

ELLIPSIS IN THE QURANIC STORY OF JOSEPH: A TEXTUAL VIEW

*Zaid Alamiri**
zalamiri@gmail.com

Dr. Peter Mickan#
peter.mickan@adelaide.edu.au

The phenomenon of “ellipsis is so fine a subject identified with charm [.....] utterances appear more communicative when left unsaid, and more articulated when kept unspoken; and more fruitful if not mentioned”. al-Jurjani (d.471/1078) (*Dalā'IL al-I' jaz*, 146).

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the phenomenon of ellipsis in the story of Joseph, analysing the original Arabic text, at the structural level from a textual viewpoint. It is limited to an examination of the role of the ellipsis as a grammatical cohesive element. The textual approach to ellipsis is new to Arabic linguistic scholarship whose focus was exclusively on the formal relations, dictated by the syntactic rules, between the elements of the sentence. Ellipsis in Arabic is a multi-faceted topic elaborated under, and diffused through, different categories of grammar and rhetoric. As to the Qur'an it has been described by both grammarians & rhetoricians. Theoretical and applied considerations of the ellipsis topic are, therefore, highly interwoven. The results show that this story made use of ellipsis, as well as other devices, in particular the concealed subject pronouns and the narrative techniques, in building up cohesiveness. Further studies, both of this story and other stories, are required to shed more light on other elements involved in the text making.

Keywords:

Ellipsis, cohesion, textual cohesiveness, Qur'an, Story of Joseph

* Zaid Alamiri. MPhil candidate in applied Linguistics, Discipline of linguistics, School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Adelaide, Adelaide 5000, Australia. E-mail: zaid.alamiri@adelaide.edu.au.

Peter Mickan, Discipline of Linguistics, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Adelaide, Adelaide 5000, Australia. E-mail: peter.mickan@adelaide.edu.au;

1. INTRODUCTION

Although ellipsis is a common feature in all natural languages, its scope and use vary considerably among them (Solimando 2011: 69). In Arabic, it is a delicate, intricate, and a multi-faceted topic elaborated under, and diffused through, different categories of grammar and rhetoric. It is widespread, and frequently used, in the speech of Arabs seeking brevity and concision (Sibawayh 1965: 211 & 222-228. *passim*).

Ellipsis in the Qur'an is a broad topic that, in Arabic linguistic tradition, has been described by both grammarians & rhetoricians. The grammarians focused primarily on its occurrence, reasons, and effect on sentence structure and meaning. The latter, on the other hand, paid more attention to pragmatic & semantic issues than to other aspects; and their approach partially overlapped with that of the Quran commentators for a proper understanding of the text. Theoretical and applied considerations of the ellipsis topic are highly interwoven.

This paper aims at describing the phenomenon of ellipsis in the Quranic narrative of the story of Joseph. The ellipsis in this story occurs at phonological, morphological and structural levels. The study is limited to an examination of the structural level from a textual point of view, focusing primarily on its indicators, which are clues referring to the elided element(s), and the role of ellipsis as a grammatical cohesive element. The textual approach to ellipsis is new to Arabic linguistic scholarship which exclusively described the formal relations, dictated by the syntactic rules, between the elements of the sentence.

Finally, the study does not claim to be a review of ellipsis in the Qur'an or Arabic language, but concentrates on the story of Joseph. It does so by analysing the original Arabic text accompanied by its corresponding English translation for the sake of illustration. We used Arberry's (1955) 'The Koran interpreted' as a basis for translating the verses mentioned in this study, however, with some modification.

2. DEFINITION & TERMINOLOGY

This section explains first the notion of ellipsis as understood by Arab grammarians and rhetoricians.

Definition

Lexical meaning of elision (حذف) revolves around three concepts: snatching (قطف), cutting off (قطع) and dropping (إسقاط) something (Ibn Mnaẓur 1999, 3, 93-94). The three terms are semantically interrelated in such a way that they refer to a process of removal of something by pulling,

chopping or dropping. The last term is exclusively used for the technical meaning, which in phono (morpho)logy refers to dropping a particle -or more-, or a vowel from a word; and, at the structural level, it denotes dropping a word (s) or phrase(s) that are “necessary for a complete construction but not for the meaning intended by the speaker”(Marogy 2010 ,85). The usage of the term, i.e. dropping, rather reflects the rhetoricians’ contribution to the study of ellipsis. For example, al-Rummani, a rhetorician, (d.384/996) defined ellipsis as “dispensing with a word, as there is a clue hinting to through a circumstantial context or signification of the speech” (ibid 1976, 76). According to another rhetorician, it is the dropping of one part, or all parts, of the speech as long as there is an indicator (clue) referring to (al-Zarkashi 1957, 3, 102). The indicator (clue), in general, is either textual (inside the text) or circumstantial (extra-linguistic). In Ibn Hisham’s work (2000, 6,317-538), the concept of the indicator (to the elided element) has further implications and extensions as we show in detail later.

