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A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Phrasal Verbs

A Teacher’s Guide

By
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An Honors Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation from the Western Oregon University Honors Program

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Abstract

Although ubiquitous in the English language, phrasal verbs are one of the most difficult constructions for English language learners to learn, as their meanings have traditionally been regarded as arbitrary and chaotic. However, recent developments in cognitive linguistics have shed light onto schematic motivations of phrasal verb meanings and thus present a number of pedagogical applications. The purpose of this thesis is to provide English language teachers with a foundation in the theory and pedagogical approaches to teaching phrasal verbs, using a cognitive linguistic framework.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of my sophomore year at Western Oregon University, I decided to take a semantics and pragmatics course which completely revolutionized my way of thinking. As I began to learn how meaning is constructed and reflected through language, I wanted to expand my knowledge and explore further applications of those theories. Eventually, my passion for meaning and language converged with another passion: English language teaching.

Through the process of earning my TEFL certification and gaining experiences in English teaching, I was exposed to the challenges that teachers face trying ground their teaching and pedagogy in research. During one teaching experience in particular, my eyes were opened to the disconnect between research and pedagogy as I struggled through a lesson on teaching phrasal verbs. The teacher lesson plan was poorly designed and informed by outdated theories, and, despite my efforts to modify the activity, the students struggled to grasp the concepts. I had been researching theories in semantics for over two years, and many researchers I read had mentioned applications to idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs. However, when it came to teaching these language features, I found it incredibly difficult to translate the theory into lesson plans and activities in the classroom. Despite my knowledge, I was still unable to effectively apply my research into my teaching.

I have come to realize that I am not alone in this disconnect. Many ESL teachers struggle to ground their pedagogy in research. Part of the problem is institutional:
teachers are not adequately prepared or given chances for professional development. Yet perhaps the larger problem is that many research developments are never directly applied to teachers. In order for teachers to educate themselves about a given topic, they are required to read multiple studies, books, and papers to become adequately equipped in that subject matter.

For my particular topic -- cognitive linguistic approaches to teaching phrasal verbs -- there are a number of works that detail the theory and others that focus on the pedagogy, but there is no cohesive introduction for teachers. This disconnect between research and practice catalyzed my thesis project: I wanted to create a comprehensive introduction that makes the pertinent theories accessible and shows teachers how they can apply the research to their classrooms. After reading this thesis, teachers should have the knowledge and tools to craft lesson plans, incorporating these concepts.

1.1 Purpose of the Thesis

Over the last 40 years, developments in the field of cognitive linguistics have shown that the meanings of phrasal verbs are conceptually related to each other, and studies have revealed the positive benefits of utilizing these approaches in classroom teaching. Nevertheless, these breakthroughs in research have done little to change the way phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions are taught in ELT contexts. This thesis attempts to change the current reality and make these concepts accessible for a wide range of teachers.

As previously mentioned, there is often a disconnect between research and pedagogy, and this is particularly true of idiomatic language features like phrasal verbs. Many textbooks are based on outdated theories of language and, as a result, fail to
present phrasal verbs in a comprehensible way. Thus, the purpose for this thesis is to bridge the gap between research in the field of cognitive linguistics and the teachers in the field who could benefit from its pedagogical insights.

1.2 Research Questions

There are two primary questions driving the current thesis project:

1. How can we teach phrasal verbs more effectively?

2. Given that we find an effective way to teach phrasal verbs, how can we present this knowledge to teachers in a way that is comprehensible?

1.3 Objectives for the Thesis

Building directly on the research questions, the objective of the thesis is bipartite: discover the best approaches for classifying and teaching phrasal verbs and then find a way to present those insights to teachers. In our digital age, pedagogical resources abound on topics like idioms and phrasal verbs. Yet, despite the available resources, there is a shocking lack of connection to or awareness of the most relevant theories that have come to dominate this field of study, and most lesson plans in circulation are based on outdated theories and understandings of language. Thus, the first part of my research centered on studying, comparing, and analyzing the most effective ways to categorize, make sense of, and present phrasal verbs in ELT contexts. I wanted to know, out of all the ways to teach or categorize phrasal verbs, which ones actually worked.

The objective catalyzed the handbook project -- presenting the theory and pedagogical approaches in a succinct yet comprehensible way for teachers to easily read. There are many research articles and books written on the topic, but many are sorely
lacking in comprehensibility and clarity. I wanted to try to give teachers a handbook that would present all the information they would need in one place.

1.4 Scope of the Thesis

This thesis is unique from all other works on this topic in that it combines the theory and pedagogical concepts necessary to teach phrasal verbs in this way. Many English language teachers have been informed by a lexico-semantic understanding of language, a tradition that strictly delineates between lexis (words) and grammar. For a number of reasons, this view of language limits the teachability of language features like phrasal verbs, so in order for teachers to move to a new teaching approach, they must first be introduced to a new way of thinking about language. The entire second chapter is dedicated to immersing teachers in this new way of thinking about language.

Yet teachers also need to know how to translate this theory into practice, so the third chapter of the thesis presents the theory and pedagogical knowledge necessary for teachers to teach phrasal verbs effectively. That chapter is intended to function as its own work, as it is intended to be read independently of the rest of the thesis. Eventually, the handbook might be distributed as a guide and introduction to these concepts. For that chapter, my target audience is English language teachers who want to become more effective in their teaching approaches.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

The organization of the thesis is fairly simple, and it consists of four chapters. In this current chapter, we laid the purpose, scope, and motivation for the project. In the second chapter, I delve into a discussion of phrasal verbs, what makes them difficult to teach, and a comparison between traditional approaches to teaching them and the more
recent cognitive linguistic perspective. Chapter two ends with further justification for the creation of a pedagogical handbook. The third chapter -- the pedagogical handbook -- is the center of the thesis project and functions as an independent work. It contains an overview of the theory and pedagogical knowledge necessary to teach phrasal verbs. The final chapter is a reflection on the project and general discussion, leading up to the conclusion of the thesis.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THEORY

2.1 Introduction to Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs - such as *take up, go on, get over,* and *get along with* - also referred to as multi-word verbs or verb + particle constructions, are incredibly common in the English language, especially in spoken communication. While definitions and interpretations vary among theoreticians, a phrasal verb is a construction containing a verb plus an additional particle following, either a preposition or adverb. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* (2005),

“A phrasal verb is a combination of an ordinary verb and a preposition or an adverbial particle that has at least one particular meaning that is not predictable from the combined literal meanings of the verb and the preposition or particle” (p. v).

Phrasal verbs can contain multiple particles, such as *get along with,* and for the purpose of the current paper, they will be regarded in the same category as traditional phrasal verbs. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) find phrasal verbs to be “ubiquitous,” and Gardner and Davies (2007) estimate that “learners will encounter, on average, one [phrasal verb construction] in every 150 words of English they are exposed to” (p. 347). Their prevalence and usage makes these constructions essential in language learning.
2.2 Difficulties with Learning Phrasal Verbs

These common and ubiquitous phrases are considered one of the most difficult constructions to learn in the English language, one primary reason being their meanings have often been regarded as arbitrary, random, and unpredictable (Walkova, 2012). As such, phrasal verbs are typically classified as a type of idiomatic expression, with ranging degrees of idiomaticity. As noted by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999), Walkova (2012), and White (2012), the meanings of phrasal verbs range from transparent or literal (e.g. sit up) to aspectual or completive (e.g. drink up) to idiomatic (figure out). Nevertheless, while some phrasal verbs can be regarded as being more literal in meaning, the vast majority - and the ones pertinent to the current study - are those that are aspectual or idiomatic in meaning. These are the phrasal verbs that are most difficult for ELLs, given that their meaning cannot be easily or observably derived from the meanings of the individual verb and particle of the phrasal construction.

In addition to their seemingly arbitrary meanings, phrasal verbs are also highly polysemous, meaning they have multiple, distinct meanings. In their analysis of the British National Corpus, Gardner and Davis (2007) found an average of 5.6 distinct meanings for each of the 100 most frequent phrasal verbs, and over 20 distinct meanings just for the phrase *go on* (White, 2012, p. 1). This significantly adds to the complexity of learning phrasal verbs. While memorizing 100 verb-particle combinations might be feasible for a student, individually memorizing the distinct sense of each of the polysemous meanings is virtually impossible.

The unpredictability and polysemous nature of phrasal verbs are just two of the difficulties associated with learning phrasal verbs. A third major issue for learners is the...
complicated syntax associated with the constructions. As Kovacs (2011b) points out, the
general rule is that the noun phrase (NP) either precedes or follows the particle in a
phrasal verb. Yet exceptions and contingencies apply, either due to the nature of the NP
or the phrasal verb. If the NP is in pronoun form, it changes the appropriate placement
and order of the phrasal verb construction, and Kovacs (2011b) notes that the NP in
participle form also influences the verb particle order. Furthermore, some phrasal verbs
can be separated, meaning the direct object can be situated between the verb and
particle, while other times it cannot. While there are some simple patterns and rules to
follow, the syntax can add another layer of frustration for students.

For instance, for the phrasal verb pick up, the following constructions are
appropriate:

1. He stooped down to **pick up** the pencil

2. He stooped down to **pick** the pencil **up**

In the first sentence, the noun phrase the pencil comes after the particle, whereas, in the
second sentence, the noun phrase precedes the particle. Since we are able to split the
phrasal verb with the noun phrase, the phrasal verb *pick up* would be considered
separable. When the noun phrase is replaced by a pronoun, the same rules do not apply.
Consider the following examples:

1. He stooped down to **pick up** it

2. He stooped down to **pick** it **up**

The first sentence is incorrect, as the pronoun makes the traditional construction
impossible; the only correct position for the pronoun is in front of the particle. This is
just one example of the complexities regarding the syntax of phrasal verbs.
In recent years, researchers have noted other problems with learning these constructions, such as the sheer number of phrasal verbs in the English language, making individual memorization an even more daunting task. Indeed, while lists and whole dictionaries have been created, Bolinger (1971) notes that native speakers generate novel phrasal verbs regularly (White, 2012, p. 420). In addition, English is one of only a few languages that contain phrasal verbs, making this a marked construction, difficult for speakers from many other language backgrounds. Multiple studies have noted the avoidance of phrasal verbs among native Hebrew and Chinese L2 English users, as both languages do not contain phrasal verbs. Even among Dutch and Swedish, languages that contain them, L2 English users have been found to avoid English phrasal verbs (White, 2012).

In short, there are a host of reasons why phrasal verbs are one of the most difficult constructions to learn in English. Not only are their meanings incredibly unpredictable and polysemous, their syntax is difficult to learn, making many students choose to avoid them or arduously try to individually memorize each of the individual meanings for the phrases. Kovacs (2011b) finds that these difficulties in learning the constructions often lead learners to the assumption that “phrasal verbs are an arbitrary combination of a verb and a particle and that - since there don’t appear to be any obvious rules - phrasal verbs just have to be individually learnt and remembered” (p. 142). This belief in the lack of a rule-based system governing phrasal verbs has dominated theory and practice for years, propagating the mindset that the only way to learn phrasal verbs is through rote memorization or naturalistic acquisition based on extensive input.
2.3 The Traditional Approach to Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs and other idiomatic expressions have not been a significant topic of research or inquiry until recently. Yet even in the past century, a number of linguists have taken it upon themselves to provide a systematic understanding for the form and meaning of these expressions. The following section provides an overview of the lexico-semantic view of language and the conceptions of idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs that stemmed from that understanding.

2.3.1 Lexico-Semantic View of Meaning

The majority of these traditional linguists were from the lexico-semantic tradition, a tradition that centers on assigning meaning to individual words or particles with little respect to dynamic changes in meaning with larger constructions. According to this philosophy, words or morphemes could be thought of as small meaning-units which could be combined together through grammar to form larger meaningful units.

Tyler and Evans (2003) note that linguists in the lexico-semantic approach tended to assume that the form of phrasal verbs are “conventionally paired with meanings, and that these form-meaning pairings are stored in a mental dictionary or lexicon” (p. 1). In other words, traditionalists have treated phrasal verbs like any other lexical form: they have their own distinct meanings and need to be uniquely stored in the mental lexicon (memorized and categorized individually).

2.3.2 Traditional Understandings of Phrasal Verbs

Given their understanding of meaning in language, these linguists developed a narrow view for analyzing phrasal verbs. Instead of focusing on meaning making and
how different meanings are formed within phrasal verbs, they primarily focused their analysis on the syntactic properties of the constructions (Kovacs, 2011b, p. 143).

For those who primarily focused on syntax, they generally took two approaches to meaning in phrasal verbs: ignoring differences in meaning or regarding meanings as arbitrary. Some tended to ignore the fact that phrasal verbs have distinct and varied meanings. In these treatments of phrasal verbs, the multiple meanings of phrasal verbs was often overlooked and did not contribute to their overall understanding of how meaning is formed within these constructions (Tyler and Evans, 2003, p. 1).

