



# Clausal Ellipsis in the Dialogue of the Movie

## “To All the Boys: Always and Forever”

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Received: 2024-08-19 Accepted: 2025-06-04

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v13i1.5463

### Abstract

Ellipsis is a part of discourse that studies about omission of words in a sentence or utterance to avoid repetition. This study focuses on finding the type of clausal ellipsis and the reference parts in elliptical sentences in the dialogue of the movie “To All the Boys: Always and Forever”. This study expects to aid students in learning clausal ellipsis and provide insight into clausal ellipsis and its reference parts. This study used Halliday and Hasan (1976) theory to determine the type of clausal ellipsis and the reference part in elliptical sentences. The data were collected by observation method and analyzed use descriptive qualitative method. Based on results, the clausal ellipsis is found with total 88 data; 29 data of modal ellipsis, 26 data of propositional ellipsis, 33 data of question-answer ellipsis. The use of Question-Answer Ellipsis was widely used in the movie dialogue because the casts was mostly teenager which in a informal relation, so, they wanted to give a direct response to the questions without implication due to the relation and situation between the casts in the movie was informal.

**Keywords:** *clausal ellipsis, dialogue, movie*

### Introduction

Cohesiveness is a semantic notion; it describes relations of meaning found inside the text that define it as such. We shall name a tie a term to describe a single instance of cohesiveness, a term for one occurrence of a pair of cohesively associated items. The idea of tie helps one to examine a text in terms of its cohesive qualities and offer a systematic account of its texture patterns (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). In linguistically terms, the ideas of cohesiveness and texture fit to explain relation in discourse analysis. Five main categories of cohesive devices are distinguished by Halliday and Hasan (1976). They contain reference, substitution,

ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Every one of them comprises several subclasses and sub-subclasses (Sitio et al., 2023).

Ellipsis is the omission of one or more words that are easily understood but that must be included in order to make a sentence that is grammatically full (Luthfiah, 2024). Ellipsis allows for the omission of certain components of a structure when it is plausible to infer their presence based on the information that has been presented previously. When an ellipsis is used, it implies continuity and enables both the speaker and the addressee to concentrate on what is contrastive (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:535).

Sinclair (2000:399) in Banjarnahor (2022) explained that the function of ellipsis is not only to minimize the conversation but also to avoid repeating words in questions. In *Cohesion in English* by Halliday & Hasan (1976), they categorized ellipsis into nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis and clausal ellipsis. Nominal ellipsis sub-classes are deictic, numerative, epithet and classifier. Verbal ellipsis sub-classes are lexical ellipsis and operator ellipsis. Lastly, clausal ellipsis sub-classes are modal ellipsis, propositional ellipsis and question-answer ellipsis.

However, this study focuses in analysing clausal ellipsis in the dialogue of the movie "To All the Boys: Always and Forever". One of the two components that make up the structure of the clause in the English language is the modal element, and the other component is the propositional element. As mentioned before, modal ellipsis is one of sub-classes in clausal ellipsis. Within the verbal group, the modal element is comprised of the subject in addition to the finite element. Similarly, the polarity is formed in modal ellipsis, and the subject may be presupposed depending on what has taken place in the past text.

A component of the propositional element is known as the residue. This component includes the remaining components of the verbal group in addition to any complements or adjuncts that may be present in the sentence. Regarding the propositional ellipsis, this component is not supplied.

It is possible to use cohesion as a means of bringing together the phrase, the clause, the word, and the sentence. These things are connected to the function of discourse. The field of discourse analysis is concerned with acquiring knowledge about language that extends beyond the word, clause, phrase, and sentence that are essential for effective communication (Pangaribuan, 2019). Communication occurs in movie, which means ellipsis can be found in the dialogue between characters. One of the interesting movies is "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" aired in 2021. This movie is a suitable subject as teenagers often use elliptical sentences in

informal conversations, making the dialogues ideal for clausal ellipsis analysis. As well as the setting is on everyday life, so analyzing the use of elliptical sentences in this context is particularly relevant.

