

ELLIPSIS IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S SHORT STORY *HILLS LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS*

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Abstract

Ellipsis is a unique linguistic technique that plays a significant role in maintaining continuity in text. It is often used to avoid unnecessary repetition and achieve a consistent style, as long as the readers or listeners understand the omissions. Ellipsis typically refers to the deliberate omission of a word, sentence, or clause from a document because the omitted elements have already been mentioned and do not need to be repeated. While all languages have elliptical forms, this research focuses on the frequency of nominal, verbal, and clausal ellipsis in the English language. This article examines the use of ellipsis in Ernest Hemingway's short story *Hills Like White Elephants*. The aim is to demonstrate the variety and ambiguity of ellipsis in prose through vocabulary analysis. The paper follows Halliday and Hasan's functional theoretical grammar approach. The results reveal that the title of the short story itself is elliptical. The analysis also discovers that Hemingway's short story contains numerous instances of ellipsis across nominal, verbal, and clausal dimensions.

Keywords: *ellipses; functional grammar; literature; syntactic analysis*

1. Introduction

Crystal (2012) defines ellipsis as "a portion of the system that has been excluded for purposes of economics, focus, or style, retrievable from an inspection of the context." According to Crystal's meaning, the ellipsis is a concept that refers to the absence of some aspects of a phrase. Similarly, the Longman dictionary describes ellipsis as "the removal of terms or phrases from sentences where they are redundant because they have already been described or referred to." When the source of the verb is the same in two co-ordinated sentences, for example, it can be omitted to prevent duplication" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

The aim of this paper is to examine ellipsis in a short tale. Rather than posing the issue of how ellipsis is understood or obtained, the research focuses on how to get from data to explanation. In the analysis, the literary work of Hemingway in English, which is considered a masterpiece in the English language, was taken into consideration. The current study was undertaken with the growing demands of studying English in mind, as mature language learners seem to concentrate more on grammatical constructs. Research will aid in understanding where and how elliptical structures of noun phrases, verb phrases, and

positional phrases can appear in a plot. The short story's plot of *Hills Like White Elephants* by Ernest Hemingway is the subject of this article. Hemingway is the representative author of English language. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate the variety and ambiguity of ellipsis in a specific short story using Halliday and Hasan's cohesion and theoretical functional grammar approach. In Hemingway's *Hills Like White Elephants*, the title of the story (*The Hills (Are) Like White Elephants*) is elliptical. The supplementary "are" and the article "the" are also absent. The story opens with a brief rundown of a train station in Spain, with a snapshot of the white hills in the distance. A girl as well as an American man is drinking outside the station while waiting for a train to Barcelona. The boy contrasts the hills to "white elephants" and informs the man of his observation. Despite the fact that the man has never even seen a white elephant, the girl's answer, "no, you wouldn't have," irritates him. This causes a little squabble amongst them.

The girl is getting through it by figuring out towards the man that the embroidered curtain dangling over through the bar's gateway has been filled with something. Anis del Toro, a drink sold in the painting, was ordered. Their conversation is terse and tense, and the man immediately attempts to convince Jig, the girl, to have had a miscarriage unless she wishes. A girl is skeptical that perhaps the treatment will solve all their problems and get their engagement back on the rails. He says that the partnership is fine, and as such, the pregnancy worries him.

She agrees to the surgery but claims she is no longer concerned for herself. She should not do it for that purpose, according to the guy, and can just do it if she wants to. This condition irritates the child, and she believes she has lost something. The man informs her that this is not the case and then says that he would like her to get an abortion. She gets angry and demands that he stops talking, threatening to yell if he does not comply. The lady who has been serving them beverages tells everyone that perhaps the train may come in five minutes, and thus the man rises then heads with their baggage down to the train station. Jig smiles as he returns with another Anis del Toro. "There's nothing wrong with me," she says as he questions if she "feels" improved. The story comes to an end. The research questions of the following are investigated in the study:

- 1) What nominal elliptical elements are found in Hemingway's short story *Hills like White Elephants*?
- 2) What Verbal elliptical elements are found in Hemingway's short story *Hills like White Elephants*?
- 3) What Clausal elliptical elements are found in Hemingway's short story *Hills like White Elephants*?
- 4) What is the total number of ellipses found in Hemingway's short story *Hills like White Elephants*?

