

## DIFFICULTIES IN MASTERING PHRASAL VERBS IN PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH

*Tetiana Yablonska*

Doctor of Pedagogics, Full Professor, Department “Philology”,  
Odesa National Maritime University (65029, Odesa, 34 Mechnykova Str.);  
e-mail: [applle9@gmail.com](mailto:applle9@gmail.com); orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6801-8704>

The article deals with the issue of the usage of phrasal verbs in professional English. First, profound knowledge of modern English is impossible without a confident command of phrasal verbs. Secondly, phrasal verbs are among the most used verbs in everyday colloquial speech and it is impossible to imagine modern English without them. One of the predominant features of phrasal verbs is that the meaning of the same verb can change beyond recognition or become opposite in combination with different postpositions. Precisely because of this, the purpose of the research is connected with the identification of challenges encountered in mastering phrasal verbs due to these combinations functioning not only at the everyday level but also as a full-fledged component of the language of professional communication. This suggests that the semantic relationships between the parts of phrasal verbs are crucial. To achieve the set goal, the following methods of teaching were applied: descriptive (for a general description of the context of a phrasal verb in English); contextual-interpretive (to identify the functional and semantic meaning of a phrasal verb), as well as a method of creating a problem situation using a phrasal verb.

The author highlights the main features of phrasal verbs that cause difficulties in learning English, considers lexico-semantic variants of phrasal verbs presented in modern phraseological dictionaries; gives some examples of professionally oriented phrasal verbs in modern English and the reasons for their appearance. It has been proved that modern English is difficult to imagine without them owing to their specificity, diversity of the context, and semantic relationships between the parts of phrasal verbs. The same can be said about their polysemy, variety, and idiomaticity. Such popularity of phrasal verbs is explained by their semantic brevity and informativeness. They can be a highly productive means of language economy. The functioning of phrasal verbs is directly related to the mobility of these language combinations, and their ability to acquire new and transform existing lexical meanings for their expansion to new concepts and phenomena. In turn, scientific and methodical bases of using phrasal verbs in the appropriate professional English context will serve as a perspective for further research.

**Keywords:** *context, idiomaticity, phrasal verbs, polysemy, professional English.*

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**The relevance of the research.** Despite its many variants and the presence of specific features for each nationality, English remains the most popular language on the entire globe. What role does the English language play in our lives now? Today, it is taught everywhere: at schools, colleges, universities, courses, and even at kindergartens. In our age of digital technologies, anyone who wants to learn English can do it via Skype without even leaving home. On the one hand, it is very convenient for business or creative people who are short of time. On the other hand, anyone also has a great opportunity to learn a language online for many pressing reasons, such as pandemics, natural disasters, and even in times of emergency or war. It is implied that any educated person is simply obliged to master the English language, as it is a key to further self-education, self-improvement, and achieving certain success in any field of activity. When learning English, many people face difficulties in the process of mastering phrasal verbs due to their specificity. The fact is that they tend to change their meanings quickly and unexpectedly, and there are a lot of them in the language (almost 12,000 thousand units). Like all words in modern English, most verbs are of Latin (Romance) or Germanic origin. Historically, words of Germanic origin belong to the neutral or colloquial vocabulary. Numerous phrasal verbs were formed based on verbs of Germanic origin [7: 112].

Profound knowledge of modern English is impossible without a confident command of phrasal verbs. A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb with a postposition (adverbial or prepositional particle), leading to the appearance of an integral semantic unit, as a rule, with several lexical meanings. This group of verbs is a unique, complex, rather extensive, and the least studied section of the English vocabulary, and is widely used, as is commonly believed, in daily conversation.

