Avoidance of English Phrasal Verbs:  
A Study Based on the Pakistani ESL Learners

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ABSTRACT: The present study is an attempt to explore the avoidance behavior of the Pakistani (Urdu) learners of English as a second language (ESL) in using phrasal verbs (PVs) and its relationship, if any, with the types of PVs (Literal and Figurative) and learners’ proficiency level (Advanced and Intermediate). Sixty Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners participated in the study (30 advanced and 30 intermediate). Ten students from each group took one of the three tests (MCQs test, Translation test, and Memorization test). The native speakers (NSs) group comprised 11 participants and was taken the same as that of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989). They took only MCQs test. The results of the t-test reveal that the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners show more avoidance of PVs compared to NSs. However, the proficiency level of the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners was more native-like in case of Literal PVs. The findings highlight the semantic complexity of PVs as a reason of the avoidance of PVs. In addition, the results of the study show a significant relation between avoidance behavior and proficiency level of the learners.

Keywords: Avoidance, phrasal verbs, Pakistani ESL learners

Introduction

Avoidance or lower presentation was first highlighted by Schechter in 1974. It is the procedural strategy adopted by L2 learners to substitute required L2 form with another due to lack of appropriate linguistic resources. This procedural strategy is explained in Faerch and Kasper (1983) model cited in Cristina (2004). According to them, the psycholinguistic model of speech development (input, output and underlying representations) is made up of two phases: planning and verbalism. Planning phase constitutes mental processes that elaborate on plans whose awareness facilitate the speakers to pass on their communicative objective. In this phase, hypothetical rules are established, which are either incorporated into inter-linguistic system as fixed rules or rejected. If rules are incorporated, hypothesis verification occurs (verbal phase) through the process of automation. In automation process availability of rules to inter-linguistic system is raised which helps the speaker to gain communicative

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1 The national language of Pakistan
objectives. On the other hand, if the speaker fails to automate the rule, the construction is found difficult. To resolve this confusion, speaker adopts communication strategies or strategic plan.

According to this plan speaker either chooses for realization strategies or evasive strategies. This results in realization behavior or avoidance behavior. In realization behavior initial objective of communication is maintained and in avoidance behavior initial objective is altered and reduced. “So avoidance behavior occurs when L2 learners attempt to avoid using structures in their production that are difficult because of the (perceived) similarities and differences between L1 and target L2” (Tavakoli, 2013, p.35).

Research shows that L1 plays an important role in the learning of L2, and avoidance is a valid index of learning difficulty that can be predicted through analysis (Cristina, 2004). By comparing and contrasting two linguistic systems of L1 and L2, we can predict and describe the scope of difficulty in learning a linguistic item (Ghabanchi, 2012). Linguistic items considered in this study are phrasal verbs (PVs). PVs are crucial for communication, ranging from everyday conversation to more formal context. According to Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (1999) PVs are used generally in fiction and conversation, but they are infrequent in academic writing. However, it is claimed in Academic Vocabulary in Use (2007) that explicit collocations and meanings of PVs can be used in formal English e.g. put forward, go through, point out, carry out, look back over etc. (cited in Uhlírová, 2013). Merriam Webster Encyclopedia Britannica (2014, p.1) describes PVs as: "A group of words that functions as a verb and is made up of a verb and preposition or adverb or both".

There exist many classifications of PVs based on their morphology and semantics (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). According to Cornell (1985) majority of the PVs are non-idiomatic and their meanings are easily deduced from the verb element. While Dagut & Laufer (1985) and Laufer & Eliason (1993) classified PVs in the following way: Literal (whose meaning could be inferred from its components like go out, take away), Figurative (in which meaning is deduced from metaphorical shift of meaning and semantic union of its components like let down), and Completive (where meaning is the result of action of its particles like burn down) (cited in Liao & Fukuya, 2004).

**Literature Review**

Research shows that L2 learners often tend to avoid PVs and mostly figurative. Pertinent studies conducted on avoidance behavior especially on the avoidance of PVs are reviewed below to devise an appropriate methodology for this study.

