

## **Artificial Intelligence Assistance in the Pre-understanding Process of Qur'anic Interpretation in the Digital Era**

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### **Abstract**

*The use of artificial intelligence, also known as AI, has grown significantly. Today, ChatGPT, Gemini AI, Meta I, and other chatbots are able to overcome fundamental problems in the interpretation process, such as analyzing linguistic aspects, explaining certain concepts in religion, providing basic information about the manuscripts of the interpretation of books, and even providing an experience like interacting directly with humans. Even so, this generative artificial intelligence cannot substitute the framework of the interpretation method that has been prepared in such a way by the interpreters. The AI platform used as an assistant to understand the meanings of the Qur'an still leaves certain problems. This study aims not to test the validity of generative AI but rather to emphasize AI assistance in the hermeneutical process, namely, pre-understanding. By taking a hermeneutical approach to the phenomenon of the use of artificial intelligence in the midst of the interpretation of the Qur'an, it can be concluded that artificial intelligence is only a tool used by readers to understand the text written by its author. In the context of the Qur'an, it is only a tool to understand the word of God. The knowledge gained is only in the pre-understanding stage. Because it is only pre-understanding, it cannot be said to be a science or knowledge that can be accounted for. The knowledge gained must continue to be re-examined both in terms of its sources and methodology.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Hermeneutic, Preunderstanding.

### **Abstrak**

Penggunaan kecerdasan buatan atau dikenal dengan istilah AI telah berkembang secara signifikan. Dewasa ini ChatGPT, Gemini AI, Meta I, dan chatbot lainnya mampu mengatasi masalah-masalah mendasar dalam proses penafsiran, seperti menganalisis aspek linguistik, menjelaskan konsep-konsep tertentu dalam agama, memberikan informasi dasar tentang manuskrip kitab tafsir bahkan memberikan pengalaman layaknya berinteraksi secara langsung dengan manusia. Meskipun begitu, generatif kecerdasan buatan ini tidak dapat menggantikan kerangka kerja metode tafsir yang telah disusun sedemikian rupa oleh para mufassir. Platform AI yang digunakan sebagai asisten untuk memahami makna-makna Al-Qur'an masih menyisakan masalah-masalah tertentu. Penelitian ini bertujuan bukan untuk menguji validitas generatif AI, namun lebih menekankan pada asistensi AI dalam proses hermeneutis yaitu prapemahaman (pre-understanding). Dengan melakukan pendekatan secara hermeneutis terhadap fenomena penggunaan kecerdasan buatan di tengah-tengah penafsiran Al-Qur'an dapat disimpulkan bahwa kecerdasan buatan hanya sebuah alat yang digunakan oleh pembaca untuk memahami teks yang ditulis oleh pengarangnya. Dalam konteks Al-Qur'an ia hanya alat untuk memahami firman Tuhan. Pengetahuan yang didapatkan hanya berada dalam tahap prapemahaman. Karena ia hanya bersifat prapemahaman maka belum dapat dikatakan sebagai sebuah ilmu atau pengetahuan yang dapat dipertanggungjawabkan. Pengetahuan yang didapat harus tetap diteliti kembali baik secara sumber-sumbernya ataupun metodologinya.

**Kata Kunci:** Kecerdasan Buatan, Hermeneutika, Prapemahaman.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in recent years has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life. AI technology enables the process of information retrieval to become faster, more systematic, and practical, as long as the device in use is connected to the internet. This technology is not only utilized by professionals or academics, but has also become part of everyday practices among the general public (Surya, 2019, p. 2394–3G9G). Machine learning-based AI has demonstrated its efficiency across various fields of study (Miller et al., 2024, p. 3). Its use has also expanded to include the understanding of religious issues.

