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Review

A Study on the Lexicographical Representation of British English and American English Phrasal Verbs in the Bilingual English-Albanian Dictionary*


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ABSTRACT

This study explores the lexicographical representation of British English and American English phrasal verbs in the bilingual dictionary of English-Albanian. The focus on the linguistic differences between British English and American English, in phrasal verbs in this case which is the chief material of our inquiry, can be justified by some weighty practical reasons and that is which variety to teach and study and in order to make an informed choice, we have to see clearly the ways in which phrasal verbs in American English differ from the British English ones. There are phrasal verbs of different forms in British English and American English and same meaning, phrasal verbs of the same form but of different meanings in both varieties, phrasal verbs peculiar to BrEng usage or American English usage, etc. Their representation in monolingual dictionaries provides some good indications on their variant range and usage in British English and American English, but their incorporation as such in the bilingual dictionary of English-Albanian does not follow suit. This is a corpus-based analysis of 300 phrasal verbs of British English and American English drawn from “Phrasal verbs: Cambridge Dictionary” and the electronic “Collins Dictionary”, as we investigate their representation and translation in the English-Albanian bilingual dictionary by Pavlli Qesku, EDFA (2002).

Keywords: Phrasal verbs, British English, American English, differences, bilingual dictionary, representation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The amount of significance that different studies have attached to British English (BrEng) and American English (AmEng) linguistic differences differs a lot with linguist such as Noah Webster and Mencken emphasizing the fact that the differences matter and the other camp of linguists such as Marckward and Quirk (1964) maintaining that the common heritage really counts. Furthermore, I would like to quote Prince Charles and the British linguist David Crystal illustrating the feeling of unease one might experience when learning or teaching English:

The International Herald Tribune quotes:

English “underpins human rights, good government, the resolution of conflict and the democratic process,” he said. But there is a catch: “We must act now to ensure that English – and that to my way of thinking means English English – maintains its position as a world language well into the next century.” American English is “very corrupting,” he said. Americans tended to “invent all sorts of new nouns and verbs and make words that shouldn’t be.” (March 25-26, 1995 as he launched the British Council’s 2000 project).

On the other hand, David Crystal in his *English as a Global Language* (1997) writes:

“Which variety will be most influential in the development of WSSE (World Standard Spoken English)? (p.138) “It seems likely that it will be US (rather than UK) English (p.135).

This gives us some good reason to study BrEng and AmEng, as well.

Most of the differences between BrEng and AmEng occur in vocabulary, an integral part of which are phrasal verbs.

The lexicographic description of English word-stock whether in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries according to different researchers and scholars recognizes the fact that the treatment of phrasal verbs and idioms in general can be improved for such an improvement would be of special benefit for those dictionary users who are studying English as a second or foreign language.

2. AMERICAN ENGLISH AND SOME OF ITS PROPERTIES

Different historical processes, intellectual traditions, social history and cultural developments have shaped and influenced specific properties of American English.

Some of the general properties of American English as listed and elaborated by Zoltan Kovecses in his “American English” (2000) that stand out in comparison with BrEng are:

American English is economical (seen in commonly observed linguistic processes such as shorter words/spellings and sentences). It is characterized by its regularity (as some irregular verbs forms tend

to get regularized, etc.). American English is also characterized by its directness or straightforwardness of statements, its democratic nature, tolerance in observing prescriptive linguistic rules, informality revealed in the relation-markers in discourse and the free mixing of styles within a single discourse or text, the high-sounding and inflated phrases, inventiveness manifested in the high degree to which American Eng contributes to the English vocabulary, imaginativeness pervading several aspects of the use of AmEng and being one of the major reasons why American words are “imported” by other varieties of English and its dynamism as AmEng is said to be “active”.

Characterizing AmEng as such, the author shows a concern for the cultural features manifesting themselves in language.

3. PHRASAL VERBS

Before delving into the dynamic development and use of the phrasal verbs in both varieties and their lexicographical representation in the bilingual English-Albanian dictionary, we would like to bring forth the definition of phrasal verbs as semantic units. What they have in common is a sort of unity between the verb and the particle and which is the essential feature of this category. They differ in the choice of factors determining that unity. “In one case, the main factor determining the unity between the verb and the particle is semantic, mainly lexical, in the other, formal syntactic.” (Sroka, 1972: 180) The term ‘particle’ is preferred by some linguists as it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between adverb or preposition following the verb or just to ease the theoretical acquisition of the English grammar rules

While other terms can instead be used for phrasal verbs such as multi-part verbs, multi-word verbs, etc., we will stick to phrasal verbs for this seems to be the term used in dictionaries of different kinds, as well.

