THE ENGLISH PHRASAL VERB,
1650–PRESENT

Providing a detailed and comprehensive account of the development of phrasal verbs from Early Modern to present-day English, this study covers almost 400 years in the history of English, and provides both a diachronic and synchronic account based on over 12,000 examples extracted from stratified electronic corpora. The corpus analysis provides evidence of how registers can inform us about the history of English, as it traces and compares the usage and stylistic drifts of phrasal verbs across ten different genres – drama, fiction, journals, diaries, letters, medicine, news, science, sermons, and trial proceedings. The study also sheds new light on the morphosyntactic and semantic features of phrasal verbs, proposing a new approach to the category, considering not only their grammatical features, but also their historical development, by discussing the category in terms of a number of central mechanisms of language change.

PAULA RODRÍGUEZ-PUENTE is PhD Lecturer of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Oviedo, Spain. She has published widely in international journals such as English Studies, English Language and Linguistics, and Folia Linguistica Historica and has contributed to prestigious edited volumes.
STUDIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

General editor
Merja Kytö (Uppsala University)

Editorial Board
Bas Aarts (University College London),
John Algeo (University of Georgia),
Susan Fitzmaurice (University of Sheffield),
Christian Mair (University of Freiburg),
Charles F. Meyer (University of Massachusetts)

The aim of this series is to provide a framework for original studies of English, both present-day and past. All books are based securely on empirical research, and represent theoretical and descriptive contributions to our knowledge of national and international varieties of English, both written and spoken. The series covers a broad range of topics and approaches, including syntax, phonology, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics, and is aimed at an international readership.

Already published in this series:
Christiane Meierkord: Interactions across Englishes: Linguistic Choices in Local and International Contact Situations
Haruko Momma: From Philology to English Studies: Language and Culture in the Nineteenth Century
Raymond Hickey (ed.): Standards of English: Codified Varieties around the World
Benedikt Szmrecsanyi: Grammatical Variation in British English Dialects: A Study in Corpus-Based Dialectometry
Daniel Schreier and Marianne Hundt (eds.): English as a Contact Language
Bas Aarts, Joanne Close, Geoffrey Leech, and Sean Wallis (eds.): The Verb Phrase in English: Investigating Recent Language Change with Corpora
Martin Hilpert: Constructional Change in English: Developments in Allomorphy, Word Formation, and Syntax
Jakob R. E. Leimgruber: Singapore English: Structure, Variation, and Usage
Christoph Rühlemann: Narrative in English Conversation: A Corpus Analysis of Storytelling
Dagmar Deuber: English in the Caribbean: Variation, Style and Standards in Jamaica and Trinidad
Eva Berlage: Noun Phrase Complexity in English
Nicole Dehé: Parentheticals in Spoken English: The Syntax-Prosody Relation
Jock O. Wong: The Culture of Singapore English
Marianne Hundt: *Late Modern English Syntax*
Irma Taavitsainen, Merja Kytö, Claudia Claridge, and Jeremy Smith: *Developments in English: Expanding Electronic Evidence*
Arne Lohmann: *English Co-ordinate Constructions: A Processing Perspective on Constituent Order*
Nuria Yáñez-Bouza: *Grammar, Rhetoric and Usage in English: Preposition Placement 1500–1900*
Anita Auer, Daniel Schreier, and Richard J. Watts: *Letter Writing and Language Change*
John Flowerdew and Richard W. Forest: *Signalling Nouns in English: A Corpus-Based Discourse Approach*
Jeffrey P. Williams, Edgar W. Schneider, Peter Trudgill, and Daniel Schreier: *Further Studies in the Lesser-KnownVarieties of English*
Jack Grieve: *Regional Variation in Written American English*
Douglas Biber and Bethany Gray: *Grammatical Complexity in Academic English: Linguistic Change in Writing*
Gjertrud Flermoen Stenbrenden: *Long-Vowel Shifts in English, c. 1050–1700: Evidence from Spelling*
Zoya G. Proshina and Anna A. Eddy: *Russian English: History, Functions, and Features*
Raymond Hickey (ed.): *Listening to the Past: Audio Records of Accents of English*
Phillip Wallage: *Negation in Early English: Grammatical and Functional Change*
Marianne Hundt, Sandra Mollin, and Simone E. Pfenninger: *The Changing English Language: Psycholinguistic Perspectives*
Joanna Kopaczyk and Hans Sauer (eds.): *Binomials in the History of English: Fixed and Flexible*
Alexander Haselow: *Spontaneous Spoken English*
Christina Sanchez-Stockhammer: *English Compounds and Their Spelling*
David West Brown: *English and Empire: Language History, Dialect, and the Digital Archive*
Paula Rodríguez-Puente: *The English Phrasal Verb, 1650–Present: History, Stylistic Drifts, and Lexicalisation*

