

ENGLISH VERB PARTICLES AND THEIR ACQUISITION. A COGNITIVE APPROACH

MARIANA NEAGU
University of Galati

ABSTRACT. *This paper revisits the issue of English phrasal verbs from the perspective of particles and the meaning they contribute to the composite meaning as a whole. The question it addresses is whether particles are purely idiomatic (i.e. arbitrarily or chaotically used) or whether they rather consist of clusters of related and transparent meanings so that they can be used in a quite motivated, logical way. Following the cognitive linguistic approach, the paper will consider the spatial domain as the source for a large variety of semantic extensions to non-locative domains through metonymy and metaphor and will analyze the meanings of two of the most frequently used particles in English: OUT and UP. Therefore, the analysis is meant to demonstrate that English verb particles disclose figurative related meanings derived from a central/prototypical locative meaning. The abstract senses did not develop at random but systematically, and this systematicity should not be disregarded if we really want to reduce the amount of memory work that learners of English (including non-native speaking teachers and translators) must invest in learning how particles and phrasal verbs are used.*

KEY WORDS. *Verb-particle construction (VPC), perspective, container, landmark (LM), trajectory (TR).*

RÉSUMÉ. *L'article revoit le problème des verbes phrasales anglais dans la perspective des particules et du sens qu'elles apportent au sens composite entier. La question qui se pose est si elles sont purement idiomatiques (employées arbitrairement ou chaotiquement) ou si elles plutôt consistent des groupements de senses relationés ou transparents de façon qu'elles puissent être employées logiquement, d'une manière motivée. En suivant l'approche cognitive, l'article prendra en considération le domaine spatial comme la source d'une vaste variété des extensions sémantiques vers des domaines non-locatifs par métonymie et métaphore et analysera les senses de deux particules verbales les plus fréquentes en anglais: OUT and UP. En conclusion, l'analyse se porte sur la démonstration que les particules verbales anglaises dévoilent des senses figuratifs relationés, dérivés d'un sens locatif central/propotypique. Les senses abstraits ne se sont pas développés chaotiquement mais systématiquement, et cette systématité ne doit pas être perdue de vue si l'on désire vraiment réduire la quantité de mémoire nécessaire pour les apprenants de l'anglais (y-compris les professeurs et les interpretes non-natifs) dans le processus d'apprentissage pour le cas des verbes phrasales et leur particules.*

MOTS CLES. *Verbe phrasale à particule, perspective, container, landmark (LM), trajectoire (TR).*

1. INTRODUCTION

The term ‘particle’ (Latin *particulla* ‘small part’) denotes elements of uninflecting word classes frequently found in languages such as Classical Greek, German, Dutch, Norwegian, English¹. In late twentieth century particle research, the term has been used with at least three meanings; first, in a very general sense, referring to all uninflected elements as particles, second, in a narrow sense, designating only modal and focus particles and third, considering particles as subsets of invariables such as adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions.

It is in this third sense that we will use the term in this paper. More specifically, we attach the sense provided by *Collins Cobuild English Usage* (1992: XV), namely “a particle is an adverb or preposition such as *out* or *on* which combines with verbs to form phrasal verbs”.

As it is known, phrasal verbs do not enjoy a good reputation in foreign language learning as they are believed to be a notoriously difficult part of the lexicon. This seems to be true especially for learners who lack phrasal verbs in their mother tongue, such as Romanian speaking students, and Spanish speaking students. These learners tend to use fewer phrasal verbs and more single word verbs than native speakers performing similar tasks. However, they are common in spoken and written English and even new ones are constantly being created. In that case, we have found it necessary and important to show that phrasal verbs are difficult to understand only because foreign learners of English do not usually notice that their meanings clearly go from the concrete to the abstract.

An important problem with phrasal verbs is that there are restrictions firstly on the place of the particle and secondly on passivizing phrasal verbs. Relative to the former restriction we will see that the more figurative a phrasal verb is, the more it forms a tight unit, and the less verb and particle can be split. For instance, the following are not possible **make one’s mind up* or **make the bill up* while *make up one’s mind* and *make up the bill* are correct.

Phrasal verbs can generally be split when the object contains information that the reader or listener already knows as in *Ann slipped the jacket on to see what it looked like* vs. *She slipped on some flat sandals and made her way downstairs* (*Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus* 2005: 285).

When the object is a pronoun referring to an abstract referent as in *He has got malaria. He picked it up in Kenya* or it is part of a petrified, purely idiomatic particle verb as in *They made it up* (They became friends again after they have had an argument), the particle is in post-direct object position.

Still, the most important problem with phrasal verbs is that the restrictions mentioned above are motivated by the meanings of the verb and the particle and the composite meaning of the whole.

The present paper is primarily concerned with the meaning of the particles. The question it addresses is whether particles are purely idiomatic (i.e. arbitrarily or chaotically

used) or whether they rather consist of clusters of related and transparent meanings so that they can be used in a quite motivated or logical way?

