Analysing Errors in learning the Present Continuous Tense: Associating Interference with Strategy of Instructions:

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1-Introduction

Analysing errors committed by second language learners in the acquisition of English tenses, particularly the present continuous, can offer great insights into learners' difficulties in acquiring target language rules. Focusing on a set of eight rules governing the use of the present continuous, one of the verb forms frequently employed in daily conversations, the researcher employed elicitation procedures aimed at discovering difficulties encountered by learners in second language acquisition. With reference to the errors analysed, the researcher claims that the learners' first language is not the only linguistic factor affecting the acquisition of English tenses. The learners' failure to grasp the significance of auxiliary verbs used in combination with the inflectional suffixes of the main verbs, in particular, has been identified as a factor causing learning difficulties. While the subjects' inability to relate some verb forms to temporal and frequency adverbials may be ascribed to intralingual interference, which is associated with developmental sequence and general learning strategies, it is interesting to note that interference causing a large portion of the errors may be both intralingual and interlingual in nature.

1-1 Statement of the Problem

Learning strategies, which have been defined as "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques used by learners to enhance their own learning" (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992:6) are often considered essential in facilitating the acquisition of a foreign or second language? More specifically, if teachers intend to maximise learners' potential, efforts need to be made to train learners to use strategies that can improve their learning effectiveness (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). This leads us to consider the possible ways in which strategy training should be conducted. If strategies are taught in ways that are not suited to the needs of the learners, it may be difficult to expect any desired result in strategy training over the n to strategy trashort term. It is therefore important to look into various factors affecting the learning process before attempts are made to design strategy training.

One of the factors influencing the learning process and the use of strategies mentioned above is interference or negative transfer, which may be defined as "the use of a negative language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language" (Richards, Platt and Platt, (1992:.205). The term 'interference', however, has also been used to refer to transfer of a learner's previous or existing knowledge of the target language (TL) while learning the same language. Errors may therefore occur as a result of such intralingual interference, which involves an application of general learning strategies similar to those manifested in first language acquisition (Richards, 1971; Lim, 2003a, 2003b). In relation to this, this paper studies the extent to which interference occurs interlingually and intralingually in the acquisition of the present continuous, a verb form frequently used in daily conversations. More specifically, it discusses these two categories of interference in an attempt to find out what possible learning strategies can be taught to learners so as

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to minimise the effects of interference on the acquisition of English tenses. Given that strategies may also have to be designed on the basis of the knowledge of interference, which is appropriate at this juncture to place the present research in the context of other studies by using a framework for second language acquisition (SLA). With regard to this, Ellis (1994) has pointed out that SLA may be investigated in some areas including (1) descriptions of the characteristics of learner language, and (2) learner-internal mechanisms affecting the acquisition and/or the use of their resources in communication.

A study of the effects of interference on tense usage may provide implications for the design of strategy training. This is congruent with Rutherford's (1998:1) view that "one cannot have a theory of how something is acquired without a theory of what that something is." In this case, if s(he)can find out how tenses can be acquired effectively using some strategies only if s(he)understands how the learning of tense usage is affected by both in relation to the two types of interlingual and intralingual interference. As interference will be discussed in relatioining, it appears necessary to review some literature pertaining to learning strategies. Oxford (1990: 2001) has classified learning strategies into six types consisting of those in the cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social domains. Of these six categories, memory-related and cognitive strategies are closely associated with both interference and strategy training and will therefore form the focus of the present study. On the one hand, memory- related strategies, among others, may involve the creation of mental images, application of images and sounds, review of information and the use of gestures or actions. On the other hand, cognitive strategies may involve practices, reception and conveyance of messages, analysis and reasoning as well as creation of a structure for input and output.

1-2 The Aim of the Study

The present study involves the importance of studying the present continuous in relation to other verb forms indicating aspect and tense can also be justified by the need to consider a language component in relation to other parts of the language being learnt.

It is an investigation into learner-internal mechanisms that are largely mental in nature. Such mechanisms may involve the transfer of knowledge from their first language, or interference from features of the target language itself.

1-3-Hypothesis of the Study

Two research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1. Intralingual interference is as significant as interlingual interference in the second language acquisition of the present continuous.

2. Verb forms that cause intralingual confusion in the learning of the present continuous are those that resemble it in terms of grammatical structures and semantic functions.

Given the two research hypotheses, attempts will be made to find out what strategies can possibly be taught to learners to minimise the effects of interference on the learning of English tenses in general and the present continuous in particular.

1-4 Limits of the Study

This study is limited to first year students from AL-Ameriya Secondary School \ in Baghdad \ AL-Kharkh   Sector for the academic year 2007-2008.

1-5-Definitions of Terms

-Interference: it means to try or to take part in something's affairs .It is the act of interfering (Oxford, 2001:402).

