Comparing Bare Argument Ellipsis in Arabic and English Languages

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares Bare Argument Ellipsis (BAE) in English and Arabic languages and it focuses on the deletion of the verb in BAE construction. It attempts to prove that BAE is systematically applied in both languages. Even though Arabic and English have some differences in the application of Ellipsis in general, BAE applies in a highly similar way in both. The methodology followed in this paper is descriptive and analytical. The sentences are syntactically analyzed depending on the Minimalist Program. The paper concludes that BAE follows the same rules, in both languages, with respect to: identity, the type of the remnant, locality restrictions, recoverability, the type of the antecedent among others.

Keywords: Ellipsis, Arabic, English.

1. Introduction

Ellipsis in general can be applied for redundant elements in the surface structure, but necessary in the syntactic structure. It is one of the challenging topics in linguistics since it shows a discrepancy between the phonological and the syntactic structures of the sentence. It should be noted that ellipsis is not arbitrarily applied. There are rules for the elements that can undergo ellipsis and rules for whether its application is obligatory or optional in a particular context. Moreover, ellipsis is classified into different types and each has certain conditions and constraints. Any violation for these conditions results in ungrammatical sentences.

Different terms are used to refer to ellipsis in English such as deletion and omission without having a difference in the intended meaning. Crystal and Davy (1984) define it as omitting parts of the sentence in conversational speech when their meaning is clear from the situation or verbal context. McShane and Marjorie (2005) connect ellipsis to syntax and suggest that the absent elements in the surface structure are expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure of a sentence.

Arabic linguists, also, refer to ellipsis in different ways. The term ‘al-ḥaḍ’ (deletion) is the most common term used by traditional grammarians to denote the omission of an element of a sentence which could be a noun, verb, a clause or even one of the letters (sounds) constituting a word. (Al-Zarkashy, 1957: 102) defines it as “Isqātu juzʿin min al-kalām aw kullī līdalīf” (dropping whole or part of the speech which is conditioned by the existence of a sign). Abdallateef (2003) considers ellipsis as deletion of an element from the surface structure of the language. ‘Iḍmār’ (concealment) is another term that is interchangeably used with ‘al-ḥaḍ’ , although this term is widely used to mean deletion some Arab grammarians as Afifi (1996) assumes that ‘Iḍmār’ (concealment) is restricted to the absence of pronouns.

Bare Argument Ellipsis (BAE) is a term that used by modern linguists to refer to the type of ellipsis in which everything in the structure is deleted except for one argument. Stripping is another term that is used by some to mean the same thing.

For example:

(1) they speak English and they speak Arabic.

(2) kataba zayd-un al-darsa wakataba zayd-un al-qiṣṣat-a

Write-past Zayd-nom the-lesson-acc and write-past Zayd-nom the-story-acc.

Zayd wrote the lesson and the story.

In the English and Arabic examples in (1) and (2) above the subjects and the verbs are deleted from the
second conjuncts leaving the objects (Arabic and al-qissata (the story)) overt.

BAE may include subject, object and/or other elements than the verb. However the main focus here is the verb the conditions in which the ellipsis of the verb is acceptable and its effect on the grammaticality of such construction in addition to the consequences of its ellipsis on the sentence.

2 Literature Review

McShane and Marjorie (2005) differentiate between semantic and syntactic ellipsis. Semantic ellipsis occurs when the sentence has some missing elements that can be understood but do not occupy any syntactic position whereas in the syntactic one the missing elements are expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure. They develop a theory of ellipsis that deals with many of its types. They classify ellipsis according to the category, the function and the configuration of the omitted element and the antecedent.

Ellipsis is discussed in the literature as across-linguistic phenomenon that applies in similar conditions in the natural languages. Recoverability is one of the main conditions for the application of any type of ellipsis, Quirk, et al. (1985) argue that deleted arguments must be recoverable to be understood. They state that not only can the ellipted elements be recovered lexically but also structurally and contextually. They refer to these types of recoverability as textual, structural and situational respectively.

