



THE EFFECTS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS ON THE ACQUISITION OF PHRASAL VERBS BY TURKISH EFL LEARNERS

Galip Kartal¹ⁱ,

Seda Uner²

¹English Language Teaching Department,

Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education,

Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey

²School of Foreign Languages,

Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Eskişehir, Turkey

Abstract:

This study investigates the effects of conceptual metaphors on Turkish EFL learners' acquisition of phrasal verbs. The participants were 120 beginner, elementary, and pre-intermediate level students. The research follows a pre and post-test quasi-experimental research design. The students were assigned to proficiency levels according to their Michigan Placement Test scores. A phrasal verb completion test was used as the measurement instrument of the study. With regard to their proficiency levels, students were divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group received cognitive linguistics inspired phrasal verb teaching (conceptual metaphors) while the control group was provided only traditional memorization method. Three paired samples t-tests were run in order to investigate the effects of conceptual metaphors in proficiency levels. In addition, a 2X3 MANOVA was conducted to investigate whether the method (traditional and conceptual metaphors) and proficiency level (beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate) have an effect on completion test of phrasal verbs (as measured by exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs). This study found evidence that conceptual metaphors have positive effects on the learning of phrasal verbs.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, phrasal verbs, idiomatic expressions, EFL

ⁱ Correspondence: email kartalgali@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Some aspects of a target language can be more problematic to foreign language learners than others. For instance, one aspect causing difficulty is the discrepancy in typology between the native and target languages. As English is a satellite-framed language, language learners with verb-framed first languages have more difficulties in learning multi-word constructions. Multi-word units, frequently used by native English speakers have been under focus for their importance for native-like proficiency and for the problems they cause to second and foreign language students (Schmitt, 2004).

Phrasal verbs are one of the, possibly the most problematic, multi-word constructions. Although there are numerous phrasal verbs that are frequently used by the native speakers of English, their usage of frequency among non-native speakers of English is extremely rare as they prefer one-word equivalents of phrasal verbs (e.g. go on= continue). Some reasons of this avoidance may be listed as the idiomaticity of phrasal verbs; absence of phrasal verbs in some languages, polysemous nature of phrasal verbs, and so on. However, even the students, with a native language of the same language family with English and include phrasal verbs as well, have problems with English phrasal verbs (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). One conclusion that may be drawn from the above discussion is that, due to several reasons, it is quite common to observe problems with phrasal verbs in foreign language environments. Recently, researchers have investigated the solutions to these problems via cognitive linguistics based language instruction.

The application of cognitive linguistics to second language teaching and learning gained a remarkable momentum. Within this area, Littlemore (2009) discussed phonological features as radial categories, encyclopedic knowledge and frame semantics, conceptual and linguistic metonymy, embodied cognition and gesture, and conceptual metaphor theory. A conceptual metaphor is *“seen as pervasive in terms of how humans understand the world and how all aspects of language are structured”* (Tyler, 2008, p.460).

In recent years cognitive linguistics inspired learning and teaching studies on idiomatic expressions (Kövecses & Szabo, 1996; Lee, 2012; Yasuda, 2010) have shown that conceptual metaphors have positive effects on learning of phrasal verbs by non-native learners of English. Cognitive linguistics view of phrasal verbs puts forth that schematic representations are essential. According to Kövecses (2006, p. 225), there is an *“interface between the body and the world”* owing to the image-schemas we have. This conceptual knowledge plays a vital role in guessing the meaning of new idioms and phrasal verbs the foreign language learners face. In addition, Stefanowitch and Gries

(2005) discuss the critical role of conceptual metaphors, embedded in the particles of the phrasal verbs, for guessing the meanings of newly encountered phrasal verbs.

