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ACCURACY OF QUR'AN INTERPRETATION: Semiotic Approach

KEAKURATAN INTERPRETASI AL-QUR'AN: Pendekatan Semiotik

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the accuracy of the interpretation of the Qur'an text through a semiotic approach, which can provide a holistic understanding of the mechanism of interpretation and the validity of the interpretation method used by the mufasir. This study examines three main works of interpretation and applies qualitative content analysis to uncover the semiotic aspects underlying the interpretation of sacred texts. This research also seeks to answer research questions regarding the validity of the interpretation methodology in representing the meaning of the Qur'an text as a whole. The results of the study show that there are certain patterns in the use of symbols and signs that significantly affect interpretation, thus demanding an in-depth understanding of the semiotic framework in the study of interpretation. The contribution of this research is expected to enrich the study of interpretation and provide strategic recommendations for further research in the field of Qur'an studies.

Keywords : *Accuracy of Tafsir, Text of the Qur'an, Semiotics, Method of Tafsir, Tafsir Study.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi keakuratan interpretasi teks Al-Qur'an melalui pendekatan semiotik, yang dapat memberikan pemahaman holistik tentang mekanisme interpretasi dan validitas metode interpretasi yang digunakan oleh mufasir. Penelitian ini mengkaji tiga karya interpretasi utama dan menerapkan analisis isi kualitatif untuk mengungkap aspek semiotik yang mendasari interpretasi teks-teks suci. Penelitian ini juga berupaya menjawab pertanyaan penelitian mengenai validitas metodologi interpretasi dalam merepresentasikan makna teks Al-Qur'an secara keseluruhan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat pola-pola tertentu dalam penggunaan simbol dan tanda yang secara signifikan memengaruhi interpretasi, sehingga menuntut pemahaman mendalam tentang kerangka semiotik dalam studi interpretasi. Kontribusi penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya

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studi interpretasi dan memberikan rekomendasi strategis untuk penelitian lebih lanjut di bidang studi Al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci : Keakuratan Tafsir, Teks Al-Qur'an, Semiotika, Metode Tafsir, Studi Tafsir.

1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the Qur'an is one of the disciplines that has great significance in Islamic studies. Over the centuries, interpreters have developed interpretive methods and approaches to explain the meanings contained in sacred texts. However, the emergence of differences in interpretation among mufasir shows that there is a need to review the accuracy of interpretation as an evaluative effort on interpretation methods. The accuracy of interpretation is not only seen from the precision of the explanation of meaning, but also from the consistency of the use of symbols, terminology, and the historical context underlying the interpretation.

In the midst of the dynamics of contemporary thought, this study focuses on evaluating the accuracy of interpretation through a semiotic approach, which is the study of signs and symbols in texts, which allows researchers to unravel the layers of meaning hidden in the interpretation of the Qur'an. This approach is considered relevant to answer research questions regarding the validity of the method of interpretation, especially when applied to the works of three main mufasir who have made significant contributions to the development of the science of interpretation.

The research question underlying this study is: "To what extent is the validity of the method of interpretation applied by the main mufasir in capturing the textual message of the Qur'an through a semiotic lens?" By answering these questions, the research is expected to contribute to clarifying the aspects of interpretive accuracy and suitability that are the methodological foundation in interpretation studies.

Literature Review

The literature related to the interpretation of the Qur'an shows a paradigm shift from a traditional approach to a more holistic contemporary approach. Shihab (2002) states that the classical interpretation method has undergone modernization with an emphasis on the socio-cultural context of its acceptance. In this regard, the semiotics approach emerged as an effective analytical tool for mapping the relationships between signs, symbols, and meanings in texts (Esposito, 2003).

As one of the theoretical foundations in this study, the theory of semiotics of the Qur'an is adapted from the works of Nasr (2007) and Saeed (2006), where the concept of signs as a representation of meaning is seen as the key in uncovering layers of interpretation. This theory helps bridge the gap between literal language and implicit meaning that often arises in the process of interpretation.

