

Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of of Tafsir al-Ibriz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube

Pergeseran Paradigma Narasi Gender dalam Tafsir al-Ibriz melalui Tafsir Lisan di Youtube.

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Abstract

This article examines the book *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, written by KH Bisri Mustofa, a prominent Javanese exegesis. The book has been re-read and interpreted orally by his son, Gus Mus (KH Ahmad Mustofa Bisri), on his YouTube channel. This study highlights a new tradition in the digital era where Qur'anic exegesis is transmitted and transformed through both written texts and oral interpretations. This research employs a qualitative approach, using primary data from the official YouTube Channel of Gus Mus and secondary data from relevant scholarly literature. Document analysis and descriptive-analytic methods reveal a significant paradigm shift between the written and oral exegesis. Specifically, gender issues such as polygamy and women's leadership, which are presented with a gender-biased perspective in the written *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, are reinterpreted by Gus Mus with a focus on gender equality. This transformation is influenced by the socio-cultural context, Gus Mus's educational background, and the changing audience of the oral exegesis. The study incorporates gender equality theory, highlighting forms of gender inequality like marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and double burden. The findings suggest that Gus Mus's oral exegesis reflects an egalitarian interpretation, contrasting with the traditional views in *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, thus promoting fair treatment for both women and men. This research contributes to the discourse on gender and Qur'anic exegesis by demonstrating the dynamic nature of oral interpretation in the Indonesian pesantren context and its impact on advancing gender equality in Islamic thought.

Keyword: *Sign Language, Qur'an Indonesia Project, Inclusive Pedagogy, Qur'an Translation Process, the Quran*

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji kitab *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, yang ditulis oleh KH Bisri Mustofa, seorang mufassir Jawa terkemuka. Kitab ini telah dibaca ulang dan ditafsirkan secara lisan oleh putranya, Gus Mus (KH Ahmad Mustofa Bisri), di kanal YouTube-nya. Penelitian ini menyoroti sebuah tradisi baru di era digital di mana tafsir Al-Qur'an ditransmisikan dan ditransformasikan baik melalui teks tertulis maupun tafsir lisan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan menggunakan data primer dari kanal YouTube resmi Gus Mus dan data sekunder dari literatur ilmiah yang relevan. Analisis dokumen dan metode deskriptif-analitik menunjukkan adanya pergeseran paradigma yang signifikan antara tafsir tertulis dan lisan. Secara khusus, isu-isu gender seperti poligami dan kepemimpinan perempuan, yang disajikan dengan perspektif bias gender dalam *Tafsir al-Ibriz* yang tertulis, ditafsirkan ulang oleh Gus Mus dengan fokus pada kesetaraan gender. Transformasi ini



dipengaruhi oleh konteks sosial-budaya, latar belakang pendidikan Gus Mus, dan perubahan audiens dari tafsir lisan tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori kesetaraan gender, menyoroti bentuk-bentuk ketidaksetaraan gender seperti marjinalisasi, subordinasi, stereotip, kekerasan, dan beban ganda. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tafsir lisan Gus Mus mencerminkan penafsiran yang egaliter, berbeda dengan pandangan tradisional dalam Tafsir al-Ibriz, sehingga mendorong perlakuan yang adil bagi perempuan dan laki-laki. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana gender dan tafsir al-Qur'an dengan menunjukkan sifat dinamis penafsiran lisan dalam konteks pesantren di Indonesia dan dampaknya dalam memajukan kesetaraan gender dalam pemikiran Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Tafsir Lisan, Gender, Pergeseran Paradigma. Media Online, Pesantren*

Introduction

Oral exegesis does not always have the same form of paradigm with the tafsir book that is recited, it can even be a contradiction. On the issue of gender, *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, which has a gender-biased paradigm, interpreted orally by Gus Mus turns into gender-equality. On the other hand, in general oral exegesis only explain ideas of the tafsir author.¹ In fact, Martin van Bruinessen said the study tradition in pesantren often considers the classical books it studies as a final understanding and should not be criticized.² The difference thought between oral exegetes and the referred tafsir book is influenced by several factors, one of which is the surrounding socio-cultural context. In line with Gracia, that there will be additional phrases from the interpreter that are needed so that contemporary audiences can understand more easily.³

Now, oral Qur'anic exegesis has been transformed into a very diverse form. In the Indonesian context can be easily found in recitations, sermons, and learning process in Pesantren that teach tafsir books to their students. At least, there are two types of oral interpretation studies as Andreas Görke mentioned; *first*, speakers who place themselves as people who understand as well as producers of Qur'anic interpretation. *Second*, speakers who study the interpretation of the Qur'an but refer to written sources, as tafsir books, in Arabic and other languages, printed and still in manuscript form.⁴ Along with technological advances, now oral Qur'anic tafsir does not only reach the offline community of Muslims, but also penetrates into audiovisual-online media that allows access by anyone, including non-Muslim

