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**ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ТА ПРАКТИЧНІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ ФРАЗОВИХ ДІЄСЛІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ**

*Фразові дієслова є високочастотним і функціонально важливим компонентом сучасної англійської мови; водночас вони залишаються однією з найскладніших сфер лексичної компетенції для студентів. Незважаючи на розвинені граматичні знання та широкий словниковий запас, вони часто демонструють стійкі труднощі у розумінні, запам'ятовуванні та продуктивному використанні фразових дієслів, особливо тих, що мають ідіоматичне чи полісемантичне значення. Ці проблеми часто призводять до уникання фразових дієслів та зниження природності мовлення.*

*Метою даного дослідження є аналіз лінгвістичних та педагогічних особливостей англійських фразових дієслів і вивчення ефективних підходів до їх засвоєння студентами у контексті навчання англійської як іноземної. Дослідження поєднує огляд сучасних наукових досліджень із розробкою диференційованої системи навчальних вправ, заснованих на когнітивних вміннях та з опорою на практику мовлення. Розглядаються ключові проблеми засвоєння фразових дієслів, включно з семантичною непрозорістю, значенням частинок, контекстною інтерпретацією та стилістичним забарвленням висловлювання.*

*На основі теоретичного аналізу та педагогічного синтезу розроблено три рівні вправ для студентів середнього, вище середнього та високого рівня володіння мовою. Вправи варіюються від контрольованого впізнавання та поєднання форми й значення до контекстного висновку, аналізу помилок, металінгвістичного розбору та активного відтворення лексики. Кожен тип вправ спрямований на певні когнітивні механізми, такі як асоціація, висновок, декомпозиція та концептуальне картографування, що сприяє глибокій словниковій знань і довготривалому запам'ятовуванню.*

*Результати свідчать, що диференційоване навчання, орієнтоване на значення, значно підвищує здатність студентів обробляти та використовувати фразові дієслова точно та гнучко. Запропонована модель демонструє, що фразові дієслова можуть бути ефективно інтегровані до навчальних програм вищої освіти, якщо розглядати їх як ключові лексичні одиниці, а не як периферійний матеріал. Дослідження має практичне значення для викладання лексики та надає основу для подальших емпіричних досліджень засвоєння фразових дієслів.*

**Ключові слова:** фразові дієслова, лексична компетенція, навчання іноземної мови, когнітивний підхід, засвоєння лексики, багатослівні вирази, ідіоматична мова, диференційоване навчання, навчання в контексті.

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## THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS

*Phrasal verbs constitute a highly frequent and functionally important component of contemporary English; however, they remain one of the most challenging areas of lexical competence for university students of English as a foreign language. Despite advanced grammatical knowledge and a broad vocabulary base, the students often demonstrate persistent difficulties in understanding, retaining, and productively using phrasal verbs, particularly with idiomatic and polysemous meanings. These difficulties frequently result in avoidance strategies and reduced lexical naturalness.*

*The present study aims to analyze the linguistic and pedagogical features of English phrasal verbs and to examine the effective approaches to their acquisition by university students. The study integrates a review of recent research with the development of a differentiated system of instructional exercises grounded in cognitive and usage-based principles. The work addresses the key challenges in phrasal verb acquisition, including semantic opacity, particle meaning, contextual interpretation, and register sensitivity.*

*Based on the theoretical analysis and pedagogical synthesis, a three-level system of exercises was designed for intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced learners. The exercises progress from the controlled recognition and form-meaning matching to contextual inference, error analysis, language reflection, and active lexical recall. Each exercise type targets a specific cognitive mechanisms such as association, inference, decomposition, and conceptual mapping, thereby promoting depth of vocabulary knowledge and long-term retention.*

*The findings suggest that differentiated, meaning-oriented instruction significantly enhances students' ability to process and use phrasal verbs accurately and flexibly. The proposed model demonstrates that phrasal verbs can be effectively integrated into higher education curricula when treated as core lexical units rather than peripheral items. The study offers practical implications for vocabulary instruction and provides a framework for the future empirical research on phrasal verb acquisition.*

**Keywords:** *phrasal verbs, lexical competence, foreign language learning, cognitive approach, vocabulary acquisition, multiword expressions, idiomatic language, differentiated instruction, context-based learning.*

**Statement and substantiation of the problem relevance.** Despite the high frequency and functional importance in contemporary English, phrasal verbs remain one of the most problematic areas of lexical competence for university-level learners of English as a foreign language. Although students at tertiary institutions often demonstrate advanced grammatical knowledge and a substantial vocabulary size, numerous studies indicate persistent difficulties in the comprehension, retention, and productive use of phrasal verbs, particularly those with idiomatic or polysemous meanings [2]. As a result, students tend to avoid phrasal verbs in both spoken and written discourse, preferring single-word equivalents, which negatively affects the naturalness and fluency of their language production.