Let us consider that phrasal verbs are among the most used verbs in everyday colloquial speech. One of the features of phrasal verbs is that the meaning of the same verb can change beyond recognition or become opposite in combination with different postpositions. E.g., the verb *to count* with prepositions *for*, *on*, and *out*. *This deal counts for nothing. It won't help you to improve your financial situation.* – Ця угода не має ніякого значення. Вона не допоможе тобі покращити твоє фінансове становище. *I am counting on your support in this tricky situation.* – Я розраховую на твою підтримку в цій складній ситуації. *The House was counted out.* – Засідання палати було

*відкладено через відсутність кворуму. The old fighter was counted out at the end of the third round. – Старого боксера було нокаутовано наприкінці третього раунду.* This suggests that the semantic relationships between the constituent parts of phrasal verbs are extremely important.

It should be noted that the conceptual inconsistencies between Ukrainian and English, the polysemy, diversity, and the idiomatic nature of phrasal verbs lead to difficulties in their perception, understanding, and use. The difficulty in mastering phrasal verbs is also caused by the fact that their number is steadily growing. The frequency of their use is also increasing. This is not surprising, because phrasal verbs are characterized by mobility. Some phrasal verbs disappear, and new ones appear, changing their meaning over time. The vocabulary of the English language is constantly updated, and modernized, reflecting the changes taking place in the world and people's lives. Phrasal verbs adapt to new situations, acquiring a wide range of meanings associated with the professional and social activities of people in different areas of communication. Such phrasal verbs, i.e., professionalisms are found in the speech of representatives of certain professions. In addition to basic meanings, they acquire additional narrow meanings due to belonging to a particular discourse.

What makes English so attractive to many people around the world? Its beauty lies in the diversity of vocabulary, the presence of colorful regular expressions, turns of phrases, idioms, phraseological units, proverbs, sayings, and many phrasal verbs [8]. It is because of this that we consider it expedient to pay attention to an issue closely related to the specifics of the use of phrasal verbs in classes in English lexicology and professional English.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** From the point of view of the famous Hungarian researcher K. Lomb, “a foreign language is the only thing you need to know, even badly” [3: 7]. During the analysis of the necessary literature, it can be seen that it concerns such an urgent problem of general lexicology as the ambiguity of lexical units in the text of any style. It is most often inherent in the artistic style. It follows from this that the context contains all certain information for a clear understanding of the meaning of the lexical units we need and their correct use in the language.

The term “phrasal verb” was first used by English grammarian Logan Pearsall Smith in the dictionary “Words and Idioms” [11: 169],

considering phrasal verbs to be the most striking idiomatic feature of the English language.

The Cambridge Dictionary gives us such an interpretation of the term “phrasal verb” as “a phrase consisting of an adverb or a preposition, which together function as a verb” [4: 350].

Tom McArthur (T. McArthur) characterizes a phrasal verb as a special type of verb that functions more as a phrase than as a separate verb. Such combinations can be used both literally and figuratively. They are often idioms or constituent parts of idioms. E.g., *to get away with murder* is explained as *to get off light* or *come out spotless*; *to get on like a house on fire* means *fast and easy/quick and easy/quickly and easily*; *to get back at someone* stands for *to take revenge on smb*; *to get up to mischief* denotes *to play pranks* [10].

Sometimes the question arises, in what area this word is used. These are the tasks of stylistics, which is closely connected with lexicology. Within the framework of lexicology, the question is important from the point of view of the total scope of the meaning of the word; here we again return to the section of semasiology. Often, one concept can be described not by one word, but by a constant group of words (*casual – free and easy/everyday/daily*; *to begin (smth) – to get (smth) underway/to start from*; etc.). As a rule, such phrases are stable and more emotional than the corresponding word. Their features are dealt with by the section of lexicology called phraseology [6].

Regarding the structure of the phrasal verb, most linguists adhere to a broad interpretation of the units studied in this scientific investigation, calling them phrasal verbs compounds that include three, but more often two elements, the first of which is a verb, the second is a postpositive element that can be expressed by a preposition or an adverb. Examples of typical phrasal verbs are *to get along – обходитися, справлятися зі справою/досягати успіху, уживатися/ладнати*; *to keep up – підтримувати, дотримуватись*; *to take out – побачити, зрозуміти, впоратись, виписати*; *to bring down – знижувати, підстрелити* and others.

