

# CYBER DA'WA OF "AA GYM DAILY VLOG" AS MOSLEM MODERATE PREACH MEDIUM

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**Abstract:** New media plays a big role in virtual da'wa for society in disruption era. "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" which released in the middle of 2020, is one of the digital media platforms that received 6.44K subscribers within only one week releasing its first teaser vlog. The research purpose is to describe the virtual da'wa message packaging by using Islamic preacher vlog. This research used qualitative method with discourse analysis approach. Data collection was done through observing 17 scenes of "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" premiere vlog content. The use of virtual da'wa "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" offers an easy access to *mad'u* (da'wa recipients) directly in real action. The da'wa messages in "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" content is moderate Islam, which carried out Islamic practices based on *sunnah* Prophet Muhammad SAW. The vlog content is very applicable, starting from the daily activities of Aa Gym about waking up and the traditions of the prophet Muhammad SAW in social daily life. Virtual da'wa of Aa Gym's is made professionally as an effort to encourage digital community to live in harmony according to Islamic guidance.

**Keywords:** Digital media, Islamic preacher, virtual da'wa, vlog

**Abstrak:** Media baru berperan besar dalam dakwah virtual bagi masyarakat di era disrupsi. "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" yang dirilis pertengahan tahun 2020 merupakan salah satu platform media digital yang mendapatkan 6,44 ribu pelanggan internet hanya dalam waktu satu minggu merilis vlog pertamanya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mendeskripsikan pengemasan pesan dakwah virtual dengan menggunakan vlog penceramah islami. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis wacana. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan mengamati 17 adegan konten vlog perdana "Aa Gym Daily Vlog". Penggunaan dakwah virtual "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" menawarkan kemudahan akses pada *mad'u* (penerima dakwah) dalam aksi nyata. Pesan dakwah dalam konten "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" adalah Islam moderat yang menjalankan amalan Islam berdasarkan *sunnah* Nabi Muhammad SAW. Konten vlog tersebut sangat aplikatif, yang dimulai dari aktivitas sehari-hari Aa Gym tentang bangun tidur dan *sunnah* Nabi Muhammad SAW dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat. Dakwah virtual Aa Gym ditayangkan secara profesional sebagai upaya mendorong komunitas digital untuk hidup harmonis sesuai dengan tuntunan Islam.

**Kata kunci:** Media digital; pengkhotbah; dakwah virtual; vlog

## A. Introduction

Moslems in Indonesia occupy the largest number of people of other religions, therefore most of the laws and regulations reflect the values of Islamic values. Along with the development of the era of Islamic preaching, it began to penetrate various media and methods, unlike in the past, which was only spread by word of mouth while trading. The virtual da'wa approach is an innovative medium to get the recipient of da'wa (*mad'u*) closer to get da'wa content. This shifting method day of virtual da'wa occurred because of the existence of internet. It grows the

passion of millennial generation to learn Islam on social media platform. They don't really interest to listen the conventional preach nowadays.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the demographics of Indonesia's digital society are more dominated by the millennial generation.<sup>2</sup> The use of virtual da'wa has many advantages in every feature of its social media. However, it may also be the case wherein religious understandings are rapidly transforming into other virtual forms that are rather fake and misleading.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Indonesian Moslem use social media to find more knowledge about Islam.<sup>4</sup> Seeing this phenomenon, Aa Gym through his official YouTube launched virtual da'wa using vlog medium. Aa Gym or KH. Abdullah Gymnastiar is an influential Indonesian preacher who leads the Daarut Tauhid Islamic Boarding School.

