

# Phrasal Verbs: Their Teaching and Acquisition

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## Abstract

This research study intends to explore the importance of teaching phrasal verbs in the English classroom, as well as to identify the effects that teaching phrasal verbs following an explicit approach has on their acquisition as evidenced by the students' oral performance. The paper will also point out the importance of engaging students in different systematic classroom activities to be able to determine whether their phrasal verbs acquisition becomes significant and improves their oral performance. Finally, the research intends to understand if there is a correlation between the acquisition of phrasal verbs through explicit and systematic activities used in the classroom, and the students' performance and proceduralization of phrasal verbs; and if they when presented and studied explicitly in class, can help the students to incorporate them in their oral performance.

**Key words:** vocabulary, methods, phrasal verbs, explicit approaches to teaching

## Resumen

Este estudio pretende explorar la importancia de la enseñanza de las frases verbales en la clase de inglés, así como identificar los efectos que enseñarlas siguiendo un enfoque explícito tiene en su adquisición, según lo evidenciado por el desempeño oral de los alumnos y las alumnas. El artículo también señalará la importancia de involucrar a los estudiantes en diferentes actividades sistemáticas para poder determinar si su adquisición de las frases verbales llega a ser significativa y mejora su expresión oral. Finalmente, la investigación pretende comprender si existe una correlación entre la adquisición de las frases verbales a partir de actividades explícitas y sistemáticas utilizadas en la clase y el rendimiento de los/las estudiantes y el proceso de enseñanza de las frases verbales, así como cuando se presentan y estudian en clase, estas pueden ayudar a los/las estudiantes a incorporarlas en su desempeño oral.

**Palabras claves:** vocabulario, métodos, frases verbales, enfoques explícitos para la enseñanza

Using phrasal verbs when speaking is a distinctive characteristic of native speakers' every day speech and should be one key feature when learning and teaching English as a foreign or second language. The way in which phrasal verbs should be presented to students has been an issue and has evolved as linguists have started to understand their importance, and the way in which the students learn them best. Different techniques have been used as professors have gained insights into what kind of approaches work better in the process. However, a central problem emerges when the receivers of the language have difficulty processing the information they get. Although very little is known about the actual processes which intervene between teaching and learning phrasal verbs, an abundant deal of agreement exists that a greater emphasis on the meaning and use of the different phrasal verbs must be given if teachers want students to sound more native-like.

English phrasal verbs are one of the most puzzling structures for English Language Learners and students tend to avoid their use due to their difficulty. As a result, it is imperative to determine the best way in which students can understand and use them correctly. It is then important to determine if explicit or implicit approaches to teaching make the acquisition of phrasal verbs more effective.

### Review of Literature

"Is it *look up*, *look for* or *look at*, professor? I honestly do not see the difference," said Lina, an English student at the University of Costa Rica. Scenarios like the previous one might pervade our English classrooms when dealing with phrasal verbs. Gardner and Davies (2007) point out that there has been a lot of confusion throughout the years surrounding the description and classification of phrasal verbs. Moreover, several sources, including grammarians and linguists, have debated how to define and classify phrasal verbs (Gardner & Davies, 2007). Gaston (2004) admits that perhaps, due to this confusion, nonnative speakers find them difficult to acquire and thus avoid using them.

As stated by Gaston (2004), several factors may trigger the fact that students of English avoid using phrasal verbs while speaking. For instance, Gaston (2004) argued that this might be due to their unusual construction *verb+ particle*, their structural differences or their idiomatic nature. Their overall meaning is idiomatic because it is different from the meaning of the individual words that make up the phrasal verb. As stated by the American linguist Dwight Bolinger "take off" has no more to do with 'take' than disease has to do with 'ease'" (as cited in Hanks, 2005). It is important to notice how today phrasal verbs apparently continue to be a torment for linguists, grammarians and students as they were back in 1971 when Bolinger wrote his book *The Phrasal Verb in English*. Besides having difficulties acquiring the phrasal verbs that already exist, students also face the challenge of learning many of the new phrasal verbs that are invented in English every year due to changes in society; thus, verb phrases like *chill out*

or *sex up* are incorporated in everyday speech as a result of their frequency in the media.

Scholars consider phrasal verbs the most common informal phrases in English, and the definitions may vary from one author to another. For instance, Thornbury (2002, p.6) has characterized them as *lexemes*, that is “a word or group of words that function as a single meaning unit.” On the other hand, Nattinger (1980) has referred to them as *polywords* which he has defined as “short phrases with extremely low variability whose meaning exists apart from syntax. They are often substitutes for single words and are thus almost the same as other vocabulary items” (1980, p.339). Moreover, Ushigusa (2008) conceived them as *prefabs* or *multiwords*. Thornbury (2002) has also agreed that they have a lexical meaning and a grammatical form. The lexical meaning of phrasal verbs derives from the fact that their meaning cannot usually be interpreted by separating the parts, and they have a rather idiomatic significance (Schmitt, 2000). For instance, the meaning of *look* is to use your eyes and to see and the preposition *up* means the opposite of *down*, but the phrasal verb *look up* may have several meanings that differ from the meanings of the verb and preposition that make the unit. Therefore, Thornbury (2002) suggested that the grammatical form of phrasal verbs originates from the *verb+particle* structure and the four types of phrasal verbs that have been identified. The following table shows the four types according to Naunton (as cited in Thornbury, 2002, p. 123).

