



ISSN: 2617-6548

URL: www.ijirss.com



A deeper understanding of the syntactic behavior of phrasal verbs

 Mohammad Awad Al-Shunnag¹,  Wasan Khalid Ahmed²,  Emad Abedalaziz Alwreika^{3*},  Abdullah Alhammaideh⁴,  Marwan Harb Alqaryouti⁵

¹Department of English, University of Petra, Amman, Jordan.

²Faculty of Islamic Sciences, University of Fallujah, Iraq.

^{3,4,5}Faculty of Arts, Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan.

Corresponding author: Emad Abedalaziz Alwreika (Email: eahwreikat@zu.edu.jo)

Abstract

The present paper examines the syntactic features of phrasal verbs among EFL students. The main objectives of conducting this study are to recognize those syntactic features associated with language acquisition and to review the syntactic structures of these phrasal verbs. In doing so, it is designed as a descriptive case study of this phenomenon within its context. In particular, the study examines how these phrasal verbs are arranged, and it presents a full description of these features. The analysis revealed that the syntactic features of phrasal verbs are difficult to comprehend for second language learners due to the various categories related to their structure, especially the separable/inseparable category. To conclude, there are many syntactic criteria based on which PVs can be categorized in terms of structure; this includes transitive/intransitive and separable/inseparable. Also, this paper highlights the distinction between phrasal verbs and prepositional phrasal verbs. Thus, all students should acquire at least an open awareness, enabling them to comprehend the PVs they encounter in spoken and non-spoken texts. Students who want to be proficient language users must be able to produce at least the more general PV combinations in a meaningful manner. Finally, this paper proposes that, as lexical items, phrasal verbs are certainly one of the greatest problematic challenges in language acquisition.

Keywords: Language acquisition, Lexical items, Phrasal verbs, Separable phrasal verbs, Syntactic features, Transitive phrasal verbs.

DOI: 10.53894/ijirss.v8i3.7750

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

History: Received: 23 April 2025 / **Revised:** 27 May 2025 / **Accepted:** 28 May 2025 / **Published:** 11 June 2025

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Publisher: Innovative Research Publishing

1. Introduction

One of the most significant objectives in phraseology is to explore phrasal verbs. Their syntactic and semantic features should be examined separately, and an extensive examination of their features is required because they are a multi-word system that requires consideration that is so different from other phraseological targets [1-4].

Furthermore, a new field of study on PV teaching and learning has emerged as a result of considering PV teaching and learning as a dynamic process that is essential to learning EFL or ESL. Although phrasal verbs were formerly extremely uncommon, academics have begun investigating phraseology from the syntactic-semantic characteristics that learners experience during the learning process [5].

2. Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal Verbs are described as a lexical sequence of a verb in addition to a particle [6]. Many names have been employed to describe this specific language form, including 'separable verbs,' 'two-word verbs,' and 'verb-particle groupings' [7-11]. Nevertheless, the phrase "phrasal verb" would be employed in this research since this definition is one that scholars of this language most frequently use [12-14]. Phrasal verbs are a broad notion used in reference materials, training, and education settings (textbooks, dictionaries, course books).

Also, phrasal verbs encompass a wide range of connotations and objectives. Gardner and Davies [13] realized that the most often used English phrasal verbs have an average of 5.6 meaning senses. Phrasal verbs entail literal, idiomatic, or figurative meanings. However, some evidence suggests that learners of second languages have more difficulty with metaphorical phrasal verbs than with literal ones [14].

Moreover, these senses frequently cannot be transferred by a distinct word correspondent or might transmit meanings that their single-word equivalent does not represent. Speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills may all be improved with basic and useful knowledge and expertise in phrasal verbs [15, 16]. Since PVs are two-word verbs (work out, make up, and get away), learners consider every part individually. For instance, they attempt to guess the meanings of "look" and the connotation of "after." This can lead to confusion. Additionally, the context in which students use English phrasal verbs has not been sufficiently considered. Some English language teachers consistently use techniques that emphasize memorizing and acquiring phrasal verbs without providing the correct context [17, 18].

However, phrasal verbs may be seen as odd for some students whose L1 requires one such structure. Due to their structural uniqueness (some PVs provide particle movement, whereas some do not) and semantic challenges (some PVs are exceptionally idiomatic and opaque), they are mostly challenging to learn and subject to avoidance [19]. Phrasal verbs may exist in a learner's L1, but due to their idiomatic purpose, phrasal verbs in the L1 and the L2 are unlikely to have a consistent relationship. Therefore, the language transfer will only have a limited impact on learning phrasal verbs. When linked correspondence between languages occurs, it typically confounds L2 learners and leads to errors [20].

