

TEACHING TRAVEL-RELATED PHRASAL VERBS THROUGH TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING (TBLT) FOR ADULT ESL LEARNERS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation:

This article presents a Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach to teaching travel-related phrasal verbs to adult ESL learners in Uzbekistan. The learners, aged 30–35 and working in various professional fields, face challenges with phrasal verbs due to limited prior grammar instruction. Drawing on Biber et al. (2021) and Payne (2011), the article outlines a lesson plan that integrates pre-task, task, and post-task phases to promote both fluency and accuracy. The activities include communicative tasks, role-plays, and contextual grammar explanations. These activities aim to help learners acquire and confidently use phrasal verbs in real-life travel situations.

Keywords:

TBLT, phrasal verbs, grammar teaching, communicative approach, Uzbekistan, ESL, adult learners, travel vocabulary

Аннотация:

В статье представлен подход Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) для обучения взрослых учащихся в Узбекистане фразовым глаголам, связанным с путешествиями. Обучающиеся в возрасте 30–35 лет, работающие в различных профессиональных сферах, испытывают трудности с фразовыми глаголами из-за ограниченного предыдущего обучения грамматике. Опираясь на работы Biber и др. (2021) и Payne (2011), автор описывает план урока, включающий этапы предзадания, задания и постзадания, направленные на развитие беглости и точности речи. В заданиях используются коммуникативные упражнения, ролевые игры и контекстуальные объяснения грамматики, что помогает учащимся освоить и уверенно использовать фразовые глаголы в реальных ситуациях, связанных с путешествиями.

Ключевые слова:

TBLT, фразовые глаголы, преподавание грамматики, коммуникативный подход, Узбекистан, английский язык как второй, взрослые учащиеся, туристическая лексика

Annotatsiya:

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistondagi katta yoshli ingliz tili o'rganuvchilariga sayohat bilan bog'liq frazali fe'llarni o'rgatishda Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) yondashuvi taqdim etiladi. Yoshi 30-35 bo'lgan va turli kasbiy sohalarda ishlaydigan o'quvchilar grammatikani oldin kam o'rganganliklari sababli frazali fe'llarda qiyinchilikka duch kelishadi. Biber va boshqalar (2021) hamda Payne (2011) ishlariga tayanib, maqolada so'zlashuvda ham beg'likni, ham aniqlikni rivojlantirishga qaratilgan dars rejasi yoritiladi. Mashg'ulotlar tarkibida kommunikativ topshiriqlar, rol o'yinlari va kontekstda grammatik tushuntirishlar mavjud bo'lib, ular o'quvchilarga frazali fe'llarni real sayohat vaziyatlarida o'zlashtirish va ishonch bilan qo'llash imkonini beradi.

Kalit so'zlar:

TBLT, frazali fe'llar, grammatikani o'qitish, kommunikativ yondashuv, O'zbekiston, ikkinchi til sifatida ingliz tili, kattalar o'quvchilari, sayohat leksikasi

Introduction

The target learners are five adult professionals from Tashkent, Uzbekistan, aged 30-35, fluent in both Russian and Uzbek. These students have been learning English at a private language centre for over seven months and are currently at an IELTS Band 3-4 (CEFR A2) level of proficiency. They come from different professional backgrounds, including architecture, finance, food production, and telecommunications, and their main goal is to improve their English so that they can speak professionally in business meetings and presentations. They also aim to improve their English for personal purposes, including travel and potential immigration.

The students learned some basic phrases while traveling and used a self-study app, "Duolingo," before attending formal classes. Since they didn't have any grammar instructions before, they have difficulties with irregular forms, tense usage, and word order. Confusing the past simple and present perfect tenses, they could say, for example, "I have worked in this company last year" rather than "I worked in this company last year." Another issue is word order, especially when it comes to frequency adverbs. For instance, they could say, "I always drink coffee in the morning," instead of "I always drink coffee in the morning."

These students learn best from clear, rule-based grammar instruction and enjoy visual aids such as tables, charts, structures and other relevant pictures. I also often explain grammar in context, that is, via texts, audio, or movies, to help the rules be more understandable. Once I'm done teaching them the structure/rule of grammar, I give them real-life practice through role-plays, discussions, along with some form-focused exercises. This method helps my students understand and apply the grammar rules in communication.

The lesson focuses on **verb-particle combinations** (commonly referred to as *phrasal verbs*), which are an essential component of spoken and written English. The instructional design draws on two main sources: *Grammar of Spoken and Written English* by Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, and Finegan (2021, pp. 403–423), which offers a detailed grammatical framework for multi-word verb constructions, and *Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction* by Payne (2011, pp. 152–156), which discusses the challenges phrasal verbs present to second language learners. These works provide both the linguistic analysis and pedagogical insights needed to address the learners' difficulties effectively.

Grammar topic exploration

Biber et al. (2021) and Payne (2011) both write about verb-particle constructions, phrasal verbs, in English. Both sources say that multi-word verb combinations are a verb followed by one or more particles, which could be either adverbial or prepositional. They also emphasize that the meaning of most phrasal verbs is idiomatic and cannot always be understood by looking at the words individually. Biber et al. (2021) state that "Phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs usually represent single semantic units that cannot be derived from the individual meanings of the two parts" (p. 403). Similarly, Payne (2011) states that "Their meanings are often figurative rather than literal. In this sense they are like compound words in that the meaning of the whole cannot always be inferred from the meanings of the parts" (p. 152). Both sources discuss the syntactic complexity of phrasal verbs and their frequent use in spoken English.

