

Conveying Conciseness in the Translation of Quranic Qaṣaṣ (Stories): Sūrah Yūsuf as a Case Study

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Abstract

This paper explores the challenges of translating the rhetorical device of conciseness in Quranic narratives (Qaṣaṣ). The inimitability of the Quran is particularly evident through its linguistic and rhetorical features, especially its capacity to convey extensive meanings with remarkable brevity. This study aims to highlight the difficulties faced by translators and underscores the strategies employed to preserve conciseness while maintaining essential semantic and rhetorical nuances. A qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approach is used to examine select verses from Sūrah Yūsuf (Q:12), focusing on the impact of conciseness, both with and without ellipsis, on their English translations. By comparing various translated Quranic verses to the source text and drawing upon exegesis to ensure the preservation of intended meaning, the research reveals that deviations from the original concise structures can result in a loss of semantic and rhetorical depth, ultimately diminishing the eloquence of the Quranic text. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in Quran translation studies, offering insights into the best approaches and strategies for translating the rhetorical device of conciseness in the Quran.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the translation of Quranic Qaṣaṣ (stories), a fundamental and significant constituent of the Quran. The Qaṣaṣ appear in various forms—some are narrated in full within a single sūrah, such as Sūrah Yūsuf (Q12), while others are condensed into just a few verses or repeated throughout the Quran for different purposes. Unlike novels or short stories, Quranic narratives form a distinct genre, characterized by a unique style and the use of various linguistic and rhetorical devices. Among these, conciseness stands out as a key feature, ensuring that every word serves a meaningful purpose in guiding mankind. As a result, Quranic verses contain no unnecessary or superfluous details. Instead, they employ highly condensed structures that carry deep rhetorical and semantic significance.

Translating the Quran, and particularly its rhetorical device of conciseness, presents a significant challenge. The richness of meaning encapsulated in a few words often does not have a direct equivalent in other languages. This research highlights the role of conciseness in shaping meaning, interpretation, and rhetorical function in Qaṣaṣ. Specifically, it examines instances of conciseness with ellipsis (إيجاز الحذف *I'jāz al-ḥadhf*) and without ellipsis (إيجاز القصر *I'jāz al-qīṣar*) in two English translations of Sūrah Yūsuf. The study evaluates how effectively these translations convey the depth and rhetorical impact of the Quranic style.

Sūrah Yūsuf (Q12) is particularly suited for this analysis because it presents an entire Qiṣṣah (story) in a single sūrah, following a coherent progression from beginning to end. Unlike other Quranic narratives that are dispersed across multiple chapters, this sūrah allows for a more holistic analysis of the stylistic and rhetorical choices employed in storytelling. The unfolding of Prophet Yūsuf's dream and its gradual realization contribute to the sūrah's artistic harmony and thematic depth, making it an ideal case study for understanding the impact of conciseness in translation.

By exploring these challenges and evaluating translation strategies, this research contributes to the broader field of Quranic translation studies. It aims to shed light on the best approaches for preserving the rhetorical force of conciseness in translation, ensuring that the Quranic message retains its eloquence and intended meaning across languages.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. The Notion of Qaṣaṣ (Stories) in the Holy Quran

The concept of narratives in the Holy Quran differs significantly from literary narratives, as the Quran is a divine revelation rather than a human-authored text. In the Quran, the act of narrating or telling a story is expressed through three key Arabic terms: 'qaṣṣa' (قَص), ḥaddatha (حَدَّثَ), and nabba'a (نَبَأَ)—each of which merits closer examination (Pillat, 2010, p. 389). A deeper analysis of the semantic range of the term 'qiṣṣah' serves to clarify its intended meaning within the Quranic context. Etymologically, qiṣṣah (plural: qaṣaṣ) is the maṣdar (verbal noun) of the verb 'qaṣṣa', which is itself derived from the noun 'qiṣṣah'. Semantically, the verb 'qaṣṣa' conveys the idea of "clipping" or "tracing." This meaning extends to the documented use of the verb in the sense of "reciting," "relating," or "recounting," whether it pertains to news or the narration of a dream in its proper manner (Lane, 2003, II, p. 2526).

Accordingly, Al-Khatib (1975, p. 44) explains that 'qaṣaṣ' is derived from 'al-qaṣ', meaning "tracking" or "tracing." This is exemplified in the Quranic verse:

Wa Qālat Li'okhtihi Quṣṣīhi

وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيه (Q 28:11)

"Follow him..."

Similarly, another verse states:

Fārtaddā `Alá 'Āthārihimā Qaṣaṣā

فَارْتَدَّآ عَلَىٰ أَثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا (Q 18:64)

"...so they went back on their footsteps, following the path they had come."

In line with this, Rollins (1984) notes that classical exegetes and lexicographers have interpreted qaṣṣa, when used in the Quran, as "to chronologically convey a series of detailed events" (pp. 68-69). Necmettin Gökkir (2006) further clarifies that 'qaṣaṣ', as an Islamic term, "specifically refers to miraculous events, particularly in reference to the lives of prophets. As a Qur'anic term, 'Qaṣaṣ' is used for both popular and edifying religious stories, as well as, much more widely, history" (p. 519).

Thus, any translation of ‘qaṣṣa’ and ‘qaṣaṣ’ in the Quran as "narrate," "recite," or "narratives" remains inadequate unless it accounts for their etymological and semantic depth, as well as the insights provided by exegetical scholarship.

2.2. The Functions of Quranic Qaṣaṣ

Quranic qaṣaṣ are not intended for entertainment, historical documentation, or artistic embellishment. Rather, they serve specific divine purposes. They provide evidence against those who oppose Islam, affirm the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and recount significant events from past nations—events that Muhammad (PBUH) had no prior knowledge of before revelation (Q 3:44; Q 11:49) (Darir & Zahid, 2014, p. 134).

Moreover, Quranic qaṣaṣ plays a crucial role in establishing moral and ethical principles. They serve as a means of educating humanity in virtue and righteousness while presenting the prophets as exemplary role models (Chakir, 2014, pp. 8–9). Additionally, they provide spiritual reassurance, strengthening both the Prophet’s and the believers’ faith in their Creator (Q 11:120).

