Beginning Verb: An Analysis of Omitting Verb “Watching” in Comparison between Bima and English Language

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Abstract

This study is inspired by the use of verb "watching" in English language in which it can be omitted and still preserve its meaning in the sentence. The aim of this research is to find out the differences in meaning of the verb "watching" when omitted in a sentence between Bima and English language. This paper is a descriptive qualitative analysis design. It utilizes empirical data and library sources to complete it. This paper also used qualitative method analysis because the data are in the form of words instead of numbers. To analyze the data, the writer used Dixon's theory on Beginning verbs. In terms of Bima language, the process of omission verb is proven to be quite complicated. The one that makes it complicated is simply because the speaker is accustomed to say the verb and not familiar with the process of omission. Although it is limited in terms of its data, time, and sources, this paper could be well developed if others want to concern more on the Bima language in terms of its tradition or the culture. The culture of the language seems to be more complex and the native speaker is really having a hard time explaining it.

Key words: Beginning verb, Bima language, Omission verb.

Introduction

In discourse, people usually produce plenty of ambiguity in their speaking process with their interlocutor. Linguists in every part of the world are striving to make new research and explore more of human culture. In this particular matter, language is one of the main focus points for them.

In producing a sentence, people may follow certain rules that are taken for granted since the day they were starting to learn a language, until they can fluently speak. The term 'Grammar' is a certain rule that is taken for granted [1]. It is because, when children were taught language, their parents did not give them a book to learn grammar, or to enrol in particular external courses for speaking. The way children learn grammar was from mimicking their parents [2]. Children learn language easily, mostly without explicitly being taught any of their rules. This process is very different from adults, who have more difficulty learning languages even when they are explicitly taught the rules. The rules that are usually taught are present tense, past tense, future tense, and etc.

In the process of analysing the utterance that people produce with their interlocutor, it should be noticed to the structure of the sentence, subject, predicate, and its object. However, in this paper, the researcher focuses more on the analysis of the verb from the point of view of semantic. Semantic analysis describes the process of understanding

the way of human communicate based on meaning and context. The context that the researcher highlights in this paper is going to be the verb types, Beginning verb in particular.

Sometimes, in a discourse, or when two speakers of English speak, they sometimes leave out items in their utterances which are normally expected to be used in a sentence if they follow the grammatical rules. The term is Ellipsis, which purposely omits certain parts in a sentence [3][4]. Take a look at these examples.

- I am absolutely sure [that] I have met her somewhere before.
- A. (Have you) Seen my keys anywhere?
- B. The're on the table.
- A. (Are) you ready yet?
- B. Yes. (I am) Ready now. (I am) Sorry to keep you waiting

In fact, when ellipsis is used appropriately, no one thinks we have 'left out' anything, and ellipsis is normal and very common, especially in informal conversation.

Semantically, the verbs of this type divide into three groups: (i) begin, start, commence; (ii) continue (with), keep (on (with)); go on (with); (iii) finish, cease, stop, complete, discontinue [5][6]. For Beginning verb, the verb should not be alone and should be followed by another verb, which -in the process of it-modifies the verb before it and could also, in certain circumstances, be omitted, e.g. The choir started (singing) 'Messiah' at two o'clock, Mary continued (with) (writing) her book after a short holiday, Tommy has finished (shelling) the peas, I've completed (grading) these assignments [7]. The process of omitting this verb is interesting to analyse and is going to be discussed in the later section of this paper.

Research Questions

From the above explanation, several research questions are produced to analyse the Beginning verb and the process of the omission in English and Bima language; 1) How does the process of omission occur in English and Bima language?; 2) How do both languages differ in terms of Verb Omission Process?

Expected Results

The researcher hypothesis about the process of omission verb in English and also in Bima language have several contrast differences. Though English does permit omission of the verb, however there will be some ambiguities that would potentially happen in a spoken language. So, this paper hopefully answers those questions.

Methodology

In this section, the researcher explains the method which is used in conducting this paper, which includes 1) research design, 2) research subject, 3) data source, 4) research instrument and 5) data collection analysis. This paper is a descriptive qualitative analysis design. It utilizes empirical data and library sources to complete it. This paper also uses qualitative method analysis because the data are in the form of words instead of numbers.

The subject of this research is utterances of English and Bima because there is more variation of language that is in the form of utterances. The data are in the form of notes that are taken from some speakers of Bima language and also from Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The data are trustworthy because the data are taken from COCA which is Corpus and a reliable source of data, and also, to compare the Bima language from English, the researcher is a native speaker of Bima and also finds some native speaker of Bima to compare the sentences.

