

## The Concept of *I'jāz Al-Qur'ān* in KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's Exegesis: An Interdisciplinary Study between Qur'anic Hermeneutics and Science

Farina Fikria Aulia

State Islamic University of Syekh Wasil Kediri, Indonesia

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#### \*Corresponding Author:

Name: Farina Fikria Aulia  
Email: farinafikria@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This article examines the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in *Tafsir Aktual* by KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i, positioning it within the framework of contemporary Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis oriented toward the contextualization of revealed meaning. This study aims to describe the formulation of the *i'jāz* concept developed by KH. Musta'in, identify the most dominant aspect of *i'jāz* in his exegetical practice, and analyze the hermeneutic approach employed in explaining the miraculous nature of the Qur'an to modern society. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with hermeneutic methods and field study. Data were obtained through textual analysis of *Tafsir Aktual* published in *Bangsa Online*, in-depth interviews as a means of clarification and interpretation validation, and literature review of contemporary tafsir and '*ulum al-Qur'an* scholarship. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic hermeneutic approach through dialogue between the textual horizon and the readers' social context. The findings indicate that KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i formulates *i'jāz al-Qur'an* integratively, emphasizing two dominant aspects: *i'jāz balaghi* and *i'jāz 'ilmi*. The *balaghi* aspect is evident in his analysis of diction, metaphor, linguistic structure, and morphological functions of the Qur'an, while the *'ilmi* aspect is manifested in reflective dialogue between *āyat kauniyah* and modern rational knowledge without reducing the Qur'an to a scientific textbook. The hermeneutic approach employed is dialogical, communicative, and pedagogical, rendering the exegesis not merely informative but also socially transformative. This study concludes that *Tafsir Aktual* by KH. Musta'in Syafi'i represents a contemporary exegetical model that successfully revitalizes the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in a moderate, contextual manner relevant to the needs of the Muslim community in the digital era.

*I'jāz Al-Qur'an*; Qur'anic Hermeneutics; Contemporary Tafsir; KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i

### Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji konsep *i'jāz al-Qur'an* dalam *Tafsir Aktual* karya KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i dengan menempatkannya dalam kerangka tafsir kontemporer Indonesia yang berorientasi pada kontekstualisasi makna wahyu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan formulasi konsep *i'jāz* yang dikembangkan oleh KH. Musta'in, mengidentifikasi aspek *i'jāz* yang paling dominan dalam praktik penafsirannya, serta menganalisis pendekatan hermeneutik yang digunakan dalam menjelaskan kemukjizatan Al-Qur'an kepada masyarakat modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode hermeneutik dan studi lapangan. Data diperoleh melalui analisis teks *Tafsir Aktual* yang dimuat di *Bangsa Online*, wawancara mendalam sebagai sarana klarifikasi dan validasi interpretasi, serta studi pustaka terhadap literatur tafsir dan '*ulum al-Qur'an* kontemporer. Analisis data dilakukan dengan pendekatan hermeneutik tematik melalui dialog antara horizon teks dan konteks sosial pembaca. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i memformulasikan *i'jāz al-Qur'an* secara integratif dengan menekankan dua aspek dominan, yaitu *i'jāz balaghi* dan *i'jāz 'ilmi*. Aspek *balaghi* tampak dalam analisis diksi, metafora, struktur bahasa, dan fungsi morfologi Al-Qur'an, sementara aspek *'ilmi* diwujudkan dalam dialog reflektif antara ayat-ayat kauniyah dan pengetahuan rasional modern tanpa menjadikan Al-Qur'an sebagai kitab sains. Pendekatan hermeneutik yang digunakan bersifat dialogis, komunikatif, dan pedagogis, sehingga tafsir tidak hanya bersifat informatif, tetapi juga transformatif secara sosial. Penelitian ini

menyimpulkan bahwa *Tafsir Aktual* KH. Musta'in Syafi'i merepresentasikan model tafsir kontemporer yang berhasil merevitalisasi konsep *i'jāz al-Qur'an* secara moderat, kontekstual, dan relevan dengan kebutuhan umat di era digital.