Nevertheless, the idiomatic setting of phrasal verbs establishes a difficult field for both learners of EFL. Foreign Language learners should have an appropriate understanding of idioms concerning their true senses and cultural relations. Idioms are challenging and hard to acquire [21, 22]. This may be attributed to various causes. Some problems are related to idioms' non-literal interpretations, their strange word groupings, or, to a lesser extent, their restrictive word order. Additional influences could be identified; for instance, the inadequacy of instructional methods applied in this field, the incompetence of the standards of textual occurrence, learners' lack of cultural integration, and the foreign cultural context in which English is learned [23].

Much research has been carried out on PVs [7, 11-14, 24, 25]. However, challenges with phrasal verb descriptions have been explained in previous research, primarily regarding the particle's structural status in phrasal verb structure: whether a particle should be an adverbial particle (e.g., away, out, over) such as in throw away, get out, take over, or whether it can also comprise prepositions (e.g., on, at, against) such as in stay on, look at, run against.

Moreover, the "more functional" definition of PVs provided by Gardner and Davies [13] will be adopted as it is relevant to and suitable for the goal of the current study, which is to describe PVs for language learners.

Although LV and preposition (PRP) are referred to as a prepositional verb, many academics use the term "phrasal verb" to describe the combination of a lexical verb (LV) and adverb particle (AVP) [7, 26]. There are other combinations (such as rush into, look into) where the location of into is not exact, even though it is clear that the cluster of LV + PRP (e.g., look at, go to) belongs to the prepositional verb group. For example, rush into and look into might function as both a prepositional particle (PRPrt) in PV and PRP in a prepositional verb.

Besides, a PV consists of a particle and a verb. Various academics have given this structure a variety of names, including particle verbs, composite verbal expressions, discontinuous verbs, compound verbs, complicated verbs, verb-particle formations, and multi-word verbs etc. [27, 28] and they have also been characterized differently by several academics [29].

While some academics have classified PVs as the conjunction of a head verb with one or more required particles, including intransitive prepositions, adjectives, or verbs, Claridge [29], for instance, classifies PVs as a subset of multi-word verbs [30]. According to Liao and Fukuya [14], a PV is commonly described as a structure consisting of a verb and a morphologically constant particle that functions like an individual lexical and syntactic unit. Idiomatic combinations that involve a verb and any number of particles that serve as a single lexico-grammatical unit are examples of alternative meanings [27, 31, 32].

Furthermore, the coherence of the verb and its particles serves as an overall description of phrasal verbs in these explanations. Also, the precise description of the combined structure of phrasal verbs, many features could be practical to specific contexts, but the entire phrasal verb:

- (1) A number of the PVs are polysemous, e.g., *makeup* has around eight implications [30, 33].
- (2) PV patterns may have an elastic or secured structure and be transitive, intransitive, or ditransitive.
- (3) The occurrence of the particle may be ignored, *wake up* or *get up*.
- (4) Their interpretations might vary between literal, metaphorical, or idiomatic; for instance, "*stand up*" donates both the meaning of "*raise from the position of sitting or lying*" and "*a thought is verified to be right*."

3. Syntactic Features of Phrasal Verbs

Investigating phrasal verbs is one of the most significant objectives in phraseology. They are a multi-word system that needs consideration, so diverse from other phraseological targets; their syntactic and semantic features should be examined independently, and a detailed investigation of their features must be conducted [1-4].

According to Quirk et al. [26], PV functions as an individual verb or is syntactically considered a lexical verb tailed by a morphologically constant component. Particles may include prepositions like (against, among, as, at, beside, for, from, into, and on top) spatial adverbs like (aback, ahead, apart, aside, astray, away, back) and prepositional adverbs like (about, above, across, after, down, in, off, out) [5]. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34] syntactic structures of phrasal verbs in different types, such as transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs, need prepositions and the separability of PVs.

Comparable to single-word items, PVs can be either transitive or intransitive. Students filling in an agreement form is an example of a transitive phrasal verb that accepts an object. The object was the phrasal verb filled in with heads. Similarly, some phrasal verbs (intransitive) do not necessitate an object, such as the plane took off. In this situation, the phrasal verb took off and served as an example of an intransitive verb that does not call for an object. The second category of PV based on the syntactic structure is the group of PVs that require prepositions, Choorit and Phoocharoensil [5]. Quirk et al. [26] addressed them as PPVs and suggested that "the presence of a one-word paraphrase is a typical indicator of idiomatic status" (p. 1160). For instance, the phrasal verbs involve put up, look up, and do away with. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34] introduced another type of PV: the separability of PVs.

