

## **ACTIVATING RELEVANT PRIOR GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE TO UNDERSTAND POETRY IN EFL TEACHING: DEALING WITH INTRA-LINGUAL COMPLEXITY OF THE -ING FORM**

**Zahra Al-Saqqaf**

Associate Professor, Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of Aden, Aden, Yemen

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Words end in -ing in a poem, because of the multiple functional load of the -ing form, are confusing and problematic when activating schema is needed for the grammatical reordering of words and filling in gaps of ellipses to understand the meaning of a poem. This paper investigates the effectiveness of activating EFL learners' prior grammatical knowledge of -ing form in understanding the meaning of the parts in which they occur in two selected poems. The poems pre-teaching activities that were designed for the purpose of this study revealed that the EFL learners did not succeed in activating the relevant schema autonomously nor did the teacher's explanation of those grammatical structures with -ing form with some examples not related to the poems bring about the positive desired effect. However, activating prior knowledge about those grammatical structures that contain the -ing form and explaining them by the teacher while teaching the poems as they occur authentically in the contexts of the poems helped the EFL learners effectively in understanding the meanings of the poems.*

**KEYWORDS:** Schema, Teaching Poetry, Ing Form – EFL Learners – Intralingual Complexity

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Poetry provides creative ways of language use and authentic contexts for language learning. Foreign learners may get motivated and find pleasure when they are challenged to explore social and emotions issues in poetic language which always contain complex and far-fetched syntactic structures and deviate from the conventions of Standard English. The foreign learner relies much on the grammatical rules he has learnt about English grammatical structures which in themselves bear different levels of intralingual complexity as in the case of the -ing form. Schema theory proposes that the learner's past knowledge is organized into interrelated patterns which serve as devices for categorizing and arranging information so that it can be interpreted and retained. (Widdowson 1983) Thinking of grammatical knowledge as schema stored in the learner's memory and activated when the learner is processing any reading text (poetic or whatsoever) for comprehension, this schema, as in Anderson's and Pearson's (1984) definition of schema, is an abstract knowledge structure which summarizes what is known about a variety of cases that differ in many particulars and which is structured in a way that represents the relationships among its component parts. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of activating EFL learners' prior grammatical knowledge in understanding poetry focusing in particular on activating learners' previous knowledge on the -ing form which bears intralingual complexity presuming that this intralingual complexity brings about difficulties in the process of schema activation. Activating the learner's grammatical knowledge in the research occurs as a poem pre-teaching activity which may help in a better understanding of the poem.

### **Statement of the research problem**

As the foreign learner of English has more than often to reorder grammatical disorder of words in lines of poetry and to fill in the gaps in ellipses relying on his stored grammatical knowledge that is activated through reading the poem, he also has to deal with intralingual complexities within some structures. Words end in -ing in a poem, because of the multiple functional load of the -ing form, are confusing and problematic when activating schema is needed for the grammatical reordering of words and filling in gaps of ellipses to understand the meaning of a poem.

### **Research questions**

- Does the intralingual complexity of the -ing form cause confusion and difficulty to the EFL learners in understanding, storing and activating the grammatical knowledge about the -ing form?
- Does understanding grammatical structures which contain -ing form in a poem help the EFL learner in understanding the meaning of the parts of the poem in which they occur?

### **Research objectives**

- To investigate the possibility of activating EFL learners' prior grammatical knowledge of -ing form with its intralingual complexity.
- To investigate the effectiveness of EFL learners' understanding of grammatical structures that contain -ing form in understanding the meaning of the parts of the poem in which they occur.