This study aims to investigate the effects of conceptual metaphors on learning of phrasal verbs by English as foreign language learners. Lantolf and Johnson (2007) believe that conceptual knowledge assists interpreting and creating personal meanings. As learning the meanings of all phrasal verbs in English is almost impossible due to their enormous number, interpreting and guessing meanings of unfamiliar phrasal verbs by taking advantage of prior knowledge might aid the learners of English as a foreign language.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Defining Phrasal Verbs

Almost all studies dealing with phrasal verbs attempt to define them. It can easily be observed that the definitions of these multi-word units show notable differences. There is no focus on the literal or figurative meanings of phrasal verbs in the definition made for example by Gardner and Davies (2007) who do not see any points in focusing on the semantic differences of phrasal verbs for foreign language learners. They believe that every two-word item which includes a lexical verb and an adverbial particle can be considered as a phrasal verb. Given the changes in the definitions of phrasal verbs, the discrepancies among them result from differing approaches. Some of them emphasize semantic and syntax, some of them stress out literal versus figurative meanings of phrasal verbs, and others try to distinguish *“between phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, phrasal-prepositional verbs, and free combinations”* (Gardner & Davies, 2007). In this study, the focus is on functions of phrasal verbs. The present study prefers Ishii’s (2009, p. 121) definition: *“A phrasal verb is a term that refers to those units of verbs and prepositions/adverbs that have more or less different meanings from those of the verbs alone.”*

2.2. Phrasal verbs and Foreign Language Learners

Dagut and Laufer (1985) attempted to account for the avoidance of phrasal verbs by Hebrew learners of English, in which phrasal verbs do not exist, to the complexity level of the structures in the target language. However, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) found that even Dutch-speaking learners of English, Dutch includes phrasal verbs, preferred single-verb synonyms of phrasal verbs. Taking these into consideration, Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 139) concludes that: *“Although L1–L2 similarity and inherent complexity (figurative versus literal phrasal verbs) have a role, the only factor that consistently predicts avoidance is the L1–L2 difference variable.”* The avoidance behavior is important in order to detect the reasons lying under them.

Recent previous research yielded that foreign language learners use phrasal verbs quite less frequently than the native speakers of English (Chen, 2007, 2013) or the usage of phrasal verbs showed differences between native and non-native speakers of English (Kayael, 2007). Working with 400 Turkish EFL and 15 native speakers of English Kayael (2007) tried to determine the use or avoidance of phrasal verbs in terms of semantic nature of the phrasal verb type (literal or figurative), participants' year of study (1-4) and different test types (multiple choice, fill-in the blanks, and translation). The results of the study yielded that test type and phrasal verb type did not result in significant results between native and non-native speakers in terms of a multiple-choice test. The results of fill-in-blanks test, on the other hand, showed that non-native speakers preferred figurative phrasal verbs more than native speakers of English. Another intriguing finding was that Turkish university students preferred figurative phrasal verbs to literal phrasal verbs. Contrary to the findings of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) and Dagut and Laufer (1985), this study did not find a negative correlation between the level and avoidance behavior. More specifically, previous studies found that when the level increases, avoidance decreases. However, this study found no relationship between those two.

Due to the problematic nature of phrasal verbs for foreign language learners, there have been lots of attempts to utilize the tenets of different theories for the sake of solving this problem. One of them, recently maybe the most prominent, is the cognitive linguistics view of the phrasal verb teaching.

2.3 Cognitive Linguistics-Inspired Phrasal Verb Teaching and Learning

Lowering the effects of syntax in productivity, cognitive linguistics view of the phrasal verbs, emphasize meaning rather than form due to the fact that the meanings of the phrasal verbs have schematic representations in the human mind. As Tyler and Evans (2003) put forth while determining the meaning of a phrasal verb, the *particle* in the phrasal verb construction plays a more substantial role than the *verb* part. Recent studies constitute a body of evidence in favor of cognitive linguistics to the teaching of idioms (Boers, 2001; Boers, Demecheleer, & Eyckmans, 2004), proverbs (Li, 2009), phrasal verbs with *up* and *down* (Talebinejad and Sadri, 2013), phrasal verbs with *in*, *out*, *up* and *down* (Condon, 2008; Nhu and Huyen, 2009) and phrasal verbs with *down*, *into*, *out*, *up*, and *off* (Yasuda, 2010).

The above-mentioned studies, in which the tenets of cognitive linguistics were utilized to teach vocabulary to second/foreign language learners, proved evidence that phrasal verbs cannot be explained solely with their idiomaticity and arbitrariness. There can be a cognitive engagement in the acquisition of phrasal verbs. One of the ways of

this cognitive engagement in phrasal verbs is the metaphors embedded in the particles of phrasal verbs. Previous research proved the significance of metaphors in the acquisition of phrasal verbs. This leads us an in-depth analysis of the metaphors in cognitive linguistics.

