also as Thing (i.e. Head = Thing), but they could be considered as embedded Deictics, with the faceted noun (*house, bed, Eiger*) as Thing. The argument for separating Head and Thing is less clear here than with the measure Numeratives; but it is supported by the fact that facet expressions often function as complex prepositions, e.g. *in front of, by the side of*. This gives the analysis in Figure 6-14 (see also the section on prepositional phrases, 6.5 below).

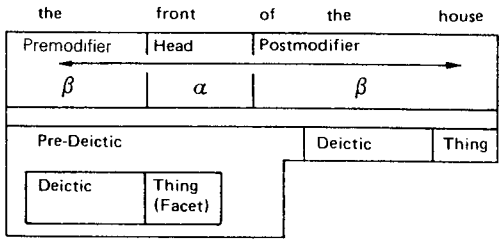


Fig. 6-14 Nominal group with facet expression

6.3 *Verbal group*

The verbal group is the constituent that functions as Finite plus Predicator (or as Predicator alone if there is no Finite element) in the mood structure (clause as exchange); and as Process in the transitivity structure (clause as representation). In the clause

someone's been eating my porridge

the verbal group is *has been eating*.

A verbal group is the expansion of a verb, in the same way that a nominal group is the expansion of a noun; and it consists of a sequence of words of the primary class of verb. If we consider *has been eating* just as a word sequence, it contains a 'lexical verb' *eat*, which comes last; a finite verb *has*, which comes first; and an auxiliary verb *been* which comes in between. No other ordering of these three components is possible.

As with the nominal group, we can express this both as an experiential and as a logical structure, although the relation between the two will turn out to be rather different. Because there is very much less lexical material in the verbal group — only one lexical item, in fact — the experiential structure is extremely simple; and most of the semantic load is carried by the logical structure, including the tense system.

6.3.1 Experiential structure of the verbal group

The experiential structure of the finite verbal group is Finite (standing for 'Finite operator') plus Event, with optional Auxiliary (one or more). Finite verbal groups range from short, one-word items such as *ate*, where the Finite is fused with the

Event and there is no Auxiliary, to long strings like *couldn't have been going to be being eaten* (Figure 6-15):

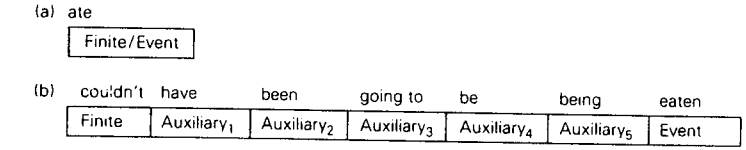


Fig. 6-15 Experiential structure of the verbal group

A striking feature of this structure is its parallelism with the nominal group. The verbal group begins with the Finite, which is the verbal equivalent of the Deictic, relating the process to the 'speaker-now'; the Finite does so by tense or modality (cf. Chapter 4 above) whereas the Deictic does so by person or proximity, but each of these provides the orientation of the group. The verbal group ends with the Event, which is the verbal equivalent of the Thing; the former expresses a process, which may be event, action, act of consciousness or relation, whereas the latter expresses an entity of some kind, but both represent the core of the lexical meaning.

This is not, of course, a coincidence. Both verbal and nominal group begin with the element that 'fixes' the group in relation to the speech exchange; and both end with the element that specifies the representational content — the difference being that, since things are more highly organized than events, there are additional lexical elements in the nominal but none in the verbal group. And it is not difficult to explain why the structures should be this way round. Initial position is thematic; and the natural theme of a process or participant is its relation to the here-and-now. Final position is informative; and the newsworthy component of a process or participant is some aspect of its lexical content. So the structure of groups recapitulates, in the **fixed** ordering of their elements, the meaning that is incorporated as **choice** in the message structure of the clause.

Just as with the nominal group, therefore, there is no call to give a separate analysis corresponding to each of the three semantic components experiential, interpersonal, textual. The textual meaning is embodied in the ordering of the elements. The interpersonal meaning resides in the deictic features associated with finiteness — primary tense or modality — together with any attitudinal colouring that may be present in the lexical verb. And further systematic distinctions of both kinds may be realized by intonation and rhythm: contrast the neutral *he hasn't been working*

// ^ he / hasn't been / **working** //

with a variant such as *he has not BEEN working*

// ^ he has / not / **been** / working //

which has 'marked negative (polarity)' and 'contrastive past (tense)', as in Figure 6-16:

has	not	been	working
Finite present	Polarity: negative: marked	Auxiliary: past: contrastive	Event

Fig. 6-16 Verbal group with marked polarity and contrastive tense

However, the structural labelling of the words that make up the verbal group is of limited value, not only because the meaning can be fully represented in terms of grammatical features (of tense, voice, polarity and modality), but also because it is the logical structure that embodies the single most important semantic feature of the English verb, its recursive tense system, and the elements of the logical structure are not the individual words but certain rather more complex elements. These are described in the next sub-section.

6.3.2 Logical structure of the verbal group

The verbal group is also structured logically, but in a way that is quite different from, and has no parallel in, the nominal group. The logical structure of the verbal group realizes the system of tense.

Consider the verbal group *has been eating*. This actually makes three separate tense choices: (1) present, expressed by the *-s* in *has* (i.e. by the fact that the first verb is in the present form); (2) past, expressed by the verb *have* plus the *-en* in *been* (i.e. plus the fact that the next verb is in the past/passive participle form V-*en*); (3) present, expressed by the verb *be* plus the *-ing* in *eating* (i.e. plus the fact that the next verb is in the present/active participle form V-*ing*). The complete tense can be built up as in Figure 6-17.

