

# The Determination of the Linguistic Status of Ellipsis

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## Abstract

The article deals with the study of ellipses in the English language. It states the importance and urgency of the investigation of ellipsis. The urgency of the investigation and its importance in the science of linguistics are substantiated and the direction of investigation and the methods used for the study of the problem are determined in the article as well.

A special attention is paid to the revelation of theoretical views and the author's attitudes to these viewpoints are discovered. Another problem to be paid worth of attention is considered structural and semantic peculiarities of sentence and utterance in the investigation because in the determination of the status of linguistic ellipsis this problem plays an important role. Determination of which viewpoint on being ellipsis a sentence or an utterance is considered as one of the main purposes of the investigation in the article, for in the determination of ellipsis as a sentence or an utterance, there is not a unanimous opinion. In the theoretical part of the article all these views are distinguished and highlighted for the successful achievement of the purpose. For the first time, in the article the status of ellipsis is considered on the ground of sentence and utterance.

**Keywords:** ellipsis, linguistics, sentence, utterance, stylistic figure

## 1. Introduction

Ellipsis is a specific language phenomenon involving grammatical and cognitive category. It is also a widely spread linguistic problem embracing all types and styles of sentences. As a stylistic figure of speech, it is mostly used in literary and publicistic styles. We may say that ellipsis is used in all the layers of language. For example, the reduction of sounds in the phonetic level, reduction of suffixes in the grammatical level and reduction of words and sentence members in the lexical-syntactic levels are characteristic features of ellipsis often met in the language. As we see phenomenon of ellipsis is a complex problem involving various fields and is closely related not only to linguistic problems but also to the cognitive perceptions. To discover the whole panorama of ellipsis a number of scholars have carried out investigations, but the more they have studied to get to know the true nature of ellipses we think, that the more problems there seemed to be left for the consideration. So, we think our approach to the investigation of this problem can be positive contribution in the discovery of this linguistic phenomenon.

Some of the authors along with consideration of ellipsis as lexical-syntactic and stylistic problems, also considered it as the problem of morphology and word-forming processes. M. K. Tursiyeva noted that ellipsis is also observed in morphology and in word-building process (Prokhorova, 2003, p. 43).

We must also mention that there is not a unanimous opinion on the determination of linguistic status of ellipsis either, that's why from the view of determination of linguistic status it is also one of the actual problems to be studied in present-day linguistics. We also think that the investigation of ellipsis is also of practical importance, because ellipses are mostly used in practical speeds.

Different scholars in determination of the linguistic and cognitive nature of ellipsis, including the status of ellipsis have exhibited different approaches. Our approach to the determination of the status of ellipsis is built up on the comparative analyses of utterances and sentences. In this article our aim is to carry out investigations on the bases of analyses of these two components within the studied problem.

## 2. Research Method

We must note that in the study of the problem, usage of one method of investigation is not appropriate. This is

linked with the fact that the problem touched upon by us is a complex problem and in its consideration implementation of different methods is needed. That's why in the study of determination of the status of ellipsis we have chosen the usage of the Method of tenacity within the Pragmatic Model. To follow the systematization of theory and practice the method of deduction is also used. The investigation has been carried out on the comparative analyses of the components of ellipsis and sentences. For the determination of the components of ellipsis, involving different aspects of language system, comparative-descriptive linguistic method and method of structural componential analyses have been used as well.

### 3. Concepts of Sentence and Utterance

In the linguistic ambiguity (alongside its belonging to language and speech) a sentence also possesses the following peculiarities: it is a bearer of communicative function; it has predicativity; it possesses semantic completeness and complete intonation (Kolokoltseva, 2001, p. 39). But utterance, being different from sentence possesses the following peculiarities: "speech status, communicative function actual member division, its structure's being more independent in comparison with sentence, its dependence on the participants of speech, its correspondence to the situation" (Kolokoltseva, 2001, p. 40).

In modern science of linguistics the term "utterance" is not explained mono-semantically. The distinctive features of utterance (communicative utterance, its relationship with speech act, its being of speech characteristics, its subjective-modal peculiarities) being highlighted, it is possible to approach this problem from the view of the theory of speech acts, psycholinguistics and other fields. It is evidently proved that situation, psychological readiness to the situation, mental development, and language knowledge play great role in understanding the meanings of utterances, separated from the sentences.

