



## An Explanatory VS. Supplemental Approach to Coherence in English Translations of the Holy Quran

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### Abstract

This study applies Charroles's model of coherence to seven translations of one of the Surahs of the Holy Quran through a quantitative analysis. Surah *Al-Naba'* was purposively selected as it represented various dimensions important for a study on coherence including implicit cultural knowledge, polysemy, and multiple interpretations. The model used divides coherence into two distinct types: supplemental and explanatory. Three main questions were proposed and answered concerning the frequency of the strategies, their statistical significance, and their possible contribution to the explication as a translation universal. Findings showed that there was a significant difference among the translations in terms of the strategies used, revealing that explanatory coherence had been used more effectively. However, the intensive quantitative comparison of the translations showed that they had individually kept the original coherence as far as possible, suggesting that explication may not be necessarily a translation universal, at least in case of Quranic translation.

**Keywords:** Quranic translation, coherence, cohesion, explication, interpretation.

### 1. Introduction

Linguistics as the scientific study of language has been rapidly expanding its theoretical and applied realms. The focus on the centrality of *textuality* and all of the characteristics associated with it suggest that linguistic studies are actively trying to explain language events from a systematic and regulated perspective. Along the great number of concepts proposed by linguists, coherence has been addressed by different theorists who have attempted to describe how this linguistic variable functions in a language (De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Coherence is about the continuity of semantic content in the formation of concepts and relations. The kinds of networks constructed by coherence are less visible and tangible compared with those of cohesion (see 1.7.2 below), because coherence is more about discovering the "sense" of text, not its visible discursive relations. Similarly, De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 109) explain that coherence is "the outcome of actualizing meanings in order to make 'sense'". Along with these pure linguistic introductions, coherence has also been addressed in fields of Applied Linguistics including Translation Studies (TS). Baker (2011), as a translation expert, explains two overriding concerns in dealing with coherence. The first issue concerns the relations established between coherence and pragmatics, whereas the second one describes how interpretation can significantly influence the way textual systems are perceived. These two aspects become extremely challenging in case of translating sacred scriptures, which are filled with all sorts of implied prior knowledge. The basic problem is that if new information is added to the translation, the final text may develop a considerably different semantics and even pragmatics.

The present study is concerned with coherence in seven translations of the Holy Quran according to Charroles' descriptive model, which divides coherence into supplemental and explanatory modes. Such a model can considerably help text-analysts find new possible mechanism based on which texts conceal information and the way the information can be appropriately made visible. Since the study deals with translated sacred scriptures it can validly discover how interpretative strategies may interfere in such translations. At the same time, the study revisits *explicitation* as a translation universal to find out whether this notion is in fact a universal in case of Quranic translation or not.

### 2. Review of Literature

#### 2.1. General Remarks: Coherence, Linguistics, Translation

Over the past four decades, linguistics has witnessed a rapidly growing rate of expanding its theoretical and applied realm. The focus on the centrality of *textuality* and all of the characteristics associated with that suggest that linguistic studies are actively trying to explain language events from a systematic and regulated perspective.

Coherence, too, is among the recently proposed notions in the technical terminology of linguistics. Different theorists have made attempts to describe how coherence functions in language (De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Coherence concerns the continuity of semantic content in the formation of concepts and relations. The kinds of networks constructed by coherence are less visible and tangible compared with those of cohesion, because coherence is more about 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 in order to make 'sense'".

There are two overriding concerns that Baker (2011) explicates in dealing with coherence: the first issue concerns the relations established between coherence and pragmatics, while the second one describes how interpretation can significantly influence the way textual systems are perceived. Thus, in any context of textual exploration, researchers

Studying coherence need to give a close attention to pragmatics and interpretation.

There may be different ways of treating the pragmatic aspects of a text. For instance, Brown and Yule (1983) have relied on Gricean pragmatics, proposing that the actual task of coherence in pragmatics is to disclose the text producer's intended meaning and how it can be communicated to the reader. Therefore, as it was explained in the section of *statement of the problem* above, a close reliance on cohesive aspects of a text cannot be much helpful in dealing with the hidden or intended meanings of a text.

