

# The Construction of KH. Ahmad Mustofa Bisri's Oral Exegesis: A Conceptual Framework

Muhammad Irsad<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, Indonesia

Correspondence: muhammadirsad1209@gmail.com

DOI: 10.29240/alquds.v9i3.16246

**Abstract.** Studies of Qur'anic interpretation in academic tradition generally focus on written interpretations, while oral exegesis, despite their significance in religious practice, are still relatively rarely studied systematically. Oral exegesis are communicative, situational, and contextual in nature, requiring separate analysis to understand their structure and dynamics. This study aims to formulate Gus Mus's oral exegesis through a conceptual approach that combines the context of delivery, interpretation structure, reference sources, and interpretation strategies. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical design through thematic analysis of oral exegesis, which is operationalized through a process of transcription, open coding, categorization, and identification of interpretive patterns and themes. The research data consists of transcripts sourced from recordings of Gus Mus's *al-Ibriz* interpretation lectures, collected through audio-visual documentation and other relevant supporting sources. The results of the study show that Gus Mus's oral exegesis is constructed through a complex analysis method, in which the text of the Qur'an, scholarly tradition, the interpreter's historical experience, and the socio-cultural context of the audience interact simultaneously. Intratextual and intertextual approaches strengthen the coherence and legitimacy of meaning, while the dimensions of locality, affirmative and critical commentary, and recontextualization ensure relevance and effective communication with the audience. The findings of this study offer a new conceptual framework in the study of oral exegesis, enriching contemporary Qur'anic interpretation studies and opening up opportunities for further research on the oral exegesis practices of other figures and written interpretations.

**Keywords:** Oral Exegesis, Methodological Construction, Gus Mus.

## Introduction

Studies of Qur'anic exegesis in academic tradition generally focus on thematic research and written exegesis as the main sources of interpretive analysis. This approach results in the mapping of methodologies, styles, and trends in the thinking of exegetes through systematically documented texts.<sup>1</sup> However, in the religious practices of Muslims, especially in Islamic boarding schools,<sup>2</sup> religious lectures, and recitation assemblies, Qur'anic exegesis is more often conveyed in the form of oral exegesis.<sup>3</sup> Despite its significant role, oral exegesis has received relatively little attention as an independent object of scientific study. Oral exegesis not only functions as a means of transmitting religious knowledge, as explained by Andreas Görke,<sup>4</sup> but also as a contextual, communicative, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Abdul Mutakabbir, "Tren Penelitian Tafsir Di Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Islam Masa Pandemi Covid-19: Tracer Studi Terhadap Skripsi Mahasiswa Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo 2020-2021," *MAGHA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 7, no. 2 (2022): 81, <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v7i2.6771>.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Irsad et al., "Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsir Al-Ibriz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 25, no. 1 (2024): 142, 1, <https://doi.org/10.14421/gh.v25i1.5416>.

<sup>3</sup> Lihat, Umi Latifah, "Tafsir Lisan Dan Sensasi Keagamaan Muslim Urban: Studi Tentang Pengajian Tafsir Syatori Abdur Rauf" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Andreas Görke, "Redefining the Borders of Tafsir: Oral Exegesis, Lay Exegesis and Regional Particularities," in *Tafsir and Islamic Intellectual History Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*, ed. Andreas Görke and Johanna Pink (Oxford

situational practice of interpretation. Therefore, a study is needed that specifically places oral exegesis as an object of scientific analysis in order to understand the character, structure, and dynamics of Qur'anic interpretation in religious practices that are alive in society.

This study examines the Tafsir al-Ibrīz lectures delivered by KH Ahmad Mustofa Bisri, popularly known as Gus Mus. To maintain terminological consistency, the term “Gus Mus” will be used throughout this paper to refer to KH Ahmad Mustofa Bisri. This activity was packaged in the form of a recitation that was not only attended by Islamic boarding school students but also by the general public and could be watched live on the GusMus Channel YouTube.<sup>5</sup> This study focuses on analyzing the construction of Gus Mus's oral exegesis, which includes the internal and external relations of the text, the influence of the interpreter's historical background, the cultural-local dimensions of the audience, the tendency of the interpretation to be affirmative or critical of written interpretations, and the process of adjusting the meaning of verses to the contemporary social context. These five aspects are explored through an in-depth reading of the patterns of interpretation that emerge in the recitation, both in the way Gus Mus builds coherence of meaning between verses and dialogues with other reference sources, as well as in his communicative strategies that link the message of the Qur'an with social realities and the life experiences of the community.

There are two arguments that led the author to choose Gus Mus's oral exegesis of *al-Ibrīz* as the subject of this study;<sup>6</sup> *first*, *al-Ibrīz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis were written and delivered in Javanese, the language used by the majority of the population on the island of Java, which has a wide social reach. The demographic dominance of the Javanese people in Indonesia's<sup>7</sup> population structure gives Javanese-language interpretations a strategic position in the process of transmitting and internalizing Islamic teachings. Population data shows that the Javanese are the largest ethnic group in Indonesia,<sup>8</sup> so the use of Javanese in Qur'anic interpretations greatly contributes to the accessibility of understanding the messages contained in the Qur'an.

