

## Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Approach to Effective Da'wah Management: The Role of Eye Contact, Facial Expressions and Body Gestures in Information Delivery

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**Abstract:** Effective communication information is essential today. In the field of da'wah management, the mastery and skills of non-verbal communication by the da'i, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body language management, can enhance the effective delivery of da'wah messages. In the 21st century, among the successful da'i is Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, whose approach integrates both verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to ensure information reaches its intended audience effectively. This study focuses on the three elements of non-verbal communication contained in Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's kenesik communication, and their role in managing information flow within da'wah. Three elements are eye contact, facial expressions, and body language. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing document analysis and content analysis to examine Said Nursi's writings and da'wah strategies. The results reveal that Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's effective da'wah management through non-verbal communication significantly contributed to the global acceptance of his message, demonstrating that managing non-verbal cues enhances message clarity and audience engagement. These findings provide valuable insights for preachers in both traditional and contemporary settings, emphasizing the importance of synchronizing verbal and non-verbal communication for effective da'wah management.

**Keywords:** *Da'wah Communication, Non-verbal Communication, Communication Management, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, Effective Information Delivery.*

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### 1. Introduction

Communication plays a crucial role in managing da'wah efforts. Without proper communication techniques, the flow of information in da'wah becomes ineffective. Scholars argue that deficiencies in managing communication methods, including verbal and non-verbal elements, can hinder the overall spread of Islamic teachings. Hence, managing both verbal and non-verbal communication in da'wah is essential for ensuring the proper delivery of its message. A significant deficiency in delivering da'wah can lead to stagnation in da'wah activities and hinder the spread of Islam, the religion of mercy for all of humanity (Erwin Jusuf, 2020).

While this significant responsibility is accompanied by great honor and substantial rewards, it also brings numerous challenges, obstacles, and trials. One of the primary challenges of da'wah, both in the past and present, is the deficiency in knowledge and skills, including ineffective approaches, inaccurate theme or communication element selection, and flawed methods of delivering judgments or punishments. Consequently, the value and reputation of Islamic communicators whether they are preachers, religious teachers, or scholars may ultimately diminish in the eyes of the community (Ibtisam & Berhanundin, 2019).

Effective communication is not solely about verbal expression but also involves non-verbal communication ethics. Da'wah communication extends beyond verbal aspects and must consider non-verbal factors, such as the content of the message, the environment, resources, target audience, language proficiency, and more. All these communication elements must be synchronized to ensure the objectives of da'wah communication are fully realized (Meerangani, 2019; Zulkefli & Nur Damia Husna, 2017).

According to da'wah scholars, one approach to addressing this issue is to elevate a recognized figure within the da'wah community as a role model. This figure can serve as a guide and standard for Islamic preachers to follow. According to Mohamad Zaidin et al. (2018), two primary challenges hinder the effective instillation of noble values. The first is the lack of a role model for society to observe and assess, and the second is the apprehension among non-Islamic communities that the approach is merely an attempt to convert or attract them to Islam.

Given these issues, the researcher identifies the need to emphasize a figure who is both suitable for the contemporary context and relevant to the diverse, multiracial, cultural, and religious landscape of Malaysia. This figure is Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, a renowned scholar in the field of Islamic da'wah and Islah (Elmira, 2021).

He is a figure with extensive experience in preaching across various fields, including politics and governance, education, spirituality, and morality—even in the arena of warfare. His involvement in all these areas of da'wah led to his recognition as a contemporary leader in religious reform, earning him the title *Badiuzzaman*, or "excellence of the age" (Ahmed & Sharifah Norshah, 2017). He achieved this by skillfully employing elements of persuasive rhetorical communication, both verbal and non-verbal, as well as creative analogies and wisdom, to enhance understanding among the wider public (Mehmet, 2016; Muhammed Ali, 2022).

A strong command of religious knowledge and effective use of tools (such as mediums and communication techniques) significantly supported Said Nursi's da'wah efforts in the field. His credibility also made him widely accepted by society (Nur Sakinah, 2019). Rather than relying on a single approach, Said Nursi diversified his methods and strategies to enhance the delivery of his da'wah message to the public (Norullisza et al., 2022).

## 2. Literature Studies

Among the studies on Said Nursi and Da'wah is a work by Ichwansyah (2018) titled "Thought and Activism of Da'wah Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960)", as well as one by Qaisar (2018) titled "A Brief Sketch of the Memoirs of the Life and Works of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi". Both studies examine the stages of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's life, from the early to later phases, and provide a brief overview of his specific methods and strategies in Turkey.

