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Epistemological Analysis and Pedagogical Challenges of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* Instruction at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif Aceh Besar

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Abstract: This study investigates the epistemological structure and pedagogical challenges of tafsīr instruction at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif, Aceh Besar. The research addresses the problem of epistemic limitation resulting from the exclusive reliance on Tafsīr al-Jalālayn and its commentary, Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī, within the tafsīr curriculum of the dayah. This study specifically asks how the use of a single authoritative text influences students' interpretive competence and the formation of contemporary mufassirīn in the context of modern Qur'anic studies. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with seven purposively selected informants consisting of dayah leaders, teachers, and students. The findings reveal that traditional pedagogical methods such as talaqqī and tikrār strengthen sanad-based knowledge transmission and preserve traditional scholarly authority. However, the exclusive dependence on a single tafsīr text limits students' comparative hermeneutical perspectives, restricts methodological exploration, and contributes to the restriction of interpretive agency. The study further identifies limited instructional time, restricted access to broader references, and the absence of independent instruction in 'ulūm al-tafsīr as significant obstacles in developing critical interpretive competence. This study concludes that curriculum reconstruction through the integration of comparative tafsīr studies and broader access to scholarly resources is necessary to balance the preservation of traditional Islamic scholarship with the demands of contemporary analytical and contextual Qur'anic interpretation.

Keywords: *Dayah; Pedagogy; Tafsīr al-Jalālayn; Qur'anic studies*

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Introduction

The dialectical relationship between the Qur'anic text and human reality has produced a rich intellectual tradition of interpretation throughout Islamic civilization.[1] As a revelation regarded as *ṣāliḥ li kulli zamān wa makān* (relevant across time and place), the Qur'an requires continuous hermeneutical engagement to ensure that its messages remain understandable and applicable within diverse socio-cultural contexts, particularly

[1] Hilmi Ridho et al., "Interpretation of the Qur'an from Classical-Textual to Contemporary-Contextual; An Approach Proposed by Muslim Scholars," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 4, no. 2 (October 2025): 645–74, https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v4i2.12593.

among non-Arab (*'ajamī*) Muslim communities.[2] In contemporary Islamic Studies discourse, this process is no longer viewed merely as a linguistic activity, but rather as a broader phenomenon of transmission of knowledge involving scholarly authority, interpretive traditions, and educational institutions.[3] The development of Qur'anic interpretation, ranging from *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr to tafsīr bi al-ra'y*, reflects the dynamic negotiation of religious authority through both textual interpretation and pedagogical practice.[4]

In Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, the transmission of Qur'anic knowledge possesses distinctive characteristics shaped by linguistic, cultural, and educational transformations.[5] Aceh, often regarded as one of the earliest epistemic centers of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world, played a significant role in the formation of tafsīr literacy within the region.[6] Studies on sixteenth-century Islamic manuscripts indicate that interpretive activities had emerged during the era of Hamzah al-Fansuri and Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani, before reaching a more systematic form through the monumental work of Abdur Rauf al-Singkili, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, in the seventeenth century.[7] Peter Riddell notes that despite scholarly debates regarding its primary sources whether *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* or *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* the work firmly established Qur'anic exegesis as a central component within the curriculum of traditional Islamic educational institutions in Aceh, commonly known as dayah.[8]

Within the context of traditional Islamic pedagogy, the use of authoritative standard texts (textus receptus) such as *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* by Jalaluddin al-Mahalli and Jalaluddin al-Suyuti represents a widespread phenomenon across the Muslim world. The text has long been considered a foundational manual due to its concise and accessible

[2] Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, "Acceptability of the Quran Translation," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 61, no. 2 (2023): 329–63.

[3] Tita Rostitawati, "Transmisi Ilmu Dalam Tradisi Islam," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5, no. 2 (2017): 61–71, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30603/tjmpi.v5i2.390.

[4] Tia Rahayu, "Relevansi Sumber Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Perspektif Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'tsur, Bi Ar-Ra'yi, Dan Bi Al-Isyari," *Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Al- Qur'an* 5, no. 2 (2024), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37985/hq.v5i2.337.

