



A Contrastive Analysis of Fi'il Mudhari' and Its English Translation Equivalents in Surah Al-Kahf: A Study of Saheeh International Translation

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-05-30 Revised: 2026-06-09 Accepted: 2026-06-10</p> <p>Keywords: Contrastive Analysis; <i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i>; Simple Present Tense; Surah Al-Kahf</p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10603</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Melgiyani 1037melgi@gmail.com UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Jawa Barat</p>	<p><i>This study analyzes the functions of fi'il mudhari' in Surah Al-Kahf and their English translation equivalents in the Saheeh International translation. Although previous studies have discussed fi'il mudhari' and the relationship between Arabic and English tenses, few studies have focused on how the various meanings of fi'il mudhari' are translated into English in Qur'anic texts. Therefore, this study aims to identify the functions of fi'il mudhari' in Surah Al-Kahf and explain how these functions are represented in English translation. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a contrastive analysis approach to compare Arabic and English grammatical and semantic systems. The data consist of 162 occurrences of fi'il mudhari' found in Surah Al-Kahf (verses 1–110). The findings show that fi'il mudhari' has wider meanings and functions than the English simple present tense. In many cases, it is translated into the simple present when expressing habitual actions, repeated activities, and general truths. However, fi'il mudhari' can also express future meaning, purpose, commands, prohibitions, and other meanings depending on the context and grammatical structure. As a result, its English translations appear in different forms, such as the simple present, future, modal, infinitive, and imperative forms. The study also finds that English simple present forms do not always come from fi'il mudhari'. Some are translated from other Arabic structures, including jumlah ismiyyah, ism fa'il, and ism tafdil. These findings help explain the differences between Arabic and English grammatical systems and provide a better understanding of Qur'anic translation. The study concludes that the relationship between fi'il mudhari' and the English simple present tense is only partial because the meaning of fi'il mudhari' depends not only on grammar but also on context.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Arabic and English possess different grammatical systems, particularly in the way they express tense, aspect, and verbal meaning. One of the most complex forms in Arabic grammar is *fi'il mudhari'*, which may express present, future, habitual, rhetorical, and modal meanings depending on context. According to Rosenthal (2013) Arabic and English possess different grammatical systems, particularly in the way they express tense, aspect, and verbal meaning.

One of the most complex verbal forms in Arabic is *fi'il mudhari'*, whose interpretation depends heavily on grammatical and contextual factors. These differences create challenges in translation, especially when Arabic religious texts are rendered into English. At the same time, Arabic has also gained a significant role in facilitating communication across nations (Nasier, 2020). Arabic has a distinct phonological and grammatical system that differentiates it from other languages, that sets it apart from other languages (Azizi, 2024).

Arabic and English represent two linguistic systems that differ structurally and functionally, particularly in their verbal categories and in the way they express time (tense aspect). (Anwar, 1995) and Arini et al. (2024) argues that Arabic verbs are classified into three main types, the first is *fi'il madhi* refers to a verb that expresses an action that occurred in the past, second is *fi'il mudhari'* describes an action taking place at the time of speaking or in the future, then the third is *fi'il amr* is a verb form used to give commands or instructions for actions to be carried out in the future.

In Arabic semantics there are three sentence structures, namely nouns (*isim*), verbs (*fi'il*), and letters (*harf*). Studies on English-Arabic translation suggest that linguistic choices play a crucial role in shaping meaning across languages (Saed et al., 2024). In this study the emphasis will be on the terms grammatical and grammatical category, as temporal relations can also be expressed by a diverse set of lexical expressions e.g. before, after, yesterday, etc. According to Ryding (2005), the interpretation of *fi'il mudhari'* is highly dependent on syntactic and discourse context, allowing it to express habituality, generic, and future oriented meanings.

In other case, simple present in English has a narrow scope that mainly includes habits and general facts (Meilani & Nasir, 2016). Thus, there is a potential mismatch of meaning when the *fi'il mudhari'* is directly translated using the simple present in religious texts such as the Qur'an. While previous research has explored Arabic-English tense systems, Qur'anic translation, and issues of translation equivalence, relatively little attention has been paid to the representation of the diverse semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in English translations of the Qur'an. Most existing studies concentrate on general tense equivalence, translation strategies, or broader grammatical features, rather than providing a systematic examination of how *fi'il mudhari'* is rendered within a specific Qur'anic chapter.

