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CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN HANDLING PHRASAL VERBS FROM A TRANSLATION PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: ***The research is an attempt to find a number of peculiar aspects of phrasal verbs as a part of the language vocabulary. It has allowed to find out the process of phrasal verbs development and existence within the frame of the English oral communication and their proper equivalence in the Target language.***

This study is a good source of information for translators as end-users helping them choose what structure should be used, what information and meaning it should designate.

Phrasal verbs are increasingly the topic of particular attention, because this field is always in evolution that depends on the development of the country, linguists, translators and specialists involved.

Key words: *phrasal verbs, semantics, etymology, translation, communication*

Introduction: The widespread use of English phrasal verbs in daily life and literary works, as well as their diversity attracts the interest of many linguists and researchers. Phrasal verbs have become the object of various researches primarily because of their complexity, polysemy, and idiomatic restraints – a complexity of characteristics that indicate to the fact that understanding and especially translating phrasal verbs can be a time-consuming and disputing process.

Phrasal verbs have multiple meanings which is a challenge in English, this fact makes linguists consider them as arbitrary and unpredictable according to numerous linguists and researchers like Baldwin T., [1], Baker M., [2], BUSUTTIL P., [3] Crystal D., [4], Thim S., [5], and others.

Considering the above-presented considerations, we can say that phrasal verbs deserve the increased level of interest shown by linguists and researchers, since this linguistic category is gaining more and more popularity among the English language users. The multitude of the existing data regarding the notion of phrasal verbs gives the scholars the possibility to explore their influence on the English language development and enrichment.

This unpredictability of phrasal verbs presents a challenge both for the learners – users of the English language and for the translators as well. Translators have to treat carefully the English phrasal verbs while rendering their meaning into Romanian is a rather difficult and fascinating task by itself.

Source of Examples: The linguistic phenomenon of phrasal verbs poses a great interest to the researchers and users of the English language. We have taken the issue of

phrasal verbs in "*The Prince and the Pauper*" by Mark Twain [6] and their translation into Romanian in „*Prinț și cerșetor*" by Mark Twain (translation Radu Tataruca) [7] as the topic of the present study. It is due to the highly regarded status of the masterpiece in this field and the fact that the work is used both as methodological material in universities around the world and because the literary work chosen is the world's bestseller, enjoyed by both young and adult readers.

Results and Discussions: Understanding the meaning or finding equivalence to a phrasal verb can sometimes present a serious challenge to the translator. This is due to the *semantic variations* brought by the additions to the verb they accompany. The problem is further complicated since some of the phrasal verbs do not exist as phrasal verbs in the target language or they are translated by either a different word, or even by various parts of speech that differ from the original one. Hence, it becomes an extremely challenging task for the translator who is facing the problem of finding the correct equivalent in the target language to preserve the original meaning from the source language.

The process of translating English phrasal verbs into Romanian can be difficult because the semantics of the phrasal verb cannot be approached through the analysis of the individual parts in isolation, the meaning of the unit is non-compositional and therefore non-analyzable. English makes use of phrasal verbs in which a preposition or an adverb is fused to a verb. In some instances, they consist of a verb, which indicates a mode of action plus a preposition.

Moreover, phrasal verbs are difficult to translate as their meaning does not correspond to the one of the basic verb or the one we think of when we see it. In other words, the meaning of phrasal verbs cannot be guessed. The example "*fly out*" has two meanings "*to leave a place by air* and *to leave a place quickly*" even if they have something in common with the main verb, the meanings are different "*a zbura, a pleca*" [8]. In the majority of cases, it is difficult to deduce the meaning of a phrasal verb from its elements, especially when it is used idiomatically. For example, the English language user, who knows that "*to kick off"* means "*to make a checkmark*", may have difficulty in understanding the sentence "The teacher *kicked off* the students for being late". In this case, the phrasal verb "*to kick off*" means "*to reprimand or to express disapproval*", so, to translate this idiomatic idea of "*kick off*" which actually does not mean "to start", a translator has to understand contextually the meaning before translating the idea [9]. He/she is not only faced with the problem of understanding what "*kick off*" means in this context, but he/she will also look for the best verb in Romanian that will translate the action of reprimanding, which is "Profesorul *a certat* studenții pentru întârziere" [8].

