THESIS

THE L2 EXPOSURE EFFECT ON AVOIDANCE OF PHRASAL VERBS BY ARAB ESL

LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

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There is little doubt that the phrasal verb structure is problematic and can be very

challenging to many English language learners. Research has demonstrated that English learners

tend to misunderstand or avoid English phrasal verbs. It has been claimed that the long exposure

to the English-speaking environment might be an important factor in the nonavoidance of phrasal

verbs. This study investigates the avoidance of phrasal verbs by Arab ESL learners in relation to

phrasal verb types (literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic) and their length of exposure to the

English-speaking environment (long exposure, short exposure). To empirically investigate this

working hypothesis, data were collected from 81 graduate and undergraduate Arab ESL learners

who took a multiple-choice test comprising 45 questions.

The results revealed that the phrasal verb type significantly affected Arab ESL learners'

preferences for phrasal verbs. Also, the results revealed that Arab ESL learners with long

exposure did not avoid any type of phrasal verbs. Moreover, they used the phrasal verbs as a

whole significantly more than the one-word verbs. Their preferences for literal and semi-

transparent phrasal verbs were significantly higher than those for their one-word counterparts.

Regarding the idiomatic phrasal verbs, their preference for them was significantly not higher, but

also their preference for their one-word counterparts was significantly not higher either.

On the other hand, the results revealed that Arab ESL learners with short exposure

avoided the idiomatic phrasal verbs. Moreover, they used the one-word verbs as a whole

significantly more than the phrasal verbs. Their preferences for literal and semi-transparent

phrasal verbs were significantly not higher than that for their one-word counterparts. In sum, these findings do not support previous studies that show that L1-L2 differences, or the semantic complexity of phrasal verbs by other studies, might motivate Arab ESL learners to develop a genuine avoidance; Arab ESL learners with long exposure in this study did not avoid any of the three types of phrasal verbs. The major outcome of this study is that Arabic-speaking learners' avoidance of English phrasal verbs is due to their relatively short exposure to the English-speaking environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter I

Introduction

It is impossible to comprehend a text, either in one's native language or in a foreign language, without understanding the text's vocabulary. It has also been demonstrated that reading comprehension is strongly related to vocabulary knowledge (Laufer, 1997). Vocabulary is central to language and of a crucial importance to the typical language learner (Zimmerman, 1997). Vocabulary knowledge is a prerequisite to the performance of language skills because it enables language use which, in turn, enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 1993, as cited in Nation & Waring, 1997). Moreover, vocabulary continues to be learned throughout one's lifetime. Words are gradually learned over a period of time from numerous exposures (Schmitt, 2000).

An English learner must learn a very large number of words to be able to communicate in English. In written discourse, a learner must know 98–99% of the words in order to understand it. Moreover, 6000–7000 word families are required to reach the 98% goal in spoken discourse (Schmitt, 2008). In order to manage vocabulary, Nation and Waring (1997) highlighted the importance incidental (indirect) learning such as learning new vocabulary or deepening the knowledge of already known words in context through extensive listening and reading.

To master a word completely, Nation (1990) proposed eight necessary types of the ideal native-like word knowledge, including its meaning(s), written from, spoken form, grammatical behavior, collocations, register, associations, and frequencies. These various types of word knowledge are related to the quality or depth of word knowledge, which is as important as breadth of word knowledge (learning many words). A learner must know much more about each item to use it well. However, learners of a second language have been shown to be weak in

depth of word knowledge, even for frequently occurring words (Schmitt, 2008; Verhallen &

Schoonen, 1993, as cited in August, Carlo, & Snow, 2005).

Hence, one essential level of types of word knowledge is the knowledge of its frequent

collocations. The approach of representing the lexicon as individual lexical items has been

considered dangerously isolationist (Moon, 1997). Ryan (1997) considered understanding of

collocations; i.e. understanding what words or types of words collocate with what words, as one

among other factors that make learning vocabulary in L2 a complex process. Many studies have

highlighted the significance of the links between words such as the lexical connections between

words in English, with particular emphasis on multi-word lexical items (Moon, 1997).

Vocabulary items are often not single orthographic units. Multi-word units and the more

'contextualized' word knowledge aspects (e.g. collocation) are probably best learned by being

exposed to the lexical item numerous times in many different contexts (Schmitt, 1997, 2008).

> You need to learn collocations because they will help you to speak and write English in a
> more natural and accurate way. People will probably understand what you mean if you
> talk about 'making your homework' or say 'My uncle is a very high man' but your
> language will sound unnatural and might perhaps confuse. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2005, p.
> 4)

Under knowledge of collocations and multi-word items, multi-word verbs (phrasal verbs)

come as one feature of English, an issue that is further explored in Chapter II, as phrasal verbs

are the target structure in this study. A phrasal verb is made up of two or more parts (a lexical

verb + adverb or/and a preposition called "particle") that function as a single verb (Celce-Murcia

& Larsen-Freeman, 1999) such as *let down, run into,* and *show off.* "Phrasal verbs as an aspect

of the lexicon are one of the most prolific, productive and elusive structures among the multi-

word expressions" (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2013, p. 212). English learners have to learn phrasal

verbs because they are very common; the system underlying them is economical and creative,

and they are an important part of the English language system. Thus, it is important that all learners of English develop at least a receptive awareness, which will help them decode the phrasal verbs that they encounter in spoken and written contexts, while those learners aspiring to be expert users need to be able to produce at least the more common phrasal verbs appropriately (Armstrong, 2004).

These phrasal verbs are considered problematic for a number of reasons. Phrasal verbs create special problems for learners, partly because of their great number, but also because the combination of verb and particle seems so often completely random (Side, 1990). Phrasal verbs contain two or more orthographic words working together, making them difficult to recognize as a single semantic unit. Unless a learner knows that a string of words is a multi-word verb, they are likely to try to decode the meanings of the individual words (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). In addition to, these phrasal verbs need to be acquired, stored and retrieved from memory as a holistic unit (Wray & Perkins, 2000, as cited in Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). More difficulties and challenges related to learning and use of phrasal verbs are examined in greater detail in Chapter II.

There is little doubt that the phrasal verb structure is problematic and can be very challenging to many L2 learners, (Darwin & Gray, 1999; Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004, as cited in Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Many consider mastering phrasal verbs to be a very difficult task for the ESL learner and using them correctly in speech, a true test of fluency. This is especially true for English learners whose L1's are non-Germanic because verb + particle combinations are rarely found outside of the Germanic family (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Cornell, 1985, as cited in Darwin & Gray, 1999).

Darwin and Gray (1999) stated that phrasal verbs are problematic for most L2 learners of English, even for those whose L1 is closely related to English:

> Not only learners with non-Germanic native languages experience this difficulty with phrasal verbs, however. Continuing the work of Dagut and Laufer (1985), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) have shown that Dutch ESL learners also have a tendency to misunderstand or avoid English phrasal verbs even though there are similar constructions in their native language. (p. 66)

This avoidance of phrasal verbs prevents learning and causes unnatural speech, such *as I encountered an old photograph* for *I came across an old photograph* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, as cited in Darwin & Gray, 1999). In spite of the fact that there has been two studies dealing with avoidance of phrasal verbs by Arab leaners of English, i.e., Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010), the long exposure to the L2 environment has not yet been studied. The long exposure has been speculated to be a factor required for English learners to become comfortable with phrasal verbs and an important factor for ESL learners' performance from avoidance to nonavoidance of phrasal verbs (Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). According to Schmitt (2008), collocations have to be acquired through massive exposure to L2 environment. However, Ben Duhaish and Abu Jamil did not take this factor (exposure to the L2 environment) into account because almost all of their studies' participants did not have long exposure to the L2 environment. This shortcoming in Ben Duhaish's and Abu Jamil's studies is discussed in greater detail in Chapter II.

It has been reported that the difficulty of Arab learners of English in using phrasal verbs, which is manifested in the avoidance phenomenon, could be understood by means of L1-L2 structures (Ben Duhaish, 2008) or by semantic/idiomatic reasons (Abu Jamil, 2010). Ben Duhaish' results have showed Arab learners avoided all the three types (literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic) of phrasal verbs (the definitions and examples for the three types of phrasal verbs

are introduced in Chapter II). On the other hand, Abu Jamil's results have showed that Arab learners, whose language did not have phrasal verb structures, have not totally avoided literal phrasal verbs. However, the results have showed that Arab learners avoided these idiomatic phrasal verbs due to the semantic complexity of English phrasal verbs as the major reason for Arab learners' avoidance.

However, these two studies share the shortcoming of neglecting Arab learners who have been exposed to the L2 environment for a long time. Although there are so many Arab people who have been living in English-speaking countries (e.g., USA) for years if not centuries, they never had been included in the studies of avoidance of phrasal verbs. If they did not avoid all the three types of phrasal verbs and the short-stay leaners avoided the three types of phrasal verbs or some, the best predictor for avoidance of English phrasal verbs by Arab learners will be the short time of exposure to the English-speaking environment.

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent Arab learners of English prefer or avoid using the three types of English phrasal verbs due to the semantic issues often caused to English language learners. It aims at providing further evidence for avoidance in the context of structural L1-L2 differences as well as the sematic difficulties in the target structure. Moreover, it includes the long/short exposure to the L2 environment in the design. Indeed, more empirical studies are needed to examine whether the long/short exposure to the L2 environment is a determining or a non-significant factor in the avoidance of phrasal verbs as well as other complex L2 phenomena such as articles and prepositions.

Cornell (1985) argued that his participants in his study who revealed a widespread ignorance of phrasal verbs had certainly never been to an English-speaking country for more than a few weeks at a time. He attributed his participants' widespread ignorance revealed in his

study to the lack of exposure to an English-speaking country for more than a few weeks at a time. It can be said that Cornell implied that a few weeks at a time in an English-speaking country is the minimum exposure for an English learner to be argued that the exposure to the L2 environment has occurred. However, as this study demonstrates, even longer periods of exposure than Cornell will still result in avoidance of phrasal verbs. Details are provided in Chapters II and III.

Research Questions

The study investigates four research questions based on the previous studies in this area. They are:

1. Is there a significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types?

2. Do Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment differ significantly from Arab ESL learners with short exposure in the avoidance of literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic phrasal verbs?

3. Is the long exposure to the native-speaking environment (four years or more) necessary to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

4. Is the short exposure to the native-speaking environment (less than four years) enough to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

Hypotheses

H_1 There will be a statistically significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types.

H_2 Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment have significantly higher scores on the three types of phrasal verbs than Arab ESL learners with short exposure.

H₃ Arab ESL learners with long exposure's preferences for the literal and semi-transparent phrasal verbs are significantly higher than their one-word counterparts.

H₄ Arab ESL learners with short exposure to the native-speaking environment have a statistically significant higher preference for one-word verbs over phrasal verbs.

H₅ Arab ESL learners with short exposure's preference for idiomatic phrasal verbs is statistically lower than their preference for their one-word counterparts.

While there appears to be some overlap among these hypotheses, the reason for this will become clear in Chapters III and IV. Chapter II is a selective review of salient prior studies with an emphasis on the topic of avoidance. Chapter III describes the design of the study. Chapter IV describes the Results and Chapter V presents a discussion of these results.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This chapter covers a sequence of interrelated topics starting with collocation and ending up with the avoidance phenomenon. More specifically, it begins by giving information about collocations, with particular emphasis on multi-word items. Then, it continues to focus on the phrasal verbs as the target structure in this study and ends by outlining the landmark studies on the avoidance of phrasal verbs. The chapter, therefore, considers collocation as well as the multi-word items and their importance in L2 learning for natural language processing. Then, the chapter becomes more specific and focuses on the English phrasal verbs; the related semantic and syntactic issues, register of phrasal verbs, importance of phrasal verbs, and challenges of use of learning phrasal verbs. Finally, it cites critiques of empirical studies of the phrasal avoidance by ESL/EFL language learners as well as it highlights the drawbacks of current research in two related studies and frames this study described in Chapter III.

Collocation

Before continuing to explore phrasal verbs and multi-word items, it might be worthwhile to first consider collocation as they are many types of collocations. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) defined collocation as "certain types of word co-occurrences that are governed by conventional use rather than form or meaning" (p. 43). For example, (a) adjective-noun such as *This is a tall person or building* (not *high*), (b) adverb-adjective as *It was statistically significant* (*important*), and (c) verb-direct object as *He asked/answered the question* (not *said* or *told*).

Gelbukh and Kolesnikova (2013) stated:

The meaning of an individual word largely depends on various relations connecting it to other words in context. A collocational relation is a type of institutionalized lexical relations which holds between the base and its partner in a collocation (e.g., *give a lecture*, *make a decision*, *lend support* where the base is *lecture, decision, support*, and the partners, termed collocates, are *give, make, lend*). Collocations are opposed to free word combination where both words are used in their typical meaning (for example, *give a book, make a dress, lend money*). (p. VII)

Some collocations are more fixed than others: binomials, such as *high and dry*, *hat and coat*, and *pick and choose*, and trinomials, such as *a king's ransom*, *a handsome/pretty price*, and *a raw deal*. Words that go together in collocations retain their lexical meaning as opposed to idioms whose meanings are difficult to retrieve from the lexical items themselves. Thus, collocations should be decipherable although it is better to think of them being on a continuum of idiomaticity. It should be mentioned that words in collocations don't occur randomly. Once you have chosen a word you are severely restricted to what comes next (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Knowledge of collocation is important for natural language processing because collocation comprises the restrictions on how words can be used together (Gelbukh & Kolesnikova, 2013).

Multi-Word Items

Multi-word items can be seen as extreme cases of fixed collocations. Moon (1997) defined a multi-word item as "a vocabulary item which consists of a sequence of two or more words (a word being simply an orthographic unit)" (p. 43). Moreover, this sequence forms a semantically and/or syntactically meaningful and inseparable unit. It can be said that multi-word items are the result of lexical and semantic processes of word-formation rather than the results of the operation of grammatical rules. For example, comparative forms of adjectives can be

excluded from the category because they are formed grammatically. Thus, Moon identified three criteria that help distinguish holistic multi-word items from other kinds of strings:

- Institutionalization: is the degree to which a multi-word item is conventionalized in the language: Does it happen a lot? Is it regularly considered by a language community as being a unit?

- Fixedness: is the degree to which a multi-word item is frozen as a sequence of words: Does it reflect? Do its component words inflect in predictable or regular ways?

- Noun-compositionality: is the degree to which a multi-word item cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized unitary meaning.

Multi-word item is a superordinate term in which the structure of phrasal verbs is one type. However, before continuing to explore phrasal verbs, it might be worthwhile to shed light on the three classes proposed by Lindstromberg (2010) into which multi-word verbs can be divided:

- Prepositional verbs: e.g., *Look after a cat,* in which *after* is considered to be a preposition whose grammatical object is *a cat*

- True phrasal verbs: e.g., *Look up a word,* in which *up* is considered to be a particle rather than a full-blooded preposition.

- Phrasal-prepositional verbs: e.g., *Put up with bad behavior*, each of which is considered to consist of a phrasal verb *put up* followed by a prepositional phrase *with bad behavior*.

Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb is made up of two or more parts (a lexical verb + adverb or/and a preposition called "particle") that function as a single verb (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman,

1999). Moon (1997) defined phrasal verbs as "combinations of verbs and adverbial or prepositional particles" (p. 45). For example, *He sat down*, *She looked after her invalid mother*, and *I look forward to reading it*. The term of "phrasal prepositional verbs" may be used to refer to phrasal verbs that are made up of more than two parts (a lexical verb + a particle + a preposition) (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). The verbs in the phrasal verbs are typically but not always monosyllabic and of German origins (Moon, 1997). The second part of the phrasal verb is called "particle" because of its close association with the verb and also to distinguish it from prepositions and other adverbs. By combining a verb and a particle as in the examples above, we can extend the usual meaning of the verb or create a new meaning. Hence, it is not always possible to guess the meaning of a phrasal verb from the usual meanings of the verb and its particle (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Moon, 1997).

Syntactic features of phrasal verbs. The syntactic features of phrasal verbs include the transitivity of a phrasal verb (transitive vs. intransitive) and the separability a phrasal verb (separable vs. inseparable). In addition to, it includes the more widely accepted tests for distinguishing phrasal verbs from verb + preposition sequences. More explanations and examples on the syntactic features of phrasal verbs are provided below.

The transitivity of phrasal verbs. Like one-word verbs, phrasal verbs can be transitive as in *I called off the meeting* or intransitive as in *My car broke down*. Also, just as some regular verbs (e.g., *open, increase*) may be either transitive or intransitive depending on the role of the agent, some phrasal verbs can have this dual function, too. For example:

An arsonist burned down the hotel. (transitive)

The hotel burned down. (intransitive) (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999)

The separability of phrasal verbs. The particle of the phrasal verbs can be sometimes separated from the verb by the direct object as in *Mark threw the ball away* and sometimes it cannot. Separation is obligatory when the direct object is a pronoun as in *Mark threw it away*. Transitive separable phrasal verbs are the largest and most productive category. On the other hand, there is a smaller category of inseparable phrasal verbs where the particle cannot be separated from its verb as in *Josh ran into an old friend*. There is a small subcategory of phrasal verbs that occur only with the verb and the particle separated as in *How can I get the message through to him? (get ... through means convey; transmit)*. The reason for this obligatory separation is to avoid the ambiguity with the inseparable phrasal verbs that have the same form but a different meaning as in *Get through the lesson (get ... through means finish)* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Distinguishing phrasal verbs from verb + preposition sequences. A particular word can behave as a preposition in some contexts and a particle in others. However, there are two useful tests suggested by O'Dowd (1998) that help overcome this overlap and arrive at a common understanding of what distinguishes its prepositional use from that of its particle use in a phrasal verb. In fact, these tests, as O'Dowd (1998) pointed out, "draw on semantic and pragmatic criteria, which indicates that we cannot analyze syntactic patterns without looking at the meaning and use of the elements involved" (p. 14). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) adapted the tests as follows. The first is a syntactic test:

Only prepositions allow (not particles):

- Adverb insertion   *We turned quickly off the road.*

                              **We turned quickly off the light.*

- Phrase fronting   *Up the hill John ran.*

Up the bill John ran.

- *Wh*-fronting   *About what does he write?*

  *Up what does he write?

Only particles in separable phrasal verbs allow (not prepositions):

- Passivization   *The light was turned off.*

  *The road was turned off.

- Verb substitution   *The light was extinguished.*

  (= *The light was turned off.*)

- NP insertion   *We turned the light off.*

  *We turned the road off.

A preposition makes a natural unit with the NP object that follows it, whereas a particle makes a natural unit with the verb that precedes it. O'Dowd (1998) stated that it might be impossible to distinguish a preposition from a particle apart from the way it behaves in a particular context.

The second is a phonological test. A particle may receive stress as in *He loòked úp the word*, whereas a preposition usually does not as in *He loóked ŭp the road*. However, although this test is helpful, it is not as reliable as the first test because there are enough exceptions where the preposition is stressed. For example, polysyllabic prepositions as *across, over,* and *without* receive stress as in *She will get òver it*, and other factors such as contrastive focus may affect the positioning of the stress as in *He loòked úp the road, not down* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Quirk et al., 1985).

However, these syntactic tests, as O'Dowd (1998) suggested, do not clearly establish a dichotomy between prepositions and particles. He added, "The most satisfactory explanations

for the tests results all seem to suggest that categoriality is flexible, influenced by semantic and pragmatic considerations" (p. 25).