Earlier titles not listed are also available.
THE ENGLISH PHRASAL VERB, 1650–PRESENT

History, Stylistic Drifts, and Lexicalisation

PAULA RODRÍGUEZ-PUENTE

Universidad de Oviedo
Contents

List of Figures  
List of Tables  
Acknowledgements  
List of Abbreviations

1 Introduction  
   1.1 The English Phrasal Verb  
   1.2 Purpose and Framework  
   1.3 The Importance of Phrasal Verbs 1650–Present

2 Corpus and Methodology  
   2.1 Introduction  
   2.2 The Corpora  
      2.2.1 ARCHER: A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers  
      2.2.2 The Old Bailey Corpus  
      2.2.3 The International Corpus of English, Great Britain  
      2.2.4 Further Sources of Data  
   2.3 A Note on the Genres  
      2.3.1 Journals/Diaries  
      2.3.2 Personal Letters  
      2.3.3 Drama and Fiction  
      2.3.4 News  
      2.3.5 Scientific and Medical Discourse  
      2.3.6 Sermons  
      2.3.7 Trial Proceedings  
      2.3.8 A Reclassification Proposal for the Genres in ARCHER and the OBC
   2.4 Methodology

3 Delimiting the Scope of the Study: What Are Phrasal Verbs?  
   3.1 Introduction  
   3.2 The Verbal Element
vi

Contents

3.3 The Particles 48
  3.3.1 Morphological Characterisation 48
  3.3.2 The Semantics of Particles 55
  3.3.3 Summary 74

3.4 Phrasal Verbs as a Unit 75
  3.4.1 Semantic Types of Phrasal Verbs 76
  3.4.2 Syntactic Characteristics: Tests of ‘Phrasal-Verbness’ 84
  3.4.3 Summary 103

3.5 Summary and Conclusions 104

4 The Relationship between Phrasal Verbs and the Processes of Grammaticalisation, Lexicalisation, and Idiomatisation 107
  4.1 Introduction 107
  4.2 Grammaticalisation 107
  4.3 Lexicalisation 111
  4.4 Idiomatisation 115
  4.5 Views on the Effect of Grammaticalisation, Lexicalisation, and Idiomatisation on Phrasal Verbs 117
    4.5.1 Phrasal Verb Particles as Grammaticalised Items 118
    4.5.2 Phrasal Verbs as the Result of Lexicalisation 120
    4.5.3 Phrasal Verbs as Idiomatised Units 123
  4.6 Proposed Model for the Relationship between Phrasal Verbs and Grammaticalisation, Lexicalisation, and Idiomatisation 139
    4.6.1 Graded Categorisation: Gradience and Gradualness 139
    4.6.2 Phrasal Verbs as a Gradable Category 142
  4.7 Summary 151

5 Phrasal Verbs 1650–1990: Linguistic Aspects 153
  5.1 Introduction 153
  5.2 Phrasal Verbs in Late Modern English and Twentieth-Century English: Linguistic Aspects 154
    5.2.1 Morphological Features and Distribution 155
    5.2.2 Semantic Characteristics 181
    5.2.3 Syntactic Features 194
    5.2.4 Nouns and Adjectives Derived from Phrasal Verbs 205
  5.3 Summary and Conclusions 211

