



Epistemology of Interpretation in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: Authority, Validity, and the Limits of AI's Role in Quranic Interpretation

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Abstract

The development of artificial intelligence in Islamic studies has transformed the landscape of the production and circulation of Quranic exegetical knowledge, while simultaneously raising epistemological issues that have not been systematically discussed, particularly regarding the shift in interpretive authority, the criteria for the validity of exegetical expertise, and the limits of technology's role in understanding the sacred text. Previous studies tend to position AI as a technical instrument or discuss it normatively, while its epistemological implications for the structure and legitimacy of exegesis have received little attention. This article critically analyzes the relationship between Quranic exegesis and artificial intelligence by formulating the epistemological limits of AI's role within the framework of contemporary exegetical epistemology. This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing an epistemological-critical analysis method grounded in Islamic epistemology and contemporary philosophy of science, as reflected in classical and modern exegetical literature. The results reveal a shift in the pattern of exegetical authority, where AI serves as an epistemic mediator that facilitates linguistic, intertextual, and comparative analysis while remaining dependent on human interpretative authority. The construction of the data corpus determines the validity of AI-based interpretation, the epistemic assumptions internalized in the algorithm, and AI's limitations in capturing the historical, social, and discursive context of the Quran. AI also lacks the reflective capacity, hermeneutic

intentionality, and intellectual accountability that are essential requirements for interpretation. In conclusion, AI must be epistemologically positioned as an analytical aid, not an authoritative source of interpretation, with theoretical implications that strengthen the epistemological framework of interpretation, making it adaptive to technology without obscuring the principles of scientific validity and the authority of human interpreters.

Keywords: Epistemology of Interpretation; Artificial Intelligence; Interpretive Authority; Epistemic Validity; Ethics of Technology

Abstrak

Perkembangan kecerdasan buatan dalam studi keislaman telah mengubah lanskap produksi dan sirkulasi pengetahuan tafsir Al-Quran, sekaligus memunculkan persoalan epistemologis yang belum dibahas secara sistematis, khususnya terkait pergeseran otoritas penafsir, kriteria validitas pengetahuan tafsir, dan batas peran teknologi dalam memahami teks suci. Studi-studi sebelumnya cenderung menempatkan AI sebagai instrumen teknis atau membahasnya secara normatif, sementara implikasi epistemologisnya terhadap struktur dan legitimasi tafsir masih kurang mendapat perhatian. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis secara kritis relasi antara tafsir Al-Quran dan kecerdasan buatan dengan merumuskan batas epistemologis peran AI dalam kerangka epistemologi tafsir kontemporer. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis epistemologis-kritis berbasis epistemologi Islam dan filsafat ilmu kontemporer terhadap literatur tafsir klasik dan modern. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya transformasi pola otoritas tafsir, di mana AI berperan sebagai mediator epistemik yang mempercepat analisis linguistik, intertekstual, dan komparatif, namun tetap bergantung pada otoritas interpretatif manusia. Validitas penafsiran berbasis AI ditentukan oleh konstruksi korpus data, asumsi epistemik yang terinternalisasi dalam algoritma, serta keterbatasan AI dalam menangkap konteks historis, sosial, dan diskursif Al-Quran. AI juga tidak memiliki kapasitas reflektif, intensionalitas hermeneutik, dan pertanggungjawaban intelektual yang menjadi syarat utama penafsiran. Kesimpulannya, AI harus diposisikan secara epistemologis sebagai instrumen bantu analisis, bukan sumber otoritatif tafsir, dengan implikasi teoretis berupa penguatan kerangka epistemologi tafsir yang adaptif terhadap teknologi tanpa mengaburkan prinsip validitas keilmuan dan otoritas penafsir manusia.

