The Eloquence of Ellipsis in the Qur'an
in the Light of al-Jurjani's Theory of Na<u>z</u>m

بلاغة الحذف في القرآن الكريم
في ضوء نظرية النظم للجرجاني تـ (٤٧١هـ)

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Abstract:

In the Qur'an, the words that make up a verse are couched in a way that creates specific rhetorical effects. To have such an eloquent influence, the Qur'an utilizes several grammatical tools, the rifest of which is ellipsis. Since ellipsis can be a source of eloquence, this means that eloquence does not emerge from laf<u>z</u> (form) in isolation, but rather from words combined in a specific manner, whether elided or unelided, a concept that is known in the Arabic literary theory as *na<u>z</u>m*. Thus, this paper will expatiate upon ellipsis in the light of al-Jurjani's theory of na<u>z</u>m. In his pertinent treatise, *Dala:ʔil al-ʔiʕja:z*, al-Jurjani shows that neither words alone nor meanings alone can account for the inimitability of the Qur'an. Therefore, inspired by the principles of the theory of na<u>z</u>m, this paper found manifest support for at least five rhetorical functions of ellipsis in the Holy Qur'an.

Keywords: Inimitability, Eloquence, Na<u>z</u>m, Ellipsis, Lafz-Maʕna Duality

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الملخص:

إن البحث في الوشائج القائمة بين التراكيب اللغوية، وما تؤديه من دلالات وأغراض بلاغية تتعلق بقصد المتكلم، وفهم المتلقي، من الضرورة بمكان في البحث اللغوي. لذا يناقش هذا البحث بلاغة الحذف في القرآن الكريم في ضوء نظرية النظم لعبد القاهر الجرجاني، فالناظر للحذف في القرآن الكريم يجد أن جُلَّهُ يعد حذفا بلاغيا، ذلك أنّ دلالات النص القرآني ليست قاصرةً على ما يُفهم من ألفاظها؛ ولكن بما يفهم أيضا من إشاراتها ومضمونها ومقتضاها، حيث يوظف الحذف أحياناً عند اتساع المعنى المقصود على اللفظ، فيكون تحقيق عموم المعنى واتساعه مع حذف اللفظ به أولى من إظهار اللفظ مع تضييق المعنى، وقد خلص البحث إلى أن الحذف يعتبر من أكثر الأمور التي تعضد نظرية النظم عند الجرجاني، والقائلة بأن إعجاز القرآن الكريم يعود إلى نظمه، وهذه حقيقة؛ لأنه إذا كان الإعجاز يعود للفظ أو للمعنى منفردين - كما قال البعض - فكيف للإعجاز والبلاغة أن تتحقق في غياب اللفظ. وقد خلص البحث إلى خمسة أغراض للحذف في القرآن الكريم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحذف، البلاغة، النظم، القرائن، السياق

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1. Introduction

One major factor that makes the Qur'anic style inimitable is its dynamic grammar. Through the utilization of this grammatical dynamicity, the resulting Qur'anic structures are grammatically correct and the meanings conveyed are far from being odd. The grammar used in the Qur'an cares for the choice of words, their dependencies, implications, and rhetorical functions. From al-Jurjani's point of view "there is no one meaning in a text; instead, there are meanings that intertwiningly coexist in one and the same text" (Gunaydin, 2012, p. 127). This stylistic technique of employing grammatical rules to serve specific semantic and rhetorical purposes is known as *naẓm*, which is a hitherto incomparable theory of Arabic discourse. Al-Jurjani (2004) argues that *naẓm* is "nothing but the fulfillment of the rules imposed by the grammar of a language" (p. 488). It could be said that *naẓm* can be described as *rhetorical syntax* النحو البلاغي */annaḥu al-bala:ɣi/* due to the fact that the theory of *naẓm*, in essence, is producing eloquent meanings by utilizing correct grammatical rules that are adaptable for the semantic and rhetorical goals intended by the speaker.

1.1 Problem Statement

Studies that tackle ellipsis are omnipresent; however, studying the eloquence of ellipsis in relation to the theory of naẓm is shrugged off in the literature. Moreover, most recent literature on ellipsis did not consider the textual view when discussing ellipsis in the Qur'an, i.e., such studies focused on a grammatical classification of ellipsis without showing its rhetorical goals. Modern studies that tackled ellipsis in Arabic include Abu Shadi (1992), entitled *Al-Haðf al-Bala:ɣi fi al-Qur'an al-Kari:m* and Khalu:f (2009), entitled *ʔUslu:b al-Haðf fi al-Qur'an al-Kari:m wa ʔθaruhu fi al-Maʕna wa al-ʔiʕja:z.* Although these two studies have eloquence and inimitability as main topics to discuss, their discussion was grammar-oriented.