6 Phrasal Verbs 1650–1990: Cross-Genre Distribution 215
  6.1 Introduction 215
  6.2 Cross-Genre Analysis of Phrasal Verbs in ARCHER and the OBC 218
    6.2.1 Phrasal Verbs in Diaries and Journals 223
    6.2.2 Phrasal Verbs in Personal Letters 235
    6.2.3 Phrasal Verbs in Drama and Fiction 240
    6.2.4 Phrasal Verbs in News 247
Contents

6.2.5 Phrasal Verbs in Medicine and Science 253
6.2.6 Phrasal Verbs in Sermons 260
6.2.7 Phrasal Verbs in Trial Proceedings 264
6.3 Discussion of Findings 271

7 Conclusion 278

Appendix I: List of Phrasal Verb Constructions with a Fixed Syntactic Order 287
Appendix II: Raw and Normalised Frequencies of Phrasal Verb Particles in ARCHER and the OBC 289
Appendix III: List of the Twenty Most Common Combinations Distributed across Genres 290
Appendix IV: Raw Frequencies of Particles Distributed across Genres 292

Bibliography 293
Index 319
Figures

2.1 Distribution of genres in ARCHER and the OBC according to the dimensions of (in)formality and their speech-like vs. written characterisation  page 43
4.1 Normalised figures of bring up per 1,000,000 words in the HC and ARCHER  127
4.2 Normalised frequencies of bring up per 1,000,000 words in the CLMETEV  128
4.3 Normalised frequencies of put down per 1,000,000 words in the HC and ARCHER  131
4.4 Normalised frequencies of put down per 1,000,000 words in the CLMETEV  131
4.5 Normalised frequencies of take in per 1,000,000 words in the HC and ARCHER  132
4.6 Normalised frequencies of take in per 1,000,000 words in the CLMETEV  133
4.7 Cline of lexicalisation in phrasal verbs  146
4.8 Cline of idiomatisation in phrasal verbs  146
5.1 Distribution of the combinations that break the ‘phonological constraint’ in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words  159
5.2 Distribution of phrasal verb particles in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words  162
5.3 The development of particles which show a tendency to increase in frequency in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words  164
5.4 The development of recent phrasal verb particles. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words  165
5.5 The development of the particle forth in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words  167
List of Figures

5.6 The development of about, around, and round in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words 169
5.7 The development of phrasal verbs from 1650 to 1990 in ARCHER and the OBC 175
5.8 Diachronic development of phrasal verbs in ARCHER 177
5.9 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of phrasal verbs in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 100,000 words 187
5.10 Distribution of phrasal verb passives per genre in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 199
5.11 Diachronic distribution of the VPO and VOP arrangements with nominal objects in ARCHER and the OBC 201
5.12 Distribution across semantic groups of the VPO and VOP arrangements with nominal objects in combinations with up 202
5.13 Diachronic distribution of -ing nominalisations in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 207
5.14 Cross-genre distribution of phrasal verb -ing nominalisations in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 208
5.15 Diachronic distribution of phrasal verb derivations other than -ing nominalisations in ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 210
5.16 Diachronic distribution of phrasal verb derivations other than -ing nominalisations in ARCHER and the OBC excluding the follow-up examples from 1950 to 1990. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 210
5.17 Cross-genre distribution of phrasal verb derivations other than -ing nominalisations in ARCHER. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 211
6.1 Frequency of phrasal verbs across genres in ARCHER and the OBC. Boxplot analysis 219
6.2 Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in diaries and journals. Boxplot analysis 224
6.3 Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in diaries and journals over time. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 225
6.4 The development of phrasal verbs in letters in ARCHER. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 236
6.5 Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in drama and fiction. Boxplot analysis 241
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in drama and fiction over time. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>The development of phrasal verbs in drama excluding the files 1944bagn.d7b and 1960bolt.d8b. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>The development of phrasal verbs in news in ARCHER. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in medicine and science. Boxplot analysis</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>Comparison of the frequency of phrasal verbs in medicine and science over time. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>The development of phrasal verbs in sermons in ARCHER. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>The development of phrasal verbs in the trial proceedings from the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>The development of phrasal verbs in the trial proceedings from the OBC and the legal cross-examinations from the ICE-GB. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>Diachronic development of phrasal verbs in the speech-related text types from ARCHER and the OBC. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>Diachronic development of phrasal verbs in the writing-based and writing-purposed from ARCHER. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Tables

