Analysis of Presentation of Phrasal Verbs in Iranian Secondary School ELT Textbooks

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Abstract

Phrasal verbs (PVs) are essential to communicate with native speakers as they are frequently used in writing as well as speaking. However, they present a substantial challenge to both teachers and learners. The aim of this study was to examine how phrasal verbs were used in locally-produced English textbooks used in secondary schools in Iran. Phrasal verbs were manually extracted from textbooks. Two hundred and forty-nine occurrences of phrasal verbs were found in the mentioned ELT textbooks. To analyze the data, the subsequent analyses were performed in three stages. The first stage of analysis dealt with the frequency of PVs. The second stage was concerned with where phrasal verbs appeared in the textbooks. The final layer of analysis focused on the function of phrasal verbs in the samples. It was evident from the results that PVs were substantially covered in the sample textbooks, and the higher the level, the more phrasal verbs were used. Therefore, it will be worth trying to scatter them all over the textbook and add a larger variety of exercises by allowing students to figure out some patterns by themselves instead of purely presenting them in grammar boxes. As a result, proper teaching approaches and material development need to be applied to reduce learners' frustration and to improve their understanding and use of phrasal verbs.

Keywords: phrasal verbs, material development, locally-produced ELT textbooks, secondary schools, English highschool curriculum

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Introduction

The emergence of the lexical syllabus and the recognition of the key function of phrasal verbs in language acquisition and fluency gave way to the inclusion of these notoriously challenging structures in the ESL/EFL curriculum (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2013). Vocabulary knowledge, especially phrasal verbs, plays a significant role in communication (Karami & Esrafili, 2021). It has also been one of the major concerns in foreign language teaching and learning (Ghandi & Maghsoudi, 2020).

The combinations of English phrasal verbs are among the most notoriously challenging aspects of English language instruction (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Phrasal verbs refer to a phrase that contains a verb and a preposition or adverb or both the meaning of which varies from the meaning of its detached parts: *look after*, *work out*, and *make up for* are all phrasal verbs (Koprowski, 2005). As stated by Trask (1993, p. 208), a PV is a lexical verb "which consists of a simple verb combined with one or more particles," and its meaning is normally changeable. Moreover, phrasal verbs can be two- or three-word idiomatic expressions, including a verb and a particle, or together with a particle and a preposition (Darwin & Gray, 1999; Lewis, 1993). Consequently, phrasal verbs are, in short, defined as a lexical verb plus adverbial particle combination so that the meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the meaning of its parts.

This research dealt with English phrasal verbs, which are considered "one of the most notoriously challenging aspects of English language instruction" (Gardner & Davies, 2007, p. 339). Given their difficulty as well as the absence of knowledge about the concept of phrasal verbs in many languages, English language learners tend to avoid them, sometimes even completely (Gardner & Davies, 2007). The importance of phrasal verbs is suggested by the fact that some rather frequent English verbs, such as *carry* or *pick,* tend to appear more often in phrasal verb constructions than on their own (Gardner & Davies, 2007). What makes phrasal verbs even more challenging for language users is their rather unpredictable nature (as far as meaning is concerned) as well as the fact that the set of possible particles is quite limited, and therefore one particle might comprise several meanings when connected to different lexical verbs (Darwin & Gray, 1999).

One facet of phrasal verbs, which has not been approached well in the

relevant literature, is evaluating the quality of presenting phrasal verbs in English textbooks. As a result, this research aimed to study how phrasal verbs are used in major Iranian ELT textbooks. According to Tomková (2013), there are six criteria for verifying PVs in this study: a) the frequency of phrasal verbs in textbooks, b) classification of text types in using PVs, c) how identified phrasal verbs are used in textbooks, d) the number of different lexical verbs and particles in textbooks, e) repetition of PVs in textbooks, and f) distribution of PVs into three categories based on their function (no focus, indirect focus, and direct focus).

Instances of phrasal verbs were split into three categories according to their function, namely, *no focus*, *indirect,* and *direct focus*. This division was inspired by the one done by Gouverneur (2008). The first category was labeled as no focus. Such phrasal verbs located in an article, recording, or exercise are no longer explicitly used in another way. While students read a text or listen to a recording, they might recognize a phrasal verb or even learn it. However, as no production containing such phrasal verbs takes place whatsoever, it is said that the exercise's focus lies elsewhere.

Indirect focus refers to a situation where a phrasal verb is used in an exercise without explicitly mentioning the term phrasal verb(s). For example, gap-filling exercises where one of the words which needs to be filled in is a particle corresponding to the preceding lexical verb, but they fail to serve as a practice of phrasal verbs to fit into this category. Therefore, as a teacher uses an exercise in a way that explicitly states the term phrasal verb, he/she makes the exercise unfit for this category. On the contrary, direct focus" means that the term "phrasal verb(s)" is used, and learners are aware that they are practicing the use of phrasal verbs. Comments to all these three groups will be provided individually for each textbook.