1.2 Research Objectives

This paper seeks to reach a clearer understanding of some rhetorical functions of ellipsis in the Holy Qur'an through the interrelationship between grammar and eloquence (a major principle of the theory of na<u>z</u>m). To this end, the main principles of the theory of na<u>z</u>m will be expounded and how ellipsis is eloquently employed in the Holy Qur'an will be expatiated upon. When necessary, some exegeses that concentrate on the rhetorical and grammatical aspects of the Qur'an will be quoted. The most frequently used exegesis in this paper is a-z-Zamakhshari exegesis since it focuses on the linguistic and rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an. Moreover, *Sahih International* is the main translation of the Qur'an used throughout the paper unless otherwise noted. Translation of Arabic quotations, be direct or paraphrased, is done by the author.

1.3 Research Questions

The current research seeks to answer the following questions:
1. How is the theory of na<u>z</u>m different from previous views with respect to Qur'anic inimitability?
2. How does eloquence emerge from elided syntactic constituents?
3. How does the use of some grammatical rules provide fodder for highly eloquent meanings?
4. What are the rhetorical functions of ellipsis in the Qur'an?

2. Laf<u>z</u>-Maʕna Duality

Mir (1986) argues that "the idea of *na<u>z</u>m* seems to have arisen in connection with the discussion of ʔiʕ j*a*:z ("inimitability") of the Qur'an" (p. 10). This issue of Qur'anic inimitability was the focal point of the classical Arabic literary theory as "Muslim writers have unanimously held the Qur'an to be muʕjiz (inimitable), though they have differed on precisely how Qur'anic ʔiʕj*a*:z is to be explained" (Mir, 1986, p. 10). Years before al-Jurjani introduced his salient treaties *Dala*:ʔ*il al-ʔiʕ ja*:z, there was a widely-held belief that the inimitability of the Qur'an comes from its words alone: "words are intrinsically beautiful or not and are in or of themselves the indicator of stylistic excellence" (Larkin, 1982, p. 77). Other views saw that inimitability emerges from the meanings of the Qur'an. For that reason, the duality of laf<u>z</u> (form) and maʕna (meaning)

has always been a leitmotif in the Arabic literary theory. A third party believed that inimitability should not be interpreted on a linguistic basis. It should rather be imputed to what they called *sarfah* صرفة, which means that Allah has preordained that the Arabs do not produce the like of the Qur'an, though they could have (see a.s.Siyu:ti, 1988).

Whether Qur'anic inimitability should be ascribed to form or meaning has led to a disputation known in the literature as form-meaning duality. Many scholars raised this argumentative issue before al-Jurjani, the eminent of them all was al-Jaḥiz (d. 255/868-869). The treatise of al-Jaḥiz is regarded as the genesis of form-meaning duality. In his widely quoted phrase: "المعاني مطروحة في الطريق، يعرفها العربي والعجمي، البدوي والقروي" (الجاحظ، ١٩٦٥، ص ١٣١) "ideas are strewn on the road, known to the Arabs and non-Arabs, to the Bedouin and the yokel alike" (al-Jaḥiz, 1965, p.131), al-Jaḥiz pays attention to the careful choice of words, stressing the importance of how an idea is expressed rather than the idea itself.

Abu Bakr Abd al-Qahir Abd a-r-Raḥman al-Jurjani, known as Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471/1078 or 474/1081) epitomizes the genius of a syntactician and rhetorician Muslim scholar. His genius is demonstrated by his ability to probe into the secrets of meanings. He was the first theorist to advance the discussion of lafẓ and maʕna in relation to eloquence. "He does so primarily in his work on the inimitability of the Qurʾān, *Dalāʾil iʿjāz al-Qurʾān* (The Signs of the Inimitability of the Qurʾān), but also in his other major work on eloquence entitled *Asrār al-balāgha* (The Secrets of Eloquence)" (Ḥarb, 2015, p. 302).

