

Digital Orality and Islamic Preaching: Ethnosociopragmatics as a Lens for Humor in Religious Discourse

Siti Rumilah, Ramadhina Ulfa Nuristama, Wahyu Kusumajanti & Raudlotul Jannah

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia.

rumilah@uinsa.ac.id

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 2025-10-20

Revised : 2026-02-14

Accepted : 2026-02-25

KEYWORDS

Cultural humor

Da'wah values

Ethnosociopragmatics

Oral literature

Value-bearing speech act



ABSTRACT

Humor has become a pervasive yet insufficiently theorized feature of Indonesian digital da'wah. Existing studies tend to describe rhetorical techniques or audience reception, but rarely examine humorous utterances as culturally embedded pragmatic acts within platform-mediated preaching. This study addresses that gap by investigating how humor in Indonesian YouTube sermons encodes social, cultural, and religious values using an ethnosociopragmatic framework grounded in Mey's pragmatics as social practice and sociopragmatic theories of appropriateness. The corpus comprises 10 sermons (approximately 600 minutes) delivered by five prominent ulama, selected through explicit criteria: minimum 20-minute duration, over 50,000 views, verified channels, and identifiable humorous segments. From these videos, 109 humorous utterances were segmented as the unit of analysis based on syntactic completion, prosodic closure, topic shift, and audience laughter cues. Data were transcribed verbatim and coded inductively using a structured codebook mapping value domains and oral forms; double-coding yielded 87% inter-coder agreement, and findings were triangulated with repeated viewing and 15 semi-structured audience interviews. Results show three dominant value domains: social solidarity and soft critique (38%), cultural identity through oral forms such as *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, and *guyon* pesantren (34%), and reinforcement of religious virtues including *sabr*, *adab*, *humility*, and *moderation* (28%). These findings demonstrate that humor functions as a value-bearing speech act that digitally recontextualizes *sastra lisan* while sustaining moral authority. The study contributes theoretically by extending ethnosociopragmatics to digital religious discourse and implies that culturally calibrated humor enhances ethical engagement in contemporary platform preaching.

1. Introduction

Laughter in religious discourse is never neutral. In contemporary Islamic preaching, humor operates as a strategic resource through which authority is softened, critique is rendered palatable, and communal bonds are reaffirmed. Far from trivial ornamentation, humorous utterances shape how moral instruction is heard, remembered, and internalized. Pragmatic scholarship has long shown that humor depends on implicature, shared contextual knowledge, and interpretive shifts (Attardo, 1994; Norrick, 2003; Dynel, 2009), while functional accounts emphasize its capacity to build solidarity, regulate norms, and manage face (Meyer, 2000; Kuipers, 2008). In religious settings, these mechanisms acquire additional evaluative weight because moral authority and communal expectations constrain what counts as appropriate laughter (Ali, 2017; Aziz, 2019; Nurdin, 2019).

The stakes become even higher in digitally mediated environments. Digital religion scholarship demonstrates that platforms such as YouTube do not merely transmit sermons; they reorganize religious authority, participation, and circulation through affordances of scalability, visibility, algorithmic recommendation, and replayability (Burgess & Green, 2018; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Slama & Barendregt, 2018). In Indonesia, one of the world's largest Muslim-majority societies, prominent ulama including Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Ustadz Das'ad Latif, Gus Baha, and KH. Anwar Zahid have cultivated distinctive humorous styles that resonate strongly with youth and digitally connected audiences (Ridho, 2020; Fajrussalam et al., 2022; Harahap et al., 2024; Wandu, 2020). Humor thus becomes intertwined with platform logic: it enhances memorability, quotability, and shareability within attention-driven media ecologies (Burgess & Green, 2018; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

A growing body of research has examined humor in Islamic preaching, yet important analytical gaps remain. Studies have described humor as rhetorical strategy (Ali, 2017; Nurdin, 2019), explored ethical tensions between reverence and entertainment (Aziz, 2019; Wandu, 2020), and analyzed specific preachers' styles such as Gus Baha or KH. Anwar Zahid (Sadili, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2023; Abdullah et al., 2020; Faqihuddin, 2021). Audience-centered research further documents humor's perceived effectiveness in increasing engagement and accessibility, especially among younger viewers (Ridho, 2020; Fajrussalam et al., 2022; Harahap et al., 2024). While these studies confirm humor's persuasive appeal, they tend to foreground reception or rhetorical description without systematically mapping the linguistic mechanisms through which humorous utterances encode culturally specific values.

Parallel scholarship in humor theory provides sophisticated models of incongruity, script opposition, and conversational joking (Attardo, 1994; Norrick, 2003; Dynel, 2009), alongside functional analyses of humor's unifying and differentiating roles (Meyer, 2000; Kuipers, 2008). However, these models are often developed in secular Western contexts and applied descriptively to religious discourse without sustained engagement with sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995) or culturally embedded moral orders. At the same time, digital religion research highlights transformations of authority and mediation (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Slama & Barendregt, 2018) but rarely integrates fine-grained pragmatic analysis. Oral literature scholarship documents the resilience of forms such as *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, and *guyon* in Indonesian traditions (Finnegan, 1992, 2012; Ong, 1982; Foley, 2002; Sweeney, 1987; Hutomo, 1991; Danandjaja, 2002; Djamaris, 1993; Baried et al., 1985), yet these strands seldom converge analytically in studies of digital da'wah. Consequently, humor in Indonesian YouTube preaching remains under-theorized at the intersection of pragmatics, ethnolinguistics, digital media, and sastra lisan.

This study addresses that fragmentation by positioning humorous utterances in Indonesian digital da'wah as ethnosociopragmatic acts. The theoretical novelty lies in extending ethnosociopragmatics (Mey, 2001; Duranti, 1997; Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995) to analyze humor within platform-mediated religious discourse, thereby embedding incongruity and implicature within culturally regulated norms of appropriateness. The empirical novelty lies in systematically examining 109 humorous utterances across five prominent ulama and mapping their alignment with identifiable value domains and oral literature forms, integrating humor theory (Attardo, 1994; Meyer, 2000; Dynel, 2009), digital religion (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021), and oral tradition scholarship (Finnegan, 2012; Foley, 1997).

The study is significant for two reasons. First, it advances pragmatic inquiry by demonstrating how humor functions as a value-bearing speech act within culturally specific religious discourse, rather than as a generic engagement strategy. Second, it contributes to digital religion and oral literature studies by evidencing how traditional verbal art adapts to algorithmic circulation without losing structural integrity (Burgess & Green, 2018; Finnegan, 2012). Accordingly, the study addresses two research questions: (1) How are social, cultural, and religious values encoded in humorous utterances used in Indonesian YouTube-based da'wah? (2) How do these utterances reflect and recontextualize Indonesian oral literature forms?