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE SEMANTICS OF ENGLISH VERB PARTICLES

Traditional semantic approaches of the meanings of verb particle constructions generally consider them to be arbitrary and idiosyncratic. According to Fraser (1976) particles do not contribute to the meaning of verb particle constructions (VPCs). He states explicitly: “we are assuming here that there is no need to associate any semantic feature with the particle, only phonological and syntactic features” (Fraser 1976: 77).

Although Fraser divides VPCs into systematic and unsystematic combinations, he maintains that the former group, i.e. systematic combinations, constitute only a small part of total VPCs, while the latter group, i.e. unsystematic cases, are much more frequent. Besides, he assumes that there is no obvious way of predicting the effect that the addition of the particle has on the interpretation of the verb, in other words, the particle has no meaning in a VPCs, which in his view is an idiom, and components of idioms have no meaning. This assumption can be accounted for by his belief that the loss of literal, concrete meaning of a particle implies the loss of meaning altogether. Therefore, Fraser’s claim is that particles and VPCs are arbitrary and unanalysable.

Throughout his book, Bolinger (1971) refers to certain meanings of verb particles as literal and to others as figurative. For example, *up* in *He threw the ball up* is literal, while *up* in *load up* is called figurative. Concerning the distinction between literal and figurative types of meaning, Bolinger does not posit a strict dichotomy but proposes a core of literal meanings surrounded at various distances by figurative meanings. He distinguishes three kinds of perfective meanings: the first meaning specifies that an object has reached a resultant condition (e.g. *mark up the windows*); the second expresses that a process has been started or completed (e.g. *round up the cattle*); the third means that a process has gained high intensity (e.g. *speed up the engine*).

A slightly different view is put forward by Lipka (1972), who assigns meaning to particles in some VPCs but not in others. For instance, the particle is said to contribute meaning in combinations like *make up* and *put out*, i.e. combinations containing semantically empty verbs such as *make, do, have, get, give, put*. Cases where the particle is meaningless include (1) VPCs in which he considers the particle to be redundant, i.e. a dictionary lists it as optional and (2) VPCs in which the verb is deadjectival (e.g. *black out*).

In her detailed study of combinations with OUT and UP Lindner (1983) claims that particles almost invariably code some part of the meaning of the VPC. Her analysis runs directly counter to Fraser’s analysis for whom analysability depends on whether the component meanings inside combination are identical to the meanings of the corresponding lexical items outside it. One of her goals is to propose meanings for particles in combinations her predecessors considered unanalysable. Unlike previous investigators who had assumed that VPCs are either fully analysable or opaque, Lindner (1983: 73) deals with the question of analysability in terms of a gradation: “while novel

combinations tend to be more transparent particularly if their components are literal, most established VPCs are also analysable, at least to some degree”.

Her hypothesis is that the components of a VPC, that are far from being meaningless, instantiate one or more well-established patterns of semantic extension. The central claim of her thesis is that particles like OUT and UP are meaningful in VPCs and, even more, they have diverse meanings which are unified in a network of semantic extensions. Besides the issue of analysability, Lindner focuses on the question of predictability. She compares full predictability with full regularity among verb tense marking and shows that admitting of productive rules is absurd. She adopts a stand that seeks to give an integrated account of irregularity and partial productivity for, as she states, “certain aspects of language, by their nature, simply cannot be predicted in absolute terms. ...many aspects of language are best expressed in terms of tendencies and likelihoods, rather than fully predictive rules” (Lindner 1983: 67). The model that allows for the statement of tendencies and likelihood which she adapts to accommodate her assumptions is space grammar, a usage-based model.

Lindner connects the idea of analysability and predictability with the sign-concept relation and convincingly stresses that a speaker may code a given concept not via extension of a single unit but by combining several units. This involves picking out several salient facets of the concept for direct symbolization or linguistic expression. No matter which facets are chosen for symbolization, much information will be left unspecified; that is, while certain salient aspects of a concept are explicitly coded, the rest are carried along implicitly and so, the meaning of the components of a complex structure will not be exhaustive of the meaning of the whole.

This line of thinking throws some light on how complex forms such as compounds and phrasal verbs are coined and why their understanding and acquisition by non-native speakers of English (especially speakers whose mother tongue is a Romance language such as Romanian) can turn into a difficult and demanding enterprise.

The interplay between the speakers’ cognitive plasticity and linguistic convention in a speech community is accommodated by the usage-based model where particular (linguistic) units are not predicted from or generated by regularities (like in the generative approach) but, on the contrary, regularities are extracted from instances.

3. SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON VERB PARTICLES

3.1. *English particles and their frequency*

In terms of the frequency of particles, Lindstromberg (1997: 254) observes that *out* which can also have perfective meaning is more common than *in* none of whose senses is clearly perfective; *up* (mainly with perfective meaning) is more common than *down*; *over* which has a number of metaphorical extensions is fairly common; while *under* which has far fewer extensions occurs rarely, if at all, in phrasal verbs. The semantically more distinct *above* is rare or absent in phrasal verbs as is the less flexible *near*.

