

THE PROFICIENCY OF THE GRADUATE TEACHER TRAINEES IN USING THE IDIOMS AND PHRASAL VERBS IN COMMUNICATION

ABSTRACT: The multiword expressions or chunks, called phrasal verbs should be gradually introduced starting from the lower classes. Beginning from the literal phrasal verbs, idioms must be taught later. Phrasal verbs indeed make up one third of the English verb vocabulary. Understanding and use of these constructions correctly in spoken and written English is essential if the learner is to develop a complete command of the language. The purpose of the study is to assess the proficiency of the graduate teacher trainees in using the idioms and phrasal verbs in oral and written communication. The sample consisted of 60 sighted students and 35 visually challenged (sightless) students. A Single Group Experimental Post test only design was adopted. Spotting phrasal verbs in newspapers, novels, poems and in the speeches of great orators was practised in the class for a month in the after college hours. Oral drills to recall and use them in sentences/dialogues were also given. Oral and Written tests were conducted. The 't' test was used to verify the hypotheses. The sighted and sightless teacher trainees were fighting closely to be on top. The sighted and the sightless are at par producing better performance in one test each.



KEY WORDS

Chunk: A phrase or group of words which can be learnt as a unit by somebody who is learning a language. Ex: 'Can I have the bill, please?' and 'Pleased to meet you'.

Collocation: A combination of two or more words used together in a language, that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance. Ex: resounding success and crying shame.

Idiom: Idiom is a group of two or more words used together in order to produce a specific meaning or effect in speech or writing. . It is specific kind of vocabulary or jargon which is used in specific contexts. Ex: Spill the beans; A blessing in disguise; Once in a blue moon; Break a leg.

Phrasal Verb: These are verb-particle and /or preposition constructions. They perform the function of a verb. The words in a phrasal verb describe one action and so forms one complete semantic unit.

Syntax: A term which refers to the system of grammatical rules for combining words into phrases and clause

INTRODUCTION

The phrasal verbs in English cause difficulties for the ESL learners as well as teachers to master them. The phrasal verbs need to be introduced gradually beginning with literal

phrasal verbs to lower classes and when the students reach higher secondary classes(11th and 12th classes) idiomatic expressions or multiword expressions should be introduced. These word-chunks are called 'the scourge' of the ESL learners. Understanding and use of these constructions correctly in spoken and written English makes the learner to develop a complete command of the language. The ESL learners avoid phrasal verbs and prefer to use single word verbs of Latin origin. To make the graduate teacher trainees in SRM university competent enough to use the phrasal verbs which have no cultural bias in their oral and written expression, a stratified sample of 60 sighted teacher trainees and 35 visually challenged (sightless) trainees were chosen from 170 students in B.Ed classes. A single group post test only experimental design was adopted for the study. The tools used were daily English newspapers, modern novels and short story books, CDs containing speeches of great orators and eminent advocates, computer games and so on. After teaching the phrasal verbs of all kinds for a month for 45 minutes daily in the after college hours, oral interview was conducted to assess their use of phrasal verbs in speech and a written examination was conducted to estimate their proficiency in the use of idioms and phrases in their written expression. The hypotheses framed were tested for their statistical significance using the 't' test.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

George J.M. Lamont(2005) reported that prepositional verbs are distinguishable from phrasal verbs in terms of movement, as prepositions cannot move after their objects.

I went to the store (preposition) ---- This is a meaningful statement.

I went the store to. ----meaningless statement. Prepositions cannot move after their objects. He has given five syntactical tests for phrasal verbs.

1. Particle Movement: Particles for transitive phrasal verbs can move either before or after the direct object, and this will determine whether the word in question is a particle or preposition. I gave up the keys ----- I gave the keys up.

2. Adverb Intervention: Adverbs can be placed before the verb or at the end of sentence and not between verb and particle/object. I help out Sheela often--- I often help out Sheela. Adverbs can be placed between verbs and prepositional phrases.