### **Grammatical knowledge as schema**

When the mind is stimulated by key linguistic items in a text, it activates schema: the mental representation of pre existing knowledge gained through experience and stored in memory. Schematic linguistic knowledge is an essential component of successful interpretation of meaning. Cook (1994) shows that the basic claim of schema theory is that text understanding can be represented as hierarchy of levels of schemata because "human understanding ... can be represented as hierarchy of levels of schemata in which failure to understand at one level can be referred to the level above." (p. 80) This relationship shows that plans or scripts at the highest level are realized through the plans or scripts lower down. Cook develops the idea of hierarchy of schemata by establishing three different types corresponding to the processing levels involved: 'language schemata' which operate at the lexico- grammatical level, 'text schemata' which are concerned with rhetorical structures of the text, and 'world schemata' which involve knowledge of the world and of discourse contextual factors. The three levels are present in the mind of any reader. A reader's expectation about a given text derives from a comparison of its structure and its language with the reader's pre-existing text schemata and language schemata. (Cook 1994, p.201).

Thinking of the poem as a reading text that can be understood in both the top-down and bottom-up processes, such interactive process of reading is

not linear but rather cyclical views of the reading process in which textual information and the reader's mental activities (including the processing of graphic, syntactic, lexical, semantic, and pragmatic information) have a simultaneous and

equally important impact on comprehension. That is, as in top-down models, the reader uses his or her expectations and previous understanding to guess about text content, but, as in bottom-up models, the reader is still dependent on what is in the text. (Barnett 1989, p. 13)

The learner's existing language proficiency in vocabulary, grammar and idioms, (his linguistic schemata), are the foundation of other schemata. Without linguistic schemata it is impossible for the reader to decode and comprehend the poem. While reading the poem, the learner activates his linguistic schemata to decode his current language proficiency in grammar and the more linguistic schemata the reader has in mind, the better understanding he may get. Carrell (1984) argues that language proficiency is required to activate relevant schemata and the reader's failure to activate an appropriate schema brings about problems in comprehension. This failure to activate an appropriate schema may be due to either the reader not efficiently utilizing his/her bottom-up processing mode to activate schemata the reader may already possess, or it may be due to the fact that the reader does not possess the appropriate schemata anticipated by the author. Berman (1984, p. 153) asserts that "efficient foreign language readers must rely on part on syntactic devices to get at text meaning".

In a study aimed to investigate the effect of grammar and vocabulary pre-teaching on the EFL learner's reading comprehension from the schematic view, the researchers concluded that grammar and vocabulary pre-teaching had no significant effect on the enhancement of reading comprehension of the EFL learners. (Jahangard et al 2011, p. 107) Although the importance of grammatical knowledge in foreign language reading ability and the indispensability of grammatical competence for identifying syntactic relations of sentence components are emphasized in many studies, there have been little research on how readers' knowledge of grammar contributes to foreign language comprehension.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher intended to explore if the provision of relevant grammar pre-teaching of a poem as a type of schema activation influenced the EFL learner's understanding of the poem effectively on the premise that correctly understanding a grammatical structure involves considering the form in a meaningful context. Two pre-teaching activities were designed and performed as described below after which the poem was taught. The researcher/teacher read and analyzed the poems with her students in an approach that combined stylistics and reader-response approaches and placed equal importance on the study of language elements of the poem and the learner's personal responding to the poem caring to make form and meaning inseparable. The language forms of the poem were analyzed and explanations of formal aspects of the poem were used to discuss meaning, and simultaneously the students related their own experiences and beliefs to make sense of the poem and its language.

### Subjects

The researcher taught the course 'Poetry', a compulsory course of specialization, to a group of forty-eight students who were in the second year of the Bachelor of Arts program in the Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of Aden in the second semester of the academic year 2014-2015 (the academic year consists of two semesters). The poems selected for this research were taught in the first two weeks of March, 2015. The researcher met the students three hours per week for teaching the course as designed by the Department's course

plan. The subjects (females and males) were between twenty and twenty-two years old. Forty students were present in the first week and forty-four students were present in the second week. In the previous three semesters the subjects studied two courses in advanced 'Grammar' and three courses in Literature: a course entitled 'Selected Literary Readings', in which they read some poems and some excerpts from drama and fiction, a course entitled 'Introduction to English Literature', which is a survey of the development of English literature, and a course in Fiction entitled 'Short Stories'. The literary courses are intended to introduce English Literature to the students as well as make them learn English language through literature.

