

EXPLORING PECULIARITIES OF PHRASAL VERBS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Yuliia Bozhko

PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
the Department of General and Applied Linguistics,
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University
(61022, Kharkiv, 4 Svoboda Square);
e-mail: Ualeksandrovnova08@gmail.com;
orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7235-0670>

The relevance of the paper lies in its examination of phrasal verbs as a complex linguistic phenomenon, essential for proficient English fluency, given their syntactic unpredictability, semantic variability, and cross-linguistic differences that hinder non-native learners. The purpose of the article is to explore the peculiarities and role of phrasal verbs in learning English, analyzing their syntactic and semantic variability, as well as the challenges they create for speakers of other languages.

The article employs several research methods, including: descriptive analysis to highlight the syntactic, semantic, and idiomatic complexities of phrasal verbs; a context-oriented approach to determine the effectiveness of teaching phrasal verbs through real-life situations, dialogues, and authentic materials; a comparative method to compare phrasal verbs with their formal synonyms to outline their role in spoken and written communication; linguistic analysis to study the structure and meaning variations of phrasal verbs, illustrating their syntactic unpredictability.

The research results have shown that phrasal verbs are particularly challenging due to their figurative meanings and the differences in syntactic structures across languages. For instance, learners' first languages influence how they understand and use phrasal verbs in English. Some languages lack equivalent constructions, making direct translation ineffective and leading to mistakes in comprehension and reproduction. Teachers often employ visual aids, role-playing, and real-life scenarios to enhance the learning process.

Context-oriented learning, where phrasal verbs are introduced through dialogues and authentic materials, has proven effective in helping students grasp their meanings and usage.

The conclusions state that phrasal verbs are an important and at the same time complex aspect of English. The article suggests that future research should focus on developing more effective teaching strategies, as well as studying the use of phrasal verbs in modern digital communication.

Keywords: *context-based learning, phrasal verbs, semantic variability, syntactic complexity, teaching strategies.*

Statement of the Problem. The acquisition of phrasal verbs in English is widely recognized as one of the most challenging aspects of learning the language, especially for non-native speakers. Phrasal verbs, which consist of a verb combined with one or more particles (such as prepositions or adverbs), often do not follow logical patterns, making their meaning difficult to deduce. This syntactic and semantic complexity poses significant barriers to learners. In addition to their structural complexity, phrasal verbs are frequently idiomatic, which means their meaning cannot always be understood from the individual meanings of their components. This problem is particularly pronounced in contexts where speakers aim for high proficiency in both formal and informal English communication. As phrasal verbs are pervasive in both spoken and written forms of the language, their role in everyday communication, academic discourse, and even professional settings makes mastering them essential. Despite this, their non-literal meanings and the variety of syntactic rules associated with them make them a particularly difficult and frustrating aspect of language acquisition.

The problem, therefore, lies not only in the challenge of learning individual phrasal verbs, but also in developing strategies for effective instruction. How can teachers ensure that learners not only understand the various meanings of phrasal verbs, but also use them correctly in different contexts? How can we help students appreciate the nuanced, sometimes figurative, meanings of phrasal verbs without feeling overwhelmed by their sheer number? The solution to these challenges may lie in a deeper understanding of the ways phrasal verbs function, both linguistically and culturally, as well as the development of pedagogical techniques tailored to the needs of learners. Addressing these questions is of paramount importance for improving learners' fluency and communication skills.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Over the years, a substantial body of literature has emerged to explore various aspects of phrasal verbs, from their syntactic features to their acquisition by second language learners. Researchers have examined phrasal verbs from different perspectives, and several key studies have contributed to a deeper understanding of their role in language acquisition. This literature review will examine the most influential studies published

from 2000 onward, highlighting key findings and offering insights into how phrasal verbs can be effectively taught and learned.

J.M. Swales' [9] influential work in the field of English for academic purposes (EAP) highlighted the importance of phrasal verbs in academic and professional communication. While phrasal verbs are more often associated with informal language, they also appear in academic texts, particularly in passive constructions or within research discussions. For example, phrases like "*set out*" (to begin an activity) and "*bring up*" (to introduce a topic) are commonly found in academic writing. Swales emphasized the need for EAP learners to understand and use phrasal verbs appropriately, particularly in oral presentations as well as written communication.

A.P. Cowie and R. Mackin [4] focused on the pragmatic functions of phrasal verbs, noting that they often serve as discourse markers in conversational English. For instance, expressions like "*give in*", "*hold on*", and "*take off*" are not only used in their literal senses but also convey a wide range of meanings depending on the context. These expressions can be used to organize discourse, mark changes in topic, or indicate shifts in the speaker's stance or attitude. The study highlighted the importance of teaching phrasal verbs within the broader context of communicative competence, as they help learners navigate conversations more effectively.

