



An Analysis Of Ellipsis In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* Script

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Received: 02 Januari 2026
Revised: 16 Januari 2026
Accepted: 28 Januari 2026

*This study examines the utilization of ellipsis in the dialogues of the film *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. This study concentrates on the varieties of ellipsis and the importance of its use in daily conversation as illustrated by the film. The objective of this research is to demonstrate the manner in which ellipsis reflects the patterns of ordinary conversation, emphasizing its significance in the development of shared understanding and social connections. The research enhances the understanding of ellipsis as a critical component of grammatical cohesion in cinematic narratives. The film's dialogues were documented and analyzed using a qualitative methodology for data acquisition. In order to categorize the film according to the applicable theory, it was viewed on numerous occasions. The ellipsis theory, as proposed by Halliday and Hasan, is employed in this investigation to classify ellipsis into three primary categories: nominal, verbal, and clausal. The results indicate that ellipsis is not only used to improve grammatical cohesion but also to facilitate effective communication among characters.*

Kata Kunci: *ellipsis, grammatical cohesion, Halliday and Hasan, dialogue analysis*

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How to Cite: Rosa Ikaputri, C., & Artawa, K. (2026). An Analysis Of Ellipsis In *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* Script. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 12(2.D), 159-166. Retrieved from <https://jurnal.peneliti.net/index.php/JIWP/article/view/12556>.

INTRODUCTION

According to Batstone (1994), grammar is a critical component of discourse and a critical aspect of reading and speaking, which is why it has a significant impact on the efficacy of communication. It is possible to assert that the flow of communication will be disrupted if the speaker is unable to employ the appropriate grammar in accordance with the context and situation. The purpose and meaning of each utterance must be determined, and the utterance must be arranged in accordance with the grammatical principles outlined by Leech (2009). The relationship between these utterances is typically interconnected, and it can be classified as cohesion.

Discourse analysis, which emphasizes the interrelationships among components of a text, includes cohesion as one of its critical components. Discourse analysis is the examination of the relationship between language and its context of use, as well as the language used in all types of written texts and spoken conversations (McCarthy, 1991). Hoey (1991: 3) defines cohesion as the way in which grammatical features within a sentence connect it to other sentences in a text. It is evident that cohesion is crucial in discourse analysis, as it improves the clarity of communication by connecting elements within the text, thereby reducing ambiguity and confusion. Grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion are the two categories into which cohesion is divided. Grammatical cohesion is classified into

several categories, such as grammatical cohesion references, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions, as per Halliday and Hasan (1976:6).

This research concentrates on the utilization of an ellipsis, a grammatical element, in the dialogue of the film *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. Ellipsis is a part of grammatical cohesion that dealing with the omission of word (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Ellipsis is present in a variety of communication forms, such as daily conversation, writing, and literary works, in a language context that is rich in nuance and variety. The use of ellipsis is not solely associated with linguistic aspects; it also reflects the social connectivity in which communication occurs. In social interactions, ellipsis can establish a sense of familiarity between speakers, indicating that they possess the same knowledge and context. Consequently, the examination of ellipsis in the context of grammatical cohesion provides vital insights into the role of language variations in the establishment of social relationships through literary works, such as films.

The film *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* is a film that chronicles the life of Margaret, who encountered a variety of novel experiences during her adolescence. In essence, it is a film that explores the themes of coming of age, drawing inspiration from Judy Blume's novel of the same name. In the narrative, Margaret Simon, an 11-year-old girl, navigates the obstacles of adolescence as she relocates from New York City to New Jersey. Certainly, this film is captivating due to its depiction of everyday life in relation to society. Consequently, the dialogues of this film can be used to establish and analyze numerous ellipsis forms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Hasan and Halliday (1976) offer a comprehensive understanding of ellipsis, defined as the omission of elements in communication that are contextually understood. This concept is critical in linguistics as it highlights how much information can be inferred without explicit mention. Ellipsis differs from substitution, which involves replacing elements with other words or phrases, thus simplifying communication and enhancing familiarity. Ellipsis can be categorized into three types, which are nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, and clausal ellipsis.