2.3. Features of Quranic Qaṣaṣ

Quranic qaṣaṣ are distinguished by their absolute veracity regarding characters, events, and settings, as the narrator is none other than the Almighty (Darir & Zahid, 2014, p. 133). One of their key features is their role in correcting distortions found in previous scriptures. While many of the narratives about the apostles, prophets, and their nations align with accounts in the Torah and the Bible, the Quran serves as a confirmation of these scriptures. However, it remains distinct in that it presents these qaṣaṣ in their purest form, free from falsehoods, myths, or trivialities (Sobhani, 2008, p. 17).

Another defining characteristic of Quranic qaṣaṣ is its conciseness, often achieved through the omission of unnecessary details. The Quran selectively includes events and descriptions that serve its higher purpose, focusing on elements that have the most profound impact on its audience. As Sobhani (2008) explains, “it mentions some events and details while omitting others, solely to present the most influential discourse” (p. 17).

2.4. The Inimitable Aspect of Quranic Qaṣaṣ

Like the rest of the Quran, the qaṣaṣ embodies characteristics that reflect both perfection and beauty, whether through word choice, grammatical constructions, or rhetorical devices. The Quran conveys complex meanings and emotions with unparalleled precision, employing logical argumentation, persuasive force, and harmonious sound patterns. However, what makes Quranic qaṣaṣ truly inimitable is their unique narrative structure, the use of dialogue, and their concise style.

The narrative structure of Quranic qaṣaṣ is distinct and unlike conventional storytelling. As Sfaira (2014) observes, “The Quran is the only book in the world to narrate, for example, the Qiṣṣa of Moses without following a structure of the type ‘context, disturbing element, ups and downs, climax, and resolution’” (p. 178, my translation). Sfaira adds, “the unity of the Qiṣṣa is not tied to the characters of the prophets but to the lessons that can be drawn from them” (p. 178).

Conciseness is another defining rhetorical feature of Quranic qaṣaṣ. These narratives are remarkably brief, including only details that serve their intended purpose. “Allah recounts past events using a concise, even laconic style, which in Arabic is considered a sign of

eloquence. For this reason, translators, in their efforts to maintain conciseness, often resort to annotations or brackets to compensate for meaning” (Sfaira, 2014, p. 178, my translation).

Dialogue is also a fundamental element of Quranic qaṣaṣ. Allah engages in direct discourse with various beings—angels, Iblis (Satan), prophets, and humans—regardless of their faith, whether Muslim, adherents of previous revelations, atheists, or pagans. “The technique of dialogue presents ideas and events concretely and realistically. It allows certain elements of the narrative to be conveyed implicitly and can effectively communicate emotions and sensations” (Sfaira, 2014, p. 178).

Finally, the word order in the Quranic qaṣaṣ masterfully integrates these characteristics in an artistic and inimitable way. Al-Jaberi (2006) asserts that:

It is permissible to say the superiority of the Quran over the Torah and the Bible in this regard lies in the fact that it is written and recited in the language spoken by the Prophet of Islam, whereas other scriptures exist only in translation, and translation inevitably alters both language and meaning. (p. 393)

This reinforces Turner’s (1997) assertion that “a translation of the Quran is not the Quran and can never be” (p. xiv).

2.5. Conciseness in Quranic Qaṣaṣ (Stories).

2.5.1. Conciseness in the Arabic language

Within the Arabic linguistic tradition, rhetoric is often encapsulated by the maxim that "eloquence lies in brevity." Early scholars such as Khalaf al-Ahmar (d. 180 H) conceptualized rhetoric as "a glance rich in meaning" (al-balāghah lamḥah dālah) (البلاغة لمحة دالة), while al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī defined it as "a word that unveils the remainder" (al-balāghah kalimah tukshifu ‘an al-bāqī) (البلاغة كلمة تكشف عن البقية) (cited in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Aṭīq, 2009, p. 175). These definitions collectively underscore the notion that true rhetorical mastery involves conveying profound meaning with minimal words. Brevity and conciseness were highly esteemed virtues in pre-Islamic Arabic oratory and poetry. Indeed, the pre-Islamic poets “were renowned for their brevity to pack meaning into condensed structures” (Fatani, 2006, p. 369). Following the advent of Islam, the Quran—revealed in Arabic—embodied the pinnacle of rhetorical excellence, employing precise and succinct language devoid of superfluity. Its verses, as emphasized in Q54:17, are structured in a manner that facilitates memorization while maximizing semantic depth.

At the lexical level, al-ījāz (الإيجاز) means shortening or making brief, which denotes brevity or succinctness (Lisān al-‘Arab, Vol. 3, p. 531). Terminologically, it is defined as "speech composed of minimal words yet abundant in meaning" (al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn, Vol. 2, p. 17). Prominent Arab rhetoricians have elaborated on this concept with nuanced distinctions:

Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī characterizes al-ījāz as "the use of few words to convey multiple meanings through subtle allusions or suggestive hints."

(أن يكون اللفظ القليل مشاراً به إلى معان كثيرة بإيماء إليها ولمحة تدل عليها).

Al-Jāhiz defines it as "the condensation of abundant meanings into concise expressions" (الإيجاز هو الجمع للمعاني الكثيرة بالألفاظ القليلة).

Ibn al-Athīr offers two interpretations: (1) "the omission of superfluous wording"

(الإيجاز حذف زيادات الألفاظ), or (2) "the efficient signification of meaning without verbal excess" (الإيجاز دلالة اللفظ على المعنى من غير أن يزيد عليه) (cited in ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Aṭīq, 2009, p. 175).

These definitions collectively emphasize conciseness (al-ījāz) as a rhetorical ideal that prioritizes semantic density over lexical abundance. In other words, conciseness (al-ījāz) prioritizes effective communication and the production of a given proposition with minimal lexical items. However, this pursuit of brevity must not come at the expense of clarity. As Abdul-Raof (2006, p. 188) emphasizes, while conciseness enhances rhetorical efficiency, it should not introduce ambiguity; contextual cues remain essential to ensure the addressee accurately infers the intended meaning. Thus, true conciseness entails not merely the compression of meaning into fewer words but the artful preservation of both clarity and eloquence.

