

SENTENCES WITH BOTH INDIRECT OBJECT AND VERB PARTICLES*

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DOLAYLI NESNE VE EYLEM PARTİKELİ İÇEREN CÜMLELER

Özet

Bu çalışma, dolaysız ve dolaylı nesne; çift geçişli yüklem partikellerinden oluşan İngilizce cümleleri içermektedir. Özne-yüklem-nesne dizimi göz önünde tutularak İngilizce cümle yapısı içinde aynı yüklemle nesne ve partikelin yerleri değiştirilerek altı cümle kurulabilir. Ancak bu cümlelerin hepsi dilbilgisel değildir. Bu cümlelerden hangilerinin kabul edilebilir olduğunu belirlemek için ana dili İngilizce olan beş kişiye başvurulmuştur. Katılımcılar, bu cümleler içerisinde partikellerin en az vurgulu olduğu yapılara yönelmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: partikel, kabul edilebilirlik, çift geçişli yüklem

Abstract

This study deals with English sentences with both direct object and indirect object and ditransitive verb particle. Considering the English sentence structure, subject-verb-object, one can make six sentences using the same verb by moving around the object and the particle. Not all of these combinations are accepted as grammatical. In order to determine which combinations are acceptable, five speakers of English are asked to mark a number of sentences constructed from phrasal verbs, for acceptability. Participants prefer sentences where the particles are placed in position of least focus.

Key Words: Particle, Acceptable, Ditransitive verb

Introduction

In every language there are sets of rules that allow its speakers to combine words in a language into larger units. Not all the combinations of words are possible in most languages. As a speaker of a language, one can distinguish between the possible sentences and those that are not. A native speaker of a language is able to know the rules of grammar even if s/he has never studied any grammar. Similarly, s/he applies the rules whenever s/he speaks or writes and whenever s/he interprets what others say. So, acceptability of a sentence, which is the largest unit in grammar, is determined by the native speakers of a language.

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In this study, English sentences with both direct object and indirect objects and verb particles will be examined. Keeping to the English sentence structure, subject – verb – object, one can make six sentences using the same verb by moving around the object and the particle. Some of these combinations are accepted as grammatical while some are not. My concern, here, is to determine which combinations are acceptable and which are not by consulting the native speakers of English.

In English not all the verbs are expressed by only one word. There are multi-word verbs, which are combinations of a verb and one or more other words. As Greenbaum (1991:59) points out, a verb followed by one or more particles is the most frequent type of multi-word verbs. **Phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal-prepositional verbs** are the major types of the combinations. As phrasal-prepositional verbs have two particles following the verb, it is easier to distinguish between this one and the other two, which consist of a verb and one particle. That is, a phrasal verb consists of a verb and an adverb particle and a prepositional verb consists of a verb followed by a prepositional phrase.

1. Harry held up the traffic when his car broke down.
2. Harry ran up a hill.

The phrasal verbs in (1) have idiomatic meaning and this is considered to be a distinguishing feature of phrasal verbs.

If phrasal verbs that allow double object constructions are examined six different orderings can be identified.

3. a. Mel gave back the saxophone to Charlie.
s v part Od Cpp
- b. Mel gave the saxophone back to Charlie.
- c. Mel gave the saxophone to Charlie back.
4. a. Mel gave back Charlie the saxophone.
s v part Oi Od
- b. Mel gave Charlie back the saxophone.
- c. Mel gave Charlie the saxophone back.

There are two kinds of objects: direct object and indirect object, both of which a ditransitive verb requires.

The indirect object refers to a person or thing that an action is done to or for. The person generally receives something or benefits from something. The direct object refers to a person or thing directly affected by the action described in the sentence.

In kernel clauses indirect object normally precedes direct object (S P Oi Od).

5. He gave Mary the book.

S p Oi Od

Very often a ditransitive clause (such as in 5) is paraphrasable by one containing the preposition **to** or **for**. The ditransitive clause (5) can be paraphrased as follows:

6. He gave the book to Mary.

s v Od Cpp

When ditransitive verbs with a particle which in this case are ditransitive phrasal verbs are considered, more complex issues arise as the particle can also be moved around in the sentence. There are six versions of one sentence having the same ditransitive phrasal verb. In the first three sentences (3. a,b,c) the indirect object with the preposition follows the direct object. The particle of the verb moves around, takes the position before the direct object, after the direct object, before the indirect object and at the end of the sentence after the indirect object. In the other three sentences (4. a,b,c) the indirect object precedes the direct object, and the verb particle, as in the first three sentences, is placed in different positions.

Native speakers of English find constructions of type 3(c) unacceptable. The other five constructions vary in acceptability according to sentence meaning and situation (ei colloquial versus formal use).

This work illustrates that the sentence structure is developed around the grammar of syntax and grammar of focus.