Recent research has highlighted the effectiveness of explicit, cognitive, and corpus-based instructional approaches to phrasal verb learning. However, these findings have not been consistently integrated into university-level curricula, where phrasal verbs are often treated as peripheral vocabulary items or presented in decontextualized lists. This pedagogical gap limits learners' ability to develop depth of lexical knowledge and to use phrasal verbs appropriately across different communicative contexts [3, p. 9].

Furthermore, the lack of systematic analysis comparing instructional methods and learning conditions remains that causes long-term retention and spontaneous use of phrasal verbs among university students. The interaction between cognitive processing, contextual exposure, and instructional design is still insufficiently explored, particularly in language environments where natural input is limited [5, p. 160].

Therefore, the problem addressed in this study deal with the discrepancy between the recognized language importance of phrasal verbs and the persistent difficulties university students experience in mastering them, as well as in the need for empirically grounded pedagogical models that effectively support

their acquisition and use in academic and communicative contexts.

**Analysis of current research.** The recent research on phrasal verb acquisition highlights the complexity of these multi-word constructions and the challenges they pose for advanced language students at the university. Phrasal verbs, characterized by a verb and particle combination and frequently idiomatic meanings, are widely acknowledged as key indicators of lexical proficiency in academic and spoken English. Across empirical and theoretical studies, scholars have converged on several core findings regarding processing, instruction, and learner outcomes [1, p. 97].

A significant body of work has explored the cognitive and pedagogical dimensions of phrasal verb learning. Riguel E. argues that phrasal verbs represent prototypical multiword expressions which meanings are not fully predictable from their parts [4, p. 115]. From a cognitive-language perspective, the comprehension and production of such units are facilitated when learners are explicitly taught semantic patterns and metaphorical mappings rather than treated as incidental vocabulary. This aligns with usage-based approaches which assert that learners internalize vocabulary more effectively when form-meaning connections are strengthened through focused engagement [4, p. 120].

Gilquin G. investigates how different types and amounts of language exposure influence learners' use of phrasal verbs, highlighting the effects of contextual input and student environment on acquisition outcomes [2].

Some linguists (Tadayonifar M., Elgort I. & Siyanova-Chanturia A.) examines how definitions placement and typographic enhancement affect the contextual learning and retention of the phrasal verbs from reading tasks. The study shows that providing definitions after exposure and using typographic emphasis significantly improves both immediate and delayed retention [5, p. 160].

The researches (Kissane H., Schilling A., Krauss P.) were devoted to the analyses of the computational

models which represent phrasal and prepositional verbs, contributing to theoretical understanding of verb-particle semantics [3, p. 10].

Corpus-informed studies have further illuminated the frequency and functional distribution of the phrasal verbs in authentic texts. Feng Y. and Yang M. work with large language corpora demonstrates that the phrasal verbs are pervasive across registers, including academic and professional discourse, where the learners often underproduce them relative to native speakers. Such findings have motivated the incorporation of corpus data into instructional materials, enabling students to observe the patterns of use in context rather than in isolation [1, p. 78].

The researches have also examined learner processing and avoidance behavior. Studies by Kissane H. and colleagues (Kissane H., Schilling A. & Krauss P.) report that even advanced learners exhibit avoidance of phrasal verbs, particularly those with highly idiomatic meanings, opting instead of single-word synonyms. These avoidance strategies suggest gaps in depth of lexical knowledge rather than general proficiency. More recent psycholinguistic research on formulaic language processing supports this interpretation, showing that fluency benefits from automatized recognition of fixed and semi-fixed expressions, including phrasal verbs [3, p. 9].

Instructional research has increasingly tested explicit and implicit teaching methods. Experimental studies indicate that the targeted instruction – especially when leveraging semantic mapping, imagery, and pattern-based learning – yields superior retention and productive use compared with the incidental exposure alone [2]. For example, controlled experiments with university students in the contexts demonstrate that the explicit explanation of particle meanings and usage conditions leads to measurable gains in both comprehension and production [3, p. 8].

Despite these advances, the literature reveals gaps and ongoing debates. One central issue concerns the transferability of classroom gains to real-world communicative competence. While explicit instruction improves test performance, some studies question whether this translates to increased use of phrasal verbs in spontaneous discourse. Additionally, the role of individual learner differences – such as language background, lexical aptitude, and exposure to authentic input – remains underexplored in large-scale studies [5, p. 161].

