

**AVOIDANCE OF PHRASAL VERBS:  
THE CASE OF CHINESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

**YAN D. LIAO & YOSHINORI J. FUKUYA**

*University of Hawai'i at Mānoa*

**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the avoidance of English phrasal verbs (PVs) by Chinese learners in relation to their proficiency levels (advanced, intermediate), PV types (figurative, literal), and test types (multiple-choice, translation, recall). Each of the six groups of Chinese learners took one of the three tests and a group of native speakers took the multiple-choice test. The ANOVA results showed that the intermediate learners, whose L1 lacks the PV structure, tended to avoid using PVs and preferred their one-word equivalents. Also, both advanced and intermediate learners tended to produce less figurative than literal PVs, which was manifested in the translation test alone. Incorporating the findings of three previous studies on the same topic, this study claims that learners' PV avoidance behavior is a manifestation of IL development and that the semantic nature of the PVs tends to interact with the translation test.

**INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of avoidance behaviors in SLA was first brought to light by Schachter (1974), who pointed out the importance of examining not only the L2 forms that were actually produced by the learners of a foreign language, but also the L2 forms they seem to avoid using consistently. Since then, it has drawn the attention of many researchers (e.g., Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Kamimoto, Shimura & Kellerman, 1992; Kleinmann, 1977, 1978).

When comparing the errors in relative clauses (RCs) made by native speakers (NSs) of Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Arabian learners in their English compositions, Schachter (1974) found that the difficulty of RC for Chinese and Japanese students, which was predicted by Contrastive Analysis (CA), manifested itself not in the number of errors made by these two groups of learners, but in the number of RCs produced, which was much smaller than that produced by the Persian and Arabian speakers. She concluded that "if a student finds a particular construction in the target language difficult

to comprehend it is very likely that he will try to avoid producing it” (p. 213). She further pointed out that Error Analysis, which had been prevailing in previous transfer studies, was deficient in SLA because it was incapable of explaining the phenomenon of avoidance.

Schachter’s study is inconclusive despite the important revelation of the avoidance behaviors. For one thing, it did not control proficiency level and the frequency of RCs in the texts. Furthermore, as Kleinmann (1977, 1978) argued, “to be able to avoid some linguistic feature presupposes being able to choose not to avoid it, i.e., to use it” (1977, p. 97). However, in Schachter’s study, there was no proof that the learners had the ability to use RCs. Therefore, the Chinese and Japanese learners’ so-called avoidance of producing English RCs may have resulted simply from their ignorance of the structure rather than conscious avoidance. Avoidance, as interpreted by Kleinmann, was a strategy that L2 learners might resort to when, with the knowledge of a target language word or structure, they perceived that it was difficult to produce.

To better pinpoint avoidance behavior, Kleinmann (1977, 1978) examined four English grammatical structures (passive, present progressive, infinitive complement, and direct object pronoun structures) performed by two groups of intermediate level ESL learners: NSs of Arabic, and NSs of Spanish and Portuguese. Before looking at any possible avoidance behavior, Kleinmann administered comprehension tests to establish the presence of the learners’ knowledge of the four structures in question. The results of the study showed an avoidance pattern in accordance with CA difficulty predictions. The frequency of use of the target structures was also correlated with various affective measures (e.g., confidence, facilitating anxiety).<sup>1</sup> The findings in this aspect, together with the avoidance pattern, led to the suggestion that “while CA is a fairly good predictor of avoidance, there is an interaction of linguistic and psychological variables in determining learner behavior in a second language in that structures which otherwise would be avoided are likely to be produced depending on the affective state of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Both confidence in comprehending the passive and facilitating anxiety significantly correlated with use of the passive within the Arabic learners of English who avoided the structure. Also, facilitating anxiety significantly correlated with use of infinitive complement and direct object pronoun structures within the Spanish-Portuguese learners of English who avoided these structures. Despite these findings, psychological variables are beyond the scope of the present paper.

learner” (Kleinmann, 1977, p. 93). Therefore, the study supported Schachter’s point that avoidance behavior can be predicted by the structural difference between L1 and L2, although other factors operate at the same time to determine the actual occurrence of the avoidance behavior.

On the other hand, some researchers argued that the underproduction of certain linguistic features does not necessarily suggest avoidance, and the structural difference between L1 and L2 alone may not be the only reason for underproduction. Kamimoto et al. (1992) pointed out that in order to be able to establish whether avoidance is a feasible explanation for relative underproduction of a group of learners, it is necessary to look at the L1 form, distribution, and function of the entity supposedly being avoided in the L2, as well as the means being used to establish whether and to what extent the entity is already part of the L2 knowledge of members of that group. In a detailed study of Chinese and English RCs, Li (1996) found that intermediate and advanced learners did not necessarily avoid structures that were apparently different in form from their L1. He hence concluded that it was not the apparent structural difference that caused Chinese learners to consciously avoid English RCs, but the more subtle pragmatic differences that made them subconsciously underproduce this structure.

The above-mentioned studies pointed out the existence and some potential causes of avoidance behavior in L2 learners. The following section discusses three studies on the avoidance of English phrasal verbs (PVs).

### ***Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs in English***

The PV structure is a peculiarity of the family of Germanic languages (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Darwin & Gary, 1999), and on the whole occurs more frequently in spoken than in written language (Cornell, 1985; Dixon, 1982; Side, 1990). A PV is usually defined as a structure that consists of a verb proper and a morphologically invariable particle that function as a single unit both lexically and syntactically (Darwin & Gary, 1999; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985). Various attempts have been made to classify PVs. Some looked at the relationship between the verb proper and the particle (e.g., Fraser, 1976), while some others focused on the semantics. Cornell (1985)

---

observed that large numbers of PVs are non-idiomatic in nature, in the sense that their meaning is easy to deduce if the verb element is known. For example, if the meaning of *rush* or *steam* is known to the learner, it would not be hard to understand *rush away* or *steam off*. In two studies on the avoidance of PVs (to be discussed in detail below), Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Laufer and Eliasson (1993) approached the classification with different terms but the same nature. Dagut and Laufer (1985) divided the 15 PVs used in their study into three types:

- (a) literal—phrasal verbs whose meaning is a straightforward product of their semantic components: *go out, take away, come in*; (b) figurative—in which a new meaning has resulted from a metaphorical shift of meaning and the semantic fusion of the individual components: *turn up, let down, ...*; (c) completive—in which the particle describes the result of the action: *cut off, burn down, ...* (p. 74).

Similarly, Laufer and Eliasson (1993) worked with three types: semantically transparent (the meaning of the whole verb-particle combination can be derived from the meaning of its parts), semitransparent (those that are transparent when put into context), and figurative or “semantically opaque” (p. 37), which have lexicalized meaning. The figurative, or idiomatic, PVs were considered semantically more difficult than other types of PVs. The difference between figurative and non-figurative PVs was also looked into in both studies.

