Literary Discourse on Quranic Studies: A Historical Study on The Model of Literary Interpretation to The Quran

*Wacana Sastra tentang Kajian Al-Qur'an: Kajian Sejarah Model Tafsir Sastra Terhadap Al-Qur'an*

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**Abstract**

This article generally will discuss how the development of the literary approach as an alternative approach in interpreting the Qur'an. Instead of positioning Amin al-Khulli as the pioneer of a model of a literary approach to the Al-Qur'an, even though he came later, this research will argue that long before that, a model of a literary approach to the Al-Qur'an had already been carried out by the Prophet and the companions. Through this paper, the author tries to trace epistemologically how the meeting of the Qur'an and literature became an approach in interpreting the Qur'an. To prove the argument above, this research employee historical approach by presenting the context of the initial contact between the Qur'an and literature tradition on Arabic society at the time while at the same time build an awareness that the Qur'an historically descended within the society which is very closely related to literary traditions and also by looking how the practices of the early interpretations of the Prophet and the Companions became the initial embryo for the birth of a model of literary interpretation to the Qur'an. Furthermore, this article contributes to complementing previous studies regarding styles, models and approaches that emerge on Quranic studies.

**Keywords:** Literary approach, Al-Khulli, Ijaz Lughawi

**Abstrak:**

Artikel ini secara umum akan membahas bagaimana perkembangan pendekatan sastra sebagai pendekatan alternatif dalam menafsirkan al-Qur'an. Alih-alih memposisikan Amin al-Khulli sebagai pelopor model pendekatan sastra terhadap Al-Qur'an, meskipun ia datang belakangan, penelitian ini akan membantah bahwa jauh sebelum itu, model pendekatan sastra terhadap Al-Qur'an sudah lebih dahulu dilakukan oleh Nabi dan para sahabat. Melalui tulisan ini, penulis mencoba menelusuri secara epistemologis bagaimana pertemuan Al-Qur'an dan sastra menjadi sebuah pendekatan dalam menafsirkan Al-Qur'an. Untuk membuktikan argumentasi di atas, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kesejarahan dengan menghadirkan konteks kontak awal antara Al-Qur'an dan tradisi sastra pada masyarakat Arab pada saat itu sekaligus membangun kesadaran bahwa Al-Qur'an secara historis turun dalam masyarakat yang sangat erat kaitannya dengan tradisi sastra dan juga dengan melihat bagaimana praktik-praktik tafsir awal Nabi dan para Sahabat menjadi cikal bakal lahirnya model tafsir sastra Al-Qur'an. Lebih jauh lagi, artikel ini berkontribusi untuk melengkapi kajian-kajian sebelumnya mengenai gaya, model dan pendekatan yang muncul dalam kajian Alquran**.**

**Kata Kunci**: Pendekatan Sastra, Al-Khulli, Ijaz Lughawi

**Introduction**

Interpretation to the Qur’an was seen as the millestones towards the emergence of the practices of Islamic teachings since the era of the prophet until now. The various kinds of laws that we use today were born from the interpretations of the scholars of the Qur'an. During this long period of interpretation of the Qur'an, various methods, styles and principles of interpretation emerged penafsiran (Saeed 2008). If we look from the history of idea the history of interpretation development can be categorized into three processes, namely change, continuity, and diversity (Mustaqim 2008). This shows that interpretation is a product of thought that reflects the context of when and where it was written so that it allows for a process of change, shift and development in accordance with the context and spirit of where and when it was written.

Literary approach (*Tafsir al-Adabi*) is one genre that exists among many approaches in interpreting the Qur'an. One of the figures considered as the pioneer of this approach was Amin al-Khulli who was later followed by his students such as Nasr Hamd Abu Zaid, Muhammad Ahmad Khalafullah, and Aisyah Bint al-Shati. Amin al-Khulli argues that the Qur'an is the largest literary book (*kitab al-arabiyyah al-akbar*) then by positioning it like that, the consequence that arises is that an interpreter must really master on literature to be able to find the meaning of the Qur'an 'an. This approach emerged with the aim of getting the message of the Qur'an as a whole and avoiding individual-ideological pulls (Al-Dzahabi 2012).

