

The Influence of Language Use toward the Implementation of Public Service Ethics

Mansyur Suma¹, Irwan Misbah¹, Somadi Sosrohadi², M. Dalyan³

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Indonesia

²Universitas Nasional Jakarta, Indonesia

³Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia

*Correspondence: mansursuma38@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of language in the implementation of public service ethics, with a focus on Hajj services at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar City. It examines both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used by public service professionals to understand how language influences ethical decision-making and interactions between service providers and the public. The research aims to explore how language choices support accountability, fairness, and transparency while encouraging ethical conduct in public institutions. Using a case study approach, the study concentrates on the interactions between Hajj service officers and prospective pilgrims during the registration, guidance, and procedural explanation stages. Data collection includes participatory observation of language use and non-verbal cues, such as gestures and intonation. The findings emphasize that key language characteristics like clarity, politeness, empathy, and motivational language play a crucial role in creating positive service experiences and promoting ethical behavior. The study concludes that strategic language use in public service fosters trust, transparency, and cooperation, enhancing relationships between service providers and the public and reinforcing a culture of accountability in public institutions.

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1. Introduction

Effective communication is at the heart of all public service interactions, influencing not only the operational efficiency of public institutions but also the ethical framework within which these services are delivered. Language, as a fundamental tool of communication, holds a profound impact on how public services are perceived and experienced by citizens. It shapes the tone of interaction, reflects the values of service providers, and has the power to either build or erode trust in public institutions (Dolamore & Whitebread, 2022; Prihandoko et al., 2019; Sukmawaty et al., 2022). In this context, the use of language is not simply about conveying information; it is a key determinant in the implementation of ethical standards in public service.

According to Chomsky (1965), language use is not merely a reflection of grammar rules but is influenced by the speaker's cognitive processes and ability to manipulate these structures in communication. Furthermore, Simon (1947) argued that language plays a crucial role in administrative behavior by influencing how decisions are communicated and understood within organizations. In public service, the use of language can affect transparency, accountability, and the ethical integrity of decision-making processes (Chipman et al., 2024; Said et al., 2021). In conclusion, language use is a complex phenomenon that encompasses not only the transmission of information but also the performance of actions, the shaping of perceptions, and the enforcement of social and ethical norms. In the context of public service, the use of language is central to the ethical conduct of public servants, as it directly influences interactions with the public, the perception of fairness, and the implementation of ethical standards.

The relationship between language use and public service ethics has gained increasing attention in contemporary studies, particularly in light of the growing demand for transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in government services. Language plays a central role in how public servants engage with the public, from the manner in which policies are communicated to the way decisions are explained and justified (Rauh, 2023; Yaumi et al., 2024; Rahman & Weda, 2019). In any interaction, the words chosen, the tone adopted, and the clarity with which information is delivered can have

a profound impact on the perceived fairness and legitimacy of public institutions. As such, understanding the influence of language on the application of ethics in public service is crucial for improving the quality-of-service delivery and maintaining public trust.

Public service ethics encompass a wide range of principles, such as integrity, transparency, fairness, and respect for the dignity of individuals. Language use, whether formal or informal, inclusive or exclusive, clear or ambiguous, can either promote or undermine these ethical principles (Tong et al., 2024; Sosorhadi et al., 2024; Sukmawaty et al., 2022). For instance, a respectful and empathetic tone can enhance a public servant's perceived fairness, while an arrogant or dismissive language can diminish citizens' trust in public institutions. Moreover, the ability to communicate policies and decisions effectively and without bias is central to ensuring that public services are both equitable and just for all members of society (Tran et al., 2024; Dalyan et al., 2022).

The impact of language on ethical practices in public service is particularly crucial in diverse societies, where inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility are key concerns (Yan et al., 2024; Hidayatullah & Sosrohadi, 2022). Public servants often interact with a wide range of communities, each with its own cultural and linguistic background. Therefore, their linguistic choices must reflect an awareness of this diversity to ensure effective communication and promote ethical service delivery.

Inclusive language plays a vital role in fostering an environment of equality and mutual respect, helping to build trust between service providers and the public. When public servants use language that acknowledges and values the differences among various groups, it encourages positive engagement and supports ethical behavior. Conversely, language that marginalizes certain groups can perpetuate social inequalities, exclude people from essential services, and compromise the ethical standards expected in public service. Thus, the way language is used in public service can significantly influence both the quality of service and the overall ethical climate within public institutions.

