

**Eman EL Rays**

**Ellipsis as a Translation Barrier in  
Selected Translations  
of the Holy Quran**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper selects three translations of the Holy Quran done by three translators of different linguistic backgrounds: Rodwell (a native speaker of English), Mohamed Asad (a Ukrainian who learnt both Arabic and English), Abd Haleem (a native speaker of Arabic). The study attempts to examine how ellipsis as a grammatical cohesive device stands as a barrier that challenges translators and also illustrates the cohesion loss in some parts of translation indicating the success or failure of the compensation strategies adopted by the three translators to remove such a barrier. Halliday & Hassan's theory of text cohesion is the basis of the present study analysis.

**Key words:** Ellipsis, Grammatical cohesive devices; Compensation techniques.

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### Introduction

Translating a text from one language into another is a problematic issue because different ways of expressions and tools used in one language may prove absurd or awkward in another, especially if the source language is Arabic and the translated text is the Holy Quran. Therefore, some Western writers criticize the style of Quran for its incoherence and lack of harmony; Abd El Fattah (2006), however, has refuted this claim as follows:

Such writers ignore the fact that:

It is both inconceivable and impossible to judge one language according to the rules of another. What might be considered elegant style, or legitimate form, or appropriate function in one language is not necessarily looked upon the same way in another. Different languages very often express the same thing differently, necessitating different phrasing in expression in translation. There is no perfect synonymy or exact equivalence between languages in translation. There will always be a “translation loss” of different degrees as a result of not only linguistic, but also, cultural factors. (p. 18)

What is mentioned above reveals that a degree of loss is expected in the translation whether: lexical, semantic, and grammatical or textual. Translation from Arabic into English or vice versa expects the loss on different levels, since Arabic and English are different (linguistically, syntactically, semantically, and phonically).

This paper focuses specifically on the grammatical cohesive tool (ellipsis) as an obstacle which encounters the translator in the translation of the sacred text, in addition to the analysis of the compensation strategies adopted by the three translators in question to mitigate the grammatical loss. In other words, the research tries to

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illustrate how translators use “ the possibilities and mechanism of compensation, in producing, analyzing and explaining target texts” (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2010, p. 49).

### **1. The theoretical frame of the study**

The theoretical frame of the study depends on Halliday & Hasan ‘s theory of text cohesion and compensation concept in the translation process. The approach of Halliday and Hasan (1976) towards cohesion identify grammatical factors of cohesion including reference, substitution and ellipsis. Ellipsis is the topic focused on; ellipsis creates cohesiveness via omission; that is, interpreting elliptical forms requires moving elsewhere within the text or discourse context for filling the blanks.

### **1.2 Compensation as a Translation Concept**

“Compensation” means “the technique of making up for the translation loss of important ST (source text) features by approximating their effects in the TT (target text) through means other than those used in the ST” (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2010, p. 248). The definition of compensation above means that “translators resort to different compensation strategies that bridge the gap created by ST features (whether lexical, grammatical, textual, etc.) which have no equivalents in the target language and thus expected to block the channel of communication between the target reader and the ST” (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002, p. 40). Therefore, compensation strategies or categories help the translators resolve the ambiguity caused by the Quran-specific lexical and grammatical cohesion features.



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### **2. Selected data and Question of the Study**

Three translations of the Holy Quran are selected: the three translators are different in their historical, religious and linguistic background and the objectivity level in rendering the Quranic text. Rodwell, a Christian and a native speaker of English who learnt Arabic, published his translation in the 19th century, in 1861 (the edition used is that of 1995). Asad, a Jew who became a Muslim and a native speaker of neither Arabic nor English is a Ukrainian (Austro -Hungarian) who learnt both Arabic and English. He published his translation in the 20th century, in 1980 (the edition used is that of 1980). Abdel Haleem, a Muslim and a native speaker of Arabic who learnt English, published his translation in the 21st century, in 2010 (the edition used is that of 2010). Abd Haleem's and Asad 's translations reveal a high level of objectivity. Such levels of objectivity would be shown in demonstrating the examples throughout the study.

This study attempts to answer the following questions;

- 1 How ellipsis is rendered in the three translations under study?
- 2 What translation strategies have been used to render ellipsis?

### **3. Literature review**

The literature review includes most of the studies that discusses the problems of rendering the Holy Quran from Arabic into English, comparing similarities and differences in more than one translation. All these contribute to the development of the present research.

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Mohamed Sabrah (1983) discusses the different views of Muslim grammarians and philologists on the problematic grammatical structures of the Holy Quran and accordingly the possibilities of different interpretations. He traces the different views held by syntacticians to argue in favor of or against a particular grammatical interpretation and the effect of these views on the development of the Holy Quranic studies later on.

Said Al-Eleemy (1993) explores many problems of translating the Quran into English through the analysis of three well-known translations of the Holy Quran. He handles cultural as well as exegetical problems such as *muhkam* and *mutashbih*. Al – Eleemy also elaborated on the inimitability of the Holy Quran and the various problems of rendering its stylistic features into English. Although he gave some examples of ambiguity in the Holy Quran, he did not address all the different aspects of this linguistic feature.

Khaled Tawfeek (1999) studies the “rendering of a selected Sample of abstract nouns in the Quran”. He tackled lexical ambiguity as well as several issues related to the translation of the Holy Quran such as the untranslatability, impermissibility of translating the Holy Quran into foreign language and “*ijaz*” i.e. ellipsis in the Holy Quran.