1. Nominal Ellipsis

This form of ellipsis occurs within nominal groups, where nouns are omitted. In such cases, other elements like deictics, numeratives, or epithets may take the Head position of the nominal group. This allows for a more streamlined expression without losing meaning. Below is the types that existed in nominal ellipsis:

- a. **Deictic:** Deictic elements are determiners that signify specific items within a context, such as that, this, those, etc. It is also include possessives such as *Mary's, mother's, etc.*

Example: "That bag is so much prettier than *this*." Here, "this" refers contextually to another bag previously mentioned.

- b. **Numerative:** These elements are expressed through numerals or quantifying words. They can include ordinals (first, second) and cardinals (one, two).

Example: "She was the first person to leave. I was the *second*." The noun "person" is understood from context, making the sentence concise and clear.

- c. **Epithet:** Typically represented by adjectives, epithets describe nouns and can sometimes act as Heads in ellipsis. They often convey descriptive qualities without necessitating the full noun phrase.

Example: "She is *the smartest* in this class," where "student" is omitted after "the smartest" based on contextual knowledge.

2. Verbal Ellipsis

This type involves the omission of verbs or elements within a verbal group, allowing for concise communication while retaining the essential meaning. Verbal ellipsis consists of two types, which are lexical ellipsis and operator ellipsis.

- a. **Lexical Ellipsis:** Lexical ellipsis occurs when the lexical verb is missing, often seen in sentences containing modal operators. This is referred to as "right-handed ellipsis."

Example:

A: "Will he come tonight?"

B: "He said he *will*,"

The verb "come" in line B is omitted but understood from the context.

- b. **Operator Ellipsis:** In contrast with lexical ellipsis, operator ellipsis retains the lexical verb while omitting the finite operator and subject.

Example:

A: "What should I do?"

B: "Work on your thesis,"

In this conversation, the operator "should" and the subject "you" are omitted from the line B, relying on the context for comprehension.

3. Clausal Ellipsis

This type of ellipsis examines omissions from the perspective of entire clauses. In clausal ellipsis, there are two types existed, which are modal ellipsis and propositional ellipsis.

- a. **Modal Ellipsis:** This occurs when modal elements are omitted, leaving behind the propositional part of the clause. This type of ellipsis often appears in responses to WH- questions.

Example:

A: "What were they doing?"

B: "*Giving* snacks to some random kids,"

The modal element "they were" in line B are omitted from the clause, leaving the residue (propositional element) to be existed.

- b. **Propositional Ellipsis:** In this type, the modal elements remain while the propositional elements are omitted. This type of ellipsis often appears in responses to yes/no questions.

Example:

A: "Have you heard about the news?"

B: "Yes, I *have*,"

In line B, the propositional element "heard about the news" is omitted because it is already understood from the previous context.

RESEARCH METHOD

Creswell (2012) defines research as a structured process for collecting and analyzing information to enhance understanding of a topic. Key steps include

formulating questions, data collection, and presenting findings. Kothari (2004) describes research methods as techniques used to conduct research operations. This study employs qualitative research methods, focusing on data sources and techniques for data collection and analysis. The film *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* (2023) serves as the primary data source, chosen for its portrayal of grammatical ellipsis in naturalistic dialogues among pre-adolescent characters. The film addresses themes of puberty, friendship, and religious identity, providing diverse contexts for analysis. Data was collected using a documentation method to manage relevant information. Note-taking techniques were employed to organize insights from various sources, including films and articles. The process involved downloading the film, multiple viewings to gather data, and identifying instances of ellipsis within the dialogue. Data analysis utilized a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on understanding human experiences through non-numeric data. The analysis involved applying Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Ellipsis theory to categorize the collected dialogue data into three types of ellipsis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the use of ellipsis in the dialogues of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, inspired by Judy Blume's novel. The film explores adolescence through the eyes of 11-year-old Margaret Simon, highlighting her interactions with family and peers. The analysis categorizes ellipsis into three types: nominal, verbal, and clausal, further dividing them into subcategories. It reveals how these ellipses contribute to character development and dialogue flow, demonstrating that ellipsis enhances linguistic efficiency and strengthens social connections by allowing characters to share knowledge and emotions without redundancy.

