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The Authenticity of Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid by Abdurrauf Al-Sinkili: An Intertextual Study

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the authenticity of Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd by Abdurrauf al-Sinkili through an analysis of Surah al-Fīl. The study addresses the assertion made by Azyumardi Azra and Salman Harun that Tarjumān al-Mustafīd is merely a translation of Tafsir Jalalain, whereas every exegetical work embodies the authenticity of its own exegete. This qualitative study relies on library research, with data analysis conducted using Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. The primary data source is Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd by Abdurrauf al-Sinkili. The findings conclude that al-Sinkili's interpretation in Tarjumān al-Mustafīd is indeed linked to Tafsir Jalalain. This close relationship is demonstrated through dominant intertextual principles such as haplology, parallelism, transformation, and existence. Nevertheless, Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd possesses distinct aspects of authenticity. First, a presentation style that is more accessible to the lay public, achieved by omitting complex linguistic details such as the grammatical function of words or distinctions between singular and plural forms; and second, the incorporation of local elements to facilitate reader comprehension, including the use of local terms such as kanisah, unggas-unggas, ditunu, and unggas layang-layang.

Keywords: Authenticity, tarjuman al-mustafid, intertextuality.

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap sisi keotentikan Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd karya Abdurrauf al-Sinkili melalui kajian Surah al-Fiil. Studi ini berangkat dari anggapan Azyumardi Azra dan

Salman Harun yang menyatakan bahwa Tarjumān al-Mustafīd hanyalah terjemahan dari Tafsir Jalalain, padahal setiap karya tafsir memuat keotentikan dari mufassirnya. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan data-data kepustakaan (library research). Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan teori intertekstualitas Julia Kristeva. Sumber data primer dalam penelitian ini adalah Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd Karya Abdurrauf al-Sinkili. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa penafsiran al-Sinkili dalam Tarjumān al-Mustafīd memiliki hubungan dengan Tafsir Jalalain. Hubungan erat kedua tafsir ini ditunjukkan oleh prinsip intertekstualitas yang dominan seperti haplologi, paralel, transformasi, dan eksistensi. Meskipun demikian, terdapat aspek-aspek yang menjadi sisi keotentikan Tafsir Tarjumān al-Mustafīd. Pertama, sistematika penyajian yang lebih mudah dipahami masyarakat awam karena menghilangkan aspek-aspek lughowi seperti kedudukan suatu kata atau bentuk tunggal dan jamak suatu kata. kedua, aspek lokalitas penafsiran yang digunakan untuk mempermudah pemahaman pembaca seperti penggunaan istilah lokal di antaranya: kanisah, unggas-unggas, ditunu dan unggas layang-layang.

Kata Kunci: Otentisitas, tarjuman al-mustafid, intertekstualitas.

Introduction

The exegesis of the Qur'an in the Indonesian Archipelago (Natar) has been underway since the 16th century. Evidence of this early tradition can be found in the works of Hamzah Fansuri or Syams al-Din Sumatrani, even if they were not explicitly categorized as commentaries.[1] In the 17th century, a landmark text emerged from the region written by Abdurrauf al-Sinkili, titled *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. This commentary was composed in Arabic-Malay (Jawi) script and spanned the complete 30 volumes of the Qur'an. According to biographical notes written by al-Sinkili himself in *'Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Sulluk Maslak al-Mufradin*, he began studying in Saudi Arabia in 1642 century. In this book, he details his timeline, study locations, and mentors. He studied across several places along the Hajj pilgrimage route, stretching from Doha in the Persian region to Yemen, Jeddah, and ultimately Mecca and Medina.[2] While in Medina, al-Sinkili studied directly under Ahmad Qusyasyi and Ibrahim al-Kurani, both of whom were direct students of Imam Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi. It

[1] Mafri Amir and Lilik Ummi Kultsum, *Nusantara Interpretation Literature*, (Ciputat: Research Institute of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2011), 2.

[2] Damanhuri Basyir, *The Renown of Sheikh Abdurrauf As-Singkili: Biography, Major Works, Intellectual Contributions, Dedication, and Pioneering Role*. (Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2019), 10–11.

was from them that al-Sinkili amassed deep knowledge in jurisprudence, mysticism and exegesis.[3]

In 1661 century, al-Sinkili finally returned to his homeland of Aceh, where he was subsequently appointed as the Grand Mufti of the Aceh Sultanate. During this period, he actively authored Islamic scholarly texts, the most phenomenal of which was *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. When composing this work, al-Sinkili relied heavily on primary references he had mastered in the Middle East, such as *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Tafsir al-Baidhawi*, and *Tafsir al-Khazin.*[4] According to Azyumardi Azra, *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* is effectively a translation of *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*. Both commentaries employ the *Ijmali* (global/concise) method to help readers easily grasp the Qur'anic verses.[5] A similar conclusion was reached by Salman Harun, who argued that al-Sinkili's scholarly lineage connects directly back to Imam Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi. Consequently, it is only natural that al-Sinkili used *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* as a cornerstone for his own commentary.[6] However, this assumption inadvertently diminishes the inherent authenticity of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, despite the fact that every work of exegesis inevitably features distinct differences and unique nuances.

