Interpretation of Hermeneutics and Religious Normativity: Hermeneutic Approach in Scientific Studies in the Islamic World

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ABSTRACT

The clergy has long used the method of hermeneutics in the 17th century to interpret classical texts in meaning. Because of this, in the study of scientific knowledge, Islam tries to use hermeneutical interpretations to find a definition that can be understood easily by humans. So the need to research the above issues to find formulations and hermeneutic methods in Islamic scholarship that not only consists of the holy book of the Qur'an and al-Hadith as authentic texts but also thoughts, culture, fiqh, theology and fields of science others in Islam. This research method is a study with a type of literature study (literature study) with a philosophical-historical approach — data collection techniques with documentation techniques. The results of the survey show that Muslim scholars such as Amin Abdullah try to use the hermeneutic method in Islamic studies to produce scientific assumptions in Islamic studies in the following subjects: First, the nature of knowledge summarized in various studies is not fixed and static, but dynamic. Second, the thinking carried out by the scholars' is the result of the interaction between the text (al-Qur`an and Sunnah) and the social context that surrounds it. Third, full emphasis on the empirical-critical paradigm for conducting religious reviews, including thoughts about the sacredness of the text itself, and the results of that thought is not fixed but always changing.

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning, hermeneutics used by religious circles. Seeing that hermeneutics can present meaning in classical texts, the 17th-century church circles applied hermeneutical studies to uncover the meaning of the Gospel text. When they found difficulties in understanding the language and message of the scriptures, they concluded that the problems would help the solution by hermeneutics. Therefore in this position hermeneutics is considered a method for understanding the text of the scriptures. This fact referred to as the first step in the growth of hermeneutics is the interpretation movement at the beginning of its development (Sibawaihi, 2007).

Hermeneutics can be loosely defined as a theory or philosophy of interpretation of meanings. Recently hermeneutics has emerged as an essential topic in the philosophy of social science, philosophy of art and language, and in literary criticism, though its modern origins date back to the beginning of the 19th century.

As an interpretation methodology, hermeneutics is not only a single form but consists of various models and variants. There are three forms or models of hermeneutics. *First,* objective hermeneutics developed by classical figures such as Friedrick Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhelm Dithley (1833-1911) and Emilio Betti (1890-1968) (Rahman, 1985). This first model interpreting interpretation is understanding the text as followed by the author because what is called the text is the expression of the soul of the author as Schleiermacher argues (Bleicher, 1980). S*econd*, subjective hermeneutics developed by modern figures, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900) and Jacques Derida (1930) (Rahman, 1985). The second model states that hermeneutics is not an attempt to find an objective meaning but to understand what is contained in the text itself (Bertens, 1981). T*hird*, liberation hermeneutics developed by contemporary Muslim figures such as Hasan Hanafi (1935) and Farid Esack (1959). This hermeneutics does not only mean the science of interpretation or method of understanding, but more than that is action (Hanafi, 2003).

Some theories of hermeneutics that experience development in the West, especially the *productive hermeneutics* of Gadamer's philosophy (Volmer, 1992), the reality has made a significant contribution and opened up new discourses in reading the sacred text. This method has inspired contemporary Muslim scholars such as Arkoun, Hasan Hanafi, Farid Esack, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid in interpreting the Qur'an (Yoyo, Shri, Putra, Fadlil Munawar, & Siti Muti'ah, 2012).

As an approach, lately, hermeneutics has been increasingly loved by academic researchers, literary critics, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, philosophers, and theologians, especially to study, understand and interpret texts, for example, the Gospel or the Qur'an. Furthermore, Fahruddin Faiz stated that the particular terms used in terms of interpretation activities in Islamic scholarly discourse are Arabic "interpretations" namely *fassara* or *fasara* used technically in the sense of exegesis among Muslims from the 5th century to the present. Whereas Amin Abdullah called a hermeneutic as a *fiqh interpretation of wat ta'wil*. Many philosophers who study hermeneutics include; Schleiermacher, Wihelm Dilthey, Martin Heideger, Gadamer, Jurgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida. But in this study, the author limited the discussion only to hermeneutics as one of the approaches in the study of Islam.

Therefore, before looking further into the study of the hermeneutic approach in Islamic scientific studies, the more systematic focus of this research is to limit the question of a comprehensive description of hermeneutics, the scope of the hermeneutic approach, and a particular study of the hermeneutic strategy in the study of Islamic scholarship. Derived from several formulations of the problem that will

be found the answer in this study, so that the purpose of this research can be formulated is to find the formulation of the hermeneutic approach which used to study and analyze Islamic science.