In the realm of the different types of phrasal verbs, we will look at 300 of them and they are:

1. Phrasal verbs which take objects and are separable,
2. Phrasal verbs which take objects and are inseparable,
3. Phrasal verbs which do not take objects (these are always inseparable) and
4. Three-word phrasal verbs. (Just a few examples) The dictionaries we have used are:
 - a) “Phrasal verbs: Cambridge Dictionary” (which is a good reference book specific to phrasal verbs used widely by students and professors)
 - b) the electronic “Collins Dictionary” (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>), (for it states the variety the phrasal verbs are used whether commonly or specifically in BrEng and AmEng and it ensures even some information on their frequency of usage)
 - c) English-Albanian bilingual dictionary by Pavlli Qesku, EDFA, 2002 edition (which is considered as a very good reference dictionary for bilingual users. It comprises 126 000 entries)

4. PHRASAL VERBS OF BRITISH ENGLISH

Some of the phrasal verbs are typically used in BrEng termed as Britishism or Britishism. Some of these and their meanings as given in “Phrasal verbs: Cambridge Dictionary” are:

- Bed down- British- if something new beds down, it starts to work well because it has existed for long enough. Eg. The new system had not bedded down in the way he had hoped.
- Bottle out- British- to suddenly decide not to do something because you are afraid. Eg. She was going to do a parachute jump but bottled out at the last minute.
- Bring on somebody- British- to help someone to improve their skills. Eg. Alice’s sessions at nursery school have really brought her on. The college golf scholarships are excellent at bringing on.
- Bucket down- British- to rain very heavily. Eg. Look at those dark cloud- it’s going to bucket down in a minute.
- Call by- British- to visit someone for a short time, usually when you are going somewhere else. Eg. I just thought I’d call by on my way into town.
- Call round- British- to visit someone who lives near to you for a short time. Eg. You should call round for a drink some time.

Some more phrasal verbs peculiar to BrEng usage are:

Baulk at something; Balls up something; Bang on; Bash something/somebody about; Belt up; Bind up in/with; Board out something; Bog off; Boil up something; Botch up something; Brave out something; Brew up something; Bring around/ round somebody/something; bring on; Bring somebody out in something; Buzzer off; Buzzer up something; Bunk off something; Buy in; Buy somebody out; Call for somebody; Cash up; Catch out; Change down; Change up; chip in; Chuck in something; Chum up; Claw back; Clean down; Climb down; Clock up something; Clue up somebody; Cock up; Cone off something; Contract into; Contract out; Crack on; Cry off; Dine out on something; Dish up; Do down somebody; Do out something; Dob in somebody; Doss about/around; Doss down; Drag up somebody; Draw in; Draw out; Drop around/round; Drop away; Drop behind; eye up sb; Eye up something; Fall about; Fasten up something; Fathom out something; Feed up somebody/something; Fetch up something; Filter in; Fit up somebody/something; Follow on; Be frozen off; Frizzle up something; Gen up; Get above yourself; Get down; Get off somebody/something; Get off with somebody; Get through something; score off

The phrasal verbs translated in the bilingual dictionary are: baulk at sth (also balk at translated as tutem para një vështirë sie); balls up (represented as ball up translated as ngatërroj, u bë lëmsh puna); board out (kal. lë në një familje); boil up (jokal. zien; ngrihet; derdhet në valë); brave out (s’e lëshoj veten); bugger off (zhduku!); bunk off (I bëj naftën shkollës); buy in (furnizohem me mall); buy out (usht. paguaj gjobën për të mos kryer shërbimin ushtarak); catch out (zë në gabim dikë); Change down (ul shpejtesine); Change up (shtoj shpejtesine); chip in (përzihem në bisedë; hedh një fjalë); chuck in

