

## THE CONSTITUENT STRUCTURE OF PHRASAL VERBS IN THE TEEN-LIT “*UNDERSTUDY TO MISS PERFECT*”

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### Abstrak:

*Banyak kata kerja dalam bahasa Inggris yang bisa dikombinasikan dengan kata keterangan dan kata depan atau yang biasa disebut dengan particle. Kombinasi ini menciptakan arti baru yang berbeda dari arti komponen penyusunnya atau biasa disebut frase verba. Tujuan dari artikel ini adalah untuk menganalisis tipe dan structure yang membangun frase verba yang ditemukan di teen-lit “Understudy to Miss Perfect”. Studi ini menggunakan teknik kualitatif dan data dikumpulkan melalui studi pustaka. Teori Quirk (1985) di A Comprehensive Grammar of The English Language menganalisis bahwa frase verba dapat dibagi menjadi 2 yaitu frase verba transitif (diikuti objek) dan frase verba intransitif (tidak diikuti objek). Studi ini menggunakan diagram pohon dan pelabelan dalam kurung untuk merepresentasikan struktur yang membangun frase verba.*

Kata kunci: kata kerja, frase verba, struktur pembangun

### 1. Background

Particularly, a phrasal verb is a phrase consisting of a verb followed by one or more prepositions which all together are treated as a single verb. For example the word “*get*” and “*get up*” are verbs however they have different meaning. It has idiomatic meaning and if the people use it frequently their English will be more natural. For example: verbs with particles *up, down, on, off, over, away, in, and out*. Phrasal verb is quite difficult because its meaning cannot be predicted from each part individually. In order to avoid misunderstanding in speaking or writing something, it is very important to understand phrasal verbs. Besides, people can not speak or understand English well without knowing phrasal verbs. The increase of using phrasal verbs will obviously enrich the vocabularies of learners. Therefore, it is very interesting to analyze the phrasal verb especially its constituent structure in the teen-lit “*Understudy to Miss Perfect*”.

## 2. Problems

1. What types of phrasal verbs are found in the teen-lit “*Understudy to Miss Perfect*” by Tempany Deckert?
2. What Constituent structures are used for phrasal verbs in the teen-lit “*Understudy to Miss Perfect*” by Tempany Deckert?

## 3. Aims of the Study

Specifically, this study focuses on analyzing types of phrasal verbs which are found in the teen-lit “*Understudy to Miss Perfect*” by Tempany Deckert. and investigating constituent structures which are used for phrasal verbs in it.

## 4. Research Method

The research method which was used in analyzing data in this study includes the selection of the data source, the method and technique of collecting data and method and technique of analyzing data. The research was done by library research which analyzes the data source (teen-lit) by reading, finding the phrasal verb, and analyzing those data by using some referential books, containing theories from linguists. The way to analyze data in this study was qualitative.

## 5. Result and Discussion

### 5.1 The Types of Phrasal Verb

#### 5.1.1 Transitive Phrasal Verb

One type of phrasal verb is transitive phrasal verb where is not followed by object. Some transitive phrasal verbs are separable. The object is placed between the verb and the particle. Besides, some phrasal verbs are inseparable and the object is placed after the particle. The data of transitive phrasal verbs are explained as follows:

She *switched* the phone *off* and placed it in her bag. (Deckert: 8)

Analysis:

According to Quirk (1985), the particle of phrasal verb can stand either before or after the noun phrase following the verb, but that of the prepositional verb must (unless deferred) precede the noun phrase. In simple way, the object of prepositional verb can not be placed between the verb and the particle. From that statement, *switched off* in the data above belongs to the transitive phrasal verb which is formed by two words “*switched*” and particle “*off*”. Besides, it has an object “the phone” as the sign of the transitive phrasal verb. Even it is formulated of 2 words, it has one meaning. The phrase “*switched off*” equals with “to put or turn off an electric current”. The sentence above can be checked by syntactic criteria below to prove whether it is transitive phrasal verb or not:

**a) Passivization.**

The acceptance of passivization of the sentence can be used to check the syntactic similarity of the phrasal verbs, as follows:

- a. She *switched* the phone *off* and placed it in her bag. (Deckert: 8) (active)
- b. The phone was *switched off* by her and it was placed in her bag. (Passive)

**b) Pronominal question form.**

The questions of phrasal verbs are built with *who(m)* for personal or people and with *what* for non-personal objects or things:

Question : Who *switched* the phone *off* and placed it in her bag?  
 Answer : She did (Louise Eary’s mother).