Schatcher (1974) describes that learners cannot actively use any grammatical feature in L2 which does not exist in their L1 because they are
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unable to see any pattern for transfer. Hence, that particular feature is avoided. To confirm this, a study was conducted by Dagut and Laufer (1985) where they observed the avoidance of PVs in the Hebrew learners of English. In the L1 of the Hebrew learners of English the PV construction is not present. So it was presupposed that they would avoid PVs. To evaluate this assumption, Dagut and Laufer (1985) conducted three tests (multiple choice test, verb translation test and verb memorization test) on three intermediate groups of the Hebrew learners of English. Along with the avoidance behavior they also investigated the frequency of avoidance in different PV types (literal, figurative, and completive). The findings of their study revealed that the Hebrew learners of English preferred one word verb (OWV) over PVs. Hence, the study strongly affirmed that typological differences between English and Hebrew resulted in avoidance behavior. It was also observed that figurative PVs were avoided more as compared to literal and completive PVs. So along with language transfer, semantic complexity was also highlighted as a major reason for avoidance behavior. But Dagut and Laufer (1985) focused only on language transfer, and concluded that the Hebrew learners of English avoided PVs because of the lack of PVs in their L1.

From this conclusion Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) assumed that the Dutch learners of English would not avoid PVs as their L1 is not deficient in the PV structure. They supposed that the Dutch learners of English would avoid PVs because of their semantic complexity. For their study they adopted the methodology of Dagut and Laufer (1985) with some variations. They included their own PVs in tests as those of Dagut and Laufer (1985) were not available. Along with the intermediate level learners they also included the advanced level learners in order to check the relationship between learners’ proficiency level and their avoidance behavior. The results of their study revealed that the Dutch learners of English also avoided PVs irrespective of their proficiency level. They avoided those idiomatic PVs which have more resemblance with the Dutch equivalents. Hence they concluded that not only structural differences between L1 and L2 are responsible for avoidance behavior but the similarities between them also cause avoidance. Hence, there came two schools of thought concerning the avoidance behavior of L2 learners: first based on the L1-L2 differences (Schecter, 1974; Dagut & Laufer, 1985) and the second based on L1-L2 similarities (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). These two foundations along with complexity of L2 structure were considered by Laufer and Eliasson (1993) in their study on avoidance behavior of the Swedish learners of English. They administered two types of tests (multiple choice test and translation test). The findings of their study revealed that avoidance was caused by structural differences of L1 and L2 confirmation of Dagut and Laughfer (1985) as the Swedish learners of English did not avoid PVs (their L1 also contains this
structure). They also concluded that structural complexity of L2 and similarities
between L1 and L2 forms do not necessarily generate avoidance behavior.

Apart from structural similarities and differences between L1 and L2 as
the causes of avoidance behavior, another dimension of this phenomenon was
brought into light by Liao and Fukuya (2004). They focused on the avoidance of
PVs by the Chinese learners of English in relation to their proficiency level.
Their participants comprised advanced and intermediate level learners of
English. Three types of tests (multiple choice test, translation test and recall test)
were administered amongst the participants. The findings of their study show
that the intermediate level learners tend to avoid PVs more as compared to the
advanced level learners. So they concluded that all L2 learners of English tend to
avoid PVs whether their L1 contains that structure or not, and this avoidance
diminishes with increase in proficiency which is related to interlanguage
development.

On the framework of aforementioned researchers Ghabachi (2012) and
Sara and Mohammadreza (2013) studied avoidance of PVs among the Persian
(Iranian) EFL learners. They investigated the relationships between avoidance
behavior and proficiency level, avoidance behavior and test type (multiple choice
test, and translation test), avoidance behavior and PVs type (literal, figurative).
The findings of their work confirmed that the Persian (Iranian) learners also
avoided PVs at both advance and intermediate level. However, the intermediate
level learners showed more avoidance of PVs compared to the advanced level
learners. These studies also confirmed that semantic complexity is also
responsible for avoidance behavior as figurative PVs were avoided more by the
learners. However, in the study of Sara and Mohammadreza (2013) no
relationship was found between test type and the avoidance behavior of L2
learners.