Furthermore, no study has specifically investigated the semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf and assessed the extent to which these functions are conveyed through the English simple present tense in the Saheeh International translation. This gap forms the basis for the present investigation.

Therefore, further investigation is needed to explore how the diverse functions of *fi'il mudhari'* are rendered in English and to assess the extent to which their meanings are preserved in translation. The importance of this study becomes even more evident in the context of Qur'anic translation. Several studies have shown the presence of meaning loss or semantic shift in Qur'anic translations due to the grammatical differences between Arabic and English, (Hummadi et al., 2020), for example found that rhetorical nuances were lost in the English translation of Qur'anic prepositional phrases due to mismatches in grammatical categories. In another area, Jabak (2022) also demonstrates similar issues. Although not focused on verbs, both studies indicate that structural differences between Arabic and English have the potential to produce meaning shifts in translation.

The frequent occurrence of meaning loss in translation highlights need for a systematic linguistic approach to compare the grammatical structures of Arabic and English, namely through contrastive analysis, studies on contrastive analysis highlight the importance of comparing linguistic structures across languages to understand meaning equivalence. The idea of similarities and differences Contrastive Analysis (CA) was advocated by R. Lado (1957) when he claimed that the CA is done by the systematic comparison between the systems of the L1 and L2. Contemporary studies such as Kostova (2022) highlight that contrastive analysis today does not stop at the lexical or syntactic level, but has expanded to the discourse level in order to uncover cross linguistic communicative implications.

This study is based on four interconnected concepts. First, *fi'il mudhari'* present as the primary grammatical category analyzed in the Arabic text. Second, its meanings are explored through their English translation equivalents in the Saheeh International translation. Third, special attention is given to the extent to which these meanings are represented through the English simple present tense. Finally, contrastive analysis is employed as the analytical framework to identify similarities and differences between the Arabic and English grammatical systems. The relationship among these concepts provides the basis for investigating the equivalence and non-equivalence between *fi'il mudhari'* and its English translations in Surah Al-Kahf.

Although previous research has examined Arabic-English tense systems (Mudhsh, 2021), translation practices in legal texts (Jabak, 2022), and contrastive studies of other linguistic genres such as proverbs (Fajariyah, 2021), limited attention has been given to the semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in the Qur'an and their English equivalents. Consequently, a gap remains in understanding how this multifunctional Arabic verb form is rendered in English translation. To address this gap, the present study investigates the semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in

Surah Al-Kahf and evaluates their representation through the English simple present tense in the Saheeh International translation.

In Qur'anic discourse, *fi'il mudhari'* can present various functions, such as expressing habitual actions, general truths, future events, commands, prohibitions, and rhetorical descriptions. These functions do not always correspond directly to the English simple present tense. Moreover, simple present constructions in Qur'anic translation are not always derived from *fi'il mudhari'*, but can also create from nominal and non-verbal structures in Arabic. Based on the research gap identified above, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the English simple present tense in the Saheeh International translation represents the semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf. This study aims to analyze the extent to which the English simple present in the Saheeh International translation represents the aspectual meanings of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions (1) What semantic functions of *fi'il mudhari'* occur in Surah Al-Kahf? (2) How are the functions of *fi'il mudhari'* represented in the English simple present tense in the Saheeh International translation?

2. Method

Research design

Contrastive analysis (CA) is the structure comparison of two or more languages in order to identify and describe their linguistic similarities and differences. As proposed by Robert Lado in *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), the central premise of contrastive analysis is that potential learning difficulties in a foreign language can be anticipated by systematically analyzing the linguistic and cultural differences between the target language and the learners' native language.

This theoretical foundation serves as the basis for selecting contrastive analysis as the primary framework of the study, particularly in comparing Arabic and English verb systems. The study adopts a qualitative research method with a descriptive design, as it focuses on the analysis of linguistic forms, meanings, and functions rather than numerical data. Qualitative research emphasizes the importance of examining and interpreting observable phenomena within their natural context (Hilmi Aulawi, 2018). Therefore, this approach is considered appropriate, as the objective of the study is to investigate the semantic and functional meanings of *fi'il mudhari'* in Arabic and their equivalents in English.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to identify and interpret linguistic phenomena within their natural context, rather than relying on statistical analysis. In addition, it utilizes a contrastive linguistic approach, or contrastive analysis, to systematically compare the use of *fi'il mudhari'* in Arabic with the simple present tense in English. Through this approach, the study seeks to identify both similarities and differences between the two linguistic systems, particularly with regard to their aspectual meanings and functional usage in the

Qur'anic text and its English translation.

