

**The effects of lexicalization, grammaticalization and idiomatization on phrasal verbs
in English**
The case of phrasal combinations with *get*

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The term *phrasal verb* or *particle verb* designates in English a combination of a verb and a particle which function semantically and syntactically as a single unit, such as that in (1) below.

(1) She finally **gave in** ['surrendered'].

In observing such constructions, a number of interesting questions arise, among them the following: why or by what means can a verb and a particle be joined together in such a way? And, more importantly, why does the union between verb and particle seem to be stronger in some cases than in others? The present paper aims precisely at finding an answer to some of these key questions.

In general, the formation of phrasal verbs has been regarded as a case of lexicalization (cf. Biber et al. 1999: 58-59; Claridge 2000: 43; Huddleston, Pullum et al. 2002: 284), though works mentioning the issue only do so quite superficially. In turn, for Brinton and Traugott (2005: 123-129) phrasal-verb particles have undergone a process of grammaticalization. However, they do not express their view regarding the status of phrasal verbs as a unit. Even if we agree that phrasal-verb particles have grammaticalized as markers of aspect, this view is not incompatible with the fact that the compound may have undergone a process of lexicalization. A number of arguments will be provided in the paper in support of this statement.

Moreover, many phrasal verbs can be said to have idiomatic meanings which cannot be deduced from the meaning of their individual parts (cf. *give up* 'abandon'). Since idiomatic meanings do not emerge suddenly, it is reasonable to think of the existence of a literal origin for such expressions (Bolinger 1971: 16; Claridge 2000: 47). Thus, it can be maintained that some phrasal verbs have also undergone a process of idiomatization.

In the present paper phrasal verbs are therefore regarded as instances of both lexicalization and idiomatization, but to different degrees. A series of semantic and syntactic tests are proposed in order to measure the degree of prototypicality of a phrasal combination. The application of such tests to a selection of phrasal verbs extracted from the *OED* quotation database leads to the establishment of three different groups of forms: non-lexicalized phrasal verbs, semi-lexicalized phrasal verbs and fully-lexicalized phrasal verbs. This agrees with the view from Prototype Theory (cf. e.g. Rosch 1973a; 1973b; 1975; 1978; Lakoff 1987) that categories "typically have fuzzy edges" (Taylor 1995: 51) and are best defined by focusing on its most prototypical members, the standard by which other members are measured.

The same procedure is applied to four phrasal verbs with *get*, a very idiosyncratic and polysemous English verb. Recent studies (cf. Gronemeyer 1999) point out that *get* has been grammaticalized in some of its uses. If this is so, another research question arises here: if both *get* and phrasal-verb particles are grammaticalized, what remains for the expression of meaning in a phrasal verb with *get*? The paper is also aimed at trying to answer this question.

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