**Kata Kunci :** *I'jāz Al-Qur'an*; *Hermeneutik Qur'ani*; *Tafsir Kontemporer*; KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i

## INTRODUCTION

The Qur'an, as the final divine revelation, possesses unparalleled excellence in its linguistic expression, legal structure, epistemic depth, and moral message. Among the most fundamental concepts in understanding its uniqueness is *i'jāz al-Qur'an*, referring to its inimitability and the inability of humankind to rival its grandeur. *I'jāz* serves not only as evidence of the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ but also as proof of the enduring intellectual and civilizational relevance of revelation across time. The concept encompasses various dimensions of miraculousness, including linguistic beauty, internal coherence, correspondence with modern scientific knowledge, and the truthfulness of unseen information (Mahfuza et al., 2025). By linking revelation with the advancement of science and technology, *i'jāz* may function as a foundational pillar for the development of modern Islamic civilization. In the digital era, its relevance becomes increasingly significant, enabling Muslims to understand the Qur'an not merely as a religious text but as a contextual source of intellectual and social inspiration.

The study of *I'jāz al-Qur'an* has been widely discussed by classical scholars and contemporary researchers. Several studies indicate a correlation between *i'jāz* and modern scientific developments, particularly concerning Qur'anic references to natural and biological phenomena (Mandalika et al., 2023). The miraculous nature of the Qur'an lies not only in its linguistic eloquence but also in its legal system and its timeless transcendence beyond spatial and temporal limitations (Islamy & Alwizar, 2025). Within the discourse of *i'jāz 'ilmi* (scientific inimitability), scholars have emphasized the necessity of maintaining a balance between scientific interpretation and theological epistemology to prevent excessive claims that exceed the methodological boundaries of Qur'anic exegesis (Sahidin & Muslih, 2022). In the Indonesian context, hermeneutical approaches to Qur'anic interpretation have become increasingly prominent as efforts to connect the Qur'anic text with contemporary social realities, ensuring the continued relevance of revelation (Darmawan, 2024). This development has encouraged exegetes to present the miraculous dimensions of the Qur'an in a popular and contextual style, as exemplified by KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i through his "Tafsir Aktual" column in *Bangsa Online*. Furthermore, strategies for disseminating knowledge of *i'jāz* through digital media are considered essential to ensure that the meanings and miraculous dimensions of the Qur'an remain accessible and comprehensible to modern generations (Mahfuza et al., 2025).

Despite these significant contributions, much of the existing scholarship on *I'jāz al-Qur'an* remains focused on conceptual exposition, thematic analysis of verses, or theoretical debates concerning the legitimacy of *i'jāz 'ilmi*. Studies that explore the relationship between revelation and science or the normative dimensions of Qur'anic miraculousness often fail to examine how the concept of *i'jāz* is concretely operationalized within the exegetical practice of a particular interpreter. Similarly, hermeneutical studies of contemporary Indonesian exegesis, while attentive to methodological dynamics and social context, have not specifically positioned *i'jāz al-Qur'an* as the primary analytical framework in examining the works of local exegetes (Darmawan, 2024). Consequently, a significant gap exists at the level of exegetical praxis namely, how *i'jāz* is

conceptualized, selected, and communicatively presented within popular tafsir consumed directly by the broader public. This article addresses that gap by examining the formulation and actualization of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*, representing a local Indonesian exegete active within the digital exegetical sphere.

Methodologically, this study adopts a moderate and critical stance toward the discourse of *i'jāz 'ilmī*. It does not endorse an affirmative approach that positions the Qur'an as a scientific textbook or treats modern scientific discoveries as definitive proof of revelation. Instead, *i'jāz 'ilmī* is understood as a hermeneutical and pedagogical approach one that presents Qur'anic cosmological verses in dialogue with scientific development without disregarding the tentative and provisional nature of scientific epistemology (Khoiri & Sulthoni, 2024). In this regard, the study aligns with contemporary scholarship that recognizes the controversial nature of *i'jāz 'ilmī* and underscores the need for a clear methodological position to avoid elevating scientific interpretation as final empirical validation (Hanif, 2022).

Based on the foregoing literature review, it can be identified that most studies of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* emphasize conceptual and theoretical dimensions such as *i'jāz bayānī*, *'ilmī*, and *tasyrī'i* without investigating how these concepts are implemented within accessible and popular exegesis. Previous research, including that of Mandalika and Islamy & Alwizar, primarily concentrates on verse analysis or theoretical discussions of miraculousness rather than on the interpretive practice of local exegetes. This article contributes to the discourse by examining *i'jāz al-Qur'an* within the actual exegetical practice of KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i, a public Indonesian exegete who popularizes the miraculous dimensions of the Qur'an through linguistic, scientific, and social approaches in digital media. The distinctiveness of this study lies not merely in describing the theory of *i'jāz*, but in analyzing how it is applied within communicative contemporary exegesis grounded in the lived social experiences of Muslim communities.