Data and Source of Data

The primary data source of this study is Surah Al-Kahf (1–110) from the Al-Qur'an, focusing on verses that contain *fi'il mudhari'* forms. The English data are taken from the Saheeh International English translation of the Qur'an, which is selected due to its clarity, consistency, and wide acceptance in academic studies. The researcher identified 162 occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf verses 1–110, which were selected as the main data of the study. In addition, secondary data sources are acquired from relevant linguistic journals, books, classical Arabic grammar references, and previous studies related to contrastive linguistics, tense-aspect theory, and Qur'anic linguistic analysis. These secondary sources are used to support the theoretical framework and analysis of the data.

Data Collection techniques

The data in this study are collected using a library research technique. The researcher conducts a careful reading of Surah Al-Kahf to identify verses that contain *fi'il mudhari'* forms. The data collection process involves several steps. First, all occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf were identified by examining each verse from verse 1 to verse 110. Second, each occurrence was recorded together with its verse number, Arabic verb form, and contextual meaning in the source text. Third, the collected data were organized into a data table containing the verse number, *fi'il mudhari'* form, its semantic function in Arabic, the corresponding English translation from the Saheeh International version, and the grammatical form used in the English translation.

After all instances of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf had been identified, each occurrence was given a code and grouped based on its main semantic function. The classification process involved analyzing grammatical markers, considering the meaning conveyed within the verse context, and comparing the Arabic expression with its English translation. The data were then categorized into several semantic functions, including habitual actions, future references, expressions of purpose, commands, prohibitions, and other meanings that depended on the specific context of the verse.

After identifying all occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf, each instance was documented by noting its verse number, Arabic verb form, semantic function in the original text, English translation, and corresponding grammatical form in English. The analysis focused on determining the semantic role of the Arabic verb, interpreting its meaning within the verse context, and comparing it with its translation in the Saheeh International version. The English renderings were subsequently grouped into six categories: Present Forms Expressing Habituality and General Action, Future Forms, Imperatives, Modal Constructions, Infinitives, and Other Language Sentences. Each occurrence was classified

according to the meaning that was most prominent in its contextual use.

Data Analysis techniques

The collected data are analyzed using contrastive analysis within a semantic and functional framework (James, 1980). The analysis is conducted through the following steps. First, the *fi'il mudhari'* forms in the selected verses are identified and classified according to their semantic functions. The semantic functions were identified by considering grammatical markers, the context of the verses, and authoritative Arabic grammar references. The categories were established based on specific linguistic criteria. An event that shows an action that is habitual, repeated, which is categorized in the Present Form that Expresses Habit and General Actions. Forms referring to future events, either through grammatical markers or contextual cues, were classified as Future Meaning.

Verbs translated using modal auxiliaries such as can, could, may, might, would, and shall were placed in the Modal category. Translations rendered in the form of to+verb were categorized as Infinitives. Imperative and prohibitive functions were identified through command structures found in both the Arabic text and its English translation. Meanwhile, the category of Other Language Sentences covered forms translated into simple past, present perfect, gerund constructions, or other grammatical forms that did not fit the preceding categories. For instance, *fi'il mudhari'* forms that occur with particles such as سوف, لن, or س, were interpreted as expressing future meaning.

Meanwhile, forms preceded by لام التعليل were treated as indicating purpose. Habitual and generic meanings were determined from the context of the verse, particularly when the action referred to something repeated regularly or expressed a general and timeless situation. Second, the corresponding English translations are analyzed to identify the use of the simple present tense. Third, a contrastive comparison is carried out to analyze how the meanings expressed by *fi'il mudhari'* in Arabic are represented in English.

