

Constructions in English: from paradigmatic to syntagmatic relations

У статті доводиться, що сучасні конструкційні підходи здебільшого зосереджені на парадигматичних відношеннях, пов'язаних з різними рівнями узагальнення структури досліджуваних конструкцій, а тому пропонується звернути увагу на синтагматичні відношення між виокремленими раніше структурами. Відповідно, у статті диференційовано п'ять синтагматичних різновидів конструкцій англійської мови: безпосередні, що складаються з двох або трьох слів; модифіковані, які включають означення; поширені, утворені кількома безпосередніми конструкціями у межах окремого висловлення; суперсинтаксичні, задіяні на рівні кількох висловлень; текстові, які зустрічаються у трьох і більше висловленнях.

Ключові слова: конструкція, конструкційна граматики, парадигматика, синтагматика.

В статье доказывается, что современные конструкционные подходы, в основном, сосредоточены на парадигматических отношениях, связанных с различными уровнями обобщения структуры конструкций, а поэтому предлагается учитывать синтагматические отношения между выделенными ранее конструкциями. В статье дифференцировано пять синтагматических разновидностей конструкций английского языка: непосредственные, состоящие из двух-трех слов; модифицированные, включающие атрибуты; распространенные, объединяющие несколько непосредственных конструкций; суперсинтаксические, задействованные в двух-трех высказываниях; текстовые, встречающиеся в трех и более высказываниях.

Ключевые слова: конструкция, конструктивная грамматика, парадигматика, синтагматика.

The paper argues that the present-day Construction Grammar approaches mainly focus on the paradigmatic relations concerning different levels of generalizing constructions and suggests that Construction Grammar take into account syntagmatic relations of the structures singled out by paradigmatic studies. The article differentiates five types of syntagmatic constructions in the English language: immediate, consisting of two or three words; modified with different types of attributes; extended comprising several immediate constructions within one utterance;

supersyntactic related across two utterances; textual occurring throughout three and more utterances.

Key words: construction, Construction Grammar, paradigmatics, syntagmatics.

One of the modern cognitive strands is represented by Construction Grammar claiming that language is a repertoire of constructions, i.e. more or less complex patterns that integrate form and meaning in conventionalized or non-compositional ways [3, p. 64]. The term *constructionist* is intended to evoke two notions: that of "construction" and that of language being "constructed" on the basis of the input together with general cognitive, pragmatic and processing constraints [5]. It is claimed that the form of constructions may refer to any combination of syntactic, morphological, or prosodic patterns with the meaning encompassing lexical semantics, pragmatics, and discourse structure. In this view grammar consists of intricate networks of overlapping and complementary patterns that serve as 'blueprints' for encoding and decoding linguistic expressions of all types [3, p. 64]. In a more general sense, 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. In addition, patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency [4, p. 5].

Current research mainly focuses on the paradigmatic – substitutational – features of constructions, i.e. relationships that a linguistic unit has with other units established due to a number of operations which explain the formation of constructions at different abstraction levels: entrenchment, categorization, schematization and generalization [4]. For example, in the sentence *I hunted a fox*, each of the words can be replaced by a number of other units without changing the basic syntactic arrangement, e.g. *I hunted a fox / you hunted a wolf*, etc. Instead of assuming a clear-cut division of lexicon and syntax, constructions are considered to be part of morphosyntax or a lexico-syntax continuum.

The paradigmatic studies single out constructions at different levels of generalization. Three levels – item-based, lexicalized and grammaticalized – were suggested in [8, p. 63]. Within this approach item-based constructions keep the same form throughout all contexts, e.g. *How are you doing?*, *Could you please _*, *I'm simply amazed*, *You keep out of this*, *Open the door!* *Nizhyn University*, *St. Paul's Cathedral*. Lexicalized patterns are supposed to rest on particular words known as

islands reliability, e.g. *X reads Y, X passes Y, X kisses Y, X hits Y, X pushes Y, X pulls Y; Where's the X? I wanna X, More X, It's a X, Put X here, I'm X-ing it, Mommy's X-ing it, Let's X it, Throw X, X gone, I X-ed it, Sit on the X, Open X, X here, There's a X, X broken*. Grammaticalized constructions generalize on the relations between the participants of an event: *X Verb transitive Y (=X loves Y)*; object transfer constructions; *can*-constructions; *do*-constructions; *negation*-constructions; *relative clauses* as constructions; *gehen–fahren* constructions etc.