When discussing about literary approach to the Qur’an mostly scholar refers to Amin al-Khulli as a focus of discussion. For instance, Setiawan the early work who discuss al-Khulli though about literary interpretation, he purposed al-Khulli’s literary approach to interpret the Qur’an (Mohammad Nur Kholis Setiawan 1998). Then the rest work mostly discusses about the development and the application of al-Khulli's literary approach to interpreting the Qur'an which is discussed elaboratively on these following scholar works (Aminullah 2016), (Ramdhani 2017), (Ghufron 2019). While this article will focus on how literary interpretation appears in the history of Al-Qur'an interpretation traditions. This article argues that the model or practice of literary interpretation of the Qur'an is the earliest approach that emerged on the interpretation tradition. To prove this argument this article will employee historical approach by looking at how the Al-Qur'an relates to the literary traditions of Arab society where the Al-Qur'an was revealed. Then, this article will also see how the prophet, the companion of the prophet, and also tabi'in who are assumed to be people who have met the prophet interpret the Qur'an. This is important in order to seek legitimacy so that the literary approach to the Qur'an is in line with what the Prophet and those who came after him did. The last part of this article will show us towrads the development of literary interpretation in the modern-contemporary era.

**Al-Qur'an Revelation in Literary Arabic**

Before discussing further about literary discourse in the study of the Qur'an, one thing that is important to understand is the awareness that the Qur'an is an Arabic holy book. It is important to say this as an initial discourse of the meeting point between the Qur'an and literature. So far there is no complicated debate about the definition that the Qur'an is the word of God (kalamullah). This has even become a consensus (ijma') among Al-Qur'an scholars. However, in philological-linguistic studies, various responses have emerged regarding the definition of the Qur'an, especially from modern Qur'anic scholars (Watt 1991). These responses at least lead to an idea that tries to place the Qur'an as one of several texts revealed by God addressed to humans far after other books such as the Psalms, Torah, and the Gospels (Ghazali 2009).[[1]](#footnote-1)

This view simply tries to build awareness that the Qur'an is a text that is dialectical with the context in which it was revealed. The consequence of this is that when the Qur'an, which is the language of God, was revealed to humans, then of course it needed a medium so that it could be understood by its audience. Simply put, God's words need to be formulated in human language so that God's message reaches humans, which in this case is Arabic (Wijaya 2009). From this discourse we can see that language accidentally (in terms of revelation) has a function as a medium when God wants to convey his message to humans. However, we do not stop at the function of language as a messenger because this implies that language (in this case Arabic) was only chosen by chance because the audience at that time was Arab society.

There are several arguments why Arabic is the main option as the language of the Qur'an. First, when viewed in terms of complexity. According to Quraish Shihab Arabic is a very complex language. Arabic is also very rich in vocabulary, on the other hand Arabic also has an extraordinary ability to give birth to new meanings from the roots of the words it has (Shihab 2013). Second, politically, language is one of the ways of the Qur'an to influence its audience. For example, the Arab community, which is known to be very close to the tradition of literature and poetry, this is what Hitti said, that there is no nation in this world besides the Arabic society who have an appreciation for language and literature more than the Arabic society at the time (Hitti 2002). Therefore, to make radical changes in Arab lands at that time, language was one of the most powerful mediums to use. The mindset and psychology of the Arabic society which is close to the literary tradition is the entrance for the Al-Qur'an to their space of reasoning and psychology (Lukman 2018). In other words, what was done by the Qur'an at that time was a political strategy to control the growth of discourse through language.

The choice of Arabic as the language of the Qur'an is also a very accurate strategy. Because, the position of Arabic language and literature is very central among pre-Qur'an Arab society. So, the most powerful thing to introduce a new holy book identity was the language and literature which at that time were very close to pre-Qur'an Arab society. This strategy proved to be effective, if we see that only in a relatively short time, namely around 23 Prophet Muhammad succeeded in spreading his influence throughout the Arabian peninsula. In fact, in history, the prophet Muhammad is listed as the first of the hundred most influential figures in the world (Hart 1986). This achievement, of course, cannot be separated from the power of the Qur'an which has historically accompanied the preaching of the prophet at that time.

