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THE LINGUISTIC NATURE OF PHRASAL VERBS: SOME SCIENTIFIC VECTORS OF THEIR STUDYING

Summary. Phrasal verbs are recognized to constitute a vast section of the English vocabulary. Recent theoretical developments have revealed that there are various nominations of phrasal verbs in modern linguistics such as “two-word verbs”, “discontinuous verbs”, “multi-word verbs”, “verbal collocations” etc.

Researchers have always seen a phrasal verb as a combination of a verb with a preposition or an adverb, or simultaneously with both of these parts of speech; it appears as one member of the sentence and, thus, forms a coherent semantic construction. The uniqueness of English phrasal verbs lies in the fact that despite the lexical and semantic changes that these formations underwent in the process of language development, they retained a separately formed character or “phrasal”.

A close attention to the phrasal verbs of both linguists and methodologists is caused by their high communicative value providing unlimited opportunities to express virtually any concept. Phrasal verbs are an almost innumerable group of verbs, which in combination with various prepositions or adverbs are able to acquire a variety of new meanings.

Phrasal verbs have a number of specific features: semantic relations between the constituent parts of phrasal verbs, polysemy, variety, idiomaticity. Obviously, popularity of phrasal verbs (their usage in oral as well as in written speech) is explained by their semantic conciseness and great informativeness. Functioning of phrasal verbs in English is directly related to the mobility of these language combinations, their ability to acquire new and transform existing lexical meanings for spreading them to new concepts and phenomena.

It should be stated that a distinctive feature of phrasal verbs is a different degree of cohesion and a different nature of the influence of adjacent elements on the meaning of a phrasal verb. This fact makes them an interesting subject for analysis within various scientific approaches: in terms of phraseology, taxonomic (semantic) and cognitive vectors.

Key words: phrasal verb, postposition, scientific vector, semantic construction, linguistic status, conceptual structure, prototypical structure.

Problem statement. Phrasal verbs are set to become a vital factor in modern linguistics as they form a large layer of the lexical structure of the English language. The general definition of phrasal verbs is the following: “a phrasal verb is a combination of a verb with a preposition or an adverb, or simultaneously with both of these parts of speech; it appears as one member of the sentence and, thus, forms a coherent semantic construction” [1]. Phrasal verbs being an almost innumerable group of verbs in combination with various prepositions or adverbs are able to acquire a variety of new meanings.

O. Zaluzhna consider phrasal verbs to be one of the most important objects of theoretical study and practical development of Eng-

lish. The existence of a large number of different opposing views and the uniqueness of phrasal verbs themselves confirms the necessity for detailed study of phrasal verbs” [2]. Phrasal verbs, being part of the lexical system of modern English, are the result of profound evolutionary transformations of the grammatical structure of the language and are a reflection of the processes of its analysis.

Review of recent researches. Phrasal verbs have received much attention in the last two centuries as the object of active research among foreign and domestic linguists. In the history of their investigation the focus has always been on phrasal verbs contributions in the field of the English language vocabulary development, on the one hand, and the determination of their linguistic status, on the other hand (Yu. Apresyan, N. Arutyunova, B. Bazarova, N. Boldyirev, P. Busuttil, A. Kunin, E. Paducheva, Yu. Zhluktenko). Nowadays we are dealing with the papers oriented towards the cognitive approach to phrasal verbs studying (B. Hampe, S. Lindner, N. Mahpeykar, D. Thom, A. Tyler), their semantic peculiarities (O. Guseva, V. Egorova, O. Vorobiova, L. Saienko), the functioning of phrasal verbs in various discursive situations (O. Dmitrieva, O. Kalugina, Yu. Stolyankov, Yu. Subachev) as well as the difficulties of their translation (I. Androsova, E. Kondratenko, O. Pertseva, Ya. Tsarenko, A. E. Saragih, S. Lubis, M. Muchtar). Moreover, there is a considerable amount of literature on methodological tips of effective ways of learning and teaching phrasal verbs (A. Zabolotskaya, N. Rokunova, O. Slugina, B.J. White).

The aim of our paper is to shed light on various scientific vectors as for phrasal verbs linguistic nature. In this context we'll try to find out the solution to the matter whether a phrasal verb refers to a phrase or it is an indivisible and complete structure.

