

Đặc điểm cú pháp của các mẫu động từ đơn trong các bản tình ca tiếng Anh

TÓM TẮT

Bài viết trình bày kết quả nghiên cứu về các mẫu cú pháp của các động từ đơn trong các bản tình ca tiếng Anh. Chúng tôi khám phá tất cả các loại mẫu của động từ đơn và mức độ sử dụng từng loại của các loại mẫu đó. Một trong những mục tiêu quan trọng nhất của nghiên cứu là cung cấp thông tin về tần suất của các loại mẫu động từ đơn, qua đó những ai có quan tâm đến học thuật sẽ thấy hữu ích khi biết loại mẫu động từ đơn nào là xuất hiện phổ biến cũng như loại mẫu động từ đơn nào là hiếm xuất hiện trong các bài hát tình yêu tiếng Anh. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu cũng giúp người học tiếng Anh có cái nhìn đầy đủ hơn về những đặc tính cú pháp của các mẫu mà trong đó các động từ đơn có thể được sử dụng. Những phát hiện này có ý nghĩa sư phạm đối với việc sử dụng các bài hát tiếng Anh trong việc dạy và học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ.

Từ khóa: Các mẫu động từ, động từ đơn, miền ngữ nghĩa, các bản tình ca tiếng Anh

Syntactic characteristics of verb patterns of single-word lexical verbs in English love songs

ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of research on the syntactic patterns of single-word lexical verbs in English love songs. We explore all the types of patterns for single-word lexical verbs and the extent to which each type of pattern is used. The overall aim of the study is to provide information about the frequency of single-word lexical verb patterns, so that those with an academic interest will find it useful to know which types of lexical verb patterns occur commonly as well as which are rare in English love songs. In addition, research also helps English learners have a full understanding of the syntactic features of verb patterns in which a single-word lexical verb can be used. The findings hold pedagogical implications to the use of English songs in teaching and learning of EFL.

Keywords: *Verb patterns, single-word lexical verbs, semantic domains, English love songs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

A verb followed by another verb is a very common feature of English. The combinations of verbs can be problematic because the form the second verb takes can vary. A learner may suppose that because he has heard and seen *I intend (want, propose) to come*, he may say or write **I suggest to come*, that because he has heard and seen *Please tell me the meaning, Please show me the way*, he can say or write **Please explain me this sentence*. Because *He began talking about the weather* means about the same as *He began to talk about the weather*, the learner may suppose, wrongly, of course, that *He stopped talking about the weather* means the same as *He stopped to talk about the weather*. Also, he may know that *I like to help him* and *I like helping him* are both correct, but be unaware that with the verb *dislike*, only the second pattern is possible. He usually uses *that* after some verbs such as *want, like, wonder* or infinitive/ *to*-infinitive after any verbs. He may think if it is correct to say *I think that, I know that, He told that*, then it must be correct to say *I want that, I like that, ...* It is the same for *I usually avoid meeting him* (**I usually avoid to meet him*), etc.

Obviously, how to get a verb pattern in a right way can occasionally be tricky, so Vietnamese learners of English often have great difficulty in deciding which sentence constructions, or verb patterns (VPs), a verb can be used in. Below are some mistakes that they usually make in speaking and writing:

- They may use object verbs as if they were no-object verbs.

E.g. She saw the film but didn't like. (*She saw the film but didn't like it.*)

- They may also do the opposite. *Talk* is normally a no-object verb, but in the following the learner has used it as a two-object verb.

E.g. I talked my brother the problems. (*I talked to my brother about the problems.*)

- They sometimes use a clause instead of an object + infinitive combination.

E.g. I want that you open your books at page 11. (*I want you to open your books at page 11.*)

- They sometimes use a full infinitive where a bare infinitive is needed.

E.g. Did you hear him to come home last night? (*Did you hear him come home last night?*)

How to help the EFL learners acquire all this in a better way? From all the reasons above, we decide to choose "***Syntactic characteristics of verb patterns of single-word lexical verbs in English love songs***". The research questions are: (1) What are the most common verb patterns used in the English songs? And (2) What are the common syntactic structures of the key elements, specifically the object, associated with the most common patterns?

We hope that the words as well as the sweet melodies of the songs will help our learners a lot in learning English more easily and quickly.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical background

Up to now, there has been a lot of research and exploration into the field of English verb

