

## DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY KURDISH LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN PREPOSITIONAL VERBS AND PHRASAL VERBS: AN ANALYTIC STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

The present study focuses mainly on distinguishing between two major types of multi-word verbs namely prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. To bring about this aim, the study sheds light on some linguistic factors that are related to this area of study like structural analysis of prepositional and phrasal verbs and their syntactic /semantic classifications. The study also includes an indication to the results of a questionnaire which was carried out in the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, University of Duhok in an attempt to find out the type of errors made in this area of study and the causes behind committing these errors. Finally, some recommendations are suggested to help Kurdish learners of English to overcome the difficulties they face in distinguishing between prepositional and phrasal verbs.

**KEYWORDS:** Prepositional Verbs, Phrasal Verbs, EFL, Syntactic Structure, Semantic Classification, Research methodology

### SECTION ONE

#### 1.1 The Problem:

In English there is a large number of verbs which consists of more than one word such as: *decide on, find out, get out of*, etc. These combinations are called multi-word verbs and they are commonly divided into three distinct categories namely prepositional verbs, phrasal verbs, and phrasal prepositional verbs. The first two categories of multi-word verbs, i.e., prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs have similar looking constructions because both consist of lexical verbs plus particles. Examples are: *break down, turn up, look at, go into*, etc. The term particle in these combinations is used by some linguists as a neutral designation for the overlapping categories of adverb and preposition. In prepositional verbs, the particle is a preposition as in *dispose of, cope with*; in phrasal verbs, the particle is an adverb as in *drink up, find out* (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990:336). The superficial similarity of form noticed above constitutes a problematic area of English grammar and it is a frequent source of errors among foreign learners of English( the learners that the present

study focuses on are Kurdish students of the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Duhok). Most students are unable to decide whether a certain combination is a prepositional verb or a phrasal verb. In fact, such a problem arises because students do not have good knowledge of the syntactic properties of these two types of verbs. To identify this problem, compare the following examples:

**1. We turned off the light.**

**2. We turned off the road.**

Most students will consider the syntactic properties of *turned off* in example No. 1 and 2 as the same since both have similar forms; they consist of the same elements. However, this interpretation cannot be taken into consideration because *turned off* in each example has different syntactic properties. In the first combination, it is possible to insert the object *the light* between the two parts of the verb as it is a common feature of phrasal verbs. Such insertion is not possible with the second combination since it is a prepositional verb and this type of verb does not have this feature. Notice the following examples:

3. We turned the light off.

Another problem that Kurdish students face is that they are unable to identify the different semantic categories of prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. Furthermore, they have no prior knowledge of the semantic properties of these two types of verbs. To identify this problem consider the following examples:

5. *We passed through* Pompeii on our way to Naples.

6. The insurance company has finally *come through* with the money.

For students, it is difficult to identify the semantic categories of *pass through* and *come through* in the above two examples. The only criterion that they can depend on is predicting their meanings from the meanings of their parts. However, this criterion, i.e., prediction, may be possible with *pass through* but it is not possible with *come through* because the meaning of *come through* as a unit is totally different from the meaning of its parts. The lack of connection between the meanings of most of the multi-word verbs as units and the meanings of their parts lead students to memorize long lists of these verbs and their meanings. This memorization constitutes another problem because it is difficult to remember the meanings of all prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. (Celce-Murcia and Laesen-Freeman, 1999: 432).

Apart from the previous problems, interference of the students' mother tongue in learning a foreign language may arise a problem. The problem that students may encounter is that they wrongly classify certain combinations as prepositional verbs or phrasal verbs depending on their mother tongue; some verbs are combined with prepositions or particles in students' mother tongue but they are not combined with any preposition or particle in English. Consider the following example:

7.a. Ez te-gehi<sup>o</sup>stim. (Kurdish)

I at arrive-pt

I understood. (English)

As noticed above, the verb te-gehi<sup>o</sup>stim is a prepositional verb in Kurdish but its equivalence in English *understood* is a single-word verb.

## 1.2. Aims of the Study:

The study aims at

1. Presenting a clear analysis of the syntactic and semantic properties of prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs, 2. Finding out the type of errors

4.\* We turned the road off.

committed by Kurdish learners concerning this area of study throughout making a grammatical test, and 3. Positing some solutions for the problems diagnosed.

