


# Arabic Oratory and its Role in Development of Islamic Civilization in Seventh Century

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## Abstract

**Background:** Arabic oratory played a significant role in Arab civilization. With the advent of Islam, it changed significantly from tribal rhetoric to a tool for social control and moral guidance. But little is known about its use in early Islam as a civilizational communication mechanism.

**Objectives:** This study looks at how, during the Prophetic and Rashidun eras, Arabic oratory supported societal cohesiveness, ethical development, and the legitimacy of government.

**Methods:** Descriptive-analytical and hermeneutic techniques were used in a qualitative textual approach. Selected sermons (khutbah), sirah stories, and ancient rhetorical writings that were purposefully picked for their significance to ethics, governance, and communal identity made up the data. Thematic coding, interpretive analysis, and contextual reading were used to study the data.

**Results:** The results demonstrate that Arabic oratory served as a fundamental channel for political legitimacy, communal integration, and moral internalization. Sermons facilitated the shift from tribal division to a morally cohesive ummah by transforming concepts of justice, accountability, and communal duty into common social standards.

**Conclusion:** This study comes to the conclusion that early Islamic Arabic oratory was a civilizational infrastructure of communication rather than just a rhetorical tradition. Repositioning oratory as a strategic channel connecting revelation, ethics, and government in the development of Islamic culture is its scientific contribution.

## A. Introduction

In societies where oral communication serves as the main means of social authority, collective memory, and normative transmission, language has continuously played a fundamental role in the formation of civilizations (Senduk et al., 2025). Prior to Islam, public speaking, or khitābah, was one of the most esteemed cultural traditions in the Arab world. It was used not just for rhetorical performances but also for tribe negotiation, dispute resolution, leadership legitimation, and communal identity maintenance (Nur & Hamzah, 2025). The spoken word had institutional power in this oral setting, influencing both short-term social activity and long-term cultural continuity. As a result, the authority of the khatīb (orator) went beyond eloquence to include symbolic power and social government (Qutbuddin, 2023).

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The role and direction of Arabic oratory underwent a significant change with the advent of Islam in the seventh century. An ethically motivated discourse based on divine revelation, universal justice, and collective responsibility eventually replaced what had once been a vehicle for tribal status and competitive solidarity (Yazar, 2025). Public speech became a crucial tool for spreading Islamic teachings, structuring communal life, and creating a moral order that transcended tribal boundaries during the Prophetic and Rashidun periods (Sugandi & Romdhoni, 2023). As a result, the khutbah evolved from a communication event to an institution of civilization-building, integrating Islamic norms into society's daily consciousness (Rokibullah, 2025).

Understanding Arabic rhetoric and preaching traditions has been greatly aided by a variety of classical and contemporary research. Eloquence was largely examined by classical academics like Al-Jāhīn and Ibn Qutaybah in terms of language artistry, persuasive power, and stylistic beauty (Ajim, 2024). Recent research has broadened this attention to include thematic studies, pragmatics, and discourse analysis of Friday sermons in modern Muslim societies (Al-hamzi et al., 2023). The mechanics, linguistic patterns, and performative aspects of khutbah speech are all explained by these research.

However, a large portion of the work currently in publication is still primarily descriptive and rhetorical, paying little attention to the broader civilizational effects of oratory throughout the early stages of Islam (Erbay, 2024). Prior studies have tended to analyze the rhetorical style of sermons, but they have placed less analytical attention on the reasons why these speeches became fundamental tools in the transformation of a divided tribal society into a morally cohesive ummah (Yilmaz et al., 2021). Consequently, there is still a lack of theoretical development about Arabic oratory's function as a method for the institutionalization of ethics, the legitimacy of governance, and the formation of collective identities.

When considering this unsolved problem from the perspectives of communication theory and civilization studies, it becomes very significant. Since the majority of early Islamic culture was oral, the sermon functioned as a public forum for political discourse, social control, and ethical instruction in addition to being a religious activity (Tanjung & Abdullah, 2025). The community progressively acquired a common moral lexicon that maintained social cohesion via frequent exposure to shared ideals like justice, accountability, compassion, and obedience to divine rule (Fahmi & Aswirna, 2025). According to this method, Arabic oratory should not only be seen as an artistic language legacy but also as an active civilizational force.