I went quickly into the room. (preposition).

3. Spoken Stress: Particles are stressed in phrasal verbs but prepositions are unstressed in normal speech. I 'gave up the `keys. (particle). I 'walked up the `stairs. (preposition).

4. Translation of Synonymy: I give up smoking. In this sentence, the phrasal verb, 'give up' can be translated as the clearly transitive verb, 'relinquish' or 'surrender'

5. Passivization: Transitive phrasal verbs can be rendered in the passive as they are transitive verb and have the capacity for the inversion of logical subjects and objects.

I gave up the keys. (particle—Active voice). The keys were given up by me.(Passive.V)

I walked up the stairs.(preposition—Active voice.). No passive voice. But now passivization takes place.

Allen Brizee(2010) reported that the particle that follows the verb changes the meaning of the phrasal verb in idiomatic ways. The phrasal verb, ‘drop off’ means ‘decline gradually’ but ‘drop out’ means ‘cease to participate’. There are :

Separable Phrasal Verbs: She added up the total on her calculator & She added it up on her calculator.

In separable Phrasal Verbs: She always gets around the rules.

When the phrasal verb is intransitive, it does not take ‘Direct Object’.

After I explained the math problem, she began to catch on (understand).—Correct.

She began to catch on the math problem.----- Incorrect

She began to catch on to the math problem.----Correct Sentence.

Maarib Mohammed Sangoor (2012) investigated on the syntactic and semantic features of the English Phrasal verbs. The phrasal verb consists of a verb, usually a monosyllabic verb of action or movement such as “go, put, take etc” and one or more particles. The meaning of the individual parts of the phrasal verb is different from the idiomatic meaning of the phrasal verb. So the phrasal verbs are often difficult to master for the students of English as a second language. Phrasal verbs are common in spoken language and used more informally than their Latinate synonyms. (use up—consume; gather together—assemble;put out – extinguish).The phrasal verb is less formal, more colloquial and more image or emotion laden than the single word.(give in – yield; look after – tend; carry on – continue) . New nouns are formed from phrasal verbs.(runway from ‘run away’; outbreak from ‘break out’; makeup from ‘make up’.)

Yusuf Afriadi (2013) has reported that for learners of all ages, the comprehension of idiomatic expressions is facilitated by contextual support. It sounds funny to say “enter” to substitute, ‘come in’ in response to the door knocked. It is more precise to say ‘the tank blew up’ instead of ‘the tank exploded. The combination of phrasal verbs is restricted to certain particle such as “down, on, off, in, out, up” but there is no restriction on verbs. However the most common verbs are those simple and short ones, such as ‘put, take, crash, get, make...’ It is a collocation restriction. The restriction is clearly seen when we substitute the particle with its antonym. We can say, “put up with it” but we cannot say, “put down with it”. The phrases ‘give out’ and ‘carry off’ are not the antonyms of ‘give in’ and ‘carry on’. In separable phrasal verbs, a noun comes either between the verb and the preposition or after the preposition. “I picked the rose up and I picked up the rose”. A pronoun comes between the verb and preposition .” I picked him up”. In non-separable phrasal verbs, the noun/pronoun follows the preposition. “ I ran into an old friend” and

“Listen to me”. The purpose of the preposition is to link the noun/pronoun to the verb. In ‘carry on’, the purpose of the adverb is to change the meaning of the verb.

Sridhar Maisa and Dr. T.Karunakaran(2013) have reported that language consists not of traditional grammar and vocabulary, but often a multi-word prefabricated chunks. These chunks include idioms, proverbs, phrasal verbs, collocations and so on, fixed and semi-fixed expressions. These chunks are called ‘formulaic language’. Formulaic language is the key to fluency and motivates the learner. Idioms are connected to the themes of animals, the sea, sports, food and drink, sight, taste, physical appearance, health and illness. Many idioms have unusual grammar. In some, a word that is usually a verb, adjective, conjunction or preposition appears as a noun. Adjectives as Nouns: all of a sudden; through thick and thin. Verbs as Nouns: the do’s and don’ts; on the make. Conjunctions and prepositions as Nouns: ifs and buts; on the up and up; the inns and outs. Uncountable nouns seeming to be countable: in all weathers.