The lexical meaning of a phrasal verb depends to a significant extent on the postpositive. In turn, the postpositive gives the phrasal verb a wider clarifying meaning, e.g., *to go* “*ходити, йти, їхати*”, with the help of a postpositive, can have a wide semantic meaning *to go at – “кидатися на кого-небудь / енергійно братися за будь-що”*; *to go ahead* – “*рухатись уперед / йти напролом*”; *to go off* –

“тікати / входити зі сцени / втрачати свідомість, помирати / пройти, минути”; *to go over* – “перейти, перекинутися / перечитати, повторити / вивчати докладно / перевірювати когось”) [9].

Phrasal verbs are currently often used in modern colloquial language and are considered to be means of mass information, and cinema. They are extremely dynamic and important in communication, as their range of meanings is constantly expanding (*to worm out* – *вивідати, випитати, випросити (інформацію)*; *to find out* – *з’ясувати, зрозуміти, дізнатись, виявити, розкрити обман чи таємницю*; *to figure out* – *розуміти, осягати, розгадувати, здогадуватися, розбиратися*; *to suss out* – “*розкусити*”, *розкрити, з’ясувати*). They are even part of slang [5].

It is also possible to cite several typical examples of the correspondence of English postpositives to Ukrainian prefixes during translation. So, for example, the English postpositive component “*up*” corresponds to the Ukrainian prefixes *під-*, *в-*. E.g., *to throw up* – *підкидати*; *to stand up* – *вставати (to stand up for – підтримувати)*; *to drive up* – *під’їхати, під’їзжати*; *to walk up* – *підходити*; *to get up* – *підніматися, вставати*. The postpositive “*out*” within phrasal verbs of motion corresponds to the prefix *ви-*, which, like out, has the meaning “*from (from within) any place*”, e.g.: *to go out* – *виходити*; *to climb out* – *вилазити*; *to run out* – *вибігати*; *to pull out* – *випягувати*; *to take out* – *виводити, виймати, випускувати*; *to drive out* – *від’їзжати, від’їхати* [1].

**The purpose and the tasks of the research.** This research relates to the identification of difficulties encountered in mastering phrasal verbs due to these combinations functioning not only at the everyday level but also to be a full-fledged part of the language of professional communication. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to accomplish several tasks of the research:

- 1) To highlight the main features of phrasal verbs that cause difficulties in learning English;
- 2) To consider lexico-semantic variants of phrasal verbs on the example of modern phraseological dictionaries;
- 3) To find examples of professionally oriented phrasal verbs in modern English and try to explain the reasons for their appearance.

**Methods of the research.** The following methods of teaching as descriptive (for a general description of the context of a phrasal verb in

English); contextual-interpretive (to identify the functional and semantic meaning of a phrasal verb), as well as a method of creating a problem situation with the help of a phrasal verb were applied.

**The main material presentation.** Phrasal verbs are special verbs of the English language, consisting of a meaningful verb and one or more prepositions (rarely adverbs). Their use in spoken language is very common and they also perform a communicative function due to their own dynamism and semantic relations between their parts [2: 37]. Considering the features of phrasal verbs, it is impossible not to mention the ambiguity of many of them. As an example, consider the phrasal verbs “to turn off”, “to turn on”, “to turn out”, and “to turn to” and their meanings.

