
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

It is clear that The Qur'an is a humanity guide that includes the instructions that lead people to the correct path. He, who stands on it, would not be astray forever. It is appropriate with Muhammad's (PBUH) assertion: *"I have left you two inheritances. You will not go astray as long as both of them made-to guide. They are the book of God and my tradition"*.

To make both of them as guide, the correct understanding is required. This requires people to really examine them properly. Lately, many people talking about the effective and appropriate theory to interpret The Qur'an. This phenomenon shows the Muslim's religious consciousness, as well as indications that the achievements of commentators in the classic era in formulating theories of The Qur'an, although quite great at the time, it needs to be re-formulated in order to be able to answer the current issues. However, the valuable contributions of classical

commentators can not be casual, especially for vocabulary of Islamic literature.¹

Fazlur Rahman, a professor of Chicago, once describes that The Qur'an is like as a peak mountain of the floated ice, nine-tenth of its content submerged under water of history and one tenth of it appears on the surface. Thus, because of a very deep meaning of The Qur'an, it needs a theory that is not only able to understand The Qur'an integrally, but also is able to produce answerable interpretations for current problems.²

The Qur'an is not common book, it consists of various guidelines for human being, and therefore its content must always be examined for better human life guidance. The necessity of verse interpretation was since the early period of Islam, even since The Qur'an had not been revealed all, people used to ask prophet (PBHU) about various problems. Prophet's answers were safe in the mind of companions and *tabi'în*.³ The next generation always looks

¹ Quoted from Rosihon Anwar, *Samudra Al-Qur'an* (Bandung:Pustaka Setia, 2001) p:173

² Sibawaih, *Hermeneutika al-Qur'an Fazlur Rahman* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2007) p: 13

³People who individually did not meet Muhammad SAW as companions did, but they talked with companions and learnt from them.

behind (previous history of Islamic teaching) in looking for information by arranging the circle to companions and *tabi'în*. Through them only science of *hadîth* and *sunnah* grow up. The literature of *hadîth* relates to various problems, includes theology, moral and Qur'anic interpretation. The Qur'anic interpretation then developed to be independent school of science, namely '*ulûm al-tafsîr*'.⁴

In understanding and interpreting The Qur'an, '*ulûm al-tafsîr*' is absolutely needed to gain appropriate understanding. Interpretation which is not based on theory will probably produce a not appropriate understanding. Because the science of *syarî'ah* in general, and '*ulûm al-tafsîr*' in particular are studies which demand to take not of requirements and courtesies with the result that its line is clear and the beauty and glory of Devine revelation is safe.⁵

⁴ In *Lisân al-Arab*, *tafsîr* is '(open something which is closed) while according to Ibn Manzhur "commentary (*tafsîr*)" is open, or explain the difficult meaning of text. According to Manna' Qattan, the science of *tafsîr* is science which discusses issues related to the Qur'an in terms of *asbabun nuzul*, codification, knowledge about *makkan* and *madinan* revelations, *al-nasikh wal mansukh*, *al-mubham wal mutasyabih* and others associated with The Qur'an. See Manna' Khalil Qattan, *Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: PT.Pustaka Litera Antar Nusa, 2006) p: 462.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p: 467. According to Nasruddin Baidan, '*ulûm tafsîr*' also called '*ulûm al-qur'ân*'. See Prof. Dr. Nasruddin Baidan, *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar Offset, 1998) p; 8.

The Qur'anic book literature has been being published many times, there is not one can read all of those literatures comprehensively. There is not holy book in which the interpretation needs many kinds of tool, expertise, energy, time, and cost as what Qur'anic interpretation needs. It because the meaning of The Qur'an is too deep and has never ending meaning to be examined. Beside the available Qur'anic literatures, there are still many literatures wrote down by certain sects for certain sects and for certain purposes.

