
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenges of Incorporating Implicit Meanings of Omitted Sentences When Translating the Holy Qur'an

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| ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complex challenges of translating omitted declarative, coordinative, and conditional sentences in the Holy Qur'an, focusing on the retrieval and accurate rendering of their implicit meanings in English. While ellipsis (ḥadhf) is a well-documented rhetorical device in Arabic, its syntactic and semantic implications remain underexplored in Qur'anic translation studies. By analyzing selected verses across three prominent English translations—Abdel Haleem, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Saheeh International—the study examines translators' awareness, interpretive strategies, and the impact of their choices on semantic fidelity and theological accuracy. Findings reveal significant variation in the treatment of ellipsis, highlighting the difficulty of conveying nuanced meaning without explicit syntactic cues. Non-native translators occasionally outperform native speakers, demonstrating that methodological rigor and exegetical insight often outweigh intuitive proficiency. The study underscores the critical role of contextual and rhetorical understanding in translating Qur'anic ellipsis, advocating for a systematic framework that preserves both the semantic depth and rhetorical elegance of the original text.

| KEYWORDS

Qur'anic Translation - Ellipsis (Ḥadhf) - Omitted Sentences - Predicate, Conjunction, and Conditional Structures - Semantic and Grammatical Challenges.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Significance and Problem Statement

The significance of this study lies in its focus on a nuanced and underexplored aspect of Qur'anic translation: the grammatical and semantic challenges posed by elliptical structures, particularly the omission of sentences involving predicates, conjunctions, and conditions. According to Noorain and Alamin (2023, p. 179), this type of inquiry is significant because it examines how translators navigate the grammatical and semantic challenges posed by ellipsis, particularly in instances where the possessed term is omitted and only the possessor is retained, all in service of fulfilling the rhetorical functions of deletion in the Holy Qur'an.

Accordingly, this study is undertaken to explore the syntactic, semantic, and translational implications of omitted sentences in the Qur'anic text, with the aim of assessing translator awareness and strategy in rendering such omissions into English. The study addresses the following core research questions:

1. To what extent are translators aware of the phenomenon of omitted sentences in the Holy Qur'an?
2. How competent are the translators in reproducing the intended meaning of the deleted structures in English?
3. To what extent do the selected translators employ linguistically and contextually appropriate translation strategies in handling omitted elements?

4. How does the inaccurate rendering of such omissions affect the overall meaning and rhetorical impact of the Qur'anic message?

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the translational challenges associated with rendering deleted sentences of predicate, conjunction, and condition from Arabic into English in selected Qur'anic translations.
2. To investigate the underlying reasons contributing to the difficulty of conveying these omitted structures in English, with reference to grammatical, semantic, and rhetorical dimensions.
3. To identify and evaluate the translation approaches employed by the three selected translators in dealing with ellipsis, and to determine their effectiveness in preserving the intended Qur'anic meaning.

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Research Context and Justification

Despite the centrality of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) in Arabic rhetorical and grammatical tradition, limited scholarly attention has been directed toward the specific issue of omitted sentences of predicate, conjunction, and condition in the Holy Qur'an. In this regard, Noorain, (2023), in two seminal studies, examined ellipsis in the context of the omitted possessed and the omitted possessor within Qur'anic discourse. His analysis encompassed three notable English translations: those of Muhammad Abdel-Haleem, Saheeh International, and Abdullah Yusuf Ali. However, the focus of the present study is distinct in that it centers on retrieving and analyzing the elided sentences related to predicate, conjunction, and condition, which constitute a different dimension of ellipsis in Qur'anic syntax and semantics.

Similarly, Al-Haj (2019, 2020), in two separate investigations, addressed pragma-stylistic and semantic barriers, in addition to cultural and lexical constraints in Qur'anic translation. While his studies dealt with the phenomenon of ellipsis as it pertains to omitted possession, his selected corpus of translations—namely, those by Muhammad Abdel-Haleem, Khan and Hilali, and Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall—overlaps only partially with the present study, which adopts a distinct set of translations and a more syntactically focused scope.