2. Literature Review:

2.2.1 Ellipsis

Ellipsis, and perhaps a coherent process, is a basic linguistic concept that is frequently employed by the language users being aware of its structure. When the meaning of one element presupposes and is based on another, a continuity relationship is formed, tying the two elements together and combining them into a document. The elliptical elements in the vocabulary are obsolete, so they can be recovered from the meaning. The speakers are encouraged to use ellipsis anytime and whenever it is possible due to the economy of the statement. Unlike relation and substitution, the ellipsis is essentially a zero substitution.

2.2.2 Relations within Ellipsis

The relationships within ellipsis can be divided into two categories: sentence level and text level. Inside the sentence level, according to Thomas (1979: 66), there are two ellipsis links. The first is syntagmatic relations, which are grammatical relationships that exist between linguistic construction units. The second kind is paradigmatic relationships, which include semantic dependencies between elements of the same level that may occupy their positions.

The relationship of ellipsis inside the text, on the other hand, is defined by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 144) as a coherent device. The most distinguishing characteristic is the absence of words or phrases whose meanings may be deduced from the linguistic and/or non-linguistic context. As a result, ellipsis denotes a specific type of relationship between linguistic objects, as well as a more general relationship with circumstance and common experience, such as the use of the facial expression in speech. The research and interpretation of real language in use is the purpose of text and discourse analysis in general. A script may be spoken or written, but it must have texture to be considered a text. Texture plays a significant role in the text, distinguishing it from something that is not a text or a string of sentences. Cohesive instruments are crucial in the construction of a strong document. Leech (1975:162) believes that ellipsis is an abbreviation system that shortens the message, makes the sentence form tighter, that is, more coherent, and makes the context relations easier to understand.

Every information unit is organised in terms of two components, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 326). The first is the New aspect, which represents the speaker's and writer's sharing of information that the listener or reader does not already know from other sources. The second aspect is the Given element, which depicts the speaker's or writer's presentation of facts that the listener or reader already knows from other means, such as the environment, the circumstance, or the previous text. This provided information is normally mutual information between the manufacturer and the interlocutor, and it is used as a starting point to which new information may be linked.

2.2.3 Difficulties Related to Ellipsis

Ellipsis leads to text creation, which has become the study's key concern, such that the textual role of ellipsis creates a referential chain and continuity. Indeed, the elliptical constructs seem vague, but the elements of details conveyed in text and/or contexts offer knowledge that dissolves the ambiguity. "Ellipsis (or deletion) happens where the form of one sentence is lacking and the absent element(s) may be restored unequivocally from the preceding sentence" (Hoey, 1983: 112).

Text writers are among those who use this technique in their work. Professional authors use an ellipsis to their benefit. They purposefully choose what to say and what to leave out. To some point, audiences unconsciously and obligingly fill in ellipses placed by authors in their minds, which may lead to problems. In his dictionary, Lovinger (2002) describes ellipsis as "the absence of a word or terms that may make a sentence more total but that can be interpreted from the meaning." Conversely, he claims that substituting the exact word(s) is problematic because, "Often a writer or speaker omits too much information, such as a crucial word. As a consequence, the statement comes off as uncomfortable or even mysterious".

Technical writing certainly allows for the use of the elliptical expression, which may appear to readers as a problem at times. The heterogeneity of creation and perception that

is implicit in the ellipsis makes it impossible to restore the elliptical form at times (Grant-Davie, 1995: 5). The dilemma of ellipsis interpretation is related to returning elliptical elements that are absent from the text. It is impossible to grasp elliptical elements or to retrieve what's been omitted if the authors do not leave evidence for readers to view. Surprisingly, almost any elliptical aspect can be recovered if presupposition is used.