Drawing upon this background, the study seeks to answer how the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* is formulated and understood within KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*. It further examines which dimensions of *i'jāz* are most prominent in his interpretive practice whether linguistic (*balāghī*), scientific (*'ilmī*), legal (*tasyrī'i*), or socio-contextual. In addition, the research explores how a hermeneutical approach is employed in articulating the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* to contemporary audiences through popular and digital media, and to what extent this approach successfully bridges the Qur'anic text with the social realities of the Muslim community.

## METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using hermeneutical analysis and field research methods. The qualitative approach is selected because the study seeks to understand meanings and intellectual constructions in depth through textual analysis and the lived experience of the research subject, rather than to test hypotheses or measure variables (Creswell, 2014). The research design follows an interpretive case study model, examining the thought of a particular figure through his exegetical works and direct interaction with the subject. A hermeneutical approach is applied to interpret the exegetical text contextually by situating it within its historical and social horizons (Gadamer, 2004). This principle emphasizes the dialogical relationship between text, interpreter, and context as a process of meaning formation, often described as the

“fusion of horizons.” Field research is conducted to obtain empirical data in the form of direct explanations from KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i as the primary informant. In this study, interviews function primarily as instruments of clarification and validation of interpretations derived from textual analysis, rather than as the principal source of textual meaning.

Data collection techniques include semi-structured in-depth interviews, documentation, and library research. Semi-structured interviews are chosen because they allow the researcher to explore the informant's perspectives in depth while maintaining alignment with the research focus (Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, 2009). The interview was conducted at the residence (*ndalem*) of KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i in Jombang, East Java, on 19 October 2025. Documentation consists of collecting published editions of *Tafsir Aktual* featured in *Bangsa Online*, interview transcripts, and field observation notes. Library research involves reviewing classical and contemporary literature relevant to *i'jāz al-Qur'an*, modern Qur'anic exegesis, and Qur'anic hermeneutics. The primary research instrument is the researcher as a human instrument, responsible for planning, collecting, and interpreting the data. The researcher's direct presence as both observer and interviewer enables intensive interaction with the research subject, which constitutes a central characteristic of qualitative field research.

Data analysis is conducted using a thematic hermeneutical approach by reading and interpreting the exegetical texts and relating them to empirical contexts derived from interviews. Operationally, Gadamerian hermeneutics is applied through stages of thematic textual reading, interpretive dialogue between the horizon of the text and the context of interpretation, and confirmation of understanding through interviews as hermeneutical validation. The analytical process involves data reduction, thematic narrative presentation, and conceptual conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Data validity is ensured through source and method triangulation by comparing interview data, exegetical texts, and relevant academic literature. In addition, member checking is conducted with the primary informant to ensure the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation. An audit trail is also maintained to ensure transparency, traceability, and overall reliability of the research process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Formulation of the Concept of *I'jāz* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

#### 1. The Concept and Dimensions of *I'jāz al-Qur'an* in Contemporary Discourse

Etymologically, the term *i'jāz* derives from the root *'a-j-z*, which denotes weakening or rendering others incapable of producing something comparable. In the terminology of *'ulum al-Qur'an*, *i'jāz al-Qur'an* refers to the distinctive inimitability of the Qur'an that cannot be rivaled by human beings, whether in its linguistic form, structural composition, depth of meaning, or transformative impact on social and spiritual life. This concept affirms the Qur'an's status as a miracle that transcends space and time and surpasses human cognitive capacity. Such an understanding developed within the classical exegetical tradition and continues to be elaborated in contemporary scholarship. From a modern perspective, *i'jāz* is not merely perceived as a rhetorical phenomenon but also as a horizon of meaning that demonstrates the epistemological superiority of revelation. Accordingly, *i'jāz al-Qur'an* functions both as a theological foundation

and as an analytical framework for examining the miraculous nature of the sacred text (Sahidin & Muslih, 2022).