What can be claimed at this point is that whenever there is choice among particles which have quite similar meanings (e.g. *over* - *above*) the one with the least specific meaning is more common in phrasal verbs. Further examples are *away* (which includes *from*) that is common, while *from* seems not to occur at all in classic phrasal verbs. Similarly, the so called ‘protean’ *by* is common, while the more specific and less flexible *near* is rare or absent. This phenomenon can be accounted for by the language economy principle, which, in its turn, explains polysemy.

3.2. *Basic meanings of prepositions and particles*

Generally, if the meaning of the verb is known and if the particle is spatial, the phrasal verb is easy to understand. The basic or prototypical meanings of prepositions and particles concern either spatial location or change of location as in:

- (1) *Do you know there is petrol leaking out of your tank?*
- (2) *The children ran up the hill to attack the enemy.*
- (3) *Wipe the dirt off your face.*

The locative domain is the source for a large variety of semantic extensions to non-locative domains through metonymy and metaphor. The following examples contain prepositions that are used as particles:

- (4) *The secret has leaked out.*
- (5) *He ran up a heavy bill.*
- (6) *He wiped the event off his memory².*

4. THE CONTAINER PARTICLE *OUT*

4.1. *The notions of perspective, construal, image schema, trajectory, landmark and container*

An important factor in some of the extended meanings of prepositions and particles has to do with the cognitive notions ‘*perspective*’ and ‘*construal*’. From this point of view, the most relevant case is that of *OUT*. Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 651) discuss the contrast between (7) *The sun is (came) out* and (8) *The light is (went) out*, showing that the former sentence means that “the sun is visible” whereas the second sentence means that “the light is invisible”. The opposing meaning is attributable to different perspectives. The notion of *perspective*, one of the dimensions of *construal* (Langacker 1991) refers to the viewpoint adopted by the conceptualizer/speaker of a referent or situation³. In examples (7) and (8) the deictic verbs *come* and *go* do corroborate the notion of viewpoint. *Come* specifies a path toward the viewer and *go* specifies a path away. Sometimes it is the verb rather than the particle which mainly contributes to the meaning of the whole VPC. For example, the deictic verb *pick* ‘grasp and bring toward the speaker’ combines with *OUT*

and UP to bring an object into the viewer's range of perceptual access (*pick up the sword, pick out one's voice*, while *put* 'place away from the speaker' combines with OUT and UP to code the opposite *put up one's sword, put out the lights*).

The only similarity with the two sentences is that both imply an opposition between an inner and an outer area. The difference is that in the *sun* example the observer (conceptualiser) is located in the outer area, so that any other entity in that area is within the observer's visual field. By contrast, in the *light* example, the perceive/observer/conceptualiser is in the inner area.

Therefore, the first kind of situation is conceived of and portrayed in terms of movement towards the observer (*The sun is/came out*) whereas the second kind of situation is construed as movement away from the observer (*The light is/went out*).

The term *construal* refers to our ability of construing or viewing the same conceptual content in alternate ways. Linguistic meaning consists of both conceptual content and the construal imposed on that content. The classical example of construal is the half-filled glass described either as 'half-full' or 'half-empty'. Therefore the notion of construal points to different ways of thinking about the same situation/activity reflected in a person's choice between various linguistic alternatives.

Two other cognitive notions that have been used in more recent approaches of prepositions and particles (Lindstromberg 1997; Peña 1998; Rudzka-Ostyn 2003) are Trajector and Landmark.

Trajector (TR) is the element or entity that is located, evaluated or described with request to another element or entity called landmark and is the most prominent or the foregrounded/profiled element in a scene or relational structure (conceptual domain). The trajector(y) may be an object (*The plane took off*), a person (*I'm going out tonight*) but also a feeling or feelings (*Your real feelings are finally getting through me*), in fact, any entity on which our attention focuses. It is generally smaller, flexible and moving.

Landmark (LM) is the entity that acts or is construed) as a reference point for the TR. It is the second prominent or foregrounded participant in a profiled relationship. It usually happens that the LM is bigger in size and it gets a relative fixity or location, as opposed to the TR. For example, in the language of emotions, a specific emotion such as mourning in *She is in mourning* acts as the LM.

Another key notion necessary for our discussion of verb particles is that of image schema. Image schemas are spatial constructs that lie at the basis of a large number of metaphorical expressions; they are described as schematized patterns of activity abstracted from everyday bodily experience, especially pertaining to vision, space, motion and force. Image schemas are seen as basic, pre-conceptual structures which give rise to more elaborate and more abstract concepts through combination and metaphorical projection. For instance, the concept ENTER can be analyzed as a combination of the image schemas object, source-path-goal and container). Therefore, they are seen as schematic and imagistic concepts which are abstracted from pre-conceptual bodily experience, function as constituents of more complex notions and provide the structure projected metaphorically to more abstract domains.

The most common types of image schema are container, part-whole, link, center-periphery, source-path-goal, point, surface, linear scale, up-down, front-back, etc. While the container and the path schemas are basic schemas, the rest of them only constitute conceptual dependencies on these two basic constructs (Peña 1998: 262). Many of the schemas derive from the most immediate of all our experiences, our experience of the human body.