2.2 The Phenomenon of Deletion in Arabic According to Linguists and Rhetoricians

Ibn al-Atheer (d. 637 AH, p. 122) regarded deletion (*ḥadhf*) as a linguistic phenomenon shared by all human languages, yet he emphasized its pronounced and systematic presence in Arabic. He notes that the Arab instinctively resorts to ellipsis as a stylistic preference for brevity, provided it does not compromise semantic clarity. He records that Ja'far ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid used to instruct his scribes: "If you can render your speech as brief as a signature, then do so." He then comments: "Deletion is a noble art of composition that only the masters of eloquence can perform."

Arabic scholars—particularly grammarians and rhetoricians—have played a pivotal role in theorizing and categorizing ellipsis. The earliest formal discussion can be traced back to Sibawayh in his foundational grammatical treatise. He introduces ellipsis under the chapter titled "*Bāb mā yakūnu fī al-lafẓ min al-a'rāḍ*" (Chapter on the Accidental Elements in Speech). He writes: "You should know that among them are those who omit words, even though their original presence in speech is something else." (Sibawayh, p. 244). This framing suggests that deletion is viewed as an accidental or non-primary feature of speech, and thus a marked departure from the basic structure of utterances. Nonetheless, it is treated as an advanced rhetorical and grammatical device that demands careful deployment.

2.3 Reasons for Sentence Ellipsis in Arabic:

Noorain and Alamin (2023, p. 178) emphasize that the omission of the possessed noun while retaining only the possessor (*al-muḍāf ilayhi*) is among the rhetorical features that highlight the Qur'an's miraculous eloquence. Arabic linguists and grammarians have outlined specific purposes and linguistic contexts in which such ellipsis occurs, often finding that the omission enhances the expressive power of the statement.

1- Repetition:

Excessive use, which is one of most common reasons used to explain the phenomenon of deletion. The grammarist, Sibawayh, (P: 13) believes that many of types of deletions caused by frequent use.

2- Long structure:

This is when the composition becomes long and becomes heavy, so deletion occurs to reduce the heaviness, such as a long relative sentence, as it is permissible to delete its front part if it is long after all the other relative nouns. Ibn Ageel, (P:1).

3. Brevity and Economy of Expression

Ellipsis is one of the primary stylistic devices used to achieve brevity in Arabic rhetoric. Rather than explicitly stating what is already understood from context, the omitted clause contributes to linguistic efficiency and elegance (al-Jāhiz, 1968, p. 45; al-Jurjānī, 2004, p. 123).

4. Dependence on Contextual Indicators

A sentence may be omitted when contextual clues—either verbal or situational—render it unnecessary. The presence of syntactic or semantic indicators in the surrounding discourse ensures the implied meaning remains intelligible (al-Suyūṭī, 1985, p. 217).

5. Stimulating Reflection and Reader Engagement

Ellipsis encourages the reader or listener to engage actively with the text by inferring the missing element, thereby enriching the communicative experience and deepening interpretive involvement (al-Subkī, 2001, p. 88).

6. Emphasis on the Core Message

The omitted sentence is often secondary to the main communicative goal. By omitting it, the focus remains fixed on the primary message or rhetorical function of the utterance (Ibn Hishām, 2006, p. 109).

7. Alignment with Grammatical and Stylistic Norms

Arabic grammar permits the omission of certain syntactic elements—such as the predicate of a subject, the answer to a conditional clause, or a verb of speech—when the context supplies what has been omitted. This practice aligns with the structural and stylistic norms of the language (Ibn ‘Aqīl, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 273).

3. Research Methodology

In alignment with the objectives and nature of the present study, the researcher adopts a descriptive-analytical approach. This methodological framework is employed to examine and evaluate the quality and accuracy of rendering elided (deleted) syntactic structures—specifically predicates, conjunctions, and conditional clauses—in selected English translations of the Holy Qur’an.

3.1 Research Design

Given the linguistic and interpretive complexity of Qur’anic text, the study utilizes textual analysis as the principal method for assessing the translators’ ability to convey the implied meanings embedded in syntactic ellipsis. Through a systematic comparison of selected Qur’anic verses across three prominent English translations, the study seeks to uncover the extent to which these translations succeed or fall short in preserving the semantic and rhetorical functions of the original Arabic.

3.2 Corpus of the Study

The translations examined include:

1. Mohammed A. S. Abdel Haleem (2005) – A native Arabic speaker with academic expertise in Qur’anic studies.
2. Saheeh International (1997) – A team of native English speakers with an Islamic scholarly background.
3. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2004, 11th edition) – A widely circulated classical translation by a native English speaker with a traditional exegetical orientation.