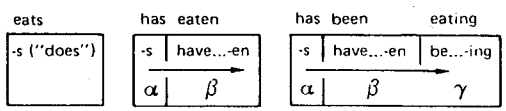


Fig. 6-17 Building up the 'present in past in present' tense

Thus tense in English is a recursive system. The primary tense is that functioning as Head, shown as α. This is the Deictic tense: past, present or future relative to the speech event. The modifying elements, at β and beyond, are secondary tenses; they express past, present or future relative to the time selected in the previous tense. Realizations are as shown in Table 6(6).

In naming the tenses, it is best to work backwards, beginning with the deepest and using the preposition *in* to express the serial modification. Thus the tense in Figure 6-18 is 'present in past in future in past'.

It is useful to have a notation also for the tenses themselves; we use − for 'past', + for 'future' and Ø (zero) for 'present'.

Clearly it is possible to represent every instance of a verbal group by a structural

Table 6(6) Realization of primary and secondary tenses

	primary	secondary
past	V-*ed* (simple past tense) as in *was/were, took, walked*	*have* + V-*en* as in *have been, have taken, have walked*
present	V-*s* (simple present tense) as in *is/are, takes, walks*	*be* + V-*ing* as in *be being, be taking, be walking*
future	*will* + V (infinitive) as in *will be, will take, will walk*	*be going to* + V (infinitive) as in *be going to be*, be *going to take, be going to walk*

analysis showing the Auxiliaries, in a way that is parallel to what is done for the nominal group. However, the elements of the verbal group are purely grammatical (that is, the options they represent are closed — past/present/future, positive/negative, active/passive — not open-ended); so it is simpler just to use a logical notation. The tense of the verbal group in Figure 6-18 could be shown as $\alpha-\hat{}\ \beta+\hat{}\ \gamma-\hat{}\ \delta\emptyset$, or simply as $-\ +\ -\ \emptyset$. There are no general symbols for polarity and voice, but these can be shown by abbreviations: pos./neg., act./pass.; with perhaps only neg. and pass. needing to be marked.

The expression of polarity is tied to that of finiteness, as has already been explained (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2). The expression of voice is an extension of that of tense. The active has no explicit marker; the passive is expressed by *be* or *get* plus V-*en* (past/passive participle), appearing as an additional modifying element at the end. The passive thus functions like an extra secondary tense; and it displays a distinctive combination of presentness (*be*) and pastness (V-*en*) suggesting 'to be in a present condition resulting from a past event', e.g. *are joined* as in *the two halves of the city are joined by a bridge*. For this reason there is no very clear line between passives and attributes having passive form. Examples of the passive are given in Figure 6-19.

For most of the known history of English the number of passive tenses has, as far as we can tell, lagged behind the number of the active ones. But since the system opened up in the way it has done the passives have caught up, and now every active tense has its passive counterpart, formed in this manner as an extension of the

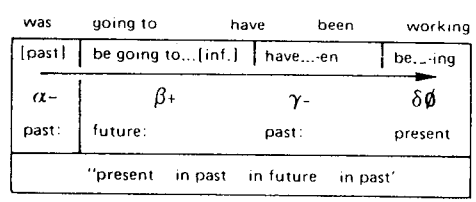


Fig. 6-18 Naming of tenses

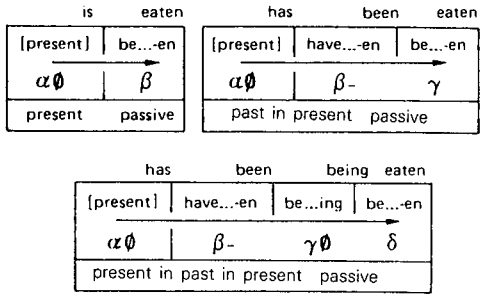


Fig. 6-19 Passive verbal groups

logical structure. The longest tense forms I have recorded in use (five serial tense choices) include an instance of the passive:

it'll've been going to've been being tested
α+ β− γ+ δ− εϕ ζ

This is 'passive: present in past in future in past in future'.

Since the tense system is recursive, there should be no longest possible tense. However, in practice there are certain restrictions which limit the total set of those that occur. These restrictions, or 'stop rules', are as follows:

(i) Apart from α, future occurs only once.
(ii) Apart from α, present occurs only once, and always at the deepest level.
(iii) Apart from α, the same tense does not occur twice consecutively.

That is: following (i), we do not hear *she is going to have been about to do it*; following (ii), we do not hear *he has been having done it*; following (iii), we do not hear *they will have had done it*. These three restrictions limit the total number of finite tenses to 36. These 36 finite tenses are shown in Table 6(7).

6.3.3 Finite, sequent and non-finite tense systems

There are in fact three distinct systems of tense in English:

System I:	finite	36 tenses
System II:	sequent	24 tenses
System III:	non-finite/modalized	12 tenses

The finite system, System I, is the one displayed in the centre columns of Table 6(7). The way it works can be illustrated by building up clauses with associated time expressions. Table 6(8) shows a four-degree tense, *she's been going to have known*, built up from one end and then demolished from the other; each form is accompanied by an appropriate time Adjunct. It will be noted that the order of time Adjuncts is the reverse of that of the tenses; there is what is known as 'mirror concord' between them, invariable except that the one corresponding to the primary tense can be picked out and made thematic, e.g. *by now she's known for some time,*