The mechanism of interpretation works according to the concept of *inference* (Brown and Yule, 1983; Levinson, 1983). According to Levinson (1983), readers' assumption and worldview can directly affect their reading of the propositional content in the sentences they perceive in everyday life. In other words, the world knowledge and background of the audience plays a key factor in representing propositional content. TS scholars have long been aware of the cultural mechanism that logically shapes people's worldview and background knowledge (Katan, 2009; Toury, 2012). A basic problem that disrupts the mechanism of conditioning inferences is the existing differences among cultures in interpreting the world. As a consequence of this cross-cultural variety, mistranslations and misinterpretations may be resulted (Baker, 2011). Naturally, deeply culture-bound texts such literature or sacred scriptures are filled with hidden and explicit meaning, a wide spectrum of background knowledge, and various effective rhetorical devices (Hatim & Munday, 2004).

In fact, such texts represent a more narrowed down problem in case of coherence in translation: the problem of cultural, religious and sacred scriptures pragmatics (Baker, 2011; Hatim & Munday, 2004). One of the characteristics of such scriptures is their *multifunctionality*. Viewed from the angle of Reiss's (as cited in Munday, 2012) text-type theory, a text may have a dominant function, although there may be cases in which a text may show a mix of functions. These functions according to Reiss (*ibid.*) include informative, expressive, and operative. Despite the assumption that the dominant function of sacred scriptures is normally to persuade the audience, in many real cases interpreters can find other functions, too. For instance, a large proportion of Quranic verses report the lives of previous prophets and ancient tribes and cultures. In such cases, the sacred text analyst must be aware of the information-giving mechanism that regulates the texture of the verse.

A researcher concerned with studies on translated sacred scriptures should naturally base his or her analysis on a model of coherence, which can hopefully unearth the hidden and connectional relations within the text. From among the models that can be referred to in TS, there is Charolles's (1983) categorization of *supplemental* and *explanatory* types of coherence. Charolles's (1983, p. 93) describes the difference between the two types as follows:

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).

## 2.2. Logical Progression of Coherent Discourse

To grasp the actual mechanism of constructing a coherent text, linguists have so far come with various definitions and paradigms to explain coherence (Brown and Yule, 1983; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). To gain a better understanding of these theoretical frames, it would be helpful to consider some of the approaches and common definitions of coherence. The primary question now is to find out what underlying functions can make a text sufficiently coherent.

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 actual world may be represented through textual semiotics. This representation of course entails a meaningful sequence of events encapsulated in each proposition of a text. To show this in a small piece of text, Bell (*ibid.*) provides the following example:

*I had a cup of coffee. I got up. I woke up.*

This piece is clearly not coherent because it reports an impossible sequence of events that does not correspond to reality. The grammatical structure and semantics of each of the propositions are surely in accordance with the standards of the English language, although, as can be simply seen, human world knowledge and experience will not validate such an order of events.

In another 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 a text is expanded. Also, "accessibility" accentuates the importance of relying on information already known to the audience. This important factor is referred to as "background knowledge" in discourse studies (Bell, 1991; Brown and Yule, 1983; Yule, 2006).

Putting coherence under the category of pragmatic equivalence, Baker (2011, p. 232) 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.

In this remark, Baker takes a step further by unfolding the dynamics regulating coherence at *macrostructural* levels such as society and nation. This quotation also reveals why world knowledge is overriding in the problem of coherence: if people belonging to various social backgrounds and affiliations expect to see texts in a specific fashion, then their expectations of occurrences and events will differ as well. As a result, what seems to be coherent in a particular genre may require certain modifications if it is to be transferred into another.

This discussion paves the way for expanding the topic of coherence at more extra-textual contexts and situations. If knowledge is a variable that underlies language, then coherence is not just limited to texts but it may be directly related to

the situations that constitute it (Baker, 2011; Brown and Yule, 1983).

