

## ELLIPSIS AS A STYLISTIC DEVICE IN LINGUISTIC SCHOOLS: TEXT LINGUISTICS AS A MODEL

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### Abstract

Text linguistics has devoted sustained attention to the text, its producer, and its recipient, conceptualising the text, whether spoken or written, as a product transmitted by the sender to the receiver. Its sentences are interconnected through cohesive ties that establish relationships among all its constituent elements. Each element is linked to what precedes or follows it through prior or subsequent relations to achieve cohesion, coherence, and linguistic well-formedness. Within this theoretical framework, ellipsis, or what is termed the *zero construction*, constitutes an internal textual relation that is invariably connected to a preceding element. This antecedent fills the gap left by the ellipsis. It fulfils several functions, most notably enhancing textual cohesion and coherence, while enabling the sender to be concise rather than prolix or verbose.

**Keywords:** ellipsis; text linguistics; zero construction.

### Introduction

An ellipsis is defined as the omission of a part or parts of speech. This does not imply its disappearance or complete absence in writing and meaning; instead, it disappears in written form, while its meanings and significations remain manifest, owing to contextual clues and evidential indicators that point to it. That is, there exist elements within the sentence, the text, or discourse that indicate, in one way or another, the omitted element and its meanings. Through this process, brevity, lightness, and numerous rhetorical benefits are achieved, as few words convey abundant meaning. In fact, ellipsis, as a stylistic device, has attracted the attention of Arab linguists and Western linguistic theories alike since it is a phenomenon common to all human languages. Among the theories that have given particular attention to this linguistic phenomenon is text linguistics. From this perspective, the present study seeks to examine the views of the pioneers of this theory regarding this distinctive phenomenon by addressing a set of questions, the most important of which are as follows: What is ellipsis? What are its conditions? What are the principal views of text linguistics? How does it conceptualise

ellipsis as a stylistic device? What types of omissions does it identify? Moreover, what is the relationship between ellipsis and the recipient within this theory?

## 1. Definition of Ellipsis

The lexical root (ḥ-dh-f) in Arabic dictionaries revolves around three principal meanings: plucking, cutting, and dropping. Al-Khalīl (d. 170 AH) defined ellipsis as follows: ‘Plucking something from the edge, just as one plucks from the end of a sheep’s tail ...’,<sup>1</sup> meaning that what is omitted does not occur in the middle of the thing, since the middle constitutes the core, whereas the edge is an addition; removal does not take place in the core but rather in the additions.

Ibn Durayd (d. 311 AH) defined it as cutting, stating: ‘I cut off his head with the sword as an act of ellipsis when I struck him and severed a part from him.’<sup>2</sup> In reality, Ibn Durayd focuses on the manner and method by which ellipsis is carried out, depicting the process undertaken by the one who omits while disposing of what is omitted. The term ‘cutting’ indicates that the omitted element is of no benefit; its presence and absence are equal; indeed, its presence entails fatigue and strain, which necessitate cutting and excision to achieve ease, comfort, and harmony.

Some defined ellipsis as dropping; in this regard, al-Jawharī (d. 393 AH) states, ‘To omit a thing is to drop it.’<sup>3</sup> Defining ellipsis as dropping entails an interpretation of the state to which the omitted element is reduced after its omission, portraying its status, position, and condition once it has been removed and set aside.

## 2. Conditions of Ellipsis

Ellipsis is subject to several conditions, including the following:

*The presence of an indicator, whether situational or contextual:*

The phenomenon of ellipsis does not occur arbitrarily; instead, the omitted element must necessarily be accompanied by an indicator that points to it. Dr Ṭāhir Sulaymān Ḥamūda termed this indicator the contextual clue ‘... which indicates the omitted element or elements’.<sup>4</sup> ‘There must be an indication of the omitted element; if there is no indication of it, then it constitutes idle discourse and cannot be relied upon, nor may it be judged as an instance of ellipsis under any circumstances.’<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the presence of such an indicator facilitates the recipient’s inference of the omitted element.

Ibn Hishām (708–761 AH) divided indicators into two types: technical and nontechnical. The latter, in turn, is subdivided into situational and contextual indicators. This will be elucidated in what follows.

### A. Technical Indicator

This is the type that the grammarian identifies during syntactic analysis, or that 'is inferred among omitted elements by means of grammatical rules and analogical principles, the knowledge of which is exclusive to grammarians, rather than being derived from a general lexical or situational clue'.<sup>6</sup>

It is known exclusively to the grammarian because it is recognised through grammatical craft. Their interpretation of the Exalted Saying exemplifies this:

*I do not swear by the Day of Resurrection.*

﴿لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

(al-Qiyāmah 75:1)

The underlying estimation is as follows: *Indeed, I swear*, because a present-tense verb is not used for an oath according to the Basran grammarians.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, His saying:

*Moreover, even if we had sent down to them the angels, and the dead had spoken to them, and we had gathered all things before them, they would not have believed unless God so willed; however, most of them are ignorant.*

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَى وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ﴾

(al-An‘ām 6:111)

That is, *even if it were established that we had sent down*.