Al-Qur'an as an Arabic language text also has a very high literary value. This can be seen from the interest of Arab poets at that time who tried to imitate the text of the Qur'an even though their efforts ended in vain. This is because even though the poems made by poets both use Arabic as used in the Al-Qur'an. However, the moral aspects and messages of the words of these poets do not contain the value of benefit for humans as contained in the Qur'an. This is also inseparable from the aspect of the miracles of the Qur'an, the role of miracles is very important in order to support the charisma and attractiveness of a claim of divine authority. If the prophets have always had miracles to support their prophetic claims, then the Qur'an is also claimed to have miracles to support its claim to divinity and its authenticity as a divine revelation. In contrast to the miracles of the previous prophets which were separated from the revelation (text) itself, the miracles of the Al-Qur'an show the truth of himself and the truth of his carrier (The Prophet Muhammad) as manifested textually in the structure of the Qur'an in the form of language and literature (Al-Khulli and Abu Zaid 2004).

The linguistic aspect and the literary heights of the Qur'an are also the main miracle aspects and are the first to be shown by the Qur'an. This can be seen from historical facts where at that time linguists gathered to challenge the literature of the Qur'an. However, none of them managed to rival the literary heights of the Qur'an. Whereas according to historical facts, the period when the Qur'an was revealed was an era when institutions and centers of Arabic literary language were at their golden peak (Qaththan 2009). Mecca at that time was the most appropriate place to hear the poetry of the best Arab poets. In this city, at the *Ukaz* market to be precise, the best poets gather every year to present their epic works in a competition. Poems that are considered special are hung (*Mu'allaqat*) in the Kaaba as a form of appreciation (Mattson 2013). However, facing such a social condition, the Qur'an gently challenges back the poets and linguists who try to make a match for the Qur'an. However, none of them has succeeded in presenting a literary work such as the Qur'an.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The above arguments at least show how the relationship between the Qur'an and literature is like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated from one another, because it cannot be denied that literature is one of the sharp weapons that accompanies the Al-Qur'an when facing Arab society at that time. Awareness of the literary side attached to the Qur'an also raises the interest of commentators to study the Qur'an in depth, not a few of them even make this literary side a separate study in their discussion.

**The Classical Era as the “Embryonic Stage” of the Birth of Literary Interpretation**

The term classic that I employee here borrows the classification made by Abdul Mustaqim in his work entitled *Dinamika Sejarah Tafsir Al-Qur’an*. In this work, he divides the period of classical Qur'anic exegesis into four periods, first, the exegesis of the Qur'an during the time of the Prophet, second, the exegesis of the Al-Qur'an during the Companions period, third, the exegesis of the Al-Qur'an during the tabi'in, and fourth, the interpretation of the Qur'an during tabi' tabi'in (Mustaqim 2016). The choice of this classical era is actually one of the historical attempts to find epistemological links regarding the literary interpretation of the Qur'an. This is important in order to seek legitimacy so that the literary approach to the Qur'an is in line with what the Prophet and those who came after him did.

The seeds of literary interpretation of the Qur'an have actually started since the time of the prophet, although the interpretation of the prophet was not highlighted as an early era interpretation by interpretation researchers. However, the Prophet on several occasions actually made interpretations of the Qur'an which were closely related to the disciplines of Arabic literature which appeared later. The exegesis narrations of the Prophet on several occasions are very close to the meaning of the term majaz in the study of Arabic literature. Majāz means expansion of meaning in Arabic terminology (M. Nur Kholis Setiawan 2005).

As evidence, after this we will look at some examples of the Prophet's literary interpretations. The first example, the majāz-scented interpretation of the Prophet is when a companion of the Prophet named Ubay bin Hatim asked about what was meant by surah Q. 2:187 regarding two threads, namely white thread and black thread.

وَكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْاَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِۖ

"Is the thread in question the thread that is known in general?". Then, the Prophet replied: "What is meant by black thread is the darkness of the night and white thread is the light of day" (Muhammad 1992). The transition of meaning from black threads and white threads to the meanings of day and night when seen is a transfer of meaning from the meaning of *haqiqi* to the meaning of *majāzi*.[[3]](#footnote-3) This understanding arose based on the questions posed by Ubay bin Ha>tim. When viewed carefully, Ubay bin Hatim's question above leads to the textual meaning of what is mentioned in Q. 2:187 related to the meaning of the thread.

The second example, when the Prophet interpreted the word al-muhl contained in Q. 30: 8

يَوْمَ تَكُوْنُ السَّمَاۤءُ كَالْمُهْلِۙ

The word *al-muhl* in Arabic has the basic meaning of boiling iron. However, in this case the Prophet interpreted the word al-muhl in the verse with the meaning "Like oil dirt, when Allah brings it closer to the face of the person being punished, the skin of his face falls” (Muhammad 1992). This interpretation also shows how the Prophet created meanings that were difficult for his companions to understand at first into meanings that were very close to those of his companions.

Another example, when the prophet interprets the word quwwah in Q. 8:60

وَاَعِدُّوْا لَهُمْ مَّا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ قُوَّةٍ

The word quwwah is a form of masdhar in Arabic which means strength or ability. When interpreting the word quwwah the Prophet expanded the meaning so that the resulting meaning is contextual. The Prophet interpreted the word quwwah to mean archery. This is done so that the meaning of quwwah which is the power to fight the enemy can continue to develop according to conditions and situations (Mustaqim 2016).

The fourth example is when interpreting the word zhulmun contained in surah Q. 6:82

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوْٓا اِيْمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ

This stems from the question of one of the companions to the Prophet. The friend assumes that it is very difficult for someone to prevent himself from committing injustice, no matter how small the act is. The Prophet then replied that what is meant by unjust in the context of this verse is shirk. This is as in Q. 31:13 *inna al-syirka la zhulmun azhim* (shirk is a great injustice) (Muhammad 1992). If seen from this third example, the words *zhulmun* and *syirkun* semantically actually have no relationship, both in terms of basic and relational meanings. However, in the case of this verse, the Prophet's interpretation does not take into account the basic or relational meaning at all, especially the textual meaning of the verse. In interpreting this verse the Prophet considered other factors such *al-siyāq al-kalam* or the context of the conversation, by looking at the context or the sentence before or after which the verse is talking about.

Although not too many of the Prophet's interpretations show a literary model of interpretation, in the sense of interpretations that cross lexical boundaries. At least, the literary interpretations of the Prophet as described above become a historical legitimacy. So that the Prophet can be appointed as the embryonic stage of the literary interpretation of the Qur'an. In other words, what the Prophet did became the basis for later commentators to be more flexible when developing the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an, especially those verses that are difficult to understand, because the aim of literature is not only to beautify but also to make reading easier for the reader.

After the death of the Prophet, the process of developing the meaning of the Qur'an was continued by the Prophet's companions. This is because the demands of reality are constantly evolving and questions about the law and verses of the Qur'an are also being questioned by the Companions, meanwhile there is a vacuum of authoritative reference to the interpretation of the Qur'an after the death of the Prophet. At that time, not many of the companions interpreted the Qur'an, instead developing the meaning of the Prophet's interpretations. This is because even though the companions had time with the Prophet and saw firsthand how the Prophet interpreted the Qur'an. However, the fact is that they have different abilities in understanding the Qur'an (Al-Dzahabi 2012).

One of the companions of the Prophet who played a major role in developing the interpretation was Abdullah bin Abbas (d.68/687). Ibn Abbas is known as one of the friends who is an expert in the field of interpretation of the Qur'an. In fact, because of the depth of his knowledge he was given the title Tarjuman Al-Qur'an. This title was given because he was one of those who received a prayer from the Prophet so that he would be given ease in exploring the ocean of meaning of the Qur'an (Al-Suyuthi 1971).[[4]](#footnote-4) In addition, he is also one of the foundational figures of the science of interpretation. Therefore, the works of commentary that emerged afterwards cannot be separated from the innovation and creativity of Ibn Abbas.

