

## ELLIPTICAL ELOQUENCE IN THE QUR'AN: A FRAMEWORK FOR RHETORICAL-STYLISTIC AND DIGITAL TAFSIR<sup>(\*)</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative conceptual study proposes a rhetorical-stylistic framework, term the Elliptical Eloquence Framework (EEF), for interpreting *ḥadhf* (elliptical constructions) in the Qur'an as intentional devices of theological and aesthetic meaning rather than syntactic anomaly. Adopting a qualitative interpretive design, the study employs close textual analysis informed by classical Arabic rhetorical principles of *ijāz* and *balāghah*, supported by thematic coding of elliptical instances across three selected short surahs (Sūrah al-Fīl, Sūrah al-'Aṣr, and Sūrah al-Kawthar). Analytically, the EEF advances four dimensions: lexical minimalism, syntactic suspension, semantic density, and affective load derived through iterative annotation aligned with corpus-assisted inquiry. Methodologically, the study integrates classical tafsīr discourse with emerging digital supports, including Qur'anBERT and corpus-based tagging, situated within a *musā'id* (assistant) paradigm consistent with Islamic epistemology. The framework does not evaluate tool performance; its contribution lies in modelling how computational methods may function as qualitative aids under ethical safeguards such as human-in-the-loop verification, theological calibration, and resistance to digital desacralization. The results demonstrate how elliptical structures can be systematized and analyzed qualitatively at scale, offering a transferable model for future studies on Qur'anic rhetoric and digital hermeneutics.

**Keywords:** *Qur'anic Stylistics; Elliptical Eloquence; Rhetorical Ḥadhf; Digital Humanities; Qur'anic NLP.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, scholarly interest in Qur'anic stylistics has intensified, particularly in efforts to bridge classical Arabic rhetoric with contemporary interpretive frameworks. This revival is evident in studies that approach the Qur'an's stylistic conciseness and rhetorical density not merely as aesthetic features, but as discourse strategies that shape interpretive meaning and reader response (Abdul-Raof, 2018; Hassanein, 2023). However, a critical disjunction persists while classical tafsir literature lauds *ḥadhf* (ellipsis) as a hallmark of *i'jāz* and rhetorical power, computational linguistics often treats such omissions as parsing anomalies or syntactic deficiencies. Most NLP and corpus-based studies lack a framework for capturing the rhetorical intentionality behind omission, leading to a methodological gap that risks reducing Qur'anic style into mere structural data. To date, no integrated model operationalizes *ḥadhf* as a purposeful rhetorical phenomenon in a way that aligns classical interpretive principles with contemporary digital analysis.

This article addresses that gap by proposing a rhetorical-stylistic framework for what it terms elliptical eloquence in the Qur'an, defined as the deliberate use of omission to elicit interpretive engagement, affective resonance, and theological awe. Case studies from *Sūrah al-Fīl*, *al-ʿAṣr*, and *al-Kawthar* illustrate how elliptical structures operate as devices of heightened rhetorical and spiritual intensity. Beyond textual analysis, the study introduces a digital tafsir model wherein tools like Qur'anBERT and rhetorical parsers function not as autonomous arbiters, but as *musāʿid* (assistants) guided by Islamic epistemic ethics. In doing so, it responds to the urgent need for digital methodologies that safeguard both the stylistic richness and theological integrity of Qur'anic discourse.

## 2. EPISTEMIC TENSION: CLASSICAL *BALĀĠHAH* AND COMPUTATIONAL MODELS

The concept of *ḥadhf* (ellipsis) occupies a central place in Arabic linguistic thought, with its theoretical roots traceable to the earliest grammatical treatises. Sibawayh (d. 180/796), in *al-Kitāb*, documented omission as a legitimate syntactic operation, permissible when the intended meaning was recoverable from context. For him, brevity was not an absence but an economy of expression, conditioned on semantic clarity and syntactic cohesion. Building on this foundation, *Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī* (d. 761/1360) in *Mughnī al-Labīb* refined the typology of *ḥadhf*, distinguishing between omissions driven by grammatical

necessity and those serving rhetorical emphasis. His treatment bridged grammar and stylistics, underscoring how ellipsis could operate simultaneously as a structural economy and a tool of aesthetic persuasion (Ahmad, 2020).

A decisive re-framing came with *‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī* (d. 471/1078), whose *Dalā’il al-I’jāz* and *Asrār al-Balāghah* advanced a rhetorical theory in which omission (*ḥadhf*) was not merely tolerated but elevated as a hallmark of eloquence. Within his theory of *naẓm*, rhetorical meaning depended not only on explicit expression but also on strategically omitted elements that shaped inferential interpretation. As he describes in *Asrār al-Balāghah*:

*“It is a subtle path, delicate in its approach, wondrous in nature, akin to magic. In it you find that omitting mention is more eloquent than mentioning, that silence in conveying is more productive of meaning than explicit statement, and that you may be at your most articulate in expression when you do not make it explicit.”* (*‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī*, 1992, p. 106)

For *al-Jurjānī*, the eloquence of *ḥadhf* was not merely ornamental but functioned as a rhetorical strategy through which omitted elements activated inferential interpretation and expanded semantic scope. Central to his theory is the notion that meaning is co-constructed through the listener’s cognitive retrieval of omitted elements, which itself contributes to the eloquence of the expression and anticipates modern accounts of inferential pragmatics.