This type of research is a research study of literature (literature review), which focuses on aspects of the survey through the relevant literature. In this study data collection was carried out by reviewing various kinds of literature, or anywhere with the primary objective of obtaining data and information about the object of research either through books or other visual tools (Semi, 1993). And can also be obtained through magazines, journals, newspapers, various types of reports and documents (both those that have not been and have been published) (Sugiyono, 2006). A literature study was conducted to obtain accurate data following the focus of this study. Various types of literature in the form of print media such as journals and books or other visual media, namely archives, papers, or articles are sources of data that will be used in research.

The selected literature is only following the focus of research or supports the theory in this study. A literature study is beneficial for analysis based on historical, social, and other qualitative investigations as a support for research source data collection. It is because the data is textual and very informative which is very much found through various types of existing literature. As a provider of research data material and other sources of information, books and literature have a central role in the publication of research making it easier for researchers to get the data they need.

The approach used in this study is a philosophical-historical approach. The approach itself has the meaning as an effort in the framework of research activities to establish relationships with the person being studied, or methods to achieve the understanding of the problem under study (Indonesia, 1998). The philosophical approach has four branches of activity, namely logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics (axiological) (Connolly, 2016). Logic is a thought process that guides the formation of an argument. The purpose of metaphysics is in an ontological sense that is talking about the nature of things, whereas epistemology is the way used to obtain knowledge and finally about ethics or axiology related to the value and benefits of something.

Broadly speaking the meaning of the historical approach is the study of various sources that contain information about the past and carried out systematically or describe symptoms but not what happened at the time the research was conducted. Approach to history has the objective to describe everything that has happened in the past (Kartodirjo, 1992). Narrowly the historical approach is intended to review a problem from the point of view of history, and answer the problem and analyze it using historical analysis methods.

The data collection process starts by taking the primary data source. The primary data sources in this study are *Hermeneutics: A Philosophy Method* by E. Sumaryono, and *Theory of New Hermeneutics Regarding Interpretation* by R.E. Palmer. As for secondary data sources, namely the book entitled *Methodology of Islamic Studies: Splash of People's Thoughts in the Grounding of Religion*

which is an essay of H. Baharun, et al., then there is a book entitled *Al-Qur'an Hermeneutics Fazlur Rahman* is the work of Sibawaihi and so on.

Secondary data sources are also obtained through books that are relevant to the title of this research, magazines, journals, newspapers, internet, articles and so on. Data collection techniques of this research were carried out by means of documentation, namely how to collect data through written relics or written objects such as archives, including books, magazines, documents, regulations, minutes of meetings, diaries, and so on (Margono, 2010).

After the data is collected then the data analysis stage is carried out in the form of content analysis. The content analysis attempts to uncover various information behind the data presented in the media or text. Content analysis can be interpreted as a technique of collecting and analyzing the contents of a text (Martono, 2014). Therefore in this case content analysis is used to reveal information in various kinds of literature about the modernization and dynamics process carried out by Muhammadiyah in the field of Islamic education, social, and religious.

DISCUSSION

Definition of Hermeneutic Interpretation in Religious Normativity

Hermeneutics means interpretation. As for etymology, the term *hermeneutics* comes from the Greek *hemeneuin,* which means to interpret. The term refers to a methodological figure in Greek mythology known as Hermes (Mercurius). Among the supporters of hermeneutics, there is a link between Hermes and Prophet Idris (Baharun, 2011). The word *hermeneutics* or *hermeneutics* is Indonesian from the English word *hermeneutics.* This last word comes from the Greek verb *hermeneuo*, which means expressing one's thoughts in words. The verb also means translating and acting as an interpreter (Hardiman, 2012).

According to Jane Dammen Mc Auliffe quoted by Saladin Kafrawi and Abdul Mustaqim etymologically the word hermeneutics comes from the Greek *hermeneuin* which means to explain, interpret and express (Kafrawi & Mustaqim, 2009). The word hermeneutics comes from the Greek *hermeneuein*, which means to interpret. Then the hermeneutical noun can be interpreted as interpretation or interpretation (Sumaryono, 2000). The use of understanding words is often found in the practice of Indonesian conversation in various fields and material of a discussion. Not many people realize that the word "interpreting" represents the meaning of hermeneutics.

