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THE AVOIDANCE OF PHRASAL VERBS AMONG ESTONIAN EFL LEARNERS

MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

Phrasal verbs, although seemingly simple and widely used by native speakers, are notoriously difficult for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to master. Learners often struggle with deciphering the meanings of phrasal verbs as well as recognizing and using them in appropriate registers. Because of these difficulties, learners may tend to avoid using phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are, however, integral to the English language and therefore it is important to address the possible causes of avoidance. The aim of this thesis is to analyze whether and to what extent Estonian EFL learners avoid phrasal verbs by replicating a study by Becker (2014). Furthermore, this paper aims to examine which factors, namely language proficiency, task type, and phrasal verb type, influence the avoidance of phrasal verbs. To achieve this, a two-part test consisting of a translation and a multiple-choice task was carried out among advanced and intermediate Estonian EFL learners. The tasks addressed 20 of the most common literal and figurative phrasal verbs taken from the corpus of the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English.

The thesis begins with an introduction, which gives an overview of the motivation for this paper and summarizes the core chapters that follow. In the first chapter, English and Estonian phrasal verbs are defined and previous research on phrasal verbs and avoidance in the EFL context discussed with a special emphasis on the study being replicated for this thesis – Becker (2014). The second chapter introduces the methodology of the present study, followed by the results and the discussion of the findings. The thesis ends with a conclusion.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a foreign language
ESL – English as a second language
L1 – first language
L2 – second language
LSWE – Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English
MCT – multiple-choice task
PV – phrasal verb
TT – translation task

INTRODUCTION

Many authors (Dagut & Laufer 1985, De Cock 2006, Gilquin 2015, Alangari et al. 2020) agree that phrasal verbs are considered a difficult aspect of English grammar for foreign learners of English (EFL) to master. Phrasal verbs can carry both literal and figurative meanings, which often make them difficult for foreign learners to comprehend (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999). Additionally, aspects of transitivity and register further complicate the use of this structure, putting learners in a challenging position. However, because phrasal verbs are an integral part of English, especially in informal and spoken language, utilizing these constructions is important in both speech and writing.

Previous research (e.g., Dagut & Laufer 1985, Gilquin 2015), including a recent BA study (Toom 2020), has found that EFL learners tend to underuse phrasal verbs. There are several possible causes for this underuse, for example avoidance (De Cock 2006), a topic which has been widely researched for several decades. Research on avoidance dates back to the 1970s when Schachter's (1974) and Kleinmann's (1977) respective studies on English language use by L2 learners first introduced and defined this issue. According to Becker (2014: 1), avoidance is a strategy that language learners use to overcome communicative difficulties. Avoidance can be defined as having passive knowledge of a certain L2 language structure but choosing not to use it where it would be considered appropriate by native language speakers (Becker 2014: 1, Laufer & Eliasson 1993: 36). The language structures that learners tend to avoid are typically considered to be difficult, thus leading them to opt for a seemingly more simple structure which portrays a similar meaning (Laufer & Eliasson 1993: 36).

It is, however, important to distinguish avoidance from ignorance. For a learner's underuse of a language structure to be considered avoidance, one must ensure that the learner has at least some knowledge of it (Kleinmann 1977, Laufer & Eliasson 1993). Otherwise, the avoidance of the construction could be attributed to ignorance and not the learner's active decision not to use a structure they know but do not feel comfortable using. This, along with

previous research on avoidance highlights the complexity of the issue, as many factors can influence the avoidance of difficult language structures (Becker 2014: 3).

One of the most widely researched factors in avoidance of phrasal verbs by EFL learners is L1-L2 differences. In the past, studies (e.g., Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Laufer & Eliasson 1993) have shown that EFL learners tend to avoid using phrasal verbs, arguing that this may be caused by the lack of phrasal verbs in the first language (L1) of foreign speakers. More recent studies (e.g., Chen 2013, Becker 2014), however, have begun to challenge such findings claiming that there are factors other than L1-L2 differences, which cause avoidance of certain grammatical structures.

While EFL learners' use of phrasal verbs has been researched extensively among other L1 learners of English, there has not been much research done on the use of phrasal verbs by Estonian EFL learners. To be able to address the issues Estonian EFL learners may face when learning phrasal verbs, it is important to find out whether avoidance is one of them. The aim of this study is to analyze the avoidance of phrasal verbs by Estonian EFL learners. To achieve this, two research questions have been proposed:

a) To what extent do Estonian EFL learners avoid using phrasal verbs?
b) Should Estonian EFL learners avoid the use of phrasal verbs, which factors, including phrasal verb type, task type, and language proficiency, influence this avoidance?

To answer these research questions, a two-part study was conducted by replicating Becker's (2014) study and method. Advanced and intermediate Estonian EFL learners completed a two-part test, which targeted 20 of the most common figurative and literal phrasal verbs in informal spoken English taken from the corpus of Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LSWE). The test consisted of two tasks, namely a translation and a multiple-choice task, as well as a self-report survey, which was used to collect demographic information about the participants and to address the issue of avoidance versus ignorance.

The thesis is divided into two major chapters: 1. Phrasal Verbs and EFL Research on Avoidance and 2. Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs by Estonian EFL learners. The first chapter begins with an overview of both English and Estonian phrasal verb characteristics. The following subsection discusses previous EFL research on phrasal verbs, followed by a summary of avoidance and avoidance research. The literature review ends with a detailed overview and analysis of Becker's (2014) study.

The second chapter begins with describing the methodology and materials of the present study, as well as an overview of Becker's (2014) methodology. The differences between the two, Becker's method and the method of the present study, are explained here as well. Then, the participants and procedure are introduced, followed by the data analysis and an overview of the results. The chapter ends with a discussion of the result as well as an analysis of the limitations of the current study and implications for possible future research.

1. PHRASAL VERBS AND EFL RESEARCH ON AVOIDANCE

This chapter sets the theoretical framework for the thesis at hand. The chapter gives an overview of the characteristics of phrasal verbs in the English and Estonian language along with a summary of previous phrasal verb research conducted among different EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. As per the aims of the study, the literature review focuses on avoidance as a strategy for overcoming language learning difficulties and discusses its status in earlier and current foreign language research. The chapter also summarizes the study which is being replicated for the thesis – Becker (2014). In addition to the summary, the shortcomings of the study are discussed as well as its implications for the present thesis.

1.1 Phrasal verbs in English

English phrasal verbs, despite their seemingly simple nature and widespread use by native speakers, are considered a difficult aspect of English grammar for foreign learners to master. However, because phrasal verbs are an integral part of English, especially in the informal register (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 425) and spoken language (Liao & Fukuya 2002: 75), they cannot be overlooked in the language learning process. At their most simple, phrasal verbs can be defined as multi-word verbs consisting of a verb plus an adverb particle (Quirk et al. 1985: 1152, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 425). Several sources (e.g., Quirke et al. 1985: 1150, Carter & McCarthy 2006: 429, Cambridge Learner Dictionary n.d.) agree that for combinations of a verb plus an adverb to be considered phrasal verbs, they must act as a single unit of meaning or carry a different meaning from the original verb, for example *come over* = *visit* or *put on* = *gain*.

This occasional unpredictability of phrasal verb meaning can be considered as one of the reasons why foreign language learners struggle with these structures (Chen 2013: 420). The meaning of the phrasal verb may not be apparent from the verb and particle combination, especially in the case of figurative phrasal verbs. For example, the figurative phrasal verb *catch on* means to *understand* or *figure out*, which can be difficult to decipher from the individual

components. Figurative phrasal verbs make up one of the three semantic categories of phrasal verbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 432). The other two are literal and aspectual phrasal verbs – these are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Literal phrasal verbs are fully compositional as they consist of a verb and a directional preposition, which both, along with the resulting phrasal verb, retain their original meaning. Some examples of literal phrasal verbs are *get in, take off*, and *get off*. These phrasal verbs are typically easier for EFL learners to understand and use, because their meaning can be more easily deduced from the individual components. (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 432)

Aspectual phrasal verbs are less transparent in their meaning, but not fully idiomatic like figurative phrasal verbs are (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 432). Becker (2014: 4) explains that in these phrasal verbs, the verb retains a literal meaning while the particle does not. The particle does, however, still contribute some meaning to the lexical verb. An example of an aspectual phrasal verb is "She was *cut off* from seeing her menacing boyfriend any further" (Becker 2014: 4). The verb *cut* indicates a separation from something, which coincides with the literal verb meaning in the sentence. The adverb *off* adds meaning to the lexical verb. The meaning of *cut off* can be literal, e.g., "She *cut off* the dead ends of her hair", but in the example sentence above, it indicates a metaphorical separation as opposed to a physical.

As mentioned earlier, figurative phrasal verbs are typically the constructions that learners find most challenging. Due to their idiomatic nature, it seems difficult to figure out their meaning from the verb and particle combination (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 433), as there has been "a metaphorical shift of meaning and semantic fusion" of the individual components (Liao & Fukuya 2002: 74). Some examples of figurative phrasal verbs include *run out, give up,* and *stand up to* which respectively take on the new meanings *expire*, *stop*, and *confront*.

The present thesis focuses on comparing the use of literal and figurative phrasal verbs. Previous research (e.g., Liao & Fukuya 2002, Becker 2014) has found that there is a significant difference in the way EFL learners use literal and figurative phrasal verbs. As stated above, figurative phrasal verbs seem to be more challenging for EFL learners than literal phrasal verbs due to their more complicated and idiomatic meanings. Therefore, it is important to examine whether Estonian EFL learners experience similar difficulties when using phrasal verbs to optimize the way phrasal verbs are taught in English classes. Aspectual phrasal verbs were not examined in this study because they were not included in the study (Becker 2014) that is being replicated.

Another way to categorize phrasal verbs is by transitivity. Quirk et al. (1985: 1152–1153) and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999: 427) divide phrasal verbs into two categories: transitive and intransitive. Transitive phrasal verbs, much like single-word verbs, take a direct object in a sentence, while intransitive phrasal verbs do not (Quirk et al. 1985: 1153). As is the case with a selection of one-word verbs, some phrasal verbs can also be both transitive and intransitive (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 427), for example the phrasal verb *burn down*. In a sentence like ‘An arsonist *burned down* the hotel’, the phrasal verb is transitive, while in ‘The hotel *burned down*’, it is intransitive.