Discussion. Among scholars there is a wide range of questions concerning phrasal verbs, and, in particular, the determination of their status. According to the results of general scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, there are two points of view on this key problem. Thus, domestic linguists hold the opinion that a phrasal verb is a phrase (free or phraseological), while foreign researchers believe that phrasal verbs are just words, in other terminology – analytical derivatives. In addition to the actual interpretation of the status of phrasal verbs, other problems have been covered in the scientific literature.

It's clear that the tasks of researchers depend on the specific topic of the papers, but in general the range of issues can be defined as follows: determining the criteria for distinguishing phrasal verbs from semantic verbs with prepositions; establishing the class of particles as the second components; settling the status of phrasal verbs as units of nomination; study of the degree of phrasal verbs idiomaticity, etc. [3, p. 38]. Along with theoretical matters, there are

attempts to classify phrasal verbs according to certain criteria, such as, for example, the component structure, as reported by phrasal verbs are divided into two-membered and three-membered.

The first vector of scientific study of phrasal verbs is considered in terms of phraseology. O. Kunin believes that the distinguishing feature of phraseological units is the stability and integrity of their meanings due to which phraseological unit is reproduced as a semantically indivisible linguistic unit [4, p. 15]. None of the four groups of phraseological units (idioms, phraseological units, phraseological combinations, phraseological expressions), the definition of which is not unanimous in scientific circles, does not fully reflect the essence of the phrasal verb, because it does not affect the criterion of stability of phrasal verb components as well as their separability/inseparability. N. Amosova insists that the term “phrasal verb” correlates with the term “stable contextual units”, in which it is impossible to replace any of the existing components without changing the meaning not only of the whole, but also of those elements that remain intact [5, p. 9].

In addition, phrasal verbs cannot be considered as purely idioms. The phrasal verb corresponds to such a property of the idiom as the globality of the nomination. “Phrasal verbs are phrases that denote actions and are made up of a verb along with a preposition or an adverb. Idioms are expressions made up of a combination of words while presenting a figurative meaning” [6].

A number of phrasal verbs are characterized by some characteristics of the phraseological unity that is lexical complete indivisibility. Replacement of the postposition within the structure of a phrasal verb as well as substitution of the synonym of the semantic verb leads either to the destruction of the imagery inherent in the phrasal verb, or to change of its expressive meaning [7, p. 2]. According to dictionary.com [8], the verb *to go* has 38 positions of its meaning. Also, the semantic verb *to go* forms phrasal verbs of different meanings with 23 postpositions. This variability of meanings clearly demonstrates the impossibility of replacing both the semantic and adverbial part of this phrasal verb.

A. Tyler and V. Evans believe that one of the components of the phrasal verb can be replaced [9, p. 21]. The fact that the main meaning is contained in the verb and the direction of the action is in the postposition allows to do the replacement of the verbal part of the phrase. It's a well-known fact that such phrasal verbs as *take down*, *put down*, *jot down*, *write down* have the same meaning. However, in some cases it is possible to substitute different postpositions after the same semantic verb while fully preserving the original meaning. Thus, variants of the phrasal verb *pass away* – *pass on* when replacing the preposition retain the denotative meaning *to die*, *to go from life* [10].

Yu. Stolyankov summarizes that on modern stage of the English language development, a combination of verbs with a second element of an adverbial character is a lexico-grammatical structure formed according to the “verb + postposition” model [11]. The scholar adds that as for the coordinates “the word – the phrase” phrasal verbs tend to syntactic formations, the logical relations within which, due to well-known grammatical features of more analytic language, are built on the basis of linear logic.

Thus, within this approach the phrasal verb appears to be a speech unit, the meaning of which consists of its elements. A number of phrasal verbs can be separated. In this case, we can make a synonymous replacement of one of its constituents. The above examples show that such combinations, possessing their own

semantics, are largely determined by the meaning of the postpositively located adverbs. As a result, phrasal verbs can be named two-vertex units of the language (Yu. Stolyankov) – word combinations – with varying degrees of idiomatization.

The second vector of phrasal verbs studying (taxonomic) is focused on their different classifications. When creating semantic classifications, scholars concentrate the attention either on the verb or the postposition, which is due to the two-component structure of the phrasal verb. The verb component is represented by an abstract verb, widely used in English, often ambiguous rather than specific with an accurate and unique interpretation. The interpretation of the verb component itself affects the meaning of the phrasal verb in general.