3. TERMINOLOGY

We examine the terminology as understood by both the grammarians and rhetoricians.

Grammarians

Sibawayh (d.177/793) is the first grammarian to examine ellipsis on its phonological, morphological and syntactic levels. In describing & analysing the phenomenon, he employed these two terms: deletion (حذف), and suppression (إضمار), whose usage occasioned difference of opinions among contemporary scholars. According to Hammudah (1998, 19-20), these two terms are synonymous, and Sibawayh used them interchangeably. On the contrary, Carter (1991, 122) argued that these terms are related and they partially overlap. Moreover, Dayyeh (2012,82) believes that ellipsis is a specific kind of obligatory suppression (إضمار), and it is linked to the frequent usage of speech, considered by Sibawayh, as one reason, among others of applying ellipsis (Ibid 2012,84). Another difference between these terms is that suppression (إضمار) refers specifically to the syntactic level (Carter 1991 122; Solimando 2011, 77) and deletion (حذف) relates to the phonomorphological level. For Versteegh (1994, 280) suppression (إضمار) is the general term covering any kind of deletion, and it has been used by early commentaries on the Qur’an, to denote “almost exclusively [...] semantic deletion in the surface structure” to reconstruct the underlying intention of the speaker (Ibid 1994,274; 1997,1-12; & Devenyi 2007, 45-64).

Sibawayh, in his Book, mentioned ellipsis over 700 times (Troupeau 1976 cited in Baalbaki 2008, 70). Two other terms, suppression (إضمار) and suppressed (مضمر), were used 90 and 76 times, respectively (ibid). Another

term, that of frequent usage (كثرة الاستعمال), considered as one essential reason of explaining ellipsis, was employed 60 times in Sibawayh's Book (Dayyeh 2012, 75. n.1). Ibn Jinnī (d.392/1002) & Ibn Hisham (d.761/1359) are other two grammarians, who contributed, after Sibawayh, to the development of the ellipsis theory. The grammarians worked out the phenomenon of the ellipsis within the theory of governance (dependency) predominant in Arabic linguistics (Baalbaki, 2008,84-108), giving a special space to the idea of reconstruction of the elided elements through the process of suppletive insertion (Ibid, 70-79).

Rhetoricians

On their part, rhetoricians concerned themselves much more with pragmatic and semantic issues such as motives, categories and benefits of the ellipsis. The motives, as expounded by rhetoricians, fall under frequency of occurrence, shortening and lightening of the clause, ease of articulation and rhetorical and other pragmatic considerations (Hammudah 1998, 97-112). The most paramount of these motives, however, is the frequent usage and the prolixity of the syntactic structures of the sentences. The frequent usage was introduced by grammarians, and in particular by Sibawayh who demonstrated its significance in deletions of structures (Dayyeh, 2012, 75), where it provokes a sort of 'attrition' "leading to dropping one of its components [...] by the free will of the speaker" (Solimando 2011, 78).

Generally speaking, rhetoricians treated the topic under the concept of brevity. Among the prominent scholars who significantly contributed to theory of ellipsis, were ibn Qutayba (d.276/889), al-Rummani (d.384/996), al-Jurjani (d.471/1078) and al-Zarkashi (d.794/ 1392). Being a feature of Arabic, brevity was common and widely employed in prose as in poetry (Atiya 1997, 49). The Qur'an has employed it extensively as another linguistic "mechanism that makes out of the Arabic language a dynamic & flexible one" (Solimando 2011, 70-71). Rhetoricians used the concept of brevity, as an effective device, in their apology of the literary superiority of the Qur'an (Atiya 1997, 49; MacKay 1991, 5-11& 18). For al-Jurjani, in his exposition of the Qur'an superiority over other texts, ellipsis is one means of enriching and expanding the meaning of speech that "[.....] not a noun or a verb being elided, without being better deleted than mentioned, and you find that its being suppressed is more constructive than being articulated"(al-Jurjani 1984,151).

al-Rummani (d.386/996) divided brevity into two categories: brevity by abbreviation and brevity by ellipsis (Rahman 2000,286). Brevity by abbreviation implies using less words and, at the same time, augmenting the meaning without any deletion (Ibid). Of importance is that earlier linguists did not differentiate between these two terms (ibid, 280) and that their technical

meanings were not fixed until the 4th century of Islam (Kibberg & Rippin cited in Rahman, 2000, 286).

