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**SYNONYMOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN SOME
PHRASAL VERBS CONTAINING PARTICLES AWAY,
OUT AND OFF:
A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS**

The paper focuses on the synonymous relations established between a certain number of English phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and the particles *away*, *out* and *off*. The research is carried out within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics, which enables us to view the semantic motivation of the linguistic units under examination in the light of their conceptual structure. This semantic analysis includes 124 phrasal verbs with the particle *away*, 406 phrasal verbs with the particle *out* and 260 phrasal verbs with the particle *off*, with the total of 1,620 different meanings. It is shown that a considerable number of the investigated phrasal verbs exhibit a high level of synonymous relations. We argue that such a semantic phenomenon is a result of the closely comparable conceptual scenes motivating their semantic structure, which stem from different spatial configurations underlying the conceptual framework of the constituent particles. The final part discusses the obtained findings and their possible implications for enhancing the understanding of the nature of phrasal verbs in general, as well as for further investigations of the semantic relations established among English phrasal verbs.

Keywords: phrasal verbs, synonymy, *away*, *out*, *off*, cognitive semantics, spatial configurations/scenes.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper explores the synonymous relations established between a certain number of English phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and the particles *away*, *out* and *off*. The analysis included 124 phrasal verbs with the particle *away* (with 180 meanings), 406 phrasal

verbs with the particle *out* (with 899 meanings) and 260 phrasal verbs with the particle *off* (with 561 meanings), yielding a total of 1,620 different meanings. They were excerpted from a dictionary of phrasal verbs, *Oxford Phrasal Verbs, Dictionary for Learners of English*, 2nd edition (OXD 2006). The research is carried out within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics (Talmy 1983, 2000, Langacker 1987, Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987, Hampe 2002, Rudzka-Ostyn 2003, etc.), which enables us to view the semantic motivation of the examined phrasal verbs in the light of their conceptual structure. The cognitive-linguistic approach to phrasal verbs provides a fertile ground for explaining the systematicity of phrasal verb meaning and accounting for their multiple meanings, both concrete and abstract. Hence, in the next section, we will briefly reflect on the tenets of this approach when it comes to the exploration of the semantics of phrasal verbs and mention some of the relevant previous studies in the field. In Section 3, we will say something about the semantic relations established between phrasal verbs, focusing on synonymy in particular. Section 4 contains the results of a detailed analysis of specific cases of meaning overlap. The final, fifth section of the paper discusses the obtained findings and puts forth some recommendations for future studies.

2. PHRASAL VERBS THROUGH THE LENS OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

One of the key descriptive tools or means used in the process of meaning analysis of phrasal verbs in the theoretical and methodological framework of cognitive linguistics is *spatial schematisation* (Talmy 1983, 2000) or *profiling* (Langacker 1987, 1999, 2013). These two similar notions are based on the idea of the organisation of spatial relations in terms of their schematisation, which forms the basis for an interpretation of certain conceptual-linguistic relations in terms of different *spatial scenes* or *configurations* underlying the semantics of lexical units. Accordingly, one portion within the spatial scene is singled out for the primary focus (typically

designated as the *trajector*) with a view to describing its disposition in terms of a second portion (typically designated as the *landmark*) (Talmy 2000: 182). As opposed to the so-called traditional approach in studying phrasal verbs (e.g. Live 1965, Fraser 1976), the cognitive-semantic approach enables us to analyse phrasal verb meaning depending on the relations established between the constituent verb and the particle.

