The Interpretation of Spanish Grammatical Aspect with Habitual and Episodic Readings

and the Influence of Adverbials

by

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ABSTRACT

Adult second-language learners of Spanish struggle with the acquisition of preterite and imperfect selection due to the overtly morphological representation of grammatical aspect. Prior studies have documented the effect of a default encoding without influence of the lexical aspect in the emergence of aspectual morphology, and have proposed the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH).

This study investigates the emergence of aspectual morphology by testing the DPTH and the effect of adverbials at interpreting grammatical aspect in this process of acquisition. Twenty-eight English-speaking learners of Spanish (beginning, intermediate and advanced) and twenty native-Spanish speakers are tested with two written comprehension tasks that assess the interpretation of habitual/imperfect and episodic/preterite readings of eventive verbs. The truth-value judgment task incorporates forty short stories with two summary sentences, from which participants must choose one as true. The grammaticality judgment task presents sixty-four sentences with temporal adverbials of position and duration, thirty-two are grammatical and thirty-two are ungrammatical. Participants must accept or reject them using a 5-point likert scale.

The findings indicate that the DPTH is partially supported by the statistical data showing a default marker, imperfect for beginning learners, and preterite for intermediate learners. This provides support to the argument of unsteady aspectual checking of [-bounded] in the spec of AspP and not necessarily by only checking [+past] in the TP for intermediate learners. The influence of the lexical aspect value of the verb is partially evident with advanced learners. Temporal adverbials play an important role at interpreting grammatical aspect with intermediate and advanced learners. Results show
that beginning learners are not influenced by the presence of adverbials due to their inexperience with the Spanish aspectual morphology.

The findings also allow the confirmation of prior results about factors that influence the interpretation of preterite and imperfect. First, the instruction of aspectual morphology co-indexed with specific temporal adverbials, and second, that learners rely on lexical cues at the sentential level, while native speakers rely on discursive ones.
DEDICATION

With all my love to my children Branko and Ivana who were my inspiration and to my husband Branko and my mother Elsa for their unconditional support on this journey.

Dedicado con mucho amor a mis hijos Branko e Ivana que fueron mi inspiración y a mi esposo Branko y mi mami Elsa que fueron mi apoyo incondicional en esta travesía.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

*Tense* and *aspect* have been extensively studied in linguistics, particularly in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Tense and aspect are terms that refer to temporality. The terms are investigated within a relationship, however, they are different. Tense locates a situation in a specific moment in relation to the time of speech. Aspect relates to an external duration and completion of a situation (Comrie, 1976). The latter offers the speaker the possibility to perceive one situation as complete or incomplete, being a subjective task. Tense and aspect are represented differently across languages due to the variety of morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic resources of each language.

Aspect can be expressed in two ways: *lexical aspect*, through the situation of an event; and *grammatical aspect*, through the individual perspective. Lexical aspect refers to the inherent semantic property of the verb and is instantiated in an inner aspectual phrase. Within this domain, four lexical categories of the verb are found: state, activity, accomplishment and achievement (Vendler, 1967). The first category is considered stative and the last three categories are eventive verbs. In addition, telicity is compositionally assigned based on the internal semantic properties of the verb, its arguments and adjuncts (Verkuyl, 1993).

Grammatical aspect is instantiated in an external AspP (Zagona, 1994) and boundedness is checked to express imperfectivity through continuity, habituality or perfectivity through completeness. This boundedness is expressed differently cross
linguistically. In English, it is expressed analytically (1), (2), and morphologically (3), (4); whereas, in Spanish it is exclusively represented synthetically (5) and (6).

(1) John was playing (continuous reading)
(2) John used to play (habitual reading)
(3) John played (episodic reading)
(4) John frequently played (habitual reading)
(5) Juan jugaba (continuous and habitual reading
Juan play(IMP)
Juan was playing / used to play
(6) Juan jugó (episodic reading)
Juan play(PRET)
Juan played

This contrast, especially with grammatical aspect has been the impetus of studies that investigated how it is learned within a variety of theoretical frameworks: types of learners, learning settings, age of acquisition, emergence, fossilization, and instructional strategies, among others. Prior studies have documented that the emergence of preterite and imperfect occurs in association with the lexical aspect value of the verb, the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (Andersen, 1986, Andersen and Shirai, 1994). Other studies challenged it, and proposed the effect of a default encoding without influence of the lexical aspect at basic levels of proficiency due to L1 transfer, the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH, Salaberry, 1999, 2001, 2003). Still thers investigated variables that affect this acquisition such as the discourse structure (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994), the perceptual saliency of the input (Andersen & Shirai, 1996), the instruction (Rothman, 2008) and the syntactic structure (DeMiguel, 1994; Montrul and Slabakova, 2002; Schell, 2000; Slabakova, 2000).
**Purpose of the Study**

Considering the variety of approaches and variables to examine the acquisition of grammatical aspect, this dissertation attempts to investigate the emergence of aspectual morphology testing the DPTH by using a syntactic framework in the line of generative grammar to analyze it. For this purpose, three levels of proficiency of native-English speakers learning Spanish were included and compared to a control group of native Spanish speakers. It also incorporates comprehension tasks only to provide an additional perspective of the aspectual acquisition process unhindered by variables proper of oral production tasks such as time constraints, focus on content and, discourse type, among others. Prior studies have primarily compared preterite with episodic readings, and imperfect with continuous reading. Even though this has provided a valuable insight of these two readings, little research has been carried out on imperfect with habitual readings compared to the preterite with episodic readings. This has been shown to be challenging for second language learners since Spanish uses two different morphological representations [see (5) and (6)]; while English only one, [see (3) and (4)]. One of the key claims of the DPTH is that a default marker is encoded in basic levels of proficiency due to a L1 transfer strategy. This strategy involves the use of adverbials. By testing whether they facilitate preterite and imperfect morphology, it can support or reject the DPTH. This will also provide some insight into whether other variables play a role in this comprehension process.

Within this context, I attempt to respond to two main questions.
1. *Can the DPTH be supported by testing the interpretation of grammatical aspect with episodic and habitual readings of eventive verbs and stative verbs across three levels of proficiency?*

2. *Do temporal adverbials facilitate the interpretation of grammatical aspect (preterite/imperfect) with episodic and habitual readings for eventive verbs?*

**Overview of the Chapters**

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters, each presenting and discussing insightful information that constructs the background needed to formulate a response to the questions, and then analyze the results of the comprehension tasks.

Chapter 1 is the introduction to the dissertation and describes its chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed explanation of the concept of aspect and its two domains. Lexical aspect and the four lexical verbs proposed by Vendler (1967) as well as grammatical aspect, with its two subdivisions of perfectivity and imperfectivity (Comrie, 1976) are described in detail. Special emphasis is given to the habitual imperfective and its contrast to episodic perfective since these are the two readings included in the tasks. The two domains are also explained in terms of functional categories, and the place they are represented in the clause phrase as inner aspect and outer aspect. Chapter 2 ends with a presentation of the importance of adverbials in the selection of aspect in English.

The background of aspect in general, and its representation in English, paves the way for explaining aspect in Spanish in chapter 3. The background of grammatical aspect provides particularly valuable contrastive information to understand the way learners react when they are faced with aspectual selection.
Chapter 4 brings together the information presented in chapters 2 and 3 to explain how Spanish is acquired as a first language. This is contrasted with significant research in second language acquisition, attempting to explain what learners must face when they are learning Spanish in general.

In chapter 5, I review previous research carried out in the field of Spanish second language acquisition. A discussion is presented of various studies that focus on two concepts: the emergence of preterite and imperfect morphology tested with interpretation tasks; and the influence of adverbials when assigning and selecting grammatical aspect.

Chapter 6 provides the body of my empirical research. I discuss the current issues in the acquisition of the contrast between preterite and imperfect with tutored learners. I explore the reasons for my study, the gap in the SLA literature and the contribution of this dissertation. In addition to the two main questions that drive this research, I also propose two respective hypotheses. The design of the study, data collection procedure, analysis techniques, and results are thoroughly explained. Results are presented in the most descriptive manner possible, based on the descriptive and statistical data.

Chapter 7 analyzes and discusses the results by responding to the two research questions and partially supporting the hypotheses provided for each question. The discussion explores variables that have potentially impacted the results and the reasons why they are comparable to prior research of the same topic even though the statistical support is not categorical.

This dissertation concludes with Chapter 8 by presenting the overall summary of the findings, explaining the limitations encountered during the study and providing recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2
ASPECT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of Aspect

Tense and aspect have been among the central focal points of linguistic study, particularly in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) due to the various representations and realizations across languages.

In general sense, aspect, as defined by Comrie (1976, p.3), includes processes and states which delineate various ways an internal temporal structure is appreciated or interpreted by an individual. Smith (1991, p.5) refers to aspect as the temporal point of view of a situation expressed by the verb. Aspect offers the speaker the possibility to perceive one situation as complete or incomplete; it can be assumed as a subjective task.

This internal temporal structure is provided by the verb, its arguments and adjuncts (Verkuyl, 1993). The speaker plays an important role by conceiving this situation as complete or incomplete. However, some Romance languages such as Spanish, French and, Italian can morphologically express it. In the case of Spanish, the morphological aspectual markers are combined with tense markers [see (1) and (2)]. Both verbs are in past tense and represent two different points of view of the situation.

(1) María trabajaba
    Maria work (IMP)
    Maria used to work

(2) María trabajó,
    Maria work (PRET)
    Maria worked

Tense, in contrast to aspect, is a deictic category which places a situation in a specific moment with regard to the time of speech. Tense can describe a situation as existing in the present, past or future. Tense is seen from an external perspective of the
situation and relates it to another time-point, while aspect is seen from an internal perspective expressing duration and completion of a situation (Comrie, 1976, p. 5).

Aspect has been classified into two domains. The first domain is the situation of an event called lexical aspect; or *situation aspect* (Smith, 1991), also known by the German term *aktionsart*. The second domain is the individual perspective of a situation called grammatical aspect, also known as viewpoint aspect (Smith, 1997). These two components are considered independent; however, they interact to provide aspectual meaning. Bertinetto (2001, p. 1) especially emphasizes this independence arguing that *aktionsart* is rooted in the lexicon since it refers to the essence of the event type and its interrelation with its verbal predicate. Grammatical aspect reports on this event or situation which is expressed through a variety of functional tools according to individual languages. Let’s look at these two components in more detail.

**Lexical Aspect**

Lexical aspect, or *aktionsart*, is an inherent/semantic property of a verb. It is based on the inner composition of a verb, mainly its lexical nature which provides aspectual information. These properties are invariant and provided by the arguments and adjuncts of a verb (Verkuyl, 1993). The study of verbal classes was initially carried out by Aristotle who classified verbs in either a group of energy (movement) or a group of kinesis (actualities). This classification was later used by other linguists- among them Kenny (1963), Vendler (1967), and Mourelatos (1981)- to elaborate more detailed verbal classes.

One of the classifications that has been widely used in the literature of SLA is Vendler’s. He proposed four verbal groups: state, activity, accomplishment and
achievement. This classification mainly focuses on the inherent temporal features of each lexical verb and not on the other components of the verbal phrase. However, Vendler considers the characteristic of the direct object when classifying an activity versus an accomplishment as in *run* (activity) and *run a mile* (accomplishment).

A verb is classified within a verbal class depending on three main features that restrict its meaning: telicity, punctuality and dynamism of a verb.

a) *Telicity* refers to the option for the verb to have or not have an endpoint; A verb can be *telic* with a limit point or *atelic* with no end point.

b) *Punctuality* distinguishes whether or not a verb is punctual. Punctuality refers to verbs that do not last in time, they have no duration and are mostly instantaneous. Comrie (1976, p. 41) emphasizes that this punctuality refers to the situation rather than the verb and he argues that some verbs can be punctual or durative.

c) *Dynamism* involves the characteristic of change: the continuity or progression of an event versus stativity, which implies no change.

State verbs are considered to have a stative condition due to their nature of no change. The second group - which includes activity, accomplishment, and achievement verbs- are considered eventives due to the main characteristic of dynamicity. Let’s describe these verbal classes more in detail.

**Verbal Classes**

State: The main characteristic of these verbs is stativity. These verbs lack an internal structure (Pustejovsky, 1988) which means they do not contain any subevents to
indicate initial, during or final stages. This restricts their inherent meaning, and prevents them from being telic or punctual with a beginning and endpoint. Their main feature implies no change, which makes them non-dynamic. They are also homogenous or last indefinitely. Verbs in this group are to know, to understand, to believe, to own, to have, to want. Examples are:

(3) John believes in freedom.