Merchant (2001) mentions an important condition on ellipsis in general and which is applied to BAE, that is, the isomorphism condition. This implies two conditions; syntactic and semantic ones. It requires the antecedent to be syntactically and semantically identical to the ellipted elements. Syntactic identity receives high interest by many scholars “it is essential to the nature of coordinating functionals such as ‘and’ and ‘or’ that the two speech items which they link whether these be sentences, phrases or single words, should have exact parity of syntactic status” (Beeston, 1968: 97). Hankamar and Sag (1976: 409) in their definition of BAE claim that it is conditioned by identity " ...[a] rule that deletes everything in a clause under identity with corresponding parts of a preceding clause …".

On the other hand, the morphology of the verb seems not to be a restriction for elliptical constructions, including BAE. Chomsky (1995) argues that the domain of morphology is the lexicon not syntax so verbs are inserted into syntactic structures fully inflected. Accordingly, morphology is not respected when it comes to ellipsis. The morphological non-identity between the antecedent and the ellipsis site does not affect the grammaticality of the sentences, since this information is not syntactically represented.

According to Aelbrecht (2010), ellipsis of any element is only allowed if there is a licensing head that must be in a local relation with that element(s). So, Gengel (2013) suggests that verbal ellipsis in BAE is licensed by FocP. She argues that the remnant moves up to the specifier of FocP and the whole TP then is deleted.

As shown in the tree diagram in (3):

(3)
Aelbrecht (2010), also, argues that ellipsis may occur immediately when the licensing head merges and [E] feature is checked. Hence, overt and covert movements that show extraction of elements (such as the subject and the object) from ellipsis sites occur before the occurrence of ellipsis, otherwise the extraction is blocked. This analysis only allows the elements that are at the edges between the ellipsis site and the licensor to be extracted.

Like English and many other languages, Arabic exhibits many types of ellipsis. Abdallateef (2003) argues that the surface structure of the sentence depends completely on ‘al-hunya al-raʔsa’ (the underlying structure). He states that the operation of movements and ellipsis which take place in the phonetic form must be constrained by the syntactic rules of the language. According to him, even the elements that are obligatorily omitted, i.e. their presence in the surface structure is ungrammatical, are present in the underlying structure. For example,

(4) a. ʔiyyāya haddaʊa-hu ʔanas-u.  
me1-acc tell-past tell-past-himi Anas-nom  
Anas told told me.

b. *ʔiyyāya haddaʊa haddaʊa-hu ʔnas-u.  
Me2-acc tell-past-hejtell-past-himi, Anas-nom  
Anas told told me.

The example in (4.a) has the following structure in (5):

The presence of the verb in the surface structure is ungrammatical in the sentence in (5.b) but it must be found in the syntactic structure because there is no assigner for the accusative case in ‘ʔiyyāya’ (me), it is assumed to be the ellipted verb ‘haddaʊa’ (talked).

Abdallateef (2003) follows Ibn Hisham (1959) in that the verb can be deleted only if there is ‘dalīl ṣinaqī’ (a syntactic sign) i.e. the syntactic rules require its existence or ‘dalīl ṣayr ṣinaqī’ (non-syntactic sign) which can be divided into ‘maqālli’ (lexical) and ‘ḥāllī’ (contextual).

Al’s-/arja and Al-Za’bout (2011) talk about verb ellipsis in Arabic language and provide examples from Sahih Al-Bukhari compared to examples from the Holy Qur’an. They classify verb ellipsis into four types depending on the element(s) that can be deleted with the verb. Three of these types can be emerged to be part of BAE that are, (i) deleting the verb with the subject, this includes the object that is raised to subject position in passive structure ‘nāʔib al-faʔī’il’, which must be in the nominative case. (The subject might be an inflection, pro, or NP); (ii) Deleting the verb and its object (which must be in the accusative case) this type includes the deletion of the auxiliary verb ‘kāna’ (was) and its predicate. (iii) The verb with its subject and object leaving a prepositional phrase or an adverb out of the ellipsis site.

