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英语复合句中的省略现象

吴远恒

(上海电力学院 外语系, 上海 200090)

摘要: 省略是英语的一大特点, 英语中的省略现象纷繁普遍, 而复合句中的省略更是令英语学习者比较难以把握的一个方面, 英语复合句中的省略主要包括定语从句、宾语从句、状语从句、主语从句、强调结构中的省略。熟知并掌握这些省略现象, 能提高我们对英语省略句实际含义的准确理解, 简明扼要地表达思想感情。

关键词: 英语; 复合句; 省略

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引言

一对居住在伦敦的英国夫妇准备访问上海, 他们前去购买两张往返的头等舱机票。他们会向售票员说“Would you please sell us two first-class tickets from London to Shanghai and back again and we will pay you the usual fare for such tickets”还是说“Two first returns, Shanghai”? 前一句话语法正确、语义清楚, 但你在现实生活中是绝不会听到的; 相反, 后一句话仅用那么几个单词, 可是在特定的语境中准确无误地表达了说话人的意思, 简洁明白, 所以在现实生活中不绝于耳。这就是英语中的省略现象。省略就是省去句子某些成分而保持句子原意不变。严格地说, 凡是省略的成分都可以被添补出来, 使省略句变成完整的句子。省略的目的有二: 其一, 语言简洁, 结构紧凑, 无论讲话还是写作, 如果老是重复相同的词语, 就会使人听而乏味, 读而生厌, 而避免重复的省略可以达到言简意赅、干脆利落的效果。其二, 重点突出, 表达有力。用省略的方法省去说话人认为句中相对来说不太重要的重复内容, 使表达出来的内容带有强调语势的色彩, 从而凸现重点, 增强语言的表达效果。语言是生活的一面镜子, 它总是随着社会的变化而变化。现代社会竞争激烈, 节奏匆忙, 人们在说话和写作中, 越来越追求用简单、经济、快捷的方法来表达自己的意思。莎

士比亚在他的名著《汉姆雷特》中借人物之口曾说过“Brevity is the soul of wit”(言以简洁为贵)这句名言现在越来越被人们所遵循。因此, 省略的现象目前在英语中仍处于发展趋势。英语中的省略现象错综纷繁, 省略的范围颇广, 小自单词, 大至句子, 只要不引起歧义, 不造成生涩费解, 大多皆可省略。鉴于此, 笔者在本文中只是着重分析在教学过程中经常出现的且带有典型意义的复合句中的省略现象, 以期通过对含有省略现象的复合句进行结构分析, 达到正确理解原句意义的目的。

1 定语从句中的省略

为避免重复, 相同的定语可以省略。前置定语一般采用“承上”的省略方式, 如: young boys and (young) girls; fresh milk and (fresh) butter; 后置定语一般采用“借下”的省略方式, 如: students (at this college) and teachers at this college; men (who work hard) and women who work hard。绝大多数定语从句置于被修饰词之后, 所以, 定语从句中的省略方式以“借下”占主导地位。^[1] (括号中的英文为省略部分, 下同。)

1 and 和 not...but...连接的并列名词后有相同的定语从句时, 省略第一个名词后的定语从句。

(1) The computers (which are produced in this

country) and the color TV sets which are produced in this country sell well on foreign markets.

这个国家生产的电脑和彩电畅销国外.

(2) It's not Mary (who is to blame) but Peter who is to blame.

不应该责备玛丽, 而应该责备彼德.

2 副词 formerly, previously, once, then, always, exclusively, obviously, normally, also 等引导名词短语, 这时可视为省去主语和系动词 be 的定语从句.

(1) The broad masses of the workers, (who were) formerly wage slaves, have become masters of the country.

广大工人从前是被雇佣的奴隶, 现在已经成为国家的主人.

(2) Helen, (who was) normally a timid girl, talked bravely with a young man at the party.

海伦本来是个胆小的姑娘, 但在晚会上却勇敢地同一位小伙子交谈.

