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DIMENSIONS OF (NON)-ANTONYMY IN ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS *PUT ON* AND *TAKE OFF* THROUGH THE LENS OF COGNITIVE SEMANTICS

Abstract

This paper is an attempt at decoding the labyrinthine semantic structure of the opposite English phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off* examined through the lens of cognitive semantics. Even though this phrasal verb pair is traditionally viewed as antonymic, a closer look at the overall conceptual-semantic structure of these two phrasal verbs casts a different light on their meaning(s), consequently their semantic relation(s) as well. More specifically, it is demonstrated that, despite the obvious antonymy exemplified by numerous meanings, a considerable number of meanings, nevertheless, fail to show any signs of mutual oppositeness when the complete radial networks of the phrasal verbs' meanings are respectively elaborated and then compared. The paper concludes that the actual degree of the *put on* and *take off* oppositeness can be determined more precisely in the light of their image-schematic structure (the *SUPPORT* schema) and conceptual mappings underlying the constituent particles *on* and *off* making up the given phrasal verbs.

Key words: phrasal verbs, *put on*, *take off*, antonymy, semantic motivation, radial structure, *SUPPORT* image schema, spatial configuration, conceptual mapping

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1. Introduction

The paper deals with the complex conceptual semantic dimensions of the opposite phrasal verbs *put on* : *take off*, whose semantic structures are viewed as polycentric categories of meaning.¹ Set against the theoretical underpinnings of cognitive linguistics, the research is concentrated on determining respective radial structures of the aforementioned phrasal verb pair's related meanings, motivated by different conceptual mechanisms grounded in the constituent particles *on* and *off* (stemming from the SUPPORT image schema and further extended via various conceptual mappings) with a view to ascertaining the cognitive salience of the pair's oppositeness of meaning. With regard to this, this investigation is aimed at: 1) identifying the intricate meaning network of the phrasal verb pair *put on* : *take off* in the light of conceptual mechanisms structuring the semantic dimensions of *on* and *off*; 2) examining the cognitive entrenchment of antonymic relations and the cases of potential (non)-activation of oppositeness of meaning between different senses of the phrasal verb pair. The paper is structured as follows: the theoretical considerations are given in Sections 2 and 3, the methodology and data analysis are outlined in Section 4, the research findings are presented, organised and explicated in Section 5, and the results and further research implications are summarised and proposed in the concluding Section 6.

2. Phrasal verbs in the light of cognitive linguistics

A semantic analysis of phrasal verbs has always posed a complex undertaking for linguists. This was particularly evident in the pre-cognitivist era when the meaning of phrasal verbs was perceived as largely arbitrary, non-transparent and unpredictable (Live 1965; Bolinger 1971; Lipka 1972). However, over the years, different studies building on the cognitive linguistic theoretical framework introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have demonstrated that the semantic dimensions of phrasal verbs are not arbitrary, but conceptually structured, semantically motivated, and systematically organised by various cognitive mechanisms grounded in

¹ Traditionally, this antonym pair is based on the notion of opposite direction – *directional antonymy* (cf. Lyons 1977; Cruse 1986; Murphy 2003; Rasulić 2016).

the constituent particle(s) (Lindner 1981; Lindner 1982; Morgan 1997; Hampe 2000; Rudzka-Ostyn 2003; Milošević 2016a, 2016b; Milošević and Vesić 2017, etc.). The key conceptual tools employed in the phrasal verb meaning analysis through the prism of cognitive linguistics are *spatial schematisation* (Talmy 1983, 2000) or *profiling* (Langacker 1987, 2013) on the one hand, and *radial category modelling* (Lakoff 1987), on the other. Regarding the first two similar notions (spatial schematisation and profiling), they essentially imply that the semantics of phrasal verbs can be explained through the prism of their image-schematic structure, that is, spatial configurations/scenes are responsible for the coding of the semantic structure of the constituent particle. Specifically, one portion of the spatial scene is singled out for primary focus and is typically labelled as *trajector*, whereas the portion singled out in the secondary focus is typically designated as *landmark* Talmy (2000: 182). As for the radial category notion, Lakoff (1987: 91) describes it as a cognitive relationship formed between a prototype (which is a central category) and category members/subcategories (which are viewed as variants of more central categories) in such a way that these (sub)categories of meaning are structured by “chaining with central members linked to other members, which are linked to other members and so on”. The central member of the category (the prototype) tends to be a concrete and physical entity and is explicitly or implicitly extended to more subcategories, which can be either concrete or abstract (extended via *conceptual metaphors* – a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience) than any other member of the category. As Taylor (1989: 111) further suggests, these meaning chains are, in fact, *family resemblance categories* in which “any node in a meaning chain can be the source of any number of meaning extensions”. Along the same cognitive lines, Taylor (1989: 112) argues that “the demonstration that prepositional usage is highly structured has probably been one of the major achievements of the cognitive paradigm”. With regard to this systematically elaborated cognitive approach, the polysemy of linguistic units such as phrasal verbs is generally viewed through the lens of conceptual semantic extensions motivated by the aforementioned conceptual mechanisms with the different senses of a linguistic unit structured and organised as a radial network of meaning (Brugman 1981; Lakoff 1987: 416–461; Tyler and Evans 2001; Brugman and Lakoff 2006; Geeraerts 2006, etc.). For instance, Brugman (1981) tackled the polysemy of the English word *over* by analysing nearly a

hundred kinds of uses of the English word *over* – not only the precise relations among the spatial senses but the metaphorical extensions of the spatial senses as well – thereby demonstrating that different spatial and extended senses of *over* are organised as a radial network (e.g. The plane is flying *over* the hill, The wall fell *over*, She turned the page *over*, The play is *over*., Look *over* my corrections, and don't *overlook* any of them, etc.).