3 Methodology

As stated above, the paper follows the descriptive and analytical methodology to discuss ellipsis in relation to the two languages. The sentences of Arabic and English are put in comparison in the discussion and they are analyzed syntactically based on the Minimalist Program. A transliteration is used to transcribe the Arabic
sentences with reference to the IPA phonetic symbols. Then, these sentences are literally translated to English showing some features of the words such as case marking, tense and gender. The last translation is a proper one to give meaningful counterparts in English.

In the analysis, the whole sentence is sometimes analyzed to explain certain things such as the relation or the distance between the target clause and the antecedent one. In other cases, the discussion needs the target clause only to be analyzed. The movements in the tree diagrams are shown through traces (t) and coindexation between the moved elements and their traces.

The analysis of elliptical structures presented in this work is based on the minimalist framework (Chomsky 1981, 1993, 1995). The Minimalist Program is derived from the theory of Generative Grammar which deals with the issue of how to link sound and meaning. He assumes that there are two components of the mind one responsible for sound and another for meaning (i.e., the articulatory system and the perceptual system respectively). This assumption can be helpful when it comes to the analysis of elliptical constructions because the ellipted elements are intended and understood but phonetically absent. Accordingly, deleted elements can occupy a position in the syntactic tree diagram. Relevant details about the Minimal Approach syntactic analysis are provided in the following section (3.1)

3.1 Theoretical Framework

In BAE the deleted elements are presented in an overt syntactic structure and suggested to have a syntactic function following the structural approaches and namely the PF deletion approach adopted by some as (Ross, 1969). The remnants on the other hand are assumed to undergo two syntactic processes, movement and ellipsis. The movement operation applies first and then deletion for their traces.

Elliptical phenomena can be successfully dealt with in the Minimalist Program because each element has features in LF even if it is not present in PF. When an element is deleted in PF (Phonetic Form), it needs to satisfy the ‘Parallelism Requirement’ at LF (Logical Form) with its antecedent. The parallelism condition is necessary to recover the identity of the ellipted element, which should receive the same interpretation of its antecedent (Lasnik, 1995).

In coordinate structures which include ellipted verbs, the elliptical clauses are parsed in a high attachment representation, following Murguia (1995). In this representation the elliptical clause is treated as a full TP and so attached to the highest projection of the other clause which is also a TP. For example,

(6) They invited Bill and they invited Mary.

In (6) it is assumed to have ellipted subject, auxiliary and verb in the second conjunct so it must be a full TP and be attached to the TP of the first conjunct in this way it applies the coordination condition and clearly presents the existence of the ellipted verb in a TP structure, as clarified in the following tree diagram:

(7)
It is common in the current syntactic theory to assume the existence of a functional projection dominating the lexical verbal projection in which the external $\theta$-role originates. This projection is labeled as vP by (Chomsky, 1995) and VoiceP (Kratzer, 1996). A trace of the subject of the clause (i.e., the spec of TP) is assigned a position at the spec of the vP to check its $\theta$-role with the verb. Voice, Transitivity and semantic features can be assigned to this functional projection, in this study the vP will be used to assign it Voice:

\begin{equation}
\text{(8)}
\end{equation}

The VP in the tree diagram in (8) above is dominated by voice projection i.e., vP. The separation of voice from the main verb projection is more appropriate for analyzing elliptical constructions since including or excluding voice from the site of ellipsis affects its grammaticality, as discussed below.

4 Data Collection

Some of the Arabic sentences in this study are taken from the Holly Qur'an which is the main source for Arabic language rules of syntax. The other part depends on the common structures used in the speech and writings in Modern Standard Arabic. The sentences that are not found in these two forms of Arabic language are judged to be ungrammatical. English sentences are collected depending on the common sentences used in standard written texts.

5 Data Analysis and Discussion

This section handles data and discussion. In this chapter the data of both Arabic and English languages are presented and discussed thoroughly. It sheds light on similarities and differences between both languages.

BAE is used to refer to omitting all the elements from a clause except one, a negative particle or an adverb may remain with that element. This type of ellipsis is analyzed by Merchant (2003), Gengel (2007) and Aelbrecht (2010) others as a PF deletion preceded by a movement operation out of the TP.

