

Productive and Receptive Knowledge and Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs: The Case of Saudi Learners of English

Ahmed Alhassani

Assistant Professor, PhD in Applied linguistics, King Abdullah Air Defense
College, Saudi Arabia
alhassani2002@gmail.com

Abstract

Recent studies in different parts of the world generally agree that multi-word expressions, including phrasal verbs (PVs), present difficulties for many language learners. The present study not only examines productive and receptive knowledge of PVs among Saudi undergraduates learning English as a foreign language, but also examines learners' avoidance behavior in the use of PVs. To achieve this, a total of 209 Saudi undergraduates in Saudi universities completed three multiple-choice (MC) tasks to assess their productive and receptive skills, and to measure their PV avoidance behavior. In addition, it investigates the factors that can influence the Saudi learners' use of PVs relative to their proficiency level, gender, and the semantic nature of PVs (literal-figurative); to determine to what extent these three variables can affect their knowledge and any possible PV avoidance. The results confirm the difficulty pointed out in earlier studies, particularly at the production level. The participants showed better receptive than productive knowledge with an average percentage of correct answers of 72% for the receptive and 59% for the productive tasks. Also, the results suggest that proficiency and the semantic nature of PVs have a statistically significant effect on the use of PVs by Saudi EFL learners for both productive and receptive tasks, while gender is found to have no significant

effect. In terms of avoidance, the results show that PV type and proficiency level affect the frequency of PV avoidance. Therefore, it was concluded that the difference between L1 and L2 structure, semantic complexity of phrasal verbs and poor productive knowledge might cause the learners' avoidance. The study confirms that phrasal verbs present difficulties for many language learners, and consequently deserve more attention by teachers, material designers and the learners.

Keywords: Phrasal Verbs, Avoidance, Lexical Knowledge, Receptive and Productive Knowledge.

1. Introduction

The present study deals with phrasal verbs (henceforth PVs), as an important aspect of English phraseology. PVs have been defined in various ways, depending on the discipline. For the purposes of this study, a PV is understood as “a structure that consists of a verb proper and a morphologically invariable particle that functions as a single unit lexically and syntactically” (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Despite their significance and high productivity in English, PVs have always posed numerous difficulties for ESL/EFL learners as confirmed by the findings of previous studies (Liao & Fukuya 2004; Liu 2011; Schmitt & Redwood 2011; El-Dakhs 2016). These researchers have pointed out different reasons as to why PVs were considered to be problematic for language learners, including the peculiarity of PVs to a certain language family, the idiomaticity of some PVs, collocational association of the same verbal head with different particles, and the polysemous nature of these verbs.

To my knowledge, there is not much research conducted in Saudi Arabia to investigate the productive and receptive knowledge and avoidance of PVs specifically among Saudi undergraduate students in the EFL context. Few earlier studies have investigated the use of PVs among other Arabic-speaking learners (e.g., Omani learners in Abdul Rahman and Abid, 2014, Egyptian learners in El-Dakhs 2016). Therefore, the present study will thus shed light on the use of PVs among a

new population exploring the nature of the learners' receptive/productive knowledge, their employment of the avoidance strategy, the effects of proficiency level and gender, and the semantic nature of PVs used by the learners. As a result, this study aims to fill this gap in this area, as well as to overcome a methodological shortcoming in the previous studies regarding investigating the avoidance behavior as they failed to ensure the participants' knowledge of the PVs prior testing, as the results could simply reflect the participants' ignorance of the PVs, through following a specific procedure to ensure learners' prior exposure to the target structure before assessing their productive or receptive knowledge and avoidance of its use. The significance of the present study comes from the contributions the results will have in terms of future studies on PVs and its learnability.

2. Literature Review

For ESL/EFL learners, specifically learners with non-Germanic first languages (L1s) such as Arabic, Hebrew and Chinese, which do not have the verb and particle combinations, PVs are very difficult to acquire as it may be seen as an unnatural construction. There are many studies which confirm that this may result in the avoidance of PVs (Liao and Fukuya 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Structural differences between L1 and L2 are not the only reason for PV avoidance. In fact, similarities between L1 and L2 are also possible reasons for PV avoidance (Hulstijn and Marchena 1989). Other reasons for the difficulty of learning PVs include the fact that they are typically categorized as a type of idiomatic expression, with ranging degrees of idiomaticity from literal, aspectual to figurative. Liao and Fukuya (2004) found that learners chose fewer figurative PVs than literal PVs on a multiple-choice test. This avoidance was attributed to the semantic difficulty of figurative PVs. In addition, PVs are highly polysemous as they have multiple, distinct meanings. This may add more confusion as to their meanings, and most certainly adds to the learning load involved in the process of learning and using them. PVs can also have strong

collocations, and learners' lack of awareness of common collocates, regular patterns and usage leads to incorrect use of PVs.

2.1. Productive and Receptive Knowledge of PVs:

In vocabulary studies, there are two important multi-faceted dimensions of vocabulary knowledge to be considered, i.e., receptive and productive. Productive knowledge refers to the user's knowing a lexical item well enough to produce it in speaking or writing while receptive knowledge refers to the user's knowing and understanding a lexical item well enough during reading or listening (Schmitt, 2010). These two components of word knowledge are interrelated (Schmitt, 2014). Learners' receptive knowledge of lexical items does not mean that they are able to use them in language production. It is believed that both productive and receptive knowledge are essential for the proper assessment of a learner's overall vocabulary knowledge (Schmitt, 2010), and that learners' receptive knowledge is much larger than their productive knowledge (Webb, 2008). Thus, it appears that that language learners need both receptive and productive knowledge of PVs to function well in the real-world communication.

A number of studies have focused on EFL/ESL learners' receptive and productive knowledge of PVs, perhaps most notably, the study of Schmitt and Redwood (2011) who examined L2 learners' receptive and productive knowledge of highly frequent PVs in English and its relationship with different factors such as frequency, exposure, proficiency level and gender. Fifty of the 60 PVs chosen in this study were taken from Gardner and Davies' (2007) list of PVs, and the other ten were less frequent items taken from student course-books and grammar reference books. The results showed that the participants had good receptive knowledge (65.2%) and fair productive knowledge (48.2%). The results also showed a significant positive relationship between PV knowledge and L2 proficiency and PV frequency rankings in the BNC complete with higher level of correlation for the productive scores than

for the receptive scores. Gender did not appear to be a factor in learners' knowledge of PVs.

Garnier and Schmitt (2016) also conducted a study to explore 128 Chilean L2 learners' productive knowledge of a sample of PVs and meaning senses on the PHaVE List, and the effect of a number of factors on this knowledge. The results revealed a significant effect of two factors on scores: item frequency and learner engagement in leisure activities in the L2. The participants showed rather limited knowledge of highly frequent polysemous PVs, despite their presumably high level of English proficiency. The factors of semantic opacity did not have any effect on knowledge.

In the Saudi EFL context, there is only one study found investigating productive use and receptive knowledge of PVs by Sonbul et al. (2020). However, this study investigates productive and receptive L2 knowledge of polysemous PVs and the factors that determine L2 knowledge of the various senses.

In the present study, learners' knowledge of PVs is assessed both receptively and productively to provide a comprehensive picture of the Saudi learners' knowledge of PVs and the design of the MC tasks was informed by an analysis of a specially-constructed corpus of Saudi EFL textbooks, and taking into account the most frequent PVs in Gardner and Davies' (2007) and Liu's (2011) corpus-based studies to maximize the chances that the learners have encountered the PVs used in the tests. In other words, it could be accounted for both corpus frequency (as identified by the lists in Gardner and Davies (2007) and Liu (2011) and textbook frequency. In this way we maximized the likelihood that that we were indeed testing the most frequent PVs in learners' language input.

2.2. Avoidance:

An avoidance strategy is employed by ESL/EFL learners “when specific language structures are under-represented in the learner’s production (written or spoken) in comparison with native-speaker production” (Ellis, 1986). It is one of the common strategies employed by ESL/EFL learners in the production of the target language when they have inadequate and incomplete knowledge about grammatical rules and lexical items.

Avoidance has in some cases been confused with ignorance and one should distinguish between them (Liao & Fukuya 2004). avoidance, rather than ignorance, occurs when the learners are somewhat passively familiar with the construction that is being studied (Hulstijn & Marchena). Researchers have reported many different reasons as to why PVs were found to be problematic and three common main reasons were given for possible avoidance: L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 idiomatic similarity, and inherent L2 complexity (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Liao & Fukuya, 2004). One of these studies which focuses on PV avoidance is Liao and Fukuya (2004) who investigated the avoidance of PVs by 70 intermediate and advanced Chinese learners of English, who do not have PVs in their L1. They used the same kinds of tests as Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), i.e. a multiple-choice test, a translation test and a recall test. They used different PVs and more casual dialogues as the context to suit their students. Liao and Fukuya’s findings show that proficiency level, PV type, and test type have an effect on learners’ avoidance of PVs.

In the Arab world where learners share the same L1, El-Dakhs (2016) conducted a study to examine the use of PVs among 407 undergraduates Egyptian learners of English as a foreign language. They completed a paraphrase task, two gap-filling tasks and a survey. The results confirm the difficulty learners face when using PVs. El-Dakhs (2016) confirms “that the under-representation of PVs in the participants’

production can be interpreted in terms of cross-linguistic differences, passive learning or comprehension and limited language exposure”.

2.3. PVs Studies in Saudi Arabia:

In Saudi context, few studies have focused on the avoidance phenomenon among Saudi learners of English in the ESL environment of PVs. However, I could not find studies focusing on Saudi learner’s knowledge and use (productive or receptive) of PVs. Ben Duhaish (2008) for example investigated the avoidance behavior of 129 Arab intermediate and advanced learners of English. The findings of his study indicated that learners’ proficiency level, PV types, test types and language environment all play a role in influencing Arab learners’ avoidance of PVs. Ben Duhaish suggested that the Arab learners’ avoidance is due to (L1-L2 structural differences). Aldukhayel (2014) also found that the participants preferred the use of PVs compared to single verb use. The results also showed that that Arab ESL avoided PVs due to PV type and learners' long exposure to the target language. In a more recent study, Gandorah (2015) conducted a study investigating avoidance behavior among 18 Saudi male learners of English in an ESL environment. The results showed that the intermediate group avoided more PVs than the advanced group. In addition, the longer a learner had stayed in an English-speaking environment, the more PVs they had learned. Also, idiomatic PVs were avoided more than literal PVs. Gandorah (2015) attributed the poor performance generally to the inherent semantic complexity of PVs.

The present study will thus shed the light on the use of PVs among a new population exploring the nature of the learners’ receptive/productive knowledge and use in addition to their employment of the avoidance strategy, as well as the effect of their proficiency level, gender and the semantic nature of PVs on the use of PVs. This study aims to fill the gap in this area, as well as to overcome a methodological shortcoming in previous studies investigating avoidance behavior: such studies failed

to maximize the likelihood of participants' knowledge of targeted PVs prior to testing, so their results might simply reflect participants' ignorance (rather than avoidance) of the PVs in question. An attempt to address this problem was made in the current study by following a specific procedure to maximize the likelihood that students were presented with familiar PVs; those that they have likely been introduced to as well as 'high-frequency PVs', which many learners at this stage of learning (i.e. undergraduate students) may have encountered before testing. As already indicated, exposure and knowledge are not the same thing, thus I am using probable exposure to a form as a kind proxy for probable knowledge of that form, but this equation is not foolproof. This was done by compiling a corpus made of the textbooks which the participants had used in public school in Saudi Arabia (elementary, intermediate and secondary). All the PVs in these textbooks were extracted, and the most frequent PVs (literal and figurative) which were all also found in Liu's (2011) list of the 150 most frequently used PVs were used in the tests to assess learners' use and knowledge of PVs, and their potential avoidance of these PVs. This study thus stands, I believe, to provide more reliable evidence on the issue of avoidance of PVs than previous comparable studies, as well as richer data and more detailed and accurate results regarding the other issues under investigation. The present study also aims to analyze possible effects of the above-mentioned factors (students' proficiency level; students' gender, and the semantic type of the PV in question) in the use of PVs (or lack thereof) by examining the data to evaluate the possible impact of these variables on the learner's production of PVs. These variables are believed to be more relevant than others as regards learners' use of PVs and will, thus, be investigated. In sum, the ultimate aim in this work is to provide an exhaustive account of the way Saudi learners of English at beginner and lower intermediate level of proficiency use PVs with the hope of advancing the existing knowledge of the nature of vocabulary use and knowledge in a foreign language. In addition, the results of this study can provide valuable input for those working in the field of English

Language Teaching (ELT), materials development, and testing in Saudi Arabia and can provide important information for future empirical studies involving language learners. Finding out how a specific learner group makes use of PVs and what kinds of problems they have in their learning may be useful in helping teachers to choose appropriate materials and tasks that would allow learners to address potential difficulties, thus this study asks the following questions:

1. How do Saudi Learners of English use PVs in productive and receptive tasks?
2. Is there any difference in their use and knowledge of PVs depending on gender, language proficiency, and semantic nature of PV types?
3. Do Saudi undergraduate learners avoid using PVs? And does their avoidance, if any, reflect differences in the semantic nature of PV types (Literal vs Figurative) and learners' proficiency level?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants:

The participants in the present study constituted a total of 195 first-year Saudi EFL undergraduates who had studied English for nine years in Saudi public schools. The age range of the participants was between 18 and 24 years. They were all enrolled in one of two Saudi universities in non-English majors. The participants consisted of 116 male and 79 female students. They had limited exposure to English outside the classroom and had never lived in an English-speaking country. Their level of English had been assessed by the Oxford Quick Placement Test, which places students on the CEFR, see Appendix A. It is known that one of the most widely recognized English-language proficiency tests designed to assess L2 learners' grammatical, vocabulary, and semantic knowledge, is the commercial version of the Oxford Online Placement Test (OOPT) (Oxford University press 2015). This instrument was developed by Oxford University Press in order to provide a valid and reliable measure of learners' language knowledge and how they use this

knowledge while communicating (Oxford University Press 2015). The main objective of the OOPT was not only to measure grammatical or lexical competence but to measure the communicative competence of the examinees. As Purpura (2009: 1) explains, “it measures a test taker’s ability to understand a range of grammatical forms and the meanings they convey in a wide range of contexts. It also measures the extent to which learners can use these language resources to communicate in English language situations”. The result of the OOPT is given as a rating that is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The CEFR provides six different levels for language learners ranging from basic (beginner) to advanced (proficient user/mastery level): A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (for more information, see the Council of Europe website at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp). Research on the OOPT is still ongoing in order to keep the test up to date. A suitable alternative widely used test among researchers is the Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT) (2001). The test is free of charge and easy to administer; it consists of a 60-item multiple-choice test with a total score of 60 points. The level of proficiency is identified according to the user’s guide to classifications of proficiency levels. Based on the results of the Oxford Quick Placement Test, the level of proficiency of the 209 participants were classified into four levels as illustrated in Table 1 below, for more details on the results of the participants, (see Appendix B).

Table (1): The distribution of the participants based on their score on the Oxford Quick Placement Test

Level	Number of participants	Council of Europe level
Beginner	9	A1
Elementary	98	A2
Lower intermediate	97	B1
Upper intermediate	5	B2

It is generally accepted in the fields of statistics and research methodology that the larger the sample size, the more reliable the results are likely to be, if the other factors have been controlled. Ellis (2010) points out that “a test based on a large

sample has more statistical power ... than a test involving a small sample. If the sample is too small, the study will be underpowered, increasing the risk of overlooking meaningful effects". (p. 52). Thus, one can remain skeptical about the conclusions drawn from very small sample size; especially from a quantitative study (see Dorniyev, 2007). Therefore, although the participants in this study were grouped into four different subgroups of proficiency levels based on their performance on the proficiency test (see Table 1), the results of only two groups will be compared, namely group A2 (=98 participants) and group B1 (= 97 participants). The results of the other two groups (A1 and B2) will be excluded from the analysis in order not to affect the generalizability and reliability of the findings. That is, their results will not be included in this study because the numbers of the participants in these two subgroups (A1 and B2) were very small, 9 and 5 respectively. Thus, a comparison between A2s and B1s is the most reliable comparison to make. Comparing the other groups will be left for further studies. According to the CEFR, A2 is considered as beginner level, while B1 is considered lower intermediate level. Thus, the comparison in this study will be between beginner and lower intermediate levels. As a result, the initial number of participants was 217. Eight learners were excluded for reasons which made them unfit for this study such as: not being Saudi or having spent a few years abroad studying. Nine A1 and five B2 learners were excluded from the analysis as their numbers were very small. The total number of participants ultimately involved in this part of the study was 195. The results of those participants will be also compared to the results of the control group (twelve English native speakers). Table 2 and Table 3 present the distribution and the percentage of the participants based on their proficiency level.

Table (2): The distribution of the participants based on their proficiency level.

Proficiency level	Number of individuals	%
Beginner	98	40.5%
lower Intermediate	97	59.5%

Table (3): The distribution of the participants based on their gender.

Gender	Number of individuals	%
Female	79	40.5%
Male	116	59.5%

Table 4 presents a detailed breakdown of the distribution of participants based on their gender and proficiency level. 21% of the participants were considered female beginners, 29.2% were considered male beginners, while 19.5% of the participants were considered female lower intermediate, and 30.3% were considered male lower intermediate.

Table (4): The distribution of the participants based on their gender and proficiency level.

Gender	Proficiency level	Number of participants %
Female	Beginner	41 21.0%
Female	lower Intermediate	38 19.5%
Male	Beginner	57 29.2%
Male	lower Intermediate	59 30.3%

3.2. Target Phrasal Verbs:

As there are many numbers of PVs in English, it was necessary that not all of them could be included in a test, due to the fact that this study is concerned with overcoming some of the shortcomings of previous studies as discussed earlier, some selection of PVs to be tested had to be made. Kleinmann (1977, p. 97) argues that 'to be able to avoid some linguistic feature presupposes being able to choose not to avoid it, i.e. to use it'. That is, it is crucial to make sure of learners' prior exposure to the target structure before assessing their productive or receptive knowledge and avoidance of its use. Basically, if learners are ignorant of a target structure, they cannot be described as avoiding it. This observation has been neglected in previous studies, and there was a failure to verify the learners'

knowledge of the PVs employed in the research. To avoid this deficiency, 31 PVs were used in the present study to test Saudi learners' (productive and receptive) knowledge of PVs and their potential avoidance. These PVs were taken from the textbooks used by the students at their elementary, intermediate and secondary schools. In addition, they are all found within the list of 150 most frequently used PVs in Liu's (2011) study, which was based on the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). It is assumed that most of the learners participating in this study should have been met and be familiar with these PVs in the process of learning English as they are taken from their textbooks and from the most frequent PVs according to the two most well-known corpora. In this way, I maximized the likelihood that learners had been introduced to the PVs in the study and this helped to maximize the degree of bias as the participants were not tested with unfamiliar PVs.

The Saudi EFL textbooks analyzed in the present study were designed from 2016 onwards. The textbooks examined were six EFL textbooks from the series Smart Class, aimed at Saudi elementary students. Another six EFL textbooks came from the series Full Blast, aimed at Saudi Intermediate students. Yet another six EFL textbooks came from the series Traveler, aimed at Saudi Secondary students. They are produced by MM Publications in the UK and authored by H Q Mitchell and Marileni Malkogianni. The corpus-processing tool Sketch Engine was used to process the textbooks for the purpose of the present study. It was also used to extract the collocates that identify PVs.

A total of 31 PVs were selected to be used in this study, (see Appendix C). To be more specific, these 31 PVs are:

1. The first 20 PVs in COCA,
2. The first 20 PVs in secondary textbooks,
3. The first 10 PVs in intermediate textbooks,
4. The first 10 PVs in BNC, and
5. The first 2 PVs in elementary textbooks:

The semantic opacity (i.e., the difficulty of deciding whether an item is literal or figurative) of the PVs was then established based on my own judgment. To minimize the complexity with respect to classification of PVs, aspectual PVs will be considered as non-literal PVs (figurative). PVs have varying degrees of idiomaticity and many of them have multiple meanings with no clear-cut classification of PVs. Therefore, PVs under investigation will be classified into just two major categories, literal and figurative. This is to reduce the fuzziness in classification, and to facilitate my analysis so that it is in line with the research objectives. Therefore, literal PVs will consist of those for which the meanings are transparent: both elements retain their regular meanings, while those that do not fulfil such criterion will be categorized as figurative PVs.

To avoid the subjectivity which is involved with semantic judgments, it was important to compare my judgment with that of native speakers, who are supposed to be more confident in their semantic knowledge of PVs and more objective in deciding whether an item is literal or figurative. Therefore, the definitions for the figurative and literal PVs, as well as contextualized examples for each verb type, were given to native English language teachers (six American, four British, one Irish and one Canadian). They were asked to classify each PV as literal (inserting the letter L in the designated space) or figurative (inserting the letter F). Before starting, the twelve raters indicated that they felt comfortable with the procedure and with the notions of PVs and literal/figurative language. Based on the native English language teachers' feedback, some changes were applied to the classification of the PVs as literal or figurative. As a result of this process, 16 PVs were classed as literal and 15 as figurative. However, to have a balanced distribution between literal and figurative PVs, one of the literal PVs (go down) has been used in a figurative sense as well. The following two sentences have been used:

a- After hitting the iceberg, the ship began to go down. (Move down to a lower level or position)

b- The cost of airline tickets is going down because of competition from budget airlines. (Decrease in value or amount).

In the first example, (go down) is used literally, while in the second it is used figuratively. As a result, there were 16 literal PVs and 16 figurative ones.

After applying these changes, the sentences were given to two English-native PhDs in linguistics to confirm the results. They were in complete agreement with the classification of the PVs as either literal or figurative. The method for selecting the target PVs was developed to avoid the possibility that learners were ignorant of the structure of PVs and thus to attain more reliable results. In addition to that, a controlled production task was included to compare the participants' performance in productive and receptive tasks, on the one hand, and avoidance task, on the other. These tasks will be discussed in detail on the following sections.

3.2.1. Productive Measurement Instrument:

To measure learner knowledge of the target PVs, a productive PV test was designed as the first part of the test (see Appendix D). A productive test format (cloze technique) was designed to avoid guessing effects, which are typical in MC test formats (Stewart & White, 2011). Cloze tests are used extensively as a testing procedure, especially in the field of vocabulary, as a good measure of lexical knowledge (Read, 1997). An example is given below:

My son is really good at making up jokes and funny stories. (Invent)

The participants had to produce the target PVs themselves, which requires a higher level of mastery than would a receptive word recognition test (Groot, 2000,

p. 76). 16 PVs (eight literal and eight figurative) were used. To help the participants and constrain the range of potential PVs elicited, they were given first-letter prompts for the target PVs.

3.2.2. Receptive Measurement Instrument:

The participants were asked to take the productive test, in which they had to recall and produce the target language, before taking the receptive test. Receptive knowledge usually precedes productive knowledge (Schmitt, 2010). Therefore, it is obvious that participants who knew the answer to an item productively would also be likely to know it receptively. The remaining 16 PVs (eight literal and eight figurative) were tested in this part (see Appendix D). The participants were asked to circle the right PV from four alternatives: the correct PV and three distractors. An example from the receptive test is given below:

- Even when I have a day off, I early. I can't help waking up at 6 a.m. (*Rise after lying in bed or sitting*).

get up get around get along get ahead

3.2.3. Avoidance Measurement Instrument:

This MC task was based on 32 PVs (16 literal and 16 figurative). Thirty-two sentences were created in which the verb in question was left blank (see Appendix D). The participants were asked to fill in the blanks from four alternatives: the correct phrasal verb, an appropriate one-word equivalent and two distractors, one of these being a PV, the other a one-word verb. These choices were presented in a randomised order below each sentence as the answers to each test item. Since each item could be answered by two correct answers, the participants were given the following instructions: 'Choose for each sentence the verb that in your opinion best fits the context and fill in that verb. Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English' (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). The participants' preference for one type of verb (one

word versus phrasal) would show avoidance of the other. An example of the avoidance test is provided below:

- Peter's going to the dentist to have his rotten tooth

removed broken down stopped taken out

3.3. Procedure:

The next preparation stage was the writing of the tasks. A 21-page test booklet was written for this study. The first page included information and instructions for participants about the study. The second and third pages included consent forms to be completed by the participants, indicating that they understand the purpose and background of this research study, procedures, risks and confidentiality. The fourth page was a bio-data questionnaire designed to collect information on participants' native language, gender, age, nationality, English proficiency score if they have one, number of years attending English classes and other fluently spoken languages (see Appendix D). The participants were also required to indicate if they had lived in an English-speaking country. Positive answers to this question led to exclusion from the study, which focused only on Saudi learners who studied English in an EFL environment. Pages 5–13 of the test booklet included the Oxford Quick Placement Test, which places students on the CEFR. The participants were given 20 minutes to finish the test. Pages 14–21 included three study tasks which were based on the 16 literal PVs and 16 figurative PVs selected for this study.

After writing the test, a pilot test was conducted to check the test's validity for both the participants and purposes of the research. Based on the informative feedback obtained from the initial pilot test, the testing instrument was revised. All the shortcomings associated with the initial pilot version were dealt with in this new

refined version; the necessary amendments were made, and a final version of the PV test was produced.

The test was carried out by the researcher after obtaining ethics clearance from the institutions involved and the informed consent of the instructors and students involved. The instructions were explained to the participants by the researcher in English and Arabic to ensure that all participants understood the tasks. Examples were also given prior to starting the tasks. All the participants had enough time to complete the tasks and the bio-data questionnaire.

3.4. Data Analysis:

The present study uses a number of statistical techniques, bearing in mind that the type of data determines the choice of the right statistical procedure. Thus, when choosing a statistical technique, the researcher has to consider the number of variables under investigation, the types of these variables, and the objectives of the study. Therefore, to pave the way for running the appropriate statistical inferential procedures, the sample's normality of distribution was checked using the Shapiro test (See Appendix E). The subgroups' results in the three tasks were not normally distributed ($p > .05$) for all variables. Therefore, nonparametric procedures were used. Accordingly, to test for significant differences between the subgroups of learners and to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, nonparametric tests are used instead of the parametric ones; for example, (a) the Mann-Whitney U test is the nonparametric alternative test to the independent samples t-test that is used when the results of two subgroups for the same variable are compared against one another, and (b) the Kruskal-Wallis test is the nonparametric alternative test to the ANOVA that is used when the results of more than two subgroups for the same variable are compared against one another. For more details refer to Dörnyei (2007). As for the correlation analysis, (c) the Pearson product-moment correlation is run with both normally and not normally

distributed data to compute the correlation coefficient between two variables; it is abbreviated as r . Analyses were considered statistically significant with a 95% confidence interval and the alpha level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all of these tests; in other words, a result is considered significant if $p < 0.05$. The next Chapter illustrates precisely how these descriptive and inferential statistical procedures are put into practice.

4. Results

4.1. Productive Knowledge:

The majority of the participants were able to use the PVs productively as shown in Table 5. The mean of the scores was relatively modest ($M = 9.41$, $SD = 4.00$). The spread of correct answers ranged from 2 to 16 on this task.

Table (5): The results for all participants on the productive test

PVs	Productive Knowledge											
	Male						Female					
	Beginner			L. Intermediate			Beginner			L. Intermediate		
	R	M	SD	R	M	SD	R	M	SD	R	M	SD
pick up	9	.16	.368	35	.59	.495	9	.22	.419	22	.58	.500
wake up	49	.86	.350	59	1.00	.000	38	.93	.264	38	1.00	.000
take up	14	.25	.434	30	.51	.504	7	.17	.381	21	.55	.504
go out	42	.74	.444	56	.95	.222	30	.73	.449	35	.92	.273
get in	17	.30	.462	49	.83	.378	11	.27	.449	34	.89	.311
take out	12	.21	.411	40	.68	.471	9	.22	.419	30	.79	.413
get out	42	.74	.444	58	.98	.130	30	.73	.449	37	.97	.162
go down	52	.91	.285	58	.98	.130	35	.85	.358	37	.97	.162
make up	22	.39	.491	51	.86	.345	13	.32	.471	33	.87	.343
find out	24	.42	.498	56	.95	.222	28	.68	.471	37	.97	.162
put in	5	.09	.285	30	.51	.504	3	.07	.264	25	.66	.481
come up	12	.21	.411	33	.56	.501	8	.20	.401	25	.66	.481
set up	6	.11	.310	41	.69	.464	4	.10	.300	29	.76	.431
go on	43	.75	.434	52	.88	.326	33	.80	.401	32	.84	.370
give up	12	.21	.411	34	.58	.498	8	.20	.401	31	.82	.393
turn out	4	.07	.258	26	.44	.501	5	.12	.331	24	.63	.489

With regard to the control group results, they performed as expected. They all answered all the sentences correctly. Productive scores in native speakers were statistically significantly different from Saudi participants. Overall total number of PVs answered was higher for native speakers (Mdn = 16) than the Saudi participants (Mdn = 10), $U = 42.00$, $z = 5.64$, $p < .001$.

In addition, a Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in the score between males and females in Table 4.23. Distributions of the scores for male and female were similar, as assessed by visual inspection, see Appendix E, part 1. The score was not statistically significantly different between male (Mdn = 9.50) and female (Mdn = 11.00), $U = 4336$, $z = .638$, $p = .523$, using an exact sampling distribution for U (Dineen and Blakesley 1973). The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .047$) indicated a low effect size suggesting that the differences in scores were not statistically significant, and that there is no significant relationship between the gender variable and the students' overall performance on the PVs tested.

In terms of proficiency level, the findings of the present study suggest that proficiency has a statistically significant effect on the productive use of PVs by Saudi learners. The results reveal that the learners with the higher proficiency level obtained better scores than the beginners for all the items in the productive test. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in the score between beginner and lower intermediate participants. Distributions of the scores for beginners and lower intermediates were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The score was statistically significantly different between beginner (Mdn = 5.50) and lower intermediate (Mdn = 12.00), $U = 754.00$, $z = -10.187$, $p = .005$, using an exact sampling distribution for U. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .739$) indicated a large effect size. Cohen (1988) suggests that $r = .50$ to 1.0 indicates large correlation (pp. 79-81). So, the correlation value above

suggests that there is a strong relationship between the proficiency level and students' productive knowledge of PVs which implies that the higher the level of students' proficiency, the better would be their performance.

In terms of semantic categories of PVs, that participants performed better on literal PVs ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.84$, $Mdn = 6$) than on figurative PVs ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 2.43$, $Mdn = 4$). The results suggest that students have a better knowledge of literal PVs than figurative ones. This, however, is not surprising as literal PVs are very transparent in meaning compared to figurative ones. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in the use between literal and figurative PVs. Distributions of the scores for literal and figurative PVs were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The score was statistically significantly different between literal PVs ($Mdn = 5.35$) and figurative ones ($Mdn = 4.04$), $U = 13001.5$, $z = -5.448$, $p = .005$, using an exact sampling distribution for U (Dineen and Blakesley 1973).

4.2. Receptive Knowledge:

The majority of the participants were able to use the PVs receptively as shown in Table 6. The mean of the scores for the receptive knowledge task was marginally higher than the mean for the productive knowledge task ($M = 11.52$, $SD = 3.08$). For this task, the scores for the correct answers ranged from 2 to 16.

Table (6): Results for all the participants on the receptive test

PVs	Receptive Knowledge											
	Male						Female					
	Beginner			B1			Beginner			B1		
	R	M	SD	R	M	SD	R	M	SD	R	M	SD
get up	46	.81	.398	58	.98	.130	35	.85	.358	38	1.00	.000
come back	53	.93	.258	59	1.00	.000	36	.88	.331	38	1.00	.000
go back	49	.86	.350	59	1.00	.000	32	.78	.419	38	1.00	.000
grow up	51	.89	.310	59	1.00	.000	34	.83	.381	38	1.00	.000
point out	12	.21	.411	38	.64	.483	10	.24	.435	27	.71	.460
get back	46	.81	.398	59	1.00	.000	34	.83	.381	38	1.00	.000

come out	31	.54	.503	54	.92	.281	22	.54	.505	36	.95	.226
end up	13	.23	.423	46	.78	.418	14	.34	.480	35	.92	.273
hold up	14	.25	.434	14	.24	.429	10	.24	.435	16	.42	.500
hang out	33	.58	.498	52	.88	.326	26	.63	.488	33	.87	.343
put out	31	.54	.503	50	.85	.363	22	.54	.505	32	.84	.370
take on	26	.46	.503	46	.78	.418	16	.39	.494	33	.87	.343
come in	39	.68	.469	57	.97	.183	29	.71	.461	37	.97	.162
look up	26	.46	.503	47	.80	.406	20	.49	.506	33	.87	.343
check out	18	.32	.469	39	.66	.477	16	.39	.494	25	.66	.481
go down	43	.75	.434	58	.98	.130	29	.71	.461	38	1.00	.000

With regard to the control group results, they performed as expected. They all answered all the sentences correctly. Receptive scores in native speakers were statistically significantly different from Saudi participants. Overall total number of PVs answered was higher for native speakers (Mdn = 16) than the Saudi participants (Mdn = 12), $U = 96.00$, $z = 5.40$, $p < .001$.

Similar to the results of productive knowledge of PVs, gender did not result in many differences in the findings, even if females performed slightly better at both levels of proficiency. A Mann-Whitney U test shows that the distributions of the scores for male and female were similar. The score was not statistically significantly different between male (Mdn = 12.00) and female (Mdn = 13.00), $U = 4252.5$, $z = -.857$, $p = .391$, using an exact sampling distribution for U. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .034$) indicated a low effect size suggesting that the differences in scores were not statistically significant, and that there is no significant relationship between gender variable and the students' overall performance on the PVs tested.

In terms of proficiency level, the findings of the present study suggest that language proficiency (beginner and lower intermediate) has a statistically significant effect on the receptive use of PVs by Saudi learners. Distributions of the scores for beginners and lower intermediates were not similar. The scores for lower intermediate (mean rank = 140.05) were statistically significantly higher than for beginner (mean rank = 56.38), $U = 674.5$, $z = -10.416$, $p = .005$, using an

exact sampling distribution for U. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .710$) indicated a large effect size.

Furthermore, the results show that the participants performed better on literal PVs ($M = 6.35$, $SD = 1.69$, $Mdn = 7.00$) than on figurative ($M = 5.17$, $SD = 1.7$, $Mdn = 5.00$) PVs. The results suggest that students have better knowledge and use of literal PVs than figurative ones. Distributions of the scores for literal and figurative PVs were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The score was statistically significantly different between literal PVs ($Mdn = 6.35$) and figurative ones ($Mdn = 5.17$), $U = 11412.00$, $z = -6.936$, $p = .005$, using an exact sampling distribution for U.

4.3. Avoidance Behavior:

The answers of (Task 3) to measure learners avoidance behavior were marked and classified into three categories: (1) wrong answers, (2) right answers demonstrating avoidance (i.e., single-word verbs) and (3) right answers with PVs. A total of 195 students completed the multiple-choice test. The total number of possible answers was 6,240 (195 students x 32 items): 3,300 PVs were chosen, that is 53% of the total score, and 2,243 answers 36% were made up of a (correct) one word verb, see Table 7.

With regard to the control group results, they performed better than Saudi participants. The total number of possible answers was 384 (12 Native speakers x 32 items): 326 PVs were chosen, that is 84.89% of the total score, and 58 answers 15% were made up of a (correct) one word verb. Out of 192 literal PVs, they chose 169 correctly, while out of 192 figurative PVs, they chose 157 correctly. A Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in the score between native speakers and Saudi learners in choosing PVs over their equivalent one-word

verb. The score was statistically significantly different between native speakers (Mdn = 27.00) and Saudi learners (Mdn = 17.00), $U = 39.00$, $z = -5.65$, $p = .001$.

Table (7): Descriptive statistics for all the PVs in the Avoidance task

Type of PV	PVs	PV		One word		Wrong	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
L	get in	172	88.2%	2	1.0%	21	10.8
L	take out	62	31.8%	108	55.4%	25	12.8%
L	get out	169	86.7%	19	9.7%	7	3.6%
L	go down	20	10.3%	170	87.2%	5	2.6%
L	get up	132	67.7%	36	18.5%	27	13.8%
L	come back	157	80.5%	29	14.9%	9	4.6%
L	go back	132	67.7%	58	29.7%	5	2.6%
L	grow up	138	70.8%	23	11.8%	34	17.4%
L	point out	55	28.2%	98	50.3%	42	21.5%
L	pick up	91	46.7%	90	46.2%	14	7.2%
L	wake up	165	84.6%	13	6.7%	17	8.7%
L	take up	31	15.9%	134	68.7%	30	15.4%
L	go out	157	80.5%	26	13.3%	12	6.2%
L	get back	115	59.0%	69	35.4%	11	5.6%
L	come out	142	72.8%	27	13.8%	26	13.3%
L	end up	88	45.1%	78	40.0%	29	14.9%
F	set up	51	26.2%	123	63.1%	21	10.8%
F	go on	60	30.8%	132	67.7%	3	1.5%
F	give up	33	16.9%	140	71.8%	22	11.3%
F	turn out	106	54.4%	70	35.9%	19	9.7%
F	hold up	68	34.9%	87	44.6%	40	20.5%
F	hang out	60	30.8%	121	62.1%	14	7.2%
F	put out	70	35.9%	98	50.3%	27	13.8%
F	make up	152	77.9%	29	14.9%	14	7.2%
F	find out	106	54.4%	64	32.8%	25	12.8%
F	put in	65	33.3%	81	41.5%	49	25.1%
F	come up	125	64.1%	32	16.4%	38	19.5%
F	take on	112	57.4%	41	21.0%	42	21.5%
F	come in	134	68.7%	36	18.5%	25	12.8%
F	look up	96	49.2%	86	44.1%	13	6.7%
F	check out	168	86.2%	18	9.2%	9	4.6%
F	go down	68	34.9%	105	53.8%	22	11.3%

To assess the influence of gender on the avoidance of PVs, Distributions of the scores for male and female were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The score was not statistically significantly different between male (Mdn = 17.00) and

female (Mdn = 18.00), $U = 4987.5$, $z = 1.050$, $p = .294$, using an exact sampling distribution for U . The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .073$) indicated a low effect size suggesting that the differences in scores were not statistically significant and that there is no significant relationship between gender variable and the students' overall performance on the PVs tested.

In terms of the influence of proficiency level on the avoidance of PVs, Distributions of the scores for A2 and B1 were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. The scores for lower intermediate (Mdn = 20.00) were statistically significantly higher than for beginner (Mdn= 13.00), $U = 1307.5$, $z = -8.763$, $p = .005$, using an exact sampling distribution for U . The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .635$) indicated a large effect size suggesting that there is a strong relationship between the proficiency level and students' preference for PVs. The result shows that the correlation is positive, which implies that the higher the level of students' proficiency, the better their performance would be.

There was also a significant difference between A2 and B1 Saudi learners in their use and avoidance of literal and figurative PVs. The participants performed better on literal PVs ($M = 9.36$, $SD = 2.54$ Mdn = 9.00) than on figurative ($M = 7.56$, $SD = 2.84$, Mdn = 8.00) PVs. The results suggest that students have a stronger preference for using literal PVs than figurative ones. Distributions of the scores for choosing literal and figurative PVs were similar. The score was statistically significantly different between literal PVs (Mdn = 9.00) and figurative ones (Mdn = 7.00), $U = 14280.5$, $z = -6.153$, $p = .005$, using an exact sampling distribution for U .

The results of the PV test above indicate that, in general, the learners under investigation show a moderate level of receptive and productive knowledge of PVs as 72% of them performed well for the receptive and 59% for the productive PV test, indicating an average performance. It was also found that learners show better

knowledge of literal PVs in comparison to the figurative PVs, which is consistent with the findings of Liao and Fukuya (2004), Dagut and Laufer (1985), and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) with respect to the avoidance of PVs: that avoidance was very noticeable with figurative PVs. Therefore, the present finding further supports the view that non-compositional PVs are more difficult for learners than the literal ones. In addition, it has been found that proficiency level influences the learner's knowledge of PVs as the lower intermediate group outperformed statistically the beginner group on the three tasks.

5. Discussion

5.1. Learners' Productive and Receptive Knowledge of PVs:

The majority of the participants were able to use the PVs receptively and productively with a percentage of correct answers, namely 72% for the receptive task and 59% for the productive task. The mean score for the receptive task ($M = 11.52$, $SD = 3.08$) was marginally higher than the mean score for the productive knowledge task ($M = 9.41$, $SD = 3.97$). This is in line with Schmitt and Redwood's (2011) and El-Dakhs' (2016) findings in that the participants did better receptively than productively. However, EFL Saudi learners performed better in both tasks in comparison to learners in Schmitt and Redwood (2011), who found that their participants had good receptive knowledge (65.2% correct answers) and fair productive knowledge (48.2%). Saudi EFL learners performed better only productively in comparison to El-Dakhs (2016), whose participants scored 80.9% on their receptive and 30.7% on their productive task. This could be due to the way the PVs tested were selected in the present study compared to the two studies mentioned. All PVs used in the present study were selected based on the textbooks used by the students at their elementary, intermediate and secondary schools (see section 3.2). In addition, they are all found within the list of 150 most frequently used PVs in Liu's (2011) study. This maximized the likelihood that students had

already met these selected PVs, which they might then either use or avoid. Thus, given a research design that maximized the likelihood that participants had met these items on which they were tested, scores of 72% and 59% correctly answered items on receptive and productive tasks in the current study might be considered quite low especially when they are compared to the results of the native control group in which they score 100% in both tests. This raises a serious concern regarding participants' knowledge and use of other PVs in English. While Schmitt and Redwood (2011) concluded that their participants showed relatively good knowledge of the PVs tested considering their intermediate level of English, it can be concluded that a score of 72% for the receptive task and 59% for the productive is rather weak considering that the participants in this study were undergraduate university students and they were only presented with familiar PVs; those that they have been introduced to in the years of studying English as well as 'high-frequency PVs' as identified by previous research (Gardner and Davies 2007; Liu 2011).

Despite the fact that previous studies did not take the same approach as this study in an effort to maximize the probability that students have been introduced to familiar PVs as well as high-frequency PVs before assessing their productive or receptive knowledge, the results of the current study support the findings of such previous studies (e.g. Barekat and Baniasady 2014; Liao and Fukuya 2004; Dagut and Laufer 1985). Contrary to earlier studies in the Arab World (i.e. Mahmoud 2015; AbdulRahman and Abid 2014; Ayadi 2010), it is worth mentioning that the students who participated in the present study were non-English majors. This major field of study difference may have particularly contributed to the Saudi learners' low performance on the tasks of this study. This is in line with You's (1999) findings on the influence of university major on the acquisition of PVs. You (1999) found that Korean learners' tendency to avoid using PVs differed between Korean learners of English who are majoring in English in Korea and others educated in Korea but enrolled in non-English majors. His results highlighted the role played

by the major field of study. To confirm this hypothesis, further research is needed to compare between those who majoring in English and those who are non-English majors.

Following the general pattern in vocabulary studies and the normal expectations, the participants showed better receptive than productive knowledge. This is in line with the findings in Ayadi and Abdul Rahman (2014) on Omani learners and El-Dakhs (2016) on Egyptian learners. In addition, productive knowledge involves knowing a lexical item well enough to produce it when it is needed for communication purposes (Schmitt 2010). Productive knowledge has been proved to be more difficult to acquire than receptive knowledge (Nation 2001). Thus, success in productive tests requires a greater depth of knowledge than in receptive tests, which could, in part, explain participants' scores.

As already noted, the previous studies attributed learners' underuse of PVs to several factors, including cross-linguistic differences. Some researchers (e.g. Dagut and Laufer 1985) conclude that the presence of PVs in learners' first language (such as Germanic languages) helps learners to use these verbs, whereas the non-existence of PVs in the first language results in learners' underuse and avoidance of these verbs. This could offer another explanation for Saudi learners' limited use of PVs given the fact that PVs do not exist in Semitic languages including Arabic. In addition, English language textbooks which are used to teach Saudi students overlook or mention PVs only in passing (Aldahesh 2009). According to Alangari (2019), PVs in most textbooks used at schools in Saudi Arabia are introduced under the vocabulary section as part of general spoken language and not as part of academic writing, and no explanation is provided of their use or their collocations, and no reference is made to academic use.

5.2. PV Avoidance:

The result showed that the Saudi learners used PVs much less frequently than the native speakers, which means that the Saudi learners avoided using PVs and preferred the one-word verbs in (36%) of cases compared to the native speakers 15%. As Dagut and Laufer (1985) mention, the PV structure is a characteristic of Germanic languages. The tendency of students to avoid PVs in 36% of cases might be attributed at this point to systemic incompatibility between the source language and the target language as was concluded by Dagut and Laufer (1985); Laufer and Eliasson (1993); Liao and Fukuya (2004); Ben Duhaiish (2008); Kamarudin (2013), El-Dakhs (2016). Ayadi (2010), for example, believes that avoidance of PVs by Arab EFL learners is due to the absence of such constructions in Arabic. The fact that there are two varieties of Arabic known by learners, modern standard Arabic (MSA) and non-standard Arabic (NSA), makes the situation more complicated. PVs do not exist in NSA while there are few verbs that take particles in MSA and the meaning of the verb changes with each particle. MSA PVs are considered complex and sometimes difficult for students to understand and consequently difficult to use. Due to the inherent complexity of PVs in MSA, or because of the influence of NSA, students tend not to use this form. Therefore, as a result of this structural difference between L1 and L2, learners might prefer to avoid using the PVs. Thus, the findings of the present study support the idea that L1-L2 differences are a good predictor of avoidance in L2.

This is also in line with findings in Dagut and Laufer (1985), who looked at a group of Hebrew-speaking students of English and their use of English PVs. The results of the study demonstrated that the majority of the learners avoided using PVs, exhibiting a strong preference for one-word verbs, and the avoidance was more pronounced with figurative PVs than with the literal or completive PVs. They attributed this finding to structural differences between L1 (Hebrew) and L2

(English) as Hebrew does not have a construction that corresponds to the English PVs.

In addition, English is a satellite-framed language that expresses the path information in satellites to verb roots, such as particles and prepositional phrases, while Arabic is a verb-framed language, which conflates the path information with the motion information contained in its verb roots (Slobin 2006). Looking at the participants' responses, the most avoided PV 'go down', in its literal meaning, with 89.5% of students choosing its equivalent single-word verb, this example suggests that the typological difference between the two languages in their ways of delivering path information could be at play.

A company will fail if it allows the quality of its products to go down.

ستفشل الشركة إذا سمحت بانخفاض جودة منتجاتها

The English PV expresses the path or the direction of the agent's movement via the particle 'down', while in Arabic it expresses the same information via the verbal component 'ينخفض', which corresponds to the English verb 'decrease'. Acknowledging that the basic sense of particles in PVs is "locational, directional, spatial, or [involving] movement" (Waibel 2007: 17) and that other extended senses can be captured by the basic sense (Boers 2004), the typological difference may have made it difficult for the Saudi EFL learners to understand the syntactic and semantic role of particles in PVs. In addition, adding these particles to the lexical verbs, resulted in underuse of PVs in their production.

Moreover, the limited amount of their exposure to PVs could be another possible cause of the learners' avoidance of PVs. It has been argued that the quantity and quality of input play a crucial role in the acquisition and use of PVs (Chen 2013,

Waibel 2007). Given the fact that cross-linguistic difference between English and Arabic is not a result of the possibility of positive L1 influence in the Saudi learners' use of English PVs, it can be assumed that any knowledge of PVs these learners possess could be a consequence of their exposure to PVs in the classroom or outside it. Accordingly, the learners' avoidance of PVs may indicate that they had not been provided with sufficient L2 input on PVs. This finding is further supported by another finding in this study in which the learners' use of PVs increases as their English proficiency level increases. This finding suggests that the amount of L2 input may have an influence on the learners' production and avoidance of PVs. This is also supported by the findings of Aldukhayel (2014), who found that Arab ESL learners with long exposure did not avoid any type of PVs, while Arab ESL learners with short exposure avoided the figurative PVs.

In addition, when considering the participants' performance on the productive task 59%, another explanation for the participants' tendency to avoid PVs can be interpreted. As reported earlier, the participants' productive use of PVs was low, which could have negatively contributed to their use of PVs in the avoidance task. This observation supports similar findings with Egyptian learners in El-Dakhs (2016).

5.3. Language Proficiency:

The findings of the present study suggest that proficiency has a statistically significant effect on the use of PVs by Saudi EFL learners. More specifically, for both receptive and productive tasks, there was a statistically significant difference between B1 and A2 students' performance on both types of tasks, with B1 students performing better on all counts suggesting that there is a strong relationship between the proficiency level and students' use and knowledge of PVs productively and receptively which implies that the higher the level of students' proficiency, the better would be their performance. A similar result was reported by Schmitt and

Redwood (2011) who examined L2 learners' receptive and productive knowledge of highly frequent PVs in English and its relationship with different factors including proficiency level. The results showed a significant positive relationship between PV knowledge and L2 proficiency as upper-intermediate learners scored higher than intermediate learners on both receptive and productive PV tests.

Since productive mastery is more advanced and it is often acquired later than receptive knowledge (Melka, 1997), it can be noticed that the two proficiency levels performed better in the receptive task than in the productive one. The productive task, on the other hand, required participants to write the exact form of the PV. The participants had to produce the target PVs themselves in the form of a fill-in-the-gap task. It should also be noted that Schmitt (2010) has pointed out that this type of task is "the most difficult test format" (p. 85) in vocabulary acquisition research. The statistical differences observed between the receptive and the productive task, therefore, could be due to the difficulty of the productive task, which required learners to have higher levels of language proficiency, and higher levels of productive-mastery.

In addition, the results of the avoidance task which investigated the role of proficiency level in the avoidance of PVs pointed out that proficiency level had a significant effect on the preferences of learners in using PVs as there was a statistically significant difference between B1 and A2 students' performance on both types of PV, with B1 students performing better on all counts. This result suggests that the higher the level of students' proficiency, the better would be their performance and they would avoid PVs less. In other words, students of higher proficiency levels tend to avoid literal and figurative PVs less than the beginners. These results support Liao and Fukuya's (2004) conclusion that that proficiency level has a significant effect on the learners avoidance of PVs. Contrary to these

results, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) concluded that there was no significant difference between advanced and intermediate learners in avoiding PVs.

In Saudi context, these results are consistent also with those found in the study of Ben Duhaish (2008) and Abu Jamil (2010) who found that the main reason behind avoidance of PVs was the proficiency level of the learners as advanced learners had noticeably higher scores than the intermediate level learners. Although the proficiency level of the learners in this study differs from those two studies (A2 and B1) and the current study focuses on Saudi learners only in an EFL context, the result of the current study confirms the results of both previous Saudi studies regarding the influence of proficiency level as a factor which has a statistically significant effect on the avoidance of PVs.

5.4. Semantic Nature of PVs:

For both receptive and productive tasks, participants performed better on literal than on figurative PVs. Proficiency level is also important here, as there was a statistically significant difference between B1 and 2A students' performance on both types of tasks and for both types of PV, with B1 students performing better on all counts. The results suggest that figurative PVs are a problematic construction for learners and that they have a better knowledge of and the ability to use literal PVs than figurative PVs, both productively and receptively. These findings are consistent with Dagut and Laufer's (1985) and Kamarudin (2013) findings that PV type (literal or figurative) had a significant influence on the participants' performance on tasks. This finding, on the other hand, does not align with that of Garnier and Schmitt (2016) who found the effect of PV semantic types on productive knowledge to be insignificant.

Many factors influence learners' difficulties in mastering PVs and their choice to avoid using them; the level of semantic transparency of the construction is one of those factors. The results show that participants performed better on literal PVs than

on figurative PVs by avoiding them less. The result revealed that PV type had a statistically significant effect on the learners' performance suggesting that students have a better knowledge of literal PVs than figurative ones. This study lends support to previous findings in the literature (Dagut and Laufer 1985; Liao and Fukuya 2004; Ben Duhaish 2008; Abu Jamil 2010; and Kamarudin 2013) that the semantic complexity of PVs plays a vital role in avoidance behavior. All the aforementioned studies reported that avoidance was more evident with figurative PVs and that the semantic complexity of PVs led to the avoidance behavior of L2 learners.

It is also similar to the findings of previous studies in the Arab world (AbdulRahman & Abid, 2014; El-Dakhs, 2016) who examined the use of PVs by Omani and Egyptian learners. In the Saudi context, Ben Duhaish (2008) also reported that the learners had noticeably higher scores in the use of literal PVs than the figurative and semi-transparent ones. It is also consistent with Gandorah's (2015) finding that intermediate learners avoided more PVs than advanced learners. Also, figurative PVs were avoided more than literal PVs. Gandorah (2015) attributed the poor performance with figurative PVs and the low performance of the intermediate group generally to the inherent semantic complexity of PVs. However, there are a few shortcomings with this study; firstly, the number of the participants (18) was small and only males participated. Secondly, only 13 PVs were tested. Thirdly, the selection of PVs was a replication of Liao and Fukuya's (2004) study, which has been criticized since it was pertinent only to American English. Liao and Fukuya (2004) also failed to address how they compiled their particular list of PVs, neglecting to provide at least some evidence that the learners had prior knowledge of the PVs being tested. The present study tried to avoid these shortcomings by employing more participants of both gender (male and female). Also, more PVs

(32) were tested, and these were chosen carefully on the basis of establishing learners' prior knowledge of these PVs as already discussed in Section 3.2.

5.5. Gender:

Another variable this study is interested in is whether gender is also a factor in the use of PVs. According to Schmitt and Redwood (2011) there has been much debate about the role of gender in language learning and acquisition. For both receptive and productive tasks, the results on the current study indicated that the difference was not significant, and for these participants at least, gender did not appear to be a factor in their knowledge of PVs, as there was not a statistically significant difference between male and female students' performance on either type of task (productive or receptive). These findings align with those of Schmitt and Redwood (2011), who reported that gender has no influence on learner performance in the use of PVs.

6. Conclusion

Previous research on PVs in Saudi Arabia has mainly focused on avoidance patterns (Ben Duhaish 2008; Abu Jamil 2010; Gandorah 2015). The present study, in the experimental part, combined productive and receptive measures as well as investigating the avoidance of English PVs and addressed a major shortcoming in previous research which failed to account for the learners' probable prior knowledge of the PVs tested. The results of this study confirmed the challenging nature of PVs and supported the findings of earlier studies pointing out the difficulty of PVs for English language learners (e.g., Garnier & Schmitt 2015, 2016; Schmitt & Redwood 2011). The results of productive and receptive tasks could be considered quite low knowing the way the items under investigation were selected: as noted earlier, the PVs in the present study were selected based on the textbooks used by the students at their elementary, intermediate and secondary schools. In addition, they are all found within the list of 150 most frequently used PVs in Liu's (2011) study, which

was based on the BNC and COCA to maximize the likelihood that students had already met the selected PVs, which they might then either use or avoid. Thus, given a research design that maximized the likelihood that participants had been familiar with the items on which they were tested, scores of 72% and 59% correctly answered items on receptive and productive tasks in the current study, might be considered quite low especially when they are compared to the results of the native control group in which they score 100% in both tests. This raises a serious concern regarding participants' knowledge and use of other PVs in English. Furthermore, it can be concluded that a score of 72% for the receptive task and 59% for the productive is rather weak considering that the participants in this study were undergraduate university students and they were only presented with familiar PVs; those that they have been introduced to in the years of studying English as well as 'high-frequency PVs' as identified by previous research (Gardner and Davies 2007; Liu 2011).

Furthermore, this level of knowledge is also positively influenced by L2 proficiency and is related to the semantic nature of the PVs in question. Gender, on the other hand, did not appear to be a factor in their knowledge of PVs. This finding could be helpful for teachers who wish to work on increasing awareness among the low proficiency level learners of the important role of PVs in language learning.

In addition, the present study confirmed the observation that Saudi EFL learners tend to avoid the use of PVs. The findings suggest that the reasons behind avoidance include L1-L2 structural differences, poor productive knowledge, limited exposure to PVs and the semantic nature of PVs. Further studies are needed to explore additional variables, such as learning context and task type.

Accordingly, special attention should be given in order to prevent learners transferring and copying their L1 structure into the L2 and to help them acquire new constructional knowledge of PVs (Goldberg 2016). Instead of teaching PVs along with one-word synonyms which may lead to learners ignoring the significant

characteristics of particles as satellites and may increase the possibility of their transferring the verb-framed properties of Arabic to their production in English, teachers and material designers should be aware that PVs deserve greater attention in language classrooms and emphasize the point that PVs are characteristic of English as a satellite-framed language (Waibel 2007). It is also suggested that, if providing one-word synonyms, teachers should do so with giving clear examples to help learners understand that they should not use these one-word synonyms as an exact replacement for PVs, as they are not used in precisely the same way in terms of context of use or register.

Additionally, there are also several PVs that could be replaced by a single verb in the learners' L1 which can influence the learners' use and knowledge of such PVs. Thus, it is suggested that teachers should take into account learners' L1 (Arabic) by explaining the meanings of PVs in both Arabic and English to help learners learn and use PVs better. Giving a clear explanation of the syntactic similarities and differences of both L1 and L2 could increase the learners' awareness of that fact that they cannot simply follow their Arabic structure and produce similar forms in English, which has different structure. Furthermore, the results confirm that learners face more difficulties in their use and knowledge of figurative PVs than literal ones. In addition, the frequency analysis conducted further confirmed this. Thus, teachers could pay more attention to figurative PVs, focusing on those that are highly frequent in English, as they are more useful for learners in their writings and communication. As the meaning of these figurative PVs cannot be understood simply by knowing the meaning of the individual elements in the PV combination, it is a difficult task for teachers to make learners aware of how the meanings of these figurative PVs are deduced. Therefore, when teaching students vocabulary, teachers should assist them in learning the word's aspects which include its written form, spoken form, grammatical behavior, collocational behavior, frequency, conceptual meaning, stylistic register, and association with related words. Learners at the advanced level

should give special attention to mastering the contextual use of polysemous PVs, as indicated by Siyanova and Schmitt (2007).

Moreover, the results of this study indicate that the Saudi EFL learners' underuse and avoidance of PVs could be due to their limited exposure to PVs as Saudi learners with B1 proficiency levels showed higher levels of productive and receptive knowledge of PVs than A2 ones. In Saudi Arabia, English classrooms are the primary source of input in the EFL context. However, Classroom time is limited. Thus, it is the role of the EFL teachers to focus on providing learners with greater exposure to PVs by promoting other forms of exposure. For example, by providing them with a number of a variety of authentic language contextualized examples of these verbs. Teachers also could encourage learners strongly to engage in activities such as reading, watching films and social networking in English. However, mere exposure to PVs is not enough to improve the learners' performance in their use (e.g. Nesselhauf 2005; Waibel 2007). Moreover, the repeated exposure of a word does not ensure memory, let alone its production or appropriate use. Thus, it could be useful using explicit teaching with respect to PV, to improve the learners' understanding and use of PVs rather than trying to teach them incidentally alone which is far less effective than explicit teaching (Nation, 2013). Teaching PVs explicitly, focusing on all their components, meaning(s) and usage patterns, is believed to be necessary to improve error-free production of L2 learners (see Nesselhauf 2005: 269). Teachers should, therefore, teach high frequency PVs more explicitly in the language classroom.

Furthermore, there are so many PVs in English that it would be impossible to teach them all. Textbook designers, therefore, as well as teachers, especially in the Saudi context, should adopt a more principled approach when it comes to selecting PVs to be presented to learners in their textbooks. The results of the study indicate that there are many high frequent PVs learners avoided. Therefore, textbook writers should

start considering the importance and usefulness of corpus tools in their selection process of what needs to be taught. For instance, they could make use of the PHaVE List and include a varied selection of exercises and assessment activities based on this list.

Additionally, it can be difficult for language practitioners and teachers to choose an appropriate approach to the teaching of PVs to L2 learners (Schmitt and Redwood, 2011). There are many ideas in the literature for teaching PVs to L2 users. Given that no single approach is suitable for all teaching contexts, having such a broad range of possibilities is good, but it may make the selection process more challenging. It is crucial for teachers to first comprehend the extent to which individual factors such as, L2 proficiency, gender and L1 background, may impact their students' learning of PVs before determining which approach to apply. The results of the current study can help with this knowledge and can be used to guide the choice of the PV teaching approach that best suits L2 students' needs.

Finally, these findings should be interpreted with regards to a number of limitations. This study was conducted with A2 and B1 proficiency participants. Future research could include advanced participants as well. Finally, it is important to note that only one test type was used in this study to measure EFL learners' use of PVs productively and receptively and their avoidance behavior. A follow-up study using different types of tests such as translation, and story-retell tasks and their affects would be of great value.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my very great appreciation to Prof. Dorothy Kenny and Iker Erdocia for their valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research work.

References

- Abdul Rahman, Z. A. A., & Abid, R. Z. (2014). Rarity or non-existence of phrasal verbs in the written discourse of Omani student -teachers of English. *SAGE Open*, 4(4), 1-10.
- Alangari, M. A. (2019) A corpus-based study of verb-noun collocations and verb complementation clause structures in the writing of advanced Saudi learners of English. PhD thesis, University of Reading.
- Aldahesh AY (2009). *Translating Idiomatic English Phrasal Verbs into English: A Contrastive Linguistic Study*. VDM: Germany.
- Aldukhayel, D. M. (2014). L2 exposure effect on avoidance of phrasal verbs by Arab ESL learners. [Master's Thesis], Colorado State University, United States.
- Ayadi, A. (2010). *Lexical translation problems: The problem of translating phrasal verbs. The case of third year LMD learners of English*. [Unpublished MA dissertation]. Mentouri University, Algeria.
- Ben Duhaish, F. A. B. (2008). "Looking Into" ESL/EFL Arab Learners' Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Colorado State University.
- Boers, F. (2004). Expanding learners' vocabulary through metaphor awareness: What expansion, what learners, what vocabulary. *Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*, 211-232.
- Dagut, M., & Laufer, B. (1985). Avoidance of phrasal verbs: A case for evidence from an empirical study of SL relativisation. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 431-470.
- Dinneen, L. C., & Blakesley, B. C. (1973). Algorithm AS 62: A generator for the sampling distribution of the Mann-Whitney U statistic. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series C (Applied Statistics)*, 22(2), 269-273. doi: 10.2307/2346934.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- El-Dakhs, D. A. S. (2016). The lexical knowledge and avoidance of phrasal verbs: The case of Egyptian learners of English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 5(1), 132-144.
- Ellis, P. (2010). *The Essential Guide to Effect Sizes: Statistical Power, Meta-Analysis, and the Interpretation of Research Results*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511761676.

- Ellis, R. (1986). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gandorah, M. S. (2015). *Arabic ELLS' Attitude toward Phrasal Verbs*. [Master Thesis]. St. Cloud State University, United States.
- Gardner, D., & Davies, M. (2007). *Pointing Out Frequent Phrasal Verbs: A Corpus-Based Analysis*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(2), 339–359.
- Garnier, M., & N. Schmitt. (2015). *The PHaVE list: a pedagogical list of phrasal verbs and their most frequent meaning senses*. *Language Teaching Research* 19(6). 645–66.
- Garnier, M., & N. Schmitt. (2016). *picking up polysemous phrasal verbs: how many do learners know and what facilitates this knowledge?* *System* 59. 29–44.
- Garnier, M. (2016) *English phrasal verbs: usage, knowledge, acquisition*. [PhD thesis]. University of Nottingham.
- Goldberg, A. (2016). *Tuning in to the verb-particle construction in English*. In Léa Nash and Pollet Samvelian, (eds.), *Approaches to complex predicates*, 110–141. Leiden: Brill.
- Groot, P. J. M. (2000). *Computer Assisted Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. *Language Learning & Technology*, 4(1), 60–81.
- Hulstijn, J. H., & Marchena, E. (1989). *Avoidance: Grammatical or semantic causes?* *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11(3), 241–255.
- Kamarudin, R. (2013). *A study on the use of phrasal verbs by Malaysian learners of English*. [Unpublished PhD dissertation]. University of Birmingham, UK.
- Kleinmann, H. H. (1977). *Avoidance Behavior in Adult Second Language Acquisition*. *Language Learning*, 27(1), 93–107.
- Laufer, B. & Eliasson, S. (1993). *What causes avoidance in L2 learning: L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 similarity, or L2 complexity?* *Studies in Second Language*, 15, 35-48.
- Liao, Y., & Fukuya, Y. J. (2004). *Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs: The Case of Chinese Learners of English*. *Language Learning*, 54(2), 193–226.
- Liu, D. (2011). *The Most Frequently Used English Phrasal Verbs in American and British English: A Multicorpus Examination*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(4), 661–688.
- Melka, F. (1997). *Receptive versus productive aspects of vocabulary*. In N. Schmitt and M. McCarthy (eds.), *Vocabulary Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy* (pp. 84-102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

-
- Nation, I. S. P. (2001, 2013). Learning vocabulary in another language. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
 - Purpura, J. (2009). The Oxford online placement test: What does it measure and how? Retrieved February 6, 2017, from https://www.oxfordenglishtesting.com/uploadedfiles/6_NewLook_and_Feel/Content/oopt_measure.pdf
 - Schmitt, N., and S. Redwood. (2011). Learner knowledge of phrasal verbs: a corpus-informed study. In F. Meunier, S. de Cock, G. Gilquin & M. Paquot (eds.), *A taste for corpora*, 173–208. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
 - Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
 - Schmitt, N. (2014). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
 - Siyanova, A., & Schmitt, N. (2007). Native and nonnative use of multi-word vs. One-word verbs. *IRAL-International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 45(2), 119–139.
 - Sjöholm, K. (2004). The complexity of the learning and teaching of EFL among Swedish-minority students in bilingual Finland. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 36(6). 685–96.
 - Stewart, J., & White, D. (2011). Estimating guessing effects on the Vocabulary Levels Test for
 - Differing degrees of word knowledge. *TESOL Quarterly*, 45(2), 370-380.
 - Slobin, D. (2006). What makes manner of motion salient? Explorations in linguistic typology, discourse and cognition. In M. Hickman & S. Robert (Eds.), *Space in languages: Linguistic systems and cognitive categories* (pp. 59–81). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
 - VanPatten, B. (2015). Input processing in adult SLA. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition* (2nd ed.) (pp. 113-135). New York: Routledge.
 - Webb, S. (2008). Receptive and productive vocabulary sizes of L2 learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 30(1), 79-95.

Appendix A

Oxford Quick Placement Test:

Oxford Quick Placement Test Section B

(Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate)

There are 60 sentences. You have 20 minutes to finish this part. Good luck!

Question 1 – 5

- Where can you see these notices?
 - For questions 1 to 5, mark one letter A, B or C on your Answer Sheet.
1. YOU CAN LOOK, BUT DON'T TOUCH THE PICTURES
A ► in an office B ► in a cinema C ► in a museum
 2. PLEASE GIVE THE RIGHT MONEY TO THE DRIVER
A ► in a bank B ► on a bus C ► in a cinema
 3. NO PARKING PLEASE A ► in a street B ► on a book C ► on a table
 4. CROSS BRIDGE FOR TRAINS TO EDINBURGH
A ► in a bank B ► in a garage C ► in a station
 5. KEEP IN A COLD PLACE A ► on clothes B ► on furniture C ► on food

Question 6 –10

- In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the text below.
- For questions 6 to 10, mark one letter A, B, or C on your Answer Sheet.

THE STARS

There are millions of stars in the sky. If you look (6).....the sky on a clear night, it is possible to see about 3000 stars. They look small, but they are really

(7).....big hot balls of burning gas. Some of them are huge, but others are much smaller, like our planet Earth. The biggest stars are very bright, but they only live for a short time. Every day new stars (8).....born and old stars die. All the stars are very far away. The light from the nearest star takes more (9).....four years to reach Earth. Hundreds of years ago, people (10).....stars, like the North Star, to know which direction to travel in. Today you can still see that star.

6. A▶ at B▶ up C▶ on
7. A▶ very B▶ too C▶ much
8. A▶ is B▶ be C▶ are
9. A▶ that B▶ of C▶ than
10. A▶ use B▶ used C▶ using

Question 11 - 15

- In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the texts.
- For questions 11 to 20, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

Good smiles ahead for young teeth

Older Britons are the worst in Europe when it comes to keeping their teeth. But British youngsters (11).....more to smile about because (12).....teeth are among the best. Almost 80% of Britons over 65 have lost all or some (13).....their teeth according to a World Health Organisation survey. Eating too (14).....sugar is part of the problem. Among (15)....., 12-year-olds have on average only three missing, decayed or filled teeth.

11. A▶ getting B▶ got C▶ have D▶ having
12. A▶ their B▶ his C▶ them D▶ theirs
13. A▶ from B▶ of C▶ among D▶ between

14. A ► much B ► lot C ► many D ► deal
15. A ► person B ► people C ► children D ► family

Question 16 - 20

Christopher Columbus and the New World

On August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain to find a new route to India, China and Japan. At this time, most people thought you would fall off the edge of the world if you sailed too far. Yet sailors such as Columbus had seen how a ship appeared to get lower and lower on the horizon as it sailed away. For Columbus this (16).....that the world was round. He (17).....to his men about the distance travelled each day. He did not want them to think that he did not (18).....exactly where they were going. (19)....., on October 12, 1492, Columbus and his men landed on a small island he named San Salvador. Columbus believed he was in Asia, (20).....he was actually in the Caribbean.

16. A ► made B ► pointed C ► was D ► proved
17. A ► lied B ► told C ► cheated D ► asked
18. A ► find B ► know C ► think D ► expect
19. A ► Next B ► Secondly C ► Finally D ► Once
20. A ► as B ► but C ► because D ► if

Question 21 - 30

- In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.
- For questions 21 to 40, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

21. The children won't go to sleep.....we leave a light on outside their bedroom.

- A▶ except B▶ otherwie C▶ unless D▶ but
22. I'll give you my spare keys in case you.....home before me.
A▶ would get B▶ got C▶ will get D▶ get
23. My holiday in Paris gave me a great.....to improve my French accent.
A▶ occasion B▶ chance C▶ hope D▶ possibility
24. The singer ended the concert.....her most popular song. A▶ by B▶ with
C▶ in D▶ as
25. Because it had not rained for several months, there was a.....of water.
A▶ shortage B▶ drop C▶ scare D▶ waste
26. I've always.....you as my best friend. A▶ regarded B▶ thought C▶
meant D▶ supposed
27. She came to live here.....a month ago. A▶ quite B▶ beyond C▶ already
D▶ almost
28. Don't make such a.....! The dentist is only going to look at your teeth.
A▶ fuss B▶ trouble C▶ worry D▶ reaction
29. He spent a long time looking for a tie which.....with his new shirt.
A▶ fixed B▶ made C▶ went D▶ wore
30. Fortunately,.....from a bump on the head, she suffered no serious injuries
from her fall.
A▶ other B▶ except C▶ besides D▶ apart

Question 31 – 40

31. She had changed so much that.....anyone recognized her.

- A▶ almost B▶ hardly C▶ not D▶ nearly
32.teaching English, she also writes children's books.
A▶ Moreover B▶ As well as C▶ In addition D▶ Apart
33. It was clear that the young couple were.....of taking charge of the restaurant.
A▶ responsible B▶ reliable C▶ capable D▶ able
34. The book.....of ten chapters, each one covering a different topic.
A▶ comprises B▶ includes C▶ consists D▶ contains
35. Mary was disappointed with her new shirt as the colour.....very quickly.
A▶ bleached B▶ died C▶ vanished D▶ faded
36. National leaders from all over the world are expected to attend the.....meeting.
A▶ peak B▶ summit C▶ top D▶ apex
37. Jane remained calm when she won the lottery and.....about her business as if
nothing had happened. A▶ came B▶ brought C▶ went D▶ moved
38. I suggest we.....outside the stadium tomorrow at 8.30.
A▶ meeting B▶ meet C▶ met D▶ will meet
39. My remarks were.....as a joke, but she was offended by them.
A▶ pretended B▶ thought C▶ meant D▶ supposed
40. You ought to take up swimming for the.....of your health.
A▶ concern B▶ relief C▶ sake D▶ cause

Questions 41 – 45

- In this section you must choose the word which best fits each space in the texts.

- For questions 41 to 45, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

CLOCKS

The clock was the first complex mechanical machinery to enter the home, (41).....it was too expensive for the (42).....person until the 19th century, when (43).....production techniques lowered the price. Watches were also developed, but they (44).....luxury items until 1868, When the first cheap pocket watch was designed in Switzerland. Watches later became (45).....available, and Switzerland became the world's leading watch manufacturing centre for the next 100 years.

41. A ▶ despite B ▶ although C ▶ otherwise D ▶ average
42. A ▶ average B ▶ medium C ▶ general D ▶ common
43. A ▶ vast B ▶ large C ▶ wide D ▶ mass
44. A ▶ lasted B ▶ endured C ▶ kept D ▶ remained
45. A ▶ mostly B ▶ chiefly C ▶ greatly D ▶ widely

Questions 46 - 50

Dublin City Walks

What better way of getting to know a new city than by walking around it? Whether you choose the Medieval Walk, which will (46).....you to the city as it was 1000 years ago, find out about the more (47).....history of the city on the Eighteenth Century Walk, or meet the ghosts of Dublin's many writers on The Literary Walk, we know you will enjoy the experience. Dublin City Walks (48).....twice daily. Meet your guide at 10.30 a.m. or 2.30 p.m. at the Tourist Information Office. No advance (49).....is necessary. Special (50).....are available for families, children and parties of more than ten people.

46. A▶ introduce B▶ present C▶ move D▶ show
47. A▶ near B▶ late C▶ recent D▶ close
48. A▶ take place B▶ occur C▶ work D▶ function
49. A▶ paying B▶ reserving C▶ warning D▶ booking
50. A▶ funds B▶ costs C▶ fees D▶ rates

Question 51– 60

- In this section you must choose the word or phrase which best completes each sentence.
- For questions 51 to 60, mark one letter A, B, C or D on your Answer Sheet.

51. If you're not too tired we could have a.....of tennis after lunch.
A▶ match B▶ play C▶ game D▶ party
52. Don't you get tired.....watching TV every night? A▶ with B▶ by C▶ of
D▶ at
53. Go on, finish the dessert. It needs.....up because it won't stay fresh.
A▶ eat B▶ eating C▶ to eat D▶ eaten
54. We're not used to.....invited to very formal occasions.
A▶ be B▶ have C▶ being D▶ having
55. I'd rather we.....meet this evening, because I'm very tired.
A▶ wouldn't B▶ shouldn't C▶ hadn't D▶ didn't
56. She obviously didn't want to discuss the matter so I didn't.....the point.
A▶ maintain B▶ chase C▶ follow D▶ pursue
57. Anyone.....after the start of the play is not allowed in until the interval.

A► arrives B► has arrived C► arriving D► arrived

58. This new magazine iswith interesting stories and useful information.

A► full B► packed C► thick D► compiled

59. The restaurant was far too noisy to be.....to relaxed conversation.

A► conducive B► suitable C► practical D► fruitful

60. In this branch of medicine, it is vital toopen to new ideas.

A► stand B► continue C► hold D► remain

Appendix B

Measuring the proficiency level of the learners.

NO.	Number	Gender	The score	Proficiency level
1	4003045	Male	32	B1
2	3612998	Male	35	B1
3	4028803	Male	37	B1
4	4001949	Male	33	B1
5	4002164	Male	37	B1
6	4001866	Male	44	B2
7	4001593	Male	32	B1
8	4029489	Male	36	B1
9	4028944	Male	36	B1
10	4002676	Male	38	B1
11	4000736	Male	32	B1
12	4000352	Male	33	B1
13	4001308	Male	32	B1
14	4005037	Male	39	B1
15	4003286	Male	42	B2
16	4002186	Male	30	B1
17	4000025	Male	35	B1
18	4003195	Male	33	B1
19	3929365	Male	33	B1
20	4002095	Male	32	B1
21	3611727	Male	34	B1
22	4000847	Male	37	B1
23	4028181	Male	39	B1
24	4001878	Male	32	B1
25	4028797	Male	34	B1
26	4001078	Male	32	B1
27	4001449	Male	33	B1
28	4000091	Male	32	B1
29	4002629	Male	39	B1
30	4000410	Male	38	B1
31	4000625	Male	39	B1
32	4000021	Male	36	B1
33	4003425	Male	34	B1
34	4002792	Male	33	B1
35	4001596	Male	33	B1
36	4001790	Male	38	B1
37	3900316	Male	39	B1
38	3705117	Male	33	B1

39	4001151	Male	32	B1
40	4001691	Male	36	B1
41	4002300	Male	36	B1
42	4028858	Male	36	B1
43	4003292	Male	33	B1
44	4028503	Male	32	B1
45	4000305	Male	32	B1
46	4000726	Male	35	B1
47	4000207	Male	33	B1
48	4029316	Male	33	B1
49	4002845	Male	34	B1
50	4002098	Male	33	B1
51	4003230	Male	32	B1
52	4002171	Male	39	B1
53	4003332	Male	33	B1
54	4002616	Male	34	B1
55	4000586	Male	37	B1
56	4000262	Male	35	B1
57	4003305	Male	33	B1
58	4000113	Male	35	B1
59	4001488	Male	33	B1
60	3901390	Male	34	B1
61	4003521	Male	34	B1
62	4000619	Male	18	A2
63	4000833	Male	20	A2
64	3414070	Male	22	A2
65	4001932	Male	20	A2
66	3902092	Male	26	A2
67	4005953	Male	19	A2
68	3903173	Male	15	A1
69	4002597	Male	18	A2
70	4003296	Male	18	A2
71	4028322	Male	24	A2
72	4000724	Male	22	A2
73	3902824	Male	21	A2
74	4002184	Male	19	A2
75	4000645	Male	25	A2
76	4002987	Male	21	A2
77	4000472	Male	20	A2
78	4002824	Male	23	A2
79	4000720	Male	18	A2
80	3900088	Male	25	A2
81	4002603	Male	10	A1
82	4003409	Male	18	A2

83	4000700	Male	23	A2
84	4001307	Male	19	A2
85	4006171	Male	20	A2
86	3902479	Male	20	A2
87	3929612	Male	21	A2
88	4001299	Male	17	A1
89	4028650	Male	22	A2
90	4028809	Male	21	A2
91	3900107	Male	21	A2
92	4028456	Male	26	A2
93	4028527	Male	15	A1
94	4028480	Male	22	A2
95	4000919	Male	24	A2
96	4029672	Male	19	A2
97	4005194	Male	21	A2
98	4000790	Male	23	A2
99	4004949	Male	19	A2
100	4028769	Male	26	A2
101	4001602	Male	19	A2
102	4028467	Male	17	A1
103	4028312	Male	20	A2
104	3904182	Male	20	A2
105	4029265	Male	21	A2
106	4000422	Male	26	A2
107	4000515	Male	18	A2
108	4000372	Male	20	A2
109	4028020	Male	19	A2
110	4006151	Male	18	A2
111	4028349	Male	26	A2
112	4002877	Male	15	A1
113	4002976	Male	20	A2
114	4015822	Male	19	A2
115	4012845	Male	20	A2
116	3002657	Male	25	A2
117	4008746	Male	24	A2
118	4026864	Male	22	A2
119	4003576	Male	23	A2
120	4008654	Male	22	A2
121	3611256	Male	20	A2
122	4028654	Male	26	A2
123	4004678	Male	20	A2
124	4001876	Male	22	A2
125	4007346	Female	23	A2
126	4001964	Female	22	A2

127	4028533	Female	18	A2
128	4029533	Female	20	A2
129	4001235	Female	22	A2
130	4007543	Female	20	A2
131	4001754	Female	26	A2
132	4025565	Female	19	A2
133	4009065	Female	20	A2
134	4001048	Female	15	A1
135	4001834	Female	22	A2
136	4019743	Female	21	A2
137	4002238	Female	19	A2
138	3929678	Female	25	A2
139	4001132	Female	21	A2
140	3611767	Female	20	A2
141	4000926	Female	23	A2
142	4028188	Female	18	A2
143	4018654	Female	25	A2
144	4082326	Female	20	A2
145	4001975	Female	21	A2
146	4021449	Female	22	A2
147	4002291	Female	25	A2
148	4012629	Female	24	A2
149	4018410	Female	20	A2
150	4000232	Female	21	A2
151	4000099	Female	17	A1
152	4009854	Female	23	A2
153	4002792	Female	20	A2
154	4028887	Female	18	A2
155	4011790	Female	20	A2
156	3902316	Female	22	A2
157	3708654	Female	20	A2
158	4012985	Female	26	A2
159	4022556	Female	19	A2
160	4032310	Female	26	A2
161	4027554	Female	22	A2
162	4013454	Female	22	A2
163	4028503	Female	19	A2
164	4000455	Female	19	A2
165	4000766	Female	22	A2
166	4000243	Female	15	A1
167	4025464	Female	18	A2
168	4012845	Female	21	A2
169	4032098	Female	38	B1
170	4013230	Female	39	B1

171	4022171	Female	44	B2
172	4003454	Female	38	B1
173	4032636	Female	38	B1
174	4043586	Female	39	B1
175	4003262	Female	36	B1
176	4034505	Female	37	B1
177	4034213	Female	37	B1
178	4024543	Female	37	B1
179	3906542	Female	39	B1
180	4016521	Female	43	B2
181	4024519	Female	37	B1
182	4024423	Female	38	B1
183	3426570	Female	38	B1
184	4015632	Female	36	B1
185	3905743	Female	37	B1
186	4015343	Female	37	B1
187	3903753	Female	36	B1
188	4036437	Female	33	B1
189	4009984	Female	36	B1
190	4021982	Female	36	B1
191	4000777	Female	38	B1
192	3902232	Female	35	B1
193	4009655	Female	34	B1
194	4010645	Female	34	B1
195	4032987	Female	38	B1
196	4036532	Female	33	B1
197	4025544	Female	37	B1
198	4015630	Female	38	B1
199	3904898	Female	36	B1
200	4032603	Female	42	B2
201	4018765	Female	33	B1
202	4023855	Female	32	B1
203	4018765	Female	38	B1
204	4019997	Female	33	B1
205	3902579	Female	36	B1
206	3929512	Female	34	B1
207	4001434	Female	36	B1
208	4028775	Female	38	B1
209	4022869	Female	35	B1

Appendix C

PVs chosen and the overall rank order in COCA, BNC and the textbooks.

NO.	Secondary	Intermediate	Elementary	COCA	BNC	PVs	S	I	E
1	1	1	12	1	1	Go on	53	44	2
2	2	6	-	6	8	Find out	20	10	-
3	3	5	20	35	62	Wake up	20	13	1
4	4	10	4	8	6	Go out	19	7	3
5	5	16	-	17	10	Make up	12	6	-
6	6	93	-	98	88	Get in	12	1	-
7	7	14	-	149	114	Put in	11	7	-
8	8	30	16	24	31	Take out	10	4	1
9	9	9	-	13	30	Get out	10	9	-
10	10	4	-	41	18	Take up	10	16	-
11	11	59	-	4	9	Come up	10	2	-
12	12	-	-	11	2	Set up	9	-	-
13	13	13	-	26	15	Go down	9	7	-
14	14	39	-	49	128	Check out	9	3	-
15	15	23	-	7	12	Come out	8	5	-
16	16	24	15	2	3	Pick up	8	5	1
17	17	-	-	16	23	Give up	7	-	-
18	18	44	-	12	21	Turn out	7	3	-
19	19	78	-	38	61	Hold up	7	1	-
20	20	3	-	86	146	Hang out	7	15	-
21	49	8	13	14	14	Come in	4	9	2
22	43	2	1	23	25	Get up	5	15	23
23	89	7	2	51	58	Put out	3	10	8
24	22	36	8	3	5	Come back	7	3	2
25	34	17	9	5	4	Go back	5	6	2
26	149	80	-	9	7	Point out	1	1	-
27	74	32	5	10	53	Grow up	3	4	2
28	50	-	-	15	22	Take on	4	-	-
29	56	72	-	18	32	End up	4	1	-
30	58	38	-	19	19	Get back	4	3	-
31	71	33	-	20	26	Look up	3	4	-

Appendix D

Personal information form

Section A (Questionnaire)
Study investigating knowledge of English

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. To enable me to consider the relevance of factors like age, sex, knowledge of other languages etc., I have a few questions for you. As already mentioned in the consent form, all information in this study will be anonymous. Your identity will be kept confidential within the limits of the law; your name will not be used in reports on the data. Please provide answers to the following questions by ticking the boxes (X) or filling in the blanks.

1. **Your native language(s):** Arabic other: _____
2. **Are you:** Female Male
3. **Your age:** 18-22 22-26 26-30
4. **Nationality:** Saudi Other: _____
5. **English proficiency score: IELTS:** _____ **TOFEL:** _____ **Other:** _____
6. **Number of years you have attended English classes:** _____ years.
7. **Number of months you have lived in an English-speaking country:** _____ months.
8. **Other languages you speak fluently:** _____

Finally, we would like to thank you very much for your participation. We really appreciate your help and contribution to this study. Thanks a lot!

If you would like to know more about the results of the study, please do not hesitate to contact us via email: ***

English Phrasal Verbs Knowledge Test

Part 1

We are carrying out a study of students' knowledge of phrasal verbs. To help us in our research please complete this test.

Read each sentence carefully, and then write what you think the missing words (a phrasal verb) are, in the space next to the sentence. To help you, the first letter(s) of each word is/are shown. We have also given a definition for each phrasal verb after every sentence. **Please make sure you read each definition carefully.**

There are 16 sentences. You have 6 minutes to finish this part. Good luck!

Example sentences:

#	Sentence	Answer
	Parents should do their best to b... u... their children to be honest. (<i>raise</i>)	bring up
	The reception in the garden was c.... o... because of a thunderstorm. (<i>canceled</i>)	cut off

1	I hurt my back when I p..... u..... a heavy sofa and put it in the back of my truck. (<i>Get or take SB/STH from a place</i>)
2	My son is really good at m..... u..... jokes and funny stories. (<i>Invent</i>)
3	How did you f..... o..... about the company's secret plans? (<i>Discover STH</i>)
4	Those who p..... the biggest effort i... will get the biggest reward. (<i>Invest or devote so as to achieve STH</i>)
5	Mike fell asleep in the seminar, so I poked him in the ribs and he w..... u..... (<i>Arise/ Stop sleeping</i>)
6	If we can't finish the job today, we'll stop and t... it u... again in the morning. (<i>Discuss or deal with an issue</i>)
7	The dog could g.... o.... because I left the door open. (<i>Leave a room</i>)
8	Do you think the issues of getting more help will c... u.... at this week's meeting? (<i>Bring forth or produce or arise</i>)
9	She came back late last night, but she could not g.... i... (<i>Go (or make STH/SB go) inside a place</i>)
10	Why don't you s.... u.... a meeting with our new clients? (<i>Arrange for STH to happen or exist</i>)
11	I've got a rotten tooth and my dentist is going to t.... it o.... tomorrow. (<i>Remove STH/SB from somewhere</i>)
12	There is a police car outside the shop. Do you know what is g.... o....? (<i>Happen, take place</i>)
13	They couldn't g.... o.... of the building because of the bars on the window. (<i>Leave a place</i>)
14	He said g... u.... alcohol was the best thing he has ever done for himself. (<i>Stop doing or having STH; quit</i>)
15	After hitting the iceberg, the ship began to g.... d.... (<i>Move down to a lower level or position</i>)
16	The seminar t... o.... better than we'd expected. It was a great success. (<i>Produce an unexpected result</i>)

Part 2

Read each sentence carefully, and then **circle** the word that **best** completes the blank space. Choose for each sentence the verb that in your opinion best fits the context and fill in that verb. Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English. There is only **one correct answer** for each question. To help you, there is a definition for each phrasal verb after every sentence.

There are **16** sentences. You have **6** minutes to finish the part. Good luck!

Example sentences:

#	Sentence			
	She the laughter with great effort. (<i>repressed</i>)			
	held back	held on	held off	held down
	This is amazing; the good work! (<i>continue</i>)			
	Keep down	Keep at	Keep up	Keep away

1	Even when I have a day off, I early. I can't help waking up at 6 a.m. (<i>Rise after lying in bed or staying</i>)	get up	get around	get along	get ahead
2	Sorry I'm late. I got in a traffic jam. (<i>Delay or prevent the progression of STH/SB</i>)	held down	held off	held up	held back
3	The headache went away after I took the pills, but it's just again. (<i>Return to a place</i>)	come about	come back	come apart	come away
4	Joe's worried about his son. He's with street gangs. (<i>Spend time relaxing or enjoying</i>)	hanging up	hanging around	hanging out	hanging on
5	She feels better today, so she should be able to to work tomorrow. (<i>Return to a place</i>)	go about	go back	go against	go off
6	He his cigarette before entering the building. (<i>Stop STH from burning</i>)	put out	put back	put in	put on
7	She was born in India, but her family moved when she was a baby and she in Canada. (<i>Get older</i>)	grew apart	grew up	grew into	grew on
8	John a few errors in the translation that we hadn't noticed. (<i>Direct attention toward STH</i>)	point to	point into	point back	pointed out
9	Don't lend him any money; you'll never it (<i>Return</i>)	get about	get across	get back	get off
10	Chelsea Football Club Liverpool in this week's Match of the Day. Which team will you be going for? (<i>Undertake or handle</i>)	takes apart	takes back	takes on	takes off
11	She went into the bank and with some money. (<i>Leave a place</i>)	came out	came away	came off	came on
12	If you don't study hard, you might working in a job you don't like. (<i>Become or do something unplanned</i>)	end with	end in	end out	end up
13	Let me know what time your flight and I'll pick you up from the airport. (<i>Enter a place or area</i>)	comes away	comes in	comes with	comes apart
14	I didn't know the correct spelling, so I had to it in the dictionary. (<i>Search</i>)	look at	look after	look up	look out
15	Let's that new website Jim found. It sounds really interesting. (<i>Have a look at; examine STH</i>)	check in	check through	check into	check out
16	The cost of airline tickets is because of competition from budget airlines. (<i>Decrease in value or amount</i>)	going down	going about	going by	going out

Part 3

Read each sentence carefully, and then **circle** the word that **best** completes the blank space.
Choose for each sentence the verb that in your opinion best fits the context and fill in that verb.
Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English. There is only **one**
correct answer for each question.
There are 32 sentences. You have 12 minutes to finish the part. Good luck!

1	He invited us to the car and go for a ride with him.			
	come along	get in	enter	join
2	We've a meeting with some of our biggest clients, and all our marketing staff are going to be there.			
	set up	given out	arranged	revealed
3	Peter's going to the dentist to have his rotten tooth			
	removed	broken down	stopped	taken out
4	I watch the news on cable TV, so I will know what is in the world.			
	coming in	going on	happening	entering
5	She tried to of the burning car but she could not open the door.			
	get out	pull back	leave	withdraw
6	I taking sugar in tea and coffee to lose weight.			
	held back	stopped	refrained	gave up
7	She will to Florida to see her parents.			
	find out	discover	go down	travel
8	The chocolate cake much better than we'd expected. It was delicious.			
	took in	turned out	appeared	understood
9	In my culture it is polite to when someone enters a room.			
	get up	put on	rise	wear
10	I was by the terrible traffic and arrived half an hour late for my appointment.			
	looked up	delayed	searched	held up
11	We are having a great time in France. I hope we can again, next year.			
	return	move up	come back	lift
12	Kids used to in pool rooms and bowling alleys, but now they're all online.			
	hang out	spend time	turn up	increase
13	We will to work after the break.			
	figure out	return	understand	go back
14	It took the firemen over an hour to the fire.			
	show up	extinguish	put out	appear
15	Ben didn't really until he had a child and had to take responsibility.			
	back up	grow up	get older	prove
16	He that I only had two weeks to get the whole thing finished.			

	pointed out	took off	removed	mentioned
17	While you're in town, can you my trousers from the Dry Cleaner?			
	work out	pick up	take	train
18	They an excuse for being late.			
	made up	put off	invented	delayed
19	I went to the library to all I could about the life and work of Bill Gates.			
	go ahead	discover	proceed	find out
20	Kenny has been working very hard lately. He ten hours of overtime last week.			
	disappointed	put in	devoted	let down
21	I at half past six this morning.			
	carried out	completed	awoke	woke up
22	The committee will the issue again when they've got more details.			
	discuss	take up	show up	appear
23	Do you feel like staying home tonight or would you rather ... and do something?			
	cut off	remove	leave	go out
24	We will contact you if anything new.....			
	turns down	refuses	arises	comes up
25	How will we to the city if the road is closed?			
	get back	return	break up	divide
26	Nobody was willing to such an awful job.			
	come over	visit	undertake	take on
27	I'm waiting for someone to of that building.			
	come out	leave	set out	start
28	We couldn't get tickets for Egypt so we going to Turkey instead.			
	got off	ended up	left	decided
29	Most trains are at least half an hour late this evening.			
	picking up	entering	coming in	collecting
30	Many people have to the meaning of this word in the dictionary.			
	keep up	move	search	look up
31	The girls like to hang out at the mall to all the new clothes.			
	check out	examine	shut down	stop
32	A company will fail if it allows the quality of its products to			
	decrease	walk out	go down	leave