Emilie Riguel (2014) has reported that multiword expressions especially phrasal verbs can assess the level of English language proficiency. Phrasal verbs are difficult both to understand and remember for non-English speakers. They are called the ‘scourge’ of the learner. They must be mastered at a young age. These verb-particle constructions should be gradually developed. The input of phrasal verbs and interaction by using them plays a major role in the language acquisition process. There are about 3000 established phrasal verbs in English including 700 in everyday use. New ones are constantly being coined. The phrasal verbs have meanings ranging from directional or literal or transparent (stand up, take away) to aspectual or completive (burn down, eat up) to non-compositional, or idiomatic or opaque (face-ff, figure out).

From “the **Wikipedia**, the free encyclopaedia.htm”, (2014), it is known that phrasal verbs including a preposition are known as prepositional verbs and those including a particle are known as Particle Verbs. A phrasal verb in present day English is a verb that takes a complementary particle, in other words, an adverb resembling a preposition necessary to complete a sentence. There are three main constructions:

Verb+Preposition: “Who is looking after the kids?” (Prepositional Phrase)

Verb + Particle: You should think it over. (Particle)

Where do they want to hang out?

Verb+Particle+Preposition: Who can put up with that? (up-Particle. With—Preposition).

The meaning of the phrasal verbs can not be understood based upon the meaning upon their parts taken in isolation. When the Particle phrasal verb is transitive, the object of a particle precedes it (the particle). But the object of a preposition can never precede the preposition. If the particle is in first place, then the phrasal verb is never written with a hyphen : input, onset.

From the website, “**Learning and Using Phrasal Verbs.htm**” (2015), the following ideas can be collected. Phrasal Verbs are typical in spoken English and informal writing. They are used much in everyday speech. The meaning of a phrasal verb is not logical/obvious.

Phrasal Verb (informal)----- Latinate Verb (formal)

Go up and go on ----- increase & continue.

One phrasal verb can have more than one meaning. Ex:1. ‘make up’ --- invent; restore friendship after an argument; cosmetics. 2. Take off ----get undressed; succeed; a plane leaving the runway. The definite pronoun goes before the particle: ‘give it up’. From the Prepositional Phrasal Verb, the preposition cannot be separated: ‘look after someone’. Some phrasal verbs do not have objects at all: 1.Please go on. 2. He came back late.

Ways to understand phrasal verbs: 1. Sometimes, the particle can help you understand the meaning.for example, ‘back’ gives you the idea of something returning. Go back; take back; come back. 2. Understanding a particle does not always mean that one can understand the whole phrasal verb. Take up – start doing. Take up a hobby. (‘up’ gives the idea of upward movement). 3. Use the context (words and phrases around) to understand the phrasal verb. Ex: Please turn the volume down. Turn –reduce). 4. Learn phrasal verbs along with the formal equivalents: talk about work, health, holidays.. 5. When one is still learning the phrasal verbs, one should not separate them and should not use a definite pronoun. Ex: I would like to take up your offer.

From the website, “**englishleap.com**”(2015), (from the available content), it is known that phrasal verb shares no similarity with the verb that it replaces. Phrasal verbs are idiomatic as well as literal. Literal phrases such as “look up, walk across and switch off” are also phrasal verbs because the action described by each cannot be described if any of the words in the phrase are omitted. The Verb+adverb/preposition (or both) form one complete semantic unit because the words that form a phrasal verb together describe one action.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the proficiency of the B.Ed teacher trainees in using the phrasal verbs in oral and written communication.

To estimate the difference in proficiency of the sighted and the sightless B.Ed teacher trainees in using the phrasal verbs in their oral and written communication.