Masoud Omar Mahmoud (2007) discusses the “Rendering of Verb to Say in the Quran into English”. Although the study mainly dedicates to the problem associated with translating the Arabic verb ‘*qala*,’ i.e. to say, in the Holy Quran, it opens with a chapter entitled, ‘Translating the Glorious Quran’. The chapter sheds light on the language of the Holy Quran and the problems, which the translator may encounter.

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### 4. Ellipsis

Pioneers as Sībawayh and other Arab researchers like IbnJinnī, Abū'Ubayda, IbnQutayba, AbūḤayyān, IbnHishām, Al-Zamakhsharī, Al-Zarkashī, Al-Jurjānī, and Al-Suyūfī among others, have devoted many pages to the analysis of this device, extensively outlining its benefits, causes, conditions and categories. Badr Al-Dīn Al-Zarkashī (794/1391) in his encyclopaedic *Al-Burhānfi'Ulūm Al-Quran* provides extensive treatment of this phenomenon, presenting us with a detailed account of what had been said previously by early Arab scholars and including over 1000 instances of its occurrence in the Quran. So, this study will be concerned only with the grammatical aspect.

According to M. A. K. Halliday and Hassan (1976) ellipsis is “something left unsaid”, where “unsaid” implies “but understood nevertheless”. It is as ‘substitution by zero’, there is nothing to be inserted into the structural slot of the missing information. They refer to it as ‘something understood’ where understood is used in the special sense of ‘going without saying’ (p. 142:144). They further state that an item is “elliptical if its structure does not express all the features that have gone into its make-up – all the meaningful choices that are embodied in it”. ...ellipsis occurs when something that is structurally necessary is left unsaid; there is a sense of incompleteness associated with it. But it is useful to recognize that the ‘essential characteristic of ellipsis is that something which is present in the selection of underlying (‘systemic’) options is omitted in the structure – whether or not the resulting structure is in itself ‘incomplete’ (Halliday and Hassan ,1976. p .144). They discuss ellipsis under three headings: nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis.

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The table provides examples for the three types of ellipsis where the omitted elements are below marked by (x) (examples in the table are taken from Nunan 1993).

### 4.1. Three Types of Ellipsis in English

Nominal ellipsis	Verbal ellipsis	Clausal ellipsis
<i>My kids play an awful lot of sport. Both (x) are incredibly energetic.</i>	<i>A: Have you been working? B: Yes, I have (x).</i>	<i>A: Why'd you only set three places? Paul's staying for dinner, isn't he? B: Is he? He didn't tell me (x).</i>

#### 4.1.1. Nominal ellipsis

As Halliday and Hasan (1976) note,

Nominal ellipsis occurs within the nominal group where the function of the omitted head is taken by some modifying element. Such elements are deictic (determiners), enumerative (numerals or other qualifiers), epithets (adjectives) and classifiers (nouns). Deictic and enumerative elements function more often as head than the other elements. For example, in the enumerative *four* does not function as modifier, but is upgraded to function as head: Four other Oysters followed them, and yet another four (p. 148).

Halliday and Hasan (1976) recognize that the second clause is ‘‘ cohesive because it presupposes the previous one that is not elliptical. The presupposed items in elliptical clauses can be restored anaphorically and always replaced by a full nominal

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group” (p. 148). They realize “what is always presupposed in ellipsis is the thing. The range of possible presuppositions is dependent on the structure of the nominal group, and therefore only those items can be presupposed that can follow the element acting as head in the following elliptical group” (p. 151):

- a. *Here are my three red fluffy dresses*
- b. *Where are yours? (your (deictic) three/ red/ fluffy / dresses)*
- c. *I used to have three. (three (enumerative) red/ fluffy / dresses)*
- d. *Can you see any yellow? (yellow (epithet) fluffy/ dresses)*
- f. *Or would you prefer the cotton? (the cotton (classifier) dresses)*

It is shown that “the thing is presupposed by all the modifying elements that function as head in the elliptical nominal group. It is only a deictic modifier in nominal ellipsis that can presuppose a full nominal group in a non-elliptical clause” (Halliday and Hasan 1976, p. 153).

### 4.1.1. Verbal Ellipsis

Halliday and Hasan (1976) distinguish two types of verbal ellipsis: lexical and operator ellipsis. They note that “operator ellipsis within the sentence, in the context of coordination, does not contribute to cohesion” (p. 174). They are illustrated in the following table (ibid, p. 175):

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### 4.1.1.1. Types of Verbal Ellipsis

<i>Lexical ellipsis</i>	<i>Operator ellipsis</i> (modal and temporal operators)
<i>Is he complaining? – He may be; I don't care.</i>	<i>Has she been crying? – No, laughing.</i>
<i>Mary didn't know, did she?</i>	<i>What must I do next? – Play your highest card.</i>

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) the difference between the two types of verbal ellipsis is that:

Lexical verb is omitted from the verbal group, whereas operator ellipsis involves the omission of operators. Moreover, operator ellipsis does not include the subject. It must be presupposed. Operator ellipsis is characteristic of responses which are closely tied to a preceding question or statement, and which have the specific function of supplying or confirming a lexical verb. Lexical ellipsis can be clearly exemplified by question tags. (p. 174).

