Religious Tolerance Limits: A Semiotic Linguistic Analysis of *al-Kāfirūn* Chapter

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to find the demarcation limit lines of religious tolerance from *al-Kāfirūn* chapter of the Holy Qur'an and respond to some issues developing in Indonesian. This study is based on an exploratory analysis of semiotic linguistic meanings of the chapter with an intention to respond to Indonesian Issues regarding the practices of religious greeting of the opening public speech, congratulating other religious celebrations, and singing performance of muslim students' in a church as cases in point. This study found that the religious tolerance limits are 'the belief' and 'the rituals'. Three activities are considered to go beyond the religious tolerance limits drawn from the chapter being studied, namely: (1) compromising religious belief, (2) mixing religious ritual activities, and (3) imposing religion on others. These three are, among others, the measurement of the activities considered tolerance or intolerance.

Keywords: religious tolerance, Qur'anic teachings, semiotic linguistics

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of 'The Santri's film sequel comprising a shared of food in the church in 2019 and a student choir group of the IAIN Salatiga (State Institute for Islamic Studies of Salatiga) performance in the Javanese Christian Church Sidomukti Salatiga in the Easter celebration on 2 April 2018 shocked many people in Indonesia. There were pros and cons in reactions and the national religious discourse in both the real and virtual worlds were shaken. Questions on the limits of religious tolerance re-emerge in the public discourse. Question on whether an activity is in the tolerance limit lines or beyond. This discourse on tolerance will always be an actual problem and causes sensitivity among the communities. This is because it cannot be separated from Indonesia's pluralistic conditions in terms of religions and cultures. It seems that the re-reading of the *al-Kāfirūn* chapter as an Islamic normative basis for religious tolerance in the perspective of semiotic linguistics needs to be done. This was to find the demarcation limit line of religious tolerance.

The discourse on religious tolerance in the Qur'anic perspective has been studied by many previous researchers, such as the work of Abdul-Muthaliff et. al. (2016, 47) entitled "Religious Harmony and Co-existence: a Qur'anic Perspective" This normative literature study concluded that the basics of tolerance in the Qur'an were: respecting the beliefs of others (QS 6,107-108), there are no compulsion in religion (QS 2, 256), universal humanists (QS 17, 70) and teachings to do good *bir wal ihsan*. This study found general ethical values in religious tolerance but has not mentioned the limits of religious tolerance.

Another study was done by Kamali (2020) entitled *Diversity and Pluralism: A Qur'anic Perspective*. This study discussed the concepts and meanings of pluralism and related words, diversity, and tolerance. Meanwhile, studies of the interpretations of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter conducted by previous researchers also have not reached any conclusions on the limits of religious tolerance, like

Jamaluddin, et al. (2021) who studied the mythologies in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter from the perspective of Roland Barthes Semiotics. Using Roland Barthes' Semiotics, the study found that at the second level of semiotics, connotative meaning is found in the verse of *qul ya ayyuha al-Kāfirūn*, that is a myth about Allah's call to Muslims to pay attention to contradictions to the claims of faith in the hearts of other Muslims. In addition, this call is also for *muqasy-qasyah* (dismantling), treason against Muslims and accusations of non-Muslims.

Meanwhile, Mu'ti & Burhani (2019) studied the limits of religious freedom on the Indonesian national first pillar *Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*. This article found that Pancasila set a religious monotheistic state through its national first pillar. Accordingly, the no monotheistic, polytheistic, and non-theistic religions have to modify their belief to be accepted as a religion in Indonesia.

Another study on tolerance in Indonesia was done by Muharam (2020). His article discussed religious tolerance based on the Cairo Declaration. This study found that there were two concepts from the Cairo Declaration that can be applied to maintain religious tolerance in Indonesia, namely: understanding religious freedom and avoiding discrimination as mentioned in article 10 of the Cairo Declaration by the national constitution 1945 article 29 verse 1 and 2 and the Law No 39 of 1999.