Kata Kunci: Epistemologi Tafsir; Kecerdasan Buatan; Otoritas Penafsiran; Validitas Epistemik; Etika Teknologi

Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) over the past decade has brought about fundamental changes in how humans produce, access, and validate knowledge, including religious knowledge (A. Ahmed et al., 2022). In the context of Quranic studies, the emergence of large-scale language models and natural language processing systems enables massive, instant, and comparative analysis of sacred texts, from presenting interpretations to formulating normative answers (Alqarni, 2024). The shift in AI's function from a technical tool to an interpretive reference source raises serious epistemological issues, as Quranic interpretation in the Islamic tradition is not merely understood as a linguistic activity, but as an epistemic practice that requires scholarly authority, historical awareness, and ethical responsibility (Ichwan, Ming, & Sya'roni, 2025). When algorithmic output is treated as interpretative truth, a fundamental tension arises with Islamic epistemology,

which posits that knowledgeable humans are the subjects of interpreting revelation (Ahmad, 2025). This situation highlights a conceptual crisis regarding the legitimacy of knowledge, the mechanisms of validating truth, and the limitations of non-human technology in understanding divine texts.

This phenomenon is reinforced by a UNESCO report (2025) that notes the accelerated adoption of AI systems in the global education and religious practice sectors, including the use of AI for religious consultations, the preparation of *da'wah* materials, and the explanation of sacred texts among younger generations who rely on speed and instant access to information. Furthermore, a global study by the University of Melbourne and KPMG (2025) shows a high level of trust in AI systems in various contexts, including education, where most respondents reported using and trusting AI-based answers even though they did not always include authoritative references from classical sources—signifying an epistemic shift from traditional authorities such as ulama and mufasir toward algorithmic systems that operate based on linguistic probability and data aggregation. This shift is not merely technical, but has a direct impact on the epistemological foundations of Quranic interpretation, particularly regarding who has the right to interpret revelation and how the correctness of interpretation is determined.

Several previous studies have addressed the relationship between digital technology and Islamic studies with varying focuses. Rahmawati et al. (2025) examined the use of digital devices as interpretive aids. They concluded that technology accelerates access to literature and broadens the scope of interpretive comparisons. However, they still position humans as the primary epistemic subjects without thoroughly addressing the epistemological implications of AI. Bashir et al. (2023) demonstrated the effectiveness of AI in analyzing the morphology and syntax of the Arabic language of the Quran. Still, they limited their study to linguistic aspects and neglected the hermeneutic and theological dimensions. Zaid et al. (2022) examined the fragmentation of religious authority in the digital space, specifically due to social media algorithms, but did not directly link this to AI-based interpretive practices. Ahmed, Sumi, and Aziz (2025) highlighted the ethics of using AI in the context of religion and the importance of moral regulation. Still, their study was normative rather than grounded in an interpretive epistemological framework. Zhang, Song, and Liu (2025) uncovered the potential for algorithmic bias in religious AI systems and the influence of training data on interpretation output; however, they did not address the epistemic validity of these interpretations. These studies demonstrate that despite the rapid development of AI discourse and Islamic studies, there is no epistemological framework that systematically explains the position of AI in Quranic interpretation, particularly regarding the authority, validity, and epistemic limits of understanding, thus opening up an unfilled research space.

This research formulates three main questions: how the epistemological landscape of Quranic interpretation has changed due to the presence of AI, what is