The more common approach in traditional lexico-semantics has been to recognize the multiple meanings but assume that those meanings are arbitrary. These linguists argue that there is no noticeable connection between the individual meanings of the verb and the particle and the composite meaning of the phrasal verb. They argue that the meanings of the particles do not contribute to the meaning of the phrasal verb at all.

Fraser (1976) is one example of this view, where he explicitly argues: “there is no need to associate any semantic feature with the particle, only phonological and syntactic features” (p. 77). In other words, he regards the meanings of the particles as moot in the semantic understanding of phrasal verbs, leading him to simply focus on the syntactic and phonological features of the constructions. Neagu (2007) points out that, according to Fraser (1976), “there is no obvious way of predicting the effect that the addition of the particle has on the interpretation of the verb” (p. 123). That is, for phrasal verbs, the particle carries no meaning and bears no weight in the interpretation of the expressions.
This would mean that there is no systematic way of determining the meaning of phrasal verbs by their constituents.

The way the verb and particle combine to form meaning is just one aspect to meaning-making in phrasal verbs. Another challenging task for traditionalists was to explain the distinct meanings within each phrasal verb, as phrasal verbs tend to have a range of different meanings. The way traditionalists generally accounted for these differences in meaning was through homonymy, that is, that the meanings within phrasal verbs are unrelated. A commonly used example of homonymy is with the word *bank*, where the form is paired with two unrelated meanings: (1) a financial institution and (2) the side of a river. Just like the form *bank*, traditionalists apply the same theoretical considerations to phrasal verbs, treating distinctions in meaning as arbitrary and unrelated homonyms.

This view assumes that for each distinct meaning of a phrasal verb, native speakers have memorized a unique, unrelated meaning for that form. This means that, for verbs like *go on* with over 20 distinct meanings (White, 2012), native English speakers have memorized and categorized over 20 distinct form-meaning pairs. The fact that each of these distinct meanings share a common form is arbitrary, as the meanings are no more related to each other than the meanings of the word *bank*. Tyler and Evans (2003) even point out that, according to this view, “the fact that the different senses are coded by the same linguistic form is presumably just an accident” (p. 5). This means that any distinct meaning of *go on* could just as easily be paired with another form like *go with* or *go between*, for the distinct meanings of the form are unrelated and arbitrary. In
short, the view is that the form *go on* can have a host of distinct, unrelated meanings that are simply memorized as distinct lexical units.

Structuralists who have propagated this view started in the 30’s with Bloomfield and have persisted to more recent linguists such as Chomsky. These linguists assert that there is no systematic way of understanding relationships between the meanings of particular phrasal verb forms. All differences in meaning have been explained as homonymous and thus unrelated and arbitrarily connected to the word form. For learners of English, this means that each form -- and each distinct meaning of each form -- must be memorized individually with no schematic connection whatsoever. This is the view that has dominated teaching of idiomatic expressions for years.

### 2.3.3 Weaknesses of the Traditional View

There are a number of weaknesses in the traditional view, both from theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. One of the primary critiques of the traditional approaches to phrasal verbs centers on the shortcomings of the homonymy view. Tyler and Evans (2003) point out a number of weaknesses in treating phrasal verb meanings as homonymous, the first being that it “ignores any systematic relationships among the distinct meanings associated with a single linguistic form” (p. 5). This is perhaps the greatest weakness with the homonymy view. Not only does this approach ignore a significant body of research from the past forty years, it also fails to recognize that there is any connection between multiple forms of a particular phrasal verb.

Another weakness Tyler and Evans (2003) mention is that the traditional approach ignores the purposeful nature of communication. When communication occurs, people use forms purposefully such that the intended meaning of their message
might be conveyed. Traditionalists would argue that, while the lexical form-meaning pairing might be arbitrary, clarity in communication comes from context (i.e. syntax). While it may be true that the context often helps clarify which meaning is paired with the form, it does not explain how novel forms have come into speech. For “in order for a novel use to be readily interpretable by the hearer, meaning extension must be somehow constrained and systematic” (Tyler and Evans, p. 6). If meanings of phrasal verbs were truly arbitrary and there was no connection between distinct meanings, then there is no explanation for how these distinct forms came to be. The only logical way for new meanings to be introduced is if those meanings are somehow related. If they were not, they would no doubt be confused with another meaning of the same form. In this way, while the homonymous view might offer an account for the present meanings of the forms, it fails to address how those forms have been introduced into the language and usage.

Aside from the critiques of the homonymy view, there are a number of other weaknesses of the traditional view as a whole. Not only does it fail to provide a systematic way for understanding meaning differences, it does not address how meaning is formed as a whole. Traditionalists argue that the meaning of the particle has no bearing on the meaning of the phrasal verb, which forces learners to memorize each individual expression without any systematic connection to the meaning of the constituents within the phrasal verb. This view is frustrating, not only from a theoretical perspective, but from a pedagogical one, as teachers are left with treating each phrasal verb as an isolated lexical item with no connection to their students’ prior knowledge of the verb or particle meanings.
Furthermore, the traditional approach does not address the human conceptual system as a basis for meaning formation. According to lexico-semantics, meaning is the product of lexis and grammar combining in unique ways. However, instead of deriving meaning directly from the world and communication, humans interpret their world through an interconnected conceptual system, a system that is largely ignored by traditionalists.

Pedagogically, the traditional approach has failed to provide English language learners any substantive or systematic approach to learning idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs. Since vocabulary is largely regarded as the locus of the idiomatic by lexical semanticists, English learners are told that the only way to learn the forms is through memorization, for according to this view, there is no system or pattern to their meanings. The only way to structure the learning is to go outside the meanings of the expressions to look at syntax or common verbs and particles. Often, teachers teach phrasal verbs in groups, teaching words that are syntactically or semantically related, yet these approaches still fail to adequately connect the meanings of the new forms with students’ prior knowledge of the particles and verbs. Thus, while various techniques and approaches have been adopted by teachers, the traditional lexico-semantic understanding of language cannot provide a systematic understanding for why and how meaning works in phrasal verbs, vital information for students learning these forms.

In short, although the traditional approach has provided us with a basic understanding of the syntactic organization of phrasal verbs and differences in homonymy and polysemy (Kovacs, 2011a), it has failed to address the more fundamental issues pertaining to meaning, such as how meanings are formed, why phrasal verbs have
multiple senses and meanings, and how those meanings are connected or motivated. It was not until the development of cognitive linguistics that these questions were finally answered and these issues of meaning were moved to the center of research and inquiry.

2.4 The Cognitive Approach to Phrasal Verbs

Unlike the traditional views, the cognitive approach to phrasal verbs makes what Holme (2012) calls “the functional assumption that form is motivated by meaning” (p. 6). In other words, the form of a word is connected to its meaning; they are not arbitrary associations. This means that, contrary to the traditional approach that views lexis and grammar as two separate entities, cognitive linguists understand that these are connected. In lexico-semantic linguistics, meaning is stored in the words themselves, and several distinct meanings could be associated with the same word form.

In cognitive linguistics, however, instead of viewing meaning as a static entity, it is viewed as a dynamic product of both lexis and grammar, in that both contribute to meaning formation. Cognitive linguistics tends to treat grammar and lexis on two ends of a “semantic continuum” (Holme, 2012, p. 6), that is, that both grammar and lexis are responsible for changes in meaning. This shift in perspective is highlighted by John Sinclair (2000) in his article, “Lexical Grammar”:

The fundamental distinction between grammar, on the one hand, and lexis, on the other hand, is not as fundamental as it is usually held to be, and since it is a distinction that is made at the outset of the formal study of language, then it colours and distorts the whole enterprise (Sinclair, 2000).
Therefore, while traditional scholars believe that meanings, including arbitrary meanings, reside solely in vocabulary, cognitive linguists have discovered that “the arbitrary” is actually much more motivated and predictable than we had previously understood. To understand how meanings are systemically related, though, it is important to understand the way the mind and the conceptual world affects language and communication.

2.4.1 Introduction to Cognitive Linguistic Theory: Embodied Meaning

Cognitive linguistics (CL) holds to a conceptual understanding of language and thought formed through our experience in the world. According to the Cartesian understanding of cognition, we form thoughts about the world around us, and language refers to those thoughts about the real world. According to this view, we experience the real, objective world directly through our thoughts, where we reflect about the world. Our thoughts then form language that refers to the real world that we have reflected on.

Unlike the traditional views of cognition where individuals form thoughts about the objective world around them, CL relies on a view of cognition where thoughts are formed through our embodied experiences in the world. This embodied principle, originates from French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty in 1945, in his work *Phenomenology of Perception*. Merleau-Ponty argued that, since humans have bodies, our experience of the world around us comes through our bodies, not from our thoughts directly interacting with the world around us. Merleau-Ponty contradicts Descartes and argues “rather than a mind and a body, man is a mind with a body, a being who can only get to the truth of things because its body is, as it were, embedded in those thing(s)”
(Stolz, 2015, p. 479). In other words, as humans, we do not gather information about the world directly through our minds, but through our bodies.

Our embodied experiences shape our understanding and form interpretive cognitive structures that shape our interpretation of the world around us. Stolz (2015) continues by arguing that “we do not think about the world from some position beyond the body or outside it, but something we ‘inhabit’ because our being is necessarily present in it and involved with it” (p. 479-480). The way we experience the world through our bodies, then, shapes our conceptual understanding of the world around us.

Given the fact that we interpret the world, not directly through our minds but rather through our bodies, it means that our conception of the world is not the actual world but a conceptual world. Our bodily experiences form our interpretive framework for the world, but the world we think about and talk about is not the objective, real world, but a conceptual world, formed by our embodied experiences in the objective world. Thus, it is impossible for humans to think a completely objective thought about the world, for as embodied creatures, we are subjects in the world, and the information we receive about the world is mediated through our bodies.

Instead of being directly related, thoughts and the objective world are mediated by our conceptual frameworks. In this way, we actually do not experience the objectively real world directly, but it is filtered by our mental representations and frameworks that interpret the input from the natural world. To illustrate, consider the following picture in Figure 2.4.1. Upon looking at the picture, some would say it is a picture of a rabbit; others would argue the subject of the picture is a duck. The input from the world (the picture printed on the page) has not changed, but the interpretations are drastically
different because they are informed by our respective conceptual frameworks of the world. Information is mediated through our bodies (in this case, our eyes), and that information is interpreted through our minds.

Thus, regardless of the reality around us, we do not passively receive information. In our reception of information around us, we inherently interpret the world around us. Tyler and Evans (2003) describe this phenomenon by saying “the patterns and organization we perceive as reality do not in fact exist independently in the world itself, but are largely the result of our cognitive processing” (p. 19). Therefore, while two people can be shown the same object, they interpret the content as two very different things. One person will see a rabbit, and the other will see a duck.

We don’t transmit thoughts directly from the world around us. We interpret them according to our conceptual understanding of the world. My eyes (part of my embodied experience) transmit the experience to my mind, where through my interpretive lens, I form thoughts about what I see. Interpretation is inherent in our understanding of the world. This is true because language is primarily “conceptualized out of the way our bodies and minds shape our perceptions” (Holme, 2012, p. 6).
To offer another example of embodiment, consider our conception of things being “in front of” us, an illustration that Lakoff and Johnson (1999) also give to articulate this embodied principle. Humans are bipedal, upright creatures that can lay down, sit, stand up, or move forward, and as such, our bodies are positioned and move through space in accordance with the confines of our physical bodies. Given the ways our bodies move, we generally think of things being “in front of” us as anything in our line of vision or in the direction we are moving. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) point out that our understanding of “in front of” is directly dependent on our embodiment, for long, flat creatures that swiveled side-to-side might have a completely different concept for “in front of” or maybe none at all.

Similarly, when infants are able to achieve balance and sit up, they “build a series of mental associations with that sensation” (Holme, 2012, p. 8), a series of associations known as an image schema. Holme (2012) notes that since the infant’s feelings of balance are positive, there is a positive mental association with balance and uprightness, which is also infused into the child’s interpretive framework of the world around them. In this way, bodily experiences are neither neutral nor passive; when we form cognitive frameworks of the world through embodiment, we also attach feelings to those frameworks. All thoughts and language, then, are formed through this conceptual framework of the world, where not only facts but values and feelings are embedded.

The embodiment principle explains how we interpret the world around us: according to the cognitive frameworks of a conceptual world formed through our bodily experiences in the world. And as such, language refers not to the real, objective world, but to a conceptual world formed through our embodied experiences. Nevertheless, in
order to fully grasp how language is tied to this conceptual world, we must understand how the embodiment principle helps to form language through metaphor.

2.4.2 The Embodiment Principle and Language: Conceptual Metaphors

According to the embodiment principle, our understanding of the world is transmitted through our embodied experiences in the world. If this is true, then there are a number of physical experiences that we experience directly with our bodies (heat, up/down orientation, objects moving through space, objects contained within other objects, etc.). These concepts can be thought of as pertaining to an experiential domain, where our knowledge of them is formed directly through our bodily experience in the world.

