University of Bahrain

College of Arts

Department of English Language and Literature

Awareness of English Polysemous Phrasal Verbs by EFL Learners

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master degree in Applied English Language studies.

Submitted by

Ameera Ahmed Isa

20111779

Supervised by

Dr. Dana Abdulla Abdulrahim

(Assistant Professor)

University of Bahrain

Kingdom of Bahrain
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Abstract

This research investigates the EFL learners' awareness of English polysemous phrasal verbs and the effect of a number of factors (hours spent reading, listening to music, watching TV and social networking in English) on students' knowledge of phrasal verbs (PVs). Three tools used to collect data: (1) students' writings, (2) a phrasal verbs test containing 24 polysemous PVs, and (3) a questionnaire. 78 EFL students from two different CEFR levels (A2-B1 and C1) were recruited for the PVs test and the questionnaire. The data obtained is analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results show that learners of the two levels do not use PVs sufficiently in their writing. The results of the test show that the A2-B1 level students have an average score of 31.97% while the C1 level students have a result of 54.21%, indicating that language proficiency level is indeed a factor in determining knowledge of PVs. Corpus frequency was not found a predictor of PV knowledge as learners were not overwhelmingly able to identify the most frequent sense of the PV in the test. Analysis of data from the questionnaire showed a moderate to low positive correlation between hours spent reading and watching TV and their knowledge of polysemous PVs, however no such correlation was found between hours social networking and listening to music and the students' knowledge of polysemous PVs. There was no clear pattern with regards to whether students are more aware of literal vs literal/idiomatic senses of PVs. The study reveals that phrasal verbs are indeed challenging for learners because of their polysemous nature, thus requiring additional attention by both teachers and learners.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved son and my soulmate. You have made me stronger, happier, and better than I could have ever imagined. I love you to the moon and back.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, praise and thanks to Allah the Almighty who granted me the strength and ability to complete this research. This would not have been possible without my supervisor, Dr. Dana Abdulrahim's guidance. Her continuous support and intellectual enlightenment have encouraged me to complete this work. I am forever indebted to my family for their support which filled me with strength and inspired me to complete the thesis.

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1. Introduction:

The English language has developed through the years as the most widely-used international language. It has thus become a necessity for Bahrainis to learn as a second / foreign language and has also become an integral part of Bahrain's educational system from primary school to higher university education. Phrasal verbs (PVs) are a very common component of the English language but have always proved to be difficult for learners as they tend to avoid using them due to their polysemous nature and their different meaning senses (Trebits, 2009). PVs are part of the formulaic language which plays an important role on the mental lexicon of EFL learners (Conklin and Schmitt, 2008). Formulaic language states that vocabulary items do not act simply as single words connected by syntax but rather occur as "multiple word phraseological units" (Schmitt, 2010). This can be very problematic for EFL learners since deducing the meaning of phrasal verbs is not always possible by looking at the sum of the meanings of its components, due to their idiomatic nature. For example, the phrasal verb *do over* means 'to do another attempt of something in order to improve it'. Yet, when the words are interpreted separately, the verb (do) has the general sense of 'to perform an action' while the lexical items (over) can belong to multiple parts of speech categories, and thus has multiple meanings like 'finish' or 'end'. However, when the two verbs are put together, they imply a completely different meaning. PVs are undoubtedly essential for EFL learners as they are very frequent in the English language. It is estimated by Gardner and Davis (2007) that PVs occur in conversation and written texts approximately 5,000 times per million words. In addition, PVs have a polysemous nature and idiomatic senses that cannot be simply explained

by identifying their one-word meaning (Cornell, 1985). Based on the above explanation, learners avoid using PVs as their idiomatic meaning cannot be simply identified from the overall construction of the phrasal verb. Therefore, to develop learners' fluency and to expect that learners would use PVs more frequently, PVs must be fully internalized by the learners. This study attempts to use a phrasal verb test to check learners' awareness of PVs in addition to a questionnaire that would help us find the factors that can affect students' knowledge of PVs. Some writings of students will also be analyzed to examine how frequently would learners use PVs correctly.

In the following sections we will introduce the research problem, research questions, research objectives and research significance.

1.1 Research Problem:

Given their polysemous nature and complexity, much has been discussed about the numerous challenges posed by multiword expressions, particularly phrasal verbs, to foreign English learners. (Kenneth Logan & Kieffer, 2017). When students enroll for university to study EFL they usually anticipate to encounter new, big, and perplexing words in their academic work whether in reading or in writing (Bardovi-Harlig, 2006). However, research has shown that these learners usually find themselves in very complex situations which they have never been prepared for, as they find that there are a variety of phrasal verbs that are polysemous and difficult to know when to use. For example:

A) She *picked up* her coat and left. (pick up: literal use of the phrasal verb).

B) She *picked up* French when she was in France. (Pick up: idiomatic use of the phrasal verb).

So, how do we categorize *pick up*? Is it an idiomatic phrasal verb or a literal phrasal verb? It's difficult to classify phrasal verbs in a precise way, and they cannot easily fit into any of the aforementioned categories: literal vs. Idiomatic (or figurative).

English foreign language (EFL) learners may have difficulty and confusion knowing the meaning of each PV. Sinclair (1991) calls them "the scourge of the learner" due to their complexity as they pose various difficulties due to their inherent properties such as polysemy, idiomaticity, and figurative uses. The current research intends to shed some light on the issue of acquiring polysemous PVs among L2 learners in Bahrain. From the empirical data available, there is no research on polysemous PVs that has been conducted in Bahrain. This research will also carry a systematic literature review to better understand the phenomenon at hand and be able to situate the findings of this study in global context of PV acquisition among EFL learners. The research will be conducted in Bahrain on college students.

1.2 Research Questions

This study will attempt to address the following questions:

1. To what extent are EFL learners in Bahrain aware of the highly frequent phrasal verbs and their different senses?
2. Which of the following factors affect the learners' knowledge of PVs the most:
    1. Social networking in English
    2. listening to music and

3. watching TV in English,
4. reading in English,
5. English language proficiency level (as reflected in the CEFR levels students are assigned to), and
6. verb frequency in an English corpus.

1.3 Research Objectives:

The main objective of this study is to know to what extent EFL students in Bahrain are aware of the different meanings of the most frequent PVs, while highlighting the factors that contribute to their knowledge of PVs. The main objectives of this research are the following:

- To assess whether EFL learners in Bahrain are aware of the different meanings of highly frequent and polysemous PVs.
- To investigate if EFL learners in Bahrain can interpret the meanings of polysemous PVs from context.
- To identify the factors that play an important role in the learner's acquisition of the different uses of frequent PVs.

1.4 Research Significance:

The significance of the study is that it will contribute towards future research on the topic of learning English as a second/foreign language among Bahraini students. It will highlight on the challenges faced by EFL learners when learning PVs. In addition, it will show the factors that affect the learners' knowledge of polysemous phrasal verbs. This study attempts to shed light on the acquisition of phrasal verbs in general

among EFL learners in Bahrain, and on the acquisition of their various meanings in particular, especially that PVs constitute an important part of the English language and acquiring them properly leads to having better fluency in English. It also investigates what factors can affect L2 learners' acquisition of English in general, and of polysemous phrasal verbs in particular.

1.5 The study's Setting:

All sessions of this study took place in Bahrain. All of the subjects are college-level students in Bahrain at different levels of their acquisition of English Language.

1.6 Research Terminology:

The following are important terms discussed in this study. These terms are ordered alphabetically:

a) **CFER levels of language acquisition:** The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is referred to as CEFR. It divides language competency into six levels from A1-C2. The levels are divided into three categories: Basic User, Independent User, and Proficient User. At the different levels, learners are able to:

A1: Beginners' level. Learners in this level can understand basic expressions, interact slowly with others and are able to introduce and ask others personal basic information.

A2: Elementary level where learners can understand more complex expressions related to family, employment, etc. They can also describe routine tasks using simple terms.

B1: Intermediate level. Learners understand words related to family, career, school and leisure. They can also deal with native speakers clearly when they travel. Learners are also able to produce basic written texts as well as describe their dreams and emotions.

B2: Upper intermediate level. Learners here understand complex technical terms and spontaneously communicate with others. While also producing more complex texts about different subjects.

C1: Advanced level. In this level learners are able to understand and express their ideas about complex academic issues, while also using the language fluently in social and academic situations. They can also write longer, more detailed texts.

C2: Proficiency level. Learners at this level can understand practically anything they read or hear. They can express themselves using complete fluent sentences while being able to summarize important data.

b) Corpus: According to Partington (1993). a corpus is a linguistic resource that contains a big and well-organized collection of texts (usually electronically stored). Corpora can contain hundreds of thousands to billions of words. They are used as an essential research tool in linguistics to do quantitative analysis and hypothesis testing, as well as to check for occurrences and validate linguistic rules within

a certain language region. For example: Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

- **Corpus frequency**: is a measure of the number of times a word has been found in a corpus.

c) **Correlation:** The degree to which two variables move in respect to each other is measured by correlation. The correlation coefficient is a numerical representation of the strength of a link between those variables. The values of the correlation coefficient vary from -1.0 to 1.0 (Weisstein, 2006).

d) **EFL learners:** EFL refers to English as a Foreign Language, and EFL learners are learners of English whose first (or native) language does not happen to be English.

e) **Non-compositional meaning** is defined as an expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituent words. For example, when looking at the PV break down in: 'She broke down when we told her the news'. When we examine break separately it means to cause something to separate into pieces, while down means towards a lower position. However, in the previous sentence break down means 'start crying and unable to control her feelings' (Katz, 2006).

f) **Phrasal verbs (PVs)**– It's difficult to define what PVs are as each researcher views them from a different point of view. Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) define them as "two-word verb". While the clearest definition is brought up by Darwin and Gray (1999, p.76-77): "A phrasal verb consists of a verb proper and a morphological invariable

particle that function together as a single unit both lexically and syntactically".

g) **Polysemy**: is the phenomenon whereby one word form is typically associated with two or several more related senses (Anne-Kathrin Wielgosz, 2017; Falkum & Vicente, 2015). That is to say a word with the same spellings can be used to convey different meanings in different contexts.

h) **Second language acquisition:** this refers to the process in which a person learns a second language.

i) **Sense (meaning) of lexical item:** A word, part of a word or a group of words that form the basic elements of a language lexicon. It may have different senses (meanings) which makes it ambiguous (Cruse, 2002).

1. **Literal sense:** utilizes terms exactly as their widely recognized definitions or connotations suggest. Literal sense gives words significance in the sense of their inherent meaning, independent of any figure of speech. It has a constant meaning regardless of context, with the intended meaning matching the meaning of the component words exactly. Literal sense is used to mean exactly what is written. (Cruse, 2002)

2. **Figurative sense:** Cruse (2006) defines figurative sense as "Linguistic expressions are said to be figurative or used figuratively if their intended meaning is (a) something other than their literal meaning and (b) can be understood on the basis

of generally applicable principles of meaning extension (rather than an ad hoc arrangement)."

3. Idiomatic meaning: Expressions that carry a non-literal, figurative sense. An idiom's metaphorical meaning differs from its literal meaning, which is classified as formulaic language. Idiomatic expressions are common in all languages; there are an estimated twenty-five million idiomatic phrases in English alone (Liu, 2017).

j) **Significance:** A finding has statistical significance in statistical hypothesis testing when it is extremely unlikely to have occurred given the null hypothesis. Statistical significance is a decision by an analyst that the data's results cannot be explained only by chance. The method by which the analyst achieves this judgment is statistical hypothesis testing. A significance test (e.g. t-test) provides a p-value, which is the likelihood of observing findings as severe as those in the data, assuming the results are truly due to chance alone. A p-value of 5% or less is frequently deemed statistically significant (Herskovits, 1973).

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides a description and a definition of phrasal verbs (PVs) and their uses. In addition, the chapter also includes discussions on the semantic features of PVs, as well as the challenges of learning PVs and avoidance of using them by EFL learners. To give the reader a more complete understanding of PVs, factors affecting knowledge and acquisition of phrasal verbs will be discussed, along with the impact of the learner's personal exposure and frequency in the acquisition of PVs. This will be followed by a discussion of past studies on the topic. Furthermore, the chapter concludes with an executive summary of these past studies, followed by a statement of benefits gained from these studies and how they can help in the current study, and finally a formulation of the current study's hypothesis.

2.1 Phrasal verbs – Definition and use

There has been an on-going debate about phrasal verbs. Linguists and teachers struggle with the definitions of PVs, let alone learners who find it difficult to use them. There are many definitions of PVs, one of which is by Marianne Celce-Murcia (1999) who states that a phrasal verb, which is formed by two or more parts functions as a single verb. These parts are a lexical verb and an adverb and/or a preposition called 'particle'. For example: 'go up'. Mortimer (1972) has also indicated that "The English language has hundreds of two-part verbs such as bring up, carry on and put up. These are easy enough to understand when the meaning of the whole two-part verb is equal to the meaning of the sum of its two parts". On the other hand, Mortimer (1972) also says that the meaning of the parts cannot always help us in knowing the meaning of the whole. As

adding the meaning of *bring* to the meaning of *up* will not help us understand the meaning of *bring up* in the following expression: 'He brought up a good point'. Nor would it help us identify the meaning of *bring up* in the following phrase: 'She brought up a family'. As each word has a different meaning when it is separated from the sentence.

Phrasal verbs can either require an object (transitive verbs) or act as intransitive verbs, where no object is required. For example: 'She looked after her brother'. Where the phrasal verb *look after* is transitive. An example of an intransitive phrasal verb would be: 'When they went away, she got up' (Al Qudah, 2012), where the phrasal verb *got up* is intransitive. To draw a line between phrasal verbs and non-phrasal verbs, it can be noted that phrasal verbs comprise a verb that is followed by a preposition or an adverb. On the other hand, verb phrases generally contain a main verb that is followed by at least one auxiliary verb. It may include the following elements: (i) the auxiliary that comes before the verbal head; (ii) arguments, optional specifiers, and adjuncts, such as prepositional phrases and adverbial phrases. An example for a VP is: 'The author is writing a new book.'. It specifically has only one verb added with a preposition or an adverb. However, in the use of prepositional phrasal verbs (Biber, 2003), in which case, both the adverb and preposition are attached to the verb form. For example, if we are considering the phrasal verb *put up* with, the structure of this phrasal verb would be (verb + preposition + adverb). "To put up with" means to tolerate. It goes similarly for other prepositional phrasal verbs like get along with, look forward to and so on (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2004).

From a theoretical approach, Sroka (1972) provides a more detailed description of PVs and particles. Instead of agreeing to the previous

explanation that simply characterizes particles as adverbs, he distinguishes between three classes of particles that occur to form a phrasal verb and they are 'Prepositions, Adverbs and Adverb-Preposition' words. He further specifies three positions (A, B and C) in which the particle occur. Position 'A' is when the particle occurs at the end of the clause "I thought it would not come off." Where in position 'B' the particle occurs before the pronoun "Two young officers paused as they looked at her." While the last position which is 'C' the particle occurs after the verb "When the Roman Legions gave up the Great Wall, sir—our people broke down the gates and came through" (Sroka, 1972, p.44).

Moreover, there have been many definitions for PVs, one of which comes from a Construction Grammar point of view. Construction Grammar is based on the idea that grammatical construction is the primary unit of grammar rather than the atomic syntactic unit. According to Goldberg (2006), a construction is defined as the following:

> Any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist. In addition, patterns are stored as constructions even if they are fully predictable as long as they occur with sufficient frequency.

Construction Grammar is a theory of linguistic knowledge which claims that "Instead of assuming a clear-cut division of lexicon and syntax," say Hoffmann and Trousdale (2013), "Construction Grammarians consider all constructions to be part of a lexicon-syntax continuum (a 'construction')". Therefore, any syntactic sequence of words, from sentences to specific complex lexemes, counts as a construction and that includes phrasal

verbs. It suggests that any change in form of a construction is accompanied by a change in meaning. According to proponents of Construction Grammar, some phrasal verbs contain a verb, a particle and a preposition. The particle used in the PV is not a preposition although it resembles one, rather it is as if it were fused to the verb, in that the meaning of the verb when attached to a particle is entirely different than when the verb is alone without a particle. (Jackendoff, 2010).

2.2 Semantic features of phrasal verbs

According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) PVs are classified into three types; literal, semi-transparent and idiomatic. Demetriou (2020) states that a literal phrasal verb is spoken out in a literal sense to mean exactly what the phrasal verb suggests. For example, "I *went out* to buy groceries"; "I *ran after* the cat"..etc. The phrasal verbs *went out* and *ran after* literally mean the direction or implication of the verb, hence making out the literal meaning of the aforementioned literal phrasal verbs (Demetriou, 2020). A study by Al-Otaibi (2019) shows that a semi-transparent phrasal verb refers to the verb that retains its original meaning through the secondary component, whatever it is. The meaning of the verb stays the same but it adds an additional meaning component to the verb in a way so that even after the addition of the secondary component, the actual meaning of the verb is not hidden and can be clearly observed. For example, *write down*, *write up*, *write out*. In these examples, the lexical verb *write* conveys the same meaning when used in a phrasal verb. What changes here is that the overall meaning of the phrasal verb contains a slight change which otherwise does not hinder the actual meaning of the phrasal verb. The third type of PVs, which is the idiomatic type, refers to phrasal verbs that have a figurative meaning. It is

more difficult to know their meaning from the individual words only as they have to be understood from the given context. For example: "He is going to have to *face up* to his past." (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002). In which it is figurative, not literally facing or confronting his past as a person but rather to accept and deal with it. Another example of figurative PV is: "She *came down* with a cold but luckily she was able to *fight it off* quickly." So, the fighting in this PV is figurative as she is not literally fighting or punching the cold in the face, it is inside her body while her immune system is resisting the virus.

By looking at the different semantic features of the PVs, we can observe that their meaning are not compositional in which the meaning of PV is not always the sum of lexical items in the PV, thus presenting difficulty for learners of English. No matter how phrasal verbs are used; literally or idiomatically, native speakers acquire them early, but foreign learners acquire them late due to the complexity of their grammar and the inability to deduce their meanings from the meanings of the individual words (Brinton, 1996). In addition to that, some PVs can have various meanings depending on the context in which they appear, and thus some of them can be polysemous in nature.

2.3 Challenges in learning and using PVs

Gammon (2020) states that students face problems and challenges very often when they are studying English and especially when they are in the process of learning the usage of the phrasal verbs. Since phrasal verbs form the mostly spoken criteria in the English language it creates challenges to English learners (Liu and Myers, 2020). According to Gammon (2020), the biggest challenges in learning English phrasal verbs

include avoidance of certain contexts. As, sometimes, confidence builds up falsely to denote that most of the semi-transparent phrasal verbs bear a lot of different meanings; let alone the idiomatic expressions which build up confusions inside the minds of EFL learners. There are also issues related to patterns of deficiency in style, dilemma in the syntactic and grammatical setting and in the construction of phrasal verbs, lack of collocational awareness in the redefining of PVs and so on. These challenges must be dealt with through practice so as to master English PVs more fruitfully (Gammon, 2020).

Certain studies claim that the fact that the avoidance of English phrasal verbs basically results from negligence of learners in the usage of PVs. As Dagut and Laufer (1985) note, PVs, by nature, are ambiguous and , therefore, learners face difficulty in their acquisition. Gardner & Davies (2007) describe PVs as being complicated and representing a "fuzzy grammatical category", therefore most English learners tend to avoid them. It is believed by many scholars that articles and prepositions are the toughest part of learning English and are often the source of grammatical errors (Girju, 2008). However, other studies argue that PVs are as difficult as articles and prepositions. A survey conducted by Covitt (1976) observing English students in New York City found that PVs are the most challenging lexical units followed by articles and prepositions. When PVs are avoided, fluency is hindered which results in unnatural speech. For example, a learner who is hesitant to use PVs might end up saying "I'll occupy myself with that show" instead of saying "I'll *dive into* that new TV show". (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Arabic learners of English have also been found to avoid using PVs due to the differences in structure between L1 and L2 (Ben Duhaish, 2008), not to mention the idiomatic and semantic differences between the two languages. Ben Duhaish (2008) states that Arabic learners of English

usually avoid all types of PVs: literal, semi-transparent, and idiomatic. While Abu Jamil (2010) found out that even though the Arabic language does not have PVs, EFL learners of English do not avoid all types of PVs but rather they avoid the semantically complex and idiomatic ones.

Thyab (2019) also investigated PVs and their use by L2 learners. Native speakers are found to use PVs regularly while learners of English struggle to use them as they have not been taught what PVs are. Thyab suggests that teachers should focus on teaching PVs to L2 learners as knowledge of PVs leads to proficiency and leaners' ability to communicate like native speakers. It's however not easy for L2 learners to acquire PVs as they are shown to be polysemous. Phasal verbs differ from one another in terms of their grammatical pattern, some require an object (transitive) while others do not (intransitive). Some PVs can also allow the particle to be separated from the verb by inserting the object (separable) "I have *put* my t-shirt *on*" although it can be separated it does not have to be, as we can also say "I have *put on* my t-shirt". Or they can be inseparable, in which the PV cannot be separated "I'm *looking for* my key", as we cannot separate the verb from the particle and say "*I'm *looking* my key *for*". Therefore, EFL learners must be taught the grammatically correct ways to use PVs. According to Thyab, grammatical confusion is not the only difficulty faced by L2 learners. Another difficulty is the polysemous nature of some PVs (which is the focus of this study). A phrasal verb can have several different meanings, for example: *take off* it can mean to remove something "he *took off* his jacket", or "the plane *took off*" meaning left the ground. This can cause confusion and difficulty to learners.

Another issue that affects learner's ability to learn PVs is suggested by Boers and Strong (2017). According to them, translatability of a PV is an obstacle le for EFL learners. It is easier to learn English PVs that have equivalent L1 translation than those which do not. They identified four levels of similarity between English PVs and their L1 translation equivalents, which may be used to anticipate which words students would struggle with:

1. The learners will have the most difficulty when the English PV has no equivalent in their L1.
2. English PV with a similar meaning but a different form to an L1 PV might be challenging to master.
3. Learning an English PV with a similar form meaning to an L1 PV is easier.
4. English PVs with the identical translation won't cause any burden on learning.

Moreover, the placement of the particle also causes confusion to learners according to Blau, Ganzales and Green (1983). As mentioned above, phrasal verbs can be separable or non-separable, so learners have to know which is which in order to choose the correct position for the object. For example, it is syntactically possible to place the object in the following sentences after or before the particle:

A) Turn out the lights.

B) Turn the lights out.

The object is a noun (the lights), in sentence A the particle out came before the object. While in sentence B the object came before the particle. In other words, once the direct object is a noun, the separation between the verb and the particle is possible.

However, when the object is a pronoun, the separation must happen, it is obligatory that the verb and the particle are separated. For example:

C) Turn them out.

D) *Turn out them.

It is not possible for the particle to stick to its verb, as it is clear in sentence D. All of that can cause confusion and ambiguity for learners as they might find it difficult to learn or use phrasal verbs.

Overall, the difficulties that non-native speakers have with phrasal verbs show clearly in their linguistic output, which can seem unnatural and non-native-like. PVs are underused by non-native speakers, according to Schmitt (2013), partially because many are made up of delexicalized verbs (have little meaning or no meaning by itself) that appear in hundreds of phrases, and partly because no equivalent exists in the first language of the learner.

2.4. Factors affecting knowledge and acquisition of phrasal verbs

2.4.1 The impact of the learner's personal exposure on the acquisition of PVs

Learner's everyday communicative engagement using the second language can affect the process of acquiring PVs. Such activities include reading books, magazines and newspapers in English or visiting English language websites, watching films, videos or TV in English, listening to music in English, and social networking in English. However, it was found by Schmitt and Redwood (2011) that listening to music and social networking in English do not have an impact on the knowledge of PVs but reading and watching films does. Gonzalez Fernandez and Schmitt (2015) similarly found out that both reading and watching movies can help learners in acquiring PVs easily. They also found that there is a positive relationship between social networking in English and the acquisition of PVs.

2.4.2. The impact of lexical frequency on the acquisition of English PVs

Lexical frequency a is a measure of the number of times a word has been found, it is based on a large number of texts, collected in a corpus. Ellis (2002) state that the frequency of a word is considered an important part in acquiring vocabulary for English learners. So, the more frequent a words is, the better the chance of acquiring it. The same claim goes with the multi-word combination (PVs) in which it was found that there is a close relationship between frequency and PV acquisition. Ellis (2002)

argues that "Humans are sensitive to the frequencies of events in their experience" (2002a, p. 145). While it is difficult to know for sure how many times a certain PV is encountered, corpora can act as an indicator to the number of frequencies of a PV. Many studies like that of Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) show that L2 acquisition of PVs cannot be isolated from their frequency. For this reason, the teaching of corpus-based vocabulary has gained large attention in the previous years. Gardner and Davies (2007) pointed out the 100 most frequent PVs. Similarly, Cole (2020) has identified the most frequent combination of PVs in English. His findings are important in this study as we will see whether the most frequent PVs are frequent and familiar for the participants of our study.

2.5 Polysemous Phrasal Verbs

Like other lexical items, PVs can be polysemous as well. Polysemy has been defined as having different related meanings, a word can have multiple word senses. Gardner and Davies (2007) examined the highest frequency phrasal verbs combinations in the British national corpus and concluded that each of the top 100 phrasal verbs in their frequency list had an average of 5 to 6 meaning. Similarly, Garnier and Schmitt (2015) found that PVs have 1.9 senses on average while investigating the most frequent PVs in COCA. For example, *bring up* in "Sara was angry she did not want to bring the topic up. (meaning to mention something)." While it can also mean to raise a child: "She was brought up in Canada."

As Cornell (1985) suggests, phrasal verbs are important for understanding and communicating with native speakers, as they are commonly used in spoken and informal language. He further explains that certain verbs and particles can be polysemous and ambiguous as they have both idiomatic

and non-idiomatic use. For example, the phrasal verb put up can be used in different meanings:

1) He put up his friend for club president.

2) Who put you up to this?

3) He put up a good fight.

4) They put up signs all over the school.

Thim (2012) also looked into polysemous phrasal verbs, where he divided PVs into three semantic categories 'literal', 'aspectual' and 'idiomatic (or 'non-compositional'). The idiomatic category is different from the two preceding groups in that its meaning cannot be simply inferred from the meaning of its surrounding elements. He further explains by giving the following examples:

1) My husband actually said to me that giving up smoking was easy because he's done it plenty of times.

2) He could not make it out, nor could he trust his own memory.

The meaning of the PVs 'giving up' and 'make out' are not transparent. Thim (2012) argues that out of three types of PVs, idiomatic ones received

the most attention in teaching English PVs to foreign learners.

Another example of a phrasal verb being polysemous is provided by Steel (2005). The phrasal verb *turn down* has many meanings and can cause ambiguity to learners. The most frequent meaning for turn down is to 'decrease the volume'. As in:

- She turned down the music.

However, it can also mean to reject, for example:

- He turned her down.

To reduce students' confusion, Steel suggests that teachers should teach the meaning of the PV as it appears in the text, without giving any other explanation to its other meanings.

2.6 Literature from Previous Studies

A study was conducted by Hourany (2002) to examine the challenges and difficulties Jordanian students face in translating phrasal verbs from English into Arabic. The participants of the study were forty MA level Jordanian students of translation from the University of Jordan. The results showed that the participants face difficulties in understanding and translating PVs into Arabic, it further states that the challenges faced are due to the polysemous, semantic and syntactic features of PVs such as transitivity and idiomaticity.

Liao and Fukuya (2004) performed a study on 70 intermediate and advanced students taking ESL courses and 15 native speakers. Participants had to take one out of the three tests (translation, multiple-choice or recall) all of tests included literal and figurative PVs. The native speakers had to take the multiple-choice test as well. The results show that learners with intermediate level avoided using PVs much more than advanced learners. The advanced level participants used PVs less than the native speakers but there was not a big difference between the two groups. The writers concluded that interlinguistic development plays an important role in reducing PV avoidance. Furthermore, all the three groups (intermediate, advanced and native speakers) preferred using literal PVs over figurative ones.

Teaching PVs is essential in developing the fluency of L2 learners as Gardner and Davis (2007) have pointed out. They used the British National Corpus to gather data as it has more than 4000 samples that benefited their study to find out the most frequent adverbial phrases (AVPs) and the most frequent lexical verbs used in PVs constructions. They found that (out, up, down, and back) occur more in AVPs. Moreover, they investigated the frequency on PVs, and saw that learners will encounter at least 1 PV every 192 word, that is 2 PVs per page of a written text. Through their research they have also found that learning multiword items like that of PVs cannot be simply acquired through a person's experience in a language, but it requires more language training. Teachers and linguists have followed the traditional way in teaching PVS by relying on their intuitions in choosing the most frequent PVs and therefore teaching them to learners. Yet, corpus linguistics has proven to be beneficial in learning and teaching PVs as it highlights the most frequent and common ones, thus, making it easy for both teachers and learners.

Elina (2012) wanted to go back to the first step of acquiring PVs and investigated the use of PVs in children's stories. The research was conducted to find out the construction and description of PVs found in children's books. Three types of PVs were found: transitive, intransitive and separable. Since PVs are very common in English both written and spoken, Elina wanted EFL learners' stories to include more types of PVs so that children can be exposed to them from an early age. She was, however, satisfied with the number of PVs found in all of the chosen books.

Moreover, in a study carried out by Kamarudin (2013) who wanted to measure the overall understanding of PVs in Malaysian school learners of English. She decided to test three factors and their role in the acquisition of English PVs (gender, school level and language proficiency) and whether students can acquire literal PVs easier than the figurative ones. Kamarudin also included Malaysian English teachers in her study to find their perception concerning the vocabulary and PVs while teaching. Students were given a PVs test and a questionnaire was distributed to teachers. The results indicated that the nature of PVs and the learner's exposure to L2 can affect learners' acquisition of PVs. The challenges and difficulties faced by students were found due to the lack of dictionaries and textbooks at the school. Teachers were also found unsatisfied with the materials provided to teach PVs. The researcher states that teaching PVs should consider the learners' first language. She elaborates by saying that PVs can be better learned and understood if learners are made aware of their lexical and grammatical patterns. She suggests that in Malaysia, it may be time to integrate the use of corpora into textbook selections and dictionaries, rather than relying on intuition alone.

Saleh (2015) also investigated the use of PVs by Arabic learners of English. He looked into three factors that can affect learners' acquisition to PVs; the proficiency level, the personal exposure of the learner using the second language and the type of PVs. The subjects of the study were 18 Arabic learners of English, they were divided into two groups by the scholar (intermediate and advanced). The two groups were different in the results as it was found that the intermediate group avoid using PVs more than the advanced one. But both groups proved that being exposed to the second language and using it in their everyday life can ease the

process of acquiring English PVs. Saleh concluded that both groups tend to avoid the idiomatic PVs finding them to be polysemous.

Garnier and Schmitt (2016) addressed the difficulties L2 learners face in acquiring polysemous PVs. Their study included 128 Chilean learners of English from two different universities, all the students share the same L1 which is Spanish, and all have high English proficiency. Two methods were used in collecting the data, one is a test were participants have to fill in the gap the correct PV by reading the sentence and the meaning in brackets. The second method was a questionnaire to see the different characteristics leaners have (listening to music and watching movies in English, etc.) which may affect their lexical knowledge of PVs. The study found that only 40% of PVs meanings were known by the L2 learners. Moreover, it found out that learners' involvements in L2 environment as well as semantic capacity did not have any effect on their knowledge of PVs, what had a great effect in their knowledge was actually the corpus frequency and their time spend reading and social networking in English. However, watching movies and listening to music in English has no relationship to their knowledge of PVs. All in all, PVs were confirmed to be problematic and polysemous to L2 learners of English and thus require more attention.

Furthermore, A study was carried out by Shareef (2018) to investigate the difficulties faced by learners while acquiring English PVs and to examine the knowledge of their teachers. The participants were 40 secondary school students and 30 English teachers. It was found out that 83% of the participants encounter serious difficulties when using PVs. Shareef also states that teachers are poorly trained and are not qualified to teach PVs;

the ill-trained teachers are the reason why students have challenges in using English PVs.

Al Nasarat (2018) has also designed a study to measure the difficulties faced by college students of English in using PVs. He divided the participants into two groups: English majors and different academic majors. The study aimed to identify the source of difficulty faced by students by looking at their performance and background level. Two types of tests were used: oral and written. The findings showed that the second group of students (from different academic majors) are unable to use PVs correctly while English majors faced less difficulty in acquiring PVs but were unable to translate them into their native language.

Furthermore, Monika (2020) investigated the errors made by students when using phrasal verbs through a PV test, and an interview of 28 students. The test consisted of three parts, 30 questions in total. In the first part, students were asked to answer 10 questions by adding a particle in the correct place. In the second part, they had to place the direct object, this part consisted of 10 questions like the previous one. The last part consisted of multiple-choice questions which included separable and inseparable phrasal verbs. Whereas the interview was used to identify the factors that could affect students' awareness of PVs by asking some personal information about the respondents. The researcher based his study on four types of errors based on Dulay Surface strategy taxonomy theory 'Omission, addition, misordereing, and misinformation'. He found that error of misinformation is the most typical error made by students when using phrasal verbs, as it came in the first place with a percentage of 47.02%. Misinformation errors are characterized by the incorrect forms of morphemes or structures. In this type of errors, learners use the

wrong form in constructing phrasal verbs, as it was found that most of the students used the wrong particle in the PV. Some examples of students' errors:

1. * Would you wrap out this present for me?
2. * You will hardly find the trees in his garden. His gardener has cut from them.
3. * James met George's sister last week, and now he calls her every day. I guess he really catch up her in a big way.

He concluded that EFL learners face serious difficulties in using PVs correctly.

Similar findings were found by Marita (2020). her study consisted of 24 essays written by students to find phrasal verbs errors made by students in writing based on surface strategy taxonomy. The results indicate that there were 76 errors from the four categories of the taxonomy: omission, misformation, addition, and misordering. The researcher found that the highest errors found are errors of misformation by a percentage of 86%. Causing learners' confusion and misunderstanding of the correct use of PVs.

2.6. Summary and conclusions drawn from previous studies

2.6.1 summary of previous studies

According to many research findings, PVs are one of the linguistic elements of English with which many language learners struggle. PVs are a defining characteristic of the English language, they are crucial as native speakers frequently use them. They are common in everyday

communication, which makes them necessary for learning and mastering the language. Overall, all studies pointed out that L2 learners of English underuse and avoid using PVs partly because of the following:

1. A lot of the time, there are no L1 equivalent to PVs that exist in learners' first language for some EFL learner groups. Learners, therefore, tend to avoid using phrasal verbs as they don't have an equivalent in their L1. Even if learners have PVs in their L1, there are most likely structural differences between L1 and L2 in their application. That's why PVs in English can be very problematic.

2. The non-compositional meaning of many PVs (the idiomatic meaning). Idiomatic phrasal verbs meanings cannot be deduced from the meanings of the individual words. For example, the PV *look back* in the following sentence 'Looking back on those days, we had a very happy life' in which it means to think about and remember the past. It doesn't mean the literal sense for look back to see something in the back.

3. Phrasal verbs can have more than one sense, i.e. be polysemous in nature. Phrasal verbs can have more than one meaning which can be difficult for learners. For example, *go on* has more than 10 meaning senses according to Garnier and Schmitt (2015). Some examples are: "The meeting seemed to *go on* forever" which means 'to last for a period of time' Another meaning is 'to happen' as in. "What's going on?" which lead learners to avoid using them.

Given their polysemous nature and complexity, much has been discussed about the challenges posed by phrasal verbs to foreign English learners. It is a difficult area not only for learners but for teachers as well. However, PVs are very useful for facilitating good communication and are a sign of fluency in English. Therefore, it is important to apply the correct teaching methods to reduce learners' confusion. It was found by many researchers that everyday communication in English can help in acquiring PVs. The meaning of the PV is usually recognized by learners, however, the action suggested by the PV does not correspond with the associated object or the surrounding context like in the figurative PVs. However, reading could help students understand and acquire PVs, the more they encounter the word, the easier it becomes.

2.6.2 relevance of previous studies to the current study

Some previous studies which are related to the present study showed that there are many variables that can affect learners' knowledge of PVs. One of which is reading and communicating using English. While also corpus frequency was found to predict knowledge and awareness of PVs. In this study, students' year of studies in their respective programs (as reflected in the CEFR language proficiency levels they're placed at) will also be taken into account.

This study adopts the methods and procedures outlined by Garnier and Schmitt (2016), discussed above. Their study is very essential to our present study as it investigates knowledge of the different senses of highly frequent PVs among EFL learners and identifies several factors that influence knowledge of PVs among learners. The test and the questionnaire in their study were adapted in our study as means of

investigating, just like Garnier and Schmitt (2016), to what extent learners are aware of PVs and the factors that affect their knowledge, but in the context of English language learners in Bahrain. The adapted tools will be explained in detail in the next chapter.

2.6.3. Current study hypothesis

Based on the research questions discussed in Chapter 1, and the discussion of literature presented in this chapter, there are several null hypotheses to be adopted for this study:

1st H_0: Learners have no knowledge of phrasal verbs.

2nd H_0: There is no relationship between students' English language proficiency levels (as reflected in the CEFR levels they are placed at) and PV awareness.

3rd H_0: There is no significant correlation between the suggested variables in the study (reading, listening to music, social networking and watching TV) and awareness of PVs.4th H_0: Lexical frequency is not a predictor of knowledge of PVs.

3. Methodology

In this study we investigate the research questions discussed in Chapter 1 using a quantitative method and a combination of statistical tests. In the following sections we will discuss the research population and sample, as well as the three tools used to collect data which are analyzed by different statistical tests.

3.1 Research Population and Sample:

The population of this study consists of 78 EFL learners (randomly chosen) in the Kingdom of Bahrain. All the students are college students currently placed at two levels of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) language acquisition levels: A2 – B1 level, and C1 level. The A2-B1 level is considered an intermediate level in which learners can understand the main points of basic clear information related to their surroundings. They can produce basic personal writings. While the C1 level is considered an advanced level in which learners can convey their thoughts fluently and write clear detailed text while being able to communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional settings.

One of the selection requirements is that the students have to have received their education in Public Schools in the Kingdom of Bahrain since kindergarten, and the other requirement is that they are all native speakers of Arabic, who do not speak English as their native language.

Table 1:Participants of the study.

Levels	Number of Participants
A2-B1	38
C1	40

Table 1 shows the number of participants at each level. We can see that there are 38 students in the A2-B1 level and 40 students in the C1 level.

3.2 Research Tools:

This study employs three main different tools to measure the awareness of polysemous phrasal verbs among EFL learners in the Kingdom of Bahrain:

(1) **test:** a multiple-choice phrasal verbs test consisting of 60 questions to see how well learners are familiar with PVs.

(2) **questionnaire:** of learners' background information to see what affects their knowledge of phrasal verbs.

(3) **collection of written texts:** to check how frequently and how accurately students use PVs in their written academic essays.

We will discuss these tools in detail in the following sections:

3.2.1 Collection of written texts (preliminary study)

3.2.2 Test

3.2.3. Questionnaire

3.2.1 Examining written texts (preliminary study):

In order to get a sense to the extent to which students at the A2-B1 and C1 levels use PVs in their written productions, we decided to examine a sample of writing produced by students at these two levels. An overall amount of 66 essays written by English college students will be analyzed for this study (10,356 words from C1 level and 7,227 words from the A2-B1 level). The objective of conducting this preliminary study, prior to conducting the tests, was to find out the following:

1. How frequently do students at these two levels use PVs in their writing in general?
2. How accurately do they use PVs in their writing?
3. Are they able to use PVs in their literal as well as figurative senses?

3.2.2 Test:

In order to answer research questions which are:

(1) To what extent are EFL learners in Bahrain aware of the highly frequent phrasal verbs and their different senses?

(2) Which of the following factors affect the learners' knowledge of PVs the most:

1. proficiency level (as reflected in the CEFR levels students are assigned to).
2. verb frequency in an English corpus.

we adapted a previously published test by Garnier & Schmitt (2016). The phrasal verbs in the test have been selected by the authors based on to their high frequency in an English corpus (COCA) and their polysemous nature. Since there is correlation between lexical frequency and word acquisition, the adapted test contains highly frequent and polysemous PVs to test learner's knowledge. The original test by Garnier and Schmitt contained 100 sentences belonging to a total of 40 PVs. The test required that the student read a sentence (which contains one of the tested PVs) and supplement the correct PV in the given space, as we can see in Table 2.

Table 2: Example from the original PV test.

	Sentence	Answer
1	The prisoners are hoping to g___ o___ of jail soon. **(leave)**	get out
2	I didn't think he would b___ u___ the subject. **(mention, introduce)**	bring up

Students were asked to read the sentences carefully and then complete the words. To help them, the first letter(s) of the verb and the preposition/adverb was provided. They were also provided with a definition for each phrasal verb after every sentence.

The test was used in its original form in a pilot study, however we received very low scores which made us reconsider the test design in order to get some reliable results. In order to render this test more manageable as an online test, 60 of the 100 senses of various were chosen and we selected 24 PVs with their various senses to test learners' knowledge of the PVs. The selected PVs have 2 to 4 senses each. Therefore, providing us with 60 senses altogether to test.

In the adapted version of the test, we decided to provide the verb as a whole and include the preposition/adverb to be chosen through a multiple-choice test. In the following example, the correct PV is bring up, therefore, the student needs to choose the preposition up.

Example from conducted test:

I didn't think he would bring ___ the subject. (mention, introduce)

- o in
- o out
- o up

Answer:

- o up

As mentioned previously, the objective of this test is to find out the extent to which learners at these two levels of English language acquisition are aware of the highly frequent phrasal verbs and their different senses.

The frequency of each PV will also be considered when analyzing the results as well as whether the PV sense is literal or figurative. All participants are informed of the study's purpose, the format of the test, and anonymity and confidentiality of the data. The following table includes all the 24 PVs used in the test with their corpus frequency, sentence used in the test, and sense provided in the test.

Table 3: PVs used in the study.

PV	(L)iteral or (F)igurative	Frequency	Sentence	Sense
(1) back up	F	2402.61	People often fail to back up their words with actions.	Take action in order to support STH or make it happen
	F	2974.66	He got into his car and backed up until he reached the street.	Move or drive backwards a short way
	F	2345.405	You have to back up your accusations with solid evidence.	Establish as valid or genuine
(2) break down	F	2106.72	Our car broke down yesterday.	stop working or functioning; fail or collapse (vehicle, device, relationship, negotiations)
	F	1755.6	Let's break down the task into three easy steps.	Divide or separate into categories or smaller components so as to make it easier to understand or deal with

	F	1536.15	He broke down at his son's funeral.	Lose control of one's emotions and yield to tears or distress
	L	1185.03	Digestion breaks down substances into small molecules.	Undergo chemical decomposition; separate into different substances
(3) bring in	L	4248.92	I brought in my laptop computer today because my office computer is broken.	Bring STH to a place
	F	2492.155	He had been brought in to save the company.	Ask SB to do a particular job or task
(4) clean up	F	6147.92	He was asked to clean up his language during the interview.	To make STH free from dangerous, unacceptable or controversial activities or contents
	L	1827.76	Make sure you clean up your room because I won't do it for you.	To get rid of dirt or mess
(5) come along	F	3969.375	I didn't expect such an opportunity to come along	To appear or arrive; come into existence
	L	1122.375	We're going to the cinema tonight; you should come along with us!	To go somewhere with SB
(6) cut off	L	2036.88	Take the carrots and cut the ends off.	Remove a part of STH by cutting it
	F	1848.28	The teacher cut off the student in the middle of her sentence.	Interrupt SB as they are speaking
	F	1772.84	The storm cut off electricity from the	End the provision of STH, or be deprived of a

			entire town.	provision (electricity, money)
(7) get down	F	1957.8	We should get down to discussing those issues as soon as possible.	(to …) Begin to pay serious attention to STH
	L	1694.25	Get down on your knees so you can get a better view.	Lower one's body as by kneeling, sitting or lying
	L	1317.75	He loves climbing trees but finds it hard to get down	Come down from STH; descend (car, horse, tree)
(8) give out	L	1209.6	The committee gave out more than 100 copies in the last meeting.	Give to each of a large number of people; distribute
	F	1013.04	You should be more careful and not give out your phone number so easily.	Make known openly or publicly; reveal
	F	347.76	At 95 years of age, her heart finally gave out.	Collapse, fail; stop functioning properly (heart, knees)
(9) hand over	L	1755.585	She turned around to hand over her keys to her husband.	Give STH to SB by holding it in one's hand and offering it to them
	F	1245.425	I had to hand over my bag to the robbers to avoid being shot at.	Surrender control or responsibility for STH/SB to SB else, esp. officially
	F	988.645	They should not hold back from joining us if they want to.	Decide not to do or say ST
	F	883.47	You cannot let a few unmotivated pupils	Prevent SB/STH from reaching their full potential

(10) hold back			hold back the rest of the group.	
	L	736.225	The dam was not strong enough to hold back the flood waters.	Prevent SB/STH from going somewhere
	F	673.12	She held back the laughter with great effort.	Contain an unwanted physical manifestation (tears, laughter, sigh, sneeze)
(11) move up	F	2101.37	She moved up from secretary to senior manager in just a few years.	Move to a better position; advance to a higher level/rank.
	L	1005.975	They had to use a forklift to move the containers up.	Move upward, from a lower spatial location to a higher one.
(12) pay off	F	3438.33	It will take a dozen years for him to pay off his debts.	Pay the complete amount of STH
	F	3403.245	All the hard work will pay off in the end.	Pay back the effort spent in doing STH by becoming profitable or effective
(13) pull back	L	3767.225	She pulled back the curtains so the light could come into the room.	Move backwards or make SB/STH move backwards
	F	1756.15	The army was forced to pull back due to bad weather.	Withdraw or retreat from an activity or location, esp. military
(14) put out	F	3899.59	The manager has put out a job advertisement in the newspaper.	Make STH known or accessible to the public (information, products)
	F	1161.58	The fire has finally	Stop STH from burning or

			been put out.	shining
	L	829.7	I've put out glasses and a bottle of water.	Place STH somewhere in order for it to be seen or used
(15) put up	L	2456.17	They put up a few posters on the wall.	Display or attach STH (e.g. to a wall) so it can be seen
	F	2029.01	I won't put up with your bad behaviour for much longer.	(with …) Be willing to accept STH unpleasant or not desirable; tolerate
	F	1922.22	They've put up a new fence after the previous one fell apart.	Build or place STH somewhere
(16) reach out	L	4792.77	She reach out for the empty jar on the table.	Stretch an arm in order to hold, touch, or get STH that is within short distance
	F	3903.39	This beauty company tries to reach out to both young and middle-aged customers.	Make an effort to address or communicate with SB, so as to help them or involve them in STH
(17) run out	F	2822.985	Unfortunately, we've run out of biscuits.	Use STH (or become used) completely so that nothing is left
	L	1939.02	After the argument, she run out into the garden and screamed.	Leave suddenly, as if in a hurry
(18) set out	F	3553.85	She set out to discover the truth behind the story.	Start doing or working on STH, esp. with a particular goal in mind
	F	2215.93	We set out for San Francisco on the following day.	Start a journey
	F	1337.92	The official	Explain or present STH

			recommendations were set out in the document.	clearly, esp. officially and in writing
(19) sit back	L	2671.68	She sat back in her chair and turned on the TV.	Rest in a comfortable position against the back of a seat
	F	1376.32	We won't just sit back and watch the situation getting worse and worse.	Deliberately take no action/remain passive about STH
(20) stand out	F	3318.425	Excellent product quality is what made the brand stand out from its competitors.	Distinguish oneself/itself by being better, more significant or more impressive than other people/things
	F	2084.3	Flashing lights make planes stand out at night.	Be easily seen or noticeable
(21) take back	L	3224.5	After dinner, we took her back to her house.	Take STH/SB to a place they were in before
	F	2160.415	My mother told me that I need to take back control of my life.	Regain possession or control over STH
(22) take in	F	935.165	The family took her in when she was abandoned by her parents.	Provide a place for SB to live or stay
	F	667.975	You have to explain more thoroughly; it's too difficult to take in.	Fully understand or grasp the meaning of STH
	F	381.7	He was very convincing, so I was easily take in.	Deceive by behaving in a dishonest way

(23) turn over	F	3709.23	The criminal decided to turn himself over .	Surrender possession or control to SB/STH (esp. in authority)
	L	2119.56	Put the chicken on the grill and turn it over a few times.	Change position so that the other side is facing towards the outside or the top, or another direction
(24) turn up	F	3608.64	The search turned up solid evidence against him.	Yield; be (or make STH be) found, discovered, or noticed
	F	1052.52	He turned up to the meeting half an hour late.	Arrive or make an appearance somewhere

Each correct answer was awarded 1 point, amounting to a maximum of 60 points per student. The scores reported in this study are converted into percentages in order to provide a clear picture of students' performance.

3.2.3 Questionnaire:

In order to answer the second research question which is:

(2) Which of the following factors affect the learners' knowledge of PVs the most:

1. social networking in English
2. listening to music
3. watching TV in English
4. reading in English

learners are requested to fill a questionnaire (adapted from Garnier & Schmitt, 2016). This questionnaire was designed to help us identify the factors that affect their acquisition of frequent PVs and their multiple

meanings. The test provided above is preceded by a questionnaire that requires information about the time learners spend reading, listening to music, watching TV and social networking in English. As well as some background information about their native language. The objective of this questionnaire is to find out the effect of different factors on the learners' acquisition of the different uses of frequent PVs. According to Schmitt (2010) lexical knowledge can be affected by different variables. As a result, gathering information by using this questionnaire is important to account for such influential variables. There are many factors affecting learners' knowledge of PVs, one of which is everyday use and exposure to English by reading different books or reading internet material in English. In addition, watching movies, listening to music and social networking are also important factors which are included in the questionnaire. Since social media and communication are undeniably becoming more popular in today's world, especially among younger students and learners it can highly affect their use of language, especially their knowledge of PVs as they are considered to be mostly found in informal communication and discourse (Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Participants are asked to write an estimate of the number of hours spent carrying out the mentioned activities: (reading, watching TV, listening to music and social networking in English).

In the questionnaire some background information about the learners is also probed like whether the learner's native language is Arabic or not, whether they have a second native language, and whether they had attended public or private schools, etc. Participants were also asked about their current level of BA, as all these factors may have an effect on their acquisition of PVs. The questions included in the questionnaire are as follows:

Please answer the following questions by ticking the boxes or filling in the gaps.
You are also free to tick as many answers as you think appropriate in each question.

1. Is your native language Arabic?

Yes☐ No☐

2. Do you have more than one native language (that is, did you learn more than one language from your parents when you were a child)?

Yes☐ No☐

If (yes) please the write the name of your second native language: _____

3. At what age did you start learning English? _____

4. Were you in a:

Private school☐ Public School ☐ Both ☐

If you answered 'both', please specify the years you spent in each system: _____

5. How many hours per week do you spend:

- Reading books, magazines and newspapers in English or visiting English language websites? _____
- Watching films, videos or TV in English? _____
- Listening to music in English? _____
- Social networking in English (Whatsapp, Snapchat, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Skype, email, etc.)? _____

Due to the current situation of Covid-19, the data collection (test + questionnaire) were distributed online. The data collected from the

polysemous PVs awareness test – in which students choose the correct preposition– will be quantitatively analyzed to identify which PVs (and their respective meanings) are most familiar for the students. Moreover, the data collected from the questionnaire will be statistically analyzed to identify the most important factors that influence the students' acquisition of PVs. In the following section, we will discuss the various statistical tests employed in this study.

3.3 Analysis:

R statistical package is used to analyze the data obtained in the test and the questionnaire. The following statistical tests will be conducted in this study:

(1) **Mean:** which is also the average is the sum of all numbers divided by the number of values in the list.

(2) **Standard deviation:** the standard deviation is a measurement of a collection of values' variance. A low standard deviation implies that the values are close to the mean whereas a high standard deviation shows that the values are spread out over a larger range

(3) Statistical tests to compare between the means of the two groups:

a. If the distribution of the scores is normal, the t-test will be used.

b. If the distribution of the scores is not normal (which can be determined through a Shapiro-Wilk normality test), a Wilcoxson-Mann-Whitney test will be used.

i. **t-test:** When the test scores follow a normal distribution , a t-test is applied to see if the means of

two sets of data are substantially different from one another. If the p-value calculated in this test is <0.05, the results are considered statistically significant.

ii. **Shapiro-wilk:** The Shapiro-Wilk normality test is also used; it is used to determine whether or not a continuous variable has a normal distribution or not. In this study, we rely on this test in order to check for normality in the distribution of scores of the phrasal verbs test. If the calculated p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 then that means that the data is not normally distributed.

iii. **Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test**: The non-parametric Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney (or rank sum) test is used to compare between two independent groups and see if there is a difference in the dependent variable. We have used it to check the significance between the average test scores performed by the two levels of learners. Used to compare between two samples when the distribution is not normal.

(4) **Pearson correlation coefficient:** It is a single number that indicates the degree and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. We have used to investigate the factors affecting the learners' knowledge of PVs.

4. Results and Discussion

In this chapter, we will discuss the results obtained from the following:

(1) Examining students' written productions.

(2) The PV test.

(3) The questionnaire.

These results will be followed by a discussion.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Preliminary study: Students' written production results

In this section, we will report on results obtained from 66 essays produced by students from two levels, C1 and A2-B1. We will examine the frequency and the accuracy of phrasal verb usage in students writing and whether or not they are used in both the figurative and literal senses.

4.1.1.1 Analysis of usage of phrasal verbs in the writing of A2-B1 level students

The examined 38 texts produced by students at the A2-B1 level, and the total number of words in these texts is 7227 words altogether. Out of these texts 8 PVs were found. These PVs can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: A2-B1 level uses of PVs in writing

PV	Meaning: (L)iteral / (F)igurative	No of times used
Look at	(L) "To examine something closely."	1
Break down	(F) "To lose control of your feelings and start crying."	1
Eat up	(F) "To eat all of something."	1
Cut down	(F) "To reduce the size, amount or number of something."	1
Cut back	(F) "To reduce the amount of something."	1
Turn into	(F) "To change or develop into something different."	2
Depend on	(L) "To rely on somebody/something and be able to trust them."	1

Out of the 8 PVs, two were used in a literal meaning sense while the other six were used figuratively. An example for a PV used literally in students writing is "looking at a screen for more than an hour is bad for your eyes." Moreover, an example of a figurative one "Doctors recommend we all cut down on sugar."

As we discussed in Chapter 2, it was estimated by Gardner and Davis (2007) that PVs occur in conversation and written texts approximately

5,000 times per million words. According to that estimate, it is expected that PVs exist in native speaker speech/writing 0.005 of the time (5,000 / 1,000,000). If we examine the frequency of PV usage in the above portion of students writing, we find that A2-B1 level students use PVs around 0.001 of the time. Compared to native speakers, EFL learners from A2-B1 level use less PVs in their writing.

4.1.1.2 Analysis of usage of phrasal verbs in the writing of C1 level students

We also examined 28 texts produced by students at the C1 level, and the total number of words in these texts is 10356 words altogether. Out of these texts 23 PVs were found. These PVs can be seen in table (5).

Table 5: C1 level use of PVs in writing

PV	**Meaning:** **(L)iteral / (F)igurative**	**No of times used**
End up	(F) "To be in a particular place or state after doing something or because of doing it."	1
Figure out	(F) "To be able to understand something or to solve a problem."	1
Look into	(F) "To examine something."	1
Add in	(L) "To include something with something else."	2
Mix in	(L) "To add one substance to others, especially in cooking."	1
Bite into	(L)	2

	"To cut into the surface of something."	
Come up	(F) "To be mentioned or discussed."	1
Roll up	(L) "To fold the ends back several times, making them shorter."	1
Dry up	(L) "To become completely dry."	1
Set aside	(L) "To save or keep money, time, land, etc. for a particular purpose."	5
Pour into	(L) "To give a lot of effort, money, or help to someone or something."	1
Look through	(L) "To read something quickly, especially to find the information you need."	1
Take up	(F) "To fill a particular amount of space or time."	1
Fold into	(L) "To add one substance to another and gently mix them together."	1
Go up	(F) "To increase / becomes higher."	1
Soak up	(L) "To take in and hold liquid."	1
Move into	(L) "To start living or operating a business in a place."	1

In 10356 words of students' academic writing, 23 PVs were found. Unlike the A2-B1 level, the C1 level students used the PVs literally more than figuratively. They have used 17 PVs in a literal sense and 5 PVs

were used figuratively. An example of a PV used in a figurative meaning sense "Do you have trouble coming up with a delicious macaroni and cheese recipe?" while the essays were full of PVs used in a literal sense like "Then add in the macaroni and cook it". Some PVs were not used correctly like in "Let it cook until you can look throw it but a little harsh when you bite it." Not only did the student misspell 'through', as in *look threw instead of look through, the student also used that PV inaccurately. When we examine the frequency of PV usage in the above portion of students writing, we find that C1 level students use PVs around 0.002 of the time. Which shows that C1 level students use more PVs in writing than the A2-B1 level students.

4.1.2 PV test results

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this test was conducted through a multiple-choice test containing 60 questions to measure the knowledge of PVs by English learners in Bahrain. The data obtained from this test will be analyzed and discussed in this section.

4.1.3 Basic statistics and distribution of test scores

In order to answer our first research question: (To what extent are EFL learners in Bahrain aware of the highly frequent phrasal verbs and their different senses?) An analysis was drawn to determine the knowledge of phrasal verbs. Seventy-eight learners of English of two different levels were chosen (A2-B1 and C1). We can see in Table 6 the numbers of learners for each level who participated in the study. Looking at all the 60 PV test items, participants of A2-B1 had a mean score of 31.97% (which means that the average score achieved by the 38 A2-B1 level students was 31.97%), while the mean achieved by the C1 level students is 54.21%.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of the participants' test scores.

Level	N	Mean	Standard deviation
A2-B1	38	31.97	7.54
C1	40	54.21	18.59

Furthermore, the table above shows the standard deviation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the standard deviation is a measurement of variance in a collection of values. A low standard deviation implies that the values are close to the mean whereas a high standard deviation shows that the values are spread out over a larger range. As can be seen, the standard deviation of the C1 level is higher with a percentage of 18.59% while the A2-B1 level has a percentage of 7.54%. To visually examine the distribution of scores for each level, Figure 1 shows the distribution of test scores out of 100%, for the A2-B1 level students, with scores grouped into groups of 5s. While Figure 2 shows the distribution of C1 level students' test scores. These figures show to what extent the participants from A2-B1 and the C1 levels are aware of the uses of the different PVs included in the test and their different senses.

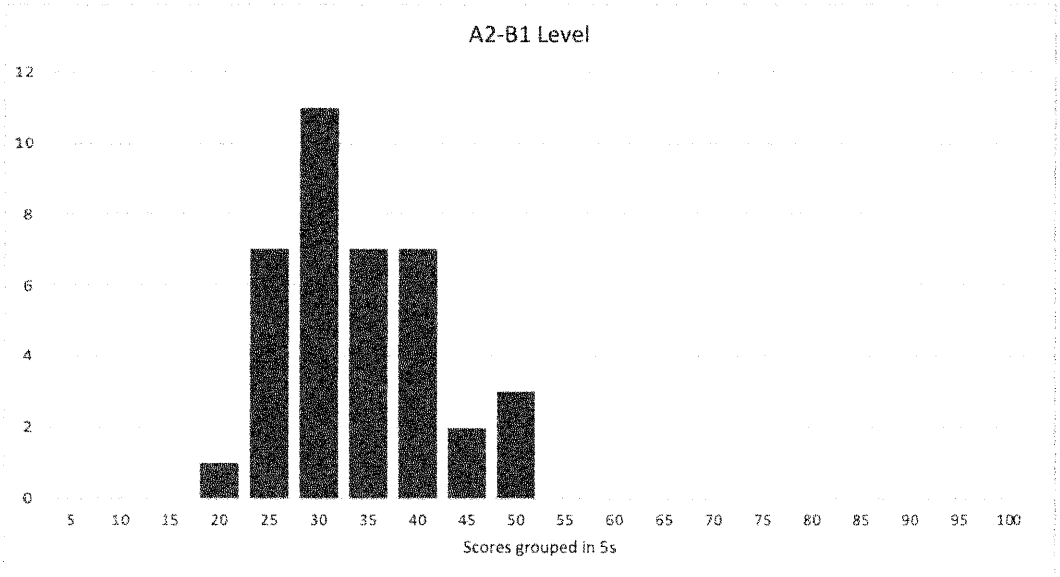


Fig. 1: Distribution of A2-B1 level participants' test scores in percentages

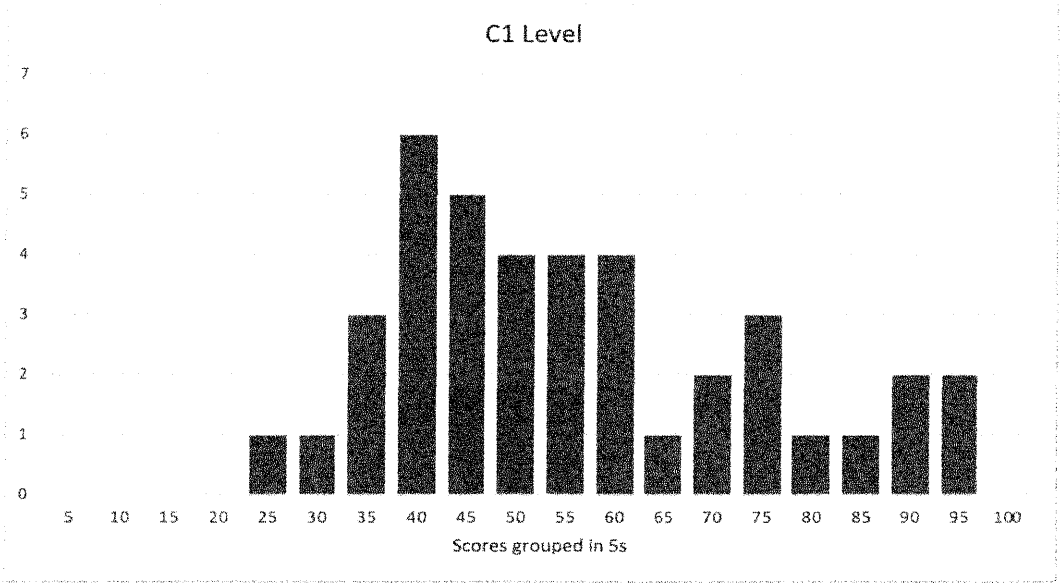


Fig. 2:Distribution of C1 level participants' test scores

As far as A2-B1 level students are concerned, it is clear that no students scored below 20%. While most participants scored between 25 – 40%. The numbers of students who scored between 45-50% is a lot lower. It can also be seen that no participant scored above 50%.

Figure 2, on the other hand, shows the performance of the participants at the C1 level. It can be seen that many participants scored between 40-60%. While no participant scored below 25%. The scores from 65% to 95% are relatively low. The scores of the C1 level learners are widely distributed varying from 25% to 95%, which explains why the standard deviation of the C1 level students' performance was higher than that of the lower-level students.

In sum, the two levels show a great difference in students' awareness of PVs. Both levels have no student who scored below 15%. The C1 level students have scored from 25% to 95% with the majority scoring 40% to 60%. While the A2-B1 level students scored between 20 – 50% with no student scoring above 50%.

4.1.4 Testing for normality of distribution

Looking at these graphs, it seems that the distribution of the scores achieved by the A2-B1 level students is normal, meaning that the student group for the A2-B1 level is quite homogenous, with respect to their knowledge of PVs. However, the distribution of scores achieved by the C1 level students does not seem to be normal. This means that the student group at the C1 level is not as homogenous as that of the A2-B1 level. In order to confirm this observation, we had to conduct a normality test. This test would help us also determine whether a t-test or a non-parametric test is needed to show whether the two means are significantly different. We conducted the Shapiro-Wilk normality test as a normality test. In this test, if the p-value is found above 0.05 then the data is normally distributed. If the p-value is below 0.05 this means that the data is not normally distributed.

The result for the Shapiro-Wilk test for the **A2-B1 level** scores is the following: p-value = 0.1124

Since the p-value > 0.5, This means that the A2-B1 data is normally distributed. On the other hand, the following is the result for the Shapiro-wilk test for the C1 level scores.

The result for the Shapiro-Wilk test for the **C1 level** scores is the following: p-value = 0.02237

The above p-value indicates that the C1 level scores are not normally distributed, because the p-value is below 0.05. This confirms our initial observation that the C1 student group is not homogenous, as the participants have different levels of language acquisition. Therefore, a t-test cannot be conducted as it requires the data to be normally distributed, and as we saw, the C1 scores are not.

4.1.5 Testing for significance

In order to find out whether the means of test scores across the two groups of students are significantly different, and in order to decide whether to accept or reject the 2nd null hypothesis:

> 2nd H_0: There is no relationship between students' year of BA studies (as reflected in the CEFR levels they are placed at) and PV awareness.

We had to conduct the non-parametric Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney (or rank sum). As explained earlier in Chapter 2, this test compares between two samples when the distribution is not normal. If a p-value is found less than 0.05 it is considered statistically significant.

The results from Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney (rank sum) test are the following: p-value = 4.232e-09

Here as we can see that the p-value is coming out to be 4.232e-09 which is far less than 0.05. This allows us to reject the 2nd null hypothesis (stated above) and confirm that the two means scored by the two groups of students are significantly different.

The data showed that there was a significant difference between the two levels. The magnitude of the differences means that the C1 level students have more knowledge of the phrasal verbs than the A2-B1 level students.

4.1.6 Average scores for the combined senses of the PVs

The two students' groups showed a great difference in their awareness of PVs as we saw in the previous section. Tables 7 and 8, as well as Figure 3, show a detailed description of the average score obtained by each student group for each PV. Bear in mind that these averages pertain to the overall score obtained for each of the 24 phrasal verbs, each of which has been tested 2 to 4 times in different contexts with different senses. PVs are sorted in terms of the highest to lowest score for each level.

Table 7: A2-B1 average scores.

level A2-B1	
PV	**Average (%)**
Come along	50
Clean up	46.05
Get down	44.73
Bring in	40.8
Break down	38.80
sit back	35.55
turn over	35.5
Pull back	34.2
Hand over	44.7
Move up	34.2
Cut off	33.33

Table 8:A2-B1 average scores.

level C1	
PV	**Average (%)**
Clean up	75
reach out	70
sit back	65
run out	63.75
Cut off	62.5
Break down	61.25
Hand over	60
turn over	57.5
Get down	56.67
Hold back	56.25
Back up	55

Hold back	32.90
stand out	26.35
Back up	31.56
Put out	32.43
set out	28.93
Pay off	28.95
take back	28.95
turn up	27.6
run out	25
reach out	19.75
Give out	22.8
Put up	20.20
take in	18.43

take back	53.75
Pull back	53.75
Bring in	53.75
Come along	52.5
take in	52.5
Put out	50
Put up	50
turn up	48.75
Pay off	48.75
Move up	46.25
Give out	45
stand out	45
set out	36.67

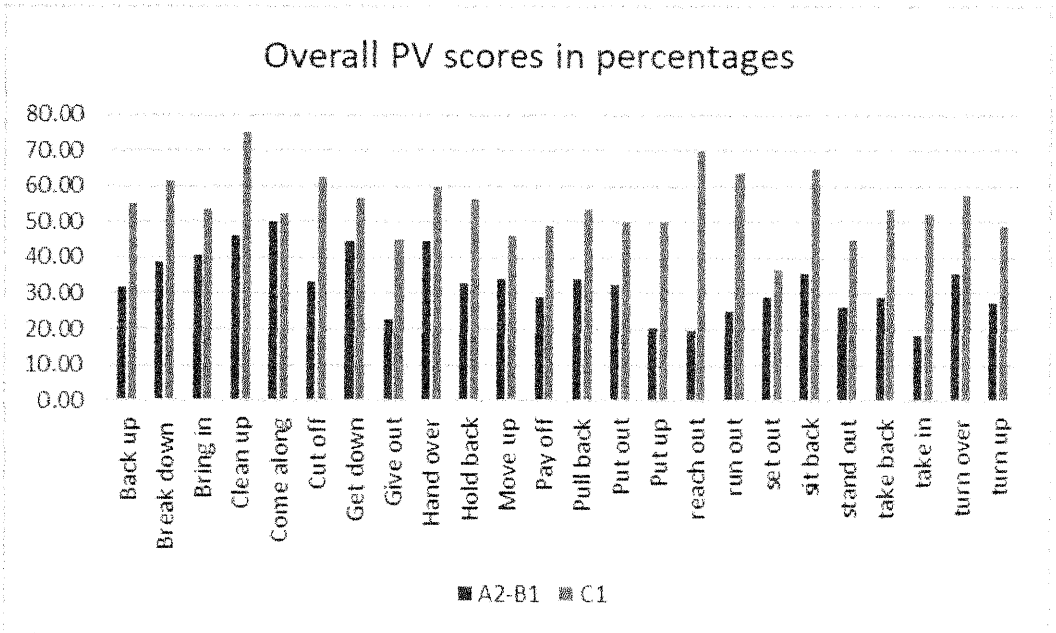


Fig. 3: Overall PV scores in percentages

The data in Figure 3 and Tables 7 and 8 show the PVs used in the test and the performance of the two levels (A2-B1 and C1). It shows that the C1 level were, on average, more familiar with the PVs and had higher scores

than the A2-B1 level. For example, in the phrasal verb reach out the A2-B1 level students have an average score of 19.75% while the C1 level students were more aware of it with an average of 70%. It is clear that there is a significant difference in the performance between the two levels.

The phrasal verb which has the highest score by the A2-B1 level is *come along* with an average score of 51.3% and the lowest score is 20.53% for the phrasal verb *take in*. While in the C1 level students were more familiar with the PV *clean up* with a score of 75% and were less aware of *set out* as they have scored 36.67%. By comparing the two levels, the C1 level students have more knowledge of the PVs as the A2-B1 students faced more challenges.

There are two cases where the A2-B1 students were more familiar with the PVs than the C1 students; the first case is the first meaning of *get down* where they scored 35.9% whereas C1 students scored 30%. The other PV is *come along* in the first frequent meaning, the C1 level had a score of 30% while the A2-B1 level had a score of 46.2%.

4.1.7 Item Analysis per phrasal verb and sense:

In the following section, we will discuss the individual scores per sense of phrasal verb for each level (A2-B1 and C1).

In the following tables, we show the 24 PVs, sorted alphabetically. The two levels of the students can be seen in the second column (A2-B1 and C1 levels) to differentiate between the two in terms of their average scores per PV sense in the test. Each PV has more than one meaning

which can be seen in columns 3-6, starting with the first most frequent meaning according to the American corpus. All the PVs have 2- 4 meanings.

Furthermore, and as mentioned in chapter 3, some of the PVs can have both figurative and literal meanings, which have been indicated in these tables as (F)igurative, and (L)iteral. For example, turn over has two meanings: one figurative, as in sentence (1), and another literal, as in sentence (2):

(1) The criminal decided to **turn** himself **over.** (PV meaning is figurative 'transferred, surrendered')

(2) Put the chicken on the grill and **turn** it **over** a few times. (PV meaning is literal 'bring the bottom to the top or vice versa').

(1) Back up:

Table 9: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb back up

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To move or drive backwards a short way'	2nd most frequent (F) 'take action in order to support STH'	3rd most frequent (F) 'To establish as valid or genuine'
back up	A2-B1	36.8	31.6	26.3
	C1	57.5	40	67.5

By observing the scores, we can see that the participants' knowledge of the different senses varies with regard to frequency as the PV scores per sense across the two levels do not seem to have a clear pattern. The frequency in *back up* for the A2-B1 level participants is: 38.5% ↓30.8% ↓28.2 %. This shows that the A2-B1 level participants were more aware of *back up* first frequent sense (To move or drive backwards a short way)

but had less knowledge of its third frequent meaning. While the C1 level learners were more familiar with the third most frequent meaning (To establish as valid or genuine), followed by the 1st most frequent meaning, then the 2nd most frequent meaning (57.5 ↓ 40 ↑ 67.5). All of these three meanings of *back up* are figurative.

(2) Break down:

Table 10:Average scores in percentages for the 4 different senses of the verb breakdown

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To stop working or functioning; fail or collapse'	2nd most frequent (F) 'To divide or separate into categories or smaller components'	3rd most frequent (F) 'To lose control of one's emotions and yield to tears or distress'	4th most frequent (L) 'To undergo chemical decomposition; separate into different substances'
Break down	A2-B1	44.70	39.5	42.1	28.9
	C1	80	52.5	65	47.5

Similarly, *break down* has four senses: three figurative senses and one literal. Both levels of learners were more familiar with the first most frequent meaning (To stop working or functioning; fail or collapse) and had less knowledge with the 4th meaning. However, the 3rd frequent meaning was more acknowledged by learners than the 2nd frequent meaning. The C1 level has a score of 65% in the 3rd most frequent meaning while 52.5% in the second most frequent meaning. Likewise, the A2-B1 level had a score of 39.5% in the 2nd most frequent meaning and 42.1% in the 3rd.

(3) Bring in:

Table 11: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb bring in

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'To bring STH to a place'	2nd most frequent (F) 'To ask SB to do a particular job or task'
bring in	A2-B1	47.4	34.2
	C1	42.5	65

Bring in has two senses, one literal and one figurative. The lower-level learners were more familiar with the first most frequent sense and less familiar with the second. While the C1 level participants were more aware of the second most frequent sense than the first.

(4) Clean up:

Table 12: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb clean up

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To make STH free from dangerous, unacceptable or controversial activities or contents'	2nd most frequent (L) 'To get rid of dirt or mess'
clean up	A2-B1	50	42.1
	C1	62.5	87.5

Moreover, *clean up* has two meaning senses, the figurative being the most frequent. Learners with A2-B1 level had more knowledge with the first most frequent sense than the second. Whereas the C1 level learners had a better score in the second most frequent sense with a score of 87.5% and 62.5% for the first sense.

(5) Come along:

Table 13:Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb come along

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To appear or arrive; come into existence'	2nd most frequent (L) 'To go somewhere with SB'
come along	A2-B1	44.7	55.3
	C1	30	75

This PV has two senses figurative and literal. The average scores for the A2-B1 level is (44.7% ↑ 55.3%). The C1 level students have a similar score pattern of (62.5% ↑ 87.5%) where learners of both levels were more aware of the second most frequent sense than the first.

(6) Cut off:

Table 14: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb cut off

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'To remove a part of STH by cutting it'	2nd most frequent (F) 'To Interrupt SB as they are speaking'	3rd most frequent (F) 'To end the provision of STH, or be deprived of a provision (electricity, money)'
cut off	A2-B1	50	2.6	47.4
	C1	87.5	25	75

Looking at the table, we can see that the PV has three senses, two figurative and one literal which is the most frequent sense. Both levels of participants had problems with the second most frequent sense with a score of 2.6% for the A2-B1 level and 25% for the C1 level. Furthermore,

the two levels were more familiar with the first most frequent sense and in the second place comes the 3rd frequent sense which were more familiar for students than the second.

(7) Get down:

Table 15: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb get down

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To begin to pay serious attention to STH'	2nd most frequent (L) 'Lower one's body as by kneeling, sitting or lying'	3rd most frequent (L) 'Come down from STH; descend (car, horse, tree)'
get down	A2-B1	34.2	47.4	52.6
	C1	30	77.5	62.5

In this PV, the two levels of learners were less familiar with the first frequent sense with scores of 34.2% for the A2-B1 level and 30% for the C1 level. The literal sense had higher scores of 47.4% in the second frequent sense and even a higher score of 52.6% for the third frequent sense for the lower level. While learners of the C1 level were more aware of the second frequent sense with a score of 77.5%.

(8) Give out:

Table 16: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb give out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Give to each of a large number of people;	2nd most frequent (F) 'Make known openly or publicly; reveal'	3rd most frequent (F) 'Collapse, fail; stop functioning properly (heart, knees)'

		distribute'		
give out	A2-B1	13.2	26.3	28.9
	C1	35	57.5	42.5

There are three senses of *give out,* one literal and two figurative. The literal sense is the first most frequent, yet it has less score for both levels of learners. The scores for the A2-B1 level (13.2 ↑ 26.3% ↑ 28.9%) where the third frequent meaning was more acknowledged by learners than the first. While for the C1 level (35% ↑ 57.5% ↓ 42.5%) Participants were more aware of the 2nd most frequent out of the three senses.

(9) Hand over:

Table 17: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb hand over

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Give STH to SB by holding it in one's hand and offering it to them'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Surrender control or responsibility for STH/SB to SB else, esp. officially'
hand over	A2-B1	52.6	36.8
	C1	65	55

Here, frequency is the predictor, where in both levels the first most frequent sense (To give STH to SB by holding it in one's hand and offering it to them) was more common to students than the second. The literal sense had higher scores of 52.6% for the A2-B1 level and 65% for the C1 level.

(10) Hold back:

Table 18: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb hold back

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Decide not to do or say ST'	2nd most frequent (L) 'Prevent SB/STH from going somewhere'	3rd most frequent (F) 'Contain an unwanted physical manifestation (tears, laughter, sigh, sneeze'
hold back	A2-B1	39.5	26.3	34.2
	C1	70	52.5	47.5

The score in *hold back* for the A2-B1 level participants is: 39.5% ↓26.3% ↑34.3 %. This shows that the A2-B1 level participants were more aware of *hold back* first frequent meaning (Decide not to do or say ST') but had less knowledge with its second frequent meaning. While the C1 level learners were also more aware of the first most common meaning but unlike the A2-B1 level, learners had more knowledge in the 2nd most frequent meaning than the third with their scores being (70% ↓ 52.2% ↓ 47.5%). The PV has two figurative senses and one literal.

(11) Move Up:

Table 19:Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb move up

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Move to a better position; advance to a higher level/rank'	2nd most frequent (L) 'Move upward, from a lower spatial location to a higher one'
move up	A2-B1	31.6	36.8
	C1	40	52.5

Likewise, the PV *move up* has two senses: figurative and literal. Learners of both levels had more knowledge with the 2nd most frequent meaning (Move upward, from a lower spatial location to a higher one) than the first with a score of 36.8% for the A2-B1 level and 52.5% for the C1 level.

(12) Pay off:

Table 20: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb pay off

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Pay the complete amount of STH'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Pay back the effort spent in doing STH by becoming profitable or effective'
pay off	A2-B1	26.3	31.6
	C1	32.5	65

This PV has two figurative senses. Both levels were more familiar with the second most frequent meaning (Pay back the effort spent in doing STH by becoming profitable or effective) with scores for the A2-B1 level (26.3% ↑ 31.6%) and for the C1 level (32.5 ↑ 65%).

(13) Pull Back

Table 21: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb pull back

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Move backwards or make SB/STH move backwards'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Withdraw or retreat from an activity or location, esp. military'
pull back	A2-B1	26.3	42.1
	C1	45	62.5

The PV *pull Back* has two senses, one literal being the first most frequent and the other figurative. Learners were more aware of the 2nd most frequent meaning (Withdraw or retreat from an activity or location, esp. military). The scores of A2-B1 level (26.3% ↑ 42.1%) While the C1 level had a score of (45% ↑ 62.5%).

(14) Put Out:

Table 22: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb put out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Make STH known or accessible to the public (information, products'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Stop STH from burning or shining'	3rd most frequent (L) 'Place STH somewhere in order for it to be seen or used'
put out	A2-B1	28.9	34.2	34.2
	C1	37.5	70	42.5

By looking at the scores, we can see that, the first most frequent meaning (To make STH known or accessible to the public (information, products) was less familiar for students of both levels. The PV has three senses, out of which the 2nd most frequent meaning has the highest score in the C1 level (70%). While for the A2-B1 level, equal awareness for the 2nd most frequent and the third most frequent meaning with a score of (34.2%).

(15) Put Up:

Table 23:Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb put up

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Display or attach STH (e.g. to a wall) so it can be seen'	2nd most frequent (F) ' be willing to accept STH unpleasant or not desirable; tolerate'	3rd most frequent (F) 'Build or place STH somewhere'
put up	A2-B1	21.1	26.3	13.2
	C1	62.5	50	37.5

In addition, the PV *put up* has three senses. The most frequent is literal while the other two figurative. The learners of the C1 level were more familiar with the first most frequent meaning (Display or attach STH (e.g. to a wall) so it can be seen). While the A2-B1 level had more knowledge with the 2nd most frequent meaning (be willing to accept STH unpleasant or not desirable; tolerate). Both levels had problems identifying the 3rd most frequent meaning with scores of 13.2% for the A2-B1 and 37.5% for the C1 level.

(16) Reach Out

Table 24: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb reach out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Stretch an arm in order to hold, touch, or get STH that is within short distance'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Make an effort to address or communicate with SB, so as to help them or involve them in STH'
reach out	A2-B1	15.8	23.7
	C1	75	65

We can see that *reach out* has two senses; literal and figurative. The scores for the A2-B1 level are (15.8 % ↑ 23.7%) where they were more familiar with the second most frequent meaning (Make an effort to address or communicate with SB, so as to help them or involve them in STH). Whereas the C1 level had scores of (75% ↓ 65%) as they were more aware of the 1st most frequent meaning (Stretch an arm in order to hold, touch, or get STH that is within short distance).

(17) Run Out

Table 25: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb run out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Use STH (or become used) completely so that nothing is left'	2nd most frequent (L) 'Leave suddenly, as if in a hurry'
run out	A2-B1	21.1	28.9
	C1	85	42.5

Moreover, this PV has two senses. The figurative sense being the first most frequent. The A2-B1 level were more familiar with the literal sense with a score of 28.9% (Leave suddenly, as if in a hurry). While the C1 level had higher score in the first most frequent meaning 85% (Use STH (or become used) completely so that nothing is left).

(18) Set Out

Table 26: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb set out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Start doing or working on STH, esp. with a particular goal in mind'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Start a journey'	3rd most frequent (F) 'Explain or present STH clearly, esp. officially and in writing'
set out	A2-B1	18.4	39.5	28.9
	C1	27.5	47.5	35

This PV has three figurative senses. The second most frequent meaning has the highest score (To start a journey) as it was the most identified sense out of the three. With a score of 39% for the A2-B1 level and

47.5% for the C1 level. The first most frequent meaning (Start doing or working on STH, esp. with a particular goal in mind) was less identified by the learners.

(19) Sit Back

Table 27: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb sit back

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Rest in a comfortable position against the back of a seat'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Deliberately take no action/remain passive about STH'
sit back	A2-B1	31.6	39.5
	C1	62.5	67.5

We can see the scores for the PV sit back for the A2-B1 level (31.6% ↑ 39.5%). While for the C1 level (62.5% ↑ 67.5%). Learner of both levels were more familiar with the 2nd most frequent meaning (Deliberately take no action/remain passive about STH). While learners were less aware of the literal first most frequent sense (Rest in a comfortable position against the back of a seat).

(20) Stand Out

Table 28: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb stand out

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Distinguish oneself/itself by being better, more significant or more impressive than other people/things'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Be easily seen or noticeable'
stand out	A2-B1	21.1	31.6
	C1	35	55

The PV *Stand Out* has two senses both of which are figurative. Learners of the two levels were more aware of the 2nd most frequent meaning (Be easily seen or noticeable). With scores of 31.6% for the A2-B1 level and 55% for the C1 level, while the first most frequent meaning (Distinguish oneself/itself by being better, more significant or more impressive than other people/things) was less identified with scores of 35% for the C1 and 21.1% for the A2-B1 level.

(21) Take Back

Table 29: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the take back

PV	Level	1st most frequent (L) 'Take STH/SB to a place they were in before'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Regain possession or control over STH'
take back	A2-B1	31.6	26.3
	C1	35	72.5

By looking at the table, the PV *take back* has two senses, literal and figurative. The A2-B1 level has scores of (31.6% ↓ 26.3%). While the C1 level's scores (35% ↓ 72.5%). As both levels were more aware of the first most frequent meaning (To take STH/SB to a place they were in before).

(22) Take In

Table 30: Average scores in percentages for the 3 different senses of the verb take in

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Provide a place for SB to live or stay'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Fully understand or grasp the meaning of	3rd most frequent (F) 'Deceive by behaving in a dishonest way'

			STH'	
take in	A2-B1	7.9	13.2	34.2
	C1	50	57.5	50

This PV has three figurative senses. The scores for the A2-B1 level are (7.9% ↑ 13.2% ↑ 34.2%) where the first most frequent meaning (Provide a place for SB to live or stay) was less recognized by learners. Whereas the C1 level has scores of (50% ↑ 57.5% ↓ 50%). Where learners were more aware of the second most frequent meaning (Fully understand or grasp the meaning of STH).

(23) Turn Over

Table 31: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb turn over

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'Surrender possession or control to SB/STH (esp. in authority)'	2nd most frequent (L) 'Change position so that the other side is facing towards the outside or the top, or another direction'
turn over	A2-B1	52.6	18.4
	C1	60	55

Frequency in this PV plays an important role, where the first most frequent meaning (Surrender possession or control to SB/STH (esp. in authority)) was more identified by learners of both levels. Whereas learners were less aware of the second most frequent meaning (Change position so that the other side is facing towards the outside or the top, or another direction). The scores for the A2-B1 level (52% ↓ 18.4%) while the C1 level has similar scores of (60% ↓ 55%).

(24) Turn Up

Table 32: Average scores in percentages for the 2 different senses of the verb turn up

PV	Level	1st most frequent (F) 'To Yield; be (or make STH be) found, discovered, or noticed'	2nd most frequent (F) 'Increase the volume or level of STH'
turn up	A2-B1	18.4	36.8
	C1	45	52.5

Turn up has two senses, both are figurative. Both levels of learners were more familiar with the second most frequent sense (Increase the volume or level of STH). With scores of 36% for the A2-B1 level and 52.5% for the C1 level. The first most frequent sense was less identified with scores of 18.4% for the A2-B1 level and 45% for the C1.

Summary of the item analysis

The following table summarizes the results discussed above with regards to whether or not students at each level were able to score the highest with respect to the most frequent meaning of each phrasal verb.

Table 33: Summary of the results obtained from item analysis with regards to test scores and highly frequent senses per verb

Phrasal verb	**A2-B1 level students scoring highest for the most frequent meaning**	**C1 level students scoring highest for the most frequent meaning**
1. Back up	yes	no
2. Break down	yes	yes
3. Bring in	yes	no

4. Clean up	yes	no
5. Come along	no	no
6. Cut off	yes	yes
7. Get down	no	no
8. Give out	no	no
9. Hand over	yes	yes
10. hold back	yes	yes
11. Move up	no	no
12. Pay off	no	no
13. Pull back	no	no
14. Put out	no	no
15. Put up	no	yes
16. Reach out	no	yes
17. Run out	no	yes
18. Set out	no	no
19. Sit back	no	no
20. Stand out	no	no
21. Take back	yes	no
22. Take in	no	no
23. Turn Over	yes	Yes
24. Turn Up	no	no

The first column of the table shows the 24 PVs used in the test, while the other two columns show whether the students scored higher for the most frequent meaning (yes) or not (no). It is clear, from the previous detailed item analysis, that, overall, the most frequent meaning was not always the meaning scored highest by the students.

As far as whether or not the students scored higher for figurative/literal senses, our test included 38 literal and 22 figurative meaning senses, it's clear from previous and item analysis, that there was no clear pattern

regarding whether students were more able to recognize literal or figurative meanings, mostly because there is no clear pattern which meaning (literal or figurative) is the most frequent. Out of the 24 PVs, the C1 participants had more knowledge of the literal senses than the figurative sense in 9 PVs like (reach out, bring in, give out). However, the figurative meaning senses were more familiar for learners and were better understood than literal ones. This finding in itself is quite fascinating, and we will come back to it in the discussion section in this chapter.

4.1.8 Factors affecting PVs knowledge:

To answer our second research question which is (Which of the following factors affect the learners' knowledge of PVs the most: (Social networking in English, listening to music and watching TV in English, reading in English, verb frequency in an English corpus?) The data from the questionnaire was analyzed using a correlation test (Pearson correlation coefficient) to investigate the factors affecting the learners' knowledge of PVs. A correlation test is a bivariate analysis which measures the strength of association between two variables and the direction of the relationship (i.e., positive or negative) Values can range from 0.00 (no correlation) to 1.00 (perfect positive correlation) or –1.00 (perfect negative correlation). We are well aware of the fact that correlation does not necessarily imply causation. The main objective of using the correlation test here is to find if there is an association between the four variables and knowledge of PVs.

In the questionnaire that preceded the test, students were asked to provide some background information regarding their native language and then they were asked to write the approximate time they think they spend doing the aforementioned variables. Some data points were eliminated in the test, as some students did not provide a numerical value (indicating

how many hours a week they spend reading/social networking/watching TV/listening to music). Example of eliminated answers: all the time, 24/7, all day.

The following sections discuss results obtained from the correlation tests conducted for each variable.

4.1.8.1 Reading

The first set of questions aimed to find out how many hours students spend reading in English. To examine the correlation between reading and PVs percentage from the questionnaire, the following tables show the correlation between score (in percentage) and hours reading in English. There is a clear positive correlation between reading and students' score for both levels. To examine the correlation of each level clearly, the following tables show the A2-B1 and C1 correlation between score and reading.

Table 34: A2-B1 correlation between score and hours reading in English.

	A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent reading in English
A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent reading in English	0.581574287	1

Table 35: C1 correlation between score and hours reading in English.

	C1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent reading in English
C1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent reading in English	0.403709623	1

Based on the analysis, it is revealed that the A2-B1 level showed a moderate correlation between students' scores and hours spent reading which was marked with a correlation coefficient of 0.581. While the C1 level showed a relatively lower value with a correlation coefficient of 0.403.

4.1.8.2 Watching TV

Second, we have examined the correlation between hours spent watching shows in English and learners' score, which can be seen in the following tables.

Table 36:A2-B1 correlation between score and hours watching TV in English.

	A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent watching TV in English
A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent watching T.V in English	0.668782909	1

Table 37:C1 correlation between score and hours watching TV in English.

	C1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent watching T.V in English
C1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent watching T.V in English	0.295456087	1

Similarly, there is a positive correlation between hours spent watching TV in English and students score of both levels.

The test revealed an also moderate correlation coefficient of 0.668 in the A2-B1 level between their scores and hours spent watching TV. While in the C1 level the analysis showed a low correlation coefficient of 0.295.

4.1.8.3 Listening to music

Another factor which was tested is hours spent listening to music in English and learners' knowledge of PVs. The following table shows the correlation between students' score of the two levels and hours spent listening to music.

Table 38: A2-B1 correlation between score and hours listening to music in English.

	A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent listening to music in English
A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent listening to music in English	0.108818086	1

Table 39: C1 correlation between score and hours listening to music in English.

	C1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent listening to music in English
C1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent listening to music in English	-0.064842308	1

There is barely any correlation between hours spent listening to music in English and students score. The correlation coefficient is estimated at

0.108 in the A2-B1 level, while the C1 level showed a negative correlation of –0.064.

4.1.8.4 Social networking

The last factor is hours spent using social media in English. The following table shows the correlation between hours spent social networking in English and students' scores of A2-B1 and C1 levels.

Table 40: A2-B1 Correlation between score and hours spent on social media in English.

	A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent on social media in English
A2-B1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent on social media in English	0.031321388	1

Table 41:C1 Correlation between score and hours spent on social media in English.

	C1 students' scores in percentage	Hours spent on social media in English
C1 students' scores in percentage	1	
Hours spent on social media in English	0.161869924	1

The results in Table 40 show almost no correlation between hours spent social networking in English and the A2-B1 level scores, with a correlation coefficient of 0.03, while the C1 level results show a slightly higher, yet still low positive correlation of 0.161 between scores of C1 level students and hours spent social networking in English.

4.2 Discussion:

In this study we examined the factors affecting knowledge and acquisition of phrasal verbs. The main objectives of this research were:

- To assess whether EFL learners in Bahrain are aware of the different meanings of highly frequent and polysemous PVs.
- To investigate if EFL learners in Bahrain can interpret the meanings of polysemous PVs from context.
- To identify the factors that play an important role in the learner's acquisition of the different uses of frequent PVs.

Students' writings were examined to check whether or not they are familiar with phrasal verbs in their writing. 78 college students placed at two levels of the CEFR (A2-B1 and C1 level) participated in our study. We have conducted both a PV test and a questionnaire to look into the impact of learner's personal exposure and frequency in the acquisition of PVs. Some previous studies related to the present study were also examined and compared with the results of our present study to identify the factors that make phrasal verbs problematic to learners of English.

The following were the null hypotheses adopted for this study:

1st H_0: Learners have no knowledge of phrasal verbs.

2nd H_0: There is no relationship between students' year of BA studies (as reflected in the CEFR levels they are placed at) and PV awareness.

3rd H_0: There is no significant correlation between the suggested variables in the study (reading, listening to music, social networking and watching TV) and awareness of PVs.

4th H_0: Lexical frequency is not a predictor of knowledge of PVs.

In the following sections, we will discuss each of these hypotheses in light of our results and discuss whether these hypotheses need to be accepted or rejected.

4.2.1 The use of PVs in students' writing

As mentioned earlier, the use of PVs is frequently considered a sign of fluency in English. PVs are rather polysemous and can be used in both formal and informal registers. As we saw in 4.1.1 students of the higher level (C1) were found to use more PVs than the A2-B1 level in their academic writing, which shows that those students have better command of the English language. By looking at the essays produced by students and in order to decide whether to accept or reject the 1st null hypothesis:

1st H0: Learners have no knowledge of phrasal verbs.

It is clear from the students' writings that they have some knowledge of phrasal verbs. Which allows us to reject the 1st null hypothesis. As students of the two levels have some knowledge of PVs. The results obtained in that section also allow us to examine the 2nd null hypothesis:

2nd H_0: There is no relationship between students' year of BA studies (as reflected in the CEFR levels they are placed at) and PV awareness.

Based on the results, the C1 level students use more PVs 0.002 of the time in writing while the A2-B1 level students use them 0.001 of the time. This allows us to reject the 2nd hypothesis as there is a relationship between students' level and their knowledge of phrasal verbs.

4.2.2 Knowledge of polysemous PVs

The purpose of this study is to see how well EFL learners are aware of polysemous phrasal verbs. The results of the PV test show that the participants of A2-B1 had a mean score of 31.97% while the mean achieved by the C1 level students is 54.21%. This shows that the two levels of students do have some knowledge of polysemous PVs which allows us to again reject the 1st null hypothesis:

1st H0: Learners have no knowledge of phrasal verbs.

4.2.3 The relationship between knowledge of polysemous PVs and English language proficiency level

Moreover, our study was able to investigate the overall scores of PVs test for the two levels of participants (A2-B1 and C1 levels.) The PV test has also revealed that learners have problems understanding some PVs even common ones used in everyday settings. The test scores of the participants were mostly between 25-60 out of 100 for the two levels which shows that many of these phrasal verbs are challenging for learners. A useful finding is that language proficiency level played an important role in learners' understanding of PVs. Learners with higher level (C1 language level) showed better understanding of PVs with an average score of 54.21 in comparison to the lower level A2-B1 of language proficiency with an average of 33.42. So, proficiency level (as reflected in the CEFR levels students are assigned to) played an important role in our study. As it was found that students from a higher CEFR level (C1) have more knowledge of phrasal verbs than the lower A2-B1 level. The data and the analysis showed a significant difference between the two levels. All of this, allows us to reject the 2nd null hypothesis:

2^{nd} H_0: There is no relationship between students' English language proficiency level (as reflected in the CEFR levels they are placed at) and PV awareness.

4.2.4 Awareness of frequent PVs

The multiple-choice phrasal verb test allowed us to investigate the effect of lexical frequency on awareness of PV usage.

In this research we have taken frequency of PVs into account to evaluate the effectiveness on learners. Based on the results of the analysis, it is found that frequency cannot determine how participants are aware of PVs. There were some cases where frequency was a predictor of knowledge. However, in many cases frequency did not seem to predict the participants awareness of PVs in which they were more familiar with the second or third frequent meaning than the first.

Garnier and Schmitt (2016), on the other hand, found the opposite as corpus frequency was found to be the best predictor of PV knowledge. Their results showed that 40% of the PVs senses on average were known to learners. Our data analysis allows us to accept the 4^{th} null hypothesis:

4^{th} H_0: Lexical frequency is not a predictor of knowledge of PVs.

What this means is that it is clear that lexical frequency was not a predictor of PV knowledge. The first most frequent sense is not always the sense that learners are more familiar with. As the second or third sense are sometimes the most common to learners.

4.2.5 Factors affecting students' knowledge of PVs

To determine the effect of several factors, like (reading, social networking, watching shows and listening to music in English) on PV knowledge, a questionnaire was included in our study, which asks the students to write down the number of hours spent doing various activities in English. Results obtained from a correlation test between overall scores per level and each of these variables helped us decide whether to accept or reject the 3rd null hypothesis:

3rd H_0: There is no significant correlation between the suggested variables in the study (reading, listening to music, social networking and watching TV) and awareness of PVs.

The results showed that there is a moderate positive correlation between hours spent reading and students' test scores, as well as hours spent watching TV and students' test scores. This allows us to reject part of the the 3rd null hypothesis related to better knowledge of PVs and reading and watching TV in English.

On the other hand, no correlation was found between listening to music, or social networking and students' test scores. This allows us to accept the 3rd null hypothesis.

As it shows, reading helps to increase vocabulary, the more a learner spends reading the more vocabulary they gain. It is predicted, therefore, that learners who spend more time reading will be more familiar with PVs.

Watching TV also promotes diverse and engaging exposure to everyday informal speech, this could help learners in acquiring L2 vocabulary thus being familiar with PVs.

Even when it comes to social networking using the L2, as it prompts the use of informal spoken language and therefore learners may have more knowledge of PVs. This is a form of language engagement that makes language more engaging and personal, and perhaps even facilities learning.

The same goes for listening to music as it does not require much attention or concentration. As a result, learners won't focus nor understand vocabulary as lyrics will be hard to make out even for native speakers. As far as results obtained in Garnier and Schmitt (2016), the researchers found that time spent reading and social networking in English have a great effect on students' knowledge of PVs, while no relationship was found between hours spent listening to music, watching TV in English and knowledge of phrasal verbs.

4.2.6 Literal vs. Figurative PVs

We found no clear pattern with regard to whether students (at either level) were able to identify a PV in its literal meaning more than in its figurative meaning, or vice versa. There were several patterns of responses as we could see in the item analysis:

(1) Both levels of students were able to identify a PV's literal sense more than its figurative sense:

Some examples from the item analysis where both levels of students figured out the literal sense more than the figurative is the PV *come along*. The sentence in the test was: 'We're going to the cinema tonight; you should *come along* with us'. The C1 level has an average of 75% in recognizing the figurative sense of the PV (as opposed to 30% for the figurative sense) while the A2-B1 level has a score of 55.3% for the literal sense (as opposed to 44.7% for the figurative sense). Interestingly, the figurative sense of that PV happened to be its most frequent sense.

(2) Both levels of students were able to identify a PV's figurative sense more than its literal sense:

In other cases, students were more familiar with the figurative sense of certain PVs than they were with their literal senses An example from the PV test is *pull back* 'The army was forced to *pull back* due to bad weather.' Both levels of students recognized the figurative sense with 42.1% for the A2-B1 level (as opposed to 26.3% for the literal sense) and 62.5% in the C1 level (as opposed to 45% for the literal sense). Another example is found in *sit back:* 'We won't just *sit back* and watch the situation getting worse and worse' The A2-B1 level scored 39.5% in recognizing the figurative sense of the PV (as opposed to 31.6% for the literal sense) while the C1 level scored 67.5% (as opposed to 62.5% for the literal sense). Also interestingly, for both PVs it was the literal sense that was the most frequent sense in each case.

(3) Mixed results among higher and lower-level students

On the other hand, we found mixed results among the students across the two levels with regards to their knowledge of literal or figurative senses of certain PVs. In the item analysis test, the literal sense of the PV *clean up* 'Make sure you *clean up* your room because I won't do it for you.' is

more recognized by the C1 level with a score of 87% (as opposed to 62.5% for the figurative sense), while the A2-B1 level students recognized the figurative sense with a score of 50% 'He was asked to clean up his language during the interview.' (as opposed to 42.% of the literal sense.) In the case of this PV, the literal sense happened to be the 2nd most frequent meaning, after the figurative sense.

These findings are enlightening in their own right, and show a discrepancy between students at the lower level and those at the higher level with respect to using PVs literally or idiomatically/figuratively. As an English as a Foreign Language learner and instructor in Bahrain, and based on my experience, we EFL learners were always taught the simple, mono lexical verbs when using them in their literal senses such as: *go, come, sit, stand* instead of *go away, come on, sit down,* or *stand up*. On the other hand, more emphasis is given to the idiomatic uses of PVs, which explains why the lower-level students showed a tendency to be more aware of the idiomatic meaning of *put up with* than the literal sense of *put* up. At the same time, idiomatically/figuratively used PVs have non-compositional meanings which makes these too highly difficult for EFL learners. These are some reasons EFL learners always find PVs to be challenging and avoid using them despite the fact that they are very commonly used by native speakers.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

This study attempted to offer answers to the questions posed in chapter 1. EFL learners in Bahrain have some knowledge of phrasal verbs which was evident in their writings and their scores of the phrasal verbs test which was conducted in the study. The C1 level students, however, have more knowledge with phrasal verbs than the A2-B1 students. Nevertheless, both groups of students have relatively low knowledge of phrasal verbs. The phrasal verbs in the test were divided into two types of senses, literal and figurative/idiomatic. There was no clear pattern as to whether the students managed to identify more PVs with literal senses than PVs with figurative senses, and vice versa. Moreover, corpus frequency was not found to predict knowledge of PVs along with hours spent listening to music and social networking in English. While a positive correlation is found between hours spent reading and hours spent watching T.V in English and students' knowledge of PVs. This research provides a better understanding of how English phrasal verbs can have multiple meanings which poses a challenge for the learners of the language and because of these complexities, they should not be overlooked by the learners or the language instructors. Not only in Bahrain, but many Arab researchers has investigated the challenges posed by EFL learners in using phrasal verbs as it has been shown in the literature review. The overview of English phrasal verbs and the difficulties faced by EFL earners is discussed and analyzed in previous studies. Although phrasal verbs have proven to be difficult not only for

5.2 Recommendations

Phrasal verbs are considered a crucial part of the English lexical inventory. They are very common in everyday communication, which makes them necessary for learning and mastering the language. Unfortunately, many learners struggle with PVs and are unaware of the correct uses of phrasal verbs.

After analyzing and investigating students' awareness of phrasal verbs, we recommend the following:

1. Students should be taught complex verbal phrases in their literal as well as figurative or idiomatic senses.
2. Students should be encouraged to spend more time reading in English and keeping note of phrasal verbs they encounter.
3. Students should be encouraged to spend more time listening to native speakers through watching tv, music and social networks.
4. Students should be encouraged to expand their learning activities beyond the classroom and continue to learn the contextual uses of phrasal verbs through different means such social networking in English and games.

The investigations conducted for this thesis have identified a number of additional areas for further research including:

1. Investigating English teaching textbooks to see how learners are taught and to what extent textbook material affects their knowledge of PVs.
2. Conduct a corpus-based study of students writing and therefore expand on the preliminary study discussed in this thesis, as a means of identifying further issues related to acquisition and use of PVs among EFL learners.

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Appendices

1) Phrasal verbs questionnaire

Part One

In order to help us better understand and interpret your score, we would like to know a little about you and your experience as a language learner. Please provide answers to the following question.

2. Is your native language Arabic? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

3. Do you have more than one native language (that is, did you learn more than one language from your parents when you were a child)? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

4. If you answered the previous question with (yes) please write the name of your second native language.

5. At what age did you start learning English? *

6. Were you in a: *

Mark only one oval.

- Private school
- Public School
- Both

7. If you answered 'both', please specify the years you spent in each system:

8. What English language course are you taking now? *

Check all that apply.

- ENGLR Level 1 (orientation level 1, ENGLR 001, 002 003)
- ENGLR Level 2 (orientation level 2, ENGLR 004, 005 006)
- ENGL 106
- ENGL123
- ENGL128
- ENGL221
- ENGL205
- ENGL305
- ENGL405

9. How many hours per week do you spend: Reading books, magazines and newspapers in English or visiting English language websites? *

10. How many hours per week do you spend: Watching films, videos or TV in English? *

11. How many hours per week do you spend: Listening to music in English? *

12. How many hours per week do you spend:Social networking in English (Whatsapp, Snapchat, Facebook, MySpace,Twitter, Skype, email, etc.)? *

2) Phrasal verbs test

Part Two: Read each sentence carefully, and then choose the suitable preposition. (We have given a definition for each phrasal verb after every sentence.) Please make sure you read each definition carefully.

For Example:

I didn't think he would bring ___ the subject. (mention, introduce) o in
- o out
- o up

Answer:
- o up

13. He got into his car and backed ___ until he reached the street. (drove backwards a short way, retreated) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- up
- out

14. It will take a dozen years for him to pay ___ his debts. (clear) *

Mark only one oval.

- off
- back
- over

15. She turned around to hand ___ her keys to her husband. (give, present) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- in
- over

16. Let's break ___ the task into three easy steps. (divide) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- into
- out

17. The family took her ___ when she was abandoned by her parents. (accommodated, sheltered) *

Mark only one oval.

- apart
- in
- away

18. She held ___ the laughter with great effort. (contained, repressed) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- on
- back

19. The teacher cut ___ the student in the middle of her sentence. (interrupted abruptly) *

Mark only one oval.

- off
- back
- out

20. The search turned ___ solid evidence against him. (yielded, revealed) *

Mark only one oval.

- in
- down
- up

21. All the hard work will pay ___ in the end. (be worth it, reward) *

Mark only one oval.

- on
- off
- over

22. Our car broke ___ yesterday. (stopped working) *

Mark only one oval.

- away
- into
- down

23. The criminal decided to turn himself ___ . (transferred, surrendered) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- off
- over

24. After the argument, she ran ___ into the garden and screamed. (left suddenly/in a hurry) *

Mark only one oval.

- around
- out
- off

25. The fire has finally been put ___. (extinguished) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- out
- across

26. The storm cut ___ electricity from the entire town. (ended the provision of) *

Mark only one oval.

- across
- back
- off

27. I've put ___ glasses and a bottle of water. (displayed, made ready for use) *

Mark only one oval.

- out
- off
- up

28. She reached ___ for the empty jar on the table. (stretched an arm so as to grab) *

Mark only one oval.

- around
- out
- through

29. Excellent product quality is what made the brand stand ___ from its competitors. (distinguish itself by being better) *

Mark only one oval.

- by
- up
- out

30. You have to back ___ your accusations with solid evidence. (prove, establish as true) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- off
- up

31. You cannot let a few unmotivated pupils hold ___ the rest of the group. (limit potential) *

Mark only one oval.

- from
- back
- on

32. You should be more careful and not give ___ your phone number so easily. * (reveal)

Mark only one oval.

- in
- off
- out

33. I didn't expect such an opportunity to come ___. (appear, arrive) *

Mark only one oval.

- across
- along
- over

34. People often fail to back ___ their words with actions. (support) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- down
- into

35. They had to use a forklift to move the containers ___. (raised, lifted) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- up
- out

36. The manager has put ___ a job advertisement in the newspaper. (issued, broadcast) *

Mark only one oval.

- out
- down
- up

37. After dinner, we took her ___ to her house. (returned) *

Mark only one oval.

- in
- away
- back

38. We set __ for San Francisco on the following day. (left, departed) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- away
- out

39. Digestion breaks ___ substances into small molecules. (decomposes) *

Mark only one oval.

- into
- down
- away

40. They put ___ a few posters on the wall. (displayed, attached) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- in
- over

41. I had to hand ___ my bag to the robbers to avoid being shot at. (surrender, yield) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- over
- on

42. The committee gave ___ more than 100 copies in the last meeting. (distributed) *

Mark only one oval.

- out
- back
- up

43. He was asked to clean ___ his language during the interview. (make more acceptable/appropriate) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- up
- off

44. Get ___ on your knees so you can get a better view. (lower body) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- over
- in

45. Flashing lights make planes stand ___ at night. (be easily seen or noticed) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- out
- up

46. Unfortunately we've run ___ of biscuits. (used completely) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- by
- out

47. You have to explain more thoroughly; it's too difficult to take ___. (understand) *

Mark only one oval.

- apart
- in
- back

48. The army was forced to pull ___ due to bad weather. (withdraw) *

Mark only one oval.

- ahead
- apart
- back

49. This beauty company tries to reach __ to both young and middle-aged customers. (address, communicate with) *

Mark only one oval.

- in
- out
- for

50. They should not hold ___ from joining us if they want to. (refrain) *

Mark only one oval.

- back
- into
- out

51. I brought ____ my laptop today because my office computer is broken. (took to a place) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- down
- in

52. She pulled ___ the curtains so the light could come into the room. (move backwards)

Mark only one oval.

- ahead
- off
- back

53. He turned ___ to the meeting half an hour late. (arrived, appeared) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- over
- in

54. We're going to the cinema tonight; you should come ___ with us! (join) *

Mark only one oval.

- through
- along
- across

55. We should get ___ to discussing those issues as soon as possible. (start paying attention)

Mark only one oval.

- up
- down
- at

56. Take the carrots and cut the ends ___. (remove) *

Mark only one oval.

- off
- in
- up

57. We won't just sit ___ and watch the situation getting worse and worse. (take no action) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- back
- about

58. My mother told me that I need to take ___ control of my life. (regain possession of) *

Mark only one oval.

- back
- apart
- away

59. She set ___ to discover the truth behind the story. (undertook, began with a definite purpose) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- in
- out

60. He loves climbing trees but finds it hard to get ___. (descend) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- out
- over

61. They've put ___ a new fence after the previous one fell apart. (built) *

Mark only one oval.

- on
- up
- out

62. He broke ___ at his son's funeral. (yielded to tears or distress) *

Mark only one oval.

- down
- into
- through

63. The dam was not strong enough to hold ___ the flood waters. (stop) *

Mark only one oval.

- into
- back
- on

64. Make sure you clean ___ your room because I won't do it for you. (tidy) *

Mark only one oval.

- in
- down
- up

65. Put the chicken on the grill and turn it ___ a few times. (bring the bottom to the top or vice versa) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- through
- in

66. At 95 years of age, her heart finally gave ___. (collapsed, failed) *

Mark only one oval.

- over
- away
- out

67. She moved ___ from secretary to senior manager in just a few years. (advanced, progressed) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- on
- out

68. He had been brought ___ to save the company. (involved in a situation, introduced) *

Mark only one oval.

- about
- in
- off

69. She sat ___ in her chair and turned on the TV. (settled, rested) *

Mark only one oval.

- about
- over
- back

70. I won't put ___ with your bad behaviour for much longer. (tolerate) *

Mark only one oval.

- up
- in
- out

71. He was very convincing, so I was easily taken ___. (deceived) *

Mark only one oval.

- out
- in
- about

72. The official recommendations were set ___ in the document. (explained, described) *

Mark only one oval.

- about
- out
- aside

3) University of Bahrain Research Request Form

UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN
Vice President Office for
Community Service & Alumni Affairs

جامعة البحرين
مكتب نائب الرئيس
لخدمة المجتمع وشؤون الخريجين

حضرة الفاضلة الدكتورة دانة عبدالرحيم المحترم

كلية الاداب

الموضوع: تعهد الطالبة أميرة أحمد عيسى ، رقم جامعي 20111779 للاستبانة المقدمة

فبالاشاره الي طلبكم الموافقه على الاستبانات الخاصه بطالبة الدراسات العليا وتعهداتهم الالتزام
بانظمه جامعه البحرين وبالتالي الالتزام باستمارة الطالب والمشرف التي وافقت عليها عمادة
الدراسات العليا وتم توقيع سعادة عميد كلية الاداب

فانه يطيب لي افادتكم علما بانه ليس لدى اللجنه مانع من اجراء المسح للطالبة اميره احمد
عيسى ، رقم جامعي : 20111779 باشرافكم .

هذا ما لزم وتفضلو بقبول وافر الشكر والتقدير

الدكتور محمد رضا	الدكتوره لمياء الجسمي	الدكتور محمد الانصاري
عميد الدراسات العليا والبحث العلمي	عميد كليه تقنيه المعلومات	نائب الرئيس لخدمة المجتمع وشئون الخريجين
التوقيع	التوقيع	التوقيع

نسخة الى:
سعادة عميد كلية الاداب – الدكتور عبدالعزيز بوليلة

P.O. Box : 32038 - Kingdom of Bahrain
Tel. : (+973) 17435008
Fax : (+973) 17449693
E-mail: malansari@uob.edu.bh

صندوق بريد: ٣٢٠٣٨ - مملكة البحرين
هاتف: ١٧٤٣٥٠٠٨ (٩٧٣+)
فاكس: ١٧٤٤٩٦٩٣ (٩٧٣+)
البريد الإلكتروني: malansari@uob.edu.bh

الملخص

يتناول هذا البحث مدى وعي ومعرفة طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بالأفعال المركبة متعددة المعاني، ومدى تأثير عدد من العوامل (الساعات التي يتم قضاؤها في القراءة والاستماع إلى الأغاني ومشاهدة التلفزيون وقنوات التواصل الاجتماعية باللغة الإنجليزية) على معرفة الطلاب بهذه الأفعال. تم استخدام ثلاث أدوات لجمع البيانات: (1) كتابات الطلاب، (2) اختبار يحتوي على 24 فعل من الأفعال المركبة متعددة المعاني، و (3) استبيان. تم اختيار 78 طالبا من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية من مستويين مختلفين من مستويات الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي العام للغات هما -A1 B2 وC1 لحل اختبار الأفعال المركبة والاستبيان. تم تحليل البيانات التي حصلنا عليها تحليلا نوعيا وكميا. تظهر النتائج أن الطلاب من المستويين لا يستخدمون الأفعال المركبة بشكل كاف في كتاباتهم. حيث تظهر نتائج الاختبار أن متوسط درجات طلاب المستوى A2-B1 هو 31.97% بينما حصل طلاب C1 على نتيجة 54.21%، مما يشير إلى أن مستوى إتقان اللغة هو عامل كبير لتحديد معرفة الأفعال المركبة. ووجدنا أن مقدار ترديد الكلمة في المكنز ليس عاملا مؤثرا على مدى معرفة الطلبة للأفعال المركبة حيث لم يتمكن الطلبة في الاختبار من تحديد معنى الأفعال المركبة الأكثر شيوعا. وقد أظهر تحليل البيانات من الاستبيان وجود علاقة إيجابية متوسطة إلى منخفضة بين الساعات التي يقضيها الطلبة في القراءة ومشاهدة التلفزيون ومعرفتهم بالأفعال المركبة متعددة المعاني، ومع ذلك لم يتم العثور على مثل هذه العلاقة بين قضاء ساعات في منصات التواصل الاجتماعي والاستماع إلى الأغاني مع معرفة الطلاب بهذه الأفعال. لم يكن هناك نمط واضح فيما يتعلق بما إذا كان الطلاب أكثر وعيًا بالصيغة الحرفية مقابل الصيغة الحرفية/الاصطلاحية في الأفعال المركبة. حيث تكشف الدراسة أن الأفعال المركبة تمثل تحديًا للمتعلمين بسبب طبيعتها متعددة المعاني، مما يتطلب اهتمامًا إضافيًا من قبل كل من المعلمين والمتعلمين.

جامعة البحرين

كلية الآداب

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

الوعي بالأفعال المركبة متعددة المعاني من قبل طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

بحث تكميلي مقدم لنيل درجة الماجستير في الدراسات التطبيقية في اللغة الانجليزية

إعداد

أميرة أحمد عيسى

٢٠١١١٧٧٩

إشراف

الدكتورة دانة عبدالله عبدالرحيم

أستاذ مساعد

جامعة البحرين

مملكة البحرين

يونيو / ٢٠٢٢