2.4. Conceptual Metaphors and Acquisition of Phrasal Verbs

Metaphors gained a significant role with the novel tenets of cognitive linguistics (Littlemore & Low, 2006). Defining a conceptual metaphor as “*understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*” Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p.5) provided following orientational metaphors for the adverbial particles of phrasal verbs (see Table 1). When we talk about metaphors we imply similarities. These similarities are results of one’s own experiences in life and their representations in the language. As noted by Valerio (1998) as well, it should be kept in mind that not all phrasal verbs have links to metaphors; it is just to show that some of them can be acquired easier via metaphor concept.

The terms ‘conceptual’ and ‘orientational’ are used interchangeably by the researchers while labeling metaphors. Although there is no problem with that, orientational metaphors are the ones which are solely related to the human body’s experiments. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) call the metaphors which include a spatial orientation as orientational metaphors. The prepositions in Table 1 are all orientational metaphors as “[t]hey have a basis in our physical and cultural experience” (p. 15). In other words, the cognitive linguistics-view of phrasal verbs has lots to do with spatial orientations which are results of the human body’s experiences. What distinguishes cognitive linguistics from other approaches in terms of phrasal verbs is that it emphasizes the importance of explicit awareness of orientational metaphors by the acquirers.

2.5. Cognitive Linguistics View Research Studies

Recent studies proved that conceptual metaphors help foreign language learners to acquire phrasal verbs (Lee, 2012; Nhu & Huyen, 2009; Talebinejad & Sadri, 2013; Yasuda, 2010). Some of these studies concentrated on orientational metaphors embedded in the phrasal verbs. Usually, *down*, *into*, *out*, *up*, and *off* were studied in recent studies. The common feature of these studies is that they all investigated the effects of orientational metaphors.

In order to compare the traditional teaching of phrasal verbs with orientational metaphors use to teach phrasal verbs, Yasuda divided 115 Japanese university students into two groups (traditional approach= 56, cognitive semantic approach 59) and asked

them to fill in the missing adverbial particles of 42 phrasal verbs. 21 of these phrasal verbs were exposed ones in the treatment, and the rest were unexposed ones. The experimental group was given the orientational metaphors of the particles of phrasal verbs adapted from Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Results of this experimental research indicated statistically significant difference between the traditional group and cognitive approach group in terms of unexposed phrasal verbs. In other words, participants had better scores from the test that included novel phrasal verbs.

Nhu and Huyen (2009) investigated the effects of conceptual metaphor for four particles “*in*,” “*out*,” “*up*,” and “*down*” on high school students. They found that conceptual metaphors are a good way of facilitating acquisition of phrasal verbs by high school students. Similar results were found by Talebinejad and Sadri (2013) who tested the effectiveness of the cognitive linguistics-based approach to phrasal verbs with *up* and *down* on intermediate level EFL learners. After an eight-week treatment with conceptual metaphors, Waehayi and Sripetpun (2012) tested the contributions of metaphors to phrasal verb acquisition and retention in a one group pre and post-test research design. The results indicated that conceptual metaphors played a significant role in the acquisition of phrasal verbs. In another study, the effects of cognitive linguistics-inspired picture-elucidation tasks were tested on 56 intermediate level students by Farsani, Moinzadeh, and Tavakoli (2012). They found similar results with above-mentioned studies.

The developments in cognitive science and above-mentioned studies prove that it is not the case to generalize phrasal verbs as indivisible arbitrary structures. Motivated by the research findings proving that conceptual metaphors are effective ways of acquiring English phrasal verbs at different proficiency levels, this study aims to test the following H_a what is this research hypothesis in Turkish EFL setting: Conceptual metaphors facilitate Turkish EFL learners phrasal verb acquisition, especially phrasal verbs with the particles: *up*, *down*, *into*, and *out*. The following research questions guided this study to test this research hypothesis:

1. Do using conceptual metaphors have any effects on Turkish EFL learners' acquisition of phrasal verbs?
2. Does proficiency level (beginner, elementary, and pre-intermediate) of EFL learners play a role on acquisition of phrasal verbs with conceptual metaphors?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 120 beginner, elementary, and pre-intermediate level students enrolled in the prep class of a state university in Turkey. They range in age from 18 to 22, and they are all non-native speakers of English. They had been learning English at least six years when they started the prep class. Their academic specializations mostly included engineering. All of the subjects were given proficiency and placement tests by their institution when they started at prep class. The students were assigned to proficiency levels according to the results of Michigan Placement Test, a standardized test assessing all four language skills, as a beginner, elementary, and intermediate. The rationale for choosing students from different proficiency levels for data collection is largely based on the gap in the literature on comparison of the effectiveness of conceptual metaphors on different proficiency levels.

