

# Multi-word verbs with the verb 'make', and their Croatian counterparts

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**Višeriječni glagoli s glagolom *make* i njihovi hrvatski ekvivalenti**

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Milić

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## Abstract

In this paper, the correspondence between multi-word verbs and their Croatian counterparts will be discussed. The book which will function as a source of the multi-word verbs is “Game of Thrones; A Song of Ice and Fire” written by George R. R. Martin. Since multi-word verbs are seen as a cluster of idiomatic expression, a non-native English speaker could easily encounter obstacles when it comes to understanding the alternate meaning. This paper addresses in multi-word verbs Croatian counterparts, so it should be emphasized that no single multi-word verb in English language could ever be directly translated into Croatian language, owing to the different inner structure of the two languages.

## 1. Introduction

„Multi-word verbs are combinations of verbs with other words that form an idiomatic unit, inasmuch as the meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the meaning of the parts ... In free combinations [treated as a sub-category of phrasal verbs, ST], the verbs and the particles are both transparent in meaning. (Greenbaum 2000: § 11.18) The main subject of this paper will be the analysis of the multi-word verbs with „make“ extracted from the Game of Thrones; A Song of Ice and Fire authored by George Raymond Richard Martin. Another focus of this paper will be identifying Croatian counterparts of the English multi-word verb types suggested by previous research and major reference works.. In order to make this paper easier to follow, it will be divided into three parts. The first part will be a pure theoretical thesis, based on already existing researches which are going to be implemented in this paper. By reading important entries which will be represented here, one will learn more about multi-word verbs. The second part features a detailed english multi-word verb analysis. Examples are analysed and multi-word verbs with „make“ will be translated into corresponding Croatian counterparts. Finally, the third part of the paper contains a conclusion based upon the obtained/derived results.



## 2.1. Multi-word verbs

According to the Cambridge Dictionary<sup>1</sup>, multi-word verbs are defined as verbs which contain a verb and at least one or more particles or prepositions. The term ‘multi-word verb’ itself is taken from Quirk et al. (1985: § 16). Since there are plenty of possibilities of constructing multi-word verbs, they will be seen as such only if acting as a single unit. An important piece of information to be given is the fact that a particle following a lexical verb determines the further behavior of a newly compounded unit. Some of them would be; *against* (belonging to the prepositions); *across* (dual function – either as a spatial adverb or as a preposition); *apart* (functioning as a spatial adverb only). These examples represent three different particle groups. A further division can be made by classifying multi-word verbs after their inner constructions; phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs.

## 2.2. Phrasal verbs

The Collins’s English dictionary<sup>2</sup>, defines phrasal verbs as a phrase that consists of a verb plus an adverbial or prepositional particle, especially one the meaning of which cannot be deduced by analysis of the meaning of the constituents. The same definition was brought by Dixon<sup>3</sup> who adds the condition of idiosyncratic meaning (Smith 1925: 172), which varies in its degree. With higher degrees of idiosyncrasy, the task of deciphering the alternate meaning of a verb becomes easily an impossible mission to take.

“The term ‘phrasal verb’ appears to have been first used in print by Logan Pearsall Smith (1925:72), following a suggestion from Henry Bradley.” (Dixon 39) Before developing a proper name for this type of verbs, there were many other tries of naming them. Since linguistics tends to coin new terminology incessantly, language did the “purification” process on its own. Some of the name suggestions for phrasal verbs were; verb-adverb combination, particle verb, verb-particle combination, verb-particle construction, discontinuous verb, merged verb, separable verb, two-word verb, separable compound, poly-word verb, etc. All of them are to be found in Carstensen 1964: 306-308.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/about-verbs/verbs-multi-word-verbs>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/phrasal-verb>

<sup>3</sup> R. M. W. Dixon (1982) The grammar of English phrasal verbs, Australian Journal of Linguistics, 2:1, 1-42

Even though they were described as almost exclusively idiomatic verbs, there are exceptions which could be seen as very simple ones, and function at least to a certain degree. A particle which constructs the phrasal verb as a single unit does not carry a meaning on its own, neither does it influence the whole construction, but rather defines it in its meaning as a unit, e.g. *turn around*. A contrary example is the phrasal verb *tell off* which is a completely idiomatic unit meaning *to criticize someone*. With that example being given, it can be mentioned that the phrasal verbs come in two different types; intransitive, e.g. *He is turning around*. and transitive, which require an object, e.g. *They have called off the strike*. (Quirk, 1152).

