INVESTIGATING THE IDIOMATIC USE OF PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH AMONG DIPLOMA STUDENTS IN JOURNALISM IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT ' OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (LANGUAGE), DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA.

JUNE, 1992.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are specifically acknowledged by means of references.

Garba Sadiq Yakubu .

CERTIFICATION

The thesis entitled "INVESTIGATING THE IDIOMATIC USE OF PHRASAL VERBS IN ENGLISH AMONG DIPLOMA STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM IN AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA " by Garba Sadiq Yakubu, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of M.A. (Language) of Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to krowledge and literary presentation.

DR (MRS) R. M. OLADIPO ..... 8th FEBRUARY, 1993
Chairman, Supervisory Committee — Date

P. V. GOMWALIC 8-2-93
Member, Supervisory Committee — Date

..... 8 Feb., 1993
Head of Department — Date

..... 24/1/96
Dean, Postgraduate School — Date

DEDICATION

To my beloved wife, MAIMUNATU ISAH ABDULKARIM

and

My dear son, ISA SADIQ.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise be to Allah for the health, determination ard perseverance He gave me in the course of carrying out this research.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my major supervisor, Dr. (Mrs.) R.M. Oladipo, for guiding me to choose the neglected area of phrasal verbs. This choice certainly "opened my eyes" to so many facts that I might not have known, had I not carried out this research. I thank her very much for her useful comments and advice on my data analysis, and for lending me a lot of her personal materials (references).

My gratitude also goes to my second supervisor, Mr. P.V. Gomwalk, for helping me reframe the title ard offering me useful suggestions on the methodology and procedure of this research study.

My appreciation goes to Mallam Suleiman Salau, Head, Adult Education Department for granting me the permission to use the students of Journalism as subjects of my study ard other facilities of the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He also gave me a lot of moral support and encouragement.

I must also express my sincere gratitude to my wife, Maimunatu Isa Abdulkarim, for helping me with my data analysis. Her constant prayers and advice helped me greatly. I also wish to thank my beloved son, Isa, for his patience every time I had to be away from home especially during the computation of my data.

I also wish to thank the authorities of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for offering me a research grant to help me carry out this study and a thesis allowance to have the work typed.

Finally, I wish to thank all friends and relatives for their constant prayers and encouragement which helped me greatly in completing this research study successfully.

Garba Sadiq Yakubu
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ABSTRACT

Several studies have been carried out to investigate one form of problem or the other among learners of English as a second language at different lpvels of education in Nigeria. These could be in the areas of phonoloqy, morphology, syntax or semantics. The presert work complements what other researchers have done. it investigates the (idiomatic) use of phrasal verbs in English among Diploma students of journalism in Ahmadu Bello university, Zaria. Four sections are included in this study, namely;

(A) Distinguishing between literal and idiomatic use of phrasal verbs.

(B) identification of appropriate interpretations of idiomatic phrasal verbs from a number of alternative answers.

(C) Giving short interpretations of idiomatic phrasal verbs (without alternative answers).

(D) Using phrasal verbs to construct idiomatic sentences.

One hundred subjects are drawn from Diploma II journalism class and divided into two groups: control and experimental. The test instrument is administered twice to these two groups. The first administration is aimed at finding out if there is

any initial difference between the groups (before any experimental treatment). An over-all average score of 1.8% is recorded in favour of the control group.

The poor performance of the two groups in the first test administration indicates that idiomatic phrasal verbs seem to constitute problems. This has pedagogical implications for students, teachers, parents and educational planners.

The second tost administration is interested in assessing the effect of the experimental treatment. An overall average score of 28.5% is recorded this time in favour of the experimental treatment.

To supplement the test instrument, a guestionnaire is administered to the subjects and the responses they provide are used in testing the formulated hypotheses, possible causes for their poor performance **are** identified and some solutions to them are given.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one gives a statement of the problem, significance of the study, aims of the study, sources of data as well as the scope/delimitation of the study. Chapter two gives the theoretical framework and literature review. it also discusses the model used in the study. The third chapter discusses the research procedure for

data collection.. Chapter four presents the analysis of data and attempts some discussions of the results and chapter five gives conclusion of the study* pedagogical implications, recommendations and the need for further research* There is also a bibliography as well as appendices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
TITLE PAGE	... ...	i
DECLARATION	... ...	ii
CERTIFICATION	... ...	iii
DEDICATION	... ...	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	... ...	v
ABSTRACT	... ...	vii
LIST OF TABLES	... ...	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	... ...	xiii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0	Preamble	1
1.1	Statement of the Problem ...	2
1.2	Significance of the study ...	4
1.3	Basic Assumptions	5
1.4	Aims of the Study	6
1.5	Sources of Data	6
1.6	Delimitation of the Study ...	6

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Preamble	8
2.1	Theoretical Framework	8
2.2	The Traditional Approach ...	8
2.2.1	The Transformational Generative Approach	11
2.2.1.1	Quirk et al's Approach	27
2.2.1.2	Phrasal Verbs	27
2.2.1.3	Intransitive Phrasal Verbs ...	28
2.2.1.4	Transitive Phrasal Verbs ...	29
2.2.1.5	Phrasal and Prepositional Verbs: Semantic Criteria	31
2.2.1.6	Syntactic Criteria	33
2.2.1.7	Phological Criteria	35
2.2.1.8	Phrasal-Prepositional Verbs ...	36

		PAGE
2.2.1.9	A Sample of Multi-word Verbs ...	38
2.3.0	Verb-Adjective Combinations ...	39
2.3.1	Alternative Analyses of Strings Consisting of A Verb + A Prepositional Phrase	40
2.3.2	Choice of a Model	41
2.3.3	Literature Review	42
2.3.4	Word Order	47
2.3.5	Stress	48
2.3.6	Foot Notes and Abbreviations ...	63
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY		
3.0	Preamble	65
3.1	Fieldwork Method	65
3.1.1	Location	65
3.1.2	The Subjects	66
3.1.3	The Test Irstrument	67
3.1.4	Pre-test of Instrument	69
3.1.5	Ethical Issues in Fieldwork ...	70
3.2	Framework of Analysis	70
3.2.1	Foot Notes	73
CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS		
4.0	Preamble	74
4.1	Results Profile	74
4.2	Implications of the Study ...	110
CHAPTER FIVE		
5.0	CONCLUSION	113
5.1	Pedagogical Implications ...	114
5.2	Recommendations	116
5.3	Need for Further Research ...	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	... ...	121
Appendix A	... ...	126
Appendix B	... ...	132
Appendix C	... ...	136
Appendices D-G	... ...	138

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1	76
Table 2	82
Table 3	102
Table 4	108

LIST OF APPENDICES

	PAGE
Appendix A. Test Instrument ...	126
Appendix B. Marking Scheme ...	132
Appendix C. Questionnaire ...	136
Appendices D-G	138

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Preamble

Figurative use of phrasal verbs refers to idiomaticity, and an idiom is defined in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English as a phrase or an expression whose meaning is not obvious through knowledge of the individual meanings of the constituent words but rather must be learnt as a whole. This dictionary alone records a total of eleven thousand (11,000) such expressions.

Language, being one of the most complex of all human phenomena, is by nature dynamic and ever open-ended. Thus, many English idiomatic expressions in varying degrees of complexity may have died out and several others introduced into the language. That no single person, native or non-native speaker of English, or any language for that matter, can claim absolute knowledge or mastery of all the idiomatic expressions of the language is perhaps too obvious to be restated over and again. It is, however, possible for an individual to be able to use appropriately and understand a large number of them which is, indeed, the aim of everyone who wishes to be proficient in the language.

The present researcher has painfully observed in the course of teaching Communication Skills to Diploma Students of Journalism that they often demonstrate very little knowledge of English idiomatic expressions in general and phrasal verbs in particular. This is not a problem that is

peculiar to students of Journalism alone, but may apply to all learners of English as a second language. The researcher is particularly concerned about this problem because of its seriousness and relevance to the practice of Journalism in general. Added to this is the fact that the study of phrasal verbs has been generally neglected over the years. Almost every work on English idiomatic expressions has tended to centre around 'Idioms proper'[1] and hardly on phrasal verbs which Fraser (1974) calls 'these annoying little mysteries.'

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The major problem the researcher has specifically identified in the students is that they often interpret idiomatic phrasal verbs in literal, rather than figurative terms (i.e they focus on their literal, rather than metaphorical meanings). This factor, he believes, is responsible for their lack of proficiency in the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs. In other words, the factor is believed to account for their general inability to understand and/or use appropriately even the simplest and commonest idiomatic phrasal verbs. Mcmordie (1979) observes that

> 'An English speaker is very often not aware that he is using an idiom; perhaps he does not even realise that an idiom which he uses is grammatically incorrect. If this could be the lot of a native speaker, we are only left to conjecture the immensity of the problem for the second language learner.'

The researcher, therefore, assumes that the students either do not have adequate exposure to the use of phrasal verbs, or they do not have much interest in exploring the said area by reading extensively. He feels, however, that

with good teaching and a lot of motivation they can be made to acquire a high level of proficiency in the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs. Their responses to the following questions provide us with an idea as to the state of their knowledge of idiomatic phrasal verbs generally:

1. What does it mean to paint the town red?

The expression simply means to have a good time, but most of the students in the class gave a series of negative meanings such as 'have a lot of blood shed', 'chaos', 'conflict', 'kill everybody in the town', 'destroy the town', 'demolish the town', 'set the town on fire' and so forth. Very few of them thought it meant 'painting the town uniformly red' or 'decorating the town.' There is no doubt that they gave the expression a literal interpretation associating the word 'red' with danger. One may possibly imagine the kind of panic or pandemonium a student would cause if he was asked to translate the expression into a vernacular language for public consumption.

2. He hits the bottle.

This means "He drinks too much alcohol", but to many of them it meant "He broke or pushed the bottle" (ignoring the present tense form of the verbs.

3. He seems to be hitting it off with his friend.

The underlined phrasal verb means 'having a good relationship', but once again a large number of them gave it a literal interpretation as seen in such answers as 'fighting', 'slapping', 'beating', 'blowing' or 'quarelling.'

On the whole, we are interested in such situations as in (3) above wherein idiomatic phrasal verbs are either given literal interpretations or completely misunderstood.

1.2 Significance of the Study

As a result of technological advancement several idiomatic phrasal verbs (new coinages), besides the existing ones, gain entry into the English language. These are used in our media of communication in varying degrees of complexity. The Diploma students of Jouranlism, who the Centre is training, are expected to be full-fledged journalists on the successful completion of their course. They are likely going to meet a lot of challenges in their future jobs which would include the production of new programmes or the translation of old ones from one language into another. These and other related tasks will, one way or the other, invariably require a good working knowledge of English idiomatic phrasal verbs.

Cowie and Mackin (1975) believe that familiarity with a wide range of idiomatic expressions, and the ability to use them appropriately in contexts, are some of the distinguishing marks of a native-like command of English. Tregidgo (1959) also remarks that a student is likely to speak and write poor English unless he is familiar with the common idioms which help to make up the language.

The study is therefore significant and necessary if such students are to be properly trained to improve upon their command of English and acquire the necessary skills,

knowledge and attitudes which would help them meet future challenges in life and enable them to play positive, productive and competent roles as journalists.

Hornby (1948: xxvii) sums it up for us by advising learners generally that

> '... Native speakers use these expressions naturally and unconsciously. You will need to learn them before using them. The more you use them, the more they will become a natural part of your English. Unless you use them, your English will always be foreign.'

1.3 Basic Assumptions

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher makes the following basic assumptions:

(1) Students who are properly taught and motivated will show an increase in their knowledge of idiomatic phrasal verbs over a given period of time as compared to those who are not;

(2) Students who are encouraged to read widely (including dictionaries) over a span of time will show some improvement in distinguishing between literal and figurative use of phrasal verbs;

(3) Students who are encouraged to read extensively over a given length of time will show some improvement in their ability to understand and use idiomatic phrasal verbs appropriately in sentences and contexts.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The study hopeS to

(1) test and analyze the performance of the subjects before and after experimental treatment;

(2) find out and analyze the possible causes of the identified problem;

(3) find out the extent to which this problem affected their intelligibility and linguistic creativity;

(4) find out the effect of the experimental treatment;

(5) suggest ways of solving the problem and make useful recommendations.

1.5 Sources of Data

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources; Students of Diploma in Journalism were used to collect first-hand information (primary source). This was supplemented by information obtained from library research (secondary source).

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The findings of this research study and the conclusions arising out of them were limited to investigations within a single class and even here, only a selected number of students/respondents (about 100) were involved. The focus was on the subjects' ability to use and understand idiomatic phrasal verbs. Consequently, complex idiomatic

expressions "Idioms proper" were not tested. Moreover, their oral use of the given phrasal verbs was not tested either. It was also feared that the subjects might not easily supply the required information if they were given essay topics to write on. Thus, it became necessary to use both discrete-point and other open-ended means of language testing in order to collect the necessary data.

Chapter II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Preamble

This chapter comprises two sections: the first deals with Theoretical Framework (a review of the different approaches that have been employed in the study of phrasal verbs and the choice of a model for the present investigation). The second presents a Review of Related Literature on the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

We shall examine specifically three of the many different approaches to the study of phrasal verbs[1] namely: the traditional, the transformational generative (TG) as well as Quirk et al's approaches. Thereafter, we shall adopt a model for the analysis of the present investigation.

2.2 The Traditional Approach

What is called "the traditional approach" to language study is nothing but a mere abstraction. In other words, there is no systematically worked-out pattern of language description so labelled. According to Lyons (1968), it dates back to Greece of the fifth Century before Christ. It also refers to all attempts to describe or 'prescribe' rules for language before the emmergence of Scientific

(linguistic) theories. Language, in the traditional sense, is not studied in itself and for its own sake, but to throw light on other human phenomena. That is why traditional grammar is described by different schools of linguistic as being, among several other things, a highly subjective, prescriptive, misleading and generally unscientific method of language description and analysis.

Close (1975), who adopts a traditionalist approach, identifies four categories of phrasal verbs. He, however, excludes such expressions as; "come in", "Take off your coat" and "keep away from the fire" whose meaning and use, according to him, can be assumed[2]. He also excludes prepositional verbs such as belong to, listen to, look for and the others. The four categories are as follows:

Type 1 verb + Preposition + NP[3]

Here, prepositions are unstressed, unless otherwise indicated (as in across). Passive is frequently used when an example of it is given. For example:

(a) 'Be about (it)' - 'be doing it', as in

(1) Please get me some stamps, and post these letters while you're about it.

(b) 'Get at' - (i) 'mean', (ii) 'criticise', as in

(2) What exactly are you getting at?

(3) Are you getting at me? Am I being got at?

(c) 'Jump at' = 'accept immediately', as in

(4) It's an offer that you won't get again, so I should jump at it if I were you.

Type 2 Verb + Adverb Particle

According to him, the particle[4] is always stressed and that there is no passive. For example:

(a) 'Answer back' = 'argue after receiving an order or rebuke', as in

(5) Do what I tell you and don't answer back.

(b) 'Break up' = 'come to an end eg. of a meeting', as in

(6) School has broken up for the Summer holidays.

(7) The meeting broke up in disorder.

(c) 'Come to' = 'regain consciousness' as in

(8) She fainted, and it was half an hour before she came to again.

Type 3 Verb + Object + Adverb Particle or Verb + Adverb Particle + Object

In this type, the particle is stressed when it follows the object; passive is also freely used, as in these examples:

(a) 'Back up' = 'support', for example:

(9) Always back up your friends.

(10) They like being backed up.

(b) 'Call off' = 'Cancel', as in

(11) The meeting has been called off as neither side is prepared to negotiate.

(c) 'Give up' = (i) 'Surrender', as in

(12) I want your gun. Give it up. (ii) 'Stop', as in

(13) Why don't you give up smoking?

Type 4 Verb + Adverb Particle + Preposition + NP

The particle in this type is stressed as in the following examples:

(a) 'Go back on' = 'break a promise', as in

(14) You promised to let me have that you don't go back on your word now.

(b) 'Stand up for' = 'Support', as in

(15) Will no one stand up for me, or will you all let me down?

(c) 'Run up against' = 'meet (an obstacle)'

(16) eg. You'll find that job difficult. You'll run up against some very tricky problems.

The traditional approach is undoubtedly useful to our investigation. It, however, fails to account systematically for what makes phrasal verbs what they are, the criteria by which we can distinguish idiomatic phrasal verbs from literal ones or the different levels of idiomaticity of su such verbs.

2.2.1 The Transformational Generative Approach

In the transformational generative school of linguistics, propounded by Chomsky, every natural language is believed to have a finite set of rules that its speakers internalise and in turn generate and infinite number of sentences. According to this view, speakers have the capacity to understand and interpret novel utterances at the levels of

phonology (sound), syntax (grammar) or semantics (meaning), even if they may never have heard such utterances before, so long as they are grammatically well-formed.

One of the most important distinctions in Chomsky's theory of language, therefore, is that between competence and performance, that is, the deep-seated difference between a speaker's underlying abilities and the knowledge of the language and his use of that language ability. The two, according to him, are very different and must be kept apart. He maintains that the capacity to be described is an ideal speaker - listener's competence in the language and that linguistics as a discipline should concern itself primarily with the theory of language with a capital L - language as a universal grammatical theory of linguistic abilities. Transformational generative grammar is therefore a mentalistic theory of language which sets out to tap the ideal speaker's linguistic competence.