In conclusion, this study reframes humor in digital da'wah as a culturally situated mechanism of moral transmission rather than peripheral entertainment. Beyond religious discourse, the findings carry implications for English language teaching (ELT). Understanding how humor encodes values, manages face, and mobilizes cultural forms can inform pragmatics instruction, intercultural communication training, and discourse analysis in ELT classrooms. By exposing learners to authentic examples of culturally calibrated humor, educators can foster pragmatic awareness, critical media literacy, and sensitivity to how language, culture, and digital mediation co-construct meaning in globalized communicative contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Digital Religion and Platform-Mediated Preaching

Digital religion scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that online environments do not merely reproduce offline religious practice but reorganize authority, participation, and mediation. Platforms such as YouTube restructure preaching through scalability, visibility, replayability, and algorithmic amplification (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Slama & Barendregt, 2018; Burgess & Green, 2018). Sermons become persistent, searchable, and fragmentable discourse artifacts rather than temporally bounded events. In such environments, communicative strategies that enhance memorability and quotability gain strategic importance.

Within Indonesian contexts, studies of digital da'wah document humor as an effective rhetorical device and engagement strategy (Ali, 2017; Aziz, 2019; Nurdin, 2019). Research on specific figures such as Gus Baha and KH. Anwar Zahid (Sadili, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2023), as well as analyses of other preachers (Abdullah et al., 2020; Faqihuddin, 2021), confirm stylistic variation in humorous delivery. Audience-focused investigations further suggest that humor increases accessibility, youth engagement, and perceived relatability (Ridho, 2020; Fajrussalam et al., 2022; Wandu, 2020; Harahap et al., 2024).

However, despite acknowledging humor's persuasive power, much of this scholarship treats humor descriptively or receptionally. Platform affordances are often mentioned as contextual background rather than theorized as shaping pragmatic inference. There remains limited systematic explanation of how humorous utterances operate linguistically within algorithmically mediated preaching. This constitutes the first gap: digital religion studies rarely integrate fine-grained pragmatic analysis of humor as value-bearing discourse.

2.2 Humor Theory and Pragmatic Mechanisms in Religious Discourse

Humor theory provides foundational tools for analyzing how meaning shifts occur. Incongruity-based frameworks emphasize script opposition and interpretive reversal (Attardo, 1994), while conversational approaches foreground shared knowledge, contextual framing, and interactional negotiation (Norrick, 2003; Dynel, 2009). Functional models demonstrate humor's capacity to unify, differentiate, regulate norms, and relieve tension (Meyer, 2000; Kuipers, 2008). These models clarify structural and interactional mechanisms but are predominantly developed in secular Western contexts.

Within Islamic communication studies, humor has been explored as rhetorical strategy and ethical negotiation (Ali, 2017; Nurdin, 2019), and debates have emerged regarding the balance between entertainment and reverence (Aziz, 2019; Wandu, 2020). Indonesian case studies document stylistic features and persuasive effects (Sadili, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2023; Abdullah et al., 2020; Faqihuddin, 2021). Yet these analyses rarely map specific humor strategies onto identifiable pragmatic mechanisms such as implicature, indirect critique, face management, and stance alignment within culturally regulated moral frameworks (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995). This reveals a second gap: humor in religious discourse is frequently described rhetorically but insufficiently theorized as sociopragmatic action embedded in locally negotiated norms of appropriateness. Western incongruity models (Attardo, 1994; Meyer, 2000) are often applied without examining how culturally specific religious values recalibrate humor's acceptability and force. The absence of such integration limits explanatory depth, particularly in non-Western religious contexts.

2.3 Ethnosociopragmatics, Oral Literature, and Culturally Situated Meaning

Ethnosociopragmatics provides a framework for bridging these analytical divides. Grounded in pragmatics as social practice (Mey, 2001) and linguistic anthropology (Duranti, 1997; Foley, 1997), it emphasizes that speech acts are embedded in culturally specific moral orders and relational expectations (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995). Meaning is not simply

inferred cognitively but negotiated within shared value systems. This perspective is especially relevant to Indonesian religious discourse, where humor is assessed not only for wit but for its alignment with *adab*, humility, and communal harmony. Oral literature scholarship further deepens this view. Studies of orality and performance (Finnegan, 1992, 2012; Ong, 1982; Foley, 2002) show that verbal art forms transmit cultural memory and ethical norms. In Malay and Javanese traditions, *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, and *guyon* serve as repositories of communal wisdom (Sweeney, 1987; Hutomo, 1991; Danandjaja, 2002; Djamaris, 1993; Baried et al., 1985). Although folkloric elements in preaching have been noted (Sadili, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2023), their role in digital *da'wah* as structured pragmatic vehicles of value transmission remains underexamined.

This reveals a third gap: scholarship rarely integrates oral literature theory, sociopragmatics, and digital religion into a unified explanatory model. As a result, humor in Indonesian YouTube preaching remains analytically fragmented across disciplinary boundaries. What is needed is a framework that simultaneously accounts for humor strategies, pragmatic mechanisms, ethnocultural values, and platform affordances.

2.4 Integrative Framework, Novelty, and Implications

Addressing these intersecting gaps, this study proposes an integrative model linking four dimensions: (1) humor strategies (e.g., anecdote, proverb, wordplay, *parikan*, satire), (2) pragmatic mechanisms (implicature, indirect critique, face management, stance alignment), (3) ethnocultural value domains (social solidarity, cultural identity, *sabr*, *adab*, humility, moderation), and (4) digital platform affordances (scalability, shareability, algorithmic visibility, interactivity) (Attardo, 1994; Meyer, 2000; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Burgess & Green, 2018; Mey, 2001; Finnegan, 2012). Its novelty lies in repositioning humor in digital *da'wah* as an ethnosociopragmatic act that mediates between oral tradition and algorithmic circulation. Rather than treating humor as rhetorical ornament or engagement metric, the study conceptualizes it as a culturally regulated speech act that encodes moral evaluation within platform-mediated performance. By integrating humor theory, sociopragmatics, digital religion, and oral literature scholarship, the framework moves beyond description toward systematic explanation.

The implications are threefold. Theoretically, the model extends humor research into non-Western religious contexts, showing how inferential mechanisms are shaped by culturally specific moral norms. Methodologically, it supports coding humorous

utterances not only by type but also by value domain and oral form. Substantively, it clarifies how Indonesian *sastra lisan* persists and adapts within digital preaching environments. The next section outlines the methodological procedures used to operationalize and empirically examine this framework.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed an interpretive qualitative design with a descriptive analytical orientation to examine humor as a culturally embedded pragmatic resource in Indonesian ulama's YouTube-based da'wah. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate because the study interprets situated meaning rather than testing variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis was guided by ethnosociopragmatics, which integrates sociopragmatic attention to appropriateness and relationality with culturally grounded interpretation (Mey, 2001). Each ulama was treated as a case unit to enable cross-speaker comparison (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Corpus Construction

The corpus consisted of sermons by five Indonesian ulama: Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Ustadz Das'ad Latif, Gus Baha, and KH. Anwar Zahid. YouTube was selected because it functions as a major repository of digital Islamic preaching and supports participatory circulation (Burgess & Green, 2018). Data were collected between March and August 2025.