(4) John has a car.

There is no beginning, no endpoint or any apparent change of believing in freedom or possessing a car.

Activities: These verbs are eventives - possessing transitions from a beginning to an end. They are dynamic and atelic with no endpoint. They have an arbitrary beginning and an end point, which means it is not clear when it started or ended as can be observed in (5) and (6). This class includes verbs such as sleep, run, eat, swim, and read, among others.

(5) John wrote letters last night.

(6) John ate sandwiches last night.

We understand that there is an event of writing letters and of eating sandwiches, but the beginning and end points of the events are not precise. The events may or not be completed.

Accomplishment: These verbs are durative like activities, but they are also telic with an inherent endpoint. A count noun direct object provides this endpoint. This has been less obvious as a verbal class, and has usually been considered as part of the telic group. This class includes verbs such as: run a mile, eat a banana, and write two letters.
(7) John wrote five letters.

(8) John ate a big sandwich.

The specific quantity of letters and sandwiches in (7) and (8) indicates that John finished writing the five letters and eating that big sandwich. Even though they have certain duration, they are telic events - we know that those events had an end point.

Achievement: These verbs like accomplishments, are telic. However, they are punctual with no duration and occur, in general, instantly. Examples of these verbs are: *reach* (9), *find* (10), and *die*.

(9) John reached the summit.

(10) John found 10 dollars on the floor.

Both verbs *reach* and *find* occur instantly and denote completeness of the event.

Table 1 summarizes characteristics of these four verbal classes. (Smith, 1997; Rothstein, 2004)

<table>
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<th>Verbal Characteristic</th>
<th>Verbal Class</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Telicity</strong></td>
<td>Non-telic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamism</strong></td>
<td>Stative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punctuality</strong></td>
<td>Non-punctual</td>
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This classification has not been exempted from debate. Verkuyl (1972) argued that the inherent lexical meaning of the verb is not enough to determine aspect as proposed by Vendler. The aspectual information of the verb is not restricted to the lexical meaning only, but extends to a more structural level of interaction between the verb and
its semantic components of the verb phrase - such as arguments, adverbs and adjuncts. In this compositional approach, the quantification of arguments together with the dynamicity of the verb interact to restrict the aspectual features of *terminativity*. This term refers to the perfectivity and imperfectivity that a situation can acquire in the grammatical aspect level. It can be observed in sentences such as (11), where *sang* is a verb of activity. However, by adding a quantified argument in sentence (12), it becomes an accomplishment with an endpoint. In addition, the cardinality of the argument (mass or count noun) will contribute to the acquisition of telicity. A specific number of the noun will express that the event is telic (12), whereas mass nouns or non-cardinal plurals will express that the event is atelic (13).

(11) Maria sang. (activity, atelic)

(12) Maria sang three songs. (accomplishment, telic)

(13) Maria sang songs. (activity, atelic).

Verkuyl provides a different verbal classification from the one proposed by Vendler. Categories based on the dynamism characteristic are included: states, events, and processes. Adjuncts also play an important role in determining the aspectual value, which is particularly relevant for this dissertation. Adverbial phrases can change the aspectual class of a verb; relying solely on the inherent lexical aspect of the verb to distinguish a verb belonging to a verbal class is not enough. An example of this is the verb *conocer* in Spanish. In (14) the verb is state; however, if an adverbial delimiting the situation is added, then the verb is coerced and this state verb becomes an achievement verb as in (15).
(14) María conocía a Juan. (state)
    Maria know(PRET) Juan
    Maria knew Juan

(15) María conoció a Juan hace 3 minutos. (achievement)
    Maria meet(IMPERF) Juan three minutes ago
    Maria met Juan three minutes ago

**Grammatical Aspect**

Grammatical aspect is the second component of aspect that describes the
speaker’s point of view of a situation. It accounts for the notion of *boundedness* of a
situation (Slavakova, 2001). Boundedness is expressed through perfective and
imperfective. Perfective refers to the condition of being complete, terminated or closed.
Imperfective refers to situations that are incomplete, continuous or open.

Grammatical aspect is represented in different ways across languages. Some
languages grammaticalize through inflectional morphology. This is true of Romance
languages such as French, Spanish and Italian. These languages not only mark for aspect,
but for tense and mood combined. In contrast, languages like English lexicalize it through
periphrasis and temporal adverbials and progressive. (This will be explained in detail in
chapter 3). The two aspectual distinctions are perfective and imperfective as explained
by Comrie (1976, p.16-24)

**Perfective**

Perfective is the view of a situation as a whole as it is looked at from outside - in
other words, as a unit with no internal composition. It expresses a bounded or
complete/terminated\(^1\) event with an initial beginning point and final endpoint. It does not

\(^1\) Smith (1991, p. 106) differentiates between a completed event and a terminated one. She indicates that
terminated events are applicable to activity and semelfactive events and completed to accomplishment and
achievement events.
provide further information that is not spanned within the endpoints established by the situation (Smith, 1991). These situations are no longer in effect during or after the time of being spoken. Examples:

(16) John reached the summit. (achievement, complete event)

(17) John walked at the park. (activity, complete event)

Perfective is not openly applied to states across languages. English and Spanish apply perfective to states with individual limitations. Other languages, such as Russian and Chinese, do not accept them at all. (Smith, 1991).

**Imperfective**

Imperfective is the view of a situation as looked at from inside. It describes the internal structure of the situation that is expressed as unbounded/incomplete, meaning continuity or repetition. Continuity refers to situations in progress.

Comrie proposes a classification of aspectual oppositions: perfective and imperfective. This classification will be entirely adopted throughout this study. See Table 2 taken from Comrie (1976, p.25).
Table 2.

Classification of aspectual opposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspectual Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be observed in Table 2, the aspectual contrast differentiates perfective and imperfective. Imperfective is subdivided into two more categories that express two meanings: *continuousness/durativity* and *habituality*. The concept of continuousness expresses the view of progression of an event. Languages express imperfectivity in a wide variety of ways, some languages express it with a general imperfective, while others have the linguistic resources to cover one or all of the subcategories presented in Table 2. Examples for perfective (18), imperfective habitual (19), imperfective continuous (20):

(18) John worked hard last Sunday

(19) John worked hard on Sundays

(20) John was working hard last Sunday when the earthquake happened.

**Continuous:** Continuity references when a situation is viewed in its duration. It indicates that a verb has internal stages which allow the meaning of continuity. It can be
expressed through progressive or non-progressive forms depending on each individual language.

Progressive meaning generally occurs with eventive verbs. Since states do not have internal stages to indicate a beginning, middle and end of a situation but rather an inherent meaning of stativity, it is not generally used with progressive forms. However, whether it is used or not is also language-specific. In addition, the characteristic of progressiveness provides an open status of information. In contrast, non-progressiveness can be open or closed informationally. (Smith, 1991, p. 119).

An instance of the non-progressive category is the imperfect Spanish which expresses continuity but with a non-progressive form (21). Spanish and English also have the progressive form to express continuous meaning (22). Sentences (21) and (22) denote the same continuous meaning, with the only difference being the verbal structures used in each one. However, if (21) and (22) are translated into English, the form used is progressive form for both of them

(21) Juan trabajaba cuando María tocó la puerta
John work(IMP) when Maria knock(PER) the door
John was working when Maria knocked on the door

(22) Juan estaba trabajando cuando María tocó la puerta
John be(IMP) work(PROG) when Maria knock(PRE) the door
John was working when Maria knocked on the door

**Habitual**: Comrie describes habituality as a situation that is extended in a period of time, and seen as a characteristic feature of a whole period. Furthermore, it refers to a situation that occurs on a successive and customary basis, and which can be prolonged indefinitely. Habituality expresses imperfectivity, but contrasts with continuousness in the sense that it lacks the internal stages that allow continuous reading.
Habituality is represented differently across languages. English uses past tense and habituality markers to clarify or limit the meaning. Markers such as *used to* (23), the auxiliary *would* (24) or quantification temporal adverbials such as *every night, on Sundays, frequently* (25) are crucial in order to disambiguate between a habitual or episodic reading of events (25) and (26):

(23) John used to work hard.
(24) John would work hard on Saturdays.
(25) John worked hard on Saturdays.
(26) John worked hard.

*John worked hard* can have a habitual or episodic reading if the quantification temporal adverbial does not clarify the condition of habituality. In English, these adverbials are the ones delimiting the aspectual meaning of a sentence.

In contrast, habituality in some Romance languages (such as Italian and Spanish), is grammaticalized morphologically through imperfect. Adverbials become redundant unless they are used to expand contextual meaning or change verbal classes. Example of a change from stative to achievement (27):

(27) Juan trabajaba duro los sábados.
   John work(IMP) very hard on Saturdays
   John used to work very hard on Saturdays.

The verb *trabajaba/used to work* in imperfect form alone provides morphological information about its habitual reading. The adverbial does not disambiguate the reading as it does in English but it only expands the information.

Habitualilty only applies to eventive verbs. Stative verbs are not included since they are, in essence, considered a permanent condition not expressing change. Habituality
differentiates from iterativity in the sense that the latter is a repetitive situation prolonged within a limited number of times. Iterativity is morphologically specified in Romance languages with perfective, whereas in English it is implied within the context provided by the adverbial phrases. Sentences (29) and (30) show the morphological importance of using perfective to express iterativity in French, while sentence (28) shows the relevance of the adverbial to indicate this iterativity due to its lack of morphological means. [These, sentences taken from Bertinetto and Lenci (2010, p.4).

(28) Last year, John visited his mother eleven times

(29) Pendant l’année passée, Jean a visité [PERF] sa mère onze fois
During the year past John visit(PER) his mother eleven times
Last year, John visited his mother eleven times

(30)* Pendant l’année passée, Jean visitait [IMPF] sa mère onze fois.
During the year past John visit(IMP) his mother eleven times
* Last year, John used to visit his mother eleven times.

Habituality has been considered as part of imperfectivity by Comrie (1976) as well as Bertinetto (1986), in the case of Italian and other Romance languages. The rationale is that it indicates the repetition of an individual or specific situation that occurred over a period of time that no longer holds. This extension of time should not be viewed as an incidental property, but a characteristic of this whole period. Binnick (1991) expands on this by saying that these episodes should be distantly spaced in time. Comrie (1976), and Salaberry (2008) emphasize the need to differentiate habitual from iterative. Iterative situations are also repetitive, but they should not be distantly space in time. Some languages such as Spanish use morphological means to differentiate between them.

There is a current debate about whether habituality is the same as genericity. Carlson (2006) considers habituality and genericity as expressing the same idea; that is,
both of them refer to a multiplicity of events. He defines both habituality and genericity as expressing regularities and generalizations made on events. These generalizations contrast with the episodic description of events. Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) sets forth habituality as different from the episodic and continuous meaning of eventive verbs and agree to treat them as generics under Chierchia’s (1995) definition of genericity. For the purposes of this study, habituality will be considered a subdivision of imperfectivity as claimed by Comrie (1976) and Bertinetto (1986). Even though a situation is finished, the fact that it occurs repetitively and over a period of time makes it fall within the range of unboundedness.

Functional Categories and Aspect

Aspect has been studied within several theoretical perspectives in the overall realm of second language acquisition, including lexical semantics perspective, generative perspective, communicative perspective, and cognitive perspective.

The generative framework, which is particularly relevant for this study, offers an explanation of aspect from a syntactic perspective. Within this framework, two main categories are differentiated to explain and describe parts of speech: lexical categories and functional categories. On one hand, lexical categories provide full semantic content to the parts of speech that form open classes - such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. For instance, “teacher, prepare, hot, breakfast, at, school” are lexical categories. They words have individual meaning, but they must be combined with the functional categories to provide full meaning to the sentence clause.

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2 There is still no consensus in the literature as to whether prepositions belong to a lexical category or a functional category (Jackendoff, 1973; Abney, 1987; Grimshaw, 1991).
On the other hand, functional categories are closed classes - meaning that no new members are added to the class as it occurs with open classes. They provide functional and referential information and coordinate the various parts of speech to determine the syntax. Among functional categories are conjunctions, determiners, negation, and inflectional morphology such as tense, aspect number, gender, agreement, and mood. Examples: the –ed of past tense, the -ing of progressive, the plural –s, the person and number agreement –s. When lexical categories and functional categories are combined, a full meaning to the sentence is provided. This can be seen when the lexical words provided in the previous paragraph are combined with functional categories as shown in examples (31) to (33):

(31) The teachers were preparing good breakfast at the school.

(32) A teacher prepared good breakfast at the schools.

(33) The schools prepare breakfast for good teachers.