Finally, the similarities and differences between the two languages are interpreted to explain the extent to which the simple present tense conveys equivalent meanings. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of tables and descriptive explanations. The research focuses exclusively on meanings of *fi'il mudhari'* and their representation through the simple present tense in English. This study focuses only on the analysis of *fi'il mudhari'* forms found in Surah Al-Kahf (verses 1–110) and their corresponding translations in the Saheeh International version. As a result, the findings are confined to a single chapter of the Qur'an and one English translation. Therefore, they cannot be generalized to all occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* throughout the Qur'an or to other English translations. In addition, the study uses only one English translation of the Qur'an, namely Saheeh International, and does not compare multiple translation versions.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, several validation procedures were

applied. First, theoretical triangulation was carried out by consulting Arabic grammar references, studies in contrastive linguistics, and research on Qur'anic translation. Second, the coding and classification results were reviewed and discussed with academic supervisors to help maintain consistency and reduce possible bias. Third, the classifications were checked against explanations provided in recognized Arabic grammar sources and Qur'anic commentaries to support the accuracy of the findings. When a *fi'il mudhari'* form seemed to carry more than one meaning, its main function was identified by examining the grammatical markers, the context of the verse, and the translation used in the Saheeh International version. The classification focused on the meaning that was most clearly represented in the English translation and best supported by the overall context of the verse.

3. Result

The analysis of Surah Al-Kahf revealed that *fi'il mudhari'* possesses broader semantic and temporal functions than the English simple present tense. Although *fi'il mudhari'* is commonly associated with present action in Arabic grammar, the findings demonstrate that its English renderings vary depending on grammatical particles, syntactic structures, contextual meaning, and Qur'anic narrative style. From the analyzed verses, *fi'il mudhari'* was translated not only into the English simple present tense, but also into future constructions, modal expressions, infinitives, participial forms, imperatives, present perfect constructions, and simple past forms. This indicates that the Arabic imperfect verb system is semantically more flexible than the English tense system.

In total, 162 occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* were found in Surah Al-Kahf. After examining their grammatical roles and contextual meanings, the data were grouped into several semantic categories. Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of each category.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Semantic Functions of *Fi'il Mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Present form (expressing habituality and general action)	45	27.78
Future meaning	44	27.16
Other Language Sentences (Simple Past, Present Perfect, Gerund, Clause/Verb)	18	11.11
Imperative	16	9.87
Modal	27	16.67
Invinitive	12	7.41
Total	162	100%

The analysis identified a total of 162 occurrences of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf. Among the identified translation patterns, the most frequently used category was the Present Form Expressing Habituality and General Action, which

appeared 45 times (27.78%). This was followed by Future Forms with 44 occurrences (27.16%), while Modal Constructions were found in 27 instances (16.67%). In addition, Other Language Sentences accounted for 18 occurrences (11.11%), and Imperative Forms appeared 16 times (9.88%). The Infinitive category was the least common, with 12 occurrences (7.41%). Overall, these results indicate that the Saheeh International translation tends to maintain the imperfective characteristics of *fi'il mudhari'* by rendering it mainly through present- and future-oriented forms.

Fi'il mudhari' in Surah Al-Kahf

Several *fi'il mudhari'* forms express habitual actions, repeated activities, and universal truths. In these cases, the English translation tends to correspond directly with the present form.

Table 1. Expressing Habituality and General Action

Verse	<i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i>	Function in Arabic	English translation	English form
18:2	الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ	Habitual action	those who do righteous deeds	Present form
18:5	إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا كَذِبًا	Repeated action	They speak nothing except lies	Present form
18:26	وَلَا يُشْرِكْ فِي حُكْمِهِ أَحَدًا	General truth	He does not share His legislation with anyone.	Present form
18:28	الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ	Habitual worship	those who call upon their Lord	Present form

The data show direct equivalence between *fi'il mudhari'* and the English simple present tense when the verbs express repeated, habitual, or universal actions. This category includes verbs that describe continuous religious practices, repeated speech, and timeless theological principles. In verse 18:2, the *fi'il mudhari'* *يَعْمَلُونَ* is derived from the root verb *عَمِلَ - يَعْمَلُ* "to do". The verb begins with the prefix *يَ*, which is one of the indicators of *fi'il mudhari'*, and ends with the suffix *ون*, indicating masculine plural subjects. In the verse, the verb refers to believers who continuously perform righteous deeds.

Therefore, it functions as a habitual action and is translated into the English simple present form "do righteous deeds." Similarly, in verse 18:5, the word *يَقُولُونَ* comes from the verb *قَالَ - يَقُولُ* "to say". The prefix *يَ* identifies the verb as *fi'il mudhari'*, while the suffix *ون* marks masculine plural subjects. The verb describes repeated speech or recurring statements made by the disbelievers. Because it expresses repeated action, the English translation uses the simple present tense: "they speak" or "they say." Another example appears in verse 18:26 with the word

يُشْرِكُ, derived from أَشْرَكَ - يُشْرِكُ “to associate” or “to share”. The verb begins with the prefix بِـ, which indicates *fi’il mudhari’*.