The researchers of the present study are professional English language
teachers having 5 to 12 years’ experience of teaching English as a second
language in Pakistan. While teaching English in the ESL classrooms they have
commonly observed that the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners mostly avoid the use
of PVs both while speaking and writing English language. Therefore, they
decided to check the validity of their observation i.e. the avoidance of the PVs
among the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners and to explore the causes of the
avoidance of the PVs among the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners. Hence, this
study is an attempt to investigate the phenomenon of the avoidance of the PVs
among the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners. However, this is a small scale study
conducted in a limited context because of some logistic issues. As the PVs are
also absent in Urdu (the national language of Pakistan) so the current work
would explore the attitude of the Pakistani ESL learners towards PVs by
investigating the following research questions.
Research Questions

1. Do Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners avoid phrasal verbs?
2. Is there any relationship between semantic complexity of phrasal verbs and avoidance behavior?
3. Is there any relationship between avoidance behavior and learners’ proficiency level?

Research Methodology

The methodology to investigate the aforementioned research questions is described below.

Participants

The participants of this study were divided in three groups; Native Speakers of English, Intermediate level learners of English and Advanced level learners of English. First group comprised native speakers and was same as that of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989). Second group consisted of 30 intermediate level learners of English who were selected randomly from the three colleges in D.G. Khan: 10 students from Government Degree College for Women, 10 from Government College for Women Model Town, and 10 from Government Post Graduate College for Boys. They all had studied English throughout their academic career and got above 75% marks in English in their secondary school exams. Third group included 30 advanced level learners of English randomly selected from the three higher education institutions in D.G. Khan: 10 participants were taken from Bahauddin Zakariaya University Sub-campus D. G. Khan, 10 from the University of Education D.G. Khan campus, and 10 from Government Postgraduate College D.G. Khan. All the advanced level learners were the students of M.A English. All of them were dexterous in the use of English language as only those students, who had scored above 75% marks in English in their bachelor’s degree, were included in the study.

Data Collection Tools

In lieu of the previous studies conducted on the avoidance of PVs, the current study also included the same tools. The tests used by Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) were used in this study. Fifteen pairs of PVs and their one word equivalent were included in the form of small dialogues in three different tests that are Multiple Choice Test, Memorization Test, and Translation Test. The details of these tests are given below.

Multiple choice test

This test consisted of 15 items. In each item, the verb in question was left blank. Four choices were provided to fill in each blank. The options included appropriate PV, one word verb (OWV) equivalent and two distracters. Students
were given 10 minutes to complete the test (time period is in lieu of the aforementioned test which this study followed).

Translation test

This test also had the same 15 items with the main verb left blank. At the end of each dialogue Urdu equivalent of the main verb was provided and the students were asked to translate it in English.

Memorization test

The participants were given the same 15 items as used in the multiple choice test with appropriate PVs. Ten minutes were given to the participants to memorize these 15 sentences. After an hour the participants were again provided with the same 15 sentences with the addition of 5 distracter sentences (these sentences contain OWV instead of PV). After ten minutes these sentences were taken back and the participants were provided with another sheet containing 15 initial sentences with the main verb left blank. The participants were asked to fill the blank with appropriate verb in accordance with what they had memorized. No Urdu equivalent was provided here so that the participants should not directly translate it into English, hence, causing L1 interference in the memorization of PVs.

Research Design

The study was designed on the lines of the two earlier studies that are Hulstijn and Marchena (1989); Liao and Fukuya (2004). Fifteen cases for NSs’ preference of PVs over one word verb and the same test items of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) were used because their study was based on British English which is valid in Pakistani context.

At the first stage of the study NSs’ preference of PVs was observed through multiple choice test (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). The group of NSs in this follow up work was that of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) and their results were used in the current study.