[5] Klawing Arjuna, "Studi Terjemah Al Quran Kawasan Asia Tenggara," *Asy-Syukriyyah* 24, no. 2 (2023): 120–42, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36769/asy.v24i2.344.

[6] Denys Lombard, *Kerajaan Aceh Zaman Sultan Iskandar Muda, Terj. Winarsih Arifin* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2008).

[7] Meiry Akmara Dhina, "Information Literacy for Santri in Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)" 5, no. 2 (2021): 216–24.

[8] Zainuddin, "Pembelajaran Tafsir Di Dayah Ummul Ayman Samalanga" 6, no. 1 (2021): 37–46, https://doi.org/Prefix 10.22373.

interpretive style (*al-wajīz*).[9] However, contemporary educational discourse increasingly questions the long-term pedagogical implications of relying exclusively on a single interpretive text. Such dependence may limit the development of critical thinking, comparative analysis, and broader hermeneutical perspectives among students.[10] Traditional pedagogical systems often prioritize memorization and textual transmission over analytical deconstruction and interpretive inquiry.[11]

Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif in Aceh Besar represents one of the traditional salaf institutions that continues to preserve *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* as the primary and dominant reference in tafsīr instruction. This phenomenon reflects an academic paradox. On the one hand, the continued use of the text preserves the continuity of scholarly authority, sanad-based transmission, and the intellectual heritage of classical Islamic scholarship. On the other hand, the dominance of a single interpretive framework generates pedagogical and epistemological limitations.[12] The absence of intertextual engagement with other tafsīr works such as *Tafsīr al-Khāzin*, *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, or contemporary interpretive literature risks narrowing students' hermeneutical horizons and limiting their exposure to methodological diversity in Qur'anic interpretation.[13]

In addition, methodological challenges emerge from the limited allocation of instructional time and the insufficient integration between linguistic sciences such as *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, and *balāghah* and practical interpretive exercises.[14] This condition creates a gap between students' mastery of linguistic instruments and their ability to independently construct analytical interpretations of Qur'anic verses.[15] Without adequate comparative engagement and methodological training, the continuity of tafsīr studies within the dayah

[9] Kurdi Fadlal, "Studi Tafsīr Jalālain Di Pesantren Dan Ideologisasi Aswaja," *Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 2, no. 2 (2016): 27–54, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v2i2.57.

[10] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age: Religious Authority and Internal Criticism*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

[11] Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Poznan Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities* 48 (1996).

[12] Bahrul Ulum and Nur Hasan, "Integrasi Metode Hermeneutik Dalam Tafsir Tarbawi: Tantangan Dan Implikasi Dalam Pendekatan Pedagogis Al-Qur'an," *EL-Banat* 14, no. 66 (2024): 116–31.

[13] Muhammad Fauzi, "Intertekstualitas Tafsir: Mengungkap Keterpengaruhan Anwār at-Tanzīl terhadap Al-Kasysyāf dalam Pemaknaan Kata Auliya," *Contemporary Quran* 2, no. 1 (2022): 57–73, https://doi.org/10.14421/cq.v2i1.5687.

[14] Maskur Maskur and Khalid Al Madani, "Microlearning for Teaching Faraid, Balaghah, and Qawaid Fiqhiyyah: A Qualitative Study on Instructional Time Constraints," *EDU-RELIGIA: Jurnal Keagamaan Dan Pembelajarannya* 9, no. 1 (2026): 54–65.

[15] Yuliana Amalia, "Kajian Kitab Tafsir Al-Jalalain Karya Jalaluddin Al-Mahalli Dan Jalaluddin As-Suyuti," *AT-TAKLIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Multidisiplin 5* 5, no. 1 (2025): 45–59.

tradition may experience intellectual stagnation, potentially hindering the emergence of future mufassirīn capable of responding to contemporary social and intellectual challenges.[16]