Focus as described in Akmajian (1979:213) is "that portion of the semantic reading which is marked as prominent, in the sense that it represents 'novel' information". In general there are certain positions in a clause to place information that the speaker or writer wants to emphasise or make prominent or novel.

Methodology

Five native speakers of English are asked to mark the acceptability of the sentences which were constructed from ditransitive phrasal verbs. There are six different orderings of phrasal verb and the two objects. If they found the structure acceptable they used the mark (/) and if they thought it was unacceptable they marked (x). They were not asked to state the reason why they thought it acceptable or not. The sentences used in the experiment and the marks of the participants are attached (Appendix).

Results

As illustrated in Appendix 1, all the participants agreed that sentences of type 3 (c) were unacceptable.

3(c) Mel gave the saxophone to Charlie back.

And all the participants preferred the sentences of type 3(a) and 3(b).

3(a) Mel gave back the saxophone to Charlie.

3(b) Mel gave the saxophone back to Charlie.

As to the sentences of type 4(a), 4(b), and 4(c), some of the participants find them acceptable and some unacceptable.

Discussion

All the participants find the sentences of type 3(c) unacceptable. In order to account for the unacceptability of these types of sentences, in the first place, syntactic restrictions have to be considered. As stated above, either the direct object or the indirect object can follow the verb. If the direct object follows the verb then the indirect object is given in the prepositional phrase. So, there is no problem with the ordering of the objects.

As to the particles, since they can be either adverbs or prepositions, it is worth considering the rules that apply to the use of these parts of speech, by which the unacceptability is thought to be caused.

Adverbs are modifiers of verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. There are few restrictions on where an adverb can occur in a phrase but there is not any restriction about placing an adverb at the end of the phrase.

7. The father brought the children up.

8. She spoke quietly.

Prepositions prototypically precede complements. They can also be placed at the end of sentences. Prepositions can be left 'stranded' through the fronting of their complements. It generally happens to those which are short, frequent, and have grammatical uses that are most easily stranded (Huddleston 1984:338). Fronting, however, only occurs in special uses such as in relative clauses, interrogatives and etc.

9. Who did you go with?

10. Tell me who you spoke to.

So, how can one account for the particles in sentence type 3(c)?

The particle of the phrasal verb in 3(c) loses its adverbial nature to become part of the Cpp. Clauses of type 3(c) could be ungrammatical as the special conditions do not apply for placing the preposition at the end of the clause. The other reason could be that there is a pair of separate phrase (NP, PP) between the verb and the particle, which may cause complexity.

The particle in sentences of type 4(c) is an adverb. This type of sentence might be considered more acceptable because the particle as an adverb can occur more easily at the end of the sentence than it can when it functions as a preposition. The problem why some people reject sentences like 4(c) needs explanation. It could be explained in terms of the complexity and 'weight' of the combined object phrases. Hudson (1992: 259) states that particles tend not to follow a single

complex object, and adds that a pair of separate phrases is counted as more complex than a single phrase containing the same number of words. Thus, there is more of a semantic problem.

In order to account for the unacceptability of such sentences besides syntactic restrictions, the grammar of focus could also be considered.

Focus is placed on an element in a sentence that a speaker or writer wants to emphasise. In speech discourse it is marked with a higher stress. In written discourse it occurs on the final element of a sentence (Akmajian, 1979).

In clauses of type 3(c) and 4(c) the particle is in the final position which is the focal position. But the particle is not a new or novel information.

In both sentences of type 3(c) and 4(c) particle is not in a correct position. Sentences of type 3(c) do not need more explanation since they are unacceptable to all the participants, and the reasons why they might have counted them unacceptable are given. But some of the participants find sentences of type 4(c), where the particle is 'back', acceptable. As Hudson (1992) states 'back' could occur in the final position in ditransitive clauses and the intended information is given perfectly.

The other reason may be that, sentences of type 4(c) could be marked as acceptable if the particle is considered to form a union with the direct object. Then the focus is shared with a more appropriate constituent of the clause, so the clause becomes more logical, easier to understand and more acceptable than 3(c).

Sentences of type 4(a) and 4(b) are acceptable for some, and unacceptable for others. There are no syntactic restrictions to the structure of sentences of type 4(a) and 4(b). Many grammarians prefer the constructions where indirect object preceded the direct object and the particle can either precede the indirect or follow it. Thus there is no grammatical restriction. However, ditransitive clause constructions can be ambiguous in meaning.

11. She paid back Tom money.

(Is Tom an indirect object or modifier of money?)

12. Customs officials turned the police over the man.

(As if the action of turning the police is done over the man)

But this kind of ambiguity is not found in all the sentences of this kind, but still some people cannot receive the given information right away. The reason may be in the reading of the sentences. They might have tended to put the emphasis on the indirect object instead of the element in the focal end position.