HYPOTHESES

1. The proficiency of the teacher trainees in B,Ed class will be very high in using

- the phrasal verbs and idioms in their oral communication .
2. The proficiency of the teacher trainees in B,Ed class will be very high in using the phrasal verbs and idioms in their written communication .
 3. The proficiency of the sighted- teacher trainees in B.Ed Class will be very high in using the phrasal verbs and idioms in their oral communication .
 4. The proficiency of the sighted- teacher trainees in B.Ed Class will be very high in using the phrasal verbs and idioms in their written communication.
 5. The proficiency of the visually challenged (sightless) teacher trainees in B.Ed class will be high in using the phrasal verbs and idioms in their oral communication.
 6. The level of proficiency of the visually challenged (sightless) teacher trainees in B.Ed class will be high in using the phrasal verbs and idioms in their written communication
 7. There is significant difference in the mean scores between the sighted and the visually challenged (sightless) teacher trainees in their achievement in using the idioms and phrases in their oral communication.
 8. There is significant difference in the mean scores between the sighted and the visually challenged (sightless) teacher trainees in their achievement in using the idioms and phrases in their written communication.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Method of the Study

Experimental Study

Design of the Study

Single Group Post test only Experimental Design.

Sample for the Study

60 sighted students and 35 Visually challenged students (sightless).

Tools for the study

1. Daily English News Papers.
2. Taped Speeches of the fluent Political Orators in and out of the parliament and the speeches of some eminent supreme court advocates.
3. Novels by reputed writers.
4. An Achievement Test in the Use of Phrasal Verbs in oral expression.
5. An Achievement Test in the Use of Phrasal verbs in written expression
6. Power point presentation of dialogues interspersed with phrasal verbs

Procedure

To help the students use phrasal verbs in their speech and written expression, the teacher educator consciously used a collection of phrasal verbs while teaching. For ex: “knows what’s what; knows his stuff; the brains behind; a mine of information; grey matter; is nobody’s fool; haven’t a clue; has the gift of the gab; could talk the hind legs of a donkey; has got nothing between the ears; slow on the uptake; wasn’t born yesterday; pull the wool over his eyes; can’t make head or tail of; one sandwich short of a picnic; one cell short of a battery; on cloud nine; over the moon; in seventh heaven; to be on top of the world; to be down in the mouth, to rave about; be at sea; be at a loss for words; be at the end of your tether; be full of beans; drive someone crazy; be dead on your feet; put a brave face on it; blow a fuse – collected from Michael McCarthy and Felicity O’Dell’s English Vocabulary in Use.

The students were asked to read an English newspaper daily and put circles around the phrasal verbs and read out the sentences as news in the Morning Prayer and in the class when they were asked to do. The phrasal verbs used often in newspapers are: “been at loggerheads; gives the benefit of the doubt; give up; take bull by horns; seething with anger; consign them to flames; the spate of protests, down shutters; hung himself with the noose; break open the doors; collide head on; growing greying profile; to take on; to launch an agitation against; urn down; a high decibel marketing; shed light; started spilling the beans; level-headed; to send shock waves; to stand up for; to stem the flow ; deadly reminders; to carry out; a tear streaming down one’s cheek; to make debut; feared a face-off; do back down; keep behind the bars; pave the way for; overturn a verdict; slap sanctions against; set to make a killing; be at the bottom rung of the ladder; lavish praises etc”. In one newspaper of a day, students picked up these phrasal verbs and idioms and other phrases in ten minutes in the class. As they had their own copies of the newspapers, they looked at different pages at a time, browse through the lines and found them out.

The students were drilled to read the dictionary after every verb-form for collecting the phrasal verbs and to know their meanings. For example, from the Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, one student read out all the idioms given under the verb, ‘loose’ and their

meanings: “ to break loose from (to separate yourself) ; to cut loose from somebody; to hang loose (to remain calm); have a loose tongue (to talk too much); to let loose (to do something to happen in an uncontrolled way); to let loose something (to make a remark in a loud way); to let somebody loose (to free somebody); on the loose (at large); to loose on something (to release something in an uncontrolled way)” and so on.

