



## THE EFFECT OF TASK-INDUCED INVOLVEMENT LOAD ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS' LEARNING OF PHRASAL VERBS

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### Abstract

Phrasal verbs have been the source of frustration for learners of English, and many students talk about the difficulties they have using phrasal verbs. They are widely used by native speakers of English but are difficult for second language learners to master. The present research aimed at investigating the effects different task types, based on the involvement load hypothesis, might have on the Iranian intermediate EFL students' learning of phrasal verbs. In an experimental research study conducted with a total number of 45 EFL students majoring English language literature, the students were randomly divided into three groups with three different task types and loads of involvement. The data were collected through pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test of phrasal verbs analyzed via descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, and a paired *t* test. Based on the results gained, the null hypothesis regarding the effects of the higher involvement load on learning and retention of phrasal verbs was rejected. The results would be practically useful for English language learners and teachers while dealing with phrasal verbs in and out of language classrooms.

**Keywords:** involvement load, task types, phrasal verbs, intermediate EFL learners

### 1. Introduction

Developing vocabulary is an important part of any effort to learn a second or foreign language without which it would be rather impossible either to decode the

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message expressed by others or to encode one's own thoughts and ideas into language. Considering the large repertoire of words in a language and the limited exposure of L2 learners in foreign language learning context, one can argue that vocabulary learning is a demanding task for language learners. In addition, when it comes to phrasal verbs, it can get even more difficult. It has been suggested that phrasal verbs create special problems for language learners because of their diversity both in terms of number and in terms of forms (Cornell, 1985; Side, 1990).

It has been a source of argument for researchers (e.g., Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Liu, 2003; Nassaji & Tian, 2010) to determine what type of input is more effective in teaching and learning English vocabulary, including phrasal verbs. The area of research which has recently received attention is the degree of engagement with vocabulary. The idea originally comes from depth/levels of processing hypothesis of Craik and Lockhart (1972) that the more the attention given to an item, and the more manipulation involved with the item, the greater the chances it will be remembered; in other words, the chance of storing new information in the long-term memory depends on the deepness or shallowness of processing. Based on depth/levels of processing hypothesis (Craik & Lockhart (1972), Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) introduced Involvement Load hypothesis. They identified three components for vocabulary involvement: need, search, and evaluation. Need is the requirement for a specific word in order to perform a task. Search is the attempt made for looking up a word. Evaluation refers to comparison of a word with other words, or comparison of different meanings of a word to see if the word suits its context.

Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) suggested that the more the involvement with a word, the greater the chances of learning that word. To test their hypothesis, they studied effect of three tasks: reading comprehension, reading comprehension with fill-in-the blank, and composition writing with varying degree of involvement on word retention in short and long term. As predicted, the task with the highest involvement load, writing composition task in their study, resulted in the highest amount of retention.

Phrasal verbs considered as part of vocabulary knowledge remains one of the problematic areas EFL learners face during their English language learning period (Side, 1990). The author adds that phrasal verbs are mostly ignored since their particular forms (two parts) and structure; phrasal verb as a lexical unit has often been grouped under the larger heading of FSs, yet this lexical item presents its own unique difficulties such as problems of definition, learner avoidance of use, and complexity of grammatical construction. They are rarely dealt with even by teachers due to language learner's disinterest in phrasal verbs while they are widely used by native speakers of English in their communications (Kao, 2001).

Thus, helping learners enlarge their size of phrasal verbs repertoire and ensure better retention when they come across new verbs unintentionally should be an important project for language teachers and researchers. Even though the importance and the difficulty of learning phrasal verbs as a subcategory of vocabulary is recognized, there has been little research so far on testing the factors or conditions that influence learning and teaching phrasal verbs (Cornell, 1985; Liu, 2003; Nassaji & Tian, 2010). Moreover, while attempts to measure different levels of language processing and awareness have been made in cognitive psychology and other areas of SLA, this task still needs to be undertaken in studies on incidental learning of phrasal verbs. While studies on intentional L2 vocabulary learning have showed that type of word, concrete vs. abstract nouns, might have an effect on vocabulary learning (De Groot & Keijzer, 2000), this issue remains mainly unexplored in the learning phrasal verbs.