Similarly, the poetic line:

*They came with diluted milk—have you ever seen the wolf at all?*

جاؤوا بمذقٍ هل رأيت الذئبَ قطُّ

That is, *something said of it*, provided that ellipsis entails neither semantic nor technical harm.

In fact, the ellipsis required by grammatical craft does not stipulate the presence of an explicit indicator, nor is it necessarily signalled by meaning. In many of its instances, there is disagreement regarding the estimation of the omitted element, its position, or

even its very existence. This is seen in expressions such as *'Your brother is in his house,'* where the majority hold that it necessarily involves ellipsis, differing as to whether its estimation is *being* or *having settled*. In contrast, others maintain that there is no ellipsis at all. Similarly, in the expression *"Were it not for Zayd, I would have insulted you,* there is disagreement concerning the presence of ellipsis: the majority hold that it necessarily contains ellipsis, estimating it as *existent*, whereas others argue that there is no ellipsis therein.<sup>8</sup>

## B. The Non-Technical Indicator

This is divided into situational and contextual types.

### 1. The Situational Indicator

The situational, or contextual, indicator is that which is signalled by the communicative situation. For example, when you say to someone who was speaking and then fell silent: *Your speech*, that is, *continue*; or when you say to someone holding a stick intending to strike with it: *Khālid*, that is, *strike Khālid*; or when you say to a newly married person: *With harmony and sons*, that is, *you have married*, and the like.

Among its instances is when the omitted element is known to the addressee or commonly understood among people, such as saying: *Pearls are a mithqāl for twenty*, while omitting the specification, namely, *dinars*; or saying: *the car is for fifteen*, that is, *for fifteen thousand dinars*.

Another instance in colloquial usage is saying, *"So-and-so has a heart"* or *"has a stomach,"* meaning that he has heart disease or a stomach ailment, relying on a shared understanding. There is no doubt that they do not intend that he merely possesses a heart or a stomach in the literal sense implied by the wording. Similarly, they say: *So-and-so [has] cars, properties, and farms*, that is, *he owns or possesses* them; and they say: *He is in the course of two years [of] houses and properties*, that is, *he acquired them*, and the like.

Among these are instances indicated by context, such as the omission of the apodosis of a conditional clause or the response to an oath or the omission of a particular expression in reliance on the context in which it occurs, as in His saying, the Exalted:

*Moreover, if there were a Qur'an by which the mountains were set in motion, or the earth were cleft asunder, or the dead were made to speak ...*

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْآنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كَلِمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتَى﴾

(al-Ra'd 13:31)

The response is not mentioned; instead, it relies on what is understood from the context. Another instance is His saying, the Exalted:

*For the ship, it belonged to poor people working at sea, so I intended to damage it, for behind them was a king who seized every ship by force.*

﴿أَمَّا السَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتْ مِمَّا يُعْمَلُونَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَأَرْدْتُ أَنْ أُعِيمَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُمْ مَلِكٌ يَأْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصْبًا﴾

(al-Kahf 18:79)

The intended meaning is *every sound ship*; for damage, it does not remove it from being a ship, and this omission is understood from the context.<sup>9</sup>

The situational indicator is manifested in ‘the circumstances accompanying the linguistic text’,<sup>10</sup> alternatively, what may be termed the context and its surrounding conditions. Among its examples is that you see a man who has aimed an arrow at a target and then released it; you hear a sound and say: *the target, by God, that is, he hit the target.*<sup>11</sup> ‘However, the indication provided by the situation takes the place of explicit verbal expression’,<sup>12</sup> The general context may be replete with ideas or significations that compete with a logically regulated grammatical pattern. The ability of the poet or prose writer may suffice to convey the intended meaning without adherence to familiar grammatical regularity. Moreover, within its particular linguistic context, the Arabic convention accepts such practices. For example, owing to its prevalence, an adjective may suffice in place of the noun it qualifies. We find an illustration of this in usages of the word *sword*, where its attribute often suffices without explicitly mentioning it, as in the verse by al-A‘shā:

*They said, “The remnant,” while the Indian strikes them down;*

*There is no remnant—only the sword—so they were routed.*

قالوا البقية والهندي يحصدهم

ولا بقية إلا السيف فأنكشفوا

By ‘the Indian strikes them down,’ what is meant, as is well known and understood, is *the Indian sword.*<sup>13</sup>

The situational indicator also relies on rational clues: ‘these are a type of situational indicator, for reason is one of the attributes of those addressed by language. A speaker may omit certain elements that listeners are able to apprehend by their intellects. Thus,

when one says, “*I ate the sheep*, listeners understand by reason, on the basis of customary usage, that he ate its meat. Here, the genitive complement is omitted. This, however, may require greater care and reflection in some texts, and listeners vary in this regard according to their intellectual capacities and cultural backgrounds.’<sup>14</sup>

## 2. The Contextual Indicator

The contextual indicator may take the form of the presence of a verbal clue pointing to the omitted element, as in His saying, the Exalted:

*Moreover, it was said to those who were mindful: "What has your Lord sent down?" They said, "Good."*

﴿وَقِيلَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَا أَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ قَالُوا خَيْرًا﴾

(al-Naḥl 16:30)

That is, *He sent down good*. Similarly, when you say: *A month* to one who asks: *How long did you spend abroad?*; that is, *I spent a month*.