In contemporary discourse, *i'jāz al-Qur'an* is generally categorized into several principal dimensions: *i'jāz lughawī* or *balāghī* (linguistic inimitability), *i'jāz tasyrī'i* (legislative inimitability), and *i'jāz 'ilmī* (scientific inimitability). The *balāghī* dimension emphasizes the unparalleled excellence of Qur'anic language, rhetoric, and stylistic structure, which cannot be equaled by human literary production. The *tasyrī'i* dimension refers to the perfection of the Qur'anic legal system and its normative values in regulating human life. Meanwhile, *i'jāz 'ilmī* concerns scientific indications within cosmological verses (*āyāt kaunīyyah*) that are understood in relation to modern scientific developments. This classification is not intended to rigidly separate aspects of miraculousness but rather to serve as an analytical device for systematically understanding the multifaceted excellence of the Qur'an. Such a classificatory approach clarifies the scope of discussion while acknowledging the interrelatedness of these dimensions (Mahdiyatul & Arrahmah, 2023).

Nevertheless, modern discourse also reveals that *i'jāz*, particularly in its *'ilmī* dimension, constitutes an epistemologically problematic domain. Associating Qur'anic verses with modern scientific discoveries often generates debate concerning the methodological boundaries between exegesis and scientific interpretation. Several scholars caution that scientific approaches to the Qur'an must be conducted carefully to avoid retrospective claims that impose contemporary theories onto the revelatory text. Such risks may lead to a theological reductionism if the Qur'an is treated merely as a scientific manual. Therefore, *i'jāz 'ilmī* is more appropriately understood as a reflective and pedagogical approach that encourages human beings to contemplate divine signs manifested in the natural world. Within this framework, the relationship between revelation and science is dialogical and inspirational rather than empirically verificatory in a final (Sahidin & Muslih, 2022).

## 2. KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i and the Authority of Qur'anic Exegesis

KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i is one of Indonesia's pesantren-based exegetes, widely recognized through his work *Tafsir al-Qur'an Aktual*. His exegetical authority is not constructed solely through formal academic credentials but through the integration of pesantren scholarly traditions, mastery of Qur'anic memorization, and extensive experience in teaching and public religious preaching. The continuity of scholarly transmission (*sanad*) and the culture of Qur'anic study that surrounds him shape an interpretive style grounded in classical authority while remaining responsive to the needs of contemporary Muslim communities. This position situates him as an exegete emerging from the pesantren ecosystem with strong socio-religious legitimacy. Scholarly recognition of his intellectual capacity is also reflected in academic studies that situate him within the broader dynamics of local Indonesian exegesis (Khusnah & Noorhidayati, 2023). Thus, the construction of KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's exegetical authority is integrative, combining tradition, textual competence, and practical religious engagement.

Within the landscape of modern Indonesian Qur'anic interpretation, KH. A. Musta'in may be understood as a representative exegete who combines the *tablīhī* method of interpretation with social sensitivity and the utilization of mass communication media. This interpretive orientation

reflects an effort to bridge the textual depth of the Qur'an with the contemporary social challenges faced by Muslim society. Such a model aligns with the broader development of Indonesian exegesis, which emphasizes the actualization of Qur'anic values without abandoning semantic structure and textual integrity (Maulana & Samaila, 2025). His engagement with digital platforms and public preaching forums further expands the reach of his interpretive discourse into wider social spaces. The relevance of his biography in this study does not lie in administrative details but in his exegetical legitimacy and interpretive authority. Therefore, KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's position becomes significant as a subject of analysis for understanding the formulation and articulation of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* within the context of contemporary Muslim society.

### 3. The Formulation of *I'jāz al-Qur'an* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

In *Tafsir Aktual*, KH. Musta'in Syafi'i conceptualizes *i'jāz al-Qur'an* as a manifestation of divine knowledge that is transhistorical and surpasses the limits of human rationality. This perspective positions *i'jāz* as a supra-rational phenomenon that, while ultimately beyond complete human comprehension, may still be reflectively understood by reason when it remains grounded in and guided by revelation (Syafi'i, 2025). Such an approach resonates with contemporary exegetical tendencies that locate the Qur'an's miraculousness not solely in rhetorical brilliance or scientific indications, but in the coherence of its meaning and its capacity for social transformation (Darmawan, 2024).

In his interpretation of QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:12–14, KH. A. Musta'in argues that the gradual description of human creation reflects a precise semantic structure whose depth becomes more appreciable in light of modern scientific knowledge. However, within *Tafsir Aktual*, the passage is not presented as empirical scientific proof of the Qur'an. Rather, it functions to reinforce theological consciousness regarding the limitations of human knowledge before divine revelation. This interpretive stance reflects a moderate approach to *i'jāz 'ilmī*, consistent with recommendations in contemporary Qur'anic studies (Sahidin & Muslih, 2022).