So far, several small-scale and large-scale studies, either exclusively or partially, have been aimed at exploring the semantic structure of phrasal verbs containing the particles *away*, *out* and *off*, based on the theoretical tenets of cognitive linguistics. Originally, Lindner (1981) conducted a comprehensive study on the key schematic structures that motivate the meaning of the particle *out*, which was complemented by the findings of Morgan's (1997) research on the various meanings of the verb *figure out*. Yeagle (1983) determined the key schematic concepts which underlie different polysemous meanings of the particle *off*. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003)¹ investigated, among others, the semantic motivation behind all three particles explored in the current paper (*away*, *out* and *off*) through the prism of their potentially more efficient acquisition by language learners, while Hampe (2002) discussed some similarities in the meaning of the particles *away*, *out* and *off*, in the phrasal verbs with the constituent verb *to fade*. A number of other studies investigated the meanings of the particles examined in this paper, such as *out* and *off* (Tyler and Evans 2003), phrasal verbs in medical and computer English containing the particles *in* and *out* (Porto Requejo and Pena Díaz 2008), verbs with the constituent particles *up* and *out* (Mahpeykar and Tyler 2014) etc. Finally, Milošević (2016a, 2016b) carried out a thorough analysis of the conceptual-semantic structures of the particles *out* and *off* in comparison to their opposites *in* and *on*, as well as of the numerous semantic relations established between phrasal verbs containing the two pairs of opposite particles (*in-out* and *on-off*). The findings of these

¹ Rudzka-Ostyn investigated the conceptual-semantic framework of a total of 17 particles, including the three particles investigated in this paper.

studies further testify to the fruitfulness of the cognitive-semantic method in analysing the semantics of phrasal verbs.

3. SYNONYMY OF PHRASAL VERBS

Semantic relations established among phrasal verbs are more than complex. First of all, there are different cases of synonymous relations among phrasal verbs, for instance, in verb pairs with the different constituent verb and the same particle (e.g. *Shall I put/turn/switch the light on?* (OXD)). On the other hand, a pair of phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and different particles can form a synonymous semantic relation and these are the kinds of synonymous relations discussed in the current research. This, for example, is the case with the synonymous pair *tap in* ≈ *tap out*, meaning ‘to put information, etc. into a machine by pressing buttons/keys’ (e.g. *He tapped in the code, then waited, knowing the signal was being scrambled through as many as dozen sub-routes before it got to its destination. ≈ He knocked quickly, tapping out the code Madam Lundy had given him.* (OXD)). Furthermore, the pairs of phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and opposite meaning particles can form an antonymous semantic relation as well (e.g. *He ran to the car, got in and drove off. ≠ The car door opened and a tall man got out*).

The first author who pointed to the phenomenon of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and different particle was Susan Lindner (1982), citing examples such as *to fill in/out an application form*, or *to live off bread and cheese/to live on fruit and raw vegetables* (Lindner 1982: 305). She argued that the overlap of meaning in these cases is a result of a profoundly complex and intricate semantic structure of phrasal verbs as highly polysemous lexical units. The phenomenon was further discussed by Milošević (2016a, 2016b) who has shown that, owing to different types of semantic motivation stemming from different underlying conceptual structures and spatial configurations/scenes,

the same pairs of particles (even opposite particles, such as e.g. *in* and *out*) can exhibit different semantic relations.

In this paper, we focus on the semantic relation of synonymy, which is perceived through its subcategory of *cognitive synonymy* (Cruse 1986, 2004). This means that synonymy is observed as truth-preserving interchangeability (Rasulić 2016: 133). Cognitive synonyms, according to Cruse (1986), are defined in terms of truth-conditional relations:

X is a cognitive synonym of Y if (i) X and Y are syntactically identical, and (ii) a grammatical declarative sentence S containing X has equivalent truth conditions to another sentence S1, which is identical to S except that X is replaced by Y. (Cruse 1986: 88)

Furthermore, in relation to the previously presented view of phrasal verb meaning stemming from different conceptual schemes underlying the semantics of the constituent verb and the particle, it is important to emphasize that the observed and elaborated synonymy among the investigated phrasal verbs is not arbitrary, but comes from the overlapping of the conceptual structures underlying the particles under examination, which is perfectly in line with the fundamental tenets of cognitive semantics.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Upon a detailed analysis of the collected examples, it has been established that the majority of meanings of phrasal verbs consisting of the same constituent verb and one of the three examined particles (*away*, *out* and *off*) do not overlap. For instance, this is the case with the phrasal verbs *go away*, *go out* and *go off*, as shown by the examples: *Go away and think about it a bit*, *Shall we go out for a meal tonight?* and *When are you going off on your trip?* (*AWAY* ≠ *OUT* ≠ *OFF*). Still, there is a considerable number of examples in which the investigated phrasal verbs exhibit a high level of synonymous relations. This can be corroborated by the following examples: *The mountains stretched out in the distance* vs. *Banana plantations stretch*

away as far as the eye could see (out ≈ away); Put the light out before you come to bed vs. Could you put the lights off before you leave? (out ≈ off), or It was hard work stripping the old wallpaper off vs. Strip away the paint to reveal the wood underneath (off ≈ away).