To prove these theses, let's consider the following situations in which utterances are used: "Once a Frenchman wanted to visit a friend of his. When he came to the door of the house, he knocked at it. A maid opened it. The Frenchman said: "Is Mr. Brown in?" the maid answered: He is not up yet. Come back in half an hour". When he came after half an hour, the maid said: "He is not down yet" he said: "If he is not up and he is not down, where is he?". The maid answered: "Oh, that's simple. "When I say he is not up, I mean he has not got up, and "when I say he is not down yet" I meant he has not come down yet".

Here the utterance up and down are unknown for the English speaking Frenchman because he does not know all the peculiarities of the English language and the situation in which these utterances are used.

In the usage of utterances (ellipses) perfect knowledge of language is more important. Utterances are generally used between the interlocutors in dialogical texts, if both of the interlocutors know the language on the same level. Another example to show lack of good command of language between one of the interlocutors which brings to misunderstanding: Once an English-learning person living in England for some years, while staying in a hotel heard someone shout: "look out?" when he heard these words, he put his head out of the window and a bucketful of water fell on him. It seems "look out" means in English "don't look out" he said, because he did not know the meaning of the utterance "look out" in English meant "be careful".

There exist different opinions and theoretical views of the scholars on "utterances" in the science of linguistics.

Here we introduce some of them: The term "utterance" very often is used equally with the term of "speech act" and more often it is considered its synonym. Such a similarity of notions very has often been the target of criticism. For example, V. G. Gak notes on the process in the speech activity and considers the determination of the product of this process as an important condition (Gak, 1982). Y. V. Paducheva speaking on "utterance" envisages it as an actualized sentence or a fragment of a speech, formed during the speech act and considered in the context of speech act (Paducheva, 1985, p. 29). The difference between speech act utterances lies in the fact that in comparison with speech act as a unit of speech utterance is one part of actual division of a sentence.

Most of the investigators determine utterance, as the main unit of speech, in comparison with sentence, which is the main unit of the language. It's comparison with sentence is understood as the comparison of structural unit with that of functional unit (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 253, 9, 90).

The scholars, considering sentence as the main signs of it note contents and structure, coordination between subject and predicate, but as the main sign of utterance, they note resonance of information with reality (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 301, 3).

T. V. Shmelyova determines utterance in this way: "It is a sentence, not isolated from the situation, namely a sentence bearing the information on by whom and why the information has been spoken, including the attitudes of the interlocutors to each-other and their attitudes to the spoken information" (Shmelyeva, 1988, p. 169).

We must mention that T. V. Shmelyova is absolutely right in her determination of utterance as a unit of speech not isolated from the situation. Utterances are cognized by the interlocutors only by situation in which both sides take place. Let's imagine such a situation: One person sees a familiar to him/her a person and asks: "Where are you going?" The other answers: "Home". For the participants of the situation the word "home" is absolutely understandable, but for a third party, being unaware of the situation the word "home" will mean nothing at all.

Utterance being the product of cognitive processes reflects all the conceptual activities of individual person. A. A. Leontyev notes that "statistic information is not the one which is given but it is its development by means of different codes in the process of exchange of information with it" (Leontyev, 1979, p. 26).

M. M. Bakhtin, distinguishing a sentence from an utterance and mentioning the wholeness of the latter notes that this completion is conditioned by the isolated semantics and grammatical wholeness: "The completed wholeness of utterance creates possibility for the answer and is determined by the finishing of the theme semantically" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 446).

He affirms the dialogical character of utterance determined by M. M. Bakhtin. This feature of utterance speaks of the communicative character of utterance and here participation of addressee is conditioned as a pragmatic factor. Tendency to dialogue in the cognitive process involves the whole speech activity of a person and this mostly shows itself in dialogues, that's why, taking use of this determination, we are going to consider the pragmatic peculiarities of ellipsis just on the basis of dialogical speech we think, consideration of ellipsis from this view point is more purposeful.

Despite the fact that both sentence and utterance are of communicative character, the functional field of one is language, but the functional field of the second one is speech. Though sentence is related to both-language and speech, it possesses a grammatical structure, a scheme constructed as to subject-predicate complex. But utterance being different from sentence absolutely belongs to speech and it exists in the adjusted form for the participant of the speech and is characterized by actual sentence division depending on speech situation.

