An Appraisal of the Legality of Translating Jumu’ah Khutbah in Nigeria

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Abstract: An Appraisal of the Legality of Translating Jumu’ah Khutbah in Nigeria. Khutbah is one of the stipulated conditions that distinguish the Jumu’ah prayer from other obligatory five ritual daily prayers. By the time Islam spread to what is now known as Nigeria, the Khutbah used to be rendered in Arabic without any attempt to translate it to any local language. However, over time, the population of Muslims continues to increase. As a result, there are agitations and counter-agitation on the need to either translate the khutbah into a local language or to render it in a vernacular. The issue of legality comes in as a means of justifying either of the duo agitations. The objective of this research paper is to examine the legality or otherwise of translating the khutbah, especially in a country like Nigeria where a section of the Muslims who observe their Jumu’ah prayer could not comprehend the language in which the khutbah is being delivered. The method adopted in the research is based on both participatory and non-participatory observations. The result of the research reveals that the khutbah can be legally translated considering the large population of worshippers who could not comprehend the language of communication i.e. Arabic. By extension, the khutbah of religious festivals such as Idul-Fitr and Idul-Adha be translated too. Similarly, ceremonial events where Khutbah is rendered in Arabic should also be translated. All these will afford the larger number of the congregation not only to be exposed to the stand and teachings of Islam on current issues but will also enable them to appreciate the teachings of Islam.

Keywords: Jumu’ah, khutbah, legality, Islam in Nigeria, translation of khutbah.

Abstrak: Khutbah merupakan salah satu syarat yang membedakan salat Jum’at dengan salat wajib lima waktu lainnya. Pada saat Islam menyebar ke tempat yang sekarang dikenal sebagai Nigeria, khutbah digunakan dalam bahasa Arab tanpa usaha untuk menerjemahkannya ke bahasa lokal mana pun. Namun, seiring berjalan waktu, populasi umat Islam terus meningkat. Akibatnya, ada agitasi dan kontra-agitasi tentang perlunya menerjemahkan khutbah ke dalam bahasa daerah atau menerjemahkannya ke dalam bahasa daerah. Isu legalitas masuk sebagai alat pembenaran salah satu dari duo agitasi tersebut. Tujuan dari artikel penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji legalitas atau tidaknya penerjemahan khutbah khususnya di negara seperti Nigeria di mana sebagian umat Islam yang melaksanakan salat Jum’at tidak dapat memahami bahasa yang digunakan dalam khutbah tersebut. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini didasarkan pada observasi partisipatif dan non-partisipatif. Hasil akhir penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa khutbah dapat diterjemahkan secara legal mengingat sebagian besar jamaah yang tidak dapat memahami bahasa komunikasi yaitu bahasa Arab. Secara ekstensif, khutbah hari raya keagamaan seperti Idul Fitri dan Idul Adha diterjemahkan...
Introduction

Khutbah can be considered one of the perquisites of Friday (Jumu‘ah) prayers. It has continued to receive adequate attention from Islamic scholars from time immemorial. As a point of fact, many Muslim jurists have written volumes of works on different aspects of Islamic rituals such as the Jumu‘ah prayer. Hardly could one find a book on Islamic jurisprudence without coming across one where the Jumu‘ah prayer is extensively discussed. In the same vein, almost all matters related to the Jumu‘ah prayer especially Jumu‘ah khutbah are not left out undiscussed. Islam is a living religion where concurrent issues are always discussed and solutions are provided for emerging problematic issues. One issue is the agitation to either render Jumu‘ah khutbah in the language of the people of the community or to translate it into the language properly understood by a large number of the community. Sequel to the agitation, the matter of translation of the khutbah turned into a topic of debate between two contending groups, each of the groups attempting to justify its stand as legal while that of opponents is perceived as illegal. Perhaps, the situation of thing motivated some scholars especially those earlier referred to, to have made one statement or another on the topic. The matter is a global phenomenon, Nigeria as a country cannot be exclusive. The problem seems to be more pronounced in the country due to many reasons. For instance, the country is of a population of more than two hundred million people of different cultural backgrounds with almost

two hundred tribes and different backgrounds of knowledge of the Arabic language and exposition to Islam. All these summed up makes the debate to be interesting in Nigeria.