-Strategy Instruction: It is a plan of action resulting from the practice of this science .It is also defined as the science of planning and directing skill in meaning or planning especially by using stratagem (Webster's dictionary, 1974:685).

3-The Procedures

3-1 Population and Sample

In order to conduct the study, 51 First stage learners in AL-Ameriyas secondary School in Baghdad were selected. The sample consisted of all first stage learners, . The sample aged between 13 and 15, and most of them had studied English as a second language in primary and secondary schools.

3-2 Instruments

The profile indicated that the respondents had generally reached a reasonable proficiency level to answer the multiple-choice items presented in the questionnaire, which consisted of (1) a section with questions eliciting learners' biographical information, and (2) another section that elicited different responses to multiple-choice items.

A total of 15 multiple-choice items requiring the use of the present continuous were set. Each item comprised five choices that competed with the expected answer in the semantic, syntactic and/or orthographic aspects, and had certain linguistic features in common with the expected grammatical choice (Corder, 1973). The researcher determined the choices on the basis of the deductive design explained above by considering (1) the errors that the students normally committed in spoken and written discourse in the form of conversations and essays, and (2) some common errors discussed in previous studies (e.g. Richards, 1971; Duskova, 1979; Wijaya, 1979; Wong and Lim, 1983; Lee, 1995).

3-3 The Test

As the items were intended to assess the subjects' knowledge of the rules governing the use of the present continuous in various situations, the subjects were asked to respond to items that assessed their knowledge of the meanings of various verb forms, particularly the present continuous. The researcher decided to use multiple-choice items in an attempt to avoid off-the-wall responses and to ensure that answers were convenient to code and analyze (Heaton, 1988). In order to include a wide range of situations in which the present continuous is generally used, a table of specification was drawn up to state the rules and situations covered in the items. The rules governing the use of the present continuous have been described by Leech, Deuchar and Hoogenraad (1982), Quirk, Greenbaum and Svartvik (1985), Thomson and Martinet (1986), Wren and Martin (1988), and Greenbaum and Quirk (1992). They are illustrated in the table 1:   **Table 1**

Rules governing the use of the present continuous

Rule No.	Rule	Abbreviation	Example	Item No.
1	For an action which is going on <u>at</u> the time of speaking.	AT	He <u>is meeting</u> a customer now.	1-4
2	For an action which is going on <u>about</u> the time of speaking or during a period in the present.	AB	I <u>am working</u> in K.L. these two years.	5-6
3	For a <u>future arrangement</u> (i.e. an action which has been arranged to take place in the future). (Note: The speaker is not referring to a series of planned future actions).	FA	He <u>is meeting</u> a customer tomorrow.	7-10
4	For a <u>regular</u> action which begins <u>before</u> a certain time and is happening at that time.	RB	At ten she <u>is typing</u> letters.	11
5	For a <u>present annoying habit</u> (i.e. an obstinate or annoying habit in the present).	PrAH	He <u>is</u> always <u>coming</u> late.	12
6	For an action which <u>appears</u> to be <u>continuous</u> or uninterrupted.	AC	He <u>is</u> always <u>helping</u> his classmates.	13
7	For a <u>present gradual development</u> (i.e. an action or event which is occurring gradually).	PrGD	House prices in this town <u>are rising</u>.	14
8	For an action which begins <u>before</u> another action after another action in <u>dramatic narrative</u> or vivid narrative.	DN - B	They <u>are flying</u> over the building when one of the engines fails.	15

The subjects were not required to state the rule but were instead expected to use their knowledge to select the grammatically correct answer from the five competing choices. This means that the subjects' knowledge was diagnosed primarily at the implicit and discriminatory levels since they were only required to distinguish the grammaticality of the verb forms given, differentiate their functions, and decide on the grammatical verb form which was most appropriate in the context implied by the words used in each item. The percentages of the subjects' choices selected by the respondents were then analysed with reference to both features and rules in the subjects' first language and target language. The researcher then assessed the subjects' knowledge of the rules mentioned above by referring to their responses to the items.

3-4 Validity of the Test

The validity of any test refers to the degree to which the evidence supports that the interpretations are correct and that the manner in which the interpretations are used is appropriate (Barbara & Leydens, 2000:1). A written test has been designed to analyze errors committed by second language learners in the acquisition of English tenses, particularly the present continuous in reading passages.

3-5 The Pilot Study

The pilot study is carried out immediately after the construction of the test. The aim behind administering the pilot study is to help the researcher to identify the weaknesses of the test and to check the estimated time for the examinees to answer the test.

The sample used in the pilot study is chosen randomly. Ten students participated in the pilot study are excluded from the sample of the main study. It is noted that the

required time of testing can be limited to (45-60) minutes. The instructions are clear enough so that all the students are able to answer the items of the test.