*Second*, the selection of this research subject was also based on Gus Mus's religious authority as a religious scholar with extensive influence, both locally and nationally. In the national context, Gus Mus is known as a religious and cultural figure whose views and advice are often used as a reference in responding to various religious, social, and national issues. His experience as Rais 'Aam of the Nahdlatul Ulama Association further reinforces his position as a morally and spiritually recognized leader. At the local level, especially in the Rembang region, the Raudlatut Thalibin Islamic Boarding School that he leads<sup>9</sup> has become one of the influential centers of Islamic authority and a major reference point for the society.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Gus Mus's oral exegesis not only represents individual interpretation practices but also reflects scholarly and religious authority deeply rooted in the boarding school tradition.

---

University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014); Andreas Görke et al., eds., *Tafsir and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*, Qur'anic Studies Series (Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> #307 *Tafsir Al-Ibrīz - Surat al-A'raf: 73* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, directed by GusMus Channel, 2026, 37:22, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgdMR7JT0Qk>.

<sup>6</sup> See, Muhammad Irsad, “Syarah Ahmad Mustofa Bisri Terhadap Tafsir Al-Ibrīz” (PhD Thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2025), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/74441/>.

<sup>7</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, “Mengulik Data Suku di Indonesia - Berita dan Siaran Pers,” accessed May 19, 2025, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Aris Ananta et al., *Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity* (ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute Singapore, 2015), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814519885>.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Ja'farul Musadad, dkk., *Ensiklopedia Ulama Nusantara* (Qalam Nusantara, 2019), 3:208.

<sup>10</sup> Arnis Rachmadhani, “Otoritas Keagamaan Di Era Media Baru: Dakwah Gusmus Di Media Sosial,” *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 2 (2021): 157, 2, <https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.v5i2.2636>.

A number of previous studies have examined Gus Mus's thoughts and contributions to Indonesian Islamic discourse, including his views on gender-related Qur'anic verses, his preaching on social media, and his poetic works, as well as studies on *Tafsir al-Ibriz* and several works on oral exegesis. However, these studies have primarily focused on the content or substance of the interpretation, such as the themes, values, and normative messages conveyed. The structural and compositional aspects of oral exegesis, such as patterns of argumentation, rhetorical strategies, modes of delivery, and intratextual and intertextual relations, have not been adequately explored. Therefore, a significant research gap remains in understanding how the construction and architecture of oral interpretation are formed, rather than merely what is being interpreted. Including his views on verses of the Qur'an that discuss gender issues in a study by M. Irsad et al. entitled *Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsir al-Ibriz through Oral Exegesis on YouTube*.<sup>11</sup> Gus Mus's thoughts on unity and diversity,<sup>12</sup> his preaching on social media,<sup>13</sup> and works discussing Gus Mus's poetry.<sup>14</sup> Several scientific works related to tafsir *al-Ibriz*, namely: *Values of Tepo Seliro in Bakri Syahid's Tafsir al-Hudā and Bisri Mustofa's Tafsir al-Ibriz*, written by Mubasirun,<sup>15</sup> *Fathers and Sons, Angels and Women*, written by Johanna Pink,<sup>16</sup> and *Javanese Interpretation of Modernism*, written by Ahmad Zainal Abidin and Thoriqul Aziz.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, scientific works related to oral exegesis include those by Yani Yuliani,<sup>18</sup> Umi Latifah,<sup>19</sup> and Farri Chatul Liqok.<sup>20</sup>

Based on this literature review, it can be concluded that studies on Gus Mus and tafsir *al-Ibriz* have been conducted from various perspectives, such as gender issues, ethical values, modernism, media da'wah, and literary works. However, these studies generally focus on normative thinking, thematic messages, or written interpretations, while Gus Mus's oral exegesis has not been systematically studied as an interpretive practice with its own construction. Existing studies on oral exegesis also tend to analyze the content of the interpretation rather than the structure and composition of the interpretation. Thus, to this day, there has been no research that specifically analyzes the construction of Gus Mus's oral exegesis, whether in terms of the structure of the exegesis, the sources of reference, or the strategies of interpretation. Therefore, this research is important to fill this gap in the study and to contribute new insights to the development of Qur'anic exegesis studies and the tradition of pesantren exegesis in Indonesia.

Based on the gaps in previous studies, this research was designed using a qualitative-descriptive method with an oral exegesis analysis approach. This methodological choice is based on the assumption that oral exegesis does not merely represent the content of the interpretation, but also

<sup>11</sup> Irsad et al., "Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsir Al-Ibriz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube."