### 4.1.2. Clausal Ellipsis

Halliday and Hasan (1976) introduce four sub-types of clausal ellipsis according to "the structure of the clause in English. These sub-types are propositional, modal, general and zero ellipsis" (P. 184). The full table is below (p. 185):

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### 6.1.3.1 Types of Clausal Ellipsis

<i>Propositional</i>	<i>Modal</i>	<i>General</i>	<i>Zero</i>
<i>Who was going to plant a row of poplars in the park? -The Duke was.</i>	<i>What was the Duke going to do? - Plant a row of poplars in the park.</i>	<i>Are you coming? - Yes. /No.</i>	<i>England won the cup. - Who told you?</i>
omission of the complement and the adjunct + lexical ellipsis	omission of the subject and the finite operator + operator ellipsis	all elements but one omitted.	entire clause omitted

The first two sub-types of clausal ellipsis consist of modal elements (subject and the finite element in the verbal group) and propositional element (the rest of the verbal group, complements and adjuncts). ‘‘Modal ellipsis occurs in response to WH-questions where the choice of mood is not expressed in the clause. What also follows from (previous table) is that lexical ellipsis implies propositional ellipsis, whereas operator ellipsis implies the modal one’’ (P. 186).

The example of zero ellipsis shows ‘‘the entire omission of the clause. It is possible to use the substitute *so* as the cohesive form of the reported clause: *Who told you so?* In general ellipsis of the clause, all elements but one required can be omitted’’ (p.197):

- *When is John coming? - Next weekend* (p. 197).

General ellipsis can be illustrated by ‘‘ the presence of WH-element or some other single clause element’’ (p. 198). These items are used to require further specification:

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- a. *Someone's coming to dinner – Who?*
- b. *John's coming to dinner – John Smith?*

Halliday and Hasan (1976) mention that clausal ellipsis” is expressed in the form of *Who?* And *John Smith?* As question rejoinders. A rejoinder is any utterance which immediately follows an utterance by a different speaker and is cohesively related to it” (P. 198). It is worth mentioning that “no type of clausal ellipsis takes the form of the omission of single elements of clause structure” (Halliday and Hasan 1976, P. 201). So, it is not possible to say *she has taken* in response to the following question:

- *Has she taken her medicine?*
- a. *She has.*
  - b. *She has done.*

In the previous example ‘clausal ellipsis is used with verbal lexical ellipsis in (a) and with verbal substitution in (b). It is also possible to reply with a full non-elliptical clause where the complement *her medicine* can be presupposed by referential it” (p. 202).

### 4.2. Ellipsis in Arabic terms

#### 4.2.1. Hazef

According to Carter (1991) ‘hazef’ is the most common term used in traditional Arabic linguistics to refer to the ellipsis of a word of a sentence.

#### 4.2.2. Idmar

Sibawayh is the first grammarian to examine ellipsis on its phonological, morphological and syntactic levels. In describing and analyzing the phenomenon, he employed these two terms: deletion and suppression whose usage occasioned difference of opinions among contemporary scholars (Alamiri, 2013. p. 63). According to Hammudah (1998) these two terms are synonymous, and Sibawayh used them



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interchangeably (p. 20). On the contrary, Carter (1991) argues these terms are related and they are partially overlapped. Moreover, Dayyeh (2012) believes that “ellipsis is a specific kind of obligatory suppression, and it is linked to the frequent usage of speech, considered by Sibawayh, as one reason, among others of applying ellipsis” (p. 82). Ibrahim (1975) mentions that “*idmar* is the second term used in Arabic linguistics to denote ellipsis”. He distinguishes between *hazef* and *idmeir* as follows:

The literal meaning of the word *hazef* is the ellipsis of an element of speech, for example, the ellipsis of the noun or the verb or the particle or clause. However, if an element is deleted from a sentence but its influence remains, then this is called *idmiir* (p. 2252).

According to Al-Hroot (1987) Arab linguists argue that the subject of the verb *zahaba* in the first example is *mudmar*, which has been ellipited; they use the term *idmeir* in this case and not *hadhf* to refer to this process (pp. 26:27). Nevertheless, Sibawayh (1975) states that “Arab linguists sometimes use the terms *hadhf* and *idmar* to mean the same thing to the extent that the reader can sometimes hardly detect any difference between them except in cases where the subject is elliptic, as in the second example above” (p. 257).

### 4.2.3. Taqdir

Gruntfest (1984) illustrates this term with the following example as follows (p. 234):

Arab linguists use the term *taqdir* to refer to the ‘process of deducing an element elliptic from a sentence’, as the following example indicates:

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*/Ou-saa?id-u Omei/ I help my mother*

Here the assumed structure of the sentence is:

*u-saa?id-u [ana u-saa?id]*

Where the word (*I*) is the assumed element (*muqaddar*). The process by which this word, and others, is deduced is called *taqdir* (assumption).

### 4.3. Types and categories of Ellipsis in the Holy Quran

The traditionalists claim that ellipses in Arabic and in the glorious Quran fall into two categories:

a. when the translator has to resort to a word or more for more clarification without additional element or utterance that will result into another shade of meaning not originally implied.

b. When the source text which requires the presupposition of ellipsis element, this is done either for rational (logical reasons) or grammatical (structural) consideration.

Arab rhetoricians, grammarians, and contemporary linguists classify ellipsis as follows: ellipsis of particle, of word, and of sentence(s).

The analysis of the following ellipsis types is quoted from the studies of the ancient Arab grammarians and rhetoricians.