This paper explores the intricate ways in which language use influences the implementation of public service ethics. By examining both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies employed by public service professionals, we aim to understand how language choices shape ethical decision-making and interactions between service providers and the public. Through this exploration, we seek to identify the practices that can enhance ethical behavior within public institutions, providing insights into how language can be strategically utilized to support the values of accountability, fairness, and transparency in public service. Through a deeper understanding of the role of language, we aim to provide actionable recommendations that can guide public service professionals toward better communication practices that align with ethical standards, ultimately fostering stronger relationships between the government and the communities it serves.

1.1 Objective of the Research

This research is to examine how language use impacts the implementation of public service ethics. By analyzing both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies employed by public service professionals, the study aims to understand how language choices influence ethical decision-making and the interactions between service providers and the public. The research seeks to identify communication practices that can promote ethical behavior within public institutions, offering insights into how language can be strategically used to uphold the principles of accountability, fairness, and transparency in public service.

2. Methodology

2.1 Type of Research

This research uses a case study approach to deeply explore how language is used in the Hajj service at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar City, and how this language influences service ethics, the relationship between officers and Hajj pilgrims, as well as the pilgrims' perceptions of service quality. The study will focus on the interactions that occur between the Hajj service officers and the pilgrims who come to obtain information, guidance, and administrative processes required to perform the Hajj.

2.2 Research Location

The research will be conducted at the office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar City, specifically in the department that handles Hajj services. This includes various interactions that take place between the officers and the prospective Hajj pilgrims, both in the registration process, guidance, preparation for departure, and monitoring during the Hajj journey.

2.3 Service Focus

The primary focus will be on the communication aspect between the Ministry of Religious Affairs officers and prospective Hajj pilgrims, particularly regarding the provision of information, guidance, and the management of complaints or issues faced by the pilgrims.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

a. Participatory Observation

1) **Objective:** To directly observe interactions between the officers and the pilgrims, as well as how language use and non-verbal actions (such as facial expressions, gestures, and intonation) play a role in shaping service ethics. 2) **Procedure:** a) Observations will be conducted in the registration service areas, Hajj guidance sessions, or when officers explain the procedures for Hajj departure. b) Focus on the language used by the officers, whether it is formal or informal, polite or firm, and how the pilgrims respond to this language. c) Record interactions that demonstrate how language plays a role in maintaining service ethics, such as politeness, fairness, and transparency.

3. Result and Discussion

This section analyzes several data related to the utterances exchanged between officers and customers, collected at the research location. The analysis focuses on how language is used in interactions between public service officers and service recipients, particularly in the context of the Hajj service at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar City. By examining these verbal exchanges, the study aims to gain insights into how language choices influence service quality, customer satisfaction, and the ethical standards upheld during the service process. Through this analysis, the research highlights key communication practices that contribute to creating a positive and professional service environment.

3.1 The utterance between officer and customer

Data1

Officer	:	<i>Selamat pagi, Ibu. Terima kasih sudah datang untuk melakukan pendaftaran haji. Nama Ibu Siti, ya? Sebelum kita lanjutkan, saya ingin mengingatkan untuk membawa semua dokumen yang diperlukan, seperti KTP, KK, dan buku tabungan. Apakah Ibu sudah mempersiapkannya?"</i>
		Good morning, Madam. Thank you for coming to complete the Hajj registration. Your name is Mrs. Siti, correct? Before we proceed, I would like to remind you to bring all the necessary documents, such as your ID card, family card, and bank book. Have you prepared them?
Customer	:	<i>Selamat pagi, Pak. Terima kasih atas informasinya. Saya sudah membawa dokumen-dokumennya, ini semua saya bawa.</i>
		Good morning, Sir. Thank you for the information. I have brought all the documents, I have them with me.

The staff consistently uses formal and polite language, such as 'Good morning,' 'Thank you,' 'Please feel free to ask,' and 'We are here to assist you.' This courteous communication is not just a matter of formality, but an essential part of creating a welcoming and respectful environment for the Hajj pilgrims. By maintaining a tone of politeness and professionalism, the staff ensures that pilgrims feel comfortable, supported, and confident as they go through the preparation process. Such language reflects the organization's commitment to providing excellent service while fostering an atmosphere of trust and care.