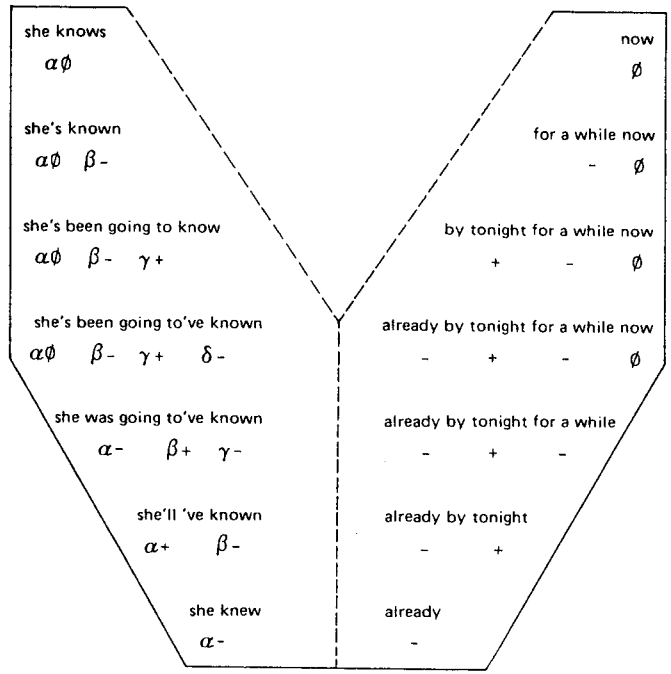


Table 6(8) Building up a complex tense form from the left and from the right, with associated temporal Adjuncts showing mirror concord

for a while she was going to have known already by tonight. The clause chosen is one of mental process, so as to be able to be built up naturally from the simple present.

System II is that which is available following a past projection (see Chapter 7, Section 7.5) such as *they said*. Note the following equivalences:

She arrived yesterday.	They said she had arrived	(the day before.
She has arrived just now.		(just then.
She had arrived before that.		(before that.

What happens here is that in the environment of a 'past' feature, the past element in three of the System II tenses is neutralized; past, past in present and past in past are all represented as past in past. Since there are six such triads, System II has $2 \times 6 = 12$ fewer tenses than System I.

System III is the tense system available in non-finite and in modalized forms of the verbal group. Here a further neutralization takes place, i.e. **both** that in System II (affecting the past) **and** a parallel one affecting the future. Table 6(9) shows the combined effect of both these steps. By step (1), *arrived*, *has arrived* and *had arrived* are all represented by the one form *have arrived*. (This appears as *have arrived*

Table 6(7)

TENSE			Non-finite, and finite modal, tenses (12): read as far as β		Finite non-modal tenses (36): read as far as α	
ϵ	δ	γ	β		α	
			(none)	I	past	1
					present	2
					future	3
			past	II	in past	4
					in present	5
					in future	6
			present	III	in past	7
					in present	8
					in future	9
			future	IV	in past	10
					in present	11
					in future	12
		past	in future	V	in past	13
					in present	14
					in future	15
		present	in past	VI	in past	16
					in present	17
					in future	18
		present	in future	VII	in past	19
					in present	20
					in future	21
		future	in past	VIII	in past	22
					in present	23
					in future	24
	past	in future	in past	IX	in past	25
					in present	26
					in future	27
	present	in past	in future	X	in past	28
					in present	29
					in future	30
	present	in future	in past	XI	in past	31
					in present	32
					in future	33
present	in past	in future	in past	XII	in past	34
					in present	35
					in future	36

Finite non-modal tense		Non-finite, and finite modal tenses: (perfective, imperfective; modal)
1 took/did take		
2 take(s)/do(es) take	I	to take, taking; can take
3 will take		
4 had taken		
5 has taken	II	to have, having; can have + taken
6 will have taken		
7 was taking		
8 is taking	III	to be, being; can be + taking
9 will be taking		
10 was going to take		
11 is going to take	IV	to be, being; can be + going/about to take
12 will be going to take		
13 was going to have taken		
14 is going to have taken	V	to be, being; can be + going to have taken
15 will be going to have taken		
16 had been taking		
17 has been taking	VI	to have, having; can have + been taking
18 will have been taking		
19 was going to be taking		
20 is going to be taking	VII	to be, being; can be + going to be taking
21 will be going to be taking		
22 had been going to take		
23 has been going to take	VIII	to have, having; can have + been going to take
24 will have been going to take		
25 had been going to have taken		
26 has been going to have taken	IX	to have, having; can have + been going to have taken
27 will have been going to have taken		
28 was going to have been taking		
29 is going to have been taking	X	to be, being; can be + going to have been taking
30 will be going to have been taking		
31 had been going to be taking		
32 has been going to be taking	XI	to have, having; can have + been going to be taking
33 will have been going to be taking		
34 had been going to have been taking		
35 has been going to have been taking	XII	to have, having; can have + been going to have been taking
36 will have been going to have been taking		

Table 6(9) Derivation of System III by the neutralization of certain contrasts in System I

	System I	System III
(1)	She arrived yesterday She has arrived just now She had arrived before that	(a) non-finite Having arrived yesterday, she . . . " just now, she . . . " before that, she . . . (b) modalized She must have arrived yesterday " just now " before that
(2)	She will arrive tomorrow She is going to arrive just now She will be going to arrive after that	(a) non-finite Being about to arrive tomorrow " just now " after that (b) modalized She must be going to arrive tomorrow " just now " after that

following a modal Finite, and as *to have arrived* [perfective] or *having arrived* [imperfective] when non-finite.) This is the same neutralization as that which produced System II, the only difference being that the System II form is a finite one, *had arrived*. By step (2), *will arrive*, *is going to arrive* and *will be going to arrive* are all represented by the one form *be going to arrive*, or *be about to arrive* (the two are synonymous as far as tense is concerned), these again having modalized, perfective and imperfective variants.

What happens here is that (i) past, past in present and past in past are all represented by past; (ii) future, future in present and future in future are all represented by future. There are twelve such triads; the total number of tenses in System III is therefore $36 - (2 \times 12) = 12$.

The difference between this and System II is that in System III the effect is simply to eliminate the entire choice of primary tense. System I minus the 'α' tense gives System III. The non-finite or modalized verbal group has no deictic tense element: non-finites because they have no deictic at all (that is what non-finite implies: not anchored in the here-&-now); modalized because, while they have a deictic element (being finite), their deixis takes the form of modality and not tense. Strictly speaking, the first secondary tense of the non-finite should be labelled α, since that becomes the Head element; but it seems simpler and clearer to retain the association of α with finiteness and show non-finites as beginning with β.