1 Farri Chatul Liqok, "Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2020).

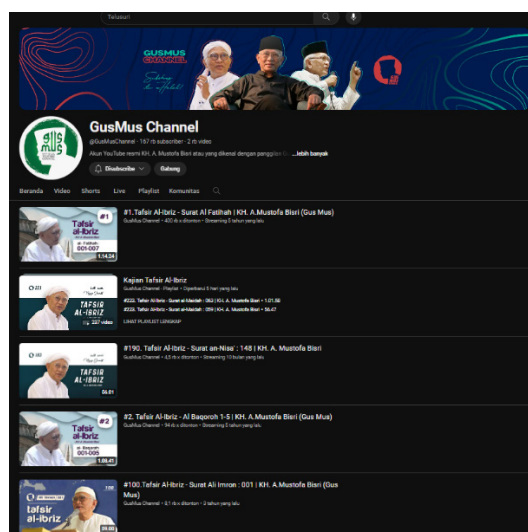
2 Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren Dan Tarekat*, trans. Farid Wajidi and Rika Iffati, 1st ed., 11 (Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Gading Publishing, 2012), 85.

3 Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: The Logic and Epistemology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 177.

4 Andreas Görke, Johanna Pink, and Institute of Ismaili Studies, eds., *Tafsir and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre*, Qur'anic studies series (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2014), 361.

communities.

In this research, the authors use official YouTube Channel Gus Mus's as a platform for providing digital content in the form of audiovisual as the material object in this research. There are many types of content uploaded on YouTube GusMus Channel, such as recitations of *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, *Muhammad Insan Kamil*, *Kimiatus Sa'adah*, Ramadan Islamic classes, Gus Mus's lectures and lectures by several other national figures. However, the authors focus on videos about recitation of *Tafsir al-Ibriz* by KH. Ahmad Mustofa Bisri or more familiarly known as Gus Mus. This research focuses on two gender themes, polygamy and women's leadership. This recitation is conducted on Fridays with an audience students of Pesantren Radlatut Thalibin Rembang and the surrounding society. In addition to being listened to by the santri and the community, this recitation is also broadcast live on YouTube GusMus Channel.⁵



Picture 1.1 Screen Shoot, Home Page of GusMus Channel on YouTube.⁶

Tafsir al-Ibriz is the work of KH Bisri Mustofa, the father of Gus Mus. This tafsir is written using *pegon*⁷ script which was deliberately designed to be easily understood by the Javanese community at the time of writing. Using pegon script

5 "GusMus Channel - YouTube," accessed December 1, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/>.

6 "GusMus Channel - YouTube."

7 *Pegon* script is the Arabic script used to write the Javanese language. See, "Search Result - KBBI VI Daring," accessed May 1, 2024, <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/pegon..> *Pegon* script is not only used in Javanese, but also in Madurese, Sundanese and Malay, see M. Irfan Sofwani, *Mengenal Tulisan Arab Melayu* (Yogyakarta: Adicita Karya Nusa, 2005).

is unique because at that time Islamic writers tended to use Arabic.⁸ As a classic tafsir book based on social Pesantren, *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* cites a lot from classical books, such as *Tafsīr Jalālain*, *Tafsīr Baiḍāwī*, and *Tafsīr Khāzin*.⁹ With the main source of reference of these tafsir books, the nuances of interpretation in *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* tend to follow the mainstream of the tafsir books that are referred to.

Meanwhile, Gus Mus's oral exegesis of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* shows different nuances of interpretation and tends to be contradiction. On gender verses, Gus Mus's oral exegesis can be categorized as an egalitarian interpretation and tends to be gender equitable. Meanwhile, on both themes, in *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* it is explained in a gender-biased. The difference between the written interpretation in *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis is interesting to investigate about how and why this can happen?

As mentioned, this study examines the differences between *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis on two gender issues, namely; polygamy and women's leadership. The authors explicitly limits the research to two verses, namely QS. al-Nisā/4: 3 which discusses polygamy; and QS. al-Nisā/4: 34, which discusses women's leadership. This research is a qualitative library research with the primary source is Gus Mus's recitation of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* documented on the YouTube GusMus Channel. Secondary sources are books, scientific journal articles, proceedings and other sources in print and digital that contain supporting data in this research. This research uses documentation data collection techniques and uses descriptive-analytical data analysis techniques.

This research uses the theory of gender equality which is based on principles and efforts to eliminate discrimination and provide fair treatment for women and men.¹⁰ According to Mansour, there are five forms of gener inequality against women, namely: marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence and double burden.¹¹ In summary, it can be explained as follows: marginalization, which is the restriction of women's access to actualize and express their self, such as educational opportunities; subordination, is an action that makes women owners of a lower position than men, such as the ban on women becoming leaders of a community; stereotyping, which is a subjective labeling of women that is not appropriate, such as weak women and seducers; violence, which includes physical and verbal violence, such as punching and cursing; and double burden, which is the provision of two burdens carried by women,

8 Abdul Mustaqim, "The Epistemology of Javanese Qur'anic Exegesis: A Study of Šāliḥ Darat's Fayḍ al-Raḥmān," *Al-Jamī'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 2 (December 15, 2017): 360.