This formulation captures his conviction that ellipsis can surpass explicit expression in eloquence, that rhetorical silence may yield greater communicative force than overt statement, and that the highest clarity sometimes arises from deliberate non-articulation (Al-Salami, 2022). Such a view anchored *ḥadhf* in the Qur’an’s stylistic genius, where absence could signal divine intentionality as forcefully as presence.

From these classical foundations, the integration of *balāghah* with digital stylistics emerges not as a simple additive process but as a dialectical negotiation between epistemologies. Rooted in notions of *ijāz* (brevity) and *taqdīs al-kalām* (sanctity of speech), classical exegetical rhetoric, particularly in the works of *al-Zamakhsharī* (*al-Kashshāf*) and *al-Sakkākī* (*Miftāḥ al-‘Ulūm*), interpret *ḥadhf* as a rhetorical form through which semantic compression acquires theological and aesthetic force (Abdel Haleem, 1992; Abdul-Raof, 2018).

Modern computational tools, by contrast, approach omission through fundamentally different paradigms. Natural language processing (NLP) models,

including Qur'anBERT and rhetorical parsers, commonly operationalise ellipsis as a syntactic problem requiring reconstruction, disambiguation, or normalization (Alhadi et al., 2023). Operating within probabilistic frameworks, they prioritise pattern recognition and statistical coherence, frequently overlooking the affective, dialogical, and theological weight of rhetorical silence.

This tension between *turāth*-based interpretation and data-driven parsing raises a foundational hermeneutic question: Can algorithmic analysis engage the Qur'an's stylistic silences without reducing them to statistical noise? Just as omission once signalled divine intent to *al-Zamakshari* and was embedded in *al-Jurjāni's* rhetorical logic, NLP models must be calibrated to detect such absences not as flaws, but as stylistic fingerprints of revelation.

Rather than seeking to erase this tension, the present study frames elliptical eloquence as a boundary object (Kosciejew, 2021), simultaneously legible to both *balāghah* and machine learning, yet fully reducible to neither. In this study, NLP is treated as a *musā'id* (assistant) to rhetorical analysis, where computational outputs support but do not supersede classical exegetical interpretation (Albreiki, 2024). The aim is not to replace *tafsīr* with computation, but to extend the rhetorical sensitivity of classical interpretation into a digital environment in which *ḥadhf* can be tagged, visualised, and discussed with greater granularity, without forfeiting its sacred function.

The study therefore proposes a model in which computational analysis supports, but does not replace, classical rhetorical interpretation, allowing digital methods to function within established exegetical and ethical boundaries.

### 3. ELLIPTICAL ELOQUENCE IN SELECTED QUR'ANIC VERSES

The Qur'an's rhetorical mastery often lies not in what is said, but in what is deliberately left unsaid. This phenomenon, known as *ḥadhf*, functions as a strategic omission that invites interpretive participation and deepens affective resonance. In this section, we offer close readings of three selected *sūrahs* where elliptical eloquence operates as a central rhetorical device. Each case illustrates a specific type of ellipsis and highlights how omission generates semantic depth, theological gravitas, and reader engagement. The interpretations are triangulated with classical *tafsir* (e.g., *al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Rāzī*, *Ibn 'Ashūr*) to ground the stylistic reading in exegetical tradition.

These classical insights not only reveal the rhetorical intention behind each omission but also serve as foundational data points for developing a typology of ellipsis that can later be annotated using computational tools such as

Qur'anBERT or rhetorical parsers. The stylistic force once inferred by *al-Zamakhsari* through linguistic instinct is now increasingly being modelled, although still imperfectly, through algorithmic tagging and ellipsis detection.

**Case Study 1**

*Sūrah al-Fil (Q 105:1)*

<b>Quranic Verse</b>	أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ
<b>Transliteration</b>	<i>A-lam tara kayfa fa'ala rabbuka bi-aṣḥābi al-fil</i>
<b>Sahih International Translation</b>	<i>Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?</i>

This verse opens with a rhetorical interrogative (*istifhām inkārī taqrīrī*), but the clause *fa'ala rabbuka* ("your Lord dealt...") is strikingly elliptical. What exactly did Allah do? The object of the verb *fa'ala* is omitted (*maḥdhūf*), leaving the consequence of the divine act unstated.

Classical exegetes such as *al-Ṭabarī* (2001) and *al-Rāzī* (n.d) reconstruct the omitted referent, interpreting it as divine annihilation, humiliation, and miraculous punishment. *Ibn 'Ashūr* emphasizes that the omission (*ḥadhf al-jawāb*) is not due to grammatical brevity but functions to provoke contemplative awe and imaginative recall. The elliptical structure invites the listener to fill the semantic void, activating memory and affect.

