




## A Comparative Analysis of the Translation of the Inappropriate Pause Sign in Four English Versions of the Holy Qur'ān

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 <https://doi.org/10.22081/TTAIS.2023.66667.1018>

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 10 June 2023

Revised: 16 July 2023

Accepted: 20 August 2023

#### Keywords:

Continuation,

Conveying,

Impermissible Pause,

Pause,

Pause and Resumption,

Waqf Symbols.

### ABSTRACT

In reciting the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, making pauses at appropriate places is one of the important issues of Tajwid, neglecting which can potentially distort the meanings of the verses and reverse their intended purpose. The present study seeks to analyze how translators have dealt with the concept of inappropriate pause by investigating four English translations of the Holy Qur'ān through answering the following questions: Has the concept of inappropriate or impermissible pause been observed in the English translations of the Holy Qur'ān? Is it possible to express the concept of inappropriate pause using English punctuation? If yes, is it possible to achieve a standard to convey the concept of inappropriate pause? If not, how can this gap be filled? Through a comparative analysis of all 68 cases of inappropriate pause in the Holy Qur'ān and their corresponding translations into English, it seems that English lacks equivalent punctuation to convey the concept of inappropriate pause. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that colon is the most appropriate punctuation in English to convey the concept of inappropriate pause. However, the findings of this research show that the translators used commas in 43.7% of the verses with impermissible pauses. The authors presented a “standards table” by examining the function of English punctuation marks, and by observing the approach taken by the translators when facing an inappropriate pause, a “descriptive table” was also presented to illustrate these observations. Then, considering the relationship between these two tables, the closest English punctuation mark for conveying the concept of inappropriate pause was introduced.

Yazdani, M., & Dastyar, H. (2023). A Comparative Analysis of the Translation of the Inappropriate Pause Sign in Four English Versions of the Holy Qur'ān. *International Journal of Textual and Translation Analysis in Islamic Studies*, 1(2), 141-155. doi: 10.22081/ttais.2023.66667.1018

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## 1. Introduction

The Holy Qur'ān is the word of revelation and the necessity of accuracy in translating it into different languages is clear to everyone. When translating the Holy Qur'ān, careful selection of appropriate words is not the only consideration; the issue of punctuation also plays an important role in facilitating comprehension. Unlike spoken language, texts lack the assistance of hand and facial gestures, stress, and intonation. Therefore, in writing, the necessity of using punctuation marks is greater. The purpose of punctuation is to read texts faster and correctly, allowing readers to understand the texts without the need for repeated reading. It also contributes to preventing reading errors by enabling people to make use of short or long pauses, or read words connectedly or separately (Dānishgar, 1374/1995, pp. 95-109). Generally speaking, this aspect of the Holy Qur'ān can be said to have received little or no attention in the research literature for a couple of reasons, including: its being taken for granted; its being regarded as a system similar to the existing western punctuation system, while the element of forbidding pauses is only one of the aspects of difference in comparison to the current world punctuation system, among other reasons. Accordingly, it can be asserted that the use of correct punctuation marks is also very important in translation. Unfortunately, this aspect has not received sufficient attention in existing translations of the Holy Qur'ān. This study seeks to explore how the concept of impermissible pause is conveyed in four English translations of the Holy Qur'ān.

## 2. Background of the Study

### 2.1. *The History of Punctuation*

Punctuation has a long history, but the date of its emergence and also its invention remain uncertain. Encyclopedias consider “Aristophanes”, a famous Greek scientist who also has works in the field of vocabulary and grammar, to be the inventor of punctuation marks. It is believed that Aristophanes introduced punctuation marks in order to transfer the passion and excitement found in speech to writing, so that everyone could read and understand texts in a way consistent with their authors' intent.

Following Aristophanes, a German scholar named “Aldus Manutius” worked on completing punctuation marks (Pazhuh, 1376/1997). It is widely believed that punctuation marks were initially created in order to read religious texts correctly and to avoid distortion of religious anthems and teachings. In Avestan alphabet, used for writing religious texts, some symbols were used for spelling indications (diacritics). For a long time, the Holy Qur'ān did not have diacritics and other punctuation marks. Then, Islamic scholars introduced red dots above and below words as substitutes for diacritics in order to prevent distortion of the Qur'ān, ensure accurate pronunciation, and prevent changes in its pronunciation, which sometimes changed the meaning completely. Later, they changed these dots into signs such as fatha and kasra. After that, with the development of the science of Tajwīd, specific signs of the Arabic alphabet, known as ishārāt al-rumūz, were established for pause, connection, integration, etc. (Pazhuh, 1376/1997). The definition of punctuation; punctuation in Greek and Latin to 1600; punctuation in English since 1600; punctuation in French, Spanish, German, and Russian; and, finally, punctuation in Asian and African languages are the main topics covered in another article in Britannica Online<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/punctuation>