A number of ellipsis-related investigations have been conducted (Yulianita (2020) Yulianita (2020); Syahputri & Hanifah (2020)Syahputri & Hanifah (2020); Pertiwi et al. (2021)Pertiwi et al. (2021); Prasetya (2022); Sugiarto & Irawan (2022)). All of them investigated the type of ellipsis found in the data source, and most of them used children's movie as the data source. All except Pertiwi et al. (2021) found the same result, namely clausal ellipsis was the dominant type found in the movie based on the theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976) to avoid repetition.

Unlike Pertiwi et al. (2021), used theory by Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) to find the type of ellipsis in a novel and analyzed it by constituent structure, they found Ellipsis of subject (and auxiliary) was the frequent type used in the novel. However, they failed to find three types of ellipsis. Sugiartono & Irawan (2022) analyzed the sentence classification of ellipsis. Declarative sentence was the most used because the use was to convey information, provide facts, and state a statement. This is different from Yulianita (2020) who investigated the function of ellipsis and found that the speaker's economy was the dominant found in the data source because the aspects that were omitted from the previous utterance will be explained in the following utterance. The listener or reader will already be familiar with them.

Most of the previous studies used children's movie as the data source, which used a simple dialogue and language structures. Therefore, sentences that contain ellipsis are not diverse because the dialogue is not complex. Because of the simple language, there are type of ellipsis that were not found in the previous study. Moreover, the previous study that used theory by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) did not explain the sub-types or even the sub-subtypes of ellipsis, for example they only used clausal ellipsis followed by the data obtained.

Whereas clausal ellipsis has three sub-types namely modal ellipsis, propositional ellipsis and question answer ellipsis. However, they made it one as clausal ellipsis so that readers would not know that it has other specific types. Therefore, all of them analysed all types of ellipsis (nominal, verbal, and clausal) but none listed why the dominant types found in the data sources were often used. Their findings state that clausal ellipsis was the most common but there was no explanation of "why" when it comes to the context of the data source.

This study aims to obtain information about the type of clausal ellipsis in the dialogue of the movie "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" and to describe the reference part omitted in elliptical sentences in the dialogue of the movie. The result of this study provides an overview of clausal ellipsis in the dialogue that we may not even realize we often use in our daily lives. After a long search, there are none recent study related to ellipsis especially clausal ellipsis for movie "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" so this study will be providing study on the topic of clausal ellipsis using movie "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" to become a new source of learning for readers who want to get a deep understanding of clausal ellipsis because the movie was a teen romance genre and the movie casts are mostly teenagers. In most cases, they utilized idioms, slang, and conversational shortcuts that are more indicative of the language use typically associated with adolescents.

## **Method**

Utilized a movie entitled "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" as the data source aired in 2021. It was an American teen romantic comedy film directed by Michael Fimognari based on Jenny Han's 2017 novel *Always and Forever, Lara Jean*. The movie duration was 1 hour 55 minutes. "To All the Boys: Always and Forever" abbreviated into TABAF and will be used consistently. This study collected the data from the dialogue of the movie.

The method of the data collected in this study used an observation method. According to Creswell (2014) in Samosir & Afriana (2023), the observational method is when the researcher observes and collects the venture of the research object. Morrison (1993: 80) in Kumar (2022), observation allows researchers to collect data about the interactional setting (e.g., the interactions that are taking place, formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal, non-verbal etc). The method that was utilized in this research was a non-participatory method because the researcher did not involve themselves in the data sources.

The data were collected through some steps. First, watched the movie and read the movie transcript. Second, chose the sentences and underlined the sentences that contained clausal ellipsis found in the movie transcript by the theory proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Third, categorized the types and the sub-types of clausal ellipsis in a table. Fourth, identify the reference part by presupposes to the sentence that came before it.