9 Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibrīz Li Ma'rifati Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-'Azīz*, vol. 1 (Kudus: Menara Kudus, n.d.).

10 Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Gender: Perspektif Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 3.

11 Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender & Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 13–22.

gender and sexuality burdens, such as forcing women to cook in menstrual pain.

The authors has traced previous research on the scope oral exegesis studies, including: Walter J. Ong with the title *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*,¹² Andreas Görke entitled *Redefining the Borders of Tafsir; Oral Exegesis, Lay Exegesis and Regional Particularities*,¹³ a dissertation written by T. Raufovich Yuskaev entitled *The Quran Comes to America: Pedagogies of Muslim Collective Memory*,¹⁴ then Latifah's work with the title, *Tafsir Lisan Dan Sensasi Keagamaan Muslim Urban: Studi Tentang Pengajian Tafsir Syatori Abdur Rauf*,¹⁵ Farri Chatul Liqok's research, *Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh*,¹⁶ the work of Muh Alwi HS with the title *Perbandingan Tafsir Tulis dan Lisan M. Quraish Shihab Tentang QS. Al-Qalam dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah (Analisis Ciri Kilisanan Aditif Alih-Alih Subordinatif)*¹⁷ and the work of Baydi and Husna with the title, *Decoding the Cultural Significance of Pengaosan Tafsir Al-Ibriz in Kedawung, Mojo, Kediri: An Analysis of Social Meanings*.¹⁸ These studies are oriented to the typology and characteristics of oral exegesis. The others tend to provide an analysis of the phenomena of oral interpretation by analyzing the typology and characteristics

While previous academic which examines *Tafsir al-Ibriz* as a formal object, include: Mubasirun with title, *Values of Tepo Seliro in Bakri Syahid's Tafsir al-Hudā and Bisri Mustofa's Tafsir al-Ibriz*,¹⁹ comparative study by Irsad entitled, *Studi Ayat-Ayat tentang Memilih Pemimpin Non-Muslim Perspektif Mufasir Indonesia*.²⁰ The study of *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is dominated by thematic research. Then, academic studies in book form related to gender studies and interpretation of the Qur'an include; *Nalar Kritis Muslimah: Refleksi Atas Keperempuanan, Kemanusiaan, Dan Keislaman*, written

12 Walter J. Ong and John Hartley, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 30th anniversary ed.; 3rd ed., Orality and literary (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012).

13 Görke, Pink, and Institute of Ismaili Studies, *Tafsir and Islamic Intellectual History*.

14 T. Raufovich Yuskaev, "The Quran Comes to America: Pedagogies of Muslim Collective Memory" (The University of North Carolina, 2010).

15 Umi Latifah, "Tafsir Lisan Dan Sensasi Keagamaan Muslim Urban: Studi Tentang Pengajian Tafsir Syatori Abdur Rauf" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021).

16 Liqok, "Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh."

17 Muh Alwi HS, "Tafsir Tulis Dan Lisan M. Quraish Shihab Tentang QS. Al-Qalam Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah (Analisis Ciri Kilisanan Aditif Alih-Alih Subordinatif)," *Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* Vol.18, no. No. 1 (2019).

18 Ubaidillah Baydi, "Decoding the Cultural Significance of Pengaosan Tafsir Al-Ibriz in Kedawung, Mojo, Kediri: An Analysis of Social Meanings," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 24, no. 1 (January 2023), <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/ushuluddin/alquran/article/view/3904/2202>.

19 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 (December 8, 2021).

20 Muhammad Irsad, "Studi Ayat-Ayat Tentang Memilih Pemimpin Non-Muslim Perspektif Mufasir Indonesia," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah dan Masyarakat* 17, no. 2 (2017): 199–218.

by Nur Rofi'ah.²¹ two book by Husein Muhammad entitled *Islam Agama Ramah Perempuan*,²² and *Fiqh Perempuan: Refleksi Kiai Atas Wacana Agama dan Gender*,²³ a book written by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir entitled *Qirā'ah Mubādalāh*.²⁴ The four books contain ways of reading Islamic religious texts that are claimed to be more gender-equitable. The books criticize old interpretations of Islamic religious texts that tend to be gender-biased and provide new methodological lines on how Islamic religious texts should be read and interpreted, resulting in gender-equitable readings.

