

## THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE RELATION OF *ADHAN* DISCOURSE AS REFLECTED ON THE MOSQUE STRUCTURE

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### Abstract

The design of a building surely considers the people who will use it. It may involve the number of people, their relationship, and how the people will use. As we see a building, we will get clues about the users or the people in the building. Reading a text can reveal who is the writer, to whom it is addressed, and the subject of person or parties it talks about, and the relationship among them. This gives an assumption that text and the architecture have participants to consider. The paper will try to explore relation mechanism among the participants of the *adhan* text, as a call for prayers for Moslem, as it is physically reflected on the mosque design.

The participants in the discourse and the physical form are human and God. The operation of the relation there covers the horizontal relation among the individuals, and the transcendental relation between the individual of human as creature in one side and God as the creator, in another. These operations are explored through analysis on the semiotics of architectural elements: form, partition, size, and the arrangement of interior and exterior properties. Thus, mosque with its distinctive design is actually a piece of discourse which tells a story among of which there is a fact about the participants and their relation mechanism, just like a written commonly does.

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**Keywords:** *tenor, participants, adhan, mosque structure.*

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### Introduction

Etymologically, *adhan* means "give or spread information." In Moslem cultural context, it is "the call to Shalat (prayer) pronounced loudly to indicate that the praying time is due." (Widhiyanto, 2003: 229). In another source, *adhan* also means "to permit" ([www.knowledgerush.com](http://www.knowledgerush.com)). It is a kind of communication between muezzin (the announcer) and the Muslim public, with its only message "please come to the mosque for having prayer together." The short message is explicitly stated in a clause chain, "Come to prayer" and other chains are the supporting lines to emphasize the message. This means the sequences of *adhan* makes up a

discourse with its religious-social purpose. The social aim is to distribute the message and the religious objective is the divine invitation contained in it, asking the target audience to do the God's order, *shalat*, a transcendental-humane behavior.

As *adhan* is viewed to be a discourse, it can be traced down to figure out its complete form by applying the semiotics of discourse, particularly focused on the context of situation, register, with its three elements: field, mode, and tenor. This paper will just explore the third element, tenor, to see the participants involved in the *adhan* discourse, and then relate its result to the physical realm, visual sign, of the Mosque architecture. The underlying assumption is that there should be a sort of parallelism between the verbal discourse of *adhan* and the visual argument reflected in the material appearance of the place where the interlocutors of *adhan* fulfill the order of the message, *shalat*. Therefore, there will be some theoretical discussion about the two semiotic systems: verbal and visual, as the foundation to inferring an analysis on the two different kinds of data. The verbal sign of *adhan* has been so clear and common for all Moslem society that it does not need any specification. While, the mosque architecture used here is the basic structure of the Mosque, covering *qibla* wall, *mihrab* (niche), *mimbar* (pulpit), minaret, *kubah* or dome, arches, moon and star (Budi:2008).

Table 1. Register of Adhan and Mosque

Register	Adhan	Mosque
Field	Call for Prayer	Place to pray
Tenor	God, Mohammad, Muezzin, Moslem	God, ohammad, Moslem
Mode	Verbal Sign	Architectural sign

Such an analysis is possibly taken for architecture, like a text, can be a symbol for its society. For example the WTC towers for the US society are symbol of pride and glory. Architecture is often put by the human in a cluster of cultural elements to be a medium to communicate a symbol of values (Kamil: 2008). Departing from these ideas, the paper will explore the meaning contained in the verbal and the architectural symbols to find out the meaning systematic working in two kinds of semiotics: verbal and architectural signs. The particular aspects focused here are the participants and their relation nature (Halliday's Tenor), which will be explained further down into status and affect. Another aspect of Tenor, contact, is excluded here.