**Table 1**  
**Four types of phrasal verbs**

	Type	Example	Meaning	Explanation
1.	Intransitive	Come to	Recover	These don't take an object.
2.	Transitive inseparable	Look into	Investigate	These must take an object which always comes after the verb.
3.	Transitive separable	Put off	Postpone	The object can either come between the verb and the particle or after the verb. If we use a pronoun then it must go between.
4.	Three-part	Put up with	Endure	These are always transitive inseparable.

Given the importance of the oral production of all the students in an English class, researchers have done different studies to determine if the acquisition of phrasal verbs by recurrent exposure to them in class has a significant effect on their oral production. In this regard, Thornbury (2002) suggested that the classroom provides a natural context for teaching phrasal verbs such as *turn on* and *turn off*, for example. Thornbury (2002) also

advanced the view that complex explanations should be avoided and that a few phrasal verbs at a time presented in contextualized activities will help the student to internalize the vocabulary successfully. In this regard, Esquivel (2000) found that students need to incorporate phrasal verbs in their speech in order to sound more spontaneous and native-like. However, Esquivel (2000) also pointed out that most teachers find phrasal verbs not worthy of being taught in the classroom and rather difficult for students to understand. Nevertheless, incorporating phrasal verbs in the classroom should not mean mayhem or a burden for teachers, but rather an opportunity for them to provide students with tools to become more native-like. Moreover, from the literature, it is clear that many of the authors have emphasized the difficult nature of phrasal verbs. Therefore, the fact that they seem to be complex for most EFL students should be a reason for teachers to intervene. Wood (2009) agreed with this idea when he claimed that difficult areas should be given extra attention in the classroom since systematic exposure to phrasal verbs has also proven to increase students' fluency in the target language. For instance, one of Ushigusa's findings has stated that "a more fluent speaker has a larger number of prefabs readily available in his/her mind. A greater degree of proceduralization associated with the use of prefabs, which are syntactic as well as lexical units recurrently used regardless of idiomaticity, has a high likelihood of being associated with a greater degree of temporal measures of fluency." (2008, p. 193) That is, students who were fluent in English showed proficiency in what she calls *prefabs* such as phrasal verbs, which had been recurrently used in classroom scenarios, and therefore, were available in the student's procedural knowledge. Moreover, Ushigusa (2008) has claimed that "the use of prefabricated sequences of words (prefabs) is associated with automaticity or proceduralization, and their use is argued to reduce time for speech-planning and speech-production."

Regarding what to teach when dealing with phrasal verbs, some researchers agree with the idea of teaching specific sets or lists of phrasal verbs. For example, Gardener and Davis (2007) findings have suggested that learners should learn those English phrasal verbs that are more frequent. They also recommend that teachers expose students to what they call *the top 100 phrasal verb lemmas*. Likewise, Nation (as cited in Schmitt, 2000) insisted on the need to spend more time teaching strategies like guessing meaning from context, than long lists of words. Finally, Thornbury (2002) also confirmed this idea by admitting that "phrasal verbs are best learned on an item-by-item basis, and preferably in short contexts that demonstrate their syntactic behavior."

In terms of how to teach phrasal verbs, most scholars agree that a combination of explicit approaches and sufficient exposure to the language may have the best results (Schmitt, 2000). Wood (2009) also pointed out that a high degree of repetition and practice tends to improve the students' performance and proceduralization of phrasal verbs. However, after a thorough review of the literature, it is still unclear which approach, *explicit* or *incidental*, is the best for teaching phrasal verbs. Whereas traditional approaches

provide repetition and recycling of words, incidental approaches suggest that students learn a great deal of vocabulary when they are exposed to the language through extensive reading or in a native environment (Schmitt, 2000). As a result, a combination of explicit instruction of specific phrasal verbs through texts, listening or speaking activities where the verbs are recurrent and presented naturally, together with extensive reading programs or immersion into L2 environments, may be the ideal for successful vocabulary learning (Thornbury, 2002).

The purpose of the current study is to identify the effects that teaching phrasal verbs following an explicit approach has on their acquisition as evidenced by the students' oral performance. According to Celse-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (as cited in Esquivel, 2000), phrasal verbs are an important part of conversational English since register may be affected. In other words, non-native students with a poor knowledge of phrasal verbs will tend to use single words where a phrasal verb, due to their informal nature, will be more appropriate. Therefore, it is common to hear students in an informal setting say things like *omit a question* instead of *miss out a question*. Therefore, I intend to engage students in different systematic classroom activities to be able to determine whether their phrasal verbs acquisition becomes significant and improves their oral performance. That is, I attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a correlation between the acquisition of phrasal verbs through explicit and systematic activities used in the classroom and the students' performance and proceduralization of phrasal verbs?
2. How many of the phrasal verbs explicitly presented and studied in class can the students incorporate in their oral performance?

## Method

The participants were nineteen college students, five males and fourteen females from first year, all of whom were students of the School of Modern Languages at the University of Costa Rica. Most were between the ages of 18 and 20. The group consisted of native Spanish speakers enrolled in either the English Language Teaching or English major who were taking LM-1002, English II, at the moment of the study. The level of proficiency in the target language is Intermediate.

