Syntactic Omission and Ellipsis as Silence: Stylistic Representation of Repressed Voice in Domestic Abuse Narratives

Dr. Khurram Shahzad

Assistant Professor (Department of English, GS)
National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad
kshehzad@numl.edu.pk

Abstract

This research examines the techniques of omission, ellipsis and repetition to create a sense of silence in Colleen Hoover's novel *It Ends with Us*, a book about domestic violence. Drawing on trauma theory (Caruth, 1996), feminist narratology (Herman, 1992) and discourse pragmatics (Brown & Levinson, 1987), the research analyzes 25 passages from the first 15 chapters of the novel. The study used a mixed-methods approach and stylistic methods to focus on two main characters in dialogue with Lily Bloom: Ryle Kincaid, an abusive husband, and Atlas Corrigan, a former lover. The results show that the ellipsis is polysemous in different contexts. Syntactic omission and ellipsis in Lily–Ryle dialogues represent repression, avoidance and silenced agency, and fragmented syntax expresses cognitive disorientation in the context of trauma. Ryle's ellipsis was a manipulative tactic designed to escape responsibility and to defuse the force of speech acts. Conversely, Lily–Atlas conversations were characterized by ellipsis and repetition as a means of intimacy, hesitation and nostalgia, while exposing relational vulnerability and emotional closeness. Two clusters, i.e., a repression cluster, including ellipsis and omission, and a fragmentation/intimacy cluster, including ellipsis and repetition, were identified: a repression cluster for contexts of abuse and an intimacy cluster for contexts of support. The study brings the analysis of ellipsis to literary stylistics. It demonstrates that omission and punctuation are not neutral but powerful tools for creating psychological realism in the representation of trauma. It also contributes to the development of feminist narratology by demonstrating how stylistic silence can affect gendered power dynamics in abusive relationships, and how it can foster intimacy in supportive relationships. The research concludes that silence in literature is not only an absence but also a presence and that this silence has the power to convey trauma, manipulation, intimacy and resilience through stylistic form.

Keywords: *Fragmented syntax, Ellipsis, Repetition, Stylistics, Repression, Abusive narratives*

1. Introduction

The narratives of domestic abuse have a pivotal role in the current literary discourse because they provide a glimpse into the lives of those who have survived the abuse, and because they bring violence into the spotlight. Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016) is a representative work of this genre, as it tells the narrative of intimate partner violence through Lily Bloom's struggle for love, trauma and resilience. Although considerable work has examined the thematic aspects of abuse in fiction, the focus of this study has been on the linguistic mechanisms involved in representing silence and repression. This paper explores syntactic omission and ellipsis (…) as stylistic devices of repressed voice in domestic abuse narratives from a theoretical perspective, using Hoover's novel as a case in point, within the context of trauma theory, feminist narratology and stylistics.

The silence of the voices of abuse is not just the absence of words; it is a language, a narrative and a strategy of trauma, resistance and survival. The concept of silence as the by-product of trauma and as an agent of agency is one of the focuses of research. For instance, Kumar (2026) believes silence within domestic spaces is a representation of trauma as well as a form of resistance to patriarchy. Her study highlights repetition, absence and fragmentation as evidence of the presence of trauma; therefore, it is not a vacuum but a complex phenomenon of semiotics (Kumar, ibid.). The point of view is also quite like earlier trauma theorists. For example, Caruth (1996) postulated that trauma interferes with language, and in this way, it produces gaps and absences in which the usual modes of narration are not applicable.

Ellipsis and omission are both deployed in Hoover's *It Ends with Us*, especially when Lily is confronting Ryle or when he is abusing her. These stylistic features, such as syntactic omission and ellipsis, indicate hesitation, stifled voice and avoidance, all of which designate the mental and emotional restraints on expressing trauma. Conversely, Lily's exchanges with Atlas often encompass ellipsis, signifying intimacy or memory, and foregrounding the paradoxical nature of silence and its insinuations in numerous relational contexts. This combination of vagueness and high frequency makes ellipsis a fruitful area for stylistic analysis.

Scholarships, in recent years, have increasingly theorized silence as a way of speaking, rather than as the mere absence of verbal communication and as a means of trauma, resistance and psychological survival. Kumar (2026) argues that it is not silence but absences, fragmentation, repetition and non-verbal expressions that depict experiences of abuse in domestic spaces; that voice is not the only way to register trauma. The study indicates that silence can be

simultaneously used as a means of concealment, negotiation and resistance in the context of patriarchy. Similarly, Thura (2026) argues that silence in women's writing may be a tool of agency and resistance, not oppression. In fragmented narration, interrupted chronology and deliberate omissions, silence is used as a rhetorical tool to engage in negotiations of identity, memory and survival by traumatized subjects. By means of these perspectives, the phenomenon of ellipsis in literary discourse can be examined as a stylistic means of expression of the suppression of the voice and emotional restraint.