The experiential base of *containment* is the human body with its surface separating the inside from the outside. The body with its various parts which make up the whole and with its front clearly distinct from its back is also a permanent exemplar of the *part-whole* and *front-back* schema, while our existence in a gravitational field provides the base for the *up-down* schema. The *link* schema and the *center-periphery* schema also evoke our bodily pre-conceptual experiences.

One last cognitive notion we need to tackle at this point is that of container, which defines the most basic distinctions between IN and OUT. The container image schema, structurally made up of an INTERIOR, a BOUNDARY and an EXTERIOR is a simple, basic cognitive structure which is derived from our everyday interaction with the world⁴. It functions as a constituent of more complex notions and provides the structure projected metaphorically to more abstract domains.

Thus, the domains of time (*be out of time*), emotions (*out of love*), thoughts (*pour out thoughts/emotions*), language (*lay out ideas clearly*), social relations and generally any state or situation, can be conceived of in terms of a container in which an object (person or thing) may be. Consequently, states of existence, work (*out of work*), duty (*out of duty*), knowledge (*figure out*, *act out one's fantasies*), consciousness or awareness, possession (*hand out*), accessibility, visibility are seen as entities with boundaries around them, as containers.

4.2. Figurative Uses Of Out

Metaphorically, the visual field is understood as a container, e.g. things *come into* and *go out of sight*. The notion of exit/departure from the observer's visual field can be extended to processes other than perceptual as in: *run out of time* (this example is convergent with the TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE conceptual metaphor), *be out of practice*, *be out of the question*, *drop out of (school, college, politics, a race contest)*:

- (7) Labour *is out* and the Conservatives *are in* ('Labour lost the elections and the Conservatives won').
- (8) It's *out* of question that I lend you more money.

4.2.1. Out as change from accessibility to inaccessibility (*out* as inaccessible)

In examples (7) and (8) the TR leaves the LM and becomes inaccessible to the viewer or to perception.

A figurative sense of OUT closely related to its *inaccessible* sense is ‘*non-functional*’:

(9)

- a. be out of order, be out of date, sign out, log out, blow out, conk out, etc.
- b. He *talked out/sang out/shouted out* his voice.
- c. I *read out* my eyes to write this paper.
- d. Rain *washed* the road *out*.
- e. My boots *wore out*.
- f. The part was *rusted out*.

Human non-functioning includes becoming unconscious (10b), falling asleep (10c), being extremely tired (10d):

(10)

- a. knocked out, worn out, worked out.
- b. He *knocked out* his opponent.
- c. I’m going to *sack out* early tonight.
- d. He *knocked himself out* to get it done.

The next metaphorical sense of OUT points to an extreme case of non-functioning, i.e. inexistence:

(11)

- a. die out, fade out, close out.
- b. The custom/species/signal *is dying out*.
- c. I have to *close out* my bank account.
- d. The radio sound *faded out*.

Both (11a) and (11d) express a gradual process, a decrease of intensity to the point of disappearance.

4.2.2. *Out* as change from inaccessibility to accessibility (*out* as accessible)

The change from private/inaccessible to public/accessible can be marked by the conventional metaphor POSSESSION IS CONTAINMENT which underlie verb particle constructions such as *give out*, *lend out*, *dole out*, *deal out*, *dish out*, *rent out*, *contract out* and *hand out* that generally mean “out of my possession” and into the recipient’s possession:

(12)

- a. He *rents out his house* at the beach.
- b. The Italians *are handing out* scholarships for study.

The notions of perspective and construal introduced at the beginning of this section can account for opposite meanings in certain VPSc with OUT. In this case the trajector moves into the observer's visual field and the LM may be only vaguely specified: in fact it may refer to no concrete object at all, but to a state of hiddenness or obscurity. The TR may be the truth (*dig out the truth*), a comment (*squeeze out a comment*), a solution (*find out a solution*), an answer (*work out an answer*) the news (13):

(13) The news leaked out; someone leaked it out (example taken from Lindner 1983: 108)

In this version of OUT the notion of movement into the observer's visual field is extended to the notion of movement into the observer's domain of awareness or understanding. The superordinate metaphor COGNITION IS PERCEPTION mixes with the PUBLIC IS ACCESSIBLE metaphor of OUT in the VPCs given in (14):

(14)
 a. Maggie *smell out* evildoers and cast spells on them.
 b. He'd told me he *had sniffed* out more books.

The idea of accessibility to the cognition or perception of some viewer is conveyed in the following examples taken from Lindner (1983: 134) who distinguishes among symbolic forms (15a), verbal forms (15b), written forms (15c), visual constructs (15d) and auditory constructs (15 e).

(15)
 a. *Tap out* the message in Morse.
 b. *Bellow out* blasphemies.
 d. *Sketch out /draw out* a diagram.
 e. *Pound out/ bang out* a tune on the piano.

To summarize, we have to note that the particle OUT has two groups of opposing meanings connected with these situations:

1. the metaphorical landmark expresses existence, knowledge, visibility, availability: *find out, squeeze out, draw out*, etc.;
2. the metaphorical landmark expresses non-existence, ignorance, invisibility, unavailability: *die out, close out, log out*, etc.