We can observe that the progressive marker of aspect in (31) indicates the continuity of the event carried out by a plural number of teachers who are previously known, and the event occurred at one specific school. In contrast, though sentences (32) and (33) use the same lexical categories, the functional categories included in them provide a different meaning.

Aspect is represented differently across languages. This variation has been explained through parametric principles of universal grammar (Chomsky, 1981). These are a set of finite principles and binary parameters which are language-specific. In this context, functional categories are assumed to explain parametric variation, development and language acquisition in particular (Borer, 1984), due to the fact that they provide
inflectional information of phrases at the level of determiners, auxiliary verbs, negative markers, and aspect and tense markers. Furthermore, in Chomsky’s (1995) view, the morphological system is the locus of the differences and parametrization across languages since tense and aspect are encoded uniquely in every language.

Functional features consist of three sets: semantic, phonological and formal. Formal features are specific for syntax, and involve interpretable and uninterpretable features [+interpretable]. Interpretable features are inherent, as in *car* [nominal, third person and non-human]. Uninterpretable features are optional in the sense that they may be assigned by other members of the structure as in *car* [number, and case assigned by the verb]. Uninterpretable features have values, which can be weak or strong. When features are strong, they are expressed morphologically overt, and force movement to check and delete features before Spell-Out. In contrast, weak features do not force movement and are checked before LF (covert syntax); otherwise, a crash occurs in the derivation.

Interpretable features are not deleted since they are relevant at LF (interpretive component or covert syntax). The fact that aspect is represented in different ways across languages makes functional features an important tool to explain this variation, and to contrast languages involved in acquisition. This difference in cross-linguistic representation is due to the feature values of the uninterpretable features. As in the case of aspect in some languages (such as Spanish), these uninterpretable features are strong and are realized overtly using morphological means. In other languages (such as English), they are weak and are realized covertly as will be seen later.
**Inner and Outer Aspect Phrases - English**

As mentioned earlier, aspect refers to two domains of study that are independent but interrelated to provide aspectual meaning to the structure. These two domains are called lexical aspect and grammatical aspect (Comrie, 1976) – or situation aspect and viewpoint aspect (Smith, 1991). These two domains are encoded syntactically and classified as inner aspect and outer aspect respectively (Travis, 1992; 2000), based on their syntactic functional projection of each domain. The position of inner and outer aspect in the sentence structure has been placed in several locations. On one hand, Travis (1992, 2000) proposed that: inner aspect is represented within a vP-internal projection in an own aspect phrase projection between the two VP-shells; and outer aspect is located in a vP-external projection outside the VP-shells in the IP domain. On the other hand, Borer (1993) proposed that outer aspect is located between VP and TP encoded by a vP-external, and inner aspect is encoded by a vP-internal.

For the purposes of this dissertation, and in order to compare results with other studies (Montrul & Slabakova, 2000, 2003), the representation of inner and outer aspect will be considered to be located between VP and TP.

*Inner Aspect Phrase (AspP)* corresponds to the vP internal that encodes telicity within an aspect phrase projection. It indicates whether an event does or does not possess an inherent limit provided by its internal arguments (Verkuyl, 1993), based on its cardinality (mass noun or count noun) and adjuncts as in (34) and (35). Slabakova (2001, p. 3) based on Kenny (1963) argues that at this level, there is a binary feature that is present [+telic] in all sentences.

(34) John wrote letters.
(35) John wrote five letters.

The argument in (34) is generic plural, with no specificity usually provided by a
determiner. The argument in (35) provides a specific number, which delimits the meaning
and assigns an endpoint.

*Outer Aspect Phrase (AspP)* corresponds to the vP external located below TP, and
within an aspect phrase projection. This level encodes boundedness, which indicates
completeness of an event. In this layer, the [+bounded] features are encoded, meaning
progression or eventuality of an event. I will adopt the clause structure used in Montrul
and Slabakova (2000) and Slabakova (2001) for comparison purposes (36). In English,
this boundedness is morphologically realized through progressive for unbounded events
to express imperfectivity, and past tense for bounded events to express perfectivity or
episodic readings. In this dissertation, the term *bounded* refers to perfective, while
*unbounded* refers to imperfective.

It is important to mention the difference between telicity and boundedness, as
noted by Depraetere (1995). Telicity describes an inherent or intended endpoint
compositionally determined (inner aspect). But boundedness describes whether a
situation has actually reached a temporal boundary (outer aspect) – and is independent
from this inherent endpoint, since it relies on the speaker’s point of view.

Furthermore, observe that telicity and boundedness operate at two different levels:
when a situation has been encoded as telic with an inherent endpoint in the internal vP, an
unbounded event in the external vP can override the previously-assigned telic value,
making the situation incomplete. This phenomenon is known as the imperfective paradox
(Dowty, 1979), which is exemplified in (37).
John was arriving at the airport when the earthquake happened. We have seen that imperfectivity implies continuity using progressive in the outer space, as also shown in (38). In English, habituality, which expresses imperfectivity (Comrie, 1976; Bertinetto, 1986) and an unbounded event, is also realized through past tense to convey habitual events. In this case, adverbials play an important role to disambiguate bounded/episodic events that occur only once, from unbounded/habitual events that occur within an extended period of time or are not complete. (39) and (40) show a representation of habitual versus episodic events.

The following trees represent the concept of aspect within Comrie’s classification (1976): lexical aspect versus grammatical aspect. Within the grammatical aspect level, Comrie subdivided it between perfective and imperfective. (36), (38), (4), (5) show the aspectual oppositions (Table 2) of perfective and imperfective proposed by Comrie. This will be adopted throughout this research for explanation purposes.
The tree structure in (36) was proposed by Slabakova (2001, p. 67), and was adapted with an original sentence for this study. She incorporates two aspect phrases: one below vP to represent telicity – where inherent lexical aspect is compositionally instantiated at this level; and another aspect phrase above vP but below TP, representing grammatical aspect – to check the features [+bounded]. At this higher level, habitual versus episodic are checked. This tree represents an episodic reading, a one-time event.
The tree structure shown in (38), proposed by Slabakova and Montrul (2002, p. 374), represents the continuous meaning of imperfective as the progressive form in English. Observe that there is no aspect phrase projected for this imperfective meaning, but an own projection of a progressive phrase to express this continuity meaning. According to these authors, this projection is sufficient to check unboundedness or imperfectivity. Van Gelderen (2013, p. 101) instantiates this continuous meaning of imperfective in the aspect phrase by including the interpretable affix –ing in the head of AspP as shown in tree (39). Both trees represent this continuity meaning in English.
The tree structure in (40) shows an aspect projection above vP to check an
imperfective/ [-bounded] event. It represents a habitual event which is checked by the
prepositional phrase on Sundays expressing a frequency of the event, repeated in (41).
Without this PP, the first reading of this sentence would be episodic [+bounded] as in
(36) and (42).
(41) John worked hard on Sundays.

(42) John worked hard.

(43)

This tree structure (43) represents an episodic reading of an event. The AdvP *last Sunday* restricts the event to episodic, and disambiguates the meaning from a habitual reading. The way [+bounded] is checked occurs lexically through the information provided by the prepositional phrase, as opposed to checking [-bounded] morphologically through the progressive tense – either in a progressive projection or an aspect phrase.
(44) also shows a habitual reading of the event *work*. However, instead of a prepositional phrase or adverbial phrase, an adverbial of frequency has been incorporated. This adverbial provides the necessary information for the verb to raise to aspect and check [-bounded] or imperfective.

We have seen in (40), (43) and (44) the importance of adverbial phrases to delimit the aspectual meaning in sentences with habitual and episodic readings. This is especially true in English, due to the lack of morphological resources. Let’s expand more on this role of adverbials in aspect assignment.

**The Aspectual [+perfect] Feature for Eventive Verbs in English**

by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997).

Several studies of second-language acquisition have used the theoretical framework proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997). In order to provide a contrast between
Germanic languages (such as English) and Romance languages (in this case, Italian), they propose that all eventive verbs are closed or perfective in the present, and cannot express continuity as it occurs in some Romance languages. The progressive form is needed to express this continuity. See (45) and (46) for a contrast to the Spanish version (47) of this sentence:

(45) *John eats a banana right now. [present tense ≠ continuity]

(46) John is eating a banana right now. [progressive = continuity]

(47) Juan come un plátano en este momento [present = continuity]
John eat(PRES) a banana in this moment.
John is eating a banana right now.

The Giorgi and Pianesi proposal involves a parametric difference for verbs between English and Italian: English has a single value [+perfect], while Italian has two values [+perfect]. This difference is based on the foundation that English verbal infinitives are morphologically bare – which means they can be either verbs or nouns, and no ending differentiates them. In Romance languages, however, this difference is provided by the endings of the infinitive form of the verb.

This proposal has been challenged by several researchers in the field, among them Bertinetto and Bianchi (2002), and Van Gelderen (2004). Specifically, Van Gelderen argued that eventive verbs are not perfective due to the bare condition of infinitives in English, but instead because perfective throughout the history of English became the unmarked value of aspect. This is due to its ambiguous condition and the re-examination of –ing as the imperfective marker. Since perfective is considered an unmarked value, the imperfective becomes the marked one in English. As I understand it, this implies that
there is no absolute value of [+perfect] for eventive verbs in English (as proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi), but there may be a parametric value of [+perfect].

Researchers such as Bertinetto and Bianchi (2002) also disagree with the proposal that English simple present verbs are perfective or closed events, due to being the same as the ambiguous bare root of verbs. They point out that the condition of perfectivity of verbs contradicts their condition of imperfectivity for habitual generic reading of English simple past – an understanding that is well established in the literature (Bertinetto 1986, Chierchia, 1995) and highlighted by Bertinetto and Bianchi. Chierchia (1995, p. 197) considers that the present tense of English is aspectually imperfective with a predominantly habitual interpretation. However, it can also convey progressive readings in specific contexts in Romance languages (Bertinetto, 1986, p. 587). They postulate that the habitual-generic meaning of eventive verbs depends on the contrast or opposition between simple present and the progressive present in English.

Regarding the habitual and stative verbs, which is relevant for this research, Giorgi and Pianesi treat them differently. Based on Chierchia’s hypothesis (1995), they claim that these types of verbs are associated with a quantificational feature and a generic operator, instead of a perfectivity feature. In the case of habitual sentences, in particular, this generic quantifier Gen requires that all components of the sentence – the event, the agent and other possible components – always occur together.

Several researchers working on second-language acquisition (Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Slabakova & Montrul, 2002) adopted the Giorgi and Pianesi theoretical framework to explain the contrast of aspect representation in the languages studied, and the possible reasons why learners have problems acquiring these cross-linguistic
differences. Some of those studies will be detailed in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Having presented Giorgi and Pianesi’s proposal (1997), I do not agree with their assumption that all verbs are closed, or only have the perfective feature in English. In my view, verbs in simple present are imperfective as highlighted by Chierchia (1995) – and simple past can have perfective and imperfective meanings, the latter expressing habituality. This view follows Comrie’s (1976) subdivision of aspect in which imperfective can be expressed through habitual meaning (simple present or past) and continuous meaning (progressive form) in English. It also relies on the concept (Van Gelderen, 2004) that if there is a marked form (perfective), there must be an unmarked form (imperfective). Therefore, the proposal by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) will not be adopted in this research, since it would contradict the assumed condition that habitual verbs have an imperfective meaning. For feature checking, habituality will be considered to hold an unbounded feature. In addition, this approach focuses on the contrast between the continuous versus the one-time meaning of verbs, and disregards the habitual meaning of eventive verbs. As a result, I will adopt the proposal that eventive verbs in past tense have either unbounded/imperfective meaning or bounded/perfective meaning.

**Temporal Adverbials and their Role in Aspect Selection**

We have seen that the aspectual information is not only provided by the inherent lexical meaning of the verb, but is compositionally attributed to the interaction with the adjuncts and arguments of the sentence. They are important for establishing a reference point during speech.
Languages have a wide variety of linguistics tools to express aspect and tense. Each language must resort to the use of what is available in its linguistic inventory. The prominence of adverbial use varies according to this availability. The rich morphological system of a language plays an important role in determining the prominence of the representation of aspect. This is true for English, which not only relies on morphology but on other lexical cues to express it. Especially in English, temporal adverbials play a crucial role in disambiguating or expanding the meaning of the verb or sentence. Their main role is to inform about the time, duration and frequency of an event or situation. Temporal adverbials are represented syntactically as adverbial phrases (48), prepositional phrases (49) and adverbial subordinate clauses (50). Prepositional phrases and adverbial phrases will be used in this study, but adverbial subordinate clauses will not be considered.

(48) John frequently worked.

