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The Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs by English Department Students in Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Avoidance behaviour represents a communicative strategy of a learner of a second / foreign language by which the learner prefers using a simpler form instead of the target linguistic element for the reason of difficulty on the part of the target feature (Gluth, 2003).

The theoretical sections of the paper in hand try to offer an exhaustive illustration on the phenomenon of avoidance in the language learning literature, in general, and the avoidance of phrasal verbs in particular .Consequently, it is a must to devote some of the theoretical sections to shed light on the syntax and semantics of the structure being avoided viz. phrasal verbs.

The practical part of the present research investigates the avoidance of English phrasal verbs as a category by advanced Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language.The work also addresses the range of influence of phrasal verb types (figurative vs. literal) on the learners' avoidance behaviour.

A multiple choice test is designed as a tool for collecting data in order to either validate or invalidate the hypotheses of this study.

The analysis of the results shows that learners are inclined not to use phrasal verbs and tend to utilize their one-word equivalents. The study also reveals that avoidance is more manifested in advanced Iraqi learners' use of figurative rather than literal phrasal verbs.

Aims of the Study

As the existing studies on avoidance behaviour in second / foreign language acquisition / learning are quite limited and their findings are sometimes inconsistent, and since the researcher is not aware of such an investigation conducted with Iraqi students learning English as a foreign language, this study is designed to explore the following:

1-Whether fourth-Year English Department students avoid the use of phrasal verbs or not .

2-Whether their avoidance , if any , reflects differences in the semantic nature of the phrasal verb types (literal vs. figurative) or not.

Hypotheses

The current study hypothesizes the following:
1-Fourth-Year English department students avoid using phrasal verbs.
2-Phrasal verb types (literal vs. figurative) play no major role in students' avoidance behaviour, i.e. there will be no difference in the students' use of figurative and literal phrasal verbs.

Literature on Avoidance

When strongly motivated to express meaning in the second / foreign language but unable , for some reasons , to have access to the correct linguistic resources, a second / foreign language learner resorts to either of two principle communication strategies (Corder,1978). Faerch & Kasper (1980:80) define such communication strategies as " potentially conscious plans ... for solving what to the individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular goal". When such strategies include paraphrasing , invention of new words, guessing , and borrowing from the mother tongue , Corder (ibid.) uses the compound noun" risk taking" or " resource expansion" to identify and refer to these strategies , while Faerch & Kasper(1980) use the term" achievement strategies" for the same group of strategies.

But when the learner ignores or abandons the target concepts for which he lacks the appropriate vocabulary, he resorts to one" escape route" (Ickenroth,1975) or another. These escape routes are commonly

referred to as "avoidance strategies ". In the recent literature, these routes also have been termed " risk avoiding strategies " (Corder, 1978) , " message adjustment strategies " (Varadi,1980) and " reduction strategies" (Faerch & Kasper,1980).

The phenomenon of avoidance behaviour in second/ foreign language acquisition / learning is first brought to light by Schachter (1974) who carries out a study in which she makes a comparison of relative clause errors produced in free compositions in English as a second language by 50 (25 intermediate,25 advanced) native speakers each of Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese. A priori contrastive analysis of relative clauses in English and the other languages predictes the order of difficulty in learning the structures in question to be:

<p align="center">*Japanese > Chinese > Arabic, Persian*</p>

But the results of the error analysis reveal the opposite:

Native Speakers of	Correct	Error	Total	Percentage of Error
Persian	131	43	174	25%
Arabic	123	31	154	20%
Chinese	67	9	76	12%
Japanese	58	5	63	8%

<p align="center">*Based on Schachter(1974)*</p>

The investigation shows that the difficulty of relative clauses for Chinese and Japanese learners reveals itself not in the number of errors performed by these two groups of learners, but in the number of relative clauses produced. And the number (67 ,58 for Chinese and Japanese respectively) is considerably smaller than that produced by the Arabian(123) and Persian (131) learners. Schachter (ibid.:123) concludes that if a learner finds some particular construction in

the target language difficult to understand , it is likely that he/she tries to avoid using or producing it.

According to Kleinmann (1977:97), who believes that " to be able to avoid some linguistic feature presupposes being able to choose not to avoid it , i.e., to use it ”, Schachter's work does not provide any evidence of the learners' ability to use relative clauses. Therefore, the Chinese and Japanese learners’ so-called avoidance of using English relative clauses may have resulted simply from their ignorance of the structure rather than conscious avoidance.

For further understanding of avoidance behaviour , Kleinmann (1977, 1978) conducts a study to elicit the production of four English grammatical structures (passive,   present   progressive , infinitive complement , and direct object pronoun structures) by two groups of intermediate level learners of English as a second language : Native speakers of Arabic , and native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese. The study is preceded by a comprehension test to assure the learners awareness of the structures involved. The results of the study detects an avoidance pattern in accordance with the contrastive analysis difficulty predictions. Thus, it supports Schachter's view that avoidance is expected to occur when L1 and L2 differences exist.