Daily, the teacher-educator asked the students to give the meanings for some phrasal verbs. The students in two groups asked each other to say the idioms when the meanings for those idioms were said. Daily for ten minutes this kind of drill was conducted. Most of the phrasal verbs they quoted were from the Sports Page of the newspapers. This drill created a lot of enthusiasm among the students. The visually challenged students though they were excluded from the study, were permitted to be present in the class and took part in the drills. The classes were held in the after college hours for 45 minutes in all the 30 working days. The visually challenged students actively participated in this drill. All the students were examined for their proficiency in the use of phrasal verbs in oral expression by the Interview Method. To test their proficiency in the use of phrasal verbs in their written expression, the normally sighted students appeared for the written test. The visually challenged students were permitted to have scribes for writing the answers in the written examination. The final year degree students of Arts and Science served as the scribes for the written examination to the visually challenged students.

The CDs which contain the speeches of the politicians like Mr. Chidhambaram. Arun Jaitley and Sitaram Yechury and some of the Supreme Court Advocates were played in the class. The students heard the speech of one personality for ten minutes daily. The students were suggested to take more attention on the use of phrasal verbs in the speech than the political message or legal knowledge presented through the speeches.

The modern novels and short stories which they have studied in their Degree classes were chosen and the students were asked to read silently a few pages for ten minutes and collect phrasal verbs used by the authors. Meanings for the new phrasal verbs were immediately consulted in the dictionary. After a week, they went through the novels at home or in the hostel rooms and came to the class with some collections. Charles Dickens had used abundant phrasal verbs in his novels. The students were asked to browse his novels.

The students were asked to encircle the literal phrasal verbs used in the poem, ‘Snake’ by D.H.Lawrence. They found the following phrasal verbs in the poem: “come down, reach down, trail down, rest upon, drip from, sip with, drink through, finish off, depart into, put into, draw up, go into, draw after, look round, put down, pick up, throw at, stare with, come back, and miss with”. They were asked to find out the idioms if there any in the poems of other writers.

The sightless/visually challenged students have the habit of recording the proceedings in the class in their cell phones and DVD players. They play back the recorded materials in their rooms and discuss among themselves in groups. They have an enormous interest to

prove themselves in public that they are as capable as the sighted persons. The partially challenged among them extend their help to the totally challenged. In all the programmes conducted in the campus, they are the more active participants.

The power point presentation of dialogues interspersed with idioms and phrasal verbs made a good appeal to the students.

The items included in the written test and the ones asked in the interview were from the phrasal verbs practised and discussed about in the class. To conduct the interview to all the sample of the study, the services of ten Assistant professors in the Arts and Science College, Polytechnic College, Engineering Colleges and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication were utilised. The oral test was conducted to all of the sample in the same day.

Verification of the Hypotheses

H₁:

Table 1 : Showing the Mean Scores of the B.Ed class teacher trainees in Oral test.

Teacher Trainees	N	Mean
Total Sample (95 trainees)	95	60.5

The proficiency level of the teacher trainees is just above average level.

H₂ :

Table 2: Showing the Mean Score of the B.Ed class teacher trainees in written expression

Teacher trainees	N	Mean
Total Sample of 95 teacher trainees.	95	563.5

H₃ :

Table 3: Showing the Mean Performance of the sighted teacher trainees in Oral test.

Teacher	N	Mean
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Trainees		
Sighted trainees	60	59

The level of proficiency of the sighted teacher trainees in the Oral test is above average.

H₄ :

Table 4: Showing the mean performance of the sighted trainees in the written test.

Teacher Trainees	N	Mean
Sighted trainees	60	65

The level of proficiency of the sighted trainees is in the lower part of the high category.

