

УДК 811.111'367.623

DOI 10.3165/2520-6966-2019-13f -96-150-158

A. B. Latun

master student of the foreign languages department of Nizhyn Mykola Gogol State University

Adjective constructions denoting appearance of a person

The article is devoted to the analysis of adjective constructions denoting appearance of a person in Internet news articles which are represented by immediate, modified and extended ones. The conducted investigation reveals, that the group of constructions expressing appealing appearance is more numerous due to the author's intention to attract readers' attention. Immediate adjective constructions state a certain characteristic in the appearance of people, either positive or negative while modified and extended ones are used to emphasize different shades of attractiveness or unattractiveness of people. The constructions under analysis occur in different syntactical positions, namely of the subject, the predicative and the object, and can be a part of compound predicate. In the immediate, modified and extended units, the adjectives are represented by compound, denominative and determining items as well as by participles.

Key words: *adjective construction, immediate construction, modified construction, extended construction, Internet news article, attractive appearance, unattractive appearance.*

Nowadays, the study of a person from different points of view, is carried out by a large number of specific disciplines [4, p. 90–96; 8, p. 45]. Each discipline is concentrated on the individual aspects of a person. To analyze the reality and different aspects of the surrounding world linguists use various linguistic units. One of them is a construction which is defined as a unit of linguistic knowledge that pairs a linguistic form with a meaning [3, p. 288; 8, p. 5; 12, p. 140]. Constructions have a fixed structure but they allow some transformations due to the slots available in their form [18, p.102].

People do not formulate a necessary construction when they need to analyze reality because constructions are entrenched in people's mind [3, p. 302]. They are already in their minds due to the high occurrence in language. Constructions are thought to be complex pairings because they are used to denote internally complex symbolic structures [7, p. 182]. In addition, constructions are considered to be

productive because those units are stored expressions that are clearly discernible as a pattern and may occasionally license novel formations of the relevant type [5, p. 185].

Though constructions and separate adjectives have been constantly studied by many researchers [4, p. 87; 5, p. 46; 11, p. 78–105; 18, p. 101–103], adjective constructions representing appearance of a person in Internet news articles have not been examined so far, so that it requires further study.

The **aim** of our work is the analysis of constructions with adjectives denoting appearance of a person occurring in Internet news articles.

Our paper is intended to solve the following **tasks**:

- 1) to define the notion of construction;
- 2) to identify adjective constructions in Internet news articles;
- 3) to classify constructions denoting appearance of a person.

In Internet news articles the appearance of people is represented by adjective constructions. Adjective constructions always have an adjective acting as the head [1], which may be preceded by premodifiers and followed by postmodifiers [9, p. 288].

Adjectives being a part of the construction are represented by different groups, classified according to their structure, meaning, grammatical characteristics and the degree of those characteristics. Due to their structure adjectives are divided into simple, derivative and compound [14, p. 103]. With regard to the meaning and grammatical characteristics they fall into two large groups: qualitative and relative [8, p. 88]. According to different degrees of characteristics, scholars distinguish scalar, deadverbial, denominal and determining adjective units [16, p. 149–155]. The need for their use arises in the process of communication, because first of all communication involves identification of a person [10, p. 19]. The same we have with news, as it is one of means of communication between people. When one hears some news or information about people he or she tries to imagine the situation and pictures the portrait characteristics and appearance of a person in the picture of the world.

In our paper we mainly rely on paradigmatic and syntagmatic approach to classification of constructions [15, p. 173]. Paradigmatic way of study of constructions is based on different levels of generalization while syntagmatic approach concerns absence or presence of the context, and according to that constructions are divided into immediate, modified and extended [15, p. 173]. In an immediate construction a word combines with a neighboring word. They are word combinations with the

dependent units on the left and on the right. This type of constructions is analyzed without relying on the context. The modified constructions enlarge the immediate ones with additional units. In an extended construction the immediate unit combines with other immediate variants [15, p. 173].

