RESEARCH ARTICLE

MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF VERB-PHRASE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

RAVINDRA

Department of English

SVRM College (Autonomous), Nagaram, Andhra Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

A verb phrase (VP) is a combination of verbs and adverbs or a preposition word. The increase in the number and the extensive use of the phrase verb is a notable feature of modern English, which has caused the extensive attention of linguists. While VPs have always been studied taking into account both their morphologic modifications (tense, mood, aspect, voice, polarity, etc.) and their syntactic complementation (intensive, intransitive, monotransitive, ditransitive and complextransitive). The method of semantic analysis of phrase verb is in line with the law of human's cognition, which can promote the acquisition of English phrase verbs by foreign language learners through the expansion of metaphor. In this paper, I intend to show that if we want to understand the way VPs operate and the way they are structured, it is essential to make this distinctionclear.

INTRODUCTION

Language is like an onion bulb with many layers. The 'existence' of the outer layers is dependent on the presence of the inner layers. Similarly, the inner layers depend on the outer layers for protection. Language is conceived as "the totality of utterances that can be made in a speech community" (Chomsky, 1986:16) or "a system of conventional signs all aspects of whose structure serve the sovereign function of meaning" (Cruse, 1990:140). For any language, especially English – our focus in this chapter – to be meaningful, it has to be grammatical. Grammatical correctness is thus a prerequisite, a *sine-qua-non* of sort, to any functional discourse. Grammar, one of the most important "aspects" or levels of linguistic study, is the body of descriptive statements about the morphological and syntactic structures of a particular language (Osisanwo, 1999:1) as it deals primarily with the rules that govern the combinations of words and groups of words to bring about meaningful sentences (Eka, 1994:1).

Morphemic analysis is the description of morphemic components of words. It accounts for the configuration of morphemic elements. Since a word is always made up of one or more morphemes, it is pertinent to reiterate that root is the core of that word. When the root of a word is identified, then, the stem and other affixes are determined. In 'bearable' for instance, 'bear' is the root. But when we say 'unbearable', 'bearable' is the stem because while 'un' is inflectional, and hence removed, 'able' is derivational, hence retained in the stem. In **foolishness**, fool is the root, foolish is the stem and 'ness' is the suffix (Ofuya, 1996:4).

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Phrasal verbs are treated morphologically in much the same way as single-word verbs in English, with suffixes inflecting the verb for third person singular, past tense, or for progressive or perfective participles. The 'verb' part of the phrasal verb—the first word, which was originally a separate verb—is the part which receives any inflection. If the original verb was irregular, it follows the same pattern of inflection as that irregular verb. For other instances of tense or aspect, the verbs are used in the same way as other English verbs, with tense and aspect indicated through auxiliary words. In examples (1) to (12), the verbs, phrasal and non-phrasal, are marked in bold, so as to highlight the changes in morphology for the reader.

(1) You try on the shoes. (2) He tries on the shoes. (3) I am trying on the shoes. (4) He tried on the shoes. (5) He tries the whiskey. (6) I will try the whiskey. (7) I crossed the street. (8) I crossed out the misspelled word. (9) While chewing gum, I blew a bubble. (10) The construction worker blew up the condemned building. As can be seen in (11), the phrasal verb is zero-marked, which is typical of the second-person singular simple present in English, but in (12), try on is inflected to 'tries on' in keeping with the norm for the third-person singular simple present of to try. In the above examples, the parent verb for the phrasal verb is the same as the single-word verb; in each set, the verbs share the same inflection. The "verb" portion of phrasal verbs follows the same morphological patterns as other English verbs; it is homophonous with the parent verb, but due to the presence of its particle, it no longer has the same meaning.

A conjunction, just as the word implies, joins words or groups of words together. Usually, conjunctions join structures of the same grammatical statuses together: words with words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses and perhaps, sentences with sentences. Examples of conjunctions are: and, but, or, yet, as etc.

There are, at least, four types of conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions specifically join words of the same rank. The common examples are: and, or, andbut. Correlative conjunctions are used in pairs.

Examples are both… and, not only… but (also), either… or, neither… not. While semi-coordinating conjunctions include groups such as, as well as, rather than, more, than, as much as etc, subordinating conjunctions, which introduce subordinate clauses, include: although, as, because, before, if, in order that, since, so that, unless, until, etc.