There is another whole domain (which we shall call the abstract domain) containing concepts and ideas such as love, relationship, time, causation, emotion, and so on. Entities in this domain cannot be immediately experienced by our bodies as with the experiential domain. Having already established that the mind cannot reflect directly on entities in the real, objective world, it is dependent on bodily experiences to form conceptual thoughts.

Thus, in order for our minds to form thoughts about these concepts and ideas outside our experiential domain, the mind draws from items in the experiential domain to conceptualize concepts in the abstract domain.

An example of drawing on the experiential domain to conceptualize ideas in the abstract domain is our understanding of what knowledge is. The concept of knowledge is incredibly abstract, so to think about and conceptualize the notion of knowledge, we think of it in terms of a more concrete, accessible concept: sight. In our everyday
experiences, we form an understanding of sight, and when things are hard for us to see, we might say they are unclear, murky, cloudy, fuzzy, opaque, or foggy, and conversely, when something is easy to see, we might say that thing is clear, bright, brilliant, or transparent. When conceptualizing knowledge (from the more abstract domain), we use the same terminology to describe knowledge.

Something that is easy to understand can be described as clear, transparent, or crystal clear. Something that is difficult to understand might be said to be unclear or cloudy; we might be fuzzy about an idea, or something might seem foggy to us. If we lack knowledge, we use the sight domain as well. Someone might be “overlooking an important point” or be experiencing “tunnel-vision”. Or maybe they are being “blind” or “myopic,” perhaps because they are “blinded by love” or wearing “rose-colored glasses”. If we want to gain more knowledge about something, we might need to “take a closer look,” “gain perspective,” or “have our eyes opened”. Then, when someone “sheds some light” on the subject matter for us, we might have “a lightbulb moment” when we come to an understanding and acquire our needed knowledge.

In this example, an idea or concept from an abstract domain is directly inaccessible by our bodily experience, so in order to be able to conceptualize knowledge, we draw on the experiential domain of vision and sight to make sense of it. Many ideas are inaccessible through our body directly, so to access these ideas, we think about them -- conceptualize them -- in terms of something in the experiential domain. This process of thinking about and speaking about one domain in terms of another is what Lakoff and Johnson call conceptual metaphors. We are thinking of something metaphorically in terms of another thing.
Yet unlike traditional understandings of metaphor, conceptual metaphors are not just ornamental language that reside in our words; they are the way we think about the world. Lakoff and Johnson, in *Metaphors We Live By*, argue that much of our cognition is dependent on metaphor. All abstract thinking is dependent on this metaphorical “mapping” of one domain on the other, of thinking of one thing in terms of another. We think of time in terms of money (e.g. running out of time, wasting time, saving time) emotions in terms of containers full of hot liquids (e.g. blowing off some steam, boiling up inside, feeling drained) and arguments in terms of war (defending your arguments, attacking your opponent’s weakest argument, shooting down an argument). While it is not immediately apparent to most of us, our conceptual understanding is built largely upon metaphor. Any abstract thinking we engage in is dependent on conceptual metaphors, drawing from our embodied experiences. Lakoff and Johnson say, “If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (p. 4). As such, metaphors are both pervasive and integral in all parts of cognition.

### 2.4.3 Cognitive Linguistic Applications to Phrasal Verbs

As mentioned previously, phrasal verbs are one of the most difficult constructions for English language learners to master, primarily because of their seemingly arbitrary and polysemous meanings. Traditional understandings have argued that these meanings are random and have no necessary relationship with the meanings of the verb and particle. Furthermore, traditional approaches have argued that the multiple meanings are homonymous, i.e. that their meanings are not related to each
A CL APPROACH TO PHRASAL VERBS

other. CL insights, though, show that the meanings of verbs are in fact motivated in meaningful and systematic ways.

Instead of treating multiple meanings of phrasal verbs as homonymous, cognitive linguists treat them as polysemous, i.e. that their meanings are distinct but related to each other. Kovacs (2011a) argues that the meanings of phrasal verbs “are related in a systematic and natural way forming radial categories where one or more senses are more prototypical (central) while others are less prototypical (peripheral)” (p. 14). In other words, within phrasal verbs, it is believed that there is a prototypical or literal sense of the phrasal verb, a base meaning, and other polysemous meanings are derived from that central meaning.

The way these peripheral meanings are formed is through metaphorical mapping, that is, “when their literal meanings are extended to abstract, non-visible domains such as thoughts, intentions, feelings, attitudes, relations, social and economic interaction, etc.” (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003, p. 4). While it is not common to think of prepositions and adverbs as being metaphorical, they actually do have metaphorical meanings that are derived from a central meaning. For instance, our understanding of “up” can be reflected literally in the phrasal verb “sit up,” where up refers to a literal direction the body moves with the action of sitting. Yet this particle can also be metaphorically extended, as in the phrasal verb “clean up,” where “up” takes on a new meaning of “completion”. The two meanings -- the literal “up” in direction and “completion” -- are not separate, unrelated meanings; the latter has been metaphorically mapped onto the prototypical meaning.

For this reason, phrasal verbs are not just an idiomatic expressions with arbitrary meanings; their meanings “can be seen as motivated by metaphors that link domains of
knowledge to idiomatic meanings” (Kovacs, 2011a, p. 14). In other words, in the same way that concepts in the abstract domain are mapped onto concepts in our experiential domain, so too, phrasal verbs exhibit similar patterns, demonstrating that “they are not simply a matter of language but products of our conceptual system” (Kovacs, 2011a, p. 14).

If this is true, and phrasal verbs are products of our conceptual systems, then like any other language feature, they are at least partially language and culture dependent. The way concepts are mapped onto other concepts varies with each language, so to a non-native English speaker, this metaphorical mapping can be difficult to discern. Kovacs (2011b) notes that “the meanings of phrasal verbs also go easily from the concrete to the abstract, and metaphors serve as a link between them. Since foreign learners often do not see this path and do not recognize the metaphor underlying the abstract meanings, they find many phrasal verbs difficult to understand” (p. 146). The metaphorical mapping is something native English speakers understand, as it is embedded in their conceptual frameworks, but for those from another language background, those implicit metaphors can be incredibly difficult to detect.

Nevertheless, making these metaphors explicit for LLs reveals the systematic relationships of the phrasal verb meanings. There is a growing body of research pointing to the benefits of including explicit metaphor instruction as means for teaching phrasal verbs. Some researchers have used spatial imagery to show the related meanings of phrasal verbs and have experienced mixed results. Some of the studies (Condon, 2008) have shown to be somewhat beneficial, while others Boers (2000) have reported significant results.
More variations to these approaches are being studied and tested in classroom settings, yet regardless of preliminary results, the CL understanding of phrasal verbs has opened up the door for a host of new pedagogical practices. Now, due to this understanding of the motivation of meanings, teachers do not simply have to resort to word lists and memorization, for these meanings are not simply arbitrary. There is a system of meaning to these expressions, and if learners are given insight into the underlying metaphors, it will be easier for them to understand and remember their meanings.

### 2.5 Cognitive Linguistics in Contemporary English Language Teaching

In recent years, given the rise of communicative language teaching, one might think that Cognitive Linguistic findings would naturally be applied in many ELT contexts. Bailey (2003) points out that recent corpus-based insights into the nature of language have helped to shape the field of ELT methodology, specifically in regards to the meaning-usage connection of language. He notes that there is greater emphasis on collocation, that is, the ways in which words frequently appear together, influencing ELT methodology to emphasize more on strings and phrases of words, so it would seem that phrasal verbs would start to be emphasized more as an essential learning element of communicative English.

Furthermore, the CL understanding that form and meaning are connected (which was not previously understood) has influenced ELT pedagogical models toward more emphasis on functionality and pragmatic awareness (Bailey, 2003). This new model has revolutionized the field of ELT methodology, and it would seem that CL, with its insight into the motivations behind many of these language connections, would be applied by
many teachers. However, Bailey (2003) notes that this is not the case, as the communicative emphasis on functionality is limiting in scope and does not necessarily seek to examine language from a conceptual level.

Hoang (2014) agrees and expresses surprise “that metaphor research in L2 learning does not seem to be influenced much by the mainstream cognitive linguistics, since implications of metaphor research have several practical implications for learners, teachers, curriculum designers, and material developers” (n.p.). Therefore, despite the applicability of the CMT to the communicative language learning model, it has not yet permeated the system.

Bailey (2003) notes that, in 1997, Lindstomberg scanned numerous published ELT materials, including textbooks and learner handbooks, fining no mention whatsoever to metaphor. Conducting his own study, Bailey (2003) confirmed the previous findings, as, while there was significant influence of the communicative language learning, there was almost no reference to metaphor or the conceptual basis for language. In this way, while there has been extensive research conducted favoring application of CL and conceptual models of language in general, the theories have not been extended to ELT materials and methodology. In his review of ELT Literature, he recounted:

In none of the above is there any attempt to consider the conceptual basis of language; there is little attempt to show how expressions can be linked or differentiated. The result is, as Low (1988) points out, that learners are not told when the expression may be used, what the possible extensions and constraints are, and what aspects of the target domain are highlighted
by the source. In short, there has been and continues to be little concern with metaphor in ELT (Bailey, 2003, n.p.).

He further notes that in the published syllabuses of the Royal Society of Arts Certificate and Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults (Cert/Dip TEFLA), there is no reference whatsoever to a conceptual understanding of language or metaphor theory at large, let alone applications to teaching practices.

**2.6 Reasons for the Lack of ELT Application**

There are several possible reasons why cognitive linguistics has not gained the traction many thought it would in English Language Teaching. One potential reason for this is the continued predominance of many traditional metaphor theories that continue to shape and influence multiple domains on a practical level, including ELT. This is certainly true, as the lack of reference in printed ELT materials – including teacher training and development – points to a general lack of knowledge regarding CL. Traditional metaphor theories have little to no application whatsoever to English Language teaching, so a lack of information regarding metaphor in general – and a conceptual approach to language, in particular – evidences this lack of CL infiltration. Nevertheless, this is indicative, not only of teachers’ lack of knowledge regarding conceptual language systems, but a failure in teacher preparation and training.

Others might point to the lack of research regarding CL application in English Language Teaching. This is certainly true, as there have been very few studies conducted exploring this connection. Yet the problem appears to lie, not in the lack of research per se, but in the general disconnect between L2 research and learning. Hoang (2014) points out that “despite its vigorous growth, research on metaphor and L2 education remains
scarce, and the practical applications of this knowledge for language teaching have not been explored” (n.p.) She notes that “teaching and researching remain worlds apart” (n.p.) and finds the lack of application in teaching methodology concerning. Thus, while research is continuing to explore various applications of conceptual models of language to this field, the actual ELT pedagogy remains relatively untouched.

The main reason for the divergence of research and methodology is presentation and accessibility of CL research for teachers. Hoang (2014) notes that in many recent CL studies, there have been suggestions for classroom activities, but “the findings of current literature on metaphor have not been presented in a way that is systematic and teacher-friendly enough for a metaphor-based teaching approach to be implemented to the full” (n.p.). Hoang (2014) argues that it may be unrealistic to expect teachers to research these studies on their own and make the suggested theoretical applications, and teachers need hands-on training or accessible materials in order to confidently apply the CL to their classrooms.

**2.7 Proposed Solution: CL Teacher Handbook**

In light of the disconnect between current research and ELT methodology, the purpose of the current project is to design a Cognitive Linguistics Teacher Handbook designed to assimilate the pedagogical suggestions in the predominant research studies and distill the content for L2 teachers. This handbook could be used for teacher development, as it would provide accessible examples and detailed explanations as to practical applications of the CL in their classroom activities, specifically relating to phrasal verbs. The basic tenants of CL would be explained to the teachers as well as some particular applications for their teaching.
The full outline and details will be further outlined in a later section. However, some of the concepts covered in the handbook would include the importance of metaphorical competence in light of the larger communicative competence framework, which will be referencing the work of Low (1988) among others. Moreover, particular strategies will be presented for teaching phrasal verbs.

While further teacher development programs will be necessary to fully equip L2 teachers to incorporate CL in their teaching methodology, this would be an initial step in teacher preparation and bridging the gap between the growing body of research and English Language Teaching as a whole.
CHAPTER 3

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO TEACHING PHRASAL VERBS

3.1 General Introduction

The following two sections serve as the introduction to the handbook. In this introduction, I discuss the importance of phrasal verb teaching, introduce some key concepts and findings in cognitive linguistics, and outline the rest of the handbook.

3.1.1 Introduction to the Handbook

The first time I ever taught phrasal verbs was a disaster. I remember standing in front of a roomful of students from my Intermediate English Class, preparing for the lesson on “Phrasal Verbs in the Workplace”. After a couple introductory exercises to start off the class, we turned our attention to the phrasal verb exercise.

I began by identifying individual phrasal verbs from the vocabulary list and proceeded to offer definitions for the students. For many of the words (e.g. call back, clean up, fill out, hand out, turn down, put away, and throw away), I drew diagrams on the board to illustrate their respective meanings. I thought the presentation was straightforward and coherent.