(dorëzohem); clean down (pastroj; kruaj një sipërfaqe të ashpër); cry off (heq dorë nga një plan; tërhiqem nga loja; II lë, anulloj, prish (një plan, një kontratë); Dine out on something (jam I ftuar te dikush); dish up (out) – server; nxjerr ne tryezë; do down (sl. ia hedh dikujt not in the British sense to criticize someone in order to make them feel ashamed or to make other people lose respect for them); do out (pastroj, fshij dhomën). drag up (fëmijë të rritur vetë, pa kujdes nga askush); fall about (shkulem, gajasem); fasten up (shtrëngo, lidh, siguroj); feed up (ushqej mirë dikë, majmëroj; ushqehem mirë pas një sëmundjeje); follow on (vijon, vazhdon; vjen pas); get above oneself (dal sipër të tjerëve; më rritet mendja); get down (zbres); score off (fitoj, dal më mirë se dikush; ul dikë), Doss down- British- to sleep on the floor or somewhere you do not usually sleep because you have no home or because there is no bed available. Eg. She dosed down in stations and door-ways, anywhere that would shelter her from the cold. (Translated as simply lie, sleep, bie të fle)

5. PHRASAL VERBS OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

Some of the phrasal verbs are typically used in AmEng as the monolingual dictionaries indicate. Some of these and the corresponding meanings given in “Phrasal verbs: Cambridge Dictionary” are:

- Ace out somebody- American informal-to defeat someone. Eg. We are aced out by a rival agency.
- (This phrasal verb is not reflected in the bilingual dictionary)
- Bear down- American- to do something in a very determined way, especially while playing sport. Eg. The pitcher bore down and struck out the next two batters.
- Belly up to somebody/something- American- to move close to someone or something. Eg. He bellied up to the bar for a drink.
- Bug off- American informal- something you say in order to tell someone to go away, usually because they are annoying you. Eg. Bug off, I’m trying to work.
- Burn somebody up- American- to make someone very angry. Eg. He’d made some remark about incompetent women that really burned me up.

Some more phrasal verbs peculiar to AmEng usage are:

Ante up something; Back off; Bat out something or bat something out; Bawl out somebody-; Beat out somebody; Beat up on somebody; Blank out; Blanket something with something; Block in something; Bluff out something/ somebody; Bog down something; Bounce around something; Break for something; Break out something; Buddy up to somebody; Bug out; Bugger about/around; Bum out; Bump up somebody; Button down something; Call around; Call out for something; Call up (telephone); Center something around/round ; Chalk up something to something; Chew out somebody; Choose up; Color in something; Color up; Come by; Come down; Come forth with; Count off; Cozy up to somebody; Crack

up something; Crank out something; Cross up somebody; Cut off somebody; Diddle around; Diddle with something; Dump on somebody; Dump something on somebody; Face off; Fake out somebody; Figure on something; Finish up something; Fix yourself up; Flare out; Flash on something; Flip off somebody; Flip out; Flunk out; Fool with; Fork over/up; Frozen out; Freeze up; Fuck over somebody; Fuss at somebody; Gas up something; Get after somebody/something; get off it

The phrasal verbs translated in the bilingual dictionary (Those in bold bear an indication on the AmEng sense being given in the bilingual dictionary) are: bear down (kal.shtyp, ngjesh, fig. nënshtroj; mjek. shtyj poshtë femijën gjatë lindjes) but the Am sense does not appear; back off (shtyj prapa; largohem, zmbrapsem); bawl out sb (përzë me ulërime dikë); beat out (ia nxjerr shkumën dikujt); blank out (...am.bis. mund me zero); block in sth (vizatoj, skicoj në vija të përgjithshme); chew out sb (qortoj, bëj për dy para); come by (... am.bëj një vizitë të shpejtë); count off (... usht. numëroj kompaninë); diddle around (jokal.am. shkoj kot/dëm); fix oneself up (...pispillosem.); flare out (...fig. ndizem; marr flakë; zemërohem; II. I përgjigjem flakë për flakë dikujt); flunk out (përrjashtoj nga shkolla/kursi studentin mbetës); fork over/ up (fork out as well translated as tund, nxjerr paratë; shpenzoj); fuck over sb (përrfitoj nga dikush); get off it! (lëre, mjaft!).

6. SAME PHRASAL VERBS, DIFFERENT OR ADDED MEANINGS IN ONE VARIETY

The phrasal verbs that might be considered confusing are the ones which either have different meanings in BrEng and AmEng, or that are highly polysemantic and might have added meaning in one of the varieties, BrEng or AmEng.