3. The Theory of Naẓm

Naẓm, sometimes called composition or theory of discourse (Larkin, 1982), coherence and integration (Mir, 1986), theory of construction (Gunaydin, 2012), and discourse arrangement (Ahmed, 1992), to cite just a few, has occupied the minds of Arabic syntacticians and rhetoricians. The theory of naẓm represents a volte-face regarding the controversiality of form-meaning duality. Al-Jurjani was the staunchest supporter of the idea that a text should not be understood as an arrangement of words according to the traditional rules of grammar but as an arrangement of meanings in accordance with rhetorical syntax,

which he called توخي معاني النحو (fulfilling the grammatical meanings). He means by grammatical meanings not the traditional grammar rules of the concatenation of words within a sentence but the utilization of grammar to serve specific semantic and rhetorical goals. "In al-Jurjani's view, we need to treat maʕani with the structure of grammar" (Busoeri et al., 2016, p. 63). In this way, grammar for al-Jurjani is not only concerned with case inflections but with the positions of the structural components as well, i.e., it is a type of grammar in which ellipsis, emphasis, preposing, postponing, the use of conjunctions, repetition, restriction, etc. are meaningful.

Grammar as viewed by al-Jurjani is dynamic so that the change of the position of a word or even a particle engenders a new meaning. For example: أقتلت زيدًا؟ (Did you verily kill Zayd?) is, according to al-Jurjani, different from أزيدًا قتلت؟ (Was it Zayd that you killed?) For the first question, it is not semantically judicious to answer as: لا بل عمرو قتلت. (No, I killed ʕamr) since the question here is about the action of killing and not about who was killed. Thus, the answer should be *Yes, I killed him.* Or *No, I did not kill him.* For the second question, the answer should be *Yes, I killed Zayd* or *No, I killed ʕamr, not Zayd* owing to the question being about who was killed and not about the action of killing. By coining this term of *grammatical meanings*, al-Jurjani widened the scope of grammar and brought it closer to eloquence.

In *Dala:ʔil al-ʔiʕja:z*, al-Jurjani sometimes highlights lafẓ as a source of eloquence and other times maʕna."The different levels to which the terms may refer has al-Jurjānī sometimes embracing one in favour of the other in one instance and adopting the opposite position in the next" (Ḥarb, 2015, p. 302). This apparently seems paradoxical, yet, in fact, it is not. Al-Jurjani underestimates meanings and gives precedence to form when the meaning produced is nothing more than the conceptual meaning. He quotes some verse lines from *al-Mutanabi* to differentiate between the conceptual meaning of words and the associative one. The idea that the nature of a human being cannot be changed can be represented by the general phrase known to all people under the sun: طباع البشر لا تتغير (the nature of a human being is unchangeable); however, *al-Mutanabi* has versified this general meaning into: "يراد من القلب نسيانكم وتأبي

"الطباع على الناقل" (الجرجاني، ٢٠٠٤، ص ١٢٣) "The heart is requested to forget you, but the nature rejects to change" (al-Jurjani, 2004, p. 123). This correlation between form and meaning is found ubiquitously in the Qur'an. For example, {قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّي وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنْ بِدُعَائِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا} (مريم: ٤) (He said: My Lord! surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and my Lord! I have never been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee) (Q. 19: 4, Shakir). اشْتَعَلَ الرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا (my head flares with hoariness) is different from أَشتعل شيب الرأس (hoariness overwhelms my head). The former means that hoariness spread on the head to the extent that no single hair was left black. The same applies to {وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ} (القمر: ١٢) (And We caused the earth to gush forth with springs. So, the waters (of the heaven and the earth) met for a matter predestined) (Q. 54: 12, Khan & al-Hilali). وَفَجَّرْنَا الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا (And We caused the earth to gush forth with springs) is not the same as وفجرنا عيون الأرض (We burst open the springs of the earth). The former depicts a picture that shows that there was no single spot on the earth except that it was gushed forth with a spring while the latter does not convey the meaning of this overwhelming widespread of springs on the earth. Thus, according to the theory of na<u>z</u>m, this correlation between grammar and the meaning intended provides fodder for Qur'anic eloquence.

4. Functions of Ellipsis in the Qur'an in the Light of the Theory of Na<u>z</u>m
4.1 Euphemistic Device

The Qur'an, being a homily, is intended for edification. Thus, ellipsis which is defined as "leaving out a word or more than a word that can be understood from contextual indicators" (a-z-Zarkashi, 1984, 3/p. 102) is used as a euphemistic device. The following verses along with the discussions that follow make this idea quite clear.

Verse	Interpretation
{فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِنْ أَثَرِ الرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا} (طه: ٩٦).	"So I took a handful [of dust] from the track of the messenger and threw it" (Q. 20: 96).

According to al-Alu:si (1994) "most exegetes interpret the verse as *I took a handful (of dust) from the track of the horse of the messenger*" (8/p.563). *The track of the horse* is the dust that is beneath its hooves.

