TEACHING PHRASAL VERBS THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract: Teaching phrasal verbs is a difficult area. Many a study has proved that contextualization has an important positive effect on the ability of the students to decipher the correct meaning of a phrasal verb. This article is dedicated to analyze some useful approaches to the presentation of phrasal verbs through communicative approach to improve the students' level of understanding. The article also suggests some other useful tips for teaching phrasal verbs.

Keywords: Phrasal verbs, context, approach, lexical verb, idiomatic expression

Introduction

A Phrasal Verb is a phrase which consists of a verb in combination with a preposition or adverb or both, the meaning of which is different from the meaning of its separate parts: 'look after', 'work out' and 'make up for' are all phrasal verbs [4]. A phrasal verb is lexical verb "which consists of a simple verb combined with one or more particles" and whose meaning is typically unpredictable. And Phrasal verbs are two-or three-word idiomatic expressions, consisting of a verb and a particle or a combination of a particle and a preposition. Phrasal verbs have been the source of frustration for learners of English. Many students talk about the difficulties they have using the phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are widely used by native speakers of English but they have been found to be difficult for second language learners to master. The subject of how best to teach phrasal verbs is still quite controversial. Although teaching of phrasal verbs has been daunting and difficult for teachers, and therefore tedious for learners, it is necessary to develop our students' skills in understanding and using them. Since phrasal verbs are frequently used by native speakers both in written and spoken English, students need to be encouraged to learn them. "There is no specified way or a programmed manner in which a student can learn all the phrasal verbs, nouns, adjectives, and idioms. The authors observe that the only way to acquire such knowledge is by extensive reading and listening" [7] the difficulties of learning phrasal verbs for ESL and EFL students must be analysed. As Thornbury (2002) explains, multi-part verbs pose a problem for English learners because of their grammatical structure and their meaning, since most times they are idiomatic, i.e. the meaning cannot be understood by analysing its parts. Then, students might feel that phrasal verbs are coined at random and that they have to be learnt and memorised by heart. Moreover, Brown (2004) points out that EFL students do not use multi-word verbs because of the following reasons:

1. The huge amount of phrasal verbs, without considering the different combinations of verbs and particles.

2. Their meanings are usually idiomatic, since the meaning of a phrasal verb can be completely different to the meanings of its separate parts. Together with the fact that most phrasal verbs are polysemous, i.e. a phrasal verb can have a lot of meanings.

3. These constructions are unforeseeable, since their parts can be separated in some cases, as it has been seen above.

Through communicative approach in language teaching, learners are generally exposed to phrasal verbs from a very early stage in their learning. In most of the beginner courses, learners describe their daily routine and are exposed to phrasal verbs such as *wake up, get up* as lexical items. Much of classroom language includes phrasal verbs: listen out for the expressions, take out a pencil and paper, and in these early stages they do not cause many problems because they are relatively straight forward as their meaning is literal or the context in which they are used is very clearly understood. As learning continues learners meet more complex forms: *get on with ..., look forward to ...,* which they understand and can use in controlled situations but which they tend to avoid in freer situations.

Main part

Phrasal verbs for example *find out* or *call off*, are verb-particle combinations which are frequently semantically not transparent at all and strongly idiomatic, so the combination of two words to a new, complex lexical unit is practically complete. The phrasal verb is often made up of a content word and one or more particles. [3]Phrasal verbs are especially rich in oral communication. Although native speakers of English have no difficulty with them, the learners of English as a second language find them complicated, difficult and hard to learn or memorize. A phrasal verb as a verb and a preposition or an adverb creating a meaning different from the original verb. Phrasal verbs are structural units like prepositional phrases. The main difference between them is that prepositional verbs cannot be separated. For example:

• *Jimmy waited for her for two hours.*

However, most of the time, we can separate phrasal verbs and put the nouns or pronouns between the main verb and the preposition or adverb.