As represented in the bilingual English-Albanian dictionary below, no indication is given about the variety usage in most of them, although in many cases the BrEng and AmEng added sense or different meanings gets translated.

Bang up I jokal. Perplasem bang up against sb perplasem me dikë; takohem rastesisht me dikë II kalim. Prish, rrënoj dicka (Am sense gets translated)

Blow off sb/sth (None of the added Am or Br slang senses are translated in the bilingual dictionary; other senses are given)

Blow out (Shared senses given, but AmEng and BrEng sense are not)

Call on somebody- American- to ask a person in a group of people to answer a question or to give their opinion about something. Eg. She was afraid the teacher would call on her and she wouldn't know the answer. (Just the Br.Eng sense as pay a visit gets represented (I bej një vizitë të shkurtër dikujt); I bëj thirrje dikujt)

Knock up sb (BrEng and AmEng meanings are given, but not reflected as such)

I kal. Hedh (shtyl) tutje; sport. Gjuaj ca topa per nxehe (para ndeshjes); sport. Shenj (bej pike) (ne kriket). Lodh; rraskapit (dike); ia marr frymen. Zgjoj; trokas per te zgjuar dike. Ndertoj (bej, sajoj) shpejt e shpejt (dicka per te ngrene). Le me barre (mbush) (nje grua). Shtyp. Drejtoj (fletet e librit para riskimit)

Clear off (shared meanings and the added BrEng sense get translated: laj borxhin; shes mallin; plotwsoj/zwendwsoj kohwn e humbur; largohet; fig. iki, zhdukem. The later sense is an added meaning in BrEng)

Climb down- British- to admit that you are wrong. Eg. He chise to climb down in the face of pressure. (The BrEng sense is incorporated through its translation as zbres; varem poshtë; fig. tërhiqem, zmbrahem, i ul fjalët; poshtërohem, I ul hundën)

cotton to sth (the American sense translated as I lëvirem dikujt; më tërheq; më hyn në zemër; mësohem me dicka; but the BrEng sense like become aware of a situation is not translated)

Crack up something- American informal- if a vehicle cracks up or if someone cracks it up, it hits another vehicle, building, tree, etc and is badly damaged. Eg. The truck cracked up at the intersection when it hit a van going through a stop light. (The AmEng sense gets translated like thyej, thërrmoj, shkallmoj; mburr)

do for sb - bis. kujdesem për dikë; I mbaj shtëpinë; qëroj, vras; marr fund; mashtroj, gënjej; rrënoj, marr më qafë (BrEng sense cause the ruin translated as marr fund; marr më qafë)

do up (rregulloj, ndreq, zbukuroj; laj (ndërresat); ndreq, gatuj; paketoj, mbështjell, mbyll (letrën), kopsit (këmishën); dërrmoj, kapit (fasten is the added meaning in BrEng which gets translated)

Draw in (tërheq, fut brenda zvarrë; thith, tërheq tymin; (macja fsheh/fut brenda (kthetrat); tërheq, josh; mbaron; (dita) shkurtohet (The later meaning is the added meaning in British English incorporated in the bilingual dictionary);

Draw out (nxjerr, shkul (një gozhdë, një dhëmb); tërheq, hap (sirtarin); nxit; zgjat bisedën; jokal. (dita) zgjatet (The later meaning is the added meaning in British English incorporated in the bilingual dictionary);

drop away (bie, pakësohet added meaning in British incorporated in the bilingual dictionary)

fetch up sth (vjell, nxjerr ushqimin; am. rrit fëmijët). BrEng sense not indicated; Am sense indicated)

fit up (added meaning in BrEng incriminate on a false charge not incorporated in the bilingual dictionary)

Get about (added meaning in BrEng, travel; translated as udhëtoj)

get at (added meaning in BrEng criticize and the added meaning in American apply oneself to

(work, etc. not represented, whereas all the other meanings get translated)

Wash up (Just the BrEng sense is given, but the semantic difference between BrEng and AmEng is not represented in the bilingual dictionary)

I.kalim. Laj to wash up the dishes (laj enet). (Deti) nxjerr ne breg (dike, dicka) II jokal. (Dallga)

perplaset ne breg). Laj enet

Similar examples include: break up; bust out; bust up; call back; call in; catch up; chase up; chat up, check out, choke up, come off, come on, eat out, come over, cut up sb, do over sth, eye up sb, fall back, finish up, bring around sb, go down, go off, go out for, hold up, keep off, kick back, kick up, knock sb back, ring up, set up, shake down sth/sb, sign off, sign on, tick off, visit with sb.

