

An Appraisal of the Legality of Translating *Jumu'ah Khutbah* in Nigeria

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Abstract: *Khutbah* (sermon) is one of the pillars of the Friday (*Jumu'ah*) prayer. When Islam spread to Nigeria, the Friday sermon was always delivered in Arabic. However, along with the increasing population of Muslims in the country, there is a desire among the people to translate Friday sermons into local languages so that the material presented can be fully understood by the congregation. This research examines the legality of Friday sermons delivered in local languages in Nigeria. The method used in this research is participatory and non-participatory observation methods. The final results of the research reveal that normatively Friday sermons can be delivered in any language other than Arabic. This is what has been practiced in other sermons outside the Friday sermon, such as the sermon for the *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Qurban*. In this way, it can be expected that the congregation will not only be able to understand the sermon contents being delivered but can also increase their knowledge of current issues related to Islamic teachings.

Keywords: Friday Sermon, Islamic Worship, socio-religious changes

Abstrak: *Khutbah* merupakan salah satu rukun shalat yang membedakan shalat jum'at dengan shalat-sholat lainnya. Ketika Islam menyebar ke Nigeria, khotbah Jumat selalu disampaikan dalam bahasa Arab. Namun seiring dengan perkembangan sosial dan intelektual di Negara itu, muncul keinginan di kalangan masyarakat untuk menerjemahkan khutbah Jumat ke dalam bahasa daerah agar materi yang disampaikan dapat dipahami sepenuhnya oleh jamaah. Penelitian ini mengkaji legalitas khotbah Jumat yang disampaikan dalam bahasa lokal di Nigeria. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode penelaahan literature yang dikombinasikan dengan metode observasi partisipatif dan non partisipatif. Hasil dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa secara normatif sesungguhnya khutbah Jumat dapat disampaikan dalam bahasa apa pun selain bahasa Arab. Hal ini sebagaimana yang diamalkan pada khutbah-khutbah lain di luar sholat Jumat, seperti khutbah di hari raya Idul Fitri dan Idul Qurban. Dengan demikian diharapkan jamaah tidak hanya dapat memahami isi khotbah yang disampaikan, namun juga dapat menambah pengetahuannya mengenai ajaran Islam termasuk isu-isu terkini yang berkenaan dengan kehidupan social keagamaan.

Kata kunci: *Khutbah* Jum'at, Ibadah keIslaman, Perubahan social keagamaan

Introduction

The *Khutbah* (sermon) is one of the pillars of the Friday prayer which has continued to receive sufficient attention from Islamic scholars since centuries ago. Many Muslim jurists have written numerous works on various aspects of Friday prayers and hardly anyone who comes across a book on Islamic jurisprudence does not find a chapter discussing Friday prayers. Likewise, almost everything related to Friday prayers, especially the Friday sermon, is also not spared from discussion.¹ Islam is indeed a living religion, where existing problems are always discussed and solutions to emerging problems are recorded. One of the problems is the insistence on translating Friday sermons into a non-Arab language or translating them into a local language that is well understood by the majority of the people. Continuing from this agitation, the issue of translating the sermon became a topic of debate between two warring groups, each group was trying to justify its position as legitimate while the opposing group considered it illegal. This situation, perhaps, has motivated some scholars to make one or more statements on the topic.

In Nigeria, the debate appears to be more severe for various reasons. For example, this country has a population of more than two hundred million people consisting of almost two hundred tribes with different cultural backgrounds, and different backgrounds of knowledge of Arabic and exposition to Islam. All these make the debate more interesting.

Considering that Nigeria is a developing country, and Islam is a living religion that is relevant in all times and spaces, the implementation of Islamic rituals in the country requires ongoing research. It was recorded that in 1998 an academic paper entitled "*Examination of the Validity of the Jum'ah Khutbah Translation*" was published in a journal. Since then, until 2020, many similar writings have appeared in line with the development of the existing situation, either wanting

¹ Muhammad Bakr Ismail, *Al-Fiqh Al-Wādih Minal Kitāb Was-Sunnah 'Alā Madhāhib Al-'Arbaah Volume 1* (Cairo: Dar al-Manār, 1997), 230-236; Abdur-Rahman Al-Juzayri, *Kitāb Al-Fiqh 'Alā Al-Madhāhib Al-'Arba'ah Volume 1* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), 289-299; Muhammed ibn Sālih Al-'Uthaymayn, *Fatāwa Arkān Al-Islām* (Riyadh: Dār ath-Tharyah), pp. 322-325; Muhammad Sālih al-'Uthaymain, *'Ala Zād Al- Mustaqi'a* (Cairo: Dār al-Haytham), pp. 334-344.

a review of existing legal provisions or, on the contrary, defending existing ideas.