The direct object can sometimes be inserted between separable phrasal verbs, but it cannot always be between inseparable phrasal verbs; that is a distinguishing syntactic characteristic of transitive PVs. However, as Choorit and Phoocharoensil [5] mentioned, separation is necessary when the direct object is a pronoun. Quirk et al. [26] summarized grammatical patterns of PVs as "verb \pm direct object \pm adverb \pm preposition". Syntactically, PVs have been categorized into three categories that include:

A V+ADV forms PVs, as "My grandfather has been taken in by the greedy salesman"(cheated).

PVs are constructed through verbs and prepositions, as in "the girl set about creating a new costume" (began).

Phrasal prepositional verbs include both a verb and an adverbial particle. For example, "We cannot put up with her; she is constantly grumpy" (tolerate) [35].

Accordingly, these blends may be quantified as a "collection of expressions" encompassing two or above words merged in a component that commonly has a certain sense as a whole, according to Beaugrande et al. [36]. They are justly steady, secure, and convenient in contrast to open groupings. Phrasal verbs (PVs) are syntactic kinds that perform similarly to single-word verbs in clauses, with the potential exception that the verb and the adverbial particle might be separated. The prepositional verb similarly discards the separation of the particle, "I looked after his son / him," but not "I looked his son / him after." The final statement is inappropriate in English.

Mainly, a new research area in the teaching and learning of phrasal verbs (PVs) is a consequence of observing the teaching and learning of PVs as a dynamic process necessary for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). Hence, researchers have started to examine phraseology from the syntactic-semantic aspects that learners undergo while learning phrasal verbs, which have been scarce in the past [5].

4. Types of Phrasal Units

Given that Bolinger [37] asserts that "being or not being a phrasal verb is a matter of degree," Darwin and Gray [12] classification of PVs may be a complex matter. Scholars must agree on a description. Subsequently, they must begin from an identical point. Therefore, avoid using an imprecise grouping procedure. To conclude, Quirk et al. [26] explanation has been employed as the criterion. These scholars have identified two primary categories of phrasal verbs based on their idiomatic meanings: "semi-idiomatic" and "highly idiomatic" constructions [26, 38].

Since there is "no option of contrastive substitution: bring up / down; come by / past / through; turn up / down; etc.," phrasal verbs such as bring up, come by, and turn up are classified as "highly idiomatic" PVs. The second set is referred to as semi-idiomatic. It includes irregular but more constrained structures like the phrasal verbs find out (realize), cut up (slice into parts), and slacken off (reduce force), where the connotation of the verb is preserved; nevertheless, the sense of the particle is more difficult to distinguish (p. 1162).

Furthermore, non-idiomatic structures such as "bring in/out," "take in/out," "walk up/down," and "run up/down" are not considered multi-word verbs since their distinctive meanings are evident from their consistent use in possible alternatives (p. 1162), indicating that they are free groupings rather than phrasal verbs. However, as it concerns this research, the researcher will use non-idiomatic structures and classify them as literal phrasal verbs based on Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34] classification of phrasal verbs.

Transitive and intransitive phrasal verbs are among the several kinds of phrasal verbs. According to Coghill and Stacy [39] transitive PVs fall into separable and inseparable categories.

4.1. Intransitive Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs that do not have a direct object upon which the verb operates are known as intransitive verbs. For example:
She woke up late after 11:00 AM.

When can I come over to your house?

They are going back to the same place next week.

4.2. Transitive Phrasal Verbs

In transitive PVs, a direct object is included [34]. They may be inseparable or separate. The verb and the preposition may be separated when the phrasal verb (PV) is separable, placing the object in the center of the phrase. Since the preposition and verb should always be together, the object must appear at the end of the sentence when the PV is inseparable. In this context, PVs occur in two forms, which include the following:

4.3. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

One particular form of PV does not tolerate separation. This suggests that the whole PV should frequently be followed when inserting an object. This is correct whether we use pronouns like him, them, and us or a noun like Rama, the vehicle, our friends, and Jordan. The following examples show that the object should often accompany the entire PV:

We ran into Halla in the park = (vb + particle = noun)

We ran into her in the park = (vb + particle = pronoun)

Once a phrasal verb is inseparable, a noun or a pronoun always occurs after the particle in the occurrence. Incorrect: We ran Halla into the park.

4.4. Separable Phrasal Verbs

If certain phrasal verbs are used with objects, they might be separated. This demonstrates that there is an option. Similar to how separable verbs are employed, an object can be positioned at the end of the sentence or between the verb and the preposition. So there is something important to keep in mind! The phrasal verb should be separated if a pronoun like him, her, them, or us is employed, as seen in the examples below:

Because of weather, they put off our journey = (vb + particle + NOUN)

Because of weather, they put our journey off = (vb + NOUN + particle)

Because of weather, they put it off = (vb + PRONOUN + particle)

A pronoun object is positioned between the verb and the particle when a phrasal verb is separable. Incorrect: Because of the weather, they put it off. It is also important to remember that a phrasal verb should not be separated if the object is long. In these situations, separating phrasal verbs is not structurally incorrect; nonetheless, as the following examples demonstrate, it becomes increasingly clear to the hearer if phrasal verbs are not separated:

Obvious: Would you please give him the car? He needs to pick up his friend from the camp at the station.