Another instance is when discourse requires two parties, one of which is mentioned while the other is omitted because its meaning is made clear by the mention of its counterpart. His saying exemplifies this, the Exalted:

*They are not all alike. Among the People of the Book is an upright community that recites the verses of God during the watches of the night, and they prostrate.*

﴿لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً ۗ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ﴾

(Āl ‘Imrān 3:113)

Here, *one community* is mentioned without mention of another, even though the discourse is constructed upon the existence of another that is intended, for *alike*, it necessarily requires two or more entities.

The Arabs may also permit the implicit omission of one of two things when a discourse indicator points to it. The poet says:

*I yielded the heart to her, for I am obedient to her command,*

*Attentive—yet I know not whether her pursuit is guidance or error.*

عصيتُ إليها القلبَ إني لأمرها

سميغُ فما أدري أرشدُ طلابها

He did not say: *or error, or neither*.<sup>15</sup>

Some have termed this the verbal clue, which consists of the presence, within the preceding or subsequent context of discourse, of something that indicates the omitted elements. At times, the verbal context may not provide an explicit indicator; however, the manner of uttering the sentence and its phonetic delivery help estimate the omitted elements, a feature specific to spoken language. Alternatively, syntactic inflexion may necessitate specific estimations, or such estimations may be required by the structural rules previously established by grammarians.<sup>16</sup>

*The omitted element should not be integral:*

This means that it is not permissible to omit an element that functions as a part of another element within the sentence because its omission would disrupt the meaning. An example of this is the omission of the subject, for through its close association with the verb, it becomes akin to a part of it.<sup>17</sup> Hence, it has been stated: 'The subject, its substitute, and that which resembles it are not omitted.'<sup>18</sup> By *that which resembles it* is meant the predicate of *kāna* or one of its sister verbs.

*The omitted element should not be emphatic:*

This is what Ṭāhir Sulaymān Ḥamūda termed 'not defeating the purpose', since ellipsis does not cohere with emphasis, for each is the opposite of the other: the former aims at brevity, whereas the latter involves a measure of prolixity. Thus, 'emphasis is among the loci of expansiveness, while ellipsis is among the loci of concision and brevity'.<sup>19</sup> Ellipsis entails compression, whereas emphasis adds to the simple sentence, reinforcing it and rendering its structure tightly knit and its meaning forceful.

'This condition was first mentioned by al-Akhfash: he disallowed, in constructions such as (*the one whom I saw is Zayd*), the reinforcement of the omitted resumptive element by saying (*himself*), because the one who employs emphasis seeks lengthening, whereas the one who omits seeks brevity.'<sup>20</sup>

*That its omission should not result in abbreviating what is already abbreviated:*

This condition considers the listener's comprehension, ensuring that nothing is omitted that could confuse. Among what impairs the recipient's apprehension is the omission of elements that themselves involve abbreviation and omission. Among its examples is that 'the noun of an actionword is not omitted while its complement remains, because it is an abbreviation of the verb'.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, 'the omission of the qualified noun while retaining its adjective is disallowed in examples such as: *I passed by a tall [one]*, because the

contextual clue is insufficient to identify the qualified noun, since it may be estimated as *a man, a road, a monument, a spear, or other things*'.<sup>22</sup>

*The omitted element should not be a weak governing element:*

This includes the omission of prepositions, particles of a jussive mood, and particles that govern the subjunctive of the verb. This rule is not universal; instead, there are contexts in which such particles are omitted. Ibn Hishām (708–761 AH) states, "The preposition, the jussive particle, and the particle governing the subjunctive of the verb are not omitted except in contexts where the indication is strong, and the use of those governing elements is frequent; and analogy is not permitted on their basis."<sup>23</sup> Because there are contexts in which these particles have indeed been omitted, Dr Ṭāhir Sulaymān Ḥamūda affirmed 'that this condition is not sound'.<sup>24</sup>

*The omitted element should not be a substitute for something else omitted:*

Among its examples is that one must not 'omit *mā* in: (*ammā anta munṭaliqan intālaqtu*), nor the word *lā* in their saying: (*if'al hādhā immā lā*)'.<sup>25</sup> The reason for the impermissibility of omitting *mā* is that it functions as a substitute for *kāna*.<sup>26</sup> The more probable view is that the impermissibility of omitting *lā* lies in its functioning as a substitute for an omitted verb negated by it.