In summary, the term (حذف) ellipsis or deletion, in the contemporary Arabic linguistic studies refers to, and describes the whole process of ellipsis on all levels of phonological or morpho-syntactical deletion (Solimando, 2011, 81). Finally, it is noteworthy mentioning that ellipsis never acquired a well-defined theoretical status in classical or contemporary Arabic linguistics, and accordingly it has never been subject to a specific & thorough study (Ibid 2011, 70-71).

4. PRINCIPLES OF ELISION

Ibn Hisham (d.761/1359) stands out as a prominent grammarian who systematically elaborated the topic in a comprehensive and unified way (Carter 1991,123, n.8). He asserted that the “concern of the grammarian must be limited to what the grammatical rules bid”, and not to mingle with “[...] motives and reasons which are the business of rhetoricians” (Ibn Hisham 2000, 6, 535-37). The principles cover various things: conditions, indicators (clues), and reconstruction of the elided elements, among others. Here, we mention only the conditions for their relevance to our study.

5. CONDITIONS

There are a number of conditions for the elision to take place. Ibn Hisham, in his analysis of the phenomenon, mentioned eight conditions (Ibn Hisham, 2000, 6, 317-538). The two most important of these are the indicator & non ambiguity (Hammudah, 1999, 115). They are closely related because the presence of an indicator or clue (to the elided element) bears on the non ambiguity (certainty) of meaning essential, for the addressee, in the process of recoverability of the meaning. These two conditions overlap & interrelate and should not be considered separately.

The presence of indicators

The term of indicator (دليل), in Arabic, means evidence, clue and proof, among others. In the ellipsis context, however, it refers to the meaning of context in that there should be either a textual or circumstantial hint(s) indicates to the elided elements.

It was Ibn Jinnī (d.392/1002) who brought to the fore the significance of the indicator. He, after Sibawayh, contributed to the theory of ellipsis (Solimando 2011, 81), and his influence on later grammarians, and in particular Ibn Hisham, (Gully 1995, 208), is apparent. He emphasized indicator’s (دليل) importance saying that “The Arabs used to delete a sentence,

a single word, a letter and a vowel, as long as there is an indicating clue; otherwise it would be a subject of speculation to determine it” (Ibn Jinnī 1960, 2, 360). He also pointed out that the elided element, with the existence of a clue, is much like the mentioned one, unless there is a syntactic obstacle or restriction (Ibid, 1,284).

Ibn Hisham (2000, 6, 317) extended the concept of the indicator dividing it in two categories: non grammatical (textual & circumstantial) & grammatical. As to the grammatical indicator (Ibid, 325), it depends on observing the formal relations within any of the syntactic categories, and its recoverability through structural clues of the sentence.

The other conditions, of Ibn Hisham, should be seen as restrictions controlling the process of ellipsis (Carter 1991, 125). For example, the agent of the sentence, being an integral constituent of it, is not subject to deletion. Moreover, these conditions reflect mere rules and instructions irrelevant to everyday language, and their applicability needs further revision, (Hammudah 1999, 115) because early grammarians, as Afifi (1996, 274) argues, hardly applied the analytical approach to elaborate this phenomenon adequately.

Two more linguists stressed the importance of the indicator. Ibn al-’Athir (d.637/1239) pointed out that “lack of an indicator (to the elided element) renders the speech meaningless” (1939, 2, 81); and moreover, “not deleting (the elliptical item) makes the speech incoherent” (ibid). al-Zarkashi (d.794/1392) highlighted this point, claiming “in the absence of an indicator, to the elided element, the speech turns confusing & unintelligible. And this is the meaning of the saying: that there should be, in the ‘left unsaid’, an evidence of what is dropped”(ibid 1957, 2,111).

Role of addressee and certainty of meaning

The discussion on the mutual interaction between the indicator and certainty of meaning showed that they both bear on the addressee role in the whole process of ellipsis, in recognizing the elided elements, and recoverability of the meaning. Moreover, the circumstantial context of the discourse, within this frame of reciprocal relations, has a complementary role for addressee understanding of ellipsis.

Such a role is well-established, defined, and illustrated in Arabic linguistic tradition. Sibawayh (1965, 1,224; 3,103. *passim*) tackled this issue to the point that “language for him always functioned in a real context of speaker and listener” (Carter 1991, 126), considering the extra-linguistic context as a necessary condition for the deletion process (Solimando 2011, 80; Baalbaki 2008, 191-201). An aspect which Sibawayh affirms repeatedly in his “Book”, is the importance given to the communication process between the two participants of the speech, as ellipsis is considered “legitimate when it does not lead to any ambiguity between them”(Solimando 2011,74-75); because “it

is only possible when the real context makes the elided elements obvious”(Carter 1991, 126).

