# An Approach to Phrasal Verbs

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## Introduction

Native speakers of English prefer using *blow out*, *come in*, *get around*, instead of *extinguish*, *enter*, *circumvent* in conversation. These are called phrasal verbs, which are remarkable features from the second half of the eighteenth century(1). Smith (1933, p. 172) adopted the term "phrasal verb" in the twentieth century(2). I adopt the term phrasal verb from Smith purely for convenience. Other grammarians' terms would serve just as well: Henry Sweet's "group-verb" (*A New English Grammar*, § 256), Kruisinga's "compound verb" (*A Handbook of Present-day English*, §§ 2204–2211), or Arthur Kennedy's "verbal combination" (*Current English*, p. 299).

During the latter half of the twentieth century, combinations of verbs with adverbs or prepositions were widely studied by many linguists, and now the term "phrasal verbs" is commonly and generally used for these collocations. The bounds of phrasal verbs are defined by meaning, function, or form. It is predicted that a linguistic entity such as the phrasal verb cannot be confined within clear bounds.

## What is the Phrasal Verb?

When we use a dictionary, we find several different types of verbs that are used with adverbs or prepositions (often called *particles*). These combinations of verbs with

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adverbial or prepositional particles are generally called phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb consists of two or three words. Most phrasal verbs consist of two words --- the first word is a verb, and the second word is a particle. Examples of common phrasal verbs include *give up*, *carry out*, and *put off*. There are also some three-word phrasal verbs, for example, *put up with* and *look forward to*.

Phrasal verbs are extremely common in English and are often a particular problem, that is, they are typically idiomatic. In many cases, even though learners of English may be familiar with both the verb and the particle in the phrasal verb, they may not understand the meaning of the combination. The whole meaning of the phrasal verb may not be understood by simply putting together the meanings of the two words. For example, the meaning of *give up* (i.e. stop) in the sentence *She gave up her job at nursing home* is not related to the normal meaning of 'give' or the meaning 'up'. On the contrary, where a verb freely combines with an adverb or preposition to produce an ordinary meaning, this is not a phrasal verb. In sentences such as *My grandmother sat in an armchair* and *They walked along the street*, 'sit in' and 'walk along' are not phrasal verbs.

Differences between Phrasal Verbs and Free Combinations

Let us consider the differences between phrasal verbs and free combinations, in which the verb and the particle have distinct meanings.

Compare the following two sentences:

(a) He came across the road.

(b) He came across the book.

These sentences seem to have the same structures superficially. Though *came across* in (a) has the normal meaning of free combination of verb plus particle, the meaning of *came across* in (b) (i.e. *found*) cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of verb and particle. *Came across* in (b) works as if it were a single verb, and is therefore a phrasal verb. *Across* in (a) is a preposition and *across* in (b) is an adverbial particle. This is one of the distinctive features of phrasal verbs, and the difference can be illustrated thus:

(a)′ S + V + ( Prep + N)

(b)′ S + ( V + AP) + N　　(AP = Adverbial Particle)

The following words work like *across* in (b) when they attach themselves to a verb: *about, across,* (*a*) *round, by, down, in, off, on, out, over, through, up* [3] .
They are usually called adverbial particles. As they have the same form as the prepositions that stand before a noun, they are also called 'adverbial prepositions' or 'prepositional adverbs'.

Let us consider six criteria that distinguish adverbial particles from prepositions.

1. The adverbial particle can be placed after the object, while the preposition cannot. Consider the following four sentences:

(a) He turned down the proposal.

(b) He turned on the light.

(c) She took to John quickly.

(d) She is relying on our help.

*Down* and *on* in (a) and (b) are adverbial particles and can be placed after the object.

(a)′ He turned the proposal down.

(b)′ He turned the light on.

*To* and *on* in (c) and (d) are prepositions and cannot be placed after the object. Accordingly, the following are unacceptable sentences.

(c)′ *She took John quickly to.

(d)′ She is relying our help on. (* indicates an unacceptable sentence.)

If the object is a pronoun, it is placed before the adverbial particle.

He turned down the proposal.

He turned the proposal down.

He turned it down.

*He turned down it.

2. The adverbial particle can serve as a complement of a verb.

But they have also resolved that if war *breaks out* again, the next embargo will be total. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 11)

3. The adverbial particle carries the accent, unlike a preposition. Palmer (1965) feels that the adverb and the preposition are consistently distinguished by accent [4] :

(a) The plane that the passenger flew in. (Prep)

(b) The plane that the pilot flew in. (AP)

4. Insertion of adverb is usually not possible.

In the case of the preposition, the adverb can be inserted between the verb and the preposition.