The transitivity of phrasal verbs can contribute to their complexity. Quirk et al. (1985: 1152) explain that in most cases with intransitive phrasal verbs, the lexical verb and particle cannot be separated from one another. Transitive phrasal verbs, however, can be used together as one unit or be separated, meaning the particle can appear either before or after the direct object (Quirk et al. 1985: 1153). Using the example sentence above, this may either look like ‘An arsonist *burned down* the hotel’ or ‘An arsonist *burned* the hotel *down*’. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999: 428) further explain that in some cases, separation is obligatory.

This separability and its various rules can be another difficulty that EFL learners face when dealing with phrasal verbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 426). As stated, transitive verbs can appear together or separated; they must, however, always be separated when the direct object is a pronoun (compare 'Mark *threw away* the ball' vs ~~'Mark *threw away* it'~~ and 'Mark *threw* the ball *away*' vs 'Mark *threw* it *away*'). This rule should be relatively simple and easy for EFL learners to remember, but other cases of inseparability are not as clear. There is a smaller category of inseparable phrasal verbs which does not follow such an explicit rule, rather these phrasal verbs seem to always appear together due to a syntactic affinity or connectedness. In such cases, the verb and particle together have a meaning beyond what each word contributes individually. If they were to be separated, it may alter the meaning of the sentence, compare 'Josh ran into an old friend/Josh ran into him' vs ~~'Josh ran an old friend into/Josh ran him into'~~. (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 428–429)

In addition to the difficulties EFL learners face because of the different types of phrasal verbs, register is another possible reason why learners may avoid phrasal verbs. Even though present in most registers (Darwin & Gray 1999: 66), phrasal verbs are used most often in informal writing and spoken English (McCarthy & O'Dell 2004: 14). Learners in a typical English classroom may focus more on skills and registers in which the use of phrasal verbs is usually discouraged, such as formal and academic writing. Alangari et al. (2020: 1) explain that students are "explicitly instructed to replace phrasal verbs with one word" verbs in academic writing due to their informal nature, making phrasal verbs stylistically inappropriate in this context. Although learners may be instructed to avoid using phrasal verbs in academic or formal writing, it is not always necessary to do so, as some phrasal verbs can be considered formal or at least neutral in register (Walter 2015: para. 1). In their study, Alangari et al. (2020: 10) found that phrasal verb constructions make up a considerable proportion of all verbs used in expert academic writing and recommend introducing language learners to phrasal verbs also

in the academic writing context so that they can be able to appropriately use them in both formal and informal contexts.

Research (Chang 2012: 18, Lasan 2021: 2) has shown that L2 learners of English struggle with distinguishing and applying appropriate registers in both formal and informal contexts. While the use of informal language in formal contexts has been more widely researched, one can assume that the opposite may also be true, meaning learners may have a tendency to produce language that is too formal in typically informal contexts. This may be done in an effort to impress their teacher or conversation partner, especially if the majority of their language learning has been done in standard rather than conversational English.

Rühlemann (2008: 680) argues that standard English is an inappropriate model for teaching spoken language as there are striking differences between the grammar and general use of language in standard and conversational English. This supports the argument of including informal and casual language constructions in the classroom where it would be appropriate to help learners sound more native-like. As previous studies have shown (e.g., Chen 2013, Gilquin 2015, Alangari et al. 2020, Toom 2020), native speakers and experts use phrasal verbs more often than EFL learners. Therefore, there is a need to address the issue and possible causes of underuse to be able to teach phrasal verbs accordingly in appropriate registers and contexts.

1.2 Phrasal verbs in Estonian

When examining the possible factors that make phrasal verbs difficult, it is also important to look beyond phrasal verb characteristics in English. Previous research (e.g. Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999, Laufer & Eliasson 1993) suggests differences between the learner's first (L1) and second language (L2) as one of the reasons they may struggle with phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are most common in Germanic languages (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999: 425), therefore non-Germanic language learners may experience more difficulty with these structures. Although Estonian is

a Finno-Ugric language, German, along with Russian, is its most important contact language (Hasselblatt 2000: 135), and this Germanic influence may affect how Estonian EFL learners use phrasal verbs in English.

According to Erelt and Metslang (2017: 107), the use of phrasal verbs and other similar constructions is very common in the Estonian language. Historically, it has been suggested that phrasal verbs entered the Estonian language as loans from German (Hasselblatt 1990, as referenced in Veldi 2006: 590 and Erelt & Metslang 2017: 107). Veldi (2006: 590) points out that there are similarities between the two languages, for example in *üles kirjutama* and *aufschreiben* ('write down'), which both use the particle *up*, while the English equivalent uses *down*. More recently, however, Estonian linguists have listed thousands of phrasal verbs, which form an extensive system with unique components and interactions between them (Veldi 2006: 590).

English phrasal verbs, when translated into Estonian, fall under two categories of multi-word verbs: expression verbs (*väljendverbid*) and phrasal, or particle, verbs (*ühendverbid*). Expression verbs consist of a *käändsõna*, meaning either a noun, pronoun or adjective, and a verb, and act as a single unit of meaning. These verbs are typically idiomatic. The main meaning of an expression verb is carried by the nominal component, while the verb adds operational meaning, which can often be quite general. An example of an expression verb is *aru saama,* in which *aru* is the main word ('reason') and *saama* is the verb ('get'). Together, these words form an expression that means 'to understand'. (Erelt & Metslang 2017: 102).

Estonian phrasal verbs (*ühendverbid*), much like English phrasal verbs, are made up of a verb and an adverb. Unlike expression verbs, the main meaning is carried by the verb, while the adverb adds nuances to the meaning. Estonian phrasal verbs can be divided into two groups: idiomatic and non-idiomatic (or figurative and literal). Idiomatic or figurative (*ainukordsed*) phrasal verbs act as a single unit not only in a syntactic, but also in a semantic sense. The verb

and adverb combination carries a new meaning which can greatly differ from the meaning of the individual words. For example, *üles ütlema*, which together means 'to break' or 'fail', consists of *up* (*üles*) and *say* (*ütlema*). (Erelt & Metslang 2017: 104–105)

Non-idiomatic or literal (*korrapärased*) Estonian phrasal verbs retain the meanings of the verb and adverb particles, while still acting together as a single unit syntactically. An example of a literal phrasal verb would be *alla kirjutama*, which means 'to sign'. *Alla* ('down') and *kirjutama* ('write') do not differ greatly from the meaning of the resulting phrasal verb, making it easier to deduce the meanings of the unit from the individual components themselves. (Erelt & Metslang 2017: 105)

As can be seen in the text above, English and Estonian phrasal verbs share many similarities. This may indicate that Estonian EFL learners are more likely to use phrasal verbs in English compared to other learners of non-Germanic languages. Nonetheless, exploring different causes for avoidance besides the L1 of learners continues to be important when analyzing learners' use of phrasal verbs.

1.3 EFL perspective on avoidance and phrasal verbs

When faced with a communicative difficulty, language learners resort to using different strategies to overcome the issue. One of these strategies is avoidance, defined as having passive knowledge of a certain language structure, which is typically perceived to be difficult, but choosing not to use it where it would be considered appropriate (Laufer & Eliasson 1993: 36, Becker 2014: 1). Instead, the learner opts for a different, seemingly more simple structure, which portrays a similar meaning (Laufer and Eliasson 1993: 36). Laufer and Eliasson (1993: 36) emphasize that avoidance must not be confused with ignorance, which refers to the inability to use a construction due to having no knowledge of it, whereas avoidance requires at least some knowledge of the structure, however faint it may be.

Avoidance and its possible causes have been researched for decades across many different foreign languages. The beginning of avoidance research can be traced back to

Schachter's (1974, as referenced in Becker 2014: 2) study, which examined the errors in relative clauses among L2 writers of English. Her study found that learners seem to avoid using L2 structures perceived to be difficult. From this finding, Schachter (1974) concluded that avoidance is a learning strategy used to resolve a linguistic problem by choosing not to use a difficult L2 structure. Kleinmann (1977, as referenced in Becker 2014: 2), who studied avoidance behavior of different grammatical structures among Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese EFL learners, expanded on this concept, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing avoidance from ignorance. These studies along with later avoidance research highlighted the complexity of the issue, calling for further research to be done to analyze which factors can cause or influence avoidance (Becker 2014: 3).

More recent studies have begun examining these factors. Avoidance has been analyzed in the context of many L2 structures and by utilizing different research methods. While earlier studies (e.g., Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Laufer & Eliasson 1993) focused specifically on avoidance, later research has taken a broader approach by studying underuse in general. One of the most broad examples of research on underuse is Ishii and Tono's (2018) corpus study on Japanese EFL learners, which examined original and then proofread essays by learners across all CEFR levels. These essays were analyzed for the underuse and overuse of several hundred grammar constructions, including tense, aspect, different word classes, etc. (Ishii & Tono 2018: 1). In general, Ishii and Tono (2018: 5) found more instances of underuse rather than overuse across all language levels and most grammar constructions.

Similarly, more specific avoidance research on English relative clauses (Jin & Qiao 2010: 123, Rattanasak & Phoocharoensil 2014: 273-274) has shown that Chinese and Thai EFL learners tend to underproduce or avoid relative clauses, which the authors hypothesize to be caused by L1-L2 differences and the perceived difficulty of the language constructions. Zhang

(2014: 124–125) found similar results in their study about the over- and underuse of English concluding connectives. According to data extracted from both native and learner corpora, Chinese learners tend to slightly overuse more simple connectives, e.g., 'all in all' and 'last but not least', but underuse connectives such as 'ultimately' or 'eventually' (Zhang 2014: 124). This supports the argument of learners avoiding grammar, which they find to be too difficult.

Underuse or avoidance has also been researched in the context of negation (e.g., Alonso Vázquez 2005, Fuentes 2008). Using native and non-native corpus data, Fuentes (2008: 319-320) examined the use of negation by Spanish EFL learners. The author found that learners tend to underuse or avoid negative prefixes opting for the *not + adjective* structure instead (Fuentes 2008: 322). Additionally, learners underused subclausal negation (Fuentes 2008: 325). Like in the studies previously described, Fuentes (2008: 325) concluded that this underuse or avoidance may be influenced by L1-L2 difficulties or the learners' limited knowledge of the target language. Although similar conclusions can be made between the different studies, the use of different research methods and the study of various L2 structures makes comparing the results difficult.

