

Phrasal Verb and Reading Comprehension Amongst Puerto Rican ESL University Students

by

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ABSTRACT

Phrasal verbs (PVs) are difficult for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. In this study, two measures were used to determine the comprehension of different semantic categories of phrasal verbs; a vocabulary test and a reading comprehension test. Puerto Rican ESL university students from the basic, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels took both tests in order to see how level affects comprehension. There were two major findings: a) ESL students comprehend phrasal verbs better when they were incorporated within a text b) the semantic categories of phrasal verbs do not necessarily determine their difficulty of comprehension. The results of the study led the researcher to consider teacher language awareness (LA) when teaching phrasal verbs. A pedagogy for teaching PVs is proposed using LA.

RESUMEN

Los “phrasal verbs” son difíciles para los estudiantes de inglés como segundo idioma (ESL por sus siglas en Inglés). Este estudio midió la comprensión de diferentes categorías semánticas de los “phrasal verbs” utilizando una prueba de traducción de vocabulario y una prueba de comprensión de lectura. Los estudiantes universitarios puertorriqueños que estudian ESL a nivel básico, intermedio y avanzado tomaron ambos exámenes para determinar cómo los diferentes niveles afectan la comprensión de los “phrasal verbs”. Hubo dos hallazgos principales:

a) Los estudiantes de ESL comprendieron mejor el significado de los “phrasal verbs” cuando eran incorporados dentro de un texto b) Las categorías semánticas de los “phrasal verbs” no necesariamente determinan la dificultad de comprensión. Los resultados del estudio llevó al investigador considerar el conocimiento de la lengua (LA por sus siglas en inglés) para enseñar “phrasal verbs.” El investigador propone una pedagogía de enseñanza utilizando LA.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Omayra Pena; mother, Luz De Rosa; father, Reno De Rosa; and brother Carlo De Rosa. Thank you for your support.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

As a teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL), I became interested in phrasal verbs (PVs) because I realized that my ESL students had difficulty understanding them. The difficulty with PVs caused me to explore them further and led me to realize that PVs can be a much more complicated vocabulary structure than many believe. PVs are commonly defined as a verb followed by a particle, yet this definition does not begin to explain their true complexity. The particle that follows the verb changes the original meaning of the verb. An example of a phrasal verb is *go out*. The verb *go* is translated as *ir* in Spanish. In this case, the particle *out* changes the meaning of the verb *go*, and *go out* translated into Spanish is *salir*. The meaning of *go out* in this case is to *go out on an outing, a date*, which is somewhat opaque, possibly causing an ESL learner to not comprehend it properly. This leads us to question: What are the exact reasons why ESL learners have difficulty with the comprehension of PVs?

For native speakers of English, PVs are acquired in the same manner as other vocabulary. Native speakers do not have to explore their origin or structure. However, this is not true with second language acquisition, where exploration is necessary.

Specifically for Spanish speaking English language learners (ELLs), PVs tend to be difficult. One reason for this is that they do not exist in Spanish; therefore, they are a new structure to recognize and learn. In addition, it is difficult for ELLs to recognize phrasal verbs as units having one semantic meaning. Another reason is that one- word verb translations from Spanish to English normally exist, and for non-native English speakers whose native language is Spanish, these are an easier yet normally less accurate alternative to phrasal verbs. An example

of a one word verb in English that an ELL learner can use to avoid using a phrasal verb is *extinguish* instead of *put out*.

A one-word translation does not always work well and can result in an inaccuracy that may lead to a misunderstanding. An example is the phrase *to get out of the car*. Spanish speakers translate the Spanish phrase *salir del carro* or *bajarse del carro* as *to leave the car*. *To leave the car* in English refers to leaving the car somewhere. For example, “Let us *leave the car* at the university and walk to Mc Donald’s.” Instead a native English speaker would actually use the phrase *to get out of the car* for the Spanish phrase *salir del carro* or *bajarse del carro*.

Of course, it is easier to literally translate the Spanish verb into English using a one-word verb, instead of searching for the English phrasal verbs that accurately convey the proper meaning for the specific context. This is where the avoidance of phrasal verbs among ESL learners comes into play.

However, PVs cannot be totally avoided. They are an important component of the reading comprehension process because they are an integral part of the lexicon. Verbs, in particular, contribute an important aspect of meaning in a sentence and, therefore, occupy a highly important place in reading comprehension (Fellbaum, 1990). PVs, as a subset of verbs, must first be recognized as semantic units. Once they are recognized as a unit, ESL learners become aware that some are easier to understand than others. Linguists have come up with three different semantic categories with varying degrees of difficulty in terms of comprehensibility (e.g. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, Pelli, 1976, Bolinger, 1971). The three semantic categories are transparent, aspectual, and opaque. A transparent phrasal verb is easily comprehensible because one can figure the meaning out by looking at the verb and the particle. An example of a transparent phrasal verb is *eat out*. An aspectual phrasal verb is moderately

comprehensible. An example of an aspectual verb is *eat up* in order to mean *eat completely*. Therefore, one can have an idea of the meaning but may not be completely correct. An opaque phrasal verb is difficult to understand because it truly follows the standard definition of a phrasal verb, in that the particle that follows the verb completely changes the meaning of the verb. An example of an opaque phrasal verb is *chill out* to mean *relax*. The particle drastically changes the meaning of the verb in an almost illogical manner; hence, one cannot figure out the meaning by analyzing the verb and particle. Phrasal verbs, then, make learning to read a difficult process in a second language (L2).

When learning to read, ESL students are faced with two general areas of difficulty: the reading process itself and target language proficiency. Vocabulary is part of the latter, and both areas of difficulty intertwine and one affects the other. The threshold hypothesis (Clarke, 1980) illustrates the interaction of the two. According to the threshold hypothesis, L2 learners must have a certain amount of L2 knowledge before they are able to transfer their L1 reading skills to reading in L2. Just how this works continues to be a major question in L2 reading. Part of the question is where the threshold is and whether the threshold is the same for all types of reading.

Given the relationship between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge, it would be interesting to know which PVs are easier to comprehend in reading so that those that are more challenging can be taught appropriately. If certain PVs are harder to comprehend for students at different proficiency levels, then ESL teaching can target these PVs at the different levels.

When we take into consideration the inherent problems in comprehending phrasal verbs and consider how difficult reading comprehension can be for L2 learners, we see how complicated comprehension of phrasal verbs in a reading context could be for Puerto Rican ESL

learners. Therefore, this study investigates PVs with Puerto Rican ESL learners to understand how well they comprehend them in reading. Phrasal verbs and reading comprehension are both areas that are well explored; however, no research relating reading comprehension or ESL reading comprehension to the comprehension of phrasal verbs exists. This research attempts to fill that gap. It is designed to identify the categories of phrasal verbs that pose the most difficulty for Spanish speaking ESL students in order to help teaching PVs to this population.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. Which semantic categories of phrasal verbs are easier to comprehend for Puerto Rican ESL students both in a reading context and out of context?
2. Does the proficiency level of the students affect the comprehension of phrasal verbs?
3. Does the context provided by a reading passage help the understanding of PVs?
4. With the results of the research in mind, how might we set up pedagogy for teaching phrasal verbs?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on the semantic categories of phrasal verbs, pedagogical aspects of phrasal verbs and reading comprehension. The topic of semantic categories will cover the transparent, aspectual, and idiomatic semantic categories of PVs. Next, avoidance as a pedagogical aspect of phrasal verbs and the role of language awareness in learning an L2 is discussed, which includes phrasal verbs. Last, the chapter focuses on the difficulty of ESL reading comprehension, which is divided into two subtopics: 1) transfer and 2) the role of vocabulary.

Semantic Categories of Phrasal Verbs

The semantic categorization of phrasal verbs varies among different scholars who have extensively analyzed this topic. The different scholars that were reviewed were Bolinger (1971), Makkai (1972), Pelli (1976) and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999). Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman as well as Pelli use the three semantic categories: literal, aspectual, and idiomatic. Bolinger and Makkai use two different categories: literal and idiomatic. The two semantic categories that were found among all of the different scholars' categorizations reviewed were: transparent and idiomatic. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) and Pelli (1976) include the aspectual category because of the systematic element which separates them from idiomatic PVs, which do not have a systematic breakdown.

With literal phrasal verbs, for example, *eat out*, the verb and the particle have a fully transparent composition. With idiomatic phrasal verbs, for example, *butter up*, the particle completely changes the meaning of the verb making its meaning opaque. Aspectual phrasal

verbs have a systematic composition, for example, *heat up*, making them not as opaque as an idiomatic phrasal verb.

Within a pedagogical context, these categories are important to recognize; that way PV's can be taught and analyzed systematically. In fact, the need to categorize phrasal verbs has been recognized by many ESL teachers because phrasal verbs differ from one-word verbs syntactically and semantically as is evident from their separate and systematic treatment in many textbooks. This research does not involve PV's syntactic structure; therefore, it will not be further mentioned. Rather, the focus will be on semantic categories. Many ESL and English grammar textbooks utilize the same or similar semantic categories for phrasal verbs.

Perhaps the fullest treatment of this topic within the education environment occurs in Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman's widely used text, *The Grammar Book* (1999). According to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, literal PVs have a fully compositional meaning. This means that the verb and the particle do not change each other's meaning; thus the meaning of the PV collocation is transparent and comprehensible. The combination of the verb and particle create a logical meaning. An example would be the phrasal verb *sit down*. This PV creates little difficulty for the second language learner.

Aspectual phrasal verbs tend to be neither transparent nor idiomatic. They are subcategorized due to certain particles that carry a specific change of meaning with multiple verbs. The subcategories according to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) are inceptive, continuative, iterative, and completive.

