

Interference in the Second Language Acquisition of the Present Simple Tense

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Practice and drills on tenses constitute a significant portion of the process of teaching and learning English as a second language, yet much research that has been done in the last few decades on the factors causing errors in the learning of some tenses, particularly the present simple tense, is still far from being conclusive. Focusing on the present simple tense, this paper argues that a large portion of the errors in the use of the tense may be ascribed to both intralingual interference resulting from the idiosyncrasies of the rules governing the use of tenses and certain interlingual differences especially with regard to temporal references of verb phrases. The data obtained in this study have provided new insights into the preparation of teaching materials and classroom activities which can heighten learners' consciousness of intralingual similarities and differences in the use of certain related verb phrases. Recommendations have also been made on how teachers may use a five-column table to facilitate the learning of the present simple tense in addition to exercises aimed at contrasting the rules governing its use.