



The language of gratitude: “*Alhamdulillah*” as an expression of appreciation to improve well-being

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Abstract. The abstract should summarize the contents of the paper in short terms, i.e. 150-250 The expression of gratitude is an emotion that has a significant expression in influencing happiness as well as individual well-being and increasing optimism in life. The expression of gratitude is also able to foster better relationships in social life. This study aims to explore the concept of gratitude in Indonesian communities by looking at the role of language as a medium of appreciation through expression. By using verbal expression, a person can convey the expression of appreciation and give appreciation to others for every good in life behavior. Each individual consciously expresses sincere gratitude with their language. Furthermore, the adoption of religious language such as the expression “*Alhamdulillah*” and so on as an expression of gratitude provides its own happiness and satisfaction to improve well-being. Gratitude with a particular language shows pro-social behavior, encourages each other in creating a positive reciprocal cycle in shaping a broader social and cultural context and creates acceptance in each individual, building stronger transcendental relationships. The role of language provides a strong bond to form the habitual behavior of gratitude and leads to optimism and a more positive outlook on life, especially certain expressions in a community that become a positive feedback loop in social communication.

Keywords: Language, Gratitude, positive emotion, wellbeing

1. Introduction

Happiness and well-being are the most fundamental things in the long journey of human life. Expressing happiness with certain expressions to improve the quality of life becomes self-identity in culture. In our tradition, expressing gratitude with the use of certain language with the phrase “*Alhamdulillah*” plays an important role in describing gratitude to describe the happiness of God's gift to his servants. The phrase “*Alhamdulillah*” with its semantic complexity in the eastern tradition means that expressions of gratitude have to be explained in different contexts from a certain perspective. The choice of the diction “*Alhamdulillah*” has a close relationship with humans of positive emotions, besides that the choice of language with the sentence is also a mediating tool in taking part in emotions on transcendence in humans. Some findings describe that a person who has a sense of gratitude to encourage a harmonious relationship between humans and nature where gratitude is a positive

emotion in moral and pro-social emotions[1], It indicates that gratitude with certain diction provides an assumption that the diction of certain sentences such as the sentence "*Alhamdulillah*" have emotional involvement with social in certain contexts that are different in general. In addition, "*Alhamdulillah*" is a product of language which is in the language perspective, the relationship between language and emotions revolves around the information that language conveys about emotions. Spoken language is an expression of the experience of self, which means that highlighting language can reveal the nature of emotion. Moreover, the fact that language communicates emotions through almost every aspect[2], makes language affect social relationships and interactions between individuals. Gratitude shown verbally can build stronger emotional bonds between individuals in a particular social community.

2. Literature Review

Recently, studying the dimensions of gratitude has become highly important. Gratitude as a dimension that can lead people to achieve happiness in life has various complexities that must be explored. "Gratitude" is more than just a buzzword and perhaps more important than we realize. The science of gratitude is worth studying, because science is beginning to show conclusions that the symptoms of grateful people versus stressed people with headaches, sleeplessness have a different effect on the human nerves and body[3]. Gratitude and mental health have a very significant relationship and need to be a recommendation for the world of education in order to encourage gratitude to maintain mental health, especially among adolescents[4], considering that the mental state of adolescents can have an impact on their well-being. Every teenager who has positive mental health will be far from mental emotional problems in the form of neurosis and psychosis. In their research, Hardianti et al. concluded that there is a very significant relationship between gratitude and adolescent mental health.

The phrase "*Alhamdulillah*" is a gratitude behavior that is close to the context of religiosity as a spiritual behavior where this behavior can improve subjective well-being as an important aspect of an individual to optimize quality of life[5]. In addition, spiritual behaviors have an influence on the high and low levels of subjective well being[6], the higher the spirituality of a person, the higher the level of subjective well being because with spirituality, an individual will feel the presence of God and get social support.

3. Method

This research uses a literature review approach to understand and explain the phenomenon of gratitude language in the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" that can foster happiness. A literature review – or a review article – is a study that analyzes and synthesizes an existing body of literature by identifying, challenging, and advancing the building blocks of a theory through an examination of a body (or several bodies) of prior work [7]. Moreover the sequence of literature reviews in this study are Design of

Reviews, Inclusion Review Criteria, Exclusion Review criteria, Search Method, Study Selection.

4. Result

1.1 Language and expressions of gratitude

Language is an important tool for humans to convey emotions and feelings. The language used to express gratitude has a strong impact on the psychology of the individual. Every language expression is a conceptual framework that shapes the emotions of each user [2]. The language of gratitude with the expression “*Alhamdulillah*” is one of the human means to convey emotions. When someone says “*Alhamdulillah*”, they are expressing gratitude for the favors and blessings given by Allah. This expression reflects the feelings of happiness and peace within a person. Through the language of gratitude with the expression “*Alhamdulillah*”, humans invite themselves and others to reflect on how important it is to be grateful for everything that God has given [8].

The words used in daily life reflect who humans are and the social relationships that surround them. Language is the most common and understandable way to explain internal thoughts and emotions into a form that others can understand. Words and language are part of psychology and communication, both of which are mediums used by cognitive, personality, clinical and social psychologists to understand humans [9].