Islamic preacher (*da'i*) must have the ability to understand the psychological condition of *mad'u* in order to be able to design what methods are suitable to be used as a medium of preaching.<sup>5</sup> Aa Gym is the only preacher who uses vlog as a medium of preaching. As a preacher, he has succeeded in formulating vlog content by emphasizing the sub-theme of da'wa. Vlogs is a kind of social media which grows in popularity among millennial generations. It has the content of oral blogs with daily stories, particular information, or personal diaries.<sup>6</sup> Aa Gym premiere vlog which is the first introduction of "Aa Gym Daily Vlog", gets 6.44 K subscriber within 1 week it's launched. Apparently, there are other well-known Islamic preachers who have utilized internet as da'wa medium. There are Ustadz Adi Hidayat (@adihidayatofficial), Ustadz Hannan Attaki (@hanan\_attaki), and Ustadz Abdul Somad (@ustadzabdulsomadofficial). Nevertheless, only Aa Gym as the first and only Indonesia Islamic preacher who expands digital da'wa using vlog. It is also managed seriously by using creative content team of Daarut Tauhid and Management Qolbu.



Figure 1. Official Cover Image "Aa Gym Daily Vlog"  
Source: <https://aagymdailyvlog.youtube.com> (2020)

It is not easy for Aa Gym to get *mad'u* attention to subscribe his vlog channel. Aa Gym should design attractive packaging of the vlog content. He composed powerful verbal language which tend to persuade *mad'u*. Verbal language on vlog content plays an important aspect

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad Nurcholis, Syaikh Ihsan Hidayatullah, and Izzatul Laila, "Inspirational Da'wah for Millennial Generation: Study at IAIN Tulungagung," *Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah* 5, no. 2 (2019): 165–180.

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Pujasari & Aep Wahyudin Supratman, "Digital Media Literacy to Higher Students in Indonesia," *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 2, no. 5 (2017): 51–58.

<sup>3</sup> Alessandra Vitullo, "New Age Goes Online: Relocating Spirituality in Virtual Spaces: The Study of Damanhur," *Methaodos Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 4, no. 2 (2016): 339–348.

<sup>4</sup> Benny Ridwan et al., "Islam Nusantara, Ulemas, and Social Media: Understanding the Pros and Cons of Islam Nusantara among Ulemas of West Sumatera," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 9, no. 2 (2019): 163–188.

<sup>5</sup> Abdul. Basit, "The Ideological Fragmentation of Indonesian Muslim Students and Da'wa Movements in the Postreformed Era," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*. 6, no. 2 (2016): 185–208.

<sup>6</sup> Lucy Jones, "Discourses of Transnormativity in Vloggers' Identity Construction.," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 25, no. 2 (2019): 85–101.

whether the vlog is worth to be subscribed or not.<sup>7</sup> The content of the vlog "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" is actually packaged in a contemporary way. The message of Aa Gym vlog is based on moderate Islam where it contains teachings that are oriented towards living in harmony in diversity, peace, humanity and equality. Islam that was revealed by Allah as *rahmatan lil alamin* (a blessing for the whole world community) wrapped in the adaptation of the *sunnah* into the life of modern world to build religious human civilization.

Social media usage has been utilized for human life in everyday life. Moslems around the world have already used this social media trend over the years. It brought many changes in the ways how Moslems society interact each other both at personal and groups level.<sup>8</sup> It differentiates digital content of Aa Gym digital da'wa to another Islamic preacher. Here are all vlog series of "Aa Gym Daily Vlog":

Table 1. Video Series of "Aa Gym Daily Vlog"

Vlog Cover Image	Vlog Titles
	<i>Vlog Premiere: Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog</i> (Vlog Premiere: Aa Gym Learn to Vlog)
	<i>Kebaikan Ringan Tapi Berbobot</i> (Simple Kindness with Good Quality)
	<i>7 Adab Bangun Tidur</i> (7 Adab of Waking Up)
	<i>Jangan Ada Baper Diantara Kita</i> (Don't take heart on us)
	<i>7 Adab Sebelum Tidur</i> (7 Adab before Sleeping)
	<i>Tetap Semangat Pak Agung</i> (Keep on Spirit Mr. Agung)

Source: <https://aagymdailyvlog.youtube.com> (2020)

<sup>7</sup> Stefan Titscher et al., *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage Publication Ltd, 2000); Jones, "Discourses of Transnormativity in Vloggers' Identity Construction."