A more detailed classification includes four levels: word constructions, e.g. *an apple (means an apple)*; idiom constructions, e.g. *X take Y for granted (means someone doesn't value someone or something)*; comparative constructions, e.g. *X is taller than Y (X is more Adj than Y)*; resultative constructions, e.g. *She rocks the baby to sleep (X causes Y to become Z by V-ing)* [6, p. 1]. The cited examples suggest that the word – *an apple* – is a classic pairing of form and meaning and thus qualifies as a construction. The meaning of the idiom *X take Y for granted* is not completely compositional and must therefore be stored in a speaker's mental lexicon. The comparative construction – *X is taller than Y* – can therefore be said to be more schematic than the idiom. The resultative construction is completely schematic, since it only contains slots for the cause X, the verb V, the affected complement Y and the resulting state Z [6, p. 1].

The conceptual level of paradigmatic description of constructions is claimed to be represented by image schemas, i.e. recurring, dynamic patterns of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structure to our experience [7: xiv]. They have been used to explain English prepositional phrases without article [2] and English idioms [1] treated as constructions. It has been found that the unity of structure and meaning of phraseological units as constructions rests on the image schemas representing referents from the perspectives of space and time location, force and motion [1, p. 19] while the unity of form and semantics of English prepositional phrases without article results from the interaction of three components: categorical, reflected in their general meaning; constructional, implying their existence as pairings of fixed structure and meaning; situational, encompassing the components of an event and links between them [2, p. 20].

However, paradigmatic relations reveal only one aspect of constructions related to the language system. The other important feature which has been neglected so far concerns their syntagmatic relations discussed in this paper.

The syntagmatic study of constructions focuses on their combination at three levels: syntactic, supersyntactic and textual.

At the syntactic level constructions are divided into immediate, modified and extended. The immediate encompass combination of words with dependent units placed either on the left or on the right, e.g. *at Chernobyl; exclusion zone*; the modified enlarge the immediate constructions with additional units, e.g. *the 30km exclusion zone*; the extended combine two or more immediate constructions within one utterance, e.g. *But about 180 mainly elderly people still live within the 30km exclusion zone around Chernobyl.*

The opposition between immediate and extended constructions seems helpful in studying an author's style or her linguistic personality. For example, in the English media discourse immediate constructions belonging to the language system seem independent from an author's style being used by the majority of writers in a fixed form, e.g. *policy agenda, refugee crisis, hard data, landslide victory*. However, as the examples of the *Conservative party* immediate construction suggest authors' attitudes are rendered by ramified combinations: modified, e.g. *most right-wing Conservative Party leadership*, or modified extended constructions, e.g. *the rising influence of pro-Brexit right wing Conservatives*. In the last example the extended construction consists of two immediate variants: *rising influence* and *pro-Brexit right wing Conservatives*.

At the supersyntactical level, covering several utterances, constructions enter intrasentential and intersentential relations which is revealed by the way *The Times'* daily bulletins introduce quotations, e.g. *Charlie Flanagan has adopted a "no can do" attitude to a promised inquiry into claims of mishandling of child abuse allegations in Waterford, a victim has said* (6.01).

Immediate constructions introducing reported speech are related to four paradigmatic levels. At the item-based one it is sufficient to divide them into *reveal-, find-, say-* and *according-*constructions. At the lexicalized level they split into two types: verbal (*X reveals / finds / says Y*) and *according-*constructions. At the grammaticalized level the verbal constructions are generalized as Verb_{Ditransitive} underscoring the importance of the disseminated information. At the cognitive – image schematic – level reporting constructions seem to be related to RESTRAINT REMOVAL which presupposes the elimination of a barrier or the absence of some potential restraint suggesting an open way which makes possible the exertion of force [7, p. 46]: *reveal / find / say*.

However, the paradigmatic approach does not seem sufficient for explaining the application of reporting patterns. Further progress is possible if we only focus on relations between two and more immediate constructions consisting of two or three words.

