

## The Use of Phrasal Verbs on Twitter Accounts

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### Abstract

This research explored the most frequent types of phrasal verbs, the 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs used, and the 5-most-frequent simple verbs used to build phrasal verbs on Twitter accounts. This study used qualitative research to collect qualitative data and used analytical techniques. The data were taken from the tweets of Barack Obama and Katy Perry. After collected the types of phrasal, phrasal, and simple verbs, the data were analyzed by categorizing them. After that, the frequency were calculated and converted to a percentage. The researcher examined as many as 379 tweets from both accounts. The frequency of types of phrasal verbs are idiomatic meaning (73%) and literal meaning (27%). The 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs are *tune in*, *look at*, *get to*, *look forward to*, *sign up*, *reflect on*, *catch up*, *come up*, *check out*, and *live in*. The 5-most-frequent simple verbs are *look*, *tune*, *get*, *come*, and *live*. The implications of this research can be used to prepare teaching materials about phrasal verbs. High-frequency phrasal verbs such as *tune in*, *look at*, *get to* can be included in teaching materials. After that, the teacher can explain types of phrasal verbs, namely literal and idiomatic meanings, and gives examples, so students understand this material.

**Keywords:** Phrasal Verbs, Literal Meaning, Idiomatic Meaning, Simple Verbs

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi jenis kata kerja phrasal yang paling sering digunakan, 10 kata kerja phrasal yang paling sering digunakan, dan 5 kata kerja sederhana yang paling sering digunakan untuk membuat kata kerja phrasal di akun Twitter. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif untuk mengumpulkan data kualitatif dan menggunakan teknik analisis. Data diambil dari tweet Barack Obama dan Katy Perry. Setelah terkumpul jenis-jenis phrasal, phrasal, dan simple verbs, data dianalisis dengan mengkategorikannya. Setelah itu, frekuensi dihitung dan diubah menjadi persentase. Peneliti meneliti sebanyak 379 tweet dari kedua akun tersebut. Frekuensi jenis phrasal verbs adalah makna idiomatik (73%) dan makna literal (27%). 10 kata kerja phrasal yang paling sering adalah *tune in*, *look at*, *get to*, *look forward to*, *sign up*, *reflect on*, *catch up*, *come up*, *check out*, dan *live in*. Kata kerja sederhana 5 yang paling sering adalah *look*, *tune*, *get*, *come*, dan *live*. Implikasi dari penelitian ini dapat digunakan untuk menyiapkan bahan ajar tentang phrasal verbs. Kata kerja phrasal frekuensi tinggi seperti *tune in*, *look at*, *get to* dapat dimasukkan dalam bahan ajar. Setelah itu, guru dapat menjelaskan jenis-jenis phrasal verbs yaitu makna literal dan idiomatik, serta memberikan contoh agar siswa memahami materi ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Verba Phrasal, Makna Literal, Makna Idiomatik, Verba Sederhana

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is currently a concern for English learners and scholars since it is important in language use. Everyone has their own way of pronouncing words. Every word in a sentence is a vocabulary. Even determiners *a* and *an* belong to vocabulary. Vocabulary can be parts of speech such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. A verb is one of the linguistic units in English that has various forms and a major role in forming clauses and sentences. The two types of verbs are single-form and multi-word verbs called phrasal verbs (Dewi, 2019). Phrasal verbs are a type of multi-word verb that consists of the combination of a verb and an adverb as phrase-based

particles (Eni et al., 2017). A phrasal verb is a mixture of a simple verb (such as walk, write) with an adverbial postposition (up, down). The two constituents constitute a single grammatical and semantic unit (Povey, 1990 cited Litvinov et al., 2017). It is impossible to determine a phrasal verb's meaning from its component and adverb. Commonly colloquial, phrasal verbs cannot be rendered literally. The pattern of the phrasal verb is one of the distinctive characteristics of the English language (Rodríguez-puente, 2019).

Phrasal verbs play an important role in language learning. Students have difficulty learning phrasal verbs because they are problematic (Armstrong, 2004). White (2012) stated that students struggle to learn phrasal verbs because they are unexpected, polysemous, frequent, and non-universal. Akbary et al. (2018) noted that it has an uneasy feature for ESL and EFL students. It reveals that although textbooks provide extensive phrasal verbs, students have sufficient exposure to use them. It also reveals that textbooks do not facilitate vocabulary items that represent natural communication. It is very important to provide resources used to facilitate students to learn phrasal verbs that reflect natural communication effectively. It also recommends magazines, radio, movies or movies, social networking apps or websites, podcasts, or TV shows as resources for teaching phrasal verbs. It is one reason that students avoid using phrasal verbs. It also suggested to investigate the frequency of phrasal verbs in magazines, radio, movies or films, social networking applications or websites, podcasts, or TV. The aim is to explore how likely it is for the learner to discover how many useful phrasal verbs are. Similarly, Shahriari et al. (2019) found that it has various forms and meanings that are considered challenging for students.

