

## Features of Modern Understanding of the Concept of "Love" in Student Families

Olena PETYAK<sup>1</sup>,  
Alla RUDENOK<sup>2</sup>,  
Taisiia KOMAR<sup>3</sup>,  
Zinaida ANTONOVA<sup>4</sup>,  
Yuliia DANCHUK<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph. D. in Psychology, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, National University of Khmelnytskyi, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0635-493X>, [lenapetyak@gmail.com](mailto:lenapetyak@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Ph. D. in Psychology, Assistant Professor, National University of Khmelnytskyi, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1197-0646>, Web of Science Author ID: <https://publons.com/researcher/4236111/alla-rudenok>, [rudenok-alla@ukr.net](mailto:rudenok-alla@ukr.net)

<sup>3</sup> Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor, Professor of Psychology and Pedagogics Department, National University of Khmelnytskyi, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8957-0971>, Web of Science Author ID: <https://publons.com/researcher/4231711/taisiiakomar/>, [komartayisiya@gmail.com](mailto:komartayisiya@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Ph. D. in Psychology, Assistant Professor, National University of Khmelnytskyi, Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1920-7410>, Web of Science <https://app.webofknowledge.com/author/record/42150046>, [shvedzina@ukr.net](mailto:shvedzina@ukr.net)

<sup>5</sup> Ph. D. in Psychology, Senior Lecturer at the department of general and practical psychology of Kamyans-Podilsky Ivan Ogienko National University, Kamyans-Podilsky, Ukraine, ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5576-9923>, [Uliyadancuk@gmail.com](mailto:Uliyadancuk@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The scientific article describes the peculiarities of the perception of student marriage partners of the concept of "love" as a romantic feeling. The aim of the article was to clarify the features of the modern understanding of the verbalized concept of "love" among student marriage partners.

The methodology of researching the personal meaning of the concept of "love" was aimed at identifying their semantic spaces among 142 students who are in a marital relationship through a free direct associative experiment.

As a result of the study of the associative field of "love" for five reactions for women and men, the peculiarities of the modern perception of married partners of the definition of "love" is the association with trust and care, care and tenderness. It was also found that the studied phenomenon is a category of intimate relationships aimed at satisfying sexual desire.

Analysis of the data of a free associative experiment suggests that the idea of love in marital relations of students generally correlates with scientific ideas about these phenomena. Love is seen as "trust", "tenderness", "passion", "respect", "sex", "understanding", "hugs". These associations belong to the associative fields of various topics, including spiritual and moral, psychological, cultural and philosophical. The most common associations were also: faith, dreams, romance, beauty, motherhood, partnership, view, positive, value, strength, mutual need. Therefore, it allows us to conclude about the positive perception of the concept of "love". Students' daily understanding of the concept of "love" has an emotional and psychological color with a physical component.

**Keywords:** *emotionality, concept, love, free associative experiment, lexical-semantic field, student marriage.*

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## 1. Introduction

According to socio-psychological research, modern youth sees love as the main reason for the beginning of a romantic relationship (Avdonkina, 2011). In second place, as a rule, are "common values" or "spiritual intimacy" (Chernyak, 2004). Love is often mentioned when mentioning the "traditional values" of Ukrainians, there have been attempts to strengthen this conservative discourse (Pecherskaya, 2012). But love as a motive for marriage, love as the basis for family and marriage has not always been our natural reality.

In a 1992 anthropological study, the concept of "romantic love" (researchers noted that it is not always possible to draw a clear line between "romantic love" (Gordienko-Mytrofanova et al, 2021), "love" and "passion") was found in folklore 88.5% of all 166 studied cultural communities (Jankowiak & Fischer, 1992). At the same time, attitudes toward "romantic" (or "passionate") love and perceptions of it differ in epochs and cultures (Weber & Ruch, 2012). Cross-cultural studies between Chinese and American students show that there are differences in modern ideas about "romantic love", in particular, what they called "hedonistic negativity": Chinese students are more likely to think that love without suffering is not possible (Rimashevskaya, 2009).

## 2. Literature review

"Romantic love" is always historically and socially conditioned (Shevtsov & Hupalovska, 2020), involves the idealization of a partner (unique, unique), a meeting with which "fills", "captures completely", gives a sense of going beyond one's own existence (Dion & Dion, 1996). Such inclusion implies sexual exclusivity of the partner, ie monogamous sexual intercourse. In addition, passion is a temporary phenomenon, and romantic "true love" is eternal and is understood as a permanent union with the object of love (Giddens, 2004). Such a "component" structure of love, in particular, monogamy, passion, intimacy, sexuality, meaning of life (Balgui, 2020), relationship duration, empathy (Doktorova, Hubinska, & Masar, 2020), the mystical experience of inclusion and shared experience of being with others was mostly formed in our time.