patterns. Most linguists discussed the points including the process of analyzing and describing as well as subdivisions of verb patterns or a varying number of sub-patterns. They were mainly interested in the classification of verb patterns and list some (or a series of) verbs belonging to the pattern but not paying attention to their occurrences. In the panorama of single-word lexical verb pattern research, it can be seen that there is an imbalance of linguistic focus on the ways of classifying verb patterns. Hornby (1953)¹ set out 25 verb patterns and each verb pattern is illustrated with some typical examples. Leech and Svartvik (1974)² offered six basic verb patterns in which the same verb can sometimes occur in various senses. Then Leech (1989)³ divided verb patterns into three types and each type also has its subtypes. In a little different way, Close (1975)⁴, split verb patterns into five main types and like Leech and Svartvik, he claimed that a verb can enter into different patterns. Palmer (1993)⁵ provided the learners with 27 verb patterns and the numbers of the verbs belonging to the patterns. Generally speaking, none of them mentioned the occurrences of the verb patterns in which single-word lexical verbs can occur. Also, they did not tell us what sources or what registers the verbs they selected come from. Some do not offer the criteria to identify the patterns which have the same structure. Different from the linguists mentioned above, Biber et al. (1999)⁶ placed their greater emphasis not only on frequencies of verbs but also on frequencies of verb patterns. According to them, there are five major patterns and each pattern also has its own variation. In addition, they listed what verbs occurring in what patterns very carefully. They claim that most common verbs allow more than one pattern (e.g. *stand* can occur in three patterns: SV, SV+A, SVOd (p. 385), that some allow a wide range (e.g. *consider* can occur in six patterns: SV, SVOd, SV+complement clause, SVOdPo (adjective), SVOdPo (noun phrase), and SVOd + complement clause (p.387), even take all the patterns (e.g. *get* (p.390)). They also confirm that the SVOd is the most common pattern (page 392) and the most common verbs occurring in this pattern are *meet*, *see*, *bring*, and *get* (75%) (pages 385 - 390). However, they considered and showed the frequency of single-word lexical verbs in four registers: conversation, fiction, news and academic prose (pp. 491-496). Apart from the linguists' studies, a few Vietnamese linguists such as Phạm (1997)⁷, Hà (1998)⁸ and Nguyễn (2000)⁹ took part in exploring the field of verb patterns more

recently. Nevertheless, there was nothing new and special in their studies: they only used again many examples or tried to change the arrangement order of the linguists' verb patterns but did not discuss the circumstances in which the verb patterns occur.

In a word, each of them has his strong or weak points, but so far, researches on single-word lexical verb patterns in English songs as well as their occurrences in this register have been "untouched". The simple reason is that "*language, as a pattern of human behavior, does not yield 'laws' like those of Newton or Einstein*" (Dixon, 1992, p.4)¹⁰. So is the language of songs. Through studying the use of single-word lexical verb patterns in songs, we can know the way in which people behave. So, all types of single-word lexical verb patterns are taken into consideration.

2.2. Classifications of patterns for single-word lexical verbs

Palmer, H. E.⁵ defines a verb pattern as follows: "*A verb pattern is the arrangement in the sentence of any verb (or particular usage of a verb) in regard to its combinations with complements, etc.*" (p. 279). For instance, the verb *fix* belongs (among others) to the pattern SVOd whereas the verb *look* does not belong to this pattern, but to the pattern SVPs. Sometimes, a verb allows more than one pattern. For example, the verb *sing* can belong to both the pattern SV and SVOd. Of course, a verb pattern contains or does not contain a subject, because the subject, occasionally, is not visible, especially in imperatives.

According to Douglas Biber et al.⁶, there are five major patterns: intransitive patterns, monotransitive patterns, ditransitive patterns, complex-transitive patterns, and copular patterns. **Intransitive patterns** are the patterns in which verbs occur with no object or predicative complement (the SV pattern). **Monotransitive patterns** are the patterns in which verbs occur with a single direct object (the SVOd). **Ditransitive patterns** are the patterns in which verbs occur with two object noun phrases (either the SVOiOd or the SVOdOi or the SVOi + complement clause) or sometimes with only an indirect object (the SVOi). **Complex-transitive patterns** are the patterns in which verbs occur with a direct object noun phrase followed by an object predicative (the SVOdPo), or by an obligatory adverbial (the SVOdA). **Copular patterns** are the patterns in which verbs are followed by a subject predicative (the SVPs), or by an obligatory circumstance adverbial (the SVA).

Verbs in all patterns can occur with optional adverbial. Each verb pattern has its own variation. Based on Cowie, A. P. & Hornby A. S.¹², we would like to list here all sub-types of each kind of verb pattern (the optional adverbial element (+A) is excluded because it can be accompanied with all patterns as shown above).

a) Intransitive pattern

There is only one kind of intransitive pattern: SV

b) Monotransitive patterns

Monotransitive patterns include the following major patterns: SVOd in which Od is a noun phrase and SVOd in which Od is a complement clause⁶.

- + SVOd (Od: NP)
- + SVOd (Od: complement clause)
 - SVOd (Od: *that*-clause)
 - SVOd (Od: *wh*-clause)
 - SVOd (Od: *to*-infinitive clause)
 - SVOd (Od: NP + *to*-infinitive)
 - SVOd (Od: *-ing* form)
 - SVOd (Od: NP + *-ing* form)

c) Ditransitive patterns

Ditransitive patterns include the following major patterns: SVOdOi (Oi: *to/for* + NP), SVOiOd (Od: NP), SVOiOd (Od: a complement clause), and SVOi.

