GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY AND LEXICAL MEANING OF VERB SET PHRASE
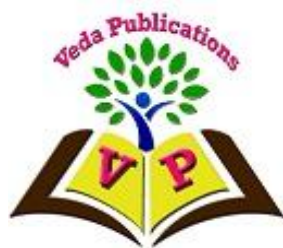
Zheng Yingxue

(Department of Foreign Language, Guangdong Polytechnic College, Zhaoqing, China.)

ABSTRACT

In second language acquisition there is not only homonymy but also the phenomenon of English similar figures with different meanings such as English verb fixed phrase sets. Reviewing the syntactic analysis theories in history, the cognition of dialectical relationship between meanings and forms of English phrases can be helpful for understanding the sentence meaning. Those fruits are widely used in English learning and English for specific purpose (ESP).

Keywords*: English phrases, syntactic function, grammatical forms, semantic aspects.*

INTRODUCTION

English phrases are conventional and fixed. But sometimes the subtle change of position for inner elements in phrases is required to choose different meanings. Those can cause the ambiguity in syntactic analysis. The following examples show the dialectical relationship of variables between forms and meanings in phrases. There is always interpreted theory in the development of linguistics.

1. THE SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PHRASES

1.1 THE CLASSIFICATION OF PHRASES IN SYNTAX

From the grammatical and syntactic functions, the English phrases are divided into four parts: verb phrases, noun phrases, adjective phrases and adverbial phrases. From the relation between forms and meanings, English phrases are divided into free phrases and idioms. In other words, free phrases are organized by denotation and idioms are organized by connotation.

From their classification we can say English phrases have been grammaticalized and lexicalized, which are defined as the processes that English phrases function as the grammatical unit and lexical items in syntax.

The types of differences we are considering involve lexicalization, the process whereby concepts are encoded in the words of a language. Some lexicalization differences may correlate with some cultural factors. For example, the idiom, on the go, lexicalizes the concept "the busy doing something". Only just in idioms there is a little metaphor, while

there is no metaphor in free phrases. The lexicalization can find expression in English words' fixed collocation forming the idioms. Lexicalization can find fully expression in English words' fixed collocation forming the idioms. E.g. another lexicalization option is found in the American language Atsugewi, in which verbs can express both motion and the type of thing that moves.

Concepts that are expressed as affixes or non-lexical categories are said to have been grammaticalized, e.g. negation and conjunction. Words forming into phrases are used as grammatical units, which is called as grammaticalization in syntax. Especially free phrases are forms to be used as grammatical elements. Generally speaking, lexicalization is mixed with the grammaticalization.

Above all, in terms of forms, words forming into a phrase are used as elements in syntax, which are called grammaticalization. On the contrary, in terms of meaning, words forming into a phrase are used as words with parts of speech, which are called the lexicalization. So in English free phrases and idioms are embodied both syntactic rules and semantic truth value rules which can measure the degrees of metaphors.

1.2 THE RELATIVE ANALYSIS OF PHRASAL RULES IN WESTERN LINGUISTICS

Historically there are some analyses of phrases from the angle of syntax. I n syntactic theory Harris brought forth transformational analysis and string analysis by his representative works "Co-occurrence and Transformation in linguistic structure" and "String Analysis of Sentence Structure." Different from Chomsky, Harris' transformations are between surface structures, whereas Chomsky's transformations are from deep structure to the surface structure. According to Harris, when two or more structures or structural sequences contain the same types, and when these structures occur in the same environments of sentences, theses structures can be taken as mutual transforms. Every structure can be obtained from others through particular forms of transformation. For example,

Strike up sth←→striking up sth
Strike sth up←→striking sth up

The structures on the two sides of each arrow are different. But since they contain the same semantic elements, the different structures are therefore mutual transforms. The two phrases have different meanings, but sometimes they have ambiguities.

The basic hypothesis of Harris' string analysis is that a sentence consists of a basic clause and (or without) some additive elements. Harris explained this point with an English example. In "Today, automatic trucks from the factory which we just visited carry coal up the sharp incline," the basic clause is "trucks carry coal"' and the rest are the additives of the basic clause. All the words in a string can be classified into certain word-categories.

