We present research that the use of ellipsis in English is evidence of interaction. Ellipsis involves leaving something unsaid and the context allows us to supply the missing part. So, when someone asks us a question like "Where did you see him?", the question allows us to just give the answer to the question where, i.e. "over there". Since ellipsis is contextual in this way, we can suppose that the phenomenon is interactive by nature.

Many strategies have been discussed in the literature which are used by speakers to interact. Peterson (2009) analyses data from textchats by Japanese learners of English and identified a series of strategies. These include back channel support (continuers), giving and seeking help, correction of self and others, and off-task discussion. Darhower (2002) discusses greeting/leave-taking, and intersubjectivity (maintaining and developing a discourse topic). Repetition is discussed by Cogo (2009: 260), Suvimitty (2012, chapter 7) and Mauranen (2012: chapter 7) in discourses involving speakers of English as a Lingua Franca. These strategies suggest that the learners are creating and maintaining social cohesion, and lead to the formation of discourse communities.

We compare two types of data, oral and textchat discussions in academic seminars. The oral seminar and workshop discussions discussions come from the VOICE (2011) corpus of English as a Lingua Franca; and the textchat logs come from my own corpus of seminar discussions from an online MA programme in English Linguistics, also involving non-native speakers of English. We show that the intersubjectivity, repetition, continuer and correction functions can be found in our data set, and we propose one more: comments. Intersubjectivity is by far the most common function, while continuers and corrections are very rare. The use of these functions clearly marks that students are interacting as members of discourse community.

Keywords: interaction, speech event, ellipsis.