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Ellipsis in Michael Jackson's Song Lyrics

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Abstract—This research deals with ellipsis found in Michael Jackson's song lyrics, especially in Thriller album. The objectives of this research are to investigate the types of ellipsis, to determine the dominant types in Michael Jackson's song lyrics and also to provide reason the use of ellipsis in the song lyrics. This research was conducted by using descriptive qualitative method. The data was taken from song lyrics in Thriller, Michael Jackson's album. The result found that there are three types of ellipsis found in Michael Jackson's song lyrics and they are: Nominal Ellipsis (50%), Clause Ellipsis (45%) and Verbal Ellipsis (6%). Nominal Ellipsis is the dominant type of ellipsis. The ellipsis types used in song lyrics are in order to make an effective sentence and to avoid misunderstanding of giving information. It also can make the sentence in the lyrics more interesting.

Keywords—ellipsis; song lyrics; Michael Jackson

I. INTRODUCTION

No one can deny language has a great role in human life. Language is an inseparable part of human life to express thoughts, feelings, desire and intention both in spoken and written way. Spoken means the process of expressing ideas and feelings of giving information is done orally. Written is done in writing activity available in short stories, articles, poems, lyrics, etc.

Song is a kind of written language that is universal. Song is a musical composition, containing vocal parts that are performed by singing and feature words (lyrics), commonly accompanied by musical instruments. Many song writers used various words to express their feelings and thoughts in song lyrics. Song lyrics are a kind of a text.

A text is a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence and it is not defined by size[1]. It means a text may of any length. One word may become a text; two words may become a text. So there is no certain limit to a text. The text provides information to the people who need it. To get information from the text, the reader must know about the relation between one word with another, one sentence with another or even one paragraph to another paragraph. Therefore, in writing the idea, the writer should be concerned with using the right diction to make his/her writing easy to understand and cannot be separated from the use of cohesion,

because cohesion is grammatical encoding in language that can be realized from the text.

[2] states that there are four ways by which cohesion is created in English: ellipsis, reference, substitution, conjunction and lexical organization. This study is specifically to ellipsis. In ellipsis, there is something missing in the text but it can be understood by the reader and does not make any changes with the meaning.

Ellipsis is the omission of elements normally required by the grammar which is the speaker/writer assumes are obvious from the context and therefore need not be raised. [3]. In ellipsis, a word or words can be omitted but must be considered that there is no change in the meaning of the text. For example:

Brian gives me a pen, and Bob a book.

The used ellipsis in writing song lyrics is needed in order to make an effective sentence and to avoid misunderstanding of giving information. It also can make the song lyrics more interesting.

This study analyzes the song lyrics of Michael Jackson's Thriller album. Michael Jackson was an American singer, songwriter, and dancer who was the most popular entertainer in the world and known as The King of Pop. There is not much research in Michael Jackson's song lyrics, especially from ellipsis point of view.

The problems of the study are formulated as the following:

1. What types of ellipsis are used in Michael Jackson's song lyrics?
2. What is the most dominant type of ellipsis used in Michael Jackson's song lyrics?
3. Why is the type of ellipsis used in the song lyrics?

People need the language in expressing ideas, giving information, sharing feelings, and the language used must be understood by the speaker and the hearer or the writer and the reader. Therefore, cohesion is required to convey the meaning and make sense for those who read. According to [2], cohesion is a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it. The concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to the relation of meaning that exists within the text, and that defines

19 it as a text [4]. [2] states that there are four ways by which cohesion is created in English: by reference, conjunction, lexical cohesion and ellipsis.

A. Reference

References are considered a significant thing to give a contribution in writing a better long text because it refers to pronoun, demonstrative and comparative. [5] Example: They came again into their bedroom. A large bed had been left in it.

B. Conjunction

Conjunction is the term used to describe the cohesive in between clauses of sections of text in such a way as to demonstrate a meaningful relationship between them. [6]. Example: Tommy wants a laptop but his mother gives him a computer.

C. Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion may be maintained over long passages by the presence of keywords, words having special significance for the meaning of the particular text. [2]. Lexical cohesion refers to the cohesive effect to the use of lexical items in discourse where the choice of an item relates to the choices that have gone before.

D. Ellipsis

The term ellipsis has been applied to a wide range of phenomena across the centuries, from any situation in which words appear to be missing (in St. Isidore's definition), to a much narrower range of particular constructions [7]. [4] defines that ellipsis is something left unsaid. It means that there is something missing in building a text but nevertheless understood by the reader or listener. [8] states that ellipsis in this case is the removal of a unit of language for specific purposes that is grammatically considered wrong but does not change the context of discourse. In English, contraction or shortening is often used.