Unlike previous studies that generally describe tafsīr learning in dayah as a traditional pedagogical practice, this article argues that the restriction of tafsīr references is not merely a curricular limitation but an epistemological mechanism that shapes students' interpretive agency. By examining the exclusive use of Tafsīr al-Jalālayn and Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif, this study contributes to Qur'anic studies by showing how sanad-based authority, textual centralization, and limited access to comparative tafsīr resources produce both preservation and constraint within traditional tafsīr education.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the epistemological structure and pedagogical challenges of tafsīr instruction at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif. Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How does the exclusive reliance on a single authoritative tafsīr, Tafsīr al-Jalālayn and its commentary Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī shape students' interpretive agency at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif? (2) What pedagogical and epistemological consequences follow from this textual restriction for the formation of contemporary mufassirīn? Positioned at the intersection of Qur'anic studies and traditional Islamic pedagogy, this article seeks to address the gap in existing scholarship concerning how the authority of a single interpretive text shapes students' intellectual formation in contemporary Acehnese Islamic education. The discussion focuses not only on technical and institutional obstacles but also on their broader conceptual implications for students' methodological competence and hermeneutical agency in contemporary tafsīr discourse.

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach. Data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with seven purposively selected informants, comprising dayah leaders, tafsīr teachers, and students at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif, Aceh Besar. Data were analyzed through three stages: data condensation, thematic categorization, and interpretive analysis. Interview transcripts and observation notes were first organized based on recurring themes,

[16] A Khumaidi, "Efisiensi Pengajaran Tafsir Al-Qur'an Di Pondok Pesantren Raudlatul Hasaniyah Mojolegi Gading Probolinggo," *Humanistika: Jurnal Keislaman 3* 3, no. 2 (2016).

including textual authority, reference restriction, teacher-student transmission, access to tafsīr literature, and students' interpretive capacity. These themes were then compared with relevant literature on Islamic pedagogy and Qur'anic studies. To strengthen data credibility, the study employed source triangulation by comparing information obtained from dayah leaders, teachers, and students.

Discussion

The Problematics of Tafsīr Book Restriction at Dayah Darul Mu'arrif Aceh Besar

Empirical findings further demonstrate that the restriction of tafsīr literature is strongly connected to the non-formalized structure of the dayah curriculum, causing learning practices to remain deeply rooted in traditional educational patterns. This finding is reflected in the statement of Informant: The curriculum of Dayah Darul Mu'arrif essentially follows the curriculum of Dayah Darussalam Labuhan Haji. This is because the late Abu Muhammad bin Zamzami previously studied there before being asked by the local community to return home and resolve various religious issues. From that point onward, he established this dayah as a place for society to study Islamic knowledge.[17]

This statement indicates that the curriculum was shaped through scholarly sanad and the inheritance of intellectual traditions between teachers rather than through modern bureaucratic standardization. As a result, the texts used in learning activities, including tafsīr literature, tend to be preserved according to the authority of the teungku and the continuity of inherited scholarly manhaj. Accordingly, the restriction of tafsīr literature at Dayah Darul Mu'arrif reflects not only traditional educational patterns but also efforts to maintain intellectual identity, religious stability, and scholarly continuity. Previous studies similarly argue that Acehnese dayah preserve inherited systems and methods of Islamic teaching as a strategy for safeguarding the identity of traditional Islamic educational institutions.[18] This condition demonstrates that curriculum construction within dayah is not merely administrative but also cultural and genealogical within the broader framework of Islamic knowledge transmission.[19]

[17] Tgk Kh, interview by the author, Dayah Darul Mu'arrif, March 12, 2025.

[18] Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution, Miswari Miswari, and Sabaruddin Sabaruddin, "Preserving Identity through Modernity: Dayah Al-Aziziyah and Its Negotiations with Modernity in Aceh," *Hayula: Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2019): 211–32.

[19] Rostitawati, "Transmisi Ilmu Dalam Tradisi Islam."