A descriptive qualitative method was employed to analyze the data. The usage was to analyse and depict the subject matter through the use of verbal expressions or complete sentences (Bouvier & Machin, 2018) in Lestari et al. (2024). The characteristic of descriptive qualitative research means that the research attempts to create a systematic, accurate, and factual general description of the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena being researched Furidha & Sidoarjo (2023). Theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976) is applied to analyse the type of ellipsis and the reference part in elliptical sentence. The process of analysing the data were: First, analysed types and sub-types of clausal ellipsis. Second, analysed the reference part in the elliptical sentence.

## Results

### *Clausal Ellipsis*

Theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976) is applied to identify the types and sub-types of clausal ellipsis. As a result, modal ellipsis, propositional ellipsis and question-answer are found in the data source, means all types of clausal ellipsis are found. Modal ellipsis found 29 data, propositional ellipsis found 26 data and question-answer ellipsis found 33 data. The data found can be seen in the table below:

*Table 1. Clausal Ellipsis*

<b>Types</b>	<b>Sub-types</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total</b>
Modal Ellipsis		29	29
Propositional Ellipsis		26	26
Question-Answer Ellipsis	Yes/No Questions	18	33
	WH-Questions	15	
		<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>88</b>

The table above tells us that the Question-Answer is the most commonly found type of ellipsis in the movie. In the movie, the relation between the casts were lovers, between friends, between sisters, and parents and daughters because the movie was a teen romance movie. The situation was informal because the dialogue occurred in the high school, house, prom night, senior trip, date, and café. Therefore, according to the context in the movie, Question-Answer ellipsis is the most frequently used by the casts in their dialogue because they want to give a direct response for the question, which means they do not like to give an implication in their response because their relation and situation were mostly informal.

When people are among their friends or family, they frequently experience less need to adhere to precise grammatical norms. This is because trust and familiarity replace the requirement for clear and comprehensive phrases. Because of this familiarity, they are able to bypass over sections of phrases that are redundant in order to emphasize communication that is both short and efficient. Also, the use of Question-answer ellipsis is most common in the movie because the reference part is occurred already in the question sentence by the questioner, so the respondent no need to repeat it again, however, this still understood by the questioner.

### ***The Reference Parts of Clausal Ellipsis***

Ellipsis is simply a substitution by zero, where something is left unsaid but understood nevertheless (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:142). So, there is an omission in the sentence. Here are some omissions or the reference parts of clausal ellipsis in the dialogue of the movie. The reference parts inserted into a table below.

*Table 2. The Reference Parts of Clausal Ellipsis*

<b>Clausal Ellipsis</b>			<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total</b>
Modal Ellipsis	Subject	Pronoun	23	28
		Noun	5	
	Finite Element	Finite Operator	20	28
		Lexical Verb	8	
Propositional Ellipsis	Complement		22	25
	Adjunct		3	
Question-Answer Ellipsis	Yes/No Questions	Positive	13	19
		Negative	6	
	WH-Questions	Subject	15	29
		Finite Element	14	
	<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>129</b>

As the table above, the most frequent reference part that omitted in the sentence is WH-Questions with total 29. The form of WH-Question is when the respondent answers a question, the modal element, which is subject and finite element is omitted and leave the propositional element in order to response or answer a question by the questioner. This phenomenon often occurs because the modal element that omitted is already occur as a part of the question. For the example: What did I hit? – A root (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:210). The respondent omitted *[I hit]* presupposed modal element and leave propositional element *A root*

in their answer. The clause *[I hit]* is supplied in the question, so in order to avoid repetition, the respondent omit it.

WH-Question is one type of direct response (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:206). Thus, the reason why the characters in the movie used many of WH-Questions because they just want to answer straight forward for the question or we can say they want to give a direct response for the question, as well as they want to avoid repetition.