3-6 Reliability of the Test

Reliability refers to the consistency of assessment scores (Stiggins, 1999:23). It refers to the statistical methods that are used to establish consistency of students' performance within a given test or across more than one test (Ibid: 27)

Test - retest is used to determine the reliability of the test when the scores of the two administrations are correspondent, or there is just a little difference, the test is said to be reliable.

3-7 Final Administration of the Test

After making sure that the test has gained the validity and reliability qualifications, the researcher has applied the test to the whole subjects of the study. The written test was applied by the researcher. The researcher explained the instructions of the test to the students

4-Analysis of data

After the administration of the tests, the data were collected and subjected to statistical analyses. Table 2 shows that the present continuous (PRC) was correctly used by most of the subjects in items 1 and 4 to refer to an action occurring *at the time of speaking*.

Table 2
Percentages of subjects' choices for items 1-4 (AT)

Item No.	Item	Subjects' Choice	Grammaticality	Percentage of Subjects (%)
1	Fatimah _____ a dress at the moment. She makes all her clothes.	is makes	Deviant	7.8
		is making	Grammatical	60.8
		made	Deviant	4.0
		makes	Deviant	19.6
		is made	Deviant	7.8
2	You can't see Ahmad now.	has	Deviant	9.8
	He _____ a bath.	have	Deviant	7.8
		are having	Deviant	9.8
		is having	Grammatical	66.7
		is have	Deviant	5.9
3	You cannot use the machine now because it _____.	is (still) repaired.	Deviant	23.5
		(till) has been repaired.	Deviant	3.9
		is (still) being repaired	Grammatical	35.3
		was (still) repaired.	Deviant	27.5
		was (still) being repaired	Deviant	9.8
4	Shafinaz usually drinks coffee but today she _____ tea.	drink	Deviant	25.5
		drinks	Deviant	45.1
		drinking	Deviant	5.9
		is drinking	Grammatical	19.6
		is drinks	Deviant	3.9

For the sentence which consisted of a temporal adverbial indicating the time of speaking or writing, such as 'at the moment' or 'now', the majority of the subjects managed to recognise that the action was occurring at the moment of speaking and that the present continuous (in its active form) should be used. The table above also shows that more than one-fifth of the subjects used the present simple (i.e. 'is repaired'), and more than a quarter of them used the past simple (i.e. 'was repaired'). These subjects might have realized that the PRC should be used when an action at the time of speaking was indicated through the use of the temporal adverbial 'now', but might not be aware of the grammatical form of the present continuous in the passive form that involves the passive auxiliary 'is being' and the past participle 'repaired'.

The error rate in the use of the PRC was also higher when a temporal adverbial indicating an action occurring at the time of speaking, such as 'now' or 'at the moment', was not given in the sentence in item 3. Table 2 shows that more than two-thirds (70.6%) of the subjects used the present simple (i.e. 'drink' or 'drinks') instead of the PRC in item 4. These subjects did not seem to know that the adverb of frequency 'usually' was used in the first sentence to indicate a habitual action, but the temporal adverb 'today' was used in the second sentence to indicate an action occurring at or around the time of speaking. These results suggest that intralingual interference could have occurred as a result of the subjects' ignorance of the rules governing the use of the PRC and the present simple (PRS).

The use of the PRC for an action occurring *around the time of speaking* was also identified as an area of difficulty. Table 3 shows that most (72.5%) of the subjects did not use the PRC for an action occurring around the time of speaking.

Table 3
Percentages of subjects' choices for items 5-6 (AB)

Item No.	Item	Subjects' Choice	Grammaticality	Percentage of Subjects (%)
5	Nurul's mother:	did … get on	Deviant	17.6
	How _____ Shafinaz _____ at school?	does … get on	Deviant	17.6
		was …getting on	Deviant	27.5
	Shafinaz's mother: Very well.	are … get on	Deviant	9.8
	She seems to like the life.	is … getting on	Grammatical	27.5
6	I usually go to school by car. My father takes me	works	Deviant	33.3
	because he passes my school on his way to the	is works	Deviant	2.0
	factory. But this week he _____ in another factory	worked	Deviant	7.8
	in the opposite direction. That's why I am queuing	is working	Grammatical	45.1
	at this bus station.	had worked	Deviant	11.8

In item 5, more than a quarter (27.5%) seemed unable to distinguish between the PRC (i.e. 'is getting on') and the past continuous (i.e. 'was getting on'). The high error rate supports the view that most of the subjects tended to use the PRC correctly for an action occurring at the time of speaking only when (1) the PRC was used in the active voice, and (2) temporal adverbials such as 'now' and 'at the moment' were given. In cases where these adverbials were not used, most of the subjects had difficulty choosing the correct verb to use. Such errors can be ascribed to the fact that no temporal adverbials were used to indicate whether the speaker was referring to an event occurring around the time of speaking or an event which was taking place at a definite time in the past. The subjects' tendency to use the past continuous (PAC)

691

instead of the PRC for an action going on around the time of speaking could be partly due to their lack of awareness of the temporal references of these two verb forms.