### 2. 1.3 Hypothesis:

It is hypothesized that Kurdish learners of English as a foreign language encounter difficulty in distinguishing between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. It is also hypothesized that learners' lack of knowledge of the syntactic properties of prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs as well as their ignorance of the semantic classification of these two types of verbs are the main causes of this difficulty.

## SECTION TWO

### 2.0. The Syntactic Structure of Prepositional Verbs and Phrasal Verbs:

As has been referred to in the introduction, prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs are subcategories of multi-word verbs. The former is comprised of two parts a lexical verb and a specific preposition such as: *look at, talk about, listen to, get off*, etc. (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1991: 339). The preposition in these verbs forms a close syntactic and/or semantic association with the verbs that they are attached to, in addition to this the prepositions in these combinations are idiosyncratic so they must be learned (Brinton and Brinton, 2010: 210). For example the preposition *to* rather than *on* is used with the verb *refer* to form a prepositional verb *refer to* as in: The victims were not *referred to/\*on* by name (Brinton and Brinton, 2010: 210). As for the latter combination, i.e. phrasal verb, it consists of a lexical verb and an adverbial particle. Examples of this type of verbs are *carry out, drink up, find out*, etc. The particles in these combinations are small words similar to prepositions; when these particles are used independently, they have literal meaning that signifies location or direction but when used in phrasal verbs, they have less literal meaning. Although prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs seem similar in their superficial forms, they are different in their internal structure. To identify this difference, compare the following pairs of sentences which are adopted from (Radford, 1995: 90)

8. a. Drunks would get off the bus.

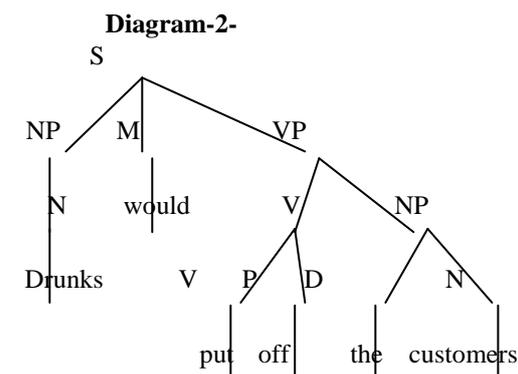
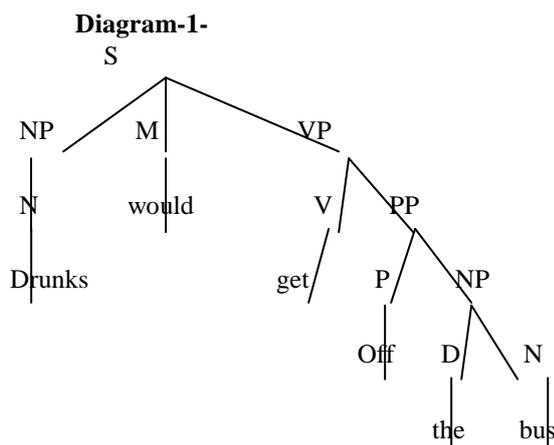
b. Drunks would put off the customers.

At first sight, the above two sentences in 8.a. and 8. b. might appear to be similar in

structure as both structures consist of the same elements; a noun phrase *drunks* functioning as subject, a multi-word verb *get off* and *put off* functioning as main verbs, and a noun phrase *the bus*, *the customers* functioning as the object. In spite of this parallelism in form, the above two sentences are different in their internal structure,

because the underlying structure of the verb phrase they contain is different (Radford, 1995:93).

The following tree diagrams show the difference of the underlying structure of the above two sentences:



The structural analysis in Diagram -1- shows that the preposition *off* and the following noun phrase *the bus* are generated together under the head node pp which in turn is generated next the verb *get*. So, the verb *get* is a prepositional verb because it is followed by the prepositional phrase *off the bus*. (Brinton and Brinton, 2010: 221). In traditional terms, this analysis is taken into consideration if the verb *get* is considered intransitive. In such a case, the noun phrase *the bus* functions as complement of the preposition *off* and it does not function as the direct object of the verb *get off* (Quirk, et al., 1985: 1156).

In diagram No (2), the preposition *off* is generated next to the verb *put* under the head node V; the noun phrase *the customers* is generated under the head node NP which is generated next to the head node V. So, the combination *put off* is a phrasal verb.