Religious tolerance in Indonesia also became the topic of study conducted by Muharom. However, it was focused on religious tolerance among students only. This study reflected that the higher the understanding of religious tolerance from the history of the prophet among the students, the higher the increase of religious tolerance, and the higher the understanding of religious inclusiveness, the higher the religious tolerance among the students (Muharom 2016, 139).

None of the articles mentioned have explicitly discussed the limits of religious tolerance. The study of the Qur'an in linguistic and thematic semiotics is expected to bring an ethical foundation to religious tolerance by more explicitly finding the limit lines of religious tolerance. This article is very important to be presented to reduce and at the same time become a solid bridge to realize religious tolerance in this diverse Indonesian society in particular and the world communities in general.

This short article is a semiotic linguistic-based academic study of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter by using Arkoun's semiotic model and Fazlurrahman double movement hermeneutics to find the limits of religious tolerance and apply the tolerance limits to examine three cases in point, namely: (1) the greeting using all religious greetings in the opening speech, (2) the practices of congratulating other religious followers for their holiday celebration, and (3) IAIN Salatiga's students of SMC choir's performances in a church.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article is a library study through a semiotic linguistics approach and a hermeneutic study on the other. The semiotic linguistic model here adopts some semiotic linguistic procedures of Arkoun's model, while the hermeneutics adopted is Fazlurrahman's model called the double movement hermeneutics. The researcher combined these reading models as a thematic 'semiotic linguistics *cum* hermeneutics' model. This semiotic linguistics cum hermeneutics is carried out through the following procedures: (1) selecting of specific verse or chapter studied, in this case, *al-Kāfirūn* chapter; (2) tracking lexical-semantic meanings of keywords based on dictionaries, to obtain the original meaning of the word being studied; (3) studying semiotic meanings by examining the forms of words and their meanings to obtain the generic

meanings of the words studied; (4) displaying supporting verses of the "theme" of the discussion, as the application of thematic inter-textual models. The use of this thematic model is intended to obtain the Quranic's view of tolerance as a whole and more comprehensively; (5) looking at the context of the verse or surah studied at the time of the verse's revelation; and (6) contextualizing the meaning of the verse in the present context. The last two steps are the adoption of the hermeneutic double movement proposed by Fazlurrahman. The hermeneutic approach is used to see the meaning of the text at the time of its emergence and to contextualize meaning at present.

DISCUSSIONS

The Limits of Religious Tolerance from *al-Kāfirūn* Chapter

The term 'tolerance' comes from the Latin *tolerare* which means to be patient with something. Tolerance is usually defined as an attitude or human behavior that respects the behavior of others. Tolerance is an attitude of allowing others to get do something according to their interests. While religious tolerance means that each religious community allows and maintains a conducive atmosphere for people or religious adherents to be able to carry out worship and religion without being hindered by anyone.

Tolerance theory has been discussed by some experts as noted by Dobbernack (2013, 1-30). In a general sense, the meaning of tolerance is forbearance and respect. The question is on to what extent the tolerance is. There will be many answers. An answer comes from Levinovit. It becomes clear that debates about the limits of tolerance depend on the context. In other words, as DJ Witmer (2020) said, there is no universal line for tolerance. Kanišauskas (2010, 77) mentioned that the tolerance boundary is 'the deviations from the norm as ideal system parameters under which the system can continue its normal (stable) functioning'. According to him, 'All behavior and intentions which encourage large deviations from the constant are considered not tolerated'.

The current situation of religious tolerance is the question of the limit lines of this tolerance where many events are questioned whether it exceeds the tolerance limit or not. For example, greetings from various religions by speakers, singing in church by muslim students, and sharing of food by muslim students in a church. The question that arises is what is the limit of religious tolerance?

