

## HERMENEUTICS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF QUR'AN

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### Abstract

Hermeneutics, as a new method of interpreting the Qur'an, is expected to be able to reveal things that cannot be known with other forms of interpretation. The author strives for this research to examine various hermeneutical method approaches in Islamic studies. The technique used in this research is a literature study. The results obtained from this research are that hermeneutics can be interpreted as an interpretation method that pays attention to the context of the words of a text and the cultural context of thought. Hermeneutics is considered to have a distinctive characteristic, namely the development of contextualization values of a text to be studied. Hermeneutics in the Islamic study of the interpretation of the Al-Qur'an finds the correspondence between the verses of the Al Qur'an in science. Also, it shows the miracles of the Al-Qur'an and its glory.

**Keywords:** Al-Qur'an, Islamic Studies, Hermeneutics

## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an is a reminder of life for Muslims. The Qur'an not only discusses the relationship between man and God but also the relationship between man and others, as well as man and nature. There are many methods of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an, such as *dirayah* and *riwayah*. Through many of these methods, things hidden from the Qur'an can be seen so that the guidance of human life becomes clear and directed.

Along with the development of the times and science in the world, a method of interpretation emerged from philosophy, namely hermeneutics (Sidik & Putri Sulistyana Universitas Muhammadiyah HAMKA, n.d.). Hermeneutics is a new method of interpreting the Qur'an, which is expected to reveal things that cannot be known through previous methods of interpretation (S. Busyra, 2021). Moreover, this hermeneutics is also likely to be able to interpret other Islamic texts.

Hermeneutics is not a new scientific study; in the history of its development, hermeneutics is no longer just limited to the study of understanding texts. In the 17th and 18th centuries, hermeneutics gave rise to ideas about linguistic, philosophical, and other scientific discourses, which led to hermeneutics becoming a scientific study in the 20th century. On the other hand, hermeneutics in interpretive methods can also give rise to contradictions, considering that hermeneutics is a science that does not originate from Islamic civilisation. Hermeneutics is regarded as an "intruder" in Islamic scholarship and can potentially destroy Islam from within. This has attracted interest in writing about various hermeneutical approaches in Islamic studies.

## METHODS

The type of research used in this research is qualitative research with a literature study. Qualitative research is research presented descriptively (Muhammad Fauzi Noor, 2023). A literature study is a chain of activities related to library data collection methods, reading, notes, and research processing (I Yuliarta & Rahmat H.K, 2021). The data used as a reference in this research is primary and secondary data through data sources in the form of documents, which consist of journals and books.

**RESULTS**

Here the author tries to briefly present the table framework in preparing the content of writing regarding the hermeneutical method in the interpretation of the Al-Qur'an. As follows.

**Table 1.** Division of Hermeneutical Methods in Tafsir of the Qur'an

Hermeneutic	Focus		Cause Appears	
	Data explore the ontological status of efforts to understand	Critical hermeneutic philosophy of language is to	Relativism of interpretation and deconstruction of Sharia	Rejecting the authority of Mufassir
Hermeneutics Philosophy	Which focuses its discussion on tracing the ontological status of efforts to understand			
Hermeneutic Theory	Which focuses its discussion on methodology			
Hermeneutic Critical	Hermeneutic Critical			

**1. Resume About Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics comes from Greek, from the verb hermeneutic, which means to interpret, and the noun hermeneia, which means interpretation. The word hermies refers to a wise Delphic priest. These three words (hermeneutic, hermeneia, and Hermes) are associated with the Greek God Hermes, who was considered the messenger of the gods to humans. Hermes was associated as a transmitter of messages from the gods so that they could be captured by human intelligence (M. Khoiroh, 2012). The association of Hermeneutics with Hermes, according to Faiz (2005), shows that three elements ultimately become the main variables in human activities, namely signs, messages, or texts, which become sources or materials in interpretation that are associated with messages brought by Hermes, intermediaries or interpreters (Hermes), and the delivery of the statement by the intermediary so that it can be understood and reached the recipient.

The term hermeneutics was first found in the works of Plato. Plato clearly stated that hermeneutics means showing something (S. Saifuddin, 2020). Hermeneutical thinking was developed in Christian theology in the Middle Ages, brought by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Its emergence, which was preceded by the transmission of Aristotle's works into Islamic thought, indicates the strong influence of Aristotle and Muslim Aristotelian thought, especially al-Farabi (870-950 AD), Ibn Sina (980-1037 AD) and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198 AD). In his work *Summa Theologia*, Aristotle shows tendencies towards naturalistic philosophy. Literal understanding refers more to Aristotle's hermeneutics in his *Fairy Hermenias*. The aim is to structure Christian theology to meet the standards of scientific formulation and simultaneously, represent its rejection of allegorical interpretation (Zarkasyi, 2006). Later in its development, Hermeneutics was used among some Protestant Christian scholars around 1654 AD. They were those who were dissatisfied with the church's interpretation of the texts of the Old and New Testaments (M. Quraish Shihab, 2013); Muara et al., 2021). Experts divide Hermeneutics into three types: Hermeneutics focuses on language in its methodology.