Ahmad Von Denffer said that The Qur'an contains the revelations of Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe to mankind. It is the message from God to men and therefore of utmost importance to us. To properly grasp a message, one needs *first* to understand its contents and for this purpose one must study The Qur'an deeply and in detail. In fact, some people do spend their whole lives studying The Qur'an, reading and reflecting upon it and, as they grow and develop, both physically and spiritually, they discover for themselves new meanings and implications. *Secondly*, some special knowledge of the circumstances that surround the message is also necessary for fuller understanding of its meaning and implications. Although some parts of this

special knowledge can be derived from The Qur'an itself, there remain other areas of knowledge that can only be discovered by wider study and research. Muslims have from earliest times, applied themselves not only to the message from Allah - The Qur'an - but also to its setting and framework, and the preoccupation with these ultimately developed into the 'sciences' of or 'knowledge' about The Qur'an, known as '*ulûm al-qur'ân*'.⁶

By the development of historical knowledge and stories of Judeo and Christian (*israiliyyât*),⁷ it is possible for commentators to complete their Qur'anic interpretation by those unbelievable stories. Those unthinkable sources

⁶ According to general definition, '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' denotes studies concerned with the book of revelations sent down upon the last Prophet Muhammad, namely: its revelation, its collection, its order and arrangement, its writing down, information about the reasons and occasions of revelation, about what was revealed in Macca and what in Madina, about the abrogating and abrogated verses, about the clear and the unclear verses. The term also covers Qur'an-related studies, such as: the explanation of verses and passages by prophet himself, his companions, their followers, and the later exegetes of the Qur'an, the methods of explanation and the scholars of exegesis and their books. see Ahmad Von Denffer, '*Ulûm al- Qur'ân, An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an*' (Malaysia:Zafar Sdn.Bhd) p:8

⁷ *Israiliyyât*, meaning 'of Jewish origin' refers to explanations derived from non-Muslim sources and especially from the Jewish tradition, but also including other ahl al-kitab in general. Such material was used very little by the *sahaba*, but more by *tabi'ûn* and even more by later generations. *Ibid.*, p:135.

infiltrate into literatures of interpretation at all. According to Husain Al-Dzahabi, *israiliyyât* influences *tafsîr* and *hadîth* through the coming of Arabian culture of *Jahiliyah* era in 70 AC (they came for saving their lives from Titus' threaten). They came, brought and bequeathed the teaching of their holy books for next generation.⁸ This coming of *israiliyyât* then produces *hurafât* which is used by the Jewish and Christian orientalist to against Islam, that Islam receives truth of parable stories of *Talmud* and *Midrash* or the truth of various fantastic Christian sects. Montgomery Watt, an Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh said that in the early period, many narratives of The Qur'an could not be justified. Commentators took sources from Bible and extracanonical Judeo-Christian, Arabians' legends, and designed materials.⁹

After the coming of *israiliyyât* in which it colored the interpretations, came various schools of philosophy and sufism. The development of theological science which is based on formal logic and its part in form of '*aqâid science*

⁸ Muhammad Husain Dzahabi, *Israiliyat dalam Tafsir dan Hadith*, translated by. Didin Hafidhudin, (Jakarta: Antar Nusa Litera, 1989) p:10.

⁹ Montgomery Watt, *Bells' Introduction to the Qur'an*, translated into: Taufik Adnan Amal, *Pengantar Study Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta:CV. Rajawali,1991) p:264.

(foundation of faith which is explained philosophically) further, introduces several elements of intellectual, while *ta'wîl* is expressing the deeper meaning, it introduces the elements of spiritual which are based on such kind of commentators' transcendental intuition. Sufism teaching at least follows strict requirements of each own teaching. However, many other interpreters also influenced so far in the freedom of interpretation. Thus, it produces protests from many sides.¹⁰

According to Thabathaba'i, there is compatibility between philosophic and esoteric-sufistic interpretation in which both emphasize on metaphorical aspects and tend to leave The Qur'anic textual aspect. The difference between these two kinds of interpretation is only concerning with subjective values. Philosophic interpretation reformulates its metaphorical meaning deals with mode of commentator's philosophical thought, and esoteric-sufistic interpretation adjusts the interpretation with their sufistic beliefs as well.¹¹