Similarly, in interpreting QS. An-Nūr [24]:40, KH. A. Musta'in understands the depiction of deep-sea darkness as a symbol of the complexity of God's creation, surpassing the scientific awareness of the community at the time of revelation. This interpretation is not directed toward literal scientific claims but toward strengthening theological insight and existential reflection (Maulana & Samaila, 2025). Overall, the formulation of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in *Tafsir Aktual* situates the Qur'an's miraculousness in the depth of its meaning, contextual relevance, and moral-social transformative power. In this model, *i'jāz* functions as a horizon of meaning that dialogically connects revelation, reason, and social reality an essential characteristic of contemporary Indonesian Qur'anic exegesis (Darmawan, 2024).

Table 1: The Dimensions of *I'jāz al-Qur'an* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

Dimension of <i>I'jāz</i>	Interpretive Characteristics	Example Verses	Hermeneutical Function	Textual-linguistic
<i>I'jāz Balaghi</i> (Linguistic-Rhetorical)	Analysis of diction and	QS. Ṭāhā [20]:63-64	Preserving the objectivity of meaning	Moderate-reflective

	linguistic structure			
P'jāz 'Ilmī (Scientific)	Cosmological indications without literal scientific claims	QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:12-14; QS. An-Nūr [24]:40	Theological reflection	Moderate-reflective
P'jāz Tasyri'i/Social	Actualization of social and ethical values	Verses on social ethics	Transformation of Qur'anic values	Contextual-normative

Source: Adapted from *Tafsir Aktual* by KH. Musta'in Syafi'i and the author's analysis.

The table above systematically maps the construction of the dimensions of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* by illustrating the relationship between interpretive characteristics, example verses, hermeneutical functions, and epistemological positions. Within the dimension of *i'jāz balāghī*, interpretation centers on the analysis of diction and linguistic structure, as reflected in the reading of QS. Ṭāhā [20]:63-64. Its hermeneutical function is directed toward preserving the objectivity of meaning through a textual-linguistic approach. The dimension of *i'jāz 'ilmī* is presented in a moderate manner through the interpretation of cosmological verses such as QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:12-14 and QS. An-Nūr [24]:40, without positioning them as literal scientific claims, but rather as vehicles for theological reflection characterized by a moderate-reflective stance. Meanwhile, the dimension of *i'jāz tasyri'i* or social inimitability emphasizes the actualization of Qur'anic ethical values within social life, functioning as a contextual-normative transformation of values. Overall, the structure of the table demonstrates that KH. Musta'in does not dichotomize the dimensions of miraculousness; instead, he positions them as complementary interpretive frameworks.

### The Dominant Aspects of *I'jāz* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

An examination of KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's exegetical works and interpretive style in *Tafsir Aktual*, published in *Bangsa Online*, indicates that the most dominant dimensions of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in his interpretation are *balāghī* (linguistic and rhetorical inimitability) and *'ilmī* (the rational and intellectual dimension of revelation). These two aspects constitute the primary foundation of his effort to present the Qur'an's miraculous nature to contemporary audiences who are familiar with modern language and scientific reasoning. Through this dual emphasis, he articulates the Qur'an's excellence not only in its aesthetic and rhetorical precision but also in its capacity to engage rational reflection. Consequently, the discourse of *i'jāz* in his tafsir functions as both a linguistic demonstration of inimitability and a rational invitation to contemplate the coherence of revelation within the modern intellectual context.

#### 1. The *Balāghī* Dimension (Linguistic and Rhetorical Beauty of the Qur'an)

The *balāghī* dimension in KH. A. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* represents a central aspect of *i'jāz al-Qur'an*, rooted in the linguistic excellence of revelation. His interpretations demonstrate a strong command of the disciplines of *'ulūm al-Qur'an*, particularly *'ilm al-balāghah*, which

encompasses *'ilm al-ma'ānī*, *'ilm al-bayān*, and *'ilm al-badī'*, though presented in a communicative and accessible style. This approach aligns with Sulaiman's findings, which emphasize that *i'jāz balāghī* lies not merely in stylistic beauty but in the precise correspondence between linguistic structure, contextual utterance, and theological message an integration that cannot be replicated by human language (Sulaiman, 2021).