At the second stage, the two groups of intermediate and advanced level Pakistani ESL learners undertook multiple choice test, translation test, and memorization test. The group of the intermediate learners consisted of 30 members who were randomly selected from three colleges in D.G. Khan. They had studied English for twelve years and were proficient in its use. They were further subdivided in three groups of equal numbers to undertake the three tests.

The advanced level learners’ group comprised of 30 members who were the students of M.A English. They had studied English for 14 years and had good command over it. They were also subdivided in three groups of equal members to undertake the three tests. Then their scores were compared with that
of the native speakers to observe whether Pakistani (Urdu) learners of English avoid PVs or not.

To contest the semantic complexity of PVs for avoidance, the tests items included both literal and figurative PVs. The division of the PVs in literal and figurative categories was made on the lines of Liao and Fukuya (2004).

**Data Analysis**

Total number of PVs in each test for the non-native speakers (NNSs) i.e. the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners was 150 \((10 \times 15 = 150)\). Out of these, 40 were literal and 110 were figurative. While, in the case of NSs there were 165 PVs as whole and no distinction was made between literal and figurative [because no such categorization was made in the study of Hulstijn & Marchena (1989)]. As the researchers used results of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) in case of NSs, the differences between the responses of literal and figurative PVs among NSs and NNSs were sorted out through inferential statistics by applying \(t\)-test. For this purpose all raw scores were converted into ratios. Response frequencies of all the three test types: MCQ test, Translation test, and Memorization test are given below in tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Table 4 reflects descriptive statistics of the aforementioned test types. To check \(p\) value of \(t\)-test \(\alpha\) of 0.05 was set. Results and statistics of each test are presented below separately.

**Table 1**

Response Frequencies of MCQs Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>PVs</th>
<th>OWV</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Intermediate)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Advanced)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

Response Frequencies of Translation Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>PVs</th>
<th>OWV</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Intermediate)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Advanced)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3
Response Frequencies of Memorization Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>PVs</th>
<th>OWV</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>Lit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Intermediate)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS(Advanced)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Test type</th>
<th>PVs type</th>
<th>Total PVs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>MCQs</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.4641</td>
<td>0.1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>MCQs</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.7500</td>
<td>0.7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.3014</td>
<td>0.1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.7300</td>
<td>0.1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.9097</td>
<td>0.1205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.8000</td>
<td>0.2582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>MCQs</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.6190</td>
<td>0.1719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>MCQs</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.4905</td>
<td>0.1850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.6500</td>
<td>0.2934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>Fig</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0.9370</td>
<td>0.0953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>Lit</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
<td>0.000000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where N = Number of participants
Intermediate= Intermediate level learners
Advanced= Advanced level learners
Lit = Literal PVs,
Fig = Figurative PVs,
OWV = One word verb
Null = Unresponded item

Results of MCQ Test

NNSs responded significantly different from NSs in case of figurative PVs as \( P < \alpha \) (see table 5). However, the response of literal PVs remained same for both speakers as \( p > \alpha \) (see table 5). Within the group of NNSs, the intermediate level learners responded significantly different from the advanced level learners in both figurative and literal PVs as \( P < \alpha \) (see table 5).
Results of Translation Test

In this test both intermediate and advanced level learners equally avoided PVs as \( p > \alpha \) (see table 5), but their preference in case of figurative and literal PVs was significantly different. In case of figurative PVs the advanced level learners used more PVs \( (P < \alpha) \) while in case of literal PVs of translation test their performance remained same \( (p > \alpha) \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>T value</th>
<th>P value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho=NS PVs Fig performance = NNS PVs Fig performance</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho= NS PVs Lit performance = NNS PVs Lit performance</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>( p &gt; \alpha ) accept Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(MCQs)= Intermediate(MCQs)</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(Translation)= Intermediate(Translation)</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>( p &gt; \alpha ) accept Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(Memorization)= Intermediate(Memorization)</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(MCQs Fig)= Intermediate(MCQs Fig)</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(MCQs Lit)= Intermediate(MCQs Lit)</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(Translation Fig)= Intermediate(Translation Fig)</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced(Translation Lit)= Intermediate(Translation Lit)</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>( p &gt; \alpha ) accept Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho=Advanced (Memorization Fig)= Intermediate(Memorization Fig)</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>( P &lt; \alpha ) reject Ho</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of Memorization Test

