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ELLIPTICAL SENTENCES AS HEADLINES OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Summary. The peculiarities of functioning of elliptical sentences in newspaper headlines, the specific features of their use are revealed. The article is mainly focused on the ellipsis as a syntactic means of compressing bulky sentences in order to achieve dynamic character and brevity of expressions as well as intensity of depicted actions. The functional and stylistic potential of elliptical sentences in English newspaper headlines are determined. The conducted analysis showed that headlines with implicit subjects or predicates are specially created expressive means which make it possible to actualize the important message to the readers. It has been found that a new phenomenon in the modern English newspaper discourse such as the omission of an object, an attribute or adverbial modifier is commonly used. The study has proven that elliptical sentences as headlines of modern newspaper articles serve as a means of compressing the information, focusing readers' attention on certain events that will intrigue and make them want to read. The authors of the articles may resort to the use of colloquial language, elliptical or incomplete sentences and other means in order to arouse the readers' curiosity. The article reveals the tendency to use newspaper headlines to reveal the authors' desire to present information concisely and succinctly and this has become possible due to the language economy and clarity of the message.

The study found that elliptical headlines are more commonly used in the newspaper «The Economist» rather than «The Guardian». In addition, newspaper headlines often used play on words, including puns, allusions and metaphors as well as alliterations and assonances, intriguing with their expressiveness, rhythm, subconsciously encouraging readers to read the article, while «The Guardian» offered more analysis and explanation, not just news of different kinds.

Key words: elliptical sentence, ellipsis, linguistic compression, language economy, newspaper headline.

Introduction. Among the current linguistic problems the principle of saving language resources which lies in the compression of information by means of reducing the structure without losing the semantic content of the message, attracts much attention of the scholars both native and foreign. Compression as a linguistic phenomenon has been actively studied recently and reflected in the works of many prominent researchers but the use and functioning of elliptical sentences in English newspaper headlines has not been fully investigated in linguistics yet.

The reasons for using elliptical sentences in newspaper headlines can be explained by the language economy, special emphasis on some part of a sentence and the peculiarities of the newspaper

style [1, p. 5]. Headlines are of great importance for a successful newspaper article as they are the first things that capture the eye of a reader, maintain his/her interest, trying to persuade him/her to go deeper into the body of the article.

The purpose of this article is to identify the peculiarities of using elliptical sentences as a means of linguistic compression and their functioning in newspaper headlines.

With the growth of information flows, the problems of its rational presentation are becoming more and more urgent as it saves time, efforts and energy of the readers. The compression of information in newspaper headlines is due to the desire of the authors to present information in such a way that is catchy and understandable.

Linguistic compression at the syntactic level lies in removing those parts of the sentence that seem to be secondary, insignificant in structural aspects. A lot of scholars point out the use of elliptical sentences, grammatical incompleteness, omission of conjunctions, parceling and joining, simplification, etc. among the effective means of syntactic compression in modern linguistics [2, p. 136].

In the elliptical sentences the omitting principal or secondary part of a sentence can be easily restored due to the content of the message, its structure, therefore they are considered to be short and laconic, for example: *Key to white survival': a miracle defender of Christianity or the most evil man?* [The Guardian, March 05, 2022]. The parts that are omitted can be understood with the help of the remaining parts, nevertheless they should be clearly definable so as not to lead to ambiguity [3, p. 217].

Literature Review. The analysis of the scientific literature referring the problem under the investigation shows that elliptical sentences in the newspaper headlines can be viewed as special highly-laconic units aimed at fast and clear understanding of some information [3, p.210]. They have appeared as a result of modern society's need to increase the informative volume of a message at the sake of its structural downsizing as well as the need to economize printed space and readers' time.

Many linguists have been interested in the problems of language economy, one of the first scholars to study the problem was Jason Merchant who stated that ellipsis can refer to a variety of syntactic, semantic as well as pragmatic phenomena and there is always a meaning in ellipsis without a form. The systematic study of linguistic economy was also done by V.H. Alexandrova, A.I. Domenko, O.V. Fadeieva and other linguists who have made a significant contribution to the investigation of the problem under analysis.

Linguistic compression at the level of headlines is achieved by means of the omission of certain words, word combinations,

phrases, complicated syntactic constructions that are insignificant from the semantic point of view, already known and do not require additional verbalization. Domestic scholars V.H. Alexandrova and T.V. Krutko consider elliptical sentences as a special structural variety of incomplete constructions, the researcher A.I. Domenko studied the stylistic status of the phenomenon of ellipsis in newspaper headlines, O.V. Fadeieva, O.O. Kucherova investigated the functions of newspaper headlines and their kinds, in particular, headline-constatives that familiarize the reader with some fact or event which is reported in the article, headline-directives that perform the communicative function by giving a direct motivation to act, headline-performatives that not only provide a statement of some fact, but describe the action itself. There are also headline-promisives that convey the meaning of a promise and there is a dependence of the event on the author's point of view and headline-menaces in which the communicative-intentional content is a threat [4, p. 13].