Sibawayh was aware of how much the ellipsis “is not a peripheral language phenomenon that one can do without because his thought was about a concrete communication act” (Solimando, 2011, 74-75). Non linguistic and linguistic contexts were equally important for Sibawayh, who gave special attention to the non linguistic because he based his analysis on, and derived his theory from, the everyday life of language use (Carter 1991, 131). Ellipsis of some syntactic structures in Arabic, without a clue to the text, is dependent on the addressees’ awareness of these situations. For example, structures like relative clauses, and apodosis of conditional clauses, which are abundant in the Quranic narratives, Arabs used to drop because of their frequent usage in their speech. (Dayyeh, 2012, 75; AbdulTawab 1995, 149-150).

However, grammarians, after Sibawayh, to a large extent overlooked this dynamic trend distancing from the real linguistic world or linguistic reality; their approach became far more prescriptive (Solimando 2011, 31; Baalbaki 2008, 170; Carter 1999, 126).

6. STORY OF JOSEPH

The story of Joseph belongs to the late Meccan period of Quranic revelation. It is composed of 111 verses that can be divided, as a drama, into (acts of) different scenes (Johns 1993, 42).

The story has some characteristic features. It is, in comparison to other Qur’anic stories, the complete and lengthiest chapter (Stern 1985, 193). It is not repeated elsewhere in the Qur’an, nor is it revealed at different times (Mir 2000, 184). Moreover, it develops a single theme which confers on it organic unity (unitary structure) in terms of the topic dealt with or the characters. It is notable, therefore, that all scenes and events revolve around one character and one theme: Joseph and his dream, as the chapter begins with the dream, and concludes with its interpretation. Ellipsis in the story of Joseph occurs at the phonological, morphological & syntactical levels; however, this study limits itself to the structural relations of the text and look into evidence of the elided element(s).

7. INDICATORS OF ELLIPSIS: ANALYSIS

When Ibn Jinnī (1960, 2, 360), Ibn Hisham (2000, 6, 317), and other linguists talked about the textual or verbal indicator (دليل مقالي) of the ellipsis, they were pointing to its existence inside the text with the referent being either anaphoric, as is the case in most of the Qur’anic examples, or cataphoric. Halliday and Hasan (1976,143) referred to that, pointing out its position to be in “sentences, clauses whose structure is such as to presuppose some

preceding item, which then serves as the source of the missing information”. Its reference, as in the case of substitution “.....is present in the preceding text. That is to say it is anaphoric relation” (Ibid, 144).

Below we display the elided element(s) in the text. They are shown in brackets, and the indicator is in italic, citing the verse (text) in which mentioned. They contain the three types of ellipsis: verbal, nominal and clausal taken all together without being displayed separately. We then comment on and analyse some of these deletions.

Verse 9: (one of them said) “kill Joseph or throw him far away so your father will turn toward you, thereafter you turn righteous persons.”

اقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهَ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ (9)

The indicator to this deletion is found in the preceding and following verses, i.e. anaphoric and cataphoric. The anaphoric is in verse 8: “*they said* Joseph & his brother are dearer to our father than we, though we are a band. Surely our father is misguided”.

إِذْ قَالُوا لِيُوسُفُ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ آبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (8)

The cataphoric is in verse 10: “one of them said No, kill not Joseph, but cast him into the bottom of the pit and some traveller will pick him out, if you do aught”.

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لِمَ تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَقْوَمَ فِيهِ غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ (10)

Verse 39: (Joseph said) “O! My fellow-prisoners, which is better many different gods or the God, the One, the Omnipotent”.

يَا صَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَرَبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (39)

The indicator is in verse 37: “*said (Joseph)* no food comes to you that I cannot tell you before it comes. This is but one part of what my lord taught me. I forsook the religion of unbelievers in God”.

قَالَ لَا يَأْتِيكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقَانِيهِ إِلَّا نَبَأُكُمَا بِتَأْوِيلِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمَا ذَلِكَمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِي رَبِّي إِنِّي تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ (37)

Verse 40: (O! my fellow-prisoners) “That which you serve, apart from Him, is nothing but names yourselves have named, you and your ancestors [.....]”.

مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءُ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (40)

The indicator is in preceding verse 39 mentioned earlier: “*O! my fellow-prisoners*, which is better many different gods or the God , the One , the Omnipotent”.

