize and share knowledge.
Holistic Understanding of Prayer	Knowledge as a requirement for valid worship; the mosque as the center of civilization.	Urging to study fiqh of prayer and zakat.	Awareness of knowledge- based worship; motivation to improve practice.

This cross-theme symmetry integrates the cognitive (knowledge), affective (motivation), and conative (practice) dimensions of da'wah. Such an interplay confirms that effective da'wah is not merely about delivering religious information but also about guiding audiences to internalize values and transform behaviors. In doing so, it supports the argument that audiovisual media extend both the reach and depth of religious messages (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021), while rhetorical strategies such as repetition and key terms strengthen the illocutionary force in digital sermons (Alhasbi et al., 2024).

With this consistency, UAH's sermon demonstrates that digital da'wah is most effective when informative, normative, and transformative dimensions are orchestrated together. The locution–illocution–perlocution triad ensures the credibility of content, normative guidance for practice, and motivational impact on behavioral change. This balance not only sustains the credibility of Islamic teachings but also responds to the needs of modern audiences navigating the flood of information in the digital era.

In conclusion, cross-theme symmetry provides more than a stylistic strategy. It offers a communicative model for digital da'wah. By balancing textual authority, directive guidance, and transformative motivation, this model makes Islamic preaching relevant, sustainable, and impactful in today's global digital landscape.

## Closing

This study has shown that Ustadz Adi Hidayat's (UAH's) sermon "*Pentingnya Ilmu dalam Berkehidupan*" demonstrates a consistent symmetry of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts across three main themes: the preservation of authentic knowledge, the attainment of deep understanding (*tafakkuh*), and the application of knowledge in prayer. The findings highlight that the sermon does not simply convey religious information, but rather integrates informative, directive, and persuasive dimensions into a coherent pattern that strengthens both clarity and persuasive force.

The analysis implies that digital da'wah can be more effective when it balances the cognitive (knowledge), affective (motivation), and conative (practice) dimensions of communication. By orchestrating symmetry across themes, da'wah in the digital era becomes not only informative but also transformative—guiding audiences toward critical awareness, faithful adherence, and behavioral change. This has practical significance for contemporary preachers and Islamic educators who seek to design strategies that resonate with global digital audiences while maintaining theological authenticity.

For future research, comparative studies could explore whether this symmetrical model is consistent across other preachers, platforms, or religious traditions. Further work might also investigate how audience reception and interaction in digital environments contribute to sustaining or reshaping the symmetry of religious communication. Such inquiries would deepen our understanding of the

dynamics between speech acts, digital media, and the transformative potential of religious discourse.

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