

Learning/Acquiring English Phrasal Verbs

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Abstract

In the context of English at university level, it has been noticed that advanced learners of English misuse phrasal verbs – a verb followed by a preposition or an adverb. This situation has motivated the need to investigate this area of English grammar and see whether a specific methodology could help in the acquisition of phrasal verbs. As a background to this investigation, we will highlight the concepts basic to foreign language acquisition, in particular the concepts of acquisition – “knowing how” the language functions – and that of learning – “knowing about” the language. We will report on the results of a test involving Definitions, Matching, Multiple Choice and Cloze Procedure activities requiring the meaning of phrasal verbs and highlighting the informants’ understanding and use of phrasal verbs. This study has shown that advanced learners of English (University level), on the whole, have a certain knowledge of some phrasal verbs, usually the ones come across in teaching, but have difficulty defining even the phrasal verbs they think they know and using the phrasal verbs in the contexts where they do not expect them.

ملخص

في مجال تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية في المستوى الجامعي، لوحظ أن الطلبة ذوي المستوى المتقدم في اللغة الإنجليزية يسيئون استخدام أشباه الجمل الفعلية – فعل يتبعه حرف جر أو ظرف. وقد حفز هذا الوضع الحاجة إلى التحقيق في هذا المجال من قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية ومعرفة ما إذا كانت هناك منهجية محددة يمكن أن تساعد في اكتساب أشباه الجمل الفعلية. كأساس لهذا التحقيق، سوف نسلط الضوء على المفاهيم الأساسية لاكتساب اللغة الأجنبية، وبالأخص تلك المفاهيم المرتبطة بالاكتساب – “معرفة كيفية” عمل اللغة – وتلك المتعلقة بالتعلم – “معرفة” اللغة. سوف نقدم تقريراً عن نتائج اختبار يشمل تعاريف، ربط جمل، أسئلة متعددة الاختيارات، وتمارين ملأ الفراغات التي تقتضي معنى أشباه الجمل الفعلية وتسلط الضوء على فهم المشاركين في الاختبار لأشباه الجمل الفعلية واستخدامها. أظهرت هذه الدراسة أن الطلبة ذوو المستوى المتقدم في اللغة الإنجليزية (مستوى الجامعة)، على العموم، لديهم معرفة معينة عن بعض أشباه الجمل الفعلية، عادة التي تأتي أثناء التدريس، ولكن يجدون صعوبة حتى في تحديد أشباه الجمل الفعلية التي يعتقدون أنهم يعرفونها، و في استخدام أشباه الجمل الفعلية في سياقات حيث لا يُتوقع منهم استخدامها.

Introduction

The dichotomy learning/acquisition has raised debates and controversies as to the nature and the development of the processes which contribute to their realisation. For a long time, it has been established that we acquire one's first language and we learn any other language which is not our first language. Nowadays, this distinction no longer satisfies our understanding derived both from day to day observation and more organised research.

In this paper, we will refer to the foundations of Second Language Acquisition and will analyse the case of phrasal verbs, an area of grammar not always focused on and not always understood because of its complexity. We will report on the results of an investigation of the degree of acquisition of phrasal verbs by advanced learners of English as a foreign language at University level.

1. Foundations of Second Language Acquisition

Foreign language acquisition research took place around the 1960s where empirical research was directed at describing the characteristics of the learner's language and how these change as acquisition takes place.

The starting point of foreign language acquisition investigation is the identification of the universal characteristics of foreign language acquisition. The description of the language learner provides an account of the learner's competence in terms of grammatical competence, discourse competence (the ability to use grammatical competence to make cohesive and coherent texts), sociolinguistic competence (the ability to use language appropriately in different contexts) and strategic competence (the ability to compensate for difficulties and make the use of language effective) (Canale and Swain, 1980, cited in Ellis and Roberts, 1987:19).

The next step is an explanation of how learners develop knowledge of the foreign language and how they use this knowledge in communication. Both external and internal factors play a role in foreign language acquisition. External factors relate to the role played by the social situation in which learning takes place and how the input accounts for acquisition through observation of the output. The choice of the language used is seen to be affected by whom the learner is speaking to (the interlocutor), where, when, why (the purpose of communication) and what is to be communicated. Internal factors relate to the mental processes that the learners use to convert input into knowledge, to internalise knowledge of the foreign language.

