

[ 研究ノート ]

## International Business Communication and the Place for Phrasal Verbs

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For the past few years, the writer has paid careful attention to the problem of phrasal verbs (or two- and three-word verbs), especially when used in international scenes. The fires of my long-cherished interest in the use of phrasal verbs were fed, when I heard Dr. John D. Pettit, Jr., the then Executive Director of ABC (the Association for Business Communication) supported our contention in his address at the 50th National Assembly of the Japan Business English Association (JBEA), held in Fukuoka in 1990, by saying as follows:

Because English usage is growing on this globe and because most who use it do so as a second language, let me mention some problems that many non-native English users have with the language. One of these problems is the two-word verb. Words such as *give away*, *calm down*, *blow out*, and such consist of a verb and a second word that produces a meaning quite different from the meanings the words have individually....

Another problem for non-native English speakers is culturally derived words. Most are slang expressions.... Similarly, words derived from sports, social affairs, work, and the like are difficult to understand.

In general we can say with some assurance that non-native English users will have difficulty with these problems. Thus, we should avoid them in our international communication efforts.

(Pettit, 1990)

Followings are the summaries of my oral presentations made at

various A B C meetings on the similar subject mentioed above. Paper I shows the writer's major view and the other papers(II-IV) supplement the writer's contention.

I New Zealand Presentation  
Ways and Means of Unifying Native and Non-native Communicators

A b s t r a c t

For the last ten years, from the standpoint of non-native English users, I have tried to set a standard of English usage in the form of a glossary or a dictionary incorporating examples of desirable English usage and showing principles for less use of the following:

- (1) two- and three-word verbs(phrasal verbs)of Anglo-Saxon origin,
- (2) idiomatic expressions derived from a unique cultural context,
- (3) a vocabulary used without serious considerations to others, and
- (4) cases of extraordinarily irregular grammar.

The Asia-Pacific Region presents a mixture of native and non-native English communication professionals, so that the place is best fitted for discussing the ways and means of unifying native and non-native English communicators.

1. English Learning Situation in Japan

Most Japanese, including college students, hardly need to depend on books written in English, thanks to the translation works of foreign literature which began in the Meiji era and Japan's miraculous economic success after being defeated in the Second World War.

We need not depend on English at all in Japan. We need not speak English even once a year, be it a white-collar worker or a housewife. You are never in trouble if you do not speak English at all. However, although there is hardly any chance to practice English in

our daily lives, advanced English skills are necessary to negotiate with foreign nationals, while there is usually only a little motivation to study English constantly.

Therefore, in Japan, learners of English suffer from the gap between ample learning opportunities and infrequent actual requirements.

They hardly have any chances to use English in their daily lives, yet when they need to use it, they are required to have an advanced level of proficiency.

## 2. What Kind of English Should We Learn ?

What kind of English should the non-native speakers of English try to learn? Should it be British or American English? Neither the British nor the Americans care to simplify their language and use simple English or Controlled English themselves. Instead, they can keep on using uncommon vocabulary or slang, thus confusing non-native speakers.

Non-native English speakers can hardly expect British and U.S. businessmen to employ plain English. However, all we have to do is ask what they mean if we find any difficult expressions during the conversation. The case would be much the same with Canadian English, Australian English, or New Zealand English. The nature of English used by non-native speakers is antithetic to that used by native speakers in that the former is Instrumental English.

## 3. Explanation of my Proposition

(1) Core English words and phrases, mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin, seem easy to remember, but are difficult to use. Take such phrasal verbs as "make out" or "turn down", for example. In fact, it is much easier for us foreigners to employ a word like "understand" or "reject" instead. Further, it is hard to tell what is "come up to" and what is "come up with".

(2) The British say "That's not cricket" in order to mean

“That’s not fair.” The Americans say “not getting to first base” to mean “not making a good start.” Such a figurative expression peculiar to British or American culture is unnecessary for international communication. English has become the commonly used language among the peoples of the non-English language countries, such as between a Japanese and a Singaporean.

(3) Vocabulary control should be exercised, so that we can appropriately choose words with specific meanings (usually “big words” of Latin origin) over idiomatic expressions.