Here is an example of a clause complex consisting of two clauses each of whose verbs has selected a System III tense:

(a) non-finite

to have been going to be spending all that time preparing the class . . .
$\beta-$ $\gamma+$ $\delta\emptyset$

(b) modalized

. . . she must have been about to be being inspected
α mod $\beta-$ $\gamma+$ $\delta\emptyset$ ϵpass

The tenses of System III are shown in the right-hand column of Table 6(7). Note that, to save duplication, the **labelling** of tenses for both systems is shown on the left. The class I form of System III is tenseless: that is *taking*, *to take*; *must* (or other modal) + *take*.

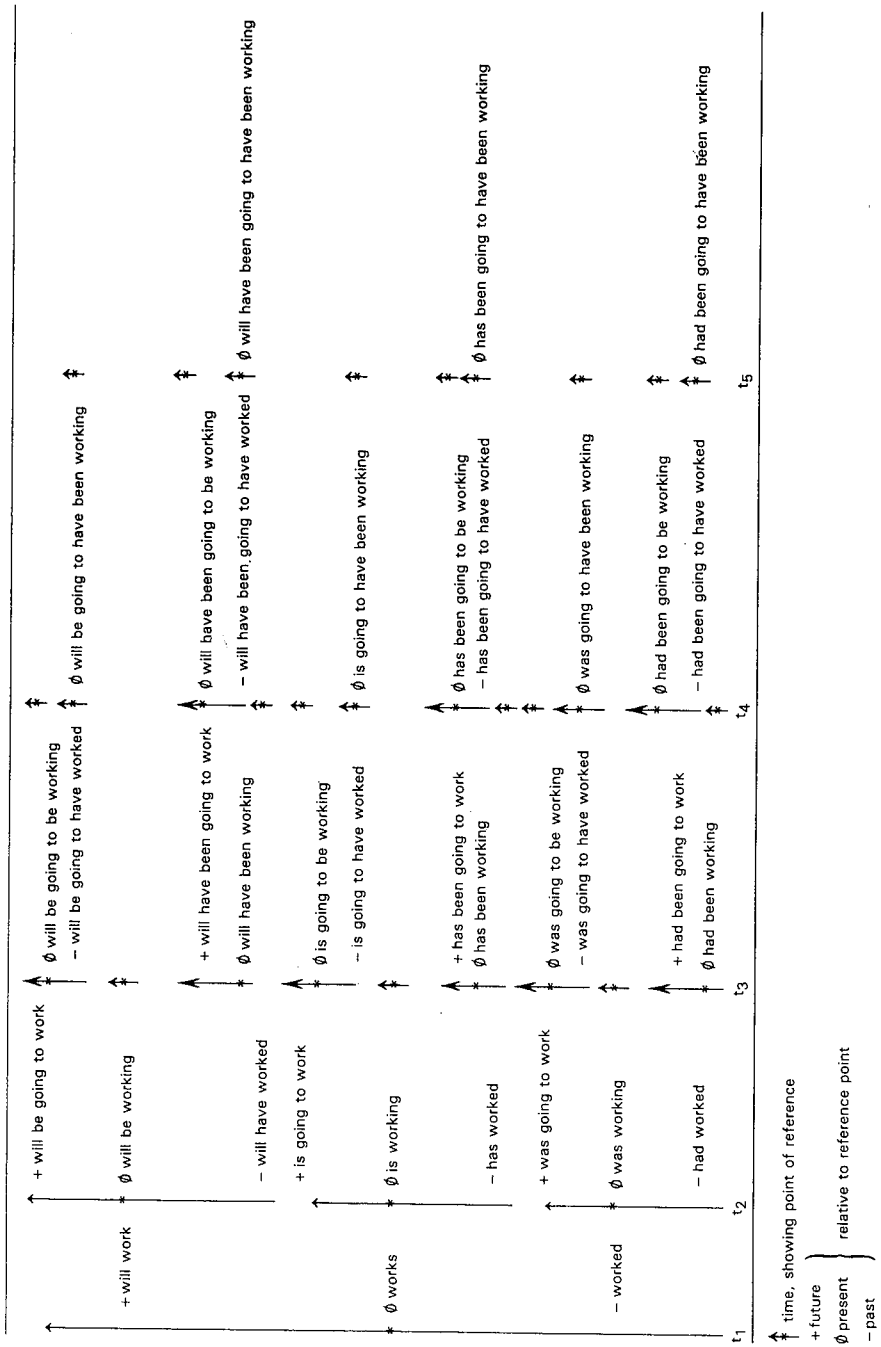
It is possible, obviously, to think of this set of tenses as a list and to represent them all as experiential structures. But this would fail to bring out the regularity in the meaning, which is based on **serial** tense choices: e.g. future (*will do*) → past in relation to that future (*will have done*) → present in relation to that past in relation to that future *will have been doing*, and so on. Also it would suggest a clear-cut distinction between those tenses that exist and others that don't, whereas the system varies for different speakers; moreover it is tending to expand all the time, although it has probably just about reached its limits. What has happened is that relative time — before, at or after a defined time reference — has come to be interpreted, in the semantics of English, as a kind of logical relation; a way of subcategorizing events similar to the subcategorizing of things, except that the latter is multidimensional (and hence lexicalized) whereas the former is based on a single semantic dimension and can therefore be expressed entirely by grammatical means.

