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## Optionally Omitting the Subject in Nominal Sentences: II

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### Abstract

This paper is a continuation of my previous article [1]. Thus, it comes to complete investigating the chronological sequence to show the development of the theory of optional omitting the subject in Arabic nominal sentences. Consequently, this article starts with Ibn Jennī and ends with Ibn Asfūr, trying to shed light on the areas of innovation and the nature of progress in each stage and the other, taking into account grammarians who represent the successive stages of the development of Arabic grammar in general. Moreover, this article maintains partially the chronological sequence of these grammarians to describe and discuss the historical development in the theory of the optional omission of the subject.

**Keywords:** Nominal subject, optional omission, Arabic nominal sentence, Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, Ibn Jennī.

### Introduction

The nominal subject in Arabic Sentence, can be implied or omitted from the speech or the surface structure. However, this possibility cannot come to light unless there is an essential condition agreed upon by the grammarians and researchers, which is the existence of verbal or case evidence that points the listener or the reader to the implied or omitted subject without ambiguity or doubt about the possibility of knowing the recipient and reaching the omitted or implied subject [2].

This paper shows the development of the theory above, starting with Ibn Jennī and ends with Ibn Asfūr, trying to shed light on the areas of innovation and the nature of progress in each stage and the other, taking into account grammarians who represent the successive stages of the development of Arabic grammar in general. Moreover, this article maintains completing the chronological sequence of these grammarians to describe and discuss the historical development in the theory of the optional omission of the nominal subject.

### Results and discussion

Continuing the chronological sequence of the optional omitting the nominal subject in Arabic, discussed in my previous paper [3], I turn to Ibn Jinnī who says in this context: The subject may be omitted at times such as Hal laka fī kathā wa-kathā? [Do you need such and such?], that is, hal laka fīhi ḥājah aw Irab? [Do you have a need or desire for it?]. Likewise, Allah Almighty says, "It will be - on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day," [4]. "balāgh," [Notification] that is, thālik aw hātha balāgh [that/this is notification], and there are many examples... and the Almighty says: "tā'atun waqawlun ma'rūfun" [Obedience and good words,] [5]. It means "amrunā tā'atun waqawlun ma'rūfun [Our command is obedience and good words] [6].

We note that Ibn Jinnī followed a new method that is different from those who preceded him; he did not resort to the interpretation or justification of the possibility of omission, as did his predecessors of grammarians towards Sībawayh, who elaborated on the understanding of the evidence of the case or the context and required its existence for the occurrence of the ellipsis or the omission of the optional subject, and towards the reference of Al-Mubarrid and Ibn Al-

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Sarrāj to the necessity of requiring the recipient addressee or listener's knowledge of the implied or omitted subject, and so on. In contrast to these grammarians, Ibn Jinnī only mentions some examples and evidence where omission is possible, so we see him citing the Qur'anic verses and saying that the omission of the subject is many, as we see him relying on enumerating some evidence on what the grammarians, especially Sībawayh and Al-Mubarrid, mentioned before him, this confirms that he was influenced by them and followed them. On the other hand, Ibn Jinnī does not fulfill the places of the optional omission of the subject, at least those mentioned by his predecessors, and he did not try or resort to the method of setting rules or specifying those places. Still, he only said examples to prove them or some of them.

Abd al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī says, in this context: "To leave the mention of something is more eloquent than mentioning it, and not to mention the meaningfulness is more practical. Sometimes, you find yourself speaking even though you didn't talk and clarifying perfectly even though you didn't explain..." [7]. Here, Al-Jurjānī deals with omitting the subject in a new method unknown to his predecessors of Arab grammarians and linguists. This is because he did not intend to justify or explain the possibility of omitting the subject, limiting its places, or setting its rules, as we will notice later. Rather, Al-Jurjānī deals with the subject's omission or ellipsis regarding the rhetorical and semantic aspects and the intended meaning. Thus, he confirms, and demonstrates that the omission is more eloquent and more informative than not. This means that omitting the subject gives connotations and that mentioning it does not. Therefore, the omission is more formal, that is, clearer in intent, more comprehensive, and more profound in meaning than a mention. The benefit that Al-Jurjānī compares its benefit between the cases of mention and omission is the meaning or significance to be conveyed to the recipient. In Al-Jurjānī's opinion, the words were used to denote the meaning, as presented by Ibn Ya'īsh. The omission or ellipsis of the comments also plays a role in fulfilling the purpose and conveying the significance to the recipient. Not only that, but also the significance and meaning as presented in the optional omission of the subject may be more fertile than when the subject is mentioned and shown in the surface structure. Expressiveness is clarification, and eloquence is clarification, the strength of expression, and conveying meaning. In Al-Jurjānī's opinion, omitting the subject in nominal sentence is more expressive and eloquent than mentioning it in speech or surface structure. In dealing with omitting the subject and saying that it is more expressive and eloquent than mentioning it, Al-Jurjānī perhaps combines the two types of signs that Muḥammad Al-Khafājī talks about, which are based on the meaning given by sounds, grammar, and morphology, and those based on the significance of the case, occasion, or context [8]. Thus, we note that Al-Jurjānī, in his theory of omission referred to, links grammar with rhetoric, because he sees great interest in meaning or connotation without separating the purpose from the grammatical structure. In this, Ba'albakkī says that the relationship between grammar and rhetoric can be explained by the fact that rhetoric is specific to the two domains of meanings that discuss the means or methods that make speech express the intended purpose with utmost accuracy through tricks related to the structural