In a plethora of phrasal verbs in the English language, it seems difficult to choose proper phrasal verbs consistent with learners' needs and language proficiency. It will be easier to conduct some studies on the evaluation of phrasal verbs' presentation and selection in the widely-used English language textbooks available in the market. As a result, investigating the quality of phrasal verbs' presentation and selection in textbooks is of great significance to the local body of relevant literature since it casts light on the blurry domain of phrasal verbs' teaching and learning. This is more noticeable when the review of related literature shows a

scarcity of research in the area.

In sum, the aim of this research was to study the patterns of phrasal verbs in contemporary English textbooks widely used in Iran, i.e., Secondary School (Junior and Senior) English Textbooks (7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades) (Perspective 1,2,3 and *Vision* 1,2,3). It aimed to identify all instances of phrasal verb combinations and their constituents, to determine their frequency, and to investigate their distribution in textbooks. Based on the above-mentioned objective, this study was an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most frequent phrasal verbs used in the Secondary School (Junior and Senior) textbooks published in Iran?
2. In what types of texts are phrasal verbs used in the textbooks?
3. How are phrasal verbs used in the textbooks?

Literature Review

In this section, it was sought to gain a deeper understanding of various facets of phrasal verbs in the related literature. A phrasal verb "is made up of two (or more) parts that function as a single verb" (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 426). According to Trask (1993, p. 24), a phrasal verb is "lexical verb which consists of a simple verb combined with one or more particles and whose meaning is typically unpredictable". McPartland (1983, p. 38) looks at them as "a nettle that has to be grasped if students are to achieve native-like proficiency in speech and writing." Despite their rather complicated structure and unpredictable meaning of some combination types, phrasal verbs are of high relevance for ESL/EFL learners (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Numerous causes aided to clarify why understanding phrasal verbs is complicated. One was the sheer number of phrasal verbs (Bolinger, 1971). Next, a single verb-particle combination usually had many meanings (on average 5.6, as mentioned by Gardner & Davies, 2007). For instance, the meaning of *make + up* differs in *make up a story, make up after an argument, make up one's face*, *make up the difference, make up a bed*, *make up for something,* and *make it up to someone*. Luckily, the obtainability of great online masses made it possible to recognize the highest-frequency verb-particle groupings (Gardner & Davies, 2007; Liu, 2011) and to classify the most common meanings of an assumed verb particle combination

(Garnier & Schmitt, 2014). This might helpfully notify choices of arrangement in learning and teaching, but the subsequent lists denoted a significant learning load. For instance, Garnier and Schmitt's (2014) list contains 150 verb-particle combinations conveying 288 meanings overall. In settings where students were not exposed to a rich assortment of English, solo achievement of all these combinations was not very probable. EFL textbooks encompass texts with examples of phrasal verbs, but scarcely in adequate numbers to make achievement probable (Alejo-González et al., 2010).

According to the related research, Imorse (2013) provided an overview of phrasal verbs as a problem for ESL/EFL learners and discussed the possible solution for learning and teaching phrasal verbs (Imorse, 2013). According to the findings and results, phrasal verbs are one of the most difficult areas for both learners and teachers, especially in the ES/EFL context. However, it is a very fruitful feature to help communicate effectively. Therefore, an appropriate teaching approach needs to be applied to reduce learners' frustration and to promote their understanding and use of phrasal verbs (Imorse, 2013).

In another study conducted by Zarifi and Mukundan (2014) on the grammatical presentation of phrasal verbs in ESL textbooks, it was reported that knowledge of phrasal verbs is often equated with language fluency and proficiency. They are likely to assume a number of different syntactic patterns, and grammatical presentation of these structures in EFL/ESL materials turns out to be a major pedagogical concern. Although a total number of 15 different syntactic patterns appeared to be associated with these multi-word verbs, they were almost overlooked as a language phenomenon demonstrating their own grammatical behavior. There also appeared to be no guiding principle underlying the selection, presentation, and sequencing of different patterns associated with PVs, bringing further home the observation that the development of ELT textbooks is more intuitively than empirically motivated (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2014). Data analysis of the research by Zarifi and Mukundan (2014) led researchers to conclude that phrasal verbs lack a good reputation in Malaysian ELT textbooks. They were hardly ever treated as a group as such, enjoying their own grammatical behavior, and were rather sparingly dealt with; despite their pronounced regularity, no grammatical explanation was provided for language learners.