3.2.1 Data Collection and Analytical Procedures

The study involves the purposive selection of Qur’anic verses wherein critical syntactic components are elliptically constructed. These samples are subjected to detailed comparative analysis, assessing how each translator approaches the challenge of rendering the omitted elements in a target language that lacks similar rhetorical conventions. The analytical instrument centers on close textual scrutiny, informed by principles of Arabic rhetoric, classical tafsīr (exegesis), and translation theory.

Sample 1

(وَإِذَا أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نُهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً أَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيهَا فَفَسَقُوا فِيهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنَاَهَا تَدْمِيرًا): الإسراء (16:17)

التقدير: أن الله تعالى أمر المترفين بالطاعة و الخير، فخالفوا أمره بالمعصية و الفسوق، و استحقوا بذلك عذاب الله تعالى

The Verse	M. A. Haleem	A. Yusuf	Saheeh International
Al- Israa (16)	"When We decide to destroy a town, We command those who are corrupted by wealth to reform, but they carry on sinning, so Our sentence is passed, and We destroy them utterly." (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Surah 17:16)	"When We decide to destroy a population, We (first) send A definite order to those Among them who are given The good things of this life And yet transgress; so that The word is proven true Against them: then (it is) We destroy them utterly." (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1934, Surah 17:16)	"And when We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word [i.e., deserved decree] comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with [complete] destruction." (Saheeh International, 1997, Surah 17:16)

A sound awareness of Arabic rhetorical principles—particularly the phenomenon of ellipsis (الحذف)—is sufficient to recognize the presence of an omitted conjunctive clause in the verse. Absent such awareness, the reader is liable to misinterpret the intended meaning, potentially arriving at a theologically untenable conclusion. Specifically, the surface-level reading of the verse may falsely suggest that God Almighty commanded the affluent members of the community to commit acts of immorality—an interpretation that is categorically impossible and wholly inconsistent with divine justice and wisdom.

Rather, the intended meaning—discernible through rhetorical analysis—is that Allah commanded the wealthy to act righteously and observe obedience. However, they responded to this divine injunction with defiance and sinful conduct, thereby earning His punishment. Thus, recognizing the elided clause is not merely a linguistic exercise, but one that profoundly alters and clarifies the theological and moral implications of the verse.

The grammarian and exegete Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745 AH) references this understanding, citing earlier scholars: "The conjunctive expression implies that the divine command was for obedience, but they transgressed with immorality." (Abū Ḥayyān, 1993, p. 27). Al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH) reinforces this analysis, stating: "One might argue: Just as the statement 'I commanded him, and he disobeyed me' implies that the command was not for disobedience—since disobedience entails doing the opposite of what is commanded—so too does immorality contradict being divinely commanded, as it is inherently sinful." (Al-Rāzī, 1986, p. 54).

In contrast to other instances, the three translators in this case successfully captured the implied meaning behind the ellipsis, effectively conveying the unspoken premise and preserving the theological integrity of the verse.

Sample 2

(قُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا) البقرة (60:2) التقدير: فضرِب

The Verse	M. A. Haleem	A. Yusuf	Saheeh International
Al Bagarah (60)	"And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Twelve springs gushed out..." (Abdel Haleem, 2004, Surah 2:60)	> "We said: 'Strike the rock with thy staff.' Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs" (Ali, 2004, 2:60).	> "So We said, 'Strike with your staff the stone.' And there gushed forth from it twelve springs" (Saheeh International, 1997, 2:60).

One of the clear examples of ellipsis (ḥadhf) of a conjunctive sentence in the Holy Qur'an appears in the aforementioned verse. A reflective reader may infer that the gushing forth of water from the rock occurred as a result of it being struck by the command and power of Allah—an act Moses (peace be upon him) was instructed to perform. The conjunctive particle in (فانفجرت), which logically follows the verb (اضرب), has been omitted, thus emphasizing that taking the means (as embodied in striking the rock) and placing trust in Allah are both essential for the fulfillment of divine outcomes.