## Materials

Two poems were selected for the research: 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' by William Wordsworth and 'Song' by Sir John Suckling.<sup>1</sup> Selecting the poems for the research focused on making the students engage affectively and respond critically to the poems. Wordsworth's poem describes aspects of nature that students knew therefore they could imagine the scenery and appreciate its beauty. Suckling's poem, likewise, deals with a theme that is relevant to the students' age and experience: the pain of love from one side. Moreover, in the two poems there are grammatical structures that contain the -ing form which students crucially need to understand to get at the meaning. The three different levels of schemata identified by Cook as explained above were considered in selecting the poems. The poems were content-familiar to the students in terms that they can appeal to their 'world schemata' involving their knowledge of the world and to their 'text schemata' as students already studied the formal rhetorical structure of the lyric in a previous course (namely in the course 'Selected Literary Readings'). Problems of the lexical 'language schemata' were eliminated by allowing students to use dictionaries.

## Procedures

In the first week Wordsworth's poem (Appendix 1) was read and Suckling's poem (Appendix 2) was read in the second week. Two activities were conducted in the pre-teaching stage of each poem and a third activity was conducted after teaching the poem as follows:

1-The poem was given to the students to read individually by themselves for the first time. Dictionaries were allowed so that students could check the meanings of difficult words and find the meanings of new words. They were given fifteen to twenty minutes for this reading after which questions sheets (Appendix 2 in the first week & Appendix 4 in the second week) were distributed and students were asked to answer the questions in five to seven minutes. Students were to answer those questions to show how much they had understood of the poem concentrating on lines that contain grammatical structures with -ing form. This activity aimed to motivate and explore students' autonomous activation of the relevant schema. Questions sheets with answers of the students (1) then were collected.

2-The teacher explained the grammatical structure which contains the -ing form that was in the poem; ({see + object + -ing} in the first week and {the gerund} in the second week), without referring to the poem intending to activate this particular schema and help students recall and retain this grammatical structure they previously studied in the courses of 'Grammar'. After providing the relevant grammatical structure needed for understanding important parts of the meaning of the poem, students were asked to read the poem again in ten to fifteen minutes. Questions sheets (Appendix 2 in the first week & Appendix 4 in the second week) were distributed to the students to answer the same questions again in five minutes to investigate the

effect of understanding the grammatical structure with -ing form in understanding the meaning of those parts of the poem in which this -ing form occurs. Questions sheets with answers of the students (2) then were collected.

3-The teacher afterwards taught the poem to the students concentrating on the poem's stylistic and formal aspects and the readers' responses as well in an interactive process that deals with the poem both from the top-down and bottom-up. While teaching the poem, she explained the structure that contains the -ing form in the poem's meaningful context. Questions sheets (Appendix 2 in the first week & Appendix 4 in the second week) were distributed to the students to answer the same questions to verify the effectiveness of understanding the grammatical structures with -ing in understanding the meaning of those parts of the poem in which it occurs. Questions sheets with answers of the students (3) then were collected. Students' answers (1), (2) and (3) were scored and compared and each student's answers (1), (2) and (3) were also compared individually.

### **Findings**

After scoring and comparing the students' answers (1), (2) and (3) as individuals and as a group, these are the findings (no numbers are provided as the research is solely qualitative in nature):

-Many students chose wrong answers or left the questions unanswered in the first activity. This could be an indication that they did not perform an autonomous activation of the relevant grammatical schema.

-Many of the students who chose wrong answers or left the questions unanswered in the first activity chose wrong answers again or left the questions unanswered in the second activity. This may indicate that they did not utilize the grammatical structures explained by the teacher in reading the poems.

- The comparison between students' answers (1) and (2) shows little positive effect of activating prior grammatical knowledge about structures that contain -ing form.

- After teaching the poems and explaining the structures that contain the -ing form in the poems' meaningful contexts, only few students chose wrong answers.