One area of EFL research which has been analyzed extensively is the use, more specifically the avoidance, of phrasal verbs. Several reasons or factors have been examined as possible causes for avoidance of phrasal verbs. Earlier studies, for example Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), who studied the use of phrasal verbs by Hebrew EFL learners, found that L1-L2 differences largely influence the avoidance of these structures. Dagut and Laufer (1985: 77) reported that Hebrew-speaking, i.e., non-Germanic language learners showed a tendency to avoid phrasal verbs, while Germanic language learners, more specifically Dutch learners, did not categorically avoid phrasal verbs (Hulstijn & Marchena 1989: 250). Laufer and Eliasson's (1993: 46) study, which examined the use of phrasal verbs by both Hebrew and Swedish learners, and later Jacobsen's (2012: 18) study also on phrasal verb use by Swedish EFL

learners, confirm these results, further emphasizing L1-L2 differences as the best predictor of avoidance.

More recent corpus-based research on Korean EFL learners (e.g., Ryoo 2013, Jungyeon 2015), whose language does not have phrasal verb constructions, suggests that L1-L2 differences may not always be the cause of avoidance. In their respective studies, the authors did not find that Korean EFL learners avoid using phrasal verbs or use them significantly less compared to native speakers or other Germanic language learners. Chen (2013), who conducted a corpus study on the use of phrasal verbs by Chinese EFL learners, agrees. Despite their L1 also lacking phrasal verbs, Chinese learners used phrasal verbs similarly to British native speakers (Chen 2013: 425). These studies indicate that other factors must be considered as possible causes for avoidance.

In their study on phrasal verb avoidance among Chinese L1 learners, Liao and Fukuya (2002: 71) explored three different factors as possible causes for avoidance, namely proficiency level (advanced vs intermediate), phrasal verb type (figurative vs literal), and test type (translation vs multiple-choice vs recall). They (Liao and Fukuya 2002: 96) found that intermediate learners tended to avoid using phrasal verbs, while advanced participants did not. Similar results were found in earlier studies (e.g., Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Laufer & Eliasson 1993), confirming that the language level of learners may influence avoidance of grammatical structures more than L1-L2 differences. Additionally, Liao and Fukuya (2002: 97) reported interaction between the translation task and phrasal verb type. In the translation task, participants used figurative phrasal verbs significantly less often than they did literal phrasal verbs, suggesting that semantic difficulties can also contribute to avoiding specific grammatical structures (Liao & Fukuya 2002: 97).

Liao and Fukuya's (2002) study has been the basis for numerous other studies on the avoidance of phrasal verbs across many different foreign languages. Subsequent studies have mostly confirmed their findings. For example, Saudi EFL learners tended to avoid figurative phrasal verbs, but used literal phrasal verbs similarly to native speakers (Algethami & Almalki 2016: 8). Rovira Diaz (2017: 22–23) agrees, reporting higher levels of avoidance among figurative

phrasal verbs and in the translation task by Catalan EFL learners. Houshyar and Talebinezhad (2013: 247), who examined Persian EFL learners, also reported higher levels of avoidance among intermediate learners, specifically of figurative phrasal verbs; however, they found no evidence of test type influencing the use of phrasal verbs.

Becker (2014), who replicated Liao and Fukuya's (2002) study on Chinese L1 learners, further expands on these results. The aim of Becker's study was to analyze the avoidance of English phrasal verbs by addressing the shortcomings of previous research. Becker (2014: 6) aimed to answer the following research question: Do L2 proficiency, learning context, task type, and phrasal verb type influence English L2 learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs? To address this research question, Becker conducted a three-part study among advanced and intermediate Chinese ESL (English as a second language) and EFL learners. The ESL learners (n = 22) were recruited from a university in the United States. These participants were studying English at the university and their language level was determined according to which level of English studies they were enrolled in. The EFL group included L1 Chinese students (n = 30), who were studying English at a university in China. Their language level was also determined by the level they were enrolled in. (Becker 2014: 7–8)

The study consisted of three tasks, namely a translation, multiple-choice, and story retell task, and a self-report survey, which are described in greater detail along with the procedure of the study in the methodology chapter of this thesis (see 2.1 Methodology and materials and 2.3 Procedure). Following the data analysis, Becker (2014: 16) found task type to be a significant factor on the use of phrasal verbs along with three significant interactions between learning context (ESL vs ELF learners) and task type, learning context and verb type, and task type and verb type. More specifically, the results showed that learners used phrasal verbs significantly more in the multiple-choice task, which the author attributes to the fact that participants had a more narrow selection of answers to choose from, thus making the task easier to complete. Becker (2014: 16) also attributes the higher use of phrasal verbs in the translation task to the effects of task type. Given that the aim

of the translation task is to produce semantic equivalents between the two languages, the choice is, again, rather narrow for the learners. However, an added difficulty in the translation task is L1-L2 differences, meaning there may not be phrasal verbs or similar constructions in the learners' first language, making the task a little more challenging. (Becker 2014: 16)

In Becker's (2014: 16) study, the strongest evidence for avoidance was the story retell task where participants had to produce phrasal verbs while speaking. Spoken and informal English is the context in which phrasal verbs are traditionally used most often (McCarthy & O'Dell 2004), making this task a good indicator of whether the participants avoid using phrasal verbs, especially since learners did not seem to avoid phrasal verbs as much in the previous tasks. Becker's (2014: 17) results showed that participants used phrasal verbs significantly less in the story retell task compared to the two other tasks. The author (Becker 2014: 17) explains that this was most likely due to the fact that the story retell task was more of a production task, whereas the translation and multiple-choice task were not. He concludes that when participants were given limited choices, they were more likely to use English phrasal verbs and less likely to do so when asked to produce language orally without guiding information or context.

Another major finding of Becker's (2014: 17) study was the difference between ESL and EFL learners. He found that while both groups had similar results in the multiple-choice task, the ESL learners performed better in the translation task and EFL learners in the story retelling task. Becker (2014: 17) attributed the learners' success in the multiple-choice task to their familiarity with this particular type of testing, which is quite widespread in the Chinese educational system. For the differences in the translation task, Becker (2014: 18) explains that ESL learners, who are more immersed in the English-speaking environment, may have more success with translating the phrasal verbs due to being more exposed to them in everyday context.

This does beg the question of why EFL learners outperformed ESL learners in the story retelling task, which relies greatly on knowing and being able to produce casual spoken language. Becker (2014: 18) explains that this may have been due to EFL learners relying on memorizing the

phrasal verb expressions in the story and using them word-for-word in their own retelling. This is supported by the fact that the more advanced learners used a greater and more diverse selection of vocabulary in their retellings (Becker 2014: 18), meaning they utilized their previous knowledge instead of the targeted phrasal verbs which they read in the story.

Of the targeted phrasal verbs, Becker's (2014: 18–20) results indicate that learners use literal phrasal verbs more often than figurative phrasal verbs. Furthermore, Becker (2014: 19) found that Chinese EFL learners used more literal phrasal verbs and fewer figurative phrasal verbs than the ESL learners. The author (Becker 2014: 19) attributes these results to L1-L2 similarities and the amount of exposure learners have to phrasal verbs. Because the meaning of literal English phrasal verbs and their equivalents in Chinese can be derived from the individual components, Chinese L1 learners may find them to be easier to understand and use. In addition, Chinese ESL learners, who live in an English-speaking environment, have more exposure to phrasal verbs in everyday context, meaning they hear the more complex and idiomatic figurative phrasal verbs more often, thus feel more confident in using them (Becker 2014: 19).

Overall, Becker (2014: 21) emphasizes the importance of recognizing avoidance of phrasal verbs as a possible strategy for overcoming language learning difficulties particularly by EFL learners. Becker explains that they may need extra phrasal verb input and output opportunities to be able to produce language that is native-like. This can be achieved by considering the task types that are used to assess learners' avoidance as well as the tasks which are used to teach and practice phrasal verbs.

Although Becker's (2014) study was quite thorough and produced significant results which can aid ESL and EFL educators in creating better materials and learning conditions for phrasal verb instruction, there are a few limitations that must be addressed. First, the three tasks were administered in succession without a counter-balance design. Becker (2014: 21) agrees that this may have produced a practice or a fatigue effect, which could have influenced the results of the study. Furthermore, the design of the tasks, particularly the multiple-choice task, does not allow

for participants to produce their own options for phrasal verbs, but rather they are forced to choose between a phrasal verb and a one-word equivalent that they may not be familiar with. This issue is present also in the data analysis method, which only gives points for correctly used targeted phrasal verbs and not other phrasal verbs which may also be correct, such as using *think up* instead of *make up* that can both mean *invent*. This means the results of the study may not fully capture learners' use and/or avoidance of phrasal verbs.

This chapter presented the theoretical framework for the thesis. The chapter began with an overview of phrasal verbs. The overview discussed the characteristics of these structures that often make them difficult for EFL learners to learn and use. These characteristics included unpredictability of meaning, phrasal verb type, transitivity, and register and were analyzed both in the context of English and Estonian phrasal verbs. The second half of the chapter examined previous avoidance and phrasal verb research among EFL learners. The subsection began with an overview of avoidance as a learning strategy in general and introduced different factors, including L1-L2 differences, phrasal verb type, task type, and other factors as possible causes for avoidance. Finally, the chapter ended with a comprehensive summary of Becker (2014) to provide a detailed overview of the study being replicated for this thesis. The following chapter will give a more detailed methodological overview of Becker (2014) as well as the results and discussion of the present study.

2. AVOIDANCE OF PHRASAL VERB BY ESTONIAN EFL LEARNERS

This chapter introduces the methodology and summarizes the results of the current thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of the methodology and materials, as well as the participants and procedure of the study. This is followed by an explanation of how the data analysis was conducted after which the results of the study are described and summarized. The chapter ends with a discussion of the results, combining the findings of this study with those of previous research.

2.1 Methodology and materials

The aim of this thesis is to assess (a) to what extent Estonian EFL learners avoid using phrasal verbs and (b) which factors, meaning verb type, task type, and language proficiency, influence the avoidance of phrasal verbs. To achieve this, a two-part test was conducted replicating Becker's (2014) study. In his study, Becker (2014) aimed to address the shortcomings of previous research by considering factors other than L1-L2 differences for the avoidance of phrasal verbs. While L1 Chinese learners of English completed three tasks, a translation, multiple-choice, and story retelling task, as well as a self-report survey (Becker 2014: 8), L1 Estonian learners only completed two: the translation and the multiple-choice task.