3 当非限制性定语从句的先行词表示主句的全部或部分意义时, 关系代词 which 和系动词 be 都可省略.

(1) He decided not to complete his university course, (which was) a great disappointment to his parents.

他决定不把大学课程学完, 这使他父母很失望.

(2) He has given in his resignation, (which was) the best thing he could do in the circumstances.

他已递交了辞职书, 在这种情况下他只能这样做.

4 在 such...as 结构中, 关系代词 as 引导的定语从句常可省略.

(1) I said no such thing (as that).

我没说这类事.

(2) Such accidents (as these) cannot be helped.

这样的事不可避免.

5 当 as 作为关系代词引导定语从句时, 如果先行词是整个主句的话, 从句中的动词 be 常可省略.

(1) I left for America the day after I saw you, as (was) planned.

按照计划, 我在见到你的第二天动身去美国了.

(2) He called on her only once a month, as (was) required.

他按照要求每月只拜访她一次.

6 介词、副词、形容词等短语做限制性后置定语时, 可视为省去关系代词和系动词 be 的定语从句.

(1) The streets were thronged with people (who were) out shopping.

大街上挤满了外出买东西的人.

(2) She picked up the newspaper (which was) on the floor.

她把地板上的报纸捡了起来.

7 在由 there be 或 here be 引导的倒装句后的定语从句中, 作主语的关系代词常可省略.

(1) There is a man (who) wants to see you.

有人要见你.

(2) Here is a piece of news (that) interests every one of us.

这儿有一条新闻, 它使我们每个人都感兴趣.

8 当定语从句中作主语的关系代词后有插入语(如 I know, I think, he said, she hopes)时, 该关系代词常可省略.

(1) I asked for something (that) I knew could not be provided.

我要一些明知不能给我的东西.

(2) He sold the books to the students (which) he said tell them how to study English.

他把那些讲解如何学习英语的书卖给了学生.

9 定语从句和分词短语同时作定语时, 可以一起省略.

Are there any trains (we can take leaving here at night and going to Shanghai) and buses we can take leaving here at night and going to Shanghai?

夜间有开往上海适合我们坐的火车或汽车吗?

2 宾语从句中的省略

动词宾语、介词宾语的省略通常采用“借下”的方式, 如: John likes (Mary), and Peter hates,

Mary 和 He is bored with (rock-and-roll), but his daughter enjoys, rock-and-roll. 因此, 宾语从句的省略方式以“借下”占主导地位。^[2]

1 用 I don't know 回答某些特殊或一般疑问句时, 用 I'm afraid not 回答某些一般疑问句时, 用 Yes, I know 接说别人的陈述句表示肯定时, 都可以认为在其后省略了宾语从句。

(1) Where has she gone? — I don't know (where she has gone).

她到哪儿去了? ——我不知道。

(2) Is she coming here tonight? — I don't know (whether she is coming here tonight).

她今晚来这儿吗? ——我不知道。

(3) Can he drive a car? — I'm afraid (he can) not (drive a car).

他会开车吗? ——恐怕不会。

(4) She told me about it yesterday. — Yes, I know (she told you about it yesterday).

她昨天告诉了我那件事。——是的, 我知道。

2 who, when, where, why, how, what, which 等疑问词在句中引导宾语从句时, 其后的成分如与句子中已出现的成分相同, 往往可以省略。

(1) He was not allowed to do it, and I wonder why (he was not allowed to do it).

不允许他做这件事, 我不知道为什么。

(2) I think there were four or five presidents who were assassinated, but I forgot which (presidents were assassinated).

我想被暗杀的总统已有四、五个了, 但记不起是哪几个。

3 如果两个并列的宾语从句中的主语和谓语相同, 仅是连词不同, 省略前一个宾语从句的主语和谓语, 只保留其连词。

(1) I want to know by whom (it was written) and for whom it was written.

我想知道这是谁写的, 又是为谁而写的。

(2) Your mother is anxious about where (you are going) and how you are going.