Semantic features of phrasal verbs. A key feature of a phrasal verb is that the whole combination of words should function as a lexical unit that has its own meaning (Lindstromberg, 2010). There is a certain unpredictability as to what the meaning of a phrasal verb will be because many of them are noncompositional or idiomatic— their meaning are different from what combining the meaning of the verb with the meaning of the particle would lead to expect. For example, knowing the meaning of *run* and the meaning of *out* does not provide much of a clue to the meaning of their combination in a phrasal verb where *to run out* means "to exhaust" as in *I've got money you can borrow if you run out*. Also, what might seem to be its antonym, *run in*, has one completely unrelated meaning of "to send to jail" when it is separated as in *I am going to run him in for violating his parole* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

In many cases, the particles in phrasal verbs have lost their concrete meaning and assumed instead an aspectual meaning (Brinton, 1988). From idiomaticity to its opposite transparency, three categories of phrasal verbs can be discerned:

- Literal (also called transparent, directional, and systematic)
- Semi-transparent (also called aspectual, semi-idiomatic, and completive)
- Idiomatic (also called figurative and opaque) (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

The division of phrasal verbs into three types is very helpful because the difficulty of phrasal verbs depends on its type. The test used in this study includes 45 phrasal verbs of all the three types; the first 15 phrasal verbs are literal, then 15 semi-transparent phrasal verbs, and the last 15 are idiomatic phrasal verbs (see Chapter III). Moreover, the type of phrasal verbs will be

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considered in the results of the study (see Chapter IV). One of the working hypotheses of this thesis is that the three types of phrasal verbs pose an ascending level of difficulty to the L2 learner.

Literal phrasal verbs. This category is composed of verbs that appear to be a combination of a verb and a directional preposition as *climb up*. However, they are classified as phrasal verbs because they function syntactically like verb-particle constructions. The particle retains its prepositional meaning and, therefore, the phrasal verb meaning is a straightforward product of their semantic components. Literal phrasal verbs are highly guessable by knowing the basic literal meaning of the component words. Thus, the meaning can be equivocally derived from the meaning of its constituent parts. Some examples of literal phrasal verbs are: *sit down, stand up, hand out,* and *throw away* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Laufer and Eliasson, 1993; Lindstromberg, 2010).

Semi-transparent phrasal verbs. This is the second category where the meaning of the phrasal verb is not as transparent, but it is not idiomatic either. This category consists of verbs to which certain particles describe the result of the action or reinforce the degree of the action denoted by the verb (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). The particles in this category appear to modify the meaning of the verb rather than serve as adverbials (Fraser, 1976). This category can be subdivided into four semantic classes, depending on the semantic contribution of the particle:

- Inceptive (to signal a beginning state) as in *John took off*.
- Continuative (to show that the action continues) as in *His speech ran on and on*.
- Iterative (use of *over* with activity verbs to show repetition) as in *He did it over and over again until he got it right*.

- Completive (uses particles *up, out, off,* and *down* to show that the action is complete)— turns an activity verb into an accomplishment as in *He drank the milk up*, reinforces the sense of goal orientation in an a accomplishment verbs as in *He closed the suitcases up*, or adds durative to a punctual achievement verb as in *He found out why they were missing.* These completive phrasal verbs are normally equivalent to the corresponding simplex verb and an expression such as *to the end, completely,* and *all of it* (Brinton, 1988).

There is some consistency of meaning for certain particles. However, they still bring some difficulty for ESL/EFL learners. For example, *burn down* and *burn up* are not antonyms because *up* has a positive "goal completion" meaning versus *down*, which have a more negative "complete extinction" meaning (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Moon, 1997).

Idiomatic phrasal verbs. This is the third category where the meaning of the phrasal verb is idiomatic. It is difficult and may be impossible to figure out the meaning of the verb by combining the separate meanings of its parts because a new meaning has resulted from a metaphoric shift of the meaning and the semantic fusion of the individual components. Thus, idiomatic phrasal verbs have lexicalized meanings. For example, *He ran up the bill.* Therefore, knowing the common senses of *ran* and the spatial sense of *up* is unlikely to help a learner guess that *ran up the bill* means increased the amount of money (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Laufer and Eliasson, 1993; Lindstromberg, 2010).

However, someone can understand idiomatic phrasal verbs by understanding the underlying logic of the language. For example, there is a contrast between a phrase with a verb + preposition sequence as in *He ran up the hill* and with a phrasal verb as in *He ran up the bill.* In

each sentence, *run* contributes a sense of motion entailing change and *up* contributes the meaning of higher vertical direction on some path. The listener can use logic to infer that if *one is running up a bill* and something is going to change, then what is going to change is the amount of money. Because the direction is up, it means that the amount of money will increase (Stauffer, 1996, as cited in Celce Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Bolinger (1971) stated that the primitive directional meaning of *up* is modified to the aspectual one by the direction that most physical acts of completion take and, therefore, *up* in is associated with increase in the example of *He ran up the bill.* The first hypothesis of this study is that there will be a significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types.

     Polysemous phrasal verbs. As with other verbs, phrasal verbs can be polysemous (having many meanings) such as *check out.* Some examples are:

- *I need to check out by 1:00 pm.*

- *I went to the library to get a book, but someone had already checked it out.*

- *Be sure to check it out before you buy it.*

- *Check it out!* Just as one form can have many meanings, it is also possible to have more than one form with the same or similar meanings.

There are ESL/EFL teaching books that consider polysemous phrasal verbs *English phrasal verbs in use*.

     Register of phrasal verbs. The word *register* means the level of formality of language. However, register in systemic-functional linguistics has three variables: (a) mode, (b) tenor, and (c) field. "Mode" has to do with the channel of communication, whether the language is written or spoken. "Tenor" is reflected in the roles and relationships of interlocutors. For example, the choice of sentence type to express a request is governed by the nature of the relationship between

the person who makes the request and the person being asked to fulfill it. "Field" is concerned with the choices of content words (Halliday, 1994, as cited in Celce Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Thus, the register of phrasal verbs should be then covered in light of these variables including the level of formality. Nonetheless, the variable of **"tenor"** is not applicable to phrasal verbs.

Although many phrasal verbs do have single-word counterparts, words derived from Latin, English speakers prefer phrasal verbs such as *put off, call off,* and *show up* to their Latinate *postpone, cancel,* and *arrive* which is a matter of register. One-word verbs tend to have a slightly more formal register, and are thus more in less colloquial contexts, for example, in academic discourse and official written reports (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007), but phrasal verbs are common in informal registers, although not completely absent from formal discourse. There are many examples of phrasal verbs which traditionally have been felt to be colloquial and informal, but they abruptly have become accepted in formal contexts (Cornell, 1985). According to Cornell, it is generally true that phrasal verbs occur more frequently in the spoken rather in the written language.

Additionally, Side (1990) stated that direct equivalents of phrasal verbs do not always exist. For example, *I'm done in* would be used in a different social context from *I'm exhausted*. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) stated that certain phrasal verbs are associated with a particular field for which there are no concise alternatives. For example, *check out* as in *I need to check out by 1:00 pm* will likely be understood to mean check out of a hotel room. Thus, it is difficult to describe the same action using any other verb. A paraphrase of *check out* in this context might be that "upon leaving a hotel, I have to go to the front desk, give the clerk my key, and pay my bill." No other verb exists that has this precise meaning.

Importance of phrasal verbs. No one can speak or understand English, at least the informal register, without a knowledge of phrasal verbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Phrasal verbs are an important component of native-like spoken discourse and not using them can make nonnatives sound stilted and unnatural in speech (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Cornell (1985) stated that the importance of phrasal verbs comes from the great number of existing phrasal verbs, too. There are at least 700 phrasal verbs in ordinary, everyday use in English and at least 3000 established ones (Bywater, 1969; McArthur & Atkins, 1974, as cited in Cornell, 1985).

Additionally, Armstrong (2004) pointed out the importance of teaching phrasal verbs, developing of receptive awareness, and the ability to produce them:

> In spite of their difficulty, PVs have to be taught at some stage because they are common, the system underlying them is economical and creative, and they are an important part of the language system; indeed, as Bolinger (1971: xi) puts it, they constitute 'an explosion of lexical creativeness that surpasses anything else in our language'. It is important that all learners develop at least a receptive awareness, which will help them decode the PVs that they encounter in spoken and written texts, while those learners aspiring to be expert users need to be able to produce at least the more common PV combinations appropriately. (p. 214)

Challenges in use and learning phrasal verbs. Many linguists and people interested in ESL/EFL research have highlighted the difficulty of phrasal verbs to English learners in different linguistics books and ESL studies. O'Dowd (1998) commented, "Nonnative speakers of English (…), in my experience, find prepositions and particles (and P- forms in particular) among the most difficult (…) forms that they have to master in learning the English language" (p. 6). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) commented, "We are once again dealing (…) with a structure that is very difficult for ESL/EFL students" (p. 425). Additionally, Moon (1997) stated that phrasal verbs are usually considered problematic in terms of L2 teaching, learning, and use

for a number of reasons. The next sections present the most reasons popular for the difficulty of phrasal verbs.

The most challenging dimension is in the meaning of phrasal verbs. Although there is some semantic systematicity, there is still enough idiomaticity to cause difficulty for ESL/EFL learners. Thus, phrasal verbs are often noncompositional and have specialized meanings; that is someone can know the meaning of the verb and the apparent meaning of the particle, but when they are put together, a unique meaning is derived (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) stated that phrasal verbs contain two or more orthographic words working together, making them difficult to recognize as a single semantic unit. Unless a learner knows that a string of words is a multi-word verb, they are likely to try to decode the meanings of the individual words.

Additionally, the register of phrasal verbs could be a challenge as well to ESL/EFL learners as Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) stated:

> For learners, the issue is not so much choosing the verb form which carries the correct meaning, but rather choosing the verb which has the appropriate register, and which conforms to the expectations of the speech community. As such, the correct selection between multi-word verbs and their one-word counterparts makes a difference in how native-like and communicatively-effective a learner is. For example, by failing to use multi-word verbs in their speech, many learners of English tend to sound unnatural and non-idiomatic. (p. 121)

Moreover, there are very few non-Germanic languages that have phrasal verbs. On the other hand, phrasal verbs are very common in English. They are different from verbs in many languages of the world. As a result, most ESL/EFL students will find such verbs strange and difficult. No one can speak or understand English, at least the informal register, without a knowledge of phrasal verbs. English learners, however, do not realize this and they might overuse single-word verbs where a phrasal verbs would be much more appropriate. In addition

to, the conditions those govern the optional or obligatory separation of the verb and the particle for phrasal verbs used transitively; the placement of any nominal or pronominal objects with respect to the verb (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Moon, 1997).

There is some consistency of meaning for certain particles in the semi-transparent phrasal verbs category. However, even here ESL/EFL students can have problems. For example, *burn down* and *burn up* are not antonyms because *up* has a positive "goal completion" meaning versus *down*, which have a more negative "complete extinction" meaning. Moreover, some particles in the semi-transparent category signal certain meanings consistently, they cannot be assigned freely to any verb. For example, *fade out* is acceptable but *fade up* is not (Celce Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Dagut and Laufer, 1985).

Also, the phenomenon of polysemy of phrasal verbs is considered a learning problem as Cornell (1985) pointed out:

> It is not the case that a particular verb + particle combination may be polysomic in having both an idiomatic and non-idiomatic use: in addition it may well be polysomic in having more than one idiomatic use. There is not merely one non-idiomatic use of *put up* and one idiomatic use, for example. As an idiomatic combination *put up* subdivides into several different meanings:
> *He put us up for the night.*
> *Who put you up to this?*
> *He put up a good fight.* (p. 270)

Given these semantic and syntactic complexities of phrasal verbs, English language learners have been found to avoid using them consistently. The avoidance of phrasal verbs has been reported in many studies in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Many researchers investigated the avoidance of phrasal verbs who were motivated by Schachter's (1974) study who first highlighted the avoidance of relative clauses. The following section of this literature review cites critiques of empirical studies of the avoidance phenomenon and particularly empirical studies of the avoidance phrasal avoidance by ESL/EFL language learners.

Avoidance

The avoidance phenomenon was first mentioned in error analysis by Schachter (1974), who drew attention to the significance of examining not only what second language (L2) learners do produce but also examining what L2 forms learners tend to avoid using consistently. For a period of thirty five years, Schachter's study spurred on so many researchers in SLA and teachers of ESL as well to investigate this phenomenon more scientifically including Kleinmann (1977), Dagut and Laufer (1985), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), Laufer and Eliasson (1993), Liao and Fukuya (2004), Siyanova and Schmitt (2007), Ben Duhaish (2008), Abu Jamil (2010), and most recently Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012).

Schachter (1974) discovered the avoidance phenomenon by chance because her study was initially intended to dispute the claim that contrastive analysis (CA) a priori was inadequate in predicting target language learning difficulties and also to prove that CA a posteriori failed to predict learning problems in the target language. CA a priori enables investigators to analyze two "theoretically compatible linguistic descriptions" of one some subsystems (such as the phonological, morphological, syntactic subsystems) of two languages and eventually discover the similarities and differences between them. By doing so, they can make predictions about the areas of difficulty for a native speaker of language A who is learning language B and the assumption was that the similarities would be easier to acquire, but the differences will be harder. On the other hand, in CA a posteriori, a subcomponent of the field of error analysis, the investigators take the learners' errors that occurred while learning a particular construction in the target language and analyze that construction with the comparable construction in the native language of the target language's learner in order to find out why the errors occur. CA a posteriori supporters claim that native language interference has nothing to do with the

occurrence of the errors while learning the target language but rather from the learner's strategies in the acquisition of the target language and from the interference within the target language (Schachter, 1974, p. 205).

Schachter (1974) examined and analyzed the relative clauses (RCs) (in English, relative clauses are sentences introduced by the pronouns *who, which/that,* and *whose*) produced in four sets of 25 compositions written by advanced ESL learners and other four sets of 25 compositions written by intermediate ESL learners of native speakers of four languages of Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Arabic (fifty compositions written by each language's native speakers). She then compared the compositions written by the native speakers of the four languages with similar compositions written by American native speakers.

She first identified the a priori predictions and then undertook an error analysis in order to figure out how many errors were committed by each group of the four language speakers relative to the total number of RCs were produced in their compositions. The number of errors was 43 errors by committed by Persian students, 31 by Arab students, 9 by Chinese students, and 5 by Japanese students. She pointed out that by inspecting only the number of errors apart from the number of RCs that were produced, one would be led to recognize that the Persian and Arab learners have far more difficulty learning and producing RCs than do the Chinese and Japanese learners. According to CA a posteriori, the Chinese and Japanese students had less difficulty in RCs acquisition than the Persian and Arab students, the fact that Schachter (1974) argued to be proven incorrect.

Nonetheless, Schachter (1974) found that Persian and Arabic native speakers had more errors because they also produced more relative clauses (174 and 154, respectively). On the other hand, the Chinese and Japanese speakers had fewer errors because they also produced

fewer relative clauses (76 and 63, respectively). She emphasized that it was plausible and correct to think that they produced less RCs because they were trying to avoid them and they only produced them when they were sure that their RCs were correct and that was the reason behind the small number of errors. She then pointed out that "if a student finds a particular construction in the target language difficult to comprehend, it is very likely that he will try to avoid producing it" (p. 213).

The difficulty of RCs acquisition for the Chinese and Japanese speakers derives from two reasons; first, the position of RCs in the languages of Chinese and Japanese is different from the position of RCs in English; RCs in Chinese and Japanese are prenominal (to the left of noun phrase (NP)), but they are postnominal (to the right of the head NP) in English. Second, as a consequence for the first dimension, the order of internal of the main constituents with the RC must be changed, too. She states that RCs position in English, however, is the same as in Persian and Arabic which is postnominal. She states "that Persian and Arab learners, on the other hand, find RCF [relative clause formation] in English to be so similar to RCF in their native languages that they assume they can directly transfer their native language forms to English" (p. 211).

Schachter (1974) concluded that the justification for this phenomenon of avoidance was the differences between the learner's L1 and L2. She thus argued that the approach of error analysis without a priori predictions was incapable of justifying the avoidance phenomenon "I regard the CA a posteriori hypothesis as untenable and think it should be abandoned" (p. 213). At that time, error analysis was claimed to be a perfect tool of explaining errors committed by L2 learners and an adequate predictor of difficulties in learning L2s.

Although the undeniable impact and importance of Schachter's (1974) study, it has been criticized for some shortcomings such as Swain (1975), Perkins and Larsen-Freeman (1975), and Ickenroth (1975). In 1977, Kleinmann criticized Schachter' study:

> The problem inherent in all these studies is they do not characterize and describe genuine cases of avoidance. Instead, they discuss situations which deal with a learners' ignorance of some linguistic item and his concomitant nonuse therefore, which in turn is interpreted as avoidance (….) Clearly at this [presystematic] stage [of learning] an individual cannot be said to be avoiding a given syntactic structure, morpheme, or lexical item, which he does not have in his linguistic repertoire, any more than he can be said to be avoiding doing anything which he is unable to do. To be able to avoid some linguistic feature presupposes being able to choose not to avoid it, i.e. to use it. (p. 95-96)

Liao and Fukuya (2004) also criticized Schachter's (1974) study because of some unnecessary limitations found in the study. First, the study was limited because it "did not control for proficiency level or the frequency of relative clauses in the texts" (p. 194). Second, the study, as Seliger (1989) also pointed out, had "no proof that the learners had the ability to use relative clauses. Therefore, the Chinese and Japanese learners' so-called avoidance of producing English relative clauses may have resulted simply from their ignorance of the structure rather than conscious avoidance" (p. 194). Seliger stated that the Japanese learners might have demonstrated partial or incomplete acquisition because there were some occurrences of RCs in their compositions.

Abu Jamil (2010) argued that Schachter (1974) could not differentiate between no-doubt avoidance from other different phenomena. He stated, "There is no proof that the Chinese and Japanese learners exhibited 'true avoidance' and not a state of nonuse as a result of ignorance of the form" (p. 72).

Hence, Kleinmann (1977) considered the relation between avoidance and knowledge in his study aimed to find out more about avoidance behavior in different syntactic structures. He examined four structures (the passive, present progressive, infinitive complement, and direct

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object pronoun) produced by two groups of 39 intermediate level learners of ESL (24 native speakers of Arabic and 15 native speakers of Spanish and Portuguese). The selection of these four structures was based on CA between English and the three languages. The predictions were then made that Arabic students would have difficulty with passive and present progressive structures and Spanish and Portuguese students would have difficulty with infinitive complement and direct object pronoun structures.

First, before looking for any possible avoidance, a multiple-choice comprehension test was administered on three of the structures (passive, infinitive complements, and present progressive structures) in order to establish the subjects' prior knowledge of these structures and then any nonuse could not be attributed to the ignorance but to avoidance. He did not administer any test on direct object pronouns because he assumed that intermediate students had already mastered this structure. The subjects were asked to rate to their confidence in each of their answers on a five-point scale ranging from "*completely unsure*" ("0") to "*completely sure*" ("4"). Thus, three scores were obtained from the test for each subject: (a) a straightforward measure of the number of items correct for each structure without any consideration of confidence ratings, (b) a weighted comprehension score taking into account confidence ratings, and (c) a straightforward confidence score. Then, these scores were correlated with the frequency of production of the structure elicited on the indirect preference assessment task.

In the indirect preference assessment task, the subjects were presented with seven pictures, four of which were designed to elicit a passive sentence by giving the verbal cue: "*What happened to the _____?*" The blank represents the word woman, car, ball, or man, depending on the particular picture. The other three pictures were designed to elicit a present progressive sentence by giving the verbal cue: "*Describe the picture in a sentence*." In addition to, the

following situation was devised to elicit infinitive complements and direct object pronouns: Each participant was seated in front of the experimenter and next to another person. The experimenter was talking with the subject and at some point turned to the third person and said such as "*Leave*!", "*Stop*!", or "*Go*!" The experimenter then asked the subject such as "*What did I just tell _____*? The subject was expected to respond such as "*You told him to leave*". Moreover, an anxiety test was administered to the subjects in order to measure the facilitating and debilitating effects of anxiety on performance.

In the anxiety test, the subjects were asked to rate to their anxiety in each of given statements by selecting one of five choices ranging from "always" to "never". Example statements were: *Nervousness while using English helps me do better* and *Nervousness while using English in class prevents me from doing well*. Then, the results were correlated with the frequency of production of the various structures on the indirect preference assessment task.