BAE targets a constituent in both languages. A full TP is deleted even though there are remnants as the subject or the object. The remnants as discussed below, move out of the ellipsis site and leave a trace at their sites inside the TP before ellipsis takes place. This is represented in the following tree:

\begin{equation}
\text{(9)}
\end{equation}

BAE is the most common construction in which the verb is deleted in Arabic and it is less restricted than in English as will be discussed here.

This type of ellipsis shows connectivity effects with respect to selectional restrictions regardless of whether the remnant is the specifier or the complement. The complement must be of an appropriate type that satisfies the selectional requirements of the verb in the antecedent clause. The specifier also has to check its features with the antecedent verb and the auxiliary in some aspects such as case marking and theta. Only in this case, the verb can be recoverable from the antecedent clause.

BAE is allowed in Arabic and English if the ellipted elements are identical to their antecedents. In Arabic the subject can be freely extracted out of the ellipsis site whereas in English, even though allowed, is restricted. For instance,

\begin{equation}
\text{(10)}
\end{equation}

Surely, Allah and His Messenger will see your work.

In (10) the verb, which is inflected for tense, and the object are deleted from the second clause, and the remnant is a DP ‘rasūluhu’ (his messenger) that carries a
nominative case marking which means that it can be a subject for the elided TP. The ellipted elements can be syntactically and semantically identical to the elements in the first clause since the remnant DP ‘rasūluhu’ (his messenger) can be a specifier for a TP identical to that of the first clause i.e. it has a nominative case mark and can be a subject for a verb like ‘yarā’ (see). Hence, the verb can be recovered from the verb ‘sayarā’ (will see). The remnant NP ‘rasūluhu’ (his messenger) must be the subject since it has a nominative case [-u]. The sentence in (10) can be represented in the following tree in (11):

(12) a. sāfara zayd-un wa čali-un sāfaraʔydan.
Travel-past Zayd-nom and Ali-nom travel-past too.
Zayd traveled and Ali traveled too.
b. *kataba zayd-un al-qaṣīdat-a wa al-sayyārat-u # kaðālik.
*Write-past Zayd-nom the-poem-acc and the-car-nom # too.
*Zayd wrote the poem and the car # too.

The sentence in (12.a) includes ellipsis of the verb ‘sāfara’ (travelled) that is inflected for past, the remnant is the subject in addition to the adverb ‘ʔydan’(too). Therefore, BAE in Arabic is not affected by the presence of the adverb when the subject is the remnant.

The sentence in (12.b) has ‘katabat al-qaṣīdata’(wrote the poem) elided from the second conjunct. The subject ‘al-sayyāratu’ (the car) remains in the overt structure and is assigned a nominative case mark, in addition to the adverb ‘kaðālik’ (too). Nevertheless, this sentence is ungrammatical. The reason for its ungrammaticality is a semantic one, that is, the DP ‘al-sayyāra’ (the car) cannot be an agent subject for a verb like ‘yaktub’ (write) which requires a human agent.

This indicates that the ellipted verb is not semantically identical to the verb in the first conjunct.

The remnants are extracted from the ellipsis site before ellipsis takes place and before Spell-Out. Following Gengel (2007), the remnants move to a Focus phrase (FocP) dominating the ellipsis site and immediately precedes it. Since the tense argument is elided from these constructions, the subject and the other argument must move to a site higher than the TP. Accordingly FocP must dominate the TP which includes the ellipted verb.

English also allows BAE under identity (syntactic and semantic identity) with the first clause but this is conditioned by the existence of an adverb or a negative when the subject is the remnant (Lobeck, 1995). For example,

(13) a. Bill studies English and Mary studies English too.
b. *Bill studies English and Mary studies English.

(14) *Bill has slept and the car # too.

In (a) and (b) the verb, which is inflected for present, and the object are deleted from the second clause. The subject is extracted from the ellipsis site in both sentences. However the sentence in (b) is ungrammatical.
because it does not have an adverb in the clause of ellipsis.