Yet as the students started chiming in with their questions, it quickly became clear that the subject matter was far more complicated than I had previously anticipated. My 15 minute presentation quickly turned into 20 then 30, as students continued to question the varied meanings and usage of the new verb forms. I explained the verb and particle meanings; I tried to distinguish between different senses, but despite the illustrations and the graphic organizers I used, the students still seemed confused.
And based on exercises and comprehension checks later that night, I realized that much of what we worked on didn’t stick. Many of the students left the class more confused than before. It seemed that, despite my efforts to clarify, phrasal verbs are simply too hard to teach effectively.

As teachers, perhaps some of you can relate to my experience and frustration in the classroom. Maybe you have attempted to teach phrasal verbs to your students or offer some sort of cohesive explanation to them. Perhaps after trying to demystify the constructions, you gave up on these idiomatic forms, as students repeatedly avoid and misuse them. As teachers, we want to be able to distill and explain difficult concepts for our students. We live for the moments where it all clicks for our students. Yet the moment of realization never seems to come with phrasal verbs. Instead, it seems like nothing but a litany of endless memorization, as students struggle with one phrasal verb after another.

My teaching experience catalyzed a personal investigation into theories and approaches to teaching idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs. I was convinced that there must be some way to present these concepts in a way that English language learners could understand, apart from word lists and rote memorization. Eventually, after researching and comparing many different strategies, I discovered a growing body of research in cognitive linguistics, where researchers are finding systematic ways to organize and teach these constructions.

Over the last forty years, there has been a tremendous amount of research in cognitive linguistics aimed at analyzing idiomatic forms like phrasal verbs. Yet despite the breakthroughs in research, these new theories have failed to penetrate our
pedagogical practices. To this day, there has been no significant change in teaching approaches to idiomatic expressions like phrasal verbs.

As such, this handbook serves as a bridge between the theory and practice, as it introduces the predominant theories in cognitive linguistics and sheds light on some pedagogical implications for teachers. In the following pages, we will overview traditional approaches to phrasal verbs and highlight the weaknesses of those views, specifically with a pedagogical focus. Then, by exploring research findings from cognitive linguistics, we will unpack a new way of approaching phrasal verbs, with what will be termed the cognitive approach.

There are far more extensive studies and materials written on cognitive linguistics, and it is not the purpose of this handbook to substitute for those resources. The following is merely an introduction to the theories and stepping stone for teachers to understand a new approach to teaching these constructions. This is a distillation of these concepts for teachers and opens the door for more practical and informed ways of teaching difficult language structures.

3.1.2 Importance of Explicit Instruction with Phrasal Verbs

One of the most frequent multi-word units in English is the phrasal verb. As Gardner and Davies (2007) note, phrasal verbs are “very common and highly productive in the English language as a whole” (p. 340), with a small percentage of them (less than 100) making up over half the phrasal verbs in the whole language. They also estimate that “learners will encounter, on average, one [phrasal verb construction] in every 150 words of English they are exposed to” (p. 347). And that ratio simply increases with conversational genres and registers. As language learners seek to become competent in
spoken English, phrasal verbs are an essential construction to master (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Yet with the rise of communicative language teaching, and as task-based approaches currently dominate English language pedagogy, the importance of explicit phrasal verb teaching -- and vocabulary teaching in general -- is sometimes overlooked. While teachers rightly focus on communicative competence and interactions between language learners in a variety of authentic language contexts, this focus can lead to some oversight. Many language teachers tend to look down on explicit instructional models and any form of direct vocabulary teaching in general, as they believe it takes away from the communicative contexts or task-based exercises. This is what Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) note when they state the following:

theorists of [language] pedagogy, particularly in English-speaking countries, have long tended to favour approaches that in one way or another discount the importance of teaching vocabulary, with many stoutly persisting in their methodological allegiances in the face of mounting evidence that vocabulary is a crucial factor in ability to read and understand challenging texts (p. 7)

While there is nothing wrong with communicative or task-based approaches, proponents of these approaches can tend to overlook the critical role that vocabulary -- and explicit vocabulary instruction -- plays in the acquisition of language. Instead of simply being additive to language learning, explicit vocabulary teaching is central to the development of language competence. With the development of large-scale corpora, linguists have been able to uncover language patterns previously unnoticed, revealing
the ubiquity of multi-word units and vocabulary collocations in English. These findings reveal that, instead of consisting strictly of lexis and syntax, language tends to be comprised of multi-word constructions and word collocations like phrasal verbs.

Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) note that these recent corpus findings have greatly influenced theories in English language teaching, and many theorists have come to the conclusion that “successful L2 learning is to a very great extent a matter of understanding and remembering collocational tendencies and prefabricated multi-word expressions (i.e. memorized phrases) and that learners ought to be helped to acquire them in large numbers” (p. 7). Thus, when it comes to developing a communicative competence of the language, multi-word vocabulary units are central for language learners to master. A large number of language teaching theorists are now accepting this new understanding of vocabulary (as expanded into words and phrases) as being of high importance in developing proficiency in English (Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008, p. 4).

The assumption of this handbook is that explicit vocabulary teaching is beneficial, not only in the traditional understanding of teaching single words, but also -- and perhaps even more importantly -- in teaching multi-word units. Central to these multi-word constructions is the phrasal verb, a form ubiquitous in the English language. Thus, it is the belief of the following book that learning phrasal verbs is a productive endeavor for any language learner, as it will directly contribute to their communicative competence in English.

As such, the teaching of phrasal verbs must be prioritized by English language teachers for their students’ language development. A critical part of language instruction is understanding the key issues for students and the best practices for teachers to
present those concepts. This handbook seeks to present those best practices. In the following pages, we will review and distill the most recent research in linguistics and language teaching and apply these theories to teaching applications regarding phrasal verbs.

3.2 Foundations in Phrasal Verb Teaching

In this section, we will discuss the nature and difficulties with learning phrasal verbs and outline some key concepts in our understanding of what teachers can do when teaching these constructions.

3.2.1 Introduction to Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs -- such as *take up, go on, get over, and get along with* -- are also referred to as multi-word verb constructions. A phrasal verb contains multiple parts of speech (a verb and either a preposition or an adverb), forming three possible syntactical combinations:

1. Verb + preposition (e.g. *take over, fill up*)
2. Verb + adverb (e.g. *take away, give back*)
3. Verb + adverb + preposition (e.g. *come up with, get out of*)

One of the most important things to understand about phrasal verbs is that they are an independent construction, and the constituents that make them up function differently inside the phrasal verb than they normally do on their own.

Take a preposition, for example. A preposition is defined by its function as the head of a prepositional phrase: a preposition + noun phrase (e.g. *My fiancé is cooking dinner in the kitchen*). The preposition *in* takes the noun phrase *the kitchen* and forms a prepositional phrase, adding locational context to the sentence. Prepositions can be
defined as words that function forming prepositional phrases, and they form a closed class of words that fit this category.

When a preposition is combined with a verb to form a phrasal verb, it changes its function: It no longer operates as the head of a prepositional phrase; it is defined in terms of its function within a phrasal verb. When a preposition functions in this new role, we refer to it, not as a preposition, but as a particle, because it is functioning primarily as part of the phrasal verb. Thus, if we take a preposition like *in* and combine it with a verb to form a phrasal verb (e.g. *fill in* as in *we needed to fill in the intern on our company policies*), the preposition is referred to as a particle.

The same is true of adverbs, too. Adverbs also form a class of words, similar to prepositions, in that their function is to add contextual information, too. They differ from prepositions because they are not able to take noun phrases to form larger phrases. For instance, we could not say “*I am going away this city*” because the adverb *away* cannot take a noun phrase like *this city* and form a larger constituent. Instead, we could say “*I am going away from this city,*” because the adverb is able to modify a prepositional phrase, not a noun phrase.

When an adverb is combined with a verb to form a phrasal verb, it also changes its function: it no longer functions in a typical adverbial function but as part of the phrasal verb. Thus, like a preposition, when it functions inside a phrasal verb (e.g. *take away*), it is referred to as a particle.

This can be confusing for both English teachers and students, as phrasal verbs are often defined as verb + preposition constructions. While this is the typical structure of a phrasal verb, its simplicity is problematic in two ways. First, while the majority of
phrasal verbs are the combination of a verb and a preposition, a few phrasal verbs use adverbs instead of prepositions. Secondly, when prepositions or adverbs function in a new role inside a phrasal verb, they lose their original function. It would be inherently misguided then to refer to them as prepositions and adverbs because they are not functioning as such. They are functioning as part of a phrasal verb, so they are referred to as particles.

In the rest of this handbook, we will refer to words according to their function. When prepositions and adverbs are functioning independently as prepositions and adverbs, I will refer to them as such. Yet when they are functioning as part of a phrasal verb, I will refer to them as particles. As such, I will refer to phrasal verbs as verb + particle constructions. This is a comprehensive term that will refer to any of the above three syntactical structures.

3.2.2 The Meaning of Phrasal Verbs

The meanings of phrasal verbs cannot always be derived from the individual meanings of the verb and the particle they are composed of. Their meanings range from transparent or literal (where their meanings can be easily derived) to idiomatic, where there seems to be very little connection to the meanings of the verb and the particle.

Consider the following examples of literal (transparent) phrasal verbs:

1. They need to **stand up** so we can see them.
2. Then let’s **fill up** the water tanks
3. Toxic chemical **leaked out** of a storage tank and into the ground water

In these examples, the phrasal verbs are used literally. For instance, **fill up** literally refers to water being poured into a tank, and as more water goes in, the level rises (goes
These are the easiest phrasal verbs for English language learners (ELLs) to learn, as their meanings are transparent and easily derived from the meanings of the verb and particle. However, take a look at the same phrasal verbs used idiomatically:

1. It is unlikely to **stand up** to valid scientific scrutiny
2. I was happy having her voice **fill up** the house
3. The story **leaked out** early in the day

In the second set of examples, the meanings of the phrasal verbs are very different from their literal meanings. The meaning of **stand up** (sentence 1) is *to confront*, **run up** (2) means *to reverberate throughout a building* (3) means *to secretly share information*. These meanings differ greatly from the meanings of their verb and particle constituents, and on first look, it may be difficult to see how their meanings are related to the original, transparent meanings.

### 3.2.3 What makes phrasal verbs difficult to learn?

As the previous section demonstrates, the meanings of phrasal verbs are not always transparent, making them difficult to learn for ELLs. Their meanings have often been regarded as arbitrary, random, and unpredictable (Walkova, 2012). As such, phrasal verbs are typically classified as a type of idiomatic expression, with ranging degrees of idiomaticity.

In addition to their seemingly arbitrary meanings, phrasal verbs are also highly polysemous, meaning the same phrasal verb might have multiple, distinct meanings. Consider the following example of the phrasal verb **pick up**:

1. He leads a group to a city park to **pick up** trash (*to lift or take off the ground*)
2. Cell phone towers are able to **pick up** a caller’s location on a 911 call (*to detect*)
3. He was trying to get a cab to go **pick up** his daughter (*to take in a car*)
4. Republicans failed to **pick up** a single seat in the chamber (*to take, to win*)
5. Momentum is starting to **pick up** (*to increase*)
6. You need to **pick up** where you left off (*to resume*)
7. Showing them pictures can help them to **pick up** the language (*to learn, acquire*)

Example sentence 1 shows a literal, transparent meaning of *pick up*, yet the other sentences demonstrate an array of idiomatic meanings ranging from learning a language to *detecting a location* to *increasing momentum*. This is not an isolated phenomenon with *pick up*, for Gardner and Davies (2007) found an average of 5.6 distinct meanings for each of the 100 most frequent phrasal verbs in English and over 20 distinct meanings just for the phrase *go on* (White, 2012, p. 1). This significantly adds to the complexity of learning phrasal verbs. While memorizing 100 verb-particle combinations might be feasible for a student, individually memorizing the distinct sense and context of each of the polysemous meanings is virtually impossible.

The question we want to explore in the next sections is what makes one phrasal verb literal and transparent and another one idiomatic. For a verb like *pick up*, how are all its meanings related? Is there a meaningful connection between the different senses, or are the differences arbitrary? How do phrasal verbs move from literal to idiomatic meanings? Can we predict their meanings or figure out how the idiomatic meanings are formed? These are the questions we will seek to answer as we continue to explore the meanings of these expressions.

### 3.2.4 How are the Meanings of Phrasal Verbs Related?

The question for teachers of English is whether there is any systematic structure or organizational system governing the meanings of these phrasal verbs. Traditional approaches to phrasal verbs have not been able to identify any coherent system or structure and have therefore classified them as idiomatic. However, recent research
developments in cognitive linguistics have revealed semantic patterns that were previously undetected. These semantic patterns stem from the ways native speakers understand and refer to the world around them. In short, the patterns of meanings are cognitively motivated; that is, meaning resides in the cognitive framework of native speakers, not just in the surface language features.