To the researcher's best knowledge , there are four studies on the avoidance of phrasal verbs. The first study is Dagut & Laufers' (1985) , which tackles the treatment of English phrasal verbs, a lexicosyntactic form with no formal equivalent in Hebrew, by intermediate Israeli learners of English. The study also examines the frequency of avoidance in phrasal verb types .The results of their study shows that the majority of the learners avoid using phrasal verbs, preferring the one-word verbs. Furthermore , avoidance is more evident with the figurative phrasal verbs. Dagut & Laufer embrace   the interlingual approach in attributing   Hebrew learners' difficulty in using English phrasal verbs,i.e the structural differences between English and Hebrew results in avoidance.

Hulstijn & Marchena (1989) conduct   a study   with   both intermediate   and advanced Dutch learners of English in which they hypothesize that Dutch learners will still avoid phrasal verbs though they have them in their mother tongue. The investigation   reveals that Dutch learners do not avoid phrasal verbs as a category. However, they

do avoid the idiomatic phrasal verbs which they comprehend as too Dutch-like. They indicate that avoidance is not always caused by the structural differences between L1 and L2 alone.The similarities between L1 and L2 may result in avoidance as well.

The third study on the avoidance of phrasal verbs is Laufer and Eliasson's (1993). Based on other studies, they specify three possible reasons of avoidance:
(a)L1-L2 differences(Dagut & Laufer,1985),(b)L1-L2 similarity(Hulstijn &Marchena, 1989), and (c) L2 complexity. The participants in Laufer & Eliasson (1993) are advanced Swedish learners of English, whose native language have the phrasal verb structure. The results of their study are compared with those of Dagut and Laufer (1985) and the following findings are arrived at: first, phrasal verbs are avoided
by learners whose L1 lacks such a grammatical category (Hebrew) but are not avoided by those who possess the category in their L1 (Swedish); second, inherent complexity does not play the major role in L2 avoidance; finally, idiomatic meaning similarity between L1 and L2 does not necessarily induce learners' avoidance (Laufer & Eliasson,1993, 43-44). Laufer & Eliasson (1993) conclude that the best predictor of avoidance is L1-L2 difference.

The last study is Chen's(2005)which involves 300 subjects in a regular university in China .The subjects are 240 non-English major students and 60 English major students with different academic levels. The results clearly indicate the avoidance of English phrasal verbs and subjects often prefer one-word vocabularies to phrasal verbs no matter when phrasal verbs were more appropriate in the context .

Types of Avoidance

In spite of some terminological and classificatory disapproval in the typologies designed for avoidance strategies , most of them derive from the typology originally started by Varadi (1980) and elaborated by Tarone (1977). Along with Cohen & Dörneyei (2002:179) , these typologies distinguish between three different avoidance strategies:
1-Topic Avoidance which appears when the learner does not talk about concepts (topics) for which he lacks the required vocabulary. In extreme cases this may lead to cease communication . In less extreme

cases the learner takes his conversation away from the troublesome topic.

2-Message Abandonment which occurs when the learner begins expressing a target concept and abruptly he realizes that he doesn't know how to continue.Then the learner stops in mid sentence , chooses another topic and continues his conversation.It is obvious that in both types, whether topic avoidance or message abandonment , the troublesome topic is entirely dropped by the learner.

3-Meaning Replacement in which the topic is in fact not dropped but preserved by the learner. However, instead of trying to expand his linguistic resources and overcome his communicative problem , he deliberately chooses to be less specific than he originally aimed to be.

Blum & Levenston (1977:3) distinguish two types of avoidance : apparent avoidance that is motivated by lack of vocabulary and true avoidance, motivated by material simplification, which presupposes choice.The latter is practised by advanced language learners , teachers and editors of simplified texts. Words that the teacher or editor of simplified texts assume will be unfamiliar to the student (reader) are omitted.

After presenting the literature on avoidance , in general, and the avoidance of phrasal verbs in particular, the researcher tries to present a comprehensive picture of the structure being avoided viz. phrasal verbs .The following sections will be devoted to this purpose.

Definition of Phrasal Verbs

In terms of whether or not a language is capable of expressing states, events, actions, ...etc. by means of a single lexical morpheme only or by using lexical morphemes plus "satellites" such as prepositions, postpositions ,or adverbs,languages are classified into verb-framed and satellite-framed languages. The former type exploits the first technique while the latter adopts the second one(Talmy,1985,2001).

English is a satellite-framed language where prepositions and adverbial particles express what in many other languages form part of the meaning of the verb stem (Stam,1999). This may explain why the quality of actions , states and events to be communicated in verb form tends to be infinite in English despite the not very great number of

common verbs , prepositions and adverbs. One important topic relevant to this issue is the phenomenon of phrasal verbs.

Thomson & Marinet (1960:227) define phrasal verbs as combinations that can be formed by placing "short words" after certain words so as to obtain a variety of meanings.They add that these short words are either prepositions or adverbs.