### **Tenor**

Halliday and Hasan define the register as the situational configuration of field, mode and tenor (1985, p.38). Tenor is the interaction of roles that are involved in the text composition. Tenor refers to the role handled by the participants in a text (Halliday and Hasan: 1985). It represents the social reality realizing the negotiation of the social relationship among the participants (Martin, 1992, p.532). The participants cover the writer, the people or the things involved in a text and the readers. In the register, tenor constitutes the projection of the interpersonal meaning. Tenor, moreover, explores whoever involved, their characters and statuses, and the significant social relationship in the form of affect (Matthiessen, 1992). Tenor focuses on the semiotic relationship. It mediates these relationships along three dimensions, i.e. status, contact and affect. Status explores the relationship of the interlocutors in culture's social hierarchy. Status clarifies the interdependency level between the writer and the participants, the writer and the reader/s, and between the participants involved either equal or unequal. Affect deals with the judgment or the assessment of the writer to the reader/s and the participant/s in a text. And contact finally represents the familiarity of language among the users, whether it is understandable or not (Martin: 1992, p.525).

### **Semiotics of Mosque Structure**

Semiotics can be in anything. When a subject sees a thing and associates it to another representation, it surely means he/she has encountered a semiotic sign. This is in line with a theory saying, "...semiotic signs are not limited only to visual graphic symbols, but can encompass other information sources, including many architectural forms" (Sutcliffe: 2004). Meaning, thus, can be planted in any object a subject intends to. The meaning through visual sign can be literal or metaphorical. Visual appeals are 'literal' as they are only an attempt to present whatever something in question, and others can be metaphorical, if the visual things represent or stand for another thing (Groat, 2002:143). This is exactly like the verbal signs, which can be metaphorical or literal. We can understand that the action of "kick the bucket" as something literal-one does something to an object—or as something metaphorical—"commit suicide" in which the former directly presents the meaning as each word reflect in utterance, and the latter the sequence of the words represent something beyond the literal fact.

Sutcliffe (2004) relates the signs of dwelling to the impetus of all human being in the purpose of finding meaning in the architecture of housing. It is believed that whatever human being realizes in an object he/she creates, the meaning is put there. And this is much concerned to the innate impetus like:

*...in addition to the purely instinctive drives to survive, obtain food and reproduce, human beings long for safety, both physical and psychological. The roots of home, of the safe shelter one associates with comfort, family or tradition are entwined with the desire to remember, to commemorate, and to relate to others the essence of such a home. Eventually, we all want to find a safe home (Sutcliffe: 2004).*

Architecture can be regarded as a text with its own “grammar.” Dharma (1990) sees the arrangement of the architectural elements is not different from the language. The signs of special arrangement and relation are a kind of syntactic form and their meaning is its semantic aspect. The function or effect to the users can be assumed to be the pragmatics facet. This may simplify the differences, which do exist between the both. However, the aspects of languages labeled to the architectural elements are still logical for our common sense. One of the architectural works, which are interesting to, discussed for their symbolism and meaning is the mosque, since it is a communal building containing certain values for its users.

In general, mosque has no universal features as the key indicator for the mosque building in this world. Each community has their own ‘sense’ and ‘style’ about how the mosque should be. Budi (2008) explain the peculiarities of the mosque.

*“There is no symbol or architectural feature that every mosque must have. Even though many mosques have some elements or architectural features that widely associated with mosque by many people elsewhere but actually there is no rule/no law in Sharia (Koran and Hadits) and also no “consensus” of Islamic believer that every mosque must have it. Some elements or architectural features are qibla wall, mihrab (niche), mimbar (pulpit), minaret, kubah or dome, arches, moon and star, etc.”*

The mosque has no universal characteristics, which can be found anywhere, though some elements are recognized by many as the marks for building to be assigned as mosque. And the physical appearance of the mosque is a part of the cultural products—the result of human being as the culture owner. There is no single *sharia* (Koran or *Hadits*), which specifies the key elements for the mosque (Budi: 2008). That is why the form of physical building is determined by the community building it. And, the architecture of the mosque used to be the architectural signs analyzed here is that of Indonesian mosque with its common features.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *The Participant's Relation in Adhan*

*Adhan* is made up of six clauses pronounced repeatedly and loudly five times a day to mark that that time of the prayer is due (Widhiyanto,