A closer look at the presentation style of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* reveals undeniable markers of interpretive authenticity. al-Sinkili frequently introduces his commentary on a verse with markers such as *tanbih* (caution/note), *faedah* (benefit/lesson), and *qishah* (narrative). Furthermore, localized linguistic contextualization is highly prominent. For instance, when interpreting Surah Al-Baqarah verse 184 regarding fasting, he translates it as follows:

اَيَّامًا مَّعْدُوْدٰتٍۗ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيْضًا اَوْ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ اَيَّامٍ اُخَرَۗ

Meaning: "(Fasting is for) a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days …

His commentary states*:*

"Therefore, whoever among you, upon sighting the crescent moon of Ramadan, *is sick or* ***sailing*** *(berlayar), then let him break his fast. It then becomes mandatory upon him to fast the corresponding number of days he missed as a replacement on other days…"*[7]

For the word *Safar*, al-Sinkili translates it using the local term berlayar (sailing) instead of a general journey. This step was taken because the socio-cultural context of 17th-century Malay society relied heavily on seafaring, whether for livelihood or travel.[8] This contrasts sharply with preceding

[3] Damanhuri Basyir, *The Renown of Sheikh Abdurrauf As-Singkili,* 13.

[4] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Musatfid*, (Bombay: Ahmad Abadi. 1951). 2

[5] Azyumardi Azra, *Networks of Middle Eastern and Archipelago Ulama in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Jakarta: Mizan Publishers, 1998). 19.

[6] Salam Harun, *The Nature of the Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid* (Jakarta: Dissertation, IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1988), 11..

[7] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 33.

[8] Abdullah, Mohd Yusof. *Speaking of the Malay world: Malay seafaring traditions*, Jabatan Muzium, Malaysia, (2015). 29

commentaries that translated *safar* as a general journey or traveling long distances over land. *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, for example, uses the standard word *safar* (on a journey) when explaining this verse.

Whoever is sick or on a journey (meaning a short-term journey, not long-term migration) and breaks his fast, it is mandatory for him to fast as many days as he missed on other days …[9]

Previous literature on *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid* can be divided into three typologies. First, thematic analyses of al-Sinkili's commentary, such as debt witnessing,[10] the concept of financial maintenance [11] and gender issues.[12] *Second,* methodological studies focusing on its characteristics,[13] writing styles,[14] interpretive orientation [15] and analytical nuances.[16] *Third,* studies emphasizing the locality of the text.[17] Despite this existing body of literature, a distinct gap remains. The authors observe that no study has yet specifically explored the structural authenticity of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. Tracing this authenticity is crucial to understanding its originality and deviations from its baseline reference, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*. Given that *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* stands as the first complete work of exegesis in the Malay Archipelago, establishing its standing as an original scholarly contribution is paramount.

Accordingly, this study examines the differences between *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* and *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* to determine the latter's structural position relative to the former specifically, whether it is a mere reproduction of a prior text or an authentic work of scholarship in its own right. Additionally, this paper

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[9] Al-Suyuthi, *Tafsir Jalalain*, terj Bahrun Abu Bakar, (Bandung: Sinar Baru Algensindo. 2001). Jilid 1, 94.

[10] Khair, Muhammad Saiful, and Nor Faridatunnisa. Testimony Regarding Debt (A Comparative Study of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 282 from the Perspectives of Tafsir Jalalayn and Tarjuman al-Mustafid)." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Quranic Studies*. 2023.

[11] Achmad Bahauddin. "The Concept of Financial Support and Leadership in the Household (A Study of the Tarjuman al-Mustafid Exegesis by Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili)." *Relinesia: Journal of Religious and Multicultural Studies in Indonesia* 3.4 (2024): 463-473.

[12] Khair, Muhammad Saiful, and Nor Faridatunnisa. Testimony Regarding Debt (A Comparative Study of QS. al-Baqarah [2]: 282 from the Perspectives of Tafsir Jalalayn and Tarjuman al-Mustafid)." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Quranic Studies*. 2023.

[13] Rukiah Abdullah and Mahfudz Masduki. "Characteristics of Tafsir Nusantara (A Methodological Study of the Book Tarjuman al-Mustafid by Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili)." *Journal of Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 16.2 (2015): 141-160.

[14] Deden Rohmanuddin. *A Comparison of Exegesis Methods in the Nusantara: A Study of the Exegesis Methods in Tarjuman Al-Mustafid by Abdul Rauf Al-Sinkili and Tafsir Qur'an Karim by Mahmud Yunus*. Dissertation, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2022.

[15] Muhammad Sahlan Faqih, Dadan Rusmana, and Yayan Rahtikawati. "The Exegetical Orientation of Turjuman al-Mustafid by Abdur Rauf al-Singkili." *At-Turas: Journal of Islamic Studies* 9.1 (2022).

[16] Mayang Sari, *Characteristics of the Sufi Approach in the Tarjuman al-Mustafid Exegesis by Abdur Rauf al-Singkili*. Dissertation. State Islamic University of Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau, 2022.

