A Descriptive Study of Coherence in Seven English Translations of the Surah An-Naba

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with coherence in seven translations of Surah An-Naba in the Holy Qur'an. Considering Charolles's (1983) descriptive model, which suggests that establishing coherence may involve adding new information to the target text, it aimed to find the frequency of supplemental and explanatory coherence and reveal whether translating coherence results in an explicated translation. For this purpose, Charolles's (1983) dichotomous modes of coherence in translation, namely supplemental (implicitation) and explanatory (explicitation), were considered as the framework of the study. The data analyzed were selected using a purposive sampling method specific to sacred scriptures. Additionally, seven renditions of the Surah An-Naba by celebrated translators were analyzed to discover coherence relations and determine the frequency and nature of these translations. The results indicated that most renditions maintained a similar coherence level to the source text, providing only minimal additional information, which aligned most frequently with the mode of supplemental coherence. Given that explicitation in translation remains a hypothetical concept, the findings offer valuable insights for improving Qur'anic translations.

1. Introduction

Introducing religions to new contexts through translation is one of the oldest translation practices. The pioneering figures in developing the modern theory of sacred translation are Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (1969). Nida and Taber (1969) propose a well-known distinction between dynamic equivalence and formal correspondence. Formal correspondence, commonly used in translating Biblical and sacred texts, involves translating the source text (ST) form into the target text (TT), preserving the original wording and grammatical structure as closely as possible. This approach, which prioritizes the form of a message over its pragmatic function, is seen as a mark of correctness in translation, as it offers the TT audience a more accurate and faithful translation. Nida and Taber (1969) also introduce "dynamic equivalence," which involves a process of thought transfer rather than strict adherence to form. Dynamic equivalence aims to create an "equivalent effect," allowing TT readers to understand the original message and respond similarly to the ST audience. Going beyond formal aspects requires the translator to also consider the cultural context of the target language.

According to Munday (2012), Saint Jerome was one of the earliest translators and interpreters to propose a theory for translating the Bible. Jerome found that closely following the original scripture did not always convey the true meaning in the target language. To address this, he categorized translation strategies into two main types: word-for-word and sense-for-sense. Although Jerome believed the word-for-word strategy was best for translating holy texts, he still exercised a certain level of freedom in translating these scriptures.

The strategy of word-for-word translation was later expanded and gained additional theoretical and ethical justification. In modern translation theory, the term used for this approach is "literalness," which historically served as an ethical principle aimed at maintaining "faithfulness". According to Munday (2012), this concept, also known as fidelity or loyalty, centers on three core principles: "(a) transferred cultural words; (b) no unnecessary deviation from grammatical and lexical ST structures, unless required by TL constraints; and (c) loyalty to the ST author's textual objectives" (Munday, 2012, p. 188). As can be seen, a translator following this strategy should hold a strong conviction that the ST form and content should be almost identically mirrored in the translated text, which demonstrates a clear tendency toward literalism.

The present study will focus on a model of coherence designed to trace the continuity of information in a sacred scripture as it is communicated through the text. Such a model can significantly help text analysts identify new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and explore how this information can be made visible. Since the study examines translated sacred scriptures, it can effectively reveal how interpretative strategies may influence such translations. Accordingly, this study aims to accomplish the following key objectives:

1.   To analyze the frequency of supplemental and explanatory coherence strategies across seven translations of the Holy Qur'an.

2.   To assess the statistical significance of differences observed between these coherence strategies.

3.   To evaluate the validity of explicitation as one of the proposed universals of translation.

This study will contribute to the field of translation studies by offering a novel discussion and analysis of coherence in the translation of sacred scriptures, specifically within the supplemental and explanatory modes. This study offers valuable contributions across multiple areas within translation studies and related fields. First, it can help expand or verify claims within descriptive translation studies (DTS), particularly regarding the concept of explicitation. Additionally, the findings may benefit cultural translation theorists by providing insights into the cross-cultural translation of sacred scriptures. For translation trainers and educators, the results and discussion address a challenging area of study, offering practical implications for training programs. Finally, the study highlights key distinctions between the roles of religious text interpreters and translators, clarifying how their responsibilities and approaches may differ.

2. Literature review

2.1. Translation universals and explicitation

According to Munday (2012), translation theory, for most of its history, depended on prescriptive conventions that defined the characteristics of a good translation. However, the need for more unbiased theories has been sharply felt in translation studies. Accordingly, some professionals in the field have sought to develop models and frameworks to study translation descriptively. As a fundamental step in establishing translation as an academic discipline, DTS was proposed by Toury (1995) to unravel the essence and mechanism of translation. Toury's goal was to give a systematic structure to translation studies, enhancing its scientific prestige. The paradigm of studies put forth by Toury is based on descriptive research.