Videos were selected purposively using explicit inclusion criteria to enhance transparency (Patton, 2015): minimum duration of 20 minutes, more than 50,000 views, and identifiable humorous segments. Videos were excluded if shorter, lacking humor, or unclear in authorship. Two videos per speaker were selected from verified channels, yielding 10 videos totaling approximately 600 minutes. From these, 109 humorous utterances were identified: UAS (25), UHA (18), UDL (22), GB (20), and AZ (24). Screening involved initial threshold filtering followed by close review to confirm humor presence and audio clarity.

3.3 Unit of Analysis and Data Preparation

All sermons were transcribed verbatim, retaining relevant hesitation and emphasis cues. The unit of analysis was a humorous utterance, defined as a bounded stretch of talk constituting one pragmatic action. Segmentation was guided by syntactic completion, topic shift, audience laughter, or prosodic closure. When humor unfolded across clauses, segmentation centered on the inferential trigger while preserving necessary context.

Humorous utterances were identified in two stages. First, candidate segments were flagged based on laughter cues or recognizable humor markers such as exaggeration, irony, or proverb-like phrasing. Second,

segments were examined in context to confirm their interactional framing as humor. This procedure reduced subjectivity by grounding identification in discourse context.

3.4 Coding Procedures and Trustworthiness

Analysis followed iterative cycles of data reduction, categorization, display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Coding was inductive yet theoretically informed, employing constant comparison techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) while grounding interpretation in ethnosociopragmatic principles (Mey, 2001).

Two primary coding layers were developed:

- 1) *Value Domains*: social (solidarity, soft critique, face management), cultural (oral forms, identity indexing), and religious (sabr, adab, humility, moderation).
- 2) *Oral Literature Forms*: anecdote (short narrative with a humorous or illustrative punchline), proverb (*pepatah*; traditional aphoristic saying conveying communal wisdom), humorous *pantun* (*pantun jenaka*; rhymed Malay poetic couplet with playful intent), *parikan* (Javanese rhymed verse used for poetic teasing or exaggerated advice), *guyon pesantren* (Islamic boarding school insider humor rooted in shared scholarly experience), and indirect satire (*sindiran*; humorous critique delivered through insinuation or exaggeration)..

Each category was operationally defined in a structured codebook that specified inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and representative examples.

To strengthen reliability, two trained linguistics colleagues independently coded a randomly selected subset of 30 humorous utterances (27.5% of the dataset). Initial inter-coder agreement reached 87% percentage agreement across value-domain coding and 84% agreement across oral-form categorization. Discrepancies were discussed in calibration meetings, and definitions were refined to clarify boundary cases. After reconciliation, full-dataset coding proceeded using the agreed definitions. This procedure enhanced analytic consistency and transparency.

Trustworthiness was further strengthened through triangulation, peer debriefing, and systematic documentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation combined transcript analysis, repeated viewing of performance cues (Spradley, 1980), and interview data (Denzin, 2017). An audit trail documenting coding decisions and category revisions was maintained to ensure methodological transparency.

3.5 Interviews and Ethical Procedures

Semi-structured online interviews were conducted with 15 participants: five santri, five university students, and five general YouTube da'wah consumers. Participants were recruited purposively through

Islamic content forums to ensure familiarity with the selected ulama (Palinkas et al., 2015). Interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes and explored perceptions of humor and value transmission (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview data functioned as interpretive support rather than independent findings.

Ethical procedures included informed consent, anonymization, and recorded permission. The analysis focused on discourse practice rather than doctrinal evaluation. Explicit sampling criteria, structured coding, and triangulation support methodological rigor and reproducibility.

4. Result

The corpus consists of 10 YouTube sermons delivered by five Indonesian ulama, totaling approximately 600 minutes of preaching. From this dataset, 109 humorous utterances were identified and segmented as pragmatic units. The distribution is as follows: Ustadz Abdul Somad (25), Ustadz Hanan Attaki (18), Ustadz Das'ad Latif (22), Gus Baha (20), and KH. Anwar Zahid (24). Humor appears across all speakers as an intentional rhetorical strategy embedded within moral explanation, social commentary, and narrative illustration.

The findings reveal that social, cultural, and religious values are analytically distinguishable but pragmatically intertwined. A single utterance may simultaneously restore face, index regional identity, and reinforce virtue. Humor functions as a multifunctional pragmatic act that condenses evaluation, identity, and pedagogy. The results are organized in direct alignment with the research questions. The first section analyzes how humorous utterances encode social, cultural, and religious values.

The second section demonstrates how these utterances reflect and recontextualize Indonesian oral literature forms. Each subsection presents definition, distributional pattern, representative excerpts in the original language with English translation, and micro analysis linking linguistic form to pragmatic inference. Overall, humorous utterances in Indonesian digital da'wah function as culturally situated pragmatic actions that sustain value transmission and oral tradition continuity within contemporary platform preaching.

4.1 Humor and the Encoding of Social Values

Social-value humor refers to humorous utterances that build solidarity, protect face, and regulate behavior indirectly. In the corpus, this function appears systematically across all five speakers and across diverse themes, including mosque etiquette, digital distraction, youth identity, marital dynamics, pesantren life, and community celebrations. Rather than issuing direct admonition, speakers employ exaggeration, playful relabeling, narrative twist, and satire. The moral target is rarely stated explicitly. Instead, listeners are invited to infer the evaluative stance through shared knowledge and contextual cues.

This indirectness is not accidental. In digitally mediated preaching, audiences are heterogeneous and physically absent. Humor therefore becomes a strategy of relational management. It allows the preacher to correct without humiliating, critique without alienating, and guide without sounding authoritarian. Social humor in this corpus consistently transforms potentially face-threatening acts into affiliative moments of collective laughter. Table 1 presents representative examples and their pragmatic mechanisms.

Table 4.1 Social-value humor: strategy, mechanism, and interpretive function

Speaker	Excerpt (Original)	English Translation	Humor Strategy	Pragmatic Mechanism	Interpretive Function
UAS	<i>"Heran anak-anak ni tak meribut rupanya ada satu security khusus anak-anak."</i>	"It is surprising the children are not noisy, apparently there is a special security guard for children."	Anecdote	Indirect behavioral regulation	Promotes tolerance and shared responsibility in worship spaces
UHA	<i>"Kalau kamu ikut kajian tapi sambil main HP, itu bukan multitasking, itu multi-dosa."</i>	"If you attend a lecture while playing with your phone, that is not multitasking, that is multi-sins."	Wordplay	Moral relabeling	Critiques distraction while preserving rapport
UHA	<i>"Kalau jomblo itu sabarnya luar biasa, bahkan level nabi!"</i>	"If you are single, your patience is extraordinary, even at the level of a prophet."	Hyperbole	Face restoration and positive reframing	Reduces stigma and constructs solidarity

Speaker	Excerpt (Original)	English Translation	Humor Strategy	Pragmatic Mechanism	Interpretive Function
UDL	<i>Cerita istri malu minta sesuatu</i>	Story of a wife embarrassed to ask for something	Domestic anecdote	Indirect relational advice	Encourages empathy and communication in marriage
GB	<i>Humor tentang kesalahan membaca kitab kuning</i>	Humor about mistakes in reading classical texts	Self-mockery	Normalization of error	Builds humility and learning solidarity
AZ	<i>Sindiran tentang hajatan berlebihan</i>	Satirical jab at excessive celebrations	Satire	Type-based social critique	Regulates community excess through collective laughter

In the mosque anecdote, UAS narrates a familiar scenario of noisy children during prayer and introduces the unexpected phrase “security khusus anak-anak.” The humor arises from institutional exaggeration. Instead of scolding parents directly, the preacher frames discipline as a humorous solution. The pragmatic force lies in its indirectness. The audience laughs, yet simultaneously recognizes the implied norm of maintaining order in sacred space. The laughter signals alignment rather than resistance. Correction is achieved without confrontation.