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### A. Elliptic Particle

#### A.1. Elliptic Question Particle

Toosey (406 A. H) mentions that the phrase (the description of the paradise مثل الجنة) is a subject of an elliptic predicate which is (what recite on you is the description of Paradise).

(ما يتلى عليكم) مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ

**The example of Paradise, which the righteous have been promised<sup>1</sup>**

#### A.2. Elliptic Circumstantial Particle

When a past tense is intended to express a circumstantial state (الحال), it is preceded by the particle (قد may) because such particle helps the verb to be circumstantial. This particle is suggested on such occasion even when it is elided See Toosey (406 A.H).

أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ (وقد) حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ أَوْ يُقَاتِلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ

**Or those who come to you, their hearts strained at [the prospect of] fighting you or fighting their own people**

#### A.3. Elliptic Emphasis Particle

Some Arab rhetoricians think that the elliptic unit is the emphasis particle (أن verily) Hassan (2000, vol. 1. p. 95)

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<sup>1</sup>The translation of the following verses is of Taqi- El-Din.A& Muhsin Khan (2012)

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قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا ( ان ) لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ

They said, “O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.” He said,  
“Indeed, you are a people behaving ignorantly

### B. Elliptic Copulative

The verse includes an elided coordinating conjunctive (واو العطف and) which precedes the verb (قال said). This style is frequently used in the Holy Quran see Hassan (2000, vol. pp 1:95).

فَأَجَاءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ إِلَى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ( و ) قَالَتْ يَا لَيْتَنِي مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسِيًّا مَنْسِيًّا

And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said,  
«Oh, I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten.

### C. Elliptic Genitive

Arab rhetoricians agree on that the elliptic unit is the genitive (الى to).

See Toosey (406 A. H.vol. 7, p. 192); Tabtaaeey (2006 .vol. 14. p. 472) and Hassan, 2000.vol. 1.p. 95).

لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَ ( الى ) مَسَاكِينِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْأَلُونَ

[Some angels said], “Do not flee but return to where you were given luxury  
and to your homes - perhaps you will be questioned.”

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### D. Elliptic Pronoun

According to Toosey (406 A.H. vol. 1. p. 274) and Hassan (2000, vol. 1.p. 97) the elliptic unit is the pronoun <ه> preceded by the genitive (في) which is the subject of the verb (تجزّي reward).

وَأَتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي ( فِيهِ ) نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا

**And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all,**

### E. Elliptic Word

#### E. 1. Elliptic Subject

The elided unit is the subject which is the demonstrative pronoun (هذا this). See Qazweeny (739 A.H, p. 26), Tabtaeey (2006, vol. 14. p. 293), Hassan (2000, vol.1, p. 96).

(هذا) ذَكَرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُ زَكَرِي

**[This is] a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah**

#### E. 2 Elliptic Verb (Obligatory Ellipsis)

The elliptic unit is the verb أقول (it is the equivalence of the English subject and its verb <I say>) said by The Almighty Allah and the text which follows it are commentary speeches by The Almighty Allah within some texts narrate Jesus speech. See Toosey (406 A.H. vol .7.p. 104) , Tabtaeey ( 2006 , vol. 13. p. 323), Qazweeny (739 A.H. p. 189) and Hassan (2000, vol. 1. p. 98)

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ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ (اقول) قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ

**That is Jesus, the son of Mary - the word of truth about which they are in dispute.**

### E.3. Elliptic Adjective

The ellipsis unit is the adjective (Jerusalem الأقصى).

see Tabtaaeey (1979. vol. 3 .p.), and Hassan ( 2000 .vol. 1. p. 98).

إِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لَيْسُوا بِوُجُوهُكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ (الأقصى) كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبِّرُوا  
مَا عَلَّمُوا تَتَبِيرًا.

**Then when the final promise came, [We sent your enemies] to sadden your faces and to enter the temple in Jerusalem, as they entered it the first time, and to destroy what they had taken over with [total] destruction.**

### E.4. Elliptic Substantive

The elliptic unit is the substantive (امرأة woman) before the adjective (واحدة one), According to Hassan (2000. vol. 1. p. 99).

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَاِمْرَأَةً ( إمرأة ) وَاحِدَةً

**But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses.**

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### E.5. Elliptic Adjunct

According to Toosey (406 A.H. vol. 6. p. 164), the elliptic unit is the adjunct (أصحاب town folk) is recovered from the situational context of the text. This is supported by Tabtaaeey (2006, vol. 13. p. 173) who believes القرية to be Egypt and العير to be the caravan. This is also suggested by Hassan (2000, vol. p. 199).

اسأل (أصحاب) القرية التي كنا فيها والعير التي أقبلنا فيها وإننا لصادقون

**And ask the city in which we were and the caravan in which we came - and indeed, we are truthful**

### E.6. Elliptic Governed

Toosey (406 A.H. vol. 3, p. 253) and Hassan (2000, vol. 1, p. 99) suggest that the elided governed is the demonstrative pronoun (ذلك) that after the word of totality (كل).

قُلْ كُلٌّ (ذلك) مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ

**Say, “All [things] are from Allah**

### E.7. Elliptic Object

Toosey (406 A.H. vol. 2. p. 380) thinks the elliptic units is the object (قوله his saying) and (أمره his command). This is according to the linguistic and the situational contexts of the text. It is suggested because the whole text narrates the speech of the believers who are <praised> by this text.

وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا (قوله) وَأَطَعْنَا (أمره)

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And they say, «We hear and we obey

### E.8. Situational Elliptic Object

According to Tabtaaey (2006, vol. 15:259) the elided object is recovered from the situational context of the Quranic discourse as a whole. The elliptic situational object is (إلهاً) for worshiping).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ (إلهاً ومعبوداً) سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ

**Indeed, those who took the calf [for worship] will obtain anger from their Lord**

Toosey (406 A.H. vol. 7. p .71), Hassan (2000. vol .1. p. 100) and Tabtaaey (2006. vol. 15. p .259) agree on the elliptic sentences after recovering them, the text may take the following form

أَذْهَبَ بِكِتَابِي هَذَا فَأَلْفَيْهِ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ, (فأخذ الهدهد الكتاب وحمله الى مملكة سبأ حتى إذا أتاهما ألقاه لها فأخذته ولما قرأته) قَالَتْ (لملأها و أشراف قومها) يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ إِنِّي أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَابٌ كَرِيمٌ.

**Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then leave them and see what [answer] they will return. She said, “O eminent ones, indeed, to me has been delivered a noble letter. Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it reads: ‘In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,**

The elliptic part is (the hoopoe took the letter to the kingdom of Sheba and fall it down to her then, she took and read it).



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### 7. Analysis

In the translation of the Holy Quran, it is sometimes necessary to add the omitted words (which usually appear in brackets) to complete a sentence in the translation to ensure comprehensibility.

#### 7.1. Al-An'aam - Verse 12

قُلْ لَنْعَنَ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ قُلْ لِلَّهِ

Haleem	Say, «To whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth?» Say, «To Allah.»
Asad	Say: «Unto whom belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth?» Say: «Unto God
Rodwell	SAY (thou): Whose is all that is in the Heavens and the Earth? SAY (thou): God's.

According to the explanation given by Ibn Katheir (2006):

The unbelievers are asked to whom belongs whatever exists in either the heavens or on the earth. The inquirer then pauses to wait for the answer. Those questioned are themselves convinced that all belongs to God, yet while they dare not respond falsely, they are nevertheless not prepared to give the correct answer. Fearing that their response may be used as an argument against their polytheistic beliefs, they keep quiet. At this, the inquirer is told to answer the question himself and to say that all belongs to God (p. 1462).

The subject is elliptical in an imperative clause, in accordance with Arabic traditional grammar; in the Arabic-English translations the subject has no consequence,

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except in Rodwell's translation. Haleem and Asad maintain the Arabic form of the imperative clause without subject. However, Rodwell restores the elliptical subject. Darier (2007) asserts that "Just as a theory of syntax has to account for the null (implicit or deleted) elements, a theory of translation has to predict ways of recovering and translating elliptical elements"(p. 5). Compensation by splitting is used in this example; Rodwell splits the predicate into explicit subject and verb to make the sentence more communicative and intelligible.

### 7.2. An-Najm - Verse 43

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى

Haleem	That it is He who makes (people) laugh and weep
Asad	That it is He alone who causes [whom He wills] to laugh and to weep;
Rodwell	That it is He who causeth to laugh and to weep,

Tafheem (1979) explains that "Allah provides the means both for joy and for grief. He controls good and ill luck. There is no one else in the Universe, who may have anything to do with making destinies"(section 62). The object that is omitted here is 'whom he wills' (Asad) or 'people' (Haleem). In Arabic, the omission of the object of a verb "gives a general dimension to the verb and causes one to focus on the action of the verb rather than the instance of the action" (Darier 2007, p. 7). Rodwell sticks to the original text and omits the object, without considering the understanding of the non-Arab reader. Asad and Haleem use the strategy of compensation by splitting to clarify the meaning of the Quranic verse. Haleem splits the verb from the omitted object by adding the word 'people'. However, Asad adds the sentence of 'whom he wills', as he does not know the intent of the original text.

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### 7.3. Al-Qasas - Verse 23

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى يُصَدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ

Haleem	When he arrived at Midian's waters, he found a group of men watering [their flocks], and beside them two women keeping their flocks back, so he said, 'What is the matter with you two?' They said, 'We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds take their sheep away: our father is a very old man
Asad	When he arrived at the wells of Madyan, he found there a large group of men who were watering [their herds and flocks]; and at some distance from them he came upon two women who were keeping back their flock. He asked [them]: «What is the matter with you?» They answered: «We cannot water [our animals] until the herdsmen drive [theirs] home - for [we are weak and] our father is a very old man.
Rodwell	And when he arrived at the water of Madian, he found at it a company of men watering. And he found beside them, two women keeping back: "Why do ye," said he, "thus?" They said "We shall not water till the shepherds shall have driven off; for our father is very aged."

Ibn Katheir informs the reader that (2006) Madian was the place where the Prophet Moses had arrived. "The two women {daughters of Shu'aib (peace is upon him)} said to Mosa: it is not possible for us to water our animals by resisting these shepherds. Our father is too old to perform this rigorous duty. There is no other male member in the house either. Therefore, we, the womenfolk, have to come out to perform these chores,

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and until all the shepherds have watered their animals and left, we have to wait” (p.3756). The deletion is of the object. The verse mentions the verb ‘watering’ and the subject ‘he’ but hides the object which is specified by the succession of the speech or by evidence. Tabtaae (2006) reveals that “one of the purposes of omission of the object is to focus on the subject (i.e. the doer of the action)” (vol. 5, p. 260).