As has mentioned above, constituent analysis can divide the sentence into two parts, transformational analysis can divide a sentence into a basic clause and constants that are used to transform a sentence into different types, and string analysis can divide a sentence into a basic clause and additive elements.

Some have pointed out that Harris's theory is circular. Units are derived from distribution, which depends on environments, which are made of units. Others have criticized that Harris extreme attitude toward meaning, saying that while Harris tries to do without meaning, in fact he depended heavily on meaning.

How the English verbal phrases as grammaticalized units based on the meaning to be made the sentence or language environment is researched by pointing the relation between structure and meaning.

Chomsky studies linguistic competence whose aim is to establish a generative grammar. From the angle of human mind, in Chomsky's generative grammar the relation between forms and meanings is revealed. The format proposed in his earliest work allowed for two types of rules: phrase structure rules that form phrase-markers, namely representations in which categorical structure is indicated.

In Chomsky's classical theory, a simple system of phrase structure rules, in this sense, is following:
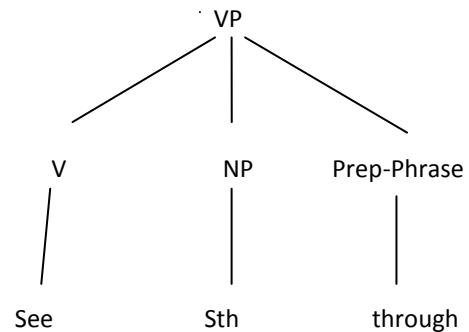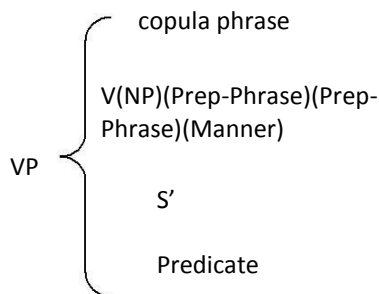
$$S \rightarrow NP \bullet VP$$

$$VP \rightarrow V \bullet NP$$

$$NP \rightarrow DET \bullet N$$

In his standard theory, Chomsky summarized the rules in the Base Component as following:

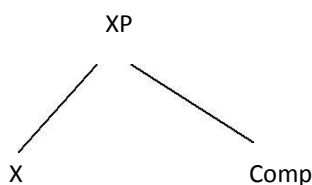$$S \rightarrow NP \frown Predicate\text{-}phrase$$

$$phrase \rightarrow Aux \frown VP(place)(time)$$

VP {
copula phrase

V(NP)(Prep-Phrase)(Prep-Phrase)(Manner)

S'

Predicate
}

Different from his First Linguistic Model, there are now selectional restrictions which ensure the agreement between nouns and verbs. The sub-categorization rules and selectional rules in the lexicon component ensure correct collocations of the verb and the noun. These collocations reflect different minds decided by different cultures.

In his extended standard theory, the transformational rules show that semantic interpretation does play certain roles in the surface structure, but Chomsky still believed that semantics is determined by deep structure。

The Base Component of the EST consists of Phrase Structure Rules and the lexicon. The most significant change here is the use of the "X-bar Theory" in place of the "Phrase Structure Rules". In the EST model, Chomsky rewrote phrase structure as "XP---X Comp" in which "X" can be substituted by any item: Verb, Noun, Adj. and Prep. The tree diagram is:
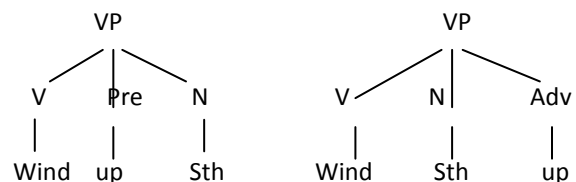
```
         XP
        /  \
       X    Comp
```

The X-bar Theory also contains "intermediate categories", larger than lexical categories and smaller phrasal categories. For example: "see sth through "is a noun phrase. According to Phrase Structure Rules, the internal construction should be:

```
           VP
         /  |  \
        V   NP  Prep-Phrase
        |   |    |
       See Sth  through
```

However,, according to X-bar Theory, "very tall girl" is an element, and this analysis is mistaken. For the AP-N sequence can parallel with another AP-N sequence can parallel with another AP-N sequence, and a string like this is an element or category. So the X-bar Theory can remedy the previous phrase structure rules. It consists of the following categories: XXXX.