The development of dayah institutions in Aceh has produced various educational models; however, traditional dayah continue to maintain learning systems based on scholarly transmission and the use of inherited classical Islamic texts. This condition illustrates a strong relationship between dayah educational traditions and pedagogical practices oriented toward maintaining sanad continuity and scholarly authority. Within this framework, the preservation of certain tafsīr books functions as part of an effort to safeguard the intellectual manhaj inherited from previous generations.[20]

From an epistemological perspective, restricting learning to a single authoritative text may be understood as a form of textual centralization within traditional educational systems. From an epistemological perspective, restricting learning to a single authoritative text reflects a regime of epistemic authority,[21] reinforced by patterns of epistemic dependence. Moreover, the legitimacy of this restriction is reinforced through normative values such as respect for teachers (*adab*) and the pursuit of blessing (*barakah*), both of which are closely associated with obedience to scholarly sanad.[22]

The relationship between scholarly authority structures and literary restriction demonstrates a significant correlation between linear models of knowledge transmission and the limited epistemic agency of santri. In this context, students are primarily directed to reproduce established interpretations rather than independently construct meaning. Such a pattern suggests that pedagogical systems grounded in singular authority tend to generate reproductive learning orientations.[23] In practice, tafsīr learning at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif is dominated by a linguistic approach to Qur'anic interpretation. This tendency is particularly visible in the interpretation of Q.S. Yūsuf [12]:24:

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهٖ ۚ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّاٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهٖ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوْۤءَ وَالْفَحْشَاۤءَ ۗ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ

In *Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī 'alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, the verse is interpreted as follows:

[20] Firdaus M Yunus, "Pergeseran Pola Belajar Santri Dayah Di Aceh, Indonesia.," *DAYAH: Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 1 (2021).

[21] Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Epistemic Authority: A Theory of Trust, Authority, and Autonomy in Belief* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

[22] Sofiah Harahap and Nur Jannah Pohan, "Tantangan Dan Peluang Pendidikan Islam Dalam Konteks Modern" 02, no. June (2025), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15769636.

[23] Tgk Sy, Menteri Pendidikan Dayah Darul Mu'arrif, interview by Farhan Rahmadi, Aceh Besar, December 24, 2024.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ قَصَدَتْ مِنْهُ الْجِمَاعَ وَهَمَّ بِهَا قَصَدَ ذَلِكَ لَوْلَا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ... وَجَوَابُ لَوْلَا لَجَامَعَهَا

This interpretation explains that the phrase هَمَّ بِهَا refers to Prophet Yusuf's inclination toward the woman, while the jawab of لَوْلَا is interpreted as لَجَامَعَهَا (*he would have approached her sexually*) had he not witnessed the sign of his Lord.[24] However, in classroom practice, this interpretation is not understood literally. Instead, it is reconstructed through a grammatical approach to preserve the doctrine of prophetic infallibility ('*iṣmah*). Students are directed to understand that the jawab of لَوْلَا may precede its conditional clause, thereby indicating merely a hypothetical inclination that was never actualized.

Methodologically, this linguistic approach provides substantial depth in analyzing Qur'anic grammatical structures. Nevertheless, the dominance of a single interpretive approach may contribute to a tendency toward mimetic interpretation, namely the tendency to imitate pre-existing interpretive constructions without engaging in critical elaboration. In this context, linguistic sciences function less as exploratory analytical tools and more as instruments for legitimizing classical tafsīr authority. It should be noted, however, that this reading rests on classroom observation and a limited set of informant accounts; it therefore indicates an interpretive tendency rather than a generalizable pattern.

Several studies demonstrate that during the early development of dayah education in Aceh, the learning system had not yet adopted a formally structured and standardized curriculum. Educational practices were transmitted through hereditary scholarly relations between *teungku* (religious teachers) and *santri* (students), resulting in a pedagogical orientation that emphasized the transmission of religious knowledge rather than the formulation of written curricular standards. Within this framework, the dayah curriculum evolved based on inherited scholarly traditions and chains of authority passed down from one generation to another. This condition indicates that the traditional dayah system primarily focused on mastery of classical Islamic texts under the authority of the teungku as the central transmitter of knowledge.[25] In line with this argument, previous studies

[24] Ahmad al-Shawi, *Hāsyiyah al-Shāwī 'alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn,* Juz II (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1971), hlm. 168.

[25] Mashuri Mashuri, "Dinamika Sistem Pendidikan Islam Di Dayah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Didaktika* 13, no. 2 (2013): 81880.

emphasize that the academic culture of salafiyah dayah in Aceh was constructed upon hereditary patterns of scholarly transmission and was not originally oriented toward modern curricular standardization.[26] Consequently, dayah institutions have historically functioned not only as centers of Islamic education but also as institutions responsible for preserving scholarly continuity, religious authority, and the intellectual identity of traditional Islam in Aceh.