Considering Nigeria as a developing state and Islam as a living religion, relevant to all ages and spaces, all these calls for continuous research on any Islamic rituals. It is on record that in 1998 an academic paper entitled "An Examination of the Legality of Translating Jumu‘ah khutbah" was published in a journal.² Since then, till the year 2020, many developments have taken place, a situation that necessitates the review or otherwise of the previous research works.

Whatever may be status and the findings of the early research work, there is no blame if the topic is re-visited in line with the current trend. With that, one will be able to project the true nature of Islam as a living, universal, and ever-relevant religion irrespective of time and space. Added to that, the view of some of the agitators of translating Jum‘uah khutbah in Nigeria ought to come to the limelight.

**Islam in Nigeria**

Nigeria is believed to be the most populous country in Africa, it falls within West Africa Region. It has a long history as was made up of different kingdoms, various empires as well as city-states among many others. It was the 1914 amalgamation of both Northern and Southern protectorates that resulted in Nigeria as a country and was placed under the governorship of Sir Frederick Lugard. The name of the country Nigeria was suggested in 1902 by Flora shaw a then-proposed wife of Lugard.³

Islam is suggested to have spread to the then Kanem-Borno empire by the Eleventh century of the Christian Era when in 108 CE, Mai (king) of Kanem called Umme Jilmi embraced Islam through an itinerant

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Islamic scholar called Muhammed ibn Mani.⁴ Some other scholars have suggested an earlier date,⁵ whichever date is considered to be the time when Islam penetrated the Kanem-Borno empire, the fact remains that Islam has a long history in present-day Nigeria. In other parts of the country, like the Hausa state, history had it that the penetration of Islam to the area is traced back to the early part of the fourteenth century. For instance, it is on record that Islam was effectively introduced to Kano during the reign of one of its kings called Ali Yaji Dan Tsamiya (1349-85CE) when some Wangarawa scholars numbering forty from Mali Republic in the present West-Africa Region introduced Islam to the king,⁶ through him, the religion spread to other parts of Hausa land. In Yoruba land, different suggestions were made at the time when Islam penetrated the area. Fajana and Biggs suggest the end of the eighteen century as the time when Islam was introduced to Yoruba land.⁷ The same date was suggested by Samuel Johnson.⁸ While Abdurrahman Doi calculates the date to be around the sixteenth century citing a Timbuktu Muslim scholar, Ahmad Baba who died in 1610CE to have observed the existence of Islam in Yoruba land when he wrote his book.⁹ Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori suggests the fourteenth century basing his submission on the role of Al-hajj Mansa Musa of Mali (d 1337 CE), stating that during his lifetime, Islam penetrated Yoruba land.¹⁰ Olayiwola also cites Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori to suggest the fourteenth century.¹¹ Whichever the date of Islam’s penetration into Yoruba, all these various suggestions confirm that Islam has been in present-day Nigeria for a long period.

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¹¹ Olayiwola, 15.
Since then, all rituals of the religion have been observed as stipulated by Islam. One such is the Jumu‘ah prayer.

**Jumu‘ah Prayer**

This is one of the stipulated obligatory rituals of Islam, which has been observed by Nigerian Muslims like their counterparts from other parts of the world since time immemorial following its pre-requisite conditions. Jumu‘ah prayer is the congregational prayer that Muslims living in the same locality offer in a larger mosque in the early period of the afternoon on Friday. The prayer attracts a larger congregation compared to the other five ritual daily prayers in different mosques. It was institutionalized when prophet Muhammad (SAW) was still in Makkah before his Hijrah to Madinah but it was not observed there, the prophet however directed one of his companions, Ma‘shab bn Umayr, who had earlier been sent to Madinah to be teaching the Muslims their religious matter, to perform the Jumu‘ah prayer together with the Muslims in the congregation. The number of the congregation that took part in the prayer was given at twelve Muslims. That notwithstanding, the first Jumu‘ah prayer offered by the prophet took place in Madinah after the prophet’s hijrah from Makkah to Madinah in the year 622 CE. It took place at the house of Banu Salim bin Awf. The prayer was institutionalized with a Divine directive in Qur’an 62 verse 9. It reads thus:

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\text{O, believers! When the call to prayer is made on Friday, then proceed diligently to the remembrance of God and leave off business. That is best for you if only you knew.} \]

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13 Ismail, 225.
15 Mustafa Khattab, The Clear Qur’an: A Thematic English Translation of the Message of
The Jumu’ah prayer has certain rules and regulations which are mandatory for its observance in addition to the general rules governing other obligatory prayers. Such rules affect both the validity and perfection of the Jumu’ah prayer. The rules include the following:

(i) Congregation
(ii) Place of worship
(iii) Imam to lead the congregation
(iv) Time (period of prayer) and
(v) Khutbah (Jumu’ah sermon)

The first four items mentioned above are beyond the scope of the present research work although they are somehow related to it. However, the scope of this research paper will be limited to khutbah.