<sup>8</sup> Nurdin Rusli, "Spiritualising New Media: The Use of Social Media for Da'wah Purposes within Indonesian Muslim Scholars," *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 3, no. 1 (2013): 1–21.

In all of his video vlogs, Aa Gym practices his daily activities such as brushing teeth, getting out of bed, performing ablution, cycling, visiting neighbors, and so on. Aa Gym would like to convey how important it is to be the role model as public figure so that *Mad'u* can follow his habit based on Islamic guidance. *Mad'u* feel involved in the vlog. This approach method must be assisted by persuasive communication so that the process of conveying message of the da'wa is conveyed through meaningful transaction between *da'i* and *mad'u* (Hakim 2017). The meaning transaction is an important tool to achieve the purpose of da'wa message which conveyed by *da'i* to increase the faith and piety of *Mad'u* to Allah SWT.

The da'wa method in "Aa Gym Daily vlog" is a kind of da'wa *bil-Hal* through digital platform medium. Da'wa *bil-Hal* is da'wa that prioritizes the action approach. "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" wants to persuade *mad'u* to carry out the sunnah of Muhammad SAW through real actions in daily activities. This type of preaching has a great influence on the recipients of the da'wa because *Mad'u* won't feel patronized.

In the vlog "Aa Gym Daily Vlog", *mad'u* are being invited to have interactive dialogue as friend on vlog comment column. Aa Gym wants to build sense of kinship on his vlog to get positive influence on viewers. Hence, *mad'u* will keep following the virtual da'wa "Aa Gm Daily Vlog" by clicking subscribe button on the vlog. When *mad'u* presses the subscribe button, the viewer will immediately receive every notification of Aa Gym's latest vlog upload. This method of da'wa through a sense of friendship was indeed taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW to preach affection.

Aa Gym uses vlog medium because of its easiest and fastest digital platform to be used in disruption era. The prophet Muhammad SAW also utilized all forms of media that existed at his time in the medium of delivering da'wa. Vlog is a video blog that is made more personal to broadcast personal notes that are always updated by the vlogger according to the theme of the activities someone is doing. The virtual da'wa medium basically makes it very easy for *da'i* to broadcast da'wa about Islam. Subsequently, *mad'u* receive the da'wa message and re-share the video vlog to other moslems by clicking share button. It gives a lot of broadmindedness to one another. As Allah SWT says:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Say thou, this is my way, I do invite unto Allah, on evidence clear as the seeing with one's eyes, I and whoever follows me. Glory to Allah! and never will I join god with Allah! (Q.S. Yusuf [12]:108).

This study aims to describe the digital da'wa method of Aa Gym through "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" platform by analyzing the verbal language use of Aa Gym rhetoric. The research on digital da'wa through vlog by a preacher has never been done before by other researchers. Hence, it will provide novel recommendation for the development of da'wa media use in this 5.0 era.

## B. Theoretical Review

This section contains theory which related to the research variables. Semiotic theory will be used to analyze the results data analysis. Semiotic theory underlies the concept of signs which are composed of language and communication systems. The language and communication system comes from human thought which is represented in the form of sign so that it can be connected with the reality of the object that resembles it. The semiotics theory used in this research is Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotics. Peirce's thinking that sign is related to objects that resemble to the causal relationship with the signs. Pierce sees that the representation (sign) is an inseparable part of the reference object and the interpretant. Sign stands to somebody or something in the sense that represents a subject that is inseparable from the sign. Semiotic theory underlies the concept of signs which are composed of language and communication systems. The language and communication system comes from human thought which is

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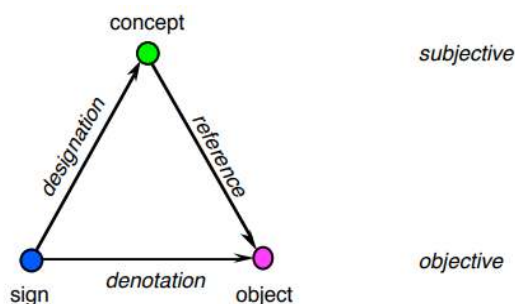


Figure 2. The reference triangle of Pierce

Source: Mills (1997)<sup>9</sup>

In the reality of life, humans perceive signs as concrete objects. Everything from a sign that is present in reality can have similar relationship because it refers to something in common. The sign is connected by means of the object represented.

