

Ellipsis in the Auxiliary Verb Constructions in the English and Uzbek Languages

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The issue of ellipsis remains complicated and worthy of debates on a syntactic level due to various approaches to this problem and insufficiently clear definition given to this term in both our and foreign languages.

According to Sitnova [1, 11-22] elliptical clauses are those where some elements such as prepositions, articles, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs are missing. Vardul [2, 69] claims that "Ellipsis does not in any way change the content and structure of a sentence; in the presence of the ellipsis it is incorrect to assume that the content of a sentence is incomplete, since elliptical sentences do not vary from a non-elliptical sentence in terms of its content".

According to some investigations carried out through analyzing incomplete sentences, Jolibekova [3] concludes that ellipsis occur only in monologic and dialogic speech. She also states that ellipsis may take place at different levels of the language: phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactical levels. Therefore incomplete sentences are only the part of ellipsis.

Contrary to that, Mahmudov [4] claims that ellipsis in which linguistic economy lies within is essential for stylistics and syntax, since it occurs only in syntactic layer. Consequently, omissions in other layers should not be confused with ellipsis. F. de Saussure [5] in his notes on general linguistics remarks that ellipsis is when we are aware of the number of parts that should be in a sentence and we compare a certain sentence with the assumed parts and discover what is missing.

According to Goskun [6], verbphrase ellipsis (VPE) is far less common than nounphrase ellipsis (NPE) in the world languages. However, ellipsis in auxiliary verbs constructions is considered to be very frequent, especially in the English language.

In the English language ellipsis occurs in the following ways:

I. Omission after auxiliary verbs

1. A main verb following an auxiliary verb can be omitted provided that it is clear what is at issue from the previous context (for example, when answering a question, in a subordinate clause or in the second part of a compound sentence).

"Don't forget to telephone." "I won't." (instead of I won't forget to telephone) [7]

If something can go wrong, it will. (instead of it will go wrong)

He says he has lost the money but I don't think he has. (instead of he has lost the money)

2. If a sentence contains more than one auxiliary verb, it is possible to omit all auxiliaries except the first one. Yet it is also acceptable to omit all the verbs, but the first two or three auxiliaries.

"He could have phoned her." "Yes, he could" (or ...could have)

I hadn't been offered the job, though my friend had (or ...had been)

3. If there are no auxiliary verbs in a sentence at all, then the main verb can be replaced by an appropriate tense form of the verb "do".

I knew just as well as he did how impossible my explanation was.

4. a) if the verbs "be" and "have" act as main verbs, and not as helping verbs, the words they are preceded by can also be omitted as in the cases with auxiliary verbs.

"I'm not easy to deal with." "I thought you were."

"Do you think he has a sense of humour?" "I think he has (does)."

b) however, if the words are omitted after the verb "have" in some phrases (e.g. have a shower, have a good time, have lunch), it is preferable to be replaced by the verb "do".

I expected to have a good time at the party but I didn't.

5. In British English the helping verb "do" can come after the modal auxiliary verb, thus superseding the rest of the statements

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"Will you see him tomorrow?" "I might (do)."

She smokes less than she used to (Am.) / used to do (Br.).

6. The verb "be" cannot be eliminated when follows the auxiliary verb.

He is not a good painter now and never will be.

II. Short answers

Answers are often grammatically incomplete, as some words and expressions are omitted that were previously in a question. Short answers are a special case dealing with ellipsis. The short answer to the general question (Yes-No question) has the following form: Yes / No + subject + the first auxiliary verb coming in the question.

"Do you smoke?" "Yes, I do."

"Could he have left?" "Yes, he could"

III. Initial ellipsis

It is the omission of the initial element in a sentence. Quite often in colloquial speech the initial component of a sentence can be omitted, if it does not bear notably essential piece of information.

1. In a conversation the expressions such as "there is/are", "it is / was" are frequently omitted.

No problem. (= There is no problem).

Not his mistake. (=It was not his mistake).

2. The subject expressed by the means of personal pronouns together with the auxiliary verb can also be omitted (both in questions and declarative sentences).

See the building next to the corner? (= Do you see the building...).

3. Besides, in questions, there are cases when the auxiliary verb alone can be omitted (but usually not in questions where "I" or "it" is the subject).

She still there? (= Is she still there?).

Am I too late? (But not I too late?)

In the Uzbek language ellipsis in auxiliary verb constructions is a rare occasion and mostly occurs by omission of descriptive verbs which are called "ko'makchi fe'llar", where only the main verb remains in the sentence. However, it is unlikely for the Uzbek language to have a lexical verb eliminated, while leaving only an auxiliary verb in the discourse like in English. Omission of a descriptive verb can be found in two-sentenced proverbs and sayings, and usually occurs in the following structure:

other parts of the clause + main verb+ -(i)b+ descriptive verb,

other parts of the clause + main verb+ -(i)b.

Here are some examples of this type of ellipsis:

Ko'p bo'lsa seplab ko'r, [8]

Oz bo'lsa – eplab (ko'r).

Yo'qni yondirib bo'lmas,

Qushni – qo'ndirib (bo'lmas).

O'lganni qaytarib bo'lmas,

O'lganni – turg'izib (bo'lmas).

As is seen from the abovementioned examples, the English language has different variations of ellipsis where either an auxiliary or main verb can be omitted in auxiliary verb constructions, whereas in Uzbek, it could be assumed that it is solely represented by omission of descriptive verbs (ko'makchi fe'llar). It is clear that when ellipsis is applied in the sentence, we can reconstruct arguments even from limited linguistic forms. Ellipsis requires listeners to exercise pragmatic inference. This means they need to connect what they hear to discourse or context. Thereby dialogues are the main type of discourse consisting of ellipsis (elliptical references, elliptical utterances). In various studies carried out on this issue ellipsis is described as a deliberate occurrence.

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