The English II course is intended for students of the first year of the major in either English Language Teaching or English. This 16-week course provides an in-depth coverage of the four major language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The textbook used for the course is *Interactions 2 Integrated Skills Edition*, which is proposed for low-intermediate to Intermediate students. The textbook has a strong grammar component which acts as a foundation for students to rely on while mastering their new skills.

## Procedure

The first day of class, the instructor gave students a diagnostic test that consisted of two parts and twenty points in total (see appendix 1). The first part of the test included a fill in the blanks exercise where students had to choose the correct verb phrase from a list given to complete each of the sentences. The second part of the test comprised a list of sentences containing an underlined part for students to change with the phrasal verb with a similar meaning.

Students were told that the purpose of the diagnostic test was to establish whether they already knew some of the verb phrases that were going to be explicitly studied during the course. They were also informed that those and other verb phrases were going to be presented explicitly throughout the course to determine the verb phrases gains during the semester. The instructor graded the tests but did not give them back to students. The same test was administered the last day of classes to evaluate the achievement of phrasal verbs during the process. Aside from the diagnostic test, the instructor also recorded students at the beginning of the semester during an oral exam to determine whether they use phrasal verbs spontaneously while talking. At the end of the semester, another oral exam was administered to evaluate whether there was an increase in the use of phrasal verbs or not. Furthermore, the same test done as a diagnostic was administered as a post test during the last day of classes (see appendix 2). It is important to mention that the instructor graded the test focusing on meaning rather than the form of phrasal verbs. That is, she granted students points for using the right phrasal verb in the context given, regardless of the fact that some students did not conjugate them correctly.

For a period of ten weeks, the teacher presented one activity per week to teach different verb phrases. In order to trace the students' progress through the ten weeks, samples from learners were collected and two recordings were done, one before the study was carried out and another at the end of the process. At the beginning of every class, the instructor presented what she called *the phrasal verb of the day*. This was a warm-up activity where the instructor wrote a sentence or short text on the board and highlighted the phrasal verb. Then, she asked one of the students to read the sentence out loud and come up with possible meanings for the phrasal verb in the sentence. After that, the instructor had one or two students use the phrasal verb orally in a different sentence from the one provided by the instructor. In addition, previous phrasal verbs were recycled and reused during classes in order to help students to move from the receptive to a more productive stage in the learning process.

In the first week, the teacher had students complete a matching game to present ten new verb phrases and their corresponding definitions. Then, during the next class, she reviewed the verb phrases and had students complete several conversations where they had to use the verb phrases studied (see appendix 3). During the third week, the teacher worked with the textbook presenting both inseparable and separable verb phrases and their meaning (see appendix 4). Furthermore, students completed several gap-fill exercises in the book

to practice using the phrasal verbs. During the following weeks, the instructor presented a series of controlled and contextualized activities that included matching, gap-fill, listening and speaking tasks and identification exercises, among others. During the process, the instructor made sure the activities were presented first for recognition and then for production as established by Thornbury (2002). It is also important to clarify that the activities were planned according to the topic students were expected to cover as part of the program (see appendixes 5-10). Moreover, the instructor paid special attention to the meanings of the phrasal verbs during the whole process since the purpose of the present study is internalizing and incorporating phrasal verbs in students' speech rather than the correct use of their form; however it is important to point out that the form is obviously relevant.

## Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents all the results of the pre and posttests. The first column lists the grades students got in the diagnostic test, and the second column shows the results they obtained in the same test after ten weeks of studying phrasal verbs explicitly. As depicted in the table, most of the students improved their performance after the experiment. It is also important to notice that only two out of nineteen got a lower grade than the one they obtained in the pretest.

Table 3 focuses more on the learners' oral performance. The first column shows the number of phrasal verbs students used during the activity. As seen in the table, ten out of nineteen students used no verb phrases, seven students used only 1, one student used 1 and another used 4. Table 3 also includes the verb phrases students attempted to fit in their oral production but were used incorrectly. When individual performance is observed, it is visible that even though the verb phrases used were incorrect, the fact that they tried to incorporate them to their speech is indeed vital to notice.

Finally, table 4 provides information regarding the phrasal verbs students utilized during the oral activities. The first column shows the verbs students used in the oral activity done before presenting phrasal verbs. The second column presents the phrasal verbs students made use of while performing at the end of the process.

**Table 2**  
**Students' scores in pre and posttests**

Student	Pretest 20 pts.	Posttest 20 pts.
A	85	95
B	25	40
C	65	95

D	30	55
E	40	80
F	65	100
G	40	95
H	100	100
I	80	95
J	50	60
K	55	75
L	40	50
M	40	65
N	90	95
O	40	50
P	65	95
Q	85	75
R	80	55
S	60	70

**Table 3**  
**Students' use of phrasal verbs during speaking activities**  
**before and after phrasal verbs were explicitly taught**  
**(items taught explicitly)**

Student	Number of times verb phrases were used while talking (before items were taught explicitly)	Number of times verb phrases were used while talking (after items were taught explicitly)	Students' attempts to use verb phrases while talking and used them incorrectly. (after items were taught explicitly)
A	1	2	<i>agree about</i> instead of <i>agree with</i>
B	0	1	
C	0	0	<i>depend of</i> instead of <i>depend on</i>
D	0	1	<i>choose about, make about, take care about</i>
E	4	2	
F	0	2	<i>take care</i> _____
G	0	1	
H	1	3	
I	1	2	<i>think of</i> instead of <i>think about</i>
J	1	4	
K	0	1	<i>suffer of</i> instead of <i>suffer from</i>
L	0	3	<i>remember about</i> instead of <i>remember of</i>
M	0	3	

