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## Hermeneutics in Tafsir Al-Quran: Discourse Approach in Interpretation of the Qur'an

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<b>Abstract :</b>	This paper wants to elaborate on the fundamental problems in studying hermeneutics with the problem of interpreting texts, both historical and religious texts. The method used is discourse analysis. The problems that will be tried to be solved are the problems surrounding the text about tradition on the one hand and to the author on the other. The most important of all is how not to disrupt the relationship between the interpreter and the text. This relationship between the interpreter and the text is a serious problem and is the starting point for hermeneutic philosophers. The effort to dynamize interpretation certainly still has hope. It can be done by conducting a critical analysis with a scalpel that has the power to trace the essence of interpretation and takwil, the history of its development, and the mapping of methods and various styles of interpretation. This critical analysis will lead the activists of interpretation to the condition and objective position of interpretation. This strategy is then followed by conducting an elaborative and comprehensive study of hermeneutics.
<b>Keywords :</b>	Hermeneutics; Tafsir al-Qur'an; Discourse Analysis
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### A. Introduction

The development of the era is currently increasingly rapid. It has entered the modern era by creating various views on the interpretation of the Quran, so controversial themes about the interpretation of the Quran have emerged. Hermeneutics is a philosophical study as well as a method of interpretation; in fact, it is not something new in the country. Because books and journals discussing it have been published since the 90s. In addition, some circles of

hermeneutics are viewed with suspicion because it comes from the West and is used to analyze the Bible.

Hermeneutics is defined as a set of rules or patterns that an interpreter must follow to understand a text.<sup>1</sup> However, in its historical journey, hermeneutics has not only been used to understand texts, especially sacred religious texts. Still, it has also been extended to all forms of texts, including literature, works of art, and community traditions. In this case, we can see that the increasingly complex interpretation of the Qur'an and the development of the times is something that cannot be avoided. So, the interpretation that should be centered on the Qur'an and Sunnah is the wise path.

The main task of hermeneutics is to interpret a classic text or a completely foreign text that belongs to people living in a different time, place, and cultural atmosphere. There is an expression that thinking cannot be separated from language, and the existence of different languages will give birth to different products of thought.<sup>2</sup>

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Understanding Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics is linguistically taken from the Greek term *hermeneutic*.<sup>3</sup> Which means to interpret while *hermeneia* as its derivative means interpretation. Both words are associated with a figure named Hermes or Hermeios who in ancient Greek mythology is considered a messenger of the Gods of Olympus who is tasked with delivering and translating the messages of the gods into a language that can be understood by humans. According to history, hermeneutics refers to the name Hermes who has the task of explaining to humans God's commands to them.

It is said that Hermes was faced with a difficult problem when he had to convey Zeus's message to humans, namely how to explain Zeus's language which uses the language of the sky so that it can be understood by humans using the language of the earth. Finally, with all his intelligence, Hermes interpreted Zeus's language into human language so that it became a sacred text.<sup>4</sup> In the tradition of perennial philosophy, there is a strong suspicion that the figure of Hermes is the Prophet Idris mentioned in the Quran. According to the story circulating in Islamic boarding schools, he was known as a weaver or spinner.<sup>5</sup> He was also the first person to know technical and medical writings, namely a messenger who had

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<sup>1</sup> Soleh, A. K. (2011). Membandingkan Hermeneutika dengan Ilmu Tafsir. *Tsaqafah*, 7(1), 31-50.

<sup>2</sup> Malik, R. A. K. (2019). Hermeneutika al-Qur'an dan debat tafsir modern: implementasinya dengan masa kini. *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 6(1), 56-76.

<sup>3</sup> Mukmin Taufik, Metode Hermeneutika Dan Permasalahannya Dalam Metode Penafsiran Al-Quran, *Jurnal EL-Ghiroh*, Vol.16, No.1, Februari 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Izza, V. (2021). Double Movement: Hermeneutika Alquran Fazlur Rahman. *Jurnal Keislaman*, 4(2), 127-143.

<sup>5</sup> Kau Sofyan A.P., Hermeneutika Gadamer Dan Relevansinya Dengan Tafsir, *Jurnal Farabi*, Vol.11, No.2, Desember 2014.

the task of delivering Jupiter's message to humans. Hermes is depicted as someone who has winged feet and is better known as Mercurius in Latin.