Conciseness (al-ījāz) constitutes a fundamental rhetorical art and stylistic technique, strategically employed in contexts demanding linguistic economy. As Abdul-Raof (2006) demonstrates, Arabic deploys conciseness across multiple discursive situations, including:

Rhetorically, succinctness [conciseness and brevity] is a stylistic technique which the communicator adopts in various text types such as advertisements, faxes, text messages, censure, imploring, complaint, gratitude, apology, condolence, reward and punishment, rebuke, income tax letters, heads of state letters, government letters, and notes such as personal messages and diary appointments. (p. 188)

Abdul-Raof (2006, p. 188) identifies four key pragmatic motivations underlying the use of succinctness (al-ījāz) in communication: (1) the necessity of brevity, (2) the avoidance of audience disengagement, (3) the facilitation of information processing for the addressee, and (4) constraints imposed by the communicator's temporal and spatial limitations.

2.6. Typology of Conciseness in Arabic Rhetoric

Arabic rhetoricians classify linguistic conciseness (al-ījāz) into two primary categories:

2.6.1. Rhetorical Conciseness Without Ellipsis (Ījāz al-Qiṣar / إيجاز القصّر)

This form of conciseness achieves brevity through semantic density rather than syntactic omission. As encapsulated in this Arabic saying:

“أوجز في كلامه إذا قصره”

"awjaza fī kalāmihi idhā qaṣarah"

("He is concise when he shortens his speech.")

Al-Rummānī (1981, p. 90) defines this type as the construction of discourse with minimal lexical items while maximizing semantic content—without relying on ellipsis. In essence, it represents the condensation of profound meaning into economically structured utterances.

Quranic Example:

The verse Q2:179 demonstrates this principle through the phrase:

﴿وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ (البقرة 179) (002:179)

(Wa Lakum Fī Al-Qiṣāṣi Ḥayāatun Yā 'Ūlī Al-'Albābi La`allakumTattaqūna)

"al-qiṣāṣ ḥayāh" (الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةً)

("In retribution [there is] life.")

Despite its binary lexical composition (nouns al-qiṣāṣ + ḥayāh), the phrase encodes multiple interpretive layers: a) a deterrent function of capital punishment, b) the preservation of societal order, and c) divine wisdom in juridical equity.

When examined from a comparative rhetorical perspective and juxtaposed with the Arabic proverb "al-qatlu anfā lil-qatl" (القتل أنفى للقتل, "Killing eliminates killing"), the Quranic phrasing demonstrates a superior degree of conciseness:

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Quranic phrase</i>	<i>Arabic Proverb</i>
Lexical Count	2 words	3 words
Repetition	non	qatl (2x)
Semantic Precision	Specifies retribution (not arbitrary killing)	Generic reference to killing

(Adapted from ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Aṭīq, 2009, pp. 176-177)

This contrast underscores how Quranic Arabic achieves ījāz al-qīṣar through:

Lexical economy

Absence of redundancy

Contextually anchored meanings

The Quran frequently employs concise rhetorical structures to deliver profound moral directives. Abdul-Raof (2006) provides a number of verses that exemplify these structures:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾ المائدة 2

“Cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.” (Q5:2)

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾ الأعراف 199

“Take what is given freely, conjoin what is good, and turn away from the ignorant.” (Q7:199)

Abdul-Raof (2006) provides other succinct propositions that are taken as wise sayings, such as:

– إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ لَسِحْرًا

Effective discourse has a magical impact.

- ما هلك امرؤ عرف قدره

He or she who knows his or her value will not perish.

- الإِتِّحَادُ قُوَّةٌ

Unity is strength.

– الْيَدُ الْغَلِيَّةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْيَدِ السُّفْلَى

The upper hand is better than the lower hand. (p. 189)

2.6.2. Ellipsis (Ījāz al-Ḥadhf / إيجاز الحذف)

Ellipsis constitutes one of the most significant linguistic phenomena in Arabic, occurring extensively in both written and spoken discourse. This rhetorical device operates on the principle of linguistic economy, whereby maximal meaning is conveyed through minimal wording, thereby enhancing both brevity and precision. In Arabic grammatical tradition, the omission of words or sentence elements is termed al-ḥadhf (الحذف).

Classical Arab rhetoricians and grammarians have extensively theorized ellipsis, often illustrating its application through Quranic examples. Al-Jurjānī (2004) provides a particularly nuanced definition:

هُوَ بَابٌ دَقِيقُ الْمَسْئَلِ، لَطِيفُ الْمَأْخَذِ، عَجِيبُ الْأَمْرِ، شَبِيهُ السَّحْرِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَرَى الدَّكْرَ أَفْصَحَ مِنَ الدَّكْرِ، وَالصَّمْتَ عَنِ الْإِفَادَةِ أَزِيدَ لِلْإِفَادَةِ، وَتَجِدُكَ أَنْطَقَ مَا تَكُونُ إِذَا لَمْ تَنْطِقْ، وَأَنْتُمْ بَيِّنَاتٌ إِذَا لَمْ تُبَيِّنَنَّ.

[ellipsis] represents a subtle rhetorical approach, delicate in execution and remarkable in effect – akin to magic. Through it, what is unsaid often proves more eloquent than explicit statement, silence becomes more informative than speech, and the most powerful articulation emerges precisely through omission. (p. 121)

Al-Jurjānī characterizes ellipsis as a complex and nuanced rhetorical phenomenon (daḡīq al-maslak/"دقيق المسلك"), likening its effects to magic (shabīh bi-l-sihr/"شبيه بالسحر") due to its paradoxical capacity to enhance meaning through omission. Far from compromising clarity, strategic ellipsis serves as a cornerstone of Arabic eloquence, where intentional exclusion yields greater communicative precision. This deliberateness is emphasized by Al-Haychari (2003, p. 313), who cautions that ellipsis "constitutes neither a mechanical process nor an arbitrary omission of linguistic elements, but rather a calculated technique requiring contextual guarantees to preserve intended meaning."