The translation task (see Appendix 1) was based on 20 short dialogues taken from the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LSWE) corpus. Each sentence contains one of the targeted phrasal verbs in the context of casual spoken English (Becker 2014: 9). The sentences were originally written in English (Becker 2014: 9) and translated into Estonian by the author of the thesis. The task was administered in Estonian and participants were asked to translate the underlined verbs into English.

The multiple-choice task (see Appendix 2) consisted of the same 20 dialogues from the translation tasks but were administered in English. Like in Becker's (2014: 9) version, the dialogues were presented without the targeted verb and participants had to choose between four

possible answers: the phrasal verb, its one-word equivalent, a distracter phrasal verb, and a one-word distracter.

Becker (2014: 10) also conducted a story-retelling task, which aimed to explore participants' use of phrasal verbs in spoken language. In this task, participants were asked to read a story written by Becker, which contained 18 of the 20 phrasal verbs, and then re-tell as much of the story as possible in English. The retelling was recorded and later analyzed for the use of the targeted phrasal verbs. Because this task must be conducted with each participant individually, the task was excluded from the current thesis, as it would have been too time-consuming.

A few changes were also made to the self-report survey to fit the needs of the current study. Becker (2014: 10) used the survey to collect demographic information about the participants, for example, age, length of residence in the U.S., and number of years spent studying English. The survey also aimed to address the possible issue of avoidance versus ignorance by including a list of 24 phrasal verbs. The list included the targeted 20 phrasal verbs of the study to assess which phrasal verbs the participants know and an additional four invented phrasal verbs to identify possible over-reporting of their knowledge. The self-report survey used in this study (see Appendix 3) included everything from Becker's, except the question about U.S. residency, and included two additional questions, which may influence the use of phrasal verbs in the Estonian context. First, participants were asked to mark their mother tongue, because only Estonian native speakers were to be included in the data analysis and second, whether the participant had ever lived in an English-speaking country and if so, where and for how long.

The tasks targeted 20 pairs of phrasal verbs and their one-word equivalents (see Table 1). The phrasal verbs, taken from the LSWE corpus, represent the 10 most common figurative (F) and literal (L) phrasal verbs in spoken English (Becker 2014: 8). As the study includes a

translation task, the phrasal verbs were also translated into Estonian by the author of the thesis. The translations are provided in the last column in Table 1 below. Because the Estonian translations may affect how the participants translate the phrasal verbs into English, a considerable amount of time was spent on the translation process to ensure that the quality of the translations is as good as possible. The phrasal verbs were first translated by the author and then edited by several other Estonian-speaking people. Estonian one-word equivalents were not used in either of the tests and were thus not translated for this study.

Table 1. English phrasal verbs and their one-word equivalents (Becker 2014: 26–30) and Estonian (Est) phrasal verbs

Phrasal verb (F)	One-word equivalent	Est phrasal verb
come on	hurry	tulema hakkama
going on	happening	aset leidma
find out	discover	teada saama
put on	gain	juurde võtma
went off	sounded	tööle hakkama
came off	occurred	korda minema
ran out	expired	läbi saama
make up	invents	välja mõtlema
gave up	stopped	loobuma
stand up to	confront	vastu seisma

Phrasal verb (L)	One-word equivalent	Est phrasal verb
get up	awake	üles tõusma
got in	entered	läksime
get out	leave	ära minema
come over	visit	külla tulema
pick up	collect	üles korjama
get back	recover	tagasi saama
get off	exit	maha tulema
take off	remove	ära võtma
took away	removed	ära võtma
come along	appears	teele sattuma

The phrasal verbs were translated into Estonian in the context of the multiple-choice task dialogues (see Appendix 2). In two instances (gave up – *loobusime*, got in – *läksime*), a one-word equivalent had to be chosen to retain the meaning of the original sentence. Otherwise, two-word verbs were used as was the case in Becker's (2014: 9) study.

Prior to administrating the tests, pilot tests were conducted with an advanced and an intermediate language level participant. The aim of the pilot tests was to assess how long the procedure takes and whether the tasks and instructions are clear for the participants. This would have allowed for any necessary changes to be made before the actual data was collected. However, as neither of the participants experienced any difficulties and completed the tasks much quicker than was described in Becker's (2014) study, the procedure and materials were not changed.

2.2 Participants

Two groups of Estonian EFL learners ($N = 75$) participated in the study. The first group consisted of advanced participants who were recruited from the English Department at the University of Tartu. 41 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language and Literature program completed the study. The average age of the advanced participants was approximately 21 who, on average, had been studying English for about 13 years. 38 out of 41 participants marked Estonian and three marked Russian as their mother tongue. Because the aim of the study is to analyze the language of Estonian EFL learners, the results of the Russian-speaking students were excluded from the data analysis.

The intermediate participants, whose language level their respective teachers estimated to be approximately B2, were recruited from Tartu Hansa Kool and Tallinna Reaalkool. 14 ninth and 27 tenth grade students completed the study. Their average age was approximately 16 and they had, on average, been studying English for 8 years. 38 out of 41 participants were Estonian native speakers, three were Russian, and were thus excluded from the data analysis. One participant also marked down English and Finnish as their mother tongue in addition to Estonian, but their results were included. One participant did not complete the second half of task 2 and was thus not included in the data analysis. In total, the data analysis included 38 advanced and 37 intermediate participants.

2.3 Procedure

Apart from a few changes, the procedure of this study was similar to Becker's (2014). The tests were conducted with all the participants of one group at once and not individually like Becker did in his study. The author of this paper visited the advanced group and one of the intermediate groups in their classes and conducted the tests in person. The data from the second intermediate group was collected by their own teacher, who followed the same procedure. The procedure itself is described in the following paragraph.

The study began with the signing of an informed consent form (see Appendix 4). The author of the thesis went over the form together with the participants, emphasizing the most important information and allowing them to ask any questions about the study. Because the intermediate students were underage, they were also given a consent form (see Appendix 5) prior to the study to bring to their parent or legal guardian to ask for their permission. Once the participants had signed the consent form, the first task was distributed. The author read out the instructions to both tasks and briefly mentioned that they are allowed to use both one-word and multi-word verbs without emphasizing this too much. As became apparent in the pilot studies, both the advanced and intermediate students completed the task much quicker than was described in Becker (2014). He gave students 15 minutes to complete both written tasks, but no time limit was given to the participants in this study. The entire procedure took approximately 20–25 minutes in all groups.

Participants were asked to raise their hand once they had completed task one in order to receive task two. Before giving them the second task, however, the first task was collected to ensure participants would not change their answers after seeing the targeted phrasal verbs in the multiple-choice task. The same procedure of distributing and collecting the task was repeated with task two. Finally, participants were given a self-report survey to fill out after which they were free to leave or continue with their classwork.

2.4 Data analysis and results

After collecting the data, the answers of the participants were manually entered into a spreadsheet document according to the task and the language level of the participant. The answers were analyzed and proportion scores calculated for each participant and phrasal verb. Similarly to Becker (2014: 12), participants received one point for each correct answer, i.e., the targeted phrasal verb, in both tasks. If the participant responded with anything other than the targeted phrasal verb, they were given no points. The proportion scores were calculated individually for each participant based on their answers in the self-report survey. If they reported knowing all the targeted phrasal verbs, their score was calculated out of 20 and if they reported knowing fewer, e.g., 15 phrasal verbs, the score was calculated out of 15, even if the participant had correctly used one of the phrasal verbs they reported not knowing. For example, if the participant used 11 phrasal verbs correctly, their proportion score would be 11/15 = 0.73.

Using the individual proportion scores of the participants, the average use of phrasal verbs in the translation task (TT) and multiple-choice task (MCT) was calculated for both groups – advanced learners and intermediate learners. The average use of phrasal verbs by advanced participants in the translation task was approximately 0.38, with literal phrasal verbs (0.45) being used slightly more often than figurative phrasal verbs (0.31). Advanced participants also used literal phrasal verbs (0.91) more often than figurative ones (0.62) in the multiple-choice task, with an overall average of about 0.76. Intermediate participants showed similar results. Their average use of phrasal verbs in the translation task was 0.37, using literal phrasal verbs (0.50) more often than figurative phrasal verbs (0.24). The average use of phrasal verbs was higher and slightly higher than that of advanced participants in the multiple-choice task (0.78), with literal phrasal verbs (0.92) being chosen more often than figurative (0.63). These results are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Means of proportion scores for advanced and intermediate learners in TT and MCT across phrasal verb types

	Advanced		Intermediate	
	Task type		Task type	
Phrasal verb type	TT	MCT	TT	MCT
All PVs	0.38	0.76	0.37	0.78
Figurative PVs	0.30	0.62	0.24	0.63
Literal PVs	0.40	0.91	0.50	0.92

During the data entry process, however, it became apparent that in the translation task, both the advanced and intermediate participants used more phrasal verbs than Becker's data analysis method allows to account for. Because only the targeted phrasal verbs received a point, several other possible phrasal verbs were left out of the analysis, even though they were correctly used and made sense in the context of the sentence. For example, in sentence 11 where the targeted answer is *make up*, only 5 out of 37 advanced participants (0.12) used this specific phrasal verb. However, when other possible phrasal verbs such as *come up (with), think of,* and *think up* are included in the analysis, the use of phrasal verbs increased to 34 out of 37 (0.89). This is the most extreme example of an increase in the use of specific phrasal verbs, but this trend can also be seen in the individual answers of the participants. When including other correct phrasal verbs in the analysis, each participant on average used 3 phrasal verbs more (max = 6 [advanced], 5 [intermediate]; min = 1) than the initial results showed. This increase is also reflected in the average proportion scores, which are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Means of proportion scores for advanced and intermediate learners in TT with and without other possible PVs included

	Advanced		Intermediate	
Phrasal verb type	w/o other PVs	w/ other PVs	w/o other PVs	w/ other PVs
All PVs	0.38	0.54	0.37	0.51
Figurative PVs	0.30	0.43	0.24	0.32
Literal PVs	0.40	0.65	0.50	0.70

Because the aim of this thesis is to study the avoidance of phrasal verbs, it is important to include all the phrasal verbs used by the participants, even if they are not in the list of the

targeted phrasal verbs to get a more realistic overview of the use of these constructions. As can be seen in Table 3, participants use phrasal verbs in the translation task significantly more often (compare 0.38 vs 0.54 for advanced learners and 0.37 vs 0.51 for intermediate learners) than the initial analysis showed. The same can be seen when looking at the phrasal verbs individually.