When we focus more closely on the cases of meaning overlap between the phrasal verbs under examination, we obtain the following results:

- In the first case, the meanings of all three particles, *away*, *out* and *off*, overlap and this is exemplified by the set of phrasal verbs *chase away ≈ chase out ≈ chase off*.
- The second case refers to the meanings of the particles *off* and *away* overlapping (e.g. *chip away ≈ chip off*).
- The third case includes instances where there is an overlap in the meaning of phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* (e.g. *cut off ≈ cut out*).
- The final, fourth case refers to the meanings of the particles *away* and *out* overlapping (e.g. *smooth away ≈ smooth out*).

In the following subsections, we will focus more closely on each of these four cases, and the specific instances of meaning overlap occurring within them. Taking into account a considerable number of examples recorded in the corpus, only the most representative ones for every case or instance will be provided.

4.1. Overlapping of the meanings of all three particles: *away ≈ out ≈ off*

Our investigation has yielded only one instance of all three particles' conceptual-semantic structure overlapping, in the case of the phrasal verbs *chase away ≈ chase off ≈ chase out*, meaning 'to force sb/sth to run away by running after them or threatening them' (OXD), as illustrated by example 1.

(1) *He chased the attackers away/off/out by firing shots into the air.* (OXD)

Spatial configurations underlying the particles' conceptual structure and thus resulting in meaning overlap are the following: PUSHING THE TR² AWAY FROM THE LM, in the case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.1), TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM, in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.2), and PUSHING THE TR OUT OF THE LM in the case of the particle *out* (Figure 4.3). As a result, we may argue that the following joint features of these spatial scenes motivate the overlap in meaning: TRAJECTOR and LANDMARK are two separate entities, and a certain external force is exerted on the TRAJECTOR with a view to removing/pushing it from the LANDMARK.

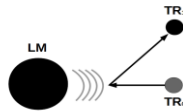


Figure 4.1: PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

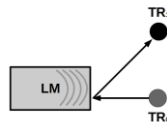


Figure 4.2: TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (particle *off*)

² TR stands for the trajector, and LM for the landmark.

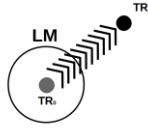


Figure 4.3: PUSHING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (particle *out*)

4.2. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *off* and *away*

In the light of the observed particles' conceptual and semantic framework, we have identified five distinct instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *away*. These instances come from different spatial configurations/scenes which underlie the conceptual-semantic structure of the respective particles, i.e. *off* and *away*.

Instance 1 refers to the cases of synonymy recorded in the corpus for the verb pairs *split off/away*, *chip off/away*, *pare off/away* and *trim off/away* (illustrated by examples 2 and 3).

(2) *The branch had split off/away from the tree.* (OXD)

(3) *She used a hammer to chip off/away the stone.* (OXD)

The established meaning overlap stems from the underlying spatial scene SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM), inherent in the corresponding particles' semantic structure: the particle *off* (Figure 4.4) and the particle *away* (Figure 4.5). It can be argued that the overlap in meaning in this instance stems from the following joint feature of the two conceptual scenes: the TRAJECTOR is an integral part which is in some manner (depending on the semantics of the constituent verb) separated from the LANDMARK, which represents the whole.



