

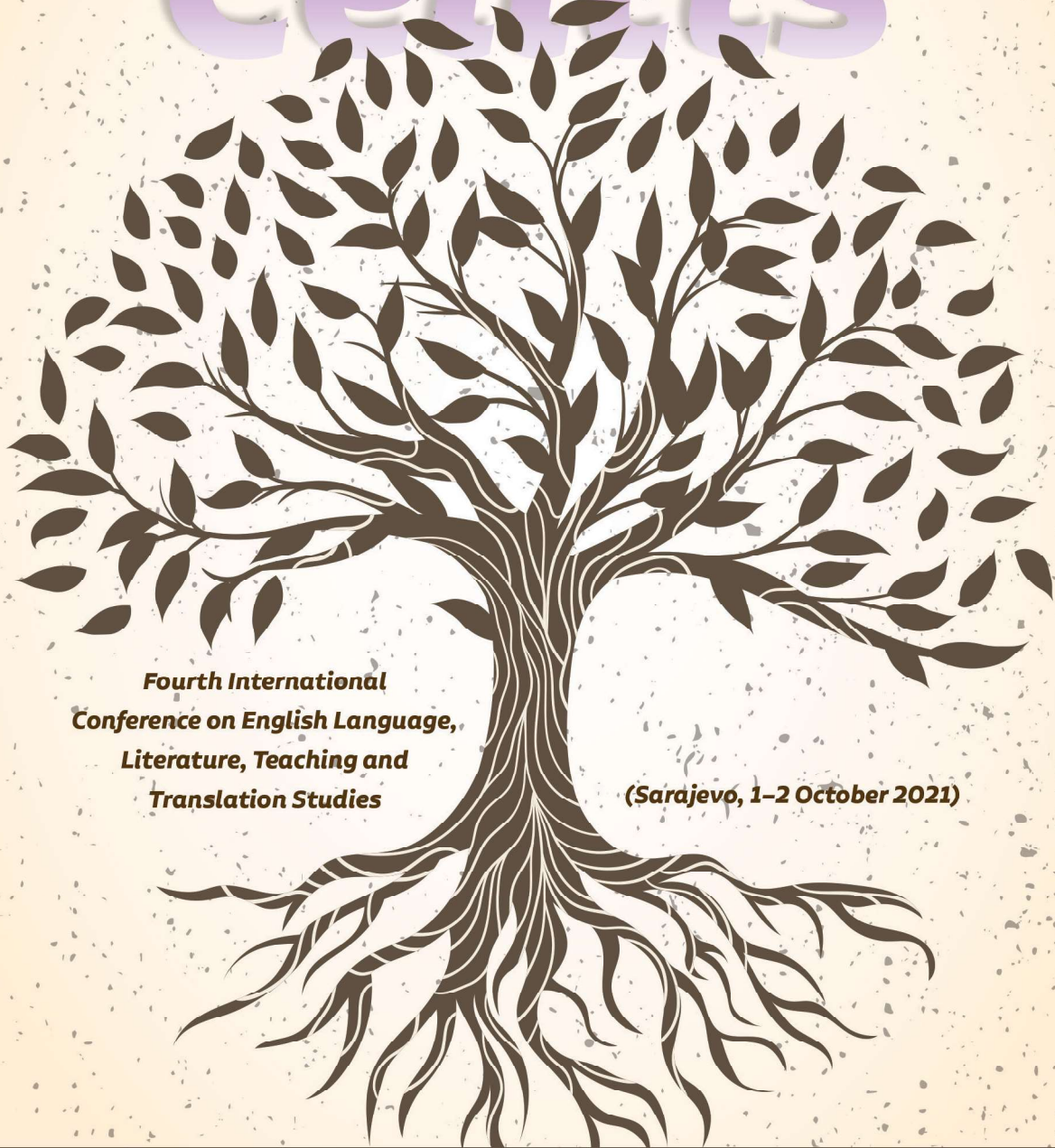


Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu
Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo



4th

CELTTS



**Fourth International
Conference on English Language,
Literature, Teaching and
Translation Studies**

(Sarajevo, 1–2 October 2021)

Proceedings

Fourth International Conference on English Language,
Literature, Teaching and Translation Studies
(4th CELLTTS)

**Re-Examining Gender Concepts and
Identities in Discourse(s) and Practice(s)
Across Periods and Disciplines**

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Sarajevo, 2022.