2003:255). *Adhan* is brief, concise, clear, and complete; it is a communicate media to remind the Muslim community for doing the five mandatory prayers. The literal meaning of *adhan* can be translated into:

- 1) God is Greater, God is Greater,
- 2) I assert that there's no god But God
- 3) I assert that Mohammed is God's messenger
- 4) Come to the prayer
- 5) Come to the success
- 6) God is Greater, God is Greater
- 7) There's no god but God

This is the common version of *adhan*, the Sunni version, since the Shia Muslim has another rather different version. The *adhan* is a call for Muslim to invite them to come to the mosque for conducting the five mandatory prayers (*fard*). This means it doesn't only function to tell that time for prayer has come, but a divine invitation for Moslem public to take prayer together in the mosque for a gathering prayer as it is explained in one the site in the internet (<http://www.knowledgerush.com/kr/encyclopedia/Adhan/>).

The literal invitation for prayer is put on the fourth line, "come to the prayer" or in another translation it can be "let's do the prayer." Seeing the two possible translations, this can be a direct order from God, or a persuasion between of the announcer to his shared-faith audience. Thus, the muezzin (announcer) actually stands for God, meaning he pronounce *adhan* on behalf of God's order. Essentially, what he asks is what God wants the human being, especially Muslim, must do at the time the *adhan* is announced. It means the Muslim audience must obey the command and leave whatever they do for fulfilling the heavenly invitation.

### Status

Status here refers to the level position of the interlocutors in culture's social hierarchy. It explains the interdependency level between the writer and the participants, the writer and the reader/s, and between the participants involved either equal or unequal (Martin, 1992:532). Seen from the status aspect of Tenor, the announcer has a higher status than the audience, the Muslim public. This is proved by the direct order of invitation. In another he makes others deferred to him. The underlying power the announcer has is the God's stand, the words he pronounces is not other than God's. This seems to put his status far above of all audiences. Surely, this is only a part of interpretation of the status and still debatable for another more appropriate conclusion.

From the perspective of shared awareness by putting it into the persuasive meaning, "let's come to prayer", the status will be equal; the announcer is only someone inviting the others to do prayer together. This

means whatever he pronounces is only the message he should deliver to his Muslim brothers and sisters. And he is also a part of the target audience included to follow the *adhan* order. This, perhaps, will be more conclusive, since muezzin usually will stay in the mosque and pray together with others. They are all just servants of God as the subject holds the highest status in this world. And they do obey the order to pursue the happiness God promises for His servants who always fulfill the orders and avoid any forbidden acts. In sum, the muezzin (an *adhan* announcer) and the Muslim audience are in equality, and are only the servants of God who absolutely holding the peak of any kind statuses.

Another participant mentioned in the text is the messenger, Mohammad. Surely, his status is little higher than other Moslems. In dealing with the prayer, he is the guider. The order to prayer is believed to be the result of negotiation between Mohammad and God. He tries to persuade the God for reducing the number of prayers for he worries his followers will be very hard to fulfill 50 prayers like the predecessors used to. The mentioning of Mohammad in *adhan* text is also a part of the requirement for doing *shalat* that is an individual must be a Moslem, by believing in God and His messenger, Mohammad. However, the prophet is also a part of God's servant who has the same obligation like other Moslems. Even, he is the most obedient human being and loves to pray so much that his feet were swollen by the long period the time he spent for prayer along the night. This means his position is till much lower than God, though his stand is surely higher than common human being, especially the Moslem believers.

### **Affect**

Affect constitutes the degree of emotional charge in the relationship between participants (1992, p.525). The affect, negative or positive feelings, can be explicitly or implicitly stated. And it is only a part of the attitude an author may have on the subject matter or other participants involved in his/her text. Other two elements are judgment and appreciation, as Priyanto (2009:358) quotes from others (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). Judgment deals with either admiration or critics a writer has in a text, and appreciation refers to the evaluation, which can be positive or negative.