the status of authority and validity of interpretations produced by AI from the perspective of Islamic epistemology, and what are the conceptual boundaries of AI's role so that it does not exceed its capacity as an aid. The research aims to develop an epistemological framework that situates AI appropriately within the practice of interpretation, identify the epistemic risks arising from the absolutization of algorithmic output, and define the boundaries of human-machine relations in the interpretation of revelation. The basic argument of this research is that Quranic interpretation is an epistemic and ethical activity that cannot be reduced to a computational process, as it requires historical awareness, scientific authority, and moral responsibility, which AI systems do not possess. Thus, this research is expected to make a theoretical contribution by enriching the epistemology of contemporary interpretation through the formulation of a conceptual position on AI, as well as a practical contribution as a critical reference for the development and utilization of AI in Quranic studies, aligning with Islamic epistemic principles.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method based on normative-critical epistemological analysis, utilizing a conceptual research approach grounded in critical literature and comparative analysis. Data sources include classical and modern exegetical literature with canonical authority and significant methodological influence, works on Islamic epistemology and the philosophy of science that discuss the sources and justification of knowledge, reputable international journal articles examining language models, epistemic opacity, and algorithmic authority, and text output from AI-based language models that are treated strictly as epistemic artifacts. Data collection was conducted through a systematic search of reputable academic databases, with selection criteria based on epistemological relevance, literature mapping aligned with the epistemological structure of interpretation, and purposive sampling of AI outputs. Data analysis is carried out in an intertwined manner by mapping the sources of knowledge and authority, as well as the mechanisms of meaning validation. The position of the interpreter subject in the tradition of interpretation and AI systems is examined, followed by a comparative analysis of differences in the structure of knowledge justification, and a normative-critical reflective synthesis to formulate the epistemic boundaries of the role of AI, without making prescriptive theological claims.

Results and Discussion

Reconstructing Interpretive Authority in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

The authority of Quranic interpretation in the Islamic scholarly tradition refers to the epistemic legitimacy of producing meaning recognized by the academic community through mastery of Arabic, *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, hadith, and interpretive methodologies internalized as an intellectual habitus (Abdulaziz, 2025). This authority is personal and embodied in the interpreter as an epistemic subject

capable of reflectively and methodologically accounting for the interpretation process (Calis, 2022). This structure positions the interpreter as the center of meaning production and the locus of scholarly legitimacy. The advent of artificial intelligence disrupts this configuration by mediating the interpretive process through computational systems that operate based on large-scale data processing, linguistic pattern recognition, and statistical relations between texts (Krenn et al., 2022). This intervention shifts the foundation of authority from the epistemic competence inherent in the subject to impersonal, systemic mechanisms.

The direct consequence of this transformation is evident in the redefinition of scientific competence as a key pillar of interpretive authority. Competence is no longer understood solely as internal mastery of a scientific discipline formed through long-term intellectual formation, but rather as the ability to access and operate an algorithmic architecture capable of simultaneously integrating diverse corpuses of interpretation, hadith, and Islamic literature (Badawy, 2025). Lumbard (2024) views this condition as a shift from epistemic embodiment to epistemic outsourcing, specifically the transfer of some cognitive capacity for knowledge to technological infrastructure. Exegetical expertise is depersonalized because authority no longer rests entirely on the reflective qualities of the subject but on the system's effectiveness in producing interpretive output. This transformation blurs the line between scholarship as an epistemic capacity and scholarship as a technical function, so that interpretive authority loses its attachment to the interpreter's personal intellectual formation.

The methodological dimension that has long guaranteed the epistemic legitimacy of interpretation has also undergone a fundamental repositioning. The tradition of interpretation demands procedural transparency through rationally traceable linguistic, contextual, and intertextual argumentation (Al Baihaqi, 2022). Artificial intelligence systems operate through opaque computational mechanisms, relying on statistical models and machine learning that cannot always be methodologically explained within the framework of classical interpretation (Eckart, Eckart, & Enke, 2021). The legitimacy of AI-based interpretation is no longer supported by the interpreter's ability to explain the stages of interpretation, but rather by the performativity of the system's output, which is deemed effective, rapid, and comprehensive (Sati et al., 2025). The philosophy of science characterizes this condition as a shift from epistemic authority to technological authority, specifically, scientific recognition that relies on the reliability of the system, rather than on methodological rationality that can be justified through argumentation (Ferrario, Facchini, & Termine, 2024). Interpretation gains acceptance not because its process is testable, but because its results appear functional, thereby allowing the source of epistemic legitimacy to be relocated.

