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METAPHORICAL FEATURES OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

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ABSTRACT

Phrasal verbs are becoming enormously popular and their polysemous and dissimilar meanings continuously emerging from the verb particle combinations are among the main focus of linguists. Phrasal verbs which contain both literal and metaphorical meanings cause difficulties in using appropriate contexts mainly for ESL or EFL students who are not aware of their root meanings. In this thesis, metaphorical meanings of phrasal verbs are defined with simple and exemplified explanations.

Language features can be different and accepted differently. Some features of world languages are universal or general and they obey similar rules in language usage, so while some features are individual and rarely used or do not exist at all in other languages due to their general and universal properties. General and universal properties are the rules of the languages that provide, grammatical, semantic, and phonetic processes of functioning of the whole system of linguistics. [1].

To guess or remember phrasal verbs is often a challenging task. It is due to the reason that the meanings seem to have no relation with the combination of words that consist of. Factually, a lot of phrasal verbs carry metaphorical meaning that is also known as idiomatic or figurative. It becomes easier to understand and use if you know the connection between the word components and the metaphor they deliver. Usually, the phrasal verbs which have both literal and metaphorical meanings are used in specific situations that help to identify the meaning they carry. For example, the phrasal verb to *dig up* refers mostly to physical action when it is used with literal meaning, *e.g. He would dig up the plant himself.*

Phrasal verbs with metaphorical meanings also illustrate a similar action in some way to the literal one *e.g. Managers have the responsibility of spending time digging up market information.*

Apart from the verbs used with metaphorical meaning, the second component of phrasal verb combination – particles also contain metaphor. The connection between the metaphorical and literal meanings of phrasal verbs is clear.

In the following table we provide the difference between the particles that deliver literal and metaphorical meanings:

Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
Particle	“Up”
Describing movement toward a higher position	Increasing in size, numbers, or strength <i>e.g. Prices went up.</i>
Particle	“Down”
Describing movement toward lower position	Decreasing, in size, number, or strength <i>e.g. The children quietened down.</i>
Particle	“Ahead”
Describing a position in front of you	Describing a point in the future <i>e.g. Many problems lie ahead of us</i>

Currently, it has become generally accepted that metaphor helps to understand the thinking process and the creation of a national-specific vision of the world, a universal image. [3].

Metaphor’s role as a universal phenomenon and its image in any figurative meaning of the word is due to the frequent usage in different genres or discourse types that made researchers go deep into this field.

The metaphoric features of particles are displayed to uncover a format in how some particular particles fit particular expressions. The directional particle “up”, for example, has a semantically broadened sense starting from the meaning of a “higher position or level” [5] to the psychological state or condition of a person. The dynamic quality of “up” like *shut up* or *give up* is also on the list. In anyways, most of the figurative meanings that are used with the help of the particle “up” have something in common that emerges from the sense “up” like something moving up or “going upward from the ground or surface” [6] or “getting into a better or more advanced state” [7].

Even though the meaning of particles varies in the combinations they used, the metaphoric patterns emerging from them should somehow help make phrasal verbs comprehensive to the ones who are learning English as a 2nd language. Particles up, off, and out, for example, metaphorically intimate the concepts of action, completion, and realization.

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