From a stylistic perspective, this omission heightens dramatic tension and amplifies rhetorical force. The listener is not passively informed but actively implicated in reconstructing the divine action. Such omission thus functions as a form of theological compression. An incomplete clause reverberates with completeness through rhetorical intensity. This is elliptical eloquence at its most forceful: what is left unsaid carries more weight than what is said.

In digital tafsir environments, tagging such omissions (particularly those involving divine actions) can enhance the recognition of rhetorical density. Classical tafsir thus not only fills interpretive gaps but also informs corpus annotation and rhetorical indexing.

**Case Study 2**

*Sūrah al-‘Aṣr (Q 103:1–3)*

<b>Quranic Verse</b>	وَالْعَصْرُ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ
<b>Transliteration</b>	Wa-al-‘aṣr • Inna al-insāna la-fi khusr
<b>Sahih International Translation</b>	By Time! Indeed, mankind is in loss,

In *Ibn ‘Āshūr’s* (2004) exegesis of *Sūrat al-‘Aṣr*, the oath opening (*wa-al-‘aṣr*) exemplifies a deliberate ellipsis of the verbal response (*jawāb al-qasam*). While the syntactic expectation in oath structures is a verbal clause (e.g., *uqsimu bi...*), here the verb is omitted, yet implicitly understood within Qur’anic stylistic convention. *Ibn ‘Āshūr* affirms that this omission serves a dual rhetorical purpose: it draws attention to the temporal gravity of the oath and to the moral consequence embedded in the following verse, *inna al-insān la-fi khusr* (“Verily, humankind is in loss”).

The elliptical suspension not only intensifies the auditory and semantic force of the oath but also reflects what *Ibn ‘Āshūr* (2004) describes as the Qur’an’s capacity to evoke profound realities through temporal cues, such as the decline of daylight and the closure of daily action. Stylistically, this elliptical structure invites the listener to complete the meaning intuitively, transforming passive reception into active semantic construction.

In digital models, such omission may appear as a fragment lacking a main verb. However, when analysed through rhetorical tagging informed by *tafsīr*, the construction functions as an instance of elliptical eloquence in which omission generates interpretive and rhetorical force rather than grammatical deficiency. *Ibn ‘Āshūr’s* reading further links the compressed structure of the *sūrah* to broader theological and eschatological themes, demonstrating how ellipsis contributes to rhetorical emphasis through semantic condensation.

### Case Study 3

#### *Sūrah al-Kawthar* (Q 108:2)

<b>Quranic Verse</b>	فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ
<b>Transliteration</b>	Fa-ṣalli li-rabbika wanḥar
<b>Sahih International Translation</b>	So, pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone].

The imperative *wa-nḥar* (“and sacrifice”) in Q 108:2 is morphologically complete but semantically indeterminate. Classical exegetes frequently interpret the verb as

referring to the “sacrifice of a camel” or “offer a ritual animal,” based on Prophetic practice. However, as *Ibn ‘Ashūr* notes, the Qur’an deliberately omits the object of the verb (a case of *ḥadhf al-maf’ūl bihi*) to achieve rhetorical *taṭnīb*: brevity that invites expansive contemplation. This omission does not signal vagueness, but rather a stylistic strategy of semantic openness, allowing for devotional plurality, whether the act involves ritual slaughter (*nabr al-budn*), charity, or symbolic submission.

*Ibn ‘Ashūr* (2004) contextualizes this within the broader theology of gratitude: the command to sacrifice follows divine gifting (*inna a ‘ṭaynāka al-kawthar*), implying that the worshipper responds not with a fixed ritual alone, but with an act of conscious dedication. This ellipsis magnifies meaning, prompting the reader to internalize and concretize the act within their ritual or ethical context, whether during *ḥajj*, *‘id*, or in private offerings of gratitude.

When modelled digitally, this stylistic ellipsis could be tagged as a site of interpretive affordance, where the structure licenses multiple valid readings rooted in tafsir, ritual practice, and theological reflection.

After surveying the three case studies, we can synthesize their distinctive forms of ellipsis and rhetorical function using the following comparative table:

**Table 1**

*Comparative Summary of Elliptical Structures in Selected Verses*

Case Study	Type of Ellipsis	Rhetorical Effect	Classical Interpretation	Digital Potential
<i>Sūrat al-Fīl</i> (Q 105:1)	Omission of object ( <i>ḥadhf al-jawāb</i> )	Heightens dramatic tension and theological awe; activates affective memory	<i>Al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī</i> : divine annihilation; <i>Ibn ‘Ashūr</i> : incompleteness as contemplative provocation	Tag as theological compression; helps locate rhetorical omissions in divine-action structures
<i>Sūrat al-‘Aṣr</i> (Q 103:1–3)	Omission of oath response ( <i>ḥadhf jawāb al-qasam</i> )	Creates rhetorical urgency; invites semantic reconstruction	<i>Ibn ‘Ashūr</i> : highlights temporal gravity and moral consequence	Tag as rhetorical suspension; aids in identifying

				elliptical oath structures
<i>Sūrat al-Kawthar</i> (Q 108:2)	Omission of object ( <i>ḥadhf al-maf'ūl bihi</i> )	Induces interpretive flexibility; broadens devotional scope	<i>Ibn 'Ashūr:</i> semantic expansion through rhetorical brevity ( <i>taṭnīb</i> )	Tag as interpretive affordance; suitable for modelling open-ended ritual expressions