The average use of individual phrasal verbs was calculated similarly to how the proportion scores were calculated for each participant. First, the maximum score for each phrasal verb was found by subtracting the number of participants who reported not knowing the phrasal verbs in the self-report survey from the number of total participants (38 for advanced participants, 37 for intermediate). For example, one advanced participant reported not knowing the phrasal verb *get off*, thus the maximum for that phrasal verb was 37, not 38. Then, the number of correctly used phrasal verbs were counted for each individual targeted phrasal verb and divided by its possible maximum score to get the proportion score.

As can be seen in Table 2 above, advanced participants used literal phrasal verbs more often in both tasks. The most frequent literal phrasal verb in the translation task was *pick up* with 36 uses (0.97) and the least frequent verb *get out (of) with* 1 use (0.03). The most frequent literal phrasal verbs in the multiple-choice task were *get off* and *took away*, which both had 37 uses (1.00). The least frequent literal phrasal verb was *get back* with 27 total uses (0.71). The means of literal phrasal verb proportion scores in both tasks are summarized in Figure 1 below. The phrasal verbs in the following figures are presented in the order of frequency in which they appear in the LSWE corpus, starting with the most frequent and ending with the least frequent (Becker 2014: 25).

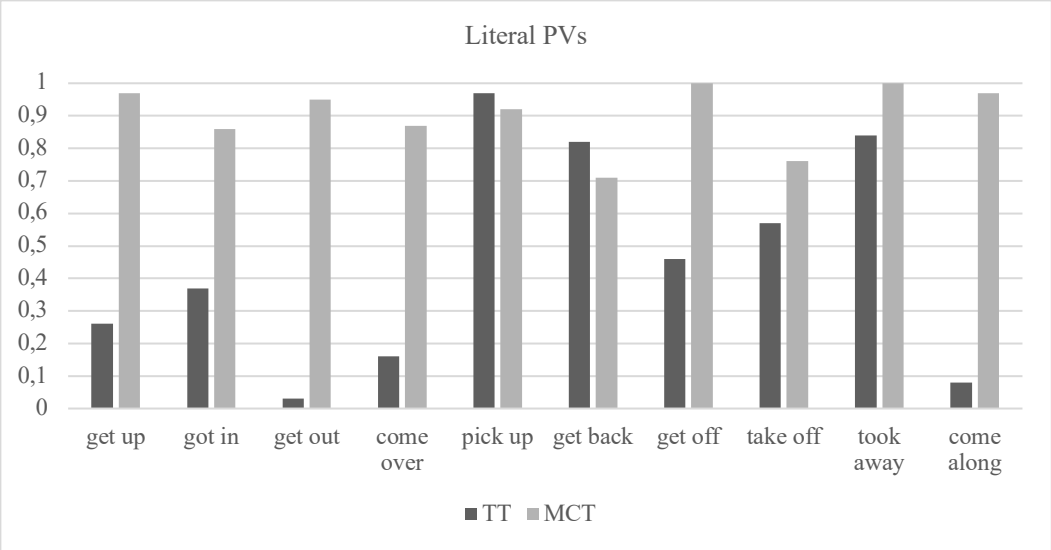

Figure 1. Means of literal PVs by advanced learners in TT and MCT

Intermediate participants also used literal phrasal verbs more often than figurative phrasal verbs in both tasks (see Table 2). The most frequently used literal phrasal verbs in the translation task were *get back* and *pick up* with 34 uses (0.92) and the least frequent *get out (of)* and *come along*, which were both used three times (0.08, 0.09). In the multiple-choice task, the most common literal phrasal verb was *took away*, which was chosen by all participants (1.00). *Come along* was the least frequent literal phrasal verb in the multiple-choice task with 27 (0.82) uses out of a possible 33. See Figure 2 below for the summarized results.

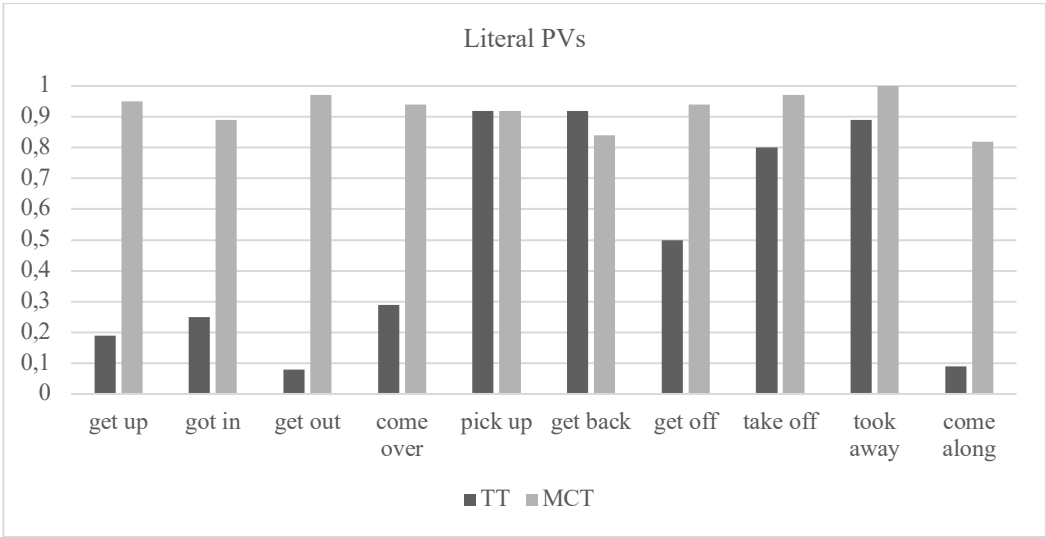

Figure 2. Means of literal PVs by intermediate learners in TT and MCT

Apart from a few, literal phrasal verbs were used fairly consistently by the advanced learners in both the translation as well as the multiple-choice task. In the case of figurative phrasal verbs, however, greater differences can be seen. In the translation task, the most frequent figurative phrasal verb used by advanced participants was *stand up to* with 31 uses out of 38 and a proportion score of about 0.82. The least frequent phrasal verb was *came off* which was not used at all (0.00). In the multiple-choice task, the most frequent phrasal verb was *gave up* with 38 uses (1.00) and the least frequent *come on* with 0 uses (0.00). See Figure 3 for the summarized results of figurative phrasal verbs.

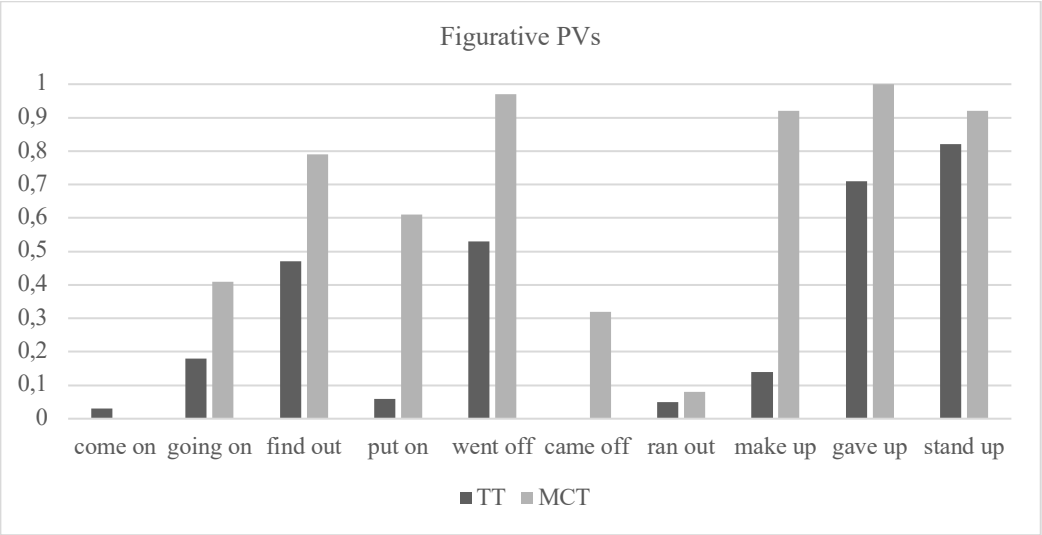

Figure 3. Means of figurative PVs by advanced learners in TT and MCT

Similarly, the use of figurative phrasal verbs varied more among the intermediate learners. In the translation task, the most frequently used figurative phrasal verb was also *stand up to* with 20 uses (0.57). There were, however, three phrasal verbs, which were not used at all, namely *come on, ran out,* and *came off* (0.00). The most frequent figurative phrasal verbs in the multiple-choice task was *find* out, which was chosen over its one-word equivalent 36 times (0.97). The least frequent, as was the case for advanced learners, was *come on* (0.00). These results are summarized in Figure 4 below.