The intermediate level learners used PVs less often in this test compared to the advanced level learners as \( P < \alpha \) (see table 5). But in the case of literal and figurative PVs responses were different. In case of literal PVs both intermediate and advanced level learners exhibited equal preference for PVs \( (p>\alpha) \) while in figurative PVs the intermediate level learners responded significantly different from the advanced level learners \( (P<\alpha) \).

Results of the Types of PVs

As it has been mentioned above that 15 PVs items were included in the test to evaluate the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners’ avoidance behavior. Among these 15 items 4 PVs were literal and 11 were figurative. Item numbers 4, 6, 7 and 10 (Appendices) fall in the category of literal PVs while the rest of the PVs are figurative. Results of the study revealed that all the learners exhibited different behavior in both categories of PVs.

In the MCQs test all the learners equally preferred literal PVs (0.467 > 0.05) (see table 5) as it is obvious from the results of table 4 where mean of all literal PVs in three tests is highest (max value of Literal PVs in table: 1.0000) and standard deviation is lowest (0.000000) as compared to figurative PVs (lowest value of Figurative PVs in table 4: 0.3014). A significant avoidance in case of figurative PVs was observed among all learners at varied degrees as NNSs avoided PVs more than NSs. Within the group of NNSs intermediate level learners used more OWVs as compared to PVs (see table 1, 2, 3). A significant difference was observed between literal and figurative PVs in translation test where overall performance of intermediate and advanced level learners remained same \( (0.063>0.05, \text{table } 5) \), but figurative PVs in this test were avoided more by intermediate learners and both showed equal tendency towards the use literal PVs. So over all, literal PVs are preferred over Figurative by all the participants.

Findings

The first research question asked whether Pakistani ESL learners avoid PVs. To answer this question the results of the MCQs test were analyzed. The study shows that the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (NNSs) avoid using of PVs as their usage of the English PVs is lower than that of the NSs. The response frequencies of table 1 show that NSs used PVs 79% whereas the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (NNSs) used them 63%. So L1-L2 structural differences could be the possible reason for this avoidance behavior (confirmation of Dagut.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{Ho} & \text{Advanced(Memorization Lit)} & 0.56 & 0.2910 \\
\text{Intermediate(Memorization)} & \text{P>α accept Ho} \\
\text{H1} & \mu_1 > \mu_2 \\
\end{array}
\]
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Avoidance of English Phrasal Verbs

Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Sara & Mohammadreza, 2013) as PV structure is the peculiarity of Germanic languages (Liao & Fukuya 2004), and Urdu language does not belong to the Germanic languages group. Urdu does not contain PVs or PV like structure. So due to this L1-L2 structural difference, the semantic and structural complexity of English PVs could be too intricate to comprehend by the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners because the learners have natural tendency to avoid what they do not understand appropriately (Dagut & Laufer, 1985). Hence, the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners preferred OWV over PVs compared to the NSs.

When the results of figurative and literal PVs were analyzed separately for NSs and the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (NNSs), the P value =0.467 >α = 0.05. So Ho was accepted (see table 5) which states that the performance of NSs and NNS is equal in case of literal PVs. Though, in case of literal PVs the performance of the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (NNSs) is more like NSs, there is statistically significant difference between the performance of the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (NNSs) and NSs in case of figurative PVs. So in addition to L1-L2 differences, semantic complexity of PVs may also be one of the reasons of avoidance. This answered the second research question of this study. Even within the NNSs group both the intermediate and advanced level learners almost equally preferred literal PVs (see tables 1, 2, 3, and 5) and switched to OWV in case of figurative. It is because learners find it convenient to deduce meaning from the components of literal PVs by combining the meaning of verb proper and its particle. On the other hand in case of figurative PVs the meaning departs from its components which create hindrance for learners in mapping out the meaning and they avoid it. So the difficulty of figurative PVs in contrast to literal PVs resides in their semantic complexity which causes avoidance (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Sara & Mohammadreza, 2013). In the light of these facts this exploration also attributes structural complexity of PVs a partial reason of their avoidance of PVs.