<sup>12</sup> Roudlotul Nazila et al., "Tinjauan Konseptual Kesatuan Dalam Keberagaman Terhadap Integrasi Nasional Berdasarkan Pemikiran Gus Mus," *Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 2, no. 5 (2024): 5, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11396736>.

<sup>13</sup> Rachmadhani, "Otoritas Keagamaan Di Era Media Baru."

<sup>14</sup> Yon Hadir Suteja, "Analisis Makna Puisi Karya Mustofa Bisri (Tinjauan Hermeneutika Wilhelm Dilthey)" (bachelorThesis, FU, 2022), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/62698>.

<sup>15</sup> Mubasirun Mubasirun, "Values of Tepo Seliro in Bakri Syahid's Tafsir al-Hudā and Bisri Mustofa's Tafsir al-Ibriz," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021).

<sup>16</sup> Johanna Pink, "Fathers and Sons, Angels and Women Translation, Exegesis and Social Hierarchy in Javanese Tafsir," in *Qur'an Translation in Indonesia: Scriptural Politics in a Multilingual State*, 1st ed., ed. Johanna Pink (Routledge, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003395287>.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmad Zainal Abidin and Thoriqul Aziz, "Javanese Interpretation Of Modernism: Contribution of Tafsir Al-Ibriz on Moderate Understanding in Sharia and Mu'amalah," *Justicia Islamica* 15, no. 2 (2018): 239–62, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v15i2.1462>.

<sup>18</sup> Yani Yuliani, "Tafsir Lisan Online Kajian terhadap Pengajian Tafsir Al-Qur'an Buya Syakur di YouTube" (masters, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2022), <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/53532/>.

<sup>19</sup> Latifah, "Tafsir Lisan Dan Sensasi Keagamaan Muslim Urban: Studi Tentang Pengajian Tafsir Syatori Abdur Rauf."

<sup>20</sup> Farri Chatul Liqok, "Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020).

contains the structure, strategy, and context of delivery that can only be deeply understood through qualitative analysis. The research data took the form of transcripts sourced from audio-visual recordings of Gus Mus's oral exegesis. Data collection was carried out through systematic documentation and searching for relevant supporting sources to strengthen the analytical framework. Furthermore, data analysis focused on reconstructing Gus Mus's oral exegesis by identifying the structure of the verse explanation, patterns of source and reference usage, and the interpretation strategies used to bridge the text of the Qur'an with the audience's horizon of understanding.

## Discussion

### Tafsir *al-Ibriz* Recitation: Negotiation between Written and Oral Exegesis

The *al-Ibriz* tafsir recitation by Gus Mus is a routine activity every Friday morning. Tafsir *al-Ibriz* is a Javanese-language tafsir written in the *Pegon*<sup>21</sup> script. It is one of the intellectual legacies of Gus Mus's father, KH. Bisri Mustofa, and has been published in several volumes: a 30-volume edition with one juz per volume,<sup>22</sup> a 3-volume edition with ten juz each, and a single volume Indonesian translation edition.<sup>23</sup> On several opportunities, when Gus Mus was unable to attend, the recitation was led by KH. Syarafuddin IQ, who is one of the leaders of the Raudlatul Thalibin Islamic boarding school in Rembang.

The *al-Ibriz* tafsir recitation was attended by the community around the pesantren, most of whom were older and had strong ties to the pesantren recitation tradition. This was evident when Gus Mus arrived at the recitation room, and the congregation enthusiastically stood up and shook his hand respectfully.<sup>24</sup> After Gus Mus took his place, he opened the recitation with *tamassul* by reading Surat al-Fatihah, which is a characteristic activity of Islamic boarding schools in opening teaching and learning activities. The form of communication in the *al-Ibriz* tafsir recitation tends to be monological, but is interspersed with casual dialogue, humor, and spontaneous responses that build closeness between the interpreter and the audience. The tafsir was delivered directly in an offline recitation forum and also live-streamed on the GusMus Channel YouTube, with the content documented in the form of digital recordings. The atmosphere of the recitation was calm, intimate, and religious, characterized by fluid communication without rigid hierarchical distance between the kiai and the audience.

Calling this recitation as "recitation of tafsir *al-Ibriz*," as stated in the video titles on the GusMus Channel YouTube, actually simplifies a much more complex and autonomous practice of interpretation. Instead of being a space for reading tafsir *al-Ibriz*, this recitation actually presents an oral exegesis practice that goes beyond the written interpretation text. In practice, the *al-Ibriz* text is generally only read briefly at the beginning as an introduction, while the rest of the explanation is almost entirely delivered through Gus Mus's oral elaboration. The interpretation presented is not aimed at explaining the structure, method, or argumentation of the *al-Ibriz* interpretation, but rather shows an independent interpretation process that responds to the text of the Qur'an, with Gus Mus only occasionally referring to the *al-Ibriz* interpretation.

