

## PROBLEMS OF SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

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**Annotation:** This thesis discusses and analyzes the semantics of phrasal verbs providing with examples. Furthermore, there are some controversial statements of different linguists about some meaning types of phrasal verbs that are clarified below.

**Key words:** Phrasal verbs, semantics, literal, figurative, semantic relations.

Nowadays it is impossible to imagine every day English without phrasal verbs as they own a brief structure, understandable meaning, content capacity, and completeness of receiving information. Phrasal verbs have always been on the interest area of linguists and academics. Despite the fact that phrasal verbs are an outstanding target of phraseology, yet have quite different purpose and own particular separate and extensive investigation [Grant & Bauer, 2004]. If we look through each component of phrasal verb combination separately, they deliver different meanings which are absolutely irrelative. Yet, by combining them we can get a truly new meaning.

As mentioned by Kollen & Frank [2012], English PVs are those verb combinations that only carry idiomatic meaning and cannot relate to the meaning of its word components or phrases. However, from our point of view and from semantic perspective phrasal verbs do not only have idiomatic meaning but they can also have related meaning to the word components of verb combinations and can be guessed without any background information or dictionary. These types of PVs usually carry "literal" meaning. For example:

Turn off

I forgot to turn off the lights.

Pick up

He picked up the key from the table.

Gardner & Davies [2007: 341] mentioned that "linguists and grammarians struggle with nuances of PV definitions, however, such differences less matter for average L2 learner".

[7]

A number of English linguists and grammarians admit that a phrasal verb is a combination of a lexical verb and a preposition or an adverbial particle whose meaning cannot be simply predicted from its word components [Quirk et al., 1985]. Bolinger illustrated the distinction between "literal" and "figurative particles" and claims a root of literal meanings surrounded at different distances by figurative meanings [Neag, 2007]. Some linguists like Lipka [1972] cited that particles can imply meaning to PVs only when united with semantically empty verbs like make, do, have, get.

Rudzka-Ostyn's description for the particle up is wider as it also covers the notion of "approach", e.g. A boy drove up to the office. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) following Fraser (1976) categorized phrasal verbs in 3 semantic levels:

1. Literal

2. Completive

3. Figurative

Literal phrasal verbs are those where the meaning of verb-particle can be guessed without any dictionaries or additional explanations. Their meanings are obvious. Examples for Literal PVs as follow:

He put his bag on the table.

Figurative phrasal verbs are the ones that do not have any systematic criteria of semantic aspect associating Verb + Particle. It opposes above mentioned PVs as the meaning of PVs cannot be guessed from the separate parts. For example:

I have to take out a loan to pay for my new Iphone 15.

Completive phrasal verbs depict a complete or completed actions with the help of their particles.

He tore up the letter.

Taking more radical point Fraser [1976:77] underlined that “particles do not have semantic association but for only phonological and syntactic features”. Cognitive grammarians proposed the arbitrariness of PVs by particles and demonstrated that the meanings of particles form a network of united senses where one or several meanings are prototypical (central) while the rest are less prototypical (peripheral). [4]

The most frequently researched particles are considered “up” together with “out”. [6]. If we take up as an example the functional element in that entities which are considered in a high position, in a condition of readiness and enhanced control. [7]. Furthermore, if entities are physically increased, they possibly become visible, accessible or salient to humanity.

There are several reasons why understanding particles is so complicated for nonnative speakers like the conceptual discrepancy between Russian and English languages. This is owing to the semantic and grammar incongruity and permanent growth of phrasal verbs in numbers and usage among language users. Let’s see some of examples:

She suddenly opened the door and went away (verb+adverb).

I asked him to turn up the volume. (verb + preposition).

Mentioned in the sentences above phrasal verbs are easy to comprehend and catch the meaning. They have literal meaning. Some PVs can have both literal and idiomatic meaning according to their contextual usage.

Phrasal verbs with Literal meaning:

He run out of the room.

Phrasal verbs with Figurative meaning:

We have run out of petrol.

As a lexical unit PVs own semantic consistency and communicative value for language users. Nowadays it is impossible to imagine every day English without phrasal verbs as they own a brief structure, understandable meaning, content capacity, and completeness of receiving information. A number of linguists like A.B. Kunin studied phrasal verbs from different perspectives. According to his suggestions Phrasal verbs are phraseological adjuncts that were made up of a verb and a postposition (that is either a particle or an adverb) [13; pp 101-102].

As we can see, phrasal verbs are capable of delivering more than one meaning i.e. they own polysemous nature. According to the researchers, in scientific style phrasal verbs used primarily with one meaning, at the same time, when there are several meanings fixed in dictionaries. Because of the structural diversity, linguists have some challenges in translation of phrasal verbs. Moreover, particles, for example in Russian, as a secondary component of the structure have both semantic and structural difference and are called postposition that are sometimes neither preposition nor adverb. “Semantic cohesion” in PV

case is explained by the choice of the main word whose responsibility is to phrase and express an integral, yet dissected concept.

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