N	0	3	
O	3	2	
P	0	1	
Q	1	1	
R	1	4	<i>take care about</i> instead of <i>take care of</i>
S	1	5	

**Table 4**  
**List of phrasal verbs used by students**  
**before and after the study was carried out**

Phrasal verbs used by students prior to experiment	Phrasal verbs used by students after the experiment
Go back, laugh at, tell about, ask about, think about, go out with, care about, get in, work at, agree with	tell about, believe in, think about, hear about, cut off, know about, agree with, read about, ask for, suffer from, depend on, write about, concern about, spend on, put in, scare about, died off

### Analysis of the Results

The premise of this study is to identify the effects that teaching phrasal verbs following an explicit approach has on the students' acquisition and oral performance. With that in mind, the first important aspect to note is that it is evident that most of the students improved their scores in the post test. This is quite telling because it supports the premise that verb phrases should be presented explicitly and in context during class activities to help students internalize them and incorporate them successfully in their oral production (Thornbury, 2003). However, it is also clear that students might have been able to store them as *declarative knowledge* (also called *memory frameworks* or *schemata* (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994)). In other words, students were able to recall phrasal verbs in the post test when they did not need to be used spontaneously; however, they did not show enough communicative competence during the speaking activities. For instance, there was no significant proof that students were able to use phrasal verbs during oral activities when the latter require a more spontaneous and impromptu approach. Moreover, it also suggests that receptive knowledge occurs before productive mastery of words. Waring's (as cited in Schmitt, 2000) results also support this finding, claiming that students should fully master the receptive aspects of the vocabulary presented before the productive since they do not necessarily co-occur. Obviously, this does not mean that students did not learn the phrasal verbs presented during class. What these findings seem to indicate

is that students were able to master them receptively but were not able to incorporate them to their speech, since the latter may require more exposure to the language together with the use of both incidental and explicit approaches (Schmitt, 2000).

Another interesting finding to point out is that many students used transparent phrasal verbs such as *care about* or *go out with* in which the particle is an adverb or a preposition, and where the meaning can be understood by analyzing the parts. In fact, one of the aspects that Thornbury (2002) mentioned as a recent trend to teaching phrasal verbs is teaching them by focusing on the meaning of the particles. He argues that “a focus on particles aims to sensitize learners to the shared meanings of a group such as *carry on*, *drive on*, *go on*, and *come on*” (2002 p. 124). It is clear from the information in Table 3 that certain particles might be more easily learned than others. In particular, the preposition *about* occurred more often than other particles. From a particle approach point of view, Gardner & Davis found that certain forms are more likely to happen than others; however, the particle *about* was not the most frequent in their results. Notwithstanding, their findings do agree with the idea that exposure to phrasal verbs and the incorporation of a particle approach is a key factor for students’ acquisition of phrasal verbs (2007).

Another result that is worth mentioning is that most of the students used transparent phrasal verbs. This finding points to the idea that transparent (or literal) phrasal verbs are evidently easier to learn since they can be understood from their components. However, it also proves the claim that the idiomaticity of phrasal verbs create a particular problem for students to learn them (Schmitt, 2000). In other words, many phrasal verbs do not have transparent meanings, so it is hard to know the whole connotation by combining the meanings of the components, verbs and particles. Such idiomatic meanings make learners feel that phrasal verbs are difficult to learn and to use, although English learners recognize their importance. From this outcome, we can reason that the semantic properties of phrasal verbs, i.e., transparent (or literal) versus idiomatic (or figurative), should be considered in the learning conditions. This result can be interpreted as proof that transparent verb-particle combinations can be lexically stored as pre-assembled units. This also supports a growing number of studies which indicate that redundant storage of regular forms like chunks or multi-word units like phrasal verbs can occur.

Even though it is noticeable that students attempted to incorporate some of the phrasal verbs in their speech, this study did not reach the conclusion that a greater proceduralization, which allows individuals to express communicative competence, is associated with the explicit presentation of phrasal verbs. Aside from that, this study found that students are not capable to incorporate phrasal verbs even though they were explicitly presented and studied in class. Further research should present phrasal verbs categorized by the meanings of the particles rather than teaching phrasal verbs grouped by theme as stated by Thornbury (2002), since students might be able to grasp them better when they are not notionally related. In addition, future studies should investigate the ef-

fect of semantic properties of phrasal verbs and to examine the effective learning condition for idiomatic phrasal verbs. Moreover, it would be interesting to do an action research study where there are two control groups where phrasal verbs are presented explicitly in one and implicitly in the other one. That kind of study would probably give a more reliable result regarding which might be the most appropriate way to handle phrasal verbs. Finally, more detailed research should incorporate more frequent and systematic oral activities during the process. That is, more oral and varied activities should be done and recorded at different stages of the process to give the learner more opportunities to practice the new phrasal verbs and provide more opportunities for analysis.

