

The Analysis of Ellipsis within The Jakarta Post Cartoons: A Case Study

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Abstract

Ellipsis mostly occurs in dialogues. When some elements in the dialogue are repeated, they become unnecessary information that lead to redundancy. Therefore, they need to be omitted to achieve effective writing. Nominal ellipsis is ellipsis in nominal group. The positions of modifiers are upgraded to function as Head. The modifiers replacing the position of Head in nominal ellipsis are Deictic, Numerative, and Epithet. Verbal ellipsis is ellipsis in verbal group. It can be specified into lexical and operator ellipsis. When some words are left out in verbal group, they belong to lexical ellipsis. But it is operator ellipsis when the form of *be* is left out. If the clause becomes the point of departure, it is divided into two parts, namely, modal element and propositional element. Clausal ellipsis is specified into modal and propositional ellipsis. When modal elements are left out, they belong to modal ellipsis. Conversely, it is propositional ellipsis if propositional elements are left out.

Keywords: ellipsis, nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, clausal ellipsis

1. Background

Language used in naturally occurring situations takes many forms. Any bit of talk by a speaker, which is distinct from other bits of talk from the speaker and from other speakers in a speech situation, is an utterance (O'grady, 1996: 583). The speakers, then, use the utterance to conduct a certain goal of interaction. They apply the forms of utterance in various expressions according to whom and what the utterance is addressed to. People normally utter in a spoken form when they meet accidentally with others. When an important document should be sent secretly, they will express in written forms.

An utterance may realize a complete sentence, an elliptical sentence, a sequence of sentences or a single word. It is common in terms of a discourse since the variation within the utterance will create an effective and efficient way of communication either in the oral or written form. The set of utterances produced by a speaker can be referred to as the speaker's discourse. The written (or transcribed) version of any utterance or body of discourse is called a text. The field that deals with the organization of texts, in which parts of texts are connected, and the devices used for achieving textual structures is called discourse analysis (O'grady, 1996: 583). The text of discourse is interrelated mostly in meaning rather than in grammar. It is cohesion that mostly matters.

Halliday and Hasan (1979: 1) state that a text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence, and it is not defined by its size. The sentences within a text, moreover, are interrelated to each other. One item will depend on what has gone before. Of this assumption, then, we need an interpretation on information encoded in the preceding one. The interpretation is led by ellipsis. For example:

A: What have you been doing?

B: Swimming. (Halliday and Hasan, 1979: 167)

The second sentence consists of elliptical structure 'Swimming'. It belongs to verbal (operator) ellipsis, for which we have to supply the missing clause, (I have been) swimming presupposed from the first sentence. The element *I have been* is the presupposed items that must be supplied in the second recourse from the preceding ones. Note that there is no possible alternative interpretation here; the second clause can be interpreted only as *I have been swimming*. Halliday and Hasan (1979: 4) completely state that:

Cohesion occurs when there is an interpretation of some elements in the discourse that is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it. Of which the elements are built up are potentially integrated into a text.

From the description above, we can assume that within a text occurs the relationship between sentences, through which a text is realized, for it needs an interpretation between them, one element presupposing the other. In other words, there is some presuppositions in the structure of what is to be supplied. It is clear that sentences are interrelated. They refer to one another. Hence it seems that the structure of sentences is what is presupposed from some preceding ones. The writer argues that a text is a relation of meaning, which is realized by sentences as the highest unit of grammatical structure to support a text cohesively. The sentences, therefore, also have the meaning which is dependent on each other. Hence we need an interpretation of, particularly, incomplete sentences. When one presupposes the other, therefore, there is a presupposition that must be filled up between sentences to achieve cohesive relation. This article aims at describing the effort of avoiding the redundancy, unnecessary repetition that has already been known or given in which the presupposition occurs because of ellipsis within a text.

A text may vary including newspapers. Newspapers are broadly read in the society. Reah (2002: 7) states that the newspaper texts and also those of novels are constructed to arise and hold the interest of the readers. From the previous observation performed by the researcher particularly during the editions of June to August 2005 it is showed that the Jakarta Post had a great quantity and quality of elliptical cases. This is one of the reasons for the researcher to take this newspaper as the object of observation. The researcher in this case will focus on cartoons in it. Cartoons provide plenty of dialogues, where dialogues have lots of elliptical forms to avoid redundancy. This analysis may not be generalized for it is a case study. The study can be applied to inquire each specific aspect of a topic deeply (Nasution, 36: 1982). The study takes some elements each of which is deeply analyzed and the result of the study focuses only on the analyzed elements (Marzuki, 41: 1983).