There are three studies on the avoidance of PVs in the literature. The first study is Dagut and Laufer (1985), which looked at the performance of Israeli learners of English on PVs, a lexicosyntactic form with no formal equivalent in Hebrew. Three groups of intermediate Hebrew learners took three tests (a multiple-choice test, a verb translation test, and a verb-memorizing test). The study also looked into the frequency of avoidance in three PV types (literal, figurative, and completive). The results showed that the majority of the learners avoided using the PVs, preferring the one-word verbs. Furthermore, avoidance was most evident with the figurative PVs. Dagut and Laufer concluded that the Hebrew learners’ difficulty in producing English PVs could not be explained by any intralingual factors such as over-generalization or fossilization. Instead, it could only be understood by an interlingual approach, that is, structural differences

between L1 and L2. Thus, the study provided strong evidence that typological difference between Hebrew and English resulted in the avoidance.

Dagut and Laufer's (1985) study has two weaknesses. First, the method used to establish participants' prior knowledge of the linguistic feature in question was not sound. The choice of the PVs depended primarily on the researchers' impression from their teaching experience, as the PVs used in the study were chosen because they were listed in one of the standard textbooks and were supposed to be covered in the curriculum. Thus, as pointed out by Kamimoto et al. (1992), their conclusion that they had "a genuine avoidance phenomenon" (p. 78) was not well grounded. The underproduction may have resulted from pure ignorance of the PVs. Second, although Dagut and Laufer (1985) pointed out that interlingual differences played a determining role in the avoidance of PVs for Hebrew speakers, they failed to address the fact that the avoidance was much more frequent in the category of figurative PVs than in the case of literal or completive ones. This, indeed, points to an intralingual element in the avoidance behavior.

A follow-up study by Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) addressed the latter of the above two issues. From the conclusion drawn by Dagut and Laufer (1985), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) derived a corollary that Dutch learners of English would tend not to avoid PVs since they had PVs in their native language. Nonetheless, they hypothesized that Dutch learners would still avoid PVs, not for structural reasons as the Hebrew learners did, but for semantic reasons. The same forms of elicitation tests used in Dagut and Laufer (1985) were used in Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) study (with different PVs because the original ones in Dagut and Laufer's study were not available). Each group of participants had the same number of intermediate level and advanced level learners in order to examine whether the avoidance behavior, if any, would diminish with increasing proficiency. From their results, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) claimed that Dutch learners, contrary to the hypothesis, did not avoid PVs categorically (i.e., as a form class), whether they were at the intermediate level or advanced level.

This study offered two interesting findings about avoidance. First, Dutch learners, although not avoiding PVs categorically, did avoid those idiomatic PVs that they perceived as too Dutch-like. This implies that avoidance does not result from structural

differences between L1 and L2 alone. Similarities between L1 and L2 are also possible reasons for avoidance. Second, the Dutch learners exhibited “a tendency to adopt a play-it-safe strategy, preferring one-word verbs with general, multi-purpose meanings to phrasal verbs with specific, sometimes idiomatic meanings” (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989, p. 241).

In a review of transfer literature, Kellerman (1983) found that “not everything that *looks* transferable *is* transferable” (p. 113). In other words, there are L1-induced constraints on the form of L2 that may prevent not only facilitation where L1 and L2 are similar but also negative transfer where L1 and L2 are different. One such constraint is the learner’s perception of language distance, which Kellerman termed as “psychotypology.” Another constraint was “prototypicality,” which refers to the learner’s perception of some L1 structure as potentially transferable and others as potentially non-transferable. According to Kellerman, “if a(n) (L1) feature is perceived as infrequent, irregular, semantically or structurally opaque, or in any other way exceptional, ... its transferability will be inversely proportional to its degree of markedness” (1983, p. 117). This psycholinguistic markedness accounted for the finding in Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) that Dutch learners, although familiar with the PV structure in their L1, avoided those idiomatic ones that were too Dutch-like. Idiomatic PVs, as argued before, are semantically opaque, and therefore, may have been perceived by the Dutch learners as language specific and not transferable to L2. Here, learner perception of both their L1 and L2 also played a role in avoidance.

The third study on the avoidance of PVs is Laufer and Eliasson (1993). Based on previous studies, they identified three possible causes of syntactic and lexical avoidance: (a) L1-L2 differences (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Kleinmann, 1977, 1978; Levenston, 1971; Schachter, 1974), (b) L1-L2 similarity (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Jordens, 1977; Kellerman, 1977, 1986), and (c) L2 complexity. The participants in Laufer and Eliasson (1993) were advanced Swedish learners of English, whose native language had the PV structure. Two types of tests were used in this study: a multiple-choice test and a translation test. A comprehension test was first given to a control group to establish the passive knowledge of the PVs. It was argued that only from this baseline could avoidance be identified. The results of the study were compared with those of Dagut and

Laufer (1985) and the following findings were observed: first, PVs were avoided by learners whose L1 lacked such a grammatical category (Hebrew) but were not avoided by those who possessed the category in their L1 (Swedish); second, inherent complexity did not play the major role in L2 avoidance; finally, idiomatic meaning similarity between L1 and L2 did not necessarily induce learner avoidance (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993, pp. 43-44). Laufer and Eliasson (1993) thus concluded that the best predictor of avoidance was L1-L2 difference.

In line with the enquiry of these three studies, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the avoidance of PVs by Chinese learners of English, who do not have the structure of PVs in their native language. Previous studies discussed above have pointed out three possible causes for the avoidance of PVs: L1-L2 structural differences, L1-L2 structural similarities, and L2 semantic complexity. This study aimed at providing further evidence for avoidance in the context of structural differences between L1 and L2 as well as inherent semantic complexity of the target form. The design of this study followed that of Dagut and Laufer (1985) and partly of Hulstijn and Marchena (1989).

The present study also included proficiency level in the design. Both Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Laufer and Eliasson (1993) studied only one proficiency level (intermediate level in the former and advanced level in the latter). Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), although including two proficiency levels (intermediate and advanced) in their study, concluded that their participants did not avoid PVs categorically. Accordingly, proficiency level was not found to have played a role in the avoidance behavior. Based on these three studies, the present study hoped to investigate whether proficiency level would be a significant factor in the avoidance of PVs.

Furthermore, the present study included test effect in the design so as to investigate whether different formats of the elicitation tests would also play a role in the avoidance of PVs. The previous studies on PVs did not look at the effect of the types of elicitation test on the performance of the participants. Yet a number of studies have reported task-induced IL variation (i.e., test effect) in different language areas: phonology (Sato, 1985), morphology (Larsen-Freeman, 1976), syntax (Schmidt, 1980), and pragmatics (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) assumed that test instruments (i.e.,

multiple-choice, translation, and recall tasks) might differentially affect avoidance behavior of PVs.

Based on the above literature review, the present study investigated three research questions:

Research Question 1: Do Chinese learners avoid PVs?