Stylistics is generally the study of language and how it conveys meaning in literary texts. Ellipsis is traditionally studied in terms of economy of expression, cohesion and conversational implicature (Leech & Short, 2007). Recent research, however, has started to investigate ellipsis as an indicator of trauma and omission. For example, by employing the concept of *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL), Tarigan (2026) explicates silence and omission in *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara, arguing that it is not simply the absence of language, but is also a grammatical choice. As a result, she revealed systematic absences of agents, sensors and verbiage in trauma narratives and the linguistic encoding of silence. Thus, in trauma linguistics, this analysis of ellipsis in Hoover's novel proposes a replicable framework for analyzing syntactic omission and ellipsis.

Moreover, in the context of domestic abuse narratives, ellipsis can be analyzed using a feminist narratology that emphasizes the role of gendered power relationships and their expression through voice and non-voice in the narrative. Mackey, Bigalky and Petrucka (2026) highlight methodological challenges to the study of intimate partner violence (IPV) because women are often left silent and unheard when it comes to experiencing violence. Their enquiry into the story exemplifies the significance of addressing broken subjectivities and silenced voices in the study of IPV (Mackey et al., ibid.). In this regard, we can consider ellipsis in Hoover's novel as not only a stylistic device, but also a marker of the author's implicit gendering of lack of agency.

The recent body of research on domestic abuse narratives also underscores the link between trauma, silence and the representation of domestic abuse in narratives. Saranya and Shepherd (2026) point out that exposure to domestic or familial abuse in literature often involves the abuse victim internalizing the fear, shame and emotional repression that leads to communication breakdowns and limited expression. Their analysis reveals that the abuse and coercion inflicted on the victim frequently relates to the narrative techniques employed, such

as fragmentation, omission and silence. Similarly, Olivia Siby (2025) asserts that silence and absence are effective literary tools that enable authors to express trauma and challenge dominant power structures on purpose. Silence is not a word that represents being silent; rather, it is an effective way to express what words cannot. The findings are useful for the current study to investigate ellipsis as a stylistic feature of voice suppression in intimate partner violence narratives.

Stylistic approaches, in literature, are often used to report the narrative of domestic violence, conveying the unspeakable parts of trauma. Broken syntax and repetition manifest predominantly in the expression of fear, hesitation and repressed voice through ellipsis. Hoover's ellipsis in *It Ends with Us*, like in culture as a whole, expresses Lily's desire to speak, yet she worries about being threatened. This is in accordance with Herman's (1992) reflection of the difficulties trauma survivors bump into when they try to articulate their understandings, and how this leaves them with an incomplete narrative.

This study investigates syntactic omission and ellipsis in Hoover's novel, demonstrating the mental and emotional reality of abuse reverberating through stylistic devices. Indeed, it analyzes the varied roles of syntactic omission and ellipsis in Lily's relationship with Ryle and Atlas. So far as Ryle is concerned, it designates repression and avoidance; conversely, as far as Atlas is concerned, it characterizes intimacy and vulnerability. This discrepancy emphasizes the power dynamics and emotional subtleties that stylistic silence can convey.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Quite often, domestic abuse narratives strive to convey unspeakable trauma. Often, survivors' voices and experiences are silenced by fear, shame or power imbalances, and literature becomes a medium for encoding these silences. In *It Ends with Us* (2016), Colleen Hoover shows Lily Bloom's struggle against intimate partner violence; the novel stylistically depicts silence through syntactic omission and ellipses (…). Although there are numerous thematic discussions on abuse in Hoover's novel, there is not a great deal of research on the stylistic manifestation of repressed voice. The study of ellipsis has mostly been studied in terms of cohesion and economy or conversational implicature, and its role in representing trauma remains underexplored. This gap offers insight into the psychological realities of the abuse, as stylistic silence, at the very least, reveals -- a hesitation, an avoidance and a suppressed agency -- coded into the structure of language. This study aims to show the role of ellipsis in Hoover's novel from the perspective of trauma theory and feminist narratology in order to reveal that

stylistic silence is used as a sign of power imbalance and resilience to enrich the field both in literary stylistics and trauma linguistics.

1.2 Research Gap and Contribution

There are numerous analyses of *It Ends with Us*, but not many studies that have focused on systematically analyzing the stylistic devices as markers of trauma. Previous research into ellipsis focused on cohesion or economy of language and has paid little attention to the function of ellipsis in the representation of repressed voice in abuse narratives. This study foregrounds syntactic omission and ellipsis as a style of silencing and connects it to the other themes of the work—those of stylistics, trauma theory and feminist narratology—in order to provide a new lens from which to analyze Hoover's narrative technique.