Among these, the co-operative principle, however, is related to the purposes of this study and that is why it will be briefly reviewed in the following section. In more accurate words, considering the perspective of sacred scriptures translation, the topics directly related to text-centered discourse analysis should technically help the act of such translations. Since (as it will be discussed in further detail below) sacred translation is viewed as an inevitable consequence of interpretation, the most related discursual topics to interpretation should be addressed first. Therefore, Gricean Maxims are presented and discussed below.

Grice, a philosopher of language, proposes a framework that, as he assumes, brings about felicitous communications between interlocutors. Grice describes the blueprints of his theory as follows (as cited in Baker, 2011, p. 236):

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose and direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Following this theoretical basis, Grice proposes four maxims (viz. quantity, quality, relevance, and manner) to guide speakers more objectively in their conversations. The whole theory is known as the “co-operative principle” in linguistics. The promise of these maxims is that interlocutors can establish a meaningful and purposive context for communicating language. At the same time, one of contributions of this model is its application to situations in which the rules are not observed. In such cases, linguists believe that a rule has been “violated” or “flouted”. For instance, consider the following sample:

A: *What are you doing?*

B: *Studying, Studying, Studying!*

Clearly, B flouted the maxim of quantity by repeating the same information three times, while according to the principle only one single mention of “studying” would be sufficient to convey the message. Under such cases, analysts can predict that a particular reason might have led the speaker to produce such an utterance (i.e. anger, frustration, indignation, etc.).

Another linguistic topic which can be clarified through the co-operative principle is *implicature*, which as mentioned above is a matter of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983; Yule, 2006). In some cases, we may imagine that a speaker tries to give an indirect answer, while we perceive that the speaker’s language is coherent. In other words, although the speaker’s reply may not involve any visible linguistic element related to the conversation, it still contributes to the continuation of sense. Consider the following example:

A: *We’re going to have a party tomorrow.*

B: *I’ve got to study for my exam.*

In this set, A is inviting B to a party, while B rejects it because the speaker will not be able to attend the party. Linguistically, there are not cohesive devices in B’s reply nor is there any clear-cut rejection of A’s suggestion. Nevertheless, the conversation is still totally relevant. This example shows that establishing coherence may require an interpreter to transcend textual factors and take into account many other possible extra-linguistic variables (i.e. cultural background, encyclopedic information, functional-pragmatic factors, and etc.).

Grice’s theory, although related to the notion of coherence, has been criticized by some experts. One of the theoretical criticisms is about the normative nature of the co-operative principle (Weigand, 2008). Such an approach, instead of describing a conversation as it is, tends to set some norms that control behavior. In other words, Grice’s normative approach describes communication “as it should be” (ibid.). In this case, the co-operative principle cannot *naturally* help analyze actual speech produced by people in their everyday encounters.

There is also another criticism against Grice’s theory strong root in the English-speaking world, as noted by Baker (2011, p. 248): “Grice’s maxims seem to reflect directly notions which are known to be valued in the English-speaking world, for instance sincerity, brevity, and relevance.”

If this is a true aspect of the maxims, then they cannot be simply helpful to analyze texts in cross-cultural studies because the framework was originated according to the philosophy of the English language. Furthermore, translation demands a descriptive approach flexible enough to take into account various translation strategies (Toury, 2012). For instance, translators may adopt different ways of creating coherence in a text: they may use descriptive phrases or may add commentaries. From the viewpoint of Grice’s maxims, which one of these strategies observes the rule of *quantity* more? Therefore, translation demands a more descriptive approach.

The discussion on the pragmatics of coherence will eventually bring us to a larger context: *culture*. It was explained that coherence helps to put a text together as far as meaning is concerned while facilitating its logical progression. Also, it was explained that coherence involves a socio-pragmatic function (Baker, 2011). Considering these issues, the term “logic” in this context, however, sounds to be relatively vague. Does logic here refer to exact formulaic expressions that are normally used in formal philosophy or mathematical statements? The logic under consideration in this study is mostly a matter of interpretation rather than exact formal relations. In other words, the concept of logic, unlike its denotations in exact sciences, is dependent upon the cultural perspective of the audience and the way he or she views the relationship among the events in the world.