In this paper, the researcher used a human instrument which could be a participant observation or observation. The researcher took a few notes from asking directly the native speaker of Bima language and also used his own knowledge of Bima language as the researcher also speaks Bima. The data were collected in the following steps. First, the data were taken from COCA. Second, the researcher filtered the results and picked the ones that support the analysis. Third, the researcher translated the data that were taken from COCA, and made a similar pattern in Bima language. Fourth, the researcher asked some native speakers of Bima language and told several sentences with and without omission verb in order to obtain their responses.

Findings and Discussion

It has been explained before that Beginning verb can sometimes be omitted if it follows certain rules. Verbs play a central role in sentences, with one of their properties being to assign case [8]. Case specifies syntactic relationships in a sentence between a verb (or preposition) and its arguments. Noam Chomsky has stated that every complete noun phrase must have case [9], which is assigned by, for example, a verb. Sentences with noun phrases without

case are ungrammatical. All languages have case, although not always visible. Dixon explains in his book that the process of omission is described in the Beginning verb, where the verb can be omitted if it follows certain rules [7].

The rules that he mentioned are: 1) The Beginning verb should be followed by another verb that modifies the previous verb. For example. The choir started (singing) 'Messiah' at two o'clock. The verb singing can be omitted because the verb before it, which is started that has been modified by the verb singing. Therefore, we can simply say The choir started 'Messiah' at two o'clock; 2) When a verb is omitted after the Beginning verb or item appears, its object Noun Phrase is left behind. The Noun Phrase that has been omitted should be the typical object of the omitted verb so that the nature of the verb can with a degree of probability be inferred from it. So that when there is an utterance saying John began building Mary's house last February it is permissible to omit build, since house is a prototypical object of that verb. However, if we try to say Mary began liking her new house after she'd been living in it for six months, it is not possible to omit the verb liking after the verb began since this is a verb that can take any sort of object; 3) When omitting a certain Beginning verb, the speaker must pay attention to the background knowledge of the interlocutor. To be able to produce a good sentence that could be understood by our interlocutor, we must always keep in mind that what we are going to say has already been understood by the other speaker. For example, in a sentence, John began (building/ painting) Mary's house, Hosanna began (reading/writing) a new detective novel, Junior began (shelling/cooking/eating) the peas, when we try to omit the word building, the speaker here has to know that his/her interlocutor can perceive the sentence well or in other words, speaker has to make sure that the addressee already know whether John is a builder. Because, if we look closely at the sentence, it could have two meanings, first is that in the sentence John began (building/painting) Mary's house, it could mean John is a builder, or John is a painter. So, this information is required by our interlocutor in order to perceive its meaning completely.

Problems In Omission

Even though the rules seem to be fair, and clearly governs the process of omitting verb, there could be some problems that might appear if Beginning verbs were used in daily conversation, or discourse. The below text is taken from a conversation in one of the Corpus of Contemporary American English. The context is a film which shows an interactive horror experience in which viewers explore the contents of a DVD and unravel a harrowing story along the way.

I guess we have to, because no one's here and there's no DVD player and there's Well, the couch is great. Is it? Yeah? It's a good couch? Yeah. Good, you know, I paid for the couch I know. cause I paid for the space, and then no one came to the space because they said they were gonna, and then they didn't. Why don't you just sit down and relax? Uh, yeah, I don't, um, Can I start watching now? Yeah, yeah, yeah, press, uh, press play. So, tell everybody, uh, what you thought, what you thought of the film. Um, I really liked it. Yeah? Did you? Um, it was really interesting. Yeah, I mean, it, it was a bit of a twist, right? Mhm. It was, uh, eh, uh, Yeah, I was not expecting that. Probably, right, right, well. [10]

In this example that is taken from Corpus of Contemporary American English, we can clearly see that the context is already clear. The speakers were talking about some movies and if the verb watching is omitted, there would be no problem in perceiving the meaning. So, we could say like this, Can I start now? Yeah, yeah, yeah, press, uh, press play. The speaker still can perceive the meaning and can also give a proper answer to what the speaker intended to say at the very first place. However, if we take things more complex, for example, in this sentence, I started (watching/reading) Harry Potter last night. This sentence could produce ambiguity because the object NP of the verb could imply two things. First, Harry Potter can be read, and there are novels about it, but it can also be watched, because Harry Potter has indeed its own adaptation of film. So, if someone might say that sentence to another speaker, the interlocutor might ask the speaker whether he/she means by started. Even if both speakers have the background knowledge of the Harry Potter series, it could still be ambiguous since the verb can have two objects. It is proven by the researcher's interview with several people that speak English. The researcher asked and uttered the sentence I started Harry Potter again last night. All of the five respondents responded quite differently, because they did not know whether the intended meaning was to watch it or to read it. One more example regarding the verb start watching that I got from Corpus of Contemporary American English is in this sentence.

