

Instructors' Views on Obstacles and Challenges of Teaching English Phrasal Verbs to University EFL Students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

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Abstract– *The main aim of this research paper was to review the syntactical and semantic obstacles of teaching the use of English language phrasal from the viewpoints of English language instructors at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, preparatory year in the academic year 2024. The study design included giving interviews to 50 English language instructors. The analysis showed though teaching phrasal verbs was regarded important to the lesson for it was a new vocabulary, there were syntactical obstacles for teaching phrasal verbs because it was hard to be formed and mater the usage and governed by standardization, it was difficult to teach the grammar of phrasal verbs, textbooks didn't pay careful attention for teaching phrasal verbs and there were semantic obstacles because meaning is governed by standardization; in such cases as transparent, semitransparent and opaque. These results underscore the challenges of teaching phrasal verbs were regarded in distinguishing between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs.*

Keywords: *obstacles, challenges, teaching English phrasal verbs, instructors' views*

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I. Introduction

No doubt English language is an international language which is widely spoken. It is the language of communication. Teaching phrasal English verbs is very essential to the students learning. It aids understanding for both syntax and semantic; in sentence order and sentence meaning. The syntactical obstacles of using phrasal verbs constitute in using the suitable particle to fit the head word; the verb. Many phrasal verbs occur within semantic frame which typically considered idiomatic. While often, certainly initially, analyzed as additional variations in the meaning. Siregar (2020) calls these more idiomatic phrasal verbs 'frozen verb'. 'Compositional' verb, on the other hand, are seen as a verb plus particles which add aspect to the verb. Most of English language instructors face many obstacles in using the appropriate form of English language phrasal verbs due to many complications in selecting the suitable particle(s) related to the first head word. It is also a challenge for many English language instructors to be sure about the meaning of English language phrasal verbs and to be able to teach confidently and that is due to their idiomatic nature and varying meanings.

The aim of the study is to review the syntactical and semantic obstacles of teaching the use of English language phrasal from the viewpoints of English language instructors at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, preparatory year in the academic year 2024.

2. Phrasal verbs have been present for much of the history of the English language; they are easily traceable to early Middle English. There are similar constructions in other Germanic languages, such as Dutch (Neeleman & Weeman,)

A phrasal verb is a combination of a verb and a preposition, a verb and an adverb, or both. (Litvinov et al., 2017).

There are similar structures in other language; phrasal verbs are represented in many languages by compound verbs. As a class, particle phrasal verbs belong to the same category as the separable verbs of other Germanic language. For example, in Dutch, de lamp aansteken (to light the lamp on). A few phrasal verbs exist in some Romance language such as Lombard due the influence of ancient Lombardic. Some of these verbs are used also in standard Italian. For instance, "far fuori" (to get rid of it) (Karen,2015).

Phrasal verbs are often known as the middle ground area between grammar and lexicon (Gass & Selinker, 2001). They, like any other phenomenon category in the language, enjoy their own grammar (Aston, 2001; Thornbury, 2002). According to Siregar, 2020 there are four types of phrasal verbs such as transitive phrasal verb, intransitive phrasal verb, separable phrasal verb an inseparable phrasal verb.

Sometimes the meaning of a phrasal verb is very similar to the base verb, and the adverb just emphasizes the meaning of the base verb, e.g. stand up, wake up, save up, hurry up, sit down and send off. (Muthmainnah et al.,2019).

The categories of semantic difficulty of phrasal verbs are classified by (Azmar,2019) into literal , semi- idiomatic and idiomatic. The main problems have been highlighted in relation to phrasal verbs of this type by Bywater (1969) as avoidance, style deficiency, semantic confusion, lack of collocational awareness, using idiosyncratic phrasal verbs and syntactic errors.

PVs can be challenging for students and teachers alike. Darwin and Gray (1999, p. 67) comment that their classification can be “slippery. The syntactic frames of phrasal verbs are pointed out by Ostyn (2003:1) phrasal verbs are also called “idiomatic”, and the possible combinations of phrasal verbs are:

- a) verb + particle (Ex. Slowdown.)
- b) verb + particle + preposition (Ex. Face up to.)
- c) verb + preposition (Ex. Refer to.)

Tran and Pham (2023) revealed that research participants faced difficulties in academic writing most from the semantic property, followed by the formality and informality of phrasal verbs and the syntactic property. Such preliminary findings are hoped to contribute to a better understanding of English as a foreign language learners’ difficulties with phrasal verbs as well as to enhance the quality of academic teaching and learning.