The last procedure in the method was the administering the success-achievement and failure-avoidance orientation test to measure the strength on one's motives to attain success and avoid failure. In this test, the subjects were asked to answer either "*true*" or "*false*" on 22 statements such as *I have a strong desire to be a success in the world*. Then, the results were correlated with the frequency of production of the various structures elicited.

The study results showed a pattern of avoidance in accordance with difficulty predictions made by contrastive analysis. Significant differences between the Arabic and Spanish-Portuguese subjects were found in the frequency with which they used the target structures. The frequent use of the structures has correlated with various affective measures (such as confidence and facilitating anxiety) and vice versa. He concluded that these significant differences were only attributable to a genius avoidance phenomenon:

The findings suggest that while CA is a fairly good predictor of avoidance there is an intersection of linguistic and psychological variables in determining learner behavior in a second language, in that structures which otherwise would be avoided are likely to be produced depending on the affective state of the learner. (p. 93)

It is, however, argued that the underproduction or nonuse of certain linguistic structures does not necessarily suggest avoidance and the structural differences between the L1 and the target language may not be the only reason for underproduction. Seliger (1989) commented that the nonuse of language structures in the target language could result from the L1-L2 differences, ignorance, nonacquisition, or presystematic use of the not yet fully acquired form, or from true avoidance.

Li's (1996) study was intended to address the differentiation of conscious avoidance and subconscious underproduction assuming that Chinese and Japanese students in Schachter (1974) underproduced the RCs rather than avoided them. Although the structures of RCs were different in the two languages, the Chinese ESL students were able to produce all the RCs except for those that had special pragmatic functions. He thus concluded, "it is not the apparent formal difference that causes Chinese learners to consciously avoid English RCs, but the more subtle pragmatic differences that make subconsciously underproduce this structure" (p. 171).

So far I have reviewed a number of studies inspired by the Schachter's (1974) observation that confirmed the existence of the avoidance phenomenon of some linguistic structures by English learners. The following section summarizes other studies that focused particularly on the avoidance of the structure of phrasal verbs as the target structure in this study.

Avoidance of English phrasal verbs. The avoidance of phrasal verbs, of course, only compounds the problem, preventing learning and causing unnatural speech, such *as I*

encountered an old photograph for *I came across an old photograph* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-

Freeman, 1999, as cited in Darwin & Gray, 1999). As shown in Table 1, there are a

representative number of studies in the literature that considered the avoidance of phrasal verbs.

Table 1

Summary of Experimental Studies Dealing with Avoidance of English Phrasal Verbs

Researcher(s)	Subjects	Instrument	Key Results
Dagut and Laufer (1985)	A total of 180 EFL Hebrew-Speaking students were divided into 3 groups (60 students in each). In Group 1 and 3, they were EFL students and some were students of English Language and Literature. In Group 2, some were EFL students and some English majors.	Fifteen phrasal verbs consisting three categories (literal, figurative, and completive) were included in three tests (a multiple choice test, a translation test, and a memorizing test). Each test was given to only one group.	Hebrew-Speaking students displayed a genuine avoidance of phrasal verbs. The figurative PVs were the most avoided category.
Hulstijn and Marchena (1989)	A total of 225 Dutch learners of English (125 were intermediate in secondary level school, and 100 were advanced majoring in English from four Dutch universities and on college).	There were 15 phrasal verbs included in three tests (a multiple choice test, a memorizing test, and a translation test).	Dutch learners did not avoid PVs categorically. However, they avoided idiomatic PVs for semantic considerations. They also preferred OWVs that had general meanings over PVs that had specific meanings. Similarity in form combined with similarity in (idiomatic) meaning between an L1 and an L2 item may lead leaners to avoid using the L2 item.

Laufer and Eliasson (1993)	A Group of 87 advanced Swedish-speaking learners of English who were studying in the departments of Scandinavian, English, and Linguistics, at Uppsala University.	Two types of tests were administered (a multiple choice test and a translation test). There were categories of PVs included in the tests (literal, semitransparent, and figurative).	Swedish learners avoided neither PVs in general nor the figurative ones in particular. None of the two possible factors of (inherent L2 complexity and L1-L2 idiomatic similarity) triggered avoidance. The best predictor of avoidance is L1-L2 differences.
Liao and Fukuya (2004)	Two groups of 70 intermediate and advanced Chinese-speaking learners of English were divided into six subgroups.	Fifteen PVs (literal and figurative) were selected and then used in three tests (a multiple choice test, a translation test, and a recall test).	Three factors (proficiency level, phrasal-verb type, and test type) affected the Chinese learners' avoidance of PVs. The reasons for the Chinese learners' avoidance were L1-L2 differences and the semantic difficulty of PVs. The learners' avoidance was a manifestation of interlanguage.
Siyanova and Schmitt (2007)	Sixty-five English native speakers (undergrad, postgrad, and professionals) and other 65 advanced nonnatives of non-Germanic languages (e.g., Arabic, Russian, Italian, and Chinese) were the subjects.	A questionnaire consists of 26 phrasal and their OWV pairs was given to the participants.	Nonnatives were less likely to use multi-word verbs than native speakers in informal spoken contexts. The length of exposure to native-speaking environments did not have an effect on the likelihood of using the multi-word verbs. A corpus analysis of

			the same verb pairs showed that the one-word verbs are often more frequent in both written and spoken discourse. Long term exposure to a natural L2 environment does have some effect on the selection of multi-word vs. one-word verbs
Ben Duhaish (2008)	A total of 129 Arabic-speaking intermediate and advanced learners, including 73 EFL learners and 56 ESL learners participated.	Two types of tests (a multiple-choice test and a translation test) comprised 25 phrasal and OWV pairs were administered. Three types of PVs were included (literal, semi transparent, and figurative).	The Arab learners performed better in the multiple-choice test. Both the advanced and intermediate learners avoided the semi transparent, and figurative PVs more than the literal ones. Language environment affected learners' preference for PVs over OWVs.
Abu Jamil (2010)	A total of 160 Arab intermediate and advanced learners of ESL and EFL	Thirty PVs (literal, semitransparent, and figurative) were identified and then used in the context of dialogues in two tests (a multiple choice test and translation test) and each tests had two versions. There were two additional tasks.	L1-L2 differences did not motivate Arab learners to develop genuine avoidance. Long exposure to the native speaker environment had an influence on the learners' preference for PVs. Both the advanced and intermediate learners avoided the semi transparent, and figurative PVs more

			than the literal ones. Proficiency level influenced learners' preference for PVs or OWVs.
Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012)	A total of 85 Iranian learners of EFL (50 intermediate L's and 35 advanced L's) were divided into three groups.	Fifteen PVs and OWVs in the context of dialogues were used in three tests (a multiple choice test, a translation test, and a recall test).	Both test type and PV type had an effect the learners' avoidance of PVs. Proficiency level did not affect the learners' performance. The L1-L2 differences and the semantic complexity of PVs seem to cause avoidance.

The first study that has contributed to the research of phrasal verbs avoidance was Dagut and Laufer (1985). They investigated the use of phrasal verbs by Hebrew-speaking English majors and non-majors on three types of phrasal verbs (literal, completive, and figurative). Dagut and Laufer's study was conducted in the light of three previous studies' conclusions including Schachter (1974), Kleinmann (1977), and Levenston (1971).

Schachter (1974) highlighted the importance of not only examining structures produced by the target language learners but also those they seemed to avoid using consistently because of the L1-L2 differences; i.e., when those structures have no parallel in their L1's. Kleinmann (1977) stated that the avoidance strategy cannot be attributed to the ignorance of the avoided structure and the term "avoidance" implies that the structure in question is familiar to the learners and can be, at least, passively recognized by them. Levenston (1971) argued that the lack of Hebrew translation-equivalents for the English structure best explained the under-representation (avoidance) of various English structures by

Hebrew-speaking learners of English. Incorporating the results of these studies, Dagut and Laufer (1985) had the impression that Hebrew-speaking learners would avoid the use of phrasal verbs when expressing themselves in spite of their knowledge of the structure.

First of all, Dagut and Laufer (1985) identified 15 phrasal verbs preferred by native English speakers over the semantically equivalent one-word verb (e.g. let down vs. disappoint). These phrasal verbs were classified into three categories in sematic terms (literal as *go out*, figurative as *show off*, and completive as *cut off*). For these phrasal verbs, 15 sentenced were constructed and used in three tests (a multiple choice test, a translation test, and a memorizing test) that were administered to three groups of Hebrew-speaking learners EFL. The multiple-choice test consisted of 15 sentences and each sentence had a blank to be filled in with one of four choices were given (the appropriate phrasal verb, the appropriate nonphrasal verb, and two distractors). For example, "We didn't believe that John could ever _____ his friends" (*let down*, *solve*, *disappoint*, and *carry on*). This test was given to 60 non-English majors students. The second was a verb translation test that included the same sentences in the multiple-choice test, but the verb was left out and its Hebrew translation was given. This test was given to a different group of 60 students (30 English majors and 30 EFL learners) who were required to translate each Hebrew verb into English. The third was a verb-memorizing test and the 15 sentences were given in full with the phrasal verb and its Hebrew translation. The test was given to a third group of 60 EFL students who were required to memorize the sentences and to supply the English form after one hour when the verb in English was left out as only the verb in Hebrew was written down.

The results confirmed Dagut and Laufer's (1985) pre-existing impression, and thus they concluded, "Hebrew-speaking students of English display a marked tendency to avoid

using phrasal verbs when trying to express themselves in English" (p. 77). The majority of the learners avoided using phrasal verbs, preferring the one-word verbs. Regarding the distribution of categories, literal phrasal verbs were the least avoided category by the three groups, but the completive and figurative phrasal verbs were mostly avoided.

In the multiple-choice test, Hebrew-speaking students chose phrasal verbs in 42% of the cases; the single verbs in 45%; the remaining 13% comprised wrong answers or attempt to answer. In the verb translation test (from Hebrew to English), in 24%, students translated the Hebrew verbs into a phrasal verbs; in 56% of the answers, students translated the Hebrew verbs into a single verb; and in 20% of the cases, the answer was either wrong or none. On the verb-memorizing test, the phrasal verbs were chosen in 24% of the cases; the single verbs in 41%; while 35% were either mistranslated or not translated at all.

Dagut and Laufer (1985) attributed this genuine avoidance to the systemic incongruence between the L1 and L2, i.e. when the L1 does not have the parallel to the structure in question in L2. According to Dagut and Laufer, Hebrew lacks the comparable structure to the phrasal verbs in English: "When his or her L1 offers him no parallel to the system he is being called on to use in L2" (p. 78). Thus they called that avoidance as an instance of indirect interference because it leads to the learners' inability to understand what is being required of them. Also, they stated that intralingual factors as "over-generalization" or "fossilization" cannot explain the learners' difficulty. Nonetheless, avoidance can be understood by an interlingual approach. They have concluded their article with this observation:

> Since the phrasal verb structure is a peculiarity of the Germanic languages, it should
> be the case that the avoidance phenomenon noted in this paper is found generally with
> regard to learners of English who are native speakers of non- Germanic languages
> other than Hebrew. The theory advanced here would indeed receive strong support

should similar studies done with speakers of other non- Germanic languages confirm our findings. (p. 78)

Liao and Fukuya (2004), however, argued that Dagut and Laufer's (1985) study had two weaknesses. First, the method used to establish the subjects' prior knowledge of the structure in question (phrasal verbs) was not sound. The choice of the phrasal verbs depended on the researchers' impression or intuition from their teaching experiences and assumed that the students "had come across all of the 15 phrasal verbs at some point in their education" (p. 75). Thus, it was much likely that the underproduction may have occurred from their ignorance of the phrasal verbs. Thus, as Kamimoto, Shimura, and Kellerman (1992) pointed out, Dagut and Laufer's (1985) conclusion that Hebrew learners had a genuine avoidance was not well grounded. Second, Dagut and Laufer claimed that interlingual differences played a role in the learners' avoidance, but they failed to address the fact that the avoidance was much more frequent in the category of figurative phrasal verbs than in the case of literal or completive ones which points to intralingual factors.

Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) was a follow-up study to Dagut and Laufer's (1985) study. The authors derived a corollary from Dagut and Laufer's conclusion that Dutch-speaking learners of English would not tend to avoid phrasal verbs because phrasal verbs do exist in Dutch. However, they hypothesized that "Dutch learners of English as a second language (ESL) would avoid phrasal verbs, too, not for structural, but for semantic reasons" (p. 241). The study's design was along the lines that were followed by Dagut and Laufer but with some essential differences: (a) The division of the learners into intermediate and advanced was considered more than in the design of Dagut and Laufer's study because the authors hypothesized that the tendency to avoid phrasal verbs would diminish with increasing

English proficiency, (b) different sentences were used in the tests, and (c) more appropriate verb pairs were used.

Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) identified 15 phrasal verbs preferred by native speakers of English over their semantically equivalent one-word verbs. For these phrasal verbs, 15 sentenced were constructed and used in three tests (a multiple choice test, a memory test, and a translation test) that were administered to three groups of intermediate learners and three groups of advanced learners. The multiple-choice test (administered to 50 intermediate and 25 advanced learners) provided Dutch ESL learners with both the phrasal and the corresponding one-word verb (along with two distractor verbs). The memory test was administered to 25 learners in each level. The same procedure of Dagut and Laufer (1985) was taken except that it provided learners only with the phrasal verb not the L1 clues. The translation test provided learners with a Dutch equivalent and they were required to translate it into English. It was administered to 50 learners in each level.

Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) conclusion confirmed their hypothesis because "Dutch learners of English do not avoid phrasal verbs categorically. However, they seemed to avoid those idiomatic phrasal verbs that perceive as too Dutch-like" (p. 241). On all the three elicitation tests, intermediate learners tended to avoid English phrasal verbs so more often than advanced learners.

On the multiple-choice test, intermediate learners responded significantly differently from the English native speakers, $X^2 = 42.4$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$, showing much less preference for phrasal verbs. The advanced learners, on the other hand, approached native phrasal verbs preference and no significant difference was obtained, $X^2 = .49$, $df = 1$, $p < ns$. On the memorization test, the difference between the intermediate learners and the advanced learners'

preference for phrasal verbs was significant, ($t = 3.294$, $df = 98$, $p < .005$) indicating that intermediate learners responded less often with a phrasal verb ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 3.0$) than advanced learners ($M = 6.8$, $SD = 3.0$). On the translation test, the difference between the intermediate learners and the advanced learners' preference for phrasal verbs was significant, ($t = 3.356$, $df = 48$, $p < .005$) indicating that intermediate learners responded less often with a phrasal verb ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 2.4$) than advanced learners ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 1.8$).

Additionally, there were four phrasal verbs (*give up*, *break out*, *go*, and *bring up*) among the 15 selected that had literal counterparts in Dutch with the same meaning: *opgeven*, *uitbreken*, *afgaan*, and *opbrengen*. I find it interesting that the Dutch learners avoided these phrasal verbs, perceiving them as being too idiomatic, too Dutch-like, and therefore nontransferable. Thus, Hulstijn and Marchena concluded, "Similarity in form combined with similarity in (idiomatic) meaning between an L1 and an L2 item may lead leaners to avoid using the L2 item" (p. 250). However, it was argued, as Abu Jamil (2010) pointed out, that Hulstijn and Marchena's study did not take the degree of ambiguity of a phrasal verb into consideration seriously because Dutch intermediate learners preferred one-word verbs with a more general meaning over phrasal verbs with a more specialized (idiomatic) meaning.

The third study on avoidance of phrasal verbs was by Laufer and Eliasson (1993) who seemed to be motivated by Dagut and Laufer's (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) interesting findings. These two studies, as Laufer and Eliasson pointed out, identified three possible lexical and structural factors that may lead to avoidance in the second language acquisition: (a) cross-linguistic difference (Dagut and Laufer, 1985; Kleinmann, 1977; Schachter, 1974), (b) cross-linguistic similarity (Hulstijn and Marchena, 1989), (c) intrinsic complexity of the second language structure avoided (Hulstijn and Marchena, 1989).

Laufer and Eliasson (1993)'s experiment is parallel to (but not identical) Dagut and Laufer's (1985) study. Hence, its outcomes were compared to the results of Dagut and Laufer's study. Two elicitation procedures (a multiple-choice test and a translation test) were used in two groups of 87 Swedish advanced learners of English whose native language does have phrasal verbs. Their proficiency level was the same as Hebrew students' in Dagut and Laufer's experiment. The multiple-choice test was administered to 50 English learners and the translation test was administered to 37 learners. The authors ran a supplementary comprehension test on a control group to confirm their assumption that the subjects in the study had a good passive knowledge of the selected 20 phrasal verbs (literal, semitransparent, and figurative types) included in 20 sentences.

Laufer and Eliasson (1993) assumed that:

If the subjects avoided English phrasal verbs, particularly the figurative ones, even though phrasal verbs exist in Swedish, this would indicate that inherent semantic difficulty of second language forms was the main factor contributing to the avoidance behavior. If, on the other hand, the learners did not show any preference for one-word verb forms in English, or indeed favored the phrasal forms, this would support the assumption that avoidance or nonavoidance depends largely on differences or similarities between the native and the foreign language. (p. 35)

Laufer and Eliasson (1993) assumed that avoidance had taken place if one type of verb was significantly more infrequent than the other type in at least one test, while the other test showed no significant difference between the two types. There were no significant differences between phrasal and nonphrasal responses by Swedish-speaking students in the two test (Test A: $t(40) = .50$, $p < 0.5$; (Test B: $t(36) = 1.32$, $p < 0.5$). Also, Swedish-speaking students did not avoid figurative phrasal verbs more than nonfigurative ones. In the multiple-choice test, the number of figurative responses was significantly higher the number of nonfigurative ones $X^2 (1, N = 50) = 18.8$, $p < .001$; $t(49) = 4.55$, $p < .0001$. Moreover,

Swedish-speaking students did not avoid English figurative phrasal verbs that had direct equivalents in Swedish. In the multiple-choice test, there was no significant difference, (X^2 (1, $N = 50$) = 0.7, $p < .05$; $t(49) = 0.25$, $p < .05$). In the translation test, identical phrasal verbs responses were significantly higher than the different ones (X^2 (1, $N = 37$) = 15, $p < .001$; $t(36)$ = 5.95, $p < .0001$).

Therefore, the results of this Laufer and Eliasson's (1993) experiment were: (a) As opposed to Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), students whose native language lacks phrasal verbs (Hebrew students) avoided them, but are not avoided by students whose native language does have phrasal verbs (Swedish students), (b) the inherent complexity of the second language, which was thought to play a major role in avoiding figurative phrasal verbs, was not observed in this study because the Swedish learners did not avoid these phrasal verbs, and (c) idiomatic similarity between the L1 and the L2 did not necessarily induce avoidance. Therefore, Swedes used significantly more phrasal verbs than Hebrew students and they did not avoid figurative phrasal verbs that had direct equivalent in Swedish as Dutch learners did in Hulstijn and Marchena's experiment. They concluded that the avoidance is determined more by a systemic incongruence between the first language (L1) and the second language (L2) than by the inherent difficulty of L2 forms.

In line with the inquiry of these three discussed studies, Liao and Fukuya (2004) was the forth-empirical study in the literature on phrasal verbs avoidance. The study was designed to examine: (a) Whether proficiency level is a determining or insignificant factor in the avoidance of phrasal verbs and (b) whether different formats of elicitation tests would have an influence on the avoidance. Also, the study looked into two types of phrasal verbs (literal and figurative). Liao and Fukuya's study was designed along the lines of Dagut and Laufer

(1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) with essential differences. Fifteen pairs of phrasal verbs and one-word verbs were selected and presented in a set of 15 dialogues that were included in three tests (a multiple-choice test, a translation test, and a recall test) and administered to 40 intermediate and 30 advanced Chinese learners of English. Like Hebrew, Chinese language does not have the phrasal verbs structure.