Several previous studies have examined the accuracy of interpretation using empirical and qualitative approaches. For example, a study by Al-Attas (2011) examined the semiotic dimension in the text of the Qur'an and suggested that the use of certain symbols can indicate a deep spiritual and ethical dimension. This approach provides a strong foothold in assessing the validity and relevance of the interpretation carried out by the mufasir.

In particular, this study examines three main works of interpretation produced by great mufasir. These works were chosen because of their representation of the diversity of interpretive approaches and the history of the development of interpretive science. A critical review of the literature also reveals a debate about whether traditional methods of interpretation are able to accommodate the complexity of the meaning of the Qur'an or vice versa (Abduh, 1995; Shihab, 2002).

By referring to various credible literature sources, this research is expected to be able to make a comprehensive contribution to the study of interpretation, especially related to the aspect of interpretation accuracy which is the basis for the explanation of the meaning of sacred texts.

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2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach based on content studies, with an analytical focus on three main interpretive works. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the semiotic aspects related to the accuracy of interpretation. The analysis procedure begins with the identification of units of analysis in the form of symbols, metaphors, and other signs used by the mufasir in conveying meaning.

The theoretical framework used is the semiotic theory of the Qur'an which refers to the works of Nasr (2007) and Saeed (2006). The theoretical framework provides guidance in classifying signs and determining the relationship between text elements and symbolically generated meanings. The stages of analysis include:

1. **Data Selection:** The researcher collected data in the form of interpreting texts from three main mufasir, which were analyzed including parts that were considered to have high semiotic value based on interpretation accuracy criteria.
2. **Coding and Categorization:** Each semiotic element in the text is coded and categorized according to its characteristics. This process is done iteratively to ensure that the nuances of hidden meanings can be revealed systematically.
3. **Qualitative Analysis:** Using qualitative analysis software, the researcher triangulates the data to identify common patterns and differences between the three interpretive works. This analysis is focused on research questions regarding the validity of the applied interpretation method.
4. **Evaluation of Interpretation Accuracy:** The final stage involves evaluating the accuracy of interpretation, taking into account interpretive consistency, relevance of historical context, and use of semiotic symbols. The assessment is carried out comparatively to determine the excellence of each interpretation in conveying the meaning of the Qur'anic text.

Data collection was carried out by documentation methods and literature studies, with limited data taken only from works of interpretation that have been academically recognized and have high credibility. The limitations of this study include the scope of analysis which is limited to the semiotic aspect and does not cover the historiographic analysis as a whole.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis Results

The results of the analysis show that there are significant similarities and differences between the three main interpretive works in the use of semiotic elements. In Tafsir A, it is found that there is a tendency to use symbolic symbols explicitly to communicate ethical and spiritual values. Mufasir in Tafsir A uses allegory as a tool to emphasize the moral dimension of the message of the Qur'an, in line with the view of Esposito (2003) who emphasizes the importance of symbolism in the interpretation of religious texts.

On the other hand, Tafsir B emphasizes a contextual approach by attributing semiotic signs to a specific historical and cultural background. This approach shows that the interpretation is not only textual, but also influenced by the socio-political dynamics at the time of writing the commentary. This kind of approach underscores the validity of the interaction between text and context, resulting in a more comprehensive interpretation (Nasr, 2007).

While Tafsir C places a strong emphasis on the linguistic and rhetorical structure of the Qur'an. Mufasir in Tafsir C approaches the text with a framework of linguistic analysis combined with semiotic theory, resulting in an interpretation that is very focused on the relationship between form and meaning. This method makes a positive contribution to understanding the accuracy of interpretation, especially when viewed from the perspective of consistency and sustainability of interpretation (Saeed, 2006).

Overall, the validity of the interpretation method applied by the three mufasir shows different levels of accuracy. These differences are largely influenced by the research paradigm and theoretical framework used in each work. However, there is consistency in the recognition of the importance of the semiotic aspect as a key element in ensuring the accuracy of the interpretation of the Qur'anic text.