On this view, several authors have so far investigated the lexical-semantic aspects of the particles/preposition *on* and *off* (Yeagle 1983; Bietel et al. 2001; Milošević 2016a, Milošević 2016b). In particular, all these studies posit the *SUPPORT* schema as the starting point in the analysis of the complex polysemic nature of the *on* and *off*'s meaning structure.² Employing the aforementioned cognitive linguistics apparatus, Milošević (2016a) carried out a comprehensive conceptual semantic analysis of the phrasal verbs containing the opposite particles *on* : *off* and additionally explored various semantic relations between them. The findings of the research suggest that a set of systematic spatial configurations predominantly motivates the concrete meanings of the opposite particles *on* and *off*, and are further extended into many abstract domains via different conceptual metaphors and metonymies, which has major repercussions for the various semantic relations holding between the examined phrasal verbs.

3. Cognitive entrenchment of antonymy

Building on Milošević (2016a), this paper explores the semantic dimensions of the opposite English phrasal verb pair *put on* : *take off* from the perspective of their radial structure predominantly motivated by the cognitive mechanisms grounded in their constituent particles *on* and *off*, which has significant consequences and ramifications for the pair's oppositeness of meaning.

² The key structural characteristics of the *SUPPORT* schema are presented in Vandeloise (1991: 186–209) and Bietel et al. (2001). In particular, Vandeloise (1991: 194), explains the *SUPPORT* schema in the context of a *burden/bearer relation* and lists the following key characteristics: a) the burden is generally lower than the bearer, b) the burden is generally in contact with the bearer, c) a part of the bearer is generally hidden by the burden, d) the bearer is generally larger than the burden, and e) the force of the bearer works against the force of gravity on the burden.

The cognitive entrenchment of antonymy has been evident in the cognitive research and accounts over the last few decades. As observed by Rasulić (2020: 138), “linguistic treatments of antonymy appear to increase in number and scope“, shifting from structuralist and logical-semantics views of this semantic phenomenon to cognitively oriented studies (Lyons 1977; Leech 1981; Cruse 1986; Justenson & Kats 1991; 1992; Cruse & Togia 1995; Murphy 2003; Croft & Cruse 2004; Deignan 2005; Rasulić 2015, 2016, 2020).³ This shift towards explorations of the cognitive potential of antonymy was triggered by the new lines of research in which lexical-semantic segments are perceived as realisations of the underlying cognitive/conceptual mechanisms such as image-schematic transformations, radial category modelling and conceptual mappings such as metaphors and metonymies (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987, etc.). These theoretical underpinnings bring the interface of antonymy and polysemy to the foreground, thereby shedding new light on the study of oppositeness of meaning.⁴ Antonymy and other lexical semantic relations are treated as conceptual construals, which are construed on-line and in actual situations of use, rather than fixed, specified-in-the-lexicon phenomena (Croft & Cruse 2004: 97). Hence, oppositeness of meaning is highlighted as a powerful trigger of dynamic meaning construction (Rasulić 2020) and is viewed as a manifestation of different conceptual mechanisms motivating the polysemous structure of lexical units. Resting on Taylor’s (1989: 112) claim that „Amongst the most polysemous words in English, and in other languages which have them, are the prepositions“ and applying the cognitive approach to antonymy through the lens of a linguistic unit’s polysemous meaning network, this investigation is an attempt at exploring the cognitive potential of meaning oppositeness with the example of two highly polycentric phrasal verbs (*put on* and *take off*), traditionally viewed as highly antonymous.

³ Deignan (2005) explores the cognitive potential of antonymy by analysing English terms from the source domains of TEMPERATURE and LIGHT/DARKNESS. Rasulić (2016) deals with the contrastive view on the semantic extensions of *temperature* adjectives. Rasulić (2020) investigates the relation of antonymy from the perspective of dynamic meaning construction with the example of ten pairs of English canonical gradable antonyms (*high/low, long/short, broad/narrow, deep/shallow, thick/thin, heavy/light, hard/soft, large/small, fast/slow, and hot/cold*).

⁴ For a detailed account of the polysemy and antonymy interplay, see Murphy (2003: 173) and Rasulić (2016: 178–180).

4. Methodology and data analysis

Having in mind the primary goals of this paper, the decoding of the complex semantic structure and antonymy relations occurring between the phrasal verbs under examination, several steps are taken. First, different senses/meanings of *put on* and *take off* are extracted from the phrasal verb dictionary *Oxford Phrasal Verbs, Dictionary for Learners of English*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021[2006]. Second, the extracted senses are corroborated and complemented by additional senses recorded in the *BNC* – 21 meanings of the phrasal verb *put on* and 22 meanings of the phrasal verb *take off* have been identified.⁵ Then, all the meanings of both phrasal verbs are grouped into concrete and abstract meanings. In the next step, all the meanings are analysed and organised from the perspective of their radial networks (from central (prototypical) to peripheral meanings), employing different cognitive mechanisms, primarily *image-schematic transformations* stemming from the *SUPPORT* schema manifested as specific spatial configurations underlying the constituent particles *on* and *off* and *conceptual mappings* occurring within specific domains of experience. Then, the radial networks of different meanings structuring the semantic framework of both *put on* and *take off* are compared in terms of their oppositeness of meaning. Finally, the different cases of (non)-antonymy between *put on* and *take off* are analysed, interpreted and explained along the lines of their cognitive entrenchment, stemming from spatial configurations and conceptualisation routes grounded in the semantic framework of the opposite particles *on* and *off*.