(4) For grammar, some kinds of simplification may be considered, wherever necessary. I believe these efforts are important in providing a common ground for discussion among native and non-native English users.

(ABC, Hamilton, NZ., Dec. 1997)

## II Singapore Presentation

### Business English Reconsidered

#### A b s t r a c t

It is very likely that non-native English speakers take Business English (BE) as it is used in the U.S. or the U.K. I think, however, that we need to ascertain whether the usage is really good in conducting international business communication effectively.

Business English covers communication among native English speakers, English as a second language users, and non-native English users who use English as a foreign language. In international business communication, negotiations among those who use English as a second or foreign language require special attention or care, as the parties need to use English with no small attention.

Therefore, native English speakers should have the prudence not to

press their mother tongue on other English users. In my presentation, I'll deal with plain English, global English, and other movements that would help improve international business communication.

### 1. What is Business English (BE)?

To find a clue to the above question, I have gone over a few books such as Mark Ellis and Christine Johnson, *Teaching Business English*, Oxford Handbook of Language Teachers, Oxford University Press, 1994, Robert E. Barry, *Business English for the '90s*, Second Edition, Regents/Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1993, and David Whitehead and Geoffrey Whitehead, *English for Business*, Made Simple Books, Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd., Oxford, 1993.

As an example, I quote an introduction to business English, from the third book, as follows:

Business English is the language of the international business world. It is ordinary English, related particularly to business. Fluent business English requires us to have a wide vocabulary of general English words, and also the specialist vocabulary of the particular business activity (trade, transport, distribution, finance, insurance, law, etc.) in which we propose to specialize.

I feel the above explanation is much to the point, and I trust you will have no objection as far as this statement is concerned.

Then, how is Business English treated in the world of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)? Tom Hutchinson and Alan Warters (1987), *English for Specific Purposes, A learning-centred approach*, Cambridge University Press, page 19 shows the tree of ELT (English Language Teaching), in which English for Business and Economics is treated as a division of ESP; however, no further explanation has been given.

### 2. Recent Development in BE Studies

Recently, two important developments appeared in the field of Business English studies, which I will explain below.

(1) TOEIC Research Report

Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, which administer the famous TOEFL test as well as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) issued a Report on Business English, by Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John, University of Birmingham, UK, as TOEIC RESEARCH REPORT Number 2, July 1996.

In INTRODUCTION the report mentions "Business English is a rapidly growing field within the area of English Language Teaching and English for Specific Purposes. ... In this report we will attempt to define Business English. We will do this by reference to published research in the area and through the analysis of textbooks, aiming in particular at establishing the construct of Business English that informs these textbooks."

In conclusion, the report gives the definition of Business English as follows:

We see Business English as a branch of ESP in that it "requires the careful research and design of pedagogical materials and activities for an indefinable group of adult learners within a specific learning context" and is "designed to meet specific needs of the learner." Most definition of ESP use ESP as an umbrella term that embraces two key areas, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).

It (Business English) deals largely with adult learners either working or preparing to work in a business, but may also include academic Business English required by students following, for example, an MBA course or a course in Finance, Accounting or Banking. ... We therefore reject the tendency among some practitioners to use

the terms Business English to refer only to the more common-core, nonspecific work and to refer to the specific work as ESP.

(2) The Association for Business Communication (ABC)

The Role of The Association for Business Communication in Shaping Business Communication as an Academic Discipline

Kitty O. Locker, The Ohio State University, Columbus, U.S.A., mentions, in *The Journal of Business Communication*, Volume 35, Number 1, January 1998, pages 14-49, as follows:

In the last ten years, we in business communication, like our colleagues elsewhere in the academy, have pondered our disciplinary identity. --- Whether one judges business communication to be a "disciple" or merely a "field" depends on one's definition of disciplinarity. --- My analysis focuses on business communication as a discipline in U.S. universities.

The history of business communication pedagogy is the story of trying to pack more and more cognitive information and mastery of more and more genres of information into the same number of courses. --- Since there are no programs solely in business communication, we cannot create courses, majors, and doctoral programs simply by replicating our own educational experiences as can faculty in more well-established fields.