Like Arabic, the remnants move to a FocP dominating the TP before Spell-Out and before ellipsis takes place. as shown in (13).

The sentence in (14) is ungrammatical because, semantically, the DP (the car cannot be a subject for a verb like (sleep) and so the ellided verb cannot be identical to its antecedent in the first clause.

(13)

In both languages the object can be extracted from the ellipsis site and stands alone as a remnant with and without an adverb or a negative. For example,


Just the-recompense-nom who fight-present-they Allah-acc and # his-messenger-nom

The recompense of those who make war against Allah and His Messenger.

b. darab-tu zayd-an wa laysa darab tu Hind-an.

hit-past-I Zayd-acc and neg hit-past-I Hind-acc.

I hit Zayd not Hind.

The sentence in (a), which is presented in the tree diagram in (16), has an ellided verb in the second conjunct that is identical to the verb in the first conjunct. The object ‘rasūlahu’ (his messenger) can stand alone without having any other element. It is extracted from the VP to move to the spec position of FocP and it leaves trace at its site.

In (b) the verb ‘darabtu’ (hit) in the first clause, which is inflected for past tense and first person singular subject, is the antecedent for the site of ellipsis in the second clause. The remnant is the object Hind that receives accusative case from the ellided verb, in addition to the negative particle ‘laysa’ (not). ‘laysa’ (not) according to AL-Horais (2008) already occupies the position of the spec of FocP when it occurs in a contrastive construction ‘wa laysa’ (and not) so its position is not affected by being in an elliptical construction. The object Hind moves to be adjoined to ‘laysa’ in the spec of FocP, as shown in (17) below:

(16)
Comparing Bare Argument …

Similarly, the object in English can stand alone in BAE and it is extracted from the VP to the spec of FocP that dominates the TP:

(18) a. Bill studies Arabic and Bill studies English.
    b. Bill studies Arabic and Bill studies English also.

In both languages the verb can be stripped with the subject, the auxiliary and the object, leaving a prepositional phrase or an adverb out of the ellipsis site.

(19) “wa mugallibu-hum dūtā al-yamīn-i wa # dūtā al-fimpāl-i” (18:18)

and we-turn-present-them to the-right-gen and # to the-left-gen.

We turned them about to the right and to the left.

(20) Bill visited Mary Sunday and Monday.

‘dūtā al-fimpāl’ (to the left) in (68) is an adverbial phrase that stands alone in the second conjunct and extracted to FocP from the ellipsis site. Similarly, (Monday) in (20) remains without any other element and moves out of the VP to FocP.

Voice match between the ellipted verb and its antecedent in this elliptical construction is necessary. In both languages the ellipted verb and its antecedent have to have identical Voice to be grammatical. For example,

(21) *Bill bought the book and not by Mary the book was bought.

(22) *zayd-un qatala ḍali-an lā bi-lhadīo-i qutila-ṣali-um.


Zayd killed Ali not by the accident he was killed.

The sentence in (21) has the prepositional phrase (by Mary) as a remnant, this PP is assumed to be the complement of the ellipted verb. It must be passive in this case but the antecedent (bought) occurs in an active structure. This sentence is ungrammatical for this voice mismatch. In English the reason might be the existence of the auxiliary of voice in the ellipsis site and so it must be identical to the auxiliary of the antecedent.

The sentence in (22) is ungrammatical too, for the same reason i.e. voice mismatch. The verb ‘qatala’ (killed) is active while the ellipted verb is assumed to be passive ‘qutila’ (was killed), because the prepositional phrase, the remnant, cannot be a subject but must be a complement for the verb. In Arabic voice is inflected with the verb and cannot be separated from it so if voice does not match, the clauses will not be structurally identical.

Another point of similarity is that, the antecedent can follow or precede the ellipsis site in both languages when the antecedent follows, the subject must be the only remnant that is extracted from the ellipsis site:

(23) “qul ʿa-bi-lāh-i # wa ʿayāt-i-hi # wa rasūl-i-hi
Say Q-particl about-Allah-gen # and his-verses-gen # and his-messenger-gen
kun-tum tastahzi-ūn”(Al-Tawba 9:65)
be-past we mocking-you?
Were you mocking Allah, His ayat, and His Messenger?