Radford (1995:94) supports his claim that the first combination *get off* is a prepositional verb and the second one *put off* is a phrasal verb by stating that it is possible to replace the sequence *off the bus* by other prepositional phrases with a related meaning such as *on the bus*, since *on* is the antonym of *off*. In other words, *off-phrase* can be replaced by *on-phrase* as shown below:

9. a. Drunks would get off the bus.

b. Drunks would get on the bus.

The replacement mentioned above cannot be applied to those structures, which contain phrasal verbs. So, the sequence *off the customers* has no *on* counterpart. Look at the following examples:

10. a. Drunks would put off the customers.

b. \*Drunks would put on the customers.

Furthermore, prepositional verb pairs which have different meanings but related uses like *get off* which means *exit* and *get on* which means *enter* can select the same range of complements, i.e. they can be followed by the same range of expressions. Radford (1995:94) asserts this fact by stating that "there is a parallelism of Selection Restrictions<sup>(1)</sup> i.e. a parallelism in the range of different expressions which can be used after a prepositional verb". This fact is made obvious in the examples below; both *get off* and *get on* are followed by the same noun phrases *the bus*, *the train*, *the table*, etc. However, they cannot be followed by a noun phrase like *the sea*.

11. a. Drunks would get off the bus/ the train/ the table/ \*the sea.

b. Drunks would get on the bus the train/ the table/\*the sea.

As for phrasal verb pairs like *put off*, which means *deter*, and *put on*, which means *wear*, they

cannot select the same range of complements (ibid:94)

12. a. Drunks would put off the customers/the waiters/\*the dirty clothes.

b. Drunks would put on \* the customers/\* the waiters/ \*the dirty clothes.

### SECTION THREE

#### 3.0. Syntactic and Phonological criteria for distinguishing between Prepositional and Phrasal Verbs:

To arrive at a clear understanding of the differences between prepositional and phrasal verbs and to assert the fact that they are structurally different, most linguists (traditionalists and transformationalists) have applied certain syntactic and phonological criteria. The following points show these criteria and how they are applied to two selected multi-word verbs; the prepositional verb *call on*, which means visit and the phrasal verb *call up*, which means summon:

The preposition of prepositional verbs is not movable; i.e. it cannot move to a position after the noun phrase but the particle of phrasal verbs is movable; it can be put before or after the object noun phrase. Compare the following examples:

13. a. Jane called on her friends.

b.\* Jane called her friends on.

14. a. Jane called up her friends.

b. Jane called her friends up.

It must be taken into consideration that with few phrasal verbs the separation is obligatory to avoid the confusion that some students encounter in distinguishing between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs that have the same form but different meanings (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999: 429). Notice how *see through* with the meaning of (not be deceived by) used as a prepositional verb in (15.a), and is used as a phrasal verb with the meaning of (survive) in (15.b):

15. a. We see through his excuse.

b. We see this ordeal/ it through together.

2. If the object noun phrase is a pronoun, it must go after the preposition in the case of prepositional verbs but it must precede the particle in the case of phrasal verbs. In other words, separation is obligatory with phrasal verbs when the direct object is a pronoun. Compare the following examples:

16. a. Jane called on them.

b. \*Jane called them on.

17. a. \*Jane called up them.

b. Jane called them up.

3. Prepositional verbs allow the insertion of the adverbs between the verb and the preposition, but such insertion is not allowed with phrasal verbs. Compare the following examples:

18. a. Jane called frequently on her friends.

b. \*Jane called frequently up her friends.

The adverbs, which are inserted between the two parts of prepositional verbs function as adjuncts (Quirk, et al., 1987:1167)

4. In structures containing prepositional verbs, the preposition can precede a relative pronoun at the beginning of a relative clause. However, the particle of phrasal verbs cannot precede these forms. Compare the following examples:

19. a. The friends on whom she called.

b.\* The friends up whom she called.

5. The preposition of prepositional verbs can precede the interrogative words at the beginning of wh-questions, but the particle of phrasal verbs cannot precede these forms. Compare the following examples:

20. a. On which friends did she call?

b.\*Up which friends did she call

6. Both constructions Prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs allow passivation (Quirk, et al, 1987: 1157).

