

**THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH**

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**Abstract**

This article examines the history and gradual development of English phrasal verbs, starting from the Anglo-Saxon period and concluding with contemporary studies by domestic and foreign scholars. Particular attention is paid to changes in the morphological and syntactic structure of phrasal verbs, their functional role in various historical contexts, and the influence of social and cultural factors on their evolution.

The phenomenon of “phrasal verbs” is analyzed from the perspective of three major linguistic research approaches: structuralism, semantics, and cognitivism. The article explores theoretical frameworks proposed by leading linguists, provides a comparative analysis of different interpretations of this phenomenon, and discusses issues such as polysemy, idiomaticity, and the word-formation potential of phrasal verbs.

The study is based on an analysis of scientific works and empirical data, allowing us to trace the evolution of views on the nature of phrasal verbs and identify key trends in their study within modern linguistics. The research findings may be useful for teachers, linguists, and anyone interested in the history and development of the English language.

**Key words**

phrasal verbs, phrasal verb unit, postverbal particles, the structure of the verb, structuralism, semantics, cognitivism.

**Introduction.** Phrasal verbs occupy a significant place in modern English, making up a substantial portion of the active vocabulary of native speakers. Currently, there are approximately 12,000 phrasal verbs used in everyday speech, official documents, and public addresses. To understand their popularity, one must examine their historical development. Phrasal verbs originate in the Anglo-Saxon period, where they often appeared as verbs with inseparable prefixes. For example, the modern verbs *burn* and *burn up* existed in Old English as *bærnan* and *forbærnan*. In this period, prefixes remained fixed and did not change their position. During the Middle English period, the development of the language was influenced by French and Old Norse. Old Norse contributed to the spread of these constructions, while French borrowings temporarily slowed their development as Romance verbs replaced many Old English forms.

**Historical Evolution and Research Directions**

The 15th century marked a time of recovery and active expansion for phrasal verbs, as seen in historical texts like the *Paston Letters*. During this era, the word order shifted toward SVO (Subject-Verb-Object), making the language more analytical. Phrasal verbs became widely used in early Modern drama, particularly in the works of William Shakespeare.

Although the term "phrasal verb" was introduced in 1925 by L. Smith, the phenomenon has been studied for centuries. Early fundamental research was conducted by A. Kennedy and D. Bolinger. Modern research currently focuses on three main directions:

**Structuralism:** Focuses on syntactic structure and particle position.

**Semantics:** Investigates the connection between particles and overall meaning.

**Cognitivism:** Analyzes phrasal verbs through conceptual metaphors and meaning extension.

The structuralist approach focuses primarily on the morphological and syntactic makeup of phrasal verbs. Scholars in this field, such as A. Kennedy, analyzed how these units function as a "verb-adverb combination".

-Syntactic Position: It examines the fixed or movable position of the particle relative to the object.

-Formal Characteristics: It looks at how the verb and particle combine to form a single functional unit within a sentence.

The semantic direction investigates the meaning generated by the combination of a verb and its particle. This is where the concept of idiomaticity becomes central.

-The Particle's Role: D. Bolinger emphasized that particles are not just grammatical markers but carry specific semantic weight.

-Idiomaticity vs. Transparency: It analyzes why some phrasal verbs have literal meanings (e.g., *sit down*), while others are completely idiomatic and cannot be understood by their individual parts (e.g., *give up*)

Cognitive linguistics has significantly advanced our understanding. Research by S. Lindner demonstrated that particles like *up* and *out* systematically influence meanings, while P. Morgan and B. Hampe studied metaphorical extensions.

- **Conceptual Metaphors:** Research by S. Lindner and B. Hampe shows how particles like *up* or *out* represent spatial orientations that expand into abstract concepts (e.g., *up* can represent "completion" or "improvement").

-**Meaning Extension:** It studies how a physical action (moving *up*) becomes a mental or social concept (e.g., *cheer up* or *bring up* a topic)

### 3. Conclusion

Phrasal verbs have undergone a long evolutionary path and remain a vital component of the English language. Despite extensive research, the phenomenon continues to interest linguists as no single consensus on its nature exists. Contemporary scientific works continue to explore these verbs through various lenses, confirming the ongoing importance of this linguistic phenomenon.

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