Thus, according to exegetes, it is intuitively understood that the dust belongs to the horse and there is no need to mention the word *horse*. However, it could be said that eliding the word *horse* and mentioning the word *messenger* only (the track of the messenger) is eloquently employed to avoid relating the miracle of the dust to the horse rather than Gabriel. If the word فرس (horse) is mentioned, the miracle will then be attributed to the horse (the track of the horse of the messenger). Therefore, ellipsis in this verse can be a kind of veneration to Gabriel.

Verse	Interpretation
﴿وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا﴾ (الجن: ١٠).	"And we do not know [therefore] whether evil is intended for those on earth or whether their Lord intends for them a right course" (Q. 72: 10).

Passivization structures in which the subject is concealed for purposes of euphemism are ubiquitous in the Qur'an. For example, in the first part of the above verse وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ (And we do not know [therefore] whether evil is intended for those on earth), the concealed subject is used. This can be construed in terms of the jinn's politeness towards Allah and their desire to glorify Him. The jinn know Allah's grandeur and try to avoid attributing the evil to Him. Thus, they use the passive form of the verb, i.e., *evil is intended* instead of *Allah intended evil*. Therefore, the jinn's disapprobation of attributing evil doing to Allah can only be expressed by dropping the subject of the verb. Contrary to the first part of the verse, the second part is phrased as أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا (or whether their Lord intends for them a right course). The subject ربهم (their Lord) is mentioned inasmuch as the word رشدا (right course) is acceptable to be associated with Allah.

4.2 Garnering the Addressee's Attention

Ellipsis is taken advantage of to attract the addressee's attention through the employment of some grammatical techniques that include: 1. ellipsis of apodosis, 2. qataʕ al-ʔiʕra:b قطع الاعراب al-ishtiɣa:l الاشتغال, and ellipsis of preposition.

4.2.1 Ellipsis of Apodosis

Verse	Interpretation
{فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ} (الصافات: ١٠٣).	"And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead" (Q. 37: 103).

In the aforementioned verse, the apodosis (the consequence clause) is elided. Though the meanings intended are limitless, the verse has a terse structure. The apodosis is elided because the situation is beyond all horrible description. As Ismael told his father, Abraham, to raise his clothes up to avoid his clothes being stained with blood, a scene that Ismael's mother cannot withstand. Eventually, Ismael told his father to send his greetings to his mother. Consequently, Abraham came closer to Ismael and kissed him (see al-Alu:si, 1994, 12/p. 125). The situation, as narrated by exegetes, can drive to madness; therefore, the apodosis is elided to let the addressee imagine a situation that is more than humans can endure. As Khalu:f (2009) puts it "the basic goal of eliding the apodosis in this verse is to show that human words are unable to describe Abraham and Ismael's happiness due to the delightful ending of the situation" (p.78).

Verse	Interpretation
{وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ} (الأنعام: ٩٣).	"And if you could but see when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands" (Q. 6: 93).

The closed condition in this verse has the apodosis elided to give rein to the addressee's imagination. Al-Alu:si states that the verse وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ (If you could but see the wrongdoers) is used instead of ولو ترى الظالمين إذ هم (If you could see the wrongdoers when) to indicate that the verse aims at depicting the horribleness of the situation those wrongdoers are facing rather than depicting the wrongdoers themselves (see al-Alu:si, 1994, 4/p. 211). Thus, it could be said that the ellipsis of the apodosis in this verse is rhetorically more effectual than mentioning it. This technique is followed since ellipsis allows room for the addressee's imagination to call up different mental images of how

abominable the situation of the wrongdoers is when they are in the agonies of death.

4.2.2 Qataʕ al-ʔIʕr*a:*b and al-Ishtiɣ*a:*l

The Qur'an abounds with further elliptical techniques that capture the addressee's attention. The commonest of which are qataʕ al-ʔiʕr*a:*b and al-ishtiɣ*a:*l. Qataʕ al-ʔiʕr*a:*b is an abrupt change in the case marking of one word in a series which, logically, attracts the addressee's attention, especially since the Arabs had unique stylistic techniques. The Arabs were inclined to the use of these constructions as a style of praise or dispraise. "The Arabs used to use the accusative both for praise and dispraise" (al-Farr*a:*ʔ, 1955, 1/p.36). This technique encourages the addressee to peruse the verses and may lead them to recourse to some commentaries to discover the reason behind choosing a specific construction at the expense of the other:

Verse	Interpretation
﴿وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ﴾ (البقرة: ١٧٧).	"[those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle" (Q. 2: 177).