Reading messages, without an ellipsis, wastes resources and time, according to Placencia (1995: 132). If there is a lot of ellipsis in the text, readers would have to put in a lot of effort and time to figure out what it means and how to fix the issue. The authors normally use an ellipsis to avoid repeating terms that have already been used or to avoid using words that may be implied. In particular, an ellipsis is a useful tool for preventing linguistic objects from being repeated and tediously repetitive.

2.2.4 Types of Ellipsis

The ellipsis of the word(s), according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), is an emptiness that replaces the word(s) instead of repetition. So they divide ellipsis, or "substitution by 0," into three categories: nominal, verbal, and clausal ellipses, which are then divided into sub-categories with more specific explanations. Since their emphasis is on document level, Halliday and Hasan (1976) treat ellipsis as a textual continuity or coherent system, and ellipsis that may appear within a single sentence is omitted and they are not concerned with the level of the sentence.

2.2.5 Nominal Ellipsis

The first form of grouping is a nominal ellipsis, which refers to the absence of item/s within the nominal category, typically a noun headword and modifying items, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 147). Elliptical item functions are captured by elements that started out as determiners or other pre-modifiers. As a result, an elliptical nominal category has the position of Head filled by a term that usually functions within the Modifier. Since proper nouns are not influenced by nominal ellipsis, they "designate persons, and are thus not worthy of more description."

When the common noun is omitted, the nominal party loses its head, and another of the instruments listed above must fill the void. Deictic and Numerative components, on the one hand, are more often used to perform the role of a head. An Epithet, on the other hand, is less often used, and a Classifier is seldom used.

2.2.6 Verbal Ellipsis

This form of ellipsis entails exclusion even within the verbal community, which includes a lexical verb and the operator that comes before it. Verbal ellipsis is a "distinctive feature of all texts, spoken and written, and offers an exceedingly subtle and versatile way of producing diverse and nuanced discourse," according to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 194). The operatives in the verbal group, from a technical standpoint, convey structural selections or choices, such as finiteness, polarity, expression, and tense of the verbal group. These choices must be mentioned in any verbal category and referred to using basic assumptions in the ellipsis process.

The elliptical verbal category, on the other hand, is a verbal group whose form carries over a structural function (Halliday and Hassan, 1976: 167). As a result, the elliptical verbal category with a configuration that completely reflects the systemic characteristic is not elliptical. To summarise, the best approach to understand ellipsis in the verb group is

strongly reliant on grammatical structures, while ellipsis in the nominal group is not explained in this way, and describing nominal ellipsis in terms of systems would be more difficult.

2.2.7 Clausal ellipsis

Clausal ellipsis bears some resemblance to verbal ellipsis except that it affects other components in the clause's form, i.e., the statement is omitted as the viewpoint. Clausal ellipsis is described as the omission of elements that are not uncovered by either nominal or verbal ellipsis. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 197), the most well-known elements affected by clausal ellipsis are complements and adjuncts. In the English language, the clause is regarded as the representation of different speech functions such as an argument, inquiry, answer, and so on, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976:197). It is a two-part system of modal and propositional components.

2.2.8 Theoretical Foundation:

Scholars have been researching English harmony since the 1960s. Jacobson's initial poetic research concentrated on literary texts' syntactic structure and parallelism. Hasan developed things a step further by delving into grammatical unity in detail. Halliday was the first to extend it to lexicogrammatical elements. Since Halliday and Hasan's *Cohesion in English*, other scholars such as Leech and Svartvik studied cohesion and features that ground a sentence in its context, and Gutwinski's work focused mostly on stylistic execution of Compatability science.