(49) John worked on Sundays.

(50) John was working when Tom arrived.

An important difference between adverbs and adverbials is pointed out by Hasselgård (2010, p. 14), based on Quirk et al. (1985). Adverbs refer to the word class, and adverbials to the syntactic clause element. Adverbs can change their function depending on what they modify. In contrast, adverbials can be represented not only by adverbs but also by noun phrases, prepositional phrases and finite, non-finite and verbless clauses.

Among the several classifications of temporal adverbials, I will consider the one by Dietrich et al. (1995) for the purposes of comparison with other studies to be detailed
in this dissertation (Lubbers Quesada, 2013). Based on this classification, Dowty (1991) proposed some restrictions for the occurrence of lexical verbal classes with specific adverbials – though this does not mean they cannot occur with other adverbials in different environments. This classification includes:

a) Adverbials of position (TAP) provide a very specific time in relation to some other time: yesterday, three weeks ago, at twelve, now. They frequently occur with telic verbs and with episodic readings.

(51) I left home at two o’clock.

b) Adverbials of duration (TAD) specify the length of a time span: all week, for many years, in an hour. They are usually related to atelic verbs and habitual/unbounded readings.

(52) John worked hard all week.

c) Adverbials of quantity (TAQ) refer to the frequency of time spans: frequently, twice, hardly ever. They usually occur with telic verbs either bounded or unbounded, and express sequence of events.

(53) John frequently repaired the car.

d) Adverbs of contrast (TAC) mark a temporal contrast: already, anymore, still, yet, no longer, again. They express repetition, the beginning or the end of a situation. They are usually combined with achievements and bounded events.

(54) John crashed his car again.

In particular, adverbials of position and adverbials of quantity are relevant for this study. As observed, there are some adverbials that are more felicitous with specific verbal
classes. However, aspectual shift can happen if some of these prototypical combinations are not used.

Adverbials play a crucial role in aspect selection and comprehension in English. This is due to the limited morphological system to express aspect – particularly habitual readings versus episodic readings – which highlights the role of disambiguating operators. In contrast, Spanish aspectual systems heavily rely on the morphology to convey aspectual meaning, while adverbials play a secondary role to support or expand the meaning provided by the aspectual morphology.
CHAPTER 3
ASPECT IN SPANISH

Aspect is instantiated in different ways across languages, due to the variety of morphological systems to represent it. For instance, Spanish is a morphologically rich language, and this provides additional resources to instantiate aspect in a synthetic way. We have seen in chapter 2 that aspect is divided in two levels that interact: lexical and grammatical aspect.

**Lexical Aspect in Spanish**

Lexical aspect in Spanish is encoded in a similar way as in English. The four aspectual classes proposed by Vendler are incorporated in this study. In addition, however, the compositional nature (Verkuyl, 1972) of the predicate will also be taken into account. In Spanish, the properties of the components that accompany the verb, such as the internal arguments and adjuncts, play a role to provide aspectual meaning to the predicate. Together, they will determine the telicity of the event, whether an event has an inherent endpoint, or is durative or terminative in Verkuyl’s denomination. The cardinality of the argument plays a role to determine telicity. A plural or mass noun as argument restricts the verb to atelic, whereas a count noun will express the telic condition of the event. For instance, (1) does not have an internal argument (direct object) so it provides an atelic meaning. The plural noun in (2) also makes it atelic. In contrast, the count noun in (3) provides an inherent endpoint to the verb. But the plural subject in (4) rules out the count noun in the direct object, and therefore provides an atelic meaning.

(1) Juan leyó (atelic)

35
Juan read(PRET)
Juan read.

(2) Juan leyó libros (atelic)
Juan read(PRET) books
Juan read books.

(3) Juan leyó five libros (telic)
Juan read(PRET) five books
Juan read five books.

(4) La gente leyó un libro (atelic)
The people read(PRET) a book
The people read a book.

At this point, there is no impact of the morphology in the sentences above, but
the impact of cardinality in the arguments is determinative for telicity.

**Grammatical Aspect in Spanish**

Grammatical aspect expresses boundedness in Spanish (as it does in English).
where an event is either bounded/perfective or unbounded/imperfective. In Spanish,
however, this boundedness distinction is grammaticalized – meaning that it is marked
morphologically on the verb. The richness of its morphology provides Spanish the means
to represent this distinction in two ways. Perfective is represented with preterite, and
imperfective is represented with imperfect.

Perfective is bounded, having a beginning and an end. It is viewed as a unit from
outside. Preterite represents this perfectivity as in (5). In this sentence the event of
singing by John is finished:

(5) Juan cantó una canción
John sing(PRET) a song
John sang a song.
In contrast, imperfective is unbounded and more subjective, since the event is appreciated from the inside. It is not seen as a unit or a situation that had a beginning and an end, but is viewed part by part. The differentiation between preterite and imperfect depends on the speaker’s point of view, making it subjective since it relies on what the speaker wants to convey. For instance, sentence (6) indicates that the event of singing was not complete. The morphological representation of imperfective through imperfect indicates that:

(6) Juan cantaba una canción  
John sing(IMP) a song  
John was singing a song.

Grammatical aspect is represented in more varied ways across languages. It has been the focus of study overall in the field of second-language acquisition, due to these distinctive morphological systems. Comrie’s (1976, p. 25) aspectual opposition between perfective and imperfective presents a subdivision of imperfective as habitual and continuous. For both subdivisions, Spanish uses verbal inflectional morphemes of imperfect as in (7) with habitual meaning and (8) with continuous meaning.

(7) Juan cantaba el himno nacional después de la cena  
John sing(IMP) the national anthem after of the dinner  
John used to sing the national anthem after dinner.

(8) Juan cantaba el himno nacional cuando el terremoto ocurrió  
John sing(IMP) the anthem national when the earthquake happen (PRET)  
John was singing the national anthem when the earthquake happened.

Sentence (8) is one way to express continuity. However, Spanish also has the progressive form to represent imperfective with continuous meaning as in (9). There is a preterite progressive as well (10), but it expresses perfectivity as preterite, which possesses a definitive time frame. The difference between preterite progressive and
imperfect progressive is that the former emphasizes that an event occurred and no longer takes place – in contrast to the imperfect progressive that emphasizes an ongoing event interrupted by another one. The imperfect progressive allows the possibility that the ongoing event continued after the second event interrupted it.

(9) Juan estaba cantando el himno ayer en la noche cuando Elena entró en el salón.

Juan was singing the anthem last night when Elena entered in the salon.

(10) Juan estuvo cantando el himno ayer en la noche.

Juan was singing the anthem yesterday in the night.

The meanings of perfectivity and imperfectivity are expressed through the imperfect of the auxiliary, not the progressive form of the lexical verb. Stative verbs are rarely used with progressive forms, due to the fact they are not eventive verbs with internal structure. This is true for English as well.

I would like to emphasize my position in this dissertation that imperfective expresses unbounded meaning in all its subdivisions, based on the content presented in Chapter 2. This might contrast to the view of some researchers (Doiz-Bienzobas, 1995; Montrul & Salaberry, 2003; Salaberry, 2008) who argue that habituality- iterativity- and genericity-specificity are beyond the realm of boundedness.

The morphological representation of Spanish preterite and imperfect is not limited to the representation of aspect, but also of past tense; then, both phenomena are combined morphologically. The verbs in italics in (11) and (12) are in past tense, the only difference that can be taken away from them is that they also have aspectual information:
(11) has perfective meaning (preterite), and (12) and (13) have imperfective meaning (imperfect).

The morphological representation is the main source for interpreting aspect in native speakers. The contextual aspectual information also influences in this process. Having this rich morphological system allows Spanish to use preterite and imperfect interchangeably with the same verb; however, the speaker’s perspective of the event will differ. The verb in (11) is in preterite, and expresses a finished event that occurred one time in the past. Sentence (12) is in imperfect, and expresses a repetitive event that occurred in the past and held for a certain period of time, making it a habitual situation in the past. The verb in sentence (13) also contains imperfect; however, the focus is continuity, an event that was held during the time the second event happened.

(11) Juan *escribió* una carta para Papá Noel (preterite, past tense, episodic)
    John write(PRET) a letter for Santa Claus
    John wrote a letter for Santa Claus.

(12) Juan *escribía* una carta para Papá Noel en las navidades (imperfect, past tense, habitual)
    John write(IMP) a letter for Santa Claus in the Christmas
    John used to write a letter for Santa Claus at Christmas.

(13) Juan *escribía* una carta a Papá Noel cuando el terremoto ocurrió (imperfect, past tense, continuous
    John write(IMP) a letter for Santa Claus when the earthquake occur(PRET)
    John was writing a letter to Santa Claus when the earthquake occurred.

It has been argued that there is a relationship between the assignment of grammatical aspect morphology and the lexical aspect of verbs (Andersen, 19863, Andersen and Shirai 1994) when aspectual morphology is acquired. According to this

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3 Andersen (1986) proposed the lexical aspect hypothesis (LAH) to explain the developmental acquisition of Spanish grammatical aspect. This hypothesis will be detailed in chapter 5.
proposal, some verbal classes are related prototypically with either preterite or imperfect morphology. In Spanish the verbal classes of state and activity are strongly related to imperfect, while accomplishment and achievement are associated with preterite. However, the flexibility of Spanish allows the use of both imperfect and preterite with all verbal classes. Morphology at the grammatical aspect level overrides this prototypical use of verbal classes through the process of coercion⁴ (de Swart, 1998, p.360) or aspeclual shift. For example state verbs (14) can become achievement verbs as in (15).

(14) Juan sabía la verdad
    John know(IMP) the truth
    John knew the truth

(15) Juan supo la verdad en ese momento
    John know(PRET) the truth in that moment
    John found out the truth in that right moment

The verb saber (to know) is stative, atelic and non-punctual, then it is prototypically used with imperfect. It, can be used, however, with preterite and also be grammatical, if it undergoes a semantic reinterpretation. The meaning with imperfect is to know as a state verb, but with preterite is to find out as an achievement, telic and punctual verb. The use of preterite and imperfect for all verbs is flexible. This occurs since the predicational aspect (lexical aspect from a compositional view) of the sentence (intrasentential) provides the necessary information to choose preterite or imperfect. This is in addition to the contextual aspeclual information outside the sentence that also contributes to it (Gonzales, 2013, p.172).

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⁴ Coercion is the contextual reinterpretation of a predicate facilitated by linguistic aspeclual operators, based on a prior concept by (Pustejovsky, 1995). This occurs when an eventuality does not match the input requirements of an aspeclual operator and to resolve aspeclual conflicts.
Syntactic Representation of Aspect

Spanish and English also have the same representation of both syntactic levels: inner and outer aspect. However, some differences are relevant in the way both languages check aspect.

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that habitual meaning triggers an unbounded feature, in contrast to the bounded feature checked for episodic events. Lenci and Bertinetto (1995, p. 11) argues that this parametrization is only applicable at a lexical or *aktionsart* level - not at an aspectual level which corresponds to the perfective-imperfective opposition. However, in this study, the features that are considered for checking at this level are [+bounded] (as argued by Slabakova, 2001), and detailed in the section of Chapter 2 explaining the Outer aspect phrase (AspP) and the difference between boundedness and telicity.

Lenci and Bertinetto – following Chierchia (1992) – instead proposed agreement features that require an appropriate operator in their checking domain. These are morphological features that are projected in an aspect phrase – PF for perfective and HAB for habitual events. They are checked by one of the two aspectual operators, Perf and Gn respectively, in the spec of an AspP. Whenever there is a quantificational adverb modifying the event, they are also adjoined to AspP and are present together with the aspectual operators – but do not replace them. In Spanish, the genericity operator that checks HAB, as well as the perfective operator in past tense, is marked by explicit aspectual morphemes.

In this dissertation, it will be these [+ bounded] binary features that are considered to express this habitual versus episodic readings. These aspectual features in Spanish are
checked morphologically in a projection of an aspect phrase. In contrast with English, Spanish does not require a temporal quantificational adverbial to check it (as will be observed below). However, it will expand the information provided initially through the morphological representation.

Table 3 illustrates an adaptation of the Spanish morphological representation to the subdivisions of aspect opposition proposed by Comrie (1976, p. 25).

