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**Constructions denoting interpersonal relations as the markers**

**of the author’s idiostyle (based on the short stories by Elizabeth Strout)**

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# INTRODUCTION

Constructions are units of the language that are studied by Cognitive Linguistics, which is a somewhat new approach to the language study as well as its relation to cognition [Robinson 2008: 3]. This approach incorporates a variety of theories such as Construction Grammar, Cognitive Grammar, usage-based theories of grammar and Radical Construction Grammar etc. [ibid]. Robinson and Ellis also suggest that Cognitive linguisticscompetes against thewidespread linguistic theory (Chomskyan Generative Grammar) and deals with subfields of linguistics from acquisition to typology, as well as the traditional fields like semantics, syntax and phonology [ibid]. This paper is focused on the Construction Grammar theory, according to which construction is a stored form-meaning pairing, a symbolic unit of a language [Croft 2001: 18]. Constructions are often studied and classified by linguists according to their form [Goldberg 1995, 2003, 2006, Tomasello 2003] and function [Sinclair 2004, Potapenko 2017] in the sentence with the help of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic approach respectfully.

Constructions as the units of the English language may serve as the author’s tools to express the interpersonal relations – the physical interactions or making an impact on other people in any way. In this case pairings may reflect the individual style of an author, which is understood as a series of the linguistic expressive instruments of an author [Stavytska 2009: 5].Style in general may be thought to be an impression of individual and group variation in the language [McMenamin 2002: 9]. The instruments and the modifications of the language may be acknowledged as the markers of the author’s idiostyle, which may be reflected in the key components the author uses to describe a certain type of interpersonal relations. The chosen genre for analysis is a short story as it is brief and dwells on a small number of characters [Hansen el.ref.].

The **topicality** of the research is explained by the interest in studying the individual style of a chosen author, its markers and main features.

This course paper **aims** to study constructions denoting interpersonal relations serving as markers of the individual style of an author.

The work is intended to solve the following **tasks**:

* to give a definition of a construction;
* to define an idiostyle of an author;
* to distinguish types of constructions;
* to single out and group the constructions representing interpersonal relations in the short stories;
* to identify the markers of E. Strout’sidiostyle.

The **object** of the research is peculiarities of the author’s idiostyle.

The **subject** is constructions denoting interpersonal relations asmarkers of Elizabeth Strout’sidiostyle.

**The material** of the research is thirteen short stories by Elizabeth Strout, collected into the novel “Olive Kitteridge” published in 2008.

The aim, tasks and subject matter of the study have conditioned the following **methods** of the research: sampling method to select the material of the investigation; quantitative method to analyze the frequency of linguistic units use;method of analysis of definitions to study basic terms; component analysis to identify semantic features in the meaning of immediate constructions; contextual analysis to study extended constructions denoting interpersonal relations in the short stories; method of stylistic analysis to define the markers of the author’s idiostyle.

**The novelty**consists in revealing constructions that serve as markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle. It is found that constructions denoting interpersonal relations are mainly verbal, and nominal. The author modifies the pairings with the help of adjectives to characterize the actions performed or people, nouns and pronouns to name the addresser or the addressee of the actions. It is proved that E. Strout also modifies the constructions with additional pairings to add meaning to the immediate construction – provide time, place, reason for the interpersonal relations.

**Theoretical value** of the research is defined by its contribution to morphosyntax in making classifications of constructions, cognitive linguistics by implementing construction grammar in analyzing nominative units, to stylistics by determining markers of the author’s idiostyle.

**Practical value** consists in the possibility of using the results in following courses:Theories of the English Language (sections “Semantics”, “Synonyms”, “General Characteristics of the English Vocabulary”, “Functional styles”, “Text and its categories”), Practical English, special courses in discourse analysis.

The discussion of the work was conducted at the conference: “Mova ta kultura: suchasniaspektyspivvidnoshennia”, Odessa,November 2020.

The publication includes the following contribution: Constructions denoting marital and romantic relations as a signal of the author’s idiostyle (based on the short stories by Elizabeth Strout). Visnykstudentskohonaukovohotovarystva. 2020. №23. P. 124-128.

The **total volume** of the course paper is 77 pages. The **structure** of the paper includes Introduction, two parts with Conclusions, General Conclusions, Literature and a Supplement.

In the Introduction the topicality of the theme is substantiated, the aim, the tasks, the object, the subject, the methods of the research and theoretical and practical value of its results are described.

The first part “Theoretical foundations of the study of constructions as markers of the author’s individual style” represents the theoretical basis of the research: the definition of a construction, classifications of constructions, the author’s idiostyle, its markers and the structure of a short story.

In the second part “Constructions as the markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle” 3 thematic groups consisting of 125 constructions are analyzed in detail to reveal the markers of the author’s individual style.

In GeneralConclusions the results of the investigation are summed up and explained.

TheLiterature comprises a list of 36 theoretical sources, 4 dictionaries and a supplement.

# PART I.THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF CONSTRUCTIONS AS MARKERS OF THE AUTHOR’S INDIVIDUAL STYLE

At the present day numerous linguists study constructions, their structure and function in a sentence – A. Goldberg, W. Croft, M.Tomasello, P. Robinson and N. Ellis and others. Constructions are widely used in English language and may give an insight into the individual style of an author. This part of the paper is focused on the analysis of a construction as a linguistic unit, the thematic groups and the style of an author.

## **1.1. Definition of a construction and approaches to its analysis**

*Cognitive linguistics*is a relatively new approach to the studying of the language.Linguists claim that “Cognitive theories of generalization and categorizationemphasize on the fact that schematic constructions are abstracted over less schematic ones that are inferred inductively by the learner in acquisition” (Harnad, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Taylor, 1998)[Ellis 2012: 196]. It is widely accepted that observing and creating constructions might be considered as a cognitive process. Cognitive linguists emphasize it and focus on the language as a whole. In other words, a person perceives language and constructions with the help of reasoning and basing on their background knowledge [Положенняпроконструкції el. ref.],applying a personal understanding of linguistic units, *run off* has a negative meaning because *run off* means *running away* according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary [Merriam-Webster Dictionary – MWD]. In case with this construction, the reader may apply the background knowledge about parents abandoning their children at birth.

According to *the constructionist approach*, developed by A. Goldberg, constructions are stored pairings of form and function, including morphemes, words, idioms, partially lexically filled and fully general linguistic patterns [Goldberg 2006: 5]. This is also acknowledged by W. Croft, who suggests that grammatical constructions consist of partially arbitrary pairings of form and meaning [Croft 2001: 18]. It is also mentioned that even the most general syntactic constructions may be interpreted semantically, that is why constructions are understood as essentially symbolic units [ibid]. The construction may be understood with the help of figure 1.

Figure 1. Symbolic meaning of constructions.

A. Goldberg also suggests that we can recognize any linguistic pattern as a construction provided that some aspect of the form or function cannot be predicted from its components or from other constructions recognized to exist [Goldberg 2003: 219-220]. In addition, it is claimed that patterns are stored even if they are entirely predictable if they occur frequently enough [ibid]. Therefore, judging from the constructionist approach, we can view a construction as a unit of a language, the meaning of which cannot be guessed from its components, *fight one’s wife* in its indirect meaning – verbal disagreement [MWD] – means *quarrel*, but in other context it may be used in the direct meaning of *contending in battle or physical combat* [ibid], if the construction dwells on physical abuse.

*Usage-based theories* claim that a linguistic construction is a unit of language that encompassesseveral linguistic elements used together for a rathercoherent communicative function, with the elements performing sub-functions as well [Tomasello 2003: 75].Consequently, constructions may differ in complexity, whichrevolves around the number of elements involved [ibid]. For example, the English regular plural construction (N+s) is relatively simple, whereas the passive construction (NP was VERBed by NP) is relatively complex [ibid]. In general, it is understood that people perceive the meaning of constructions in use after engaging in communication with each other.

To conclude, there are numerous approaches to defining a construction as each of them focuses on a particular aspect. This research will primarily focus on the *constructionist* and*cognitive* approaches. Authors stick to the opinion that a construction is a pairing of form and meaning, which is subconsciously remembered and understood by speakers during communication and acquisition of a language in general.

## **Types of constructions**

Constructions may be classified applying two different approaches. There are two classifications – paradigmatic and syntagmatic. Paradigmatic one focuses on qualities of components, while syntagmatic emphasizes on their number.The syntagmaticand paradigmatic dimensions cannotaffect each other because they do not come into contact with each other, being independent from each other, and to study one, we should ignore the other [Sinclair 2004: 141]. Therefore, both of those classifications may be used to group the construction and analyze their usage in the text.

**1.2.1.****Paradigmatic classification of constructions.**It was noticed by J. Sinclair that the traditional linguistic theory has had a massive bias in favour of the paradigmatic rather than the syntagmatic classification [Sinclair 2004: 140]. Text is typicallyseen as a sequence of somewhat independent choices of one item after another, whilecombination patterns have been vigorouslyunderestimated, so meaning appears to be created by paradigmatic choice [ibid].

The **paradigmaticstudies** draw on a number of operations including entrenchment, categorization, schematization, and generalization which explain the formation of the constructions of different levels of generalization [Потапенко 2017: 173]. Constructions vary in their abstractness, from abstract constructions such as the English plural and passive, to various concrete idioms. Importantly, even the most abstract constructions are nonetheless symbolic, as they possess a coherent meaningbeingrather independent of the lexical items involved [Goldberg 1995: 35].

According to M. Tomasello [2008: 62-77], constructions are divided into item-based, lexicalized and grammaticalized.

*Item-based* constructions have a syntactic marking as an essential part [Tomasello 2008: 77]. According to Tomasello, this type of construction is a concrete utterance schema, in which the speaker fills in “slots”, which are built up through observed type variation in that utterance position [Tomasello 2008: 74]. Moreover, it is known that item-based constructions keep the same form in all the contexts [Potapenko 2017:173]. They are considered as one item [Положенняпроконструкції: el.ref.], e.g.*be a frightening stranger*. Its meaning cannot be predicted because in the direct meaning it can be understood as the person is unknown to the narrator and they are scared, but in the context of the story the husband finds his wife was not interested in communicating, she changed.

*Lexicalized*constructions are based on the islands of reliability, “relatively stable frames of reference in speech stream” [Talavira 2017: 102]*e.g. X loves Y, X annoys Y.*Tomasello [2008] mentions that a lexicalized construction has a more grammatical structure in the sense that they have constant linguistic material that:

* may be more internally complex;
* there is at least one open slot, where we can placea variety of lexical items and phrases.

*Grammaticalized* constructions are thought to be highly abstract entities, which are based on the forms and function commonalities of a host of a variety of specific expressions, e.g. can-constructions; negation-constructions; X Verb transitive Y (=X loves Y); do-constructions; object transfer constructions; relative clauses as constructions [Tomasello 2000: 62]. Grammaticalized constructions generalize on the relations between the participants of an event [Potapenko 2017: 174], *e.g.stay married to somebody*.

This classification may be used to determine constructions in the stories and classify them according to their types. Itmight be utilizedto analyze the author’s individual style judging from the types of constructions they use.

Tomasello’s work is not the only one to pay attention to the classification of constructions. For instance, Thomas Hoffmangives a more detailed classification of constructions [Hoffman 2016: 1] and distinguishes*word constructions, resultative constructions, idiom constructionsand comparative constructions*:

* *Word construction* is a form-meaning pair, a word *e.g.danger*-construction (FORM: danger [ˈdeɪn(d)ʒə] ↔ MEANING: ‘danger’)*.*
* *Resultative* construction which has the following scheme: Agent causes Patient to become Result-Goal by V-ing’, e.g. An eager look of her eyes could *crack his heart into two*, meaning her look breaks [Cambridge Dictionary - CD] his heart, which makes him sad [ibid].
* *Idiom constructions,*the meaning of which must be stored in the speaker’s mental lexicon*e.g. be neat as a pin*(means be tidy, clean, neat)[Thesaurus el.ref.].
* *Comparative constructions*, e.g. X is smarter than Y (X is more Adj than Y);

To sum up,the given classification should be considered if we want to see more approachesof classification of constructions. It should be noted that, in the context of this paper, Tomasello’s classification may be more suitable to group and analyze the constructions in stories. The reason for it lies in the fact that the focus of the paper in the constructions denoting interpersonal relations, and even though Hoffman’s resultative, idiom and comparative types of constructions could be of good use for grouping and analysis, Tomasello’s classification can help to uncover a bigger variety of constructions with structures much more complicated.

**1.2.2. Syntagmatic classification of constructions.**Basing on the *syntagmatic dimensions*, a word is understood as a part of realization of a larger pattern or item picture [Sinclair 2004: 141]. It can also have little freedom andconsequently can give little information; it might be as meaningfulas a letter in a word, serving the purpose of recognition, that is why we should consider theaid forassociation paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations must be found in order to give a balanced picture [ibid].According to the **syntagmatic approach** constructions are divided into *immediate*, *modified* and *extended* [Potapenko 2017: 3].

* *Theimmediate*are a combination of words with reliant units, which are placed on the left or on the right,*e.g.fight one’s wife.*
* *The modified*ones broaden the immediate construction with the help of additional units, *e.g. picture living with somebody.*
* *The extended*pairings incorporate two or more immediate constructions, *e.g. run off the night one’s baby is born.*

The difference between *immediate* and *extended* constructions is helpful in studying the style of the author and his/her linguistic personality. *Modified* or *extended* constructions reflect the author’s attitudes [Potapenko 2017: 3], which is quite relevant for this research.

Therefore, constructions may be divided into immediate, modified and extended. This classification takes into account the relations between units and their positions with respect to each other.

To sum up, though paradigmatic approach to constructions is more popular with linguists, we may consider both of them and use them for grouping constructions according to their form.

**1.2.3. Thematic groups of constructions.**We may classify constructions into numerous thematic groups according to their meaning. I. Arnold suggests that the basis of grouping thematicallymay be considered both linguistic andextralinguistic due to the fact thatpeoplelink different words as the things they name exist together and the phenomena they denote might be closely connected in reality [Arnold 1986: 226]. It has been found that words establish quite clearly articulated spheres, which are held together by distinctive values, oppositions and differences, [ibid]. In this paper we will classify constructions denoting interpersonal relations into thematic groups and then analyze their form and meaning to make a conclusion about Elizabeth Strout’s individual style.

Firstly, a thematic group must have a decent number of constructions because a small number of them cannot be sufficient to be analyzed in detail to draw conclusion on the author’s style. In the context of this paper, where we analyze 13 short stories, ten or more constructions in one thematic group are thought to be the minimum amount to be analyzed.