Table 2. Expressing Future Meaning

Verse	<i>Fi’il Mudhari’</i>	Function in Arabic	English translation	English form
18:14	لَنْ نَدْعُوَا	Future	Never will we invoke	Future/modal
18:22	سَيَقُولُونَ	Future prediction	They will say	Future
18:24	عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي	Hope	Perhaps my Lord will guide me	Future/modal
18:31	يَلْبَسُونَ	Future	They will wear	Future

The findings further indicate that many *fi’il mudhari’* forms convey future events, promises, warnings, or possible consequences. Consequently, these verbs are commonly translated into English using future or modal constructions. one example found in verse 18:14 with the verb نَدْعُوَا, derived from دَعَا - يَدْعُو “to invoke” or “to call upon”. The prefix نـ marks the verb as *fi’il mudhari’*. In the sentence لَنْ نَدْعُوَا مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَهًا “We will never invoke besides Him any deity” the particle لَنْ changes the meaning into future negation. As a result, the English translation uses the future construction “will invoke.”

Another example is verse 18:22 contains the verb سَيَقُولُونَ, which comes from قَالَ - يَقُولُ “to say”. The verb is preceded by the particle سَ, a grammatical marker that indicates future tense in Arabic. In the verse سَيَقُولُونَ “They will say” the verb functions as a prediction of future speech. Hence, it is translated into English using the future tense form “will say.” In addition is the word يَهْدِيَن in verse 18:24, which originates from the verb هَدَى - يَهْدِي “to guide”. The prefix بِـ identifies the verb as *fi’il mudhari’*. In the expression عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي “Perhaps my Lord will guide me” the verb conveys hope and future possibility. Therefore, the English translation renders it with the modal future expression “will guide.” Another example is the word يَلْبَسُونَ, “they will wear”. The prefix بِـ also shows that the word is *fi’il mudhari’*. Similar to the previous example, this verb is preceded by the particle لَ (lam al-ta’Il).

Table 3. Expressing Purpose

Verse	<i>Fi’il Mudhari’</i>	Function in Arabic	English translation	English form
18:2	لِيُنذِرَ	purpose	To warn	Invinitive
18:21	لِيَعْلَمُوا	Purpose	Would know	Modal

In this expression, there are several *fi’il mudhari’* forms that function as expressions of purpose. One example is the word يُنذِرُ, which comes from the verb

أَنْذَرَ - يَنْذِرُ “to warn”. The verb begins with the prefix يـ, which indicates that it is a *fi'il mudhari'*. In Surah Al-Kahf, this verb is preceded by the particle لَ (lam al-ta'li), known as لام التعليل (*lam al-ta'li*), which functions to show purpose. Therefore, the meaning of the verb becomes “to warn” or “in order to warn.”

Another example is the word لِيَعْلَمُوا, derived from the verb عِلْمٌ - يَعْلَمُ “to know”. The prefix يـ also shows that the word is *fi'il mudhari'*. Similar to the previous example, this verb is preceded by the particle لَ (*lam al-ta'li*), which indicates purpose. As a result, the expression means “so that they may know” or “in order that they know.” These examples show that *fi'il mudhari'* preceded by لام التعليل commonly functions to express purpose, and in English it is usually translated using infinitive or modal constructions such as “to warn” and “so that they may know.”

Table 4. Expressing Command and Prohibition

Verse	<i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i>	Function in Arabic	English translation	English form
18:19	فَلْيَنْظُرْ	Command	Let him look	Imperative
18:19	فَأَيُّكُمْ	Command	Bring	Imperative
18:19	يُشْعِرَنَّ	Prohibition	Let no one be aware	Negative imperative
18:29	يُؤْمِنَ	command	Let him believe	Imperative
18:29	يَكْفُرْ	Command	Let him disbelieve	Imperative

Then, example here is the word يَنْظُرُ in the expression فَلْيَنْظُرْ “let him look”. The verb يَنْظُرُ comes from the root verb نَظَرَ - يَنْظُرُ “to look” or “to observe”. It begins with the prefix يـ, which indicates that it is a *fi'il mudhari'*. In this verse, the verb is preceded by لام الأمر (*lam al-amr*) in Arabic, this word is for commanding or used to give instructions. Therefore, the expression functions as a command and is translated into English as “let him look.” The item يَأْتِكُمْ in the expression فَأَيُّكُمْ “bring”. It begins with the prefix يـ, which indicates that it is a *fi'il mudhari'*. In this verse, the verb is preceded by لام الأمر (*lam al-amr*) in Arabic, this word is for commanding or used to give instructions.

