

Contributions to a semantico-contrastive analysis of verb particle constructions in English and verbs with coverbs in Hungarian

Abstract

The main aim of the dissertation is to examine certain properties of verb particle constructions, such as productivity, aspect and Aktionsart. The productivity of verb particle constructions is one of the central issues of the dissertation since, unlike the majority of views in the literature, we will show that verb particle constructions can be highly productive in their literal, i.e. directional sense as well as aspectual sense and as such should be treated separately from the idiomatic phrasal verbs. The study presents a detailed analysis of verb particle combinations with the four particles *out*, *in*, *up* and *down* all having clear directional meanings. The author of the dissertation puts forward a suggestion used as a guideline for the present analysis according to which verb particle combinations are morphologically productive formations if they are morphotactically productive (the particle attaches to verbs in a productive way) and morphosemantically transparent (the meaning of the verb particle combinations can be derived from the meaning of their parts). It has turned out from the study that this latter criterion should be waived in the case of those combinations where the particle conveys aspectual meanings. In order to obtain the productive patterns of verb particle constructions two different sources of information have been used: paper and online learners' dictionaries as well as Levin's (1993) verb classes. It has been shown that many semantic classes of verb particle constructions can be set up in which a particle productively attaches to a verb stem; besides, a number of lexical rules can be formulated that generate the productive word formation pattern for a verb particle construction.

Another goal of the thesis is the analysis of aspectual and Aktionsart meanings of verb particle combinations. The dissertation argues for separating the notions of aspect and Aktionsart and examines the verbal particle's impact and that of coverb on the event-structural make-up of the event and Aktionsart-formation. The analysis has revealed that verbal particles in English and coverbs in Hungarian may alter the telicity value of the verb or verbal predicate in different event classes in both languages. It has turned out from the analysis that the telicity marking in Hungarian by different coverbs is more systematic and consistent than that in English by different verbal particles.

Aktionsart as defined in the present work is a morphologically determined lexicogrammatical category. Following the generally accepted view, morphological rules operate in the lexicon. This part of the thesis is meant to be a contrastive study, i.e. the aspectual and Aktionsart meanings of verb particle combinations can be investigated within the English-Hungarian contrastive framework and it is an attempt in the present thesis to carry out such an investigation. The analysis has shown that English has only one Aktionsart, the resultative Aktionsart expressed by means of different verbal particles in contrast with eleven Aktionsarten in Hungarian, which are expressed by at least ten coverbs and the suffixes *-gat/-get*. The author has provided arguments to support the observation that the verb particle constructions in English are not morphological constructs and concluded that the notion of morphologically expressed Aktionsart does not exist in English.

The present dissertation does not aspire for a detailed investigation of phraseological units with idiomatic meanings, the focus is on the transparent verb particle combinations with only a superficial note of idiomatic meanings.