Krashen (1981, 1982, 1985) puts forward a theory of second language acquisition that consists of five hypotheses. First, the Acquisition / Learning Hypothesis states that there are two ways of developing ability in the foreign language: acquisition – an unconscious process that involves the

natural development of language proficiency through understanding language and using language for meaningful communication that results in “knowing how” the language functions – and learning – a conscious process that results in “knowing about” the language, learning the rules that make up the language. The acquisition process results in an implicit store of knowledge and the learning process in an explicit store of knowledge viewed as a facilitator of implicit knowledge, as it enables learners to notice features in the input and compare them with their interlanguage – the internal system that a learner has constructed over time, the mental grammar that a learner has constructed in the process of acquiring a foreign language. Second, according to the Natural Order Hypothesis, we acquire the rules of a language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and others late. Third, the Monitor Hypothesis considers that our ability to produce language comes from our acquired comprehension; learning serves only as a monitor. We resort to learning – our conscious knowledge of the language – to make corrections in the output of the acquired system. Fourth, according to the Input Hypothesis, acquisition takes place through receiving and understanding “Comprehensible Input”. If there is enough comprehensible input, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. Fifth, the Affective Filter Hypothesis is based on the idea that when the affective filter – this mental block preventing learners from fully assimilating the comprehensible input they receive – is up as when they are unmotivated, lacking in self-confidence or anxious, the input may be understood, but it will not reach the acquisition process.

Empirical evidence has shown that certain language items are learnt, others acquired. In some cases, acquisition has taken place, but the rules are not used. This corresponds to the process of “fossilisation”, the process by which non-target forms become fixed in the interlanguage. This takes place when there is insufficient quantity of input, inappropriate quality of input, acquisition of deviant forms and when the affective filter and the output filter which prevent acquired rules from being used are up.

2. Place of Phrasal Verbs in Grammar Books

We will now look at one case of learning / acquiring a foreign language – phrasal verbs. We believe that in order to develop a rapid acquisition, the teaching methodology has to be appropriate to the type of element to be acquired. We do not teach all the elements of the language the same way, with the same amount of time. Besides, teaching overtly certain language elements does not always produce a rapid acquisition of these elements; they have to go through their natural route of development. For example, the “s” third person singular rule is a very easy rule to teach, to apply in exercises, but it takes years for the Algerian learners to acquire it. Why is such a simple rule to learn difficult to acquire? The likely reasons are lack of reciprocity in the first language and incoherence of the rule – “s” is a mark

for plural nouns and a mark of singular for verbs. Lack of systematicity of the rule makes it a very late acquired rule.

What is the case of phrasal verbs? Before we investigated the degree of acquisition of phrasal verbs of advanced learners of English as a foreign language at university level, we looked at the place and methodology of teaching phrasal verbs in a certain number of Grammar books (See References for 2. : The Place of Phrasal Verbs in Grammar Books).

Allsop (1983) uses the expression “phrasal verbs” to refer to three patterns:

- V + Adv. : Give up.
- V + Prep. : Look after.
- V + Adv. + Prep. : Get down to.

and the term “particle” to refer to the adverb or preposition which follow the verb. He gives a list of particles which function :

- only as prepositions :
 - after : Look after your sister.
 - against : Don't go against the rules.
 - at : Get at the meaning.
 - For : Stand for what you believe in.
 - from : She comes from the South.
 - into : Go into the question.
 - like : It looks like it.
 - to : Get down to work.
 - With : Put up with your sister.
 - Without : Go without food.
- only as adverbs :
 - away : Don't run away.
 - Back : Take it back.
 - Forward : Bring the date forward.
 - Out : Put the lights out.
- as prepositions or adverbs : most particles may function as a preposition or an adverb. The most common ones are about, across, along, around, before, up, under, through, round, behind, by, down, in, off, on, over.

What distinguishes the prepositional verb (V+Prep.) and the phrasal verb (V+ Adv.) is :

1. the place of the object : when the object can be inserted between the verb and the particle, the latter is an adverb ; when it cannot, it is a preposition.