4.2.3. *Out* as abnormal

The conceptual link between the notion of exit from the container (landmark and that of change from a normal to an abnormal state, such as from consciousness into unconsciousness or from self-control into lack of control is linguistically coded in: *be*

out of one's mind 'be extremely angry', *be burnt out* 'be exhausted mentally, without energy', *break out*, *burst out*:

(16) They were in England when war *broke out*.

(17) They *burst out* laughing.

In other words, the metaphorical container (LM) is what has been called 'the canonical human state' which includes psychological and emotional states like happiness and solidarity. Such states are deemed desirable and canonical and their opposites such as depressed (*bummed out*, *put out*, *psyched out*), crazy and frightened (*weird out*, *freak out*, *panic out*, *flip put*) are therefore out:

(18)

a. That really *bums me out*.

b. John really *psyched* his opponent *out* by acting confident.

c. That remark *put* him *out*.

Further, the LM may represent other facets of the canonical human state namely being normal, conscious and controlled. Being in the canonical normal state means being accessible – easy for others to interact with. Therefore OUT metaphorically codes departure from canonical, accessible states in verbs such as *vibe sb. out*, *freak out*, *flip out*, *blow out*, *panic out*.

The idea of going to an extreme, beyond the normal range of intensity and reasonableness is manifest in the following examples:

(19)

a. We really *porked out/pigged out* last night. ('indulge in an eating binge').

b. I'm going to the library and *nerd out*. ('study intensively, give oneself over to studying').

c. They're *rocking out*.

d. I'm just *spazzing out* ('be unusually clumsy').

e. They got all *punked out* for the concert. ('dressed and dancing in punk style').

f. We got *toked out* ('tired or blank due to excess of marijuana').

The meaning (version) of OUT pointing to an abnormal state seems to be also related to the last group of extensions of OUT, which involves expansion.

4.2.4. *Out* as expansion

This group of meanings is linked with the idea of increasing/expanding to maximal boundaries. In a concrete sense, objects with a minimal shape when not in use expand to their maximal shape when used with *out*:

(20)

- a. Please *spread out* the map on the table, it'll make it easier to find the place.
- b. The nets are still wet, we have to *hang* them *out*.

Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) argues that in the same manner, the same can be done with abstract or figurative verbs + OUT relating to time periods and intrinsic physical properties with a potential for stretching. This stretching potential is manifest in the following examples that express a durative aspect, namely they last some time and time is often viewed as a surface which can extend: *search out* ('look carefully as long as necessary until one finds what one was looking for'), *wait out* ('wait until the whole period of time passes'), *hold out* ('stay as long as possible'), *wipe out* ('kill a whole group or a nation'), *last out* ('manage to stay fit, function, stay alive'), *sit something out* ('continue though it was boring, unpleasant, not efficacious') and *drag/draw sth out*:

(21)

- a. You *won't last* the day *out* on an empty stomach in a difficult situation.
- b. He did not like the course, but as he had already paid the fee he decided to *sit it out* till the end of the year⁵.
- c. The lawyer *dragged out* all the details during the trial ('The lawyer talked too much longer than necessary making the trial last as long as possible').
- d. *Draw out* the week end by taking Monday off.

To summarize, expansion is a concept which can be subdivided in the following types:

- expansion in length: the TR of OUT is a one dimensional object and OUT codes this object's increase in length (*stretch out a rope*);
- expansion in area: OUT profiles a TR's increase along two dimensions (*flatten out the dough*);
- expansion in volume: OUT profiles a TR's extension in three dimensions (*puff out one's cheeks*);
- expansion of discontinuously occupied space: *He spread out the tools on the work bench*; expansion in abstract, non-spatial domains: *The company branched out* ('The company got bigger by sending forth branches');
- expansion to full or canonical form): OUT codes extension to full form, i.e. the form which has more information specified about it, a complete form: *He was filling out forms about the accident*.

4.3. *Out*, a synonym of *in* and an antonym of *up*?

The last example can be extended to *He was filling out forms about the accident while I was filling in forms at the airport* where the difference between FILL OUT and FILL IN is that the former profiles the addition of information up to a complete form,

while the latter simply codes the insertion of information. At this point we have to stress that OUT and IN are not always opposites; on the contrary, they can even be partial synonyms, as shown above. More interestingly, in some domains OUT and UP are opposites, as evinced in the following examples, taken from Lindner (1983: 193):

(22)

- a. She *crumpled up* the letter and then *smoothed it out*.
- b. Kitty *stretched out* and then *curled up*.
- c. *Roll up* the carpet and then *roll it out*.
- d. He had to *gather up* the tickets he *had handed out* by mistake.
- e. *Lay out* your clothes and *fold* them *up*.

5. THE ORIENTATIONAL, PATH PARTICLE *UP*

UP is the most frequently used English particle (there are 1,000 senses for VPCs with *UP*, compared to 600 for *OUT*). Its frequency can be explained by the fact that an upward position or motion, both physical and especially abstract, is in a very special way part of our daily experience.