Other sources say that in Greek mythology, the word hermeneutics refers to Hermes, a messenger of God who served to explain (interpret) to humans about God's commands from the sky. In other words, the task of Hermes is to become the mouthpiece of God to bridge the world of heaven and the human earth. From this, it is clear that the hermeneutic problem is how to explain and translate past texts into the present context (Kafrawi & Mustaqim, 2009).

Whereas according to E. Sumaryono, the term hermeneutics from the Greek language is reminiscent of a mythological figure named Hermes, namely an emissary who must convey Jupiter's message to Humans. Hermes is depicted as someone who has winged legs and more stems known as Mercurius in Latin. Hermes's job was to translate the messages from the god on Mount Olympus into a language that was understood to be human. Therefore, the function of Hermes is essential because if there is a mistake about the message of the gods, the consequences will be fatal for all humans. Hermes should be able to interpret or retell a message to the language in use by hearing. From that moment, Hermes became a symbol of an ambassador who was burdened with a particular mission. The success or failure of the task depends entirely on how the message was delivered. Therefore, a Hermeneutic is ultimately interpreted as a process of changing something or a situation of ignorance to understanding. This general limitation is always considered right, both hermeneutic in the classical view and the modern view (Sumaryono, 2000).

Then the same thing was also described by several opinions which stated, in Greek mythology, Hermes was known as the god in charge of conveying the messages of god to humans. From Greek tradition, hermeneutics developed as a biblical interpretation methodology, which was later developed by theologians and philosophers in the West as a method of interpretation in general in the social sciences and humanities (Baharun, 2011). According to Adian Husaini, what is called hermeneutics is a methodology used as a means of interpretation of the Biblical (Old and New Testament) texts that developed from the Greek tradition (Husaini, 2007).

Apart from various variants, the hermeneutic approach is a way of understanding the sacred text messages to know the true meaning of the message, and how it relates to the context in which the text then interpreted by humans. If the sacred text is the word of God, then how can the word that is still in the divine language be understood correctly and more operationally by humans today. It is the task of the hermeneutic approach, which is to interpret the text from God's language into human language because it assumed that God's word is different from human language. If God's speech is abstract and conceptual, human language is concrete and applicable. If the scriptures contain very universal concepts, then the task of this method is to operationalize it so that it becomes particular in its understanding.

Therefore, in applying the hermeneutic approach a researcher needs to understand the three variables that are the conditions of interpretation. First, the variable of the author (God who speaks); second, the reader variable (human as reader); and third, the historical context variable (the condition when the word was revealed). Understanding these three variables to find out the actual content of the message and how the message is then interpreted in the context of the reader.

Hermeneutic Function

According to its purpose, hermeneutics can be understood to be six things, namely *first*, the interpretation theory of the scriptures, in this case, the Bible (Palmer, 2005). The Bible is a book or a Gospel (al-Barry & Partanto, 2001). In the Bible this is very important to use, because the writers of the Old or new, are written anonymously or anonymously (al-Barry & Partanto, 2001) (the exact name of the author is not known, unless only believed to be written by the Prophets), and the purpose of the submission can be more explained through hermeneutic methodology.

In this case, hermeneutics is more functioned as a means of interpretation of a theoretical text. A text that is believed to originate from the Prophet's writings needs to be reinterpreted so that it can be better understood by people who believe in it. Hermeneutics tries to explain the message that the scriptures carry so that their substance can be conveyed to humans so that they can understand and understand the content of the teachings contained in the Gospel in a style that is more appropriate from the point of view of an ordinary human being. Precisely with the existence of hermeneutics positioned as an interpretation theory in any book, it will be easier for a human being to be able to retrieve the text messages brought by the book so that it is more in place as a text manuscript that can be understood by humans;

Second, hermeneutics as a general philological methodology (Palmer, 2005). While philology itself is the study of the culture and spirituality of a nation by examining literary works (or other written sources) (al-Barry & Partanto, 2001). Hermeneutics becomes more functional when it becomes a study to study various literary works even though hermeneutics itself cannot escape from a literary work.

Third, hermeneutics is the science of all language understanding (the science of all linguistic understanding) (Endraswara, 2009). If it is understood more deeply, hermeneutics is a part of linguistics in general. But hermeneutics positions itself more to find the meaning or message behind the existence of a linguistic text, and with that capacity, it seems that hermeneutics becomes a discipline that can stand alone with its function to find the most profound meaning.