Eg : Look it up.

Adv.

Eg : Look up the street .

Prep.

In the first case, “up” is part of the meaning of the verb (what must I look?) .

In the second one, it relates to the object (Where must I look?).

2. The stress pattern: in a V + Prep., stress is on the verb ; in a V + Adverb., stress is on the particle or equally on the verb and the particle.

In relation to the word order in phrasal verbs, in other words, should the object be between the verb and the particle or at the end, the choice may depend on a slight change of meaning, on the rhythm of the sentence or on personal preference of the speaker.

Eg : - Put away your toys.

- Put your toys away.

- Put them away.

(a personal pronoun object is always between the verb and particle).

- Put away all what you have bought today.

(a long object is always at the end).

Phrasal verbs are very common and widely used by native speakers of English, both in everyday speech and in writing. They form a great part of the language and are constantly being created or other meanings of the already existing ones are added.

A certain number of phrasal verbs have a corresponding one word verb, usually of classical (Latin or Greek) origin (to give up: to abandon), but the single word can often sound odd or too formal in everyday speech where the phrasal verb is expected.

On the whole, the meaning of phrasal verbs can be derived from the verb, from the particle or from the two if the parts of the phrasal verb have their literal meaning or only a slightly transferred meaning (not literal, metaphorical).

E.g.: He sat down. (Literal meaning).

E.g. : He tore the notice do. (Slightly transferred meaning).

We can guess the meaning of many phrasal verbs like to get up, to go up / down, to send away, to take away, to bring back. However, many phrasal verbs have a meaning which cannot easily be deduced from the meaning of the parts of the verb, a transferred or metaphorical meaning.

E.g. : He gave up smoking. (stopped).

These kind of phrasal verbs can only be learned by experience and with the help of a dictionary. What also creates difficulty in understanding phrasal verbs is that sometimes a phrasal verb has several meanings.

E.g. : Take your glasses off. (remove).

E.g. : The plane took off. (left the ground).

E.g. : He is a wonderful mimic, he can take off most people. (impersonate).

E.g. : Do you think this book will take off? (be a success): this is a metaphorical use of "take off" associated to the planes and is typical of the way in which the meaning and use of phrasal verbs grows.

Chalker (1984) draws the attention to the fact that what distinguishes the prepositional and the phrasal verb is the place of an

adverb: in a prepositional verb, it can be between the stem and the preposition, not in the case of a phrasal verb.

E.g. : He looked (briefly) at the timetable.

Adv.

E.g. : He (eagerly) looked up the word in the dictionary.

Adv.

Eastwood (2006) gives a list of the phrasal verbs which have as equivalent a one word verb usually from Latin origin and considered formal.

- to find out : to discover.
- to go back : to return.
- to go on : to continue.
- to leave out : to omit.
- to make up (a story) : to invent.
- to put off : to postpone.
- to hand (send) out : to distribute.
- to throw away : to discard.
- to turn up : to arrive.

We note that these one-word verbs are easier for us to remember .

Fucks & al (2003) and Maurer (2004) explain the difference between phrasal verbs in terms of separable phrasal verbs where the object can be inserted between the stem and the particle, and inseparable phrasal verbs where the stem and the particle cannot be separated by the object.

Inseparable :E.g. : She ran into the man in front of her .

E.g.: She ran into her friend in the market .

Separable : E.g.: She looked up the information in the dictionary.

She looked the information up. She looked it up.

Leech and Svartvick (1975) clearly distinguish between prepositional verbs and phrasal verbs. They mention the three reasons we have already mentioned :

1. the difference of stress,
2. the difference in the place of the object,
3. the difference in the place of the adverb,

and add a fourth reason:

4. the difference in the use of a relative pronoun: prepositional verbs accept a relative pronoun after the preposition, not phrasal verbs.

Eg: The men (whom) they called up.

but not * The men (whom) they called on.

In Lekeu (1997), each unit has a section about phrasal verbs. The directions are "add an 'adverbial particle' to the verbs". For example, "Our summer dresses were cheap and sold fast (were all quickly sold)". The expected 'adverbial particle' is "out".