7. PHRASAL VERBS OF DIFFERENT ADVERBIAL PARTICLES IN BRENG AND AMENG

In the following, we have dwelt on cases of phrasal verbs with different adverbial particles in BrEng and AmEng, which have the same meaning. Many of these are represented in the bilingual dictionary with no variants of the adverbial particle. Neither are they specified as BrEng or AmEng.

BrEng	AmEng
• <i>break down</i>	<i>break up</i>
• <i>get on</i>	<i>get along</i>
• <i>come through</i>	<i>come in</i>
• <i>cut along</i> (to haste)	<i>cut out</i>
• <i>fall about</i> (collapse)	<i>fall down</i>
• <i>follow on</i>	<i>follow after</i>
• <i>give in/over</i>	<i>give up</i>
• <i>pay out</i>	<i>pay up</i>
• <i>pull in</i>	<i>pull over</i>
• <i>sell up</i>	<i>sell off/out</i>
• <i>sign on</i>	<i>sign up</i>
• <i>stay off</i>	<i>stay out</i>
• <i>strip off</i>	<i>strip down</i>
• <i>turn in</i>	<i>turn up</i>

8. REPRESENTATION OF BRENG AND AMENG PHRASAL VERBS IN THE BILINGUAL DICTIONARY

As the author Pavlli Qesku notes and I cite "... this bilingual dictionary comprises 1/40 of English lexicon as this is actually recorded most recently" (back in 2002). Despite all that, it is considered as a good dictionary of use for the bilinguals including 126 000 entries.

As revealed throughout the article there is really a good undertaking in providing many translated phrasal verbs of both varieties, but they are not represented as BrEng or AmEng when translated, except for a few such as *blank out*, *come by*, etc. Nor do their added or different senses in the other variety bear any indication about the variety use in the cases of highly polysemantic phrasal verbs.

Furthermore, cases of differences in the adverbial particle between the two varieties are not evidenced as such, as is the case with *turn in*, *strip off*, *stay out*, etc.

9. CONCLUSION

The focus on the linguistic differences between BrEng and AmEng (in phrasal verbs in this case which is the chief material of our inquiry) can be justified by some weighty practical reasons and that is which variety to teach and study and in order to make an informed choice, we have to see clearly the ways in which phrasal verbs in AmEng differ from the BrEng ones. The list of the phrasal verbs we have covered is not exhaustive and more research work needs to be done.

- The linguistic data that we relied on come primarily from British-American comparisons, those aspects of phrasal verbs that differ in some way in both varieties.
- Both varieties are very productive in phrasal verbs, more so in American English as it is commented by the Oxford Companion to the English Language "Phrasal verbs have always been common, but have increased in number since the mid-19 century and even more so since the mid-20 century, especially in AmEng" (p.775) The bilingual dictionary does not really reflect that covering phrasal verbs of both varieties.
- A good job is done in translating many of the phrasal verbs in the English-Albanian bilingual dictionary.
- More needs to be done for the translation of many BrEng and AmEng phrasal verbs in the future. (Some of these phrasal verbs are the BrEng ones: *arse about/around*; *bang on*; *bang up sb*; *bed down*; *belt up*; *bind up in/with*; *blow off*; *blow out*; *board out sth*; *bog off*; *boil up sth*; *book into sth*; *bottle out*; *brave out*; *budge up*; *bugger about/around*; etc. AmEng ones: *face off*, *flash on something*; *flip off somebody*; *flip out*, etc.
- At the same time, there is a need for a specification (or some indication) of the phrasal verbs of BrEng or AmEng as well as for their added/different senses in one of the varieties to be

represented in the bilingual dictionary, or the difference in their form regarding adverbial particle to be evidenced (so that confusion over which variety means what can be avoided).

Although determining items of the vocabulary in general and phrasal verbs specifically as BrEng or AmEng as elaborated in this study is a tricky task to be undertaken knowing that both varieties contribute to one another, still, since many monolingual dictionaries tell the difference/s between them, wouldn't it be appropriate to represent them as such in the bilingual dictionary, as well?

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