The research may be one of the first to extend the analysis of ellipsis in literary stylistics to the context of trauma and may show how ellipsis and punctuation can be used as semiotic means to encode silence. It also intends to shed light on the cultural analysis of feminist narratology that includes an emphasis on the stylistic silence that is an aspect of the problem of gender and power in an abusive relationship. Overall, the research may contribute to trauma linguistics by revealing the unspeakable aspect of abuse in literary works as a stylistic form.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore ways in which Lily's use of syntactic omission and ellipsis in her conversations with Ryle and Atlas provides evidence for power imbalance, trauma and emotional repression.
2. To analyze the use of syntactic omission and ellipsis as expressive elements of silence and suppressed voice in Colleen Hoover's novel *It Ends with Us*.

1.4 Research Questions

1. In what ways do syntactic omissions and ellipses vary across Lily's dialogues with Ryle and Atlas, translating trauma, repression and power imbalance?
2. How do syntactic omission and ellipsis operate as stylistic devices of repressed voice in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us?*

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stylistics and Ellipsis

Stylistics is a study that investigates the way meaning in literary texts is created through various language choices. Ellipsis, i.e., the omission of words or phrases that are predictable from the

context, has been studied traditionally as a phenomenon connected to cohesion and economy of language (Leech & Short, 2007). Both Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Quirk et al. (1985) stressed ellipsis as a cohesive device and its pragmatic use in conversation, respectively. Recent stylistics studies have extended ellipsis analysis to the discourse-pragmatic and cognitive aspects (Toolan, 2016). Nevertheless, its function in the depiction of trauma has not been sufficiently explored.

2.2 Silence and Trauma Narratives

The theory of Trauma emphasizes the challenges of telling stories of experiences that are *too big to tell*. Trauma has been shown to create gaps and silences in narrative, as Caruth (1996) notes. Herman (1992) also commented that survivors may have difficulty describing the abuse and the description may be disjointed. This has been further investigated in literary texts, with Tarigan (2026) showing how omission is strategically coded in Yanagihara's *A Little Life* through grammatical structures. In Kumar's (2026) study of resistant silence in the domestic sphere, silence is seen as trauma and as resistance. These studies suggest that ellipsis may function as a stylistic signifier of trauma, representing the suppression of voice.

The stylistic approach has also been seen in recent research, where it has been argued that stylistic features such as ellipsis and fragmentation reflect psycholinguistic and cognitive disorientations in trauma survivors, thus linking stylistics with psycholinguistics and cognitive narratology. For example, van der Kolk (2014) suggests that trauma is embodied and that it may not always be possible to articulate verbally, which is why the accounts of trauma survivors may often consist of gaps, pauses and unfinished sentences. These stylistic elements in the literary texts turn into symbols for the unspeakable. In the same way, Genette's (1980) narratological approach underscores the effects of absence in narrative time, which is the space of the missing moment that becomes the space of the reading in which the reader himself or herself must fill. These observations allow the researcher to make two applications to Hoover's novel: that ellipsis is not only a stylistic device, but also a narratological tool that forces readers to *go there* with Lily's repressed voice.

Moreover, Mills (2014) argues that recent feminist stylistics research shows that many stylistic silences carry a gendered subjectivity, where the voices of women are split or cut off by male structures. Together, these perspectives add value to the study of Hoover's text and place ellipsis in a more inclusive interdisciplinary setting, accounting for trauma linguistics,

narratology and feminist stylistics. This novel viewpoint strengthens the originality of the focus on ellipsis as silence in domestic abuse narratives.

In recent years, the study of trauma and its language has grown increasingly engaged with silence, fragmentation and omission as the linguistic representation of trauma in literary narratives. Lopez (2023) suggests that *The Bluest Eye's* structure and reader response are shaped by trauma, as is the disrupted narration itself, showcasing how the narrative reflects the psychological effects of racism, gendered violence and emotional trauma. Consequent to this, the findings of the study done by Edward, Nina and Iloanwusi (2025) show that ellipsis and fragmented sentences in Adichie's *American Embassy* serve as markers that signal trauma and past experiences that are not easy to express verbally. Continuing the argument, Tarigan (2026) explicates that silence and omission are not only linguistic gaps or lacunae but also systematic linguistic choices, which are experiences of suppression and emotional silence in trauma narratives. Combined, these studies demonstrate the power of omission, fragmentation and silence as stylistic tools that communicate psychological disruptions and as devices which can be used to examine ellipsis as a way to dismantle a suppressed voice in *It Ends with Us.*

2.3 Feminist Narratology and Gendered Silence

Feminist narratology focuses on the role that gendered power dynamics play in rendering a voice in the narrative. Lanser (1992) suggested that women's stories frequently signify silence as a symbol of patriarchy's oppression. Mackey, Bigalky and Petrucka (2026) reported methodological difficulties in the study of intimate partner violence, reporting that women's experiences of IPV are often shrouded in silence and secrecy. The story inquiry highlights the need to listen to voices silenced within IPV research. This lens can be used to ask how and why Lily's agency is limited when she uses ellipsis in the novel, and how this is related to her relationship with Ryle.