Research Question 2: Does their avoidance, if any, reflect differences in the semantic nature of PV types (figurative vs. literal)?

Research Question 3: Does their avoidance, if any, reflect the ways their performance is measured?

### ***Hypotheses***

To answer these three research questions, six hypotheses were created.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 answered Research Question 1. Dagut and Laufer (1985) found that Hebrew learners of English, whose L1 lacked the PV structure, avoided using PVs. They attributed this avoidance to the structural difference between L1 and L2. Because Chinese learners do not have the PV structure in their L1, either, it is hypothesized that they will avoid using PVs like Hebrew learners did. However, none of the three studies (i.e., Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) found proficiency level to have played a role in the avoidance of PVs; hence, Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 1: Chinese learners of English will avoid using PVs as compared with native speakers.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no difference between advanced learners of English and intermediate learners of English in using PVs.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 answered Research Question 2. Previous research on the avoidance of PVs found that if avoidance did occur, it was more obvious with figurative PVs than with literal ones (Dagut & Laufer, 1985). Even in the case of learners who did not avoid PVs as a category, they tended to avoid those idiomatic PVs that they perceived as too similar to their L1 (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

Hypothesis 3: Chinese learners of English will avoid using figurative more than literal PVs as compared with native speakers.



Hypothesis 4: There will be no difference between the advanced learners of English and the intermediate learners of English in using figurative and literal PVs.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 answered Research Question 3. There has not been any previous research on the test effect on the avoidance of PVs.

Hypothesis 5: There will be no effect of test types on Chinese learners' use of PVs as a category.

Hypothesis 6: There will be no effect of test type on the learners' use of figurative and literal PVs.

## **METHOD**

### ***Participants***

Eighty-five students participated in this study. They were made up of three groups: NSs of English, advanced Chinese learners of English, and intermediate Chinese learners of English.

The NSs of English were 15 undergraduate students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM).

The advanced learners were 30 Chinese graduate students at UHM. Their TOEFL scores were all above 600. At the time of the data collection (1999), five of them had been in the U.S. for more than three years, four for about two years, and the remaining 21 for nine months. These advanced learners were randomly and equally divided into three groups, each given one of the three elicitation tests (multiple-choice, translation, and recall).

The remaining participants were 40 Chinese intermediate learners of English, 10 of whom were graduate students at UHM. Their TOEFL scores were between 500 and 590. At the time of the data collection (1999), seven of them had been in the U.S. for about five months, and three for about nine months. The other 30 were college students in China. At the time of the data collection (2000), they had all studied English for a minimum of eight years (six in secondary school and two in college) and passed Band Six of the College English Test (a national standardized English test for college students in China), which is roughly equivalent to 500-600 on the TOEFL score. These 40

intermediate Chinese learners were combined into one group on the grounds that the students at UHM had only been in the U.S. for a short period of time (the majority for only five months and some for nine months). Of the 10 learners from UHM, five took the multiple-choice test and five took the translation test. The 30 learners from China were randomly divided into three groups of 10, each given one of the three tests.

### ***Research Design***

Fifteen NSs took a multiple-choice test. Of 30 advanced learners, 10 took the multiple-choice test, 10 a translation test, and 10 a recall test. Of 40 intermediate learners, 15 took the multiple-choice test, 15 the translation test, and 10 the recall test. The study was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, 15 NSs took the multiple-choice test alone so that 15 cases of native-speaker preference for a PV over a semantically equivalent one-word verb in a short dialogue could be identified. As discussed in the literature review, the semantic complexity of PVs plays a role in learners' avoidance behavior. Semantic opaqueness in the case of figurative PVs presents more difficulty for L2 learners than semantic transparency in the case of literal PVs. In order to take into consideration the role of semantic complexity in learners' avoidance of PVs, the present study looked at the PVs in two types: literal and figurative (see Appendix A). The second stage was to find out whether and to what extent these PVs would be avoided by Chinese learners of English. This stage consisted of the administration of three elicitation tests (a multiple-choice test, a verb translation test, and a recall test) to three independent groups of advanced learners and three independent groups of intermediate learners.<sup>2</sup>

The study was designed along the lines of two earlier studies: Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena (1989). However, the present study is different from these two studies in two respects. First, different PVs were used. The ones used in the former study were not available. In the latter study, the PVs used were those preferred by native British English speakers and therefore might not be appropriate for the participants

---

<sup>2</sup> Although all the three tests could have been administered to individuals in the advance and intermediate groups, this repeated-measure design was likely to create a practice effect of the phrasal and/or one-word verbs on their performance.

in this study, who were in an American English environment. Second, PVs are generally considered to belong to an informal register and are colloquial in nature. Both these two prior studies used sentences to provide the context for the PVs in their tests. Although the participants were told to imagine saying the sentences in casual speech, some of the sentences seem to be too long and too formal to suit the purpose. For example: “After having failed to have a decent conversation with a German couple I had met in the pub, I decided that it was time to *brush up* my German” (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989, p. 255). Instead of using long sentences, the present study used shorter and more casual dialogues as the context. For the same PV *brush up* (*brush up on* in American English), the following dialogue was used: Cathy: “I heard the company is sending you to Germany again.” Tony: “Yes. It’s been a long time since I was there, so I guess it’s time to *brush up on* my German” (See Appendix B). It was hoped that despite the fact that these dialogues were still in the written form, they offered a better chance of making the participants feel that they were in spoken English.

### **Materials**

Fifteen pairs of phrasal and one-word verbs were selected based on the NS preference in the context of small dialogues. This set of 15 dialogues was used in all three tests.

**Multiple-choice test.** This test consisted of the 15 short dialogues from the test on NSs (see Appendix B). In each dialogue, the verb in question was left blank. The participants were asked to fill in the blank with one of the four verbs presented below the dialogue: the PV, the equivalent one-word verb, and two distractor verbs. The participants had about 10 minutes to complete the test. Because each item actually contained two correct answers, the participants received special instructions to choose the one that they considered most suitable to complete the dialogue.

**Translation test.** This test had the same 15 dialogues as in the multiple-choice test, with the verbs left out. At the end of each dialogue the Chinese equivalent of the missing verb was given. The participants were required to translate them into English in the provided 10 minutes.

**Recall test.** The participants were first given the same 15 dialogues as in the multiple-choice test, written out in full with the PVs. The test included five distractor

dialogues with one-word verbs. The participants were told to remember the main ideas of the dialogues in about 10 minutes. After about an hour, they were given the same dialogues again, but this time, the verbs were left out. They were asked to fill in the verbs according to what they remembered. In order to prevent L1 influence, no native language translation of the PVs was given (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

### ***Data Analyses***

An alpha level of .05 was used for both statistical tests. To conduct ANOVA, raw scores were converted into ratios. There were 15 items in all three tests. If the participant chose eight PVs, the raw score was converted to the ratio of  $8/15 = .53$ . Because there were two phrasal verbs among the four choices (one correct, one distractor), only the correct phrasal verbs chosen by the NNSs were counted in the calculation. Among the 15 PV items, 11 were figurative and four were literal. If out of the 11 figurative PVs, the participant chose five (again for the NNSs this would be the correct ones chosen), the raw score for figurative PVs was converted into the ratio of  $5/11 = .45$ . If out of the four literal PVs, the participant chose two, the raw score for literal PVs was converted into the ratio of  $2/4 = .50$ .