According to Pym (2010), the central question in DTS is not what translations should be, but what translations are or look like. Therefore, rather than prescribing rules, DTS aims to establish a common basis for studying the nature of translation without imposing normative conventions. As a result of this neutral stance, DTS is typically expected to investigate habitual translation behaviors within a scientific framework. Naturally, when a system studies a phenomenon scientifically, it should identify patterns and make predictions (Chesterman 2007). Since it emerged in the last decade of the twentieth century, one of DTS's missions has been to discover any regularities that occur in, dominate, or characterize translations. Consequently, experts in the field have developed strategies, models, and frameworks to study translation descriptively.

Along similar lines, the concept of "translation universals" was proposed within DTS (Munday 2012; Pym 2010). If translations exhibit certain similarities, could these similarities be rule-governed and predictable? Consequently, a translation universal can be simply defined as "a feature that is found in translations and in no other kind of text" (Pym 2010, p.78). Up to the present, translation experts have identified certain universals with caution, including lexical simplification, explicitation, adaptation, and equalizing unique items (Pym 2010, pp.79-80). Pym (2010, p.79) also asserts that explicitation is a hypothesized translation universal which is characterized by "greater 'redundancy' of translations". On the other hand, based on Munday (2009), explicitation can be defined more specifically as follows:

> In contrast to implicitation, explicitation (or explication) means that information that is only implicitly mentioned in the ST is expressed clearly in the TT. Making

information explicit in the TT can take place at least at three levels of language: grammar, semantics, and pragmatics/discourse (p. 187).

2.2. Background

Over the past four decades, the field of linguistics has rapidly expanded its theoretical and applied domains. The focus on the centrality of textuality and all of the characteristics associated with it suggests that linguistic studies are actively trying to explain language events from a systematic and structured perspective (Toury, 1995; Pym, 2010; Monday, 2012). Among the many concepts proposed by linguists, coherence has been explored by different theorists who have attempted to describe how these linguistic variable functions (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Coherence is, therefore, about the continuity of semantic content in the formation of concepts and relations. The networks created by coherence are less visible and tangible than those of cohesion, as coherence focuses more on discovering the "sense" of a text, not its visible discursive relations. Similarly, De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 109) explain that coherence is "the outcome of actualizing meanings to make sense".

Along with these purely linguistic concepts, coherence has also been addressed in areas of Applied Linguistics, including translation studies. Translation expert Baker (2011) explains two overriding concerns in dealing with coherence. The first issue concerns the relationship between coherence and pragmatics, while the second aspect addresses how interpretation can significantly influence the perception of textual systems. These two aspects become extremely challenging when translating sacred scriptures, which contain extensive implied prior knowledge. The basic problem is that if new information is added to the translation, the final text may develop considerably different semantic and even pragmatic meanings. Bell (1991, p. 165) explains that coherence "consists of the configuration and sequencing of the concepts and relations of the textual world which underlie and are realized by the surface text: the propositional structures". The phrase "textual world" illustrates how the real world may be represented through textual semiotics. This representation entails a meaningful sequence of events encapsulated in each proposition of a text.

In a different definition, Hatim and Mason (1997, p.16) state, "the underlying concepts and relations must also appear to the reader to be mutually relevant and accessible in establishing and maintaining sense constancy or coherence". This definition emphasizes the fact that meaning should remain consistent as the text develops. Additionally, "accessibility" highlights the importance of relying on information already known to the audience. This important factor is known as "background knowledge" in discourse studies (Bell, 1991; Brown and Yule, 1983; Yule, 2006). Classifying coherence as a form of pragmatic equivalence, Baker (2011) describes this notion as follows:

> The coherence of a text is a result of the interaction between knowledge presented in the text and the reader's own knowledge and experience of the world, the latter being influenced by a variety of factors such as age, sex, race, nationality, education, occupation, and political and religious affiliations. Even a simple cohesive relation of co-reference cannot be recognized, and therefore cannot be said to contribute to the coherence of a text, if it does not fit in with a reader's prior knowledge of the world (p. 232).

The discussion of the pragmatics of coherence can lead us to a broader context: culture. Baker (2011) and Larson (1998) explain that coherence is closely related to the culture within which language is exchanged. Coherence also involves a socio-pragmatic function and helps structure the meaning of a text while facilitating its logical progression (Baker, 2011). Given this, one could argue that sacred scriptures are a rich array of culture-specific images (e.g., the sun), values (e.g., bravery), traditions (e.g., animal sacrifice), and even figures of speech (e.g., similes and metaphors) within each cultural context. In addition, sacred scriptures contain strong cultural links that are meaningful within the ST. Each of these can serve as a hidden source of information in any given text. In this vein, a translator of sacred texts may find it necessary to highlight these pieces of information, which are deeply rooted in the source language and culture.