2.4 Domestic Abuse Narratives in Contemporary Fiction

There are stylistic tools that are commonly used in domestic abuse stories to communicate trauma. Thematic elements, such as portraying abuse (Herman, 1992; Lopez, 2023), are an aspect of the narrative that has been discussed; however, few have focused on the stylistic encoding of the narrative. One of the most noticeable features of this text is the repeated words, ellipses and broken syntax that reflect Lily's state of mind. Other stylistic devices have been observed in the silence of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (Koledade & Isa, 2025) and the fragmentation of Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Tarigan, 2026), in which trauma is

encoded. The comparisons indicate that Hoover uses ellipsis in a similar way as other authors do to depict abuse.

2.5 Pragmatic Functions of Ellipsis

Ellipsis can perform several pragmatic functions: it can be used for hesitation, avoidance, repression and intimacy. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is used to explain ellipsis as a means of reducing face-threatening acts. Ellipsis is frequently used in Lily–Ryle dialogues to indicate avoidance or repression; it is an expression of fear of confrontation. Within Lily-Atlas exchanges, ellipsis is used in order to express intimacy and nostalgia, to bring about relational contrast. This ambiguity reflects the power asymmetry that is built into ellipsis, making the ellipsis one of the main locations for stylistic analysis.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted in three interrelated frameworks. They are explained below.

The study draws on trauma theory developed by Caruth (1996), with foundations laid by Herman (1992). Trauma disrupts language, which creates gaps, silences and fragmentation. Ellipsis is operationalized as a linguistic sign of trauma, a sign of hesitation and a muffled voice.

Secondly, it draws on the feminist narratology of Lanser (1992) and Mackey et al. (2026). Silence is considered a gendered phenomenon, as it in itself is a manifestation of the power imbalance in an abusive relationship, which is one of the main characteristics of patriarchy. The term ellipsis refers to a stylistic technique used to represent the repression of gender.

Syntactic omission and ellipsis are analyzed in terms of their pragmatic functions, such as *hesitation*, *avoidance*, *repression* and *intimacy* in dialogues (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Toolan, 2016). This framework frames ellipsis as a linguistic strategy for creating interpersonal meaning. The study brings together these frameworks and places syntactic omission and ellipsis at the intersection of linguistic form, the representation of trauma and power dynamics between genders.

3. Methodology

The study used a mixed-methods approach. It was mostly qualitative; however, it employed tables and frequencies to describe and support the textual analysis quantitatively in a visual

form. In addition, this quantitative analysis assisted in supporting the qualitative analysis. The researcher utilized them to further construe the findings of the analysis qualitatively.

3.1 Research Method

The study is predominantly exploratory and stylistic with a discourse-pragmatic approach. Stylistics is chosen because it allows for a systematic approach to the analysis of the linguistic form and its relationship to the meaning in literary texts (Leech & Short, 2007). The qualitative approach is suitable since it is based on understanding the meanings of ellipsis and syntactic omission in *It Ends with Us*. The findings are supported by quantitative corpus data, which is the frequency count of syntactic omission and ellipsis markers, but the main method is interpretive, close reading and contextual analysis.

3.2 Text Sample

Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016) was the main text that is used as data. Narrative scenes and dialogues that included Lily Bloom's interactions with Ryle Kincaid and Atlas Corrigan were used. Besides, these relationships suggest differing dynamics of intimacy and abuse. The researcher selected the key episodes that included:

- Each time Lily encountered Ryle during an abusive incident (Chapter 1 to Chapter 15).
- Descriptive portrayal of Lily's trauma and hesitations.
- Lily's conversations with Atlas, especially about memory and intimacy.

Around 25 passages from these bigger narrative scenes were chosen purposively with ellipses (….) or syntactic omissions, and they were analyzed in detail. The sampling technique was purposive, and the researcher restricted it to 25 passages so that he could handle them appropriately. Moreover, the researcher restricted himself to 25 passages because they were enough to fulfill the purpose of the study. This purposive sampling allows analysis of stylistic features in the context that is most relevant to trauma representation.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Employing the analytical framework, the researcher carried out the analysis in four stages:

1. Identification: First, the researcher identified syntactic omissions and ellipsis (…) from the text.
2. Categorization: Second, the researcher coded the pragmatic functions, such as *hesitation,* i.e., uncertainty and pause, and *avoidance,* i.e., deflection and refusal to confront. As explained

in the theoretical framework, the researcher also analyzed *repression,* i.e., fear of emotion, and *intimacy,* i.e., softened speech and nostalgia.

