

FORM AND FUNCTIONS OF PHRASAL VERB IN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this research paper is to concentrate on the form and function of phrasal verb in written and spoken English. Few aspects were added to language to enrich its vocabulary i.e. Phrasal verb, idioms and phrases. This study attempts to reveal the difficulties students endure while learning phrasal verb and misinterpretation of phrasal verb in writing. 120 first year engineering students were asked to take a comprehension test with 50 phrasal verbs (make sentence on their own) and their answers were taken as the principle for the researcher to analysis the common problems encounters in phrasal verbin the writing of Engineering students. 60 students of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Communication skills lab were used for speaking (presentation). English proficiency level of all the students was intermediate.

KEYWORDS: Phrasal Verb, Spoken English

INTRODUCTION

In this global scenario English has become inevitable in day to day life. Phrasal verb is a part of grammar which has become inseparable from the language. Phrasal verbs in English are syntactically defined as combination of verbs and prepositions or particles but semantically their meanings are generally not the direct sum of their part. We concentrate on those that we define as the most confusing phrasal verbs, the sense that they are most commonly used ones whose occurrence may correspond either to a true phrasal verb or an alignment of a simple verb with a preposition. It is repeatedly found that regardless of their L1 background, learners tend to avoid using phrasal verbs when there is a single-verb counterpart available (Dagut & Laufer 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson 1993; Liao & Fukuya 2004; Schmitt & Redwood 2011).

English grammar has a rule for everything but this phrasal verb has no rule which makes the learning of L2 learner difficult.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted to identify the understanding of phrasal verbs among the Engineering College students. To achieve this objective, two research tools were used namely, Questionnaire and third year communication skills lab (presentation). For writing and speaking respectively. This type of design, that

Uses different research methods to investigate the same issue, is called a *triangulation mixed method design* (Creswell, 2002). The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity and reliability of the process (Tellis, 1997). In addition, using multiple methods in a research design would also help to “give a fuller picture and address many different aspects of phenomena” (Silverman, 2000, p.50).

Participants

The target students’ population in this study was all the first year and the third year Electrical and Electronic Engineering students of a private Engineering college.

A questionnaire was given to the first year second semester students. Total number of students was 120. Out of which 90 were boys and 30 were girls. 60 students of Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Communication skills lab were used for speaking (presentation). English proficiency level of all the students was intermediate.

Procedure

The Primary method of inquiry used in this study was a questionnaire. It consisted of three Sections: A,B and C. In section- A, Objective type questions were given to identify the correct phrasal verb. Section –B, 30 phrasal verbs were given to the students to frame sentence of their own. In Section –C participants were asked to write fifteen phrasal verbs apart from the phrasal verbs used in the questionnaire. And ten set of objective questions were given to them to identify whether it is the phrasal verb in the sentence or just verb and the preposition. In the third year Communication Skills Lab session students were given 20 phrasal verbs and instructed to use at least 10 to 15 phrasal verbs in their oral presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed. The questionnaire has helped to identify the area in which the students are weak in. Based on the findings of data analysis, the few problems students encounter in phrasal verbs are as follows.

- Students were not able to identify the phrasal verb.
- They mistake the literal meaning of the verb and preposition rather than phrasal verb.
- They get confused with the similarities of the phrasal verb.
- When they get confused on phrasal verbs they land up in writing ambiguous sentence.

Reasons Why Phrasal Verbs are Confusing

L2 learners find phrasal verbs difficult and this is partly because it has no certain rules. Phrasal verbs consist of ‘base verb’ such as take, make, have, get, do, give etc. And ‘a particle’ such as down, back, off, on, up etc. When a learner encounter an unfamiliar phrasal verb, he/she will definitely know the meaning of the ‘base verb’ as well as the particle- but the base verb and particle put together to form a completely different meaning. Even the beginner would know what ‘see’ and what ‘through’ means. But that won’t help to guess the meaning of ‘see through’ as phrasal verb. Many linguists’ had tried to solve this problem, but they usually focus more on explaining how phrasal verbs work, rather than why they are so. Phrasal verbs are very arbitrary and random. Since there is no obvious rules, phrasal verbs have to be individually learned and remembered.

Recognizing Phrasal Verb

Most of the time L2 learner find difficult to recognize the phrasal verb. They don't know whether it is a verb and preposition or phrasal verb, in the sentence. To recognize the phrasal verb, we have to look at the whole sentence. If the two words can be understood literally then it is verb and preposition. If they have to be taken together and if it has nothing to do with literal meaning of the verb then it is phrasal verb.

Example

I went out of the office to relax myself.