1. Nominal Ellipsis

Nominal Ellipsis contains of deictic, numerative, and epithet. Below is the analysis of the data according to the types of nominal ellipsis:

a) Deictic

[16:26 – 16:35 Minutes]

Margaret sees someone walked in

Margaret : “Is **that** our teacher?”

Nancy : “Her? No. That’s Laura Danker. Stay away from her, okay?”

In this scene, Margaret has just entered a new school and is in a new environment. Nancy, who was the only person Margaret was already friends with, helped Margaret get to know their classmates. When Laura Danker walked into the classroom, Margaret asked Nancy whether Laura was their teacher or not, as she was more mature than her classmates. In Margaret's line “Is **that** our teacher?” there is a deictic in the form of the modifier ‘that’ which replaces the noun element “person / girl” as the head. When translated into a complete format, the sentence would appear as “Is **that person / girl** our teacher?”

b) Numerative

[16:26 – 16:35 Minutes]

Jan : “We’ll have it refinished, paint it completely black, and then we’ll cut out little stars and recreate the night sky.”

Barbara : “So how many stars would we need?”

Jan : “I was thinking five or ten **thousand**. It shouldn’t take us long.”

According to this scene, Jan (Nancy's mom) asks Barbara (Margaret's mom) for help making fabric star creations that will later be hung to decorate their school committee room. Barbara asks how many more stars they need. It was then answered by Jan in the next line " : I was thinking five or ten **thousand**. It shouldn't take us long." Where the numerative “thousand” replaces “stars” as the head of the phrase. This happens as an effort of communication efficiency because the noun stars has been mentioned before. If this data appears in full form, it should be "I was thinking five or ten **thousand stars**. It shouldn't take us long."

c) Epithet

[38:42 – 38:47 Minutes}

Margaret went to the Jewish temple with Sylvia for the first time.

Sylvia : “There’s the rabbi. He’s **the best** in the city. Two hours, in and out, *bing bang boom*.”

During her holiday at her grandmother's house, Margaret reflected on her school project about religion, specifically wanting to learn about her grandmother's Jewish faith. Sylvia, her grandmother, embraced this idea and eagerly introduced Margaret to the Jewish congregation at the temple. She also fueled Margaret's curiosity by explaining the rules and rituals of the temple service. When the rabbi took the lead, Sylvia commented, “There’s the rabbi. He’s **the best** in the city. Two hours, in and out, *bing bang boom*.” This statement exemplifies anaphoric ellipsis, as the term "rabbi" was omitted after its initial mention. The complete version would be, “There’s the rabbi. He’s **the best rabbi** in the city. Two hours, in and out, *bing bang boom*.” This clearly illustrates an epithet within the context of nominal ellipsis.

2. Verbal Ellipsis

Verbal Ellipsis can be broken down into two categories, which are lexical ellipsis and operator ellipsis:

a) Lexical Ellipsis

[14:35 – 14:41 Minutes}

Margaret was ready to go to school.

Margaret : “I don’t want socks.”

Barbara : “Why? You’ll get blisters.”

Margaret : “I just **don’t**.”

In this scene, Margaret was getting ready to go to school. Normally, Margaret would wear her shoes and socks when she goes to school. However, when Barbara offered Margaret to wear socks, Margaret refused. When Barbara asked why, Margaret replied “I just **don't**” Margaret's answer implies a lexical ellipsis, where the action verb ‘want’ is omitted along with the complement “socks”. If this data appeared in full form, it would be “I just **don't want** socks.”

b) Operator Ellipsis

[16:26 – 16:35 Minutes]

Margaret sees someone walked in

Margaret : “Is that our teacher?”

Nancy : “Her? No. That’s Laura Danker. **Stay** away from her, okay?”