Affect will be taken as the only parameter to see the relationship among the participants present in *adhan*. The obvious affect seen is the positive things associated to "Allah" (the God). There are two clauses explicitly mentioning about with two attributes, "greater" and "the only." These evidences are truly the positive affect to the subject they associate. This positive affect is shared with all target audience. The recitation of the fact functions to remind all human being about the essential being of who

they are and what is the most important for them. This can be the positive value as well.

The positive fact is supported by the implied message in another clause, "Come to the success." This means to emphasize the greatness and the only-ness of the God. Human being who seeks for the success should follow the order, the only way by submitting their fates to the God. And the prayer is one of the submission's manifestations. And it is basic impetus for all individual to gain the success either in life or in afterlife. A similar tone of affect goes also to Mohammad, mentioned as His messenger. This means the way a Moslem prays must follow his way in conducting it, otherwise, the prayer will not be valid, or just void, and unacceptable.

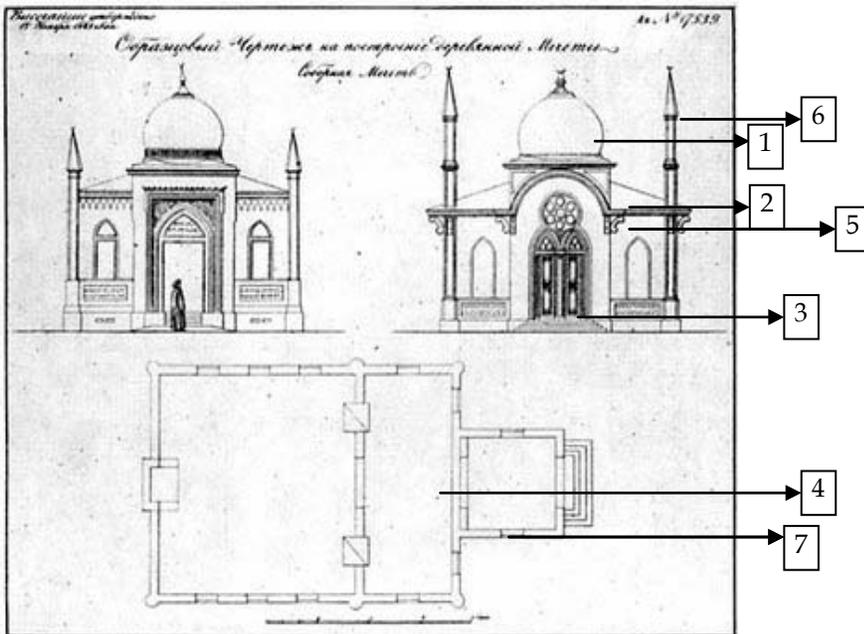
The affect for the target audience is not literally mentioned. There is no word in the *adhan* text mentioning the human being in general or their association. The implied presence of the target audience is the command—the message asking to do prayer and the sentences of *syahadah* (divine assertion) before the command clarify the addressee to whom the command is directed; it means the target audience is whoever believing in "Allah is the only God and Mohammad is His messenger" — Moslem community.

Some sort of positive affect is perceived in "Come to the success." This has a positive tone for the target audience by posing a good promise—and not a threat. The order for doing prayer is also an offer, showing a positive manner (see Widhiyanto, 2003:259). Literally, the target audience will get the success if they fulfill the invitation of conducting the prayer. And the success here covers not only for the life in this world but also life after that. The promise of success can be concluded to be a positive affect for the interlocutors. And this is also the case for the announcer himself; gaining success requires him to do prayer as well. In sum, the affect for all participants involved in the text is positive, which is explicitly stated for the God and His messenger, and is implicitly associated to the interlocutors, the muezzin and the Muslim public.