The above tree diagrams are X-bar theoretical analysis.

One of the advantages of the X-bar Theory is that it can solve this problem of slight ambiguities. The X-bar Theory can also reveal the different meaning between phrases such as "wind up sth" and "wind sth up". E.g.

```
        VP                    VP
      / | \                 / | \
     V Pre  N              V   N  Adv
     |  |   |              |   |   |
    Wind up Sth          Wind Sth  up
```

Chomsky's X-bar Theory only can settle down the ambiguities of free phrases than Harris theory.

1.3 HALLIDAY'S "FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR"

Halliday's "Functional Grammar" believes the English clause is a composite affair, a combination of three different structures deriving from distinct functional components: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. These three sets of options together determine the structural shape of the clause, which is applied to the analysis of phrases.

The three functional components of meaning, ideational, interpersonal and textual, are realized throughout the grammar of a language. In

interpreting group structure we have to split the ideational component into two: experiential and logical. A phrase is different from a group in that, whereas a group is an expansion of a word, a phrase is a contraction of clause. Starting from opposite ends, the two achieve roughly the same status on the rank scale, as units that lie somewhere intermediate between the rank of a clause and that of a word.

Nominal groups occur in a certain sequence; and the sequence is largely fixed, although some variation is possible.

These two splendid old electric trains

Deictic numerative epithet1 epithet2 classifier thing

Verb group: A verb 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. The experiential structure of the finite verbal group is Finite plus Event, with optional Auxiliary. 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 later expresses an entity of some kind, but both represent the core of the lexical meaning. There are additional lexical elements in the nominal but none in the verbal group. E.g.

Keep up these two splendid old electric trains

Event Deictic numerative epithet1 epithet2 classifier thing

The classes of word which most typically realize these functions are as follows: Deictic1, Deictic2, Numerative, Epithet, Classifier, Thing, determiner, adjective, numeral, adjective, noun or adjective, noun, Numeral occurring as classifier, as in first prize, or embedded nominal group as possessive Deictic, e.g. the day before yesterday's paper.

These word classes---noun (=common noun), adjective, numeral and determiner---are all different kinds of noun; they are sub-classes of this one primary class. The nominal groups can function as: 1) Deictic 2) numerative 3) epithet 4) classifier.

From the point of view of the logical structure of the nominal group, noun phrases can function as verbs, adjectives and adverbials. A verb

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. The experiential structure of the finite verbal group is Finite plus Event, with optional Auxiliary. 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 later expresses an entity of some kind, but both represent the core of the lexical meaning. There are additional lexical elements in the nominal but none in the verbal group.

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 systemic distinctions of both kinds may be realized by intonation and rhythm.

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.

The class of verb functioning as Event in the verbal group structure is the verb. The grammar enables us to explain why phrasal verbs have evolved to the extent that they have done in modern English.

The information focus is now non-final. Arbitrary rule: if the Goal is a pronoun it almost always occurs within the phrasal verb. Thematic variation often shows a preference one way or the other. This change must be kept in a certain extension.

Halliday believes that structure is not the appropriate concept for interpreting semantic domain. Thus the problem of the relation between forms and meanings is not solved in Halliday's

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theory.

2.THE LIMITATION OF THE SYNTAX THEORIES IN HISTORY TO EXPLAIN VERBAL PHRASES

Harris X-bar theory can explain part of ambiguities Chomsky's generative grammar cannot explain the ambiguities of verb phrases. Halliday's theory cannot solve the relation between forms and meanings.

2.1: INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT ON SYNTAX

The development of linguistics has undergone three stages: prescriptive, descriptive and explanatory. Traditional grammar in the two-millennium long period before the nineteenth century and structuralist linguistics in the first half of twentieth century are explanatory.

In fact, the research methodologies and prescriptive have been studied by various schools of linguistics in the past two centuries. The various schools have been shifting between approaches of description and explanation.