Realizing the issues mentioned, the researchers tackled the issue by considering the effect of involvement load on learning and retention of phrasal verbs by the tasks they get involved. In the present study, incidental learning of phrasal verbs as a learning condition in which learners are processing language for meaning rather than for form is of prime importance to the researchers. The significance of the present study lies in the fact that it focuses on the investigation of a rarely explored subcategory of English vocabulary, the phrasal verbs. However, whether the use of different involvement loads would lead to better learning of phrasal verbs has not been dealt with in previous studies, hence the motive for the present study. The finding of this research might be applicable to the teachers, students, and syllabus designers so that they may consider designing more desirable tasks conducive to learning phrasal verbs.

## **2. Literature review**

The concept of 'levels of processing' was proposed in the cognitive psychology field by Craik and Lockhart (1972), who suggested that remembering information depends not only on having attended to it during its occurrence or having rehearsed it after its occurrence, but also on how deeply it is processed. Acknowledging the importance of the notions of depth of processing (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) and elaboration (Craik & Tulving, 1975), but feeling the need to translate and operationalize such general cognitive notions in terms of L2 vocabulary learning tasks, Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) developed the ILH for L2 vocabulary learning; tasks with different involvement loads will lead to different incidental acquisition. Importance of vocabulary knowledge in SLA is known for all (Nassaji, 2004; Laufer & Nation, 1999). However, the best way for learning vocabulary is still unknown, because it depends on many factors. One of the

factors known to be effective in vocabulary learning is the degree of engagement with it which is known as ILH (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001) in the literature.

This hypothesis states that degree of involvement with a word determines its degree of irretrievability; the more the involvement, the more the chance of retention. Under this hypothesis, a task such as sentence writing would lead to higher vocabulary retention than cloze or fill-in-the-blank tasks because of higher degree of involvement.

There has been a considerable number of investigations supporting this belief about indirect vocabulary acquisition (Jenkins, Stein, & Wyoski 1984; Keating, 2008; Laufer, 2005; Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987). Thesis findings have revealed that children could incidentally learn vocabulary during the reading process. Nagy et al (1987) claim that the results are beyond reasonable doubt that incidental learning of word meanings does take place during normal reading.

Of particular relevance to ILH is the study by Keating (2008). He partially reconstructed the target words test conducted by Hulstijn & Laufer (2001) with the additional consideration of time on task. Keating found that the composition was not more effective than gap fill. Zimmerman (1997), Laufer (2003), and Min (2008) studied the effectiveness of reading only with reading supplemented with activities. They all reported that the second task leads to significant gains and retention.

ILH is a powerfully persuasive theory because, as Keating (2008) points out, it fits in well with other studies and theories in the field, for example word glossing, look-up and frequency (Peters, Hulstijn, Sercum, & Lutjeharms, 2009) task-induced involvement (Laufer, 2006, 2010) and theories around negotiation and interaction (Nation, 2006). However, a study conducted by Martinez- Fernandez (2008) indicated that tasks used in this study did have a different effect on vocabulary gain, but did not support predictions made by ILH. Likewise, findings of the study done by Allemzade, Rayati, and Yagubi (2010) suggests that, contrary to the prediction of the ILH, tasks with lower involvement load index led to superior performance. Obviously, a review of literature reveals inconsistency regarding the validity of the claim made by ILH in the area of lexicon in the first place.

Research indicates the difficult nature of phrasal verbs may lead to avoidance causing learners to choose a single word synonym instead. Avoidance occurs whether phrasal verbs are present in the L1 or not, although students whose L1 did not contain phrasal verbs tended to avoid them more (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993). In addition, Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) found intermediate learners tended to avoid phrasal verbs more than advanced learners. Three common main reasons given for possible avoidance are "*L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 idiomatic similarity, and inherent L2 complexity*" (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993, p.45).