In the “multi-dosa” utterance, UHA constructs humor through phonological parallelism. The transformation from “multitasking” to “multi-dosa” is linguistically economical and acoustically memorable. The pun functions as moral relabeling. Digital distraction is reframed not as productivity but as ethical failure. The audience becomes co-creator of meaning by recognizing the shift. Because the critique is embedded in wordplay, the corrective message is softened, yet its evaluative force remains strong.

The hyperbolic statement about singlehood, “bahkan level nabi,” performs a different but related function. Here humor restores face rather than correcting misconduct. By exaggerating patience to prophetic level, the preacher reframes a socially stigmatized identity into moral virtue. The audience’s laughter is affiliative. It reduces shame and constructs shared resilience. The joke does not deny social pressure; it reinterprets it. Humor therefore becomes a resource for emotional regulation and communal bonding.

UDL’s domestic anecdote about a wife who feels embarrassed to express needs exemplifies indirect relational advice. Rather than prescribing marital communication explicitly, the preacher narrates a humorous situation in which silence produces misunderstanding. The audience infers the corrective lesson. The pragmatic mechanism is relational modeling. Humor lowers defensiveness in discussing

sensitive household dynamics and encourages empathy without accusation.

GB’s humor about mistakes in reading classical texts operates through self-mockery. By laughing at scholarly mishaps, the preacher normalizes imperfection. The social effect is equalization. Students feel less intimidated and more willing to participate. The implicit message is that humility and perseverance are integral to learning. The laughter functions as pedagogical lubrication, making discipline socially sustainable.

AZ’s satire on extravagant celebrations targets a recognizable social pattern rather than individuals. The humor depends on shared cultural awareness of excessive spending in public events. The preacher exaggerates the scenario, inviting collective recognition. The critique is firm but generalized. This type-based satire allows social regulation without direct blame. Community standards are reinforced through laughter rather than coercion.

Across these examples, social-value humor consistently performs three interrelated functions. First, it manages face by transforming potentially threatening correction into playful commentary. Second, it builds solidarity by positioning the preacher and audience within a shared experiential frame. Third, it facilitates moral inference rather than direct instruction. Listeners are invited to draw conclusions, which increases internalization.

A further pattern emerges in the interplay between narrative and labeling strategies. Anecdotes allow indirect modeling of desirable behavior, while lexical transformations such as “multi-dosa” condense evaluation into portable moral formulas. Hyperbole restores dignity in vulnerable identities, and satire regulates collective excess without humiliating individuals. These strategies demonstrate that humor in digital da’wah is not random entertainment. It is a calibrated social instrument.

In digital contexts, where audiences cannot be physically observed and immediate feedback is limited to mediated responses, such humor becomes particularly effective. It anticipates audience sensitivity and mitigates potential misinterpretation. Social-value humor therefore functions as a pragmatic bridge between moral authority and relational accessibility.

Overall, the findings show that humor systematically encodes social values by guiding conduct, sustaining communal harmony, and preserving dignity. Through exaggeration, narrative framing, and playful relabeling, preachers maintain moral seriousness while ensuring emotional safety. Social correction and solidarity do not operate in opposition; they are co-produced through humor.

4.2 Humor and Cultural Identity Construction

Cultural-value humor refers to humorous utterances that activate regional idioms, poetic structures, vernacular registers, and culturally shared symbolic references. Unlike purely situational jokes,

these utterances are anchored in recognizable forms of verbal art. Their humor depends not only on incongruity but on cultural familiarity. When audiences recognize a proverb, poetic pattern, or regional storytelling style, they participate more deeply in interpretation. Humor thus becomes a marker of belonging.

In the corpus, cultural-value humor appears most prominently in the sermons of UAS, UDL, and AZ, though all speakers employ culturally indexed language to varying degrees. These utterances frequently take the form of *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, *guyon* pesantren, or vernacular anecdote. Importantly, the activation of cultural forms is not decorative. It performs identity work. In a digital preaching environment where audiences are geographically dispersed, cultural markers re-anchor discourse in locality. They signal authenticity, continuity, and shared heritage within the scalable setting of YouTube. Table 2 presents representative examples of cultural-value humor and their pragmatic effects.

Table 4.2 Cultural-value humor: oral form, cultural index, and interpretive function

Speaker	Excerpt (Original)	English Translation	Oral Form	Cultural Index	Interpretive Function
UAS	<i>“Mati meninggalkan nama, harimau mati meninggalkan belang, gajah mati meninggalkan gading.”</i>	“When humans die they leave a name, tigers leave stripes, elephants leave ivory.”	<i>Pepatah</i>	Malay proverbial tradition	Condenses moral lesson into authoritative communal wisdom
UAS	<i>“Kalau tuan membeli peniti / jangan dicucukkan ke kubis.”</i>	“If you buy a pin, do not stick it into cabbage.”	<i>Pantun jenaka</i>	Malay poetic closure form	Marks sermon ending through playful rhythmic familiarity
UDL	<i>“Wahai istriku yang termancung hidungnya di lorong tiga!”</i>	“Oh my wife whose nose is the most prominent in alley three.”	<i>Parikan</i> -like teasing	Javanese domestic humor	Softens advice through poetic exaggeration
GB	<i>Humor tentang kesalahan santri membaca kitab</i>	Humor about students misreading classical texts	<i>Guyon</i> pesantren	Pesantren oral learning culture	Reinforces insider identity and scholarly humility
AZ	<i>Cerita blak-blakan kehidupan desa</i>	Blunt rural life storytelling	<i>Guyon</i> desa	East Javanese vernacular	Establishes authenticity and local credibility

The *pepatah* delivered by UAS is structured through rhythmic parallelism and semantic layering. The repetition of “meninggalkan” across three clauses creates cadence and mnemonic force. Humor does not arise from absurdity but from performative emphasis and audience recognition. The utterance is familiar yet reanimated in sermon context. Pragmatically, the proverb carries inherited authority. Because it is culturally transmitted wisdom rather than personal

assertion, it invites agreement without resistance. The humor lies in delivery style and timing, which lightens the moral gravity without weakening its force. The audience is positioned not as passive listeners but as co-bearers of cultural memory.