## 2.2. The Importance of Pause and Resumption

The function of punctuation marks in writing can be compared to the function of traffic signs on the road. Their absence causes mistakes and their wrong installation also can lead to accidents. Punctuation marks are the key to understanding the meaning of sentences. The importance of these marks is made evident to some extent by the following two examples:

A woman, without her man, is nothing. A woman: without her, man is nothing.

بخشش لازم نیست، اعدامش کنید. / بخشش؛ لازم نیست اعدامش کنید.

Punctuation is a crucial aspect of translation, especially when it comes to the Holy Qur'an, because failing to convey the meaning accurately can result in misunderstanding and deviation from the true message of the Holy Qur'an. To illustrate the importance of proper placement of pause marks for comprehending the Holy Qur'an, a personal anecdote can be shared. It is reported that a Muslim, many years ago, converted to Christianity based on the Holy Qur'an! He interpreted the verse "لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ" (There is no compulsion in religion.) (Sūrah al-Baqarah, verse 256) as implying that choosing a religion is a matter of personal preference; Therefore, he changed his faith. However, if he had paid attention to the pause symbol, i.e. "صلى", and its meaning, which indicates that pausing is not allowed and the verse must be continued, he would not have made such an erroneous inference.

The Holy Qur'an presents the paths of guidance and misguidance as clear and distinct from each other, and the correct interpretation is that since the truth is evident, there is no need for coercion. This does not mean that any path or religion is acceptable. Imām Alī (peace be upon him) stressed the significance of the concept of pause and continuation, and regarding the meaning of the verse "وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلاً" (and recite the Qur'an slowly and distinctly), considered observing pauses as half of the proper recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

This implies that one who is not familiar with the rules of pause, does not truly comprehend the Holy Qur'an. (Majlisī, 1388/2009: Feyḍ Kāshānī, 1402 Lunar year, p. 45) Recitation scholars also maintain, "Those who do not know [the concept of] 'pause', do not know the Qur'an." Because according to them, it is through the proper placement of pause and continuation that one can distinguish various, contradictory or distinct meanings between two sentences (Jazri, [n.d.], p. 225). In the book of "Al-Muktafī fī al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā", it is narrated from 'Uḏay Ibn Hatim that one day, two people approached the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, expressing their desire to convert to Islam. One of them pronounced the two testimonies and said, "Whoever follows/obeys Allah and His Messenger, is indeed guided and who opposes/disobeys them" then he paused here and then continued, "indeed has gone astray". The Prophet said, "Stand up; You are a poor speaker".

Here, if the speaker wanted to make a pause in the middle of the sentence, he should have either paused after the phrase "فَقَدْ رَشِدَ" (is indeed guided) and then continued with "وَمَنْ يَعْصِهِمَا فَقَدْ غَوَى" (and who opposes/disobeys them, indeed has gone astray") or he should have uttered both sentences together (the correct meaning of the above sentence is as follows: Whoever follows/obeys God and His Messenger, indeed is guided, and whoever disobeys them, indeed has gone astray) (Dānī, 1404 Lunar year, p. 103).

### 2.3. Punctuation Marks in Translating the Holy Qur'ān

Punctuation marks have special features in each language. Although some of these marks are common across languages, neglecting their role in the accurate transfer of meaning in translation can lead to incomprehensible, incorrect, and ambiguous translations. In the Holy Qur'ān, common punctuation marks have been used to facilitate recitation and avoid ambiguity. Some marks have only a structural aspect while others play a semantic role. However, there is a significant difference between punctuation marks in English and Persian and those found in the Holy Qur'ān. For example, in the Holy Qur'ān, question marks are not used for interrogative sentences, while in the process of translating the Holy Qur'ān, careful attention must be paid to such cases to ensure the transfer of the correct meaning of the verses without ambiguity (Shāhsavandī, 1372/1993, pp. 63-92).

