### DIGITAL ERA QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION IN INDONESIA:

Influence and Development on Contemporary Tafsir

#### Sihabussalam

Sekolah Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, Indonesia ⊠ sihabussalam22@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id

#### Sa'adatul Lailah

Pondok Pesantren Al-Muhajirin, Purwakarta, Indonesia ⊠ ellalailah5@gmail.com

#### Roma Wijaya

Ankara University, Ankara, Turki ⊠ rwijaya@ankara.edu.tr

#### Abstract

This paper examines how the influence of digital space on the development of contemporary interpretation gives rise to mediatiation and democratization of interpretation. This paper is qualitative research using Teun A. van Dijk's theory of critical discourse analysis to reveal the discourse carried by online interpreters, a visual ethnographic approach to the four platforms, and historical analysis to see the origins of the democratization of online interpretation. This article finds that the development of digital interpretation is highly correlated with media and digital platform structures. The periodization of digital-era interpretation in Indonesia began in 2012 on the YouTube channel, a year after the Facebook platform became a medium of interpretation. In 2016, followed by websites, and in 2017, on Instagram. Tafsir of digital in Indonesia has a two-way openness and affects the practice of tafsir in general; namely, the loss of an integral part of tafsir and the discourse of Qur'anic Tafsir is increasingly globalized. Three discourses are presented in digital interpretation in Indonesia: thematization in the interpretation of the Qur'an, the internal and external capacity of *mufasir*, and the dominance of ideology and media.

**Keywords:** Digital Era, Democratization of Interpretation, Mediatization, Social Media, Interpretation Method.

#### Tafsir Era Digital Di Indonesia: Pengaruh dan Perkembangan Terhadap Tafsir Kontemporer

#### Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji tentang pengaruh ruang digital terhadap perkembangan tafsir kontemporer sehingga memunculkan mediatisasi dan demokratisasi tafsir. Tulisan ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan teori analisis wacana kritis Teun A. van Dijk untuk mengungkap wacana yang diusung oleh para penafsir daring; pendekatan etnografi visual pada keempat platform tersebut, dan analisis historis untuk melihat asal-usul demokratisasi tafsir daring. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa perkembangan tafsir digital sangat berkorelasi dengan media dan struktur platform digital. Periodisasi tafsir era digital di Indonesia dimulai dari tahun 2012 di kanal Youtube, setahun sesudahnya platform Facebook menjadi media penafsiran. Pada tahun 2016 disusul oleh website, dan 2017 di Instagram. Tafsir digital di Indonesia memiliki keterbukaan dua arah dan berpengaruh terhadap praktik tafsir secara umum, yaitu hilangnya bagian integral dari tafsir dan wacana tafsir Al-Qur'an semakin mengglobal. Ada tiga wacana yang dihadirkan dalam tafsir digital di Indonesia, yaitu tematisasi dalam penafsiran Al-Qur'an, kapasitas internal dan eksternal mufasir, dan dominasi ideologi dan media.

Kata kunci: Era Digital, Demokratisasi Penafsiran, Mediatisasi, Media Sosial, Metode Tafsir.

تفسير العصر الرقمي في إندونيسيا: التأثير على تطور التفسير المعاصر

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة قضية تأثير الفضاء الرقمي على تطور التفسير المعاصر، مما أدى إلى ظهور الوساطة وإضفاء الطابع الديمقراطي على التفسير. هذه الورقة عبارة عن بحث نوعي يستخدم نظرية تيون أ. فان ديك لتحليل الخطاب النقدي للكشف عن الخطاب الذي قدمه المفسرون عبر الإنترنت، ونهجا إثنوغرافيا بصريا المنصات الأربعة، وتحليلا تاريخيا لمعرفة أصول إضفاء الطابع الديمقراطي على التفسير عبر الإنترنت. اكتشف هذه الدراسة أن تطور التفسير الرقمي يرتبط ارتباطًا وثيقًا بنوع الوسائط وبنية المنصات الرقمية. بدأت فترة التفسير للعصر الرقمي في إندونيسيا منذ عام 2012 على قناة اليوتيوب، وبعد مرور عام أصبحت منصة فيسبوك وسيلة للتفسير. وفي عام 602، تبعه موقع إلكتروني، وفي عام 2017 على إنستغرام. يتمتع التفسير الرقمي في إندونيسيا بانفتاح ثنائي الاتجاه وله تأثير على ممارسة التفسير بشكل عام، أي فقدان جزء لا يتجزأ من التفسير ويصبح الخطاب حول تفسير القرآن عالميًا بشكل متزايد. هناك ثلاثة خطابات مقدمة في التفسير الرقمي في إندونيسيا، وهي الموران عالميًا بشكل متزايد. هناك ثلاثة خطابات مقدمة لا يتجزأ من التفسير ويصبح الخطاب حول تفسير القرآن عالميًا بشكل متزايد. هناك ثلاثة خطابات مقدمة لي التفسير الرقمي في إندونيسيا، وهي الموضوعية في تفسير القرآن الكريم، والقدرة الداخلية والخارجية لا منعر من المنوي إلى منونيا ما لموضوعية في تفسير القرآن الكريم، والقدرة الداخلية والخارجية

الكلمات المفتاحية: العصر الرقمي، ديمقراطية التفسير، الوساطة، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، أساليب التفسير

#### Introduction

The digital age is a time that changes all sectors of knowledge, including the study of tafsir. The confluence of the two expands the scope of Qur'anic studies while adding to the civilization and treasures of Islamic scholarship. Moreover, tafsir is one of the human intellectual products that is dynamic and non-absolute, so changes from time to time in terms of content, characteristics, methodology, and even distribution continue to grow. This is due to the progress of various aspects of life, such as social, cultural, economic, and technological; even the scientific background of the mufasir has a role in the dynamics of tafsir. At the beginning of the Islamic era, the interpretation of the Qur'an was dominated by the interpretation of history; the minimum interpretation of the Qur'an at that time was also called tafsir bi al-ma'sur (At-Tayyār 2002: 73; Aż-Żahabiy 2000: 112; Goldziher 2006: 87).