### 2.3. DTS, Universals of Translation, and Explicitation

Translation theory for most of its history relied on prescriptive conventions that defined the characteristics of a good translation (Melis and Albir, 2001). The need for more unbiased theories was sharply felt in translation. As a fundamental step in founding translation as an academic discipline, Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) was proposed by Toury (2012) with the purpose of unraveling the very essence and mechanism of translation. Toury’s goal was to give a systematic structure to TS, lustering translation with a scientific prestige. The paradigm of studies put forth by Toury is based on descriptive research.

The basic question sought to be answered in DTS is not what translations should be, but what translations are or look like (Pym, 2010). So instead of normalizing or prescribing rules, DTS is after building a common basis for studying

the very nature of translation without falling into normative conventions. As a result of this neutral stance, DTS is normally expected to investigate habitual translation behaviors within a scientific outline.

Naturally, when a system studies a phenomenon scientifically, it should find a way to arrive at some regularities and predictions (Chesterman, 2007). One of the missions of DTS, since it came to existence in the last decade of the twentieth century, has been to discover any possible regularity occurring in, dominating or characterizing translations (Munday, 2012; Pym, 2010). Therefore, experts in the field have tried to come up with strategies, models and frameworks to study translation descriptively.

Along the same lines, the idea of “translation universals” was suggested in DTS (ibid.). If translations exhibit certain similarities, is it possible to propose that these similarities are rule-governed and predictable? As a result, 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). So far, translation experts have found certain universals with a degree of caution (ibid., pp. 79-80): lexical simplification, explicitation, adaptation, equalizing unique items.

Explicitation is a hypothesized translation universal which is characterized by “greater ‘redundancy’ of translations” (ibid., p. 79). More specifically, explicitation can be defined as follows (Munday, 2009, p. 187):

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.

As mentioned earlier, sacred scriptures consist of strong cultural links meaningful within the ST. Considering the fact that establishing coherence may involve adding new information to the TT, one may raise the question whether translating coherence may result in an explicated translation or not. Because explicitation is still a hypothesis in translation, it would be a great opportunity to test it in case of Quranic translations.

### 3. Methodological Considerations

#### 3.1. Data collection

The present study is fed by a corpus of the seven Quranic translations which are generally viewed as the most read and translations of the Holy Quran. Also, based on the conventions of Quranic translation and to establish validity, the researcher made use of a number of Quranic interpretations written by different scholars over different periods. The following is the Surah under study:

- *Naba'* the 78<sup>th</sup> Surah of the Quran

The textual corpus referred to for doing the analysis includes the following Quranic translations:

- Shakir (1999)
- Irving (1985)
- Saffarzade (2001)
- Pickthal (1930)
- Sarwar (1920)
- Yusuf Ali (1934)
- Arberry (1955)

Since the study focuses on the aspects of translating coherence in sacred scriptures, the data to be analyzed through the framework of the study were selected according to the method of purposive data collection. This method of selection is justified by Williams (2001) who describes that, contrary to other sciences, the data selected for research in translation should be gathered purposively to secure the validity of the research. It should be noted that random sampling would break the continuity of meaning, while it is strongly important to consider a text as a whole in case of coherence.

#### 3.2. Statistical analyses and answering research questions

The discussion of the results is done according to a descriptive treatment of the findings, which are represented systematically in corresponding tables. More specifically, to determine the possible statistical difference between the two strategies under study, chi-square test is conducted. The questions guiding the study are as follows:

What is the frequency of supplemental or explanatory strategies in establishing coherence in the seven translated versions of the Holy Quran?

To answer this question, the frequency of each of the categories of coherence was measured and the findings were inserted into the respective tables. This statistical procedure is basically descriptive and most obviously shows the extent to which each translation rendered or balanced coherence.

Is the frequency of the strategies used in the Quran translations statistically significant?

To answer this question, chi-square test were conducted on the descriptive tables. The purpose of this test is to unfold if the statistical differences observed in the translations are significant.

Did establishing coherence in the translations lead to explication as an alleged universal of translation?