Although the use of technology for religious purposes is not entirely new, the presence of AI offers a different kind of experience. We are already familiar with earlier technologies such as *Maktabah Syamilah* software and digital books of Islamic texts. AI enables users to interact with technology in a dialogical manner—engaging as if in conversation with a human being—to explore the meanings of Qur’anic verses. The use of AI as a tool for interpreting the Qur’an has developed significantly. ChatGPT, Gemini AI, Meta AI, and other chatbots are now considered capable of addressing religious issues (Mauluddin, 2024, p. 110). While this ability opens up new opportunities, it also raises a range of critical questions—from ethical and theological to methodological ones (Wahid & Hasbi, n.d., p 2183). At the same time, questions concerning the validity, accuracy, and depth of AI-generated interpretations have become increasingly important, both academically and practically. This indicates that the topic of AI use in understanding the Qur’an is not only relevant but also urgent for in-depth exploration in contemporary Islamic studies.

This issue has started to attract the attention of both academics and religious scholars as its use has become more widespread (Mauluddin, 2024, p. 101). With advances in information technology, AI is seen as a tool that can provide easier and quicker access to various interpretations and references. Moreover, AI is even capable of quickly analyzing linguistic problems and providing fundamental information about Qur’anic exegesis (Elsawy et al., 2025, p. 9). Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made major breakthroughs in Qur’anic studies, including textual analysis, thematic classification, and the development of digital interpretations. These innovations expand accessibility and enhance the accuracy of analysis in sacred text studies (Zuhri et al., 2024, p. 2). Several studies have shown that AI has the potential to broaden public

access to religious understanding, which was once considered exclusive (Habibullah, 2023, p. 11). Research by Ubaidillah and Zulkarnain indicates that the *Ngaji.ai* application can increase interest in learning the Qur'an digitally, especially among younger generations (Ubaidillah & Zulkarnain, 2025, p. 11).

On the other hand, research conducted by Nafisah notes that dependence on AI for understanding the Qur'an requires a critical attitude, as it risks diminishing the depth of spiritual reflection that should be preserved (Nafisah, 2024, p. 201). Additionally, research by Ismail Dahia and Mohamed Belbacha shows that ChatGPT has a fair degree of accuracy in translation, although improvement is needed (Dahia & Belbacha, 2024, p. 135). Meanwhile, research by Faidh Fasyani found that ChatGPT has limitations in accessing original Islamic texts, making its function more of an assistant rather than a replacement for accountable scholarly authority (Fasyani et al., 2024, p. 8G). In a separate study, Mahdi Kais argues that AI-based interpretations lack accuracy and do not involve their historical contexts (Al-Janabi, 2024, p. 112).

Therefore, the use of AI in religious contexts still bears several limitations and weaknesses, particularly regarding accuracy and ethics. These shortcomings serve as reminders that AI should not become the sole reference in interpreting the Qur'an. The central issue in using AI to understand the Qur'an lies in how we position it hermeneutically. This paper aims to examine the phenomenon of using artificial intelligence to understand the Qur'an through the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. The study will focus on how AI as a tool of interpretation interacts with the fundamental principles of hermeneutics, and how the process of understanding is shaped within this new digital space. This inquiry is crucial to provide a critical and contextual theoretical understanding of an increasingly prevalent phenomenon in contemporary Muslim societies. Furthermore, the article seeks to identify the opportunities and challenges posed by AI in Islamic studies and explore how Gadamer's hermeneutics can serve as a philosophical foundation for critiquing the use of such technologies.

## **B. THEORETICAL STUDIES**

Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics positions understanding not as a methodical or scientific reconstruction of meaning, but as a dialogical and historical event that unfolds between the interpreter and the text. In his major work *Truth and Method*, Gadamer introduces the concept of the *fusion of horizons* (*Horizontverschmelzung*), in which the horizon

of the text, shaped by its historical origin, comes into contact with the horizon of the interpreter, shaped by present experience (Gadamer, 2013, p. 305-341). Rather than dissolving the temporal distance between the two, Gadamer views this distance as productive, offering space for genuine understanding to occur.