This relocation of legitimacy has direct implications for the configuration of the subject of knowledge and epistemic responsibility. The tradition of

interpretation positions the interpreter as a reflective agent who bears responsibility for the intellectual implications of interpretation, both scientifically and discursively (Ariyadi & Anggriyani, 2025). Artificial intelligence systems lack epistemic awareness, intentionality, and the capacity for normative reflection, and therefore cannot be considered a subject of knowledge in the classical sense (Stahl, 2023). The production of interpretation through non-personal mechanisms creates a fragmentation of epistemic agency, namely the separation between the process of meaning production and the subject capable of providing rational justification for that meaning (Junaidi et al., 2025). This condition weakens the dimension of epistemic accountability because there is no single locus that can be held accountable for the interpretation procedure. The authority of interpretation is no longer inherent in the individual interpreter. Still, it is dispersed across technological networks that operate without epistemic awareness, thereby losing the personal dimension that has long underpinned scientific responsibility.

This fragmentation of agency suggests that artificial intelligence functions as an epistemic infrastructure, rather than as an autonomous epistemic subject. Algorithmic systems provide the capacity for data processing and the construction of meaning patterns, but they cannot grasp meaning within normative and historical horizons as interpreters do (Mustafa et al., 2024). However, this infrastructural function still has significant epistemological implications because it mediates the relationship between the Quranic text and the interpreting subject. Authority no longer rests on the interpreter's ability to construct methodological arguments, but on the system's capacity to provide seemingly comprehensive possibilities for meaning. This creates the illusion of technological objectivity, potentially shifting epistemic recognition from critical reflection to trust in the system. This shift marks a profound transformation in the structure of interpretive authority, as legitimacy is no longer generated through conscious meaning-making processes, but rather through computational mechanisms operating outside of human reflective awareness.

The reconstruction of interpretive authority in the era of artificial intelligence is both epistemological and structural, rather than pragmatic or normative. Authority shifts from the figure of the interpreter as an epistemic subject to a systemic configuration that integrates data, algorithms, and computing infrastructure as sources of possible meaning. This shift alters the relationship between knowledge, methodology, and epistemic accountability without necessarily eliminating the role of humans. Interpretation is no longer entirely generated through the interpreter's reflective consciousness, but through a complex interaction between the human subject and the technological system. This transformation marks the birth of a form of interpretive authority that is impersonal, decentralized, and difficult to trace methodologically. The epistemological framework of interpretation suggests that this condition necessitates a conceptual

reevaluation of the source of scientific legitimacy, ensuring that Quranic interpretation remains grounded in human epistemic responsibility, even when mediated by artificial intelligence.

Epistemic Validity of AI-Based Interpretation

The truth of interpretation in the Islamic epistemological tradition is not reduced to a propositional correspondence between statements and texts, but rather is determined through the relational integration of divine words, meanings, and intentions rooted in the context of revelation and the linguistic structure of the Quran (Junaidi et al., 2025). This framework positions the truth of interpretation as a normative epistemic achievement rather than merely a linguistic inference. Artificial intelligence-based interpretation operates through probabilistic modeling of language patterns derived from large corpora, yielding conclusions based on probability estimates rather than contextual understanding (Gaanoun & Alsuhaibani, 2025). The resulting truth is inferential and approaches the category of *ẓann lughawī*, rather than methodologically legitimized knowledge in the epistemology of interpretation. The reliance on the frequency of meaning occurrences encourages the statistical reproduction of dominant interpretations, without the ability to evaluate the epistemic strength of those meanings (Malhas & Elsayed, 2022). The discursive dominance reflected in the training data does not necessarily reflect the validity of the interpretation, because the popularity of a meaning does not guarantee its conformity with the structure of revelation.

Interpretive coherence demands substantive unity of meaning, namely, the internal integration of the Quran's verses, themes, and theological principles as a unified revelation (Alsaied, 2025). This coherence is not only measured through consistency between statements, but also through methodological awareness of the relationships between verses and the dynamics of thematic meaning. Artificial intelligence systems establish meaningful connections through statistical correlations between linguistic units, resulting in structural-formal coherence (Titus, 2024). The linguistic complexity of the Quran, such as *iltifāt*, *majāz*, *mushtarak lafẓī*, and non-linear syntactic relations, tends to be reduced to the single equivalent meaning that appears most frequently in the data (Gaanoun & Alsuhaibani, 2025). This reduction creates an impression of semantic regularity that masks the productive tensions of meaning between verses. The coherence created is not based on theological or methodological awareness, but rather on the stability of linguistic patterns. As a result, AI-based interpretation fails to capture the thematic movement of meaning that underlies the development of a holistic and layered understanding of the Quran.

