



Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University Journal.
Philological Sciences. Vol. 2 (90)

Вісник Житомирського державного
університету імені Івана Франка.
Філологічні науки. Вип. 2 (90)

ISSN (Print): 2663-7642
ISSN (Online): 2707-4463

UDC 81'42'37: 811.111

DOI 10.35433/philology.2 (90).2019.82-87

ELLIPTICAL LEXICAL UNITS IN THE ENGLISH MEDIA DISCOURSE OF EARLY 21st CENTURY

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The article focuses on the study of new lexemes constructed according to the model of elliptic shortening in the English media discourse of early 21st century – their structural typology, semantic content and functional implementation of constituting media discourse and its strategies. The material of the research was taken from the fragments of English media discourse in on-line versions of newspapers and magazines and lexicographic publications (explanatory dictionaries, and dictionaries of neologisms). The methods of the research include the method of continuous selection of the material, method of reconstruction of word-formation models, methods of definitional and component analysis, methods of qualitative analysis, and linguopragmatic method. The article proves the fact that elliptical lexical units are characterized by two types of ellipsis – the ellipse of the headword and the ellipse of modifier with the predominance of the first type – the process in which the remained adjective of a binary word-combination, known as a substantivized one acquires the paradigm, syntactic functions and the semantic content of the noun. The author comes to the conclusion that in particular it can be explained by the existence of greater number of classifying components that denote not only the referents of reality but also indicate their distinctive properties in the English media discourse as compared with the number of classified components. The role of elliptical lexical innovations in the implementation of attention drawing and appealing to necessities strategies for organizing English media discourse has been examined.

Key words: elliptical lexical units, the model of elliptic shortening, ellipse of the headword, ellipse of modifier, media discourse, strategies, tactics.

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ЕЛІПТИЗОВАНІ ЛЕКСИЧНІ ОДИНИЦІ В АНГЛОМОВНОМУ МЕДІЙНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ ПОЧАТКУ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ

А. М. Чумак

Стаття присвячена дослідженню нових лексем, утворених за моделлю еліптизації, які розглядають у структурно-семантичному та лінгвопрагматичному аспектах із позицій реалізації стратегій організації англомовного медійного дискурсу початку ХХІ століття. Матеріалом дослідження слугували фрагменти англомовного медійного дискурсу з on-line версій газет і журналів, у яких виокремлено еліптизовані лексичні одиниці, а також лексикографічні видання (тлумачні словники та словники неологізмів). Серед методів дослідження, які використано в рамках роботи, варто зазначити метод суцільної вибірки матеріалу, структурний метод у вигляді конкретних методик: аналізу словникових дефініцій, за безпосередніми складниками та компонентного аналізу та лінгвопрагматичний метод. У результаті дослідження доведено той факт, що для еліптизованих лексичних одиниць розрізняють два типи еліпса – еліпс ядра та еліпс модифікатора з переважанням першого типу словотвірного процесу, у результаті якого прикметник повністю переходить у розряд іменника, що в лінгвістичній літературі використовується як поняття "субстантивізація". Автор приходить до висновку про те, що це, зокрема, може бути зумовлено існуванням більшої кількості класифікувальних компонентів, які в англомовному медійному дискурсі використовуються не тільки на позначення нових референтів дійсності, але й, зокрема, для акцентування на їх диференціальних властивостях порівняно з кількістю основотвірних компонентів. Розглянуто роль еліптизованих лексичних інновацій у реалізації низки стратегій організації англомовного медійного дискурсу: привернення уваги, апеляції до потреб індивіда.

Ключові слова: еліптизовані лексичні одиниці, модель еліптизації, еліпс ядра, еліпс модифікатора, медійний дискурс, стратегії, тактики.

Introduction. The English media discourse of early 21st century shows a tendency for lexical units to collocate which results in a specific word being used with the meaning of a binary word-combination. The process of the word elimination in the collocation is known as ellipsis or elliptic shortening. The problem of ellipsis has always caused debate among linguists (I. V. Arnold [5: 161], S. Greenbaum [7: 416], H. Marchand [8: 361], V. L. Silin [4]. The **topicality** of this research is motivated by the necessity for the systematic study of elliptical lexical units in the English media discourse of early 21st century. Its **aims** are to single out, classify and characterize the structural types of word-formation model according to which the elliptical lexical innovations are formed, their correlation with the relevant referents in the studied variety of discourse.

