

The Present Progressive: A Difficult Aspect to Learn, Evidence from the Moroccan EFL Classroom

Younes ZHIRI

Faculty of Letters, Ibn Tofail University
Kenitra- Morocco

Abstract

The present progressive is one of the structures that create immense problems to foreign learners of English in general and Moroccan ones in particular. These learners fail to use this aspect appropriately in discourse due to a difficulty in internalising its real meaning. Our survey shows that these English as a foreign language (EFL) learners associate the present progressive with only one context of use- the one referring to actions/ events happening around *NOW* or at the moment of speaking. Students generally fail to go beyond this focal meaning. They tend to ignore the other contexts where the present progressive can be used. Along with this complexity/ plurality of meaning, the problem could be attributed to some deficiencies in the learning and the teaching enterprises as well. This paper draws both students' and practitioners' attention to a number of facts related to the learning/ teaching of this aspect. The study provides a detailed description of the different functions/ uses of the present progressive with examples. Moreover, it highlights the situations / contexts that are more problematic to students on the basis of our test's results. Most importantly, the findings show that the conventional traditional grammar course has many limitations. Therefore, there is an urgent need for an alternative course or method of teaching that is capable of helping students become more proficient in the use of tense and aspect in general.

Key words: aspect, learning, present progressive, teaching, tense

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