As the particle modifies the meaning of the verb, the further away it is from the verb the less acceptable the sentence would be to the reader. One of the reasons for sentences of type 3(c) and 4(c) being unacceptable might be the position of the particle. If this hypothesis were correct, then constructions of type 3(a) and 4(a) should be most acceptable. There is no problem with constructions of type 3(a) as

all the participants marked it acceptable. Besides constructions of type 3(a), constructions of type 3(b) are equally marked acceptable by all the participants. Furthermore sentences of type 4(a) are not marked acceptable by all the participants. Thus, the data does not support the proposition.

Sentences of type 3(a) and 3(b) owe their acceptability to their Cpp constructions which make the information clearer by leaving the direct object alone on the left hand side of the sentence and embody the indirect object in Cpp.

As to the positions of the particles, 'when the particle combines with an object, it is generally possible to reverse the order of the two complements' (Huddleston, 1988:62)

13. Mel gave back the saxophone <to Charlie>

14. Mel gave the saxophone back <to Charlie>

The 'object' Huddleston refers to is a direct object, so there is no restriction of reversing the order of the complements. Therefore, sentence type 3(a) and 3(b) should be equally acceptable, as it is shown in the data. And there cannot be a problem of focus in these sentence types as it would not change the intended information of the sentences.

Conclusion

There is a strong tendency for using the sentences of type 3(a) and 3(b) in English when forming sentences with phrasal verbs and double objects. Since the particle and the preposition occur in the position of least focus, and the preposition preceding the indirect object aids in getting the correct information, sentence types 3(a) and 3(b) are preferred.

The sentences having particles in the position of most focal attention, without the opportunity to combine with another unit and share the sentence focus, are unacceptable to an English speaker.

References

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Appendix

A – Hand back

- 1.a. The teacher handed back the assignments to the students. / / / / /
 b. The teacher handed the assignments back to the students. / / / / /
 c. The teacher handed the assignments to the students back. x x x x x
- 2.a. The teacher handed back the students the assignments. x x x x /
 b. The teacher handed the students back the assignments. x x x / /
 c. The teacher handed the students the assignments back. x x x x /

B – Hand out

- 1.a. He handed out photocopies to the class. / / / / /
 b. He handed photocopies out to the class. / / / / /
 c. He handed photocopies to the class out. x x x x x
- 2.a. He handed out the class photocopies. x x x x /
 b. He handed the class out photocopies. x x x / /
 c. He handed the class photocopies out. x x x x x

C – Hand in

1. a. She handed in her resignation to the employer. / / / / /
 b. She handed her resignation in to the employer. / / / / /
 c. She handed her resignation to the employer in. x x x x x
- 2.a. She handed in the employer her resignation. x x x / /
 b. She handed the employer in her resignation. x x x x /
 c. She handed the employer her resignation in. x x x x x

D – Send back

- 1.a. Paul sent back the letter to Kim. / / / / /
 b. Paul sent the letter back to Kim. / / / / /
 c. Paul sent the letter to Kim back. x x x x x
- 2.a. Paul sent back Kim the letter. x x x / /
 b. Paul sent Kim back the letter. x x / / /
 c. Paul sent Kim the letter back. x x x / /

E – Send out

- 1.a. He sent out invitations to his friends. / / / / /
 b. He sent invitations out to his friends. / / / / /

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| c. He sent invitations to his friends out. | x x x x x |
| 2.a. He sent out his friends invitations. | x x x x / |
| b. He sent his friends out invitations. | x x x / / |
| c. He sent his friends invitations out. | x x x x x |
| F – Pay back | |
| 1.a. She paid back money to Tom. | / / / / / |
| b. She paid money back to Tom. | / / / / / |
| c. She paid money to Tom back. | x x x x x |
| 2.a. She paid back Tom money. | x x / / / |
| b. She paid Tom back money. | x x / / / |
| c. She paid Tom money back. | x x x / / |
| G – Deal out | |
| 1.a. He dealt out the cards to the players. | / / / / / |
| b. He dealt the cards out to the players. | / / / / / |
| c. He dealt the cards to the players out. | x x x x x |
| 2.a. He dealt out the players the cards. | x x x / / |
| b. He dealt the players out the cards. | x / / / / |
| c. He dealt the players the cards out. | x x x x x |
| H – Turn over | |
| 1.a. Customs officials turned over the man to the police. | / / / / / |
| b. Customs officials turned the man over to the police. | / / / / / |
| c. Customs officials turned the man to the police over. | x x x x x |
| 2.a. Customs officials turned over the police the man. | x x x x x |
| b. Customs officials turned the police over the man. | x x x x x |
| c. Customs officials turned the police the man over. | x x x x x |