Ambiguous: Would you please give him the car? He needs to pick up his friend from the camp at the station.

According to Declerk [40], three main categories of PV formations depend on whether the verb combines with a particle, a preposition, or both. These consist of the following:

4.5. Prepositional Phrasal Verbs (Verb + Preposition)

The PV is a prepositional phrase (PPV) whenever the component comprises a preposition, meaning it is the head of a complete PPV. The tail following the PV can likewise be considered transitive and non-separable.

Is the nanny looking after the boys? Afterward, a preposition was used to present the PP after the boys.

The neighbors picked on everybody. Using on as a preposition occurred to present the PP to everybody.

She ran into her old colleague. Using it as a preposition occurred to present the PP to an old colleague.

4.6. Particle Phrasal Verbs (Verb + Particle)

Since the construct does not accept a complement, it cannot be interpreted as a preposition but rather as a particle. Both transitive and intransitive verbs can be used with these. The following examples show that they are separable since they are transitive verbs.

The committee brought that up two times. The utilization of up at this point as a particle cannot be interpreted as a preposition.

Let us think it over. The use of over at this point as a particle cannot be interpreted as a preposition.

He told us that we should not give in immediately. The utilization of in at this point as a particle cannot be interpreted as a preposition.

4.7. Particle Prepositional Phrasal Verbs (Verb + Particle + Preposition)

This category has various PVs that join using a particle and a preposition.

I would like to know who can put up with that. The utilization of up at this point occurred as a particle and with is a preposition.

After the game finishes, we look forward to resting. The utilization of forward at this point occurred as a particle and as a preposition.

The other tanks were bearing down on my panther. The utilization of down at this point occurred as a particle and as a preposition.

Simultaneously, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34] maintain that separable phrasal verbs can be classified into two comprehensive groups based on how the particle and verb are separated. They are known as optional and obligatory separations.

4.8. Optional PV Separation

If using a direct object to separate the particle from the verb is an option, then this type of separation is optional. As demonstrated by the examples below, both are accurate constructs with the same meaning.

Rama throws out my ball. The utilization of the particle out in the PV throw-out is not separated from the verb.
Rama threw my ball out. The utilization of the particle out in the PV throw-out is separated from the verb.

4.9. Obligatory PV Separation

As seen in the subsequent instances, if the direct object is a pronoun, this form of separation is obligatory:

Halla tossed it away. The particle tossed away is not separated from the verb. The (direct) object is a pronoun, so it should be separated from the verb, making it inappropriate.

Halla tossed it away. The utilization is accurate because the particle tossed away is separated from the verb.

4.10. The Distinction between PVS and PPVs

Hageman and Guéron [41] state that PVs and PPVs are distinguished based on certain criteria. PVs and PPVs have been discussed as PPVs since they have the same structure. However, they act fairly inversely regarding syntactic-semantic properties Rovira Diaz [42]. This is another way PV differs from a prepositional verb, which is a verb-preposition combination. For example, call (up) is a PV, whereas calling (on) is a combination of a verb and a preposition, as represented in the succeeding examples:

The particle is stressed: They called up their neighbor, but not *They called on their neighbor.

The particle can be shifted to the final position: They called their neighbor up, but not * They called their neighbor on.

The simple verb could not be separated from the particle with an adverb: * They called early up their neighbor is no good, but They called early on their neighbor is fine.

Hence, the researcher would like to highlight that although diverse scholars and researchers may have many views on the functions and learning of PVs, all researchers agree that learning PVs should be based on language syntactic and semantic aspects. In the same way, EFL learning that is considered effective and meaningful to its learners has to be related to the competent employment of phraseology, in which learners can process the phrases syntactically and semantically.

5. Phrasal Verbs' Test

Bolinger [37] created a set of requirements to prove that verb and particle combinations are PVs in an attempt to define PVs completely.

5.1. Replaceability

To determine if a verb and a particle combination is a phrasal verb (PV), the most popular phrasal verb test is to examine if a single-word verb can substitute the phrasal verb. For example, the expressions "count out," which means "reject"; "look into," which means "investigate"; "egg on," which means "provoke"; "go around," which means "avoid"; and so on. It is possible to debate how many phrasal verbs lack expression counterparts. For example, the phrase "take over" means "to control," "show off" means "to draw notice," and "pay off" means "to be profitable" [37].