Furthermore, this respectful approach helps to establish a positive rapport between the staff and the pilgrims, which is crucial during such an important and spiritual journey. The use of polite and formal language contributes to a sense of dignity and respect, ensuring that all pilgrims feel valued and heard. By combining professionalism with empathy, the staff not only assists with logistical matters but also helps to ease any concerns or uncertainties that pilgrims may have, ultimately enhancing their overall experience and sense of readiness for the pilgrimage.

Data2

- Officer : *Baik, terima kasih, Ibu. Sekarang, mari kita mulai dengan mengisi formulir pendaftaran. Harap pastikan bahwa semua data yang Ibu isikan sudah sesuai dengan dokumen asli untuk menghindari kesalahan. Jika ada yang perlu ditanyakan atau tidak dimengerti, silakan langsung bertanya.*
- Officer : *Alright, thank you, Madam. Now, let's begin by filling out the registration form. Please make sure that all the information you enter matches the original documents to avoid any mistakes. If you have any questions or anything you don't understand, feel free to ask.*
- Customer : *Baik, Pak. Saya akan isi formulirnya sekarang. Kalau ada yang tidak jelas, saya akan langsung tanya. Terima kasih atas penjelasannya.*
- Customer : *Alright, Sir. I will fill out the form now. If there is anything unclear, I will ask right away. Thank you for the explanation.*

Clarity and transparency are essential aspects of the service provided by the staff, who make sure to give clear and detailed explanations about the required documents, registration steps, and the procedures to follow. This level of transparency helps to avoid any confusion and ensures that the Hajj pilgrims fully understand what is expected of them at each stage of the process. By providing such clear guidance, the staff makes it easier for the pilgrims to navigate through the necessary preparations, giving them a sense of confidence and security as they move forward with their journey.

Moreover, the clear communication from the staff is crucial in minimizing any potential misunderstandings that could arise during the registration or preparation phases. By explaining each step thoroughly and answering any questions that may arise, the staff ensures that pilgrims are well-informed and prepared for the upcoming pilgrimage. This commitment to transparency helps to create a smoother and more organized process, allowing the pilgrims to focus on their spiritual preparation, knowing that the logistical aspects are well taken care of.

Data 3

- Customer : *Pak. Saya harap semuanya berjalan lancar*
- Customer : *Sir, I hope everything goes smoothly.*
- Officer : *Saya juga berharap demikian, Ibu. Semoga perjalanan ibadah haji Ibu berjalan dengan lancar dan diterima oleh Allah SWT. Setelah pendaftaran ini selesai, kami akan memberi informasi lebih lanjut mengenai persiapan keberangkatan. Jangan khawatir, kami akan selalu mendampingi Ibu.*
- Officer : *I hope so as well, Madam. I pray that your Hajj journey goes smoothly and is accepted by Allah SWT. Once this registration is complete, we will provide further information regarding the departure preparations. Don't worry, we will always assist you."*
- Customer : *Terima kasih banyak, Pak. Semoga saya bisa menjalankan ibadah haji dengan lancar*
- Customer : *Thank you very much, Sir. I hope I can perform the Hajj smoothly.*
- Officer : *InsyaAllah, Ibu. Semoga segala urusan dimudahkan. Terima kasih telah meluangkan waktu untuk mendaftar, Ibu. Jangan ragu untuk kembali jika ada yang perlu dibantu.*
- Officer : *InsyaAllah, Madam. May everything be made easy. Thank you for taking the time to register, Madam. Don't hesitate to come back if you need any assistance.*

Empathy and support are key elements in the interactions between the staff and the Hajj pilgrims. The staff express genuine care by saying phrases like, 'We hope your Hajj journey goes smoothly and is accepted by Allah SWT,' and 'We will always be here to accompany you.' These expressions not only convey kindness but also help to establish a more personal and supportive relationship with the pilgrims. This approach is essential in creating a positive perception of the

service, as it reassures the pilgrims that they are not just another number, but are treated with respect, compassion, and genuine concern for their well-being throughout the entire preparation process.

Additionally, the staff encourage active participation by inviting pilgrims to ask questions if anything is unclear, demonstrating openness and a willingness to assist. This approach supports the principle of fairness in service, where the pilgrims feel that they have an active role in the process and that no information is being withheld from them. By fostering a welcoming and transparent environment, the staff ensures that the pilgrims are not only well-prepared for their journey but also feel supported every step of the way, further enhancing their confidence and sense of belonging.