In this study, in order to familiarize the readers with the concept of pause in the Holy Qur'ān as much as possible, the researchers will first explain different types of pause marks and then focus on the main topic of the present research, which is the function of an inappropriate or impermissible pause mark in Arabic and its translation into English.

### 2.4. Types of Pauses

The term “*Waqf*” (pause) literally means standing (Khurramshāhī, 1377/1998, p. 2318) and in *Tajwīd* terminology, it refers to “stopping the voice at the end of a word, with an interval needed for breathing before resuming recitation” (ibid.). Pause can be broadly classified into “optional” and “necessary”. If the Speech is complete, pause is considered “optional” and if it is incomplete, it would be “necessary”. A necessary pause is permitted only in cases of shortness of breath, forgetfulness, sneezing, coughing, etc. Since in a necessary pause, the Speech is incomplete and pausing not only serves no purpose, but in some cases conveys the opposite of the intended meaning, this type is also called inappropriate pause (ibid., p. 2320). Optional pause is also divided into three categories: (‘Abdullāhzādīh, 1382/2003, pp. 67-66; Khurramshāhī, 1377/1998, pp. 2320-2319).

**Absolute Pause:** This type of pause is made when the reciter has completed the speech in both letter and spirit, and there is no connection with what follows. An example would be pausing at “مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ” and restarting from “إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ”. This type of pause is commonly used at the end of the text of the Holy Qur'an, including stories and other sections.

**Sufficient Pause:** This type of pause is made when the sentence has been completed in terms of structure, but the understanding of its meaning is dependent on the following text. An example would be pausing at the word “مَرَضًا” in the holy verse of “فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ “مَرَضًا” وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ اللَّهُ”. In this case, either a pause can be made and the next sentence can be started without going back to the previous one, or the two sentences can be connected together.

**Good Pause:** This type of pause is made when the understanding of the meaning of the speech is not dependent on the next clause, but there is a structural connection between what comes before and after the speech. In this case, making a pause is permissible and considered good, but it is not possible to start the recitation from the next part. An example would be making a pause at the word “بِاللَّهِ” in “الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ”. Although the meaning of the sentence is complete (praise belongs to Allah), in terms of the structural aspect, it depends on the next clause because “رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ” is a substitute for “اللَّهُ”.

In order to determine the appropriate places for pausing during recitation of the Holy Qur'an, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of Arabic literature, the meanings of Arabic words, and a complete knowledge of the rules of morphology, syntax, and semantics. Since not all Muslims are proficient in Arabic language and its sciences, scholars of recitation have developed marks to indicate the appropriate places for pausing. These marks were first established by 'Allāmiḥ Shaykh 'Abdullāh Abū Ja'far Ṭayfūr Sajāvandī", and are known as "Sajāvandī codes".

It is important to note that Tajwīd scholars have developed classifications for pausing and resuming based on different criteria. Some have classified pauses based on appropriateness of both pausing and resuming, while others have only considered the appropriateness of resuming. Consequently, some versions of the Holy Qur'an contain multiple pause marks in one place to indicate different views regarding pausing or resuming. However, the multiplicity of marks can cause confusion among reciters. In 1923 (1342 lunar year), Egyptian scholars presented the following marks as pause marks in order to promote unity among different types of pausing and resumption codes (Kāshānī, 1363/1984, pp. 193-194; Khurramshāhī, 1377/1998, p. 232):

م: It indicates a compulsory pause. If connected, changing the meaning of the sentence is very likely.

لا: It indicates an "impermissible or inappropriate pause". This sign comes where a pause between two phrases changes the meaning of the Speech. In these cases, while considering "appropriate resumption", it is necessary to repeat a part of the previous clause of the holy verse and connect it to the next phrase, like:

### Surat Al-Baqarah [2:120]

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۗ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَّلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

صلى: It indicates a preference for continuation over pausing, but pausing is also permitted.

قللى: It indicates a preference for pausing over continuation, but continuation is also permitted.

ج: It indicates a "permissible pause". This mark is used where both pausing and continuation are allowed, but pausing is preferred. In other words, this mark is used where the possibility of pausing and continuation both remain, but the possibility of pausing is stronger. In Arabic-script versions of the Holy Qur'an, "ج" is a sign of equality between stopping and continuation, such as in the holy sūrah of al-Kahf, the holy verse 3.

ط: It indicates an "absolute pause" or "tām", where pausing is highly appropriate; To resume what comes after it is also good.