你妈很想知道你要去何处, 怎样去。

4 在比较状语从句后的宾语从句可以省略。

(1) I was surprised to discover that she was younger than I expected (that she was).

发现她比我预料的要年轻, 我感到很吃惊。

(2) I felt more excited than I could say (that I felt).

我当时说不出有多激动。

3 状语从句中的省略

在英语中, 状语从句中的省略涉及面最广, 也是英语教学的难点之一, 这是因为状语从句本身就多达 9 种, 他们是表示时间、地点、原因、目的、结果、条件、行为方式、比较关系、让步等的状语从句。^[3]

1 由 when, while, once, if, unless, where 等引导的状语从句, 常省略其后的主语和系动词 be, 直接用分词、形容词或介词短语。

(1) Be careful when (you are) crossing the street.

过马路时要当心。

(2) Don't talk while (you are) eating.

吃饭时不要说话。

(3) Once (it was) published, the book caused a remarkable stir.

这本书一出版就引起一场轰动。

(4) Correct mistakes if (there are) any.

有错即纠。

(5) A body at rest remains at rest unless (it is) acted upon by an external force.

除非有外力施加于它, 一个静止的物体会保持静止。

(6) Fill in the blanks with proper articles where (it is) necessary.

在需要的空白处填入适当的冠词。

2 在 than 引导的比较状语从句中, 凡是与主句中相同的成分常可省略。

(1) You can speak English more fluently than I (can speak English).

你讲英语比我流利。

(2) We've had more fine weather this summer than (we had fine weather) last (summer).

今年夏天的天气比去年夏天好。

3 在由 than 引导的比较状语从句中, 当对比成分的谓语为实义动词时, 从句中的主语常可省略。

(1) You can't do better than (you) go.

你最好还是去。

(2) I would rather die than (I would) yield.

我宁死不屈。

4 在由 than 引导的比较状语从句的主语指主句全句时,从句的主语和系动词 be 常可以省略,而实义动词则不可以省略。

(1) The sea was less smooth than (what was) hoped.

大海不像人们希望的那样平静。

(2) The question is far more complicated than (what) appears on the surface.

这个问题要比表面上看起来复杂得多。

5 当 than 引导的比较状语从句本身是一个复合句时,从句中的主句常可以省略。

(1) She is better than (she was) when I wrote you last.

她现在比我上次写信给你时要好些。

(2) The people seem more agreeable on holiday than (they are) when banging through revolving doors into office buildings.

人们在度假时要比在急匆匆推开旋转门进入办公大楼时似乎更容易相处。

6 由 than 引导的比较状语从句中的宾语 what 常可省略。

(1) I won't say more than (what) I know.

不知道的我一句也不多说。

(2) She got more than (what) she asked for.

她得到的比她所要求的多。

7 当 as 引导比较状语从句和行为方式状语从句时,在从句中凡与主句相同的成分常可省略。

(1) The second visit was almost as soul-stirring and exciting as the first (visit was soul-stirring and exciting).

第二次访问几乎同第一次一样令人兴奋和激动。

(2) She plays with him as a cat (plays) with a mouse.

她戏弄他,就像猫逗老鼠。

8 如果 as 引导的状语从句是复合句,常可省略其中的 that 从句,有时将 as 及其后的从句都省略。

(1) The interview was not such an easy one as I

thought(that is was).

面试并不像我所认为的那样容易。

(2) Pleasing people is its first aim, and no other consideration is as important (as pleasing people is).

使人满意是它首要的目的,其他的考虑都不及这个重要。

9 当 as...as 引导的状语从句的主语指全句时,从句的主语和系动词 be 常可省略。

(1) Come as soon as (it is) possible (for you to come).

尽快来。

(2) She is as clever as (she is) beautiful.

她很美,也很聪明。

10 在 as follows 这一结构中,可看作 as 后省略了主语 it 或 what.