## **RESULTS**

The raw scores of the tests are presented in Appendix C. Fifteen NSs took the multiple-choice test. The total number of possible verbs was 225 (15 participants x 15 items). The results showed that in 189 cases, the NSs chose the phrasal verb, and in 36 cases, they chose the one-word verb. Of the 225 possible occurrences of PVs, 165 were figurative (15 participants x 11 figurative PV items), and 60 were literal (15 participants x 4 literal PV items). Among the 189 PVs the NSs chose in the multiple-choice test, 136 were figurative and 53 were literal. The raw scores for the two groups of NNSs (advanced and intermediate) in all three tests (the multiple-choice, the translation, and the recall) are presented in the same fashion.

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Phrasal Verb Usage*

Test	Group	<i>n</i>	PV Type	<i>k</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
M	NS	15	PV	225	0.84	0.10
			Fig	165	0.82	0.12
			Lit	60	0.88	0.13
	A	10	PV	150	0.75	0.15
			Fig	110	0.73	0.19
			Lit	40	0.83	0.17
	I	15	PV	225	0.45	0.19
			Fig	165	0.43	0.20
			Lit	60	0.50	0.19
T	A	10	PV	150	0.47	0.16
			Fig	110	0.35	0.22
			Lit	40	0.83	0.17
	I	15	PV	225	0.38	0.16
			Fig	165	0.26	0.19
			Lit	60	0.70	0.24
R	A	10	PV	150	0.78	0.17
			Fig	110	0.76	0.17
			Lit	40	0.83	0.24
	I	10	PV	150	0.50	0.22
			Fig	110	0.48	0.21
			Lit	40	0.55	0.35

*Note.* M = Multiple-choice test; T = Translation test; R = Recall test; A = Advanced learners of English; I = Intermediate learners of English; PV = PV total; Fig = Figurative PVs; Lit = Literal PVs; *k* = Total number of verbs

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of phrasal verb usage for all three groups of participants. A two-way (3 x 2) ANOVA with repeated measures on one independent variable (Analysis I) was conducted to investigate the performance of three groups (the NSs, the advanced learners, and the intermediate learners) in the multiple-choice test. The ANOVA results (see Table 2) showed that the main effect for group was significant,  $F(2, 34) = 31.25, p < .01$ . The main effect for PV type was also significant,  $F(1, 34) = 7.68, p < .01$ , with the mean score of literal PVs being significantly higher than that of the figurative PVs. However, the first-order interaction between PV type and group was not significant,  $F(2, 34) = 0.22, p = .80$ . Post-hoc analysis (Tukey) of the group variable revealed that the difference between the NSs and intermediate learners was statistically significant, with the mean score of the former being higher than the latter. Cohen's (1988)  $d$  was calculated for the effect size estimate. The effect size of the intermediate learners relative to the NSs was  $d = -2.69$  with its 95% upper limit confidence interval ( $d = -2.94$ ) and its lower limit ( $d = -2.44$ ). The difference between the advanced and intermediate learners was also statistically significant, with the mean score of the advanced learners higher than that of the intermediate learners. However, the difference between the NSs and the advanced learners was not statistically significant. The effect size of the advanced learners relative to the NSs was  $d = -0.41$  with its 95% upper limit confidence interval ( $d = -0.62$ ) and its lower limit ( $d = -0.20$ ).

Table 2

*Two-way (3 x 2) ANOVA Table*

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Group	2	2.25	1.13	31.25*	.01
PV Type	1	0.14	0.14	7.68*	.01
PV Type x Group	2	0.01	0.01	0.22	.80
Error	37	0.70	0.02		

\*  $p < .05$

A three-way (2 x 3 x 2) ANOVA with repeated measures on one independent variable (Analysis II) was conducted to analyze the performance of the two NNS groups (advanced and intermediate) on all three tests. A summary of the results is presented in Table 3. The main effect for proficiency (between the advanced and intermediate learners) was statistically significant, which is consistent with the result in Analysis I. The main effect for test was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 58) = 3.03, p = .06$ . However, the analysis showed a trend ( $p = .0553$  to be more exact than what is reported in Table 3) for the three tests to be different. The first-order interaction between proficiency and test was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 58) = 2.19, p = .12$ . The main effect for PV type was statistically significant,  $F(1, 58) = 46.79, p < .01$ , with the mean score of the literal PVs being higher than that of the figurative ones. However, another first-order interaction between PV type and proficiency was not statistically significant,  $F(1, 58) = 0.03, p = .86$ . The interaction between PV type and test was statistically significant,  $F(2, 58) = 17.50, p < .01$ . The second-order interaction among PV type, proficiency, and test was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 58) = 0.08, p = .92$ .

Table 3

*Three-Way (2 x 3 x 2) ANOVA Table*

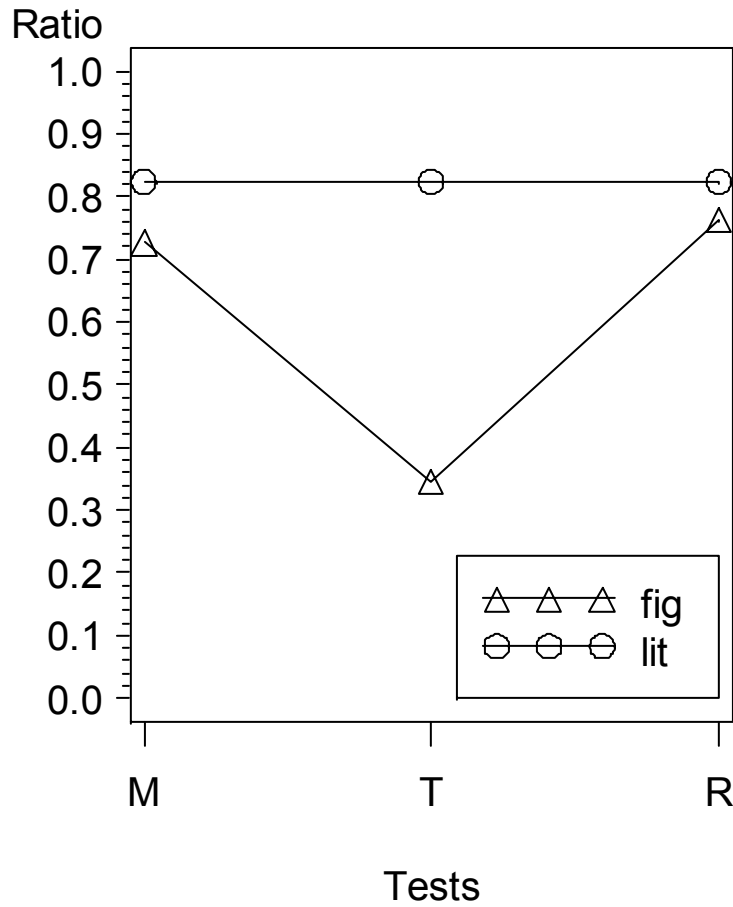
Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Between participants</i>					
Proficiency	1	1.71	1.71	28.05*	.01
Test	2	0.37	0.18	3.03	.06
Proficiency x Test	2	0.27	0.13	2.19	.12
Error	64	3.90	0.06		
<i>Within participants</i>					
PV Type	1	1.45	1.45	46.79*	.01
PV Type x Proficiency	1	0.01	0.01	0.03	.86
PV Type x Test	2	1.09	0.54	17.50*	.01
PV Type x Proficiency x Test	2	0.01	0.01	0.08	.92
Error (PV Type)	64	1.98	0.03		