Table 3.
Morphological representation of the aspectual opposition in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspectual opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Perfective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Preterite</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imperfective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Imperfect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuous</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Non-progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>imperfect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Imperfect</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>progressive</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following syntactic representations [see (16), (18), and (21)] provide an illustration of the subdivision of aspectual opposition portrayed in Table 3. Letters A, B, C, and D are included to better guide the reader in the explanation of their syntactic representations below.
(16) represents sentence (17) and letter A of the aspectual opposition in Table 3. It has an achievement verb in preterite, which indicates that it is an episodic event. The illustration shows that at the lower vP level, the verb is checked as telic by the noun phrase *la cima/the summit* and punctual since the event was instantaneous. Then in a level above vP, in an aspect phrase the boundedness is checked as [+bounded] to indicate that this event is episodic, it occurred one time. At this level, perfectivity is assigned and the verb raises to tense phrase and this event checks past tense. Past tense and perfective are morphologically represented through preterite.

(17) Juan alcanzó la cima
    John reach(PRET) the summit
    John reached the summit.
(18) illustrates sentence (19) and letter B of Table 3. It represents habituality, and is checked in the aspect phrase as [-bounded] assigning it imperfective meaning. Then it raises to TP spec to check past tense, and the imperfect morphology is assigned.

(19) Juan trabajaba duro todos los domingos
John work(IMP) hard all the Sundays
John worked hard on Sundays.

It is important to highlight that the adverbial phrase los domingos/on Sundays expands the information about the event, and reinforces the habituality meaning.

However, the morphology by itself is enough to understand it as habitual. If the adverbial phrase were not part of this sentence, the possibility to have a continuous meaning for this event – as in letter C of Table 3 – is positive if a contextual information is provided either outside the sentence or by a subordinated sentence as in (20):

(20) Juan trabajaba duro cuando el policia llegó
Juan work(IMP) hard when the policeman arrive(PRET)
Juan was working hard when the policeman arrived.

In contrast, English checks [-bounded] not morphologically, but through the adverbial phrase and/or other means – such as when the periphrasis used to or the auxiliary would are used. This cross-linguistic contrast will be expanded at the end of this chapter.

(21)

(21) represents continuous meaning with progressive morphology, as letter D in Table 3. The continuity reading is checked with [-bounded] through the progressive of the lexical verb, and the auxiliary in imperfective. Both progressive and imperfect express continuity in Spanish.

**Role of Temporal Adverbials in Spanish**

We have seen the importance of adverbials in aspect assignment in English, and how crucial they are to disambiguate the meaning when the simple past is used to express habituality or episodic events. These temporal adverbials are also important in Spanish –
but not of the same magnitude as in English. The main use of temporal adverbials is to reinforce tense and aspect.

Salaberry (2008, p. 195) points out that the association between specific aspectual concepts (morphology) and the use of temporal adverbials expressions is a first step of grammaticalization. This licenses that events or states that are inflected in imperfect are supposed to be combined with open interval adverbials – but when inflected in preterite, with adverbials of closed intervals. Regardless of this association, the morphology selected by the speaker is the main means to assign aspect. Adverbials become a secondary means to expand the information already provided in the aspectual morphology. Observe that the imperfect inflection in sentence (22) indicates that this event has a habitual meaning – *John used to go to school* – and the adverbials in the brackets only expand this information. Sentence (23) depicts a one-time episodic event:

*John went to New York.*

(22) Juan iba a Nueva York [en 1980, en su niñez]
    John go(IMP) to New York [in 1980, in POS3P childhood]
    John used to go New York. [in 1980, in his childhood]

(23) Juan fue a Nueva York [ayer, el mes pasado]
    John go(PRET) to New York [yesterday, the month last]
    John went to New York. [yesterday, last month]

Lenci and Bertinetto (1995, p. 4) emphasize the role of morphology, and conclude that Italian and Spanish have the capability to represent aspect without being overruled by overt adverbial expressions. This means that generic adverbs can further explain the meaning of a habitual event. If an event does not express habituality through its
morphology, however, the generic reading cannot be retrieved from the adverb itself as observed in (24) and (25)\(^5\)

(24) Juan generalmente veía a María por la noche
    John usually see\(\text{IMP}\) OM Mary for the night
    John usually saw Mary at night.

(25) ? Juan generalmente vio a María por la noche
    John generally see\(\text{PRET}\) OM Mary for the night
    John generally saw Mary at night.

Morphology of grammatical sentences, in specific cases, does not match with prototypical temporality of the adverbials; this is the case of iterativity. Salaberry (2008) argues that there is a semantic component in place that extends over the usual grammaticalization. Iterativity is represented with preterite and is reinforced by an adverbial that contributes to this iterative meaning – for instance, (26) and (27) as taken from Salaberry (2008, p. 195):

(26) ?Durante muchos años el tren del mediodía llegaba (IMP) tarde
    During many years the train of noon arrive\(\text{IMP}\) late
    For years, the 12 o’clock train arrived late.

(27) Durante muchos años, el tren del mediodía llegó (PRET) tarde
    During many years the train of noon arrive\(\text{PRET}\) late
    For years, the 12 o’clock train arrived late.

**Grammatical Aspect Contrast in English and Spanish**

The relevant contrast for this dissertation is primarily found in the representation of grammatical aspect – by verbal inflection, lexical means or periphrastic expressions. This difference has been the focus of a large number of studies in the acquisition of Spanish as a second language. Grammatical aspect in Spanish is represented by verbal

\(^5\) Sentences translated from Lenci & Bertinetto (1995, p.4)
inflection that distinguishes between perfective (preterite) and imperfective (imperfect) with habitual and continuous meaning. English only has past tense to represent perfective and imperfective with habitual meaning – in addition to the periphrastic expression of used to and the modal would. However, the progressive form in English instantiates the continuous meaning only, whereas Spanish also expresses continuity with imperfect in addition to the progressive form. Table 4 describes the morphological and lexical means used to represent the aspectual opposition of perfective and imperfective in English and Spanish.

Table 4. Morphological representation of the aspectual opposition in English and Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECTUAL OPPOSITION</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>SPANISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERFECTIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPISODIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td>John worked hard</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPERFECTIVE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HABITUAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple past</td>
<td>John worked hard when he needed money</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John used to work hard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John would work hard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUOUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>John was working hard</td>
<td>-Juan estaba trabajando duro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John be(IMP) work(PROG) hard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Progressive</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>-Juan trabajaba duro cuando la policía llegó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John work(IMP)hard when the police arrive(PRE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John was working hard when the police arrived</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The limited morphological variety available in English to represent habitual versus episodic reading makes it rely on other syntactic components of the sentence – such as adverbials – in order to disambiguate between these two meanings.
CHAPTER 4

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF GRAMMATICAL ASPECT IN SPANISH

Language acquisition of grammatical aspect has been widely studied in the realm of second language acquisition in many languages. In order to understand how grammatical aspect is acquired and what second language learners need to learn, it is necessary to explore how it is acquired as a first language. This provides us with some insight on how L2 learners are similar or different and what factors contribute to these characteristics. Let’s take a look at how aspect is acquired in a first language.

First Language Acquisition of Aspect in Spanish

First language acquisition research in aspect have been the referent point for studies in second language acquisition that expand information or contrast it. Most of these studies have documented the developmental acquisition of Spanish grammatical aspect. Some of the first descriptive studies were done as part of a wider morphological study such as Kernant and Blount (1966) who found that children between 5 to 7 years of age had not completely internalized the morphological rules of preterite and imperfect. Data shows an oral-production accuracy of 32% for preterite and 47% for imperfect using a testing set of real words and artificial words.

In a similar study, Perez-Pereira (1989) analyzed the oral-production of younger children from 3 to 6 years of age. The tasks also included real and artificial words and the results showed that imperfect morphology was produced with more accuracy than preterite being 65%, 98%, 98%, 100% at 3, 4, 5 and 6 years of age respectively. In contrast, preterite morphology remained steadily low with 48%, 74, 73% and 76% at 3, 4, 5 and 6 years of age respectively. This shows that imperfect morphology seems easier to
acquire than preterite which still at age 6 was not completely mastered. I assume that the larger number of irregular verbs in preterite, in contrast to the only three irregular verbs found in imperfect, makes longer the process to attain them. For that reason, one of the strategies reported in this study was overregularization of irregular verbs to avoid exceptions. It is also interesting to find that some of the irregular verbs that were overregularized, initially were produced accurately at earlier ages. Perez-Pereira (1989, p. 304) suggests that this might be an indication that at early ages, morphological acquisition is lexical rather than grammatical; however, as children grow, they incorporate rules for the formation of preterite and imperfect.

These results are based on descriptive analysis of the acquisition of verbal morphology across the verbal endings –ar, -er, -ir in relationship with the personal pronouns and these two studies (Kernant & Blount, 1966, and Perez-Pereira, 1989) coincide that imperfect is mastered first and preterite takes longer than 6 years of age. In these studies, it is not claimed which morphological marker, preterite/imperfect, emerge first or their relationship to the telicity of the verb.

From a different perspective, other studies analyzed the relationship between the aspectual characteristics of the verb and the morphological representation of grammatical aspect in Spanish and have focused mainly in the emergence of perfective and imperfective morphology. Jackson-Maldonado & Maldonado (2001) found that there is a selective morphological distribution based on the verbal class. Their results showed that at 1;8 years old preterite appears with achievement verbs and present tense is used with activity and states until a later age in which imperfect is introduced.
These findings mirror an earlier study in Italian (Antinucci & Miller, 1976) in which at early stages of acquisition (1;6 and 2;5 years of age), there is a similar selective distribution between morphology and verbal class as in Spanish studies. For instance, perfective morphology is combined to telic predicates and imperfective morphology to atelic ones in prototypical combinations. However when non-prototypical aspect combinations (coercion) occur, children tend to comprehend them as prototypical aspect combinations. This has been documented in studies for Spanish (Hodgson, 2003) and English (Vinnitskaya & Wexler, 2001). Hodgson reported that 5 to 6 year-old children overextended the oral production to imperfective morphology when expressing completed events in narratives.

This trend in the influence of telicity in the emergence of aspect morphology has been supported in other languages. In English, Bloom et al. (1980) also found in children 1;11 and 2;5 years of age that past tense morphology was used with achievement verbs, -ing progressive with activity, present with completive/durative verbs and no inflection for stative verbs. In French, Bronckart and Sinclair (1973) investigated the production of children between 2;11 to 8;7 year of age and found that there was a relation between tense morphology and duration of the event. Their results showed also that passé composé (past tense) was used with telic verbs and present tense with atelic verbs; they claimed that aspect was marked before tense.

These studies support the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis that will be detailed in chapter 5. However, studies such as the one by Behrens (1993) who studied the speech production of seven German children between 1;0 and 4;0 years of age, challenged this tendency of acquisition by providing evidence that his findings did not support the
exclusive production related to telic verbs and past tense; it was found that stative and activity verbs were used with past tense even earlier than achievement verbs. Behrens claimed that German children do not rely on telicity to use past tense but instead past markers are used to provide temporal reference and aspectual information at the same time. From my understanding, there are no studies in L1 Spanish acquisition that document against the relationship between lexical aspect and morphology emergence.

To summarize, studies show that L1 acquisition of Spanish occurs within the relationship between lexical aspect and morphology showing a pattern found not only in Spanish but also in other languages. The L1 Spanish acquisition of grammatical aspect is used as a reference for Spanish SLA since it describes the phases of morphological acquisition which includes the patterns of emergence, its relationship with the aspectual classes, and how children process it.

**Second language Acquisition of Aspect in Spanish**

Second language acquisition is the study of the interlanguage, term introduced by Selinker (1972) to describe a rule-based linguistic system that a learner of a second language has developed. The interlanguage has specific characteristics regarding its unique linguistic organization based on the preservation of some first language features together with a wide range of characteristics acquired in the acquisition process of a second language; therefore, the interlanguage is a unique developing system and not a “incorrect” version of the target language. This distinctive system has been the focus of study across various languages, levels of proficiency, features that diverge from the L1 and, strategies to produce the L2, among others. Most of the studies that have described this variability usually rely on the comparison with the target language and the influence
of the L1. For instance the difference in the morphological representation found between English and Spanish is detailed in chapter 3.