As an expert in the world of exegesis, Ibn Abbas certainly plays an active role in developing the meaning of the Qur'an. This can be seen from the many traditions of interpretation based on Ibn Abbas and not a few of these narrations which show the model of literary interpretation of the Qur'an. These interpretations with a literary face arose because Ibn Abbas was also a person who had extensive knowledge of the ins and outs of Arabic and ancient Arabic literature. This can be seen in some of his interpretations which use *Jahili* Arabic poetry’s as a source of searching for meaning. One of the examples of Ibn Abbas using ignorant Arabic poetry in interpreting the Qur'an is when he interpreted Q. 7:33

قُلْ اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَالْاِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

Ibn Abbas interprets the word *al-ism* in the verse with the meaning of *khamr*, that is, something that intoxicates. This is based on a poem that reads:

(و الأثم) الخمر كما قال الشاعر:

شربت الأثم ثم حتى ضل عقلي ... كذا الأثم تذهب با العقول

“I drank khamr until I lost my mind. Thus, khamr causes loss of one's mind." (Mustaqim 2016).

Another example of Ibn Abbas's interpretation which has a literary dimension is when Ibn Abbas interpreted the word *rafas* in Q. 2:187

اُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ اِلٰى نِسَاۤىِٕكُمْ ۗ

The word *rafas* in this verse lexically means to touch. However, if one pays attention to the context of the discussion of the verse, the word *rafas* in the verse is more precisely interpreted as *mubasyarah* which means to have sexual intercourse (M. Nur Kholis Setiawan 2005). If we pay attention to the interpretation by Ibn Abbas of the word *rafas* in the verse, it is an example of an example form which in Arabic literature is called *kinayah* (Shihab 2013).[[5]](#footnote-5)

The farther from the Prophet's era, the more difficult the level of difficulty in understanding the Qur'an is. Moreover, the interpretation of the Prophet and his companions did not cover all the verses of the Qur'an and only interpreted parts that were difficult for those who were with them to understand. This makes the following generation, namely, the tabi'in generation feel the need to continue the process of interpreting the Qur'an based on their knowledge of Arabic and what they have learned from their teachers. In addition, the verses of the Qur'an at this time were also often monopolized by certain groups in the context of theological political interests. Therefore, the activities of the Al-Qur'an cultivators at this time were rather difficult to separate from theological debates. Linking interpretation with theological interests requires efforts to understand the Qur'an through a language perspective.

One of Ibn Abbas' students from the tabi'in circle who continued this model of literary interpretation was Mujahid ibn Jabbar (d. 104/722). This can be seen when he interprets several verses of the Qur'an, for example when interpreting Q. 2:65

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِى السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُوْنُوْا قِرَدَةً خٰسِـِٕيْنَ

When reading this verse, Mujahid paid attention to the phrase "*kunu qiradatan khasyi'in*". According to the phrase "Be you lowly monkey!" in this verse does not mean that they are physically transformed into monkeys, but what changes is only their character and nature. The argument used by Mujahid is that the verse is a form of imagery or simile used by the Qur'an to describe something. Things like this are very common and are used several times in the Qur'an when they want to describe something (Mujahid 1989).

Another example is Mujahid's interpretation of Q. 18:34

وَّكَانَ لَهٗ ثَمَرٌۚ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهٖ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَنَا۠ اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا

The word *samar* which means the basis of the fruit, in this verse is interpreted differently by Mujahid. He defines the word with gold and silver. If you look at it, there is no semantic relationship between gold and fruit, because these two words have their own meaning, both denotatively and connotatively. In the context of this verse, Mujahid makes a shift in meaning from a basic meaning to a relational meaning based on the context of the entire discussion of the verse. Mujahid's change of meaning to the vocabulary in the verse shows the importance of context and consideration of the locality of a text (M. Nur Kholis Setiawan 2005).