[17] *Ida Novita.* "Local Wisdom in the *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid* Exegesis by Abdul Rauf Al-Singkili." *Al Burhan: Journal of Qur'anic Studies and Cultural Development* 23.01 (2023): 199-211.

investigates the forms of authenticity embedded within *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. To classify these structural variations effectively, Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory of intertextuality is employed as an analytical framework. This theory serves as an incisive tool to map out the text's authentic dimensions. Due to the impracticality of analyzing all 30 volumes, this research focuses on Surah al-Fil. This Surah was selected because, despite its brevity, it contains the visually vivid historical narrative of the elephant army's assault on the Ka'aba, allowing al-Sinkili to showcase his characteristic depth when unpacking historical accounts in the Qur'an.[18]

Research Method

This study utilizes a qualitative approach grounded in library research. The data sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary data source is Tafsir *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by Abdurrauf al-Sinkili. The secondary data sources consist of related books, commentaries, academic articles, and literature addressing similar research themes to provide essential complementary insights.

The data analysis technique is descriptive-analytical. The authors present textual data and subsequently evaluate them using Julia Kristeva's intertextuality framework. Kristeva posits that any text can be envisioned as a mosaic or puzzle constructed from fragments of pre-existing texts. When an author creates a piece of work, they assemble these fragments into a newly systematized structure. Kristeva outlines 9 key principles to trace these textual links: *Haplology* (The genotext undergoes reduction or condensation within the phenotext, *Transformation* (The genotext undergoes translation or linguistic adaptation within the phenotext), *Modification* (The genotext is mirrored or adopted, but characters, words, or settings are manipulated according to the author's preference in the phenotext), *Expansion* (The genotext is expanded, elaborated, or lengthened within the phenotext), *Parallelism* (The genotext exhibits direct alignment, structural similarity, or strong resemblance within the phenotext), *Demythologization* (The genotext faces direct contradiction, subversion, or opposition within the phenotext), *Conversion* (The genotext undergoes a subtle, non-radical, or less aggressive shift or opposition within the phenotext), *Existence* (The elements or details presented in the phenotext differ significantly from those in the genotext) and *Defamiliarization* (The genotext undergoes an extraordinary transformation regarding its core meaning or character traits within the phenotext).[19]

[18] Rukiah Abdullah and Mahfudz Masduki. "Characteristics of Nusantara Exegesis (A Methodological Study of the Book Turjumān al-Mustafīd by Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili)." *Journal of Qur'anic and Hadith Studies*, 16.2 (2015): 145.

[19] Lihat Julia Kristeva et al., *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art, Poetics Today*, *vol. 3,* 1982, https://doi.org/10.2307/1772011. 66.

Result and Discussion

Definition of Authenticity

Etymologically, authenticity derives from the root word "authentic" in english or "authenticus" in latin, signifying genuineness, truth, trustworthiness, or validity. The term refers to the genuine nature of an object, data, text, or an individual's self qualities that align with the original source and are free from falsification.[20] According to the KBBI, authenticity signifies genuineness or truth. Meanwhile, experts such as Charles Taylor describe authenticity as the unique, original state of a specific individual or entity. An authentic identity pertains to the core essence the unique or distinctive aspects of that identity.[21] Regarding the *mufassir* (exegete), every author of a tafsir (exegesis) possesses a unique element of authenticity; consequently, their work differs from previous ones or those produced by others. Much like hadith, works of exegesis require verification of their authenticity to ensure that the text truly originated from the specific *mufassir* in question. Thus, the authenticity of the exegesis referred to in this study encompasses the genuineness, validity, and purity of the exegete's work. This indicates that the content of the text truly originates from the original author and is grounded in an understanding that is both scientifically and historically defensible.[22]

Julia Kristeva and Intertextual Theory

Julia Kristeva is a highly influential figure in semiotic theory who adheres to post-structuralism. She was born on June 24, 1941, in Bulgaria.[23] In addition to specializing in semiotics, she is also an accomplished critic, writer, novelist, linguist, and psychologist. Kristeva moved to Paris at the age of 24 to pursue her studies; there, she joined a group of thinkers known as Tel Quel.[24] In 1974, Kristeva completed her doctoral program with a thesis titled "La Révolution du langage poétique."

Kristeva is a philosopher whose thought was influenced by Sigmund Freud, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Lacan.[25] Kristeva's contributions to the field of semiotics have yielded numerous phenomenal works. This propelled her career, leading to her appointment as an honorary member of the linguistics faculty at the University of Paris and an honorary invitation to Columbia

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[20] Agustinus Widyawan Purnomo, Autentisitas Manusia Menurut Albert Camus, *Focus* 1, No.1 2020. 1-6.

[21] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Kanada: Harvard University Press, 1991), 25.

[22] Masduki, *Otentisitas Tafsir Isyari: Studi Tafsir Sahl al-Tustary*, Tesis. UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019, 178.

[23] Tri Febriandi Amrulloh, Analysis of Al-Ibrīz Tafsir as Genotext in Al-Maḥallī's Tafsir: An Intertextuality Study on Surah Al-Fātiḥah. *QOF*, *7*(1), 2023. 39.

[24] Wildan Taufiq, *Semiotika Untuk Kajian Sastra dan Alquran*. Bandung: Yrama Widya. 2016. 86.