Unlike الموفون ([those who] fulfill their promise) which is in the nominative case, الصابرين ([those who] are patient), on the other hand, is in the accusative case though it is supposed to have the same case marking as that of الموفون ([those who] fulfill their promise). The latter is case-marked as accusative as it is an object of an elided verb أخص بالمدح / أمدح (I praise / I especially praise). This abrupt change in the inflection of a word attracts the reader's attention. The same stylistic technique is found in the following verse:

Verse	Interpretation
﴿لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (النساء: ١٦٢).	"But those firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you. And the establishers of prayer [especially] and the givers of zakah and the believers in Allah and the Last Day - those We will give a great reward" (Q. 4: 162).

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (the) الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ (those firm in knowledge), الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
believers), الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ (the givers of zakah), and "الْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ"
(the believers in Allah and the Last Day) are all in the nominative case.
They are case-marked as such because they are all subjects, i.e., لكن(but)
does not have an effect on the nominalizations that follow due to the fact
that it is an inactive particle. الْمُقِيمِينَ الصلاة (the establishers of prayer), on
the other hand, is in the accusative case because it is an object of an
elided verb أمدح (I praise the establishers of prayer) to show the lofty
status of prayer in Islam. This abrupt change of inflection gives a
rhetorical dimension to the structure of the verse.

As for the phenomenon of al-ʔishtiɣa:l, the verb c-commands the
annexed pronoun instead of the direct object of this verb. For example,
{وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ} (الذاريات: ٤٧ - ٤٨).
(And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its]
expander And the earth We have spread out, and excellent is the
preparer) (Q. 51: 47-48). These two verses start with a noun, which is
syntactically classed as a fronted object whose operator is elided. The
verse is originally understood as {السَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ} (وبنينا)
{الْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُون} (وفرشنا). Getting these two verses to start with
a noun in the accusative case, draws the reader's attention and makes the
focus of the verses on the heaven and the earth and not on the action of
building or the action of spreading out.

4.2.3 Ellipsis of Preposition

A third syntactic phenomenon that is used to grasp the
addressee's attention in the Qur'an is the ellipsis of preposition. The
omission of the preposition in one of the two following verses and
mentioning it in the other is semantically and rhetorically effective:

Verse	Interpretation
{وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا} (الزمر:٧١).	"And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups until, when they reach it, its gates are opened" (Q. 39: 71).

Verse	Interpretation
{وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا} (الزمر: ٧٣).	"But those who feared their Lord will be driven to Paradise in groups until, when they reach it while its gates have been opened" (Q. 39: 73).

In (39:71) فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا (its gates are opened), the *waw* (and) is elided to indicate that the gates of Hell have not been opened yet and they will be opened only when its companions (disbelievers, polytheists, deniers, falsifiers, etc.) are admitted into it. "It was said that the gates of Hell are not opened until its companions are admitted into it, the gates of Paradise, however, are already opened" (a-n-Nasafi, 1998, 3/p.1036). Therefore, the *waw* is elided in (39:71) to show that those disbelievers and polytheists will be treated like prisoners for whom the gate of prison is shut and opened only when they come to it. Unlike the case of the companions of Hell, the companions of Paradise will be celebrated upon their arrival to Paradise. The gates of happiness and exhilaration are already open for those who will be admitted into Paradise, so the use of *waw* is suitable in (39/73) but not in (39/71) (a-s-Sabu:ni, 1981, 3/p.89). This means that the ellipsis of the *waw* works as a means of humiliation for those criminals and a way of increasing the psychological effect of the torture of Hell, i.e., when they come to the gates of Hell, they will find them shut, and all of a sudden the gates are opened.

4.3 Brevity of Construction

Ellipsis in the Qur'an is employed to avoid prolix structures. Although elliptical structures are conspicuously present in the Qur'an, they do not make verses equivocal. As Ibn Jinni (1952) argues, "the Arabs used to delete a single word, a sentence, a letter, and a vowel provided that there is a clue for recovering the elided element (2/p.360). Ibn Hisham, who was influenced by Ibn Jinni, highlights eight conditions for ellipsis to take place (2000, 6/pp.317-382). However, Hammouda (1998) argues that only two conditions of the ones set by Ibn Hisham are linguistically plausible: 1. the existence of a clue for the elided element, and 2. the deletion of a linguistic item should not result in an ambiguous structure. Clues that are used to the recoverability of an elided

construction can be textual, e.g. cataphoric reference and anaphoric reference, or circumstantial (extralinguistic), e.g. juristic and mental.

