

ELLIPSIS AS A MEANS OF ECONOMY AND EXPRESSIVENESS: THEORETICAL
APPROACHES AND TRANSLATIONAL ASPECTS

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Annotation: This paper explores the phenomenon of ellipsis as one of the most complex and multifaceted aspects of syntax. It examines its semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic features, emphasizing the criteria that distinguish ellipsis from other types of incomplete constructions—such as semantic completeness, recoverability, and communicative integrity.

The study traces various approaches to ellipsis in Russian, English, and Uzbek linguistic traditions, analyzing perspectives from functional-pragmatic, formal-structural, and cognitive frameworks. Special attention is given to the works of C. Bally, A. Martinet, V. A. Zvegintsev, L. S. Barkhudarov, P. A. Lekant, and F. E. Ibragimova, among others, highlighting the diversity of interpretations across linguistic schools.

The paper also considers the stylistic role of ellipsis in literature, particularly in Ernest Hemingway's "iceberg style," where omission serves to create tension, authenticity, and expressive economy. Difficulties in translating elliptical constructions are discussed, focusing on the need to preserve the brevity and stylistic effect of the original text.

Keywords: ellipsis, incomplete sentences, syntactic reduction, expressiveness, cognitive approach, pragmatics, E. Hemingway, translation.

Introduction: Ellipsis is one of the most complex and multifaceted phenomena of syntax. Its nature has been studied for many decades, yet it still remains a subject of debate. The main distinction between ellipsis and other types of reduction lies in the fact that the omitted elements can always be restored by the recipient of the utterance. This process requires no effort, as it is based either on a typical grammatical model or on the predictability of the speech context.

Thus, ellipsis does not destroy the integrity of the utterance; on the contrary, it ensures its compactness and expressiveness.

Unlike incomplete constructions, which may be semantically ambiguous, elliptical forms maintain clear coherence. For example, in spoken language, the expression "Going home" requires no explanation, since the verb "going" implies both the subject and the purpose of motion. In incomplete sentences such as "I to the library", however, the verb is missing, and the recovery of meaning depends solely on the situation. Here the fundamental difference becomes evident: ellipsis ensures predictability and transparency, whereas an incomplete construction may remain uninterpreted even within the context.

Linguists have offered different explanations of the nature of ellipsis.

The expressive-pragmatic interpretation was proposed by Charles Bally, who regarded ellipsis as a means of adding emotional intensity to speech and as a way of avoiding redundancy. André Martinet linked it to the universal law of linguistic economy, noting that omission occurs where it does not hinder understanding.

Within the cognitive tradition, V.A.Zvegintsev viewed ellipsis as a manifestation of presupposition, which ensures the logical and semantic connection between parts of discourse.

In the formal-grammatical tradition (L.S.Barkhudarov, V.B. Kasevich), ellipsis is seen as a transformation of a complete structure, in which certain elements undergo zero expression. Thus, two poles are formed: the functional-pragmatic and the formal-structural.

Russian scholars attached special importance to ellipsis.

P.A.Lekant and V.V.Babaytseva identified elliptical sentences as an independent type of incomplete construction that retains communicative completeness.

E.S.Skoblikova emphasized that ellipsis should not be viewed as a structural defect but rather as an independent syntactic unit.

Conversely, L.S.Barkhudarov classified elliptical forms according to the principle of recoverability-either syntagmatic or paradigmatic. A.M.Peshkovsky described “stationary elliptical sentences”, which function as stable structures and do not require restoration. These approaches demonstrate the breadth of interpretations, ranging from pragmatic to strictly structural.

In the English linguistic tradition, ellipsis was studied by Randolph Quirk’s group, which identified several mechanisms of its functioning: representation, substitution, and parallelism. Charles Fillmore linked its acceptability to the valency structure of the verb, which made it possible to connect ellipsis with the theory of government and dependency.

Modern scholars such as Jason Merchant, J.Hankamer, I.Sag, and R. Jackendoff associate ellipsis with processes of syntactic derivation, developing the theories of “surface” and “deep” anaphora. These approaches make it possible to view ellipsis not merely as a reduction, but as an integral part of the cognitive mechanisms of information processing.

In Uzbek linguistics, one of the first works on the subject was the dissertation by N. M. Makhmudov, which provided a detailed classification of elliptical forms, analyzed the conditions of their functioning, and examined their differences from other types of incomplete constructions.

Later, F. E. Ibragimova drew attention to the linguopoetic potential of ellipsis, comparing it with anti-ellipsis. Her research showed that ellipsis enhances the dramatic quality and dynamism of a text, whereas anti-ellipsis, on the contrary, introduces precision and redundancy. This contrast paves the way for studying ellipsis in the context of poetics and literary style.

Main part: The use of ellipsis in literature is particularly illustrative.

Ernest Hemingway, employing his so-called “iceberg style,” frequently omits obvious elements, thereby creating tension and narrative dynamism.

Elliptical constructions allow him to make his characters’ speech more natural and closer to oral communication. Translating these constructions into Russian presents certain difficulties: it is necessary to preserve the conciseness and expressiveness of the original while avoiding redundant additions. Otherwise, the stylistic effect of the source text is lost.

The most important criterion is semantic completeness. An elliptical construction always allows for an unambiguous restoration of the omitted element, whereas an incomplete construction may remain ambiguous. The second criterion is recoverability: ellipsis is systematically related to grammatical norms, while an incomplete form can be situational. The third criterion is communicative integrity: ellipsis does not disrupt communication; on the contrary, it makes it more effective.

As a result, ellipsis should be regarded as a universal mechanism operating at the intersection of grammar, pragmatics, and cognitive factors.

Its difference from incomplete constructions lies in its structural recoverability and the preservation of the utterance’s integrity. Ellipsis is not merely a reduction but a motivated

means of textual organization, playing a key role both in everyday speech and in literary discourse.

Conclusion: Ellipsis represents a universal linguistic mechanism that operates at the intersection of grammar, pragmatics, and cognition. It is not merely a structural reduction, but a functional and stylistic device that enhances the economy, expressiveness, and coherence of speech. Across linguistic traditions—from Russian and Uzbek scholarship to Western theoretical models—ellipsis has been interpreted in multiple ways: as a manifestation of grammatical omission, a communicative strategy, and a reflection of cognitive processing.

In literary discourse, ellipsis acquires special significance, serving as a tool for emotional intensity, narrative tension, and stylistic precision. Authors like Ernest Hemingway demonstrate its potential to convey meaning implicitly, engaging the reader in reconstructing the unspoken. The challenges of translating elliptical structures underscore their delicate balance between form and meaning, where even minimal additions can disrupt the intended effect.

Thus, ellipsis should be viewed not as a flaw or omission, but as a purposeful and dynamic means of expression, fundamental to both everyday communication and artistic language.

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