1. Classification of group-verbs (Denison 1981: 24–33)  
   **page 4**

2. Common classifications of phrasal verbs and related structures  
   **7**

3. Periodisation of the English language  
   **13**

1. Number of words of British English across genres in ARCHER  
   **18**

2. Number of words of American English across genres in ARCHER  
   **19**

3. Number of files and words per subperiod in the OBC sample  
   **23**

4. Total files and number of words of diaries and journals in ARCHER  
   **29**

3. Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of combinations containing *up* as an emphatic particle in the text types from ARCHER and the OBC  
   **65**

4. Common terminology for the three levels of meaning in verb-particle combinations traditionally distinguished in the literature  
   **77**

5. Tests for phrasal verbs. *Turn on* as a case in point  
   **106**

6. Syntactic tests of cohesion applied to the combination *ring up*  
   **144**

7. Degrees of prototypicality in phrasal verbs  
   **149**

5. Most common verbs used in the formation of phrasal verbs in ARCHER and the OBC  
   **156**

6. Raw figures and normalised frequencies per 10,000 words of verb types in ARCHER and the OBC  
   **156**

7. Diachronic distribution of most common verbs used in the formation of phrasal verbs in ARCHER and the OBC  
   **157**

8. Comparison of the origin of the verbal element in the combinations between the subperiods 1650–99 and 1950–90 in ARCHER  
   **160**
List of Tables

5.5 Raw and normalised frequencies per 100,000 words of the distribution of the eight most frequent particles in ARCHER and the OBC 163
5.6 The development of about, around, and round in drama. Raw and normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 170
5.7 Most common phrasal verb combinations in ARCHER and the OBC 172
5.8 Diachronic distribution of the fifteen most common combinations in ARCHER and the OBC 173
5.9 Ratio of type/token frequency of phrasal verbs in the seven subperiods of ARCHER 179
5.10 Ratio of type/token frequency of phrasal verbs in the four subperiods of the OBC 179
5.11 Raw and normalised frequencies per 10,000 words of new types per corpus subperiod in ARCHER 180
5.12 Raw and normalised frequencies per 10,000 words of new types per corpus subperiod in the OBC 180
5.13 Raw figures and percentages of the distribution of semantic types of phrasal verbs in ARCHER and the OBC 187
5.14 Patterns of transitive phrasal verbs in ARCHER and the OBC 195
5.15 Distribution of the two main transitive phrasal verb patterns and object types in ARCHER and the OBC 200
6.1 Raw and normalised figures of phrasal verbs per 10,000 words across the genres in ARCHER 221
6.2 Raw and normalised figures of phrasal verbs per 10,000 words in the OBC 221
6.3 Raw and normalised frequencies per 10,000 words of phrasal verbs in diaries and journals 231
6.4 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in diaries and journals. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 233
6.5 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in diaries and journals 234
6.6 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in letters. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words 238
6.7 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in letters 240
6.8 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in drama and fiction 245
List of Tables

6.9 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in drama and fiction. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words

6.10 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in news

6.11 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in news. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words

6.12 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in medicine and science

6.13 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in medicine and science. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words

6.14 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in sermons

6.15 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in sermons. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words

6.16 Raw and normalised frequencies (per 10,000 words) of new types introduced over time in trial proceedings

6.17 Diachronic distribution of semantic types of combinations with up in trial proceedings. Normalised frequencies per 10,000 words
Acknowledgements

