

Tarjumān Al-Mustafid: Answering The Need For Accessible Qur'anic Interpretation For The Masses

Tarjumān Al-Mustafid: Menjawab Kebutuhan Akan Tafsir Al-Qur'an yang Mudah Diakses oleh Masyarakat Luas

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Abstract.

This article examines the interpretation model of Tarjumān al-Mustafid as a means to address the need for Qur'anic interpretation for the general public. Using a qualitative method with content analysis and a systematic literature review, the study explores the approach used by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī in his interpretation of the Qur'an. The results of the study indicate that al-Fansūrī's interpretation model includes three key elements: avoiding interpretations based solely on word meanings, providing context through asbāb al-nuzūl, narration isrāīliyyāt, historical accounts, and faidah letter explanations, and reconciling meanings to avoid controversial interpretations in both law and belief. The study concludes that Tarjumān al-Mustafid is not a translation of classical interpretations, but rather a reproduction of al-Fansūrī's interpretation, referencing classical Arabic sources, and should not be referred to as a translation of Arabic interpretation into Malay. Overall, the interpretation model of Tarjumān al-Mustafid provides a solution for addressing the need for Qur'anic interpretation for the general public and is a valuable contribution to the field of Qur'anic interpretation.

Keyword: abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī, Indonesian tafsir, contextualization

Abstrak:

Artikel ini mengkaji model penafsiran Tarjumān al-Mustafid sebagai sarana untuk memenuhi kebutuhan penafsiran Al-Qur'an bagi masyarakat umum. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, teknik analisis isi dan tinjauan literatur yang sistematis, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pendekatan yang digunakan oleh Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa model penafsiran al-Fansūrī mencakup tiga elemen kunci: menghindari penafsiran yang hanya didasarkan pada makna kata, memberikan konteks melalui asbāb al-nuzūl, riwayat isrāīliyyāt, kisah-kisah historis, penjelasan faidah surat, dan merekonsiliasi makna untuk menghindari penafsiran yang kontroversial baik dalam hukum maupun akidah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa Tarjumān al-Mustafid bukanlah terjemahan dari tafsir klasik, melainkan reproduksi dari tafsir al-Fansūrī dengan merujuk pada sumber-sumber klasik berbahasa Arab, dan tidak dapat disebut sebagai terjemahan tafsir Arab ke dalam bahasa Melayu. Secara keseluruhan, model penafsiran Tarjumān al-Mustafid memberikan solusi untuk memenuhi kebutuhan penafsiran Al-Qur'an bagi masyarakat umum dan merupakan kontribusi yang berharga dalam bidang penafsiran al-Qur'an.

Kata Kunci: abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī, tafsir Indonesia, kontekstualisasi

Pendahuluan

The study of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī has been the subject of debate, with previous research mainly focused on identifying the work as a translation of classical texts.¹ However, another area of inquiry is related to its relationship with the context of the surrounding community's needs. The research on *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* is open to a broader examination due to the identification of social and community problems that existed during al-Fansūrī's lifetime. He lived during the decline of the Aceh kingdom² and the degradation of religious understanding, which was marked by controversies that arose from the Wujūdiyah stream introduced by Hamzah al-Fansūrī and Samsyuddin al-Sumatrani, and the Tasawuf stream of Nuruddin al-Raniri.³ The relationship between *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and the reality of community needs is strengthened by the fact that it was written during al-Fansūrī's time as Qādi Mālik al-Ādil, a position responsible for religious administration.⁴ This position gave al-Fansūrī the authority to provide the community with an accurate and conflict-free understanding.

The study of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* has so far focused on identifying the work as a translation of classical texts or examining the methods used. However, its relationship and role in society as an interpretation tend to be overlooked. Three patterns can be identified from previous studies of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*: first, studies that examine the interpretation methods in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* fall under the category of global interpretation (*ijmāli*),⁵ which focuses on the use of history

1 Peter Riddell, 'The Sources of Abd Al-Rauf's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 57, no. 2 (1984): 113–118; Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Grup, 2013); Peter Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16' (Australian National University, 1984).

2 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*, 247.

3 Edwar Djamaris and Saksono Prijanto, *Hamzah Fansuri Dan Nuruddin Ar-Raniri* (Jakarta: Proyek Pengembangan Media Kebudayaan, Direktorat Jenderal Kebudayaan, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1995), 25.

4 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

5 Suarni, 'Karakteristik Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid', *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 17, no. 2 (October 2015): 159–166; Wendi Parwanto, 'Penafsiran Surat Al-Falaq [113]: 3-4 : Menurut Abd. Ar-Rauf As-Singkili, Hamka Dan M. Quraish Shihab: Telaah Atas Epistemologi Dan Genealogi', *MISYKAT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Al-Quran, Hadist, Syari'ah dan Tarbiyah* 3, no. 2 (December 2018): 205; Abid Syahni, 'Mufassir Dan Kitab Tafsir Nusantara (TafsirTurjumun Al-Mustafid Karya Abd. Rauf As-Singkili)', *Nun : Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 5, no. 1 (January 2020): 33–51; Ismail Muhammad, 'Analisis Isi Kitab Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Wa Bihamisihi Turjuman Al-Mustafid', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 16, no. 1 (July 2019): 12.