In item 6, a third (33.3%) of the subjects used the PRS (i.e. 'works') instead of the PRC (i.e. 'is working') for an action occurring around the time of speaking. These subjects used the PRS (i.e. 'works') incorrectly to indicate an action occurring during a period of time (i.e. 'this week'). They seemed unable to differentiate between PRC and PRS, both of which are normally used to refer to actions in the present, and they appeared unable to distinguish between (1) the use of the PRC for an action occurring around the time of speaking and (2) the use of the PRS for a habitual action which occurs in the present.

A significant portion of the subjects also combined verb forms erroneously to form the predicator of a main clause. Table 4 shows that more than half (54.9%) of the subjects combined the modal auxiliary in item 7 with the present participle 'going' in an attempt to indicate a future action.

Table 4
Percentages of subjects' choices for items 7-10 (FA)

Item No.	Item	Subjects' Choice	Grammaticality	Percentage of Subjects (%)
7	Zainab : How do you go to school usually? Shafinaz: I usually go by bus but tomorrow I _____ in Siti's car.	go	Deviant	2.0
		goes	Deviant	3.9
		will goes	Deviant	15.7
		am going	Grammatical	23.5
		will going	Deviant	54.9
8	I _____ because I am going abroad in September.	will saving up	Deviant	25.5
		had saved up	Deviant	13.7
		am saving up	Grammatical	37.3
		have save up	Deviant	19.6
		have been saved up	Deviant	3.9
9	That film _____ to the local cinema next week. Do you want to see it?	come	Deviant	3.9
		comes	Deviant	0.0
		will comes	Deviant	19.6
		is coming	Grammatical	39.2
		will be come	Deviant	37.3
10	Nasri: Why are you walking so fast today? You usually walk quite slowly. Ben : I am hurrying because I _____ my mother at 4 o'clock and she doesn't like to be kept waiting.	will meets	Deviant	68.6
		am going to meeting	Deviant	15.7
		was meeting	Deviant	2.0
		am meeting	Grammatical	5.9
		will meeting	Deviant	7.8

In this case, most (70.6%) of the subjects readily used 'will' in erroneous verbal combinations (i.e. 'will goes' and 'will going') to indicate a future event. The omission of the auxiliary 'be' as in 'will going' was a more obvious error committed by more than half (54.9%) of the subjects. As the time adverb 'tomorrow' was given in the item to indicate the temporal reference of a future event, most of the subjects encountered difficulty in the use of the PRC which is often used to indicate a ***future arrangement*** (i.e. an action which has been planned to take place in the immediate future or near future). To a large extent such errors can be ascribed to interlingual interference from the subjects' L1. Hence, the subjects' tendency to use 'will' in erroneous combinations may be attributed to influence from the subjects' L1 which frequently requires the use of 'سوف' for future or subsequent actions.

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10	Nasri: Why are you walking so fast today? You usually walk quite slowly. Ben :　I am hurrying because I _____ my mother at 4 o'clock and she doesn't like to be kept waiting.	will meets	Deviant	68.6
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In this case, most (70.6%) of the subjects readily used 'will' in erroneous verbal combinations (i.e. 'will goes' and 'will going') to indicate a future event. The omission of the auxiliary 'be' as in 'will going' was a more obvious error committed by more than half (54.9%) of the subjects. As the time adverb 'tomorrow' was given in the item to indicate the temporal reference of a future event, most of the subjects encountered difficulty in the use of the PRC which is often used to indicate a ***future arrangement*** (i.e. an action which has been planned to take place in the immediate future or near future). To a large extent such errors can be ascribed to interlingual interference from the subjects' L1. A future action is normally indicated by the aspectual auxiliary "سوف "whose closest equivalent in the target language is 'will' or 'shall'. It should, however, be pointed out that the future auxiliary 'سوف" in Arabic can also be translated as 'would' in contexts where the speaker refers to actions in the past. (See *Kamus Dwibahasa,* 2001: 1469-. 1486.) Hence, the subjects' tendency to use 'will' in erroneous combinations may be attributed to influence from the subjects' L1 which frequently requires the use of" سوف "for future or subsequent actions.

Apart from this, the main verb　in Arabic " ذهب "　can be translated into five verb forms (i.e. 'go', 'goes', 'went', 'gone' and 'going') of which three forms (i.e. 'go', 'goes' and 'went') can exist independently without being combined with any auxiliary.　On the other hand, intralingual interference could have also occurred as these subjects did not seem to know that the PRC, which is normally used for an action occurring at the time of speaking, could also be used for a planned future action.

