Multi-word verbs with take, and their Croatian counterparts

Dešić, Hrvoje

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Hrvoje Dešić

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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

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CONTENTS

Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of multi-word verbs featuring the verb *take* as the verbal part of the combination and their Croatian counterparts, as found in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*, which has served as the corpus for the present paper. Multi-word verbs are combinations of a verb with one preposition which have a more or less idiosyncratic meaning. This idiomatic meaning can present a challenging obstacle to a learner or a non-native speaker. Multi word-verbs are categorized into three groups: phrasal verb, prepositional verbs and phrasal prepositional verbs.

 Phrasal verbs are the most numerous of the three and sometimes the term phrasal verb is used to describe any multi-word verb. Translating multi-word verbs can thus also be very demanding as they are a feature of English language and other languages do not have the same kinds of constructions. The particular analysis in this paper shows that perfect Croatian equivalents can rarely be found and in that manner translating multi-word verbs has to be approached cautiously.

Key words: multi-word verb, phrasal verb, Tolkien, translating, The Fellowship of the Ring

1. Introduction

'Multi-word verbs are one of the most distinctive characteristics of English language. They make English so peculiar, but also complicated for learners and foreigners. What makes multi-word verbs interesting is their meaning - a verb accompanied by a preposition will have most likely a completely new definition and will be used in a different context' (Thim 2). This paper will examine multi-word verbs with '*take'* taken from The Fellowship of the Ring written by John Ronald Reulel Tolkien and give their Croatian equivalents. The paper will contain two main parts. The first part of the paper will provide the theoretical background needed for the research, and give the information about multi-word verbs and the book on which the research is based upon, the Fellowship of the Ring.. The second, analytical part, will consist of examples of multi-word verbs with *take* and their Croatian equivalents. Also, in the second part, multi-word verbs will be tested, explained, compared with other examples. Their structure and meaning will be compared in terms of both the English and the Croatian language.

2.1. Multi-word verbs

The Cambridge Dictionary[1] defines multi-word verbs as verbs which consist of a verb and one or two particles or prepositions. The words which follow the lexical verb in expressions like drink up, dispose of, and get away with are morphologically the same, and will be given the neutral designation particles. They actually belong to two distinct but overlapping categories, that of prepositions and that of adverbs (Quirk et al. 1150). Many multi-word verbs have an idiomatic meaning, and therefore they cannot be taken literally and their meaning cannot be guessed so easily. They are categorized into three groups: phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs.

2.2. Phrasal verbs

Most of the times we speak of multi-word verbs we are actually referring to phrasal verbs, as they are the most frequent of the three types. Phrasal verbs are a crucial part of English, and given the fact that they are so numerous. According to Dixon[2], phrasal verbs are combinations of a verb with one (or more) preposition(s) which have a more or less idiosyncratic meaning. Oxford on-line dictionary[3] provides a slightly different definition: ''An idiomatic phrase consisting of a verb and another element, typically either an adverb, as in break down, or a preposition, for example see to, or a combination of both, such as look down on''.

'The term phrasal verb originates from the short phrase made up by the verb and the preposition. It was first used in "Words and Idioms", written by Logan Pearsall Smith in 1925 where he stated that editor Dr. Henry Bradley suggested the term to him and said he would not welcome any alternative terms' (Dixon 2). 'Alternative terms for phrasal verbs are 'compound verb', 'verb-adverb combination', two-part word/verb', 'three-part word/verb' and 'verb-particle construction' (Thim 3).

As mentioned above, many phrasal verbs have an idiomatic meaning, however in some instances the meaning of the simple verb is almost identical to the meaning of the phrasal verb; for example in *slow down* and *eat up*. The meaning of the preposition does not have a literal

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[1] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/
[2] R. M. W. Dixon (1982) The grammar of English phrasal verbs, Australian Journal of Linguistics, 2:1, 1-42
[3] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/

meaning and does not denote the direction in which the verb is realized, but in certain cases does add a nuance of meaning to the whole. The particle down, for example adds the sense 'to a reduced state', whereas up in many cases signals the idea of completeness. Others, like *take off* (fly into the air) and *take off* (imitate) have a completely idiomatic meaning, which is often not even connected to the meaning of the main verb or the adverb particle.