In another research, Kamarudin and Zamin (2018) explored the descriptions of phrasal verbs in language reference materials and showed that multi-word units like phrasal verbs (PVs) are very common in English, indicating their usefulness in everyday settings. Despite the importance of PVs in both written and spoken discourse, it was reported that language learners generally have great difficulties in understanding and using this linguistic form due to various factors. However, studies examining the treatment of PVs in language reference materials, which may also contribute to learners' difficulties in understanding PVs, are still lacking. Thus, this study investigated how language reference materials, in particular those commonly prescribed to Malaysian school learners, addressed and described this very common and important linguistic feature. Secondary school prescribed textbooks and two learner dictionaries were examined. All sections in the textbooks and dictionaries entries that discussed the selected common PVs were analyzed. Descriptive analysis was conducted to examine how this particular language form is described by looking at the selection of PVs, as well as information provided with respect to PVs. Results of the present study have revealed a number of useful findings with regard to the selection and description of PVs in both reference materials, which to date, have not been found in any other studies in Malaysia, to inform relevant parties for further actions (Kamarudin & Zamin, 2018).

In brief, Kamarudin and Zamin (2018) revealed that both the school textbooks and learner dictionaries under investigation do not treat PVs appropriately and adequately as an important language form. There is only a small section in the textbooks discussing PVs. Many of the PVs presented to learners are also not carefully defined and clearly explained with good examples of PVs. The selection of PV items to be included in the reference materials seems to be highly subjective, and mainly based on writers' intuition and common sense, rather than authentic language data (i.e., corpus-based frequency counts). In other words, PVs are presented to learners without sufficient consideration as to their frequency of occurrence in real-life situations. It is important for learners to be presented with high-frequency PVs as there is a high possibility that they will encounter such PVs more frequently in the future. This would help them to understand PVs better, and eventually, be able to use them appropriately in their written or spoken discourse.

This suggests that a systematic selection of a 'core of phrasal verb' is

necessary to ensure learners are presented with PVs that are most useful for them in the world outside the classroom. Thus, reference material providers in Malaysia in particular, should give a better treatment to this important language feature. They should be more careful with the information provided (i.e., definitions and examples), and the selection of PVs to be included (i.e., 'frequency occurrence' of PVs) in order to avoid unnecessary confusion and loss of time for both teachers and learners.

As reviewed in the related literature, there have been several studies on various facets of phrasal verbs. However, few studies focused on the evaluation of presenting phrasal verbs and exploring their selection in textbooks. Lack of research was considered a gap in the related literature, which should be filled with further research. This study aimed to fill these gaps and explore phrasal verbs selection and the quality of their presentation in the major Iranian English textbooks.

Materials and Method

Textbooks

Six widely used textbooks, including Iranian Secondary School (Junior and Senior) English textbooks (Perspective 1,2,3, and Vision 1,2,3), were selected for analysis. These textbooks are published in Iran and approved by the Iranian Ministry of Education. As the study focused on phrasal verbs, the role of grammar and lexis in textbooks was of main importance.

Textbooks use a skill-based syllabus and are split into several topic-based units which are further divided into different parts based on their focus, namely vocabulary and listening, grammar, culture, reading, everyday English, writing, etc. As the units evolve around a given topic, the need for context is stressed. Every unit is structured according to the grammar points, which are connected to the ones presented in the next units. In addition, vocabulary is systematically presented. All in all, the selected textbooks aimed to develop all four skills as well as subskills through various interactive tasks set into a context with a clear outcome.

Procedure

The aforementioned textbooks were then used for choosing phrasal verbs, whose appearance served as the material for the analysis. Phrasal verbs were manually extracted from textbooks. All units of textbooks were included and all

exercises were taken into account. After mentioning where the phrasal verbs were looked for, the way they were identified, and the subsequent criteria for their inclusion in the analysis were discussed.

It was also more in line with the objectives of this research to give an overall picture of the presence of phrasal verbs in textbooks. It was decided not to include nominalized forms of phrasal verbs (such as in "The *tryouts* for the team were successful") and expressions that tend to form a single syntactic unit as a whole (such as *make up one's mind*). On the other hand, all gerunds were included, as it is often difficult to express whether their nominal or verbal characteristics are prevalent. All phrasal verbs were then categorized to provide a clearer picture of the data, i.e., *go on*, *going on*, and *went on* were all classified as *go on*. Liu (2011) sees this as a possible limitation, but without the lemmatization, it proves difficult to find a considerable amount of the same phrasal verb forms in textbooks.

To conclude the description of the selection phase, it should be noted that, based on the definition of phrasal verbs, some textbooks contain expressions, but not all are completely in line with the definition used in this study, and such exemplars are not included in the following analysis. However, some of them were labeled as phrasal verbs by the textbook and included in the analysis. They belong to the category of either prepositional (for example: *look after*) or phrasal-prepositional (for example: *get on with*) verbs in this study.

Data Analysis

Data in this study refer to all phrasal verbs presented in the Iranian Secondary School textbooks (Perspective 1,2,3 and Vision 1,2,3). Data analysis was conducted in 3 stages, where each stage corresponded to one of the research questions. The data analysis was presented in some tables and accompanying comments. For the sake of consistency, all values in the tables containing non-integer numbers were rounded to two decimal places. All three stages were divided into sections, one for each textbook. A more detailed description of the three stages of analysis is provided below.