### 2.3. Prepositional verbs

“A distinction between phrasal, prepositional and phrasal-prepositional verbs was first suggested by T.F. Mitchell (1958) and has since found its way into many reference accounts of English.” (Thin 41) Their own their name to the fact that they exist as a combination of verb and preposition, often with idiomatic meaning, differing from other phrasal verbs in that an object must always follow the preposition, as *take after* in *The children take after their mother*. Quirk, on the other hand, groups prepositional verbs into two groups:

- 1) 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:

*I don't care for Jane's parties.*

*His eyes lighted upon the jewel.*

- 2) 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). It can be seen in following examples extracted from Quirk:

*May I remind you of our agreement?*

*Give way to traffic on the major road.*

*The young man was plied with food.*

## 2.4. Phrasal-prepositional verbs

“There is a further major category of multi-word verbs which will be called PHRASAL-PREPOSITIONAL verbs, because they contain, in the addition to the lexical verb, both an adverb and a preposition as particles. Those combinations are largely restricted to informal English.” (Quirk et.al. 1160)

Examples: *put up with (tolerate); look in on (visit)*. These verbs are, also, divided in two groups:

- a) Type I phrasal-prepositional verbs do not require a direct object;

*We are all looking forward to visiting you.*

- b) Type II phrasal-prepositional verbs require a direct object;

*We put our success to down to hard work.*

It is very important, that in b-type example only the regular passive can occur:

*Our success can be put down to careful planning.*

## 2.5. Grammatical tests

As written in Dixon’s piece of work, there are quite a few non – semantical criteria which can help by sorting out phrasal and prepositional verbs from the same basket. An analysis and the examples of such verbs follow in the next chapters.

### 2.5.1. Substitution

“It is well known that phrasal verbs are almost exclusively based on monosyllabic verbs of Germanic origin — the most productive are *be, bear, bring, come, cut, do, fall, get, give, go, hand, hang, have ...* (just two non-Germanic forms belong with this list, *carry and round*). Corresponding to many phrasal verbs there is a polysyllabic verb of Romance origin with very similar meaning.. : postpone for *put off*, suppress for *fight down*, inherit for *come into*, reprimand for *tell off*, and so on.” (Dixon 4).

Back in 1965, Live wrote that substitutability by a single-word synonym is the best and the simplest test for phrasal verbs. Nowadays it is well known, that there are many single-word synonyms for literal combinations of verb and preposition, e.g. enter = *go in*, extract = *take out*, cross = *go across*. Also, there are very many phrasal verbs for which no single-word synonym or partial synonym exists, e.g. *keep in with*, or *hold against* in “*He held against me the fact that I voted for the other candidate*”, or *grow on* in “*Music tends to grow on one.*” (Bolinger 1971:6).

### 2.5.2. Position of Preposition

“It is noteworthy that a preposition can often occur either before or after a non-pronominal postverbal noun phrase. But this is not criterial.” (Dixon 4)

“Positional alternation can plainly not be taken as a criterion for phrasal verbs (as Fraser 1974:1-3 suggests; see also Mitchell 1958, and Bolinger 1971:10-11)” (Dixon 4)

➔ “make up” ➔ possible alternations:

- a) John *made up* a story.
- b) John *made* a story *up*. ➔ *The meaning of the sentence stays exactly the same (object positioning).*

➔ “take after” ➔ impossible alternations:

- a) John *takes after* his father.
- b) \*John *takes* his father *after*. ➔ *Impossible, while the whole meaning of the sentence changes.*

To conclude, there are phrasal verbs which do allow the object to be placed more freely in the sentence, but there are also conditions which must be met, e.g. an object is not allowed to be a pronoun or a prepositional verb, otherwise it cannot come on alternative places (limited to the after-preposition place).