Whatever the status and results of previous research findings, there is no harm in revisiting the topic in line with current trends. In this way, someone will be able to project the essence of Islam as a religion that is alive, universal, and always relevant regardless of space and time. Apart from that, the views of several supporters of the translation of *Jum'uah* sermons in Nigeria should also be used as material for study.

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.²

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 Islamic scholar called Muhammed ibn Mani.³ Some other scholars have suggested an earlier date,⁴ 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

² Rex Akpofure Michael Crowder, *Nigeria: A Modern History for Schools* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 17.

³ Chinedu N. Ubah, *Islam in African History* (Nigeria: Baraka Press and Publishers, 2001), p. 154.

⁴ Abdul Fattah Olayiwola, *Islam in Nigeria: One Crescent Many Focuses* (Kaduna Baraka Press and Publishers Limited, 2014), p. 11.

(1349-85CE) when some Wangarawa scholars numbering forty from Mali Republic in the present West-Africa Region introduced Islam to the king,⁵ 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 eighteenth century as the time when Islam was introduced to Yoruba land.⁶ The same date was suggested by Samuel Johnson.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.⁹ Olayiwola also cites Adam Abdullahi al-Ilori to suggest the fourteenth century¹⁰ 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. 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

⁵ J. A. Burdon, *Northern Nigeria: Historical Notes on Certain Emirates and Tribes*. (London: Waterlow & Son Limited, 1972), p. 24.

⁶ Adewunmi Fajana and B. J. Biggs, *Nigeria in History* (Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Limited, 1976), p. 178.

⁷ Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos: C.S.S. Limited, 2001), p. 26.

⁸ Abdur-Rahman I. Doi, *Islam in Nigeria* (Zaria: Nigeria Gaskiya Corp Nation, 1984), p. 109.

⁹ Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilori, *Islâm Fî Najjiriyâ Wa al-Shaykh Uthman Bi Fûdi al-Fulâni* (Cairo, 1971), p. 33.

¹⁰ Olayiwola, p. 15.

five ritual daily prayers in different mosques.¹¹ 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, *Mascab 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.¹² 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*.¹³ The prayer was institutionalized with a Divine directive in Qur'an 62 verse 9. It reads thus:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ
اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۗ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

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."¹⁴

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)

¹¹ Abdur-Rahman I. Doi, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam* (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1978), p. 113.

¹² Ismail, p. 225.

¹³ Muhammad Bik al-Adari, *Nur al-Yaqin Fi Sirah Sayyid al-Mursalin* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.t.), p. 89. Ismail, p. 224.

¹⁴ Mustafa Khattab, *The Clear Qur'an: A Thematic English Translation of the Message of the Final Revelation* (USA: Book of Signs Foundation, 2016), p. 324.

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* (sermon)**

The word *khutbah* is from the Arabic root word, *khataba* meaning “to make or deliver a speech”.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

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* 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.

¹⁵ Elias, *The Dictionary, Arabic/English* (New Delhi: Taj Company, 1986), p. 114.

¹⁶ Ahmad al-Askandariyyah and others, *al-Mufasssal Fi Tarikh al-Adab al-'Arabi Volume 1* (Cairo: Wazirah al-Mucarif, t.t.), p. 40.

¹⁷ al-Askandariyyah and others, p. 87.

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.¹⁸ 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 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.¹⁹

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*.²⁰ Despite

¹⁸ al-Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah Volume 1* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1977), p. 260.

¹⁹ Solagberu, p. 132.

²⁰ Adam Abdullahi Al-Ilori, *Nasimus-Sibâ Fi Akhbâr al-Islâm Wa 'Ulamâ Bilâd Yorubâ*

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.²¹ 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.²² Meanwhile, the view of the majority of scholars is that it is a compulsory aspect of prayer.²³

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 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.²⁴ 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

(Cairo: Maktabatul-al-Adâb wal matba'atuha, 1986), p. 127.

