

Mult – verb – words and its difficulties of learning

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Annotation. This article is designed to examine difficulties in interpreting English phrasal verbs (PVs) that individual student of English realize very early on their learning carrier.

Interpretation is an apparent obstacle that EFL students encounter as they learn language systematically. This article goes a long way to helping EFL students to unravel the complexity of multi-word verbs, preposition and adverb collocations. and idiomatic expressions. Phrasal Verbs will find its place in self-access centers, for learners to study on their own.

Keywords: phrasal verb, word, study, particle, adverb, preposition

A number of past studies were conducted on the translation of Phrasal Verbs (further PVs) and avoidance. A limited number of case studies concerned the issue of VPs interpretation, but rather focused on grammatical or translation problems and avoidance by L2 learners. Carl W. Hart (1999) claimed that PVs are difficult to teach because there are no rules that govern when or which a preposition is needed to combine a certain verb. They collocate with nouns. Adjectives past participles, and verbs, without rules or logic. Students simply have to learn that **interested** is followed by **in**, and **good** is followed by **at**. and **go home** has no preposition. Multi-word verbs, or phrasal verbs as they are often referred to, present a very special problem. Multi – words verbs are verbs which consists of a verb and one or two particles. English can make verb and particle (preposition or adverb) combinations easily and freely. The order after the verb in a multi-word verb is always a preposition). Multi-word verbs exist throughout the language. They express everyday actions such as **Turn on the light**: they can also have a variety of meanings such as **Things worked out well**. **We worked out the problem**. **She worked out in the gym**, **I've never been able to work him out**. and **The find price works out at 10**. **There can be asked question what the multi word verbs mean**. **The answer is not so difficult**.

Multi-word verbs are verbs that combine with one or two particles

(a preposition and/or an adverb).

I'm **looking for** my pasport. Have you seen them?

(verb + preposition)

Look out! There's a bike coming!

(verb + adverb)

A snob is someone who **looks down on** people of a lower social class.

(verb + adverb + preposition)

If the addition of the particle(s) changes the meaning of the verb, it is

usually called a *phrasal verb* because it has the meaning of a phrase.

However, there are so many different types of phrasal verbs that it is

easier to call all combinations of verb + particle(s) *multi-word verbs*.

What is Literal or non-literal meaning? Look at the following example, where the verb and particle keep their separate literal meaning.

He **looked up** and saw a huge glider.

Here the meaning of the verb and the particle have not changed.

He **looked up** = He looked + up (in the direction of the sky).

Non-literal meaning

Sometimes the addition of the particle(s) creates a multi-word verb that

has a different meaning.

He **looked up** all the new words in the dictionary.

In this sentence, *look up* = to find information in a reference book.

He **held up** the World Cup and everybody cheered. (held)

Armed robbers **held up** the bank and escaped with \$ 500.000.

(robbed)

We **ran out** of sugar. Would you like your coffee without it? (Finished) the

The people **ran out** of building to escape the fire. (go out)

The police are **looking into** the cause of the accident. (investigate)

Mario **looked into** the room but couldn't see her. (look)

Semi-literal meaning

The meaning of some multi word verbs is completely different from the separate literal meanings of the verb and particle.

I want to **give up** smoking. = I want to stop smoking.

However some multi words verbs have a semi literal meaning: the basic meaning of the verb remains the same but the particle adds its own particular meaning.

We decided to **drive on**. = We decided to go on driving.

In this example the particle on gives the idea continuing with something.

Some particles can have a general meaning when combined with a certain group of words. For example the particle round can be used to give the meaning of visiting someone informally.

You can call **round** any time. We will be always glad to see you at our place.

multi words verbs are frequently used in everyday spoken English and they usually have an informal style. Quite often there is no single word which has exactly the same meaning as the multi words verbs but some of

them there is a Latin- based verb which has an equivalent meaning. However these Latin- based verbs tends to be used in more formal contexts.

When a more formal style is required as in the official report or announcement m=non literal multi-word verbs are usually replaced with more formal words and expressions. However sometimes there is a little difference in the degree of formality between multi- word verbs and their equivalents.