Across all three instances, *elliptical eloquence* functions not as a syntactic anomaly but as a deliberate Qur'anic device for deepening meaning, intensifying divine authority, and engaging the reader as an interpretive participant. Whether omitting an object (*fa'ala rabbuka*), suppressing the verbal clause in an oath (*wa-al-aṣr*), or leaving an imperative open-ended (*wanḥar*), the Qur'an invites semantic co-construction aligned with spiritual, ethical, or eschatological reflection.

This textual incompleteness is not a deficiency but a strategy that enhances semantic density, evokes reverent awe, and renders the discourse dialogical rather than declarative. In computational terms, these elliptical features call for a shift in corpus design: from treating omissions as parse errors to recognizing them as loci of rhetorical intentionality.

Tagging such omissions in digital *tafsir* platforms opens new interpretive pathways. When informed by classical *tafsir*, corpus analysis can identify verses that permit multiple interpretive possibilities through patterns of lexical and syntactic indeterminacy. This ensures that the digital model honours both the stylistic richness and the theological integrity of the Qur'anic discourse.

Moreover, the three case studies directly correspond to the four analytical dimensions developed in the next section:

- Lexical minimalism
- Syntactic suspension
- Semantic density
- Affective load

Each form of *ḥadhf* maps onto these dimensions, illustrating how rhetorical omission operates on multiple levels: linguistic, theological, and affective.

Classical commentators may not have articulated these categories in modern stylistic terms, but their exegesis affirms their hermeneutical validity.

Through this synthesis, the study bridges classical *tafsir* and digital stylistics, reframing rhetorical ellipsis as both a computationally taggable and spiritually meaningful feature of Qur'anic language. Consequently, the study positions rhetorical ellipsis as a site where hermeneutics and digital linguistics converge, offering a transferable framework for future Qur'anic stylistic inquiry.

#### 4. TOWARD A RHETORICAL-STYLISTIC FRAMEWORK

In this section, we propose the Elliptical Eloquence Framework (EEF), a four-dimensional model for analysing omission-based rhetorical strategies in the Qur'an. This study positions the EEF as a framework for rhetorical-stylistic and digital *tafsir*, aligning with the integration of classical Arabic rhetoric and contemporary computational tools outlined in the title. While previous studies have examined *ḥadhf* from syntactic, semantic, or translation-based perspectives (e.g., Ai-Kelani, 2009; Abdul-Raof, 2018; Hassanein, 2023), their insights often remain fragmented. The EEF consolidates these strands into a coherent rhetorical-stylistic framework that foregrounds not only linguistic form but also reader engagement, affective impact, and digital annotation potential. In operational terms, the EEF is designed for deployment within digital *tafsir* contexts, where the *musā'id* (assistant) paradigm ensures that computational tools serve rather than replace classical exegetical authority.

Elliptical eloquence, as defined here, refers to the Qur'an's strategic use of omission to achieve brevity (*ījāz*), semantic intensity, and theological gravitas. It is not a deficiency, but a rhetorical presence: a space of divine assertion where meaning is compressed and contemplation is required. Unlike general notions of *ḥadhf*, this concept emphasizes:

- The rhetorical purpose behind omission
- The stylistic texture created by suspended or incomplete forms
- The affective and interpretive burden placed on the reader

This builds on classical concepts like *semantic compression in Qur'anic discourse* and *ījāz*, while enabling scalable analysis in digital environments.

#### Four Core Analytical Dimensions

Building on previous linguistic and rhetorical studies (Ai-Kelani, 2009; Abdul-Raof, 2018; Hassanein, 2023), We propose what we term the Elliptical Eloquence

Framework (EEF), a four-part model designed to analyse omission-based rhetorical strategies in the Qur’an. This framework is structured around four analytical dimensions (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Analytical Dimensions of the Elliptical Eloquence Framework (EEF)*

Dimension	Definition	Stylistic Function
Lexical Minimalism	Omission of verbs, objects, or connectors ( <i>ḥadhf al-fi’l, al-maf’ūl, etc.</i> )	Increases semantic density and brevity
Syntactic Suspension	Use of incomplete clauses or delayed sentence resolution ( <i>ta’kḥīr al-jawāb</i> )	Builds suspense, creates interpretive engagement
Semantic Density	Compression of meanings into minimal wording ( <i>ījāz</i> )	Invites layered exegesis; expands interpretive range
Affective Load	Emotional or theological charge borne by the omission ( <i>ta’zīm, rahbah, khawf</i> )	Amplifies sacred awe and experiential participation

These dimensions can be operationalized through dependency parsing (1–2), collocation and corpus analysis (3), and reader-oriented annotation (4).