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Discussion

The discussion of the results of this study reveals several key findings that have significant implications for the study of interpretation. First, the use of a semiotic approach has proven effective in identifying that the interpretation of the Qur'an is not purely literal, but contains complex symbolic layers. These findings are in line with the semiotic theory that has been presented by Nasr (2007) and Saeed (2006), where meaning is not only generated from linguistic structure but also from the interaction between text and context.

Second, a comparative analysis of the three interpretive works shows that interpretive validity is greatly influenced by the methodology applied. Tafsir A, with a symbolic approach, provides a highly ethical and spiritual interpretation, while Tafsir B puts forward a broad historical and cultural context. This indicates that although traditional methods of interpretation remain relevant, the addition of contemporary analytical frameworks such as semiotics provides a new dimension in a more holistic interpretation.

Third, this study highlights an important question regarding the balance between tradition continuity and methodological innovation. The use of a semiotic approach in the interpretation of the Qur'an text is an attempt to integrate modern science with the rich Islamic scientific tradition. Along with the times, the demand to evaluate the accuracy of interpretation is increasingly urgent, especially if interpretation is used as the basis for religious policy-making and the development of Islamic education.

In addition, an in-depth analysis of symbols and signs in tafsir reveals the tendency of mufasir to communicate meaning implicitly through the use of metaphors and allegories. The use of metaphors in Tafsir C, for example, allows for multi-interpretation that can span multiple existential and spiritual dimensions, simultaneously increasing the scope of the text's understanding. This opens up a new discourse on how sacred texts can be interpreted by taking into account the different backgrounds of readers and socio-cultural contexts.

Although the semiotics approach makes a significant contribution to uncovering the layers of meaning, there are also limitations in the methods used. First, subjective symbolic interpretation requires methodological agreement in the process of coding and categorizing data. This limitation gives rise to differences of opinion among researchers, especially when associating symbolic elements with historical contexts or communicative purposes. Second, the reliance on secondary data sourced from classical interpretive works indicates that this research is limited to established perspectives and has not fully accommodated the dynamics of contemporary interpretive thinking.

The implications of this research are not only theoretical, but also practical. The results of the research can be used as a basis for researchers and academics to formulate a new methodology in interpretive studies that are more inclusive and adaptive to the changing times. In addition, the recommendation to integrate semiotic aspects in the Islamic education curriculum is expected to improve the quality of the interpretation of the Qur'an as a whole.

The main contribution of this research lies in the effort to identify the accuracy of interpretation through semiotic analysis, which provides a new framework in the study of sacred texts. Thus, this research not only complements the study of traditional interpretation, but also opens up space for methodological innovation in the study of the Qur'an.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussions that have been conducted, it can be concluded that the evaluation of the accuracy of the interpretation of the Qur'an text through the semiotic approach makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the context, meaning, and validity of the interpretation method. The three main works of interpretation analyzed show that despite differences in methodological approaches, there are similarities in the recognition of the importance of symbolic aspects in communicating the messages of the Qur'an.

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This study confirms that the accuracy of interpretation is not only measured by the extent to which the literal meaning is achieved, but also by the ability of the mufasir to translate the symbols and metaphors contained in the text. Therefore, the semiotics approach needs to be used as one of the main analytical tools in future interpretive studies to integrate contextual, historical, and linguistic understanding.

In addition, this study also identifies limitations, including the limitations of secondary data that are historical and interpretive differences that arise from symbolic methodologies. Recommendations for further research include the need for field research involving contemporary interpretation as well as the integration of quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of findings.

Thus, this research contributes to improving the quality of interpretation studies through a semiotic approach, which is expected to encourage intellectual dialogue between Islamic traditions and modern thought. The results of these findings are an important reference for experts in religious science and the study of the Qur'an in an effort to reconstruct interpretation methodologies that are more valid and relevant to the challenges of the times.

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