According to Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968), adopting the transformational approach, some sentences do contain words known as verb particles in their verb phrases (VPS). For example, 'up' and 'out' in the following sentences:

(17) The Chemist shook up the mixture.

(18) The telegraph operator bawled out the clerk.

They maintain that words such as 'up' and 'out', as used above, are often considered to be prepositions and this, to them, is erroneous and misleading especially if such sentences are compared with the two below:

(19) The chemist walked up the street

(20) The telegraph operator walked out the door.

They explain further that there is little advantage in considering the said words to be prepositions in the four sentences above. In the first pair, the words 'up' and 'out' can be moved around to the other side of the object, giving the sentences below:

(21) The chemist shook the mixture up.

(22) The telegraph operator bawled the clerk out.

On the contrary, in the second pair (19 and 20), these words cannot be moved around to the other side of the NPS which follow them. If this permutation is carried out, two ungrammatical strings arise:

(23) * The chemist walked the street up

(24) * The telegraph operator walked the door out.

Thus, despite their superficial similarity, sentences (17) and (18) are somehow different from sentences (19) and (20).

There are other differences between the way they function as prepositions. Prepositions may be shifted (or preposed) to the front of sentences when questions are asked. Thus, both of the sentences below are fully grammatical:

(25) Up what did the chemist walk?

(26) Out of what did the telegraph operator walk?

On the contrary, particles may not be preposed in a question. If they are, ungrammatical strings result:

(27) * Up what did the chemist shake?

(28) * Out who did the telegraph operator bawl?

When question sentences containing verb particles are generated, the particle must remain in its original position.

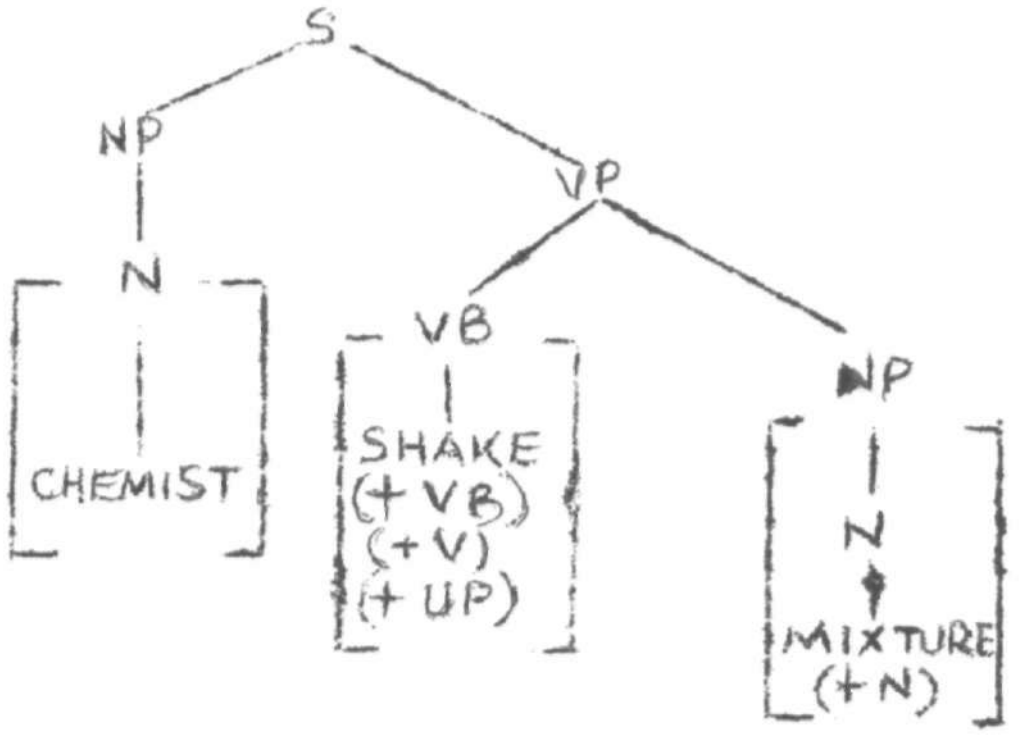
It cannot be preposed:

(29) What did the chemist shake up?

(30) Who(m) did the telegraph operator bawl out?

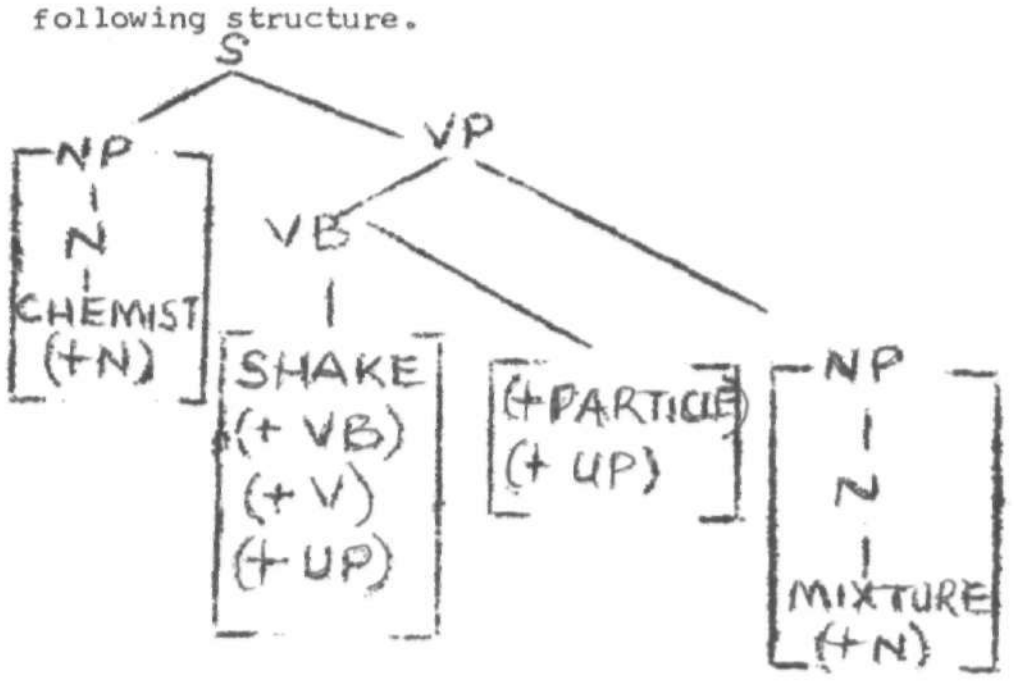
According to Jacobs and Rosenbaum also, there are at least two ways in which particles can be represented in deep structures[6]. First, they can be represented as actual constituents in the deep structure. Second, they can be represented as verb features that cause the application of a transformation which introduces a particle segment into the structure. We must note, however, that this question has not been resolved by grammarians. Thus, the writers adopt what they call 'the feature representation of particles' (since in other situations, new evidence is being found for feature analysis rather than constituent analysis).

In terms of their analysis, they uphold that the deep structure of sentence (17) (that is, The chemist shook up the mixture) is:

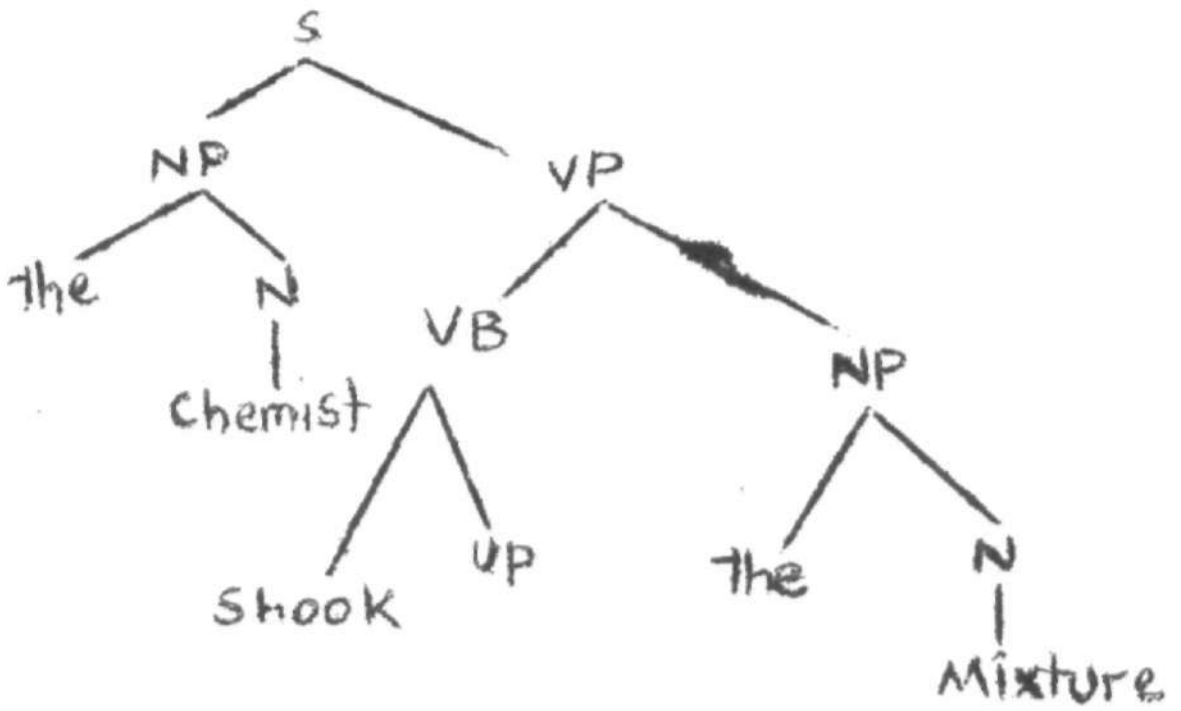


In other words, particles appear in the deep structure neither as constituents, such as NP or VP[7], nor as segments, but as features on the verbal segment.

The transformation responsible for introducing a particle segment into the structure is simply called the particle transformation. This introduces a segment into the verb phrase which contains the feature (+ particle), together with whatever particle feature is specified in the verb segment. Thus, when the particle transformation is applied to the deep structure above, it generates the following structure.



Jacobs and Rosenbaum maintain that if no other transformations are applied to this structure, the segments in this surface structure are replaced by actual words from the lexicon. In this case, the particle segment is replaced by the word 'up'. (The surface structure[8] below assumes that the Particle transformation and the agreement transformations have already been applied:

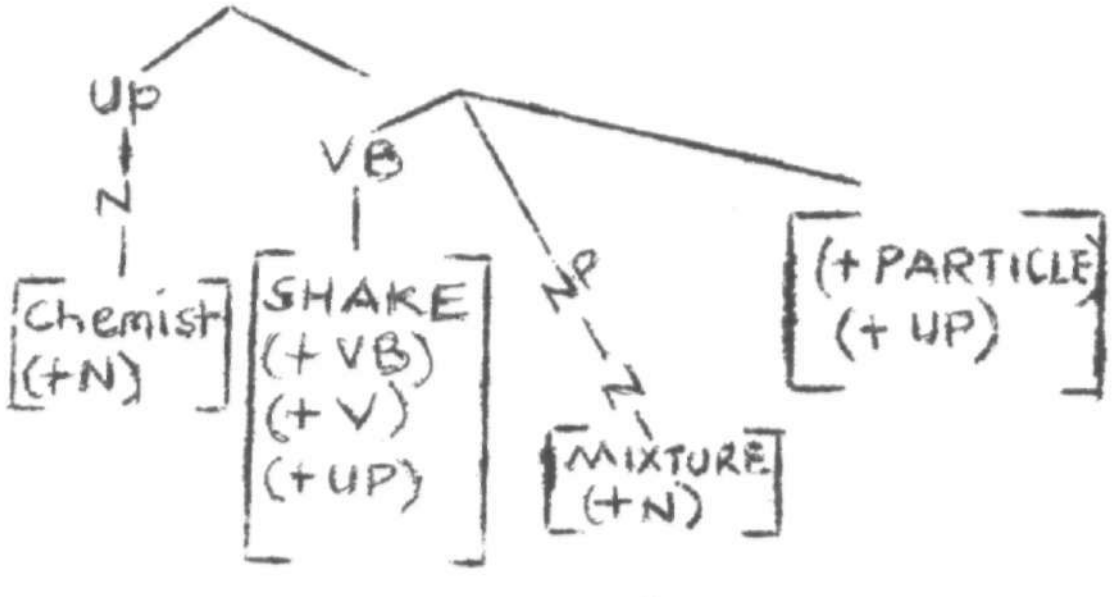


If we examine the following two sentences

(31) The chemist shook up the mixture

(32) The chemist shook the mixture up.

We will discover that the word 'up' is a particle in both sentences, and both sentences have precisely the same deep structure. Furthermore, both sentences are synonymous[9]. The transformation which relates them is the Particle Movement transformation. This transformation moves the particle segment introduced by the particle transformation around to the other side of the object of the VP, creating the structure below



Jacobs and Rosenbaum explain further that after the lexicon[10] has been drawn on, the result is the structure of the sentence 'the chemist shook the mixture'. It is obvious that the particle movement transformation could not apply if a particle segment had not previously been generated by the particle transformation. The particle movement transformation is normally optional; that is, it may or may not be applied. This explains why English contains both of the sentences below:

(33) The chemist shook up the mixture.

(34) The chemist shook the mixture up.

In the first sentence, the particle movement transformation has not been applied. In the second, it has. But there are certain cases in which the transformation is obligatory:

(35) The chemist shook it up

(36) The chemist shook up it.

The second string above is ungrammatical because the particle movement transformation has not been applied. Whenever the object noun is a pronoun, the particle movement transformation is obligatory. This can be tested by constructing other pairs where the object is a pronoun:

(37) +The landlord put out him

(38) The landlord put him out.

(39) +The visitor looked up them in the telephone directory.

(40) The visitor looked them up in the telephone director.

Radford (1985), also adopting a transformationalist view point, proposes eight diagnostics for determining whether a given set of words in a sentence is a constituent

or not, and if so, of what type or category. He maintains that these tests can be used to determine both NPS and constituents of VPS. Our investigation is, however, interested only in the latter as they relate to phrasal verbs. The following are the proposed tests:

(a) Does it have the same distribution as (i.e, can it be replaced by) an appropriate phrase of a given type? If so, it is a phrase of the relevant type.

(b) Can it undergo movement (that is, preposing or postposing)? If so, it is a phrase of some sort.

(c) Can it serve as a sentence-fragment? If so, it is a phrasal constituent.

(d) Does it permit positioning of S - or VP - adverbials internally? If so, it is an S or VP, and not, for example, an NP or PP.

(e) Can it undergo ordinary coordination with another string? If so, it is a constituent of the same type as the one with which it is coordinated.

(f) Can it serve as the 'shared constituent' in shared constituent coordination? If so, it is a phrase.

(g) Can it be replaced by, or serve as the antecedent of an appropriate proform? If so, it is a phrase of the same type as the proform.

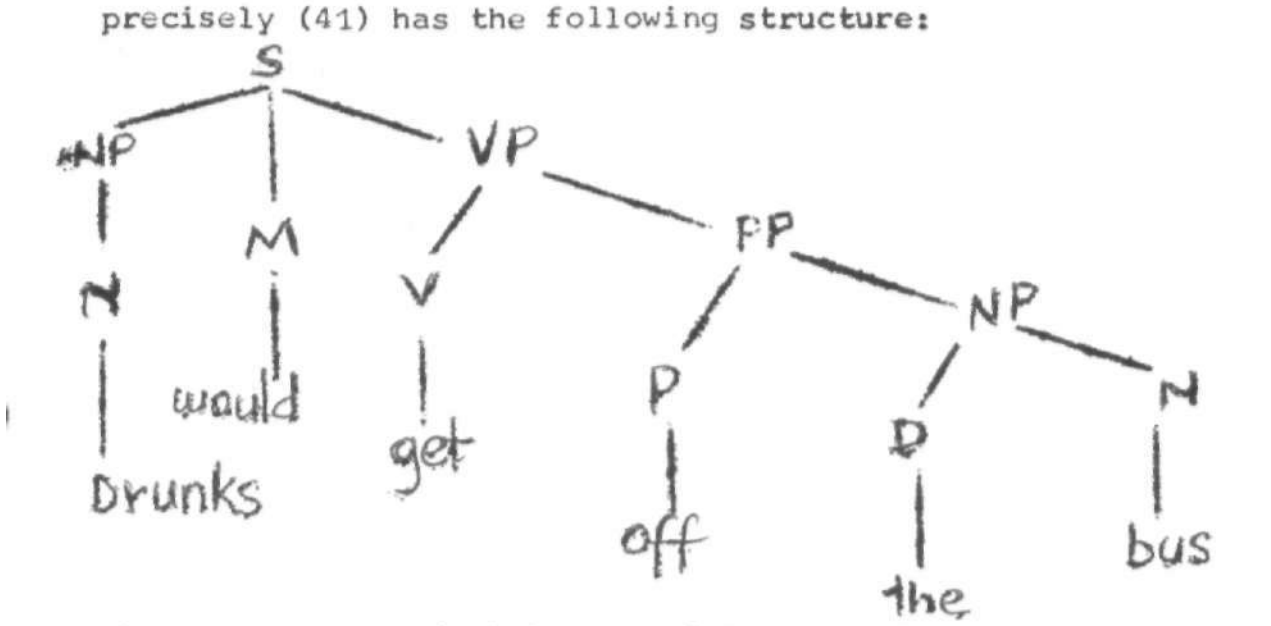
(h) Can it undergo ellipsis under appropriate discourse conditions? If so, it is a VP.