component of the surface structure [9]. In this context, al-Bahnasāwī says: "Abd al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī resolved the issue of linking grammar to semantics and explained the importance of this linkage and the need for the structural component to rely on the semantic part" [10]. This means that Al-Jurjānī raises and highlights the significance and necessity of relying on the surface structure in which the subject was implied or omitted on the semantic component inherent in that omission or ellipsis because the semantic part gives the surface structure eloquence, expressiveness, and rhetoric. The semantic element's role outweighs the surface structure's role if the subject is mentioned in that structure.

It should be noted that none of those who preceded Al-Jurjānī referred to all of the preceding in terms of a semantic aspect related to omitting the subject. Instead, his predecessors sought to justify the possibility of omitting the subject from the surface structure and its verbal or case condition. It is most likely from his predecessors of grammarians that the connotation of the surface structure in which the subject is omitted is equal to that of the surface structure in which the subject is mentioned, and this is what Al-Jurjānī does not agree with, as is clear from the preceding. According to Al-Jurjānī, the semantic component is similar to the surface structure and not only an explanatory part, as was considered by the grammarians who preceded Al-Jurjānī in their approach to the optional omission of the subject.

For Al-Zamakhsharī:

It is permissible to omit one of them (the subject or the predicate). One example of omitting the subject is the saying of the seer of the crescent: Al-hilāl wa-Allah [the crescent, by Allah], and your saying when you smell something: Al-misk wa-Allah [the musk, by Allah], or when you see somebody: Abd Allah warabbī [Abd Allah, by my Lord]. In addition, the Almighty is saying, Fasabr jamīl [so patience is most fitting] [11].

In this context, Al-Zamakhsharī conveys what Sībawayh and Al-Mubarrid had said before him. Still, he adds a poetic example of the nominative case of Na'am [camels] as a predicate for an optionally omitted subject whose assumption is hiya [they are]. As for the meaning of the line of poetry: the soldiers or the army said, "These are camels," so seek them and strive for them. In this context, he uses the term jāz [It is permissible], a jurisprudential term, as did Al-Mubarrid and others before him. Thus, it is clear from the preceding that Al-Zamakhsharī was strongly influenced by Sībawayh and Al-Mubarrid and followed them without referring to them. This means that Al-Zamakhsharī did not introduce anything new in the optional omission of the subject; not only that, but Al-Zamakhsharī did not fulfill all the places in which the subject is optionally omitted, although he did not try, in what he said above, to limit or set rules for those places. Instead, he merely mentioned various evidence and examples in which the subject was optionally omitted or implied.

At the outset, it should be noted that Ibn Ya'īsh enters into the context of his talk about omitting the subject as an explanation and justification for the necessity of resorting to the theory of omission or ellipsis, which was discussed in this research above [12].

It is also clear that Ibn Ya'īsh combines what Sībawayh, Al-Mubarrid, and Al-Zamakhsharī said to a certain extent. This is in terms of the examples he mentions, so there is no

need to repeat them. Still, in terms of interpretation and justification, Ibn Ya'ish renews by saying the issue of the verbal or case presumption that indicates the listener or the addressee to the intended meaning without mentioning or showing it in the surface structure. Ibn Ya'ish's adoption of the term "presumption" made me look at dictionaries to find out its connotations: the presumption is what guides the desired and indicates the intended in speech, and it is what accompanies speech and shows what is meant by it [13]. Terminologically, it means evidence. The verbal presumption idiomatically means the spoken evidence while the semantic presumption is the case evidence. In this way, Carter understood it, so he adopted the terms verbal evidence and semantic evidence. Ḥassān Abbās considers that the presumption is the sign that indicates the meaning, directs at it, and removes ambiguity and confusion. Thus, if it is a word, it is called verbal. If it is not a word, it is called semantic or mental [14].

Tamām Ḥassān categorizes the presumptions into a classification that may be comprehensive: the physical presumptions, such as the remnants of the criminal at the crime scene, and the mental presumptions, including mental everyday presumptions, such as your saying: *Anā thāhib ilā al-kullīyah* [I am going to college], so the meaning of *al-kullīyah* [college] is defined by a mental common presumption. Some of them are mental, such as syllogism issues and proof, the verbal presumptions include both spoken and semantic ones, and the case presumptions are known from the context [15].