[25] Tri Febriandi Amrulloh, Analysis of Al-Ibrīz Tafsir as Genotext.., 40.

University in New York. Among Kristeva's renowned works are: *Semeiotike: Recherches pour une semanalyse, Le Textedu Roman: Approache Semilogique d'Une Structure Discursive Tranformationelle, Revolution in Poetic Language, Polylogue, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, About Chinese Woman, Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art, Black Sun, dan Strangers to Ourselves,* and so forth.

It began with Julia Kristeva's dissatisfaction with Roland Barthes's traditional semiotics, which merely explained textual structures while disregarding the historical dimension of the text itself.[26] Therefore, to bring the historical dimension of a text back into view, Julia Kristeva developed a new theory known as intertextuality. According to Kristeva, a text can be likened to a puzzle composed of pieces from earlier texts; when an author creates a work, they are assembling these puzzle pieces into a systematically organized piece of writing.[27] The steps of the intertextuality theory are as follows: first, determining the genotext and the phenotext (in this study, Tafsir Jalalain serves as the genotext, while Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid serves as the phenotext); second, tracing the process of the new text's formation (Tarjuman al-Mustafid); and third, comparing the genotext and the phenotext based on principles formulated by Julia Kristeva.

Biographical Sketch of Abdurrauf al-Sinkili

Al-Sinkili's full name was Abd al-Rauf bin Ali al-Jawi al-Fansuri al-Sinkili. He was a Malay scholar hailing from Fansur, Sinkil (modern-day Singkel, Aceh), along the northwestern coast of Aceh.[28] He is often famously referred to as al-Fansuri (though he is distinct from the mystic Hamzah al-Fansuri, despite sharing the same regional origin).[29] His exact birth year remains a subject of academic debate. Harun Nasution estimates that al-Sinkili was born around 1001 H / 1593 M.[30] Conversely, D.A. Rinkes, as cited by Azra, suggests a birth year around 1024 H / 1615 M. Rinkes calculated this by tracing al-Sinkili's return from the Middle East to Aceh in 1661 M. Al-Sinkili pursued his education in the Middle East for roughly 19 years, spanning the 1640s to the 1650s, before returning home. He passed away around 1693 M at approximately 78 years of age and was buried near the Kuala (estuary) of the Aceh River.

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[26] Wildan Taufiq, *Semiotika Untuk Kajian Sastra..,* 91-92.

[27] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.* Ed. Leon S. Roudiez, Terj. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, dan Leon S. Roundiez. New York: Columbia University Press. (1977). 66.

[28] Abid Syahni, *"Mufassir dan Kitab Tafsir Nusantara (Tafsir Turjumun al-Mustafid Karya Abd. Rauf As-Singkilli),"* Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara 5, no. 1 (2020): 35. https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v5i1.99.

[29] Putra Afriadi, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2020). 5.

[30] Syifa Nurkholilah, Alfian Yogi Kurniawan, dan Andi Rosa, "*Syaikh Abdur Rauf Singkel: Kitab Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*," Jurnal Intelek Insan *Cendikia*, no. Vol : 1, No: 10 (2024): 7962.

Consequently, he is locally revered as Teungku Syiah Kuala moniker immortalized by the prominent state university, Universitas Syiah Kuala.[31]

Scholarly Lineage (Genealogy)

In his youth, al-Sinkili studied under his father, Sheikh Ali al-Fansuri, as well as various local scholars in Fansur and Banda Aceh. His father was an eminent scholar in Aceh who founded and managed the Simpang Kanan dayah (an Islamic boarding school institution equivalent to a pesantren in Java) in the interior of Singkel.[32] After exhausting local educational avenues, al-Sinkili traveled to the Middle East, studying across Doha, Yemen, Jeddah, and eventually Mecca and Medina. In Doha, he studied briefly under Abd al-Qadir al-Mawrir. He then moved to Yemen, spending considerable time in Bayt al-Faqih and Zabid, which were the intellectual hubs of the region. In Bayt al-Faqih, he focused on jurisprudence and Hadith under the tutelage of the Ja'man family, notably Ibrahim bin 'Abd Allah bin Ja'man. In Zabid, he learned from 'Abd al-Rahim bin al-Shiddiq al-Khash and 'Abd Allah bin Muhammad al-'Adani, the latter being recognized as the premier Qur'anic reciter of the region. He later traveled to Jeddah to study under its Mufti, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Barkhali, and eventually proceeded to Mecca, where he learned from 'Ali bin 'Abd al-Qadir al-Tabari, alongside other contemporary scholars like Taj al-Din bin Yaqub and Isa al-Maghribi.[33]

Following this extensive journey, al-Sinkili settled in Medina to immerse himself in Islamic mysticism. He studied under Ahmad al-Qusyasyi, who eventually appointed him as a deputy of the *Shatariyyah* and *Qadiriyyah* Sufi orders. He also studied under Ibrahim al-Kurani, gaining a comprehensive understanding of Islamic sciences. Al-Sinkili developed such a close relationship with al-Kurani that he requested him to write his major work, *Ithaf al-Zaki*, to address and moderate the aggressive theological reforms initiated by Nuruddin al-Raniri in Aceh. Although Sheikh al-Qusyasyi had once instructed al-Sinkili to return to Java (a historical Middle Eastern term for the Indonesian Archipelago) to foster Islamic development, al-Sinkili initially requested to stay longer to deepen his knowledge. He finally returned to Aceh after his master's passing, going on to become the pioneering figure responsible for the widespread dissemination of the Shatariyyah order across the Malay world.[34]