From this point, the limit lines of religious tolerance explored here were from *al-Kāfirūn* chapter of the Holy Quran based on Arkoun's semiotic linguistics theory which has become the basis of religious tolerance as the framework of the tolerance limit lines. In addition, the double hermeneutics of Fazlurrahman applied later on.

The chapter *al-Kāfirūn* consists of six verses and is a *Makkiyah* or was sent down in Mecca. It is named *al-Kāfirūn* which means "the disbelievers" because this chapter commands the Messenger of Allah to tell the disbelievers that he will not worship the idols they worship. It is also called *Surah al-'Ibadah* because this chapter proclaims worship only to Allah and not to others that are worshiped by the disbelievers. Another name for this chapter is *Surah ad-Din* as the last verse mentioned. It can also be called *Surah al-Munabadzah* and *al-Muqasyqasyah.* It was named *Muqasyqasyah* or *Muqasyqisyah* (healer) because its content heals and eliminates polytheism.

To the semiotic meanings of this *surah*, the researcher applied Arkoun's Semiotic model. Arkoun provides signs in the semiotic reading of the Holy Qur'an by enriching and expanding it along with anthropological, social, cultural, and political developments. This is intended to free intellectual insight

and consider human social values. Thus, the semiotics of the Qur'an serves as an effort to present the verses of the Qur'an into a more representative form of meaning based on the work of semiotics theoretically and scientifically.

Arkoun's view emphasizes the urgency of linguistic and semiotic methods to understand scripture for dialogue. The holy text of al-Quran must be read, according to Arkoun, through various modern linguistic and semiotic theories to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying 'language' at the birth of a religious text. As a post-modernist thinker, Arkoun (2000) views everything as something that is not regardless of historical context

From a semiotic linguistic perspective, there are several linguistic symbols mentioned in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter such as *ism, fā'il* or the present participle of *al-Kāfirūn*, *fi'il* or the verb *'abada*, the symbols of negation *la*, the symbol of pronoun *ana*, and the restriction of particle *lam* that can all be analyzed. The following is an analysis of the semiotic linguistics of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter as the basis of the concept of religious tolerance from the perspective of the Qur'an. The structural linguistic symbols can be drawn as a basis for determining the limits of religious tolerance in this Quranic perspective of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter. The linguistic symbols in this study refer to morphological form, syntactic structures, and their semantic meanings. The followings are the linguistic symbols found in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter through its verses.

The first is the symbol of *ism al-fā'il* or Arabic present participle. This symbol is mentioned in the first verse of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter.

قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الْكَٰفِرُوْنَ

Qul ya ayyuha al-Kāfirūn'
(Say 'O unbelievers)

The form of the *isim fā'il*, or present participle of *al-Kāfirūn*, has the object of appeal a believer. It means that the object of tolerance is that of the people or the believers, not the religion itself. It means that what is to be tolerated is the social relationship between the followers of religions rather than religion as the subject. In other words, tolerance exists only between religious followers and does not compromise religion or beliefs. That is because faith is final for someone as a believer. For a believer, his or her religion and beliefs are the rightest and the best for him/her.

The second is the symbol of the verb عبد (*abada*/perfect) and *ya'budu* (imperfect) which means 'worship', 'serve', and 'worship' (a God) (Hanswer 1971, 586). The word *'abada* in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter appears with *'fi'il* or verb in Arabic. The verb form is in the second verse of *la a'budu ma ta'budun* that means 'I do not worship what you worship (it).

لَآ اَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ

La 'abudu ma ta'budun
(I serve not what you serve)

The form of the verb shows worship activities. However, this word shows that the worshippers do not engage in worship activities between one religious follower and the other. Thus, one of the lines of religious tolerance limits is on conducting cross-religious activities or other religious rituals.