#### *The Nature of Relation among the Participants in Mosque*

The relation of the participants involved here is drawn in semiotic way through the structure of physical elements of the mosque. Along with the idea of architecture as semiotic sign (Sutcliffe: 2004, Dharma: 1990, Ridwan: 2008 and Groarke: 2002), here the mosque will be seen as text-like phenomenon. Put the mosque in that stand, the chance opens to explore the building as a discourse. Then, the contexts of situation, register, of the mosque can be figured out through its word-like elements. Through semiotics, it is imaginable and logical to make the elements of the building to speak about "the meaning they bear." The object of course will be metaphorically interpreted. Each constituent stands not only for

its physical and functional reality but also exists to express some meaning (see Santoso, 2004:2).



Picture 1. 1) Dome, 2) *tajug* roof, 3) main entrance, 4) room of main roof, 5) Mosque roof, 6) minaret, and 7) *mihrab*

Source: <http://1.bp.blogspot.com>.

The *tajug* roof or sphere dome represents the sacred mountain (Santoso, 2004, Budi: 2008), which may derive from the Hindu tradition, and is similar to the Greek myth believing that, Zeus, the God of the gods and goddess, controlled his throne from the Olympus peak, which is believed to be the God palace. The meaning of the mosque's dome or peaking roof surely is not so literal like the Greek. The peak roof/sphere dome symbolizes the transcendental link to the Creator the Moslem believed to be on Heaven above, the top of the seventh sky. The structure is the representation of God's presence to which the good deeds in the mosque are addressed. Santoso (2004) briefly concludes the meaning of the mosque structure in Table 1.

Table 2. The Meaning of Mosque's Structure (Santoso: 2004)

No	Structure	Meaning
1	<i>Tajug</i> roof / sphere dome	Sacred mountain
2	Mosque's roof	unity
3	Main's entrance	Hierarchic demarcation of time and space
4	Room under main roof, in	multiplicity

	the middle, centered and oriented to <i>mihrab</i>	
5	Mosque's roof + structure columns	Re-integration
6	Tower (minarets) and columns	Ontological axis

In a narrative, the meanings of the constituents of the mosque structure can be seen as the sign system bearing meaning. The highest existence to whom the prayers are addressed is reflected from the *tajug* roof/sphere dome. The sphere dome or *tajug roof* is often complemented with stars and moons icons. These objects contribute to the symbolism of the doom and *tajug* roof to be subject above settling in the top sky. To find the highest entity, human should pass the demarcation of time and space, represented by the main entrance, or the gate (*gapura*). The gate or the main entrance is like the borderline to separate the profane world and the spiritual domain.

In Turner's (1969) perspective, the main entrance is the luminal line of human being to transform their material being into spiritual one. As the requirement to come into the sacred point, a subject has to clean his/her body, symbolized by *wudhu*. When the human beings take their steps into the main room of the mosque, they should put all the profane attributes off. This room is under the main roof, centralized to the sphere dome or *tajug* roof, and oriented to the *mihrab*, where *imam* (the prayers leader) is. *Mihrab* also signifies the orientation to the God's messenger.

Re-integration to the sacred God is marked by the meeting line between the main roof and the columns and the pillars. It means that the prayers the human being takes transform the humane signification. The essential value is then placed on the heart and souls, not on the material and physical being. The highest value will be achieved as one is able to submit his/her totality and spiritually he/she will reach the peak of finding Him (*ikhsan, khusyu* – the condition in which Moslem feels like communicate directly to Allah). The symbol of efforts to achieve the peak is reflected in on the tall minarets with their erected peak. They are symbol of ontological axis, an effort of human being to reach the divine.

The explanation of the meaning symbolized in the mosque structure indicates the participants involved in the mosque discourse: the God and human being (Muslim) in general. The relation mechanism between two kinds of entities, the Creator and the creatures, can be drawn in two ways. First, the God (in *tajug* roof, or sphere dome) is vertically linked to the human being in general, especially the Moslem doing prayers gathering together in the main room as the symbol of multiplicity. This vertical relation is also indicated by other symbols like columns,

minarets, the main roof and the line encounter of the columns and the main roof. Mosque is the place where human beings manifest them as nothing but the servants of God, and in which they try to communicate transcendently to Him. In sum, the relation between God and human being as reflected in the mosque structure is unequal; the former is on the highest, and the latter is on the lowest.