Lott (2005) has an extensive list of phrasal verbs per category with examples (V+Adv. (Transi.), V+Adv.+ing. Form, V+O+Adv. and V+Adv.+Prep.+O) followed by exercises including these phrasal verbs.

In Loughed (2006), the mystery of prepositions (as the title of the book says) is tackled throughout the book in chapters labelled in types of prepositions: time, place, cause The methodology used is to:

1. choose the appropriate preposition in context : a guided activity,
2. select an appropriate preposition in a narrowly defined situation: a guided activity,
3. use prepositions in sentences, which is a free production.

Murphy (2004) deals with phrasal verbs through a series of exercises and some reference to general rules about the place of the preposition. The units about phrasal verbs are divided in terms of the nature of the preposition: in, out,

Shrampfer Azar (2002) devotes eight appendixes to phrasal verbs with the directions: "Supply appropriate prepositions for these two and three-word verbs".

The following table sums up the major terms used in relation to phrasal verbs.

Term	Definition and / or Example
1. One word verb	E.g.: to look. He <u>looks</u> ill.
2. A two-word verb	E.g.: to look up. <u>Look up</u> the street
3. A three-word verb	E.g.: to look up to. He <u>looks up to</u> his father.
4. Prepositional verb	V+Prep. E.g.: He <u>looks at</u> her.
5. Phrasal verb	V+Adv. + Prep. E.g.: He <u>looks forward to</u> meeting.
6. Particle/ Adverbial	An adverb or preposition used in a multi-word verb.
7. Preposition	A word that precedes a word which it governs, usually a N or a N phrase.
8. Adverb	A word that modifies or qualifies a verb, an adjective or another adverb.
9. Adverbial	Any word, phrase or clause used like an Adverb.
10. Separable Phrasal Verb	A multi-word V which can be separated by an O. E.g.: Look <u>it</u> up.
11. Inseparable Phrasal Verb	A multi-word V which cannot be separated by an O. E.g.: Look up <u>the street</u> .

3. Acquisition of Phrasal Verbs by Advanced Learners of English as a Foreign Language at University Level

As further back as my early years of learning my first and second language (French and Standard Arabic), I have always expressed the need to understand **why** such a language element is formed and functions in such a way. When I studied English, my urge to understand **why** has not stopped. I remember asking my English teacher "Why can't we say I can **to** work"? and I distinctly remember her shocked face and her "arrogant" answer: "you ask

too many questions, it's just like that." I knew "it was like that", but I wanted to understand **WHY** it was like that. Can grammar tell us **why** it is like that? It tells us **how** it is more than **why**. It is clearly the case of phrasal verbs.

Teaching phrasal verbs is one of the most difficult areas in grammar because of the lack of systematicity of the rule – if there is one, and as we have just said, not all grammar books deal with this aspect, and when they do, they do it in a variety of ways. We undertook to find out how much of this teaching background has produced acquisition in advanced learners of English as a foreign language at university level, how much knowledge of this thorny area learners who have gone through four years of English at university level, who are presently teaching at the university has been acquired. We invited all the teachers in our Department, holding a B.A or a Master and having graduated in the last ten years to take part in the study (75) and 57 came to take part in this investigation. The informants were formally invited to take part in this study but were not told the object of the investigation so that they would answer the test spontaneously – without any special preparation. The informants are classified into three categories: holders of a B.A; not registered in a Master (20), holders of a B.A, registered in a Master (26: this year: 15, in the past three years: 11) and holders of a Master (11: registered in a Ph.D:05, not registered in a Ph.D:06).

Before the test the informants answered, we wanted to find out whether they knew the expression "Phrasal Verbs" , and if "yes", what they thought it meant. Only four informants from Category I said that they did not know the expression; the others gave a satisfactory definition.