Khutbah

The word khutbah is from the Arabic root word, khataba meaning “to make or deliver a speech.” The word khutbah is translated as speech or address. The art of khutbah has been part of the Arab’s life since the period of Jâhiliyyah (the pre-Islamic era of the Arabs). History had it that the Arabs, especially during the Jâhiliyyah period were identified as orators as they attached great importance to the art of khutbah and it formed part of their culture. It was even manifested in their political, religious as well as legal affairs. Furthermore, through it, the socio-political status of a community is elevated in society. Added to that, the Arabs used the khutbah to boast of their lineage (Manâfirah), as it was also used to mark the deputation of a tribal group to a place.

By the time Islam was finally introduced into the Arabia peninsula around 610 CE, the art of khutbah was retained as one of the aspects of the new religion but with certain modifications. Sequel to that, khutbah

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18 al-Askandariyyah and others, 87.
was introduced as part of religious rituals where it is mandated to be given and delivered to the congregation. Typical examples are at the two *id* festivals, i.e. *Id al-Fitr* and ‘*Id al-Adhâ*, and during particular occasions when religious services such as the eclipse of the sun or that of the moon are taking place *khutbah* also delivered as a result of excessive drought, during the marriage ceremony, after the completion of the recitation of the Glorious Qur’an as well as during *Jumu‘ah* prayer. All those mentioned above with exception of the *Jumu‘ah* prayer are not within the scope of this research paper.

**Delivering Jumu‘ah Khutbah in Nigeria**

Rendering of *khutbah* before the observance of the *Jumu‘ah* prayer is a prerequisite for the validity of such prayer. It has been observed that the rendering of such *khutbah* has continued to take different dimensions among different groups in Nigeria. It ought to be explained that by the time Islam spread to the country of Nigeria, *khutbah* especially that of *Jumu‘ah* had been rendered in Arabic without any translation. It was at a later time that the agitation for its translation came up and different reasons were advanced for such agitation. In response to the agitation, the *khutbah* has been rendered in multifarious manners, depending on what is prevailing in a particular geographical location.

In the Northern parts of the country, the *Jumu‘ah khutbah* is rendered in the major Central Mosques in Arabic without any translation. In some other places in Nigeria, the *khutbah* is delivered in Arabic and later translated into vernacular by Imam himself during the second part of the *khutbah*. This is common in some Muslim societal Central Mosques such as Tijaniyyah Central Mosque in Ilorin and *Ansar-ud-deen* Society at its Ilorin branch. In some mosques, both *khutbah* and its translation are delivered simultaneously. Typical examples are central mosques owned by Muslim Organizations in the Southern parts of Nigeria. In some mosques, *Jumu‘ah khutbah* is rendered in English and translated into vernacular simultaneously. This is the case in the University of Ilorin and

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some institutions of higher learning in the Southern states of Nigeria. It is observed that in some places, the translation of Jumu‘ah khutbah is made after the observance of the Jumu‘ah prayer. Typical reference is made to Bayero University Kano as well as Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin among many others.\(^{20}\)

However, it is worth noting that in these institutions, the translation is nowadays been given simultaneously during the khutbah. The art of translating khutbah, before or after the observance of the Jumu‘ah prayer is faulty because it does not satisfy the rules governing Khutbah.\(^{21}\) Despite that, the translation of Jumu‘ah khutbah continues to attract the attention of the public, especially scholars.

**Translation of Jumu‘ah Khutbah**

It is apparent from what we have mentioned so far that the issue of Khutbah al-Jumu‘ah has generated a lot of controversies among scholars. Perhaps what led to that is the fact that neither the term khutbah nor its verbal form khataba in their technical connotation occur in the Glorious Qur’an, not even in the verse that institutionalized Jumu‘ah prayer.\(^{22}\) This silence, however, paved the way for the emergence of divergent opinions on the status of the khutbah. For instance, some scholars are of the view that delivery of khutbah is a pre-requisite for the validity of the Jumu‘ah prayer while others hold the view that it is a constituent part of the prayer, adding that, its essence is to serve as guidance and enlightenment.\(^{23}\) Meanwhile, the view of the majority of scholars is that it is a compulsory aspect of prayer.\(^{24}\)

That notwithstanding, the essence of khutbah may be appreciated better, if one considers the fact that at the on-set, the khutbah used to be

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\(^{20}\) Solagberu, 132.