The study operationalized learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs as a usage that is lower than of the native speakers at a statistically significant level. Thus, on the multiple-choice test, while the intermediate learners avoided using phrasal verbs preferring the one-word verbs, the advanced learners did not perform very differently from the native speakers. The ANOVA showed that the group was significant, $F (2, 34) = 31.25, p < .01$. The difference between the advanced learners and the native speakers was not statistically significant; the effect size was $d = -0.41$. Phrasal verb type was also significant, $F (1, 34) = 7.68, p < .01$, with the mean score on the literal phrasal verbs significantly higher than that on the figurative phrasal verbs. On all the three tests, phrasal verb type was also significant, $F (1, 58) = 46.79$, $p < .01$, with the mean score on the literal phrasal verbs significantly higher than that on the figurative ones. In addition to, proficiency level difference was significant $F (1, 58) = 28.05$, $p < .01$. Intermediate learners' avoidance was attributed to the L1-L2 differences between English and Chinese. Liao and Fukuya (2004) commented, "Because of the L1-L2 differences, the semantic function of the particles in English phrasal verbs may be confusing to intermediate Chinese learners of English" (p. 211).

However, because the study results demonstrated that the Chinese advanced learners used significantly more phrasal verbs than the intermediate did, Liao and Fukuya (2004) claimed a developmental manifestation of interlanguage from avoidance to nonavoidance.

Namely, regardless of whether learners have phrasal verbs in their L1 or not, they go through the same developmental process. Within this developmental framework, Liao and Fukuya speculated that the advanced learners' exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs in contrast with the intermediate leaners' avoidance. Thus, for the advanced learners, learning counteracted the effects of L1-L2 differences and the claim by Dagut and Laufer (1985) that L1-L2 differences are a good predictor of avoidance in L2 acquisition was not fully supported in this study.

Moreover, both intermediate and advanced learners used fewer figurative phrasal verbs than literal phrasal verbs. However, advanced learners' performance was not statistically different from that of the native speakers. Their exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs.

However, Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) argued that the significant differences in the Chinese learners' willingness to use multi-word verbs were due to that the two groups varied considerably in both proficiency level and L2 exposure because the intermediate EFL Chinese students in Liao and Fukuya (2004) had no L2 exposure, but their advanced ESL students had at least nine months of natural L2 exposure. Siyanova and Schmitt assumed that if the two groups varied only in terms of their L2 exposure, but their proficiency levels were similar, then there would not be any differences in terms of their preference for phrasal verbs. Regarding the factor of test type, there was an interaction between test type and phrasal verb type only on the translation test because both intermediate and advanced Chinese learners tended to use figurative phrasal verbs less often than literal ones.

As observed in the previous studies, the English native speakers' preference, unlike nonnative speakers, for phrasal verbs over the semantically equivalent one-word verbs was

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established. However, Siyanova and Schmitt's (2007) study explored this issue by consulting the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) corpus and the British National Corpus (BNC) to answer their question: "What are the relative frequencies of multi-word vs. one-word verbs in written and spoken English as L1?" (p. 121). They found that the BNC and CANCODE data suggested that although many multi-word verbs are reasonably frequent, natives still prefer to use one-word verbs over phrasal verbs in the majority of the cases. However, they concluded that "in spoken discourse natives do prefer multi-word over one-word verbs in many cases, but we must not assume that this is the trend in general" (p. 131).

> Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) raised three questions to be addressed in their study:
>
> 1. What are the relative frequencies of multi-word vs. one-word verbs in written and spoken English as L1?
> 2. Are advanced learners of English as likely to use multi-word/one-word verbs as native speakers in spoken and written contexts?
> 3. How does exposure to an L2 environment affect the likelihood of nonnatives using multi-word vs. one-word verbs? (p. 121)

To answer these questions, they devised a questionnaire of 26 phrasal and their one-word verb pairs set in short dialogues. This questionnaire was given to two groups of 65 English native speakers (undergrad, postgrad, and professionals) and other 65 advanced nonnatives of non-Germanic languages (e.g., Arabic, Russian, Italian, and Chinese). In addition, they consulted three corpora: the CANCODE, BNC, and the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE).

The results were, as an answer to Question 1, that multi-word verbs were more frequent in spoken than written discourse. Moreover, the one-word form was more frequent than the multi-word form in both spoken than written discourse. They have found that 18 of the 26 verb pairs (69 %) were more frequent in their one-word forms in written discourse.

The answer to Question 2 was that while the native speaker's preference for multi-word verbs was strongly established, the advanced learners were more likely to use one-word verbs than the natives. Advanced learners were less likely to use the multi-word verbs ($M=$ 4.47) than the native speakers ($M=$ 5.15), with a Mann–Whitney test confirming that the result is statistically significant ($U=$ 991, $p <$ .001). Also, the learners ($M=$ 4.21) were more likely to use the one-word verbs than the natives ($M=$ 3.36), a result that is also statistically significant ($U=$ 854, $p <$ .001). However, the learners' willingness to use multi-word verbs was obvious but they do not have as strong a preference for them as the natives.

The answer to Question 3 was that although the lengthy stay in native-speaking environments decreased the likelihood of using one-word verbs, it did not have an influence on the likelihood of using multi-word verbs. A Kruskal–Wallis test with Mann–Whitney post hoc test showed no significant differences in likelihood of multi-word verb usage among the three groups ($H(2) =$ 1.4, $p >$ .05). Also, spending more than a year abroad was not enough to bring the nonnatives down to a native-like level; the one-word verb scores of those long-stay learners ($M=$ 3.71) were still higher than the scores of native speakers ($M=$ 3.36) (Mann–Whitney test, $U=$ 535.5, $p <$ 0.5).

Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) concluded that their study results supported those of Dagut and Laufer (1985) who found evidence of avoidance. Hence, the results were different from Liao and Fukuya (2004) who found their advanced Chinese learners differed slightly from native speakers on using phrasal verbs and no avoidance behavior was reported.

However, the claim by Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) that "the amount of exposure to native-speaking environments did not have an effect on the likelihood of using the multi-word verbs" (p. 119) was not well grounded. The reason is that the exposure to the L2 environment

was not taken into consideration. The ultimate group was "more than 12 months" and, as

Siyanova and Schmitt themselves commented, "The "more than 12 month" participants were

not exposed long enough to show an effect" (p. 132). The researchers should have included

learners with long exposure to the L2 environment (as up to four years in the L2 environment)

to justify this claim. This drawback is discussed in greater detail when discussing Ben

Duhaish's (2008) and Abu Jamil's (2010) same drawback.

Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010) are the only relevant studies to this study.

Thus, I will postpone reviewing them because the literature review should be concluded with

the most relevant studies.

The most recent study on avoidance of phrasal verbs is Ghabanchi and Goudarzi

(2012). The study investigated any possible avoidance by Iranian learners of English, whose

native language (Persian) does not have the phrasal verbs structure. Three factors were

considered in the experiment; the role of phrasal verb types, type of measurement, and level of

English proficiency. The study raised questions as follows:

1. Do Iranian learners of English avoid using phrasal verbs?
2. Does semantic nature of different types of phrasal verb (figurative verbs and literal) affect their performance to avoid this structure?
3. Does the way of measurement affect their avoidance (if any)?
4. Does proficiency level play an important role in all the three questions above? (p. 44)

To answer these questions, Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012) administered three tests (a

multiple-choice test, a translation test, and a recall test) on 15 pairs of phrasal verbs (4 literal and

11 figurative) and one-word verbs in the context of dialogues to 85 intermediate and advanced

Iranian learners of English. Intermediate learners were 50 B.A. students of English and

advanced learners were 35 MA students of English. In the multiple-choice test, the appropriate

phrasal verb, the appropriate nonphrasal verb, and two distractors were given. For the translation

test, the phrasal verb was left out but its Persian equivalent was given. In the recall test, the 15 sentences were given in full with the phrasal and the students were required to memorize the sentences and to supply the English form after one hour.

For the native speakers the result reported by Liao and Fukuya (2004) was used here who "were fifteen undergraduate students at the university of Hawaii at Manoa" (Liao and Fukuya, 2004, p. 202). On the multiple-choice, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the three groups (the native speaker, the advanced learners, and the intermediate learners) performances. The results showed that the group was significant $F(2, 47) = 10.0$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Post hoc (Tukey) comparisons revealed that the mean score for native speakers ($M = 12.68$, $SD = 4.28$) was significantly different from the advanced learners ($M = 9.33$, $SD = 2.84$). The difference between native speakers and the intermediate learners ($M = 7.85$, $SD = 2.34$) was also statistically significant. However, advanced students did not significantly differ from intermediate students. Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the three groups performance in order to identify any dissimilation in phrasal verb type (figurative vs. literal) between groups. The results showed that the group was significant $F(2,47) = 8.96$, $p = 0.001 < 0.05$. Post hoc comparisons revealed that the mean score for native speakers ($M = 9.20$, $SD = 3.29$) was significantly different from the advanced learners ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 2.64$). The difference between native speakers and the intermediate learners ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 2.08$) was also statistically significant. However, advanced students did not significantly differ from intermediate students.

On the translation and recall tests, t-test was conducted to investigate the possibility of any difference between intermediate and advanced learners in avoiding phrasal verbs on these two tests. Translation t-test revealed no significant difference, $t(14.4) = 0.98$, $p = 0.33 > 0.05$. In

recall test, the same result was also achieved, $t(17.7) = -1.57$, $p = 0.13 > 0.05$. The result also revealed that these two tests showed no significant difference in their use of figurative verbs. This result was identified in translation with t value 1.37 $p = 0.18 > 0.05$ and in recall test, $t(17.2) = -1.35$ $p = 0.19 > 0.05$.

In order to investigate the possibility of test type influence on performance of Iranian learners, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine any significant difference in learners' performance in using phrasal verbs in their tests, $F(2,82) = 21.26$, $p = 00.0 < 0.05$. The result was that test type had an influence on choosing specific phrasal verb.

Therefore, the results have reported that Iranian learners avoided phrasal verbs. Both intermediate and advanced learners have used phrasal verbs much less than native speakers and the reason might be the difference between L1 and L2 in supporting the results of Ben Duhaish (2008), Dagut and Laufer (1985), Laufer and Eliasson (1993) Liao and Fukuya (2004), and Siyanova and Schmitt (2007). Two factors were found to have an effect on the Iranian's avoidance; test type and verb type. Both groups of Iranian learners used phrasal verbs less often in translation and recall test. Also, they preferred literal phrasal verbs over figurative ones in all three tests. Thus, the learners' proficiency levels did not affect their performance. Therefore, Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012) concluded, "the difference between L1 and L2 structure and semantic complexity of phrasal verbs might cause the learners' avoidance" in supporting the results of Abu Jamil (2010), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), Liao and Fukuya (2004), and Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) (p. 43).

There are only two studies in the literature that investigated the avoidance of phrasal verbs by "Arab" learners of English: Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010). Ben Duhaish (2008) tested a total of 129 Arab intermediate and advanced learners of English.

Research questions were concerned with four factors assumed to attribute to avoidance; (a) the learners' proficiency level (advanced vs. intermediate), (b) phrasal verb types (literal, semi-transparent, and figurative), (c) test types (multiple-choice vs. translation test), and (d) language environment (ESL vs. EFL).

The results have showed that proficiency level, phrasal verb types, test types, and language environment all have an effect on Arab learner's avoidance of phrasal verbs. Therefore, a significant main effect was obtained concerning proficiency level, F (1, 768) = 15.37, p < .001 indicating that advanced learners had significantly higher scores (M = 14.32) than intermediate learners (M = 13.71). For verb types, a significant main effect was obtained, F (2, 768) = 601.23, p < .001 indicating that Arab learners had significantly higher scores in use of literal phrasal verbs (M = 17.18) than figurative (M = 11.72) and semi-transparent verbs (M = 13.21) and. Regarding test types, a significant main effect was obtained, F (1, 768) = 60.80, p < .001 indicating that Arab learners had significantly higher scores on the MC (M = 14.53) than they had on the translation test (M = 13.50). Finally, there were significant differences in phrasal verbs preference between the ESL learners and EFL learners, F (1, 768) = 60.25, p < .001 indicating that ESL learners had significantly higher scores (M = 14.54) than EFL learners (M = 13.40).

Moreover, a Chi square test was conducted to test if there was a preference for one-word verbs over phrasal verbs by Arab learners. The Chi square value obtained was 1,098.94 in X^2 [df = 10] = 1098.94; p < .001. Therefore, since the probability is less than .05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ben Duhaish (2008) attributed the Arab learners' avoidance to the L1-L2 structural differences between Arabic and English because Arabic does not have the phrasal verb structure

in supporting the results of Dagut and Laufer (1985), Laufer and Eliasson (1993) Liao and Fukuya (2004), and Siyanova and Schmitt (2007). However, Abu Jamil (2010) commented that this conclusion by Ben Duhaish was unjustified according to the evidence presented in the study itself. The study results have showed that Arab learners preferred the literal phrasal verbs over their one-word verbs in both the two tests. Thus, the Arab learners have tended to avoid the category of idiomatic rather than the literal phrasal verbs and, thus, the semantic complexity of the phrasal verbs might be the best reason for the avoidance by Arab learners.

Moreover, Abu Jamil (2010) identified two more drawbacks in Ben Duhaish's (2008) study. The method used to establish subjects' prior knowledge of the phrasal verbs was not sound because the selection of the 25 phrasal verbs in the study was based on the author's himself rather than the subjects' exposure to a variety of texts and conversations. In addition, Ben Duhaish did not look into the role of time lived in a native speaking environment.

Abu Jamil (2010) was a follow-up study to Ben Duhaish's (2008) study because, as Abu Jamil pointed out, a serious lack of important aspects of the Arab learners' avoidance was found in Ben Duhaish's study. In line with the inquiries made by the studies reviewed above, Abu Jamil has explored the role of proficiency level (advanced, intermediate), the impact of educational background (EFL, ESL), the context of structural differences between L1 and the L2, and the inherent semantic complexity of phrasal verb (literal, semi-transparent, figurative) as well as the effect of different elicitation formats on Arab learner's possible avoidance. The study subjects were 160 ESL and EFL Arab learners; 40 intermediate and 40 advanced learners in the foreign environment (Saudi Arabia) and other 40 intermediate and 40 advanced learners in the native environment (USA).

The selection criteria for phrasal verbs used by Abu Jamil (2010) were much more rigorous than any previous study, but not perfect. First, he carefully selected 100 phrasal verbs from difference sources such as Saudi English curricular, dictionaries, and concordances. Then, in order to establish the subjects' prior knowledge, he ran a comprehension multiple-choice test to 20 Arab learners (I have identified one shortcoming regarding the sample who took this test and will be discussed in greater detail later). They were required to indicate the degree of confidence about the choice on a five-point scale ranging from completely unsure (1) to completely sure (5) as in the example below:

Can you get some coffee from the shops; I'm afraid we've run …

A. in   **B. Out**   C. off   Degree of confidence _____

Only 46 phrasal verbs were correctly chosen out of the 100 phrasal verbs and eventually only 30 ones were used and divided into three types (literal, semi-transparent, and figurative). He has administrated four tests (two versions of multiple-choice tests and two versions of translation tests). Also, each test was followed by two tasks (a fill-in-the-blanks task and a paraphrasing task). Each test consisted of 50 items and 10 learners from each of the study's four groups were enrolled in.

Abu Jamil (2010) concluded that his study findings did not support the conclusion of the previous studies that have proposed that the L1-L2 differences is a good predictor of learners' preference for one-word verbs and avoidance of phrasal verbs (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Sjoholm, 1995; Ben Duhaish, 2008) because his results have showed that Arab learners, whose language did not have phrasal verbs structure, have not avoided literal phrasal verbs in the preference task. According to Abu Jamil, if the L1-L2 differences were a good reason for avoidance, Arab learners would avoid even literal phrasal verbs but they did not.

Abu Jamil (2010)'s study has reported that the learners' performance was influenced by language environment, level of proficiency, the semantic properties of phrasal verbs, and the test types. There were significant differences in phrasal verbs preference between the ESL learners and EFL learners, $F(1, 358) = 18.885$, $p < .001$ indicating that ESL learners had significantly higher scores on the phrasal verbs ($M = 14.75$) than EFL learners ($M = 11.92$). Also, a significant main effect was obtained for the level of proficiency, $F(1, 358) = 92.771$, $p < .001$ indicating that advanced learners had significantly higher scores ($M = 16.5$) than intermediate learners ($M = 10.18$). Regarding verb types, a significant main effect was obtained, $F(2, 357) = 41.065$, $p < .001$ indicating that Arab learners had significantly higher scores in use of literal phrasal verbs ($M = 5.68$) than figurative ($M = 3.26$) and semi-transparent verbs ($M = 4.4$). Regarding test types, a significant main effect was obtained, $F(2, 357) = 33.831$, $p < .001$ indicating that Arab learners had significantly more scores on the MC ($M = 14.1$) and MCA ($M=16.2$) than they had on the translation test ($M = 9.47$).

Therefore, Abu Jamil (2010) attributed avoidance in only these two types (semi-transparent and idiomatic) of phrasal verbs to the semantic complexity of English phrasal verbs as the major reason for Arab learners' avoidance. This conclusion is in line with Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) conclusion: "For phrasal verbs with specific (as opposed to general) meanings, avoidance need not necessarily be explained in terms of a structural contrast between English (present of phrasal verbs) and Hebrew (absence of phrasal verbs), but rather can be explained better in term of semantic considerations" (p. 251).

Incorporating the methodologies in Duhaish's (2008) and Abu Jamil's (2010) studies, two major drawbacks to the two studies can be identified: (a) The length of exposure to the L2 environment was not taken into consideration and (b) the inclusion of EFL learners in the studies

was not appropriate. First, their short exposure to the L2 environment that has resulted in using fewer idiomatic and semi-transparent phrasal verbs than literal phrasal verbs has led the authors to conclude that even advanced ESL learners seemed to avoid idiomatic and semi-transparent phrasal verbs either for L1-L2 differences (Ben Duhaish) or for the semantic complexity of English phrasal verbs (Abu Jamil). Second, the inclusion of EFL learners in the studies has led the authors to mistakenly interpret the poor performance, i.e., large number of errors plus fewer use of idiomatic and semi-transparent phrasal verbs plus higher preference for one-word verbs, by EFL Arab (Saudi) learners as avoidance instead of ignorance or incomplete acquisition of the structure. Cornell (1985) called his participants' poor performance as "a widespread ignorance" of phrasal verbs tested. These two drawbacks are discussed in greater detail in the next sections.

First, the long exposure to the L2 environment was argued to be an important factor in ESL learners' performance from avoidance to nonavoidance (Liao and Fukuya, 2004). Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) pointed out the "long term exposure to a natural L2 environment does have some effect on the selection of multi-word vs. one-word verbs" (p.130). According to Schmitt (2008), collocations have to be acquired through massive exposure to L2 environment. As reviewed above, Liao and Fukuya speculated that the advanced learners' exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs in contrast with the intermediate leaners' avoidance. Among their 30 advanced learners, five students had been in the United States for more than three years, four for about two years, and the remaining 21 for nine months. Both intermediate and advanced learners used fewer figurative phrasal verbs than literal phrasal verbs. However, advanced learners' performance was not statistically different from that of the native speakers. Their exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs.

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However, Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010) did not take the length of exposure to the L2 environment as seriously as they should have done. This was exhibited in, in spite of they had been exposed to the native speaking environment, the advanced Arab learners' avoidance of the semi-transparent and idiomatic phrasal verbs regardless that they scored higher in phrasal verbs than the EFL advanced learner because these relative higher scores did not mean that they did not avoid phrasal verbs. This leads us to the thought that the advanced ESL learner's length of exposure to the L2 environment in these two studies was not long enough to make a significance difference between the ESL advanced and the EFL leaners' performance.