It should be stated that in modern linguistics there is a general classification of phrasal verbs into transitive and intransitive [12]. Transitive phrasal verbs take a direct object (*to look after somebody*) whereas intransitive ones cannot, for example: *to eat out*, *to eat in*. Further phrasal verbs are grouped into inseparable (*to pick on*, *to take after*) and separable “meaning that the elements can be separated in this way” [12]: *to call off* (the party, for instance), *to bring up* (the argument, for example).

Semantic nature of phrasal verbs is brightly presented by M. Celce-Murcia and D. Larsen-Freeman [13]. According to this classification there are phrasal verbs which:

- express movement and at the same time characterize it: *to jump in*, *to run away*;
- denote the cessation or beginning of the movement: *to start out*, *to start over*;
- point out the moving of the object from one state to another: *to break down*, *to lay off*;
- have such a semantic component as “no change in the position of the object”: *to put down*, *to talk into*;
- possess a dominant constituent “image of movement”: *to put back*, *to take away/off*.

Various approaches have been proposed in a profound investigation by M. Walkova [14, p. 52–53]. The scientist presents the schematic illustration of different classifications of phrasal verbs as well as the descriptive one. Thus, for example, “B. Fraser distinguishes two semantic classes of PVs – figurative (*figure out*) and systematic, in which the particle systematically modifies the meaning of the verbal root” [14, p. 53]. The systematic phrasal verbs in their turn are subdivided into adverbial (*hang up*) and completive (*fade out*).

R. Jackendoff's grouping of phrasal verbs is based on semantic and syntactic criteria. He points out such classes of phrasal verbs: “directional (*put something away*), aspectual (*drink up*) and idiomatic (*freak out*) PVs, the ‘time’-away construction (*twist the night away*), the V/N-d out construction (*I'm coffeed out*), and the *his heart out* family of constructions (*Richard yelled his head off*)” [14, p. 58].

Modern Ukrainian linguists, N. Shokarova, for example, is of the opinion that the second component of a phrasal verb is meaningful, because in order to be combined with the verb, the postposition must have the necessary meaning. Otherwise, there would be no need to join them [1, p. 55].

According to the meaning of the postposition (according to the classification of M. Celce-Murcia and D. Larsen-Freeman [13]) phrasal verbs are grouped into:

- phrasal verbs in which the postposition is used in its denotative (aspectual) meaning: *use up*, *think over*;

– phrasal verbs in which the second component, while maintaining its basic aspectual meaning, enhances the meaning of the verb: *to slow down*;

– phrasal verbs in which the postposition has an abstract derivative of the basic meaning, the connection of which with the primary is being felt: *to put down something*;

– phrasal verbs in which the second component introduces a lexically specific shade indicating the beginning, continuation, ceasing, repetition of the action: *to keep up, to bring up*;

– phrasal verbs the meanings of which do not appear as the sum of the meanings of verbs and postpositions, they are semantically undecomposed: *to call off* = *to cancel*, *to wait on* = *to serve*.

As a whole, according to M. Walkova's observations the classification given above comprises "literal, aspectual and idiomatic phrasal verbs" [14, p. 55]. The indicator of non-compositionality underlies the classification. "Fully compositional phrasal verbs, in which the particle has a directional meaning, are literal; non-compositional ones are idiomatic. Aspectual phrasal verbs are defined as the class where "particles contribute consistent aspectual meaning" [14, p. 55].

The third vector of phrasal verbs investigation is cognitive. From a cognitive point of view, a phrasal verb is a derived unit, the semantics of which is formed by the interaction of adjacent elements – the conceptual structures of the verb and the particle. The phrasal verb, thus, has a special compositional, or integrative, type of meaning, which is not completely reducible to the value of its parts and at the same time based on these meanings according to certain rules [15, p. 30]. This problem can be outlined in terms of some cognitive theories: the cognitive grammar of R. Langacker [16], prototype theory by A. Wierzbicka [17], conceptual metaphor by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [18].

Refining the concept of language reflection of the surrounding reality and continuing to develop the previously expressed assumptions that the same objective situation and state of affairs in the world can be described in different ways, cognitive grammar puts forward the term "construction of the world" [16, p. 13]. The function of the components of a compositionally complex linguistic unit, which is a phrasal verb, consists in profiling, or cognitive selection, of certain aspects of the conceptualized scene, which leads to the emergence of new properties that none of the elements constituting a given linguistic unit could cause separately.

