

УДК 316.77;378;87.9

DOI 10.31654/2520-6966-2019-12f-95-142-149

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Verbalization of love in modern English poetry: constructional approach

The paper dwells on the constructions denoting love in modern English online poems. The most large-scale immediate constructions belong to three thematic groups with the core words love, heart and pain. Modified constructions transform the immediate ones due to adjectives, nouns with prepositions and adverbs, while extended constructions, combining several immediate ones, provide nominal representation of various models of the state of love.

Key words: construction, verbalization, state of love, English poetry.

Love has long been a feeling described in numerous verses, stories, novels as it is the state known to everybody and cherished by the people of various age, status, income, appearance, etc. Still, the topic is not even near to be exhausted. The definition of love includes its abundant manifestations such as "strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties; attraction based on sexual desire; tenderness felt by lovers; affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests" [11]. Naturally, there are many words to describe the feeling, countless synonyms which rely both on direct and metaphoric meanings. The novelty of the paper lies in the analysis of the linguistic units denoting love, namely constructions which are defined as non-predictable form-meaning pairings [7, c. 4]. Researchers study numerous characteristics of constructions: their productivity [4, c. 46], levels of generality [10, c. 101], their cross-linguistic similarities [3, c. 87]. In the vein of types of constructions, there have been analyzed sentence-level constructions [7, c. 219], idioms [1, c. 1; 6, c. 2] and articleless constructions [2, c. 208]. However, little attention has been paid to the spheres of reality constructions may represent. Thus, the goal of our research is to dwell on the constructions describing love in contemporary online poetry. The tasks we plan to solve are as follows: to classify constructions indicating love; to analyze immediate, modified and extended constructions that reflect aspects connected with the

feeling of affection; to identify the representation of love in English verses with the help of constructions.

The material of our research is constituted by the poetry of the 21st century which is a rather multifaceted subject. Being referred to as 'post-internet poetry' [9] or 'metamodernism' [15, c. 5], "with the globalizing effect of the internet exerting its influence" [16], more and more artists are using the Web as the basis for their work [9], verses emerge in tweets, social networks, combine with visual media. Thus, contemporary poetry has a number of peculiarities: its availability online for everyone, the process of searching and variety of forms [16].

In the case of easy accessibility, any person can log in, post a poem, get feedback for free. Moreover, there are no age limitations, so readers can find poetry created by adults, teenagers or even children as a part of their school assignment. As for the ability of search, different genres of poetry can be reached in a few clicks due to the fact that websites contain a list of tags on the main page, where readers can find trending poems, or use a search line instead to choose a verse to their liking. Variability of forms rests on the idea that poets should not follow standard rules, thus, there are more ways, often unexpected ones, "taking poetry out of its tradition and theoretical/political context, expanding or breaking open coteries" [16]. Besides, poetry of this century contains numerous lexical units and constructions, which can be analyzed from a linguistic point of view.

Constructions are stored pairings of form and function, including morphemes, words, idioms, partially lexically filled and fully general linguistic patterns [5, c. 6]. Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist [8, c. 5]. Though constructions have a fixed structure, they allow some transformations due to the slots available in their form, i. e. participant roles associated with a construction or a verb [7, c. 49], differing from one use to the next [8, c. 39, 90].

Constructions may be classified applying two different approaches: paradigmatic, focusing on qualities of components, and syntagmatic, emphasizing their number.

Paradigmatic studies draw on different levels of generalization [12, c. 173] when constructions are divided into item-based, lexicalized and grammaticalized [14, c. 62]. Even though potentially decomposable into constituents item-based constructions are stored and used as single units, e. g. *eternal love*. Lexicalized constructions with islands of reliability are relatively abstract, e. g. *X kisses Y, X loves Y very much*.

Grammaticalized constructions are highly abstract entities 'based on commonalities in the forms and functions of a whole host of different specific expressions', e. g. *negation constructions*; *motion construction* [14, c. 62].