In (23) the ellipted elements in the first and in the second clauses ‘kun-tum tastahziʔīn’ (you were mocking) precedes the antecedents that occur in the third clause.

The remnants (i.e. the PP ‘bi-Allahi’ (about Allah) and the DP ‘ʔāyātihi’ (his verses)) are the complement of the ellipted VPs. As noted the remnant PP is attached to ‘ʔa’ (a question particle) that occupies spec position of a CP as noted in the tree diagram (24) below. So there must be a movement operation applied for the PP before ellipsis takes place and before Spell-Out. The PP in this case must move to a position that dominates the TP, otherwise, it cannot be directly attached to the question particle. The assumed site for the moved PP is a FocP that is higher than the TP and lower than the CP. So the other remnant ‘rasūlihi’ (his messenger) is assumed to undergo a similar movement operation to FocP dominating its internal TP.

(24)

(25) Bill went to the market and Mary went to the market.

The ellipted elements in (25) are recoverable from the antecedent (went to the market) that follows the ellipsis site.

Local relation between the antecedent and the ellipsis site seems to be respected in BAE in English (Merchant 2013). The existence of a strong barrier, as CP, between them blocks the application of this type of ellipsis. Locality in ellipsis is affected by: the presence of overt tense, and of the availability a linguistic antecedent(Murguia, 2005).In BAE, Tense is not available in overt syntax and it must be recoverable from a linguistic or non-linguistic antecedent. In English, If there is a linguistic antecedent present then the local relation has to be held between it and the ellipsis site.

All of the examples above show locality restrictions in both languages, whereas the following sentence in (26) do not:

(26) *Bill passed the exam and Mary thinks John passed the exam too.

The examples in (26) is ungrammatical because of the long distance between the antecedent and the ellipsis site. This makes the recoverability of the ellipted elements difficult since the structure of the clause is not assigned and the antecedent clause is spelled out (Spell-Out of the first clause takes place once the structure of the second starts to be assigned). As shown in the tree that represents the sentence in (27), the clause (Mary thinks) intervenes between the elliptical clause and the antecedent and as known at the time the elliptical clause is constructed the antecedent is already spelled out.

(27)
In Arabic, on the other hand, the long distance does not play any role in the grammaticality of BAE. For instance,

(28) “fa-nki-ū mā ūba lakum min al-nisāʔ-i maonā wa
..then-marry-present-you who like-past-for-you from women-gen two
oulāoa wa rubāc-a fa-ʔin xif-tum ʔallā
and(or) three-acc and(or) four but-if fear-past-you that-neg
taqḍil-ū fa-wāhida-tan # aw mā malakat ʔymān-u-kum # ”(Al-Nisa’ 4:3)
do-present-you justice, then-one-acc #,or # whopossess-past-you.

Then marry such women as seem good to you; two, three, four of them. But if you fear that you cannot do justice, then one only, or, those you possess.

In (28) the sites marked by # include ellipted verbs recoverable from the verb ‘ʔinkihā’ (marry) at the beginning of the sentence. There is a long distance between the ellipsis site and the antecedent in addition to a strong barrier i.e. the complementizer ‘ʔin’(conditional particle (if)). So, there is no locality restriction required to delete the verb in BAE construction in Arabic. (note that the ellipted verb in the first site is located after the object because the remnant object is directly attached to the coordinator ‘fa-’(then) we assume that, in this case, the object moves to a position higher than the TP before ellipsis takes place). The reason for the possibility of nonlocal relation in BAE in Arabic might be the morphologically realized case marking that has an important role in identifying the function of the word (the remnant). The accusative case assigned to the remnant“..-wahidatun” (one) in (28) helps in identifying it as an object. Although the TP structure is not assigned, it can be predicted depending on overt NPs case marking.