After outlining the above structural diagnostics, Radford then applies them to determine the constituent structure of a couple of sentences as shown below:

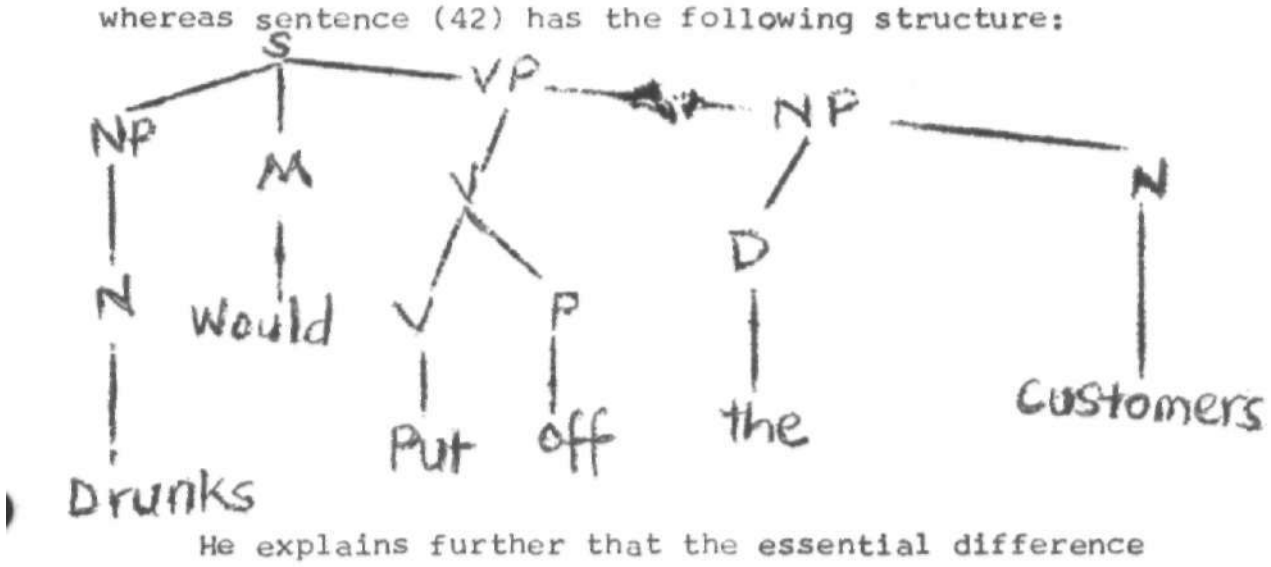
(41) Drunks would get off the bus

(42) Drunks would put off the customers.

At a glance, according to him, the above two sentences might appear to be parallel in structure: both consist of a sequence of a Noun (drunks), a Modal (would) a verb (get/put), a preposition (off), a determiner (the), and a Noun (bus/ customers). Yet, as far as he is concerned, the two sentences have very different constituent structures. More precisely (41) has the following structure:



whereas sentence (42) has the following structure:



He explains further that the essential difference between the two structures is that in (41) the preposition

'off' goes with the following NP 'the bus' to form the prepositional phrase 'off the bus'; whereas in (42), the preposition 'off' goes with the verb 'put' to form the complex phrasal verb 'put off'. Thus in traditional terms, we might say that 'get' in (41) is a prepositional verb (because it is a verb which takes a prepositional phrase after it), whereas 'put' in (42) is a phrasal verb because the sequence 'put off' forms a 'compound verb'. Thus, he claims that his eight diagnostics can be used empirically to support the fact that there is a syntactic difference between prepositional and phrasal verbs.

According to him, the distribution argument (a) would seem to lend support to our analysis. If the sequence 'off the bus' in (41) is a prepositional phrase, then we should expect that it can be replaced by other PPs with a related meaning:

> since 'on' is the antonym of 'off', we might expect it to be able to replace the off-phrase in (41) by an on-phrase. This is possible as the sentence below indicates:

(43) Drunks would { get off the bus / get on the bus }

The fact that the sequence 'off the bus' can be replaced by the PP 'on the bus' would seem to confirm its PP status. But what is fascinating is that in the case of the second example (42), the sequence 'off the customers' has no 'on' counterpart:

(44) Drunks would { put off the customers
                  { +put on the customers

We may wish to ask why this is so and the answer, according to him, is that the sequence 'off the customers' is not a PP (indeed not a constituent at all), and hence cannot be replaced by a PP like 'on the customers'. Thus, distributional facts seem to support the claim that 'put off' is a phrasal verb, whereas 'get off' is a prepositional verb.

Radford, however, cautions that we may be over-simplifying a bit by ignoring the fact that the sequence 'put on' can indeed be used as a phrasal verb as in the sentence below:

(45) Mary would put on a new dress.

But whereas there is a consistent parallelism between 'get off' and 'get on', no such parallelism holds between 'put off' and 'put on'. The obvious explanation is that 'get' seems to have a constant meaning (in both cases, it is roughly synonymous with "climb") irrespective of whether it is combined with 'on' or 'off'. But this, according to him, is not at all the case with 'put'. Thus 'put off' means more or less the same as 'deter', whereas 'put on', (in its most familiar sense) is roughly synonymous with 'wear'. He thus maintains that we can make a generalisation by proposing that prepositional verbs have a consistent, componential meaning (i.e the meaning of the whole expression is a simple function of its component parts), whereas phrasal verbs tend to have an idiosyncratic or idiomatic meaning, that is, there is no way of telling what 'put off' or

'put on' mean simply by knowing the meaning of 'put', 'on' and 'off'. This information is very useful to our investigation.

Another syntactic evidence in support of the claim that prepositional and phrasal verbs have different structures is the movement (that is, preposing and postposing) test. This has, however, been explained above by Jacobs and Rosenbaum and will not therefore be repeated. This leads us to the sentence-fragment test.

The sentence-fragment test yields the same results as the others for, as we see below, the sequence 'off the bus' can serve as a sentence-fragment in sentence (41):

(46) (a) Speaker A: Did he get off the train?

(46) (b) Speaker B: No, off the bus.

Since only full phrases can serve as sentence-fragments, this confirms the PP status of the above sequence. By contrast, the string 'off the customers' in (42) cannot function as a sentence fragment, as indicated below:

(47) (a) Speaker A: Would drunks put off the waitresses?

(47) (b) Speaker B: *No, off the customers.

But why, we may wish to ask, can't 'off the customers' function as a sentence - fragment? The answer suggested by the analysis of sentence (42) above is that the sequence 'off the customers' is not even a constituent, let alone a phrase (and we should recall that only full phrases can function as sentence - fragments).

The next test relates to the distribution of Adverbial Phrases. The class of VP - Adverbials includes such

expressions as 'quickly', 'slowly', 'completely' etc. Since VP - Adverbials can occur internally within VPs, then we should expect that such an Adverbial could be placed in between the verb 'get' and the Prepositional Phrase 'off the bus' in (41) and the sentence below shows that this indeed is the case:

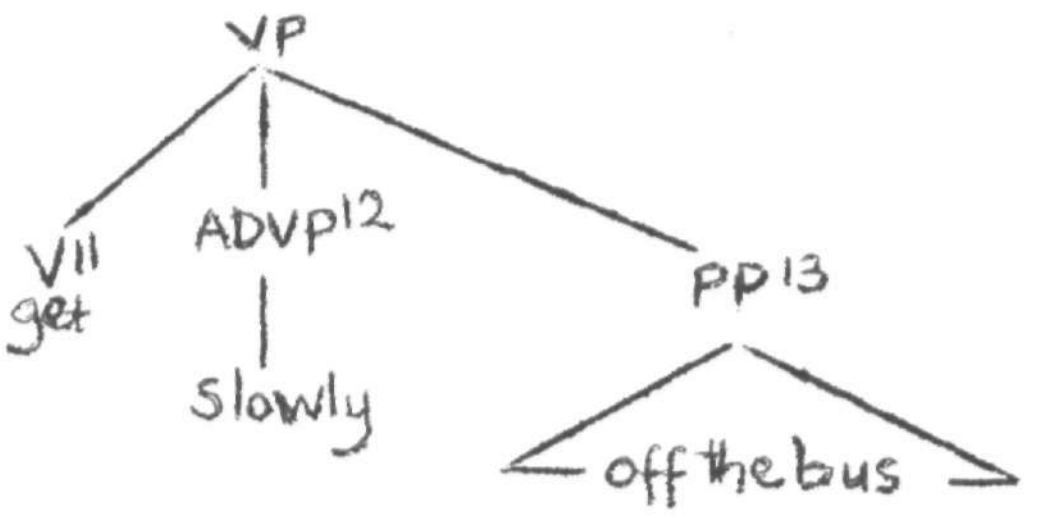
(48) Drunks would get slowly off the bus.

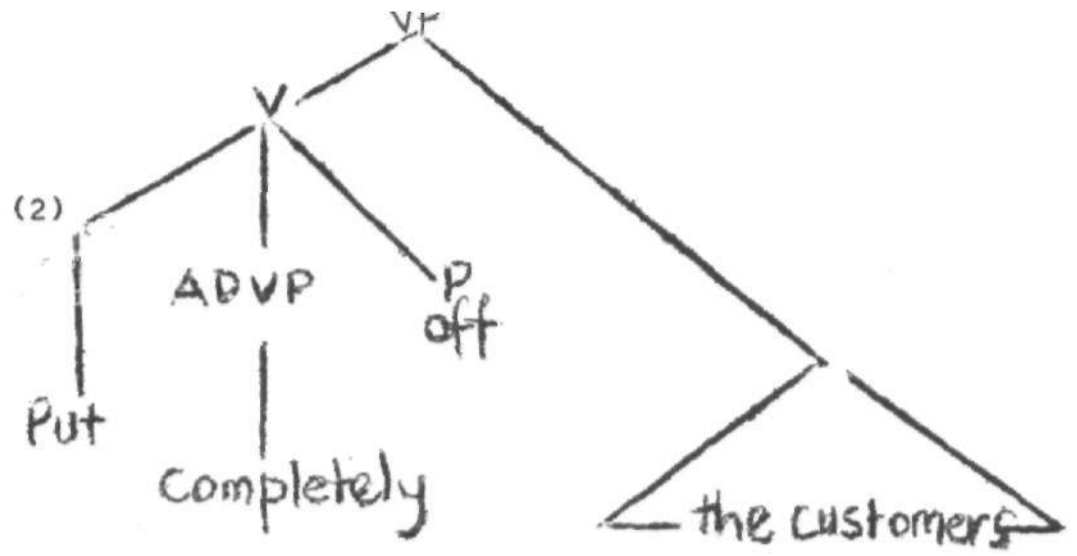
By contrast, it is impossible to position a VP - Adverbial between 'put' and 'off' in (42), as evident from the ungrammaticality of the sentence below:

(49) *Drunks would put completely off the customers.

We may still wish to ask why it should be possible for a VP-Adverbial to intrude between 'get' and 'off' in (41), but not between 'put' and 'off' in (42). We can see the answer immediately if we look at the different structures assigned to each of the verb - phrases in (41) and (42) repeated below:

(1)





It should now be immediately obvious why analysis (1) is correct, but (2) is not. For, since Adverbials like 'slowly' and 'completely' are VP-Adverbials, they can only attach to a VP node. In other words, structures like (1) and (2) make precisely the right predictions about the distribution of VP-Adverbials with Prepositional verbs on the one hand, and phrasal verbs on the other.

Next is the coordination test and given our assumption that 'off the bus' is a PP constituent in (41), we should expect that it can be coordinated with another PP of the same type; and as the sentence below shows, this is indeed the case:

(50) Drunks would get (off the bus) and (on the train).

But given our assumption that the sequence 'off the customers' is not a constituent of any sort in (42), we should also expect that it cannot be coordinated with another similar sequence: and this is exactly the right prediction, as the ungrammaticality of the sentence below illustrates:

(51) *Drunks would put off the customers and off the waitresses.

But what about shared constituent coordination test (f)? Given our assumption that the sequence 'off the bus' in (41) is a PP constituent, we should expect that it can function as the 'shared constituent' in sentences involving shared constituent coordination, and we see below that this is the case:

(52) Drunks would get - and junkes would fall-off the bus.

By contrast, the sequence 'off the customers' cannot be used in the same way in (42) as shown below:

(53) *Drunks would put - and junkies would also put - off the customers.

Radford goes on to discuss the Ellipsis[15] test (h). He explains that GAPPING is one of the different types of Ellipsis found in English and that it is called so because it has the effect of leaving a 'gap' in the middle of some phrase or clause. What is of immediate interest to us here is the fact that the verb 'get' can be gapped along with the modal 'would' in structures such as (41), resulting in sentences like:

(54) Drunks would get off the bus, and junkies ∅∅∅∅ ∅∅ off the train.

However, what is even more interesting is that we cannot gap the verb 'put' along with the modal 'would' in structures like (42) as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of the sentence below:

(55) *Drunks would put off the customers, and junkies ∅∅∅∅ ∅∅ off the waitresses.

By contrast, we can gap the whole expression 'put off' along with 'would' as shown below:

(56) Drunks would put off the customers, and junkies ~~would put off~~ the waitresses.

Thus, it would seem that as far as gapping is concerned, the whole expression 'put off' is somehow treated as a single 'compound verb'. This is the very intuition encapsulated in analysis (2), by giving the sequence 'put off' the status of a single V constituent (ie, by analysing it as a phrasal verb). Thus, facts about gapping lend yet further support to our argument.

Finally, we come to the pronominalisation argument (g). The expressions 'the bus' and 'the customers' are all NPs consisting of a Determiner and a Noun. Now, if they are indeed NPS, argues Radford, we should obviously expect that they can be replaced by an appropriate pro - NP constituent such as 'it' or 'them'.- And yet, while this is true of the object of a prepositional verb like 'get off' as illustrated below:

(57) The trouble with the bus was that drunks would want to get off it every few kilos, to exercise their natural bodily functions. It is not true of phrasal verbs like 'put off' as shown below:

(58) *What worries me about the customers is whether drunks would put off them.

This then is a transformational generative approach to the analysis of phrasal verbs. The eight diagnostics

suggested will be of great help to us in distinguishing phrasal verbs from prepositional verbs. The approach does not, however, account for the different types of phrasal verbs and their levels of idiomaticity.

2.2.1.1 Quirk Et al's Approach

Quirk et al's approach has the following components:

I. Phrasal verbs
   (a) Intransitive phrasal verbs
   (b) Transitive phrasal verbs
II. Phrasal and Prepositional verbs
   (a) Semantic criteria
   (b) Syntactic criteria
   (c) Phonological criteria
III. Phrasal - Prepositional Verbs
   (a) A sample of multi-word verbs
   (b) Verb-adjective combinations.
IV. Alternative analyses

2.2.1.2 Phrasal Verbs

In their own treatment of phrasal verbs, Quirk et al (1972, 1973) give a number of sentences to illustrate their points, such as:

(59) Adam called the man.
(60) Adam called up the man.
(61) Adam called on the man.
(62) Adam put up with the man.

According to them, verbs can be divided into single-word verbs as in (59) and multi-word verbs, which are phrasal verbs (as in (60), prepositional verbs (as in (61), or phrasal-prepositional verbs (as in (62).

They maintain that the above set of sentences can be distinguished from other, superficially similar sequences consisting of verbs and prepositional phrases (the second set of sentences):

(63) Adam called from the office.

(64) Adam called after lunch

(65) Adam called from under the table.

The difference between the two sets is one of 'cohesion': in the first set, the adverbial or prepositional particle (up, on, up with) forms a semantic and syntactic unit with the verb; in the second set, the prepositional particle (from, after, from under) is more closely connected with the head of the prepositional phrase. (These points will be discussed fully shortly. For now, we shall distinguish intransitive phrasal verbs from transitive ones).

2.2.1.3 Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

According to Quirk et al, an intransitive phrasal verb is one common type of multi-word verb which consists of a verb + particle as exemplified in

(66) The children were sitting down.

(67) Drink up quickly.

(68) The plane has now taken off.

(69) The prisoner finally broke down.

(70) When will they give in?

(71) He is playing around.

(72) Get up at once.

(73) Did he catch on?

(74) He turned up unexpectedly.

(75) The tank blew up.

We can see that most of the particles are place-adjuncts or can function as such. In some instances, the particles form the first element in a complex preposition:

(76) Come along (with us/me).

(77) He moved out (of the house).

Of particular interest to our investigation is the fact that phrasal verbs vary in the extent to which the combination preserves the individual meanings of verb and particle. In instances like

give in (surrender)

catch on (understand)

turn up (appear)

it is clear that the meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the meanings of the verb and particle in isolation.

2.2.1.4 Transitive Phrasal Verbs

The second type of phrasal verbs are called transitive phrasal verbs which, according to Quirk et al, take a

direct object. For example:

(78) We will set up a new unit.

(79) Find out whether they are coming

(80) Drink up your tea quickly.

(81) They turned on the light.

(82) He can't live down his past.

(83) They called off the strike.

(84) I can't make out what he means

(85) He looked up his former friends.

As we see from the above examples, some combinations ('drink up', 'give in') can be either transitive or intransitive, with or without a difference of meaning. With most transitive phrasal verbs, the particle can either precede or follow the direct object:

(86) - They turned on the light

(87) - They turned the light on

although it cannot precede personal pronouns:

(88) - They turned it on

not

(89) - They turned on it (except, rarely, with contrastive stress).