The justification of knowledge is the primary foundation for the epistemic validity of interpretation, as it requires justification through clear methodological tools. Interpretation justification in the Islamic tradition relies on linguistic, historical, and rational-normative arguments that enable a critical assessment of the

strength of a meaning (Ichwan et al., 2025). Artificial intelligence-based interpretation lacks a reflective justification mechanism, as the inference process is opaque and cannot be traced to explicit methodological premises (Ding et al., 2022). References to sources of interpretation are implicit and aggregative, making the relationship between conclusions and argumentative bases unverifiable (Ilafi & Nurrohim, 2025). The absence of *qawā'id tarjīh* and a hierarchy of evidence renders AI incapable of explaining the epistemic reasons why one meaning is chosen over another. The resulting knowledge claims constitute computational outcomes, not testable methodological conclusions.

The historical dimension of interpretation reveals additional structural epistemic limitations. *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* in the epistemology of interpretation does not function as background information, but rather as a structure of meaning that frames the relationship between the text and the reality of revelation (Khodijah & Musafa'ah, 2025). Artificial intelligence treats historical context as additional data separate from the process of reasoning about meaning, so that the normative significance of revelatory events is not epistemically integrated (Confalonieri et al., 2021). The inability to distinguish between context as information and context as a horizon of meaning causes AI to fail to understand the transformation of meaning generated through the interaction of text and historical reality (Tirado-Olivares et al., 2023). The resulting interpretations tend to be ahistorical in an epistemic sense, failing to consider historical relevance as a basis for normative reasoning. This condition results in a tendency to generalize meaning, thereby ignoring the temporal and situational boundaries of revelation and treating meaning as a static entity detached from its historical dynamics (Malhas & Elsayed, 2022).

Understanding the *maqāṣid* of the Quran requires integrating the text, values, and the teleological orientation toward the purpose of revelation. *Maqāṣid* functions as an epistemic structure that guides the assessment of the strength of meaning based on the orientation of benefit and normative goals (Mutawali, 2023). Artificial intelligence lacks the rational capacity to substantively assess the purpose of revelation, as it only optimizes output based on past patterns, without the capacity for normative reflection. When confronted with normative verses, AI tends to produce literal generalizations that fail to consider the implications of sharia's goals (Salim & Aditya, 2025). This limitation is ontological, not merely technical, because assessing *maqāṣid* demands normative rationality that goes beyond computation. The resulting interpretation risks being pseudo-normative, treating the purpose of revelation as linguistic information rather than an ethical orientation that requires contextual assessment (Abdalhussein, 2025).

The epistemological problems of data-based interpretation have direct implications for claims of the objectivity of interpretive knowledge. Objectivity in Islamic epistemology is not synonymous with technical neutrality, but rather is determined by the fulfillment of the requirements of truth, substantive coherence,

and methodological justification (Lumbard, 2024). Claims of AI objectivity rest on the assumption of data and algorithmic neutrality, even though training data reflects social constructions, school-of-thought preferences, and particular discursive tendencies. Statistical patterns represent dominant tendencies, not epistemically tested truths. When objectivity is reduced to output consistency and reproducibility, the reflective dimension of interpretation is eliminated (Rønn, 2022). The resulting knowledge appears technically objective, but is epistemologically fragile because it lacks accountable normative justification. This kind of objectivity is procedural, not epistemic, and therefore fails to meet the criteria for interpretive knowledge in the Islamic tradition.