While Palmer (1965:215) refers to phrasal verbs as "compound verbs", "verb + particle combinations " or " prepositional and phrasal verbs" . For him , these combinations are characterized by being collocationally restricted , replaced by single word verbs, passivized and the relevant particles comprise a limited set.

A phrasal verb is usually defined as a structure that consists of a verb proper and a morphologically invariable particle that functions as a single unit both syntactically and lexically (Quirk , Greenbaum , Leech & Svartivk ,1985 ;Darwin & Gray,1999).

The Classification of Phrasal Verbs

The use of phrasal verbs, in both formal and informal Modern English, is growing. Nowadays libraries are filled with different sources: books, dictionaries and articles which are devoted to phrasal verbs . These sources approach the classification of phrasal verbs in terms of Syntax and Semantics.

On the syntactic level , scholars focus on such axes as adverb vs. preposition as particle, the transitivity and separability of the phrasal verb. Quirk & Greenbaum 1973:389-394 ; Fraser, 1976 ; Murphy, 1994:272 and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999:429 classify phrasal verbs into four types:

1-Intransitive phrasal verbs which are composed of a basic verb plus a particle which is a place adjunct or functions as such ,e.g.

<div align="center">

Drink up quickly.
He is playing around.

</div>

Also called non-separable for the particle cannot be separated from its verb ,e.g.

*Drink quickly up.

2-Transitive phrasal verbs which do take a direct object .See the following examples:

He looked up a word in the dictionary.
He looked a word up in the dictionary.

3-Prepositional verbs , such verbs are composed of a basic verb plus a   preposition ; they do permit an inserted adverb after the verb ; therefore they are   separable .See these instance

They called early on the man.

The phrase "the man" functions as the object, thus prepositional verbs are transitive

4-Phrasal –prepositional verbs . These verbs are composed o f a basic verb plus   an adverb plus a preposition which is followed by an object.

He puts up with that secretary of his.
*He puts willingly up   with that secretary of his.

The latter example illustrates the non-separability of this group of phrasal verbs.

Various studies are conducted to explore the semantic nature of phrasal verbs. Quirk ,Geeenbaum ,Leech & Svartivk (1985) deal with the classification of phrasal verbs in terms of idiomaticity , which for them is a synonym for predictability of meaning. According to them, phrasal verbs can be of three types:

1-The phrasal verbs whose meaning with respect to the verb doesn't change are   termed non- idiomatic. For example

She fell down and broke her arm.

2-Those phrasal verbs whose meaning changes slightly with respect to the base verb are called semi-idiomatic. For example

I was hoping to leave at 4:30 a.m , but my parents take me out of it.

3-Those phrasal verbs whose meaning is unpredictable are called idiomatic. For example:

I don't know how she puts up with her boss.

Cornell(1985) observes that large numbers of phrasal verbs are non-idiomatic in nature, in the sense that their meaning is easy to deduce if the verb element is known. For example ,if the meaning of "take" or "come" is known to the learner , it would not be hard to understand " take away" or "come in".

Dagut & Laufer(1985) approach the classification of phrasal verbs with different terms but the same nature. They divide the phrasal verbs used in their work into two types:

1-Literal phrasal verbs whose meaning is straightforward product of their semantic components ,e.g. go out , get up.

2-Figurative phrasal verbs in which a new meaning has resulted from a metaphorical shift of meaning and the semantic fusion of the individual components e.g. turn up , led down.

Similarly , Laufer & Eliasson (1993:37) deal with two types of phrasal verbs : semantically transparent (the meaning of the whole verb particle combination can be derived from the meaning of its parts) and figurative or " semantically opaque" , which has a lexicalized meaning. The figurative, or idiomatic phrasal verbs are considered semantically more difficult than the other type of phrasal verbs.

Reasons of Avoidance

Brown (1973:178), in his definition of communication strategies , employs the phrase " for some reason" to indicate that resorting to such communication strategies is motivated by different factors.

Though the literature on avoidance behaviour in second / foreign language acquisition / learning is still inadequate, the few works on avoidance demonstrate various causes for such a behaviour. Since ninety five percent of the literature on avoidance comprises studies investigating the avoidance of phrasal verbs , hence the factors underlying avoidance are relevant to the same issue.

Schachter (1974) and Kleinmann(1977,1978), whose studies are not devoted to the avoidance of phrasal verbs,agree with Dagut & Laufer (1985);Hulstijn & Marchena (1989) and Laufer & Eliasson (1993), who explore the avoidance of English phrasal verbs , that avoidance behaviour more or less exists in second/ foreign language performances but results from varied causes related to types of learners and settings as well as the similarities and dissimilarities between the two languages.