(1) The full text reads as (it) follows.

全文如下。

(2) The conditions are as (what) follows.

情况如下。

11 在 if 引导的条件状语从句中,可省略与主句中相同的成分。

(1) I'm happy if you are (happy).

如果你快乐,我就快乐。

(2) Anyone might be angry if (he is) teased.

被人戏弄,任何人都会生气的。

12 在 if 引导的条件状语从句中,当从句中的谓语动词仅为实义动词时,一般不能省略;但如果主语是 anyone, no one 或类似的不定代词时,从句中的实义动词就可以省略。

(1) If anyone (knows), she knows.

如果有人知道,她就知道。

(2) If no one (goes), I'll go.

如果没有人去,我就去。

13 在 if necessary, if possible 等结构中省略的主语不是主句中的主语,而是表示主句中内容的 it.

(1) I will do the work if (it is) possible.

如有可能,我会干这工作的。

(2) She can take avoiding action if (it is) necessary.

如有必要,她可以采取回避行动。

14 含有比较状语从句的复合句中的主句和从句的谓语都是系动词 be 时,常一起省略。

(1) The richer the vocabulary (is), the more developed the language (is).

词汇越丰富, 语言越发达.

(2) The darker the color of the material (is), the greater the amount of heat it absorbs (is).

物质颜色越暗越吸热.

15 在 whatever, however 等引导的让步状语从句中, 谓语动词 be 常可省略.

(1) Whatever your problems (are), they can't be worse than mine.

不管你面临什么问题, 总不会比我的更严重.

(2) She bought everything that pleased her, no matter what the cost (was).

她见到喜爱的东西, 不论贵贱, 一概买下.

4 主语从句中的省略

在主语从句中, 省略的大多是先行词 it 和系动词 be.

(1) (It is) No wonder it is heavy.

难怪这么重.

(2) (It is a) Shame you won't be there.

你将不在那里, 真遗憾.

5 强调结构中的省略

在被强调成分为主语强调句中, 关系代词所担当的主语可以省略.

(1) Who was it (that) told you my name?

是谁把我的名字告诉你的?

(2) It isn't everybody (that) can do such a thing.

并非人人都能做这样的事.

(3) It was this wicked woman (that) completely

upset me.

是这个可恶的女人使我心烦意乱.

6 结束语

省略是用比较经济的方法表达比较复杂思想的一种手段. 使用省略时, 必须做到意义明确, 避免歧义. 如果用了省略后, 几种解释都讲得通, 别人就无法知道你的真意所在. 如“He loves his son more than his wife”这句话就可以有两种理解: “He loves his son more than his wife loves his son”或“He loves his son more than he loves his wife”. 这种省略造成歧义, 务必避免. 我们可以用 do 作替代词或保留必要的动词、介词. 我们把引起歧义的句子“He loves his son more than his wife”明确说成“He loves his son more than his wife does”或“He loves his son more than he does his wife”, 这样一来, 句子的意思就十分清楚了. 由此可见, 英语中的省略不是随心所欲的, 它有一定的规则和习惯, 不是一件容易做对的事. 我们有时辨不出句子里有无省略, 有时不知道在什么情况下可以省略, 有时不清楚省略与不省略的区别及哪种说法更普遍等. 所以, 熟知并掌握英语中的省略、特别是难度较大的复合句中的省略现象, 就能提高我们对语言的理解能力.

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Ellipsis in Complex Sentence of English

WU Yuan-heng

(*Department of Foreign Languages, Shanghai University of Electric Power, Shanghai 200090, China*)

Abstract: Ellipsis, a common phenomenon, is characteristic of English. Ellipsis in complex sentences of English, which mainly consists of attribute clause, object clause, adverbial clause, subject clause, emphatic pattern and absolute construction of participles, is especially difficult for foreign learners, who should exert every effort to enhance the correct understanding of complex sentences with varied ellipses, in order to precisely express themselves.

Key words: English; complex sentence; ellipsis