'There are two types of phrasal verbs: intransitive and transitive. Intransitive phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus and adverb particle. E.g. *He is playing around*. Transitive phrasal verbs are those verbs that can take a direct object. E.g. *She's bringing up two children'* (Quirk et al. 1153).

2.3. Prepositional verbs

'Prepositional verbs have two parts: a verb and a preposition which cannot be separated from each other: *break into (a house)*, *depend on*, *go into*. There are two types of prepositional verbs: a) Type I: without a direct object and b) Type II: with an object

a) Type I: A prepositional verb consists of a lexical verb followed by a preposition with which it is semantically and/or syntactically associated' (Quirk et al. 1155). The preposition precedes its complement:

> *Look at those paintings*.

> *I don't approve of their opinions.*

b) 'Type II: Prepositional verb is followed by two phrases, normally separated by the preposition: the former is the direct object, the latter the prepositional object' (Quirk et al.1158). For example:

> *Jenny thanked us for the present.*
> *Mary took good care of the children.*
> *I have lost touch with my family.*

2.4. Phrasal-prepositional verbs

'Phrasal-prepositional verbs have three parts: a verb, a particle and a preposition. The particle and the preposition cannot be separated. Many of these verbs are often used in informal contexts, and their meaning is difficult to guess from their individual parts' (Quirk et al. 1660). For example: *listen out for, look up to*. There are two types of phrasal-prepositional verbs: Type I phrasal-prepositional verbs do not require a direct object.

I am really looking forward to seeing you.

Type II phrasal-prepositional verbs require a direct object.

The salesman fobbed me off with a low-quality printer.

2.5 Types of tests

According to Dixon, a number of non-semantic criteria have been suggested to separate phrasal verbs from prepositional verbs. These will be analyzed in the following subchapters.

2.5.1. Substitution

'Most phrasal verbs have a corresponding polysyllabic verb with very similar meaning. In that manner, the substitution test reveals that if a multi-word verb can be replaced by a single verb with a similar meaning, it is a phrasal verb. For example, *fight down* can be replaced by *supress*, *put off* by *postpone*, *come into* by *inherit*, etc. However, there are two problems with the substitution test; the fact that there are many prepositional verbs that can also be replaced with single verbs for example *take out* by *extract* and *go in* by *enter*. Furthermore, there are some phrasal verbs which do not have a single-word synonym – *grow on* – 'become gradually more appealing or hold against' – 'allow past actions to have a negative influence on one's attitude towards someone' (Dixon 3-4).

2.5.2. Position of object

'Phrasal verbs allow the object to be placed either before or after the particle if the object is not a pronoun and prepositional verbs limit the object to always come after the preposition' (Cambridge).

[2]   Phrasal verb

You need to sort out your priorities / You need to sort your priorities out.

Prepositional verb

The thief *broke into* a house /*The thief *broke* a house *into.*

2.5.3. Gapping[4]

This test points out that only literal combinations can be gapped, and phrasal verbs cannot. Gapping is possible with many literal constructions and with some mildly phrasal verbs (Dixon 5).

[3]   *John kept his anger in and Mary her temper down.*

   **He *took* his shirt *off* and the firm *over*.

This method does not distinguish between phrasal and prepositional verbs but it proves that the more idiomatic meaning the less chance the verb has being gapped (Dixon 5).

2.5.4. Fronting[5]

'Phrasal verbs can be separated from prepositional verbs by trying to front the preposition of the phrasal verb. It is a phrasal verb if it cannot be fronted and if it can be fronted it is prepositional verb' (Dixon 5).

[4]   *Jim ran up the stairs. / Up what did Jim run?*

Jim *ran up* a bill. / *Up* what did Jim *run?*

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[4] The omission of a verb in the second of two coordinated clauses, as in I went by bus and Mary by car.
[5] When we want to put certain elements in focus we put them on the front of the clause.