With inceptive aspectual phrasal verbs, the particle indicates a beginning state. Some examples would be *set out*, *take off*, and *start up*. With continuative aspectual phrasal verbs, the particle indicates a continuing action. An example would be *run on* to mean *continue*. With

iterative aspectual phrasal verbs, the particle indicates repetition. Some examples would be *sing over* and *do over*. An example of a possible Spanish misinterpretation could be *hacer sobre* which would be the direct translation; yet, the correct translation is *hacer de nuevo*. With completive aspectual phrasal verbs, the particle indicates that the action is complete. An example would be *wear out* (pp. 432-433).

Finally, according to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, idiomatic phrasal verbs are those where the global meaning is completely different from the denotative meaning of the verb and the particle, which, of course creates difficulty for second language learners. An example of this would be *cut loose*, to mean *relax*.

Bolinger (1971) refers to literal and metaphorical semantic categories, and unlike Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999), does not use an aspectual semantic category. He does, however, mention phrasal verbs that have different degrees of metaphorical (or idiomatic) meaning. The second level of the idiomatic meaning of a phrasal verb according to Bolinger “is a phrasal combination comprised of a verb and a particle in which the proximity of the particle to the verb or the particular noun complement alters the meaning between literal or metaphorical meaning” (p. 26). His example is, *make up* a bed, being literal, as opposed to *make up* a face, being metaphorical. He is claiming that with the literal phrasal verb *make up* the bed, the proximity of the particle to the verb is higher, and that with the metaphorical phrasal verb, *make up* a face, the proximity is lower. These examples actually seem debatable.

Makkai (1972), as Bolinger, uses the phrasal verb semantic categories of literal and idiomatic. In addition, he stresses the polysemous aspect of phrasal verbs and presents the following categories:

- 1) the combination has literal meaning only; e.g., *go away* as in *When did he go away?*
- 2) the combination has both literal and idiomatic meanings; e.g., *come up* in *Has he come up from the basement yet?* (literal meaning) and in *What's come up?* (idiomatic meaning);
- 3) the combination has only idiomatic meaning; e.g., *give in* in *He gives in too easily*;
- 4) the combination has several literal as well as several idiomatic meanings; e.g., *put up* is used in its literal meaning in *Put up those books on the shelf, will you?* and several idiomatic meanings as in *I'll put up the Browns overnight* ; *Mother puts up preserves*; *They put me up to it* ; *I'll put it up to you, Sir*,
- 5) the combination has several idiomatic meanings; e.g., *work up* in *I worked up to six o'clock, and then took a break* ; *I couldn't work up the courage*; *work this test up for tomorrow*, and *I was all worked up about it*.

(pp. 135-137)

Within Makkai's categorizations, the two PV semantic categories are that of literal/transparent and idiomatic. Although different combinations and polysemous features are presented, the categories, once again, are the common two.

Pelli (1976) is in agreement with Bolinger and Makkai in using the literal and idiomatic phrasal verb semantic categories. Pelli does take it one step further, as Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, and includes the aspectual phrasal verb category. O'Dowd (1998) cites Pelli's classifications of phrasal verbs:

- 1) structures with "purely directional or locational meaning," as in *climb up*, *fall off*;
- 2) structures with a spatial meaning and additional semantic characteristics such as

extension and intensity, as in *pay out, load down*; 3) structures with aspectual meaning alone, without spatial reference, as in *clean up, check out*; which express duration of time 4) purely idiomatic structures, e.g., *bump off* ‘kill’

(p. 67)

Pelli’s semantic categorizations of PVs are made up of transparent and idiomatic categories, yet we notice that he separates aspectual meaning similar to Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, although, Pelli’s breakdown of aspectual verbs is a little different. The specific aspectual category indicates that a difference does exist between a pure idiomatic PV and an aspectual PV.

Scholars divide PVs into two or three categories: transparent, aspectual, and idiomatic. One can place these patterns under the larger categories of transparent and non-transparent. The non-transparent category has the two sub-categories which are aspectual and idiomatic. The difference between these two sub-categories is sufficient to suggest the possibility of differential comprehension among ESL readers. Also, aspectual verbs fall under specific sub categories and have patterns that make them fairly systematic, as opposed to idiomatic PVs, creating more of a reason to explore them as a separate category. The three categories seem to be concrete and validated by different scholars with explanations that give enough theoretical and pedagogical reason to use these three PV semantic categories in my own research.

Pedagogical Aspects

Avoidance

Phrasal verbs are difficult for ESL students to grasp and utilize (Liao & Fukuya 2004). One important reason for this is that many languages do not have PVs. Phrasal verbs, therefore pose an unfamiliarity of structure and syntax, to the ESL learner. Second language learners

replace phrasal verbs with a one word direct translation, which normally exists. This strategy, termed “avoidance,” by Schachter (1974), occurs when L2 language learners avoid the use of a grammar structure or element when possible because of a lack of counterpart in their native language. Interestingly, but understandably, avoidance is not detected during error analysis because the structure of interest is not produced; so one must truly be looking for the use of specific grammar elements to see if learners are using these grammar features or not, followed by error analysis. If not, an accurate error analysis will not be made. For that reason, learners may be forced to use grammar features in order to conduct an accurate error analysis. Then the discovery of why a grammar feature is avoided can be better explained.

In order to be considered avoidance, a grammar feature must be avoided most of the time by a specific L1 population. According to Liao & Fukuya (2004, p. 94), it must be noted that the students of the L2 need to have knowledge of the L2 grammar feature that is being “avoided,” because, if not, it would not be considered avoidance. For example, native Spanish speakers who are not taught English phrasal verbs do not use them due to their lack of awareness and knowledge. Therefore, when testing for usage of a grammar feature, the subjects’ L2 knowledge must be tested to know their respective base of knowledge to accurately judge whether avoidance is occurring or not.

Also, one needs to explore whether the L2 grammar feature exists or functions in the same way the subjects’ L1 to deduce whether transfer or avoidance is an issue or not. Testing phrasal verb usage among native Hebrew subjects (whose native language does not have a similar grammar structure) is clearly different than testing Dutch subjects (who do have phrasal verbs in their native language). Dagut and Laufer (1985) found that Hebrew learners chose to use one-word verbs over phrasal verbs, presumably due to the structural difference between

Hebrew and English. It makes sense that a one-word verb replacement is easier for the ESL student to use, but it must be noted that it is normally a less accurate alternative to a phrasal verb (Dagut and Laufer). Because phrasal verbs tend to be considered an informal grammatical feature, the use of one word verb alternatives does tend to sound awkward and non-native like; hence, to sound native, one must integrate PVs into one's English repertoire. Some examples of this non-native use of a one word verb over a phrasal verb are: 1) I *found/met* Melissa at the mall yesterday, as opposed to the native speaker's use of a phrasal verb in this situation, e.g. I *ran into* Melissa at the mall yesterday. 2) I am going to *find* the word in the dictionary, as opposed to the native speaker's use of a phrasal verb in this situation, e.g. I'm going to *look up* the word in the dictionary. 3) Let's go to the gym to *exercise*; as opposed to the native speaker's use of a phrasal verb in this situation, e.g. Let's go to the gym to *work out*.

Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), who did a follow up study to Dagut and Laufer (1985), used Dutch learners who have phrasal verbs in their native language. There were three groups of intermediate ESL students. There were three tests used, a multiple choice test, a verb translation test, and a verb memorizing test, which were all used to elicit a phrasal verb. It was thought that they would not avoid phrasal verbs due to transfer from L1 to their L2, English. Surprisingly, it was found that avoidance of PVs still occurred, perhaps

- 1) because of their similarity, with idiomatic phrasal verbs that were too Dutch-like, and
- 2) subjects had "a tendency to adopt a play-it-safe strategy, preferring one-word verbs with general, multi-purpose meanings over phrasal verbs with specific, sometimes idiomatic, meanings" (p. 241).

In response to Hulstijn and Marchena's two reasons for why avoidance occurred amongst these learners, Liao and Fukuya (2004) comment that "idiomatic phrasal verbs are semantically opaque and therefore may have been perceived by the Dutch learners as language specific and not transferable to L2" (pp. 199-200). Hulstijn and Marchena demonstrate the complexity of avoidance, implying the difficulty of learning phrasal verbs regardless of the students' native language.

Liao and Fukuya (2004) did a follow up study to Dagut and Laufer's (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) research, in order to discover the incidence of avoidance of phrasal verbs among Chinese learners. First, it is important to note that phrasal verbs do not exist in the Chinese language. (I will assume that Liao and Fukuya are referring to Mandarin as it is the official language of China). The two semantic categories of phrasal verbs that are used in their study are "figurative" and "literal" which correspond to "idiomatic" and "transparent". There were three groups of participants: native speakers of English, advanced learners of English, and intermediate learners of English.

There were three test types, multiple choice, translation, and recall. The same 15 dialogues were used for the three different tests. Fifteen different phrasal verbs were used, one for each dialogue. Four of the total fifteen phrasal verbs were literal, and the remaining eleven phrasal verbs were figurative. With the multiple choice test, which is the relevant test type to this current experiment, the 15 dialogues were presented, but the focus verb was left out, leaving the student to choose from four multiple choice possibilities. A phrasal verb was provided, a one-verb equivalent, and two distracters. The dialogues were written in an informal manner which would therefore make the phrasal verbs the better choice.

The three research questions were; 1) Do Chinese learners avoid PVs? 2) Does their avoidance, if any, reflect differences in the semantic nature of PV types (figurative vs. literal)? 3) Does the way their performance is measured (test type) influence their avoidance?

To answer their research question 1, the native speakers used phrasal verbs 84% of the time and one-word verbs 16% of the time. There was only a slight difference between the advanced group of learners and the native speakers; they used phrasal verbs 75% of the time and one-word verbs 21% of the time. The significant difference in the results was between the native speakers and advanced learners on the one hand and the intermediate learners on the other; the latter used phrasal verbs 45% of the time while using one-word verbs 43% of the time. From these results, it is quite evident that there is avoidance of phrasal verbs among the intermediate learners. The results of all three test types demonstrated that advanced learners use a significantly higher number of phrasal verbs than intermediate learners. To answer research question 2, it was found that both advanced and intermediate levels preferred to use literal phrasal verbs to figurative phrasal verbs. To answer research question 3, it was found that the test type had no affect on their avoidance except for the translation test. With the translation test, it was found that there was greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs.

