

## From the Editors

### MULTIWORD PATTERNS: CONSIDERING PHRASAL VERBS AND THEIR UNDERLYING SEMANTIC SYSTEMS (II)

This is the second volume in *Language Value* that is thoroughly devoted to the issue of Verb Particle Combinations (VPCs) also known and analysed under different linguistic trends and terms as phrasal/prepositional verbs, compound verbs, discontinuous verbs or multiword verbs, among others. For the sake of simplicity we will use the term verb particle combinations (VPCs) throughout this editorial.

Five articles present perspectives on the use of VPCs as used in different texts and contexts: that of animal-related VPCs in Panther and Thornburg, VPCs in child and adult interaction in data taken from the CHILDES corpus in Hampe's article, economics and finance texts in Breeze's, VPCs in cartoons in Kühr's, and constructions made by L2 learners of the VPCs as reflected in a corpus of learner language in Alejo's article.

As most authors in this issue, the study conducted by **Hampe** is framed within the field of Cognitive Linguistics. In it, the author takes a construction grammar perspective in order to carry out a thorough multi-factorial analysis of transitive verb-particle constructions in English. Hampe draws on the findings of previous studies like Gries (2003, 2011) and Diessel & Tomasello (2005) and suggests that the two word-order alternatives found in this kind of constructions are actually members of two different *construction networks*, each with a different prototype; thus, while those realisations of the *Verb-Particle-Object (V-Prt-O)* alternative rank higher as instances of the transitive construction, realisations of the *Verb-Object-Particle (V-O-Prt)* template are closer to the Caused-Motion Construction (CMC).

Her claims, however, go a step beyond by introducing the components of first-language acquisition and use; Hampe proposes that, in early stages, "literal" realisations of transitive phrasal verbs fitting the *V-O-Prt* alternative may be conceived of by the child, together with other expressions with, say, deictic adverbs, as instantiations of the same,

primitive and simple CMC. These, all together, and among other factors, are assumed to act as precursors of non-literal and more complex realisations of the CMC.

One of the aims of her study, accordingly, is to ascertain the role of *V-O-Prt* phrasal verbs as one kind of possible precursors in the acquisition of the CMC, with a special focus on the resultative caused-motion network. In her research, Hampe also takes into account the occurrence of either alternative in conjunction with spatial/non-spatial uses and the prevalence of either option in child and adult speech.

Her analysis is based on child and adult data extracted from different corpora: two age groups (3 and 5-7 year-olds) from the British part of the CHILDES and a third age group (adults) from the spoken part of the ICE-GB plus spontaneous spoken language and broadsheet newspaper texts from the BNC in order to also take into account genre-specific data.

**Alejo** explores the acquisition of VPCs by L2 learners from the perspective given by a usage-based approach to language. The article investigates an issue that has so far been nearly neglected in the area of VPC analysis: whether the *syntactic* distinction between particles and prepositions implies a difference in the way non natives learn them and whether the syntactic difficulty is really problematic or just something to be learnt without too much effort. In order to fill in this gap, Alejo examines one particle –OUT – considering all its possible syntactic and grammatical realisations. The approach followed in this article is to first focus on particle use contrasting data between native and non-native speakers, and then go on with the analysis of how this use is allocated in the different syntactic and semantic possibilities in order to establish the extent to which OUT is used by L2 learners. The author carries out an extensive analysis in three corpora: the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE) was used to establish L2 learners' use of VPCs with OUT, and two other corpora were used to contrast learner English patterns of use for VPCs with native English patterns (the *Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays* (LOCNESS) and the university and school essay sections of the *British National Corpus* (BNC)).

In their paper, **Panther and Thornburg** analyse a series of verb-particle “critter” constructions (VPCs whose verbal component derives from an animal name) from a Cognitive Linguistic perspective.

The authors propose a “conceptual schema” template combining a series of parameters (folk models, image schemata, aspectual categories, metaphoric and metonymic projections and sense specialization) that allows them to provide compelling explanations for each of the cases analysed.

The notion of folk model becomes central in their explanations as it helps them to illustrate how cultural models like “negative rat”, “positive beaver” or “clam” bring a rich load of conceptual content that explains the lexico-grammatical structure of constructions like *rat out*, *beaver away* or *clam up*.

The authors show that whereas the verbal component in this kind of constructions contributes with the folk model in hand, the spatial schema underlying the particle element allows for a metonymical association with an aspectual target. Operations of metaphoric and metonymic nature allow for the necessary changes leading to the correct interpretation of the VPC in hand thanks to a final process of sense specialisation. The resulting semantic conception of these VPCs is therefore non-compositional and arises out of the combination of the factors mentioned above.

In the next article, **Breeze** explores the use of the particles UP, DOWN, AHEAD, BACK, OUT and OFF in VPC constructions in two economics and finance corpora. Her analysis of the most frequent patterns is mapped out in the underlying conceptual metaphors of verb particle use in the field of financial reports. The prototypical cognitive schemata that lead to the different VPC senses by means of metonymy and metaphorisation are clearly identified and discussed. The author also finds out that VPC nominalisations, though not particularly frequent, are preferred to define various finance or business agreements (such as *buying/selling*) in the corpora studied.

The descriptions of the schemas activated in the VPC combinations analysed in the corpora are employed in the design of classroom activities, presenting exercises based on cognitive linguistics postulates. Thus, the article ends with contextualised examples

for VPC teaching focusing on the use of specific particles and the patterns they appear in using data from the corpora and applying corpus analysis results to the proposed exercises.

Abdeljalil Naoui **Khbir** examines how phrasal verbs are exploited in order to convey humour through the use of verbal and non-verbal cues in cartoons. He discusses how cartoon verbal and visual modes interact in the creation of different VPC interpretations (literal and idiomatic) thus originating the typical cartoon humour.

Khbir suggests that the combination of puns and literal meanings provides teachers with situations and cultural aspects to which students can relate; this, together with the pictorial support, makes phrasal verb cartoons well worth exploiting in the English language classroom. The author also suggests that humour appreciation may also be introduced in the class as triggered by the combination of literal and metaphorical or idiomatic meaning in the situation depicted in the cartoon. Moreover, the author discusses how the use of phrasal verbs in cartoons in an ambiguous way with other possible interpretation(s) may also be understood as a violation of Gricean Maxims.

The volume ends with a review of *Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus* where Yasutake **Ishii** focuses on the entry items coverage and the special features that distinguish this dictionary from other phrasal verb dictionaries. The usefulness of dictionary macro and microstructure is also considered and compared to other dictionaries.

*Antonio José Silvestre López*  
Guest Editor  
*M<sup>a</sup> Carmen Campoy Cubillo*  
*Miguel F. Ruiz Garrido*  
Editors  
Universitat Jaume I, Spain

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