Figure 4.4: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)
(particle *off*)

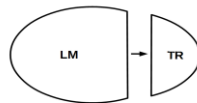


Figure 4.5: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)
(particle *away*)

The second instance includes synonymy in the two subcategories of phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away*: *dash off/away*, *drive off/away*, *speed off/away*, *walk off/away*, *wander off/away* and *slip off/away*, indicating the self-propelled movement of the trajector (illustrated by example 4), and *carry off/away*, *cart off/away*, *spirit off/away* and *whisk off/away*, indicating an external force exerted on the TRAJECTOR, forcing it to move away from the LANDMARK (example 5).

(4) *He dashes off/away every day at four o'clock.* (OXD)

(5) *A strong current carried the dinghy off/away.* (OXD)

In both subcategories of verbs, the observed overlap of meaning stems from the comparable conceptual scenes, namely, SEPARATION AND MOVING/ORIENTING OF THE TR in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.6), and TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.7).

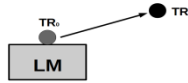


Figure 4.6: SEPARATION AND MOVING/ORIENTING OF THE TR (particle *off*)

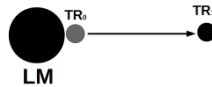


Figure 4.7: TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

The third separate instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *away* was recorded in our corpus for one pair of verbs, *drain off/away* (shown by example 6).

(6) *I drained the water off/away and hung up the blouse to dry.* (OXD)

The spatial configuration REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) is responsible for the occurrence of meaning overlap in this pair of verbs, as it is illustrated in Figure 4.8 for the particle *off*, and Figure 4.9 for the particle *away*.

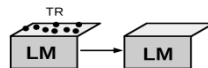


Figure 4.8: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) (particle *off*)

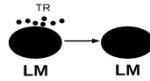


Figure 4.9: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) (particle *away*)

The fourth instance of the synonymy of phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* refers to the following synonymous pairs recorded in the corpus: *frighten off/away* and *scare off/away* (illustrated by examples 7 and 8, respectively).

(7) *The noise frightened the birds off/away.* (OXD)

(8) *She used a whistle to scare off/away her attacker.* (OXD)

In this instance, the overlap in meaning is an immediate result of the possible comparison of the semantic structure of the spatial configurations TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (Figure 4.10), which underlies the particle *off*, and PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (Figure 4.11), which underlies the particle *away*. The abstract meanings of these two pairs of verbs, ACCESS DENIAL and ATTACK REPULSION, also directly stem from the above-stated spatial scenes.

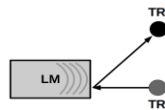


Figure 4.10: TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (particle *off*)

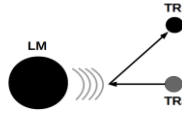


Figure 4.11: PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

Finally, the fifth instance of the observed synonymy between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* comprises the following pairs: *veer off/away* and *sheer off/away* (illustrated by example 9), as well as *trail off/away* and *tail off/away* (example 10), the latter with the abstract meaning of MITIGATION OF THE CURRENT/USUAL EFFECT OR ACTIVITY.

(9) *The car sheered wildly off/away, just missing the truck.* (OXD)

(10) *The number of tourists starts to tail off/away in the summer.* (OXD)

These instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* can be assigned to the underlying spatial scene DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM, illustrated by Figure 4.12 in the case of the particle *off*, and by Figure 4.13 when it comes to the particle *away*.

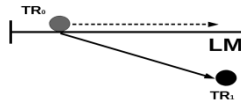


Figure 4.12: DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *off*)



Figure 4.13: DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

4.3. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *off* and *out*

From the conceptual-semantic point of view, we have ascertained five different instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *out*. Analogous to the previous cases, these instances also stem from various comparable spatial scenes underlying the conceptual-semantic framework of the above-mentioned particles.

The first instance has been detected in our corpus for the synonymous pairs *set off/out*, *strike off/out* and *ship off/out* (illustrative examples 11 and 12).

(11) *Check your oil before setting off on a long journey.* (OXD)

(12) *They set out on the last stage of their journey.* (OXD)

The observed synonymy stems from the following spatial configurations underlying the particles' conceptual structure: SEPARATION (FROM THE LM) AND ORIENTATION OF THE TR (Figure 4.14) in the case of the particle *off*, and TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE STARTING POINT/ORIGIN (LM) (Figure 4.15) when it comes to the particle *out*. These comparable scenes exhibit the following joint features responsible for the occurrence of synonymy: the TRAJECTOR moves away from the LANDMARK and is oriented towards the final destination/goal.