The publishing of *Cohesion in English* may be regarded as the foundation of every cohesion theory. According to Halliday and Hasan, cohesion is a "semantic term" that refers to "context connections that occur inside the text and describe it as text" (p. 4). In *An Approach to Functional Grammar*, Halliday built on the principle of continuity, saying that he "gave up the original identification of conjunction and embraced logic-semantic relations," and that substitution and ellipsis were "variants of the same kind of cohesive relation" (p. 317). Hasan broadened the concept of cohesion to include non-structural and structural cohesion. Martin also established the cohesion method, while Hoey presented the lexical cohesion principle.

The teaching of language and study, sociolinguistics, translation studies, rhetoric analysis, and specifically stylistics have all used harmony theory in some way. This hypothesis has been seen to be useful in analysing a document in ways other than sentential. Thompson claimed that cohesion discusses "the linguistic instruments through which the narrator can indicate the text's immersive and relational coherence, and is, therefore, a textual phenomenon: we can point to features of the text that have a coherent purpose" (p. 147). Schiffrin, on the other hand, claimed: "cohesion has to do with semantic information" (p. 62)

Some scholars looked at pre-and intra-sentence harmony. Halliday and Hasan's account, according to Martin, "fails to carry out the continuity between the hierarchical [...] and non-structural [...] tools" (p. 19). Such cohesionists began using separate labels for the same idea in their works, while others believed that the coherent devices in each language differed.

3. Research Method

1.3.1 Data Collection Procedure:

The data in the written texts are collected only from the works of the particular writers. As far as the case of the study the data for the research in the field of ellipsis is collected by the short story of Hemingway. No other source is utilised for the collection of data and utilisation in the study. All the data is just collected for ellipsis.

1.3.2 Data Analysis Procedure:

The collected data from the short story of Hemingway are analysed with a lot of care. The story is read many times and specific lines, which are having elliptical entities, are picked out and written separately. The lines which are having ellipsis in them are analysed then according to three dimensions: nominal, verbal, and clausal. Then they are explained in the discussion part and thus counted in the end revealing how many ellipses are present in the story.

1.3.3 Reliability:

The results of the study are reliable as the selected lines of the short story were reviewed by the English language expert who is teaching stylistics and syntax to master students. The findings of elliptical elements were approved by him after proper reviewing. He also approved the presence of the elements in particular nominal, verbal, and clauses categories of ellipses. The research is also reliable as it resembles different studies. The reliability can also be seen by simply applying the particular theory given by Halliday and Hasan to any text and getting productive results.

1.3.4 Validity:

The study is valid as its scope is limited to the one short story which is written by Hemingway. The story is analysed according to the theoretical framework provided by Halliday and Hasan and specifically regarding ellipsis analytical features. The study is fully valid as it is directly quoting the lines of the short story and also insert the missing elements or words in sentences or phrases which is echoing the presence of ellipsis. The study also claims about specific types of ellipsis present in the lines of the sentences.

4. Results and Discussion

The story's elliptical constructs are grouped into three categories, and I will discuss under the following subsections: nominal, textual, and clausal. The nominal category has a Base and an alternate modification; the addition is called pre-modifier or post-modifier depending on whether it arrives before or after the Head. The lack of a nominal group is known as nominal ellipsis. Deictic, numeral, epithet, classifier, and quantifier make up the modifier. A Head is a noun or a pronoun that is commonly used.

The linguistic aspect is omitted in the verbal ellipsis. One or perhaps more phrases from the previous verbal category are presupposed by the elliptical verbal component. The configuration of a verbal category that completely reflects all of its structural characteristics is not elliptical.

The way verbal, nominal, and clausal ellipsis are utilised and can be found under the following subsections:

- a. Ellipsis with coordinators like and, or, but, and with [E1].
- b. Topic ellipsis and/or auxiliary/verb ellipsis at the start of the sentence [E2].