- + SVOdOi (Oi: *to/for* + NP)
- + SVOiOd (Od: NP)
- + SVOiOd (Od: a complement clause)
 - SVOiOd (Od: *that*-clause)
 - SVOiOd (Od: *wh*-clause)
 - SVOiOd (Od: *to*-infinitive clause)

+ SVOi (Ditransitive with only an indirect object)

d) Complex-transitive patterns

Complex-transitive patterns include the following major patterns: SVOdPo (Po: NP), SVOdPo (Po: AdjP), SVOdPo (Po: a complement clause), and SVOdA (A: obligatory adverbial)

- + SVOdPo (Po: NP)
- + SVOdPo (Po: AdjP)
- + SVOdPo (Po: a complement clause)
 - SVOdPo (Po: *to*-infinitive clause)
 - SVOdPo (Po: *bare*-infinitive clause)
 - SVOdPo (Po: *ing*- clause)
 - SVOdPo (Po: *as/ like* + NP/ AdjP)
- + SVOdA (A: obligatory adverbial)

e) Copular patterns

Copular patterns include the following patterns: SVPs (Ps: NP), SVPs (Ps: AdjP), SVPs (Ps: a complement clause), and SVA (A: obligatory adverbial).

- + SVPs (Ps: NP)
- + SVPs (Ps: AdjP)
- + SVPs (Ps: a complement clause)
 - SVPs (Ps: *that*-clause)
 - SVPs (Ps: *wh*-clause)
 - SVPs (Ps: *to*-infinitive clause)
 - SVPs (Ps: *bare*-infinitive clause)
 - SVPs (Ps: *ing*-clause)
- + SVA (A: obligatory adverbial)

Table 1 summarizes the five patterns with their subtypes. This framework is the basis for the analysis of the collected corpus of English love songs in terms of the syntactic characteristics associated with the single-word lexical verbs.

Table 1. Types of patterns for single-word lexical verbs

	Verb patterns	Constituent elements & subtypes
a	Intransitive patterns	SV
b	Monotransitive patterns	+ SVOd (Od: NP) + SVOd (Od: complement clause)
c	Ditransitive patterns	+ SVOdOi (Oi: <i>to/for</i> + NP) + SVOiOd (Od: NP) + SVOiOd (Od: a complement clause) + SVOi
d	Complex-transitive patterns	+ SVOdPo (Po: NP) + SVOdPo (Po: AdjP) + SVOdPo (Po: a complement clause) + SVOdA (A: obligatory adverbial)

e	Copular patterns	+ SVPs (Ps: NP) + SVPs (Ps: AdjP) + SVPs (Ps: a complement clause) + SVA (A: obligatory adverbial)
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3. METHODOLOGY

Our approach is descriptive, quantitative and qualitative. The descriptive analysis makes information received become specific and vivid. The quantitative analysis provides us with concrete figures of the patterns for single-word lexical verbs. The qualitative analysis will illustrate these figures. As a result, the study will be concrete, persuasive and have a high reliability.

3.1. Data collection

The number of collected songs is 250. The songs have been collected from different books across a wide range of disciplines and published in collections such as “The best song book of all time”¹¹, “World Best Collection’s Song Book”¹² (with musical scores and chords), “A collection of unforgettable love songs”¹³, “152 ca khúc để đời của Tứ quái Beatles”¹⁴, and “The best ABBA collection”¹⁵. The selected songs are based on the following themes: romantic love, familial love, friendship, the love of nature, life, homeland, peace, etc. The words in each song are written completely in English. There are also many songs in which lyrics are written under staves. Stave, or called staff, is a set of five horizontal parallel lines on which music is written¹⁶.

3.2. Data analysis

All the patterns for single-word lexical verbs were identified, classified, and statistically analyzed. The process of analyzing the data was as follows: we picked out all the verb patterns in which single-word lexical verbs are used; then we calculate the overall number of different patterns with the help of Excel software, and put the results in the statistical tables.

So as to get an exact counting of occurrence of single-word lexical verb patterns, we also paid careful attention to the number of their repeated times. There are many songs in which some verses, especially choruses, are repeated. Of course, the occurrences of single-word lexical verb patterns depend on the number of repeated times of that verse. For instance, the chorus in the song below is repeated twice. That means learners can hear (or repeat) two times the same verbs appearing in this chorus (*know, need, tell, mean, make, am*).

1. *Oh oh, yea, yea*
I love you more than I can say
I'll love you twice as much tomorrow
Oh love you more than I can say

2. *Oh oh, yea, yea*
I miss you every single day
Why must my life be filled with sorrow
Oh love you more than I can say

“CHORUS:

*Don't you **know** I **need** you so*
Tell** me please I gotta **know
*Do you **mean** to **make** me cry*
***Am** I just another guy*

3. *Oh oh, yea, yea*
I miss you more than I can say
Why must my life be filled with sorrow
Oh love you more than I can say
(CHORUS)

4. *Oh oh, yea, yea*
I love you more than I can say
I'll love you twice as much tomorrow
Oh love you more than I can say
(‘Love you more than I can say’ – Leo Sayer)

We can also recognize the repeated passage with “Back to Ref.”, “Repeat *”, “Repeat ...”, “Repeat verse 1 and Chorus”, or with a point of reprise¹⁷ which is the colon placed at the end of a passage, telling us to repeat it. (Figure 1.)