21. a. She called on the dean.

b. The dean was called on.

22. a. She switched on the light.

b. The light was switched on.

7. In structures containing prepositional verbs, it is possible to prepose the sequence of the preposition and the following noun phrase to the front position for emphasis. By contrast, in phrasal verb constructions the sequence of the particle and the following noun phrase can't be preposed . (Radford, 1995: 95). Compare the following examples:

23. a. Up the hill John ran.

b.\*Up the hill John ran.

8. The preposition of prepositional verbs is normally unstressed and it has the "tail" of the nuclear tone which falls on the lexical verb, but the particle of phrasal verbs is normally stressed, and in final position normally bears the nuclear tone (Quirk, et al., 1987:1167). Consider the following examples:

24. a. Which friends did Jane call on?

b. Which friends did Jane call up?

#### SECTION FOUR

##### 4.0. Syntactic Classification of Prepositional and Phrasal Verbs:

Prepositional and phrasal verbs like single word verbs are classified into certain syntactic categories and as follows:

##### 4.1. Intransitive and Transitive Prepositional Verbs:

Some linguists like Foley and Hall (2005:158), Alexander (2004:116) classify prepositional verbs as transitive verbs. However, Quirk, et al. (1987: 1156) stated that prepositional verbs are classified into two syntactic categories, namely intransitive and transitive. They are labeled as intransitive when they are not followed by direct objects; in this case, the preposition is analyzed as an element, which precedes its complement. Notice the following example:

25. Many people looked at these pictures.

In the above example, the second noun phrase *these pictures* is analyzed as complement of the preposition *at* and not the direct object of the verb *look at*. This intransitive interpretation is justified by the fact that it is possible to insert an adverbial between the verb and the preposition as shown below:

26. Many people looked distainfully at these pictures.

However, the verb *looked at* in the above example can also be described as transitive prepositional verb. In this case, the preposition *at* forms a syntactic unit with the preceding verb *look*; the second noun phrase *these pictures* is analysed as the direct object of the verb *looked at* and not complement of the preposition *at*. The second analysis is justified by the fact that it is possible to replace the prepositional verb *look at* by a single word verb *examined* as shown below:

27. Many people examined these pictures.

Thus, it can be said that structures containing prepositional verbs can be analysed into two different ways. The first analysis will determine the clause pattern SVA if the prepositional verb is classified as intransitive. The second one will determine the clause pattern SVO if the prepositional verb is classified as transitive (Quirk, et al., 1987:1156).

In addition to the above two types, there are some ditransitive prepositional verbs. Such type of verbs are followed by two noun phrases normally

separated by a preposition. Examples are *deprive of*, *confine to*, *protect from*, *provide with*, etc.

With such type of verbs, the first noun phrase functions as the direct object of the clause and it becomes the subject of the passive clause. As for the second noun phrase, it functions as the prepositional object (Greenbaum and Quirk, 1991: 341). Consider the following examples:

28.a They have provided the child with a good education.

b. The child was provided with a good education.

##### 4.2. Intransitive and Transitive phrasal verbs:

Like the preceding types of multi-word verbs, phrasal verbs are classified into two syntactic categories namely intransitive and transitive. Intransitive phrasal verbs form one of the common types of multi-word verbs. This class of verbs is used without a direct object; and they usually have a meaning which is different from their separate parts. Consider the following sentence:

29. Rollerblading never really caught on (=became popular) in England.

As intransitive phrasal verbs have no direct object, they cannot be made passive:

30. My car broke down.

It must be taken into consideration that intransitive phrasal verbs are sometimes used in imperative sentences. Notice the following example:

31. Watch on, that floor is not very solid.

In addition to intransitive phrasal verbs, many phrasal verbs are also described as transitive, and therefore they require a direct object. Notice the following example:

32. We will set up a new unit.

#### SECTION FIVE

##### 5.0. Semantic Classification of prepositional and phrasal verbs:

It is difficult for most students to know and remember the meanings of prepositional and phrasal verbs because there is no connection between the meanings of most of these verbs as units and the meaning of the words that they consist of. For example, the meanings of *pass* and *out* separately do not have any relation to the meaning of the combination as a unit where *pass out* means *faint*. Furthermore, the meaning of some multi-word verbs changes when certain parts of the combinations are substituted. For example,

the meaning of *call for*, which means *visit*, changes to *summon* when the particle *for* is substituted by *up*. These criteria and some others lead most linguists to classify prepositional and phrasal verbs into three categories depending on the semantic properties of these verbs (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999:432):