Unlike syntactic and semantic identity, morphological match between the antecedent and the elided verb is not required in BAE. This morphological difference usually results when the remnant is the subject. In Arabic and English the verb has to agree with the subject in some aspects and so when the subject of the antecedent and the ellipted verb are of different types, as in number or gender, they will be morphologically realized differently by the verb. The grammaticality of the sentence which includes BAE is not affected by such morphological mismatches between the verbs. For example,

(29) Bill and Mary study English and Joan studies English too.

(30) “yuṣharu bi-hi mā fi buṭūn-i-him wa # al-julūd-u” (22:20)
melt-present-passive by-it what in their-bellies and # the-skins-nom.

and that which is in their bellies and their skins shall be melted.

in (29) the ellipted verb must be attached to a final inflection [-s] to agree with the singularity of the subject. The verb in the antecedent site, however, is not attached to such inflection.
The Arabic sentence in (30) has an ellipted verb assumed to be ‘tusharu’ (melt) which is attached to the initial inflection [tu-] (this inflection usually attaches to the verb in the present tense and when the subject is feminine or, sometimes, broken plural) to agree with the broken plural subject ‘al-julūd’ (the skins) and this is different from the one attached to the antecedent verb [yu-] (which is attached to the verb in present tense when the subject is masculine).

The verb in (30) is passive and the ellipted one must be the same.

In Arabic the existence of a linguistic antecedent of verbal type is not necessary to license ellipsis. As mentioned before, Arabic grammarians as Ibn Hisham (1959) suggest that ellipsis, in general, is licensed either by ‘dalīl sinaqī’ (a syntactic sign) or ‘dalīl ʿayr sinaqī’ (non-syntactic sign). Hence, BAE can be applied without having an identical TP in the same context. In this case the verb could be deduced from another word in the same context and this word might be verbal or nominal one. For example,

(31) “fa-ʿimmā # man-an baṣdu wa ʿimmā # fidāḥ-
ān...” (47:4)

Then, either grace-acc and either ransom-acc.

In (31) the NPs ‘mannān’ (grace) in the first conjunct and ‘fidāḥan’ (ransom) in the second receive accusative case marks [-an]. Accusative case marking in Arabic cannot be assigned by default but there must be a case assigner for it. There are no overt words that are able to assign the case for the NPs in (31). So, Arabic grammarians assume that there is an ellipted verb in these conjuncts that assigns them accusative context. These NPs are, accordingly, objects for the ellipted verbs. The ellipsis of the verb is accounted for by ‘dalīl sinaqī’ (syntactic sign) not by structural parallelism as in the previous examples. The ellipted verbs here are recoverable from nominal antecedents i.e. the remnant objects. The verb in the first conjunct is assumed to be ‘yamūnū’ (grace) and in the second one ‘yafḍī’ (ransom) the tense and the subject are recoverable from a previous aya (verse) in the same context, the ellipted elements become ‘tamūnū-īn’ (grace-present-you) and ‘taḍūn’ (ransom-present-you).

The four cases of ‘al-ḥaḍ al-xāș’ (specific ellipsis) suggested by Al-Zarkashy (1957), a BAE construction. The sentence in (32) represents a case in which verb ellipsis occurs for ‘al-ḥāṣas’ (specification):

(32) “wa mraʿat-uhu # hammālata al-ḥaṭabī” (111:4) and his-wife accusative case ‘porter acc the-wood gen’.

and his wife laden with firewood.

In (32) there is an ellipted verb at # assumed to be ‘ḥaṣnī’ (I mean) which is necessary for the assignment of the accusative case on ‘ hammālata’ (porter). This verb, so, does not have a lexical or a contextual antecedent but a syntactic one. The verb is deleted in BAE construction since the object is the only remnant of the clause.

In English, also, the verb can be deleted in BAE without having a linguistic antecedent, for instance,

(33) # Black or # white, I will accept it.

The sentence in (33) is interpreted as (whether it is black or white). The verb is assumed to be (be) which lacks any semantic content as it is not required in that sentence. The recoverability of the verb then is a contextual one.

In both languages BAE can occur in coordinate but not in a subordinate structure. For example,

(34) *taraka zayd-un al-madinat-a liʿanna ḥe-ā-uh
taraka al-manzil-a.