\*  $p < .05$

Because of these results, follow-up analyses were necessary to examine the interaction between PV type and test. Figure 1 shows a plot of PV type x test for the advanced learners of English, and Figure 2 shows a plot of PV type x test for the intermediate learners of English. Post-hoc analysis (Tukey) of the test type revealed that the difference between the multiple-choice test and the translation test was statistically significant. The difference between the recall test and the translation test was also statistically significant. However, the difference between the multiple-choice test and the recall test was not statistically significant. A specific interaction was therefore found between PV type and the translation test. This means that the difference in frequencies between the figurative verb use and the literal verb use were found to be statistically significant for both the advanced and intermediate learners only in the translation test. In other words, only in the translation test was the learners' (both advanced and intermediate) production of the figurative PVs significantly less frequent than that of the literal PVs.



Figure 1: The Use of Fig and Lit VPs By Advanced Learners



M: Multiple-choice test

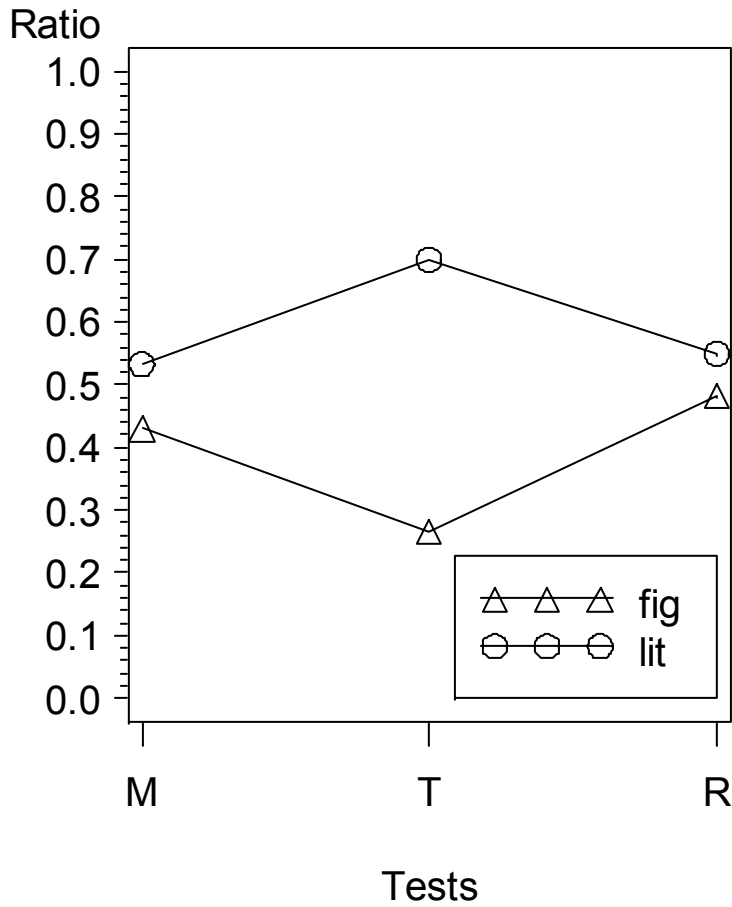
T: Translation test

R: Recall test

Fig: Figurative PVs

Lit: Literal PVs

Figure 2: The Use of Fig and Lit VPs By Intermediate Learners



M: Multiple-choice test      T: Translation test  
R: Recall test                Fig: Figurative PVs  
Lit: Literal PVs

## DISCUSSION

Research Question 1 asked if Chinese learners of English avoid PVs. To answer this question, results from all three elicitation tests were analyzed. The present study operationalizes learners' avoidance of PVs as a usage that is lower than that of the NSs at a statistically significant level. In the multiple-choice test, the advanced learners used PVs 75% of the time and one-word verbs 21% of the time, while the intermediate learners used them 45% and 43% of the time, respectively. The NSs, on the other hand, used PVs 84% of the time and one-word verbs 16% of the time (see Table 1). As discussed in the Results section, Analysis I found that the intermediate learners produced PVs much less frequently than both the advanced learners and the NSs did. It follows that the intermediate learners avoided using PVs and preferred the one-word verbs. Although the advanced learners did not perform very differently from the NSs, they also showed a slight tendency to use PVs less than the NSs. Thus, Hypothesis 1 of this study is partially supported. Of the Chinese learners, those at the intermediate proficiency level showed a tendency to avoid using PVs. Analysis II further revealed that in all the three elicitation tests, the advanced learners used significantly more PVs than the intermediate learners did (see Table 1). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 of the study is not supported.

The L1-L2 structural difference (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) between Chinese and English might be a reason for the avoidance of PVs by the intermediate Chinese learners. The PV structure is a peculiarity of the Germanic languages (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Darwin & Gary, 1999) that have no parallel in Chinese. The structure of a verb followed by a particle does exist in Chinese, like *guolai* (come over here), *guoqu* (go over there), in which the two particles *lai* and *qu* follow the verb *guo* to give the directional meanings. However, this structure is different from the English PV structure in two ways. First, unlike the English PV structure, the particles in Chinese are generally inseparable from the verbs; it is very rare for nouns to come between the verbs and the particles. As a result, this type of verb + particle structure is more or less treated as a whole word. Second, the morphological form "particle" is very restricted in Chinese. There are only very few directional particles such as *lai* (over here), *qu* (over there), *shang* (up), *xia* (down), *jin* (in), *chu* (out), and the verb + particle

combinations rarely take on figurative meanings as they very often do in English (e.g., *let down* for *disappoint*).