The following typology synthesizes common Qur’anic ellipsis patterns and their interpretive functions:

**Table 3**

*Common Types of Ellipsis in the Qur’an and Their Stylistic-Interpretive Effects*

Ellipsis Type	Example Verse	Interpretive Impact
Verb Omission	Q 105:1 ( <i>fa’ala rabbuka</i> )	Heightens suspense and invites reflection
Subject/Object Omission	Q 108:2 ( <i>wa-nḥar</i> )	Broadens liturgical meaning; universal command
Connector Omission	Q 103:1–2 ( <i>wa-al-’aṣr</i> )	Urges interpretive completion by the reader
Clause Suspension	Q 18:9 ( <i>aḥasibta...</i> )	Pauses narrative flow; compels cognitive leap

This typology builds on Hassanein's (2023) concept of "reader-dependent syntactic gaps" and integrates Abdul-Raof's (2018) attention to macro-structural cohesion. By encoding these ellipsis types into machine-readable formats (such as XML tagging or rule-based NLP pipelines) this typology supports both digital annotation and rhetorical tafsir.

The Elliptical Eloquence Framework can be implemented across several scholarly domains:

- Digital Tafsir Platforms: to annotate rhetorical ellipses and flag interpretive zones
- Corpus Linguistics: to study frequency and clustering of omission features
- Pedagogy: to train students in recognizing Qur'anic stylistic cues
- AI-Assisted Tools: such as ellipsis detection in Qur'anBERT or AraTafsir

These applications do not automate tafsir, but enhance its analytical scope, theological reverence, and translatability across disciplines. Like the classical grammarians and rhetoricians, we are still asking: what does the silence mean? But now, we do so with layered tools that preserve reverence even as they increase interpretive reach.

## 5. DIGITALLY SUPPORTED TAFSIR: ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The application of artificial intelligence to Qur'anic interpretation expands the analytical capacity of digital text analysis while complicating questions of rhetorical meaning, interpretive control, and exegetical authority. As digital tools begin to support sacred textual analysis, scholars are confronted with a dual imperative: to harness technological affordances while safeguarding theological integrity. This section proposes a digitally supported *tafsir* model that augments, rather than replaces, classical exegesis. It presents a twofold framework: (1) a methodological pathway for detecting and annotating rhetorical ellipsis in the Qur'an, and (2) a set of ethical safeguards to ensure interpretive reverence. Central to this model is the *musā'id* paradigm, in which computational systems assist the exegete without assuming interpretive authority. In doing so, this approach seeks to align digital tafsir with the adab, aims, and epistemology of the Islamic scholarly tradition.

**5.1 Methodological Integration: From Text to Annotation**

In recent years, digital tools have begun to supplement Qur’anic interpretation in ways that were previously unimaginable. The idea of *digitally supported tafsir* refers to the augmentation of traditional exegetical practices with computational models, without replacing the authority of classical interpretive methods. It reflects an integrative paradigm in which artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as syntactic parsers, stylometric detectors, and deep learning models serve as interpretive assistants (*musāʿid*), not arbiters (*muḥakkim*), in the sacred hermeneutical process.

This model aligns with a growing body of scholarship exploring the affordances of AI in Islamic textual studies. For instance, Alhadi et al. (2023) developed a rule-based NLP system for analyzing rhetorical patterns in classical Arabic poetry. Koscieljew (2021) introduced a digital documentation framework that foregrounds the materiality of sacred texts. Hehsan et al. (2024) proposed a pedagogical model for Arabic digital learning. Collectively, these contributions demonstrate that, when ethically grounded, digital methods can enrich rather than undermine faith-based scholarship.

In the context of elliptical eloquence, such tools can be used to detect syntactic gaps, minimal clause constructions, or stylistically dense segments that correspond with *ḥadhf*. To operationalize this, the following workflow outlines how elliptical eloquence may be systematically analysed through a digitally supported process.

**Table 4**

*Hybrid Workflow for Elliptical Eloquence Analysis in the Qur’an*

Step	Tool/Technique	Output	Human Oversight
1. Input Qur’anic Text	Raw verse data (e.g., from Tanzil, Quran.com)	Qur’anic corpus with verse boundaries	Selection based on surah/theme relevance
2. Linguistic Preprocessing	Tokenization, POS tagging, dependency parsing (e.g., CAMEL tools)	Syntactic structures, POS profiles	Researcher checks parsing reliability in Classical Arabic (CA)