If associated with the Greek mythology of the god Hermes, then both have a positive correlation, namely spinning or arranging in the sense of arranging words and meanings that come from God so that they are later easily understood by humans. So, the word Hermeneutics which is taken from the role of Hermes is a science and art of building meaning through rational and imaginative interpretation of raw materials in the form of texts.

#### A. Operationalization of Hermeneutics

##### 1. Processing Text

Hermeneutics is a part of linguistic philosophy, meaning that the main focus of hermeneutics is how to understand the language contained in a text or something that is considered a text. When processing a text, the first concern of hermeneutics is its linguistic aspect. Linguistic analysis is indeed very necessary because it is the first step that certainly cannot be ignored in interpreting the Qur'an, namely understanding the text, namely seeing it in its linguistic aspect, Arabic. Without attention to the text, an interpreter will certainly get the wrong understanding and impression so that his explanation of the verse will be wrong, or at least he will make unfounded conclusions.

##### 2. Understanding Text

An exploration of the meaning of a text that only stops at the content of the text without wanting to see the background and historical setting behind the text will ultimately lead to partial understanding and inaccurate interpretation. In hermeneutical terms, the text does not stand alone, it is very dependent on the existence of the contexts that surround it, both in terms of form and content.<sup>6</sup>

##### 3. Contextualization

Understanding the Qur'an in its context as explained above, will be a study that is purely academic if it is not projected to meet contemporary needs. The need for contextualization in the sense of an effort to apply the meaning of the text understood from a discourse in a certain context in the past with a different context in the present.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Can the Koran be interpreted based on hermeneutics?

The word tafsir from the Arabic "fassara" means explanation (ibanaah) or revealing something that is still closed. According to al-Zarkasyi, tafsir is a science used to understand the Al-Quran, explain its meanings, and convey its laws and wisdom. <sup>8</sup>The Al-Quran is a revelation that Allah sent down to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, and as a revelation revelation of the Al-

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<sup>6</sup> Ibrahim, S. (2014). Hermeneutika Teks: Sebuah Wacana Dalam Metode Tafsir Alquran?. *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 11(1), 23-41.

<sup>7</sup> Marhaban, M. (2017). Memahami Teks Alquran dengan Pendekatan Hermeneutika (sebuah Analisis Filosofis). *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an dan Tafsir*, 2(1), 30-42..

<sup>8</sup> Soleh, A. K. (2011). Membandingkan Hermeneutika dengan Ilmu Tafsir. *Tsaqafah*, 7(1), 31-50.

Quran had a mini-effort to be used as a guide, which then after approximately 23 years was recorded in a Mushaf mutawatir.

In the context of the Qur'an, according to al-Dzahabi, a person must fulfill certain requirements before interpreting. Among others, (1) mastering Arabic grammar, starting from nahwu, sharaf, balaghah, and so on; (2) mastering the sciences that assist reasoning, such as ushûl a-fiqh, ulûm al-qur'an, qira'ah science and so on; (3) understanding religious teachings and doctrines, such as ushûl al-dîn; (4) understanding the history and historical situation of the revelation of verses (asbâb al-nuzûl); (5) understanding the hadiths that are used as material for interpretation. These requirements must be fulfilled and mastered so that a person can understand the holy text correctly.

In the study before the arrival of hermeneutics, interpretations were known to be used technically in the sense of exegesis among Muslims from the 5th century to the present. According to Farid Esack in his book *Quran: Pluralism and Liberation*, the practice of hermeneutics has been carried out by Muslims for a long time. The existence of meaning about how to understand the Quran according to Islamic tradition, Ibn 'Arabi believes that the text of the Quran contains a very deep and infinite meaning. Every word in the Quran has an infinite meaning, all of which are willed by God.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, the Qur'an can be interpreted religiously according to the experience of the diversity of each interpreter. In this case, hermeneutics tends to be used in interpreting the Bible. So if this hermeneutics is used for the method of interpreting the Qur'an, it gets pros and cons for interpreters. It is important to explain further regarding the arguments built by each interpreter. Hermeneutic figures such as Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Gadamer, and others view religion as a form of interpretation of interpretation.

In such conditions, it is very logical if conceptually hermeneutics suggests that no text cannot be interpreted by hermeneutics. This is where it differs from the science of interpretation, where it is taught that not all texts (verses) of the Qur'an can be understood clearly.<sup>10</sup> In this context, 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abbas who holds the title of "spokesman of the Qur'an" emphasized that the interpretation of the Qur'an is divided into four categories. First, it can be known generally through Arabic. Second, there is no reason not to know it like the verses about halal and haram. Third, it can only be understood by scholars. Fourth, only Allah knows its meaning.