These motivations are implicitly embedded within the cognitive structures of native speakers, and native English speakers are generally not explicitly aware of the ways their language (including phrasal verbs) flows from these conceptual structures. These motivations are not transparent to speakers of other languages learning English (since they do not have direct access to the same conceptual frameworks), making the meanings of phrasal verbs appear completely arbitrary and random.

3.2.5 Can Teachers Teach Phrasal Verbs in Meaningful Ways?

Despite the fact that ELLs are generally unaware of the conceptual motivations for English phrasal verb meanings, teachers are able to tap into these conceptual frameworks and explicitly teach them to students. Numerous studies have revealed the positive benefits on students’ understanding and retention of phrasal verb meanings when these frameworks are explicitly taught (e.g. White, 2012; Neagu, 2007; Karahan, 2015; Yasuda, 2010)

When thinking about teaching phrasal verbs, there are five important principles to bear in mind:

1. Since language is based on the conceptual frameworks of the speakers of that language, students from other language backgrounds do not have direct access to the conceptual frameworks of English.
2. Phrasal verbs rely heavily on these metaphorical conceptual frameworks.
3. Native English speakers are not normally consciously aware of these inherent metaphorical frameworks.
4. Teachers first need to become aware of these frameworks and turn their procedural knowledge into explicit knowledge.
5. Once these metaphorical structures are explicitly taught to ELLs, they will be able to understand how the meanings of these phrasal verbs are motivated.

While we have already touched on principles one through three, the next section will focus primarily on the fourth principle: turning our procedural knowledge into explicit knowledge. As speakers of English, you already have developed and rely on conceptual frameworks to form your language, but you might not yet know how this works. In this way, you have formed a procedural knowledge of English: You know how to use language, but you do not necessarily know why you say everything you do. For any of us who have ever said “I don’t know why; it’s just how we say it,” you are demonstrating your procedural knowledge but don’t know how to translate that into explicit knowledge.

The purpose of the rest of the handbook is to give you the tools and insight as a teacher to make this switch and learn to explain why phrasal verbs act in the ways they do. In this next section, we will explore some of the theoretical underpinnings of the English language to gain access to this conceptual framework: the conceptual metaphor theory.

3.3 Cognitive Linguistics: A Foundation in Theory

We now turn our focus to the theories of language that support our pedagogical practices. This field of cognitive linguistics is less than forty years old, yet these concepts have already dominated fields of psychology and learning as well as linguistics. A thorough understanding of these concepts is vital in teaching phrasal verbs effectively.
3.3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory: How We Think and Speak About the World

Language is a profound tool, not only for speaking about our experiences and communicating with others, but also for making sense of the world around us and categorizing concepts we encounter. As Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) notes, speakers of some languages use speech to distinguish between animate and inanimate objects; masculine and feminine entities; past, present, or future; and different types and degrees of knowledge (p.6). For our purposes in this handbook, it is helpful to think of two main categories of entities that speakers refer to: concepts that we directly know through our experiences and abstract concepts that are outside of our direct experience.

Due to the fact that we are creatures with physical bodies in a physical world (not just disembodied minds), our understanding of the world is transmitted through our embodied experiences in the world (Tyler and Evans, 2003). As such, there are a number of physical phenomena that we experience directly with our bodies (e.g. heat, up/down orientation, objects moving through space, objects contained within other objects, etc.). These concepts are part of what we shall refer to as the experiential domain, where our knowledge is formed directly through our bodily experience in the world.

There is another domain (which we shall call the abstract domain) containing concepts and ideas such as love, relationship, time, causation, emotion, and so on. Many ideas in this abstract domain are inaccessible through our embodied experiences, so to access these ideas, we think about them -- conceptualize them -- in terms of something in the experiential domain. This process of thinking about and speaking about one domain in terms of another is what linguists Lakoff and Johnson call *metaphorical mapping*. We
take ideas and entities in our experiential domain (the source domain) and “map” them onto ideas in the abstract domain (target domain) to make sense of the abstract ideas.

In this way, we are thinking and speaking of abstract ideas in terms of concrete, experiences. This is why this mapping is called metaphorical, because we are taking concepts from the source domain and mapping those ideas onto the target domain to conceptualize them.

### 3.3.2 Understanding Conceptual Metaphors: A Metaphor for *Knowledge*

To illustrate, consider the following example: The concept of *knowledge* is incredibly abstract, so to think about and conceptualize *knowledge*, we think of it in terms of a more concrete, accessible concept: sight. In our everyday experiences, we form an understanding of sight, and when things are hard for us to see, we might say they are unclear, murky, cloudy, fuzzy, opaque, or foggy, and conversely, when something is easy to see, we might say that thing is clear, bright, brilliant, or transparent. When we conceptualize *knowledge* (from the more abstract domain), we use the same terminology to describe it.

Something that is easy to understand can be described as clear, transparent, or crystal clear. Something that is difficult to understand might be said to be unclear or cloudy; we might be fuzzy about an idea, or something might seem foggy to us. If we lack knowledge, we use the sight domain as well. Someone might be “overlooking an important point” or be experiencing “tunnel-vision”. Or maybe they are being “blind” or “myopic,” perhaps because they are “blinded by love” or wearing “rose-colored glasses”. If we want to gain more knowledge about something, we might need to “take a closer look,” “gain perspective,” or “have our eyes opened”. Then, when someone “sheds some
light” on the subject matter for us, we might have “a lightbulb moment,” when we come to an understanding and acquire knowledge.

In this example, an idea or concept from an abstract domain (e.g. knowledge) is directly inaccessible by our bodily experience. Thus, in order to conceptualize it, we draw on the experiential domain of vision and sight to make sense of it.

3.3.3 The Ubiquity and Importance of Metaphors

Yet unlike traditional understandings of metaphor, conceptual metaphors are not just ornamental language that reside in our words; they are the way we think about the world. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in *Metaphors We Live By*, argue that much of our cognition is dependent on metaphor. All abstract thinking is dependent on this metaphorical “mapping” of one domain on the other, of thinking of one thing in terms of another. For instance, we think about abstract concepts like time in terms of money (or a limited resource):

**TIME IS A COMMODITY**
- They were just trying to **buy some time**
- She now **spends her time** trying to educate others
- This sense of direction guides the way you **use your time**
- It would be silly to **waste time** daydreaming
- We are **running out of time**

In this example, we use the source domain of money to conceptualize the target domain of time. We also refer to arguments and debate in terms of competition (or even war):

**THEORETICAL DEBATE IS COMPETITION**
- It became an excuse to **attack his beliefs**
- They will ask the president to **defend his point of view**
- Statistics she quotes . . . seem to **bolster her argument**
- If she expresses herself in a true way, she’s going to **get shot down**
- Peace advocates can no longer **defend their position**
Here, the source domain is competition, which is mapped onto the target domain of theoretical debate. We can also combine conceptual metaphors together for greater abstractions. For instance, we think about anger in terms of heat and our bodies as containers for our emotions. Consider the following utterances that rely on this combination of conceptual metaphors:

**ANGER IS HEAT and BODY IS CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS**
- It just started really **boiling inside** of me
- He wants to play basketball to **blow off some steam**
- She said her own fear had kept **bottled up**
- My father had a very **fiery temper**
- I’m going to **stew on that** for a minute

While it may not be immediately apparent, our conceptual understanding is largely built upon metaphor. Any abstract thinking we engage in is dependent on conceptual metaphors, drawing from our embodied experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) rightly say, “If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (p. 4). As such, metaphors are both pervasive and integral in all parts of cognition, and these metaphors are expressed through our language.

In the next few sections, we want to relate this discussion to phrasal verbs, and specifically, the metaphorical usage of particles. We generally don’t think of particles as having literal and metaphorical meanings, yet the way the meanings of particles are extended is one of the major factors in determining the meanings of phrasal verbs. In this next section, let’s consider the literal (i.e. spatial or prototypical) sense of particles.
3.4 Particles and Phrasal Verbs

When we start applying these theories to phrasal verbs, one important concept to note is the compositional nature of phrasal verb meanings. As multi-word expressions, phrasal verbs derive their meaning from the meanings of the verb and particle of which they are composed. Sometimes, the meaning of the phrasal verb directly reflects the meanings of the constituents, but often, this is not the case, and it is difficult to see the connection between the phrasal verb and the meanings of the verb and particle.

This difficulty has led some to believe that phrasal verbs do not have compositional meanings, i.e. their meanings are not necessarily tied to the meanings of the verb and particle. For instance, they might argue that the particle out in fill out (as in fill out a form) is arbitrary and could easily be replaced with in, (as in *fill in a form). On the contrary, as we will see in these next sections, the particular particles that are used in phrasal verbs are incredibly important, and they do directly relate to the compositional meaning of phrasal verbs.

3.4.1 The Spatial (Prototypical) Meaning of Particles

One of the most fundamental elements in our experience is the concept of direction, that is, spatial orientation. When we refer to the world around us, we don’t conceptualize space in terms of fixed space and location, referring to exact angles, distances, or sizes. Rather, our concepts of space are relativized to ourselves and the world around us (Tyler and Evans, 2003, p. 21).

The language we use reflects this relativistic understanding of the space around us. Instead of referring to exact locations, we use prepositions and adverbs to talk about location, saying something is across the room or on the table, referring to things in
relation to us and to our surroundings. Consider the following list of prepositions and adverbs listed below (adapted from Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003, p. 4-5) to see the way we refer to space around us:

1. With a bow, he hastened across the floor
2. A man rode his bicycle along the road
3. He lives eight miles away from here
4. I close the notebook and hand it back to him
5. Her apartment is by the stairs
6. The heavily laden van moved down the hill
7. I grabbed the bowl and hid it in the kitchen.
8. A resident inside the apartment was armed and fired
9. The plane slammed into the building
10. I swiped crumbs off my lap and onto the rug
11. There’s a bucket of champagne already chilling on the table
12. He walked out of the room, and I was left sitting there
13. A pair of drones that hovered over the field
14. Bats flitted out through the tunnel, abandoning him.
15. She slips under the table and tickles her sisters’ feet.
16. I watched one squirrel climb up the pole

Any preposition or adverb that refers to physical direction or space is called spatial (or prototypical) in meaning. Of all the ways prepositions and adverbs can be used, these are the most basic meanings, as they refer to location and space around us.

3.4.2 Phrasal Verb Usage: Transparent Meanings

As we established in Section 3.2.1, a preposition or adverb functioning within a phrasal verb is referred to as a particle. Thus, when that preposition or adverb is in its prototypical form, it is referred to as a particle functioning in its prototypical form. These prototypical particles -- when they combine with verbs -- form a class of phrasal verbs known as transparent or literal phrasal verbs. Since the prototypical meaning of particles pertain to our experiential understanding of space and direction -- they are
accessible to us and easy to understand. The meanings of transparent phrasal verbs can be easily discerned by the meanings of the verb and the particle used. Consider the following examples:

1. Here is a hasty note asking you to send back to me the receipt I sent you
2. Tami climbed into the right seat and put on her helmet
3. The man scooted over so he could sit down on the futon
4. This book is something to pull out of my pocket at will

Consider the first example sentence: the meaning of send is to arrange for the transportation of something, and the spatial, prototypical meaning of back expresses the return of something to a prior location. When we put them together, the phrasal verb is easy to understand because it is based on the meaning of the verb and the prototypical meaning of the particle. A general rule is this: if the ELL knows the meaning of the verb, and the particle is in its spatial (or prototypical form), then the meaning can be derived by the meanings of the constituents. These phrasal verbs are the easiest for English language learners to acquire, since their meanings are transparent.

### 3.4.3 Extended Meanings of Particles:

Unfortunately, not all phrasal verbs have transparent meanings, and in fact, a majority of their meanings are idiomatic and polysemous. For these phrasal verbs, the particle takes on a different meaning from its prototypical meaning. Instead of referring to literal space and direction, these particles are used when other concepts are thought of in terms of space. Consider the following examples, where difficulties (an abstract concept) are conceptualized in terms of containment (an experiential source domain):

**DIFFICULTIES ARE CONTAINERS**

- How do you get out of this situation?
- He could be in a lot of trouble
- He’s already **up** to his neck in the nation’s troubles
- Well, I think we’re **in** a mess
- I try not to get myself **into** too much trouble

As the examples above show, when *container* is used as a source domain, particles are frequently used in the expressions (e.g. out, in, up). This is because the concept of direction is embedded into the notion of a container. To speak of a container is to speak of being inside, on top of, out of, or into a container. Thus, when we use a container to make sense of an abstract entity like *difficulties*, we will rely on direction-related particles to aid in our understanding and language of the concept. The most primary experiences (like *orientation* and *containment*) serve as the source domain for us to conceptualize the majority of our abstract thoughts.

Notice how, in these examples, the particles refer to abstract entities instead of literal spatial orientation. In the first sentence, for example, the subject is asking how to escape from a situation, and they use *out* to express it. At a conceptual level, the difficult situation is thought of in terms of a container, and as such, the particles are used metaphorically, differing from their prototypical meanings.