Foreword

The fourth International Conference on English Language, Literature, Teaching and Translation Studies (4th CELLTTS) was held online (from the premises of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo) on 1–2 October 2021. The event had originally been planned as an in-person conference at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo in September–October 2020. Alas, the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the pandemic shook the very ground beneath us and inevitably made us reconsider the plans. There were moments when the members of the CELLTTS’ Committees questioned continuing the planned activities and wondered whether it was better to call everything off; yet, the correspondence from the prospective participants of the 4th CELLTTS motivated us to rethink the position and adapt to the “new now”. Although thankful for the technology which has enabled us to keep on with our work or provided relief in our daily existence (no matter how deficient or incomplete these may have seemed), and which ensured that our Conference could take place in October 2021, we feel the urge to emphasise its effect on the humanities. At first having taken quite a great toll, the humanities paradoxically managed to quickly regroup and yet again prove that what lies at the bottom of our societies, our functioning, our mutual bond, and what provides comfort in times of uncertainty (no matter how impractical or seemingly futile at the first glance) *are* the humanities – literature and culture, language, teaching, translating, arts and philosophy, to name a few. In the very words of our former plenary speaker, whom we commemorate with this issue: “Corporate culture which has been ruling the world for at least a few decades does not have a lot of affinity and familiarity with culture in general, let alone literature. *And yet here we are; many of us still reading.*” (Radeljković, 2017, p. 28, added emphasis). A certain number of the papers inescapably point at and reflect this very fact: the vitality and adaptability of humanities in general and Anglophone studies in particular.

With the overarching topic of our fourth International Conference on English Language, Literature, Teaching and Translation Studies we attempted to cast a light on a highly relevant issue, the issue of gender. Originally the topic had been selected as we aimed at marking the centennial anniversary of the US Nineteenth Amendment by re-evaluating the progress and backlash in (all our) gender policies. A fair share of the papers in the proceedings look into the issue and examine whether and how gender has informed and influenced cultural and public policies; language use; teaching methodologies; interpretation and translation techniques and perspectives; writing, reading and the study of literature. Many of the papers also foreground the deep-seated prejudices, and some unravel the unfathomable reality: gender stereotypes have been generating inconceivable amount of aggression and hostility. It remains certain that although various gender theories and forms of political activism have been making their presence felt for at least 50 years now, they still resonate strongly in our contemporary world (from Texas to Afghanistan, to Poland and Bosnia), demonstrated in the shocking rise of gendered violence in the recent pandemic as well.

The proceedings of this conference are structured into two larger sections; however, a certain number of the articles dispute and test “neat” classifications, demonstrating the interdependence of academic disciplines, and the pervasiveness and multidisciplinary nature of gender. Part One consists of articles in the fields of linguistics, English language teaching, and translation studies while Part Two comprises papers that concentrate on Anglophone literature, literary theory and cultural studies.

We would like to express our gratitude to our plenary speakers – Dr. Greta Olson (University of Giessen), Dr. Roelien Bastiaanse (University of Groningen, and Center for Language and Brain, HSE), and Dr. Daniel Xerri (University of Malta) – whose inspiring and moving lectures have stimulated and generated fruitful and lively exchange of ideas, and who have prompted us to re-examine gender concepts and identities from fresh perspectives across disciplines.

We also extend our appreciation to the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo for providing facilities and administrative assistance once again, albeit in a different, certainly more challenging context. Moreover, we as the Editors express special gratefulness to our programme and organising committees, and to our many reviewers without whose dedication and fervour we most certainly would not have been able to bring this project to its (new) life.