The *pantun jenaka* example further demonstrates how poetic form structures interaction. The paired lines and rhythmic cadence echo traditional Malay *pantun* patterns. The absurd image of sticking a pin into

cabbage produces playful incongruity, but the deeper function is ritual closure. The *pantun* signals the end of a serious sermon in a culturally sanctioned light tone. In digital space, such rhythmic lines are easily clipped and shared. Cultural humor here operates as a portable aesthetic device that enhances memorability and circulation.

UDL's *parikan*-like teasing employs exaggerated praise embedded in local social geography. The phrase "lorong tiga" situates the humor within a familiar communal setting. The poetic exaggeration does not aim at ridicule but at relational cushioning. Advice about marital communication becomes more palatable because it is wrapped in culturally recognizable humor. The audience laughs not at the wife but at the stylized praise. Cultural familiarity reduces defensiveness and sustains warmth.

GB's *guyon* pesantren relies on insider knowledge of santri life and classical text learning. Humor about misreading kitab kuning activates shared educational experience. The utterance constructs a collective identity among those familiar with pesantren culture. Pragmatically, the joke equalizes hierarchy. The preacher aligns himself with learners rather than above them. Cultural humor thus becomes a mechanism of scholarly humility and communal bonding.

AZ's rural storytelling uses blunt vernacular phrasing and vivid local imagery. Cultural identity is enacted through lexical choice and narrative rhythm. In digital preaching, such vernacular markers do not limit audience reach. Instead, they enhance perceived authenticity. Viewers outside the immediate cultural setting encounter localized language as a marker of sincerity and rootedness. Cultural humor in this context affirms that digital da'wah remains anchored in lived community realities.

Cultural-value humor in this corpus performs three interrelated functions that extend beyond entertainment. First, it condenses moral instruction into culturally authoritative forms. Proverbs and *pantun* function as ready-made discursive frameworks that carry inherited legitimacy, allowing ethical messages to be delivered in ways that feel familiar, credible, and socially endorsed. By embedding humor within these traditional structures, the content softens didacticism while preserving moral depth.

Second, it reinforces communal identity by activating recognizable linguistic and cultural patterns. Forms such as *parikan* and *guyon* pesantren evoke shared memories, religious nuances, and local sensibilities, positioning audiences within a collective cultural space. Even when transmitted through digital platforms, these expressions maintain their communal resonance, bridging traditional oral culture and contemporary media environments.

Third, cultural-value humor enhances memorability and portability. Its rhythmic, formulaic, and vernacular features make it easy to recall, repeat, and circulate across contexts. As a result, moral messages embedded in humorous forms become more adaptable and socially transmissible, increasing their reach and sustainability within both offline and online communities.

This triangulated dataset highlights not only measurable academic progress but also meaningful transformations in classroom attitudes and independent learning behaviors. Observation logs documented increased participation, more frequent peer collaboration, and higher engagement during activities, indicating that the classroom gradually developed into a more active, interactive, and socially supportive EFL environment. Interviews further revealed that students did not simply comply with instructions; they began to demonstrate confidence and pride in using English, extending their language use beyond the classroom into their daily lives.

Homework reports add further depth to this interpretation. Students' independent engagement with vocabulary media at home signals the emergence of early digital learning discipline and growing language autonomy. Their willingness to revisit materials outside school hours suggests that learning was no longer confined to formal instruction but became a self-initiated practice. Taken together, the combination of heightened classroom enthusiasm and sustained home-based engagement supports the argument that multimodal vocabulary input encourages lasting learner motivation and promotes family-supported language development among young EFL learners.

4.4 Humor and Religious Value Transmission

Religious-value humor refers to humorous utterances that encode and transmit core Islamic virtues such as *sabr*, *adab*, humility, sincerity, and moderation. Rather than presenting doctrine in abstract theological terms, these utterances translate virtue into everyday scenarios. The humor does not dilute seriousness; it reframes it. Through exaggeration, playful relabeling, narrative modeling, and satire, moral expectations are rendered personally relevant and socially acceptable.

In the dataset, religious-value humor appears across all five speakers and frequently overlaps with social and cultural functions. A joke about digital distraction, for example, simultaneously regulates social conduct and reinforces *adab* in knowledge-seeking. A humorous story about marriage encodes both relational empathy and ethical responsibility. This overlap indicates that moral instruction in digital da'wah is rarely isolated from context. Religious humor is embedded in lived experience and relational dynamics rather than detached doctrinal exposition. Table 3 presents representative examples of religious-value humor and their pedagogical mechanisms.

Table 3. Religious-value humor: virtue framing and pedagogical function

Speaker	Excerpt (Original)	English Translation	Religious Theme	Pragmatic Mechanism	Pedagogical Outcome
UHA	<i>“Kalau jomblo itu sabarnya luar biasa, bahkan level nabi!”</i>	“If you are single, your patience is extraordinary, even at the level of a prophet.”	Sabr	Hyperbolic elevation	Makes patience personally actionable
UHA	<i>“Itu bukan multitasking, itu multi-dosa.”</i>	“That is not multitasking, that is multi-sins.”	Adab	Moral relabeling	Links attention to ethical accountability
GB	<i>Humor tentang kesalahan membaca kitab kuning</i>	Humor about mistakes in reading classical texts	Humility	Self-mockery and normalization	Encourages disciplined learning culture
AZ	<i>Sindiran tentang hajatan berlebihan</i>	Satire on excessive celebrations	Moderation	Indirect moral critique	Promotes simplicity as religious norm
UAS	<i>“Harimau mati meninggalkan belang...”</i>	“The tiger dies leaving stripes...”	Legacy and righteous deeds	Proverbial condensation	Connects moral conduct to enduring spiritual consequence

The utterance about singlehood and prophetic patience illustrates how hyperbole transforms abstract virtue into lived identity. The phrase “level nabi” functions as moral elevation. Humor emerges from exaggeration, yet the evaluative frame is clear: sabr is not passive endurance but spiritually meaningful discipline. Pragmatically, the joke collapses distance between sacred narrative and contemporary youth experience. The listener is invited to reinterpret personal frustration as moral achievement. This reframing encourages internalization of virtue through positive identification rather than guilt.

The expression “multi-dosa” operates through lexical compression. By transforming “multitasking” into a moralized label, the preacher condenses an ethical argument about attentiveness into a two-word formula. The repetition and phonological similarity enhance recall. Pragmatically, the utterance constructs a contrast between secular productivity discourse and religious accountability. The humor does not merely entertain; it produces a portable ethical category that can circulate independently of the sermon context. The listener may later recall the label and self-correct behavior.

GB’s humor about misreading classical texts illustrates virtue modeling through self-mockery. Rather than presenting the teacher as flawless authority, the joke foregrounds fallibility. This normalizes error while preserving the seriousness of disciplined study. The laughter generated reduces fear of failure and

fosters persistence. The religious value of humility is enacted through stance rather than explicit moralization. The pedagogical outcome is not only cognitive understanding but attitudinal formation.