Moreover, it seems that the length of exposure to the L2 environment in the two studies was short. It was not reported in Ben Duhaish's (2008) study at all, but it can be inferred that advanced ESL participants had a short time of exposure because they were either in level 400 which means 12 months or slightly more in the USA or they were in academic university classes which does not mean a long exposure to the L2 environment.

On the other hand, Abu Jamil's (2010) study's division of the ESL participants into groups according to the length of exposure to the L2 environment was not robust. For example, Group A includes learners who spent from zero to three months in the L2 environment. This does not mean that it is unexpected that this group included learners who had arrived the United States only very few days if not one day before taking the tests and they were considered ESL learners with exposure to the L2 environment. Cornell (1985) argued that his participants in his study who revealed a widespread ignorance of phrasal verbs had certainly been never to an English-speaking country for more than a few weeks at a time. It can be said that Cornell implied that a few weeks at a time in an English-speaking country is the minimum exposure for an English learner to be argued that the exposure to the L2 environment has occurred. However,

this is not applicable to Group A in Abu Jamil's study. Moreover, the ultimate group (Group C) includes learners who spent more than 12 months in the L2 environment. However, "more than 12 months" participants, as Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) commented, "were not exposed long enough to show an effect" (p. 132). In addition to, it was not stated if so many participants had long exposure to the L2 environment. In fact, the author reported that ESL participants had been living in the United States from one month to seven years, but it seems that those who spent seven years or so were few because the average year of time in the USA for ESL groups was 2.9.

Thus, advanced ESL participants' exposure to the L2 environment in the two studies was not long enough to play its role in the learners' development from avoidance to non-avoidance. Thus, the relatively better performance of the ESL advanced learners in Ben Duhaish (2008) and the lower one-word verb preference of the "over 12 months" learners in Abu Jamil (2010) did not result in a nonavoidance of phrasal verbs. However, ESL advanced learners in the two studies seemed to avoid the semi-transparent and idiomatic phrasal verbs. Abu Jamil has reported that advanced ESL learners produced fewer semi-transparent and idiomatic phrasal verbs and the ultimate group did not reach the native speaker's level in using phrasal verbs.

The second drawback to Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010) was the inclusion of EFL Arab (Saudi) leaners. This is inappropriate for two respects. First, the nature of input in EFL classrooms indicates that there is a little input of phrasal verbs if there is any because, as Liao and Fukuya (2004) pointed out, phrasal verbs are a structure that occurs more often in spoken than in written contexts because English native speakers prefer to make use of phrasal verbs in spoken, informal colloquial contexts. Thus, realizing that much of the input in the EFL environment (Saudi Arabia in the two studies) is written, it is reasonable to assume that EFL Arab learners did not receive enough input of phrasal verbs if there is any. Moreover, Cornell

(1985) stated that learning of phrasal verbs at school and university is generally not very successful because of the limited contact with phrasal verbs. Hence, it is very important in studying avoidance to consider the input that the learners receive as Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) commented, "It may be that learners use relatively fewer multi-word verbs simply because this reflects the input they are receiving, rather than because they are actively avoiding them. Undoubtedly, both input and avoidance have a role to play" (p. 133).

Second, EFL learners lack the exposure to the L2 environment which is crucial for the acquisition of the phrasal verbs, as Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) pointed out, English native speakers prefer to make use of multi-word verbs, especially in spoken, informal colloquial contexts. Also, Cornell (1985) attributed his participants' widespread ignorance revealed in his study to the lack of exposure to an English-speaking country for more than a few weeks at a time. Thus, it is not appropriate to include EFL learners who had not been exposed to any native-English environment in such a study that investigates a phenomenon (avoidance) in which the exposure to the L2 environment, only where English learners can be exposed to the structure in question, is an essential element in claiming or disclaiming the existence or absence of avoidance. Also, as Liao and Fukuya (2004) pointed out, the length of exposure to the L2 environment was argued to be an important factor in ESL learners' performance from avoidance to nonavoidance. Moreover, the limited exposure to the L2 environment by the ESL learners in Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010), as mentioned above, resulted in avoidance of phrasal verbs. Hence, the zero exposure to the L2 environment by EFL leaners will absolutely result in ignorance of phrasal verbs.

Thus, the poor performance in EFL Saudi learners leads to the thought that Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil's (2010) so-called avoidance should more accurately be called ignorance

or incomplete acquisition of the structure rather than conscious avoidance. Cornell (1985) called

his participants' poor performance as "a widespread ignorance" because the average score was

over 15 out of 60 or (25%). In fact, the poor performance in EFL Saudi learners which indicates

participants' ignorance or incomplete acquisition of the structure could be easily observed in the

two studies. Ben Duhaish (2008) did not provide any specific statistics for ESL learners'

preference vs. EFL learners' for phrasal verbs because he reported once the results of the

crosstabs analysis for the total number of the learners. Because the results were given once for

all the learners, it was not possible to compare ESL learners' preference to EFL learners' for

phrasal verbs vs. one-word verbs and the incorrect answers or not provided answer. However,

the results were helpful because other figures were provided (the mean scores for EFL and ESL

learners of the variables and the number of ESL and EFL participants). The results of the

crosstabs analysis have showed that learners answered with phrasal verbs in 36.98% of the cases,

60.90% of the time with single-word verbs, and 2.12% of the cases were either deemed incorrect

or provided no answer. The figures for EFL learner's likelihood of use phrasal verbs were much

lower than the ESL learner. Finally, because there were more EFL learners (*N*=73) than the ESL

leaner (*N*=56), it was reasonable to think that the largest part of the poor performance by the

participants could be contributed by EFL learners.

Regarding Abu Jamil (2010), performance was poorer in EFL learners than ESL learners.

The results showed that EFL learners answered with phrasal verbs in 39.7% of the cases

(compared to 49.2 % by ESL learners), 42.7% of the time with single-word verbs (compared to

39.5% by ESL learners), and 17.6% of the cases were either deemed incorrect or provided no

answer (compared to 11.3% by ESL learners). Hence, 60.3% of the EFL learners' performance

was devoted to single-word verbs, incorrect answers, or no answers (compared to only 50.8% by

ESL learners). There were also significant differences in phrasal verbs preference between the

ESL learners and EFL learners, F (1, 358) = 18.885, p < .001 indicating that ESL learners had

significantly higher scores (M = 14.75) than EFL learners (M = 11.92).

One more shortcoming can be identified in Abu Jamil (2010). As reviewed above, he has

reported that he could have established the learners' prior knowledge of the selected phrasal

verbs by running a comprehension multiple-choice test to 20 Arab learners. He has argued that

by establishing the learners' knowledge of the phrasal verbs, "any avoided phrasal verbs will be

avoided by choice and not by ignorance" (p. 106). However, I assume that he could have

established this knowledge only in ESL learners not in EFL learners. The reason is that he ran

the test to 20 Arab learners but he has not reported weather these Arab learners were ESL or EFL

learners or whether they were Saudis or non-Saudis. It is more likely that they were ESL

learners because they may have been the only Arab learners available to the researcher if we

consider the place in which his study was conducted (USA). Moreover, they could have been

non-Saudis and the importance of considering this is that non-Saudis may have had been taught

English in their countries differently or even better than the Saudi students. Therefore, the poor

performance in EFL Saudi learners, as I mentioned above, should more accurately be called

ignorance or incomplete acquisition of the structure.

These drawbacks call for attention to have a study that takes the length of exposure to the

L2 environment into consideration and is more careful in choosing its participants. Hulstijn and

Marchena (1989) commented, "It was hypothesized that intermediate learners, although

passively familiar with all phrasal verbs used in the study, would show a higher tendency to

avoid these verbs than advanced learners, whose preference was expected to be more native-like"

(p. 243).

The Contribution of This Study to the Literature

In line with the inquiries of the studies reviewed here and particularly Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010), the purpose of this study is to investigate the avoidance phenomenon among Arab learners of English in the ESL environment. The studies reviewed above have proposed that the difficulty of phrasal verbs manifested by English learners' avoidance can be best predicted as a result of L1-L2 differences (Ben Duhaish, 2008; Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Ghabanchi and Goudarzi, 2012; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007) semantic/idiomatic reasons (Abu Jamil, 2010; Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007) or L1-L2 similarities (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). The design of this study follows partially that of Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010). However, it excludes the test effect because only one type of task (one test type) used as suggested by Abu Jamil for future research.

Also, the study excludes participants from the EFL environment because my experience in learning and teaching English in the EFL environment (Saudi Arabia) and the results reported in Abu Jamil (2010) and Ben Duhaish (2008) strongly suggest the nonuse of phrasal verbs by EFL Saudi learners is much better interpreted as an ignorance or partially acquisition of this structure. Thus, this study includes only ESL learners. The participants and the criteria for choosing and including the participants into different groups are given in greater detail in the next chapter (Chapter III).

Ben Duhaish (2008) attributed the avoidance of phrasal verbs by Arab learners of English to the L1-L2 differences. On the other hand, Abu Jamil (2010) attributed their avoidance to the semantic complexity of English phrasal verbs. However, if the Arab leaners with long exposure to L2 environment in this study did not avoid all the three types of phrasal verbs and the those

with short exposure avoided the three types of phrasal verbs or some, the best predictor for avoidance of English phrasal verbs by Arab learners will be the short time of exposure to the English-speaking environment.

Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter critically examined the literature related to the phrasal verbs as the basis for the present study and the avoidance phenomenon of phrasal verbs. It discussed the syntactic and semantic characters of phrasal verbs as well as their register. Moreover, it also provided a detailed discussion about the importance and the challenges in use and learning of phrasal verbs for ESL/EFL learners. Additionally, this chapter gave critical reviews of the empirical studies of avoidance in phrasal verbs relevant to the present study. The chapter concludes with some drawbacks I have identified in the two related studies Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010) which caused the necessity to have a third study on avoidance of phrasal verbs by Arab learners of English. The next chapter, Chapter III, will discuss the research methods of this thesis. It includes the setting, participants, the instrument, and design of the study.

Chapter III

Research Methodology

This chapter gives in details a description of the settings in which the study was carried

out, the participants and the criteria for the target subjects, the instruments, the research

procedure, the data collection, how the data will be analyzed, and finally the research questions

and hypotheses.

Setting

The studies on avoidance of phrasal verbs reviewed in the previous chapter were

conducted either in only EFL settings (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012;

Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) or both in ESL and EFL settings (Abu

Jamil, 2010; Ben Duhaish, 2008; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). This study,

however, was conducted in only ESL settings. The reason for including ESL learners and

excluding EFL learners is that this study investigates the use vs. nonuse (due to avoidance not

ignorance or incomplete acquisition) of phrasal verbs, a structure that occurs more often in

spoken than in written contexts. Thus, given the fact that much of the input in the EFL

environment (e.g., Saudi Arabia) is written, but the input in the ESL environment (USA) is both

written and spoken, I believe that ESL is the appropriate setting to conduct the study.

Moreover, it is not appropriate to include EFL learners who had not been exposed to any

native-English environment in such a study that investigates a phenomenon (avoidance) in which

the exposure to the L2 environment, only where English learners can be exposed to the structure

in question, is an essential element in claiming or disclaiming the existence or absence of

avoidance. My experience in learning and teaching English in the EFL environment (Saudi

Arabia) and the results reported in Abu Jamil and Ben Duhaish strongly suggest the nonuse of

phrasal verbs by EFL Saudi learners is due to an ignorance or partially acquisition of this structure not avoidance.

Additionally, Liao and Fukuya (2004) speculated that the advanced learners' exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs in contrast with the intermediate leaners' avoidance. Thus, ESL is the only setting where long-stay learners are available.

Participants

A total of 81 Arab male and female learners of English as a second language have participated in this study. They represented two groups. The first was learners of English in the ESL setting with long exposure to the L2 environment (USA) ($N = 35$). It includes Arab people (immigrants and graduate students in US universities) who had been living in the L2 environment for an extensive amount of time. The criteria for including participants in this group are that they should have spent a minimum of four years in the USA or any English-speaking environment. The mean of the total number of years lived in the L2 environment is ($M = 10.23$, $SD = 6.67$). I assume that their long stay in the native environment will enhance their use of phrasal verbs over their one-word counterparts in a significant difference. Thus, I assume that their use of some particular types of phrasal verbs (literal and semi-transparent) is significantly higher than their use of one-word counterparts. In terms of the idiomatic phrasal verbs, their use of their one-word counterparts is at least statistically not significant.

The second group includes Arab learners of English as a second language who finished studying the language and started studying their majors (undergraduate and graduate students) ($N = 46$). They have short exposure to the L2 environment. The criteria for including participants into this group are that they should have spent fewer than 4 years in the native environment. The

mean of the total number of years lived in the L2 environment is ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.19$). This group has been called consistently by the studies reviewed above as advanced learners. However, on the basis of my observation of this group's performance in Ben Duhaish and Jamil and because of their relative limited (short) time of the exposure to the L2 environment compared to the first group, I have decided to call this as learners with short exposure.

The Instrument and Study Design

The studies reviewed in the previous chapter differed in their design regarding the number and types of tests in investigating the avoidance of phrasal verbs; (a) some studies administered a multiple choice test, a translation test, and a memorizing (recall) test (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Liao & Fukuya, 2004), (b) a multiple choice test and a translation test (Ben Duhaish, 2008; Laufer and Eliasson, 1993), (c) a multiple choice test (two versions) and a translation test (two versions) plus two tasks (Abu Jamil, 2010), and (d) a questionnaire (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007).

Having explored the phrasal verb avoidance literature, I found that it became significant that the best way to measure the avoidance phenomenon is by using quantitative methods. This study administered only one type of test (multiple-choice test).

Phrasal verbs used in the test. Forty-five two-word phrasal verbs were selected for use in this study, some were taken from the previous studies reviewed in the previous chapter, and the remaining were selectively taken from the Webster's New World American Idiom Handbook. This book includes the most common phrasal verbs used by American people, an environment in which the study's participants were supposed to live. The selected 45 phrasal verbs were then examined by some native English speakers who preferred the use of all these phrasal verbs over their one-word equivalents (e.g., *give away* vs. *distribute*).

The selected phrasal verbs represent a variety of features; they vary in frequency, as some are relatively literal in meaning and some are idiomatic, and some are polysemous, while others are not. The 45 phrasal verbs were divided into three types; 15 literal, 15 semi-transparent, and 15 idiomatic phrasal verbs. Overall, they are intended to represent the range of phrasal verbs a learner should have come across when studying and using the English language in the ESL environment. For each of these phrasal verbs, a one-word verb that is roughly synonymous was chosen as *put down* means *insult*.

Thus, this study investigates 45 phrasal and one-word verb pairs in one extended test (see Appendix I). To find out whether or not and to what extent these phrasal verbs would be avoided by Arab ESL learners, this study employed one type of test: a multiple-choice test (see Appendix III).

Multiple-choice test. There are two reasons for administering only one type of test (multiple-choice test) in this study. First, I have selected the most applicable test that presents a strong evidence of avoidance among the different tests in the studies reviewed above. According to Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), the evidence on avoidance of phrasal verbs produced by the multiple-choice task is strong "if learners were not to follow native speakers' preference for phrasal verbs". On the other hand, "the weakest evidence would be produced by the translation test, since we could not be absolutely sure whether learners, given a nonphrasal translation, would have actually considered (and rejected) the phrasal verb" (p. 244). Second, the author of the most recent related study (Abu Jamil, 2010) commented on the elicitation format and to gain better control over some of the methodological problems that cropped up in his study. He stated:

I suggest carrying out a fairly extensive study applying one type of task (one test type).

A multiple-choice test would have a great advantage in this type of investigation for it

only takes 20 minutes to administer and is quite easy to control. (p. 206)

Incorporating the observations of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) and Abu Jamil (2010), I

decided to administer one test type, a multiple-choice test. In addition to, a demographic

questionnaire was prepared and given to the subjects in order to obtain some general background

information. It aims, firstly, to get exact information about the participants' length of exposure

to the L2 environment a main factor for avoidance or nonavoidance. Secondly, it aims to have

some information about the participants' amount of time in learning English in addition to other

variables such as their gender, age, and obtained degrees (see Appendix II).

The multiple-choice test consisted of 45 questions in the dialogue format. In each

dialogue, the verb in question was left blank. The first 15 items were designed to elicit literal

phrasal verbs that would be easy for the participant to choose. The second 15 items were

designed to elicit semi-transparent phrasal verbs hat would be less easy to choose. The last 15

items were designed to elicit idiomatic phrasal verbs hat would be hard to choose. The

participants were required to select the verb from four alternatives: the correct phrasal verb, an

appropriate one-word equivalent, and two distractors, one of these being a phrasal verb, the other

being a one-word verb. The choices (correct vs. incorrect, phrasal vs. non-phrasal) were

presented in randomized orders as the answers to each test item. The participant's preference for

one type of verb (single or phrasal) would indicate avoidance of the other. A copy of the test is

found in the Appendix III.

Procedures Used

The multiple-choice test was administrated to five Arab learners of English to try out the clarity of the items and whether they think any items should be added or deleted. Once the pilot study produced acceptable results, and all questionable test items had been adjusted, the final test was created in Google Drive and the Web link to the test was published online. ESL Arab learners of English living in the USA or any other English-speaking country were approached by E-mails and their personal accounts in social networks such as Twitter and Facebook and were encouraged to take the test. Social networks helped me to easily approach a large number of target participants. I also sent the link by SMS messages and broadcasts to smart cellphones to people who I had their phone numbers. In addition to, I handed out some hard copies of the test to other participants.

The final step was to analyze the results of the test, which were categorized as follows: On the test, the number of selected phrasal verbs used within each verb type is counted. The number of selected one-word verbs is also counted. These totals were analyzed by means of a variety of statistical and descriptive methods discussed in greater depth in Chapter IV.

Research Questions

The study investigates four research questions based on the previous studies in this area. They are:

1. Is there a significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types?

2. Do Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment differ significantly from Arab ESL learners with short exposure in the avoidance of literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic phrasal verbs?

3. Is the long exposure to the native-speaking environment (four years or more) necessary to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

4. Is the short exposure to the native-speaking environment (less than four years) enough to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

Hypotheses

H₁ There will be a statistically significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types.

H₂ Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment have significantly higher scores on the three types of phrasal verbs than Arab ESL learners with short exposure.

H₃ Arab ESL learners with long exposure's preferences for the literal and semi-transparent phrasal verbs are significantly higher than their one-word counterparts.

H₄ Arab ESL learners with short exposure to the native-speaking environment have a statistically significant higher preference for one-word verbs over phrasal verbs.

H₅ Arab ESL learners with short exposure's preference for idiomatic phrasal verbs is statistically lower than their preference for their one-word counterparts.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the methodology adopted for this study (the setting, participants, and the instrument and study design). It also presented the procedures used to approach the participants. The next chapter (Chapter IV) will provide a detailed analysis of the results of this study to see whether the research hypotheses mentioned above can be accepted or rejected.

Chapter IV

Results of the Study

This chapter includes the main findings that resulted from the analysis of the study test reported in Chapter III and discuss them in relation to thesis hypotheses. Descriptive statistics along with repeated measures ANOVA, one-way ANOVA, paired samples *t*-test, and Pearson Correlation were used to calculate for the avoidance of phrasal verbs and to investigate the finding of the test used. Means and standard deviations were calculated and compared. Differences between all participants' scores in all test sections (literal phrasal verbs, their one-word counterparts, semi-transparent phrasal verbs, their one-word counterparts, idiomatic phrasal verbs, and their one-word counterparts) were examined and reported in order to address the thesis hypotheses.

Reliability of the Test

As mentioned earlier in Chapter III, I used one type of test: a multiple-choice test of 45 questions. To test the reliability of the test, a reliability test was conducted. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the test was (.764). These results indicate the reliability of the test is statistically acceptable.

Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations of the phrasal verbs and one-word verbs scores as well as the three types of phrasal verbs, the dependent variable in the study, from the long exposure and short exposure groups were first calculated. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the two groups including the total number of participants, means, the standard deviations, the range, the minimum scores, the maximum scores, and the total sum of the phrasal verb types and their one-word counterparts for the two groups.

Table 2:

Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups' Scores on the Test

Verb type	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.	Range	Sum
Literal PVs	Long exposure	35	8.9143	2.86327	3.00	15.00	12.00	312.00
	Short exposure	46	6.8261	2.51488	2.00	13.00	13.00	314.00
	Total	81	7.7284	2.85049	2.00	15.00	15.00	626.00
1-word counterparts	Long exposure	35	6.0286	2.88491	.00	12.00	12.00	211.00
	Short exposure	46	7.2174	2.47578	2.00	13.00	13.00	332.00
	Total	81	6.7037	2.70853	.00	13.00	13.00	543.00
Semi-transparent PVs	Long exposure	35	10.3714	2.92138	4.00	15.00	11.00	363.00
	Short exposure	46	6.6739	3.18367	1.00	14.00	14.00	307.00
	Total	81	8.2716	3.56726	1.00	15.00	15.00	670.00
1-word counterparts	Long exposure	35	4.2571	2.68266	.00	11.00	11.00	149.00
	Short exposure	46	7.0435	3.31298	1.00	14.00	14.00	324.00
	Total	81	5.8395	3.34087	.00	14.00	14.00	473.00
Idiomatic PVs	Long exposure	35	7.0000	3.23583	1.00	15.00	14.00	245.00
	Short exposure	46	3.6957	2.43921	.00	10.00	10.00	170.00
	Total	81	5.1235	3.24185	.00	15.00	15.00	415.00
1-Word Counterparts	Long exposure	35	7.5714	2.88287	.00	13.00	13.00	265.00
	Short exposure	46	9.7609	2.80622	4.00	14.00	14.00	449.00
	Total	81	8.8148	3.02536	.00	14.00	14.00	714.00
Total phrasal verbs	Long exposure	35	26.4000	7.05941	14.00	45.00	45.00	924.00
	Short exposure	46	17.1739	6.28686	6.00	30.00	30.00	790.00
	Total	81	21.1605	8.03501	6.00	45.00	45.00	1714.00
Total 1-word verbs	Long exposure	35	17.7429	6.76210	.00	30.00	30.00	621.00
	Short exposure	46	23.6304	6.75396	9.00	37.00	37.00	1087.00
	Total	81	21.0864	7.32837	.00	37.00	37.00	1708.00

Phrasal verbs and one-word verbs. The results of the test showed that out of the total 3,645 possible responses for phrasal verbs (45 × 81 = 3,645), 924 were produced by the Arab ESL learners with long exposure and 790 by the Arab ESL learners with short exposure. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 26.40, while that of short exposure group was 17.17, a difference of 9.23 points. Out of the total 3,645 possible responses for one-word verbs (45 × 81 = 3,645), 621 were produced by the long exposure group and 1087 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 17.74, while that of short exposure group was 23.63, a difference of 5.89 points. The long exposure group used phrasal verbs 53.9% of the time and one-word verbs 36.4% of the time, whereas the short exposure group used them 46.1% and 63.6% of the time, respectively. With this significant difference, it appears that Arab ESL learners with long exposure had the advantage of the exposure to the L2 environment.

The total number of phrasal verbs was compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 1, the long exposure participants' higher performance on phrasal verbs was obvious.
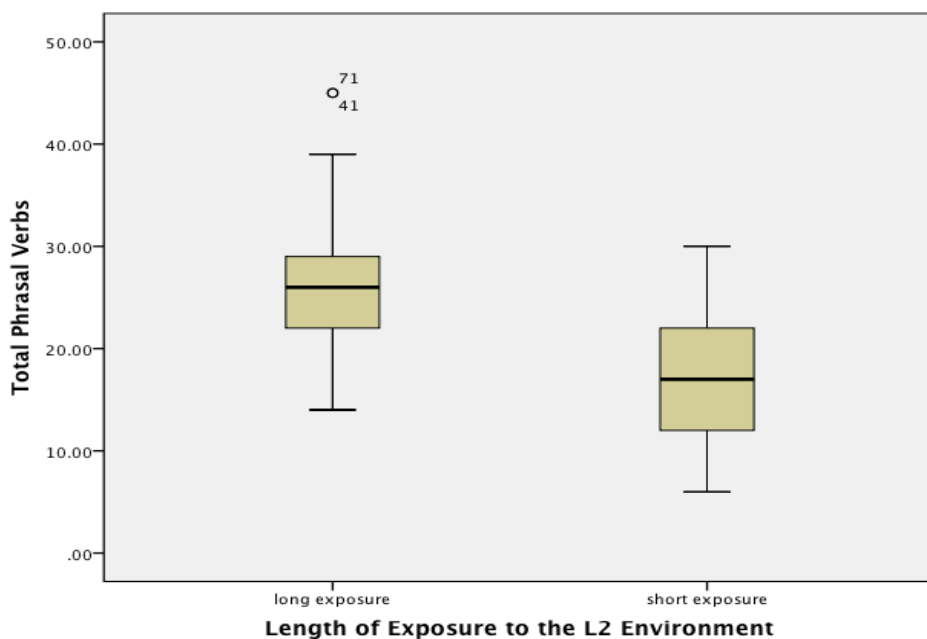

Figure 1: The total number of phrasal verbs of the two groups

The total number of one-word verbs was compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 2, the short exposure participants' higher preference for one-word verbs was obvious.
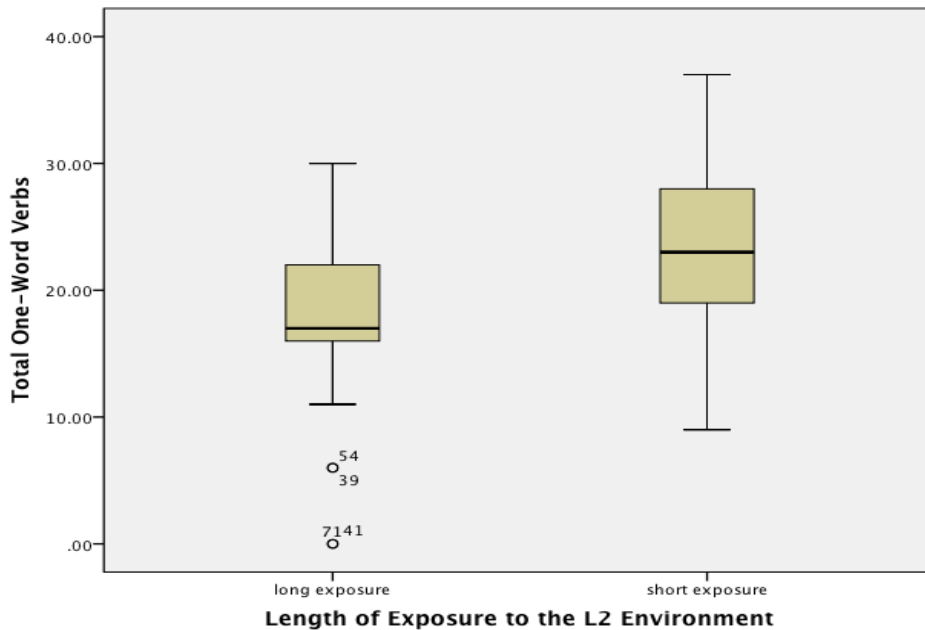

Figure 2: The total number of one-word verbs of the two groups

Literal phrasal verbs and one-word counterparts. The results of the test showed that out of the total 1,215 possible responses for literal phrasal verbs ($15 \times 81 = 1,215$), 312 were produced by the long exposure group and 314 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 8.91, while that of short exposure group was 6.82, a difference of 2.09 points. Out of the total 1,215 possible responses for one-word counterparts for the literal phrasal verbs ($15 \times 81 = 1,215$), 211 were produced by the long exposure group and 332 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 6.03, while that of short exposure group was 7.21, a difference of 1.18 points.

The total number of literal phrasal verbs was compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 3, the long exposure participants' higher performance on the literal phrasal verbs was obvious.

Figure 3: The total number of literal phrasal verbs of the two groups

The total number of one-word counterparts for the literal phrasal verbs was compared
between the two groups. As shown in Figure 4, the short exposure participants' higher preference
for the one-word counterparts was obvious.

Figure 4: The total number of one-word counterparts for the literal phrasal verbs of the
two groups

Semi-transparent phrasal verbs and one-word counterparts. Out of the total 1,215
possible responses for semi-transparent phrasal verbs ($15 \times 81 = 1,215$), 363 were produced by
the long exposure group and 307 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure

group performance was 10.37, while that of short exposure group was 6.67, a difference of 3.7

points. Out of the total 1,215 possible responses for one-word counterparts for the semi-

transparent phrasal verbs (15 × 81 = 1,215), 149 were produced by the long exposure group and

324 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 4.25,

while that of short exposure group was 7.04, a difference of 2.79 points.

The total number of semi-transparent phrasal verbs was compared between the two

groups. As shown in Figure 5, the long exposure participants' higher performance on the semi-
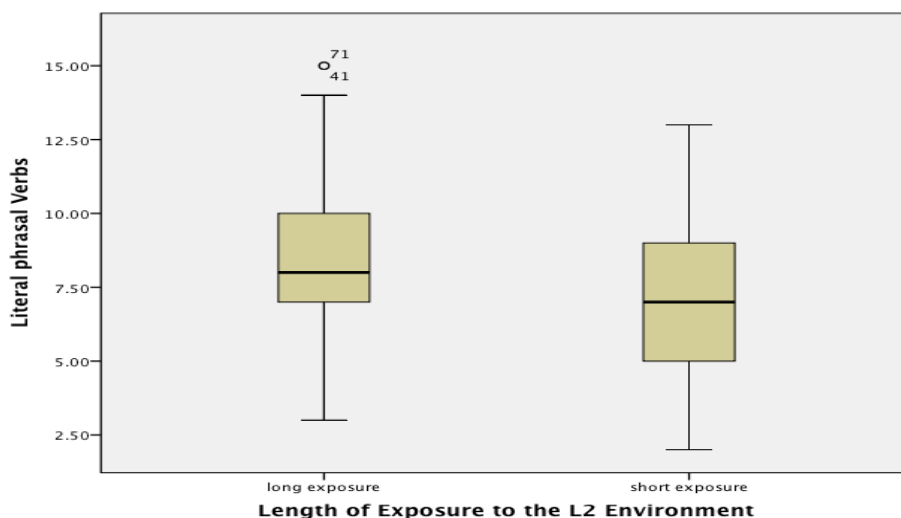
transparent phrasal verbs was obvious.

Figure 5: The total number of semi-transparent phrasal verbs of the two groups

The total number of one-word counterparts for the semi-transparent phrasal verbs was

compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 6, the short exposure participants' higher

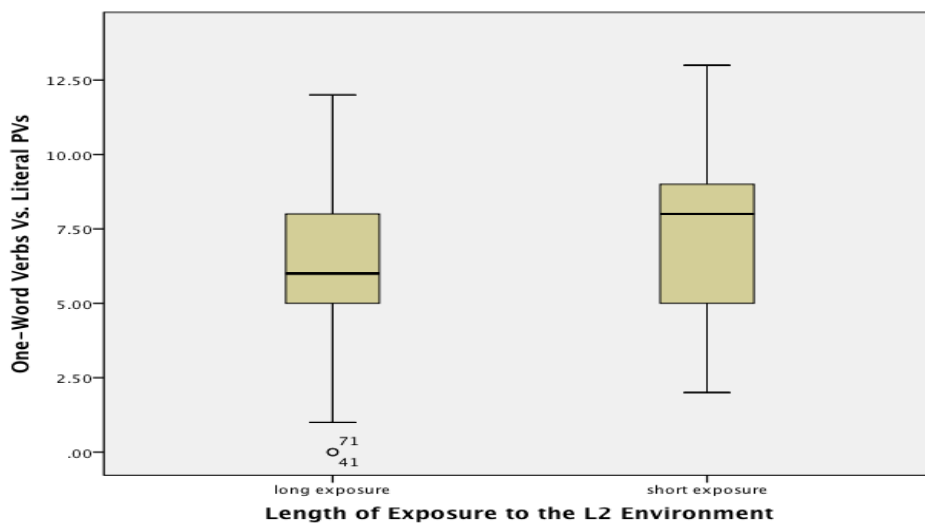preference for the one-word counterparts was obvious.

Figure 6: The total number of one-word counterparts for the semi-transparent phrasal verbs of the two groups

Idiomatic phrasal verbs and one-word counterparts. Out of the total 1,215 possible responses for idiomatic phrasal verbs ($15 \times 81 = 1,215$), 245 were produced by the long exposure group and 170 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group performance was 7.00, while that of short exposure group was 3.69, a difference of 3.31 points. Out of the total 1,215 possible responses for one-word counterparts for the idiomatic phrasal verbs ($15 \times 81 = 1,215$), 265 were produced by the long exposure group and 449 by the short exposure group. The mean of the long exposure group's performance was 7.57, while that of short exposure group was 9.76, a difference of 2.19 points.

The total number of idiomatic phrasal verbs was compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 7, the long exposure participants' higher performance on the idiomatic phrasal verbs was obvious.
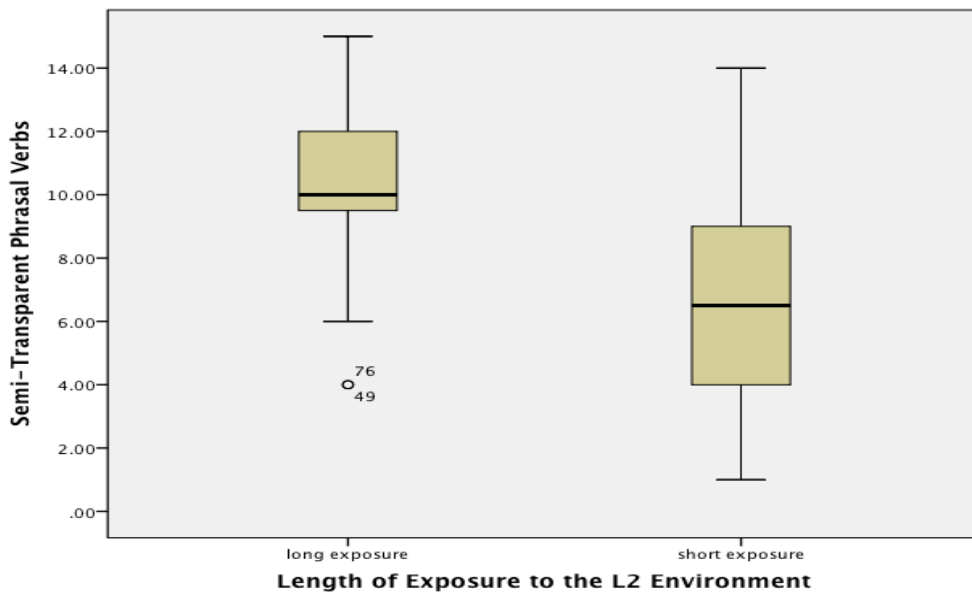
72

Figure 7: The total number of idiomatic phrasal verbs of the two groups

The total number of one-word counterparts for the idiomatic phrasal verbs was compared between the two groups. As shown in Figure 8, the short exposure participants' higher preference for the one-word counterparts was obvious.
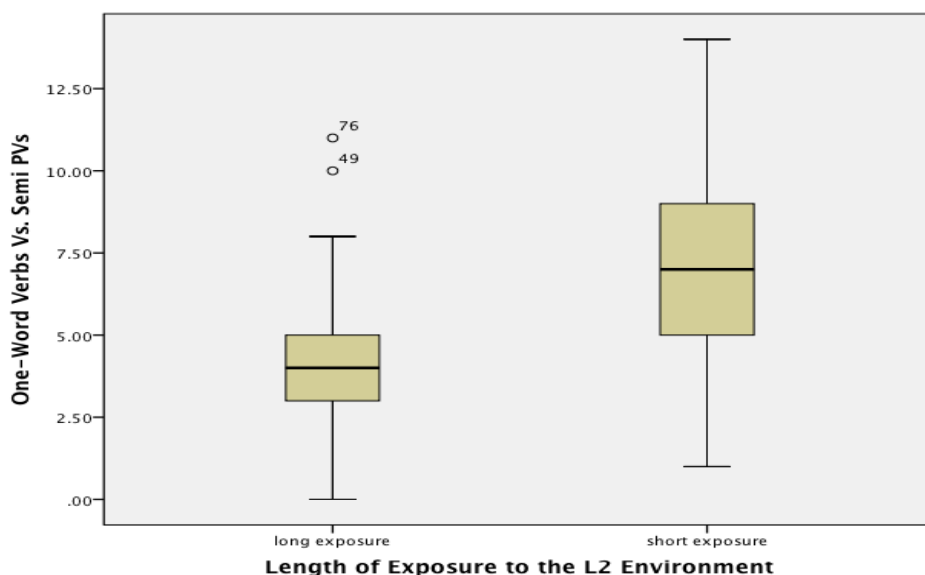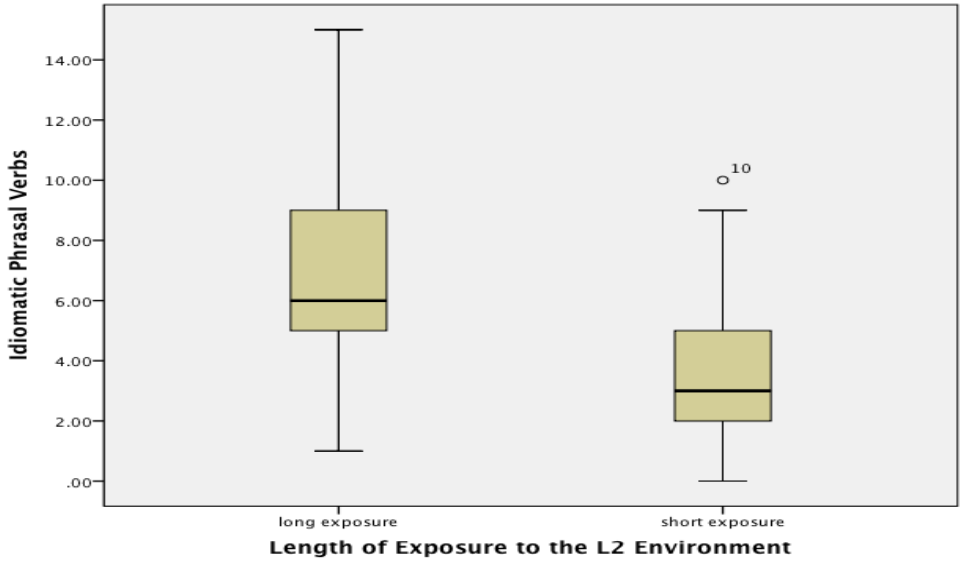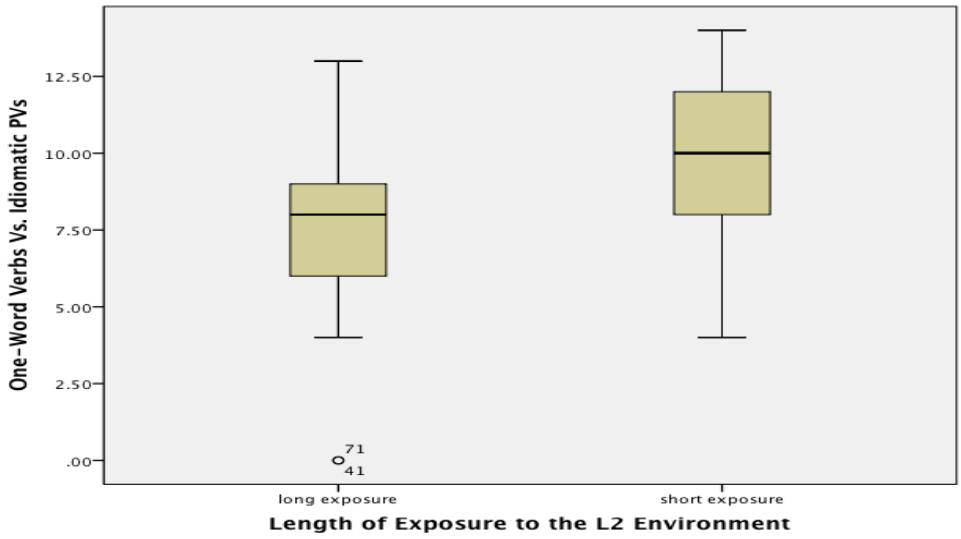

Figure 8: The total number of one-word counterparts for the idiomatic phrasal verbs of the two groups

Interpretation of Main Factors

For analysis of hypotheses regarding the preference for phrasal verbs or one-word verbs by Arab ESL learners of English, a total of 81 participants took the multiple-choice test were considered in this analysis and were divided into two groups; (a) long exposure and (b) short exposure to the L2 environment. The test was designed to examine the participants' preferences for phrasal verbs or one-word verbs. The first 15 items were designed to elicit literal phrasal verbs that would be easy for the participant to choose. The second 15 items were designed to elicit semi-transparent phrasal verbs hat would be less easy to choose. The last 15 items were designed to elicit idiomatic phrasal verbs hat would be hard to choose. Two main factors were identified in this study that affected the performance on the phrasal verbs of the Arab ESL learners of English; (a) type of a phrasal verb and (b) the length of exposure to the L2 environment.