### C. Methods

This research conducted with qualitative method with the approach of discourse analysis. On discourse analysis approach, the language can have variant meaningful. This research context was formulated based on the language used in certain discourse. It also offers proper methodology on how specific someone can construct his/her argument about self-evident and truth to wider societies. We viewed that "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" video premiere has many potential powerful of verbal content in terms of how the way Aa Gym delivered his dakwah message on the vlog. This vlog is constituted professionally in packaging its content. There were 13 selected spoken scenes from a premiere vlog of "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" entitled "Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog" to be analysed. The data collecting was done by observing and transcribing Aa Gym spoken language on "Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog". These 13 scenes were identified into the coding categories. Then, we examined the categories into Headers, Introduction and Conclusion to find the data interpretation on how Aa Gym compose outstanding verbal da'wa messages.

### D. Results and Discussion

Aa Gym vlog provides not only the content of lecturing, but also the personal practices in applying the content of the lecture. In the vlog series, Aa Gym really gives understanding to *mad'u* while making an application of the material presented. There were 13 scenes from the premiere vlog that will be analyzed from the premiere of "Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog".

<sup>9</sup> Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1997).



Table 2. Selected Scenes of "Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog" on "Aa Gym Daily VLog" Premiere

Scenes	Discourse Written Scenes	Discourse Spoken Scenes
1		<i>Apa kabar sahabatku sekalian?</i> (How are you my friends?)
2		<i>Ini adalah vlog yang akan berisi adab dan akhlak yang harus kita jalani dalam hidup ini.</i> (This is a vlog that will contain the manners and morals that we must live in this life.)
3		<i>Kita ingin bahagia? PASTI. Kita pun ingin mulia? Dan kita ingin selamat. PASTI.</i> (We want to be happy? CERTAINLY. We also want to be noble? And we want to survive. CERTAINLY.)
4		<i>Dan ternyata karunia itu Allah berikan kepada orang-orang yang memiliki Akhlaq Karimah buah dari Qolbun Salim.</i> (And it turns out that Allah's gift is given to people who have Akhlaq Karimah, the fruit of Qolbun Salim.)

5



*Mari kita sama-sama belajar. Dan berlatih mempraktekannya dengan Konsep BASIS.*  
(Let's study together. And practice practicing with the BASIS concept.)

6



*B nya Benar, inshaalah semuanya rujukannya jelas.*  
(The B is true, inshaalah all the references are clear.)

7



*Yang kedua A aplikatif yaitu dekat dengan keseharian kita.*  
(The second, A, is applicative, which is close to our daily live.)

8



*Yang ketiga Simple sederhana tidak usah rumit kita di dalam memahaminya.*  
(The third is Simple, simple, we don't need to be complicated in understanding it.)

9



*I nya yang keempat adalah inovatif. Semoga vlog ini menyampaikan indahnya islam dengan cara yang inovatif.*

*(The fourth is I, innovative. Hopefully this vlog will convey the beauty of Islam in an innovative way.)*

10



*Sehingga yang kelima adalah solutif. Semoga menjadi solusi dalam aktivitas keseharian kita.*

*(So that the fifth is a solution. Hopefully it will be a solution in our daily activities.)*

11



*Aa sangat menunggu masukan, kririk, saran demi vlog ini benar-benar berkah membawa kebaikan yang banyak.*

*(Aa really wait for the input, critic, suggestion to bring this vlog a blessing of goodness.)*

12



*Terimakasih sahabatku sekalian. Selamat menikmati kebersamaan kita lewat vlog ini.*

*(Thank you, my friends. Enjoy our togetherness through this vlog.)*



13



*Silakan subscribe dan share sebagai ladang amal sahabatku.*

(Please subscribe and share to seek the charity my best friend's.)