*They turned down the competitors' offer to give them the price. – Вони відкинули пропозицію конкурентів поступитися їм у ціні.*

*Turn down the light! – Змени світло!*

*Turn off the tap, please! – Будь ласка, закрийте кран!*

*At last, the manager turned off an incompetent employee. – Нарешті директор звільнив недбалого працівника.*

*A strange sound turned his attention off the road. – Дивний шум відволік його увагу від дороги.*

*Turn on the light! – Увімкни світло!*

*Turn on the sluice! – Відкрий шлюз!*

*Unfortunately, much turns on his answer. – На жаль, багато залежить від його відповіді.*

*Spain turned out (to be) a very picturesque country and a real paradise for art lovers. – Іспанія виявилась дуже мальовничою країною та справжнім раєм для шанувальників живопису.*

*This company always turns out wonderful New Year's gifts and souvenirs at a reasonable price. – Ця компанія завжди випускає чудові новорічні подарунки та сувеніри за розумною ціною.*

*Turn to work immediately! – Беріться за роботу негайно!*

*Unexpectedly the water turned to ice. – Несподівано вода перетворилася на лід.*

Another feature of phrasal verbs is that they can be transitive and intransitive. Intransitive verbs (Latin – *verba intransitiva*) are verbs that cannot be combined with a direct object, that is, it does not have the property of transitivity. These include verbs denoting movement and position in space, and physical and moral state, i.e. verbs that cannot have a direct object. For example:

*He was late because his car broke down to pieces. – Він запізнився, тому що його машина розбилася вщент.*

*I hate getting up early. – Я ненавиджу вставати рано.*

Transitive verbs (Latin – *verba transitiva*) indicate that the action is directed towards an object. Examples: *read (what?) a book, watch (what?) a movie, invite (who?) a friend*, etc. For example:

*We will have to put off our meeting because of unforeseen circumstances. – Нам доведеться відкласти нашу зустріч через непередбачені обставини.*

*Maybe it will be better to put up with our colleagues. – Може, краще буде помиритися з нашими колегами.*

*We are looking forward to the news. – Ми з нетерпінням чекаємо новин.*

Phrasal verbs can also be separable and inseparable. There is no clear rule by which one can determine whether a particular phrasal verb is separable or not. In this case, most often you need to turn to the dictionary for help. As for inseparable phrasal verbs, the preposition is never separated from the verb and is used right after it. All intransitive verbs and some transitive ones belong to inseparable phrasal verbs. Again, let's give some examples.

*Jason is relying on our help. – Джейсон розраховує на нашу допомогу.*

*I'll be waiting for you tomorrow at the railway station at 10 o'clock a.m. – Я буду чекати завтра на тебе на залізничній станції о десятій годині ранку.*

Regarding separable phrasal verbs, it is possible to put an object between the base verb and the postposition. E.g.

*Johh switched on the radio. – Джон увімкнув радіо.*

*Johh switched the radio on. – Джон увімкнув радіо.*

*I talked my mother into letting me borrow the car. – Я вмовив маму позичити мені свою машину.*

*She looked the phone number up. – Вона переглянула номер у телефонному довіднику.*

*She looked up the phone number. – Вона переглянула номер у телефонному довіднику.*

*I made the story up. – Я вигадав цю історію.*

*I made up the story. – Я вигадав цю історію.*

If a separable phrasal verb is followed by an object expressed by a pronoun, then prepositions are always placed after such an object.

*Take it away!* – Забери це!

*Throw it away!* – Викинь це!

*Put it away!* – Прибери це!

Consider, for example, the phrasal verb “to break down” with the basic meaning “break” and its derivatives. Let’s follow the changes in their specialization in the examples given below [3]:

*You will break down if you work too hard.* – Якщо ти будеш занадто багато працювати, ти втрапиш здоров’я.

*His health broke down on account of ecological disaster in the region.* – Його здоров’я погіршилось через екологічну катастрофу у регіоні.

*The poor girl broke down and gave way to tears.* – Бідолашна дівчина не витримала і дала волю сльозам.

*But police threatened to break down the door.* – Тоді поліцейські почали загрожувати зломом дверей.

*Tooth enamel breaks down due to poor water quality.* – Зубна емаль руйнується через погану якість води.

*My drill has broken down.* – Моє свердло зламалося.