Sarajevo, May 2022
Ifeta Čirić-Fazlija & Selma Đuliman

To ***Professor Zvonimir Radeljković***,
friend, mentor, advisor and *spiritus movens* of
the Department of English Language and Literature

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LVCs and Full Verbs: A Case of Synonymy or a Lack Thereof?

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ABSTRACT

The term ‘light verb construction’ (LVC) is applied to a construction consisting of a light (or semantically bleached) verb and a deverbal noun. LVCs are often compared to their corresponding full verbs (FVs) in terms of the supposed synonymy between them. As a matter of fact, since LVCs contain two diverse components (a verb and a noun), they give speakers the opportunity to exploit both the verbal and the nominal categories to achieve greater precision of expression.

Given that the synonymy between LVCs and their corresponding full verbs is often pointed out, this paper aims to discuss the factors motivating the occurrence of LVCs, their use and productivity in a language, i.e. to document the circumstances that encourage the periphrastic structuring of the predicate. By exploring examples from the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English the following phenomena will be considered: a clear semantic difference between LVCs and the corresponding FVs, the possibility of premodifying the noun in the LVC with an adjective and the possibility of quantifying the noun in the LVC. Particular attention will be paid to the aspectual opposition established between LVCs and FVs, as well as the possibility for a different hierarchy (and reduction) of arguments offered by the LVCs, which is closely related to the information structure of the sentence.

Keywords: full verbs, light verb constructions, synonymy

1. Introduction

This paper explores the debatable synonymy between light verb constructions (LVCs) and their corresponding full verbs. As is widely acknowledged, a relation of synonymy is established between words that have exactly the same meaning and are interchangeable in diverse contexts. The concept of absolute synonymy involves interchangeability in all contexts and is recognized only rarely, if at all. The different nouns used to refer to the same animal or plant could be considered absolute synonyms, but even then it is disputable whether the criterion for interchangeability in all contexts is met, as some of these words might be regional variants or could vary in the level of formality. What happens much more frequently is that a word is synonymous with another word only in some of its senses/uses but not all, in which case the words are labelled as near-synonyms. Whether there exists a sense relation of synonymy between two words can be verified by applying a substitutability test.

The term ‘light verb construction’ (LVC) is applied to a construction consisting of a light (or semantically bleached) verb and a deverbal noun. LVCs are often compared to their corresponding full lexical verbs (FVs) in terms of the supposed synonymy between them (*to have a chat vs to chat*, or *to make a promise vs to promise*). As a matter of fact, since LVCs contain both a verbal and a nominal component within their structure, they give speakers the opportunity to exploit both the verbal and the nominal categories to achieve greater precision of expression.

Given that the synonymy between LVCs and their corresponding full verbs is often pointed out, this paper aims to discuss the factors motivating the occurrence of LVCs, their use and productivity in a language, i.e. to document the circumstances that favour the periphrastic structuring of the predicate at the expense of FVs. By exploring examples from English online corpora the following phenomena are considered: a clear semantic difference between LVCs and the corresponding FVs, the possibility of premodifying the noun in the LVC with an adjective and the possibility of quantifying the noun in the LVC. Particular attention is paid to the aspec-

tual opposition established between LVCs and FVs, as well as the possibility for different hierarchy (and reduction) of arguments offered by the LVCs, which is closely related to the information structure of the sentence.

For the purposes of this analysis, the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) were searched for collocations consisting of a verb (*make, give, have* or *take*) and a noun. Although these corpora are annotated for parts of speech, the results still had to be filtered manually to find examples demonstrating the ‘light’ use of these verbs in combination with a deverbal noun. Selected examples are included in this paper to illustrate the main points.