want to keep watching, or...? I will answer that question after I pay a visit to the powder room, courtesy of raging diarrhea. (both chuckle) Be right back. (giggles) Hey. She said, " Do you want to keep watching TV, or...? " Mm. I'll tell you how to respond as soon as I get some fresh air. Okay. (breathing heavily) She said, " Do you want to keep watching, or...? " " I'd like to stop watching TV " and start watching your lips. " - So good! - Yeah. " I'd like to stop watching TV and start watching your lips. " That's good. Good, good, good, good, good, good, good. Thanks, Briggs. I owe you a solid. No problemo. You're really helping me out here, Rabbi. You owe me a mitzvah. (moans) Talk to me. Uh... She wants him to talk to her. Uh... Whoops. Oy

The verb in the sentence I'd like to stop watching TV and start watching your lips cannot be omitted, because the information is not enough for the interlocutor to understand. We cannot simply omit the verb and say I'd like to stop watching TV and start your lips, because the prototypical object of the verb is not used commonly by speakers. In the

context of this sentence, the watching is usually associated with TV or movies, but lips is a different context. We are aware that the speaker was intended to do some flirting so omitting the verb watching could spoil the meaning.

The Process of omitting verb in Bima language

In the context of omission, the Bima language is quite unique. The language is still widely used by people in Bima and outside of Bima. Its language also seems to be very complex. In Bima language, we cannot omit the verb in the sentence. Even though we apply the same principle in English language, but we still cannot omit the verb. It is due to the nature of the speakers and the culture that really rely on the verb when speaking. For example, we take from the previous example above, when one want to say he/she started watching Harry Potter, in Bima it would be:

Nahu tempu'u tanda Harry Potter. → Nahu tempu'u Harry Potter

I started watching Harry Potter. → I started Harry Potter

If we want to omit the verb in the Bima language, which in this case is tanda, it could produce ambiguity among the speaker. Another example we can see below:

La'aka tempu'u lowi utam beca parongge → La'aka tempu'u utam beca parongge

He start cooking moringa vegetables (*sayur kelor*) → He start moringa vegetables

It is also ambiguous to say in Bima language *La'aka tempu'u utam beca parongge* because the verb is not clear for the speaker. In Bima language, it has a special rule in terms of the word cooking. When we cook rice, or in terms of quantity and relationship, then the perfect word that should be used is mbako, rather than using the verb lowi. This shows that Bima Language really relies on its verbs and the usage of the verb varies depending on a certain rule that already governs the language historically. Take another example from one of the examples in the Dixon book, which is *John began building Mary's House*. Let's try to convert that to Bima language.

John tempu'u tu'u umah → John tempu'u umah

In this example, although in English language is acceptable, however in Bima, it is still not acceptable, because the verb tempu'u does not enough to make it a full sentence. Most of the respondents feel ambiguous with the form of the sentence, and saying that the sentence in terms of Bima language, is ungrammatical. It is again derived from the fact that people in Bima tend not to omit the verb when doing a conversation with their interlocutor.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the process of omission in English can vary in terms of its rules, and we cannot omit a verb just because the rules which in this case grammatically permit them to do so, we need to pay attention to other aspects outside of the box. The one that we need to pay attention to is indeed the context of the verb. The context is the one that is highlighted the most, because it sometimes can produce ambiguity when it is used improperly. Although sometimes, on a few occasions, even if some speaker already knows the context, culture, or the background of the speaker, it sometimes could also produce ambiguity. For example, the case of Harry Potter, where it has both movies and books, when it is used in a sentence, the verb should not be omitted as it could still produce ambiguity. We need to specify whether we watch it or we read it.

In terms of Bima language, the process of omission verb is proven to be quite complicated. The one that makes it complicated is simply because the speaker is accustomed to say the verb and not familiar with the process of omission. It is related to the cultural background of the language that every speaker speaks. So, when we apply the principles of omitting verb in Bima Language, it could still produce plenty of ambiguity. Bima language is also known for the majority of classes in language that make it more complex to comprehend. For example, in terms of verb types, there are a lot of variations of usage, and it is not arbitrary to use it. It means that the verbs have special forms, and it is related to its object. For example in cooking vegetables, we use lowi, rather than mbako. However, when a speaker wants to cook rice, they tend to use the word mbako, rather than lowi. The rule is simply because of the quantity of food that we want to cook. If we want to cook something heavy, or in plenty of quantities, we used mbako, instead of lowi and vice versa.

Although it is limited in terms of its data, time, and sources, this paper could be well developed if other want to concern more on the Bima language in terms of its tradition or the culture. The culture of the language seems to be more complex and the native speaker is really having a hard time explaining it. Therefore, it is better to have a literary source that specifically explains the nature of Bima language and how the sentence is formed.

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