This study examines coherence in seven translations of the Holy Qur'an using Charroles' (1983) descriptive model, which classifies coherence into supplemental and explanatory modes. Such a model can significantly help text analysts identify new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and how this information can be appropriately made visible. Since the study deals with translated sacred scriptures, it can accurately identify how interpretive strategies may influence such translations. Since establishing coherence may involve adding new information to the TT, the question arises whether translating coherence leads to an explicated translation. At the same time, the study revisits explicitation as a translation universal to examine whether this notion is indeed a universal in the case of Qur'anic translation.

In this context, the following questions were addressed in the study:

1.   What is the frequency of supplemental or explanatory strategies in establishing coherence used in the seven English translations of the Surah *An-Naba*?

2.   Does coherence in the translations lead to explication as an alleged universal of translation?

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

In this study, seven renditions of the Holy Surah An-Naba by seven renowned translators were considered. Additionally, in accordance with the conventions of Qur'anic translation and to ensure validity, Qur'anic interpretations by various scholars across different periods were used where necessary. The renditions in the study are presented as follows:

R1: Yusuf Ali (1934)

R2: Shakir (1999)

R3: Irving (1985)

R4: Mohammad-Sarwar (1920)

R5: Pickthall (1930)

R6: Saffarzadeh (2001)

R7: Arberry (1955)

3.2. Framework of the study

Charolles' supplemental and explanatory model was used as the framework for the study. Charolles (1983) divides coherence into two major types: supplemental and explanatory. Indeed, his categorization of supplemental and explanatory types is related to the issue of coherence relations. Charolles (1983) goes on to describe the difference between the two types: "The former never lead to the explication of a thematic continuity (they indicate that an element is repeated from one segment to another), whereas the latter justify this continuity (they lead to the manifestation of the reason why a certain thing is said about an element)" (p. 78). As a result, the two types of coherence can be explained here. Supplemental coherence occurs when the author does not seek to explain the relations that make the text coherent. In simpler terms, the speaker/writer assumes that the audience will understand the implicit relations in the text. Explanatory coherence, on the other hand, occurs when the speaker/writer tries to explain why some pieces of textual information are connected. In fact, it may be assumed that the audience needs more information to understand the relations that organize the text conceptually.

3.3. Procedures

The present study was based on a corpus of seven Qur'anic translations, which are generally regarded as the most widely read translations of the Holy Qur'an. Since the focus of the study was on the aspects of coherence in translation in sacred scriptures, the data analyzed within the framework of the study were selected using purposive sampling. Additionally, in line with the framework of the study, two modes of coherence in translation—namely, supplemental and explanatory—were examined. To employ the framework of the above model in a DTS study, the coherence relations had to be identified and supported by the interpretations. In this vein, the study proceeded line-by-line to identify any triggers for coherence in the Holy Verses. After that, the translations were analyzed separately to determine how they rendered the coherence of related pieces of information. Following this step, the observed data were classified according to the notions of supplemental and explanatory types of coherence. That is, if the translation in question treated implicit information with no additional explanation, one point was added to its supplemental coherence. Otherwise, when extra information was provided to explain coherence-related connections, it was considered as one point added to the explanatory coherence.

The analytic procedure can be outlined as follows. First, the verse was read in light of various interpretations to determine if it contained any supplemental coherence, specifically with implicit information intended for English or non-Muslim readers. Next, the translations were examined to assess how they transferred this implicit information. If the translations did not provide additional information, it was considered an instance of supplemental coherence. However, if additional information was provided, it was classified as explanatory coherence. Notably, omissions were not counted in the analysis, as the model only focused on added information in the translation. Therefore, any additions were categorized as instances of explanatory or explicated coherence.

4. Findings

In the following, some samples of the renditions of the Surah *An-Naba* by seven different translators are presented:

Example #1 (Surah An-Naba: 1):

<div dir="rtl">عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُون</div>

R1. Concerning what are they disputing?

R2. Of what go they ask one another?

R3. What are they questioning one another about?

R4. What do they quarrel about?

R5. Whereof do they question one another?

R6. Of what do they ask one another?

R7. Of what do they question one another?

Example #2 (Surah An-Naba: 2):

<div dir="rtl">عَنِ النَّبَأ الْعَظِيمِ</div>

R1. Concerning the great news.

R2. About the great event.

R3. About an important announcement.

R4. They quarrel about the great news.

R5. (It is) of the awful tidings.

R6. Of the great news [of the resurrection day].

R7. Of the mighty tiding.