The author refers to the difficulties in establishing Business Communication as an independent discipline. The situation is not very much different from that in Japan. Further, she explains ABC's efforts in fostering interest in international communication, as in the following:

The removal of "American" from the Association's name in 1985 was a major step toward becoming a truly international organization. In 1995, the Board passed an option enabling the creation of three additional international regions -- Margaret McLauren, Asia and the Pacific; Lillian Sanchez, Carrebean, Central and South America; Hilikka Yli-Jokipii, Europe.

Therefore, the first regional meeting in Hamilton, New Zealand, 1997, and the second regional meeting in Singapore, 1998.

### 3. English for International Business Communication

From the foregoing statements, you may have noticed Business English and Business Communication (in/through English) may interchangeably be used. I make no practical difference in using the two words.

Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Jack C. Richards · John Platt · Heidi Platt, Longman, 1992 defines "English as an International Language" as "the role of English as a language of international communication" and gives an example of English for Negotiation between a Brazilian businessman and a Japanese businessman.

In my opinion, however, the example is not appropriate. Rather, the negotiation between a Brazilian and a Briton, or a Japanese and an American, should be raised. And the Brazilian or the Japanese in question should not try to use British English or American English. Moreover, the Briton or the American should try to follow International English principles, avoiding usages peculiar to each culture and words and idioms unfamiliar to the non-native speakers of English.

In this connection, I have long contended that we should establish



principles for less use of the following:

- (a) two- and three- word verbs (phrasal verbs) of Anglo-Saxon origin
- (b) idiomatic expressions derived from a unique cultural context
- (c) a difficult vocabulary used without serious consideration
- (d) cases of extraordinarily irregular grammar

Such efforts, I believe, are necessary to provide a common ground for discussion between native and non-native English users. The Asia and the Pacific region is most conveniently situated to discuss the above contention of mine, since the area includes those whose language is English as a first language (Australia, New Zealand, etc.), and English as a second language (India, Singapore, Hong Kong, etc.), and English as a non-native language (Japan, China, etc.). I hope our region will take up this important issue. Later this year, I will publish an English book under the title of "International Business Communication -- Problems and Proposals."

(ABC, Singapore, Sept. 1998)

### III San Antonio Presentation

#### Is Plain English Really "Plain"?

##### 1. Introduction

In 1994 and 1995 ABC Conventions there was no presentation dealing with Plain English. In 1996, however, two articles have appeared:

1. A Plain Language Study: Do New Zealand Citizens Get Accessible Consumer Legislation? By Jacqueline Harrison and Margaret C. McLaren
2. Effects of Candid vs Lawyer-Proof Language on Budgeting Decisions

By Thomas Clark, Cincinnati, OH

In 1997 papers concerning Plain English were as many as six:

1. Introducing the Plain Language Process to Business Communication  
By Janet Dean and Cherry Stephens, BC, Canada
2. Plain English and the SEC cf. A Plain English Handbook by SEC  
By William Lutz, NJ and Nancy Smith, Washington, DC
3. The Plain English Revival: Financial Documents  
By Gretchen N. Vik, San Diego
4. Plain English in Government Agencies  
By Susan D. Kleimann, Washington, DC, et al.
5. Implementing Plain English: Not As Easy As It Seems  
By Barbara Shwom and Penny Hirsch, Evanston IL
6. The Plain Language Movement: The Roles of ABC, APCC, and IDC.  
BY Susan D. Kleimann, Washington, DC, et al.

They explore the roles researchers, academics, and consultants might play in the movement toward using plain language in business writing.

This year we are going to have six presentations on the field:

1. Into Plain English: A Pilot Test for New Zealand Tax Legislation  
By MCLAREN, HARRISON
2. Is Plain English Really "Plain"?  
By HASHIMOTO (myself)
3. Plain English for Bank Contracts in New Zealand: An Idea Whose Time Has Come  
By CAMPBELL
4. What Does the Presidential Memo on Plain Language Really

Mean?