### 3.4.4 Metaphorical Extensions of Phrasal Verbs

Depending on the conceptual metaphor used, these particles can take on a range of extended meanings, differing from their prototypical meanings. For instance, while the prototypical meaning of *up* literally means to move in an upward direction to a higher location, metaphorically, it refers to an increase in size, number, or strength (Kovacs, 2011b, p. 147). Notice these metaphorical extensions in the following phrasal verbs:
• The premiums have gone up since the Affordable Care Act
• I came up with the idea to provide students
• The students wanted to make up for that absence

Conversely, while down prototypically means moving in a downward direction to a lower position, it can be metaphorically extended to refer to a decrease in size, number, and strength:

• Interest rates have gone down
• My car broke down on the way to Minneapolis
• He allowed the mirth to quiet down a bit before continuing

These are just two examples of particles that are metaphorically extended. Their meanings are extended beyond the literal, spatial orientation to describing abstract entities. This is what makes some phrasal verbs difficult to learn; the conceptual metaphors that motivate these meaning extensions are not transparent to them.

In this next section, we will explore how meaning is extended metaphorically and the common conceptual metaphors that are responsible for these meanings. To fully understand the systematic ways meaning works, we will isolate one particle, out, and see how its prototypical meaning extends to many idiomatic phrasal verbs.

3.4.5 A Closer Look at Metaphorical Extension: The Example of Out

Like many other particles, the notion of out relies on the image of a container as a source domain for its metaphors. In its prototypical sense, out refers to exiting a container. We can use this prototypical sense of out to speak about objects exiting a number of different containers:

• Max rushed out of the house
• Yes, we jumped out of our seats
• Emma opened the cottage door to let the dog out
• She stormed out of the courtroom
• Moore told them to check out of the hotel
• Minorities were driven out of their homes

These are the most transparent of all uses of out. In these sentences, anything from a house to a seat is considered a container. Even in sentence 3, while it is not stated, the container is implied, as the dog was enclosed in the house and now is let out of that enclosure. Because they are physical containers, these phrasal verbs utilize the spatial-prototypical sense of the particle.

Multiple researchers (Lindner, 1983; Tyler and Evans, 2003; Tyler and Mahpeykar, 2015; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003; Kurtyka, 2001; Neagu, 2007) have theorized the ways in which the central meaning of out is metaphorically extended and used in phrasal verbs (c.f. Lakoff, 1987 for an analysis of over). While they present different labels and categories, their analyses share many similar features, which will be summarized in the following sections.

3.4.6 OUT: Local Extensions with the Container Metaphor

Given that the central meaning of out is leaving a container, the way the expressions are metaphorically extended is when other entities are conceptualized as containers. Neagu (2007) notes that particle meanings are metaphorically extended in concentric circles from the central meaning. This means that not all metaphorical extensions are equally abstract; some are much more easy to discern than others due to their proximity to the prototypical sense. The following three local extensions form the first concentric ring around the central sense. The first extension is called the Not In Situ
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*Sense* (Tyler and Evans, 2003), where *being/eating in a home* is conceptualized as a container, and anything outside of that container depends on the use of out:

**BEING/EATING IN A HOME IS A CONTAINER**

1. Would you like to go out for lunch?
2. I don’t think we should be going out tonight
3. Johnson would invite Scott out to dinner
4. That’s sweet of you, but I want to stay in tonight (Use of in shows the metaphorical extension works both ways)

Notice how, in these sentences, the phrasal verb meaning is not fully transparent but still simple to understand from the verb and particle. In addition to the *Not In Situ Sense*, Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) identifies two other local extensions: Sets and groups are containers and bodies, minds, and mouths are containers. In addition to the first local sense, these extensions are relatively transparent in their meanings. Consider the meaning of *out*, as sets and groups are conceptualized as containers:

**SETS AND GROUPS ARE CONTAINERS**

- I was kicked out of the Brownies when I was about seven years old
- Maybe she’ll get picked out of the crowd
- The guitar wonder came out of a non-blues tradition
- He’s confident he was forced out of the NFL

The third conceptual metaphor is to view mouths (as well as bodies and minds) as a type of container:

**MOUTHS ARE CONTAINERS**

- She stuck her tongue out at me
- I dealt out praise for them in return
- "I... I don't know," she stammered out
- The nerve to speak out against a government's abuse
- He yelled out orders to attack the herd
She was startled and **cried out**

In these sentences, both physical objects (e.g. a tongue, in sentence 1) and abstract ideas (e.g. words and phrases) are conceptualized as leaving the mouth. Closely related to this mouth-as-container metaphor is one where the body and mind are viewed as a corporeal container for thoughts, emotions, and questions:

**BODIES AND MINDS ARE CONTAINERS**

- I couldn’t **get** this question **out** of my mind
- He **poured out** his heart, sharing his story
- She’s going to **squeeze** the life **out** of him
- I **reached out** to greet him
- I wonder if Ed is **out** of his mind
- He decided to **hear** her **out** anyway

Again, in these sentences, the body or mind is thought of as a container for emotions and inner thoughts. Even in the fourth sentence, as the subject stretches out their hand to greet, the body is thought of as a container, and the arms at the sides of the body are thought to be inside the container. Reaching out to shake hands, then, is conceptualized as leaving the container of the body.

These three local extensions of **out** help us to see how the idea of containment is extended to a variety of contexts -- from corporeal containment to viewing groups or homes as containers. In the next section, we will consider further global metaphorical extensions, where more abstract concepts are thought of in terms of containment, giving rise to other phrasal verb meanings.
3.4.7 OUT: Global Extensions with Conditions as Containers

As we have mentioned, the prototypical meaning of *out* is extended metaphorically to include a range of various meanings. In the first concentric extension, *out* is extended as physical entities (i.e. homes, groups, and bodies) are thought of as containers. In the global extensions, more abstract entities (e.g. states or conditions) are viewed in terms of containment.

The first of these conditions is what we would deem a (usually negative) situation. This is an incredibly common and implicit metaphor in English. Consider the following phrases where this metaphor extends the meaning of *out*:

**SITUATIONS ARE CONTAINERS**
- The whole situation *got out* of control
- I believe that if Europe can *get out* of this mess
- If it helps you *crawl out* of debt for good, it's worth it

Another condition (or state) we conceptualize in terms of containment is focus. When we focus on something, our attention is given to that thing, and everything else is thought to be outside of that focus. When we focus on something, it consumes (i.e. contains) our mental energy, and when we shift our focus, it is thought of as leaving that container:

**FOCUS IS A CONTAINER**
- he'd asked her to *look out* for Grandma
- *Watch out* for those stump holes
- You can *check out* the name of recipes on the website

In these sentences, someone is being asked to turn their focus toward something outside their normal focus.
Aside from situations and focus being conceptualized as containers, several researchers (e.g. Lindner, 1983; Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003) have noted the pattern of default or normal states being conceptualized as containers. As such, when someone ceases to participate in that state, they are thought to be exiting out of the state. This could be leaving the state of existence to non-existence, consciousness to unconsciousness, knowledge to lack of knowledge, remembrance to forgetfulness, etc.

This pattern of things going from states of existence to non-existence can be illustrated in the following sets of sentences. Listed below are three of Rudzka-Ostyn's (2003) example subcategories: existence, consciousness, and usability.

**EXISTENCE IS A CONTAINER**
- He is helping others **put out** the fire
- The continent’s long-term residents began to **die out**
- They saw their futures, their savings, their homes **wiped out**
- Her voice **faded out** again

**CONSCIOUSNESS IS A CONTAINER**
- The flight engineer was **knocked out** cold
- He **passed out** on the bed after a couple of drinks

**USABILITY IS A CONTAINER**
- By the time you **wore it out**, it would be out of fashion anyhow
- The wave had **washed out** the road in some places
- The lock on the patio door had **rusted out** long ago

In each of these examples, a state or condition is thought of in terms of a container, where something changes from a state (e.g. existence) to a different state. These examples follow a pattern of entropy, where things go from order to disorder,
potential to lack of potential, etc. When something moves from this state of existence, it is thought to be leaving the container (\textit{out}), motivating this phrasal verb pattern.

In her phrasal verb analysis, Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) finds that this same pattern for \textit{out} exists the other way, too: non-existence is thought of as a container that can be escaped, too. This pattern holds true for things going from non-existence to existence, ignorance to knowledge, and invisibility to visibility. The following example sentences illustrate this series of metaphors:

\textbf{NON-EXISTENCE/IGNORANCE/INVISIBILITY IS A CONTAINER}

- The word must have \textit{leaked out} that something was up
- Try to \textit{figure out} what the administration is doing next
- Others examined the comet’s surface, which \textit{turned out} to be as hard as ice
- He \textit{pointed out} that disaster flights are not what people want to read about
- We will pursue him until the full truth \textit{comes out}
- She shuffled the deck and began to \textit{deal out} the cards for study

In these sentences, something that was originally hidden from knowledge or sight becomes visible and brought into clear view. It could be a secret that gets leaked out, or it could be a discovery (e.g. the nature of the comet’s surface). Even in the last sentence this pattern persists, for in the act of dealing out cards, the faces of the cards become evident (visible) to the card players. These are just a few of the many examples following this pattern of extension.

\textbf{3.4.8 Generalizing Phrasal Verb Extension}

Without the container metaphor, there would be little way for us to see a meaning connection between the phrasal verbs containing \textit{out}. Yet due to viewing various entities (e.g. houses, bodies, focus, visibility, existence) as containers, we are able to see how the meaning of phrasal verbs are motivated by conceptual frameworks.
There is a logical and systematic organization of phrasal verbs, and it primarily stems from the metaphorical extension of particle meaning, using a family of related metaphors.

For our example, we looked at *out* and saw how its spatial, prototypical meaning was extended metaphorically, but we can take the same principle and apply it to every other particle, too. As such, by beginning with the spatial, directional meanings of particles, we can determine a wide range of extended meanings, simply by using conceptual metaphors. This recent breakthrough in our understanding completely transforms the way we can understand and teach phrasal verbs. Instead of presenting isolated phrasal verbs, we can identify and expose the conceptual structures that really drive the meanings.

3.5 Pedagogical Approaches to Phrasal Verbs

In Part IV of the handbook, we will explore the various pedagogical applications for these theories. In short, this is the crux of the handbook, yet it is completely dependent on the theories in previous sections. We will begin with an introduction on how to visually represent conceptual metaphors for students and move to practical lesson-plan building at the close of the section.

3.5.1 From Theory to Practice: How to Teach Phrasal Verbs

We now move to the pedagogical section of the handbook: turning our theory into practice. Now that we have built an understanding of how conceptual metaphors drive phrasal verb meaning, we are ready to learn how to best present these concepts to our students. I remind you of the five principles in teaching phrasal verbs as we shift our discussion toward pedagogy:
1. Since language is based on the conceptual frameworks of the speakers of that language, students from other language backgrounds do not have direct access to the conceptual frameworks of English.
2. Phrasal verbs rely heavily on these metaphorical conceptual frameworks.
3. Native English speakers are not normally consciously aware of these inherent metaphorical frameworks.
4. Teachers first need to become aware of these frameworks and turn their procedural knowledge into explicit knowledge.
5. Once these metaphorical structures are explicitly taught to ELLs, they will be able to understand how the meanings of these phrasal verbs are motivated.

So far in our discussion, we have established the first four pedagogical principles. We now understand how phrasal verb motivation occurs and how meaning is extended, turning our procedural knowledge to explicit knowledge. The question of this next section is how we can turn this understanding into meaningful learning experiences for our students.

3.5.2 Weaknesses of Traditional Pedagogical Approaches

Without the understanding of metaphor from cognitive linguistics, teachers are left with two primary ways to present phrasal verbs: semantic and syntactic organization. With semantic organization, teachers categorize phrasal verbs according to topic or usage. These groups of phrasal verbs usually appear in the vocabulary section of the textbook, grouped by themed chapters on “Family and Relationships,” “Workplace,” or “Travel and Transportation”. While the phrasal verbs have similar contexts of use, they are not necessarily related to each other; thus, this approach leads teachers to present lists of phrasal verbs for their students to memorize.

Another pedagogical strategy -- syntactic organization -- seeks to focus on the syntactic elements (either verbs or particles) and categorize the constructions
accordingly. An example would include teaching a list like *take after, take down, take over, take up*, etc. While this approach is closer to a cognitive approach, it still fails to identify the real motivations of meaning: the conceptual metaphors that drive particle meaning. Thus, like the semantic approach, the syntactic approach fails to identify the real motivations for meaning extension.

### 3.5.3 The Importance of Conceptual Visualization

Based on this understanding of metaphorical meaning extension, cognitive linguists have proposed a new approach to teaching phrasal verbs -- one that relies heavily on visualization. Kurtyka (2001) summarizes the importance of visualization by saying “the ability to form mental representations of verbal and non-verbal input, seems to be indispensable in learning” (p. 33), citing numerous studies pointing to the centrality of the image in learning retention. Many scholars and researchers (e.g. Shone, 1984; Shabiralyani, G. et al. (2015)) have pointed to the efficacy of visuals in learning, and it has become a widely-accepted norm in language teaching.