The overall analysis confirms that the epistemic limitations of artificial intelligence are fundamental when dealing with the complexities of Quranic interpretation. These limitations include the inability to establish hermeneutic truth, the failure to achieve substantive coherence, the lack of methodological justification, and the absence of a teleological assessment of the *maqāṣid*. AI-based interpretation cannot claim to be objective exegetical knowledge in the sense of Islamic epistemology, as it fails to meet the requirements of justification, unity of meaning, and orientation toward the goal of revelation. The epistemic position of AI must be positioned proportionally as an auxiliary instrument operating at the linguistic level, not as an authority on exegetical knowledge. Affirming these limits is a crucial prerequisite for further discussion on the role, responsibilities, and epistemological regulation of artificial intelligence in Quranic studies.

The Relationship between the Subject of Interpretation, the Text of the Quran, and Technology

The shift in the interpreter's subject position has significant epistemological implications for the character of interpretive knowledge. Hermeneutics understands interpretation as a conscious process that always recognizes the subject's limitations, historical distance, and the instability of language (Ichwan et al., 2025). Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, reduces complexity by presenting meaning in a structured, classified manner (Mallick & Mittal, 2025). When interpretive results are presented as seemingly final outputs, awareness of historical and existential issues is potentially weakened. The interpreter is no longer encouraged to question methodological assumptions or negotiate horizons of meaning, as technology presents the illusion of epistemic certainty (Chukhanov & Kairbekov, 2024). This situation is not merely a technical issue, but it also touches on the epistemological foundations of interpretation. The resulting knowledge tends to shift from reflective understanding to operational knowledge, thereby losing the dimension of openness that is a key requirement for hermeneutic dialogue.

The reduction in hermeneutic awareness is also closely related to the weakening of the interpreter's scientific intuition. Scientific intuition is not a spontaneous, unfounded response, but rather the result of internalizing interpretive

traditions, mastering language, and sensitivity to sociohistorical context (Pichan & Ahmadnezhad, 2021). Artificial intelligence does not develop such intuition, as it operates through data correlation without existential experience (Pedwell, 2024). Excessive reliance on system output can replace the in-depth reading, argumentative comparison, and methodological reflection that shape the interpreter's scientific intuition. As a result, the interpretation process becomes an activity of information consumption rather than the production of reflective meaning (Malhas & Elsayed, 2022). The loss of scientific intuition directly impacts the quality of interpretation, as interpreters lose sensitivity to linguistic ambiguities, normative tensions, and ethical nuances inherent in revealed texts. Interpretations born without intuition risk becoming meaningless and detached from human reality (Thaib, 2023).

The ethical dimension has also shifted as subjects interact with the Quranic text through technology. The ethics of interpretation demands epistemic responsibility from the interpreter regarding the implications of the resulting meaning for the social and moral life of the community (Ridwan, 2021). When technology presents interpretation as a ready-to-use information product, the interpreter's personal and moral involvement tends to diminish. The process of understanding no longer requires intellectual trust but is reduced to the search for efficient answers. This logic of efficiency has the potential to shift awareness of the sacredness of the text, as meaning is treated as a commodity of knowledge. The impression of objectivity inherent in technology can also obscure the subject's responsibility, as if the meaning presented is free from normative choices (Tigard, 2021). This situation suggests that ethical issues are not additional aspects, but rather an inherent part of the epistemology of technology-based interpretation.

The relationship between epistemology and the ethics of interpretation becomes increasingly crucial in the context of the use of artificial intelligence. Ways of knowing always shape ways of being responsible, so changes in the mechanisms of knowledge directly impact the moral orientation of interpretation. When interpretation is reduced to the extraction of linguistic data, knowledge loses the transformational dimension that should shape the interpreter's consciousness (Abalkheel, Sourani, & Zohbi, 2025). Interpretation is no longer understood as a space for value testing and normative reflection, but rather as a means of providing information and insight. As a result, the human relationship with the text of revelation loses its power to shape character and ethical orientation. The interpreting subject risks losing its role as a moral agent responsible for meaning as technology takes over the epistemic mediation function (Putra & Hidayaturrahman, 2020). The main challenge lies in ensuring that technology does not replace ethical awareness but rather remains a tool under human responsibility.