ج: It indicates an allowed pause. This mark is used where both pausing and continuation are allowed, but continuation is preferred. In other words, this sign comes where the possibility of continuation is stronger, such as in the holy sūrah of al-Baqarah, the holy verse 10.

ص: It indicates a “licensed pause”. This sign is used to make a pause between verses, long stories and appositives in case of shortness of breath. This sign comes where there is a semantic connection between the two clauses preceding and following, but due to the length of the subject and the inability to read it continuously, a pause can be made, without the need for the reciter to return to the word before the sign and read the previous clause again. An example of this is the pause on the word “بِنَاء” (the holy surah of al-Baqarah, the holy verse 22).

“: – :”: It indicates an “embracing pause”. These two marks are placed on two words close to each other in order to guide the reciter to pause at only one of those two words and not at the other one.

### 2.5. Prohibited Pause

The preceding discussion provided a brief overview of various types of pause symbols in the Holy Qur'an. However, the main focus of the present research is on the “لا” mark, which is one of the pause symbols. The challenge of conveying the meaning of this mark is greater than that of other pause symbols because many translators have found no equivalent mark in English. In some translations, the number of cases without a mark is almost equal to the number of cases with one.

There is no comprehensive definition of the prohibited pause, but by examining the words in the Holy Qur'an marked with “لا”, it can be inferred that this pause is inappropriate. Ibn Jazrī, in explaining the correct meaning of the “لا” pause from Sajāvandī's perspective, writes, "It should be noted that by “لا”, Sajāvandī means that the reciter should not pause on this word in a way that they want to start from the next word" (meaning that a pause can be made, but if so, it is advisable not to start from the next clause and instead go back to where it is appropriate to resume).

In an inappropriate pause, the speech is not complete in terms of letter and spirit, and the word on which a pause is made is dependent on the word that follows it. If a pause is unavoidable before completing the context or speech due to circumstances such as shortness of breath, sneezing, coughing, or hiccups, it is necessary to repeat the word on which the pause was made from the appropriate place. Failing to do so may result in a change of the intended meaning of the sentence or verse (Shakir, 1376/1997, p. 123; Khurramshāhī, 1377/1998, p. 232).

### 2.6. The Punctuation Marks of English Language

Among English punctuation marks, the authors mention only those that are used in English translations to convey the meaning of the pause symbol “لا” (inappropriate pause). The mentioned marks are listed in Table 1 (Tūsī, 1384/2005; Schwartz, 2003; Greenbaum, 2002).

Table 1. The place of use and the function of English punctuation marks

Punctuation Marks	The Place of Use and the Function
Full Stop (.)	It comes at the end of declarative sentences and after some abbreviations. It indicates a complete stop. It shows the end of the sentence, of course, in sentences that are not interrogative or exclamatory.
Comma (,)	It is used to separate the clauses of a sentence (independent or dependent clause). It indicates a change or a short pause in the sentence. It is used on two sides of appositive sentences, phrases or words. It is utilized to separate words or phrases that follow each other in a sentence with the same parts of speech.
Semicolon (;)	It separates two complete sentences, and acts almost like a full stop. It separates two independent but very close clauses that are not connected by conjunctions.
Colon (:)	It is used at the beginning of an explanatory clause or phrase (an example, a quotation and the like).
Dash ( _ )	Sometimes it is used instead of a comma, and sometimes it is used to explain a just previously mentioned content, and sometimes it comes before and after appositive contents.
Exclamation mark (!)	It is used at the end of exclamatory sentences, both to show surprise and emphasis.
Quotes (“”)	It is used for direct quotation.

### 3. Research Method

The methodology employed in this research involved a comprehensive examination of all verses in the Holy Qur'an containing the impermissible pause mark. To facilitate this process, the translations of Professor Fouladvand in Persian and four translations by Mr. Muhsin Khan, Mr. Pickthall, Mr. Yusuf Ali, and Mr. Shakir in English were utilized. The search tool in Word Office Software was used to identify 68 cases where the “ﻻ” pause mark was present. The Persian translation was solely used to assist with the comprehension of the original Arabic text.