OH! DARLING

Words and Music by JOHN LENNON
and PAUL MCCARTNEY

Slowly

E+ A E

1. Oh, — dar - ling, — please be - lieve me, —
(2) dar - ling, — if you leave me, —

mf

F#m D

I'll nev - er do you — no harm; — be -
I'll nev - er make it — a - lone; — be -

lieve me when I tell you, I'll nev - er do you _____ no
 lieve me when I beg you, don't ev - er leave me _____ a -

harm. _ lone. _

harm. _ lone. _

harm. _ lone. _

Figure 1. A paragraph with a point of reprise

Apart from identifying verb patterns correctly, it is very necessary to recognize single-word lexical verbs of non-standard English in the process of picking them out. Some examples of non-standard lexical verbs are clippings (*it was* v. *'twas*, *watched* v. *watch'd*, *want* v. *wan'*, *crying* v. *cryin'*, *thought* v. *tho't* (simple past of *think*), ...; orthographic variations (*am not*, *is not*, *are not*, *has not*, *have not* v. *ain't*; *give me* v. *gimme*; *let me* v. *lemme*, ...), oscillation (*been* v. *bin*, *make* v. *mek*, *says* v. *sez*, ...) and obsoletes/obsolescents (*does* v. *doth*, *makes* v. *maketh*, *leaves* v. *leaveth*, ...).

And it is also very important to recognize the variations of element order in the pattern. We need to understand the nature of the normal or unmarked order which may be altered to meet

particular requirements of information flow, or to convey a special effect of emphasis. For example, the fronted object is often a demonstrative pronoun or a complement clause (e.g. "***This*** much I can say" (OdASV) ('Love story' – Andy Williams) or "***Why she had to go*** I don't know" (OdSV) ('Yesterday' – Beatles)). When analyzing verb patterns, it is also necessary to pay attention to the structural cohesion between consecutive lines in order to identify the elements of verb patterns exactly: SVOd (Od: *that*-clause)

*Girl, somehow I **know** deep inside
 your heart that you **need** my tender touch.*

(*'Girl, you are my love'* – Pink Boy)

In addition, in a few cases where a verb is repeated many times, only one pattern is

counted. The repeated forms are considered as occurrences, e.g. *When you **said, said, said, said** that you love me ...* (*‘Beautiful Sunday’* – Daniel Boone). In this example, the verb **say** is repeated 4 times.

Table 2: Frequencies of occurrences of patterns of the single-word verbs in the English songs

	No. of occurrences	Percentage
Monotransitive	3398	52.85%
Intransitive	1461	22.72%
Copular	645	10.03%
Complex-transitive	503	7.82%
Ditransitive	423	6.58%
Total	6430	100%

The analysis of English love songs, focusing on verb patterns, provides valuable insights into the linguistic choices made by songwriters within this genre. The predominant verb pattern observed is the monotransitive, with 3398 occurrences, constituting a significant 52.85% of the total. This finding indicates that love songs frequently utilize verbs that take a direct object, suggesting a focus on actions and expressions within the context of romantic relationships.

E.g. SVO

*I'll be there for you if you should **need** me*

*You don't have to **change** a thing*

*I **love** you just the way you are*

*So come with me and **share** the view*

I'll help you see forever too

***Hold** me now, **touch** me now*

I don't want to live without you.

(‘Nothing’s gonna change my love for you’ – Glenn Medeiros)

Following closely is the intransitive verb pattern, which appears 1461 times, making up 22.72% of the verb occurrences in the dataset. Intransitive verbs suggest actions that do not require a direct object, and their prevalence in love songs implies a significant emphasis on self-expression, personal emotions, or internal states of being when conveying romantic themes.

E.g. SV

*The sun will **rise** within your eyes // Come back to me then we will be happy together.*

(‘Boulevard’ – Dan Byrd)

*I was always certain love would **grow**.*

(‘Evergreen’ – Barbra Streisand)

*Oh, so you go again when the leading man **appears**.*

(‘Everytime you go away’ – Paul Young)

*Hey baby, you **see**, we got everything, baby*

*Even old, you **know**.*

(‘Everytime you go away’ – Paul Young)

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Frequencies of occurrences of patterns of the single-word verbs in the English songs are as follows:

*And you know you can **survive**.*

(‘Hero’ – Mariah Carey)

So tell me all about it, tell me ‘bout the plans you’re makin’

*Then tell me one thing more before I **go**.*

(‘How am I supposed to live without you’ – M. Bolton, D. James)

I don’t like to sleep alone

*Stay with me, don’t **go**.*

(‘I don’t like to sleep alone’ – Paul Anka)

*I wish I never met you, girl // You’ll never **come** again.*

(‘Feelings’ – Morris Albert)

*A whole life so lonely // And then you **come** and ease the pain.*

(‘Eternal flame’ – Bangles)

You seemed to change, you acted strange.