Ellipsis can economize on sentence space but the writer must be careful to ensure that the omitted words are grammatically compatible and not make any change in meaning. For example:

Bobby: How much Upin bought his car?

Raji: I don't know []. You can ask him []

The responses of the question should be:

Raji: I don't know how much Upin bought his car. You can ask him how much he bought the car.

The listener still understands the responses even though some elements of the conversation are missing.

Ellipsis is a term used in grammatical analysis to refer to a sentence where, for reasons of economy, emphasis of style, a part of the structure. [9].

Ellipsis occurs when some essential structural element is omitted from a sentence or clause and can only be recovered by referring to an element in the preceding text. For example:

Tina is beautiful. Tina is clever.

→ Tina is beautiful and clever.

Types of Ellipsis

[2] divides three main contexts for ellipsis. They are nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, and clause ellipsis.

Nominal Ellipsis

Nominal ellipsis is the ellipsis that occurs within the nominal group where the noun or pronoun is deleted [10]. The nominal group in this case can consist of head and modifier.

As stated before, nominal ellipsis occurs within the nominal group. In detail, it can be expanded into types of nominal ellipsis, they are deictic, numerative, epithet and classifier.

- Deictic Ellipsis

The deictic is normally a determiner.

Example:

A: My pencil is broken. Can I borrow yours []?

It should be: Can I borrow your pencil?

The word "yours" is a possessive pronoun that functions as a determiner. It is used as possession without saying the thing possessed.

- Numerative Ellipsis

The numerative is the nominal group expressed by numerals such as ordinal and cardinal number or other quantifier.

For example:

- James was the first person to leave the class. Siska was the second.

- A: Have another coffee?

B: No, thanks, I've had my third.

The word "the second" is a cardinal number as numerative ellipsis because the number is not followed by the things as the noun. It is only said "the second", but it is understood that what is meant is "the second person to leave the class" as what has been said previously.

- Epithet as a Head

The epithet is typically to be fulfilled by an adjective [4].

For example:

A: There are so many fruits, but apples are the cheapest [].

The sentence should be: There are so many fruits, but apples are the cheapest fruits. The word "the cheapest" is an adjective and here it is not followed by the noun but it is still understood that what is meant by "the cheapest" is fruits, as it has been mentioned before.

- Classifier as a Head

For example:

A: Here are my two blue cotton blouses.

B: Would you prefer the silk []?

The sentence should be: Would you prefer the silk blouse? Both the speaker and the listener understand that what is meant by "silk" is "the silk blouse". Hence, it is called a classifier because the modifier can be classified into certain things.

2 Verbal Ellipsis

An elliptical verbal group implies words from a preceding verbal group. There are two types of verbal ellipsis, lexical ellipsis and operator ellipsis. Lexical ellipsis means deleting the lexical verb from the verbal group i.e., any verbal group not having a lexical verb is elliptical. Operator ellipsis, on the other hand, means deleting the subject and all the auxiliaries, except the lexical verb [10]

10 Lexical Ellipsis

Lexical ellipsis is the type of ellipsis in which the lexical verb is missing from the verbal group [4].

5 Lexical ellipsis is ellipsis 'from the right', it always involves omission of the last word which is the lexical verb, and may extend 'leftward' to leave only the first word intact.

For example:

A: Have you been swimming?

B: Yes, I have [].

It should be: Yes, I have been swimming.

3 Operator Ellipsis

Operator ellipsis is the omission of the operator and remains the lexical verb. In 26 operator ellipsis the subject is also omitted from the clause, it must therefore be presupposed. Operator ellipsis is ellipsis 'from the left', which means the initial 24 element in the verbal group. [4].

For example:

A: What have you been doing?

B: [] Swimming

It should be: I have been swimming.

27 Clause Ellipsis

Clausal ellipsis occurs if either the model element or propositional one is omitted [4].

For example:

A: What will you say if she asks about it?

B: I'll tell the truth [].

The clause should be: I'll 3 tell the truth if she asks about it.

The response from B is still understood by A even though B does not say it in complete sentences.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

Research design is the way of collecting and analyzing data to get answer to the research questions. 3 Descriptive qualitative method was applied to analyze the data.