These secondary data reveal that the educational system of Acehnese dayah is fundamentally grounded in hereditary scholarly traditions transmitted through teacher-student relations. The learning orientation prioritizes the reinforcement of teungku authority and the mastery of classical texts rather than the implementation of standardized formal curricula. In this context, each dayah develops its curriculum flexibly according to its own intellectual traditions and inherited scholarly orientations. Therefore, dayah education functions not merely as a mechanism for transferring religious knowledge but also as a means of preserving sanad continuity, ulama authority, and the intellectual identity of traditional Islamic scholarship in Aceh.[27]

This pattern is closely related to the restriction of tafsīr literature at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif. Various studies indicate that the Acehnese dayah system developed through traditional patterns of scholarly transmission in which the teungku determines the learning materials, religious texts, and educational orientation.[28] As a result, the curriculum is constructed more upon intellectual traditions and genealogical scholarly authority than upon modern administrative standardization.[29] Such conditions contribute to the preservation of specific tafsīr references according to the inherited manhaj and intellectual orientation of previous institutions. Consequently, the restriction of tafsīr literature at Dayah Darul Mu'arrif is not merely a technical educational policy but also represents an effort to preserve scholarly authority, intellectual identity, and the continuity of Acehnese dayah traditions.

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[26] Silahuddin Silahuddin, "Budaya Akademik Dalam Sistem Pendidikan Dayah Salafiyah Di Aceh," *Miqot* 40, no. 2 (2016): 156949.

[27] Saiful Saiful, "Eksistensi Dayah Di Aceh: Peran Dan Kiprahnya Dalam Memajukan Masyarakat," *Al-Fathanah* 1, no. 2, Oktober (2021).

[28] Stephen Roche, "Dayah, the Traditional Islamic Education System of Aceh 1900-2000," *Media Syari'ah: Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 14, no. 2 (2012): 239–50.

[29] A R Mohammad, "The Curriculum of Islamic Studies in Traditional and Modern Dayahs In Aceh: A Comparative Study.," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 39, no. 1 (2001): 62–97.

The relationship between the dominance of linguistic approaches and limited references reveals a methodological gap within tafsīr learning. Students tend to understand the final products of interpretation without adequately comprehending the epistemological processes underlying them. This finding aligns with critiques asserting that traditional Islamic education frequently prioritizes textual transmission over analytical deconstruction of meaning.

Empirical findings additionally reveal limitations in learning duration, as tafsīr classes are conducted only once per week despite consisting of several sessions in a single day. Furthermore, access to alternative references remains highly restricted due to limited library facilities and prohibitions on digital devices within the dayah environment. These conditions reinforce students' dependence upon teachers' explanations during learning activities. This situation was acknowledged by one of the teachers, Teungku Mulyadi, who stated:

> "We understand that times continue to develop and the need for various tafsīr books is becoming greater. However, such changes cannot be implemented instantly because we must respect the policies of previous dayah leaders and preserve the blessing of inherited knowledge."[30]

Similarly, one student, Teungku Samsul, explained:

> "We realize that there are many other tafsīr books with broader discussions, but here we are only permitted to study *Ḥāshiyah* al-Ṣāwī as part of a system that has existed for a long time."[31]

The limitation of time and information access structurally creates epistemic inequality between teachers and students. Teachers possess access to various references, including digital literature such as *Maktabah Shāmilah*, whereas students lack equivalent access. Consequently, students have insufficient opportunities to develop comparative perspectives in tafsīr studies, both within classical and contemporary interpretive frameworks.

