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Ellipsis in Literary Texts

A paper

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

سوره ال عمران (الایة ۱۵۹)

*In the name of Allah The most Gracious the Most
Merciful,*

Then when thou hast taken a decision put
thy trust in God. For God loves those who
put their trust (in Him).

Dedication

To Imam Al-Mahdi, the invulnerable grotto , the tranquility of the servile distressed, and the shelter for the believers .

To the fountain of unconditional love , sacrifice , warmth and affection, my lovely priciest mother.

To the constant source of support and encouragement during study period , my dear father.

And

To my lovely angels; my brothers and sisters.

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I want to offer this work to our creator almighty for the wisdom and the strength that we were provided with, beside the good health and peace of mind in order to finish this research paper. I would like to express my gratitude towards my family, which with their support and encouragement made me fulfill my dream. Their care and love had a big role in my journey that made me what I am now. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my gratefulness towards my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Sadiq Mahdi Al-Shamiri. Next to him, dear friends and everyone who helped me completing this paper.

Abstract

Ellipsis mean the missing words must be understood or necessary to make the construction grammatically complete. The forms, which do not occur in a given sentence and they are understood from the meaning of the sentence, refer to ellipsis which is a device of abbreviating and shorting the message, the ellipted forms must be recoverable from the context which is important to avoid misunderstanding and miss communication. This paper contains four chapter . The first about the problem , aim, hypotheses , procedure , limit and value . The second chapter about the ellipsis with their types and function . The third chapter aboutthe analysis of the Great Gatsby while the last chapter about the conclusion of the study .

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Section One

Introduction

1.1 The Problem

Halliday and Hassan (1976: 142,144) define the ellipsis as a zero substitution. They call it understood, and what is understood is used in the special sense of "obviously." add that ellipsis is a variation on substitution. Ellipsis is used more frequently than substitution. The speaker prefers to leave something (ellipsis) than to use a substitution term for it. Ellipses are considered a means of achieving aggregation .

This study attempts to find solutions to the following questions:

1. What are the forms and functions of ellipsis in English language?
2. What are the uses of ellipsis in literary texts ?

1.2 The Aims

This study aims at:

1. Identifying the forms and functions of ellipsis in English language.
2. Pointing out the uses of ellipsis in some selected literary texts ?

1.3 The Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes that :

1. There are five forms and functions of ellipsis in English language?
2. There are two main uses of ellipsis in literary texts .

1.4 The Procedure

1. Presenting a theoretical background about ellipsis in English Language.
2. Analyzing some literary texts in order to identify the forms and function of ellipsis .

1.5 The Limits

The paper is limited to find out what is meant by ellipsis and the role of it in English. The data of analysis is limited to Great Gatsby (1925) by F. Scott Fitzgerald .

1.6 The Value

This study is expected to provide knowledge about ellipsis forms in English . This knowledge could be benefited for the teacher to pinpoint the area of difficulty in this respect and also it could be a theoretical value to research workers.

Section Two

Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Ellipsis

The concept of ellipse has been defined by various researcher , including . They state that the removal of one item from a sentence or clause is known as ellipsis in English and Arabic. When there is verbal or mental proof to that missed aspect, leaving the reader to deduce it. As a result, most definitions include terminology like omission of element that can be retrieved or deduced from context (linguistic or physical) (Crystal, 2008: 166).

The ellipsis can be explained from many linguistic points of view. Halliday and Hassan (1976: 142,144) define the ellipsis as a zero substitution. They call it understood, and what is understood is used in the special sense of "obviously." That ellipsis is a variation on substitution. Ellipsis is used more frequently than substitution. The speaker prefers to leave something (ellipsis) than to use a substitution term for it. Ellipses are considered a means of achieving aggregation .

Ellipsis is an omission of a part of the structure, which is recoverable form a scrutiny of the context (Crystal, 1985:158). The use of ellipsis would be for reasons of economy and emphasis or style . " but it can only occur when the speaker is certain that the listener is able to recover the full meaning of the utterance and the omitted word."

Syntactically, Ellipsis is a Syntactic phenomenon rather than a morphological one (Robert and Dressler, 1981:49). They also state that ellipsis is omitting some of the surface expressions .In connected discourse ,sentences can be influenced by the structure of neighboring sentences . It refers to words which are omitted " where understanding can be achieved without word repetition"

Quirk, et al (1985: 536), state that words are ellipse only if they are uniquely recoverable, as there is no uncertainty to what words are to be supplied . It is feasible to add the recovered words to the sentence .