Another example is the word يُشْعِرَنَّ which is derived from the verb أَشْعَرَ - يُشْعِرُ “to make aware” or “to inform”. The prefix يـ indicates that the verb is a *fi'il mudhari'*. In the verse, the verb is preceded by لا الناهية (*la al-nahiyah*), a particle used to express prohibition. Then, another example from the different verses are يُؤْمِنَ “Let him believe” and يَكْفُرْ “Let him disbelieve”. In this verse, the verbs are preceded by لام الأمر (*lam al-amr*) in Arabic, this word is for commanding or used to give instructions.

Table 5. *Fi'il Mudhari' Into Other Language Tenses*

Verse	<i>Fi'il Mudhari'</i>	English translation	English form
18:1	وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ	has not made	Present perfect
18:18	فَقَلَّبَهُمْ	turned them	Simple past
18:21	يَتَنَازَعُونَ	Disputed	Simple past

The word *يَجْعَلْ* is categorized as *fi'il mudhari'* because it begins with the prefix *يـ*, which is one of the indicators of *fi'il mudhari'*. The verb is derived from the root verb *جَعَلَ - جَعَلٌ* "to make". In the verse *وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ* "and has not made" the verb is preceded by the particle *لَمْ*, which functions as *harf jazm*, in English does not have a grammatical category exactly similar to *harf jazm*. Instead, its meanings are conveyed through auxiliary verbs and sentence structures such as negation, prohibition, and conditionals. This particle changes the *fi'il mudhari'* into the *majzum* form. The sign of *jazm* in this verb is the *sukun* at the end of the verb.

Another example is the word *فَقَلَّبَهُمْ*, which comes from the root verb *قَلَّبَ - قَلَّبٌ* "to turn" or "to rotate". The verb begins with the prefix *فـ*, indicating that it is a *fi'il mudhari'*. In the verse, the verb describes a continuous action performed by Allah in turning the sleepers from side to side. In addition, the word *يَتَنَازَعُونَ* is derived from the verb *تَنَازَعَ - تَنَازَعٌ* "to dispute" or "to argue". The prefix *يـ* identifies it as *fi'il mudhari'*, while the suffix *ون* indicates masculine plural subjects. The verb expresses an action performed collectively by a group of people.

An Analysis of the Non-Existence of Simple Present Tense in Surah Al-Kahf

In this case, the translation into English tends not to correspond directly to the present tense form.

Table 6. *Simple Present Form*

Verse	Arabic expression	Arabic form	English translation	English form
18:22	رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ	<i>Ism Tafdil</i>	My lord is most knowing	Present form
18:26	اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ	<i>Ism tafdil</i>	Allah is most knowing	Present form
18:27	لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ	<i>Ism fa'il</i>	There is no changer of his words	Simple present
18:31	وَحَسْبَتْ مُرْتَقًا	<i>Fi'il madi</i>	Good is the resting place	Present form
18:26	مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ	<i>Jumlah ismiyyah</i>	They have not besides Him any protector"	Present form
18:2	أَنْ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا	<i>Jumlah ismiyyah</i>	They have a	Present form

The findings indicate that English simple present tense in Surah Al-Kahf is not always derived from *fi'il muhari'*. Several Arabic grammatical structures without *fi'il mudhari'* are translated into English present constructions because English grammar generally needs verbal expressions to convey present meaning. For example, the expression 18:22 "رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ" which is an *ism tafdil* (superlative adjective), however, the English translation becomes "My Lord is most knowing of their number." which uses the simple present structure "is". Similarly, in verse 18:27 "لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ" the word مُبَدِّل is an *ism fa'il* (active participle), not a verb. Nevertheless, the English translation uses the present construction "There is no changer of His words."

The expression "وَحَسْنَتْ مُرْتَفَعًا" contains a *fi'il madi* form "حَسْنَتْ", which grammatically indicates past tense in Arabic. However, semantically the expression functions as a timeless evaluative statement (The clause gives a positive evaluation of the place, not a description of a past event) rather than a past event. Therefore, the English translation renders it into the simple present form "Good is the resting place" to express a universal and permanent evaluation.