Apart from Mujahid, a figure who also emerged from the tabi'in circle was Qatadah (d.117/735). Qatadah is also one of those who helped develop a literary interpretation of the Qur'an. He was also a student of Ibn Abbas who lived in the same generation as Mujahid. Its popularity in the world of interpretation also cannot be doubted. His ideas went far beyond those before him, one could say he was one of the early figures who acknowledged *al-wahdah al-maudhu'iyah fi al-Qur'an*, namely the principle of the unity of the themes of the Qur'an (M. Nur Kholis Setiawan 2005). One of the indicators is when he interprets Q. 28:46

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ

This verse, according to Qatadah, is in line with the desired meaning in the context of the discussion of verse 44 in the same surah which reads:

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ

Seeing the various models of interpretation above shows that the activity of experts and scholars of the Qur'an in the first and second centuries of the Hijri marked a significant development in the interpretation of Al-Qur'an literature. In fact, if sorted further, there are still very many figures who have developed the interpretation of the Qur'an. However, one thing that needs to be realized is that the development of literary interpretation of the Qur'an has developed since the time of the Prophet even to the present day. However, of course there are significant differences when compared from time to time. The thing that is very striking from the classical era is that the use of the literary method itself has not been realized because there is no literary discipline. Therefore, this era is referred to as the embryonic stage because the methods of literary interpretation that appeared later were inspired by what the interpreters did in this era.

**The Modern Age: New Directions of Literary Interpretation**

In several important works that examine the development of literature in the study of the Qur'an in the modern era, mostly positions Amin al-Khulli as a key figure who drives this approach seriously. This seriousness of al-Khulli is proven by his offer to interpret the Qur'an with a literary and linguistic approach with the aim of getting the message of the Qur'an as a whole and avoiding individual-ideological pulls. Basically, al-Khulli's ideas are very closely related to the reforms carried out by Muhammad Abduh. In fact, it could be said that Abduh was a major figure who initiated a new direction in literary studies in the study of the Qur'an. This started from Abduh's anxiety about the products of previous interpretations which were very fixated on grammatical debates, moreover the products of interpretation which were closely related to political interests, ideology, scientific evidence, and so on. It ignores that actually the Qur'an is a book of guidance *al-kitab al-hidayah* (Al-Dzahabi 2012, 1:).

Abduh argues that the most important function of interpretation is to realize the predicate of the Qur'an as a book of guidance (*al-kitab al-hidayah*) and explain its wisdom in the fields of faith, morality and law in a pattern that is attractive and motivating to do good deeds (Ramdhani 2011). This is the basis for the emergence of the *adabi-ijtima'i* approach to the Qur'an which is oriented towards cultural and social literature, or also known as socio-cultural interpretation (Tanjung 2014). The emergence of this model of interpretation indicates that the spirit of the Qur'an must also reach the wider community in a practical and easy-to-understand manner, not only for certain circles.

This is what built Amin al-Khulli's awareness to go further. He commented on Abduh by stating that realizing the predicate of the Qur'an as a book of guidance is indeed very important, because that is the main function of the Qur'an. However, before going there, according to al-Khulli, the thing that needs to be realized is that the Koran is the largest Arabic holy book. Therefore, one must first really understand the tools of Arabic language so that one can explore the guidance itself and placing guidance as a top priority without paying attention to the proper tools to obtain this guidance is naivete (Ramdhani 2017).

According to al-Khulli there is a big goal that must be achieved first, this goal is an upstream which will later pave the way for the realization of other goals of the Qur'an. The aim is to view the Qur'an as a book of the largest Arabic literature that has a very strong literary influence. A book that perpetuates the Arabic language, protects its existence so that it becomes the pride and jewelery of the *turas* treasury (Ramdhani 2011). The implication of al-Khulli's offer regarding the Qur'an as the largest book of Arabic literature (*kitab al-'arabiyyah al-akbar*) is that the Qur'an must first be considered as a sacred Arabic text. Therefore, in order to understand the Qur'an proportionally, one must really take and understand the literary approach method (*al-manhaj al-adabi*) ) (M. Nur Kholis Setiawan 2005).