Since the integration and changes in the scientific climate, the interpretation of the Qur'an has experienced significant development. The implication is that *mufasirs* and their magnum opus have been born with various styles and characteristics. In Indonesia, for example, the treasures of Qur'anic interpretation have been born since pre-independence. The style of dissemination and paradigm of tafsir before independence was constructed only at the stage of awakening the nation's spirit (Roifa, Anwar, and Darmawan 2017: 22). Efforts to write tafsir in Indonesia have also been ongoing for a long time, starting from 'Abd ar-Rauf Singkili's *Tarjuman al-Mustafīd* in Malay Arabic writing in the 17th century, to H. Oemar's *Tafsīr Rahmat* in the 20th century.

Previously, the method of interpretation was built on the needs of the purpose of the birth of the intention of the Qur'anic text, in certain situations, as an affirmation of engagement with a period. The spirit of the times and different social conditions will produce the dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation (Mabrur 2020: 207–213). The methods, contents, and media of spreading tafsir have also undergone significant modifications. Initially, tafsir was an oral tradition in which the medium of dissemination was the mouth of the mufasir. When the Islamic community recognized the writing media, tafsir was published through writing. In the digital era, offline interpretation in the form of oral and writing transforms into interpretation in virtual space (online). Interpretation media develops from oral, written, and printed media and is finally mediated by electronic media, marked by the digitization of the interpretation book (Zahra 2019: 32–65). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilitated this progress and

development, which had grown and developed massively up to digitizing the Qur'anic Tafsir.

The digitization of the Qur'anic Tafsir is an effort of the mufasir to utilize information technology in this digital era. The digital era is characterized by technology that increases the speed and breadth of knowledge circulation (Shepherd 2004: 1). Research on Qur'anic Tafsir in the digital era must be intensified as an effort to maintain the authenticity of the Qur'an (Mubarok and Romdhoni 2021: 110-114)-however, the transfer of interpretation space from conventional to virtual experiences a dilemma. One side is an effort to maintain the authenticity of the Our'an, but at the same time, there will be freedom in interpreting the Qur'an. This freedom is an implication of the nature of the media interpreting the Qur'an in today's digital era which is free without limits, anyone can express and exist in the digital world. In particular, the ubiquity of the internet, the unpredictability of communication on social media, and the demands of consuming news for 24 hours will be an attack for an expert (Nichols 2017: xi-xii), including mufasirs. Therefore, the tradition of interpretation in this digital era gave birth to the digitalization and democratization of interpretation.

The tafsir's democratization challenges "genuine" (conventional) *mufasirs* to restore their authority as interpreters while adapting to the current situation and circumstances. At the same time, "fake" *mufasirs* are increasingly showing their existence in the digital world. Perhaps the durability of today's mufasir is determined by the number of his followers in the digital world. It is as if the public is led to the misguided perspective that the person who often produces tafsir content is the one who has the right to interpret the Qur'an. Setio Budi said that being an interpreter is very difficult because many requirements must be met and have special expertise in the sciences of Tafsir (Setio 2021:10). The proliferation of media opens space for everyone to be able to interpret the Qur'an without going through the requirements as set by the scholars (Hairul 2020: 198). This fact provides space for anyone who wants to interpret the Qur'an because conditions do not bind it.

The phenomenon of the emergence of tafsir in this virtual space is known as the "mediatization" of Qur'anic tafsir. Mediatization refers to a situation in which the media becomes an important source, as a result of which social, political, and economic forces in society adjust to the media's logic to influence the audience (Triputra 2017). The mediatization of tafsir can be described as the phenomenon of publishing tafsir online, which aims to be a reference for the general public and influence the way the religion of the community is influenced. Therefore, research related to integrating tafsir and media provides a good signal to the community to be wiser in choosing a reference site/platform so that their religion remains on the right track and based on authoritative references.

Mediatization is not new in scientific studies, especially in media and communication studies. This fact encourages researchers to integrate general science with Islamic studies. There have been many studies like this, but the difference is in the aspect of the study. Aminudin, Zamah Sari, and Setio Basuki focused their studies on the multimedia-based Qur'an learning process (Aminudin, Sari, and Basuki 2019). Some discuss the digital Qur'an (Radzid et al. 2019; Zakariah et al. 2017) to focus on interpretive studies on Facebook (Lukman 2016; Muhammad 2018). At the same time, Nafisatuzzahro focused her research on YouTube (Zahra 2019). Research conducted on websites has become a trend in studying the mediatization of interpretation, such as research on interpretation methodology on the almanhaj.or.id and nadirhosen.net websites (Nuralvi 2018), as well as on sources, methods, and styles on the muslim.or.id website (As-Sa'idah 2018). Meanwhile, Saifullah examined the hermeneutics of the virtual Qur'an with the object of his study Nadisyah Hosen, on Facebook (Saifullah 2019). The same thing was also done by Acmad Rifai, whose main focus was the difference in the digitalization of tafsir and digital tafsir and the development implications. He took the website tafsirweb.com as the object of his study (Rifai 2020).

Based on previous research and these problems, this paper comes based on the arguments: 1) the digitalization of Qur'anic interpretation is a social phenomenon and technological media that has an impact on the method of Qur'anic interpretation; 2) the interpretation of the Qur'an in the digital era has an impact on the "democratization of interpretation" which has become a new paradigm in contemporary interpretation in the digital space; 3) the rapid development of digital has become a new medium and trend in contemporary interpretation. In particular, the argument is formed in the "wrapping" of the history of digital era interpretation in Indonesia. When and how did it develop until the current impact? In addition, the production process of digital-era interpretation in Indonesia is diverse and inseparable from the character of the platforms used.

This research is included in the descriptive qualitative study. Meanwhile, in collecting data, this research uses a literature review. After the data is collected, it is processed using three approaches. The first is historical, which is used to explore past information systematically. The author observes four study objects: Facebook, Instagram, website, and YouTube. Second, virtual ethnography is a method to observe netizen interactions in virtual space, especially on these four platforms. Third, Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory reveals the discourse carried by online interpreters.

