

UDC 811.111’36

THE CONSTRUCTION “OFF WE STARTED, HE REMAINING BEHIND” AS AN “ABSOLUTE” UNIT OF THE LANGUAGE

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The article represents different viewpoints of grammarians considering the issue of functioning of “absolute” units in language and speech. During the consideration of this problem scholars are adducing pro and contra arguments from the perspective of both theoretical and practical grammar.

Key words: absolute usage, Absolute Participle Construction, concept, term.

Попович О. С., Гродська Е. Б., Михайлюк С. Л. Конструкція Off we started, he remaining behind як «абсолютна» одиниця мови. Стаття представляє різні точки зору граматистів з проблеми функціонування «абсолютних» одиниць у мові та мовленні. В ході розгляду цього питання вчені висувують аргументи «за» та «проти» з позицій як теоретичної, так і практичної граматики.

Ключові слова: абсолютне вживання, незалежний дієприкметниковий зворот, поняття, термін.

Попович Е. С., Гродская Э. Б., Михайлюк С. Л. Конструкция Off we started, he remaining behind как «абсолютная» единица языка. Статья представляет различные точки зрения грамматистов по проблеме функционирования «абсолютных» единиц в языке и речи. В ходе рассмотрения этого вопроса ученые выдвигают аргументы «за» и «против» с позиций как теоретической, так и практической грамматики.

Ключевые слова: абсолютное употребление, независимый причастный оборот, понятие, термин.

Problem statement and its relationship with important scientific and practical tasks. Not a single grammarian has given a definition of the term «absolute» in English philology. Such definition can be found in some English explanatory dictionaries only [24–28].

However, as any term designating the most meaningful logical concepts requires exact definition and ground, the more so since this concept and its designated term is often found in works of grammarians.

The authors of this research paper will make an effort to present the points of view of the most linguists that spoke out on issue of the term “absolute” and those elements that, according to their opinion, can be adopted by it.

Analysis of the last researches and publications. By implication, the term “absolute” in any case is explained by some grammarians as it applies to a certain construction or one or another of its component. For example, Fischler, Arkadievskaya and coauthors, and others [1; 14].

A variety of the terms in particular used by the authors is explained by the fact that they examined this problem to detonate the construction “Weather permitting, we for a walk” underlined in the sentence. So, it is called:

- Absolute Participle Constructions [4; 5; 9; 16; 22];
- Nominative Absolute [14; 18];
- Absolute Participle Construction [6; 10; 15];
- Absolute Nominative Participle Construction [2; 7];
- Independent Participle Phrase [3].

Most authors of theoretical and practical grammars examining the absolute use of language units are limited to the construction traditionally called Nominative

Absolute only [8; 11; 12]. Some authors write about the use of the adjective, noun, adverb, word combination including a prepositional phrase in this construction.

The analysis of the definition of the term “absolute” given above allows to single out preliminary at least two descriptions of its contents namely – syntactic independence of one or another language unit from other components of the sentence and its usage without a component it usually combines with. It is easy to notice that the second out of these descriptions contains in itself the first one semantically. On this basis, the content of the grammatical concept of the term “absolute unit” can be defined at this stage of research as “used without anything it usually combines with”.

All above said show that in English philology, there is no single opinion of syntactic functions of constituents of this construction, and also syntactic status of the whole construction on the whole [14; 21].

Except for this construction the term “absolute” often applies to some anglicizes mark the absolute use of infinitive, participle, verb in the Imperative Mood, adjectives (substantive adjectives) in a superlative degree, reflexive and reciprocal verbs (in the cases of pronouns omission), and some dialects (for example, C.E. Gursky calls them relatives).

As evident from the points of view given above, contradictions in statements not only make a term “absolute” clear but even do doubtful its usage for those who are going to undertake serious linguistic studies of text corps of different functional styles aimed at the analysis of absolute units. For such researchers, definiteness at an object of research selection is needed.

The aim of the paper is to attempt to begin consideration of one of the constructions that, according to the opinion of grammarians, belongs to the group of abso-

lute syntactic constructions of English and to make clear at least one of the speech units regarding its "absolute" descriptions.

Presentation of the main research material. We will try to analyze the language units all grammarians without an exception talk about as absolutely used. The constructions like "Off we started, he remaining behind" can be referred to such units. In this sentence as J. Cerme [17] explains the pronoun 'he' is absolutely used as a pronoun in the Nominative Case in the function of a subject usually combines with a verb in the personal form while in the constructions like these a pronoun in a nominative case in the function of a subject combines with participles, adjectives, dialects and nouns. Such explanation fully complies with the definition of content of notion for the term "absolute" given above.