A central element in this fusion is what Gadamer calls *pre-understanding* (*Vorverständnis*), the background of assumptions, experiences, and cultural conditioning that the interpreter brings into the act of reading (Gadamer, 2013, p. 267-274). Pre-understanding is not a flaw to be eliminated—as previous hermeneutic thinkers like Schleiermacher might suggest—but rather a necessary condition for any interpretation to happen at all (Gadamer, 2013, p. 269). According to Gadamer, understanding begins not from a place of neutrality, but from a horizon already influenced by tradition and language. This concept is especially relevant in contemporary settings where interpreters (including artificial systems) approach texts with embedded linguistic and contextual frameworks.

Closely related is Gadamer's notion of *Wirkungsgeschichte* or “history of effects,” which underscores that all understanding is shaped by the influence of tradition (Gadamer, 2013, p. 272-380). The interpreter does not stand outside history but is embedded within it. Therefore, meaning is never static or fully objective; it is shaped by an evolving relationship between text and reader, grounded in both historical continuity and openness to reinterpretation. Tradition, then, plays a double role: it both conditions and enables understanding. This contrasts sharply with approaches that treat the act of interpretation as purely technical or detached from historical consciousness.

Applied to the field of Qur'anic interpretation using artificial intelligence, Gadamer's theory raises critical questions. While AI can simulate textual analysis and language processing, it lacks existential awareness, tradition-formed pre-understanding, and historical embeddedness. It does not possess a “horizon” in Gadamer's sense, nor does it experience a transformative encounter with meaning.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while AI may assist in classifying, translating, or correlating textual patterns, it cannot fully participate in the hermeneutical event as Gadamer conceives it. Nevertheless, understanding these limitations through Gadamer's lens allows scholars to use AI responsibly—as a tool that supports but does not replace the human act of interpretation.

The structure of this article will subsequently employ Gadamer's hermeneutical theory as the basis of analysis, followed by a literature review on the application of AI in Qur'anic studies, and then an analysis of the interaction between AI and the interpretive process from a hermeneutical perspective. The final section will present conclusions and recommendations for future research and the practical use of AI in the field of religion.

### **C. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the method of literature review. Data are collected from various relevant written sources, including books, journal articles, and scholarly online materials ([Ni'am et al., 2023, p. 282–310](#)). The analysis is conducted by referring to Hans-Georg Gadamer's framework of philosophical hermeneutics, particularly the principle of the fusion of horizons between the researcher's initial understanding and the historical context of the text. This approach enables the researcher to examine how AI interacts with sacred texts within a dialogical space of interpretation. Conclusions are drawn through a reflective and structured process to ensure scholarly relevance and validity.

### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Results**

Artificial intelligence began to gain attention among the public and scholars around the 1950s and 1960s. Frank Rosenblatt, a psychologist known in this field, published one of the earliest papers on the perceptron. The perceptron itself was a simple precursor to what is now known as the neural network. Marvin Minsky and Seymour Papert later wrote a book titled *Perceptrons: An Introduction to Computational Geometry*, which presented the mathematical basis of the perceptron as an example of a machine that can be trained to perform simple tasks using training data. In simple terms, artificial intelligence was created with the goal of replicating human-like thinking. A significant milestone in the development of AI was the demonstration of intelligent machines capable of playing chess against humans, and even being considered superior to human players (Martinez et al., 2019, p. 15).

Since the 2000s, the development of artificial intelligence has progressed rapidly and significantly. This progress has been supported by advances in AI algorithms, the availability of big data, and high-performance computing systems. In addition, this growth has also been enabled by the availability of relevant datasets. The achievements of AI in recent decades reflect the future potential of AI to be applied across various sectors in accordance with user needs (Martinez et al., 2019, p. 17). Today, artificial intelligence supports users in many fields. In industry, for example, AI has made work more efficient. It also enhances user experiences, such as through the use of virtual assistants. Furthermore, this advancement has been applied in the transportation sector. Cars and trains can now operate autonomously without human

control (Shadiqin et al., 2023, p. 319–333).