Here, it is clear that interest and preference of commentator to a school of science will actually affect the

¹⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary* (New Delhi: Goodwords Book, 2008) p: ix

¹¹ Rosihon Anwar, *op.cit.*, p: 213

result of interpreting The Qur'an. Factor of interpreter's subjectivity will never be released from interpretation, Abdullah Yusuf Ali,¹² the writer of *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary*,¹³ is not exception. His dream to serve The Qur'an moderated his heart to show its beauty in English beautiful words. A very strong soul of art and the western culture in which he grew up dominated his process of understanding The Qur'an. His translation and commentary has been published many times and is used widely in the English speaking world as well as in places where English is read and understood. His phenomenal work occupies a high

¹² He was born at 4 April 1872 – 10 December 1953, was a South Asian Islamic scholar.

It is well-known that Abdullah Yusuf Ali is the author of The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary published on 1934.

¹³ A couple of 'revised' Editions have appeared within the last fifteen years or so. An investigation into the changes made in these new Editions reveals a pattern which may be educational to the readers of this case study. Three Editions of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's works were used to research and document this case study. Both the revised Editions make it clear in their introductory pages that the original translation and Commentary by Abdullah Yusuf Ali has been modified. The original is *The Glorious Kur'an - Translation and Commentary* (Dar al-Fikr, Beirut), The second revision is Amana, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'an* . New Edition with Revised Translation, Commentary and Comprehensive Index Newly compiled by Amana Publications. First edition, 1408 AH/1989 AC by Amana Corporation, and last revision is IFTA, *The Holy Qur'an - English Translation of the meanings and Commentary*, revised and edited by The Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, Call and Guidance King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex.

position in The Qur'anic commentary world in English. The work is very famous and most highly respected; people learn a lot and become a reference particularly in Europe. Translation of the Holy Qur'an by Yusuf Ali, together with the translation by Marmaduke Pickthall,¹⁴ since first published, is the most widely used today.

In his foreword for the first edition (published in 1934) Abdullah Yusuf Ali said that he wanted to provide an English translation side a side by Arabic text. The translation is not merely changing a word by another word, but also by a very well expression to explore its total meaning as far as it could be understood in Arabic. He wanted to show its beautiful rhythm, musical rhyme and its original beautiful linguistic tone. Further, he explained that he wanted to make English as Moslem's language. To achieve his dream, he provided poetic prose or free poetry to set a beautiful and poetic situation inside The Qur'an. Before explaining the meaning of verse, he firstly preceded with a poem talking

¹⁴ Marmaduke Pickthall was a Western Islamic scholar, noted as a poetic translator of the Qur'an into English. A convert from Christianity to Islam, Pickthall was a novelist, esteemed by D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, and E. M. Forster, as well as a journalist, headmaster, and political and religious man.. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmaduke_Pickthall (retrieved on Wednesday, May 19, 2010)

about the content of verse.¹⁵

Yusuf Ali tried to avoid theological debates or various arguments in his commentary. As a modern interpreter, he is not different from previous interpreters such as Muhammad Abduh (death in 1323H/1905 M), Rasyid Ridla (1860-1935M), Musthafa Al-Maraghi, etc, who have afforded to contextualize the verses with current social condition.¹⁶ This contextual approach in the way of re-interpreting text of The Qur'an and *hadith* is not merely theoretical problems, but also the need of Moslems to anticipate nowadays demands and challenges. The integrity of Moslem condition is really determined by their ability to give relevant answers to these challenges and demands. It is an easily understood demand of

¹⁵ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op.cit.*, p.: iv. Project of making Al-Qur'an as poetry has also been made by HB Jassin, an Indonesian who was successful after writing "*Al-Qur'an Bacaan Mulia*" in 1973, tried to set up a new paper titled *Al-Qur'an Berwajah Puisi*. However his work was gazed by various parties, especially Ministry of Religious Affair and MUI who worried that al-Qur'an with style of poetry would obscure its meaning. More details see H.B. Jassin, *Kontroversi Al-Qur'an Berwajah Puisi* (Jakarta: PT. Pustaka Utama Graffiti, 1995) p: 61-64.