Although fronting can be applied to both literal and non-literal combinations, is not always a reliable test given the fact that there are some phrasal verbs which can be fronted.

[5]   *Jim takes after his father. / After whom does Jim take?*

2.5.5. Adverb insertion

This method suggests that an adverb can be inserted between the verb and its particle if it is a prepositional verb but cannot separate a phrasal verb into two parts. These principals apply to both literal and non-literal combinations (Quirk et al.1167).

[6]   *He turned suddenly off the road*

       *He *turned* suddenly *off* the light.

2.5.6. Passive

'It is usually possible to passivize a transitive clause, with the direct object becoming the subject. Most transitive phrasal verbs can become passive.

[7]   *His smooth talking took me in.*
       I was taken in by his smooth talk.

However, the passive test is also not always reliable because most intransitive phrasal verbs cannot be passivized' (Dixon 7).

3. Tolkien's 'The Fellowship of the Ring'

'John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) was a major scholar of the English language, specialising in Old and Middle English. Twice Professor of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) at the University of Oxford, he also wrote a number of stories, including most famously *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955), which are set in a pre-historic era in an invented version of our world which he called by the Middle English name of Middle-earth. This was peopled by Men (and women), Elves, Dwarves, Trolls, Orcs (or Goblins) and of course Hobbits. He has regularly been condemned by the Eng. Lit. establishment, with honourable exceptions, but loved by literally millions of readers worldwide' (Tolkien Society[6]).

The Lord of the Rings is not, as it is commonly believed, a trilogy but it is a single novel, consisting of six boox, published in three volumes with the first one being The Fellowship of the Ring. 'It is One of the world's most famous books that continues the tale of the ring Bilbo found in *The Hobbit* and what comes next for it, him, and his nephew Frodo' (Tolkien Society).

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[6] https://www.tolkiensociety.org/

4. Methodology

The 'search' function was used to extract the relevant examples of multi-word verbs with *take* from a PDF file of the book. I established that the verb *take* (searched for tokens *takes, took, taken*) is found 249 times in the Harper-Collins e-book version of The Fellowship of the Ring. Twenty-two out of these were established to be multi-word verbs– the rest are either simple verbs or free-combinations, which was determined by the substitution test, adverb placing and observing verb characteristics. In the next section, multi-word verbs will be tested to determine the type: a) phrasal (transitive or intransitive), b) prepositional (transitive or intransitive) or phrasal-prepositional (transitive or intransitive). Furthermore, their definitions will be provided For the Croatian translations and examples I have used the following edition: J.R.R. Tolkien. *Prstenova družina*. Zlatko Crnković, Marija Špiranović, Algoritam, Zagreb. 2005. English definitions of multi-word verbs were taken from either Oxford or Cambridge on-line dictionary, as indicated in the analysis. English example sentences were taken from the abovementioned Harper-Collins e-book.

5. Multi-word verbs analysis

This chapter includes the analysis of the most frequently found instances of multi-word verbs with *take*, taken from The Fellowship of the Ring. Each example will be tested, translated and its meaning will be explained. Not all test will be implemented for every multi-word verb

(1) Take after
-to look like or behave like an older member of your family
Translate: ličiti, podsjećati
'You take after Bilbo' said Gandalf.
'You resemble Bilbo' said Gandalf.
'You ~~take~~ really ~~after~~ Bilbo' said Gandalf.
Sentence translation: *Ličiš na Bilba' rekao je Gandalf.*

It is a transitive phrasal verb as it has an object. The idiomatic meaning, furthermore, can be replaced by a single-word synonym and cannot take an adverb. *Take after* has a simple lexical verb Croatian equivalent *ličiti* which captures the idiomatic meaning.

<div align="center">

(2) Take on

- To become very upset

Translation: uzrujati se

Don't let him turn me into anything unnatural! My old dad would take on so.

My old dad would ~~take so on.~~

~~On how~~ would my father ~~take~~?

Sentence translation:*Ne dajte mu da me pretvori u neku neman! Moj bi se ćaća ozbiljno zabrinuo.*

</div>

Its meaning is fully idiomatic and by inserting an adverb or trying to front the multi-word verb it is clear that it is a intransitive phrasal verb.