Literal (compositional construction):

The meaning of this category of verbs is made up of the literal meaning of the verb and the literal meaning of the particle and/or preposition; in other words, its meaning is predictable from the meaning of its parts because each part retains its normal meaning. For example the meaning of the phrasal verb *pin sth up* in *he pinned up a notice on the board*, can be understood as *fastening sth to a wall with pins*. It must be taken into consideration that the particles and/or prepositions in this type of constructions have directional or spatial meanings. In this use, the particle can often be replaced by an appropriate (directional) prepositional phrase (Dehe, 2002; 5). Compare the following examples:

33. Sheila put the books *away*.

34. Sheila put the books *on the shelf*.

In the above examples, the particle *away* in (35) is replaced by the prepositional phrase *on the shelf* in (36). Other examples of literal constructions are: *sit down*, *carry out*, *fall down*, *pass through*, etc.

Idiomatic constructions:

The meanings of some multi-word verb constructions are thoroughly idiomatic. such as *fall through=not happen*, *bring through=rear*, *come by=acquire*, *turn up=make an appearance*, etc.

In fact, it is difficult to figure out the meaning of idiomatic constructions by combining the literal meanings of their parts. This is so because the primary meaning of a verb is completely changed when it combines with a preposition or a particle (Alexander, 2004:119).

Aspectual constructions:

This semantic category of verbs is also called semi-idiomatic because the meanings of the verbs are not always predictable as the first category and not totally idiomatic as the second category. In such constructions, the verb often retains its basic non-idiomatic meaning, and the particle and/or preposition strengthens or extends this meaning such as *down* in *burn down* (Alexander:2004 118). Notice the example below:

35. The house burned down in 1995.

In constructions of this type, the particle/preposition has a role in adding something to the basic meaning of the verb such as completeness as in *up* in *drink up the milk*, continuation of an action such as *away* in *sleep the day\_away*, aimless behavior which can be expressed by the preposition *around* as in *mess around* in *will you stop messing around and get on with some work?*, endurance which can be signaled by *out* in *hold out* as in *the rebels held out in the mountains for several years*. To know more about this semantic class and the additional meanings that it refers to, it is recommended to read (Celce-Murcia and Larson-Freeman, 1999:432).

## SECTION SIX

### Methodology

#### 6.1. The sample:

To arrive at a clear understanding of the aims of this research and to find out the kind of errors that Kurdish students make in learning this area of study a grammatical test was used (see Appendix A). The test was designed by the researcher to assess students' knowledge of prepositional and phrasal verbs in two areas: syntactic form and semantic classification. The sample of the research includes third and fourth year students of the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Duhok; (it must be noticed that these samples were chosen because they studied these two linguistic phenomena in their linguistic courses). The test was administered towards the end of the academic year 2012. It was distributed among nearly 70 students of whom only (34) were taken into consideration as the other students were unable to answer all the questions.

The test consisted of four basic questions; each question consisted of five sentences, and each sentence was followed by two choices. The first question aimed at testing students' ability to distinguish structurally between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. The second question focused on the semantic area, where the students have to identify the semantic class of the underlined multi-word verbs. The third question tested students' ability to differentiate between prepositions and particles. As for question No.4, it concentrated on testing students' ability to match correct prepositions and particles with correct

verbs. As for students' proficiency and knowledge on prepositional and phrasal verbs, it was measured depending on the percentage of correct and incorrect responses. If the percentage of the correct response is 50% or above, it is considered well acquired or the students have achieved an acceptable development in learning this area of study. If the percentage of correct responses on prepositional and phrasal verbs is below 50%, it is considered as not yet acquired or that the students

have not achieved an acceptable level of proficiency in it; this type of measure is based on the fact that (50%) is the pass grade for the students at university of Duhok.