The third is the symbol of *isim fā'il* or active participle. In addition to the verb form, the word *'abada* in this chapter also appears in the form of *fā'il* or active participle which shows the function of an agent/actor/follower (*fā'iliyyah*) of a religion. The form of *isim fā'il* is found in verse 3 as well as verses 4 and 5:

وَلَاۤ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَاۤ اَعْبُدُ

Wa la antum 'abiduuna ma a'bud
(And you are not serving what I serve)

وَلَاۤ اَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُّمْ

Wa la Ana 'abidun ma 'abadtum
(Nor am I serving what you have served)

وَلَاۤ اَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُوْنَ مَاۤ اَعْبُدُ

Wa la antum 'abiduuna ma a'bud
(Neither are you serving what I serve)

The *isim fā'il* or active participles in the three sentences above are used to inspire that the demarcation line or demarcation limits of religious tolerance is when people become perpetrators of the worship of a religion and/or become 'adherents' of other religions. The adherents here are intended as people who adhere to a religion or have the same beliefs as those of other religions. To equate or to consider all religions as similar so that they exchange and compromise their religious beliefs. Indeed, the tolerance demarcation line limit that can be inferred from this symbol is that Islam does not compromise one religion for others.

Fourth is the symbol of the negation particle of *la*, in *la a'budu* (I serve not) which functions as *la-nafi*, or negation, which means negating something. This means that followers of religion must negate all forms of worship and other religious beliefs in themselves. This is also true whereas other religions also negate the form of worship other than those taught by their religions. This also means not to confuse one religion with other religions in worship rituals and beliefs. Thus, from the symbol of negation, a demarcation line of religious tolerance limits can also be drawn, i.e. not entering worship and other religious beliefs as well as confusing the worship of other religions.

The fifth is the pronoun a*na* or I in English. Viewed from the side of the use of this pronoun in the verse *wala ana 'abidun ma 'abadtum*, when it is referred to personal attitudes, the verse shows that religion is a very private or personal matter. Faith is indeed a private matter that cannot be forced by other parties. On the other hand, when discussing the other person, the word *antum* means 'they' and is used in plural form, this means that the beliefs or religions outside of a person are diverse and varied.

لَكُمْ دِيْنُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِيْنِ

Lakum diinukum waliya diini
(For you, your religion and for me, my religion)

This last verse, *lakum dinikum waliyadīn* (for you your religion, for me my religion), also confirms that religion is a personal matter. The existence of words that means ownership also shows that religion is a personal matter of each person or a life choice of each person. So, the other line of religious tolerance is not to impose one religion and belief on followers of other religions. In addition, the coercion issue is explicitly mentioned in another verse in the Qur'an, such as the surah *al-Baqarah* verse 256 as the following: *la ikraha fiddin qad tayyana rusydu minal ghayy*. There is no coercion in religion because it has clear instructions and error.

Sixth is qasr symbol or the restrictions. The composition of the sentence in the last verse puts the particle *la-* which is a predicate placed before the subject in the verse *lakum dinukum waliya diini* which means 'for you your religion and for me my religion'. Putting the *musnad* predicate ahead of

subjects, in *balaghah* (Arabic rhetoric), has a *qasr* or limitation function (Romly 2018, 552). The verse contains restrictions: 'your religion is *limited* to you, and my religion is *limited* to me. In other words, a person is limited by the religion he adheres to in his beliefs and rituals. Thus, the implications of this restriction are not permitted to confuse the beliefs of one religion and the ritual of one religion with another. From here, it can also be drawn the limits of tolerance is not to mix one religion with another in belief and ritual.

Further, hermeneutically, as Fazlurahman proposed in the double movement approach, that means bringing the problem of the current situation towards the time the Qur'an was revealed and from the time of the Koran back to the problem now (Ulya 2011, 111). Accordingly, one has to search for its meaning when the *surah* was sent down to the Prophet and contextualized to the present. Based on Fazlurahman's theory, the current situation of religious tolerance must be seen, juxtaposed with the context of the revelation of the *al-Kāfirūn* chapter, and then contextualized to contemporary situations.