Secondly, it is preferable if the constructions of the same thematic group are used in several stories to see the way author describes the events from the perspective of various characters and situations. For example, when the short story “Pharmacy” is narrated from the viewpoint of Henry Kitteridge, a variety of positive love and care-constructions are used towards his wife and friends *e.g. think of Denise with keenness, sadness shuddered through him*(on thought about a friend’s anxiety and grief)*, his life feels unbearable*. The author describes person’s attention to the feelings of the close people. In “The Piano Player” the character performs in front of a big audience and a construction*change atmosphere in the room* is used to express the character’s influence on others. It should be mentioned that even though we may compile many thematic groups with constructionstaken from a number of stories,some stories dwell on death, suicide, addictions and a thematic group is gathered only from one or two stories e.g. *(not) leave a note* (before suicide), *broken by grief*, etc.

Compiling thematic groups of constructions according to their meaning gives us an insight into the writer’s expressive means, which she uses to describe one certain type of interpersonal relations. For example, if we take a look at the thematic group *marital relations constructions*, we may see the constructions denoting both ups and downs of a relationship, e.g. *reconcile with his wife,fight with his wife*. When there is a complete thematic group of constructions we may analyze the related constructions in detail, paying attention to their meaning and form, and then use it to study the idiostyle of the chosen author.

To conclude, constructions are considered to be stored pairings of form and meaning. They may be studied according with respect to the paradigmatic or the syntagmatic approach. The paradigmatic one studies a construction focusing on the quality of its components, while the syntagmatic one concentrates on their number. In the context of this paper constructions will be studied concentrating on the syntagmatic approach.

## **The definition of style**

It is generallyunderstood that style is a unique way of using language. For instance, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, style is a distinctive manner of expression (as in writing or speech) [MWD]. MacMillan defines *style* as the individualway that someone behaves and does things, the way that someone writes or produces music or art [MacMillan]. Cambridge dictionary specifies that style is a way of doing something, especially one that is *typicalof a person*, *group of people, place, or period* [CD]. It may be seen that these definitions have something common. **Style** is described as something distinctive or individual about the way a person creates something. It is what makes a written work or oral speech different from others. A particular style may be reflected in the choice of words, the usage of constructions, the word order, etc. Besides, stylistic devices like metaphors, alliteration, hyperbole, repetition, onomatopoeia and others help to build and reveal a unique style. It should be noted that style itself has been defined by numerous linguists, who all have different views on it.

Style is perceived as a characteristic way of using language and this general viewpoint has been applied to literary language, which is referred to as stylistics; in this sense style has been viewed as a characteristic of certain genres, periods, authors, and even texts [Biber 2009: 23]. Style may also be defined as a reflection of individual and group variation in written language [McMenamin 2002: 9]. It was also claimed thatlinguistic stylistics studies markers of the individual style for the idiolect of a certainwriter [ibid].

Therefore, style may be defined as distinctive, typical way a person creates or writes something, characteristic of particular genre, period, author or text, which can be reflected in the choice of the vocabulary, constructions and stylistic devices.

## **Idiostyle, idiolect and linguistic personality**

Idiostyle is a term typically used by linguists of Post-Soviet schools of linguistics. They usually study works of Ukrainian and Russian authors and how the style functions in these languages in particular.

For instance, L. Kotkova, who writes about the Ukrainian language, claims that the terms “individual style”, “idiostyle” and “idiolect” occupy the central positions in the linguistic terminology [Kotkova 2012: 27]. Besides, L. Kotkova suggests that the terms “idiostyle” and “individual style” are usually usedsynonymicallyand may be interchangeable [ibid]. Though, idiostyle and idiolect are a bit different. The term idiostyle cannot be found in English dictionaries. The Moscow school of linguistics points out that the writer’s idiostyle is broader than his idiolect, the first encompasses the second: **idiostyle** is interpreted as the whole set of the linguistic expressive means of the author, while the components of the **idiolect**are themostimportant features of the idiostyle [Stavytska 2009: 5].According to the Cambridge dictionary, **idiolect** is the form of a language that a particular person speaks [CD].So, idiolect is a set of linguistic expressive means typical for one writer.

Particular attention should be paid to the correlation of the terms **idiolect** and **idiostyle**. There is no doubt that in the interdisciplinary scientific paradigm, the writer’s idiostyle intersects with the idiolect, the individual style, the authorial style, the individual cognitive space [Stavytska 2009: 10]. Still, there is no unanimity among researchers in understanding the idiolect and idiostyle of the writer [ibid]. It is quite clear that despite the absolute obviousness of the inseparability of the concepts of the writer’s **idiolect** and **idiostyle**, there is a fine differential boundary between them, which cannot be ignored [ibid].B. Stelmakh defines the dominants of the author’s idiolect: “peculiarities of the use of a certain layer of vocabulary, audio, visual and olfactory images, condensation or non-condensation of lexemes, punctuation, stylistic variation of syntactic constructions, rhythm-melody and the story composition, etc.” [Stelmakh2004: 231]. O. Pavlyshenko refers to **the markers of the author’s idiolect** as lexical units, which are characteristic of the works of a certain writer or are used more often in these works than in the works of other writers [Pavlyshenko 2004:214].

In case of the assimilation of terms **idiolect** and **idiostyle**there is nothing but the mechanical transfer of the first to the stylistic term system [Stavytska 2009: 11]. This transfer is not quite legitimate because the term idiostyle has emerged as a symbiosis “idiolect” (the first part of the idio- indicates the socio-communicative nature of individual speech) and “style”, and therefore, at first glance, operating with completely synonymous terms idiostyle and individual style, one should keep in mind the sociolinguistic component of the first one [ibid]. These concepts may be synonymous, but the operation of the term idiolect requires the researcher to take into account the extralinguistic background of the writer’s linguistic creation, as well as the varied intertextual projections of particular linguistic and aesthetic phenomena [ibid].

It should be noted that foreign schools of linguistics also use this term and study it. **The idiolect** has been referred to as a personal dialect. No two individuals use and perceive language in exactly the same way, so there will always be at least small differences in the grammar each person has internalized to speak, write, and respond to other speakers and writers [McMenamin2002: 71]. The idiolect is the individual’s unconscious and unique combination of linguistic knowledge, cognitive associations, and extra-linguistic influences [ibid]. When language changes over time, there are periods when “competing” new and old forms exist side by side in the whole speech community. Multiple forms will also be found in the language of an individual speaker, i.e., in his or her **idiolect.** Such individual variation is due to changes going on in the speech community, as well as to changes occurring in the person’s own process of language acquisition and use.

It should be mentioned that if we speak about the individuality of an author, we should consider the phenomenon of **linguistic personality**, which is somewhat similar to the above mentioned idiostyle. According to Y. Karaulov, linguistic personality is generally defined as a set of human characteristics that determine the production and perception of linguistic works, which differ in the degree of structural and linguistic complexity, the depth and accuracy of the reflection of reality or a specific target orientation [Karaulov 1989: 37].

Karaulov also suggests three levels in the linguistic personality model, which are verbal-semantic, linguo-cognitive and semantic [ibid]. *The verbal-semantic level* includes the lexical and grammatical means used in discourse: words and relations, represented by grammatical-paradigmatic and semantic-syntactic connections between words, while the stereotypes are reflected with the help ofmodels of phrases and sentences [Karaulov 1989: 87]. *The linguo-cognitive level* is represented by the person’s knowledge and world view, which are reflected in the conceptual structures like images, gestalts, frames, schemes and sentences which actualize the author’s knowledge of the world [Karaulov 1989: 189]. *The motivational level* consists of the needs, attitudes, motives or intentions determining the production of the texts [Karaulov 1989: 37]. The verbal-semantic and linguo-cognitive levels are crucial for our research as they focus on the lexical and grammatical means and the conceptual structures used by the author.

It was noticed that the phenomenon of the linguistic personality provides us with the deeper understanding of what influences the production of the text like the author’s world view, motivation or intention as well as other elements. In other words, the above mentioned makes an impact of the language used, including the extralinguistic means, while the idiostyle is a set of expressive linguistic means of an author.

All in all, we may see that the term idiostyle and individual style are usually interchangeable, meaning a set of linguistic means typical for one author. The linguistic personality similarly focuses on these means, but breaks them into three levels. The verbal-semantic and linguo-cognitive levels are represented with the help of the lexical and grammatical means as well as the author’s conceptual structures, which describe the author’s picture of the world.

## **A shortstory as a genreof writtenwork**

Short story is thought to be a brief fictional narrative, which describes the events in the lives of several characters. To understand this genre better, a closer look should be taken to the functional styles in linguistics and their prominent features.

**1.5.1. Functional styles in linguistics.**Various linguists studied functional styles and have given their view on them. We may draw attention to the works of Arnold [1981], Galperin [1981], Crystal [1988, 2000]. I. Galperin distinguished functional styles in the English language by identifying the distinct features of each one [Galperin 1981: 228]. For example, the use of reported speech and events may be a characteristic of a newspaper style. Galperin also notes that those styles can be easily distinguished one from another, they are not homogeneous and have or don’t have unique features. According to Galperin, there are 5 styles: belles-lettres style, publicist, newspaper, scientific prose and official document style [Galperin 1981: 250-312]. The difference between these styles may be seen when we determine typical features of each of them.

**Belles-lettres style** includes the substyles of poetry, emotive prose and drama. All of them may give the reader a chance to draw their own conclusions on what the author implied, feel the connection to the characters, feel pleasure from the content or even the way the work was written (rhyme, references, manner of narration, etc.) [Galperin 1981: 250]. It is generally understood that one style is not limited only to certain characteristics. Very often features of other styles may be discovered in belles-lettres, which add extra meaning, submerge into unusual situation, describe an incident, give some facts or add realness to the specific character’s profession. It is known that the authors of this genre often use numerous stylistic devices like metaphor, metonymy, allusion, oxymoron, parallelism, etc. to interest or intrigue the reader and draw the attention to characters or events.

**Publicistic style** includes oratorical speeches, essays and articles. It is usually used to express speaker’s point of view, convince the addressee in the author’s opinion [Galperin 1981: 287]. It should be noted that this style has common features with other styles as well, partly with scientific because the text should be well-structured, logical and argumented, and partly with belles-lettres because of its appeal to the listener, especially essays and speeches. Besides, publicist texts should be brief and to the point.

**Newspaper style** includes brief news items, headlines, advertisements, announcements, press reports, the main goal of which is to provide the reader with information, interpret or comment on it [Galperin 1981: 295]. Moreover, newspaper may affect the reader’s opinion concerning social or political matters.

**Scientific prose style** aims to describe the creation of new concepts, verify a hypothesis, detect the connections between phenomena, prove a theory, etc. The text should not be emotional, but rather generalized and objective, containing scientific terms relevant to the branch of science [Galperin 1981: 307]. Furthermore, the utterances are to be logical, contain the justification for the statements given. It is understood that words are to be used in their direct logical meaning.

**Official documents style** includes substyles like the language of business documents, legal documents, diplomacy, and military documents. This style of a language helps to make and express an agreement between contracting parties, e.g. between two or more citizens or governments, a state and a citizen, a society and its members, a person in authority and a subordinate etc. [Galperin 1981: 312].

Galperin’s and Arnold’s style system are very similar and are also time-proven, as they widely used to classify written works into styles. This paper focuses on **short stories**, which fall into the category of belles-lettres style, as a short story is *prose*. In the works of this genre the author uses a variety of stylistic devices to catch the reader’s attention.

**1.5.2. Peculiarities of a short story.**It is well known that a short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that is shorter than a novel and that usually deals with only a few characters [Hansen el.ref.]. According to A. Hansen, a short story as a genre originated before humans learned to write and the early storyteller depended on fixed rhythms, stock phrases and rhyme, which is why a lot of the oldest narratives are in verse. The Short story has gone a long way through centuries and millennia – Egyptian papyrus earliest tales in prose, Indian religious Buddhist teachings, Aesop’s fables from Greece, Scandinavian and Icelandic myths and sagas, Celtic tales, romantic tales of the Middle ages, fabliaux of Boccaccio and Chaucer – and other numerous earlier examples of the short story in its development are to be forever remembered in history [ibid].

Arlen J. Hansen [Hansen: Short story, 2019] also suggests that as a [genre](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/genre), the short story barely receives any attention through the middle of the 20th century, while the most useful studies of it were often narrowed to a certain region or epoch. The modern short story grew out of the terms “sketch” and “tale”. Tales are frequently entirely understood only by representatives of the certain culture to which they belong and, more often than not, filled with cryptic and extraordinarily conveyed motifs, characters, and symbols [Hansen el. ref.]. Basically, tales are thought to be intracultural, usually being a medium through which a culture speaks to itself [Hansen el. ref.]. The sketch, on the other hand, is intercultural, often depicting certain phenomena of one culture for the benefit or joy of the other. Moreover, the sketch by nature is suggestive, incomplete; the tale is often hyperbolic, exaggerated [Hansen el. ref.]. Whether we consider the short story a combination of a tale and a sketch, it is debatable that nowadays it is a recognizable and independent genre, though still in development.

It is widely known that short stories, just like any fiction, may succumb to genre standards, being a science-fiction (cyberpunk, space opera, dystopian/utopian etc.), a thriller (supernatural, political, historical etc.), a romance (contemporary, gothic, romantic, regency, historical, etc.), a fantasy (horror, comic, urban, traditional, etc.), a mystery (noir, paranormal) [The 17 Most Popular Genres In Fiction: el. ref.]. Besides, there are works of fiction written specifically to meet the demands of a certain group of people, like young adults or women. In the 21st century we have thousands of short story writers from various countries and backgrounds, who can provide us with unimaginable source of short stories for both linguistic and stylistic analysis. Besides, the popular short stories are very often adapted for radio, TV and film, getting even more fans all over the world.

The short story has come through a long process of development since people started to tell stories to each other millennia ago and going into the 20th century where it has become a more defined genre. The short story is understood as a brief fictional narrative, which dwells only on several characters.It may fall into various genres, aiming for different groups of people. The authors use numerous stylistic devices to portray the characters, their feelings and surroundings, which is why this type of narrative is valuable for linguistic and stylistic analysis.

**1.5.3. Narrative and its structure.**In the context of this paper, we should draw the attention to **narrative**, due to the fact that short stories by Elizabeth Strout are studied. For a deeper understanding of the topic and the genre we define what narrative is, main genres and structure.

If we want to define narrative, we may see that linguists agree on the fact that **narrative** is anything that tells or presents the *story* [Jahn Manfred Narratology: A guide to the theory of narrative N1.2.]. In other words, all narratives have a story and all stories are populated by characters [ibid]. The Post-Soviet schools of linguistics claim that **narrative** is a specific type of presentation that, in contrast to the descriptive or explanatory type, has a plot, and informs the addressee about the events [Evstigneeva2007: 95].