5. Results and discussion

In this section, the conceptual semantic structure of the opposite phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off* is identified, analysed and presented as a radial

⁵ The *BNC* examples are used to complement the *put on* and *take off* senses extracted from the phrasal verb dictionary with a view to conducting a more complete and comprehensive investigation. The dictionary linguistic data are complemented in the following cases: 1) the dictionary does not list certain typical concrete senses of the phrasal verbs, 2) the dictionary lists a concrete sense of the phrasal verb, but fails to include an abstract sense stemming directly from the given concrete sense, and 3) the example given in the dictionary is not sufficiently illustrative in terms of conceptual structure of the phrasal verbs investigated in this paper.

meaning category in terms of the different conceptual mechanisms underlying and motivating the constituent particles *on* and *off*. Then, through the prism of their respective radial networks of meaning, the cognitive salience of antonymy occurring between different senses of the given phrasal verbs is examined and explored.

5.1. The radial structure of the phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off*

The following senses/meanings of *put on* have been identified:

- (a) 'Please *put it on* the table' the Trunchbull said.⁶ (BNC)
- (b) Aren't you going to *put* your coat *on*? (OXD)
- (c) She's *putting* her make-up *on*. (OXD)
- (d) She *put on* the brakes suddenly. (OXD)
- (e) Alan and I *put* the lid *on* the coffin and screwed it down. (OXD)
- (f) We *put* Ruth *on* the bus to Carlisle. (OXD)
- (g) The doctor *put* him *on* antibiotics. (OXD)
- (h) I've *put* £10 *on* Sultan's Promise (= a horse) in the next race. (OXD)
- (i) I thought you *were putting* me *on*. (OXD)
- (j) She *put* Tim *on* the phone. (OXD)
- (k) Shall I *put* the light *on*? (OXD)
- (l) I need to get home and *put* the dinner *on*. (OXD)
- (m) She *put on* a Bob Marley CD. (OXD)
- (n) He *put on* a hurt expression. (OXD)

⁶ In the light of cognitive linguistics, the prepositional instances such as '*Please put it on the table*' the Trunchbull said. (BNC), in the case of *put on*, or *Can you take your feet off the sofa?* (OXD), in the case of *take off*, may be treated as phrasal verbs because such meanings typically represent the prototypical/central sense within the radial network of the phrasal verb in question. This prototypical (typically spatial and non-idiomatic) meaning serves as the starting point for further meaning extensions into abstract domains within the phrasal verb's radial network of meanings, motivating different metaphorical and/or idiomatic meanings (e.g. *He put on a hurt expression.* (OXD) or *Can you take any money off this shirt?* (OXD). This view of having both non-idiomatic and idiomatic phrasal verbs is additionally corroborated by the following facts: the abovementioned and similar prepositional instances are listed as phrasal verbs in the phrasal verb dictionary *Oxford Phrasal Verbs, Dictionary for Learners of English*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021[2006]; these prepositional instances are regarded as phrasal verbs by certain authors such as Bolinger (1971), Lindner (1981) and Hampe (2002).

- (o) My answer was no, and about an hour later my boss called me into his office *to put the pressure on*. (BNC)
- (p) 'He *put me on* the committee and now they've persuaded me to open the thing.' (BNC)
- (q) I've *put on* two kilos in two weeks. (OXD)
- (r) The new tax *put 20p on* the price of a packet of cigarettes. (OXD)
- (s) "I telephoned, *put my name on* the list and a few days later I went to the station and left for England" (BNC)
- (t) They *put on* extra trains during the holiday period. (OXD)
- (u) The museum *put on* a special exhibition about dinosaurs. (OXD)

The first of the above concrete senses (*'Please put it on the table' the Trunchbull said. (a)*) denotes a dynamic relationship between two separate concrete entities structured via the spatial configuration TR GETTING ON THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (Figure 1) and instantiates the central sense of *on*. This prototypical concrete meaning is extended to another concrete meaning *Aren't you going to put your coat on? (b)* by means of the configuration TR COVERING LM (Figure 2), which motivates the next concrete meaning *She's putting her make-up on. (c)* via the MULTIPLEX VS. MASS transformation.⁷ The particle *on* in the sense of physical pressure is derived by another route, TR EXERTING PRESSURE ON LM (Figure 3) (*She put on the brakes suddenly. (d)*). The last recorded concrete sense, *Alan and I put the lid on the coffin and screwed it down. (e)*, forms another node of meaning introducing a new PART-WHOLE element in the form of the configuration ADDITION OF A PART (TR) TO THE WHOLE (LM) (Figure 4).

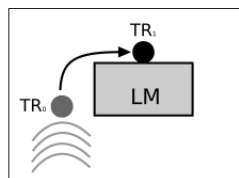


Figure 1: SP-1 – TR GETTING ON THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM)

⁷ Lakoff (1987: 428).