- c. Ellipsis where a phrase or term is left out and a new word is often substituted for it [E3].

Under these headings, categorising elliptical elements becomes simple and fast, and a broad corpus can be categorised and evaluated quickly using this approach. That is because the objective of this study is to assist language learners in identifying elliptical structures in English; the author proposes the development of a computer software method for identifying structures. At the most basic level, it is possible to mark it as elliptical. Synchronizing, exophora and bunching are all grouped together under the [E1], [E2], and [E3] headings, respectively. Since the existing data on ellipsis inside stories is so large, this paper chooses at random the first or seventh entries from the storey.

Ellipsis with coordinators likes and, or, but, and with [E1].		
Sentence Number	Sentence and Ellipsis (Bolded)	Type of Ellipsis identified
1	The hill across the valley of Ebro was long and (were)E1 white.	Verbal Ellipsis
7	She put the felt pads and (she put)E1 the beer glasses on the table and (she)E1 looked at the man and the girl.	Clausal and Nominal Ellipsis
14	Across on the other side were fields of grain and (there were)E1 trees along the banks of the Erbo.	Clausal Ellipsis
21	Do you want (Anis del Toro) E1 with water?	Nominal Ellipsis

Table 5.1. E1 Ellipses

Topic ellipsis and/or auxiliary/verb ellipsis at the start of the sentence [E2].		
Sentence Number	Sentence and Ellipsis (Bolded)	Type of Ellipsis identified
1	(In the area that was)E2 close against the side of the station [...]	Clausal Ellipsis
7	(Do you want it)E2 with water?	Clausal Ellipsis

Table 5.2. E2 Ellipses

Ellipsis where a phrase or term is left out and a new word is often substituted for it [E3].		
Sentence Number	Sentence and Ellipsis (Bolded)	Type of Ellipsis identified
1	On this side (across the valley of the Erbo)E3 there was no shade [...]	Nominal Ellipsis
7	I've never seen one (the white elephants)E3 .	Nominal Ellipsis
14	Is it (Anis del Toro) E3 all right.	Nominal Ellipsis
21	I just meant the coloring of their (the hills)E3 skin through the trees.	Nominal Ellipsis

28	Then what will do afterward (after the operation)E3 .	Nominal Ellipsis
35	If you don't want to (get operated)E3 you don't have to (get operated)E3 .	Verbal Ellipsis
42	I'll love it (whatever you say)E3 .	Clausal Ellipsis

49	And we could have everything and every day we make it (the possibility of enjoying all the fun by avoiding the operation) E3 .	Clausal Ellipsis
56	I'm perfectly willing to go through with it (the operation)E3 if it (the operation)E3 means anything to you.	Nominal Ellipsis
63	[...] (which was)E3 made of strings of bamboo beads, (which was)E3 hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies.	Verbal Ellipsis
70	He walked through the bar room, where people (were waiting)E3 for the train were (and they)E3 drinking [...]	Verbal Ellipsis

Table 5.3. E3 Ellipses

Ellipsis In Hills Like White Elephants		
Types of Ellipsis	Number	Percentage
E1	21	20.19
E2	10	9.61
E3	73	70.20
Total	104	100

Table 5.4. A statistical representation of Ellipses

5. Conclusions

The key aim of this study is to explain all facets of ellipsis. While we choose what to communicate on any particular platform, our language and the context in which we use it substantially restrict our choices. It is not surprising that English exhibits more of one type of ellipsis and less of another, as linguistic structures are intuitive rather than logical. The analysis reveals that the title of Hemingway's short story, *Hills Like White Elephants*, is itself elliptical. The study further uncovers that the story is rich in elliptical constructions, spanning nominal, verbal, and clausal dimensions. These ellipses contribute to the concise and impactful style for which Hemingway is known. By examining these various forms of ellipsis, the study provides insights into how ellipsis functions to enhance narrative efficiency and reader engagement in literary texts.

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