### **Final Reflection**

It is incredible how much one can learn from research, especially from the students. At the beginning of the process, I was afraid students were not going to be motivated by the idea of being part of a research project. However, one of the key characteristics of the group was their motivation. They were always willing to do the activities and perform to the best of their abilities. Even though motivation was not a factor to consider in this specific study, I know it was a crucial one because it was present in every class. I learned that as a teacher, you should always take every part of the teaching process very seriously. Before doing this study, I used to rush into teaching phrasal verbs because it was part of the program that was supposed to be covered in only two or three weeks. However, knowing the relevance that learning phrasal verbs have in the students' oral performance, I will try to expose students to them during every class from now on. This is especially important for me to remember because one of my main goals as a teacher is to try to exceed my students' potential and improve their performance as much as possible. Knowing that the use or lack of use of phrasal verbs makes a difference between becoming more native like or sounding awkward or too formal, I will certainly expose my students to phrasal verbs as much as possible. Finally, I honestly did not think learning vocabulary and teaching it correctly was so important for improving the students' performance. Usually, books and programs for teaching English focus on grammar or topics in general, and more often than not, vocabulary is present in one or two pages per unit. However, not only presenting and putting vocabulary to work is important, but also knowing the best ways to present vocabulary in class should be fundamental aspects of any teacher's class. I know that from now on, the previous aspects will be recurrent in mine.

### **Final Recommendations**

Based on the analysis and discussion of the data obtained, the following recommendations can be made:

- All learners benefit in one way or another from constant exposure to specific aspects of the language such as phrasal verbs.
- To help students increase the number of phrasal verbs used while speaking, more oral activities should be incorporated during the process.
- Students' performance in a class is closely related to the kind of exposure received; therefore, enough exposure should be encouraged in order to obtain the desired outcome.
- Phrasal verbs should be presented both explicitly and incidentally.
- Phrasal verbs should be presented in a contextualized manner.
- Phrasal verbs may be acquired more effectively if they are presented focusing on the particle rather than on topics.
- Another research study with two control groups should be carried out to find out which of the approaches, incidental or explicit, works better for the acquisition of phrasal verbs. In one of the groups, phrasal verbs can be presented explicitly and in the other one implicitly to check which of the approaches works better with students.

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## Appendix 1

University of Costa Rica  
LM-1002  
Phrasal verbs diagnostic  
Facilitator: Roxana Chevez

Total points: 20  
Points obtained: \_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the blank spaces using separable or inseparable verbs from the box. Make adjustments to the verbs when necessary. You may not repeat the verbs. There are some extra verbs. (15 pts.)

talk about	call on	bring up
help out	work out	find out
run into	get up	remind about
dream about	wake up	grow up
come back	remind of	get together with
bring in	look for	talk to
look at	look after	run to

- Many women around the world are \_\_\_\_\_ their children on their own. They are trying to \_\_\_\_\_ things \_\_\_\_\_ and support their families.
- Last week I \_\_\_\_\_ some of my old high school classmates. We decided to \_\_\_\_\_ more friends next weekend and do something fun.
- The professor \_\_\_\_\_ the plans for this term. He \_\_\_\_\_ us \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of practicing English outside the classroom.
- I asked my sister to \_\_\_\_\_ my kids while I was out. I promised I'd \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as I could.
- My aunt was \_\_\_\_\_ some old photographs and said to me: "Jim, you really \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_ your grandfather." You are both very handsome.
- When we were \_\_\_\_\_, our grandparents usually \_\_\_\_\_ my mom \_\_\_\_\_. My grandma cooked for us, and my grandpa played with us.
- The loud sound of an ambulance \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_ this morning. Thank God that happened! I was \_\_\_\_\_ a monster that was chasing me.
- When we have our Christmas dinner, everyone \_\_\_\_\_ at the table and Daddy says a prayer before eating.

Rewrite the given sentences changing the underlined part for the most appropriate phrasal verb to keep their original meaning. Substitute the nouns in italics for the corresponding pronouns. Use the verbs in the box. YOU CAN'T REPEAT VERBS (5 points)

Go over	Get along with	Run into	Bring up	Ask about
Come back	Try out	Care about	Take care of	Work out

- 1- I try to have a good relationship with *my classmates*.
- 2- Mrs. Smith is raising *her kids* by herself.
- 3- Researchers want to experiment with *a new pill*.
- 4- My boss hopes to find a solution for *the problem*.
- 5- The teacher always corrects *the homework*.

### Appendix 2

University of Costa Rica  
LM-1002  
Phrasal verbs Post Test  
Facilitator: Roxana Chevez

Total points: 20  
Points obtained: \_\_\_\_  
Grade: \_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the blank spaces using separable or inseparable verbs from the box. Make adjustments to the verbs when necessary. You may not repeat the verbs. There are some extra verbs. (15 pts.)

talk about	call on	bring up
help out	work out	find out
run into	get up	remind about
dream about	wake up	grow up
come back	remind of	get together with
bring in	look for	talk to
look at	look after	run to

1. Many women around the world are \_\_\_\_\_ their children on their own. They are trying to \_\_\_\_\_ things \_\_\_\_\_ and support their families.