Problem Setting. In linguistics the concept of *ellipsis* was originally associated with syntax and characterized sentences and constructions with the eliminating part or element that could be easily restored in a given context or situation [1: 59]. The tendency to the linguistic economy at the level of syntactic units also shows up at the level of lexical units and is related to the mechanism of compression. The intention of the author of the media discourse to use the least amount of lexical units without resorting to the search for a special, relevant only for the given referent, can be realized at the level of the usage of elliptical lexical units.

The mechanism of compression under examination is termed as elliptic shortening and is connected with active, dynamic modifications of Modern English lexical system especially in the process of the formation of lexical

innovations. As a result of elliptic shortening remains only one component of a binary word-combination which can be either signifying or signified. This remained component acquires the semantic and grammatical properties of the whole phrase. The lexical ellipses of the signifying and signified components were studied in comparative terms on the material of the Germanic languages (V. L. Silin [4]) as well as one of the word-formation models of shortening (G. Stern [10]).

The signifying ellipse is also known as the *ellipse of modifier*. The principle of new lexical units construction according to the elliptical word-formation model is based on the possibility of a remained noun to generalize in its own meaning also the semantic content of the modifier.

Another type of lexical ellipse is the signified remained component or the so-called *ellipse of the headword* in a binary word-combination. The main display of this ellipse is substantivation – the word-formation process in which a remained adjective acquires the paradigm, syntactic functions and the semantic content of the noun [2: 41].

Analysis Procedure. In the present study two types of elliptical lexical units used in the English media discourse of early 21st century are being explored. In terms of formal structure the gathered material is represented by substantivized adjectives and elliptical nouns that are constructed in accordance with two elliptical word-formation models – ellipse of the headword and ellipse of modifier. The sample includes two sets of lexical units: the elliptical lexeme and its corresponding original binary word-combination. The singled out lexical innovations are also analyzed from the point of view of their correlation with the relevant referents in the English media discourse.

Substantivation of a binary word-combination *Adj. + Noun* is the result of the ellipse of the headword model. From

the point of view of semantics lexical innovations constructed according to this model are characterized by more specific, detailed, distributive indications and are used to nominate: a) people by their group affiliation and age (*Millennials* (the millennial generation) – "born in the 1980s, 1990s, or early 2000s" [6], *under-five* (a child under the age of five / a child aged under five years / an under-five child [11]); b) products and devices (*Patriot* (patriot missile) – "a surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, the primary of its kind used by the United States Army and several allied nations" [11], *dialup* (dialup connection) – "dial-up computer systems, devices, and internet services use a phone line to connect them" [6], *pop-up* (pop-up ads) – "used to describe an advertisement that is shown in a new window in front of the window that you are looking at on a website" [6] / (pop-up window) – "a new window that opens quickly on a computer screen in front of what you are working on" [6], *beta* (beta-version) – "a piece of software, etc. that is at the second stage of development, during which customers are asked to use it to see if there are any problems that have not been corrected" [6], *junk* (junk mail) – "advertising material that is sent to homes and businesses without their asking for it" [6]); c) institutions (*non-profit* (non-profit organization) – "an organization whose aim is to make money for a social or political purpose or to provide a service that people need, rather than to make a profit" [6], *magnet* (magnet school) – "a school that specializes in particular subject in order to attract students from a wide area" [9]); d) social phenomena and processes (*presale* (presale view) – "sale to individual customers some goods in advance of a predetermined time" [9], *chicken-and-egg* (chicken-and-egg situation / question) – "a situation in which it is impossible to say which of two things existed first and which caused the other one" [6], *double-digit*

(double-digit gains / growth / increases) – "relating to a number or series of numbers between 10 and 99" [6]); e) spheres of activity (*facial*(*afacial*operation) – "a beauty treatment that cleans and improves the condition or appearance of the facial skin" [9]).

Another represented group of lexical innovations constructed according to the ellipse of modifier model is characterized by the invariable noun while the attribute of the original word-combination can be used in different contexts. This type of new lexemes is characterized by the process of elimination of their signifying component. Elliptical nouns are used to name: a) people by their professional activities (*brass* (top brass) – "high-ranking officers in an organization, esp. the military" [6]); b) social phenomena (*bang* (big bang) – "the important changes made in 1986 to the rules for trading on the London Stock Exchange, or similar changes to other organizations" [6]); c) objects (*shuttle* (space shuttle) – "a vehicle or aircraft that travels regularly between two places" [6]); d) products (*fries* (French fries) – "long thin pieces of fried potato" [6], *banner* (web banner) – "a form of advertising on the World Wide Web delivered by an ad server" [6]); e) processes (*bypass* (heart bypass) – "a medical operation in which the flow of a person's blood is changed to avoid a diseased part of their heart" [6]).