To analyze the conveyance of the meaning of the “ﻻ” pause mark from Arabic to English, a standards table (Table 2) was compiled based on the definitions of various punctuation marks in English as presented in Table 1. The marks were classified into four groups - strong, moderate, weak, and negative - based on their level of encouragement to establish a connection. A descriptive table (Table 3) was then constructed to detail the frequency of methods utilized by the translators and the percentage of English punctuation marks they employed. Finally, a comparative table (Table 4) was created by merging the standards and descriptive tables. This table enabled the exploration of the various approaches utilized by English translators of the Holy Qur'an in conveying the meaning of the impermissible pause mark, as well as their differences in this regard.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The study's background indicated that pause marks in Arabic language have two functions: First, they phonologically facilitate the recitation, and second, they help the reciters of the Holy Qur'an comprehend the content's connection, coherence, cohesion and separation. The present study focused on the second function and examined how to convey the meaning of an impermissible pause to English.

Out of the four English translations, 68 instances of “لا” pause mark in the Holy Qur'an were identified and analyzed. Table 2 categorizes the English punctuation marks based on their degree of encouraging connection. This table provides the basis for all descriptions, comparisons, analyses and conclusions in this research. Table 3 shows the frequency percentage of each punctuation mark in English.

Table 2. The function of English punctuation marks in terms of the level of encouragement to connect

English punctuation marks					The level of encouragement to connect
,:		:”		:	Strong
Ø	,-	--	-	,	Moderate
;-			;		Weak
!			.		Negative

The study background section (Table 1. English punctuation marks) explained the function of each punctuation mark individually and based on that, Table 2 was constructed. The term “strong” was applied to those punctuation marks that strongly encourage connection and discourage pause in English. The term “moderate” was applied to those punctuation marks that have an ambiguous direction, and the term “weak” was applied to the marks that favor pause over connection. Since some punctuation marks have the opposite function (encouraging pause), which contradicts the communicative purpose of the pause 1, each of the English punctuation marks will be described separately.

**Colon (:):** According to Table 1, a colon introduces an explanatory clause, phrase, or context that provides examples or quotes. Based on this definition, the function of a colon is to urge the reader to read on without pausing; Therefore, this mark belongs to the Strong row in terms of encouraging connection:

##### Surat Al-An'am [6:51]

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُجَسَّرُوا إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ ۗ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَاوِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ.

Yusuf Ali: “Give this warning to those in whose (hearts) is the fear that they will be brought (to judgment) before their Lord: except for Him they will have no protector nor intercessor: that they may guard (against evil).”

In the above example, the colon urges the reader of the English text, like the reader of the Arabic text, to pay attention to the rest of the text (to maintain the flow of the text).



**Null (Ø):** This mark has not been defined in Table 1, because it is not considered a punctuation mark. However, since in many translations, no specific sign is used to represent "لا", this mark is mentioned in Table ۲. Pay attention to the following example:

### Surat Al-Ma'idah [5:9]

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

Yusuf Ali: "To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward."

Shakir: "Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward."

In the two translations above, the translators have not used any specific punctuation marks to convey the impermissibility of pausing, and the reader is naturally inclined to read on in this holy verse. However, it should also be noted that the absence of a punctuation mark does not necessarily rule out the possibility of pausing and the reader may sometimes pause at a word where there is no punctuation mark, depending on his/her comprehension. For instance, in the following sentence, although there is no punctuation mark before "after", the reader may pause before it or continue reading based on his/her understanding of the sentence structure.

They called us after they found the lost documents.

Now observe this sentence:

It requires one to travel constantly, in order to know the world well.

The reader understands here that he/she should not pause after the words "it, requires, one, to, travel"; Therefore, the absence of a punctuation mark might indicate that the matter of pausing is irrelevant. Consequently, because the null state or the absence of a punctuation mark may imply either pausing or continuing, its degree of encouraging pause is considered moderate.

**Comma (,):** According to Table 1, comma indicates a pause in the sentence flow and also comes between grammatically related clauses and phrases. Hence, since it can be used both for connecting and for making a pause, its level of encouragement to pause is considered as moderate. Pay attention to the following examples, in which a comma is used to convey the meaning of "لا" pause mark:

### Surat Al-A'raf [7:35]

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنِ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Muhsin Khan: "O Children of Adam! If there come to you Messengers from amongst you, reciting to you, My Verses, then whosoever becomes pious and righteous, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."

Pickthall: "O Children of Adam! When messengers of your own come unto you who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil and amendeth - there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve."

Shakir: "O children of Adam! if there come to you messengers from among you relating to you My communications, then whoever shall guard (against evil) and act aright-- they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve."