The two verses mentioned above establish a textual relationship: a question is posed in the first verse (عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُون), and it is then answered in the second. This forms a basic conversational pattern. While all seven English renditions convey the same proposition, they use different semantics to express it (e.g., disputing, ask, questioning, etc.). As a result, the translations preserve the supplemental coherence of the original verse, without providing further justification for the question or offering any background information. In the Arabic original of the second verse, the phrase "great tidings" is used. Six of the translations maintain this phrase relatively unchanged in English, while in R6, additional explanation is provided about what the great news might refer to, depending on interpretation. This added information shifts the supplemental coherence of the original two verses into explanatory coherence. It is also important to note that the introductory structure "It is" in R5 cannot be classified as explanatory coherence, as it is a matter of cohesion, not coherence.

Example #3 (Surah An-Naba: 3):

<div dir="rtl">الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ</div>

R1. About which they can not agree?

R2. About which they differ?

R3. Which they are disagreeing over.

R4. Concerning which they have disputes.

R5. Concerning which they are in disagreement.

R6. About which they [the believers and the disbelievers] differ and make dispute.

R7. Whereon they are at variance.

There is no evidence of any change in coherence in the English renditions of this verse, except in R6. In this case, R6 appears to clarify for English readers the exact referent of the pronoun "they". By doing so, however, R6 provides a more coherent version of the Holy Scripture, adding information beyond the text itself. Additionally, the implied information "believers and disbelievers" is explicated in R6, transforming the supplemental coherence of the ST into explanatory coherence. When considering the R6 translation of the verse alongside the others, it is clear that R6 offers a more coherent rewriting.

Example #4 (Surah An-Naba: 4):

<div dir="rtl">

كَلاَّ سَيَعْلَمُونَ

</div>

R1. Verily, they shall soon (come to) know!

R2. Nay! they shall soon come to know.

R3. However they soon will know!

R4. They will soon come to.

R5. Nay, but they will come to know!

R6. [what the deniers say is but falsehood]and they shall soon know;

R7. No indeed; they shall soon know!

Clearly, all the renditions maintain the same level of coherence as the ST by providing only minimal information present in the verse. According to the model under study, this constitutes an instance of supplemental coherence. However, R6 includes additional explanations that justify the logical progression of the text. At this initial stage, the English reader of the Holy Scripture translated in R6 is provided with some information about the question, its topic, and those involved in the questioning. In contrast, the other translations have not yet clarified or justified any of these aspects. The other translations maintain supplemental coherence by preserving the implicit content of the verse: "what the deniers say is but falsehood".

Example #5 (Surah An-Naba: 5):

<div dir="rtl">

ثُمَّ كَلاَّ سَيَعْلَمُونَ

</div>

R1. Verily, verily they shall soon (come to) know!

R2. Nay! Nay! They shall soon know.

R3. Then indeed they shall know!

R4. Yes, indeed, before long they will learn all about it.

R5. Nay again, but they will come to know!

R6. Verily they shall soon know.

R7. Again, no indeed; they shall soon know!

The translations of this verse, although relatively longer than the original, manage to maintain the balance of information between the ST and the TT. As a result, the translations do not introduce any extra coherence to justify the meaning. Furthermore, no instance of explanatory coherence occurs here, as this verse is a rhetorical repetition of the previous one. In fact, the meaning progresses evenly without any new content. Therefore, no statistical addition takes place.

Example #6 (Surah An-Naba: 6):

<div dir="rtl">

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهاداً

</div>

R1. Have we not made the earth as a wide expanse,

R2. Have we not made the earth an even expanse?

R3. Have we not laid the earth out as a cradle?

R4. Have we not made the earth as a place to rest?

R5. Have we not made the earth an expanse,

R6. Did we not make the earth a vast space for establishing your habitation on it,

R7. Have we not made the earth as a cradle?

It appears that all renditions except R6 have the same coherence level compared with the ST, by providing only minimal information existing in the verse which is an instance of supplemental coherence. However, R6 has some extra explanations justifying the logical progression of the text, which is an instance of explanatory coherence.

Example #7 (Surah An-Naba: 7):

<div dir="rtl">

وَ الْجِبالَ أَوْتاداً

</div>

R1. And the mountains as pegs?

R2. And the mountains as projections (theoren)?

R3. And (set) the mountains up as kingpins?

R4. And the mountains as pegs (to anchor the earth)?

R5. And the high hills bulwarks?

R6. And the mountains as strong pegs to keep the earth and you secure against the shaking?

R7. And the mountains as pegs?