In his interpretation of QS. Al-Ḥajj [22]:5, KH. Musta'in explains the term *'alaqah* not simply as "a clot of blood," but as a metaphor denoting attachment and dependence, comparable to a leech that absorbs nourishment. This analysis reflects sensitivity to *tasybih balīgh* (eloquent simile), wherein Qur'anic language operates through symbolic and dynamic representation rather than static object description. Such an approach resonates with contemporary Qur'anic linguistic studies, which highlight the dynamic and context-rich nature of revelatory language (Azmi et al., 2025). Similarly, his etymological exploration of the term *mudghab*, understood as "something chewed," demonstrates a method of *tahlīl lughawī* characteristic of rhetorical exegesis. Tracing lexical roots and semantic nuances in this manner has been widely acknowledged as a key indicator of linguistic *i'jāz* in modern tafsir studies.

At the morphological (*ṣarf*) level, KH. Musta'in further highlights the use of emphatic forms (*ṣiḡḡah mubālaghab*), such as the distinction between *hayāb* and *ḥayawān* in the Qur'an, which reflects an ontological gradation between worldly life and the life of the Hereafter. This analysis reinforces the view that variations in Qur'anic word forms are not merely aesthetic choices but carry profound theological implications, as emphasized in contemporary research on morphological functions in Qur'anic rhetoric (M. R. Ridho & Bakar, 2025). Moreover, his attentiveness to particles such as the letter *fā'* in QS. Al-Kahf [18]:85, indicating *ta'qīb faurī* (immediate succession) demonstrates mastery of *'ilm al-ma'ānī* and awareness of the relationship between linguistic structure and contextual action (Syafi'i, 2022). This confirms that *i'jāz balāghī* in *Tafsir Aktual* extends beyond aesthetic appreciation to encompass the communicative effectiveness of revelation in shaping moral and social consciousness.

## 2. The 'Ilmī Dimension (Scientific Orientation and the Rationality of Revelation)

In addition to the *balāghī* dimension, *Tafsir Aktual* also demonstrates a strong inclination toward *i'jāz 'ilmī*, namely the effort to highlight the correspondence between the Qur'anic *āyāt kaunīyyah* (cosmic verses) and empirical reality as well as rational knowledge. Within this framework, KH. Musta'in employs modern scientific findings as a medium of reflection to reveal the depth of revelation's meaning, rather than as a tool for literal scientific verification.

For instance, in his interpretation of QS. Al-Ḥajj [22]:5 and QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]:12-14, the terminological distinction between *nuthfah* and *manīyy* is used to demonstrate the precision of Qur'anic language in describing the early stages of human life (Syafi'i, 2025). This approach aligns with contemporary studies on *i'jāz 'ilmī*, which view verses concerning human creation as rational stimuli for recognizing divine greatness, rather than as substitutes for modern embryological science (Sahidin & Muslih, 2022).

Nevertheless, recent academic literature has cautioned against the risk of scientific overclaim in readings of *i'jāz 'ilmī*. Nidhal Guessoum, for example, argues that employing tentative scientific theories as benchmarks for validating revelation may inadvertently reduce the

Qur'an's status as a transcendent text (Guessoum, 2011). This critical perspective has also been adopted by several Indonesian scholars who emphasize the necessity of maintaining clear epistemic boundaries between tafsir and science (Hanif, 2022).

Within this conceptual framework, *i'jāz 'ilmī* in *Tafsir Aktual* is more appropriately understood as an expression of the rationality of revelation rather than as scientific prediction. KH. Musta'in does not position the Qur'an as a scientific manual; instead, he presents it as a divine text that encourages humanity to think, investigate, and read the natural world as *āyāt kaawmiyyah*. Such an approach reflects a moderate exegetical paradigm in which the relationship between revelation and science is dialogical and complementary rather than competitive.

### 3. The Synthesis of the *Balāghī* and *'Ilmī* Dimensions

These two dimensions *balāghī* and *'ilmī* do not function independently; rather, they mutually reinforce one another within KH. Musta'in's exegetical framework. The *balāghī* dimension reveals the expressive beauty of the Qur'an, while the *'ilmī* dimension highlights the logical and empirical depth of its meanings. For KH. Musta'in, Qur'anic language is not only beautiful but also intellectually profound; it is not merely aesthetic, but inherently rational.

