

## Using Image Schemas in Teaching Phrasal Verbs to English as a Second Language (ESL) Learners: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

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A phrasal verb consists of a main verb together with an adverb or a preposition, or both. Typically, their meaning is not obvious from the meanings of the individual words themselves (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2018). Phrasal verbs play a vital role in English spoken discourse and it is vital for ESL learners to have substantial knowledge in this area to improve their communication skills. According to Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green (2006), image schemas derive from sensory and perceptual experience as we interact with and move about in the world, therefore, this human experience can be used to understand different movements indicated in phrasal verbs. This particular study attempts to use image schemas to teach English phrasal verbs to ESL learners. 20 first year undergraduates following the English for Social Sciences course at the Department of English Language Teaching were chosen for the study and they were divided into two groups of 10 students each: the Control group and the Experimental group. The lessons included 10 phrasal verbs for each of the following prepositions: OVER, UNDER, UP, DOWN, IN and OUT, and both groups had three weeks lessons for phrasal verbs. The control group learned the phrasal verbs as lists, using the translation-based method, meanwhile the experimental group learned the phrasal verbs using image schemas. First, the basic meaning of the preposition was explained and next, the meaning of each phrasal verb was explained accompanied by example situations. Images of movements were used to give a broader understanding to the experimental group. At the end of three weeks, an immediate post-test was conducted to both groups to evaluate their knowledge. The results of the immediate post-test indicated that the experimental group quickly understood the phrasal verbs because 70% of the members finished the test early, whereas the majority of the control group (60%) took extra 5 – 10 minutes to finish the test. In addition, the vast majority of the experimental group correctly understood the phrasal verbs including the ones that have subtle meanings, however, the control group showed difficulties in understanding the meanings of phrasal verbs. In conclusion, the study proves that using image schemas to teach phrasal verbs help the ESL learners to have a better understanding, rather than using the traditional approach of translation based method.

**Keywords:** applied linguistics; cognitive linguistics; image schemas; phrasal verbs; vocabulary