The steps taken in this research are as follows: First, the digital platform to be studied, which contains Qur'anic commentary content, was determined. To facilitate the search, popular platforms that are more widely used by the community. After getting the names of these platforms, determine each platform's sites that discuss the interpretation of the Qur'an. Second, data collection of uploads on each platform and a comparison of the beginning of the existence of the interpretation of the Quran on each platform are also needed. Third, the methods, forms, and trends of Qur'anic interpretation are categorized, and their significance is seen by looking at audience responses in the virtual space. Fourth, they conduct a descriptive analysis of interpretation content by combining interpretations made in digital spaces and reference books.

## Sketches of Interpretive Media in Indonesia: from Conventional to Digital

A long history occurred in the birth of the Indonesian state and the Qur'an interpretation in Indonesia. Even the emergence of tafsir in Indonesia preceded the birth of the Indonesian state. This means that the development of the tradition of interpretation in Indonesia first occurred before Indonesia's independence. Efforts to write tafsir in Indonesia have happened from the 17th century until the 20th century (Roifa, Anwar, and Darmawan 2017: 22). Tafsir Indonesia, often known as tafsir Nusantara, is not only books that use the Indonesian language but tafsir whose language of instruction is non-Indonesian can be categorized as Indonesian tafsir, as long as there are still elements of Indonesianness. Not only that but tafsir, attributed to one institution, such as pesantren, is generally also called Indonesian tafsir will not be separated from institutions and scholars, whether they come from academia, pesantren, or the general public.

Looking at the above concept of Indonesian tafsir, it is unsurprising that Indonesian tafsir studies are very diverse. They start with the method of interpretation in Indonesia, which was conducted by Yunan Yusuf and published in 1991. Indonesian interpretation studies are focused on methodology, hermeneutics, and ideology (Gusmian 2013). In addition, Indonesian mufasir figures also did not escape being the object of study until his works. The development of tafsir studies always follows the flow of the times so that the object of study is richer and more interesting. Similar to the spread of tafsir, the media used are quite diverse. Media is interpreted as a medium or channel used to convey messages or information (Miftahuddin 2020: 117). If tafsir is the process of conveying a message or information from God (the Qur'an), then the interpretation of the Qur'an requires interaction with the media.

Significant media changes indicate the development of a period so that the process of discourse or study can be seen whether there is progress or regression. The reading of the media is significant because, from the media, it can be understood about the development process of the times, including the media used for interpretation in Indonesia (Miftahuddin 2020: 119). The media of tafsir in Indonesia is no different from the media of spreading the Qur'an, or tafsir, in the Middle East, from conventional to digital. In the traditional era, the media has value with a very long distance or delay between when opinions are expressed, events occur, and when the audience receives information (Rusadi 2014: 174). The concept emphasizes the effectiveness of its delivery to the general public. In addition, the information conveyed, including tafsir, does not have a wide and efficient distribution, so it takes time and energy to access the tafsir. In the conventional era, tafsir is a medium for disseminating tafsir, or the process of interpreting the Quran is still offline.

The era of conventional tafsir in Indonesia began with the oral tradition of mufasir that coincided with the spread of Islam in Indonesia in the 13th century. Although it does not explicitly reveal the meaning of the Qur'an, the interpretation of the Qur'an is listed in the process of delivering religious material. This situation can be proven by the presence of the names Hamzah Fansyuri (d. 1590 M), Nuruddin Ar-Raniry (d. 1658 M), Syamsuddin Al-Sumaterani (d. 1630 M), Sheikh Kuala 'Abd ar-Rauf Singkili (d. 1693 M), Syihabuddin of Palembang (d. 1789 M), Abdus Samad Al-Falimbani (d. 1789 M), Sheikh Arsyad of Banjar (d. 1812), Sheikh Nawawi of Banten (d. 1897 M), Sheikh Yusuf of Makassar (d. 1699 M), and so on. (Baiti and Razzaq 2014: 139). There was no formal label 'tafsir' at this oral stage, but it manifested Islamic teachings, including faith (akīdah), fiqh, mysticism (tasawwuf), and so on. The existence of learning facilities, such as mosques, surau, and pesantren, is a fact that the oral tradition of tafsir existed then. In fact, in this era, tafsir was assimilated with the media of proselytizing the spread of Islam, especially in Java, such as the puppet media used by Sunan Kalijaga. Through the puppet show, Sunan Kalijaga did not ask for money as a condition of admission but said the shahada. This shows that the meaning of the Quran was absorbed in the art arena then (Miftahuddin 2020: 124-125).

At the beginning of the 16th century, the tafsir media in Indonesia changed. The century they have marked a new tradition in Indonesian tafsir, namely the era of written interpretation. Most researchers of Indonesian tafsir studies put *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by 'Abd ar-Rauf Singkili (1615-1693) as the first work of tafsir in Indonesia. However, in the aspect of media dissemination, the forerunner of media dissemination through writing is the manuscript of Tafsir surah al-Kahfi (18): 9. This manuscript, dated before 1620 M, was brought to the Netherlands, namely Tafsir surah al-Kahf in Malay language with no author listed (Roifa, Anwar, and Darmawan 2017: 25). Then in the pre-modern century (around the end of the 18th century, the beginning of the 19th century) Indonesian tafsir media experienced progress, including the birth of mass media. It appeared simultaneously with the massive publication of other Islamic books. Tafsir, in this phase, has reached the wider community. This situation can be ascertained from the media used.

Mass media itself means all types of communication, whether written, spoken, or broadcast, whose messages are intended to reach a wide audience (Siregar 2017: 3). Bungin also expresses a similar opinion that mass media is defined as mass communication media and can be accessed by many people, in terms of meaning, mass media is a tool or means to disseminate news content, opinions, comments, entertainment, and so on (Habibie 2018: 79). From the perspective of distribution, tafsir in this era includes print media such as magazine publishing, and modern electronic media such as radio and TV.

Two theories show the birth of tafsir in magazines; first, the theory of significance mentions the tradition of tafsir in magazines that occurred in 1906 in Al-Imam magazine; second, the definitive theory emphasizes that the magazine provides an explicit rubric of tafsir. In 1962, the magazine Gema Islam was published by Buya Hamka. Besides Buya Hamka, in 1978, Abdurrahman Syahab also wrote in the same magazine. During 1997-1999, Syu'bah Asa wrote for *Panji Masyarakat* magazine. Meanwhile, Jalaluddin Rahmat wrote in Republika Daily with the title *Tafsīr bi al-Ma'tsūr: Pesan Moral Al-Qur'an* (Gusmian 2017, 36; Miftahuddin 2020: 131–132). The newspaper was first published in March 2004 by the newspaper publisher Harian Bangsa (Miftahuddin 2020: 132).