Elliptical lexical innovations within their possibility to refer to new concepts play a decisive role in implementing the English media discourse strategies, like appealing to necessities, attention drawing.

The usage of the elliptical lexeme, for example, *preschool* in the following media representation is the way the lexical innovations function in this variety of discourse: *Most middle-class parents can't afford a few hundred bucks a week for private **preschool***. (PressRelease, February 14, 2013). This

lexical ellipse is the instance of the ellipse of the headword model, that is, the example of substantivation of the adjective. Its structural-semantic content correlates with the following referent – "a school for children who are younger than five years old" [6].

Lexical units *middle-class* and *private preschool* with their anaphoric position arrangement in the analyzed statement realize the tactics of appealing to self-actualization and sensual satisfaction that constitute media discourse in terms of appealing to necessities strategy. The anaphoric organization of the new lexeme *preschool* presentation is the realization of attention drawing strategy in the English media discourse. The anaphoric arrangement of the elliptical lexical innovation is given at the end of the statement. This lexeme arrangement is characterised by an informationally strong position as it is implemented on the principle of hierarchical deployment of the information about new realities.

The analysed media representation, devoted to preschool educational institutions, focuses attention of the reader on the middle class of the social ranking with the help lexemes that refer to high social status – *most* and *few*, denoting the social status of a person, which is interpreted by means of the concepts "above – below" [3: 56]. And it is reported that this type of educational institutions require heavy expenses (*a few hundred bucks a week*) while the parents are financially enable (*parents can't afford*) to educate their children in such private institutions paying for tuition.

The official recognition as the embodiment of appealing to necessities strategy in the following media representation is indicated by denoting the institution of education and is implemented with the help of the elliptical unit *magnets*, that correlates such institutions with different levels of the social ranking [3: 188]: *The reasons*

that **magnets** were developed were to encourage desegregation by luring better educated families into inner-city schools. (Reference and Education Community, December 13, 2007).

Special schools, presented with the help of a completely substantivized adjective *magnets*, are compared with ordinary *inner-city schools*. The verbs used in the analyzed media discourse sample (*develop, encourage, lure*) denote the movement to achieve the desired social status. The tactic of appealing to the needs of an individual's recognition correlates such referents as schoolchildren and their families with the highest level of social hierarchy (*better educated families*).

The technique of information detailization of the new phenomenon of the reality denoted by the innovation is represented by the elliptical lexical innovation *Millennials* in the next media representation: *While 45 percent of Baby Boomers (ages 49-67) say they worry "often" about privacy, younger generations (**Millennials**, ages 18-30) are more likely to include the Web in their definition of privacy and have taken proactive steps to protect themselves, such as creating content to improve Google search results or using multiple email addresses.* (PR Newswire, April 23, 2013).

The technique of detailization is given with the help of emphasizing the quantitative and age qualities of the event participants. The analyzed elliptical lexeme *Millennials* demonstrates the age gradation of "baby-boom" generation. The expressions *more likely* and *such as* in the mentioned above media representation are the means of the explanation of the phenomena tactic that in its turn implements attention drawing strategy in the English media discourse. These expressions actualize qualitative characteristics of two age group participants – the *Baby Boomers* and the *Millennials*. The way the new word is presented and the new reality

denoted by it is explained helps the reader of the media discourse at least to single out and identify it in some contextual usage. The presented above technique of detailization realized within the explanation of the phenomena tactic is used to draw attention to new lexical units.

Conclusions and Perspectives.

Thus, in terms of formal structure, elliptical innovations are represented by two types: substantivized adjectives and elliptical nouns. From the point of view of semantics, substantivized adjectives are characterized by more specific, distributive features. Such lexical units nominate subjects, institutions, people by their age characteristics, processes, types of activities, features of the objects. At the same time, elliptical nouns are characterized by generalization. The semantic structure of such innovations that are used to denote people by age, social phenomena, scientific and technological progress items, products, processes completely coincides with the original binary word-combination. In terms of functioning the analyzed elliptical lexical units constitute Modern English media discourse and its strategies: attention drawing, appealing to necessities realized within particular tactics and techniques.

The findings of the given analysis of elliptical lexical units used in the English media discourse provide ground for further research, particularly in the area of cognitive mechanisms of forming lexical innovations involving a particular model as well as in determining their role in organization of other types of discourse. Future work could also consider a comparative study of structure, semantics and pragmatics of lexical innovations.

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Стаття надійшла до редколегії: 18 вересня 2019
Схвалено до друку: 29 листопада 2019