Having analyzed 75 BBC Internet news articles we have singled out 27 examples of units which denote appearance of a person. They are classified according to two different approaches: paradigmatic, focusing on qualities of components, and syntagmatic, emphasizing their number [18, p. 143]. These constructions describe the outward aspects and features of people.

Adjective constructions denoting general appearance of a person with the help of description of some of its aspects are perceived by everyone in the same way in all languages. By the word *appearance* we understand the way a person looks or seems to other people [1]. There is a subjective estimation of a person on the basis of his or her positive or negative aspects of appearance [6, p. 166]. So that adjective constructions which represent general physical appearance are divided into two groups:

- 1) *attractive appearance* which produces positive effect;
- 2) *unattractive appearance* of people which makes the opposite impression.

Adjective constructions which represent attractive appearance of people include immediate, modified and extended. We have singled out 21 of them. The core adjectives in immediate constructions are divided into three subgroups: those describing the highest degree of attractiveness, representing a full of enthusiasm person and denoting males appealing appearance.

The immediate adjective constructions occur in the positions of a predicative and an object. All the adjectives, which are used to describe the appearance, imply that people are good-looking but at the same time they imply different degree of attractiveness. The words *gorgeous*, *wonderful*, *adorable*, *beautiful* and *amazing* present the highest degree having the meaning of being very beautiful, attractive or pleasant [13], e.g. "*She **was a wonderful woman** and had a lovely sense of humour... and that's something somebody should have*" (www.bbc.com, 13.06.19), "*A Conservative MP has been criticised for saying unemployed young people should take farm jobs working with **gorgeous EU women***" (www.bbc.com, 2.10.19), "*She **was an adorable, beautiful daughter and granddaughter***" (www.bbc.com, 31.10.19), "*A spokesman for the German Penz 13. com team said the 27-year-old **was "an amazing***

person who greatly enriched our team. He will be sadly missed" (www.bbc.com, 4.06.19). To describe an attractively full of enthusiasm girl the author of the article uses the adjective *bubbly*, e. g. "*Samantha was a gorgeous, bubbly girl always full of beans and so loveable, and to think that I will never see her again is so very hard indeed*" (www.bbc.com, 2.10.19). As for the word *handsome*, the author of the article uses it to emphasize that the man is physically attractive and has a pleasing and impressive appearance [1], e. g. "*But ultimately their goal is to find a handsome man – which Krantz wrote about in graphic detail*" (www.bbc.com, 24.06.19).

In this group immediate adjective constructions are modified by the adverbs *very*, *so* and *just* to emphasize and intensify the quality of attractiveness, e. g. "*a very great man*" (www.bbc.com, 15.02.19), "*a very good-looking, handsome and charming husband*" (www.bbc.com, 4.04.19), "*he is so energetic*" (www.bbc.com, 6.05.19), "*just a nice boy*" (www.bbc.com, 12.02.19). The numeral *one* gives the exact number of people, e. g. "*one strong woman*" (www.bbc.com, 30.03.19) and the quantifier *a lot of* states vague quantity of humans that is a large amount, e. g. "*a lot of decent people*" (www.bbc.com, 25.05.19). As for possessive pronouns *his* and *her*, they are used to denote belonging and possession to a person or a group of people, e. g. "*his beautiful soul*" (www.bbc.com, 16.07.19), "*her gracious mother*" (www.bbc.com, 13.06.19). The adjective construction is also modified by the abbreviation *EU* which means European Union and reflects being a part of this organization, e. g. "*gorgeous EU women*" (www.bbc.com, 2.10.19). Besides, we have singled out the adjective in the superlative degree of comparison + word denoting nationality, e. g. "*the most adorable Czechoslovakian stuntman*" (www.bbc.com, 27.05.19). The word *Czechoslovakian* denotes nationality of the man and the adjective *adorable* represents him to be very attractive in comparison to other people. One immediate construction is modified the adjective *young* which shows that the woman has not lived for very long [2], e. g. "*the ebullient young woman*" (www.bbc.com, 19.04.19). The adjective *old* in the comparative degree of comparison is used when one object or group is equalized with another, e. g. "*a wonderful older lady*" (www.bbc.com, 25.04.19). In the example, the old lady is considered to have a greater amount of quality of attractiveness in comparison with another person.