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[31] Mia Fitriah Elkarimah dan Sa'dullah, *"Kitab Tafsir Karya Ulama Aceh; Al-Quran Al Karim Wa Bihamisihi Turjuman Al-Mustafid,"* ZAD Al-Mufassirin 5, no. 2 (2023): 247

[32] Harun Nasution, *Ensiklopedi Islam di Indonesia*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Abdi Utama, 1992). 55.

[33] Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaruan Islam Indonesia,* Edisi Perenial (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013). 246.

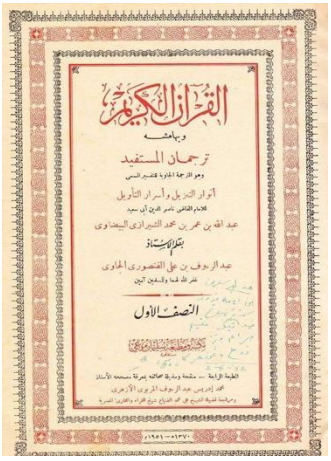
[34] Lub Liyna Nabilata, *"Kritik Abdurrouf Al-Sinkili Terhadap Paham Wujudiyah Dalam Kitab Tarjumanul Mustafid,"* Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis (JIS) Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Tasawuf 8, No. 2 (2022): 229–42.

Major Works

Throughout his life, al-Sinkili was an exceptionally prolific scholar. His surviving manuscripts, preserved today in the Aceh Museum and various Malaysian archives, include *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, *Mir'ah al-Thullab* (a Shafi'i legal text), *'Umdah al-Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufarridin* (a treatise on mysticism), *Hujjatul Balighah 'ala Jum'atul Mukhasamah* (a judicial text on evidence and witnessing), and *Syarh Lathif 'ala Arba'in* (a commentary on Imam Nawawi's Forty Hadiths). Historical records indicate he authored at least 25 major works.[35]

Profile of Tafsir *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*

Tarjuman al-Mustafid stands as the earliest complete work of exegesis written in the Malay Archipelago and was widely distributed across Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia. The text was composed using the Malay-Jawi script. While it incorporates supplementary references from classical texts such as *Tafsir al-Baidhawi* and *Tafsir al-Khazin* (primarily located within the structural *faedah* and virtue sections, al-Sinkili also extensively consulted *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Tafsir al-Tha'labi*, *Tafsir al-Baghawi*, *Nihayah*, *Manafi' al-Qur'an*, *Shafi'i jurisprudence*, and *Tafsir at-Tabari*.[36]


القرآن الكريم

وبهامشه

ترجمان المستفيد

أو جاوي

أنوار التنزيل وأسرار التأويل

للقاضي ناصر الدين أبي سعيد

عبد الله بن عمر بن محمد الشيرازي البيضاوي

بتقرابيت ما

عبد الرؤوف بن علي الفنصوري الجاوي

غفر الله لهما ولوالديهما آمين

النصف الأول

سورة فاتحة الكتاب مكية

وهي سبع آيات

Figure.1. *Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid.*

www.wordpress.com

Context of Composition

Al-Sinkili authored *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* during his tenure as *Qadhi Malik al-Adil* (Grand Mufti) of the Aceh Sultanate. While explicit primary records explaining his exact motivation are scarce, the socio-religious environment of 17th-century Aceh provides clear indicators. The local populace

[35] Muliadi Kurdi, *Abdurrauf As-Singkili Mufti Besar Aceh Pelopor Tarekat Syattariyah di Dunia Melayu* (Banda Aceh: Naskah Aceh, 2017). 101.

[36] Abid Syahni, *Mufassir dan Kitab Tafsir Nusantara*....,99

was in dire need of accessible vernacular Islamic references. Simultaneously, the region was fractured by intense theological disputes stemming from the heterodox pantheistic interpretations *(Wahdat al-Wujud)*.[37] The influx of Sufi masters from various countries into Aceh fostered a climate of intense mysticism, leading Aceh to become deeply connected to Sufism during that era.[38]

This understanding is based on the thoughts of two great scholars who are very famous in Aceh, namely Hamzah al-Fansuri and Syams al-Din as-Sumatrani. These two ulama played a very crucial role in shaping the religious thought and practice of Malay Muslims in the archipelago in the 17th century. These two figures are considered to be the earliest Sufi figures and also leading pioneers of the Malay tradition.[39] The situation grew volatile when Nuruddin al-Raniri arrived and launched an aggressive campaign against these pantheistic doctrines, declaring their adherents heretics, sanctioning executions, and burning their texts.[40] This socio-religious chaos prompted al-Sinkili to compile a comprehensive, accessible Malay translation and commentary of the Qur'an. By grounding the community's religious understanding directly in the literal, accessible text of the Qur'an, he sought to restore theological stability and offer a balanced path forward.