According to W. Labov, narrative as a subject matter contains complex products and genres of literary and oral traditions: novels, short stories, poetry and prose epic, chronicles, histories, films, sagas, interviews, myths, folk tales, comics, oral memoirs, graphic novels and other visual media [Labov, Waletzky1967: 12]. These forms of narrative may derive from the fundamental human power to pass on the experience from one person to another with the help of the narratives of personal experience [ibid].

Narrative has been the focus of linguistic research for decades. According toDr. Julio Gimenez [Gimenez 2010:199], we can trace back the beginnings of narrative analysis to Aristotle, who has made an outline of the structure of plots in narratives in his work *Poetics*. The more modern analyzes have been greatly influenced by Labov and Waletzky’s (1967)analytic framework, according to which clauses in a narrative consist of different functions. Their model consists of an abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution and coda.

The model can be used to analyze narrative according it its structure. If we look at this model in detail, we see that firstly, **abstract**, prepares the reader for the text and lets them know what kind of story they will be told. Secondly, **orientation** gives the reader the main information – participants, time and place of the events, and what happened before the onset of complications [Labov and Waletzky 1967: 32]. For example*,* the first short story “A Different Road” in “Olive Kitteridge” starts with the introduction to one of the main characters in the first sentence, the date of the event and its influence on the characters: *“An awful thing happened to the Kitteridges on a chilly night in June. At the time, Henry was sixty-eight, Olive sixty-nine, and while they were not an especially youthful couple, there was nothing about them that gave the appearance of being old, or ill. Still, after a year had gone by, people in this small New England coastal town of Crosby agreed: Both Kitteridges were changed by the event.”*[Strout 2008: 104].

In the **complication** stage, we may see a problem, which culminates in a crisis, the narrated events go wrong [Labov and Waletzky1967: 32]. For instance, after the dinner Olive feels bad and the couple goes to the hospital, where the unexpected events take place: “*There was a quick, rushing sound – the curtain flung back with the tinny whoosh of its rings against the rod. There was a person in a blue ski mask waving an arm at Olive, shouting, “Get down!” There was the weird confusion, for a second the schoolteacher in her saying, “Hey, hey, hey,” while he said, “Get down, lady”*[Strout 2008: 113].

According to Labov and Waletzky, the next stage of **evaluation** is what gives the text its significance, settles the point of narrative, occurs between complication and resolution and marks a break between them [Labov and Waletzky1967: 33]. For example, during the attack Henry and Olive start to argue with each other: *“This guy’s your husband?” Olive nodded. – “Well, he’s a fuckin’ nut.” – “He can’t help it,” Olive said. “You’d have to know his mother. His mother was full of pious crap.”– “That’s not true,” said Henry. “My mother was a good, decent woman.”*[Strout 2008: 117]. The reader may see the tension between the characters arise slowly when the nurse started praying and Henry sided with her: *“Blessed is the fruit of thy womb” that Olive said to her, “God, will you shut up with that crap?” And Henry said, “Olive, stop.” Siding with the nurse like that”*[Strout 2008: 120].

The next stage of the narrative is **resolution**, which tells the reader how the protagonist resolves the crisis[Labov and Waletzky1967: 39].In the short story the attack is finally coming to an end when the police come to rescue people:*“And they could hear the crackling of walkie-talkies out in the hall, the sound of the strong, unexcited speech of people in charge, and the boy started to cry.* […] *He held the small gun, still standing up.* […] *For the rest of Olive’s life she would be certain the boy had thought of turning the gun on himself, but the policemen then were everywhere, covered with dark vests and helmets”* [Strout 2008: 122].

The last stage, **coda**, often refers back to the theme of the abstract, makes a statement about the text. In written narratives coda creates a sense of finality, often going in circle to come back to the start if the narrative[Labov and Waletzky1967: 39]. For instance, characters come back to what happened to them and make a statement on how the event influenced them:*“Olive, we were scared that night.”*[…]*“We were both scared. In a situation most people in a whole lifetime are never in. We said things, and we’ll get over them in time.”* […] *Olive thought he had to turn away because he knew what he said wasn’t true. They would never get over that night. And it wasn’t because they’d been held hostage in a bathroom – which Andrea Bibber would think was the crisis. No, they would never get over that night because they had said things that altered how they saw each other.”* [Strout 2008: 124].

So, the six stages of narrative help us study the structure of the story we are interested in, look if it is correspondent to it, or, on the contrary, differs from the “standard”. The six stages include the abstract, which prepares the reader for the text; the orientation, which gives the main information on the participants, time and place; the complication, where the characters face a problem, which grows into a crisis; the evaluation gives the text its significance, marks a break between the complication and resolution; the resolution dwells on how the problem is solved; and the coda makes a statement about the text.

## **Markers of the idiostyle of an author**

Signals of theidiostyle in the context of this paper will give an insight into the peculiarities of the author’s idiostyle. In other words, when we study the constructions we may draw a conclusion on the unique way the author uses particular words, grammatical structures, or which topics are the most represented in the author’s work and what is special about them.

Speaking about the analysisof a thematic group, we may investigate a thematic group based on its meaning and dwell more on the types of constructions in the chosen group depending on their form and the number of components.In the context of this paper, we focus on the interpersonal relationships, those being, relating to, or involving relations between persons [MWD]. It should be noted that interpersonal relationships are thought to be a strong bonding between two or more people [What is Interpersonal Relationship? el. ref.]. An attraction between individuals brings them close to each other and eventually results in a strong interpersonal relationship. Forms of Interpersonal communicationinclude those of between individuals working together, man and a woman (love, marriage), immediate family members and relatives, child with his parents, friends, students with their teacher etc.

After the short stories have been read, we havecompileda finished list of constructionsthat are divided into thematic groups according to their meaning.

The meaning of a construction may be analyzed with the help of a dictionary [MWD], which gives a direct meaning of words in the construction. For this paper it is decided to break the thematic groups into constructions with positive and negative meaning. If we take a construction *feel a ping of danger*, the word *ping* means a sharp sound like that of a striking bullet and the word danger means exposure or liability to injury, pain, harm, or loss [MWD].Therefore, the meaning of this construction is negative [ibid].

As for the form, in each of the found constructions, we need to point to the key element of a construction, which helps us understand if it is interpersonal, which is the main focus of this paper. According to the key component of the chosen construction, we can further group it into several categories – *nominal, verbal, adjectival*. So, the key component is the one, which points to the *interpersonal aspect* of relationships, while the other components of the constructions extend or modify it, proving the healthiness of the relationships, or characterizing it in a way which corresponds to the thematic grouping. Those modifications and various characteristics of relationships may be interpreted as the markers of the idiostyle of the author, which are the main focus of our research. For example, the construction *be a wonderful* ***father*** is a nominal construction because the key component is a noun. Being a father suggests either the biological relation, or the parental role [MWD], therefore the noun points to the interpersonal relation. It is furthermodified by the adjective *wonderful*, which marks the healthiness of the relationship.

The markers of the author’s idiostyle can be reflected not only in the adjectives, but a variety of tools. For instance, in a construction *give his father a hug*, we see that this construction is interpersonal because we have a physical interaction between two people – a child and a parent. They both belong to one family, that is why this construction belongs to the family relations thematic group. Besides, giving a hug means *having an embrace with the arms especially as a sign of* ***affection*** [MWD]. In this case, affection is one of the previously mentioned keys to healthy family relationships and therefore we consider it to belong here. The construction is modified with the help of a noun *father*, which specifies the addressee of the action. This modification is understood as the marker of the author’s idiostyle because it provides the reader with additional information on the people involved in the relations.

Similarly, we have chosen and grouped the constructions according to these criteria. Another example is *brag about them endlessly* – *brag* means *talking boastfully* (**to** and **about** other people, in our case, which makes the relationships interpersonal), bragging about children connects the construction to the family relations, and the meaning *talk* ***boastfully*** suggests that the speaker *takes pride* [MWD] in their children, which is a sign of affection and acceptance – a key to the healthy family relationships. In case with the above mentioned construction, the adverb *boastfully* modifies the construction and provides us with the manner of an action. The verbal construction characterizes the action, while the adverb adds the manner of performing it, which is understood as a marker of the author’s idiostyle as provides additional information on the attitude of the parent toward the child.

If the immediate construction does not provide us with the proof that it is healthy or interpersonal, we should study the context in order to be able to group it, e.g. the construction *be a saint* points neither to the interpersonal, nor the family relations. However, the extended constructions *not know how you do it* and *go there every day*in the sentence *“I don’t know how you do it,” Molly says quietly. “Going there every day, Olive.* ***You’re a saint.”***[Strout 2008: 165] verify belonging both to the interpersonal and to family relations – the attention is paid both to Olive *being praised* by another person for her *taking care* of her husband, which is thought to be a marker of the author’s idiostyle as it emphasizes the support of the relative. Or similarly, if we read a construction *stop off by her mother’s*, the direct meaning may be understood as visit to mother’s house, but the extended pairing indicates that the character visits her grave. Situations like this are not very frequent, but should still be taken into consideration. We see that the extensions provide us with more information on the characters, describe them and broaden the understanding of their relationships with others.

The markers of the author’s idiostyle are understood as the modifications and extensions typical of E. Strout’s idiostyle. These may be seen in the modification of constructions with elements like adjectives, adverbs, nouns, pronouns or the extensions with the help of additional constructions. We will analyze all the constructions with respect to their form and meaning, identify which of the key elements dominate, how they are modified or extended and then draw a conclusion on the markes of the authors individual style.

# CONCLUSIONS ON PART I

Cognitive linguistics studies constructions as the units of the English language and understands them as storedpairings of meaning and form. Constructions may be analyzed from the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic point of view. The paradigmatic approach is used to analyze the constructions with respect to their qualities, while the syntagmatic approachfocuses on linear arrangement of the constructions in the sentence. Paradigmatically, constructions are divided into an item-based, which is a concrete utterance schema, with slots filled in by the speaker; lexicalized, being based on islands or reliability; and grammaticalized, which are very abstract generalizations. Syntagmatically, constructions are divided into immediate, being a combination of words with reliant units placed on sides; modified, broadening the immediate constructions with additional units, and extended, incorporating 2 or more immediate pairings.Thematically, constructions may be grouped according to their meaning based on the background knowledge and the fact that the constructions may denote things closely connected in reality.

Constructions denoting interpersonal relations have beenanalyzed to uncover the markers of E. Strout’sidiostyle, that is understood as a collection of unique expressive means of an author. To study the markers of the idiostyle, the key element, which points to the interpersonal relations should be found. The modifications and extensions and what they denote should be singled out and studied, drawing the conclusion on their role in describing the relationship or people involved and if they are the markers of the author’s idiostyle.

Short story is characterized by brevity, dwells only on several characters and may succumb to several genre standards at the same time, aiming for a certain group of people. This type of text is characterized by a large number of stylistic devices valuable for stylistic and linguistic analysis.

# PART II. CONSTRUCTIONS AS MARKERS OF E. STROUT’S IDIOSTYLE

This research dwells on **interpersonal relations**, which means that the chosen construction must characterize actions, thoughts towards other people, influence on them, reaction to or perception of people’s actions, words or appearance. The short stories chosen for the analysis contain numerous thematic groups with hundreds of constructions. It should be noted that constructions denoting interpersonal relations are not consistent throughout the text as the stories cover different events. For instance, stories like “A Little Burst” and “The Piano Player” are focused on the main character’s inner problems, fear, mental issues that’s why interpersonal relations are seen here as a background or reason for problems. On the contrary, stories like “Pharmacy” and “Incoming tide” describe a variety of characters and events in their lives, which in its turn serve as a valuable source of constructions.

**The material** – constructions – was collected through (1) reading and understanding the whole content of the short story, (2) identifying the data related to the topic and it was followed by note taking. The collected material was analyzed due to its meaning and then, according to it, it was classified as belonging to a certain thematic group. The classification is based on the frequency of occurrence of constructions and their meaning. Therefore, all the constructions relevant to the topic of interpersonal relations have been singled out and classified.

After studying 13 stories, the found thematic groups of constructions include marital relations, romantic relations, family relations, friendship constructions. The thematic groups directly correlate with the main plot of the stories. The short stories themselves mostly cover the situations in lives of interconnected characters, drawing a great deal of attention to the family and acquaintances of the main character – Olive Kitteridge. It should be reminded that having at least 10 or more constructions in one thematic group is crucial for the analysis and drawing conclusions on each of the represented issues.

After the constructions have been singled out and classified into thematic groups, we take a closer look and analyze them to determine the markers of the author’s idiostyle. This is done when we define the meaning of the constructions and the way the author describes a certain type of interactions between people. We may see it in the types of units the author uses to enhance the meaning of words. Besides, the types of constructions are also to be considered because we can also trace the unique features of the author’s style through it.

## **2.1. Family relations constructions**

The biggest thematic group of constructions represented in the short stories is the family relations constructions – 58 in total. It should not be surprising, as the plot is focused on the situation from the lives of several families – the Kitteridges, the Thibodeau/ McCarthy family, the Houltons, the Grangers, the Larkins, the Harwoods, etc. as well as a couple of separate characters, who all are connected to Olive or the city of Crosby, Maine, where the majority of events take place.

The family relations are usually associated with people who are close biologically. Merriam-Webster dictionary gives us several definitions of a family: the basic *unit in society* traditionally consisting of *two parents* rearing their *children* [M-W], a *group* of individuals living *under one roof* and usually *under one head* – a household [ibid], group of persons of *common ancestry* [ibid]. Therefore, we may say that family relations are the ones, which encompass relations in a group of people, who have common ancestry and live in one household.

The short stories give an insight into healthy family relations (18 constructions), family issues (16), children constructions (12), relations with in-laws (12). Therefore, we can divide them into subgroups and study them in more detail.

**2.1.1. Healthy family relations constructions.**While compiling the biggest thematic subgroup healthy family relations(18 constructions), we took into consideration their typical characteristics. According to the article “Healthy families” [el.ref.], the main keys to healthy family relationships are the following: communication, togetherness, sharing activities, affection, support, acceptance, commitment and resilience. Using this description, we have found the constructions and studied them in detail. Just as the name of this subgroup suggests, the meaning of these constructions is positive, as the word *healthy* itself is: beneficial to one’s physical, mental, or emotional state [MWD]. After we have grouped the constructions according to their meaning, we identify the key components of a construction.