Al-Suyūfī (d. 911 AH) adduced as evidence for the impermissibility of omitting *mā* in regard to a substitute for *kāna* the following hemistich:

*Abā Khurāshah, ammā anta dhā nafar*

أبا خُرَاشَةَ أَمَا أَنْتَ ذَا نَفَرٍ

That is, *if you were*, where the particle *lām* was omitted for the sake of brevity, then *kāna* was likewise omitted, the pronoun became detached, and *mā* was introduced as a substitute for it. The omission of *kāna* was then obligatorily maintained so that the substitute and what it substitutes for would not be combined.<sup>27</sup>

*This omission should not lead to preparing the governing element for operation and then severing it from that operation:*

In such a case, ellipsis disrupts meaning. Thus, 'the Basrans prohibited the omission of the second object in constructions such as: (*ḍarabani wa-ḍarabtuhu Zayd*), lest it be allowed to govern *Zayd* and then be severed from it by raising it through the first verb'.<sup>28</sup> The second object here is the pronoun *-hu* in (*ḍarabtuhu*).

Similarly, ‘it is not permissible to say: (*ḍarabani wa-ḍarabtu Zaydan*), because the omission leads to preparing the second verb (*ḍarabtu*) to govern *Zayd* as its object, and then severing that operation because *Zayd* is the subject of the first verb (*ḍarabani*)’.<sup>29</sup>

*Its omission should not lead to the operation of a weak governing element when it is possible to operate a strong one:*

There are two types of governing elements in grammar: strong and weak. The strongest of them is the verb, and what follows it is weaker in degree. It is therefore impermissible to allow a weaker governing element to operate in the sentence when a stronger one is present. Accordingly, ‘the Basrans disallowed the omission of the object in constructions such as: (*Zaydun ḍarabtuḥu*), because omitting it would allow (*ḍaraba*) to govern *Zayd* and then sever it from that governance, while allowing initial predication to operate despite the possibility of allowing the verb to operate’. On this basis, they extended the ruling to (*Zaydun mā ḍarabtuḥu*) and (*hal ḍarabtuḥu*) and thus prohibited omission even when it did not lead to that consequence. Likewise, they prohibited raising (*ra ’suhā*) in: (*akaltu al-samakata ḥattā ra ’sahā*) unless the predicate is mentioned, so that one says: (*ma ’kūl*).<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Text Linguistics

Text linguistics, or text science, is a modern approach that is concerned with the study of language within specific frameworks, namely, texts, which constitute the object of analysis, whether written or spoken. Several designations, including *textual linguistics* and *text grammar*, have used this approach,<sup>31</sup> such as *language linguistics*, *text linguistics*, and *text science*.<sup>32</sup> This field is characterised by interdisciplinarity, as numerous disciplines participate in the study of the texts it undertakes. It is also distinguished by the proliferation of its concepts, owing to the large number of scholars who have sought to investigate and work within it.<sup>33</sup>

This approach proceeds from the study of the text as an integrated unit, through which researchers seek to uncover patterns of regularity and consistency arising from its communicative use. It also processes and analyses texts across diverse contexts of social interaction from multiple perspectives.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, it concerns studying the text in its entirety, without fragmenting it into separate sentences. It is the study of the text in its interconnectedness and the interweaving of its strands, in its complete, cohesive, coherent, and harmonious form. It thus examines the text from multiple perspectives, foremost including cohesion (connectedness) and its mechanisms and types; reference and its types; textual context; and the roles of the participants in the text (the sender and the receiver). This study encompasses both spoken and written texts alike.<sup>35</sup>

One of the most important reasons for the emergence of this approach in linguistic studies was its proponents' attempt to address the shortcomings of research that focused on sentence grammar while neglecting semantics and meaning, as well as its disregard for the social context of language. This latter aspect was later addressed by the functional

approach and the London School, and scholars of text linguistics likewise demonstrated an interest in it.<sup>36</sup>

The most significant task that this new linguistic discipline seeks to undertake is the study of the concept of *textuality*.<sup>37</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler defined it in terms of seven criteria; if any one criterion is missing, the text is judged noncommunicative. 'These criteria are cohesion and coherence, which relate to the text itself; intentionality and acceptability, which relate to the users of the text; and informativity, situationality, and intertextuality, which are criteria related to the material and cultural context surrounding the text'.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4. Ellipsis in Text Linguistics

An ellipsis is a relation that exists within the text; it is sometimes referred to as '*substitution by zero*'.<sup>39</sup> In ellipsis, there is a single element whose place absence or zero is substituted. Scholars of text linguistics have devoted attention to the study of the phenomenon of ellipsis in texts and have regarded it as one of the internal devices through which textual cohesion is achieved.<sup>40</sup> In this context, Muḥammad Khaṭṭābī notes that it is 'a relation within the text, and in most examples the presupposed element is found in the preceding text, which means that ellipsis is an anaphoric relation'.<sup>41</sup> That is, the gap created by ellipsis is connected to an element that precedes it, and this latter element points to the meaning of the omitted element, which the recipient understands despite the gap and absence present in the text.