Five extended adjective constructions of this group occur in the position of an object, an object complement, constructions represented by passive voice and subjective participle complex.

Adjective construction in the function of an object contains immediate construction of right-hand dependence *in a black designer dress and high heels*, which emphasizes a woman being graceful and attractive in appearance [1], being modified by the adjectives *black* and *designer*, e. g. "*He had come to the villa to meet an elegant woman in a black designer dress and high heels*" (www.bbc.com, 24.05.19). The dress is described with the help of the adjective *black*, which denotes the darkest colour [2] and the adjective *designer*, which is derived from the noun, representing a piece of clothes made by a famous and fashionable stylist to attract people by being new [1]. More than that, the immediate construction *an elegant woman* is extended by the verb *meet*. It expresses man's intention to see that woman and speak with her.

We have singled out one extended adjective construction functioning as an object complement *X finds Y attractive*, e. g. "*Speaking on David Tennant's podcast, the TV host added that "certainly no-one ever finds you **attractive**" on screen if you are a larger size"* (www.bbc.com, 2.04.19). In this sentence the adjective *attractive*, which means to be very beautiful to look at [1], appears as a direct object. The author of the article uses an object complement to give additional information and better description of the subject.

Two constructions are extended by the verbs *portray* and *call* which are used in the passive voice. The present continuous passive voice highlights that the description of that women and girls by others as beautiful or intelligent has a lasting effect on people, e. g. "*You rarely saw curvy, chubby, black women or girls who were being portrayed as **beautiful or intelligent***" (www.bbc.com, 28.02.19). In the second example, the verb *call* shows that people consider Robert Picardo and his wife to be obviously very beautiful, e. g. "*They also were called a **radiant couple** by Robert Picardo, known for his role as The Doctor on Star Trek: Voyager*" (www.bbc.com, 28. 03. 18).

Moreover, we have the adjective construction which is represented by participle complex in which the participle *looking* is used to emphasize the general appearance of the woman which is *serene* and *gorgeous*. More than that, these linguistic units are modified by the adverb *so*, e. g. "*Mother sat there looking so **serene and gorgeous**, really dressed up beautifully and each person came in, all the boys with their cameras and lighting and she thought that was great*" (www.bbc.com, 13.06.19). In this example peacefulness and great beauty of that woman are indicated by those non-gradable adjectives.

Judging by the positive shades of meaning of adjectives *attractive*, *beautiful*, *intelligent*, *radiant*, *serene* and *gorgeous*, these constructions produce significantly positive effect and denote appealing appearance of people.

Adjective constructions denoting unattractive appearance are represented by two immediate constructions, one modified, two extended ones and one idiom. They are less numeral than the constructions of the previous group because authors of the news articles tend to describe people with the help of positive constructions in order to attract readers' attention.

We have singled out two immediate adjective constructions which are used in the syntactical functions of a subject, e. g. "*The notion that for some reason **unattractive** or heavy **people** don't fall in love*" (www.bbc.com, 2.04.19) and a predicative, e. g. "*One minute he was as good as gold, the next he **was horrible***" (www.bbc.com, 4.04.19). The core adjectives in these constructions are *unattractive* and *horrible* which have negative shades of meaning, describing unpleasant to look at and communicate with people [1].

One construction is represented by the adjective *good-looking*, which denotes positive appearance, but being modified by the negative particle *not*, it acquires impugnable meaning, e. g. "*he's not even **good-looking***" (www.bbc.com, 11.06.19). In the example above, it expresses unattractive appearance of a man. Moreover, it is modified by the adverb *even*, which is used to describe something unusual, surprising or unexpected [1] and intensifies the quality of the adjective.