Congressional Democrats *moved quickly to* end the resign of one of their most powerful leaders. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 18)

In the case of an adverbial particle, the adverb usually cannot be inserted between the verb and the adverbial particle when the semantic coherence of the combination is strong.

(a) *He *gave reluctantly up* smoking for his health.

(b) *She could not *make sufficiently out* what he said.

However, the adverb can be inserted when the semantic coherence of combination is weak.

(c) They find it hard to *look directly at* each other. (A. Miller, *After the Fall*)

(d) Stieglitz *believed deeply in* photography as art --- but as photography, not as painting. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 18)

When the combination renders a completely new meaning, there can be no insertion of the adverb, as the meaning of the combination is obscured, if an adverb is inserted.

5. The adverbial particle can come at the beginning of the sentence. In this case, the sentence has dramatic impact and a rhetorical flavor.

(a) Away he goes.

When the subject is a noun, it is placed after its verb.

(b) Up goes the place in roaring flames. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

But the adverbial particle cannot come at the beginning of the sentence when the combination has strong semantic coherence.

(c) *Up she gave.

(d) *Out they found.

6. The passive voice is possible with adverbial particles.

(a) Jane called *up* the doctor. (AP)

(b) Jane called *on* the woman. (AP)

(c) Jane called *after* breakfast. (Prep)

*Called up* in (a) and *called on* in (b) can be used in passive form, but *called after* in (c) cannot.

(a)′ The doctor was called up.

(b)′ The woman was called on.

(c)′ *Breakfast was called after.

This shows that the combination of verb plus adverbial particle works like a single verb.

Adverb or Preposition?

Six criteria are shown above, but they are not sufficient. There are also exceptions. The following examples contain particles that can function either as adverbs or as prepositions.

(1) One can frequently add a prepositional function by simply repeating a noun already in the context:

(a) He came to the end of the bridge and jumped *off* (*the bridge*).

(b) He came to the road and struggled *across* (*the road*).

(2) A reflexive pronoun often makes the conversion with *off* and *on*.

(a) He put the coat *on* (*himself*).

(b) She pulled the ring *off* (*herself*, i.e. *her finger*).

(3) The unmentioned context supplies the missing prepositional object.

(a) Jane pulled the tablecloth *off* (*the table*).

(b) Throw a large bonus *in* (*the deal*).

(4) The original prepositional object is becomes the direct object, if the direct object is explicit.

(a) She brushed *off the suit.*

(She brushed the lint *off the suit.*)

(b) I wiped *out the sink.*

(I wiped the dirt *out of the sink.*)

A "prepositional adverb" that can be construed as either an adverb or a preposition is called an "adrept" by Dwight Bolinger [(5)], who illustrated the variable status of the prepositional adverb through triply ambiguous sentences like:

(a) He *ran down* the road.

(b) She *swept off* the stage.

(c) We *backed up* the stream.

(1) If the particle is construed as an adverb, the corresponding pronominalization will

be:

He *ran* it *down*.　(i.e. disparaged it)

She *swept* it *off*.　(i.e. cleaned it)

We *backed* it *up*.　(i.e. clogged it)

(2)　If the particle is construed as a preposition, the pronominalizations and meanings will be:

He *ran down* it.　(i.e. did his running somewhere down the road)

She *swept off* it.　(i.e. did her sweeping somewhere not on the stage)

We *backed up* it.　(i.e. did our backing at some point upstream)

(3)　There is a third possibility, with the same pronominalizations as in the previous set but with different meanings:

He *ran down* it.　(i.e. descended it)

She *swept off* it.　(i.e. departed from it majestically)

We *backed up* it.　(i.e. ascended it in reverse direction)

The position of the pronoun shows that the particle is a preposition. In contrast to the sentences in (2), the sentences in (3) reveal that the particle is a constituent of the phrases *run down*, *sweep off*, and *back up*.

As seen above, there are some criteria for distinguishing the adverbial particle in a phrasal verb from the preposition in a free combination of verb plus particle. I propose that the most important criterion is that the combination of verb + adverbial particle produces a new meaning. Moreover, I choose to regard *of* in *think of*, *hear of*, *dream of*, as an adverbial particle.