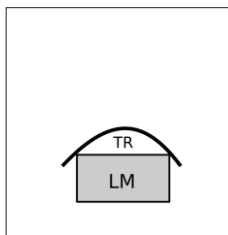


Figure 2: SP-2 – TR COVERING LM

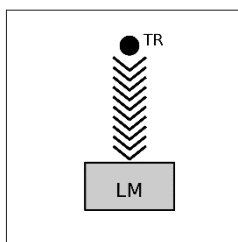


Figure 3: SP-3 – TR EXERTING PRESSURE ON LM

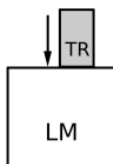


Figure 4: SP-4 – ADDITION OF A PART (TR) TO THE WHOLE (LM)

These underlying spatial configurations, by ‘joining forces’ with conceptual mappings such as metaphor and metonymy, also structure a number of the phrasal verb’s abstract senses. The first chain of abstract senses, (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m) and (n), is primarily motivated by the configuration TR GETTING ON THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) and is additionally construed by the following metaphors and metonymies: *We put Ruth on the bus to Carlisle.* (f) is extended by the metaphors A MEANS OF TRANSPORT IS A SUPPORTING ENTITY

and PASSENGERS ARE SUPPORTED ENTITIES⁸; *The doctor put him on antibiotics.* (g) stems from the conceptual mapping A MEDICAL THERAPY IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT; within the domain of GAMBLE, *I've put £10 on Sultan's Promise (= a horse) in the next race.* (h) is motivated by the mapping A POTENTIAL VICTORY/GAIN IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY; the co-occurrence of the metaphor DECEPTION/MISLEADING IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY and the metonymic chain A PERSON FOR A PERSON'S SENSES FOR A PERSON'S MIND activates *I thought you were putting me on.* (i); *She put Tim on the phone.* (j) is a result of the conceptual coordination of metaphors A PERSON IS THE SUPPORTED ENTITY and COMMUNICATION IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY and the metonymic chain A PERSON FOR AN EAR FOR THE HEARING SENSE; *Shall I put the light on?* (k), which is motivated via the conceptualisation THE SUPPORTED ENTITY IS VISIBLE/AVAILABLE within the domain of ENERGY SUPPLY, constitutes a subcategory of senses including the following senses (l), (m) and (n): *I need to get home and put the dinner on.* (l) – via COOKING IS ENERGY SUPPLY ACTIVATION, *She put on a Bob Marley CD.* (m) – via the co-occurrence of the metaphor PLAYING MUSIC IS ENERGY SUPPLY ACTIVATION and the metonymy CD FOR THE RECORDED MUSICAL CONTENT, *He put on a hurt expression.* (n) – via MANIFESTING MENTAL STATES/CONDITIONS IS ENERGY SUPPLY ACTIVATION. The second chain has one abstract meaning, *My answer was no, and about an hour later my boss called me into his office to put the pressure on.* (o), which explicitly stems from the configuration TR EXERTING PRESSURE ON LM by means of the conceptual metaphor MENTAL PRESSURE IS PHYSICAL PRESSURE. The third chain of abstract senses (p), (q), (r), (s), (t) and (u) is predominantly structured by the configuration ADDITION OF A PART (TR) TO THE WHOLE (LM) as follows: *'He put me on the committee and now they've persuaded me to open the thing.'* (p) is motivated by the metaphor ABSTRACT ENTITIES ARE OBJECTS and the metonymic relation MEMBER FOR GROUP; *I've put on two kilos in two weeks.* (q) is understood as ADDITIONAL WEIGHT IS THE SUPPORTED ENTITY and WEIGHT IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY; *The new tax put 20p on the price of a packet of cigarettes.* (r) is conceptualised via ADDED NUMERICAL AMOUNTS ARE THE SUPPORTED ENTITY and NUMERICAL AMOUNTS ARE THE SUPPORTING ENTITY; *"I telephoned, put my name on the list and a few days later I went to the station and left for England"* (s) is construed by means of the mapping ADDING AN ITEM/MEMBER ON THE LIST IS

⁸ The stated conceptual metaphors for both *put on* and *take off* (see the metaphors for *take off* below in the text) are identified and formulated by means of the observed and ascertained correspondences and similarities between the spatial configurations grounded in the concrete meanings of *put on/take off* serving as the source domains on the one hand, and the different metaphorical meanings of *put on/take off* construed in the abstract domains serving as the target domains, on the other.

ADDING A PART TO THE WHOLE; *They put on extra trains during the holiday period.* (*t*) is a metaphorical extension of the conceptual mappings ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC ROUTES/LINES ARE THE SUPPORTED ENTITIES and TIMETABLE IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY, whereas *The museum put on a special exhibition about dinosaurs.* (*u*) is grounded in the mappings AN EVENT IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY and EVENTS TIMETABLE IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY.