Even though the importance and the difficulty of learning phrasal verbs are recognized, there has been little research on testing the factors that influence learning phrasal verbs so far (Nassaji & Tian, 2010; Liu, 2003). As such, no studies have been found that specifically target the acquisition of phrasal verbs in an incidental learning context. Phrasal verbs have been included as targets in reading studies (e.g., Bishop, 2004), but were grouped with other kinds of formulaic sequences and idioms. Similarly, some studies (e.g., Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993) have looked at the difficulty of phrasal verb use. However, the present study will allow for considerations in the testing and treatment of phrasal verbs. Since the major concern was providing an appropriate input to expand students' knowledge of English phrasal verb, the present study was going to find whether tasks with varying levels of involvement load produce different effects on learning and retention of English phrasal verbs for the intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

### **3. Method**

Based on the nature of the study, it is a quantitative research method supported through a quasi-experimental design to test if different task types have any effect on the learners' learning and retention of English phrasal verbs. Thus, a pre-test - post-test-delayed post-test design with no treatment was used to assess the hypothesis of the research.

The initial number of participants consisted of 59 students majoring English language literature (5<sup>th</sup> semester) at Ardabil Islamic Azad University, in Iran, with 36 females and 9 males with an average age range of 18 to 23. The participants were selected from the original pool of 80 students through homogeneity test of TOEFL.

The input text comprising the phrasal verbs used in the present research was a passage titled 'The travelling salesman' which included 9 targeted phrasal verbs. The passage and the targeted phrasal verbs in it were selected on the basis of their unfamiliarity to the students, ease of providing English definitions and their Persian equivalents, and the ease of their incorporation into making sentence. To avoid the risk of students' familiarity with the phrasal verbs and consequently, the unreliable test results, Table 3 comprising the phrasal verbs was made.

**Table 1:** Table of familiarity and unfamiliarity of students with the targeted phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs	Seen	Unseen	Meaning
1. Get taken in			
1. Hand over			
3. Get away with doing something			
2. Go by appearances			
3. See through someone			
4. Come into some money			
5. Turn up			
6. Come across			
9. Catch on			

According to Table 1, the students were required to write 'seen' if they had seen or heard phrasal verbs before, and 'unseen' if they had not seen or heard the phrasal verbs before. In the fourth column, the students were required to write the meaning of the phrasal verbs if they knew. Then, the result of the table indicated that 14 students knew the targeted phrasal verbs. They were unavoidably crossed out from the study as leaving only 45. Then, the participants were randomly assigned into three experimental groups of multiple choice items tasks, fill-in-the blanks tasks, and sentence making tasks, with 15 students in each group. Each group was required to do a different type of the tasks: that is, based on the type of the tasks, the students were divided to task 1, task 2, and task 3 students.

### 3.1. Pre-test, immediate post-test, and delayed post-test

A pretest of phrasal verbs consisting of 9 targeted phrasal verbs was administered to all three groups of students at once to assess their overall knowledge of phrasal verbs and to make sure that the homogeneity of the students in their knowledge of phrasal verbs is achieved (See Appendix A). Immediately after the pretest, in order to avoid generating any memory traces in students' mind, the students were given the same test of phrasal verbs as their posttest to answer so that the effect of involvement load on their learning of phrasal verbs could be estimated. To answer the first research question which was designed to investigate the effect of ILH on incidental learning of phrasal verbs in an immediate post-test, a multiple choice test consisting of the same 9 target phrasal verbs as their posttest items was given to measure learners' developing knowledge of the particular phrasal verbs through applying different task types. Later, after a period of two-week time interval after the immediate posttest, in order to measure the retention of the targeted phrasal verbs, the same posttest, as a delayed

posttest, was given to the students to check the effect of involvement load on their learning of phrasal verbs and the retention of the meaning of the phrasal verbs.

However, the time estimated was approximately 15, 18, and 28 minutes for the first, second, and third task, respectively. The first two task tests, multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank tests, were scored based on correct and incorrect item response criterion. It means that the items were scored 0, if the students provided nothing or incorrect answers to the questions, and they were scored 1, if the correct and exact answers were chosen by the students. However, for the third task test in which production was important not recognition, the meaning conveyance was particularly important as long as the phrasal verbs were correctly, semantically, incorporated in the sentence(s).