2. Last week I \_\_\_\_\_ some of my old high school classmates. We decided to \_\_\_\_\_ more friends next week-end and do something fun.
3. The professor \_\_\_\_\_ the plans for this term. He \_\_\_\_\_ us \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of practicing English outside the classroom.
4. I asked my sister to \_\_\_\_\_ my kids while I was out. I promised I'd \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as I could.
5. My aunt was \_\_\_\_\_ some old photographs and said to me: "Jim, you really \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_ your grandfather." You are both very handsome.
6. When we were \_\_\_\_\_, our grandparents usually \_\_\_\_\_ my mom \_\_\_\_\_. My grandma cooked for us, and my grandpa played with us.
7. The loud sound of an ambulance \_\_\_\_\_ me \_\_\_\_\_ this morning. Thank God that happened! I was \_\_\_\_\_ a monster that was chasing me.
8. When we have our Christmas dinner, everyone \_\_\_\_\_ at the table and Daddy says a prayer before eating.

Rewrite the given sentences changing the underlined part for the most appropriate phrasal verb to keep their original meaning. Substitute the nouns in italics for the corresponding pronouns. Use the verbs in the box. YOU CAN'T REPEAT VERBS (5 points)

Go over	Get along with	Run into	Bring up	Ask about
Come back	Try out	Care about	Take care of	Work out

- 1- I try to have a good relationship with *my classmates*.
- 2- Mrs. Smith is raising *her kids* by herself.
- 3- Researchers want to experiment with *a new pill*.
- 4- My boss hopes to find a solution for *the problem*.
- 5- The teacher always corrects *the homework*.

### Appendix 3

#### Phrasal Verbs

Activity: Chase the word

Facilitator: Roxana Chevez Herra

MI: Bodily, Verbal Linguistic, Interpersonal, Musical

Materials: Sets of cards with phrasal verbs and definitions, masking tape, cd player, cd with music, candy, handout 1

Procedures:

Part A:

1. Draw two columns on the board: Column A: Phrasal verbs and Column B: Definitions.
2. Give each student a card with either a phrasal verb or the definition of a phrasal verb.
3. Explain to students that they have to paste the cards on their backs.
4. When the teacher counts to 3, students have to take somebody else's card and post it on the Column that corresponds (phrasal verbs, definition) while music plays on the background.
5. The winner is the one who keeps his/her card on the back.
6. The teacher checks the classification done on the board.
7. Have some students come to the board to match the phrasal verb with the corresponding definition.

Part B:

8. Give each student a copy of handout 1.
9. Read the instructions with the students and answer questions.
10. Have students write a logical reply to each of the statements or questions on the handout, using some of the phrasal verbs from part A in each of the answers.
11. Have students work in pairs.
12. Check the exercise with the students by having some model their dialogues.

List of phrasal verbs in the cards: grow up, live on, look after, look like, move out of, drop by, get along with, get together with, go over, run into, take care of.

List of definitions in the cards: become an adult, exist, supervise/watch, resemble, leave/relocate, visit, be friendly with, meet socially, review/correct, meet accidentally, watch/supervise

#### Appendix 4

Handout 1

Phrasal verbs

Prepared by: Chevez, R.

Instructions: Write a logical reply to each of the following statements or questions using one of the verbs from PART A in each of your answers. Work with a partner and then practice the dialogues.

Example:

A: I need to bring all my belongings into my new house.

B: When are you moving into your new house?

1. A: Do you know San Jose well enough to describe it to me? I know you were born and raised there right?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_
2. A: I don't make enough money. I just make \$100 a month.  
B: \_\_\_\_\_
3. A: \_\_\_\_\_  
B: No teacher, I don't think it's necessary to review the exercise.
4. A: Can you take care of my babies today?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_
5. A: Wow, you are exactly like your sister. Are you twins or something?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_
6. A: I can't understand why my sister and I can't have a good relationship?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_
7. A: \_\_\_\_\_  
B: Really? Oops! I am sorry for you, I know you didn't want to see your boyfriend ever again.

## Appendix 5



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### B. Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

Certain prepositions customarily follow certain verbs. These prepositions are sometimes called particles. The following is a short list of some common verb + particle combinations in English. These phrasal verbs are “inseparable” because the particle has only one possible position in the sentence. In most cases, it immediately follows the verb. With the phrasal verbs in this group, the particle does not change the basic meaning of the verb.

Verbs	Examples
agree (disagree) with	Mary doesn't <b>agree with</b> her mother.
belong to	That toy <b>belongs to</b> Billy.
care about	Mrs. Smith <b>cares about</b> her children.
consist of	The family <b>consists of</b> four people.
depend on	Children <b>depend on</b> their parents.
differ from	Your opinion <b>differs from</b> mine.
dream about (of)	Mary <b>dreams about</b> getting married someday.
laugh at	Everybody <b>laughed at</b> the dog's tricks.
leave for	The children <b>leave for</b> school at 7:45 A.M.
listen to	The mother <b>listened to</b> the child's story.
live with	She <b>lives with</b> her daughter.
look at	Last night we <b>looked at</b> old photographs.
look for	She <b>looked for</b> her keys for an hour.
sit down	Everyone <b>sat down</b> at the table.
talk about	We <b>talked about</b> our plans for the summer.
talk to	My teacher <b>talked to</b> me about my homework.
think about (of)	Mr. Smith is <b>thinking about</b> his work.
wait for	Mrs. Smith <b>waited for</b> Mary at the bus stop.