### Methodological Framework in the Construction of Gus Mus's Oral Exegesis

<sup>21</sup> "Search Result - KBBI VI Daring," accessed May 1, 2024, <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/pegon>; M. Irfan Sofwani, *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu* (Adicita Karya Nusa, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> See, Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*, vol. 1 (Menara Kudus, n.d.).

<sup>23</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibriz Versi Latin* (Lembaga Kajian Strategis Indonesia, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> #1. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Al Fatihah* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), performed by A. Mustofa Bisri, 2018, 01:14:24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJcp-uxXVAU>.

Gus Mus's oral exegesis is a complex practice of interpretation that does not stand on a single dimension. Based on the author's analysis of Gus Mus's oral exegesis, the author formulates that the construction of oral exegesis is formed by five main elements that are interrelated. These elements include intratextual and intertextual approaches, historical influence, the dimension of locality, the affirmative and critical comments, and recontextualization.

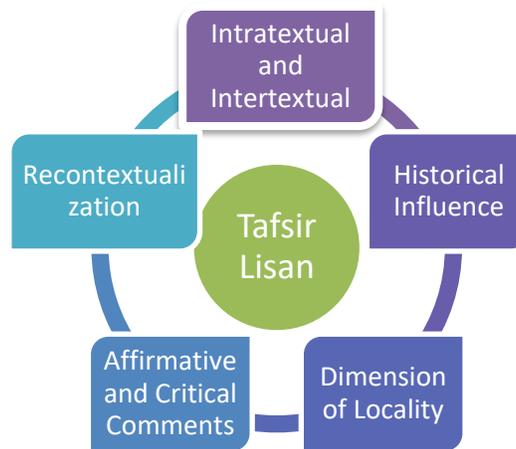


Image 1.1 Methodological Framework in the Construction of Oral Exegesis

### Intratextual and Intertextual

The intratextual approach refers to a method of interpretation that involves comparing and analyzing a verse of the Qur'an with other verses within the Qur'an itself, while the intertextual approach is an attempt at interpretation that connects and compares verses of the Qur'an with other texts beyond the Qur'an, especially the hadiths, which serve to explain and reinforce meaning. For example, when explaining the meaning of the word *waliyyun* in QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 257, Gus Mus uses an intratextual approach by referring to QS. Yunus [10]: 62.

*"waliyyun itu saya makanani bolo. Bolo itu bisa penolong, bisa pelindung, bisa kekasih... karena itu, bolo-bolone Gusti Allah ini ndak punya takut, ndak punya susah, karena bolo ne Gusti Allah. 'alā innā awliyā Allabi lā khaufun 'alaibim wa lā hum yahzanūn'".<sup>25</sup>*

(I interpret *waliyyun* to mean *bolo*. *Bolo* can mean helper, protector, or even beloved. Therefore, Allah's *bolo* have no fear or worries, because they are Allah's *bolo*, *'alā innā awliyā Allabi lā khaufun 'alaibim wa lā hum yahzanūn*)

In addition to using an intratextual approach, Gus Mus also uses an intertextual approach in his oral exegesis by linking verses from the Qur'an with other textual sources, especially the hadiths. The citation of hadiths serves to explain, reinforce, and expand the meaning of the verses being interpreted, so that the understanding conveyed is not based on the Qur'anic text only. Gus Mus said:

*"mulane Kanjeng Nabi Muhammad SAW. itu dawuh: kullu ummati yadkbulūna al-jannah semua umatku masuk surga, illā man abā' kecuali yang ndak mau."<sup>26</sup>*

<sup>25</sup> #90.Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Al Baqarah : 256 | KH. A.Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), performed by Ahmad Mustofa Bisri, 2020, 50:41, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ttU0Ca\\_c8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ttU0Ca_c8).

<sup>26</sup> #90.Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Al Baqarah.

(Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said: *kullu ummati yadkhubluna al-jannah*, all of my followers will enter heaven, *illā man abā* except those who reject it).

Thus, intratextual and intertextual approaches are important elements in the construction of Gus Mus's oral exegesis. Connecting one verse to another shows that oral exegesis does not rely only on spontaneous verbal explanations, but is built on an awareness of the internal coherence of the Qur'an. At the same time, the use of the Prophet's hadith as supporting text shows that there is a dialogue between texts that enriches and confirms the meaning of the interpreted verse. These two approaches serve as a methodological foundation that maintains a balance between depth of meaning and ease of understanding for the audience. In the context of oral exegesis, intratextuality enables the interpreter to affirm the consistency of the Qur'an's message, while intertextuality broadens the horizon of interpretation through the authority of the prophetic tradition. This shows that oral exegesis is not identical to simple or popular interpretation without scientific basis. On the other hand, Gus Mus's oral exegesis shows a systematic interpretation structure even though it is delivered orally and communicably. By combining verses from the Qur'an and hadith, Gus Mus presents an integrative and contextual interpretation. This approach also strengthens the legitimacy of the meaning conveyed to the audience. Therefore, intertextuality and intratextuality can be positioned as integral methodological components in the practice of oral exegesis.