The third research question asked whether there exists any relationship between avoidance behavior and proficiency level of learners. Results of the table 5 reveal that P value=0.015<α 0.05 which rejected Ho and H1 was accepted which stated that the advanced level learners used more PVs than intermediate level learners in the MCQs test. Similar results were found in case of memorization test where P value=0.001<α 0.05, hence, Ho not was rejected and H1 was verified. However, in translation test both groups equally preferred OWV over PVs (P value=0.063>α 0.05, hence, Ho is accepted). These results first confirmed Liao and Fukuya (2004) conclusion of L1-L2 differences as developmental manifestation of intermediate level learners’ avoidance behavior. In spite of the fact whether learners have PVs in their L1 or not (i.e., Hebrew,
Chinese, Dutch, and Swedish), they seem to undergo the same developmental process from avoidance to non-avoidance of PVs. As the Hebrew intermediate learners avoided PVs; the Chinese intermediate and graduate level learners avoided them whereas more advanced Chinese graduate learners did not; the Dutch high school students avoided PVs, but the Dutch and the Swedish intermediate level learners did not. So as the development precedes the avoidance behavior decreases. Secondly, the equal preference for OWV in translation test by the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners could be attributed to L1-L2 differences. As it has been mentioned above, that Urdu has no PV structure at all, so when learners tried to translate Urdu word they preferred OWV over PV because OWV might have seemed to them the correct translation of the Urdu equivalent. This OWV preference over PVs while translating Urdu substitute could be due to the lack of control over PVs components because a single verb in combination with different particles generate different meanings which is confusing for the learners who lack PVs in their L1 (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). However within the translation test high preference of figurative PVs by the advanced level learners compared to the intermediate level learners again confirms that avoidance behavior lags behind proficiency level. So the two notions of intermediate level learners’ development (Liao & Fukuya, 2004) and L1-L2 structural difference (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. Thus establishing structural difference as a factor in PVs avoidance does not discard the possibility that L2 learners’ difficulties (semantic complexity of PVs and proficiency level of learners) with PVs would ultimately drop (Liao & Fukuya, 2004).

Conclusion

The findings of the current work manifest three occasions of avoidance. First, L1-L2 structural differences as the Pakistani (Urdu) ESL learners (current work), the Hebrew ESL learners (Dagut & Laufer, 1985), the Swedish ESL learners (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993), the Chinese ESL learners (Liao & Fukuya, 2004), the Iranian ESL learners (Sara & Mohammadreza, 2013) avoided PVs and their L1 Lacks in PVs. Second is the semantic complexity of PVs which has been highlighted in this work and all aforementioned studies also argue that semantic or syntactic complexity of PVs triggers avoidance behavior specially in case of figurative PVs because it is difficult for the learners to comprehend PVs especially when they have no equivalent structure in their L1. This avoidance is demonstrated more in translation test (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004) because learners are unable to handle PV components while translation so they prefer OWV. Third, proficiency level of learners is inversely proportional to avoidance which means that avoidance decreases with the increase in learners’ proficiency level. The more the learners are proficient and exposed to native like environment the more they would
prefer PVs (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Hence, L1-L2 structural differences, semantic complexity of PVs, and proficiency level of learners mutually contribute to avoidance behavior in second language learning. So all the language teachers must keep in mind these barriers and devise their strategies to minimize the effect of these obstacles for better learning outcomes.
References
Appendices

Multiple Choice Test

*Choose for each sentence the verb that in your opinion best fits the context and fill in that verb. Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English.*