M. Benson, E. Benson, & R. Ilson's [2] research provided a comprehensive analysis of the syntactic properties of phrasal verbs, emphasizing the role of prepositions and particles in determining their meaning. For example, in phrasal verbs such as "*run out of*" (to deplete a supply), "*put off*" (to delay), and "*break up*" (to end a relationship), the choice of particle is crucial in shaping the meaning of the verb. Benson's work has been instrumental in helping teachers understand how phrasal verbs can be classified based on their syntactic behaviour – whether they are separable or inseparable – and how learners can be trained to recognize these distinctions.

S. Thornbury's [10] work is widely regarded for its contribution to the understanding of the difficulties learners face when acquiring phrasal verbs. He attributes these challenges to the multi-word nature of phrasal verbs, which makes them more complex than single-word verbs. In addition, many phrasal verbs are idiomatic, meaning their meanings cannot be deduced from the individual words that make them up. For instance, the verb "*turn down*" means to reject or refuse, while

“*pick up*” can mean to collect or to improve. Thornbury’s research suggests that the key to mastering phrasal verbs lies in exposure to them in context, through both written texts and spoken discourse.

P. Liao and Y. Fukuya [6] examined how Chinese-speaking learners of English acquire phrasal verbs. Their study found that learners face difficulties distinguishing between separable and inseparable phrasal verbs, especially when the placement of the object can vary. For example, in the sentence “*I’ll pick you up at 7 PM*” (separable), the object “*you*” can be placed between the verb “*pick*” and the particle “*up*”. However, in sentences like “*He ran out of gas*”, the object “*gas*” cannot be moved. The study concluded that these syntactic differences pose challenges for learners and suggested that explicit instruction on these patterns can improve learners’ understanding.

N. Jiang’s [5] research focused on the impact of a learner’s first language (L1) on their acquisition of English phrasal verbs. His findings revealed that learners who speak languages without equivalent structures (e.g., Chinese, Russian) struggle more with understanding and producing phrasal verbs. The L1 interference becomes particularly evident when learners attempt to translate phrasal verbs directly into their own language. For example, the phrasal verb “*pick up*” may be confusing to Chinese learners, as Mandarin does not have a direct equivalent for this expression in the same context. Jiang’s work highlighted the importance of understanding the cross-linguistic differences that influence the acquisition of phrasal verbs.

M. Celce-Murcia and D. Larsen-Freeman [3] discussed the role of phrasal verbs in communicative language teaching (CLT). They emphasized that language learners can benefit from seeing phrasal verbs in meaningful communicative contexts. Using dialogues, role-plays, and real-life examples, teachers can help students learn how phrasal verbs are used naturally in conversation. This approach encourages learners to focus on meaning rather than merely memorizing individual expressions, allowing them to use phrasal verbs more effectively in communication.

N. Nesselhauf’s [7] study on the acquisition of phrasal verbs by learners of English as a foreign language revealed that learners often overuse certain phrasal verbs in place of more formal or accurate synonyms. For example, learners might use “*bring up*” instead of “*raise*” in formal academic writing. Nesselhauf’s work underlined the need for learners to distinguish between phrasal verbs and their more

formal equivalents, which would help them adjust their language use to different registers and contexts.

M. Baker's [1] work focused on the challenges of translating phrasal verbs into other languages. Since many phrasal verbs are idiomatic, they can be difficult to translate directly. Expressions like "*check out*" (to examine) or "*take over*" (to control) often require learners to understand the cultural context in which they are used. Baker's research highlighted the importance of teaching phrasal verbs in context and using translation strategies that account for their idiomatic nature.

A. Siyanova-Chanturia and R. Martinez's [8] research focused on the acquisition of idiomatic expressions, including phrasal verbs, by second language learners. Their study found that learners often misinterpret the meaning of phrasal verbs because they focus too heavily on the literal meanings of the individual words. Siyanova-Chanturia recommended using context-rich activities and teaching strategies to help learners understand the figurative meanings of phrasal verbs.

The relevance of the paper lies in its examination of phrasal verbs as a critical yet challenging component of English fluency, given their syntactic unpredictability, semantic variability, and cross-linguistic differences that hinder non-native learners.

The purpose of the paper is to explore the complexity and significance of phrasal verbs in the process of English language acquisition. Specifically, the article aims to analyze the role of phrasal verbs in spoken and written English, their syntactic and semantic features, and the challenges they present for learners. It also aims to investigate the pedagogical strategies that can be used to help learners acquire phrasal verbs effectively. Furthermore, this article examines the importance of understanding the nuances of phrasal verbs in terms of their cultural implications and their integration into communication. As phrasal verbs are often key to achieving fluency in English, particularly in informal and spoken language, the article will emphasize their importance in enhancing overall language proficiency.