Verse 41: (Joseph said) “my fellow-prisoners, as for one of you, he shall serve his lord wine, as for the other he will be crucified.....”. The indicator is also in verse 37.

يَا صَاحِبِي السِّجْنِ أَمَا أَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِي رَبَّهُ خَمْرًا وَأَمَا الْآخَرُ فَيُصَلَّبُ فَمَا تَأْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَضِي الْأَمْرُ الَّذِي فِيهِ تَسْتَفْتِيَانِ (41)

Verse 43: “the king said I have seen seven fat *cows* being devoured by seven lean (cows); and *seven green ears*, and other (seven) dry (ears). My Councilors interpret to me my vision”. In this verse, the Indictors are in the same text, and underlined.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ إِنِّي أَرَى سَبْعَ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعَ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ
يَابِسَاتٍ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَقْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ (43)

Verse 44: they said (your vision) is a confused dream”. The reference is in the preceding verse 43: the king said....., tell me about *my vision*.

قَالُوا أَضْغَاتٌ أَحْلَامٍ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَأْوِيلِ الْأَحْلَامِ بِعَالَمِينَ (44).

Verse 46: (and he said O!) “Joseph, the true fellow, tell us your interpretation of the seven fat cows being devoured by seven lean ones. Likewise, of seven dry and green ears”.

يُوسُفُ أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُ أَقْتِنَا فِي سَبْعِ بَقَرَاتٍ سِمَانٍ يَأْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَسَبْعِ سُنبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ
وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ لَعَلِّي أَرْجِعُ إِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ (46)

Indicator is in verse 45: “then said the one, of the fellow- prisoners, who had been freed from the prison, remembering after a while I will tell you its interpretation, so send me...”.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ أُمَّةٍ أَنَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَأْوِيلِهِ فَأَرْسِلُون (45).

Verse 48: Then thereafter there shall come upon you seven hard (years) that shall devour what you have laid up for them, all but a little you keep in store

ثُمَّ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَأْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَحْصِيُونَ (48)

The indicator is in the preceding verse (47): He said, ‘You shall sow seven years after your wont. What you have harvested leave in the ear, excepting a little whereof to eat.

قَالَ تَزْرَعُونَ سَبْعَ سِنِينَ دَأْبًا فَمَا حَصَدْتُمْ فَذَرُوهُ فِي سُنْبُلِهِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ (47)

Verse 81: “Return you all to your father, and say, “Father, your son stole (The King’s cup), we do not testify except only what we know.....”.

ارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ أَبِيكُمْ فَقُولُوا يَا أَبَانَا إِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ وَمَا شَهِدْنَا إِلَّا بِمَا عَلَّمَنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ
حَافِظِينَ (81)

The indicator is in verse 72: “They said (the king’s servants), We are missing *the king’s cup*. Whoever brings it shall receive a camel’s load”.

قَالُوا نَفَقْدُ صَوَاحِ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَاءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيرٍ وَأَنَا بِهِ زَعِيمٌ (72)

Verse 82: and (say to him O! our father) “Ask the village in which we have been ...”.

وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِي كُنَّا فِيهَا وَالْعَيْرَ الَّتِي أَقْبَلْنَا فِيهَا وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ (82)

Here, there are multiple indicators identified in verses 80 and 81. In 80: [...]. *Said the eldest of them, ‘Do you not know how your father has taken a solemn pledge from you by God, and aforetime you failed regarding Joseph? Never will I quit this land, until my father gives me leave, or God judges in my favour; He is the best of judges.’*)

قَلَمَّا اسْتَيْأَسُوا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوا نَجِيًّا قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ أَبَاكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَوْثِقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمِن قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُمْ فِي يُوسُفَ فَلَنْ أَبْرَحَ الْأَرْضَ حَتَّى يَأْذَنَ لِي أَبِي أَوْ يَحْكَمَ اللَّهُ لِي وَهُوَ خَيْرُ
الْحَاكِمِينَ (80)

The second one is in verse 81 (see above): “*return to your father and Say to him*” which is a continuation of their eldest brother order to them.

Verse 87: (Jacob said) “O my sons set off to search for Joseph & his brother news, and do not despair of God’s comfort [...].”

يَا بَنِيَّ ادْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَيْأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَبْئَسُ مِنْ رَوْحِ
اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ (87)

The indicator is in the preceding verse 86: “*He (Jacob) said, I make complaint of my anguish and my sorrow unto God; I know from God that you know not.*”

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (86)

Verse 101: (Joseph said) “O my Lord, Thou hast given me to rule, and Thou hast taught me the interpretation of tales”.