### Historical influence

Historical influence is a condition in which the process and content of interpretation are influenced by the historical background of the interpreter, including life experiences, education, socio-cultural environment, and intellectual traditions that shape their understanding in reading and explaining the text of the Qur'an. Kunto Wijoyo says that every human being is inevitably influenced by thought. In essence, a person cannot escape the realm of thought and even in daily life, depends on what thoughts and ideas influence them. For example, a pious person cannot escape the influence of their religious theological thinking. In the same way, someone who does not believe in God cannot escape the influence of their atheistic ideology.<sup>27</sup> Thus, historical influence is an inseparable element of every interpretation process, because understanding of the text of the Qur'an is always shaped by the interpreter's intellectual horizon, which is rooted in their experience, education, and socio-historical context. Awareness of this dimension is important in order to read interpretations not as neutral and ahistorical products of meaning, but as the result of a dialogue between the text, the interpreter, and the history that surrounds it.

Human thought is never born in a neutral way, separate from its social context. The way someone understands and formulates ideas is always influenced by their social experiences, relationships, and historical conditions. Karl Mannheim stated that a method of thinking cannot be fully understood without knowing its social origins.<sup>28</sup> In other words, a complete understanding of a thought can only be achieved if the social elements behind its emergence are clearly understood.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, tracing the social background is an essential step in comprehensively understanding the direction, structure, and meaning of a thought. In the context of this study, this perspective emphasizes that Gus Mus's oral exegesis cannot be fully understood without tracing the social and historical background that formed his way of thinking.

In Gus Mus's oral exegesis of QS. al-Nisā [4]: 176, his explanation shows the connection with historical experiences that formed his horizon of thought. When explaining the provisions of

<sup>27</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah*, Ed. 2 (Tiara Wacana Yogya., 2003), 189.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, 1st ed., trans. Louis Wirth and Shils (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Hamka Hamka, "Sosiologi Pengetahuan: Telaah Atas Pemikiran Karl Mannheim," *Scolae: Journal of Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2020): 64, 1, <https://doi.org/10.56488/scolae.v3i1.64>.

inheritance distribution, Gus Mus did not stop at the normative aspects of the verse, but expanded it by explaining the obligation of dowry as a financial burden borne by men. This explanation is then reinforced through a comparison of the practice of giving dowry in Indonesia and in Arab societies, particularly in terms of the size and method of payment. The detailed description of the dowry tradition in the Arab world demonstrates Gus Mus' empirical knowledge of the social realities of the Middle East, which cannot be separated from his educational background in Egypt. This cross-cultural experience is part of the historical influences that shape the way Gus Mus reads and explains the text of the Qur'an. In his oral exegesis, this experience is processed into communicative and contextual interpretive arguments, so that the meaning of the verses can be understood more concretely by the audience. Thus, Gus Mus shows that the intellectual and cultural experiences of the interpreter play a significant role in shaping the structure and construction of oral exegesis.

### **The Dimension of Locality: Language and Culture**

An oral interpreter is always connected to the local situation, which can influence their interpretation. In the process of oral exegesis, contextualizing verses by connecting them to local realities—whether in the form of language, daily illustrations, or local cultural references—serves to connect the meaning of the Qur'anic text with the audience's horizon of understanding. Görke believes that there is a large basis that connects all local interpretation traditions. This development may be more apparent in oral exegesis than in written exegesis, because oral exegesis makes it easier to respond directly to local conditions.<sup>30</sup> Baidowi argues that locality can be seen in three elements: locality of appearance or writing style, locality of communication or linguistic locality, and locality of interpretation or interpretive products that intersect with the traditions and culture of the surrounding community.<sup>31</sup> The aspect of locality is an integral part of an interpretive product. In addition to being a marker of where the interpretive product came from, it also contains the message that not all interpretive products are relevant to different spaces and times.

For example, in QS. al-Nisā [4]: 11-12, Gus Mus explains that one of the reasons men are required to give dowry is so that they receive twice the inheritance of women. Javanese Muslims have a culture of giving very small dowries, usually in the form of a small amount of money or a set of prayer equipment. Thus, in Javanese Islamic marriage ceremonies, it is rare to find dowry payments made in installments.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Gus Mus' explanation confirms that his verbal interpretation is not only based on normative texts, but also consciously accommodates and highlights the relationship with local culture as part of an effort to bridge the message of the Qur'an with the social reality of the community.