A. Sources of Data

In this study, the sources of data were taken from Michael Jackson's song lyrics. There are many albums created by him, but the data is limited to into Thriller album as it is Michael Jackson's most popular album. There are 9 songs in this album as the data to be analyzed, they are: 8 (1) Wanna Be Starting Somebody, (2) Baby Be Mine, (3) The Girl is Mine, (4) Thriller, (5) Beat It, (6) Billy Jean, (7) Human Nature, (8) Pretty Young Thin, and (9) The Lady in My Life.

B. Technique of Collecting Data

The data in this research 1 were collected by applying documentary technique. 1 Documentary technique means that the data were found from reading, studying, and analyzing the references related to the subject matter.

C. Technique of Analyzing Data

The data are analyzed in the following procedures:

1. Identifying the ellipsis found in the lyrics.
2. Classifying ellipsis into their types.
3. Counting the occurrences of each types of ellipsis by using the percentage formula:

$$X = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

X = the percentage of the obtained items

F = Frequency

N = the total number of the items

4. Finding out the most dominant types of ellipsis used in the songs.
5. Finding out the reason for using ellipsis in the song lyrics.

D. The Data

As mentioned in the previous section, the data of this study are the song lyrics from Thriller album of Michael Jackson. There are 12 songs in this album, they are: (1) Wanna Be Starting Somebody, (2) Baby Be Mine, (3) The Girl is Mine, (4) Thriller, (5) Beat It, (6) Billy Jean, (7) Human Nature, (8) Pretty Young Thin, and (9) The Lady in My Life.

III. DATA ANALYSIS

After analyzing and marking the data, they were 34 classified based on the types of ellipsis in each song. The followings are the examples of how the identification and classification were done.

A. Wanna Be Starting Something

The first song lyric to be analyzed is Wanna Be Starting Something. This song contains 6 stanzas. The stanzas that have ellipsis on it are the first to sixth stanza.

4 I took my baby to the doctor with a fever
but nothing he found []
By the time this hit the street
They said she had a breakdown
Someone's always tryin' to start my baby cryin'
[] Talkin', [] squealin', [] lyin'
[] Sayin' you just wanna be startin' somethin'

The data above is the first stanza in Wanna Be Starting Something song lyrics. In the second line, a nominal ellipsis is found. The deleted phrase is "in my baby". It is called nominal ellipsis because it is a nominal group. In the sixth line, there is a clause ellipsis. The clause that has been deleted is "someone's always trying to start my baby talking, someone's always trying to start my baby squealing, someone's always trying to start my baby lying." The deleted phrases consist of subject and predicate, so it's called clause ellipsis. In the

seventh line, there is clause ellipsis, and the deleted clause is “someone is”. “Someone is” consist of subject and predicate, hence they are called clause ellipsis. After analyzing the first stanza, there are one nominal and four clause ellipses found.

It's too high to get over
 [] Too low to get under
 You're stuck in the middle
 And the pain is thunder

The data above is the second stanza. The deleted ellipsis is “it is” which consist of subject and predicate. Hence, it's a clause ellipsis. After analyzing the second stanza, there is 1 clause ellipsis found.

You love to pretend that you're good
 When you're always up to no good
 You really can't make him hate her
 So your tongue became a razor
 Someone's always trying to keep my baby crying
 treacherous, [] cunnin', [] declinin'
 You got my baby cryin'.

The data above is the third stanza in the song. In the sixth line, there is clause ellipsis. The deleted clause is “someone's always trying to keep my baby cunning, someone's always trying to keep my baby declining.” It contains subject and predicate, so it is a clause ellipsis. After analyzing the third stanza, there are two clause ellipses found.

9 Billie Jean is always talkin' when nobody else is talkin'
 [] Tellin' lies and [] rubbin' shoulders
 So they called her mouth a motor
 Someone's always tryin' to start my baby cryin'
 [] Talkin', [] squealin', [] spyin'
 [] Sayin' you just wanna be startin' somethin'

The data above is the fourth stanza. In the second line, clause ellipsis is found. The deleted clause is “when nobody else is”. In the fifth line there is also a clause ellipsis, and the deleted phrase is “someone's always trying to start my baby talking, someone's always trying to start my baby squealing, someone's always trying to start my baby spying.” It's called clause ellipsis as it contains subject and predicate. After analyzing the forth stanza, six clause ellipses are found.