The use of artificial intelligence, as part of digitalization in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is not only limited to technological issues in the workplace, but also extends into discourse on religious authority. Religion, once regarded as an exclusive domain for religious scholars, is gradually facing an identity shift toward becoming more open and interpretable by anyone. Religious institutions, previously seen as immune to change, are now inevitably required to adapt to ongoing developments (ADEBOYE et al., 2023, p. 1-11).

In the context of interpreting Qur'anic verses, tafsir has traditionally been reserved for those recognized as mufasssir. A Qur'anic interpreter is expected to possess adequate knowledge and tools necessary for the interpretive process. They may construct their own methodology or apply established methods in interpretation. Even religious scholars are not always capable of offering interpretations based solely on personal reasoning; they often rely on established exegeses. This exclusivity is based on the understanding that Qur'anic interpretation is a complex activity with strict requirements. Many branches of knowledge must be mastered by mufasssirun to uncover the meanings of the Qur'an (Shihab, 2009, p. 1-10).

In relation to the development of artificial intelligence and the interpretation of the Qur'an, AI is increasingly being used by Muslims. Various applications have utilized technological advancements to assist religious communities in studying Qur'anic verses. AI is seen as offering many benefits and contributions to the field of Qur'anic studies, including facilitating learning, providing Qur'anic learning platforms, and assisting individuals in understanding interpretations. Its use, however, must be conducted with caution so as not to cause harm. The use of this technology should prioritize justice and avoid disadvantaging any particular group (Mauluddin, 2024, p. 110-111).

The use of artificial intelligence in understanding Qur'anic exegesis represents a more advanced form of information access compared to earlier tools such as search engines like Google. Before AI became widely known, people had already used search engines to facilitate easier access to information, rather than engaging directly with primary written sources. Search engines merely retrieve related articles based on available sources; users are required to open each source individually and are not assisted with summaries or synthesized conclusions. In contrast, artificial intelligence is specifically designed to simulate human thinking.

Given this, it is clear that artificial intelligence serves two main purposes for users in the context of interpreting Qur'anic verses. First, it functions as a tool that facilitates access to

Qur'anic interpretations for religious communities. Second, its purpose aligns with the core intention behind AI itself—to replicate human-like thinking. Religious users can interact with AI as if speaking directly to a religious authority, and AI may even provide answers more quickly than human scholars. Furthermore, the presence of this technology offers greater efficiency in the process (Putra & Hidayaturrahman, 2020).

For example, the author utilized artificial intelligence tools from three different platforms—Gemini, ChatGPT by OpenAI, and Meta AI—to obtain an overview of Bint al-Syathi's interpretation of Surah Adh-Dhuha, verses 1–2. The author posed the question, “How does Bint al-Syathi' interpret Surah Adh-Dhuha, verses one and two?” The comparisons are presented as follows:

According to the search using ChatGPT, Bint al-Syathi's interpretation of Surah Adh-Dhuha verses 1–2 reflects a symbolic and reflective approach. She interprets the oath by the forenoon (al-ḍuḥā) and the still night (al-layli idhā saajā) not merely as cosmic phenomena but as representations of two inner states of the Prophet Muhammad: spiritual optimism and the silence during the pause in revelation. In her view, this is a form of divine compassion meant to comfort the Prophet's soul, not a reprimand. This interpretation also reflects literary and psychological sensitivity in reading the sacred text, differing from the legal-formalist tendencies of classical tafsir (ChatGPT, 2025).

Gemini responded by explaining that Bint al-Syathi' offers a deep and relevant perspective in her interpretation of these verses. Her interpretation focuses on the psychological state of the Prophet Muhammad when the revelation was temporarily halted, viewing the verses as divine reassurance and comfort. She interprets the oath by the forenoon (wa-l-ḍuḥā) not as an ordinary oath, but as a powerful metaphor for the arrival of hope and light after a period of hardship or darkness, symbolizing a new beginning and optimism. Furthermore, the oath by the still night (wa-l-layli idhā saajā), according to this account, complements that understanding. Bint al-Syathi' sees it as an affirmation that life consists of both light and darkness, and even during times of hardship, there is tranquility and wisdom. Altogether, this interpretation affirms that God will never abandon His servant and that every hardship will be followed by ease (Gemini, 2025).