2. Comparison between LVCs and Their Corresponding Full Verbs

LVCs testify to the “increasingly analytic character of English” (Brinton, 1996, p.193), which stems from the tendency to substitute inflectional forms with periphrastic ones. Synonymy between the simple and the analytic forms is often assumed in the proscriptions of purists, who acknowledge only register- or style-related differences between these two structures (Brinton, 1996, p.193). From a historical perspective, as much as there were assertions that LVCs are interchangeable with the FVs in the past, there have also been claims that LVCs are not necessarily equivalent to their corresponding FVs (Olsson 1961, Visser 1970, Quirk et al., 1985 and Algeo 1995, as cited in Brinton, 1996). The following paragraphs will demonstrate that LVCs differ from the FVs in several important ways.

According to Allerton (2002), those light verb constructions that do not have a corresponding full verb parallel are labelled *defective*. This means that there exists no such full verb that is etymologically related to the eventive noun in the LVC, as is the case with the construction *to make an effort* for which there is no corresponding full verb **to effort* (Allerton, 2002, p.235). Yet, it is disputable whether we can regard these constructions as light verb constructions, albeit defective ones. This is because by the definition adopted in this paper, the nouns within the LVCs (or *the*

stretched verb constructions in Allerton's terms) must be deverbal nouns derived from existing full verbs.

In addition to these rare occurrences, there are also situations where a FV has a corresponding LVC, but their semantic meaning is not identical. Such is the case with the FV *to love* versus the LVC *to make love*, each of which indicates a distinct type of interpersonal relationship. This is why both the FV and the LVC have application in language, each in its separate semantic domain.

When it comes to the adjectival modification of the noun within the LVC, there are several distinct situations. First, a relationship of semantic equivalence can be established between a LVC in which the deverbal noun is premodified by an adjective and a construction with a full verb that is modified by an adverb, as is evident from examples (1a) and (1b).

(1a) ...she left the hotel and *took a brief walk* down Hlavn Tda, the main street. (BNC)

(1b) ...she left the hotel and *walked briefly* down Hlavn Tda...

In example (2), on the other hand, a relation of synonymy cannot be established since the LVC and the construction with the FV have different interpretations. The LVC *have a quiet read* implies reading in a peaceful environment, while the construction *read quietly* implies reading by making little or no noise.

(2) Many people practice relaxation techniques, ... or *have a quiet read* in bed before turning out the light. (BNC)

Similarly, the LVC in (3), *took a short walk*, has no parallel in the construction *walked shortly*, as the adverb *shortly* means *soon* or *abruptly*, while the intended meaning of the adjective *short* used in the context of the LVC *took a short walk* is that the walk has lasted a small amount of time. This absence of total correspondence between LVCs with premodifying adjectives and FV constructions with an adverbial modifier has also been recognized by Stein (1991).

(3) Silas and I *took a short walk* along the track. (BNC)

Occasionally there is no corresponding adverb for the premodifying adjective used in the LVC, which makes the construction with a FV impossible, as is the case with *have a big argument* in (4) versus **argue bigly*.
 (4) So they *had a big argument* downstairs... (BNC)

For all these reasons, linguists generally consider adjectival modification to be one of the main motives for the use of LVCs. Some authors go even that far to claim that adjectival modification is the motivation behind the use of LVCs as much as fifty percent of the time (Rensky, 1964, as cited in Brinton, 1996).

The advantages of pluralization and quantification of the noun within the LVCs have been long recognized in linguistics. Jespersen (1942) was among the first linguists to point that out. Purely eventive nouns do not always take plural forms. It is well-known in linguistics that “less lexicalized nominalizations denote actions only, and are thus closest to the verbal meaning, but as they lexicalize, they become more polysemous, taking on result meanings and then possibly also product meanings” (Behrens, 2014, p.146). Research indicates that nouns with a more pronounced resultative interpretation oftentimes have plural forms, and in LVCs these nouns can appear either in the singular (5a) or in the plural (6a), depending on the number of times the action took place on the temporal axis. This is because lexicalized nominalizations typically adapt more readily to the word class of nouns, thus adopting some, if not all, nominal categories. There can be no semantic equivalence between the original sentences and the paraphrases with the FV *call* in these contexts unless the verb is used transitively, in which case an addressee must additionally be mentioned. Therefore, in these cases a relationship of synonymy between the FVs and the LVCs cannot be established, which is evident from the comparison of (5a) to (5b) and (6a) to (6b).