Table 6(10) gives an alternative arrangement of the tenses of System I, ordered from the 'Finite' end. This is the opposite to that used in Table 6(7). Column 1 shows past, present and future relative to the time of speaking: say in $time_1$. Column 2 shows past, present and future in $time_2$ — that is, time **relative to** the time chosen at $time_1$. Column 3 shows past, present and future in $time_3$ — again, time relative to the time chosen at $time_2$; and so on. This corresponds with the way the more complex tenses tend to get built up in the course of dialogue; for example,

Does that machine work?				present
— It's not working now. But it'll				present in present
be working when you next need it.				present in future
— Is it going to be working by			present in future	in present
tomorrow?				
— It was going to've been working		present in past	in future	in past
already before you came; but . . .				
	t_4	t_3	t_2	t_1

It is interesting to compare those in Column 3, where out of 27 theoretically possible tenses only 12 are typically found to occur (cf. the 'stop rules' referred to earlier), with the remaining 15 that could be constructed:

(regularly occurring)		(not normally found)	
++$\emptyset$	will be going to be working	+++	will be going to be about to work
++−	will be going to have worked	+$\emptyset$+	will be being about to work
		+$\emptyset\emptyset$	will be being working
+−+	will have been going to work	+$\emptyset$−	will be having worked
+−$\emptyset$	will have been working	+−−	will have had worked



Ø+Ø	is going to be working	Ø++	is going to be about to work
Ø+–	is going to have worked	ØØ+	is being about to work
		ØØØ	is being working
Ø–+	has been going to work	ØØ–	is having worked
Ø–Ø	has been working	Ø––	has had worked
–+Ø	was going to be working	–++	was going to be about to work
–+–	was going to have worked	–Ø+	was being about to work
		–ØØ	was being working
––+	had been going to work	–Ø–	was having worked
––Ø	had been working	–––	had had worked

It is not impossible to construct contexts in which there would be strong pressure for one or other of the latter set to appear. Unfortunately this cannot be tested experimentally, because these complex forms are almost always spontaneous; people cannot produce them under experimental conditions. But the system itself has the potential for being further expanded in this way; there is no clear boundary between what is in and what is out.

6.3.4 Phrasal verbs

The class of word functioning as Event in the verbal group structure is the verb. We can refer to this more specifically as the 'lexical verb' to distinguish it from the finites and auxiliaries.*

PHRASAL VERBS are lexical verbs which consist of more than just the verb word itself. They are of two kinds, plus a third which is a combination of the other two:

(i) verb + adverb, e.g. *look out* 'unearth, retrieve'
(ii) verb + preposition, e.g. *look for* 'seek'
(iii) verb + adverb + preposition, e.g. *look out for* 'watch for presence of'

Examples:

(i) Could you look out a good recipe for me?
— Yes I'll look one out in a moment.

(ii) I'm looking for a needle; could you help me find one?
— Yes I'll look for one in a moment.

(iii) Look out for snakes; there are lots around here.
— Yes I'll look out for them.

* A major point of difference between the verbal group and the nominal group is that the Event (unlike the Thing) is not the point of departure for the recursive modifying relationship. Hence it does not figure as an element in the notation. It could be argued that a phrasal verb represents an expansion of the Event, giving something like
come along up out from under (that table)
α β γ δ ϵ ζ
(or, more seriously, the adverbial part of it, as far as the word *out*). But we have not explored this line of approach here.

Expressions of this kind are lexical items; *look out*, *look for* and *look out for* belong as separate entries in a thesaurus or dictionary. They are thus tending more and more to function as grammatical constituents; but this tendency is far from complete, and grammatically they are rather unstable.

Experientially, a phrasal verb is a single Process, rather than Process plus circumstantial element. This can be seen from their assignment to process types. For example, the verb *see* represents a mental process, and so has simple present as its unmarked present tense, as in *do you see that sign?* (not *are you seeing that sign?*). But *see off* is material, and so has present in present: *are you seeing your brother off?* (not *do you see your brother off?* which can only be habitual). The transitivity analysis is therefore as in Figure 6-20.

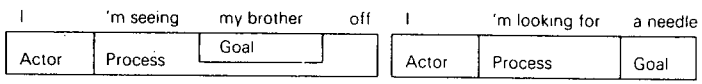


Fig. 6-20 Transitivity analysis of phrasal verbs

The same pattern is reflected in the thematic variation. If the prepositional phrase *for a needle* was a circumstantial element it should be able to be thematized; but we do not say *for that I'll look*; the more likely form is *that I'll look for*. Similarly with the adverbial ones: *see off* is a single process, so whereas we would say *there I'll see John* (= *I'll see John there* but with *there* instead of *I* as Theme), there is no form *off I'll see John* thematically related to *I'll see John off*.

The grammar enables us to explain why phrasal verbs have evolved to the extent that they have done in modern English. The leading edge is formed by those of type (i), the adverbial ones, which are particularly widely spread. Typically these have non-phrasal, one-word synonyms, or near-synonyms; yet the phrasal form tends to be preferred, and is strongly favoured in the spoken language. Why is this?

Suppose we have a two-participant clause, active in voice, in which the main item of news is the Goal. The Goal comes at the end, and this is where the prominence — the information focus — typically falls. We can express the process either phrasally or non-phrasally — there is nothing very much to choose between the two:

they cancelled **the meeting** they called off **the meeting**

Suppose however that I want the focus of information to be the Process rather than the Goal. At this point a significant difference arises. If I say

they **cancelled** the meeting

the result is that the information focus is now non-final; this is a marked, strongly foregrounded option, and therefore carries additional overtones of contrast, contradiction or unexpectedness. I may not want these overtones; but the only way I can avoid them is to leave the focus unmarked — i.e. at the end. This means that the Process, not the Goal, must come last. In Chinese, which has a similar word order and information structure, there is a special construction, the *bǎ* construction, for achieving this; but in English it is impossible — I cannot say *they the meeting cancelled* — unless the Process is split into two parts. This therefore is what

happens, with a phrasal verb: it splits the Process into two parts, one functioning as Predicator and the other as Adjunct, with the Adjunct coming in its normal place at the end:

they called the meeting **off**

This also explains something that is often presented as an arbitrary rule of English, but is in fact anything but arbitrary: that if the Goal is a pronoun it almost always occurs **within** the phrasal verb (*they called it off* rather than *they called off it*). This is part of the same story; a pronoun is hardly ever newsworthy, since it refers to something that has gone before, so if the Goal is a pronoun it is virtually certain that the Process will be under focus. (But not quite; the pronoun may be contrastive, and if so it **can** come finally, e.g. *they rang up me, but apparently nobody else.*)