The recent scholarship converges on the view that phrasal verbs are integral to advanced language competence and that their acquisition benefits from explicit, data-driven, and cognitively informed pedagogies. However, continued research is needed to refine the instructional models that bridge controlled learning gains with fluent, naturalistic use in academic and professional contexts.

**The purpose.** The purpose of this study is to analyze the linguistic and pedagogical features of the English phrasal verbs and to examine effective approaches to their acquisition by university students, with a particular focus on the recent research findings and instructional practices.

To achieve the stated purpose, the study sets out to accomplish the following tasks:

- to define the linguistic nature of English phrasal verbs as multiword lexical units and describe their structural and semantic characteristics;

- to examine instructional approaches to teaching phrasal verbs, including explicit, cognitive, and corpus-based methods;

- to determine pedagogical implications of the recent research findings for improving phrasal verb instruction in higher education.

**The main material of the study.** In order to ensure effective acquisition of the English phrasal verbs, the system of exercises was developed based on the principle of differentiated instruction. Since students demonstrate varying levels of language proficiency and cognitive readiness, three groups of exercises were designed: for intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced learners. Each group addresses the specific linguistic and cognitive challenges associated with learning phrasal verbs.

The first group of exercises is aimed at introducing phrasal verbs and forming basic lexical competence. At this level, students need structured input, clear semantic boundaries, and controlled practice.

First of all, we can mention multiple-choice completion where the students have to choose the correct phrasal verb to complete the sentence from the given.

This exercise develops receptive lexical recognition and helps learners distinguish between formally similar phrasal verbs. The multiple-choice format limits cognitive load and allows students to focus on meaning rather than form production. It is particularly effective for introducing new items and preventing random guessing through semantic contrast.

In this group there are the exercises for matching phrasal verbs with their meanings. Such tasks reinforce form-meaning associations and support memory consolidation. This exercise encourages learners to perceive phrasal verbs as single lexical units rather than as separate components. It is especially effective at early stages of learning, when stable lexical representations are being formed.

One more type of the exercises is sentence completion where the students complete the sentences using the correct form of the phrasal verbs in brackets. This exercise shifts learners from recognition to controlled production. By requiring correct grammatical form, it integrates vocabulary learning with grammatical accuracy. Such tasks help students internalize the phrasal verbs as functional elements of sentence structure.

The exercises in this group require reproduction of the learned material. They contain ready-made answers that students are expected to recall. However, regular completion of these tasks contributes to revising the material and practicing the use of the phrasal verbs, as well as mastering their meanings.

The second group of exercises addresses semantic complexity, polysemy, and contextual interpretation. The learners at this level often know phrasal verbs but misuse or avoid them. The exercise with the wrong meaning trap has the sentences which contain a phrasal verb with a wrong explanation. The students have to find the mistake and write the correct meaning

(*The plane took off at 6 a.m. She ran into her teacher in the supermarket. They put up with the noise during the renovation*).

This task develops semantic discrimination and trains learners to resist false associations. It raises awareness of polysemy and idiomatic meaning, which are major sources of lexical error at this stage.

Also we can propose the students to replace the gaps with one phrasal verb from the given that fits the context. This exercise strengthens contextual inference skills. The students must analyze discourse meaning rather than rely on isolated definitions. Such tasks promote deeper lexical processing and reading comprehension.

The students can explain the meaning of any phrasal verb in different sentences. This task develops awareness of polysemy and highlights the role of context in meaning construction. Learners begin to understand that phrasal verbs cannot be learned as one-to-one equivalents.

Also the teacher can propose to replace the incorrect phrasal verb with the correct one (*He looked up his little sister while their parents were away. The teacher asked us to put on the problem carefully*).

Error correction tasks enhance lexical accuracy and encourage reflective learning. The students identify incorrect usage and reconstruct the appropriate form-meaning pairings.

There are the exercises requiring meaning shift through particles where the students explain how the meaning changes (*She turned the offer. She turned down the offer*). This exercise demonstrates the semantic power of particles and helps learners understand that particles contribute meaning, not merely grammatical function.

The specified group of exercises requires a deeper knowledge of the language. Error analysis helps students independently identify and solve problems and justify the correctness of their statements. The exercises aimed at identifying the polysemy of phrasal verbs also require careful consideration and sufficient background knowledge. These exercises are designed for perceiving the material in context, which makes the tasks more challenging.