Table 4 illustrates that about a quarter (25.5%) of the subjects used 'will' to indicate a planned future action or future arrangement in item 8. Even though more than a third (37.3%) of the subjects used the PRC correctly to indicate a planned future action, more than two-fifths (45.1%) used erroneous verbal combinations (i.e. 'have save up' and 'will saving up') for this item. Similarly, more than half (56.9%) of the respondents chose the erroneous verbal combinations involving the use of 'will' as in 'will comes' and 'will be come' for a planned future action. These subjects'

apparent inability to recognise such wrong verbal combinations supports the claim that the existence of many forms of a main verb (e.g. 'come') could be a source of intralingual interference as well. In this case the main verb may exist in many forms (i.e. 'come', 'comes', 'came' and 'coming') even though only the base form 'come' can immediately follow the future auxiliary 'will'. In item 10, these subjects had the tendency to use the auxiliary 'will' for a future arrangement. The high error rate of 94.1% also suggests that the majority of the subjects had not acquired the rule requiring the use of the PRC for a planned future action. As has been mentioned, the subjects who used the future auxiliary 'will' might be aware that a future action was referred to, but had not internalised the rule governing the combination of a future auxiliary and a main verb.

In item 11, the temporal reference involves the time of inception of an action. Table 5 shows that more than half (51.0%) did not use the PRC to refer to a *routine action* which *begins before another regular action* expressed in the PRS.

Table 5
Percentages of subjects' choices for items 11-15 (RB, PrAH, AC, PrGD, DN-B)

Item No.	Item	Subjects' Choice	Grammaticality	Percentage of Subjects (%)
11	No, I _____ badminton at 6.30. I start playing at 5.30 p.m. and stop playing at 7.00 p.m. We can probably start our discussion at 8.30 p.m. Is the time all right with you?	play	Deviant	11.8
		am playing	Grammatical	49.0
		have played	Deviant	21.6
		had played	Deviant	3.9
		plays	Deviant	13.7
12	I am very angry with you and I am not going to let you use my car any more. You _____ my car key.	loses	Deviant	7.8
		are always lose	Deviant	19.6
		are always losing	Grammatical	41.2
		are always lost	Deviant	17.6
		always losing	Deviant	13.7
13	Fatimah: Ahmad works the whole time. Siti : You are right. He _____.	is always working	Grammatical	39.2
		is always worked	Deviant	7.8
		is always works	Deviant	15.7
		is always work	Deviant	9.8
		always working	Deviant	27.5
14	It's seven o'clock. The sky _____ darker gradually.	get	Deviant	3.9
		gets	Deviant	19.6
		is getting	Grammatical	68.6
		is got	Deviant	7.8
		is get	Deviant	0.0
15	Jane: Continue to tell us the story, please. Chai Ling: Then they decide to fly over the desert to look for the boy who has got lost. When they _____ over the desert, one of engines of the aircraft fails. At first they don't know what to do…	would be flying	Deviant	2.0
		flew	Deviant	13.7
		are flying	Grammatical	49.0
		were flying	Deviant	31.4
		will be flying	Deviant	3.9

About a quarter of the respondents used the PRS (i.e. 'play' or 'plays') for the regular action erroneously in this context, and more than a fifth of the subjects used the present perfect (i.e. 'have played') erroneously for an action that has not come to an end at 6.30 p.m. It should be pointed out that the PRC is normally not used for a regular action or event, and only the PRS is used to refer to a regular action in the

present. The regular action in this case, however, should be indicated in the PRC instead of the PRS because the action does not start at 6.30 p.m. but is still going on at that time. The subjects' inadequate understanding of the temporal reference of a verb also explains why difficulty arose in the use of the PRC. These subjects did not seem to pay much attention to the time of inception of the action. In this case the speaker regularly starts playing badminton at 5.30 p.m. and stops at 7.00 p.m., so at 6.30 p.m. she is still playing the game. The results suggest that these subjects had not acquired the rule requiring the use of the PRC for a regular action which begins before a certain time.

In item 12, more than half (58.8%) of the respondents did not use the PRC to refer to a ***present annoying habit*** even though the adverb of frequency was given. The affirmative forms of the PRC and the PRS alone include 'lose', 'loses', 'is lost', 'am lost', 'are lost', 'is losing', 'are losing', 'am losing' and other verbs which are less often used in English such as 'is being lost', 'are being lost' and 'am being lost'. While the PRS is normally used for a present habitual action, the PRC has to be used for a present annoying habit. Hence, the incorrect use of PRS can partly be attributed to the subjects' ignorance of the distinction between the two types of present regular actions.

In item 13, more than a fifth of the subjects used the present participle 'working' without the primary auxiliary 'is' for a ***present action*** which ***appears to be continuous***. These respondents had difficulty distinguishing a finite verb form (i.e. 'is working') from a non-finite one. Such difficulty can be ascribed to interference from the subjects' L1. The affirmative form 'in Arabic يعمل an be translated as (1) 'always work' or 'always works' to refer to a normal habitual action, and (2) 'is always working', 'are always working' or 'am always working' to refer to an action which appears to be continuous. These cross-linguistic differences partly explain why interlingual interference may have occurred in the learning of verb forms in the present tense.