One of the important questions for the development of TS is the validity of DTS claims. One of the general universals of translation is *explication* which refers to cases where an original text is expanded through translation. To answer this question, only the explanatory coherence statistics of the translations were taken into account, because only this type of coherence can help test the universality of *explication*. So a chi-square test was conducted on the descriptive statistics of explanatory translation.

#### 3.3. Textual analysis

If the translation in question treats implicit information without any further explanation, one point is added to its *supplemental* coherence (SC). Otherwise, because giving extra information would explain coherence-related connections, the extra information is considered one point added to the *explanatory coherence* (EC). The analytic procedure can be simply outlined as follows:

- The verse is read based on interpretations to see if it contains any supplemental coherence (SC) with implicit information for the English or non-Muslim reader.
- The translations are examined to see how they transferred this implicit information
- If they do not give more information, this would be an instance of SC. Otherwise, it would be counted as explanatory coherence (EC).
- Omissions will not be counted because the model only takes into account added information in translation. However, additions will be counted both as explanatory and explicated coherence. Although these two categories are different, they will help answer the third question of the research.

## 4. Textual Analysis of the Surah, Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Textual analysis

In this section, because of constraints of space, some sample verses analyzed according to the model are presented.

1 عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ

- R1. concerning what are they disputing?
- R2. of what do 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?

2 عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

- 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 tidings.

The two above-mentioned verses above constitute a textual relationship: a question is raised in the first verse (عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ), and it is then answered in the second one. This is a basic pattern of conversation. Although all the seven English renditions carry the same proposition, they used different semantics to convey it (disputing, ask, questioning, etc.). So, the translations kept the SC of the verse without justifying the question or providing any background for it.

In the Arabic original of the second verse, there is only a phrase which conveys "great tidings". Again, six of the translations reframed relatively the same phrase in English translations, while in R6 there is a further explanation about what *great news* is (or might be) about depending on interpretation. This added information modified the balance of the textual informativity, turning supplemental coherence of the ST two verses into explanatory coherence. It should be noted that the introductory structure (*It is*) in R5 cannot be counted as EC, because it is linguistically a matter of cohesion rather than coherence.

The supplemental coherence regarding the question raised at the beginning of this Surah, in its original form, is continued up to the 18<sup>th</sup> verse. In other words, the answer of the above-mentioned question which is the "resurrection day" is stated in the 18<sup>th</sup> verse. The modification introduced by R6 definitely influences the reading and the effectiveness of the ST. The reason for this is that it modifies the balance between the question-answer exchange of the rhetorical question. Another issue important for translation is that the ST does not show any extra information at this level. In other words, the rhetorical question does not contain any cultural or textual implicit information. As a result, EC may not seem justifiable here.

8 وَ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا

- 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" was rendered with the same implication as in the ST in all renditions except in R6\*. The translator in R6 added that "creation in pairs" *maintains the generation*. This extra piece of information shows the translator's interpretation of the verse in question. "Creation in pairs" according to Islamic interpretations is a sign of God's power. The non-Muslim reader may not understand this implicit justification. As a result, there is hidden information here which is supplemental coherence by the other translations.

21 إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا

- R1. Truly Hell is as place of ambush,
- R2. Surely Hell lies in wait
- R3. Hell will lurk in ambush
- R4. Hell will lie in wait (for its prey)
- R5. Lo! hell lurked in ambush,
- R6. Verily, the Hell will be a place of Ambush, (lying in wait for the wrongdoers)
- R7. Behold, Gehennam (Hell) has become an ambush

Some translations show a relative lexical ambiguity by using “ambush”, because it does not make it clear whether Hell is an ambush for hiding, or *it* is an ambush for wrongdoers. R1 and R7 show this ambiguity more clearly. R4 uses “for its prey” to show that Hell is waiting for wrongdoers, creating an instance of EC. R6, too, explains the image by “(lying in wait for the wrongdoers)”. R2, R3, and R5 kept the SC of the original.