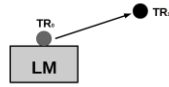


Figure 4.14: SEPARATION (FROM THE LM) AND ORIENTATION OF THE TR
(particle *off*)

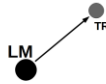


Figure 4.15: TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE STARTING POINT/ORIGIN (LM)
(particle *out*)

The second instance of meaning overlap of phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* can be illustrated with the following verb pairs recorded in the corpus: *cut off/out*, *mark off/out* and *vote off/out* (examples 13–16).

- (13) *He cut his son off without a penny.* (OXD)
- (14) *She cut me out of her will.* (OXD)
- (15) *What will he do if he gets voted out?* (OXD)
- (16) *Parsons was voted off the Board.* (OXD)

The abstract meanings of EXCLUSION or DIFFERENTIATION featured in these verb pairs are the result of the comparable spatial scenes REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.16), and SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) when it

comes to the particle *out* (Figure 4.17), which underlie their semantic structures respectively, the joint feature of both scenes referring to the disintegration of the LANDMARK in a certain way, either by removal or separation of the TRAJECTOR.



Figure 4.16: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *off*)

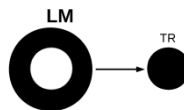


Figure 4.17: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) (particle *out*)

The third instance of meaning overlap comprises phrasal verb pairs *put off/out*, *turn off/out* and *knock off/out*. These synonymous pairs exhibit the following abstract meanings modelled on the two ascertained spatial configurations: NON-FUNCTIONING, illustrated by the verbs *put off/out* and *turn off/out* (examples 17 and 18) and DEFEAT, exemplified by the phrasal verbs *knock off/out* (examples 19 and 20).

(17) *Could you put the lights off before you leave?* (OXD)

(18) *Put the light out before you come to bed.* (OXD)

(19) *She easily knocked off her Republican opponent in the last election.*
(OXD)

(20) *France knocked Belgium out of the European Cup.* (OXD)

Spatial configurations LOSS OF THE TR'S PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (Figure 4.18) and THROWING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (Figure 4.19), motivating the conceptual structure of the particles *off* and *out* respectively, are responsible for the synonymy between the above-mentioned phrasal verb pairs.

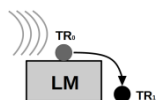


Figure 4.18: LOSS OF THE TR'S PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (particle *off*)

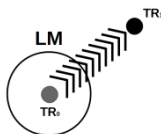


Figure 4.19: THROWING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (particle *out*)

The fourth instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* has been corroborated in the corpus for the synonymous pair *round off/out*.

(21) *I rounded off/out the corners with sandpaper.* (OXD)

The observed synonymy in this particular verb pair stems from the following comparable spatial scenes constituting the above-stated particles' conceptual framework: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM SURFACE (Figure

4.20), in the case of the particle *off*, and DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (Figure 4.21), in the case of the particle *out*.

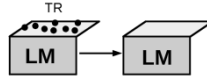


Figure 4.20: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM SURFACE (particle *off*)

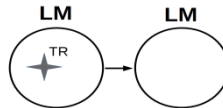


Figure 4.21: DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (particle *out*)

The final instance within the synonymous relations established between the observed phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *out* refers to the pair *level off/out* (examples 22 and 23).

(22) *The plane levelled off at 20 000 feet. (OXD)*

(23) *The road began to level out as we approached the coast. (OXD)*

The meaning overlap in this particular phrasal verb pair is an immediate result of the spatial configuration LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM), underlying both the semantic structure of the particle *off* (Figure 4.22), and the particle *out* (Figure 4.23).

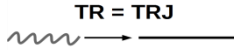


Figure 4.22: LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM) (particle *off*)

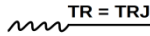


Figure 4.23: LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM) (particle *out*)

4.4. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *away* and *out*

As regards the synonymous relations between phrasal verbs containing the particles *away* and *out*, two distinct instances have been identified in the examples from the corpus.