According to the interpretations referenced, the ST (وَ الْجِبالَ أَوْتَادًا) only presents mountains as pegs, with no further explanation of this simile in the Arabic original. In fact, the English reader may not fully grasp the cultural significance of the Arabic simile. On the other hand, R4 and R6 demonstrate explanatory coherence. Phrases such as "to anchor the earth" or "to keep the earth and you secure against the shaking" build upon the source language's metaphor and explicate its meaning by justifying the simile. As a result, the supplemental coherence of the ST is transformed into explanatory coherence in these two renditions. The other translations maintain this implicit information as supplemental, offering no additional justification, and thus employ the supplemental coherence strategy.

Example #8 (Surah An-Naba: 8):

<div dir="rtl">

وَ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً
</div>

R1. And (have we not) created you in pairs,

R2. And we created you in pairs

R3. We have created you in pairs

R4. Have we not created you in pairs,

R5. And we have created you in pairs,

R6. And we did created you in pairs (male and female to give you family and to maintain your generation)

R7. And we created you in pairs

The concept of "creation in pairs" is rendered with the same implication as in the ST in all renditions except R6. In R6, the translator adds that "creation in pairs" maintains generation. This extra information reflects the translator's interpretation of the verse. According to Islamic interpretations, "creation in pairs" is seen as a sign of God's power, which may not be immediately clear to a non-Muslim reader. Therefore, while the other translations leave this implicit justification as supplemental coherence, R6 introduces additional explanatory coherence by providing this interpretation.

Example #9 (Surah An-Naba: 9):

<div dir="rtl">

وَ جَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتاً
</div>

R1. And made you sleep for rest,

R2. And made your sleep to be rest (to you)

R3. And granted your sleeping for repose

R4. Made sleep for you to rest,

R5. And have appointed your sleep for repose,

R6. And we caused sleep for your rest Repose;

R7. And we appointed your sleep for a rest

Apparently, this verse does not contain any explanatory coherence, because Qur'anic interpretations only mentioned "sleeping" and "repose" in the actual meanings of the words. Thus, the English reader will not need any more pragmatic information for understanding.

Example #10 (Surah An-Naba: 10):

<div dir="rtl">

وَ جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاساً
</div>

R1. And made the night as a covering,

R2. And we made the night to be a covering

R3. And granted night as a garment,

R4. Made the night as a covering,

R5. And have appointed the night as a cloak,

R6. And we appointed Night a covering to protect you from tumult and fatigue of the day;

R7. And we appointed night for a garment

All TTs illustrate "night" as a covering or garment, exactly as it appears in the ST. These words refer to the conditions necessary for "sleeping" and tranquility. As a result, the English reader may require additional cultural information to fully understand the implicit content within the supplemental coherence. However, R6 explicates the verse by providing the reasoning behind the simile, making it more comprehensible to English readers: "to protect you from the tumult and fatigue of the day". Consequently, an instance of explanatory coherence occurs in this English rendition.

Example #11 (Surah An-Naba: 11):

وَ جَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعاشاً

R1. And made the day as a means of subsistence?

R2. And we made the day for seeking livelihood

R3. And granted daytime for (you to earn your) living in.

R4. And the day as time for you to make a living?

R5. And have appointed the day for livelihood

R6. And we appointed Day a time for work and seeking livelihood (from Allah's Bounties)

R7. And we appointed day for a livelihood

All TTs illustrated "the day" as the time for gaining subsistence. Yet, R6 has given "from Allah's Bounties", which is simply some extra information. This of course may affect the balance of information as R6 gives more information in case of supplemental coherence.

Example #12 (Surah An-Naba: 12):

وَ بَنَيْنا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعاً شِداداً

R1. And (have we not) built over you the seven firmaments,

R2. And we made above you seven strong ones

R3. We have built seven firmaments above you

R4. Have we not made seven strong heavens above you,

R5. And we have built above you seven strong (heavens),

R6. And we built above you Seven Mighty Heavens:

R7. And we have built above you seven strong ones (heavens)

Both the ST and the English renditions are equally coherent, because the main theme of the ST is transferred. However, R2 is the only translation that did not provide the extra information for understanding the verse.

Example #13 (Surah An-Naba: 13):

وَ جَعَلْنا سِراجاً وَهَّاجاً

R1. And placed (therein) a blazing lamp?

R2. And we made a shining lamp (Sun)

R3. And set a blazing lamp there.

R4. (the Sun) as a shining torch

R5. And have appointed a dazzling lamp,

R6. And we placed in it a highly light-Giving lamp, (by the name of Sun)

R7. And we appointed a blazing lamp (sun)

Although the concept of "وهاجا" was rendered in different forms into English, coherence-related modifications were made by some other factors: The word "Sun" which is stated directly in R2, R4, R6, and R7 is an implied image in the ST. Therefore, the supplemental coherence of the text was expanded into an explanatory coherence in these renditions, while the unmentioned image was given prominence in translation. In this case, these four translations explicated a hidden metaphor "lamp" for "sun", creating an instance of explanatory coherence.