In a similar vein, Edi Amin's (2018) study, "The Thought of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Da'wah", examined the concept of *murasalah* (correspondence) as a method for delivering da'wah, proposing 'ustadhiyyah al-Quran' (the Quran as the primary teacher) as a foundation for transformation. Aligning with Amin's approach, Norullisza et al. (2021) in their work, "Aspects of Human Development: Analysis of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Personality", explored Said Nursi's da'wah methods broadly through various facets of human development, including spiritual, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Additionally, Elmira (2021) in her study, "Said Nursi on Secularism, Religious Rights, Ethics, and Education", delves into Said Nursi's efforts to bridge science and religion, aiming to harmonize European civilization with authentic Islamic teachings a central aspect of his da'wah mission. Similarly, Zulqarnain et al. (2022), in "Interpretation of Diverse Dimensions of 'Faith' by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Its Impact Upon Reawakening Muslim Societies", highlight Said Nursi's emphasis on 'faith' as the core of da'wah, which served as a catalyst for transformation across all facets of human life.

## 3. Methodology

This study employs qualitative methods for data collection. The analysis aims to explore the theory and practical aspects of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's da'wah communication in Turkey, as presented in his work *Rasail an-Nur*. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized in this research. Primary data was gathered through documentation, while secondary data was sourced through content analysis from research reports on da'wah communication, resolutions from seminars or discourses on Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's teachings, and documents from various da'wah societies, organizations, and other related entities.

Some studies share similar features and focus on abstracts. This review article will be summarized through a detailed evaluation of keywords related to communication and da'wah, along with elements of kinesic communication. The data collected were analyzed using a content analysis framework. The findings and analysis presented in this paper serve as an academic contribution and reference for developing effective da'wah communication models or methods, particularly in Malaysia.

#### 4. Effectiveness Of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's Communication Da'wah

Badiuzzaman Said Nursi's approach to da'wah primarily draws from three principles: 'da'wah bil-hikmah' (inviting with wisdom), 'da'wah bil-hasanah' (inviting with goodness), and 'da'wah al-mujadalah al-husna' (engaging in the best form of reasoning). These principles are inspired by Surah al-Nahl, verse 125, which encourages calling to Allah's path with wisdom, kindness, and the best form of reasoning.

However, in several other studies, researchers categorized his da'wah communication into two main components, verbal and non-verbal communication. This is because Said Nursi not only conveyed his message through speech but also demonstrated it through his behavior and actions (Norullisza et al., 2022; Thameem, 2019).

In his book *Rasail an-Nur*, Badiuzzaman Said Nursi addressed over 130 topics, including al-Kalimat, al-Maktubat, al-Luma'at, al-Shu'a'at, and Signal al-I'jaz fi Mazan al-Ijaz. His primary goal was to safeguard the community's faith by clarifying the essential principles and truths of the Quran. Beyond its comprehensive content, covering themes of both horizontal and vertical communication, these writings were also meant to protect his students (Tullāb al-Nūr) who faced various legal challenges, especially concerning complex issues like the oneness of Allah SWT, the hereafter, and more (Mohd Sairi, 2015).

Like other well-known Islamic preachers or da'i, Said Nursi also has his characteristics or approach to his method of da'wah. An appropriate and strategic approach according to the current modernity will differentiate the impact and level of community acceptance of the call of da'wah (Amin, 2015). Bakti (2021) highlighted that Said Nursi's communication style is exemplary for communicators, particularly Islamic preachers. His ideas align with the Active Reception model, which encourages community members to actively participate in changing their fate.

Through his profound understanding of religious knowledge and communication techniques, Said Nursi was able to effectively highlight his abilities. His credibility was a key factor in earning the community's trust and acceptance of his da'wah endeavors (Nur Sakinah, 2017).

##### **Non-verbal Communication**

Non-verbal communication refers to conveying messages or signals without words, using methods like eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, object usage, and body language. As Adler & Rodman (2003) describe, non-verbal communication involves "oral and non-oral messages expressed through means other than language." Similarly, Kristiyanti (2012) explains that non-verbal communication encompasses gestures, mannerisms, vocal intonations, attitudes, and other cues that enable people to communicate without spoken language.