In the book translation it is translated as *zabrinuti* 'to worry' which does not seem to capture the complete meaning of the phrasal verb.

<div align="center">

(3) Take away

-to remove something from something

Translation: maknuti, oduzeti

Indeed it would take away the only point I ever saw in the affair.

Ineed it would remove the only point I ever saw in the affair.

Indeed it would ~~take quickly away~~ the only point I ever saw in the affair.

Sentence translation*: Zaista bi se na taj način izgubio jedini smisao koji sam video u cijeloj toj stvari.*

</div>

Take away can be replaced by a single-word synonym, an adverb cannot be placed to separate it and it can take an object so that it is a transitive phrasal verb.

The verb itself is not translated literally in the original translation, however the equivalent crucially depends on the specific NP functioning as the object, which collocates with a specific verb in Croatian (*izgubiti smisao*).

<div align="center">

(4) Take into

-to bring something or someone into a particular situation

Translation: uvesti, povesti

</div>

Not if you know of anyone you can trust, and who would be willing to go by your side – and that you would be willing to take into unknown perils.

Into what is he going to take me?

Sentence translation: *Ne moraš ako poznaješ nekog u koga se možeš pouzdati u tko bi bio voljan putovati s tobom – I koga bi ti bio voljan povesti u nepoznate opasnosti.*

The verb cannot be replaced by a single verb, does not have an idiomatic meaning and can be fronted making it a prepositional verb.

The original translation uses *povesti* which corresponds with the context of the situation, where Frodo is in charge and would have to *take* someone *into* his situation.

<div align="center">

(5) Take in

- Accommodate someone as a lodger or because they are homeless or in difficulties

Translation: ugostiti, primiti pod krov

</div>

If there are hobbit-folk in these parts, why don't we look for some that would be willing to take us in?

If there are hobbit-folk in these parts, why don't we look for some that would be willing to ~~take generously us in~~?

Sentence translation: *Ako u ovom kraju već ima hobita, zašto ne bi potražili neke od njih koji bi nas htjeli primiti pod svoj krov?*

The idiomatic meaning of the contex and the fact that we cannot insert an adverb proves that it is a transitive phrasal verb.

 It also has an idiomatic expression Croatian equivalent which is provided in the original translation.

However, in a different context *take in* can also function as a free combination with a literal meaning, which was also found in several occasions.

They stood outside of Prancing Pony waiting to be taken in.

(6) Take for

-regard as, consider someone/something to be something

Translation: smatrati

''You need not speak to me as to one of the fools that you take for friends''

"You need not speak to me as to one of the fools that you ~~take~~ gladly ~~for~~ friends''

~~For~~ what you ~~take~~ them?

Sentence translation: '*Ne moraš samnom govoriti kao s jednom od onih budala za koje misliš da su ti prijatelji'.*

The idiomatic meaning, unsuccessful fronting and adverb placing prove that it is a phrasal verb. The translation of the verb could be *consider to be friends* (smatraš da su ti prijatelji), but *you think are your friends* works as well in the given context.

(7) Take to

a) Form a liking for

Translation: dopasti se, svidjeti se

But I must admit,' he added with a queer laugh, 'that I hoped you would take to me for my own sake.

But I must admit,' he added with a queer laugh, 'that I hoped you would ~~take~~ readily ~~to~~ me for my own sake.

But I must admit,' he added with a queer laugh, 'that I hoped you would <u>like</u> me for my own sake.

Sentence translation: *Ali moram priznati'', nadoda smijući se nekako čudno, ''da sam se nadao da ćete mi povjerovati na riječ.*

Take to can be replaced by a single-word synonym and an adverb cannot be inserted making it a transitive phrasal verb.

The verb is not translated in the original translation and could have been translated as *da sam se nadao da ću vam se svidjeti radi sebe*.

b) Go to (a place) to escape danger or an enemy

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Translation: sakriti se, skloniti se, pritajiti se

'This is where we leave the open and take to cover,' said Strider.

'This is where we leave the open and hide,' said Strider.