Source: <https://aagymdailyvlog.youtube.com> (2020)

Aa Gym uses persuasive verbal language to communicate the explain reason of this vlog exist. Take a look at the 13 scenes which displayed in terms of verbal usage, Aa Gym select the verbal language in sincere and flowing diction selection. Aa Gym wants the messages to be conveyed successfully and change *mad'u* attitude to be better human being. The verbal language structure is divided into structure of Headers, Introduction and Conclusion.<sup>10</sup>

The header structure in scene 1 shows the identity of Aa Gym as a preacher, the YouTube vlog icon medium and the "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" brand which are shown on a photo frame display attached in the wall. This header will continue to be the "face" of the vlog's early introductions that will bridge the next "Aa Gym Daily Vlog" vlogs. Then in the structure of Introduction, Aa Gym explains the purpose of this vlog by using the sentence "*Ini adalah vlog yang akan berisi adab dan akhlak yang harus kita jalani dalam hidup ini*" (scene 2). This vlog language is used as stressing about how important this vlog is made. The language style used to invite is in the use of the next question sentence, "*Kita ingin bahagia? PASTI. Kita pun ingin mulia? Dan kita ingin selamat*" (Scene 3). This verbal language invitation doesn't have any stressing in both words' selection and intonation. In fact, the question sentence that Aa Gym immediately answered was a brotherly invitation by using the substitute word '*Kita*' which aa gym repeated many times in scene 1, scene 2, scene 3, scene 5, scene 7, scene 8, scene 10, scene 11 and scene 12.

The next introduction structure is in scene 4 in the form of a complete statement of Aa Gym which answers the question sentence in scene 3 previously. I found a bid senetence in scene 4, "*Dan ternyata karunia itu Allah berikan kepada orang-orang yang memiliki Akhlaq Karimah buah dari Qolbun Salim*" is a verbal invitation in the style of offering *mad'u* to become part of a human being with a *Akhlaq Karimah* and having *Qolbun Salim*. The next structure introduction is in the form of benefit statement if *mad'u* accepts the offer sentence. The statements about the benefit language are in scenes 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Then, to make the core of da'wa message easy to remember, Aa Gym created the acronym of BASIS (*Benar, Aplikatif, Sempel, Inovatif* and *Solutif*). It is the main climax of the premiere vlog persuasive language on "Aa Gym Belajar Nge vlog" by explaining BASIS concept which describes the entire philosophy of this da'wa vlog lauched digitally. Furthermore, the closing structure is expressed in verbal language which is equalized with the viewer. In scene 11, Aa Gym never use the pronouns of 'I' and 'you' in the closing vlog sentence. Thus, Aa Gym consistently uses the pronoun "we" as a communicator who wants to build friendship by opening feedback in the form of input criticism and suggestions. Aa Gym doesn't want to put any distance from the viewer. Another powerful closing language was also spoken in scene 12 by saying the words "*sahabatku*" and the words

<sup>10</sup> Aris Badara and Jamiludin Jamiludin, "Representation of Indonesian Women Workers: A Critical Discourse Analysis on the Newspapers of Nationalist-Secular and Islamic Ideological Perspectives," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*. 10, no. 1 (2020): 79–101.

"*Selamat menikmati kebersamaan kita lewat vlog ini*". The virtual friendship between *da'i* and *mad'u* is a brilliant da'wa concept that has never been done by any *da'i* in Indonesia.