AZ’s satire on excessive celebrations encodes moderation as communal norm. The humor exaggerates extravagance to highlight imbalance. Instead of issuing direct condemnation, the satire invites recognition. Pragmatically, the joke aligns audience evaluation with the virtue of simplicity. The laughter does not trivialize the critique; it legitimizes it socially. By framing moderation as reasonable rather than restrictive, the humor increases acceptance of moral guidance.

The proverb “*Harimau mati meninggalkan belang...*” further demonstrates how religious value is embedded in culturally authoritative form. Although proverb-based, its interpretive effect extends to spiritual accountability. The focus on legacy implies that righteous deeds endure beyond life. Humor in delivery lightens the tone but does not weaken the moral implication. Instead, it creates space for reflection without moral heaviness. A central pattern is compression. Humor reduces theological abstraction to brief, quotable statements, replacing extended exposition with morally charged punchlines. This brevity increases memorability and supports digital circulation, as short phrases are easily shared and recalled.

Another significant pattern is affective regulation. Religious humor reduces defensiveness. Moral expectations can trigger resistance when delivered sternly. By embedding instruction in laughter, the preacher lowers emotional barriers. Listeners accept correction not because it is imposed but because it is recognized collectively. Humor thus mediates between authority and accessibility.

Importantly, religious-value humor in this corpus does not trivialize sacred themes. It maintains evaluative clarity. Terms such as *dosa*, *sabr*, humility, and moderation are not diluted. Instead, they are repositioned within relatable scenarios. The pragmatic strategy lies in aligning everyday experiences with transcendent moral categories. This alignment transforms doctrine from distant principle into embodied practice.

In digital preaching environments, where attention spans are fragmented and audiences diverse, such humor becomes pedagogically efficient. It integrates moral seriousness with narrative pleasure. Religious value transmission is therefore not diminished by humor; it is intensified through strategic linguistic packaging.

4.4 Oral Literature Continuity in Digital Context

The second research question examines how humorous utterances in digital da'wah reflect and recontextualize Indonesian oral literature forms. The findings demonstrate that oral genres are not merely referenced; they are actively performed within contemporary preaching. Anekdote, *pepatah*, *pantun jenaka*, *parikan*, *guyon* pesantren, and *sindiran* appear as structurally recognizable forms embedded in sermon delivery. These forms retain their mnemonic and performative characteristics while adapting to the communicative demands of digital platforms.

In the corpus, oral forms function as patterned vehicles of meaning. They shape how humor is constructed, how moral lessons are condensed, and how audiences recognize authority. Importantly, these forms are not nostalgic insertions. They operate dynamically within digital circulation, allowing local verbal art to travel across audiences without losing structural integrity. Table 4 maps the primary oral genres identified in the dataset and their sermon and digital functions.

Table 4. Oral literature forms in humorous da'wah and their digital transformation

Oral Form	Representative Example	Function in Sermon	Structural Feature	Digital Recontextualization
Anekdote	Mosque security story	Moral illustration and behavioral modeling	Narrative setup and punchline	Shareable narrative clip with relatable everyday theme
<i>Pepatah</i>	"Mati meninggalkan nama..."	Moral condensation and authority framing	Parallelism and repetition	Quotable proverb circulated independently
<i>Pantun jenaka</i>	"Kalau tuan membeli peniti / jangan dicucukkan ke kubis."	Closure ritual and affiliative bonding	Rhythmic couplet and playful incongruity	Memorable ending line suited for clipping and sharing
<i>Parikan</i>	"Wahai istriku yang termancung..."	Relational advice through poetic teasing	Exaggerated praise and rhythmic phrasing	Viral poetic fragment with cultural flavor
<i>Guyon</i> pesantren	Humor on kitab reading mistakes	Pedagogical humility and solidarity	Insider reference and self-mockery	Insider identity marker for digitally connected santri
<i>Sindiran</i>	Hajatan satire	Social correction and moderation	Exaggeration and indirect critique	Circulating social commentary across platforms

The anekdot form, exemplified by the mosque security story, follows a classic narrative arc: situational setup, unexpected twist, and evaluative closure. The humor emerges from narrative surprise rather than abstract wordplay. Within sermon context, this structure allows moral modeling through lived scenario. In digital context, the same narrative can be excerpted as a short clip that retains coherence. The

oral logic of story-based instruction aligns seamlessly with the clip-based logic of digital platforms.

The *pepatah* "Mati meninggalkan nama..." demonstrates moral condensation through rhythmic parallelism. The repetition of syntactic structure produces authority and memorability. The utterance operates as communal wisdom rather than individual

opinion. In digital circulation, the proverb can stand alone as a quotation detached from its original sermon context. Its structural completeness allows it to function as an independent moral artifact. The oral device of repetition thus enhances digital portability.

The *pantun jenaka*, “Kalau tuan membeli peniti / jangan dicucukkan ke kubis,” illustrates how rhythmic absurdity signals closure. The couplet format and balanced phrasing resemble traditional *pantun* patterns. Humor arises from incongruous imagery. In sermon context, the *pantun* marks a transition from seriousness to light-hearted ending, strengthening audience affiliation. In digital space, the rhythmic line becomes easily memorizable and shareable. Its aesthetic compactness makes it suitable for captioning, short-form video, and quotation graphics.

Parikan-like teasing, as in “*Wahai istriku yang termancung...*,” preserves poetic exaggeration rooted in Javanese oral performance. The humor depends on stylized praise and playful imagery. Structurally, the utterance retains rhythm and performative exaggeration characteristic of *parikan*. In digital environments, this form functions as a culturally flavored fragment that attracts attention while conveying relational advice.

Guyon pesantren functions as insider humor rooted in shared educational experience, originating in communal joking among students and teachers within the pesantren tradition. When presented on YouTube, it reaches wider audiences while preserving its insider markers, allowing recognition of the joke to signal belonging within a dispersed religious learning community across digital networks. Similarly, *sindiran*, seen in satire about excessive celebrations, draws on oral traditions of indirect critique through exaggeration and generalized targets. In digital spaces, this indirectness becomes shareable social commentary, maintaining evaluative clarity without direct personal attack while sustaining communal norms and moral reflection.

A key finding is that oral forms function as discourse technologies that simultaneously preserve tradition and facilitate digital dissemination. Their structural properties, rhythm, repetition, narrative arc, parallelism, exaggeration, make them inherently memorable. These features, originally designed for oral transmission, align naturally with algorithmic media environments that reward brevity, clarity, and recognizability.

The continuity observed is not static preservation but adaptive transformation. Oral literature forms are re-performed in a new communicative ecology. The preacher becomes both storyteller and digital content creator, though implicitly. The same structures that once supported communal memory in village or pesantren settings now support circulation in online networks.

Thus, humorous da’wah demonstrates that digital mediation does not displace oral tradition. Instead, it extends its reach. Anekdote, *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, *Guyon*, and *sindiran* remain active frameworks for moral communication. Their integration into YouTube sermons shows how oral literature continues to shape religious discourse, not as relic, but as living structure within contemporary digital preaching.