'This is where we leave the open and ~~take~~ safely ~~to~~ cover,' said Strider.

~~To~~ where will they ~~take~~?

Sentence translation: *''Ovdje ćemo napustiti čistinu i skloniti se u zaklon'', reče Strider.*

The particle of the phrasal verb cannot precede the interrogative word at the beginning of the wh-question also the multi-word verb can be replaced by a single-word synonym proving it is a intransitive phrasal verb.

The original translation uses *skloniti se*, which is appropriate, as the prepositional object *cover* contributed in choosing the Croatian equivalent which captures the whole idiomatic meaning of its English equivalent.

- c) Begin or fall into the habit of

Translation: početi nešto, uhvatiti se nečega

He took to thieving, and going about muttering to himself, and gurgling in his throat.

He <u>began</u> thieving, and going about muttering to himself, and gurgling in his throat.

~~To~~ what he ~~took~~?

Sentence translation: *Počeo je krasti i lutati neprestano gunđajući nešto za se i grgljajući iz dubine grla.*

Multi-word verb *take to* takes an object, can be replaced by a single-word synonym and cannot be fronted, which makes it a transitive phrasal verb.

It does not have a Croatian phrase equivalent but can be translated as *početi* or *uhvatiti se nečega* which has similar idiomatic meaning.

(8) Take up with

- Begin to associate with (someone), especially in a way disapproved of by the speaker

Translation: družiti se, petljati (s nekim)

'But if I was in your plight, I wouldn't take up with a Ranger.'

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Sentence translation: *"Ali da sam ja na vašem mjestu, ja se ne bih petljao s jednim graničarom."*

Take up with has both a particle and an adverb, has idiomatic meaning and since it does not require a direct object it is a intransitive phrasal-prepositional verb.

It has a simple lexical verb as a Croatian equivalent which also exhibits idiomatic meaning *petljati se (s nekim).* Interestingly, and (un)expectedly, the Croatian equivalent has little to do with the literal sense of the source verb *take,* which testifies to its idiomatic status.

(9) Take up
- to start doing something
Translation: početi, započeti

The other had gone down to take up his watch on one of the lower branches.
The other had gone down to <u>start</u> his watch on one of the lower branches.
The other had gone down to ~~take~~ quietly ~~up~~ his watch on one of the lower branches.
Sentence translation: *Treći je od njih sišao da preuzme stražu na jednoj od nižih grana.*

Take up is a transitive phrasal verb given that it can be replaced by a single-word synonym and it cannot take an adverb.

The original translation does not give atranslation of the phrasal verb but substitutes it with the more likely counterpart in Croatian of the multi- word verb *take over* ('preuzeti'). Alternatively, it could be translated as *da počne stražariti na jednoj od nižih grana.*

6. Conclusion

As one on the most distinctive components of English language, multi-word verbs and their often idiomatic meaning can be quite problematic for learners and non-native speakers. Since their meaning cannot be assumed by the main verb or the particle in many instances, they have to be learned and used as frequent as possible. Translating multi-word verbs can be as difficult as the understanding and learning or even more so. As it is expected, the translation very much depends on the choice of the translator, and his or her perception of what is, and is not in the spirit of the language. In some, but rare instances, it is possible to supply the multi-word verb with a Croatian equivalent that captures the idiomatic meaning. E.g. *take after/ sličiti*. However, as chances for that to happen are not that common, more often we can use a different verb which accords with the multi-word verb and its object, or even the whole phrase. E.g. *My old dad would take on so. / Moj bi se ćaća ozbiljno zabrinuo.* Furthermore, multi-word verb are occasionally overlooked, omitted or even translated with a completely different meaning on the account of context of the sentence. E.g. I *hoped you would take to me for my own sake./ Nadao sam se da ćete mi povjerovati na riječ.* Some parts of English language cannot be translated literally and do not have a Croatian equivalent, and it is the same with multi-word verbs. They can be approached in many ways but there are certain aspects that must be kept in mind. If multi-word verbs cannot be translated equivalently, they can be translated freely or changed, as long as the translation reproduces the original meaning and captures the spirit of the language.

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