Hartman and Strok (1972: 99) emphasize the fact that the missing words must be understood or necessary to make the construction grammatically complete. The forms, which do not occur in a given sentence and they are understood from the meaning of the sentence, refer to ellipsis which is a device of abbreviating and shorting the message, the ellipited forms must be recoverable from the context which is important to avoid misunderstanding and miss communication. Yet, these forms are not a mere repetition of the same form given in preceding part of a sentence. Consider the following example;

1)John preferred to email June, to tweet

It is obvious to the reader/ listener that the verb (prefer) is omitted form the second clause.

2)Susan loves zucchini, and Jory does too.

The elliptical information appears previously, or can be inferred from the context of the sentence. The verb (love) will be needless to be repeated , so when it is left away, the sentence can still be understood that Jory also loves zucchini.

Some kind of ellipsis, which are not formal, are not dependent on the linguistic context. This means that the ellipted words cannot be recoverable from the context, as in, (you) Have a good time? The recoverability of the pronoun 'you' doesn't depend on the linguistic context of this statement (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 253).

In the elliptical construction, the omitted verb must be parallel with the first one. In other words , the elliptical verbs must be exactly the same. For example:

3)We like Iraqi cuisine, Ahmed prefers Italian Cuisine.

Such sentence is not parallel, the verb in the second clause is not identical to the first clause, therefore we cannot omit the verb in the second pattern.

Hassan (1976: 142), states that ellipsis is commonly utilized in English and Arabic language. It has function and importance in both languages, the basic function of ellipsis is to create cohesion by leaving out, under definite rules. ellipsis is used to avoid repetition and focus attention on what is new, for example:

4)Has jack been crying? No, laughing.

2.2 Uses of Ellipsis

There are many reasons for ellipsis, by which grammarians try to explain the phenomenon of ellipsis in its different places and types.

In English, the reasons include avoiding repetition, economy of component, continuation of thoughts and constituting the concept of cohesion . In contrast, in Arabic, the reasons of ellipsis include ;frequent use, length of speech, ellipsis for case ellipsis for the word structure, regular reasons, explanations after ambiguity, intending ambiguity, keeping the pause and feeling with eagerness and showing that time is shortened about saying the ellipited element (Hammuudah, 1998, p. 31-107).

2.3 Ellipted Forms of Verb in English

Verbal ellipsis refers to ellipsis within the verbal group, including the omission of the lexical verb, the auxiliary verb, the whole predicate and verb plus direct object.

Technically, it is defined as a verbal group whose structure does not fully express its systematic feature, for example:

5)Have you been swimming? Yes, I have (lexical ellipsis)

6)What have you been doing? Swimming (operator ellipsis)

(Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 167)

The two verbal groups in the answers (yes I have) and (swimming) , are both the instance of verbal ellipsis. Both stand for (have been swimming) , and there is no possibility of filling out with any other items.

2.4 Types of Ellipsis

2.4.1 Ellipsis of lexical verb

The lexical verb is the type of verbal ellipsis in which the obligatory verb of the verbal group is omitted , as in: Crystal, (2008: 167).

7)Is she eating? Yes, she is.

2.4.2 Ellipsis of verb including Auxiliary

The second type of verbal ellipsis refers to the operator ellipsis which involves the omission of the first part of predication , including both the auxiliary verb and the verb. Consider the following example:

8)Jack has played football and Tom (has played) tennis.

9)John should clean the shed and Peter (should) mow the lawn.

So deleting the auxiliary is generally optional. (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973, p. 262)

It is also possible to omit the subject in the second clause if the two clauses have the same subject, as in the following example :

10)They might or might not have objected .

11)The full forms of this sentence are;

12)They might or they might not have objected.

13)John sat down and (he) told us the news.

2.4.3 Ellipsis of Verb Plus Subject Complement

In English , both the verb and subject complement can be ellipted with the possibility of even ellipting the subject. Quirk and Green Baum (1973:262) provide the following example to show this idea:

14) John was the winner in 1971 and Bob (was the winner) in 1970.

2.4.4 Ellipsis of verb Plus Object

The verb and its object can be ellipted in the verb phrase of the second clause.

15) Mary will clean the room today and Jory (will clean the room) tomorrow.

2.4.5 Predicate Ellipsis

Predicate ellipsis means, the omission of the whole clause except the subject. In English, deleting the predicate is not common. (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 906)

For example:

16) Nigel finished the exam at the same time as George

2.4.6 Subject pronouns

When we do not need to mention someone or something because it is obvious from the immediate situation, we use situational ellipsis. Situational ellipsis often means we do not need to use the subject pronoun I, especially at the beginning of a clause. This is quite informal: (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 906)

17) (I) Wonder where Daisy is these days?

18) Great! [I] Hope you had a trip?

2.4.7 Subjects and Auxiliary Verbs

In informal conversation, we can leave out both a subject pronoun such as I or you and an accompanying auxiliary verb at the beginning of a clause when the meaning is obvious. This is most common in questions. For example (Ibid)

19) (Have you) Finished with the novel?