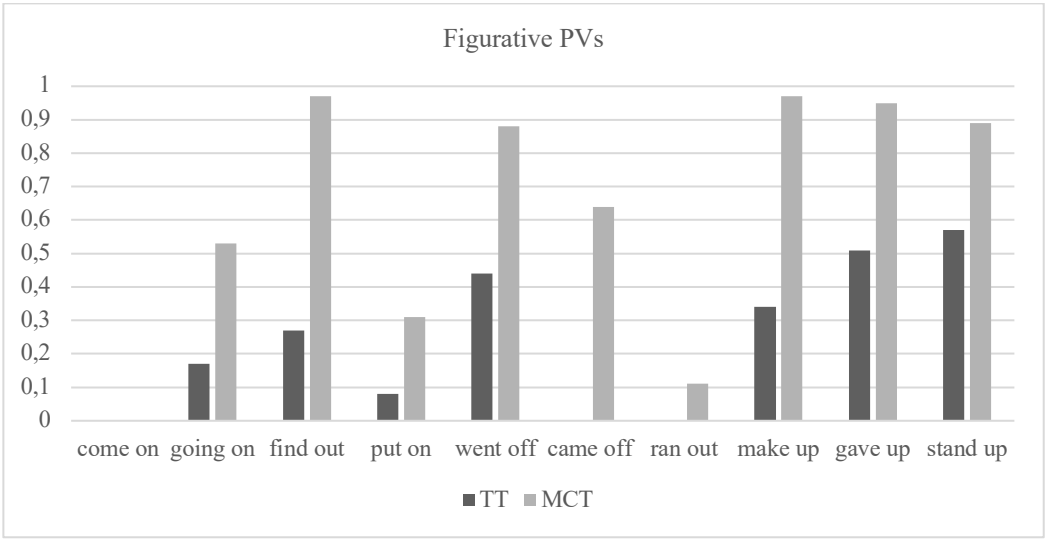

Figure 4. Means of figurative PVs by intermediate learners across translation (TT) and multiple-choice tasks (MCT)

As mentioned earlier, in Figures 1–4 above, the phrasal verbs are listed in the order of frequency in which they appear in the LSWE corpus (Becker 2014: 25) starting with the most frequent (*get up, come on*, > 300 occurrences per million words) and ending with the least frequent (*come along*, *stand up*, > 20 occurrences per million words). Broadly speaking, in the case of both literal and figurative phrasal verbs, advanced and intermediate participants seem to use the less frequent phrasal verbs more often than the more frequent phrasal verbs. More discussion on this result and other findings will follow in the next section.

2.5 Discussion

According to the findings of the present study, Estonian EFL learners, in general, do not avoid using phrasal verbs. Advanced and intermediate learners showed similar results across both the translation and the multiple-choice task, with advanced learners having more success with the figurative phrasal verbs and intermediate learners with the literal phrasal verbs. Both groups performed significantly better in the multiple-choice task. The proportion scores in the translation and multiple-choice task for advanced participants were 0.54 and 0.76 respectively, and 0.51 and 0.78 for intermediate participants. Interestingly, intermediate learners performed 'better' in the multiple-choice task, choosing phrasal verbs over their one-

word equivalents more often than advanced learners. Both groups preferred using literal phrasal verbs over figurative phrasal verbs. These results echo those of Becker's study (2014: 13–14) who also found that Chinese EFL learners performed better in the multiple-choice task and used literal phrasal verbs more often than figurative phrasal verbs. There was, however, a bigger distinction between the advanced and intermediate learners in Becker's study than there was between the Estonian learner groups of the present thesis.

As can be seen in the results above, the findings of this study seem to indicate that the language level of the participants does not influence the use of phrasal verbs. This, however, does not match the findings of previous research (e.g., Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Laufer & Eliasson 1993, Liao & Fukuya 2002, Becker 2014), which has shown that lower language level learners have more difficulty with using phrasal verbs and thus tend to avoid them more often than advanced learners. Therefore, the findings of the present study are surprising, but may be explained by the fact that the intermediate participants in the study were high-intermediate learners (B2) as opposed to lower intermediate (B1) as was the case in Becker's (2014) study, for example. Furthermore, the language level of the intermediate learners was estimated by their teachers, meaning there is no solid proof of their actual language level. The intermediate participants could have been too advanced to accurately reflect the use of phrasal verbs by lower-level learners.

Furthermore, the intermediate learners of this study outperformed advanced participants in the multiple-choice task by choosing phrasal verbs over their one-word equivalents more often than advanced learners. This could have been influenced by a few factors. First, it could have been because the learners had already been exposed to the phrasal verbs in the previous task (translation) and now felt more confident in choosing the same constructions in the multiple-choice task. However, both groups completed the tasks in the

same order and under similar conditions, so it does not completely explain why lower language level participants chose the targeted phrasal verbs more often.

The second possible explanation for this could be the one-word equivalents themselves. It is quite likely that some intermediate participants simply did not know the one-word equivalents and saw the phrasal verbs as safer options. This makes sense because phrasal verbs are comprised of elementary level words, while, according to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.), some of the one-word equivalents, such as *recover* and *confront*, belong to high-intermediate and advanced level vocabulary. Even if the participant does not know the meaning of the phrasal verb, they are able to deduce the meaning from the individual components more easily than the one-word options. Becker (2014: 18) came to a similar conclusion when analyzing the results of the story retelling task, in which the intermediate participants used more phrasal verbs than advanced participants did. Becker (2014: 18) explains that the more advanced learners used a greater and more diverse selection of vocabulary in their retellings, meaning they did not focus on memorizing the source material, rather relied on their previous knowledge and vocabulary.

A finding of the present thesis, which does confirm earlier research (e.g., Liao & Fukuya 2002, Houshyar & Talebinezhad 2013, Becker 2014, Rovira Diaz 2017), is the learners' preference for literal phrasal verbs over figurative phrasal verbs. In both tasks, all participants used or chose literal phrasal verbs more often than figurative phrasal verbs. The proportion scores for literal phrasal verbs in the translation task was 0.65 for advanced and 0.70 for intermediate learners. In the multiple-choice task, the proportions scores were 0.91 for advanced and 0.92 for intermediate participants. For figurative phrasal verbs, the scores were much lower: 0.43 for advanced and 0.32 for intermediate participants in the translation task and 0.62 and 0.63 in the multiple-choice task. These results can be explained by the fact that determining the meaning of figurative phrasal verbs is more difficult (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-

Freeman 1999) as the meaning of such verbs often cannot be deduced from the individual components. Literal phrasal verbs are more straightforward in meaning, making them easier to comprehend.

As described in the literature review, German has greatly influenced the Estonian language, especially in the context of phrasal verbs (Hasselblatt 1990, 2000, Veldi 2006, Erelt & Metslang 2017). Like previous studies (Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Laufer & Eliasson 1993, Becker 2014) have described, whether the learner's L1 has phrasal verb constructions could influence how they use them in their L2. The results of this study support this argument, as Estonian EFL learners, who do have phrasal verbs in their L1, did not seem to avoid or underuse phrasal verbs. The influence of Estonian is further illustrated by the fact that Estonian EFL learners used the English phrasal verbs that are similar in Estonian more often than those which are very different. For example, some of the most frequently used phrasal verbs were *stand up to, pick up, get back, take off*, and *take away*. All of these have a direct or close to a direct translation in Estonian, which probably made them easier to use both in the translation and multiple-choice task.

Another contributing factor to how learners used phrasal verbs in English was likely the Estonian translations of the targeted phrasal verbs. Many participants came up with similar translations for some of the Estonian phrasal verbs. For example, the Estonian phrasal verb for *make up* was *välja mõtlema,* in which *välja* means *out* and *mõtlema* means *think*. Several participants in both language level groups translated the phrasal verb into *think of* or *think up*, using the same main verb as in Estonian. The same could be seen in how *aset leidma* (*ase* = bed, place; *leidma* = find) was often translated into *taking place* instead of the targeted *going on* or *teada saama* (*tead(m)a* = know, *saama* = get) into *get to know*. Intermediate learners also very often translated *tööle/tulema hakkama,* in which *hakkama* means 'to start', into *start ringing/coming*, although the respective targeted phrasal verbs were *went off* and *come on*. This

can indicate that in the translation task, participants perhaps focused too much on the verbs and not the sentences as a whole.

Another peculiar finding of this study, which to the knowledge of the author has not been found or discussed in previous research, is how the participants used the less common phrasal verbs significantly more often than those which were most common in the LSWE corpus. For example, the most common phrasal verb *come on* (Becker 2014: 25) was chosen once in the translation task and not at all in the multiple-choice task across all 75 participants. Because only nine of those participants reported not knowing this phrasal verb, this could be considered one of the few instances of avoidance in the present study. The majority of the participants did not avoid this construction due to ignorance, meaning there must be another factor that is causing avoidance, be it the surrounding context of the phrasal verb or its perceived formality.

Studies (Chang 2012, Lasan 2021) have found that learners often struggle with applying appropriate registers when using English. Because phrasal verbs are typically used (McCarthy & O'Dell 2004) and taught (Alangari et al. 2020) in informal language, perhaps the surrounding context in the task (*Would you please* come on*!*) made participants choose the more formal one-word equivalent *hurry*, even though *come on* would be considered completely appropriate by native speakers. This is supported by the fact that in the translation task, which participants completed first, the phrasal verb *come on* and the main verb *come* were used, but all of the participants then chose 'hurry' in the multiple-choice task, even if they had previously used *come* or *come on*.

There are a few limitations of the present thesis which must be addressed. As can be seen in the results and discussion above, in this study, there was not as big of a difference between the results of the intermediate and advanced learner groups. This does not coincide with the findings of previous research discussed above, meaning the external validity of the

results may not be very high. To address this issue, the tests would have to be readministered among lower intermediate (B1) learners to get a better overview of their language use. Furthermore, the language level of the intermediate students in this study was estimated by their teachers and not tested, which can be another contributing factor to the findings of the study. In future research, the language level of all student participants must be assessed before conducting the phrasal verb tests.

Another limitation of the study may be the self-report survey, more specifically the final task in which participants were asked to "Circle the phrasal verbs that you could explain, translate or for which you know that you could provide *at least* one clear definition" (see Appendix 3). The majority of the wording was borrowed from Becker (2014: 33), with *explain* and *translate* being added to the task description by the author of the present thesis. Although several options were provided for 'knowing' the phrasal verbs, this task description is still somewhat problematic. Phrasal verbs can carry different meanings and even if the participant thinks they know the meaning of a phrasal verb, it may be a different definition than the one that was being targeted in the study. Therefore, in some cases of phrasal verb misuse, it could have been due to ignorance even if the participant reported knowing the phrasal verb. In future studies, it would be beneficial to test whether learners actually know the targeted meaning of the phrasal verb and not just the phrasal verb itself.

One reason that the self-report survey may have been designed like this may have been to save time. Prior to filling out the survey, participants have already completed two or three tests, as was the case in Becker's (2014) original study. This means that the learners could be tired from the other tasks and therefore more likely to make mistakes or fill out the survey carelessly. This could have led Becker to opt for a more simple task, i.e., underlining the phrasal verbs they know, which does not take as much mental effort as, for example, defining the phrasal verbs would.