One might take this understanding and choose to illustrate individual phrasal verbs for their students, drawing diagrams for each individual PV construction. This is the technique I tried before coming to an understanding of cognitive linguistics, and I have seen multiple teachers use it in their teaching.

The problem with this approach is that the visuals are over-contextualized, as the learner is presented with an individual picture for each phrasal verb. In other words, the teacher must present a single picture to represent the PV *fill up* and another for the PV *fill out*, as the meanings and contexts of use are incredibly different. Further, in order to effectively teach these polysemous constructions, the teacher would have difficulty
drawing a picture to fully encapsulate the drastically different meanings of the following phrasal verb:

8. He leads a group to a city park to **pick up** trash (*to lift or take off the ground*)
9. Cell phone towers are able to **pick up** a caller’s location on a 911 call. (*to detect*)
10. he was trying to get a cab to go **pick up** his 3-year-old daughter (*to take in a car*)
11. Republicans failed to **pick up** a single seat in the chamber (*to take, to win*)
12. momentum is starting to **pick up** (*to increase*)
13. You need to **pick up** where you left off (*to resume*)
14. Showing them pictures can help them to **pick up** the language (*to learn, acquire*)

Imagine drawing one picture that would satisfy all the meanings of this one phrasal verb! It would no doubt be impossible, so teachers would have to resort to either teaching only one meaning for the phrasal verb or instead drawing seven pictures to illustrate its meanings. This is surely not an effective use of time and energy for teachers and students.

Cognitive linguists have proposed a different type of visualization: a cognitively-based image. Instead of drawing images for each individual phrasal verb and context, this approach allows teachers to present the metaphorical structures for students through visuals. These visuals are based on the spatial-prototypical meaning of phrasal verbs, and as such, they are more abstract to elucidate the conceptual motivations to students. As we learn this visualization approach, we must develop an understanding of two important concepts: landmark and trajector.

### 3.5.4 Landmark and Trajector: Learning to Visualize Metaphorical Extensions

In order for teachers to gain an in-depth pedagogical understanding into the metaphorical network of extended meanings, it is important to introduce two new concepts: *trajector* and *landmark*. These terms help to label and define how these
metaphors work and also give rise to pictorial representations of these abstract metaphors. These terms were initially introduced by Langacker (1987), but they have since then been adopted by a majority of prominent cognitive linguists.

In short, the terms *trajector* and *landmark* help us label the way humans make sense of the world around them and focus on and speak of particular objects around them. When we speak about things, we speak of one thing in relation to another, with one entity in focus and another as a backdrop. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) notes that “we unconsciously foreground or focus on a (moving) entity and view it against a background seen as container or surface” (p. 9). The moving (or foregrounded) entity is referred to as the *trajector*, while the container or surface against which the trajector is viewed is called the *landmark*. In her work, Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) demonstrates the notion of landmark and trajector through a series of sentence comparisons. Consider the following example sentences, following that pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENTENCE</th>
<th>TRAJECTOR</th>
<th>LANDMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. He locked himself away in his room</td>
<td>he</td>
<td>room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He picked up the glass sitting on the table</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Bay took a paperback out of her backpack</td>
<td>paperback</td>
<td>backpack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Corbin pulled alongside the curb and stopped</td>
<td>Corbin’s car</td>
<td>curb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these sentences, the foreground entity is the moving entity, and the landmark is the container or surface against which the trajector is positioned. Now, consider the same sentences where the landmark and trajector are switched and the background entities are moved to the foreground:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENTENCE</th>
<th>TRAJECTOR</th>
<th>LANDMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>His room is locked around him</em></td>
<td>room</td>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <em>The table is sitting under the glass</em></td>
<td>table</td>
<td>glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. *Bay's backpack is surrounding a paperback</td>
<td>backpack</td>
<td>paperback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. *The curb is next to the Corbin’s car

The first set of sentences affirms our natural interpretation of the world around us, while the second set (the awkward sentences offset with asterisks) contradicts this organizational system by switching the foreground and background entities. While this categorization of the world might not be true for all languages and peoples, it is certainly the predominant way native English speakers organize and speak about their experiences.

When we apply the concept of trajector and landmark to phrasal verbs, we think of the subject in focus as the trajector, and the landmark is conceptualized as a type of container, path, group, or surface.

3.5.5 Using Trajector and Landmark to Represent Metaphors

Linguists have used a number of ways to represent trajector and landmark in pictorial form, and the following visualization approach is an adaptation primarily derived from Rudzka-Ostyn, (2003). The trajector (the entity in the foreground) is represented by a dark circle, and the landmark (the background entity) is represented by a large rectangle.

To illustrate this visualization approach, we will revisit the central and extended meanings of *out* to see how these pictures help elucidate these concepts for students. The pictures thus contain an abstract representation of a container (the landmark) and an entity leaving the container (the trajector). The following picture is a representation of the prototypical meaning of *out,* based on its spatial-orientation.
This image can be used to elucidate the meanings of the following expressions:

- Max rushed out of the house
- Yes, we jumped out of our seats
- Emma opened the cottage door to let the dog out
- She stormed out of the courtroom
- Moore told them to check out of the hotel
- Minorities were driven out of their homes

For the illustration, the landmark (container) and the trajector (the dark dot) substitute for a variety of different entities. This allows teachers to draw one abstract illustration (based on the prototypical meaning of the particle) and extend it to various contexts. Students will be able to build their understanding of the metaphorical extension by visually seeing how different entities are metaphorically represented by this container metaphor. For instance, the spatial image of out (Figure 1.1) can be extended to visually represent the following phrasal verbs:

**USABILITY IS A CONTAINER**

- By the time you wore it out, it would be out of fashion anyhow
- The wave had washed out the road in some places
- The lock on the patio door had rusted out long ago
In these sentences, the concept of *usability* is represented by the container landmark, and the entities that move out of use (the dark dot) are thought to be leaving the containment of *usability*. The important piece to this visualization is that the image does not change. The only difference is the referents for the trajector and landmark, but the image of entities exiting a container remain the same.

### 3.5.6 Further Adaptations to Landmark and Trajector

To further illustrate the variety of phrasal verbs represented by the notion of containment, it is sometimes helpful to adapt and modify visualizations to show how the meanings are logically extended. Taking the example of *out*, consider how to visually represent *out* as leaving a group:

*Figure 1.2: Out as Leaving a Group*

A visual like this one helps us to make sense of the connection between the following extensions and phrasal verbs:

**SETS AND GROUPS ARE CONTAINERS**

- I was **kicked out** of the Brownies when I was about seven years old
- Maybe she’ll get **picked out** of the crowd
The guitar wonder came out of a non-blues tradition
He's confident he was forced out of the NFL

Without an image like this one, though, language learners might struggle to find a meaningful connection between came out, kicked out, and picked out. Yet with this picture, these metaphorical connections are made explicit for learners. The trajector represents an entity in a group (the group is represented by other dots inside the landmark), and the connection is made clear. Lastly, consider the following image, where out represents thoughts and emotions leaving the body:

Figure 1.3: Out as Leaving the Body

BODIES AND MINDS ARE CONTAINERS
- I couldn't get this question out of my mind
- He poured out his heart, sharing his story
- She's going to squeeze the life out of him
- I reached out to greet him
- I wonder if Ed is out of his mind
- He decided to hear her out anyway

In these examples, the trajector represents thoughts, emotions, and disposition, and the landmark represents the body or mind in which the trajector is contained. Instead of
drawing unique pictures for each of these PVs, teachers can illustrate a whole body of related meanings through one image and relate all the respective PV meanings to it.

3.5.7 Benefits of a Conceptual Approach to Presenting Phrasal Verbs

Compared with traditional approaches, this cognitive linguistic approach has a number of benefits for teachers and students.

1. **Use of Visuals.** This approach puts visuals to use, which have been shown to lead to better retention of vocabulary and stronger understanding of academic content.

2. **Grounded in Metaphor.** This is perhaps the most important aspect, as the illustrations represent the actual meaning motivations, not just contextual information. This leads to understanding of why and how various meanings are related, rather than simply providing illustrations to individual phrasal verbs.

3. **Ease for the Teacher.** This approach allows the teacher to move from the arduous process of explaining the meaning and context of each individual phrasal verb and toward a more comprehensive approach to related meanings. Teachers can also build lessons on each other, presenting the central meaning first and extended meanings in further lessons, which adds continuity and structure to the lessons.

4. **Ease for the Student.** Since the CL approach reveals the conceptual underpinnings of PV meaning motivation, students are able to learn and memorize families of PVs instead of individually learning each PV meaning and context.
5. **Related Illustrations for Diagrams.** The *out* phrasal verbs all rely on a series of related container metaphors, and the visual illustrations reveal those relations. For instance, most landmarks are demarcated by either a container or surface image, which makes it simple for teachers and adds continuity for students learning these illustrations and meanings.

In short, there are a host of reasons why this method of presenting phrasal verbs has immense potential to reduce time and energy of learning and also add to overall retention of the content. Multiple studies (Condon, 2008; Boers and Lindstromberg, 2000) have shown benefits of using related approaches in classrooms, and researchers are developing more resources for teachers to utilize these in the classroom.

### 3.5.8 Application in the Classroom: Crafting Meaningful Lesson Plans

When it comes to turning these approaches into lesson plans, there are several practical ideas for teachers to consider. Instead of simply providing example lesson plans, this section presents a number of principles and ideas for consideration when crafting lesson plans and activities for your particular classroom.

1. **Modify traditional fill-in-the-gap exercises.** These exercises are often used during class time to build students’ understanding and gauge their comprehension. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) recently developed a series of what are called *exetests*, a combination of a standard fill-in-the-gap exercise and a comprehension check for students. In those *exetests*, a series of sentences were used in which students had to choose from a phrasal verb word bank to select the correct form for the sentence. Sometimes, the words were omitted; other times, the phrasal verb would substitute for a
synonym. Exercises like these have been shown to be useful in learning and retention in a variety of contexts (Kurtyka, 2001).

Teachers can also expand on these standard fill-in-the-gap exercises to steer them to a more task-based approach. As long as the students are exposed to explicit forms and are able to make the conceptual connections, task-based adaptations are incredibly helpful and useful. Teachers could turn these *exetests* into standard gap-fill exercises, where students work in pairs or groups to complete an activity together. An example of this might be the following: After presenting the BODY/MIND AS CONTAINER metaphor, have students cut out faces from magazines and talk about the emotions expressed in terms of containment, using target forms. Then, have them write and share stories about their lives (perhaps a particular event) or about another person, speaking of their emotions and feelings in similar terms. These adaptations of simple lessons has immense potential to make the content more meaningful and accessible for students.

2. **Make space for explicit instruction on form.** As mentioned in the introduction, within communicative and task-based language teaching, the importance of explicit focus on forms -- and phrasal verb teaching, specifically -- is often overlooked, as they believe it takes away from the communicative contexts of the task-based exercises. Nevertheless, while it is important to utilize authentic contexts and use communicative approaches, these activities must be combined with focus-on-form instruction.

In order to successfully present the conceptual metaphors and give students the opportunity to visualize the abstractions, teachers will have to explicitly present the
material to the students. Holme (2017) agrees and calls for “more teacher control over input and output” or what he terms “input engineering, to make sure that forms reoccur and are noticed when they do” (p. 23). Noticing (Schmidt, 1990) is a vital aspect of language learning, and to make sure our students understand and are exposed to a variety of phrasal verbs, we must be willing to explicitly teach the forms to them.

3. Utilize student-centered visualizations. A recently developed approach (White, 2012) combines cognitive linguistic approaches with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to develop what is termed conceptual mediation, where students are the originators of the conceptual imagery. This approach differs from many other approaches in that the activity that students engage in is a tool for discovery, rather than a practice exercise for a discovery already made. According to Negueruela (2008), “conceptually mediated learning activity not only prepares the way for development to occur but at the same time promotes development itself” (White, 2012, p. 422).

This approach in essence refocuses the classroom, where the student is viewed as the originator of mental schemas, instead of the teacher presenting diagrams and images to the class. Students are presented with contextualized phrases, and they must use landmark and trajector to illustrate the meaning of the phrasal verb. After the students are exposed to a conceptual understanding of phrasal verbs and given the appropriate tools for illustrating and labeling their diagrams, they are given the opportunity to collect samples on their own and draw pictures of related phrasal verbs. The teacher can then use those drawings as a launching point to explain how the individual phrasal verbs are connected to each other. This activity has been tested on older students (White, 2012) and would tend to be most successful with older language learners and students.
in high intermediate and above courses, where they are able to dissect meaning of a phrasal verb from the context of a passage.