In item 14, more than two-thirds of the subjects used the PRC correctly for a ***gradual development*** in the present. Even though most of the subjects might be familiar with the active form of the verb (i.e. 'is getting'), nearly one-fifth of the subjects used the PRS which might refer to a sudden occurrence of an action instead of a gradual development. Such errors could be due to the subjects' ignorance of the rule requiring the use of the PRC for an action occurring gradually around the time of speaking.

The data obtained for item 15 illustrate that more than a fifth (31.4%) of the subjects used the PAC (i.e. 'were flying') instead of the PRC (i.e. 'is flying') for an action which ***starts occurring before another action in dramatic narrative***. Consider the following sentences:
(1) When they ***were flying*** over the desert, one of the engines of the aircraft ***failed***.
(2) When they ***are flying*** over the desert, one of the engines of the aircraft ***fails***.

The respondents who used the PAC (i.e. 'were flying') inconsistently with the PRS (i.e. 'fails') might be unaware of the correct sequence of tenses. Even though sentences 1 and 2 are both grammatical if they are used in storytelling, a speaker or writer has to be consistent in choosing between PRC or PAC. With regard to this, an investigation of the textbooks used by the subjects also revealed that the past tense was normally used to tell stories. The frequent use of the past tense in textbooks partly explains why a portion of the subjects seemed to use the past tense, such as the PAC (i.e. 'were flying'), readily in this case.

On the basis of the errors analysed in the preceding section, it is not far-fetched to conclude that the data appear to support both the hypotheses deduced above.

Firstly, intralingual interference seems to be as significant as interlingual interference in the second language acquisition of the present continuous. In some cases, some subjects' inability to relate certain verb forms with temporal and frequency adverbials may be ascribed to both interlingual and intralingual interference. In other words, interference that caused a large portion of the errors may be both intralingual and interlingual in nature.

Secondly, the verb forms which may have recurrently caused confusion in the use of PRC were (1) the present simple and (2) the past continuous. The influence of the subjects' L1 on the acquisition of verb forms in the progressive aspect (in the target language) can be attributed to the fact that the PRC and the PAC are both expressed in the same grammatical form involving the use of the progressive auxiliary 'sedang' or 'masih' which shows no tense distinction (in the learners' first language).
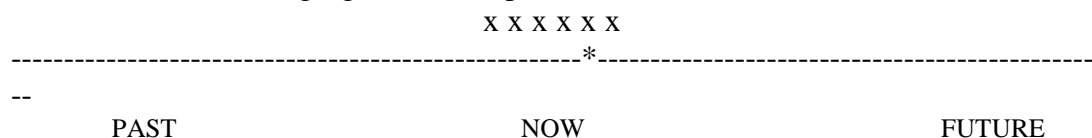
4-1 Implications for strategy instruction

The results summarized above have some important implications for trategy instruction in the area of tense usage.

First, learners need to distinguish the active forms from the passive ones even though both indicate the same tense and aspect. Cognitive strategies involving the practice of verb forms in the present continuous need to be incorporated. Such practices should involve not merely the active forms of the present continuous but also its passive forms. These forms should be contrasted simultaneously with the active and passive forms of the present simple in different situations. This means that cognitive strategies of repeated practices covering different situations, including those involving the use of adverbials indicating the time of speaking and regular events, should be taught to learners in an attempt to raise their consciousness of intralingual differences in time frames, associations with singular/plural subjects, and active/ passive structures. The point to be underscored here is that while different forms that resemble one another may be taught in stages, they need to be contrasted constantly and repeatedly in different stages in the process of acquisition.

Second, learners need to discern the differences between the present continuous and other verb forms, particularly the present simple and the past continuous, in terms of time frames. It is recommended that some memory-related strategies involving comparisons and contrasts of time lines be used to help learners recall the differences among the present continuous, the past continuous and the present simple. The following figure illustrates three time lines demonstrating the time frames using the notations 'vvvvvv' and 'x x x x x x' that indicate (1) progressive and (2) separate regular actions respectively:

(1) The use of the PRS (e.g. 'gives') for a present habitual action

```
                                    x x x x x x
-----------------------------------------------------*----------------------------------------------
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           PAST                          NOW                          FUTURE
```