3. Third, the researcher conducted a comparative analysis in order to compare Lily–Ryle dialogues with Lily–Atlas dialogues for differences in the use of ellipsis. This discrepancy was a representation of the intimacy and the power relationship; in fact, even the imbalance was represented in the stylistic silence.

4. Interpretation: Fourth, the researcher interpreted the findings, where the stylistic silence was a form of psychological realism; furthermore, he drew upon trauma theory and feminist narratology to find out gendered repression.

3.4 Linguistic Operationalization

Ellipsis is represented as:

- A marker of graphology, such as a three-dot (...) punctuation mark.
- Syntactic omission: words or phrases which were deliberately omitted and could be understood from the context.
- Pragmatic functions, such as hesitation, avoidance, suppression and intimacy.

The researcher manipulated this operationalization to examine syntactic omission and ellipsis as multi-layered stylistic tools that have linguistic, psychological, as well as social dimensions.

4. Data Analysis

The researcher chose 25 passages for analysis in this paper from the first 15 chapters of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*. They offered an opulently rewarding area for stylistic analysis. These segments were full of syntactic omission, ellipses, repetition and fragmented sentence structure. They functioned as stylistic signifiers of trauma, repressed voice and power imbalance in the relationship. This analysis draws on the trauma theory of Caruth (1996) and Herman (1992), the feminist narratology of Lanser (1992) and Mackey et al. (2026) and the stylistics/discourse pragmatics of Leech and Short (2007) to interpret how Hoover encodes silence within the linguistic form.

Table 1

Stylistic Devices across Relationships

Relationship Context	Ellipsis (…)	Omission	Fragmented Syntax	Repetition	Dominant Function
Lily–Ryle	11 (High)	06 (High)	10 (Frequent)	06 (Moderate)	Suppression / Avoidance
Lily–Atlas	07 (Moderate)	03 (Low)	06 (Occasional)	05 (Moderate)	Intimacy / Hesitation
Lily–Others (family/friends)	04 (Low)	02 (Moderate)	05 (Occasional)	03 (Low)	Everyday hesitation / pragmatic economy

As Table 1 displays above, the relationship between the stylistic devices is different for each group. Ellipsis and omission show the prevalence in Ryle, signifying repressed voice and avoidance. Ellipsis is used to give intimacy and hesitation in Atlas; repetition is used to show nostalgia. Stylistic devices are used to achieve pragmatic economy, not trauma encoding, with others. This distribution in the data highlights the relationality of silence.

Table 2

Pragmatic Functions of Ellipsis

Function	Lily–Ryle Examples	Lily–Atlas Examples	Lily–Others Examples
Repression	"I just… I can't…" (p.117)	—	—
Avoidance	"Well… yeah, but…" (p. 32).	—	"Um… I'll be fine" (p. 32).
Hesitation	"Um" (p. 32). "Oh, yeah?" (p. 136).	"I missed you… so much" (p.124).	"I… I don't know" (p.36)
Intimacy	—	"I missed you… so much." (124)	—

The data demonstrates that ellipsis is multifunctional. It represents repression and avoidance in Lily–Ryle dialogues and symbolizes trauma and fear. It conveys hesitation and intimacy – vulnerability and nostalgia – in Lily–Atlas dialogues, because she remembers him occasionally

when he is not with her. Ellipsis plays a pragmatic role in exchanges between Lily and others, expressing hesitation in natural conversation. This is an example of polysemous stylistic silence.

Table 3

Fragmented Syntax and Emotional States

Stylistic Device	Emotional State Encoded	Example
Fragmented clauses	Anxiety/fear	"I can't… I don't…" (p. 117)
Ellipsis (…)	Repression/avoidance	"Well… yeah, but…" (p.140)
Omission	Silence/resistance	Lily's refusal to finish sentences with Ryle
Repetition	Emotional intensity	"Two… nine" (p.143) (Ryle's obsessive repetition)

Table 3 above discloses that chaotic syntax is an echo of psychological disruption. According to the theory of trauma, Lily experiences broken sentences or ellipses during abuse scenes, which are a form of encoding cognitive disorientation. Conversely, Ryle's repetition suggests obsession and control, stylistically signifying his manipulative power throughout the narrative. The analysis further demonstrates that Atlas' ellipsis is intimate, as it shows that stylistic devices can have meaning based on their relation.

Table 4

Ellipsis and Power Imbalance

Speaker	Stylistic Device	Function	Power Implication
Lily	Ellipsis	Repression	Fear of confrontation, silenced agency
Ryle	Ellipsis	Avoidance	Manipulation, deflection of responsibility
Atlas	Ellipsis	Intimacy	Vulnerability, supportive hesitation

The analysis further depicts that ellipsis is not neutral but is a reflection of power relations. The ellipsis in Lily is an indicator of the agency that is repressed under abuse. All of Ryle's ellipses are manipulative avoidance, weaponizing silence. Atlas' ellipsis intimates, and Lily's voice is supported. Silence is, therefore, a site of power negotiation with style.