Example #14 (Surah An-Naba: 14):

وَ أَنْزَلْنا مِنَ الْمُعْصِراتِ ماءً ثَجَّاجاً

R1. And do we not send down from the clouds water in abundance,

R2. And we send down from the clouds water pouring forth abundantly

R3. We send down water in torrents wrung from rain clouds

R4. And sent down heavy rains from the clouds

R5. And have sent down from the rainy clouds abundant water,

R6. And we sent down from the heavy Clouds, water in abundance,

R7. And have sent down out of the rain clouds water cascading

Every entity in this verse has been translated into English in all TTs, which do not give any further information justifying or explicating the proposition. In fact, no further information is needed.

Example #15 (Surah An-Naba: 15):

لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَ نَباتاً

R1. That we may produce therewith corn and vegetables,

R2. That we may bring forth thereby corn and herbs

R3. So we may produce grain and plants with it,

R4. To make the seeds, plants,

R5. Thereby to produce grain and plant,

R6. By which we produce for you corn, fruit and vegetations,

R7. That we may bring forth thereby grain and plants

The translations do not provide any explanatory coherence. In other words, this verse does not represent any evidence of supplemental coherence in the original.

Example #16 (Surah An-Naba: 16):

<div dir="rtl">

وَ جَنَّاتٍ أَلْفافاً

</div>

R1. And gardens of luxurious growth?

R2. And gardens dense and luxuriant

R3. As well as luxuriant gardens.

R4. And thick gardens grow?

R5. And gardens of thick foliage.

R6. And also gardens of crowded foliage.

R7. And gardens luxuriant

This verse, like the previous one, does not represent any evidence of supplemental coherence in the original. The translations also do not provide any explanatory coherence.

Example #17 (Surah An-Naba: 17):

<div dir="rtl">

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كانَ مِيقاتاً

</div>

R1. Verily the Day of Sorting Out is a thing appointed,

R2. Surely the Day of Decision is (a day) appointed

R3. The day for sorting has been appointed,

R4. The Day of Judgment will certainly be the final appointment.

R5. Lo! the Day of decision is a fixed time,

R6. But verily, the Day of Separation Between Truth and Falsehood is the promised Day to be met by all Mankind.

R7. The day of Trumpet is blown, and you shall come in troops

The renditions relied on various images to convey the concept of Judgment Day. At the same time, all the renditions maintain coherence with the ST, except for R4 and R6. In R6, the translator adds further explanation for the concept of "separation" with the descriptive phrase "the promised Day to be met by all mankind". As a result, the supplemental coherence in the ST is transformed into explanatory coherence in R6. Additionally, R4 explicitly mentions "Day of Judgment" a concept that was implicit in the holy verse.

Example #18 (Surah An-Naba: 18):

<div dir="rtl">

يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَتَأْتُونَ أَفْواجاً

</div>

R1. The day that Trumpet shall be sounded and ye shall come forth in crowds;

R2. The day on which the trumpet shall be blown so you shall come forth in hosts

R3. The day when the Trumpet shall be blown so you will come in droves,

R4. On the day the trumpet will be sounded and you will come (to Us) in huge groups.

R5. A day when the trumpet is blown and ye come in multitudes,

R6. On the Day the Trumpet will be blown and you shall come out in huge groups;

R7. The day Trumpet is blown and you shall come in troops

There is no evidence of modified coherence in the English renditions of this verse, the reason why "people will come in multitudes" remains unexplained in the translations. In other words, the holy verse contains some supplemental coherence about the Judgment Day, but all of the translations kept it hidden. A reader from a very different culture may not be able to make sense of the relationship between "Trumpet" and "Judgment Day".

Example #19 (Surah An-Naba: 19):

وَ فُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَاباً

R1. And the heavens shall be opened as if there were doors,

R2. And the heavens shall be opened so that it shall be all openings

R3. And the sky will open up as if it had gates,

R4. The heavens will have openings like doors.

R5. And the heavens is opened and becometh as gates,

R6. And the sky will be opened as if turned into gates (and the Angels descend from them)

R7. And heavens is opened, and become gates.

All renditions represent the ST's concept by the same coherence. R6 gives some extra explanation enclosed in parentheses, changing the balance of supplemental coherence of the ST into an explanatory coherence: "(and the Angels descend from them)"

Example #20 (Surah An-Naba: 20):

وَ سُيِّرَتِ الْجِبالُ فَكَانَتْ سَراباً

R1. And the mountains shall vanish, as if they were a mirage.