*Why, I’ll never **know**.*

(‘Are you lonesome tonight?’ – Elvis Presley)

You were my strength when I was weak

You were my voice when I couldn’t speak

*You were my eyes when I couldn’t **see**.*

(‘Because you loved me’ – Celine Dion)

I can never love again the way I loved you. Oh!

I can never cry again like I did when I left you...

*I can never **love** again now that we’re apart.*

(‘Foolish beat’ – Adbbie Gibson)

The verbs *see*, *know*, sometimes fall into the expressions such as ‘you see’, ‘you know’. In this case, the expressions have the interactive and cohesive meaning, and “can act as monitoring devices, whereby the person who holds the conversational floor can check that other participants are still ‘tuned in’ to what is being said.” (1999, p.1092)⁶. For that reason, these expressions can be regarded as discourse markers (1999, p.1086)⁶ and therefore the verbs included in them fall into the SV pattern:

*Baby! When I met you, there was peace, I **know**.*

(‘Islands in the stream’ – Kenny Rogers Duet with Dolly Parton)

indicates a desire to capture more intricate and multifaceted aspects of love within the lyrical narrative.

Basing on the above statistics, let's have a closer look at the realization of Od and Oi in some patterns of high frequency of occurrences.

Table 3: Frequencies of occurrences of realizations of Od of monotransitive patterns

Od realization		No. of occurrences	Percentage
NP		2373	69.86%
Clause	<i>that</i> -clause	468	13.77%
	<i>wh</i> -clause	157	4.62%
	<i>to</i> -V clause	236	6.95%
	<i>V-ing</i> clause	29	0.85%
	NP + <i>to</i> -V clause	24	0.71%
	NP + <i>bare</i> -V clause	34	1.00%
	NP + <i>V-ing</i> clause	30	0.88%
	direct speech	46	1.35%
Total		1024	30.14%
Total		3397	100%

Table 3 presents the findings of the realization of the Od of the monotransitive patterns. This detailed examination of the direct objects within the monotransitive patterns in English love songs reveals two primary groups: noun phrases (69.86%) and clauses (30.14%). This breakdown suggests that songwriters often employ a diverse range of linguistic structures to convey the objects of actions within romantic contexts. The exploration of clause subtypes within this analysis provides further insight into the nuances of how actions are expressed.

Within the clause group, the most prevalent subtype is the *that*-clause, occurring 468 times and accounting for 13.77% of the total clause occurrences. *That*-clauses are commonly used to provide additional information or context, indicating that love songs frequently employ a more descriptive and elaborate approach in specifying the direct object of actions.

E.g. Od realized as an NP

*When I **saw** you at the party, you were talking to a girlfriend.*

(‘Hey, hello’ – Joys)

*While we dance I **felt** your body, **touched** your face and then I **kiss** you.*

(‘Hello’ – Lionel Richie)

*I **close** my eyes and **see** your face.*

(‘From souvenir to souvenir’ – Demis Roussos)

Nothing’s gonna change my love for you

*You oughta know by now how much I **love** you*

The world may change my whole life through

But nothing’s gonna change my love for you.

(‘Nothing’s gonna change my love for you’ –

Glenn Medeiros)

*You can **dance** ev’ry dance with the guy who gave you the eye; let him hold you tight.*

*You can **smile** ev’ry smile for the man who held your hand ‘neath the pale moonlight.*

(‘Save the last dance for me’ – The Drifters)

*Now just a memory the tears that I **cried***

*Now just a memory the sighs that I **sighed**.*

(‘Over and over’ – David Fannel)

E.g. Od realized as a *that*-clause

*I **guess** that we’ll meet*

We’ll meet in the end.

(‘Goodbye to romance’ – Ozzy Osbourne)

You were leaving in the morning

*But you **promised** you would call me.*

(‘Hey hello’ – Joy)

*... **Said** I loved you but I lied*

Cause this is more than love I feel inside

***Said** I loved you but I was wrong*

Cause love could never ever feel so strong.

(‘Said I love you ... but I lied’ – Michael Bolton)

*If we hold on together, I **know** our dreams will never die.*

(‘If we hold on together’ – Diana Ross)

I never dared to reach for the moon

*I never **thought** I’d known heaven so soon.*

(‘Over and over’ – David Fannel)

Wh-clauses constitute another notable subtype, with 157 occurrences, making up 4.62% of the total. These clauses, introduced by *wh*-words like "who," "what," "where," etc., add interrogative or relative elements to the direct object, suggesting an inclination towards posing questions or introducing relative clauses within the lyrical narrative of love songs.

E.g. Od realized as a *wh*-clause

*I don’t **know** why you said goodbye.*

(‘Boulevard’ – Dan Byrd)

I’ll never let you see

the way my broken heart is hurtin’ me.

*I’ve got my pride and I **know** how to hide*

all my sorrows and pain

I’ll do my crying in the rain.