Non-verbal communication is divided into several types. Among them are the objects of communication (how to dress), touch (shaking hands), chronemics (use of time), 'gesture' (facial expression), proxemics (space), vocals (voice intonation) and environment (space dan distance) (Kristiyanti, 2012). Ruben & Stewart (2005) explained, that non-verbal communication has several channels, namely paralanguage covering vocal auditory messages made in the form of speech. In addition, it also includes tone of voice, tone of speech, intonation, loudness or lowness of voice and speed of speech.

Every time non-verbal communication occurs between two parties, it often involves behaviors such as gestures, eye movements, posture shifts, and facial expressions, either consciously or unconsciously. These behaviors and movements complement the spoken message, significantly influencing the effectiveness of communication and feedback (Noor Afzaliza Nazira et al., 2022).

Non-verbal communication is a crucial aspect of human interaction, conveying messages and emotions through various means beyond spoken language. As described by experts as mentioned above, non-verbal communication encompasses gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, and vocal nuances, all of which play a significant role in expressing ideas and emotions without words. These non-verbal cues, whether

consciously or subconsciously displayed, enhance the effectiveness of communication by complementing verbal messages and providing additional context.

### **Kinesics Elements**

One of the elements of non-verbal communication is kinesics. Kinesics comes from the Greek "kinesis", in this contact means physical movement of the body and its study. It is a study of the way in which certain body movements such as hands, body conditions and facial expressions when communicating (Grothe, 2022). Kinesics is the main method of communication and often supports or even replaces verbal communication (Nuredayu & Salafiah, 2021).

According to Richard (2009), there are many studies related to body language and found that the way a person appears in public in terms of his body gestures can determine the success or failure of one's communication. Meanwhile, according to Joshua (2007), controlling body movement while communicating is essential when conveying a message. Besides, supporting what is being said verbally, it can attract the attention of the audience or listeners (Nordin, 2016).

### **Kinesics Elements of Badiuzzaman Said Nursi**

Said Nursi asserts that humans are wonderfully endowed with a variety of body parts, in addition to the mouth and tongue used for communication. These include both internal and external organs, senses, emotions, and other bodily components. Each of these creations serves a specific function and plays a vital role in both our relationship with Allah SWT and our interactions with one another. They stand as evidence of the beauty and perfection of creation (Said Nursi, 2008).

According to Said Nursi, several forms of kinesic communication play a vital role in human relations, especially in the context of effective da'wah communication. This study will examine kinesic elements, including eye contact, facial expressions, and body gestures.

**Eye Contact:** Eye contact is a vital non-verbal communication channel. It can convey signals and messages to others, expressing emotions like happiness, sadness, and more. For instance, repeatedly blinking may symbolize anxiety (Noor Afzaliza Nazira et al., 2022). A person's eyes can reveal a range of emotions, including hostility, interest, and attraction. In one of his writings (The Twenty-fifth Word), Said Nursi explained that a lustful glance can damage both the heart and morals.

According to Said Nursi, harsh words are not always necessary to cause harm; even the language of the eyes can lead to destruction in others' lives. The worship of outward appearances profoundly damages morality and leads to the corruption of the spirit, as seen in the following: just as lustful and desirous glances at the corpse of a beautiful woman, who deserves compassion, erode moral integrity, similarly, gazing at the images of deceased women or even those of living women, whose likenesses are akin to small corpses, weakens and ultimately destroys the core of elevated human emotions (Said Nursi, 2007c).

Said Nursi's advice aligns with the teachings of the Prophet SAW, as reflected in the Quranic verse: "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest; That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is All-Aware of what they do" (Surah an-Nur, 30). In Rasail an-Nur, Said Nursi discussed the wisdom of the hijab, noting that men's gazes often make women uncomfortable and that veiling helps alleviate this discomfort (Said Nursi, 2007a).

In reality, Said Nursi revealed what was said in the writing preach. Vahide (2005) recorded that on several occasions when interacting with women, Said Nursi always maintained his manners by guarding his eyes when dealing with them. Said Nursi will not turn to look at a woman if there is no need or interest (Norullisza et al., 2021).

"The Old Said stayed in Istanbul for ten years during his youth, and he did not look at a woman once" (Vahide, 2005, 2011).

**Facial Expressions:** Facial expressions play a significant role in nonverbal communication. A simple smile or frown can convey a wealth of information, often being the first thing we notice before someone speaks. In the

realm of non-verbal communication, facial expressions are part of "gestures" or body movements that include more than just the movements of hands, feet, or eyes. These expressions fall under the kinesic elements that help interpret messages during communication. Without us realizing it, our facial expressions can change constantly while we speak or listen (Noor Afzaliza Nazira et al., 2022).