Further, despite comprising a single-expression equivalent, there are situations where these equivalents do not contain precisely the same sense as the phrasal verbs and can possess varied meanings and collocational limitations. For instance, the phrasal verb "involve sleep in" does not only refer to the phrase "stay in bed" but also to staying in bed after your usual rising time; "put up with" cannot be used productively, but "stand" can; the phrasal verb "take after" is commonly related to family associates; nevertheless, its single-word corresponding, "similarity," may be utilized in a less precise context. These kinds of tests, however, are not always consistent when used to determine if that combination of a verb and particle is a phrasal verb. Additionally, Bolinger [37] example of the phrase "look into," which signifies "investigate," contradicts his phrasal verb object movement test. This type of test makes it obvious that looking into and examining cannot be categorized as phrasal verbs since object movement is impossible. For instance;

They look into the difficulty.

* They will look into the difficulty.

5.2. Passive' Formation

Passive formation is Bolinger [37] second suggested phrasal verb test (1971; p.7). He states that transitive PVs could be changed into passive, which he discussed employing the following instances;

We gossiped about her.

She was gossiped about.

Therefore, it could be discussed that in using [37] object movement test, the instances explained in the previous sections do not denote the class of PVs, in which the particle relates to a preposition and object movement is difficult:

We gossiped about her.

Though this kind of test is certainly factual for the most common phrasal verbs' transitivity, according to Darwin and Gray [12], several transitive phrasal verbs do not have passive tenses, such as:

He came across a few history books in the attic.

* A few history books appeared in the attic [12].

Therefore, this passivation test is not ideal because it does not apply to all phrasal verbs.

5.3. Action Nominal Formation

Formation of action nominal is Bolinger [37] third suggested phrasal verb test (1971). This text can result from transitive phrasal verbs. For instance;

He looked up the proof.

He looks up the proof [37].

Therefore, as Bolinger [37] affirms, this promotes an unacceptable test since the difficulties in uses as per in the sentence;

The running up of the mountain was a subject of a few minutes, during which the combination was free [37]

Fraser [7] also extends the test and clarifies that action nominal phrasal verbs do not enable the separation of the verb and particle, such as in the example.

*The tossing of food up, whereas free combinations allow such separation, such as in the tossing of a football up [7].

Furthermore, "some transitive combinations that most would consider phrasal verbs do not form acceptable action nominals," according to Darwin and Gray [12]. These combinations exemplify employing the following instances:

We came across a prehistoric vessel.

*The coming across of a prehistoric vessel [12].

5.4. Object Movement

Object movement is the fourth phrasal verb test Bolinger [37] suggested. It is related to the procedure where transitive phrasal verbs, the particle, can be used before or after the direct object. For illustration:

Shadi looked up at his photo.

Shadi looked at his photo [37].

However, it is not a perfect phrasal verb test when the object of a transitive phrasal verb moves before or after the direct object. For instance, Darwin and Gray [12] point out that object movement might change the meaning, making it unreliable as a phrasal verbs test. As in the following examples:

Why don't they run down the document? (Analysis).

Why don't they run the document down? (Discover) [12].

5.5. Pronoun Placement

Bolinger [37] stressed the importance of the fifth phrasal verb test, which looks at pronoun placement. According to this test, direct-object pronouns often occur before the particle if the arrangement is transitive. For instance:

They are putting him on

*They are putting on him [37].

5.6. Adverbial Insertion

The sixth criterion Bolinger [37] suggests using to identify phrasal verbs from other arrangements is the introduction of an adverb. The test shows that phrasal verbs do not permit the insertion of adverbs between the verb proper and the particle. For illustration:

He is scared they will discover these pupils are increasingly dropping out.

* He is scared they will discover these pupils are dropping out increasingly [37].

The majority of phrasal verbs will pass this test, although Darwin and Gray [12] assert that there are certain exceptions, citing Fraser [7] as one such example, whereas this test can be doubted.

The excavation caved speedily in [7].

Remarkably, while this instance rapidly appears uncertain, accurate, possibly introduced amongst the verb proper and the particle as per in;

The excavation caved right in.

This is an additional stimulating instance that may require extra analysis.

5.7. Stress

Stress is the seventh test originated by Bolinger [37] that examines stress, as it supports differentiating AVPs in phrasal verbs, for instance, look up from pure prepositions, look at. Conversely, Bolinger [37] reiterates the fact that this test excludes some words since they are periodically stressed to draw attention to them or to contrast them with other words, such as the examples.

What is he looking up, no

What is he looking at?" [37]

A related viewpoint is expressed by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34]; they assert that the final syllable of PVs (the particle) and the final syllable of certain single-word verbs will take on some stress, as explained in the subsequent instance: The single-word verb (conSUME) is phrasal (use up) [34].