It is quite probable that L2 learners do not properly learn how to use phrasal verbs or other non-transferable grammar elements by choice, which in this case is avoidance. The reality is that L2 speakers know that they are able to communicate their message without using PVs and are satisfied to do just that. The problem is that native-speaker English will never be acquired without the use of phrasal verbs, raising the issue of effective pedagogy of phrasal verbs.

A study by Rivera (2002) on the processing of idioms was carried out on the UPRM campus. Two semantic categories were used, transparent and idiomatic(opaque). Three different

proficiency levels of students were used: Pre Basic, Basic, and Intermediate. There were twelve subjects, four for each proficiency level: all were native-speakers of Spanish. The test was designed in order to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The methodology used was the think aloud protocol in which the subject is presented with a stimulus situation and then asked specifically what the idiom means in this case. The process of how they come up with the meaning of the idiom is then tape-recorded. The different strategies that were used according to Cooper, which Rivera's research was modeled on, in order were: 1) guessing from context, 2) using literal meaning of the idiom, 3) using background knowledge, 4) referring to an L1 idiom as a key to the meaning of the English idiom, and 5) using other strategies.

Rivera's research goals were to identify which strategies participants use at different proficiency levels to successfully process idioms in a second language. The second was to identify the strategies used successfully or unsuccessfully by the participants at different proficiency levels to process idiomatic expressions in a second language. The third was to determine how the transparency of idioms affects processing.

The results of the research demonstrated that the pre basic students had the least success in processing the idioms, and the intermediate students had the most success processing the idioms. The strategies used to process the L2 idioms were 1) literal translation, 2) requesting information, 3) referring to an idiom in the L1, 4) repetition, 5) paraphrase, 6) use of context, 7) confirmation check and, 8) no evidence. This shows that the level of success to process idioms is directly related to the proficiency level of the student as well as transparency of the idiom, which is relevant to my study.

Language Awareness

There are so many levels of phrasal verb understanding and because phrasal verbs are not an easy grammar vocabulary category, they pose a difficulty for instructors on how to approach them and for students to learn. For this reason, language awareness (LA) is important on the part of the teacher and student. It is understandable that many instructors may not be completely competent in teaching PVs and may not even teach them. This problem would be alleviated with the proper LA. Another matter at hand related to phrasal verbs is raised, which is the difficulty of deciding how to present and teach phrasal verbs. The debate is whether to teach phrasal verbs as vocabulary along with the English language learning process, or if PVs should explicitly be taught grammatically and structurally following the LA theory of SLA. This debate could affect L2s learning because educators are unsure of how to present PVs and this confusion could therefore trickle down to the students. I will discuss the concept of LA in detail and explore the importance and benefits of the LA approach of learning for the student and teacher.

Svalberg (2007) thoroughly reviews language awareness and explores the concept more deeply than the standard idea that LA solely means being grammatically or linguistically aware. She questions if there is a LA approach to language teaching and learning. In response, she presents and summarizes Borg's (1994) five main features of an LA methodology:

- 1) It involves an ONGOING INVESTIGATION of language as a dynamic phenomenon rather than awareness of a fixed body of established facts.
- 2) It involves learners in TALKING ANALYTICALLY about language, often to each other.
- 3) It considers essential the INVOLVEMENT of learners in exploration and discovery.
- 4) It aims to develop not only the learners' knowledge about and understanding of language but also their LEARNING SKILLS, thus promoting learner independence.

5) The aim is to involve learners on both a COGNITIVE and an AFFECTIVE level.

(as cited in Svalberg, pp. 290-291)

These five main features of LA methodology are certainly ideal for effective language learning because they incorporate the many different ways that people learn.

Svalberg also reviews cognitive aspects of language. She divides this section into two parts: 1) consciousness/awareness, attention and noticing and 2) explicit and implicit knowledge and learning. In the first section, she explains that consciousness and awareness are synonymous. She then stresses the importance of these three cognitive aspects of language for the student. She claims that attention and awareness facilitate learning. In reference to noticing, Svalberg refers to Schmidt (1994) who defines noticing as the “registration [detection] of the occurrence of a stimulus event in conscious awareness and subsequent storage in long term memory” (as cited in Svalberg, p. 179). Svalberg claims that attention and awareness come together in noticing. He refers to the standard definition of noticing, for example, noticing grammar items while reading text.

In the second section, the stance that is taken is that explicit learning is more effective than implicit learning. She refers to Hulstijn & de Graff (1994) who state that “learners can work out simple rules for themselves but that complex rules benefit from explicit instruction” (as cited in Svalberg, p. 178). Within the context of idiomatic PVs, where rules do not exist, it seems that explicit instruction would be the best option as an educator of language.

Teaching Phrasal Verbs

Traditionally, in grammar textbooks, phrasal verbs are included in the vocabulary or multiword sections. For example, in the *ELT Grammar Book* (Firsten, 2002) PVs are taught as two-word verbs and are presented as literal or figurative language. Another textbook (Cowan,

2008) presents PVs as grammatical units. For example, it teaches transitive PVs versus intransitive PVs, and discusses how they differ from prepositional verbs. PVs can be categorized by semantic category (Pelli 1976) or by topic (O. V. Pozdnyakova, 2011). Research articles and journals refer to the difficulties in teaching phrasal verbs because of the way they are presented in textbooks. In addition to the methods mentioned above, PVs are also taught through memorization and matching without emphasizing patterns or commonalities (Side, 1990).

Armstrong (2004) uses traditional methods to teach PVs but includes LA. He emphasizes that teachers must be clear on the semantics of PVs and also must be able to categorize them in order to teach them. Armstrong states that “based on compositionality, we can identify three types of PV combinations: transparent PVs, semi-transparent PVs and opaque PVs” (p. 213). In order to further validate his own categorization he states that “Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) label them ‘literal’, ‘aspectual’ and ‘idiomatic’ PVs, which I think are roughly similar divisions (to his own)” (p. 213), thus strengthening his own semantic categories. In other words, Armstrong promotes the understanding of these three semantic categories of phrasal verbs as a part of the language awareness for the teacher and student.

Schmitt (2000) in his investigation of vocabulary in language teaching indicates that phrasal verbs are within the category of vocabulary as multiword units (MWU). He expresses the importance of multiword unit knowledge for an English learner and states that, “this is especially true if learners hope to gain the pragmatic fluency that comes from knowing the right lexical phrase for the right functional situation” (p. 111). Schmitt acknowledges the pedagogical difficulty that the PV poses by stating, “Phrasal verbs have long been recognized as a particular problem for students, but they are so arbitrary that no one has yet been able to offer a truly satisfactory way of teaching them” (p. 110). The way that Schmitt proposes teaching a MWU is

by chunking. In the case of the phrasal verb, this would mean to memorize that verb and the particle as a whole unit. He explains that it is easier to memorize as a chunk, and once the MWU has become lexicalized, one can refer back and analyze it grammatically. He expresses the importance of both item learning and system learning and says that “these two types of learning are not mutually exclusive; rather they feed into one another” (pp. 127-128).

It is important for students to understand what a phrasal verb is, and the semantic categories that exist to better understand them. The semantic categories: transparent, aspectual, and idiomatic can still be explicitly taught even if the categorization of phrasal verbs is not completely decided upon. For example, a widely accepted definition of PVs is that they are a verb followed by a particle whereby the particle changes the semantic meaning of the verb. Some scholars may oppose this definition because it has exceptions, but a teacher must start somewhere. The awareness that phrasal verbs exist, and a basic awareness of the semantic categories is important, especially for ESL students who do not have the exposure to gradually attain these colloquial items that are so common.

Having discussed the importance of language awareness and more specifically that of phrasal verbs, now reading comprehension and the role of vocabulary, in this case phrasal verbs in reading comprehension will be discussed.

The Difficulty of Reading Comprehension

To understand the role of PVs as a component of reading comprehension (RC), we must first understand RC in general and then for ESL students in particular. Reading comprehension, in plain terms, refers to the understanding of what is read. A major issue in the field of reading comprehension is whether reading is a natural or an unnatural process. Gough and Hillinger (1980) claim that reading is an unnatural process and explain how active the reading process is,

arguing, at length, that successful reading requires active conscious aspects and a mastery of the “cipher.” The term “cipher” is a technical term that refers to a code that is systematic, and ciphertext is “the coded message” referring to the meaning of text.

Two major stages of the process of learning to read are presented by Gough and Hillinger (1980), 1) “Pair-Associated Learning,” which is the association made by a child between a printed word and its spoken form; and 2) “Cryptanalysis,” where the child begins the process of breaking the code or “cipher.” According to Gough and Hillinger, most children begin the process of learning to read with Pair-Associated Learning, when a word is read and recognized and associated with a word in their verbal/oral lexicon. When they refer to their knowledge of their spoken language to understand written words, they will remember those written words. Thus far, Pair-Associated Learning appears to be a natural process, in fact much the same process as verbal/oral word learning, where children associate arbitrary forms with arbitrary concepts. However, because written text is actually *encoded*, successful reading requires deciphering rather than merely whole word association. This means that when someone reads the word *cat* they do not merely associate the word with the animal but also by how the word physically looks. It must be mentioned that the issue is debated and there are some well-known advocates of the “whole word” approach to reading. Smith (1979) objects to phonics, claiming that good readers do not sound words out but rather recognize the words which in most cases means that its meaning has been comprehended. Smith’s advice to beginner readers that come across an unknown word is as follows:

The first alternative and preference is to skip over the puzzling word. The second alternative is to guess what the unknown word might be. And the final and least

preferred alternative is to sound the word out. Phonetics, in other words, comes last (p. 66).