Additionally, phrasal verbs cause *semantic* problems, since many of them are *polysemous*, that is they have more than one meaning, which results from its usage, context or environment. For instance, the phrasal verb "*to put down*" has two meanings: *the literal* meaning of *"putting something down"* and *the idiomatic* meaning of *"accomplishing something"*. According to the Longman Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs, it might have one of the twelve different meanings. For instance: *(2)* to criticize and humiliate somebody: "I hate the way Dave *puts* me *down* the whole time"; or *(4)* to stop, put an end to something, as in the sentence: "The uprising *was put down* by the police and the army". *(8)* to kill an animal without causing it pain, usually because it is old or sick: "The owner had to have

her cat *put down*", or *(12)* to leave a passenger: "He asked the taxi *to put* him *down* at the end of the road" – this meaning is more frequently used especially in British English [9].

Until now, it was impossible to succeed in presenting a right and proper way of categorizing phrasal verbs semantically, that is, in terms of meaning. Many linguists tried to accomplish this task and the most frequently used classification is as follows: 1. ***Literal*** 2. ***Semi-idiomatic*** 3. ***Idiomatic***.

In the ***Literal*** category, the verb retains its basic concrete meaning while the short adverb or preposition maintains a literal meaning. Such combinations are the simplest to translate. Examples with *prepositions*: ***walk out*** *the door (ieşi pe uşă),* ***fall down*** *the stairs (cadea pe scari)*. Examples with *adverbs plus prepositions*: ***come out*** *of the house (a iesi din casa),* ***walk away*** *from the house (a pleca de acasa)* [8]. Thus, all these examples prove that sometimes phrasal verbs could be translated with direct meaning even if they consist of verb + particle. They are easy to be understood and rendered into the target language.

An example to empower what has been mentioned above is the phrasal verb ***look in*** which as many other phrasal verbs has several meanings and one of them is the same as the verb *to look*. The example "…*bare-footed and cold,* ***looking in*** *at cook-shop windows*…" [6, p.25] was translated as "…*picioarele goale, rebegit de frig,* ***uitându-se*** *la prăvăliile birtaşilor*…" [7, [29]. Thus, as we can see "*to look in*" is translated as "*a se uita*". Even if, the phrasal verb seems to be part of the *literal category*, we should look it up in the dictionary to make sure the certain phrasal verb is translated properly.

Another example of this nature is the verb ***laugh at*** that means "*a râde de*" it is linked with the meaning of the verb "*to laugh*" but the difference is that the first one has negative connotation. Oxford Dictionary gives us the following definition to this phrasal verb "*to show that you think someone or something is stupid*" [10]. The example "*and royally utter commands that were good stuff to* ***laugh at***" [6, p.63] is rendered as "*să-i dea ordine, pe un ton regal care o făcea să* ***hohotească de râs***" [7, p.68]. The translator opted for the emphasized meaning by adding one more word.

A little bit different case from the ones above regarding its translation is "*He* ***looked up*** *and encountered a solemn warning in my Lord St. John's eyes*" [6, p.74] "***Ridică fruntea*** *şi întâlni un avertisment solemn în ochii lordului St. John*" [7 p.78]. Even if the Romanian variant of the phrasal verb "*look up*" should be "*a privi in sus*" or "*a ridica ochii*", the translator opted for another structure; he rendered it as "***ridică fruntea****"*.

It is a common knowledge that in order to provide an adequate translation, the translator must be able to sense nuances in the semantics of both the source language and the target language texts. The components of phrasal verbs have their important role and namely the ability to describe actions or states more precisely, vividly and emotionally.

In the ***Semi-idiomatic*** category, the verb retains its concrete meaning, but the preposition adds a nuance that would not be discernible from its basic meaning. Even though the exact meaning of these phrasal verbs might not be clear, a language learner might grasp an approximate meaning. Some examples are: ***write up*** *(a scrie (ceva favorabil)),* ***write down*** *(a scrie)*, ***write out*** *(a completa, a copia)* [8]. The basic notion of these phrasal verbs is the activity of writing, but each of the short prepositions conveys a different nuance to that activity of writing. Therefore, the idea of this category is that the meaning of the phrasal verb is close or related to the basic verb.