Stage One. In the first stage, the frequency of phrasal verbs in textbooks was evaluated, as represented in the first research question (Q1). In addition, Table 1 presented calculations of phrasal verbs that appeared at least four times, where each corresponded to one of the textbooks.

Table 1

Frequency of Phrasal Verbs in Secondary School (Junior and Senior)Textbooks

		Junior			Senior			
	Grades	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
First Part	Unique PVs	6	5	14	17	40	31	82
	Absolute Occurrences	15	21	28	48	69	68	249
	Relative Occurrences	0.29	0.36	0.21	0.40	0.64	0.68	
Second Part	Unique Lexical Verbs (Lexicons)	6	4	11	16	27	25	49
	Unique Particles	6	4	9	10	20	15	25
Third Part	Repetition of PVs (in percentage) — Once	26.66	9.52	14.28	12.50	36.23	22.05	
	Repetition of PVs (in percentage) — 4times	6.66	4.76	3.57	10.41	5.79	7.35	
Fourth Part	Percentage of Repetition: Number of 5 lexicons that are repeated the most divided into Total PVs (%)	93.33	100*	64.28	60.41	42.02	48.52	

* Note: there are just 4 kinds of unique lexicons in the 8th grade; so the calculations were conductedwith this number.

Stage Two. At this stage, the focus was on the type of texts with phrasal verbs in the sample textbooks, concentrating on the second research question (Q2). Text types included Exercise, Conversation, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Passage.

Stage Three. This stage focused on how the identified phrasal verbs were used in textbooks, thus answering the third research question (Q3). All instances of phrasal verbs were taken into account and split into three categories based on their function – no focus, indirect focus, and direct focus.

Results

In this section, the results of the study are reported. All data (extracted PVs) were verified using dictionaries. In the first section, PVs' analysis in the sample

ELT textbooks is presented.

As mentioned earlier, this study aimed to find out what PVs appeared in the widespread English textbooks and evaluate the quality of presenting them through finding out how and in what exercises they were presented. All phrasal verbs were extracted and verified using two dictionaries dedicated to PVs, including the Oxford Phrasal Verb Dictionary for Language Learners and the online Cambridge Dictionary. These dictionaries were also used when in doubt during the final decision-making process. It is apparent from the results of this study that PVs are substantially covered in all of the sample textbooks, and the higher the level, the more phrasal verbs are used. In the following parts, the results of the three research questions are presented respectively.

Question One: Frequency of Phrasal Verbs

The first part of the analysis investigated the frequency of PVs and answered the first research question (Q1): *What are the most frequent phrasal verbs in the sample textbooks?* In this part, all phrasal verbs appearing in the Iranian Secondary School English textbooks (Junior and Senior, *Perspective* 1, 2, 3 and *Vision* 1, 2, 3) were extracted, counted manually, and inserted in Table 1 respectively.

In Table 1, data in the First Part (first and second rows) and the Second Part (both first and second rows), were calculated manually. Full calculations of data of the rest of the rows are presented in the Appendix. The First Part of Table 1 shows the number (frequency) of PVs and different PV forms in the Secondary School Textbooks (Junior and Senior, *Perspective* 1, 2, 3 and *Vision* 1, 2, 3).

As shown in the second row of the First Part of Table 1, 249 occurrences of phrasal verbs were found in the Iranian Secondary School textbooks. In total, 82 different PVs were found as shown in the first row of the First Part. According to the table data, the 11th grade of Secondary School textbooks have by far the largest number of occurrences (69 occurrences) and the 7th grade of the Secondary School textbooks have the smallest (15 occurrences). However, this is not directly comparable as the textbooks vary in length. Therefore, the third row of the First Part of Table 1 shows the frequencies by page, with 12th grade of the Secondary School textbooks enjoying the highest frequency. Data calculations in this part were performed using the following formula (Formula 1) and their full explanations are

presented in the Appendix 1.

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{\text{Absolute Occurrences}}{\text{Number of the last page of the book with PVs}} \quad (1)$$

The second part of Table 1 shows the number of different lexical verbs and particles in the Secondary School (Junior and Senior) textbooks and summarizes the number of lexical verbs and particles included in 82 unique PV forms. It is seen that the 11th grade of Secondary School textbooks included a bit more variety in this aspect. In this part, data were extracted manually.