### **3.2. Tasks definition**

The involvement load is determined by three components of need, search, and evaluation. If a component is present, it is indicated as (0). A minus (-) is used to indicate the absence of a component. (1) and (2) are used to indicate the moderate and strong presence of a component, respectively. Moreover, the moderate presence is shown by (+) and strong presence is marked by (+ +). As pertinent to the present research, the involvement load was investigated via three experimental groups with different types of tasks pertinent to the ILH as explained below. Each group was given a different task from task 1 to task 3.

#### **3.2.1. Task (1) multiple-choice items at text level**

Task one students were provided with a text in which the phrasal verbs were included, but no meanings and explanations of the phrasal verbs were given. However, they were allowed to look the phrasal verbs up in their dictionaries available to them. They were, then, required to recognize the right phrasal verbs in multiple-choice test items based on the text given. Regarding the ILH, because using dictionary to figure out the meaning of the phrasal verbs was necessary in this task, the three main components of involvement load, *need*, *search* and *evaluation* were present. Hence, the involvement index of the first task was 3 (+ (1) need, + (1) search, + (1) evaluation) (See Appendix B 1).

#### **3.2.2. Task (2) recognizing phrasal verbs in text**

The same text of phrasal verbs was given to task 2 students. They were asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate phrasal verbs given collectively in random order at the end of the text along with some extra phrasal verbs. As the task was introduced, there was

no search component in this task since the definitions and explanation of the phrasal verbs were provided for students; they did not have to look the phrasal verbs up in a dictionary. However, the need component was moderate, because it was externally induced. To fill in the blanks correctly, the contextual appropriateness of the phrasal verbs at the end of the test had to be evaluated against each other to decide on their choice in the text. Hence, the evaluation component was also moderate. Based on ILH, the involvement index of second task was 2 (+ (1) need, - (0) search, + (1) evaluation) (See Appendix B 2).

### 3.2.3. Task (3) using text-based phrasal verbs in sentence

Task 3 students were provided with the same phrasal verbs as in the two previous tasks. However, the phrasal verbs were given with their definitions and explanations in a separate piece of paper in English and Persian. Then, the students were asked to make sentences using the phrasal verbs at sentence level or a short paragraph mixed with two or more sentences in which two or more phrasal verbs could be used. It needs to be noted that producing grammatically correct sentence or paragraph was not important; the message the students conveyed through their production was important. Based on the involvement load, the need and search components were equal to the need and search components in the task 2. The value of evaluation, however, was higher than the value of evaluation in the tasks one and two because the phrasal verbs were to be used in the context that was originally developed by the students. It required the students to make more effort to create the text. Therefore, the involvement load of the task was 3 (+ (1) need, - (0) search, ++ (2) evaluation) (See Appendix B 3).

## 4. Data Analyses and Findings

In this study, a TOEFL test was to homogenize the students based on their proficiency level. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of this test. By using the standard deviation and the mean scores, the range of students' scores was calculated.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of the students' homogenizing scores

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error
Homogenizings	80	10.00	18.50	16.0333	1.96768	-.882	.309
Valid N (listwise)	80						

As Table 2 shows, the standard deviation and the mean were respectively 1.96 and 16.03. The minimum of 10 and maximum of 18.50 were achieved. As a result, 59 students whose scores were between 14.07 and 17.99, intermediate students were used



in this study. It needs to be reminded, as explained earlier, that 14 students were unavoidably crossed out from the study due to their familiarity with the phrasal verbs leaving 45 students for the study.

In order to check the students' knowledge level of phrasal verbs, they were required to take a pre-test. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine the homogeneity level of the students in phrasal verbs. The descriptive data for the pre-test scores of the three groups of students are demonstrated in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Descriptive data for the pre-test of the groups

Tasks and Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Group 1)	15	12.85	3.98	0.69
Task2 (Gap-fill) (Group 2)	15	12.56	4.12	0.92
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Group 3)	15	12.61	3.86	0.87
Total	45	12.67	3.98	0.82

As the descriptive data in Table 3 show, the mean score of the groups were at the same level at a high extent, and the results of the one-way ANOVA in Table 4 reveal that the Sig. ratio of the pre-test scores is ( $f(3,112) = 0.013$ ,  $p = 0.989$ ). Thus, it could be said that there was not any significant difference among the three groups of students.