The second classification is based on the criterion of absence or presence of the context, according to which constructions may be divided into immediate, modified and extended [12, c. 175]. Immediate constructions consist of a word with dependent units joined on the left or on the right [13, c. 102]. Thus, we have constructions with left-hand dependence, e. g. *views on love*, and right-hand dependence, e. g. *love myself*. Immediate constructions are considered separately and isolated from the text they are used in, e. g. *love, heart*. These immediate constructions give us only the notions of affection, but without analyzed context it is difficult to perceive the picture of the whole complex feeling of love. Immediate modified constructions admit additional elements expressed by adjectives or pronouns [13, c. 102], cf. *share my love* vs *speak about real love*. Extended constructions combine two or more immediate units, e. g. *it seems **real love** has died through hypocrisy and abuse* (Robin Wright). In the cited example, the immediate modified variant *real love* is extended by units *has died* and *through hypocrisy and abuse* on the right.

We have taken examples from two online sources of verses: www.hellopoetry.com and www.familyfriendpoems.com. They contain works of different authors, both professional and amateur, who sign the verse using the names which don't give away much information about their personality. Still, the poems indicate the feelings contemporary authors have and reflect the linguistic representation of their emotions.

Drawing on the suggested grammatical approach to prefabricated units this paper presents the analysis of several groups of constructions denoting affection depending on the key word in their structure: love-constructions, heart-constructions and pain-constructions.

Love-constructions split into two subgroups with respect to the part of speech: verbal constructions and nominal constructions.

Verbal *love-constructions* include immediate ones with right-hand dependence and one extended construction. *Love-constructions* in the function of a predicate form immediate constructions naming the person denoted by pronouns, e. g. *love **u*** (Rishabh Sharma) and modified by the adverb, e. g. *love **me forever*** (Lebanna Rose); nouns, representing the object of affection, e. g. *love **my life*** (Robin Wright). The extended construction is formed with the help of the infinitive and direct object, e. g. *love **to watch the rain*** (Robin Wright).

Nominal *love*-constructions are of two types depending on the combinability. The left-hand dependence is represented by pronouns denoting the object of affection, e. g. **our** *love* (Katja Pullinen), **my** *love* (Roman Payne), **your** *love* (Roman Payne); adjectives, indicating various characteristics of the feeling, e. g. **real** *love* (Jessica Jarvis), **fragile** *love* (Katja Pullinen); nouns, highlighting the peculiar feature of the state, e. g. **power** *of love* (Robin Wright), **beauty** *of love* (Robin Wright); participles, e. g. **scattered** *love* (Willow SR).

The right-hand dependence of nominal *love*-constructions is designated by the combination with the link verb and the predicative expressed by the noun to represent the abstract state, e. g. *love is not a conquest* (Robin Wright), *love is just a game* (Robin Wright); the participle, e. g. *love is gone* (William Troup); or the adjective, e. g. *love was pure and true* (Robin Wright), *love is unbreakable* (Robin Wright). In case with the adjective the immediate construction can be modified by the prepositional object to denote the recipient, e. g. *love for somebody is immeasurable* (Emma Rose).

A separate case of nominal *love*-constructions is formed by the combination of the noun *love* with verbs. Here, we observe both left- and right-hand dependence. The left-hand dependence with verbs reflects a person's actions taken in relation to love. The verbs in the immediate constructions indicate gains, e. g. **fall in** *love* (ema), **fight for** *love* (Indigo Morrison); mutual character of the feeling, e. g. **share your** *love* (Rishabh Sharma); or losses, e. g. **splash out** *our love* (Katja Pullinen), **suffocate** *new love* (Kai), **trade** *love for anything* (IrieSide), **fall out of** *love* (ema).

The right-hand dependence can result in the immediate constructions where noun *love* functions as the active participant to indicate actions carried out by the state, e. g. *love won't win* (Willow SR), *love has created* (Robin Wright), *love does* (Jessica Jarvis). The extended constructions of this type combine with nouns that reflect comparison of the affection with various natural phenomena, e. g. *love moves like a wave* (Abbie Affleck), or with the objective infinitive complex naming celestial bodies, e. g. *our love makes the stars align* (Roman Payne).

The spread of *heart*-constructions in the poems about love has always been wide as heart, considered the centre of all human emotions, is the symbol of love. *Heart*-constructions fall into 2 subgroups resting on the combination with units on the left or right.