(5a) Once he got onto Santa Monica Boulevard, he *made a call*. (COCA)

(5b) Once he got onto Santa Monica Boulevard, he *called* [someone].

(6a) He and his staff *made calls* to assure that the media played along.
 (BNC)

(6b) He and his staff *called* [someone] and [someone else] to assure that the

media played along.

When it is important to specify the number of individual occurrences of the action profiled with the deverbal noun, speakers use numerals before the noun. This option is more readily available when the deverbal noun has a more resultative or objectified interpretation, as in (7) and (8), rather than a strictly eventive one. Close paraphrases with the FVs *sip* and *bite* are possible, but in such cases the idea of quantity needs to be conveyed with an adverb of definite frequency, such as *twice* or *three times* corresponding to the numerals *two* and *three* in examples (7) and (8) respectively.

- (7) She *took two sips*, then the water ran out of her mouth on to her chin. (BNC)
- (8) ... he *took three big bites* and the banana was gone. (COCA)

In situations when it is enough to convey a vague idea of plurality, it is equally possible to use quantifiers denoting imprecise quantity, such as: *some*, *a few*, *several*, etc. as in (9) or to avoid using quantifiers, as in (10). In these cases, it is irrelevant to mention the exact number of occurrences of the action. What is relevant is that this number is more than one. Paraphrases with the FVs *sip* and *bite* would lack the compactness of the LVCs and might sound somewhat strained or awkward.

- (9) She *took a few sips* of the hot coffee. (BNC)
- (10) People *took bites* without buying the cookies. (COCA)

Thus LVCs make it possible for speakers to easily make a contrast between a single occurrence and multiple occurrences of an event.

Closely related to the singularity of the deverbal noun in the LVCs, which is signaled by the presence of the indefinite article before the noun itself, is the interpretation of the LVCs as ‘single, time-bounded events’ (Berk, 1999, p. 31-32). Along the same lines are the views of Brinton (1996, 2011) Wierzbicka (1982) and Dixon (1991). With the full verb paraphrases this construal of actions or events as discrete time-limited units on the temporal axis is not possible. This contributes to an aspectual opposition

between the FVs and the corresponding LVCs, where the LVCs indicate perfective aspect by emphasizing the completion of an activity, which is usually of a shorter duration, while the FVs are perceived as more suited for the expression of ongoing activities that proceed over a longer period of time. For these reasons, one cannot draw a relation of total synonymy between example (11a) and its FV paraphrase in (11b). Example (11a) is clearly marked for the singularity and time-boundedness of the event, which is not the case with the FV paraphrase (11b), which could easily be perceived as taking a longer period of time.

(11a) ... she held him close and *gave him a passionate kiss*. (BNC)

(11b) ... she held him close and *kissed him passionately*.

In the unmarked word order, in LVCs the nominalization follows the light verb, thus placing the action profiled as a noun in direct object position. Hence, a light verb construction “serves as a means of isolating the ‘notional nucleus of the verbal predication’ and ‘singl[ing] it out as a rheme” (Rensky, 1964, as cited in Brinton, 1996). Yet, according to the functional sentence perspective, besides being realized as a rheme (in the neutral word order), the nominal component of the LVC can also be realized as a theme (in the marked word order). For example, there are several possibilities for different thematization of the arguments in the LVCs, illustrated by examples (12a) - (14). Example (12a) shows syntactic passivization of the LVC *make a discovery*, where neither the agent nor the object of the discovery is explicitly expressed. It would be impossible to render this sentence into either active or passive voice simply by using the FV *discover* without mentioning at least one of its arguments, as shown in (12b) and (12c) respectively. Not to mention the fact that the placement of *the discovery* in theme position in (12a) serves some vital information structuring purposes, and these are: presenting familiar information first, omitting the nominative and the accusative argument of the FV if they are already mentioned, unknown, irrelevant, or preferably undisclosed. Sometimes in LVCs only the accusative argument of the FV is reduced,