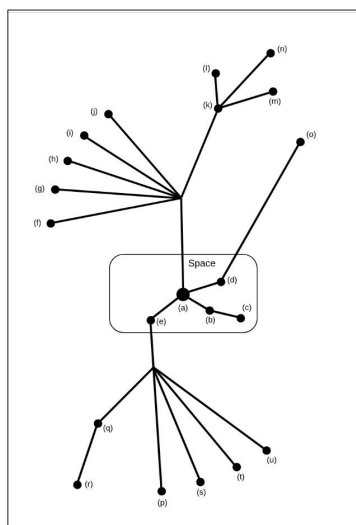


Figure 5: The radial structure of the phrasal verb *put on*

The following senses/meanings of *take off* have been identified:

- (a) *Can you take your feet off the sofa?* (OXD)
- (b) *She took off her coat and hung it up.* (OXD)
- (c) *Always take your make-up off before you go to bed.* (OXD)
- (d) *He stayed for a year, then took off for a job in New York.* (OXD)
- (e) *They took him off to the police station.* (OXD)
- (f) *The flight was due to take off from Heathrow at 13.15.* (OXD)
- (g) *His leg had been taken off above the knee.* (OXD)
- (h) *Sam took the lid off the box.* (OXD)
- (i) *The teacher took the cigarettes off me.* (OXD)
- (j) *I learned about trailer driving the hard way during a competition retrieve, when an enthusiastic crew member took us off the road with an Eagle two-seater in the trailer.* (BNC)
- (k) *His doctor took him off tranquillizers.* (OXD)

- (l) I've got an assistant now, which *will take* the pressure *off* a bit. (OXD)
- (m) Their best striker *was taken off* after 30 minutes. (OXD)
- (n) Sales of mobile phones *have really taken off* in the last few years. (OXD)
- (o) Several people reported that they *had taken off* more than 15 pounds. (OXD)
- (p) *Can you take* any money *off* this shirt? (OXD)
- (q) Smoking *takes* six years *off* the average life. (OXD)
- (r) One of the lawyers *has been taken off* the case. (OXD)
- (s) I *took* my name *off* the list. (OXD)
- (t) The play *was taken off* after a week. (OXD)
- (u) I'm *going to take* the next week *off*. (OXD)
- (v) She *was taking off* the woman next door. (OXD)

The prototypical concrete sense of *take off* (*Can you take your feet off the sofa?* (a)) evokes an image of TR GETTING OFF THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (Figure 6). This central two-separate-entity relationship, then, motivates the next two concrete meanings, *She took off her coat and hung it up.* (b) and *Always take your make-up off before you go to bed.* (c), via the configuration TR UNCOVERING LM, (Figure 7) with (c) instantiating additional MULTIPLEX VS. MASS conceptualisation. Another route of concrete senses is derived by means of the following configurations: TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING (Figure 8) (*He stayed for a year, then took off for a job in New York.* (d)), TR SEPARATING FROM LM BY FORCE AND LEAVING (Figure 9) (*They took him off to the police station.* (e)), and TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING UPWARDS (Figure 10) (*The flight was due to take off from Heathrow at 13.15.* (f)). The next node of concrete senses denotes the PART-WHOLE relationship and is structured via the configuration SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) (Figure 11), exemplified by *His leg had been taken off above the knee.* (g), which is further branched out into the configuration SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) (Figure 12), illustrated by *Sam took the lid off the box.* (h). Another node of concrete senses is motivated by the co-occurrence of the configuration SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) and the configuration THE SOURCE (TR) SPREADING/LEAVING IN A LINEAR DIRECTION (Figure 13) (*The teacher took the cigarettes off me.* (i)). The final recorded concrete meaning chain is extended via the configuration TR DEVIATING FROM THE PATH OF MOVEMENT (LM) (Figure 14), exemplified by *I learned about trailer driving the hard way during a competition retrieve,*

when an enthusiastic crew member took us off the road with an Eagle two-seater in the trailer. (j).

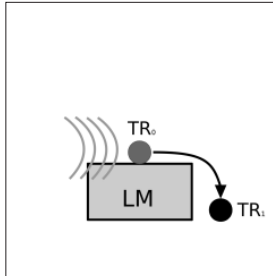


Figure 6: SP-5 – TR GETTING OFF THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM)

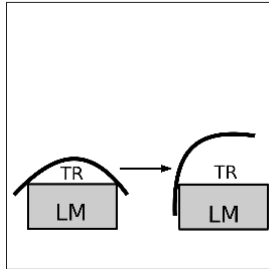


Figure 7: SP-6 – TR UNCOVERING LM

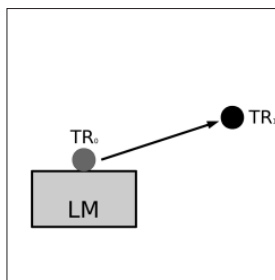


Figure 8: SP-7 – TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING

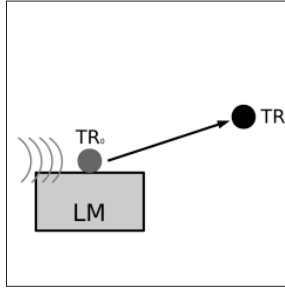


Figure 9: SP-8 – TR SEPARATING FROM LM BY FORCE AND LEAVING

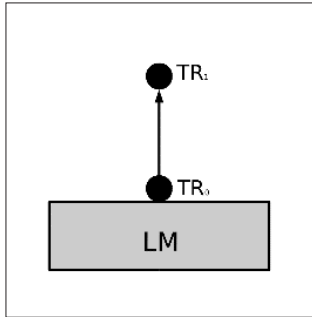


Figure 10: SP-9 – TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING UPWARDS

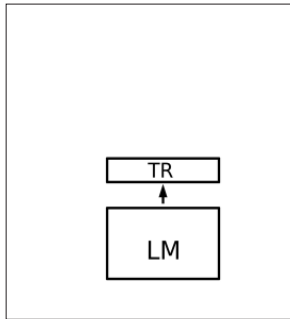


Figure 11: SP-10 – SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)