Regarding the study of forms and meanings, there are also three stages. Traditional grammar focuses on meaning, structural grammar focuses on form, and Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar tries to combine forms and meanings. All the three approaches seem to be justified for their own purposes. But all the three approaches have not a perfect way to use and understand language. First, excessive emphasis on meaning may lead to a confusion of language with logic, making linguistic investigation less objectivity, empiricism, and verification of linguistic forms without giving due attention to meaning will result in theories that are considerably limited. Third, although combining forms and meanings may seem an ideal approach, such inquiries are faced with problems due to lack of human knowledge on the relation between pragmatic rules and typical contexts of situation. Although there are close relations between the use of language and social contexts, there are too many variables to be taken into consideration. The features of English conventional phrases can show humor, colloquial, and various functional meanings.

In ancient Greece, many philosophers were interested in a number of disciplines, language being one of their topics of discussion. They debated on the origin of language, and the relationship between words and meanings. The classical works, Veda and Sutra, can be regarded as the sources for the earliest grammar. As Sanskrit was looked on as a divine language, their methods of studying the grammar were mainly analytic. At this time, the Indian Scholars discussed the relation between the perceived utterances, spoken or written, of a language and the language itself. The distinction between what is specially said in a certain situation and the abstract linguistic principle is much like Saussure's distinction of langue and parole, Chomsky's distinction of competence and performance, and Pike's distinction of "emic" and "etic" in the twentieth century. In fact, the dialectical ideas have permeated their considerations of two sides on language.

The grammar on any Indo-European language includes as its main component an exhaustive statement of the rules of word formation in the Sanskrit language. Panni's grammar is the earliest grammatical treatise on any Indo-European language includes a s its main component an exhaustive statement of the rules of word formation in the Sanskrit language. Panni's grammar is the earliest grammatical treatise on Indo-European language, and in Bloomfield's words," one of the greatest monuments of human intelligence."

In Chinese Qin and Han dynasties, studies of language focuses on both compiling classical texts and interpreting the meaning of words. The former was called philology, and the later Xungu.

Starting in about the 5th century BC, ancient Greek linguistics was philosophical, more interested in problems on the relationship between language and the natural world, language and human thought, language form and logical form. The famous philosophers in ancient Greece were Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and later Stoic philosophers. The study of meanings, so to speak, was started.

While grammatical criteria can be either morphological or syntactic, semantic criteria can be of various kinds: lexical meaning, translation,

paraphrase, stylistic meaning, class meaning and grammatical meaning.

The most noticeable contribution was in the field of grammar. They separately made detailed studies on the grammatical structure of ancient Greek。The Romans，as well as the Slavs borrowed their writing system from the Greeks. Varro was the most important Roman grammarian.

The middle Ages refers to the period of European history starting from the fall of the Roman Empire in the year 476 and the beginning of the Renaissance in the fifteenth century. During this time, a continuity of Greek thought and learning coexisted in the Eastern Empire with the official spread of Christianity, while in the west much classical literature was lost. This ensured the language a high place, and linguistic studies in the early years of the middle Ages were largely represented by studies in Latin grammar.

The construction of noun and verb is taken as fundamental, as in earlier syntactic descriptions, and the terms "subject "and "predicate "are used to denote the syntactic functions of the two parts of the basic sentence; the modes of signification of the noun and the verb are involved in the interrelations of subject and predicate.

The Arab's achievement in this branch of linguistics was far more successful in terms of descriptive accuracy than that of the Greeks and Romans. The Renaissance itself saw the publication of many of the first grammars of European languages such as Bille. In fact, meaning must be studied from then on.

The rationalist grammars were in several ways the successor of the medieval scholastic grammar. On the basis of the general grammar, Port Royal Scholars took the nine classical world classes (noun, article, pronoun, participle, preposition, adverb, verb, conjunct, interjection).Pot-Royal grammarians wanted to show that the structure of language is a product of reason, and the different languages of men are but varieties of a more general logical and rational system. In making a genuine attempt to write a general grammar, the Port-Royal grammarians drew examples from Latin. Greek,

Hebrew, and other modern European languages underlie their common characteristics. In many ways their ideas are similar to Chomsky's modern theory. For example, their analysis of downgrading function of relative pronouns is somehow like the deep structure analysis.

It is because Wilkins was framing a system of universal or philosophical grammar, applicable to English but not based simply on English, that he was the most radical in revising the tradition of Priscian, who had a follower named by Cooper. Theses scholars on English grammars describe the traditionally accepted framework of grammar instead of their own observations of forms and structures of the language which has been focused by Halliday.