Because of this L1-L2 difference, the syntactic and semantic functioning of the particles in English PVs may be confusing to Chinese learners of English, which is frequently commented on by both teachers and learners of English. Learners might develop a “natural tendency to avoid using what they do not properly understand and to prefer the more familiar one-word verb” (Dagut & Laufer, 1985, p. 78). Dagut and Laufer (1985) found that intermediate Hebrew learners of English, who do not have the PV structure in their L1, avoided using PVs. The researchers attributed this avoidance of PVs to the L1-L2 structural difference between Hebrew and English. In the present study, this avoidance was manifested in the case of the intermediate Chinese learners. The advanced learners, although not avoiding PVs, did produce fewer PVs than the NSs. Accordingly, the findings of the present study partially support the conclusion of previous research that L1-L2 difference is a good predictor of avoidance behaviors in SLA (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993).

Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) also investigated the difference of English proficiency levels in the avoidance of PVs. They hypothesized that Dutch learners would avoid PVs and their avoidance tendency would diminish with increasing proficiency. Their participants were Dutch learners who had the PV structure in their L1, consisting of intermediate learners (i.e., secondary school students), who had received English instruction for five to six years, and advanced learners (i.e., first-year college students). While their study claimed that Dutch learners did not avoid PVs at either advanced level or intermediate level, their findings in the multiple-choice test (given to the NSs, the advanced learners, and the intermediate learners) showed that “the intermediate ESL learners responded significantly different from the English native speakers,  $\chi^2 = 42.4$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ , showing much less preference for phrasal verbs. The advanced learners, however, showed a clear preference for phrasal verbs not significantly different from native speakers,  $\chi^2 = .49$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $ns$ ” (p. 246). This means that although the advanced Dutch learners did not avoid the English PVs, the intermediate learners actually did. The disparity between Hulstijn and Marchena’s (1989) claim and the findings might have come from a failure to analyze the full effect of the two distinct proficiency levels

(intermediate and advanced) before collapsing them in a broader analysis of Dutch learners as one group. In simpler terms, they failed to follow the standard statistical interpretation procedure that when an interaction between two proficiency levels was significant, the interpretation should first focus on the interaction before any non-significance of the main variable, proficiency level, was claimed.

Incorporating all the findings of the four studies on the avoidance of PVs (i.e., Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; the present study), a better interpretative framework than the L1-L2 difference seems to be a developmental manifestation of IL from avoidance to non-avoidance. Figure 3 shows a simplified line of an IL development from beginning to native-like stage. The horizontal line of arrows divides learners by their L1: learners whose L1 lacks PVs are above the line, and those whose L1 has PVs are below the line. The vertical line divides avoidance (on the left) and non-avoidance (on the right) of PVs. The findings of the four studies were laid out along these two lines. This model seems to suggest that, regardless of whether learners have PVs in their L1 or not (i.e., Hebrew, Chinese, Dutch, and Swedish), they seem to go through the same developmental process from avoidance to non-avoidance of PVs. Hebrew undergraduate learners avoided PVs; Chinese undergraduate and graduate learners avoided them whereas more advanced Chinese graduate learners did not; Dutch high school students avoided PVs, but Dutch and Swedish undergraduates did not. Nonetheless, the two notions of IL development and L1-L2 structural difference (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) are not mutually exclusive or contradictory. Establishing structural dissimilarity as a factor in PV avoidance does not rule out the possibility that L2 learners' difficulties with PV would eventually subside.



the three groups (NSs, advanced, and intermediate learners), which means that all three groups favored more literal PV production than figurative PV production in the multiple-choice test. Analysis II, which looked at the performances of two NNS groups in all three tests, also found that learners favored more literal PV production than figurative PV production. Since no interaction between the group and the PV type was found, learners of both proficiency levels performed in a similar way, using figurative PVs less often than literal ones. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported. There was no difference between the advanced and intermediate learners in terms of using figurative PVs less than literal ones.

Although both the advanced and the intermediate learners showed the same pattern of using less figurative PVs than literal PVs, the advanced learners' performance was not statistically different from that of the NSs, which means that they did not really *avoid* either figurative or literal PVs. It was only the intermediate learners who avoided using both. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is only partially supported. An interesting finding here is that this difference between figurative and literal PV usage found in the NNSs is consistent with that of those PVs produced by the NSs. The NSs used figurative PVs 82% of the time and literal ones 88% of the time (see Table 1). These findings are consistent with previous studies as well. Dagut and Laufer (1985) found that Hebrew speakers' avoidance of PVs happened more often with figurative ones than literal ones. In Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) study, despite the L1-L2 similarity (PV structure exists in both English and Dutch, two Germanic languages), Dutch speakers also avoided some of the idiomatic PVs, that is, figurative ones.

The difficulty of figurative PVs in contrast with literal PVs may reside in their semantic nature (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993). In a figurative PV, the meaning departs from its individual components. As figurative PVs often take on idiomatic meanings, learners find it difficult to map their meanings with their forms. On the other hand, it is relatively easy for them to get the meaning of a literal PV by combining the meanings of its verb proper and particle. In addition, for learners whose L1 lacks such flexible verb + particle combinations, such as the Hebrew learners in Dagut and Laufer (1985) and the Chinese learners in the present study, the difficulty also lies in the control of the components (the verbs and the particles) in figurative PVs. An English verb can take a number of different particles to form

figurative PVs with a variety of meanings. This is very confusing to learners who do not have such a grammatical feature in their L1. The reason for the intermediate Chinese learners' stronger avoidance tendency with figurative PVs, therefore, could be semantic, syntactic, or a combination of both. A complementary explanation could be a distributional bias in the input. Among the 15 PV items, 11 were figurative and four were literal. This differential treatment between these PV types might have affected the outcomes. In this sense, an equal distribution of the PV types is recommended for future research.

The last research question in this study looked into the test effect on the Chinese learners' avoidance of PVs. In their study on Dutch learners' avoidance of PVs, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) hypothesized that the evidence for avoidance behavior produced by the three elicitation tests would be strongest for the memorization test (recall test in the present study), less strong for the multiple-choice test, and least strong for the translation test. The recall test had been designed with a bias in favor of PV responses with only PVs explicitly given in the test. Their logic was that if learners were to respond to the recall test with one-word verbs, then this would be the strongest evidence for the avoidance of the PVs. The multiple-choice test, with both PVs and their one-word counterparts present, had a less strong bias in favor of PV responses. And the translation test offered the least strong evidence for PV responses because it made neither the PVs nor their one-word equivalents explicitly available. Despite their hypothesis, their results showed that in all three tests, the advanced Dutch learners "did not avoid phrasal verbs as a form class and that the intermediate learners, although showing a tendency to avoid phrasal verbs to some extent, did not avoid phrasal verbs categorically either" (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989, p. 250).