#### 4. Determination of Linguistic Status of Ellipsis

Having considered the similar and distinctive features of sentence and utterance, as to the logical consistency it is possible to consider the status of ellipsis. We think that concept of elliptic sentence is more of formal-grammatical character, and it has not relationship with contents. It is surmised that ellipsis possesses the status of utterance, thus we observe three signs, peculiar to ellipsis, which are as follows. The first, elliptic forms each time is formulated by an individual, the second, they are created at the moment when they are suitable for the speech activity, namely, they are fitful for a period of time and for a situation, the third, ellipsis are always addressed to the participants of speech. The following language materials may help us to justify our thoughts.

"Let's stop and see Mr. Bauman again", exclaimed Jennie, her natural sympathies restored by the hopeless note in her mother's voice.

"Do you think he would trust us anymore?"

"Let's tell him where we're working. I will".

"Well", said her mother, wearily (Teodor Dreiser "Jennie Gerhardt").

These sentences, which we have considered, elliptic utterance, being used by the participant of the dialogue has been directed to the participants of the communication and is directly related to the speech moment.

From this viewpoint, we may think that the elliptic expression "*as a rule is created as to the model, which exists in our thinking... We accept this model as an indivisible whole*" (Tutarisheva, 2018, p. 60). We do not create this model; simply we fill in the ready-made mold.

Notion of utterance within the frame of text is of special importance. Within the frame of this investigation, cognitive-discursive approach, which we have exhibited, aimed at the investigation of pragmatic peculiarities of ellipsis, envisages the description of mutual links of both linguistic and extra linguistic forms of any speech form. This form of coordination may exceed the limits of text as it takes place within the text. The effectiveness and suitability of usage of any speech element to the usage of moment is determined by the context factor, making this element more purposeful. If we take this factor into consideration, we think that to consider ellipsis and the "whole" sentence on the same plan, to consider them as equal elements from the view of semantic wholeness, are more purposeful, because both of them unless exist in a certain context turn to abstract elements and only within the context they gain the status of one part of communicative act. Just from this viewpoint, within the frame of this scientific investigation, we consider ellipsis not in the status of an utterance. Context acts as the main factor in the formulation of the semantics ellipsis. Being isolated from the context, of which we have

mentioned above, ellipsis lose the whole volume of contents and is deprived from the communicative function. As far as the term “context” is concerned, we must note that this term expresses “*both the determination of the self-belonging feature of contents and the situation cover embracing the text*” (Enkvist, 1980, p. 255).

Here we also think it necessary to touch upon the speech semantics. After A. V. Bodarkov we consider the speech meaning of text as “information expressed by the proper language means fitting to fundamental speech situation, condition and context on the basis of knowledge and experience of listener and speaker, which is sent by the speaker and received by the listener” (Bondarko, 1978, p. 95). So we may determine the speech meanings as follows: 1) linguistic contents of the text; 2) contextual information; 3) situative information; 4) encyclopedic information.

T. N. Prokhorova relates the notion of meaning to utterance, which is considered as the main category of pragmatics, but she relates the other elements taking part in the realization of the meaning of the utterance to the external contents of the utterance (Prokhorova, 2003, p. 41).

The pragmatic description of utterance is determination of the mechanism of realization of the meaning, by taking the suitability of formulation of utterance to its self-belonging external contents, to the structure and to the condition of sending this meaning into consideration.

Elliptic constructions in the pragmatic reference plan, expressing the thought, realize the principle of implicitly of the language sign. In this meaning the final purpose of the author “I” is to achieve coreference on the account of elliptic structure over predicative references, which finds its reflection in different grammatical language forms, manifested in systematic language expressions, a great majority of which are established by elliptic structures, possessing secondary predicativity (Golubeva, 2018, p. 51).

As far as the status of ellipsis is meant, it is necessary to pay special attention to the opinion O. I. Reunova. So, he thinks that the meaning creating and meaning distinguishing signs for elliptic utterance though being characteristic cases, as the main signs morphological and syntactic features are marked (Reynova, 2000, p. 19). O. I. Reunova, as characteristic features of ellipsis, takes any criteria belonging to utterance which create meanings and express meanings as basic criteria. As to her conception utterance is considered as to the ratio of possibility/impossibility of forming the meaning and its sending, but sentence is described as a one-member or two-member construction. Ellipsis carry out the function of “meaning creation” and acts as a meaning specifying element in the formulation of communicative contents (Reynova, 2000, p. 21).