In fact, ellipsis is a phenomenon whose presence in the text is indispensable because the speaker or writer finds it impossible to include all the elements of the text without exception, since doing so would cause boredom for the listener or recipient and render the text replete with heavy, burdensome expressions. In this regard, de Beaugrande states, 'It is unreasonable for people to convert everything they say or understand into complete sentences; if they were to do so, they would be better off preferring to speak in far more complete sentences than they actually do. Grammatical completeness produces structures that are neither useful nor clear'.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, ellipsis is another example of the alternation between brevity and rapid accessibility. Extensive use of ellipsis requires greater effort to connect the projected world model of the text while sharply reducing the surface structure. The presence of varying degrees of ellipsis, each suited to the text and the situation, is another instance of regularity in usage.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, it has been said that 'the structure that precedes in discourse can supply us with varying amounts of material to fill the gap'.<sup>44</sup>

Some have defined ellipsis as 'the presupposition of an element absent from the text, on the basis of the indication provided by a preceding element'.<sup>45</sup>

It is not possible to speak of the phenomenon of ellipsis in simple sentences because the elements of simple sentences scarcely suffice to express their basic meaning. Instead, one

may speak of ellipsis in extended, interconnected sentences or in texts because the length of the latter compels their producers to avoid prolixity and repetition. Hence, ellipsis occurs more frequently in texts than in isolated sentences because texts are structured around cohesion and coherence, which assists the text producer in achieving brevity and avoiding length by omitting superfluous information. Accordingly, ellipsis requires that the text begin with a complete sentence that observes grammatical rules. For subsequent sentences, scholars of text linguistics rely on what is termed grammatical dependency, that is, the dependence of the following sentence upon the preceding sentence or on what Arab linguists term resumptive sentences. Ellipsis is frequent in resumptive sentences to achieve concision.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, 'the relation within a single sentence may be a structural one in which ellipsis does not result in any type of cohesion; consequently, ellipsis occurs between two sentences, such that in the second sentence, we find a structural gap which the recipient seeks to resolve on the basis of what appears in the first sentence or the preceding text'.<sup>47</sup> Thus, 'cohesion through ellipsis is not realised within a single sentence; rather, the presence of more than one sentence is necessary. A single sentence does not generally contain an expressed element that points to the omitted one, so that the omitted element may subsequently cohere with what indicates it within the sentence.'<sup>48</sup>

Surface structures in texts are often incomplete, contrary to what may appear to the observer. In linguistic theories that establish clear boundaries for grammatical or logical correctness, it necessarily follows that utterances are viewed as containing ellipsis, in accordance with the principle of good textual structuring.<sup>49</sup> Ellipsis is 'a mode of linkage superior to explicit mention'.<sup>50</sup> The connectedness within the text produced by such gaps, which are related to preceding elements, is far more effective than reinserting those elements into the text.

'Ellipsis termed *deletion* or *ellipsis* by some is among the rules of grammatical cohesion indicated, explicated, and exemplified by van Dijk, Ruqayya Hasan, and others. It is not restricted, in their view, to a word, a single lexical item, or a nominal construction (such as a subject); rather, it may involve the omission of an entire sentence. The omission of such a sentence serves to link parts of the predication and to render multiple sentences as although they were a single sentence, such that one cannot distinguish its parts or differentiate one from another.'<sup>51</sup> For this reason, the process of omitting or reducing specific sentences from a text is complicated, since the elements within them that signal subsequent omissions would render those omissions obscure gaps if those sentences were removed.

Ellipsis operates within the text by omitting repeated elements that can be inferred from context. It highlights articulation at the level of pronunciation and reduces textual elements to avoid redundancy and excess. Hence, the speaker does not resort to ellipsis to create a flaw in the text; in contrast, ellipsis possesses aesthetic qualities and serves numerous purposes. Nevertheless, ellipsis has not been left entirely to the discretion of the text producer to employ as they wish; rather, controls and conditions have been

established to govern this phenomenon. Given that this phenomenon is not confined to a single language, the views of Arab grammarians have converged with those of other linguists on the establishment of a condition of great importance for ellipsis, namely, the necessity of the presence of an indicator of the omitted element.<sup>52</sup>

A gap is introduced only on the basis of an indicator. There is no doubt as to the importance of the presence of an indicator of the omitted element, whether contextual or situational. What concerns us is the presence of this indicator at the level of more than one sentence, with the element pointing to it appearing in another sentence, whether within the exact text or in a different one, provided that both texts are by the same speaker. This, in fact, contributes to the achievement of cohesion between two sentences or among these sentences, especially if the omitted element is lexically identical to, synonymous with, or in contrast to the expressed element.<sup>53</sup> ‘The indicator serves as a guide for the reader, enabling them to locate the omitted element, determine how it should be estimated, and choose the position of that estimation. It thus arouses in the recipient the desire to complete the text by retrieving the omitted elements, which are among the requirements that matter to the recipient.’<sup>54</sup>