However, the compressive potential of these elliptical sentences in the newspaper headlines are almost impossible to exaggerate as they are considered to be the first elements of the article, very specific structural units which constitute a kind of condensation of ideas as in the following examples: *Record growth, record heat, record drought: how will Las Vegas weather the climate crisis?* [The Guardian, February 25, 2022]. *Fuel, food and fury* [The Economist, March 12, 2022].

Despite the considerable interest to elliptical sentences, they still remain insufficiently studied and need further investigation, so the study is relevant and in line with the latest achievements in this field of linguistic studies. The newspaper headline has repeatedly been the focus of a number of scientific studies, both by linguists and translators, in the context of current research issues, among which the linguistic features of newspaper headline deserve special attention. A great number of scholars explored the problem of headlines of newspaper articles in their scientific works from various aspects: from the point of view of their structure, syntax, function, semantics, style, manifestation of laws of economy of language means, etc. Much attention has been paid to the problem of the relationship between the headlines and the main text of the articles, so the newspaper headline plays the most important role in attracting readers' attention to the article itself and revealing the key information which can be illustrated by the following example: *A rehearsal for war. Beyond the fog of war* [The Guardian, February 27, 2022]. *Biden's impossible bind: how to tackle Russia's invasion of Ukraine?* [The Guardian, February 08, 2022]. *Ukraine at war* [The Economist, March 12, 2022]. Elliptical headlines are of great value for the linguistic analysis from different perspectives as they contain concise information to attract the readers' attention and to give the gist of the story. Being very compressed and condensed, they create new associations and meanings, a complex of ambiguities and conventions, images and ideas mutually accepted and taken for granted [4, p.32].

The aim of the article is a comprehensive description of the cognitive-communicative potential of the elliptical headlines of modern English newspaper style which has not been the subject of special analysis in the linguists' works yet.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following specific tasks should be solved:

- theoretical justification of the main scientific achievements of the elliptical sentences in the context of newspaper headlines studying;

- the process of modeling simple and complex elliptical sentences of modern English newspaper headlines;
- the analysis of communicative and functional features of the elliptical headlines of newspaper publications;
- identification of productive ways of creating and using elliptical sentences in the structure of newspaper headlines.

The topicality of the study is the need to systematize the comprehensive investigation of elliptical sentences in English newspaper headlines, in particular, to analyze the specific features of their use for communicative purposes.

The object of the study is elliptical headlines of English newspaper articles.

The subject of the study is the communicative and functional aspects of elliptical headlines of English newspapers. The study was based on the headlines of such online newspapers as «The Guardian» [5] and «The Economist» [6].

Research Methods. The sampling method was used during the selection of newspaper articles with elliptical headlines for the further analysis. The structural-grammatical methods have been used for analyzing grammatical structures, functional-communicative for revealing the message in terms of its meaning and discourse analysis for studying a printed message in relation to its social context. The quantitative data analysis has been used to determine the frequency of occurrences of each type of elliptical sentence (nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis) in the newspaper discourse.

Results. Ellipsis as a syntactic means of compression lies in omitting the logically necessary members of the sentence to achieve dynamism and brevity of the expression, intensity of the described action. Since the omitted component is easily understood from the headline context, the content of the article can be guessed from its grammatical structure, semantics of the word constituents, we can assume that elliptical headlines should be eye-catching, easy to grasp and at the same time intrigue the reader to decipher the headline news, for example: *Quality Not Quantity: The Times view on MPs' salaries. UK not prepared for climate impacts* [The Guardian, February 06, 2022]. *In numbers: casualties, refugees and aid* [The Guardian, March 02, 2022].

According to the law of the language economy, the components that are extra and overload the message, or can be easily understood from the context can be removed. So, the meaning of the headline 'Omicron: bleak New Year or the beginning of the end for the pandemic?' [The Guardian, February 12, 2022] is understandable to the reader: the consumer of information taking his/her background knowledge into account, realizes that the article will be about a new strain of coronavirus infection – omicron and what to expect the following year. Elliptical headlines are perceived from the specific context with the help of acquired knowledge and experience. The communicative and informational relevance of the message also plays an important role in the perception of a concise message with elliptical structures: 'Occupation? No thanks!' [The Economist, March 21, 2022].

General knowledge is important for understanding such elliptical headlines as: 'From ambushes to cakes and ale, Shakespeare always has the last word. With Boris Johnson comparing himself to Othello, he's also the best way for us to read the present' [The Guardian, February 06, 2022]. *The great leap backward. Maybe by a generation, maybe by a century pushing Russia into the past.* [The Economist, March 12, 2022]. *Wishy-washy victory. What is known*

about *the next president of South Korea?* [*The Economist*, March 16, 2022]. In the following examples the readers need prior knowledge about the topic which is essential for reading comprehension in order to make sense of the new information.