Categorization of Combinations

The following analysis categorizes combinations into three different groups. First collocations of verb plus preposition will be examined in Group 1, as I believe that these collocations have a latent ability to become the phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs that act as transitive verbs will be examined in Group 2, and those that act as intransitive verbs will be examined in Group 3.

1. Group 1 : V + Prep + N

He *lives in* the house.

Here *lives* is an intransitive verb, and *in* brings *house* into relation with the verb *lives*. The prepositional phrase *in the house* is regarded as modifying the verb *lives*, hence it performs the function of an adverb.

Originally, *in* was an adverb modifying the verb *lives*. The idea now conveyed by *in the house* was in this early period expressed by *house* in the old locative case. The adverb *in* with the meaning *inside* expressed the same idea as the old locative case, but expressed it more concretely hence more forcibly. Gradually, *in* came into a closer relation with *house*, so that it became more intimately associated with *house* than with the verb and thus developed into a preposition, and since its force was stronger than the old locative, the latter gradually disappeared as superfluous [(6)].

In this way, *in* not only shows the relation between the verb *lives* and the prepositional object *the house*; it also has an adverbial function with the meaning of *inside* or *indoors* and it could been seen as standing in a closer relation to the intransitive verb *lives* than to its object *the house*. As far as this meaning of *inside* or *indoors* is concerned, the preposition *in* could be considered as having an adverbial function that modifies the meaning of *lives*. It is also possible to regard the preposition *in* as combining with the intransitive verb *lives*, with the resulting combination acting as a transitive verb.

A little more detailed explanation of this group can be attempted by taking the combination *sleep in* as an example.

But Ottilie did not *sleep in* this grand bed. (T. Capote, *House of Flowers*)

Here *in* has the same adverbial function as *discussed* above. In other words, the combination of the intransitive verb *sleep* and the preposition *in* acts like a transitive verb (i.e. inhabits). If so, the passive voice should be possible.

But the bed was empty, though it looked as if it had *been slept in*.

(T. Capote, *In Cold Blood*)

In this example, *sleep in* is used in passive form, but attention must be paid to the fact that the bed is the center of attention. Therefore, *be slept in* is a particular passive voice. It is not common. We must take care of the use of the definite article *the* in *the bed* as well. The semantic coherence between the intransitive verb *sleep* and the preposition *in* is very weak. Similarly,

As for sleep, he *slept on* a mattress without sheets --- it was his abandoned mar-

riage bed --- or in the hammock, covered by his coat. (S. Bellow, *Herzog*)

the combination of *sleep on* also can be used in passive form, as seen below.

From his . . . pocket he two-fingered out a cigarette that looked as though it had *been slept on.* (J. D. Salinger, *Nine Stories*)

The possibility of the usage in the passive voice presents evidence that the combination (e.g. *sleep in* and *sleep on* seen above) of an intransitive verb and preposition acts as a transitive verb. The relation between the intransitive verb and the preposition could indicate latent ability to become like the combinations in Group 2.

2. Group 2 : V + AP = VT

The combinations of verb + adverb particle function like transitive verbs and therefore have objects, so combinations like these can be divided into two subgroups.

Subgroup 1: When the object is a pronoun, it cannot be placed between the verb and the adverbial particle.

Subgroup 2: The pronoun can be placed before the adverbial particle. Combinations in these two subgroups will be examined in terms of the possibility of usage in the passive voice, adverb insertion, and so forth. Each of these subgroups can in turn be further divided into two categories, depending on whether the meaning of combinations can be predicted based on the individual words.

Subgroup 1a: The meaning of the combination can be predicted from the verb and the adverbial particle.

(1) Adverbial particle *of* (*hear of*, *speak of*, etc.).

a. I've *heard of* him.

In this case, *hear* is an intransitive verb. *Live* of *live in* is similarly an intransitive verb, but the preposition changes according to its object (e.g. live *on* the farm, live *at* No 7). On the other hand, *of* in *hear of* does not change according to its object. Therefore, the coherence between *hear* and *of* is stronger than that between *live* and *in*. Since the combination *hear of* acts as a transitive verb, it can be used in passive form.

Now and then even a child disappeared and *was heard of* no more.

(J. Steinbeck, *The Long Valley*)

It can be guessed from examples that the passive form is usually used in negative

sentences. But there are few examples of the passive form.

b. When I *speak of* him I feel him in my head, pounding for order.