Students' difficulty to learn the phrasal verbs is influenced by some factors. First, they have lack of linguistic exposure outside the class (Shahriari et al., 2019). Second, English teachers are unaware to teach the phrasal verbs effectively in English class though it is fully laden with the phrasal verbs in EFL textbooks (Armstrong, 2004). Besides, phrasal verbs can confound learners since their meaning may be unrelated to their component phrases, and there are many phrasal verbs in the English language that are commonly used (Sari & Pandiangan, 2021).

Some previous studies examined the phrasal verbs on songs. Akbary et al. (2018) studied the frequency of phrasal verbs in song lyrics of different genres such as Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop, and Metal. They analyzed 400 song lyrics. The findings were compared to Garnier and Schmitt's phrasal verb pedagogical list. The word of phrasal verbs that often appears is "come on".

The difference between the present study and the previous studies above is examining phrasal verbs on Twitter. The current research focuses on examining the Twitter Barack Obama and Katy Perry accounts regarding frequently used phrasal verbs. There are similarities between the current study and Akbary (2018); they both calculate phrasal verb frequency.

### ***Phrasal Verbs***

Most English speakers utilize phrasal verbs in conversation (Thyab, 2019). But, the phrase phrasal verbs has not been found to be comparable in Indonesian (Anggraeni et al., 2020). Therefore,

Thyab (2019) stated that phrasal verbs are essential features of the English language. Some scholars define phrasal verbs. Wyatt (2007) revealed that a phrasal verb consists of a verb and an adverb or preposition. When these adverbs and prepositions are utilized as particles, they are typically referred to as particles. An example of a phrasal verb is hold up, which means "to cause a delay" or "to try to rob someone". The phrasal verbs are features of most English verbs that can be coupled with a preposition or an adverbial particle to provide a new meaning (Mandić, 2017). Phrasal verbs are also known as 'compound verbs', 'verb-adverb combinations', and 'verb-particle construction' (Nasarat, 2018). Rottet (2005) explained that the phrasal verb has a literal or transparent meaning. The literal meaning refers to the meaning that can be inferred easily by looking at the verb and the adverbial particle. The example is 'the balloon went up into the sky'. The phrasal verb also has an idiomatic meaning. The meaning cannot be predicted from the verb and adverbial particle, for instance, 'I can't make out the addresses'. Make out has idiomatic meaning distinguish.

Phrasal verbs are phrases that communicate action. They are frequently used in informal and spoken English. Because they are so abundant in informal English, phrasal verbs are worthy of study. It will be difficult to comprehend informal language if unfamiliar with its meaning. Additionally, appropriately employing phrasal verbs will make informal discussions appear more natural.

### ***Simple Verbs***

Each sentence must have at least one verb. At its most basic level, a sentence can consist of only one verb in the imperative form. Actually, a verb can be a sentence by itself, with the subject, in most cases, implied, such as *sing*, *drive*. However, a verb is a general notion or idea for conception.

Litvinov (2017) stated that simple verbs are the same as verbs. Saviour (2021) stated that verbs are words used to describe an action or a state of being. The verb is the primary word in a sentence. A sentence cannot be completed without a verb (Idioms, 2023). Most verbs provide key information about the subject of a sentence and are central to the sentence's predicate. Whether a verb is literally performing the action in the sentence or merely linking the subject to the rest of the information, they're always 'doing' something.

Simple verb tenses are classified into past, present, and future. While some verb tenses, like present and past tense, can be represented simply by modifying the form of the verb, others, particularly future tense, necessitate the assistance of an auxiliary verb (Albert, 2022). From the definition above, it can be concluded that the function of a verb appears in a sentence is as a predicate. It may be used after the subject or before the object or connects the subject to the object.