In this regard, it is clear that preserving the intended meaning is a crucial criterion in any instance of linguistic omission. Arabic, in particular, exhibits a wide range of elliptical constructions due to the varied syntactic and semantic roles of linguistic elements. Consequently, numerous constraints govern these elliptical forms. Notably, it is difficult to compile an exhaustive list of the conditions that regulate ellipsis across all linguistic components in Arabic. However, two primary and widely applicable conditions are consistently observed: the presence of contextual clues that enable recoverability and the absence of ambiguity. As Afifi (1996, p. 276) asserts, "ambiguity should not be there at the level of both utterance and meaning after the omission."

It would be incomplete to discuss ellipsis without addressing the typological considerations of Quranic ellipsis. Indeed, several classifications of ellipsis have been proposed in linguistic and rhetorical studies. However, given that this research focuses on conciseness and ellipsis in the Quranic narrative (al-Qaṣaṣ) from a translational perspective, it is pertinent to highlight a typology specifically developed for the Quran. Darir (2007), in his paper "Ellipsis: A Rhetorical Feature in the Quran and the Challenge of Translation," proposes a relevant classification of ellipsis in the Holy Quran. His typology comprises the following six categories:

a. Rhetorical ellipsis

It is defined as the omission of sentence elements for rhetorical effect, often relying on the speaker's intent for recovery (Darir 2007, p. 55). An example from the Quran is the phrase:

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾ الفاتحة 6

"Show us the straightway" (Q1:6). (Yūsuf Ali, 1983, p. 1)

Normally, "show us the right way" would be expressed as "اهدنا إلى الصراط المستقيم". The Quran omits "إلى" to emphasize not only guidance to the right path but also perseverance on it.

b. Syntactic Ellipsis

It is the omission of words needed to complete a grammatical structure, with the missing elements typically inferred from the context. There are different types of syntactic ellipsis:

Ellipsis explaining case marking:

﴿فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۖ نَاقَةُ اللَّهِ ۖ هَ وَسُقْيَاهَا﴾ الشمس 13

"But the Messenger of Allah said to them: "It is a She-camel of Allah! And (bar her not from) having her drink!" (Q91:13) (Yūsuf Ali, 1983, p. 318)

In the ST, the verbs "leave alone" and "bar her not from" are omitted, indicated by the accusative case assigned to the objects.

c. High Contextualization or Pragmatically Explained Ellipsis:

Darir refers to this as semantically and pragmatically justified ellipsis, where the omitted elements are necessary for the sentence's meaning and grammatical acceptability. This type often overlaps with implicitness, requiring context to understand the missing parts. A key example is unspecified object ellipsis (الاقتصار), where objects irrelevant to the speaker's purpose are omitted. The recovery of these elements in translation depends on contrastive pragmatics. Darir's term "high contextualization," borrowed from Hall's theory, reflects cultures where much is implied. An example is the verse:

﴿أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسَاكِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا﴾ الكهف 79

“As for the boat, it belonged to certain men in dire want: they plied on the water: I but wished to render it unserviceable, for there was after them a

certain king who seized on every boat by force.” (Q13:79) (Yūsuf Ali, 1983, p. 116)

The fact that the king only targeted sound ships is not explicitly stated but is implied through the context, a natural assumption in Arabic culture.

d. Ellipsis in Quranic Stories:

Ellipsis is common in Quranic stories, where certain elements or sentences are omitted to enhance conciseness, relying on context for understanding. This often involves implicit meaning rather than true omission.

﴿فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا﴾

يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا﴾

مريم 12-11

So Zakariya came out to his people from his chamber: He told them by signs to celebrate Allah's praises in the morning and in the evening.

[To his son came the command]: "O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might":

and We gave him wisdom even as a youth (Q19:12). (Yūsuf Ali, 1983, p. 144)

Between Zakaria receiving the news of his son (Yahya) and Yahya being commanded to study the scriptures, a life stage (childhood) is omitted, understood implicitly from the context.

e. Obligatory Ellipsis or Language-Specific Ellipsis:

This type of ellipsis is stipulated by the nature of the language itself. For example, Arabic is a cop(ular) drop(ping) language, which means there is no auxiliary "to be." In Arabic also there

is also the notion of the dummy subject الضمير المستتر, as in, for instance, قال خيرا. The recoverability of the elliptical element is taken care of by contrastive syntax.

f. Grammarians' Artifacts:

Darir refers to grammarians' artifacts as ellipses required by specific grammatical models to maintain internal consistency but irrelevant for translation. For example, traditional Arabic grammar assumes that a vocative noun like "يا موسى" ("O Moses!") is the object of an omitted verb like "I call." This assumption doesn't aid translation, as it does not contribute to meaning. An example:

﴿قَالُوا لَآ ضَرِيرٌ إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ﴾

“They said: "No matter! for us, we shall but return to our Lord!"

(Q19:12). (Yūsuf Ali, 1983, p. 144)

Grammarians claim an omitted خبر of لا ("no harm") is present, but this omission has no significant impact on translation.

2.7.Semantic Features of Conciseness in the Quran

Conciseness in the Holy Quran manifests through a range of semantic features that reflect its rhetorical depth. In his seminal work *al-Ījāz fī Kalām al-‘Arab wa Naṣṣ al-I‘jāz* (Conciseness in Arab Speech and the Holy Quran), Mokhtar Atiyya (2009) systematically examines these rhetorical phenomena and outlines five key characteristics:

1. *Semantic Condensation*: This refers to the articulation of profound and abundant meanings in minimal wording, wherein complex ideas are expressed succinctly (p. 188).
2. *Meaning Regeneration*: The Quran often employs words and expressions with multiple layers of meaning, allowing for semantic regeneration and interpretive richness (p. 207).
3. *Nuanced Semantic Shades*: Many Quranic passages are characterized by semantic subtlety, allowing for multiple interpretive nuances to emerge from a single expression (p. 217).
4. *Semantic Abundance*: Several verses of the Quran carry a wealth of meanings, despite being composed of only a few words, thus exemplifying semantic density (p. 245).
5. *The Use of Imagery to Condense Meaning*: Imagery—particularly metaphor—plays a vital role in enhancing conciseness. A strong link exists between metaphor and semantic condensation, a relationship often emphasized by classical rhetoricians, who regarded metaphor as a cornerstone of brevity (p. 252).