Meta AI describes Bint al-Syathi'—a prominent Qur'anic exegete—as interpreting verse 1, “By the forenoon,” as God swearing by the morning light, symbolizing goodness and prosperity. Meanwhile, verse 2, “And by the night when it is still,” is understood as a symbol

of calmness and an opportunity for introspection (Meta AI, 2025).

Upon direct verification of Bint al-Syathi's original works, one may find that the AI-generated responses are more or less aligned, though they are not identical, and in some cases—such as Meta AI's—are quite different. Gemini and ChatGPT even mention the interpretive approach used by Bint al-Syathi. However, direct engagement with the primary text reveals more than mere interpretation—it reveals Bint al-Syathi's deep concern with classical interpretations that, in her view, often neglect the contextual background of revelation. Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding of her work can only be attained through in-depth reading of the original text (Saniyyah, 2023, p. 109-114).

Regarding references, artificial intelligence systems rely on general information available online. AI processes and combines data rather than referring to specific scholarly websites. Nevertheless, AI can still provide relevant book references. Thus, while AI-generated information can support learning processes, it remains insufficient as a valid academic reference. In addition to issues of source reliability, methodological concerns also arise in the interpretation of Qur'anic verses. Every exegetical work—even the most basic—has its own methodology. These methodological aspects are essential for assessing and validating interpretive claims. Therefore, the use of AI in Qur'anic exegesis must undergo strict methodological verification to ensure the legitimacy of its interpretations.

For instance, in its interpretation of Surah Adh-Dhuha verses 1 and 2, ChatGPT suggests that the forenoon symbolizes hope and enlightenment following darkness, while the still night reflects the Prophet Muhammad's emotional distress and solitude during the pause in revelation. This interpretation highlights the emotional and spiritual contrasts in the Prophet's life, which are then addressed and comforted through the subsequent verses. Although not an authoritative source in the field of tafsir, such preliminary interpretations offer thematic direction for further exploration before turning to classical or contemporary primary sources.

These AI-generated responses help readers grasp the meaning of the verses more easily than reading directly from traditional tahlili-style exegeses. Furthermore, if asked about the interpretive method employed, AI explains that the interpretation represents a synthesis of classical and contemporary exegetical traditions, conveyed in accessible language and supplemented with semantic analysis based on the historical context of the surah's revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*).

From this information, it is evident that AI draws upon general data and processes it

accordingly. Within the discourse of classical exegetical methodology, two approaches—*tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr* (based on transmitted sources) and *tafsīr bi al-ra'y* (based on rational reasoning)—are often viewed in opposition. The debate between the two remains ongoing, as each method presents its own challenges. Efforts to combine both approaches continue to be a significant challenge in the field of Qur'anic exegesis (Imadudin & Ain, 2022, p. 381-388). Another essential aspect of knowledge is validity. All knowledge is, by nature, relative—its truth depends on the perspective from which it is viewed. Moreover, truth is always tentative, valid only until it is replaced by a newer, more accurate theory (Ilham, 2017, p. 205).

This condition also applies to Qur'anic interpretation. The interpretation of Qur'anic verses is dynamic and never final. Understanding the text is a continuous, unfinished process. This is due not only to the ontological nature of the Qur'anic text itself but also to the subjectivity of the interpreter and the differences in interpretive methodologies.

## **Discussion**

According to its linguistic origin, the term "hermeneutics" derives from the Greek word *hermēneuein*, which means "to explain." The word is etymologically linked to the name of a god whose task was to convey divine messages to humans. The term was later adopted into other languages, such as *Hermeneutik* in German and *hermeneutic* in English (Syamsuddin, 2017, p. 13). Historically, hermeneutics was initially applied to the interpretation of religious texts, particularly in theological contexts. Its expansion to other textual fields began with Friedrich Schleiermacher, who defined hermeneutics as the art of understanding the language of others, especially written language. Wilhelm Dilthey then extended the scope of hermeneutics to include the interpretation of social phenomena and historical events (Hardiman, 2015, p. 10-13).