There are 9 **verbal constructions** in this thematic group, which denote physical contact (*babies* ***crawl*** *all over the house/mother*), taking care (***be wheeled*** *by Olive,* ***get*** *one’s parents food,* ***give*** *that girlhalf my life,* ***depend on*** *me*), establishing/improving a relationship (***acquire*** *a second wife and two children, have them* ***bonding***), being proud of the family members (***brag*** *about them endlessly*). The verbs in the constructions all point to the action performed towards a family member, which in itself may be understood as an interpersonal relationship.

The author modified **verbal constructions** by other components like numerals, nouns, adjectives, adverbs or extended with the help of the other constructions, which may help us identify the nature of the relationship, whether they are *healthy* or not. The construction *acquire a wife and children* is modified with the help of additional units – two**numerals***second* and *two* togive more information about the number of son’s relationships and children he is responsible for. The pairing *stop off by his mother’s* (grave)is modified with the noun *mother’s* in the possessive case, which points to the person being visited.

The markers of Strout’s idiostyle are verbal constructions, modified with 6 nouns to point to the person performing or undergoing an action like the nouns *girl* and *parents* in *give that* ***girl*** *half my life* and *get her* ***parents*** *food etc*.The construction *have somebody bonding* is extended with the help of an **adjective** which gives an additional evaluation to the close relationship: *“He’s reading Theodore a story. It’s* ***nice to have them bonding”*** [Strout 2008: 210].Constructions can be extended by adverbs like in the pairing*brag about them(children)*, where the**adverb***endlessly* emphasizes the duration of the action and indicates parental affection and pride in their children, which is a sign of a healthy family relationship. The adverb *all over* is used in the constructions to point to the extent of affection or aggressiveness of the action in the construction *babies crawl* ***all over*** *house and* ***all over*** *mother*. The construction ***depend*** *on me* means *place reliance or trust* [MWD] points to support – one of the characteristics of the healthy family relations.The pairing is extended with *there are people who* to underscore the existence of multiple individuals sharing family connection: *“There are people who depend on me”* [Strout 2008: 161].

Verbal construction may be extended with other constructions to draw the attention to the type of relationship parents and children have. For instance, *get one’s parents food* means the care for the elder parents, which may be seen in the abstract *“It was assumed the daughter from Boston must have some hand in* ***getting her parents food,*** *because once a month or so there would be a car parked in the driveway with a Massachusetts license plate*[…]*”* [Strout 2008: 141]*.*The constructions *daughter from Boston* and *Massachusetts license plate*, extending the immediate pairing, emphasize that the daughter comes from another state to take care of her parents.

It’s typical of E. Strout to use the vast majority of the verbal constructions in the**active voice**, *e.g.* ***stop*** *off by her mother’s,* ***give*** *that girl half my life,* ***brag*** *about them (children) endlessly*. This may mean that the constructions mainly describe family members actively performing positive actions, rather than undergoing ones. The**passive voice** is used in the construction *be wheeled by Olive*, which points to helplessness of a family member, and the help of the other: “*Propped up in his wheelchair, blind, always smiling, Henry* ***waswheeled by Olive*** *to the recreation room, over by the piano”* [Strout 2008: 146]. Here *propped up (supported), wheelchair* and *blind* suggest that a family member needs help, and in this case the wife is taking care of her husband, which emphasizes affection.

There are 7 **nominal** constructions, which are used to characterize a family member (*be a wonderful* ***father****, be a* ***saint,*** *be* ***Mommy’s*** *girl****)****,* family traditions (*be a family* ***custom***)*,* feeling of belongingness (*be a* ***part*** *of her son’s life*)*,* number of family members (*have a* ***shoe*** *full of* ***children***) physical contact(*give one’s father a* ***hug***). It may be seen that half of all the constructions (9) is modified with the help of **personal pronouns in the objective case** like *brag about* ***them*** *endlessly,have* ***them*** *bonding, depend on* ***me****,* which are used in the construction to point to the people who **undergo an action**. The pronoun *them* here is used to point to children (*brag about them*), parent and child (*have them bonding*). It’s peculiar for E. Strout’s idiostyle to point to the belongingness to a family, **responsibility** for a family member with the help of **possessive pronouns,***e.g. stopoff by her mother’s, be part of her son’s life, get* ***her*** *parents food,* referring to the daughter and mother,and **possessive pronouns**,implying mother and son, *e.g.give that girl half my life, your father would be proud, give your old father a hug*.

There have been found two **immediate nominal constructions**, which are used to provide a characteristic of a family member. For instance, in the construction *be a* ***saint***we turn to the extended construction to look for the meaning of the construction: *“I don’t know how you do it,” Molly says quietly. “Going there every day, Olive. You’re a saint”* [Strout 2008: 165].In the cited example, the noun characterizes the wife who takes care of her ill husband in a good way, saying she is *eminent for piety or virtue* [MWD]. In case with the construction *be Mommy’s girl*, the key component *Mommy’s* in the construction is used in the **possessive case**, which may be interpreted as the daughter’s and mother’s bonding, the feeling of connection, which emphasizes the healthy relationship.

Similar to the verbal constructions, the markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle are modifications of nominal constructions with the help of adjectives, nouns, constructions. The author modifies the nominal construction with the **adjective***wonderful* to evaluate the parenting skills of a father *e.g. be a* ***wonderful*** *father*, which may be interpreted as an assessment of father’s parenting skill as being unusually good [MWD]. In a similar way 2 other constructions are modified with nouns *old* and *full* to characterize the person receiving an action and the quantity of relatives. Constructions were modified by 3 nouns to accentuate being a part of the group or family like in*be a* ***family*** *custom to have pancakes*, wherethe nominal construction *be a custom* – *a long-established practice considered as unwritten law* [M-W] – is modified with the noun *family* to specify it. There is a modification with the help of a proper noun in the construction *be wheeled by* ***Olive***, which could be used by the author to underscore the family member who performs an action. The same nominal construction *be a family custom* is further extended with the help of other **construction***to have pancakes* to draw the reader’s attention to the type of activity, which is a family custom, providing us with an insight into the family relations.

The author also uses two **adjectival constructions** which both point to the pride in the children with the help of the adjective *proud* as the key element of the construction, e.g. *your father would be* ***proud***, *kids****to be proud of****.* The healthiness of the family relations may be understood from the extended constructions: *“We were just saying that honestly, Marlene, you and Ed turned out the three best* ***kids*** *in town.” And it’s true they are something* ***to be proud of****: Eddie Junior in the coast guard, smart the way his father was*[…]*, Lee Ann studying to be a nurse, Cheryl about to graduate from high school; you never heard about any trouble they were in”* [Strout 2008: 169]*.* In fact, in the same sentence after the character’s direct speech, the **narrator** is the one to explain why these parents are proud of their kids – their intelligence (*smart the way his father was*), education (*studying to be a nurse, about to graduate*) or being obedient (*never heard any trouble they were in*). In this case the constructions are provided as the valid reasons for being proud of children. Both constructions have been modified with 2 nouns, which point to who feels the emotion with the noun *father*: *your* ***father*** *would be proud*, or who is the reason for them with the noun *kids:****kids*** *to be proud of.*

To conclude, the markers of the author’s idiostyle are reflected in the usage of mainly **verbal** constructions (half of the group) and in the **active voice** used to characterize the actions like physical contact, establishing the relationship, expressing the pride in family members. The markers also include the modifications draw the attention to the characters undergoing the actions, their feelings and the manner of the actions performed, to evaluate the bond between people. Seven **nominal** constructions are used to describe a family member, traditions, or name the physical contact. Being modified they assess people’s parenting skills and family traditions. Two **adjectival** constructions are utilised to express the pride of parents in their children and modified with 2 nouns to point to the people having feelings. The most frequent modification occurring is with nouns and pronouns to name the participants of the events. Though the healthy family relations are not quite typical of some families in the stories, in some cases E. Strout still gives us the characters’ perception of the mentioned events, or describes how they find at least some positivity in their family. The markers help the reader to identify and accentuate the “healthiness” of the relationships by drawing attention to the people involved, manner of the actions and the actions themselves.

**2.1.2. Family issues constructions.**Just like healthy family relations, where we see communication, support, and a feeling of togetherness, family issuesare also a part of family life. Conflicts are claimed to be a sometimes unavoidable part of family life [Family problems el. ref.]. They occur due to several reasons being different personalities clashing, jealousy, disagreements, separation of parents, a parent having mental health problems, illness, stress or money problems, etc. [ibid]. We may also say, that contrary to the healthy family relations, family issues reflectthe lack of communication, togetherness, affection, support, acceptance, etc. that may cause arguments. It is not surprising, because even though every family is supposed to be the source of happiness, we know that it is impossible to get along all the time. The family issues are covered in the short stories by Elizabeth Strout and we have divided them into those, which dwell on the issues between parents and children, and marital issues, which dwell on the relations between the husband and the wife. It is not surprising that this group contains the negative aspectsof family life, relatives’ influence on each other and consequences of the issues. For instance, the construction *witness breakdowns of a mother*contains a word like *breakdown*, meaning a complete loss of physical, mental, or emotional vitality: a physical, mental, or nervous collapse and the word *witness*, meaning personal or direct cognizance of something [MWD]. This implies a child seeing a parent’s breakdown, which could result in subsequent outcomes in the future. Similarly, 16 family issues constructions have been found and grouped together. After grouping, the key components for further grouping, which point to the relationships being interpersonal, have been identified.

The vast majority of the found constructions – 14 are **verbal -** denotingphysical interaction (***grapple*** *with the baby*), influence on each other (***drive*** *her nuts,* ***bear down*** *too hard on Christopher,* ***witness*** *nervous breakdowns of a mother,* ***take over*** *that boy’s life,* ***blame*** *the mother for everything*), jeopardy towards others (***shoot*** *their daughter’s boyfriends,* ***jeopardize*** *such a thing (baby by smoking during pregnancy)*, avoiding responsibility (***run off****,* ***get shipped off***), punishment (*have her mouth* ***washed*** *with soap*), psychological struggles because of relatives (***not belong*** *to the world of family and love, crazy* ***breeds*** *crazy*) and death of a child (*children* ***dying*** *left and right*). When we take a closer look at the constructions, we may see that a lot of them are extended by various components, which mark the author’s idiostyle.

E. Strout modifies verbal constructions with the help of adjectives, nouns and pronouns. Three constructions are transformed with the help of 3**adjectives**,which characterize the people and actions performed towards a family member,*e.g. crazy breeds* ***crazy****, bear down too* ***hard*** *on Christopher, witness* ***nervous*** *breakdowns of a mother*. In the construction *witness the nervous breakdowns of a mother*the immediate pairing*witness breakdowns* is modified with the help of an adjective *nervous*, specifying a type of a breakdown. In *crazy breeds* ***crazy***the immediate construction is modified with the adjective *crazy* indicating that a supposedly *not mentally sound person* [MWD] is having a child who inherits the mental condition.

The markers of the idiostyle is modification of verbal constructions with 8**nouns**pointing to the characteristic of the people’s wishes, or the participants and instruments of the action,e.g. *not belong to the world of* ***family*** *and* ***love****,* ***children*** *dying left and right, have her mouth washed with* ***soap****, blame the mother for* ***everything****.* In the construction *blame the mother for* ***everything*** the modifying noun *everything* specifies what to blame her for. It is not only the author’s choice of the “protagonist”. It has been proven that numerous psychologists of the 20th century claimed that mothers caused autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia in their children, while partially people blame mothers for this because usually they are the ones doing the most of labour associated with kids [When things go wrong why do mothers get the blameel.ref.]. The author uses the construction to draw the reader’s attention to the issues in parenting, marking the particular family member – ***mother*** – responsible for everything.E. Strout modified the constructions with 5 **pronouns**, pointing to the people undergoing an action *e.g. drive* ***her*** *nuts, shoot* ***their*** *daughter’s boyfriends*.So, the adjectives are used to evaluate people and their actions, nouns used for modifications give a specification for the immediate constructions, point to the indirect or the direct object of an action.

Three of the verbal constructions are extended with the help of other constructions *e.g. children dying* ***left and right***, where the constructions *left and right* means *in a very quick and uncontrolled way* [MWD], which may point to the family issue of a high child death rate. With the help of extended constructions, the author also accentuates pairings describing irresponsible parents, e.g. *run offthe night one’s baby is born,* which is extended with the noun *the night,* pointing to the time of an action and the construction *their baby is born,* which marks the reason – escaping the responsibility. In case with *get shipped off,* in the sentence it is extended with the construction *to live with relatives*, to specify *where* parents prefer to send their kids – away from the parents. With the before mentioned extended constructions, the author draws attention to the lack of the responsibility in parents.

In a similar way, one of the markers of the author’s idiostyle may be singled out from the usage of constructions, the meaning of which might be difficult to understand without turning to the extended constructions. In other words, they are used in the indirect meaning and we need further details to get the correct one. For instance, there is one nominal construction *leave a* ***note***, which without the context does not connect with the family issues, but when we turn to the extended constructions *shot himself* and *no-note business* the analyzed pairing is used in the context of suicide: *“My father? Shot himself.* […] *Oh, Mother had such a hard time with that no-note business. She thought the least he could’ve done was* ***leave a note****, the way he did if he’d walked to the grocery store”* [Strout 2008: 39]. It should be mentioned that *a note* is considered interpersonal because it *a short informal letter* [MWD] aimed at another person – his wife in this case. Similarly, without the extended constructions, the verbal construction *jeopardize such a thing* does not point us anywhere with its direct meaning because we do not know the direct object, expressed by the noun *thing*. Though, when we turn to the extended constructions *have one more cigarette, Christopher’s baby in there,* and *develop respiratory system* we see the full picture: *“If you don’t mind, Mom, I’m just going to have one more cigarette.” – Olive did mind. This was Christopher’s baby in there, trying to develop its own respiratory system right about now, and what kind of woman would* ***jeopardize such a thing****?”* [Strout 2008: 210]*.* The extended constructionsdraw the reader’s attention to the fact that the woman who is pregnant jeopardizes the embryo by smoking. In such a way the author guides the reader to the correct meaning of the constructions, and gives the audience more reasons to sympathize with the character, who suffers from the jeopardy.

To sum it up, the markers of the author’s idiostyle are verbal constructions of the family issues thematic group pointing to the physical interactions like punishment or putting family members in danger, influencing them, avoiding responsibility, struggles glue to the relatives.More than a half of theverbal constructions are modified with the help of either nounsorpronouns to name the person performing an action or undergoing negative emotions due to the relatives. Three adjectives modifying the verbal constructions emphasize the negative emotions caused by relatives. The extended constructions explain the circumstances of an action and provide us with the details to get the full picture of what happened. These pairings and their modifiers serve as the markers of the author’s idiostyle because they show Strout’s unique way of portraying family issues, problematic behaviour or actions of family members. Therefore, the author draws attention to the actions more, evaluating them and broadening their meaning, while directly naming the performer and the addressee of the action described.