R2. And the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain a mere semblance

R3. And the mountains will travel along as if they were a mirage.

R4. The Mountains will be driven away and become like mirages.

R5. And the hills are set in motion and become as a mirage.

R6. And the mountains will be set in motion And they look like mirage;

R7. And the mountains are set in motion, and become a vapor.

The purpose of this verse is to show the eventual fate of the mountains. Except for some minor omissions in R1, the translations generally depict how the mountains will be destroyed. These omissions, however, are not considered part of coherence because coherence is a macrostructural variable, whereas minor mistakes in rendering a word are microstructural. Therefore, these omissions are not included in the analysis.

5. Discussion

In the current study, DTS, proposed by Toury (1995), was used to unravel the essence and mechanisms of translations of sacred scriptures. The paradigm put forth by Toury is based on descriptive research, and DTS was intended to provide a systematic structure to translation studies, endowing translation with scientific prestige. In this context, one of the goals of DTS has been to uncover any regularities that occur in, dominate, or characterize translations (Munday, 2012; Pym, 2010). The central question addressed in DTS is not what translations should be, but what translations are or look like. Therefore, rather than normalizing or prescribing rules, DTS aims to establish a common foundation for studying the very nature of translation without adhering to normative conventions.

The supplemental coherence regarding the question raised at the beginning of Surah An-Naba is maintained in its original form up to the 18th verse. In other words, the answer to the previously mentioned question—"the resurrection day"—is provided in the 18th verse. The modification introduced by R6 significantly impacts the reading and effectiveness of the ST. This is because R6 alters the balance between the question-and-answer exchange in the rhetorical question. Another important point for translation is that the ST does not provide any extra information at this stage. In other words, the rhetorical question does not contain any cultural or textual implicit information, making explanatory coherence seemingly unjustifiable here. Regarding the 19th verse, all renditions maintain the same coherence as the ST; however, R6 offers additional explanation, shifting the balance from supplemental coherence in the ST to explanatory coherence. Finally, regarding the 20th verse, the original coherence is not supplemental, ensuring that the non-Muslim reader will be able to comprehend the message.

5.1. Response to the first research question

To answer the first research question, the frequency of each category of coherence was counted, and the findings were recorded in the respective tables. The statistical procedure employed was primarily descriptive, clearly indicating the extent to which each translation conveyed a balanced coherence.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of SC[1] & EC[2] in different renditions

Translation	SC	EC	Total	Percentage
R1	9	4	13	13.7
R2	10	4	14	14.7
R3	10	1	11	11.6
R4	6	8	14	14.7
R5	10	2	12	12.6
R6	1	19	20	21.1
R7	9	2	11	11.6
Total	55	40	95	100.0

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[1] supplemental coherence
[2] explanatory coherence

As indicated in Table 1, the frequency distribution of supplemental coherence and explanatory coherence across different renditions suggests that the translations are predominantly supplemental rather than explanatory. However, R6 is the only translation with a significant difference between the frequencies of SC and EC. R4 ranks second, followed by R2 and R1, which share third place. R5 and R7 come next, while R3 ranks last.

5.2 Response to the second research question

One of the general universals of translation is explication, which refers to cases where an original text is expanded through translation. On the other hand, a key question in the development of translation studies is the validity of the claims made by DTS. To answer the second research question, only the statistics on explanatory coherence in the translations were considered, as this type of coherence could help test the universality of explication. Providing a clear-cut answer to this question was challenging. Therefore, the results from the descriptive statistics were used for further analysis and discussion to provide a valid response.

Table 2. Percentage of supplemental and explanatory coherence in different renditions

Translation	SC Percentage	EC Percentage
R1	9.5	4.2
R2	10.5	4.2
R3	10.5	1.1
R4	6.3	8.4
R5	10.5	2.1
R6	1.1	20.0
R7	9.5	2.1
Total	57.9	42.1

As shown in Table 2, 57.9% of the cases are SC, indicating a dominant tendency among translators to maintain supplemental coherence. A more detailed comparison involves the standardized information for each coherence type in each translation. Clearly, R1, R2, R3, R5, and R7 have a higher frequency of SC. Furthermore, in R4, the two coherence types are very closely distributed. Interestingly, R6 is the only translation with a significant difference between supplemental coherence (1.1%) and explanatory coherence (20.0%). In fact, we can conclude that the translations largely preserve the supplemental coherence of the original Holy Scripture. This finding somewhat challenges the general notion of the universality of explicitation proposed by Pym (2010). In reality, the seven renditions of Surah An-Naba in the Holy Qur'an exhibit coherences that are largely similar to the original text. However, in the case of R6, it is clear that the addition of extra information and the provision of explanatory coherence lead to a longer and more detailed coherent rendition.