Although hermeneutics has broadened significantly in its applications, it remains primarily concerned with interpretation, not limited to texts alone. As a philosophical discipline, it seeks to investigate the nature of understanding itself. The goal is not just a simplistic grasp of meaning, but a more rigorous, theoretically accountable comprehension (George, 2020). Over time, various schools of hermeneutics have developed in line with philosophical trends. Syamsuddin classifies these into objectivist, subjectivist, and integrative approaches. Early objectivists believed the author's intended meaning could be fully recovered by the reader. Conversely, subjectivists rejected this notion, asserting that interpretation is

shaped by the reader's contemporary context and that the reader is free from the constraints of the original meaning (Syamsuddin, 2017, p. 45-47).

Hermeneutical analysis also involves navigating the hermeneutic circle between author, text, and reader. For reproductive hermeneutics, the reader seeks to avoid misunderstanding by carefully applying methodological tools to uncover the author's intended message. Later schools promote a more creative reading process that emphasizes the reader's historical standpoint and seeks not consensus, but meaningful tension.

Philosophically, Hans-Georg Gadamer argues that readers cannot return to the past to recover original meaning. For Gadamer, the hermeneutic circle is not about reproducing authorial intent but about forming meaning through a dialogical process grounded in the present. This process is shaped by historical consciousness, pre-understanding, and the fusion of horizons (Hardiman, 2015, p. 18G). Historical consciousness, according to Gadamer, is an inevitable influence on the reader. A reader is not only a historian but also a participant in history. Thus, interpretation is always situated within a particular historical context.

In addition, the interpreter is guided by pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*)—the initial assumptions that frame their interpretation. Pre-understanding is essential; without it, understanding cannot begin. It is also open to revision, allowing the interpreter to challenge and refine their assumptions through continued dialogue with the text. This process leads toward what Gadamer calls the perfection of pre-understanding (*Vollkommenheit des Vorverstandnisses*) (Syamsuddin, 2017).

Another key concept in Gadamer's theory is the fusion of horizons, the merging of the interpreter's historical and conceptual framework with that of the text. Each text has its own horizon, which may differ from that of the reader. Interpretation becomes a dialogical encounter that requires the reader to suspend their biases and allow the text to speak anew. When contradictions emerge, the text's objective meaning is prioritized (Syamsuddin, 2017). The final element in Gadamer's hermeneutics is application. While the objective meaning remains essential, the reader is not bound to apply it exactly as it was originally intended. Readers live in different times, and therefore, interpretation must adapt to contemporary contexts (Syamsuddin, 2017).

In the Islamic context, the Qur'an is considered the speech of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad for all humanity (Cook, 2000). Hermeneutical interpretation of the Qur'an is the Muslim community's attempt to seek guidance, meaning, and understanding from the divine

text. A mufassir is one who is considered qualified to uncover that meaning (Ali, 2017, p. 1-2).

Classical scholars have outlined various conditions that must be met by a qualified exegete. According to Manna Khalil al-Qattan, a mufassir must master Arabic and its intricacies, as well as the sciences of qira'at, tawhid, usul al-fiqh, nasikh-mansukh, and asbab al-nuzul. Moreover, moral integrity and good character are also required alongside scholarly credentials (Al-Qattan, 1973). The complexity of interpreting sacred texts stems from the ontological gap between the divine and human realms. To bridge this gap, scholars developed methodologies to make Qur'anic messages intelligible, while acknowledging that their full meaning may remain elusive. Interpretation is seen as mapping out the possible meanings surrounding the divine message, rather than capturing its absolute truth (Shihab, 2007, p. 57).