Language is certainly capable of communicating emotions, but a growing study suggests that language also helps shape emotions by unifying sensations into specific perceptions of categories of various emotions [10]. Through language, emotions are expressed and interconnected, fostering a deep sense of empathy and understanding among individuals and building relationships with one another [11]. The element of emotion is the deepest part of the human experience, affecting thoughts, behaviors, and relationships with others [12]. Language, in its various forms, serves as a container for emotions to be expressed. Language summarizes feelings and allows individuals to communicate their emotional state to others i.e. how humans express joy, sadness, anger, love, etc. not only to communicate their inner world but also to influence the emotions of those who interact around them. Hence, the phrase “*Alhamdulillah*” is used not only to express gratitude but also to praise, reassure, promise to reciprocate, express surprise and joy, express the necessity of obligations, and express the desire to continue a relationship [13].

1.2 The Role of Language in Expressing Gratitude

The etymology of the phrase “*Alhamdulillah*” is to recognize the blessing and then show it by praising [14] and expressing gratitude to Allah Ta'ala. The expression of gratitude with certain word choices shows a certain meaning according to the context. In a semiotic approach, gratitude is assumed to be something about the various kinds of favors Allah has bestowed on His creatures, especially humans [15].

Every expression uttered by someone cannot be separated from the intended meaning. Every word spoken by someone contains the meaning they want to convey to the listener personally or transpersonal that transcends universal linguistic principles [16]. The range of meanings to be conveyed is complex depending on many factors such as context, culture, personal experience, and semantic nuances to understand how words acquire meaning, then how these meanings form the basis of effective human communication and how individual wants to express one's psychology in a life achievement and self-development [17].

Every person who speaks is actually playing with psychological tools within himself, and also tools in the language itself that take place [18]. Language plays a role in emotions because it helps acquire, organize, and use conceptual knowledge which is an important element in the perception of emotions and perhaps even in the experiences [19].

1.3 Gratitude and Positive Emotion: A Psychological Perspective

Each behavior involving emotions will essentially be at the stage of basic emotions that are thought to have a central organizing mechanism and have the capacity to influence attitudes, thoughts, and other fundamental processes [20]. In social interactions, people can express their feelings through what (verbal) they say and how (nonverbal) they say it [21].

Positive emotion which is the psychological human resource, being a fundamental force considering that it will affect endurance beyond the psychological or physical dimensions of the human being itself. The mission of positive psychology is to understand and develop the factors that enable individuals, communities, and societies to thrive [22] which symbolizes the development of optimal well-being. From this point of view, the overall balance of a person's positive and negative emotions has been shown to predict assessments of subjective well-being [23]. Gratitude behavior is an affective phenomenon. While the affective itself being a physical sensation, to describe moods and attitudes which usually involve emotions that are usually associated with some personally meaningful circumstances [24]. Specifically, any behavior that involves emotions - for example, the expression "thank God" - is certainly a tendency for certain actions personally because of the impulsive feeling such as fear, happiness and so on [25].

1.4 The Expression “*Alhamdulillah*” and Life Satisfaction

A language that is revealed is a process of very fundamental human feelings[26], With a language approach, the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" can be understood in depth how the relationship of one person to another, or even transcendental, because each language tends towards certain forms of epistemology or towards certain implicit propositions about the grounds of knowledge.

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Some of the conclusions about the relationship between *Alhamdulillah*'s expression and what humans perceive are first that it is impossible to separate language from the thought that it has influence or not, which is impossible to separate language from culture in general, and separate from social interaction in particular [27]. Human expression with language codes will always have both relationships.

There are two kinds of human behavior when expressing gratitude with the expression “*Alhamdulillah*”, visible behavior in language is human behavior when speaking and writing or when producing a language, while invisible behavior is behavior when understanding what is heard or read so that it becomes something that he has or processes something that he will say or write [28].

With this in mind, recent psychological research that reveals the relationship between gratitude and life satisfaction will be presented. The psychological factors involved in the experience of gratitude and its impact on life satisfaction will be discussed.

1.5 Language and the Experience of Gratitude in Culture and Religion

Language is the human tool for communicating and articulating feelings of gratitude. Each cultural group of people has its own specialized vocabulary and phrases for expressing gratitude. The way in which language is used in different contexts can reflect the cultural values and religious practices of that community. Expressions of gratitude can also manifest in the form of prayers, phrases, chants from generation to generation, and gratitude expressions with the word “*Alhamdulillah*”.

The experience of gratitude is a complex psychological aspect influenced by cultural and religious factors. Language acts as a bridge that connects the internal experience of gratitude with external expressions that can be understood by the community.

Malay people embrace Islam and their traditions have influenced their Islamic activities. The culture is rich in words, proverbs, rhymes and poetry. The importance of language in Malay culture is evidenced by the secondary meanings of language, namely “respect” and “manners” [28].

The existence of complex terrain from human experience is influenced by various internal and external factors. In this case, gratitude is one of the psychological aspects that cannot be separated from the influence of culture, religion and language that shape the way individuals experience and express it. The relationship between culture, religion, language and gratitude shows how human diversity and the complexity of human emotional experience.