Y. A. Zemskaya also thinks that ellipsis have the status of utterances and she names elliptic utterance as communicative utterances and notes that consituations enter the composition of utterance and their below-mentioned components during the oral speech make influence on their structures:

- a) speech condition or context embracing the utterance;
- b) visual-sensitive situation, i.e., the things that the participants of the communication see and feel;
- c) individual experience and knowledge of the speakers (Zemskaya, 1981, p. 193).

These components as to common signs unite. Commonness between the components are as follows: the first, they all, making influences on the vacant positions in the same way, serve for the creation of common contents; the second, all the types of consituations are individual, i.e., they are known to the people, more exactly speaking to the participants of communication in limited quantity. That’s why consituative utterances beyond the situation are either absolutely understandable or not completely clear (Zemskaya, 1981, p. 194) of which we have exhibited in the above-mentioned examples.

Touching upon the dependence of consituative utterances on the speech context Y. A. Zemskaya within the speech context, distinguishes macro context from micro context. As far as the activity circle of elliptic utterances is concerned, she notes that micro context is the main factor, influencing their structures, namely micro context is a linguistic weapon to be considered nearest to them (Zemskaya, 1981, p. 194).

Y. A. Zemskaya explains the dependence of elliptic utterance on the visual-sensitive situation like this: “*Those, given in visual-sensitive situations may not be verbalized in the communicative situation appearing on the bases of these situations. Besides, it is also important to note that naming of visual-sensitive components is also natural, that’s why the consituative meaning of visual-sensitive utterances as a rule is equal to the meaning of a certain word or words. The position, intended for this word monosemantically, determines its form as well*” (Zemskaya, 1981, p. 208).

It is necessary to consider ellipsis as a structural model of utterance expressing any syntactic reduction of any part of the sentence (because only the fulfilment of this reduction may restore the complete restoration of the

sentence). “*This is more conditioned by the existence of former or later context of the situation, created during the dialogical communication*” (Chicherina, 2018, p. 110).

Elliptical utterance is one of the accepted forms of live dialogic speech. For example, In the English language after the type of utterance “I am leaving now” the usage of the word “where?” is already a speech norm and has a specific power of expression. Besides, “*elliptic form within the frame of a certain situation has the possibility of acting as a stylistic device as well*” (Galperin, 2012, p. 45).

We agree with such a determination of the linguistic status of ellipsis.

## 5. Conclusion

Scientific investigation of the problem of the “Determination of the linguistic Status of Ellipsis” makes it possible for us to come to the following conclusions.

1) We must mention that cognition of the phenomenon of ellipsis as its investigation is one of the complex problems. We must mention that there is not a unanimous opinion on the determination of linguistic status of ellipsis.

2) Ellipsis is a notion involving all the aspects of linguistics (lexis, grammar and phonetics) so it is absolutely impossible to end up the study of the problem by one or two scientific researches. To discover the whole panorama of ellipses a number of scholars have carried out investigations, but the more they have studied to get to know the true nature of ellipsis, we think, that the more problem there seemed to be left for the consideration, that’s why our making another scientific attempt in studying ellipsis and determination of its linguistic status is necessary and useful and may serve as our more or less contribution for the study of the problem.

3) Considering and generalizing the views of the scholars on the “Determination of the linguistic status of the ellipsis we can conclude that in the study of the problem, investigation of notions of sentence and utterance is a main step for the discovery of the problem because in most cases ellipsis are realized in the form of utterances.

The role of situation is undeniable of which many of the scholars have expressed their opinions in revealing the true nature of ellipsis. It is just the situation which discovers the meanings of ellipsis through utterances.

We consider that ellipsis possesses the status of utterance. Under the influence of situation, usage of ellipsis during the speech possesses a pragmatic feature, expressed openly.

Ellipsis is an utterance possessing non-verbalized subject or predicate and it is realized on the account of presuppositions and speech situations being common for the listener.

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