The next level above a word on the grammatical rank scale is a phrase. A phrase is a word or a group of words that together have a particular meaning grammatically. A phrase may identify a referent, indicate the action of, modify, qualify or complement grammatical elements in sentences. Some of the phrases in English are noun phrase, (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjectival phrase (ADJP), adverbial phrase (ADVP) and prepositional phrase (PP). Examples of some of these phrases are marked in the constructions that follow.

NP   –   The boy is my friends
VP   –   She must have been there before now
ADJP   –   The tall elegant young looking lady
ADVP   –   Locomotive trains move very slowly
PP   –   Abdul is relaxing in the garden now.

In systemic grammar, the idea of "groups" is used in place of "phrases". Each element in the structure of a clause qualifies as a group/phrase, namely: S (subject), P (predicator), C (complement), A (Adjunct).

The concept of the verb phrase (VP) is central to contemporary theoretical approaches to many foreign languages, and, indeed, to modern syntactic theory in general, with its status as a theoretical construct being controversial. The controversy revolves around what is being claimed by saying that a language 'has a VP'. The weak claim is simply that in at least some data types, a discrete constituent consisting of a ver stem and its dependents can be identified.

There have been two different analyses for the English VP. One, which has been promoted, among others, by transformational grammarians, includes as

elements of this structure both the verb and its complementation. There is a second analysis which restricts the term VP only to the verbal element of the sentence, without paying attention to its possible complementation; that is to say, the term is used to refer to the unit which has also been referred to in other grammars by the name of verb or verbal group, which is formed by two elements: the Main Verb and the Auxiliary System.

Direct Evidence for a Verb Phrase

A naïve definition of 'verb phrase' is a discrete word group consisting of a verb stem and any of its dependents, such as arguments, complements, or certain kinds adverbial modifiers, such as instrumental, locative, temporal, and aspectual modifiers. The verb is the 'head' of the phrase because it determines the category or type of the phrase and because it provides the semantic 'nucleus' of the phrase.

Verb Phrases, being clauses (sentences) without a subject, normally begin with a Verb node on the left. More often than not, this initial verb is an *auxil-iary verb*. Auxiliaries fall into several categories; English is changing and one of the most obvious changes of the last few centuries has been the multiplication of auxiliary verb group constructions. However, there are four canonical categories of auxiliary verb that can occur, alone or together, in an *auxiliary verb chain*, before the main verb of a verb phrase; each must be followed by a particular form of the **next** verb, whether that next verb is the main verb or another auxiliary verb in the chain.. In their order of appearance, these are:

1. *Modal Auxiliary Verbs*: *may, might, can, could, shall, should, will, would, must* modal auxiliaries must be followed by an *infinitive* verb form. *Bill might be here. Mary can go now.* (*be* and *go* are infinitive verb forms)
2. *have*, the **Perfect** auxiliary; *have* must be followed by a *past participle* verb form *Bill has gone already. Bill might have left already.* (*gone* and *left* are past participle verb forms; the *have* in *might have* is an infinitive)
3. *be*, the **Progressive** auxiliary; this *be* must be followed by a *present participle* form *Bill is leaving now. Mary has been driving the car.*

Bill might have been sleeping. (*leaving, driving,* and *sleeping* are present participles; *been* is a past participle)

4. *be*, the **Passive** auxiliary; **this** *be* must be followed by a *past participle* form *Bill was seen with Mary. Bill has been seen with Mary. Bill has been being seen with Mary since January. Bill might have been being seen with Mary even before then. Bill is not being seen with Mary these days. Bill might be seen with Mary again soon*
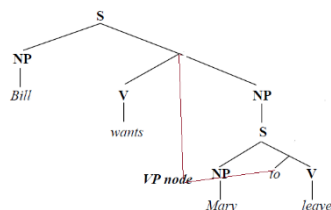
MORPHOLOGIC ANALYSIS OF VPs

The internal structure of the VP is the Auxiliary System + the Main Verb. The Main Verb – that is, the Head of the VP – is always realised by a verb, usually lexical, in its base form (*play, run, think, etc*.). The function of the Main Verb is to be the bearer of the semantic content of the VP and to establish the different relations with all the other elements in the sentence. It therefore expresses the core meaning implied by the whole VP. Broadly speaking, it can represent a state (*This table **weighs** 20 kilos*), an action (*He **jump**ed the wall*), or a process (*The weather is **chang**ing for the better*). The Auxiliary System – that is, the Dependent element of the VP – is slightly more complex, since it can be realised in different ways:

- by a zero element with no realisation at all **(∅ + Head),** as in *They **play** football every day,*
- by an inflectional morpheme **(-ed1 + Head),** as in They ***played*** football every day,
- by an auxiliary verb (**modal verb + Head**), as in They ***may play*** football every day,
- by a combination of auxiliary verbs and inflectional morphemes **([-ed1 + may + have -ed2 + be -ing] + Head),** as in *They **might have been playing football every day**.*

The morphologic modifications in VPs are related to the verbal categories of tense, mood, polarity, phase, aspect and voice. The mood modification, for example, allows the speaker to present an action as factual (He is living here) or as nonfactual, as a possibility (He may be living here). The morphologic modifications in NPs are related to the nominal category of number and to Determiners, by means of which the speaker can present the content expressed by the noun as +/-

plural, +/-definite, +/- specific, +/- generic, +/- quantified, etc., as in a boy/some boys, this book/any books, three lions/lions.

For instance, one such rule is that in English, there must be a subject NP, and it precedes the verb, instead of coming after it, as here. So we relate this structure with the following one by a rule of Subject Formation, which applies to every deep structure towards the end of the derivation (the series of rule applications; a number of other rules would have already applied earlier, producing the other differences). In the diagram above, the effect of Subject Formation is indicated by the curved arrows; it moves the first argument of each clause up and out of the clause, forming a new constituent:

Cognitive Teaching Method

In order to solve the problem of the traditional method of phrase verb teaching, many scholars try to apply the theory of cognitive linguistics to the teaching of the phrase verbs.

LiMner is the first scholar to analyze the phrase verb from the perspective of cognition. She believes that can be analyzed with the semantics of phrasal verbs and particles of the literal meaning, metaphorical meaning in the same image schema is closely related to and can influence the overall meaning of phrasal verbs. She phrasal verbs through analysis of lexical semantic analysis and demonstrates the system between the various meanings of phrasal verbs of contact.

A few examples listed below show that there are a number of common phrasal verbs whose parent verbs are Germanic in origin. Examples (6), (7), and (8), however, show that parent verbs for phrasal verbs are not limited to Germanic roots.

(1) bring about, bring along, bring back (Germanic root, Old English bringan)

(2) draw back, draw out (Germanic root, Old English dragan)

(3) break off (Germanic root, Old English brecan)

(4) go out, go up (Germanic root, Old English gan)

(5) take on, take out, take in (Germanic root, Old English tacan, from Old Norse taka)

(6) point out, point to (non-Germanic root, Old French pointer)

(7) carry on (non-Germanic root, Anglo-Norman French and Old North French carier, from Latin carrus)

(8) attend to (non-Germanic root, Old French atendre from Latin attendere)

Prepositions vs. Phrasal Verbs

Prepositional phrases and phrasal verbs are two of the most complicated grammar forms to master in English. Many verbs do not fit neatly into one category or another. The best way to learn about this topic is to study phrasal verbs. First, let's review some simple definitions.

How can you tell when it's a phrasal verb?

Usually, phrasal verbs don't make sense without an object. Many times the particle (the second part of the phrasal verb) cannot be moved.

For example:

1. She picked up.

She picked up what? She picked up **the pencil**.

2. He figured out.

He figured out what? He figured out **the problem**.

How can you tell when it's a prepositional phrase?

For prepositions, the sentence does not rely on the prepositional phrase to make sense. A good way to test if something is a preposition is to move the prepositional phrase to the front of the sentence. If it still makes sense, it is a preposition.

She walked.

She walked down the street. →Down the street she walked.

The sentence makes sense, so it's a preposition. "She" is still the subject, and it's still a complete sentence.

With phrasal verbs, you can't reverse the order. See this example:

She picked up the pencil. →The pencil she picked up .

The pencil is not the subject, and this is now a sentence fragment, so it doesn't make sense.

Therefore, it is a phrasal verb.
Basic meaning of verb-extended meaning.

Spatial Prototypical or Basic Meanings	Metaphrical of Ex-tended Meanings
a. Do you know there is some petrol leaking out of your tank?	b. In the middle age, epidemics wipe out
a. The children ran up the hill to attack the emery	b. It is up to you to decide
a. wipe the dirt off your face	b. His initial enthusiasm wore off fast

The metaphorical extensions of into, out, on.