## 6.2. Data Analysis:

To identify the type and percentage of errors made by the students in distinguishing between prepositional and phrasal verbs, the correct and incorrect responses were calculated as shown in the following tables. Tables of errors

**Table (1):** Students' Responses concerning the Syntactic Differences between Prepositional and Phrasal Verbs

Item NO.	Selected Multi-word Verbs	No.of correct responses	Percentage %	No.of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	Booked for	19	55.88 %	15	44.11 %
2	Booked up	15	44.11 %	19	55.88 %
3	Get a cross	22	64.70 %	12	35.29 %
4	Get a cross	24	70.58 %	10	29.41 %
5	Live down	21	61.76 %	13	38.23 %

**Table (2):** Students' Responses concerning the Semantic Classification of Prepositional and Phrasal Verbs

Item NO.	Selected Multi-word Verbs	No.of correct responses	Percentage %	No.of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	Tied down	0	0. %	34	100 %
2	Tied down	8	23.52 %	26	76.47 %
3	Goofed around	5	14.70 %	29	85.29 %
4	Made off	13	38.23 %	21	61.76 %
5	Sealed up	12	35.29 %	22	64.70 %

**Table (3):** Students' Responses concerning the Differences between Prepositions and Particles

Item NO.	Selected Multi-word Verbs	No.of correct responses	Percentage %	No.of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	<b>Blew through</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>50 %</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>50 %</b>
2	<b>Slept through</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>44.11 %</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>55.88 %</b>
3	<b>Slept through</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>76.47 %</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23.52 %</b>
4	<b>Cooked at</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>64.70 %</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>35.29 %</b>
5	<b>Flew over</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47.05 %</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>52.94 %</b>

**Table (4):** Students' Responses concerning the Correct Choice of Prepositions and Particles

Item NO.	No.of correct responses	Percentage %	No.of incorrect responses	Percentage %
1	14	41.17 %	20	58.82 %
2	22	64.70 %	12	35.29 %
3	3	8.82 %	31	91.17 %
4	2	5.88 %	32	94.11 %
5	3	8.82 %	31	91.17 %

Table (1) shows that most students committed errors in identifying the syntactic class of *booked*

*for* and *booked up* in items (1) and (2). The percentages of incorrect responses were about

(44.11% and 55.88% respectively). Moreover, in an attempt to test students' knowledge of the syntactic criteria that enable them to distinguish prepositional verbs from phrasal verbs, the same multi-word verb *get across* is used in two different structures for items (3) and (4); the percentages of students' incorrect responses were (35.29%, 29.41% respectively). For item (5), the percentage of errors was (38.23%) where *live down* is classified as prepositional verb instead of phrasal verb.

Furthermore, one of the highest percentages of errors committed by the students was in the semantic area. This fact is made obvious in table (2) where the percentages of errors were (100%, 76.47%, 85.29%, 61.76%, and 64.70%) for items (1, 2,3,4 and 5 respectively). These results show two causes of errors. The first one is that this area of study, including semantic categories of multi-word verbs and the easiest ways to figure out the possible meanings of each combination as a unit is not usually taught as an important requirement in teaching these two types of verbs. This fact leads in turn to another cause of errors, namely students' lack of knowledge of the semantic classification of prepositional and phrasal verbs. In other words, students do not have a clear idea of the semantic terms like literal, aspectual, and idiomatic meanings of prepositional and phrasal verbs.

Table (3) presents the percentages of correct and incorrect responses to the question that concentrate on the second part of prepositional and phrasal verbs i.e. prepositions and particles. Thus, the aim of giving such question is to know whether students were able to differentiate between prepositions and particles; since these words have similar forms but different functions; a preposition may function as part of the preceding verb forming with it a prepositional verb or it may also function as part of the following noun phrase to form a prepositional phrase. As for particles, they have one function which is forming a single unit with the preceding verb. Once again the percentages of incorrect responses which were (50%,55.88%,23.52%,35.29% and 52.94%) for items(1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively) shed lights on another important cause of students committing mistakes. That is the similarity of forms between prepositions of prepositional verbs and particles of phrasal verbs.

Table (4) shows more high percentages of incorrect responses which were about (58.82%, 35.29%, 91.17%, 94.11%, 91.17%) for items (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively). It is obvious that the basic cause of students' committing mistakes in answering this question is the interference of the students' mother tongue; this fact is made clear when students failed to choose appropriate prepositions or particles. For example, they used *in* instead of *at* for item (2), they also used *down* instead of the correct choice which is *off* for item (3), etc. Such mistakes assert the fact that has been referred to in the introduction; that is students use the features of their mother tongue when they want to learn a foreign language. In fact, most students think that every preposition in their mother tongue and in the target language can be applied in the same way. Unfortunately, this strategy ends up in a misuse of prepositions and particles.