**2.1.3. Child-parent interaction constructions.** Children and their feelings and actions are also well-described in the short stories and it is not surprizing. Children are a big part of the family, and the author takes time to describe various families – both with healthy and unhealthy relationships – and the way children are brought up there. Though some stories don’t often mention children, e.g. Incoming Tide, The Piano Player, A Different Road, etc., we still have a decent amount of children-constructions to pay a close attention to. They mainly point to the **bonding** between child and parent, or the **actions** between them, as well as heritage, support, influence, etc.

There are 12 constructions, all of which are focused on parent-child interactions and influences in general. If we speak on the child-parent relations which are widely covered in the short stories, we may see that **mother-son relations** are the ones which prevail. The author’s preferable components display a variety of **actions** and **states** which add to the understanding of some children’s struggles, like Olive Kitteridge’s son, for instance. We see several constructions used about Christopher in particular *e.g. not allow his parents to even visit him, break one’s mother’s heart*,etc. It is generally understood that *parent* is the person who brings up and cares for another [MWD], but this is not the case in some of the given short stories, where, intentionally or unintentionally, children are victims of bad parenting.

The characteristic of E. Strout’s idiostyle is the usage of ten**verbal** constructions, pointing to the child-parent interactions (***not allow*** *his parents to even visit him,* ***make*** *mom nuts,* ***break*** *his mother’s heart*), heritage (***take over*** *the store,* ***get*** *something* ***from*** *his mother*) or emotions towards each other (*glad to* ***have*** *him****, miss*** *one’s mother,* ***create*** *sadness for one’s parents*), parent’s influence on children (***marry*** *one’s mother,* ***be ruled*** *by my fear of you*)*.* The verbal constructions of this thematic group are modified by E. Strout with additional elements or extended with other constructions, which enhances the meaning and gives more insight into the child-parent relationship.

Nearly half of the verbal constructions (7) are modified with the help of nominal parts – 6**nouns**and 7**pronouns**:*take over the* ***store****, get that from his****mother****, break your****mother’s*** *heart, miss his****mother****, be ruled by my fear ofyou*(mother)*, marry his****mother,*** *created a different level of* ***sadness*** *for her parents*. Two of the constructions point to the idea of **heritage**. As for the construction *take over the store*, we may see one of the positive child-parent interactions – inheritance of the property, as the transitive verb *take over* means *to assume control or possession of or responsibility for something* [MWD]. In connection to it, we have *get that from his* ***mother****,* we also see the meaning heritage in the construction *get something from somebody*. Though, in this case the child inherits a trait of character from his parent: *“****He got that from his mother****. His mother was impossible. Just ignore him”* [Strout 2008: 117]. These two heritage constructions give the reader two types of heritage children can get from their parents.

**The nouns**, with which the author transforms constructions, provide us with the main parent figure in the relationships described, so verbal constructions may include the recipient of an action, 5 constructions directly naming *mother*, or using pronouns *you* and *him*, which are used to refer to mother or son: *glad to have* ***him*** *(son), be ruled by my fear of* ***you*** *(mother).* We may also see other recipients like *parents*: *create a different level of sadness for her* ***parents***, *not allow his* ***parents*** *to even visit him.* The modification with nouns and pronouns pointsout the addresser or the addressee of an action, as well as shows the relations between the characters, which is thought to be a marker of the author’s idiostyle.

The meaning of constructions may sometimes be understood only from the extended pairing. In the construction *married his mother*both components usually give good associations with family and being loved: *marry*– to join in marriage according to law or custom [MWD] and *mother*– a female parent [ibid]. Marrying your mother is not legal or socially accepted, so the meaning of the construction is to be understood from the extended context. The author gives a short description of Denise and *compares* her to her mother-in-law with the construction *marry his mother* and judging both of them: “*The girl* (daughter-in-law) *is utterly helpless. Why, she can’t drive a car, and she’s never written a check […] I’m simply telling you he* ***married his mother****. Men do.”* [Strout 2008: 20]. It should be mentioned that marrying one’s mother is a known phenomenon among psychologists. For instance, a body of psychological research suggests that our earliest relationships, especially with our mother, not only can influence how we are able to connect to others as adults – in romantic and other contexts – but also create internalized scripts or working models of how relationships work [Why Your Partner May Be Like Your Parent el.ref.]. This may help us have a deeper understanding of the family issues in the short stories, as well as the constructions extending immediate pairings. The construction ***messed-up*** *childhood* points us to the *problematic, incorrect* [MWD] upbringing of the child and the meaning of the construction may be fully understood from extended constructions, the extended pairing where *messed-up childhood* is specified with *do something as a result of*: “*He had gone to medical school thinking he’d become a paediatrician, as his mother had been, but he had been drawn to psychiatry, in spite of his recognition that those who became psychiatrists* ***did so as a result of their own messed-up childhoods*** *[…]”* [Strout 2008: 36]. With the help of this extended construction the author points the reader to the long-term consequences of the bad parenting, as well as the fact that people who had messed-up childhoods became psychiatrists because of it. The extended constructions used by the author may serve as the markers of the author’s idiostyle, as it gives a broader understanding of the relations between people, intensifies the meaning of the bad parenting

It should be noted that the author uses constructions to give assessment to the relationships between the child and the parent, provide the characteristic of their actions and emotions children feel towards their parents or vice versa. For instance, the construction may show the emotions parents can feel because of her child (*make mom* ***nuts***, ***break*** *his mother’s* ***heart****,* ***glad*** *to have him (son),* ***createsadness*** *for one’s parents*) or child’s emotions because of their parents (***miss*** *one’s mother, be ruled by my* ***fear*** *of you*). The assessment may be give through the choice of the immediate construction, its meaning in general, or its key components. The **verbal** constructions were modified with the help of an adjective to denote affection (*be* ***glad*** *to have somebody*) and we can see 2**adjectival** constructions which also give an evaluation of people and enhance negativity/positivity of the meaning. For instance, ***messed-up*** *childhood* – *incorrect, the one where mistakes were made* [MWD], ***free*** *to do what they like - enjoying personal freedom* [MWD], lack of restriction from parents, etc. The author’s usage of adjectival, nominal and verbal constructions, modified with adjectivescarrying strong emotional meaning (*free, nuts, messed-up*) may be understood as the author’s idiostyle, as it gives her assessment of the relationship between the child and the parent.

Just like with the family issues, the constructions with verbs are mainly used in the **active voice**, which draws the reader’s attention to the fact that children interact with parents (*take over the store*), strengthen (*be glad to have somebody*) or weaken (*break one’s mother’s heart*) family bonding. It may be understood as the marker of the author’s idiostyle, as it says to us the family members are the one who are in control of the actions and perform them on purpose. Besides, this thematic group includes one construction in the **passive voice** –*be ruled by my* ***fear*** *of you*, which describes the state of fear the son cannot control. This can lead to the conclusion that the author uses active voice for the constructions to denote the actions characters are in control of, while the passive ones mean the character cannot omit the action – influence of the parent.

Therefore, the markers of the author’s idiostyle are reflected in the utilization of 10 verbal and 2 adjectival constructions which give the reader a positive (sign of a heritage, bonding) or negative (being controlling, emotionally hard for either of the relatives) characteristic of the child-parent relationship. The pairings are modified with the help of nouns to denote the recipient of an action or adjectives to give an assessment of the actions or character’s emotions. The before mentioned markers emphasize positivity or negativity of interaction between the child and the parent.

**2.1.4. In-law constructions.**As is known, in-law is a relative by marriage [MWD] which in the stories is mainly represented by Olive Kitteridge’s daughters-in-law. The author focuses a lot on mothers not accepting their son’s wives and several examples of it from the stories. There were 12 in-law constructionsfound in the stories. The in-laws in the stories are mainly treated and thought of badly, *e.g. want to* ***slap*** *her* (daughter in law),***make fun*** *of her* (dead) ***mother-in-law****, that* ***goddamn know-it-all*** *daughter-in-law,* ***never care*** *for their son-in-law*,etc., with 11 constructions out of 12 carrying **negative meaning**.

The relevant feature of the author’s idiostyle is the vast majority (10) of the in-law constructions are **verbal** pointing to several actions: mockery (***make fun*** *of her mother-in-law*), disapproval (***not like*** *her son’s new wife,* ***marry*** *a girl one’s father didn’t like,* ***be appalled*** *by the bossiness of their new daughter-in-law, have a son* ***stolen*** *away*) and mistreatment (*never* ***care*** *for somebody, want to* ***slap*** *her, I wish she’d* ***drop*** *dead*), kindness (***treat*** *her kindly,* ***get along*** *fine*). The constructions point either to the **action toward an in-law**, *e.g.make fun of her mother-in-law* or a desire to do it, *e.g. want to slap her*. A lot of the constructions indeed point to disrespect and abuse of the above mentioned relatives.

The verbal constructions are modified with the help of adjectives, adverbs, nouns and extended with the help of other constructions. The 3**adjectives**used by E. Stroutimply congenial relationship between the in-laws, e.g. *get along* ***fine****,* in which the adjective *fine* is used to assess the type of relationship, in this case [MWD].

The transformation with the help of an**adverb**accentuates the way relatives regard each other*e.g.treated her* ***kindly****.* The extended construction, indicates that the character has established warm relationships with her father-in-law: “*He was not Julie’s father – who had run off with another woman when Julie was a kid – but* ***he treated her kindly****, as he treated everyone”* [Strout 2008: 182].

Moreover, verbal constructions are modified with the help of 6**nouns** which name the person who undergoes an action, e.g. *make fun of her* ***mother-in-law****, be appalled by the bossiness of their new* ***daughter-in-law****.* Both constructions give an insight into the unpleasant relationships between the in-laws and what they do to whom.

The extension of verbal constructions emphasises on the relationships between the characters *e.g. I wish she’s drop dead*, where the immediate construction *drop dead* is extended with *I wish* to reflect the scorn of the mother-in-law to her daughter-in-law: *“The couple hadn’t been married four months when Christopher called from work one day. “Now, listen,” he said. “Suzanne and I are moving to California.” […] “****I wish she’d drop dead,****” Olive said. “Just* ***drop dead*** *today”* [Strout 2008: 143]*.* In *marry a girl his father didn’t like* the immediate construction *marry a girl* is extended with the construction *his father didn’t like:“The oldest brother, Denise said, straightening a bottle of shampoo, had been her father’s favourite until he’d* ***married a girl her father didn’t like****”.* The construction his father didn’t like extends the construction in a way that the reader sees the son married a girl in spite of the father’s disapproval, which adds a negative meaning to the positive immediate construction

The markers of idiostyle are reflected in the usage of constructions in the **passive voice** to indicating the **lack of control** of an action: *have a son* ***stolen away*** is modified with the help of participle II of the construction *steal away*, which emphasizes on the fact that the mother supposes her son is “kidnapped” by his wife. This draws the reader’s attention to mother’s perception of the in-law as someone who took away her child after years spent at preparing him to live nearby: *“But a woman did not expect to raise a son, help him build a lovely house nearby, get started in a steady podiatry business, then have him marry and move across the country and never move home again, even when he found himself deserted by a beast of a wife. No woman, no mother, expected that.* ***To have a son stolen away****”* [Strout 2008: 168]. The participle II is the marker of the author’s idiostyle, which points to the actions being uncontrolled.

The author also used 2 **nominal constructions**. For example, *that goddamn know-it-all* ***daughter-in-lawof mine*** modified with the help of 2 adjectives, which broaden the negative perception of an in-law. We may see it in the informal offensive *goddamn*, meaning *cursed by god* [MWD] and *know-it-all* which means that daughter-in-law *claims to know everything.* In this case, the modification with the adjectives may serve as the marker of the author’s idiostyle because that is the author’s way of depicting unhealthy in-law relations, which, in the context of the stories, are mainly described to be such.

As for the secondary components of the constructions, we see that 7 constructions include**possessive pronouns,** *e.g. make fun of her mother-in-law, never care a great deal for their son-in-law, not like her son’s new wife, marry a girl his father didn’t like, be etc.*, which point to belongingness to a family, being relatives, even though in this thematic group the type of relation is negative. The adjectives point to the mother-in-law, parents-in-law, daughter-in-law or a son. The object pronoun *treather kindly*, meaning daughter-in-law,is used to point to the addressee of an action. These minor components demonstrate who belongs where and who undergoes the actions.

Therefore, the markers of the idiostyle are seen in the fact that the author primarily uses verbal constructions to describe in-law relationships, which have been modified with the help of adjectives to call names on daughters-in-law, nouns to give us their traits of character or the addressees of the actions and pronouns to name the performers of the actions. The modifications reflect the negative attitude of one character towards the in-law, which helps to support the thought that their relationships are unhealthy. The constructions are extended with the help of additional pairings to provide the reasons for hate or irritation with the relatives. In-law constructions have negative meaning and point to abuse, discontent, scorn (mainly towards daughters-in-law) with only 2 constructions out of 10 indicating positive effect on the in-law. The markers of the author’s idiostyle in the in-law constructions make the reader understand that in-law relationships depicted in the short stories are not quite healthy.

## **2.2. Marital relations constructions**

The topic of marital relations is the second most represented in the short stories. Nearly every story shares the good and bad sides of a marriage. While reading, we can encounter a number of married couples at different stages of their family life – from newly-weds to the couples who have been together for years. Marital relations are usually created to live in love and happiness, and it started that way for a lot of characters. Though, the reader may see countless examples of marital arguments and issues. It should be noted, that even though the marital relations are also a part of family relations, we consider them to be separate because marital relations constructions concern only two people – the husband and the wife (the stories cover only the opposite sex marriages) and their interactions specifically in these roles. 44 constructions describing both good and bad aspects of the marital life have been singled out to study the markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle.

**2.2.1. Marital issues constructions****.**Though it is not quite pleasant to start from the negative aspects of the marital life, it should be known that the marital issues are much more represented in the short stories by Elizabeth Strout. It is not surprizing, as all couples have ups and downs of their relationships and it is normal. Besides the arguments which may occur in everyday life, there are more serious problems which make a big impact on the family and the relationship between the partners. The reasons for **family issues** may include *infidelity, sexual differences, values, life stages, traumatic situations, stress, boredom, jealousy, trying to change each other, communication problems and various others* [20 most common marriage problems: el.ref.]. Families in the short stories by E. Strout also face these issues, some of which are resolves, while the other leave a scar on the partner’s heart forever.

We have singled out 34 marital issues constructions in the stories which represent actions,which worsen relationships, and feelings describing the emotional state of people and their perception of the issues in their couple.