Figure 6-21 gives the analysis of a clause with a phrasal verb of the adverbial type (i) in it, in terms of (a) transitivity and (b) mood:

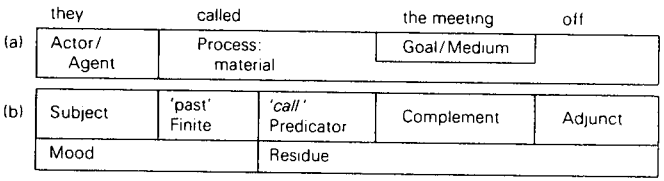


Fig. 6-21 Phrasal verb in transitivity and mood structure

Similarly with the prepositional type (ii): in *I'm looking for a needle*, the mood constituents are *looking* Predicator, *for a needle* Adjunct, and this accounts for the ordering relative to other Adjuncts, e.g. *I've looked everywhere for a needle*. The third type includes some where both adverb and preposition are (or may be) part of the Process, e.g. *look out for*, *put up with*, *put in for*; and others where only the adverb is within the Process, e.g. *let in for*, *put up to*, as in *he let me in for it*, *he put me up to it*. Analyses as in Figure 6-22.

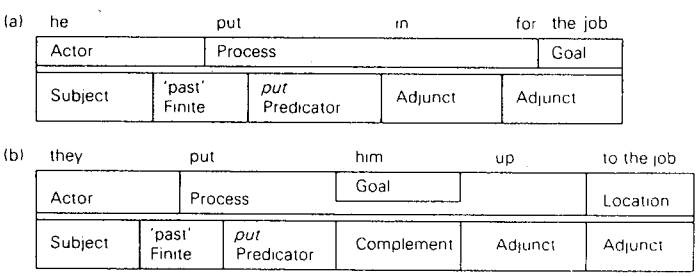


Fig. 6-22 Further examples of phrasal verbs

Expressions of this kind are lexical items; *look out*, *look for* and *look out for* belong as separate entries in a thesaurus or dictionary. They are thus tending more and more to function as grammatical constituents; but this tendency is far from complete, and grammatically they are rather unstable.

Experientially, a phrasal verb is a single Process, rather than Process plus circumstantial element. This can be seen from their assignment to process types. For example, the verb *see* represents a mental process, and so has simple present as its unmarked present tense, as in *do you see that sign?* (not *are you seeing that sign?*). But *see off* is material, and so has present in present: *are you seeing your brother off?* (not *do you see your brother off?* which can only be habitual). The transitivity analysis is therefore as in Figure 6-20.

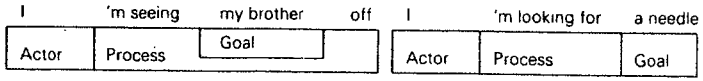


Fig. 6-20 Transitivity analysis of phrasal verbs

The same pattern is reflected in the thematic variation. If the prepositional phrase *for a needle* was a circumstantial element it should be able to be thematized; but we do not say *for that I'll look*; the more likely form is *that I'll look for*. Similarly with the adverbial ones: *see off* is a single process, so whereas we would say *there I'll see John* (= *I'll see John there* but with *there* instead of *I* as Theme), there is no form *off I'll see John* thematically related to *I'll see John off*.

The grammar enables us to explain why phrasal verbs have evolved to the extent that they have done in modern English. The leading edge is formed by those of type (i), the adverbial ones, which are particularly widely spread. Typically these have non-phrasal, one-word synonyms, or near-synonyms; yet the phrasal form tends to be preferred, and is strongly favoured in the spoken language. Why is this?

Suppose we have a two-participant clause, active in voice, in which the main item of news is the Goal. The Goal comes at the end, and this is where the prominence — the information focus — typically falls. We can express the process either phrasally or non-phrasally — there is nothing very much to choose between the two:

they cancelled **the meeting** they called off **the meeting**

Suppose however that I want the focus of information to be the Process rather than the Goal. At this point a significant difference arises. If I say

they **cancelled** the meeting

the result is that the information focus is now non-final; this is a marked, strongly foregrounded option, and therefore carries additional overtones of contrast, contradiction or unexpectedness. I may not want these overtones; but the only way I can avoid them is to leave the focus unmarked — i.e. at the end. This means that the Process, not the Goal, must come last. In Chinese, which has a similar word order and information structure, there is a special construction, the *bǎ* construction, for achieving this; but in English it is impossible — I cannot say *they the meeting cancelled* — unless the Process is split into two parts. This therefore is what

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happens, with a phrasal verb: it splits the Process into two parts, one functioning as Predicator and the other as Adjunct, with the Adjunct coming in its normal place at the end:

they called the meeting **off**

This also explains something that is often presented as an arbitrary rule of English, but is in fact anything but arbitrary: that if the Goal is a pronoun it almost always occurs **within** the phrasal verb (*they called it off* rather than *they called off it*). This is part of the same story; a pronoun is hardly ever newsworthy, since it refers to something that has gone before, so if the Goal is a pronoun it is virtually certain that the Process will be under focus. (But not quite; the pronoun may be contrastive, and if so it **can** come finally, e.g. *they rang up me, but apparently nobody else.*)

Figure 6-21 gives the analysis of a clause with a phrasal verb of the adverbial type (i) in it, in terms of (a) transitivity and (b) mood:

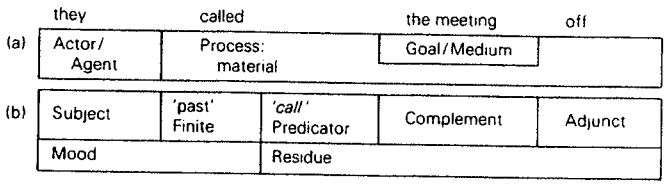

Fig. 6-21 Phrasal verb in transitivity and mood structure

Similarly with the prepositional type (ii): in *I'm looking for a needle*, the mood constituents are *looking* Predicator, *for a needle* Adjunct, and this accounts for the ordering relative to other Adjuncts, e.g. *I've looked everywhere for a needle*. The third type includes some where both adverb and preposition are (or may be) part of the Process, e.g. *look out for*, *put up with*, *put in for*; and others where only the adverb is within the Process, e.g. *let in for*, *put up to*, as in *he let me in for it*, *he put me up to it*. Analyses as in Figure 6-22.

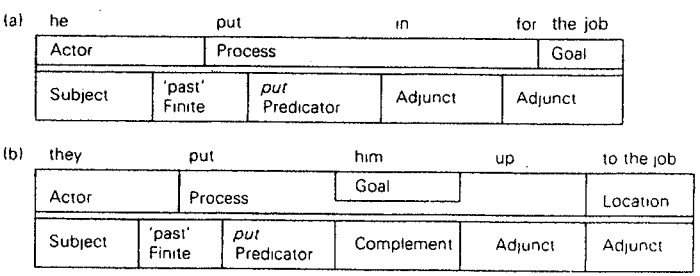

Fig. 6-22 Further examples of phrasal verbs

There will often be doubt about whether these complex lexical items can be interpreted grammatically as a single Process or not. In such cases it is important to consider the transitivity of the clause as a whole, to see whether it appears to be structured as process plus participant or process plus circumstance. Thematic variation often shows a preference one way or the other (cf. Chapter 5, Section 5.7 above).

6.4 *Adverbial group, conjunction group, preposition group*

6.4.1 Adverbial group

The adverbial group has an adverb as Head, which may or may not be accompanied by modifying elements. Premodifiers are grammatical items like *not* and *rather* and *so*; there is no lexical premodification in the adverbial group. What there is is therefore more like what we have called 'submodification' in the nominal group, with SubModifiers relating to an adjective as their SubHead.

We can represent the adverbial group as a logical structure as in Figure 6-23.

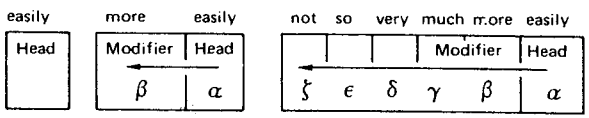

Fig. 6-23 Premodification in the adverbial group

Postmodification is of one type only, namely comparison. As in the nominal group, postmodifiers are rankshifted, or embedded; they may be (a) embedded clauses, or (b) embedded prepositional phrases. Examples:

(a) much more easily [[than you would have expected]]
as grimly [[as if his life depended on it]]
too quickly [[for us to see what was happening]]
not long enough [[to find my way around]]
(b) as early [as two o'clock]
faster [than fifteen knots]

There are also the type favoured in grammar tests, such as *John runs faster than Jim*, where the embedded element is said to be a clause with the Finite and Residue presupposed by ellipsis: 'than Jim runs'. It appears however that these are now embedded prepositional phrases, since the normal form of a personal pronoun following *than* or *as* is oblique/absolute rather than nominative: *John runs faster than me* (not *than I*). The same applies in the nominal group when the Head is an adjective: *John isn't as tall as me.*

This is the only instance of embedding other than in a nominal group. All other embedding in English is a form of nominalization, where a group, phrase or clause comes to function as part of, or in place of (i.e. as the whole of), a nominal group. See further Chapter 7, Sections 7.4 and 7.5 below.

Strictly speaking the domain of these comparative Postmodifiers is not the Head of the group but an item within the Premodifier: *as, more, less, too* (the exception is *-er* comparatives like *faster*). This could be shown as in Figure 6-24 (a); cf. the nominal group, where given *a better man than I am* we could show *than I am* as dependent on *better* rather than on *man*.* But this is not really necessary: structure is not the appropriate concept for interpreting semantic domain, and the locus of comparison may in any case be part of the Head (the *-er* in *faster, readilier*) or even part of the Postmodifier (the exceptional form *enough*, which follows the Head). It seems unnecessary to represent pairs such as *too fast (for me) to follow, slowly enough (for me) to follow*, or *as fast as I could count, faster than I could count*, as having different structures. They can be analysed as in Figure 6-24(b).

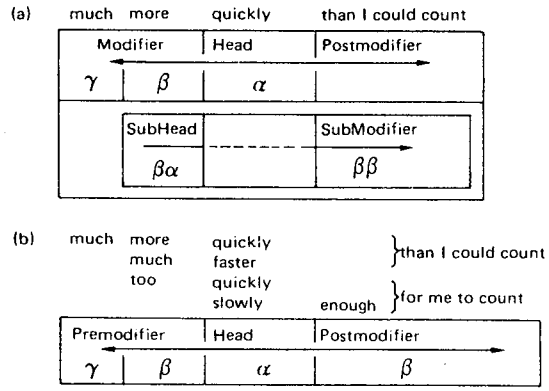

Fig. 6-24 Adverbial groups with embedded Postmodifiers

6.4.2 Conjunction group

Within the 'primary' word class of adverbials, there is another class besides adverbs, namely conjunctions. Their roles in the grammar are described in Chapter 7; they form three sub-classes, namely linker, binder and continuative.