The most important factor to cause the avoidance of English phrasal verbs by students is the lack of foreign language environment. Students are exposed to very few opportunities for English communication except where there are some opportunities provided to practise English in the classroom. Lack of practice and individually spaced repetition, that is the opposite of massed repetition, is likely to result in ineffective or less confident communication even though the relevant language knowledge has been taught in the classroom (Nation , 2001). However, research evidence shows that communicative practice in the classroom is not sufficient to lead learners to a high degree of fluency and accuracy in all aspects of language production (Lightbown, 2000).

Some mismatch can be found between the vocabulary required for studying and conversational discourse (Wetherell , Taylor & Yates , 2002) . What makes matters worse , there has been an over emphasis on vocabulary among learners , the majority of students possess a vocabulary dictionary and most of their time that is devoted to learn English is occupied by memorizing words instead of learning the most commonly used phrasal verbs. In addition, students tend to exclude that part of vocabulary that consists of more than one single word including phrasal verbs.

Gluth(2003) believes that other psychological variables operate at the same time to determine the actual occurrence of the avoidance behaviour such as confidence, levels of anxiety, motivation, and risk-taking.

Maniruzzaman (2008) adds that the learners may lack self-confidence and 'facilitating anxiety' that enhance learning and performance; rather, they may have 'debilitating anxiety' that hinders learning and reduces performance, as Scovel (1978:139) maintains :

*"Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to 'fight'
the new learning task ; it gears the learner
emotionally for approach behaviour. Debilitating
anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to 'flee'
the new learning task; it stimulates the individual
emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour."*

Teachers' Role in Reducing the Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs

Learning English is becoming an important issue in the Iraqi settings so effective and efficient teaching is more pressing and crucial than ever before. Iraqi learners of English (students) are weak in understanding phrasal verbs and they tend to avoid using them (see Discussion). Therefore, phrasal verbs should be given greater emphasis than before with the goal of achieving effective and efficient communication in the English speaking community.

Wyss (2002:1-2) reports that the pedagogical problem with regard to phrasal verbs is related to their heterogeneous structure which is a mixture of semantic considerations (do they have a meaning which is simply the sum of its parts or have a meaning which bears little apparent relation to those parts?) and syntactic variations such as transitivity and separability.A further difficulty is encountered with the phrasal verbs that contain shades of meaning difference that are relevant to context and register , i.e. pragmatic aspects.

The aforementioned mixture that composes this English bugbear (phrasal verbs) is the reason behind presenting phrasal verbs as a formidable obstacle on the road toward English foreign language learner's fluency. Nonetheless ,a few guidelines on understanding phrasal verbs should be considered by English foreign language instructors involved in teaching them. These clues may include useful rules that clarify the answers of questions like:

1-What exactly constitute phrasal verbs ?
2-Does verb + preposition combinations represent phrasal verbs ?
3-Does verb +adverb combinations represent phrasal verbs ?
4-Which phrasal verbs are transitive and which ones are intransitive ?
5- Which phrasal verbs are separable and which are not ?
6-How and when to use phrasal verbs?

Therefore,English foreign language teachers must emphasize phrasal verbs while teaching vocabulary and help learners to use them properly. Consequently, these verbs ,as Xu (2002) states ,ought to be treated as 'chunks' –together with their syntactic , contextual and collocational features-rather than in isolation. Providing learners with lists of phrasal verbs to learn by heart ought to be a thing of the past.

Teachers should be aware of the importance of communication especially oral communication in modern daily life; therefore, communication skills should be put in an exceptional prominent place. Moreover, there is evidence that English phrasal verbs are important component in communication , and they need to be emphasized in English language learning and teaching(Wu,2001).

Besides, teachers should hold positive attitudes with respect to teaching methods. There are no best methods in education, particularly with respect to English phrasal verbs (Prabhu,1990). However , Hunt & Beglar (2005) provide some ideas for teachers to elaborate approaches to the teaching of English phrasal verbs , namely the downward and upward approach. This is an approach to teach English phrasal verbs whose meanings are familiar to the learners and it should be stressed that almost every common English phrasal verb consists of particular words that the learner must be very familiar with. Doing so initially makes the learner feel that phrasal verbs involve nothing difficult and can be more confident to learn them well. Which is a psychological strategy. This is the so-called downward approach.

After that , the upward approach can be used, namely to introduce the meanings that are closely related to daily communication. Various meanings can be gradually added to each item. The purpose of doing so is to help the learners to become aware of the powerful service provided through oral communication. Given that some learners may like to challenge something new , and may feel bored to learn the phrases with their familiar components, some equivalent forms may be introduced in an appropriate way to make sure the learners are not overloaded with new ideas.

This approach is especially suitable when the vocabulary size for oral communication has been lowered down to a certain level where the

learners do not have to memorize so many inapplicable words for use in speaking situations.

The Model

The study is designed along the lines of two earlier studies " Dagut & Laufer (1985) and Hulstijn & Marchena (1989) with certain modifications.