(*asbāb al-nuzūl*)⁶ and inter-text methods in the interpretation⁷. In terms of style, some researchers consider *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* to use *adabī ijtimā'ī* (social-linguistics)⁸ by providing keywords at the beginning of each interpretation,⁹ and identifying the work as a tafsir in the form of translation¹⁰. Second, there are thematic studies on al-Fansūrī's concepts, such as Tawhid,¹¹ politics,¹² husband-wife relationships,¹³ dates,¹⁴ and women¹⁵. Third, studies that analyze the qira'ah aspect of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*.¹⁶ Among these three trends, no research has explored the interpretation model used by al-Fansūrī to provide an easier understanding for non-Arabic speakers. Research that sheds light on this interpretation model and avoids the conflictual debates in interpretation could make the Qur'an more accessible to the general public.

This study aims to address the limitations of previous studies by examining the interpretation model in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* and its connection to the community's

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- 6 Nazori Ab Rahman, Mohd Nazri Ahmad, and Wan Nasyrudin Wan Abdullah, 'Kaedah Periwatan Asbab Al-Nuzul Dalam Tarjumān Al-Mustafid', *AL-TURATH: Journal of Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah* 4, no. 1 (June 2019): 1–7.
 - 7 Rukiah Abdullah and Mahfudz Masduki, 'Karakteristik Tafsir Nusantara (Studi Metodologis Atas Kitab Turjumun Al-Mustafid Karya Syekh Abdurrauf Al-Singkili)', *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 16, no. 2 (February 2017): 141.
 - 8 Andi Miswar, 'Corak Pemikiran Tafsir Pada Perkembangan Awal Tradisi Tafsir Di Nusantara (Hamzah Al-Fansuri, Syamsuddin Al-Sumatrani Dan Abd Rauf Al-Singkel)', *Rihlah: Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan* 4, no. 1 (June 2016): 115–126; Muhammad Abdullah Syauqi, 'Corak Penafsiran Al-Adabi Al-Ijtima'i Dalam Tafsir Tarjuman Al Mustafid Karya Syekh Abdurrauf as-Singkili' (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2021).
 - 9 Arivaie Rahman, 'Tafsir Tarjumān Al-Mustafid Karya 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Fanshuri: Diskursus Biografi, Kontestasi Politis-Teologis Dan Metodologi Tafsir', *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman* 42, no. 1 (August 2018): 1.
 - 10 Nurul Wardah Nazifah Razali et al., 'Kombinasi Pentafsiran Dan Penterjemahan Dalam Tarjuman Al-Mustafid', *International Journal of West Asian Studies* 10, no. 1 (November 2018).
 - 11 Misbahuddin Jamal, 'Abd Rauf Al-Singkily Dan Karya Tafsirnya (Telaah Atas Metodologi Kitab Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid)', *AL ASAS* 2, no. 1 (November 2019): 1–16; Siti Imas Masrury, 'Metode Tafsir Tarjuman Almustafid Karya Abdurrauf Al-Singkili' (UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, 2020); Abdullah Munir, 'Turjumān Al-Mustafid; Wujud Intertekstualitas Tradisi Keilmuan Islam', *El Makrifah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Keislaman* 1, no. 1 (March 2020): 1–15.
 - 12 Jamal, 'Abd Rauf Al-Singkily Dan Karya Tafsirnya (Telaah Atas Metodologi Kitab Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid)'. beak in nusantara not found work as a whole. interpretationLater in the next century, a work and to complete (30 deuce
 - 13 Gunawan, John Supriyanto, and Sulaiman M Nur, 'Kedudukan Suami Istri Dalam Kitab Tarjuman Al-Mustafid Karya Abdul Rauf Al Singkili', *Al-Misykah: Jurnal Kajian Al-Quran dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2020).
 - 14 Fitriana, 'Buah Kurma Menurut Tafsir Nusantara (Studi Komparatif Antara Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid Dan Tafsir Al-Azhar)' (Institut Ilmu Al Quran (IIQ) Jakarta, 2018).
 - 15 Jamal, 'Abd Rauf Al-Singkily Dan Karya Tafsirnya (Telaah Atas Metodologi Kitab Tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafid)'. beak in nusantara not found work as a whole. interpretationLater in the next century, a work and to complete (30 deuce
 - 16 Maria Ulpah, 'Ragam Qirā'ât Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Penafsiran (Studi Analisis Qirā'ât Sab'ah Dalam Kitab Tafsir Tarjumān Al-Mustafid)' (Institut Ilmu Al Quran (IIQ) Jakarta, 2018); Muhammad Ronald Abidin, 'Ragam Qiraat Dalam Surat Al Fatihah: Telaah Kitab Turjuman Al Mustafid Karya Abdul Rouf Al Singkili' (UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2019).