By KLEIMANN

5. How Business Can Benefit from Plain English

By WILD

6. The Critical Role of Testing in Plain Language Initiatives

By KLEIMANN

Whatever the targets of other presentations may be, I'd like to shed some light on the plainness of Plain English. I feel that more emphasis should be laid on this problem because Plain English should be 'plain' by its very nature. So the point is how plain is Plain English compared to other means of communication.

2. Plain English Defined.

*The Plain English Approach to Business Writing*, Edward P. Bailey, Jr., Revised Edition, 1997, in Chapter 2, Style: a readable sentence, pp. 9-24, suggests that for writing the way you talk,

- Use ordinary words.
- Use a variety of punctuations.
- Use contractions.

advise	tell
assist	help
commence	begin
furnish	give
prior to	before

For using ordinary words, the author suggests that instead of using the words from left-hand side above, use the words from the right-hand side.

But, how can we recognize "what is a difficult word?" and

“what is a plain word?”? That’s a difficult question.

### 3. Avoid Overusing Phrasal Verbs

As a non-native English teacher I have long contended that in international business communication, we should avoid the overuse of the following:

1. two- and three-word verbs (phrasal verbs) of Anglo-Saxon origin,
2. idiomatic expressions derived from a unique cultural context,
3. a vocabulary used without serious consideration to others, and
4. cases of extraordinarily irregular grammar.

In this connection, Dr. John D. Pettit, Jr. mentioned in his address to the Japan Business English Association, in 1990, as follows:

Words such as *give away*, *calm down*, *blow out*, and such consist of a verb and a second word that produces a meaning quite different from the meanings the words have individually. And compare the changes: *cut off*, *cut out*, *cut down*, etc.

I know that Plain English is chiefly meant for newer nationals, as well as avoiding legalese or bureaucratese, but if other thoughts such as the above are taken into consideration, there would be more plain English in future.

### 4. Some More New Aspects

Recent publications such as David Crystal’s *English as a global language* (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Rachel McAlpine’s *Global English for Global Business* draws our interest, and I expect some more new aspects will appear.

## IV Los Angeles Presentation

### The Place for Phrasal Verbs

## Proposal

Last year, I spoke on Plain English and found that interpretations differ on the word Plain English itself from country to country. So, this year, I'll try to define these differences, although rather dogmatically, then proceed to one of my original contentions that phrasal verbs at times hinder smooth communication, especially in international scenes. I'll conclude that if native speakers are to be successful communicators, they should avoid the overuse of phrasal verbs such as *make out* and *come up to* or *come up with*.

last year, I talked on the subject *Is Plain English Really 'Plain'?* and contended that phrasal verbs at times hinder smooth communication. Maybe, I was not smart enough in presenting my contention to the audience, since many of them seemed to be particular about the contents of the word "plain English" itself.

Here, I would rather dogmatically analyze what plain English is, with the feeling that its interpretations are different country by country. For example, in the U.K. plain English is to write simply and concisely, avoiding officialese and legalese. In the U.S.A. the survival English for immigrants is included, as they need to learn day-to-day English in which phrasal verbs are no exceptions to survive.

What about in Australia and New Zealand? I think in those countries emphasis is more laid on avoiding officialese and legalese. Singapore and Hong Kong, where English is a second language, may be practically the same as in the above two English-speaking countries. In the case of China and Japan, where English is a foreign language, the situations are more or less similar to the U.K.

On these understandings, I'll elaborate again whether phrasal verbs

(two- and three-word verbs) have their proper place in international business communication. From the standpoint of non-native English users as well as in international (business) communication, native English speakers should restrictively use phrasal verbs such as *make out* and *come up* to or *come up with*, instead of *understand* and *equal* or *think of*.

In my presentation, I'll show a list of phrasal verbs which the writer has selected from Chamber's Pocket Guide to Phrasal Verbs, 1982.