As we can see, in the given examples the omitted parts of the sentence are guessed from the given context and the headlines themselves sound condensed, for example: *'Crisis? What crisis? No. 10 in 'total denial' about Boris Johnson's fate'* [*The Guardian*, January 14, 2022]. *'Too close for comfort. Body cameras in British retail'* [*The Economist*, March 18, 2022].

The factual material which has been collected shows that elliptical sentences are most often used in headlines as they vividly represent the features of the events described in the newspaper article. According to our observations, the most common are elliptical sentences-headlines with omitted predicates as they can be easily guessed from the context, for example: *'Blooming flowers, fledgling birds... the early UK's spring'* [*The Guardian*, January 14, 2022]. *'A brief history of Londongrad, a haven for 'Moscow gold'* [*The Economist*, January 12, 2022].

The analysis of the material shows that the most typical are three types of elliptical sentence-headlines:

1) Verbal ellipsis – headlines with implied predicate when it isn't explicitly stated but it is understood from the context, for example: *Vac to the future!* [*The Guardian*, January 14, 2022]. *The post-post-cold-war world* [*The Economist*, February 10, 2022].

2) Nominal ellipsis – headlines with implied subject that is omitted in order to avoid unnecessary repeated words, for example: *Running through the dark to keep Ukraine going* [*The Economist*, March 20, 2022].

3) Clausal ellipsis – headlines in which a verb phrase has been elided as it can be understood within the same linguistic context and it can be the omission of a clause or its constituent, for example: *President is not telling the truth, neither his speaker* [*The Guardian*, January 16, 2022].

According to researchers of elliptical sentences in the language of the modern English press, they indicate the topic of the article directly or metaphorically, by naming or hinting at the temporal or locative characteristics of the situation. In other words, the verb of movement in such syntactic structures performs an expressive function which consists in distinguishing the circumstances of the action and in expressing the speed of its realization: *Getting to the bottom of Covid? It's a dirty job* [*The Guardian*, January 14, 2022]. *Born in war: Kyiv's maternity ward under siege* [*The Guardian*, February 18, 2022].

The analysis of the language of mass media allows us to state that elliptical sentences are used as headlines which consist mainly of two parts: the first part has the following model: noun + addressee of the action

and the second one: noun + direct object, for example: *The deep roots of the Russians to money laundering* [*The Guardian*, January 14, 2022]. *Forgotten what to wear? The new rules of party dressing* [*The Guardian*, February 18, 2022]. Striving for novelty and originality in reproducing the realities of everyday life, journalists try to create non-standard headlines that are dynamic and expressive in content, structure in order to stir the readers' curiosity. Such, in particular, are the elliptical sentences-headlines in which the authors seek to create effects of surprise, abrupt change of an opinion or to combine the incompatible in one headline: *Bye-bye to the Big Mac: Russia's war heralds a dark, isolated economic era* [*The Guardian*, March 14, 2022].

The mentioned fragmentation can be graphically marked by means of a colon, a semicolon, a question mark, a dash or hyphen which also help to grasp the readers' attention, make them use their imagination to fill in the blanks with quotes from the context as in the example: *'Eco changes. Worth doing or a waste of energy?'* [*The Guardian*, February 25, 2022]. *United We Stand – the surest answer to Putin's aggression* [*The Guardian*, January 18, 2022].

To give the headline some expressiveness, the authors make the logical separation of the initial component or actualize one or another circumstantial value of the headline structure which they consider more appropriate. The omission of the principal parts of the sentence (either the subject or the predicate) or the secondary parts (an object, attribute or adverbial modifier) performs the function of giving the utterance some dynamic character, promotes the natural way of expressing the author's thoughts, for example: *Feeling overwhelmed by world events? Treat yourself the way you would a friend* [*The Economist*, March 19, 2022]. *Queen back to usual duties after Covid* [*The Guardian*, January 18, 2022]. *Obsessed? Frightened? Wakeful? War in Ukraine sparks return of doomscrolling* [*The Guardian*, February 08, 2022].

Statistical calculations were used for calculating occurrences and frequencies of the elliptical sentences prevailing in the compared newspapers «The Guardian» and «The Economist». The percentage of different types of elliptical sentences (nominal, verbal and clausal) in various newspaper articles have been calculated. The obtained results have shown that the number of nominal elliptical headlines with implicit subjects is bigger in the newspaper «The Economist» than the corresponding number of verbal elliptical headlines with implicit predicate as compared to the newspaper «The Guardian», for example: *'Door on refugees'* [*The Guardian*, February 20, 2022]. *Planning a loft conversion? Desperate for extra space but reluctant to move? Key factors to consider before you start* [*The Guardian*, February 12, 2022]. *NEED TO KNOW. Your three-minute digest* [*The Guardian*, January 18, 2022].