For example:

• *He turned on the lights*. Or

• *He turned the lights on.*

Because their meanings are idiomatic, there is no logical pattern or formula for learning phrasal verbs, and what makes it worse is that many phrasal verbs have more than one idiomatic meaning. For instance, *take back* can also mean to return merchandise for a refund. (*John went to the mall to take back the sweater he bought*). The same phrasal verb may have several different meanings. This is because each of the commonest adverb particles (such as *up, down, on, off* etc.) has a lot of different meanings apart from its basic position or movement meaning. For example:

• *He put down the box.*

• *This grocery store put down the prices.*

• *I've put down my name on the list.*

• *Jerry put down the boy who was bothering him*

Brown (2004) states that students' struggle with phrasal verbs has three main reasons. First, complete numbers: currently there are over 4,000 phrasal verbs, many of which are everywhere in the written and spoken forms, and the formal and informal registers of British, American and Australian English. Knowledge of the most common of these is essential if one wants to understand and speak English well. A second challenge is that their meanings are often totally different to the meanings of the individual words of which they are composed, i.e. many are non-compositional and thus idiomatic.

Moreover, they may have several meanings, e.g. a phrasal verb such as put out can have many meanings. A final learning problem is the actually unpredictable grammar of phrasal verbs, mostly the conditions governing the separation of the verb and particle. The rules relating to word order, transitivity, passive constructions, and whether a verb is followed by gerund or infinitive also need to be considered.

As stated above, this separation of the verbs and the articles, and the transitivity cause a great problem for the learners. The most important thing to learn about the grammar of phrasal verbs is where to place the object. Should we put it before or after the particle? The first type of phrasal verb is the separable ones which can be separated. Then the object may be placed between them. For instance:

• *His mother brought up his son with great difficulties*. Or
 • *His mother brought his son up with great difficulties*.

However, if the direct object is a pronoun, we must certainly separate these two parts and put the pronoun between them. For example:

 • *My father turned on the radio.*
• *My father turned it on.*
• *I picked up Ahmet.*
• *I picked him up.*

Richards and Rogers (2001) state that the origins of Communicative Approach (CA) can be found in the language teaching system of England, which dates from the 1960s. Communicative Approach was an effort to overcome some of the threatening factors in second language learning. The approach seemingly removed the threat of all-knowing teacher, of competing against peers. All these threats may lead to a feeling alienation and inadequacy. The teacher allowed the learner to determine the type of conversation and to analyze the foreign language inductively. In the situations in which explanation or translation was almost impossible, it was the learner who became a counselor to aid the motivation and capitalize on essential motivation.[8] In this CA, the teacher and the students have roles different from the other methods. The teacher does not act as an instructor but more like a facilitator of the student's learning. Students can be accepted as communicators. They try to make the others understand by communicating in the target language though they are not competent in the target language. Demirel (1999: 52) also emphasizes some of the special features of Communicative Approach:

• More importance is given to the written and spoken activities that are meaningful for the students.

• Teaching is students-centered.

• Teaching activities are generally based on dialogs, group activities, simulation, problem solving and educational games.

• The aim is to teach the materials that are written and used in daily life.
• The teacher is expected to be adequate in both his native tongue and in the target language.
• The role of the teacher is to help students to communicate.

Conclusion

Getting students to come to terms with phrasal verbs is a challenge as they are rather difficult to learn. Learning phrasal verbs out of the dictionary can help, but students really need to read and hear phrasal verbs in context for them to be able to truly understand the correct usage of phrasal verbs. In our country, still, the easy way, which is explaining the meaning or just giving the Uzbek equivalent of the phrasal verbs, is usually used to teach these verbs or other forms of vocabulary. But, in the light of the literature on the methods and approaches that are used to teach phrasal verbs, it is clear that experimental group students who were taught phrasal verbs in communicative approach have shown a better performance and learning process which means that communicative approach is really effective in phrasal verb teaching.

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