رَبِّ قَدْ آتَيْتَنِي مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِي مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَلِيِّي
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَأَلْحَقْتَنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ (101)

The indicator is in verse 100: [...], “*he- Joseph- said, this is the interpretation of my vision of long ago; my Lord has made it true,[.....]*”.

وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبْتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا
رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (100)

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Arabic scholarship on ellipsis in general and the Qur’an in particular, there are cases, frequently cited and talked of, in which the clue to the elided element lies outside the text. The first belongs to the field of Qur’anic exegesis preoccupied by restoring the supposed gaps (existed) in the text (Sakhy 2012: 3; Solimando 2011, 69; Jad Alkareem 2006, 42); the other is based on the syntactic rules of Arabic (Ibn Hisham 2000, 6: 317). As they are not text-related deletions, we did not include them in our study. So, this study is restricted to analysis of the cases of ellipsis where the indication (clue) is textual; with its clues being endophoric.

The story can be seen as a dramatic play presented in Acts consisting of scenes (Johns 1993, 42). The analysis showed that elisions are identified in only five Acts, with their respective verses: **I (9), IV (39, 40, and 41), V (43, 44, 46, and 48), IX (81, 82, and 87) and XI (101)**, totalling twelve scenes. For example, in Act **I**, it is identified in only one scene (**verse 9**). In this particular verse, the clue is both anaphoric and cataphoric. In the former it refers to a voice from among the brothers saying: kill Joseph. There was no mention of who was speaking, it was just a statement of the dialogue taken

place among the brothers who were speaking in unison in a way “encouraging each other in their hatred by repeating words to each other”(Johns 1993,44). On the other hand, the cataphoric reference is based on verse **10**, where the subject of this verse (one of them) is a referent to the preceding verse. So, the elided subject of verse **9** can be reconstructed by two ways: either using the pronoun (They), referring to all brothers talking in one voice saying: kill Joseph and hence the referent is understood; or the subject refers to just one of them, as is the case of verse **10**, talking also to his brothers: Kill Joseph. In the rest of the Acts, the clues are all anaphoric.

Though the ellipsis, textually viewed, is identified in just 11 verses out of 111, its contribution to the cohesion of the story is noticeable. Considering it together with the other cohesive element of substitution represented by the implied (concealed) pronouns helps us understand the way the story employs different elements to build up cohesion.

Arab grammarians did not consider this textual view when they discussed and analysed the ellipsis in the Qur’an. What they did was simply mentioning its place in the sentence in term of the syntactic category: verb, noun, adjective, preposition, and verbal noun etc...

Verbal, nominal & clausal ellipsis

As to their categories, the elided elements can be classified into verbal, nominal and clausal. The most frequent ellipsis is the verbal identified in the following verses: **9, 39, 41, 46, 82, 87 and 101** which represent scenes of different Acts; meanwhile the nominal is reported in verses: **43, 44, 48, 81**; and finally the clausal just in one verse: **40**.

Role of anaphorical personal pronouns

In Arabic, pronominalisation refers to the use of personal pronouns instead of nouns in the cases of subject, object and possession; and they “stand on their own as substitutes for nouns or noun phrases” (Ryding 2005, 298).

They are referential in that they anaphorically refer to their respective nouns mentioned in the sentence. We here discuss only the subject (agent) pronouns, where they replace the agent of a verb. These pronouns are implicitly carried by the verb alluding to its respective subjects (agents), i.e. ‘speaker or person addressed’ or to a ‘person or thing extraneous to the speaker’ (Beeston 1968, 39 & 46).

In accordance with Ibn Hisham conditions (2000, 6, 317), the agent of a sentence is an integral part not subject to elision. And even if the agent (as a noun) is substituted by its respective concealed pronoun, this substitution, so to say, does not mean or refer to a deleted agent.

In this story, the frequently used form of the implied (concealed) pronoun is the third person pronoun (singular and plural) of the perfect (simple past) verb. The pronouns are extensively used, replacing the subject (agent) of the verb. They are of common and frequent usage, in particular for the speech verb denoting saying. For example, instead of repeating the agent (he) in this structure (he said), it is sufficient to use only the verb which implicitly carries its agent within. We identified the concealed pronoun in this story sixty times used with different agents (subjects). For example, Joseph, the central character, as a subject was substituted with its equivalent pronoun in structures (of speech verb denoting saying) in perfect (simple past) verb **19** times out of sixty (**4, 23, 26, 33, 37, 42, 47, 50, 55, 59, 62, 69, 77, 79, 89, 90, 92, 99, 100**). The name of Jacob, the father, was substituted **12** times (**5, 13, 18, 64, 66, 67, 83, 84, 86, 94, 96, 98**). The brothers of Joseph, as a subject, were also substituted by their equivalent pronouns **22** times (**8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 61, 63, 65, 71, 73, 75, 77, 78, 80, 81, 85, 88, 90, 91, 95, 97**).