The immediate reporting constructions mainly hinge on the verbs *find* and *reveal* without particular correlation with the constructions within quotations. In immediate constructions the verb *find* combines with the names of different kinds of special examination denoted by the nouns *study*, e.g. *Death rates from breast cancer are lower in parts of the country where a national screening programme was first introduced, a study has found* (28.12); and *investigation*, e.g. *Travel firms are using misleading discount claims to lure holidaymakers into paying hundreds of pounds more than necessary for flights and accommodation, an investigation has found*; as well as by the names of particular persons, e.g. *Stanley Johnson – former MEP, author, father of six (including the foreign secretary) – was the unlikely star of this year's I'm a Celebrity show in the Australian jungle. But is he as charming in real life? Julia Llewellyn Smith finds out* (30.12).

Similar – immediate – relations are denoted by *reveal*-constructions focusing on exposing the truth which was not known before. The reporting verb *reveal* combines with the following nouns: *investigation*, e.g. *Consultancy firms working for the government on the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station were advising the project's Chinese investor and its French builder at the same time, an investigation by The Times has revealed* (1.01); *survey*, e.g. *Sickness is rising steeply among staff in the Scottish health service as it comes under increasing pressure, new surveys have revealed* (26.12); *document*, e.g. *The Arts Council failed to take formal action over Michael Colgan for more than a year after he verbally attacked a staff member in a "humiliating" and "abusive" outburst, documents reveal* (1.01); *minister*, e.g. *Internet giants face a multimillion-pound tax raid unless they agree to help combat the terrorist threat to - Britain, which is at its worst "for 100 years", the security minister revealed last night* (31.12); as well as names of particular periodicals, e.g. *Britain's biggest police force is worse at helping children at risk of sexual exploitation and rape than it was 12 months ago when a damning report found systemic failings, The Times can reveal* (28.12).

The immediate *according*-constructions refer to books, e.g. *Tony Blair warned Donald Trump's aides that British intelligence may have spied on them during the election, according to an explosive new book* (4.01); polls, e.g. *Undeterred by a politically turbulent 2017, more than half*

of Britons think their financial situation will stay the same or improve over the next year, according to the annual YouGov "state of the nation" poll (1.01); analysis, e.g. *More than half the children in Britain are growing up in areas where air pollution levels exceed the legal limit, according to an analysis* (27.12); surveys, e.g. *A majority of the British public believe religion has no place in politics and want bishops to lose their automatic seats in the House of Lords, according to a survey for The Times* (25.12).

The modified constructions include those with the noun *figure* accompanied by the adjectives *sharp* and *latest* as well as governing the use of the verbs *suggest*, e.g. *President Trump's immigration crackdown has prompted a sharp fall in the number of "genius" visas granted to British specialists, official figures suggest* (2.01), and *show*, e.g. *Teacher training applicants have fallen by a third in a year, the latest figures show* (5.01).

The extended constructions are represented by the *say*-type. Their use depends on the contents of the quoted utterance while the tense form of *say*-constructions – present, present perfect or past indefinite – correlates with the constructions used in the quotation.

The *say*-constructions in the present tense introduce the so-called general truth statements holding for the future as well. Therefore in the quotations reference to the future is combined with two types of generalizing constructions: impersonal, e.g. *It's possible to be cosy without looking a slob. And you'll feel all the better for it, says Anna Murphy* (27.12), or indefinite, traditionally known as indefinite noun phrases, e.g. *A tightening of the central bank's mortgage lending rules in November will put a brake on the rise in house prices this year, particularly in Dublin, a report on the property market says* (2.01). *Say*-constructions in the present tense also introduce utterances about present-day consequences of the past activities which are not disputed, e.g. *Facebook's intervention in the 2015 general election was responsible for triggering the landslide for the Scottish National Party, the company says* (28.12).

Say-constructions in the present perfect form introduce quotations about unique events or entities identified in the reported speech by particular nominal and verbal means. The latter include *perfect-tense* and *should*-constructions. The *perfect-tense*-constructions combine with the nominal units referring to Brexit, e.g. *Brexit has weakened the UK's ability to attract overseas investment as companies look to create jobs in other European countries after the referendum result, the head of the IDA has said* (5.01), to the NHS budget, e.g. *Almost £1 billion of the NHS budget goes to waste each year because patients fail to turn up for appointments, the health service's top nurse has said* (2.01), or to the Islamic States

supporters, e.g. Thousands of western foreign fighters serving with Islamic State have escaped encirclement in the final battles along the Syrian-Iraqi border, finding sanctuary in remote desert areas elsewhere or escaping to Turkey, local commanders and intelligence officers have said (27.12).