The object is omitted in the following sentences:

وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ (غنمهم) -1

He found there a group of men watering (their flocks)

٢- دُونَهُمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ (غنمهما)

Two women who were keeping back (their flocks)

- قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي (أغنامنا) 3

They said “we cannot water (our flocks)

Rodwell pays no attention to the elliptic objects or to the understanding of the verse meaning. However, Haleem and Asad grasp well this point and they apply compensation by splitting and add the object ‘their herds and flocks’. Asad adds also the omitted object ‘them’ to the verb ‘asked’. The restoring of the elliptic object helps the TR to understand the intended meaning of the verse.

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### 7.4. Al-A'raaf - Verse 31

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

Haleem	Children of Adam, dress well whenever you are at worship, and eat and drink [as We have permitted] but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people.
Asad	O CHILDREN of Adam! Beautify yourselves for every act of worship, and eat and drink [freely], but do not waste: verily, He does not love the wasteful!
Rodwell	O children of Adam! wear your goodly apparel when ye repair to any mosque, and eat ye and drink; but exceed not, for He loveth not those who exceed.

According to the explanation of Tafheem (1979) “the word ‘Zena’ which occurs in this verse refers to full and proper dress. While performing Prayer people are required not only to cover the private parts of their body, but also to wear a dress that serves the two-fold purpose of covering and giving one a decent appearance” (section 206). Haleem (2010) points out that the literal meaning of ‘wear your adornment’, is clearly a reference to clothes and not to jewelry. God does not want to subject man to “misery or starvation or to deprive him as such of the good things of this worldly life”. On the contrary, “it pleases Him that man should appear in good decent dress and enjoy the clean food provided for him by God. There is nothing sinful in that. As for sin, it consists in transgressing the bounds set by God” (p. 96). The object of the transitive verbs ‘eat and drink’ is omitted, the reason behind this has been illustrated by Siyouti (2003): it is simply to draw attention to the necessity of eating and drinking without excess as a means of preserving life.

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Rodwell translates the verse literally without recalling the deleted object of the transitive verb ‘eat and drink’ depending on the imagination of the TR. whereas; Haleem and Asad find it is impossible to render the verse without the object. So, compensation by splitting is the proper solution; they add the object to the transitive verb. Haleem adds the sentence ‘as we have permitted’, while Asad adds the adverb ‘freely’ to complete the mental image conveyed.

### 7.5. Ash-Shams - Verse 13

فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ نَاقَةَ اللَّهِ وَسُقْيَاهَا

Haleem	The messenger of God said to them, ‘[Leave] God’s camel to drink,’
Asad	although God’s apostle had told them, «It is a she-camel belonging to God, so let her drink [and do her no harm]!»
Rodwell	Said the Apostle of God to them, - «The Camel of God! let her drink.»

According to explanation of Ibn Katheir (2006) ‘the people of Thamud challenged the Prophet Salih to present a sign (a miracle) if he was truthful. Thereupon the Prophet presented a she-camel miraculously before them and warned them to the effect: ‘ This is Allah’s she-camel. She will graze at will in the land. One day will be for her to drink and one day for you and your cattle. If you molest her, you will be punished with a scourge’ ‘(p. 5587).

The verb is omitted and signaled by the accusative case assigned to the objects.

The three translators find no way out except by using compensation strategy. Haleem and Rodwell employ compensation by splitting strategy to restore the omitted

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verb. Haleem uses the verb ‘leave’, Rodwell finds out that the active verb ‘let’ is the most suitable one in this position. Asad, on the other hand, use compensation in kind; as he adds the sentence ‘do her no harm’ that contains the verb ‘do’. They all agree on restoring the verb and apply compensation technique, though each use a different verb.

### 7.6. Yusuf - Verse 18

وَجَاءُوا عَلَىٰ قَمِيصِهِ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ۚ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ أَمْرًا ۖ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ

Haleem	And they showed him his shirt, deceptively stained with blood. He cried, ‘No! Your souls have prompted you to do wrong! But it is best to be patient: from God alone I seek help to bear what you are saying.’
Asad	And they produced his tunic with false blood upon it. [But Jacob] exclaimed: «Nay, but it is your [own] minds that have made [so terrible] a happening seem a matter of little account to you!» But [as for myself,] patience in adversity is most goodly [in the sight of God]; and it is to God [alone] that I pray to give me strength to bear the misfortune which you have described to me.
Rodwell	said, And they brought his shirt with false blood upon it. He “Nay, but yourselves have managed this affair. But patience is seemly: and the help of God is to be implored that I may bear what you tell me.”

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According to the explanation of Ibn Katheir (2006)

The literal meaning of “good patience” which implies a patience that enables one to endure all kinds of troubles and afflictions in a calm, self-possessed and unripening manner, without complaining or crying or weeping, as is worthy of great minds. Grammatically, it is claimed that what is omitted is the subject of the nominal sentence, i.e. صبري صبر جميل ‘my patience is a good patience’ (p. 2405).

Rodwell and Haleem apply compensation in kind; grammatical transformation is chosen by Haleem changing the adjective ‘beautiful’ in the ST into the clause ‘to be patient’ in TT, while Rodwell employs a synonym ‘seemly’. Asad, on the other hand, uses compensation by splitting and adds the omitted subject clause ‘as for myself’ to clarify the presupposed meaning of the verse.