Aa Gym uses the method of preaching the prophet Muhammad SAW through the ties of Islamic brotherhood (*Ukhuwah Islamiyah*) on vlog media which is branded with the brand name "Aa Gym Daily Vlog". The selected verbal language use of Aa Gym through the words '*Kita*', '*Sahabat*', '*Kebersamaan*', *Aa* (Sundanese mention names for brother instead of I), '*Kebaikan*', '*Berkah*', in his vlog are the embodiment of the bonds of *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* taught by the Prophet Muhammad SAW when preaching. The da'wa of the prophet Muhammad SAW always pays attention to the atmosphere, situation and condition of *mad'u*. Like the first time the Prophet Muhammad arrived in the city of Medina, he gave an example of this Da'wa bilHal by establishing Quba Mosque, and uniting the Ansar and the *Muhajirin* in Islamic brotherhood ties (Hasanah 2014). In addition, the choice of Aa Gym verbal language was interpreted by *Qawlan Layyinan*. *Qawlan Layyinan* means gentle speech. In da'wa communication, gentle speech is a type of communication interaction in influencing *mad'u* to achieve wisdom. Syamsudin explains that *Qawlan Layyinan* is da'wa with gentle words to change situation into another state that is better according to the benchmarks of Islamic teachings, so that a person or society practices Islam as a teaching and way of life. Da'wa by prioritizing *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* and *Qawlan Layyinan* will have great influence on the recipients of da'wa to easily apply the contents of the da'wa.<sup>11</sup>

The verbal language of Aa gym in "Aa Gym Belajar Nge Vlog" which have been selected into the codification of words (*Kita*, *Sahabatku*, *Kebersamaan*, *Aa* (brother), *Konsep BASIS*, *Kebaikan*, *Berkah*) are reflection of wise attitude in digital preaching. The words used by Aa Gym in its verbal language will touch the hearts *mad'u* because they feel appreciated and welcomed.

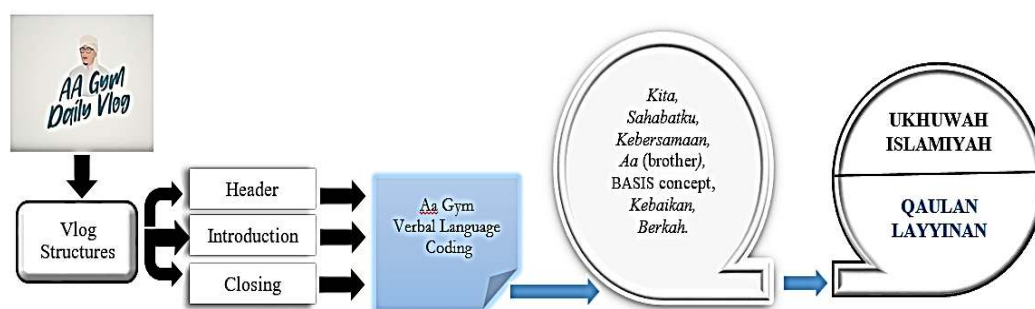


Figure 3. Model on Aa Gym Persuasive Da'wa Message at "Aa Gym Daily Vlog"  
Source: Research result (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2020)

The selection of good verbal language, courtesy and mutual respect based on *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* and *Qawlan Layyinan* are defined as the whole effort to invite the digital community to develop themselves according to Islamic guidance. As Levinson<sup>12</sup> said that the environment of new media is the instantaneous and expansive distribution of information about anything in any form that may lead to numerous forms of new community, new way of life, and new power structures within society. The essence of digital da'wa is basically an effort to form more Islamic behavior that makes it easier for *mad'u* to access da'wa without being limited by space and time. In the end, *da'i* expected a behavioral change in *mad'u* attitude according to the content of the da'wa message *ma'du* received.

<sup>11</sup> R.S. Syamsudin, *Sejarah Dakwah* (Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Paul. Levinson, *New Media* (Boston: Pearson, 2014).

## E. Conclusion

"Daily Vlog Aa Gym" has encouraged outstanding creativity to do da'wa through vlog digital media platform. Aa Gym uses selective spoken language on the vlog to indicate *Ukhuwah Islamiyah* and *Qawlan Layinnan*. He collaborated the spoken language of da'wa with factual action on his vlog, thus it collaborates all aspects of theoretical and practical. The formation of spoken language looks vivid as it portrayed on virtual da'wa "Aa Gym Daily Vlog". Da'wa through the internet, especially social networking can penetrate the boundaries of space and time in an instant cost and energy. It has been assisted *da'i* to do da'wa in affordable way. This means that the use of virtual da'wa for *da'i* is strongly relevance to fulfill the needs of preaching Islam for digital community/*mad'u* as the challenges continues to grow.

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