5.1. *Spatial senses of up*

It is known that in our spatial orientation we make use of the coordinates which are of different importance to us: verticality is a more important dimension of orientation than horizontality and, within horizontality, orientation along the FRONT/BACK axis outranks orientation along the left/right axis. The basic prepositions of orientation in English are: *UP-DOWN*, *OVER-UNDER*, *ABOVE-BELOW* and *FRONT-BACK*, *BEFORE-BEHIND*.

Typically, i.e. spatially, *UP* means motion from a lower to a higher place. However, *up* may also refer to situations where there is no real change of place (e.g. *Where is David? He must be up in his room* where *up* means ‘on a higher floor’).

Up shows that the position of the object mentioned is higher than others (*Our department room is two floors up*) or it changes from a horizontal to a vertical position (*Is Jane still sleeping? No, she has been up for an hour.*).

5.2. *Extended senses of up*

Besides ‘movement to a higher place’ (the basic meaning of *up*), *UP* is associated with the notion of approach, meaning ‘aiming at or reaching a goal, an end, a limit’:

(23)

- a. Several passengers *rushed up / hurried up* the waiting bus;
- b. At the sight of the stranger the children *ran up* to their mother;
- c. *Go up* to the window and see what is going on;

- d. She *walked up* (came up to me) to me and asked how to get to the station;
- e. How do you *link* the new printer *up* with the computer?
- f. By Monday you *should have read up* to page 100.

In cognitive linguistic literature, which places great emphasis on explaining usages, this derived sense has been accounted for in the following way: as we approach an entity such that it gets closer to us, it comes to distend a larger area of the retina. This causes the ocular experience of entities which are approaching or which we are approaching to appear to move up in our visual field. That is, this situation relates to motion along the horizontal, not the vertical axis.

A second derived sense of UP sustains the idea that generally, upward orientation tends to go together with positive evaluation while downward orientation with a negative one⁶. In other words, what is good, beautiful, cheerful, big, strong, solid is positive i.e. is on top of the vertical orientation or up, (e.g. *brush up*, *brighten up*, *cheer up*, *live it up*, *perk up*, *build up*) while what is bad, ugly, sad, small, weak, fragile is at the bottom of this vertical line of evaluation or down.

The *up-down schema*⁷ structures the systemic (primary) metaphor MORE IS UP and LESS IS DOWN that can be expressed in numerous ways. For example, the idea of more energy is conveyed in *A good preacher knows how to work up a crowd*; more size is suggested in *His toe swelled up after the horse stepped in*; more speed in *Hurry/speed up*; more volume in *Could you turn the TV up?* and accumulation in *We clocked up a lot of mileage*.

Up is also used for *more important* and *higher in rank*, as in *She's getting up in the world* (i.e. doing better and better in her career, socially, etc.), *She's been talking up her job* (i.e. saying how good it is) and *We went up to London* (a usage which derives from the consensus that London is the most important/highest ranking place in the land). *Down* is used to denote 'low in value, low in status, not working, defunct' as in *House prices went down*.

A third extended sense of UP has to do with the idea that higher up is *more visible, accessible, known*. Relative to this use of *up*, Rudzka-Ostyn (2003: 86) notes: "When one entity is or comes to a higher level or location, it is noticed more easily. This is not true only true of concrete objects but also of abstract entities to which one draws somebody's attention. Therefore, a feature that is characteristic of many verbs with *up* is that what was hidden or unknown becomes visible or known". This line of thought can be followed if we consider example sentences such as (24a), (24b), (24c) and (24d):

(24)

- a. Do you know how many participants *showed up* at the conference dinner last night?
- b. He was determined to *bring up* the issue at the department meeting.
- c. I've noticed her name keeps *cropping up* several times in the conversation.
- d. The police has *turned up* some more evidence.

One last identifiable sense of *up* indicates not only that an abstract limit has been reached, but even more, that a whole object has been affected by an action⁸:

(25)

- a. Running can *burn up* a lot of calories.
- b. Someone *has used* all the paper *up*.
- c. She got into drugs and really *messed up* her life.

The perfective sense of *up* which I believe is the typical perfective particle, is shared by *out*, the previously discussed verb particle, and also by its opposite, *down* or the particles *off* and *through*: *wash up*, *calm down*, *chill out*, *cool off*, *think through*. As is known, perfective phrasal verbs have to do with the notions of completeness or thoroughness:

(26)

- a. *Type* this letter *up*, please!
- b. They've *closed down* their business.
- c. Mammoths *died out* a long time ago.
- d. I've *read* it *through*. Now let's talk about it.

5.3. Simple verbs and VPCs with *up*

One of the most common errors made by learners when using phrasal verbs is confusing phrasal verbs and single word (bare) verbs whose meanings are related. While simple verbs code processes that do not result in a perceivable change of state, i.e. they do not code the achievement of the goal state itself, VPCs with UP point to an object's change of state up to some state designated as goal. For example, it is possible *to beat* somebody without leaving any visible evidence, but *beating somebody up* results in a visible difference. A *goal state* is that degree beyond which further change would make no difference. It is that state at which the change in the object is considered salient, i.e. perceivable, maximally different from the initial state or relatively permanent. In the sentences below, UP specifies that the object's change reaches the goal state required by the context, while the bare verbs suggest gradual and less perceptible changes:

(27)

- a. My foot swelled imperceptibly.
- b. *My foot swelled up imperceptibly.
- c. The foot *swelled up*.
- d. The boy opened his eyes.
- e. The boy *opened up* his eyes.
- f. His coming back brightened my life.
- g. His coming back *brightened up* my life.