Said Nursi explains that Allah SWT created humans as the finest of His creation, as mentioned in Surah at-Tiin, verse 4: "Indeed, We created man in the best form." Nursi emphasizes that all creatures are designed with precision, having their organs and parts balanced perfectly. Additionally, each living being is granted a unique, well-proportioned, and beautiful face (Said Nursi, 2007b).

Given the importance of the face, Said Nursi emphasizes its function and role in the "Risalah al-Mathnawi." He asserts that the face, which Allah SWT has bestowed upon every human, carries distinct roles and functions. Although the facial structure is fundamentally the same in all humans, it possesses unique features that differentiate individuals. The face, in addition to its physical features, can convey traits such as gender and age, as well as emotions like intelligence, happiness, sorrow, anger, and others (Said Nursi, 2007a).

"All glory be to Him Who includes and inscribes endless features on the page of your face. Although they cannot be comprehended by reason and beheld with a superficial look, they are discerned through insight and can be perceived in detail by a careful look" (Said Nursi, 2007a)

According to Said Nursi, even though no words may be spoken, a person's face can convey a great deal to an attentive observer. With a deep and sincere gaze, one can discern the truth through facial expressions, which reflect the individual's nature, character, and heart. Emotions like smiles or anger are manifestations of this internal truth. This is seen as Allah SWT's decree in the cause-and-effect relationship, where the person's facial expressions are a reflection of their inner being.

"What is emitted from inside to outside is in accord with the will of that Source" (Said Nursi, 2007a)

According to Said Nursi, the expressions on our faces are shaped by our intentions. A sincere intention leads to a face reflecting sincerity and positive actions, while an insincere intention results in the opposite. Similarly, our deeds have two "faces": those performed to please God reveal a clear, transparent face, reflecting numerous manifestations, while actions lacking such intention create a dark, opaque face devoid of truth (Said Nursi, 2007a).

From another point of view, Said Nursi offered a different perspective, suggesting that a person's face reflects their inner character. Before a communicator even speaks, their face conveys an initial understanding. Therefore, the 'language' displayed on a communicator's face reflects their genuine devotion to God.

"The imprints of their worship are discerned in their lives, manners, and even on their faces."  
(Said Nursi, 2007a)

In one account of Said Nursi's teaching, he was seen as very prudent when confronting a drunkard who was on his way to a brothel. He flashed a smile and greeted him with full of love and affection and advised the drunkard to return home, take a shower, repent and perform prayers (Norullisza et al., 2021; Said Nursi, 2013).

Said Nursi also emphasized that our facial expressions or body reflections do not have to be extreme. A Muslim communicator who is intellectually healthy does not overreact in responding to pleasure or disappointment, anger or complaint when going through a test.

"Know, o friend, that if your intellect is sound, you should not rejoice or grieve, be angry or complain, about anything you gain or lose here..." (Said Nursi, 2007a)

Apart from that, a smile is one of the facial reactions or facial expressions that is very important in non-verbal communication. Said Nursi was described by the one who often smiles. At one time, Said Nursi's students

offered him zakat or alms because he was eligible to receive zakat. Said Nursi was from the Asnaf and deserved to receive zakat. However, he rejected it, with a smile (Vahide, 2005).

Said Nursi's smile at this time was a signal that he was determined to reject other people's gifts, but in a good way. The smile was given as a sign of gratitude and a sign of appreciation for their intentions and kindness. Said Nursi's amusing dialogue with his brother explained that he would not accept any zakat or gifts so that it would not interfere with the sincerity of his da'wah struggle (in another account, Said Nursi clarified that he would never accept zakat, alms and gifts of others to him) (Vahide, 2005).

**Body Gesture:** Said Nursi emphasizes that every part of the body and each of our senses plays a crucial role in human social life, serving us with full trust. In Islam, this is the reason why every individual will be held accountable in the afterlife. The movements of the limbs and hands, such as gestures, signal the nature of a person's behavior, whether it's encouragement, prevention, aggression, and so on (Said Nursi, 2007c).

Said Nursi also emphasized the importance of body language when discussing prayer in the context of human relationships with God. He categorizes prayer into two types: verbal prayer (petitions) and physical actions (behavior). Sometimes, prayer expressed through body language (actions and effort) can yield results more quickly. This concept similarly applies to interpersonal relationships, where body language (actions) can often have a greater impact on others than verbal communication (Mustafa & Watson, 2017).