The relationship between restricted tafsīr references, limited instructional time, and hierarchical structures of scholarly authority appears to influence the scope of students' interpretive engagement. The findings suggest that students tend to rely primarily on established explanations transmitted by teachers and classical texts, while opportunities for comparative exploration of alternative interpretive perspectives remain

[30] Tgk M, interview by Farhan Rahmadi, Aceh Besar, December 24, 2024.
[31] Tgk S, interview by Farhan Rahmadi, Aceh Besar, December 24, 2024.

limited. Although this pattern contributes positively to the preservation of scholarly continuity and institutional authority, it may also reduce students' exposure to methodological diversity in contemporary Qur'anic studies. Therefore, the findings indicate a tension between the preservation of inherited interpretive traditions and the increasing need for broader hermeneutical literacy within modern tafsīr education.[32]

The Relevance of the Dayah Tafsīr Curriculum to the Formation of Contemporary Qur'anic Exegetes

Contemporary discourse concerning the qualifications of Qur'anic exegetes reflects significant transformations in the demands placed upon students of tafsīr. One classical principle states:

كل من فسر القرآن فعليه بعلم التفسير

"Whoever intends to interpret the Qur'an must master the science of tafsīr."

This principle emphasizes that proper understanding of the Qur'an requires mastery of the methodological sciences of interpretation. Al-Zarqānī defines tafsīr as follows:

والتفسير في الاصطلاح: علم يبحث فيه عن القرآن الكريم من حيث دلالته على مراد الله تعالى بقدر الطاقة البشرية

"*Tafsīr*, terminologically, is a discipline that examines the indications (*dalālah*) of the Qur'an in accordance with the intended meaning of Allah to the extent of human capability."

Although concise, this definition implies that understanding the Qur'an requires mastery of various supporting disciplines, including Arabic linguistics, *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, *balāghah*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *qirā'āt*, *asbāb al-nuzūl*, and *nāsikh-mansūkh* studies. Accordingly, the formation of competent mufassirīn requires not only textual mastery but also methodological openness and interpretive plurality.

The restriction of tafsīr books at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif therefore requires critical analysis regarding the relationship between structures of authority and students' epistemic capacities. Within Islamic educational discourse, there exists a persistent tension between the maintenance of tradition and the demands of modernity. Field findings demonstrate that the curriculum, which limits students primarily to *Tafsīr*

[32] Ismail Anshari et al., "Reconstruction of Tafsir Learning in Dayah Aceh," *Fitrah* 9, no. 2 (2023): 319–28, https://doi.org/10.24952/fitrah.v9i2.8138.

al-Jalālayn and Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī, functions as a form of "epistemic filtering" intended to preserve theological orthodoxy within specific interpretive boundaries.[33]

Proponents of this tradition do not regard such restriction as a deficiency. From their standpoint, concentrating instruction on a single authoritative commentary is precisely what safeguards doctrinal fidelity and the integrity of transmission. Tgk (Kh), the dayah secretary, described the talaqqī method as "the best way to ensure that students receive correct understanding from their teachers without any distortion of meaning." Tengku Syukri, who oversees the dayah's educational affairs, framed the policy in terms of continuity and blessing: "This policy is not merely an academic matter; it is also a form of respect for our teachers and the dayah leaders before us. We believe that knowledge transmitted while preserving the inherited scholarly heritage brings benefit and barakah to students." Some students concur: Tengku Fahri, a level-five student, observed that constant repetition "makes our understanding stronger and not easily forgotten."

This phenomenon may be understood through a linear theory of knowledge transmission in which truth is perceived as static and transferred from teacher to student through a single authoritative text. [34] The consequence of this structure is the emergence of what may be termed a "methodological gap." In contemporary contexts characterized by intellectual plurality, a mufassir is expected to possess the capacity for comparative interpretation (*tafsīr muqāran*).[35] However, when students are exposed only to a single linguistic-classical perspective, they have limited opportunities to engage dialectically with diverse interpretive methods, including *tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* and *tafsīr bi al-ra'y*.[36]

This condition is further exacerbated by the absence of independent instruction in '*ulūm al-tafsīr* and *qawā'id al-tafsīr* within the formal curriculum. [37] Consequently, a pedagogical paradox emerges. While students are introduced to various linguistic instruments necessary for understanding classical tafsīr, the available data indicate that opportunities for independent methodological application remain relatively limited. As a

[33] Farhan Rahmadi, *Skripsi: Problematika Pengajian Kitab Tafsir Pada Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif Aceh Besar*, (Banda Aceh: UIN Ar-Raniry, 2025), h. 48.