### 7.7. Al-Qaari’a - Verse 10-11

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا هِيَ . نَارٌ حَامِيَةٌ

Haleem	What will explain to you what that is? (it is) a blazing fire.
Asad	And what could make thee conceive what that [abyss] will be? A fire hotly burning!
Rodwell	And who shall teach thee what the pit (El-Hawiya) is? A raging fire!

Tafheem (1979) explains this verse as ‘what do you know what that (the calamity) is? That is, it will not merely be a deep pit but will also be full of raging fire’. The subject of the answer of the mentioned question is omitted, which is ‘it is’ (section 11). Zarkashi (1957) sheds light on the purpose of such ellipsis which is



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‘to glorify and exalt what is vague’.Rodwell and Asad do not attempt to recover the elliptic subject and they translate it according to the ST, while, Haleem is interested in manifesting the elliptic subject between two parenthesis employing compensation by splitting.7.8.Ar-Ra’d - Verse 35

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلُّهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا

Haleem	Here is a picture of the Garden that those mindful of God have been promised: flowing streams and perpetual food and shade.
Asad	THE PARABLE of the paradise promised to those who are conscious of God [is that of a garden] through which running waters flow: [but, unlike an earthly garden,] its fruits will be everlasting, and [so will be] its shade.
Rodwell	A picture of the Paradise which God hath promised to them that fear Him. The rivers flow beneath its bowers: its food and its shades are perpetual.

Ibn Kathir (2006) shows that ‘the Paradise is like this: canals flow beneath it, its fruits are eternal and its shade is perpetual. Such is the reward of the righteous but the reward of the disbelievers is the tire of Hell ‘(p. 2534).The predicate is deleted; the assumed omitted predicate is “دائم” everlasting or perpetual in “وظلها دائم” [the shade there in is perpetual].Haleem and Rodwell employ compensation in kind by paraphrasing the clause and making the adjective ‘perpetual’ qualify ‘food and shade’, whereas, Asad uses compensation by splitting and he adds the clause (so will be) to ensure that the intended meaning is fully intelligible and comprehensible.

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### 7.9. Al-Kahf - Verse 105

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزْنًا

Haleem	It is those who disbelieve in their Lord's messages and deny that they will meet Him. 'Their deeds come to nothing: on the Day of Resurrection We shall give them no weight.
Asad	They are destined to meet Him. Hence, all their [good] deeds come to nought, and no weight shall We assign to them on Resurrection Day
Rodwell	They are those who believe not in the signs of the Lord, or that they shall ever meet him. Vain, therefore, are their works; and no weight will we allow them on the day of resurrection.

Ibn Kathir (2006) mentions that:

The deeds of disbelievers will be in vain in the life-after-death, even though they might have considered it is a great achievement but the fact is that it will lose its value as soon as the world shall come to an end. When they will go before their Lord, and all their deeds shall be placed in the scales, they will have no weight at all. The only thing which will have weight there will be that which had been done in accordance with the Divine instructions and with the intention to please Allah (p. 3628). The adjective which qualifies the depicted noun 'weight' is deleted. The assumed dropped adjective is 'useful' according to Zarkashi (1957) who also states that the reason behind the ellipsis of the adjective is to exalt and glorify the indefinite nouns (i.e. the depicted nouns (الموصوف)).

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Note: As-Siyouti (2003) realizes that adjective deletion is rare since the adjective always comes to explain the depicted vague noun (p. 256).

None of the translators in the three translations recovers the elliptic noun.

### 7.10.Ar-Room - Verse 4

فِي بضعِ سنينَ ۗ لِلّٰهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ ۗ

Haleem	In a few years' time - God is in command, first and last.
Asad	Within a few years: [for with God rests all power of decision, first and last].
Rodwell	In a few years. First and last is the affair with God.

According to the explanation of Tafheem (1979) when the Romans will gain victory, it will not mean that Allah's lost kingdom will be restored to Him. Sovereignty in any case belongs to Allah. Allah gave victory to the side that became victorious first and Allah will give victory to the side that will gain victory after wards. For no one in his Kingdom can achieve domination solely by his own power. He whom He raises and he whom He causes to fall.

Ibn Jiny assumes that the omitted words are “أى من قبل ذلك ومن بعده” “before [that] and after [it]”, the annexed to ' mudāf 'ilayhi' is deleted (1955, vol. 2, p. 362). Abdul Hamid in *Sharh Ibnu Aʿqeel* (1980) refers to the fact that the 'annexed to' is less used than the omitting of the annexed. The conjoined prepositional phrases من قبل ومن بعد, literally “before and after” means “before the Defeat and after the Victory” (p. 73).

The three translators render it as first and last. None of them realizes the elliptic 'annexed to' nor attempts to retrieve it.

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### 7.11.Ar-Ra'd - Verse 23-24

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ  
بَابٍ . سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

Haleem	They will enter perpetual Gardens, along with their righteous ancestors, spouses, and descendants; the angels will go into them from every gate. ‘Peace be with you, because you have remained steadfast. What an excellent reward is this home of yours!’
Asad	Gardens of perpetual bliss, which they shall enter together with the righteous from among their parents, their spouses, and their offspring; and the angels will come unto them from every gate [saying]: (13:24) «Peace be upon you, because you have persevered!»
Rodwell	Gardens of Eden—into which they shall enter together with the just of their fathers, and their wives, and their descendants: and the angels shall go in unto them at every portal: “Peace be with you!” saying, “because ye have endured all things!” Charming the recompense of their abode!