3.2 Materials

A phrasal verb completion test was used as the measurement instrument of the study. The phrasal verbs on the completion test were adapted from Yasuda (2010). It consists of 30 phrasal verbs lacking the particle in each sentence. The participants were asked to fill in the blank with the appropriate particle of the phrasal verbs. Fifteen phrasal verbs in the test were exposed ones, and the rest was unexposed items. The aim of using both exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs was to determine the generalizability of metaphorical knowledge. The completion test consists of phrasal verbs, which included the particles of *down*, *into*, *out*, *up* and *off*. These phrasal verbs were selected because they occur in the students' textbooks *Double Click* (Evans & Sullivan, 2012) of the students; therefore, they were familiar with them. Table 1 illustrates the orientational metaphors embedded in the particles.

Table 1: The conceptual metaphors used in the study

Particle	Metaphors	Example
Down	Lowering/Decreasing	calm dawn, break down
	Defeating /Suppressing	turn down, knock down
Into	Changing	turn into, burst into
	Involvement	enter into, run into
Out	Removing/Excluding	leave out, rule out
	Searching and Finding	figure out, make, out
Up	More visible/Accessible	show up, open up
	Completion	use up, dry up
Off	Departure/Separation	get off, take off
	Stopping /Cancelling	call off, pay off
	Prevention, Production	keep off

Source: Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

3.3 Procedure

With regard to their proficiency levels, students were divided into control and experimental groups. There were one control and one experimental group in each proficiency level. The study measured EFL learners' phrasal verb knowledge using 30 item phrasal verb completion test at the beginning and end of a treatment section to all groups. The tests were administered by the same instructor. Instructions about the completion test were given orally in Turkish before the administration in order to make sure that they understand the instructions clearly.

Students from all proficiency level received one class time instruction on phrasal verbs. The students in the control group were provided with only Turkish translations of the phrasal verbs in English. The students were given 21 phrasal verbs with their translations into Turkish and instructed to memorize them. There was not any focus on orientational metaphors or any other methods. The experimental group students, on the other hand, were provided with the conceptual metaphors embedded into the particles of phrasal verbs (see Table 1). First, the students were instructed by using the metaphors. Second, the students were told to memorize the meanings of the phrasal verbs. The instruction time for the experimental group was one class hour as well. The instructor placed emphasis on the orientational metaphors in learning of the phrasal verbs. After the treatment, both control and experimental groups were given the post-test, which was the same with the pre-test. Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted and after finding that the data were distributed normally, paired samples t-tests and a 2X3 MANOVA was run for the analysis of the data.

4. Results

4.1. Findings relating to Research Question 1: Does using conceptual metaphors have any effects on different level Turkish EFL learners' acquisition of phrasal verbs?

Three paired samples t-tests were run to investigate the effects of conceptual metaphors in proficiency levels (Table 1). According to the results, there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre and post-tests for beginner level group ($t(15) = -1.98, p < .066$). On the other hand, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test ($M=11.65, SD=2.187$) and post-test ($M=14.48, SD=2.352$) of elementary ($t(22) = -4.198, p < .01$) level students. There was also a statistically significant difference ($t(21) = -4.755, p < .01$) between the mean scores of pre-intermediate level students' pre-test ($M=10.36, SD=2.46$) and post-test mean scores ($M=14.55, SD=2.703$). These findings indicate that conceptual metaphor teaching improved phrasal verb knowledge of elementary and pre-intermediate level students. However, there was not any improvement in for beginner level students.

Table 2: Paired Samples t-test results for the pre and post-test results of each proficiency level

Pairs	Tests	<i>x</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
1. Beginner	Pre-Test	10,75	2,817	1,980	,066
	Post-Test	8,44	3,444		
2. Elementary	Pre-Test	11,65	2,187	-4,198	,000
	Post-Test	14,48	2,352		
3. Pre-Intermediate	Pre-Test	10,36	2,46	-4,755	,000
	Post-Test	14,54	2,70		

4.2. Findings relating to Research Question 2: Do teaching method (traditional and conceptual metaphor) and proficiency level (beginner, elementary, and pre-intermediate) affect Turkish EFL learners' phrasal verb knowledge test (as measured by exposed and unexposed phrasal verb items)?