Furthermore, the order in which the participants completed and the way the tasks were introduced may have influenced learners to use the phrasal verbs more often. One could argue that conducting all the tests at once primes the participants to choose phrasal verbs over the one-word equivalents. First, they are exposed to multi-word verbs in the translation task and then they see phrasal verbs in the multiple-choice task. It is not difficult to then conclude that phrasal verbs are probably being targeted. Additionally, Becker (2014: 27) included in the task descriptions that both one-word and multi-word verbs can be used. Because the current study is a replication of Becker's, this sentence was included in the tests of this study as well. Although not explicitly emphasized, knowing that multi-word verbs are allowed to be used could further indicate that this is something that should be done to correctly complete the tasks. In future research, it would be interesting to conduct the study using filler items, independent measures or a between-group design. This could be achieved by having randomized groups complete one of the two, not both tasks. This would avoid order effects such as practice and fatigue, which could have been a contributing factor to the results of the present study.

Another major limitation of the present thesis is the fact that the story retelling task was omitted from the study due to time constraints, especially since it may have provided further insight into why Estonian EFL learners underuse phrasal verbs in spoken language (Toom 2020: 28). As described by Becker (2014: 16), the story retelling task was the strongest piece of evidence for avoidance in the study. Compared to the translation and multiple-choice task, in which the learners could see the sentences and possible answers the entire time and where the focus was more on language comprehension rather than production, in the story retelling task, the participants had to produce the verbs themselves without any extra materials or context. This means learners could only rely on the knowledge and vocabulary that comes most easily to them. Furthermore, because phrasal verbs are used most commonly in spoken language (McCarthy & O'Dell 2004: 14), this task would have provided a better overview of

how learners are able to spontaneously produce phrasal verbs in the register that they are most often used in. In future research, conducting a study on phrasal verb use in spoken language would certainly help to better understand the problems EFL learners may face when using these structures, especially since previous research (e.g., Gilquin 2015, Toom 2020) has found significant differences in how native and non-native speakers use phrasal verbs in spoken language.

CONCLUSION

Phrasal verbs, although seemingly simple and widely used by native speakers, are known as a difficult topic of grammar for EFL learners. Research has attempted to examine these difficulties by conducting different experimental and corpus studies. These studies (e.g., Dagut & Laufer 1985, Gilquin 2015, Toom 2020) have shown that EFL learners tend to underuse or avoid phrasal verbs. This avoidance, defined as choosing not to use a grammatical structure that one has knowledge of due to its perceived difficulty (Laufer & Eliasson 1993, Becker 2014), could be partly contributed to the characteristics of phrasal verbs, which can often be confusing for L2 learners of English. Some of these difficult characteristics include unclear meaning (Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman 1999), syntactic difficulties (Quirk et al. 1985, Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman 1999), and register issues (Chang 2012, Alangari et al. 2020, Lasan 2021).

Beyond phrasal verb characteristics, one of the most widely researched topics in phrasal verb avoidance studies is L1-L2 differences. Many authors (e.g., Dagut & Laufer 1985, Hulstijn & Marchena 1989, Gilquin 2015) agree that EFL learners whose first language does not have phrasal verbs avoid phrasal verbs more than those who do have similar structures in their first language. Because phrasal verbs are most typical in Germanic languages (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman 1999), one could assume that Estonian EFL learners also underuse phrasal verbs to a large extent. A recent BA study (Toom 2020) found that Estonian learners underuse these constructions compared to native speakers of English. However, as there has not been sufficient research on phrasal verbs conducted among Estonian learners, the reasons for this underuse are not known. Furthermore, due to the influence of German on the Estonian language (Hasselblatt 2000, Veldi 2006, Erelt & Metslang 2017) and according to the previous research on L1-L2 differences mentioned earlier, Estonian EFL learners may not avoid phrasal verbs at all, but underuse them for other reasons (for example, not comprehending the register differences involved in the use of phrasal verbs).

The present thesis intended to address this gap in research by replicating Becker's (2014) study on phrasal verb avoidance. The aim of this thesis was to analyze the avoidance of phrasal verbs by Estonian EFL learners. To achieve this, two research questions were proposed: a) To what extent do Estonian EFL learners avoid using phrasal verbs? b) Should Estonian EFL learners avoid the use of phrasal verbs, which factors, including phrasal verb type, task type, and language level, influence this avoidance? To answer these questions a three-part study was conducted among advanced (n = 38) and intermediate (n = 37) Estonian EFL learners (N = 75). The study consisted of a translation and a multiple-choice task, which targeted 20 of the most common literal and figurative phrasal verbs in the LSWE corpus. To collect demographic information about the participants as well as to address the issue of avoidance versus ignorance, learners also filled out a self-report survey. The results were analyzed by calculating proportions scores and averages of these scores.

The analysis of the data provided answers to both research questions. According to the results, Estonian EFL learners do not avoid phrasal verbs. The overall use of phrasal verbs in the translation task by all participants was over 0.50 and over 0.70 in the multiple-choice task. These results seem to support previous findings (e.g., Laufer & Eliasson 1993, Jacobsen 2012) which have found that L1 speakers of Germanic languages, or languages with Germanic influences, avoid phrasal verbs less than those who do not have phrasal verbs in their first language. Some of the most commonly used phrasal verbs in this study were those that had a very similar meaning in Estonian (e.g., *get back – tagasi* [back] *saama* [get]*)*, further highlighting the possible influence of the learners' L1 on the use of phrasal verbs in English. The influence of Estonian could also be seen in the way learners translated the phrasal verbs in the translation task. Many participants came up with similar answers for the targeted phrasal verbs, which were considered not 'correct' from the perspective of the study. For example,

instead of *make up*, for which the Estonian translation was *välja* (out) *mõtlema* (think), many participants wrote *think up/of* which closely resembles the Estonian version.

The results also provided answers for the second research question, which aimed to examine different factors, namely task type, phrasal verb type, and learner proficiency, as possible causes for avoidance. The most significant factor in the results of the present study was task type, followed by phrasal verb type. There were no substantial differences found between the advanced and intermediate learners – both groups performed significantly better in the multiple-choice task. These results reflect those of earlier research (Liao & Fukuya 2002, Becker 2014, Rovira Diaz 2017) which have also found learners having more success with the multiple-choice task. Another finding of the present thesis, which confirms earlier research (Liao & Fukuya 2002, Houshyar & Talebinezhad 2013, Becker 2014, Rovira Diaz 2017), is the learners' preference for literal phrasal verbs over figurative phrasal verbs. In both tasks, all participants used or chose literal phrasal verbs more often than figurative phrasal verbs.

Overall, although Estonian EFL learners do not seem to avoid English phrasal verbs, a few limitations of the study could have influenced these results. First, the language level of the intermediate participants may have been too high to accurately portray the use of phrasal verbs by lower-level students. Further research should be done to address this issue and to get a better overview of the difficulties intermediate learners may face when using these structures. Second, the present study omitted the story retelling task from Becker's (2014) study, which provided the most significant evidence of avoidance in his results. The task was omitted due to time constraints; however, as phrasal verbs are used most often in spoken language and the story retelling task requires participants to produce phrasal verbs without surrounding context or extra material, it would provide a more reliable overview of phrasal verb use and/or avoidance. And finally, as was the case in Becker's (2014) study, the tasks were conducted in succession, which could have influenced the results of the present study. Completing the

translation and multiple-choice task together, both of which targeted the same 20 phrasal verbs, could have created a practice or fatigue effect, which can influence the findings of the study.

This thesis serves as a starting point for further, more detailed research on avoidance of phrasal verbs by Estonian EFL learners. Using the findings and limitations of the study, several questions could be posed to provide further insight into the topic. Phrasal verbs are an integral part of English and this topic merits further research since EFL learners often have difficulties with these structures. Further research on the use of phrasal verbs by EFL learners allows the development of better teaching methods and materials.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Translation task

Task 1

Read the following 20 dialogues and then translate the Estonian verb that best completes each sentence into English. Write your response in English in the space provided. Keep in mind, you can choose either one-word or multi-word verbs. You will have approximately 15 minutes to complete this task.

1 Ta peaks mõnikord lihtsalt õppima talle vastu seisma. _____
2 Ta ei hoolinud raha kadumisest. Ta tahtis lihtsalt oma krediitkaarti tagasi saada. _____
3 Ta oli häbelik, nii et ta ei tahtnud arsti nähes riideid ära võtta. _____
4 Mõtlesin, et käskisin sul siit ära minna! _____
5 Kas olete hiljuti kaalus juurde võtnud? _____
6 Kas sa palun hakkaksid tulema juba? _____
7 Häirekell hakkas tööle millalgi pärast südaööd. _____
8 Vanemad võtsid auto temalt ära, sest ta jäi roolis purjus peaga vahele. _____
9 Peame prügikasti ostma, sest naabritele ei meeldi meie prügi üles korjata. _____
10 Ta tõuseb iga päev pärastlõunal üles. _____
11 Mu õpilane mõtleb alati vabandusi välja, miks ta tunnis ei käinud. _____
12 Miks sa eile õhtul külla ei tulnud? _____
13 Ära võta esimest tüdrukut, kes teele satub. _____
14 Läksime autosse vahetult enne kui vihma sadama hakkas. _____
15 Minu tellimus sai eelmine kuu läbi. _____
16 Purjus mees ei tulnud bussilt maha. _____
17 Reis Las Vegasesse läks korda nagu plaanis oli. _____
18 Ma ei suuda uskuda, mis seal aset leiab. _____
19 Nad loobusid mõttest sel suvel Pekingisse reisida. _____
20 Ärme talle veel ütle. Ma ei taha, et ta veel neist kohutavatest uudistest teada saaks. _____

Appendix 2 – Multiple-choice task

Task 2

Read the following 20 dialogues below and the circle the letter (a, b, c, or d) of the word that **best** completes the blank space. You will have approximately 15 minutes to complete this task.