Advice- or should-constructions in the reported speech usually combine with the names of particular phenomena. Should-constructions introduce information about ScotRail, e.g. The debate over whether ScotRail should be nationalised is a "meaningless distraction" from the "fundamental" problems on Scotland's railways, a former transport minister has said (27.12), and the confidence and supply deal, e.g. The confidence and supply deal should not be allowed to "drop dead" after the next budget and could continue beyond 2018, Leo Varadkar has said (28.12). Advice-constructions in the reported speech correlate with the choice of the verb *tell* additionally denoting the addressee: More middle-aged professionals must change career and become teachers to improve schools in remote and deprived areas, the new head of Teach First has told The Times (29.12). Moreover, advice-constructions used in quotations also correlate with say-constructions referring to the past, e.g. Dog owners should not be made to feel guilty if they give their pets to be re-homed, one of Britain's leading animal rescue charities said (25.12).

Nuancing constructions focusing on specific ways of restraint removal are introduced by the verbs *propose*, e.g. Tax-free vouchers like those used by parents to pay for childcare should be offered to encourage people to save towards long-term care costs, a company has proposed (25.12); *claim*, e.g. Donald Trump's right-hand man openly questioned his mental health and predicted that he would quit to avoid being ousted, it has been claimed (5.01); *confirm*, e.g. A British family on holiday, including an 11-year-old girl, was killed when a seaplane on a New Year's Eve joyride crashed into the Hawkesbury River, police have confirmed (1.01).

The textual syntagmatic relations are embodied in skeleton texts, which in the following example represent only utterances with the immediate construction *exclusion zone* which is modified and extended throughout the text in the order in which it occurred in the initial news story:

(1) Chernobyl's eerie exclusion zone 30 years on.

(2) Thirty years after its fourth reactor exploded on 26 April 1986, an exclusion zone is still in place around the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine.

(3) The exclusion zone, which extends for a radius of 30km (19 miles) around the plant, is monitored by police armed with AK-47s.

(4) They have stayed there ever since, despite being inside the exclusion zone.

(5) Visitors to the exclusion zone can measure changes in radiation and exposure to it with a dosimeter.

(6) In all, 116,000 people were moved out of the area declared an exclusion zone.

(7) Picking up discarded items in the exclusion zone is strictly prohibited, especially the gas masks used by workers known as "liquidators" in the aftermath of the disaster (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35824880>).

The skeleton text above comprises modified and extended *exclusion-zone*-constructions placed in the succession in which they occurred in the source text. The two modified constructions are adjectival (*eerie exclusion zone*) in the headline (1) and indefinite (*an exclusion zone combined*) related to the predicative constructions denoting in (2) the existence of the exclusion zone (*an exclusion zone is still in place around the Chernobyl nuclear plant*) and the act of its coming into existence (*the area declared an exclusion zone*) in (6).

The extended constructions are one predicative and several prepositional indicating the spatial coordinates of the Chernobyl exclusion zone.

The predicative construction in (3) reveals the main parameters of the zone: its size (*the exclusion zone, which extends for a radius of 30km (19 miles) around the plant*) and surveillance (*monitored by police armed with AK-47s*). The prepositional phrases in the rest of the text locate different entities within the zone: people in (3) (*being inside the exclusion zone*), individuals coming there (*visitors to the exclusion zone*) in (5) and objects (*picking up discarded items in the exclusion zone*) in (7).

As can be seen, the use of modified and extended constructions is subordinated to the overall informational structure of the text: it begins with general features of the exclusion zone outlined from the outside by indefinite and predicative constructions and then characterizes it from the internal perspective by a number of prepositional constructions.

The skeleton texts are compiled by students together with teachers and are published in an online reference book for speaking and writing posted on the university site (<http://www.ndu.edu.ua/index.php/ua/kafedra-germanskoji-filogiji/reference-book>) to be used by junior

students to speak and write on particular topics designated by the constructions in the headline.

To conclude, the initial paradigmatic constructionist studies which have revealed different types of structures are to be enriched with syntagmatic relations divided in this paper into immediate, consisting of two or three words; modified with attributes; extended comprising several immediate constructions within one utterance; supersyntactic correlating in two utterances; textual related throughout three and more utterances.

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