¹⁶ Contextual term as the method related to the interpretation of Al-Qur'an actually has vocally introduced by Fazlur Rahman. According to Djohan Effendi, contextual approach is a method of understanding Qur'an by analyzing the socio-historical context, i.e., a view and approach of idea or phenomenon can not be separated from the context of the time, place, culture and environmental groups. In the history of theory, this method is not only deals with Al-Qur'an, but also able to understand the *Hadith* of the prophet. See Rosihon Anwar, *op.cit.*, p: 274.

society that wishes Islam be the only alternative solution for life.¹⁷

Further, Abdullah Yusuf Ali said that in dealing with previous history of human life, people have to use the latest research. In commenting verses of Jewish and Christian's beliefs, people should refer to the sources of Jewish and Christian as well, but it is not to take those beliefs or systems.¹⁸ For this case, Muhammad Husain Dzahabi said that absolutely, commentator can not take the proposition of *naql* from people of the book, if there is information about the great of The Qur'an or there is a clear of the ambiguity.¹⁹

Nevertheless, looking at his commentary, Abdullah Yusuf Ali precisely wanted to explain The Qur'an with those stories. Only few of his commentary (explaining verse through stories) are followed by explanation of story's authenticity, it precisely seems he received those doubtful

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ His Commentary for Surah 3:46 "Task of Isa was only ended within three years, 30-33 year of age, when in the vision of his enemies he was crucified. But actually some said that he was explaining the gospel of Luke and having discussions with the teachers in the holy house, in the age of 12 years, or even less than that, as a child, he "grow big and become a strong, full of wisdom" (Luke ii.40). Apocrifa Gospel mentioned that he preached since he was a baby. See Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op. cit.*, p:135

¹⁹ Muhamad Husain Dzahabi, *op.cit.*, p: 198

stories.²⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali almost never mentioned *hadîth* concerning with several verses relate to previous people such as Moses' and Jesus' people, even he explained by quoting story from Old Testament and Bible. Inside his commentary is rarely found either *matan* or *sanad al- hadîth* which is usually used by other commentators to explain The Qur'an.

As mentioned above, that the trends and interests will be very influential for one's work. Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid reminds that interpreter must be aware of his own ideology and subjectivity, thus, both will not influence process of interpretation.²¹ However, Yusuf Ali's interest of art is shown in this phenomenal work. It is proven by his act of quoting poems and comments from very well-known poets such as Shakespeare,²² Dickens,²³ and other famous people from Western, the place where he sought the knowledge really affected his view of understanding the text.

Commentary of Abdullah Yusuf Ali is a little different from others in concerning with the methods he used in commentary, in addition to a poetic style which colors his

²⁰ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op.cit.*, p:xi

²¹ Moch. Nur Ichwan, *Meretas Kesarjanaan Kritis Al-Qur'an, Teori Hermeneutika Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid* (Jakarta:Teraju, 2003) p:99

²² Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *op.cit.* p: 153,557, notes: 439, 1663

²³ *Ibid.*, p:300, note: 862

commentary, the use of history from other religions' books and lack of using prophet's tradition in describing the verse may be spelled a stray running with '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' that usually used by other commentators in understanding The Qur'an. While the paper is his masterpiece and is main reference in Europe. Ahmad Von Denffer commented on his work, saying: "*This is a book of mixed value, since the translation in places is a little far from the text. The numerous footnotes provide helpful explanation and background information but some of them seem odd if not unacceptable*".²⁴

Therefore, this essay will address the analyzing tools of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in viewing the Qur'an which is assumed not in line with the disciplines of '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' already developed by scholars. Thus, it is necessary to examine Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods of commentary through the perspective of '*ulûm al-qur'ân*'. Here, the writer tries to examine the power of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods through renewed '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' developed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd²⁵. It is need to know that although Yusuf Ali's

²⁴ Ahmad Von Denffer, *op.cit.*, p:147

²⁵ Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd is Egyptian qur'anic thinker and one of the leading liberal theologian in Islam, he is famous for his project of a

work covers the translation of verses, this essay will only focus on his way of commentary.