Table 5

Stylistic Clusters in Abuse vs. Intimacy

Context	Dominant Stylistic Devices	Stylistic Cluster	Psychological Effect
Abuse (Ryle)	Ellipsis, omission, fragmentation	Repression cluster	Encodes trauma, fear, silenced voice
Intimacy (Atlas)	Ellipsis, repetition	Intimacy cluster	Encodes nostalgia, vulnerability, emotional closeness

In the analysis, two clusters of style were found: repression, i.e., abuse and intimacy, i.e., supportive relationship. The analysis further demonstrates that Hoover's stylistic decisions convey psychological realism, revealing the different modes of silence in the relationship.

Nonetheless, in Dialogues of Lily and Ryle, ellipsis corresponds to a repressed voice. Lily's "I just… I can't…" (Hoover, 2016, p. 117) is, for instance, an expression of her lack of a means of protesting. Another example is: "Ellen. I just . . ." (Hoover, 2016, p. 117). Trauma disables language and creates gaps and silences, according to Caruth (1996). Her utterance remains syntactically incomplete because the traumatic scene she sees exceeds her ability for verbalization. Others, such as Herman (1992), also point to the fragmentations in the survivor's stories. Hoover mirrors this disruption in a stylistic manner, and she places trauma into Lily's voice. Ellipsis then becomes a punctuation of pain, the unspeakable dimensions of abuse.

Ryle's ellipses have different properties. His utterance "I just . . . I burned my hand. I panicked. You were laughing and . . . I'm so sorry" (Hoover, 2016, p. 140). It elides responsibility, diffusing forceful utterances. His fragmented speech further illustrates self-interruption and psychological disorganization. Brown and Levinson (1987) construe it as a *face-saving mechanism*, which drives hesitation linguistically in the guise of manipulation. Hoover's literary style highlights Ryle's power in elliptical speech, a technique that demonstrates how silence is manipulated as a weapon. This further elucidates that literary stylistic devices are not only emblems of trauma but are manipulation devices, too.

Intimacy is represented through ellipsis in Lily–Atlas dialogues. Lily's dialogue, "I don't want him to move to Boston, Ellen. I know that's selfish of me because he can't keep living in that house. I don't know what I'm more afraid might happen. Watching him leave or selfishly begging him not to go." (Hoover, 2016, p. 116) is, for example, a message of nostalgia and

vulnerability. Here, this stylistic silence is employed to reclaim voice in supportive contexts, as Lanser (1992) explains. The ellipsis shifts from repression to intimacy. In this way, relational contrast is emphasized. This exemplifies the polysemy of stylistic silence, where multiple meanings relate to one another.

The structure of the sentences is broken , reflecting psychological disintegration. In scenes of abuse, Lily's broken sentences are a stylistic representation of cognitive disorientation. Tarigan (2026) concluded that omission and fragmentation are a systematic encoding of trauma in literary narratives. The psychological realism that Hoover brings to Lily's voice is thereby revealed through the stylistic choices and illustrates how language shape is a representation of trauma.

The repetition: "Two more months," I whispered. We just kept staring at each other, and my heart was beating faster and faster. "When do you turn nineteen?" (Hoover, 2016, p. 108) (twice, their repetitions) suggests obsession and control. Repetition is a stylistic reminder of manipulative power. The repetition of Lily is contrasted with the encoding of emotional intensity. This shows the polysemy of repetition, which means that it conveys various meanings depending on the speaker and situation.

The omission is like silence and resistance. The lack of a sentence ending with Ryle conveys a hidden agency with Lily. Kumar (2026) states that silence can be a means of resistance to patriarchy. Hoover's style is an omnibus form of resistance, demonstrating the ways in which silence can be traumatic and can be an act of agency.

Two clusters of style were identified in the data: repression, i.e., abuse and intimacy, i.e., supportive relationship. The repression cluster, i.e., ellipsis, omission and fragmentation, expressed trauma and a silenced voice. The intimacy cluster, i.e., ellipsis and repetition, conveyed a sense of wistfulness and vulnerability. Psychological realism, therefore, becomes a part of the stylistic elements, as Hoover demonstrates the different roles of silence in relation to its context.