understanding of the Qur'an. *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* serves as a guide for the Qur'an by offering simple explanations that align with the meaning and purpose of each verse, to be disseminated to those unfamiliar with Qur'anic interpretation. To that end, this study will answer the following questions: (1) What form of interpretation does Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī offer that is relevant to ordinary people's needs? (2) How did Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī reconcile the meaning of the Qur'an from classical Arabic interpretation to a meaning that can be easily understood by non-Arabic speakers? Additionally, the study will re-examine the four arguments given by Riddell that refute the views of Rinkes and Voorhoeve and insist on *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* being a translation of *Tafsīr Jalālayn* by presenting similar evidence to prove that it is not a translation. This aspect of the study of models and efforts to reconcile meanings has not been previously discussed, so further research is needed to address these limitations.

This study challenges the notion that the brief explanation model used in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* yields the same results as its referenced works of interpretation. This interpretation model effectively provides the Qur'an's content to ordinary people. The similarities with referenced tafsir books do not imply that *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* is a translation of those commentaries. It is common for modern interpreters to draw from classical interpretations to create new independent works, leading to intellectual interweaving between interpretations from different periods. This is supported by Azra's perspective, which states that similarities in interpretations show a connection between the knowledge passed down from one teacher to another in different contexts.¹⁷ The similarities in interpretation serve as solid evidence of the scientific connection between Indonesian interpreters and classical interpretations in the Middle East.

This research aims to fulfill the gap in previous studies by using a qualitative method with content analysis as the analytical tool. The primary data for this study is obtained from *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī, which was selected based on its model and context that suits the community's needs for Qur'anic interpretation and the author's efforts to resolve religious narratives. Secondary data was gathered from relevant literature and prior research. The data collection process followed a systematic literature review model consisting of three stages: planning, implementation, and display. The researcher first developed questions related to the research topic, which guided the search for data in the implementation stage. The data search was limited to primary sources relevant to the theme and questions. The data was collected using mapping techniques to identify the models and methods

¹⁷ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

of reconciling meanings derived from classical Arabic commentaries. The results of mapping were displayed and analyzed using secondary data. These stages were carried out to provide answers to the formulated questions.

Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī and Tarjumān al-Mustafid: A Short Overview

This section highlights the context and debates surrounding *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*. A brief overview of the research subject is presented through two models: the biography of Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī and an explanation of the context and debates surrounding the writing of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*. These explanations provide a fundamental understanding of the background behind the creation of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, allowing for a more straightforward analysis of the data collected.

Biografi Singkat Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī

Abd al-Raūf bin Ali al-Jawi al-Fansūrī al-Singkili was a highly influential Malay scholar in the development of interpretation in Indonesia.¹⁸ The exact year of his birth is disputed, with some sources claiming it was in 1593 AD¹⁹ and others stating 1615 AD²⁰. This latter date is based on Rinkes' calculation of al-Fansūrī's arrival in Aceh in 1661, during his stay in Mecca.²¹ Another view is that he was born in 1620 in Suro Village, Simpang Kanan, Singkil.²² The origin of al-Fansūrī's family is also unclear, with some speculating they descended from Persia and others suggesting they were Arab or a mix of Arab and local heritage.²³ The possibility of an origin outside of Malay is due to the Kingdom of Aceh being a stopping point for traders from Persia, Arabia, India, and China.

Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī received his early education in his hometown, studying under his father, who was a well-known scholar in Fansur and operated an educational institution. Azra introduces another possibility in al-Fansūrī's educational background, citing the view of Drakard, who suggested that al-Fansūrī continued his education in Banda Aceh, the capital of the Aceh kingdom. There, he may have

18 Ibid.

19 Harun Nasution, *Ensiklopedia Islam Di Indonesia*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Abdi Utama, 1992).

20 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

21 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

22 Alamsyah, *Ensiklopedi Aceh: Adat, Bahasa, Geografi, Kesenian, Sejarah* (Aceh: Pejabat Pembuat Komitmen Bidang Budaya, Satker BRR NAD-Nias Pemulihan dan Pengembangan Bidang Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya, 2008).