## Discussion

The results indicate Question-Answer Ellipsis was the most frequently used by the casts in the movie. It is similar to the results by Yulianita (2020), that in her study Yes/No Questions and WH-Ellipsis is dominant sub-types found which is parts of Question-Answer Ellipsis in clausal ellipsis. Different from Prasetya (2022), modal ellipsis was the frequently found in the clausal ellipsis. Thus, to get a better understanding of clausal ellipsis, some data of clausal ellipsis obtained will be describes. This study quotes several utterances in the data source below:

### 1. Modal Ellipsis

The modal ellipsis containing modal elements (subject + finite element) is omitted. Subject is usually a noun, noun phrase, or pronoun that indicates who or what the sentence is about and it carries out the verb's action. Halliday & Hasan (1976:180), the systems of finiteness is closely associated with first position in the verbal group, and this largely determines the possibilities of their presupposition by means of ellipsis. The example of the modal ellipsis can be seen in the following excerpts:

#### Data 1

LJ: *"Is it just me, or is she getting meaner with age?"*

Margot: *"And [...] more opinionated."*

(TABAF: 02:41)

The utterance above showed one phrase that omitted and can be classified as a modal ellipsis. The clause *she is* is omitted, which it seen after conjunction *and* then continued by adverb *more* and adjective *opinionated* without any subject and predicate. The clause *she is* is omitted which is related to the previous utterance's subject is *she*. The omission *she* is the subject and *is* the finite element. The full form of the clause should be *And [she is] more opinionated*. However, the meaning still understood by the viewer even the subject and predicate is omitted.

## Data 2

LJ: "In two days, I'm gonna tackle you and... [1] smother you with kisses and... [2] give you gifts."

(TABAF: 04:55)

There are two clauses omitted in the utterance that belong to modal ellipsis marked by [1] and [2]. The subject and predicate are omitted in that utterance after conjunction *and*, before verb *smother* and *give*. The clause *I'm gonna* is supposed to be filled in the brackets [1] and [2], it is related to the previous utterance *I'm gonna tackle you*. Thus, the full form of the utterance is *In two days, I'm gonna tackle you and [I'm gonna] smother you with kisses and [I'm gonna] give you gifts*. The subject is *I'm* and the finite element is *gonna* with the abbreviation is *going to*.

## Data 3

LJ: "Do you know how long it took Dad to find someone who will eat his cooking and [...] watch his documentaries?"

(TABAF: 17:18)

The utterance above is categorized as a clausal ellipsis by eliding the modal element. The modal element that is omitted is in the bracket, which is supposed to be *who will*, the subject is *who* and the finite element is *will*. The clause is omitted because in the previous clause has been mentioned *who will*. Therefore, the complete utterance would be *Do you know how long it took Dad to find someone who will eat his cooking and [who will] watch his documentaries?*

## 2. Propositional Ellipsis

The propositional element consists of the residue: the reminder of the verbal group and any complements or adjuncts that may be present Halliday & Hasan (1976:197). A word or phrase that completes a sentence's meaning is called a complement. The verb frequently requires complements, which give crucial details about the subject or object. An adjunct is an optional sentence component that contributes information beyond what is required for the statement to make sense grammatically. Adjuncts can offer information about the time, location, manner, reason, and so forth. We could say that adjunct is adverbial. The difference between complement and adjunct is, briefly, that the complement could become a subject if the clause was turned around in some way, whereas the adjunct could not (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:197). The selected data are as follows:



**Data 4**

LJ: *"This girl, she came up to me speaking Korean, and it's like, they see me and they think I understand... [1] and then I don't... [2], and it's like I don't belong... [3]"*

(TABAF: 04:23)

We can see there are three omissions that occurred in the data above. The omission [1], it is occurred after the modal element with subject *I* and finite element *understand*, the omission is *Korean* because it is related to the previous clause, *she came up to me speaking Korean*, which means *this girl* thought LJ is understand Korean because she looks like Korean. Here there is an adjunct that omitted in [2], it is occurred after subject *I* and verb phrase *don't belong*. The phrase that omitted is *understand Korean* presupposed that to *she came up to me speaking Korean, and it's like, they see me and they think I understand [Korean] [1]*. Last, the phrase omitted in [3] is *because I don't understand Korean*, which is still relate to the previous clause.