The Third Part of Table 1 is concerned with the repetition of identified PVs. Although the number of phrasal verbs introduced in each textbook might seem rather satisfying at first sight, the sufficiency of their recurrence is probably a bit questionable. After all, Thornbury (2002, as cited in Zarifi & Mukundan, 2013) claimed that regular occurrences over spaced intervals dramatically increase the chance of being learned. Spaced intervals refer to the fact that there should be short pause(s) between occurrences. The first row of the Third Part of Table 1 shows that a striking number of PVs, i.e., 20 percent of them appeared only once in the Secondary School textbooks. (Calculations were conducted using Formula 2, and more explanations are provided in Appendix 2.)

$$\text{Once : Repetition of PVs in textbooks (in percentage)}$$
$$= \frac{\text{Number of PVs that appeared only Once}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\% \quad (2)$$

As follows from the second row of this part, only about 6% of PVs appeared at least four times in each textbook (according to the Formula 3; obvious explanations are presented in Appendix 2).

$$\text{4 times: Repetition of PVs in textbooks (in percentage)} = \frac{\text{Number of PVs that appeared at least 4 times}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\% \quad (3)$$

According to the Third Part of Table 1, it is debatable whether such values permit the majority of PVs to be learned. It might prove useful to revisit many of the PVs more often in textbooks. However, the main reason why these tables were shown here is that they might provide a starting point for a potentially interesting area of further research related to language textbooks and/or phrasal verbs. According to the Fourth Part of Table 1, in order to calculate the percentage of lexicons repetition in each textbook, 5 lexicons were selected with the highest

frequency of repetition and were summed up. Then, they were divided into the total number of PVs in each textbook (According to Formula 4, full calculations are provided in Appendix 3).

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} = \frac{\text{Number of 5 Lexicons with the highest repetition rate}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\% \qquad (4)$$

Question Two: Place of Phrasal Verbs Used

In this part, it was sought to answer the second research question: *In what types of texts are phrasal verbs used in the textbooks?* This objective was incorporated in the second research question.

Table 2

Distribution of PVs in Text Types. (Junior and Senior Secondary School Textbooks)

	Grade	Exercise	Conversation	Vocabulary	Grammar	Passage
Junior	7	11	2	2	0	0
	8	18	3	0	0	0
	9	9	3	14	2	0
Senior	10	27	3	4	8	5
	11	36	5	18	11	5
	12	34	1	11	11	12
	Total	135	17	49	32	22

As seen in Table 2, the selected PVs cannot be largely similar for all textbooks. The most frequent type of text in which PVs were applied was Exercise. The second most frequent type was Vocabulary. (All of the calculations of Table 2 were done manually).

Question Three: Function of Phrasal Verbs

In this part, it was sought to answer the third research question: *How are phrasal verbs used in the textbooks?* Table 3 shows the distribution frequency of PVs into three main categories based on their function: no focus, indirect focus, and direct focus.

Table 3

Distribution of PVs into Three Categories based on their Function (Junior and Senior Secondary school Textbooks)

	Grade	No Focus		Indirect Focus		Direct Focus	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	7	3	4.61	12	6.89	0	0
Junior	8	3	4.61	18	10.34	0	0
	9	5	7.69	24	13.79	0	0
	10	10	15.38	40	22.98	0	0
Senior	11	17	26.15	37	21.26	19	100
	12	27	41.53	43	24.71	0	0
Total		65	100	174	100	19	100

As seen in Table 3, the indirect focus is the most frequent function followed by no focus as the second most frequent function (According to the Formula 5;full calculations are presented in Appendix 4).

Distribution of PVs into three categories based on their function (in percentage)

$$= \frac{\text{Number of PVs into three categories based on their function}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\% \qquad (5)$$

Discussion

In this part, first, the findings of this study are interpreted, and then previous and related studies are discussed to see whether they are in line with this study. It is apparent from the results that PVs are substantially covered in all sample textbooks, and the higher the level, the more phrasal verbs are used. Among PVs presented in the sample textbooks, the most frequent PVs were the ones concerned with popular topics, such as shopping, cooking, entertainment, traveling, etc. This shows that in order to be able to communicate about these popular topics in English, knowing phrasal verbs is essential. The next finding of this study was the type of text in which phrasal verbs were used in the sample textbooks. The most frequent type of text containing PVs was Exercise. The second most frequent text was Vocabulary.

Next, the function of texts in which phrasal verbs were presented is also examined. Accordingly, the most frequent function was indirect focus meaning. One can conclude from this finding that PVs are more likely to be taught indirectly, and

this will work better than the other two methods, including direct focus and no focus.