Most people decipher the word *rearrange* in order to understand its meaning. In any case, according to Gough and Hillinger (1980), Pair Associated Learning is limited because at a certain point a gradual decline of this association's success occurs with each additional word (p. 183). Most likely, this is the case due to memory limitations. Successful reading, then, according to the linguists Gough and Hillinger, depends on the child's knowledge of the code or "cipher" in written text.

Understanding that reading is an unnatural process within one's own native language, a logical conclusion would be that learning to read in a second language would be an even more difficult process. We know that when learning to read one's native language, reference is made to one's extensive lexical knowledge. The lexicon includes extensive knowledge across all levels, i.e. phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, etc. for understanding (Jackendoff, 2002). Second language readers' inter-language knowledge is incomplete, inaccurate, and has interference from L1, so they must refer to their native knowledge and their native language speaking ability in order to understand second language texts. Given this, the difficulty of second language reading (SLR) is intensified because SL students do not have native speaker knowledge to aid them with the reading process of ESL. One must also keep in mind that reading in a second language is not the same as learning to speak a second language. According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), an ESL environment implies that the second language is actually spoken in the learner's normal environment; therefore, transparent, scaffolded exposure to the second language exists, which promotes speaking and comprehension abilities. However, the same level of exposure to text as native speakers in an

English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL) environment is not likely. This means that in order to learn to read effectively in a second language, an EFL/ESL learner must make an active effort to read in their second language and, if fortunate, come from a family or an environment that places an importance on second language literacy. Because of the high probability that EFL/ESL reading exposure is minimal, considerable attention to the EFL/ESL reading process should be present in schools. EFL/ESL reading can also reinforce previously learned knowledge and serve as a model of English syntax. Vocabulary is also widened from repeatedly seeing common words and being exposed to new words.

The reading level of EFL/ESL students within their native language must also be taken into consideration. Good reader skills will at some level transfer to the second language, but, unfortunately, negative transfer of poor reading abilities will occur as well. According to Clarke, “there is some transfer of skills, for the good readers perform better than the poor readers in both languages...” (1980, p.119) Here he refers to his “short circuit” hypothesis. This is the idea that one must have sufficient L2 knowledge before they can transfer L1 reading skills to their L2 reading ability. Unfortunately, there are more poor readers than good readers. The unnatural qualities of second language acquisition combined with the unnatural act of learning to read create layers of difficulty for the ESL student. Given this, the importance of explicitly teaching all unnatural aspects of reading is evident.

As previously overviewed and demonstrated, reading comprehension in a first language is a very complex process. More specifically, related to this experiment is the role of vocabulary in reading comprehension. Grabe and Stoller (2002) discuss *lexical access*, which is the recognition of vocabulary in the reading process. It is widely recognized that there is a relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

In order to understand the difficulty of reading in L2, one must be aware of the approaches to the reading process. According to Hudson (2007), the two most paradigmatic approaches are the *bottom-up approaches* and the *top-down approaches*. The bottom-up approaches are designed to prepare a reader with fundamental knowledge to become more effective readers. For example, students are taught the past tense before they begin to read newspaper articles or text on historical events. The top-down approaches are designed to immerse the reader and have them, for example, use context to aid in vocabulary and reading comprehension. There is also the *interactive approach*, which adopts from these two approaches but does not fully take on either's extreme stand.

Abraham (2000) explains the bottom-up and top-down models similarly. When using the bottom-up model for reading instruction, the teacher “emphasizes decoding skills”. He then explains that the top-down model “focuses on what the readers bring to the process”. “The readers sample the text for information and contrast it with their world knowledge, helping to make sense of what is written”. He also explains that the focus of the top-down model is on the interaction between the reader and the text. Like Hudson, Abraham mentions reading theorists that recognized “the importance of the text and the reader in the reading process”, in other words, the interactive model, which is the combination of the bottom-up and top-down models.

Goodman's view of reading, which is a top-down approach, is in context to help understand text. The dependency of vocabulary comprehension and context is clearly presented in Goodman's view in that reading is “an activity involving constant guesses that are later rejected or confirmed. This means that one does not read all the sentences in the same way, but one relies on a number of words – or cues - to get an idea of what kind of sentence (e.g. an explanation) is likely to follow ” (1996, p.25).

The verb or phrasal verb indicates the action of most sentences; therefore, it is important in a sentence in order to understand the proper direction of a reading. This would indicate that Goodman's view helps justify the importance of phrasal verbs as a strong component of deciphering the meaning of a sentence, hence the importance of phrasal verb comprehension.

Grabe and Stoller (2002) discuss the different levels of the reading processes and when describing the lower-level processes they state that, "The most fundamental requirement for fluent reading comprehension is rapid and automatic word recognition" (p.20). In the context of this research this means that the phrasal verbs must be recognized rapidly by the reader in order to comprehend text. This is another example of what Grabe and Stoller refer to as *lexical access*.

Since the research is based on the L2 reader, it is important to establish the differences in the way L1 and L2 readers process a text. It must be understood that there is a great difference between the amount of lexical, grammatical, and discourse knowledge between L1 and L2 readers. L1 readers have at least four to five years of oral learning before they begin to learn to read. It is also commonly known that a six year old has a word knowledge range of 5,000 to 7,000 words (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). This is a huge advantage when considering that L2 learners are learning to read during their language learning process.

The exposure to L2 reading does indeed differ, which affects the amount of phrasal verb acquisition. Of course, in the L1 environment, exposure differs as well, but there is a higher amount of L1 literature and text exposure. To put it in perspective, in Puerto Rico, media is written in Spanish; therefore, forms of English media must be sought. With an L2, the literature and text exposure is 1) going to differ among students and 2) will be limited, and sometimes limited to only classroom exposure. Grabe and Stoller (2002) in reference to the language threshold hypothesis argue that "students must have a sufficient amount of L2 knowledge (i.e.

vocabulary, grammar, and discourse) to make effective use of skills and strategies that are a part of their L1 reading comprehension abilities” (p.50). This further supports the importance of providing a solid base of phrasal verb knowledge to ESL students to enable them to read effectively.

Chapter Summary

The review of the literature presents topics and research that are directly related to and support this research study. It covers the semantic categories of phrasal verbs which include: transparent, aspectual, and idiomatic. This establishes the foundation of the semantic categorization of phrasal verbs and justifies the selected PV semantic categories chosen for this research. The pedagogy of phrasal verbs was also explored, focusing on avoidance, and language awareness. In this section, we discover how and why students avoid the use of PVs and the importance of explicit grammar knowledge of teachers and students. The last section focuses on the difficulty of ESL reading comprehension by looking at transfer and the role of vocabulary. Here we see how L1 reading ability affects L2 reading ability and the importance of vocabulary in the reading process.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative method was used to investigate the differences in comprehension of phrasal verbs by semantic category, and proficiency level both with and without a context.

The research questions addressed in this study were:

1. Which semantic categories of phrasal verbs are easier to comprehend for Puerto Rican ESL students both in a reading context and out of context?
2. Does the proficiency level of the students affect the comprehension of phrasal verbs?
3. Does the context provided by a reading passage help the understanding of PVs?
4. With the results of the research in mind, how might we set up pedagogy for teaching phrasal verbs?

Participants

A convenience sampling was used. This means that I did not select subjects randomly. I used the students that were present in three intact classes, one section from each level, chosen because I had access to them at the time of my research and they were willing to participate. The participants were students from three different levels of English at the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Campus. Students ranged from 18 to 22 years old. There were 20 students in the basic level, 16 students in the intermediate level, and 21 in the advanced level. Placement in the different course levels is based on students' English as a Second Language Achievement Test (ESLAT) scores. A basic level student will have an ESLAT score that ranges from 470-569. A student placed in the intermediate course will have an ESLAT score of 570 or above and has not

taken the advanced placement test in English or has not qualified for placement in advanced English. The advanced level students have obtained a score of 4 or 5 on the advanced placement test.

Design of instruments

Selection of PVs

Phrasal verbs for the tests were selected randomly from *The Grammar Book* by Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999). The selected PVs are listed under their corresponding semantic category and the aspectual PVs include their subcategory in Table 1.

Table 1
Selected Phrasal Verbs

| Transparent | Aspectual | Idiomatic |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Carry out | Set up/completive | Get over |
| Throw away | Goof around/continuative | Get through |
| Pass through | Think over/ Intensifies | Turn to |
| Climb up | Do over/iterative | Get across |
| Sit down | Check over/durative | Come upon |
| Take down | Carry on/continuative (opaque PV) | Keep up (with) |

Tests

The instruments used in this research experiment were three different reading passages, one including six transparent PVs (181 words), one with six aspectual PVs (133 words), and one with six idiomatic PVs (152 words). Due to the different phrasal verbs used for each reading passage, the topic varied for each passage (see Appendixes A, B, & C). Each reading passage was designed as an e-mail and only used one PV semantic category throughout the passage. Second, there were three reading comprehension tests, one for each passage (see Appendixes A, B, & C). Third, there were three phrasal verb multiple choice vocabulary tests, for each type of

PV (see Appendixes A, B & C). The multiple-choice tests were created in line with the multiple-choice tests used by Liao and Fukuya (2004).

According to Grabe and Stoller (2002), “there are specific research findings with implications for L2 instruction and curricular planning” (p. 66). One of these findings is “the importance of a large recognition vocabulary for reading” (p. 66). Therefore, it seems that it would be important to measure the knowledge of phrasal verbs by using the vocabulary tests and the reading comprehension tests. The results would determine whether the bottom-up model would be appropriate when deciding whether to explicitly teach phrasal verbs as vocabulary items when considering L2 reading instruction. Although not perfect, a recognition test such as multiple choice seems to be the most appropriate for this particular research in order to be able to collect a sufficient amount of data.