The test is made up of four parts – Definitions, Matching, Multiple-Choice and Cloze Procedure – each part involving ten phrasal verbs. The choice of these activities is related to the nature of the task required to be performed. As to Definitions, if an informant can define a word, an expression, it shows understanding. Matching offers the possibility to identify the phrasal verbs, think about their meaning, definition, use before inserting them in the blanks. Multiple Choice offers the same type of activity as Matching, except that for each blank, three possibilities are provided – one distractor is made up of the right base verb plus another particle, and the other distractor is made up of another verb plus the right particle. The Cloze Procedure is made up of a text with blanks to be freely filled in. This activity is the one which tells us most about whether the informants know a phrasal verb – whether the one we have omitted or another one which fits the context. These four activities, requiring different performances, different strategies will enable us to see to what extent they can put words on a phrasal verb (Definition), identify the right phrasal verb (Matching), choose (and use) the right phrasal verb (Multiple Choice) ,and use phrasal verbs (Cloze Procedure). We had thought about the highest level – free production, but we decided against it because it requires a large scale operation, and

there is no guarantee that the informants would use phrasal verbs (avoidance phenomenon).

The forty phrasal verbs included in the four activities (ten per activity) have been selected according to three criteria.

- I know the phrasal verb .
- The likelihood that the majority of the informants can at least understand the phrasal verbs .
- An advanced learner of Category III of the informants knows the majority of the phrasal verbs.

The phrasal verbs combine a variety of particles and relate more to a formal use (academic use).

The texts used for Matching, Multiple Choice and Cloze Procedure were selected according to the nature of:

- the topic: topics specific to women or men or requiring a specific knowledge were discarded,
- the discourse, style, vocabulary, structure: the combination of these elements had to be at the informants' level.

Definition	Matching	Multiple Choice	Cloze Procedure
1. to call in	to go through	to go through	to open up
2. to catch up	to mark down	to put away	to break into
3. to hand over	to check against	to look for	to switch off
4. to identify with	to lie down	to ask for	to cut off
5. to knock out	to drift off	to hand in	to send for
6. to keep at	to give out	to put off	to arrive at
7. to narrow down	to come up with	to call off	to write down
8. to pass out	to tear up	to talk over with	to sweep up
9. to sleep on	to believe in	to come across	to carry out
10. to show off	to say about	to leave behind	to beat up

Table 1: List of Phrasal Verbs per Activity

Looking at the phrasal verbs which had the highest scores in Category I, we see that these phrasal verbs had higher scores in Category II and Category III, except for “to knock out” which had slightly lower scores in Category II and for “to identify with” which had lower scores in Category III; 45.46% of Category III of the informants, the most advanced learners , said they were not sure about “to identify with”. This seems strange, but in fact it shows that when they were sure, they gave the right definitions. “To show off” is less known by Category I, but on the whole, it is an acquired phrasal verb which must have been come across in different texts and focused on in teaching.

The phrasal verbs known by the majority of Category II and Category III are the same, except for “to pass out” (to become unconscious or to give something to somebody), which is not known by the majority of Category II. As we will see later, this phrasal verb is easily confused with “to pass away” (to die).

Our next analysis focuses on the definitions provided by the informants when they said they knew the phrasal verb and gave the right or wrong definition, and when they said they were not sure and gave the right or wrong definition.

If it is rather expected to give a wrong definition when we are not sure about a definition, it is less expected to get a wrong definition when we say we know the definition.

Category I	Category II	Category III	All the Categories
1. to call in: 100	to call in: 90.91	to pass out: 87.50	to pass out: 82.35
2. to hand over: 100	to sleep on: 85.71	to sleep on: 83.33	to call in: 80.95
3.to identify with: 100	to pass out: 75	to hand over: 83.33	to sleep on: 78.57
4.to knock out: 87.50	to catch up: 64.29	to catch up: 75	to catch up: 77.42
5. To pass out: 80	To hand over: 63.64	to knock out: 71.43	to hand over: 76.19