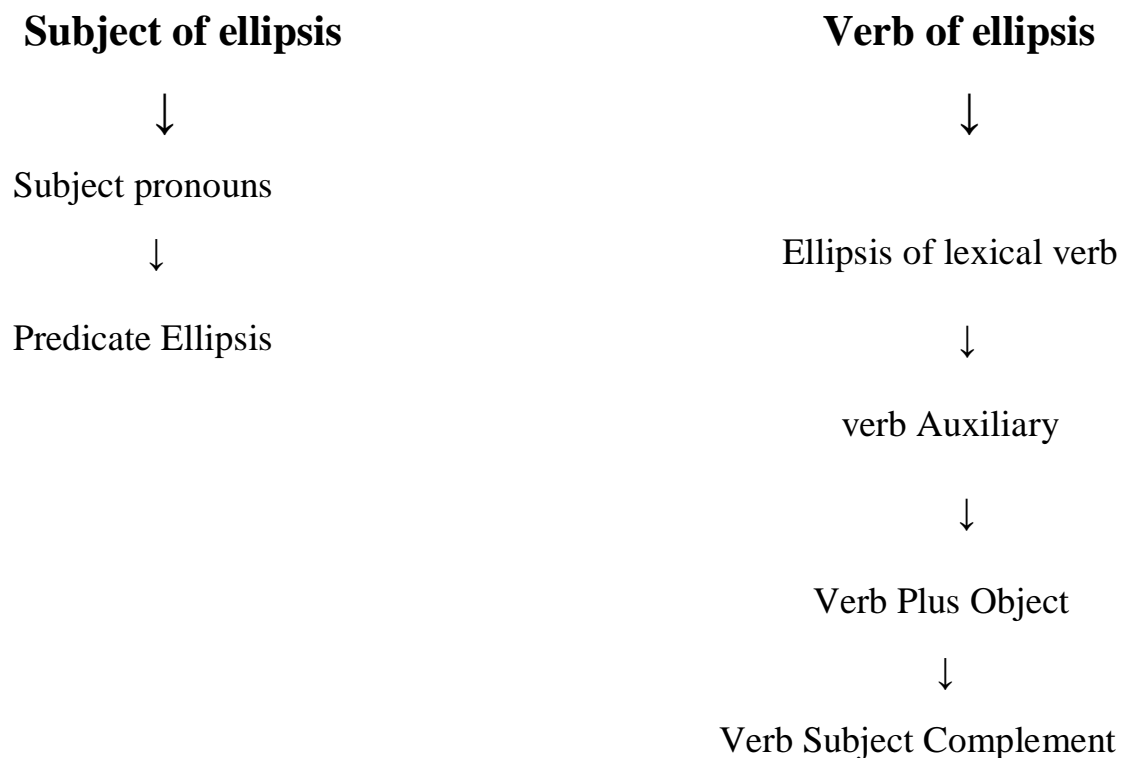
20) (I've) Lost my slippers again. Have you seen them?

2.5 The Model of The Study

In English words are ellipse only if they are uniquely recoverable, as there is no uncertainty to what words are to be supplied. It is feasible to add the recovered words to the sentence we have many types and function of ellipses. The model will be limited to the following types of ellipsis

Figure (1) types and function of Ellipsis in English

Types of Ellipsis in English



Chapter Three

Data Description and Analysis

3.1 Data

Blew there are analysis of the ellipsis used in *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald's :

3.2 Data Description

F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece *The Great Gatsby* was written in a time of social decadence, in which values no longer played an important role among the war-shattered population. The "Roaring Twenties" were shaped by the post-war generation and especially by the newly rich and wannabe famous, whose life circled around parties, money and affairs. On the surface, Fitzgerald's story seems to be about success, money and love – thus about the mentioned newly rich. Although the superficial life of the rich and powerful is a major theme in *The Great Gatsby*, it mostly explores underlying complexities and depths and therefore reveals the other side of the American Dream to the reader. Corruption, despair and desperate desire come along with idealism, faith and illusions. The protagonist, Jay Gatsby, personifies the American Dream as he is a man with a dubious background who managed to accomplish a luxurious style of living and to achieve everything he wanted to have by his own efforts – except of his great love, that is Daisy. *The Great Gatsby* is built upon the desperate desires of the protagonist and reveals a glance behind the glittering facade. Fitzgerald manages to draw the reader's attention to significant details and symbols in the text in order to make one think about the so-called 'truths' in the story.