3. CORPUS, DATA, AND METHODOLOGY

3.1.Corpus: Sūrat Yūsuf as a Paradigmatic Case Study

Sūrah Yūsuf (chapter 12) serves as an exemplary model for examining conciseness in the Qur’anic narratives (Qaṣaṣ). This 111-verse Sūrah holds a distinctive position in the Qur’an due to its compelling and stylistically refined narrative, which is marked by both brevity and precision. Mir Mustansir (1986) describes it as a narrative that "telescopes the story of many years in less than one hundred verses, presenting an amazing variety of scenes and fundamental themes of the Qur’an" (p. 1).

Revealed toward the end of the Makkan period of Islam, chapter 12 is devoted entirely to the story of Prophet Yūsuf (peace be upon him), after whom this Sūrah is named. Unlike other prophetic narratives in the Quran—which are often recounted across multiple Sūrahs,

each emphasizing different theological or moral themes—Sūrat Yūsuf presents the longest continuous narrative of a single character's life. This unique feature distinguishes it from the rest of the Quranic corpus. Notably, it is the only Sūrah, or chapter, in the Qur'an that begins with a dream (Q12:4) and concludes with its interpretation (Q12:100), reflecting its cohesive narrative structure.

3.2. Conciseness in Sūrah Yūsuf

One feature that underscores the inimitability (i'jāz) of Quranic narratives (Qaṣaṣ) is their remarkable conciseness. In Sūrat Yūsuf, this conciseness is manifested through various rhetorical and structural strategies. The primary rhetorical devices examined in this study are ellipsis and non-elliptical brevity, both of which are analyzed in detail in the analytical part of this study. However, beyond these, several additional features contribute to the overall concise nature of the Sūrah:

- a) In Sūrah Yūsuf, many scenes are intricately connected, with transitions from one situation to another seamlessly through causal links rather than explicit narrative transitions or connectors¹.
- b) The Sūrah offers **no physical or moral descriptions** of its characters; instead, the audience comes to understand them through their speech, actions, and decisions, thereby maintaining narrative economy.
- c) The names of characters are kept to a minimum. Only Yūsuf, Ya`qub (peace be upon them), and Al-Aziz (which may function more as a title than a proper name) are explicitly mentioned, which further streamlines the narrative.

3.3.Data

The verses selected for analysis exemplify the Quranic stylistic feature of conciseness and are drawn from two widely recognized English translations of Sūrat Yūsuf (Q12). These translations were produced by two prominent Muslim scholars: Muhammad Asad and Abdullah Yūsuf Ali. The first is *The Message of the Quran: An English Translation and Commentary*, authored by Muhammad Asad and first published in Gibraltar by Dar al-Andalus in 1980. It is widely regarded as one of the most influential modern English renderings of the Quran. The second is *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary*, by Abdullah Yūsuf Ali, originally published in 1934 by Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf Publishers in Lahore (then part of British India). This translation gained considerable popularity, particularly after it was subsidized and globally distributed free of charge by the Saudi government until 2002.

4. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The verses selected for analysis are presented along with their context and relevant exegesis, which explain the rhetorical reasons for conciseness in these verses. The goal is to explore the underlying meanings and structures, focusing on the rhetorical functions of conciseness (with or without ellipsis) in each verse in the Arabic language. The translations of these verses are then presented and compared to the source text (ST), analyzed from a semantic, stylistic, and structural perspective. This comparison assesses how effectively the rhetorical device, particularly conciseness, was preserved in the translated texts.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Sample 1

¹ <http://m.quran-m.com/index.php>.

Source Text:

(وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَى الْبَابِ ۚ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ أَوْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ)

(سورة يوسف آية 25)

Target text: (Q12:25)

Transliteration	Yusuf Ali (1987)	M. Asad (1980)
Wa Astabaqā Al-Bāba Wa Qaddat Qamīshahu Min Duburin Wa 'Alfayā Sayyidahā Ladā AlBābi Qālat Mā Jazā'u Man 'Arāda Bi'ahlīka Sū'āan 'Illā'An Yusjana 'Aw 'Adhābun 'Alīmun)	“So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back: they both found her lord near the door” (Q12:25) (Ali, 1987, p. 108).	“And they both rushed to the door; and she [grasped and] rent his tunic from behind - and [lo!] they met her lord at the door!” . (Q12:25) (M. Asad, 1980, p. 427).

5.1. Interpretation and context

In Tafsīr al-Jalālayn (1954, p. 238), the phrase "استبقا الباب" (astabaqā al-bāba, “they raced to the door”) in verse Q12:25 refers to Yūsuf and the wife of al-‘Azīz, with Yūsuf running toward the door to escape, while she pursued him in an attempt to catch him, ultimately seizing and pulling his garment toward her. According to Ibn ‘Āshūr, the standard syntactic form of this phrase would be "استبقا إلى الباب" (astabaqā ilā al-bāb, “they raced to the door”), but the preposition "إلى" (ilā) is omitted here, just as the preposition "من" (min) is omitted in verse Q7:155: "واختار موسى قومه سبعين رجلا" (wa-ikhtāra Mūsā qawmahu sab‘īna rajulan), for rhetorical effect (1984, p. 255). In this context, the omission of the preposition "ilā" in Q12:25 serves a rhetorical function: it intensifies the sense of immediacy and urgency in the action, emphasizing Yūsuf’s determined effort to flee and his unwavering moral integrity (Ibn ‘Āshūr, 1984, p. 255).

Darir (2007, pp. 55–56) categorizes this type of ellipsis as rhetorically motivated, wherein the omitted linguistic element is contextually recoverable through rhetorical competence. He notes that such omissions are characteristic of Quranic style and pose a challenge for translators, who must render not only the literal meaning but also the rhetorical implication. In this case, the phrase "استبقا الباب" should be translated as “they raced to the door”, with the implied preposition “to” restored in the target language to reflect the intended meaning.

Translation Assessment

Both translators prioritized meaning over structure and style, opting to recover the preposition "إلى" (ilā, "to") that was ellipted in the source text. A strictly literal translation maintaining the original elliptical structure would yield awkward and unnatural English constructions such as "They both rushed the door" or "They both raced each other to the door".