Al-Zamakhshari elaborates on the syntactic ellipsis by stating: "The particle *فاء* in (فانفجرت) refers to a deleted clause, i.e., it was struck, and consequently it burst forth." Similarly, Al-Wahidi affirms: "It was struck, and thus it gushed forth." (Al-Wahidi, 1441 AH, p. 108). Al-Sabouni echoes this interpretation, noting: "It was struck, and water burst out from it with force, forming twelve springs equal in number to the tribes of Israel." (Al-Sabouni, 2001, p. 54).

However, the three cited translators adhered strictly to a literal rendering, which resulted in their failure to capture the elliptical structure and its interpretive implications. Consequently, their translations fall short in conveying the layered semantic and theological dimensions embedded in the original Arabic.

Sample 3

يس (45:36) (وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ): جواب الخبر محذوف تقديره: إذا قيل لهم ذلك أعرضوا عن الناصح واستخفوا به وتطاولوا عليه

The Verse	M. A. Haleem	A. Yusuf	Saheeh International
YA SEEN (45)	"Yet when they are told, 'Beware of what lies before and behind you, so that you may be given mercy,' (Abdel Haleem, 2004, 36:45).	"When they are told, 'Fear ye that which is before you and that which will be after you, in order that ye may receive Mercy,' (They turn back)" (Ali, 2004, 36:45).	> "But when it is said to them, 'Beware of what is before you and what is behind you; perhaps you will receive mercy...'" (Saheeh International, 1997, 36:45). [The conclusion of this sentence is understood to be "...they ignored the warning."]

3.3 Discussion:

The omitted apodosis (*jawāb al-law*) in the verse is inferred rather than explicitly stated. Its implied meaning, as interpreted by Al-Tantawi (1978, p. 38), is: "Had they been warned, they would have turned away, dismissed the admonition, and scorned the messenger."

This ellipsis mirrors a similar rhetorical structure found in the Almighty's words:

(...وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُو رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ) "If only you could see when the evildoers hang their heads before their Lord, saying, 'Our Lord! Now we see and hear, so send us back to do righteous deeds. Indeed, we are now certain.'"

Commenting on this, Sheikh Tfayesh (2011, p. 211) states that "the answer to 'if' (لو) is omitted and should be inferred after a sense of certainty," indicating a powerful, implied vision too overwhelming to describe.

This pattern of ellipsis recurs in other verses. For instance, in the verse:

"And when it is said to them, 'Beware of what is before you and what is behind you, so that you might be shown mercy,' they turn away."

Al-Jalalayn (2007, p. 505) emphasizes their aversion despite clear warnings. Similarly, Ibn Abbas (2007, p. 503) remarks:

"(Could you but see) O Muhammad, when terror overwhelms them and the earth seizes them from below—with no escape."

In evaluating translations of such verses, differences in rendering the elliptical structure become evident. Abdul Haleem renders the passage quite literally, overlooking the implied sentence and thus weakening the contextual force of the verse. Yusuf Ali, however, reconstructs the omission effectively with "they turn back," preserving the rhetorical and semantic depth of the original. Saheeh International excels by translating the phrase as "they ignored the warning," an interpretation that precisely captures the verse's intended meaning and emotional tone.

Sample 4

(أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَئِنْ أَكْثَرِ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ) البقرة (243:2) التقدير: (ثم أحياهم) ثم حرف عطف للترتيب مع التراخي و(أحياهم) لا محل لها معطوفة على جملة مقدرة أي (فماتوا ثم أحياهم)، درويش (1415 - ص: 361)

The Verse	M. A. Haleem	A. Yusuf	Saheeh International
Albagarah (243)	"God said to them, 'Die!' and then brought them back to life again" (Abdel Haleem, 2004, 2:243).	"God said to them: 'Die.' Then He restored them to life" (Ali, 2004, 2:243).	"Allah said to them, 'Die'; then He restored them to life" (Saheeh International, 1997, 2:243).

3.4 Discussions:

The phrase "Then He brought them to life" involves a conjunctive structure that indicates sequence with flexibility in temporal immediacy. The clause functions independently and cannot be syntactically linked as a conjunct predicate; rather, it implies an underlying elliptical construction: "They died, then He brought them to life" (Darwish, 1415, p. 361). Al-Qurtubi (2003, p. 625–626) interprets the verse as divine instruction to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), highlighting the significance of reflecting on the errors of past nations. He explains that Allah informed His Prophet of a group of people who fled their homes in fear of death, whereupon Allah caused them to die and subsequently revived them. Similarly, Al-Jalalayn (2007, p. 44) identifies these individuals as members of the Children.