B. Research Question

Regarding the study, problems that may come around are:

1. What are methods of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in commenting the verse of The Qur'an?
2. What are critiques on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods of Qur'anic commentary from the perspective of contemporary '*ulûm al-qur'ân*'?

C. Aim and Significance of Research

The significances of this research are:

1. To know the methods of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in commenting verses of The Qur'an.
2. To know the critique on methods of commentary of Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

humanistic Qur'anic hermeneutics. Born on July 10, 1943 he developed a renewed hermeneutics view of the Qur'an and further Islamic holy text, arguing that they should be interpreted in the historical and cultural context of their time. He renewed the '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' already written in *Mafhum Al-Nash Dirâsah fi 'Ulûm al- Qur'ân*.

D. Prior Research

There are few of writings discuss more about Abdullah Yusuf Ali. Among those writings are *Searching for Solace; A Biography of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Interpreter of The Qur'an*. This writing is translated into Indonesian by Rahmani Astuti under the title “*Jiwa Yang Resah; Biografi Yusuf Ali Penerjemah dan Penafsir al-Qur'an Paling Otoritatif dalam Bahasa Inggris*”. This book contains of complete information about his life childhood, educational background, intellectual and political career and the left time of his life.

In ‘*Ulûm al-Qur’ân, The Introduction to The Science of The Qur’an*, Ahmad Von Denffer also cited his opinion about Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s work, saying that the numerous footnotes provide helpful explanation and background information but some of them seem odd if not unacceptable.²⁶

The Study about Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s work *The Holy Qur’an, Text, Translation and Commentary* also done by Helmy Maulana as a thesis research. The study he focuses on is methods of the translation and commentary. His conclusion remains in general, his study does not touch in detail analysis

²⁶ Ahmad Von Denffer, *loc.cit.*

about the literary characteristics strongly tasted in Abdullah Yusuf Ali's work. He valued the work with devices of classic *'ulûm al-qur'ân*. The influence of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's interest in literature is not explained well, thus the linguistic aspect in which Yusuf Ali wants to show is left behind. As a modern thinker, Yusuf Ali was much influenced by the modern thought and so, the writer sees that it is necessary to analyze more detail his work together with seeing his power of methods through contemporary theoretical framework.

E. Theoretical Framework

Manna 'Khalil Qattan in *Mabâhîs fî 'Ulûm al- Qur'ân* (Mansyurat al-'ashr al-Hadith, 1973) explains that the scientific and objective study is main basis for a valid knowledge that gives power to the learner, he said that its fruit is most delicious food for the mind and intellectual.²⁷ Therefore, the availability of research sufficient facilities and infrastructures is a value for good results in which it is easily gained. Study of law in general and commentary in particular are activities that should pay much attention and learn a number of terms and courtesies that result the clear line, the

²⁷ Manna 'K Qattan, *op.cit.*, p: 462

beauty and the glory of Devine revelation.²⁸

In dealing with explanation of Mana' Qattan, Prof. Dr. Nasruddin Baidan in his book *Metode Penafsiran al-Qur'an, Kajian Kritis Terhadap Ayat-Ayat yang Beredaksi Mirip* said that to understand and to interpret al-Qur'an correctly, people should know "theory or interpretation principles" or also called by '*ulûm al-qur'ân* or '*ulûm tafsîr*. Although the expertise of rule of interpretation is the requirement to become a commentator, but it does not directly ensure that the comments are compatible with God means. In other word, rule of interpretation only leads someone to interpret The Qur'an, not to determine whether the interpretation is true or wrong. Commentary is the work of *ijtihâdiah* as prophet said that if only someone does the true he will get two rewards and if he does the wrong, he will get one.²⁹