23 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

studied with either Hamzah al-Fansūrī or Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani.²⁴ However, Azra disputes the possibility of al-Fansūrī studying with Hamzah al-Fansūrī due to conflicts between the two during their lifetimes but accepts the possibility of al-Fansūrī studying with Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani, considering that they could have met at the end of Syamsuddin's life. Riddell acknowledges the lack of information on al-Fansūrī's early life. However, theological debates over the doctrine of Sufism marked the social and religious conditions during al-Fansūrī's childhood.²⁵

Al-Fansūrī's education continued in Arabia around 1642 AD,²⁶ as noted by Riddell in his work *Umadat al-Muhtājīn ilā Suluk Maslak al-Mufridīn*. According to Riddell, al-Fansūrī listed 19 scholars who were his teachers and named several figures he studied within various locations, including Makkah, Jeddah, Bayt al-Faqih, Zabid, Madinah, and others.²⁷ Azra's research provides a more chronological view of al-Fansūrī's educational journey in the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Fansūrī's journey began in Doha, Qatar, where he studied under Abd al-Qadīr al-Mawwir. He then traveled to Yemen to study in various cities, including Bayt al-Faqih, Zabid, Mawza', Mukha, al-Lumayah, Hudaydah, and Ta'iz. In Bayt al-Faqih, he studied with the prominent Sufism scholars of the Ja'man family. In Zabid, he studied under Abd al-Rahīm ibn al-Siddīq al-Khās, Amīn ibn al-Siddīq al-Mizjajī, and Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-'Adanī. Al-Fansūrī then traveled to Jeddah and studied with Abd al-Qadīr al-Barkhalī before moving on to Mecca and finally Medina, where he studied with Ahmad al-Qushashī and Ibrāhīm al-Kuranī, scholars and leaders of the Shattariyah Order.²⁸

After completing his intellectual journey, Al-Fansūrī returned to Aceh in 1661,²⁹ according to the most widely accepted opinion among scholars. The news of Al-Fansūrī's return caught the attention of the court in the Kingdom of Aceh, as the kingdom was facing a religious dispute after the death of Sultan Iskandar Tsani.³⁰ Al-Fansūrī worked to reconcile the understanding between sharia and tariqah and, with his new concepts in the religious context of the kingdom, he received more

24 Ibid.

25 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

26 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

27 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

28 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

29 Ibid.; Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

30 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

attention and protection and was appointed as Qādi Mālik al-ʿĀdil to oversee religious matters.³¹ Al-Fansūrī was renowned not only as a Sufi scholar but also as a scholar of fiqh, hadith, and tafsir.³² His major work in fiqh is *Mirʿat al-Tullāb fī Tashīl Maʿrifah al-Ahkām al-Sharʿiyyah li al-Mālik al-Wahhāb*, in hadith he wrote a commentary of *Arbaʿin al-Nawawī* and a collection of Qudsi traditions *al-Marwāʿiz al-Bādiʿah*, and in tafsir, his phenomenal work is *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*.

The Polemical Identity of Tarjumān al-Mustafid

To determine the year of creation of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, a reference can be made to the research conducted by Peter Riddell. Riddell states that the oldest copies of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* were created in the 17th and early 18th centuries.³³ After examining the oldest manuscript collections, he concluded that the work was created in 1675 CE.³⁴ This means that *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* was written by Al-Fansūrī while he was serving as Qādi, succeeding Shaif al-Rijal, who died in 1661.³⁵ Given Al-Fansūrī's role as a person responsible for religious understanding in the Kingdom of Aceh, this book can be considered part of his efforts to provide religious understanding to the community through interpreting the Qur'an. This is also supported by Azra's statement that *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* was created to serve as a practical guide for the Acehnese people's daily lives.³⁶

The debate surrounding the book *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* originated from Snouck Hurgronje's claim that it was a translation of *Tafsir al-Baydarwī*.³⁷ Rinkes and Voorhoeve further supported this argument. However, Peter Riddell provided four pieces of evidence that disproved this assumption and argued that the tafsir is a translation of *Tafsir Jalālayn*.³⁸ This view is also supported by Azra, who found that al-Fansūrī was closer to the author of *Tafsir Jalālayn*³⁹ in his scientific network, leading to the conclusion that his interpretation was based on the Jalālayn tafsir. Bābā Dawūd al-Jawī assisted in the completion of the book, particularly in adding

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

34 Ibid.

35 Abdul Hadi, 'Aceh Dan Kesusasteraan Melayu', in *Aceh Dalam Lintasan Sejarah* (Jakarta: IKJ Press, 2006).

36 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

37 Riddell, 'The Sources of Abd Al-Rauf's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid'.

38 Ibid.

39 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

information about the stories.⁴⁰

Regarding the sources used, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* is the result of al-Fansūrī's reproduction of Tafsir. He utilized several classical commentaries as the basis for his interpretations and provided context for the verses. The sources in this tafsir not only include the commentaries of al-Khāzin, al-Baydawī, and Jalālayn but also refer to various other books, both tafsir and others related to the Qur'an's explanation. When compared to these three commentaries, al-Khāzin's commentary holds the dominant position as the reference of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* when mentioning *Isrā'iliyāt*. However, to claim that the citation of the story by al-Khāzin is the work of Bābā Dawūd al-Jawi, Yusoff believes further research is needed.⁴¹ Additionally, in some verses, al-Fansūrī also utilized *Tafsir al-Tha'labī*,⁴² *Manāfi' Al-Qur'an* for explaining the surah's rules,⁴³ and *al-Nihāyah* and *Tafsir al-Qurtūbī* for providing Fiqh explanations.⁴⁴ Moreover, al-Fansūrī also used *Musnad Ahmad*, *Sahih al-Bukhārī*, *Sahih Muslim*, and *Mustadrak al-Hākim* in adding explanations from Hadith.⁴⁵