## RECOMMENDATION

The structural and semantic analyses carried out and the results arrived lead us to recommend the following:

### = Updating Classroom Techniques:

Students are in need of new practical techniques that lead in turn to improve their background knowledge and enable them to overcome the difficulties that they encounter in learning this area of study. This step can be achieved through various activities as shown below:

#### 1.Using pictures in the process of teaching:

Through working in groups teachers can give students in each group 10 prepared pictures; the pictures must include some actions, which can be referred to by using different types of multi-word verbs. For example, a picture illustrates somebody turning off the lights. Another picture illustrates somebody picking up the receiver to dial, etc. Students are allowed to look at these pictures for few minutes, and then the pictures will be taken out by the teacher. After taking out the pictures, the teacher must give each group 10 prepared verb cards and 10 particle/preposition cards; the verbs written on the cards refer to the actions done in the pictures. These cards must be shuffled then the students of each group have to turn over one verb card and one particle/preposition card. If there is a multi-word verb match, the students of the groups

have to refer to that. After making all the possible matches, a student from each group must read the verbs a loud after putting the verbs in correct sentences under the supervision of the teacher.

### 2. Using multi-word verbs in context:

To enhance students' knowledge of the syntactic properties of prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs, teachers can encourage students to use multi-word verbs instead of one-word verbs to write short paragraphs about some interesting topics, such as daily activities, morning routines, describing a peculiar accident, etc. This technique will help students to use these verbs appropriately since writing improve students' knowledge of the syntactic rules that determine the correct use of these verbs.

### 3. Using prepositional and phrasal verbs in speech:

As prepositional and phrasal verbs occur more frequently in the spoken language; students should be encouraged to use them more in speaking and listening classes. This can be achieved by asking students to speak about some daily routines; as has already been referred to above, such as morning routine,

telephone routine or any other topics. On using such a technique, the teacher can start speaking about certain routine, and he/she must incorporate multi-word verbs in his/her speech.

The students first listen to their teacher to know the appropriate multi-word verbs that must be used and the correct constructions in which these verbs are used . Then they must mime their teacher by using the same multi-word verbs that the teacher use when they speak about their own routines.

### Endnotes:

1. Selection Restriction which is also referred to as selectional feature, is a term used in Generative Grammar for a type of contextual feature, i.e. a syntactic feature which specifies the conditions relating to where in a deep structure a lexical item can occur.

Selectional features specify the restrictions on the permitted combinations of lexical items within a given grammatical context. These restrictions are stated with reference to the relevant inherent features in an adjacent or nearby word within a grammatical construction. For example, we can say that the word *expect* has the selectional property that it can select an infinitive

complement (e.g. in a structure like *they expect to win*.(Crystal,1992:309).

## CONCLUSION

From the forgoing information, the following points are concluded:

1. Prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs are two types of multi-word verbs. These verbs are similar in form but different in function; these facts create difficulty among students. Furthermore, it is made clear that distinguishing between these two forms of verbs constitute a problematic area of English language and a major source of errors for EFL.//////2. It has become evident that two major factors have an effect on students' committing mistakes. The first one is students' ignorance of the syntactic features and semantic classification of prepositional and phrasal verbs. The second one is the interference of the mother tongue in learning a foreign language.

Developing new teaching techniques and activities in classrooms like encouraging students to use multi-word verbs instead of one-word verbs in written and spoken English is considered one of the best solutions to the problem of learning and using prepositional and phrasal verbs.

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### Appendix (A)

University of Duhok  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of English  
A for University Students

#### \*General Background Information:

Class----- Mother Tongue-----  
Other languages----- Gender-----

\*Dear students, we will not judge you for your performance in this questionnaire. Hence, you should state your answers honestly. Your personal information will be kept secret.

\*The questions below belong to a research paper; this research is written purely for academic purposes, We hope that you will answer honestly and completely.