Question : What did she *switch off* and placed in her bag?  
 Answer : The phone

**c) The position of Particle**

In Phrasal verb, according to Quirk “The particle of a phrasal verb can stand either before or after the noun phrase following the verb, but that of the prepositional verb must (unless deferred) precede the noun phrase”. Therefore, the particle of

phrasal verb can be often placed either before or after a noun. But it is only placed after a personal pronoun.

a. She *switched* the phone *off* and placed it in her bag. (Deckert: 8)



b. She *switched off* the phone and placed it in her bag. (Deckert: 8)

### 5.1.2 Intransitive Phrasal Verb

Besides transitive phrasal verb, another type of phrasal verb is intransitive phrasal verb which is not followed by object. Phrasal verb is similar to free combination but they are quite different in term of meaning. Phrasal verb has idiomatic meaning. Meanwhile the verb and the adverb of free combination have distinct meaning on the other. In this part is explained the distinction between intransitive phrasal verbs and free combinations using some syntactic criteria, below:

I knew exactly what Kelly was *getting at*. (Deckert: 94)

#### a) Substitution

In free combinations, the separability of verb and adverb in terms of meaning is shown by possible substitutions. For example in “*wade across*” the verb “wade” can be substituted with “walk”, “jump”, “fly”, etc ; and for particle like “across” can be substituted with “through”, “over”, “in”, etc. As discussed previously, phrasal verbs are idiomatic expressions, combining verbs and prepositions or adverbs to make new verbs whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the verb and the particle in isolation. So, the word cannot be substituted with another word individually or word by word easily because it can change the meaning of the phrase.

a. I knew exactly what Kelly was *getting at*. (Deckert: 94)

\* b. I knew exactly what Kelly was *receiving on*.

#### b) The Insertion of a Modifying Adverb Right or Straight

There are also syntactic signs of cohesion. In free combinations, it is often possible to place a modifying adverb *right* (or sometimes *straight*) between the

adverb particle and the verb. This insertion is to differentiate prepositional verbs with phrasal verbs:

- a. I knew exactly what Kelly was *getting at*. (Deckert: 94)  
 \* b. I knew exactly what Kelly was *getting right at*.

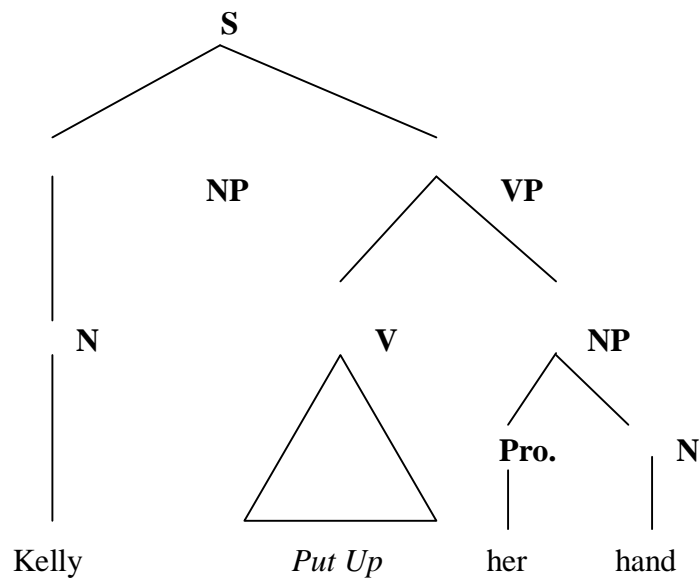
## 5.2 The Constituent Structures of Phrasal Verbs

### 5.2.1 Constituent Structure of Transitive Phrasal Verb

The form of a bracketed string and the tree diagram of transitive phrasal verbs are shown in the figure below:

Kelly *put up* her hand. (Deckert: 50).

#### a. Figure of the tree diagram



The constituent structures for the sentence above are:

S → NP VP                      NP → Pr. N

VP → V

#### b. Labeled and Bracketed Strings

The constituent structure of the sentence above in the form of labeled and bracketed strings would look like this:

(S(NP(N(Kelly)) VP(V(put up)) NP(Pro.(her)N(hand))))

As discussed before, there are various forms of constituent structure in the data. For example, In the constituent structure of inseparable phrasal verb like in the sentence “Kelly *put up* her hand.” , the verb and the particle are string together functioning as a single verb (V), so V dominates two words (verb +adv) and forming a triangle, however in the separable phrasal verb like “I began but shelley *cut me off*” the verb and the adverb are separated so, the branch of the verb (V) and the particle (Adv) are separated by (NP). The particle in this phrasal verb functions as an adverb. The constituent structure of tree diagram and labeled and bracketed string of the data is similar, however they have different appearance where the tree diagram in tree form and labeled and bracketed string in horizontal form.

## 6. Conclusion

1. Syntactically, there are 2 types of phrasal verbs: transitive phrasal verb which needs an object and intransitive phrasal verb which does not need an object. Some transitive phrasal verbs are separable. The object is placed between the verb and the particle. Besides, some phrasal verbs are inseparable where the object is placed after the particle. Phrasal verb is resembled but different with free combination in which the verb and the adverb have distinct meaning on the other.
2. After making the constituent structures of phrasal verbs in the teen-lit “*Understudy to Miss Perfect*”, there are various forms of constituent structure of the data in this study. The ways of representing the information about constituent structure which are used in this study are tree diagram and labeled and bracketed strings. Related to the type of phrasal verb, in transitive phrasal verb, some transitive phrasal verbs are separable. The object is placed between the verb and the particle. Besides, some phrasal verbs are inseparable where the object is placed after the particle. In the constituent structure of inseparable phrasal verb, the verb and the particle are string together functioning as a single verb (V), so V dominates two words (verb +adv) and forming a triangle, however in the separable phrasal verb, the verb and the adverb are separated so, the branch of the verb (V) and the particle (Adv) are separated by (NP).

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