4.3.1 Textual Clues

Textual clues in the Qur'an can be cataphoric or anaphoric ones. Ellipsis in the following verse can be justified in terms of the presence of a cataphoric reference, i.e., the meaning of a word can be deduced from the meaning of another word that comes later in the text.

Verse	Interpretation
﴿وَلَوْلَا أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِنْ فَضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ﴾ (الزخرف: ٣٣).	"And if it were not that the people would become one community [of disbelievers], We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount" (Q. 43: 33).

The above verse has an elided element: ﴿وَلَوْلَا أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً﴾ (على الكفر) (If it were not that the people would become a community [of disbelievers]). The elided element على الكفر (of disbelievers) is recoverable from the context of the verse as the latter part ﴿لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِنْ فَضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ﴾ of the verse (We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Most Merciful - for their houses - ceilings and stairways of silver upon which to mount) identifies the logical referent of the first half of the verse. In addition, the second half of the verse contains the word يكفر (disbelieves) which makes it logical that the elided element in the first part of the verse should be interpreted as those people are a nation of disbelievers.

In the following verse, on the other hand, ellipsis is semantically and grammatically permitted due to the existence of an anaphoric reference, i.e., the meaning of a word or phrase is predictable from the meaning of a word or phrase that was used earlier in the text.

Verse	Interpretation
﴿يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ﴾ (إبراهيم: ٤٨).	"[It will be] on the Day the earth will be replaced by another earth, and the heavens [as well], and all creatures

| | will come out before Allah, the One, the Prevailing" (Q. 14: 48). |

A-n-Nasafi (1998) sees that "the earth will be changed into a different earth and the heavens will also be changed into different heavens" (2/p.562). Thus, it could be said that there is no need for mentioning *the heavens will be replaced by other heavens* تبدل السماوات غير السموات to be structurally in unison with *the earth will be replaced by another earth* تبدل الأرض غير الأرض since the preceding part of the verse provides the necessary information for this interpretation. Therefore, succinctness is prioritized since the meaning is inferable from the anaphoric reference.

Verse	Interpretation
{وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا خَيْرًا} (النحل: ٣٠).	"And it will be said to those who feared Allah, "What did your Lord send down?" They will say, "[That which is] good" (Q. 16: 30).

Since the Qur'an was revealed in a language deeply rooted in the Arabs, its words and structures were intuitively intelligible to them. قَالُوا خَيْرًا قالوا أنزل (They will say, "[That which is] good") has an elided verb: أنزل قالوا خيرا (They will say he sent down good things). Since the verb أنزل (sent down) is contextually recoverable, then ellipsis is given precedence to obviate grandiloquence and redundancy. What is worthy of notice is that خيرا in (16/30) is in the accusative case while أساطير (legends) in (16/24) is in the nominative case. {وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ} (النحل: ٢٤) (And when it is said to them, "What has your Lord sent down?" They say, "Legends of the former peoples") (Q. 16: 24). A-z-Zamakhshari (1998, p.432) sees that خيرا (that which is good) is in the accusative case as it is an object of an elided verb, i.e., قالوا أنزل خيرا , while أساطير (legends of the former peoples) is in the nominative case since it is a predicate of an elided subject. When they were asked: مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُم ("What has your Lord sent down?", they said هو أساطير الأولين (It is legends of the former peoples). Moreover, a-z-Zamakhshari differentiates between the believers' response and that of the deniers. When the believers were asked about what their Lord sent down, they put it clearly; therefore, their answer was straightforward and compatible with the rules

of grammar. The disbelievers, on the other hand, avoided giving a direct answer to the question. They said, "it is mere tales of the men of old". This means that they basically deny the notion that the Qur'an is sent down by Allah. The structure here is compatible with the meaning intended.

4.3.2. Circumstantial Clues

There are cases of ellipsis in the Qur'an in which the clues for the recoverability of an elided element occur outside the text. Elliptical structures that are construable in terms of juristic and mental indicators are the most common examples.

Verse	Interpretation
{وَاللَّائِي يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ إِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ فَعِدَّتُهُنَّ ثَلَاثَةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ} (الطلاق: ٤).	"And those who no longer expect menstruation among your women - if you doubt, then their period is three months, and [also for] those who have not menstruated" (Q. 65: 4).