1. As we all thought that my uncle had left the country we were surprised to see him---------at my mother's birthday party.
   (claim, appear, look up, turn up)

2. After having failed to have a decent conversation with a German couple I had met in the pub, I decided that it was time to-------- my German.
   (calm down, improve, abolish, brush up)

3. We were really astonished when John did not keep his promise; we hadn't thought that he would ever-------- his friends.
   (let down , solve, disappoint, carry on)

4. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to-------- smoking.
   (fall down, stop, give up ,elect)

5. I spent one hour trying to ring my mother from a phone booth but didn't manage to-------- her.
   (earn, get through to, reach, mix up)

6. When the weather is nice I love to-------- early.
   (release, look after, get up ,rise)

7. "Don't you think it's a good idea to have a break now and to-------- playing after lunch?", My hungry bridge-partner asked me.
   (cheer up, continue, flush, go on )

8. When the war was just about to--------, in 1940, my father must have been about 15-yearsold.
   (break out ,look down on, start, satisfy)

9. Luckily there would be no one in the embassy-building when the bomb was to--------
   (go off ,explode, tune in, reply)

10. According to my grandfather it is very difficult, nowadays, to-------- one's children well.
    (listen, raise, bring up, come across)

11. "Hello Suzy? How nice of you to call me! But someone has just rung the doorbell; could you-------- a second?"
    (capture, hang on ,wait, fall down)
12. She did it again! She always forgets to--------- the fire when she leaves.
   (put out, foresee, extinguish, break into)

13. When Jack was late for his date, he knew his girlfriend would be furious, so he had to ---------- a story about a traffic-jam.
   (make up, follow, lie down, invent)

14. The fight between Robert and Paul stopped when Paul twisted his ankle and had to-------------.
   (realize, surrender, look up to, give in)

15. When my aunt had just opened the shop, she was forced to--------- several interesting business-offers, because she was simply short of time. (offend, turn down, cheer up, refuse)

Translation Test

Choose for each sentence the verb which in your opinion is the exact translation of Urdu word provided along four choices. Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English.

1. As we all thought that my uncle had left the country we were surprised to see him---------- at my mother's birthday party.
   (claim, appear, look up, turn up (namdaar)

2. After having failed to have a decent conversation with a German couple I had met in the pub, I decided that it was time to--------- my German.
   (calm down, improve, abolish, brush up (bhter bnana)

3. We were really astonished when John did not keep his promise; we hadn’t thought that he would ever---------- his friends.
   (let down, solve, disappoint, carry on, (Mayos)

4. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to--------- smoking.
   (fall down, stop, give up, elect, (choora)

5. I spent one hour trying to ring my mother from a phone booth but didn't manage to------------- her.
   (earn, get through to, reach, mix up (ras'saibasal)

6. When the weather is nice I love to--------- early.
   (release, look after, get up, rise (bedar bona)

7. "Don't you think it's a good idea to have a break now and to--------- playing after lunch?" My hungry bridge-partner asked me.
   (cheer up, continue, flush, go on (jarirka)

جاری رکھنا
8. When the war was just about to --------, in 1940, my father must have been about 15-years old.
   (break out, look down on, satisfy (Aghaz) آغاز)

9. Luckily there would be no one in the embassy-building when the bomb was to--------
   (go off, explode, tune in, reply (phat'na) پھٹنا)

10. According to my grandfather it is very difficult, nowadays, to-------- one's children well.
    (listen, raise, bring up, come across (parwarishkarna) پرورش کرنا)

11. "Hello Suzy? How nice of you to call me! But someone has just rung the doorbell; could you-------- a second?"
    (capture, hang on, wait, fall down (intizar fermana) انتظار فرمانا)

12. She did it again! She always forgets to-------- the fire when she leaves.
    (put out, foresee, extinguish, break into (bojhana) بجھانا)

13. When Jack was late for his date, he knew his girlfriend would be furious, so he had to -------- a story about a traffic-jam.
    (make up, follow, lie down, invent (gharna) گھڑنا)

14. The fight between Robert and Paul stopped when Paul twisted his ankle and had to--------.
    (realize, surrender, look up to, give in (bathayar dalna) پتھیردار دالنا)

15. When my aunt had just opened the shop, she was forced to-------- several interesting business-offers, because she was simply short of time.
    (offend, turn down, cheer up, refuse (thokrana) تھکرانا)

Memorization Test

First Stage: Participants are provided with fifteen sentence containing appropriate PVs. They have ten minutes to memorize these sentences. After ten minutes the paper will be taken back. And then after an hour second stage will start.