In addition, there are also scientific works related to gender studies and interpretation of the Qur'an also published in scientific journals and proceedings, including: the work of Iksan and Predi entitled, *Dasar-Dasar Ajaran Islam, Al-Qur'an dan Isu Gender*,²⁵ Abdul Wasik with the title, *Qur'an and Gender Equality. Interpretation Of The Qur'an In A Feminist Perspective: (The Thought of Asma Barlas and His Contribution to the Development of Islamic Law)*,²⁶ by Rustam and Jubair with the title, *Memahami Perbedaan Gender Dalam Perspektif Islam Dan Socio-Kultural*,²⁷ then Dozan and Supriadi's research entitled *Peran Perempuan Dalam Meningkatkan Taraf Bekerja Terhadap Keluarga: Kajian Isu Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an*,²⁸ by Halya Millati with the title, *The Reconstruction Of Kaidah Al-Tazkir And Al-Ta'nīs In Paradigm Of Gender Equality Interpretation*,²⁹ by Ahmad Muttaqin with the title *Women's Identity in the Digital Islam Age: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias*,³⁰ by Siti and Hannah entitled, *The Role of Women in the Public*

21 Nur Rofiah, *Nalar Kritis Muslimah: Refleksi Atas Keperempuanan, Kemanusiaan, Dan Keislaman* (Bandung: Afkaruna.id, 2020).

22 Husein Muhammad, *Islam Agama Ramah Perempuan*, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2021).

23 Husein Muhammad and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Fiqh perempuan: refleksi kiai atas wacana agama dan gender*, Cet. IV. (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 2007).

24 Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Qirā'ah mubādalāh*, Cetakan IV. (Banguntapan, Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2021).

25 Iksan and Predi M. Pratama, "Dasar-Dasar Ajaran Islam, Al- Qur'an Dan Kesetaraan Gender," *Jurnal Syntax Fusion* 1, no. 07 (July 27, 2021): 125–140.

26 Abdul Wasik, "Interpretation Of The Qur'an In A Feminist Perspective: (The Thought of Asma Barlas and His Contribution to the Development of Islamic Law)," *International Conference on Humanity Education and Society (ICHES)* 2, no. 1 (March 29, 2023), accessed December 3, 2023, <http://proceedingsiches.com/index.php/ojs/article/view/16>.

27 Nurcholish Rustam and JUBair Situmorang, "Memahami Perbedaan Gender Dalam Perspektif Islam Dan Socio-Kultural," *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender dan Agama* 14, no. 1 (September 29, 2020): 29–43.

28 Wely Dozan and Supriadi Supriadi, "Peran Perempuan Dalam Meningkatkan Taraf Bekerja Terhadap Keluarga: Kajian Isu Gender Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender dan Agama* 15, no. 2 (December 27, 2021): 167–179.

29 Halya Millati, "The Reconstruction Of Kaidah Al-Tazkir And Al-Ta'nīs In Paradigm Of Gender Equality Interpretation," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (December 11, 2020): 259–280.

30 Ahmad Muttaqin, "Women's Identity in the Digital Islam Age: Social Media, New Religious Authority, and Gender Bias," *QIJIS (Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies)* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2020):

Domain in the View of the Qur'an,³¹ by Fauzi and Ruslan entitled, *Tinjauan Al-Qur'an Terhadap Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Pembagian Warisan*,³² karya Miranti, dkk., yang berjudul *Wanita Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an*,³³ then in Arina Al-Ayya wrote a paper in the Gender and Social Movement Conference entitled *Konstruksi Relasi Gender dalam Tafsir al-Qur'an (Telaah Kitab Nazharat fi Kitabillah Karya Zainab al-Ghazali al-Jubaili)*,³⁴ and proceedings in the International Conference on Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies in 2023 entitled, *Gender Equality in the Perspective of the Qur'an*³⁵

Based on the previous literature and prior research, it could be said that gender equality studies that make oral exegesis as a formal object have never been conducted before. On the aspect of selecting figure Gus Mus as the subject of research, it has met five of the six criteria defined by Abdul Mustaqim, namely: pouler, influential, unique, intensive in giving lectures on tafsir dicipline and has relevance.³⁶ Therefore, the authors argues that this theme is worth to be researched for the development of studies on gender and oral exegesis.

Tafsir al-Ibriz, KH. Bisri Mustofa and Gus Mus (Ahmad Mustofa Bisri)

253–388.

- 31 Siti Sa'adah and Neng Hannah, "The Role of Women in the Public Domain in the View of the Qur'an," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 4 (April 27, 2021): 586–595.
- 32 Taufiqurrahman Fauzi and Mohammad Ruslan, "Tinjauan Al-Qur'an Terhadap Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Pembagian Warisan," *El-Furqania : Jurnal Ushuluddin dan Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 8, no. 02 (August 22, 2022): 22–46.
- 33 Miranti Miranti, Desma Enawati, and Novia Lestari, "Wanita Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Multidisiplin Indonesia* 2, no. 6 (June 27, 2023): 1321–1329.
- 34 Arina Al-Ayya, "Konstruksi Relasi Gender Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Telaah Kitab Nazharat Fi Kitabillah Karya Zainab al-Ghazali al-Jubaili)," *Prosiding Konferensi Gender dan Gerakan Sosial* 1, no. 01 (December 26, 2022): 574–586.
- 35 Novia Firdayanti, Triono Ali Mustofa, and Nur Saadah Hamisan Khair, "Gender Equality in the Perspective of the Qur'an" (Presented at the International Conference on Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies (ICIMS 2023), Atlantis Press, 2023), 142–148, accessed December 3, 2023, <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/icims-23/125991738>.
- 36 Abdul Mustaqim, "Model Penelitian Tokoh (Dalam Teori Dan Aplikasi)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 15, no. 2 (2014): 205–207.