Data 4

Officer : *Bapak. Kami di sini untuk memastikan bahwa Bapak siap secara fisik dan mental untuk melaksanakan ibadah haji. Keberangkatan haji tahun ini direncanakan pada tanggal 10 Juli. Sebelum keberangkatan, Bapak akan mengikuti pembekalan mengenai tata cara ibadah haji dan persiapan lainnya, seperti vaksinasi dan pengaturan dokumen perjalanan.*

Sir, we are here to ensure that you are physically and mentally prepared to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. This year's departure for Hajj is scheduled for July 10th. Before the departure, you will attend a briefing regarding the procedures for performing Hajj and other preparations, such as vaccination and travel document arrangements.

Customer : *Terima kasih atas penjelasannya. Apa saja dokumen yang perlu saya pastikan sudah lengkap sebelum keberangkatan?*

Thank you for the explanation. What documents do I need to make sure are complete before departure?

Officer : *Untuk keberangkatan, Bapak harus memastikan beberapa dokumen berikut: paspor, visa haji, tiket penerbangan, serta bukti vaksinasi meningitis. Kami juga akan memeriksa seluruh dokumen Bapak pada sesi verifikasi beberapa hari sebelum keberangkatan. Jika ada dokumen yang kurang atau belum lengkap, mohon segera melengkapinya*

For departure, you need to ensure that the following documents are complete: passport, Hajj visa, flight ticket, and proof of meningitis vaccination. We will also check all your documents during the verification session a few days before departure. If any documents are missing or incomplete, please make sure to complete them as soon as possible.

Empathy and support are demonstrated by the staff through thoughtful and caring expressions such as, 'We are here to ensure that you are physically and mentally prepared to perform the Hajj pilgrimage' and 'We wish the best for you and your family.' These phrases do more than just provide information; they also help to build a personal and compassionate relationship between the staff and the pilgrims. By showing genuine concern for the pilgrims' well-being, the staff not only addresses their practical needs but also offers emotional support, which is crucial for creating a positive and supportive environment during the preparation process.

Such expressions of empathy go a long way in making the pilgrims feel valued and understood. By acknowledging both the physical and emotional aspects of the Hajj journey, the staff fosters a sense of connection and trust. These thoughtful interactions are essential in helping the pilgrims feel more confident and reassured, knowing that they are not only receiving logistical assistance but also the emotional encouragement they need to embark on such a significant spiritual journey.

Data 5

Officer : *Bapak. Briefing ini sangat penting untuk memastikan Bapak memahami semua prosedur, aturan yang berlaku di Tanah Suci, serta hal-hal yang harus diperhatikan selama pelaksanaan ibadah haji. Kami mengadakan briefing dua kali, yaitu satu minggu sebelum keberangkatan dan satu hari sebelum keberangkatan. Kami sangat menyarankan Bapak untuk hadir pada keduanya.*

- Sir, this briefing is very important to ensure that you understand all the procedures, rules that apply in the Holy Land, as well as the things to pay attention to during the Hajj pilgrimage. We will hold two briefings: one week before departure and one day before departure. We strongly recommend that you attend both.
- Customer : *Baik, Ibu, saya akan datang. Terima kasih atas semua informasi yang diberikan. Saya merasa lebih siap sekarang.*
- Alright, Ma'am, I will attend. Thank you for all the information provided. I feel more prepared now.
- Officer : *Sama-sama, Bapak. Kami senang bisa membantu. Semoga ibadah haji Bapak berjalan lancar dan diterima oleh Allah SWT. Jangan ragu untuk datang kembali jika ada pertanyaan lebih lanjut. Kami siap membantu kapan saja.*
- You're welcome, Sir. We are happy to help. We hope your Hajj pilgrimage goes smoothly and is accepted by Allah SWT. Don't hesitate to come back if you have any further questions. We are ready to assist you at any time.

The use of motivating language plays an important role in encouraging the pilgrims to engage wholeheartedly in the Hajj preparation process. Phrases such as 'We hope your Hajj journey goes smoothly and is accepted by Allah SWT' and 'We highly recommend that you attend both sessions' contain positive motivational elements. These expressions inspire the pilgrims to follow all the procedures with enthusiasm and dedication. By offering words of encouragement, the staff fosters a spirit of commitment and readiness, ensuring that the pilgrims are not only well-prepared but also mentally and spiritually motivated for the pilgrimage.