#### Closing Remarks

*Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics* (1992) gives the following definition of phrasal verbs:

a verbal construction consisting of a verb plus an ADVERB PARTICLE. A distinction may be made between phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal prepositional verbs, according to the different grammatical patterns in which they occur. For example:

	phrasal verb	prepositional verb
Particle can occur after the object	<u>Turn</u> the light <u>off</u> .	Particle (*I'll <u>apply</u> the job <u>for</u> .) cannot occur after the object
Short pronouns occur between	<u>Turn</u> it <u>off</u> . (* <u>Turn off</u> it.)	Pronouns I'll <u>apply</u> for it. occur after (*I'll <u>apply</u> it for.) the verb+ particle

the verb  
and the  
particle

( An asterisk indicates a case of irregular grammar. )

A phrasal-prepositional verb consists of a verb, an adverb particle, and a PREPOSITION:

We must *cut down on* expenses.

They *put* their failure *down to* bad advice.

The meaning of some of these verbal constructions can be guessed from the meanings of their parts (e.g. *cut down on*). But the meaning of others is idiomatic (e.g. *put down to*). Nowadays, the term "phrasal verb" is often used to include phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, and phrasal-prepositional verbs. see also IDIOM  
*Further reading Quirk et al 1985*

Grammatically, some phrasal-prepositional verbs such as "put down to" are difficult to understand because we cannot guess from the meanings of the parts -- e.g. idiomatic,

In this connection, *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* to accompany COBUILD is useful. However, in International Business Communication, certain idiomatic phrasal verbs which are not well known should, no doubt, be sparingly used by native-English users.

Appendix

CHAMBERS POCKET GUIDE TO PHRASAL VERBS TO  
ACCOMPANY CHAMBERS UNIVERSAL LEARNERS' DICTIONARY  
Edited by George W. Davidson and published by Federal  
Publications, U.K., 1982. Japanese edition by Hirota Norio,

Hokuseido, Tokyo, 1989.

I. Phrasal (two-word) verbs whose meanings are not clear to nonnative English users (the writer's selection)

abbreviations used

colloq. colloquial expression

trans. transitive (verb) intrans. intransitive (verb)

separable two- or three-word verb whose composing words can be used separately (emphasizing) must separate

unseparable such a verb whose composing words cannot be used separately like a single word

add up (colloq.) intrans.

EX: I don't understand his behavior--it just don't add up.

bail out trans. separable

EX: They won't allow you to bail out someone accused of murder.

bargain for trans. unseparable (usually in negative sentences)

EX: I didn't bargain for everyone arriving at once.

credit ... with trans. must separate

EX: I don't credit her with much intelligence.

cry off (colloq.) trans.

EX: After promising to come to the party she cried off at the last minute.

dip into trans. unseparable

EX: I've been dipping into my savings quite a lot recently.

egg on (colloq.) separable

EX: She egged him on to apply for a better job.

fall through intrans.

EX: We had planned to go to Paris, but the plan fell through.

get accros (colloq.) intrans.

EX: This is something rarely get across to the general public.



help out (colloq.) intrans. meaning 'help temporarily'

EX : I don't mind helping out in the shop from time to time.

make out trans. separable

EX : Can you make out what he's trying to say?

plow back trans. separable

EX : He made a profit last year, but plowed it back so that he could buy more machinery.

reckon on formal [upon] trans. unseparable

EX : I am reckoning on meeting him tonight.

rule out trans. separable

EX : You mustn't rule out the possibility of bad weather.

run across (colloq.) trans. unseparable (incidentally meet a person)

EX : I ran across an old friend.

run off trans. separable

EX : He run off 500 copies of the President's speech.

run through trans. unseparable

EX : He ran through the names on the list.

salt away (colloq.) trans. separable

EX : He has a pile of money salted away.

score off trans. unseparable cf. gain an advantage over

EX : He's always scoring off his wife in public.

set about trans. unseparable meaning 'begin'

EX : She set about planning her holiday.

set in intrans.

EX : Winter has set in early.

set on [upon] trans. unseparable (usually in passive voice)

EX : He set on [attacked] me in the dark.

trade in trans. separable

EX : We decided to trade in our old car and get a new one.

turn down trans. separable

EX : He turned down her offer [request] .

visit with trans. unseparable American usage

EX : She is visiting with her family.

vouch for trans. unseparable

EX : I can vouch for his honesty.

wade in (colloq.) intrans. meaning 'attack fiercely,

EX : He waded in at her for her clumsiness.