In the light of prototype theory phrasal verbs can be considered as a linguistic category that has a prototypical structure with idiomatic constructions in the center and free combinations of the verb and particle on the periphery [17, p. 32].

Within this vector cognitive linguists consider phrasal verbs polysemous as their meanings are well defined but have reference to each other. E. Kovács claims that the meanings of phrasal verbs "are related in a systematic and natural way forming radial categories where one or more senses are more prototypical (central) while others are less prototypical (peripheral)" [19, p. 14].

The dominant ideas of the theory of conceptual metaphor point out that the phrasal verb is not just an idiomatic expression with occasional meaning; its meaning "can be seen as motivated by metaphors that link domains of knowledge to idiomatic meanings" [19, p. 14]. In other terms, phrasal verbs reveal related patterns, representing that they are not merely language units but issues of our intellectual system.

N. Mahpeykar and A. Tyler in their profound scientific work prove that phrasal verb constructions "can have several systematic,

motivated meanings" [7, p. 32]. It is stated that prior studies only reflected the polysemy of the postposition, and, as a result, admitted a distinct, constant meaning for the verb within the construction. The analysis of the scholars demonstrates that the multiple meanings of each constituent contribute to the multiple meanings associated with the construction can only provide a partial investigation [7, p. 32]. Moreover, it has been verified that a wide variety of phrasal verb meanings can be thoroughly motivated from the wide-ranging source of human capability and experience.

Conclusions. Summing up, we can say that the dominant function of phrasal verbs is lexical, because phrasal verbs are concise and expressive. According to their structure, phrasal verbs are complex structural, lexical and semantic formations that reflect changes in the linguistic, communicative and cognitive processes of speech and constantly attract the attention of many researchers. This can be explained by the fact that a number of phrasal verbs have now become a kind of transfer to the stylistic layer of the English language, and, thus, acquired a new semantic colouring.

To further our research, we intend to focus our attention on basic principles of phrasal verbs within pedagogical approach to describe the effective ways of their teaching and learning.

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Главацька Ю. Лінгвістична природа фразових дієслів: деякі наукові вектори дослідження

Анотація. У статті визнано, що фразові дієслова становлять велику частину англійського словникового запасу. Останні теоретичні розробки виявили, що в сучасній лінгвістиці існують різні номінації фразових дієслів, такі як «двослівні дієслова», «нерозривні дієслова», «багатослівні дієслова», «дієслівні словосполучення» тощо.

Дослідники завжди розглядали фразове дієслово як поєднання дієслова з прийменником чи прислівником або водночас з обома цими частинами мови; воно виступає як один член речення й, отже, утворює зв'язну смислову конструкцію. Унікальність англійських фразових дієслів полягає в тому, що, незважаючи на лексико-семантичні зміни,

яких ці утворення зазнали в процесі розвитку мови, вони зберегли рису окремої сформованості або «фразовість».

Пильна увага до фразових дієслів як лінгвістів, так і методистів зумовлена їх високою комунікативною цінністю, що надає необмежені можливості для вираження практично будь-якого поняття. Фразові дієслова – це майже незліченна група дієслів, які в поєднанні з різноманітними прийменниками чи прислівниками здатні набувати різноманітних нових значень.

Фразові дієслова мають низку специфічних ознак: семантичні відношення між складовими частинами фразових дієслів, багатозначність, різноманітність, ідіоматичність. Очевидно, що популярність фразових дієслів (їх використання в усному, а також у писемному мовленні) пояснюється їх семантичною лаконічністю й великою інформативністю. Функціонування фразових дієслів в англійській мові безпосередньо пов'язане з рухливістю цих мовних комбінацій, їх здатністю набувати нових значень і трансформувати наявні лексичні значення на нові поняття та явища.

Варто констатувати, що відмінною рисою фразових дієслів є різний ступінь зв'язності й різний характер впливу суміжних елементів на значення фразового дієслова. Це робить їх цікавим предметом для вивчення в рамках різних наукових підходів: з точки зору фразеології, таксономічного (семантичного) та когнітивного векторів.

Ключові слова: фразове дієслово, постпозиція, науковий вектор, семантична конструкція, лінгвістичний статус, концептуальна структура, прототипна структура.