(S. Bellow, *Herzog*)

Attention should be paid to the expression *to speak of* used in negative sentences in a deprecatory sense.

We have had no rain *to speak of* for the last three weeks. (Wood, 1979)

I didn't think his performance was anything *to speak of*. (Whitford, 1987)

c. You're not telling me one thing I haven't *thought of* by myself.

(J.D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*)

*Think of* can be freely used in passive form freely.

I want to *be thought of* as a going concern. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

He *was* highly *thought of* by his employers. (Wood, 1979)

d. I didn't do that to *dispose of* you, Louise. (A. Miller, *After the Fall*)

I never quite believed that people could *be* so easily *disposed of*. (*ibid.*)

The intransitive verb *dispose* always combines with *of* and is not used by itself. *Dispose* can be transitive also.

(2) Adverbial particle *at*.

a. He *laughed at* me.

*Laugh at* can be freely used in passive form: I *was laughed at*.

b. *Look at* the man. (*Look at* him.)

They find it hard to *look directly at* each other.

*Look at* can be used like the following.

They *looked at* him swimming.

They *looked at* him swim.

*Look at* has special uses in negative sentences, usually with 'will' and 'would'.

They wouldn't *look at* my proposal. (reject, refuse)

c. She *glanced at* him.

She'd *glanced shyly at* him from behind her fan.

He got to his feet and, doing so, *glanced* briefly, and as if against his better judgment, *at* Franny. (J.D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*)

*At* in the third example may be regarded as a preposition.

(3) In the case of *believe in* and *speak to* (i.e. address).

a. He *believed in* God. (i.e. have faith in the existence of)

He *believed in* that man. (i.e. have trust in)

Although no examples are provided here, *believe in* can be used in passive form.

b. I *spoke already to* Iggy Fitelstein. (T. Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*)

She was, I decided, . . . : someone never to *be spoken to* again. (*ibid.*)

The person *to* whom she is *speaking* is myself. (*ibid.*)

The last example shows that the coherence of *speak to* is weak.

Subgroup 1b : The meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the verb and the adverbial particle.

a. The occasion *calls for* prompt action. (i.e. demand, require)

An answer seems to *be called for*. (J. D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*)

b. This meant that she was *looking for* a husband. (i.e. seek)

*Look for* (i.e. seek) is not generally used in passive form. But can freely be used in passive form when it means 'to expect'.

I think we may *look for* a better result next year. (Wood, 1979)

The results were better than had *been looked for*. (Wood, 1979)

c. Tom is always *picking on* me. (i.e. nag, annoy)

I am always *being picked on* by Tom.

Why should you *pick on* me to do the chores? (i.e. single out)

I object to *being picked on* for all the unpleasant job. (Wood, 1979)

Subgroup 2a : The meaning of the combination can be predicted from the verb and the adverbial particle.

(1) In the case that the adverbial particle emphasizes the meaning of the verb.

a. What's more, you . . . *tie* me *up* in red tape with what not --- with examiner trials, . . . (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

I *was tied up* by my father's will from assisting.

b. Willie's friends who *climbed up* the six frozen flights to Lesser's flat during a blizzard on the first Friday of the new year. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

c. "Our first priority is to find out what Clinton is like," says one Russian specialist in American affairs. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 18)

As soon as all the facts have *been found out* we can begin to formulate a theory. (Wood, 1979)

(2) The entire meaning of the combination can be understood by putting together the meanings of the verb and the particle.

a. If they catch you jumping bail, they'll *throw away* the key.
(T. Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*)
Not knowing what's yours until you've *thrown* it *away*. (*ibid.*)

b. It is *taken away* by the nurses and Dan. (A. Miller, *After the Fall*)

c. The doctor *took* the bandage *off*, but I put it back because I wanted you to be the first! (*ibid.*)
Would you like to *take off* your shoes? (*ibid.*)

Subgroup 2b : The meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the verb and the adverbial particle.