The relationship between Arabic oratory and the development of early Islamic civilization has received little scholarly attention, which the current study clearly recognizes as a research gap. Few studies have thoroughly investigated how oratory served as a civilizational infrastructure in forming moral consciousness, governing practices, and the shift from tribal affiliation to universal religious community, despite the fact that earlier works have extensively documented rhetorical forms and literary elegance (Palangyos & Ulla, 2025). Closing this gap is crucial for discussions on oral discourse's role in state formation and civilizational continuity, as well as for Islamic studies.

In light of this vacuum, the article's main research issue is: How did Arabic oratory serve as a civilizational force during the Prophetic and Rashidun periods in forming moral principles, social cohesiveness, and political systems? The article uses a descriptive-analytical qualitative approach based on foundational works on Arabic rhetoric, sirah literature, and ancient sermon texts to address this subject (Zaen et al., 2025). This study aims to reconstruct early Islamic oratory as a transforming medium of civilization by placing these works within their socio-historical context.

By placing Arabic oratory outside the purview of literary studies and ritual research, this paper advances the field by contending that it was a fundamental communication institution in the growth of Islamic culture (E-sor et al., 2025). This study is new since it combines ethical communication, civilizational theory, and rhetorical history into one analytical framework. According to this viewpoint, Arabic oratory is seen as a strategic tool used by Islamic culture to institutionalize political legitimacy, moral order, and communal identity in addition to being a kind of speech.

## B. Research Methods

In order to examine Arabic oratory as a civilizational force in early Islam, this study uses a qualitative textual research design with a descriptive-analytical and hermeneutic approach. Because the target of research consists of historical sermons, rhetorical writings, and sirah narratives that call for interpretive interpretation rather than numerical measurement, the qualitative design is especially appropriate (Nurhuda et al., 2025). In order to track the historical evolution of Arabic oratory and analyze its civilizational roles in social cohesion, government, and ethical formation, the study blends descriptive investigation with analytical interpretation (Qutbuddin, 2023).

Selected sermon texts (khutbah) from the Prophetic and Rashidun periods, passages from classical sirah literature, and fundamental Arabic rhetorical works that address early public speech traditions make up the basic data of this study. Representative sermons that specifically address issues of justice, accountability, community cohesion, leadership duty, and moral instruction are included in the corpus. Modern academic publications on Arabic rhetoric, Islamic sermon discourse, and communication theory that offer conceptual backing for contextual interpretation are examples of secondary data (Razzaq, 2023).

The purposeful establishment of the text selection criteria ensured that the corpus was pertinent to the study subject. Three criteria were used to choose the texts: (1) historical proximity to the formative Islamic period of the seventh century; (2) explicit use of public speech as communal advice; and (3) thematic significance to civilizational characteristics like ethics, governance, and collective identity development. The primary analysis did not include sermons that only included devotional formulas with no wider societal significance.

Systematic recording and textual extraction from both traditional and contemporary published sources were used in the data collection process. Major analytical themes were used to identify, catalog, and group pertinent sermon texts, historical narratives, and rhetorical remarks. After that, the retrieved texts were grouped into theme groups, such as communicative authority, political legitimacy, social cohesiveness, and ethical formation.

There were four steps in the data analysis process. In order to comprehend the socio-historical context of the chosen works, contextual reading was done first. Second, thematic coding was used to examine the sermons, with an emphasis on recurrent civilizational themes including justice, moral responsibility, governance, and communal integration (Afdhalia et al., 2025). Third, the deeper connection between rhetorical language and the development of Islamic social order was shown by applying a hermeneutic interpretation (Ahmad, 2024). Ultimately, a framework for civilizational communication was used to synthesize the results.

The study used source triangulation, comparing sermon texts, sirah narratives, classical rhetoric manuals, and contemporary academic studies, to increase the reliability of interpretation. By cross-referencing motifs from various textual traditions and connecting them with accepted research on early Islamic communication methods, interpretive consistency was preserved.

## C. Results and Discussion

### Results

The textual research shows that Arabic oratory was more than just ceremonial speech in early Islam; it served as an organized medium for social integration, ethical formation, and the legitimacy of rule. The evidence suggests that normative notions that affected the developing moral order of the Muslim community were consistently expressed in sermons during the Prophetic and Rashidun periods. The four main themes that emerged from the coding process are ethical formation, social cohesiveness, political legitimacy, and collective consciousness.