## 5. Relationship between Ellipsis and Substitution

There is a degree of similarity between substitution and ellipsis in that both achieve textual cohesion. However, substitution leaves an element in the text that replaces another. In contrast, ellipsis is regarded as a substitution by zero since it leaves no element to stand in for the omitted element in the text. In ellipsis, there is a single element whose place absence or zero is substituted. In this context, Dr Nu‘mān Būqrah states, ‘Ellipsis differs from substitution only in that it is substitution by zero, in the sense that the relation of substitution leaves a trace in the text, and the substitutive element remains as an indicator by which the recipient is guided in searching for the substituted element. In contrast, ellipsis differs in that nothing takes the place of the omitted element, leaving in the subsequent sentence a structural gap that guides the recipient to fill it by returning to what appears in the preceding sentence, such as: *the poor man eats bread and (...) his companion [eats] tharīd.*<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, ‘the relationship between ellipsis and substitution is, in reality, a relationship between ellipsis and repetition, because these Arabic and Western models are not instances of substitution. Sibawayh and al-Mubarrad did not intend substitution, but rather the estimation of the omitted element on the basis of the presence of an indicator. Accordingly, the substitution intended by Halliday and Ruqayya Ḥasan does not correspond to the dependent substitution in Arabic grammar.’<sup>56</sup> Likewise, ‘nothing takes the place of the omitted element, and thus in the second sentence we find a structural gap which the reader is guided to fill on the basis of what appears in the first sentence or the preceding text’.<sup>57</sup>

## 6. Ellipsis, Reference, and Anaphora

'As for the relationship between ellipsis and reference, it is evident, and it is among the aspects that underscore the importance of ellipsis in achieving textual cohesion. Given the presence of an expressed indicator that contributes to the estimation of the omitted element, this leads us to say that ellipsis, by its nature, is an anaphoric relation to what precedes (*anaphorie*). At times, ellipsis may have exophoric reference (*exophorie*), the latter depending on situational context, which provides us with the information that contributes to interpreting the example. However, exophoric ellipsis reference outside the text has no place in textual cohesion.'<sup>58</sup>

There is also a close relationship between ellipsis and reference, in that the presence of an indicator or clue pointing to the omitted element constitutes one of the forms of reference. What precedes the omitted element in the structure refers to the omission and to the gap present in the text, which is what Arabic grammar has regarded as the indicator of ellipsis. Ellipsis, therefore, is a textual relation that operates within the text and necessarily requires the presence of a clue pointing to it, which renders it an anaphoric relation. The reference of ellipsis is thus to a preceding element, which functions as an indicator or clue pointing to the omitted element.

## 7. Types of Ellipsis

Halliday and Ruqayya Hasan identify three types of ellipsis: nominal, verbal, and ellipsis occurring within the prepositional phrase. 'Nominal ellipsis refers to the omission of a noun within a nominal group, for example: *Which hat will you wear? This is the best.* Verbal ellipsis refers to omission within the verbal group, for example: *Were you swimming? Yes, I was.* The third type is ellipsis within the prepositional phrase, for example: *How much is it? Five pounds.*'<sup>59</sup>

Others classify types of ellipsis as follows: 'ellipsis on the basis of a linguistic indicator, that is, one in which, on the basis of the preceding and following sentences, the omitted element can be estimated;

- ellipsis based on memory;
- ellipsis on the basis of a graphic indicator, whereby the text at times suffices with dots in place of writing;
- ellipsis on the basis of the white-space indicator, manifested in the way the writer distributes the paragraphs of the text and the manner of writing poetic passages. One may observe a balance between lines or a dialectic of length and brevity, all of which may be interpreted in light of the hypothesis of presence and absence;
- ellipsis based on the frame, where estimating the omitted element requires reflection, caution, and the activation of all the elements of the frame, unlike the previous types of ellipsis, which are estimated on the basis of the preceding and following sentences. Here, the blank space is read through a signification derived from the written text and extracted from it.'<sup>60</sup>

## 8. Reference to the Recipient

'The recipient has become a fundamental pillar of textual analysis; they constitute the second reading of the text. For this reason, linguists have not overlooked the role of the recipient, for the text is considered a dialogue established between the producer of the text, the text itself, and the recipient.'<sup>61</sup> No one can infer the omissions present in the text other than the recipient, who notices the gaps and seeks to link them to the preceding elements that point to them. As a result, the intended meanings are discerned. Here, the proper role of the recipient becomes apparent, as they are not 'a mere passive consumer of the text, but rather a participant'.<sup>62,63</sup>