4. Use corpus concordance lines for demonstrating phrasal verb use. The use of corpora, large, digital collections of written texts representative of a particular genre or language group, are increasingly commonplace in language research and teaching. One of the many contributions of a large-scale corpus is that it present representative language data of how language users actually use language. We have many assumptions on how we use language, but looking at authentic texts gives us insight into the existence and prevalence of various speech and language patterns.

For PV instruction, teachers can go to a large-scale corpus (e.g. COCA: Corpus of Contemporary American English) and find instances of phrasal verbs in actual usage. This is preferable to making up examples or even using textbook examples, which can be arcane and rarely used. With a corpus, you can show students the most common phrasal verbs and how their meanings are extended in authentic contexts. This also might help you demonstrate to your students how prevalent the metaphoric, extended meanings are in phrasal verbs. (See Appendix B for an example of concordance lines).

These suggestions are just a few starting points as you consider how to construct meaningful lessons for your particular classes. As you develop and expand your knowledge, there are several helpful resources to consider. In the next section, we will consider some of these resources and next steps in your research.

3.5.9 Resources for Further Knowledge

As this handbook comes to a close, there are a few resources that are helpful to consider -- sources that have aided in my understanding and will surely benefit you and
further elucidate these concepts. The purpose of this handbook is to provide teachers with a conceptual and pedagogical introduction, but it is by no means exhaustive. To flesh out your knowledge on these concepts, consider looking further into these resources:

*Metaphors We Live By* -- (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) In their seminal work, Lakoff and Johnson introduced the theory of the conceptual metaphor and catalyzed much of what this current work is based upon. While the theory has been nuanced, expanded, and adapted over the years, the same principles persist, and this work fleshes out many of these concepts in great detail. This is an accessible read, and it would be beneficial for any teacher wanting to understand the prevalence and ubiquity of metaphor in thought and language.

*The Semantics of English Prepositions* -- (Tyler and Evans, 2003) One of the principle elements in determining phrasal verb meaning is particle meaning changes, and this work comprehensively covers the topic. Tyler and Evans explain the reasons why particular particles are used and change meanings the way they do, and they also provide guidelines for determining the prototypical and distinct senses of particles, something other researchers had not done before. Finally, they delve into the theory of embodiment and show how cognition and language are dependent on our embodied experiences. If you would like to expand your knowledge on the theory behind this methodology, this is the source to explore.

*Word Power: Phrasal Verbs and Compounds* -- (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003) Much of the pedagogical work in this handbook is based on and adapted from Rudzka-Ostyn’s text. The book is a comprehensive overview of over a dozen different particles, and
while I chose to demonstrate with *out*, Rudzka-Ostyn provides an in-depth analysis for many particles, listing *exextes* and offering pedagogical suggestions. If, as a teacher, you plan to use this approach to teach phrasal verbs, this is a must-have. A straightforward, to-the-point text like this is invaluable for instruction, as it is replete with examples and helpful diagrams.
Appendix A: Frequent Phrasal Verb Combinations in English
from Gardner and Davies (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Out</th>
<th>Up</th>
<th>On</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Down</th>
<th>In</th>
<th>Off</th>
<th>Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>7,688</td>
<td>3,678</td>
<td>14,903</td>
<td>8,065</td>
<td>4,781</td>
<td>1,974</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COME</td>
<td>5,022</td>
<td>5,523</td>
<td>4,830</td>
<td>8,029</td>
<td>3,305</td>
<td>4,814</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAKE</td>
<td>3,426</td>
<td>4,608</td>
<td>4,199</td>
<td>1,628</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>2,163</td>
<td>5,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GET</td>
<td>3,545</td>
<td>3,936</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>4,552</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td>1,127</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>4,633</td>
<td>10,360</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARRY</td>
<td>10,798</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3,869</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURN</td>
<td>4,284</td>
<td>2,710</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1,373</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRING</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>2,507</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>2,505</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOOK</td>
<td>1,641</td>
<td>3,871</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>2,251</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUT</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>2,835</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>2,873</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PICK</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>9,037</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAKE</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>5,469</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POINT</td>
<td>6,984</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIT</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>4,478</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIND</td>
<td>6,619</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVE</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>4,186</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>4,703</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>996</td>
<td>1,286</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLD</td>
<td>1,507</td>
<td>1,624</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOVE</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>1,419</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68,188</td>
<td>63,772</td>
<td>35,824</td>
<td>33,082</td>
<td>25,773</td>
<td>14,475</td>
<td>10,647</td>
<td>9,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of PV</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cum %</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B: Example Concordance Lines for Pick Up for Classroom Use

A random sample from the Corpus of Contemporary American English

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>... take a minute to <strong>pick up</strong> any bits of litter lying about, break up fire rings and bury . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>I drop off the 2 carbon dioxide and <strong>pick up</strong> more oxygen. I am bright red again! From the lungs I go . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>... off to school before their parents got ready for work. They'd <strong>pick up</strong> a little when they got home. They might clean on weekend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>... then Barbara called this morning to say you'd be back in two weeks to <strong>pick up</strong> your things and the Mustang once the two of you got back . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>So he doesn't need to <strong>pick up</strong> a phone and call somebody and say do a terrorist attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td>(Sacramento County) # <strong>PICK UP</strong> THE TAB # Editor -- Now that the Jeremiah O'Brien has shown the world . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>She ought to be careful because I'll send one of my friends to <strong>pick up</strong> her girlfriend, and I think it would be very easy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>... moment, could be made to look terrible. And then if the news programs <strong>pick up</strong> that little snippet and an editor . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>I have to go, too. I just stopped by to <strong>pick up</strong> those financial printouts. If you have them, I can take them now . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>... tips that could benefit Black women. From the warning signs they want us to <strong>pick up</strong> on sooner to birth control options, this is what we found . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td>Mann will sometime <strong>pick up</strong> the twins at preschool, spend the evening at home with them, then . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ACAD</td>
<td>... long as they could play the right sounds. These students are usually quick to <strong>pick up</strong> the vocabulary and often, because of their aural skills . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>... was last Tuesday as I already said. Big Master Henry was in Memphis to <strong>pick up</strong> some fabric ordered by Miss Caroline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>... fell eight votes short of the 60 it needed to pass. But it did <strong>pick up</strong> the support of most Republicans including minority leader . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>I know a two-week lull can feel like forever, but things will <strong>pick up</strong> for you. I know about this. &quot; # Spencer looked at her . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>She has a husband and a baby. Who can blame her? I <strong>pick up</strong> the Hazzard book and try again. This is so depressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>... it onto the floor, had to grope over the side of the bed to <strong>pick up</strong> the receiver. &quot; That you, Mr. Buford?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>During the forelimb stretch, stand to the front and side of the animal and <strong>pick up</strong> the front leg by grasping it above the knee, and gently pull it . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>Haut, the old man's got a press release he wants you to <strong>pick up</strong> and take it around town.' &quot; # When I pressed Haut about . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>You've seen pictures, but it's always bigger than you expect <strong>Pick up</strong> your jaw and drop down to Glacier Creek, which leads north . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>so I’m really handy to the banjos anywhere I am so I can <strong>pick up</strong> a banjo and tinker with it and see what happens . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>SPOK</td>
<td>Elsewhere, House Democrats will have to <strong>pick up</strong> the pieces from the election debacle with a new leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>MAG</td>
<td>Besides, &quot; she added wistfully, &quot; I might just happen to <strong>pick up</strong> a few pieces of my Wedgwood. &quot; So the three women drove to . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>FIC</td>
<td>One neuronic pathway goes down, and the other parallel pathways <strong>pick up</strong> the processing load. But if the nanobots are affecting them . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td>Mary Kay Woodward says. &quot; While you’re at it folks, <strong>pick up</strong> your towel and toss it in the bin. It doesn’t escape me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I reflect on the completed project and discuss the significance of the handbook for teachers. This section ends by addressing the limitations of the project and offering suggestions for future study and development.

4.1 Reflection on the Completed Handbook

The purpose of this thesis is unique. After wading through multiple research articles and noticing that the vast majority of research has failed to meaningfully impact current pedagogical practices, I knew I had found the purpose of my project: I wanted to connect the theories I was learning about with teachers and apply these new language principles and insights to a fresh audience. I wanted to target teachers in my project and produce something meaningful and accessible for them to use in their everyday teaching. Thus, instead of producing a traditional thesis, I decided to create a handbook for teachers as an introduction to teaching phrasal verbs using a cognitive linguistic approach.

I noticed part-way through the creation of the handbook that EL teachers speak a different language than linguistic researchers – even when the researchers are studying the same subject matter. There is an immense amount of discipline-specific jargon in the field of cognitive linguistics, and researchers define their terms differently. This presented a challenge for me in my project, as I wanted to present the key principles without weighing down my audience with unnecessary terminology. At the same time, I wanted to introduce the foundational principles and jargon necessary for teachers to
understand the current literature on the topic. This tension between readability and accessibility on one hand and induction into the field on the other guided me in my language choices throughout the handbook.

Another challenging aspect was distilling multiple perspectives and researchers' findings into one presentation. For instance, even as I decided to explore the meaning of out throughout the handbook, there are half a dozen different variations and analyses of the particle over the last forty years, each with their own variation of diagrams and pictures. There are a number of slightly different ways of approaching and presenting and classifying this information, and I tried to combine the strengths of each in my handbook to make it more comprehensive and thorough. To this end, I stayed away from using just one perspective but chose to integrate as many researchers as possible. Although this was one of the most difficult aspects, synthesizing multiple perspectives and presenting the information in one cohesive handbook was an enjoyable challenge.

A final decision I made was incorporating authentic examples from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). It would have been far easier to generate example sentences on my own, but I wanted to take the time and find meaningful examples from actual usage. The COCA examples demonstrated the ubiquity of conceptual metaphors in sentences containing phrasal verbs, and as such, I wanted my audience to know that I found these example sentences from authentic use, rather than my imagination. Although I adapted some of the language and removed distracting names, I preserved the utterances for the example sentences, and most of them remain untouched. These examples — I believe — add to the accessibility of the handbook and make the language patterns recognizable.
4.2 Significance of the Thesis

This thesis differs from a standard research project in its attempt to present recent research findings in an accessible way for teachers. As such, the main contribution of my thesis is the handbook itself: an independent work hopefully to be published and distributed freely for a wider audience of teachers. My goal in the project was not to offer a complete treatment of phrasal verbs or an exhaustive theoretical exploration of their meanings. Rather, my purpose was to create something meaningful and readable for teachers, an introduction to cognitive linguistics and a basic understanding of how to apply it to phrasal verbs. Regardless of how widely it is dispersed and utilized by teachers, this handbook fulfills its purpose in the distillation of the research and presentation of ideas.

4.3 Limitations of the Study

As mentioned in previous sections, this thesis is intentionally restricted in its scope. There are many possible applications for cognitive linguistics – and specifically the conceptual metaphor theory – but I wanted to narrow the scope to simply focus on phrasal verbs. Even within the topic of phrasal verbs, there are many particles whose meanings are metaphorically extended, but I chose to only focus on *out* for my example. In this way, my thesis and handbook are limited, but every limitation in scope is intentional. I did not want to create a large book for teachers but rather a handbook that could be read in an hour or two, something they could use for reference if needed.

4.4 Suggestions for Future Research and Development

Cognitive linguistics is a relatively young but rapidly growing field, and new developments are being made every year. As these research findings continue to grow,
and as studies are performed with larger sample sizes, the merits of these approaches will continue to gain credence among the larger ELT community. With time, given their benefits for both teachers and learners, these pedagogical approaches will no doubt completely revolutionize the way phrasal verbs – and all English idioms – are taught. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) and Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) are two recent attempts to create meaningful activities for teachers to use in their classrooms, and others are sure to follow.

In the meantime, more studies need to be performed, demonstrating the efficacy of these approaches. There have been a significant number of researchers who have tested cognitive linguistic pedagogical approaches on a variety of populations and with students from varying linguistic backgrounds, yet more research needs to be done to strengthen the findings.

Furthermore, when it comes to pedagogical applications, there are a number of possible developments. This handbook in particular focuses just on phrasal verbs, but there is more that could be explained. There are a number of ways in which conceptual metaphors manifest themselves in language, and phrasal verbs are just one of the many applications. A variety of idiomatic and grammaticized expressions that find their roots in conceptual frameworks. Once the teachers gain an understanding of cognitive linguistics, hopefully they can then apply that understanding to a variety of idiomatic language expressions.

4.5 Conclusion

Phrasal verbs are one of the most ubiquitous constructions in English, and as such, it is important for teachers to be equipped with the necessary tools to teach them
effectively. The thesis detailed the importance of these expressions, the nature of idiomatic meaning, and the way conceptual metaphors manifest themselves in language structures. The following pedagogical sections detailed the ways in which these expressions can be taught and suggestions for teachers. In short, this thesis sought to make an attempt – an attempt to change the way we think about and teach idioms. Instead of viewing language as random and arbitrary, this project seeks to shed light on the fact that language can be effectively taught, and seemingly arbitrary linguistic structures can be demystified for English language learners.
A CL APPROACH TO PHRASAL VERBS

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