Table 2: Highest Rates of ✓ but Wrong Definitions

“To call in” (to visit a place or a person for a short time ,or to phone your place of work to explain why you are not there, or to ask someone to come and help in a difficult situation) was understood as phoning somebody (to call / to phone). “To hand over” (to give someone else responsibility for ,or control something or someone) was confused with “to hand in” (to give something to someone in authority) or “to hand out” (to give something to each person in a group of people).“To identify with” (to feel similar to someone) was defined as to recognise something, the meaning of “to identify”. “To knock out” (to make someone become unconscious ,or to make someone fall asleep) was assimilated to a knock out in boxing for Category II and III but not Category I. “To pass out” (to become unconscious ,or to give something to each person in a group of people, which is “to hand out”) was confused with “to pass away” (to die), and when a right definition was given, it was the second one (to give something to each person in a group). “To sleep on” (to wait until the next day before taking a decision about a problem) was confused with “to carry on” sleeping, confusion brought about by the particle “on”. “To catch up” (to reach other people in

front of you by going faster than them) was defined as “to hold”, which is the meaning of the verb base and the general tendency which makes the informants say they know the phrasal verbs when in fact they do not or partly know it. The definitions provided prove that “to show off” (to try to make people admire your abilities or your achievements in a way which other people find annoying) is really known by the informants.

Now, we will look at the cases where the informants said they were not sure about the definition of a phrasal verb and yet gave a right definition.

Category I	Category II	Category III	All the Categories
1. to keep at : 20	to show off : 100	to keep at : 100	to keep at : 53.33
2. to narrow down: 20	to narrow down: 66.67	to knock out : 50	to narrow down : 40
3. to show off : 14.29	to keep at : 57.14	To narrow down: 50	to identify with: 12.50
To catch up : 12.50	to identify with : 25	to sleep on : 50	to show off : 12.50

Table 3: Highest Rates of ? but Right Definitions

For Category I, the scores of right definitions when there was a hesitation as to whether they knew the phrasal verbs or not are very low, and for the other six phrasal verbs, they were all wrong. This shows that they had difficulty putting words on the definitions they knew or thought they knew and that their hesitation is in fact related to not knowing what words to use to define the phrasal verbs. It is very common that students say they know a word but they cannot define it ,or the words they use are so imprecise that they distort the definitions.

In Category II, “to show off” was accurately defined (in spite of the hesitation). This hesitation could be due to the fact that the phrasal verb had not been used for some time. The same for “to keep at” (to continue working hard at something difficult or which takes a long time ,or to make someone continue to work hard) for Category III. ‘To narrow down” (to make something, for example a list, smaller and clearer by removing the things that are less important) was successfully defined by 40% of the informants who were not sure about whether they knew it or not. The particle “down” seems to be at the origin of this. This is confirmed by the number of those who defined it as “to make something narrower” (60%).

Activity Two: Matching

The informants were asked to complete ten blanks in a text with ten phrasal verbs presented in a scrambled order.

Phrasal Verbs	Category I	Category II	Category III	All Categories
1.am going through	100	100	100	100
2. to mark down	90	69.23	90.91	80.70
3. check against	80	73.08	100	80.70
4. was lying down	100	100	100	100
5. drifted off	40	80.77	63.64	63.16
6. gave out	50	69.23	36.36	56.14
7.to come up with	95	88.46	90.91	91.23
8. had torn up	50	88.46	90.91	75.44
9. believe in	100	100	100	100
10. said about	65	73.08	81.82	71.93

Table 4: Matching: Rates of Correct Use of phrasal Verb

“To go through”, “to lie down” and “to believe in” were recognised by all the informants; they are rather common phrasal verbs ,and the context where they occur in this text has most probably helped in the identification of the phrasal verb – “was going through a lucky phase”, “was lying down on the sofa” and “believe in astrology”. “To come up with” (to think of ,or to suggest a plan or idea, a solution to a problem or an answer to a question) and “to mark down” (to write something on a piece of paper in order to make a record of it) were recognised by a large majority of informants. There was confusion between “to mark down” and “gave out” (to give something to a large number of people, to tell people information) which were used one for the other. “Gave out” and “drifted off” (to gradually start to sleep) were the least identified phrasal verbs. This is strange for “gave out”, but not so for “drifted off” which is not a common phrasal verb. Although it was used in proximity to “woke up”, it was not recognised.

Activity Three: Multiple Choice

The informants were asked to complete ten blanks in a text. For each blank, they had to choose out of three phrasal verbs. In addition to the right answer, we have provided two distractors – one including the verb base of the right phrasal verb and one including the particle of the right phrasal verb.