In the above verse, ellipsis exists as long as the meaning can be gleaned on a juristic basis. وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ (and [also for] those who have not menstruated) is juristically judged in the same way as وَاللَّائِي يَئِسْنَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ (those who no longer expect menstruation among your women), i.e., وَاللَّائِي لَمْ يَحِضْنَ (عِدَتُهن ثلاثة أشهر) (and also for those who have not menstruated their period is three month besides). Considering that the meaning is predictable on a juristic basis, then ellipsis becomes preferable and the verse is compendiously structured. This rhetorical succinctness resulting from ellipsis in verses the meanings of which can be inferred on a juristic basis are so rife in the Holy Qur'an. Consider the following:

Verse	Interpretation
{مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ} (الفتح: ٢٧).	"with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened" (Q. 48: 27).

In the above verse, the word رؤوسكم (heads) is used after the word محلقين (shaved), while it was elided after the word مقصرين (shortened) to indicate that in pilgrimage the complete shaving of the head is better than just shortening of hair. If the verse has مقصرين رؤوسكم

(with your heads shortened), it can be juristically construed as both the complete shaving of the head and just shortening of hair will be rewarded likewise. The meaning of the above verse structured as such is in unison with the hadi:θ narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (see al-Bukha:ri, 2002: p. 417). Thus, ellipsis in this verse is juristically justified.

Verse	Interpretation
{وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا} (يوسف: ٨٢).	"And ask the city in which we were" (Q. 12: 82).

The word أهل (the people of) is elided and the verse is structured as وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ (Ask the city) instead of وَاسْأَلِ أَهْلَ الْقَرْيَةَ (ask the people of the city) because the meaning is contextually recoverable on a mental basis.

4.4 The Meaning Intended is Wider than the Scope of Phrasing

When the scope of the content intended is wider than the expression plane, widening of the meaning is achieved only by ellipsis to let the expression plane receive more than one interpretation all of which serve the main goal of the verse. Thus, it is exegetically plausible to find exegetes explicating the same verse in different ways since their commentaries, albeit different, serve the main goal of the verse but in a wider scope. Consider the following:

Verse	Interpretation
{فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ} (الحديد:١٦).	"And a long period passed over them so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient" (Q. 57: 16).

Due to the utilization of ellipsis, فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ (and a long period passed over them) has different interpretations. Ibn Kaθi:r (2002, 13/p.423) sees that a long period passed over them while they were away from Allah's straight path. They rejected the Book revealed to them by Allah behind their backs and sold it for a small price. Moreover, they have taken their *Aḥbar* (rabbis) and *Ruhban* (monks) deities besides Allah. Al-Alu:si (1994), on the other hand, sees that الأمد (long period) is said to be the polytheists' long lives and unlimited hopes, or their waiting for the day of resurrection and punishment (14/p.181). Thus, based on the different interpretations provided by exegetes, الأمد can be their long life in a state of heedlessness, living in prosperity, and possessing ease and

plenty without being afflicted by any hardships or calamities. Thus, ellipsis in this verse serves the main goal, i.e., the heart can be hardened either by being away from the remembrance of Allah or by being indulged in cravings.

Verse	Interpretation
{وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ} (يوسف: ٢٥).	"And they both raced to the door" (Q. 12: 25).

These two words وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ (And they both raced to the door), though so terse, they depict a scene full of actions and reactions. A-ṣ-Ṣabu:ni (1981) shows the terseness of this verse by quoting most scholars' opinions regarding that. The above verse, according to them, is an example of the inimitable terseness of the Qur'an in which the structure conveys limitless meanings using the fewest number of words, e.g. the wife of al-ʕazi:z sought to seduce Joseph, but he firmly refused, so she rushed behind him trying to catch him and he rushed towards the door to escape from her. This long scene that is full of action is depicted by an eloquent two-word sentence that contains elided constituents.

Verse	Interpretation
{عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ} (المطففين: ٢٤).	"On adorned couches, observing" (Q. 83: 24).

In the verse {عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ يَنْظُرُونَ} (On adorned couches, observing), the object of the verb *observe* is elided to open the door for different images to come to the mind: what things are the people in Paradise observing? Are they observing the castles, the fair women with large, beautiful eyes, or their companions in Paradise? In this way, the ellipsis of the object of the verb evokes the addressee's imagination.

4.5. Ellipsis as a Narrative Technique

Although Qur'anic stories are narrations of historical events free from imagination, they have suspense and excitement that most literary stories that are based on imagination fail to have. Giving attention to every single detail leads to boredom and monotony; therefore, the Qur'an narrates only events that are remarkably important and influential in the course of the story (see al-Khati:b, 1975, pp.49-51). Thus, ellipsis in the

Qur'an sometimes works as a narrative gap to let the addressee focus on the main incidents.