Materials

Fifteen pairs of phrasal verbs (five literal vs. ten figurative) and one-word verbs are used in this study. This set of (15) items is arranged in the elicitation test ,i. e. multiple choice test . The multiple choice test which consists of fifteen sentences is presented ,the verb in question is left blank .The participants are asked to fill in the blank with one of four verbs presented   below the sentences : the phrasal   verb   ,the one-word equivalent verb and two distractor verbs. Because each item actually contains two correct   answers , the participants receive instructions to choose the one they consider most suitable to complete the sentence.

The phrasal verbs included within the multiple choice test are all selected from McCarthy & O'Dell's English Phrasal Verbs in Use (2004) since the phrasal verbs presented in this book are all taken from those described as significant by the CANCODE corpus of spoken English, developed at the University of Nottingham in association with Cambridge UniversityPress and the Cambridge International Corpus of written and spoken English. Also these phrasal verbs are considered necessary to know for everyday spoken and written communication in English.
The choice of the phrasal verbs from the above reference is depended primarily on the researcher's impression from her teaching experience as the phrasal verbs used in the study are chosen because they are listed in one of   the standard textbooks (Quirk & Greenbaum,1973) which is supposed to be covered in the present subjects' curriculum.

The Subjects

The participants in this study are eighty- five advanced Iraqi learners of English. These learners are fourth year students (for the year 2007-2008) at the Department of English/ college of Education/ Kirkuk University . The reason behind selecting the subjects from the fourth year is to establish and ensure the presence of the learners' knowledge of the   structure   in question , since fourth year students have already received systematic

study and extensive exposure to authentic English which would help them master the commonly used English phrasal verbs. The community in which the study was conducted is a multilingual one; therefore,thefourth year students comprises native speakers of Turkmen , Kurdish and Arabic. The responses of the native speakers of Arabic are neglected because they are few in number (due to the fact that the number of Arab students in the fourth stage for the academic year 2007-2008 is very small compared to the other groups). Consequently, their responses are not sufficient to make statements concerning the analysis of their test results . So, the participants are approximately equal native speakers of both Turkmen and Kurdish which do not have phrasal verbs in their linguistic systems.

Research Design

The eighty-five fourth-year students at the department of English for the academic year 2007-2008 have taken a multiple choice test. As discussed in the literature review , the semantic complexity of the phrasal verbs plays a role in learners' / students' avoidance behaviour . Semantic opaqueness in the case of figurative phrasal verbs presents more difficulty for foreign learners than semantic transparency in the case of literal phrasal verbs. In order to take into consideration the role of the semantic complexity in learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs, the present study looks at phrasal verbs in two types :literal and figurative(see Appendix A).

Results

The first aim of this paper regards the question whether English department students avoid the use of phrasal verbs or not. In order to achieve this aim , the collected data, through using a multiple choice test as a research tool, is analyzed by calculating the percentage of correct use for both one-word verbs and phrasal verbs while responding to the items of the test. Table (1) presents the results of this analysis.

Item No.	Percentage of Correct Responses for		Percentage of Incorrect Responses
	One- Word Verbs	Phrasal Verbs	
1	14.1%	81.2%	4.7%
2	76.5%	21.9%	10.6%
3	31.8%	48.2%	20%

4	21.2%	64.7%	14.1%
5	84.7%	10.6%	4.7%
6	4.7%	89.4%	5.9%
7	60%	15.3%	24.7%
8	9.4%	63.5%	27.1%
9	80.%	15.3%	4.7%
10	84.7%	11.8%	3.5%
11	25.9%	56.5%	17.6%
12	50.6%	8.2%	41.2%
13	30.6%	8.2%	61.2%
14	72.9%	24.7%	2.4%
15	43.5%	31.8%	24.7%
Sum	46.04%	36.16%	17.80%

Table (1)

Percentage of Distribution for Correct & Incorrect Responses According to Verb Type

The results presented in the above table indicate the presence of discrepancy in the use of one-word verbs and phrasal verbs by English department students. When comparing the percentage of use of these two structures , it becomes obvious that the percentage of using one-word verbs (46.04%) is higher than that of phrasal verbs (36.16%). In other words, the low percentage of using phrasal verbs refers to (correlates with) students' avoidance of these forms.

Now that it is apparent the fact that English department students do avoid using phrasal verbs , the researcher aims at examining whether or not their avoidance correlates with the semantic complexity of the multi-word verb ,i.e do students avoid compositional (literal) or non-compositional (figurative phrasal verbs)?