This book deals with the development of phrasal verbs from the end of the Early Modern English period to the present day, and with the relationship between these structures and the processes of lexicalisation, grammaticalisation, and idiomatisation. The manuscript is a revised version of my doctoral dissertation, which was publicly defended at the University of Santiago de Compostela in September 2013. The structure of the chapters has been changed, new data have been added, and a number of valuable comments that I have received on the original version have been taken into consideration. The final result represents a significant personal achievement, one which would not have been possible without the help and support of many people over many years.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the support of the research team Variation, Linguistic Change and Grammaticalization (University of Santiago de Compostela), sponsored by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (grant FFI2017-86884-P). I am especially grateful to María José López-Couso, my PhD supervisor, for her professional guidance, constructive criticism, and constant encouragement, and Teresa Fanego, the team leader, for supporting my research from the outset.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the guidance of those who have helped to orientate and refine my research during various visits abroad, namely Christian Mair (University of Freiburg), David Denison and Nuria Yáñez-Bouza (University of Manchester), and Terttu Nevalainen and the members of the Research Unit for Variation, Contacts and Change in English (VARIENG) at the University of Helsinki. The greatest debt of gratitude goes to Nuria, not only as my ‘supervisor-and mentor-in-the-shadows’, but for generously providing me with her self-collected data, which made possible an important part of the corpus research presented in this monograph. To her I owe my enthusiasm for historical sociolinguistics, historical pragmatics, and corpus analysis. This book would not have been written without her unfailing help and encouragement.
Acknowledgements

I would also like to thank Helen Barton, the Commissioning Editor for Linguistics at Cambridge University Press, for her support and understanding from the first moment she received the initial book proposal and manuscript, and especially Merja Kytö, the editor of the series Studies in English Language, for her valuable comments and suggestions for improvements, these always made in a friendly and sympathetic way.

My gratitude also goes to colleagues and friends from various departments of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Santiago de Compostela and the Faculty of Philology and Translation of the University of Vigo for support on both the academic and personal level. I am likewise very grateful to my colleagues and friends from the Department of Philology of the University of Cantabria, especially to my P., for his support, encouragement, and valuable friendship during the years I spent in Santander, and to my friends and colleagues from the Department of English, French, and German from the University of Oviedo, where I currently hold the position of PhD Lecturer (Ayudante Doctora).

Last but by no means least, I would like to express my warmest gratitude to the closest members of my family. So, I dedicate this book to Uxía, Álvaro, and mamá, in recompense for the many hours that it has kept me away from them. Thank you all for your patience, understanding, and constant support.
Abbreviations

Corpora

ARCHER = A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers  
BNC = British National Corpus  
BROWN = A Standard Corpus of Present-Day Edited American English  
CED = A Corpus of English Dialogues  
CLMETEV = A Corpus of Late Modern English Texts Extended Version: 1710–1920  
COCA = A Corpus of Contemporary American English 1990–2010  
COHA = Corpus of Historical American English  
CONCE = A Corpus of Nineteenth-Century English  
FLOB = Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English  
FROWN = Freiburg-Brown Corpus of American English  
HC = Helsinki Corpus of English Texts 850–1710  
ICE-GB = International Corpus of English, Great Britain  
LOB = Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus  
OBC = The Old Bailey Corpus

Dictionaries

BT = An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary  
CCDPV = Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs  
CALD = Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary  
COD = Collins Online English Dictionary  
DGTL = A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics  
KCCL = Key Concepts in Language and Linguistics  
LDOCE = Longman English Dictionary Online  
MDO = Macmillan Dictionary Online  
MPVP = Macmillan Phrasal Verbs Plus  
MWO = Merriam-Webster Online

xix
List of Abbreviations

ODCIE = Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English
OED = Oxford English Dictionary
RDLL = Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics
TFD = The Free Dictionary

Grammatical Terms

AdvP = Adverb Phrase
DO = Direct Object
IO = Indirect Object
NP = Noun Phrase
O = Object
P = Particle
PartP = Particle Phrase
PP = Prepositional Phrase
PredC = Predicative Complement
PrepO = Prepositional Object
S = Subject
V = Verb

Periods

EME = Early Middle English
EModE = Early Modern English
LME = Late Middle English
LModE = Late Modern English
ME = Middle English
OE = Old English
PDE = Present-Day English

Other

AN = Anglo-Norman
NF = Normalised Frequencies
Tkns = Tokens
TTR = Type/Token Ratio