The hermeneutic circle is not merely a technical method but a fundamental structure of understanding. Gadamer rejects the notion of "breaking" the circle and emphasizes that understanding unfolds through a historical and contextual dialectic between parts and wholes. Interpretation begins with pre-understanding shaped by the interpreter's linguistic, cultural, and historical context, which then interacts with the horizon of the text in a process called fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*). This dynamic process does not yield final certainty, but instead fosters deeper understanding through sustained dialogue between the interpreter and the interpreted. Thus, Gadamer's hermeneutic circle is not a constraint, but a generative space for meaning-making shaped by tradition, language, and lived experience (Gadamer, 2013).

Within Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, artificial intelligence can be positioned as a tool within the interpretive circle. As a tool, AI's effectiveness ultimately depends on its user. One can easily seek an interpretation of a verse simply by typing a question into a prompt. If clarification is needed, follow-up questions can be posed. AI not only provides interpretive content but can also elaborate on the methodology employed in arriving at that interpretation.

In accordance with its position, hermeneutics as a scholarly discipline offers a distinct perspective on this phenomenon. As a branch of philosophy, the hermeneutic view does not necessarily need to be confined within binary frameworks commonly found in Islamic jurisprudence. A hermeneutic approach emphasizes the appropriateness of using artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool for understanding Qur'anic texts, rather than positioning it within rigid normative categories.

As a discipline, hermeneutics is inseparable from its philosophical foundations. Every scientific discipline presupposes a source of knowledge, a methodology, and standards of validity that can be critically examined. Scientific inquiry demands critical thinking and constant evaluation of acquired knowledge. Moreover, it requires openness—the ability for knowledge claims to be tested and retested—thus making scientific understanding a continuous, relative, and provisional process (Okasha, 201G, p. 1-2).

In the context of assisting Qur'anic interpretation, the position of artificial intelligence remains epistemologically unsettled. As previously noted, its usage still harbors unresolved issues. When someone seeks an interpretation through AI—whether to understand the meaning of a specific verse or to explore the views of exegetes—from a hermeneutic perspective, especially in light of Gadamer's thought, such results may be regarded as a form of pre-understanding (Shadiqin et al., 2023, p. 319-333).

This pre-understanding derived from AI necessarily calls for verification, as is customary in academic practice. One must consult primary sources directly to ensure the accuracy of the information. Beyond the sources themselves, the methodology underlying the interpretation must also be critically examined. This verification process is not intended to complicate matters, but rather reflects the fact that AI operates based on the datasets within its system; if the input data is flawed, the output may also be misleading.

At this point, the use of AI in interpreting Qur'anic verses presents significant challenges. Every academic discipline presupposes a skeptical attitude toward the results it produces. If readers fail to adopt a critical posture and AI presents only a single perspective, this may lead to dogmatism in religious understanding. The hermeneutic circle between the author, text, and reader is essentially a dialogical relationship. While the Qur'anic text is fixed, its interpretation is dynamic due to ever-evolving social, cultural, and historical contexts. Differences in interpretation are the result of a dialogue between readers, context, and previous commentaries. This dynamic becomes particularly complex when AI is employed in interpretive processes (Rosa, 2024).

From the standpoint of philosophical hermeneutics—particularly in the thought of Hans-Georg Gadamer—pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) is the initial horizon brought by the interpreter when approaching a text. If artificial intelligence (AI) is situated as an assistive actor in this process, it functions as a provider of initial context, aiding readers in understanding the historical, linguistic, and thematic background of Qur'anic verses. Before the interpreter

engages in a fusion of horizons, AI can compile and present relevant data from classical and contemporary exegetical sources, introduce various interpretive methods (textual, contextual, thematic), and summarize structural aspects of the surah as well as its chronological place in revelation. In this role, AI does not directly replace the reader's subjectivity but serves as an epistemological extension that enriches the initial reading horizon with cross-disciplinary and diachronic references.