To accomplish this goal , students' correct choices of the correct phrasal verbs in the test are taken to be the database which is analyzed by calculating the percentage of use for each correct phrasal verb compared to the number of users and how many times (frequency) they used the correct phrasal verb. Table (2) illustrates the results of this process.

| Item No. | Percentage of Correct Responses for Phrasal Verbs | | | |
| | Literal | | Figurative | |
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	69	14.97%	-	-
2	-	-	11	2.39%
3	41	8.89%	-	-
4	-	-	55	11.39%
5	9	1.95%	-	-
6	76	16.48%	-	-
7	-	-	13	2.82%
8	54	11.71%	-	-
9	-	-	13	2.82%
10	-	-	10	2.17%
11	-	-	48	10.41%
12	-	-	7	1.52%
13	-	-	7	1.52%
14	-	-	21	4.55%
15	-	-	27	5.86%
Sum	249	54.02%	212	45.99%

Table (2)
Percentage of Usage for Phrasal Verb Types

The numbers in the above table demonstrate a difference in the percentage of use for compositional (literal) and non-compositional (figurative) phrasal verbs.Since,the number of the former type of phrasal verbs are less than the number of figurative one in the test and in order to make a comparison between them , the researcher resorts to the weighted percentage. This is calculated by dividing the percentage of use for each type (category) by the number of the verbs in that specific category. Then a comparison between the two percentages is done by using the contrast among related percentages equation. The comparison reveals that the calculated value equals (1.960) at a significance rate of (0.5). This means that the students avoid figurative phrasal verbs.

Table (3) aims to identify which phrasal verbs are avoided most ,i . e . to arrange these phrasal verbs in a descending order (sequence). In the course of pursuing this aim, the data is analyzed by calculating the

percentage of use for each correct phrasal verb and the low percentage of use is considered as an indicator of avoiding to use that phrasal verb.

It is worth mentioning that the percentage 50% and below was considered as a statistical marker (scale) of avoiding phrasal verbs in the present study. Among the fifteen phrasal verbs used in the elicitation test , only ten of them scored below the standard scale (50%).Table (3) presents the ten phrasal verbs that are avoided by English department students in a descending order.

Order	The Phrasal Verbs	Percentage of Usage	Item No.
1	Puts up with	8.2%	١٢
1	Giving in	8.2%	١٣
2	Looking around	10.6%	٥
3	Carry on	11.8%	١٠
4	Let down	12.9%	٢
5	Make up	15.3%	٧
5	Hold on	15.3%	٩
6	Passed away	24.7%	١٤
7	Broke down	31.8%	١٥
8	Coming out	48.8%	٣

Table (3)
The Order of Avoided Phrasal Verbs in Students' Responses

The avoided phrasal verbs with their percentage of use in a descending order are:" Put up with " and " Giving in" 8.2% ," Looking around " 10.6% ," Carry on" 11.8% ," Let down" 12.9% ," Make up " and " Hold on" 15.3% ," Passed away " 24.7% ,"Broke down" 31.8% ,"Coming out" 48.2% .

Five phrasal verbs (Switch off 89.4% , Get up 81.2 % , Show off 64.7% , Take back 63.5% , Brought up 56.5%) scored higher than the standard statistical scale of avoidance of this study(50%). Consequently, they were not considered as being avoided by the subjects, so they were not included in table (3).

Discussion

The first research question in the present study is related to whether fourth year English department students avoid the use of English phrasal verbs or not .To answer this question, results from the test are analyzed. Analysis reveals that the students tend to avoid using phrasal verbs (they used phrasal verbs 36.16% of the time) and prefer their one-word equivalents(they used one-word verbs 46.06% of the time),see Table (1). Thus, hypothesis no.1 of this study is supported.

Turkmen is the native language of half of the population in this study. The structure of a verb followed by a particle does not exist in Turkmen. However , Turkmen possesses somehow similar constructions that are composed of two elements, one of them is a verb. The two elements structure acts as one unit which functions as a verb, thus it is possible to refer to such combinations as compound verbs which very often take on figurative meanings. Consider these examples which are taken from standard Turkmen , Ayağina düştü(to beg),Kulak asti (to listen carefully), Kanina girdi(to kill), Gözu düştü (to admire),Bel bağladi(to depend on), Söz tuttu(to obey),Uregi düştü (got scared).

Kurdish, which is the mother tongue of the other half of the population in this study, also lacks the phrasal verb structure. Like Iraqi Turkmen, it contains within its linguistic system structures composed of two or more elements,one of them is a verb. The whole structure is functioning as a verb. Consider the following instances, soini khward(to swear), germi kird(to heat),rek kawit(to agree), chawii pey kawit(to catch the sight of), chaki kird(to fix), seri le da(to visit).

All these structures ,whether in Turkmen or Kurdish, are different from the English phrasal verb structure.Thus, the structural difference between L1 (Turkmen and Kurdish) and L2(English) may be the reason behind advanced Iraqi learners' avoidance of English phrasal verbs. Therefore, the findings of the present study support the conclusion of previous researches that L1-L2 difference is a good predictor of avoidance in foreign language learning (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993).