\(^{24}\) al-Qurtabi.
preceded by the *Jumu‘ah* prayer till the time when a caravan containing goods was brought to Madinah during the *Jumu‘ah* period, on noticing the arrival of the Caravan, people deserted the prophet and left for business, then verse eleven (11), chapter 62 of the Glorious Qur’an was revealed on the issue and since then the position of *khutbah* changed i.e. it then began to be rendered before the *Jumu‘ah* prayer. The combined effect of this incident indicates that whenever the *khutbah* is being delivered by the *Imam* certainly he is communicating with the congregation, therefore the audience should be given to him, without anyone talking to another person, rather, he should be given full attention otherwise one is prone to be a sinner. This is related to a prophetic tradition that guides Muslim worshipers to that effect. "……the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said "If you say to the man who is sitting next to you. Be quiet on Friday, while the *Imam* is delivering the *khutbah* you would sin".

Nevertheless, it is on record that when prophet Muhammad (SAW) was delivering *Jumu‘ah* *khutbah*, one of his companions entered the mosque, and the prophet permitted him to perform two rak‘at. This does not negate the established order of giving the *Imam* one’s full attention, rather, it can be seen to have straightened it, considering the limitation of rak‘ah to be offered to only two rak‘at is to enable the person to pay attention to the *khutbah* of the *Imam* and consequently benefit from it. Added to that, it can be seen to have confirmed the fact that the essence of the *khutbah* is for the congregation to be attentive and listen to the *khutbah* since the *Imam* is expected to base his *khutbah* on what would be of benefit to the Muslim community.

However, it was discovered that in some localities in Nigeria, the *khutbah* has not been allowed to perform its expected function of educating the members of the congregation, because it has been delivered

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in the Arabic language to a large congregation, the majority of whom could not understand Arabic. In that respect, Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori (d. 1992) observes that the majority of the "illiterate" worshippers consider every aspect of the khutbah as prayer and would echo âmin (amen) at the end of every sentence of the Imam even where the sentence does not warrant the saying of âmin.\(^{29}\) As a result of the above-stated situation, some concerned Muslims in Nigeria called for a change of attitude in the mode of rendering Khutbah al-Jumu‘ah. In response to the call, some Islamic Associations in the country such as Nawâirudeen and Zumratul-hujjaj among others decided to be rendering the Jumu‘ah Khutbah in vernacular but to retain Qur’anic verses and Hadith of the prophet in Arabic. Some other Islamic Associations rendered the khutbah in Arabic and translate it simultaneously into vernacular.\(^{30}\) Having stated the background of the translation of the khutbah, we may now consider its legality or otherwise.

**The Legal View on Khutbah**

Having explained the people's inclinations toward the different methods and manner of delivering Khutbah al-Jumu‘ah, one needs to outline the legal view on Jumu‘ah Khutbah. It is a fact that the majority of the orthodox jurists of the Malik school of law seem to have toed an identical line on the issue. For instance, al-Âbi al-Azharî in his work entitled “Jawahiru-l-iklil, a commentary on Mukhtasar Khalil of Shaykh Khalil ibn Is-hâq opines that Jumu‘ah Khutbah should be delivered in Arabic even if the audience is non-Arabs.\(^{31}\) The same jurist in another work of his work called al-Thamud-Dâni fi Taqrib al-Ma’âni, a commentary on Risâlatu Abî Zayd al-Qayrawânti, considers rendering of Jumu‘ah Khutbah in any language other than Arabic as a blinder and a nugatory he states further that any community that lacks a qualified Imam who could

\(^{29}\) al-Ilorî, Nasîmus-Sibâ Fi Akhbâr al-Islâm Wa ‘Ulamâ Bilâd Yorubâ, 127.