(1) The adverbial particle adds a metaphorical sense to the proper one of the verb. As a result, the meaning of the combination becomes metaphorical.

a. take out (i.e. accompany, escort)
I'll *take* them *out* to dinner, her and her new husband. (S. Bellow, *Herzog*)
Every night Jim *takes* his dog *out* for a walk. (Whitford, 1987)

b. blow up (i.e. destroy by explosion, to explode)
A thug he's hired to burn or *blow up* the joint? (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)
The railway track *was blown up* at several strategic points. (Whitford, 1987)

c. carry out (i.e. perform)
They quickly *carried out* the operation. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)
You will be paid as soon as the work has *been carried out*. (*ibid.*)

(2) The combination carries a completely new meaning.

a. hold up (i.e. delay)
Thick fog *held up* a number of trains. (Wood, 1979)
The cab *was held up* by trucks in the garment district. (S. Bellow, *Herzog*)

b. make out (i.e. perceive)
Nothing he could *make out* but gloomy hall. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

3. Group 3 : V + AP = VI

Here the combinations of verb + adverbial particle function like intransitive verbs.

(A) The meaning of the combination can be predicted from the verb and the adverbial

particle.

(1) The adverbial particle emphasizes the meaning of the verb.

a. God, how swiftly it all *fell down*! (A. Miller, *After the Fall*)

b. Each time the doctor touched her arm the woman *cried out* in pain. (Whitford, 1987)

c. *Turn round* and let me see your profile. (*ibid.*)

(2) The entire meaning of the combination can be understood by putting together the meanings of the verb and the particle.

a. All right, Carrie, tell him to *come in*! (A. Miller, *After the Fall*)

b. When I telephoned, his mother told me that Edward had just *gone out*. (Whitford, 1987)

(B) The meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the verb and the adverbial particle.

(1) The adverbial particle adds a metaphorical sense to the proper one of the verb. As the result, the meaning of the combination becomes metaphorical.

a. speak up (i.e. say something)

Zooey's voice suddenly and suspiciously *spoke up*: "Mother? What in Christ's name are you doing out there? (J. D. Salinger, *Franny and Zooey*)

b. grow up (i.e. reach maturity)

Michele Molese --- who, it is true, was born in New York and grew up in Florida and Ohio. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 18)

c. move in (i.e. take possession of a new dwelling)

When they moved in, he built shelves, cleared the garden, and repaired the garage doors. (S. Bellow, *Herzog*)

(2) The combination carries a completely new meaning.

a. come out (i.e. result, turn out)

It *came out* even better than we thought it would. (*Newsweek*, 1994, Nov. 18)

b. get up (i.e. arise from a bed, a chair)

I've got to *get up* to write, otherwise there's no peace in me. (B. Malamud, *The Tenants*)

c. come on (i.e. hurry, come along)

McClane: Stay close. *Come on*. Let's go. *Come on*, let's go, goddam it. *Come on*.

(*Die Hard 4.0* screenplay)

d. come on (i.e. act, pretend to be)

You like to *come on* meek and tame, and cover up the devil that's in you.

(S. Bellow, *Herzog*)

Multi-Word Verbs

In *A Grammar of Contemporary English* and *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, Quirk *et al* consider the combinations of the verbs with particles as multi-word verbs only when they behave as a single unit. The main category of multi-word verbs consists of such combinations as *drink up*, *dispose of*, and *get away with*. And they call such combinations Phrasal Verb, Prepositional Verb, and Phrasal-Prepositional Verb, respectively. In brief, they call the combination of a verb with an adverbial particle as a Phrasal Verb, the combination of a verb with a preposition as Prepositional Verb, and the combination of a verb with both an adverb and a preposition a Phrasal-Prepositional Verb.

Not all multi-word verbs consist of lexical verbs followed by particles. Other categories of multi-word verbs, consisting of such combinations as *cut short* (verb + adjective) and *get rid of* (verb + verb) will not be discussed here.

The term "verb" is used not only for a morphologically defined word class, but also for an item that acts as a single word lexically or syntactically. It is this extended sense of 'verb' as a 'unit that behaves to some extent either lexically or syntactically as a single verb'.

Particles actually belong to two distinct but overlapping categories, that of prepositions and that of spatial adverbs. The term 'particle' will apply to such words as these, when they follow and are closely associated with verbs.

particles

(A) *against*, *among*, *as*, *at*, *beside*, *for*, *from*, *into*, *like*, *of*, *onto*, *upon*, *with*, etc.

(B) *about*, *above*, *across*, *after*, *along*, *around*, *by*, *down*, *in*, *off*, *on*, *out*, *over*, *past*, *round*, *through*, *under*, *up*, etc.

(C) *aback*, *ahead*, *apart*, *aside*, *astray*, *away*, *back*, *forward*(*s*), *home*, *in front*, *on top*, *together*, etc.