This conversation highlights how the use of clear, polite, empathetic, and supportive language can greatly enhance the ethics of service in the context of the Hajj. The staff's ability to communicate effectively and with respect creates an atmosphere of trust and professionalism. By delivering information in a manner that is both clear and considerate, the staff ensures that the pilgrims feel valued, while also helping them navigate the necessary steps to prepare for such an important spiritual journey. This approach emphasizes the importance of communication in making sure that the pilgrims feel comfortable and well-informed.

The staff at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Makassar have shown exemplary service by providing information in a professional and respectful manner, creating a safe and welcoming environment for the pilgrims. Through their attention to both the logistical and emotional aspects of the preparation process, they ensure that the pilgrims understand and are ready for their Hajj. This thoughtful approach not only enhances the quality of service but also fosters a deeper sense of respect and trust between the staff and the pilgrims, making the entire preparation process smoother and more fulfilling.

3.2 Characteristics of language use in public service

Based on the previous data, the language used in public service is characterized by several key elements: clarity, politeness, empathy, motivational encouragement, and openness to participation. Clear and transparent communication is essential in ensuring that service recipients fully understand the procedures and requirements involved. By providing straightforward explanations, the service minimizes confusion and ensures that the process runs smoothly. This is particularly important in settings like public services, where understanding and following protocols are vital to a successful outcome.

Polite and formal language is another crucial characteristic. Common phrases such as "Good morning," "Thank you," and "Please feel free to ask" are used to establish professionalism and create a respectful, comfortable environment. This formality not only reflects the professionalism of the service but also makes individuals feel valued and respected. By maintaining a courteous tone, public servants ensure that the service recipients have a positive experience and are more likely to engage cooperatively throughout the process.

Empathy plays a significant role in public service language. Expressions like "We wish the best for you and your family" or "We are here to ensure that you are physically and mentally prepared for the Hajj pilgrimage" highlight a genuine emotional connection and support for service recipients. These empathetic statements go beyond simply providing information—they convey care and understanding, helping to create a personal and supportive atmosphere. This makes recipients feel that their well-being is prioritized and fosters trust and rapport between the staff and the public.

In addition to empathy, motivational language is frequently employed in public service. Phrases like "We highly recommend that you attend both sessions" inspire action and encourage individuals to follow through with necessary steps. Motivational language serves as a reminder of the importance of participation and commitment, helping service recipients approach their tasks with enthusiasm and determination. By incorporating motivational phrases, the staff promotes an active role for individuals in the service process, ensuring they remain engaged and proactive.

An openness to participation is also a defining characteristic of language used in public service. Service recipients are often invited to ask questions or seek clarification if needed. This open communication ensures that individuals feel comfortable expressing their concerns and guarantees that no issues are left unaddressed. It promotes a sense of equality and involvement, allowing service recipients to feel that their opinions are valued and that they are integral to the process.

Overall, these characteristics—clarity, politeness, empathy, motivational encouragement, and openness to participation—work together to create a positive, supportive, and efficient public service experience. Empathy and motivation stand out as dominant characteristics, as they foster personal connections and encourage active engagement from the service recipients. By combining these elements, public service language not only provides clear and professional communication but also nurtures a respectful, supportive, and encouraging environment for all involved.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the language used in public service plays a crucial role in creating a positive and effective experience for service recipients. By incorporating clarity, politeness, empathy, motivational encouragement, and openness to participation, public servants can ensure that individuals feel informed, respected, supported, and motivated throughout their interactions. Empathy and motivational language, in particular, are key to building personal connections and encouraging active engagement, which fosters trust and cooperation. Together, these elements contribute to a seamless, respectful, and empowering service experience, enhancing the overall quality of public service and strengthening the relationship between the service provider and the public. Furthermore, the careful use of language in public service not only improves the immediate experience for service recipients but also contributes to a broader culture of respect and professionalism within the community. When public servants consistently use clear, polite, and empathetic language, they set a standard for communication that helps build trust in the institution as a whole. This positive interaction encourages individuals to feel more confident in the services provided and more willing to engage with public institutions in the future. Ultimately, the thoughtful application of language enhances not only the efficiency of public services but also the overall relationship between the government and the people it serves.

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