Table 3. Status of the Participants in Two Different Semiotics

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Adhan</u>	<u>Verbal Sign</u>	<u>Mosque</u>	<u>Architectural Sign</u>
God	Highest	Great, only God, Come!	Highest	<i>Tajug roof, sphere dome</i>
Mohammad	Higher than Moslem	The Messenger	Higher than Moslem	Mihrab, the point of orientation in the main room
Moslem	Lower	Come!	Lower	Gate, wudhu, main room oriented to Mihrab,
Muezzin	Equal to Moslem	He is part of audience	-	-

Second relation is the horizontal one, represented by the main entrance, main room, and *mihrab*. It is the relation between human beings. Once an individual enters the main entrance, he or she starts to be spiritual being, escaping him/herself from the worldly attributes. Light wash on some parts of body (taking *wudlu*) is the sign of cleaning from all profane dirt. The shape and plain, open structure of the main room emphasizes the equal stands of the human taking prayers in the mosque. An individual can take the front line and have prayer at the row, no matter whom he/she is as long as he/she comes early. In the room of multiplicity, all individuals are nothing other than the servants of God. And the muezzin has the same chance to pick his stand on the row. He is just equal to others. *Mihrab* as the place where the *imam* (a leader of prayers) does his prayer stands for the Mohammad, the God's messenger. This means that the praying individuals in the main room should follow obediently to the Mohammad's guidance. The guidance here is symbolized by an imam with the role of leading the prayers in conducting *shalat*. Meanwhile imam's position is just like others, at the lowest stand before God. In short, the status among human beings gathering the main room is equal to each other, sharing the common orientation of the Mohammad's guidance.

The affect among the participants can be inferred from the fact that the producer or the builder of the mosque is the human being. The symbolism of the God put in the highest position implies that the human being have positive affect on God being. In contrary, they put themselves

at the lowest position, meaning invoking negative affect. This negative affect is also represented by the necessity to clean the body before they initiate to communicate to God. Though, the symbolism of the media in the mosque structure to reach God can be interpreted to reduce the negative affect associated to human being. Another positive affect is correlated to Mohammad the prophet, symbolized in *mihrab*. The human being views him as the good guidance that can lead them in the prayers. Thus, the parallelism of meaning between the verbal signs and the architectural signs can be concluded positively. Both signify the vertical and the horizontal relation, putting the God in the highest status, and the human at the lower status. Mohammad as God's messenger is put on higher rank than all human being, but he is still at much lowest rank since he is only part of the God's servant. In terms of the affect, the two semiotics reflect the positive value linked to God and Mohammad. The positive affect of human being is conditional; they must fulfill the order to have positive value, getting the success (in *adhan*), or coming into spiritual being to meet the God (in the mosque structure).

Table 3. Affect among the Participants in Two Different Semiotics

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Adhan</u>	<u>Verbal Sign</u>	<u>Mosque</u>	<u>Architectural Sign</u>
God	Positive	<i>Great, only God, Come!</i>	Positive	<i>Tajug roof, sphere dome, stars and moon icon</i>
Mohammad	Higher than Moslem	<i>The Messenger (guidance)</i>	Positive	<i>Mihrab, the point of orientation in the main room</i>
Moslem & Muezzin	Conditional Positive	<i>Come to success (by) Come to Prayers</i>	Negative, can be positive by turning into spiritual being	<i>Main room, Wudhu, - Demarcation, minarets, columns and pillars</i>

### Closing Remarks

The meaning is put by human being through the culture they develop in many ways and in varieties of realities. Often, the meaning is put on the natural being other than the object they create. In another way, the meaning is inspired them to create a thing to bear. For example human being creates the temple as the place to worship based on the meaning they have in mind. The meaning, then, dictates the structure, the elements, and other attributes to accommodate the meaning planted. Based on this perspective, the sensitivity needs to capture the possible meaning that is implanted on any object we find. The semiotics provides us with a yawning concept to explore realities and to find out the underlying meaning behind them.

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