As with the intransitives, transitive phrasal verbs vary in the extent to which they form idiomatic combinations. For example, the verb and particle in 'put out the cat' preserve their individual meanings in that combination and in a wide range of combinations (eg. put + down/outside/away/aside; take/turn/bring/push/send/drag + out. There are

fewer alternative combinations that the verb and particle in 'turn out the light' can enter (turn + on/off/down/up; switch + on). Finally, in 'put off' (postpone) the verb and particle are fused into a new idiomatic combination, which does not allow for contrasts in the individual elements.

2.2.1.5 Phrasal and Prepositional Verbs Semantic Criteria

Quirk et al also explain the sort of relationship between phrasal and prepositional verbs by using certain semantic criteria. The semantic unity in phrasal and prepositional verbs (the first set of sentences already introduced at the beginning of this model) can often be manifested by substitution with a single-word verb, for example:

'visit' for 'call on'

'summon' for 'call up'

'omit' for 'leave out'

'see' for 'look at', and so on.

Furthermore, phrasal and prepositional verbs often have composite meanings which are not normally deducible from their parts, for example:

make out (understand)

take in (deceive)

come by (obtain).

This explanation is of great importance to our investigation as it highlights one of the major problems

of the students' inability to properly use and understand idiomatic phrasal verbs. The terms 'phrasal' and 'prepositional' verbs are not, however, restricted to such idiomatic combinations. Three sub-classes can be distinguished within the first set (where it will be convenient to refer to both the adverbial and prepositional element as 'particle'):

(A) The verb and particle retain their individual lexical meanings, as in -

look over (inspect)

set up (organise)

The individuality of the components appears in possible contrastive substitutions:

bring	}	{ in
take	}	{ out
turn	}	{ on
switch	}	{ off.

(B) The verb alone retains its basic lexical meaning and the particle has an 'intensifying' function:

find out (discover)

sweep (up) the crumbs

spread (out) the rug

(C) The verb and the particle are fused into a new idiomatic combination, the meaning of which is not deducible from its parts, for example:

bring up (educate)

come by (obtain)

put off (postpone)

turn up (appear)

In such combinations there is no possibility of contrastive substitution: there are no pairs such as 'bring up/down', 'put off/on', 'give up/down', 'give in/out' etc for this subclass. The adverbial, lexical values of the particles have been lost, and the entire verb - particle has acquired a new meaning.

In some cases the verb-particle combination can belong to more than one sub-class with a corresponding difference in meaning:

(94) Adam went into { the house (literal meaning)
                     { the problem (figurative meaning)

(95) Adam put up with Ladi { (stay with)
                           { (tolerate)

2.2.16 Syntactic Criteria

Quirk et al also use syntactic criteria to show the difference between phrasal and prepositional verbs.

(a) Passivization - The syntactic similiarity of verbs in the first set can be seen in their acceptance of passivization:

(96) - First set: The man was { called up
                              { called on
                              { put up with

(97) - Second set: { *Lunch was called after
                   { *?[16] *The office was called from.*

In the passive the verbs of the first set behave identically with single-word transitive verbs (The man

was called) whereas those of the second set do not allow the passive. It can also be seen that ambiguous combinations such as 'put up with' take the passive only when they have the figurative meaning:

(98) Ladi couldn't easily be put up with (= 'tolerate' but not = 'stay with).

(b) Pronominal Question Form

The questions of the first set are formed with 'who(m)' for personal and with 'what' for non-personal objects:

(99) who(m) did Adam call up?

(100) what did Adam look for?

(c) Adverbial Question Form

Adverbial question form is the third syntactic criterion used to distinguish the two sets of sentences. The prepositional phrases of the second set have adverbial function, and have question forms with 'where', 'when', 'how' etc.

(101) - Where did Adam call from?

(102) - When did Adam call?

We may notice that there is a certain amount of overlap between the two sets. If we apply the three criteria, (P) passivization, (Qpro) pronominal question form, and (qadv) adverbial question form, to sentences 1 - 5 below, we can state their relations by means of a matrix:

P	Qpro	Qadv	
+	+	-	(103) The police might ask for more details.
-	+	-	(104) Abdu agreed with Ladi.
-	+	+	(105) The car stopped beside a wall.
-	-	+	(106) She left before six O'clock.
-	-	+	(107) His job also comes into the picture.

Sentence (103) has both passive and pronominal question form:

(108) - More details might be asked for by the police.

(109) - What might the police ask for?

Sentence (104) has only the pronominal question form:

(110) Who did Abdu agree with? The passive is highly doubtful.

(111) ? Mary was agreed with by Abdu

Sentence (105) can form no passive, but both types of question are possible; the pronominal one is the 'recapitulation form' whereas the adverbial one is the more natural question form:

(112) What did the car stop beside? }

(113) Where did the car stop? }

Sentence (106) has only the adverbial question form?

(114) When did she leave?

Finally, sentence (107) shows its idiomatic nature by refusing any of the three criteria, resisting this kind of syntactic manipulation.

2.2.1.7 Phonological Criteria

Phonological criteria are also used to distinguish between prepositional and phrasal verbs. Quirk et al explain further that the particle in phrasal verbs is normally stressed and, in final position, bears the nuclear tone, whereas the particle in the prepositional verb is normally unstressed and has the 'tail' of the nuclear tone on the lexical verb.

For example:

(115) He called 'up the man - The man was called up.

(116) He 'called on the man - The man was 'called on.

2.2.1.8 Phrasal - Prepositional Verbs

These, according to Quirk et al, are combinations of the two multi-word verb classes (phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs) which usually consist of a verb followed by two particles:

(117) - He puts up with a lot of teasing (tolerates).

As with prepositional verbs, we can analyse these as transitive verbs with the succeeding noun phrase as "direct object". They allow pronominal questions and under certain conditions can occur in the passive:

(118) - He can't put up with bad temper.

(119) - What can't he put up with?

(120) - Bad temper can't be put with for long.

As with single-word transitives and prepositional verbs, we cannot insert an adverb immediately before the object:

(121) *He puts up with willingly that Secretary of his.

though it is possible to do so between the particles:

(122) - He puts up willingly with that Secretary of his.

(123) - We look forward eagerly to your next visit.

In relative clauses and questions, the particles are positioned after the rest:

(124) - The party we were looking forward to so eagerly.

(125) - Who(m) does he put up with willingly? or (less commonly) the final particle can be brought into initial position:

(126) - The party to which we were looking forward so eagerly.

(127) - With whom does he put up willingly?

Like phrasal and prepositional verbs, these multi-word verbs vary in their idiomaticity. Some like 'stay away from' (avoid), are easily understood from their individual meaning. Others are fused combinations, and it is difficult (or impossible) to assign meaning to any of the parts, for example:

put up with (tolerate).

There are still others where there is a fusion of the verb with the first particle or where one or more of the elements may seem to retain some individual meaning. For example, 'put up with' can also mean 'stay with', and in that sense 'put up' constitutes a unit by itself ('stay with', 'put up at', and the transitive phrasal verb 'put' in

(128) 'I can't put you up').

Similarly,

(129) 'check up on' (his record) = investigate, is analysable as consisting of the verb 'check on' plus the intensifying element 'up'. We also have the single-word verb 'check', and therefore three transitive verbs of similar meaning, together with the intransitive 'check' and 'check up'.

2.2.1.9 A Sample of Multi-Word Verbs

Here, we shall take a look at samples of multi-word verbs. The words in parenthesis illustrate or gloss their meanings:

(a) Phrasal Verbs

back up (somebody)

blow up (a ship)

break off (our relations)

bring about (a change)

bring up (children)

catch on ('understand')

pull up ('stop')

draw up (a contract)

burn up (a house) etc.

(b) Prepositional Verbs

add to (the bill)

allow for (delays)

apply for (a post)

approve of (an action)

object to (something

enlarge on (a topic)

care for (somebody)

Comment on (the results) etc.

(c) Phrasal Prepositional Verbs

- break in on (somebody's conversation) = 'interrupt'
- walk out on ('abandon')
- look forward to ('anticipate')

- look down upon (somebody) - 'despise'
- look in on (somebody) - 'visit'
- cut down on (expenses) - 'curtail'
- get away with (such behaviour) - 'avoid being reprimanded or punished for)
- catch up on (my reading)
- come up with (an idea)
- look up to (somebody) - 'respect'

2.3.0 Verb-Adjective Combinations

We must note, according to Quirk et al, that there is a verb-adjective combination that is very similar to phrasal verbs. Let us compare the following:

(130) He put the cloth straight.

(131) He put it out.

Where only 'put out' is considered a phrasal verb. Both combinations form close units but the adjectives in verb-adjective combinations have their individual meaning and grammatical properties:

(132) Abdu didn't put the table cloth as $\begin{Bmatrix}\text{straight}\\ *\text{out}\end{Bmatrix}$ as Binta

Adjectives in combinations like 'cut short', 'rub dry', 'scrub clean', 'set free', 'dye red', 'wash clean', 'work loose' etc are, however, selected from a rather restricted range of adjectives. Thus, none of these verbs can have several adjectives, but the adjectives can co-occur with many different verbs, for example: 'burst open', 'force open', 'hold open', 'push open', swing open', 'tear open' etc.

It is in this respect that verb-adjective combinations differ from verb + adjective complements which can select complements from a very wide range of adjectives:

(1) He found her pretty/rich/intelligent/foolish/stubborn/smart etc.

2.3.1 Alternative Analyses of Strings Consisting of A Verb + A Prepositional Phrase

Apart from those mentioned above, there are other means of analysing strings consisting of a verb plus a prepositional phrase. A sentence like:

(133) 'He looked at the girl'.

can be analysed in two ways. In one, there is a prepositional phrase 'at the girl' as adverbial; in the other, 'looked at' is a prepositional verb with the ('girl' as prepositional object. (We will use the shorter term *'prepositional object' for what should properly be termed* (object after a prepositional verb).

Analysis 1

He looked at the girl

Analysis 2 Prep V Prep O

Analysis 1 (verb + Adverbial) accounts for the similarity of prepositional phrases with regard to relative clause structure and the position of adverbs:

(134) The girl { at whom he looked / to whom he came

(135) He { looked slyly at the girl / stood quietly near the girl

Analysis 2 (prepositional verb + prepositional object) accounts for the similarity of these structures to that of transitive non-prepositional verbs:

(136) The girl was { looked at admired / * stood near

Two modes of analysis are also appliable to sentences like:

(137) He gave an apple to the girl.

where 'to the girl' can be considered a prepositional adverbial (Analysis 1), accounting for the similarity between, for example, the following sentences:

(138) (a) He { gave an apple
(b) { found an apple for)
(c) { aimed an apple at)

The two analyses can be regarded as different, but equally valid and complementary ways of looking at the same structure.

2.3.2 Choice of a Model

On the whole, we have examined phrasal verbs in their various forms as presented by Quirk et al and Close, as well as the eight diagnostics for testing phrasal verbs as presented by Radford. Our reservations about each of them calls for adoption of an eclectic model in adequately

handling idiomatic phrasal verbs. In other words, we have adopted the eclectic approach for the analysis of our data because no single approach can adequately do so.

2.3.3 Literature Review

In this section, we examine what others have found and discussed and which is relevant to our investigation.

The unique behaviour of idioms, according to Susan (1986), has been a subject of interest to several linguists. Idioms have been dealt with under various linguistic terms, such as 'ready - made utterances' (Lyons, 1968: 177), 'Lexemes and Sememes' (Makkai, 1972: 177) and 'hypermorphemes' (Pike, 1967: 426, cited in Makkai, 1972:42). Others are Toha's 'two-word verb', Anna's 'discontinuous verb', Kruisinga's 'compound verb', Fraser's 'verb-particle combination', Kennedy's tentative 'verb-adverb Compound', Quirk's 'multi-word verb' as well as Tregidgo's 'phrasal verb'. It is noteworthy that many linguists have adopted this last term (phrasal verb) purely for the sake of convenience.

There are also differences among linguists in the inclusiveness of the definitions of idioms, Hockett (1958: 171) defines an idiom very broadly as a grammatical form which has a meaning that cannot be deduced from its structure, and he thus includes pronouns, proper names, figures of speech, phrasal compounds and abbreviations. Tregidgo (1959) views an idiom as being plainly a set expression which

can only be altered to a limited extent, and which must be learnt and used exactly. Fraser (1974), Pietro (1971) and Rudolf (1968) regard an idiom as a single constituent or series of constituents whose semantic interpretation is independent of the formatives which compose it. Lyons (1968: 177) would include a variety of phrases learned as unanalysed wholes, including greetings such as 'How do you do?' and proverbs. The definition given by Balint (1969), cited in Makkai (1972:45) is closer, just like Fraser's above, to the usual dictionary definition: (an idiom is) 'a phraseological unit whose meaning cannot be arrived at from the separate meanings of the constituents of the units.' It is with this type of definition that the present investigation primarily concerns itself.

Linguists as well as foreign language learners have found problems with the resistance of idioms to the normal rules of syntax. Chafe (1978) claims that idioms pose a challenge to transformational - generative grammar because some of them cannot undergo the passivisation transformation without losing their idiomaticity. The sentence 'Sam kicked the bucket' meaning 'Sam died' cannot, for example, be passivised without losing the idiomatic function, as in 'The bucket was kicked by Sam' (Chafe, 1968: 111-112). Furthermore, other syntactic operations, such as forming of questions and negatives, nominalisation, and conjunction reduction, cannot be performed on every idiom. Bruce Fraser, a transformationalist, has however responded to this criticism by stating that idioms should be treated as a complicated variety of mono-morphemic lexical entries and

that there are varying levels of 'frozenness' so that some idioms do allow more syntactic operations than others (Fraser, 1970: 30-42).

Makkai (1972:148) categorises some idioms as 'tournure idioms', which have a compulsory internal make-up that may not be altered and permit only inflectional operations such as changes in verb tense. He also notes that English idioms follow several patterns and cites, among others, a group of irreversible binominals, which contain two elements in a fixed order, such as 'hem and ham' and 'hit and miss'; a group with a compulsory definite article, including to 'break the ice' and a group containing a compulsory definite article such as to 'blow a fuse' or to 'pull a fast one' (Makkai, 1972:173). Many other patterns could be found, but it is important to note that such minor points as an article can be essential to retaining idiomatic meaning.

We may consider the above as a general over-view of idioms, but of particular relevance to the present investigation is the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs. Several scholars have treated phrasal verbs using more or less similar approaches.[17] We shall examine very briefly the approaches of Stannard Allen (1947), Eckersley and Eckersley (1960), Azuike (1988) as well as Cowie and Mackin (1975) which will hopefully be representative of all the others.

Allen (1947) observes that many verbs get strongly associated with certain prepositions in one of the two ways:

(i) Verb and preposition keeping their basic meanings.

(ii) as a compound having an idiomatic meaning (we cannot guess the meaning from the two). For example,

Type (I)

(140) Take the novel in your hand and open it at page 4.

(141) He's sitting on a chair and looking out of the window.

(142) He spoke about his holidays.

Type (II)

(143) I didn't take to her at first (like)

(144) She took after her mother (resembled)

(145) We set about preparing dinner. (began to prepare)

(146) The ship made for the harbour (went towards).

We can easily see that sentences of the first type have phrasal verbs which retain their literal meanings while those of the second have figurative meanings. Allen also identifies another group as discussed below:

Adverbail Particles

These, according to him, combine with verbs even more often than prepositions to form idiomatic compounds. Most of them have the same form as their corresponding prepositions, but the following seven are adverbial only and are never used as prepositions: away, back, out, backward(s), downward(s), forward(s) and upward(s).

Adverbial particles are most commonly found as part of compound verbs (or phrasal verbs). As with similar compounds made with prepositions, these are of two kinds:

Type (i) - Verb and adverb keeping their own basic meanings: 'go in'; 'walk away'; 'come out'; 'play back' etc.

Type (ii) - Verb and adverb combining to give a new idiomatic meaning: Keep on (continue); bring about (cause); give in (yield); take off (leave the ground or imitate); blow up (explode), etc.

Some of these compounds can be followed by a preposition to make a further combination: 'go in for' (practise for pleasure); 'come out with' (say suddenly); 'get down to' (apply oneself); 'put up with' (suffer, bear), etc. Allen (1947) further upholds that it is not always easy to distinguish between a prepositional and adverbial compound. However, these are the main differences:

A preposition is closely tied to the (pro) noun it controls:

(147) He looked/at the boys

(148) He spoke/to them

(149) He spoke/about his problems.

(150) He looked/out of the window.

An adverbial particle is closely tied to its verb (as if by a hyphen):

(151) Please put-out/the light

(152) We blew-up/the bridge and the rebels gave-in.

2.3.4. Word Order

Allen also explains the word order of prepositions and adverbial particles. As indicated above, a preposition must precede its (pro) noun object while an adverbial particle always follows a pronoun object. It usually follows the object even when this is a noun, unless the noun-phrase object is a long one, which would leave the verb too far from its particle:

(153) Look the word up in the index.

(154) Look up the word in the index.

(155) Look up all the difficult words and phrases in the index.
(the particle 'up' can only precede such a long object).

The distinct word- orders of preposition and adverb can be seen when the object is a pronoun -

(156) a. Adverbial particle: Look the word up

(156) b. Look it up

(157) a. Preposition: Look up the chimney

(157) b. Look up it.