Human language is phonetic and it is a medium for communication [29], while the expression “*Alhamdulillah*” is a transcendental medium of communication between

humans and God produced by religious traditions and dogma then becomes a cultural behavior of general muslim communities

The central role of culture and religion shapes the perception and expression of the experience of gratitude. The values and norms instilled by culture shape how a person gives meaning and expresses gratitude. Thus, a collective culture tends to emphasize gratitude that is pro-social towards the community, while an individualistic culture will emphasize personal achievement. Religion has played a role in shaping a strong understanding of gratitude. Some religious practices, rituals, and teachings can guide individuals to experience and express gratitude.

5. Discussion

The word "*Alhamdulillah*" is an adopted expression of gratitude from Arabic, which literally means "Praise to Allah". This expression has a deep meaning in Islamic culture and is used to express appreciation and gratitude for the blessings and goodness given by Allah SWT. Human behavior in expressing this word of gratitude can be observed through two main aspects, namely language behavior derived from culture and understanding behavior from religion.

In the context of Islam, various literature confirms that the phrase "*Alhamdulillah*" is an important expression to acknowledge Allah's blessings and be grateful for every good thing that has been given. This expression is a form of worship and recognition of the greatness of Allah as the Creator and Giver of all things. In addition, the use of "*Alhamdulillah*" also reflects the belief that everything that happens in our lives is part of His destiny and plan.

1.6 The Expression "Alhamdulillah" as an Instrumen of Pro-social Emotions

In daily communication, people often use connotational meanings, where words can carry emotional nuances or concepts that are broader than their lexical meanings. For example, the word "house" not only refers to the physical structure of a dwelling, but can also symbolize security, comfort, or even nostalgia.

Expressions of gratitude increase inter-personal moral sentiments to care for others in a pro-social manner [30] and provide communal benefits that are not concerned with individual interests. The phrase "*Alhamdulillah*" is not only a phrase that means praise but becomes a pro-social positive emotion instrument which has the potential to enrich social interactions and the ability to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships. The positive emotions that are expected to emerge later on are empathy, solidarity, trust among others and dealing with difficulties in life. By attempting to understand the meaning and positive emotional dimensions of "*Alhamdulillah*", individuals are able to develop a more open meaning of life with the social world around them.

1.7 The Expression "Alhamdulillah" is a Transcendental Psychological Phenomenon

Gratitude is considered a self-transcendent emotion in transcendental psychology [31] and it is an appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself and represents a general state of gratitude and/or appreciation. This proposed definition goes beyond the inter-personal tone associated with the term (i.e. the idea of receiving something from someone) and allows for a more inclusive meaning (e.g. being grateful for experiences, such as being alive and in contact with nature). This definition also allows for the context of circumstances and traits [32]. On a personal level, it is used to express gratitude for favors and blessings. In the transcendental dimension, it becomes a channel to unite with God in moments of devotion and reflection.

The positive emotion of gratitude with the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" forms a trans-relationship or a relationship that goes beyond the personal. One way people experience positive emotions in the face of adversity is by finding positive meaning in ordinary events and in adversity itself [33].

One of the motivations for developing emotional intelligence is that emotional intelligence is closely related to spirituality [34] where a servant connects with God through behavior and expression. In Islam, the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" is an expression of resignation in accepting the realities of life (acceptance) and trying to face it with calmness and patience [8]. A person will always see with positive emotions everything he has in his life even though what he has is seen as an individual experience in increasing life expectancy by being calmer and not panicking when facing problems [35] and seeing anything in his life more positively.

From the relationship among those aspects, the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" transcends the material and rational boundaries of language and becomes a transcendental psychological phenomenon that connects individuals to a deeper spiritual dimension. Humans feel an emotional connection to the existence of the Almighty, increase their experience of gratitude, and understand their limitations. The phrase "*Alhamdulillah*" can have a positive impact on an individual's psychological and spiritual well-being.

6. Conclusion

The relationship between language, gratitude, positive emotions and well-being, with a focus on the expression "*Alhamdulillah*" in our society is a multidimensional one. It suggests the importance of gratitude in influencing individual happiness, fostering relationships and enhancing well-being. This study shows that the language of gratitude, particularly through the expression "*Alhamdulillah*", goes beyond communication that it serves as a vehicle to shape emotions and perceptions. The adoption of this expression not only reflects appreciation of favors but also signifies a connection with the Almighty and acceptance of life's realities. Linguistic mechanisms also influence how individuals experience and express emotions, contributing to psychological and spiritual growth.

In addition, culture and religion play a vital role in shaping expressions of gratitude. The phrase "Alhamdulillah" has deep cultural and religious significance, bringing together concepts of appreciation, destiny, and recognition of a higher power. It becomes a transcendent psychological phenomenon, uniting individuals with a broader spiritual dimension and fostering a positive outlook on life.

Overall, this study confirms that language is not just a means of communication, but a place for deep emotions, relationships and spiritual connections. The expression of gratitude, especially through the use of specific languages, has the potential to enhance well-being, create harmonious social interactions and foster positive feedback that enriches individual and communal life.

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