II Three-word verbs difficult to understand their proper meaning  
(the writer's selection)

average out at trans. unseparable

EX : His car's petrol consumption averaged out at ten liters  
a week.

catch up (with) intrans.

EX : We waited for him to catch up with us.

check up on trans. separable

EX : We have been checking up on him.

come up to trans. unseparable

EX : This piece of work doesn't come up to your usual high  
standard.

come up with trans. unseparable

EX : He's come up with a new great idea.

crack down on trans. unseparable meaning 'to  
take severe measures'

EX : The police are cracking down on vandals in this area.

date back to trans. unseparable =date from

EX : Their quarrel dates back to last year.

do away with trans. unseparable

EX : They did away with uniforms at that school years ago.

face up to trans. unseparable

EX : He faced up to his difficult situation.

fall back on (colloq.) trans. unseparable =as a last resort

EX : Whatever happens, you have your father's money to fall  
back on.

fall in with trans. unseparable

EX : On the way home we fell in with some friends.

gang up on (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX: The manager felt that the younger members of staff were ganging up on him.

get around (round) to (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX: I don't know when I'll get around to (painting) the door.

get away with trans. unseparable meaning 'not punished'

EX: Murder is a serious crime and one rarely gets away with it.

get down to trans. unseparable

EX: I must get down to work tonight, as I've got exams next week.

get in with (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX: He's trying to get in with the boss in order to get a pay raise.

get on to trans. unseparable

EX: You must get on to the airline at once to see if your flight has been delayed.

get up to trans.. unseparable

EX: So far I've got up to page sixty.

get around with (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX: I don't like the group of friends you're going around with.

go down with (colloq.) trans. unseparable =fall ill

EX: He has gone down with flu.

go in for trans. unseparable

EX: I'm not going for the 1000 meter race.

go on at (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX: Her mother went on at her for coming home late after the dance.

go through with trans. unseparable

EX: I'm going to go through with this in spite of what you say.

grow out of trans. unseparable

EX : He has grown out of that coat.

hammer away at (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX : We'll hammer away at this until we get it solved.

hold out on (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX : He says he know nothing about it, but I think he's  
holding out on us.

keep in with (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX : It's a good idea to keep in with the police in case you  
need their help one day.

keep out of trans. unseparable

EX : I tried to keep out of the argument, as it was none of  
my business.

lead up to trans. unseparable

EX : We studied the events leading up to the Second World  
War.

live it up (colloq.) intrans. unseparable meaning 'carefree'

EX : He started to live it up after he got out of college.

live up to trans. unseparable

EX : He found it difficult to live up to the reputation of  
bing a hero.

Look down on trans. unseparable

EX : She has always looked down on us for not having a car.

look forward to trans. unseparable

EX : I am looking forward to seeing you.

look up to trans. unseparable

EX : He has always looked up to his father.

make up for trans. unseparable

EX : This will make up for all the occasions when you've lost.

make up to trans. unseparable

EX : She's always making up to the teacher by bringing him  
presents.

open on to trans. unseparable

EX : Our front door opens on to the street--we have no front

garden.

put up with trans. unseparable

EX : I cannot put up with all this noise.

rub off on trans. unseparable

EX : I guess some of your wisdom rubbed off on me.

send away for trans. unseparable meaning 'by mail/by post'

EX : I've sent away for some things that I saw in the catalog.

settle up with trans. unseparable

EX : We shall settle up with the travel agent tomorrow.

stick out for (colloq.) trans. unseparable British usage

EX : The men are sticking out for a five percent pay rise.

stick up for (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX : When my father is angry with me, my mother always sticks up for me.

take up with (colloq.) trans. unseparable

EX : She has taken up with very strange people.

talk down to trans. unseparable

EX : Children dislike being talked down to.

wait up (for) trans. unseparable

EX : I'll be late, so don't wait up for me.

walk away with trans. unseparable

EX : Of course you will win — you'll walk away with all the prizes.