Some phrasal verbs can have a noun or a pronoun between the verb and the particle. Here are some examples.

Verbs	Examples
ask (someone) about	Mrs. Smith <b>asked</b> the children <b>about</b> their day.
ask (someone) for	Dick <b>asked</b> Susie <b>for</b> a second cup of coffee.
borrow something from someone	Susie <b>borrowed</b> some milk <b>from</b> her neighbor.
help (someone) with	Dick <b>helped</b> Susie <b>with</b> the dishes.
lend something to someone	The neighbor <b>lent</b> some milk <b>to</b> Susie.
remind someone about	Billy <b>reminded</b> his mother <b>about</b> the football game.
remind someone of	You <b>remind</b> me <b>of</b> your grandmother.

## Appendix 6

### 3 Fill in the blanks with the correct particle.

**Example:** During breakfast, Mrs. Smith reminded her husband about the parents' meeting that evening.

1. Billy spent fifteen minutes looking for his geography book.
2. During the day, Susie Smith listened to the radio while she worked in the house.
3. She borrowed some sugar from her neighbor.
4. At school, the children laughed at a funny story.
5. Mary lent her red pencil to a classmate.
6. During class, Billy dreamed of going outside and playing.
7. This reading book belongs to Mary.
8. At work, Dick Smith asked his boss for a raise.
9. Susie waited for the children to come home from school.
10. Then Susie helped them with their homework.
11. During dinner, the family members talked about their day.
12. Mrs. Smith almost always agrees with Mr. Smith.

### C. More on Inseparable Phrasal Verbs

There are many verb + particle combinations in which the particle changes the meaning of the verb. That is, the meaning of the two words together is different from the meanings of the verb and the preposition by themselves. These verb + particle combinations have an *idiomatic* meaning. They are different from sentences with prepositional phrases. Compare the following:

	Examples	Notes
<b>Verb + prepositional phrase</b>	<p>Jim <b>lives on</b> Middleton Street. (The house where Jim lives is located on Middleton Street.)</p> <p>Jim <b>ran into</b> his house. (Jim entered his house, running.)</p>	In these sentences, the verb keeps its basic meaning.
<b>Verb + particle (phrasal verb)</b>	<p>Jim <b>lives on</b> \$500 a month. (Jim spends \$500 a month.)</p> <p>Jim <b>ran into</b> an old friend. (Jim met an old friend by chance.)</p>	In these sentences, the verb has an idiomatic meaning.

Appendix 7

Following is a short list of inseparable phrasal verbs with their idiomatic meanings.

Verbs	Examples	Meanings
come back	Are you going to <b>come back</b> early?	return
drop (stop) by	My neighbor <b>dropped by</b> this afternoon.	visit
get along with	The Smiths <b>get along with</b> their neighbors.	be friendly with
get together with	Let's <b>get together with</b> the Nelsons this weekend.	meet socially
get up	On weekends, everybody <b>gets up</b> late.	leave one's bed after sleeping
go over	Let's <b>go over</b> the homework.	review; correct
grow up	I <b>grew up</b> in Wisconsin.	become an adult
live on	Can you <b>live on</b> \$500 a month?	exist; support oneself financially
look after	Will you <b>look after</b> the boys while I'm out?	supervise; watch
look like	You <b>look like</b> your father.	resemble
move out of	When are you <b>moving out of</b> your apartment?	leave; relocate
move into	When are you <b>moving into</b> your new house?	relocate, bring belongings into a new residence
run into	I <b>ran into</b> an old friend yesterday.	meet accidentally
stay up	How late did you <b>stay up</b> last night?	remain awake
take care of	Will you <b>take care of</b> my plants while I'm gone?	watch; supervise

4 Replace the verbs in italics with inseparable phrasal verbs from the chart above.

**Example:** When Susie and Dick go out in the evening, a babysitter *watches* the children.

*When Susie and Dick go out in the evening, a babysitter looks after the children.*

1. That child doesn't *resemble* either of her parents. *look like*
2. When are you going to *return*? *come back*
3. I *meet* my best friend for dinner once a week. *get together with*
4. Yesterday, I *accidentally met* my college roommate on the street. *ran into*
5. I need to *review* my notes before the test tomorrow. *go over*
6. Please feel free to *visit us* any time you're in the area. *call on*
7. I have only a part-time job, so it's hard for me to *exist on* my salary. *live on*
8. We are going to *leave* this apartment next month. *move out of*
9. We are going to *enter* a new house next month. *move into*
10. Would you please *watch* my cat while I am on vacation? *take care of*
11. I *lived* in Vermont. Then, when I was an adult, I moved to California. *grew up*
12. I don't *have a good relationship with* my sister. We fight all the time. *get along*

Appendix 8

5 This letter, from Susie Smith to her friend Nancy, contains many particle errors. Cross out the errors and correct them as in the examples. Note the date!

March 18, 1957

Dear Nancy,

I have been thinking ~~over~~<sup>about</sup> you a lot lately. I'm sorry for not writing sooner, but I've been so busy with the children.

I ran ~~through~~<sup>into</sup> your mother at the market the other day, and we talked with your life in the BIG CITY! It's interesting how much your life differs in your mother's -- and mine.