Those in group (A) are prepositions only, and those in (C) are spatial adverbs only

(unless they form part of a complex preposition, as in *out of*). Those in (B) can be either prepositions or spatial adverbs, and in the latter function are known as 'prepositional adverbs'. Group (C) includes adverbs like *ahead* and *away*, which correspond to complex prepositions such as *ahead of* and *away from*, and so are also known as prepositional adverbs. The most obvious difference between the prepositions and the adverbs is that where prepositions require a following noun phrase as a prepositional complement, there is no such requirement for adverbs.

| PREPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCTION | ADVERBIAL CONSTRUCTION |
|---|---|
| (A) The dog went *for me*. | *The dog went *for*. |
| (B) Jack fell *down the hill*. | Jack fell *down*. |
| (C) *We must not look *back the past*. | We must not look *back*. |

Particles of group (B) are the only ones that are acceptable in both structures.

Here, we must take into consideration the question of how to distinguish two superficially similar constructions, that of a transitive 'phrasal verb' [(7)] such as *call up* in *He called up the dean*, and that of an intransitive 'prepositional verb' [(7)] such as *call on* in *He called on the dean*. Quirk presents the criteria to distinguish these two kinds of verbs as follows [(8)].

The differences are both syntactic and phonological :

(a) The particle of a phrasal verb can stand either before or after the noun phrase following the verb, but that of the prepositional verb must (unless deferred) precede the noun phrase.

(b) When the noun phrase following the verb is a personal pronoun, the pronoun precedes the particle in the case of a phrasal verb, but follows the particle in the case of a prepositional verb.

(c) An adverb (functioning as adjunct) can often be inserted between verb and particle in a prepositional verb, but not in a phrasal verb.

(d) The particle of the phrasal verb cannot precede a relative pronoun at the beginning of a relative clause.

(e) Similarly, the particle of a phrasal verb cannot precede the interrogative word at the beginning of a *wh*-question.

(f) The particle of a phrasal verb is normally stressed, and in final position normally

bears the nuclear tone, whereas the particle of a prepositional verb is normally unstressed and has the 'tail' of the nuclear tone that falls on the lexical verb.

## Conclusion

When using a dictionary, one finds several different types of verbs that are used with adverbs or prepositions (often called *particles*). These combinations of verbs with particles are generally called phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb consists of two or three words. Most phrasal verbs consist of two words --- the first word is a verb, and the second word is a particle. Examples of common phrasal verbs include *give up*, *carry out*, and *put off*. There are also three-word phrasal verbs, such as *put up with*, *look forward to*, *get away with*. These three-word phrasal verbs are called phrasal-prepositional verbs by Quirk *et al*, but they are not investigated in this paper.

Phrasal verbs are extremely common in English and are often a particular problem, that is, they are typically idiomatic. In many cases, even though learners of English may be familiar with both the verb and the particle in the phrasal verb, they may not understand the meaning of the combination. The whole meaning of the phrasal verb may not be understood by simply putting together the meanings of the two words. For example, the meaning of *give up* (= stop) in the sentence *She gave up her job at nursing home* is not related to the normal meaning of 'give' or the meaning 'up'. On the contrary, where a verb freely combines with an adverb or preposition to produce an ordinary meaning, this is not a phrasal verb. In sentences such as *My grandmother sat in an armchair* and *They walked along the street*, 'sit in' and 'walk along' are not phrasal verbs.

We have investigated the phrasal verbs, but we find it difficult to clearly distinguish the varieties of phrasal verbs. Owing to the ambiguity of the particles, learners of English as a foreign language have difficulty identifying the phrasal verbs clearly. It would appear that whether a particular combination is a phrasal verb or not depends on where it falls on a continuum.

NOTES

(1) D. Bolinger, *The Phrasal Verb in English*, p. xi.

(2) L. P. Smith, *Words and Idioms*: *Studies in the English Language*, p. 172

(3) A. G. Kennedy, *Current English*, p. 298.
These adverbial particles are the ones in group (B) described later in the section Multi-Word Verbs.

(4) F. R. Palmer, *A Linguistic Study of the English Verb*, p. 182

(5) D. Bolinger, *The Phrasal Verb in English*, pp. 26–27

(6) G. O. Curme, *Syntax*, p. 561.

(7) The terms used here are those presented by Quirk *et al.*

(8) Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, G. N. Leech & Jan Svartvik.
*A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, p. 1167

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