Through a style that is both simple and reflective, KH. Musta'in succeeds in presenting *Tafsir Aktual* as a meeting point between the language of revelation and the language of science. His work affirms that *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* is not only to be admired, but also to be appreciated through human reason and experience. In this respect, his tafsir represents an integrative model of *i'jāz*, one that combines literary excellence with rational and empirical insight.

Table 2: Dominant Aspects of *I'jāz* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

Dimension of <i>I'jāz</i>	Verse / Exegetical Theme	Interpretive Pattern in <i>Tafsir Aktual</i>	Analytical Findings	Academic Implications
<i>Balāghī</i> (Rhetoric and Language)	QS. Al-Ḥajj [22]: 5 (‘alaqah, mudghah)	Metaphorical and etymological analysis of embryological terminology	Qur'anic language operates through symbolic activity and precise diction rather than literal description	Affirms linguistic <i>i'jāz</i> through <i>tasybih balīgh</i> and <i>tahlīl lughawī</i>
<i>Balāghī</i> (Morphology)	Hayāh vs. ḥayawān; kufr vs. kufrān	Emphasis on <i>ṣiġbah mubālaghab</i> and morphological distinctions	Variations in word forms convey ontological and theological gradations of meaning	<i>I'jāz</i> emerges from the correspondence between linguistic form and doctrinal message
<i>Balāghī</i> (Sentence Structure)	QS. Al-Kahf [18]: 85 (fa atba'a)	Analysis of particles ( <i>ḥurūf al-ma'āni</i> )	Qur'anic syntactic structure shapes ethical ethos and moral consciousness	The language of revelation is communicative and transformative

Dimension of <i>I'jāz</i>	Verse / Exegetical Theme	Interpretive Pattern in <i>Tafsir Aktual</i>	Analytical Findings	Academic Implications
' <i>Ilmī</i> (Rationality of Revelation)	QS. Al-Ḥajj [22]: 5; QS. Al-Mu'minūn [23]: 12–14	Dialogical engagement between revelatory language and modern scientific knowledge	Terminological precision encourages rational reflection	<i>I'jāz 'ilmī</i> is understood as the rationality of revelation, not scientific literalism
Synthesis of <i>Balāghī-'Ilmī</i>	Cosmic verses ( <i>āyat kawmiyyah</i> )	Integration of linguistic beauty and empirical reflection	Qur'anic language is simultaneously beautiful and logically profound	Forms an integrative model of <i>i'jāz</i> in contemporary exegesis

Table 2 demonstrates that the dominant aspect of *i'jāz* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* is grounded primarily in the *balāghī* dimension, reinforced through attention to linguistic structure, morphology, and syntactic function. The analysis of embryological terminology in QS. Al-Ḥajj [22]:5, for instance, reveals that Qur'anic language does not function as a literal biological description, but rather as a symbol of dynamic activity marked by lexical precision and rich metaphorical resonance. Morphological distinctions such as between *hayāb* and *ḥayawān*, or *kufr* and *kufrān* indicate that variations in word forms convey significant ontological and theological gradations of meaning. At the level of sentence structure, the emphasis on the function of *ḥurūf al-ma'ānī* in QS. Al-Kahf [18]:85 illustrates how syntactic construction shapes the ethos of action and the reader's moral consciousness. The '*ilmī* dimension appears in the form of a rational dialogue between revelation and modern science, yet it is carefully maintained within a reflective framework without being elevated to the status of definitive scientific claim. Overall, the table affirms that the pattern of *i'jāz* in *Tafsir Aktual* is integrative in nature, combining linguistic beauty and the rationality of revelation within a moderate and contextually grounded epistemological framework.

### Hermeneutical Approach in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual*

The hermeneutical approach in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* may be understood as an effort to construct a dynamic dialogue between the Qur'anic text and the social reality of contemporary readers. This tafsir does not confine itself to lexical or historical explanations of verses; rather, it advances toward a contextual reading that renders the Qur'an present and meaningful in the lives of Muslims today. Such a paradigm aligns with the development of modern Qur'anic exegesis in Indonesia, which positions social context and reader experience as integral components of the interpretive process. Within this framework, revelation is not perceived as a static text, but as a divine message that continuously engages with changing historical circumstances (Ichwan & Salisu, 2024).