Sentences (27d) and (27e) suggest that eyes that open up are wider than eyes that open; sentence (27f) implies that my life was bright for a while, whereas sentence (27g) sounds like my whole life changed after his coming back.

5.4. *Up in apparently opposed VPCs*

Another source of semantic confusion for non-native learners is that particles like UP can combine with predicates which code processes leading to apparently opposite states: *open up – close up, tighten up – loosen up, harden up – soften up, slow up- speed up, divide up – join up, speak up – shut up, bind up – break up, tie up – split up, etc.* The correct understanding and acquisition of these verb particle constructions should start from and be based on the awareness of the meaning the particle UP contributes to these verbs, namely ‘a change up to some goal state located on a state change scale’. The states implied by the pairs of verbs above can be conceived of as opposites of a single continuum, e.g. from open to close, from tight to loose, from hard to soft, etc. However, there are some cases when the change toward the value conceptualized as the lower one (on a two headed scale) is coded by the particle down:

(28)

- a. heat up – cool down - *cool up;
- b. liven up – quiet down - *quiet up;
- c. speed up – slow down –slow up;
- d. tense up – calm down - *calm up;
- e. fatten up – slim down - *slim up.

DOWN is prototypically an opposite of UP but these particles do not always pattern this way. Meanings (versions) of UP and DOWN which code paths in different domains are not considered opposites like in the pairs *write up – write down, hunt up – hunt down, close up – close down*:

(29)

- a. They *closed up* the University building for the night and the next day it was *closed down* for repairs.
- b. *Write* the phone number *down* so you won’t forget it.

In (29a) UP singles out the TR compactness, i.e. the University building is completely and securely closed, while DOWN indicates that all work and activity stop there because of the repairs. In (29b) DOWN extends into a non-spatial domain to mean something like ‘fixed in a place and therefore in possession or under control’, a meaning which reminds of the fastening, restriction meaning of UP in VPCs such as *bottle up, button up, fasten up, hang up, etc.*

To summarize, the domains structured by the vertical axis and by UP implicitly, cover a wide range and include quantities (*clock up, heap up, mount up, pile up*), rates (*speed up, quicken up, hurry up*) loudness and pitch (*sharpen up, sing up, speak up*),

temperature (*heat up, warm up*), social rankings (*get up in the world*), values (*brush up, talk sth. up*), feelings and emotions (*tense up, fire sb. up, flare up, hot up, liven up, work up*)

6. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN *OUT* AND *UP*

More puzzling cases for the non-native learner of English are instances where the same verb can be used with different particles such as *OUT* and *UP*:

- (30)
- a. 100 people *turned out* for the picnic.
 - b. 100 people *turned up* for the picnic.

The subtle difference between (30a) and (30b) lies in the nature of the LM and of the TR. In (30a) the LM is a state of hiddenness and inaccessibility involved by the idea of privacy of the people's homes. So, *turn out* can be associated with verbs such as *go out, take sb. out, dine out, stay out (too late)*. By contrast, in (30b), the same TR, namely 100 people are not felt to be especially concealed; they are simply, for whatever reason, not in someone's range of access at a given time. The 100 people who turn up for the picnic in (30b) seem to appear from anywhere, with the feeling that they may have come spontaneously off the street rather than having planned to come from home. Therefore, in the case of *turn out*, the notion of boundary around sth. carries a sense of privacy, while in the case of *turn up* the idea of spontaneity and unexpectedness is conveyed.

Although the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* (1990, 1989) records *turn out* and *turn up* as being synonyms, we believe that the latter is rather a synonym of *show up* and it is by virtue of analogy with this phrasal verb that *turn up* acquired the meaning discussed above. The idea of unexpectedness contained in VPCs with *UP* is most clearly evinced in the phrasal verb *pop up*.

Another difference between *OUT* and *UP* concerns the place of *OUT* and *UP* trajectors relative to a given canonical human state. So, as we have seen earlier, in example (18), *OUT* can remove its trajector from a human canonical state; by contrast, the particle *UP* places its trajectory in it so that VPCs with *UP* code becoming conscious or awake, (*wake up, get up*), energetic (*pep/perk sb. up, amp up, spirit sb. up*), prepared or lively (*gear up, psych up, be up, hype up*), happy (*cheer up, brighten up, jolly sb. up*), controlled or socially acceptable (*couth up, sober sb. up*). All these are states universally desired and besides they are states of accessibility, activity and function.