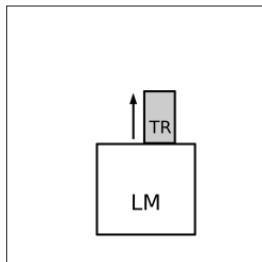


Figure 12: SP-11 – SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)

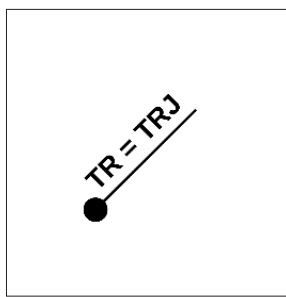


Figure 13: SP-12 – THE SOURCE (TR) SPREADING/LEAVING IN A LINEAR DIRECTION

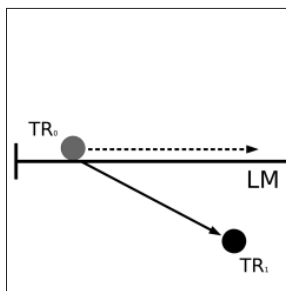


Figure 14: SP-13 – TR DEVIATING FROM THE PATH OF MOVEMENT (LM)

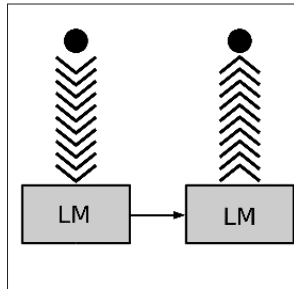


Figure 15: SP-14 – LM RELIEVED OF THE PRESSURE EXERTED BY TR

These underlying spatial configurations, co-occurring with other conceptual mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy, further activate various senses in the phrasal verb's abstract domains. The first chain of abstract senses, (k), (l) and (m), is predominantly structured by means of the spatial configuration TR GETTING OFF THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM), additionally motivated by the following conceptual mappings: *His doctor took him off tranquillizers.* (k) is extended via the conceptual mapping THE LACK OF A MEDICAL THERAPY IS THE LACK OF PHYSICAL SUPPORT; *I've got an assistant now, which will take the pressure off a bit.* (l) (implicitly stemming from the configuration LM RELIEVED OF THE PRESSURE EXERTED BY TR (Figure 15)) is a metaphorical extension via the mapping THE LACK OF METAL PRESSURE IS THE LACK OF PHYSICAL PRESSURE; *Their best striker was taken off after 30 minutes.* (m) is structured by the metaphors A PLAYER IS THE SUPPORTED ENTITY and THE SPORTS FIELD IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY and the metonymy A SPORTS GAME FOR A SPORTS FIELD. The second chain of abstract senses, *Sales of mobile phones have really taken off in the last few years.* (n) is coded by the configuration TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING UPWARDS via the metaphor GROWTH/INCREASE IS A PLANE GETTING OFF THE GROUND. The third abstract meaning chain, (o), (p), (q), (r), (s), (t) and (u), is primarily construed by the configurations SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) and SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) as follows: *Several people reported that they had taken off more than 15 pounds.* (o) is structured via the metaphor UNNECESSARY WEIGHT IS THE SUPPORTED ENTITY and WEIGHT IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY; *Can you take any money off this shirt?* (p) is conceptualised via the mapping NUMERICAL REDUCTION IS THE SEPARATION OF THE PART FROM THE WHOLE within the domain of NUMERICAL AMOUNTS; *Smoking takes six years off the average life.* (q) is motivated by the metaphors LIFE SPAN IS AN OBJECT and TIME REDUCTION IS A PHYSICAL PART-WHOLE

SEPARATION and the metonymic chain LIFE FOR LIFE SPAN FOR AGE NUMBER; *I took my name off the list*. (s) is construed by means of the mapping REMOVING AN ITEM/MEMBER FROM THE LIST IS SEPARATING PART FROM THE WHOLE; *The play was taken off after a week*. (t) is additionally grounded in the mappings AN EVENT IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY and EVENTS TIMETABLE IS THE SUPPORTING ENTITY; *I'm going to take the next week off*. (u) is motivated by the metaphor A PERIOD OF TIME IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT. The final abstract meaning chain, exemplified by *She was taking off the woman next door*. (v), is primarily structured by means of the configuration TR DEVIATING FROM THE PATH OF MOVEMENT (LM) and is additionally conceptualised via the mapping CANONICAL HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IS A PATH (the sub-metaphor IMITATION/IMPERSONATION IS A DEVIATION FROM THE PATH OF MOVEMENT).

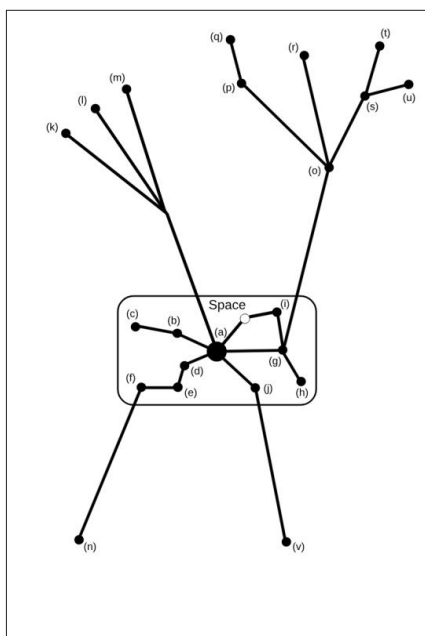


Figure 16: The radial structure of the phrasal verb *take off*

5.2. Oppositeness of meaning between the phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off*

By comparing the respective radial networks stemming from the semantic framework of the phrasal verb pair *put on-take off* (Figures 5 and 16), we have ascertained numerous cases of antonymy between various meanings

of the abovementioned phrasal verb pair. Nevertheless, a considerable number of their meanings show no evidence of semantic oppositeness to each other whatsoever. Both linguistic phenomena (*antonymy activation* and *antonymy non-activation*) could be expounded more closely by the occurrence and non-occurrence of different conceptual mechanisms structuring the semantic framework of the constituent opposite particles *on* and *off*.