In the present study, Analysis II on the test effect revealed that there was an interaction between test type and PV type and that this interaction was found only in the translation test. This means that it was only in the translation test that the Chinese learners (both advanced and intermediate) showed the tendency to use figurative PVs less often than literal ones. Hence, inherent L2 complexity has also played a role in the intermediate Chinese learners' avoidance of PVs when they took the translation test,



which made neither the PVs nor their one-word equivalents available. This is also a reason the advanced Chinese learners used literal PVs more often than figurative ones.

Table 4

*Interaction Between the Test Type (Multiple-Choice, Translation, Memorization/Recall) and PV Type (Figurative vs. Literal)*

	Multiple-Choice	Translation	Memorization
Dagut & Laufer (1985)	+	+	+
Hulstijn & Marchena (1989)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Laufer & Eliasson (1993)	- *	+ *	(Not Used)
Present Study		+ *	

*Note.* + = Greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs; - = Greater avoidance of literal PVs than figurative PVs; \* = From inferential statistics; N/A = No statistics available from the study

In order to examine the test effect further, the following section compares these results on the test effect with those found in the former three studies on the avoidance of PVs (see Table 4). Dagut and Laufer (1985) found a greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs in all three tests (multiple-choice, translation, and memorization) in the case of intermediate Hebrew learners of English, whose native language lacks the PV structure. Their conclusion, however, was based on only descriptive statistics. The second study, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), did not provide any specific statistics for the avoidance of figurative and literal PVs. In the third study (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993), Swedish learners of English, who also have PV structure in their L1, showed a greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal ones in the translation test, while in the multiple-choice test, the exact opposite was found. Memorization (recall) test was not used in their study. The results of the test effect in the present study and the above comparison on the interactions between test type and PV type led to the conclusion that the translation test is the test type that is likely to yield a greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs, regardless of learners' native languages. This, however, does not mean

that multiple-choice tests and recall tests will not produce a greater avoidance of figurative than literal PVs. The latter two tests may or may not yield a greater avoidance of figurative than literal PVs. Based on the results of the three studies (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; the present study), the present study claims a greater avoidance of figurative than literal PVs only in the translation test.

Why did the Chinese learners tend to use more figurative PVs much less than literal ones in the translation task? As discussed in this section, difficulties of figurative PVs may be semantic and/or syntactic. It may be semantic in that figurative PVs take on specific, idiomatic meanings, and it may be syntactic in that verbs in figurative PVs can take different particles to carry various meanings. The authors of the present paper speculate that these difficulties may have aggravated the avoidance of PVs by the Chinese learners when they took the translation task. Among the three tasks, the translation was the only task in which PVs were not available to the learners. In the multiple-choice test, both English PVs and one-word equivalents were available; in the translation test, both PVs and one-word verbs were absent; in the recall test, only PVs were present. The greater avoidance of figurative PVs than literal PVs produced by the translation test offers additional evidence for L2 semantic complexity in the Chinese learners' avoidance of PVs.

## CONCLUSION

Theoretically motivated by the proposition of L1-L2 difference, the present study set out to investigate Chinese learners' avoidance of English PVs. The results of the study showed that the intermediate learners tended to avoid using PVs, while the advanced learners did not. An integration of these findings into the three previous studies (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) seems to point more to a manifestation of learners' IL development than to the L1-L2 differences or similarities in learners' PV avoidance or non-avoidance, although these two notions are not mutually exclusive. This IL development of PVs needs further empirical validation because the data currently available are not sufficient to compare precisely the learners' English proficiency levels across these four studies. Whether the learners have the PV

structure in their L1 or not, they tend to avoid using PVs at the intermediate proficiency level, for example, Hebrew learners in Dagut and Laufer (1985), intermediate Dutch learners in Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), and intermediate Chinese learners. As they proceed in their IL development, however, this avoidance tendency diminishes and their usage of PVs approaches that of NSs: advanced Dutch learners in Hulstijn and Marchena (1989); Swedish learners in Laufer and Eliasson (1993); advanced Intermediate Chinese learners. Moreover, as three studies (Dagut & Laufer; 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; the present study) have indicated, the semantic nature of PVs seems to have interacted with the translation task, that is, the learners tended to use literal PVs significantly more than figurative ones in this task. Semantic and/or syntactic difficulties of figurative PVs may aggravate learners' avoidance of PVs when they take a translation task in which PVs are not available to them. Further research is needed to validate these two claims, and it is strongly recommended that researchers incorporate (a) the developmental framework, especially for learners whose L1 has the PV structure, (b) task effect, and (c) an equal distribution of figurative and literal PVs in the input into their future research designs to shed more light on the avoidance of PVs.

The authors of the present paper speculate that, within the developmental framework, the advanced Chinese learners' exposure to the L2 environment might have been an important factor in their non-avoidance of PVs in contrast with the intermediate learners. The present study did not have advanced EFL Chinese learners or intermediate ESL learners to compare with the intermediate EFL learners and the advanced ESL learners who participated in the study. It would be worthwhile to look into this aspect of PV avoidance by comparing ESL and EFL learners at both the advanced and intermediate levels of English proficiency so as to determine the exact role that the exposure to the L2 environment plays in the avoidance or non-avoidance of PVs.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank Prof. Craig Chaudron and Prof. Kate Wolfe-Quintero for their insightful comments, and Prof. Shuqiang Zhang and Ms. Ginger Carey for their advice and assistance in data analysis.

## REFERENCES

- Cornell, A. (1985). Realistic goals in teaching and learning phrasal verbs. *IRAL*, 23, 269-280.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dagut, M., & Laufer, B. (1985). Avoidance of phrasal verbs: A case for contrastive analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 7, 73-79.
- Darwin, C. M., & Gray, L. S. (1999). Going after the phrasal verbs: An alternative approach to classification. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 65-83.
- Dixon, R. (1982). The grammar of English phrasal verbs. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 2, 1-42.
- Fraser, B. (1976). *The verb-particle combination in English*. New York: Academic Press.
- Hulstijn, J. H., & Marchena, E. (1989). Avoidance: Grammatical or semantic causes? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11, 241-255.
- Jordens, P. (1977). Rules, grammatical intuitions and strategies in foreign language learning. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin*, 2, 5-76.
- Kamimoto, T., Shimura, A., & Kellerman, E. (1992). A second language classic reconsidered—the case of Schachter's avoidance. *Second Language Research*, 8, 251-277.
- Kellerman, E. (1977). Towards a characterization of the strategy of transfer in second language learning. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin*, 2, 58-145.
- Kellerman, E. (1983). Now you see it, now you don't. In S. Gass & L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language transfer in language learning* (pp. 112-134). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Kellerman, E. (1986). An eye for an eye: Crosslinguistic constraints on the development of the L2 lexicon. In E. Kellerman & M. S. Smith (Eds.), *Crosslinguistic influence in second language acquisition* (pp. 35-48). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Kleinmann, H. H. (1977). Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 27, 93-107.