The hermeneutic interpretation method should be part of one of the interpretation approaches in the modern era today, although this approach has many pros and cons, even so, groups that accept and reject hermeneutics have the same goal, namely to explain the intent and message of the Qur'an as a book of guidance for mankind that is appropriate at all times and places. As for those who accept, they try to ground the teachings of the Qur'an according to its context. Those who reject feel obliged to apply the Qur'an in the lives of Muslims

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<sup>9</sup> Ibrahim, S. (2014). Hermeneutika Teks: Sebuah Wacana Dalam Metode Tafsir Alquran?. *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 11(1), 23-41.

<sup>10</sup> Malik, R. A. K. (2019). Hermeneutika al-Qur'an dan debat tafsir modern: implementasinya dengan masa kini. *AT-TURAS: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 6(1), 56-76.

throughout time, as has been understood by scholars literally, and maintain a genuine and very established method that has been formulated by the salafus shalih, namely the method of interpretation and takwil which cannot be equated with hermeneutics.<sup>11</sup>

In this case, there are no specific hermeneutical rules in interpreting texts. But some important points must be known in hermeneutical interpretation. Among them are the following:

- 1) First, the text has its form, regardless of the author/writer of the text. It is not important to know the author's purpose. If it is associated with the owner of the text, then the text has been shackled to one particular meaning only, no more than that meaning, even though the author has died.
- 2) The interpreter's insight, ideas, and knowledge have a very large role in determining meaning.
- 3) Hermeneutics argues that the author is an interpreter and his understanding is one of many interpretations, which is not stronger than the interpretation of any other figure.
- 4) The text has a broader meaning than the author's intention and it is possible that the text has another interpretation that was not intended by the author, it is even possible that the text has an understanding that continues to develop and always changes with each era.
- 5) The process of interpretation is a dialogue between the interpreter and the text. Understanding emerges as the dialogue takes place. The dialogue begins with the interpreter's questions, assumptions, and unanswered assumptions and predictions, and he may find the answers after interpreting the text.<sup>12</sup>

In an interpretation, there needs to be contextualization and not just text and context.<sup>13</sup> Namely, how texts produced and originating from the past can be understood and useful for the present. As for the interpretation of hermeneutics in the context of the Qur'an, it is often considered confusing. This is because hermeneutics emerged from the Western tradition, in which many were produced by non-Muslims.<sup>14</sup> The Qur'an as the holy book of Islam cannot simply accept the methods used by Westerners. That is why hermeneutics needs to be further explained regarding its meaning and application. And hermeneutics is not only understood as a Western product but is experienced more broadly about the contextualization of the text of the Qur'an. So the meaning of the Qur'an which

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<sup>11</sup> Ibrahim, S. (2022). Indikasi Penyimpangan dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Ilmiah al-Jauhari: jurnal Studi Islam dan Interdisipliner*, 7(1), 123-142.

<sup>12</sup> Habibie, M. L. H. (2016). Hermeneutika dalam Kajian Islam. *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 1(1), 211-242..

<sup>13</sup> Habibie, M. L. H. (2016). Hermeneutika dalam Kajian Islam. *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 1(1), 211-242..

<sup>14</sup> Ibrahim, S. (2014). Hermeneutika Teks: Sebuah Wacana Dalam Metode Tafsir Alquran?. *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 11(1), 23-41.

is still rarely understood by people, with hermeneutics will make it easier for people to understand it.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that the use of hermeneutic methods in interpreting the Qur'an is included in the category of turning away from the Qur'an. The hermeneutic method is the main reason why the Qur'an will not be understood as understood by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions as role models in understanding and practicing Islam. The results of using the hermeneutic method are often contrary to the basic principles of Islam. The use of hermeneutics also means following the orientalist who are infidels against the Qur'an, so there is no doubt that the use of the hermeneutic method in interpreting the Qur'an will go astray, *kal ā mullah* the noble.

Examples of interpretations of Quranic verses using the hermeneutic method:

Allah says in the Koran surah al-Maidah verse: 3 which reads:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالِدَمُّ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ

Translation:

" Forbidden to you (are) carrion, blood, the flesh of swine, (the flesh of animals) slaughtered in the name of other than Allah.

