

ELLIPSIS AND ZEUGMA IN PORTUGUESE

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Abstract. In this article such a figure of speech as ellipsis in Portuguese is considered. An analysis of ellipsis, its functions, properties and features is conducted. Four types of ellipsis in Portuguese are described, with an analysis of their examples. Additionally, zeugma and its essence are considered, along with its relevance to ellipsis and their differences.

Keywords: figure of speech; ellipsis; zeugma; Portuguese.

Introduction

In Russia there is a keen interest developing in learning and teaching Portuguese, as shown by the number of works published on Portuguese and Portuguese language teaching [1-3]. In teaching and learning Portuguese, particular importance must be attached to authentic language. A not inconsiderable part of authentic language are figures of speech. This article analyzes two such aspects – ellipsis and zeugma – found in the Portuguese language.

Ellipsis

In Portuguese, just like in many other languages, we can meet the phenomenon of ellipsis, both in spoken and written speech.

Ellipsis (from the Ancient Greek – omission or falling short) is the omission from speech or writing of a word or words that are superfluous or able to be understood from contextual clues [4].

Ellipsis is a figure of spoken speech, which is why it is used predominantly in this style. Apart from that, ellipsis is used in poetry and fiction. Thanks to ellipsis, writers can give vivacity and dynamism to the speech of a hero or to a text.

Native Portuguese speakers designate this phenomenon in such a way: *Elipse* – omissão de uma ou mais palavras sem prejudicar a clareza da frase [5] – omission of a word or words without affecting the meaning of the phrase. In other words, this phenomenon is characterized by the absence of speech elements, which should be there according to the rules. The phenomenon is universal in many languages. There are some functions of ellipsis in speech:

- Making a speech dynamic.
- Saving of time.
- Making a speech laconic.
- Making speech more informal.

For example, in Russia people say “Hello, give me your number” in a conversation with a friend, so we can use “number” without mentioning “phone”. The interlocutor will understand that we are talking about a phone number. But in the official style it may seem out of place: “Leave your phone number and we will contact you”. That is why ellipsis is inherent in colloquial speech. In Portuguese, as in other languages, the usage of ellipsis should be appropriate, not to create the impression that something is missed in a sentence.

Native speakers of Portuguese often use ellipsis. They use it subconsciously, because many forms have already caught on. A characteristic of lusophones is that they have a large variety of shortening and combining words (#de + ela = dela, emesse = nesse), for that matter there is a wide application of ellipsis in speech.

Classifications

There are four types of ellipsis in Portuguese [6].

1. Ellipsis of subject This type of ellipsis is quite common, because we can determine by whom an action is committed from the form of the verb, thereafter a listener can comprehend the subject by the form of the verb if the subject was omitted.

- (Eu) Não sei – Don’t know. “Eu” is omitted, because “sei” refers only to the first person singular of the verb “saber” – so that we can omit the subject. It is very common; we can hear “eunãosei” in rare occasions.

It should be mentioned that ellipsis of subject is often used in colloquial speech, when the verb refers to the first-person singular “Eu”–“I”, the same thing happens in the Russian language. When the verb refers to the first-person plural the same thing occurs: “nós”–“we”.

- (Eu) Vou falar com ela – I’ll speak to her
- (Eu) Acho que não – I think not
- (Nós) Não temos tempo livre para essas coisas – We don’t have free time for these things
- (Nós) Esperamos que você possa se sentir feliz lá – We hope you can feel happy there

But it is necessary to be careful, because in many cases the first-person singular form coincides with the third-person singular form (ele, ela). To use ellipsis properly it is necessary to take it into account. In other cases it will be error, which leads to misunderstanding.

Verb “saber”:

- Eu sabia – I knew
- Ele / ela sabia – He / She knew.

2. Ellipsis of verb. In this group the verb (link-verb) is omitted. It is necessary to be careful, because sometimes as a result of ellipsis, difficulties in translating the described time appear.

• O escritório vazio, ninguém (está) àquela hora no trabalho – Empty office, there is no person at this time at work.

In this sentence, after “ninguém” the verb is omitted, but with the help of the context we may easily understand that the verb “estar” was supposed to be there.

• Na casa antiga, (não havia) nenhum sinal de vida – There weren’t stirrings of life in the old house.

Also, it is obvious, according to the intent of the sentence, that “não haver” is omitted.

• Eu cheguei aqui só ontem. (Há) Muitas coisas para ver – I came here only yesterday. There are a lot of things to see.

Even without the verb “haver” the meaning is quite clear.

3. Ellipsis of preposition. We can meet this type of ellipsis not very often, but still it exists.

• (Em) Este ano mudaremos de casa – This year we will change home.

Basically, we can observe ellipsis of preposition “de” in construction “de que”.

• Lembre-se (de) que nada é perfeito – Remember that nothing is perfect.

• Duvido (de) que ele virá – I doubt that he will come.

• Tenho certeza (de) que a situação melhorará – I am sure that the situation will improve.

4. Ellipsis of conjunction. It is similar to ellipsis of preposition, because we can encounter it very rarely and mostly in poetry.

• (Se) Gostasse de mim, eu seria o homem mais feliz do mundo! – If she liked me, I would be the happiest man in the world.

• (Se) Fizesse frio eu vestia roupa mais quente – If it was cold, I would wear warm clothes.

• (Se) For assim, (nós) prosseguiremos – It will be this way (if it would be this way), we will continue.

Zeugma

One more figure of speech, which has some similarities with ellipsis, is zeugma. But zeugma should not be confused with ellipsis, as often hap-

pens. It happens because of the fact that they are based on the omission of an element restored in meaning.

Zeugma – figura pela qual uma palavra, já expressa numa proposição, se subentende noutra ou noutras que com a primeira têm analogia ou relação

[5]. It means that zeugma is a figure of speech in which a word applies to two others in different senses.

With the help of zeugma we can avoid unnecessary repetitions, which is why zeugma is actively used in many styles of speech.

For example:

- Ela *gosta* de dançar; ele, de comer (ele *gosta* de comer) – She likes dancing, he – eating.

- Ele *recebeu* dinheiro; ela, glória (ela *recebeu* glória) – He received money, she – glory.

- Nós viemos de loja, eu *comprei* leite; ele, queijo (ele *comprou* queijo) – We came from a shop, I bought milk, he – cheese.

The main difference between zeugma and ellipsis is that in ellipsis an element not mentioned before in a sentence is omitted, whereas in zeugma an element previously mentioned is omitted.

Conclusion

Analyzing and setting out these figures of speech, we can make a conclusion that ellipsis and zeugma are widely used in Portuguese. They are often used by lusophones not only in everyday speech, but also can occur in poetry and fiction. That is why it is important, in learning and teaching the Portuguese language, to pay particular attention to these figures of speech and be able to use them actively in speech to make it more vivid and closer to authentic language.

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