The analysis of the study can be summarized in the table as represented below:

	Elliptical Sentences		Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	The Guardian	The Economist	The Guardian	The Economist	The Guardian	The Economist
Nominal	119	237	0.33	0.66	33.4	50.2
Verbal	153	179	0.46	0.53	46.1	39.5
Clausal	58	44	0.56	0.43	20.5	10.3

Fig. 1. The number of elliptical headlines in the compared newspapers

Conclusion. According to the results of our study, elliptical sentences consisting of one principal part (either a subject or a predicate) are more often used in headlines of the newspaper «The Economist» as compared to the newspaper «The Guardian» and they acquire special communicative significance as evidenced by the numerous examples. The functional purpose of such elliptical headlines is to condense the content of the statement in order to familiarize the readers with the main essence of the article quickly and enhance the focus on the defining or circumstantial factors of the events.

It should also be noted that the expressive use of headlines in the newspapers with several implicit components can be predictable from the content of the headline are more frequently used in the newspaper «The Economist» than in «The Guardian». It can be explained by the fact that «The Economist» is noted for its extensive use of wordplays, including puns, allusions and metaphors as well as alliteration and assonance, especially in headlines while «The Guardian» offers the readers the analysis and explanation, not just news. Elliptical headlines are considered to be incomplete contextual constructions that have a structure of an elliptical sentence and exclusively condensed content, they are intriguing by their expressiveness, rhythmic pattern that subconsciously persuade the readers to read the article. The conducted analysis showed that the most common cases are newspaper headlines in which subjects (356 cases or 83.4%, of which 119 cases or 33.4% in «The Guardian» and 237 cases or 50.2% in «The Economist») or predicates (332 cases or 85.6%, of which 153 cases or 46.1% in «The Guardian» and 179 cases or 39.5% in «The Economist») are omitted.

To conclude, the conducted research has shown that elliptical sentences are widely used in newspaper headlines as a means of realization of a corresponding communicative intention of the author as well as actualization of the reader's attention by focusing on the most important event in order to achieve the desired result by transmitting a large amount of information using a smaller number of words. The tendency to diversify the headlines of newspaper articles with elliptical sentences has flooded the columns of newspapers as the incompleteness of the headline eliminates the phrase overloading, makes the headline more accessible, easier to understand, actualizes the potential action and circumstances. In newspaper headlines the elliptical sentences help to compress the information, save efforts, time and space of the printed message, help to avoid bulky constructions and reduce the formal structure of the message. The prospect of further scientific research can be seen in the study of elliptical sentences in advertising slogans.

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Котенко М., Штангрет Г. Еліптичні речення як заголовки газетних статей

Анотація. У статті розкрито особливості функціонування еліптичних речень та доцільність їх використання у газетних заголовках. Основну увагу зосереджено на еліпсисі як синтаксичному засобі стиснення об'ємних речень з метою досягнення динамічності та стислості газетних заголовків, а також інтенсивності зображуваних подій. Було визначено функціонально-стилістичний потенціал еліптичних речень в заголовках англійських газет. Проведений аналіз показав, що заголовки з опущеними підметами чи присудками є спеціально створеними виразними засобами, які дають змогу актуалізувати важливе повідомлення та передати його читачам в стилій та лаконічній формі. Було виявлено, що в сучасному англійському газетному дискурсі використовується таке нове явище, як еліпсис додатка, означення чи обставинного модифікатора. Дослідження показало, що еліптичні речення як заголовки сучасних газетних статей слугують засобом стиснення інформації, фокусування уваги читача на певних подіях, які інтригують та викликають бажання прочитати статтю. Автори заголовків газетних статей можуть вдаватися до використання розмовної мови, неповних речень та інших стилістичних засобів, щоб викликати цікавість читачів. У статті розкрито тенденцію до використання газетних заголовків для виявлення прагнення авторів подавати інформацію лаконічно, що стало можливим завдяки мовній економії та стислому викладу повідомлення. Проведене дослідження показало, що еліптичні заголовки частіше використовуються в газеті «The Economist» у порівнянні з «The Guardian». Окрім цього, в газетних заголовках часто використовувалася гра слів, включаючи каламбури, алюзії та метафори, а також алітерації та асонанси, інтригуючи своєю виразністю, ритмічністю, підсвідомо спонукаючи читачів прочитати статтю, тоді як газета «The Guardian» пропонувала в більшій мірі аналіз і пояснення, а не лише новини.

Ключові слова: еліптичне речення, еліпсис, лінгвістична компресія, мовна економія, газетний заголовок.