5. Discussion

This section interprets the findings in sustained dialogue with scholarship on humor, pragmatics, digital religion, and oral literature. Rather than restating results, the discussion clarifies what the ethnosociopragmatic framing reveals beyond descriptive analysis, how digital mediation reshapes pragmatic inference, and how Indonesian sociocultural specificity extends dominant models of humor theory. The argument proceeds in four subsections: theoretical integration, digital platform logic, Indonesian sociocultural specificity, and methodological reflection with limitations and future directions.

5.1 Theoretical Integration: Ethnosociopragmatics, Humor, and Value Transmission

The findings demonstrate that humor in Indonesian digital da’wah operates as a culturally regulated pragmatic act rather than a peripheral rhetorical device. Classical humor theory emphasizes incongruity, script opposition, and interpretive shifts (Attardo, 1994), while conversational accounts stress shared knowledge and inferential work (Norrick, 2003; Dynel, 2009). Functional models further position humor as a resource for solidarity, regulation, and tension management (Meyer, 2000; Kuipers, 2008). The present study confirms these mechanisms but situates them within a culturally embedded moral order.

For example, the wordplay “multi-dosa” illustrates incongruity through lexical transformation, consistent with script-based humor theory (Attardo, 1994). However, the pragmatic force of the utterance cannot be fully explained through cognitive shift alone. Its effectiveness depends on shared norms of adab and the culturally specific moral weight attached to dosa. Here ethnosociopragmatics clarifies how indirect correction operates within locally recognized boundaries of appropriateness (Mey, 2001; Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995). The humor succeeds not only because it is clever, but because it aligns with Indonesian expectations of polite religious admonition.

Similarly, solidarity-building hyperbole such as “level nabi” aligns with functional accounts of humor as social bonding (Meyer, 2000), yet its interpretive resonance depends on shared reverence for prophetic models. The exaggeration does not trivialize sacred figures because cultural norms regulate its acceptability. Ethnosociopragmatics thus extends conventional pragmatics by embedding inferential

mechanisms within ethnocultural moral schemas (Duranti, 1997; Foley, 1997). The findings demonstrate that humorous implicature in religious discourse is shaped not only by conversational maxims but by culturally internalized hierarchies of value.

Previous studies on humor in Indonesian preaching have described rhetorical strategies or audience appeal (Ali, 2017; Nurdin, 2019; Sadili, 2021; Samiyah et al., 2023), while others focus on ethical boundaries (Aziz, 2019) or reception (Ridho, 2020; Wandu, 2020; Fajrussalam et al., 2022; Harahap et al., 2024). The present study converges with these works in recognizing humor's persuasive potential but diverges by providing a systematic mapping between humor strategies, pragmatic mechanisms, value domains, and oral forms. The ethnosociopragmatic framing adds explanatory depth by showing how indirectness, face management, and evaluative stance are culturally calibrated rather than universally applied.

Importantly, the data extend Western-centered humor models by demonstrating that incongruity in religious discourse is norm-sensitive. Humor in this corpus does not challenge sacred authority; it repositions it through accessible framing. This nuance contributes to pragmatic theory by illustrating that speech acts in religious contexts are governed by layered norms that combine social harmony, moral accountability, and cultural legitimacy.

5.2 Digital Platform Logic and the Reshaping of Orality

Digital mediation plays a constitutive role in how humor functions within the sermons analyzed. Digital religion scholarship has shown that online environments transform authority, participation, and circulation (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Slama & Barendregt, 2018). YouTube's affordances, including visibility, algorithmic recommendation, and replayability, reshape preaching from a temporally bounded event into a persistent and shareable discourse artifact (Burgess & Green, 2018).

The findings demonstrate that oral forms such as *pepatah*, *pantun*, and *anekdot* adapt effectively to this environment. Their structural properties, repetition, rhythm, narrative compactness, align with digital logics of clipping and sharing. For instance, the proverb "Mati meninggalkan nama..." can circulate independently as a quotable moral statement. The *pantun* closure functions as a memorable ending suited for short-form reposting. This convergence suggests that digital mediation does not erode oral tradition; it amplifies its mnemonic strengths.

At the same time, digital context intensifies audience heterogeneity. Humor must anticipate diverse interpretive backgrounds. The reliance on culturally recognizable forms helps stabilize meaning across dispersed audiences. The laughter that follows indirect critique in recorded sermons functions as an embedded

interpretive cue for online viewers, guiding inference even when physical co-presence is absent. Thus, digital orality emerges as a hybrid mode where traditional performance cues interact with platform circulation dynamics.

Compared with earlier work that treats digital da'wah primarily as media adaptation (Slama & Barendregt, 2018), this study highlights how platform logic interacts with pragmatic inference. Humor becomes not only an engagement strategy but a format optimized for digital dissemination. This insight advances digital religion scholarship by foregrounding linguistic structure rather than institutional transformation alone.

5.3 Indonesian Sociocultural Specificity and Oral Literature Continuity

The findings underscore the importance of Indonesian sociocultural specificity in understanding humor's function. Oral literature scholarship has emphasized performance, mnemonic structure, and communal value transmission (Finnegan, 1992, 2012; Ong, 1982; Foley, 2002). In Malay and Javanese contexts, forms such as *pepatah*, *pantun*, *parikan*, and *guyon* historically encode ethical instruction (Sweeney, 1987; Hutomo, 1991; Danandjaja, 2002; Djamaris, 1993; Baried et al., 1985).

The present study demonstrates that these forms remain active frameworks in contemporary preaching. Rather than citing tradition abstractly, preachers perform it. The proverb functions as communal authority; *parikan* structures relational advice; *guyon* pesantren constructs insider scholarly identity; *sindiran* regulates excess through indirect critique. These patterns illustrate continuity rather than rupture.

This continuity challenges the common assumption that digitalization inevitably weakens local expressive forms. Rather than eroding tradition, the findings point to a pattern of adaptive resilience, in which cultural expressions adjust to new media environments while maintaining their core meanings. Cultural forms function as interpretive scaffolding that helps stabilize meaning for diverse and heterogeneous digital audiences. From an ethnosociopragmatic perspective, the analysis shows how culturally embedded norms shape and regulate what is considered appropriate humor within sacred discourse. The frequent overlap of social, cultural, and religious values within single utterances further demonstrates the integrated and holistic nature of Indonesian moral communication, where meaning is constructed through interconnected layers of normative understanding.

The study therefore contributes to oral literature scholarship by evidencing how *sastra lisan* operates within digital religious performance. It shows that oral tradition is not merely preserved but recontextualized as portable discourse units suited for algorithmic circulation.

5.4 Methodological Reflection, Limitations, and Future Directions

Methodologically, the combination of transcript analysis, performance observation (Spradley, 1980), triangulation (Denzin, 2017), peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and purposive sampling (Patton, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015) strengthens analytic credibility. The iterative coding process (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) ensured that value domains and oral forms were grounded in repeated patterns rather than isolated examples. The use of semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) provided interpretive validation from audience perspectives, confirming that humor was recognized as value-bearing rather than merely entertaining.