Maintaining the reflective role of the interpreting subject is key to ensuring that the relationship with the Quranic text retains its humanistic and spiritual dimensions. Technology needs to be positioned as a supporting tool, not a substitute

for hermeneutic awareness. The interpreting subject retains epistemic authority through the capacity for reflection, normative judgment, and ethical responsibility that algorithmic systems cannot replicate. Awareness of technological limitations is essential to preventing interpretation from becoming a mechanical activity. Interpretation requires the presence of a conscious, critical, and responsible subject, so that the meaning of revelation continues to serve as a source for the formation of awareness and values. The relationship between the subject, text, and technology should be directed toward strengthening understanding, rather than merely accelerating access to meaning. In this way, interpretation remains rooted in a reflective intellectual tradition while simultaneously responding to the epistemological challenges of the era of artificial intelligence.

Epistemological and Ethical Limits of AI's Role in Quranic Interpretation

The epistemological limits of artificial intelligence's role in Quranic interpretation lie in its lack of normative evaluative capacity, a primary prerequisite for interpreting revelation. Exegetical knowledge does not stop at recognizing linguistic patterns or symbolic regularities, but rather demands the ability to assess meaning as a value orientation tied to normative goals and practical consequences (Saeed & Akbar, 2021). AI operates through corpus-based statistical computation, yielding descriptive and probabilistic relationships rather than reflective and intentional ones (Sheth, Roy, & Gaur, 2023). This situation places AI outside the epistemic requirements of interpretation as a meaningful meaning-making activity, as it lacks reflective awareness, moral goal orientation, and the ability to weigh value implications. When these computational mechanisms are applied to the Quranic text, there is a risk of reducing its meaning by treating revelation as a neutral linguistic object rather than a source of normative guidance.

Placing AI as an epistemic instrument requires the formulation of clear functional boundaries to prevent an implicit shift toward the status of interpretive subject. AI functions can be directed toward mapping vocabulary, tracing verse correlations, grouping themes, and reconstructing historical interpretive tendencies from data (Yadav, 2024). All of these functions are instrumental because they rely on computational work rather than normative judgment. Interpretation as a scientific activity requires a believing subject who bears the mandate of interpretation and is responsible for the social and theological implications of the meaning produced (Abdulaziz, 2025). When AI is treated as an interpretive subject, the epistemic process loses its scientific and ethical dimension because the interpretive output lacks moral responsibility. AI lacks intention, empathy, and awareness of consequences, and therefore cannot account for the impact of its interpretations (Schwitzgebel, 2023). Affirming the instrumental function prevents the naturalization of AI output as interpretive truth, thereby maintaining the epistemological integrity of interpretation as a value-laden intellectual practice.

Epistemological implications emerge significantly when these instrumental boundaries are transcended, and AI is positioned as an autonomous generator of meaning. Reducing interpretation to algorithmic output risks negating the Quran's meaning, which is contextual, *maqāṣidī*, and transformative. Interpretation aims not only to explain the text but also to guide action and shape the ethical orientation of the community, so that each interpretation carries concrete practical consequences (Dweirj, 2023). AI operates through data-driven pattern generalization, whereas interpretation requires sensitivity to the particularities of social context, actual humanitarian problems, and value dynamics. This imbalance produces interpretations that appear textually coherent but are normatively problematic. Delegating meaning to technical systems also risks creating epistemic dependency and automation bias, which blunts the interpreter's critical capacity (John-Mathews, 2022). The epistemology of interpretation requires the active involvement of reason, scientific traditions, and value considerations, rather than merely analytical efficiency.

The relationship between the epistemology of interpretation and ethical responsibility becomes even more crucial when AI is involved in the production of religious knowledge. Every process of interpretation carries normative implications that influence religious attitudes, worship practices, and the community's social relations (Alsaied, 2025). Ethical responsibility demands methodological clarity, normative caution, and awareness of the impact of interpretation. The use of AI must be accompanied by an explicit recognition that the system's output is tentative and requires critical human evaluation. The ethics of religious knowledge do not stop at data accuracy or textual coherence, but rather encompass interpretive fairness, contextual sensitivity, and protection against the misuse of meaning. AI lacks the capacity to weigh benefits and harms because such considerations are rooted in values rather than data (Stahl et al., 2023). Human interpreters still bear full responsibility for the disseminated meaning and its ideological and social implications.