\(^{30}\) al-Ilorî, Nasîmus-Sibâ Fi Akhbâr al-Islâm Wa ‘Ulamâ Bilâd Yorubâ.

render the *khutbah* in Arabic is excused from offering *Jumu‘ah* prayer.\(^{32}\) This view is shared by another jurist person of Muhammad ’Arafah Ad-Dasuqi in his work entitled: *Hâshiyat al-Dasuqi ‘alà al-Shahi al-Kabîr*, according to him, any locality which does not have a competent Imam who could deliver the *khutbah* in Arabic should be exempted from offering *Jumu‘ah* prayer.\(^{33}\) This view is also upheld by al-Adawi in his work named; *Hâshiyat al-Adawi ‘alà Sharh Abî Hassan li-Risalah ibn Abî Zayd Kifâyat al-Talib al-Rabâni*.\(^{34}\) Based on the above juristic views, it appears that *Jumu‘ah Khutbah* must be rendered in Arabic, otherwise, the prayer is invalid and imperfect.

Nevertheless, there are some jurists, especially modern scholars such as Maulana Muhammad Ali, who express contrary views. According to them, the *Jumu‘ah Khutbah* ought to be delivered in a language understood by the congregation.\(^{35}\) Muhammad Ali explains further that, the essence of the *khutbah* is meant to advise and guide the people, while the congregation ought to know what the *Imam* would to talking about in the *khutbah*. Therefore, there is no sense in delivering *khutbah* in Arabic to a non-Arab audience.\(^{36}\) Another modern Islamic scholar, Professor Abdur-Rahman Doi, in one of his works named, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam* asserts that delivering the *Jumu‘ah Khutbah* in Arabic to non-Arabs defeats the main purpose of the *khutbah*.\(^{37}\)

Moreover, the views of the modern scholars have the support of the other three leading Imams, Abû Hanifah (699-767 CE), Ash-Shafi (767-82016), and Ahmad ibn Hanbali (780-857 CE). For instance, the Hanafi school of law approves the delivery of the *khutbah* in any language of


\(^{34}\) Shaykh Aliy Assa’îdi al-Adawi, *Hashiyat al-Adawi ‘alà Sharh Abî Hasan Lirâlat Abî Zayd Volume 1* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, t.t.).


\(^{36}\) Ali.

the majority of the congregation other than Arabic, even if the Imam is capable of delivering it in Arabic. In the school of Imam Hanbali, it is stipulated that the khutbah ought to be delivered in Arabic on condition that the Imam is capable of doing so, otherwise, he is allowed to render it in a language he understands better. The legal viewpoint of the Shâfî’i school of law is stated that the khutbah should be delivered in Arabic if the congregation is made up of Arabic speakers, but if they are not, then, the khutbah may be delivered in any language even if the Imam is capable of communicating in Arabic. Imam ’Uthaymayn along with the three schools of law favors the translation of Arabic khutbah into other languages but stipulated that any Qur’anic verse in the course of khutbah be rendered in Arabic.

The foregoing discussion on the legal aspects of delivering the Jumu’ah Khutbah has exposed us to two major opposing views i.e. rendering the khutbah in Arabic or any other language. This gives room for the emergence of a middle course. That is to merge Arabic with the other language which results in the translation of the khutbah whereby both Arabic and another language would be entertained. Based on that, we, therefore, need to appraise the news.

**Appraisal of the Legal Views on Khutbah**

In an attempt to review the legal views on Jumu’ah Khutbah, certain things are to be put into consideration they are the perspectives through which the Jumu’ah Khutbah can be an appraisal. These are:

(i) Theoretical aspect
(ii) Educational aspect
(iii) Environmental aspect and
(iv) Socio-religious aspect

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38 al-Juzayri, 391.
39 al-Juzayri.
40 al-Juzayri.
41 al-Juzayri.

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All these aspects have some influences on the mode and manner of rendering *khutbah*.

(i) Theoretical Aspect. This aspect deals with the stipulated conditions of *Jumu‘ah Khutbah*. It has to be pointed out that there are divergent views on the status of *khutbah*, while some scholars consider it obligatory and a pre-requisite for *Jumu‘ah* prayer. Some other scholars consider it as a condition for the perfection of the *Jumu‘ah* prayer. Whatever may be the legal status of the *khutbah*. It is stipulated that the *khutbah* should comprise of celebration praises to Allah, seeking Allah’s blessing for the Noble prophet, Muhammed (SAW), making a bequest on the importance of piety and righteousness for the Muslim *Ummah*, recitation of Qur’anic verses, giving warning, glad tiding and admonition to the Muslims as well as offering supplications for the believers. Added to that, is the language of communication. This varies from one school of thought to another, while some schools of law mandated the Arabic language as a medium of delivering *khutbah*, some others give concession to any language as stated earlier. All these summed up suggest that the *Jumu‘ah Khutbah* is a religious duty that has rules and regulations as well as conditions governing it. Therefore it has to be studied and analyzed along with other aspects like education.