Own love as an intimate experience of feelings for a particular person began to form in the period of ancient Greek culture. Passion, as well as communication, were taken out of the family and belonged to heterosexuals. The marriage rather made the woman the property of a

certain man, but did not presuppose egalitarianism or fidelity to the wife (Ackerman, 2018). The view of marriage as a sacred union, the spiritual union of two people, too, was not immediately established, because even before the twelfth century in Europe there was polygamy, and if the church managed to fully cope with this polygamy, the concubinage remained a reality long after monogamous marriage was declared a sacrament and the only legal form.

In the Renaissance and the Reformation, the understanding of the concept of "love" is dominated by two tendencies: love as a cosmic force and love as a call of nature. In the XV century in Germany, Holland, Scandinavia and Scotland began to spread the view of marriage as a spiritual unity of husband and wife. Legislation has confirmed a woman's right to remarry if, for example, her husband betrays her (Chvets, 2017). In the Enlightenment (XVII century) it was proclaimed that love is an uncontrollable feeling and cannot serve as a reliable basis for marriage. Therefore, in order to be able to perform family responsibilities and do household chores that form a moral character, the master and mistress of the family must love each other without passion. Only in aristocratic groups there was some sexual privilege for "respectable women" (Giddens, 2004).

At the turn of the XIX-XX centuries, in connection with industrial and social transformations in society, the weakening of ties between generations, the passionate feeling that grew out of love for God, turns into a close and familiar concept of "romantic love", to which everyone aspires to and without which the individual is "inferior" (Shadrina, 2016). A huge role in this was played by the emancipation of women, the mass introduction of female oral contraceptives and the "sexual revolution" of the 80's, as described by I. Kon in his works on sexology (Kon, 2016).

Since the mid-1990s, Ukraine has been undergoing a rapid transformation of the marriage and family model. The predominant type of family is a married couple, which is based on a registered marriage (Brovkina & Baranova, 2019). But "cohabitation" of various durations without formal relations, "guest marriages", when partners maintain stable relationships but live separately, as well as an increase in the share of single (extramarital) families "are becoming commonplace" (Rimashevskaya, 2009). Sexuality loses its simplistic odious uniqueness and is considered not only in the reproductive but also in the personal aspect. O. Vasylieva formulates the results of this rethinking as follows:

a) sexuality ceases to be only a male prerogative and is equally recognized for men and women;

b) it goes beyond legal marriage, is realized and considered in the new system of relations and values; the qualitative nature of these changes actualizes the importance of finding criteria of morality in the field of gender and sexuality;

c) marital sexuality is not limited to childbearing and is increasingly transformed towards the autonomy of marital, sexual (Bondar & Gordienko-Mytrofanova, 2017) and reproductive behavior (Vasilyeva & Khmaruk, 1999). Thus, the transformations of the concept of "romantic love" lead to the fact that it, with all its attributes, begins to dominate where it did not exist before: in long-term paired monogamous relationships as a basis for future marriage. That is why we consider it fundamentally important to consider that the study of these concepts in the context of family and marriage relations concluded by student youth, which have undergone significant transformations together with our entire society, is an extremely important and relevant issue today.

### ***2.1 The aim of the study***

The aim of our study was to elucidate the features of the modern understanding of the verbalized concept of "love" among student marriage partners.

### ***2.2 The aim of the article***

Referring to a broad interpretation of the concept, we consider it as an element of the linguistic picture of the world that helps the collective or individual consciousness to obtain, process and store a certain amount of information about the environment. The concept is part of the conceptual apparatus of linguoculturology and cognitive psycholinguistics. According to O. Selivanova, the concept is interpreted as an information structure of consciousness, a kind of organized unit of memory that contains a set of knowledge about the object of knowledge, obtained by the interaction of five mental functions of consciousness and the unconscious (Selivanova, 2006).

The concept of "love" occupies an important place among psychological and psycholinguistic phenomena. This phenomenon is defined as a set of everyday ideas about feelings, and its specificity is due to the unity of ethnocultural, sociocultural and psychological individual experience of the speaker about a set of certain emotions. Modern psychological and psycholinguistic research reflects only some aspects of the coverage of the concept of "love", in particular the analysis of conceptual metaphors of love (Karasyk, 2001), the study of psychosemantics of verbs "love-love", the