*Wood as an organic material will break down over time.* – Деревина, як натуральний органічний матеріал, так чи інакше руйнується з часом.

Now let’s turn to another phrasal verb “to go down” and let’s look at its meanings.

*Euro is expected to go down slightly this year* – В цьому році очікується деяке падіння євро.

*Three ships went down in last night’s storm.* – Під час учораїнього шторму затонуло 3 кораблі.

*As the sun went down below the horizon, the sky became pink and gold.* – Коли сонце зайшло за обрій, небо стало рожево-золотим.

*Let’s wait here till the storm goes down.* – Почекаймо тут, поки стихне буря.

*Doctor, tell me please, when will the tumor go down?* – Докторе, скажіть, будь-ласка, коли ця пухлина зменшиться?

*One of my best students went down in the examination.* – Один з моїх найкращих студентів провалився на іспиті.

As can be seen from the examples, the phrasal verbs “to break down” and “to go down” have different lexico-semantic variants related to both everyday conversational and specialized vocabulary. If some variants of the above sentences are understandable in speech, then others are highly



specialized, having made their way from colloquial speech to a professional language. It can be assumed that the emergence of such meanings is based on the communication of people connected by certain activities, as well as the need to define new concepts and phenomena.

Thus, with the emergence and active development of computer technology, the following phrasal verbs began to be used: *to back up* – *to make a backup on the computer* – *робити резервну копію інформації на комп'ютері*; *to go online* – *to connect to the Internet/website* – *заходити в мережу, використовувати інтернет*; *to go offline* – *to disconnect from the Internet/website* – *виходити з мережі, не працювати в мережі*; *to wipe out* – *to delete data from the computer* – *видаляти дані з комп'ютера*.

In the culinary field firmly established, such phrasal verbs as *to chop up* – *to cut vegetables* – *нарізати, нарубати овочі*; *to eat out* – *to go to the restaurant/cafe* – *виходити у світ, їсти поза домом*; *to warm up the leftovers* – *to heat up/ to take the chill off* – *підігріти залишки їжі*; *to whip up* – *to lay the table, to cook food quickly* – *зібрати на стіл, швидко готувати їжу*.

In the field of logistics, you may come across phrasal verbs such as *to draw up a budget/an estimate* – *to make a calculation of forthcoming expenses and incomes* – *скласти кошторис*; *smuggle* – *secret duty-free transportation of goods across the border, as well as goods transported in this way (to smuggle in* – *ввозити контрабандою; to smuggle out* – *вивозити контрабандою)*; *to take in (income)* – *to receive/to earn money or material values received from an enterprise or any kind of activity* – *отримувати прибуток*; *to send in transit* – *carriage of goods without transshipment at intermediate stations* – *відправляти транзитом*.

Medical English also has a wide variety of phrasal verbs. Let us analyze some of them. E.g. *to shiver/ to tremble with (cold)* – *to shake from frequent and short oscillatory movements, shake* – *тремтими від холоду*; *to get over/to cope with* – *to recover from an illness/disease* – *подолати хворобу, одужати*; *to treat smb for smth with smth* – *to cure* – *лікувати когось від чогось*; *to write out (a prescription)* – *an official recommendation/instruction from a doctor for the preparation of a medicine in a pharmacy for a patient, indicating the method of application* – *виписати (рецепт)*.

The above examples prove the conciseness, and brevity of phrasal verbs and also indicate that they are an effective means of language

economy They simplify the language, and express the action more accurately, more figuratively compared to ordinary synonymous verbs.

**Conclusions and perspectives for further research.** As a result of the research the main features of phrasal verbs that cause difficulties in learning English were highlighted; lexico-semantic variants of phrasal verbs on the example of modern phraseological dictionaries were considered. The examples of professionally oriented phrasal verbs in modern English were analyzed and the reasons for their appearance were considered. Thus, we can say with confidence that the importance of the English language in the modern world is so great that its knowledge is not a privilege or a luxury. Profound knowledge of modern English is impossible without a confident command of phrasal verbs. It is also difficult to imagine modern English without applying them, knowing the diversity in the context and semantic relationships between the constituent parts of phrasal verbs within a definite specialty.