### 2.5.3. Gapping

“A superficial examination might suggest that only literal combinations, and not phrasal verbs, can be 'gapped' (Fraser 1974:3). In fact, the underlying structures we posit perfectly explain the possibilities of gapping.” (Dixon 5)

The point which is intended to be made by quoting the paragraph above is that only literal combinations can be gapped, what is not the case at the vast majority of phrasal verbs, although some exceptions are to be expected.

a) original sentences:

*Jones pulled the old tablecloth off and the new one on.*

*John kept his anger in and his temper down*

b) gapped sentences:

*\*Jones pulled off the old tablecloth and on the new one.*

*\*John kept in his anger and down his temper.*

### 2.5.4. Fronting

“The most common word order in a declarative clause is subject (s) + verb (v) + object (o) or complement: [S] [V] [O]

*I bought a new camera*

Sometimes, particularly in speaking, when we want to focus on something important, we bring it to the front of the clause. This is called ‘fronting’:

I bought a new camera. And a *very expensive camera* it was. (Most common word order: It was a very expensive camera.)

Some elements like adjuncts or complements do not typically belong at the beginning of a clause. When we want to focus on them, we bring them to the front or beginning of the clause. We often find this in written literary or formal contexts.” (Cambridge Dictionary)

The claim can also be substantiated by following examples (Dixon 6)

a) *John ran up a hill/ Up what did John run?/ Up a hill John ran.*

b) *John ran up a hill/\* Up what did John run?/\*Up a hill John ran.*

## 2.5.5 Criteria for distinguishing phrasal and prepositional verbs

Quirk states, that phrasal and prepositional verbs differ from each other not only syntactically, but also phonologically. Based on his work, the examples from the page 1167 will be shortly discussed.

- a) 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.

*They called on the dean.* → *\*They called the dean on.*

- b) When the noun phrase following the verb is a personal pronoun, the pronoun precedes the particle in the case of a phrasal verb, but follows the particle in the case of a prepositional verb.

*They called on him.* → *\*They called him on.*

- c) An adverb (functioning as adjunct) can often be inserted between verb and particle in prepositional verbs, but not in phrasal verbs.

*They called angrily on the dean.*

- d) The particle of the phrasal verb cannot precede a relative pronoun at the beginning of a relative clause.

*...the man on whom they called.*

- e) Similarly, the particle of a phrasal verb cannot precede the interrogative word at the beginning of a *wh*-question.

*On which man did they call?*

- f) The particle of a phrasal verb is normally stressed, and in final position normally bears the nuclear tone, whereas the particle of a prepositional verb is normally unstressed and has the “tail” of the nuclear tone which falls on the lexical verb.

*Which man did they call on?*

### 3. Martin's "Game of Thrones: A Song of Ice and Fire"

The book contains 835 pages. The lexical verb "make" appears 289 times in different combinations. My focus will be on multi-word verbs. After a thorough reading, I came to conclusion that there are six multi-word verbs with "make". These will be analyzed and explained. Translations into Croatian will also be provided in order to draw a parallel between the two languages as can be seen in the next chapter.