Then, in modern electronic-based mass media, such as radio, interpreting the Qur'an is a process of da'wah and religious authority lectures. In the 1972 era, the radio broadcasts of Alaikassalam Sejahtera Jakarta, located in Tebet, South Jakarta, and Dakwah Islam Surakarta, were da'wah broadcasts that included tafsir (Miftahuddin 2020: 133–134). As for

the media of Television (TV), it seems that the TVRI station was the first to become the media of this interpretation, and M. Quraish Shihab was the first mufasir who existed to convey the understanding that he had written *Tafsir al-Mishbah*.

From the 20th century until now, Indonesian government authorities have maximized digitization. The digital era is when information is easily and quickly obtained and disseminated using digital technology. Digital technology uses computerized systems connected to the internet (Penyusun 2019: 10). Information conveyed in this era, including Qur'anic commentaries, has been digitized. Compared to the previous era, this digital era has the scope of disseminating audiences more efficiently, quickly, and easily, so this era is known as new media. Thus, new media is a term meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computer, or networked information and communication technologies in the late 20th century (Aji 2016: 46). The ability of this digital era media makes it easier for the public to receive information faster; with the internet media making mass media flock to change direction (Setiawan 2017: 1).

The digital era of Qur'anic interpretation does not eliminate elements of previous media, such as oral, written, electronic, or printed. Still, this era emphasizes internet connectivity and tools such as computers or smartphones. This era is also characterized by real-time access and short time. This is what is meant by the concept of digital in this paper, including websites and social media that have a central role in the digital era. In addition, the digital era is also more varied and communicative, displaying images or writings and accompanied by videos. Even not only one-way communication, the digital era offers two-way communication and interaction, as happens in social media. The tradition of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital era occurred on the Facebook platform in 2012. This differs from the research conducted by Miftahuddin, which found that the website was the first media used to interpret the Quran (Miftahuddin 2020: 135).

#### The Beginning and Development of Digital Interpretation in Indonesia

Interpretation of the Quran in the digital age can be done on several platforms. *First* the Youtube platform. After reviewing several channels that interpret the Qur'an on YouTube, it turns out that interpretation on this platform began in 2012, namely by the Tafaqquh Online Channel, which discusses the Study of Tafsir Q.S Āli Imrān/3: 5-7, with a video duration of 21.55 minutes and receive a response from an audience of 6.1 thousand views, 104 likes and five comments (Tafaqquh Online 2012). Then, in 2016,

many channels began to discuss the interpretation of the Qur'an, including Yufid TV, Oemar Mita Syameela, Thursina IIBS Channel, and others. Even now, many Islamic boarding schools, foundations, and mosques have begun to post tafsir recitations on their respective YouTube channels, such as al-Muhajirin TV, Yayasan Bisa, Masjid Ramadhan Araya, and others. There are two types of production on the YouTube platform, namely recording (video) and YouTube streaming (from YouTube directly or from Zoom). Interaction with the audience can take several forms: like, dislike, comment, subscribe, share, and save.



Figure 1. Example of Qur'anic Tafsir on the Instagram platform (Photo: Tafaqquh online)

*Second* the Instagram platform. This platform was used to interpret the Qur'an starting in 2017, namely by the @risalahmuslim account, so do not forget to make it easy for each other among you (Al-Baqarah [2]: 237) and received a response from the audience of 133 likes. Furthermore, in 2017, another account, @kajiantafsir.co, began posting interpretations of the Qur'an, namely about efforts to prevent corruption from an early age from the perspective of the Qur'an. The interpretation is associated with surah al-Isrā'17: 7, about good deeds for oneself and bad deeds that will return to oneself. The point is that corruption prevention efforts can be made by realizing the importance of doing good for oneself, and others will follow (Kajiantafsir.co 2017). Subsequent developments, many accounts posted about the interpretation of the Qur'an as well such as @Pesan\_kebaikan (2017), @Khazanah\_tafsir.id (2019), @Tafsiralqur'an.id (2020) and @

Tafsirinstitute (2021). The types of production found on this platform are video/IG TV, single image, and carousel (several videos/pictures in one post). The audience can respond by liking, commenting, sharing, saving, and following through the platform.



Figure 2. Example of Qur'anic Tafsir on the Instagram platform (Photo: Risalahmuslim)

*Third,* the website platform. This platform has been used to interpret the Qur'an since 2016, on the Bincang Syariah website titled "Betrayal of the Nation's Children to their Country: al-Mā'idah 51" (Ustadz Ahong 2016). In its development, the interpretation of the Qur'an is also found on other websites such as @ibnuhotman.com, @ibnukatsvir-tafsir.blogspot.com, @ ibnukatsironline.com, @tafsir.learn-quran.co.id, @tafsirweb.com, @ tafsiralqur'an.id and others. In the discussion of the title, the opinions of Rasyīd Ridā' to at-Țantawiy are explained. The form of this platform is text, and it can be produced in two types: by the community and by individuals. An example of community website management is TafsirAl-Qur'an.id, and an example of personal management is a personal blog, such as the blog of one of the students of al-Qur'an and Tafsir Sciences at UIN Jakarta with the blog address <u>https://kitabatulfata.blogspot.com</u>.

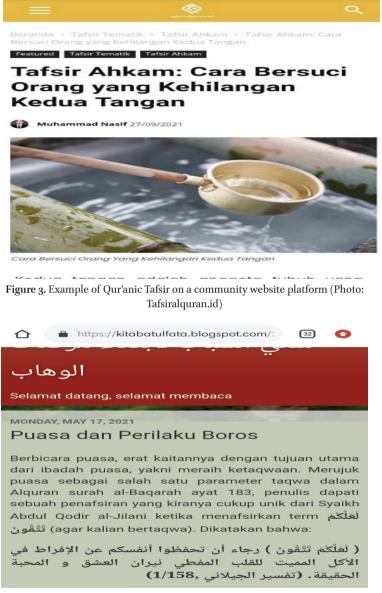


Figure 4. An example of Qur'anic Tafsir is on a personal website platform (Photo: kitabatulfata).