1 "I can't stand it when we're late. Would you please _____?
"Alright, I'm coming. Just wait a minute!"
a) come on b) hurry c) forget d) come across

2 "He's so lazy. He would _____ at noon every day and watch TV."
"Why don't you ask him to find a job?"
a) claim b) calm down c) awake d) get up

3 "So, how did things go at the doctor's office today?"
"Well, she was shy, so she wouldn't _____ her clothes in front of the doctor."
a) remove b) tune in c) take off d) improve

4 "What are you doing here? I thought I told you to _____ here!"
"Okay, okay, I'm leaving. Calm down."
a) enter b) leave c) get out of d) look up

5 "Why didn't you _____ last night?"
"I know, I'm sorry. I just got so busy with my work."
a) abolish b) come over c) let down d) visit

6 "He always yells at her about the work she does or doesn't do around the house."
"She should just learn to _____ him sometimes."
a) stand up to b) invite c) run into d) confront

7 "So, when did this actually happen last night?"
"The alarm _____ sometime after midnight."
a) went off b) claimed c) sounded d) set up

8 "We _____ the car just before it started raining."
"Wow! You were lucky because we got soaked."
a) lifted b) showed up c) entered d) got in

9 "We need to buy a garbage can, because the neighbors don't like to _____ our trash."
"Yeah, they seemed kinda upset about our trash always blowing into their yard."
a) turn out b) pick up c) collect d) wash

10 "Did you _____ some weight recently?"
"Actually, I gained a couple pounds because I stopped jogging in the morning."
a) put on b) gain c) stand up to d) rise

11 "Did you see all the changes that Bill made in the store?"
"Yeah. I can't believe what's _____ at that place."
a) waiting b) tuning in c) happening d) going on

12 “Someone’s gotta tell Andy what happened.”
“Let’s not tell him now. I don’t want him to _____ the terrible news just yet.”
a) move on b) discover c) find out d) disappoint

13 “Her parents _____ the car because she was caught driving after she was drinking.”
“It sounds like it was her own fault then. I don’t feel bad for her.”
a) removed b) offended c) took away d) pointed out

14 “Was he mad about the missing money?”
“He didn’t care about losing the money. He just wanted to _____ his credit cards.”
a) recover b) get back c) take on d) solve

15 “The drunk man wouldn’t _____ the bus.”
“So, what did the driver do? Did he stop the bus?”
a) reply b) get off c) shut up d) exit

16 “Hey, good to see you back. How was the trip to Vegas?”
“The trip to Las Vegas _____ as scheduled.”
a) occurred b) took over c) released d) came off

17 “What happened to all the magazines you were getting?”
“My subscription _____ last month.”
a) turned out b) exploded c) ran out d) expired

18 “I don’t care who it is, I’ll date anyone at the moment.”
“C’mon, don’t take the first girl that _____ either.”
a) comes along b) appears c) goes away d) captures

19 “My student always _____ excuses for not attending class.”
“Do you believe what she says?”
a) invents b) misses c) drops in d) makes up

20 “They _____ the idea to travel to Beijing this summer.”
“But that’s all they used to talk about. Was the money tight?”
a) took over b) gave up c) answered d) stopped

Appendix 3 – Self-report survey

Self-report survey

1) What is your age?

2) How long have you been studying English? *(in years)*

3) Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?
    a. Yes
    b. No

    If yes, where and for how long? *(in months or years)*

4) What is your mother tongue?
    a. Estonian
    b. Russian
    c. Other *(please specify)*

5) Circle the phrasal verbs that you could explain, translate or for which you know that you could provide *at least* one clear definition.

** The phrasal verbs marked with asterisks indicate the four made up phrasal verbs. The asterisks were not included in the version that participants completed.*

Come on	Ask down*	Come along
Get up	Put on	Make up
Chip up*	Going on	Gave up
Get out (of)	Took away	Find out
Come over	Get back	Take off
Stand up to	Get off	Pick up
Went off	Let after*	Come off
Got in	Ran out (of)	Show away*

Appendix 4 – Participant informed consent form

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in a research study for my, Sandra-Leele Toom's, master's thesis. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand what is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the author of the study if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

STUDY DESCRIPTION:
The aim of my master's thesis is to examine the use of English verbs by Estonian EFL (English as a foreign language) learners. You will receive a questionnaire, which consists of three tasks:

- a translation task, in which you must translate 20 short phrases from Estonian to English,
- a multiple-choice task, in which you must choose between four possible answers to complete 20 short dialogues,
- a self-report survey, in which you must provide your a) age, b) first language, c) how long you have been studying English, d) whether (and where/how long) you have ever lived in an English-speaking country, and e) mark down which verbs you know from the list provided.

Your answers will be used as data in my study. Your results will not be used to grade or assess you. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your preferences.

Your responses will be completely anonymous. You will be assigned a code (e.g. P01) which will be used in place of your name on all research notes and documents. Your personal information and test results will be stored in separate files on my personal computer, which only I will have access to.

Participation in the study is voluntary and safe. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or test, you may ask the author of the study (Sandra-Leele Toom, toomsandra@gmail.com).

I, _____, have read and understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature:
Date:

Researcher's signature:
Date:

Appendix 5 – Parent/legal guardian informed consent form

UURIMUSE KIRJELDUS:

Olen Tartu Ülikooli võõrkeeleõpetaja eriala magistrant Sandra-Leele Toom. Uurin oma lõputöös Eesti õpilaste inglise keele kasutust, täpsemalt tegusõnade kasutamist. Uurimuse eesmärgiks on välja selgitada, kuidas erinevad faktorid (sh õpilaste keeletase) mõjutavad tegusõnade kasutamist inglise keeles.

Selleks viin edasijõudnud (Tartu Ülikooli) ning kesktaseme (Tartu Hansa Kooli, Tallinna Reaalkooli) inglise keele õpilaste seas läbi testi, mis koosneb kolmest osast:

- tõlkimisülesanne, milles peavad õpilased 20 lühikest fraasi eesti keelest inglise keelde tõlkima,
- valikvastustega ülesanne, milles peavad õpilased 20 lauses olevad lüngad valikvastustega ära täitma,
- lühike küsitlus, milles peavad õpilased ära märkima oma a) vanuse, b) kui kaua nad on inglise keelt õppinud, c) mis on nende emakeel, d) kas (ning kus/kui kaua) nad on kunagi välismaal elanud ning e) ära märkima, milliseid tegusõnu nad etteantud listist teavad.

Test toimub õppetundide ajal ja võtab aega kõige rohkem 25 minutit. Iga tulemus saab õpilase andmetele vastava koodi (nt P01). Katse tulemusi ei kasutata õpilase hindamiseks.

Tagan kõigi uurimuse jooksul saadud andmete puhul täieliku anonüümsuse. Õpilaste nimede asemel kasutan koode ning esitan tulemused keeletasemegruppide kaupa. Uurimistööga seotud andmeid hoian oma isiklikus arvutis ning testide tulemusi hoian isikuandmetest eraldi dokumendikaustas, nii et uurimusega mitteseotud isikutel ei ole võimalik kaht dokumenti juhuslikult omavahel kokku viia.

Uurimuses osalemine on vabatahtlik ega sea õpilast ohtu. Soovi korral on ka testi ajal võimalik osalemisest loobuda. Kuna osa osalejatest on alaealised, on vajalik Teie nõusolek. See ei kohusta aga õpilast uurimuses osalema, vaid küsin temalt enne katset samuti kirjalikku nõusolekut.

Kui Te olete nõus sellega, et Teie laps osaleb uuringus, siis palun täitke ja tagastage allolev nõusoleku vorm.

Mina, _____, olen nõus, et minu poeg/tütar _____, osaleb Sandra-Leele Toomi magistritöö uurimuses.

Olen teadlik uurimistöö eesmärgist ja metoodikast ning kinnitan oma nõusolekut enda lapse osalemiseks selles allkirjaga.

Tean, et uurimistööd puudutavate küsimuste korral võin pöörduda töö autori Sandra-Leele Toomi poole (toomsandra@gmail.com).

Lapsevanema/eestkostja allkiri:
Kuupäev, kuu, aasta:

Lapsevanemale/eestkostjale informatsiooni andnud isiku nimi: Sandra-Leele Toom
Lapsevanemale/eestkostjale informatsiooni andnud isiku allkiri:
Kuupäev, kuu, aasta:

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Sandra-Leele Toom
The Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs Among Estonian EFL Learners. Ühendverbide vältimine Eesti inglise keelt võõrkeelena (EFL) õppijate seas.
magistritöö
2022
Lehekülgede arv: 52

Annotatsioon:

Käesolev magistritöö uurib Eesti inglise keelt võõrkeelena (EFL) õppijate ühendverbide kasutust, täpsemalt nende vältimist inglise keeles. Töö eesmärk on kindlaks teha, kas ning millisel määral Eesti EFL õppijad ühendverbe väldivad. Lisaks püütakse kindlaks teha millised tegurid, sealhulgas õppijate keeletase, ühendverbi tüüp ja ülesande tüüp, ühendverbide vältimist mõjutavad. Töö replikeerib Beckeri (2014) uuringu meetodit, mille järgi viiakse läbi kaheosaline test kesktaseme ja edasijõudnud Eesti EFL õppijate seas. Test koosneb tõlkimis- ja vastuse variantidega ülesandest ning uurib 20 kõige sagedasemat otsese ja ülekantud tähendusega ühendverbi.

Töö jaguneb kahte peatükki: kirjanduse ülevaade ja empiiriline analüüs. Esimeses peatükis defineeritakse nii inglise kui eesti keele ühendverbid ning seejärel antakse ülevaade varasematest EFL õppijate kohta tehtud uurimustest ühendverbide ja nende vältimise kontekstis. Peatüki lõpus analüüsitakse lähemalt Beckeri (2014) uurimust. Teine peatükk tutvustab käesoleva töö metodoloogiat, uuringu osalejaid ja protseduuri ning see järel tulemusi. Peatükk lõppeb tulemuste arutelu ning järeldustega.

Käesoleva uurimuse andmed näitavad, et Eesti EFL õppijad ei väldi ühendverbide kasutamist. Samuti ei leitud suuri erinevusi kesktaseme ja edasijõudnud õppijate tulemuste vahel. Küll aga leiti, et mõlemad õppijate grupid kasutavad ülekantud tähendusega ehk idiomaatilisi ühendverbe vähem kui otsese tähendusega ühendverbe. Edasijõudnud õppijad kasutasid ülekantud tähendusega ühendverbe mõnevõrra rohkem kui kesktaseme õppijad. Tulemustest ilmnes ka see, et mõlemad õppijate rühmad kasutasid ühendverbe rohkem valikvastustega ülesandes kui tõlkimisülesandes. Huvitavalt valisid kesktaseme õppijad valikvastustega ülesandes ühendverbe edasijõudnud õppijatest rohkem.

Märksõnad:
Inglise keel ja keeleteadus, grammatika, õppijakeel, ühendverbid.

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