Picture: by Muhammad Irsad

The full title of the tafsir written by KH. Bisri Mustofa is, *al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is one of the tafsir from Indonesia that uses Javanese language and is written using *pegon* script. *Pegon* script uses Arabic letters with certain modifications whose pronunciation uses Javanese. *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is written in full 30 juz consisting of thirty volumes, each volume contains one juz. If the authors analyze using the classification of the writing method of interpreting al-Farmawy, *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is written using the *tablili* method, which presents tafsir in the form of explaining the meaning of verses, quoting explanations from the Prophet and companions, displaying *asbab al-nuzul* and written based on the order of the Usmani mushaf. As for the style of interpretation, *Tafsir al-Ibriz* does not show a tendency towards a particular style, but is a combination of *fiqhi*, *Sufi* and *adabli al-ijtimai* styles.

The complete title of tafsir written by KH. Bisri Mustofa is, *al-Ibriz li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Aziz*. *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is one of the tafsir from Indonesia using Javanese language and written using *pegon* script. *Pegon* script uses Arabic letters with certain modifications with Javanese pronunciation. *Tafsir al-Ibriz* is written completely 30 juz consisting of thirty volumes, in each volume contains one juz.³⁷ If analyzed using the classification method of writing tafsir al-Farmawy,³⁸ *Tafsir al-Ibriz*

37 The authors has also found *Tafsir al-Ibriz* printed in a three volume version, each volume containing ten juz. Since 2013, *Tafsir al-Ibriz* has also been translated into Indonesian by Lembaga Kajian Strategis Indonesia, see: Bisri Mustofa, *Al Ibriz Versi Latin (Tafsir Al-Quran Bahasa Jawa)* (Depok: Lembaga Kajian Strategis Indonesia, 2013).

38 Abd al-Hayy al-Farmawy, *Abd Al-Hayy al-Farmawi*.1976. *Al-Bidayah Fi al-Tafsir al-Maudhu'i* (Mesir:

is written using the *tablili* method, which presents tafsir in an explanation of verse meaning, taking explanations from the Prophet and the Sahabah, displaying *asbāb al-nuzūl* and written based on the Usmani mushaf order. The style of interpretation, *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* does not show a tendency towards a specific style, but is a combination of *fiqhi*, *Sufi* and *adabli al-ijtimai* styles.



Picture 1.3 KH. Bisri Mustofa, author of the *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz*.³⁹

The authors of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz*, KH. Bisri Mustofa was born in the village of Sawahan, Palen alley, Rembang, Central Java in 1915 from the married couple H. Zaenal Mustofa and Chotijah. His birth name was Mashadi, then after completing hajj (according to Javanese tradition) he changed his name to Bisri, and Mustofa is a name taken from his father's last name. He is four brothers with three brothers named; Salamah (Aminah), Misbach and Ma'shum.⁴⁰ Besides a charismatic ulama figure, Kiai Bisri is also a politician, a moderate religionist, and a productive writer. *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* is a compilation of his talks codified by his three students, Munshorif, Maghfur and Ahmad Sofwan. Kiai Bisri died at Asr prayer on February 17, 1977 Dr. Karyadi Hospital Semarang.⁴¹

Dirasah Manhajiyah Mawdluiyyah, 1976).

39 "KH Bisri Musthofa: Singa Podium Pejuang Kemerdekaan," *NU Online*, accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.nu.or.id/tokoh/kh-bisri-musthofa-singa-podium-pejuang-kemerdekaan-LWdYe>.

40 Imam Muhsin, "Budaya Pesisiran Dan Pedalaman Dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an (Studi Kasus Tafsir al-Ibrīz Dan Tafsir al-Huda)," *Thaqafiyat : Jurnal Babasa, Peradaban dan Informasi Islam* 15, no. 1 (February 6, 2016): 5.

41 Cholidul Adib, "KH Bisri Mustofa," *ablusunahwaljamaah*, May 2, 2007, accessed January 8, 2024, <https://ablusunahwaljamaah.wordpress.com/manakib/kh-bisri-mustofa/>.



Picture 1.4 KH. A. Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus).⁴²

Gus Mus, full name is KH. Ahmad Mustofa Bisri, he is son of Kiai Bisri Mustofa the author of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz*. Gus Mus was born in Rembang on August 10, 1944. Young Gus Mus grew up in a loving, progressive and patriotic family circle. Gus Mus's intellect got extraordinary nourishment from teachers, kiai and a loving family. Gus Mus's education begins from the Rembang Sekolah Rakyat (SR) in 1950-1956, Lirboyo Pesantren Kediri in 1956-1958, Kranyak Pesantren Yogyakarta in 1958-1962, Taman Pelajar Islam Pesantren Rembang in 1962-1964, before finally he received a scholarship from Al-Azhar University Cairo in 1964-1970 for Islamic Studies and Arabic Language.