(ii) Educational Aspect. This aspect deals with the educational aspect of Islam. It is a known fact, that Islam always encourages its adherent to acquiring learning. Based on that, one will not fail to discover that a large portion of the Glorious Qur’an as well as prophetic tradition is on educational instruction. Qur’an in chapter 62 verse 2 makes it clear that the purpose of Divine religions is educational.

As the verse reads thus:

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43 Ismail, 230.
46 Ezzah.
It is He who has sent among the unlettered. A messenger from themselves, to rehearse to them His signs to sanctify them, and to instruct them in scripture and wisdom-although they had been, before in manifest error.\(^{47}\)

The above facts imply that *Jumu’ah* should be regarded as a *madrasah* academic center while the *khutbah* ought to be perceived as educational instruction. Perhaps this accounted for the reason why some scholars interpret *Jumu’ah Khutbah* as a weekly Islamic Educational Class.\(^{48}\) In that respect, education has to be recognized as a feature of *Jumu’ah Khutbah* indicating that whenever the *Imam* is delivering the *Khutbah* he should bear in mind that he is educating the congregation.

(iii) Environmental Aspect. This is another aspect that influences the view and inclination of the scholars on the mode and manner of rendering *Jumu’ah Khutbah*. For instance, Imam Malik (711 – 795 CE) was born and bred in Madinah, a city where Arabic is the major language. This informs the decision of his school of law against rendering *khutbah* in any language other than Arabic. It is based on this influence that the school stipulates that the *khutbah* should be rendered in Arabic, otherwise, the *khutbah* is invalid and of no effect.\(^{49}\)

Concerning other leading Imams who approved the rendering of the *khutbah* in any other language apart from Arabic, it must be noted that some of these *Imams* were not pure Arabs, or their schools were not fully established in Arab-dominated areas. A typical example was Imam Abu Hanifah (d. 767 CE), he was not an Arab.\(^{50}\) Similar to him was Imam Shafi’i (d. 820 CE) who was influenced by the places he either visited or settled in, such as Iraq and Egypt, though he was an Arab of Quraysh lineage.\(^{51}\) And for Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbali (d. 855 CE), apart from the geographical and linguistic influences


\(^{51}\) al-Khuduri, 156-158.
on him, the period when his school emerged also influenced him. History had it that during the period, the issue of the Qur’an is created came up, he upheld the orthodox view and was persecuted for it by the Abbasid Caliph, Ma’mun (d. 833 CE), and was released later by Caliph al-Mutawakil (d. 861 CE) who granted permission to the people to exercise their freedom. The act of the Caliph during this period opportunity for the Imam to retain his glory. All these played positive roles afforded in determining the mode of rendering khutbah as approval of the school of law.

(iv) Socio-Religious Aspect. Another important aspect to be considered in the mode of rendering the Jumu’ah Khutbah is its socio-religious influence. It ought to be brought to our understanding that the essence of any message, khutbah inclusive is the ability to deliver the message to the target audience (Tablîgh). Along the line, the universality of Islam should be considered. Islam is not a racial religion nor does it restrict itself to a particular space or a certain age. This is based on the fact that the prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent to the whole world. The prophet kick-started his propagation of Islam from Arabia using Arabic as the medium of communication because Arabic is presented in many Qur’anic verses as the language of al-Qur’an. Typical references are in Sûrah Yusuf thus: “Indeed We have sent it down as an Arabic-Qur’an. So that you may understand” (Qur’an 12:2). Also in Suratul Zumar verses 27 and 28 Allah declares thus:

“We have certainty set forth every kind of lesson for people in this Qur’an, so perhaps they will be mindful. It is a Qur’an revealed in Arabic without any crookedness, so perhaps they will be conscious of God” (Qur’an 29:27 – 8). The implication of this is that Arabic is the language of Islam, and considering the multifarious backgrounds

52 al-Khuduri, 161-162.
54 Mustapha al-Subâ‘i, al-Sunnah Wamakânatuhâ Fi al-Tashri‘i al-Islâmi (Cairo: Tnp, 1949), 442.
55 Khattab, 125.
56 Khattab, 264.
of man as stated in the Qur’ân thus:

“O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into people and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the noblest of you in the sight of God is the most righteous among you. God is truly All-knowing, All-Aware.” (Qur’ân 49:13).