The claim is that stress is especially beneficial for discriminating between particles and prepositions since prepositions do not receive stress, as seen by the following examples: We walked to the school [34].

The stress in adverbs, however, cannot be concentrated since they continue to take stress forms comparable to those of phrasal verbs as illustrated in the examples, according to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman [34], who point out that this test is unsuccessful in representing the free combinations of verb and adverb;
The crane went up [34].

Therefore, stress is not a faultless phrasal verb test and does not appear to be particularly practical, especially for language learners.

5.8. *Definite Noun Phrases*

This is another phrasal verbs test. It intends to investigate behavior with certain noun phrases. According to Bolinger [37] this test is a variation of the object movement test that highlights the particle's ability to "precede a simple definite noun phrase (a proper name or the plus a common noun) without assuming it as its object" [37]. For example,
She left out the award.

He worries about taking on Shadi in the coming competition [37].

Darwin and Gray [12] point out that although the test appears accurate in separating particles from adverbial adjuncts, the findings are less apparent when separating particles from prepositions. They provided examples of the phrases "look up the term" and "focus on the term," in which definite noun phrases control both; nonetheless, only "look up" is a phrasal verb, and "focus on" is a prepositional verb.

5.9. *Listing*

Bolinger [37] suggests describing phrasal verbs by simply listing them. However, he points out that this method has two shortcomings. First off, when it comes to English lexical modernizations, phrasal verbs are extremely creative. Consequently, since new phrasal verbs would constantly be added, the list would never be comprehensive. In fact, "it would differ depending on accent" poses a second challenge [37]. For instance, the British and Americans realize that a few of each other's phrasal verbs are strange [12].

Bolinger [37] proposed that since particles are a rather closed category of words, listing them would be the most helpful approach. This suggests that PVs should be classified together, given that the particle weight is greater than the verb since the particle is essential to the phrasal verb's sense and, in certain situations, does so more strongly than the verb Side [24]. Darwin and Gray [12] disagree, arguing that listing is not a test. Some phrases are particles and additional speech components (prepositions, nouns).

Consequently, Fraser [7] investigation demonstrates that simple words function as particles, contrary to Bolinger [37] unlimited list of particles (p. 4). Adverbial particles were also observed by Gardner and Davies [13] as part of their examination of PVs in a native speakers' corpus (p. 346). On the other hand, adverbial particles (AVP) and prepositional particles (PRPrt) are included in the much longer and more thorough list of around 48 particles produced by the Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs. This expanded scope denotes a pragmatic lexicographical judgment of PVs, considering language learners' needs rather than verbal ones [43-46].

Despite all the insufficiencies in the tests suggested by Bolinger [37], as argued earlier, these tests are certainly very valuable and improve our comprehension of the principles of phrasal verbs. However, the previous argument has revealed that the mentioned tests of PVs defined are not a completely inclusive test collection to demonstrate that an (LV + Prt) arrangement is unquestionably a phrasal verb, because transitive rather than intransitive phrasal verbs find them more comfortable.

Out of the nine suggested tests, only three listing, stress, and replacement, are suitable for intransitive phrasal verbs, according to Darwin and Gray [12], and practically any free arrangement can permit the test. As a result, Darwin and Gray [12] propose a different system for categorizing phrasal verbs. They decided that removing it from the phrasal verb class would be preferable to adding it. Thus, they adopted this approach, which assumes that unless shown otherwise, every arrangement is a PV.

Until the opposite can be confirmed, scholars should regard all verb + particle combinations as possible phrasal verbs rather than eliminating them from the verb + particle categorization until it is shown that they fit in. Researchers should make it their career to discard information rather than incorporate it [12, 47].

Considering this, Darwin and Gray [12] concluded that a seven-test group was employed to reject any (LV + Prt) arrangements of the PV class. They contend that the "bottom-up" method enables us to understand the presentation before determining whether or not the (LV + Prt) combination qualifies as a phrasal verb. However, this approach to documenting phrasal verbs has also drawn criticism since it may exclude combinations that support teaching these structures rather than broaden the range of possible phrasal verbs [48].

In this regard, their assertion that the original classification will alleviate the issues that learners have with the curriculum [48] and establish an unlimited improvement in ESL [48] was also interrogated by Sheen [49]. To the extent that this research is involved, no precise test will be used to determine whether a given arrangement qualifies as a phrasal verb.

Table 1.
Bolinger [37] Phrasal Verbs' Tests.