The incognita of how second language learners acquire Spanish has been approached from various theoretical perspectives. One of them is the Generative Grammar and within this framework, Universal Grammar (UG) provides innate linguistic knowledge to the first language learners and constraints the native language. However, there is no consensus in whether the same occurs in second language acquisition. Some proposals argue for learners only have access to UG principles learned in the L1 and no parameter resetting is possible (Bley-Vroman, 1987; Clahsen & Muysken, 1986). In an intermediate position, the access is restricted to the same values that are instantiated in the L1 and the L2 (Strozer, 1992), and if these values are not instantiated in the L2 learnability problems arise (Liceras et al., 1997). This access can also be through the L1 initially to finally have full access to the L2 values (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; White 1985). And on the other side of the spectrum is the direct access to UG for both the L1 and L2 grammars (Flynn, 1987). Another interrogation is that if L2 learners have access to the UG, how is it available? In this sub-spectrum, we find two extremes, one that supports that UG operates in a second language through the first language in which the values of the L2 are set through the L1 parameters in some degree depending on the hypothesis. On the other extreme we find proponents that support that the L1 does not play a role at all. In between this spectrum, there are hypotheses that support a partial access to the L1. Chapter 5 of this dissertation will describe hypotheses that mainly support in some degree the access to UG through the first language.
The focus of Spanish second language acquisition is to shed light on the process of learning Spanish in various contexts (naturalistic and educational) by considering the learner’s various linguistic characteristics and describing how grammatical aspect emerge within a linguistic theoretical framework. As it will be detailed in chapter 5, studies of second language acquisition have been compared to the ones in first language acquisition and similarities and contrasts have been documented in the acquisition and the description of each language.

There are some L2 studies that have found a similar pattern to the L1 Spanish development of aspect morphology. Andersen’s (1991) findings show that the emergence of verbal morphology are similar to the pattern documented in Jackson-Maldonado & Maldonado (2001) and Hodgson (2003) as well as in Italian with Antinucci & Miller (1976). When speaking about second language acquisition of Spanish, it is necessary to address the description, analysis and findings within a theoretical approach.

What Challenges do Native-English Speakers have When they Learn L2 Spanish?

Chapter 3 presents the main differences of the English and Spanish systems in grammatical aspect representation for more details. A main difference is the encoding of grammatical aspect in Spanish. One of the first tasks learners have to do is to learn that grammatical aspect is morphologically represented. This means that they first have to overtly check the feature [+ boundedness] in the spec of AspP above vP, and then also overtly check tense in the spec of TP. In other words, learners have to be aware that not only past tense is morphologically encoded but also grammatical aspect in one verbal inflection. In addition to the aspect-tense morphological concept, learners also have to
learn the two different inflections used for verbs ending in –ar and –er/-ir and their respective inflection for each person as can be observed in Table 5.

This is a process in which learners have to internalize that the notion of episodic and habitual events have to be distinguished in the verb morphology and not in the adverbial of the clause as it is instantiated in English. Adverbials are not always present in the sentence unless an expansion of the information is needed as in (1) and (2).

(1) Juan jugaba tenis (habitual meaning)
John play(IMP) tennis
John used to play tennis

(2) Juan jugó tenis (episodic meaning)
John play(PRET) tennis
John played tennis

Table 5

Grammatical aspect inflections in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL PRONOUNS</th>
<th>PAST TENSE / GRAMMATICAL ASPECT INFLECTIONS</th>
<th>IMPERFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRETERITE</td>
<td>EPISODIC CONCEPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-AR Trabajar to work</td>
<td>-ER, -IR Comer / Vivir to eat / to live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yo [I]</td>
<td>Trabaj-é</td>
<td>Com-í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tú [you singular]</td>
<td>Trabaj-aste</td>
<td>Com-íste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Él / Ella [He/She]</td>
<td>Trabaj-ó</td>
<td>Com-ió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nosotros/as [fem] [We]</td>
<td>Trabaj-amos</td>
<td>Com-imos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ustedes [you pl.] Ellos/as [They]</td>
<td>Trabaj-aron</td>
<td>Com-ieron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vosotros [informal you sg]</td>
<td>Trabaj-ásteis</td>
<td>Com-ísteis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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However, the association of the preterite/imperfect morphology is not restricted to an episodic and a habitual notion but also to the association episodic and continuous. This latter association usually has additional cues to disambiguate the meaning. First, the sentence structure in which the continuous meaning of imperfective is incorporated, presents a subordinated sentence or contextual information as in (3). And second, the concept of continuity in English is associate with a morphological representation of progressive which could be more salient for learners when they encounter imperfect with continuous meaning. For some native speakers of Spanish, sentence (1) first interpretation would be habitual, however, there might be always the possibility that it could also be interpreted as continuous, in this situation native speakers would need more contextual information to decide for one of the interpretations as in (3). In addition, learners have to learn that all aspectual verbs can have imperfect and preterite morphology and this includes state verbs.

(3) Juan jugaba tenis cuando Teresa llegó (continuous meaning)  
John play(IMP) tennis when Teresa arrive(PRET)  
John was playing tennis when Teresa arrived

As can be observed in Table 5, learning the inflectional system of grammatical aspect is a tedious process in which memorization, practice and exposure to the language play an important role to master these inflectional endings. SLA researchers need to take into account the level of command of the inflectional system in the second language to decide whether the production or comprehension of the aspectual concepts are not undermined or influenced by a poor command of this system. As they improve their proficiency, this morphological reliance should become stronger and adverbial should be less influential. This is expected for the reasons explained in this section. In regards to
how L2 learners process grammatical aspect, Garcia & Van Putte (1988) noted that adverbial influence is different between native-Spanish speakers and native-English learners of Spanish. They explain that the context surrounding the main verb provides the information to interpret grammatical aspect and it is mainly the inception (beginning) of the event that leads this interpretation. In contrast, native-English speakers prioritize the information provided by the adverb by focusing on the process instantiated in the adverb to provide interpretation to the verb. This shows that learners have a tendency to rely on their L1 strategies to comprehend grammatical aspect.
CHAPTER 5
SLA HYPOTHESES ON THE ACQUISITION OF SPANISH GRAMMATICAL ASPECT AND PRIOR STUDIES

The study of grammatical aspect in the field of second language acquisition in Spanish has been extensive. These studies have been carried out within various theoretical frameworks, using a wide variety of experimental designs, and explaining the influence of variables such as L1 transfer, the syntactic structure and, the discourse structure, among others. The most distinctive variable of study in the L2 acquisition of grammatical aspect has been the lexical aspect influence in the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology. Some of these studies provided the starting point for subsequent research that along the time incorporated variables that were considered to influence acquisition; however, it is crucial to highlight that regardless of the theoretical framework most studies always describe the relationship between lexical aspect and morphological acquisition.

Several perspectives were used to approach the analysis of the development of grammatical aspect morphology, Montrul and Salaberry (2003) subcategorize them in lexical semantics perspective, generative perspectives, context-based perspective, communicative perspectives and cognitive-perceptual perspectives. The lexical semantics and the generative perspectives are the only ones described in detail due to their relevance for this study.

The lexical semantics perspective incorporates the study of the Vendlerian’s verbal classes in order to analyze their relationship to the development of grammatical aspect morphology. Prior studies in first language acquisition (Antinucci & Miller, 1976;
Bronckart & Sinclair, 1973; Bloom, Lifter, & Hafitz, 1980) were the reference to continue studies in second language acquisition following this same line of analysis. One of these pioneering studies in L2 Spanish was carried out by Andersen (1986). Roger Andersen’s research has been especially important for the SLA field due to its impact in promoting subsequent research. It is one of the first empirical studies that provided a theoretical framework to compare lexical aspect to morphological development of aspect and tense. This led to propose a hypothesis named the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis (LAH) (Andersen, 1986). Other hypotheses have been proposed as variants of the LAH, with the main purpose of supporting or rejecting it. These hypotheses incorporated additional variables: the Discourse Hypothesis which incorporates grounding in discursive structure (Bardovi-Harlig, 1994), and the Distributional Bias Hypothesis (Andersen & Shirai, 1996) which emphasizes the perceptual saliency of the input. Other hypotheses such as the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH) even challenged the sequence followed by second language learners as noted by Salaberry and Shirai (2002). This dissertation will only describe the LAH and the DPTH which are the only relevant hypotheses for this dissertation.

**Hypotheses of Spanish Second Language Acquisition**

**The Lexical Aspect Hypothesis**

This hypothesis was first proposed by Andersen (1986, 1991) based on a study that documented the spontaneous oral production of two native-English speakers learners of Spanish in a naturalistic setting. Andersen was one of the first researchers to document that there was also a correlation between the Vendlerian aspectual classes and the tense-aspect morphological emergence in the interlanguage of Spanish learners. This follows
prior studies in first language acquisition (Bronchart & Sinclair, 1973; Antinucci & Miller, 1976, Bloom, 1980) about this type of association. However, the study by Weist et al. (1984) was used in part as the theoretical framework in Andersen’s study.

Andersen’s participants were children ages 8 and 12 living in Puerto Rico for a period of two years. They had been learning Spanish in naturalistic settings. The data were collected in two times two years apart from each other. The results of a 16 year-old native-Spanish speaker was used as a control. The main proposal of this hypothesis is that only inherent aspectual distinctions are encoded in basic stages of acquisition; therefore, neither grammatical aspect, nor tense are morphologically encoded. Andersen (1991, p.314) proposed a sequential emergence of morphology based on the type of aspectual verbal class and it is summarized in Table 6.

As it can be observed, there is a trend that relates morphology with verbal classes. Preterite emerges with achievement verbs and it is the first aspectual morphology that is used, then it progressively spreads to the other eventive verbal classes – accomplishments and activities –and lastly states at advanced stages. Imperfect is exclusively used with state verbs first and progressively emerges with activity, accomplishment and lastly with achievement verbs.

Andersen’s study used the L1 English acquisition of tense aspect as a reference. The developmental sequence he proposed also reflects a similar morphological emergence of the aspect morphology in studies of Spanish L1 acquisition. The trend is that preterite is the first morphological encoding with achievement verbs, and later state verbs are used with imperfect to substitute the present tense.
Table 6
Developmental sequence for encoding tense and aspect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Accomplishments Telic events “taught x to y”</th>
<th>Achievements Punctual events “broke (in two)”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present Tiene</td>
<td>Present “played”</td>
<td>Present Enseña</td>
<td>Present Se parte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Present Tiene</td>
<td>Present “played”</td>
<td>Present Enseña</td>
<td>Preterite Se partió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Imperfect Tenía</td>
<td>Present “played”</td>
<td>Presente Enseña</td>
<td>Preterite Se partió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Imperfect Tenía</td>
<td>Imperfect “played”</td>
<td>Preterite Enseñó</td>
<td>Preterite Se partió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Imperfect Tenía</td>
<td>Imperfect “played”</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Enseñó- Enseñaba</td>
<td>Preterite Se partió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Imperf Tenía</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf “played”</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Enseñó- Enseñaba</td>
<td>Preterite Se partió</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Imperf Tenía</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf “played”</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Enseñó- Enseñaba</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Se partió- Se partía</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Preter+ Imperf Tuvo -Tenía</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf “played”</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Enseñó- Enseñaba</td>
<td>Preter+Imperf Se partió- Se partía</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This developmental sequence in Table 6 is not entirely based on evidential samples, only four of the eight stages are. However, Andersen (1991 p.314) argues that quantitative differences in verbal marking for the missing evidence of the remaining stages are consistent to the eight stages and account for them.

This hypothesis is not free of criticism due to the hypothetical stages that do not really show factual evidence to support them. Regarding this, Slabakova (2001, p. 116) argues that aspectual encoding could have happened from the first stage and probably imperfect could have emerged with activity verbs first and not state verbs in stage 3, or
that imperfect could have not emerged yet in stage 5 for accomplishment verbs. This exposes a concerning methodological issue of generalizability. This methodological factor limits the application of these findings to other populations such as adult learners and learners with formal instruction in educational settings.

Salaberry (2008) also noted that this study does not provide a theoretical explanation of why all verbal classes after stage 5 can handle both imperfect and perfective morphologies, regardless of the prototypical uses of each verbal classes. In other words, how proficiency affects handling coercion within this hypothesis. He further explained that the Defective Tense Hypothesis (Weist et al., 1984), and the Relevance Principle (Bybee, 1985) used in Andersen’s study only account up to stage 4 and no additional theoretical framework is provided by Andersen to explain the prototypical use of verbal classes and morphology.

Regardless of the shortcomings exposed by some researchers such as the limitations of the research design, this study has been the blueprint for a large number of research that incorporated new variables that had a high impact in their findings, some of them supporting the LAH (Andersen, 1986, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Cadierno, 2000; Lopez-Ortega, 2000, Ramsay, 1990), and others challenging it (Salaberry, 1997, 1999, 2003).

The variables affecting the design in the study of Lexical Aspect have been detailed by Salaberry and Shirai (2002 p.4). It is relevant to note that some of them interrelate in such a way that impact the outcome of the learners’ L2 production. Salaberry and Shirai argue that L1 transfer, input data and its processing, discourse functions, instructional variables, cognitive/universal constraints and, formation of
prototypes, among others are factors that need to be taken into account when analyzing data or designing a study. Most of these studies mainly analyzed either oral or written production. Some of these factors presented by Salaberry and Shirari are detailed as follows.