[34] Agus Kenedi, "Memahami Studi Islam Dengan Pendekatan Tekstual," *Jurnal Al-Nur* 7, no. 2 (2021): 213–27.

[35] Aida Fitriatunnisa, "Metode Tafsir Muqaran Dilihat Kembali," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 3, no. 4 (2024): 639–46.

[36] Mahbub Ghozali, "Belenggu Rasionalitas Dalam Tafsir Bi Al-Ma'thur: Rekonstruksi Dikotomis Atas Sumber Penafsiran," *Revelatia* 2, no. 2 (2021): 106–23, https://doi.org/10.19105/revelatia.v2i2.4944.

[37] Wawancara dengan Tgk Sy (Menteri Pendidikan Dayah Darul Mu'arrif), pada tanggal 24 Desember 2024.

result, students' interpretive practice tends to be oriented toward understanding established explanations rather than exploring alternative analytical approaches. This condition may affect their readiness to engage with broader contextual and interdisciplinary challenges in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation. This issue is implicitly reflected in Q.S. al-Naḥl [16]:44:[38]

بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَاَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

> "We sent them with clear proofs and scriptures, and We revealed the Reminder to you so that you may explain to humanity what has been revealed to them, and so that they may reflect."

This verse emphasizes both explanatory functions (*li-tubayyina*) and critical reflection (*yatafakkarūn*). Within the context of tafsīr education, such reflective processes require intertextual dialogue among various interpretive works in order to examine and evaluate interpretive validity critically. Furthermore, restrictions on information access, including prohibitions on digital devices and limited library access, causally produce unequal intellectual hierarchies between teachers and students.[39] Research findings indicate that teachers possess access to digital resources such as *Maktabah Shāmilah*, whereas students depend almost entirely upon oral explanations and memorization.

Therefore, the relevance of the Dayah Darul Mu'arrif curriculum for the formation of contemporary Qur'anic exegetes currently stands at a critical juncture. If the dayah continues to maintain a single-text policy in the name of authority and barakah, students may become trapped within a model of "epistemic mimesis," merely reproducing the explanations of earlier mufassirīn without the capacity to generate new meanings relevant to contemporary challenges. Consequently, the curriculum requires reconstruction in accordance with current developments that demand openness of information and more flexible learning systems. By providing broader access to libraries and digital resources, students would be better equipped to confront modern intellectual challenges requiring contextual, critical, and multidimensional understandings of Qur'anic interpretation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, tafsīr learning at Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif represents a strong manifestation of traditional scholarly authority preserved

[38] Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), h. 272.

[39] Farhan Rahmadi, *Skripsi...*, h. 39.

through the methods of talaqqī and tikrār. Nevertheless, this system simultaneously faces significant challenges in the form of "partial epistemic closure" resulting from the restriction to a single authoritative text. The dominance of Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwī over *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, without dialectical engagement with comparative interpretive works and without the independent teaching of 'ulūm al-tafsīr, has contributed to the stagnation of students' hermeneutical agency and the emergence of methodological gaps in tafsīr learning.

This condition is further intensified by structural limitations, including restricted learning time and unequal intellectual hierarchies created through the exclusivity of reference access and digital literature concentrated among teachers. Consequently, reconstruction of the curriculum toward a more inclusive and transformative model becomes necessary through the integration of diverse tafsīr references and broader access to information resources. Such transformation is essential to ensure that dayah institutions do not merely produce primarily reproductive learners of classical texts but also cultivate contemporary mufassirīn who possess critical awareness and the capacity to respond constructively to modern social challenges.

The main contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that tafsīr learning in traditional dayah cannot be understood merely as a pedagogical practice, but also as an epistemological field in which authority, textual selection, and access to knowledge shape students' interpretive agency. This study is nevertheless limited in scope, it draws on a single site Dayah Istiqamatuddin Darul Mu'arrif and on seven informants, without a comparative dayah, so its findings are analytically suggestive rather than statistically generalizable. Future research could pursue comparative studies across multiple dayah with differing reference policies, or longitudinal work tracing the development of students' interpretive competence over time, in order to test and extend the present findings.

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