Al-Khulli's statement regarding the status of the Qur'an as the largest book of Arabic literature rests on the historical fact that in reality the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. Therefore, the Arabic side of the Qur'an itself is something that must be considered before other things, especially for those who want to study the Qur'an. To achieve this, al-Khulli does not only stop at the discourse stage of *kitab al-'arabiyyah al-akbar*, he also offers a new methodology in studying the Qur'an through a literary approach with the aim of getting the message of the Qur'an and as a whole (objective) and avoid very subjective meanings because of certain interests, whether ideological, political, and so on. In this case, he offers two major agendas in the process of interpreting the Qur'an, namely a study that talks about what surrounds the Qur'an (*dirasah ma hawla Al-Qur'an*) and a study of the existing content. in the Qur'an itself (*dirasah ma fi Al-Qur'an*). (Al-Khulli 1961).

At the stage of *dirasah ma hawla Al-Qur'an*, a muffasir must first trace things that are special in nature. This is related to the process of the revelation of the Qur'an, its compilation, and its circulation in Arab society as an object of revelation. This study is quite crucial in the process of interpretation, because this study is a strategic first step to understand the Qur'an with a literary understanding and by not ignoring the conditions surrounding the Qur'an as a navigator in the process of understanding the Qur'an (Al-Khulli 1961). Then move on to general matters that are broader in nature as before, but at this stage the variables seen more broadly include the intellectual, cultural, geographical situation of Arab society in the century when the Qur'an was revealed. If seen from what al-Khulli has to offer regarding the above matter, it seems that he emphasized that in order to produce an objective meaning of the Qur'an it should be understood in the way the first listener understands it (Jansen 1997).

While the study of the dira>sah ma fi Al-Qur'an aspect itself is as the name suggests, the stages carried out are more related to the internal elements that exist in the content of the Al-Qur'an. In this case a commentator has to trace the development of the meaning and significance of certain words from the Qur'an in its singular form. Then, the nuances of the meaning of the word meaning in each generation so that it can be seen the change in meaning in various generations as well as its psychological social and civilizational influence on the shift in meaning (Yusron 2006). In an effort to understand the meaning of the words in the Qur'an, it is not enough just to look at the etymological meaning, but also to look at the functional meaning of the word. Therefore, after finding the etymological meaning, it is followed by paying attention to the functional meaning of the word by looking at the location and how the word is used in the Qur'an. Then, the next step is to examine the word order (murakabat). As a tool, interpreters can use the help of linguistics and literature such as nahwu, balaghah and the like (Ramdhani 2011).

Apart from considering these two things, Amin al-Khu>lli> also emphasized that the Qur'an through its language puts stress on the human soul, so that the human psychological aspect also influences the method of literary interpretation. He also called for accepting the psychological model of interpretation. According to him, this model of psychological interpretation will help readers to explore the secrets of the movement of the human soul, because the foundation of this psychological interpretation is art which is nothing but explosions of expression of the human soul (Al-Khulli 1961).

A brief description of the framework of Amin al-Khulli's literary method is summarized in the following table.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Dirāsah ma haula Al-Qur’ān* | * Knowledge of asababun nuzul both micro and macro * Knowledge of the codification of the Qur'an, its process of writing, and the diversity of *qiraat* * Knowledge of *Ulumul Qur'an* * Sensitivity to the spirit of the Arabian peninsula that accompanies the revelation of the Qur'an |
| *Dirāsah ma fi Al-Qur’ān* | * Study of the vocabulary of the Qur'an both etymologically, semantically and inductively * Accuracy in the vocabulary of the Qur'an, starting from insights into word derivation, chronological changes in words from when the word was first used until now, and explanations according to the context in which they are composed. * Focus on the meaning and universal values ​​contained in the Qur'an. |
| Sikap terhadap metode lain | * Criticizing the non-grounded orientation of interpretations of verses of the Qur'an, such as debates about the structure of language and scientific aspects. * Incorporating elements of psychological studies into the process of understanding discourse. |

The choice of this sub is entitled "the modern era as a new direction for the study of Al-Qur'an literature" because in this era there has been a hermeneutical awareness of the textuality of the Qur'an as a holy book that was revealed in a certain time and space. Therefore, the literary discourse of the Qur'an in this era does not only stop at how the interpreters understand and interpret the features of the language used in the Qur'an. However, more than that the things that are aimed at are about how to produce meaning by letting the Qur'an speak about itself by paying attention to two aspects, namely dirāsah ma fi Al-Qur'ān and dirāsah ma haula Al-Qur'ān as stated offered by al-Khulli.