There might be other reasons resulting in the Iraqi learners avoidance of phrasal verbs such as the lack of a native English environment,

psychological variables like self-confidence and anxiety, etc...but such factors are beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Research question no.2 asked if the avoidance of phrasal verbs by (English department) students reflects differences in the phrasal verb types (i.e literal vs. figurative).Analysis found that phrasal verb type is statistically significant in the multiple choice test, with the mean of literal phrasal verbs(54.02%) being higher than that of figurative ones (45.99 %).See Table (2).This is an evidence that there is interaction between phrasal verb types and Iraqi learners' avoidance, which means that all the learners favoured more literal phrasal verb production than figurative phrasal verb production in the multiple choice test. Hence, phrasal verb types (literal vs. figurative) play a major role in students' avoidance behaviour, i.e. there is a difference in the students' use of figurative and literal phrasal verbs. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected.These findings are consistent with previous studies as well. Dagut & Laufer (1985) have found that Hebrew speakers' avoidance of phrasal verbs happens more often with figurative ones than literal ones. In Hulstijn & Marchena's(1989) study, despite the L1-L2 similarity (phrasal verb structure exists in both English and Dutch, two Germanic languages), Dutch speakers also avoid some of the idiomatic phrasal verbs, i.e. figurative ones.

The difficulty of figurative phrasal verbs in contrast with literal phrasal verbs may be due to their semantic nature(Dagut & Laufer ,1985 ;Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989 ; Laufer & Eliasson , 1993) . As figurative phrasal verbs often take on idiomatic meanings,learners find it difficult to map their meanings with their forms . On the other hand , it is comparatively easy for them to get the meaning of a literal phrasal verb by combining the meanings of its verb proper and particle.

Difficulties of figurative phrasal verbs may be syntactic as well .It may be, syntactic in that verbs in figurative phrasal verbs can take different particles to carry various meanings(an English verb can take a number of different particles to form figurative phrasal verbs with a variety of meanings). Therefore , the reason for the students' stronger avoidance tendency with figurative phrasal verbs could be semantic, syntactic, or a combination of both.

The findings lend support to the conclusion of the investigations carried out by Schachter 1974, Dagut & Laufer 1985, Kleinmann 1977, 1978, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Chen, 2005 and may be considered to be

a common or 'universal' phenomenon of second/foreign learning, though further research is needed to validate this.

Table(3) presents a descending hierarchy of the phrasal verbs used in the study, based on the extent of their avoidance by the English department students. Declaring the percentage 50 % and below as a statistical indication of the emergence of avoidance resulted in having ten phrasal verbs in this hierarchy. All of these phrasal verbs are figurative except two (look around 10.6 % , come out 48.2 %) which are literal ones. The existence of figurative phrasal verbs in this table comes in accordance with the hypothesis that learners tend to avoid figurative more than literal phrasal verbs. As for the reason underlying the existence of literal phrasal verbs within the same range of avoidance for figuratives , one may attribute this to the fact that students frequently use their one- word equivalents (search, leave respectively) , i.e. students are more familiar with them or they want to play it safe (Cook, 2001).

Regarding the five phrasal verbs excluded from table (3), three of them are literal phrasal verbs (get up, take back, switch off) and the rest are figurative ones(show off, brought up), their scores qualifie them not to be considered as being avoided by the subjects. It is anticipated that literal phrasal verbs will not be avoided compared to figurative ones, but to figurative phrasal verbs to be considered as not being avoided, comes contrary to the expectations of this work.This may be due to students' familiarity with these figurative phrasal verbs.

This deviation from the expectations of this study(for both literal phrasal verbs ," look around " and " come out ", to be avoided and figurative ones ," show off "and" brought up" , not to be avoided) is an evidence that avoidance can be turned into non- avoidance if learners, in a way or another, become familiar with the item in question.

Conclusions

The current study reveals that fourth year Iraqi college students , at the department of English, avoid the use of phrasal verbs in English foreign language performance. The study also discloses that the avoidance pattern is much greater with figurative phrasal verbs than literal ones, which lends support to the belief that the semantic and/or syntactic difficulties of figurative phrasal verbs may aggravate learners'

avoidance of them. The study also concludes that L1-L2 difference is a good predictor of avoidance.

However , the study provides an evidence that the avoidance tendency may diminish or approach a native like performance if learners are provided with the recommended environment for learning phrasal verbs, whether figurative or literal.

Pedagogical Implications

Because of the increasing number of foreigners coming to Iraq, being able to communicate with them became a major motivation (second order) behind learning English by Iraqi students(see Amin, p. 9). This is, therefore, an evidence that English phrasal verbs , that are important components in communication , need to be emphasized in English language teaching and learning. The syllabus has to be designed in such a way that it incorporates what the learner wants and needs to communicate in his/ her real life situations. That is, the vocabulary items and the sentence structures to be learned have to be selected on the basis of the needs analysis of the learner. Similarities and dissimilarities between the L1 and L2 should be considered and disclosed to the learner so that he/she can pay special attention to them because materials and classroom activities embodying the similarities and dissimilarities between the L1 and L2 can discourage and decrease the learner's avoidance tendency.In addition, teachers should resort to the recommended methods in teaching English phrasal verbs(see Teachers Role in Reducing the Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs).