You asked me ~~for~~<sup>about</sup> my life as a "typical American housewife." My life consists in my children, my husband, and my home. As you know, we recently moved ~~on~~<sup>into</sup> this big,

expensive new house, so we don't have much money these days. I

thought ~~in~~<sup>about</sup> trying to find a part-time job because it's not easy to live ~~with~~<sup>on</sup>

Dick's salary. Dick doesn't want me to work, though, and I think it's

more important for me to take care to the kids and the house. Anyway,

I know I can depend ~~for~~<sup>on</sup> Dick to support us all.

The kids are wonderful. They are growing ~~in~~<sup>up</sup> so fast! Every afternoon, when they come ~~to~~<sup>back</sup> from school, we talk with their day, and I go ~~under~~<sup>over</sup> their homework with them. I really enjoy listening ~~on~~<sup>to</sup> them.

What else can I tell you, Nancy? Sometimes I get together ~~from~~<sup>with</sup> other mothers in my neighborhood and we talk ~~on~~<sup>about</sup> our kids and husbands. I think I'm lucky because Dick helps me ~~for~~<sup>with</sup> the housework more than most other husbands do. Occasionally, I go to my neighbor Julie's house and ask her ~~about~~<sup>for</sup> some advice, or I borrow some sugar or something ~~of~~<sup>from</sup> her. Now and then I run around ~~into~~<sup>into</sup> some old friends from high school.

And that's my life, Nancy. Sure, sometimes I dream ~~for~~<sup>about</sup> doing something different and exciting, and I think ~~of~~<sup>about</sup> you in the city. But really I am very happy. I hope you are, too.

Love,

Susie



## Appendix 9

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## D. Separable Phrasal Verbs

With *inseparable* verbs, the verb and particle are a unit; they must be together. However, English also has *separable* phrasal verbs. With these verb + particle combinations, *noun* objects may come after the verb + particle or between them. *Pronoun* objects must come between the verb and particle. Compare:

	Examples	Meanings
<b>Inseparable</b>	<i>noun</i> My mother <b>ran into</b> Laurie.	My mother saw Laurie.
	<i>pronoun</i> My mother <b>ran into</b> her.	My mother saw her.
<b>Separable</b>	<i>noun</i> I <b>called up</b> my mother.	I telephoned my mother.
	<i>noun</i> I <b>called</b> my mother <b>up</b> .	I telephoned my mother.
	<i>pronoun</i> I <b>called</b> her <b>up</b> .	I telephoned her.

Common Separable Phrasal Verbs		
Verbs	Examples	Meanings
bring up	Dawn <b>is bringing</b> her kids <b>up</b> by herself.	raise (a family)
call up	Yesterday my son <b>called</b> me <b>up</b> .	telephone (verb)
drop off	Could you <b>drop</b> me <b>off</b> downtown?	take someone or something (on the way somewhere, often by car)
figure out	I can't <b>figure out</b> this problem.	understand, solve (a problem); decide
find out	Did you <b>find out</b> her phone number?	learn, discover
help out	My mother often <b>helps</b> me <b>out</b> with the kids.	assist, help
look over	Please <b>look over</b> your paper before you give it to me.	read quickly; review
pick out	Did you <b>pick out</b> a present?	choose, select
pick up	I <b>picked</b> her <b>up</b> after class.	go (often by car) to get someone
take out	Please <b>take out</b> the garbage.	take outside
talk over	We <b>talked</b> the situation <b>over</b> .	discuss
think over	I'll <b>think over</b> your advice.	think about something carefully
throw away	Did you <b>throw</b> yesterday's paper <b>away</b> ?	discard; put in the garbage
try out	Let's <b>try out</b> these new skis.	test, experiment with
wake up	The phone <b>woke</b> me <b>up</b> .	cause someone to stop sleeping
work out	I hope we can <b>work it out</b> .	find a solution, resolve something

Appendix 10

6 Fill in the blanks with the correct particle. Then change the word order of the verb, particle, and object *if possible*.

**Example:** I would like to look over the plans → *look the plans over*

1. I threw out my mother's letter by accident.
2. Please think my suggestion over and give me your opinion.
3. I can't figure out the answer to this math problem.
4. These days it's really hard to bring kids up.
5. I need to drop off a package at the post office.
6. Every day, Mrs. Smith picks her children up at the bus stop.
7. We tried out a new computer system, but we didn't like it.
8. There's no reason to fight. We can work out our problems by talking.
9. The noise from the birds woke up Mr. Smith at 5:00 A.M.
10. I call my mother up every Sunday.

rewrote it out  
wrote it over  
figure it out  
ring them up  
drop it off  
pick them up  
tried it out  
work them out  
wake him up  
her up

7 Change all the noun objects in Activity 4 to pronouns. Pay attention to word order.

**Example:** I would like to look over the plans.

*I would like to look them over.*

8 Each of the following sentences has an error. Find the errors and correct them.

1. There were several problems. Mike pointed out them to me.
2. Did you gave the book back?
3. We need to get through to this project as soon as possible.
4. Please look into the word in the dictionary.
5. I haven't been get along with her for a long time.
6. I want to go to Hawaii. I think I'll look after the airfare.
7. Please fill in this application.
8. You should fill out your name before answering any of the questions.
9. This is a difficult problem. I can't figure out it.
10. There's my school. You can just drop off me at the corner.
11. I'm going to move out at my apartment.
12. Vi was take care of his younger sisters last weekend.