**Table 4:** One-way ANOVA of within groups' effects for pre-test scores

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Between Groups	0.596	3	0.301	0.013	0.989
Within Groups	1652.245	112	14.184		
Total	1652.841	115			

With regard to the performance of the groups in their post-tests, it can be claimed that based on the means displayed in Table 5, students in the third group, task 3, outperformed the other groups in immediate post-tests. To know if the differences were significant, the group scores of each immediate post-test were submitted to a one-way ANOVA.

**Table 5:** The immediate post-test of the groups (descriptive data)

Tasks and Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Group 1)	15	26.45	2.69	0.75
Task2 (Gap-fill) (Group 2)	15	29.25	2.84	0.79
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Group 3)	15	33.66	3.53	0.81
Total	45	29.78	3.02	0.78

The mean score for task 3 (33.66), proved to be higher than those of other two groups. It confirms that the students performing task 3 did very much better than the students in other groups. And, the mean score of task 2 students (29.25) is higher than the mean score of task 1 students (26.45). To know if the differences were significant, the group scores of each immediate post-test were submitted to a one-way ANOVA.

**Table 6:** One-way ANOVA tests of within groups' effects for immediate post-test scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	113.52	3	42.25	4.16	0.001
Within Groups	392.34	69	4.87		
Total	557.34	72			

Table 6 shows ANOVA results for the first question reveal that there is a statistically significant difference in the performances of the groups on the immediate test ( $f(3, 69) = 4.16, p = 0.001$ ). Therefore, the results confirmed that Task 3 among other tasks (1 and 2) with a different degree of involvement load indicated significant effect higher than the other tasks on promoting learners' learning of phrasal verbs.

**Table 7:** The delayed post-test of the groups (descriptive data)

Tasks and Classes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Task 1 (Glossing) (Group 1)	15	28.1	2.98	0.67
Task 2 (Gap-fill) (Group 2)	15	27.25	2.27	0.59
Task 3 (Sentence-making) (Group 3)	15	29.48	2.11	0.38
Total	45	28.27	2.45	0.54

Table 7 reveals the data collected on the descriptive statistics for the performances of the three groups on their delayed post-test. It showed that the mean score (29.48) of task 3 group is higher than the mean scores of the other groups revealing that students in in task 3 group had a better performance than the students in group 1 and 2.

**Table 8:** One-way ANOVA test of within groups' effects for delayed post-test scores

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	186.25	3	69.23	9.83	0.00
Within groups	329.57	71	3.94		
Total	515.82	74			

Table 8 shows the one-way ANOVA results for the second question of the present research. The results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the performances of the three groups on the delayed post-test ( $f(3, 71) = 9.83, p = 0.00$ ).

Thus, the results confirmed that Tack 3 with a different degree of involvement load proved higher effect compared to the other tasks on enhancing learners' learning of phrasal verbs.

To compare the performance of the groups in their immediate post-test and delayed post-test of phrasal verbs, the mean difference in the tests were estimated through a paired *t* test. As indicated in Table 9 in which the mean differences of all tasks which are significant at  $\alpha < .001$  are given, there was a lower performance of the all three groups in their delayed post-test as the means for tasks in the immediate and delayed post-tests show.

**Table 9:** Paired *t* test for the means between immediate and delayed post-tests

Pairs	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig.
Glossing (im. & del.) (Class 1)	7.79	2.29	8.022	29	.000
Gap-fill (im. & del.) (Class 2)	8.19	2.40	7.69	22	.000
Sentence-making (im. & del.) (Class 3)	8.57	1.59	9.852	28	.000

However, as shown in Table 9, the results of the post-hoc analysis of the mean differences among the three groups in both immediate-test and delayed post-test showed that there was a significant difference between the score of the students in task 3 and the students in tasks 1 and 2. In addition, the mean difference in the scores of the task 3 and the task 1 is significantly high. Thus, it can be claimed that task 3 had a significant effect on learning and retention of phrasal verbs incidentally in the intermediate EFL classes.

## 5. Discussion

As the objectives of the present study indicated, the significant point referred to estimating if Iranian EFL learners' learning of phrasal verbs could be enhanced by utilizing different teaching techniques and strategies according to ILH proposed by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001). Thus, the current research investigated the effect of ILH in terms of types of tasks on learning English phrasal verbs.