Repetition was another key aspect of creating silence. Repetition is not a kind of cliché but an insistence on the unsaid. Lily tended to avoid and pass over traumas of her father without directly confronting them, resulting in a discourse of hesitation, avoidance and emotional constraint. Hoover employed repeated moments of silence, pauses and unspoken words to demonstrate how trauma hinders verbal expression. This reiteration of incomplete disclosure suggests that Lily does not have the ability—or the willingness—to actually say the things that

are painful in her soul. Consequently, silence does not simply mean lack of speech, but a presence that is important, that helps to form the narrative. The researcher believes that Hoover paints a picture of silence as a shield, a way Lily can work through the unhealed emotional trauma in isolation. For example, Hoover's moments of verbal absence reveal a shield, a way Lily can navigate through the unhealed emotional trauma alone.

One such instance is when Lily tells Ryle about her father's funeral speech. She told people there that she was going to tell "five great things" about her father, only to be quiet for two minutes straight: "There wasn't one great thing that I could say about my father," she said (Hoover, 2016, pp. 17–18). This scene illustrates, on several levels, the reinforcement of silence through repetition. Lily repeatedly says she can't say anything good about her father; the lack of a response at the podium is a refusal to speak about what she knows about his abusive behavior to repeat. When *five great things* are repeated over and over but not said in the story, it makes the effect of communication by silence even more powerful. Hoover uses repetition as a stylistic indicator of trauma by bringing the reader back to a memory of abuse through repetitions of pauses, suppressed statements and verbal gaps. Failure to speak over and over again becomes a silent statement that speaks to readers that some experiences are communicated more effectively by being absent than by being present, and by being silent than by being spoken.

5. Findings of the Study

A stylistic analysis of the 25 passages in *It Ends with Us* from Chapters 1-15 brings out a few salient points:

- Ellipsis was manipulated as a marker of repressed voice.

The textual analysis reveals that ellipsis (...) was often used in Lily–Ryle dialogues when there was confrontation or abuse. The broken sentences in Lily's dialogue "I just… I can't…" (Hoover, 2016, p. 117) are akin to a stunted form of agency or hesitation. Ellipsis is a stylistic device that signifies trauma, in which there are difficulties in expressing abuse.

- Ellipsis was employed for manipulation and avoidance.

The textual analysis demonstrates that Ryle's use of the ellipsis "Well… yeah, but…" (Hoover, 2016, p. 32) neutralizes the coercive speech acts and deflects responsibility. Here, the stylistic tool of ellipsis is weaponized as a manipulative discourse strategy.

- Ellipsis was employed to convey intimacy and vulnerability.

The textual analysis displays that ellipsis expresses familiarity and sentimentality in a Lily–Atlas dialogue: “I missed you so much” (Hoover, 2016, p. 124). The stylistic device of silence can mean different things in different relational contexts: for example, repression in an abusive relationship, intimacy in a supportive relationship.

- The fragmented syntax was used as psychological realism.

The analysis shows that fragmented syntax is viewed as psychological realism. Lily’s disjointed clauses: “I can’t… I don’t…” (Hoover, 2016, p. 117) reflect her cognitive disorientation in the midst of trauma. According to trauma theory, fragmentation is a coding of psychological disruption.

- Repetition was used as obsession and emotional intensity.

Moreover, Ryle repeats himself “Two… nine” (Hoover, 2016, p. 108) to convey the sense of obsession and control. In Lily’s repetition, there is an encoding of emotional intensity and how repetition works varies according to the speaker and context.

- Stylistic clusters

Two clusters emerged, i.e., an avoidance-of-using-repression cluster that was represented by ellipsis, omission and fragmentation in contexts of abuse. Secondly, the intimacy cluster represented ellipsis and repetition in supportive contexts. These clusters created psychological realism, which means how the stylistic silence differs in relation to the relationship.

5.1 Discussion and Answers to the Research Questions

The first research question was how Colleen Hoover uses ellipsis to mark repressed voice in *It Ends with Us*. The results prove that ellipsis is a key stylistic tool for voice repression. In Lily–Ryle dialogues, ellipsis marks occur where there is a confrontation, and they are used for hesitation and fear. According to trauma theory by Caruth (1996) and Herman (1992), this is the result of language disruption when trauma disrupts speech and creates gaps and silences. In Lily’s ellipsis, it is an expression of this disruption, an expression of the unspeakable dimensions of abuse.

Furthermore, ellipsis is used by Ryle as a tool for manipulation. His “Well… yeah, but…” (Hoover, 2016, p. 140) puts the onus back on the listener and defuses coercive speech acts. According to the discourse-pragmatic theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), it is a face-saving

strategy and a strategy that hides underneath the linguistic hesitation. Consequently, ellipsis is employed in two ways: as the victim and as a manipulator.

Ellipsis, as a polysemous tool, is marked stylistically with this combination of meanings, conveying trauma and power imbalance. It is not manipulated as a typographical error only. However, it results in the imposition of discourse and the voicing of agency.