H₅ :

Table 5: Showing the mean performance of the sightless trainees in the Oral test

Teacher Trainees	N	Mean
Sightless Trainees	35	62

The level of proficiency of the sightless teacher trainees in the Oral test is just above the average . It is in the lowest part of high category.

H₆:

Table 6: showing the mean performance of the sightless trainees in the written test.

<i>Teacher Trainees</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Sightless Trainees	35	62

The level of proficiency of the sightless trainees is above the average category.

H₇ :

Table 7: Showing proficiencies of the sighted and the sightless Teacher trainees in the Oral test.

$$df = N-2$$

Teacher Trainees	N	M	σ	't' calculated	't'-Table Value At 0.05 level
Sighted Trs.	60	59	5.8	2.61	1.99 S
Sightless Trs.	35	62	5.14		

The proficiency of the sightless teachers is significantly better than the sighted teachers.

H₈ :

Table 8: Showing proficiencies of the sighted and sightless teacher trainees in the written test.

Teacher Trainees	N	M	σ	't' calculated	't'-Table Value at 0.05
Sighted Trainees	60	65	5.08	2.5	1.99 S
Sightless Trainees	35	62	5.91		

The sighted teacher trainees have performed significantly better than the sightless teacher trainees in the written achievement test.

Results of the Study

The sightless teacher trainees have a proficiency better than the sighted in the use of Phrasal verbs in their Oral expression but in the Written test, the sighted surpasses the sightless in their proficiency.

The sighted as well as the sightless are around the high average category in their proficiency in the use of phrasal verbs in communication.

DISCUSSION

The Semantic units of the idioms and phrasal verbs cannot be understood by the ESL learners knowing the meanings of the isolated words in idioms. This fact has been brought out by almost all the previous researchers and by the websites like Wikipedia. The Power Point Presentations of dialogues containing idioms and phrasal verbs were made

and the students in pairs were asked to read aloud. Cordless mikes were provided to the students. The individual words in the following idioms mean something different from the meanings conveyed by the whole phrases: spill the beans; a wolf in sheep's clothing; tooth and nail; poke one's nose; nip in the bud; leave in the lurch; tell upon; turn down; put up with; make out etc.

When phrasal verbs and idioms were found in the newspapers and in novels/short stories in proper context, they understand the meanings of the multiword expressions or chunks, that is the idioms. When the idioms and phrasal verbs are classified on the basis of people's dispute, keeping secrets, poverty, circumlocution in speech, boasting oneself and so on, it helps the students to recall them easily when they need.

As Maarib Md. Sangoor (2012) explained the formation of nouns from the phrasal verbs, the practice was entertaining to students. The new words like "runway, makeup, outbreak, breakout, break-up, blackout, sit-in, upkeep, layout, outlay etc make the learning of phrasal verbs lively.

George J.M.Lamont (2005) has given five syntactic tests for phrasal verbs. The tests enable the student-teachers to differentiate particles from prepositions.

Sridhar Maisa and Dr.T.Karunakaran (2013) have classified the phrasal verbs on the basis of people's work, rural life, transport, science and technology, sports and entertainment, parts of the body, feelings and emotions etc; Such approach to study idioms help the students to recall them in a flash.

This experimental study raised the proficiency of the teacher trainees from the scratch to the above average level. In ESL countries, only a few teachers use phrasal verbs in speech. So the proficiency level of the students is at low ebb. But in this study, the visually challenged students made serious attempts to surpass the sighted/normal students in their proficiency in the use of phrasal verbs. The normal students were also motivated by the efforts of the sightless. Usually the researchers launch studies based on genders in schools and colleges. But this study was carried out for the first time to test out the proficiency of the sighted and the sightless in the use of the phrasal verbs.

CONCLUSION

The sightless students made use of the gadgets provided to them by the government to make progress on par with the sighted students in the use of idioms and phrasal verbs in their communicative expressions.

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