Based on this model, to get the meaning of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter, it is better to understand the background or reason for sending down (*asbabun nuzul*) of the chapter or verses. Ibn Kathir explains the *asbabun nuzul* of *al-Kāfirūn* chapter in his commentary. That the disbelievers of Quraish once invited the Prophet Muhammad *Sallallaahu 'alaihi wassalam* to worship their idols for one year, then they would worship Allah for one year. So, Allah *Subhanahu wa ta'ala* sent down this letter (Ibnu Katsir 1992, 564).

Ibn Ishaq, narrated from Ibn Abbas, regarding the *asbabun nuzul* of Surah Al Kafirun stated that Walid bin Mughirah, Ash bin Wail, Aswad bin Abdul Muttalib, and Umayyah bin Khalaf met the Prophet Muhammad. They said: "O Muhammad, let us worship the God you worship and you worship the God we worship. We are in this together. If it turns out that your religion is better than ours, we have joined in and taken advantage of us your religion. If it turns out that our religion is better than yours, you have participated and taken advantage of our religion." Such offers are foolish and ridiculous things. Therefore, Allah sent down the *al-Kāfirūn* chapter as a clear answer that the Messenger of Allah broke away from their religion.

Qutub (3990-3993) in *Tafsir Fi Dhilalil Quran* explains that Arabs do not deny the existence of Allah. However, they do not understand His essence to associate partners with Him. They worship idols that they make to represent righteous people or angels who mediate closer to Allah. They considered angels to be daughters of God.

They were surprised when the Prophet preached monotheism, to worship only Allah. They also opposed his *da'wah* (religious teaching spread) in various ways. After failing to stop the Prophet from harming him, they offered him wealth and position. When that too failed, they resorted to compromise by offering cooperation by worshiping their Lord together for one year and then the following year for worshiping Allah. Allah then sent down *al-Kāfirūn* chapter as the answer (Qutub n.d., 3990-3993).

From the description above, it can be concluded that from the semiotic linguistics perspective, five linguistic symbols can be used as inspiration to determine the limits of religious tolerance, namely symbols of verbs, *isim fā'il* or active participle, the negation of *lam*, pronoun *ana*, and predicate structures that take precedence.

These symbols indicate that the essential limits of religious tolerance are the belief and the rituals as demarcation line limits of religious tolerance. From

this line, any activity will be regarded as going beyond the limits of religious tolerance, according to the chapter of *al-Kāfirūn* are: (1) compromising the religious faith; (2) compromising the religious ritual activities; and (3) imposing religion on others. Those are, at least, the limits of tolerance in religion inspired by *al-Kāfirūn* chapter from a semiotic linguistic perspective.

The Application of Religious Tolerance Limits to Contemporary Issues

Several issues are always actual and become public issues including the polemics of religious greeting in opening speech, congratulating other religious holidays, and singing in a church by muslim students. The following is a review of these activities from the perspective of tolerance limits in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter verses.

The Polemics of Religious Greeting in Opening Speech

Some Indonesian public figures greet the audience by combining all religious greetings when they have a public speech such as *Assalamu'alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakatuh*, as a greeting to Muslims; *Salam sejahtera untuk kita semua*, as a greeting to Christians; *Om swastyastu*, as a greeting to Hindus; *Namo Buddhaya*, as a greeting to Buddhists; and *Salam kebajikan*, as a greeting to Confucians. All of these greetings are always used by several officials at every opportunity, including President Joko Widodo. This is to respect all religious adherents.

This greeting becomes a polemic among people. This is regarded as mixing religious rituals among religions. Among others, East Java Ulama Council hoped that people do not mix religious greetings in public speaking but people have to greet others by using the greeting from that of the speaker's religious belief.