Leave past Zayd-nom the-city acc because his brother accusative case mark from the ellipted verb Zayd left the city because his brother left the house.

(35) *Bill is going to the market because Mary is going to the market now.

The sentences in (34) and (35) are ungrammatical because the elements are ellipted in subordination structure.

The verb in this construction can be deleted obligatorily in Arabic and this obligatory deletion is syntactically motivated. For example,

(36) “wa al-ḥraḍ-a madadnāhā...” (15:19)

And the-earth accusative case ‘spread out past we it’. We have spread out the earth.

The NP ‘al-ḥraḍ-a’ (the earth) in (36) receives accusative case mark from an ellipted verb recovered from ‘madadnāhā’ (spread out it) so assumed to be ‘madadnā’ (spread it out) and the NP ‘al-ḥraḍa’ (the earth) is the object for that verb. It is ungrammatical for
this verb to appear in the surface structure because it is redundant.

Ellipsis of this type and the movement operation take place during the derivation (derivational ellipsis is argued for in Aelbrecht (2010)). The remnant is extracted out of its position before ellipsis takes place. The remnant, which originally occupies the position of the specifier, moves out of the TP after it checks its case and theta features and before it is spelled out. Similarly, when the remnant is extracted from the complement of the verb this is done after checking features with the verb, or any other elements elided with the verb such as prepositions, and before Spell Out. Such claim can be proved in Arabic by the sentence in (23) in which the PP in the antecedent clause moves to the spec of FocP. This shows that the remnant PPs are originally extracted from the ellipsis site before ellipsis takes place and that allows the ellided elements to be ellided during the derivation not after the formation of the sentence is completed. Otherwise, ellipsis is not allowed because its site is spelled out after the derivation and this blocks any syntactic processes from being applied. The sentence in (28) also has the remnant object directly attached to the conditional coordinator [fa-] which means that there are no elements intervening between them and so the ellided elements must follow not precede it.

If we assume that the existence of a licensing head is necessary to license this type of ellipsis then it must be licensed by the spec of FocP as stated by Gengel (2013). This assumption is acceptable in Arabic and English as FocP is the only remnant in the internal structure and immediately precedes the ellipsis site. Another reason is that the head of FocP is able to bear [E] feature that is required to license ellipsis (Gengel, 2013). Moreover, spec of FocP can host the subject or the complement of the verb which in turn can bear a focus feature that triggers their movements.

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, Arabic and English share many features related to the application of verb ellipsis in BAE construction. These similarities can be summarized in the following points:

1. BAE occurs clause final as represented in the deep structure.
2. The ellided verb must be able to govern its complement; since the ellided verb exists in the deep structure this enables it to function syntactically.
3. Syntactic and semantic identity must be respected whereas morphological identity can be violated. Voice mismatch is disallowed.
4. BAE is conditioned by recoverability.
5. BAE occurs during the derivation of the sentence and before Spell Out.
6. The remnant moves to a FocP dominating the ellipsis site.
7. The ellipsis site may precede or follow its antecedent.
8. BAE targets a constituent i.e., a full TP.
9. It can occur in coordination but not in subordination.

Such results prove that BAE is a principled process that is restricted by specific constraints. However, some differences are shown in this respect as a result of the morphological and syntactic variations between the two languages.

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المقارنة بين الحذف المجرد بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية

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ملخص
يقترن هذا البحث الحذف المُجرَد من عنصر بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية بالتركيز على حذف الفعل في هذه القاعدة. وتحاول الباحثة فيه إثبات أنه يتم تطبيق الحذف المجرد من عنصر بطريقة منضبطة في كل اللغتين. وبالرغم من وجود بعض الاختلافات بين العربية والإنجليزية في تطبيق الحذف بشكل عام إلا أن هناك تشابها كبيرا بينهما في تطبيق هذا النوع. إن المنهج المتبوع في هذا البحث هو المنهج الوصفي التحليلي. حيث سيتم تحليل الجمل نحوية بدءا على الأدلة الكلمات الدالة: الحذف، العربيَّة، الإنجليزية.