- Kleinmann, H. H. (1978). The strategy of avoidance in adult second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie (Ed.), *Second language acquisition research: Issues and implications* (pp. 157-174). New York: Academic Press.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1976). An explanation for the morpheme acquisition order of second language learners. *Language Learning*, 26, 125-134.
- Laufer, B., & Eliasson, S. (1993). What causes avoidance in L2 learning: L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 similarity, or L2 complexity? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 15, 35-48.
- Levenston, E. A. (1971). Over-indulgence and under-representation: Aspects of mother-tongue interference. In G. Nickel (Ed.), *Papers in contrastive linguistics* (pp. 115-121). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li, J. (1996). Underproduction does not necessarily mean avoidance: Investigation of underproduction using Chinese ESL learners. In L. F. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and language learning: Vol. 7* (pp. 171-187).
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of English language*. New York: Longman.
- Rintell, E. M., & Mitchell, C. J. (1989). Studying requests and apologies: An inquiry into method. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 248-272). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Sato, C. J. (1985). Task variation in IL phonology. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 181-196). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Schachter, J. (1974). An error in error analysis. *Language Learning*, 24, 205-214.
- Schmidt, M. (1980). Coordinate structures and language universals in IL. *Language Learning*, 30, 397-416.
- Side, R. (1990). Phrasal verbs: Sorting them out. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 44, 144-152.

**APPENDIX A**  
**PHRASAL AND ONE-WORD VERBS USED IN THE STUDY**

The 15 pairs of phrasal and one-word verbs used in the study (see Appendix B for context).

Phrasal Verbs	One-Word Equivalents	Chinese Translation
<i>a. Literal</i>		
get up	rise	□□
go away	leave	□□
take away	remove	□□
come in	enter	□□
<i>b. Figurative</i>		
show up	appear	□□
brush up on	review	□□
let down	disappoint	□.....□□
go off	explode	□□
hold on	wait	□□□
put out	extinguish	□□
make up	invent	□□
give in	surrender	□□
turn down	refuse	□□
show off	boast	□□
run into	meet	□□

**APPENDIX B**  
**TEST ITEMS**

After each dialogue, the following information is added: in order of their appearance, the Chinese translation of the phrasal verbs and the four verbs presented in the multiple-choice test. The percentage of native speaker preference for the phrasal verb is in the parentheses after its occurrence. The 15 informants were all adult, NSs of American English who were studying at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

1. –“When the weather is nice I love to \_\_\_ early.”  
–“Me, too. It’s good to enjoy the morning air.”(□□)  
A. rise    B. release    C. get up (100%)    D. look after
2. –“I didn’t expect to see Emily at the party. I thought she had gone on vacation.”  
–“Me neither. I was also surprised when she \_\_\_.”(□□)  
A. claimed    B. appeared    C. showed up (93%)    D. looked up
3. –“I heard that the company is sending you to Germany again.”  
–“Yes. It’s been a long time since I was there, so I guess it’s time to \_\_\_ my German.”(□□)  
A. abolish    B. improve    C. brush up on (73%)    D. calm down
4. –“How do you like John?”  
–“He is one of those few people who never \_\_\_ their friends.”(□.....□□)  
A. solve    B. disappoint    C. let down (73%)    D. carry on
5. –“Did you hear about the bombing of the embassy in Nairobi?”  
–“That was a disaster. Fortunately, there weren’t that many people in the building when the bomb \_\_\_.”(□□)  
A. went off (73%)    B. tuned in    C. exploded    D. replied
6. –“Hello, Jan!”



- “Hi, Susan! How nice of you to call me!”
- “I want to ask some advice from you.”
- “No problem. Oh---, can you \_\_\_ a second? Someone is knocking at the door.”  
(□□□)
- A. hold on (73%)    B. capture    C. wait    D. fall down
7. –“Michelle always forgets to \_\_\_ the fire when she leaves!”
- “That’s dangerous! You should talk to her about this.”(□□)
- A. break into    B. foresee    C. put out (93%)    D. extinguish
8. –“I was late for my date last night, so I \_\_\_ a story about a traffic jam.”
- “But did your girlfriend believe it at all? Better be frank next time.”(□□)
- A. invented    B. made up (93%)    C. followed    D. lay down
9. –“Robert and Paul were fighting on the street this morning.”
- “So I heard. Was it serious?”
- “They didn’t stop until Paul twisted his ankle and had to \_\_\_.”(□□)
- A. realize    B. give in (87%)    C. surrender    D. look up to
10. –“How is your business going?”
- “Pretty good. Though I have to \_\_\_ several good offers because I am just short of time.”(□□)
- A. offend    B. turn down (80%)    C. cheer up    D. refuse
11. –“When you think about it, most of your classmates will disappear forever from your life after you graduate.”
- “Yeah, but every now and then you will \_\_\_ one of them on the street.”(□□)
- A. go over    B. run into (80%)    C. meet    D. applaud
12. –“Do you notice that Marvin likes to \_\_\_?”
- “Yes. But I don’t think that he has anything to be proud of.”(□□)
- A. lie    B. boast    C. show off (93%)    D. break out
13. –“I’m sorry I hurt you. I didn’t mean to say those things. I was just angry.”
- “Just \_\_\_. I don’t want to see you for a while.”(□□)
- A. leave    B. sit    C. go away (100%)    D. move on
14. (in a restaurant)
- “Miss, could I get a bit more coffee when you’ve got a chance?”

–“Sure. Would you like me to \_\_\_ these plates first?”(□□)

A. remove      B. take away (73%)      C. mix      D. drop in

15. –“How do you get in that bar?”

–“You have to \_\_\_ the back door.”(□□)

A. enter      B. come in (80%)      C. adopt      D. put up

**APPENDIX C**  
**RAW SCORES OF THE THREE ELICITATION TESTS**

Test	Group	<i>n</i>	Type	<i>k</i>	PV	OWV	Mistakes
M	NS	15	Total	225	189	36	0
			Fig	165	136		
			Lit	60	53		
	A	10	Total	150	113	32	5
			Fig	110	80		
			Lit	40	33		
	I	15	Total	225	101	96	28
			Fig	165	71		
			Lit	60	30		
T	A	10	Total	150	71	50	29
			Fig	110	38		
			Lit	40	33		
	I	15	Total	225	85	79	61
			Fig	165	43		
			Lit	60	42		
R	A	10	Total	150	117	5	28
			Fig	110	84		
			Lit	40	33		
	I	10	Total	150	75	15	60
			Fig	110	53		
			Lit	40	22		

*Note.* *k* = Total number of verbs; OWV = One-word verbs; M = Multiple-choice test; T = Translation test; R = Recall test; A = Advanced learners of English; I = Intermediate learners of English; Fig = Figurative phrasal verbs; Lit = Literal phrasal verbs

Yoshinori J. Fukuya

Department of Second Language Studies

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

1890 East-West Road

Honolulu, HI 96822

yfukuya@hawaii.edu