1. The discourse structure. It is one of the variables that generated a large number of studies and will be briefly detailed next. The leading study was carried out by Bardovi-Harlig (1994) who proposed the Discourse Hypothesis based on a prior research by Hopper (1979) as cited in Bardovi-Harlig, (1994 p. 43). This hypothesis assumes that the structure of narratives, specifically the narrative grounding, had a high impact in the use of grammatical aspect morphology in basic learners of English as a second language. In other words, the emerging verbal morphology is the element that differentiates foreground from the background. This dependency decreases with higher proficiency and other elements such as adverbials help distinguishing grounding information. Foregrounding narrative is associated more with the use of achievement verbs and backgrounding with stative verbs. In addition, the type of narrative also influence in using more perfective for fictional narratives and imperfective for personal narratives. The means of production also impact in preferring one morphological coding over the other, Cadierno (2000) found that oral production of L2 Spanish learners followed the usual grounding distribution but written production did not support this pattern.

2. The perceptual saliency of the input. The distributional bias hypothesis was proposed by Andersen and Shirai (1996) in order to explain the variability of the past tense distribution across all verbal classes. This hypothesis tries to explain the possibility
that morphological development of L2 Spanish learners is guided by distributional biases in the input and not necessarily by the lexical aspect influence.

3. The syntactic structure. It is especially relevant for this study since part of the analysis of data and the theoretical framework will rely on this approach. Most of these studies of L2 Spanish acquisition explain this aspectual relationship within a generative approach (de Miguel, 1994; Slabakova, 2001; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Schell, 2000). A description of this theoretical framework was detailed in Chapter 3; however, a brief description will be recalled in this chapter to explain findings that support or reject these prior hypotheses.

The main argument of this approach is that lexical aspect and grammatical aspect are instantiated in two different positions in the clause structure. These positions are inner aspect and outer aspect. Inner aspect covers lexical aspect in a lower vP and the inherent meaning to the verb is acquired through its relationship with the arguments and adjuncts of the clause sentence. In other words, it is compositional and does not rely only on the verb. Here, in a lower level vP, telicity is checked through the parametric features [+telic]. In a higher position, above VP within an aspect phrase below tense phrase, outer aspect is located and grammatical aspect is checked, depending on the language, it is going to be check overtly as in Spanish or covertly as in English with no morphological realization.

There are several proposals on the type of aspectual parametric features that are checked in this domain, among them boundedness [+bounded] (Slabakova, 2001) and perfectivity [+perfective] (Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997), the latter has been mostly used in the L2 Spanish studies. In my point of view, in the former, the checking is not necessarily
morphological, [+bounded] can be covertly checked as it occurs in English for habitual and episodic readings. [-bounded] represents imperfective which includes continuous (progressive) and habitual meaning versus [+bounded] perfective meaning. For the latter, [+perfective] features represent morphological representation of aspect. It means that English only checks [+perfective] for past tense and even present tense, there is no [-perfective], and if imperfectivity needs to be checked, it occurs through progressive features instantiated in a progressive phrase projection for continuous meaning. In contrast, in Spanish the parametric feature [+perfective] exists since grammatical aspect can be morphologically represented with preterite and imperfect. This last perspective has been widely used in several studies to explain the developmental acquisition of grammatical aspect morphology of L2 Spanish. In consecutive studies, Slabakova also adopted these features to explain studies comparing imperfect with continuous reading and perfective readings (Slabakova & Montrul, 2002; and Montrul & Slabakova, 2000).

**The Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH)**

The prominence of the analysis within the lexical aspect hypothesis has been challenged regarding the validity of the developmental sequence. One of the first studies to challenge this sequence and highlight the effect of a default encoding was by Wiberg (1996). Wiberg analyzed the data of L2 Italian bilinguals (9-17 years old) at four levels of proficiency and found that past tense in Italian was overused with the four verbal classes at initial levels of acquisition (1 and 2). In a very small degree only, imperfect was used exclusively with state verbs in an initial level. His findings mirror some prior studies of L2 Italian (Giacalone Ramat, 1990) with similar results.
Salaberry (1997, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2008) in further research of L2 Spanish examined the role of lexical aspect in the past-tense morphology. This hypothesis was initially conceived based on prior results that showed preterite as the default marker at early stages of acquisition (Hasbun, 1995; Lafford, 1997). In contrast to Wiberg’s study, these two studies analyzed L2 data from L2 tutored learners. All these studies tested the LAH with oral narratives. In order to test the validity of the LAH and to compare his results to prior studies, Salaberry (1997) analyzed the distribution of grammatical aspect morphology across three aspectual categories, statives, atelic events and telic events. This analysis was carried out on oral data from tutored students at three levels of academic instruction including one basic level group, one low intermediate level, and one advanced level. In this study he proposed the following null hypothesis:

\[ H_0: \text{The use of Past tense morphological marking in L2 Spanish of adult tutored learners is independent of the effect of inherent lexical aspectual value of verbal predicates.} \] (p. 157)

Salaberry’s results does not totally support the null hypothesis above, at basic levels of proficiency. During the first time of data collection, learners show no contrast of past tense morphological marking across all three verbal categories, and preterite is exclusively used in imperfect environments –except for one token used to mark a stative verb. During a second time of data collection, the use of imperfect with stative verbs only increased in one additional token.

These results, even though not categorical, provide Salaberry the foundation to argue the existence of a past tense default marker at early stages of acquisition, in this case preterite. The null hypothesis is partially rejected by the results showing an
emerging reliance on inherent aspectual distinction to mark tense-aspect as proficiency increases across levels. Salaberry specially highlights the association between preterite - telic events and imperfect - stative verbs across proficiency levels as time to language exposure increases. This can signify that learners are marking viewpoint aspect and that the values of inherent lexical semantics start being associated with specific values of grammatical aspect morphology.

Salaberry justifies his results and explains that even though Shirai (1991) could counterclaim that this preterite overgeneralization might be due to a limited experience in the use of past tense morphology among basic learners and the limited knowledge of these inflections and its association to their aspectual value; it can be overseen due to the fact that the production of some past tense morphology is exclusively realized with preterite inflection as means of marking past tense but not aspectual contrast.

An important feature about Salaberry’s proposal is that after reaching the highest point of association between prototypical morphology and lexical aspectual classes, advanced learners start relying more on morphology that transmit their point of view regardless of their prototypical association. Then, it can be assumed that increasing proficiency provides learners the linguistic tools to interpret grammatical aspect at a level where semantics and syntax interact, then coercion starts being part of the learners’ aspectual repertoire as it occurs with native speakers of Spanish.

Later, Salaberry (2000) expands on the reason tutored learners rely on one specific morphological realization of past tense in Spanish and he argues that at this point learners might be using a transfer strategy from their L1. Based on Giorgi and Pianesi’s (1997) proposal ([+perfective] for eventive verbs in English), Salaberry argues that
learners strongly associate preterite (representing past tense and perfective aspect) with English past tense; therefore marking only tense and not aspect across all verbal classes. In other words, learners are not checking the features [+bounded] or [+ perfective] in the aspectual phrase projection instantiated in the Spanish clause structure and the verb directly raises to the spec of TP to check [+past]. In his proposal, no difference is made about the two readings of past tense –ed (habitual and episodic readings), instead it seems that the Spanish [-perfective] includes both continuous and habitual readings.

Based on the results obtained in Salaberry (1997), he proposed a sequential development of past tense morphology in L2 Spanish for tutored learners that differentiates from the LAH mainly in the initial stages of acquisition. He further tested this developmental sequence (Salaberry, 2000) and obtained more supporting data. However, these subsequent studies incorporated additional variables that he assumed impacted the production of aspectual morphology. See table 7 taken from Salaberry (1997, p. 194).
Table 7
Sequential development of past tense morphology in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 0</td>
<td>No past tense marking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Past tense is marked with Preterite only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Imperfect is used with stative verbs (limited set)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Imperfect extended to atelic and telic events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>All verbs may be marked with Imperfect or Preterite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This developmental sequence in table 7 shows in more detail early stages of acquisition that could be incorporated in the first stages of the developmental sequence supported in LAH. This sequence evolves based on the instruction sequence and experience with the preterite and imperfect morphology provided in the classroom. I would like to emphasize that most Spanish learners in instructional settings generally only have access to Spanish in the classroom with an input controlled through the textbooks and curricula. In an initial stage 0, there is no past tense marking and present is used instead. In stage 1 only preterite is marked as past tense in opposition to present, and it is used as a past tense marker regardless of the aspectual difference. It is in stage 2 that imperfect is exclusively produced with stative verbs. In stage 3 imperfect is used with both telic and atelic events which before were used only with preterite. Salaberry emphasizes that it is in this stage in which the rule-based morphological use is developed. At stage 4, the marking of all verbs occurs with imperfect and preterite regardless of the prototypical lexical aspect selection.
In a later study, Salaberry (2003, p.569), proposed that the past tense morphological marking in L2 Spanish stops being independent of the effect of inherent lexical aspectual value at advanced levels of proficiency and at this point learners discriminate the use of the preterite-imperfect contrast according to lexical aspectual classes.

The DPTH was supported in subsequent studies (Baker, 2009; Bergstrom, 1995; Camps, 2002; Comajoan, 2001; Dominguez et al, 2013, Granda, 2004; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006, 2013; Salaberry, 1999, 2002, 2003; Schell, 2000) by showing that regardless of the verbal class, preterite was used as the preferred marking. Salaberry (1997, 2002, 2003) and Dominguez et al. (2013) argued that the types of tasks had a significant impact as a variable that influence the use of one specific past tense marking, the types of tasks. A wide variety of tasks were used to test the DPTH and the LAH in production tasks that ranged from oral story retelling, oral personal and impersonal narratives, and written narratives. Only written multiple choice was used to test comprehension of preterite-imperfect marking in one of these studies (Salaberry, 2003). However, one factor that was noticed is the influence of tasks in the outcome to support one of these hypotheses.

Comajoan (2005) and Bonilla (2013) analyzed prior studies that supported either one of these hypotheses and they found a strong correlation in the type of task and the production of one specific past tense marking (Salaberry, 2003). Comparing results in comprehension tasks which are closed-ended, personal narratives had more imperfect than impersonal narratives. The former used more atelic events to portrait background information, while the latter has twice as many telic events due to the foregrounding nature of this type of narrative. In contrast, Bonilla (2013) argues that the fact that there is
a preference for one specific marking either preterite or imperfect, might be interpreted not as a default marker, but it could be a considered a priming effect caused by the type of narrative. Bonilla argues that close-ended tasks have shown to favor the DPTH since learners can focus on form explicitly and tend to use preterite as the default marker to express past tense but not viewpoint.

Another important factor that can contribute to support the DPTH and provide a reason of a default marker claimed in the DPTH is the role of instruction of grammatical aspect in tutored learners. It would be important to refer to the developmental sequence presented above in table 7 and compare it to the introduction of preterite and imperfect in the sequence of instruction. All instructors who are involved in teaching Spanish can easily identify a sequence of teaching preterite/ imperfect as well as the pedagogical conventions followed in Spanish textbooks. These textbooks, among them, Plazas (Hershberge, et al, 2011), incorporate the instruction of preterite first referring to past events in general to later on introduce the contrast preterite/imperfect. This is taught following a contrastive approach between English and Spanish equivalences and not conceptual differences in the aspectual system of Spanish. Rothman (2008) expanded on it and indicated that these contrastive equivalences are presented with specific instructions, for example, in one hand, imperfect should be used when learners want to express habitual acts, descriptions and generalizations that are represented in English with would, used to and be+gerund construction. On the other hand, preterite is taught to be used for one-time events that is represented in English by simple past –ed. In addition, this latter explanation related to preterite is taught before imperfect morphology and the preterite/imperfect contrast. Furthermore, it is taught in a simplified manner which only
indicates to be used to describe what occurred in the past. As it can be observed, Salaberry’s developmental sequence coincides with the instructional sequence incorporated in the Spanish instruction. Basic learners are first and only taught preterite for past tense and it coincides with stage 1 of Salaberry’s sequence which uses exclusively preterite. When imperfect is introduced, the verbs used are mainly state and activity verbs of high frequency such as ser, querer, trabajar, ir, hacer, among others, usually no achievement or accomplishment verbs are introduced at this point with imperfect. In instruction, it can be observed that verbal classes and aspectual differences are taught in a sequence that can contribute to support the DPTH in very early stages. This argument opposes to Rothman (2008) conclusion that this instructional sequence support the Aspect Hypothesis which was initially proposed based on naturalistic data.