Sample 5:

Arabic Verse:

(وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ تِلْكَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَئِنْ كَذَّبُوا فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ)

Implied Meaning (Taqdir):

Had they believed and been conscious of Allah, He would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and the earth.

The Verse	M. A. Haleem	A. Yusuf	Saheeh International
Surah Al-A'raf (7:96)	"Had the people of those towns believed and been conscious of God, We would certainly have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth."	"If the people of those towns had believed and been conscious of God, We would certainly have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth."	"If only the people of those towns had believed and feared Allah, We would certainly have opened up to them blessings from the heavens and the earth."

3.5 Discussion:

This verse presents a classic instance of ellipsis (*ḥadhf*) in a conditional structure, specifically the omission of the apodosis (*jawāb al-shart*) that would explicitly state the consequence of belief and piety (Al-Zamakhshari, 2015). The Arabic text implies that the blessings of Allah are contingent upon human response to divine guidance, namely faith and God-consciousness (*taqwā*). Without recognizing this ellipsis, a literal reading could misleadingly suggest that divine blessings are arbitrary, undermining the theological principle of moral causality embedded in the Qur'an (Al-Rāzī, 1986; Al-Tantawi, 1978).

From a rhetorical perspective, the omission strengthens the verse's didactic force by encouraging the reader to actively infer the conditional relationship. The ellipsis emphasizes human responsibility and the moral consequences of rejecting faith, while maintaining conciseness in the Qur'anic style (Abū Ḥayyān, 1993).

The three translations under review demonstrate varying degrees of success in addressing this ellipsis. Abdul Haleem preserves the literal phrasing but does not explicitly reconstruct the implied conditional, potentially leaving the causality implicit for readers unfamiliar with Qur'anic rhetoric (Haleem, 2004). Yusuf Ali's translation is more formal but similarly relies on the reader to infer the consequence. Saheeh International, by employing the phrase "If only," more clearly conveys the hypothetical consequence of belief, capturing the intended moral and theological nuance (Saheeh International, 1997).

Among the three translations, Saheeh International demonstrates the clearest awareness of the ellipsis in the conditional clause. Its use of "If only the people of those towns had believed and feared Allah" effectively conveys the implied consequence—that

divine blessings are contingent upon faith and piety. In contrast, M. A. Haleem and Abdullah Yusuf Ali render the verse in a literal conditional form, which communicates the basic meaning but does not fully capture the implied causal relationship or the rhetorical force of the elided apodosis. Consequently, Saheeh International provides a more accurate reflection of the Qur'anic nuance, preserving both theological and moral implications.

4. Conclusion and Findings:

This table Figure displays the three translators' accuracy in rendering the deleted Sentences.

	Abdul Haleem	Yusuf	S. International
Perfect translation	1 – 2 -	1 - 2 – 3 -	1 - 3 - 5
Literal Translation	3 – 4 - 5	4 - 5	2 - 4

In light of the theoretical framework and the data analysis conducted in this study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

The research has effectively addressed the questions posed in its introduction. When examining the translation of Qur'anic verses, the selected translators demonstrated varying degrees of accuracy in applying appropriate translation strategies, particularly in instances involving syntactic ellipsis (where a sentence or clause is implied but not explicitly stated).

Among the translators, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International stood out, outperforming the third translator by accurately reconstructing the omitted sentences in 3 out of the 5 selected samples. His renderings demonstrated a high degree of precision, with only one instance failing to convey the intended contextual meaning of the verse.

In comparison, Abdul Haleem secured second place, each successfully rendering 2 out of 5 samples. However, he faltered in three cases, opting for a literal, word-for-word translation that failed to capture the deeper Qur'anic context.

Regarding the impact of the translators' native language, the study involved two non-native Arabic speakers (Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International) and one native speaker (Abdul Haleem), with the aim of exploring how a translator's mother tongue influences syntactic and semiotic choices. Contrary to what might be expected, the native proficiency of Abdul Haleem in Arabic did not confer a decisive advantage in identifying and reconstructing ellipses. Instead, it was Yusuf Ali, a non-native speaker, who excelled in this aspect, underscoring that linguistic intuition alone may not suffice without the support of effective translation strategies and interpretive insight.

