

**The Preamble to Form-Function Mapping: the Development of a Theoretical Construct to Respond to Elemental Stages in the Language-Learner's Processing of SE Periphrastic Verb Forms**

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**Research Questions:**

- 1) What sources of error are revealed by the methodological process of gathering and analysing periphrastic verb forms from formal and informal written assessments in the communicative ESL classroom where isolated focus on form is adopted?
- 2) How can sources of error in the communicative classroom inform the creation of a theoretical framework with practical applicability that would redound to the benefit of grammar instruction, assessment and feedback?
- 3) What are the effects of text-bound instruction on the language-learning process?

**Key Findings:**

Results showed that learners (n =30) were cognitively burdened.

Extraneous cognitive load which was precipitated by the demands of text-bound teaching and testing articulated one type of cognitive load and caused the random application of auxiliary elements and participles in grammar tests.

Intrinsic cognitive load which was motivated by the difficulty of the material itself, constituted another and showed the lexical treatment of verb forms in grammar tests, written compositions and e-journals, where the following forms were confused: 1) *have to*, *have – en*, *had –en*, *had*, *would have* and, *should have*; 2) progressive formations, *is/are –ing* and *was/were – ing* and passive structures, *is/are – en* and, *was/were – en*; 3) participial adjectives and participles 4) *been* and *being* and, 5) *is* and *has*.

Following the application of the pedagogical scheme or operational theory (n=9) results showed the following: SE periphrastic verbs were more intact than they had previously been, errors motivated by lexical associations were fewer and did not occur in as many environments, and the random application of non-finite elements in grammar tests was limited to two cued-gapped limited response exercises where it appeared that task demands were still too great.

**Conclusions:** Error groupings derived from the systematic associations which learners (n=30) made between forms which were phonologically and orthographically similar have profound implications for teaching and testing, not just periphrastic verbs, but the English verb phrase in general. This is due to the wide applicability of periphrastic verbs which incorporate progressive, perfect, passive, interrogative, negative and modal verb phrases. These groupings provide ELT practitioners with a toolkit, in practical terms, or a sound theoretical base, the use of which will aid: 1) in intercepting non-target forms before they become permanently fixed in the learner's intermediate system (Nemser 1971), 2) in grouping verb phrases for the purposes of disentangling them, rather than relying exclusively on the sequence in any conventional grammar syllabus, synthetic or otherwise, and 3) in helping to build a system of organized feedback which does not yet exist for grammatical forms, and which is particularly useful for adult learners who are keen on monitoring their own progress

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