A 2X3 MANOVA was run in order to investigate whether the method (traditional and conceptual metaphors) and proficiency level (beginner, elementary, pre-intermediate) have an effect on completion test of phrasal verbs (as measured by exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs). The interaction between method and proficiency level was found significant ($F(4,234) = 19,963, p < .000$). As for the main effects, the method was found to have a statistically significant effect on exposed phrasal verbs ($F(1,118) = 63.083, p < .000$) and unexposed phrasal verbs ($F(1,118) = 18,371, p < .000$). Proficiency level also has a significant effect on both exposed phrasal verbs ($F(2,118) = 27,33, p < .000$) and unexposed phrasal verbs ($F(2,118) = 9,83, p < .000$).

Table 3: MANOVA Results

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Method	,611	37,265 ^b	2,000	117,000	,000
Level	,633	15,013 ^b	4,000	234,000	,000
Method x Level	,556	19,963 ^b	4,000	234,000	,000

As the interaction between method and proficiency level was found significant ($F(4,234)=19,963, p<.000$), the cell means (see Table 2 and 3) were also reported here. The cell means show that for traditional teaching of phrasal verbs, the results of the exposed group the beginners were more successful than elementary and pre-intermediate. On the other hand, as for the conceptual metaphors, pre- intermediate was the most successful group. There was a positive relationship between the level and unexposed phrasal verb items in traditional method group. This positive relationship in the experimental group was for exposed phrasal verb items. It can be concluded that conceptual metaphors were more beneficial than traditional method for learners to guess the meaning of unexposed phrasal verb items.

Table 4: The mean scores of each method by proficiency level with regard to exposed and unexposed items

		Beginner	Elementary	Pre-intermediate
		<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>
Traditional method	Exposed	13	12,90	12,65
	Unexposed	2,05	4,70	4,83
Conceptual metaphors	Exposed	5,69	11,87	12,09
	Unexposed	2,75	2,61	2,73

The aim of making a comparison between exposed and unexposed items in the Phrasal Verb Knowledge test was to test the generalizability of metaphorical knowledge available. In other words, the aim was to test whether the experimental (conceptual metaphor) group could apply the metaphorical knowledge to the guessing the meaning of newly encountered phrasal verbs which includes a particle with a metaphorical meaning. As Figure 1 and 2 show, it was the pre-intermediate group which utilized the conceptual metaphoric knowledge most. Elementary group students took the second place. It can be concluded from these findings that, when the level improves the effectiveness of the conceptual metaphor method of teaching phrasal verbs is higher.

Figure 1: Estimated Marginal Means of Exposed Phrasal Verbs

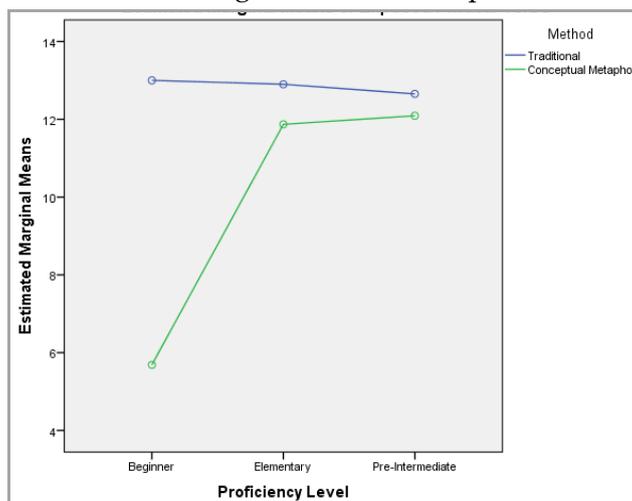
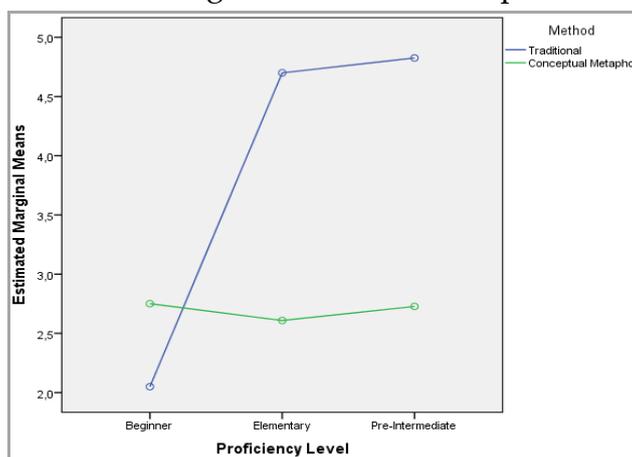