However, the study is limited to YouTube sermons by highly visible male ulama. Other platforms such as TikTok or Instagram may encourage different humor formats due to shorter attention spans and stronger algorithmic compression. Additionally, the focus on popular figures may overlook alternative or marginalized preaching styles. The identification of humorous utterances, while systematically defined, remains interpretive and context-sensitive.

Future research could extend this analysis in several directions. Comparative studies could examine humor in Malaysian or Middle Eastern digital preaching to explore cross-cultural differences in ethnosociopragmatic calibration. Platform-specific research could analyze how TikTok's short-form constraints reshape oral literature forms and moral compression. Longitudinal studies of audience comments could investigate how humorous utterances influence moral uptake over time. Further research could also explore female ulama's humor practices or non-Sunni preaching traditions to broaden representational scope.

In conclusion, this study advances humor and pragmatics research by embedding analysis within culturally situated moral frameworks. It demonstrates that humorous da'wah in Indonesian digital contexts functions as a structured mechanism of value transmission that integrates ethnosociopragmatic regulation, oral literature continuity, and platform-mediated circulation. Through this integration, the study contributes to linguistic theory by illustrating how pragmatic inference, cultural identity, and digital mediation co-construct meaning in contemporary religious discourse.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that the humorous segments identified in the YouTube Da'wah programs of the Indonesian ulama Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, Ustadz Das'ad Latif, Gus Baha, and KH. Anwar Zahid transcend the boundaries of entertainment and art. Instead, they are capsules that encapsulate complex intertwining social, cultural, and religious dimensions

and breathe life into the rich oral literature traditions of Indonesia. From an ethnosociopragmatic perspective, the study of 109 utterances in 10 videos demonstrates the social solidarity and humor critique culture—supporting social ethnicity using Malay and Javanese idioms, religious virtues of *sabr*, *adab*, and *kesederhanaan*, and the mastery of simplification in making complex Islamic concepts digitally accessible. These factors do not only increase the level of the audience, but also illustrate the use of humor in the practical negotiation of meaning across different sociocultural levels, deepening the study of literature and folklore by illustrating the use of language in religious communication.

The findings fortified understandings of ethnosociopragmatics by demonstrating the integration of humorous speech acts with cultural frameworks in online preaching, bridging Western incongruity models with Southeast Asian hybridity. They also illustrate the dynamism of sastra *lisan* by retaining its essence and transforming from traditional oral performances to digital virality, as forms like *anekdot* and *guyon pesantren* continue to transmit values across generations. These findings provide practical value to ulama and da'wah practitioners: they can develop more nuanced, impactful, and ethical humor da'wah designs to reach youth and rural populations by intentionally weaving in local contextual humor.

The study is limited to the YouTube platform and the prominent ulama. Yet, it makes room for future studies on humor in cross-cultural digital Islam or emerging platforms, such as TikTok. In the end, ulama's humorous da'wah reflects the cultural resilience of Indonesia's spiritual and folklore heritage in the digital world—conserving spirituality and folklore while blending tradition and innovation to foster a more introspective, connected Muslim community.

5. Acknowledgement

This research was supported by the Research and Community Service Institute (LPPM) at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya through an internal grant for linguistic and cultural studies. We extend our sincere gratitude to our colleagues at the Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, who offered valuable insights, feedback on methodological approaches, and access to digital resources that significantly enhanced the analysis. However, they may not endorse all interpretations presented in this paper.

References

- Abdullah, M., Muhid, A., & Wahyudi, R. (2020). Humor dalam dakwah Kyai Ishaq Latif di Pesantren Tebuireng Jombang. *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 14(2), 302–320.
<https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v14i2.9053>

- Ali, M. (2017). Humor in Islamic preaching: A study of rhetorical strategy in religious discourse. *Journal of Islamic Communication*, 2(1), 15–28.
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Aziz, M. (2019). Humor in Islamic sermons: Between entertainment and controversy. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Society*, 6(2), 45–62.
- Baried, S. B., et al. (1985). *Tradisi lisan dalam sastra Indonesia*. Balai Pustaka.
- Burgess, J., & Green, J. (2018). *YouTube: Online video and participatory culture* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
- Campbell, H. A., & Tsuria, R. (2021). *Digital religion: Understanding religious practice in digital media*. Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Danandjaja, J. (2002). *Folklor Indonesia: Ilmu gosip, dongeng, dan lain-lain*. Pustaka Utama Grafiti.
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Routledge.
- Djamaris, E. (1993). *Pengantar sastra lisan Indonesia*. Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.
- Duranti, A. (1997). *Linguistic anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dynel, M. (2009). Beyond a joke: Types of conversational humour. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 3(5), 1284–1299. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2009.00152.x>
- Fajrussalam, H., Rachman, A., & Nurdin, S. (2022). Humor dan etika komunikasi dakwah di media sosial: Studi kasus TikTok. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 12(1), 45–60.
- Faqihuddin, A. (2021). Humor in Ustadz Das'ad Latif's YouTube content.
- Finnegan, R. (1992). *Oral traditions and the verbal arts: A guide to research practices*. Routledge.
- Finnegan, R. (2012). *Oral literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers.
- Foley, J. M. (2002). *How to read an oral poem*. University of Illinois Press.
- Foley, W. A. (1997). *Anthropological linguistics: An introduction*. Blackwell.
- Harahap, R., Siregar, D., & Nasution, F. (2024). Efektivitas humor dalam dakwah di Mandailing Natal. *Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam*, 14(1), 22–38.
- Hutomo, S. (1991). *Mutiara yang terlupakan: Pengantar studi tradisi lisan*. HISKI Jawa Timur.
- Kuipers, G. (2008). The sociology of humor. In V. Raskin (Ed.), *The primer of humor research* (pp. 361–398). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE.
- Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.
- Meyer, J. C. (2000). Humor as a double-edged sword: Four functions of humor in communication. *Communication Theory*, 10(3), 310–331. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2000.tb00194.x>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Norrick, N. R. (2003). Issues in conversational joking. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(9), 1333–1359. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(03\)00097-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(03)00097-0)
- Nurdin, A. (2019). Humor sebagai media internalisasi nilai dalam dakwah Islam. *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah*, 39(1), 101–118.
- Ong, W. J. (1982). *Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word*. Routledge.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Ridho, A. (2020). Persepsi masyarakat terhadap humor dalam ceramah dakwah.
- Sadili, I. (2021). Aspek humor dalam retorika dakwah Gus Baha di media YouTube. *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.24252/jdt.v22i2.23647>
- Samiyah, N., Utami, R., & Kurniawan, A. (2023). Humor dalam dakwah KH Anwar Zahid: Kajian sosiolinguistik. *Jurnal Bahasa dan Dakwah*, 9(2), 134–150.

- Slama, M., & Barendregt, B. (Eds.). (2018). *Digital Indonesia: Connectivity and divergence*. ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Sweeney, A. (1987). *A full hearing: Orality and literacy in the Malay world*. University of California Press.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. Routledge.
- Wandi. (2020). Penggunaan humor dalam dakwah komunikasi Islam. *Al-Din: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 5(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.35673/ajdsk.v5i1.573>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.