The expression "مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ" is a "*jumlah ismiyyah*" (nominal sentence) in Arabic. This sentence does not describe a past event, but expresses a general and permanent truth that no protector exists besides Allah. Therefore, the English translation uses the simple present form "They have not besides Him any protector" because the simple present is commonly used to express general truths and permanent situations.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study show that *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf has a broader semantic and functional meanings than the English simple present tense. Although *fi'il mudhari'* is generally associated with present and future meanings in Arabic grammar, the analysis reveals that its English translations vary depending on grammatical particles, sentence structures, contextual meanings, and Qur'anic narrative style. The data demonstrate that *fi'il mudhari'* is not only translated into the English simple present tense, but also into future form, modal expressions, infinitives, imperatives, present perfect forms, and simple past forms.

The first finding shows that *fi'il mudhari'* frequently corresponds directly with the English simple present tense when expressing habitual actions, repeated action, and ongoing depending on contextual usage (Mohammad Alhawary, 2016). Examples such as يَعْمَلُونَ "do righteous deeds," يَدْعُونَ "call upon," and يُشْرِكُ "does not share" demonstrate this direct equivalence. Similarly, Rodney Huddleston and Pullum (2002) explain that the English simple present tense commonly expresses habitual activities and general truths. Therefore, the English translation naturally uses the simple present tense to convey similar meanings. This finding supports

Lado's (1957) theory that similarities between two language systems may produce direct grammatical equivalence.

The second finding indicates that many *fi'il mudhari'* forms express future meaning. In several verses, the verbs are used to indicate prediction, hope, warning, or future consequences. According to Petrantoni (2023), the form *sawfa/sa- + yaf'alu* indicates the future tense. Consequently, the English translation often employs future or modal form. Similarly, Alsaif (2017) explains that Modern Standard Arabic imperfect forms may express "past, present, and future times" depending on contextual and grammatical markers. For example, the verb سَيَقُولُونَ is translated as "they will say" because it is preceded by the particle سَ, which marks future tense in Arabic. Similarly, the expression عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِّي رَبِّي is translated as "Perhaps my Lord will guide me," expressing hope and future possibility. In addition, the use of the particle لَنْ in expressions such as لَنْ نَدْعُوَا changes the meaning into future negation, which is translated into English using future constructions. These examples show that Arabic imperfect verbs may express future meanings depending on grammatical particles and context.

Another important finding concerns *fi'il mudhari'* preceded by لام التعليل (*lam al-ta'lil*). In Arabic grammar, *lam al-ta'lil* is used to express purpose or intended action and is commonly followed by *fi'il mudhari'*. Therefore, constructions such as لِيَعْلَمُوا and يُنذِرْ convey purposive meaning rather than simple present-time reference. Husni and Zaher (2020) illustrate purposive constructions in Arabic through examples such as "I went to town to buy what I needed," in which the particle لِ introduces the intended purpose of the action.

This supports the present finding that constructions such as يُنذِرْ are translated as "to warn," while لِيَعْلَمُوا conveys the meaning "so that they may know." In these cases, the English translations tend to use infinitive or modal constructions rather than the simple present tense. This difference occurs because English typically expresses purpose through infinitive structures, whereas Arabic expresses it through grammatical particles attached to *fi'il mudhari'*.

The analysis also reveals that *fi'il mudhari'* may function as command and prohibition forms. Verbs such as يَنْظُرْ and يَأْتِكُمْ are preceded by لام الأمر (*lam al-amr*), which gives imperative meaning. As a result, they are translated into English as "let him look" and "bring." Similarly, verbs preceded by لا الناهية (*la al-nahiyah*) express prohibition, such as يُشْعِرَنَّ, which is translated as "let no one be aware." These findings indicate that Arabic imperfect verbs can perform imperative functions depending on surrounding particles and sentence context. Therefore, the English translations use imperative and negative imperative constructions rather than present tense forms.