The first instance is supported by the synonymous pair *smooth away/out*, which carries the abstract meaning of PROBLEM/DIFFICULTY-SOLVING, illustrated by the following example.

- (24) *We are here to smooth away/out any practical problem for you.*
(OXD)

The meaning overlap in this specific instance comes directly from the comparable conceptual-semantic framework underlying the constituent particles – *away* and *out*. In particular, the following spatial configurations motivate such overlapping: FADING OF THE TR (AWAY FROM THE LM) in the

case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.24), and DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) when it comes to the particle *out* (Figure 4.25).

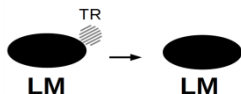


Figure 4.24: FADING OF THE TR (AWAY FROM THE LM) (particle *away*)

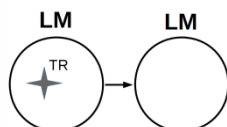


Figure 4.25: DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (particle *out*)

Regarding the second instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *away* and *out*, there is also one verb pair recorded in the corpus, *stretch away/out*, and the synonymy can be observed in the following examples:

- (25) *The mountains stretched away into the distance.* (OXD)
- (26) *Banana plantations stretched out as far as the eye could see.* (OXD)

The overlap of meaning stems from the conceptual scene TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES, underlying the conceptual structure of the verb with the particle *away* (Figure 4.26), as well as the verb with the particle *out* (Figure 4.27). In this instance, the TRAJECTOR and LANDMARK embody different locations of the same entity³ and keep spreading or moving towards the outer boundary.

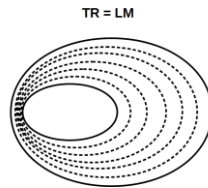


Figure 4.26: TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES (particle *away*)

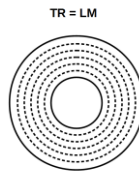


Figure 4.27: TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES (particle *out*)

³ This phenomenon was first noticed and labelled as the *reflexive trajectory* by Lindner (1981). It was later acknowledged by Lakoff (1987), and further elaborated as one of the most frequent image-schematic transformations.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the analysis of the examples collected from the corpus, it can be argued that the synonymous relations between or among the investigated phrasal verbs in the established cases are not arbitrary, but are a result of the closely comparable conceptual scenes motivating their semantic structure. The comparable conceptual scenes stem from different spatial configurations underlying the conceptual framework of their constituent particles (*away*, *out* and *off*). Moreover, these different configurations form a part of the broader concepts of PATH (in the case of the particle *away*), CONTAINMENT (*out*) and SUPPORT (*off*), which code this particular lexical-semantic segment of the English language. In some cases, the overlapping of certain segments of the conceptual-semantic structures of the observed particles is practically identical, which is corroborated by the existence of identical spatial configurations underlying the given particles' meaning (e.g. Case 4, Instance 2, the spatial scene TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES as a joint feature inherent in the semantics of both the particle *away* and *out*). On the other hand, in certain instances, meaning overlap comes as a result of the occurrence of highly similar and comparable underlying spatial configurations (e.g. Case 3, Instance 2, the spatial configuration REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *off*, and SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) in the case of the particle *out*). Furthermore, the pairs of phrasal verb synonyms including the particles *away* and *off* and *off* and *out* appear to be more productive than the pairs of synonyms featuring the particles *away* and *out*. This might be due to a higher degree of overlap between the conceptual structures which motivate the semantics of the examined particles.

As a conclusion, it may be argued that the results of our study further confirm the tenets of cognitive linguistics pertaining to the analysis of phrasal verb semantics, since both their meaning and meaning overlap with other phrasal verbs are explained in terms of the underlying spatial

configurations. Hence, this research may serve as a basis for further lexical and semantic investigations in the subfield of synonymous semantic relations established between/among phrasal verbs, as well as a framework for a more comprehensive description of the diverse and complex semantic relations between phrasal verbs containing other particles, where similar relations might be revealed and explained.

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