Though stories in the Holy Qur'an have such evident lacunae, they are not episodic. For example, the dialogue between the king and the prisoner who was freed started with {وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُونِ} (يوسف: ٤٥) (But the one who was freed and remembered after a time said, "I will inform you of its interpretation, so send me forth) (Q. 12: 45). All the other discussions between the king, the eminent among the people of the king, and the prisoner who was freed were dropped. The next scene starts directly with a dialogue between Joseph and the prisoner who was freed: {يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَفْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ} (يوسف: ٤٦) ([He said], "Joseph, O man of truth, explain to us about seven fat cows eaten by seven [that were] lean, and seven green spikes [of grain] and others [that were] dry - that I may return to the people; perhaps they will know [about you]) (Q. 12: 46). This part of the story focuses on the content of what the king has seen in his dream, making known Joseph's efficiency in the interpretation of dreams, and proving his innocence of seducing the king's wife. For that reason, all other discussions and procedures that took place were elided.

After Joseph's interpretation of the king's dream, the story did not tell anything regarding the prisoner's return to the king and his narration of Joseph's interpretation. It rather started with the king requesting the eminent among his people or his soldiers to bring Joseph to him. Eliding the part that concerns the prisoner's narration is rhetorically employed to avoid redundancy and focus on the main goals of the story. In the next scene, the messenger came to Joseph and asked him to come and see the king, yet Joseph refused and asked the messenger to ask the king to investigate the case of the women who cut their hands. Again, the discussion between the messenger and the king was left out and the next scene started directly with the king investigating the women: {قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ إِذْ رَاوَدْتُنَّ يُوسُفَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ} (يوسف: ٥١) (Said [the king to the women], "What was your condition when you sought to seduce Joseph?") (Q. 12: 51). Then the king asked his soldiers to bring Joseph to him: {وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُونِي بِهِ أَسْتَخْلِصْهُ لِنَفْسِي فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهُ قَالَ إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِينٌ أَمِينٌ} (يوسف:٥٤) (And the king

said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself." And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established [in position] and trusted") (Q. 12: 54). The incidents that followed the king's request of bringing Joseph to him were elided and the scene started with the dialogue between the king and Joseph, which matters most in the story. The same technique of using narrative gap is used in all Qur'anic stories.

5. Limitation of the Study

This paper is not exhaustive in nature since it is not possible for all verses that contain elliptical structures to be condensed in one article. This paper can only be viewed as an attempt to revive Qur'anic studies in the light of the Arabic literary theory and draw attention to such a vivid and rich field of research. Therefore, there is a pressing need for other research papers so that most of the types of elided constructions and their rhetorical functions can be identified in all the chapters of the Qur'an.

6. Conclusion

Al-Jurjani, being an erudite scholar, had an innovative view regarding some issues that his predecessors and, sometimes, his contemporaries took for granted. His unflinching determination to discover the rationale behind putting a specific linguistic element in a particular syntactic slot and not the other led him to fully account for the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an. By doing so, he clinched the argument of form-meaning duality, i.e., for him the interrelationship between the type of syntax used in the Qur'an and the meanings intended provides fodder for Qur'anic eloquence.

The functions of ellipsis discussed in this paper line up with the main principle of al-Jurjani's theory, i.e., eloquence can exist in the absence of some words, phrases or even whole constructions due to the arrangement of the neighboring words in a specific manner to serve the rhetorical goals intended.

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Appendix

List of Arabic Phonetic Symbols

Arabic Consonants	Symbol	Arabic Consonants	Symbol	Arabic Consonants	Symbol
أ	/ʔ/	ب	/b/	ت	/t/
ث	/θ/	ج	/g/	ح	/ḥ/
خ	/kh/	د	/d/	ذ	/ð/
ر	/r/	ز	/z/	س	/s/
ش	/sh/	ص	/ṣ/	ض	/ḍ/
ط	/ṭ/	ظ	/ẓ/	ع	/ʕ/
غ	/ɣ/	ف	/f/	ق	/q/
ك	/k/	ل	/l/	م	/m/
ن	/n/	هـ	/h/	و	/w/
ى	/y/				
Arabic Vowels	Symbol	Arabic Vowels	Symbol	Arabic Vowels	Symbol
ُ diacritic (ḍamma)	/u/	َ diacritic (fatha)	/a/	ِ diacritic (kasra)	/i/
ى , آ	/a:/	و	/u:/	ي	/i:/