The phrasal verb type. The analysis of this factor is considered first in this chapter. Three different types of phrasal verbs were identified; (a) Literal ($N = 15$), (b) Semi-transparent ($N = 15$), and (c) Idiomatic ($N = 15$).

Although those results appear to be significant in Table 2, it is necessary to determine their significant relationship statistically. To investigate the effect of phrasal verb type and whether any difference existed across the three types of phrasal verbs, a comparison was computed using one-way repeated measures ANOVA. Mean and standard deviation are shown in Table 3. As Table 4 indicates, ANOVA revealed that the difference between the mean scores was not significant for the literal-semi-transparent $F(2, 160) = 45.58$, $p = .331$. The mean score of literal ($M = 7.72$) and that of the semi-transparent ($M = 8.27$) are relatively homogeneous, which demonstrated the learners did not have a significantly higher score on each of the phrasal

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verbs. The ANOVA revealed that the difference between the mean scores was significant for the literal-idiomatic $F(2, 160) = 45.58$, $p = .000$. The mean score of literal ($M = 7.72$) is significantly higher than that of the idiomatic ($M = 5.12$), which demonstrated the learners had a significantly higher score on the literal phrasal verbs. Moreover, the ANOVA revealed that the difference between the mean scores was significant for the idiomatic-semi-transparent $F(2, 160) = 45.58$, $p = .000$. The mean score of idiomatic ($M = 5.12$) is significantly lower than that of the semi-transparent ($M = 8.27$), which demonstrated the learners had a significantly higher score on the semi-transparent phrasal verbs. The data partially support the first hypothesis:

H_1 There will be a statistically significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types.

Table 3:

Mean Scores on the Three Types of Phrasal Verbs

Verb type	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Literal phrasal verbs	81	7.72	2.85
Semi-transparent phrasal verbs	81	8.27	3.56
Idiomatic phrasal verbs	81	5.12	3.24

Table 4:

Pairwise Comparisons

(I) Verb	(J) Verb	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Literal	Semi-transparent	-.543	.337	.331
	Idiomatic	2.605	.350	.000
Semi-transparent	Literal	.543	.337	.331
	Idiomatic	3.148	.370	.000
Idiomatic	Literal	-2.605	.350	.000
	Semi-transparent	-3.148	.370	.000

The length of exposure to the L2 environment. This is the second factor identified in this study. Two different lengths of exposure to the L2 environment were identified based on the learner's years of living in the L2 environment; (a) Arab ESL learners with long exposure ($N = 35$) and they have spent a minimum of four years in the USA or any English-speaking environment ($M = 10.23$, $SD = 6.67$), and (a) Arab ESL learners with short exposure ($N = 46$) and they have spent less than 4 years ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.19$).

The advantage of long exposure to the L2 environment. To investigate the advantage of the long exposure to the English-speaking environment in enhancement the use of phrasal verbs and whether any difference existed between the participants' performances on the three types of phrasal verbs (literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic), a one-way ANOVA test (Table 5) was calculated. The ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups' performances on the individual types of phrasal verbs, $F(1, 79) = 12.15$, $p = .001$, for the literal, $F(1, 79) = 28.77$, $p = .000$, for the semi-transparent, and $F(1, 79) = 27.49$, $p = .000$, for the idiomatic. As shown in Table 2, Arab ESL learners with long exposure had significantly higher scores on the literal ($M = 8.91$), the semi-transparent ($M = 10.37$), and the idiomatic phrasal verbs ($M = 7.00$) than those of the short exposure group ($M = 6.82$), ($M = 6.67$) and ($M = 3.69$), respectively. The data, thus, supported the second hypothesis:

H_2 Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment have significantly higher scores on the three types of phrasal verbs than Arab ESL learners with short exposure.

Table 5:

One-Way ANOVA Summary Table Comparing the Two-Different Exposures to the L2
Environment Groups on the Three Types of Phrasal Verbs (PVs)

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Literal PVs					
Between Groups	1	86.67	86.673	12.154	.001
Within Groups	79	563.35	7.131		
Total	80	650.025			
Semi-transparent PVs					
Between Groups	1	271.745	271.745	28.766	.000
Within Groups	79	746.280	9.447		
Total	80	1018.025			
Idiomatic PVs					
Between Groups	1	217.026	217.026	27.488	.000
Within Groups	79	623.739	7.895		
Total	80	840.765			

Now, the significant higher performance on all individual three types of phrasal verbs is

established for the long exposure' group in compared with the short exposure group. The

advantage of the long exposure to the L2 environment is obvious now. However, it is needed

now to determine what type of phrasal verbs they significantly prefer on their one-word-

counterparts. To do so, a comparison was computed using a paired-sample t-test (Table 7). Mean

and standard deviation are shown in Table 6. As Table 7 indicates, the t-test revealed that the

difference was significant between the mean scores of the literal phrasal verbs and their one-

word counterparts $t (34) = 2.972$, $p = .005$, $d = .45$ and that of the semi-transparent phrasal verbs

and their one-word counterparts $t(34) = 6.523$, $p = .000$, $d = .74$. However, the *t*-test revealed

that the difference was not significant for the idiomatic phrasal verbs and their one-word

counterparts $t(34) = -.564$, $p = .576$.

The mean score of the literal ($M = 8.91$) was larger than that of their one-word

counterparts ($M = 6.02$) and the mean score of the semi-transparent ($M = 10.37$) was larger than

that of their one-word counterparts ($M = 4.25$), which demonstrated that participants tended to

use the literal and the semi-transparent phrasal verbs more than their one-word counterparts.

However, the mean score for the idiomatic phrasal verbs ($M = 7.00$) and of that the one-word

counterparts ($M = 7.57$) are relatively homogeneous, which demonstrated that the participants

had the same relative tendency of using idiomatic phrasal verbs and their one-word counterparts.

The data supports the third hypotheses:

H₃ Arab ESL learners with long exposure's preferences for the literal and semi-

transparent phrasal verbs are significantly higher than their one-word counterparts.

Table 6:

*Long Exposure Group's Mean Scores on the Three Types of Phrasal Verbs and Their One-word
Counterparts*

Verb type	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Literal phrasal verbs	35	8.91	2.86
1-word counterparts	35	6.02	2.88
Semi-transparent phrasal verbs	35	10.37	2.92
1-word counterparts	35	4.25	2.68
Idiomatic phrasal verbs	35	7.00	3.23
1-word counterparts	35	7.57	2.88

Table 7:

Paired-Sample t-Test for the Long Exposure's Three Types of Phrasal Verbs and Their One-word Counterparts Total Scores

	Paired *t*-Test		
Source	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Literal phrasal verbs - 1-word counterparts	2.972	34	.005
Semi-Transparent phrasal verbs - 1-word counterparts	6.523	34	.000
Idiomatic phrasal verbs - 1-word counterparts	-.564	34	.576

The short exposure to the L2 environment drawback. In order to investigate the short exposure to the English-speaking environment drawback to the underuse of phrasal verbs and whether there is a significant difference between the short exposure group's preference for the one-word verbs and preference for the phrasal verbs, a comparison was computed using a paired-sample *t*-test. Mean and standard deviation are shown in Table 8. As Table 9 indicates, the *t*-test revealed that the difference between the mean scores for both variables was significant t (45) = -3.81, p = .000. The difference is medium using Cohen's guidelines (d = .50.). The mean score of the one-word verbs (M = 23.63) was larger than that of the phrasal verbs (M = 17.17), which demonstrated that participants had the tendency to use the one-word verbs more than phrasal verbs. This supports the forth hypothesis:

H₄ Arab ESL learners with short exposure to the native-speaking environment have a statistically significant higher preference for one-word verbs over phrasal verbs.

Table 8:

Short Exposure Group's Mean Scores on the Phrasal Verbs and the One-Word Verbs

Verb type	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Phrasal Verbs	46	17.17	6.28
One-word verbs	46	23.63	6.75

Table 9:

Paired-Sample t-Test for the Short Exposure's Phrasal Verbs and One-Word Verbs Total Scores

Source	Paired *t*-Test		
	t	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Phrasal verbs - One-word verbs	-3.812	45	.000

Now, the significant higher preference for the one-word verbs as a whole over the phrasal verbs as a whole is established for the short exposure group. The drawback of the short exposure to the L2 environment is obvious now. However, it is needed now to find out what type of phrasal verbs they significantly prefer its one-word-counterparts. To do so, a comparison was computed using a paired-sample t-test. Mean and standard deviation are shown in Table 10. As Table 11 indicates, the *t*-test revealed that the difference was significant for the idiomatic type *t* (34) = -8.612, *p* = .000. The difference is large using Cohen's guidelines (*d* = .79). The mean score of the one-word verbs (*M* = 9.76) is larger than that of the idiomatic phrasal verbs (*M* = 3.69), which demonstrated that participants had the tendency to use the one-word verbs significantly more than their idiomatic phrasal verbs. The data support the fifth hypotheses:

H₅ Arab ESL learners with short exposure's preference for idiomatic phrasal verbs is statistically lower than their preference for their one-word counterparts.

Table 10:

Short Exposure Group's Mean Scores on the Three Types of Phrasal Verbs and Their One-word Counterparts

Verb type	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Literal phrasal verbs	46	6.82	2.51
1-word counterparts	46	7.21	2.47
Semi-transparent phrasal verbs	46	6.67	3.18
1-word counterparts	46	7.04	3.31

| Idiomatic phrasal verbs | 46 | 3.69 | 2.44 |
| 1-word counterparts | 46 | 9.76 | 2.80 |

Table 11:

Paired-Sample t-Test for the Short Exposure's Three Types of Phrasal Verbs and Their One-word Counterparts Total Scores

	Paired *t*-Test		
Source	*t*	*df*	*Sig.* (2-tailed)
Literal PVs - One-word counterparts	-.564	45	.575
Semi-transparent PVs - One-word counterparts	-.419	45	.677
Idiomatic PVs - One-word counterparts	-8.612	45	.000

More investigation on the advantage of long exposure to the L2 environment on the use of phrasal verbs and the short exposure drawback to the use of one-word verbs is necessary. To investigate if there was a statistically association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the phrasal verb use, a correlation was computed. The Pearson Correlation statistic was significant, $r(79) = .55, p = .000$. The direction of the correlation was positive, which means that Arab ESL learners who have longer exposure to the L2 environment tend to have higher phrasal verb scores and vice versa. Using Cohen's guidelines, the effect size is large.

The association for an individual's score on the total phrasal verbs usage with his/her total number of years lived in the L2 environment is shown in a scatterplot with regression line. As shown in Figure 9, the significant positive association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the phrasal verb usage was obvious.

Figure 9: The association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the phrasal verb usage

Moreover, to investigate if there was a statistically association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the one-word verbs use, a correlation was computed, too. The Pearson Correlation statistic was significant, $r(79) = -.41$, $p = .000$. The direction of the correlation was negative, which means that Arab ESL learners who have shorter exposure to the L2 environment tend to have higher one-word verbs scores and vice versa. Using Cohen's guidelines, the effect size is medium.

The association for an individual's score on the total one-word verb usage with his/her total number of years lived in the L2 environment is shown in a scatterplot with regression line. As shown in Figure 10, the significant negative association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the one-word verb usage was obvious.
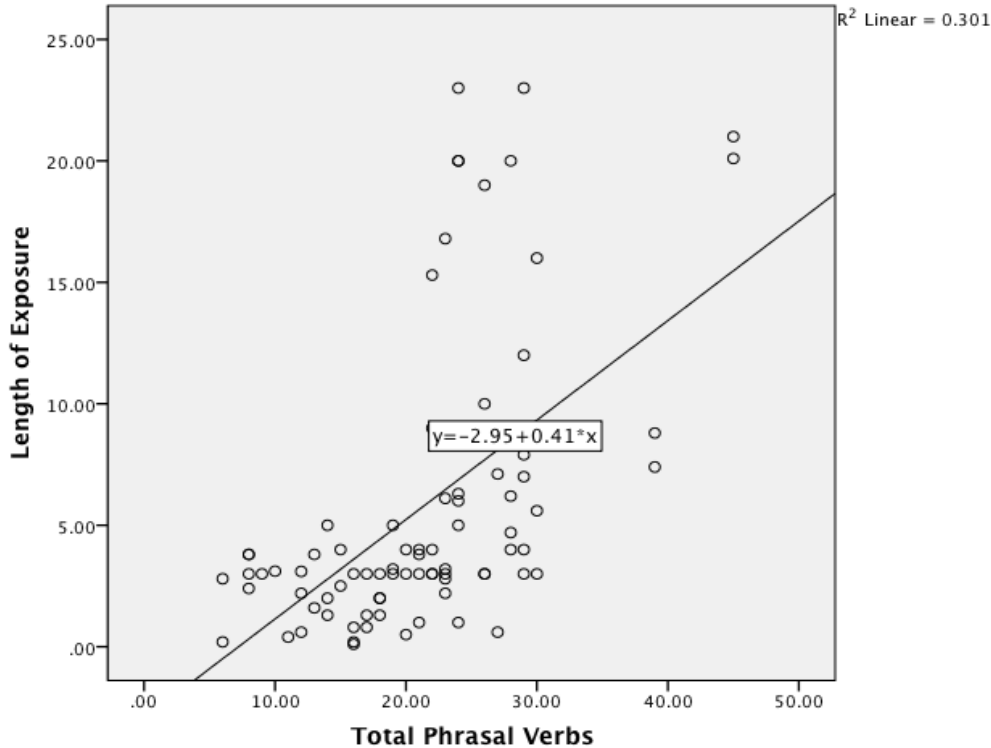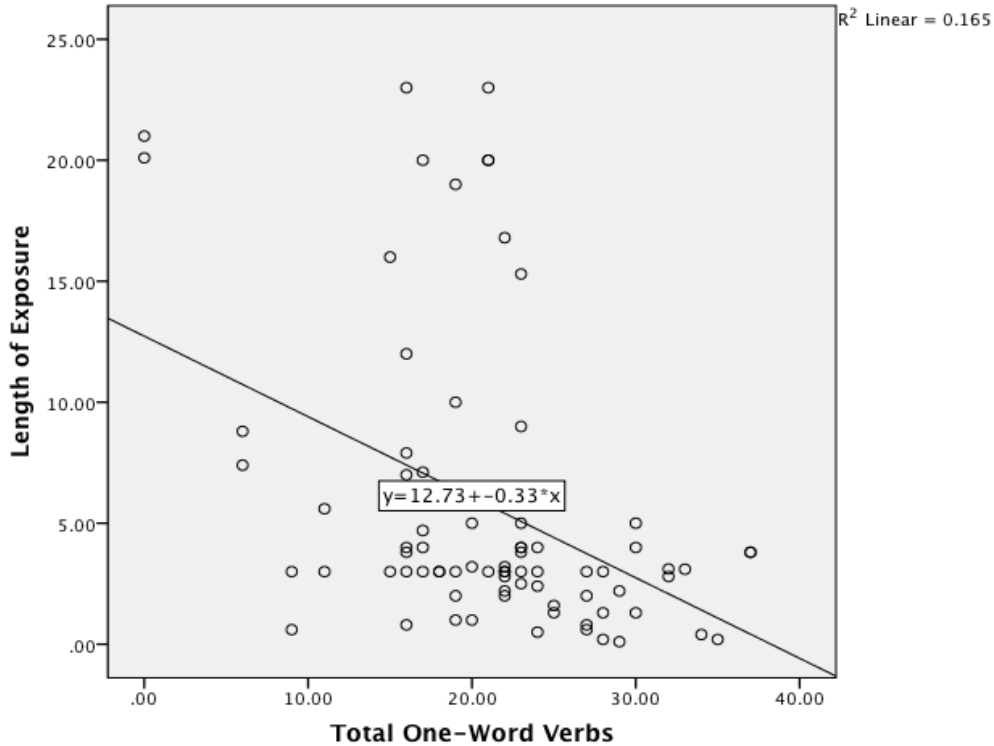
Figure 10: The association between the length of exposure to the L2 environment and the one-word verb usage

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the statistical procedures and the results of the study presented in Chapter III, as I sought responses to the thesis hypotheses. Descriptive statistics that presented the means and standard deviations of all variables were calculated. A paired-sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, correlation, and Repeated Measures ANOVA were used to discover the differences in participants' performance on the phrasal verbs and one-word verbs. The p, (t), and *sig.* (2-tailed) were pointed out to determine the significance of the differences. In addition to, the *d* was pointed out to indicate the strength of the magnitudes of the differences. The following chapter (Chapter V) will include a discussion and interpretation of these results.

Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter presents a discussion of the main results of the study reported in the previous chapter (Chapter IV). Each research question and its results will be answered according to the findings. Furthermore, it compares the findings of this research with some previous studies that have been conducted on the same issue. Additionally, this chapter presents pedagogical implications for ESL learners. This chapter also shows the limitations of this thesis. At the end of this chapter, some suggestions and recommendations will be offered for further research.

Interpretation of the Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study was to assess the performance of Arab ESL learners of two different lengths of exposure to the English-speaking environment (long exposure vs. short exposure) on a test evaluating their preferences for English phrasal verbs. The study examines the avoidance of phrasal verbs in relation to the Arab ESL learners' length of exposure to the English-speaking environment (long exposure, short exposure) and phrasal verb types (literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic). In particular, the test was designed to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance across the three types?

2. Do Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment differ significantly from Arab ESL learners with short exposure in the avoidance of literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic phrasal verbs?

3. Is the long exposure to the native-speaking environment (four years or more) necessary to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

4. Is the short exposure to the native-speaking environment (less than four years) enough to enhance the Arab ESL learners' preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs?

The ANOVA and *t*-tests results presented in Chapter IV show that only the idiomatic phrasal verbs had an effect on Arab ESL learners. In fact, the idiomatic phrasal verbs had an effect only on the short exposure group, as they tended to select significantly fewer idiomatic phrasal verbs than their one-word counterparts. Moreover, the length of exposure to the English-speaking environment had an effect on Arab ESL learners' preference for phrasal versus one-word verbs. Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the native-speaking environment have significantly higher scores on the three types of phrasal verbs than Arab ESL learners with short exposure. Also, Arab ESL learners with long exposure tended to select the literal and semi-transparent phrasal verbs significantly more than their one-word counterparts. In addition to, their long exposure to the native-speaking environment has protected them from the avoidance of the idiomatic phrasal verbs, as the avoidance of idiomatic phrasal verbs was not noticed. Nonetheless, the avoidance of idiomatic phrasal verbs was noticed in Arab ESL learners with short exposure. The semantic complexity of the idiomatic phrasal verbs may be confusing to them (Liao and Fukuya, 2004). Moreover, their short exposure was not enough to enhance their preference for the literal and semi-transparent phrasal verbs, as their preferences for them were not significant higher.

The Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs

The study operationalizes Arab ESL learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs as a usage that is significantly lower than that of one-word counterparts. The first research question asked if a significant difference in phrasal verbs avoidance exists across the three types. The one-way repeated measures ANOVA revealed that the difference was not significant between the literal phrasal verbs and the semi-transparent ones with the mean score of literal (M = 7.72) and that of the semi-transparent (M = 8.27) being relatively homogeneous. However, the differences were significant between the literal and the idiomatic phrasal verbs and between the semi-transparent and the idiomatic ones with the mean of literal phrasal verbs (M = 7.72) and that of the semi-transparent (M = 8.27) being significantly higher than that of the idiomatic ones (M = 5.12).

The difficulty of idiomatic phrasal verbs in contrast with literal and semi-transparent phrasal verbs may be attributed to their semantic complexity (Abu Jamil, 2010; Ben Duhaish, 2008; Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). It should be pointed out that the avoidance of idiomatic phrasal verbs is established for the Arab ESL learners as a whole. Namely, the total scores (long exposure's scores + short exposure's scores) of the idiomatic phrasal verbs were counted together and, therefore, they significantly were lower than those of their one-word counterparts. However, it should be explained that the avoidance of idiomatic phrasal verbs was noticed only in Arab ESL learners with short exposure whose scores on the idiomatic phrasal verbs (M = 3.69) were significantly lower than those of their one-word counterparts (M = 9.76). On the other hand, Arab ESL learners with long exposure's scores on the idiomatic phrasal verbs (M = 7.00) were significantly not lower than those of their one-word counterparts (M = 7.57).

The Necessity of Long Exposure to the Native-Speaking Environment

The second research question asked if Arab ESL learners with long exposure to the English-speaking environment differ significantly from Arab ESL learners with short exposure in the avoidance of literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic phrasal verbs. The ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups' performances on the individual three types of phrasal verbs with the mean scores for Arab ESL learners with long exposure on the literal ($M = 8.91$), the semi-transparent ($M = 10.37$), and the idiomatic phrasal verbs ($M = 7.00$) being significantly higher than those of the Arab ESL learners with short exposure ($M = 6.82$), ($M = 6.67$) and ($M = 3.69$), respectively.

The third research question asked if the long exposure to the native-speaking environment (four years or more) is necessary to enhance the Arab ESL learners' significant preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs. The answer is that the long exposure is necessary to enhance the significant preference for phrasal verbs as a whole because, as the *t*-test revealed, only in Arab ESL learners with long exposure it was noticed that the scores particularly on the literal ($M = 8.91$) and semi-transparent ($M = 10.37$) phrasal verbs were significantly higher than those of their one-word counterparts ($M = 6.02$) and ($M = 4.25$), respectively. In contrast with Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) who claimed that "the amount of exposure to native-speaking environments did not have an effect on the likelihood of using the multi-word verbs" (p.191), this study has demonstrated that the long exposure had an effect on the preference for the phrasal verbs usage in the Arab ESL learners which supports the findings of Liao and Fukuya (2004) who claimed that "one significant contributing factor to the learners' language development from avoidance and nonavoidance found in this study might have been the amount of contact with the L2" (213).

It should be pointed out that although the long exposure to the English-speaking environment was not enough to enhance the significant preference for the idiomatic phrasal verbs in particular, it has helped the Arab ESL learners to not avoid them. The *t*-test revealed that the difference was not significant between the idiomatic phrasal verbs and their one-word counterparts with the mean score for the idiomatic phrasal verbs ($M = 7.00$) and that of the one-word counterparts ($M = 7.57$) being relatively homogeneous. In contrast to Ben Duhaish (2008) who reported an avoidance of the phrasal verbs in general and Abu Jamil (2010) who reported an avoidance of the idiomatic phrasal verbs in particular, this study has demonstrated that the long exposure was a major factor in the (long exposure) Arab ESL learners' significant preferences for the literal and semi-transparent ones and the nonavoidance of the idiomatic ones. Thus, perhaps that if the minimum years of exposure for the long exposure group was raised from four years, a significant preference for the idiomatic phrasal verbs would have existed.

The Shortcoming of Short Exposure to the Native-Speaking Environment

The forth research question asked if the short exposure to the native-speaking environment (less than four years) is enough to enhance the Arab ESL learners' preference for phrasal verbs over one-word verbs. The answer is that the short exposure is not enough to enhance the significant preference for phrasal verbs because, as the *t*-test revealed, only in Arab ESL learners with short exposure it was noticed that the scores particularly on the literal ($M = 6.82$) and semi-transparent ($M = 6.67$) phrasal verbs were significantly not higher than those of their one-word counterparts ($M = 7.21$) and ($M = 7.04$), respectively. Moreover, the avoidance was noticed in their performance on the idiomatic phrasal verbs because the *t*-test revealed that the difference between the mean score of the one-word verbs ($M = 9.76$) was significantly higher than that of their idiomatic phrasal verbs ($M = 3.69$). Not only the short exposure did not

enhance the significant preference for phrasal verbs (literal and semi-transparent ones), but also it was the reason for the avoidance of the idiomatic phrasal verbs.

Pedagogical Implications

This research demonstrates that the long exposure to the English-speaking environment plays an important factor that leads Arab ESL learners to the preference for phrasal verbs in general and literal and semi-transparent ones in particular in spit of the fact that, as mentioned earlier, Arabic does not have the phrasal verb structure. On the other hand, the short exposure has been determined to be insufficient in the preference for the phrasal verbs.

I claim that, as Liao and Fukuya (2004) did, Arab ESL learners go through a developmental process. Within this developmental framework, the long exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs in contrast with the short exposure group's avoidance. Thus, for the Arab ESL leaners, the long exposure to the native-speaking environment counteracted the effects of the L1-L2 differences and the semantic complexity and, thus, the claim by Abu Jamil (2010) that semantic difficulties are a good predictor of avoidance in Arab leaners of English was not fully supported in this study.

I have inferred that the semantic difficulties might be a reason for the short exposure group's idiomatic phrasal-verb avoidance, but its role will diminish as learners reach a longer exposure to the native-speaking environment. In other words, in the avoidance of idiomatic phrasal verbs, the semantic difficulties affect Arab ESL learners only up to a certain length of exposure to the native-speaking environment. The study offers interesting clues as to the success of long exposure Arab ESL learners in learning and preferring phrasal verbs, including the idiomatic ones.

Limitations of the Study

Even though the study adequately answered the research question and supported the research hypothesis, there are some limitations:

1. The study is concerned with Arab ESL learners in only one ESL setting (USA). Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this study cannot be carried out over to Arab ESL learners in other English-speaking countries or any other group of learners with different characteristics and language backgrounds.

2. This study did not use any test to establish the participants' prior knowledge of the selected phrasal verbs. This is very important because one can claim the participants' underuse of phrasal verbs results from ignorance rather than conscious avoidance.

3. The study was based on a limited number of selected phrasal verbs (45) and a population sample of 81 participants. More items and a larger population would make it more feasible to generalize the findings.

4. The definitions of the long exposure as an amount of four years or more and the short exposure as less than four years lived in the English-speaking environment were not based on scientific research. It is necessary to scientifically determine the length of exposure whether it is long or short.

5. The study's results were obtained from only one test (multiple-choice test). Thus, different results may be obtained if different instruments were used. Also, because the study was mainly focused on avoidance of phrasal verbs in preference situations, there were no serious measures of the production abilities in speaking or writing.

In conclusion, I hope that the above-mentioned limitations will inspire other researchers to improve this study or develop better measurements in the future. To further this study,

suggestions for future research are presented in the following section.

Suggestions for Future Research

Experimental research in the future could be planned to overcome the limitations of this study. Future research could include a larger sample in order to ensure more balance of Arab ESL learners' length of exposure to the native-speaking environment. A larger sample drawn from Arab ESL learners from all/some English-speaking countries would also increase the possibility of achieving statistical significance in the results.

In terms of the elicitation format, I suggest carrying out a study applying a speaking/writing test to measures Arab ESL learners' abilities in producing phrasal verbs in speaking and writing in English as a SL. Previous studies on the avoidance of phrasal verbs, including this study, have never used speaking or writing tests. So, it will be interesting to find out the English learners' abilities on these productive skills as the primary means of showing a leaner's ability in English.

To provide further evidence for this (long exposure to the English-speaking environment leads to the preference for phrasal verbs), I suggest testing learners of English of speakers of other languages whose L1s, like Arabic, do not have the phrasal verb structure (e.g., Chinese ESL learners). It is interesting to find out if the long exposure is also a contributing factor to the preference for phrasal verbs in other-languages speaking learners of English not only in the Arabic-speaking learners of English.

Conclusion

Previous research on avoidance of phrasal verbs has pointed out that ESL learners' exposure to the native-speaking environment might have been a factor in their nonavoidance of phrasal verbs. Motivated by this, this study sought to investigate the avoidance of/preference for

the phrasal verbs by Arab ESL leaners with two different exposures to the native-speaking environment. The results of the data supported all the hypotheses of the study. It was found that the phrasal verb type had an effect on the avoidance of/preference for phrasal verbs. Also, the long exposure to the native-speaking environment had an effect on the nonavoidance of phrasal verbs, as manifested by the Arab ESL learners with long exposure's higher preference for the literal and semi-transparent ones in particular. Moreover, Arab ESL learners with short exposure seemed to avoid the idiomatic phrasal verbs.

In summary, the results showed that phrasal verbs present a source of difficulty for Arab ESL learners in general and those with short exposure in particular. Therefore, phrasal verbs need more attention from L2 curriculum designers and teachers.

While this study has focused on phrasal verbs, it is possible that the independent variable of length of exposure may account for relatively low scores in extensively researched L2 errors such as articles and prepositions. This issue can certainly be addressed by a reanalysis of the many existing studies. In addition, while the focus of this specific study is native speakers of Arabic, persistent errors found in the interlanguage of studies of even the most advanced L2 learners, no matter their native language, can be largely attributed to length and quality of exposure. Another hypothesis will worth investigating.

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Appendix I

Phrasal Verbs & One-Word Counterparts List

List of the 45 phrasal verbs and their one-word counterparts used in the multiple-choice test

	Literal PVs	One-word counterpart	Semi-transparent PVs	One-word counterpart	Idiomatic PVs	One-word counterpart
1	Give back	Return	Sign up	Register	Let down	Disappoint
2	Give away	Distribute	Make up	Invent	Run into	Meet
3	Throw away	Dispose	Leave out	Omit	Call off	Cancel
4	Run away	Escape	Eat up	Finish	Put off	Postpone
5	Carry away	Remove	Cut down	Reduce	Back up	Support
6	Side with	Support	Bring up	Mention	Turn up	Arrive
7	Allow for	Permit	Shut off	Stop	Buy into	Believe
8	Ask for	Request	Go over	Review	Put down	Insult
9	Hand out	Distribute	Look over	Check	Mix up	Confuse
10	Come in	Enter	Find out	Discover	Drop in	Visit
11	Pull off	Remove	Break up	Separate	Kick around	Discuss
12	Pick out	Choose	Think up	Invent	Go for	Choose
13	Send back	Return	Talk over	Discuss	Run with	Adopt
14	Go away	Leave	Try out	Test	Wear down	Weaken
15	Hide away	Hide	Shut down	Close	Run out	Expire

Appendix II

Demographic Questionnaire

Please respond to the following by either choosing a predefined answer or writing your own answer.

1. Gender: □ Male   □ Female   **2. Age:** □ a. 22 years old or less   □ b. 23-30 years old

□ c. 31-40 years old   □ c. 40 years old or more

3. Nationality _____   **4. Native Language** _____

5. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

□ a. High School

□ b. Bachelor's Degree

□ c. Master's Degree

□ d. Doctoral Degree

□ e. Other (please specify) _____

6. How long have you been LIVING in the USA?

_____ years _____ months

7. Years of LEARNING English in your home country: ____ years ____ months

8. Years of LEARNING English in the USA or any other English-speaking country:

_____ years _____ months

9. Other languages spoken (besides your native language and the English language):

_____

10. If you work in the USA, what is/are your job(s)?

_____

_____

Appendix III

Multiple-Choice Test

This test has 45 short daily dialogues. Read the dialogue first, then select ONLY ONE response that you would use in your daily conversations. It is possible to have more than one correct answer, so be sure to select the one that is most natural to you.

Select only ONE appropriate response.

1. A: Hi Ahmed, I need your car today, please.
   B: Ok. But don't forget to _____ the keys.
   a. stop   b. return   c. run up   d. give back

2. A: What is the thing you are most proud of about your radio station?
   B: Well, I think it is that we used to _____ free concert tickets.
    a. reach   b. give away   c. fall apart   d. distribute

3. A: Jack, don't _____ those empty cans and bottles. You have to recycle them.
   B: OK. Mom.
    a. throw away   b. dispose   c. receive   d. shut off

4. A: Was the criminal captured last night?
   B: No. In fact, the police tried to grab him, but he _____ from them as quickly as possible.
       a. escaped   b. spoke up   c. inserted   d. ran away

5. A: Although you trimmed the tree, how is our backyard so clean?
   B: Because Jack helped me and _____ the branches and leaves.
    a. removed   b. supported   c. carried away   d. eased up

6. A: Did you fight with your sister when you were kids?
   B: Yes, but my mother always _____ her when we had an argument.
    a. mentioned   b. sided with   c. took away   d. supported

7.   A: How many people do you expect to have at your wedding?
     B: I don't know, but our wedding budget _____only 100 guests.
        a. allows for   b. cancels   c. mixes up   d. permits

8.   A: What do most people do first when they come in to your restaurant?
     B: Well, they _____ for a quiet table at the back of the restaurant.
        a. bring down   b. keep   c. ask for   d. request

9.   A: Do you know why there were so many people here yesterday?
     B: I believe that was because the show administration _____ free tickets to the show.
        a. touched up   b. distributed   c. adjusted   d. handed out

10. A: Jack, there are some people at the door.
     B: Ok. Please let them _____.
        a. enter   b. start   c. put on   d. come in

11. A: I feel too hot!!
     B: I think you need to _____ this heavy jacket.
        a. remove   b. pull off   c. watch   d. switch on

12. A: So, tomorrow is Jane's wedding!
     B: Yeah! I _____ a present for her!
        a. picked out   b. came out   c. chose   d. called

13. A: What did she tell you, Sam?
     B: She told me to _____ this form to her after I fill it out.
        a. speak   b. send back   c. seek out   d. return

14. A: Do you have many tourists come to visit your city?
     B: Yes, so I'll be happy when they all have _____, and our city is quiet again.
        a. helped out   b. discussed   c. left   d. gone away

15. A: I think I'm going to _____ all my documents in my closet to not lose them.
     B: This is a great idea!
        a. work out   b. hide   c. invite   d. hide away

16. A: What do you plan to do after high school?
     B: Well I'm going to _____ with the Navy.
        a. pay   b. register   c. sign up   d. run up

17.   A: Do you think 1st grade students are going to like Sarah?
      B: Absolutely, because she likes to _____ stories to tell kids.
      a. invent   b. prevent   c. hang out   d. make up

18.   A: Are you going to tell me what happened?
      B: Yes and I won't ____anything,
      a. pitch in   b. omit   c. relax   d. leave out

19.   A: I've heard you are going to cancel the party tonight!
      B: Yes, that's right. Because somebody has _____ all the cookies I baked.
      a. finished   b. created   c. eaten up   d. checked in

20.   A: Why is the public transportation important in your city?
      B: Because it helps _____ traffic congestion.
      a. cut down   b. reject   c. reduce   d. log on

21.   A: What did you have in the last meeting?
      B: The participants _____ several safety questions.
      a. brought up   b. hung up   c. became   d. mentioned

22.   A: It is so noisy here.
      B: Don't worry. I'll _____ the machine.
      a. give up   b. stop   c. lose   d. shut off

23.   A: What can I do for you?
      B: I need you to ____ my transcript and give me your feedback.
      A: Sure, I will.
      a. listen up   b. review   c. repair   d. go over

24.   A: My dad always helps me do my homework.
      B: Me too. I often ask my dad to _____ my essays.
      a. check   b. give away   c. look over   d. join

25.   A: Have you put up the tent, guys?
      B: No, not yet. We're reading the directions to _____ how to put it up.
      a. go off   b. invite   c. discover   d. find out

26.   A: Do you let your students work together in your class?
      B: Yes. I usually _____my students into pairs to work.
      a. separate   b. turn in   c. break up   d. start

27.   A: Why do you think the school administration thanked David yesterday?
       B: I think because he is good at _____ creative projects for his students.
       a. reducing   b. inventing   c. thinking up   d. dropping out

28.   A: I have recently received so many job offers.
       B: OK, but remember, you need to _____ all these job offers with your wife before
          accepting any of them.
       a. run for   b. claim   c. talk over   d. discuss

29.   A: Where's Michael?
       B: He's _____ his new bike in the backyard.
       a. trying out   b. testing   c. living for   d. leaving

30.   A: There are so many protestors in the street. Have you seen them?
       B: Yes. I think they hope to _____ the nuclear plant.
       a. travel   b. close   c. strike up   d. shut down

31.   A: Why do you study so hard at the university?
       B: Because I don't want to _____ my parents.
       a. cut down   b. let down   c. disappoint   d. speak

32.   A: I haven't seen our old friend James for a long time. Have you?
       B: Yes, I _____ him last week in the grocery store.
       a. broke out   b. met   c. completed   d. ran into

33.   A: It is raining heavily outside.
       B: I know. I hope they don't _____ the wedding.
       a. call off   b. cancel   c. watch   d. back off

34.   A: Are you still going to travel in December?
       B: No. I had to _____ my vacation until January.
       a. decrease   b. postpone   c. cheer up   d. put off

35.   A: The police have arrested the criminal in a remarkably short time.
       B: Great! I think because they were _____ by extra officers from nearby towns.
       a. supported   b. signed up   c. backed up   d. appeared

36.   A: His parents are so worried about him because he didn't return from school yet.
       B: I hope he finally _____.
       a. confuses   b. arrives   c. takes up   d. turns up

37.   A: Jack always brings up some attractive ideas.
        B: I know, but I never _____ his ideas.
         a. bought into   b. believed   c. gave out   d. produced

38.   A: I think Ali deserves much respect from you.
        B: Why?
        A: Because it's wrong to _____ someone because of his beliefs.
         a. catch up   b. insult   c. put down   d. express

39.   A: Why did you miss the party?
        B: Because we got the dates _____.
         a. passed in   b. confused   c. submitted   d. mixed up

40.   A: I've heard that Jane is sick. Is this right?
        B: Yes. I think we should ____ this evening to see if she needs anything.
         a. add up   b. visit   c. stop   d. drop in

41.   A: What did you do after the exam yesterday?
        B: We sat in the library and _____ some ideas for graduation.
         a. exploited   b. stood out   c. discussed   d. kicked around

42.   A: Has your brother bought a car?
        B: Yes. After looking at a number of cars, he finally____ the BMW.
         a. planned   b. went for   c. chose   d. dropped out

43.   A: Why is he very important to his company?
        B: I think because the company has ____ his ideas for marketing the product.
         a. opened up   b. looked   c. adopted   d. run with

44.   A: How does Jack always get what he wants?
        B: I think because he always argues and persists until he finally _____ his parents and
        they let him get what he wants.
         a. calls out   b. weakens   c. results   d. wears down

45.   A: Why do you have to evacuate your apartment?
        B: Because my contract _____ next week.
         a. cuts in   b. yields   c. expires   d. runs out