The article employs several **research methods**, including: a descriptive analysis to describe the syntactic, semantic, and idiomatic complexities of phrasal verbs; a context-based learning approach to highlight the effectiveness of teaching phrasal verbs through real-life contexts, dialogues, and authentic materials; a comparative method to contrast phrasal verbs with their formal synonyms to emphasize their

role in spoken and written communication; a linguistic analysis to examine the structure and meaning variations of phrasal verbs, illustrating their syntactic unpredictability.

Presentation of the main material of the study. Phrasal verbs represent a significant challenge for second language learners, primarily because of their intricate syntactic structure, semantic variability, and idiomatic nature. These expressions, consisting of a verb combined with one or more particles (either prepositions or adverbs), do not always adhere to logical, rule-based patterns, making their meaning difficult for learners to deduce. This linguistic feature creates a fundamental barrier to learning for many non-native speakers, as phrasal verbs often convey meanings that are not directly linked to the meanings of their constituent parts. For instance, the expression “*pick up*” has several meanings depending on the context: it can literally mean “to lift something”, as in “*I will pick up the box*”, but it can also mean “to acquire knowledge or a skill”, as in “*She picked up Spanish quickly*”, or “to improve”, as in “*The weather picked up after the storm*”. The versatility of these expressions, where one form can take on multiple meanings, introduces a layer of complexity, that may lead to confusion for learners who attempt to understand phrasal verbs from their literal interpretations alone. It is this semantic elasticity, or “dual meaning”, that is one of the primary sources of difficulties in comprehension and usage, even for learners with an advanced level of English proficiency.

Additionally, learners may struggle with phrasal verbs due to their syntactic unpredictability. Phrasal verbs can be categorized into separable and inseparable types, each with specific rules about object placement. For example, “*pick up*” can be used in a separable manner (“Pick it up”) or an inseparable manner (“She picked up on the clue”). The placement of the object of the verb varies depending on whether the verb is separable or inseparable, adding an additional layer of difficulty for learners. This syntactic variation complicates the learning process because learners must not only memorize the verb itself, but also its potential variations in terms of word order and structure. Thus, the complexity of phrasal verbs is not limited to their meaning but also extends to their structure as well.

In addition to the inherent difficulty of phrasal verbs, their role in everyday communication further complicates the acquisition process. Phrasal verbs are pervasive in spoken English and often appear in informal and conversational settings, which can be confusing for

learners who may be more familiar with formal or written English. The use of phrasal verbs in speech reflects the casual, dynamic nature of spoken language, where more straightforward synonyms, often of Latin or French origin, may be used in formal writing. For example, the verb “*bring up*” (meaning to introduce a topic in conversation) is often replaced with “*introduce*” in academic or professional contexts. The discrepancy between spoken and written usage adds another layer of complexity for learners, who must adapt their understanding and use of phrasal verbs to various contexts.

However, research has shown that teaching phrasal verbs in context, such as through real-life conversations or exposure to authentic materials, is one of the most effective strategies for helping learners internalize their meanings and usage. By encountering phrasal verbs in context, students are able to understand the nuances of their meanings and the ways in which they are used in real communication. For instance, through the analysis of dialogues or transcripts where speakers use phrasal verbs like “*get along*” (to have a good relationship), “*break up*” (to end a relationship), and “*take off*” (to become successful or to leave suddenly), learners can better grasp how these expressions function in specific situations. For example, “*get along*” may be used when two people have an amicable relationship, as in “*They get along well with each other,*” whereas “*break up*” is typically used in the context of relationships or partnerships that are ending, as in “*They broke up after two years of dating*”. By observing and practising these phrasal verbs in a variety of situations, learners can understand the full range of their meanings and applications.

Furthermore, exposure to phrasal verbs in diverse registers – ranging from formal written texts to informal spoken interactions – ensures that learners acquire a well-rounded understanding of their use. This dual approach allows students to see how phrasal verbs are used in both casual conversations and more formal settings, thus giving them the flexibility to use these expressions correctly and appropriately in different contexts. For example, phrasal verbs such as “*take off*” can mean “to remove something” in a literal sense (as in “*She took off her shoes*”) or “to become successful” in a figurative sense (as in “*The business really took off after their marketing campaign*”). The ability to recognize these distinctions in meaning is essential for achieving fluency and accuracy in both written and spoken English. By incorporating these expressions into both oral and written activities,

learners develop a deeper appreciation for how phrasal verbs can help them communicate more naturally, confidently, and effectively across a range of situations.

Moreover, phrasal verbs can also serve as crucial tools for understanding the sociocultural dimensions of language. Since phrasal verbs are frequently used in colloquial speech, they reflect cultural norms, social dynamics, and communication practices. Mastering these expressions can also provide learners with greater insight into English-speaking cultures, as phrasal verbs are often linked to cultural references, idiomatic usage, and historical influences. For example, phrases such as “*look up to*” (to admire or respect someone) or “*pick up on*” (to notice something subtle) carry connotations and cultural nuances that are not always immediately clear to learners. By teaching these expressions in context, language instructors can help students gain not only linguistic competence but also a deeper cultural understanding of the English language.