as in (13), other times only the agent is reduced, as in (14) and occasionally all three arguments are overtly present. Topolińska (1982) argues that the nominalization (within the LVC) “in many cases either obligatorily reduces the number of superficially present arguments or at least allows their absence” (Тополињска, 1982, p. 36-37). It is claimed that twenty percent of the LVC cases are motivated by the possibility to omit the otherwise compulsory accusative argument of the full verb (Rensky, 1964, as cited in Brinton, 1996).

(12a) *The discovery was made* yesterday. (BNC)

(12b) [Someone] *discovered* [something] yesterday.

(12c) [Something] *was discovered* yesterday.

(13) *The discovery was made* by a farmer out spraying his crops. (BNC)

(14) *The original discovery of the cancer gene was made* by fragmenting the DNA of human bladder tumour cells and feeding the fragments to cultured mouse cells. (BNC)

Topolińska (1982) lays particular emphasis on the possibility of changing the communicative hierarchy of the arguments, as one of the most important factors that encourage the use of LVCs in a language (Тополињска, 1982, p.36-38). Practically, this means that a LVC can express passive meaning without applying syntactic passivization transformations. X gives help to Y as opposed to *Y receives/gets help from X* closely reflects the active-passive voice opposition between *help* and *am/is/are helped*. LVCs with the light verbs *receive* and *get* are commonly associated with passivization of this kind. This phenomenon has also been called *lexical passivization* (Allerton, 2002, p. 251), as well as *semantic passivization* (Коњик, 2006, p. 35).

The importance of LVCs for achieving cohesion in discourse has also been pointed out (Brugman, 2001). This can be illustrated with example (15a) where the LVC facilitates the establishment of anaphoric reference. In relation to the construction with the FV in (15b), the use of the LVC in example (15a) proves to be a much better solution for the achievement of anaphoric reference.

(15a) Firm statements about the importance of grammar would be taken by many teachers and members of the general public to mean a return to Latinate grammar, and we did not wish *to give this false impression*.

(15b) *...and we did not wish *to impress [someone] falsely like this*.

The demonstrative pronoun *this* within the noun phrase *this false impression* anaphorically points backwards in the text, to the entire first clause within this compound sentence, and thus it has a cohesive function. It is practically impossible to replace the LVC *give this false impression* with the corresponding FV *impress* without consequences to the meaning, compactness and cohesion of the sentence for several reasons. First, it is debatable to what extent the FV *impress* is synonymous with the LVC *give an impression*; then, the construction with the corresponding FV must be transitive, i.e. the speaker needs to indicate who is impressed, and finally the adverb *falsely* does not collocate well with the FV *impress*.

Furthermore, there is a possibility to create paradigmatic series of LVCs based on the same deverbal noun (where each LVC illustrates a different aspect of the activity). Full verbs on their own cannot express such subtle semantic shades of meaning, as is evident from the series of LVCs with the noun *attention* listed in examples (16a) to (24). The semantic subtleties of these LVCs cannot be captured by exclusively relying on the FV *attend*. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary both document an intransitive use of the verb *attend* with the meaning "to pay attention to what somebody is saying or to what you are doing" (OALD) and "to give attention to what someone is saying" (CALD). This means that the English verb *attend* cannot adequately substitute any of the LVCs with the deverbal noun *attention*, with the exception of *give/devote/pay attention*, which is demonstrated in example (16a) and its FV paraphrase in (16b). Unlike this example, from examples (17) to (24) it becomes clear that the verb *attend* cannot substitute for the LVCs *attract/capture/draw/command/catch/grab one's attention*, *hold/keep/rivet one's attention*, *direct/turn one's attention*, *receive/get one's attention*, *divert/draw attention* and *concentrate/focus attention*. This semantic versatility of LVCs is yet

another strong motivation for their use.