Type 1	Multi words verbs	Intransitive + inseparable
Type 2	multi-words verbs	Transitive + separable
Type 3	multi-words verbs	Transitive + inseparable
Type 4	multi- words verbs	Transitive + two inseparable

Type 1. Multi-words verbs are written in a dictionary with nothing after them. (without someone or something) to show they are intransitive and separable. To call round

Type 2. Multi-words verbs are transitive (i.e they take direct object) and separable (i. e. it is possible to separate the verb and the particle). For example these two sentences have the same meaning.

He looked up the word in the dictionary.

He looked the word up in the dictionary.

If an object pronoun is used (me/ you/ him/ her/ it/ us/them) the particle must come after the object pronoun.

Multi-words verbs are written with someone and or something between the verb and particle to show that they can be separated. *To look something up.*

Type 3 Multi-words verbs are written with someone and or something after the particle to show that they are transitive and inseparable *to look for someone.*

Type 4 Multi-words verbs are written with someone and or something after the

two particles: *to look down on someone.*

Some **multi-words** verbs can be used to talk about people (someone) and things (something) without any difference in meaning. In a dictionary these verbs have someone/ something after them. However some multi-word verbs change their meaning depending on whether they are talking about people or things. For example, *to get on with someone* and *to get on with something* are not the same. [Workman, 1993: 22].

Do you get on with your neighbor? = Do you have a good relationship with your neighbor?

How are you getting on with your studies? = What progress are you making with your studies.

As earlier indicated by different research findings, multi words verbs (PVs) present a challenge for language teachers and students, as evidenced by the amount of research that has been done to understand, classify, and teach them. [Show, 2000: 58].

As multi words verbs (VPs) are essential part of the body of English vocabulary and so constitute a huge area of meaning which overlaps with hundreds of semantic-word denotations and connotations, they will always appear as complex units (that EFL learners face even from different culture and background levels. Tajik L2 learners of English whose mother tongue is Tajik were found

I have picked up a cold = I have caught a cold.

Each multi- words verb has its own rule for word order. Multi- words verbs which have more than one meaning can have several word order rules. Some descriptions of these rules are too complex to be useful, but there are four basic types which cover most multi-word verbs.

According to the types of the multi- words verbs is given a table.

unable to address the lexical meaning of VPs effectively when they were being examined. Even advanced students would, most of the time, fail to analyze and understand multi words verbs (PVs) through listening, reading, writing or speaking. The study reveals a gap that both learners and teachers have to work on and resolve in the future either by intensive class-tutorial or perfect learning environments. [J.Harmer, 1993: 67].

However, the overall scores obtained by students in the language use test indicate the academic level of students is significant which means that language experience would reflect a better ability to interpret VPs. The listening sample test, on the other hand, show that spoken English involving multi words verbs (VPs) is the most difficult task EFL Tajik learners would face as they do not interact with native speakers directly. Again for the third question raised previously, the task of writing using one's own words also indicate a general weakness in vocabulary building. Finally, the sentence completion test was not easy to handle by most EFL Jordanian students and reveal another learning difficulty in interpreting English PVs.

Studies indicate that some strategies may help L2 learners grasp the identification and interpretation of multi words verbs (PVs). These strategies need to be examined further with more languages, better methodologies, and multiple levels of students to verify their effectiveness.

It is clear that learner's problem with multi words verbs is not basically grammatical, but an obstacle that they frequently face when it comes to interpretation. Additionally, this area of language is open to different cultural-specific usage within accents, dialects and types of speech around the world such as American, British, Canadian and Australian English.

In brief, the best course of action would be to include this type of VPs interpretation in teaching curricula of early schooling to get pupils exposed more to the nature of the meaning of VPs. We should also enhance adults learning by giving rich material covering VPs context, meaning and translation. English courses for majoring English students should be consistently maintained to adapt students' academic path through a careful planning of what is to be taught. This area of language is fundamental to learners.

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