

Extension exercises

Chapter 24: Ellipsis and substitution

Exploring English

Choose a newspaper article and a page from a novel which includes a lot of dialogue – or, if you have access to the necessary technology, record someone talking or a conversation which you can then analyse.

- 1 Identify examples of ellipsis and substitution in these texts.
- 2 Identify any instances where opportunities for using ellipsis and substitution have not been taken, and the language is consequently more ‘wordy’ than is necessary.
- 3 Identify any instances of ellipsis or substitution which might make understanding difficult for a learner.
- 4 If you are able to do this, choose similar texts in a foreign language that you know well. Identify examples of ellipsis and substitution. What kinds of words are left out? What kinds of words are used as substitutes? How does this compare with ellipsis and substitution in English?

Course materials

Choose course materials you are familiar with and, if possible, some that you don’t know. Analyse and compare them bearing in mind the following questions.

- 1 How easy is it to locate material which deals with the topic of ellipsis and substitution? (Look at the Contents page, ‘map of the book’, Index or Grammatical summary.)
- 2 Are ellipsis and substitution treated as an aspect of grammar? vocabulary? reading skills? writing skills?
- 3 At what levels (for example, elementary, intermediate) is attention paid to ellipsis and substitution?
- 4 To what extent is ellipsis and substitution treated as one topic as opposed to separate topics (for example, ellipsis in short answers to questions, ‘situational’ ellipsis of pronouns in conversation)?
- 5 What balance is there between sensitisation and analysis, and practice?
- 6 Is use made of authentic text?
- 7 Evaluate the materials in terms of the amount of attention paid to ellipsis and substitution and the effectiveness of this treatment.