5.2.1. Cases of *put on* : *take off* antonymy

Based on the recorded linguistic evidence, the clear oppositeness of meaning between the pair's prototypical concrete meanings *Please put it on the table*' *the Trunchbull said. (a)* vs. *Can you take your feet off the sofa? (a)* is triggered by the complementary spatial configurations TR GETTING ON THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) and TR GETTING OFF THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM). The same complementary configurations seem to motivate the pair's antonymy in the following case of the following abstract senses, *The doctor put him on antibiotics. (g)* vs. *His doctor took him off tranquillizers. (k)*, which are additionally conceptualised via the complementary conceptual metaphors A MEDICAL THERAPY IS PHYSICAL SUPPORT and THE LACK OF A MEDICAL THERAPY IS THE LACK OF PHYSICAL SUPPORT with the same mental space of MEDICINE.

Analogous to this, The *put on* : *take off* antonymy recorded in the following cases of concrete meanings, *Aren't you going to put your coat on? (b)* vs. *She took off her coat and hung it up. (b)*, and *She's putting her make-up on. (c)* vs. *Always take your make-up off before you go to bed. (c)*, stems from the activation of complementary spatial configurations TR COVERING LM and TR UNCOVERING LM underlying the opposite constituent particles *on* and *off*.

The cognitively entrenched antonym relation between the *put on* : *take off* pair in the following case, *My answer was no, and about an hour later my boss called me into his office to put the pressure on. (o)* vs. *I've got an assistant now, which will take the pressure off a bit. (l)*, essentially comes from the complementary configurations TR EXERTING PRESSURE ON LM and LM RELIEVED OF THE PRESSURE EXERTED BY TR, metaphorically extended via the complementary conceptual metaphors MENTAL PRESSURE IS PHYSICAL PRESSURE and THE LACK OF MENTAL PRESSURE IS THE LACK OF PHYSICAL PRESSURE.

The evident oppositeness of meaning exemplified by the following *put on* : *take off* concrete senses, *Alan and I put the lid on the coffin and screwed it down. (e)* vs. *Sam took the lid off the box. (h)*, is conceptually activated

by the complementary configurations ADDITION OF A PART (TR) TO THE WHOLE (LM) and SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) within the same concrete domain of PHYSICAL OBJECTS. Also, this complementary image-schematic scenario primarily underlies the semantic framework of the constituent opposite particles *on* : *off* in a number of their abstract senses, additionally structured via the complementary metaphorical mappings (typically within the same conceptual domain or frame), thereby motivating the activation of antonymy: the domain of WEIGH/CALORIES (ADDING WEIGHT IS ADDING A PART TO THE WHOLE VS. REDUCING WEIGHT IS SEPARATING A PART FROM THE WHOLE) – *I've put on two kilos in two weeks. (q)* vs. *Several people reported that they had taken off more than 15 pounds. (o)*; the domain of NUMERICAL AMOUNTS (ADDING NUMBERS IS ADDING A PART TO THE WHOLE VS. SUBTRACTING NUMBERS IS SEPARATING A PART FROM THE WHOLE) – *The new tax put 20p on the price of a packet of cigarettes. (r)* vs. *Can you take any money off this shirt? (p)*; the domain of LIST (ADDING ITEMS ON THE LIST IS ADDING A PART TO THE WHOLE VS. REMOVING ITEMS IS SEPARATING A PART FROM THE WHOLE) – *"I telephoned, put my name on the list and a few days later I went to the station and left for England" (s)* vs. *I took my name off the list. (s)*; the domain of SCHEDULE/TIMETABLE (ADDING EVENTS TO THE TIMETABLE IS ADDING A PART TO THE WHOLE VS. REMOVING EVENTS FROM THE TIMETABLE IS SEPARATING A PART FROM THE WHOLE) – *The museum put on a special exhibition about dinosaurs. (u)* vs. *The play was taken off after a week. (t)*.

5.2.2. Cases of no antonymy between *put on* and *take off*

The thorough insights into the radial category of the phrasal verb *take off* clearly demonstrate that the spatial configurations TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING and TR SEPARATING FROM LM BY FORCE AND LEAVING structure the following senses of *take off*: *He stayed for a year; then took off for a job in New York. (d)* and *They took him off to the police station. (e)*. However, the radial network of the phrasal verb *put on* suggests that none of the recorded meanings are coded via any complementary configurations, thus failing to provide any instances of antonymy.

The following recorded senses of the phrasal verb *take off*, the concrete sense *The flight was due to take off from Heathrow at 13.15. (f)* and the derived abstract meaning *Sales of mobile phones have really taken off in the last few years. (n)*, are coded by the spatial configuration TR SEPARATING FROM LM AND LEAVING UPWARDS. In line with the previous case, the linguistic

data indicate that there are no recorded instances of *put on* structured via any complementing configurations, and thus no oppositeness of meaning between the pair is activated.