#### 1. Oratory as Ethical Formation

The ethical significance of early Islamic sermons is one of the most compelling conclusions. The emphasis on justice, equality, and accountability is a recurring theme in the scripture, particularly as it appears in the Prophet's Farewell Sermon. The statement, "No Arab has superiority over a non-Arab except by piety," illustrates how a universal moral standard was utilized in public discourse to replace hereditary tribal

hierarchy (Khan et al., 2021). The claim that oratory served as a tool of ethical restructuring, changing loyalty from kindred to moral accountability, is amply supported by this literary evidence.

Furthermore, recurring themes in sermons like honesty, empathy, and duty to the weak suggest that khutbah discourse functioned as a public pedagogy of virtue. The early Muslim community's absorption of moral standards was probably aided by the weekly and ritualized repeating of these themes (Hashimi, 2024).

## 2. Oratory as Social Cohesion

The importance of oratory in fostering social cohesiveness is the subject of the second key discovery. The Muslim community is clearly portrayed in a number of early sermons as a single ummah that transcends tribal and ancestry boundaries. For instance, a purposeful rhetorical technique of communal unification is reflected in the Farewell Sermon's frequent exhortation to believers as a single moral body (Arifeen & Usama, 2023). According to this data, Arabic oratory served as a means of reconstructing identity by substituting a universal religious community for fragmented tribal connections. Sermons developed a shared symbolic vocabulary that bolstered social cohesion through recurrent references to moral reciprocity, shared faith, and collective responsibility.

## 3. Oratory as Political Legitimacy

The function of sermons in legitimizing government is the subject of a third important finding. An obvious example may be found in Abu Bakr's first sermon upon his coronation as caliph:

*"As long as I obey Allah and His Messenger, obey me."* (Purwanto & Mufid, 2024)

This claim illustrates how moral conditionality, as opposed to coercive domination, was used to rhetorically construct political power in early Islam. A model of governance founded on responsibility, moral leadership, and mutual legitimacy between the ruler and the community is established in the sermon.

The textual evidence also demonstrates that the pulpit functioned as a communicative institution that facilitated ongoing public discussions about administrative justice, public duty, and leadership responsibilities. The conclusion that Arabic oratory developed into a soft infrastructure of government is supported by this.

## 4. Oratory and Collective Consciousness

The last conclusion relates to how oratory shapes collective awareness. A common moral imagination that connected individual conduct to civilizational continuity was created by frequent rhetorical allusions to divine judgment, collective accountability, and social fairness (Kilic et al., 2025). According to the findings, the mosque sermon served as a recurring cognitive framework that helped normalize ethical language in public discourse. These lectures produced a lasting moral discourse that influenced society's perceptions of authority, justice, and community membership rather than just imparting religious knowledge.

When considered collectively, these results support the claim that Arabic oratory was a fundamental communicative institution in the development of early Islamic civilization throughout the seventh century. Sermon texts, prophetic discourse, and caliphal addresses provide proof that public speech actively supported the consolidation of the Muslim ummah, the internalization of ethics, and the legitimacy of administration.

## Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that early Islamic Arabic oratory operated well beyond the bounds of rhetorical adornment. Public speech developed into a civilizational tool for social integration, political legitimacy, and ethical institutionalization rather than just an artistic language performance. The prevailing scholarly tradition, which has mostly studied khutbah from stylistic, pragmatic, and discourse-centered viewpoints, is expanded by this more expansive interpretation. Khutbah continues to influence collective moral narratives in modern Muslim nations, as evidenced by earlier research like Carol and Hofheinz's examination of Friday sermons in Germany and Gürlesin's research on sermon discourse in the Netherlands (Aslan, 2025). By demonstrating that the civilizational significance of sermon discourse was already deeply

ingrained in the Islamic environment of the seventh century, when oral communication formed the major infrastructure of normative transmission, the current study expands these insights historically (Dweirj, 2023).

The role of Arabic oratory in ethical formation is one of the findings' most important aspects. Farooq's reading of the Prophet's Farewell Sermon as a foundational ethical charter is substantially supported by the textual evidence, particularly the focus on equality, justice, and moral accountability (Batubara et al., 2025). The current study, however, goes beyond just identifying these moral principles by showing how they became socially internalized norms as a result of their frequent circulation through public discourse. To put it another way, the sermon's strength came from both its ethical substance and its ritualized repetition, which made it possible for values to transition from dogma to collective habit. This supports the claim that early Islamic oratory served as a vehicle for moral education rather than merely teaching theology.