The Contextual Background of Tarjumān al-Mustafīd

The changing social diversity of a community impacted the various works produced during that period. *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, written by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī in 1675 CE,⁴⁶ emerged against the backdrop of Aceh's declining society after the Portuguese conquest of Malacca in 1629. This conquest led to the expansion of Portuguese influence in Aceh, resulting in heavy losses both in terms of troops and the treasury. This event marked a turning point in the decline of the Aceh kingdom, causing deep trauma among its people.⁴⁷ There were significant changes in the realm of religion when Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrani and Ibrāhīm al-Shamī passed away in 1630,⁴⁸ causing the people of Aceh to experience a significant shift in their religious beliefs and practices.

40 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

41 Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff and Wan Nasyrudin Wan Abdullah, 'Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: Satu Analisa Terhadap Karya Terjemahan', *Jurnal Pengajian Melayu* 16 (2005).

42 Abd al-Raūf Al-Fansūrī, *Tarjumān Al-Mustafīd* (Sangkapura: Maktabah wa Maṭba'ah Sulaymān Mar'ī, 1951).

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Yusoff and Abdullah, 'Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: Satu Analisa Terhadap Karya Terjemahan'.

46 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

47 Takeshi Ito, 'The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh' (Australian National University, 1984), 16.

48 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

The debate on religious doctrine intensified after the arrival of Nur al-Dīn al-Ranirī in Aceh. He wrote a paper that rejected the religious beliefs of the Acehnese, who followed Hamzah al-Fansūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatranī under the protection of Sultan Iskandar Tsani. According to Hurgronje's account, quoted by Riddell, during Nur al-Dīn's time, followers of Hamzah al-Fansūrī's doctrine faced difficulties, and some of them were killed, and books by Hamzah al-Fansūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatranī were burned.⁴⁹ Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī's departure to Arabia left behind a society plagued by conflicting religious beliefs, and this state of confusion was still present when Abd al-Raūf returned to Aceh.

When he arrived in Aceh, Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī was given a particular task by the ruler of the Aceh kingdom to quell theological debates by writing *Mi'rāt al-Tullāb* in 1663.⁵⁰ According to Riddell, the purpose of this book was to guide the Acehnese back to a traditionalist religious understanding.⁵¹ Four years after completing *Mi'rāt al-Tullāb*, Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī finished writing *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*. Although there is no specific information about the purpose of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, it can be assumed that the goal of creating an interpretation book that stays away from theological and fiqh debates may have similarities to the purpose of *Mi'rāt al-Tullāb*. This argument is supported by the creation of two other books, *Risalat Adab Murid Akan Shaykh* and *Sharh Arba'in al-Narawī*, which Sultanah Inayah Shah Zakiya tal-Dīn Shah commissioned to improve behavior and understanding of hadith.⁵² This view is also shared by Rahman,⁵³ who sees *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* as a potential work initiated by the leader at that time. The connection between the context and the purpose of producing *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* cannot be separated from the context of a society that needed a moderate interpretation of religious teachings and avoided debates over understanding.

Spreading the Message of the Qur'an to the Ordinary People

The tendency of Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī to narrate the meanings and content of the Qur'an in a specific context in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* will be discussed in this section. The explanation of this narrative tendency will be presented in two models: a descriptive explanation that includes the form of Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī's

49 Ibid.

50 P. Voorhoeve, 'Three Old Acehnese Manuscripts', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14, no. 2 (1952): 335–345.

51 Riddell, 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Singkili's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid: A Critical Study of His Treatment of Juz 16'.

52 R.H. Djajadiningrat, *Kesultanan Aceh* (Aceh: PDIA, 1982).

53 Rahman, 'Tafsir Tarjumān Al-Mustafid Karya 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Fanshuri: Diskursus Biografi, Kontestasi Politis-Teologis Dan Metodologi Tafsir'.

interpretation in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and a critical and transformative explanation that includes the strategy of aligning the meaning of the verses with the understanding of ordinary people who have difficulties in comprehending Islam.

The form of Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī 's interpretation in Tarjumān al-Mustafīd

The interpreter's purpose in approaching the Qur'an significantly impacts the forms and methods used to explain its meaning. The data shows that the Tafsir Tarjuman al-Mustafid by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī explains the meaning of verses by referring to the complete verse or verse fragments to give a full explanation of its meaning.⁵⁴ In interpreting Surah Al-Baqarah 2:10, al-Fansūrī breaks down the meaning into three parts:⁵⁵

(fī qūlubihim marad) in all their hearts is a doubt that leads to softening of the heart (*fa zādahum Allah marad*) so Allah Ta'ala increases their doubt (*wa lahum 'adhāb alīm bimā kānū yakdhibūn*) and they are punished severely for denying the prophets of Allah.⁵⁶

However, in the interpretation of Surah Al-Baqarah 2:14, al-Fansūrī explains the verse entirely without breaking it down.