*Fourth*, is the Facebook platform. Facebook became a platform for Qur'anic Tafsir starting in 2013 on the account of Salman Harun, a lecturer at the Faculty of Ushuluddin UIN Jakarta. He discussed the interpretation of surah an-Naml/27: 88. He interpreted that Allah is perfect in everything.

For example, in the creation of mountains, mountains look sharp upwards, even though they are like clouds, and the hills are interconnected using their magma. In this post, he received a response from the audience, namely five likes (Harun 2013).

Furthermore, in 2018, in Buya Gusrizal Gazahar's account, he also discussed the interpretation of the Qur'an, namely the interpretation of surah Ali Imran verse 32 (Buya Gusrizal Gazahar 2018). He also answers the problems in people's lives through his posts, such as moral crises, LGBT, interfaith, and others. The type of production on the Facebook platform can take several forms, namely video, text, and images. Meanwhile, the response from the audience can be to add as a friend, follow, share, like, and comment.



Figure 5. Example of Qur'anic interpretation on the Facebook platform (Photo: Salman Harun account)

# The Dilemma of Tafsir in the Digital Age: between Authenticity and Democratization

The presence of digital era tafsir is not a matter of digitizing tafsir alone, but rather the occurrence of dualism related to authenticity and democratization of tafsir. In dualism, authenticity is quite a complicated part because it includes the authenticity of the Quran and its interpretation. The authenticity of the Quran in the realm of digital interpretation is fundamental because the field of study of interpretation is the Quran. So, it can be concluded that the material object is the Quran (Zulaiha 2017: 82). If so, then the process of interpretation in the digital era is not free from the writing of the Qur'an itself and will also present the digitization of the Qur'an—various forms of digitization of the Qur'an, ranging from internetbased platforms to smartphone software applications. Mohammed Zakariah et al. said, "Many digital Quran applications are available that allow offline users to read the Quran on mobile and handheld devices," (Zakariah et al. 2017: 13). One of the rubrics available in the digital Qur'an is the Tafsir of the Qur'an, although it is not dominant. Regarding the authenticity of the Al-Qur'an, the Al-Qur'an Pentashih Institute has the authority to always check and verify the authenticity of the Al-Qur'an, of course, based on the provisions and regulations for writing the Al-Qur'an.

Unlike the authenticity of the Qur'an, the tafsir itself has no institutional authority to check the authenticity of the tafsir used as a reference. This also opens up a long discussion about the authenticity of conventional interpretations when entering the digital space. Therefore, the authenticity of the digital era interpretation allows for changes in the point, even in the construction of the text. The existence of group interests and the doctrination of certain groups adds to the problem of the authenticity of digital era interpretation. This digital era interpretation includes digitalization and digital interpretation. These two conceptions will still not be separated from the debate on the authenticity of interpretation. Although they look the same at first glance, the two concepts have fundamental differences. Digitalization of tafsir is the process of putting the works of previous tafsir scholars into digital space or just the process of translating. In contrast, in the digital era, tafsir is the participation of online mufasir provided in the digital space.

As for democratization, the interpretation of the digital era has absolutely no impact on the freedom to create the Qur'an. Because it is impossible to do and needs verification and confirmation by the Qur'anic Pentashih Institution, democratization occurs in interpreting the Qur'an, not in the Qur'an itself. The synthesis proves that no verse mentions that interpretation is free from democratization. In addition, in interpreting the Qur'an, the mufasir is always faced with two main practices: understanding divine messages and interacting with the socio-cultural conditions where the mufasir is. The assumption built here is that each generation of mufasir has a different interpretative character. One of the reasons is the other conditions, so the next mufasir assumes that there is a need for reinterpretation of the Qur'anic verses. The argument they built is to maintain the suitability of the Quran with the times.

Maintaining compatibility cannot be separated from the debate of the times. It is wishful thinking for a commentator who aims to ground the

Qur'ān and make it *şālih likulli zamān wa makān* without engaging in a dialectic with the times. To avoid this, some people try to adapt to the times; some maintain the quality of interpreting the Qur'ān by paying attention to the ethics and methods of interpreting the Qur'ān. The first perspective is very pronounced when digital media flow is massive. As for the second perspective, it is almost eroded by the digital media. This phenomenon occurs because of the free nature of the digital era, and anyone can express their thoughts in the virtual space.

Although there are ethics in communication in the digital space, these ethics have not yet been included in the qualifications of a person who is the subject of communication. Thus, what needs to be done is not to eliminate the democratization of interpretation because it is a necessity of the digital era. Strengthening the characteristics of the mufasir and his interpretation needs to be campaigned to the public as consumers or audiences. The two elements must be aware of their respective positions; first, people who want to become online mufasirs must pay attention to the qualifications and standardization of being a Qur'anic mufasir; second, the general public should be smarter in taking interpretations on the internet

#### Qur'anic Tafsir in the Digital Age

#### Scholars' Consensus on Methods of Interpreting the Qur'an

Regarding interpretation in the digital era, one of the things that cannot be separated from it is the method used in interpreting the Quran. In general, the interpretation methods commonly used or agreed upon by scholars are four, as argued by al-Farmāwi, namely *taḥlīliy* (analytical/detailed), *ijmāliy* (global), *muqāran* (comparison) and *mawḍū'iy* (thematic) (Al-Farmāwi 1992: 22). However, to find out details about the most frequently used interpretation methods in the digital era, it is necessary to look directly at commonly used platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and websites.

#### Methods of Tafsir on Digital Platforms

Digital platforms are now widely used by the Indonesian people, and they have their characteristics; some are text, video, audio, and others. Through these features, the interpretation of the Qur'an is delivered by online *mufasirs* and causes an acceleration of the production and consumption of tafsir among the public. The general public can feel closer to the semantic function of the Qur'an (Mubarok and Romdhoni 2021: 112). Apart from all that, the interpretations used on these platforms have different methods, but they still refer to the methods the scholars have agreed upon. This is

evidenced by the review of the interpretation of the Quran by several figures on various platforms.