- a. The focus of the hermeneutic philosophy of language is to explore the ontological status of efforts to understand.
- b. Critical hermeneutic philosophy of language is to

According to Gadamer, Hermeneutics is not only defined as the art of exegesis, but more than that as a discipline that discusses methodical aspects that can theoretically justify the activity of an interpretation. (HG Gadamer, 2006)

As an approach, hermeneutics is currently very popular with academics, critics, writers, sociologists, historians and philosophers. They specifically use this hermeneutics to be used as study material, understanding material, and material for interpreting sacred biblical texts, such as the Bible and the Al-Qur'an. (Edi Susanto, 2016)

Because there are so many methods of interpretation in contemporary times, hermeneutics also plays a big role in offering itself as a variable method of understanding the holy book of the Al-Qur'an, for example to show the attractiveness of hermeneutics as an extraordinary thing. In his own writing entitled *Religious Dialogue and Revolution*, Hassan Hanafi explains that hermeneutics is not just a science but is also a science that explains the reception of revelation from the verbal level to the world level. This science

also discusses the process of revelation from letter to reality, from logos to praxis and also transforms revelation from God's mind to human life (Hassan Hanafi, 1994).

The special terminology used to indicate an interpretive activity within the scope of Islamic scholarship is tafsir. Tafsir among Muslims is usually understood as a scientific discipline that generally discusses matters related to the Al-Qur'an that deepens its meaning and content in accordance with human abilities. (Jalal al-DIn Abdurrahman bin Abi Bakr-al-suyuti, 1988).

As far as the author can convey, hermeneutics is an interpretive method that teaches researchers to understand and interpret texts correctly and accurately. Hermeneutics has a scope and object of discussion that covers all research objects in the social sciences and humanities (including language or texts, symbols and human behavior) (Sahiron Syamsuddin, 2017).

## **2. Reviews in Hermeneutical Studies**

In hermeneutics, is generally agreed that the broad scope of hermeneutics revolves around three things, namely the world of the text, the world of the author, and the world of the reader, or what is usually called triadic hermeneutic (Budiyanto, 2020; Adri et al., 2020; Muara et al., 2021). Hermeneutics talks about almost everything related to these three things: text, reading, understanding, the purpose of writing, context, historical situation, and the paradigmatic situation or condition of the reader's or author's meaning.

Although in its development, hermeneutics was used in various scientific studies, in short, hermeneutics can be interpreted as a method of interpretation that pays attention to the context of the words (of a text) and the cultural context of thought. Hermeneutics can also be interpreted as an interpretation method that can understand the content and meaning of a word, sentence, or text and find instructions in symbols (Taufiq & Ilham, 2021).

## **3. Hermeneutics in The Tafsir of Qur'an**

According to history, hermeneutics arose out of doubts about the authenticity of the Bible, so there was an insistence on rationalisation pioneered by Greek philosophy at that time. They believe the Bible was not written by Jesus, who is believed to be Jesus, nor did his disciples write it, but was written by people who never met Jesus. In the New

Testament, there is the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, and so on. Thus, the Bible is the work of its writers, and God revealed his revelation to the writers of revelation in the form of inspiration. This distinguishes it from the Al-Qur'an, which has yet to experience problems in terms of history. Al-Qur'an has a clear record and sanad and has been memorised by companions under the guidance of the Prophet SAW. Al-Qur'an has many lines of narration. While the Bible, in addition to its single narration (Sunday), which was brought by one person, Johannes, Markus, Luke, and Mathius, the narration of the Bible is also mural, the sanad is broken because they never met the Prophet 'Isa directly. Because there are differences between the Qur'an and the Bible, as mentioned above, hermeneutics in interpreting the Qur'an must also be adapted to these differences. The Al-Qur'an cannot be understood as a human-made text, which may change according to the conditions of time and place; instead, the Al-Qur'an should be understood as kalamullah appropriate to every situation of time and place (S. Fahimah, 2019).

This also does not limit Hermeneutics to the position of humans as interpreters so that the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an is no longer dependent on revelation, hadith, or atsar. Hermeneutics is considered to have a distinctive characteristic, namely the development of contextualisation values of a text to be studied. Hermeneutics explores meaning by considering clear boundaries surrounding the text, with the meaning being the text, author, reader, or interpreter (Syamsul Wathani, 2016).