In contemporary exegetical studies, a hermeneutical approach is understood as a method that emphasizes the dialectical relationship between the text, the context of revelation, and the

present context of the reader. Qur'anic hermeneutics does not aim to displace textual authority; rather, it seeks to expand interpretive space so that the Qur'an's message remains relevant and applicable. Recent scholarship has emphasized that hermeneutical tafsir strengthens interpretive validity by simultaneously accounting for historical, linguistic, and social dimensions, rather than relying solely on literal meaning (Ichwan & Salisu, 2024). This framework provides the epistemological foundation for the emergence of contemporary "actual" tafsir in Indonesia.

Within this broader context, KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* demonstrates a distinctive form of contextual hermeneutics, particularly through its effort to ground Qur'anic messages in the everyday language and lived experiences of society. His tafsir frequently employs social analogies, concrete examples, and current events as interpretive bridges between revelation and communal reality. This strategy resonates with the paradigm of contextual exegesis, which maintains that the Qur'an's meaning becomes more effectively understood when connected to the social problems faced by readers, such as social ethics, justice, and moral responsibility (H. Ridho et al., 2025).

The dialogical interaction between text and context constitutes a central characteristic of the hermeneutics found in *Tafsir Aktual*. KH. Musta'in does not position the Qur'an as detached from social reality; rather, he presents it as a source of values that guide readers in responding to contemporary challenges. This pattern corresponds with contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutical thought, particularly the notion of the "fusion of horizons," referring to the meeting point between the horizon of the text and that of the reader within the interpretive process (Dozan & Turmuzi, 2019). Consequently, tafsir becomes not merely informative but transformative.

In addition to its dialogical character, the hermeneutical approach in *Tafsir Aktual* also exhibits pedagogical and communicative features. The language employed is generally straightforward, argumentative, and accessible to lay readers, without sacrificing interpretive depth. This pattern reflects a hermeneutical awareness that tafsir is not intended solely for academic audiences but also serves as a medium of religious education for the wider public. Several studies have affirmed that the use of popular language in contextual tafsir constitutes a key strength in effectively conveying Qur'anic messages within the public sphere (Hasbiyallah, 2018).

Furthermore, KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's hermeneutical approach demonstrates that *actual tafsir* is not a simplification of exegesis, but rather a methodological strategy designed to bridge the complexity of the revelatory text with the lived realities of modern readers. Such an interpretive model resonates with critiques of purely textualist exegesis, which often fails to address contemporary social issues. Qur'anic hermeneutics, by contrast, enables the exegete to excavate the universal values of the Qur'an and articulate them within ever-changing contexts (Ichwan & Salisu, 2024).

Accordingly, the hermeneutical approach in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* affirms its position within the broader current of contemporary Indonesian exegesis that prioritizes contextualizing the meaning of revelation. This tafsir not only represents an intellectual response to the evolution of modern exegetical methodologies, but also reflects a commitment to presenting the Qur'an as a guide to life that remains relevant, communicative, and transformative for today's Muslim society. Such an approach reinforces the argument that Qur'anic hermeneutics does not

threaten the authority of revelation; rather, it functions as a methodological instrument for safeguarding the enduring significance of the Qur'an across time (Furqan & Sakdiah, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the formulation of the concept of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* in KH. Musta'in Syafi'i's *Tafsir Aktual* is constructed through an integrative and moderate approach. *I'jāz* is not understood merely as rhetorical superiority or literal scientific correspondence, but rather as the profound depth of revelation whose meanings are transhistorical, contextual, and transformative. The principal findings of this research affirm that the *balāghī* and *'ilmī* dimensions constitute the most dominant aspects of *i'jāz* in his tafsir, with particular emphasis on the precision of Qur'anic language, the rationality of revelation, and the Qur'an's capacity to engage contemporary social realities without falling into excessive scientific claims. The hermeneutical approach employed further reflects an effort to preserve textual objectivity while actualizing its meaning in a communicative and pedagogical manner for modern society.

Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations, as it focuses on a single exegetical work and one mufassir, and therefore its findings are not intended to be broadly generalized across the entire spectrum of contemporary Indonesian tafsir. Moreover, the analysis of *i'jāz 'ilmī* remains confined to a reflective-hermeneutical reading and has not yet involved an in-depth interdisciplinary dialogue with the sciences. Future research is therefore recommended to expand the scope of investigation by comparing *Tafsir Aktual* with other contemporary exegetical works and by developing interdisciplinary approaches to further enrich the understanding of the epistemological position of *i'jāz al-Qur'an* within the dynamics of modern Qur'anic exegesis.

## DECLARATION OF USING AI

The authors used ChatGPT to improve language and readability. The authors reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the content.

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