

## THE MOTION VERBS WITH PARTICLES AND PREPOSITIONS: SEMANTIC ANALYSES

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### **Abstract**

*The topic of this research figures out the features of the motion verbs with particles and prepositions. The objectives of the research are to describe the meanings of the motion verbs in verb-particle combinations, the specific meaning of the adverb and the prepositions in the concept of motions, The data are taken from three novels. The selection of the data is focused on the verbs which express the agentive manner of motion and which combine with adverbs or prepositions that follow. The motion verbs semantically express the agent's moving from one place to another. The concept of motion event is represented by the moving figure, motion event, path, and ground. However, the case of the motion verbs with the particles and prepositions show the different sense of motion. There are two categories of meanings indicated by the verb-particle combinations namely literal and idiomatic. The idiomatic meanings of the motion are mostly derived from metaphors. In the concept of motion event, the paths which are occupied by adverb or preposition or the combination of both contribute to the idiomatic meaning of the verbs.*

**Key Words :** motion verbs, particles and prepositions, literal and idiomatic meaning

### **Introduction**

Language is a communication tool used by human. When we communicate by using a language, we produce sentences. Every sentence consists of words. The rules on how to put words together to form the grammatical sentences refer to our knowledge of language. Thomas (1993: 2) defines that English sentences are made up of units and that at one level these units are words. Alternatively, words are the constituents of a sentence. With regard to words, Deterding (2001: 2) declares

that some words in English namely nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs contribute substantially to the meaning of the sentence. These words are called content words. Other words, the smaller ones like a, the, she, his, of, for, but, and and help to establish the structure of the sentence but have less inherent meaning of their own. These words are called function words. In sentences, the words construct sentence constituents which have functional terms such as subject, verb, object, and adverbial.

The main theme of this research is verb. The discussion of verb almost always appears in the study of language. It indicates that verbs might always take place in every sentence construction of any languages. The study of verb meanings in sentences would inevitably involve the other elements of the sentence. Verbs might interfere or even be interfered by the other elements of sentence as stated by Saeed (1997: 38) that “words are in a network of semantic links with other words and it is reasonable to assume that conceptual structures are similarly linked”.

Viewing the semantic of verbs, Greenbaum (1990: 177) defines that many verbs are able to express the activities conducted by the subject. For example:

(1) *Mr. John had just gone into the house*

The sentence above contains the lexical verb ‘go’. The verb expresses the agent’s moving from one place to another. The directional meaning of the motion is indicated by the word ‘into’. In other words, the sentence reveals the concept of motion. Downing (2006: 336) explains that the components in the concept of motion event are figure, motion event, path, and ground. The subject represents the moving figure, verb represents the motion event, and the path

is usually expressed by an adverb or a preposition. The ground complements the path in relation to the goal of the motion. In the sentence (1), the figure ‘Mr. John’ is described to have an act of moving away from his place indicated by the motion event ‘go’ and the directional meaning of the paths ‘into’ and the ground ‘the house’ as the goal of the motion. However, the case is there is another sentence which draws different interpretations of the motion.

(2) *Mr. Pok has gone into a tourism business*

The sentence (2) is in the same construction as the sentence (1) but from the semantic point of view, the sense of the motion in sentence (2) is ambiguous. It is in fact that the interpretation of the sentence (2) is quite different from that of the sentence (1). The figure ‘Mr. Pok’ in sentence (2) does not really carry out a physical movement. This can be proved that the ground ‘tourism business’ is not the concrete noun which is supposed to be the goal of the motion. In terms of semantic, this is called metaphor. The semantic relationship between the components often brings into another

interpretation based on our knowledge of world, feelings and perception.

**A. Research Questions**

The research is formulated into the following questions:

1. What is the meaning of the motion verbs with the particles and prepositions ?
2. What is the specific directional meaning of the adverbs and prepositions in the concept of motion?

**C. Objectives of the Research**

The objectives are :

1. To analyze the meaning of the motion verbs with particles and prepositions?
2. To describe the specific directional meaning of the verbs with the particles and prepositions in the concept of motion.

**D. Theoretical Foundation**

**The Concept of Motion**

To understand the conceptual meaning of the verbs involves the other sentence elements. This has a thing to do with the relationship between the meaning of words and the sentence structure. It was previously mentioned that many verbs are able to express motions and construct the concept of motion along with the other sentence elements. Downing (2006: 337) explains that the components in the concept of motion are

figure, ground, motion event, and path. Motion event is realized by the verb indicating the manner of motion, figure represents either the moving object or stationary object and ground is a point of reference where the path is conceptualized. For example:

(3) *He fell down on the floor*

The sentence (3) semantically represents the concept of motion which can be described in the following motion event analysis:

	Figure	Motion event
Path	Ground	
(3)	<i>He</i>	<i>fell</i>
	<i>down on</i>	<i>the floor</i>

In terms of transitivity manner, the motion verbs are usually intransitive. However, there are a few motion verbs which take a direct object as the complement like ‘leave’ and ‘chase’ as the transitive verb. In the motion event analysis, the two figures (subject and object) can represent the moving or the stationary object.