1) *give/devote/pay (one's) attention* ('X allocates Y /enough, too much, little.../ space in the field of its conscious perception'¹)

(16a) She seemed preoccupied with other things, although she *paid close enough attention* to what Wren was saying... (COCA)

(16b) ... although she *attended* closely enough to what Wren was saying...

2) *attract/capture/draw/command/catch/grab one's attention* ('Y is introduced into the field of X's conscious perception')

(17) One face, happier than the others, *caught his attention*. (BNC)

3) *hold/keep/rivet one's attention* ('The fact that X introduced Y into the field of its conscious perception prevents X from introducing anything else in that field')

(18) The teeth, long and jagged, grayish-white, *held her attention*. (COCA)

4) *direct/turn/draw one's attention* ('X introduces Y, and not something else, into the field of its conscious perception' or 'Z makes X introduce Y into the field of its conscious perception')

(19) So the professor *turned his attention* to Diana, and invited her to play the piano. (BNC)

(20) Gascoigne saw MacArthur on 21 May and *drew his attention* to an article that day in the Nippon Times...(BNC)

5) *receive/get one's attention* ('Y is allocated /enough, too much, little ... / space in the field of X's conscious perception')

(21) '...Jack Scamp's stolen my watch.' That *had got his attention*. (BNC)

6) *divert/draw attention* ('Y2 is introduced into the field of X's conscious

1 The paraphrases given in parenthesis for the LVCs entries 1-4 and 6-8 were originally presented by Topolińska (1982) in her contrastive analysis of Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Polish LVCs with the deverbal noun *pažnja/vnimanie/uwaga* (*attention*) (Тополинська, 1982, p.41-48). In these paraphrases X stands for the first participant i.e. the person whose attention is being discussed, Y is the second participant i.e. a person, a thing or a relation that is the object of attention, Y2 indicates the thing that diverts X's attention from Y1, and Z is a causer that directs X's attention to Y.

perception’, which causes X to exclude Y1 from the field of its conscious perception’ or ‘Z makes X exclude Y from the field of its conscious perception’)

- (22) The conversation *diverted Julia’s attention* from her phantom arms and the frosty operating room.
- 7) *concentrate/focus attention* (X introduces/keeps Y in the centre of the field of its conscious perception’)
- (23) We shall now *concentrate our attention* on his criticism of proposition (b)... (BNC)
- 8) *retain attention* (‘Y is introduced into the field of X’s conscious perception and it remains there longer than expected’)
- (24) Ads *retained attention* better if they delivered several snippets of joy in succession... (COCA)

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper sheds some light on the supposed synonymy between LVCs and their corresponding full verbs. By addressing this issue from several perspectives, it was clearly demonstrated that some of the circumstances where substitutability of LVCs and FVs was hardly possible or impossible included: the different semantic load of the FVs in comparison to the LVCs, the use of adjectival premodifiers to the nouns in the LVCs, the use of pluralized and quantified nouns within the LVCs, the neutralization of the accusative argument of the FV in the LVC, as well as the possibility for a linear rearrangement of sentence constituents in compliance with the specific contextual and discourse needs. This list is not exhaustive, however. There are other factors that could also potentially validate the distinction between the LVCs and the corresponding FVs, such as the different styles or registers these structures are typically associated with. Yet the factors elaborated in this paper constitute some of the major issues.

This article has shown that there is a wide variety of situations where a LVC would be better suited than a FV for the expression of a particular idea. However, the preference for LVCs is not always conditioned by a given context, but sometimes reflects the original tendency of people to shape the world around them by using nouns, as terms that do not denote relations, but have referents in the world around us and within us (Gradečak -Erdeljić, 2004, p.31). That said, it is a fact of life verified in present-day corpora, that native speakers of English use both FVs and LVCs, constantly accommodating to the ever-changing demands of diverse speech situations. This certainly would not have been the case had these two structures been absolutely synonymous.

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