On Margaret's first day at her new school in New Jersey, she sat with Nancy and her companions, who assisted her in becoming acquainted with her classmates, including Norman Fisher, Laura Danker, and Philip Leroy. Laura's taller stature, which was a consequence of her earlier adolescence, initially led Margaret to mistake her for a teacher. Regrettably, Laura's reputation resulted in other students being reluctant to establish friendships with her due to unsavory rumors. As a result, Nancy cautioned Margaret to "stay away from her," which was omitting the operator “was” and subject “I” with the ellipsis suggesting that the full warning was, "**You must** stay away from her, okay?"

3. Clausal Ellipsis

Clausal Ellipsis consists of two types, which are modal ellipsis and propositional ellipsis.

a) Modal Ellipsis

[32:00 – 32:09 Minutes]

Barbara greeted and watched her husband, Herb, who was busy cutting the grass using a lawn mower.

Barbara : “Look at you. **Working** the land. Heavy machinery, ouch.”

Herb : “Be better if I take my shirt off, or it’s too much?”

In this scene, Barbara sees Herb (her husband) busy taking care of their front garden. Barbara teases him ignorantly saying "Look at you. **Working the land.** Heavy machinery, ouch." In this data, the modal elements, namely the subject “you” and the finite verb “are”, have been truncated, leaving only the phrase “**Working the land**” which is the residue of the propositional element. This data can be categorized as modal ellipsis. If it appears in full form, this data would be "Look at you. **You are working the land.** Heavy machinery, ouch."

b) Propositional Ellipsis

[1:35:04 – 1:35:17 Minutes]

Simon’s family saw Moose who was busy lawn their grass.

Barbara : “Is it lawn day?”

Herb : “It is. We haven’t paid him yet.”

Barbara : “Yeah we **haven’t.**”

Herb : “And If you want to go into the kitchen then grab it..”

Margaret: “Yeah, Yeah sure.”

According to this scene, Simon's family (Margaret, Herb, and Barbara) saw Moose, their neighbor, doing his job of cutting the grass and cleaning up Simon's family garden. Herb remembered that they haven't paid Moose for his work. This was agreed by Barbara who responded with “Yeah **we haven't.**” where the line was used to emphasize Herb's statement. In this line, the efficiency of ellipsis is utilized by cutting the propositional element “paid him yet.” And only using the modal element “we haven't.” as a form of agreement. If this line appeared in full form, it would be “Yeah **we haven't paid him yet.**”

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the use of ellipsis in the dialogues of the film *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret* employing Halliday and Hasan's (1976) theory of ellipsis. The findings revealed that ellipsis plays a significant role in enhancing grammatical cohesion and facilitating efficient communication among characters. The three primary types of ellipsis—nominal, verbal, and clausal—were identified and examined, each contributing uniquely to the flow and naturalism of the dialogues.

Nominal ellipsis, encompassing deictic, numerative, and epithet forms, demonstrated how omitted nouns could be contextually inferred, streamlining conversations without loss of meaning. Verbal ellipsis, divided into lexical and operator ellipsis, highlighted the omission of verbs or verb-related elements, enabling concise yet clear exchanges. Clausal ellipsis, including modal and propositional ellipsis, showed how entire clauses could be truncated while retaining communicative effectiveness, often reflecting shared knowledge or emotional resonance between characters.

The study underscores the importance of ellipsis not only as a grammatical tool but also as a social connector, fostering familiarity and mutual understanding among interlocutors. The film's dialogues effectively mirrored real-life communication patterns, emphasizing how ellipsis contributes to linguistic efficiency and character development in cinematic narratives.

B. SUGGESTION

Future research could expand on this study by exploring ellipsis in other genres of films or literary works to compare its usage across different contexts. Additionally, investigating the role of ellipsis in multilingual or cross-cultural communication could provide deeper insights into its universal applicability. For educators, incorporating ellipsis analysis into language teaching could enhance students' understanding of natural speech patterns and grammatical cohesion.

Filmmakers and scriptwriters may also benefit from this research by consciously utilizing ellipsis to create more authentic and relatable dialogues. Finally, further studies could employ quantitative methods to complement qualitative findings, offering a more comprehensive view of ellipsis frequency and its impact on audience perception.

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