	Figures	Motion events
	Figures	Paths
	Grounds	
(4)	<i>Philippe</i>	<i>had left</i>
<i>her</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>the bed room</i>
(5)	<i>Angry demonstrators</i>	<i>chased</i>
<i>him</i>	<i>away</i>	

The figures 'Philippe' and 'Angry demonstrators' are the moving objects which are interpreted in the act of movement while the figure 'her' is the stationary object and 'him' can be either the moving or the stationary object.

In the case of transitive motion verbs, it is important to consider that the motion verbs like 'pass' might indicate the second figure (object) as the moving object while the first one (subject) is the stationary object.

(6) Ken passed the books to Sergeant Parrott.  
(stationary object)  
(moving object)

#### **Literal Meaning of the Motion Verbs**

In relation to the motion verbs, the non-idiomatic construction is when the motion verbs express the agent's physical movement from one place to another. The whole components in the concept of motion indicate the real physical movement conducted by the figure. In other words, the meaning of the verb is literal. Quirk (1985: 1162) notes that in verb-particle combination, the non-idiomatic constructions occur when the individual meanings of the components are apparent from their constancy in possible substitution since the verbs and the particles are separated in meaning. The verbs keep their basic individual meanings and the

particles encode the directional meaning of the prepositional phrase. For example:

(7) *The ball is rolling down*

#### **Idiomatic Meaning of the Motion Verbs**

The verbs with idiomatic meanings need high interpretation and look impossible to figure out the meaning of the verb since it is an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be separated. The words or the expressions are peculiar to a particular language that means something different from the literal meaning of the words. Concerning the idiomatic meaning of the verbs, Quirk states (1985: 1163) that putting the verb in the idiomatic category does not really mean the meaning of the verb is completely opaque. It sometimes contains metaphors which are fairly clearly derived from their literal verb interpretations. In the other respect, Fromkin (1999: 179) declares that the breaking of semantic rules can be used to convey a particular idea. The meaning of the verb can be literally interpreted but in some sense the sentence is ambiguous. The literal meaning is so unlikely that listeners/ readers stretch their imagination for another interpretation. For example:

(8) *The price came down*

The sentence above contains metaphor. Based on the concept of motion event, 'the

*price*’ is the moving figure, *‘came*’ is the motion event, and *‘down*’ is the path of the motion. Semantically, the subject *‘the price*’ is the inanimate agent or the abstract noun which is not supposed to move like the animate. Therefore, it is considered metaphor. In line with this, O’Grady (1993: 219) explains that metaphor is a conceptual system to express meaning in human language. Metaphor in our language involves the use of words that are primarily associated with physical and psychological state. Many concepts are structured and understood metaphorically in terms of notions more basic to our physical and cultural experience. Time is understood in terms of a commodity metaphor, health and happiness in terms of spatial metaphor, and so on.

### **E. Methods**

The method includes the instrument used, the procedure and technique to collect and analyze data in order to learn language phenomenon. The writer took the data from three novels. The selection of the data is focused on the verbs which express the agentive manner of motion and which combine with adverbs or prepositions that follow. The data are purposefully collected to

analyze the meaning of the motion verbs with particles and prepositions.

### **F. Research Findings and Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the data, there are several findings concerning the motion verbs with particles and prepositions. The findings are:

1. There are two categories of meanings constructed by the motion verbs in verb-particle combination namely literal and idiomatic.

2. In the concept of motion event, the paths which are occupied by adverb or preposition or the combination of both express:

- the movement with reference to an axis (vertical and horizontal) of directional path.

- positive destination of motion in relation to the goal of motion (final position) and negative destination in relation to the starting position (away from the starting position).

- the surrounding position to the motion.

- the idea of passage (movement toward and then away from a place).

- a static resultative meaning indicating the state of having reached the destination There are two possibilities of the meaning of the adverb *‘up*’ in some data. It may indicate the vertical direction from the lower to the higher position or the state of having reached the destination.

- the continuative action to the manner of motion

The meaning of the motion verbs with their particles and prepositions seem to be complex. In the case of motion verb in verb-particle combination, it is a language phenomenon found in English language. The outcome of this research is expected to bring into the more understanding of the meaning of the motion verbs with particles and prepositions. This is to say that knowing the meaning and the rules for combining the words will help us to comprehend such constructions. In other words, the discussion of the meaning of the motion verbs with particles and prepositions in this research might become a kind of clues in identifying and understanding the features of the motion verbs, including those with idiomatic meaning.

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