Test	Characteristics	Example
Replaceability	To see whether PV can be substituted with a distinct phrase verb	Count out = Reject
Passives' Formation	Transitive PVs could be changed into passive	We gossiped about her. She was gossiped about.
Action Nominal Formation	The text can result from transitive phrasal verbs.	She looked up the evidence. She looked up of the evidence
Object Movement	For transitive phrasal verbs, the particle can be substituted prior to or following the direct object.	I looked up at my friends. I looked up my friends
Pronoun Placement	If the PV is transitive, direct-object pronouns often occur before the particle.	Aziz's putting him on! * Aziz's putting on him!
Adverbial Insertion	The introduction of an adverb between the verb proper and the particle	He is scared they will discover these pupils are increasingly dropping out. * He is scared they will discover these pupils dropping out increasingly
Stress	It supports differentiating AVPs in phrasal verbs	look UP (PV) LOOK at (Prep)
Definite Noun Phrases	The capability of the particle to come before an ordinary definite noun phrase without using it as an object	We left out the title.
Listing	Listing PVs in a closed class of words	The Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs

6. Conclusion

The unique syntactic structure of phrasal verbs, as well as the difficulties they present for EFL learners, has been highlighted by this study. Based on the analysis, phrasal verbs' diverse syntactic patterns particularly with regard to separability and transitivity are a major factor in their difficulty in acquisition. Comprehending the difference between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs is crucial for learners seeking to attain advanced language skills. Consequently, enhanced syntactic awareness and focused teaching techniques are essential for aiding learners in the mastery of these multi-word verbs. This study posits that phrasal verbs are structurally varied and semantically complex, rendering them a challenging yet vital aspect of English language learning. Future studies may investigate instructional methods that might improve learners' proficiency in understanding and utilizing phrasal verbs across diverse settings.

References

- [1] L. Grant and L. Bauer, "Criteria for re-defining idioms: Are we barking up the wrong tree?," *Applied Linguistics*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 38-61, 2004.
- [2] A. Minalla, "Sudanese efl undergraduates challenges towards understanding idiomatic english phrasal verbs," *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, vol. 8, no. 9, pp. 19990-19994, 2017.
- [3] M. Yildiz, "A cross-linguistic inquiry into the potential reasons for the avoidance of English phrasal verbs: The case of Turkish and Norwegian EFL learners," *The Linguistic Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 124-140, 2016.
- [4] N. Schmitt and S. Redwood, *Learner knowledge of phrasal verbs: A corpus-informed study* (A taste for corpora: In honour of Sylviane Granger). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011.
- [5] K. Choorit and S. Phoocharoensil, "A corpus-based study of phrasal verbs: Carry out, find out, and point out," *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, vol. 3, no. 7, pp. 73-88, 2014.
- [6] J. Holtrup, *Phrasal and prepositional verbs: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- [7] B. Fraser, *The verb-particle combination in English*. New York: Academic Press, 1976.
- [8] A. K. Taha, *An analysis and dictionary of two-word verbs in English*. Kuwait: Kuwait University, 1972.
- [9] P. Meyer, "The English language: a problem for the non-Anglo-Saxon scientific community," *British Medical Journal*, vol. 2, no. 5970, p. 553, 1975.
- [10] S. Hunston and G. Francis, *Pattern grammar: A corpus-driven approach to the lexical grammar of English*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999.
- [11] A. Siyanova and N. Schmitt, "Native and nonnative use of multi-word vs. one-word verbs," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, vol. 45, no. 2, pp. 119-139, 2007.
- [12] C. M. Darwin and L. S. Gray, "Going after the phrasal verb: An alternative approach to classification," *Tesol Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 65-83, 2012.
- [13] D. Gardner and M. Davies, "Pointing out frequent phrasal verbs: A corpus-based analysis," *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 339-359, 2007.
- [14] Y. Liao and Y. J. Fukuya, "Avoidance of phrasal verbs: The case of Chinese learners of English," *Language Learning*, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 193-226, 2004.
- [15] E. Alwreikat and K. Yunus, "Phrasal verbs avoidance among jordanian efl university students," *Educational Research (IJMCR)*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 263-271, 2022.