The first part of the analysis was concerned with the frequency of PVs in the sample textbooks. The most frequent PVs of all in each textbook were shown in tables. The analysis then took PVs with at least four occurrences in the given textbook and sorted them based on their frequency. The study of frequencies seems to be the most prominent area in the research related to phrasal verbs or other phenomena in textbooks. Although many PVs are included in the sample textbooks, the selection method of PVs remains questionable. The second stage of the analysis consisted of text types where PVs appeared in textbooks. Overall, PVs were frequently included in exercises, conversations (dialogs), sets of vocabularies, grammatical parts, readings, and so on, as shown in the tables. It might be an opportunity for teachers to step in and enrich the textbook syllabus with supplementary materials. For example, students could read English books (or their simplified versions based on their level) and then prepare a presentation or discuss and interpret its content together in class or in a written paper. Teachers could also encourage students to follow news from the English-speaking world. This might turn out to be a successful way of delivering lexical content (not only PVs) that may be perceived as neglected in textbooks provided to students. The final part of the analysis dealt with the function of PVs in textbooks. To this purpose, textbook PVs were divided into three main categories – direct, indirect, and no focus on PVs. Almost all exercises were written and rather controlled with few possibilities for freer production of PVs.

In this part, as mentioned earlier, it was sought to see whether previous studies are in line with this study. Nemati (2009) assessed the second Pre-University English textbook under the title of '*enable*' from two various sides and two dissimilar steps. Results of vocabulary analysis indicated that it is better to modify and perform some adjustments in the sequence of text offering; so the texts with more frequent vocabularies and consequently easier ones come first and texts with uncommon and much more difficult vocabularies seem to appear at the end of the book. As this study evaluated the way PVs are presented in the major Iranian English textbooks, and Nemati (2009) explored the way vocabularies were presented in the Secondary School English textbooks, these studies share some similarities. However, they were

different in that Nemati (2009) concluded that texts and vocabulary presentation should follow a certain order, while this study found what phrasal verbs are presented in these textbooks. As a result, these two studies are not in line with each other.

In a study, Zohrabi and Sabouri (2012) appraised the merits and demerits of Iranian first-year high school English textbooks. Results of their work demonstrated that the English book is structure-based and cannot encounter the curriculum objectives and students' requirements. They found out only reading skill is highlighted in this book, and the communicative role of language is overlooked. There is no emphasis on the foreign countries' culture. This study was similar to Zohrabi and Sabouri in that both evaluated high school English textbooks, with the difference being that this study evaluated the way phrasal verbs were presented in these books, while Zohrabi and Sabouri (2012) evaluated English textbooks in general. Although Zohrabi and Sabouri revealed that the English book One has some problems dealing with culture, content, and method, this study failed to approach the cultural presentation of phrasal verbs.

In a study conducted by Karamouzian (2010), the checklist method of textbook evaluation was designated to assess reading comprehension textbooks. Textbooks with the highest frequency in Iran were selected as a sample. The Reading Through Interaction books 1, 2, and 3 by Zabankadeh Publications in Iran were the three books focused on in this study. Results of the study suggested that the total average scores, including general impression, organization, content, and total concerns, were close, and the general quality of books was appropriate. The absence of information on grammar and pronunciation should be covered by suitable supplementary materials, though. Additionally, it was suggested that the quality of books can be improved by assuming those parts with numerous weak points. Likewise, these studies shared some similar aspects as they both were concerned with Iranian English textbooks evaluation. However, they were similar in that Karamuzian (2010) evaluated several English books used with a high frequency in Iran, and this study focused on six Iranian Secondary School (junior and senior) English textbooks. However, these studies were different in that Karamuzian (2010) conducted a general evaluation of the mentioned books, while this study concentrated on phrasal verbs presentation and their quality.

In a study that evaluated Iranian high school English textbooks, Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) assessed three English language textbooks taught in high schools. The results of Rahimpour and Hashemi (2011) provided convincing evidence on the English language textbooks recently taught in Iranian high schools failed to meet teachers' requirements. As seen here, they concluded that the three Iranian English language textbooks were burdened with some problems revealed according to teachers' ideas. However, this study revealed what phrasal verbs were used in the mentioned English textbooks. It also displayed the quality and function of the presentation of PVs; it failed to come up with the main problems of these books, nevertheless. As a result, these two studies failed to comply with each other.

Following the studies focused on the evaluation of the Iranian English language textbooks, Hashemnezhad and Maftoon (2011) assessed English Grammar for College Students books 1 and 2. Results indicated a correlation between subject matter and the physical makeup of the book, and there was no association between other features. Consistent with the findings of the research, the significance of affective and psychomotor areas was overlooked in the book, and the cognitive domain was stressed. Although they concentrated on grammar textbooks, this study shared some areas of research with them. This study analyzed the presentation of phrasal verbs in English textbooks, and Hashemnezhad and Maftoon (2011) evaluated a grammar textbook, but both evaluated some English language textbooks taught and practiced in Iran and can be taken into account as a common area between these two studies. Thus, these studies are partially similar to each other.