When a text is presented for reading, it may be read in multiple ways, and multiple meanings may be inferred from it. These meanings may be compatible with one another or differ, depending on the recipients. From this perspective, 'the text acquires its life through the recipient, who deciphers the code of the text and extracts what it contains, each recipient according to their culture, horizon, and knowledge of the world of the text and its context. This horizon enables them to apprehend the ideas, principles, and aesthetic qualities of the text and to fill the gaps inherent in its elements, particularly those related to the omission of numerous elements. Herein lies the task of the recipient.'<sup>64</sup> Thus, 'the reader contributes to completing the text and to filling its gaps'.<sup>65</sup> This is achieved through a set of tools, for 'there is no doubt that approaching a text and reading it without the requisite tools such as context, a broad horizon, and an understanding of the language of the text, among others ultimately leads to imprecision in reading and, consequently, to an inability to bring out the functions of ellipsis, for example, in achieving textual cohesion'.<sup>66</sup>

'The issue of ellipsis is among the most important means of textual cohesion that highlight the significance of the recipient, for it is the recipient who perceives through their multiple horizons the sites of ellipsis and the manner in which this ellipsis performs its rhetorical and textual functions.'<sup>67</sup> In estimating the omitted elements, the recipient seeks to fill the gaps in the text and thereby uncover its hidden aspects and latent meanings. Here, the importance of ellipsis becomes evident in that it does not supply the expected lexical items. It thus releases in the mind of the recipient a charge that awakens their attention and prompts them to reflect upon what is intended.<sup>68</sup>

The recipient may also resort to interpretation, and 'in order to restrict interpretation, the recipient turns to what has preceded in particular (which is termed, in Leavis's terminology, the prior discourse)'.<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, the recipient searches for the gaps and lacunae present in the text by examining what precedes within the sentence in which ellipsis occurs and infers and interprets the omitted elements in accordance with context and situation. As a result, the text invites multiple readings, since each recipient possesses a particular capacity and competence to estimate gaps in the text, thereby generating numerous inferred texts.

## **Conclusion**

At the conclusion of this modest study, in which we explored the concept of ellipsis, its conditions, and the position of text linguistics, we may arrive at the following conclusions:

- In its lexical sense, ellipsis denotes plucking, cutting, and dropping. This phenomenon affects additions and peripheral elements whose presence or absence does not influence the utterance or the structure.
- According to Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, ellipsis is subject to eight conditions, without which the phenomenon lacks meaning and realisation. Among the most important of these conditions are the presence of an indicator that the omitted element should not function as an integral part, that it should not be emphasised, that its omission should not result in excessive abbreviation, and that the omitted element should not be a weak governing element or a substitute for something else.
- In text linguistics, ellipsis is one of the devices that achieves textual cohesion.
- Ellipsis constitutes a gap present within the text and is linked to a preceding element that points to its meaning.
- In this theory, ellipsis is related to substitution in that both contribute to textual cohesion; however, ellipsis is substitution by zero, whereas substitution involves replacing the omitted element with another element.
- Ellipsis is related to reference and anaphora, owing to the presence of an indicator that assists in estimating the omitted element.
- There are three types of ellipsis: nominal, verbal, and ellipsis occurring within the prepositional phrase.
- Ellipsis is related to the recipient, since the recipient constitutes the core of the process of estimating and inferring the omitted elements.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, *Muʿjam al-ʿAyn*, arranged alphabetically, ed. and intro. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1st ed., 2002), vol. 1, 297.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Durayd, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Durayd al-Azdī, *Kitāb Jamharat al-Lughah* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Majlis Dār al-Maʿārif, 1st ed., 1926), vol. 2, 128.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Jawharī, Ismāʿīl ibn Ḥammād, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ: Tāj al-ʿArabiyyah wa-Ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿArabiyyah*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Aṭṭār (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlm li-l-Malāyīn, 4th ed., 1990), vol. 4, 1341.

<sup>4</sup> Ṭāhir Sulaymān Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf fi al-Dars al-Lughawī* (Egypt: al-Dār al-Jāmiʿiyyah li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 1998), 116.

<sup>5</sup> Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamzah ibn ʿAlī al-ʿAlawī, *al-Ṭirāz*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Hindāwī (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyyah, 1st ed., 2002), vol. 2, 51.

<sup>6</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 122.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb ‘an Kutub al-A‘arīb*, ed. and comm. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb (n.p., n.d.), vol. 6, 325.

<sup>8</sup> Faḍīl al-Sāmīrā’ī, *al-Jumlah al-‘Arabiyyah: Ta’līfuhā wa-Aqsāmuhā* (Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 2nd ed., 2007), 78–79.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Sāmīrā’ī, *al-Jumlah al-‘Arabiyyah*, 77–78.

<sup>10</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 130.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*, vol. 1, 284.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Jinnī, *al-Khaṣā’iṣ*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, 285.

<sup>13</sup> Rajā’ ‘Īd, *Falsafat al-Balāghah bayna al-Taḥniyyah wa-l-Taṭawwur* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2nd ed., n.d.), 92–93.

<sup>14</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 133

<sup>15</sup> Al-Sāmīrā’ī, *al-Jumlah al-‘Arabiyyah*, 4th ed. (2007), 76–77.