nomination in the discourse of love (Ivanova, 2004) "Love" (Balakina & Krasavskiy, 2004). Linguocognitive research has examined a model of the sensory picture of the world that contains such emotional concepts as "happiness" and "love." It is worth noting that along with the concept of common psycholinguistic concept, there are specialized: folklore, mythological, household, poetic, individual-author concepts, etc. Despite the common trajectory of implementation, these concepts are different. For example, the poetic concept, like the common language, is a representative of the linguistic picture of the world, but represents a poetic image that functions at the highest level of generalization (Terekhova, 2018). It becomes obvious that the complexity of emotional semantics as an object of psycholinguistic analysis and description presupposes the application of complex approaches to elucidating the peculiarities of the perception of the concept of "love". Potential meanings are not just additional to the nuclear components, but determine the semantic development and "communicative variation" (Korolova, 2013) of the word that calls the concept. Emotionality is manifested in language formations, so our tasks were both system-structural research and functional-language approach to the study of this object.

### **3. Metodology**

Students from Khmelnytskyi National University, Kamyanets-Podilskyi National University named after Ivan Ohienko and Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University named after Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi took part in our research. The sample was divided into three conditional groups according to age: Group I - 50 respondents aged 17-19 years, Group II - 64 respondents aged 20-22 years, Group III - 28 respondents aged 23-25 years. The total number of respondents is 142. 88 of them are women and 54 are men. All respondents are married and have different periods of married life.

#### ***3.1 Measures and procedure***

The following methods were used to carry out the research: theoretical: analysis of scientific literature on the stated issues, generalization of the received information; systematization and interpretation of the obtained results; analysis, comparison and generalization of theoretical and empirical material; empirical: psycholinguistic experiment, based on a free associative experiment with the word stimulus "love"; mathematical and statistical: frequency analysis to identify trends in the distribution of associations.

The free associative experiment was conducted online using the "Google Forms" software according to the following instructions: the subjects had to indicate gender, age, marital status and indicate the first five words-reactions (phrases) that they associate with the word- stimulus of "love". Time to complete the task is limited, no more than 90 seconds for the selection of 5 associations.

#### 4. Results and discussions

The method of studying the personal meaning of the concept of "love" was aimed at using a free direct associative experiment to identify its semantic spaces. Associative connections are established in the process of gaining subjective experience, as well as knowledge of the experience of the history of human activity. These connections are determined both by the context of the culture in which the individual is formed and by his or her individual experience. This allows to identify explicit and implicit ideas of respondents about love. The set of generated associations for stimuli allowed to establish the semantic field of this token.

According to the instructions, respondents had to write down the first 5 words as soon as possible, phrases that come to mind with the word "love". Data analysis was performed separately for the obtained associative reactions and for the general array. The groups of words that formed the "nest of associations" were combined into a single word or placed in a common cell. Using the "frequency" function in the Excel software, the absolute repetition rate of associations and their percentage value were set. Having obtained the results of frequency analysis of a free associative experiment on the stimulus of "love", we constructed associative fields for the first and five reactions. The word-stimulus "love" received 780 responses after five reactions, including 28 phrases (sentences), 34 reactions with a frequency of more than "1" in women and 27 in men; 26 single reactions in women, 9 - in men. The obtained reactions were grouped according to the gender of the respondents. Thus, Table 1 presents the high-frequency associations of the surveyed respondents who are married to students.

**Table 1.** *Frequency of significant associations of respondents to the stimulus of "love"*

Association	Rank	Absolute value	Percentage value, %
trust	1	84	12.54
care	2	50	7.46

tenderness	3	46	6.87
happiness	4	40	5.97
sex	5	36	5.37
warmth	6	32	4.78
respect	7	31	4.63
embrace	8	30	4.48
family	9	28	4.18
mutual understanding	10	27	4.03
devotion, joy, support	11	21	3.13
passion	12	19	2.84
gifts	13	18	2.69
patience, attention	14	16	2.39
emotions	15	15	2.24
help	16	14	2.09
sincerity	17	12	1.79
love, peace, children	18	9	1.34
kiss, friendship	19	8	1.19
reliability, responsibility	20	7	1.04

After receiving the associations, we assigned them ranks. In total, 20 ranks of associations with a frequency of more than "1" were selected. The other 47 associations are single. The most high frequency and rank "1" (12.54%) was the reaction of "trust", which was indicated by 84 respondents. In field stratification, the core of the field includes associations that gain a frequency of more than 10%. In the case of the concept of "love" should be attributed to the reaction of "trust" to the nuclear association. Associations with a frequency of 4% to 10% become the field area of the nearest periphery. In our study, "care, care" (7.46%) - rank 2, "tenderness" (6.87%) - rank 3, "happiness" (5.97%) - rank 4, "sex" (5.37%) - rank 5, "warmth, warmth" (4.78%) - rank 6, "respect" is on the 7th rank and received respectively 4.63%, "hugs" - rank 8 (4.48%) and "family" - 9 rank (4.18%), "Mutual understanding" (4.03%). The far (extreme) periphery includes associations with a frequency of less than 4% ("devotion", "joy", "support", "passion", "gifts", "patience", "attention"). All others are low-frequency and single associations of the extreme periphery, which received a frequency from 0.15% to 0.9%. According to the results of the associative field, the

positive, moral, physical and physical definitions of the concept of "love" prevail in five reactions of married students.