**2.2.1.1. Actions constructions.**When we speak about the actions concerning family issues, we mean the things partners do to start having family problems and because of them. This thematic group was not as easy to compile because it covers a variety of actions – affair, fight, parting, etc. We have singled out 20 action constructions, which are used by the author to cover the topic of marital issues.

Fifteen of the constructions which have been singled out are **verbal**, which is not surprizing, as the thematic group consists of **actions** which denote having arguments (***fight*** *his wife, throw dishes,* ***bite*** *her (wife*), be***uprooted*** *by his pushy wife*), the results of an argument (***leave*** *their bed,* ***sleep*** *on a couch,* ***alter*** *how people see each other*), upsetting one another (***crack*** *his heart in two, wife* ***took off*** *(lickety-split*), infidelity (*ask you to* ***leave*** *with me,* ***carry on*** *a brief affair,* ***spend the night*** *with someone her (mistress)*), disappointment in marriage (*ever once* ***apologized****,* ***deserted*** *by a beast of a wife*) and staying in an unhealthy marriage (*stay married*).

Three**immediate verbalconstructions** like *throw dishes, sleep on a couch* and *stay married,*have been used, which keep their form in all the contexts. More than that, we see 2 of them used in one sentence: *“But people ended up knowing things. When you were a school nurse, or a pink-haired librarian, you ended up knowing who married alcoholics, whose kids had attention deficit disorder (that’s what it was), who* ***threw dishes****, who* ***slept on the couch****”* [Strout 2008: 130] and it is because the school nurse is the one who always knows the city gossip and typical marital issues among the main characters of the stories. It is understood that *throwing dishes* may be implied both in the direct – throwing a tantrum with throwing objects, and the indirect meaning – having an argument. While we speak about this sentence with verbal constructions, we may also analyze 2 other **nominal immediate constructions** from the same sentence, which are *marry a* ***beast*** and *marry an* ***alcoholic***, used to negatively characterize the spouse. The noun *beast* means *a contemptible person*[MWD], either the husband or the wife, but in the short stories it’s the wife who is always the *beast*: *“You will* ***marry a beast*** *and love h*er” […] “*You will* ***marry a beast*** *and she will leave you*” [Strout 2008: 160-161]. *Stay married* is a **verbal immediate construction** which at first glance has a positive meaning, as stay is to *stand firm* [MWD], while the extended pairings *he divorced* and *marry in the church again* indicate the absence of choice as the reason for the saved relationship:*“That she told Tony he must* ***stay married****, because if* ***he divorced****, he would never be able* ***to marry in the church again****”* [Strout 2008: 25]. *Sleep on the couch* is an **immediate verbal construction** pointing to the consequence of an argument between the couple, where they decide to keep the distance. Similarly, the construction *leave their bed* is connected to the lack of physical contact between the husband and the wife. The marker of the author’s idiostyle is to present the actions as uncontrollable and underscore consequences of the arguments.

As for the modifications done by the writer, verbal constructions may be transformed with the help of 2 **numerals**, *crack his heart in* ***two*** to specify the immediate constructionwith**adjectives** *– be uprooted by his* ***pushy new*** *wife –* to specify when the couple married and the wife’s trait of character***.*** The author also modified the pairings with 8 **pronouns** to point to the person undergoing an action *e.g. crack* ***his*** *heart into two, bite* ***her***, accentuate being a couple *e.g. leave* ***their*** *bed*.There are also verbal constructions, extended with another **construction**, for instance the construction *not believe*, which shows the husband’s disbelief and disappointment in the lack of apologies from the wife,*e.g*. *“In all the years we’ve been married, all the years, I don’t believe* ***you’ve ever once apologized****. For anything”* [Strout 2008: 123].

The constructions used in the thematic group directly name wife as the performer with the help of nouns, personal pronouns and the husband as the addressee with the help of the passive voice. The**noun***wife* is used in 4 constructions and she either undergoes an action – *fight with his wife*, or performs it towards the husband – *be uprooted by his pushy new wife, deserted by a beast of a wife*.The wife can be named by personal **pronouns***e.g. her*: *“Lydia’s been divorced a few years now. The guy* ***bit her****.* […]*” – “****Bit her****? Or beat her?” – “Bit*” [Strout 2008: 128] and *you*in the extended construction *not believe you’ve ever once apologized*. The wife is often blamed for the marital issues in the short stories, having 8 constructions out of 20 connected with the wife’s direct actions: *leave their bed, crack his heart into two, marry a beast etc.* The constructions show the husband as a victim of the wife’s actions, in which he undergoes, which is expressed by **the passive voice**: *be uprooted by his pushy new wife, be deserted by a beast of a wife*. Therefore, even though the actions denoting marital issues are equally dwelling on the wife and the husband, the wife is the one who is directly mentioned in the constructions, while the constructions concerning the husband do not mention him but only give an action. Pointing to the person responsible for the fights with the help of nouns and pronouns may be understood as a marker of the author’s idiostyle.

The two **nominal constructions** also point to the actions performed by the married couples towards each other and their consequences: *have* ***fights*** *that had made Olive feel sick, a public* ***exposure*** *of familial failure.* The construction *have fights* is extended with the help of the construction *made Olive feel sick*, which characterizes the fights which happened between the husband and the wife, emphasizing on its consequences for the wife. Besides, the extended construction *stop having a certain kind of fight* implies that the couple overcame the family issues they have been struggling with– “*Earlier in their marriage, they’d* ***had fights that had made Olive feel sick*** *the way she felt now. But after a certain point in a marriage, you stopped having a certain kind of fight […]”* [Strout 2008: 122]. In case with *a public exposure of familial failure*, we see that Henry perceives Olive *not going to the church* a *familial failure*, as the other church goers might think so, and for him it is a negative consequence expressed by the noun *exposure* - *disclosure of something secret* [MWD]: “*Olive had refused to go to church the day before, and Henry, uncharacteristically, had spoken to her sharply. […] Going without her seemed* ***a public exposure of familial failure****”* [Strout 2008: 9].The extended nominal constructions in this thematic group are used by the author to provide the reader with the reason for an argument and its result.

There is one **adjectival** construction, which contains several nouns to characterize a wife *marry someone mean and pushy / dumb and nice*. The given adjectives *mean* and *pushy* describe the person as *showing petty selfishness or malice, aggressive often to an objectionable degree* [MWD], while the adjective *dumb* means *lacking intelligence* [ibid]. The above mentioned construction provides mainly negative attributes to the person.

To conclude, the markers of the idiostyle are verbal and nominal constructions describing the marital issues and the actions spouses perform to harm their marriage, consciously or subconsciously. Five immediate constructions underscore uncontrollable actions, which harm the relationship or cause troubles to the couple. The markers attribute negative qualities to the actions and name the victim directly. The constructions have been modified by a numeral, 3 nouns and 8 pronouns to give a specification of an action or point to the addressee. The modifications also include 5 adjectives describing the failures or couples. The wife is mentioned directly or indirectly in the constructions, while the husband only performs and undergoes the actions. This may lead the reader to perceive the wife as the villain and husband as a victim.

**2.2.1.2. Feelings constructions****.**This group of constructionsis used to depict how people perceive family issues and provide the reader with the charter’s **reaction** to the actions, or the **emotional consequences** of the actions of the spouse. The interpersonal aspect of the relationship may be seen in the extended constructions, where the author explains how the actions influence people. We have singled out 12 sentiment constructions which may help us study the idiostyle of the author in detail.The mentioned reactions of the characters are directly linked to the previously performed actions, which is why the key components in this thematic group are the ones which are used to describe the emotions of people having marriage issues.

To begin with, the singled out feelings constructions are not restricted by being strictly interpersonal, so we have a bigger variety in the key elements. In case with this thematic group, we have 6 nominal constructions, 5 verbal constructions and 2 adjectival constructions.

The six **nominal** constructions are used by the author to name the feeling the character experiences because of marital issues like distancing from the spouse (*be a frightening* ***stranger***), fantasising about another person (*have* ***fantasies*** *of living out her widowhood with Henry,* ***passion*** *that turns him away from his wife*), inner suffering (*an age-old sliver of anguish shuddered deep within her, a darkness rumbles through him*), being possessive of the partner (*the piercing of jealousy and rage*). We see that the meaning of the constructions focuses on the emotional suffering and infidelity, which gives us a deeper understanding of characters having marital issues.

The author modifies nominal constructions withadjectives, pronouns, noun and extended with constructions. The construction *an age-old sliver of* ***anguish*** *shuddered deep within her* is modified with the help of **adjectives***.* The *anguish*, an *extreme pain, distress, or anxiety* [MWD] felt by the wife, further modified with the help of the adjective *age-old*, suggests long term marital issues (husband’s infidelity) while the adjective *deep* draws the reader’s attention to the fact that the character is heavily emotionally wounded due to being betrayed: “*You did see them at the Miami airport, didn’t you?” And when he didn’t answer, she felt her bowels ache, and* ***an age-old sliver of anguish shuddered deep within her****;* […]*”* [Strout 2008, 136]. Two **pronouns** are used topoint to the person undergoing the change of feelings and towards whom *e.g. passion that turns him away from his wife*. In the construction *feel the* ***piercing*** *of rage and jealousy* the noun *piercing* means *cutting, causing intense discomfort to one's skin* [MWD]. The construction is modified with the nouns *rage* and *jealousy* to specify the type of a feeling cause the character to face physical pain. As for the *construction have fantasies of living out her widowhood with Henry*, having *fantasies* suggests to us that the person is constantly having a mental image or a series of mental images (such as a daydream) [MWD] about being with another person. The reader might see the supposed inner hopes for the character’s death expressed with the extended construction *died early on*: *“Daisy, who’d* ***had fantasies****–Olive was certain of this –* ***of living out her widowhood with Henry*** *Kitteridge if only Olive could have died early on, said she would be glad to water the garden”* [Strout 2008: 136].In the cited example the author specifiesnot only the widowhood issue, being parted with the spouse by death, but also possible fantasies about other person’s husband. The pairing *have fantasies* is further extended with the help of a construction *living out widowhood* to specify the type of a fantasy.

The 4 **verbal constructions**, pointing to the inner suffering (*his soul is* ***suffocating*** *in tar, feel her heart was* ***broken*** *again*)*,* dislike of spouse’s actions (***hate*** *to have her swear*)*,* rage (*had the switch* ***flipped on***)*.* The construction *his soul is* ***suffocating*** *in tar* means that the person’s soul is *deprived of oxygen* [MWD], and it is modified with the noun *tar* - *a dark brown or black bituminous usually odorous viscous liquid obtained by destructive distillation of organic material* [MWD] which adds to a vivid description of how a person feels after an argument with their partner*.* The construction ***hate*** *to have her swear* directly names *the feeling of an extreme enmity* [M-W] toward the spouse and is modified with the verb *swear*, which gives the reason for negative emotions.

The author extends the verbal constructions to specify the feeling expressed with an immediate construction. For instance, the pairing*had the switch* ***flipped on*** is extended with additional construction*an engine inside Olive*tocompare the emotion of anger to an engine –*a machine for converting energy into mechanical force and motion* [MWD]supported by the pairing *motor was accelerating*to furthermore emphasize how the person feelings get more intense–*to progress rapidly* [MWD]*: “Stop now. Let’s stop this,” but it was like an engine inside Olive****had the switch flipped on****, and the motor was accelerating; how did you stop such a thing?”* [Strout 2008: 121]. Besides, the **causative construction** “*have something done*” is used with *flip on*, which may mean that the strong emotions were uncontrollable. Another construction which points to the negative emotions which could not be managed by the person is *her heart was* ***broken***, which is modified with the help of a **passive voice** in which the spouse is hurt by their loved one: “*And she felt that her heart was broken again.”* [Strout 2008: 138]*.* In addition, in the extended construction the adverb *again* gives the reader a clue that the character’s heart was broken several times by their spouse. The passive voice and the causative constructions are used by E. Strout to point to the unmanageable negative emotions caused by the actions of the spouse, which may be understood as the markers of the author’s idiostyle.

The **adjectival** constructionsare *made him feel cold* and*make you so sad*. Both key elements in the constructions state emotions, cold being physical sensation, and *sad* being an emotion. The construction *the sight of Bonnie made him feel* ***cold*** is extended with the construction *sight of Bonnie*, which gives the reason for the feeling – someone’s look makes them feel cold, which is not healthy in a marital relationship. The extended construction *unlit cave* compares home to a *cave*–*a natural chamber or series of chambers in the earth* [MWD], which is a negative comparison as the description of a *cave* is the opposite of *home* –*one’s place of residence, the focus of one's domestic attention* [MWD]: *“And yet,* […]*, the sight of Bonnie****made him feel cold****. The house felt like a damp, unlit cave”* [Strout 2008: 98]. The construction *make you so sad* is directly giving us the emotion people might have when they learn that they have been cheated on – “*I’ve* ***made you so sad****”* [Strout 2008: 138]*,* though it might be an underestimation from the husband’s point of view. The author provides us with adjectival constructions to describe the feelings of people when they face marital issues. She modifies the adjectival constructions to further enhance the feelings of a person.

All in all, theconstructions denoting feelings are more varied than the previous thematic groups, where verbal constructions prevail, which may be understood as a markers of the author’s idiostyle. The feelings thematic group showing the influence of spouses on each other are expressed with 6 nominal, 4 verbal and 2 adjectival constructions. The modifications provide the reader with the deeper understanding of the emotions married couples have, specifically the type of the state,who undergoes them and comparison with the real life phenomena. The constructions are modified with the help of 2 adjectives, characterizing the issue, 3 nouns to name the emotionthe spouse feels. Besides, verbal construction in the passive voice and the causative construction draw the attention to the uncontrolled emotional trauma caused by the spouse. This thematic group gives the reader an insight into the feelings of a couple who is experiencing marital issues, very typical of the characters of the stories by E. Strout.

**2.2.2. Healthy marriage constructions.** We have previously discussed the unhealthy marriage relationships, but even though every relationship dynamic might be quite different, the healthy ones are the goal of every couple. It is claimed that the signs of a **healthy marriage** are commitment, good communication, effective conflict resolution, lack of violence and abuse, fidelity, intimacy and emotional support among many others [What is a “healthy” marriage: el.ref.]. Though healthy marriages are portrayed in the short stories and we see the love and support of the spouses, it is understood that the healthy marriage constructions are greatly outnumbered by the unhealthy ones. Twelve healthy marriage constructions have been singled out in the stories by Elizabeth Strout.