<sup>16</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 116.

<sup>17</sup> See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Badī‘ fī ‘Ilm al-‘Arabiyyah*, ed. and study Faṭḥī Aḥmad ‘Alī al-Dīn (Mecca: Markaz Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 336.

<sup>19</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Ashbāh wa-l-Nazā’ir* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 338.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 343.

<sup>22</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 141.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 345.

<sup>24</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 164.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 345.

<sup>26</sup> See Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 345.

<sup>27</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ham‘ al-Hawāmi‘ fī Sharḥ Jam‘ al-Jawāmi‘*, ed. and comm. ‘Abd al-‘Āl Sālim Makram (Kuwait: Dār al-Buḥūth al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1980), vol. 2, 106.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 347.

<sup>29</sup> Ḥamūda, *Zāhirat al-Ḥadhf*, 149.

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, vol. 6, 347–49.

<sup>31</sup> See Jamīl ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, *al-Badī‘ bayna al-Balāghah al-‘Arabiyyah wa-l-Lisāniyyāt al-Naṣṣiyyah* (Alexandria: al-Hay‘ah al-Miṣriyyah al-‘Āmma li-l-Kitāb, 1998), 66.

<sup>32</sup> See Sa‘īd Ḥasan Buḥayrī, *‘Ilm Lughat al-Naṣṣ: al-Mafāhīm wa-l-Ittijāhāt* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān; Cairo: Longman, 1st ed., 1997), 99.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>35</sup> Ṣubḥī Ibrāhīm al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naṣṣī bayna al-Nazariyyah wa-l-Taṭbīq* (Cairo: Dār Qubā’, 1st ed., 2000), vol. 1, 36.

<sup>36</sup> See ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, *al-Badī‘*, 66–67.

<sup>37</sup> Robert de Beaugrande, *al-Naṣṣ wa-l-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ijrā’*, trans. Tammām Ḥassān (Cairo: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1st ed., 1998), 95.

<sup>38</sup> Nu‘mān Būqrah, *al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Asāsiyyah fī Lisāniyyāt al-Naṣṣ wa-Tahlīl al-Khiṭāb* (Amman: Jidārā li-l-Kitāb al-‘Ālamī, 1st ed., 2009), 142.

<sup>39</sup> De Beaugrande, *al-Naṣṣ wa-l-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ijrā’*, 340.

<sup>40</sup> See al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naṣṣī*, vol. 1, 120.

<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad Khaṭṭābī, *Lisāniyyāt al-Naṣṣ: Madkhal ilā Insijām al-Khiṭāb* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-‘Arabī, 1st ed., 1991), 21, citing M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqayya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London, 1976), 144.

<sup>42</sup> De Beaugrande, *al-Naṣṣ wa-l-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ijrā’*, 341.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 342.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Umar Muḥammad Abū Khurmah, *Naḥw al-Naṣṣ: Naqd al-Nazariyyah wa-Binā’ Ukhra’* (Irbid: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 1st ed., 2004), 82.

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- <sup>46</sup> Şalāh al-Dīn Şāliḥ Ḥasnanayn, *al-Dalālah wa-l-Naḥw* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1st ed., n.d.), 253.
- <sup>47</sup> Aḥmad ‘Afīfī, *Naḥw al-Naşş: Ittijāh Jadīd fī al-Dars al-Naḥwī* (Cairo: Maktabat Zahrā’ al-Sharq, 1st ed., 2001), 126.
- <sup>48</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 2, 203.
- <sup>49</sup> De Beaugrande, *al-Naşş wa-l-Khiṭāb wa-l-Ijrā’*, 340.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibrāhīm Maḥmūd Khalīl, *Fī al-Lisāniyyāt wa-Naḥw al-Naşş* (Amman: Dār al-Masīrah, 1st ed., 2007), 233.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 233–34.
- <sup>52</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 2, 207.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 207.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 209.
- <sup>55</sup> Būqrah, *al-Muşṭalahāt al-Asāsiyyah*, 107.
- <sup>56</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 2, 201.
- <sup>57</sup> Khaṭṭābī, *Lisāniyyāt al-Naşş*, 21.
- <sup>58</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 2, 201.
- <sup>59</sup> Khaṭṭābī, *Lisāniyyāt al-Naşş*, 22.
- <sup>60</sup> Muḥammad Miftāh, *Dīnāmyyat al-Naşş* (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-‘Arabī, 2nd ed., 1990), 167–68.
- <sup>61</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 1, 110.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 110.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 217.
- <sup>64</sup> Al-Fiḳī, *‘Ilm al-Lughah al-Naşşī*, vol. 2, 213.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 215.
- <sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 216–17.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 217.
- <sup>68</sup> Būqrah, *al-Muşṭalahāt al-Asāsiyyah*, 106.
- <sup>69</sup> Khaṭṭābī, *Lisāniyyāt al-Naşş*, 56.