Since then, grammars of English have been written to the present day. By then, forms and meanings were studied separately.

In the 18th century, the contemporary world of linguistic science started. The discovery of Sanscrit by western scholars was one of the principal factors in the development of comparative philology in the 19th century. They studied the problem how language as it was known in historical times could come into being and develop into the present form. Though their research, the philosophical relation between grammatical forms and meanings has been debated in linguistic school.

A prominent representative of the universal philosophical theory of grammar in English during the 18th century was James Harris, an Aristotelian scholar. He held that words are related to what they designate by convention and that language is "a system of articulate voices significant by compact." Harris's system of grammar requires two principles: nouns (including pronouns) and verbs(including participles and adjectives).Another British linguist, James Burnett, saw the connection between human society and human speech.

In the 19th century, the main research problem focuses on the historical comparison among the world language families. The main representatives were Verner, Grimm and Rask. Up to this time, linguists had made a research on linguistic

history.

There appeared a major linguistic controversy about Neo-grammarian doctrine. Neogrammarians realized that the explanations of historical linguistics on language must be based on facts. But their adopted language facts were so limited. They also explained the language phenomena psychologically.

In 20th century, Saussure was the first linguist who made linguistics a science. He contributed the theory of language to general linguistics. Saussure's theories of language include the features of language, the prescription of task for linguistics, historical distinctions between langue and parole, between diachronic linguistics and synchronic linguistics, and sketch a semiological theory in linguistics. Saussure believed that language is a system of signs which are the union of a form which signifies namely the significant or signifiers. His distinction between the linear nature and signifier or signified is the same as the one between forms and meanings. It has been necessary to discuss the links between the linear natures of signifiers and signifies namely forms and meanings since the distinction has been done by Saussure.

The internal relation of linguistic signs is called as systemic grammar by Halliday Saussure's and Halliday's theories belong to structuralism in different stages. From their theories we can know the importance of categorization to be found in grammatical rules.

In 1950's Chomsky's TG grammar can be called a revolution in modern linguistics. He distinguished the linguistic competence and linguistic knowledge. Chomsky sees linguistic competence as one of the characteristics of the human mind. He and Saussure have one thing in common in holding that the task of linguistic studies is to deal with langue or linguistic competence rather than parole or linguistic performance. .Though he put forward three different levels to evaluate grammars on, Chomsky did not provide a successful description of English or any particular language.

Above all, the grammatical theories by Harris, Bloomfield, Chomsky and Halliday mainly adopted the way of segmenting the sentence into phrases for grammatical analysis. At the level of this point, they studied the phrases from forms.

2.2 THE RESEARCH SITUATION ON ENGLISH PHRASES

What's the relationship between syntactic forms and different meanings for the conventional phrases? How do we use those linguistic theories in history to analyze phrases syntactically and semantically? Vice Versa, how do we use correct phrasal forms to make a logical sentence?

In linguistic history linguists studied the syntax in form. They used to make a research on separate forms and meanings. So their views are based on idealism. On the contrary this paper shows the relation between forms and meanings by means of dialectic materialism.

According to Katz's componential theory, meaning is compositional. The way words are combined into phrases and phrases into sentences determines the meaning of the sentences. In other words, the basic units consisting of a text are words, phrases and sentences. Lexicology (about words) and syntax (sentences) are researched by many linguists. Phrases are just only studied in lexicology and syntax by western linguists. Few scholars in China have been recording on phrases.

In western linguistic schools they have used projection rules, categorizations, X-bar theory and functional theories to analyze the phrases in one-sided way. In the all-sided dialectical way we will show the relation between meanings and forms. Namely, we should consider the meanings when we study the grammatical forms of phrases. This point of view is only mentioned in a paper "The New Way to Research on Grammar from Meanings to Forms" in a technical journal. The analysis of the phrases can prove this relation and get rich linguistic dialectical views.