Interpretive Method and Orientation

Al-Sinkili adopted the *tahlili* (analytical/verse-by-verse) method. Through this approach, he systematically unpacked the meanings of the verses alongside their historical contexts of revelation (*asbab an-nuzul*), structural coherence (*munasabah*), textual variations (*qira'at*), general meaning, and legal derivations. Before delving into the text, he routinely introduced each Surah by clarifying its classification (Meccan or Medinan) and its spiritual virtues.[41] In his exegesis, al-Sinkili also incorporates explanations regarding *qira'at* (modes of Quranic recitation). He details various *qira'at* variations throughout the work; indeed, these differences are an integral part of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, with discussions on various *qira'at* appearing on almost every page.[42] Furthermore, the *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* commentary falls under the category of *Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi*

[37] Putra Afriadi, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: Lembaga Ladang Kata, 2020). 5.

[38] Basyir Damanhuri, *Kemasyhuran Syekh Abdurrauf As-Singkili, Riwayat Hidup, Karya Besar, Kontribusi Intelektual, Pengabdian dan Kepeloporannya* (Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2019). 19.

[39] Suteja Ibnu, *Pakar Tasawuf di Nusantara, Tadarus Tasawuf & Tarekat* (Cirebon: Aksara Satu, 2016). 24.

[40] Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII & XVIII; Akar Pembaruan Islam Indonesia.* 232.

[41] Abdurrauf al-Sinkili, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* (Jakarta: Dar Fikr, 1981). 5

[42] Deden Rohmanudin dan Badruzzzaman M. Yunus, *"Methodology of Nusantara Tafsir: Astudy of The Tafsir Turjuman Al-Mustafid by Abdul Rauf Al-Sinkili and Tafsir Qur''an Karim by Mahmud Yunus,"* Mashadiruna : Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir 2, No. 1 (2023): 8.

(interpreting the Qur'an through the use of reason), without disregarding the opinions or narrations of the Companions (*Sahaba*) or the Successors (*Tabi'in*).

Regarding the approach to exegesis, this commentary is not confined to a single, specific style; rather, the author employs an interpretive method suited to the particular verse being analyzed. When interpreting a verse containing *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) rulings, he elaborates on those legal precepts; when addressing a verse involving theology, he discusses beliefs and doctrine with appropriate depth; and when encountering a verse containing a narrative (*qishah*), he interprets it with due attention. This versatility stems from al-Sinkili's expertise across a wide range of disciplines including jurisprudence, philosophy, theology (*tauhid*), history, and politics. Given the breadth of his knowledge, it is not surprising that his interpretive approach is comprehensive in nature.[43]

Exegesis of Surah Al-Fil in Tafsir *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*

In this study, the researcher selected Surah Al-Fil as the subject of analysis for the following reasons: *First*, the data is easily accessible, thereby facilitating the research process. *Second*, Surah *Al-Fil* employs a highly concise linguistic style for instance, by identifying the *Ashab al-Fil* (People of the Elephant) and specifying when the event occurred. *Third*, it contains powerful visual metaphors, such as the terms *Sijjil* (baked clay) and *'Asfin Ma'kul* (leaves eaten by caterpillars). Within the framework of intertextuality, this allows the exegete to employ terms that align with the community's understanding or to reference earlier sources. Presented below is Al-Sinkili's interpretation of Surah *Al-Fil*:

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِاَصْحٰبِ الْفِيْلِۗ ﴿١﴾

Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?

Commentary:

1. *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with all those who possessed the elephant. (The commentator says) the elephant was named Mahmud, and its owner was named Abrahah, the King of Yemen. He and his army built a Khanisah (church) in the city of Sana'a so that those making the pilgrimage to Mecca would turn to it instead. He sent a letter to Negus, the King of Abyssinia, saying: "I have built a church for you, the likes of which has not been built for any king before you. Will you not how to it so that all the pilgrims may turn to it?" This was overheard by a man from the Bani Kinanah. He traveled to the church, entered it by night, defecated inside, and smeared its sanctuary with feces to defile it. When news reached Abrahah, he demanded: "Who dared to defile my church with feces?" He was told it was a man from the Arabs who own the Ka'aba.*

[43] Sania Arisa Sinaga dkk., *"Ali Aksara Teks Manuskrib Salinan Tarjuman Al Mustafid Dalam Makna Surah Al Fatihah,"* Mimbar Kampus: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Agama Islam 23, No 1 (2024): 31.

Abrahah then swore an oath to demolish the Ka'aba. He marched on Mecca with his entire army riding several elephants, including the one named Mahmud. As they advanced to destroy the Ka'aba, Allah the Almighty sent down upon them that which He narrates in His verse.[44]

اَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِيْ تَضْلِيْلٍۙ ﴿٢﴾

Did He not make their plan go astray?

Commentary:

2. *Did your Lord not render their plot to demolish the Ka'aba into loss and destruction.*[45]

وَّاَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا اَبَابِيْلَۙ ﴿٣﴾

And He sent against them birds in flocks

Commentary:

3. *And flocks of unggas-unggas (birds/fowls) were sent down upon them..*[46]

تَرْمِيْهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍۙ ﴿٤﴾

Striking them with stones of hard clay,

Commentary:

4. *And they pelted them with stones made of earth that had been ditunu (burned/fired).*[47]

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُوْلٍ ﴿٥﴾

And He made them like eaten straw.