30 فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا

R1."so taste ye (the fruits of your deeds); for no increase shall We grant you, except in Chastisement."  
 R2.so taste for we will not add to you aught but chastisement  
 R3."So taste! Yet We shall only increase torment for you!"  
 R4. (They will be told),"Suffer, We shall only increase the torment for you".  
 R5.So taste (of that which ye have earned). No increase do We give you save of torment.  
 R6. (It will be stated to them :) "So taste you The consequences of your deeds, We Only increase to your Chastisement."  
 R7.Taste! We shall increase you not save in chastisement  
 R1 contains some added information: “(the fruits of your deeds)”, which is a metaphor not existing in the original. R2, too, uses “(They will be told)”, clarifying some extra information. Also, R5 contains “of that which ye have earned)” which explicates some implicit information. Finally, R6 adds “(It will be stated to them :)”.

36 جَزَاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا

R1.Recompense from thy Lord, a gift, (amply) sufficient,  
 R2.A reward from your Lord, a gift according to a reckoning  
 R3.as compensation from your Lord, a calculated gift.  
 R4.This will be their reward from your Lord, a favor from Him and a recompense for their deeds.  
 R5.Requital from thy Lord - - a gift in payment  
 R6. (O, Messenger!) This wonderful reception (based on the account of good deeds) Has been granted from your creator and Nurturer to the pious,  
 R7.for recompense from thy lord, a gift, a reckoning  
 R4 provides a very detailed explanation of information which is not implicit, creating an instance of EC. Also, R6 gives detailed explanatory information by “(O, Messenger!)” and “based on the account of good deeds)”. These pieces of information are extra and not related to SC.

## 4.2. Results and discussion of statistical analyses

### 4.2.1. First question of the study

What is the frequency of supplemental or explanatory strategies in establishing coherence in the seven translated versions of the Holy Quran?

To answer this question, the frequency of each of the categories of coherence was counted and the findings were inserted into the respective tables. This statistical procedure is basically descriptive and most obviously shows the extent to which each translation rendered or balanced coherence.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of SC & EC translations

| Translation  | Supplemental | Explanatory | Total     | Percent      |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| 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         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>55</b>    | <b>40</b>   | <b>95</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

As can be seen in the table, a total number of 95 instances were observed in the translations with 55 SC and 40 EC. One of the uses of frequency distribution tables is to clearly show the share of each of the items under study. In this case, too, R6 (total 20) set the maximum number of coherence modifications. Other translations show a relatively close range of numbers. R3 and R7 show the least number of modifications (total 11). SC shows a relatively higher frequency (55) suggesting that most of the translations tend to keep minimal coherence as much as possible. Still, EC is not much lower than SC. Apparently, R6 had a very important effect on the frequency of EC, because it accounted for half of the cases. Although frequency check is a very obvious measure of the proportion of each of the items involved, there is still the question of the significance of the data. This question will be answered in the following subsection.

### 4.2.2. Second question of the study

Is the frequency of the strategies used in the Quran translations statistically significant?

To answer this question, chis-square test was conducted on Table 1. The purpose of this test is to unfold if the statistical differences observed in the translations are significant. If no significance is observed, the translations modified coherence to a relatively close extent. This test is in reality an examination of the distribution differences between SC and EC.

To do the test, the data were inserted into SPSS 12 by considering three variables: Translation, Type, and Frequency. Translation contained the number of each translation analyzed in the study. Type stored the two possible translations of coherence in the present study: supplemental and explanatory. Frequency contained the numbers for each

of the SC and EC frequencies according to Table 1. After the chi-square test was conducted, Pearson chi-square was found to be 36.678 and p-value .000. Accordingly, since the observed p-value is less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ), one can argue that the difference between the types (SC & EC) may not be accidental.

Table 2. Chi-square results of the SC & EC correlation

| Pearson chi-square | df | Sig.  |
|--------------------|----|-------|
| 36.678             | 6  | 0.000 |

In reality, there might be a difference between SC and EC used in the translations that significantly changed the balance. A look on the findings in Table 1 can be helpful. Apparently, R1, R2, and R4 show a relatively close distribution of SC versus EC. However, R6 seems to be strongly affecting the balance in the statistics (SC: 1, EC: 19). In fact, the explanations used in R6 were about 19 times as great as the implicit information.