Furthermore, the findings show that several *fi'il mudhari'* forms are translated into other English tense forms such as present perfect and simple past. For example, the expression وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ is translated as "has not made," using the present perfect tense because the particle لَمْ negates a completed action. In other

cases, verbs such as *نُقِلُّهُمْ* and *يَتَنَازَعُونَ* are translated into simple past forms (“turned them” and “disputed”) even though they are grammatically *fi'il mudhari'* in Arabic. As explained by Ryding (2005), the Arabic verbal system is strongly aspectual and context-dependent, allowing *fi'il mudhari'* to express different temporal meanings depending on context. Similarly, Baker (2018) argues that translation equivalence is often determined by semantic and contextual meaning rather than grammatical form alone.

Another significant finding of this study is that English simple present constructions in Surah Al-Kahf do not always originate from *fi'il mudhari'*. Several non-verbal Arabic structures are also translated into English simple present forms. These include *ism tafdil*, *ism fa'il*, *jumlah ismiyyah*, and evaluative expressions. According to Nafi', Miftahuddin, and Busri (2024), *ism al-tafdil* refers to a comparative form in Arabic morphology that follows the pattern *أَفْعَلٌ* for masculine forms and *فُعْلَى* for feminine forms. For example, the expression *رَبِّيَ أَعْلَمُ* contains *ism tafdil*, not *fi'il mudhari'*. However, the English translation becomes “My Lord is Most Knowing,” which uses the simple present structure “is.” In addition, the phrase *لَا مُدَبِّرَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ* contains an *ism al-fa'il* (active participle), yet the English translation uses the present construction “There is no changer of His words.”

A similar phenomenon appears in the expression *وَحَسْبُنَا مَرْتَفَعًا*. Although the word *حَسْبُنَا* is grammatically a *fi'il madi* (past verb), semantically it functions as a timeless evaluative statement rather than a past event. Therefore, the English translation renders it into the simple present form “Good is the resting place.” Another example is the nominal sentence *مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ*, which expresses a permanent theological truth that no protector exists besides Allah. Since English generally requires verbal structures to express present meaning, the translation becomes “They have not besides Him any protector.” These examples indicate that present meaning in Arabic can be conveyed through various grammatical structures, not only through *fi'il mudhari'*.

From the perspective of contrastive linguistics, these findings reflect important structural differences between Arabic and English. Arabic allows present or timeless meanings to be expressed through verbal and non-verbal structures without explicit tense marking. In contrast, English relies heavily on verbal tense constructions, particularly the simple present tense, to express general truths, permanence, and habitual meanings. As explained by Ryding (2005) notes that Arabic aspectual systems emphasize continuity and the nature of actions rather than strict temporal distinctions.

In the end, the findings demonstrate that the relationship between *fi'il mudhari'* and the English simple present tense is only partially equivalent. Present meaning in Arabic is semantically broader and structurally more flexible than the English tense system. Therefore, English simple present constructions in Surah Al-Kahf may originate not only from *fi'il mudhari'*, but also from nominal sentences, participles, adjectives, and evaluative expressions. This study confirms that

equivalence in translation should be understood semantically and contextually rather than through grammatical form alone.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the functions of *fi'il mudhari'* in Surah Al-Kahf and their English translations in the Saheeh International version by applying a contrastive analysis approach. The results indicate that *fi'il mudhari'* has wider semantic and functional meanings than the English simple present tense. Although many forms of *fi'il mudhari'* are translated directly into the simple present tense, their meanings are not restricted to present-time actions alone. The analysis shows that *fi'il mudhari'* may express different functions, including habitual actions, repeated activities, general truths, future meanings, commands, prohibitions, and expressions of purpose. As a result, the English translations are represented through various grammatical forms such as the simple present tense, future constructions, modal expressions, infinitives, imperatives, present perfect forms, and simple past forms.

Furthermore, the study reveals that English simple present constructions in Surah Al-Kahf are not always derived from *fi'il mudhari'*. Some Arabic non-verbal structures, including *jumlah ismiyyah*, *ism fa'il*, *ism tafdil*, and evaluative expressions, are also translated into English simple present forms. This finding highlights the structural differences between Arabic and English in expressing present and timeless meanings. In conclusion, the equivalence between *fi'il mudhari'* and the English simple present tense can only be considered partial. Arabic grammar provides greater flexibility in expressing present meaning because both verbal and non-verbal structures can convey similar semantic functions. In contrast, English relies more heavily on verbal tense constructions, particularly the simple present tense, to express general truths and permanent conditions. Therefore, the interpretation of *fi'il mudhari'* should consider not only grammatical form but also semantic meaning and contextual usage.

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