Gus Mus is the son-in-law of KH. Cholil Harun who is a ulama in the eastern Pantura region, after he married Siti Fatmah in 1971 and was blessed with seven children. As evidence of the contribution to the spread and development of Islamic intellectuals, Taman Pelajar Islam (*Raudlatut Tholibin*) was founded by Gus Mus's father in 1955, which is now cared by Gus Mus brothers, where *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* is currently studied with santri and the surrounding community.⁴³

The Oral Exegesis of Gus Mus

The Issue of Polgamy

In this section, the authors analyze *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis.

42 gusmus, "Ini Tiga Bentuk Berpolitik Menurut Gus Mus," accessed May 1, 2024, <http://gusmus.net/news/ini-tiga-bentuk-berpolitik-menurut-gus-mus>.

43 gusmus, "Profil," accessed January 8, 2024, <http://gusmus.net/profil>.

The first verse in QS. al-Nisā/4: 3 is as follows:

Meaning: *And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of (other) women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then (marry only) one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline (to injustice).*

Bisri Mustofa begins to explain this verse by narrating cause of revelation of the verse (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) then explains the essence of the verse's command that if you are unable to do justice to orphans then marry two, three or four women you like, but if you are unable to do justice (to your wives) then marry only one woman or a slave girl you own.⁴⁴ Bisri's interpretation of the verse which tends to be textual may be due to many factors, one of which is the reference to classical tafsir used in the writing of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* (as acknowledged by the author in his preface) which cites from various famous classical tafsir books such as *Tafsīr Jalālāin*, *Tafsīr Baiḍāwī*, and *Tafsīr Khāzin*.⁴⁵ In summary, Bisri explains this verse in a very concise, normative manner, and not far from the textual narrative of the verse, so that the impression that arises is approval of the practice of polygamy without notes.

While in Gus Mus's oral exegesis, there are points of difference: *first*, he provides a broader explanation up to the analysis of the vocabulary (*mufradāt*) used in the verse.⁴⁶ *Secondly*, although it is not explicitly mentioned, it is obvious that Gus Mus tends to be pro-monogamy and criticizes the current practice of polygamy using the verse. Gus Mus mentions that the verse (by some people) is misused as an argument for polygamy without considering the context of revelation of verse which is closely related to the issue of orphans. Gus Mus also gave reasons against polygamy, such as; the Prophet's monogamy period was longer than the polygamy period, the Prophet was polygamous with old widows not with young widows or girls except Aisyah RA,⁴⁷ and the reason for polygamy using argument that female population is higher than male population is reasonable but harassing women.⁴⁸

Gus Mus's oral exegesis reflects his thinking that sees polygamy as a form of labeling (*stereotyping*) of women. Therefore, Gus Mus attempts to present an

44 Bisri Mustofa, *Al-Ibrīz Li Ma'rifati Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, vol. 4 (Kudus: Menara Kudus, n.d.), 194–195.

45 Mustofa, *Al-Ibrīz Li Ma'rifati Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, vol. 1, p. .

46 #141. *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa' : 3* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, 2022, accessed April 1, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGBI-znoDrU>.

47 Prophet Muhammad had a monogamous marriage with Khadija until her death. Prophet Muhammad was widowed for two years, then he married and was polygamous for eight years until his death. See, Inayah Rohmaniyah, *Menyoal Keadilan Dalam Poligami* (Yogyakarta: PSW UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2009), 15.

48 #141. *Tafsīr Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa'*.

interpretation that is gender-equitable and in favor of women. Gus Mus's oral exegesis is unique, where his oral exegesis products disagree with the tafsir book that is being read and besides that it is rare to find male interpreters who have attention to gender equality issues.

The Issue of women's leadership

The second verse, about women's leadership in QS. al-Nisā/4: 34, as follows
Meaning:

“Men are in charge of women by (right of) what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend (for maintenance) from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. But those (wives) from whom you fear arrogance – (first) advise them; (then if they persist), forsake them in bed; and (finally), strike them. But if they obey you (once more), seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.”

In this verse there is also a significant difference between Bisri's interpretation and Gus Mus's oral exegesis. In *Tafsir al-Ibriz*, this verse is interpreted as granting power to husbands over his wives. The granting of power is caused by the superiority that has been given to men over women in aspects of knowledge, intelligence, control of territory and others and based on duty to provide livelihood that is imposed upon the husband.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Gus Mus's oral exegesis stresses that men and women have different sides, these differences are innate factors and can be seen physically and psychologically. Psychologically, women inherit a patient, soft and caring attitude. For example, in parenting issues, a mother has an advantage in emotional intimacy over a father. However, with these differences, Gus Mus still opens opportunities for women to do work that is usually done by men and in certain cases women can do better than men.⁵⁰