The locality dimension in Gus Mus's oral exegesis is not only marked by the use of Javanese as a medium of communication, but more importantly by the choice of Javanese diction that is very familiar to the daily experiences of ordinary Javanese people. The language used is not elitist or technical-scientific Javanese, but rather spoken language that is familiar and easily understood by congregations from various educational backgrounds. As a religious scholar with high intellectual capacity, Gus Mus certainly has no difficulty reciting religious terms, including pronouncing the word Allah correctly according to the rules. However, he consciously chooses to use language commonly used by the general public as a communicative strategy in delivering his interpretations. The use of popular religious terms such as “Kanjeng Nabi” and “Gusti Allah” (read: Gusti Alah) reflects Gus Mus's efforts to bring the messages of the Qur'an down to earth within the linguistic and cultural

<sup>30</sup> Görke, “Redefining the Borders of Tafsīr: Oral Exegesis, Lay Exegesis and Regional Particularities,” 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ahmad Baidhawi, “Aspek Lokalitas Tafsir Al-Iklil Fi Ma'āni al-Tanzil Karya KH Mishbah Musthafa,” *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2015): 10, 1, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v1i1.10>.

<sup>32</sup> #199 . *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa': 173* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, performed by A. Mustofa Bisri, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AYJvMxmNDM>.

horizons of his audience. The general Javanese Muslim public is generally unable to pronounce the word Allah fluently, resulting in a shift in pronunciation to “Alah”.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that locality is an important dimension in constructing elements of oral exegesis, both at the level of language, examples of explanations, and the orientation of meaning delivered to the audience. Oral exegesis not only functions as a medium for delivering the message of the Qur’anic text, but also as a space for interaction between the text, the interpreter, and the local socio-cultural reality. In this context, locality plays a role as a hermeneutic device that allows religious messages to be understood in a more contextual, communicative, and relevant manner to the life experiences of the community. The use of local language, the adoption of local traditions, and the modification of concrete examples show that oral exegesis is constructed through the interpreter's situational awareness of their audience. Therefore, the aspect of locality cannot be viewed as a peripheral element, but rather as a constitutive element that shapes the character, effectiveness, and vitality of oral exegesis in a particular social space.

### Affirmative and Critical Comments

Oral exegesis as a living and situational practice of interpretation never occurs in a completely neutral space of meaning. In the process of its delivery, oral exegesis always contains various forms of response to existing written interpretations, whether in the form of agreement or re-evaluation. Gracia calls this response an *interpretant*,<sup>33</sup> which is an additional commentary on a text. In this context, the author uses the terms affirmative comment and critical comment to describe two inherent tendencies that accompany the practice of oral exegesis. The presence of these two types of comments cannot be separated from the dynamics of changes in the context of interpretation, shifting social situations, and the audience's evolving communicative needs. In addition, the interpreter's background, the listener's horizon of understanding, and the demands of meaning actualization in a particular social space also influence how written interpretations are accepted, affirmed, or even questioned in the practice of oral exegesis.

Affirmative commentary is a form of verbal interpretation that expresses agreement, reinforcement, or alignment with existing written interpretations. These comments can take the form of historical analysis, linguistic analysis, social context analysis, thematic explanations, or normative reflections relevant to the audience's situation. As in QS. Ali Imrān [3]: 118, Gus Mus affirms the meaning of the word *biṭānah* in the interpretation of *al-Ibrīz*. He reveals the historical background regarding the prohibition for Muslims to make non-Muslims as *biṭānah* (close friends) which is related to the close relationship between the Ansar Sahaba and the ahl al-kitab. Then this verse was revealed to warn the Ansar Sahaba not to make the ahl al-kitab as *biṭānah* as they had previously made the Banu Nadhir and Banu Qainuqa’ as *biṭānah*.<sup>34</sup> Thus, affirmative commentary serves as a mechanism for reinforcing meaning in Gus Mus’s oral exegesis and becomes an important element in the construction of oral exegesis, as it allows for continuity between written exegesis, historical context, and the audience's need for understanding.

Unlike affirmative comments, critical comments in Gus Mus’s oral exegesis are evaluative and corrective responses to the interpretation. These comments can be made by reviewing linguistic aspects, historical context, social implications, and the relevance of the meaning of the verse. In QS. al-Nisā’ [4]: 43, specifically in the phrase *wahjurūhunna fī al-maḍājī’*, in the tafsir *al-Ibrīz*, the phrase is

<sup>33</sup> Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (State University of New York Press, 1995), 150.

<sup>34</sup> #123. *Tafsir Al-Ibrīz - Surat Ali Imron : 115* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), performed by A. Mustofa Bisri, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbntDdkzCdI>.

interpreted as *aja mbaturi turu* (do not sleep with your wife).<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, Gus Mus interprets it as “stay away from your wife in bed.” This difference in interpretation has significant practical implications. The interpretation of “staying away from your wife in bed”<sup>36</sup> still leaves space for dialogue and communication between husband and wife, allowing for discussion to resolve the issues at hand. Meanwhile, the interpretation of “do not sleep with your wife” has the potential to be understood as sleeping apart, sleeping in separate rooms, or even sleeping in separate houses, which actually closes the possibility of dialogue and prevents solutions from being reached. This shift in interpretation shows Gus Mus' critical attitude towards the written interpretation he refers to, which is driven by serious attention to the linguistic structure of the verse and the social implications of the resulting interpretation.