In his *Metodologi Penafsiran al-Qur'an*, Prof. Dr. Nasrudin Baidan said that in Indonesian terminology, method is a systematic working way to facilitate the implementation of an activity to achieve a specific purpose. In this regard, it

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Baidan, *Metode Penafsiran al-Qur'an, Kajian Kritis Terhadap Ayat-Ayat yang Beredaksi Mirip* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002) p:95.

means that the study of Qur'anic interpretation cannot be separated from the method, i.e., a regularly and thinkable way to reach the correct understanding of what God intends through the verses of The Qur'an. The definition provides a description that method of *tafsîr al-qur'an* contains a set of rules that must not be ignored during the process of interpretation, if someone interprets The Qur'an without employing the right methods, it is possible that he will have mistaken.

Further, he said that the method of interpretation is different from methodology of interpretation, which is the science of interpreting the Qur'an. Methodology is a way of commentary or media that should be used to reach the goal of an instructional treatment. To use methods of interpretation, one is prosecuted for an absolute control of methodology of interpretation.³⁰

In the case of methodology of interpretation, Fazlur Rahman said that the effort of classifying without viewing the paradigm that is used by each commentator usually tends to be misleading. This error can be shaped in (1) adjustment of particular method as the truth (2) interpretation (*tafsîr*) recklessly confronts one method to other methods (3)

³⁰ Prof. Dr. Nasaruddin Baidan, *op.cit.*, p:8

classification is not viewed from methodological epistemology, but emotional consideration such as school or particular political flow.³¹

Abdul Mustaqîm, in his *Aliran-Aliran Tafsir Madzahibut Tafsir Dari Periode Klasik Hingga Kontemporer* mentions that in an effort to restore the Qur'an as a book of guidance, contemporary *mufasssir* do not understand this book as the "dead" revelation as traditional scholars understood over the years, but as something "alive". The Qur'an is understood as a holy book whose occurrence can not be separated from the historical context of humanity. Therefore, as a consequence of this understanding, it is not enough to rely on such scientific device used by the *mufasssir* such as *fiqh*, *asbab al-nuzul*, *nahwu-sharaf*, *Balaghah*, etc, to understand The Qur'an. The Method of hermeneutic approach eventually becomes "alternative" the menu to replace the device for this scholarship which is considered not only inadequate but also not "resilient" against the challenges of time. The methods employed by contemporary *mufasssir* is also very various. This diversity arises not only because Muslim start to open their minds to foreign idea, but

³¹ Dr. H. A. Syukri Saleh, *Tafsir al-Qur'an Kontemporer dalam Pandangan Fazlur Rahman* (Jakarta:Sultan Thaha Press, 2007) p; 41

also the dynamics and awareness on their shortcomings of existing methods.³²

Method and style of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in interpreting The Qur'an is slightly different from method used by the majority of the commentators. However, judging his interpretation as mistaken is not wise before knowing in detail his works. Critique done here is not to judge Yusuf Ali's interpretation as mistaken, but to know the validity of method he used in interpreting Qur'an. Thus, viewing his method from the perspective of *'ulûm al-qur'ân* will be very important. And the study of Qur'an develops time to time. The previous study is completed by the latest to grasp the best of understanding. In the course of history, Muslim intellectuals apply the Qur'anic hermeneutic which in traditional term is *'ulûm al-qur'ân*.³³ And Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd as the representative of contemporary scholar is considered the best for his concept of this trend.³⁴ Besides, both of these two figures have the same interest in literature. Therefore, the writer uses the concept of Nashr Hamid Abu

³² Abdul Mustaqim, *Aliran-Aliran Tafsir, Madzahibut Tafsir Dari Periode Klasik Hingga Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2005) p: 80

³³ Moch Nur Ichwan, *op. cit.*, p: 60

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Zayd to check the power of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's method in interpreting The Holy Qur'an. And it is a must to define the different use of "commentary" and "interpretation".³⁵ The writer uses the term "commentary" to explain Yusuf Ali's work for he only analyzed verses in inadequate explanation.