First, Facebook. Two methods of interpretation are often used, namely *ijmāliy* and *mawdū'iy*. This can be proven in one of the Facebook accounts of Muslim scholars, namely Nadirsyah Hosen, familiarly called Gus Nadir. Since 2017, he has often analyzed interpretations of the hottest issues at every moment. One example of his interpretation is about choosing non-Muslim leaders, which is usually associated with the word *awliyā*' in surah al-Māidah (5): 51. Based on asbāb an-nuzūl and the opinions of Ibn Kasīr and at-Tabariy, the word is not a leader but a kind of ally. He also strengthens his argument by correlating it with another verse, surah an-Nisā' (4): 144, understood as alliances and alliances by leaving Muslims. There are also interpretations of the Qur'an on Facebook that use the *ijmāliy* (global) method. This can be seen in the interpretation of the Qur'an on Salman's account. In his account, Harun uses a very brief interpretation and often adds information about the interpretation of other verses that connect with the verse being interpreted. In contrast, Gus Nadir quotes several interpretations of the Qur'an, so his writing is representative (Harun 2021).

Second, on the YouTube platform, three methods of interpretation are popular in the community, namely *ijmāliy* (global), *tahlīliy* (detailed), and *maw*du*iy* (thematic). Applying the *ijmāliy* method can be seen through the YouTube channel of Pesantren Kosan Bisa. The channel has posted live streaming of *ijmāliy* interpretation studies complete up to 30 juz, which consists of 1 juz/post. The method of interpretation mentions several points in one justice that are explained. Then, it is explained globally on each of these points and accompanied by the verse's recitation (Bisa 2021). Another method that is also found in the interpretation of the Qur'an on Youtube is the tahlīliy method, for example, found in the Nasaruddin Umar Office-NUO Channel entitled "Review of Tafsir Ar-Razy: Surah al-Fatihah" by Dr. Hamka Hasan (Nasaruddin Umar Office-NUO 2021). This can be concluded to use the *tahlīliy* method because Tafsir al-Raziy itself is a tafsir that uses the *taḥlīliy* method (Yuliza 2020: 60). Another method found on YouTube is *mawdū'iy*. For example, Gus Baha's recitation (Abidin and Chayati 2023) and on the NU Online Channel, which discusses the interpretation of surah al-Kawsar: 1-3 about sacrificial worship by Gus Dhofir Zuhry. Gus Dhofir, in the video, uses several books on tafsir; besides that, he also describes linguistically and adds traditions related to sacrifice (NU Online 2020).

*Third*, on the website platform, there are several methods of interpretation, namely *mawdū'iy*, *ijmāliy* and *tahlīliy*. The *mawdū'iy* (thematic) method is found on the website tafsirweb.com, which interprets

verses about usury, patience, marriage, and others. Furthermore, several books on tafsir clarify the interpretation of a theme (Tafsirweb.com n.d.). In addition, the website platform has a *taḥlīliy* method for interpreting the Qur'an. For example, on the website Tafsiralqur'an.id, there are detailed interpretations of the interpretation of surah al-Hajj (22): 78, verses 62-64, and others (Tafsiralquran.id 2021). The *ijmāliy* method in the website platform can be seen from, for example, the interpretation of surah al-Kahf (18): 1-10 on tafsirweb.com which uses several books of tafsir that interpret globally such as *Tafsīr al-Muyassar, Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar, Tafsīr al-Wajīz*, and others (Tafsirweb.com n.d.).

*Fourth*, on the Instagram platform, there are several interpretation methods used, namely *mawdū'iy* and *ijmāliy*. An example of an Instagram account that often interprets the Qur'an using the *mawdū'iy* method is @ quranriview, such as the interpretation of surah al-Baqarah/2: 187, which is related to the hotly discussed issue of childfree. This account also explains that after mixing with your partner, you should endeavor to have children (quranreview 2021b). An example of tafsir using the *ijmāliy* method is found in the Muslim treatise account post regarding the interpretation of surah al-Mu'minūn (23): 115. The post explains the denial of the inhabitants of hell, and everything that humans do will be held accountable. The post also added a Qur'anic verse correlating with surah al-Mu'minūn (23): 115, namely surah al-Qiyāmah (75): 36) (Risalahmuslim 2021).

After reviewing some of the interpretation methods used on the four platforms, it turns out that the popular interpretation method in the community is *the mawdū'iy* or thematic method. This is evidenced by the various responses from the community when using this method. This is because the themes used are often related to events or problems that occur in society. For example, when approaching the Eid al-Adha, many figures interpreted the Qur'ān about sacrificial worship through various platforms. For example, the interpretation delivered by Ustaz Adi Hidayat reached 92 thousand views and was liked by 844 people (Al-Hujjah Dakwah Islam 2017). In addition, people are also more enthusiastic about controversial statuses. For example, the interpretation of surah Al-Mā'idah verse 51 carried out by Nadirsayah Hosen regarding the case of the election of non-Muslim leaders based on the momentum of the DKI Jakarta regional election on March 8, 2016. 1,981 people liked Gus Nadir's interpretation, shared it 906 times, and commented on it 1,890 times (Mabrur 2020).

#### Tafsir Reference on Digital Platforms

The interpretation of the Qur'an on digital platforms in terms of references is divided into three: one book of interpretation, several books of interpretation, and those that do not include any book of interpretation. First, those that use one book of interpretation are found in Dr. Hamka Hasan's interpretation of "Tafsīr al-Raziy Study: Surah al-Fātihah." Based on his explanation, *nasta'in* is the process of survival in the world and the future. The interpretation of the words *iyyāka na'budu wa iyyāka nasta'īn* is to eliminate heavy things to bring obedience to Allah Swt. Therefore, the presence of Allah Swt. in the soul and heart makes Allah Swt. the object of worship and the party to ask for help (Nasaruddin Umar Office-NUO 2021). Furthermore, Gus Baha's interpretation is based on Tafsir Jalalain Q.S. Al-Bagarah 2: 2; the word *muttagin* is a person who avoids shirk or disbelief behavior. There is also an opinion that people guard against minor and major sins (Literasi 2021). The implication of using this one-book reference is that what is conveyed can focus on exploring one interpretation, and listeners who have the book can directly refer to the book.

*Second,* using several books of tafsir found on the NU Online Youtube Channel regarding the interpretation of surah al-Kausar (108): 1-3 regarding sacrificial worship by Gus Dhofir Zuhry. Based on his explanation in *Tafsir al-Nukat wa al-'Uyūn* by Imam Al-Mawardi, the meaning of al-Kawsar is a little but a lot. Furthermore, in *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubiy*, it is explained that faṣalli means prayer. The word fashalli has other meanings, namely the Eid al-Adha prayer and *yawm al-nahr* (the day of Eid al-Adha). *Şalli* can also mean prayer and can also mean gratitude because Allah Swt. gave al-Kawithar. Furthermore, the word nahr means the lower part of the neck (NU Online 2020). Another example that uses several tafsir books is the interpretation of surah al-Kahfi (18): 9 on tafsirweb.com, which uses *Tafsīr al-Muyassar, Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar, Tafsīr al-Wajīz*, and *Zubdatut Tafsir*.

"Do not think, O apostle, that the story of the cave dwellers and the alabaster stone on which their names are written are among Our wondrous and strange signs, for the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them is more wondrous than that." (*Tafsīr al-Muyassar*)

"And do not think, O Messenger, that the story of the cave dwellers and the inscribed stone with their names on it are miracles and signs of Our greatness, but other miracles are more amazing than that, such as the creation of the heavens and the earth." (*Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*)

"Are they among the wondrous signs of Our power? This verse and the story of *ashāb al-kahfi* was revealed when the Quraysh asked the Prophet about three things, including dealing with the Jews." (*Tafsīr al-Wajīz*)

"That is, O Muhammad, do you think they are the only ones of Our verses that are amazing? Do not think so, for all of Our verses are amazing, and some are more amazing than their stories. The word al-raqīm is the name of a valley, country, or a board on which their names are written." (Zubdatuh al-Tafsīr)

Thus, each tafsir highlights a slightly different aspect of the verse, giving it a different emphasis in its expression (Tafsirweb.com n.d.). The next example of interpretation that uses two interpretations is Gus Nadir's interpretation using *Tafsir Ibn Kašīr* and *at-Ṭabariy* regarding the interpretation of the word *awliyā'*, which is often associated with choosing non-Muslim leaders. Based on these two interpretations, the word *awliyā'* is not interpreted as a leader but as a kind of ally (Mabrur 2020: 207–13). When using two or more interpretations, the content of the interpretation will be broader and diverse because each interpretation provides a different opinion.

*Third,* interpretations that do not include references to the book of interpretation are found in most interpretations on Instagram in the @ quranreview account. Although not all of them, the majority of the interpretation of the Qur'an in the account's posts do not include references to the books of interpretation they use, such as regarding the testimony verse surah al-Fātiḥah (1): 7 (quranreview 2021a), all women are the same which is associated with surah an-Nisā' (4): 34 (quranreview 2021c). Interpretations that do not include references to a single book will reduce the credibility of what is conveyed in the content. The implication is that it raises the question of whose opinion it is and based on what book.

Qur'anic Tafsir in the digital era is the activity of interpreting the Qur'an in digital space, whether connected to the internet or not. However, interpreting the Qur'ān without internet media is usually categorized in the electronic world. Digital age platforms in this context include websites and social media. Social media is defined by various interactive internet applications that facilitate creating, curating, and sharing user-generated content, collaboratively or individually (Davis 2016, 1). Social media platforms have different models, structures, norms, and user bases. However, in general, social media platforms share the same characteristics.

#### Critical Discourse on Digital Tafsir in Indonesia

The word "discourse (*wacana*)" is often associated with discourse. Discourse is "to flow separately" or "to engage in something." This meaning has developed into "giving information about something" (Payuyasa 2017: 15).

discourse in a critical view emphasizes the power of objects or conditions that run in the process of production or reproduction (Wahab 2019: 30). Therefore, tafsir is also known as the discourse of a mufasir in expressing the meaning of the Qur'anic verse, either written or oral. The discourse develops when it enters digital media, which has the opportunity to influence the meaning and reality surrounding it significantly. Power, events, and access to society become the main capital in constructing an interpretation in the digital era. These three capitals are inseparable from cognition and social context as aspects of encouraging the creation of the dynamics of the digital era's interpretation.

The dynamics of the digital era interpretation in Indonesia always follow the development of social media platforms. This affects the model of disseminating contemporary interpretations that are straightforward and massive. In the same situation, its influence is very obvious to the point of ignoring an integral part of the interpretation of the Qur'an, namely the aim to achieve the full meaning of the Qur'an (Lukman 2018: 115). The influence explicitly leads to the authority of the digital era mufasir. Widespread access and communication between users will open a wide space for discussion about Qur'anic tafsir, even without face-to-face meetings. The migration movement of new media on a large scale builds a discourse on the Qur'an that is increasingly globalized (Pink 2019: 6).

The discourse built, especially in the digital media space, has characteristics that allow the production and reproduction of meaning to give birth to knowledge of why the discourse is present. In the next position, the purpose of the presence of digital interpretation discourse affects the study of Qur'anic interpretation to the public audience. To see the strong reasons why the discourse is produced, influenced, and influential, a critical analysis is needed, which includes three elements, namely text, social cognition, and social context (social analysis) (Dijk 2008: 96; see also Wahab 2019: 32–48). Text elements include macro-structure, including global meaning in terms of topic/theme; super-structure, including the framework of a discourse; micro-structure (local meaning), which can be seen from the choice of words, sentences, and style. Social cognition relates to the internal mufasir, and social context relates to the external mufasir. Based on these three elements, there are three discourses and their influence on contemporary tafsir, namely:

#### Thematization in Qur'anic Interpretation

The wide reach of digital media, consumed not only by academics but more generally by ordinary people, has changed the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation. The first impression displayed is that each interpretation is given a theme. This is also evidenced in the four platforms used as the object of study, all of which use thematic. For example, at the beginning of the interpretation on YouTube, the Channel @tafaqquh online gave the title of its post, "Allah knows best what is in the heavens and the earth." The theme is written as a thumbnail (a still image that represents the content of the video) as an implicit meaning of the interpretation of surah Āli Imrān (3): 5-7. The trend on YouTube, at the beginning, was also used by the Instagram account @kajiantafsir.co in 2017. The theme raised was "Efforts to prevent corruption from an early age from the perspective of the Qur'an."