²¹ Muhammad Fuâd Abdul Bâqi, *al-Muujam al-Mufharis Li al-Fâdh al-Qur'anul-Karim* (Cairo: Dâr al-Hadith, 2001), p. 37.

²² Imam Ibn Rushd Al-Qurtabi, *Bidâyat al-Mujtahid Wanihâyat al-Muqtasid Volume 1* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, 2002), p. 297.

²³ al-Qurtabi.

²⁴ Imam Ismail Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir Volume IV* (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1987), 367.

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".²⁵

Nevertheless, it is on record that when prophet Muhammad (SAW) was delivering *Khutbah al-Jumu'ah*, one of his companions entered the mosque, and the prophet permitted him to perform two rak'at.²⁶ 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.²⁷

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 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*.²⁸ 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

²⁵ Musa. O.A. Abdul, *Islam as a Religion (Faith and Duties)* (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1986), p. 54.

²⁶ E. J. Brill, *First Encyclopedia of Islam 1913 – 1936 Volume IV* (New York, 1987), p. 81. Al-Hâfiz Zakiuddin Abdul-Azim al-Mundhiri, *Translation of the Meaning of Summarized Sahih Muslim, Arabic-English* (Riyadh: Darus-Salam Publishers and Distributors), p. 244.

²⁷ Abdul, p. 54.

²⁸ al-Ilori, *Nasimus-Sibâ Fi Akhbâr al-Islâm Wa 'Ulamâ Bilâd Yorubâ*, p. 127.

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.²⁹ 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-Azhari* 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.³⁰ 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-Qayrawânî*, 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 render the *khutbah* in Arabic is excused from offering *Jumu'ah* prayer.³¹ This view is shared by another jurist person of Muhammad 'Arafah Ad-Dasûqi in his work entitled: *Hâshiyat al-Dasûqi 'alâ 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.³² This view is also upheld by al-Adawi in his work named; *Hâshiyat al-Adawi 'alâ Sharh Abî Hassan li-Risalah ibn Abî Zayd Kifâyat al-Talib al-Rabâni*.³³ Based on the above juristic views, it appears that *Jumu'ah Khutbah* must be rendered in Arabic, otherwise, the prayer is invalid and imperfect.

²⁹ al-Ilorî, *Nasimus-Sibâ Fi Akhbâr al-Islâm Wa 'Ulamâ Bilâd Yorubâ*.

³⁰ Salih Abdus-Sami al-Âbi al-Azhari, *Jawâhir al-Iklil Sharh Mukhtasar al-'Alâmah Shaykh Khalil Fi Madhhab al-Imam Malik Volume 1* (Kano: Ahmad Abu Said Wa'Uthman Tayyib), p. 234.

³¹ Salih Abdus-Sami al-Âbi al-Azhari, *al-Thamaru al-Dâni Fi Taqrib al-Ma'âni Sharh Risalat Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, t.t.), p. 234.

³² Muhammad 'Arafah al-Dasûqi, *Hâshiyah al-Dasûqi Alâ al-Sharh al-Kabir Volume 1* (Cairo: Ihyâu al-Kutub al-'Arabiyah, t.t.), p. 378.

³³ Shaykh Aliy Assa'sidi al-Adawi, *Hashiyat al-Adawi 'alâ Sharh Abi Hasan Lirâlat Abi Zayd Volume 1* (Cairo: Dâr al-Fikr, t.t.), p. 98.

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.³⁴ 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 be talking about in the *khutbah*. Therefore, there is no sense in delivering *khutbah* in Arabic to a non-Arab audience.³⁵ 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*.³⁶

Moreover, the views of the modern scholars have the support of the other three leading Imams, Abû Hanifah (699-767 CE), Ash-Shafi (767-820 CE), and Ahmad ibn Hanbali (780-857 CE). For instance, the Hanafi school of law approves the delivery of the *khutbah* in any language of the majority of the congregation other than Arabic, even if the *Imam* is capable of delivering it in Arabic.³⁷ 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.³⁸ The legal viewpoint of the Shâfi'i school of law is stated that the *khutbah* should be delivered in Arabic if the congregation is made up of Arabic speakers,³⁹ but if they are not, then, the *khutbah* may be delivered in any language even if the *Imam* is capable of communicating in Arabic.⁴⁰ *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.⁴¹

³⁴ Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam. A Comprehensive Discussion of the Sources, Principles, and Practices of Islam* (Lahive: the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishâ'at Islam, 1973), p. 358.