### **Discussion**

The results of the first activity may convey the possibility that some students did not activate the appropriate schema of the -ing form because they did not possess it, but it is also possible that some others who might possess it and perhaps recalled it did not utilize it. The results of the second activity however support the second possibility. Even with possessing the relevant schema through the teacher's explanation of the structure that contains -ing form outside the poem's context, some students did not implement it because they did not identify the syntactic relations of the sentences components in the poem. Words end in -ing have wide range of functions and appear in many different contexts. The diversity of usage of this single form has a potential for confusion and difficulty for the foreign learner to understand it and consequently to store it in his mind as schema<sup>2</sup>. The following examples illustrate how a single word ends in -ing, like the word 'running', may appear in many different contexts having different grammatical functions (for the grammatical functions of the word 'running' in each example below see Appendix 5<sup>3</sup>, No 1-18 & 24):



1. I can hear *running* water.
2. For the sixth day *running*, my car wouldn't start.
3. They cancelled the *running* competition.
4. He prefers cycling to *running*.
5. Cycling and *running* are his best hobbies.
6. He enjoys *running* along the beach in the early morning.
7. At this speed, you are *running*, you are not walking.
8. He came *running*.
9. I saw him *running*.
10. He tried to start the engine *running*.
11. Ali was seen *running* in the street.
12. *Running* to school, he met his friend.
13. He opened the door *running* out.
14. *Running* very fast he did not see the car.
15. The boy who is *running* in the street is my son.
16. The boy *running* in the street is my son.
17. She is busy *running* her small shop.
18. It is expensive *running* this car.
19. I can't imagine a judge *running* barefoot.
20. It was funny to see a judge *running* barefoot.
21. While walking, he passed by a judge *running* barefoot.
22. The judge *running* barefoot gave me a shock.

Thinking of a grammatical structure that contains -ing form as a schema stored in the learner's memory and activated when the learner is reading the poem, this schema needs to be stored in the learner's mind as an abstract structure which is well known and understood by the relationships among its component parts. The multiple functional load of the -ing form which results in many different kinds of relationships among the component parts of the structures that contain the -ing form as shown in the sentences above may cause confusion and difficulty to the foreign learner in understanding it and consequently storing it as a schema. When reading the poem the foreign learner finds it difficult to grammatically reorder those component parts according to the relationships among them (or even recognize that they occur in the usual order) and to fill in the gaps in ellipses relying on this stored schema (if he possesses it).

In Wordsworth's poem the sentence 'When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.' (Appendix 2) follows the grammatical structure No. 9 in Appendix 5 i.e. (see + object + -ing as a complement of the object). The other sentence 'I saw ten thousand at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.' (Appendix 2) also follows the same grammatical structure (see + object + -ing as a complement of the object). Some students understood the meaning of the sentences with that grammatical structure i.e. it is the daffodils which are fluttering, dancing and tossing their heads in the breeze. Some other students understood the meaning of the sentences with the grammatical structure No. 12 in Appendix 5 perceiving the structure with -ing as a non-finite subordinate clause, thinking that there are two simultaneous actions in the sentence done by the same subject 'I'. In the discussion while teaching the poem, those students read the sentences as to mean: 'When all at once I saw a crowd, a host, of golden daffodils; beside the lake, beneath the trees, [while I was] fluttering and dancing in the breeze.' and 'I saw ten thousand at a glance, [and I was] tossing [some of] their heads in sprightly dance.' In their perception, it was the speaker 'I' who twisted the heads of the daffodils in dancing movements.

In Suckling's poem, some students added [you were/are] before 'looking well', 'looking ill', 'speaking well' and 'saying nothing' in the sentences 'Will, when looking well can't move her, Looking ill prevail?' and 'Will, when speaking well can't win her, Saying nothing do't?'. The similarity in form and the position of occurrence makes the distinction between the present participle and the gerund difficult for the foreign learner as shown in Appendix 5, No. 24. Those students then got confused in reordering the sentences grammatically with the presence of 'will'. However, some others had read it as 'When [you are] looking well [you] can't win her, will [when you are] looking ill [you] prevail?' Interestingly, in the discussion while teaching the poem, some students read the second sentence as 'When [you are] speaking well [you] can't win her, saying nothing *will* do it' [.] ignoring the question mark and imposing their own meaning. Those students justified that this is the right way to attract the attention of someone you like.