Thus, the complete utterance is *This girl, she came up to me speaking Korean, and it's like, they see me and they think I understand [Korean] and then I don't [understand Korean], and it's like I don't belong [because I don't understand Korean]*.

**Data 5**

LJ: *"Then my dad would kill you."*

Peter: *"No, he wouldn't [...]"*

(TABAF: 13:20)

From data 5 above, propositional ellipsis occurred in the utterance after the modal element *he wouldn't*, the subject *he* and the finite element *wouldn't*. Here there is omission of propositional element presupposed complement, the phrase that is omitted in the bracket is *kill me* which still related to the previous sentence by LJ. So, the complete utterance by Peter is *No, he wouldn't [kill me]*. However, the utterance is still understood by LJ and the audience of the movie.

**Data 6**

Peter: *"Have you listened to Oasis?"*

LJ: *"Not on purpose."*

Peter: *"Talk to me when you have [...]"*

(TABAF: 17:06)

From the utterance above, the propositional ellipsis is in the bracket. In propositional ellipsis, any complement or adjunct is omitted. As a result, there is an omission in the utterance by Peter, *talk to me when you have*. The omission is *listened to Oasis* presupposed a complement after the modal element *you have*

which will complete the sentence. Thus, the full form of utterance should be Talk to me when you have [listened to Oasis].

### 3. Question-Answer Ellipsis

The 'question and answer' sequence is a standard pattern in language, and not surprisingly, the particular type of cohesive relation that subsists between an answer and its question has its characteristic grammatical properties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:206). The sample provided in the data below demonstrates the Yes/No Questions and WH-Questions in the movie, such as:

#### a. Yes/No Questions

In their book, Halliday & Hasan (1976:208) explained that answers to yes/no questions, or polar questions as they have been called, are very simply dealt with, as the instruction 'answer yes or no!' suggests: the appropriate answer is *yes* or *no*. The words *yes* and *no* express simply a feature of polarity. They do not mean 'you are right' and 'you are wrong'; they mean 'the answer is positive' and 'the answer is negative'. It is possible to consider *yes* and *no* as a clause substitute. But they are not really substituting; for one thing, they can be accompanied by part of even the whole of the clause for which they would be said to be substituting, and that is precluded from the substitution as usually defined (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:209). The omission happens to the part of even the whole clause that follows *yes* and *no*.

#### Data 7

LJ: "That's huge, Peter. Are you gonna do it?"

Peter: "Nah, [...]."

(TABAF: 12:41)

Yes/No Question is divided into positive and negative response. *Nah* is an informal form of *No* which means a negative response. There is an omission part or clause after *Nah* that should relate to the question. The clause *I am not gonna do it* is omitted after the word *Nah*. Thus, the full form of utterance would be *Nah, [I am not gonna do it]*.

#### Data 8

Chris: "Hey, any word yet from Stanford?"

LJ: "No, [...] and it's killing me."

(TABAF: 14:28)

In this data, we could see the negative response by the word *No* in answering the question. The modal element is omitted in LJ's utterance. The clause *not yet* is omitted presupposed negative response. The clause *not yet* is related to the question by Chris. This should be place after *No*, then the complete utterance would be *No, [not yet] and it's killing me*. Even though the word *not yet* is not uttered but

it is still understandable by Chris and the audiences.

### Data 9

Dan: "You okay?"

LJ: "Yep, [...]"

(TABAF: 18:02)

Yes/No Questions is occurred in the data above. Yep is an informal form of Yes which indicate a positive response. There is a clause that omitted in the utterance by LJ. The clause I am okay is omitted which related to the Dan's question. I am okay is presupposed a positive response. So, the full utterance is Yep, [I am okay].