## 4. Methodology

Two methods were used in making of this paper; scanning for key details using the search tool of pdf viewer and intensive reading of the book. After a careful observation, I found out that the verb *make* appears 289 times in the e-book version<sup>4</sup> of *The Game of Thrones: A Song of Ice and Fire*. Not all verbs belong to the multi-word verbs group, because some of them can be classified either as simple verbs or free combinations. In order to be able to tell them apart, the grammatical test outlines were applied, namely gapping, substitution, etc. Since they can easily be replaced for free combinations or minor MwV combination, their verb characteristics are also to be observed. So that we can draw out a proper conclusion, a detailed analysis will follow in the next chapter. Not only will they be sorted by their type (phrasal, prepositional or phrasal-prepositional), but they will be also sorted by their trait of (in)transitivity. Therefore, a short definition will be provided, as well as a simple verb wherever possible. To make these verbs closer to a reader, a translation into Croatian will follow. I used two version of the same book: George R.R. Martin, *The Game of Thrones; A Song of Ice and Fire*; Bantam Books, New York, 2011. and George R.R. Martin *Igra prijestolja; Pjesma leda i vatre*; Algoritam, Zagreb, 2009 translated by Tajana Pavičević. As an auxiliary tool by searching/controlling the multi-word verbs, I also used the e-book version, which can be found at <https://www.nothuman.net>. When it comes to definitions, I used several online dictionaries, such as Oxford, Cambridge, Merriam Webster, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nothuman.net/images/files/discussion/2/1815b71a2e633176b1c509f3a186605b.pdf>



## 4.1. Verb analysis

In this chapter, a detailed multi-word verb analysis will follow. The examples of the multi-word verbs with *make* were taken from *The Game of Thrones; A Song of Ice and Fire*. The main task will be to analyse (test) them, translate into Croatian and explain their meaning. Not all tests have necessarily been applied in the analysis (of the verbs).

### 1) *Make out*

- to deal with a situation, usually in a successful way

Translation: *snaći se*, pozitivan rezultat složene situacije.

*'The snow's pretty well covered it now, but I could still make it out.'*

*The snow's pretty well covered it, but I could still find my way out.*

*'The snow's pretty covered it, but I could still ~~make out~~ it.'* (Martin, 8)

Sentence translated into Croatian: *Iako je tlo bilo poprilično*

*prekriveno snijegom, uspio sam se nekako snaći.* (I.N.)

After the analysis, it can be stated, that this is a transitive verb which requires an object (it). Due to its idiomatic meaning, it is almost impossible to replace it by a single-word verb in this particular case. Since Croatian is a Slavic language, it could be translated into a simple lexical verb (*razbrati*), but the idiomatic meaning would be lost, so I've decided to translate it as a reflexive multi-word verb (*snaći se*).

### 2) *Make up*

- to invent a story, poem etc.

Translation: *izmisliti*, *stvoriti* (nematerijalno).

*'Beth, you shouldn't make up stories.'*

*'Beth, you shouldn't invent stories.'* (Martin, 8)

*'Beth, you shouldn't ~~make~~ the stories ~~up~~.'* (Though, Dixon allows such an alternation!)

*\*~~Up~~ what shouldn't Beth ~~make~~?*

Sentence translated into Croatian:

a) *Beth, ne bi smjela izmišljati priče.*

b) *Beth, trebala bi manje fantazirati.* (I.N.)

It is a transitive verb, requiring an object. Since it can not be fronted, one can easily conclude that it is a pure phrasal verb. Again, because of different language structures, this time it was possible to translate it into a single-word lexical verb in Croatian. The same fact goes for the English „translation“, which only confirms its phrasal verb category.

3) *Make of*

- to understand someone or the meaning of something in a particular way

Translation: *shvatiti, razumjeti.*

*'Robert said...Jorah aside, what do you make of his report?'*

*'Robert said...Jorah aside, what do you understand of his report?'*

*'Robert said...Jorah aside, what do you ~~make quickly~~ of his report?'*

(Martin, 108)

Sentence translated into Croatian: *Robert reče...Jorah na stranu, što si uspio iz njegova izyješća shvatiti?*

*Make of* can be replaced by a single-word verb *understand* and an adverb cannot be inserted between the constituents, which just proves us that it is a transitive phrasal verb. This time it was possible to translate it into Croatian using a simple-word verb *shvatiti*.