The ethical framework for the use of AI in interpretation must be formulated as an operational epistemological principle rather than a mere declarative norm. The principle of transparency demands openness regarding the system's operation, data sources, and analytical limitations to avoid the illusion of objectivity (Ananny & Crawford, 2018). The principle of normative prudence emphasizes that any AI output must be examined through linguistic, historical, and *maqāṣidī* considerations before being used as the basis for interpretation (Sukkar et al., 2024). The principle of interpretive justice requires sensitivity to the diversity of social contexts and the potential exclusionary or discriminatory impacts of meaning (Craft et al., 2020). This principle positions human interpreters as normative evaluators fully responsible for the interpretation process and results. Without these principles, the use of AI risks

turning interpretation into an information commodity detached from its orientation toward moral development and social transformation.

The formulated normative framework asserts that the use of AI in Quranic interpretation is only epistemologically legitimate when it is positioned as an instrument under human hermeneutic supervision and with full ethical accountability. The principle of instrumentality rejects claims of authority over meaning in technical systems. The principle of hermeneutic supervision ensures the integration of AI results with linguistic, historical, and value-oriented knowledge. The principle of ethical accountability demands accountability for the impact of interpretation on people's lives. This framework serves as a normative reference for contemporary interpretation studies, ensuring that technological innovation does not erode the interpreter's epistemic and ethical responsibilities. Thus, AI is utilized to enrich the process of understanding without replacing the role of humans as the trustees of meaningful and responsible interpretation of revelation.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence does not possess authoritative capacity as an interpretive subject, but rather functions as a limited epistemic instrument that relies entirely on human methodological competence, normative frameworks, and ethical responsibilities. These findings emphasize that the consistency of reasoning procedures determines the validity of interpretation in the digital era, the traceability of knowledge sources, and critical awareness of algorithmic biases inherent in AI systems, thus clarifying the boundaries between analytical tools and the authority of religious knowledge. Theoretically, this study contributes to enriching the epistemology of interpretation by formulating the subject-text-technology relationship as a normatively controlled instrumental configuration. Practically, it provides a conceptual basis for the critical and transparent use of AI in digital interpretation research, Islamic education, and the development of tools to assist in Quranic study. The limitations of this study lie in its conceptual and normative approach, which does not yet involve empirical analysis of the practice of using AI on specific digital interpretation platforms. Consequently, the range of findings does not reflect the variation in technological implementation in concrete terms. Therefore, further research is recommended to fill this research gap through cross-platform empirical studies, the development of interpretation-based AI epistemic evaluation indicators, and the formulation of an adaptive regulatory framework that integrates an interdisciplinary approach, encompassing interpretation studies, technology ethics, and data science.

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Author Contribution Statement

AB contributed to the conceptual formulation of the research, coordination of manuscript writing, and final correspondence and editing. MZ contributed to the development of the theoretical framework and the literature review. KK contributed to the design of the methodology and data processing. YK conducted the analysis of the research results and the interpretation of the findings. NK played a role in content validation, argument alignment, and editing the manuscript's substance. All authors were involved in the review and final approval of the manuscript, and are responsible for the overall integrity of the article's content.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that this manuscript was prepared without any conflict of interest, whether financial, professional, or institutional. The entire research, analysis, and writing process was conducted independently and objectively in accordance with applicable academic principles.

AI Usage Statement

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the preparation of this manuscript was limited to assistance in improving language quality, correcting grammar, and providing formatting support. All scientific substance in this article, including research results, findings, concepts, analyses, ideas, and conclusions, is entirely the result of the author's own research and academic work, not the product of AI. Therefore, the author remains fully responsible for the content and scientific integrity of this manuscript.

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