One example of this category is "*None, sir. Would'st have them **take off** their garment, and sleep without-like the beasts*?" [6, p.24] and it is translated as "*Vreţi **să-şi scoată** rochiile şi să se culce goale, ca animalele*?" [7, p.29]. The basic verb "*to take*" in Romanian is "*a lua*" while the phrasal verb "*to take off*" is translated as "*a scoate*". Therefore, this category of the verb meaning is obvious.

The other example is the verb ***to move on*** that means "*to leave the place where you are staying and go somewhere else*" [9] and it is translated into Romanian as "*a se misca, a merge mai departe*". The example taken from the novel "*The houseless prince, the homeless heir to the throne of England, still **moved on**, drifting deeper into the maze of squalid alleys*" [6, p.50] has been translated by an *equivalent* from the dictionary "*Prinţul fără azil, moştenitorul tronului Angliei, fără adăpost, **mergea**, încă, înfundându-se, din ce în ce, în labirintul străduţelor mizerabile*" [7, p.54].

The difficulty of *semi-idiomatic* category is also very common. Every translator, English learner or speaker that deal with phrasal verbs have to know the way to differentiate and to use these structures properly.

The third category is ***Idiomatic***, the most complex and difficult one. These combinations are fully idiomatic. No part of the combination of the verb is predictable from its meanings. In order to manage the work with these types of phrasal verbs, the translator has to know them or look them up in dictionaries for finding their appropriate meaning. Some examples are ***work out*** *(come to a successful solution)*, ***work out*** *(perform physical exercise)*, ***bring up*** *(suggest a topic)*, ***bring up*** *(raise children)*, ***carry on*** *(continue)*, ***carry out*** *(perform duties)* [10]. The same phrasal verb can have several meanings, the only way out is the context.

The following examples are a proof of the above statement: "*The lights began to twinkle; it **came on** to rain, the wind rose, and a raw and gusty night **set in***." [6, p. 57] – "*Luminile se stingeau una după alta; **începu** să plouă; vântul creştea: o noapte aspră şi furtunoasă **se pregătea***" [7 p.62]. If we look at the phrasal verbs from this sentence, we observe that they have nothing to do with the meaning of the basic verb or with the one we imagine it could be. The verb "*came on*" has been translated as "*începu*", the dictionary meaning is "*to start to happen or work*" that means that the translator's choice is correct. The second phrasal verb of this sentence "*set in*" has been translated as "*se pregătea*" with the meaning "*when something unpleasant sets in, it begins and seems likely to continue in a serious way*" that is also correct.

The example "*Then **springing up**, he turned a joyful face toward the two lords in waiting*" [6, p.71] is translated as: "*Atunci, **ridicându-se**, el întoarse o faţă veselă către cei doi demnitari care îl însoţeau*" [7, p.76] and prove that it is an idiomatic difficulty because the meaning cannot be understood by simply looking at the expression. Sometimes the meaning of the idiomatic phrasal verb can be concluded from the context. In our case, the context proves the proper meaning of the phrasal verb. Thus, any method is welcome when the message is translated adequately.

Based on the examples provided above, we consider that a thorough study and consequent understanding of semantic correspondences of the English and Romanian verbal systems can be an extremely powerful tool in the translator's arsenal.

The translation problems and difficulties of phrasal verbs reflect the most typical situations. Their rendering is a very important part of the science of translation because otherwise the world of literature would not enjoy qualitative translation without a correct rendering of phrasal verbs. Translators should pay a thorough attention to the translation of the phrasal verbs and study each of them. English and Romanian lexical systems are so different that they demand a special approach to translating of each phrasal verb according to its contextual meaning.

If speaking about *translation techniques* they play an important role in translating phrasal verbs. In addition, it is to be remembered that these structures are non-compositional, non-analyzable, and consequently not amenable to word for word translation.