7. FINAL REMARKS

The analysis presented so far has been meant to demonstrate that English verb particles disclose figurative related meanings derived from a central/prototypical locative meaning. The abstract senses did not develop at random but systematically, and this systematicity should not be disregarded if we really want to reduce the amount of

memory work that learners of English (including non-native speaking teachers and translators) must invest in learning how particles and phrasal verbs are used. We believe particles are very important clues in the acquisition not only of phrasal verbs, but also of other vocabulary items, such as phrasal (compound) nouns and adjectives where particles also contribute their meaning to the whole. Thus, OUT occurs in quite a number of compounds either as the first part or as the second: *block out, dropout, fallout, handout, outburst, outgrowth, outlook, outpatient, outrage, outset, outskirts, printout, sell-out, walk-out*. The meanings of these compounds as well as the meanings of a number of deverbal adjectives formed with OUT (*outdated, outgoing, outspoken, outstanding, outer, outlandish, outlying, outrageous, outright*) can be associated with the general meanings we have discussed in section 4.

By dealing with opposite senses of OUT and with opposite senses of UP we hope we have stressed the idea that polysemy is better understood in terms of the cognitive linguistic approach and of the usage-based model. The validity of this approach is also confirmed by the way phrasal verbs have started to be treated in some recent dictionaries such as *The Macmillan Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* published in 2005, where the meanings of particles are also given in the form of diagrams that try to suggest the idea of systematicity invoked throughout our whole paper. Simple verbs and VPCs have been compared mostly with a methodological view and to show what exactly the addition of a particle can mean when acquiring phrasal verbs.

The discussion of UP in apparently opposed verbs has also been intended to throw some light on the semantic confusion brought about by cases as those discussed in 5.4. Finally, by comparing and contrasting OUT and UP, we have tried to underline that changing the particle of a phrasal verb may result in semantic differences, thus demonstrating that in a VPC it is not only the meaning of the verb which counts, but also that of the particle. To round everything up, we believe that the cognitive approach of the semantics of particles is meant to help learners not to feel overwhelmed or unnecessarily confused but encourage them to study and to use particles logically, on the basis of their meaning.

NOTES

1. In the class of invariable elements Hartmann (1999: 271) also includes interjections and discourse markers.
2. Examples taken from Rudzka-Ostyn (2003: 3).
3. The cognitive notion of *perspective*, one of the most commented upon of the construal operations, is essential for spatial descriptions.
4. Most of our daily activities are conceptualized in CONTAINER terms. Johnson (1987) gives the following evidence: "...Consider, for example, only a few of the many in-out orientations that might occur in the first few minutes of an ordinary day. You *wake out* of a deep sleep and *peer out* from beneath the covers into your room. You gradually *emerge out* of your stupor, *pull yourself out* from under the covers, *climb into* your robe, *stretch out* your limbs, and *walk in a daze out* of your bedroom and *into* the bathroom. You *look in* the mirror and see your face *staring out* at you. You *reach into* the medicine cabinet, *take out* your toothpaste, *squeeze out* some toothpaste, *put* the toothbrush *into* your mouth, brush your teeth, and *rinse out* your mouth. At breakfast you perform a host of further *in-out moves* - *pouring out* the coffee, *setting out* the dishes, *putting* the toast *in* the toaster, *spreading out* the jam on the toast, on and on." The bodily

- experience the container schema comes from can be summarized as follows: ‘we experience our bodies as containers and as things in containers (e.g. rooms) constantly’ (Johnson 1987 *apud* Lakoff 1987: 272)
5. In American English, *sit something out* means ‘not participate in it at all’.
 6. However, Lindstromberg (1997: 190) notes that *down* does not always have negative associations. Thus, the use of *down* stems from the fact that virtually all traditional jobs require people to spend most of their time looking down, working on something at waist level or below: *Lets get down to work; Could you take down a letter for me? Why don't you write/put/note down what I'm saying?*
 7. Like the container schema, the up-down schema is one of the most common types of image schemas which are basic cognitive structures derived from our everyday interaction with the world.
 8. Related to this, the meaning of *give up* shows that *up* designates a level at which an idea/a habit is considered uninteresting/dangerous and thus abandoned.

REFERENCES

- Bolinger, D. 1971. *The Phrasal Verb in English*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fraser, B. 1976. *The Verb Particle Combination in English*. New York: Academic Press.
- Hartmann, D. 1999. “Particles”. *The Concise Encyclopedia of Grammatical Categories*. Eds. K. Brown and J. Miller. Oxford: Elsevier. 271-277.
- Huddleston R. and G. Pullum. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, M. 1987. *The Body in the Mind. The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Langacker, R. 1991. *Concept, Image and Symbol. The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Lindner, S. 1983. *A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of Verb-Particle Constructions with UP and OUT*. Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Lindstromberg, S. 1997. *English Prepositions Explained*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Lipka, L. 1972. *Semantic Structure and Word-formation: Verb Particle Constructions in Contemporary English*. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
- Peña Cervel, S. 1998. “The prepositions *in* and *out* and the trajector-landmark distinction”. *RESLA* 13: 261-271.
- Rudzka-Ostyn, B. 2003. *Word Power: Phrasal Verbs and Compounds. A Cognitive Approach*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

DICTIONARIES

- Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus*. 2005. Oxford: Macmillan.
- Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the 1989th Edition, Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press.
- Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs*. 1990 (1989). London and Glasgow: Collins.
- Collins Cobuild English Usage*. 1992. London: Harper Collins.