### b. WH-Questions

A WH-question required the specification of a particular item, which was missing from the clause. The omission part in WH-questions is usually supplied by the questioner in their question. This type omitted the modal element and leaving only the propositional element. Usually, the respondent omits it because they don't want to repeat the same clause as the clause in the question. Unlike Yes/No Questions where the answer is either Yes or No, the answers to WH-Questions can be very diverse.

### Data 10

LJ: "So, how was the visit?"

Peter: "[...] Amazing."

(TABAF: 03:40)

In the data above, there is missing modal element in the Peter's utterance. A modal element should occur before the propositional element amazing which act as a complement. The clause the visit was is presupposed modal element and it was supplied in the previous utterance by LJ, this should be occurred before amazing. So, the complete utterance is [the visit was] amazing.

### Data 11

Peter: "What is his name?"

Kitty: "[...] Dae. And this is the first time I'm contacting him."

(TABAF: 10:39)

Dae is a propositional element presupposed complement. There is no modal element in the Kitty utterance, which means the modal element is omitted. According to the previous utterance what is his name? by Peter, the omission would be his name is presupposed subject and modal element. This clause should occur before prepositional element Dae. So, the full form of utterance is [his name is] Dae. And this is the first time I'm contacting him.

## Data 12

LJ: *"Do you know how long it took Dad to find someone who will eat his cooking and watch his documentaries?"*

LJ and Kitty: *"[...] Long time."*

(TABAF: 17:18)

This data is the example of WH-Questions with characteristic the modal element is omitted, leaving only propositional element. The propositional element is in the LJ and Kitty answer *long time*. Based on the question *how long it took Dad to find someone who will eat his cooking and watch his documentaries?* So, the modal element that omitted is *it took* that supplied in the question. Which makes the full utterance is *[it took] long time*.

Looking at the results of clausal ellipsis sentence data above, this study sheds light on the ways in which adolescents regularly rely on clausal ellipsis to achieve an effective communication. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to analyze the manner in which characters in the movie which mostly adolescents omit sections of phrases while still conveying the intended meaning. In addition to demonstrating the inherent linguistic tendencies that are present in the speech of adolescents, this also exemplifies the informal and dynamic nature of their relationships, which are defined by brevity and mutual knowledge, which enables communication to take place in a more rapid and effective way.

## Conclusion

Drawing from the analysis conducted in the prior chapter, this study analyzed the clausal ellipsis from the dialogue of the movie "To All the Boys: Always and Forever". The types of clausal ellipsis found in the movie is Modal Ellipsis, Propositional Ellipsis and Question-Answer Ellipsis, which means this study found all types of clausal ellipsis. After collecting the data, Question-Answer Ellipsis was the type of clausal ellipsis frequently used in the dialogue of the movie. It was because mostly the characters in the movie was teenagers which the relation was informal, made them use clausal ellipsis to give a direct response and avoid repetition and implication. They wanted to communicate efficiently.

This study also discovered the reference part of the clausal ellipsis that was omitted by the characters in their dialogue. The most widely used is WH-Questions as a part of Question-Answer Ellipsis. The reason is more or less similar to the explanation above, the characters in the movie wanted to give a straight forward answer or response for the question. The important thing is the questioner still understands by the respondent's answer even though they used ellipsis in their dialogue.

As this study focused on analyze clausal ellipsis, the future researcher could focus analyzing nominal ellipsis or verbal ellipsis in the next study to expand the reader's understanding of types of ellipsis. As Halliday and Hasan (1976) theory is widely used to analyze types of ellipsis, it is better to use another theory in analyzing ellipsis so the readers could have more perspective of kind of ellipsis. In the end, hopefully, this study can help readers to learn more information about clausal ellipsis and its reference parts that is omitted in the dialogue.

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