Finally, regarding that most studies conducted on the Iranian English textbooks had some problems in different areas, such as grammar, content, reading passage, and vocabulary, it is concluded that this study is in line with the dominant discourse in the Iranian English textbooks evaluation in that it revealed some of the problems with phrasal verbs presentation in textbooks.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

This study aimed to analyze the patterns of phrasal verbs in the Iranian Secondary School (Junior and Senior) English language textbooks. It is clear from the results that PVs are substantially covered in all sample textbooks, and the higher the level, the more phrasal verbs are used. In total, 249 occurrences of PVs were

recorded in the Secondary School English textbooks. Focus on both form and meaning was presented in all the textbooks and it was shown that the terminology of phrasal verbs was not consistent, and PVs were used as the umbrella term for all types of multi-word verbs (prepositional as well as phrasal-prepositional verbs). These books have some advantages and can enable learners to encounter with phrasal verbs. However, it might be perceived a bit unfortunate that the vast majority of the textbook sections dealing explicitly with PVs provide a list of PVs and then offer two to four very controlled exercises. Exercises also tend to be presented in a very small space (typically one page) and then not to be mentioned for several units.

However, PVs are quite productive and mainly used in less formal contexts, it might be worth trying to scatter them all over the textbook and add a larger variety of exercises by allowing students to figure out some patterns by themselves instead of purely presenting them in grammar boxes. Obviously, the aforementioned features also depend on individual textbooks. Thus, it could be interesting to study other contemporary English textbooks (preferably with various types of syllabuses) as well.

In addition, this research provided other researchers with some new areas of research that were previously neglected in material evaluation, at least in Iran, as it focused on the evaluation of phrasal verbs presentation in an English textbook, which may be seen in other textbooks too. Therefore, it suggests that other investigations should be conducted to cast more light on other aspects of phrasal verbs presentation in language learning and teaching materials. Finally, it is remarkable to mention that material evaluation should be performed with a more narrowed focus since most of the other studies conducted in this area evaluated the whole book. It means other particular aspects of English language textbooks, such as grammar, reading comprehension, communication, and listening, may need to be investigated and analyzed.

In general, this study was expected to exert some important points called pedagogical implications. Material developers, who write and publish English textbooks, can benefit from the findings of this research. They can be the target of pedagogical implications of this research owing to some facts. First, they should take the issues provided in this study into account while developing new materials.

Second, they are recommended to edit the problematic parts of phrasal verbs presentation in the new versions of textbooks. Material developers can also conduct some research to find some academic sound ways to remove the problems revealed in this research. If they just adopt some ways obtained through non-academic exploration, it is likely not to remove them effectively. Thus, it is a highly significant point that materials developers should not neglect.

It is remarkable for teachers to pay attention to the findings of this study. As explored in this study, phrasal verbs can be presented through more interesting and effective ways to compensate for the problematic areas revealed here. Consequently, teachers are strongly recommended to pay attention to phrasal verbs presentation in the books they teach and if they are incompetent in this sense, teachers are suggested to either change the book or improve the parts.

Official authorities who determine grand policies in education in general and English language teaching and learning, in particular, are recommended to pay especial attention to material development. Since most Iranian English textbooks are either imported from famous international publications or adopted from those books directly or indirectly, it is required to set some rules, which necessitate material developers to write and produce some books based on the findings of domestic studies. Consequently, material developers can recognize those problems which are specific to the Iranian context, including the problems revealed by this research.

In conclusion, this study can be highly useful for other authors and can function as an influential source of inspiration to find some innovative topics of research. In other words, other researchers are suggested to explore other aspects of phrasal verbs presentation through deep thinking and taking the findings of this study into account.

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Appendices

Introduction

In this section, ways of calculating tabulated data are presented. All phrasal verbs were manually extracted from sample textbooks. The analysis made use of tabulated data and accompanying comments. For the sake of consistency, all tabulated values containing non-integer numbers were rounded to two decimal places.

Appendix 1: Calculating Data of Table 1 (First Part, Third Row)

Number of PVs and Different PV Forms (Frequency) in Secondary School ELT Textbooks (Junior and Senior)

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{\text{Absolute Occurrences}}{\text{Number of the last page of the book with PV}}$$

Grade (7):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{15}{51} = 0.29$$

Grade (8):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{21}{58} = 0.36$$

Grade (9):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{28}{129} = 0.21$$

Grade (10):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{48}{119} = 0.40$$

Grade (11):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{69}{107} = 0.64$$

Grade (12):

$$\text{Relative Occurrences} = \frac{68}{99} = 0.68$$

Appendix 2: Calculating the Data of Table 1 (Third Part, First Row)

Repetition of PVs in the Secondary School Textbooks

Once : Repetition of PVs in textbooks (in percentage)

$$= \frac{\text{Number of PVs that appeared only Once}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\%$$

Grade (7):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{4}{15} \times 100\% = 26.66\%$$

Grade (8):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{2}{21} \times 100\% = 9.52\%$$

Grade (9):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{4}{28} \times 100\% = 14.28\%$$

Grade (10):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{6}{48} \times 100\% = 12.50\%$$