Translation involves two main processes: reading in the source language and writing in the TL. Any issues that arise in either of these processes can lead to mistranslation. To avoid misunderstandings, it is crucial to understand exactly what needs to be conveyed. Moreover, translation is not merely about finding target-language equivalents for source-language words and phrases; it also encompasses the roles that translation plays in society and the influence society has on translation. Translating different types of texts, each with its own

genre, is important in the field of translation studies. However, translating sacred texts is especially sensitive and significant because these texts engage with ideologies and beliefs. Therefore, a translator of divine texts must be fully aware of the specific challenges and considerations involved in such translations.

In a study on explicitation in translation, Shirinzadeh Bojnourdi et al. (2013) examined an English translation of Sa'di's Gulistan by James Ross and found that the translator had extensively used explicitation. However, the study did not provide accurate statistical data to support the findings, which makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. Therefore, further studies should be conducted to explore this issue more clearly. Generally, scholars in translation studies have come to view explicitation as a natural phenomenon. In the present study, descriptive statistics were used to examine the rate of explicitation. Ultimately, the skill of a good translator lies in transferring cultural or religious expressions from the ST to the TT in a way that is both faithful to the original and comprehensible and acceptable to the target readers. The process of explicitation involved in transferring concepts between Arabic and English shows that, although the two languages have different structures, it is possible to provide an acceptable interpretation for native English speakers seeking to engage with Islamic scriptures.

6. Conclusion

The translation of sacred scriptures is of such importance that foundational translation theories in the Western world have often focused on the translation of such texts. Melis and Albir (2001) identify three possible settings for quality assessment: (1) literary or sacred texts, (2) professional, and (3) pedagogical. Quality assessment in the first setting resembles literary criticism. However, this three-way classification is debatable, as both literary translation and the translation of sacred texts can be considered professional, and the purpose of these two genres may differ significantly (cited in Saldanha & O'Brien, 2013, p. 97). Furthermore, unlike other types of translated texts, sacred texts are deeply sensitive and require meticulous attention and faithfulness. In fact, translators of Holy Scriptures have sometimes faced dire consequences, even being accused of infidelity to the original texts due to perceived mistranslations.

Since this study focuses on the notion of coherence in translating sacred scriptures according to the supplemental and explanatory modes of coherence, it offers a novel contribution to translation studies. This model can significantly assist text analysts in identifying new mechanisms by which texts conceal information and how that information can be appropriately revealed. Additionally, because the study involves translated sacred scriptures, it can provide valuable insights into how interpretative strategies may influence such translations.

The findings of this study have several important implications. The study demonstrates that, even across a relatively large number of translations, there is a general tendency to preserve the original coherence of the verses. The renditions indicate that the holy verses contain significant implicit information, which leads translators to maintain supplemental coherence. Another key implication is that explication (or explicitation) may not necessarily be accepted as a universal translation strategy. While translation theory has proposed this idea, the results suggest that, in the case of sacred texts, translators may be reluctant to adopt text-expanding strategies, opting instead to closely reproduce the form of the original. Clearly, this issue warrants further research to be more conclusively established.

The present study offers several contributions to language practitioners. It can help expand or validate the claims of DTS, particularly concerning the notion of explication. The findings can provide cultural theorists of translation with valuable insights into how sacred scriptures are translated across cultures. Additionally, the results can significantly assist translation trainers and educators, as the study addresses a highly complex and challenging issue. Moreover, the study can provide useful perspectives for religious text interpreters, highlighting how their work may differ from the tasks of a translator.

One of the major limitations of this study was the relatively small size of the corpus. It is almost certain that the results could have been more reliable if the research had been extended to include more chapters of the Noble Qur'an. However, increasing the scope of the study would have imposed additional time constraints on the researcher, making it difficult to complete the study within a reasonable timeframe. Moreover, extending the duration of the research would have incurred additional costs, presenting another limitation in meeting the research deadlines. In addition to these practical constraints, working on religious texts requires careful attention to avoid writing anything that could disturb followers of a particular faith or provoke strong opposition. Researchers in this area must maintain impartiality and refrain from supporting any side of a theological debate. This concern may explain why some translators, perhaps due to these sensitivities, prefer not to alter the source language content significantly, choosing instead to remain loyal to the original text. Given these challenges, it would be beneficial for future researchers to extend this study to other chapters of the Noble Qur'an. Such studies could provide complementary findings, helping to validate the results of this research and further enhance the understanding of how religious texts are translated. These future efforts could also contribute to the improvement of translations of religious texts, ensuring they are both faithful to the original and accessible to a wider audience.

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