Baiq et al. (2021) found that students in Hamzanwadi University faced many problems, such as lack of vocabulary, less understanding of phrasal verb and difficulty to produce sentences with phrasal verbs.

It was proved by Azmar (2019) that the students’ mastery of phrasal verbs was weak. In addition, the result of the interview showed that the semantic and syntactic error became two of the difficult aspects faced by students in learning and understanding phrasal verbs.

According to Osman (2018) the inability of students to understanding and using English phrasal verbs and also lack of knowledge about the phrasal verbs.

Salman's (2018) findings would shed light on translating inability and more significantly on interpreting strategies while students work out the meaning of spoken or written PVs combinations.

3. The study is limited to the teaching of English language phrasal verbs in English language education. The researcher uses the descriptive and analytical research method. Questionnaires are used as a data gathering tool to show the views of English language instructors at preparatory year unit, about the obstacles of teaching English language phrasal verbs in both forms; of use and meaning.

The subjects of the study are (50) instructors of English; (EFL); male, at Preparatory Year Unit Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Riyadh, Kharj town, in the university years (2022-2024).

It is believed that the questionnaires and the observed items in teaching English language phrasal verbs are suitable data gathering tools that can be used to obtain adequate results from the respondents. The purpose of the questionnaire is to reveal the theoretical practices and instructors’ beliefs about the obstacles and challenges of teaching English language phrasal verbs.

4. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of the Questionnaire Data

4.1 The Validity of the Questionnaire

No. = 29 statements.

Cronbach alpha = 0.997

4.2 The Reliability of the Questionnaire

No. = 29 statements.

Cronbach alpha = 0.995

4.3 Teaching Phrasal Verbs Axis.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	28	56%	15	30%	4	8%	2	4%	1	2%	50	100%
Second Statement	22	44%	13	26%	5	10%	3	6%	7	14%	50	100%
Third Statement	20	40%	14	28%	4	8%	3	6%	9	18%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	23	46%	12	24%	3	6%	5	10%	7	14%	50	100%
Fifth Statement	20	40%	14	28%	6	12%	8	16%	2	4%	50	100%

In the first statement 28 participants responded strongly agree which is 56% while 15 responded agree which is

30%. 4 participants are neutral which is 8% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the second statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 13 responded agree which is 26%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 7 responded disagree which is 14%.

In the third statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 14 responded agree which is 28%. 4 participants are neutral which is 8% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 9 responded disagree which is 18%.

In the fourth statement 23 participants responded strongly agree which is 46% while 12 responded agree which is 24%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 5 responded disagree which is 10% and 7 responded disagree which is 14%.

In the fifth statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 14 responded agree which is 28%. 6 participants are neutral which is 12% while 8 responded disagree which is 16% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%.

The present result coincided with the study of tram and pham (2023) in the light of contributing the phrasal verbs in the academic writing which will enhance better learning of English and that constitute great importance of using phrasal verbs.

4.4 The Syntactical Obstacles of Teaching the Use of English Language Phrasal Verb.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	24	48%	21	42%	1	2%	3	6%	1	2%	50	100%
Second Statement	20	40%	18	36%	2	4%	5	10%	5	10%	50	100%
Third Statement	22	44%	19	38%	3	6%	3	6%	3	6%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	24	48%	21	42%	3	6%	1	2%	1	2%	50	100%
Fifth Statement	22	44%	19	38%	5	10%	2	4%	2	4%	50	100%

In the first statement 24 participants responded strongly agree which is 48% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 1 participant is neutral which is 2% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the second statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 5 responded disagree which is 10% and 5 responded disagree which is 10%.

In the third statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 3 responded disagree which is 6%.

In the fourth statement 24 participants responded strongly agree which is 48% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 1 responded disagree which is 2% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the fifth statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%.

The present study coincided with what Baiq et al. (2021) found as the revealed students found difficulty to produce sentences with phrasal verbs.

4.5 Section three: Grammatical Axis.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	25	50%	20	40%	1	2%	3	6%	1	2%	50	100%
Second Statement	21	42%	22	44%	2	4%	2	4%	3	6%	50	100%
Third Statement	23	46%	21	42%	2	4%	2	4%	2	4%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	20	40%	23	46%	4	8%	1	2%	2	4%	50	100%

In the first statement 25 participants responded strongly agree which is 50% while 20 responded agree which is 40%. 1 participant is neutral which is 2% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the second statement 21 participants responded strongly agree which is 42% while 22 responded agree which is 44%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 3 responded strongly disagree which is 6%.