Conjunctions also form word groups by modification, for example *even if, just as, not until, if only*. These can be represented in the same way, as $\beta \hat{} \alpha$ structures (or $\alpha \hat{} \beta$ in the case of *if only*). Note however that many conjunctive expressions have evolved from more complex structures, e.g. *as soon as, in case, by the time, nevertheless, insofar as*. These can be treated as single elements without further analysis. They are themselves, of course, subject to modification, e.g. *just in case, almost as soon as.*

* Cf. *the brightest star in the sky*, where *in the sky* would modify *brightest*.

6.4.3 Preposition group

Prepositions are not a sub-class of adverbials; functionally they are related to verbs. But they form groups by modification, in the same way as conjunctions; e.g. *right behind, not without, all along, way off* as in *right behind the door, not without some misgivings, all along the beach, way off the mark.*

Again there are more complex forms, such as *in front of, for the sake of*, which can be left unanalysed. These are also subject to modification, as in *just for the sake of, immediately in front of.* It is important to make a distinction between a PREPOSITION GROUP, such as *right behind* or *immediately in front of*, which is a Modifier–Head structure expanded from and functionally equivalent to a preposition, and a PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE, which is not an expansion of anything but a clause-like structure in which the Process/Predicator function is performed by a preposition and not by a verb. Prepositional phrases are discussed in the final subsection of this chapter (6.5).

Complex prepositions such as *in front (of), for the sake (of)*, have evolved from prepositional phrases, with *front, sake* as 'Complement'. Many expressions are indeterminate between the two, for example *by the side of, as an alternative to, on the grounds of*; expressions like these are on the way to becoming prepositions but have not quite got there. In general however there is a difference; those which have become prepositions typically occur without a Deictic preceding the noun (*in front of*, not *in the front of*), and the noun occurs in the singular only (*in front of*, not *in fronts of*). In some instances duplex forms occur: *beside* has become a full preposition, but because it is often used in an abstract or metaphorical sense a modern version of the original complex form *by the side of* has reappeared along with it, and this in its turn is now starting to follow the same route towards prepositional status.

6.5 *Prepositional phrase*

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition plus a nominal group, for example *on the burning deck.*

We have explained a preposition as a minor verb. On the interpersonal dimension it functions as a minor Predicator having a nominal group as its Complement; and, as we saw above in Sections 4.3 and 5.8, this is felt to be essentially no different from the Complement of a 'full' Predicator — prepositional Complements increasingly tend to have the same potential for becoming Subject, as in *this floor shouldn't be walked on for a few days.* No doubt one reason for this tendency has been the lexical unity of phrasal verbs, referred to in Section 6.3; because *look up to* is a single lexical item, with a one-word near-synonym *admire*, it is natural to parallel *people have always looked up to her* with *she's always been looked up to.*

Thus the internal structure of *across the lake* is like that of *crossing the lake*, with a non-finite verb as Predicator. In some instances there is a non-finite verb that is more or less interchangeable with the preposition, e.g. *near/adjoining (the house), without/not wearing (a hat), about/concerning (the trial).* There is in fact an area of overlap between prepositional phrases and non-finite clauses; some instances can

be interpreted as either, and some non-finite verb forms can be classified as prepositions, e.g. *regarding, considering, including.* In principle, a non-finite clause implies a potential Subject, whereas a prepositional phrase does not; but the prevalence of so-called 'hanging participles' shows that this constraint is not always taken very seriously (e.g. *it's cold not wearing a hat*). More significant is the fact that **non-finite clauses are clauses**; that is, they can be expanded to include other elements of clause structure, whereas prepositional phrases cannot. One can say either *he left the city in his wife's car* or *he left the city taking his wife's car*; but only the latter can be expanded to *he left the city taking his wife's car quietly out of the driveway.*

Likewise on the experiential dimension the preposition functions as a minor Process. The nominal group corresponds in function to one or other of the participants Range, Goal or Attribute, though without any very clear distinction among them. We shall interpret it in all cases as a Range. But the constituency is the same whether we represent the prepositional phrase experientially, as in Figure 6-25 (a), or interpersonally, as in 6-25 (b).

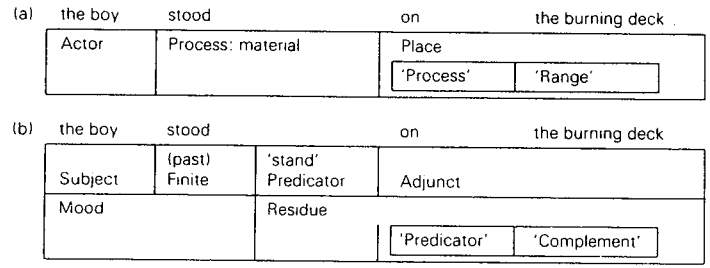

Fig. 6-25 Representation of the prepositional phrase

But note that prepositional phrases are phrases, not groups; they have no logical structure as Head and Modifier, and cannot be reduced to a single element. In this respect, they are clause-like rather than group-like; hence when we interpret the preposition as 'minor Predicator' and 'minor Process' we are interpreting the prepositional phrase as a kind of 'minor clause' — which is what it is.

As regards its own function, a prepositional phrase occurs either (i) as Adjunct in a clause, or (ii) as Qualifier in a nominal group, for example *on the radio* in (i) *I heard good news on the radio*, (ii) *the news on the radio was good.* As Adjunct, it may also occur initially, as marked Theme; e.g. *on the radio I heard good news.* The exception is prepositional phrases with *of*, which normally occur only in function (ii); the reason is that they are not typical prepositional phrases, because in most of its contexts of use *of* is functioning not as minor Process/Predicator but rather as a structure marker in the nominal group (cf. *to* as structure marker in the verbal group). Hence *of* phrases occur as clause elements only in two cases: (1) as circumstance of Matter, e.g. *Of George Washington it is said that he never told a lie*, (2) as one of a cluster of circumstances expressing a sense of 'source', all ultimately deriving from abstract Locative 'from': *died/was cured of cancer, accused/convicted/acquitted of murder*, and so on.