- [16] R. F. Alhasan, I. F. Huwari, M. H. Alqaryouti, A. E. Sadeq, A. A. Alkhalidi, and K. A. Alruzzi, "Confronting English speaking anxiety: A qualitative study of Jordanian Undergraduates at Zarqa University," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, vol. 15, no. 6, pp. 1782-1790, 2024.
- [17] Q.-K. Fu, C.-J. Lin, G.-J. Hwang, and L. Zhang, "Impacts of a mind mapping-based contextual gaming approach on EFL students' writing performance, learning perceptions and generative uses in an English course," *Computers & Education*, vol. 137, pp. 59-77, 2019.
- [18] R. Spring, "Teaching phrasal verbs more efficiently: Using corpus studies and cognitive linguistics to create a particle list," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 121-135, 2018.
- [19] M. Garnier and N. Schmitt, "Picking up polysemous phrasal verbs: How many do learners know and what facilitates this knowledge?," *System*, vol. 59, pp. 29-44, 2016.
- [20] T.-p. Chan and H.-C. Liou, "Effects of web-based concordancing instruction on EFL students' learning of verb-noun collocations," *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 231-251, 2005.
- [21] M. F. Teng, "The effect of focus on form and focus on forms instruction on the acquisition of phrasal verbs by Chinese students," *Asian EFL Journal*, vol. 20, no. 6, pp. 145-173, 2018.
- [22] B. J. White, "A conceptual approach to the instruction of phrasal verbs," *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 96, no. 3, pp. 419-438, 2012.
- [23] A. Alrishan and O. Smadi, "Difficulties EFL Jordanian university students encounter in translating English idioms into Arabic," *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 6, no. 10, pp. 124-133, 2015.
- [24] R. Side, "Phrasal verbs: Sorting them out," *ELT Journal*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 144-152, 1990.
- [25] A. Cornell, "Realistic goals in teaching and learning phrasal verbs," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, vol. 23, pp. 269-280, 1985.
- [26] R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech, and J. Svartvik, *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. UK: Longman Group UK Limited, 1985.
- [27] E. W. Schneider, "How to trace structural nativization: Particle verbs in world Englishes," *World Englishes*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 227-249, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0883-2919.2004.00348.x>
- [28] L. C. Lam, "Conceptual fluency in second language learning: Chinese ESL learners' production of OUT and UP particles in English verb particle constructions," Ph.D. Dissertation. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 2003.
- [29] C. Claridge, *Multi-word verbs in early modern English: A corpus-based study* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.
- [30] A. Villavicencio and A. Copestake, "Verb-particle constructions in a computational grammar of English," in *Proceedings of HPSG 2002, Seoul, Korea*, 2003.
- [31] E. A. Alwreikat and K. B. Yunus, "Conventional errors in employing English prepositions in the written work of EFL Jordanian students," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 488-496, 2020.
- [32] S. A. Al Nasarat, "The dilemma of learning phrasal verbs among EFL learners," *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 119-125, 2018.
- [33] A. Al-Qudah, "Acquisition of some selected phrasal verbs by English major undergraduates at Yarmouk University in Jordan," *Um Al-Qura University Journal of Language and Literature*, vol. 7, pp. 10-75, 2012.
- [34] M. Celce-Murcia and D. Larsen-Freeman, *The grammar book: An ESL / EFL teacher's course*, 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle, 1999.
- [35] J. Courtney, *Phrasal verbs and their meanings*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983.
- [36] R. Beaugrande, A. Shunnaq, and M. Heliel, *Language and translation in the West and the middle east*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1994.
- [37] D. Bolinger, "The nominal in the progressive," *Linguistic Inquiry*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 246-250, 1971.
- [38] A. Mahmoud, "Under-representation of phrasal verbs in EFL university students' free writing," *International Journal of English and Education*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 261-268, 2015.
- [39] J. Coghill and M. Stacy, *English grammar*. New York: University Press, 2003.
- [40] R. Declerk, *The grammar of the English verb phrase: The Grammar of the English tense system*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006.
- [41] L. Hageman and J. Guéron, *English grammar: A generative perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- [42] M. Rovira Diaz, "The acquisition of phrasal verbs by Catalan learners of English: Preference for one-word verbs rather than two-word combinations," Ph.D. Dissertation. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain, 2017.
- [43] T. Lehecka, *Collocation and colligation*. In J.-O. Östman & J. Verschueren (Eds.), *Handbook of Pragmatics Online*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins, 2015.
- [44] J. I. Lontas, "Vivid phrasal idioms and the lexical-image continuum," *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 71-109, 2002.
- [45] D. Mansour, "Using COCA to foster students' use of English collocations in academic writing," in *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Higher Education Advances*. Valencia, Spain, 2017.
- [46] F. E. A. J. M. Shareef, "A study of the difficulties of using phrasal verbs among EFL learners in secondary level," Doctoral Dissertation, Sudan University of Science and Technology, 2018.
- [47] I. F. Huwari, S. Erkir, A. A. Alkhalidi, and I. Royani, "Analysis of endophoric reference in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland," *Forum Linguisticum Studies*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 1-13, 2024.
- [48] J. H. Sawyer, "Comments on clayton m. darwin and loreta s. gray's" going after the phrasal verb: An alternative approach to classification". a reader reacts," *Tesol Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 151-159, 2000.
- [49] R. Sheen, *Phrasal verbs and their acquisition: Investigating the role of semantic transparency*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.