In the third statement 23 participants responded strongly agree which is 46% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 2 responded disagree which is 4%.

In the fourth statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 23 responded agree which is 46%. 4 participants are neutral which is 8% while 1 responded disagree which is 2% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%. It is true because Salman (2018) found students had difficulty in written PVs combinations.

4.6 The Semantics Axis of Teaching Phrasal Verbs.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	25	50%	16	32%	7	14%	2	4%	0	0%	50	100%
Second Statement	21	42%	21	42%	6	12%	1	2%	1	2%	50	100%
Third Statement	21	42%	20	40%	5	10%	4	8%	0	0%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	22	44%	18	36%	4	8%	4	8%	2	4%	50	100%
Fifth Statement	20	40%	21	42%	5	10%	3	6%	1	2%	50	100%

In the first statement 25 participants responded strongly agree which is 50% while 16 responded agree which is 32%. 7 participants are neutral which is 14% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 0 responded disagree which is 0%.

In the second statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 5 responded disagree which is 10% and 5 responded disagree which is 10%.

In the third statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 3 responded disagree which is 6%.

In the fourth statement 24 participants responded strongly agree which is 48% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 1 responded disagree which is 2% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the fifth statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%.

Azmar (2019) and Osman's (2018) study showed that that the students' mastery of phrasal verbs was weak. Also, the inability of students to understanding and using English phrasal verbs and also lack of knowledge about the phrasal verbs.

4.7 The Obstacles Axis of Teaching Phrasal Verbs.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	21	42%	18	36%	5	10%	4	8%	2	4%	50	100%
Second Statement	20	40%	21	42%	3	6%	3	6%	3	6%	50	100%
Third Statement	22	44%	18	36%	4	8%	4	8%	2	4%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	21	42%	19	38%	5	10%	3	6%	2	4%	50	100%
Fifth Statement	24	48%	16	32%	4	8%	4	8%	2	4%	50	100%

In the first statement 21 participants responded strongly agree which is 42% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 4 responded disagree which is 8% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%.

In the second statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 5 responded disagree which is 10% and 5 responded disagree which is 10%.

In the third statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 3 responded disagree which is 6%.

In the fourth statement 24 participants responded strongly agree which is 48% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 1 responded disagree which is 2% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the fifth statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 2 responded disagree which is 4%. It was proved by Saman (2018), Osman (2018) Azmar (2019), Tram and Pham (2023) and Baiq et al. (2021) there were many obstacles faced using phrasal verbs inside English classes.

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First Statement	18	36%	17	34%	5	10%	8	16%	2	4%	50	100%
Second Statement	16	32%	16	32%	8	16%	5	10%	5	10%	50	100%
Third Statement	17	34%	9	18%	9	18%	8	16%	7	14%	50	100%
Fourth Statement	16	32%	15	30%	8	16%	8	16%	3	6%	50	100%
Fifth Statement	18	36%	16	32%	7	14%	6	12%	3	6%	50	100%

4.8 The Suggested Solutions Axis of Teaching Phrasal Verbs.

In the first statement 21 participants responded strongly agree which is 42% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 4 responded disagree which is 8% and 2 responded strongly disagree which is 4%.

In the second statement 20 participants responded strongly agree which is 40% while 18 responded agree which is 36%. 2 participants are neutral which is 4% while 5 responded disagree which is 10% and 5 responded disagree which is 10%.

In the third statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 3 responded disagree which is 6% and 3 responded disagree which is 6%.

In the fourth statement 24 participants responded strongly agree which is 48% while 21 responded agree which is 42%. 3 participants are neutral which is 6% while 1 responded disagree which is 2% and 1 responded disagree which is 2%.

In the fifth statement 22 participants responded strongly agree which is 44% while 19 responded agree which is 38%. 5 participants are neutral which is 10% while 2 responded disagree which is 4% and 2 responded disagree

which is 4%.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that teaching phrasal verbs was regarded important to the lesson for it was a new vocabulary. Also, there were syntactical obstacles for teaching phrasal verbs because it was hard to be formed and mater the usage and governed by standardization. In addition to that it was noticed that it was difficult to teach the grammar of phrasal verbs. Moreover, textbooks didn't pay careful attention for teaching phrasal verbs. Furthermore, there were semantic obstacles because meaning is governed by standardization; in such cases as transparent, semitransparent and opaque. Finally, the challenges of teaching phrasal verbs were regarded in distinguishing between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs.

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