Some students chose the wrong answer for the sentence 'They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay' getting confused with the occurrence of 'never' premodifying the adjective 'ending'. Some other students also chose the wrong answer for the sentence 'The waves beside them danced; but they Out-did the sparkling waves in glee'. Students knew that the comparative -ing adjective would be modified by 'more' and cannot end with the '-er' suffix, as 'more' does not occur in the sentence they were not sure whether the comparison between the daffodils and the waves was about dancing or sparkling. Adjectives ending in -ing are always confusing to the foreign learners because some of them can be used as full adjectives (i.e. they can be used both attributively and predicatively, can be modified by 'too' and 'very' and can be compared), while some others are not full adjectives and cannot be modified by 'very' and 'too' nor can they be compared. (Appendix 5, No. 23)

Activating prior grammatical knowledge about structures that contain -ing form by presenting them as abstract rules with some examples yet isolated from the poem brought about little positive effect in understanding the meaning. Explaining the structures that contain -ing form while teaching the poem in their meaningful contexts in the poem, however, worked particularly well as an opportunity for the students to practice what they have previously learned. Students were interested to see grammar come alive in action in an authentic context.

## CONCLUSION

Activating the EFL learner's prior knowledge of grammatical structures that contain -ing form in isolation with some examples not related to the poems as a pre-teaching activity brought about little positive effectiveness in the learners' understanding of the meanings of those sentences in which the -ing form occurred. This could be attributed to the intralingual complexity of the -ing form which causes difficulty in understanding and storing these grammatical structures as abstract structured schema that could be activated and restored when needed. However, activating prior knowledge about grammatical structures that contain the -ing form while teaching the poems as they occurred authentically in the contexts of the poems helped the EFL learners effectively in identifying the relationships among its component parts and the meaning these relationships create which was a positive factor in the learners' understanding of the meaning of the poems.

Activating relevant linguistic schemata during the process of reading poetry and efficiently utilizing the bottom-up processing mode to activate the schemata the reader may already

possess are important learning strategies which EFL learners need to develop and use independently on an ongoing basis and make them natural parts of their comprehension process when they read poetry. Nonetheless, the fact that reading in a foreign language which always entangles language problems (intra-language complexities) that cause difficulty in and disturbance of recalling the relevant schema or inability to recognize the structure of the sentence should be challenging and motivating not frustrating and discouraging.

## ENDNOTES

- 1- Wordsworth's and Suckling's poems were selected from *An Introduction to Poetry* by Louis Simpson (1986), (Third Edition), p. 187 and p. 132 respectively.
- 2- Intralingual complexity of the -ing form causes difficulty and confusion for the Arab learners of English who also face interlingual interference. The learners may tend to substitute the kind of background experience they have in Arabic for what they read in English, or may use literal translation directly. This interlingual interference maybe due to some reasons like: the different compounding system, the highly complicated inflection of the verb phrase in Arabic, and the non-existence of well defined counterparts of the continuous and the perfect tenses in Arabic.
- 3- Examples used in this paper and grammatical rules about the multiple functional load of the -ing form are checked and collected from Zandvoort (1957), Thomson & Martinet (1960), Swan (1980), Quirk et al . (1972), Heaton & Stocks (1966), Fires (1945), Cowie (1989), Collins COBUILD (1990), and Close (1975).