Commentary:

5. *Thus He turned them into something like pastured leaves that have been eaten by beasts, trodden upon, and crushed. (Faidah/Lesson): It is mentioned in Jami'ul Bayan that when they drew near Mecca and sought to enter it, Allah the Almighty sent down birds from the sea resembling the bird known as the layang-layang (swallow/swiftlet). Each bird carried three small stones one in its beak and two in its feet. When they dropped them, a stone would strike a man's head and exit through his rear, causing them all to die. Allah knows best.*[48]

[44] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 614.
[45] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 615.
[46] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 615.
[47] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 615.
[48] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 615.

Intertextuality analysis of Al-Sinkili's interpretation with Jalalain's interpretation

In this table, the researcher displays al-Sinkili's interpretation [49] and *Jalalain*[50] regarding Surah Al-Fil. The researcher then analyzed it using intertextuality theory to classify the principles of intertextuality present in their respective interpretations.

Table 1: Comparative Intertextual Analysis of *Q.S. Al-Fill*

Verse	Tafsir *Jalalain*	*Tarjuman al-Mustafid*	Intertextual Principle
1.	*Didn't you notice) Istifham or the word question here contains the meaning of amazement; This means that you should be amazed (how your Rabb has acted towards the elephant army) the person who had the elephant was named Mahmud who was accompanied by his friends, namely the king of Yemen named Abraha and his soldiers. He had built a church in Shan'a with the aim of turning people away from visiting Mecca and not visiting it again. One day a man from Kinanah caused an incident at the church, he smeared camel dung on the part of the church which was used as the Qibla with the intention of insulting him. Abraha vowed to destroy the Kaaba. Then he came to Mecca with his soldiers, along with Mahmud's elephants. When they began to move to destroy the Kaaba, Allah sent them what He narrated through the next word, namely:*	*Have you not seen how much your God does to all those who have elephants? (said the mufassir) the elephant was named Mahmud and the one who owned him was named Abrahah, the king of Yemen and his army had made in the land of Shan'a a temple so that people who were on the pilgrimage to Mecca would turn to him. He sent a surah to Najas king Habsyah: I have done for you Kanisah which no other king has done like him. Have you not bowed down to him so that all the pilgrims will turn to him? Then a man from the Banu Kinanah heard it. So he went (to Khanisah) and entered it. At night, he defecated in it, so he smeared his Qibla with feces, even though it humiliated him. So the news reached Abraha. He said: who dares to smear my Khanisah with that dung? So people said he was a man from Arabia who had the Kaaba. So Abrahah swore again that he would destroy the Kaaba. So he came to Mecca with all his soldiers on several elephants, namely an elephant named Mahmud. So, when they faced them, they wanted to destroy the Ka'aba, which Allah Ta'ala revealed to them, as He said in His Word.*	In this verse, both interpretations have the same sentence structure. However, al-Sinkili reduces the lughowi aspect contained in Jalalain's interpretation. Remembering that this tafsir was written to make it easier for the people of Aceh to understand the Koran. The principle of intertextuality that applies to this verse is haplology (the text is reduced from the reference text source)
2.	*(Didn't He make) (their deception) in order to destroy*	*Hasn't your Lord made their efforts to destroy the Ka'bah in loss and*	In this verse, the two commentaries employ

[49] Sinkili, *Tarjuman Al-Mustafid*, 614-615.

[50] Jalaludin al-Mahali dan al-Suyuthi, *Tafsir Jalalain*, terj. Sinar Baru Algensindo. Jilid 2. 1382-1383.

	the Ka'bah (in vain) meaning it only plunged them into loss and destruction.	*destruction?*	a similar sentence structure. The principle of intertextuality at play here is one of parallelism (the text shares similarities with its source of reference).
3.	*(And He sent against them birds in flocks)—or, in successive waves. According to one view, the word Ababil has no singular form, much like the word Asatir. Another opinion holds that its singular form is Abul, Ibal, or Ibbil, following the morphological patterns of Ajul, Miftah, and Sikkin.*	*And He sent down upon them birds in flocks.*	In this verse, al-Sinkili repeats the same method as verse 1. He removes the lughowi aspect that is in Jalalain's interpretation. The principle of intertextuality in this verse is haplology.
4.	*(Pelting them with stones from scorched earth) that is, baked clay.*	*And threw stones at them from the ground that had been laid (ditunu)*	Regarding this verse, both commentaries share the same interpretation. However, al-Sinkili replaces the word burned with *ditunu* (a Malay term for heating something). The principle of intertextuality at play in this verse is transformation (where the text undergoes a shift in language or translation).
5.	*(Then He made them like eaten leaves) or like the leaves of plants consumed by livestock, then trampled and torn to shreds. Allah destroyed each one of them with a stone bearing the name of the person it was destined to strike. Each stone was slightly larger than a lentil seed and somewhat smaller than a chickpea; the stone could pierce through a foot soldier's helmet and the*	*So they were made like leaves of pests which had been eaten by animals and spread to them and destroyed by them. (faidah) that in the jami'ul bayan, when they arrived almost to Mecca and were about to enter Mecca, Allah Ta'ala sent down birds from the sea like birds called kites. And each bird had three small stones in its mouth and two feet. So the stone was thrown at them and the stone fell on one of their heads and it would come out of*	In this verse, the elements presented differ. The *Jalalayn* provides an explanation regarding the stones carried by the Ababil birds. The principle of intertextuality applicable here is that of existence (the textual elements

elephant he was riding.	*his anus. So they all died. Wallahu a'alam.*	presented are distinct).