Eight **verbal constructions** denoting healthy family relations indicate the care for the spouse (***make sure*** *you’re okay*), commitment (*lives* ***get knit*** *together like bones,* ***stay*** *in her marriage, all that* ***matters****is you)*, resolution of the conflicts (***stop having*** *a certain kind of fight,* ***reconcile*** *with his wife*) and good communication (*a gift to* ***know*** *someone, feel some knowledge* ***pass*** *between them*).

The modifications with the nouns are used by the author to compare the healthy relationships with the real life phenomena to point to the firmness or positivity. The writer modified **verbal constructions** with the help of nouns and extended with constructions. The 4**nouns**, transforming the construction were used by the authorto compare the bond between people to some real life objects or linkages,*e.g.****lives get knit*** *together like bones*, wherethe immediate construction *lives get knit* is modified with the help of the **noun***bones – one of the hard parts of the skeleton of a vertebrate* [MWD]. The noun is used to compare the *durability, firmness* of the relationships of a married couple that *link firmly or closely* [MWD] to the bones which are joined firmly in the body. Another example of comparison of relationships to real life object is the construction *a gift to know someone,* inwhich *know someone* is modified with the **noun***gift* – *present, something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation* [MWD], which is often connected to the positive emotions. The verbal constructions have been also modified with 3 pronouns like *you, her* to point to the person having feelings *e.g. make sure you’re okay*. The **extended constructions** *heart swell with music, love for him* and *for so many years* also points to the healthy and long-lasting marital relations: “*Glancing at her husband, Jane felt her heart swell with the music, and with love for him, this man next to her, this old (!) man, who had been followed through life by his own childhood troubles* […] *A gift, she thought again,* […]***a gift to be able to know someone*** *for so many years”* [Strout 2008: 131].

There are 4 nominal constructions in this thematic group pointing to the commitment (*never have a* ***friend*** *as loyal, as kind, as her husband; Bonnie was the central* ***heating*** *of his life*), long-lasting marriage (*our wedding* ***anniversary***) and spending time together (*have a pleasant* ***evening***).

The **nominal constructions** are modified with the help of nouns and adjectives. For instance, in the construction *never have afriendas* ***loyal****, as* ***kind****, as her husband* the reader is given the **adjectives***loyal* and *kind* to characterize the husband and the friendly relationship of the couple. The nominal construction *Bonnie was the central heating of his life* is extended with two constructions like *Bonnie was*, which points to the target of the positive emotion, and the construction *of his life*, used to specify what is influenced by other person. The construction *central heating* - *a system that heats all parts of a building* [MWD] compares the positive feelings to the person to the heat, warmth, which points to the healthiness of the relationship.

The markers of the idiostyle may be seen in the naming the participants of the relationship or event.In this group the characters have been mentioned directly by their name, *e.g.* ***Bonnie*** *was the central heating of his life* or indirectly with the help of pronouns. There are 6 constructions modified with the help of **object pronouns** and **possessive pronouns** in *all that matters is you*, the husband addresses the wife with the help of the pronoun *you*. Similarly, the verbal construction *make sure* ***you****’re okay* contains the object pronoun you, which refers to the wife. Possessive pronouns in *stay in her marriage*, *our wedding anniversary*, *Bonnie was the central heating of his life* and *never have a friend as loyal, as kind, as her husband* are used to point to belongingness to the family, commitment to the relationship.

Therefore, the markers of the idiostyle are revealed in the fact that the author uses 8 verbal and 4 nominal constructions to describe healthy marital relations. The verbal constructions specify the actions denoting commitment, taking care of the spouse, solving marital issues, healthy communication. The modifications are also understood as the markers as they name the positive qualities of the relationship.The 4 nominal constructions are used by E. Strout to portray long-lasting relationship, spending time with the spouse, and commitment.Being modified with adjectives,they underscore spouse’s traits of character, while a noun specifies who is praised by the immediate construction. The author names the addressees of the action in the construction either directly by their name in the extended construction, or with the help of pronouns.

**2.3. Acquaintance constructions**

Even though the family and marital relations are the main focus of the short stories, the reader may find himself delving into communication with strangers or acquaintances. The characters of the stories interact with their neighbours, teachers, nurses, strangers in the bar, etc. This type of connection is also interpersonal, that is why the topic of communication with acquaintances must be covered in the paper. Twenty-three acquaintance constructions have been singled out and grouped according to their meaning into constructions meaning emotional interaction and describing a conversation.

**2.3.1. Emotional interaction constructions.**When people communicate with their friends, neighbours, colleagues or strangers a variety of emotions constructions is used to denote the feelings characters have as a reaction to the actions of others or their words. The constructions of this thematic group carry quite negative meaning, describing how people make each other uncomfortable. These pairings are very similar with the feelings on marital issues, because they do not show the direct communication between people, but rather their inner reaction to other people. That is why there is much more diversity in the types of constructions and not as many of them are strictly verbal – the key element is chosen not to show the interpersonal relations, but the effect of characters on each other.

Eight **verbal** constructions have been found and they are used to portray the atmosphere of communication (***seem*** *nice to everyone,****change*** *the atmosphere, light* ***flickering*** *off him,* ***keep*** *everyone content*), missing another person (***sadden*** *her to have him not there*), reaction to people’s words (*make her heart* ***race****, envy* ***flickers*** *over his face*), inner feelings on people (***feel*** *the ping of danger*).

Author’s modifications of the verbal constructions includeother pairings. For instance, the author extends the immediate pairing *change the atmosphere* with the help of pairings *playing the piano* to specify the means of influence, and*responsibility frightened her* to denote the importance of the event for the character: “*She was* ***changing the atmosphere*** *in the room****.*** *It was the responsibility of this that frightened her. And it was why she played straight through for three hours, without taking a break* […] *What she liked was playing the piano****.”***[Strout 2008: 51]. Besides, the pairing *feel a ping of danger* consists of *feel danger* modified with the help of the noun *ping*, which is used to draw the attention to the intensity of the person’s feeling as *ping* is *a sharp sound like that of a striking bullet* [MWD]. Angie feels danger because of the situation denoted by the**constructions** like *eyes were not warm* and *had been warm eyes*, in which the **present perfect tense** accentuates a change in the person: *“And then* ***she felt the ping of danger****. His eyes were not warm. They had been warm eyes.”* [Strout 2008: 57]. The modification with nouns point to the place of communication, while the extended constructions provide the reason for the emotions, which may be understood as markers of author’s idiostyle.

It’s typical of E. Strout to implicate flicker-constructions to point to the different types of attention – negative focus on others and the absorption of positive recognition. There are two flicker-constructions, which have the same verbal component, but quite the opposite meaning *e.g. envy flickers over his face,* which points to the emotional state of a person toward someone and *little light flickering off him* which denotes the feelings a character evokers in others. They both emphasize on the process of *burning or shine fitfully or with a fluctuating light* [MWD], though the noun *envy* points to the overall negativity of the emotions toward another person. The construction is used to portray the flicker of *malice*, while *have little light flickering off him* means being in the centre of good attention performing in front of others expressed with the extended construction *he was playing*: “*She had come into this very bar with her friends one night that summer, and there he was playing “Fly Me to the Moon.” It was like he’d* ***had little lights flickering off him****”* [Strout 2008: 55].

There are 5 **nominal** constructions, indicating the impact from people’s presence (*feel like a* ***child*** *in her presence, a silent large* ***presence***), comfort from being in a group (*provide no sense of* ***comfort***), fear of an interaction (*feel an inward* ***fear*** *that grew and spread through him, an exacerbation of the silent* ***dread*** *in Kevin*).

Nominal constructions denoting feelings towards the acquaintances are modified with the help of **nouns, adjectives, verbs** and extended withother constructions. For instance, in the construction *an exacerbation of the silent dread* the immediate construction *silent dread* is extended with the help of a noun *exacerbation*, which increases the negative feeling of *dread*, claiming that it *becomes stronger and more violent* [MWD]. The nominal construction may be modified with a **verb** to denote the action of emotional influence of people on each other, e.g.***provide*** *no sense of comfort****.*** The modification with the adjective *no* suggests the negative meaning – *lack of comfort*. Nominal constructions were modified with **adjectives** to describe the condition of being present in social environment *e.g. a* ***silent large*** *presence*, where the person is present and shows it to others to get the attention: “*Henry, seated next to Olive toward the back, recognized no one, until* ***a silent large presence*** *made him look up, and there was Jerry McCarthy. Henry and Olive moved over to make room for him”* [Strout 2008: 19]. This construction is further extended with the help of construction *made him look up*, indicating the result– presence of a person and a will to be acknowledged. The extension of an immediate construction with the help of **another pairing** was used to characterize the inner feeling of the character and how it gradually takes control over them with the help of the construction *grow and spread through somebody* in***feel an inward fear*** *that grew and spread through him*.

The reader is given presence-constructions, drawing the attention to the fact that a character simply being present can influence the people around them. For instance, the nominal construction *feel like a child in her* ***presence*** points to the shame still living with the parents or insecurities with the help of extended constructions *living at home* and *chubby wrists and belly*: *“The boy’s face colored – perhaps he had a little crush on Denise, or perhaps he* ***felt like a child in her presence****, a boy still living at home, with his chubby wrists and belly”* [Strout 2008: 14]. In *a silent large* ***presence***, the author implies that a person may use his presence to persuade someone to do something, which is expressed with the help of the extended construction *made him look up*: “*Henry, seated next to Olive toward the back, recognized no one, until* ***a silent large presence****made him look up, and there was Jerry McCarthy.”* [Strout 2008: 19]. Presence constructions imply the person’s control over another person, either their actions or insecurities, with the help of the extended constructions.

To sum it up, the markers of the author’s idiostyle may be seen in the usage of 8 verbal constructions to describe the reaction to others’ words, internal feelings toward others, missing them, etc. The modifications and extensions are also understood as the markers as they describe the interactions between the characters, name their emotions when they encounter each other. It should be mentioned thatflicker-constructions andpresence-constructions are the ones which point to different type of the attention people get in public. Five nominal constructions are modified with the help of nouns to name the feeling or the person undergoing it, adjectives andverbs to portray the reasons for it. This makes us understand that the acquaintance constructions help the author depict emotions of people, their reactions to actions, words or presence with the help of the verbal and nominal constructions, modified with nouns or adjectives.

**2.3.2. Conversation constructions** denoting the actions people perform while engaging in a dialogue are connected to the facial expressions, type of conversation, reaction to the interlocutor’s words or willingness to communicate. Ten conversation-constructions have been singled out.

Nine conversation-constructions are **verbal** and are used to point to gossiping about other people (***blah-blah-blah*** *about you,* ***tell*** *everyone things about you,* ***chop off*** *a baby finger for news*), expressing emotions while speaking (***roll*** *her eyes,* ***talk*** *about her in a certain eye-rolling way,* ***give*** *a roll of his eyes*), way of expressing and perceiving information (***speak*** *to her sharply,* ***listen*** *with half an ear*) not being able to quit conversation (***stuck*** *in one more yakkety conversation*).

The marker of the author’s idiostyle is the fact that**verbal constructions** are modified with the help of nouns, adjectives and extended with the help of additional constructions. As for**nouns**,they provide a specification for the action expressed by the immediate construction. The pairing is modified with the noun *baby* to point to whose finger is being cut, and the noun *news*, the usage of which provides the reader with a reason for violence. *e.g. chop off a baby finger for news*. The construction means that a character would do anything to get some news and gossip.

The verbal constructions are also modified with the help of **adjectives** like in the pairing *talk about her in a certain eye-rolling way*, where the adjective *eye-rolling* characterizes the facial expression reflecting the attitude of annoyance towards another person. There are also verbal constructions extended with the help of **other pairings** to specify the condition for an action, *e.g. blah-blah-blah about you* is further extended withthe construction *when your back is turned,* implying that people gossip about the character when they are not present: *e.g. “Olive can understand why Chris has never bothered having many friends. He is like her that way, can’t stand the blah-blah-blah. And they’d just as soon* ***blah-blah-blah about you*** *when your back is turned*[Strout 2008: 68].

There are 3 **eye-roll constructions**representing facial emotions people express towards each other: *give a roll of his eyes, talk about her in a certain eye-rolling way, roll her eyes*. Two variations of verbal construction *roll one’s eyes* are used, as well as an adjective *eye-rolling* to describe a similar phenomenon. All three of the constructions point to the annoyance with the conversation or the interlocutor. The extended constructions provide the reasons for the annoyance – being *put on probation*: “*He put me on fucking probation for being a muffin cutter.” […] “In the hospital. One time I cut my muffin in half. The rules are, you’re not supposed to engage […] with the food except to eat it. So I […] cut the muffin in half, and I get reported to Luke. ‘We heard you’ve been cutting your muffins, Nina,’ he said, with his arms folded across his chest.” The girl* ***rolled her eyes*** *extravagantly when she finished telling this.”* [Strout 2008: 93]. We may also see the construction being modified with the adverb *extravagantly* which provides the reader with the manner of expression emotions - *exceeding the limits of reason or necessity* [MWD], which points to the overreaction. The eye-rolling constructions pointing to the specific facial expressions may serve as the marker of the author’s idiostyle.

A **nominal** construction which is used to dwell on gossip was found, *e.g. come here for a nice dose of schadenfreude*. The noun *schadenfreude* comes from German Schaden (damage) + Freude (joy), meaning *enjoyment obtained from the troubles of others* [MWD]. In other words, characters discuss the problems of other people, which is supported by extended constructions like *tell things about somebody*, while the importance of the gossip to the character is expressed with the construction heart started to beat fast: *“Yuh. Well, she told everyone things about you, too.” Olive’s heart had started to beat fast. […] “She shouldn’t be telling things from the nursing home.” […] “Oh,” said Louise, laughing softly. “You* ***came here for a nice dose of schadenfreude****, and it didn’t work.”* [Strout 2008: 156].

Therefore, the markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle are mainly verbal (9) constructions to describe the conversations happening between people, the internal feelings of people, missing others, people’s actions while communicating, as well as their emotions. The modifications characterize the talks of people, their actions and provide the overall understanding of how they feel while speaking with the acquaintances. They were modified with nouns to give the reasons for an action and adjectives to give a negative characteristics of the way people speak, adverbs to express the manner of an action. Flicker-, presence- and eye-roll-constructions are the ones which are used several times in the stories to portray the perception of other people.

# CONCLUSIONS ON PART II

The biggest thematic group, consisting of58 constructions, was used by E. Strout to depict the family relations. This group includes pairings describing the healthy family relations (18), the issues relatives face (16), child-parent interactions (12) and relations with in-laws (12). Family relations constructions point to the actions performed by relatives toward each other, including physical interactions and influence on each other. As for the markers of the author’s idiostyle, here E. Strout mainly uses verbal constructions (43 out of 58) in the active voice to dwell on the interpersonal relations in the families.The 11 nominaland 4 adjectival constructions were utilised to describe family struggles, traits of characters and family traditions, assess parenting skills. The author modified the constructions of this group with the help of 30 nouns and 28 pronouns to reflect emotions or point to the addresser or the addressee of the actions or influence. She used 11 adjectives and 2 adverbs to attribute positive and negative qualities to people or their actions towards each other. The constructions have been extended with the help of 11pairings to dwell on the time, place, reasons and consequences of the family relations.