Muhammad Asad’s lexical choice of the verb “rushed” is particularly effective, capturing the violent urgency of the scene where Prophet Yūsuf (PBUH) flees while al-‘Azīz’s wife pursues him to seize his garment. In contrast, Yūsuf Ali’s selection of "raced" (which

would correspond to "تسابقا إلى الباب" [tasābaqā ilā l-bāb]) fails to convey the intensive semantic features of emphasis and exaggeration inherent in the original verb "استبقا" (istabaqā).

Another noteworthy feature is the grammatical duality in Arabic, which contributes significantly to the verse's conciseness. Unlike English, where duality is expressed lexically (e.g., through the word "two"), Arabic marks dual forms morphologically (see Baker, 1992; Ashaer, 2013, p. 50). In this verse, the long vowel "ā" in "استبقا" (astabaqā) and "ألفيا" (alfayā) signals the dual form, referring to Yūsuf and the wife of al-ʿAzīz. As a result, rendering this dual grammatical feature into English necessitates additional lexical items, thus expanding the target text and diminishing its brevity.

Sample 2

Source Text:

﴿وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

(سورة يوسف آية 30)

Target text: (Q12:30)

Transliteration	Yusuf Ali (1987)	M. Asad (1980)
Wa Qāla Niswatun Fī AlMadīnati Amra'atu AlʿAzīzi Turāwidu Fatahā ʿAn Nafsihi Qad Shaghafahā Ḥubbāan ʿInnā Lanarāhā Fī Ḍalālin Mubīnin	"Ladies said in the City: "The wife of the (great) 'Aziz is seeking to seduce her slave from his (true) self: Truly hath he inspired her with violent love: we see she is evidently going astray." (Q12:30) (Ali, 1987, p. 109).	"NOW the women of the city spoke [thus to one another]: "The wife of this nobleman is trying to induce her slave- boy to yield himself unto her! Her love for him has pierced her heart; verily, we see that she is undoubtedly suffering from an aberration! (Q12:30) (M. Asad, 1980, p. 430).

Interpretation and context

In his commentary on this verse, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1949, pp. 314–315) observes that the speech of the Egyptian women—condemning the wife of al-ʿAzīz—contains multiple layers of wickedness and deceit. He enumerates these rhetorical and moral transgressions as follows:

- 1- The women referred to her as "the wife of al-ʿAzīz" rather than mentioning her by name. This indirect reference, emphasizing her hideous act rather than her identity, reflects the severity of the deed, particularly given her status as a married woman. Within the cultural and moral framework, such behavior is considered far more reprehensible when committed by a married woman than by one who is single.

- 2- She attempted to seduce her adopted son, a figure who ought to be regarded as a member of the household rather than an outsider. This further intensifies the moral transgression of her actions.
- 3- The women's statement also implies that her affection had grown so intense that love had completely overtaken her heart and being—suggesting a deep, consuming emotional entanglement.
- 4- The verb *rāwada* (راود), used in the continuous form *turāwidu* (تراود - is seducing / is trying to seduce), conveys a continuous or ongoing action—indicating that her attempts at seduction were not a single event but persistent and likely to continue.
- 5- The women's words of blame conveyed both excessive desire and insistent pursuit. She restrained neither her passion nor her pursuit. Her overwhelming love is expressed in the phrase "*qad shaghafahā ḥubbān*" (قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا) – “He has deeply affected her with love” – while her persistent attempts are captured in "*turāwidu fatāhā*" (تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا) – “She is seducing her servant.” The Arabic term *al-murāwada* (المراودة) connotes a repetitive and deliberate effort, emphasizing the continuous nature of her pursuit (cf. Said Atteya Ali Metawa, 2006, pp. 258–259; my translation).

Translation Assessment

Semantically, the word “nobleman” used by Muhammad Asad does not fully capture the layered meaning embedded in the Arabic phrase “*imra’at al-‘Azīz turāwidu fatāhā ‘an nafsihī*” (امْرَأَةُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ). In this verse, the woman is not identified by her proper name but referred to in relation to her husband, *al-‘Azīz*, the minister and governor of Egypt. This indirect reference not only underscores her status but also highlights the moral gravity of her actions. Her attempt to seduce her household servant—despite being a married woman in a socially exemplary position—constitutes a highly inappropriate and socially reprehensible act.

Moreover, the structure and diction in Asad's rendering do not fully convey the rhetorical and semantic depth of the Arabic original. The phrase “*qad shaghafahā ḥubbān*” (قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا) consists of only three words in Arabic, yet it powerfully expresses that the wife of *al-‘Azīz* was consumed by an irrational and overpowering love for Yūsuf (peace be upon him). According to *al-Ṭabarī's* exegesis², the love had penetrated to the “*shighāf al-qalb*” (شِغَافُ الْقَلْبِ)—that is, the pericardium, the membrane that envelops the heart³. This metaphor indicates that her passion had reached the deepest, most vulnerable part of her emotional being. While Asad translates this with the idiomatic English phrase “her love has pierced her heart,” this rendering expands the original with additional words and conveys only the surface meaning, losing some of the original's emotional and rhetorical intensity.

In contrast, Yūsuf Ali's translation—“the wife of (the great) ‘Azīz is seeking to seduce her slave from his true self”—preserves more of the original's richness. By transliterating the word “‘Azīz” and appending the adjective “great” in parentheses, Ali amplifies the social stature of the husband, thereby emphasizing the seriousness of the wife's betrayal. Furthermore, to render the verb “*turāwidu*” (تُرَاوِدُ), which appears in the continuous form (*mudārī'*) indicating a continuous or future action, Ali uses a gerund construction (“is seeking to seduce”) that

² www.Quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer

³ Merriam-webster.com

appropriately reflects the ongoing nature of the attempt. Overall, Yūsuf Ali demonstrates greater sensitivity to the rhetorical and semantic nuances of the verse than does Asad.