### Recontextualization

The recontextualization that the author refers to is a process of interpretation in oral exegesis that transfers, adapts, and rearticulates the meaning of a text from its original context to a different social, cultural, and situational context. Recontextualization can be done by relating the meaning of verses to social conditions and current issues, explaining interpretations so that they are relevant to the cultural background, language, and experiences of the listeners, or by using examples, analogies, or illustrations to bridge the gap between the text and the social reality of the audience.

Recontextualization in Gus Mus's interpretation can be seen in his explanation of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 30, which recounts the angels' dialogue regarding the creation of humans as beings with the potential to cause destruction and bloodshed on earth. Gus Mus emphasizes that the human tendency to cause destruction is not only historical, but also evident in contemporary life, both in the form of destruction of nature and human conflict. To clarify the relevance of this verse, Gus Mus relates it to the disharmonious conditions in a number of Middle Eastern countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. He explains that conflicts often come packaged with ideological narratives, such as propaganda claiming that Shia is not part of Islam, which triggers a struggle for authority among factions. However, according to Gus Mus, these conflicts are not purely rooted in ideology but are driven more by the struggle for power over natural resources, especially oil.<sup>37</sup> This explanation shows that Gus Mus's oral exegesis does not stop at the textual meaning of the verses, but actively transfers the message of the Qur'an into the contemporary social and political context. Thus, this practice of exegesis emphasizes the element of recontextualization, which is an effort to present the meaning of the verses so that they remain relevant and meaningful in reading the ever-changing reality of humanity.

### Conclusion

This research found that Gus Mus's oral exegesis was constructed through a methodological approach that was not single-minded, but rather comprised of a number of intertwined elements. Based on an analysis of his oral exegesis practices, it can be asserted that Gus Mus's oral exegesis is constructed by intratextual and intertextual approaches, the historical influence of the interpreter, the dimension of locality, the existence of affirmative and critical comments, and recontextualization. These five elements are present simultaneously and form a distinctive pattern of interpretation in the

<sup>35</sup> Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz* (Menara Kudus, n.d.), 5:211.

<sup>36</sup> #151. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa': 34* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, directed by GusMus Channel, 2022, 55:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KKVRoAuVQ4>.

<sup>37</sup> #8. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz Al-Baqorob 30-32* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), performed by A. Mustofa Bisri, 2018, 57:35, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdQMYLqyiAo>.

delivery of oral exegesis. The findings of this study show that oral exegesis cannot be understood purely as a form of simplification of written exegesis or as a spontaneous and non-methodological practice of interpretation. On the contrary, Gus Mus's oral exegesis shows a systematic internal structure, in which the text of the Qur'an, scientific tradition, the historical experience of the interpreter, and the socio-cultural context of the audience interact in the process of meaning production. This synthesis confirms that oral exegesis is a space for dialogue between the text, the interpreter, and the ever-changing social reality.

This study presents a conceptual framework for the construction of oral exegesis that enriches the study of Qur'anic exegesis, especially in the domain of contemporary exegesis. By positioning oral exegesis as a hermeneutic practice with its own methodological tools, this study broadens the understanding that exegesis is not only produced in written form, but is also actively constructed through responsive, dialogical, and contextual practices. The results of this study open up a more serious study of oral exegesis as an independent object of study in Qur'anic studies. The methodological framework formulated in this study can be used as a starting point for further research to explore the oral exegesis practices of other figures and interpretation books with different locations and media.

## Bibliography

- #1. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Al-Fatihah* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus). Performed by A. Mustofa Bisri. 2018. 01:14:24. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJcp-uxXVAU>.
- #8. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz Al-Baqorob 30-32* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus). Performed by A. Mustofa Bisri. 2018. 57:35. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdQMYLqyiAo>.
- #90. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Al Baqarah : 256* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus). Performed by Ahmad Mustofa Bisri. 2020. 50:41. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ttdU0Ca\\_c8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ttdU0Ca_c8).
- #123. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat Ali Imron : 115* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus). Performed by A. Mustofa Bisri. 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbntDdkzCdI>.
- #199. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa' : 173* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri. Performed by A. Mustofa Bisri. 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AYJvMxmNDM>.
- Abidin, Ahmad Zainal, and Thoriqul Aziz. "Javanes Interpretation Of Modernism: Contribution of Tafsir Al-Ibriz on Moderate Understanding in Sharia and Mu'amalah." *Justicia Islamica* 15, no. 2 (2018): 239–62. <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v15i2.1462>.
- Ananta, Aris, Evi Nurvidya Arifin, and M. Sairi Hasbullah. *Demography of Indonesia's Ethnicity*. ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute Singapore, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814519885>.
- Baidhowi, Ahmad. "Aspek Lokalitas Tafsir Al-Iklil Fi Ma'āni al-Tanzil Karya KH Mishbah Musthafa." *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2015): 1. <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v1i1.10>.
- Görke, Andreas. "Redefining the Borders of Tafsīr: Oral Exegesis, Lay Exegesis and Regional Particularities." In *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*, edited by Andreas Görke and Johanna Pink. Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014.
- Görke, Andreas, Johanna Pink, and Institute of Ismaili Studies, eds. *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*. Qur'anic Studies Series. Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014.