According Gus Mus, this verse specifically explains about male leadership in the household area. This is because men have a duty and responsibility not only as leaders but also to facilitate and provide household needs. In addition, Gus Mus also criticizes men for being authoritarian in the household while emphasizing that women also have the right to have an opinion in taking a decision. Gus Mus does not explicitly explain the women's position in leadership in the public domain, but Gus Mus's explanations clearly indicate the defense, giving rights and respect to

49 Mustofa, *Al-Ibriz Li Ma'rifati Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Aziz*, 4:210.

50 #151. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa' : 34* | KH. A. Mustofa Bisri, 2022, accessed May 2, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KKVRoAuVQ4>.

women. Gus Mus also said that women and men have their own advantages and disadvantages, which emphasizes the imperfections of human beings. Because of these imperfections, men and women must complete each other.⁵¹

In summary, in leadership issues, *Tafsir al-Ibriz* tends to bring up the narrative of male superiority and marginalization to women. While Gus Mus's oral exegesis presents an egalitarian side and emphasizes that women also have the potential as men, even in certain domains women are able to show a better job than men.

Different context of Tafsir al-Ibriz and Gus Mus's oral tafsir.

In this section the authors will explain the context of *Tafsir al-Ibriz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis, which theoretically can provide an explanation about the background of creation an interpretation. As a frame of analyze, the authors use the Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge theory. The main ideology of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge may believe that there are methods of thinking that cannot be understood properly as long as their social origins are unclear.⁵² Put another way, a concept can only be understood properly if the social factors surrounding the concept are first well understood. It may be that a concept of thought has the same redaction but is for a different purpose because comes from a different social background.⁵³

The authors found two factors that became the main difference between *Tafsir al-Ibriz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis, namely: internal and external factors of the mufasir. Internal factors include educational background, the influence of teachers and the circle of intellectual interaction. Bisri Mustofa grows up in a pesantren environment, receiving education from teachers who are pesantren Kiai as well as leading ulama in Indonesia, such as Kiai Kholil Haroen Kasingan, Kiai Ma'shum Lasem and Kiai Dimiyati Tremas.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, Gus Mus, besides getting non-formal education from Kiai, such as Kiai Bisri his own father and Kiai Ali Maksun Krapyak, also received education at al-Azhar University Cairo. Thus, Gus Mus received two types of education and experienced two different social conditions in Indonesia and Egypt. In addition, Gus Mus was in a more heterogeneous circle of intellectual interaction than his father. Gus Mus was a politician, interacting with culturalists, writers and artists. Gus Mus also interacted with leading Indonesian Islamic scholars, progressive Islamic thinkers and non-Muslim religious leaders.

51 #151. *Tafsir Al-Ibriz - Surat an-Nisa*'.

52 Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Shils, 1st ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954), 2.

53 Hamka Hamka, "SOSIOLOGI PENGETAHUAN: TELAAH ATAS PEMIKIRAN KARL MANNHEIM," *Scolae: Journal of Pedagogy* 3, no. 1 (June 6, 2020): 78.

54 "KH Bisri Musthofa."

Gus Mus's educational journey, the influence of his teachers and his circle of intellectual interactions formed a horizon that influenced the difference between his oral exegesis and the *Tafsir al-Ibriz*. This horizon contains a reflective dimension, as described by Gadamer.⁵⁵ The reflective dimension contains a person's pre-understanding with the reality encountered in the present, so that the understanding that comes later is a product of new thinking rather than a repetition of previous thinking.⁵⁶ In the context of this research, Gus Mus brings up a new gender-equality interpretation of the theme of polygamy and women's leadership, which is different from the older gender-biased meaning in *Tafsir al-Ibriz*.

Then, external factors include the socio-cultural conditions of society in general and the context of the audience who follow the recitation of tafsir in specific. Bisri Mustofa wrote *Tafsir al-Ibriz* between 1915-1977, at the time condition of Javanese society was still strong with patriarchal culture. In addition, the discourse of gender equality was only introduced to Indonesian society around the 1990s. So, it is reasonable if Kiai Bisri's interpretation is relevant to the context of Javanese society as an audience at that time. Meanwhile, Gus Mus gives an oral exegesis of *Tafsir al-Ibriz* in the context of contemporary audiences who are familiar with gender issues. They also live in a technologically advanced era, where they can easily access information about women's emancipation, feminism and the gender equality movement.

Social context and audience change are important factors in producing Gus Mus's oral exegesis to be relevant and acceptable. According to Farid Esack, the relevance of the read text to the contemporary context is very important to produce new meanings needed in the particular context (the context of each country).⁵⁷ In addition, Abdullah Saeed also said that interpretation products can be accepted if they include as many aspects as possible that can change, such as mindsets, cultural norms and values in line with the development of society.⁵⁸ Thus, the socio-cultural situation and the context of the audience are very possibly the factors that cause the shifting paradigm of gender bias to gender justice, between *Tafsir al-Ibriz* and Gus Mus's oral exegesis.