The radial network of the phrasal verb *take off* testifies that the spatial configuration TR DEVIATING FROM THE PATH OF MOVEMENT (LM) motivates the following two senses: *I learned about trailer driving the hard way during a competition retrieve, when an enthusiastic crew member took us off the road with an Eagle two-seater in the trailer. (i)* and *She was taking off the woman next door. (v)*. The absence of a complementary spatial configuration in the semantic framework of the phrasal verb *put on* accounts for the lack of antonymy activation in relation to the two *take off* senses in question.

The linguistic data also reveal that there is no spatial configuration in the radial network of *put on* which is complementary to the configuration SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM), exemplified by *His leg had been taken off above the knee. (g)*, so the corresponding antonym meaning of *put on* is not activated. Parallel to this, the co-occurrence of the configurations SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) and THE SOURCE (TR) SPREADING/LEAVING IN A LINEAR DIRECTION structures the following *take off* meaning, *The teacher took the cigarettes off me. (i)*. However, the linguistic evidence suggests that none of the recorded configurations underlying the semantic framework of the particle *on* is complementary to the configuration THE SOURCE (TR) SPREADING/LEAVING IN A LINEAR DIRECTION, thereby no oppositeness of meaning is switched on.

All the cases of antonymy non-activation between the concrete and/or abstract senses of the phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off* presented so far are fundamentally related to the absence of complementary configurations structuring the conceptual framework of the constituent particles. Notably, all the missing potential complementary configurations fail to occur within the conceptual framework of the phrasal verb *put on*. However, there are cases suggesting that the occurrence of complementary configurations in the semantic framework of the phrasal verb pair under investigation may not be sufficient for the activation of antonymy. Namely, the radial meaning structures underlying *put on* and *take off* clearly demonstrate that the complementary configurations TR GETTING ON THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) and TR GETTING OFF THE PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) motivate a number of the pair's abstract meanings. Nonetheless, if the routes of the further metaphorical extension (via metaphors and metonymies) of the given complementary configurations into abstract domains are different, the complementary

configurations themselves will not be sufficient to trigger semantic oppositeness. For instance, let us see the whole chain of the *put on* abstract senses starting with the sense (h) in the domain of GAMBLE, across the senses (i) in the domain of DECEPTION, (j) within the frame of MEANS OF COMMUNICATION, (k) within the frame of ENERGY SUPPLY, (l) within the frame of COOKING FOOD, (m) within the frame of PLAYING MUSIC, all the way to the sense (n) in the domain of MENTAL STATES/CONDITIONS.⁹ A deep insight into the radial structure of the phrasal verb *take off* reveals no complementary mapping processes (by means of metaphors, metonymies or co-ordination of metaphors and metonymies) activating oppositeness of meaning between the pair for any of the listed *put on* senses. Along the similar conceptual lines, the *take off* sense *I'm going to take the next week off. (u)*, primarily motivated by the configuration SEPARATION OF AN ADDITIONAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) and additionally construed via the metaphor A PERIOD OF TIME IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, has no corresponding antonymous *put on* sense for the following reason: despite the fact that the complementary configuration ADDITION OF A PART (TR) TO THE WHOLE (LM) is grounded in the *put on* conceptual framework, the linguistic data suggest that the given configuration does not code any metaphorical meanings within the domain of TIME PERIOD.

6. Concluding remarks

The research findings indicate that the actual degree of the *put on : take off* oppositeness can be determined more precisely through the lens of cognitive linguistics. By mapping out their respective radial meaning networks and comparing them in the light of their image-schematic structure, which is systematically motivated by the SUPPORT schema underlying the constituent particles *on* and *off* making up the given phrasal verbs, a clearer notion of the *put on : take off* oppositeness is brought to light. The oppositeness of meaning between concrete senses of *put on* and *take off* is activated exclusively by the presence of complementary spatial configurations structuring the semantic framework of the opposite constituent particles *on* and *off*. In addition, the antonymic relation between their abstract senses is triggered by the co-occurrence of the complementary *spatial*

⁹ Various levels of concept hierarchy and levels of schematicity, *image schema*, *domain*, *frame* and *mental space*, are discussed by Kövecses (2020: 50–92).

configurations structuring the particles *on* and *off* on the one hand, and the complementary conceptualisation routes construed by means of *conceptual metaphors* and/or *conceptual metonymies* (typically within the same conceptual domain, frame or mental space depending on the level of schematicity at which the process of conceptualisation takes place), on the other. If any of these conceptually motivated conditions is not fulfilled, the activation of meaning oppositeness between the explored phrasal verb pair is not recorded.

The analysis focuses on the antonymous English phrasal verbs *put on* and *take off*, but its findings may be applicable to other antonymous phrasal verbs in the English language, especially with regard to the polysemy-antonymy interface viewed from the perspective of the theoretical postulates of cognitive linguistics. The research results may also serve as the basis for the exploration of the conceptual semantic dimensions and other intricate lexical-semantic relations between other word classes, not only in the English language, but across other languages as well. Ultimately, the paper has presented some cognitive strategies to a fruitful conceptual semantic analysis, which may provide a solid foundation for further investigation of the complex interaction of language and cognition.

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