Phrasal Verbs	Category I	Category II	Category III	All Categories
1. had gone through	70	84.62	90.91	80.70
2. putting away	10	15.38	18.18	14.03
3. had looked for	100	100	100	100
4. had asked for	100	96.15	100	98.24
5. had handed in	30	23.08	18.18	24.56
6. had put off	50	61.54	36.36	52.63
7. would be called off	55	61.54	81.82	63.16
8. should come across	70	69.23	100	75.44
9. to talk over with	90	76.92	100	85.96
10. left behind	40	38.46	18.18	35.09

Table 5: Multiple Choice: Rates of Correct Use of Phrasal Verbs

The phrasal verbs which created no or hardly any problem are “to look for”, “to ask for”, “to talk over with”, “to go through” and “to come across”.

Category I	Category II	Category III	All the Categories
1.to look for : 100	to look for : 100	to look for : 100	to look for : 100
2. to ask for : 100	to ask for : 96.15	to ask for : 100	to ask for : 98.24
3.to talk over with: 90	to go through : 84.62	to come across : 100	to talk over with : 85.96
4. to go through : 70	to talk over with : 76.92	to talk over with: 100	to go through : 80.70
5. to come across : 70	to come across : 69.23	to go through : 90.91	to come across: 75.44

Table 6: Multiple Choice: Highest Rates of Correct Use of Phrasal Verbs

“To put away” (to put something in the place where it is usually kept) was largely confused with “to put aside” (to keep something so that you can use it later). “To hand in” was largely confused with “to hand out”. “To leave behind” (to leave a place without taking something or someone with you, either because you have forgotten them or because you cannot take them with you) was confused with “to leave out” (not to include someone or something). “To put off” (not to do something immediately) was partly confused with “to put on” (to dress yourself in clothes, or to start something electrical) and partly with “rounded off” (to do something as a way of

finishing an event or activity in a satisfactory way, or to make something that is pointed or sharp into a smooth shape by rubbing it, or to reduce a number to the nearest whole) and some informants did not provide an answer. "To call off" (to decide that something which was not planned will not happen) was more confused with "to ring off" (to end up a telephone call by putting down the receiver) than with "to call out" (to shout something or say it loudly), and some informants did not provide an answer. On the whole, the confusion was with the phrasal verb which has the same verb base.

Activity Four : Cloze Procedure

The informants were asked to complete ten blanks in a text with a phrasal verb of their choice.

Phrasal Verbs	Accepted Words			
1. to open up	1. to check on 2. to get in	3. to check up 4. to get into	5. to check up on 6. to look at	
2. had broken into	1. had got in 2. had been in 3. had gone into	4. had got into 5. had been inside 6. had intruded in	7. had come into	
3. had switched off	1. had put off 2. had turned off 3. had turned down	4. had taken away 5. had broken down 6. had broken up	7. had cut off	
4. had cut off	1. had put away 2. had turned off	3. had put off 4. had broken down	5. had smashed up 6. had taken away	
5. send for	1. call up 2. call in	3. call for 4. ask for		
6. arrived at	1. came in 2. came up to	3. came into 4. went to	5. came to 6. got into	
7. to write down	1. to make up 2. to bring in	3. to hand in 4. to come up with	5. to jot down	
8. sweep up	1. fix up 2. take out 3. pick up	4. clean up 5. take away 6. get rid of	7. throw away	
9. had carried out	1. had listened to 2. had taken down	3. had dealt with 4. had acted upon	5. had gone through 6. had written down	
10. beat up	1. knock out 2. wait for 3. shot down	4. knock down 5. hang up 6. find in	7. catch up	