Here the 'went out' literally mean "went and out". This is a verb (went) and a preposition (out).

I went out with my fiancée a few times.

Here the phrasal "went out" is a phrasal verb meaning 'spent time with'.

Phrasal Verbs with Multiple Meaning

Phrasal verbs are generally confusing because they are very similar to each other

(Look after, look forward, lookup, look down on).The base remain the same and the preposition changes to change the meaning of the phrasal verb. Most of the phrasal verbs have multiple meaning and a literal meaning too.

For example 'stand for' would mean in two different ways depending upon the sentence. "I will stand for my father in all legal issues." In this sentence 'stand for' means 'support' his father. "B.A stands for Bachelor of Arts" In this sentence 'stand for' means 'represent'.

Similarly 'make up' has a multiple meaning

(eg) "Usually my son makes up new stories to convince me"

Make up here means 'invent a story (imaginary)

"The teacher tried a lot to make up the class which had two reveal teams"

Make up here means 'restore a good relationship'

"The husband gifted a diamond ring to make up for forgetting his wife's birthday."

Make up here means 'to compensate'

Confusing Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs tend to confuse the students of its similarities. Like any other vocabulary, it should be understood by reading the context. 'Grow up' and 'bring up' were the two phrasal verbs having similar meaning. Both of them are about children becoming adult, but should be careful to choose the right one. Parents bring up their children and children grow up. 'Grow up' means to 'mature' and 'bring up' means 'to raise'.

Pedagogical Implications on Phrasal verb

Based on the findings of data analysis and discussion on the problems faced by the students on phrasal verbs, a

new method of teaching phrasal verb was implemented in the classroom with new strategy. Instead of routine teaching in the classroom, phrasal verbs were taught in the class room with the Audio-visual aids. The visual effect has created a lot of change in the moods of the students, visual effect added interest and involvement which resulted in creating a good learning ambience.

Example

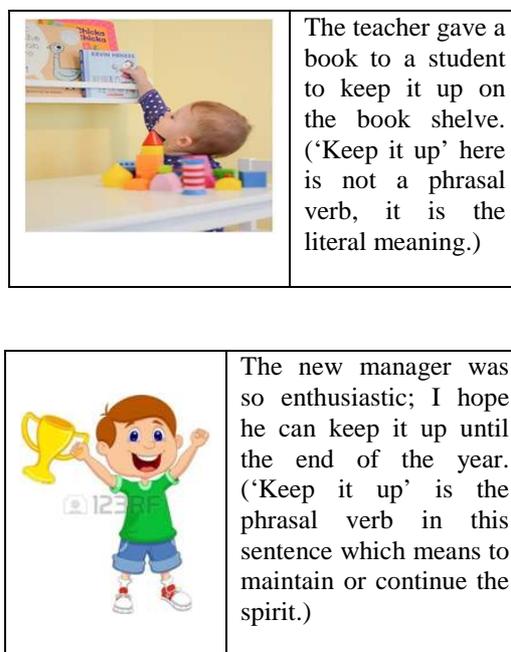


Figure 1

Each of these sentences is represented with a pictorial diagram. Visualization helps them to understand the sentence better. In the first image a child is trying to keep the book on the shelf and in the second image the enthusiasm was seen on the face, this helped the students to understand the difference. After two classes on visual training, the third class was conducted without Audio-visual aid but the students were asked to visualize the sentences given to them. With the help of the training given to them in the earlier classes, they were able to visualize the sentence, which helped them to identify whether it a phrasal verb or just the verb and preposition.

Class Room Activity

In a class room of 60, each student was asked to bring a chart with an image representing a phrasal verb. Later they were clubbed in a team of five members. Each group will come one by one to show their chart (image) to the class and the other teams should find the phrasal verb represented in the image. This activity helped the students to learn phrasal verb as a game and they were able to learn 60 phrasal verbs in a single class. Conducting team or group activity reduces the peer pressure in the class room. Students encourage themselves to increase the score of the team which leads to the healthy learning atmosphere. Once the students are self motivated the learning process becomes simpler.

The success or failure in language learning is generally attributed to the method of teaching and learning. Methods of teaching are simply an instrument in the hands of teacher. Even a sound method handled by a competent teacher may

fail if learners do not have the willingness to learn. Effective use of 'Teaching aids' help to capture the attention of the students and it develops greater understanding. It increases the interest and involvement in the students. Pictorial representation helped in overcoming language barrier. Teachers are expected, from time to time to re-examine their method in the light of new theories and new research. Teacher's venture to new methods of teaching kindles the student's creativity and pin them to the class, without any distraction.

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