Therefore with the global status of Islam, if there is a community of Muslims who could not understand Arabic if the such community is addressed in its Jumu’ah Khutbah in other languages than Arabic such a decision would have been based on a Qur’anic verse in Surat Ibrahim verse four which reads thus:

“We have not sent a messenger except in the language of his people to clarify the message for them…” (Qur’ân 14:4)

The importance of understanding a Divine messenger by his audience is so emphasized to the extent that the prophet Musa (Moses) supplicated to Allah to remove the impediment from his speech so that the people would understand what he said, he did not stop there, he requested for a helper (i.e. Hârun) so that his task would be easy. This fact is contained in chapter 20 verses 20 – 30 of the Glorious Qur’ân (Q 20:26 – 30).

The combined effect of the analysis is that the Jumu’ah Khutbah which initially used to be delivered in Arabic could be rendered in a language better understood by the audience. The view held some scholars that the Khutbah should be rendered in Arabic because it is not permitted for any worshipper to talk when the prayer is in progress, otherwise the prayer has been invalidated as stated earlier. The impression that the khutbah replaces the first two raka’ah of the Zuhr (noon) prayer, while the Jumu’ah prayer itself stands for the remaining two raka’ah, could not be taken as it does not hold water because there is no law stipulating a re-payment of any raka’ah on anyone who misses the Khutbah. In the view of ‘Uthaymayn, the khutbah should be rendered in the people’s language. In another work, ‘Uthaymayn explains further that rendering

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57 Khattab, 299.
58 Khattab, 137.
59 al-Qurtabi, 297.
60 al-‘Uthaymayn, Fatâwa Arkân Al-Islâm, 393.
it in Arabic is not a pre-requisite condition for the validity of the Khutbah, likewise, the wording of the khutbah cannot be used as a means of worshipping Allah. In that regard, Arabic should not be stipulated as a means of rendering khutbah.\(^\text{61}\)

Considering what has been discussed so far, one is given to understand that with a large number of scholars approving the delivery of Jumu‘ah Khutbah in any other language than Arabic for the non-Arabs, members of the congregation would benefit from the lessons contained in the khutbah which consequently influence their thought positively. Then the implication is that the legality of translating the khutbah into a language better understood by the community should be upheld and confirmed. (As to what extent the influence and effect of the khutbah on the public or its accurate translation are beyond the scope of this research paper).

However, one may appreciate the position of Imam Malik school of law that the Khutbah be delivered in Arabic if one realizes the fact that the school of law approves the principle of law based on "taking precaution" (Sadd-adharâh), which is believed to have been responsible for the school decision of rendering Jumu‘ah Khutbah in Arabic with the prime objective of promoting and protecting the language of al-Qur‘an and to unify the Muslim Ummah. Nevertheless, the school ought to have inclined to her principle of Mursalah (consideration for the public interest), whereby the main purpose of khutbah to the Muslim community be considered and then permit it to be delivered in the language understood by the members of the community.

**Conclusion**

It has been established in the proceeding paragraphs of this research paper that delivery of Khutbah before the observance of Jumu‘ah prayer is a pre-requisite to the prayer itself; it has also been explained that the khutbah is meant to serve a purposeful use of educating and enlightening the congregation. With this, khutbah should be made to achieve its purpose. Recognizing the fact that the legal luminaries among the early

Muslims expressed their divergent views on the mode of rendering the *khutbah* on the bases of their exposure and experience, the later generation of Muslims can marry those views together to form a new one which will be relevant to the prevailing situation in the modern age. As such, to render *khutbah al-Jumu‘ah* in Arabic and translate it simultaneously into the language understood by the majority of the congregation should hold sway. In our opinion, this submission will cater to the principle of *Sadd-adharâï*’ which Imam Malik school of law inclines to, by trying to immortalize the Arabic language and at the same time take care of *Mursalah*, that is, the interest of the generality of the Muslim worshippers.

On recommendation, one may recommend that further research be conducted on the influence and effect of *khutbah* on the congregation as well as the community as a whole. Added to that, research is also recommended on the accuracy of rendering the translation of the *khutbah* in line with how it has been presented by the Imam or otherwise.

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