If you can't feed your baby
 Then [] don't have a baby
 And [] don't think maybe
 If you can't feed your baby
 You'll be always tryin' to stop that child from cryin'
 [] Hustlin', [] stealin', [] lyin', now baby's slowly dyin'

The data above is the fifth stanza. In the second line, the deleted noun group is “you”. Hence, it is a nominal ellipsis. In the third line, there is nominal ellipsis, too, as the omitted noun group is “you”. In the sixth line, there is a clause ellipsis, as the deleted phrase consists of subject and predicate is “you'll always be trying to stop that child from hustling, you'll always be trying to stop that child from stealing, you'll always

be trying to stop that child from lying.” After analyzing the fifth stanza, there are two nominal ellipses and three clause ellipsis.

[] Lift your head up high and [] scream out to the world
 I know I am someone, and [] let the truth unfurl
 No one can hurt you now because you know what's true
 Yes, I believe in me, so do believe in you

The data above is the sixth stanza of Wanna Be Starting Something song lyrics. In the first line, there are two omitted noun group, they are “you” and “you”. Hence, it is nominal ellipsis. In the second line, there is nominal group, too. The deleted noun group is “I”. After analyzing the sixth stanza, there are three nominal ellipses found.

Based on the analysis of Wanna Be Starting Something song lyrics above, there are 6 (37.5%) nominal ellipses and 16 (62.5%) clause ellipses found.

B. 4 The Girl is Mine

The next song is The Girl is Mine which contains 6 stanzas. The stanzas that contain ellipsis are the second, third, fourth, and sixth stanza.

In the second, third, and fourth line of second stanza, clause ellipses are found. In the second and third line, clause “you are” is omitted. In the third line, clause “it is” is omitted. Meanwhile, in the fourth line, nominal ellipsis of “you” is found. After analyzing the second stanza, three clause ellipses and one nominal ellipsis are found.

In the third stanza, ellipses are found in the first, third, fifth, and seventh line. In the first line, the omitted verbal ellipsis of “loves you” is found. In the third line, there are two nominal ellipses that have been deleted, they are “you” and “you”. In the fifth and seventh line, the ellipses that have been omitted are clause ellipses, they are “it's” and “she's my girl”. After analyzing the third stanza, there are 2 nominal ellipses, 1 verbal ellipsis, and 2 clause ellipses found.

In the fourth stanza, there is only “you” nominal ellipsis deleted. On the other hand, in sixth stanza, the omitted clause ellipsis is “that I'm her forever love” is found.

Based on the analysis of The Girl is Mine song lyrics above, there are 4 (36.36%) nominal ellipses, 1 (9.09%) verbal ellipsis, and 6 (54.54%) clause ellipses found.

After analyzing all the song lyrics, the result can be tabulated as in the following table.

TABLE I. DATA TABULATION

Song Title	Ellipsis Types			Total
	Nominal	Verbal	Clause	
Wanna Be Starting Something	6	0	16	22
8 Baby Be Mine	1	0	7	8
The Girl is Mine	4	1	6	9
Thriller	7	1	3	11
Beat It	17	4	2	23
Billy Jean	4	0	1	5
Human Nature	3	0	7	10

PYT (Pretty Young Thing)	3	0	3	6
The Lady in My Life	7	0	2	9
Total	52	6	47	105
Percentage	(50%)	(6%)	(45%)	(100%)

C. Research Findings

After analyzing the ellipsis in Michael Jackson's song lyrics in Thriller album, the findings can be presented as followed:

1. The three types of ellipsis are used in Michael Jackson's song lyrics, they are Nominal Ellipsis (50%), Verbal Ellipsis (6%), and Clause Ellipsis (45%).
2. The total number of Ellipsis is 105 ellipses and the most dominant type is Nominal Ellipsis with the percentage of 50%. The Nominal Ellipsis is used in order to avoid repetition of noun as it has been stated before. The most dominant word is "you", because in the songs direct speech is used.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the ellipsis in Michael Jackson's song lyrics in Thriller album, conclusions are drawn as the following.

1. There are three types of ellipsis are used in Michael Jackson's song lyrics, they are Nominal Ellipsis (50%), Verbal Ellipsis (6%), and Clause Ellipsis (45%).
2. Nominal Ellipsis is the dominant types of ellipsis used in the song lyrics, which is 50%. the nominal ellipsis is used in order to avoid repetition of noun, as it has been stated before. The most dominant word is "you", because direct speech is used in the song lyrics.
3. The objectives of the usage of types of ellipsis used in song lyrics are to make effective sentences and to avoid misunderstanding of giving information. It can also make the sentence in the lyrics more interesting and ear-catching.

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