4) *Make for*

- to go directly toward someone or something.

Translation: *poći prema komu/čemu.*

*'I've told the Khal he ought to make for Mereen.'*

*'I've told the Khal he ought to go to Mereen.'* (Martin 607)

*\*~~For~~ where he (Khal) ~~made~~?*

Sentence translated into Croatian: *Naredio sam khalu da ode u Mereen.*

*Make for* is a transitive phrasal verb, because it needs a direct object and it cannot be fronted, as seen above. Even though it shows some characteristics of a phrasal-prepositional verb (single-word replacing only partially possible), due to its two constituents it'll still be classified as a phrasal verb.

5) *Make (it) through something*

- to not die as a result of an illness or an accident.

Translation: preživjeti, uspjeti, opasnu situaciju držati pod kontrolom.

*'If I took your horse, I'd have twice the chance to make it through.'*

*'If I took your horse, I'd have twice the chance to handle it.'* (Martin, 416)

*('it' refers to the ongoing situation)*

Sentence translated into Croatian: *Da sam uzeo tvojega konja, imao bih dvaput više šanse da uspijem.* (I.N.)

*Make through* is according to the analysis a transitive phrasal verb. Its meaning is rather idiomatic. If the object (it) would be omitted, the meaning would alternate. Another confirmation is the fact, that the whole multi-word verb can be replaced with a single-verb unit.

6) *Make up for something*

- to provide something good, so that something bad seems less important.

Translation: iskupiti za nešto.

*'Lord Tywin would do no such thing, of course, but Tyrion would make up for it when he won free.'*

*'Lord Tywin would do no such thing, of course, but Tyrion would redress when he won free.'* (Martin, 302)

Sentence translated into Croatian: *Naravno da lord Tywin tako što ne bi učinio, no Tyrion bi se po vraćanju vlastite slobode već odužio.* (I.N.)

*Make up for something* is a very interesting multi-word verb to analyse. It has an idiomatic meaning, and the possibility of replacing it with a single-word unit leads us to conclusion, that it is a 'pure' transitive phrasal verb, but it is actually a Type II phrasal-prepositional verb which requires a direct object. This multi-word verb consists of a lexical verb (make), a particle (it) and a preposition (for).

## 5. Conclusion

A language without its own distinctive features does not exist. Certainly, the most "english" thing of the English language is the grammatical category of multi-word verbs. Because of their idiomatic meaning, it is not that simple to understand the meaning only by having a look at the lexical verb isolated from the other sentence constituents. As we established by analysing 289 verbs with "make", it is absolutely impossible to learn a complete "list" of phrasal verbs, but rather keep tracking and reaching for the new expressions making the language richer and richer with new language challenges, such as analysing their structure, which has to be dissected to its own matter. From the analysis, it is possible to conclude that in the book there prevail transitive verbs (6/6) belonging to the phrasal verb group. An example of a phrasal-prepositional verb, which proves to be transitive due to a direct object required, is also to be found (1/6). Since their meaning is rather idiomatic, the meaning of the whole work will depend on the translator's choice of words and way of expressing his/her thoughts. One of the biggest challenges was trying to find a appropriate idiomatic counterpart in Croatian for each verb, so we can often become forced very easily into translating it as neutral word combinations. An example from this work brings it as clear as it gets "*If I took your horse, I'd have twice the chance to make it through./Da sam uzeo tvojega konja, imao bih dvaput više šanse da uspijem.*" Furthermore, translating a multi-word verb displaying idiomatic characteristics was possible in one case only; "*Beth, you shouldn't make up stories./Beth, ne bi trebala fantazirati.*" As it is already well known, some parts of the English language, due to its markable trait of structural creativity do not seem to have a grammatically appropriate equivalent in the Croatian language. The translators do not have an easy task in their hands, but the freedom of (not) translating multi-word verbs into idiomatic collocations should be left up to them. As long as the rules of the grammar are obeyed.

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