Conclusions. In conclusion, phrasal verbs represent a complex but indispensable feature of the English language that learners must master in order to communicate effectively and with confidence. Despite their syntactic complexity, semantic fluidity, and idiomatic nature, phrasal verbs are essential for achieving fluency in both spoken and written English. They play a significant role in communication, especially in informal and conversational English, where their prevalence makes them an integral part of effective interaction. In order to overcome the challenges associated with phrasal verbs, learners must go beyond memorizing individual expressions and focus on developing a more comprehensive understanding of their meaning and usage.

Research has shown that context-based learning is the most effective way to acquire phrasal verbs. By seeing these expressions used in context, learners are able to recognize the different meanings of phrasal verbs and understand how to apply them in various scenarios. Through consistent practice and exposure to phrasal verbs in authentic materials, learners can internalize the syntactic and semantic patterns associated with them. Moreover, learners should be encouraged to engage with phrasal verbs through interactive activities, role-plays, and dialogues, which allow them to practice using these expressions in realistic settings.

Additionally, learners should be made aware of the cultural and contextual significance of phrasal verbs, as these expressions often

carry subtle meanings that reflect societal attitudes, values, and norms. By understanding how phrasal verbs are used in different contexts, learners can more effectively navigate various social settings, from casual conversations to professional interactions.

Ultimately, by adopting a systematic and context-rich approach to teaching and learning phrasal verbs, learners can successfully integrate these expressions into their linguistic repertoire, enhancing their ability to communicate fluently and accurately in both informal and formal contexts. Through exposure, practice, and contextual understanding, learners gain greater confidence in using phrasal verbs naturally and appropriately, leading to a more authentic and nuanced command of the English language.

Perspectives for further research. Future research should prioritize bridging the gap between theoretical insights and classroom practice. Collaborations between linguists, educators, and technologists could yield innovative tools and frameworks to address the persistent challenges learners face. Additionally, expanding the scope of studies to include under-researched populations (e.g., heritage speakers, low-literacy learners) would provide a more inclusive understanding of phrasal verb acquisition.

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ФРАЗОВІ ДІЄСЛОВА В ОПАНУВАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Юлія Божко

канд. філол. наук, доцентка кафедри загального та прикладного мовознавства

Харківського національного університету імені В.Н. Каразіна

(61022, Харків, майдан Свободи, 4);

e-mail: Ualeksandrovnova08@gmail.com;

orcid: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7235-0670>

Актуальність статті полягає в тому, що в ній розглядаються фразові дієслова як складне мовне явище, важливе для вільного володіння англійською мовою, зважаючи на їхню синтаксичну непередбачуваність, семантичну варіативність та міжмовні відмінності, які заважають учням, для яких англійська мова не є рідною. Метою статті є дослідження особливостей та ролі фразових дієслів у вивченні англійської мови, аналіз їхньої синтаксичної та семантичної варіативності, а також труднощів, які вони створюють для носіїв інших мов.

У статті використані методи описового аналізу для висвітлення синтаксичних, семантичних та ідіоматичних складнощів фразових дієслів; контекстно-орієнтований підхід для визначення ефективності викладання фразових дієслів через реальні ситуації, діалоги та автентичні матеріали; порівняльний – для зіставлення фразових дієслів з їхніми формальними синонімами з метою окреслення їхньої ролі в усному та писемному мовленні; лінгвістичного аналізу – для вивчення структури та варіацій значення фразових дієслів, що ілюструє їхню синтаксичну непередбачуваність.

Результати дослідження показали, що фразові дієслова є особливо складними через їхні переносні значення та відмінності в синтаксичних структурах різних мов. Наприклад, перша мова учнів впливає на те, як вони

розуміють і використовують фразові дієслова в англійській мові. Деякі мови не мають еквівалентних конструкцій, що робить прямий переклад недоцільним та призводить до помилок у їх розумінні та відтворенні. Викладачі часто застосовують наочність, рольові ігри та сценарії з реального життя, щоб активізувати процес навчання.

Контекстно-орієнтоване навчання, де фразові дієслова вводяться через діалоги та автентичні матеріали, довело свою ефективність у допомозі учням засвоювати їхні значення та вживання.

У висновках зазначено, що фразові дієслова є важливим і водночас складним аспектом англійської мови. У статті пропонується зосередити майбутні дослідження на розробці більш ефективних стратегій їх викладання, а також вивченні використання фразових дієслів у сучасній цифровій комунікації.

Ключові слова: контекстно-орієнтоване навчання, семантична варіативність, синтаксична складність, стратегії викладання, фразові дієслова.

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