(2) The use of the PRC (e.g. 'is giving') for an action occurring at the time of speaking.
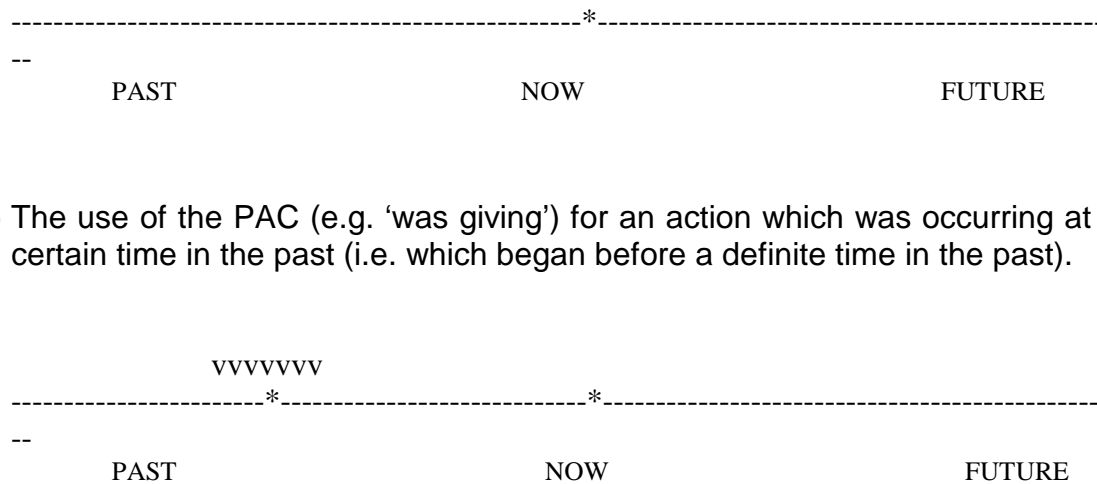
```
                                    vvvvvvv
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----------------------------------------------------*----------------------------------------------
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        PAST                        NOW                        FUTURE
```

(3) The use of the PAC (e.g. 'was giving') for an action which was occurring at a certain time in the past (i.e. which began before a definite time in the past).