I chose the PVs and created three reading passages that were in the form of an e-mail. The three passages were designed in place of using authentic material for two reasons; 1) authentic material lacks the use of phrasal verbs in concentration and 2) authentic material lacks the isolation of phrasal verbs of specific semantic categories. Because phrasal verbs are normally used in an informal context and are normally considered colloquial, an email was chosen due to its informal writing style when used to write a known person. This provided the needed informal context that “feels natural” to the learner while reading.

In order to answer my research questions I developed two different tests:

1) Multiple choice reading comprehension test

Accompanying the reading passage was a set of comprehension questions which focused on the comprehension of the passage with the use of literal questions. The tests were written in Spanish so that student answers were not affected by any misinterpretations of the questions.

The comprehension of the passages was directly related to the phrasal verbs in that each question of the reading comprehension test was based on whether or not the student understood the phrasal verb within the context of the passage. The main verb in the majority of the sentences was a phrasal verb. The passages were designed this way in order to clearly distinguish if the correct understanding of the passage was due to the phrasal verb comprehension or the context surrounding the phrasal verbs. An example of a question is:

- 4) Pedro está escribiendo esta carta para _____ sus problemas.
a) quejarse de b) olvidarse de c) presentar d) pensar en

This particular question is from the idiomatic reading comprehension test. The phrasal verb is *to get across*. The answer would therefore be *presentar*.

2) Multiple choice PV vocabulary test

The second instrument was a multiple-choice vocabulary comprehension test written in Spanish. The test focused on comprehension of each phrasal verb used in each passage. Spanish was used in order to better obtain accurate data due to the high possibility of misinterpretation amongst English options of the proper phrasal verb meaning. Students were presented with an English phrasal verb and four Spanish choices with the instructions to choose the best translation. The multiple-choice vocabulary comprehension test was written in Spanish so that there was an accurate and clear translation of the phrasal verb. This technique was used to insure that the choices were correctly understood by the subject. This made sure that there was no error due to an incorrect English translation of the provided choices of the PV meanings on the subjects' part.

In addition, the phrasal verb comprehension portion of this research experiment was not to test the subject's English proficiency as in the reading comprehension section. The main

concern was the recognition of the phrasal verbs as vocabulary items. Although Liao and Fukuya (2004) used production for their methodology as their translation test, I decided to use multiple-choice questions because I focused on PV comprehension, where as Liao and Fukuya focused on avoidance of PVs.

Verification of Materials

Four English graduate students who are native Spanish speakers were used in order to make sure the instruments were comprehended correctly. We read through each passage and then answered each reading comprehension question. Then, they completed the phrasal verb comprehension sheet. As a group, I led them through each question and asked how they answered. Each question was reviewed and the correct answers as well as the distracters to confirm whether they were well designed. Three questions were answered incorrectly by all four students. We discussed why they chose the incorrect answer and it turned out that the distracters that they chose were all the same. Those chosen distracters appeared to be synonyms of the correct answer which I had chosen to use by these native Spanish speakers. Our discussion then transferred into a discussion of whether they did not comprehend these particular phrasal verbs or whether the distracter they had chosen was just poorly chosen. Three of the four questions that were answered incorrectly were due to my choice of distracters. The remaining question that they answered incorrectly was due to not knowing the exact meaning of that particular phrasal verb. That phrasal verb was changed to a more common phrasal verb. From that discussion, I was able to make the proper changes based on the graduate students' native Spanish knowledge in selecting strategically appropriate distracters.

Procedure

The same data collection procedure was used for all three groups (basic, intermediate, and advanced). All data was gathered in the month of October, 2008. The data collection took a total of three days: one day for students to be briefed and to sign the consent form (See Appendix D) and two days of gathering data. The first day the students were briefed on the purpose of the experiment with the understanding that it was a linguistic based investigation with the purpose of completing my thesis requirement for a Masters Degree. After briefing the students, they were given a consent form to read and sign if willing to participate. All students signed the consent form. The second meeting was one week later in order to gather the Reading Comprehension data. The Reading Comprehension instruments were distributed to students one by one, waiting for each student's instrument to be completed then collected before distributing and collecting the second and the third instruments. The order of distribution of the tests was first the transparent test, then the aspectual test, and finally the idiomatic test for all three groups of students. Students were given as much time as needed in order to finish each reading comprehension instrument.

The vocabulary comprehension tests were distributed two weeks after the reading comprehension tests in order to give time to test the subjects' phrasal verb comprehension allowing time for the passages and the phrasal verbs included to be forgotten. This was important because the same sets of phrasal verbs were used on the reading comprehension tests and the vocabulary comprehension tests.

Data Analysis

Student tests were analyzed across all proficiency levels. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The mean percentage for each semantic category for all subjects was calculated. Then the mean percentage for each of the three proficiency levels within each of the three semantic categories was calculated. This was done for both the reading comprehension test and the vocabulary comprehension test.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of PVs in ESL reading comprehension in order to determine which semantic categories of phrasal verbs (transparent, aspectual, idiomatic) were comprehended by ESL learners at the basic, intermediate and advanced levels. Also, a second purpose was to determine if the context that a reading passage provides aided in the understanding of phrasal verbs. Based on the data, I suggest how phrasal verbs can be taught to ESL learners.

This first section of Chapter 4 will answer the first three research questions. Research question 4 will be answered in the final part of the chapter.

Research Question #1: Which semantic categories of phrasal verbs are easier to comprehend for Puerto Rican ESL students both in a reading context and out of context?

In order to determine which phrasal verbs are easier for Puerto Rican students to comprehend in a reading context, the mean scores of the Reading Comprehension Tests of reading passages with transparent, aspectual, and idiomatic phrasal verbs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Overall Reading Comprehension Results

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| N=57 | |
| Transparent | 77% |
| Aspectual | 71% |
| Idiomatic | 82% |

Ironically, within a reading context, as expected, the highest scores are on the idiomatic PVs, followed by transparent and then aspectual PVs.

In order to determine which phrasal verbs were easier for Puerto Rican students to comprehend, the mean scores of the Phrasal Verb Comprehension Tests without reading passages are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Overall Phrasal Verb Test Results

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| N=57 | |
| Transparent | 70% |
| Aspectual | 70% |
| Idiomatic | 51% |

Without a reading context, the lowest scores are on the idiomatic PVs making them the most difficult. Interestingly, transparent and aspectual PV scores were the same. It was expected that transparent phrasal verbs would be the easiest for students to comprehend in a reading passage and aspectual PVs would be the second most comprehended PV category followed by idiomatic PVs. Surprisingly, idiomatic PVs yielded the highest reading comprehension scores overall while the aspectual phrasal verbs yielded the lowest scores. These results are most likely due to the instrument design/passages and the phrasal verbs that were chosen to include in the tests. The passages were different in length and in topic. It is possible that the PVs may differ in frequency and familiarity to the students. It is also possible that the aspectual phrasal verbs that were chosen were more difficult to comprehend than most aspectual phrasal verbs. This strengthens the point that Grabe & Stoller (2002) make when discussing the importance of vocabulary in L2 reading. Although the subjects may have already known the idiomatic PVs, apparently the aspectual verbs are in need of further development, especially since many can be quite idiomatic. It is also possible that the idiomatic phrasal verbs that were used were more common phrasal verbs in general, therefore, possibly already known by the students, once again accounting for no significant gap between the two PV categories.

Research Question #2: Does the proficiency level of the students affect the comprehension of phrasal verbs?

In order to determine whether the proficiency level of the student makes a difference in the comprehension of phrasal verbs in a reading context the Reading Comprehension test scores by proficiency level are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
Reading Comprehension Results by Proficiency Level

| | Basic N=20 | Intermediate N=16 | Advanced N=21 | Overall average N=57 (Total) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Transparent | 67% | 80% | 85% | 77% |
| Aspectual | 66% | 71% | 76% | 71% |
| Idiomatic | 65% | 91% | 90% | 82% |
| Overall Comp. Total | 66% | 81% | 84% | |

The scores of intermediate and advanced students are quite close and quite a bit higher than scores for the basic students. The scores of the basic students were almost the same regardless of PV type. The RC scores of the basic students were 67% (transparent), 66% (aspectual) and, 65% (idiomatic). With regard to proficiency level, test scores moved in the expected direction: lowest score/basic, mid score/intermediate, highest score/advanced) on the RC tests for transparent and aspectual PVs. What was surprising was that, overall, the highest scores were for idiomatic PVs and the lowest were for aspectual PVs, although not much lower across the three levels. For the intermediate and advanced groups, the intermediate group scored 91% and the advanced group scored 90% on the RC test for idiomatic PVs. This means that among all three tests, the idiomatic PVs were the easiest for these two groups, even easier than the transparent PVs. This may be due to the choice of phrasal verbs. They may have been poor as far as difficulty level is

concerned. In addition, the passages were constructed for the test; therefore they were not authentic. The topics were not exactly esoteric, but the PVs that were used for each semantic category may not have been equally familiar. One must also take notice that there was no difference between the scores of these two groups on the RC test for idiomatic PVs. This goes back to Clarke's short circuit hypothesis (1980) where he discusses how L2 language knowledge can affect reading ability. It seems safe to say that the L2 knowledge, in this case the knowledge of phrasal verbs, clearly separates the basic level from the intermediate and advanced levels. Another interesting observation is that the lowest scores of the intermediate (71%) and advanced (76%) groups were on the aspectual test. This means that the aspectual test was the most difficult among all three tests most likely due to the opaqueness and unfamiliarity with these PVs.

In addition, in order to determine whether the proficiency level of the student makes a difference in the comprehension of phrasal verbs, the Phrasal Verb Comprehension test scores by proficiency level are presented in Table 5. By looking at the students' vocabulary knowledge by itself, we can gather what the students' base knowledge of phrasal verbs is in order to see the difference among their PV comprehension without a reading context.