3. THE PHENOMENON OF SIMILAR PHRASES WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS IN SYNTAX.

There are similar phrases with verbal element displacement have different meanings, about which Functional theory can't explain the semantic change. For example:

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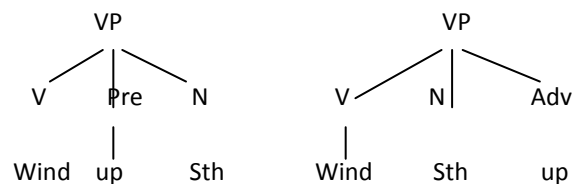|	
strike sth up	演奏
strike up sth	开始结交；认识
see through sb or sth	看透某人，某物
see sb through	帮助某人
see sth through	坚持到底
turn sb out	赶走，开除
turn out sth	生产
touch upon/on sth	简略地论述
touch sth up	修饰（图画文章），润色
testify on my behalf	为我证明
testify on behalf of me	代表我证明
run off with sb or sth	带……潜逃，窃走
run sth off	流走，印刷，生产，流利写出
run off sb	对某人毫无影响
wind up sth	结束某事物
kick up sth	引起骚扰
kick sth up	逐出某物
provide for sb/sth	准备，筹备，
provide sth for sb	供给，供应，备办
provide sb with sth	
present sth to sb	将某物呈递给某人
present sb to sb	将某人引见介绍给某人
present sth at sb	举枪瞄准某人
now then	引人注意
now……then	时而…时而
now and then	有时候，偶尔
keep up	继续保持，赶上
keep it up	振起，使不低落，继续
act sth out	使动作化
act out	演出，
beat out	扑灭
beat it out	演奏
draw in	变短
draw sb in	吸引某人
draw up	停止
draw up sth	起草
call on	号召
call on/upon sb to do sth	要求某人做某事

X-bar theory can distinguish grammatical meaning from those phrases. Generally they are different from "-vi" or "-vt". But they can't distinguish the lexical meanings. Also language environment can settle out the different lexical meanings. How do we recognize the logical-semantic relations with philosophical idea?

4. THEIR ANALYSIS OF PHRASES IN SYNTAX AND LINGUISTIC DIALECTICAL IDEA.

English phrases function as grammatical elements in syntax, embodying the restriction-selected rules of words. All kinds of phrases are formed, centring on the headword. The part of speech of this headword decides the grammatical function of the whole phrase. Let's see how to analyze free phrases and idioms in the way of Chomsky's X-bar theory and Halliday's functional grammar. E.g. Verbal phrase and idiom"
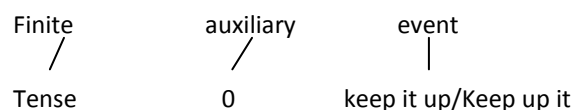
X-BAR THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

```
        VP                           VP
      / |  \                       / |  \
     V  Pre  N                    V   N   Adv
     |                            |
   Wind  up  Sth               Wind  Sth  up
```

In Chomsky's classical theory, a simple system of phrase structure rules, in this sense, is following:

Wind up sth→wingding up sth

FUNCTIONAL THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Finite	auxiliary	event
Tense	0	keep it up/Keep up it

It is because Wilkin was framing a system of universal or philosophical grammar, applicable to English but not based simply on English. These scholars on English grammars describe the traditionally accepted framework of grammar instead of their own observations of the forms and structures of the language which has been focused by Halliday. Since then grammars of English have been written to the present day. By then, forms and meanings were studied separately.

Halliday studies the relations between language and society from anthropological and sociological point of view. The internal relation of linguistic signs is called as sysmic grammar by

Halliday. The relation of linguistic signs with outside is as same as the relationships in the functional grammar studied by Halliday. The philosophical relations between forms and meanings mean the combination of inside and outside, namely dialectics. The behaviourist Bloomfield emphasized langue use which is connected with the view.

These philosophical ideas in linguistic history can guide English verbal phrases learning.

5. CONCLUSION

For English learners the similar verb phrases with different meaning are produced ambiguities. Their grammatical meaning can be analyzed by the grammar theories. The context with grammatical analysis can settle out the ambiguities. It also proves the dialectical view that functional meanings decide the selection of grammatical constructions and contexts of forms explain the understanding of the meanings under the condition of keeping certain extensions. What's more important is that the statement of the language original function can measure the degrees of metaphors in idioms. These fruits can contribute a lot of teaching practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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