(‘Crying in the rain’ – Everly Brothers)

To-V clauses, observed 236 times (6.95%) implies a desire for actions to be realized or completed, showcasing a sense of intention or purpose in the actions described within the love songs.

E.g. Od realized as a *to-V* clause

Here's a little song I wrote

*You might **want** to sing it note for note.*

(*'Don't worry, be happy' – Bobby McFerrin*)

My first love, you're every breath that I take

You're every step I make

*And I, I **want** to share all my love with you.*

(*'Endless love' – Diana Ross and Lionel Richie*)

*I **want** to call the stars down from the sky*

*I **want** to live a day that never dies*

*I **want** to change the world only for you*

*All the impossible I **want** to do*

*I **want** to hold you close under the sun*

*I **want** to kiss your smile and feel the pain.*

(*'When you tell me that you love me' – Diana Ross*)

It won't be easy, you'll think it strange

*when I **try** to explain how I feel*

That I still need your love after all that I've done.

(*'Don't cry for me Argentina' – Madonna*)

V-ing clauses, with 29 occurrences (0.88%), involve verbs in their gerund form (-ing). The infrequent use of this subtype indicates a less common but still present choice for conveying a sense of continuous or ongoing romantic activities.

E.g. Od realized as a *V-ing* clause

Baby you got me like ah, woo, ah

*Don't you **stop** loving me (loving me)*

*Don't **quit** loving me (loving me)*

*Just **start** loving me (loving me)...*

*Baby, **keep** loving me*

Just love me, yeah

Just love me.

(*'Love on the Brain' – Rihanna*)

Additionally, the analysis includes NP + *to-V* clauses (24 occurrences, 0.71%), NP + *bare-V* clauses (34 occurrences, 1.00%) and NP + *V-ing* clauses (30 occurrences, 0.88%). These structures involve noun phrases followed by an

infinitive or gerund, respectively, providing variation in how direct objects are constructed within the monotransitive patterns.

E.g. Od realized as a NP + *to-V* clause, a NP + *bare-V* clause and a NP + *V-ing* clause

*I don't **want** my heart to be broken*

(*'I beg of you' – Elvis Presley*)

*Let me **hear** you say.*

(*'Let me hear you say' – Seventeen*)

*I **hear** you calling, calling for me out in the night*

But it's all bad, and I know that

(*'I hear you calling' – Gob*)

*I **see** friends shaking hands*

Saying, "How do you do?"

They're really saying

I love you

(*'What a wonderful world' – Louis Armstrong*)

Finally, direct speech is utilized as a direct object in 46 instances, accounting for 1.35%. This finding suggests that love songs sometimes incorporate direct quotations, allowing for a more immediate and authentic expression of dialogue or sentiments within the lyrical content.

E.g. Od realized as a direct speech

I sat on a rug biding my time

Drinking her wine

*We talked until two and then she **said***

"It's time for bed"

(*'Norwegian Wood' – The Beatles*)

*I'll **say**, "will you marry me?" (and what you do me, baby?)*

Got me singing (uh-ooh, uh-ooh)

Got me singing (uh-ooh, uh-ooh)

Would you marry me, baby? (uh-ooh, uh-ooh, uh-ooh)

(*'Marry me' – Jason Derulo*)

*The man **said**, "Why you think you here?"*

*I **said**, "I got no idea"*

"I'm gonna, I'm gonna lose my baby"

"So I always keep a bottle near"

*He **said**, "I just think you're depressed"*

"This me, yeah baby, and the rest"

(*'Rehab' – Amy Winehouse*)

Table 4: Frequencies of occurrences of realizations of Oi in ditransitive patterns

Oi realization		No. of occurrences		Percentage
Prepositional phrase		58		13.71%
Other phrase		170		40.19%
Clause	that-clause	90	137	32.39%
	wh-clause	27		
	to-V clause	9		
	direct speech	11		
Only an indirect object		58		13.71%
Total		423		100%

Table 4 presents the findings concerning the syntactic structures of the Oi in the ditransitive patterns. A meticulous examination of the ditransitive patterns within English love songs sheds light on the structures employed to express the indirect object, revealing four major groups: prepositional phrase (13.71%), other phrases (40.19%), clause (32.39%) and only an indirect object. This breakdown suggests that songwriters utilize a variety of linguistic forms to convey the indirect objects of actions, adding complexity and depth to the narratives within romantic lyrics.

Among the groups, prepositional phrases are used in 13.71% of ditransitive patterns. Prepositional phrases often provide additional context or information about the relationship between the verb and its indirect object.

E.g. Oi realized as a prepositional phrase

*I lost my faith, you **gave** it back to me.*

(‘Because you loved me’ – Celine Dion)

*I **say** goodbye to romance, yeah // goodbye to friend // goodbye to all the past.*

(‘Goodbye to romance’ – Ozzy Osbourne)

The largest group, other phrases, constitutes 40.19% of ditransitive patterns. This category encompasses a diverse range of linguistic constructions beyond prepositional phrases and clauses. The use of other phrases suggests a high degree of creativity and flexibility in expressing indirect objects within the lyrical content of love songs. It could include various phrase structures that contribute to the richness and variety of expressions in the songs.