Another striking thing is that in this era the Qur'an was positioned as a text or what al-Khulli called kitāb al-arabiyyah al-akbar. The determination of the Qur'an as a text is also an inevitability of the implications of al-Khulli's literary method which demands a study of the dirāsah ma haula Al-Qur'ān on the basis of the awareness that the Qur'an was not revealed in a vacuum, but to the people of the Arabian Peninsula for a certain period of time and use the medium of the local language. Therefore, it is very possible that the Al-Qur'an was more or less influenced and even influenced the cultural, social, and social systems in which it was sent down.

**Conclusion**

This paper at least provides information related to how the literary approach can be an alternative used to gain the broad meaning of the Qur'an. At least language is the main entry point for a commentator when trying to interpret the Qur'an. As the author has alluded to in the first sub-chapter in this paper. The discussion in the first sub-chapter tries to raise awareness among Al-Qur'an readers regarding the issues faced by the Al-Qur'an in the process of its decline, one of which is the linguistic and literary aspects which were thick in Arab society at that time became the door for the emergence of the miracle of language ('ijaz lughawi) which is the first miracle shown by the Qur'an. This is also presented by the author as an epistemological link why the language approach is used in the process of interpretation.

The discussion above also shows how the practices of interpretation by the prophet and his companions tried to elaborate the words in the Qur'an into broader and contextual meanings through language and literature in order to provide meanings that were contextual and easily understood by the audience. Because basically the main principle of literature besides beautification is to make it easier for readers to understand the contents of the reading. These practices later became an epistemological reference for later interpreters in interpreting the Qur'an with a literary approach, including Amin al-Khulli with his offer regarding a new direction of literary interpretation of the Qur'an.

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1. The emergence of this response was influenced by the nickname that the Qur'an gave itself as "al-Kita>b". This can be found in several surahs of the Qur'an, for example QS. Ṣad: 29, QS. Al-A'raf: 7, Al-Baqarah: 2 and in several places at the beginning of other letters. The consequence of this is that indirectly the Qur'an is confident enough to call itself a book as it is called for previous books such as the Torah and the Bible. Further explanation about this can be read in the article Abd Moqsith Ghazali, *Metodologi Studi Al-Qur’an*, Jakarta: Gramedia, 2009, hlm 46. dan juga Fadhli Lukman, *Menyingkap Jati Diri Al-Qur’an*, Yogyakarta: Bening Pustaka, 2018, hlm 98 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Qur'an gives challenges gradually to its challengers at times. This is recorded in several fragments of the surah, where at first the Qur'an gives a challenge to anyone who is able to make the Al-Qur'an a match for QS. At-Ṭur: 34, and after seeing the incompetence of its challengers at that time, the Qur'an began to lower its challenges which originally required linguists and poets to bring for example the Al-Qur'an to only 10 surahs. This is as described in QS. Hud: 13. Even the Al-Qur'an lowered its challenge to the poets at that time to present just one surah like the Al-Qur'an as recorded in QS. Al-Baqarah: 23. However, they are still unable to present the example of the Qur'an even one verse. Finally, the Qur'an issues an ultimatum that no one is able to present a single verse like that. Even if humans cooperate with jinn, even though this will never materialize, QS. Al-Isra: 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. What is meant by *haqiqat* in the study of balaghah is الحقيقة هي اسم لكل لفظ اريد به ما وضع له (Haqiqah is an ism for every lafaz whose true meaning is wanted)). While *majaz* means المجاز هو استعمل اللفظ في غير المعني الموضوع له (Majaz is a lafaz that is used for another meaning which is not the true meaning) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In the book al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an mentioned several narrations of the Prophet's prayers addressed to Ibn Abbas. The first account of the prayer is اللهم فقهه في الدين وعلمه التأويل, the second narration says that when praying for Ibn Abbas, the Prophet prayed with اللهم آته الحكمة and another narration is اللهم علمه الحكمة. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kinayah (كناية) is to determine one meaning, without mentioning the lafazh used for that meaning, but mentioning other words/sentences while giving an indicator of the meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)