4.1 Findings:

These findings are structured to be clear, scholarly, and aligned with the objectives and data:

1. Ellipsis in Qur'anic Arabic is a Highly Systematized Rhetorical Device

Elliptical constructions in the Qur'an are not arbitrary omissions but deliberate rhetorical strategies governed by strict grammatical and contextual norms. Their omission aims to enhance brevity, clarity, and impact without compromising meaning.

2. Literal Translation Often Fails to Convey the Implied Meaning of Ellipsis

Translations that adhere strictly to surface structures—such as those by Haleem and Saheeh International in certain instances—frequently miss the deeper, implied semantic content of omitted clauses, leading to weakened theological and rhetorical clarity.

3. Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International Outperformed Abdul Haleem in reconstructing omitted sentences

Among the three translators examined, Abdullah Yusuf Ali and Saheeh International demonstrated the greatest awareness and reconstruction of implicit meanings in elliptical structures, succeeding in 3 out of the 5 analyzed verses, despite being a non-native Arabic speaker.

4. Native Proficiency in Arabic Does Not Guarantee Better Translation of Ellipsis.

Contrary to expectations, the native Arabic speaker (Abdul Haleem) did not outperform the others in interpreting and rendering ellipses. This finding indicates that strategic interpretive insight and exegetical knowledge may outweigh native linguistic intuition in such cases.

5. Contextual Awareness is Crucial in Handling Deleted Sentences

Accurate rendering of omitted predicates, conjunctions, and conditions requires a nuanced understanding of contextual indicators and classical tafsīr, without which the translated meaning may become ambiguous or even theologically problematic.

6. Theological Accuracy Hinges on Recognizing Ellipsis

Failure to reconstruct omitted sentences—such as the divine command being for obedience, not sin (as in Al-Isra 16)—can lead to interpretations that conflict with core Islamic beliefs, demonstrating the grave theological consequences of mistranslation.

7. Saheeh International Achieved Moderate Success through Interpretive Additions

While generally more literal, Saheeh International occasionally employed interpretive insertions that effectively captured implied meanings, such as rendering an omitted response clause as “they ignored the warning” in Ya Seen 45.

8. Coordinative and Conditional Ellipses are Particularly Challenging in Translation

Among the three types of deleted structures, conditional and coordinative ellipses (e.g., missing apodoses or actions inferred from context) posed the greatest difficulty for translators, often requiring reconstruction based on classical grammatical theory.

9. Lack of Standardized Methodology in Handling Ellipsis

The study reveals inconsistency in translation strategies across all three translators, indicating an absence of a standardized framework for addressing syntactic ellipsis in Qur'anic translation, even among prominent translators.

10. Elliptical Structures Enrich Reader Engagement and Semantic Density

Beyond translation, ellipsis in the Qur'an serves a higher rhetorical purpose: stimulating reflection, engaging the reader, and deepening interpretive involvement—functions that are often diminished or lost in literal renderings.

5. Conclusion

This study has explored the phenomenon of ellipsis (ḥadhf) in the English translation of the Holy Qur'an, focusing on the omission of predicates, conjunctions, and conditional clauses. The analysis has demonstrated that ellipsis in the Qur'anic discourse is not merely a grammatical omission but a stylistic and rhetorical device that enhances the depth, precision, and aesthetic quality of the divine message. Through careful examination of selected Qur'anic verses, it was shown that translators face significant challenges in rendering these elliptical structures into English without compromising meaning, rhythm, or theological implication.

The findings reveal that a successful translation of ellipsis in the Qur'an requires a balance between linguistic fidelity and contextual interpretation. Literal translation often fails to capture the implicit meanings embedded within elliptical expressions, while overly interpretive renderings risk distorting the intended divine nuance. Therefore, translators should adopt a context-sensitive approach grounded in both linguistic competence and exegetical awareness.

Ultimately, the study underscores the necessity of integrating linguistic, rhetorical, and theological perspectives in Qur'anic translation studies. By doing so, translators can better preserve the eloquence and spiritual resonance of the Qur'anic text while ensuring communicative clarity for the target audience. Future research may extend this inquiry by examining ellipsis across different Qur'anic translations and comparing the strategies employed by translators of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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