<p>3. Ellipsis Cue Detection</p>	<p>-Qur'anBERT for masked prediction                  -Stylometry for compression                  -Dependency anomaly detection</p>	<p>List of flagged verses with potential ellipsis</p>	<p>Researcher filters out false positives</p>
<p>4. Thematic &amp; Rhetorical Analysis</p>	<p>Semantic tagging (e.g., ritual, divine acts, eschatology)</p>	<p>Rhetorical profile contextualized</p>	<p>Researcher interprets based on tafsir tradition</p>
<p>5. Classical Tafsir Validation</p>	<p>Primary sources: <i>al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Zamakhsharī</i></p>	<p>Confirmed or contested readings of ellipsis and implied meanings</p>	<p>Human validation for theological alignment</p>
<p>6. Annotation &amp; Typology Mapping</p>	<p>Manual tagging via the 4-part elliptical eloquence framework</p>	<p>Lexical Minimalism, Syntactic Suspension, Semantic Density, Affective Load</p>	<p>Researcher ensures consistency in tagging</p>
<p>7. Corpus Integration</p>	<p>XML/JSON markup or stylometric annotation database</p>	<p>A reusable annotated ellipsis corpus for research and pedagogy</p>	<p>Archived and curated for digital tafsir use</p>

This hybrid workflow ensures that digital analysis remains interpretively faithful. Computational cues such as anomalies in dependency parsing or stylometric compression signals are never accepted uncritically. Instead, they serve as *muqaddimāt* (preliminary indicators) subject to interpretive validation by the scholar. Classical tafsir functions as the authoritative arbiter, maintaining epistemic continuity with the Islamic tradition (Abdul-Raof, 2018; Hassanein, 2023). The model aligns with the adab of tafsir, ensuring that AI acts only as a

*musā'id*, supporting the exegete without supplanting theological judgment (*muḥakkim*). In this configuration, technology augments rather than overrides the sacred interpretive process.

### 5.2 Ethical Foundations: Preserving Reverence in Digital Tafsir

To ensure interpretive accuracy and theological legitimacy, each computational step must incorporate explicit human oversight. This results in a hybrid model that is both ethically cautious and epistemologically grounded.

A common critique of computational *tafsir* posits that applying machine learning to the Qur'an risks epistemic reductionism. This concern suggests a flattening of divine revelation into data points or pattern-recognition outputs. From this perspective, digital tools may inadvertently desecralize the Qur'an by turning stylistic eloquence into algorithmic artifact, and by substituting theological contemplation with computational convenience.

This concern parallels a deeper distinction: between recitation and recoding, or between the experience of listening with reverence and the act of scanning with algorithms. As Koscieljew (2021) warns, the digital rendering of sacred text may obscure its spiritual and performative dimensions, potentially privileging efficiency over contemplative depth.

This study acknowledges these concerns and responds by proposing an ethically grounded design model rooted in Islamic epistemology. Central to this model is the *musā'id* (assistant) paradigm, which treats artificial intelligence not as *muḥakkim* (arbiter), but as a subordinate tool in the exegetical process. The AI functions analogously to classical instruments of interpretation such as grammar and rhetoric, facilitating clarity yet never superseding the authority of the exegete.

To safeguard theological integrity, the model also incorporates interpretive safeguards. All computationally generated patterns are cross-referenced with *tafsir mu'tabar* (e.g., *al-Ṭabarī*, *Ibn 'Āshūr*), ensuring fidelity to the hermeneutic tradition while enabling its expansion through digital means.

### Human-in-the-Loop: Ethics of Interpretation

Four foundational principles guide this digital tafsir process:

1. AI as *Musā'id*, Not *Muḥakkim*: Tools support human judgment; they do not determine it (Albreiki, 2024).

2. **Transparency of Assumptions:** All algorithmic choices including lexical tagging, syntactic modelling must be visible and justifiable (Kosciejew, 2021).
3. **Integration with *Classical Islamic Exegetical Tradition*:** Computational findings are always cross-referenced with classical tafsir to maintain epistemic continuity (Abdul-Raof, 2018).
4. **Safeguards Against Misuse:** Public-facing tools must include disclaimers, guided annotation protocols, and theological oversight (Fadhli et al., 2024).

The following table outlines practical guidelines for developers and users to maintain reverence, accuracy, and ethical responsibility when integrating AI tools into Qur’anic stylistic analysis.

Table 5: Best Practices for Implementing Elliptical Eloquence in Digital Tafsir Platforms

For Developers	For Users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design ellipsis-aware NLP models using classical syntax (<i>ḥadhf al-fi‘l, al-maf‘ūl</i>).</li> <li>- Use transparent tagging schemas (e.g., XML, JSON) with classical annotations.</li> <li>- Cross-reference with <i>tafsir mu‘tabar</i> (e.g., al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).</li> <li>- Label ambiguous ellipses as “interpretive zones” with contextual notes.</li> <li>- Enforce human-in-the-loop verification for AI-tagged content.</li> <li>- Avoid auto-generating theological meanings without disclaimers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use ellipsis annotations as rhetorical cues, not definitive meanings.</li> <li>- Consult classical commentaries for background and context.</li> <li>- Use annotations as a starting point for deeper reflection.</li> <li>- Balance visual aids with engagement in Qur’anic Arabic.</li> <li>- Respect the theological depth of open or ambiguous phrasing.</li> <li>- Do not treat AI suggestions as religious judgments.</li> <li>- Approach digital tafsir with <i>adab</i> and critical awareness.</li> </ul>