Two constructions contain the extended elements of left-hand dependence represented by verbs of communicative activity *call* and *describe*. The verb *call* shows that a girl considers Irish women to have unappealing appearances, e. g. "*Azealia Banks has called **Irish women ugly** and accused airline Aer Lingus of banning her following a row on a plane*" (www.bbc.com, 22.01.19). As for the verb *describe*, which extends the second construction, it denotes what others say about Ms Baldwin's look, and according to the example she is considered to be untidy and not neat [13], e. g. "*Ms Baldwin, 35, from the Newcastle area, was robbed at about 22:30 GMT on Wednesday at the services, near Rochdale, by what she described as **an unkempt man***" (www.bbc.com, 24.03.19).

In addition, unattractive appearance of a person is represented by the idiom *ugly as sin*. The source domain of this idiom is *sin* which is more concrete and the target domain here is *a person considered to be*

very unattractive [1], e. g. "She said she met Vincent Van Gogh when he would buy paint from her uncle in Arles in 1888, calling him **ugly as sin** and "an awful character" (www.bbc.com, 18.09.19).

To sum up, adjective constructions denoting general physical look of a person can represent attractive and unattractive appearance with the help of various types of linguistic units. The group of constructions expressing appealing appearance is more numerous and is represented by 21 units, containing immediate, modified and extended adjective constructions used in different syntactical functions. The immediate constructions are modified by the adverbs *very*, *so* and *just* to emphasize the attractiveness of people, by the numeral *one* to state the exact number of people, by possessive pronouns *his* and *her* to denote possession of a person, by other adjectives to highlight nationality of a person and state of being old or young. The extended adjective constructions are used with verbs and adjectives which denote what people consider others to be. Five constructions of the second group are mainly immediate and extended which occur in the positions of a subject and a predicative. One construction of this group is represented by the idiom *ugly as sin*. Our investigation shows that the core adjectives in constructions under analysis present different shades of unattractive and unpleasant appearance and their effect on other people. Further research in this realm may be connected with differentiating other groups of constructions indicating traits of people's character in Internet news articles.

Literature

1. Cambridge Dictionary. URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ru>. (accessed 08.11.2019).
2. Collins Dictionary. URL: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com> (accessed 08.11.2019).
3. Croft W., Cruse D. Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 356 p.
4. Croft W. Radical Construction Grammar: Syntactic Theory in Typological Perspective. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 416 p.
5. Dąbrowska E. Language, Mind and Brain. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. 262 p.
6. Dominick J. Wimmer R. Mass Media Research. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc, 2013. 496 p.
7. Evans V. New Directions in Cognitive Linguistics. Bangor: Bangor University Press, 2009. 519 p.
8. Goldberg A. E. Constructions at Work: The nature of Generalization in Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 280 p.

9. Greenbaum S. The Oxford English Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 652 p.
10. Herring S. Computer-mediated discourse / ed. by D. Tannen, D. Schriffrin. Oxford: Blackwell, 2015. 24 p.
11. Langacker R. W. Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 562 p.
12. Langacker R. W. Construction Grammars: cognitive, radical, and less so. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005. 159 p.
13. Longman Dictionary. URL: <https://www.ldoceonline.com>. (accessed 08.11.2019).
14. Miller J. An introduction to English Syntax. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2002. 190 p.
15. Potapenko S. I. Constructions in English: from paradigmatic to syntagmatic relations. *Література і культура Полісся*. 2017. Вип. 89. С. 172–180.
16. Radden G. Dirven R. Cognitive English Grammar. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007. 374 p.
17. Talavira N. English orientating constructions denoting location: classification and article use. *Lingua Posnaniensis*. 2017. Vol. 59. Issue 2. P. 101–120.
18. Talavira N. Verbalization of love in modern English poetry: constructional approach. *Література і культура Полісся*. 2019. Вип. 95, №12. С. 142–149.