Grade (11):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{25}{69} \times 100\% = 36.23\%$$

Grade (12):

$$\text{Repetition: Once} = \frac{15}{68} \times 100\% = 22.05\%$$

Repetition of PVs in Secondary School textbooks (in percentage) (Table 1, Third Part, Second Row)

4 times: Repetition of PVs in textbooks (in percentage)

$$= \frac{\text{Number of PVs that appeared at least 4 times}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\%$$

Grade (7):

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{1}{15} \times 100\% = 6.66\%$$

Grade (8):

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{1}{21} \times 100\% = 4.76\%$$

Grade (9):

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{1}{28} \times 100\% = 3.57\%$$

Grade (10):

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{5}{48} \times 100\% = 10.41\%$$

Grade (11):

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{4}{69} \times 100\% = 5.79\%$$

Grade (12) :

$$\text{Repetition: 4 times} = \frac{5}{68} \times 100\% = 7.35\%$$

Appendix 3: Calculating the Data of Table 1 (Fourth Part)

Percentage of Repetition: the Most Frequent Lexicons divided into Total PVs in the Secondary School Textbooks (in percentage)

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} = \frac{\text{Number of 5 Lexicons that are repeated the most}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\%$$

Grade (7):

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} = \frac{9(\text{fill}) + 2(\text{sit}) + 1(\text{get}) + 1(\text{come}) + 1(\text{make})}{15} \times 100\%$$
$$= \frac{14}{15} \times 100\% = 93.33\%$$

Grade (8):

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} = \frac{14(\text{fill}) + 4(\text{be}) + 2(\text{work}) + 1(\text{decide})}{21} \times 100\%$$
$$= \frac{21}{21} \times 100\% = 100\%$$

* Note: there are just 4 kinds of unique lexicons in grade (8), so the calculations are done with this number.

Grade (9):

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} =$$

$$\frac{4(\text{fill}) + 4(\text{take}) + 4(\text{get}) + 3(\text{put}) + 3(\text{check})}{28} \times 100\% = \frac{18}{28} \times 100\% = 64.28\%$$

Grade (10):

Percentage of Repetition =

$$\frac{10(\text{take}) + 6(\text{pair}) + 6(\text{give}) + 4(\text{put}) + 4(\text{fill})}{48} \times 100\% = \frac{29}{48} \times 100\% = 60.41\%$$

Grade (11):

$$\text{Percentage of Repetition} = \frac{10(\text{look}) + 6(\text{pair}) + 6(\text{turn}) + 4(\text{fill}) + 3(\text{grow})}{69} \times 100\%$$

$$= \frac{29}{69} \times 100\% = 42.02$$

Grade (12):

Percentage of Repetition

$$= \frac{10(\text{look}) + 8(\text{pair}) + 6(\text{come}) + 5(\text{figure}) + 4(\text{care})}{68} \times 100\%$$

$$= \frac{33}{68} \times 100\% = 48.52\%$$

Appendix 4: Calculating the Data of Table 3

Distribution of PVs into three categories based on their function (in percentages)

$$= \frac{\text{Number of PVs into three categories based on their function}}{\text{Total PVs}} \times 100\%$$

Secondary School (Junior and Senior) Textbooks:

Grade (7) (No Focus):

$$= \frac{3}{65} \times 100\% = 4.61\%$$

Grade (7) (Indirect Focus):

$$= \frac{12}{174} \times 100\% = 6.89\%$$

Grade (7) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{0}{19} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

Grade (8) (No Focus):

$$= \frac{3}{65} \times 100\% = 4.61\%$$

Grade (8) (Indirect Focus):

$$= \frac{18}{174} \times 100\% = 10.34\%$$

Grade (8) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{0}{19} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

Grade (9) (No Focus):

$$= \frac{5}{65} \times 100\% = 7.69\%$$

Grade (9) (Indirect Focus):

$$= \frac{24}{174} \times 100\% = 13.79\%$$

Grade (9) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{0}{19} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

Grade (10) (No Focus):

$$= \frac{13}{65} \times 100\% = 15.38\%$$

Grade (10) (Indirect Focus):

$$= \frac{40}{174} \times 100\% = 22.98\%$$

Grade (10) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{0}{19} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

Grade (11) (No Focus):

$$- \frac{17}{65} \times 100\% - 26.15\%$$

Grade (11) (Indirect Focus):

$$- \frac{37}{174} \times 100\% - 21.26\%$$

Grade (11) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{19}{19} \times 100\% = 100\%$$

Grade (12) (No Focus):

$$= \frac{27}{65} \times 100\% = 41.53\%$$

Grade (12) (Indirect Focus):

$$= \frac{43}{174} \times 100\% = 24.71\%$$

Grade (12) (Direct Focus):

$$= \frac{0}{19} \times 100\% = 0\%$$