As it is stated above that elliptical cases may occur in dialogues which in turn widely take place in cartoons. There are left some structural slots out that must be filled in. it will recourse to the preceding where there is available information. Interpretation is needed to reveal the elements of sentences to fill it in. one is presupposing, finding the one which presupposes the following. Each of them leads to the relationship in meaning. As a relation in meaning, they provide a proposition. In this relationship lies cohesion.

Ellipsis is commonly expressed through dialogues either spoken or written. When written, cartoons seem to be the richest source of the data. This research then focuses on elliptical cases within cartoons in the Jakarta Post.

Elliptical cases are various. Principally the elliptical cases are the same, that is, leaving out some structural slots. It is obvious that the analysis of a text contains many problems related to, for instance, the problems of proposition, of presupposition, of cohesion and of ellipsis. The analysis in this research focuses merely on ellipsis within The Jakarta Post cartoons. It is impossible, then, to cover all those problems simultaneously in this research as it needs a long time to discuss comprehensively. Besides, it is wider in scope of what this research has to do to.

A. Discussion

We will always find the incomplete sentence. Many parts of the sentences have been left out. From speaking and writing, we generally require getting adequate information and this involves the left out words or phrases of the complete grammatical unit. This case of leaving out the words or phrases is called ellipsis (Parrot, 2004: 318). Another important reason for ellipsis is omitting shared items attention that will be focused on new material (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 251). When some elements are left out, the new construction of the sentence shows the new information. For example:

A: Have you spoken to him?

B: (I have) Not yet. (spoken to him)

What A was saying is given information (*Have you spoken to him*). A needs a new information in the response. Hence B (*Not yet*) is new information since it gives information needed by A. similarly, O'grady (1996: 298) explains that old (or given) information consists of the knowledge that speaker assumes to have been available with the addressee at the time of utterance, either because it is shared by both or because it has already been introduced into the discourse. The writer assumes that what is given is the source of information to be recoured by the hearer or addressee. The new information involves the knowledge that is introduced into the discourse for the first time. Thus, *Not yet*, is the new information while *Have you spoken to him*, is the given knowledge introduced by A.

Given information requires the new information to be supplied into the elliptical form presented normally in the response. Hence, the recourse should be made to the given information since there lays all information needed with which the ellipsis will be supplied. Redundancy needs to be repudiated by leaving out unnecessary information that has been mentioned before. Ellipsis, therefore, must be conducted.

Redundancy

Ellipsis is used to avoid repetition (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973: 251). When the given information is repeated in the second, it is trapped in redundancy. What has been mentioned in the first becomes unnecessary information if it is used in the second. If it is written in the full form, the sentence takes on redundancy. When it is fully written it will not be an effective writing because of the case of redundancy. It is important to leave the structural slots out in order to be the effective writing. Thus the second must provide only something new that is truly needed by the first. That is the obvious reasons that the function of ellipsis is to avoid redundancy. It can be said then that one function of ellipsis is to avoid redundancy to get the effective writing or speaking.

Presupposition

Halliday and Hasan (1979: 144) simply define presupposition as a device for identifying something by referring it to something that is already there. The given and new information has a correlation in meaning. The correlation, then, becomes the device to recourse to what has gone before, that is, presupposition. One is presupposing while the other is presupposed. One element will interpret another. The first element provides the source of information to be presupposed in the second as in *Joan brought some Carnations, and Catherine some sweet peas* Halliday and Hasan (1979: 143). The presupposed element is the predicator *bought*. When to make the second, the full form is *Catherine bought some sweet peas*. Because of ellipsis the second one is not fully written for the information is already available in the first. Aminudin (2003: 100) adds that the presupposition can also be related to the efforts in understanding the unity of the content of a reading text.

Cohesion

Cohesion is defined as the set of possibilities that exist in the language for making text hang together (Halliday and Hasan 1979: 144). It has relation among elements realized. These relations show the meaning which is independent upon each other. When some elements within the text need an interpretation of others by referring to what has been left out, there is cohesion. Hence Halliday and Hasan (1979: 4) claim that the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations in meaning that exists within the text. From the statement it can be underlined that cohesion is not a structural relation but semantic one with which the text becomes a semantic unit.

Nominal ellipsis

Nominal ellipsis can generally be described as ellipsis in nominal group. The structure of nominal group is structured by head, as usually refers to thing, pre-modifier, as what precede the head, and post modifier, that comes after the head. The head is clearly accompanied with modifiers.

The modifiers may be composed by various elements. They are normally as deictic, numerative, epithet, classifier and qualifier. Deictic is normally represented by determiner, numerative by numeral, epithet by adjective, classifier by noun and qualifier by relative clause or propositional phrase.