(158) a. Adverbial particle: He couldn't get his talk across (= manage to communicate)

(158) b. He couldn't get it across.

(159) a. Preposition: He couldn't get across the river.

(159) b. He couldn't get across it.

2.3.5 Stress

Stress is also used as a phonological distinguishing factor between the two. According to Allen, the difference is quite clear in speech because at the end of a phrase a verb with preposition has a final stress on the verb:

(160) - Give it to the man you 'spoke to.

(161) - Who does he take after?

At the end of a phrase, however, a verb with adverb particle has a final stress on the adverb:

(162) - Which word are you going to look 'up?

(163) - This is the book he brought back, and here's the one he wants to take 'out.

Phrasal verbs with prepositions also take their final stress on the adverb when in this position:

(164) - We have a lot of troubles to put 'up with

(165) - Chess is a good game to go 'in for.

We must also note that it is possible for the same verb-adverb compound to have more than one meaning according to context:

(166) - This box is heavy; I must put it down (place on the ground).

(167) - Shall I put his name down, too? (make note of)

(168) - The riot was put down by the police (suppress).

(169) - I should put him down as a student. (reckon, consider).

(170) - He said nothing; we put it down to shyness (attribute).

(171) - You can't get through this door with your umbrella up; you'll have to put it down. (shut).

In their study and analysis of idiomatic phrasal verbs, Eckersley and Eckersley (1960) give a number of sentences to illustrate first the difference between words used as prepositions and as adverbs (forming adverb complements) and then how the two often form phrasal verbs:

(172)(a) - The monkey came down the tree.

(b) - The pole blew down in the wind.

(173)(a) - He put the book on the table.

(b) - put your coat on.

(174)(b) - Henry [redacted] came before four O'clock.

(b) - I have explained that point before.

(175)(a) - Mary is in the garden

(b) - I opened the door and the cat walked in.

Here, it is obvious that the words in the sentences marked (a) are different in function from the corresponding words in those marked (b). In the first case they are prepositions, while in the second they are adverbs and form adverb complements. They note how often such words as discussed above (prepositions and adverbs) are attached to, and affect the meaning of verbs. Let us take these sentences as examples:

(176) - I will put out the light

(177) - This has taken up a lot of time.

(178) - The boy accidentally knocked over the lamp.

(179) - Turn on the gas.

(180) - Take off your hat.

All these words (out, up, over, off, on) are used in front of nouns or noun equivalents, but they could go equally well elsewhere, for example:

(181) - I will put the light out.

(182) - This has taken a lot of my time up.

(183) - The boy accidentally knocked the lamp over.

(184) - Turn the gas on.

(185) - Take your hat off.

We can notice that they are not showing the relationship between the noun that follows them and any other word in the sentence; they belong much more closely to the verb. In fact, most of these expressions could be replaced by a single verb of practically similar meaning. For example:

put out - extinguish

take up - occupy

knock over - upset

take off - remove etc.

There are a great many of these 'phrasal verbs (that is, verb + preposition or adverb) and a number of verbs

(usually the commonest in the language) may have a dozen or more different meanings according to the adverbial particle which accompanies them. Consider these examples:

put off - postpone

put up - accommodate

put up with - tolerate

put across -

put through - etc.

Some of the meanings could be literal and the meaning of the phrase may be gathered from the individual words that compose it. For example:

(186) put the book up there

(187) The ice was broken up by the ice - plough.

But very frequently the meaning is figurative and can only be learned by treating the combination as one unit, for example:

(188) Can you put me up for the night?
(= accommodate)

(189) We have broken up for two weeks
(classes have finished for a two weeks' holiday).

Furthermore, in some cases the adverbial particle has become completely fused with the verb to become an inseparable particle. In that case it precedes it. For example:

outnumber

overlook

upset

withstand, etc.

Cowie and Mackin's approach is rather different from the two discussed above. According to them, idioms correspond to a wide range of grammatical types, or patterns. They are found, for instance, in the following phrase patterns:

(a) Article + adjective + noun, as in

the last straw

a live wire

a lame duck

(b) article + present participle + noun, as in

a parting shot

a sitting duck

(c) article + past participle + noun, as in

a foregone conclusion

a close-run thing

Idiomatic expressions also span sentences of various structural types, as in

break the bank

fill the bill

make somebody's day

jump the gun

(190) give him an inch and he'll take a mile

(191) Spare the rod and spoil the child.

This, according to them, is but a small sample of the great diversity of grammatical forms which idiomatic expressions may take.

Of most significance to the present investigation is the fact that though various expressions have been cited as examples of each type, we have yet to say what it is that entitles us to refer to them as idioms. Thus in turning to the central question of the nature of diomaticity, it is useful to pose the following basic questions and attempt to find suitable answers to them -

i. How in practice do we determine whether a given expression is idiomatic or not? We sense, for example, that 'put up' as used in the sentence

(192)(a)- They are having a memorial put up to him by public subscription is not idiomatic, whereas 'put up' in

(192)(b)- A well-wisher had put up the money for the scheme is idiomatic.

II. Is the distinction between nonidioms and idioms clear cut, or does the one type shade off gradually into the other?

III. What criteria in particular determine the inclusion of some items and the exlusion of others as idioms?

IV. Finally, what is the bearing of the conclusions we reach upon the grammatical labels we attach to idioms?

If an expression such as 'put up' (in the second example above) is shown to be a unit of meaning, should we not describe it as a grammatical unit also, and generally abandon the 'verb + particle' labelling in idiomatic cases? Discussions of idiomaticity are sometimes confused by introducing inappropriate grammatical criteria into an area where considerations of meaning carry particular weight (see Azuike 1988). A question which is often raised in treatments of the verb + particle combination, but from the discussion of which the wrong conclusions are sometimes drawn, has to do with the different grammatical functions of 'on' in such pairs of sentences as:

(193)(a) The machine turns (= rotates) on a central pivot.

(193)(b) pop music turns on (= stimulates, excites) many young people.

There is surely a difference of function here: we cannot shift the final NP to precede 'on' in the first sentence, but we can in the second:

(194)(a) * The machine turns a central pivot on.

(194)(b) pop music turns many young people on.

Further evidence of the difference is the contrastive

positioning of 'it' and 'them' (as replacements for the NPS) in the two sentences:

(195)(a) The machine turns on it.

(195)(b) Pop music turns them on.

It is on the basis of such criteria that 'on' can be said to function as a preposition in the first example and as particle (or adverbial particle) in the second. At this point, it will be wrong to use this grammatical evidence of contrastiveness in support of a claim that 'turn on' (= excite) is a unit of meaning, and thus an idiom. If we did, we should have to explain why it is that 'turn on' as used in the sentence -

(196) The porter turns on the hall lights appears, and can be shown to be, less idiomatic, while at the same time displaying the same characteristics with regard to the particle. Let us compare:

(197)(a) The porter turns the hall lights on

(197)(b) The porter turns them on.

We should also have to account for the fact that, whereas 'turn on' (verb + prep) in -

(198) The machine turns on a central pivot is intuitively less idiomatic than its homonym in the following sentence, ('on' is equally 'prepositional' in both cases:)

(199) Our conversation turned on (= had as its main topic) what was to be done when the elections were over.

The evidence of such examples points to the conclusion that whereas the particle and preposition contrast is a valid and important one, it has no bearing on whether expressions are idiomatic or not. The idiom/non-idiom contrast is different in kind and must be established by different means.

The writers (Cowie and Mackin), thus conclude that we can begin the discussion of idiomaticity with a simple and familiar assumption: an idiom is a combination of two or more words which function as a unit. This assumption can be easily tested. Thus, for instance, if a verb + particle expression is a semantic unit we should be able to substitute for it a number of single words (in this case, verbs) of equivalent meaning. By this criterion, 'step up' as used in the sentence.

(200) His promotion has stepped up their social status.

Is clearly idiomatic, since it is synonymous with 'improve'; 'enhance'. By the same token, 'take off' is an idiom in the sentence:

(201) Bill took off Hitler to perfection.

Since it is equivalent in meaning to 'mimic', 'imitate'.

According to Cowie and Mackin, we can also test our intuitions about idiomaticity in another way. If 'step up' and 'take off' are indivisible units of meaning, it should not be possible to break that unity either by removing the particle component or by replacing the verb component with other verbs of like meaning. The 'particle deletion' test shows both expressions to be idiomatic: the effect of applying it is to make nonsense of the example sentences:

(202) *His promotion has stepped their social status

(203) *Bill took Hitler to perfection.

'Verb replacement' also applies negatively in both cases: there are no precise equivalents to 'step' and 'take' as they are used here:

(204) His promotion stepped up his social status.
? pushed
? bumped

The semantic unity which is characteristic of idioms tends to make them behave as single grammatical words also. This tendency is reflected, for example, in the fact that some verb + particle expressions which are idiomatic can be converted into nouns.

So 'to make up' (one's face) has a corresponding noun 'make up' and 'to break down' (the accounts, the figures) has the corresponding form 'breakdown', This characteristic suggests a further test - of 'noun formation' - which applies positively to both our examples. In parallel with the cases just cited, we find that 'to step up' (someone's status) can be changed into 'a step- up' (in someone's status) and 'to take off' (Hitler) into 'a take - off' (of Hitler).

The next criterion is that idiomatic expressions are units of meaning; non-idiomatic ones, conversely, are made up of distinct meaningful parts. We should expect this assumption about non-idioms to be borne out when they are tested in the same ways as idioms. This time, however, the tests should apply in reverse. Let us consider the item 'draw out', as in the example -

(205) John drew out twenty naira from his savings account.

We note first that there is no corresponding noun in this case: we shall not attest *'a draw-out' (of twenty naira) to parallel ' a step-up' (in status). We find too that we can equally well use 'take' or 'draw' in this context: the verbs are synonymous here. Again, the particle 'out' can be deleted without affecting sense or acceptability:

(206) - John drew twenty naira from his savings account.

The examples we have been looking at tend to suggest that there is a sharp contrast between idioms and non-idioms - that there are items like 'take off' (a soldier) to which all the tests apply positively or negatively as appropriate, and other combinations like draw out (money) to which the same tests apply in reverse. In reality, the picture is not so clear - cut: even 'draw out' which on most counts seems unidiomatic enough, has a one -word equivalent in 'withdraw' (suggesting semantic unity):

(207) John withdrew twenty naira from his savings account.

In fact, the more individual cases that we examine the more does it appear that the boundary between highly idiomatic items and the rest is not sharply drawn, rather it is hazy and imprecise. We shall do better to think in terms of a scale of idiomaticity, with the "true" idioms ('step up', 'take off') clearly established at the upper end and 'draw out' appearing near the bottom, but with many items representing varying degrees of semantic and grammatical unity spaced out in between. Among the intermediate types, or 'Semi-Idioms', we find items like 'put up' as used

in the sentence

(208) - Increased transport costs will put up the prices.

and 'muck up', as in the example -

(209) - The weather really mucked up our party.

W What gives such items their special status is that when the tests used to identify idioms (or non-ddioms) are applied, the results are not conclusive either way. We discover, for example that whereas 'put up' and 'muck up' are unitary according to one criterion ('raise' or 'increase' can as well be substituted for the first expression and 'spoil' or 'ruin' for the second), they are inseparable according to another criterion (replacement of the verb component by a verb or verbs of equivalent meaning). Thus, we can say:

(210) Increased transport costs will send up the prices (or cause the prices to go up).

where 'send' and 'go' replace 'put' in the original sentence. We can also say -

(211) The weather really messed up our party.

Where the synonym 'mess' replaces 'muck'.

What has been said about the nature of the relationship between idioms and non-idioms applies also to more complex expressions - those containing

a noun and an adjective, for example. Here too there is a gradual shading - off from absolutely fixed expressions, such as:

(212) make an honest woman of or

(213) make a clean breast of

through those which allow the replacement of certain words by others of related meanings - down to the expressions of which an adjective (etc) is not an essential part, for example:

(214) - keep a (careful, close, watchful, etc) eye on

(215) - take (strong, instant, particular, etc) exception to.

As these examples suggest, the distinctive idiomatic character of such expressions is brought out by applying the same tests of replacement and deletion that we demonstrated earlier.

In the discussion carried out above, we have considered one of the most useful approaches in the treatment of idiomatic phrasal verbs. In it, a number of thought - provoking questions were asked to throw more light on the problem of deciding what actually qualifies as an idiom and what does not, the criteria used in distinguishing idiomatic from non-idiomatic expressions as well as the different levels of idiomaticity.

Finally, Azuike (1988) draws the same conclusion asMackin and Cowie (1975) above when he observes that

> "It is thus a universal feature of idioms that they come on a scale of metaphorical gradation from completely metaphorically translucent forms to entirely opaque ones."

He also talks about the social function of idioms. He observes that in socio-cultural terms, the stylistic function of idioms is of great importance. The use of idioms permits a community to conveniently avoid the use of swear and taboo words and expressions which would otherwise cause societal disapproval. He draws this conclusion from what Coulmas (1978), p. 325) has noted:

> "The presence of idioms in a language as part of its synonymic resources enables stylistic variety and variation in a number of ways. Such variation can be correlated with the finer points of social interaction such as delicacy and tact:
>
> 'spend a penny'
>
> 'go to the ladies/mens/gents'
>
> etc instead of the literal going for a piss/crap".

2.3.6 Foot Notes and Abbreviations

1. Procter (1978) defines phrasal verb as a group of words that acts like a verb and consists usually of a verb with an adverb and/or a preposition. Fraser (1976) adds that it is given this special name because the verb and the preposition or adverb following it form a set phrase.

2. This refers to the literal meaning of phrases or expressions as opposed to the figurative.

3. This simply means a noun phrase.

4. The word 'particle' is a grammatical term that refers to a minor part of speech such as an article (a, an, the), a preposition or adverb (up, in, out), a conjunction (or), an affix (un-, in-, -ness, -ly).

5. *This sign marks choices which are totally unacceptable).

6. In simple terms, the concept of 'deep structure' means the internal structure or the inward form of a sentence.

7. This stands for verb phrase.

8. This is the external or outward form of a sentence.

9. It means 'having the same or nearly the same meaning as'

10. procter defines lexicon as a dictionary especially of an ancient language.
11. V stands for verb.
12. ADVPstands for adverbial particle
13. PP represents prepositional phrase.
14. Node is a place where branches meet or join, as on a plant or in any treelike pattern or network. See some of the tree diagrams in this study.
15. Ellipsis is the leaving out of a word or words from a sentence when the meaning can be understood without them.
16. (? marks choices which are acceptable in the context but doubtful synonyms).
17. Such scholars include Mittins W.H., Smith L.P., Bradly, Spasov D., Erades P. (1961), Fairclough N.L. (1965), Bruce F. (1974), Otto J. (1928), Author G.K. (1920), Kruisinga E. (1931-32), Live A.H. (1965), George W.A. (1940), Mitchel T.F. (1958), Palmer F.R. (1960), Dongen, W.A. (1919) and a host of others.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the research method and procedure used for data collection, location for the study, the subjects used, the test instrument administered, the pre-test of research instrument as well as ethical issues in the fieldwork.

3.1 Fieldwork Method and Procedure

3.1.1 Location

The study was carried out at the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The choice of this place was borne out of some considerations, namely -

(a) the researcher teaches there;

(b) he taught Communication Skills to Diploma II students of Journalism for one session and in whom he identified the stated problem;

(c) the students would complete their course at the end of the 1990/91 academic session and that would give him enough time to conduct the investigation conveniently.

3.1.2 The Subjects

One hundred subjects were randomly drawn from Diploma II Journalism class out of a total number of one hundred and fifty-eight students. It became necessary right from the beginning of their course to split them into two groups because of the large number involved. Two separate teachers were assigned to teach them Communication Skills. Thus, while the other teacher was in charge of Group A (control group), the present researcher had Group B (experimental group). Both groups had three periods of Communication Skills in a week (one on Mondays and two on Fridays). With the consent of the other teacher, the researcher randomly selected fifty students from each group and came up with a rounded figure of one hundred subjects. The idea was to allow for easy calculation and presentation of results in percentages.

The modified test instrument was administered to all the selected subjects. There was no experimental treatment before the first administration of the test instrument. The rationale behind this was to find out if there was any initial significant difference between the two groups. The subjects' scripts were marked and scored. Thereafter, members of the control group went on with their normal class work

in communication Skills while the experimental group received intensive coaching and practice in the use of figurative phrasal verbs, some carry home assignments as well as extra lessons on Saturdays which they volunteered to attend. After a period of about three months (that is, towards the end of the 1990/91 academic session) the researcher re-administered the same test instrument to the subjects that he had done initially. The reason this time was to make a comparison of the subjects' scores in the two tests and to assess the effect of the experimental treatment. These scores and the information they supplied in the questionnaire were therefore the chief sources from which the researcher collected his data.

3.1.3 The Test Instrument

The test instrument consisted of one hundred items divided into four sections. Section (A) had ten items (1-10) designed to test the subjects' ability to distinguish literal from the figurative use of phrasal verbs. Section (B), which contained twenty multiple - choice items (11 - 20), aimed at testing their ability to choose the most appropriate interpretation of each phrasal verb from a number of alternatives lettered a - d. Section (c) consisted of forty items (21 - 60) and the subjects' task was

to give possible interpretations of the phrasal verbs used figuratively in sentences without any alternative answers given to assist them. Finally, Section (D) had forty items (61 - 100) and here the subjects were required to use the 'ordinary' phrasal verbs provided figuratively in sentences of their own choice and at the same time give a brief interpretation of each.