- Gracia, Jorge J. E. *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology*. State University of New York Press, 1995.
- GusMus Channel, dir. #151. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa': 34* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri. 2022. 55:11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KKVRoAuVQ4>.
- GusMus Channel, dir. #307 *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat al-A'raf: 73* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri. 2026. 37:22. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgdMR7JT0Qk>.
- Hamka, Hamka. "Sosiologi Pengetahuan: Telaah Atas Pemikiran Karl Mannheim." *Scolae: Journal of Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (2020): 1. <https://doi.org/10.56488/scolae.v3i1.64>.
- Indonesia, Badan Pusat Statistik. "Mengulik Data Suku di Indonesia - Berita dan Siaran Pers." Accessed May 19, 2025. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/news/2015/11/18/127/mengulik-data-suku-di-indonesia.html>.
- Irsad, Muhammad. "Syarah Ahmad Mustofa Bisri Terhadap Tafsir Al-Ibriz." PhD Thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2025. <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/74441/>.
- Irsad, Muhammad, Abdul Mustaqim, and Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy. "Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsir Al-Ibriz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube." *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 25, no. 1 (2024): 1. <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i1.5416>.
- Kuntowijoyo. *Metodologi Sejarah*. Ed. 2. Tiara Wacana Yogya., 2003.
- Latifah, Umi. "Tafsir Lisan Dan Sensasi Keagamaan Muslim Urban: Studi Tentang Pengajian Tafsir Syatori Abdur Rauf." UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021.
- Liqok, Farri Chatul. "Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh." UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020.
- Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. 1st ed. Translated by Louis Wirth and Shils. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954.
- Mubasirun, Mubasirun. "Values of Tepo Seliro in Bakri Syahid's Tafsir al-Hudā and Bisri Mustofa's Tafsir al-Ibriz." *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021).
- Musadad, dkk., Ahmad Ja'farul. *Ensiklopedia Ulama Nusantara*. Vol. 3. Qalam Nusantara, 2019.
- Mustofa, Bisri. *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. Vol. 1. Menara Kudus, n.d.
- Mustofa, Bisri. *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. Vol. 5. Menara Kudus, n.d.
- Mustofa, Bisri. *Al-Ibriz Versi Latin*. Lembaga Kajian Strategis Indonesia, 2015.
- Mutakabbir, Abdul. "Tren Penelitian Tafsir Di Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Islam Masa Pandemi Covid-19: Tracer Studi Terhadap Skripsi Mahasiswa Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo 2020-2021." *MAGHZA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 7, no. 2 (2022): 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v7i2.6771>.
- Nazila, Roudlotul, Anggun Puspita Sari, Badria Nikmatus Sya'diah, and Bakti Fatwa Anbiya. "Tinjauan Konseptual Kesatuan Dalam Keberagaman Terhadap Integrasi Nasional Berdasarkan Pemikiran Gus Mus." *Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 2, no. 5 (2024): 5. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11396736>.
- Pink, Johanna. "Fathers and Sons, Angels and Women Translation, Exegesis and Social Hierarchy in Javanese Tafsir." In *Qur'an Translation in Indonesia: Scriptural Politics in a Multilingual State*, 1st ed., edited by Johanna Pink. Routledge, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003395287>.

- Rachmadhani, Arnis. "Otoritas Keagamaan Di Era Media Baru: Dakwah Gusmus Di Media Sosial." *Panangkaran: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 2 (2021): 2. <https://doi.org/10.14421/panangkaran.v5i2.2636>.
- "Search Result - KBBI VI Daring." Accessed May 1, 2024. <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/pegon>.
- Sofwani, M. Irfan. *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu*. Adicita Karya Nusa, 2005.
- Suteja, Yon Hadir. "Analisis Makna Puisi Karya Mustofa Bisri (Tinjauan Hermeneutika Wilhelm Dilthey)." bachelorThesis, FU, 2022. <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/62698>.
- Yuliani, Yani. "Tafsir Lisan Online Kajian terhadap Pengajian Tafsir Al-Qur'an Buya Syakur di YouTube." Masters, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2022. <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/53532/>.