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. C. & Pearson, P. D. (1984). A schema theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In P. L. Carrell , J. Davine, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnett, M. A. (1989). *More than meets the eye. Foreign language reading: Theory and practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Berman, R. A. (1984). Syntactic components of the foreign language reading process. In C. J. Alderson & A. H. Urquhart (Eds.), *Reading in a Foreign Language*. New York: Longman, pp. 139-156.
- Carrell, P. L. (1984). Schema theory and ESL reading: Classroom implications and applications. *The Modern Language Journal*, 68, pp. 332-343.
- Close R. A. (1975). *A Reference Grammar for Students of English*. London: Longman.
- Collins Cobuild. (1990). *English Grammar*. Rupa Charitavali Series.
- Cook, G. (1994). *Discourse and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cowie, A. (1989). *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fires, C. (1945). *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Heaton, J. B. & Stocks, J. P. (1966) *Overseas Student's Companion to English Study*. London: Longman.



- Jahangard, A. & Moinzadeh, A. & Karimi, A. (2011). The Effect of Grammar vs Vocabulary Pre-teaching on EFL Learner's Reading Comprehension: A Schema-theoretic View of Reading. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*. No. 8, Autumn & Winter 2011, pp. 92- 113. Retrieved from [www.ensani.ir/storage/Files/20130623091558-9818-11.pdf](http://www.ensani.ir/storage/Files/20130623091558-9818-11.pdf).
- Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. & Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. (1972). *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.
- Simpson, L. (1986). *An Introduction to Poetry*, New York: St Martin's Press. (Third Edition).
- Swan, M. (1980). *Practical English Usage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thomson, A. J. & Martinet, A.V. (1960). *A Practical English Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zandvoort, R. W. (1957). *A Handbook of English Grammar*. London: Longman.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*

(William Wordsworth 1770-1850)

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
**Fluttering** and **dancing** in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-**ending** line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
**Tossing** their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the **sparkling** waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

## **Appendix (2)**

*When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze*

Who is fluttering and dancing?

- 1) I
- 2) Daffodils
- 3) The lake
- 4) The trees

*They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:*

This means that:

- 1) They stretched along the margin of the bay in a line that never ends.
- 2) They never stretched and ended the line along the margin of the bay.

*Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

This means:

- 1) I saw ten thousand daffodils at a glance as they were tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
- 2) I saw ten thousand daffodils at a glance and I was tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

*The waves beside them danced; but they*

*Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:*

Which is a correct statement?

- 1) The dancing of the daffodils is more beautiful than the dancing of the sparkling waves.
- 2) The waves are more sparkling than the daffodils.

### Appendix (3)

*Song*

By Sir John Suckling(1609-1642)

Why so pale and wan fond lover?  
Prithee why so pale?  
Will, when **looking** well can't move her,  
**Looking** ill prevail?  
Prithee why so pale?

Why so dull and mute young sinner?  
Prithee why so mute?  
Will, when **speaking** well can't win her,  
**Saying nothing** do't?  
Prithee why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame, this will not move,  
This cannot take her;  
If of herself she will not love,  
Nothing can make her;  
The devil take her.

### Appendix (4)

*Will, when looking well can't move her,  
Looking ill prevail?*

This means:

- 1- You can't move her when you are looking well, you will prevail when you are looking ill.
- 2- Looking well can move her but looking ill will not prevail.
- 3- If looking well can't move her, looking ill will not prevail.

*Will, when speaking well can't win her,  
Saying nothing do't?*

This means:

- 1- You can't win her when you are speaking well, you will do it when you are saying nothing.
- 2- Speaking well can win her but saying nothing will not do it.
- 3- If speaking well can't win her, saying nothing will not do it.

## Appendix (5)

The multiple functional load of the –ing form

1	as an adjective in attributive position	I can hear running water.
2	as an adjective in predicative position	For the sixth day running, my car wouldn't start.
3	as a noun modifier in a noun phrase	They cancelled the running competition.
4	as an object to a proposition	He prefers cycling to running.
5	as a subject	Cycling and running are his best hobbies.
6	as a direct object in SVO sentence	He enjoys running along the beach in the early morning.
7	as a head verb in (be + _ing) verb phrase	At this speed, you are running, you are not walking.