The marital relations constructions include44 units, divided into 2 sub-groups. Thirty-four family issues pairings describe the actions (15) couples perform consciously or subconsciously to hurt their marriageor the feelings (12) they experience. The healthy marriage constructions (12) describe the positive sides of marriage. The markers of E. Strout’s idiostyle are verbal (27) constructions to describe actions, nominal (12) to underscore the issue and adjectival (3) to give attributes to the person or relationship. The author modifies the constructions with 11 nouns and 17pronouns to point to the participants of the events and arguments, or name the feelings or characters. Besides, 10 adjectives and 1 adverb attribute healthy or unhealthy qualities to the marital relations.Thirteen extensions of constructions give a deeper understanding of the events, issues and the consequences of the action, providing the reader with author’s assessment.

The23 acquaintance constructions, describing the relations with strangers, neighbours, friends, teachers, nurses and other people characters meet from time to time in the town. This group is divided into unitsspecifying emotional interactions (13) and conversation pairings (10). The author uses mainly verbal (17) constructions as she focuses more on the actions like missing others, internal feelings aimed at someone, communications; the nominal constructions (6) representstates or interaction. E. Strout modified the above mentioned constructions with 5 adjectives to assess people and their emotions, 7 nouns and 16 pronouns to name participants in the acquaintance communication. The 7 extended constructions point to the reasons for negative emotions, the means ofpersuasion etc.

E. Strout has utilized primarily verbal constructions to describe the interpersonal relations. In fact, 87(69,6%) of all constructions have a verb as the key element. It is not surprizing as the key element of the construction in the context of this paper should be connected to the interpersonal aspect of the relationship, which is expressed through actions, interactions and communications described by verbs. They have been used mainly in active voice, where the addresser of the action was willingly performing an action, while the passive voice (7 constructions) has been used to express the process of being helped or having uncontrollable actions or emotions. Thirty-one (24,8%) of the constructions utilized by E. Strout were nominal indicating characteristics of a person or action, describing the event, emotional state or struggle. Only 7 (5,6%) adjectival constructions have been used by the author to attribute positive or negative qualities to people, describe their attitude towards a family member or a spouse.

Overall, E. Strout has used 182 modifications and extensions to broaden the meaning of the immediate constructions. To name the emotions prevalent and the participants of the relations, 61 pronouns and 48 nouns have been used. The author also modified the pairings with the help of 26 adjectives and 7 adverbs to express the attitude towards the characters and their doings, assess them and their actions in a negative or positive way.The 31 extended constructions added more to the context for understanding the reasons for people’s actions and decisions as well as the details of what occurred in the lives of the characters. The modifications are regarded as markers of the author’s idiostyle as they provide the reader with the author’s view on the characters, their actions and consequences, help to make a conclusion on the healthiness of the relationships characters are a part of.

# GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Constructions are stored pairings of form and function. They may be studied with the help of two different approaches – paradigmatic, syntagmatic and thematic. This paper is aimed at the syntagmatic approach, according which constructions are divided into immediate, modified and extended. The immediate ones are a combination of words with dependent units on the left or on the right. The modified broaden the immediate constructions with additional units. The extended pairings combine several immediate constructions. The constructions may also be divided into various thematic groups according to their meaning.Compiling thematic groups of constructions according to their meaning gives us an insight into the writer’s usage of vocabulary units to convey ideas to the reader.

The constructions as the linguistic means of expression can be a tool to study the individual style of an author. Style itself is understood as a unique way of using language. Idiostyle is interpreted as a set of the linguistic expressive means of the author, the peculiarities of the use of a certain layer of vocabulary. To analyze the style with respect to the markers of the author’s idiostyle we have to identify the key element of the construction, which in the context of this research should point to the interpersonal relations. This type of relations involves two or more people. When the key components and the immediate construction is singled out, the modifications and extensions are found and analyzed to reveal the markers of the author’s idiostyle. The pairings may be modified with the help of adjectives, nouns, verbs, pronouns, numerals or extended with the help of additional constrictions to broaden the understanding of the situation.

In the second part of the paper 125 constructions denoting interpersonal relations have been classified into thematic groups according to their meaning. Three of the biggest groups encompass family, marital and acquaintance interaction constructions.

The biggest thematic group of family relations constructions, containing 58 of them, dwells on the healthy family relations (18), family issues (16), child-parent interactions (12) and communication with in-laws (12). These pairings have been used by the author to denote the interactions between relatives, influence and dependence on each other, parenting, jeopardizing, etc. The constructions of this group have been modified with 30 nouns and 28 pronouns to point to the participants of the relationships, 11 adjectives to characterize them in a healthy or unhealthy way, and extended with other pairings to give the reader details on the reasons and the consequences of the actions performed by and towards the family members.

The marital relations thematic group consists of 44 constructions, which describe the marital issues (22) and a healthy marriage (12). The pairings in this group are mainly verbal (27) and nominal (14), denoting the actions which strengthen or harm the relationship, characterize the relatives’ behaviour, the reasoning behind them, the emotional states, etc. This thematic group was modified with 11 nouns and 17 pronouns to name the people’s struggles in the marital relationships and their initiator. The wife is mainly named directly, while the husband is not mentioned in the actions, which might cause the reader to perceive her as the main antagonist in the marriage. Thirteen extended constructionswere utilized to draw the attention to the causes of the issues.

The acquaintance constructions thematic group consists of 23 pairings representing the emotions of people engaged into communication (13) and description of conversations people have (10). E. Strout uses verbal (17) and nominal (6) constructions to portray the reaction to people’s words, feelings towards others, missing them, character’s facial expressions and perception of others. The prevalent markers in this thematic group are 16 pronouns and 7 nouns naming the participants of the communication and their emotions, 5 adjectives and 7 extended constructions to describe the feelings and the circumstances of communication.

The pairings used by the author describe physical interactions, influence on others, arguments, parenting, insulting, admiring, cheating, etc. The constructions have beenmodified with the help of 182 units, including 61 pronouns 48nouns to specify the meaning of the immediate construction, namely the participants of the relationship, their feelings and traits of character; 26 adjectives and 7 adverbs to attribute positive or negative qualities to the characters or events, as well as to provide the reader with the manner of performing an action; 31 extended constructions tospecify the actions, provide their reasons and consequences, time and place of an action or communication, etc. Six verbs and 2 numerals have been also utilized to give a specification of the action and number of people involved.

We may come to the conclusion that the most significant markers of the author’s idiostyle are the usage of predominantly verbal (69%) constructions to denote the interpersonal relations. The most frequently utilized modifications by E. Strout are pronouns (33,5%), nouns (26,3%), extended constructions (17%) and adjectives (14,2%), which leads us to believe she focuses on the participants of the event, the description of their emotional states and actions,as well as broadening the understanding of the interpersonal relationships. Modifications like adverbs (3,8%), verbs (3,3%) and numerals (1,6%) should also be regarded as they serve to draw the attention to the manner of the action, how it influences the interlocutor, and how many of them are involved.

# АНОТАЦІЯ

Оповідання характеризується великою кількістю прийомів, цінних для стилістичного і лінгвістичного аналізу та дослідження ідіостилю автора, який розуміють як його унікальні мовні виражальні засоби. Маркерами ідіостилю виступають найчастіше використані типи конструкцій, їхні модифікації та розширення, що постають як типові для автора.

Теоретичний матеріал допоміг визначити, що конструкція як мовна одиниця єпоєднанням форми, функції та значення. Мовознавці вивчають та групують конструкції за парадигматичним, синтагматичним та тематичним підходами. Ця робота фокусується на синтагматичному підході, відповідно до якого конструкції поділяються на безпосередні, модифіковані та розширені, а також на тематичному, завдяки якому конструкції були згруповані за значенням – міжособистісним типом відносин.

13 оповідань Е. Стротмістять 125 конструкцій на позначення міжособистісних відносин, що були згруповані у три групи відповідно до типу відносин – родинні, подружні та відносини між знайомими. Після аналізу конструкцій було визначено, що маркерами ідіостилю автора постають переважно дієслівні конструкції, модифіковані іменниками та займенниками для вказання учасників відносин, а також поширені конструкції та прикметники для приписання рис людям та їх вчинкам, оцінки відносин як позитивних або негативних.Авторка також використовувала конструкції в основному активного стану, в той час як пасивний вживався для зображення неконтрольованих станів або дій. Модифікації прислівниками, дієсловами і числівниками також слід розглядати як особливості ідіостилю, оскільки вони звертають увагу на манеру дії, вплив на співрозмовників і їхню кількість.

**Ключові слова:** конструкція, ідіостиль, маркер ідіостилю, міжособистісні відношення, оповідання.

# SUMMARY

Short stories are characterized by a large number of devices valuable for stylistic and linguistic analysis and author’s idiostyleregarded as a set of unique linguistic means of expression of the author. Markers of idiostyle are the most commonly used types of linguistic pairings, their modifications and extensions that are typical for the chosen author.

Theoretical material helped to determine thatconstructionis a combination of form, function and meaning. Linguists study and group constructions according to paradigmatic, syntagmatic and thematic approaches. This work focuses on the syntagmatic approach, according to which constructions are divided into immediate, modified and extended, as well as on the thematic, when constructions are grouped by their meaning – the interpersonal types of relations.

Thirteen short stories by E. Strout contain 125 constructions denotingthe interpersonal relationsthat have beendivided into three groups according to the type of relations: family, marital and acquaintance relations. After analyzing the constructions, it was determined that the markers of the author's idiostyle aremainly verbal constructions modified by nouns and pronouns to indicate participants in the relationship, as well as common constructions and adjectives to attribute traits to people and their actions, evaluatetheir relations as positive or negative.The author has also utilized constructions mainly in the active voice, while the passive voice has been used to portray uncontrollable states or actions. Modifications by adverbs, verbs and numerals should also be regarded as markers of idiostyle because they draw attention to the manner of the action, the influence on the interlocutors, and their number.

**Key words:** construction, idiostyle, marker of an idiostyle, interpersonal relations, short story.

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# SUPPLEMENT A

**2.1. Family**

**2.1.1. Healthy family**

1. be a wonderful father
2. babies crawl all over the house and all over mother
3. brag about them endlessly
4. be wheeled by Olive
5. stop off by her mother’s
6. be a saint
7. kids to be proud of
8. be a family custom to have pancakes on Sunday nights
9. give your old father a hug
10. be Mommy’s girl
11. acquire a second wife and two children
12. be part of her son’s life
13. have a shoe full of children
14. have them bonding
15. there are people who depend on me
16. get her parents food
17. give that girl half my life
18. your father would be proud

**2.1.2. Family issues**

1. drive her nuts
2. not belong to the world of family and love
3. (not) leave a note
4. Crazy breeds crazy
5. run off the night their baby is born
6. mother is always mad at him
7. get shipped off to live with relatives somewhere
8. children dying left and right
9. bear down too hard on Christopher
10. witness the nervous breakdowns
11. have her mouth washed with soap
12. take over that boy’s life
13. shoot their daughter’s boyfriends
14. jeopardize such a thing
15. blame the mother for everything
16. grapple with the baby

**2.1.3. Children**

1. be free to do what they like
2. take over the store
3. get this from his mother
4. not allow his parents to even visit him
5. break his mother’s heart
6. be glad to have him
7. miss his mother
8. be ruled by my fear of you
9. create a different level of sadness for her parents
10. make mom nuts
11. marry their mother
12. messed-up childhood

**2.1.4. In-law constructions**

1. make fun of her mother-in-law
2. never care a great deal for their son-in-law
3. treated her kindly
4. get along fine
5. not like her son’s new wife
6. marry a girl his father didn’t like
7. that goddamn know-it-all daughter-in-law of mine
8. be appalled by the bossiness of their new daughter-in-law
9. want to slap her
10. I wish she’d drop dead
11. have a son stolen away
12. tension is so thick

**2.2. Marital relations**

**2.2.1. Marital issues**

**2.2.1.1. Actions**

1. leave their bed
2. a public exposure of familial failure
3. crack his heart in two
4. fight with his wife
5. stay married
6. wife took off
7. carry on a brief affair
8. uprooted by his pushy new wife
9. have fights that had made Olive feel sick
10. don’t believe you’ve ever once apologized
11. alter how people see each other
12. bite her
13. marry alcoholic
14. throw dishes
15. sleep on a couch
16. spend the night with her
17. marry a beast
18. deserted by a beast of a wife
19. ask you to leave with me
20. marry someone mean and pushy / dumb and nice

**2.2.1.2 Feelings**

1. a darkness rumbles through somebody
2. one’s soul is suffocating in tar
3. be a frightening stranger
4. feel the piercing of rage and jealousy
5. passion that turns somebody away from one’s wife
6. the sight of Bonnie made him feel cold
7. hate to have her swear
8. like an engine inside Olive had the switch flipped on, and the motor was accelerating
9. age-old sliver of anguish shuddered deep within her
10. feel that her heart was broken again
11. make you sad
12. have fantasies of living out one’s widowhood with sb

**2.2.2. Healthy marriage constructions**

1. Bonnie was the central heating of his life
2. make sure you’re okay,
3. lives get knit together like bones
4. have a pleasant evening
5. stay in her marriage
6. a gift to be able to know someone for so many years
7. feel some knowledge pass between them
8. all that matters is you
9. our wedding anniversary
10. never have a friend as loyal, as kind, as her husband
11. stop having a certain kind of fight
12. reconcile with his wife

**2.3. Acquaintance constructions**

**2.3.1. Emotional construction**

1. feel like a child in her presence
2. a silent large presence
3. change the atmosphere
4. provides no sense of comfort
5. need to keep everyone content-
6. feel an inward fear that grew and spread through him
7. sadden her to have him not there
8. an exacerbation of the silent dread in Kevin
9. have little light flickering off him
10. make her heart race
11. feel the ping of danger
12. a shadow of envy flickers darkly over his face
13. seem nice to everyone

**2.3.2. Conversation constructions**

1. give a roll of his eyes
2. speak to her sharply
3. listen with half an ear
4. stuck in one more yakkety conversation
5. blah-blah-blah about you
6. roll her eyes
7. chop off a baby finger for news of any kind
8. tell everyone things about you
9. come here for a nice dose of schadenfreude
10. talk about her in a certain eye-rolling way