Thus, we conclude that Ibn Ya'ish, at the same time, was also highly influenced by Sībawayh, Al-Mubarrid, and Al-Zamakhsharī. This is evidenced by his taking from them, as previously mentioned, on the one hand, but on the other hand, he renewed in this chapter. He elevated the research and grammatical authorship in terms of his interpretation of the possibility of omission, his adoption of the term "presumption" and its classification, and his reference to the necessity of resorting to the theory of omitting the subject.

Ibn Asfūr adopts the term 'al-ithbāt' [mention] as a reverse concept of omission, and this is a different adaptation from the adoption of those who preceded him, as we noted by Sībawayh, Al-Mubarrid, Al-Naḥḥās, Abū Alī Al-Fārisī, Ibn Jinnī, Al-Jurjānī and others had adopted the term 'al-ithhār' [showing] as a reverse concept of omission or ellipsis [16]. This means that Ibn Asfūr is more successful in choosing terms because if we look at 'al-ithbāt' versus 'al-ithhār' we will conclude that 'al-ithbāt' is a more successful term than 'al-ithhār' to signify the opposite of omission. In this discussion, we benefit from the opinion of Ayyūb, who says that omitting the subject indicates that the subject was dropped from speech -if any other element in the structure was apparent and then dropped from the speech or the prominent structure [17]. There is no doubt that 'al-ithbāt' expresses the opposite of dropping an element or elements in the speech or composition, and thus 'al-ithbāt' is more successful than 'al-ithhār' in expressing the reverse of the omission.

It should be noted that Ibn Asfūr was not the first to adopt the term 'al-ithhār' in Arabic grammar; only his predecessors adopted it, but in places not related to the syntactic omission. For example, Abū Ja'far Al-Naḥḥās discussed the omission and mention of tanween (nunation) [18]. Al-Zajjājī also talked about mentioning the letter yā'

in the sense of not omitting and dropping it from the word [19]. Likewise, Abū Alī Al-Fārisī used 'al-ithbāt' in the opposite sense of omitting and dropping from the word. In addition, Abū Alī Al-Fārisī has adopted the term 'al-ithbāt' to signify the opposite of omission and drop. Also, Al-Fārisī differs from those who preceded him in adopting the terms of 'yalzam' [it is obligatory] and 'anta fih bi-al-khayār' [you have the choice], while those who preceded him adopted 'yajīb' [must] and 'yajūz' [may] [20]. Adopting Al-Fārisī for those terms may be more successful because they are devoid of religious or jurisprudential nature, which may face consequences or results to which the Arabic grammar is dispensable. This is on the one hand, but on the other hand, Al-Fārisī did not renew anything in this context in terms of content or the theory of the optional omission of the subject. Perhaps his predecessors did not mention the necessity of proving the subject or saying it, but this is understood from their handling of the conditions for the omission of the subject -it has to be confirmed and may not be omitted- As for his mention of the places of the permissibility of omission, his predecessors mentioned them starting with Sībawayh, and this indicates that Al-Fārisī is influenced by and taking from Sībawayh as well.

### Conclusion

After discussing, comparing, and critiquing the views of grammarians and writers on the theory of the optional omission or ellipsis of the subject, we can say that the subject can be implied or omitted from the speech or the surface structure. However, this possibility cannot come to light unless there is an essential condition agreed upon by the grammarians and researchers, which is the existence of verbal or case evidence that points the listener or the reader to the implied or omitted subject without ambiguity or doubt about the possibility of knowing the recipient and reaching the omitted or implied subject. Drawing that result is due to what the grammarians mentioned from the linguistic, poetic, prose, and Qur'anic examples, whose authenticity or content did not remain in doubt among the researchers.

The study discussed the development of the theory above, starting with Ibn Jennī ends with Ibn Asfūr, trying to highlight the areas of innovation and the nature of progress in each stage and the other, taking into account that each of the grammarians, whose names the chapters of the study were named, represent the successive stages of the development of Arabic grammar in general. As a continues paper, the study then maintained completion for the chronological sequence of the historical development in the theory of the subject's optional omission [21].

It is worth noting that Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī distinguished himself in addressing the issue of optional omission or ellipsis of the subject. While the grammarians who preceded him were busy describing and clarifying the conditions for that omission, we note that Al-Jurjānī deals with the semantic and rhetorical aspect of that omission or ellipsis, where he highlighted, explained, and demonstrated that omitting or implying the subject, with the availability of its condition, is more informative and eloquent than mentioning or showing it in the surface structure or the apparent structure.

However, despite this transformation and renewal made by Al-Jurjānī, we did not notice, in general, that the later grammarians were affected by his renewal in dealing with

the optional omission of the subject. Perhaps this influence was evident to the later rhetoricians, which is not among the study's objectives.

In conclusion, this study calls for severe studies to be conducted on other aspects related to the subject, such as its necessary omission, the places of that omission, and the disagreement between the grammarians about it, as well as the ongoing discussion between the grammarians in the question of which is better and worthier: the assumption of omission of the subject or the predicate where both estimations are correct?

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