The meaning of the verse above in the context of the verse according to the socio-historical review is that pigs are forbidden because in Arabia the animal is rare so it will make it difficult for someone to get it and will make the price expensive, even though if seen from the current context, this animal is one of the most profitable animals when viewed from a livestock perspective even though various diseases cause many harms, but in contextualization, it can be overcome as long as the context supports it.

Analysis:, if we look further into this verse, it is not mentioned who forbids the foods mentioned in it. This shows that it is not only because every Muslim must know that the only one who has the authority to forbid is Allah SWT, but also to indicate that what will be mentioned below is so bad that anyone would be disgusted. Furthermore, in the verse above, only pork is explicitly included with the word meat when its prohibition is explained, although in essence what is forbidden is the meat of the others. Tahir bin `Asyur, a follower of the Malik school of thought, thinks that the coupling indicates that what is forbidden is eating pork, because when the word meat is mentioned, eating it comes to mind.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. The Koran is not a cultural product

According to Quraish Shihab's view, the Qur'an is the word of Allah that cannot be touched by falsehood and error from any aspect. In this case, Shihab criticized the view of a Muslim hermeneutic, Nasr Hamid Abu Zayid, who put forward a fairly controversial idea, namely that the Qur'an is a cultural product.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibrahim, S. (2022). Indikasi Penyimpangan dalam Penafsiran al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Ilmiah al-Jauhari: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Interdisipliner*, 7(1), 123-142.

<sup>16</sup> Mukmin, T. (2019). Metode Hermeneutika Dan Permasalahannya Dalam Penafsiran Al-Quran. *El-Ghiroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 16(01), 65-86.

<sup>17</sup>Abu Yazid only quoted the understanding of text based on the understanding used by the modern world: "Text is a series of languages that are arranged and store meaning, the meaning of a text will appear in the world of reality, in this case, the text is better understood as a collection of signs that become instruments to show certain realities because the purpose and target of the text itself is the existing reality.

Through the basics that he explained in the problem of the text of the Qur'an, he then emphasized his view that the text of the Qur'an is a cultural product, this is inseparable from the reality that confirms that the Qur'an was not revealed in an empty and vacuum space, during twenty years the Qur'an touched and interacted with local cultures, this is what Abu Zayd called the "formation" phase, then communication between the text and local culture by itself made the text of the Qur'an itself a "cultural producer, meaning that the text of the Qur'an becomes a former for a particular culture.

when the concept of the text of the Qur'an is dismantled, and released from its position as 'the Word of God', then the Qur'an will be treated as a 'language text' and 'cultural product' so that it can be understood through a study of historicity, without paying attention to how the Messenger of Allah and his companions interpreted or applied the meaning of the verses of the Qur'an in their lives. <sup>18</sup>By dismantling the Qur'an as 'the Word of God', then the hermeneutic method can be used to understand the Qur'an.

This statement contradicts the verses of the Koran, for example " *And when Our clear verses are read to them, those who do not expect a meeting with Us say: "Bring another Koran than this or replace it." Say: "It is not proper for me to change it from myself. I do not follow except what is revealed to me. "Indeed, I am afraid that if I disobey my Lord, I will face the torment of the great day (Doomsday)." QS. Jonah:15).*

### **C. Conclusion**

Based on the explanation above, Shihab disagrees with the view that the Qur'an is a cultural product as expressed by Nasr Hamid. The reason is, if the Qur'an is a cultural product, then aren't the verses that were revealed to straighten out the culture of society? If the Qur'an is a cultural product, then there are groups of people who compile a kind of Qur'an, but until now no one has dared to agree or even accept the challenge of making it comparable to the Qur'an. Their inability to accept the challenge of the Qur'an indicates and proves that it is a revelation from God. Therefore, if what is meant by a cultural product is the content of the Qur'an as a result of human work, feeling, and creation as defined by culture, then it is contrary to Islamic belief.

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<sup>17</sup> Muzayyin, M. (2015). RESEPSI HERMENEUTIKA DALAM PENAFSIRAN AL-QUR'AN OLEH M. QURAI SHIHAB: UPAYA NEGOSIASI ANTARA HERMENEUTIKA DAN TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN UNTUK MENEMUKAN TITIK PERSAMAAN DAN PERBEDAAN. *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara*, 1(1) 123.

<sup>18</sup>Muchtar, M. I. (2016). Analisis konsep hermeneutika dalam tafsir alquran. *HUNAF: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 13(1), 67-89.

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