We also performed a frequency analysis of a free associative experiment on the word "love" by the first reaction among respondents. Table 2 shows which tokens changed their ranks after the first reaction. Note that the answer "trust" remained at 1 rank (33.7%), while other associations changed their rankings. Thus, "joy" (2.14) shifted to the 10th rank and fell into the zone of the extreme periphery, "sex" (11.43%) became the zone of the nearest periphery and rose to the 3rd rank.

**Table 2.** Associations of marital partners-students on the stimulus of "love" on the first reaction

Association	Rank	Absolute value	Percentage value, %
trust	1	47	33.57
respect	2	31	22.14
sex	3	16	11.43
mutual understanding	4	12	8.57
passion	5	9	6.43
happiness	6	7	5.00
warmth	7	6	4.29
care	8	5	3.57
tenderness	9	4	2.86
joy	10	3	2.14

Accordingly, "respect" (22.14%) - 2 rank, "mutual understanding" (8.57%) - 4 rank, "passion" (6.43%) - 5 rank, "happiness" (5.00%) - 6 rank, "warmth, warmth" (4.29%) - 7 rank, "care" (3.57%) - 8 rank, and "tenderness" (2.86%) - 9 rank.

Thus, a comparative analysis of the associative fields for the five and the first reactions of the respondents allowed us to conclude that the content and nature of the reactions do not differ significantly among the tokens in the first 10 ranks, and the reaction of "trust" is leading.

The next step in our study was to work on distant and single reactions. These associations belong to the associative fields of various topics, including spiritual and moral, psychological, cultural and



philosophical: faith, dreams, romance, pleasure, security, fire, confidence, leisure, cheerfulness, life, flowers, beauty, motherhood, partnership, view, positive, value, strength, mutual need. The total number of the whole set of reactions has a positive direction. Therefore, it allows us to conclude about the positive perception of the concept of "love" by the studied students who are in a marital relationship.

The result of modern perception of the concept of "love" by married partners is that this word is associated with trust (12.54%) and care, concern (7.46%) and tenderness (6.87%) both to the partner and with the expectation of a corresponding reaction to themselves. Love is also associated with happiness (5.97%) and sex (5.37%) and is a category of close relationships aimed at satisfying sexual desire (in the narrow sense of coitus), due to the instinct of reproduction and is one of the main physiological needs of the human body.

The concept of "love" lies in the same semantic space with the phenomenon of "love", but the second concept is more general, broad. Love is an intimate word, to make love is a verb to express intimate relations, which is common for Poles, Belarusians and Ukrainians. In the Ukrainian language, the verb is very productive, it formed many words and expressions. There is a similar resemblance between the Armenian "kohel" and the Spanish-American "coger", as well as the English "cooker". Love (in the sense of love) is phenomenal in Polish and Lithuanian. We assume that "love" appeared as a borrowing in the XVI-XVIII centuries from the Polish language. However, kochat se is also available in Czech and Slovak and applies to the enjoyment process. In general, our study confirmed that the semantic content of the core of the token "love" is explained by the psychological category of "trust".

## 5. Conclusion

Psycholinguistic study of the peculiarities of the perception of married students, the emotional concept of "love" in synchrony and diachrony allowed to identify its essential characteristics, similarities and differences in linguistic objectification, to trace the general and specific features of functioning in Ukrainian linguistics.

The emotional concept of "love" is ethnically and culturally conditioned, is a complex structural-semantic, verbalized formation based on conceptual, figurative and semantic basis. As a result of the research it was established that this concept is the result of complex cognitive-emotional development of human linguistic and extralinguistic reality,

rethinking in the Ukrainian linguistic culture and actualized in the national consciousness.

Analysis of the data of a free associative experiment suggests that the idea of love in marital partners-students in general correlates with scientific ideas about this phenomenon. Love is seen as "trust", "tenderness", "passion", "respect", "sex", "understanding", "hugs" and so on. It was found that the everyday understanding of the studied concept has an emotional and psychological color with a physical component.

The prospect of further research on the stated issues is cross-cultural analysis, increasing the number of respondents, the study of gender, gender characteristics of modern psycholinguistic perception of married partners of this emotional concept.

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