E.g. Oi realized as a noun phrase

*I’ll **buy** you a diamond ring, my friend if it makes you feel alright.*

(‘Can’t buy me love’ – The Beatles)

*If you were my girl, I’d **give** you it all // Why can’t you see he’s faking?*

(‘He don’t love you’ – Human Nature)

*I wanna tell you you mean all the world to me...// You changed my life, you **showed** me the way.*

(‘Especially for you’ – Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue)

The third group, clauses, makes up 32.39% of ditransitive patterns, indicating a substantial use of complex structures to convey indirect objects. A further exploration of the subtypes of clauses within this category provides additional insights into the ways in which indirect objects are framed. Within the clause group, *that*-clauses are the most prevalent, occurring 90 times. *That*-clauses serve to provide additional information or context to the indirect object, adding layers of meaning to the actions described within the romantic narrative of the songs. *Wh*-clauses, with 27 occurrences, introduce interrogative or relative elements to the indirect object, implying a desire for more detailed information or a connection to other elements within the lyrical content. *To*-V clauses appear 9 times.

E.g. Oi realized as a noun phrase and followed with a *that*-clause

SVOiOd (Oi: NP, Od: *that*-clause):

*You **tell** me that you need me,*

Then you go and cut me down

(‘Apologize’ – OneRepublic)

E.g. Oi realized as a noun phrase and *that* is often omitted

*Have I **told** you lately I love you? Have I **told** you there’s no one else above you?*

(‘Have I told you lately?’ – Rod Stewart)

***Tell** Laura I love her, **tell** Laura I need her*

***Tell** Laura I may be late*

I’ve something to do, that cannot wait

(‘Tell Laura I love her’ – Ray Peterson)

*When you **told** me you didn’t need me anymore*

*Well, you **know** I nearly broke down and cried*

*When you **told** me you didn’t need me anymore*

*Well, you **know** I nearly broke down and died*

(‘Oh darling’ – The Beatles)

E.g. Oi realized as a noun phrase and followed with a *wh*-clause

SVOiOd (Oi: NP, Od: *wh*-clause):

How can I tell her about you?

*Girl, please **tell** me what to do*

Everything seems right whenever I’m with you

*So girl, won't you **tell** me*
How to tell her about you
 ('How can I tell her' – Lobo)

E.g. Oi realized as a noun phrase and followed with a *to-V* clause

SVOiOd (Oi: NP, Od: *to-V* clause):

Tell her not to go

I ain't holding on no more

Tell her something in my mind freezes up from time to time

('Tell her this' – Del Amitri)

Direct speech is utilized as a direct object in 11 instances, adding a dynamic and immediate quality to the expression of the indirect object within the ditransitive patterns.

E.g. Oi realized as a *to+* noun phrase and followed with a direct speech

And **I think** to myself:
 "What a wonderful world"

Yes, **I think** to myself:
 "What a wonderful world"

('What a wonderful world' - Louis Armstrong)

Oi, brought to bear as an indirect object, makes up 13.71% of ditransitive patterns.

E.g. With SVOi pattern

*If your broken heart should need repaired, then I'm the man to see, I whisper sweet things. You **tell** all your friends, and they'll come runnin' to me.*

('Handy man' – James Taylor)

Say you **say** me, say it for always that's the way it should be.

Say you **say** me, say it together naturally.

(Say you say me' – Lionel Richie)

Table 5: Frequencies of occurrences of realizations of subtypes of copular patterns

Structure			No. of occurrences		Percentage	
SVPs	Phrase	AdjP	169	188	26.20%	29.15%
		NP	17		2.64%	
		PreP	2		0.31%	
	Clause	<i>that</i> -clause	9	20	1.40%	3.10%
		<i>wh</i> -clause	0		0	
		<i>to-V</i> clause	11		1.70%	
		<i>V-ing</i> clause	0		0	
		<i>bare-V</i> clause	0		0	
		direct speech	0		0	
					208	
SVA				437	67.75%	

Table 5 presents the findings of the occurrences of realizations of subtypes of copular patterns. This table reveals two primary groups: SVA (67.75%) and SVPs (32.25%). This is different from the pattern for copula *be*: the copula *be* favours the SVPs more than the SVA. (See Nguyen Thi Ngoc Huong et al., 2020, p.97)¹⁸ The A element usually refers to either position or direction where the subject of the clause is located. It sometimes refers to a duration.

E.g.: SVA (A: obligatory adverbial)

Baby, you're all that I want

*When you're **lying** here in my arms*

I'm finding it hard to believe

We're in heaven

('Heaven' – Bryan Adams)

Love just comes and it goes.

*How long it's gonna **last**, say, nobody knows.*

('That's the way love is' – Marvin Gaye)

*But when I **get** home to you*

I find the thing that you do

will make me feel alright.