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                        vvvvvvv
-----------------------*----------------------------*----------------------------------------------
--
        PAST                        NOW                        FUTURE
```

Figure 1: Suggested time lines that distinguish the three verb forms in terms of time frames

Third, learners' confusion with combination of auxiliary and main verbs needs to be sufficiently dealt with. The subjects' tendency to use erroneous combinations of auxiliary and main verbs suggests that they might not be familiar with the rules governing the combinations of auxiliary and main verbs indicating tense and aspect. The learners' failure to grasp the significance of modal auxiliary verb 'will', which should be used with a base form, seems to be the main cause resulting in the learners' repeated use of the erroneous combinations. This means that intralingual confusion involved in the use of the verb forms can be minimised only if learners are able to comprehend the contextual information provided in the items given, or more specifically, the situations in which the grammatical form is expected to be used. This is a situation in which learners can be taught to use memory-related strategies concurrently using a five-column table that differentiates the present continuous from other verb forms as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Combinations of auxiliary verbs and transitive main verbs in the formation of the present continuous and the present simple

| Auxiliary Verbs | 1) do/ does don't/ doesn't 2) did /didn't 3) will/ would shall/ should can/could may/ might must/ ought to has to/ have to had to/ used to, etc. | (No helping verb is required.) | (No helping verb is required.) | 1) has/ have / hasn't/ haven't 2) had/ hadn't 3)   (Passive voice) a) is/ am/ are b) was/ were c)   will be/ would   be, etc. d) has been/   have been e) had been f) is being/   am being/   are being 4) will have/ would have, | 1) is/ am / are 2) was/ were 3) will be/   would be,   etc. 4) has been/   have been 5) had been 6) will have   been/   would   have   been, etc. (Note: Not to be combined with stative verbs) |

				etc.	
Column	B	1	2	3	4
Main Verb:	Base Form	Present Simple	Past Simple	Past Participle	Present Participle
Irregular Main Verbs	buy	buy /buys	bought	bought	buying
	do	do / does	did	done	doing
	give	give / gives	gave	given	giving
	take	take / takes	took	taken	taking
	write	write / writes	wrote	written	writing
Regular Main Verbs	clean	clean/ cleans	cleaned	cleaned	cleaning
	play	play / plays	played	played	playing
	repair	repair/ repairs	repaired	repaired	repairing
	wash	wash/ washes	washed	washed	washing
Temporal \ Frequency Adverbials	1) every day, every Sunday, etc. (Present habitual actions) 2) just now, last night, yesterday, two days ago, two weeks ago, two months ago, in 1995, when he was here etc.	every day, every Sunday, on Sundays, never, seldom, sometimes, often, usually, always, etc. (Present habitual actions)	just now, last night, yesterday, two days ago, two weeks ago, two months ago, two years ago, in 1995, when he was here, etc., ⌐ every day, every Sunday etc. (Past habitual actions)	1) just, (already), etc. 2) (same as 1) 3) (Passive Voice) a) every day, etc. (Present habitual actions) b) just now, last night, etc. c) tomorrow, etc. d) just, (already), etc. e) just, (already), etc. f) now, at the moment, etc. g) at 8.30 last night, etc. 4) by 8.30 tomorrow, morning, etc.	1) now, at the moment, etc. 2) at 8.30 last night etc. 3) tomorrow etc. 4) since 1996, for two years, etc. 5) since 1996, for two years, etc. 6) by 8.30 tomorrow morning, etc.
Note: Verbs in the present continuous and the associated adverbials (of time and frequency) are Indicated shaded areas.					

The table which separates verb forms into five columns can be used as a frame of reference that helps learners distinguish verb forms in the present continuous from those indicating another aspect and/or tense, particularly the present simple that is frequently involved in intralingual confusion. Auxiliary verbs which can be combined with each of the transitive verbs are given in the top row of the table, whereas temporal/frequency adverbials are presented in the bottom row to illustrate their frequent association with certain verb forms. After learners have familiarised themselves with combinations of a certain set of transitive main verbs with the given auxiliary verbs in the top row, they may subsequently be exposed to other main verbs that combine with the same set of auxiliary verbs and adverbials indicated in the table. This means that learners' acquisition of verb forms indicating a certain tense and/or aspect may be effectively enhanced if teachers employ memory-related strategies involving (1) the time lines explained above, (2) the list of functions of related verb forms as shown in Table 1, and (3) a five-column table that distinguishes different verb forms with reference to various combinations of verbs and possible temporal/frequency adverbials.

5-Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions
5-1 Conclusions

On the basis of the errors analysed in the preceding section, it is not far-fetched to conclude that the data appear to support both the hypotheses deduced above.

Firstly, intralingual interference seems to be as significant as interlingual interference in the second language acquisition of the present continuous. In some cases, some subjects' inability to relate certain verb forms with temporal and frequency adverbials may be ascribed to both interlingual and intralingual interference. In other words, interference that caused a large portion of the errors may be both intralingual and interlingual in nature.

Secondly, the verb forms which may have recurrently caused confusion in the use of PRC were (1) the present simple and (2) the past continuous. The influence of the subjects' L1 on the acquisition of verb forms in the progressive aspect (in the target language) can be attributed to the fact that the PRC and the PAC are both expressed in the same grammatical form involving the use of the progressive auxiliary which shows no tense distinction (in the learners' first language).

5-2 Recommendations

On the basis of the data elicited, it is recommended that both finite and non-finite verbs should be explained in relation one another in the syntactic, semantic and morphological aspects. Cognitive and memory-related learning strategies are also recommended to enhance the learning of the present continuous in relation to other verb forms and their associated semantic functions.

In brief, learners may be taught not only to constantly check the table showing the combinations of verb forms in cases of erroneous usage, but also to draw up tables showing combinations of auxiliary verbs and different regular/irregular main verbs used in various situations. This means that strategy training aimed at offsetting both types of interference should include activities that encourage learners to (1) take note of a situation in which verbs forms indicating the same tense and aspect are used, (2) compare the differences between verb forms in their first language and target language, and (3) contrast the required verb forms that resemble the PRC at the orthographic, syntactic and semantic levels.

5-3 Suggestions for further Studies

The following suggestions are found to be suitable for further investigations:

1-A similar study can be conducted for analyzing the efficiency of EFL college students in learning the other grammatical process in English grammar.

2-A study can be carried out to investigate the difficulties in using other tenses that faced the pupils in the early stages of their study.

3-A further study can be conducted to compare various methods of teaching English grammar in order to establish the most effective methods in teaching grammar.

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تحليل الأخطاء في تعلم صبغة المضارع المستمر :ربط التداخل مع إستراتيجية التوجيهات

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الخلاصة:

يهدف البحث إلى تحليل الأخطاء التي يتم ارتكابها من قبل متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية باعتبارها لغة ثانية في عملية اكتساب صيغ الأفعال في اللغة الانكليزية وخصوصا صيغة المضار المستمر ،ويستطيع أن يقدم هذا البحث أفكارا في الصعوبات التي تواجه المتعلمين في اكتساب قواعد (اللغة الانكليزية) من خلال التركيز على مجموعة من ثمانية قواعد التي تحكم استخدام صيغة الضار المستمر، حيث إن واحدة من هذه الصيغ في كثير من الأحيان تستخدم في الأحاديث اليومية .

ويعمل الباحث على استنباط إجراءات تهدف إلى اكتشاف الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب في اكتساب اللغة الثانية (اللغة الانكليزية).مع الإشارة إلى تحليل الأخطاء، فان الباحث يدعو إلى إن متعلمي اللغة الأولى(الأم) هي ليست العامل اللغوي الوحيد الذي يؤثر في اكتساب صيغ الأفعال في اللغة الانكليزية . أن فشل المتعلمين في إدراك أهمية الأفعال المساعدة المستخدمة في الجمع والربط مع لواحق واشتقاقات الأفعال الأساسية على وجه الخصوص، تم تعريفها كعامل أساسي في الصعوبات التي تواجه المتعلم .