Left-hand dependence of *heart*-constructions is represented by nominal parts of speech and verbal ones. Nominal parts encompass

pronouns indicating the object of affection, e. g. **my heart** (Sophie L. Bracegirdle), **your heart** (JoJo), **our hearts** (Willow SR); adjectives, denoting sufferings, e. g. **broken heart** (Jessica), or underscoring the degree of attachment, e. g. **precious heart** (Robin Wright). Extended constructions are formed with the help of nouns with prepositions indicating feelings, located in the heart viewed as a container, e. g. **the passion within your heart** (Robin Wright), **the song in your heart** (Robin Wright).

As for verbal left-hand dependence, the noun *heart* combines with notional verbs, e. g. **ripped my heart** (Lila Timberwolf), or phrasal verbs, e. g. **stolen my heart away** (Robin Wright). Verbal constructions can be modified by adverbs to name the manner of action, e. g. **open my heart readily** (Dana Hughes), **sew your heart back together** (JoJo); or a noun with a preposition representing the state obtained by the person: happiness, e. g. **put my heart into bliss** (Sameera Krishna), or disappointment, e. g. **fill my heart with dismay** (Samuel Canerday).

Verbal immediate constructions of right-hand dependence highlight the normal work of the organ, e. g. e. g. **heart beats** (Willow SR); its help in the emotional sphere, e. g. **heart guide me** (Katja Pullinen), **heart started to stay** (Azfar Hakimi); or the suffering tolerated by the person, e. g. **heart's been shattered apart** (Robin Wright), **heart is on fire** (AnActualToaster).

Pain-constructions are used quite often in love poems as the other facet of positive feelings caused by affection is unanswered unshared feeling which brings forth great discomfort. This type of constructions mainly hinges on verbs, which give forth to left- or right-hand dependence.

Immediate verbal constructions of left-hand dependence name physical pangs of different stages: infliction, e. g. **bringing me pain** (Jasmine S. Johnson), **cause you any pain** (Caity), **see me in pain** (Kayla Marie); its sustain, e. g. **endured the pain** (Robin Wright), **experience the pain** (Robin Wright), **is full of pain** (Vbishal Barick); and impossibility to cope with it, e. g. **die from this pain** (Bianca Santamaria) / **couldn't stop the pain** (Ariel Smith).

The right-hand dependence hinges on the verbs describing unbearable feeling, e. g. **pain really hurts** (Shelli), **this pain that haunts day and night** (Bianca Santamaria), **the pain that kills inside** (Kendra), or its negative effects: **pain is taking its toll** (Jasmine S. Johnson).

The process of overcoming negative state is represented by immediate constructions combining with verbs on the right, e. g. **mask the pain inside** (Robin Wright), **cover up my pain** (Robin Wright); or on

the left, e. g. *the pain leaves* (Jasmine S. Johnson), *pain go away* (Kari Johnston). Extended constructions represent the person or object that facilitates in coping with pain, e. g. *tears won't take the pain away* (Nora).

To conclude, constructions verbalizing the feeling of affection are well represented in modern English poetry with immediate, modified and extended constructions. Our typology concerns constructions naming love itself, heart as the container of the emotion and pain as the negative facet of the perceived state. The group of love-constructions is the most large-scale with verbal subgroup indicating the object of affection and nominal subgroup representing various features of the state described, actions taken in concern with it. Units modified by the prepositional object denote the recipient of love, whereas extended constructions combine with nouns that reflect comparison of the affection with various natural phenomena. Heart-constructions highlight the person experiencing the state, the normal work of the organ, its assistance in love. Verbal heart-constructions can be extended by adverbs or nouns with a preposition representing the state obtained by the person. Pain-constructions reflect physical sufferings of various stages and degrees or the process of coping with negative effects of love. Further investigation in this realm may be connected with differentiating other groups of constructions indicating various states of a person.

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Вербалізація стану закоханості в сучасних англомовних віршах: конструкційний аспект

У статті аналізуються конструкції на позначення стану закоханості у сучасних англомовних онлайн віршах. Найбільш вживані безпосередні конструкції належать до трьох тематичних груп, де ключовими словами виступають "любов", "серце" та "біль". Модифіковані конструкції трансформують безпосередні за рахунок прикметників, іменників з прийменниками або прислівників, тоді як розширені конструкції, утворені декількома безпосередніми, забезпечують номінативну репрезентацію різних моделей стану закоханості.

Ключові слова: конструкція, вербалізація, стан закоханості, англійська поезія.