In the view of Islam, greetings are respect as well as prayers for safety and goodness. Islam is a religion of peace and encourages its people to spread peace (*ifsyaa'u al-salaam*) to anyone, either muslims or non-muslims. The relations with non-muslims are built on the principles of kindness and justice. There is no prohibition against being good and fair to those who do not fight and are hostile (*al-Mumtahanah*, 8). Even in the Quran surah *al-Zukhruf* (89), muslims are ordered to be tolerant and say greetings to others. Prophet Ibrahim, as an example for us (*al-Mumtahanah*, 4), also once said greetings to his father who disbelieved (*Maryam*, 47). Several statements from the Qur'an are strong instructions for the famous cleric, Sufyan bin Uyaynah, to say that it is permissible to greet unbelievers.

However, greetings to non-muslims has become an issue of the caliphate. Some circles forbid it with the argument of the Prophet's hadith which states, "Don't start greeting Jews and Christians. When they meet on the road, narrow the space for movement" (Muslim). Judging from the context (*sabab al-wurūd*), the hadith is stated in a war situation when the Prophet and the muslims wanted to besiege the Banu Quraizhah Jews for violating the peace treaty. Therefore, in a peaceful situation—the scholars of *al-salaf al-shālih*—from the generation of companions onwards, allow greetings to non-muslims. The Prophet himself once said greetings to a group of people consisting of muslims and non-muslims (Jews and polytheists) (Al-Bukhari).

When someone reminded him that it was forbidden to say the greeting *salam* to non-muslims, the Prophet's companion, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, said: "They have the right because they have accompanied me on my journey". Another friend, Abu Umamah al-Bahiliy, always said greetings whenever he met people, either muslim or non-muslim. He said that religion teaches us to always spread the greetings of peace (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, 11/111). According to

him, the greeting is respect for fellow muslims, and a guarantee of security for non-muslims who live side by side (Bahjat al-Majālis, Ibn Abd al-Barr n.d, 160).

Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751 H), a scholar known to be conservative in relations with non-muslims, mentions several names that allow greetings for non-Muslims, including Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn Abbas, Abu Umamah, al-Nakha 'i and others. In his view, it is permissible to start greeting them if there is an urgent mutual benefit (*mashlahah rājihah*) due to kinship, neighbors, or other factors. "Your greeting means following the *salaf-salih* scholars. No greetings also follow the righteous *salaf* 'traditional' scholars", he concluded, quoting Imam al-Awza'iy (Zaad al-Ma'aad 2, 388).

Although a religious greeting has a religious meaning, it is not a religious ritual and it is proposed for creating harmony among people with different religions. It does not become beyond the religious tolerance limit line inspired by *al-Kāfirūn* chapter. Even though, it is suggested to use a more general greeting that is not containing religious symbols.

Saying Congratulations on the Holidays of Other Religions

As a pluralistic nation, the Indonesian people embrace diverse religions. There are at least six religions officially acknowledged by the government of Indonesia namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucian. Every religion has its religious holidays. In a pluralistic society that cannot be denied, Indonesian people live in this religiously diverse community in a pluralistic society so that if a religious community commemorates their religious feast the other religious communities congratulate them as a sign of respect or mere harmony.

Congratulations on religious holidays are for example: 'Congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr' or 'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year'. Such remarks are still debatable whether these are beyond the lines of religious tolerance limits or not. Some people argue that saying congratulation on religious days is included in other religious beliefs. Is that the case?

Judging from the limits of religious tolerance as described by the author from the study of semiotic linguistics of the verses in *al-Kāfirūn* chapter, the greetings of religious holidays for followers of other religions in the context of social harmony is not beyond the limits of religious tolerance. This is because by saying congratulations on another religious holiday, someone does not necessarily have the same belief about the celebration or content of the religious celebration.