The third group of exercises promotes deep cognitive processing, metalinguistic awareness, and autonomous lexical control.

The teacher can use only the particles for the student to complete the sentence using an appropriate verb (*She refused to \_\_\_\_\_ up her dream. A new problem \_\_\_\_\_ up during the discussion*). This task shifts attention from the verb to the particle, strengthening understanding of particle semantics and improving retention.

The students can write the phrasal verbs according to their meanings (*to tolerate something unpleasant \_\_\_\_\_ to cancel or delay an event \_\_\_\_\_*). Such reverse task mirrors real communicative processes and prevents direct translation. It supports concept-to-form mapping, which is crucial for fluent language use.

This group can contain the exercises where the students have to explain two meanings of the sentence (*The meeting was called off*). The students explore context-dependent interpretation, recognizing that

meaning is determined by usage rather than dictionary definition alone.

The language decomposition task develops metalinguistic awareness and turns vocabulary learning into analytical reasoning, enhancing long-term retention.

Speaking about the phrasal verbs it is necessary to do the exercises for replacing the phrasal verb with a more formal synonym. This exercise builds stylistic awareness and helps learners choose vocabulary appropriate to communicative context. Also this task raises awareness of deceptive similarity and helps learners avoid semantic overgeneralization.

One of the most difficult tasks is to underline the phrasal verbs that cannot be replaced by a single verb without loss of meaning (*She came up with an idea and refused to back down, even when others tried to talk her out of it*). This task develops stylistic sensitivity and helps learners recognize when phrasal verbs are semantically indispensable.

The exercises in this group require a high level of language proficiency. Independent identification of the meaning of the phrasal verbs requires well-developed skills. If students know several meanings of phrasal verbs and are able to use them in different contexts together with synonyms, they have fully mastered the language material.

The presented system of exercises progresses from controlled recognition to deep semantic and metalinguistic processing. Each task activates specific cognitive mechanisms – association, inference, decomposition, recall – ensuring that the phrasal verbs are learned as meaningful, functional lexical units rather than memorized lists. The differentiation of exercises according to proficiency level allows learners to overcome avoidance strategies and achieve confident, accurate use of phrasal verbs in varied communicative contexts.

**Conclusions and prospects for further researches of directions.** The present study demonstrates that the acquisition of the English phrasal verbs can be significantly enhanced through a systematic, differentiated, and cognitively oriented approach to instruction. Given the semantic complexity, polysemy, and idiomatic nature of the phrasal verbs, traditional methods based on memorization and isolated practice prove insufficient, particularly at higher levels of language proficiency. The system of exercises proposed in this study addresses these challenges by aligning instructional design with learners' developmental stages and cognitive capacities.

The three-tier structure of exercises reflects a gradual progression in lexical processing. At the intermediate levels, controlled and recognition-based tasks support the formation of stable form-meaning connections and reduce early avoidance of phrasal verbs. At the upper-intermediate stage, context-dependent and error-focused exercises promote semantic precision and flexibility, enabling learners to overcome misleading associations and partial understanding. At the advanced level, unconventional and analytically demanding tasks foster deep lexical processing, metalinguistic awareness, and autonomous control over phrasal verb usage.

A key contribution of the study is in its emphasis on the depth of vocabulary knowledge rather than the surface familiarity. By encouraging the students to analyze particles, reconstruct meaning from context, and compare stylistic alternatives, the exercises move beyond rote learning and activate higher-order cognitive processes such as inference, prediction, and conceptual mapping. These processes are essential for long-term retention and accurate spontaneous use of the phrasal verbs in both spoken and written communication.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of treating the phrasal verbs as integrated lexical units within discourse, rather than as the marginal or optional vocabulary items. The findings suggest that learners' difficulties with the phrasal verbs stem not from their inherent complexity, but from insufficient exposure to structured, meaning-oriented practice that reflects real language use. The proposed exercise system responds to this gap by combining linguistic theory with practical pedagogy.

In pedagogical terms, the results of this study may inform the design of vocabulary syllabi, teaching materials, and classroom practices in higher education. The differentiated exercise model can be adapted to various learning contexts and proficiency levels, making it a flexible tool for instructors seeking to improve learners' lexical competence. The future research may build on this framework by empirically testing the effectiveness of individual exercise types or by examining their impact on the students with different language backgrounds.

In conclusion, the study confirms that the phrasal verbs need not remain a persistent obstacle in the English language learning. When approached through structured differentiation, cognitive engagement, and contextual analysis become a manageable and meaningful component of advanced lexical competence.

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