It should be noted that the items were carefully graded in order of difficulty. That is, from the simpler to the more difficult ones and from the highly discrete - point[1] to the more open-ended[2] types. Clear instructions and a number of examples were given at the beginning of each section in order to define clearly the tasks to be performed by the subjects.

To supplement the test instrument and find a strong basis for testing our hypotheses, the subjects were also asked to fill a questionnaire. It was divided into three parts: part ($_A$) sought to find out their reading habits either at home or school, part (B) their socio-linguistic background and part (c) their knowledge of English figurative phrasal verbs. The test instrument and the questionnaire are reproduced in the appendix.

3.1.4 Pre-test of Instrument

The first draft of the test instrument was administered to fifty Diploma I students of Journalism randomly selected. The purpose was to see the ease or difficulty level of the instrument as well as its discriminatory power. The result of this pre-testing was quite revealing. Most of the students scored very high marks and this was attributed to the simplicity of the test items. It also helped the researcher to reconstruct, reframe or even drop some of the items from the original draft and insert new open-ended types. The researcher was also able to gather more information on timing and scoring, especially as regards other possible acceptable responses to the open-ended questions, some of which he did not envisage when he was framing the questions. The modified test instrument was shown to fellow teachers of English for comments. Many colleagues remarked that it was a bit too difficult for the target subjects. The simple answer the researcher gave was "it has to be that difficult if the experimental treatment is to serve any purpose at all".

3.1.5 Ethical Issues in Fieldwork

The researcher ensured that the authorities of the Centre were duly informed about the conduct and purpose of the study and they gave their consent. The teachers and students of Diploma II journalism class were equally informed and effort was made to ensure that the study was not going to interfere with their programme of study in the department.

3.2 Framework of Analysis

The subjects' test scripts were marked and scored in order to get a general picture of their understanding and use of idiomatic phrasal verbs. A marking scheme (see Appendix B) was worked out based on informal English usage and where an item had more than one possible answer, these were taken into consideration in order to ensure valid and reliable assessment of their responses. A careful classification of the sort of errors they made was also undertaken.

The test scores are generally presented in percentages. However, where some items, such as contained in the questionnaire, could not be analyzed quantatively, such items are given a qualitative analysis. The following tables have been prepared

In outlining the salient points/conclusions of the study -

Table 1 - This contains an over-all analysis of results, item by item in the first test administered (before any experimental treatment). It presents the performance of subjects in the two groups.

Table 2 - The analysis here is presented according to the four sections of the test instrument, namely:

(A) Literal vs figurative use of phrasal verbs;

(B) Multiple-Choice items - identifying the most appropriate interpretations of phrasal verbs used in sentences with alternatives;

(C) Giving possible interpretations of phrasal verbs used in sentences without alternatives;

(D) Using idiomatic phrasal verbs to construct sentences.

Table 3 - This shows an over-all analysis of results, item by item, in the second test administered (after experimental

treatment). It also presents the performance of subjects in the two groups.

Table 4 - The analysis here is given according to the four frames once again just as in Table 2 above.

3.2.1 Foot Notes

1. Discrete-point items are test items that test only one thing at a time and permit only one possible answer. Examples are Sections A and B of the test instrument. See Oller (1978).

2. Open-ended items test more than one thing at a time and permit a wide range of possible answers. This method of language testing is one of the best means of tapping the students' linguistic creativity.

Chapter IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents analyses and interprets our data. It also examines some of the possible causes of the general inability to use and understand accurately English idiomatic phrasal verbs among respondents (i.e. Diploma Students of Journalism in the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria). Furthermore, it attempts to identify the implications of the present study for students, teachers, education planners and the general public. Although the study is limited to the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, we hope that our findings are applicable to a large number of speakers of English as a second language throughout Nigeria.

4.1 Results Profile

We shall discuss the results according to the following frames:

(a) Frame I (items 1 - 10) Literal/Idiomatic use of phrasal verbs.

(b) Frame II (items 11-20) identification of possible interpretations of phrasal verbs.

(c) Frame III (items 21-60) Giving short interpretations of phrasal verbs.

(d) Frame IV (Items 61-100) Using idiomatic phrasal verbs in sentences.

These four frames were administered twice to test the subjects' ability to use and understand accurately a given number of English phrasal verbs. It was assumed that the students often took such phrasal verbs by their literal, rather than figurative meanings and demonstrated very little ability to use and understand them appropriately. Thus, Frames I - IV were constructed to test these assumptions. We should note, however, that the first administration of the test was mainly aimed at finding out, in addition to the afore-mentioned reasons, whether there was any initial marked difference in the performance of the two groups (control and experimental) in the test before the application of any experimental treatment. Table 1, therefore, presents an over-all performance of subjects in the two groups.

TABLE 1

RESPONSES' IN PERCENTAGE
OVER-ALL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: ITEM BY ITEM INITIAL TEST ADMINISTRATION
(BEFORE EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT)

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP(B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
1	52	**42**
2	72	**74**
3	58	**62**
44	24	**36**
5	70	**58**
6	60	**56**
7	36	**34**
8	64	**68**
9	70	**78**
10	76	**68**
AVERAGE	58.2	57.6
11	40	**50**
12	36	**28**
13	84	**86**
14	18	**22**
15	**66**	**60**
16	48	**30**
17	**80**	**64**
18	**26**	**34**
19	**12**	**14**
20	42	62
AVERAGE	45.2	**45**

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) CCONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
21	66	62
22	8	4
23	6	6
24	6	6
25	6	6
26	16	6
27	2	0
28	30	32
29	28	14
30	8	88
31	22	6
32	14	20
33	2	0
34	8	10
35	56	50
37	4	0
38	18	24
39	46	34
40	38	44
41	28	22
42	4	6
43	12	8
44	34	28
45	28	14
46	12	10

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
47	26	10
48	1	10
49	28	10
50	18	16
51	10	10
52	8	2
53	42	48
54	28	20
55	24	26
56	12	22
57	50	48
58	2	4
59	44	4
60	58	28
AVERAGE	20.7	17
61	22	8
62	6	2
63	8	0
64	0	0
65	16	8
66	0	0
67	2	0
68	0	0
69	2	2
70	0	0

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
71	2	2
72	8	6
73	6	2
74	15	6
75	6	0
76	22	24
77	10	14
78	2	0
79	4	0
80	44	36
81	2	0
82	18	2
83	0	0
84	6	6
85	0	0
86	0	0
87	30	18
88	2	2
89	0	2
90	20	14
91	2	0
92	16	6
93	0	0
94	0	0
95	2	0
96	2	0
97	8	6
98	18	16
99	2	4
100	12	12
AVERAGE	7.9	5.1

We took 40 as the cut-off point following the Centre's grading system whereby students who score less than 40 are considered to have failed the test. We, therefore, employed a similar grading system in our present study.

Taking the groups one after the other as presented on the table, we would now discuss the results based on the four frames. Subjects in Group A passed all the items in Frame I except items 4 and 7 where they scored less than 40. In other words, they passed eight items and failed two. This could be attributed to the fact that the task for them in this frame was not a difficult one because all they were required to do was to label each sentence either L (literal) or F (figurative). Consequently, the possibility for guess work was increased. The researcher was very conscious of this fact from the outset and therefore deliberately limited the items to only ten because of their little discriminatory power.

By a remarkable coincidence, subjects in group B passed the same items as did their counterparts in group A and failed items 4 and 7 too. Thus, this implies that subjects in the two groups performed equally well in Frame I by coming up with 80% success and 20% failure. This, as far as we are concerned

at the moment, does not prove that they could actually distinguish phrasal verbs used literally from those used idiomatically as their performance in the more productive (open-ended) frames will soon show.

In Frame II, subjects in Group A failed four items (12, 14, 18 and 19) while those in group B failed five out of the ten items, namely: (12, 14, 16, 18 and 19). Here, we notice a difference of one item between the two groups. We may also observe that their performance in this frame is not as good as it was in the first one. This can be explained from the point of view of the multiple - choice nature of the items. While many of the subjects were confused about the correct responses and had no choice but to guess, some of the brilliant ones among them simply used the contexts of the sentences to eliminate the wrong or less appropriate alternative answers to arrive at the most appropriate ones.

In Frame III, where the subjects were required to demonstrate their actual ability to understand idiomatic phrasal verbs, those in Group A scored only six out of the forty items (21, 35, 39, 53 and 60) while those in group B scored only five items, namely 21, 35, 40, 53 and 57. Again, we notice another difference of one item between the two groups.

Their performance in the fourth and final frame where they were required to display or manifest their real creative abilities in the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs is very revealing. Subjects in group A scored only item 80 while those in group B scored none at all. Majority of them left blank spaces while others constructed absurd sentences thereby showing more weaknesses than the researcher had anticipated. Examples of these will be given shortly.

Let us now examine their average score in each frame. Table 2 is an over-all analysis of the results frame by frame. Each frame was worked out for each group by simply adding the percentage score in each item and dividing it by the total number of items in each frame.

TABLE 2

OVER-ALL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS - FRAME BY FRAME PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT RESPONSES

FRAME NO.	GROUP A (CONTROL)	GROUP B (EXPERIMENTAL)	INITIAL DIFFERENCE
Frame I	58.2	57.6	.6
Frame II	45.2	45	.2
Frame III	20.7	17	3.7
Frame IV	7.9	5.1	2.8
		AVERAGE	1.8

Starting with frame I, the table indicates that group A scored an average of 58.2% while group B scored an average of 57.6%. It is observable that the subjects could not actually distinguish literal phrasal verbs from the figurative ones as shown in some of their mistakes. Items which the two groups generally found difficult and as such scored less than 40% in were items 4 and 7.

4. The children have been warned to keep in sight of the land in case they are caught in a storm.

Most of the subjects labelled the underlined phrasal verbs F (figurative) instead of L (literal).

7. She had been looking forward to leaving the hospital wards for a holiday in London. This sentence was labelled L instead of F. Other items that subjects apparently found difficult were items 1 and 2.

1. He only told me to look up the chimney. Here, the phrasal verb was labelled F instead of L by many of the subjects.

2. She took in her parents = (deceived). Many of them labelled the phrasal verb in this sentence L instead of F.

The poor performance of the subjects in the above items could be due to the seemingly complex

nature of the sentences or to their general lack of understanding of the basic difference between literal and figurative phrasal verbs. In item 7, for example, many of them perhaps thought that the person referred to in the sentence was actually performing the physical act of 'looking' instead of the idiomatic sense of 'anticipating'. We should note an initial difference of .6% which subjects in group A scored more than those in group B in frame I.

In frame II, group A scored an average of 45.2% while group B scored 45%. Subjects in group A scored less than 40% in items 12, 14, 18 and 19 while those in group B failed items 12, 14, 16, 18 and 19. Their responses were as follows:

12. They did him in without a sign of remorse.
Many of the subjects chose either alternative (b), (c) or (d) instead of (a).

14. Adamu blasted away at the president's decision.
Majority of the subjects chose either a, b, or d instead of c.

16. Aliyu conked out early in the evening
Subjects, particularly in group B, could not choose (d) as the most appropriate answer but chose the remaining wrong answers.

18. You'll have to sweat it out for another hour.
Majority of the subjects in the two groups chose (a)

as the appropriate answer instead of (b).

19. 'Marry me, Helen, I'm young, good-looking and well set up.

Here too most of the subjects chose alternative (c) instead of (d).

Another item worth mentioning is item 13 which was misunderstood by more than half of the subjects.

13. He doesn't take long to catch on.

The common response was (c) = 'arrest' instead of (c) = 'understand.' This sentence also shows us that many of the subjects took it by its literal rather than figurative meaning. In this frame also, we notice that group A scored .2% more than group B.

In frame III, subjects in group A scored 20.7% while those in group B scored an average of 17% Again, we notice an initial difference of 3.7% between the two groups. Both groups failed because they scored less than the cut-off point (40%). We may recall that those in group A failed in thirty-four items while those in group B failed in thirty-five items. Most of the responses they gave showed that they either took the expressions by their literal meanings instead of the figurative meanings or they did not understand the expressions at all. Occasionally, some of the subjects gave exactly 'opposite' (antoymous) meanings to the correct options. Let us examine some of these:

21. It was noised abroad that he was taking up a new appointment.

Many subjects interpreted the underlined phrasal verb as either 'general disturbance' or 'a very noisy atmosphere' as opposed to either 'announced' or 'made known'.

22. Everything that Jane possessed went under the hammer.

To many of the subjects, the phrase meant 'destroyed' or 'beaten to pieces' instead of the actual meaning 'was sold at an auction' or simply 'was auctioned.'

23. Do you think that he hits it off with his boss?

This was one of the few items to which the subjects gave an antonymous meaning. Many of them wrote different but related meanings such as 'quarrels', 'argues', 'fights', or 'beats', as opposed to the usual meaning 'gets along' or 'enjoys good relationship'.

34. If you had pressed him for a reply, you would have put his back up.

Many of the subjects took the expression to mean 'broken his back' or 'injured his back' as against the actual idiomatic meaning 'made him angry' or simply 'offended him.'

35. The rest of the Christmas pudding was polished off by the children.

Some of the answers given by the subjects show that they took this phrasal verb by its literal meaning, that is, 'washed', cleaned', 'tidy', This last one even shows another weakness of inflection among the samples who provided it.

41. He bolstered up his position in the case with new evidence.

Some of the responses to this phrasal verb included 'messed', 'spoilt', 'changed', 'contradicted' and so forth as opposed to its actual meaning 'supported'.

47. Let's kick around this new idea.

Here also, a large number of the subjects took the expression to mean 'forget', 'abandon', 'reject' or 'leave' instead of the usual meaning 'consider slowly and carefully'.

54. 'How horribly servile and ingratiating that man is. He makes me want to throw up.

Again, this phrasal verb was taken to mean 'throw stones at him' and so forth instead of 'vomit'.

59. She'd been picked at so often by parents and teachers that she didn't know how to behave.

Just like the other examples cited above, this phrasal verb was mistaken for 'chosen' or 'selected' by many of the subjects instead of the usual meaning 'criticized' or 'nagged at'.

All these examples prove the subjects' general inability

to understand phrasal verbs used idiomatically.

Finally, in frame IV subjects in both groups performed very poorly thereby proving their low linguistic creativity once again. Those in Group A scored 7.9% while the others in group B scored an average of 5.1%. It is noteworthy to mention at this juncture that this fourth frame certainly 'tapped' not only their productive ability to use the given phrasal verbs idiomatically in sentences of their own, but their 'internalised grammar' in general. Let us consider the following examples:

1. It is being bandy about that she had an abortion.
2. This child leech onto his mother.
3. The football match has peter out.
4. The man trigger off the case.

All these sentences suggest that even in a situation where some of the subjects had some knowledge of a particular phrasal verb, their other linguistic dificiencies such as knowledge of tenses and the appropriate verb forms, spelling and the like interfered with their ability to produce grammatically and contextually appropriate sentences. Let us consider these cases one after the other.

The researcher discovered that the subjects generally had weaknesses in English tenses and inflections. Here are a few more examples to show the seriousness of this problem:

5. The man simmer down (drop)
6. The case should be buckle down. (close)
7. Do not fob off on to what is doesn't concerned you.
8. He ogle at him because he hate him (frown).
9. He was call forth to deliver the speech (represent).
10. His paper have been ferret out (exclude).

It did not occur to the researcher that pronunciation too could hinder the subjects' ability to use phrasal verbs idiomatically. Items 66, 69 and 70 deserve special mention because many of the subjects changed them from:

66 'keel over' to 'kill over'

69 'give off' to 'give up'

70 'kip out' to 'keep out'.

Many of the subjects thought the words were wrongly spelt and therefore changed them into what they thought were the correct spellings.

Next was the problem of taking whole phrases or the particles by their literal meanings. Letus consider these sentences:

18. I'd better eke out, it's getting late (go away)

19. He usually knuckle under the table (hide).

20. Please peter out the dirt (wash it away or remove).

Clearly then, the subjects took the above particles (out, under and out) by their literal meanings. In the following sentences, however, the phrases were given literal rather than figurative meanings - despite all the instructions and examples given them.

81. He told me not to chew over the bread.
(not to eat).

79. She fall flat (accident)

93. I was ask to pen in my complains. (write)

95. The goat was cut up rough (cut to pieces or slaughter).

Furthermore, there were instances where the subjects demonstrated their total ignorance of certain phrasal verbs as in the following examples.

63. I would be call forth for the event.(to witness).

65. The arm rubber could not shack up with the police tail.(run away).

66. Let's keel over the time. (wild away).

90. I warn you not let this issue hear out.(lick).

93. He pen in when he was not needed (intruder).

It is clear that item 66 above could have arisen as a result of phonological problem where, apparently, the subjects could not find any difference in pronunciation between 'kill' and 'keel'.

A lot of spelling errors were also recorded from the subjects' responses. The following were just few of them:

a. vommit for vomit
b. desive or decieve for deceive
c. exquise for excuse
d. live for leave
e. somebodies wife for somebody's wife.
f. shelf for shelve (suspend)
g. wild for while
h. exergerete for exaggerate
i. vigoreous for vigorous
j. exersice for exercise, and many more.

Above all, many of the subjects showed their poor linquistic productivity by leaving a lot of blank spaces which resulted into their scoring very low marks. We will now record the initial difference of an average of 1.8% which group A (Control) scored over group B (experimental) before the administration of any experimental treatment. We arrived at this figure by adding up the initial differences in each of the four frames and dividing the total by 4.