(wa idhā laqū al-ladhīna āmanū qālū āmannā wa idhā khalaṣ ilā shayatinihim qālū innā ma'akum innamā nahn mustabzi'ūn) and when they meet those who believe, they say, We have believed, but when they are alone with their evil forces, they say, indeed, we are with you, for we were only mockers.⁵⁷

The interpreter uses this method to make it easier for people to understand the meaning and content of the verses.

The explanation of the Qur'an's meaning can be further reinforced by incorporating the impact of different recitations (*qira'ah*), reasons for revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and stories of previous people in *isrāīliyyāt*. In his tafsir of al-Baqarah (2):10,

(faidah) the disagreement between three different reciters regarding the reading of the word *yakdhubun*. He explains that Abu Amr and Nāfi' read it with *tashdīd dāl*, while Hafs reads it with *takhfīf*, and that the *takhfīf* reading represents the cause of their misguidance, despite their belief in the Prophet.⁵⁸

Al-Fansūrī's interpretation includes different readings of the word that can

54 Al-Fansūrī, *Tarjumān Al-Mustafīd*.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

impact its meaning.

Second, using *asbāb al-nuzūl* and historical events can also add deeper understanding to a verse by providing context for its revelation. An example of this can be seen in Q.S. al-Baqarah (2): 26,

(qissah) When the Jews rejected Allah by likening one of them to a fly and another to a bee, Allah rejected them by likening them to a Jew (*inna Allah lā yastahy an yadrib mathalan mā ba'udatan famā farwqah*)⁵⁹

The explanation of a verse can also be facilitated by including a historical story related to the event it refers to, as demonstrated in the explanation of Q.S. al-Fīl (105): 2-5:

The elephant, Mahmud, was owned by Abrahah, the King of Yemen, and his army. He created the army in Sa'a Kanisah to redirect the pilgrims away from Makkah. Abrahah wrote letters to Najashi, king of Habsah, boasting of his creation of a Canaanitah that no king like him had made and that Najashi had yet to attempt to redirect the pilgrims to Makkah. Upon hearing this news, Abrahah was asked who dared to come upon him and smear his Canaanitah. He was told it was an Arabian man who believed in the Kaaba. So, Abrahah went to Makkah with his army, including an elephant named Mahmud, to destroy the Kaaba. Allah then sent down His Word to defeat them (*alam yaj'al kaydahum fi tadril wa arsala 'alayhim tayran ababil tarmihim bihijarah min sijnil fa ja'alahum ka 'asf ma'kul*)⁶⁰

By incorporating the historical context of the revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and relevant historical events, the meaning and content of the verse become easier to comprehend.

Thirdly, the use of *Isrā'iliyāt* strengthens the explanation of stories about previous people and reveals the wisdom contained within them. For example, Al-Fansūrī includes a significant portion of narrations taken from Al-Khāzin⁶¹ and Al-Baydawī in his explanation of Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 61.

(qissah) As mentioned in Khāzin, Allah, the Almighty, commanded Moses to come to him along with all the Children of Isrā'īl to ask for forgiveness for the sin of worshiping cattle. Moses selected seventy men from among his people and asked them to fast and purify themselves and their garments, which they did. Moses and the seventy men then went to Mount Tursina. They said to Moses, "O Moses, surely you will hear the word of your Lord for us." Moses replied, "We will do so." As Moses approached the hill, a cloud descended and covered it. Moses entered the cloud and told all his people to come near and enter it,

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

which they did, bowing down. Moses, however, did not bow down when he spoke with his Lord. After speaking with his Lord, Moses fell upon a bright place of light, and no one could look at him. God put a wall between them and Moses and spoke to the people, saying, "I am God, there is no God but I, and I have dominion over you from the land of Egypt by my great power. Worship me and no one else." After Moses finished speaking and the cloud disappeared, he faced the people, and they said, "We do not believe in you until we see Allah clearly," and they threw lightning bolts at him.⁶²

The use of *isrā'iliyāt* helps reveal the complete story in verses that relate the stories of previous people, making the meanings and messages they convey easier to comprehend.

Identifying the uses and principles of the Qur'an can highlight its content beyond its meaning. Al-Fansūrī explains the principle contained in each surah at the beginning of his interpretation. For example, he explained the content of al-Fatihah, a seven-verse surah attributed to Makkah and revealed in that city. Al-Fansūrī quotes from *Tafsir al-Baydawi*, *Manāfi' al-Qur'an*, and *Tafsir al-Khazin* to explain the benefit (*faidah*) of reciting al-Fatihah, which is said to be a cure for every disease and brings a reward that cannot be measured. This explanation aims to reveal the content of the Qur'an beyond its verse arrangement.