Furthermore, AI must also function as a bias-dismantler and horizon-adjuster, helping readers become aware of their possibly narrow or limited assumptions. It can do this by presenting divergent interpretations, comparing various exegetical perspectives across schools of thought, intellectual traditions, and even feminist or modern thematic exegesis. Additionally, AI should be designed to manage the complexity of the Arabic language—for instance, through morphological, semantic, and root-word analyses—which significantly influence the semantic scope of the verses. By building a broader semantic network from the stage of pre-understanding, AI enables a more open, reflective, and critical interpretive process aligned with Gadamer's dialogical hermeneutics. Thus, AI serves not merely as a technical tool but as an epistemic partner in cultivating tradition-aware and position-conscious interpretation.

Nevertheless, pre-understanding should never be mistaken for complete understanding. It represents merely the starting point in the hermeneutical process. Therefore, the results obtained through AI still require critical validation, as pre-understandings can be flawed or inaccurate. In this regard, pre-understanding necessitates further filtering in order to evolve into scientifically accountable and valid knowledge.

According to Gadamer's framework, understanding is never objective or neutral; it is always shaped by the reader's preconceptions and expectations. When AI is used to generate interpretations of texts, the information it provides automatically forms a new horizon that interacts with the reader's own. This interaction constitutes a "fusion of horizons," wherein the context of the text—mediated by AI—encounters the reader's lived experiences and background. In this way, AI acts not just as a passive tool but also as a discursive agent influencing the formation of meaning.

There is a common assumption that technology, including AI, is neutral. However, as Martin Heidegger argues in his essay *The Question Concerning Technology*, every technology carries a worldview, a mode of revealing he calls *Enframing* (*Gestell*), which reflects the

tendency of humans to view reality as something calculable and simplified (Heidegger, 1977, p. 18-21). Within this context, AI tends to promote instant comprehension and summary-based thinking, often lacking deep contextual layers. This risks reducing religious meaning to simplistic formulas, a concern echoed by Susanne K. Langer, who emphasized that religious meaning cannot be reduced to informational formulas without losing its symbolic substance (Langer, 2009, p. 284).

From the lens of critical hermeneutics developed by Paul Ricoeur, understanding is not merely cognitive, but also involves ethical dimensions and intersubjective responsibility. Ricoeur underscores that every interpretive act entails a “productive distancing” between interpreter and text—an opening for new meanings while requiring ethical engagement in accepting or rejecting them (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 104-105). Hence, the use of AI in religious interpretation must be accompanied by moral responsibility on the part of human interpreters for the meanings produced. AI can only offer possibilities; decisions and ethical accountability remain firmly in human hands. This is especially vital in interpreting the Qur’an, given its normative and transcendent messages.

The shift from traditional exegetical reading to digital media brings about changes in the authority of meaning-making. Previously, authority resided in the credibility of exegetes and the transmission chains (sanad) of interpretation. In the digital era, this authority increasingly shifts to algorithms and data sets forming the AI’s reference base. This shift raises fundamental questions about epistemic legitimacy: Can authority be vested in technological systems that lack religious consciousness, spiritual context, or experiential faith?

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Qur’anic exegesis presents significant potential in supporting the processes of information retrieval and pre-understanding, particularly through dialogical models such as ChatGPT, Gemini AI, and Meta AI.

Nevertheless, AI cannot replace the methodological, epistemological, and ethical foundations that have long been integral to the scholarly tradition of Qur’anic interpretation.

Employing Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, this article asserts that the output produced by AI belongs to the stage of *Vorverständnis* (pre-understanding), rather than constituting a definitive or final interpretation. AI functions merely as an initial partner in opening the horizon of meaning, which still requires source verification and methodological

scrutiny by human interpreters who are contextually, historically, and ethically aware.

While AI can enrich initial comprehension and offer multiple interpretive approaches, it lacks the spiritual capacity, religious experience, and moral consciousness necessary to determine normative meanings within sacred texts. Therefore, AI should be positioned as an epistemological aid—one that complements but does not replace—the human interpretive process.

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