Singing Events in a Church by Muslim Students

The event of singing in a church performed by muslim students became viral. This can be seen from five factors: locus, media, actors/institutions, society, and content. In terms of locus, the event took place in a church. Humans are homo-symbolism. Humans are symbolic beings or creatures that cannot be separated from the world of symbols. Church is a symbol of the place of worship for Christianity. So, people will easily assume that all church activities are Christianity rituals. This assumption is the trigger why the crowd is agitated to know that a group of muslim students sing some songs in the church, regardless of the kinds of songs sung by those students and in what sessions they performed.

The second is the media. The media plays a very significant role that neutralizing this choir activity. The spread of this news cannot be separated from the role of the media. The chorus starts from the post of a person of the congregation who posted the choir to his Facebook and YouTube which then

spred rapidly, became viral, and caused a reaction in national and even global circles.

Third, from the institutional side of the SMC IAIN, the Muslim Student Choir Group. They are identified as students of Salatiga State Institutes of Islamic Studies (IAIN Salatiga), a symbol of Islamic religious institutions, so it is considered by most people that they represent IAIN Salatiga as an institution of Islamic Higher Education. It is the Integration of locus and institution

Fourth, in terms of the content of the songs to be sung, Fredric Nietzsche's *Day by Day* song is considered a ritual song offering with the lyrics as follow:

Day by day
Day by day
Oh, Dear Lord
Three things I pray
To see thee more clearly
Love thee more dearly
Follow thee more nearly
Day by day

Because the song is in English, not everyone immediately understands and assumes that the song is a *Kidung* or specific hymn for certain religious rituals, so the chorus group appears to violate the limits of religious tolerance. Does the choir violate the demarcation of religious tolerance? Based on the demarcation limits as inspired by *al-Kāfirūn* chapter above, it can be seen from the side of activities and actors. In terms of activity based on the recognition of the Students Choir Group of SMC, they sang songs in entertainment sessions or moments that were not ritual songs or ritual activities from Christianity, if this is not a ritual then they did not violate the demarcation limits of religious tolerance. It can be seen from the fact that when the campus music group SMC sings, the church members take a photo of the choir. This shows that the choir was not performing a ritual procession.

Secondly, they did not automatically become Christians when carrying out the choir so that the singers did not violate the demarcation of religious tolerance limits. Furthermore, when singing the song, the religious symbols contained in the song content were universal, as Lord was referred to by the word 'God', and not Jesus. Thee or "You" is not Jesus or the Messiah, so it does not automatically a verbatim saying of any religious rituals. The song is a universal song that can be interpreted subjectively by the singer. The author believes that when singing the song students are not in a position to dictate Jesus or God based on Christian beliefs and not embrace being Christian but limited to mere human friendships.

CONCLUSIONS It can be concluded that through the semiotic linguistic perspective, five linguistic symbols can be used as an inspiration to determine the boundaries of religious tolerance limits, namely *isim fā'il* form (active participle), verbs, the negation of *la*, personal pronoun *ana* (I), and predicate structures that take precedence. These symbols indicate that the limits of religious tolerance are the belief and the ritual. From this limit, the activities suggested in order not to go beyond the religious tolerance limit are: (1) not attaching the religion or the belief system of the religion; (2) not in the area of other religious ritual and worship activities; (3) not included in the territory of the other faiths, (4) not

imposing religion on others nor negating the worship of other religions, (5) not confusing rituals and religious beliefs. Those are at least the limits of tolerance in religion inspired by *al-Kāfirūn* chapter from a semiotic linguistics perspective.

Second, from the perspective of religious tolerance limits from *al-Kāfirūn* chapter, polemics of greeting with all religious styles are not going beyond the religious tolerance boundaries, but it is supposed to be changed into the general model of greeting. Likewise, congratulations on religious holidays and entertainment songs in the church do not violate the normative limits of religious tolerance as well This article is only a semiotic linguistic study through readable linguistic symbols, other studies from a sociological, anthropological, and political perspective are also needed to be carried out to clarify the discourse of religious tolerance in Salatiga as the city of tolerance, in particular, and Indonesia and the world in general.

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