Ibn Kathir (2006) explains the verse as follows:

Those who remain self-possessed and keep under control all their desires and lusts and do not transgress the bounds, and they do not yield to temptations to disobey their Lord in order to gain advantages and gratify their desires. Their reward will be gardens wherein they will live forever. This implies two things. The angels will come

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in large numbers from every side and give them this good news: Now you have come to a place where there is peace for you. Here you are immune from every affliction, every trouble, every hardship, and every danger and worry. (p. 250)

The adverb of manner is omitted at the beginning of the verse 24. So, the interpretation would require the supposition of the /qa-eleen/ saying / قائلين /.

Haleem does not attempt to retrieve the adverb of the manner and sticks literally to the ST, while, Asad and Rodwell find it is significant to complete the meaning and make it accessible to the TR, and so they add the adverb ‘saying ‘employing compensation by splitting.

### 7.12.Qaaf - Verse 1-2-3

ق وَالْقُرْآنِ الْمَجِيدِ. بَلْ عَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَاْفِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ

Haleem	Qaf. By the glorious Quran! But the disbelievers are amazed that a warner has come from among them and they say, ‘How strange!
Asad	Qaf. Consider this sublime Qur'an! But nay - they deem it strange that a warner should have come unto them from their own midst; and so, these deniers of the truth are saying, «A strange thing is this!
Rodwell	Qaf. By the glorious Koran: They marvel forsooth that one of themselves hath come to them charged with warnings. “This,” say the infidels, “is a marvelous thing.

### According to Tafheem (1979):

In this verse an oath has been sworn by the Quran to impress the point that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah’s peace and blessings) is really the Messenger of Allah and the disbelievers’ surprise and wonder about his apostleship is misplaced, and the fact of the Quran’s being “majid” is a proof of this claim (Section 45). What is omitted in this verse is the complement of the Oath (جواب القسم) .

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The Complement of the Oath is either “you are Allah’s Apostle” or “you will live again after you die and become dust” according to the estimation of Siyouti (2003). These two estimations stem from Verses 2 and 3 in the same Sūrah, respectively. Haleem (2010) refers to that which is sworn—that mankind will be raised from the dead—is omitted but is evident from the verses that follow (1–4), usually is taken to mean ‘recording angels’ (p. 340). According to Asad’s comment in the footnote (1980) in this verse “a vast subject has been compressed into a few brief words. The object for which an oath has been sworn by the Quran has not been mentioned. A subtle gap has been left and the sentence is resumed with “nay”. If one thinks a little and also keeps in view the background in which this has been said, one comes to know what-is the subject of the gap that has been left between the oath and “nay” (p. 731). None of the three translators recalls the complement of the oath in their translation. However, Haleem and Asad find it is enough to refer to this in the footnotes.

### **8. Findings of This Study**

The study analyzes twelve examples from different chapters in the Holy Quran in terms of compensation strategy. The examples tackle more than eight types of ellipsis. Examples 1, 6 and 7 handle omissions of the subject. Examples 2, 3, 4 deal with object deletion. Example 5 is concerned with verb omission. Example 8 drops the predicate. Example 9 works on ellipsis of the adjective of depicted noun. Example 10 illustrates the annexed to deletion. Example 11 explains how the adverb of manner can be dropped. Lastly, example 12 tackles the deletion of the complement of the oath. Employing compensation strategy also differs from one translator to another in rendering ellipsis as follows:

8.1. Example (1) Only Rodwell applies compensation by splitting.

8.2. Examples (2, 3, 4,7,5) Haleem and Asad use compensation by splitting.

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8.3. Examples (6, 8) Rodwell and Haleem chose compensation in kind, whereas Asad inclines toward compensation by splitting.

8.4. Example (7) only Haleem opts for compensation by splitting.

8.5. Examples (9, 10, 12) none of them uses any type of compensation.

8.6. Example (11) compensation by splitting is used by Asad and Rodwell.

The following pie chart clarifies the usage of compensation in rendering different types of ellipsis in the Quranic verses under study. The ratio among them is as follows respectively Haleem 7, Asad 7, and Rodwell 5 throughout the twelve examples.

Rodwell is less than the others in using compensation techniques, as he prefers sticking literally to ST. Haleem and Asad, on the other hand, find it is crucial to convey the intended meaning that the verses imply to TR. This can be achieved by employing different compensation strategies in rendering different types of ellipsis.

## **9. Conclusion**

Ellipsis refers to the structure of sentences and clauses in which some information is missing. Elliptical clauses are the presupposing ones, and the missing information can be carried over from the presupposed clause. This research concludes the following:

1. Ellipsis in English is an optional act, however, in Arabic; it is sometimes an obligatory act.

2. Translators of the Glorious Quran sometimes find in compensation strategies the proper solution to the cases of ellipsis obstacles in rendering the Holy text.

3. Translating the elliptic Quranic texts requires a wide knowledge of the Arabic Rhetoric as well as in the fields of Jurisprudence and interpretations of the Glorious Quran because recovering the elliptic units is often done by means of both the linguistic and the situational contexts.

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### **End note:**

Elision and ellipsis are found in the linguistic of a language. Both of them mean leaving out or dropping parts of words or utterances. As far as Arabic is concerned, elision relates to dropping sounds and single letters whether in isolation or in the case of one-letter particles while ellipsis relates to dropping parts of speech, words or complete clauses or sentences but for the sake of enhancing the inimitability and sublime style of the Qur'an, (al-Sāmarā'ī ,2000. p. 12).



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