The second research question was how syntactic omissions and ellipsis diverge between Lily's dialogues with Ryle and Atlas, and how these differences reflect power imbalance and trauma. The findings of the study specify noteworthy variances. For example, with Ryle, ellipsis – a literary stylistic device -- encodes repression and avoidance. Moreover, Lily's broken sentences – a literary stylistic device -- encode fear of confrontation. Conversely, omission is a type of silence and resistance, signifying repressed agency. The fragmented syntax mirrors cognitive disorientation -- a code switch for trauma.

- Stylistic cluster: repression

With Atlas, ellipsis is used to imply intimacy and hesitation. In Lily's "I missed you… so much" (Hoover, 2016, p. 124), there is vulnerability and a feeling of nostalgia. For emotional intensity and closeness, repetition encodes it.

- Stylistic cluster: intimacy

These differences represent a power imbalance. In the case of Ryle, stylistic silence is indicative of trauma and manipulation. Stylistic silence is intimacy and support Atlas. Feminist narratologists such as Lanser (1992) and Mackey et al. (2026) understand this as a feminine voice: the silence of supportive relationships, but also the silence of patriarchy. Hence, *ellipsis* and *omission* are different in different contexts and can represent trauma in abuse and intimacy in support. This is an example of how the stylistic devices express the relationship and the psychological realism.

The results further demonstrate how polysemous stylistic silence functions in relation. Ellipsis, omission, fragmentation and repetition are not innocuous means, but means of trauma, manipulation, intimacy and resistance. Hoover's aesthetics place *It Ends with Us* in trauma narratives, highlighting the presence of a muted voice in the structure of the language.

In trauma theory, ellipsis and fragmentation encode language disruption and are trauma's unspeakable dimensions. In feminist narratology, the power imbalance of abuse and the support

of intimacy, silence is gendered. Conversely, ellipsis has been employed as manipulation, i.e., how to use silence as a weapon in discourse pragmatics.

Using multi-perspective theoretical frameworks (Paltridge, 2020), the study finds that stylistic silence plays a vital role in Hoover's *It Ends with Us*, portraying domestic abuse, which is a form of psychological realism. It mirrors the difficulty for survivors in a painful way, describing what was done to them and the manipulation of silence by the abusers.

5.2 Implications of the Study

For literary scholarship and applied linguistics, this study has tremendous implications. First, it shows that stylistic techniques, such as ellipsis, omission and fragmentation, do not simply, and not primarily, reveal aesthetic decisions but also serve as strong indicators of trauma, manipulation and intimacy. With this insight, scholars should make stylistics a more central component of trauma and feminist narrative studies, connecting the stylistic to the psychological realism of the text. Second, the results show that pedagogical use of stylistic analysis in literature teaching is valuable; learners can be taught to perceive how silence and fragmentation reflect the hidden voice in domestic abuse stories, which allows them to gain insight into the subject and see the perspectives of others. Lastly, the study proposes that the concept of stylistic silence is applicable to other interdisciplinary contexts, such as the study of sociolinguistic and psychological processes of how trauma is expressed—or not expressed—in a survivor's spontaneous speech.

6. Conclusion

For this study, 25 passages from *It Ends with Us* from Chapters 1-15 were examined for the various ways silence was encoded in them, including ellipsis, omission, fragmentation and repetition. The results show that stylistic silence is polysemous, signifying that it works differently in each relational situation. Ellipsis in Lily–Ryle dialogues is a marker of repressed voice and avoidance that represents trauma and manipulation. Omission serves as a voice of silence and resistance, while disoriented syntax is fragmented. This repression cluster carries the messages of trauma and power imbalance. Lily–Atlas dialogues, in fact, use ellipsis, conveying intimacy and hesitation, and conversely repetition is employed to convey emotional intensity. This intimacy cluster encodes vulnerability and support. Hence, the study situates Hoover's stylistic decisions within trauma theory, feminist narratology and discourse pragmatics. Trauma theory was employed to elaborate ellipsis as a stylistic device of language disruption, elucidating the unattainable facets of trauma or abuse. Feminist narratology

articulates that silences are gendered; abuse and intimacy are intertwined. Moreover, discourse pragmatics asserts how ellipsis can be manipulated as a weapon, revealing the potential of silence.

The study analyzed syntactic omission and ellipsis as a stylistic feature of the voice that was repressed. Hence, it contributes to trauma linguistics and literary stylistics. Moreover, it illustrates that syntactic fragmentation, punctuation and omission are not neutral; rather, they are potent indicators of manipulation, intimacy, trauma and resistance. Psychological realism has been conveyed by Hoover's stylistic approach, exemplifying the manifestation of repressed voice and resilience in language. Ellipsis, omission, fragmentation and repetition express the unspeakable nature of abuse, the intimacy of supportive relationships and manipulative strategies of abusers. Stylistic silence converts into a trauma, power and resilience landscape, providing a multifaceted standpoint on domestic abuse narratives.

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