('A hard day's night' – The Beatles)

When occurring with the SVPs, the copula lexical verbs usually take a phrase (29.15%),

especially an adjective phrase (26.20%). This is contrast to the patterns for copula *be*: *be* takes more often a noun phrase than an adjective phrase when it enters into the SVPs (See Nguyen Thi Ngoc Huong et al., 2020, p.97)¹⁸. SVPs pattern is favored in English love songs because it concerns human feelings. "It reports an assessment of physical or mental state of being"⁶ (1999, p.442).

E.g.: Ps realized as an AdjP (adjective phrase)

Did your lady friend leave your nest again?

*That is very sad, makes me **feel** so bad.*

('Yellow bird' – The Brothers Four)

(In this example, the subject of the verb *feel* is the object of the verb *make*.)

My love is just for you.

*I'll be **feeling** blue living without you.*

('Girl, you are my love' – Pink Boy)

It is used to mark personal attitudes, often indicate some degree of likelihood in English love songs:

If I had to live my life without you near me,

The days would all be empty

*The nights would **seem** so long.*

(*'Nothing's gonna change my love for you' – Glenn Medeiros*)

Get, come, and go are relatively common. Although at first glance these verbs seem very similar in meaning, they are in fact sharply differentiated by their specific meanings. *Come* is used to “mark a change to a more favorable condition”⁶ (1999, p.445); in contrast, *go* is typically used to “describe a change towards some undesirable state”, and “describes both changes experienced by humans and natural processes that happen to other things.”⁶ (1999, p.444); and *get* is “usually used to describe a human experience changing to a new state”, “both physical and mental changes”⁶ (1999, p.444):

*That keeps me searching for a heart of gold
And I'm **getting** old
Keep me searching for a heart of gold
And I'm **getting** old.*

(*'Heart of gold' – Neil Young*)

*Turn me on when I **get** lonely.*

(*'She's a woman' – The Beatles*)

*Dreams that I've cherished now have **come** true.*

(*'Over and over' – David Fannel*)

*...nothing could **go** wrong because I knew
someday we're gonna love again.*

(*'Someday we're gonna love again' – The Searchers*)

*Oceans apart, day after day, and I slowly **go**
insane*

*I hear your voice on the line, but it doesn't stop
the pain.*

(*'Right here waiting for you' – Richard Marx*)

5. CONCLUSIONS

The results we have had from analyzing verb patterns for single-word lexical verbs from 250 English love songs are:

The most common verb pattern observed is the monotransitive (the SVOd). The Od element in this kind of pattern is characteristically a noun phrase or a *that*-clause. In addition, *to*-V clause and *wh*-clauses are also relatively common. The second most common verb pattern detected is the intransitive pattern (the SV). The popular patterns are relatively common. Unlike the copular *be*, single-lexical verbs have a preference for the SVA, and when used in the SVPs, they prefer taking an adjective phrase to any phrases or clauses. The complex-transitive pattern is typically popular with the SVOdPo pattern in which the Po element is related to the object rather than to the subject. The SVOdA pattern is also used to express a locative relationship between the direct object and the

adverbial. The least common is the ditransitive verb pattern (the SVOO), in which the Oi is usually realized as other phrases and a phrase followed with a *that*-clause.

Of all the patterns above, the monotransitive (SVOd) is the favourite pattern in English love songs. This proves that the language of English love songs, apart from its peculiarities, still obey the general norms of English language: “In English, the common order is subject – verb – object.”¹⁹ (1961, p.155). In English love songs, this is the main device for the musicians to describe human conditions.

*Love me tender, love me sweet. Never let me go.
You have made my life complete. And I love you
so.*

*Love me tender, love me true, all my dreams
fulfilled*

For, my darling, I love you, and I always will.

*Love me tender, love me long. Take me to your
heart.*

For it's there that I belong, and we'll never part.

(*'Love me tender' – Elvis Presley*)

Obviously, the SVOd pattern is an indispensable device in English love songs. Of course, its presence in all songs does not mean that it is used most frequently in every song. In the song below, only 4 SVOd are found against 12 SV patterns (the verbs of the SV are in bold form):

*I took a little trip to my home town. I only
stopped just to look around. And as I walk along
the thorough fare, there **was** [music **playing**]
ev'rywhere. The music came from within my
heart. How did it **happen**? How did it **start**? I
only know that I fell in love. I guess the answer
lies up above.*

*Oh! What a feeling! My heart was **reeling**. The
bells were **ringing**, the birds were **singing**. And
so the music, it goes on and on... all through the
night until the break of dawn.*

*I hear a birdie up in a tree, I hear [him saying
this melody]*

*Oh! What a feeling! My heart was **reeling**. The
bells were **ringing**, the birds were **singing**. And
so the music, it goes on and on... all through the
night until the break of dawn.*

*I fell in love where the sun goes down, I with my
lover in my home town.*

*And so I **sing**, yeah, yeah, yeah!!!”* (*'My home
town' – Paul Anka*)

(*'My home town' – Paul Anka*)

Thus, no song is exclusively for a kind of pattern. So, the same song can be used to teach several patterns.

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