The role of hermeneutics in Islamic studies through the study of interpretations of the Al-Qur'an is to find conformity between the verses of the Al-Qur'an and science, which also shows the miracles of the Al-Qur'an and its glory. It is hoped that the existence of a hermeneutical method that is by the rules of interpretation of the Al-Qur'an can increase knowledge of the interpretation of the Al-Qur'an (Hasbiyallah, 2018; M. Miski et al., 2021; S. Bary & Z. Zakirman, 2020)

#### **4. Hermeneutics as a Method of Interpretation**

Hermeneutics is not just interpretation but rather a separate "method of interpretation" or a philosophy of understanding, which can be very different from the Al-Qur'an's interpretation. In Christian circles today, using hermeneutics in Biblical interpretation is common but also causes debate. From the definition above, it is clear that the use of hermeneutics in interpreting the Qur'an cannot be separated from the Christian

tradition. Unfortunately, this tradition is used by hermeneutics to deconstruct the Qur'an and its methods of interpretation (Muhammad Shahrur, 2004)

Hermeneutics, as a method of interpretation, does not only look at the text; what cannot be left behind is also trying to understand its literal meaning. More than that, he tries to explore meaning by considering the horizons surrounding the text, both the author's horizon, the reader's horizon, and the text's horizon. In other words, as an interpretive method, hermeneutics considers three main components in interpretive activities: text, context, and contextualization.

According to Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd in his book, "Inclusive Hermeneutics", the basic problem studied by hermeneutics is the problem of interpreting texts in general, whether in the form of historical or religious texts. Therefore, we want to solve a much more complex problem woven around the text's basic nature and its relationship to al-turāts on the one hand and text relationships on the other. The most important of the many issues above is that hermeneutics concentrates on relationships with text. (Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd, 2004) He believes that the Qur'an is a text in the form of language. It is impossible for Islamic Arab civilization to forget the centralization of readers. He said Islamic Arab principles, sciences, and culture grew and stood on texts.

However, the text could only do something with human intervention. This means the reader can only develop Arabic Islamic civilization and science if it receives the touch of human thought. In other words, religion as a text will not function if humans do not consider its existence. Therefore, he believes that the development of Islam depends on the dialectical relationship between humans and their dimensions of reality on the one hand and texts on the other. Here, it is clear that Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd considers that Islam and the Qur'an must continue to be dialectical and keep up with changing times, not only at a practical level but also at a conceptual level, including concepts regarding methods of interpretation.

Moreover, Nasr Hamid and other hermeneuts view the Qur' as a cultural product, not the 'Kalam of Allah,' so it cannot be separated from the context—cultural soso Arab society when the Qur'an was revealed (critical history). Nasr Hamid's method of interpretation, which releases the position of the Qur'anic text from 'Kalam Allah,' can be seen from his criticism of the interpretation method of the Ahlu Sunnah by concluding: (1) The correct interpretation according to the Ahlussunnah, past and present, is the

interpretation based on the authority of previous scholars; (2) The fundamental error in the attitude of the Ahlussunnah, past and present, is the attempt to attribute the "meaning of the text" and its 'dalālah' to the time of the prophethood, treatises, and revelation. This is not only a mistake of "understanding" but also an expression of his ideological attitude towards reality—an attitude that relies on backwardness, anti-progress, and anti progressiveness. Therefore, the Ahlussunnah organizes the main sources for interpreting the Qur'an into four things: the explanation of the Prophet, the companions, the tabi'in, and finally, the linguistic interpretation.

So, when the concept of the Qur'anic text is dismantled and released from its position as 'Kalam Allah,' the Qur'an will be treated as a 'language text' and 'cultural product' so that it can be understood through historical studies without paying attention to how the Messenger of Allah and his companions interpreted or applied it—the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in their lives. By dismantling the Qur'an as 'Kalam Allah,' it is possible to use the hermeneutical method to understand the Qur'an. This method allows the interpretation of the Qur'an to be biased and can be adapted to the demands of dominant (Western) cultural values.(Adnan Husaini & Henri Shalahuddin, 2004) As a result, concepts are emerging, such as 1) Relativism of interpretation and deconstruction of Sharia and 2) Rejecting the authority of Mufassir.

## CONCLUSION

From the article above, the author tries to conclude that hermeneutics can be interpreted as a method of interpretation that pays attention to the words of a text and the cultural context of thought. Hermeneutics is also divided into three, namely, hermeneutic theory, which focuses its discussion on methodology; hermeneutic philosophy, which focuses its discussion on tracing the ontological status of efforts to understand; and critical hermeneutics, which emphasizes its discussion regarding efforts to uncover the causes of distortion in understanding. Hermeneutics is also characterized by developing the contextualization value of a text to be studied. Hermeneutics in Islamic studies through interpretation of the Qur'an finds compatibility between the verses of the Qur'an and science, which also shows the miracle of the Qur'an and its glory. From the article above, the author tries to conclude that hermeneutics can be interpreted as a method of interpretation that pays attention to the words of a text and the cultural context of thought.



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