**Dash (-/--):** According to the descriptions in Table 1, this mark sometimes has the same features of a comma and sometimes it has the features of a colon, but considering that one of the common uses of this punctuation mark is to provide additional context, its level of encouragement to continue is considered to be moderate. Consider the following example:

### Surat At-Tawbah [9:12]

وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعْنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَتَمَّتْ الْكُفْرَ إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

**Pickthall:** "And if they break their pledges after their treaty (hath been made with you) and assail your religion, then fight the heads of disbelief - Lo! they have no binding oaths - in order that they may desist."

**Semicolon (;):** According to Table 1, this mark functions almost like a full stop, although the contents before and after it are related; Thus, the degree of its encouragement to continue and not to make a pause is considered to be weak. Pay attention to the following example, in which the translators have used this mark to convey the "لا" pause mark:

### Surat An-Nur [24:37]

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

**Pickthall:** "Men whom neither merchandise nor sale beguileth from remembrance of Allah and constancy in prayer and paying to the poor their due; who fear a day when hearts and eyeballs will be overturned;"

**Shakir:** "Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about;"

**Full Stop (.) and Exclamation Mark (!):** Because these two marks are used to mark the completion of a context (Swan, 1995, p. 459), the degree of encouragement to connect for both of them is considered negative. That is, their function is exactly opposite to the function of the "لا" pause mark.

### Surat Al-An'am [6:56]

قُلْ إِنِّي مُهَيَّبْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ قُلْ لَا أَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ

**Muhsin Khan:** Say (O Muhammad SAW): "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke (worship) besides Allah." Say: "I will not follow your vain desires. If I did, I would go astray, and I would not be one of the rightly guided."

**Shakir:** Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allah. Say: I do not follow your low desires. for then indeed I should have gone astray and I should not be of those who go aright.

**7- Combined Cases:** Combined cases are those few cases that exhibit the characteristics of two punctuation marks. The position and degree of encouragement to connect for each one can be seen in Table 2.

*4.1. Translators’ Approach to Conveying the “ʻ” Pause Mark*

To demonstrate how the translators conveyed the concept of the “ʻ” pause mark in the target language, a descriptive table (Table 3) was prepared. This table displays the frequency and percentage of punctuation marks used by each translator.

Table 3. The frequency and percentage of punctuation marks used by each translator to convey the concept of “ʻ”

The mark used by the for “ʻ” Translator	.	‘	-‘	;	:	!	-	--	∅	;-	:“	‘:
Muhsin al-Din Khan	9	38		1			1		19			
Pickthall	3	28	1	7	6		3		20			
Yusuf Ali		21	12	4	14	1	2		12	1	1	
Shakir	1	32		6	1			3	23			2
Total	13	119	13	18	21	1	6	3	74	1	1	2
Percentage	4.77	43.7	4.77	6.6	7.72	0.3	2.2	1.1	27.2	0.3	0.3	.073

Due to an inadequate level of information gained from the percentage analysis of punctuation marks in the target language, the researchers undertook a thorough examination of the translators’ approach in dealing with pauses that were not permissible. By merging Tables 2 and 3, the comparative Table 4 was formulated to demonstrate the extent to which English punctuation marks facilitated meaningful connections.

Table 4. The degree of encouragement to connect in English punctuation marks

Punctuation Marks					The Degree of Encouragement to Make a Connection	Percentage	Grade
:	:	“	:	:	Strong	8.75	2
,	-	--	;-	∅	Moderate	78.97	1
;	;-				Weak	6.9	3
.	!				Negative	5	4

In order to analyze and compare the standard levels (Table 2) with the descriptive percentages (Table 3), a numerical score was assigned to each row in Table 4, indicating the

extent to which the primary function of the “ﻻ” pause mark was accurately reflected in the translations. The prevalence of higher percentages was observed in the categories of moderate and strong levels, while the lower percentages were found in the weak and negative levels. Approximately 79 percent of the English translations effectively conveyed the idea of forbidding pauses with markers that encourage moderate levels of connection.

It can be inferred that the translators, whether knowingly or unknowingly, conveyed the meaning of the “ﻻ” pause mark in English translations. However, this matter also highlighted that the intended meaning was not effectively conveyed in all verses. For example, the absence of a mark can indicate both a tendency to pause and an encouragement to connect or, in many cases, the dash itself serves as a pause indicator in speech. Hence, the sense of the “ﻻ” pause mark is translatable into English, although not flawlessly.