Several factors could be responsible for such a poor performance as demonstrated by the subjects of the present study. The socio-linguistic background of learners generally influences, positively or otherwise, their language learning or acquisition. According to Aitchinson (1976), for language, like any other biologically triggered behaviour, to develop adequately the surrounding environment must be sufficiently rich. This implies that language does not develop properly in impoverished or unnatural surroundings. What then is the linguistic situation in our learners' immediate environment? How much English is spoken or used in the learners' homes, schools or immediate environment in general?

Tiffen (1969) maintains that the crux of the problem of English language teaching lies in the primary school, for it is here that the teaching of English is begun and the foundations are laid. There is a growing feeling, however, that these foundations are often inadequate and that primary school children are exposed to the poor, non-standard English of many teachers and often fail to acquire the skills necessary to use English as the language of learning.

Obanya (1982) examines the matter from two perspectives. According to him, there are both

pedagogical and environmental reasons for the young Nigerian students' linguistic disabilities. The pedagogical reasons are related to the poor quality of reading and the calibre of available teachers in primary schools (thus agreeing with Tregidgo above), appropriate methods of teaching including what Odu and Umeh (1975) call 'the tendency to translate English into the vernacular,' the non-availability of adequate, relevant, and effective facilities for the teaching of English, the near total absence of libraries and children's readers of appropriate content and standard. Many pupils speak English only during English classes and very little outside the classroom, the number of such periods on the time-table is often too small to allow any effective teaching and learning to take place. The situation is even worse if the pupil-teacher ratio is taken into consideration and the fact that in some areas the pupils' and often the teachers' English is seriously affected by the widespread use of pidgin or substandard type of English, or a heavy and active linguistic (mother-tongue) interference.

The environmental reasons, on the other hand, have to do with the use of English itself in the Nigerian society, and the prevalent conditions in the child's home as well as his immediate society.

Obanya feels that a large proportion of Nigerian children live and grow up in homes without books. Most of them are not encouraged to read books other than the ones prescribed in schools. Griffith-Jones (1959) supports this claim where he states that:

> Most homes are not able to supply the necessary conditions of uninterrupted peace, and many parents are quite unconvinced that books are work, anyway: there is usually 'more important' housework or gardening or shopping to do; the television is on in the only available room; there is no tradition of reading, as we understand it at all. These may seem harsh criticisms, but as statements of fact I believe they are justified.

Obanya explains further that very few communities have public libraries where children can read. Since English is rarely used in the child's immediate environment he has rot become fluent in English at the time of entry into secondary school and above, and it is this lack of fluency that poses problems for teachers of English. Rivers (1978) is also of the opinion that the situation in post-secondary institutions is more or less the same as far as English language teaching and learning are concerned.

More specifically, there are quite a number of factors that pose problems of understanding and

using idiomatic phrasal verbs among learners of English as a Second Language. Tregidgo (1959) upholds that one of those factors is that the words which make up the idiomatic expression are usually simple in themselves, but understanding each separate word does not always erable one to understand the expression as a whole. Secondly, according to him, very often the expression is not quite logical or grammatical. He cites a number of examples such as when we say we 'look forward to' something, we are not really looking at all. We also say 'at break of the day' despite the fact that the day cannot really break. Moreover, we all have two feet and we say 'on foot' ard although 'foot' is a countable noun in the singular, we disobey the rule about using an article. He concludes that it is peculiarities of this sort which help the students to recognise that a certain expression is an idiom, even though they may never have seen it before and it is at such moments that a dictionary comes in handy. With good training, he claims the students can independently and easily understand or use such expressions appropriately. Besides, he advises that students keep a special watch for verb-idioms which consist

of a common preposition or adverb because there are so many of them in English that they are given a special name: 'phrasal verbs'.

Also fully explained by Tregidgo is the fact that many of such phrasal verbs are extremely common and may have several different meanings. He affirms that phrasal verbs actually present a real difficulty for the students. The same view is expressed by Eckersley and Eckersley (1960) and Quirk et al (1973) who state that there are a great many of these 'phrasal verbs' (that is, verb + preposition or adverb) and a number of verbs (usually the commonest in the languge) may have a dozen or more different meanings according to the particle which accompanies them. Let us consider the following phrases:

- put about (to spread bad or false news)
- put across (to cause to be understood)
- put forth (to bring into action or effect)
- put in for (to make a formal request for)
- put up (to raise)
- put up (to accommodate)
- put up with (to tolerate)
- put on (to add to)
- put off (to postpone)
- put off (to extinguish)

- - put away (to remove) etc.

To say that such expressions are in common use, according to Cowie and Mackin (1975), is not, however, to say that their meanings are always self-evident. Fraser (1974) concludes that some of the meanings are literal and the meaning of the phrase may be gathered from the individual words that compose it. But frequently the meaning is figurative and can only be learned by treating the combination as one unit. Thus distinguishing literal meanings of phrasal verbs from the figurative ones is a very difficult task for most students. Fraser argues further that expressions like 'make love to', 'beat around the bush', 'bury the hatchet', 'pass the buck' and the like are all instances of idioms, just as are verb-particle combinations like 'look up the information', 'eke out a living', 'boil down the broth' and so on. In 'to pass the buck', for example, there is no independently motivated interpretation of the verb 'pass' or of the noun phrase 'the buck' such that when taken together the string 'pass the buck' would immediately receive the interpretation of 'to avoid work by giving the job to someone else'.

Susan (1986) expresses the same opinion about the problem of understanding diomatic expressions among students. According to her, idioms often break the normal rules of a language (just as explained by Tregidgo above), thus offering a creative source of word play, yet at the same time they conform to even more rigid rules which are usually not made explicit. The problem in the use of idioms in any foreign language environment is that they are generally presented with only a sample paraphrase or definition and no rules for their usage The foreign language learner then may incorrectly assume that a given idiomatic phrase follows the same rules as a non-idiomatic one of similar form. A student of English, for instance, could logically assume that the phrase 'to bite the dust' could be treated as being in a paradigm with 'to bite an apple', 'to bite the meat', and 'to bite the tongue'. This assumption, according to Susan, could lead to an ungrammatical sentence if a student freely applies syntactic and lexical substitutions.

It was on the basis of the above views expressed by the different writers that the present researcher decided to administer a questionnaire to the subjects

essentially to find out their socio-linquistic backgrounds and reading habits. It was hoped that whatever data was gathered would help to establish the root causes of poor linguistic creativity in our students. Once again, the responses they provided proved to be quite revealing.

The first question on the questionnaire sought to find out whether they enjoyed reading at home and 75% of them answered in the negative. In response to the second question on the availability of facilities, they gave different reasons ranging from too much noise to lack of electricity and facilities such as furniture and the like. The third question sought to find out whether they had an adequate collection of books in their homes. 90% of them answered in the negative. As to whether there were public/community libraries in their locality, only 36% of them answered in the affirmative but indicated that these were ill-equipped. Only 15% of them showed that they had libraries in their former primary schools. However, in their last post-primary institutions, 70% claimed to have had libraries which were nonetheless ill-equipped.

As to whether they enjoyed reading in the library only 50% showed they did while the remaining 50% claimed they detested it because of congestion, noise and lack of the desired books to read. Furthermore, only 25% of them claimed to read widely while 75% indicated that they read only specific textbooks prescribed to them in their course if available. Otherwise, they normally relied on handouts or photocopies.

In part B of the questionnaire, the subjects supplied a lot of information about their socio-liguistic backgrounds. 100% indicated they spoke English in the classroom but 65% used vernacular languages to their friends outside the classroom. Furthermore, only 10% identified English as the dominant language in their homes while the remaining 90% indicated different Nigerian indigenous languages. Again, only 3% of them indentified English as the dominant language in their locality.

In part C and the final section of the questionnaire 100% of the subjects indicated that they had very little knowledge of English figurative (idiomatic) phrasal verbs before coming to Ahmadu

Bello University, Zaria. 100% also agreed that figurative phrasal verbs posed a serious problem of understanding to them because of their complex nature. No wonder then that Fraser (1974) calls phrasal verbs 'these annoying little mysteries'. Asked to explain exactly what they liked or disliked about such phrasal verbs, 75% indicated that they disliked them for being very difficult to use and understand. The remaining 25% answered in the positive adding that their knowledge of figurative phrasal verbs would be one of the indications that the university had actually 'passed through' them.

With the above information collected from subjects, it is clear that their poor sociolinguistic backgrounds and poor reading habits constitute some of the major causes of their very low level of proficiency in the use of English idiomatic phrasal verbs in particular and use of English in general.

We shall now focus our attention on the second administration of the same test instrument on the subjects after the application of experimental treatment to subjects in group B. Table 3 presents an over-all analysis of results: item by item which will help us assess the effect of the experimental treatment.

TABLE 3

RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGE OVER-ALL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: ITEM BY ITEM FINAL TEST ADMINISTRATION (AFTER EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT)

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
1	63	96
2	70	96
3	72	90
4	60	80
5	68	94
6	48	92
7	56	88
8	76	90
9	76	100
10	84	100
AVERAGE	67.8	92.6
11	46	92
12	60	96
13	72	96
14	48	76
15	72	96
16	50	86
17	66	98
18	44	92
19	42	90
20	64	94
AVERAGE	56.4	91.6

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
21	66	92
22	16	68
23	16	56
24	10	62
25	6	22
26	10	24
27	2	16
28	36	56
29	14	56
30	8	40
31	8	56
32	24	58
33	6	54
34	16	42
35	48	88
36	14	28
37	8	42
38	14	66
39	38	44
40	42	64
41	26	60
42	10	42
43	14	36
44	36	58
45	22	32

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
46	16	48
47	16	40
48	4	12
49	18	72
50	8	36
51	6	30
52	2	16
53	32	54
54	18	50
55	24	46
56	26	60
57	30	74
58	4	40
59	2	40
60	12	78
AVERAGE	17.95	48.95
61	26	64
62	16	46
63	4	28
64	6	36
65	40	60
66	2	40
67	10	54
68	2	22

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
69	4	42
70	8	40
71	2	12
72	4	60
73	8	36
74	10	46
75	2	30
76	10	56
77	16	54
78	2	20
79	10	16
80	24	68
81	2	10
82	2	28
83	2	10
84	8	38
85	0	20
86	4	24
87	16	58
88	6	20
89	0	28
90	8	44
91	0	10

ITEM NO.	GROUP (A) (CONTROL)	GROUP (B) (EXPERIMENTAL)
92	8	40
93	**2**	8
94	**0**	**2**
95	**0**	**18**
96	0	**10**
97	6	**16**
98	8	**36**
99	0	**32**
100	6	**46**
AVERAGE	7.10	32.20

As the above table indicates, both groups scored all the items in frames I and II, perhaps due to their familiarity with the tasks involved or the general ease of the items. In frame III, however, subjects in group A failed thirty-eight out of the forty items by scoring less than 40%. They were able to pass only items 21 and 40. Their counterparts in group B, however, failed only ten out of the forty items. As such, we record a difference of twenty eight items in favour of the experimental group. In frame IV, subjects in group A failed all the items except item 65 in which they scored an average of exactly 40%. Those in the experimental

group, on the contrary, failed only fourteen items and passed sixteen items. Here too, we record another difference of fifteen items in favour of the experimental group.

The mistakes they made this time were not different from the ones they had already made in the first test. It is, however, necessary to mention at this juncture that the number of such mistakes and blank spaces were greatly reduced on the part of group B, evidently as a result of the experimental treatment they received. Furthermore, their level of creativity markedly increased as evident from some of their responses. Let us consider these few examples:

61 (a) The traffic warden told me to pull up beside the road (stop).

(b) Where can we pull up and have a drink?

(c) This is a wrong place to pull up.

(d) Once you start driving, don't pull up until we reach home.

(e) Have you ever pulled up at Amina Hall for a gossip?

(f) If you are sleepy, you'd better pull up for a nap. etc.

Here then lies the effect of the experimental treatment.

We shall now examine their average score in each frame. Table 4 presents an over-all analysis of results - frame by frame.

TABLE 4

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS FRAME BY FRAME (PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT RESPONSES)

FRAME NO.	GROUP A	GROUP B	DIFFERENCE
Frame I	67.8	92.6	24.8
Frame II	56.4	91.6	35.2
Frame III	17.95	48.95	31.0
Frame Iv	7.10	32.20	25.10
AVERAGE			28.5

It is discernible here that in Frame I, subjects in group B scored an average of 92.6% while those in group A scored 67.8% - a difference of an average score of 24.8%. In frame II, group B again scored an average of 91.6% while their counterparts in group A scored 56.4% - another difference of 35.2%. In frame III, the difference

seems to be great too between the two groups. Group B scored an average of 48.95% and therefore passed in that frame whereas group A failed by scoring an average of 17.95% which is less than 40%. The difference in favour of the experimental group is 31%. Strikingly, both groups failed in frame IV by scoring less than an average of 40%. Group A scored an average of 7.10% while group B scored 32.20%. The difference once again in favour of group B is 25.10%. In all, therefore, members of the experimental group scored an average of 28.5% arrived at by adding up the average scores and dividing the total by 4. Thus, to find out the effect of the experimental treatment we simply deduct the initial difference from the final one. If we do that, we will be left with a difference of an average score of 26.7% in favour of the experimental group. Thus, despite all the identified possible causes of poor linguistic output, our findings show that the students' performance in respect of the use of phrasal verbs can be changed positively. The fact that subjects in both groups failed in frame IV could be attributed to the general complexity of phrasal verbs generated and the span of the experimental treatment. Thus, the effect or success of the experimental treatment could be

deduced from table 4 under the column tagged 'differences'. We could also see clearly that the general performance of the control group was much lower than that of the experimental group. As such, the lower the performance of the subjects, the lower their linguistic creativity/proficiency and the less intelligible such subjects might be presumably.

4.2 Implications of the Study

From the foregoing, it can been seen that this study has a lot of implications for students, teachers, parents, Federal, State and Local Governments, as well as the general public. The following are some of them.

(1) It is clear that students learn only in the classroom, that is, if they ever learn anything at all. As such, they will continue to be linguistically handicapped unless they are made to acquire the right set of habits, skills, attitudes and the general will-power to

learn and use English anywhere anytime. Teachers should make them explore and exploit other avenues or means of learning English outside the classroom with much ease and at little cost such as listening to radio and television programmes and so forth.

(2) primary and post-primary institutions are badly maintained and staffed by the different levels of the government. This yields nothing but problems in different shapes and sizes to students, teachers, parents and the entire nation.

(3) Educational planners do not ensure that their plans/schemes are actually implemented or rigorously modified from time to time so as to cater for the needs of our students and the entire nation in these fast and ever-changing times.

(4) Parents do little to provide their children with the basic facilities such as books, light, furniture and a conducive atmosphere in which to learn at home.

(5) Some communities/localities contribute to the problem by relying absolutely on the government to build schools, public libraries or reading rooms, television viewing centres and the like. This hampers the students' progress in no small measure.

Because of the above observations, it is very difficult for the society to produce the right calibre or journalists and other competences needed for the general survival and progress of the entire nation. With good teaching and a lot of encouragement from both parents, teachers and our policy - markers, the situation in the country can be reversed positively as our findings seem to imply.

Chapter V

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study set out to identify and analyse the possible causes of the general inability to use and understand English idiomatic phrasal verbs among Diploma students of Journalism in the Centre for Adult Education and Extension Services, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. In addition, it also sought to find out the extent to which such a problem could affect the students' intelligibility and linguistic creativity with the aim of suggesting possible solutions to the problem. To achieve these aims, we started by explaining what actually prompted us to carry out this study and, on the basis of that, formulated some hypotheses to test in the course of our investigation.

In Chapter two, a review of related literature was done. Three different but important approaches to the study of phrasal verbs were examined after which a model was selected for our study. In order to give a comprehensive account of idiomatic phrasal verbs, an eclectic model was adopted.

In Chapter three, we discussed the method used for collecting our data and the type of subjects used. One hundred subjects were drawn from the class and divided into two groups: control and experimental groups. The test instrument consisted of one hundred discrete-point and open-ended items divided into four sections. The same test was administered twice - firstly to find out if there was any initial significant difference in the performance of the two groups; and secondly to find the effect of the experimental treatment. The time limit was three hours but majority of the subjects were able to finish before then in each of the tests. The tests were marked and scores were given according to informal usage of the phrasal verbs (see Appendix B for the marking scheme). Results were presented in percentage.

Chapter four discussed the results which were presented in different tables - item by item and frame by frame. This was done in order to ease comparison of the performance of subjects in the two groups.

5.1 Pedagogic Implications

The study has shown that the subjects' socio-linguistic backgrounds remain one of the chief causes

of their poor linguistic creativity in the use of idiomatic phrasal verbs in particular, and in the use of English language in general.

It has also shown the discriminatory power of the test instrument administered to the subjects and its capacity to 'tap' or 'trigger off' their 'internalised grammars'. The effect of the experimental treatment has shown the possibility of increasing the subjects' level of proficiency and productivity.

The inability to use and understand appropriately English idiomatic phrasal verbs certainly hampers effective communication and as Seidl and McMordie (1974:4) cited in Azuike (1988) rightly observe 'English is very rich in idiomatic expressions. In fact, it is difficult to speak or write English without using idioms'. Moreover, Azuike (1988) himself concludes that "...