However, the two sources have different level of analysis and focus. Biber et al. (2021) divide multi-word verb structures into four groups: phrasal verbs (like "pick up"), prepositional verbs (like "look at"), phrasal-prepositional verbs (like "get away with"), and other verb-particle combinations (like "take into account"). They explain that: "There are a number of semantic and structural criteria used to distinguish the various types of multi-word verb combinations" (p. 403). In order to differentiate these types apart, they also talk about tests like particle movement and wh-question formation. In contrast, Payne (2011) has a more general discussion and focuses on how hard it is for second-language learners to use phrasal verbs

instead of going into details about grammar. He states that "Phrasal verbs and related constructions present particular problems for second language learners of English" (p. 152), counting reasons such as their "syntactic properties vary considerably from one phrasal verb to another," and "they are ubiquitous (in other words they 'crop up' a lot) in conversation" (p. 152).

Terms like "phrasal verbs," "particles," and "multi-word verbs" are used a lot in both sources. Biber et al. (2021), on the other hand, make more accurate language groups by separating phrasal verbs from prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs from prepositional verbs. Payne (2011) says that phrasal verbs are "verb-like constructions involving a root word and one or two preposition-like 'particles' " (p. 152). Biber et al. (2021) say that phrasal verbs are "multi-word units consisting of a verb followed by an adverbial particle (e.g. carry out, find out, or pick up)" (p. 403).

Biber et al. (2021) is a better source for teaching ESL students who are not yet intermediate because it gives a clearer grammatical framework for learning how verbs and particles are put together. Biber et al. (2021) have different groups of multi-word verbs, organized in a way that makes it easier for teachers to explain these patterns to students. Payne (2011) talks about problems with learning. They also talk about things that make them different, like particle movement and how wh-questions are formed, which makes teaching phrasal verbs more organized.

TBLT application

The lesson follows a three-phase Task-Based Language Teaching framework - pre-task, task, and post-task - designed to help learners acquire and apply travel-related phrasal verbs in meaningful communication.

In the pre-task phase (25-30 minutes), the teacher activates students' background knowledge through a short discussion on travel experiences. Prompts such as "What are some important things to do before and during a trip?", "Have you ever had a travel experience where you ran out of something? What happened?", and "If you could get away anywhere right now, where would you go and why?" encourage students to reflect and share personal experiences. The target phrasal verbs are then introduced using flashcards and contextualised example sentences - for instance, We set off for Phuket early in the morning, She ran out of money halfway through her trip, or They looked forward to their vacation all year.

A brief grammar explanation follows, focusing on the distinction between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs, as well as three-word phrasal verbs. For example, check in is inseparable, whereas turn off is separable (She turned off the TV / She turned it off). The table below summarises the key patterns:

Type	Rule	With noun	With
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			pronoun
Separable	Object can go between the verb and particle; pronouns must go between.	<i>She turned off the TV.</i>	<i>She turned it off.</i>
Inseparable	Object cannot go between the verb and particle.	<i>She looked after her sister.</i>	<i>She looked after her.</i>
Three-word (Always inseparable)	Object follows the full phrasal verb.	<i>They came up with a new idea.</i>	<i>They came up with it.</i>

Table 1 presents the patterns of separable, inseparable, and three-word phrasal verbs.

To consolidate understanding, learners work with short matching and gap-fill activities based on contextualised sentences.

The task phase (30-35 minutes) simulates a travel agency scenario. Students, working in small groups, select a destination, research attractions, accommodation, and local cuisine, and prepare a visual presentation. While developing their plan, they are encouraged to use at least five of the target phrasal verbs in discussion. The activity culminates in group presentations, with the class voting for the most appealing travel package.

In the post-task phase (10-15 minutes), students exchange their work for peer review, underlining the phrasal verbs used by their partners. The teacher then provides feedback on accuracy and appropriacy, reinforcing correct usage in authentic contexts.

The phrasal verbs covered in this lesson include set off (begin a journey), check in (register at a hotel or airport), check out (leave a hotel), take off (when a plane departs), get away (go on vacation), look around (explore a new place), run out of (use up all of something), pick up (collect someone or something), drop off (take someone or something to a place), and look forward to (be excited about something in the future).

Reflection

The design of this Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) activity drew primarily on the framework described by Guvendir and Hardacre (2020), with supplementary insights from Ellis (2008, 2012) and Krashen (1982). While the appendix exercises were generated with AI assistance, the overall lesson plan and implementation were developed independently.

In the pre-task phase, a guided discussion was used to activate learners' prior knowledge and establish the communicative context. This approach reflects Guvendir and Hardacre's (2020) emphasis on TBLT as a means of fostering language development through meaningful interaction. Travel-related phrasal

verbs were introduced via real-life examples and visual aids such as flashcards, enabling learners to infer meaning from context rather than through explicit grammatical explanation alone. Although brief grammar explanations were provided, the primary focus remained communicative, a characteristic of the “weak” TBLT approach, which blends grammar-focused input with communicative practice (Ellis, 2012).

The task phase was designed to be communicative and goal-oriented, following the principles of meaning-focused instruction. Acting as travel agents, students selected destinations, identified activities and accommodations, and prepared group presentations incorporating at least five target phrasal verbs. This format aligns with Krashen’s (1982) view that exposure to language in authentic contexts accelerates acquisition, while also supporting Ellis’s (2008) argument that collaborative tasks encourage negotiation of meaning. By prioritising real-life communication over isolated grammar drills, the activity allowed learners to develop fluency while engaging with the target structures.

Finally, the post-task phase centred on peer review and teacher feedback. Peer review encouraged learner reflection, while teacher feedback reinforced both the accuracy and contextual appropriateness of phrasal verb use. As Guvendir and Hardacre (2020) note, the weak TBLT model offers an effective balance between communicative engagement and form-focused attention, helping learners strengthen both fluency and accuracy.

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