8	after a verb of physical activity (come and go)	He came running.
9	after verbs of sensations plus object i.e. as a complement of the object	I saw him running.
10	after have, catch, keep, start, etc. plus object i.e. as a complement of the object	He tried to start the engine running.
11	as a complement of the subject in a sentence in the passive	Ali was seen running in the street.
12	as a non-finite subordinate clause when the actions in the two clauses are simultaneous	Running to school, he met his friend.
13	as a non-finite subordinate clause when one action is after another	He opened the door running out.
14	as a non-finite clause expressing reason for the action	Running very fast he did not see the car.
15	as defining/adjectival clauses (or any subordinate clause in a complex sentence)	The boy who is running in the street is my son.
16	as a stylistic device for clause reduction (defining non-finite clause)	The boy running in the street is my son.
17	as a complement of an adjective in SVC sentence	She is busy running her small shop.
18	after certain adjectives like expensive, foolish, happy, better	It is expensive running this car.
19	as a preposition or a conjunction	He asked me concerning (about) my health.  Supposing he fails, what will you do?
20	as an unrelated participle construction	Generally speaking, he cannot do it.
21	as an absolute participle construction preceded by a noun	God willing, we will see him tomorrow.

	or a pronoun functions as its subject	
22	Mostly words end in '_ing' are derived from a verb stem but there are words end in '_ing' which are derived from a noun like:	neighboring, cunning, appetizing, balding, etc...
23	Some '_ing' adjectives can be used in attributive or predicative position and keep their function as adjectives in both cases, while some others are only used attributively as adjectives and when they are used predicatively, they change their function; they become part of a verb phrase in the progressive tense.	<p>a) 'terrifying' can be used as an adjective both attributively and predicatively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is the most terrifying tale ever written.</li> <li>- The present situation is terrifying.</li> </ul> <p>Likewise, worrying, amazing, interesting, misleading, tiring, etc...</p> <p>b) 'dying' is an adjective if it premodifies a noun and it becomes a head verb in the verb phrase when it is used predicatively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- He has never seen a dying man.</li> <li>- He was dying when they arrived.</li> </ul> <p>Likewise, bleeding, increasing, rising, ruling, etc...</p> <p>Type (a) can be used as full adjectives (i.e. they can be used both attributively and predicatively, can be modified by 'too' and 'very' and can be compared), while type (b) are not full adjectives, in that they cannot be modified by 'very' and 'too' nor can they be compared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-I have read an amusing story.</li> <li>-The story was very amusing.</li> <li>-His story is more amusing than yours.</li> </ul>
24	The similarity in form and the position of occurrence makes the distinction between the	

	<p>present participle and the gerund difficult for the foreign learner. The present participle and the gerund both can:</p> <p>1-be qualified by an adverb:</p> <p>2- govern an object:</p> <p>3-be in the perfective:</p> <p>This similarity in form and the position of occurrence may cause ambiguity as illustrated by the examples:</p>	<p>-Coming late, he knocked the door politely.</p> <p>-Coming late was his only fault.</p> <p>-I saw them playing football.</p> <p>-His best hobby is playing football.</p> <p>-Having embezzled large sums of money, he left the country.</p> <p>-He was suspected of having embezzled large sums of money.</p> <p>-I can't imagine a judge running barefoot.</p> <p>- It was funny to see a judge running barefoot.</p> <p>- While walking, he passed by a judge running barefoot.</p> <p>- The judge running barefoot gave me a shock.</p>
25	It may be difficult to decide whether an '_ing' form is a gerund or a present participle in the case of some transitive verbs like: avoid, enjoy, deny, etc... which can have the gerund as an object.	<p>-I couldn't avoid meeting him.</p> <p>-He denied knowing anything about the plan.</p> <p>-She enjoyed hearing him talk.</p>
26	These verbs can be followed by a present participle clause in what is known as 'phase	-I could avoid putting too much weight on my arm.

	structure' (two actions are closely linked).	-Children enjoy playing alongside each other.  -He denied being very impressed with the official anthems.
--	--	---