<p>- Explain annotation rationale to promote transparency and literacy.</p>	
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## 6. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The development of a rhetorical-stylistic framework centred on elliptical eloquence in the Qur'an holds wide-ranging implications for tafsir pedagogy, translation practices, digital corpus development, and the evolving intersection of sacred hermeneutics and artificial intelligence. Just as the Qur'an's rhetorical omissions once summoned exegetes to fill sacred silences with reflection and reverence, today's scholars are called to bridge *turāth* and technology. In this endeavour, it is essential to ensure that the precision of digital tools serves theological insight rather than supplants it.

### A. Tafsir Pedagogy and Qur'anic Literacy

At the pedagogical level, this framework reinforces the importance of stylistic literacy in tafsir education. The ability to detect *ḥadhf* and understand its rhetorical function equips students to appreciate the Qur'an's *ījāz*, theological density, and interpretive openness.

This aligns with Fadhli et al.'s (2024) emphasis on non-traditional hermeneutics (e.g., *tafsir ḥikāyatī*) to cultivate reader agency and social engagement. By integrating the concept of elliptical eloquence into postgraduate *tafsir* curricula, supported by annotated corpora and rhetorical glossaries, educators can train students not merely to read, but to listen attentively to the Qur'an's rhetorical cues.

Such training mirrors the classical *'ulūm al-Qur'ān* principle of *i'jāz lughawī* (linguistic inimitability) but reframes it for a digital generation. In postgraduate tafsir seminars, this framework can be applied using platforms such as UAM CorpusTool or INCEPTION. Students may be guided to collaboratively annotate selected *sūrah*s, tagging *ḥadhf al-fi'l*, *ḥadhf al-maf'ūl*, and rhetorical ellipses, while linking these to relevant insights from tafsir mu'tabar (e.g., *al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Rāzī*, *Ibn 'Ashūr*).

A typical seminar activity might include:

- Selecting a short *sūrah* (e.g., *Sūrat al-Fil* or *Sūrat al-Kawthar*),
- Identifying elliptical structures within the verses,

- Reconstructing omitted components based on classical tafsir and syntax,
- Discussing their rhetorical and theological implications, and
- Comparing group annotations to observe interpretive variation.

This pedagogy emphasizes that digital annotation is not a substitute for contemplation, but a scaffold for deeper engagement with Qur'anic eloquence.

### B. Qur'anic Translation and Stylistic Ethics

In the realm of translation, the proposed framework provides a principled lens for ethically rendering Qur'anic ellipsis. As Hassanein (2022, 2023) illustrates, elliptical constructions, especially those involving *al-iḥtibāk* or amphibological syntax pose unique challenges to translators striving to preserve both rhetorical conciseness and semantic integrity.

By foregrounding elliptical eloquence, the framework equips translators to resist the impulse to over-clarify or artificially complete what is intentionally omitted. This approach safeguards the Qur'an's contemplative space and preserves its rhetorical subtlety.

Future translation efforts might benefit from digital support tools such as:

- Stylistic glossaries annotating types of *ḥadhf*
- Ellipsis detection flags in translation software
- Visual markers for rhetorical density to guide translation teams

These tools function as *musā'idāt* (assistive aids) rather than interpretive arbiters, supporting the identification of rhetorical omission in interlingual transmission without replacing human exegetical judgment.

### C. Corpus Annotation and Digital Linguistic Models

From a digital humanities standpoint, this study contributes to the broader movement toward Qur'anic corpus annotation and rhetorical modelling. The typology of elliptical forms proposed here, especially when integrated into tools such as Qur'anBERT or rule-based NLP engines, lays foundational infrastructure for ellipsis-aware Qur'anic corpora.

Whereas classical scholars relied on *ḥāshiyah* and marginal notes, today's researchers annotate *ḥadhf* using XML or JSON schemas. Despite the difference

in medium, both practices share the same objective: to uncover divine precision through structured interpretation.

This complements work by Alhadi et al. (2023), who demonstrated the utility of NLP in identifying rhetorical devices in Arabic poetry. A similar approach to Qur'anic discourse could yield:

- Searchable verse databases tagged by *ḥadhf* type
- Stylometric clustering of ellipsis-rich *sūrah*s
- Interactive annotation environments for collaborative *tafsīr*

Such a corpus would provide a structured resource for integrating corpus-assisted analysis with established exegetical traditions in the study of Qur'anic rhetoric.

At the same time, it is crucial to acknowledge the methodological constraints of computational implementation. NLP-based ellipsis detection models, including Qur'anBERT and rule-based dependency parsers, often struggle with the subtleties of non-verbal ellipses (e.g., implied subjects, theological deixis, or rhetorical deixures). Unlike explicit omissions such as *ḥadhf al-fi'l*, many elliptical structures operate at the semantic-pragmatic boundary, where algorithms lack the theological awareness or intertextual sensitivity needed for accurate tagging.