Therefore, symbolism plays a major role in *The Great Gatsby*. Symbolism is the most powerful device of allowing the reader to gain insight into a character's personality and of revealing hidden ideas, values and profundity. The most significant symbolism applied in the text is color symbolism. In this paper, I will concentrate on analyzing Fitzgerald's use of colors as symbols and thus try to expose the meaning of color symbolism on the basis of the most meaningful examples. The most prominent colors that can be found throughout the novel are green, white, blue and yellow so I will analyze their symbolic meaning in the following.

3.3 The Analysis

Extract 1

Narrator Nick Carraway leaves a party with Mr. McKee, who invites him to lunch:

“Come to lunch someday,” he suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator.

“Where?”

“Anywhere.”

“Keep your hands off the lever,” snapped the elevator boy.

“I beg your pardon,” said Mr. McKee with dignity, “I didn't know I was touching it.”

“All right,” I agreed, “I'll be glad to.”

Instead of following this conversation with a lunch scene, Fitzgerald uses the ellipsis to omit what happened between the two men after leaving the party. The untold events are left to the reader to imagine, though many have seen the omission as implying a sexual relationship. Here we have the writer use Ellipsis of lexical verb and verb auxiliary

Extract 2

... I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands.

Here, the ellipsis represents a time lapse that is open to interpretation. The reader must decide how the two characters came to be in this situation. Here we have the writer use Ellipsis of Verb Subject Complement.

Extract 3

[Jordan] ‘It was-simply amazing,’ she repeated abstractedly. ‘But I swore I wouldn’t tell it and here I am tantalizing you.’ She yawned gracefully in my face. ‘Please come and see me . . . Phone book . . . Under the name of Mrs. Sigourney Howard . . . My aunt . . .’ She was hurrying off as she talked-her brown hand waved a jaunty salute as she melted into her party at the door.

There is also an excellent example of ellipsis points giving life to someone’s speech. Because of the use of the points, we can hear Jordan gradually fading away, but we can also understand what she means even though words are missing. Here we have the writer use Ellipsis of Verb Subject Complement and Auxiliary Verbs.

Extract 4

His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was . . .

. . . One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight.

Ellipses end the first paragraph and begin the next, suggesting that time has passed. These lines define Gatsby in an otherworldly and strange way, suggesting there is more to him than meets the eye. These lines also correspond with the first time he met Daisy, linking the two together. Here we have the writer use Ellipsis of Subject pronouns.

Extract 5

“Beauty and the Beast...Loneliness...Old Grocery House...Brook’n Bridge....” Then I was lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, staring at the morningTribune, and waiting for the four o’clock train.

This is an extremely significant use of ellipsis from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*. In this excerpt, the narrator Nick Carraway has left a party with another man, Mr. McKee. They agree to go to lunch as they are in the elevator, and Fitzgerald then separates that with an ellipsis and suddenly Nick is standing next to this man’s bed, while Mr. McKee is in his underwear. The leap is surprising, and seems to omit not redundant information, but instead a very key moment in the relationship between these two men. Made implicit through the use of the ellipsis Subjects and Auxiliary Verbs

3.4 Discussion of Results

Table (1) types of Ellipses in *The Great Gatsby* :

| Type of Ellipses | Fre. | | % |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| Ellipsis of lexical verb | 8 | Extract 1 | 40% |
| Verb Auxiliary | 8 | Extract 3 | 40% |
| Verb Subject Complement | 2 | Extract 3, 2 | 10% |
| Subject pronouns | 1 | Extract 4 | 5% |
| Subjects and Auxiliary Verbs | 1 | Extract 5 | 5% |
| Total | 20 | | 100% |

Discussion

In the above table verb auxiliary scores the frequency with (8) frequency of 40% percentages

Ellipsis of lexical verb scores the frequency with (8) frequency of 40% percentages.

Subject pronouns and subjects and auxiliary verbs scores the frequency with (1) frequency of 5% percentages.

Verb subject complement scores the heights frequency with (2) frequency of 10% percentages.

Chapter Four

Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

In English, ellipsis is generally a structural process. In most cases, the elided element is in the second clause and can be predicted/recovered from its antecedent in the first clause. Admittedly, in certain contexts a constituent in the first clause may be ellipted (object and predicate) if it is mentioned in the second clause. That is, the elided element in English is recoverable and predicted from the surrounding context. From chapter two conclusion the best definition of ellipsis is removal of one item from a sentence or clause is known as ellipsis in English and Arabic. When there is verbal or mental proof to that missed aspect, leaving the reader to deduce it. As a result, most definitions include terminology like omission of element that can be retrieved or deduced from context (linguistic or physical).

4.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that some additional exercises about ellipsis are added to the subject of grammar of the fourth _year stage of the department of English .

4.3 Suggestions

The following topics are suggested to be investigated by other researchers because they are beyond the limits of the present study:

1. Ellipsis in English political texts .
2. A Contrastive Study of ellipsis in Standard English and Arabic

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