This research is different from previous studies, for example Alwi HS's

55 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge (London: University of California, 2008), 45.

56 Rahmatullah Rahmatullah, "Menakar Hermeneutika Fusion of Horizons H.G. Gadamer Dalam Pengembangan Tafsir Maqasid Alquran," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Tafsir di Nusantara* 3, no. 2 (2017): 150.

57 Farid Esack, *Quran, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression* (England: Oneworld, 1997), 63.

58 Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (Abingdon [England]; New York: Routledge, 2006), 115.

research which provides a comparative analysis between written tafsir and oral Qur'anic exegesis of Quraish Shihab by using the characteristics of Walter J. Ong's oral theory.⁵⁹ Liqok, has also done research on the oral interpretation of KH. Haris Sodaqoh which also uses Ong's theory.⁶⁰ Next, Yani Yuliani's research on Buya Syakur's oral exegesis on YouTube concluded that Buya Syakur criticized and deconstructed the Islamist interpretation carried out by Sayyid Quthb and then provided a new contextual interpretation offer.⁶¹ This research has similarities with the one carried out by Yani, but has a different side that this research does not only conclude the difference between the oral exegesis and the tafsir book that is read, but until the investigation of the factors that cause the difference.

Based on the analysis conducted by the authors, it can be said that the shifting paradigm in interpretation is closely related to the qualifications and capabilities of the interpreter, the socio-cultural background and changes in audience. Therefore, the authors provide recommendations that, at this time, Muslims must be aware and selective in receiving information containing new interpretation products that are more easily found, along with the advancement of digital media and freedom of speech that is almost without limitations. When receiving information, Muslims need to consider the interpreter's background, where he studied, who his teacher was and in what socio-cultural context the interpretation was born, before finally deciding to accept or reject the interpretation product. This attitude must be taken, because today people need fast information and use online religious content as a way to find solutions for their problems.⁶² People have a wish to deepen their religious knowledge because they can easily access it through online media. In addition, through common trends, people can identify religious figures who can be followed and their explanations can be used as guidelines.⁶³

Conclusion

Based on the explanation and analysis of the data above, the authors conclude

59 HS, "Tafsir Tulis Dan Lisan M. Quraish Shihab Tentang QS. Al-Qalam Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah (Analisis Ciri Kilisanan Aditif Alih-Alih Subordinatif)."

60 Liqok, "Al-Ibriz Dan Tafsir Lisan KH. Haris Sodaqoh."

61 S. Ag Yani Yuliani, "TAFSIR LISAN ONLINE KAJIAN TERHADAP PENGAJIAN TAFSIR AL-QUR'AN BUYA SYAKUR DI YOUTUBE" (masters, UIN SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA, 2022), 101, accessed May 9, 2024, <https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/53532/>.

62 Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, "Pesantren Online: Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan Di Dunia Maya," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 2, no. 2 (November 24, 2019): 185.

63 Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy and Althaf Husein Muzakky, "Dinamika Ngaji Online Dalam Tagar Gus Baha: Studi Living Qur'an Di Media Sosial," *POROS ONIM: Jurnal Sosial Keagamaan* 2, no. 1 (June 29, 2021): 14.

that there has been a shift in the tafsir paradigm in the reading of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* in Gus Mus's You Tube Channel, at least in two gender issues, namely the issue of polygamy and the issue of women's leadership. If in the issue of polygamy, *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* represents a patriarchal paradigm when interpreting polygamy verses and simply approves the textual message of verse Q.S. al-Maidah 34, then this is not the case with Gus Mus's oral exegesis which tends to disagree with the practice of polygamy today. Because the situation and context are changing, the awareness and sensitivity of gender equality among the society is also getting higher. Gus Mus, has done a critical and contextual reading regarding the issue of polygamy. This cannot be separated from the scientific background and gender discourse that is increasingly strengthened not only among academics, but also pesantren kiai.

This is also with the issue of women's leadership. *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* tends to be exclusive, showing the dominance and superiority of men over women. Meanwhile, Gus Mus's oral exegesis is more inclusive and provides space for women to actualize, including being leaders. Gus Mus presents a more reasonable reading, by explaining the superiority of men and women based on their psychological tendencies. In certain situations men can be superior than women, and in other situations women can do things better than men.

As a critical reflection, the authors would like to argue that the recitation of *Tafsīr al-Ibrīz* in the case of Gus Mus's YouTube Channel is not only to explain the author's message in the tafsir, but also to criticize and produce new meanings in accordance with the context and discourse surrounding the reader of the tafsir. In short, the reading of Gus Mus's tafsir does not only reflect repetitive-reproductive reading, but also critical and productive reading

Supplementary Materials

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank LP3M Universitas Ma'arif Lampung (UMALA) providing financial support for this research

Authors' contributions

All listed authors contributed to this article. M.I. wrote the original draft, reviewed and edited it, and wrote the formal analysis, A.M. compiled the resources, conceptualised the study, and managed the project administration. S.Z.Q 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

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