Table 5.
Phrasal Verb Comprehension Results by Proficiency Level

| | Basic N=20 | Intermediate N=16 | Advanced N=21 | N=57 (Total) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Transparent | 63% | 73% | 75% | 70% |
| Aspectual | 64% | 67% | 79% | 70% |
| Idiomatic | 20% | 56% | 76% | 51% |
| Overall Comp. Total | 46% | 63% | 76% | |

Overall comprehension of phrasal verb scores were: 46% for the basic level, 63% for the intermediate level and 76% for the advanced level. The mean percentages do move in the

expected direction, lowest scores from the basic group, higher scores from the intermediate group, to the highest scores from the advanced group on all PV tests. Interestingly enough, the scores from each group level were higher on the aspectual PV test than on the transparent PV test, except for the intermediate level. The basic level scored 63% on the transparent test, 64% on the aspectual test and steeply dropped to a score of 20% correct on the idiomatic test. The transparent test score being lower than the aspectual test score was unexpected, but the extremely low score on the idiomatic test was expected. In reference to Liao & Fukuya (2004), within their translation test, it was found that there was greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs. This means that like their lower level ESL students, the lower level students in this study also had limited knowledge of figurative (idiomatic) PVs. When looking at the results of all of Liao & Fukuya's three test types, they demonstrated that advanced learners use a significantly higher number of phrasal verbs than intermediate learners. It is possible that this result is because of the subjects' PV knowledge, which in my results show that the lower the proficiency level of the subject, the less PV knowledge they have. The advanced group scored highest on the aspectual test (79%) but surprisingly scored higher on the idiomatic test (76%) than on the transparent test (75%), a minimal difference. Most likely, this is due to the PVs that were chosen for the different semantic categories. Possibly, the transparent PVs were not so transparent or the aspectual verbs were not so idiomatic. It is also quite possible that the distracters were too attractive with the transparent PV test.

Similar to Rivera (2002) who showed that the level of success in processing idioms is directly related to the proficiency level of the student and transparency of the idiom, the experiment also showed that the proficiency level of the students does make a difference in the comprehension of phrasal verbs as measured by the instruments used. The students of the basic

proficiency level had a lower level of phrasal verb comprehension than those of the intermediate and advanced proficiency levels in both the reading comprehension tests and the vocabulary tests. Among the students of the intermediate and advanced proficiency levels, there was little or no difference in the comprehension of phrasal verbs on the reading comprehension tests. On the vocabulary tests among the intermediate and advanced students, the intermediate students PV comprehension was found to be generally lower, yet the basic level still scored substantially lower than the intermediate group. It seems that both the intermediate and advanced levels are beyond some threshold of proficiency and are not very different from each other. As to the direct answers to RQ1 and RQ2, the idiomatic semantic category of phrasal verbs was easiest to comprehend for Puerto Rican ESL students in a reading context and out of context, the transparent semantic category was the easiest to comprehend. The proficiency level of the student does make a difference in the comprehension of phrasal verbs, yet there was little difference found between the intermediate level and the advanced level.

Research Question #3: Does the context provided by a reading passage help the understanding of PVs?

Context as an aid in the understanding of vocabulary is a well known and well-researched area. Most teachers know that with context, students' vocabulary comprehension is normally better than without any context. The results of this experiment support this claim because the reading passage helped the understanding of PVs. Table 6 provides the scores of the reading and phrasal verb comprehension tests, together, in order to clearly see to results.

Table 6
Comparison of Reading Comprehension and Phrasal Verb Comprehension Tests

| | | Basic | Intermediate | Advanced | Overall/Total |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Transparent | Reading | 67% | 80% | 85% | 77% |
| | Vocabulary | 63% | 73% | 75% | 70% |
| Aspectual | Reading | 66% | 71% | 76% | 71% |
| | Vocabulary | 64% | 67% | 79% | 70% |
| Idiomatic | Reading | 65% | 91% | 90% | 82% |
| | Vocabulary | 20% | 56% | 76% | 51% |

The reading comprehension scores of each group, with the exception of the reading test for aspectual PVs in the advanced level, are higher than the respective phrasal verb comprehension test. This suggests that one can comprehend quite a bit without explicit knowledge of all vocabulary in the text. For aspectual PVs, the difference between reading comprehension and phrasal verb comprehension is minimal. This closeness in results throughout all of the aspectual phrasal verb groups of students with their respective aspectual reading comprehension groups of students could be due to a previous familiarity with these particular aspectual phrasal verbs. The six aspectual phrasal verbs used were: *set up, goof around, think over, do over, check over, and carry on*. Possible high frequency and saliency could be the cause of this or maybe the context is not particularly helpful in this reading passage.

As expected, the idiomatic phrasal verb groups of students with their respective idiomatic reading comprehension groups of students did have quite different results. What is interesting is that the scores for idiomatic PVs, especially in reading comprehension, do not look much lower than for transparent PVs and in some cases are higher than aspectual and transparent. In the

intermediate and advanced levels, the idiomatic PV scores were higher than the transparent and aspectual PV scores. In addition, at all levels the content provided by the reading passage seems practically helpful for idiomatic PVs.

The Reflective Teacher

When I taught ESL in Mexico City, like most ESL teachers, I scrambled to find ways to teach phrasal verbs to my students. After carrying out this study and analyzing the results of research questions 1, 2, and 3, I realized the importance of reflecting and being aware of how to approach phrasal verbs in the classroom. In the review of the literature, I discussed the importance of language awareness on the part of the student. Now, I see the importance of language awareness for the teacher.

Teacher's Language Awareness (LA)

The first component of any good pedagogical process is language awareness on the part of the teacher. Language awareness (LA) refers to having explicit knowledge of the language, and being cognitively aware of language use, language teaching, and language learning of English in reference to ESL instruction. LA is of great importance to understand how to instruct students in any aspect of language instruction. The instructor needs a clear understanding of the grammar and structure of the target language in order to teach effectively. Therefore, the more linguistically aware a teacher is the better. According to Wright and Bilitho (1993);

A linguistically-aware teacher will be in a strong and secure position to accomplish various tasks- preparing lessons; evaluating, adapting, and writing materials; understanding, interpreting, and ultimately designing a syllabus or curriculum; testing and assessing learners' performance; contributing to English language work across the curriculum (p. 292).

When a teacher is not linguistically aware in the target language it will reflect and trickle down into their pedagogical ways. Wright and Bilitho believe that there is a correlation in “teachers’ knowledge of language and their practices in teaching language” (p. 292). It is clear that language awareness is just as important for the teacher as the student. Specifically, when teachers pay attention to and are aware of the problems with PVs themselves, they will be more sensitive to the language needs of their students when learning PVs. Teachers must also be aware of how to identify PVs by semantic category and if patterns exist, with respect to changing particular particles causing a different meaning. With this in mind, PVs should be the focus of more pointed lessons to expose students to the most common PVs. Therefore, research question # 4 considers this.

Research Question #4: With the results of the research in mind, how might we set up pedagogy for teaching phrasal verbs?

After analyzing the results of this study, particularly regarding how phrasal verbs are recognized in context and as separate vocabulary items, phrasal verbs should be taught using two methods. The first method is the bottom-up approach as discussed in the review of the literature by Hudson (2007) and Abraham (2000). This method corresponds to the way others have taught PVs by focusing on each through memorization, matching activities or any activity that isolates a particular PV before using it in context. The second method is the top-down approach or learning in context (Abraham, 2000). With this method, students will use authentic readings to comprehend the meaning of the phrasal verb from its context. When used together, both methods promote language awareness because they force students to pay attention and focus.

The first step to learning is conscious awareness. If students do not understand what a phrasal verb is, they are not going to learn them. They must understand that in vocabulary there are multiword units, which include phrasal verbs (Schmitt, 2000, p. 99). Once they understand that PVs are multiword items, with focus on the forms from the teacher, they will notice phrasal verbs in text and recognize them as chunks. According to Schmitt, learning multi word units as chunks is advantageous because it is easier to memorize the whole PV rather than to memorize the parts with the corresponding syntax . This definitely is the case with idiomatic phrasal verbs. After PVs are learned in chunks, the student will be able to grammatically analyze their composition make up later.

Also, when considering the importance of vocabulary in language learning, PVs are a vocabulary subset that cannot be avoided. At the college level, I believe that students should initially be presented with the three PV semantic categories to promote the “awareness, attention and noticing” that Svalberg (2007) discusses in her article. As a vocabulary component, the exposure to the semantic categories would be sufficient for an initial introduction.

After a supplemental introduction, it would be important to emphasize that within the aspectual semantic category there are verbs that are somewhat transparent, such as, *think over* to mean *ponder* and verbs that are idiomatic, such as, *carry on* to mean *continue*.

With an aspectual PV, the verb meaning should be somewhat changed by the particle. If we look at the example, *think over*, this is the case. The meaning of the verb, *think*, remains the same, while the particle *over* intensifies the meaning which makes it so the PV only somewhat changes in meaning from the verb used.

If we look at the aspectual PV *carry on*, we see that the particle completely changes the meaning of the verb. The verb, *carry*, no longer means to physically carry something. Actually,

the meaning of the particle, *on* no longer implies location. In this case the particle completely changes the original meaning of the verb and the particle. Therefore, the meaning of this aspectual PV is truly idiomatic.

This discrepancy brings us back to the issue of the semantic categorization of the PV. As reviewed, Bolinger (1971) and Makkai (1972) categorize PVs with only the transparent and idiomatic semantic categories. With this distinction of transparent and idiomatic meanings amongst aspectual PV's, it seems that those are the most appropriate semantic categories for students to focus on. For a student, it is not important if the meaning is transparent, somewhat transparent, or idiomatic. What matters is if they understand the lexical item or not. For this reason, the overall ambiguity of the aspectual PV semantic category in regard to transparency makes it a category to omit as a main PV semantic category in the further pedagogy of PVs for ESL learners.

After students are exposed to the semantic organization of phrasal verbs, then it would make sense that they were taught the most common phrasal verbs that pertain to the PV semantic categories. As expected, the idiomatic PV comprehension was higher in a reading context than without a context.

For the above reason, the next step in the teaching of PVs would be to present them within context, using authentic materials. Authentic material would be best because the language that is used is natural and it is not contrived for the purpose of teaching a specific language item. Also, when the authentic materials are related by theme it gives students the opportunity to recycle vocabulary that they have learned previously, and this would include phrasal verbs.

As an ESL teacher who has developed teaching activities for PVs, and who is practicing language awareness in this area, I propose the following the following process for teaching phrasal verbs.

Process for Teaching Phrasal Verbs

- Introduce the PV

In the first step, **Introduce the PV**, the teacher will present the PV and its semantic category on a Smart Board and explain, "Today we will learn the meaning and use of the Phrasal Verbs: *Back out* (idiomatic) and *Step in* (idiomatic)."

- Provide Authentic Material

In the second step, **Provide Authentic Material**, the teacher will give students the text which provides the context for the PV. The following quote is taken from the video game magazine *Game Informer* written by Dan Ryckert (on August 1, 2011 at 4:25 pm) which utilizes the PV *back out* and the PV *step in*. The quote is in reference to the release of the video game *True Crime 3* and the video game companies Activision and Square Enix. The Teacher will then present the example with highlighted PVs.

Example:

“Activision may have **backed out** of the sequel, but Square Enix is **stepping in** to help the project see the light of day.” The teacher will read the quote to the class.

- Discussion of PV Meaning in the Authentic Material

In this step of the process, the teacher will ask questions about the meaning of PVs. For example, she might ask one or more of the following questions:

What does the PV *back out* mean in the context of the sentence?

What does the PV *step in* mean in the context of the sentence?

What other words in the sentence help you to derive the meaning of the PV?

The teacher will then call on various students to express verbally what they think the meaning of the PV is.

- Establish and Present the Meaning of PV

Once the meaning of the PV in the sentence is established as a class, **Establish and Present the Meaning of PV** putting it on the board with its meaning. For example, the PVs might have the meanings like these as derived from the example text:

Back out (idiomatic) – to remove oneself from a situation

Step in (idiomatic) – to enter a situation

- Recycling of PVs

According to Schmitt (2000, p. 137), in order for a student to memorize vocabulary in general, in this case PVs, they must be **recycled**. Gardner (2008) explains that recycling is the reencountering of vocabulary words multiple times in multiple and varied contexts. This means that students must be strategically exposed to the same PV for it to become a part of their lexicon through exercises, readings, homework, and activities.

The implementation of the five steps mentioned: 1) introduce the PV (specific chunks), 2) provide authentic material which uses the PV previously introduced, 3) engage in a discussion of PV meaning within the authentic material, 4) establish and present the meaning of PV with the students, and 5) recycling of PVs seem to be a sufficient treatment for the learning of phrasal verbs.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

The objectives of this study were: 1) To investigate the role of PVs within ESL reading comprehension, 2) to determine which semantic categories of phrasal verbs (transparent, aspectual, idiomatic) are comprehended by ESL learners at the basic, intermediate, and advanced levels, 3) to determine if the context that a reading passage provides aids in the understanding of phrasal verbs, 4) and based on the data, to determine which semantic categories of phrasal verbs should be explicitly taught to ESL students and how.

This research explored ESL comprehension of three categories of phrasal verbs presented both with and without context across three proficiency levels. I expected that some phrasal verbs would be more difficult to comprehend than others, for Spanish speaking ESL students. Specifically, I expected that transparent PVs would be relatively easy to comprehend, whereas aspectual PVs and idiomatic PVs would be more difficult, because they are more opaque.

Given this, I expected to find that students' comprehension of reading passages containing phrasal verbs would depend on which type of PVs they encountered. I expected that students' comprehension would be related to the level of transparency of the phrasal verbs. As previously discussed, literal PVs are the most transparent, whereas both aspectual and idiomatic phrasal verbs are fairly opaque. Although aspectual PVs are considered less opaque than idiomatic PVs, I believed that aspectual PVs would be comprehended less well than literal PVs, yet more easily comprehended than idiomatic phrasal verbs. I believed that the order of the PV comprehension would also apply to the reading comprehension of each of the PVs corresponding passages. Instead, amongst the vocabulary translation tests, aspectual verbs were found to be the highest comprehended semantic category out of the three. Interestingly enough, overall, the

aspectual reading comprehension test results were the lowest out of the three semantic categories. In other words, amongst the vocabulary tests, the aspectual phrasal verb category took the assumed place of the transparent category. Amongst the reading comprehension tests, the aspectual category took the assumed place of the idiomatic category. Therefore, this result shows the importance of using both bottom up and top down teaching methodology for PVs, specifically opaque aspectual PVs and idiomatic PVs. It also points to the importance of using focus on form for students to bring about attention and noticing to have language awareness. In this sense, showing students specific items would be more advantageous to learning.

I also thought that students comprehended better with a bottom up or discrete approach to PVs as vocabulary items, but I found that comprehension is aided within the context. In the reading passages students scored higher with the idiomatic PVs when they were in context.

Hence, what one should consider for the teaching of phrasal verbs is both a bottom up and a top down approach. Bottom up should be used in the initial stages of recognition, as the five steps described above and then the teaching of PVs should be complemented with top down activities where the PV is recognized in context.

Limitations of Study

In retrospect, there were three areas that were detrimental to this study. The three areas were: 1) the instruments, specifically the design of the reading comprehension passages, 2) the small number of subjects, and 3) the use of discreet data.

Instruments

The reading comprehension tests were weak. They consisted of three passages, each contained six phrasal verbs of one particular semantic category: transparent, aspectual, or idiomatic. The first weakness was the inconsistencies of each passage. One inconsistency was

the different lengths of each passage. The second inconsistency was the different topics.

Although all passages were requests, it was impossible to use the same passage and change only the phrasal verbs.

Another limitation of the instruments was the reading comprehension questions that went with the passage. Because each reading comprehension question was focused on the understanding of a phrasal verb, they could be considered vocabulary comprehension questions with a context. This weakened the reading comprehension portion of the experiment making it difficult to say much about the influence of PV comprehension or knowledge on reading comprehension. However, the intention of this study was not to look specifically at the comprehension of the passage as a whole, but rather the comprehension of individual PVs within the passage.

Another weakness of the study involved the choice of phrasal verbs that were used in the tests. This made the reading comprehension tests easy, making the passage itself easy as well. For example, students scored higher on aspectual PVs when I expected they would score lower. This also might explain the lack of difference between the scores of the intermediate and advanced groups. The dilemma here involves how one chooses phrasal verbs and which are more idiomatic than others and which are more common. Added to this is the problematic nature of the aspectual category itself. One way to find out which PVs to use would be to investigate whether or not there are corpus studies that show frequency of PVs and which ones are more common than others. As the researcher, I used my best judgment about which PVs to use by category and this may have affected the results of the study.

Number of Subjects

The small number of subjects used in this experiment created a severe limitation. This did not allow me to use certain statistical tests that could have led to more accurate, legitimate and useful analysis of results. The reason for the small number of students was because it was a convenience sample.

Pedagogical Implications

On the basis of the results and discussion of Chapter 4, it seems that students generally comprehend phrasal verbs better when in the context of a reading passage but not substantial enough to therefore assume that a top down model of learning would be sufficient. The small gap between reading comprehension and PV comprehension could mean that the phrasal verbs that were recognized were because of student's previous exposure and not due to context in regard to the reading comprehension test. With this in mind, it is important to take into consideration that this research is based on the recognition of the student. This means that if we were to focus on the production of phrasal verbs, most likely the percentage of accurate production of phrasal verbs would be even lower than the results of the recognition tests. This is not taking into account the role of avoidance that would most likely take place.

Therefore, as described in the process of teaching phrasal verbs in research question #4, it seems that the best way to approach the teaching of phrasal verbs would be to begin with the bottom up approach, explicitly teaching them to students. Most likely, the best way would be to explain the different semantic categories that exist, and then to provide examples of phrasal verbs which pertain to the different categories in order to illustrate their qualities. After an understanding of the semantic categories is established, a list of commonly used phrasal verbs

from each semantic category could be provided. With that list, different written and oral activities can be used in order to expand and implement appropriate phrasal verb use in context.

Most important, when teachers undertaking studies that are directly related to their practice, the results, whether strong or not, offer teachers the opportunity to use language awareness and to reflect on and improve their teaching. Even though the findings of this study were weak, because of the described limitations, real change occurred in my knowledge and awareness of phrasal verbs. In the future, the way I teach phrasal verbs to ESL students will be very different from my first experiences as an ESL teacher in Mexico.

Recommendations for Further Research

There were very few research experiments found on phrasal verbs in the ESL context and much less ESL in Puerto Rico. There were none found on the role of phrasal verbs within reading comprehension. Therefore, further research is needed to add to the understanding of the role of phrasal verb comprehension amongst ESL learners. The following examples could serve as possible studies which could increase the knowledge of the role of phrasal verb comprehension.

- Written open-ended questions/translations could be used instead of multiple-choice questions. This would allow the researcher to see the production of PVs instead of the recognition of PV's.
- A larger number of subjects could be used to insure accurate statistical results. More than one hundred subjects is suggested.
- A study that uses a two-way ANOVA to analyze the results.
- The number of phrasal verbs could be increased instead of the six PVs per semantic category used.

- The use of a non Puerto Rican Spanish speaking group could be used which does not have the same level of English exposure. A Non-Spanish speaking ESL group could be used as well and compared to Spanish speakers.
- Authentic material could be used where the semantic phrasal verb categories are identified by the researcher in order to systematically measure subjects' reading comprehension with the different semantic categories of phrasal verbs included. Examples of authentic material would be newspaper articles, magazine articles, poems, book fragments, and comics.
- To test the avoidance of phrasal verbs by students in order to select PVs for teaching purposes.

Finally, further research on phrasal verbs amongst ESL learners is needed when considering how widely used they are within all forms of media. Phrasal verbs create a barrier for ESL learners due to their common idiomatic nature. Because of this, formal education should address phrasal verbs within ESL learning in order to increase the level of English comprehension and communication. Proper phrasal verb acquisition facilitates native like language and accurate comprehension necessary for effective communication and a professional/native level of English competence.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Transparent Tests

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Directions: Please read the following passage and then complete the question sheet.

Dear Castelar,

How have you been? It has been a long time since we have communicated and I hope everything is well with you. I am going to be working on my house during the summer. I would like to know if you can help me with some work at the house this summer. Since you are a teacher like me I know that you have the summer off as well and that you usually stay home. One of the responsibilities would be to carry out broken bricks from the house. Another task would be to throw away the beautiful furniture that no longer combines with the new decor. Also, I would need you to pass through the grounds to find any nails. The most difficult task would be to help me prevent the children from climbing up anything. The last responsibility would be to take down any bad shingles. Of course, whenever you are driving the forklift to move things you

must sit down. I would pay you every week for the work you do. Please respond as soon as possible.

Jose

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Reading Comprehension Sheet

Circula la contestacion que completa mejor la oracion de acuerdo a la lectura.

- 1) Jose quiere que Castelar _____ los ladrillos rotos.
a) recicle b) saque c) mueva d) cargue
- 2) Jose quiere que Castelar _____ los lindos muebles.
a) revise b) trate con cuidado c) bote d) tire aparte
- 3) Castelar debe _____ el area donde puede encontrar los clavos.
a) recorrer b) pasear por c) evitar d) pasar
- 4) Castelar debe prevenir los ninos de _____ algo.
a) levantar b) poner encima de c) llevar d) escalar
- 5) Castelar tambien debe _____ las tablillas de tejado podridas.
a) bajar b) bajarse con c) poner debajo d) botar

6) Jose dice que cuando Castelar esta usando la grua de horquilla (forklift) se necesita

_____ .

a) estar muy conciente b) manejar con cuidado c) estar sentado d) poner la grua debajo

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Vocabulary Comprehension

Circula la traduccion de ingles a espanol correcta.

1) carry out

a) sacar b) llevar en c) cargar d) traer

2) throw away

a) botar b) tirar c) dejar afuera d) relajar afuera

3) pass through

a) pasar b) recorrer c) pasear d) evitar

4) climb up

a) levantar b) poner encima c) escapar d) escalar

5) sit down

a) acostarse b) pararse c) sentarse d) arrodillarse

6) take down

a) bajar b) tomar c) bajarse con d) poner debajo

Key : Transparent PV's

Reading comprehension:

1) b

2) c

3) a

4) d

5) a

6) c

Phrasal verb comp.:

1) a

2) a & b

3) b

4) d

5) c

6) a

Appendix B

Aspectual Tests

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Directions: Please read the following letter and then complete the question sheet.

Dear Junito,

I am planning to present a play next month. I am writing you to see if you would be able to set up the different stages for the play. This would be very helpful to me. This play is very important because many critics plan to come and see it. This means that you can not goof around. Before you make a decision I want you to think over my request because it is a big responsibility. Remember it is a play, so it is live. We cannot do it over. Also, check over your calendar during that month to confirm if it is possible for you to help. Your help would only be needed during the weekends so during the week you would be able to carry on with your normal activities.

Thank you,

Prof. Rodriguez

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Reading Comprehension Sheet

Circula la contestacion que completa mejor la oracion de acuerdo a la lectura.

1) El Prof. Rodriguez quiere que Junito _____ .

- a) mude el escenario de otro lugar
- b) limpie el escenario
- c) arreglar el escenario
- d) ayude con el diseno del escenario?

2) El Prof. Rodriguez dice que Junito no puede _____.

- a) ser flojo
- b) estar en el alrededor
- c) vacilar
- d) ir a otros lugares

3) Junito necesita tomar su decision _____ .

- a) considerandola
- b) rapidamente
- c) con tiempo
- d) reconsiderandola

4) El Prof. Rodriguez menciona que _____.

- a) no se puede repetir la obra de teatro
- b) no se puede inventar algo nuevo
- c) no se puede hacer la obra de teatro diferente
- d) no se puede hacer cambios

5) El Prof. Rodriguez le aconseja a Junito _____ calendario.

- a) modificar el b) colocar el c) revise su d) marque el

6) Junito podria _____.

- a) llevar cosas a su trabajo b) seguir con su rutina c) festejar durante la semana d) tomar decisiones sobre las actividades

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Vocabulary Comprehension Sheet

Circula la traduccion de ingles a espanol correcta.

1) set up

- a) colocar b) arreglar c) componer d) ponerlo parado

2) goof around

- a) jugar b) perder el tiempo c) volverse en d) ser flojo

3) think over

- a) reconsiderar b) pensar bien c) pensar en d) imaginar

4) do over

- a) hacer despues de b) hacer en el futuro c) hacer de nuevo d) hacer en adiccion a

5) check over

a) repasar b) senalar c) notificar d) cualificar

6) carry on

a) pegar en b) poner encima c) prender d) continuar

Key: Aspectual PV's

Reading Comp.

1) c

2) c

3) a

4) a

5) c

6) b

Vocab.

1) b

2) b

3) b

4) c

5) a

6) c

Appendix C

Idiomatic Tests

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Directions: Please read the following passage and then complete the question sheet.

Dear Uncle Junior,

I hope everything is well with you and the family. It has been difficult to get over my relationship with Maria. Between that situation and losing my job it has been difficult to get through these moments. I have been looking for a job but I have not found one. Unfortunately it is more difficult because I have no one to turn to now. I hope you understand what I'm trying to get across with this e-mail. Financially I am not stable and I want to know if it is possible for you to loan me money for rent. When I come upon a job, which will be soon, I will pay you everything. During the beginning of my job I will not be able to pay you everything at once but I will keep up with the payments every two weeks after I start a job. I would appreciate your help.

Thank you.

Pedro

Name _____

Date _____

Course _____

Section _____

Reading Comprehension Sheet

Circula la opción que completa mejor la español de acuerdo a la lectura.

- 1) Pedro esta tratando de _____ Maria.
a) olvidarse de b) reunirse con c) cortar la español con d) arreglar las cosas con
- 2) Ha sido español para Pedro _____ sus situaciones.
a) entender b) evitar c) soportar d) sobrepasar
- 3) Pedro dice que esta pasando un tiempo español/de dificultad y no tiene nadie _____.
a) con quien trabajar b) a quien acudir c) con quien salir d) con quien pasar tiempo
- 4) Pedro esta escribiendo esta carta para _____ sus problemas.
a) quejarse de b) olvidarse de c) presentar d) pensar en
- 5) Cuando Pedro _____ trabajo, el le pagara el español a su tío, Junior.
a) encuentre un b) llegue a su c) termine su d) domine su
- 6) Pedro va a _____ los pagos cada dos semanas.
a) quedarse con b) continuar con c) enviar d) incrementar

Name_____

Date_____

Course_____

Section_____

Vocabulary Comprehension Sheet

Circula la español ón de ingles a español correcta.

- 1) get over
- 2) llegar b) conseguir de nuevo c) conseguir d) olvidar
- 3) get through
- 4) sobrepasar b) conseguir c) entender d) agarrar
- 5) turn to
- 6) girar b) acudir a c) mezclar d) entregar a
- 7) get across
- 8) conseguir b) presentar c) cruzar d) poner encima
- 9) come upon
- 10) subir b) venir con c) buscar d) encontrar
- 11) keep up
- 12) continuar con b) quedar con c) subir con d) quedarse arriba

Key idiomatic

Reading comprehension

1) a

2) d

3) b

4) c

5) a

6) b

Phrasal verb comp.

1) d

2) a

3) b

4) b

5) d

6) a

Appendix D

Grammar and Reading Comprehension Formulario de Consentimiento

UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO
RECINTO DE MAYAGÜEZ
COLEGIO DE ARTES Y CIENCIAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS

Muchas gracias por expresar su disposición de participar en este estudio que estoy realizando con el fin de completar los requisitos del grado de Maestría en Artes de la Educación en Inglés en el RUM.

Nombre e Información contacto de el investigador principal y de el director de tesis:

Adam-Andre DeRosa Torres, Investigador Principal

E-mail: adt26621@uprm.edu

Prof. Nevin Leder, Director de Tesis

E-mail: ledernev@uprm.edu

Propósito del estudio: Determinar el rol que desempeña los elementos de gramática en la comprensión de lectura de los estudiantes.

Beneficios Potenciales: Los resultados obtenidos podrán beneficiar futuros estudiantes de Inglés.

Confidencialidad: Este estudio es voluntario, confidencial, y anónimo. Todas las respuestas se mantendrán en estricta confidencialidad. Su nombre ó identidad de ninguna manera serán atados a la data obtenida.

Duración: El mismo debe tomar dos clases en ser completado. Los resultados de este estudio estarán disponibles a través de la versión digital de mi tesis la cual será completada para diciembre de 2008.

Derecho a rehusar ó declinar el estudio: Su participación en este estudio incluirá leer y completar los cuestionarios. Su participación es voluntaria y puede rehusar participar del mismo ó discontinuarlo en cualquier momento.

Personas contacto: Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de su participación en este estudio, usted puede contactar a Adam-Andre DeRosa Torres a través de la siguiente dirección electrónica: adt26621@uprm.edu También puede contactar a su director de tesis, el Prof. Nevin Leder: ledernev@uprm.edu.

He leído esta sección en su totalidad y entiendo completamente lo establecido en la misma.

Todas mis preguntas relacionadas a la misma ó acerca del estudio han sido respondidas satisfactoriamente. Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria y que puedo rehusar de participar ó discontinuar el cuestionario en cualquier momento. Estoy de acuerdo en participar. Entiendo que al firmar mi nombre a continuación estoy proveyendo un informe de consentimiento para participar de este estudio.

Nombre _____

Fecha _____

Firma del investigador

Fecha _____