References

1. Cambridge Dictionary URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ru>. (accessed 08.11.2019).
2. Collins Dictionary URL: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>. (accessed 08.11.2019).
3. Croft W. Cruse D. Cognitive Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 356 p.
4. Croft W. Radical Construction Grammar: Syntactic Theory in Typological Perspective. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 416 p.
5. Dąbrowska E. Language, Mind and Brain. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010. 262 p.
6. Dominick J. Wimmer R. Mass Media Research. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co Inc, 2013. 496 p.
7. Evans V. New Directions in Cognitive Linguistics. Bangor: Bangor University Press, 2009. 519 p.
8. Goldberg A. E. Constructions at Work: The nature of Generalization in Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 280 p.
9. Greenbaum S. The Oxford English Grammar. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 652 p.
10. Herring S. Computer-mediated discourse/ ed. by D. Tannen, D. Schriffrin. Oxford: Blackwell, 2015. 24 p.
11. Langacker R. W. Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 562 p.

12. Langacker R. W. Construction Grammars: cognitive, radical, and less so. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005. 159 p.
13. Longman Dictionary URL: <https://www.ldoceonline.com>. (accessed 08.11.2019).
14. Miller J. An introduction to English Syntax. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2002. 190 p.
15. Potapenko S. I. Constructions in English: from paradigmatic to syntagmatic relations. *Literatura i kultura Polissya*. 2017. Vyp. 89. S. 172 –180.
16. Radden G. Dirven R. Cognitive English Grammar. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007. 374 p.
17. Talavira N. English orientating constructions denoting location: classification and article use. *Lingua Posnaniensis*. 2017. Vol. 59, Issue 2. P. 101–120.
18. Talavira N. Verbalization of love in modern English poetry: constructional approach. *Literatura i kultura Polissya*. 2019. Vyp. 95, №12. S. 142–149.

А. Б. Латун

магістрантка факультету іноземних мов Ніжинського державного університету імені Миколи Гоголя

Прикметникові конструкції як засіб зображення зовнішності людини

Стаття присвячена аналізу прикметникових конструкцій на позначення зовнішності людини в інтернет-статтях новин, які представлені безпосередніми, модифікованими та розширеними конструкціями. Проведене дослідження показує, що група конструкцій, які виражають привабливу зовнішність, є більш чисельною через намір автора привернути увагу читачів. Найбільш вживані безпосередні конструкції цієї групи представлені прикметниками, які виражають найвищий рівень привабливості особи, ентузіазм людей та лінгвістичними одиницями, які позначають приємну зовнішність лише чоловіків. Безпосередні прикметникові конструкції вказують на певну характеристику зовнішності людини, позитивну або негативну, в той час як модифіковані та розширені одиниці підкреслюють різні відтінки привабливості чи непривабливості людей. Представлені групи прикметникових конструкцій в реченні зустрічаються в різних синтаксичних позиціях, таких як підмет, присудок, обставина, додаток, означення та можуть виступати частиною складеного присудка. Модифіковані конструкції трансформують безпосередню за рахунок присвійних займенників, які показують належність людині або групі людей, числівників, які уточнюють кількість осіб, прийменників, які підсилюють привабливість або непривабливість, аббревіаціями, які акцентують місце роботи людей та прикметниками в вищому та найвищому ступенях порівняння, які підкреслюють національність та вік людини. Дане дослідження показує, що вище перераховані ступені порівняння використовуються для зіставлення людини з іншою особою або групою людей. Розширені конструкції, які утворюються за рахунок поєднання двох та більше безпосередніх одиниць, представлені дієсловами на позначення комунікативної діяльності людей та забезпечують репрезентацію ставлення інших індивідів до певної особи. Представлені групи прикметникових конструкцій в реченні зустрічаються в різних синтаксичних позиціях.

Ключові слова: прикметникова конструкція, безпосередня конструкція, модифікована конструкція, розширена конструкція, інтернет-стаття новин, приваблива зовнішність, неприваблива зовнішність.