Summarizing all the above presented, it should be noted that phrasal verbs have some specific features that make it difficult to learn English and require further in-depth and comprehensive research. Among them, semantic relations between the constituent parts of phrasal verbs, polysemy, diversity, and idiomaticity are of particular interest. The analysis of the presented material shows that phrasal verbs are typical not only for everyday colloquial speech but also are a full part of the language of professional communication. Obviously, such popularity of phrasal verbs is explained by their semantic conciseness and greater information content, that they can act as a highly productive means of language economy. The functioning of phrasal verbs in the language of professional communication is directly related to the mobility of these language combinations, and their ability to acquire new and transform existing lexical meanings for their extension to new concepts and phenomena. In turn, scientific and methodical bases of using phrasal verbs in the appropriate professional English context will serve as a perspective for our further research.

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## ТРУДНОЩІ ОВОЛОДІННЯ ФРАЗОВИМИ ДІЄСЛОВАМИ У ПРОФЕСІЙНОМУ АНГЛІЙСЬКОМУ МОВЛЕННІ

*Тетяна Яблонська*

докт. пед. наук, професор кафедри «Філологія»  
Одеського національного морського університету  
(65029, Одеса, вул. Мечникова, 34); e-mail: [applle9@gmail.com](mailto:applle9@gmail.com);  
orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6801-8704>

У статі обґрунтовано актуальність використання фразових дієслів у професійному англійському мовленні. По-перше, через те, що володіння сучасною англійською мовою майже неможливе без використання фразових дієслів. По-друге, фразові дієслова належать до найбільш уживаних дієслів повсякденного розмовного мовлення. Однією з особливостей фразових дієслів є те, що значення одного і того ж дієслова може змінюватися до невпізнанності або ставати абсолютно протилежним у поєднанні з різними постпозиціями. Саме через це мета дослідження пов'язана з виявленням труднощів, що виникають при оволодінні фразовими дієсловами завдяки їх функціонуванню як на побутовому рівні, так і на рівні професійного спілкування. Для досягнення поставленої мети було використано такі методи дослідження, як описовий – для загального опису контексту фразового дієслова в англійській мові; контекстно-інтерпретаційний – для виявлення функціонально-семантичного значення фразового дієслова, а також метод створення проблемної ситуації за допомогою фразового дієслова.

У статті виділено основні ознаки фразових дієслів, які викликають труднощі у вивченні англійської мови; розглянуто лексико-семантичні варіанти фразових дієслів на базі сучасних фразеологічних словників; виявлено професійно орієнтовані фразові дієслова у сучасній англійській мові та з'ясовано причини їх появи. Доведено, що сучасну англійську мову важко уявити без використання фразових дієслів завдяки їхній специфіці, розмаїттю контексту та семантичних зв'язків між їхніми складниками, а також завдяки їх багатозначності, різноманітності та ідіоматичності. Така популярність фразових дієслів у сучасній англійській мові пояснюється їхньою семантичною стислістю та великою інформативністю і тим, що вони можуть виступати високопродуктивним засобом мовної економії. Функціонування фразових дієслів у професійному англійському мовленні безпосередньо пов'язане з

рухливістю даних мовних поєднань, їх здатністю набувати нові лексичні значення та успішно трансформувати вже наявні лексичні значення для поширення їх на нові поняття та явища. У свою чергу науково-методичні засади навчання використання фразових дієслів у відповідному контексті професійного англійського мовлення і будуть виступати перспективою наших подальших досліджень.

**Ключові слова:** багатозначність, ідіоматичність, контекст, професійне англійське мовлення, фразові дієслова.

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