Figure 2: Estimated Marginal Means of Unexposed Phrasal Verbs



As the results of the MANOVA for the *proficiency level* were found to be statistically significant, Scheffe post-hoc test was conducted in order to find out which proficiency level pairs have a statistically significant difference with regard to exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs (table 4). The findings revealed that while there is a statistically significant difference between mean scores of beginner ($M=9,75$, $SD=4,245$) and elementary ($M=12,35$, $SD=1,771$) and beginner and pre-intermediate ($M=12,38$, $SD=2,289$) levels with regard to exposed phrasal verbs, there is not a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of elementary and pre-intermediate levels with regard to exposed phrasal verbs at $p<.01$ level. In terms of unexposed phrasal verbs, while there was a significant difference between mean scores of beginner ($M=2,36$, $SD=1,268$) and elementary levels ($M=3,58$, $SD=2,015$), and beginner and pre-intermediate levels ($M=3,80$, $SD=1,779$), there was not a statistically significant difference between mean scores of elementary and pre-intermediate levels at $p<.01$ level.

Table 5: Scheffe Post-hoc test results for proficiency level

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	
Exposed Verbs	Phrasal	Beginner	Elementary	-2,60*	,466	,000
			Pre-Intermediate	-2,63*	,462	,000
	Elementary	Beginner	Pre-Intermediate	2,60*	,466	,000
			Pre-Intermediate	-,03	,440	,998
	Pre-Intermediate	Beginner	Elementary	2,63*	,462	,000
			Elementary	,03	,440	,998
Unexposed Verbs	Phrasal	Beginner	Elementary	-1,22*	,339	,002
			Pre-Intermediate	-1,44*	,335	,000
	Elementary	Beginner	Pre-Intermediate	1,22*	,339	,002
			Pre-Intermediate	-,22	,320	,792
	Pre-Intermediate	Beginner	Elementary	1,44*	,335	,000
			Elementary	,22	,320	,792

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

5. Discussion

This study investigated the effects of explicit teaching of conceptual metaphors on Turkish EFL learners' acquisition of phrasal verbs. The effectiveness of conceptual metaphor awareness on guessing the meaning of novel phrasal verbs was investigated as well. The results of the study yielded a statistically significant difference between the students who memorized the meanings of phrasal verbs and students who learned them via the conceptual metaphors. In other words, this study found evidence that conceptual metaphors have positive effects on the learning of phrasal verbs, which is consistent with lots of other previous research findings (Lee, 2012; Nhu & Huyen, 2009; Yasuda, 2010). More specifically, the explicit teaching of the metaphors, the particles *down, into, out, up, and off*, helped learners to improve their phrasal verb knowledge. Previous studies also found similar results with different particles: *up and down* (Talebinejad and Sadri, 2013); *out, up and over* (Lee, 2012); *in, out, up, and down* (Nhu & Huyen, 2009); *down, into, out, up, and off* (Yasuda, 2010). Without taking the level of students into consideration, the findings of this study supported the findings of Yasuda (2010), who found that the subjects who learned phrasal verbs through conceptual metaphors significantly outperformed those who learned them through the traditional method (memorization) as for the unexposed (novel) phrasal verbs.