Table 7: Cloze Procedure: List of Accepted Words

On the whole, the deleted phrasal verbs were not found, except for **"to open up"** ("Mr Wilson was feeling quite cheerful as he went **to open up** his shop.") and **"to write down"** ("In the meanwhile, they asked Mr Wilson to see if there was any money missing from the till and **to write down** a list of items that had been taken.") where, respectively, 43.86% and 49.12% of the informants provided the right answer. However, there was a large number of accepted phrasal verbs for all the cases, except for **"had cut off"** ("Furthermore, the burglar **had cut off** the phone and Mr Wilson had to go a long way down the street ..."), **"arrived at"** ("the police **arrived at** the shop shortly after the shopkeeper returned ...") and **"had carried out"** ("by the time the shopkeeper **had carried out** the police instructions, the police had done all they could and left") where the majority of the informants provided a rejected phrasal verb. This could be understandable for **"had carried out"** because this phrasal verb is not expected in this context – how could the police have done all what they could and left by the time the shopkeeper did not sweep up the broken glass (these were the instructions)? What is less understandable is the case of **"arrived at"** ("The police **arrived at** the shop shortly after the shopkeeper returned"). Our explanation is that the informants did not expect – in Algeria – the police to arrive at the shop shortly after you have phoned them, if they do come at all. The case of **"had cut off"** the phone with 35.09% of the informants giving rejected answers can also be explained by the unexpectedness of the action of **"cutting off"** a phone. This is an action of the burglar, not a common action. So, we see that although advanced learners know some phrasal verbs, they do not automatically use them.

38.60% of the informants left the blank provided for **"beat up"** empty. This is due to the context ("Mrs Wilson arrived just then saying : 'Thank goodness the burglar did not beat you up'"). This is not an expected statement because the burglar, we believe, came at night and the shopkeeper arrived at his shop in the morning. We note that 35.09 % of the informants gave acceptable phrasal verbs (**knock you out, knock you down, catch you up, wait for you, hang you up, shot you down, find you in**).

No informant found **"send for"** ("... had to go a long way down the street to a public phone box in order **to send for** the police" and **"to sweep up"** ("...", but the police asked Mr Wilson not **to sweep up** the broken glass until they had finished"). Concerning **"send for"**, it has nothing to do with the phrasal verb itself because this is a known phrasal verb, it is rather because of the – again – unexpectedness of the use of the phrasal verb in this context. This is not the case of **"to sweep up"** (to sweep) which is related to a domestic activity usually not covered by overt teaching.

The difference between the three categories of informants is not in the right use of the deleted phrasal verbs, but rather in the number of phrasal verbs, especially in the case of **"beat up"** where Category I had 15 %, Category II 38.46 % and Category III 63.64 % of accepted phrasal verbs.

This activity – Cloze procedure – shows that the context is very important for the use of a phrasal verb, that experience in the language allows the learner to resort to other similar expressions, close enough in meaning or fitting semantically and syntactically in the context.

Implications of the Study

It appears clearly that phrasal verbs are a case of learning which turns up into acquisition. The fact that some phrasal verbs have been acquired by some advanced learners and not others, irrespective of the category of informants, shows that there has not been a systematic teaching of the phrasal verbs in the B.A. Those who know more phrasal verbs have acquired them through their personal reading, investigation. We might argue that this is true for any other area of language, except that for phrasal verbs, as they can easily be avoided through the use of equivalent one-word verb or rephrasing, they can be very lately acquired or not acquired at all. In this respect, phrasal verbs should be focused on at different levels of instruction. The various activities experimented on here – definitions, matching, multiple-choice and cloze procedure – do provide a methodological framework adequate for the development of the understanding and the use of phrasal verbs, provided that an analysis of both the use of the verb base plus particle in their form and use is performed as an activity involving the learner in grammar consciousness raising. Such grammar consciousness-raising serves the ultimate aim of paving the long way which extends between learning and acquiring. Without consciousness-raising, learning can never turn into acquisition. In the grammar books we have looked at in order to evaluate the place of phrasal verbs in these books, we have noticed that there was a large number of fill-in the gaps activities (one sentence level). We should not recommend such activities because in terms of context, there is not enough ground for the understanding and use of phrasal verbs. As we have said, sometimes an interrelated context (see the cloze procedure activity) does not provide a clear-cut indication for this or other phrasal verb, the reader's expectations, knowledge of the world and culture playing an important role in the choice of this or other phrasal verb.

Conclusion

We would like to conclude our paper focusing on two points. First, teachers should not be “**put off**” by phrasal verbs just because they feel that they do not know enough phrasal verbs themselves. It is a good opportunity to perfect one's knowledge of phrasal verbs through teaching them. Second, phrasal verbs should be taught in a variety of ways : when we teach prepositions, particles, adverbials because those are the source of confusion, when we teach verbs, and when we teach language in general.

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