	TR	LM
Peter got on the bus	Peter	The bus
Mother sent the boy out to buy something to eat	The boy	mother
After years of discipline, he turned into a manager	he	A manager

The Range and Extraction Method of the Phrase Verb

Liao and Zhang Bin's research are divided into two kinds of semantic transparency (transparent) and figurative. Semantic transparency is to infer the meaning of the whole phrase verb from the composition, and the metaphor is not to be inferred from the literal meaning of the constituent elements. Such as "walked out of the building He" and "walked out on his wife. He" are the two cases respectively. In this paper, the two forms of the phrase verb are also included in the study. A huge number of English phrasal verbs will combine all may be a particle of exhaustive combination of phrasal verbs constitute a is not realistic. According to the standard proposed by Liao and Zhang

Bin, all verb phrases can be divided into two subgroups: semantic transparency and figurative meaning. Since the word verb is very common, we take the highest frequency in the two corpora. Such as "back" as a comeback for semantic transparency, as the "memories" or "criticism" is figurative,but senses of "return" in LOCNESS and CLEC use frequency highest so return to semantic transparency group. All of the phrase verbs are grouped in below Tables

72 phrase verbs are divided into two groups, which are semantic transparency and figurative meaning.

Semantic Transparency(n=37)	Figurative Meaning(n=35)
Bring down, Bring in, Bring out, Come around, Come back, Come down, Come in, Come out, Come up, Find out, Get along, Get away, Get down, Get off, Get on, Get out, Get through, Get up, Go ahead, Go down, Go off, Go out, Go up, Look up, Pick up, Point out, Put away, Put down, Put in, Put on, Put up, Stand up, Take apart, Take back, Take down, Take off, Take out	Bring about, Bring on, Bring up, Carry out, Come about, Come across, Come along, Come off, Come on, Get back at, Give up, Go about, Go along, Go in, Go on, Go over, Look up to, Make up, Put forward, Put off, Run out, Set down, Set in, Set off, Set out, Set up, Take in, Take on, Take over, Take up, Turn down, Turn in, Turn on, Turn out, Turn up

The first 5-super phrase verbs.

ST2	ST3	ST4	ST5	ST6
Go over	Go out	Take up	Come back	Set up
Get up	Run out	Go in	Go out	Go out
Go out	Get up	Get up	Get up	Give up
Come back	Stand up	Get along	Give up	Get up
Make up	Get along	Find out	Look up	Bring about

If we want to describe VPs precisely, we must specify the way the six modifications are realised, whether they are realised by their marked or unmarked forms. For example, the VP of a sentence such as *They **had been working** hard* should be analysed as remote, non-modal, non-negative, phased, progressive and non-passive; the VP of the example *I **have had** many chances to do it* as non-remote, non-modal, non-negative, phased, non-progressive and nonpassive; and that of *They **might not have been sent** by now* as a remote, modal, negative, phased, non-progressive and passive.

Summing up, the morphological structure of the English full tensed VP should, therefore, be formulated as: [(**∅,-s / -ed1**) (**∅ / modal verb**) (**∅ / not**) (**∅ / have -ed2**) (**∅ / be -ing**) (**∅ / be-ed2**)] + **lexical verb**

All the modifications are equally important. None of them plays a more outstanding role than the others. All the modifications modify the Head of the VP at the same level. So they are in a coordination relation: The Head is the Main verb, and the Head is modified by the marked or unmarked form of these modifications. The order in which these modifications occur is always fixed. Tense is always attached to the first element and Polarity to the first auxiliary, with operator *do* if there is none. The inflectional morphemes present in the phase, aspect and voice modifications are always attached to the following verbal form, and the Main Verb is always the last element in the VP.

CONCLUSION

A good language user must know and at the same time obey the rules governing grammatical and correct sentences in the language in question. The grammaticalness of sentences starts from correct choices of morphemal elements combined to form them. Similarly, these 'grammatical' sentences need to be correct and appropriate. The ability to formulate such sentences requires not only the knowledge of language (competence) but how to use it effectively. The implication here is that the context of meaning, as essence of communication, determines appropriateness and correctness of seemingly abstract concerns of grammar in concrete situation of language use. And by reviewing word classes and types, phrases, clauses and sentences, it is foregrounded that without words, there is no grammar; and without grammar, language loses its essence, indeed, its purpose's it becomes just, as William Shakespeare would put it: "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing".

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