To answer the research question, the effect of the involvement load on the initial learning of English phrasal verbs and on the students' retention of English phrasal verbs was estimated through employing different tasks with different degrees, and the related null hypothesis failed to be confirmed. The results showed a significant effect in confirmation of the involvement load hypothesis that proved to be effective in enhancing EFL learners' incidental learning of phrasal verbs on the delayed post-test. Among the tasks analyzed, task 3 indicated a higher involvement load and had a more

significant effect on increasing incidental learning of phrasal verbs among intermediate Iranian EFL learners.

Based on the results, it is reasonable to conclude that retention of unfamiliar words is claimed to be conditional to the amount of involvement while processing new target words. Therefore, tasks with different involvement load will lead to different incidental acquisition (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

The outcomes of the current study generally corroborated Laufer and Hulstijn's (2001) findings. Their experiments showed that the task of composition with incorporated target words produced best retention results, and the task of reading comprehension plus filling in target words produced better results than task of reading comprehension with marginal glossing for target words.

The Keating's (2008) findings are also in line with the outcomes of the current study. He checked out task effectiveness and word learning in second language reading comprehension domain. He observed that writing sentence tasks were more efficient than reading comprehension plus fill-in tasks and reading comprehension with marginal glosses.

However, the results of the study conducted by Rott (2005) do not support the findings of the current study. In her study, the multiple-choice gloss facilitated more need, search, and evaluation than the single translation gloss, and the former also appeared to bring about stronger form-meaning connection and also more result memory trace than the latter.

But, Rott's study supported the current study in that the tasks that needed higher degree of involvement resulted in more retention of the new words. However, in Rott's study, multiple-choice gloss proved to have stronger load involvement that produced better learning and retention. Similarly, in another study developed by Hulstijn (1992), the involvement index in multiple-choice condition is higher than other task types. Therefore, the involvement index in multiple-choice condition is higher than the other tasks.

Overall, the results of this study confirms the results of the current study, determining that tasks with higher degree of involvement lead to better learning and retention of new words. However, more empirical evidence is needed in order to support it. Within this framework, learners may or may not pay attention to words and become aware of them while they are reading for meaning. Therefore, the notion of incidental learning is distinct from the notion of implicit learning, which takes place outside of awareness.

## 7. Conclusion

There is no doubt that learning vocabulary is one of the most problematic and time consuming sub-skills to master for language learners. Within language study and teaching context, phrasal verbs as an important part of vocabulary have always been counted as an important linguistic feature to instruct. As for the learners, it is a fundamental part of language learning and a significant means of communication. Accordingly, the growth of phrasal verbs seems to be challenging for the learners, especially when it is going to be achieved incidentally.

The results of the study confirmed the validity of the ILH which makes it possible to operationalize the cognitive notion of depth of processing and elaboration in terms of second language learning of vocabulary (phrasal verbs). It also suggested that this notion is applicable in incidental learning of English phrasal verbs through giving rise to the ILH. In general, the findings of the present study provided positive support for the ILH, which contends that the learning and retention of unfamiliar phrasal verbs are contingent upon the degree of involvement in processing the phrasal verbs.

Furthermore, ILH should be familiar to researchers and professionals in language teaching far more than it is now, since it covers a variety of factors, and it is essential to have solid vocabulary learning theories to use in classroom situations. ILH posits that incidental tasks that induce higher involvement are conducive to the type of processing that is considered crucial for retention of phrasal verbs based on the findings of the present study. Indeed, this hypothesis needs to be investigated in studies and classrooms so as to lessen the burden of learning vocabulary and related materials. Thus, English language teachers as well as learners can be informed that mental involvement is instrumental to learning: the deeper they are involved in a given task, the better their phrasal verbs gain might be. Furthermore, knowledge of the relationship between involvement induced by different tasks and retention of unfamiliar phrasal verbs can be helpful in rethinking and formulation of more comprehensive and rigorous theories in the field. Practically speaking, this awareness can inform material developers, policy makers and teachers in making language related decisions.

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