**Q-1-Decide whether the underlined combinations in the following sentences function as a prepositional verb or a phrasal verb. The symbol (PREPV) refers to prepositional verb and (PHRV) refers to phrasal verb. Draw a circle around the correct choice.**

1. He was booked for possession of cannabis. A- PREPV, B-PHRV
2. The show was booked up weeks before it opened. A-PREPV, B-PHRV
3. The bridge was destroyed, so we could not get across the river. A-PREPV, B-PHRV
4. It was not easy to get across my message in such a short time .A.PREPV, B.PHRV
5. It was such a stupid thing to do. I'll never live it down. A.PREPV, B.PHRV

**Q-2-Decide whether the underlined verbs in the following sentences carry literal, compositional or idiomatic meaning. Notice that the symbol (A) is used for literal meaning, (B) is used for compositional meaning and (C) for idiomatic one. Draw a circle around the correct choice.**

1. We tied down the boxes on the roof of the car. A-B-C
2. Marks dreams of travelling but he feels tied down by his family and work. A-B-C
- 3-They goofed around all afternoon. A-B-C
4. The thief made off down the road with the money. A-B -C.
5. Make sure the parcel is properly sealed up before you send it. A- B-C.

**Q-3-Decide whether the underlined forms in the following examples function as preposition (=PREP) or as particle (=PRT). Draw a circle around the correct choice.**

- 1-The wind blew through the trees. A-PREP B, B.PRT
- 2-Do not forget to add on some money for expenses. A.PRT, B. PREP.
3. We wept at the bad news. A.PRT, B. PREP.
4. We looked at the newspaper. A.PRT, B. PREP.
5. The crop duster flew over the cornfield. A.PRT, B. PREP.

**Q-4-Put an appropriate particle or preposition in the blanks below:**

- 1-She has broken-----her engagement.
- 2-The earthquake wiped-----the village.
3. She has broken-----her engagement.
4. The earthquake wiped-----the village.
- 5.Our house is right-----the road.

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پوخته

مه‌رم ژ فص فه‌کولینئ نه‌وه ده‌ستتیشانکرنا جیاوازی دنا‌فبه‌را دوو جو‌رین کارین لیک‌دای له زمانی نینگلیزیدا ونه‌و کارین لیک‌دای له گه‌ل نام‌را‌زین په‌یوه‌ندی (prepositional verbs) و کارین لیک‌دای له گه‌ل ناوه‌لکارا (phrasal verbs) نه‌ف مه‌رمه‌ به‌جه به‌یت همی لایین تاییه‌تمه‌ند بو قی بابه‌تی هاتین شلوفه‌کرن وه‌ک شلوفه‌کرنه‌رکئ فان کارا ژ لایئ زمانی فه. و دابه‌شکرانا (classifying) وان ل‌دیف سیسته‌مئ ریزمانئ و واتاسازیدا هه‌روه‌سا فه‌کولین نه‌جامین و ریکا شلوفه‌کرنه‌ به‌رسقسن قوتابیان بو ژماره‌کا پرسیاران دیار دکه‌ت. نه‌ف پرسیاره‌ ب ریکا ژماره‌کا ریف‌راندوم هاتیه‌ نه‌جامدان ل پشکا زمانی ننگلیزی/ ل سکولا نادابئ/ زانکویا ده‌وک - ل دوماهیکا فه‌کولینئ فه‌کوله‌رئ چه‌ندین ریک و ریبازین هاریکار بو فیرکرنه‌ و بکارئینانا فان جو‌رین کارا ب دروستی دیار دکه‌ت.

الخلاصة

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل و ابراز الفوارق بين نوعين من الافعال المركبة في اللغة الانكليزية وهي الافعال المتصلة بحروف الجر (prepositional verbs) والافعال المتصلة بالظروف (phrasal verbs) لتحقيق هذا الهدف ركزت الدراسة على الحقائق اللغوية المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع مثل تحليل هذه الافعال قواعدياً ولغوياً ودلالياً. وتضمنت الدراسة ايضاً عرضاً للنتائج التي تم التوصل اليها من التحليل الاحصائي الذي تم تنفيذه في قسم اللغة الانكليزية / كلية العلوم الانسانية / جامعة دهوك. في نهاية الدراسة تم تقديم بعض الاقتراحات التي قد يكون لها دور في مساعدة الطلبة الكرد على التغلب على المصاعب التي يواجهونها في تعلم واستخدام هذه الافعال بطريقة صحيحة.