Sample 3

Source Text:

(قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ مَا أَمَرُهُ لَيُصْجِنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونًا مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ)

(سورة يوسف آية 32)

Target text: (Q12:32)

Transliteration	Yūsuf Ali (1987)	M. Asad (1980)
Qālat Fadhālikunna Al-Ladhī Lumtunnānī Fīhi Wa Laqad Rāwadttuhu `AnNafsihi Fāsta`šama Wa La'in Lam Yaf al Mā 'Āmuruhu Layusjananna Wa Layakūnāan Mina Aş-Şāghirīna)	“She said: "There before you is the man about whom ye did blame me! I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self, but he did firmly save himself guiltless!... And now, if he doth not my bidding, he shall certainly be cast into prison, and (what is more) be of the company of the vilest” (Q12:32) (Ali, 1987, p. 109).	Said she: "This, then, is he about whom you have been blaming me! And, indeed, I did try to make him yield himself unto me, but he remained chaste. Now, however, if he does not do what I bid him, he shall most certainly be imprisoned, and shall most certainly find himself among the despised!" (Q12:32) (M. Asad, 1980, p. 430).

Interpretation and context

Al-Zamakhshari argues that the term ista‘šama ("استعصم"), derived from ista‘šam ("استعصام"), signifies an exaggerated form of insusceptibility. This term implies an exceptional degree of abstinence and extreme reticence, portraying Yūsuf (PBUH) as being in a state of infallibility, one that he strives to elevate further (Al-Kashaf, 2009, p. 514).

Ibn Ashur expands on this by explaining that ista‘šama ("استعصم") denotes an exaggerated effort to protect oneself from sin. The Arabic letters "س" (s) and "ت" (t) serve to intensify the meaning, as seen in words like istamsaka ("استمسك"), which conveys the act of clutching tightly. Thus, the term suggests that Yūsuf (PBUH) refrained from sin as if he were infallible, viewing seduction as a sin from which he protected himself (Ibn Ashur, 1984, V12, p. 264).

This verse succinctly encapsulates the event of seduction by Al-Aziz’s wife and Yūsuf’s (PBUH) steadfastness, which were explored in greater detail in earlier verses.

Translation Assessment

The suggested translation of this verse by Muhammad Asad—"And indeed, I did try to make him yield himself unto me, but he remained chaste"—does not fully capture the stylistic

and rhetorical nuances of the source text. Stylistically, Asad fails to retain the hyperbolic force encapsulated in the original Arabic term *ista'ṣama* (استعصم), which conveys an emphatic sense of resistance. His chosen rendering, "he remained chaste," falls short of expressing the intense abstinence and unwavering moral fortitude demonstrated by Prophet Yūsuf (PBUH) when confronted with the advances of Al-‘Azīz’s wife.

In terms of conciseness, the TT is less succinct than the ST. Asad used more words yet failed to convey the full range of meanings inherent in the ST.

Yūsuf Ali, however, paid close attention to the meanings conveyed by the verb *ista'ṣama* (استعصم) in Arabic. Nevertheless, his translation of this verse—"I did seek to seduce him from his (true) self, but he did firmly save himself guiltless!"—does not achieve the same concision as the source text (ST). While Ali sacrifices the hyperbolic form of the original, he compensates semantically by employing the auxiliary verb "did" for emphasis, followed by the adverb "firmly" to intensify the verb. Through these lexical choices, he makes a concerted effort to approximate the intended meaning, albeit not fully replicating the ST’s rhetorical force.

Sample 4 Source Text:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ۖ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

(سورة يوسف آية 33)

Target text: (Q12:33)

Transliteration	Yusuf Ali (1987)	M. Asad (1980)
(Qāla Rabbi As Sijnu 'Aḥabbu 'Ilayya Mimmā Yad'ūnānī 'Ilayhi Wa 'Illā Taṣrif 'Annī Kaydahunna 'Aṣbu 'Ilayhinna Wa 'Akun Mina Al-Jāhilīna)	“He said: "O my Lord! the prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me: Unless Thou turn away their snare from me, I should (in my youthful folly) feel inclined towards them and join the ranks of the ignorant.” (Q12:33) (Ali, 1987, p. 109).	Said he: "O my Sustainer! Prison is more desirable to me than [compliance with] what these women invite me to: for, unless Thou turn away their guile from me, I might yet yield to their allure and become one of those who are unaware [of right and wrong]." (Q12:33) (M. Asad, 1980, p. 430).

Interpretation and context

In this verse, scholars agree that the omission of the vocative particle *yā* (يَا) in Allah's address carries significant theological and stylistic implications. This elision reflects an intimate proximity between Yūsuf (PBUH) and the Divine, evoking the Quranic principle that

Allah is "closer than the jugular vein" (Q50:16). As noted by Az-Zarkashī (1990, vol 3, p. 213), this stylistic feature serves dual rhetorical purposes: it simultaneously conveys divine exaltation and underscores prophetic infallibility. Semantically, the vocative particle typically carries an imperative force (e.g., yā Zayd [يا زيد] meaning "I summon you, Zayd"). However, its deliberate omission here effectively neutralizes any connotation of command, thereby foregrounding instead the themes of glorification and transcendence. This linguistic choice transforms what might have been a mere summons into a profound expression of sacred intimacy and reverence.

Another elliptical instance occurs in the same utterance of "Rabbi" (رب), where the omitted particle is "T" (ي), representing the 1st person singular possessive pronoun (pronoun attached in the genitive case, ⁴ اسم مرفوع والياء المحذوفة ضمير متصل في محل جر بالاضافة). The underlying structure is "Qāla Rabbi As-Sijnu 'Aḥabbu 'Ilayya Mimmā Yad'ūnanī 'Ilayhi" (قال ربي السجن (أحب إلي مما يدعونني إليه). This strategic omission serves multiple rhetorical functions: (1) it enhances textual economy, (2) intensifies the immediacy of Yūsuf's (PBUH) supplication – reflecting his urgent desire for divine intervention, and (3) conveys profound longing for enduring spiritual solace rather than temporary relief from worldly temptation. As Az-Zarkashī (1990, Vol. 3, p. 213) observes, such elliptical constructions in divine discourse often carry layered semantic and affective dimensions that transcend mere grammatical brevity.

Translation Assessment

At the structural level, both translators restored the omitted elements in the noun "Rabbi" (ربي): the exclamation "O" (used before a name in direct address, such as in prayers⁵) for the vocative particle "yā" (يا), and the possessive adjective "my" for the first person singular possessive pronoun "rabbī" (ربي), both accompanied by an exclamation mark in the translations. Preserving the original structure of the source text (ST) in the target text (TT) would result in awkward and impolite phrasing, as Yūsuf (PBUH) addresses Allah the Almighty in such a dire situation. Maintaining the ST structure (e.g., "Sustainer!" or "Lord!") would not adequately convey the stylistic and semantic intentions behind the rhetorical omission. In this case, the translator of the Quran must recover and convey the implied meaning, ensuring the translation accurately reflects the underlying structure while avoiding any awkwardness.