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APPENDIX A
PHRASAL AND ONE-WORD VERBS USED IN THE STUDY

The 15 pairs of phrasal and one-word verbs used in the study (see Appendix B for context).

	Phrasal Verbs	*One-Word Equivalents*
A- Literal		
	get up	rise
	come out	leaving
	look around	searching
	switched off	disconnected
	take back	withdraw
B- Figurative		
	let down	dissapoint
	show off	boast
	make up	reconcile
	hold on	wait
	carry on	continue
	brought up	raised
	put up with	tolerate
	give in	surrender
	passed away	died
	broke down	collapsed

APPENDIX B

THE MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

Dear students: The items below are particularly concerned with the use of phrasal verbs. Your careful answering of them is instrumental to our research and will be highly appreciated. Thank you for cooperation.

Q-Choose the most suitable alternatives to fill in the blanks below

1. – " When the weather is nice I love to ___ early."

      A. rise   B. release   C. get up   D. look after

2. – " I am absolutely sure that I can trust my husband and that he will never_____me."

    A. solve   B. let down   C. fill in   D. disappoint

3. "Jane is_____of the hospital. She is much better now."

    A. staying   B. leaving   C. coming out   D. mixing up

4. " The child danced around the room,_____to every body."

    A. breaking out   B. showing off   C. boasting   D. lying

5. " If you are _____ for a new job, then you have to ask different people."

 A. looking around   B. closing down C. treating D. searching

6. "Sorry, I had _____ my mobile."

    A. disconnected   B. switched off   C. go on   D. lived

7. " Whenever I quarrel with my friend, I can't wait to _____again."

    A. put forward   B. avoid   C. make up   D. reconcile

8. I shouldn't have called you lazy, I_____ what I said."

   A. bring off   B. insist   c. withdraw   D. take back

9. " Tanya: can I speak to your sister , please?"
   Matt:_____ I 'll see if she is in yet?"

     A. hold on   B. capture   C. wait   D. fall down

10. " Are you going to_____ working or will you stay at home?"

     A. sit   B. carry on   C. continue   D. meet

11. " The young Richard was orphaned at early age and was_____ by an aunt."

   A. killed   B. stood up   C. brought up   D. raised

12. 'I don't know how James _____ his boss."

   A. tolerates   B. turns off   C. puts up with   D. buys

13. " The authorities showed no signs of _____ to the kidnapper's demands."

   A. realizing   B. giving in   C. surrendering   D. looking up

14. " Jim's uncle _____last year."

   A. became   B. shook off   C. passed away   D. died

15. " Nicolas _____ when the doctor told him the results of his medical test."

   A. broke down   B. took off   C. collapsed   D. built

ظاهرة تجنب الافعال المركبة لدى طلاب قسم اللغة الانكليزية في العراق

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الخلاصة

ان سلوك التجنب هو احد ستراتيجيات التواصل المعتمده من قبل متعلمي اللغة(الثانيه و الاجنبية) والتي يتفادى فيها المتعلم استخدام الصيغة اللغوية الانسب في السياق المعني لانه يجدها عسيرة ويلجأ بدلا من ذلك الى استخدام الصيغة المرادفة الابسط(Gluth،٢٠٠٣).

يسعى الباحث في الجزء النظري من البحث الحالي لعرض صورة شاملة،قدر الامكان،عن ظاهرة التجنب في مجال تعلم اللغة بشكل عام وعن ظاهرة تجنب الافعال المركبة في الانكليزيةعلى وجه الخصوص.كماوأرتاى الباحث ضرورة ان تخصص فقرات ضمن الجزء النظري من البحث لالقاء الضوء على الابعاد النحوية والدلالية للتركيب الذي يتم تجنبه الا وهو الفعل المركب في الانكليزية.

امـا الجانـب العملـي للدراسـة فأنـه يستقصـي ظـاهرة تجنـب متعلمـي اللغة(الانكليزيـة كلغـة اجنبيـة)العراقيين في الصفوف المتقدمـة للافعـال المركبـة كصنف مـن اصناف الافعـال في اللغـة المذكورة انفا.

ويتنـاول البحث ايضـا مدى تـأثير انـواع الافعـال المركبـةعلى سلوك التجنب لـدى المتعلمين الآنف ذكرهم اعلاه للافعال المركبة في الانكليزية.

هذا وقد وظف البحث اسلوب الاختبار متعدد الاختيار كـأداة لجمع البيانـات لغرض تأييد او دحض فرضيات الدراسة الحالية.

تشير نتائج الدراسه الى ان المتعلمين العراقيين ذوو نزعة لتجنب استخدام الافعال المركبة الانكليزية واللجوء لاستعمال مرادفاتها من الافعال البسيطة عوضاعن ذلك.

وقد اظهرت الدراسـة ايضـاان سلوك التجنـب لـدى المتعلمين العراقيين هـو اكثر وضوحـا عند استعمالهم للافعال المركبة المجازية المعنى من قريناتها ذوات المعنى الحرفي.