The significance of khutbah as a method of civilizational consolidation is further supported by the findings on social cohesion. The present analysis reveals a deeper historical function: the reconstruction of identity from fractured tribal connections into a universal ummah. Previous scholarship has generally agreed that sermons serve a role in upholding communal ideals. This bolsters Qutbuddin's claim that early Arabic oration developed to meet the communication demands of a society that was changing quickly (Manayangattil, 2025). Additionally, by demonstrating that this change was institutional rather than just linguistic, the current study strengthens the analytical layer. Oratory actively created the symbolic boundaries of the Muslim community by continuous rhetorical appeals to justice, shared commitments, and a shared spiritual destiny. As a result, the sermon evolved into a communication tool that helped moral solidarity progressively replace social fragmentation.

The topic of governance legitimacy is another significant addition of the conversation. The mosque pulpit is emphasized as an institution that mediates authority, ritual, and public normativity in earlier writings, especially *The Rituals and Rhetoric of the Friday Pulpit* (Kana'an, 2024). By showing how caliphal addresses, like Abu Bakr's inaugural address, rhetorically framed political authority as contingent upon devotion to divine principles, the current findings validate this institutional role in the early Islamic era. This is important from a theoretical standpoint because it demonstrates that early Islamic legitimacy was not only maintained by coercive systems but also discursively constructed through ethical accountability. As a result, public discourse evolved as a tool for ongoing negotiation and moral justification of the relationship between the ruler and the community.

Repositioning Arabic oratory within a context of civilizational communication is the main originality of this topic when compared to earlier research. A large portion of the current literature effectively describes discourse themes, rhetorical beauty, and sermon language mechanics. However, these methods frequently end at the level of textual study and fail to adequately examine how oratory served as a strategic framework for the creation of states and the propagation of morality. By showing that speech served as a link between revelation, government, and collective ethics, the current study closes this gap. This makes Arabic oratory one of the first institutional tools used by Islamic culture to maintain its moral cosmos (Hasanah, 2021).

These results add to more general academic discussions on the function of speech in institutional continuity from the standpoint of communication theory. Repeated public speech creates shared interpretive frameworks that help communities perceive justice, belonging, and authority in civilizations where oral communication predominates. This is consistent with theoretical stances that see discourse not as a passive representation of reality but as a constitutive social force. Thus, in early Islam, the sermon functioned as a technology of collective consciousness, allowing ethical terminology to become commonplace across social classes and generations.

The conversation also has wider ramifications for research on Islamic civilization. The study challenges academics to reevaluate how Islamic civilization was formed through the moral influence of public speaking as well as legal codification, military conquest, and administrative institutions by presenting Arabic oratory as a fundamental communicative institution. A fruitful interdisciplinary conversation involving Islamic studies, rhetoric, communication theory, and civilizational analysis is made possible by this viewpoint.

Lastly, the comparison with previous research shows that the current findings extend earlier rhetorical analyses into the field of civilizational theory rather than contradicting them. This study explains why sermon persuasion was historically crucial in turning a divided tribal community into a morally cohesive civilization, while earlier research explains how sermons convince. The article's scholarly contribution is strengthened by this more comprehensive analytical framework, which also positions Arabic oratory as a key factor in the creation of early Islamic history.

### Implications

The significance of this research work is far, reaching for the disciplines of Islamic studies, communication theory, and social history. It challenges the traditional notion of early Arabic oratory as a mere aesthetic art and presents it as the chief "architect" of the civilization. Thus, it brings out the essence dynamic moral communications can have in the building of nations. It shows the mechanism through which a society might evolve, with the aid of public discourse, from one of unorganized diversity to that of strong central unity.

*Communication Theory:* This research is essentially a record of how oral, non, governmental communication can be a powerful tool for regulating the social order and spreading complex value systems. It is evident that in a civilization wholly dependent on the oral medium, the mosque's *minbar* (pulpit) is as effective an institution in embodying behavior codes and social expectations as the contemporary legislative or educational institutions.

*Societal Development:* The results indicate that the rise of one civilization depends on how well their conduct has been synchronized with a shared moral language. The early Islamic example is a case in point where public speech being based on accountability rather than mere authority results in people getting a "voluntary compliance" feeling.

*Modern Relevance:* From our ancestors' experience, we get a kind of historical template which is very helpful in today's moral leadership and public dialogue issues. In comparing how the 7<sup>th</sup> century *khutbah* managed to accommodate different tribal interests under one moral element, Muslim societies of our time can identify the bases for a pluralistic yet unified public discourse that is still relevant today.