These pronouns such as *he* and *they*, as is the case of most implied pronouns in this story, are signs of a concealed noun “because the listener is able to recognize the person they refer to” (Marogy 2010, 85). This substitution of agents (subjects) by their implied pronouns, though not considered ellipsis in Arabic, when viewed from a textual point, contributed to the cohesion of the story because it is a “relation within the text” constituting a link between its parts (Halliday & Hassan 1976,89-91).

Narrative techniques

Beside the ellipsis- including anaphorical personal pronouns- , discussed so far as an essential resource of text making (Halliday & Hasan 1989 و76; 1976 و5& 145), there are other factors, which contributed, in varying degrees, to the cohesion and coherence of the story. Among these the narrative techniques employed in the story are salient. The vision of Joseph and its centrality in the plot of the story are the uniting threads of the whole story. In the Qur’anic narrative, the story in general is related strongly to its thematic unity (Mir 1988, 59. In this story, the plot is organized in a way of “involution & evolution” (Mir 1986, 1) that promoted the usage of tightly structured scenes. In other words, it is a story “that has a coherent plot and is completely free from digression and loose joints” (Mir 2000, 184). This efficient usage of brevity & terseness is evident in the Quranic narrative which is a live communication “delivered orally to its audience [...] full of dialogue between interlocutors” (Khallaf Allah 1999, 337). The story, in developing & carrying its plot, employed the report (narrator’s text) and the dialogue (characters’ text) techniques (Johns 1993, 41). As two complementary devices, they create a harmonious plot by “shifting proportions of each from scene to scene, from

act to act” (Ibid, 66). Taken together, they contribute largely to the cohesive structure of the story.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this study was to discuss the concept of ellipsis, in Arabic linguistic tradition, relevant to this story, and in particular its role as a resource of text making. The study mainly examined the topic from a textual viewpoint, which is absent in Arabic linguistic tradition, and scarcely employed in contemporary studies. Arabic linguistic tradition adopted the sentence - based ellipsis which focused on the structural relations between the elements of the sentence. This trend emphasized only the identifying & assigning categories of the elliptical items, as well as their restoration inside the sentence.

Viewed from a textual point, the use of ellipsis is essential to the cohesion of the story, though a small number of elided elements were identified in this study. Other kinds of ellipsis, discussed in Arabic studies, were not considered relevant to the cohesion of the story of Joseph.

Concealed subject (agent) pronouns were identified as another textual cohesive element (of substitution) and contributed considerably to the cohesion of the story. They substituted the nouns (as subjects or agents) by avoiding their repetition and providing anaphorical clues. The role of concealed agents needs further theoretical investigation in Arabic to determine its constructive function in building a text cohesively.

The thematic unity of the story together with the narrative technique(s) were crucial in the carriage of the plot, as they complementarily contributed to the cohesiveness of the story along all its stages of the knot building and releasing.

Other elements of cohesion including grammatical & lexical contribute to the cohesion, and this needs further investigation.

Further analysis will include other stories in the Qur’an to find out how the ellipsis is working as a grammatical cohesive element.

10. REFERENCES

- ‘AbdulTawab, S. (1995). *al-Surah al-‘Adabiyah Fi al-Qur’an al-Kareem*. Cairo: Longman.
- ‘Afifi, A. (1996). *Dhahirat al-Takhfif Fi al-Nahw al-Arabi*. Cairo: Al-Dar al-Musriyah al-Lubnaniyah.
- Arberry, A.J. (1955). *The Koran interpreted*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Baalbaki, R. (2008). *The Legacy of the Kitab. Sibawayhi’s Analytical Methods within the Context of the Arabic Grammatical Theory*. Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics. T. Muraoka & C.H.M. Versteegh (eds.), Leiden & Boston: Brill.