E. Methodology of Research

This study is the literature research (Library Research) with the focus is critique on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods of commentary through perspective of contemporary '*ulûm al-qur'ân* renewed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zayd. The research method used by writer in this study includes:

a. Source of Data

This research comes from two sources of data, which is the primary source is direct source of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's work, entitled *The Holy Qur'an, Text, Translation and Commentary* and to criticize his method of interpretation is work by Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Mafhum Al-Nash Dirâsah fî 'Ulûm al- Qur'ân* While the secondary data is in

³⁵ Commentary is the way of giving explanation for something simply, while interpretation is the way of giving explanation in greater detail or deeply.

form of other works of both and other related sources of study. Such as work of M.A. Sherif “*Jiwa Yang Resah; Biografi Yusuf Ali Penerjemah dan Penafsir al-Qur’an Paling Otoritatif dalam Bahasa Inggris*”. Other sources of Abu Zayd’s theory are *Isykaliyat Al-Qira’ah wa Aliyyat Al-Ta’wil*, *Naqd al-Khitâb al-Dînn*, etc.

b. Method of Collecting Data

Method of collecting data used in this research is documentation. As the object will be examined in this research is methods of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in his Qur’anic commentary through perspective of *‘ulûm al-qur’ân*, the research will be done in the form of qualitative research with the research literature by documenting the data, both primary and secondary data, and data complement in the form of articles, magazines and journals related to the object of the problem will be examined as well.

c. Data Display

In displaying data, the writer will try to explain the data in narrative text as the most frequent form of data display for qualitative research.

Nevertheless, table and chart will also used to explain the data. Through those data display, the data is organized, arranged in relational pattern, and thus, it will be easily understood.

c. Analysis

Method of analysis that will be used is descriptive-analysis which is not only limited in collecting and arranging the data, but also classifying, analyzing and interpreting data.³⁶ The approaches used in this research are: *First*, the content analysis approach which is a systematic technique to analyze data objectively which then is classified and interpreted to make Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods of commentary in map. *Second*, the historical-sociological approach that is used to analyze the thoughts of Yusuf Ali to see how far the influences of socio-cultural environment in shaping his view of reality he faced. This pattern then formed mode of thought of Yusuf Ali's commentary, so that, it affects the construction of his thought in understanding the

³⁶ Prof.Dr. Winarno Surakhmad, *Pengantar Penelitian Ilmiah Dasar Metoda Teknik* (Bandung:Tarsito,1998) p: 139.

verses of Qur'an. After knowing the clear methods of Abdullah Yusuf Ali in understanding the holy book, it just after that his methods are analyzed more by the study of *'ulûm al-qur'ân* renewed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid. It is important to know whether Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods of commentary based on powerful methodology or not.

F. Writing Systematic

Writing systematic of this research is below:

Chapter I, this chapter is a group of foreword of the research, consists of background, formulation of problem, significance of research, theoretical framework, methodology of research and writing systematic.

Chapter II, this chapter is the discussion around *'ulûm al-qur'ân* as the way to understand Qur'an comprehensively, from its definition, history and characteristics of *'ulûm al-qur'ân* especially developed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid.

Chapter III is discussing about the phenomenal work of Abdullah Yusuf Ali and will talk more about his life background and the skates of his work from reasons behind his project, techniques of writing, sources of commentary, also examples of his commentary.

Chapter IV contains critics of Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods. Part A will explain about the critique on Abdullah Yusuf Ali's methods in the perspective of '*ulûm al-qur'ân*' developed by Nashr Hamid Abu Zaid. Part B will explain about the evaluation of his work.

Chapter V is the chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion.