

Intralingual and interlingual errors by Croatian EFL students in the use of English phrasal verbs

Udovičić, Anita

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Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Diplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti – nastavnički smjer i filozofije

Anita Udovičić

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engleskog jezika pri uporabi frazalnih glagola**

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Mentor: izv. prof.dr.sc. Tanja Gradečak-Erdeljić

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Abstract

This paper investigates the influence of intralingual and interlingual factors in making errors related to the use of English phrasal verbs by Croatian learners of English. The first part of the paper contains theoretical background on phrasal verbs, intralingual and interlingual errors and errors in general, as well as on relevant research connecting errors and phrasal verbs. The second part presents the results of 51 questionnaires answered by 3rd year students of the BA program in English language and Literature. Student errors are analyzed in order to connect them with intralingual or interlingual factors. The results have shown that students equally make errors based on intralingual as interlingual factors, and that the majority of students can not recognize the errors in the 'correct the mistake' task.

Key words: phrasal verbs, errors, intralingual factors, interlingual factors

Sažetak

Rad se bavi istraživanjem unutarjezičnih i međujezičnih faktora koji utječu na pravljenje pogrešaka prilikom uporabe engleskih frazalnih glagola. Prvi dio rada objašnjava teorijsku pozadinu frazalnih glagola, unutarjezičnih i međujezičnih pogrešaka kao i pogrešaka općenito te relevantnih istraživanja o pogreškama i frazalnim glagolima. Drugi dio predstavlja rezultate 51 ankete koje su radili studenti na trećoj godini preddipomskog studija engleskog jezika i književnosti. Pogreške studenata su analizirane kako bi se utvrdio mogući utjecaj unutarjezičnih i međujezičnih faktora. Rezultati su pokazali da studenti podjednako prave pogreške zbog unutarjezičnih i međujezičnih utjecaja te da većina studenata ne može prepoznati pogreške kada se od njih traži da ih sami isprave u zadatku.

Ključne riječi: frazalni glagoli, greške, unutarjezični faktori, međujezični faktori

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1. Introduction

This paper consists of two parts: the theoretical and the practical part. The first part is theoretical and it provides necessary information and definitions of phrasal verbs, errors, intralingual and interlingual factors which cause errors, and relevant research on the topic of errors in the process of learning English phrasal verbs. The second part of this paper analyses the questionnaires which were answered by 3rd year students of the BA program in English language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek. The questionnaires consist of three tasks: in the first and the second task students have to fill in the blanks by providing the correct phrasal verb in a context providing sentence, while in the third task students have to find the mistake and correct it.

English phrasal verbs are one of the most problematic area for the learners of English. Since they can have multiple meanings, they are often confused with the meaning of the main verb, or students confuse phrasal verbs with the same main verb but different particles. Phrasal verbs should be introduced to students as a part of their standard vocabulary, i.e. they should be learned in a context of various topics in different lessons. For example, I, a student of English language who finished the course entitled 'Phrasal Verbs', found it difficult to learn the lists of phrasal verbs by heart. Practicing phrasal verbs with context providing sentences made it easier for me to understand and memorize them.

There are not any research investigating the connection between acquisition of the English phrasal verbs and Croatian students. This research will try to discover which intralingual and interlingual factors affect Croatian students' errors in learning of English phrasal verbs.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Phrasal Verbs

2.1.1 Definition

Bolinger (1971:3) explains that he adopts the term *phrasal verb* as the one who is most generally accepted even though there are many suitable names: “Others would serve just as well: Abdul Taha’s “two-word verb”, Anna Live’s “discontinuous verb”, E. Kruisinga’s “compound verb”, Bruce Fraser’s “verb-particle construction”, or Arthur Kennedy’s tentative “verb-adverb compound,” which he suggested and then put aside” (Bolinger, 1971: 3).

According to the Oxford dictionary (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/grammar/phrasal-verbs>), a phrasal verb is a verb that is made up of a main verb with an adverb, a preposition or both. Its meaning is usually not obvious from the meaning of individual words themselves. For example, in the sentence ‘She has always looked down on me’, the verb *looked down on me* does not mean that the person literally was in a higher position and looked down on someone, but that the person thought that she was better than some other person. Palmer (1987) refers to that problem as issue of idiomaticity where phrasal verb can be understood literally if the meaning of it can be deduced from one of its parts i.e. a verb and a particle. Idiomaticity occurs when phrasal verbs cannot be understood literally, but they have certain metaphorical meanings.

Palmer (1987) states that every English dictionary is full of combinations of verbs and particles which can either be treated as an adverb or a preposition, e.g. *give in, look after, carry on, put up with*. Since prepositions require objects, and adverbs do not, phrasal verb ‘give in’ is considered as phrasal verb with adverb, while the rest of them require an object and thus are considered as prepositional verbs. He continues that variations of phrasal verbs i.e. verb plus preposition/adverb are extremely common in spoken English and they have certain characteristics (Palmer 1987:215):

- a) A limited number of particles can be included into combinations, e.g. *down, in, off, on, out, up* and they can combine freely with every verb even though some verbs such as *put, take, get, make* are more common ones.
- b) Some collocational restrictions exist when forming the combinations like shown in example where one particle is replaced by the other one: *look after somebody* can become *look before somebody* - but it does not have an idiomatic meaning in English.

- c) All phrasal/prepositional verbs can be replaced by a single word verb with a very little change in meaning: e.g. *give in* by *yield*, *look after* by *tend*, *carry on* by *continue*, *put up with* by *tolerate*.
- d) All verbs, (except for *give in* in the set above), have passive forms: e.g. *His father was looked after by the nurse.* // *The family tradition was carried on by the son.* // *She's a person who simply can't be put up with.*

Palmer divides phrasal verbs into transitive ones, which require an object, and intransitive which do not require an object and have no following noun phrase. He makes a distinction between phrasal and prepositional verbs by categorizing phrasal verbs as the ones that are followed by an adverb, and prepositional verbs as those that are followed by a preposition e.g. 'The enemy finally gave in' where 'gave in' is phrasal verb, and 'He looked after his aged father' where 'looked after' is prepositional verb which requires an object.

Palmer notes the problem of idiomaticity: "The issue of idiomaticity is closely tied up with 'transparency' or literalness. The meaning of a combination can be said to be transparent (or literal) if it can be deduced from the meaning of the individual parts (here the verb and the particle). If it cannot, it is opaque" (Palmer, 1987:217). He continues that phrasal/prepositional verbs should include idiomatic and non-idiomatic forms to establish clearly defined formal classes, stating that idiomaticity is a semantic rather than a grammatical feature and concludes that idiomaticity is a matter of degree i.e. there is no clear line dividing idiomatic and non-idiomatic expressions as can be seen in these examples where the first meaning is idiomatic and the second one is literal: *put back* 'the clock' or 'the book on a coffee table', *put down* 'a resolution' or 'food for cat', *put up* 'a candidate' or 'hand', *put in* 'an application' or 'an ad in the newspapers', *put out* 'a pamphlet' or 'the rubbish', *put over* 'an idea' or 'the same meaning as put' – these verbs have literal and idiomatic meaning.

Bolinger explains that phrasal verbs are not only phrases that contain verbs and particles but that there must be combinations about which certain generalizations can be made i.e. certain regularities and irregularities should be listed and defined. Bolinger states that:

"All have agreed on the most central forms (of phrasal verbs): they consist of a verb proper and an adverbial particle such as *up*, *out*, or *over*, though not necessarily all instances of even these three have been accorded equal status. Peripheral clusters have been described and either defined into the class of phrasal verbs or defined out of it" (Bolinger, 1971:4).

Further on, he explains that phrasal verbs can be defined by listing every one of them, but that list would be exhaustive and problematic due to everyday construction of new phrasal verbs. Mitchell, as cited in Bolinger (1971:4), proposes that it would be possible to make a closed system of particles, but that it is also hardly practicable.

2.1.2. Phrasal Verb Criteria

Mitchell, as cited in Bolinger (ibid.), makes a distinction between four types of phrases:

1. Nonphrasal
 - a) nonprepositional – *to take*
 - b) prepositional – *to take to*
2. Phrasal
 - a) nonprepositional – *to put up*
 - b) prepositional – *to put up with*.

Bolinger (1971) explains that phrases with pure prepositions are more accidental and bring little contribution to the English language. Proper phrasal verbs are in the phrasal nonprepositional category due to their ability to be more or less systemized, even though there is no clear boundary in forming them. Phrasal nonprepositional verbs are characterized by relatively freely composable phrases which have certain degree of figurative extension and can be systemized based on certain stereotypes. Further on, he proposes 9 criteria for categorizing verbs as phrasal verbs:

1. Replaceability is the most general criterion, it means that phrasal verb can be replaced by a single word verb, e.g.: *to look into* – *investigate*, *egg on* – *incite*, *get around* – *circumvent*. But this criterion excludes some obvious phrasal verbs which cannot be replaced by a specific single word verb: The plane *took off*. – *departed* is not specific. // He *broke out* with a rash. – *erupted* cannot be used in this example. // He *hauled off* and hit me. – meaning to push or drag somebody forcibly, no synonym for this phrasal verb.

2. The second criterion is transitivity, i.e. if the verb is transitive, the combination should be able to be passivized. This test is applicable to verbs with pure prepositions, e.g. *They talked about you*. – *You were talked about*. On the other hand, verbs with mixed adverbs and prepositions will fail the passivation test, e.g. *The house stands near the lake*. ≠ **The lake is stood near by the house*. Bolinger (1971) claims that this test only confirms transitivity of a verb which is rarely in doubt, so he concludes that if the verb is transitive but cannot passivize, it is not excluded from the category of phrasal verbs.

3. Bolinger (1971:8) states that the third criterion is that if the verb is transitive, it should yield an *action nominal*. Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1988) defines action nominal as nouns that are derived from verbs with general meaning of an action or process, thus action nominal construction has an action nominal as its head and contains reference to the participants in the action or process designated by that action nominal, e.g. *He looked up the information.* – *His looking up the information.* Another example of the test is when the phrasal verb cannot be transformed into action nominal: *He looked into the information.* ≠ *His looking into of the information.* Furthermore, Bolinger (ibid.) explains that this test is useful for recognizing pure prepositions, but when it comes to mixed prepositions, it shows contradictory results: e.g. *run up the bill* and *to walk across the bridge* have the same construction, but when they are tested – *The running up the hill was a matter of minutes.* **The walking across of the bridge was a matter of minutes.* Bolinger (ibid.) concludes that the nature of actions, and not the structure of phrases, determines at least these nominals.

Bolinger (1971:10) states that next three tests (4,5 and 6) are grouped together by Fairclough who adopted them from Mitchell.

4. This test states that if the combination of a verb and a particle is transitive, it means that the particle can either precede or follow the noun object: *He looked up his friends.* – *He looked his friends up.* // *They bought out their competitors.* – *They bought their competitors out.* Also, this test eliminates pure adverbs as particles: **He sold regretfully the business.* – *He sold the business regretfully.* It also eliminates prepositions as particles: *I stood in the doorway.* - **I stood the doorway in.* But this test leaves a grey area with certain adpreps: *I walked over the hill.* - ?*I walked the hill over.*

5. The fifth criterion is found when the combination is transitive: if used, pronouns precede the particle: *How did you found that out?* - ?*How did you found out that?* // *You're putting him on!* - **You're putting on him.*

6. The sixth test states that whether the combination is transitive or intransitive, adverbs cannot be found between the verb and the particle unless a particle appears in its most literal sense: **The debater drew his opponent only part-way out.* – *The debater drew the lucky number only part-way out.*

7. Adverbs can be accented and that can be applied in two ways: first to differentiate adverbs, which are independent constituents, or adverbs-particles, which are parts of phrasal verb, from pure prepositions, and second: to distinguish adverbs and adverbs-particles from each other in

the form of contrastive accent. Prepositions normally do not carry an accent: *He is not the person I was looking at.* – *He is not the person I was looking up.* But some prepositions can be accentuated: *He's not the person I was looking after.* Also, adpreps can be accentuated in some situations and in some not. Adverbs which are independent constituents can be separated from adverb-particles which are parts of phrasal verbs by a contrastive accent which at the end indicates the adverbs. But, for example, *give up*, *hold out* and *throw away* are phrasal verbs even though these verbs do not pass the test: *We wanted you to hold out, not give up.* *I wanted the stuff thrown away, not thrown back into the garage.* This test works only in cases of ellipsis i.e. gapping: *I wanted the stuff thrown away, not back into the garage.* // **I told him to move aside, not away.* Bolinger concludes that this test of combined ellipsis and contrastive accent works only with polarity, i.e. pairs like off-on, up-down, in-out and fore-aft.

8. This criterion states that if the combination of the verb and the particle is transitive, the particle can precede a simple definite noun phrase i.e. a proper name or *the* plus a common noun, without taking it as its object. This test refers to test number 4 which states that a particle can follow the noun object, but the problem is that almost any adverb can follow the noun object: **I saw yesterday John.* – *I saw John yesterday.* // **He did neatly the work.* – *He did the work neatly.* // **I left there the keys.* – *I left the keys there.* In test number 8, the noun phrase stands as a unit after the phrasal verb: *I'm afraid to take on John in this contest.* // *You left out the caption.* // *Did you bring along the Joneses?.* Furthermore, the following examples are more or less synonymous expressions functioning as particles show that only the phrasal verb combinations allow the nouns to follow particles: *Why don't you bring over John?* - **Why don't you bring here John?* // *They dragged past the trailer.* - **They dragged nearby the trailer.* // *They pushed in the door.* - **They pushed inward the door.* // *They cut apart the orange.* - **They cut in two the orange.* // *He scattered abroad the generations.* - **He scattered afar the generations.* // *He finished up the report.* - **He finished completely the report.*

Also, a particle can take a noun as its object and in that way, proper particles can be distinguished from pure prepositions: *She told on her friend.* // *That brought on the argument.* But also, test number 5 could already make that distinction: *She told on him.* - **She told him on.* // *That brought it on.* - **That brought on it.* Bolinger finds this test the most dependable one: “The chief advantage is that is not just an either-or test but can be varied by increasing or decreasing the semantic weight of the direct object, to reveal degrees of tightness of stereotyping” (Bolinger, 1971:16). On the other hand, this test does not differentiate between the literal and figurative use of particles: *He brought home the groceries.* // *He brought home the*

point in a convincing manner. But Bolinger concludes that phrasal verbs can be literal and figurative; literal usage is primary and figurative usage can vary.

9. As I have already mentioned, Bolinger (ibid.) proposes that phrasal verbs can be listed, but the problem is obvious due to the great length of that list and to the constant productivity of new phrasal verbs. Mitchell (as cited in Bolinger, 1971) proposes that all the particles used for making phrasal verbs can be listed. The problem with this list is that, even though the particle class is smaller than the verbal components class, it is hard to decide which words this particle list does contain. Meyer (as cited in Bolinger, 1971) lists seventeen most productive particles: *about, across, along, around, aside, away, back, by, down, in, off, on, out, over, through, under, up.*

2.2. Errors in Language Use

2.2.1. Definition of Error

James (1998:1) marks errors, like language itself, as something unique to human beings due to the fact that animals and objects are unable to make them, thus "to err is human". He defines a language error as an unsuccessful bit of language and error analysis as a process of determining the incidence, nature, causes, and consequences of that unsuccessful language. Corder (1982:57) explains that errors made by learners are their language intuitions about grammaticality which is possessed by native speakers of the target language i.e. a learner is not yet a speaker of the target language. Ellis (1994:47) states that learners make comprehension and production errors. He continues that an example of the comprehension error is when the learner understands '*Pass me the paper*' as '*Pass me the pepper*' because of an inability to differentiate the sounds. Production errors are those made in the process of speaking. Children learning their first language, as well as adult native speakers can make them: '*My father live in Gloucester*' instead of '*My father lives in Gloucester*'. Touchie (1986) agrees with James when he writes that language learning, like any other human learning, includes making errors. Furthermore, Touchie explains that language errors were found undesirable in the past, but now they are seen as evidence in a creative process of learning a new language.

Selinker (1972) indicates that language errors are significant in three ways: errors are important for a language teacher because they indicate the learner's progress. Errors are also important for

language researchers since they provide information about the learner's process of learning a language, and errors are important to the learner himself/herself because he/she can test different hypotheses while learning a language.

James (1998:62) states that error analysis is a study of linguistic ignorance i.e. the investigation of what people do not know and how they cope with it. James continues that one sign of ignorance can be silence because some learners tend to be silent when they cannot provide the correct answer. Majority of learners, on the other hand, will try to provide an answer no matter its correctness – the latter ones provide research material for error analysis. James (ibid.) claims that language learners' ignorance can be expressed through four categories: (1) grammaticality, (2) acceptability, (3) correctness, (4) strangeness and infelicity. He described each of these four categories, as follows:

1. **Grammaticality** means that a structure uttered by the learner is grammatical only if it is formed well, which means that something is ungrammatical if it cannot be said in that certain way under any circumstances. Grammaticality includes the context as part of its correctness i.e. if something can be said in a certain context, it means that it is well-formed; otherwise, we cannot use that certain structure in any context while speaking. Grammaticality can be problematic if considered as a reference point due to borderline cases of different grammars, i.e. clear-cut cases of grammaticality are considered as 'code' or 'core' grammar. James also explains the term 'corrigibility', meaning that utterances can be grammatically corrected without change of the meaning e.g. *I want that he come* can be corrected into *I want him to come*. Corrigibility was introduced by Lyons (1977:379) who states that it is the best indicator of grammatical unacceptability, even though James states that there are some ungrammatical sentences that are highly disjointed i.e. 'agrammatical', that they are incorrigible. An example of that 'agrammaticality' is the sentence **Butted to when in did sorry he town*. where Lyons (ibid.:380) concludes that such grossly incorrigible sentences are ungrammatical. Furthermore, James explains that phonology errors which deal with mispronunciation can be corrected, meaning they are corrigible, but they are not ungrammatical.

James (ibid.) claims that the third problem with this test are semantic and collocational anomalies as in examples: *The milk turned *rotten // A *flock of elephants* which are not cases of ungrammaticality because they do not break the rules of general grammar, but they do follow unique rules which make them natural combinations. Lyons (in James, 1998:380) claims that those sentences are corrigible even though they are not ungrammatical; *rotten* can be substituted with *sour milk*, and *flock* can be substituted with *herd of elephants*. On the other hand, James

claims that if these sentences are not ungrammatical but are corrigible, the test is invalid, concluding since they are corrigible, they must be ungrammatical. Furthermore, James proposes that the term 'grammar' should include semantic well-formedness the same as phonological well-formedness.

2. **Acceptability** "is not a theoretical notion but practical notion being determined by the use or usability of the form in question" (James, 1998:66). James claims that the expert of language (linguist) determines if something is grammatical, but the user of language determines if something is acceptable. Further on, grammaticality is a prerequisite for acceptability: Lyons (in James, 1998:380) explains that a native speaker can determine the acceptability of some utterances and put them in context i.e. an ungrammatical utterance is one that a native speaker can recognize as unacceptable and which he/she can correct. "To decide on the acceptability of a piece of language we refer not to rules but to contexts, trying to contextualize the utterance in question" (James, 1998:67). For example, a sentence *Pele (a Brazilian footballer) wore a green dress* can be acceptable if Pele went to a Brazil carnival and wore a green dress, but the speaker probably thinks about his football uniform so that is an error of acceptability. Also, this is an example of a false pair in the Croatian/English interface where the English word 'dress' sounds like the Croatian word for the football jersey 'dres', so the sentence *Pele wore a green dress* can be understood as an interlingual error.

James analyses the relationship between the grammaticality and the acceptability when they co-occur or when they are mutually exclusive, providing four categories which were explained by Lyons (in James 1998:381): a) the first category is where the sentences are grammatical and acceptable, b) there are sentences that are ungrammatical and unacceptable, as it was explained before - ungrammaticality leads to unacceptability, so most of the errors are of this type, c) a sentence can be grammatical but unacceptable, cf. an example given by Borsley (1991:4) *The horse raced past the barn fell.* – the sentence is grammatically correct but it misleads the reader, so a better way to say it is: *The horse ridden past the barn fell.* And the last category is d) where the sentences can be ungrammatical but acceptable which seems impossible since grammaticality is prerequisite for acceptability; Borsley (1991: 4) questions whether this type exists, but provides an example where it is possible: *He is a ?not unintelligent person* – he continues that people say this even though it is grammatically unacceptable to combine 'not' with a prenominal adjective e.g. *a not grey sky, that *not rich man* (Borsley 1991: 5)

3. James (1998) marks **correctness** as a term which refers to prescriptive normative standards of grammar. James states that some utterances can be accepted spontaneously by native speakers

but they were taught to find those utterances unacceptable: that is a metalinguistic decision of a speaker which is not based on his intuition of grammaticality or acceptability. For example, *They went with Tom and me* which is grammatically correct is replaced with *They went with Tom and I*, James concludes that here acceptability is being overruled by grammaticality.

4. The last category of learner's ignorance is **strangeness and infelicity**. Allerton (as paraphrased in James, 1998:75) states that the strangeness is connected with a number of linguistically strange combinations. There are some words that are inherently strange like e.g. 'fax' and 'glasnost' (which is not an English word) but James cannot see the problem concerning that type of words since 'fox', phonetically a close counterpart, is for example an acceptable combination and 'glasnost', although not an English word, has close phonetic counterparts in words with the same phonotactics in the English language like 'glisten' and 'cost'. Some utterances are semantically disharmonious like *crooked year*, *wet water* – they are tautological, contradictory and typical for poets or “the poet in all of us” (James, 1998:75).

The next category, as suggested by Allerton, is simply ungrammaticality, also known as 'locutional deviance' which is expected from foreigners “They are result of cooccurrence restrictions of English, which are not governed by fixed rules but are probabilistic or 'weighted' in unpredictable ways” (James, 1998:75). Allerton (ibid.) provides an example sentence: '*He was listening *at me when I *put the statement*', where co-occurrence restrictions of English, usually not governed by fixed rules and probabilistic, are violated.

In view of their contextual weight, Austin states that errors which are made at the pragmatic level are called *infelicities* and they can worsen speaker's performative class of speech acts (in James, 1998:75). According to James (ibid.) there are four categories of felicities: a) when a speaker does not have enough of L2 vocabulary so he/she cannot express himself, b) misapplication happens when a speaker says the right thing but not to the right person or not in the right moment, c) right language is being directed to the right person and under good circumstances but the linguistic act is imperfect, and the last category is d) when the performance of the speech is cut short.

Touchie (1986) notes that errors are usually divided into *performance errors* and *competence errors*. He explains that performance errors are made when the speaker is tired or in a hurry, on the other hand, competence errors are more serious than performance errors since they reflect inadequate learning. Burt and Kiparsky (as paraphrased in Touchie, 1986) divide errors into global and local ones. “Local errors do not hinder communication and understanding the

meaning of an utterance. Global errors, on the other hand, are more serious than the local errors because global errors interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances” (Touchie, 1986:76). Finally, Touchie concludes that language learning errors involve phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic components.

2.2.2. Intralingual and Developmental Factors Causing Errors

Touchie (1986) defines **intralingual** and **developmental errors** as those which appear as a result of difficulty of the second/target language; he lists eight factors which affect second language learning; (1) simplification where learners tend to use simpler structures like simple past instead of present perfect, (2) overgeneralization which will be explained below, (3) hypercorrection where students who are affected by teacher’s corrections make mistakes even in correct forms, (4) faulty teaching where students make mistakes due to the incorrect information provided by teachers, (5) fossilization which will be explained below, (6) avoidance which is similar to simplification i.e. students avoid complex structures and use simpler ones, (7) inadequate learning when student does not pay attention to rule restrictions, and lastly (8) false concepts hypothesized when learners form the wrong hypothesis about target language.

Selinker (1972) states that fossilization occurs in five categories: “If it can be experimentally demonstrated that fossilizable items, rules, and subsystems are a result of identifiable items in training procedures, then we are dealing with the process known as *transfer of training*; if they are result of identifiable approach by the learner to the material to be learned, then we are dealing with *strategies of second language learning*; if they are a result of an identifiable approach by the learner to communication with native speaker of the target language, then we are dealing with *strategies of second language communication*; and finally, if they are a result of clear overgeneralization of target language rules and semantic features, then we are dealing with the *overgeneralization of TL linguistic material* (Selinker, 1972:37). He provides examples of the above mentioned processes:

1. Selinker (1972:38) states that the overgeneralization of target language is well known to the teachers of the second language: e.g. *What did he intended to say?* where the past tense morpheme -ed is used with the main verb to form a question since the speaker uses it as if it was applied to form an affirmative sentence, disregarding thus completely the function of the operator *did*.

In the example: *After thinking a little, I decided to start on the bicycle as slowly as I could as it was not possible to drive fast*, overgeneralization is applied to the verb *drive* which is used for the act of controlling every vehicle, but in the case of a bike, we find its collocate in the verb 'ride'.

And in the last example: *Max' girlfriend is a very optimistic person, but Max is happier than she's these days*, which concerns the contractions of English language, we have a case when most of the students learn how to form regular contractions, e.g. from *the concert is* to *the concert's* but then they tend to overgeneralize that rule and they do not notice that contractions of auxiliary *to be* cannot be made when it is immediately followed by a constituent.

2. Selinker (1972) explains the process of transfer of training as something relatively different from overgeneralization and language transfer. He gives an example from the Serbo-Croatian language where learners of English have problems with *he/she* pronouns. Subsequently, he explains that in the most cases learners tend to use the pronoun *he* and they do not consider that mistake worth of correction. Selinker concludes that the reason for this mistake is because Serbo-Croatian textbooks use mostly male characters in the examples for teaching English.

3. Selinker (1972) states that some strategies of the second language learning and teaching are culture bound, and where one strategy is widespread in language teaching the simplification of the target language happens. For example, if a student is taught that verbs in the English language are either perfective or imperfective, sentences like these can be constructed: *I am feeling thirsty. // Don't worry, I am hearing him*. The second sentence presents the learner's error in thinking that every progressive aspect has to be marked by *-ing* suffix which results in the inappropriate use of Progressive with verbs of physical perception. Another example are two Russian speakers learning English: they avoid using articles, plural forms and past tense forms e.g. *It was Ø nice, nice trailer, Ø big one. // I have many hundred carpenter my own. // I was in Frankfurt when I fill the application*. Selinker claims that this could be the result of a learning strategy of simplification. On the other hand, Coulter (in Selinker 1972:40) explains that the above mentioned problem could be a communication strategy problem where the speaker does not want to think too much about the grammatical functionality of the sentences in order not to have a slow and inefficient communication with the other speaker. In the same article, Crothes and Suppes (as paraphrased in Selinker, *ibid.*) explain a subconscious strategy of language learning called 'probability matching' with the example of Americans learning Russian where learners tend to 'copy the cue' i.e. where the chance that the learner will choose a correct morphological ending of a word is not random. An example would be when foreign students of

English add 'r' at the end of the words like 'California' and 'saw' since their English language teachers are from Boston.

2.2.3. Interlingual Factors Causing Errors

Touchie (1986) states that errors which are influenced by the native language are called **interlingual errors** i.e. **interference or transfer errors**. Fries and Lado (paraphrased in Touchie, 1986) state that the native language usually plays a negative role in the process of learning a new language. Dwinastiti (2013) defines *language transfer*, also known as *L1 interference*, *linguistic interference*, and *cross meaning*, as the process where learners of the second language apply their knowledge from the native language. Dulay, Lott, Ellis and Selinker (as cited in Dwinastiti, 2013) provide different definition for language transfer: "Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Lott (1983: 256) defines interference as 'errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue'. (Ellis, 1997: 51) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says is 'the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2'. He argues that transfer is governed by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning. In learning a target language, learners construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1971, Seligar, 1988 and Ellis, 1997) with the use of their L1 knowledge, but only when they believe it will help them in the learning task or when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible" (Dwinastiti, 2013). Weinrich, (paraphrased by Dwinastiti, 2013) lists five factors which cause language interference;

1. Bilingualism is problematic since the speaker is influenced by the native language while trying to learn the target language.
2. Disloyalty to target language which causes the negative attitude of a learner. That leads to disobedience towards foreign language structures and the learner will use native language structures instead.
3. Limited vocabulary of target language occurs when the learner does not know the correct word to express a thought or statement so native vocabulary is being used instead.
4. Synonyms have an important role in learners' communication; the learner will try to use synonyms to intensify utterances and avoid repeating himself so new words will be adopted and borrowed from the synonym language and transferred to the target language.

5. To obtain prestige and style in his/her target language communication, the learner uses words which he/she does not fully understand. The speaker of the target language will know the meaning of these words but will not get the idea that the learner of the target language is trying to present.

Lott (paraphrased by Dwinastiti, 2013) claims that there are three factors which cause interference: (a) the first one is the interlingual factor which marks interlingual transfer a significant source of errors for language learners i.e. mother tongue can be the only source of errors in the second language acquisition. Errors are caused by different structures of mother tongue and target language where the learner transfers mother tongue structures which do not fit into the target language rules. The second factor (b) is over extension of analogy where the learner uses vocabulary from the mother tongue which is similar to those of target language due to cognate words i.e. words which have the same form in two languages but with different functions or meaning. And lastly, the third factor (c) is the transfer of structure which can be positive or negative: the positive transfer is when the mother tongue and the target language have similar structures so it is easier for the learner to grasp the grammar of the new language, on the other hand, negative transfer is called *interference* i.e. when the mother tongue affects the target language even though they have different structures.

Dwinastiti (2013) concludes that interference has both positive and negative aspects in learning a new language; whether the transfer will be positive or negative depends on differences or similarities of the mother tongue and the target language.

2.3. Relevant Research

2.3.1. International Research

International research focusing on the process of learning English phrasal verbs is summed up in Sylvie de Cock's work 'Learners and Phrasal Verbs' (2006) where she focused on combinations of high-frequency verbs which should be familiar by learners such as *go, take, put, and give* with adverbial particles such as *up, in, out, off, down, and through*, and prepositional particles such as *at, for, to, and with*. De Cock used the data based on International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) and from the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) which are based at the Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, Université Catholique

de Louvain. ICLE is made up of essays written by upper-intermediate and advanced EFL learners from a variety of mother tongue backgrounds. De Cock used two types of evidence for the understanding of the phrasal verb problems; experimental data such as translation tests or multiple-choice tests in which learners have to select appropriate verb, and computer learner corpora which are electronic collections of spoken and written texts produced by learners. According to De Cock, there are six categories of problems which can emerge from phrasal verbs formed with adverbial particles; (1) avoidance, (2) style deficiency, (3) semantic confusion, (4) lack of collocational awareness, (5) usage of 'idiosyncratic' phrasal verbs and (6) syntactic errors. She provides evidence for each of the mentioned categories:

1. **Avoidance of phrasal verbs** is mostly done by learners who lack phrasal verbs in their mother tongue, like Spanish or French learners; on the other hand, Dutch-speaking and German-speaking learners use more phrasal verbs in written discourse than native speakers.

2. Phrasal verbs are usually presented as an **informal part of English**, while they are not likely used in formal writings or similar. De Cock (2006) claims that learners tend to use more phrasal verbs in their formal writing than in everyday informal speech. The reason is that learners have more time for thinking about the choice of words when they are writing; while on the other hand, speaking gives them less time to think.

3. **Semantic confusion** i.e. learners' incomplete understanding of the meaning of phrasal verbs is the category with the majority of errors. Learners tend to confuse phrasal verbs and single-word verbs with similar meaning: *He has to find out (discover) new means to fight against them. // Students couldn't put on (wear) a scarf in the winter. // The impulse to build up (build) also spring us (springs) from the need...* Further on, learners use the correct verb but with the wrong particle: *They fill up (fill in) many forms. // It is a task which must be carried on (carried out) using the brain.* And lastly, learners use the right particle with the wrong verb: *We tried to come back to (go back to) Los Angeles.*

4. Learners are usually unaware of certain **collocations** of words which are common in the English language so they tend to produce combinations like *cut down pupil's creativity* instead of *stifling creativity*, *calming down eventual revolts* instead of *quelling revolts* and lastly *set up a family* instead of *start a family*.

5. Learners sometimes produce **phrasal verbs which do not exist in the English language** due to their ignorance of appropriate verb: *These differences need to be levelled down (ironed out).* //

People who decide to marry are usually more responsible and they can trust each other more because they know that in case of problems they do not just split apart (split up).

6. And lastly, learners tend to use **transitive phrasal verbs as intransitive** and vice versa: *The state should help parents to grow up better generations. // He or she begins to look for another love, splitting up the relationship.*

Phrasal verbs with prepositional particles are also a great source of errors for upper-intermediate and advanced learners. These errors occur due to three reasons:

1. **Influence of the mother tongue** happens when the learner does not know that a verb is a prepositional verb in English since it is not a prepositional verb in his/her mother tongue, when the word is prepositional in both mother tongue and second language but prepositional particles differ and are not translational equivalents, and lastly the learner does not know that even though the verb is prepositional in his/her mother tongue, it is not a prepositional verb in the English language.

2. **Intralingual confusion** occurs: when prepositional verb can take more than one particle and the learner confuses them, when the English verb is not a prepositional verb but a derived noun is used with the preposition, when an English word is used as prepositional verb and as a verb that does not require the preposition, and lastly when an English verb is used as a prepositional verb but learners are not aware that particle ‘to’ is a preposition and not the infinitive particle.

3. **Style deficiency** occurs when learners tend to use phrasal verbs with prepositional particles in formal writings in spite of inappropriateness.

De Cock concludes that phrasal and prepositional verbs should “be treated as ‘chunks’ - together with their syntactic, contextual, and collocational features – rather than in isolation. Providing learners with *lists* of phrasal verbs to learn by heart ought to be a thing of the past” (De Cock 2006). Furthermore, she continues that the teaching of the phrasal verbs needs a contextualized approach based on authentic or semi-authentic texts i.e. the teacher should explain phrasal verbs as they appear in spoken and written texts, and lastly, mother tongue should be taken into consideration when teaching phrasal and prepositional verbs.

Other research conducted in the area of phrasal verbs include ‘Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs: the Case of Chinese Learners of English’ (2004) by Liao and Fukuya who concluded that the intermediate learners whose mother tongue does not have phrasal verbs, tend to avoid phrasal

verbs and use one-word equivalent instead. Furthermore, Liao and Fukuya concluded that both intermediate and advanced learners tend to use literal phrasal verbs instead of figurative ones.

Finally, the research 'A Corpus-based study of the Phrasal Verbs in Korean EFL Students' Writing' (2013) conducted in South Korea by Mi-Lim Ryoo indicates that the most frequent phrasal verbs in British National Corpus overlap with Korean learners' corpora, but less frequent combinations in the BNC rarely appeared in the writings of Korean learners, thus concluding that Korean EFL learners lack the formulaic competence of English phrasal verbs.

2.3.2. Croatian Research

There is no Croatian research which studies English phrasal verbs and errors made by Croatian learners in their acquisition. However, there is a research by Katunar, Srebačić, Raffaelli and Šojat concerning only Croatian phrasal verbs entitled 'Arguments for Phrasal Verbs in Croatian and Their Influence on Semantic Relations in Croatian WordNet' (2012) where the category of phrasal verbs is introduced into the Croatian lexicon and grammar description to show their influence on semantic relations in the Croatian WordNet. Additionally, Luzer and Tominac Coslovich in the article "Leksikografska obrada glagola, glagolskih kolokacija i sintagmi u dvojezičnim tehničkim rječnicima" (2016) state that phrasal verbs should be treated as a special part of the dictionary corpus as well as all verb collocations.

3. Errors Made by Croatian Students Concerning English Phrasal Verbs: Research Report

3.1. Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate which intralingual and interlingual factors have an effect on acquisition of phrasal verbs by Croatian students of English. Intralingual factors can be seen in the avoidance of usage of the phrasal verbs, a semantic confusion where students do not know the real meaning of phrasal verbs, and the creation of new phrasal verbs which do not exist. Interlingual factors can be seen in the confusion of the English phrasal verb with its literal meaning in the Croatian language. Further on, the aim of this study is to see how Croatian

learners of English choose phrasal verbs and put them into context i.e. they can either know the meaning of the phrasal verb and put it into context, they can know the meaning of the verb without a particle – but not the phrasal verb – and guess the meaning of the phrasal verb, or they can connect it with Croatian language and make a good or bad language transfer. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which intralingual and interlingual factors affect English phrasal verbs acquisition of Croatian learners?
2. Is it easier for Croatian learners of English language to recognize the meaning of the phrasal verbs when they have context sentences?

Furthermore, the aim of the first task, which is focused on intralingual errors, is to see whether Croatian learners of English will know to distinguish between phrasal verbs of the same form, but different meaning. Additionally, the aim of the first task is to see whether Croatian students will recognize the distinction between similar phrasal verbs with the same main verb, but different particles like ‘turn off’ and ‘turn down’ and put them into the right context. The study thus aims to answer the following question, as well:

Are Croatian learners of English able to recognize the distinction between phrasal verbs with the same form but different meaning?

The aim of the second task which is focused on interlingual errors is to see whether Croatian learners of English will recognize the true meaning of phrasal verbs even though their literal translation to Croatian can give a different meaning. The study aims to answer the following question:

Are there any interlingual factors affecting learner’s knowledge of English phrasal verbs?

The aim of the third task is to see whether Croatian students of English will be able to recognize the mistakes made in sentences and correct them; learners should be able to recognize where to change only the particle, but not the verb, and where to change the verb, but not the particle. Additionally, the aim of the third task is to see whether Croatian students will recognize the influence of the mother tongue and provide the correct form of the phrasal verb. The study aims to answer the following question:

Are Croatian learners of English language able to recognize and correct errors concerning the form and the meaning of the phrasal verb?

Will Croatian students recognize the influence of the mother tongue and provide the correct form of the English phrasal verb?

Lastly, the study aims to discover whether the years of learning English will be relevant for making errors concerning phrasal verbs. The study aims to answer the following question:

Are years of learning language significant for making more or fewer errors concerning English phrasal verbs?

3.2. Sample

The study was conducted at the Faculty of English at the Josip Juraj Strossmayer University in Osijek among English bachelor degree students of the third year. Altogether 51 students participated in the research. Students had already absolved the course of study named 'Phrasal Verbs' in which they learned phrasal verbs specifically. Students had been studying English as a second language for 5-16 years. 1 student had learned English for 5 years, 1 for 7 years, 1 for 9 years, 1 for 10 years, 8 for 11 years, 17 for 12 years, 5 for 13 years, 7 for 14 years, 5 for 15 years and 5 for 16 years.

Table 1: Distribution of students' years of learning English

YEARS OF LEARNING ENGLISH	5y	7y	9y	10y	11y	12y	13y	14y	15y	16y
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	1	1	1	1	8	17	5	7	6	4

3.3. Instrumentals and Procedure

The students were given the questionnaire (Appendix 1) which consists of three tasks. At the beginning of the questionnaire, students were asked to provide information about how long they had been learning the English language officially and if they had had any course of study connected to the phrasal verbs of the English language. The first and the second part consist of cloze tests in which students have to provide a correct phrasal verb in a context sentence, and in the third task, students have to find and correct the mistake in the use of phrasal verbs.

The first task consists of sentences with gaps where students have to provide correct phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are listed above the sentences. The first task is concerned with intralingual errors which students could make. Students need to know both meanings of the phrasal verbs to use them correctly, even though context sentences provide them helpful hints. The aim of this task is to see whether students will experience semantic confusion concerning phrasal verbs. There are 5 phrasal verbs which have to be used twice each in the task, i.e. they have the same form, but different meaning (see Table 2).

Table 2: Meaning of phrasal verbs in the first task of the questionnaire

English phrasal verb	The first meaning	The second meaning
1. Call on	To visit (a person)	To select (a student)
2. Hold up	To wait or delay	To rob something/someone
3. Bring up	To raise children	To mention something
4. Turn off	To power down	To repulse, disgust
5. Turn down	To refuse, decline	To reduce the amount of something

The second task also consists of ten context sentences with gaps where students have to provide correct phrasal verbs. This task is aiming at interlingual errors concerning phrasal verbs. There are ten phrasal verbs listed above the task and their English meaning is different than it is when they are translated literally to the Croatian language (see Table 3).

Table 3: Croatian literal and English meaning of phrasal verbs used in the second task

English phrasal verb	Croatian literal meaning	English meaning
1. Look alive	Izgledati živo	Move more quickly and energetically
2. Put on	Staviti na	Start wearing something
3. Look into	Pogledati u	Discover the facts about something
4. Wait on	Čekati na	To serve somebody
5. Look down on	Pogledati dolje na	To think that you are better or more important than someone
6. Run into	Trčati u	To collide with somebody
7. Take down	Uzeti dolje	To write down information or a statement
8. Look up	Pogledati gore	To try to find a particular piece of information
9. Go Through	Ići kroz	To use, spend, or eat all of something, especially quickly
10. Look over	Pogledati preko	To examine something, usually

		quickly
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The third task consists of six sentences in which students have to correct the phrasal verb if it is written incorrectly. In the first three sentences, students are supposed to correct only the particle, but keep the same main verb. The first three sentences aim at the intralingual errors, unlike the last three sentences which aim at interlingual errors. In the last three sentences students have to correct the main verb, but not the particle; the main verb is purposefully translated from Croatian into English in a way that the Croatian metaphorical meaning is properly used in Croatian language, but when it comes to English phrasal verbs translated literally from Croatian into English then those phrasal verbs cannot be used in that context. For example, the Croatian word ‘preletjeti’ which can be translated as ‘fly over’ in English and it can be used metaphorically as in the sentence: ‘Preletio sam taj dio knjige’ (‘I flew over that part of the book’), but the correct English phrasal verb used in this example has to be ‘pass over’. Other examples are Croatian words ‘preskočiti’ which can be translated into English as ‘jump over’, and ‘miješati se’ which can be translated as ‘mixing in’. So the incorrect sentences are: ‘I jumped over that part of the book’ and ‘Mom is always mixing in on our conversations’, and the correct forms of the phrasal verbs are: ‘I passed over that part of the book’, and ‘Mom is always butting in on our conversations’.

Table 4: Incorrect phrasal verbs used in task 3 and their correct counterparts

Incorrect phrasal verb	Correct phrasal verb	Meaning
1. Going by	Going over	To pass or move over something or someone
2. Hand off	Hand on	To give someone something that was given to you

3. Count on	Count off	To count the number of people or things in a group to ensure that everyone or everything is present
4. Fly over	Look over	To examine something, usually quickly
5. Jumped over	Pass over	To ignore or not mention
6. Mixing in	Butting in	To join a conversation or activity without being asked to

3.4. Results

The first task of the questionnaire has 510 answers in total since there are 51 questionnaires filled and the task has 10 sentences. In total there are 85 incorrect answers, i.e. 16.66 % incorrect answers in total in the first task. The first sentence has 5 incorrect answers out of 51 which leads to 9.80 %. The second sentence has zero incorrect answers i.e. every participant of the questionnaire filled in the gap correctly. The third sentence has 26 out of 51 incorrect answers which are 50.98 %. The fourth sentence has 11 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 21.56 %, the fifth sentence has 22 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 43.13 %, and the sixth sentence has 7 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 13.72 %. Seventh, eighth and ninth sentences have each 3 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 5.88% of errors for each sentence, and lastly, the tenth sentence has 5 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 9.8 %.

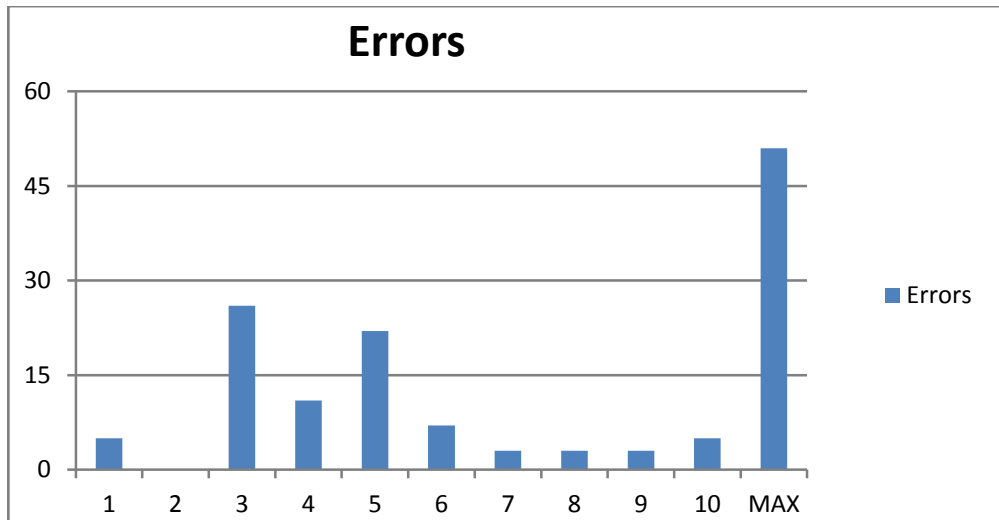


Figure 1: Errors in the first task of the questionnaire

The second task has 129 incorrect answers out of 510 answers in total, i.e. 25.29 %. The first sentence has 6 incorrect answers out of 51, which is 11.76%. The second sentence has 29 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 56.86%. The third sentence has only 1 incorrect answer out of 51 as well as the seventh sentence, which is 1.96%. The fourth sentence has 22 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 43.13%, the fifth sentence has 27 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 52.94%, and the sixth sentence has 13 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 25.49%. Eight sentence has 18 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 35.29%, the ninth sentence has 7 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 13.72%, and lastly, tenth sentence has 5 incorrect answers out of 51 which is 9.80%.



Figure 2: Errors in the second task of the questionnaire

The third task of the questionnaire has six sentences which means that it has 306 answers. 195 out of 306 answers are incorrect in this task which is 63.72%. Not one person managed to correct the first sentence so the percentage of errors is 100%. 14 persons out of 51 corrected the second sentence correctly which means there are 37 incorrect answers, i.e. 72.54%. The third sentence has 31 incorrect answers which are 60.78% of incorrectness. There are 26 out of 51 possible incorrect errors in the fourth sentence, which is 50.98%. 21 persons out of 51 managed to correct the fifth sentence so there are 30 incorrect answers which are 58.82% of incorrectness. The sixth sentence was corrected well 15 times which means there is 70.58% of incorrectness.



Figure 3: Errors in the third task of the questionnaire

When it comes to the relevance of the years of learning English, the highest percentage of errors in the questionnaire is found among those with 14 years of learning English, 42.85%. Students with 11 years of experience with English follow them with 41.82%, then those who have been learning English for 12 years with 37.33% of errors. Students learning English for 13 years have 35.38% of errors, while those who have been studying English for 15 years have 33.33% of errors in the questionnaire. Lastly, those who have been studying English for 16 years have the best percentage, 26.92% of errors in total.

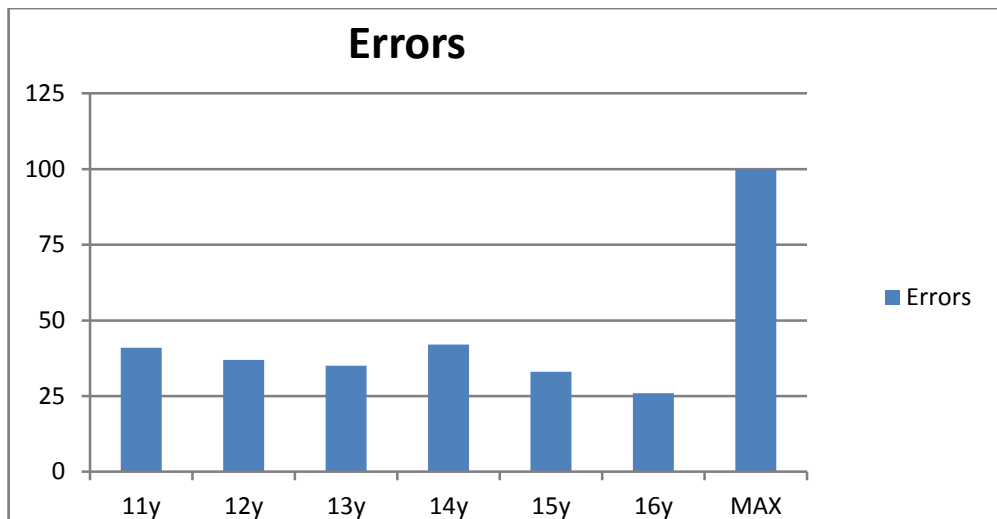


Figure 4: Error statistic compared with years of learning the English language

3.5. Error Analysis

As it was previously stated, the first task of the questionnaire has 85 incorrect answers out of 510 possible incorrect answers. At the beginning of each paragraph, the correct version of the sentence in the questionnaire is presented.

1. As we were in the area, we **called on** my sister in law.

There were 5 errors concerning that sentence: two students left blank spaces, two students wrote 'held up', and one student wrote 'turned down'. Blank spaces can be characterized as avoidance of the answer which is characterized as ignorance i.e. students do not know either the meaning of the sentence or the meanings of the verbs. 'Held up' and 'turned down' could fit into this sentence but since the sentence does not provide enough context for these two verbs, students guessed the phrasal verb without knowing the true meaning of the verb 'call on'.

2. It isn't easy to **bring up** children nowadays.

This sentence has all correct answers i.e. zero incorrect answers. Since the phrase 'bring up children' is commonly known, students were able to place this phrasal verb in the correct sentence.

3. It was a disgusting movie. It really **turned me off**.

This sentence has 26 out of 51 possible incorrect answers. 19 of the incorrect answers are those where the students use 'turned me down' instead of 'turned me off', 3 of them left blank spaces,

and 4 of them wrote 'holds me up' instead of the correct phrasal verb. 19 errors where students wrote that the movie 'turned them down' could be connected with interlingual influence since in the Croatian language when something is repulsive, it can be said 'odbojno mi je/odbija me to' which literally translated from Croatian means 'it turns me down', but in the context where 'odbijati' means 'to refuse'. 3 students avoided the answer by leaving the blank spaces since they did not know the meaning of the sentence or of the phrasal verb. 4 students wrote that since the movie is disgusting, it 'holds them up', since this meaning of the verb is not related to the Croatian language, the assumption is that the students did not know the true meaning of the phrasal verb 'hold up', concluding that the last two errors are simple ignorance.

4. Three masked gunman '**held up**' the Security Bank yesterday.

It has 11 out of 51 possible incorrect answers. 4 students left blank spaces, 2 students wrote 'brought up', 2 students wrote 'called on', 2 students wrote 'turned down', and one student wrote 'turned off'. 4 students who avoided the answer do not know the meaning of the phrasal verb 'hold up', or the sentence so this error is characterized as ignorance. 2 students who wrote 'brought up' could have thought of the phrasal verb 'blow up' subconsciously since that verb is commonly used with the noun 'bank' so probably they made a connection based on the particle 'up'. 2 students who wrote 'called on' are not completely wrong since people can call on a person, Cro. 'svratiti do' but in this sentence it is clear that the masked gunmen are not just going to call on the bank so the students do not understand the meaning of the correct phrasal verb 'hold up' that should be placed in that sentence. 2 students who wrote 'turn down the bank' could have made connection with the collocation 'shut down the bank' so they made connection on the basis of the particle 'down', which is characterized as an intralingual mistake, similar to the error with the phrasal verb 'brought up'. The last example where a student wrote 'turn off the bank' can be connected with the Croatian language since the collocation 'ugasiti banku' (literally translated to English – 'turn off the bank') exists in the Croatian language but in a different sense and context so that the example is based on interlingual error.

5. Your radio is driving me crazy! Please **turn it down**.

This example has 22 out of 51 possible errors. All 22 mistakes are in using the phrasal verb 'turn off' instead of 'turn down'. The phrasal verb 'turn off' fits correctly in this sentence: 'Please turn off the radio', but the problem is that the verb 'turn off' must be used in other two sentences. So if the students used 'turn off' correctly in other two sentences, they are supposed to notice that

‘turn down’ is the only solution that has left for the fifth sentence. This mistake, which cannot be called an error, is caused by not knowing the meaning of all the phrasal verbs in the first task.

6. I hate to **hold up** the meeting, but I have to go to the bathroom.

It has 7 out of possible 51 incorrect answers. 4 of the students left a blank space, 2 of the students wrote ‘turn down’, and 1 student wrote ‘call on’ instead of ‘hold up’. Avoiding the answer is characterized as ignorance since students do not know the meaning of the verbs. ‘Turn down the meeting’ can be linked only with the connotation that this phrasal verb brings, something is not progressing, or something stopped i.e. students probably knew what had happened with the meeting (it was momentarily stopped), but they do not know the correct phrasal verb, or they had used it in another sentence, so this can be characterized as an intralingual error. The last sentence, where a student used ‘call on’ instead of ‘hold up’ was due to a subconscious replacement with the phrasal verb ‘call off the meeting’ which is the correct form. This error is also based on the intralingual factor where the student confused the particle ‘on’ with the particle ‘off’.

7. We **turned off** the lights before anyone could see us.

This sentence has 3 errors; 1 student wrote ‘called on’ instead of ‘turn off’, and two students wrote ‘turn down’. The error of the student who wrote ‘called on the lights’ can be characterized as ignorance since phrasal verb ‘call on’ cannot be placed in this sentence i.e. student does not understand either the context sentence or the phrasal verb. Two students who wrote ‘turn down the light’ are not completely wrong since this collocation exists, but the context sentence indicates that the lights have to be turned off completely otherwise somebody can see something if the lights are just subdued.

8. I hate to **bring this up**, but you still owe me £50.

This sentence has 3 same errors. The phrasal verb ‘call on’ was used instead of the correct one, so the wrong sentence is: ‘I hate to call this on, but you still owe me £50’. This can be characterized as an intralingual error since a person can ‘call on’ another person because he/she does not believe in somebody’s honesty, but the phrasal verb ‘call on’ cannot be used with objects since ‘call something on’ is not valid collocation.

9. He applied for a promotion twice this year, but he was **turned down** both times.

There are 3 errors related to this sentence: there is 1 sentence where the phrasal verb is written ‘helded up’, 1 where it is written ‘holded up’, and 1 where it is written ‘turned off’ instead of the

correct phrasal verb. ‘Helded up’ and ‘holded up’ are the incorrect forms of the past participle of ‘hold up’ whose correct form is ‘held up’. These errors can be characterized as the intralinguistic factor influenced by overgeneralization of the rule for past tense verbs where ‘ed’ is added as the past tense marker. The second analysis of the previously mentioned errors where the phrasal verb ‘held up’ was used instead of ‘turned off’ can be due to the connection with the collocation ‘put on hold for a promotion’ which is characterized as semantic confusion. The error where the student wrote ‘turn off’ instead of ‘turn down’ can be characterized as an intralingual error since the student used the

10. The teacher **called on** the students in the back row.

There are 5 out of 51 possible errors. 1 student left blank space, 1 student wrote ‘brought up’, and 3 students wrote ‘held up’ instead of the correct phrasal verb. The student’s avoidance error is characterized as an ignorance error since the student does not understand the context sentence or the offered phrasal verbs. Similarly, the error with the phrasal verb ‘brought up’ can be characterized as ignorance since the student did not understand the meaning of the context sentence or of the mentioned phrasal verb. The last error where the students wrote ‘held up’ instead of ‘called on’ can be connected with the verb ‘hold/held’ since there is a possibility that the students thought that the correct sentence should be: ‘The teacher held students in the back row’ which means that the teacher wanted to talk with students after the class was dismissed, but the verb ‘hold up’ was misapplied. This error is based on semantic confusion which means that the students confused phrasal verbs and single-word verbs whose meanings are related.

The second task of the questionnaire has 129 out of 510 possible incorrect answers, as it was previously mentioned. At the beginning of each paragraph, the correct version of the sentence in the questionnaire is written.

1. You’ve misspelled this word again. You’d better look it up.

This sentence has 6 incorrect answers; 4 answers are ‘look it over’, 1 is ‘look it alive’, and 1 student left a blank space instead of putting the correct phrasal verb. Errors in which students used ‘look it over’ are intralingual errors since the students know the correct main verb, but not the correct particle, i.e. they do not know the meaning of the complete phrasal verb. Similarly, ‘look it alive’ error can be characterized as intralingual due to the reasons explained in the

previous example. Avoidance of the answer is connected with the ignorance of the student, i.e. the student does not know the meaning of the phrasal verb or of the context sentence.

2. He'd been **looking over** the leaflets he'd picked up earlier.

This sentence has 29 out of possible 51 incorrect answers. 10 incorrect answers are where the students used 'going through' as a phrasal verb, 7 errors where students used 'taking down', 4 answers where a student used 'looking into', 4 students left a blank space, 2 students wrote 'wait on', 1 student wrote 'looking down on', and finally 1 student wrote 'put on' instead of the correct phrasal verb. 'Going through' can be used in this sentence as a phrasal verb whose meaning is 'examine/search something', but the sentence does not provide enough context for this phrasal verb i.e. somebody can go through the leaflets in order to find something. Also, if students had solved all the other sentences correctly, they would have concluded that other phrasal verb must fit into the mentioned sentence, so the students did not understand all phrasal verbs or the context sentences from the task. 'Take down the leaflets' can be characterized as an interlingual error since students probably translated the phrasal verb literally into Croatian as 'skinuti dolje', which in English means 'take something off'. Also, students did not know the meaning of the phrasal verb completely, but they connected it with another phrasal verb 'take off', so this error is also affected by intralingual factors. 4 students who wrote 'looking into', and 1 student who wrote 'looking down on' instead of 'looking through' made an intralingual error since they do not know the complete meaning of the phrasal verb they have used, but the connection is made between the main verb of the correct and incorrect phrasal verb. Avoidance of the answer of the 4 students is characterized as ignorance of the context or of the meaning of the phrasal verbs. 2 students who wrote 'wait on', and 1 student who wrote 'put on' did not understand the context of the sentence or the meaning of the correct phrasal verb, so this error is also based on ignorance.

3. I **put on** a sweater and a jacket because it's supposed to be cold today.

This sentence has only 1 error where a student wrote 'run into' instead of a correct phrasal verb. This error is based on student's ignorance of the context sentence or the phrasal verb. Also, this sentence has minimum incorrect answers since collocation 'put on clothes' is widely spread and often used in the English language.

4. Go to the meeting and **take down** everything that the chairman says.

This sentence has 22 out of 51 possible errors; 6 times student wrote 'go through' instead of the correct phrasal verb, 5 times student avoided the answer, 3 times students wrote 'look into', 4 times students wrote 'wait on', 2 times students wrote 'look alive', and lastly 2 students wrote 'look over' instead of the correct phrasal verb 'take down'. The phrasal verb 'go through' could fit the mentioned sentence, but the sentence does not provide enough context for this phrasal verb. If someone 'goes through something', he/she has to have some sort of objects which can be examined, like books, audio or video tapes, but the chairman's speech cannot be examined in the moment of speaking so this mistake is made on the basis of not fully understanding the context of the sentence. Similarly, the mistake where students wrote 'look over' can be explained as previous one. Avoidance of the answer is characterized as ignorance of the context or of the necessary phrasal verb. The phrasal verb 'look into' can fit in the mentioned fourth sentence, but if the students had placed other phrasal verbs correctly, they would have concluded that this phrasal verb has to be placed in a different sentence. The error where 4 students used 'wait on' instead of the correct phrasal verb could be connected with the verb 'weigh something', thus a person has to 'weigh everything that the chairman says' which makes sense, otherwise this error is based only on ignorance. The usage of the phrasal verb 'look alive' is based on ignorance of the context or the meaning of the correct phrasal verb.

5. Gordon **goes through** a lot of beer while watching football on television every Saturday afternoon.

This sentence contains 27 out of possible 51 errors; 12 students wrote 'takes down', 8 students avoided the answer, 3 students wrote 'waited on', 2 students wrote 'look over', 1 student wrote 'look into', and finally 1 student wrote 'looks alive' instead of correct phrasal verb. Usage of phrasal verb 'take down' can be connected with the phrasal verb 'drink down', thus this error is characterized as intralingual error connected with students' incomplete understanding of the phrasal verb. Avoidance is characterized as incomprehension of the phrasal verb or the context of the sentence. 3 errors where students wrote 'wait on' can be explained in a way that students thought that Gordon 'waited for a beer' thus concluding that it is intralingual error in which students understand only the main verb, but not the complete phrasal verb, and the context of the sentence. 2 students who wrote 'look over', 1 student who wrote 'look into', and 1 student who wrote 'look alive' made errors on the basis of the main verb 'look' the correct form of which should be 'look for', thus a correct sentence could be: 'Gordon looks for a lot of beer'. This error is based on an intralingual error since students understand the main verb of the phrasal verb, but they mix particles.

6. The police will **look into** the possibilities of embezzlement.

It has 13 out of 51 possible errors; 8 students wrote 'go through', 5 students wrote 'look over', 2 students wrote 'look up', and lastly, 1 student wrote 'take down' instead of the correct phrasal verb. 8 students who wrote 'go through' are not completely wrong since that phrasal verb can fit the meaning of the sentence, but if the students had used other phrasal verbs in the task correctly, they would have noticed that this phrasal verb is already taken, thus we may conclude that students do not understand the meaning of all the phrasal verbs or the context sentences in the task. Likewise, the usage of the phrasal verb 'look over' has the same explanation like the previous mistake. 2 students who wrote 'look up' have mistaken that phrasal verb with 'look for' which means that it is an intralingual error since students mixed the meaning of phrasal verbs based on their particles. A student who wrote 'take down' made an error based on ignorance i.e. they do not understand either the context or the meaning of phrasal verbs.

7. Guess who I **ran into** in the High Street this afternoon.

This sentence has only one incorrect phrasal verb, 'look over' instead of the correct one. This error is based on not understanding the meaning of the context of the sentence or phrasal verb.

8. All servants **wait on** the king'.

This sentence has 18 out of 51 possible errors. 7 students wrote 'look over', 6 students wrote 'look down on', 2 students wrote 'look into', 1 student wrote 'put on', 1 student wrote 'look up', and lastly 1 student avoided the answer all together. The students who wrote 'look over' were confused due to the phrasal verb 'look after' which means 'to take care of the king'. Thus, this error is an intralingual error since students do not understand the meaning of the phrasal verb completely. 'Look down on the king' is a possible solution for the eighth sentence, but the sentence does not provide enough context for this phrasal verb, so the student did not understand the context of the sentence or the meaning of the other phrasal verbs. The students who used 'look into' instead of 'wait on' made an error connected with the Croatian language since 'looked into' translated literally to Croatian means 'look at someone'. Thus, the sentence could make sense – 'All servants looked at the king'. A student who wrote 'look up' made a connection with the phrasal verb 'look up to', thus it may be concluded that she/he made an intralingual error by mixing the meaning of particles i.e. not understanding the phrasal verbs completely. Avoidance of the answer is characterized as ignorance.

9. Women have grown tired of being **looked down on** by employers.

This sentence has 7 errors; 3 students wrote ‘taken down’, 2 students wrote ‘looked over’, 1 student wrote ‘looked into’, and lastly 1 student avoided the answer. Students who wrote that ‘the women were tired of being taken down by employers’ made a connection with the phrasal verb ‘take somebody down’ which means ‘to defeat somebody’. This error is based on intralingual factors since the student does not understand the phrasal verb correctly. 2 students who wrote ‘looked over’ probably meant that ‘employers are looking women up and down’ so that the error is based on the main verb ‘look’ which makes it an intralingual one. A student who wrote that ‘women are tired of being looked into by employers’ could have meant that ‘women are tired of being looked at by employers’ which is an error based on the main verb ‘look’, thus an intralingual error. Avoidance is characterized as ignorance i.e. students do not understand the context of the sentence or meaning of the phrasal verbs in the task.

10. “Come on, Fred! Get moving! **Look alive!**” shouted the coach, who was not happy with Fred’s performance.

This sentence has 5 errors: 2 students wrote ‘look up’, 2 students wrote ‘go through’, and 1 student left blank spaces. The students who wrote ‘look up’ could have meant that direction is important in that sentence, thus making us conclude that they did not understand the context of the sentence. The students who used ‘go through’ could have mixed the mentioned phrasal verb with ‘go through with something’, thus the error is intralingual since students mixed particles of the phrasal verb and their meaning. Avoidance is connected with the ignorance.

The third task of the questionnaire has 287 incorrect out of 306 possible answers. At the beginning of each paragraph, the sentences are written as they are in the questionnaire i.e. incorrect sentences are provided.

1. Keep your head down, there are bullets **going by**.

The correct phrasal verb is ‘**going over**’. Not one person managed to correct the sentence by providing the targeted phrasal verb. 12 students wrote ‘flying by’ instead of ‘going over’, 3 students corrected the wrong phrasal verb, they wrote ‘keep your head up’, 1 student wrote ‘going through’, 7 students mark the sentence as correct, and 28 students left blank spaces. ‘Fly by’ means ‘when time passes quickly’ or ‘to fly past, usually something’, thus students made an error based on the similarity of particles, they did not recognize that the particle is the part that needs to be corrected, thus students made an error based on intralingual factors. A student who

wrote 'going through' did not understand the context of the sentence since there must be 'something', an object that bullets go through. This error can be characterized as intralingual since student corrected particle, but incorrectly. Errors, where students corrected the wrong phrasal verb, where they mark the sentence as correct, and where they avoided the answer, are characterized as ignorance.

2. I have some good news to **hand off**, don't you want to hear it?

The correct phrasal verb is '**hand on**', and 2 students out of 51 wrote the targeted answer, 10 students wrote 'hand out', and 2 students wrote 'pass on' which can fit as appropriate phrasal verbs. 37 students made errors; 22 students did not correct the sentence, 10 students wrote 'hand in', 1 student wrote 'tell you', 1 student crossed the particle – left only 'hand', 1 student wrote 'tell off', and lastly 2 students marked the sentence as correct. Students who wrote 'hand in' made an error based on misunderstanding the phrasal verb on the basis of the particle, which makes it an intralingual error. The student who used 'tell you' understood the context of the sentence but did not use the phrasal verb while correcting the sentence. The student who crossed the particle 'off' made an intralingual error since she/he retained the main verb 'hand' but did not know which particle to add. The student who wrote 'tell off' left the same particle, but changed the main verb, even though the particle and the main verb are incorrect, and the meaning of the phrasal verb 'tell off' does not fit in the sentence, making this is an error based on ignorance. 2 students who marked the sentence as correct did not recognize that the particle of the phrasal verb should be changed, so these errors are also based on ignorance.

3. At the beginning of each class, I **count on** the students to see if the number present agrees with the attendance list.'

The targeted phrasal verb is '**count off**'. 5 students wrote 'count up', and 15 students crossed the particle 'on' and left only the verb 'count' which can be considered as correct answers. 23 students did not correct the sentence, 4 students wrote 'count down', and lastly 4 students marked the sentence as correct. Those students who did not correct the sentence had not noticed that the sentence has errors so these errors are based on ignorance. The verb 'count' can be retained in the mentioned sentence, but the phrasal verb 'count off' is more specific since it means 'to count the number of people or things in a group to ensure that everyone or everything is present', and that context is explained in the sentence. 'Count down' is an incorrect phrasal verb since it means 'to wait for something to happen, usually noticing every day or moment that passes until it happens', so this error is based on particle confusion, and thus characterized as

intralingual. Lastly, those students who marked the sentence as correct did not notice the error, thus it is marked as ignorance.

4. I had a few minutes before the meeting to **fly over** what he'd written.

The correct phrasal verb is '**look over**' which was written by 9 students, 11 students wrote 'go over', 3 students wrote 'go through', and lastly 2 students wrote 'skim over'. The mentioned phrasal verbs are marked as correct even though 'go over' means to examine something carefully. 26 errors were made in the fourth sentence; 16 students did not correct the sentence, 6 students marked the sentence as correct, 3 students wrote 'fly through', and 1 student wrote 'fly across'. The students who did not correct the sentence or who marked the sentence as correct made errors based on ignorance since they did not recognize the wrong phrasal verb. 'Fly through' and 'fly across' are not phrasal verbs, and they have only literal meaning which means that those errors are based on ignorance of the students.

5. I **jumped over** that part of the book because I knew it wouldn't be in the test.

The targeted phrasal verb is '**pass over**', and only 1 student wrote it. 19 students wrote 'skip over', and 1 student wrote 'run through' which are adequate phrasal verbs for the fifth sentence. There are 30 errors concerning the fifth sentence; 1 student wrote 'gloss over', 5 students marked the sentence as correct, 20 students did not correct the sentence, 3 students wrote 'jumped through', and lastly 1 student wrote 'jumped across'. 'Gloss over' is an inadequate phrasal verb for the fifth sentence, since it means 'to refuse to mention something bad to cover up its wrongness', thus the error is based on ignorance. Students who did not correct the sentence, and marked it as correct made an error based on ignorance. 'Jump through' and 'jump across' have only literal meaning, and are not adequate for the fifth sentence. Furthermore, students corrected the particle and not the main verb which means that they did not recognize the interlingual error.

6. Mom is always **mixing in** on our conversations.

The targeted phrasal verb is '**butting in**', and 7 students wrote it, 4 students wrote 'meddling in', 3 students wrote 'jumping in', and 1 student wrote 'listening in' which are adequate phrasal verbs. There are 36 errors in the sixth sentence; 3 students wrote 'mixing to on our conversations', 2 students wrote 'mixing up', 2 students marked the sentence as correct, 1 student wrote 'spying in', and lastly 30 students did not correct the sentence. 'Mixing to conversations' does not make sense, thus the error is based on ignorance. 'Mix up' means either 'to think that one person or thing is another person or thing' or 'to put things together without

any order' so it is an inadequate phrasal verb for the sixth sentence and possibly an interlingual error. 'Spying in' can be used only as 'spying on', thus the student made an intralingual error since he/she confused the particles of the phrasal verb. Students who marked the sentence as correct, or did not correct the sentence made an ignorance error, thus making us conclude that either they do not understand the context or do not know the appropriate phrasal verb.

4. Conclusion

Richards (as cited in Ellis, 1994) explains that intralingual errors "reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which the rules apply" and interference/interlingual errors as "result of the use of elements from one language while speaking another" (Ellis, 1994:58). Further on, Richard's division of intralanguage errors is; overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized.

Students participating in the survey made general errors like avoiding the answer, and exhibiting general ignorance where they used a completely wrong phrasal verb or did not understand the context of the sentence. Avoidance of the answer and ignorance are frequent errors, especially in the third task where students had to find and correct the mistake. Some widely spread collocations like 'put on clothes' or 'bring up children' have a high percentage of correctness in the tasks.

Most intralingual errors are based on students' confusion of the particles of the phrasal verbs, i.e. they connect the meaning of the phrasal verb either with the main verb in the phrasal verb or with another phrasal verb with the same main verb but a different particle. Additionally, there are intralingual errors which are based on the meaning of the particle and not the main verb i.e. students connect the particle with a phrasal verb which has a different main verb, but the same particle. There was one example of overgeneralization which is not connected with the phrasal verb error but is considered an intralingual error. Also, some errors were made on the basis of phonetic similarity, verbs sounding similarly but having different meaning.

Interlingual errors are based mostly on translation from Croatian to English language or vice versa. Some expressions are used in the Croatian language, but when they are translated into English, they do not make sense.

The third task where the students needed to find and correct the mistake has the most avoidance errors. Students corrected the phrasal verbs into phrasal verbs that have correct main verbs but

wrong particles, which means that they made intralingual errors since they do not understand the complete meaning of the phrasal verb. Additionally, students corrected wrong phrasal verbs into verbs whose main verb and particle are translated separately and they do not have a metaphorical meaning, but only the literal one. Students were not able to recognize errors based on particles of phrasal verbs; they either wrote completely new phrasal verbs or they corrected the main verb. Also, they were not able to recognize errors influenced by their mother tongue; most of them avoided the answer while others corrected the complete phrasal verb instead of correcting just the main verb. In comparison, those students who corrected the phrasal verbs used the appropriate ones, even though they thought of a new phrasal verb.

It is easier for Croatian students to recognize the meaning of the phrasal verbs when they have context sentences, and when they do not have to remember the phrasal verb in isolation. The third task has a lot of incorrect answers compared to the first and the second task. Even though the first task has verbs with the same form and a different meaning, students were able to remember both meanings, but with the help of the context sentences. Also, students were able to place phrasal verbs into correct context sentences in the second tasks where the aim was to make students think of a literal translation from English to Croatian.

When it comes to the connection of the phrasal verbs knowledge and the years of learning English as a second language, results are inversely proportional. Those students who have been studying English for more years have better results than those who have been studying English for fewer years than the first group. The only exception is the students with 14 years of learning English who have more mistakes than the students who have been learning English for 13, 12, and 11 years. The students who have been learning English for 16 years have noticeable better results than those who have been learning it for 12 years.

To conclude, many phrasal verbs are straightforward for the students to use and understand, but many of them have metaphorical meanings which makes them difficult to learn. Phrasal verbs should be introduced to the standard vocabulary in every lesson, and not be learned separately from the context, even though the only way to learn phrasal verbs is by heart since the particle could change their entire meaning.

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Appendix 1

ISTRAŽIVANJE O FRAZALNIM GLAGOLIMA U ENGLESKOM JEZIKU

Poštovani studenti,

pred Vama se nalazi anketa o frazalnim glagolima koja je dio istraživanja koje provodim u svrhu izrade diplomskog rada. Molim Vas da ispunite cijelu anketu koja je anonimna.

Hvala na sudjelovanju!

Koliko godina učite engleski jezik? (upisati broj godina) ____

Jeste li imali kolegij koji se bazirao samo na učenju frazalnih glagola? DA NE

1. Fill in the gaps with correct phrasal verbs.

call on 2x hold up 2x bring up 2x turn off 2x turn down 2x

1. As we were in the area, we _____ my sister-in-law.
2. It isn't easy to _____ children nowadays.
3. It was a disgusting movie. It really _____ me _____.
4. Three masked gunmen _____ the Security Bank yesterday.
5. Your radio is driving me crazy! Please _____ it _____.
6. I hate to _____ the meeting, but I have to go to the bathroom.
7. We _____ the lights before anyone could see us.
8. I hate to _____ this _____ but you still owe me £50.
9. He applied for a promotion twice this year, but he was _____ both times.

10. The teacher _____ students in the back row.

2. Fill in the gaps with correct phrasal verbs.

look alive put on look into wait on look down on
run into take down look up go through look over

1. You've misspelled this word again. You'd better _____ it _____.
2. He'd been _____ the leaflets he'd picked up earlier.
3. I _____ a sweater and a jacket because it's supposed to be cold today.
4. Go to the meeting and _____ everything that the chairman says.
5. Gordon _____ a lot of beer while watching football on television every Saturday afternoon.
6. The police will _____ the possibilities of embezzlement.
7. Guess who I _____ in the High Street this afternoon?
8. All servants _____ the king.
9. Women have grown tired of being _____ by employers.
10. "Come on, Fred! Get moving! _____!" shouted the coach, who was not happy with Fred's performance.

3. Correct the phrasal verb in a sentence if necessary.

1. Keep your head down, there are bullets going by.
2. I have some good news to hand off, don't you want to hear it?
3. At the beginning of each class, I count on the students to see if the number present agrees with the attendance list.
4. I had a few minutes before the meeting to fly over what he'd written.
5. I jumped over that part of the book because i knew it wouldn't be on the test.
6. Mom is always mixing in on our conversations.