If a pronoun is absolutely used in similar constructions according to J. Cerme, then J. Nesfield in one place of the work [19, 7] supposes that the participle is absolutely used here and literally on the next page he explains that the whole phrase is absolutely used.

To answer the question whether a participle is used in such constructions absolutely, it is necessary to take into account grammatical status of all constructions and their components. The material mentioned shows that constructions like "he remaining" are the secondary structures of predication consisting of the secondary subject (he) and the secondary predicate (remaining) in this case. Accordingly, J. Cerme calls these components a subject and a predicate although he does not use term "secondary". It is this grammatical status of the examined construction and their components that is understood by such anglicizes as O.M. Fischler [14, 43], Z.V. Sulimovskaya [13, 95]. Both coauthors and R. Quirk call such constructions "Absolute Clauses" [21, 760]. Therefore, the participle 'remaining' appears in the function of a predicate in this construction. However, mostly a predicate is expressed by either a verb in the personal form or verb in the personal form plus complement to it (primary predicate). In accordance with the definition of content of notion regarding the term "absolute" given above, a participle is not absolutely used in such constructions.

On the contrary, G. Show does not call the constructions like "my work completed" (in the sentence "My work completed, I left for home") a clause (a structure of predication) but a phrase exactly because it contains neither a subject nor a predicate [22, 25]. G. Show calls the group of words not containing a subject and a predicate the phrase.

But G. Show as well as R. Quirk with the coauthors considers that neither this single nor that component is absolutely used in such cases but all construction on the whole. As for the syntactic function of a participle (completed), then G. Show determines it as a modifying agent of a noun. O.S. Ahmanova in the "Linguistic dictionary" also considers that the adjective "dead" in the sentence "Henry dead, the crown was seized by his uncle" is a definition in an absolute construction [23, 59].

One of the syntactic structures that will be considered in the paper is a structure of modification consisting of a major term and a modifying agent to it. A

modifying agent will be realized in speech either an attribute (cold weather) or an adverbial (modifying agent) (The student studies well). As it was stated, the second compliment of the examined constructions is not an attribute but a secondary *predicate*.

Further examining the same constructions most anglicizes are quite right saying that all of them are used in the function of different adverbial modifiers: time, reason, manner, purpose and consequence, etc. [20]. It follows from here that the examined construction is a *modifying agent* in the sentence, and functionally basic components G. Show gives as an example in the sentence can be presented as follows: My work completed (modifying agent), I left for home (major member). And simultaneously a major member depends on a modifying agent in this sentence. This is a structure of modification.

L.P. Vinokurova in "Grammar of English" uses two terms to denote the construction like "No agreement having been reached", namely: the Nominative Absolute Participle Construction and the Absolute Participle Construction, supposing that the first "appears out-of-date for a modern language as an English noun does not have a nominative" [6].

However, such statement does not affect the morphological essence of a component standing before a participle, and the use of the term "Nominative" appears more successful because the personal pronoun that often functions in such constructions is always in the Nominative Case (he, she, we, etc.). These pronouns in the Nominative Case can replace such nouns in them as the man, the woman, the people, etc. The term 'Common Case' could be understood as the Objective Case that is never used in such constructions.

Therefore, it is fully clear that English grammarians (for example, J. Cerme) call the similar constructions the Nominative Absolute [17, 536] or Absolute Nominative [17, 42].

As to the second term used by L.P. Vinokurova, namely – the Absolute Participle Construction, it can be understood in two ways: "Absolute Participle Construction" and "Absolute Participle Construction", i.e. either as a construction with a participle that is used absolutely or as a construction in which a participle is absolutely used. First, both meanings of the term reflect the structure of these constructions inadequately, as a substantive component is an obligatory part in the Nominative Case. Second, it was already shown above that the examined constructions taken on the whole are not absolutely used and that the participle is not absolutely used in them either.

Conclusions from this research and prospect. Language and text units' search that can be named "absolute" is one of the interesting and necessary works conducted by the grammarians. Such units show certain processes in human consciousness and they must be considered carefully and objectively.

Research results showed that the described constructions like "Off we started, he remaining behind" for many grammarians remain debatable, if we examine them in the aspect of research of absolute units. If some researches find elements in them that can be adopted by "absolute", i.e. used absolutely, then oth-

ers have fully reasonable arguments to contest absolute descriptions found.

Nevertheless, a similar discussion appears useful enough too many linguists as it gives an opportunity to accept one or another point of view and begin fruitful research of the "absolute" elements of a text in

order to prove the correctness/incorrectness of different positions.

In future, it is assumed to undertake a study of other units used absolutely or in absolute constructions – infinitive, verbal forms in the imperative mood and so on.

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