This huge statistical difference can account for the statistical significance appeared in the data. It should be noted that as far as the notion of coherence is concerned, the researcher did not find any numerical study on Charrole's model of coherence. A closely related research was carried out by Naoum (2011), who took a coherence-oriented approach to translating Arabic texts into English. A problem in comparing results of this study with other studies is that although Charroles's is still a valid one (see Baker, 2011), more empirical data is needed to help be more certain about the patterns of coherence across languages.

As Naoum (2011, p. 22) argues, there is established agreement among scholars about coherence in translation. Another problem is that the findings of Charroles's cannot be related to other theories such as Grice's maxims, since as mentioned in the literature review, the latter is a normative theory while the former is a descriptive one. Yet, another even more important problem is that the present study focused on Quranic translation, which is definitely more complicated than other text types. As a result, future empirical studies are needed for gaining certitude of the common patterns of SC and EC in translation. The next section will address another challenging question which has a stronger background in translation theory.

#### 4.2.3. Third question of the study

Is explication as an alleged universal of translation a consequence of balancing coherence between the two languages?

One of the important questions for the development of TS is the validity of DTS claims. One of the general universals of translation is *explication* which refers to cases where an original text is expanded through translation. To answer this question, only the explanatory coherence statistics of the translations should be taken into account, because only this type of coherence can help test the universality of *explication*. Answering this question is very challenging. So to provide a valid answer, both statistical results of the previous test and a qualitative observation of the translation will be used.

According to Blum-Kulka (as cited in Pym, 2010, p. 79-80) defines explication as:

The process of interpretations performed by translator on the source text might lead to a TL [target language] text which is more redundant than the source text. This redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the TL text. This argument may be stated as "*the explication hypothesis*".

Clearly, to examine this hypothesis many studies should be done on every existing text type. In case of literature, for instance, Shirinzadeh Bojnourdi et al. (2013) studied an English translation of Sa'di's *Guilistan* by James Ross, finding that the translator had extensively used explication. Yet, the study does not provide exact statistical data to show the results, which would make it very difficult to make certain decisions. However, most generally, scholars of TS have come to believe that explication is a natural event.

In the present study, too, the researcher uses the numerical data to examine the rate of explication.

Table 3. Descriptive percentage of supplemental and explanatory coherence in the translation

| Translation  | SC %        | EC %        |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| 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         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>57.9</b> | <b>42.1</b> |

As can be seen in Table 3, 57.9% of the cases were SC, which shows a slight dominance of the translators' tendency toward keeping supplemental coherence. A more accurate comparison involves the standardized information of each type for each translation. Obviously, R1, R2, R3, R5 and R7 had more SCs. Moreover, the two coherence types in R4 are very close to each other. Apparently, the only translation with a huge difference between SC (1.1%) and EC (20.0) is R6. As a matter of fact, one can even argue that the translations are mostly as supplemental as the original Holy Scripture.

This finding can challenge the general idea of universality of explication (see Pym, 2010). In fact, these seven translations of the Holy Quran have approximate coherences to the original. However, in case of R6, we should definitely accept that generating extra information and providing explanatory coherence resulted in a very long and coherent final rendition.

## 5. Conclusion

In this study, Charrolle's model of coherence was applied to the seven translations selected by considering three main questions: (a) the frequency of supplemental or explanatory strategies; (b) statistical significance of the strategies used; and (c) universality of explication in translation. The answer to the first question showed that one of the translations (R6) had largely changed coherence in translation. However, this frequency check could not reveal if the changes in translations were significant. As a result, to test the second question, chi-square test was conducted. The result showed that there was a definite difference among the translations (Pearson chi-square was found to be 36.678 and p-value .000.). To test the universality of explication through comparison of the standardized information of each coherence type for each translation, the exploration of the third question unfolded that R1, R2, R3, R5 and R7 had more supplemental coherence, while R6 mostly exhibited explanatory coherence. The larger number of supplemental coherence may suggest that explication may not be exactly a universal but simply a hypothesis which needs further research to be confirmed.

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