³⁵ Ali.

³⁶ Doi, *The Cardinal Principles of Islam*, 114.

³⁷ al-Juzayri, p. 391.

³⁸ al-Juzayri.

³⁹ al-Juzayri.

⁴⁰ al-Juzayri.

⁴¹ Muhammed ibn Sâlih al-'Uthaymayn, *Sharh al-Mumtiu 'Alâ Zâd al-Mustaqi'I Volume*

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

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.⁴² 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.⁴³ Added to that, is the language of communication. This

II (Cairo: Dâr ibn Utaymayn, t.t.), p. 339-340.

⁴² Ismail, p. 230.

⁴³ Abu Mâlik Kamâl b. al-Sayyid Sâlim, *Sahih Fiqh al-Sunnah Wa Adlatuhu Wa Tawdih*

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.⁴⁴ Qur'an in chapter 62 verse 2 makes it clear that the purpose of Divine religions is educational.⁴⁵ As the verse reads thus:

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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷ 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

Madhâhib al 'Aimah Volume 1 (Cairo: Dâr al-Tawfiqiyah Liturâth, 2010), p. 512.

⁴⁴ Abdul-Fazl Ezzah, *An Introduction to the History of the Spread of Islam* (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1979), p. 224.

⁴⁵ Ezzah.

⁴⁶ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an. Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989), p. 1466.

⁴⁷ Ahmâd al-Sharbâsî, *Yas'alûnaka Fi al-Din Wal-Hayâl Volume 1* (Beirut: Tnp, t.t.), p. 71.

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.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ Similar to him was Imam Shafici (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.⁵⁰ And for Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbali (d. 855 CE), apart from the geographical and linguistic influences on him, the period when his school emerged also influenced him.⁵¹ 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.⁵² The act of the Caliph during this period opportunity for the Imam to retain his glory.⁵³ 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

⁴⁸ al-Azhari, *Jawâhir al-Iklil Sharh Mukhtasar al-'Alâmah Shaykh Khalil Fi Madhhab al-Imam Malik Volume 1*, p. 95.

⁴⁹ Shaykh Muhammad Buk al-Khuduri, *Târikh al-Tashri al-Islâmî* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2009), p. 143.

⁵⁰ al-Khuduri, p. 156-158.

⁵¹ al-Khuduri, p. 161-162.

⁵² Cyril Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (London: EPP Book Services, 2002), p. 195.

⁵³ Mustapha al-Subâ'i, *al-Sunnah Wamakânatuhâ Fi al-Tashri' i al-Islâmî* (Cairo: Tnp, 1949), p. 442.

the message to the target audience (*Tabligh*). 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"⁵⁴ (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"*⁵⁵ (Qur'an 29:27 – 8). The implication of this is that Arabic is the language of Islam, and considering the multifarious backgrounds 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."*⁵⁶ (Qur'an 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..."*⁵⁷ (Qur'an 14:4)

⁵⁴ Khattab, p. 125.

⁵⁵ Khattab, p. 264.

⁵⁶ Khattab, p. 299.

⁵⁷ Khattab, p. 137.

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'an (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*⁵⁸, 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.⁵⁹ In another work, 'Uthaymayn explains further that rendering 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*.⁶⁰

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).

⁵⁸ al-Qurtabi, p. 297.

⁵⁹ al-'Uthaymayn, *Fatâwa Arkân Al-Islâm*, p. 393.

⁶⁰ al-'Uthaymayn, *Sharh al-Mumtiu 'Alâ Zâd al-Mustaqi' i Volume II*, p. 340.

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-adharâi'* 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.

Author Contribution

Abdur-Razzaq Mustapha Balogun Solagberu has been the sole contributor to this article, involved in every step of the process, including conceptualization, designing the research methodology, reviewing the literature, data collection, data validation, and data analysis. Additionally, *Abdur-Razzaq Mustapha Balogun Solagberu* edited and refined the manuscript into its final form.

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