Meanwhile, the theme presented on the website platform is not directly in the body of the image but outside the image. This is what distinguishes it from the previous two platforms. Thematic tendencies also exist on the Facebook platform. Although the initial macro-structure (thematic) discourse on Facebook was implicit, three years later (2016), the thematic trend entered the interpretive discourse on Facebook. The first Facebook account to use thematics as part of its discourse building was Nadirsyah Hosen (Gus Nadir). His account raised a theme related to choosing a non-Muslim leader connected to the word *awliyā*' in the Qur'an.

This thematization of Qur'anic interpretation in the digital space affirms that the discourse promoted by digital *mufasirs* is to establish that the *mawdū'iy* method is still the hallmark of contemporary interpretation. This trend has even become a requirement when producing interpretations in the digital space. Interpreters in the digital space must have the skills to make interesting titles that are short, concise, and represent the content of writings and videos. This proposition will make contemporary tafsir a coveted interpretation to answer current problems. The selection of themes with diction understood by the general public and the reproduction of themes from the same verse become a space for discussion and a new character of contemporary interpretation.

#### Internal and External Capacity of the Mufasir

The ability to determine themes is closely related to awareness, feelings, or efforts to observe the surrounding environment. In Teun A. Van Dijk's discourse analysis, this is known as social cognition. At this stage of analysis, Van Dijk offers four schemes/models (Dijk 1987: 23–24) to understand built events and discourses. These schemes are person (how a person describes another person), self (oneself is seen and understood by others), role (explaining the role of others in society), and event (how phenomena are meant and interpreted). The four elements can be simplified by

understanding oneself others, and being sensitive to one's surroundings. Not only is it an important element in analyzing the interpretive discourse produced in the digital space, but it can be used as an asset to see the discourse presented by the mufasir.

The digital space and platforms that become *online media* have general guidelines that must be adhered to by their users. Freedom of the press and opinion, as written in the 1945 Constitution as a human right, is the foundation on which anyone can have an opinion. The negative value is that someone who does not have the qualifications of mufasir can argue in the digital space. This affects the distinctiveness of contemporary interpretation, which has a wider and more flexible space. In addition, the mechanism of reporting on personal accounts is often guided by investigation, argumentative, and persuasive. Moderate Islam, such as the website @tafsiralquran.id, guides some. The mechanism built by each platform will affect a mufasir's capacity.

If analyzed using the four schemes above, for example, Gus Nadir's Facebook account and the @bincangsyariah website look at Ahok in the 2016-2017 alleged blasphemy case. Both platforms do not independently judge the figure and the case. In fact, both present scientific discussions by referring to the interpretation of the word *awlivā*' based on various references to the Book of Interpretation. Both Gus Nadir and Ustaz Ahong, as writers on their respective platforms, demonstrate the capacity for discussion based on the knowledge and mechanisms of their respective platforms. Related to self-schema, this can be witnessed in the response to comments and likes on the platform. Various kinds of positive and negative responses will always affect the flow of discourse and the capacity of digital mufasir. Meanwhile, in the role scheme, Gus Nadir, as an NU Muslim scholar, will always present an argumentative discourse. It is the same with Ustaz Ahong's prominence. Finally, the event scheme in social cognition is related to the phenomenon used as the basis for interpreting the Qur'an in the digital space. Therefore, the internal capacity is interpreted as how one understands the phenomenon, and the external capacity is understood as the cause of a mufasir giving birth to discourse in the digital space.

#### Ideology Domination and Media

Ideology and media have power and access to the critical discourse of Indonesian digital interpretation. Van Dijk offers two elements in this context: power and access (Dijk 2006). These two elements open the door to the domination of ideology and media that can control other individuals or groups. Some of the various platforms this paper's research objects are personal and institutional. Power in the context of personal platforms is defined by their capacity and influence to influence the general public personally. The items underlying power are usually ownership or other sources of value, such as money, status, and knowledge (Wahab 2019: 46).

The dominance of ideology is massively seen in the discourse in digital interpretations. Mufasir has extensive and interdisciplinary knowledge and will influence and dominate digital interpretation. The ideology developed by presenting the discourse of digital interpretation is very diverse. Some carry philosophical interpretations, for example, those given by Gus Dhofir; moderate Islam carried by @tafsiralquran.id; or describe the interpretation in general, even more likely to divert language only (translation). Whatever the digital interpretation discourse produces will always be related to ideological domination. This also emphasizes that interpretation will always be affected by the ideology of the mufasir. In the context of media domination, the media interests of each platform have power over the discourse produced. This also results in online *mufasirs* having to follow the terms and conditions of each platform. This point will continue, and contemporary interpretation will depend on media power.

#### Conclusion

Digital interpretation is an interpretation issued by someone through a digital platform and cannot be separated from the traditional method of classical interpretation and its digital nature. Digital media has developed to construct social communication and create the authority of the mufasir. The structure of digital media, like, share, subscribe, and comment, is important in constructing digital interpretation discourse. Through historical analysis, the periodization of digital era interpretation in Indonesia began in 2012 on the YouTube channel, and a year later, the Facebook platform became a medium of interpretation. 2016, it was followed by the website, and in 2017, it was on Instagram. Based on virtual ethnography, digital interpretation in Indonesia has a two-way openness and affects the practice of interpretation in general; namely, the loss of an integral part of interpretation, and the discourse of Qur'anic interpretation is increasingly globalized. Based on Teun A. Van Dijk's discourse analysis, three discourses are presented in digital tafsir in Indonesia: thematization in Qur'anic interpretation, the internal and external capacity of the mufasir, and the dominance of ideology and media. The three critical discourses in contemporary interpretation have a role and influence, especially in the context of ideology and characteristics.

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