At the semantic level, the translators' lexical choices for rendering al-Rabb (الرب) reveal distinct interpretive approaches. Asad demonstrates particular sensitivity to the situational context—a moment of profound crisis where Yūsuf (PBUH), facing existential peril, turns to divine intervention as his sole recourse. Recognizing this psychological dimension, Asad selects "Sustainer," a term whose etymological sense (from Latin *sustinere*, "to strengthen or support") effectively captures both physical preservation and spiritual fortification.

While both translations necessarily reconstruct the elliptical elements to maintain target-language naturalness—as literal preservation would produce pragmatically awkward results—neither successfully reproduces the ST's strategic brevity. This compensatory expansion, however, represents an unavoidable concession to linguistic and cultural constraints rather than a failure of translation. The translators' obligatory recovery of elided elements ultimately

⁴ <http://corpus.quran.com/wordbyword.jsp?chapter=12&verse=33>

⁵ <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/o>

prioritizes functional equivalence over formal correspondence in this theologically sensitive context.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Sūrah Yūsuf comprises 111 verses, with the narrative of Prophet Yūsuf (PBUH) spanning the first 102. Through semantic, stylistic, and structural analysis of four selected verses—each demonstrating conciseness, whether elliptical or non-elliptical—this study evaluates the translational challenges faced by Yūsuf Ali and Muhammad Asad in preserving rhetorical brevity. The key findings are as follows:

Sample 1: In verse 25, an elliptical case occurs where the preposition "إلى" (ila) is omitted. Both translators prioritized meaning over structural fidelity by explicitly recovering the omitted preposition ilā ("to"). While this ensures clarity, it sacrifices the ST's conciseness, illustrating the inherent tension between semantic accuracy and stylistic preservation in Quranic translation.

Sample 2: In verse 30, the ST employs non-elliptical brevity (ījāz al-qaṣr), compressing profound meaning into a succinct structure. Neither translation includes footnotes to elucidate the condensed rhetorical force, leaving target readers unaware of the ST's layered intentionality.

Sample 3: In verse 32, another instance of conciseness (Ijāz ālqīṣar) occurs without ellipsis. The verb istaṣama (استعصم) is a hyperbolic form that conveys a profound meaning in the source text. Both translations fail to replicate this stylistic intensity, opting for flatter renditions (e.g., "he remained chaste") that dilute the original's rhetorical power.

Sample 4: In verse 33, there are two instances of the ellipsis of the vocative particle yā (يَا) and the possessive pronoun in Rabbi (رَبِّ). Both translators restored the omitted elements. However, they did not preserve the brevity intended in the source text's structure; they had no choice but to recover the omitted elements to avoid rendering an awkward or opaque translation.

6.1.Key Observations

Elliptical Cases: In all instances of ellipsis, Ali and Asad reconstructed omitted elements, prioritizing semantic transparency over conciseness. **Non-Elliptical Conciseness:** Forījāz al-qaṣr, neither translator preserved the ST's brevity or provided explanatory footnotes, resulting in significant rhetorical loss.

Theoretical Implication: The Quran's inextricable link between structure and meaning poses a fundamental challenge when translators prioritize "sense over structure"; they risk diluting the text's layered hermeneutics.

In general, while Ali and Asad successfully conveyed core meanings, their inability to retain conciseness—whether in elliptical or non-elliptical constructions—highlights a critical limitation in Quranic translation. The absence of paratextual aids (e.g., footnotes) further exacerbates this gap, underscoring the need for translators to balance linguistic fidelity with richer contextual explanations.

7. CONCLUSION

This study explored the complexities and challenges of translating the rhetorical device of conciseness in Sūrah Yūsuf (Q:12). The research first introduced the Quranic Qaṣaṣ as a

unique literary genre, distinct from modern literary stories in its structure, functions, and characteristics. Consequently, the Quranic Qaṣaṣ should not be translated through the lens of contemporary literary forms.

The study also examined the rhetorical device of conciseness in the Quran, focusing on its use with and without ellipsis, as well as its structural and semantic features. At the practical level, an analysis of various translations of Sūrah Yūsuf was conducted to compare the strategies used by translators to convey the nuanced meanings embedded in this device.

The findings of the study highlighted several key points:

- The overlap between structure, style, and meaning is critical when translating the rhetorical device of conciseness. Translators must be particularly attentive to this relationship to ensure the integrity of both form and content.
- The translation of Quranic structures involving ellipses can benefit from the inclusion of footnotes that explain the meaning of the source text in its specific context.
- A thorough stylistic analysis of the source language is essential when translating the Quranic Qaṣaṣ. Translation is not merely a transference of meaning but also of style; in the case of the Quran, these elements cannot be separated.
- To accurately convey the intended meaning of Quranic verses, translators must draw on the extensive knowledge of Islamic religious sciences, particularly exegesis (Tafsir), as well as Arabic linguistic studies that address the Quran's semantics, pragmatics, and rhetoric.

This research underscores the importance of preserving both form and meaning in Quranic translation, highlighting the difficulty of faithfully conveying the eloquence and rhetoric of the original text. In this context, the study reinforces the argument for the untranslatability of the Quran due to its divine nature and the unique linguistic and rhetorical features that cannot be fully captured in any other language.

While the study contributes valuable insights, it does not claim to be exhaustive. Further research is necessary, particularly with a broader scope, to continue exploring the translation of conciseness and Quranic Qaṣaṣ. Future studies could benefit from an interdisciplinary approach that integrates Islamic studies and Arabic linguistics, offering translators effective tools for addressing gaps in meaning and style. Additionally, leveraging advanced technologies—such as digital tools, computational linguistics, and AI—could facilitate more precise analysis and comparison of Quranic texts, uncovering patterns of conciseness and improving translation strategies. By combining religious and linguistic knowledge with technological advancements, future research could preserve the rhetorical power of the Quran while expanding the field of translation studies.

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