### ***Twitter***

Culnan et al. (2010) stated that one of the popular social media widely used for organizations and businesses is Twitter. Twitter is a social media that enables users to share information in a real-time news stream with people who share similar interests (Mistry, 2011). Kassens-Noor (2012) noted that Twitter can be said as a "microblogging" service that is popular and proliferating because Twitter users can post quick short messages, commonly referred to as "Tweets". Besides being able to post

short messages, tweets can upload photos or websites, and they can be seen by the followers who have followed the user. Twitter's purpose is to facilitate the instantaneous and barrier-free exchange of ideas (Högberg, 2015). Sah (2015) stated that Twitter is a well-known microblogging service that allows users to communicate thoughts and information; it can also be used in various professions. Twitter has a significant function in disseminating information (Schreiner, 2018). The material pertains not only to social and political issues but also to English education. There is a possibility to find phrasal verbs on Twitter.

The research questions of this study are:

1. What are the most frequent types of phrasal verbs on Barack Obama and Katy Perry's Twitter accounts?
2. What are the 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs used on Barack Obama and Katy Perry's Twitter accounts?
3. What are the 5-most-frequent simple verbs to build phrasal verbs on Barack Obama and Katy Perry's Twitter accounts?

## **METHOD**

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach with qualitative descriptive as a research design. Creswell (2009) explained that the qualitative research technique explored and analyzed the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human occurrences. This research technique will provide information or representations concerning actualization, social reality, and attitudes about the study aims or targets. One of the benefits of employing this research method is that qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representation but rather with gaining a deeper understanding of a particular issue. Data of the study are 379 phrasal verbs on Twitter. Data sources are Barack Obama and Katy Perry's accounts. 379 tweets were used as a data source after utilized a smartphone to browse Twitter. The tweets were published from 1 November 2020 to 31 October 2022.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Data Analysis of Tweets***

This research explored the most frequent types, the 10-most-frequent and the 5-most-frequent simple verbs, to build phrasal verbs on the Barack Obama and Katy Perry Twitter accounts. In examining the types of phrasal verbs, the researcher used Rottet's theory (2005), which is divided into two categories: literal meaning and idiomatic meaning. To answer the research questions, both accounts' tweets have been collected and analyzed. The researcher found that the most frequent type of phrasal verb has an idiomatic meaning.

### ***Most frequent types of phrasal verbs***

The analysis of the two types of phrasal verbs resulted in 379 tweets from the accounts Barack Obama and Katy Perry. Based on the results, literal meaning totals 102 data, and idiomatic meaning totals 277 data.

The data were analyzed using Rottet's theory (2005) in the types of phrasal verbs. The researcher counted the data and calculated the frequency of the data. The percentages are based on the categories type of phrasal verbs. After calculated the percentage used a formula, the researcher concluded that the most frequent type of phrasal verbs used in the two Twitter accounts is the idiomatic meaning which amounts to 73%. The second type is the literal meaning which amounts to 27%.

Table 1. Frequency of types of phrasal verbs

No	Types of Phrasal Verbs	Frequency	Percentage
1	Literal meaning	102	27%
2	Idiomatic meaning	277	73%
	Total	379	100%

**The 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs**

Among the 379 tweets on Barack Obama and Katy Perry accounts, the 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs are *tune in*, *look at*, *look forward to*, *get to*, *reflect on*, *sign up*, *get back to*, *come up*, *live in*, and *catch up*.

Table 2. The 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs

No	Phrasal Verbs	Total
1	Tune in	35
3	Get to	13
4	Look forward to	11
5	Sign up	10
6	Reflect on	9
7	Catch up	8
8	Come up	7
9	Check out	7
10	Live in	6

Tune in: The phrasal verb *tune in* is used by Katy Perry only. The phrasal verb *tune in* in the example is an invitation from Katy Perry to her audience to watch American Idol.



Figure 1. Example: phrasal verb *tune in*

Look at: *Look at* is the second most frequent phrasal verb. The phrasal verb *look at* is often used by Barack Obama 12 times and Katy Perry 6 times. Based on the example, Barack Obama used this phrasal verb because he had seen his work over the past year.

I'm inspired by the stories of progress that came from 2021—especially the example set by a new generation of young leaders making a difference in their communities.  
Take a look at the work that came out of the [@ObamaFoundation](#) over the past year.

Figure 2. Example: phrasal verb *look at*

Get to: Katy Perry frequently used this phrasal verb 7 times and Barack Obama used it 6 times. Based on the example, the use of *get to* means being able to vote on American Idol.

idol tonight. top 24. finally you get to vote! thank GAWD cause these babies are too good i don't want the responsibility anymore! take the wheel Merica!!! [#americanidol](#) ❤️🇺🇸

Figure 3. Example: phrasal verb *get to*

Look Forward to: This phrasal verb is also often used by Barack Obama 9 times and Katy Perry 2 times. From the example, the phrasal verb *look forward to* is used by Barack Obama to mean that he is looking forward to the progress of the Biden administration

The road ahead will not be easy, especially when one of our two major parties is standing in the way. But I still believe we can create a brighter future together, and I look forward to watching the Biden Administration build on this progress.