Linguistic knowledge generally oriented between people who speak using that language and the person they are talking. But for hermeneutics, it focuses more on exploring the meaning and message of the Creator of the text to be contextualized to humankind. In this sense that hermeneutics tends to make the text in a position as something that can be known by humans in general.

Fourth, hermeneutics as the methodological foundation of the human sciences. That is a methodology to understand the purpose of other people's life experiences. It is commonly done in anthropology today which prioritizes participatory approaches (Palmer, 2005). The flow of discussion like this hermeneutics is nothing more than linguistic knowledge even hermeneutics can be understood as the parent of various disciplines because it can functionally be applied to multiple disciplines of science. In essence, hermeneutics here is more aimed at taking and obtaining the substance of multiple

sciences about humanity or in other words the hermeneutics serve to make the science of humanity more meaningful and in accordance with human needs.

Fifth, hermeneutics is an existential understanding and phenomenology of existence and of existential understanding. That is the interpretation of the "self that is" concerning real-time and space, which will present direct experience, freedom, authenticity, and subjectivity (Palmer, 2005). The function of hermeneutics is more to explain the existence of the "self that is" so that it can be accepted by something that is outside of it. The presence of hermeneutics means the task of reaffirming the existence of a "self who is" that the "self that is" really exists in its existence so there is no doubt about its existence.

Sixth, hermeneutics is a system of interpretation. Hermeneutics, as a system of interpretation can be applied, both collectively and personally, to understand the meaning contained in myths or symbols (Palmer, 2005). It is the most basic hermeneutical function. Because hermeneutics has a role that is how to restore and contextualize a symbol or also an unknown text of purpose and purpose which is ultimately understood the essence of the symbol or text when the text is brought into different spaces and times. Sometimes when the symbol or text is not brought into a different space and time, things like this will have a broad impact on aspects of human understanding to be incomprehensible as the symbol or text has a purpose to be created and held by the Creator.

Implementation of Hermeneutic Approach in Islamic Studies

Some assumptions in hermeneutics are also applicable to Islamic studies. Here are some reasons. *First,* the text (both written text and the contents of dogma or theology), is seen as a social-cultural resulted from human history. *Second,* the way of understanding the text is no longer focused on a single meaning of truth-seeking, but instead on the view that the purpose of a text is plural, depending on the reader. *Third,* the way to understand the text is no longer separated from the reality of human concrete experience, but rather it becomes unity with real human interests, namely liberation from obstruction. Therefore, it emphasizes on the side of liberality and humanity.

Basically all objects are neutral. Subjects and objects are correlative terms or mutually combine, such as father and son. Someone will be called that because there is another and this relationship is reciprocal. Without a subject, there will be no object. An object becomes an object because of the wisdom of the subject who pays attention to the object. The meaning is given to the object by the subject, according to the subject's perspective. If not, then the object has no meaning (Sumaryono, 2000).

Hursel's opinion quoted by E. Sumaryono stated that objects and meanings never occur simultaneously or together because at first, the object was neutral. Although meaning or meaning appear after an object or object decreases its meaning on the basis of an object situation, everything is the same. From here we see the advantages of hermeneutics (Sumaryono, 2000).

To be able to understand inter pretension, people must first understand or understand. But the situation first understands this is not based on timing, but rather scientific. Because, according to reality, if someone understands he has interpreted and vice versa. There is participation between understanding and making interpretations. Both are not two moments in a process. Understanding and interpretation lead to a hermeneutical circle.

Interpretative activity is a traditional process (having three interconnected aspects). In this process, there is a conflict between the mind directed at the object and the mind of the interpreter itself. The person who does the interpretation must know the message or biases of a text, then he must absorb the contents of the text so that in the beginning the other I now become the interpreter himself. Therefore, we can see that believing in earnest only going to grow when it is based on knowledge of the (correct). Meaning we will not know if there is no construction record (Sumaryono, 2000).

Hermeneutics asserts that human beings are always seen in the context of space and time where humans themselves experience or experience it. To understand *das sein*, we cannot escape from the context, because if we are outside the context we will see only artificial people who are official or only man-made. Authentic humans can only be grasped or understood in space and time are exactly right where he is. In other words, each individual is always in a situation and is only truly understood in the situation (Sumaryono, 2000).