Said Nursi's character as a soldier during the Ottoman Empire's decline is highlighted by his active role in battle. As a religious functionary, he consistently showed bravery, refusing to stay hidden in trenches. Instead, he moved among the troops, boosting their morale by leading from the front and rarely retreating, even during difficult conditions (Vahide, 2005).

This action, carried out without verbal instructions, reflects Said Nursi's use of non-verbal communication through body language (such as gestures and posture) to convey a message of courage, fearlessness, enthusiasm, and perseverance in jihad. This approach is also emphasized in the life of the Prophet SAW. Many stories describe the prophet SAW acting without verbal instructions, but the prophet's gestures are enough to give a message to his followers. For example in the events of the Khandak war. The Prophet SAW also dug trenches to signal teamwork and leadership through example (Sariningsih et al., 2019).

In certain situations, 'stillness' or 'silence' (when the body remains motionless) can convey signals or messages. In the as-Sunnah teachings of Rasulullah SAW, this is referred to as takrir, which involves the Prophet's silence (without indicating agreement or disagreement) and also conveys an implicit message. This method of communication demonstrates that the Prophet SAW was cautious in addressing matters to avoid being misunderstood (Ike Nilawati et al., 2020).

Said Nursi explained the fact of 'silence' in the context of human communication today there are two types. One silence brings benefits, while the other silence carries negative signals and damage. For example, in the context of Amar makruf nahi mungkar, a person who is silent about sin and evil (does not want to prevent evil), then he gives a signal, which is either to ignore the sin or to conspire with the perpetrator of the sin. So this non-verbal action will cause damage to humans (Said Nursi, 2007a).

For example when Said Nursi answered a question about the tragedy of the earthquake, which gave a reward to those who committed sins and crimes, but at the same time also sacrificed the faithful and righteous Muslims. Answer Said Nursi:

“...Whether it be the injustices visited upon the poor, the corruption of politicians and businessmen, public promiscuity, or general disbelief, many people cooperate silently in such misdeeds in various ways. Whether by complacently ignoring the wrong, profiting from the wrongdoing in one way or another, passively putting up with it and doing nothing to stop it, or defending the rights of miscreants to carry out their offenses, guilt is more widespread than that for which a relatively small number of perpetrators is responsible.” (Abu Rabi, 2016)

According to Said Nursi's explanation, remaining silent or failing to take action to stop an evil act committed by an individual, whether through words, physical actions, or by the heart, can also be considered a form of evil. This aligns with the meaning of the Prophet SAW's hadith, which encourages the prevention of evil in all its forms, whether verbal or non-verbal (Hadith narrated by Muslim, no. 49; Ahmad, no. 514; Abu Daud, no. 4345).

## 5. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role that non-verbal communication plays in effective da'wah, focusing on how elements like eye contact, facial expressions, and body gestures reinforce the delivery of the message. Said Nursi's mastery of rhetorical and communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, served as a model for preachers in both traditional and contemporary settings. His success shows that non-verbal communication should not be overlooked, as it plays a pivotal role in complementing verbal messages.

In addition, this research emphasizes the importance of managing both verbal and non-verbal communication in the context of da'wah. Said Nursi effectively managed his use of non-verbal cues to ensure clarity, engagement, and the proper flow of information, making his message more relatable and accessible to diverse audiences. By managing these elements, preachers can enhance their communication and ensure that their message resonates with different cultural and social contexts.

The findings of this study provide a valuable framework for today's Islamic preachers, who must navigate an increasingly complex and multicultural audience, ensuring that both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies are synchronized for maximum impact. The mastery of non-verbal communication techniques is thus not just a complementary tool but an essential component of da'wah management.

## Theoretical and Contextual Contribution

This paper provides a theoretical contribution and contextual development to Islamic da'wah communication by emphasizing that Badiuzzaman Said Nursi employed non-verbal aspects of communication, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and body gestures, in innovative ways during his da'wah process. The paper widens the literature on da'wah by showcasing how non-verbal communication can facilitate more effective and relevant da'wah, especially in multicultural societies.

The study demonstrates that managing non-verbal cues can enhance da'wah efforts, allowing preachers to overcome language and cultural barriers, thus making their message more inclusive and relatable. Such insights are critical for modern-day da'i operating in diverse settings, particularly in multiracial and multicultural societies like Malaysia.

This contribution highlights the need for an integrative da'wah communication strategy that incorporates both verbal and non-verbal elements. By considering these factors, preachers can engage their audiences more effectively, ensuring that the core message of Islam is conveyed in a clear, impactful, and culturally appropriate manner.

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