Figure 4. Example: phrasal verb *look forward to*

Sign up: Barack Obama used the phrasal verb 8 times, while Katy Perry used it twice. Based on the example, the phrasal verb *sign up* used by Barack Obama provides a link to a list of vaccines for people who need them.

The other day I had a chance to visit a COVID-19 vaccination site in Greenbelt, MD. It was great to see so many folks getting their shot. If you need one, sign up today at [vaccines.gov](#) — and then spread the word so we can keep our families and communities safe.

Figure 5. Example: phrasal verb *sign up*

Reflect on: Barack Obama used it 8 times, while Katy Perry only used it once. The *reflect on* used by Barack Obama in the example is that we can reflect on the blessings and hopes of Easter

This Easter, I hope we can all take some time to reflect on the blessings we enjoy and the hope we have for a brighter future. From our family to yours, have a safe and happy Easter.

Figure 6. Example: phrasal verb *reflect on*

Catch up: This phrasal verb has 8 data. Barack Obama used it 6 times, and Katy Perry used it twice. Based on the example, the phrase *catch up* used by Barack Obama means to meet someone.

Spending time with young folks always makes me hopeful about the future. I had a great time catching up with @ChiPubSchools South Shore students and talking about some of our plans for the Obama Presidential Center.

Figure 7. Example: phrasal verb *catch up*

Come up: This phrasal verb has 7 data. Katy Perry used this phrasal verb 4 times, and Barack Obama used it 3 times. Based on the example, the phrasal verb *come up* that Katy Perry means is that she makes memes at every commercial break.

Us trying to come up with memes every commercial break 🤪 #AmericanIdol

Figure 8. Example: phrasal verb *come up*

Check out: This phrasal verb were used by Barack Obama 6 times and Katy Perry only used it once. Based on the example, the phrasal verb *check out* that Barack Obama means is that if the audience wants to see the film, they can check it out on Netflix.

.@PeteSouza and I have traveled the world together, and he's captured some iconic shots over the years. So we decided to reflect on some of our favorite memories at national parks. Take a look, and make sure to check out Our Great National Parks on Netflix.

Figure 9. Example: phrasal verb *check out*

Live in: The phrasal verbs with 6 data and are often used by Barack Obama 3 times and Katy Perry 3 times. Based on this example, the phrasal verb *live in* means that we live in a media environment where a lot of things are said that sometimes don't match the facts.

Part of the reason it's hard to bring about change is because we live in a media environment that elevates falsehoods as much as truths, and divides people as much as it brings them together.

Figure 10. Example: phrasal verb *live in***The 5-most-frequent simple verbs to build phrasal verbs**

Among the 379 tweets on the accounts Barack Obama and Katy Perry, the 5-most-frequent "simple" verbs to build phrasal verbs *look, tune, get, come, and live*.

Table 3. The 5-most-frequent "simple" verbs

No	Simple Verbs	Total
1	Look	47
2	Tune	35
3	Get	28
4	Come	27
5	Live	16

**Look:** *Look* is a simple verb that appears frequently with a total of 47 words. *Look* has several variations, namely *look at, look forward to, look for, look to, look back, look into, look like, look out, and look up*

Looking at the remaining contestants and the two spots left in the Top 16 realizing that the math isn't math-ing rn... [#AmericanIdol](#)

[#AmericanIdol](#) finale is tonight! Guess who I'm singing with in the comments 🙌 I'll give you a hint - he may look like Ryan Phillippe 🤖

Figure 11. Example: phrasal verb *look*

**Tune:** *Tune* is a simple verb that frequently appears with a total of 35 words. *Tune* has only one variation, namely, *tune in*. *Tune in* is a phrasal verb that appears the most frequently 35 times. Based on this example, tune in to this sentence means to watch a television broadcast.

Get yer wings 🦋 cause I've got yer W.I.G. !! The music video with @Alesso premieres at halftime of the [#cfbplayoff](#) 🏆🏆 tune in to @espn starting at 5:00pm PT @ESPNCFB okuuuur 🤖

Figure 12. Example: phrasal verb *tune*

**Get:** The simple verb that appears third most often is *get*, which is 28 words. *Get* has several variations: *get to, get in, get together, get back, get back to, get ahead, get down, get into, get on, and get out*.