> ...The Nigerian writer often discovers that he needs idioms in his authorial assignments and he uses them profusely in order to give his erudition free rein. With equal frequency, the result of this is either unproductive or a development. It is unproductive when the writer fails entirely to inform and a development when his creative urge yields a new phrase or figurative extension of the English language."

5.2 Recommendations

On the basis of these findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

That as soon as fresh students are admitted into the Journalism programme, or any other programme for that matter, they should be given a thorough diagnostic test in order to find out their areas of strength or weakness as well as learning needs. This will help the teachers greatly in designing a course of study in Communication Skills, or English language as the case may be, that is relevant to the age, ability and interest of the students.

Teachers must be prepared to attend seminars, workshops, conferences and undergo in-service training in order to equip themselves with current trends and innovations in the art of teaching/learning. It is through such functions that they will improve upon their knowledge as well as their ability to make effective use of audio-visual aids and other teaching techniques so as to provide a variety of learning experiences to the students. Tape-recorders, cassette tapes, television and video films, film slides and

a host of other gadgets could be of great help in giving the students adequate exposure to the English language.

Schools could organise appeal funds, P.T.A. meetings, speech and prize giving days, sports, cultural shows and related functions and invite parents, guardians and the general public in order to generate funds for the purchase of the necessary teaching/learning facilities.

Teachers should always ensure that they teach by example. They should read widely before they can expect the students to emulate them. They should use idiomatic phrasal verbs and other expressions frequently with ease and accuracy if they want the students to do the same. They should also be very hard-working and keep the students very busy by giving the students a lot of practice and assignments to do either in class or at home. Most of all, they should instill the habit of engaging in extensive and independent reading in the students.

There is also the need to have community/public libraries where students can carry out further reading at their free time. Parents and members of each

community should make generous donations in cash or kind for their collective progress. Study groups could be formed in each community and competitions in form of debates or quizzies organised at the Local Government, State and National levels where different prizes could be won. Winning prizes, of course, has a lot of advantages to our Students, but the amount of progress such students would make through such exposure is of much greater importance.

Finally, the Federal as well as State Governments should ensure adequate funding of primary and post-primary institutions so that the necessary facilities could be purchased and the right calibre of teachers employed if we want any effective teaching and learning to take place. Teachers should be given regular promotions and other incentives such as prompt payment of salaries, in-service training and the like. The researcher strongly recommends that once in a while, teachers who prove to be competent and dedicated to their duties should be sponsored, by the Federal Government to study English abroad. This will expose the teachers to the English language and the English culture. The researcher also feels that there are so many things that textbooks cannot explain and teachers of English in Nigeria do need opportunities

to go abroad and explore such areas. After all, when such teachers are fully trained, they would be of tremendous help to so many thousands of children whose parents may not have the privilege of sending them to study abroad.

5.2 Need for Further Research

On a final note, the researcher hopes that future researchers into the problem of understanding and using English idiomatic expression will find this research study valuable especially in the area of language teaching. It has been very difficult to come across any work in particular that sets out to examine available methods and techniques for the teaching of English idiomatic expressions of various types to second language learners. There is obviously the urgent need for such studies within the context of (TESL) Teaching English as a Second Language in our schools.

There is also the need to carry out a more global or contrastive study of the problem among students of Journalism in selected or all the institutions offering the course in Nigeria.

The researcher is also of the view that even the so-called educated Nigerians seldom use idiomatic expressions including teachers of English themselves. There is the need to dig into that if we are to do justice to our students.

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APPENDIX A

General Instructions: This test comprises 100 questions which you are required to answer as carefully as possible. You are advised to study the instructions and examples given at the beginning of each section. All answers must be supplied in the space provided on the question paper.

SECTION A:

Instructions: In this section, there are ten sentences in which some phrasal verbs have been used either literally or figuratively. For example:

a) Bello wants to go into the house. L
b) Bello wants to go into the matter. F

In (A) above, the underlined phrasal verb is synonymous with 'enter' and is therefore literal. Note how each of the words in the phrase retains its individual meaning.

In (B) however, the same phrasal verb is synonymous with 'investigate' and is therefore figurative. Note also how the words now lose their basic lexical meanings and take on a new idiomatic one.

Now do numbers 1 - 10 by simply labelling each sentence either L (for Literal) or F (for Figurative) as shown above.

1. He only told me to look up the chimney.

2. She took in her parents.

3. In the few weeks she had been with them, she had put on a lot of weight.

4. The children have been warned to keep in sight of the land in case they are caught in a storm.

5. Please cut out that picture

6. In barracks all the officers of a batallion mess together

7. She had been looking forward to leaving the hospital wards for a holiday in London.

8. He took my pencil and got away with it.

9. There's no need to lose any sleep over the stolen car.

10. Ado was lost in the intricacies of a new electric car.

SECTION B:

Instructions: After each of the following sentences, a list of possible interpretations of the phrasal verb is given. Choose the interpretation that you consider most appropriate for each underlined phrasal verb.

For example:

John tried to throw dust in my eyes, but I knew he was lying. This means that John

a) wanted me to be blind
b) liked playing in the dust
c) was a big liar
d) wanted to deceive me

The most appropriate interpretation here is (d). So we answer the question by placing a tick against alternative as follows - (d) wanted to deceive me.

Now answer questions 11-20 in the same manner.

11. Some people say that our boss is about to crack up.

a) burst into tears
b) smile
c) reveal a secret
d) be insane

12. They did him in without a sign of remorse.

a) killed
b) kidnapped
c) injured
d) tortured

13. He doesn't take long to catch on.

a) be confused
b) understard
c) arrest
d) meet

14. Adamu blasted away at the president's decision.

a) was angry
b) was disappointed

c) criticized
d) disagreed.

15. Smoking dope has caught on the United States of America

a) has become popular in
b) has adversely affected
c) has enhanced
d) has become the cause of crimes.

16. Aliyu conked out early in the evening.

a) fainted
b) left
c) got highly drunk
d) fell asleep

17. They feared that their allies would chicken out at the last moment.

a) materialise
b) attack
c) lose courage
d) charge

18. You'll have to sweat it out for another hour

a) suffer
b) persevere
c) relax
d) cogitate

19. 'Marry me, Helen, I'm young, good looking and well set up.

a) built
b) properly brought up
c) very wealthy
d) healthy ard vigorous

20. 'Offer the visitor a drink. That will thaw him out'.

SECTION C

Instructions: Study the following 40 sertences carefully and give a short interpretation of each underlined phrasal verb. No options are given this time. Here are two examples to guide you.

1. The meeting has been put off. (postponed)
2. In the first form he palled up with a boy of his own age. (Made friends).

Now do numbers 21 - 60 in the same way and remember that your answers must be as short as the ones exemplified.

21. It was noised abroad that he was taking up a new appointment.

_____

22. Everything that Jane posessed went under the hammer.

_____ ___ _____

23. Do you think that he hits it off with his boss?

_____

24. You can't hush up a think like that_____

25. They are good technicians, but they have to be kept in their place._____

26. Once you make an appearance on television you'll never look back:_____

27. One or two yourger scientists are challenging him in his field, so he must look to his laurels.

_____

28. The salesman tried to palm us off with some shop-soiled sheets._____

29. Several of the runners pegged out at the end of the course._____

30. I would consider drastically curtailing the number of radio series and taking steps to pep up those that were left out.

_____

31. He put his back out badly, falling down the stairs like that._____

32. Most of his present officers were put through the mill, he considers battle experience more valuable than college training.

33. I wish you'd stop trying to put the wind up Virginia.

34. If you had pressed him for a reply, you would have put his back up.

35. The rest of the Christmas pudding was polished off by the children.

36. The President is speaking in a way that suggests putting the famous scheme on ice.

37. David does pile it on; anyone would think that he's the only one with domestic problems.

38. Now you can all stop talking about my money: I've no intention of popping off yet

39. He acted out the emotions he felt.

40. He bolstered up his position in the case with new evidence.

41. He begged off from serving with the group

42. Witnesses ofter clam up in the face of a hostile lawyer

43. I think we should ease up on Olu.

44. You may be able to fake out your opponent if you start slowly.

45. Don't flunk out, you'll have to join the army.

46. Scholars grind away on their research.

47. Let's kick around this new idea.

48. You can limber up by doing the tug of war

49. The guillotine is a device to lop off heads.

50. Every time the teacher comes to class, he is well away. _____

51. I didn't let on receipt of the letter. _____

52. With his father's name and his mother's money, young Aliyu should be well away. _____

53. It's time you awoke to the realities of the situation _____

54. 'How horribly servile and ingratiating that man is. He makes me want to throw up'. _____

55. The sales team flew in at ten O'clock, wrapped up a couple of deals before lunch, and caught the afternoon plane back to Lagos. _____

56. Come on down to the Church and I'll make an honest woman of you. _____

57. I don't know if philip has made it up with Mary or not. _____

58. They had probably been picked off by American snipers at the head of our advance. _____

59. She'd been picked at so often by parents and teachers that she didn't know how to behave. _____

60. I'm a bit hard up myself _____

SECTION D:

Instructions: Below is a list of phrasal verbs. You are required to use them figuratively (idiomatically) in sentences of your own. Make sure that you indicate the meaning or interpretation of each one of them as briefly as possible - just as you did in Section C. above. Here are two examples to help you:

1) put up with

I can't put up with that (tolerate)

2) put up

Will you put me up for tonight only? (accommodate).

Now do numbers 61-100 in the same manner

61. pull up
62. eke out
63. call forth
64. knuckle under
65. shack up with
66. keel over
67. bandy about
68. gull out of
69. give off
70. kip out
71. chuck up
72. leech onto
73. hanker after
74. mull over
75. ferret out
76. trigger off
77. gawk at
78. tail off
79. fall flat
80. simmer down
81. peter out
82. keep in with
83. clum up
84. nestle up against
85. bugger up
86. chime in on
87. chew over
88. buckle down
89. clog up
90. hear out
91. fob off onto
92. ogle at
93. pen in
94. batten on
95. cut up rough
96. inveigle into
97. put to bed
98. crop up
99. tuck away
100. make shift with

APPENDIX B

MARKING SCHEME

SECTION A		SECTION B	
1.	L	11.	d
2.	F	12.	a
3.	F	13.	b
4.	L	14.	c
5.	L	15.	a
6.	F	16.	d
7.	F	17.	c
8.	L	18.	b
9.	F	19.	d
10.	F	20.	c

SECTION C

21. announced/made known
22. was sold at an auction
23. gets along/enjoys good relationship
24. conceal/prevent it from being known.
25. must not be allowed to forget their position
26. make continuous progress
27. beware of losing his reputation
28. tried to persuade us to accept
29. fainted or collapsed from exhaustion
30. make more interesting or lively
31. dislocated
32. given severe training/practical experience
33. scare or frighten
34. offended him/or made him angry
35. eaten up quickly.
36. shelving/suspending (possibly with the intention of reviving it later.
37. exaggerate

38. dying
39. portrayed/demonstrated
40. excused
41. supported
42. keep quiet
43. reduce pressure
44. deceive
45. drop out of school
46. work hard
47. consider
48. stretch your muscle
49. cut off
50. drunk
51. acknowledge
52. make a good start
53. realised
54. vomit
55. concluded successfully
56. marry (after having had some affairs)
57. reconciled/settled his differences with
58. shot one by one with deliberate aim
59. criticized/nagged at
60. broke.

SECTION D

61. stop/halt
62. find some way, however meagre, to live, broaden or enlarge something
63. provoke
64. give way in the face of pressure
65. live in an informal style with somebody to whom one is not married.
66. capsize/lose one's balance and fall
67. spread/blab about/pass from person to person.
68. obtain by trickery from
69. emit/produce or release

70. sleep in the open air
71. abandon/leave
72. attach oneself firmly and persistently to somebody
73. have a strong desire for
74. pender on/over, consider slowly and carefully
75. find/discover by diligent searching
76. stimulate/spark off/cause an event
77. gape at/look open mouthed
78. gradually decrease in number/become less frequent/decline in quality (usually of work).
79. prove ineffective/fail to arouse any interest/ prove impossible to carry out or put into operation
80. cool down/pipe down
81. dwindle to nothing
82. remain in good terms with somebody
83. become totally uncommunicative through fear, distrust or suspicion
84. press close to another person for warmth/comfort
85. spoil, ruin, make a harsh/mess of
86. comment
87. consider slowly and carefully
88. work hard
89. fill in such a way as to prevent normal movement
90. listen until somebody has finished his remarks
91. persuade somebody to accept something or by deceit
92. look intently and with love or longing
93. confine/enclose in a pen/restrict the movement or freedom of
94. exploit
95. react violently
96. persuade or trick somebody by flattery or deception into doing something.
97. take a newspaper in its final edited form for printing.
98. arise
99. consume great quantities of food/put away.
100. make do with/use for lack of something better/use as substitute

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire aims at collecting some data on your use of English idiomatic phrasal verbs. The findings will be used in improving the general quality of the Journalism programme. You are, therefore, requested to provide sincere and accurate information. please, do not write your name, number or anything that might identify you in any way.

PART A

Please, indicate the appropriate response by placing a tick in the space provide.

1. Do you enjoy reading at home? _____yes_____NO.
2. Why?_____
   _____
3. Is there a rich collection of books in your home?
   Yes_____ NO._____ NO.
4. Is there a public/community library or reading-room in your locality? Yes_____ NO_____
5. If yes, it will equipped? Yes_____ NO_____
6. Was there a library in your former primary School?
   Yes_____ NO_____
7. Was there a library in the last post-primary school you attended? Yes_____ NO_____
8. Do you utilise some of the library facilities available to you here in Ahmadu Bello University?
   Yes_____ NO _____
9. Do you generally enjoy reading in the library?
   Yes_____ NO_____
10. Why?_____
11. Do you read widely? Yes_____ NO_____
12. If Yes, mention some of the things you often read. e.g. novels, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, comics, cartoors, biographies, etc.

1) ---------- 5)---------- 9)----------
2) ---------- 6)---------- 10)----------
3) ---------- 7)---------- 11)----------
4) ---------- 8)---------- 12)----------

13. If no, do you then read only specific textbooks prescribed to you in your course? Yes____ No____

PART B

14. What languages do you speak to your friends outside the classroom?_____

_____

15. What languages are spoken in your home? _____

_____

16. What is the dominant language in your locality?

_____

PART C

17. Did you have any knowledge of English figurative (idiomatic) phrasal verbs before coming to A.B.U.? Yes_____ NO_____

18. If Yes, how did you acquire this knowledge? (tick as appropriate)

a) Through class teaching? Yes ____ No____

b) Through personal efforts such as extensive reading? Yes_____ No_____

c) Through social interaction with others? Yes___ NO_____

If none of the above, then specify:_____

_____

19. Do figurative phrasal verbs generally pose any problem(s) to you? Yes_____ No_____

20. If Yes, please specify_____

_____

21. Exactly what do you like or dislike about the use of figurative phrasal verbs?_____

_____

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN PERCENTAGE
TEST ONE (NO EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT)

GROUP A. (CONTROL)

001	22%
002	21%
003	13%
004	26%
005	20%
006	13%
007	17%
008	11%
009	21%
010	20%
011	7%
012	15%
013	17%
014	21%
015	18%
019	30%
020	24%
021	16%
022	27%
023	25%
024	28%
025	33%

026	17%
027	18%
028%	19%
029	25%
030	21%
031	25%
032	21%
033	23%
034	11%
035	25%
036	25%
037	22%
038	26%
039	27%
040	10%
041	17%
042	22%
043	23%
044	17%
045	14%
046	13%
047	20%
048	21%
049	45%
050	36%

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN PERCENTAGE
TEST ONE (NO EXPRRIMENTAL TREATMENT)

GROUP B (EXPERIMENTAL)

051	19%
052	16%
053	15%
054	13%
055	13%
056	28%
057	14%
058	18%
059	10%
060	14%
061	20%
062	19%
063	18%
064	18%
065	11%
066	17%
067	23%
068	18%
069	14%
070	9%
071	25%
072	15%

073	16%
074	49%
075	33%
076	20%
077	19%
078	23%
079	24%
080	35%
081	19%
082	23%
083	18%
084	22%
085	14%
086	33%
087	13%
088	20%
089	14%
090	15%
091	12%
092	19%
093	21%
094	18%
095	17%
096	18%
097	18%
098	23%
099	17%
100	19%

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN PERCENTAGE
TEST TWO (AFTER EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT)

GROUP A (CONTRO)

001	15%
002	21%
003	24%
004	33%
005	20%
006	21%
007	22%
008	38%
009	16%
010	35%
011	29%
012	20%
013	7%
014	21%
015	31%
016	5%
017	10%
018	28%
019	28%
020	40%
021	18%
022	38%
023	41%
024	11%

APPENDIX G

INDIVIDUAL SCORES IN PERCENTAGE

TEST TWO (AFTER EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT

GROUP B (EXPERIMENTAL)

051	56%
052	42%
053	52%
054	61%
055	50%
056	63%
057	48%
058	44%
059	41%
060	45%
061	54%
062	51%
063	64%
064	54%
065	54%
066	48%
067	58%
068	42%
069	51%
070	49%
071	53%
072	64%
073	58%

025	17%
026	29%
027	17%
028	27%
029	32%
030	8%
031	26%
032	30%
033	21%
034	27%
035	20%
036	15%
037	19%
038	29%
039	26%
040	24%
041	27%
042	22%
043	5%
044	7%
045	16%
046	16%
047	19%
048	3%
049	23%
050	46%