From the table above, al-Sinkili's interpretation in Tarjuman al-Mustafid's interpretation tends to be similar to Jalalain's interpretation. In the first verse, al-Sinkili tends to use the same narrative as Jalalain's interpretation when telling the story of Abrahah. He started by saying the name of the elephant that attacked the Kaaba and then explained briefly how the elephant troops attacked the Kaaba. Apart from that, al-Sinkili eliminates the lughowi aspect in *Jalalain's* interpretation in order to make it easier for readers. The principle of intertextuality that occurs in this verse is *haplology* because the text is reduced from the reference text source.[51] In the second verse, it appears that al-Sinkili only rewrote *Jalalain's* interpretation so that the text used is exactly the same as the reference source text. The principle of intertextuality that occurs in this verse is *parallel.*[52] In the third verse, al-Sinkili reduces the lughowi aspect of *Jalalain's* interpretation. This is the same as what he did in the first verse so that the principle of intertextuality that occurs in this verse is *haplology.*[53] This is due to a reduction of text in the *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* commentary. Then, in the fourth verse, al-Sinkili adopts the local Malay term *ditunu* when describing land that is being burned. Among the Malay community, this term refers to the act of burning an object or heating something over a large fire.[54] The principle of intertextuality at work in this verse is *transformation*, as a specific text undergoes a shift in language to clarify its meaning..[55] In the fifth verse, al-Sinkili's interpretation and Jalalain's interpretation experience different elements of interpretation. In *Jalalain's* interpretation, Imam Jalalain explains the stones carried by the ababil bird, such as their shape and properties. Meanwhile, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid's* interpretation tends to explain what the ababil bird is. al-Sinkili uses the local Malay term, namely swallowtail bird, to analogize the ababil bird. This term in Malay society denotes a seabird that is small but flies very fast.[56] The principle of intertextuality at play in this verse is one of *existence*, as the elements within the text differ from those in the source text.[57]

Based on the data presented, there are differences between the interpretations of al-Sinkili and Jalalayn. Regarding the format of presentation, the Jalalayn commentary employs verse numbering, whereas al-Sinkili's work does not. Furthermore, al-Sinkili omits linguistic (lughawi) analysis from his interpretation, as the work was written to facilitate the Malay community's

[51] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Poetics Today, vol. 3, 1982, 66.

[52] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach...*, 69

[53] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach....,* 72

[54] Kamus Melayu-Indonesia, Jakarta: 2008. 1782.

[55] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach..,* 73

[56] Kamus Melayu-Indonesia, Jakarta: 2008. 714.

[57] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach...,* 75

understanding of the Qur'an's content. Additionally, the socio-cultural context of the Malay community influenced the nature of al-Sinkili's interpretive discourse; he interpreted Qur'anic verses by incorporating local terms.[58] The choice to use the Malay language in the Tarjumān al-Mustafīd exegesis cannot be separated from its socio-cultural context. This is because the work emerged from the socio-political environment of the Sultanate; at the time, Al-Sinkili served as an advisor to the Sultanate of Aceh. Consequently, the language employed in writing Tarjumān al-Mustafīd adhered to the official language: Malay.[59]

Conclusion

Based on the presented data and analysis, this study concludes that al-Sinkili's interpretation in Tarjumān al-Mustafīd bears a relationship to the Jalālayn exegesis. Dominant principles of intertextuality such as haplology, parallelism, transformation, and existence demonstrate the close connection between these two works. However, there are distinct aspects that render Tarjumān al-Mustafīd an authentic work in its own right. First, regarding the presentation format, Tarjumān al-Mustafīd does not employ verse numbering, unlike Jalālayn, which does. Furthermore, Tarjumān al-Mustafīd lacks the linguistic (lughawī) analysis of specific words found in Jalālayn. Second is the aspect of locality; al-Sinkili incorporated local Malay terms to facilitate the public's understanding of the verses' meanings. In the interpretation of Surah al-Fīl, for instance, four local Malay terms appear: Kanisah, Unggas-unggas, Ditunu, and Unggas layang-layang. Consequently, this study refutes the arguments of Azyumardi Azra and Salman Harun, who posited that Tarjumān al-Mustafīd is merely a translation of Jalālayn.

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[58] Faiqoh, Lilik. "*Vernakularisasi dalam Tafsir Nusantara*...., 87.

[59] Islah Gusmian, "Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Indonesia: Sejarah dan Dinamika", *Nun*: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir di Nusantara, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015. 4.

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