The function of head is commonly provided by common noun, pronoun or proper noun. Proper nouns and pronouns are rarely used since they are present in the form of substitution rather than ellipsis. In the case of nominal ellipsis then common noun is omitted and the missing head is replaced by one of those modifiers (deictic, numerative, epithet, classifier and qualifier) to be functioned as head in the elliptical nominal group. This occurrence is what the so called as nominal ellipsis. In non elliptical nominal group, thus, the thing presenting head is expressed. Conversely, it does not occur in elliptical nominal group. The function of head is taken by modifiers. Hence, deictic, numerative, epithet, classifier and qualifier placed as modifiers are upgraded into Head in the elliptical nominal group.

Verbal ellipsis

Verbal ellipsis is simply defined as ellipsis in verbal group. There is omission of some words in verbal group. It can be said, then, that the structure of elements is not expressed. As generally characteristic of ellipsis there occur leaving structural slots out. The leaving of structural slots out in elliptical verbal group causes missing of information. The missed information requires an interpretation of elements which are not expressed. The interpretation is needed since the information is available there and this missing should be filled out to get the complete information.

Clausal ellipsis

Ellipsis in the clause is related to mood. Specifically it is related to the question-answer process in dialogue; and this determines that there are two kinds: 1. Yes/No ellipsis and 2. WH ellipsis (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 297).

Cartoon

Sudjana and Rifai (1990: 58) define a cartoon as a figure which represents people, ideas, or situation designed to influence the mind of society. Regarding teaching, cartoons are very important media to comprehend mainly the content of the teaching materials of their logical order for the unity of the meaning of the text.

Cartoons may belong to visual media. Sudjana and Rifai (1990: 8) state that a visual message is perfectly effective to sharpen the information even it can interfere one's attitude, set up a mind of society, etc. it is clear that cartoons as a visual media also play an important role to send a message.

Soerlarko (1980: 2) convinces that looking at figures is easier to get the point since the figure is not only a sign but also simplified artificial object. Cartoons also have some benefits (Sudjana and Rifai, 1990: 61-63) as follows:

1. Cartoons give a motivation

The effective cartoons are interesting and they can generate the students' learning interest.

2. Cartoons as an illustration

They are used to illustrate the teaching materials when the teaching and learning process is in progress.

3. Cartoons are possibly used for students' works

They are possible to apply students' creativity for teaching purposes. Literary and grammar are allowed to use cartoons as knowledge of illustration of the students as well.

The portion of types of ellipsis

Having analyzed the full form, left out element(s), types of ellipsis, and specific types of each type of ellipsis, the researcher wants to take into account the portion of each type of ellipsis that occurred in the data. The result presents the specific data from June to August 2005. It is intended to find out what the frequency of types of ellipsis during the edition is. The table below shows the points.

Types of Ellipsis from June to	Total Identified Elliptical	Percentage
Nominal ellipsis	9 forms	17,31%
Verbal ellipsis	6 forms	11,54%
Clausal ellipsis	37 forms	71,15%
Total	52 forms	100%

B. Conclusion

The message must be transmitted through the language analysis in order to be understood by the readers. One of the language analyses is ellipsis. The analysis of ellipsis is the study of omitting process to some structural slots of unnecessary information to achieve effective either writing or speaking. Ellipsis can be grouped into nominal, verbal, and clausal.

Ellipsis is used to avoid redundancy. It is unnecessary information that repeats what was said before. When some elements are left out, the new sentence is not complete and become shorter. The full meaning, however, is still clear. It is available in the first. The readers, then, need to interpret the unexpressed meaning by means of presupposition. The second will recourse the necessary information in the first. One is presupposing while another is presupposed. What is said in the first is the given information. It is the available knowledge at the time of utterance. Because it is given, it needs something new that replies the first's question. It is a must for the second, then, to serve the new information to continue the proposition expressed by the first. Thus, between sentences are cohesive since they are interrelated to each other. In other words, they have relationship in meaning through which cohesion is mostly dealt with. It can be concluded, then, that ellipsis has contribution to cohesion.

The frequency of ellipsis may vary in a text particularly in the cartoons' dialogue. The research finding shows that ellipsis widely occurs within the dialogue. From the whole data, 52 elliptical forms – edited in June to August 2005, it is showed that nominal ellipsis is about 17,31%, verbal ellipsis is about 11,54% and clausal ellipsis is about 71,15%. We can say, thus, that during June to August 2005 the greatest occurrence of ellipsis types in the Jakarta Post Cartoons' dialogue is clausal ellipsis.

C. Suggestion

Ellipsis is a complex problem. It needs an accurate study to get a clear understanding. It will be ambiguous if we do some mistakes. Therefore, first, the left out words or elements should be appropriate with the readers' knowledge. The writers must recognize to whom the text will be addressed. Consequently, readers must be careful of leaving some structural slots out in a text. They have to recognize what elements are left out by understanding the previous context to look up the relationship between sentences in the text so that they can catch the necessary information. During teaching and learning process, teachers and students have to discuss ellipsis to understand its objective and benefit.

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