I'm proud to announce that the Obama Presidential Center will officially break ground in 2021. Our hope is that the center will breathe new life into historic Jackson Park while delivering jobs, growth, and much more to the South Side.

Let's get to work.

There's a crack ❤️ in everything, that's how the light gets in @RondaFelton [#AmericanIdol](#)

Figure 13. Example: phrasal verb *get*

Come: *Come* is a simple verb that occurs frequently with a total of 24. *Come* has several variations, namely *come up*, *come out*, *come to*, *come back*, *come at*, *come in*, *come along*, *come into*, and *come together*.

Everything is coming up 🌻 daisies 🌻 tonight on the new episode of @AmericanIdol! We're only on episode 2 but I think tonight will bring double the fun! 🤗👯	America you have all week to VOTE! Who from last season do you want to come back with a vengeance? 🤔👑 #AmericanIdol
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Figure 14. Example: phrasal verb *come*

Live: *Live* is a simple verb that appears frequently with a total of 15. *Live* has several variations, namely *live in*, *live up to*, *live for*, *live on*, *live off*, and *live out*.

.@brhodes has been a close advisor and a good friend for more than a decade. His new book, <i>After the Fall</i> , is a personal, timely look at how America has shaped the world we live in—for better and worse—and the importance of continuing to lead by example. It's a great read!	we're live on #americanidol right now and you have less than 2 hours to vote so HOLD OFF UR DINNER, NO BATHROOM BREAKS 😬, AND DONT LOSE UR RIGHT TO VOTE UR FAV ISNT SAFE
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Figure 15. Example: phrasal verb *live*

### Discussion

This research explored the most frequent types of phrasal verbs, the 10-most-frequent phrasal verbs used, and the 5-most-frequent simple verbs used to build phrasal verbs on the Barack Obama and Katy Perry Twitter accounts. Researcher researched the accounts of Barack Obama and Katy Perry, who have different fields. Barack Obama is a politician, and Katy Perry is a singer.

The researcher found 379 tweets for the phrasal verbs typed in Barack Obama's and Katy Perry's tweets. The data shows that idiomatic meaning is the most dominant type of phrasal verb on Barack Obama and Katy Perry's tweets and accounts for about 73 percent. Lower the literal meaning by 27 percent. In both accounts, idiomatic meaning is the most dominant because it can bridge the existence of more creative communication, allowing communication to have significant value. Katy Perry's tweets often use idioms because she often uses informal language that adds to their appeal.

The phrasal verbs that appear most frequently in the tweets of Barack Obama and Katy Perry's accounts are *tune in*, *look at*, *get to*, *look forward to*, *sign up*, *reflect on*, *catch up*, *come on*, *check out*, and *live in*. *Tune in* most frequently used 35 times. *Tune in* appears most frequently in those tweets because it invites the audience to watch a television program. In addition, *tune in* can also be used to realize or understand what is happening or what other people are thinking. In (Akbari et al., 2018) journal, it was found that the phrasal verb that appears most often is *come on*. In this research, the phrasal verb that appears most frequently is *come up* which is in 8th place. This study has similarities with previous studies, namely the word *come*.

Each simple verb is found in the result of the second research question. The result of the simple verb that appears most frequently is *look* because it can function as a verb and noun. The use of *look* in language learning is fundamental and must be understood because that word is often used in everyday conversations. *Look* is can be defined as the act of observing a person or object that takes some time. In (Andi et al., 2021) journal, this study used prepositional phrases as variations. This has similarities with this study; the same variety used the prepositional phrase as *look at*.

The results of this study have significant implications for the teaching and learning of phrasal verbs. Teachers can develop teaching materials based on the high-frequency phrasal verbs such as *tune in, look at, get to*. After that, the teacher can explain the meaning of each variation of the phrasal verbs in this study. In addition to explaining variations, teachers can explain types of phrasal verbs, namely literal and idiomatic meanings, and are given examples, so students understand this material.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, phrasal verbs are important to study because they are prevalent in English and because the meaning of a verb often changes significantly when used in a phrasal verb. Therefore phrasal verbs have a variety of meanings. For example, the word *give* means to give something to someone, but in the phrasal verbs, *give up* means to stop trying or to stop doing something that has become a habit. Based on the results of the research, several suggestions are put forward as follows; teachers can develop phrasal verbs teaching materials using simple verbs look because it has a high frequency, and future researchers can use the present research as a reference for researching phrasal verbs but with different perspectives or research gaps, like about transparent and opaque in different types of texts.

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