1. As we all thought that my uncle had left the country we were surprised to see him--------at my mother's birthday party.

2. After having failed to have a decent conversation with a German couple I had met in the pub, I decided that it was time to --------brush up-------- my German.

3. We were really astonished when John did not keep his promise: we hadn't thought that he would ever --------let down--------his friends.

4. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to--------give up--------smoking.

5. I spent one hour trying to ring my mother from a phone booth but didn't manage to --------get through--------her.
6. When the weather is nice I love to **get up** early.
7. "Don't you think it's a good idea to have a break now and to **go on** playing after lunch?" My hungry bridge-partner asked me.
8. When the war was just about to **break out**, in 1940, my father must have been about 15 years old.
9. Luckily there would be no one in the embassy building when the bomb was to **go off**.
10. According to my grandfather it is very difficult, nowadays, to **bring up** one's children well.
11. "Hello Suzy? How nice of you to call me! But someone has just rung the doorbell; could you **hang on** a second?"
12. She did it again! She always forgets to **put out** the fire when she leaves.
13. When Jack was late for his date, he knew his girlfriend would be furious, so he had to **make up** a story about a traffic jam.
14. The fight between Robert and Paul stopped when Paul twisted his ankle and had to **give in**.
15. When my aunt had just opened the shop, she was forced to **turn down** several interesting business offers, because she was simply short of time.

**Second stage:** Now the Participants are provided with original fifteen sentences, containing appropriate PVs, along with five distracter sentences.

1. As we all thought that my uncle had left the country we were surprised to see him **appear** at my mother's birthday party.
2. After having failed to have a decent conversation with a German couple I had met in the pub, I decided that it was time to **brush up** my German.
3. We were really astonished when John did not keep his promise: we hadn't thought that he would ever **let down** his friends.
4. As we all thought that my uncle had left the country we were surprised to see him **look up** at my mother's birthday party.
5. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to **stop** smoking.
6. I spent one hour trying to ring my mother from a phone booth but didn't manage to **get through** her.
7. When the weather is nice I love to **get up** early.
8. "Don't you think it's a good idea to have a break now and to **go on** playing after lunch?" My hungry bridge-partner asked me.
9. When the war was just about to **break out** in 1940, my father must have been about 15 years old.
10. Luckily there would be no one in the embassy building when the bomb was to **go off**.
11. According to my grandfather it is very difficult, nowadays, to **bring up** one's children well.
12. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to give up smoking.
13. I spent one hour trying to ring my mother from a phone booth but didn't manage to reach her.
14. When the weather is nice I love to rise early.
15. "Hello Suzy? How nice of you to call me! But someone has just rung the doorbell: could you hang on a second?"
16. She did it again! She always forgets to put out the fire when she leaves!
17. When Jack was late for his date, he knew his girlfriend would be furious, so he had to make up a story about a traffic-jam.
18. "Hello Suzy? How nice of you to call me! But someone has just rung the doorbell: could you wait a second?"
19. The fight between Robert and Paul stopped when Paul twisted his ankle and had to give in.
20. When my aunt had just opened the shop, she was forced to turn down several interesting business-offers, because she was simply short of time.

3rd Stage: Participants are asked to complete the following sentences with suitable verb. Also select the relevant check box in collaboration of your memorization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test sentences</th>
<th>I remember this sentence</th>
<th>I don't Remember this Sentence</th>
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<tbody>
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