LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL PROPERTIES OF PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH AND THE CHALLENGES OF THEIR TRANSLATION INTO UZBEK

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Abstract

Phrasal verbs constitute one of the most distinctive and complex features of the English language. Their semantic opacity, polysemy, and structural variability pose serious difficulties not only for learners of English as a foreign language but also for translators working into languages that lack a comparable grammatical phenomenon, such as Uzbek. This article examines the lexical and grammatical properties of English phrasal verbs and analyzes the major challenges involved in translating them into Uzbek. The study highlights semantic, stylistic, and structural issues and proposes practical strategies for achieving adequate and context-sensitive translations.

Keywords: phrasal verbs, English grammar, lexical semantics, translation difficulties, Uzbek language, contrastive linguistics

Introduction.

In modern English, phrasal verbs play a central role in both spoken and written communication. They are particularly frequent in informal speech, journalistic writing, and contemporary fiction. A phrasal verb typically consists of a lexical verb combined with one or more particles (adverbs or prepositions), such as give up, look after, bring about. Despite their apparent simplicity, phrasal verbs often

carry meanings that cannot be directly inferred from their individual components. For Uzbek learners of English and translators, phrasal verbs represent a significant challenge. The Uzbek language does not possess an equivalent grammatical category, and meanings expressed through English phrasal verbs are usually rendered by single verbs, verb phrases, or descriptive constructions. This article aims to analyze the lexical and grammatical nature of English phrasal verbs and to identify the main difficulties encountered in translating them into Uzbek.

Main Part

Phrasal verbs represent a unique lexical phenomenon in the English language, characterized by the combination of a simple verb and one or more particles that together form a single semantic unit. One of their most important lexical properties is **semantic unity**, meaning that the overall meaning of a phrasal verb often differs significantly from the literal meanings of its individual components. For example, the phrasal verb *give up* conveys the meaning "to abandon" or "to quit," which cannot be derived directly from the meanings of *give* and *up*. [1; p.15]

Another key lexical feature of phrasal verbs is **idiomaticity**. Many phrasal verbs function as idioms, where the particle contributes a figurative or abstract meaning rather than a spatial or directional one. This idiomatic nature makes phrasal verbs difficult for non-native speakers and complicates their translation into languages such as Uzbek, which lack equivalent verb–particle constructions. As a result, literal translation is often inappropriate and may lead to semantic distortion.

Polysemy is also a defining lexical property of phrasal verbs. A single phrasal verb may possess multiple meanings depending on context. For instance, *take off* can mean "remove clothing," "depart suddenly," or "become successful." Each of these meanings requires a different lexical equivalent in Uzbek, demonstrating

that context plays a crucial role in determining accurate interpretation and translation. [2; p.23]

Additionally, phrasal verbs often display a high degree of **lexical productivity**. Common verbs such as *get, take, make,* and *put* combine with various particles to form numerous phrasal verbs with distinct meanings. This productivity increases the expressive capacity of English but simultaneously expands the lexical load for learners and translators.

Finally, phrasal verbs are closely associated with **register and style**. Lexically, they tend to occur more frequently in informal and conversational English, whereas their single-word synonyms of Latin origin are often more formal (e.g., *put off* vs. *postpone*). This stylistic contrast must be taken into account in translation, as Uzbek equivalents may differ in formality and expressive force. [3; p.54]

Semantic Unity and Idiomaticity

One of the most distinctive lexical properties of English phrasal verbs is their semantic unity, which refers to the fact that the verb and its particle function together as a single semantic unit. In many cases, the overall meaning of a phrasal verb cannot be accurately inferred from the individual meanings of its components. For example, the phrasal verb *give up* means "to abandon" or "to stop doing something," a meaning that differs considerably from the literal combination of *give* and *up*. This semantic indivisibility distinguishes phrasal verbs from free verb–adverb combinations. [4; p.10]

Closely related to semantic unity is the concept of **idiomaticity**. Many phrasal verbs are idiomatic in nature, meaning that their meanings are fixed and conventionalized within the language. Idiomatic phrasal verbs often lose their original spatial or directional sense and acquire abstract or metaphorical meanings, as seen in examples such as *break down* ("to fail" or "to lose emotional

control") and *carry on* ("to continue"). Such idiomatic meanings present significant challenges for both language learners and translators. [5; p.45]

In the context of English–Uzbek translation, idiomatic phrasal verbs rarely allow for literal rendering. Since Uzbek lacks verb–particle constructions, the semantic content of idiomatic phrasal verbs is typically conveyed through single verbs or descriptive phrases. For instance, *give up* is translated as *voz kechmoq*, and *look after* corresponds to *g'amxo'rlik qilmoq*. These examples demonstrate that semantic unity requires translators to focus on meaning rather than form. [6; p.10]

Therefore, understanding the semantic unity and idiomaticity of phrasal verbs is essential for accurate interpretation and effective translation. Failure to recognize the idiomatic nature of such constructions may result in semantic distortion and loss of communicative intent.