- Beeston, A.F.L. (1968). *Written Arabic. An approach to the basic structures.* Cambridge University Press: London.
- Dayyeh, H.R. (2012). The relation between frequency of usage and deletion in Sibawayhi's *Kitab*. in A. Magory (ed.), *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics. Sibawayhi and Early Arabic grammatical Theory*, 75-98. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Devenyi, K. (2007). Idmār in the Ma'ānī of al-Farrā : A Grammatical Approach between Description and Explanation. In Everhard Ditters and Harald Motzki (ed.), *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics*, 45-64, Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Gully, A. (1995). *Grammar and Semantics in Medieval Arabic.* Surry: Curzon press.
- Halliday, M.A.K & Hasan, R. (1989). *Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social semiotic perspective.* Oxford: OUP.
- Halliday, M.A.K. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English.* London: Longman.
- Hammudah, T.S. (1999). *'ahirat al-Hadhf Fi Ad-Daras al-Lughawi.* Alexandria: ad-Dar al-Jami'yah lilnashr wal Tiba'ah wal Tawzi'.
- Ibn al-Athir, D. (1939). *Alamthal Alsair.* (ed.), M.M. Abdul Hamid. Cairo: Maktabat Mustfa Albaby Alhalaby wa Awladuhu.
- Ibn Hisham, A.Y (2000). *Mughny al-labib.* (ed.), A.M. al-khatib. Kuwait: Almajlis Alwatany lil thaqafa wal Funun wal 'Adab. Silsilat al-Turath.
- Ibn Jinnī, A. (1960). *Alkhasa'is.* (ed.), M.A. an-Najjar. Cairo: Dar alkitab al-Missriyah.
- Ibn Man'ur, A.M (1999). *Lisan al-'Arab.* (ed.), A.M. 'AbdulWahab & M.S.al-'Ubaidy. Beirut: Dar 'Ihia al-Turath al-Arabi & Mua'ssasat at-Tarikh al-'Arabi.
- Johns, A.H. (1993). The Quranic presentation of the Joseph story: naturalistic or formulaic language? In G.R Hawting & 'Abdul-kader A. Shareef (eds.), *Approaches to the Qur'an*, 37-69, London & New York: Routledge.
- al-Jurgani, A.Q. (1984). *Dala'il a-I'jaz.* (ed.), M.M. Shaker. Cairo: Maktabat Alkhangi.
- KhallafAllah, M. A. (1999). *al-Fan al-Qassassy Fi al-Qur'an al-Kareem.* London, Beirut & Cairo: Sina lilnashar & Dar alintishar alArabi.
- MacKay, F.W. (1991). *Ibn Qutayba's understanding of Quranic brevity.* M.A. thesis, McGill University.
- Marogy, A.E. (2010). *Kitab Sibawayhi. Syntax and pragmatics.* Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Mir, M. (1986). The Qur'an story of Joseph: Plot, Themes, and Characters. *The Muslim World*, 76(1), 1-15.
- Mir, M. (1988). Qur'an as literature. *Religion & literature*, 2(1), 49-64.
- Mir, M. (2000). Irony in the Quran: a study of the story of Joseph. In I.J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*, 173-187, London & New York: Routledge.
- Rahman, Y. (2000). Ellipsis in the Qur'an: A study of Ibn Qutayba's Ta'wil Mashkil al-Qur'an. In I.J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an* (pp.277-291). London & New York: Routledge.
- al-Rumanni, A. (1976). *Al-Nukat Fi I'jaz al-Qur'an.* In Thalath Rasā'il Fi I'jāz al-Qur'an. (ed.) M.Khalafallah Ahmed and M.Zaghlūl Sallām. Cairo: Dar al-Maaref.
- Ryding, K.C (2005). *A Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic.* Cambridge University Press: New York.
- Sakhy, A.R. (2012). A Quranic perspective on ellipsis. *Journal of Basra Arts*, 61, 1-25
- Sibawayh, A. (1966). *al-Kitab,* (ed.), 'Abd as-Salam Harun, 5 vols. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khangi.

- Solimando, C. (2011). Ellipsis in the Arabic Linguistic Thinking (8th–10th Century). In G. Lancioni & L. Bettini (eds.), *The Word in Arabic*, 85-108. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Stern, M. S. (1985). Muhammad and Joseph: A Study of Koranic Narrative. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 44, 193-204.
- Versteegh, K. (1994). The notion of underlying levels in the Arabic grammatical tradition. *Historiographia Linguistica*, 21, 271-296.
- Versteegh, K. (1997). Landmarks in linguistic thought III: The Arabic linguistic tradition. London: Routledge.
- al-Zamakhshari, J.M.A (1998). *Al-Kashaf* .(eds.), A.M. ‘Abdul Maujud, A.M. Awad & F.A.A. Hujazy. Saudi Arabia: al-ubaikan Bookshop.
- l-Zarkashi, B. (1957). *Al-Burhan Fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’an* . (ed.), M.A. Ibrahim. Cairo: Dar al-Turath.