Reconciling the Meaning of the Qur'an in the Understanding of the Ordinary People

The attempt to bridge the gap between the non-Arabic community and an understanding of the Qur'an was achieved by Al-Fansūrī's use of classical Arabic tafsir references that emphasized the general content of the meaning⁶³ and avoided a literal interpretation⁶⁴. The data shows that Al-Fansūrī refrained from interpreting each word in the verses. Instead, Al-Fansūrī explained the whole meaning of the verse or divided the verse into coherent segments to provide an interpretation. In the case of Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 88,

(wa qālū qulūbunā ghulf) They said to the Prophet, 'Our hearts were covered, so Allah says (*bal la'anahum Allah bi kufrihim fa qalilan mā yu'minūn*), but Allah declared them disbelievers and thus kept them away from His mercy, as their faith was very little.⁶⁵

The aim of providing a global explanation and avoiding literal interpretation

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

is to reconcile the meaning between classical tafsir references and the understanding of the tafsir audience, which is not fluent in Arabic.

Understanding the Qur'an for those new to it requires clear explanations that exclude legal differences. Al-Fansūrī explains rulings without mentioning differences among jurists (*fuqaha*),⁶⁶ except for the ruling on *liwat* (sodom), in which he mentions the view of al-Shāfi'ī without discussing the debate.⁶⁷ For example, he only quotes the ruling from *al-Nihayah* in explaining the permissibility of praying without water to respect time (*li hurmat al-waqt*).⁶⁸ This approach of avoiding debates in interpretation helps reduce confusion and conflict among the audience, who are still in the early stages of understanding the Qur'an.

The debate in tafsir studies arises in understanding *mutashābihāt* verses, which need to be avoided to prevent debates in faith. The data shows that in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*, al-Fansuri does not provide commentary on such verses, as in his interpretation of Q.S. al-An'am (6): 103,

(*wa huwa 'ala kulli shayin wakīl lā tudridrikuh al-absar wa huwa yudrik al-absār wa huwa al-Latīf al-Khabīr*) and he is also the Lord of all that is very nurturing without an eye in the world and he is also all-seeing.⁶⁹

Al-Fansūrī explains the muqatta'ah verses in Surah al-Baqarah (2): 1 by stating that "Allah, the Almighty, knows best what He wills."⁷⁰ He did so in order to avoid debates on verses related to faith. Al-Fansūrī's effort is to clarify the muqatta'ah verses in Surah al-Baqarah (2):1.

Analysis of the Form and Reconciliation of Meanings in Tarjumān al-Mustafid

This study finds that *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*'s brief explanations aim to simplify the understanding of the Qur'an for those new to its study and meaning. Al-Fansūrī employs at least three methods to facilitate comprehension for a general audience. Firstly, he avoids interpreting verses based solely on word meanings, despite mainly using *Tafsīr Jalālayn* as a reference.⁷¹ Secondly, he provides context for verses by incorporating *asbāb al-nuzūl, isrāīliyyāt*, historical stories, and explanations of letter rules. Lastly, he reconciles meanings by avoiding interpretations that could lead to

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Riddell, 'The Sources of Abd Al-Rauf's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid'; Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

legal or creed-based debates. These efforts result in a clearer understanding of the Qur'an without the possibility of a dispute

The creation of a concise tafsir was driven by the need for understanding the Qur'an in communities newly introduced to Islam. Al-Fansūrī's context as a *qādī* tasked with resolving religious disputes also influenced his approach in *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*. To avoid further conflicts, most explanations in the tafsir avoid debates over the meaning and provide a single, straightforward interpretation.⁷² Riddell notes that al-Fansūrī opted for easy-to-understand explanations without relying on word-by-word translations of the Arabic Qur'an.⁷³ This is supported by Johns, who highlights the concise and clear narration as a key advantage of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*.⁷⁴ The author's use of brief explanations reflects their goal of making the Qur'an accessible to a broader audience

Explaining the Qur'an in a simple and non-controversial manner can enhance the purpose and essence of interpretation. As an explanation of the Qur'an, Tafsir should be brief⁷⁵ and precise.⁷⁶ The advantage of using a straightforward explanation method (*ijmāli*) is that it allows readers to focus on the meaning without being distracted by unrelated issues.⁷⁷ Anwar's study of *Hashiyah al-Sawī* also highlights the use of simple language in the tafsir, making it easier to understand.⁷⁸ This global interpretation approach leads to a straightforward and direct understanding of the Qur'an.

Previous studies on *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* have debated its method, tendency, and style. Some studies focus on specific themes in the book, while others overlook its significance in a society lacking Quranic study and facing Sufi polemic. *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* has great value in developing early Quranic study and teaching, as it has a simple and brief narrative.⁷⁹ Azra suggests that it can serve as a practical reference

72 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

73 Riddell, 'The Sources of Abd Al-Rauf's Tarjuman Al-Mustafid'.

74 Anthony H. Johns, 'Quranic Exegesis in The Malay World', in *Approaches to The History of The Interpretation of The Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

75 Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīm Al-Zarqānī, *Manāhil Al-'Irfān*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), 166.