Polysemy of Phrasal Verbs

Another important lexical characteristic of English phrasal verbs is their polysemy, that is, the ability of a single phrasal verb to express multiple related meanings depending on context. Polysemy significantly increases the semantic complexity of phrasal verbs and often becomes a major source of difficulty for learners and translators. Unlike monosemous lexical items, polysemous phrasal verbs require careful contextual interpretation to determine the intended meaning. For example, the phrasal verb *take off* demonstrates a high degree of polysemy. It may refer to the act of removing clothing (*She took off her coat*), the departure of an aircraft (*The plane took off on time*), or rapid success or popularity (*His career took off quickly*). Each of these meanings corresponds to a different lexical equivalent in Uzbek, such as *yechmoq*, *havoga ko'tarilmoq*, and *muvaffaqiyat qozonmoq*. This illustrates that a single phrasal verb cannot be associated with one fixed translation equivalent. [7; p.22]

Polysemy in phrasal verbs often develops through metaphorical extension, where a basic physical meaning evolves into abstract or figurative meanings. Particles

such as *up, out, off,* and *down* contribute to these shifts by adding notions of completion, separation, or intensity. As a result, the semantic range of a phrasal verb expands beyond its original literal sense.

In translation into Uzbek, polysemy requires translators to prioritize **contextual meaning** over dictionary equivalence. Failure to recognize the intended sense of a polysemous phrasal verb may lead to inaccurate or misleading translations. Therefore, understanding the polysemous nature of phrasal verbs is essential for achieving semantic precision and communicative adequacy in translation.

Grammatical Properties of Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs in English are not only lexically complex but also exhibit unique **grammatical properties** that distinguish them from simple verbs. Understanding these grammatical features is essential for both language learners and translators, as they directly influence sentence structure, meaning, and translation strategies.

Structure and Components

Grammatically, phrasal verbs consist of a main verb and a particle, which may function as an adverb (*look up*) or a preposition (*look after*). Some constructions include both an adverb and a preposition (*put up with*). These multi-word units function as a single predicate within the sentence.

Uzbek grammar, by contrast, relies heavily on suffixation and auxiliary verbs rather than particles. As a result, the grammatical structure of English phrasal verbs has no direct formal counterpart in Uzbek.

Transitive and Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. Transitive phrasal verbs may allow separation of the verb and the particle (*turn off the light / turn the light off*), while intransitive ones do not (*wake up*). This separability is another grammatical feature absent in Uzbek. When translating into Uzbek, the syntactic flexibility of

English phrasal verbs is typically neutralized, and the meaning is expressed through a fixed verb form. [8; p.34]

Stylistic and Pragmatic Aspects

Phrasal verbs often carry stylistic connotations. They are generally more informal and conversational than their Latin-based single-word synonyms (e.g., *put off* vs. *postpone*). In translation, maintaining this stylistic nuance is difficult. Uzbek translations may sound either too formal or too neutral, depending on the chosen equivalent. [9; p.4]

For example, *find out* is commonly translated as *aniqlamoq* or *bilmoq*, which may lack the informal tone of the original expression. Thus, translators must balance semantic accuracy with stylistic appropriateness.

Challenges in Translating Phrasal Verbs into Uzbek

The main challenges in translating English phrasal verbs into Uzbek can be summarized as follows:

Lack of structural equivalents – Uzbek does not employ verb-particle constructions.

Idiomatic meanings – Literal translation is often impossible or misleading.

Polysemy and context-dependence – One phrasal verb may require multiple Uzbek equivalents. [10; p.9]

Stylistic mismatch – Informal English expressions may lose their pragmatic force in translation. To overcome these difficulties, translators often use descriptive translation, contextual substitution, or functional equivalents rather than word-for-word rendering.

Conclusion

English phrasal verbs represent a complex interaction of lexical meaning and grammatical structure. Their idiomaticity, polysemy, and stylistic coloring make

them one of the most challenging elements to translate into Uzbek. Due to the absence of an analogous grammatical category in Uzbek, translators must rely on semantic interpretation and contextual analysis to convey the intended meaning accurately.

A thorough understanding of the lexical and grammatical properties of phrasal verbs is therefore essential for both language learners and translators. Future research may focus on developing pedagogical and lexicographic tools that facilitate the acquisition and translation of phrasal verbs in the English–Uzbek language pair.

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