In this way, the study draws the conclusion that the outward expression of the civilization is just as crucial, if not more so, than its legal framework. The history of Arabic public speaking is essentially a testimony to how the deepest, most enduring values of a society can always be communicated through a medium that is accessible, consistent, and profoundly human.

### Research contribution

This study constitutes a major advancement in the discipline by redirecting the scholarly attention from the "mechanics" of speech to its "mission." A civilizational reading of early Arabic oratory is presented here to address the most pressing question in the existing literature, which has not taken the linguistic and rhetorical aspects as a priority. On one hand, earlier research has been able to unravel the masterful stylistic elegance of the seventh, century *khutbah*. On the other hand, this paper takes those stylistic decisions as part of the overall endeavor to establish a new social and moral order. The combination of civilizational theory and historical analysis gives a comprehensive basis for considering oratory as the "connective tissue" of early Islamic society. It goes beyond the definition of the *khutbah* as a mere religious ceremony and instead, it is viewed as a key socio, political institution that facilitated the change from tribalism to statehood. This method helps to uncover how the beauty of the language was not merely ornamental but was tactically used to evoke ideas of justice on a global scale and moral obligation at the individual level.

In the end, this research reconsiders the early Arabic oratory in a very detailed way. It sees the oratory as one of the main founders of the early social cohesion in the Islamic world. By showing how the mosque was a place where people discussed morality and formed a community, the study offers a perspective that highlights the communicative and moral aspects of the early Islamic period rather than just focusing on the political expansion.

### Limitations

This paper explores the ancient cultural roots of Arabic eloquence through a thorough examination of primary sources. The paper is limited to Seventh, century literature and only deal with the immediate aftermath of the tribal, universal binary change. Therefore, this research set aside the examinations of various local oratory styles, e.g., Persian, raised, Byzantine, raised, North African, raised styles, which would have been the natural result of Islamic state expansion, in the regional variants of the sermon. After all, these geographic details and the later historical changes from the Umayyad to the Abbasid era of the *khutbah's* evolution would amount to a very large separate topic, which is beyond the immediate extent of this work. Moreover, the method was strictly qualitative and based on a hermeneutics interpretation of classical texts and sermons without quantification or empirical data. This method allowed for a deep and detailed comprehension of the moral and ethical themes but the objective was not to count rhetorical devices or to identify statistically speaking the size of audience of different speakers. The difference in focus of the paper lies in the fact that it has chosen a civilizational and thematic research which narrative is more cohesive and highlight the social consciousness turning point rather than the use of raw data. These limitations should not be seen as mistakes, but rather as set limits that intentionally maintain the validity of the study.

The study focuses only on the period of the Prophet and the rightly guided Caliphs so that it can provide a very detailed model of oratory as the main factor of a new moral order before it got influenced by the complex administrative and sectarian changes of the following centuries. This concentrated viewpoint is the one that makes sure that the basic "genetic material" or "DNA" of Islamic oratory is recognized and grasped.

### Suggestions

Future research can extend this study to look at how Islamic oratory changed in later periods such as the Umayyad and Abbasid eras or Islamic and non, Islamic can be compared in terms of the oratory traditions of civilizations. New research can also consider how today's Islamic oratory can be relevant in the context of education, social, and digital communication.

### D. Conclusion

According to the study's findings, early Islamic civilization was largely shaped by Arabic oratory during the Prophetic and Rashidun eras. The results demonstrate that, within the developing Muslim ummah, public discourse served as an institutional mechanism for forming moral principles, social cohesiveness, and the legitimacy of government in addition to serving as a vehicle for religious transmission. Principles like fairness, accountability, and collective responsibility were converted into common moral standards that governed public life through sermons and speeches.

Repositioning Arabic oratory beyond rhetorical aesthetics and ritual performance into the larger context of civilizational communication is the study's primary contribution. This research shows that early Islamic oratory functioned as a strategic medium for moral internalization, communal identity construction, and symbolic state-building, in contrast to earlier studies that mostly focus on stylistic and discourse characteristics. The view of Arabic oratory as a communicative infrastructure that linked revelation, ethics, and governance in the creation of Islamic culture is what makes this work novel.

These results imply that a civilization's communicative institutions should be used to understand its evolution. Future research could examine sermon traditions across civilizations or expand this approach to other Islamic eras.

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## F. Author Contribution Statement

The author individually conceived the research idea, conducted the literature review, analyzed the primary sources, developed the theoretical framework, and wrote the manuscript.

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