Over-reliance on such tool's risks misclassifying poetic brevity as syntactic anomaly or, conversely, flattening sacred silence into quantifiable absence. For this reason, the Elliptical Eloquence Framework (EEF) must always be deployed within a human-in-the-loop model, where computational outputs are reviewed, validated, and contextualized by scholars of Qur'anic rhetoric and *tafsīr mu'tabar*. In this way, the framework supports rather than substitutes the hermeneutic labour of the exegete

#### D. Ethical Safeguards and Theological Accountability

As Qur'anic interpretation enters the digital age, epistemic boundaries must be actively reaffirmed. This study emphasizes the *musā'id* model of AI, which operate within a human-in-the-loop paradigm grounded in Islamic epistemology and guided by *khashyah* (reverence), *adab al-tafsīr* (interpretive ethics), and *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (higher objectives of the divine law).

Future digital tafsir platforms must therefore integrate safeguards such as:

- Cross-referencing outputs with *tafsīr mu'tabar* (e.g., *al-Ṭabarī*, *Ibn 'Āshūr*)
- Displaying zones of stylistic uncertainty, especially around *ḥadhf*
- Transparent algorithmic logic in ellipsis tagging
- Embedded disclaimers and interpretive warnings for AI-generated suggestions

These design principles ensure that digital tafsir remains not only pedagogically sound but spiritually responsible, maintaining the Qur'an's ontological status as *kalām Allāh* rather than reducing it to linguistic code.

#### E. Interdisciplinary Prospects

Finally, the proposed framework invites interdisciplinary expansion. Within Qur'anic studies, it may inspire renewed analysis of brevity-rich expressions, *i'jāz*, and *iltifāt* under the stylistic lens. Beyond tafsir, the model may be extended to:

- *Hadīth* analysis, especially in identifying elliptical narration styles in *jawāmi' al-kalim* traditions (cf. Rashwan, 2024),
- Classical Arabic poetry, where *ḥadhf* was often a sign of artistic compression (Ai-Kelani, 2009),
- Digital Islamic pedagogy, integrating rhetorical annotation into Arabic learning platforms (Hehsan et al., 2024),
- Translation software refinement, helping translators detect and render elliptical structures with greater fidelity.

The implications of this research are both methodological and theological. By elevating elliptical eloquence from a marginal rhetorical device to a core stylistic axis, this framework not only enriches tafsir but also equips scholars with new tools to navigate the divine complexity of Qur'anic discourse. Future directions must prioritize collaborative development across disciplines, bringing together linguists, computer scientists, tafsir experts, and ethicists to ensure that digital progress remains spiritually grounded and pedagogically transformative.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study has argued that elliptical eloquence, defined as Qur'an's strategic use of omission (*ḥadhf*) that functions not merely as a linguistic feature, but as a rhetorical signature that intensifies its semantic density, theological gravitas, and interpretive richness. Through close analysis of selected verses from *Sūrat al-Fil*, *al-ʿAşr*, and *al-Kawthar*, we have demonstrated how omission invites reader participation, amplifies divine authority, and heightens the affective impact of revelation. Classical rhetorical theory, as articulated by scholars such as *al-Zamakhsharī*, *al-Sakkākī*, and contemporary linguists like Abdul-Raof (2018) and Al-Kelani (2009), situates this stylistic phenomenon within the broader system of *ijāz* and brevity-rich expression.

From this textual insight, the article proposed a rhetorical-stylistic framework grounded in four core dimensions: lexical minimalism, syntactic suspension, semantic density, and affective load. This framework not only sharpens literary analysis but also offers a scaffolding for digital annotation, paving the way for ethically grounded, AI-assisted Qur'anic research. Tools such as NLP, stylometry, and Qur'anBERT possess transformative potential, provided that their development remains guided by Islamic epistemological values.

Nevertheless, as Koscijew (2021) cautions, the materiality and sanctity of digital texts must not be compromised in the pursuit of computational precision. Artificial intelligence should be understood as a *musā'id* (assistant) rather than a *muḥakkim* (arbiter) in tafsir processes. Its role is to support the exegete's interpretive efforts without supplanting them. The annotated corpus proposed by Alhadi et al. (2023) represents a promising model; however, its deployment in sacred contexts must be governed by *adab al-tafsīr* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, ensuring that technological enhancement remains subordinate to theological integrity.

Ultimately, this study invites renewed engagement with the Qur'an's rhetorical architecture, not merely as a source of guidance, but as a literary event that requires reverence, curiosity, and ethical sensitivity. Scholars across disciplines, including linguistics, theology, artificial intelligence, and digital humanities, are called to collaborate in designing tools that are linguistically precise, theologically respectful, and pedagogically empowering.

The eloquent silence of the Qur'an, expressed through *ḥadhf* (omission), is not a gap but an invitation. It calls readers to listen deeply, infer responsibly, and interpret with both heart and intellect.

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