Mona Baker, in her book "*In Other Words. A Coursebook on Translation*", proposed the most useful practical approaches to translate phrasal verbs, along with idioms and fixed expressions; these approaches are applying ***literal translation, paraphrase, equivalence, modulation*** **and** ***omission*** [2].

Literal translation is the rendering of text from one language into another one word at a time with or without conveying the sense of the original whole. In the example "*Prithee, **take** it **away**, lest in mine unheedfulness it be soiled*" [6, p. 51] the phrasal verb is translated as "*Vă rog, **luati**-1 de aici, în stângăcia mea, 1-aş putea murdări*" [7, p.62] we can consider this translation as *literal one.* The translator kept the same structure for the target sentence without affecting the meaning. It is also noticeable that the target text remains idiomatic and has the same word order, meaning and style as the source text. The translator has chosen to provide the literal translation for bringing more clarity to the Romanian reader. However, cases of literal translation are rarely found.

Paraphrase is the most common way of translating phrasal verbs when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the target language because of the differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages. The example: "*The King's face **lit up** with a fierce joy*" [6, p.112] has been translated as "*O raza de bucurie **luci** pe faţa regelui*" [7, p.116]. So, "*lit up*" having the meaning "*to set burning, as a candle, lamp, fire, match, or cigarette; kindle; ignite*" [9] has been translated as "*a luci*" with a metaphorical meaning. It is translated by *paraphrase* because the translator changed the word order of the sentence but at the same time kept the meaning of the very phrasal verb, perfectly fitting the original style.

Equivalence is a translation technique, which uses a completely different expression to transmit the same reality. In the example: "*the Lord Hertford relieved his fellow-keeper, and **sat down** to keep watch and ward alone*" [6, p.34] the phrasal verb has a full equivalence in the Romanian language "*lordul Hertford, concedie pe însoţitorul său de pază şi **se aşează** să vegheze singur*" [7, p.39]. It allows the translator to preserve the meaning of a phrasal verb by finding a target language equivalent. It is called "*established equivalent*" – a translation technique that "can be used only if a term or expression used in the source language (SL) is recognized by dictionaries or language in use as an equivalent in the target language (TL)" [9, p. 498].

Modulation basically means using a phrase that is different in the source and target languages to convey the same idea. For the example: "*A great shout **went up** at this,*

and one rude fellow said" [6, p. 23] the translator has given the variant "*Un mare hohot de ras* ***primi*** *aceste vorbe şi un baiat grosolan îi raspunse*" [7, p.29]. It seems to be the same technique as paraphrase but there are differences. *Modulation* helps the translator generate a change in the point of view of the message without altering its meaning and without generating an unnatural feeling in the reader of the target text.

Omission. As single words, a phrasal verb may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target language. This may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons. The example: "*and they* ***kept*** *this* ***up*** *for days and nights together*" [6, p.63] has been translated as "*Toata lumea era în sarbatoare ... de zile şi nopţi întregi*" [7, p.72]. In general, the verb "*keep up*" has the meaning "*to continue*" [10]. *Omission* is applied here perfectly for if it does not change the meaning and the context of the message.

Summing up the results of the research, we can say that English phrasal verbs can be translated using either direct or indirect translation techniques. The most widespread practice is to use *modulation*, which allows making minor changes in the wording, preserving the TL natural patterns; *paraphrase* is used when no direct equivalent can be found and *equivalence*, where a structure of similar meaning and form found in dictionaries is used. *Omission* helps get rid of redundant words, when speaking about *literal translation* it is extremely rarely used.

Conclusion: Generally, the primary use of phrasal verbs is a conceptual categorization of reality in the speaker's head. They denote not only natural processes or states as "ordinary" verbs do, but also specify their spatial, temporal or other features. This ability to describe actions or states more precisely, vividly and emotionally is determined by the components of phrasal verbs. By merging with these elements, the exact translation verbs of broader meaning are subjected to a regular and systematic generation of their semantic roles. Translation techniques are the second major help for translators after dictionaries.

This knowledge will allow the end-users express their thoughts, attitudes and emotions in different ways, adding colour and life to both written texts and speech.

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