What made this study distinct from all these studies was that it examined the effectiveness of this method across different proficiency levels. Although the effectiveness of the conceptual metaphors on Grade 12 students (Waehayi & Sripetpun,

2012), high school students (Nhu & Huyen, 2009), and university level students (Yasuda, 2010) was investigated, a comparison study across different proficiency levels was not conducted. This study found evidence that the effectiveness of the explicit teaching of metaphoric knowledge show differences across proficiency levels. As for the exposed and unexposed phrasal verbs, it was found that pre-intermediate level students were the most successful group in applying the conceptual metaphoric knowledge to the novel (unexposed) phrasal verbs. Elementary group students took the second place, and the beginners were least successful to profit by conceptual metaphors. While there was a statistically significant difference between beginner and elementary, and beginner and pre-intermediate group, there was not a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of elementary and pre-intermediate groups. This positive relationship between the level and effectiveness conceptual metaphoric knowledge is possibly a result of the fact that higher level students already implicitly internalized some of this metaphoric knowledge before the experiment and improved this knowledge with the help of the treatment. As Kovecse and Szabo (1996, p. 351) conclude: *"The passive existence of metaphorical motivation, that is, the mere presence of conceptual metaphors in the mind does not seem to be sufficient for their active use in the learning of a foreign language."* The explicit instruction of conceptual metaphor embedded into the particles of phrasal verbs seems to work more with the pre-intermediate and elementary level student than the beginning level students.

However, there might be several other reasons for the findings that the higher levels did statistically significantly better than the beginning level. One reason might be the fact that the research was conducted during the last weeks of the term when students at three proficiency levels, especially elementary and pre-intermediate reached almost the same proficiency level. As beginner level students have a heavier schedule to follow, they have difficulty in keeping up with elementary and pre-intermediate level students. Therefore, beginner students may be less proficient than elementary and pre-intermediate groups while conducting the study. Another reason might be that the difference between elementary and pre-intermediate level groups could have been close to each other at the beginning of the semester. This is because, in the program of the preparatory school where the study was conducted, the pre-intermediate level is considered as a transition between elementary and intermediate level. On the other hand, beginners were far less proficient than these two levels.

The differences across the proficiency levels with regard to the application of metaphoric knowledge for guessing the meaning of novel phrasal verbs need to be discussed from a metalinguistic knowledge view as well. Yasuda (2010) discussed the results of her study, which yielded similar results with this study, regarding

metalinguistic knowledge view and concluded that one of the determiners of the variance in conceptual metaphor use might have been resulted from metalinguistic knowledge. In addition to Yasuda (2010), Zietek and Roehr (2011) concluded that language analytic ability of EFL learners may constitute an important component of the metalinguistic knowledge they have. In other words, a learner's metalinguistic knowledge would be highly related to analytic cognitive style.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of conceptual metaphors on learning of phrasal verbs by EFL learners with a specific focus on proficiency level and exposedness and non-exposedness. The findings of this current study contributed to the research that has examined the effectiveness of cognitive linguistics inspired teaching of vocabulary by specifically focusing on phrasal verbs. The results showed that cognitive linguistic inspired phrasal verb teaching, i.e conceptual metaphors, can be used as an alternative strategy for teaching and learning phrasal verbs in EFL settings. The results showed a significant effect for proficiency level as well. As for the effectiveness of proficiency levels on the acquisition of phrasal verbs via conceptual metaphor method, it can be concluded from these findings that, when the level is higher, the effectiveness of the conceptual metaphor method of teaching phrasal verbs is higher. These findings are significant and suggest that conceptual metaphors can be well suited to providing opportunities for learning of phrasal verbs in EFL settings. There are numerous phrasal verbs in English. The experimental group (conceptual metaphor group) did statistically outperform the control group (memorization) with regard to novel phrasal verbs. This finding is also significant and suggests that the conceptual metaphor knowledge might be used in order to teach and learn lots of phrasal verbs by learning the metaphors embedded in the particles of the phrasal verbs.

The results of this current study have significant pedagogical implications for teaching and learning of phrasal verbs in EFL contexts. First, teachers can utilize these conceptual metaphors while teaching the phrasal verbs. In other words, the explicit teaching of conceptual metaphors can be used by teachers to help learners comprehend phrasal verbs. Second, as students from a verb-framed L1 perceive phrasal verbs as non-analyzable multi-word constructions because of the typological differences between Turkish and English, the findings of this research might be utilized in order to teach phrasal verbs with conceptual metaphors to students whose L1 is verb-framed. Last but not least, although there were differences across the proficiency level groups with regard to the effectiveness of conceptual metaphor technique, all three levels

improved their phrasal verb knowledge via this cognitive linguistics inspired method. So, teachers can implement explicit teaching of conceptual metaphors to all proficiency levels.

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Galip Kartal, Seda Uner
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