Punctuation marks that strongly encourage connection accounted for 8.75 percent of the total usage. These marks indicate that the content/context is incomplete and require the reader to continue reading. For example, a colon signals that something follows, and the reader may expect more information after it. However, the colon ranked second in Table 4, which suggests that the English translations did not fully convey the concept of the “ﻻ” pause mark according to the priority of encouraging connection in Table 2.

The examples (strong and moderate degrees) showed that the translators successfully conveyed the sense of the “ﻻ” pause mark in 88 percent of the cases. However, punctuation marks that weakly encourage connection only represented 6.9 percent of the total usage. Moreover, 5 percent of the cases used punctuation marks that contradicted the sense of the “ﻻ” pause mark by encouraging pausing and stopping. This contrast between the source and target languages was evident both at the standard level (negative level) and in the translators’ practical approach (the fourth priority with the lowest percentage). Therefore, the use of full stops and exclamation marks did not reflect the impermissibility of pause implied by the “ﻻ” pause mark.

#### *4.2. Why English Translations Fail to Convey the “ﻻ” Pause Mark Accurately*

Based on the analysis presented in Table 4, it can be inferred that although translators often strive to foster a sense of connection and continuity in the reader, data analysis indicates that they have not been entirely successful in achieving this objective. Specifically, the percentage of punctuation marks used to strongly encourage connection ranks second, when it should have been in the first. Colon appears to be a punctuation mark that strongly promotes connection, but its usage in the target language is not as prevalent as that of the comma, which is only moderately effective in encouraging connection based on standard measures. Therefore, it appears that translators have been constrained by the structural limitations of the target language, which has limited their ability to utilize colon, a punctuation mark that strongly fosters a sense of connection, since its other uses, such as providing examples, explanations, and quotations, are more common than its use to promote connection. This has resulted in a limitation of its usage to specific cases. Conversely, the comma is more commonly used in English and while it is used to create a brief pause in reading, it also indicates a tendency to connect.

In conclusion, despite the translators’ partial success in conveying the meaning of the “ﻻ” pause mark, it appears that none of the punctuation marks in the English language fully captures its intended meaning. Although colon is more effective in encouraging connection among English punctuation marks, its usage is not as frequent as that of the comma.

Furthermore, the degree to which the comma fosters connection is not as strong as that of the colon, despite its high frequency of use.

## **5. Conclusion**

The literature on Qur'ānic punctuation system as a distinct system from the western punctuation system is scarce. The researchers searched for related works on this topic, but found a few results. This suggests that this aspect of translation studies has been neglected in the research literature. One of the few sources that lists most of the punctuation signs used in the Holy Qur'ān is Mishkat Academy, which provides a webpage titled 'Quran Waqf Signs'<sup>2</sup>. Among the signs covered in the above study, the subheading 'ﻻ – No Need of Stopping' is the one most relevant to the current study:

In the context of the Quran, the word “ﻻ” or “laa” is often used to indicate negation or denial, and it is not a punctuation mark that requires a pause or a stop. Unlike other Arabic punctuation marks, “laa” is not used to indicate a break in the flow of the sentence, but rather to provide emphasis or to negate a statement. It is important to note that when “laa” is used within a Quranic verse, it should not be treated as a punctuation mark that requires a pause or a stop<sup>3</sup>.

Previous studies have not addressed the issue of translating the Qur'ānic punctuation system, which is essential for understanding the meaning of the Holy Qur'ān. This study aimed to explore how the inappropriate pause mark in the Arabic text of the Holy Qur'ān can be conveyed in its English translations. Four English translations were compared with the original text to answer the three research questions. This study revealed that:

- The “ﻻ” pause mark was often omitted or ignored in most of the translations, either intentionally or unintentionally.
- In some instances, the “ﻻ” pause mark was either not translated or partially represented by common punctuation marks in the target language.
- There was no consistent criterion for translating the “ﻻ” pause mark into specific punctuation marks in the target language.

This study has opened up new avenues for future research on translating the pause marks in the Holy Qur'ān. Some potential topics for further study are:

- How other pause marks in the Holy Qur'ān are translated into different languages and how they affect the interpretation of the text.
- How a new punctuation system can be developed specifically for the English translations of the Holy Qur'ān that can fully capture the meanings of the pause marks.
- How conjunctions can be used to convey the sense of impermissible pause mark and avoid ambiguity or misreading.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://b2n.ir/t02084>

<sup>3</sup> <https://b2n.ir/t02084>

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