If further elaboration of the argument about hermeneutics goes to a broader scope, we will find that each object appears in the same context of time and space, or as Karl Jaspers calls the term *das Umgreifende* or horizon of space and time. No object is in an isolated state, each object is in space. There is always a frame of reference, dimensions, something boundary, real or false, all of which give special characteristics to objects.

We must return to the original experience of the writers (text) with the intention of finding the key meaning of words or expressions. We express ourselves through everyday language. But often we can also doubt ourselves whether the mental experiences or thoughts behind the language really have been convincingly revealed. Holy texts or manuscripts or other documents are written based on divine inspiration, history, law, or even literature as if in the above circumstances also use everyday language. However, all these things will not be able to understand without being interpreted. We cannot explain the contents of a text using the language we use ourselves. There are always several interpretations based on various spaces and times. But these interpretations have been modified according to the flow of time (Sumaryono, 2000). Although hermeneutics or interpretations contained in literature and linguistics, law, history, religion, and other disciplines related to the text, the root is philosophy.

The Pioneers of Muslim scholars on Hermeneutics

In hermeneutics developed by Amin Abdullah, he based on a number of scientific assumptions (epistemology), among them the *first, the* nature of knowledge summarized in various studies not fixed and static, but dynamic, always changing and developing in accordance with the times (Abdullah, 1996); *second,* thoughts carried out by the scholars', is the result of the interaction between text (al-Qur`an and Sunnah) and their surrounding social context. So that religious thought (theology) cannot be separated by historical factors (Abdullah, 1996).

Then *third,* full emphasis on the empirical-critical paradigm for conducting religious reviews, including thoughts about the sacredness of the text itself, and the results of that thought is not fixed but always changing. Therefore the interpretation is not deductive or legal formulation based on or focus on statements (Abdullah, 1996). Amin Abdullah presented his idea as an ideal curriculum that would be used by all Islamic Universities in Indonesia.

Another modern Muslim thinker using hermeneutics as an interpretation methodology is Abdullah Saeed. Although the thought of the Qur'anic hermeneutics Abdullah Saeed focuses more specifically on the ethical-legal verses. Saeed considers these verses are often interpreted literally and ignores the context of both revelation and interpretation. The theoretical foundation that Abdullah Saeed formulated for his contextual interpretation is *first,* the connection between revelation and the socio-historical context that surrounds it. It shows that revelation must be understood in the socio-historical context.

Second, the phenomenon of flexibility in how to read the Qur'an and change the law following new situations and conditions (*naskh*) which shows that the Qur'an, from the beginning of its revelation, has actively engaged in the first audience. This phenomenon inspires the same thing for the next period; *thirdly,* the condition of the Qur'an which internally (theological verses, stories, and parables) cannot be understood with a textual approach.

In carrying out the interpretation, Abdullah Saeed's contextual hermeneutics takes into account epistemological principles, namely *, first,* recognizing the complexity of meaning; *second,* pay attention to the socio-historical context of interpretation. Because the Qur`an participates in and communicates with the socio-historical context in its time, it must be an inseparable part of interpretation; *third,* formulate a hierarchy of values for ethical-legal verses to determine which changes and what remains.

Furthermore, the principles translated by Saeed into the four stages of his interpretive framework, including the *first,* meet the world of text; *second,* conduct critical analysis; *third,* find the meaning of the text for the first recipient; *fourth,* determine the meaning and application of text for the present.

CONCLUSION

Basically the terminology of a hermeneutic approach is a way of understanding sacred text messages to find out the true meaning of the message, and how it relates to the context in which the text is then understood by humans.

If correlated to the study of Islam, the hermeneutic approach in Islamic studies can be grouped into four types of functions. *First,* hermeneutics is interpretation theory of the scriptures and the texts (both the Qur`an and Hadith). *Second,* hermeneutics is as a general philology methodology; it related to the study of culture, especially Muslims culture that cannot be separated from the roles of various texts that have ever existed before. *Third,* hermeneutics is the science of all understanding of the language. That is, especially the languages in multiple texts which are used as references for Muslims. *Fourth,* hermeneutics as a system of interpretation.

In the study of Islam, hermeneutics focused on the interpretations of God's messages formulated in the whole series of Islamic teachings in general. Thus, with this hermeneutic approach, it is hoped that there will be no more confusion in understanding Islamic doctrines.

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