76 Muḥammad Husayn Al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr Wa Al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2 (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2007), 12.

77 Abd Al-Sattār, *Al-Madkhal Ilā Al-Tafsīr Al-Mawḍūī* (Mesir: Dār al-Tawzi' wa al-Naṣr al-Islāmiyah, 1991), 17.

78 Rosihon Anwar, 'Lughawi Tafsir of Hashiah Al-Sawi: A Critical Analysis of Tafsir Al-Jalalain', *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (December 2020): 92. especially in the language rules usage through his examples in explaining the verses. This study employs a qualitative method to the data gathered from literature (library research)

79 Peter Riddell, 'Earliest Quranic Exegetic Activity in the Malay Speaking States', *Archipel* 38, no. 1 (1989): 107-124.

for readers.⁸⁰ However, the view that it is a translation of *Tafsir Jalālayn*, as stated by Riddell and followed by Azra, must be reevaluated.⁸¹ This is because the need for easy Quranic understanding requires interpreters to provide brief explanations that only relate to the verse's intended meaning. The existence of tafsir with brief explanations helps to convey the Quran's message more efficiently.

A brief explanation of the Quranic meaning aimed at a general audience can significantly impact the formation of basic knowledge from Quranic interpretation. Al-Fansūrī's approach serves as a role model for grounding the Qur'an in a community new to it. Avoiding interpretation debates in initial Islamic education based on the Qur'an can result in more easily understandable explanations.⁸² This approach can also address radicalism and intolerance resulting from a misunderstanding of religious narratives. Al-Fansūrī used a brief explanation model to resolve the debate on faith caused by the understanding of *zāhir* and *bātin* after Hamzah al-Fansūrī's time. Rahman also stated that the primary motivation behind *Tarjumān Mustafid* was to overcome the faith debate that disturbed the stability of the Aceh kingdom.⁸³ A straightforward and brief interpretive narrative can help ordinary people understand the Qur'an.

Conclusions

The notion that *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* is a translation of commentaries by al-Khāzin, al-Baydawī, or Jalālayn is unfounded. On the contrary, this study shows that the short and easy narration provided by Abd al-Raūf al-Fansūrī aims to offer an easier understanding of the Qur'an's meaning and content for the ordinary people. Al-Fansūrī cites *Tafsir Jalālayn*, *Tafsir al-Khāzin*, and *Tafsir al-Baydawī* as a means of providing context and references when interpreting the Qur'an. The model presented by al-Fansūrī reflects his consideration of the community's needs and attempts to bridge debates on the esoteric interpretation that existed previously. Therefore, *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* cannot be entirely considered a classical interpretation due to its efforts to make the Qur'an more accessible to the general public.

Viewing *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* as a process of reproducing al-Fansūrī's interpretation by referencing classical tafsir sources highlights its purpose as an

80 Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Akar Pembaharuan Islam Indonesia*.

81 (1984)

82 M Solahudin, 'Pendekatan Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Dalam Penafsiran Alquran', *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al- Qur'an dan Tafsir* 1, no. 2 (December 2016): 123.

83 Rahman, 'Tafsir Tarjumān Al-Mustafid Karya 'Abd Al-Rauf Al-Fanshuri: Diskursus Biografi, Kontestasi Politis-Teologis Dan Metodologi Tafsir'.

answer to the general public's need for interpretation. This identification was achieved through the use of content analysis in the research. This method enables researchers to quickly identify the model and make correct conclusions based on the data from *Tarjumān al-Mustafid*. It also provides tools for researchers to address research questions and understand the role of *Tarjumān al-Mustafid* in the lives of ordinary people.

However, this research has limitations as it only focuses on one interpretation book that is often debated for authenticity. Other tafsir books in Indonesia that offer brief explanations are also frequently challenged for their validity, particularly those that explain the Qur'an with a translation model. Such accusations hinder the relationship between tafsir and translation in Indonesia and its role as a means of facilitating non-Arabic speakers' understanding of the Qur'an. Therefore, further research is necessary to investigate the relationship between tafsir in Indonesia and the community's need for Qur'an interpretation.

Supplementary Materials

The data presented in this study are available in [insert article or supplementary material here] (Usually the datasets were analyzed from library research can be found in the whole data references).

Acknowledgements

Authors' contributions

All listed authors contributed to this article. C.W wrote the original draft, reviewed and edited it, and wrote the formal analysis, compiled the resources, conceptualised the study, and managed the project administration. I.K.A was responsible for the methodology and validation and supervised the project

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflicts of Interest

None of the authors of this study has a financial or personal relationship with other people that could inappropriately influence or bias the content of the study.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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