The argument is complex and results do not support entirely neither the LAH nor the DPTH due to the various intervening factors such as type of task, type of narrative and, the role of instruction, among others. The next section details how these two hypotheses and these intervening variables have influenced the findings in the following studies.

**Prior Studies on L2 Aspect**

The following studies have investigated the acquisition of grammatical aspect, some of them have focused on examining the DPTH, and others indirectly have provided data that could be interpreting as supporting the DPTH. Their importance to this dissertation is that they incorporated similar comprehension tasks, tested the same proficiency levels, and introduced similar variables that have proved to be influential in the acquisition of grammatical aspect.
Montrul and Slabakova (2000).

This is one of the first studies that researched the role of semantic properties in the acquisition of preterite and imperfect and its syntax-semantic interface within a generative approach. They expanded on examining the formal syntactic properties of grammatical aspect and their semantic interpretation. For this purpose, Montrul and Slabakova tested the access to semantic universals with comprehension tasks that examined the acquisition of stative - eventive, habitual- episodic and generic-specific meanings. This latter is not explicitly taught in classroom instruction; therefore, if it shows to be acquired, it would support the strong UG hypothesis. This hypothesis assumes that the L2 is also constrained by UG which at the same time is supported by the Poverty of the Stimulus argument. This argument emphasizes that despite of the lack of positive evidence, learners are able to acquire grammatical structures due to the availability of an innate linguistic capacity. The data in this study was also used for a later publication by Slabakova and Montrul (2003) in which only the two last conditions are discussed. They conclude that learners have unconscious knowledge of abstract properties of the grammar without explicit instruction.

In this 2000 study, they hypothesized that L2 learners could be sensitive to the semantic distinction of various interpretation of preterite and imperfect in Spanish. In order to test this hypothesis, three types of structures were considered. I) stative verbs that changed to eventive verbs through morphology changes, this is coercion and more process wise challenging for learners, II) verbs that changed from habitual meaning with imperfect to episodic meaning with preterite, and III) the interpretation of generic
pronouns with preterite and imperfect. See examples taken from Montrul and Slabakova (2000, p. 536-537) in (1).

(1)  
(I)  

a. Juan sabía la verdad  (Stative verb)  
Juan know(IMP) the truth  
Juan (already) knew the truth  

b. Juan supo la verdad  (Eventive verb)  
Juan know(PRET) the truth  
Juan found out the truth  

(II)  

a. Marcelo robaba en la calle  
Marcelo rob(IMP) in the Street  
Marcelo habitually robbed (people) in the street  

b. Marcelo robó en la calle  
Marcelo rob(PRET) in the Street  
Marcelo robbed (someone) in the street  

(III)  

a. Se comía bien en este restaurante  
Se eat(IMP) in this restaurant  
One/we would eat well in that restaurant  (Generic and specific possible)  

b. Se comió bien en este restaurante  
Se eat(PRET) well in this restaurant  
We ate well in that restaurant  (only specific possible)  

In order to explain the habitual meaning of sentence (1, II a and III a), Slabakova and Montrul adopted Bonomi’s (1997) argument of genericity which states that the existential quantification is associated with perfective morphology, whereas universal quantification is associated with imperfective. The authors assume that this genericity is represented in a projection above TP where a phonetically empty quantifier is checked realizing as imperfect morphology, this excludes the preterite morphology which is checked in TP and does not raise above it to the genericity projection. This approach to explain genericity and habituality contrasts to the one adopted in this dissertation where boundedness (habituality is included in this category) is checked in an AspP.
In their study 69 English-speaking learners of Spanish were classified in intermediate and advanced groups of proficiency. 18 Spanish native speakers were the control group. The main task was a truth value judgment task that consisted in 80 stories followed by a sentence that summarized the idea of the story. Learners had to decide whether this sentence was true or false. 40 sentences were in the preterite and 40 in the imperfect. It has not been specified whether the 80 stories were all different, however, it is assumed by the indirect explanation on the paper that there were 40 different stories with 20 true sentences in preterite and 20 true sentences in imperfect and the other 40 stories were a replica with 20 false sentences in preterite and 20 false sentences in imperfect. 12 additional stories were distractors. Three syntactic structures were tested: first, a change in meaning of stative verbs into achievements triggered by morphology; second, habitual versus one-time event; and third, generic versus specific subject interpretation. This third structure was relevant to test the strong UG hypothesis since it is not explicitly taught in the classroom and tests the poverty of stimulus situation. It contrasts to the other two structures which are extensively taught in instructional settings.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I would like to focus on the results of structure A and B since they will be comparable to the results in this study. Results show that for structure A, which analyzed the change of meaning of stative verbs based on the aspectual morphology, intermediate learners performed better with stative verbs in imperfect (sabía/to know(IMP)) than with verbs that changed from statives to an eventive verb through morphology (Supo/known(PRET) meaning to find out as eventive). It seems that learners preferred the prototypical association of imperfect with stative verbs and were not able to totally internalize the change of meaning of these stative verbs into
eventive verbs realized by the morphology. For advanced learners, accuracy in both preterite and imperfect was significantly close to the control group. They argue that advanced learners have mostly internalized these semantic differences triggered by the morphological representation.

The results for structure B, which tested the habitual (imperfect) meaning and one-time event (preterite) contrast show that intermediate and advanced learners performed better with preterite (97% and 81% respectively) than imperfect which means that preterite is well associated with one-time events. However, the association of imperfect with habitual events (intermediate 47% and advanced 70%) is still developing and far to equal the control group (89%). Table 8 shows the percentages of accuracy on tense for only structure B and C taken from Slabakova & Montrul (2003, p. 183)⁶.

Table 8
Percentage of Accuracy on Structure B (Habitual vs. One-time event) and structure C (subject interpretation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Type of Story</th>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Habitual event</td>
<td>Imp (T)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pret (T)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One-time event</td>
<td>Imp (F)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pret (T)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Generic subject</td>
<td>Imp (T)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pret (F)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific subject</td>
<td>Imp (T)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pret (T)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁶ Slabakova and Montrul (2003) used the same data and analysis in Montrul and Slabakova (2000). Condition A was not included in the 2003 study.
Results for structure C show that intermediate and advanced learners are equally accurate with imperfect associated with generic meaning as well as preterite with specific meaning. Slabakova and Montrul argue that the sensibility to this contrast supports the strong UG hypothesis by providing evidence that regardless of non-explicit teaching of this property, learners acquired this semantic properties; therefore their results support the conclusion that knowledge of semantics is constraint by Universal Grammar. An important note to these findings is that intermediate learners only perform better with the prototypical association of imperfect and statives, however, for the other structures, preterite is the preferred morphology and the non-prototypical association of eventive verbs with imperfect seems to be developed later. As noted by Slabakova and Montrul, their findings support the developmental patterns proposed in the acquisition of L2 Spanish by Salaberry (1997, 2000). However, they do not totally discard the possibility that learners could use analogical strategies with their L1 to figure out this uninstructed structure for structure C.

Regarding the task design, this study shows that the control group does not perform at 100% of accuracy which sets the referential benchmark for learners for comparison purposes. Salaberry (2008) attributes this to the possibility that the stories may introduce a degree of uncertainty by opening the possibility that the false response could be comprehended as true and vice versa. In addition, stories were presented twice, one with a true sentence and the other one with a false one; this can trigger priming to learners about the assumption that one of the sentences is true and the other one has to be false which could bias the real interpretation of those sentences. The analysis was made to all eventive verbs as a group and not individually based on the three Vendlerian verbal
classes for events or based on telicity. However, stative verbs were included in the analysis as an individual group which is valid for comparison to this dissertation. Another note about the task design is that some of the stories contained explicit past tense morphology which can prime the correct grammatical aspect morphology and influence in the selection of the sentence to be chosen as true or false. This will also be addressed in the design of this dissertation in order to avoid this priming issue.

**Salaberry (2003)**

Following the studies to test the LAH, Salaberry carried out subsequent research to test the DPTH (1997, 1999, 2000) and challenge the validity of the LAH. These studies provided him with the data to propose a developmental sequence which include the use of a default marker, preterite, in basic learners of Spanish. Prior studies mainly used oral production tasks such as personal and impersonal narratives, retelling stories, or written production tasks, among them filling the blanks with the correct form of the verb. However, Salaberry’s (2003) importance to this dissertation is that in order to test the effect of text types (personal vs. fictional narrative) in the production of past tense inflectional morphology, he incorporated a multiple choice task. This is one of the first studies to test the DPTH with a comprehension task and with learners of three levels of proficiency in contrast to prior studies that used comprehension tasks only with intermediate, advanced and near native-speakers of Spanish (Montrul and Slabakova, 2000; Slabakova and Montrul, 2002, 2003).

Salaberry’s study used the data of 105 L1- English speakers with three levels of proficiency based on their placement in college courses that distanced two semesters
among levels. In addition, a near-native group and a native group were included as a baseline reference.

Two multiple-choice tasks were used to complete one personal narrative and one fictional narrative. Participants were asked to select one choice out of four verbal forms (present, preterite, imperfect, and infinitive). The distribution of telic, atelic and stative verbs was meant to be based on the type of narrative, for instance the fictional narrative had more telic than atelic verbs, and stative verbs together. However, for the personal narrative instead of having a larger number of atelic verbs, this narrative sample had more numbers of statives verbs followed by telic and lastly atelic verbs. These numbers were not controlled since the narrative samples came from prior narratives made by L2 participants of a different study. It was edited for length and difficulty of vocabulary but not for number of verbal classes. This could be considered a downside of the design that possibly affected the outcome of the impersonal narrative.

The results showed that the DPTH was supported with the fictional narrative. Preterite was preferred with stative verbs across proficiency levels except for the advanced learners. In general, preterite was preferred relatively more than imperfect with stative, telic and atelic. As for the effect of proficiency level, only beginning and intermediate learners used other verbal endings than preterite and imperfect. Lexical aspect seems to have some effect in advanced learners.

Results from the personal narrative showed no support of the DPTH with preterite as the default marker, basic and intermediate learners preferred imperfect across all lexical aspectual classes, especially for stative verbs. However, Salaberry speculates that there is still a default form used in each type of text that he assumes is triggered by the
type of narrative, fictional narrative showed more overgeneralized preterite and personal narrative showed imperfect as the preferred morphology. In order to support this proposal, Salaberry argued that this preference for imperfect in personal narratives is due to the possibility that learners reassessed the categorization of lexical aspectual classes to habituality (use of imperfect), a concept that according to him is proper of these texts. He further supported his argument with the native and near-native speakers’ behavior regarding their preference of imperfect with telic verbs in a personal narrative context and their preference of preterite with telic verbs in a fictional narrative. See Table 9 (adapted from Salaberry, 2003, pp.565, 567)

Table 9.

Percentage of use of verbal endings in the personal and fictional narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telic events</th>
<th>Fictional</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near-native</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main finding is that the impact of type of text can promote a different viewpoint of the event and even define specific default markers of past tense which seems to be influenced by discursive factors. The methodological part had some design issues that Salaberry tried to overcome in a subsequent study (Salaberry, 2011), especially the unbalance of type of verbs, characteristic of each type of narrative. In this new study, he mainly compared the impact of inherent lexical aspect in relationship with the discursive grounding. He incorporated a more balance number for each verbal class according to the grounding and they were presented in 40-item text-based forced-choice
task to a larger pool of participants (286). The main findings were that lexical aspect and grounding were correlated with grammatical aspect at all levels of proficiency except for beginning learners. Beginners showed only a gradual increase of correlation after relying on either preterite or imperfect for both lexical aspect and grounding. He assumed that it was due to fact that they were not marking telic events with grammatical aspect morphology. In addition, grounding becomes the more relevant element for native speakers to assign grammatical aspect morphology.

The importance of Salaberry’s (2003, 2011) studies is that they provide evidence of an early default marker, either preterite or imperfect, that is related to grounding based on the type of task. This is one of the first studies to test the DPTH with comprehension tasks at three levels of proficiency. And it also provides the basis to analyze the possible impact of instruction in the emergence of grammatical aspect morphology.

**Previous Studies on Adverbs in L2 Aspect Acquisition**

The influence of adverbials has been widely studied since they have shown to be an important linguistic tool for L2 Spanish learners to complement or even use them as the means to express grammatical aspect morphology overall in early stages of acquisition.

Some prior studies about adverbials analyzed their influence in initial stages, and how they prefer using lexical cues to communicate grammatical aspect rather than using aspectual morphology (Van Patten, 2004). Van Patten noted that learners rely on lexical cues to process form and transmit aspectual meaning. This is basically due to the high processing cost of inflectional morphology and the more direct access to the aspectual semantic information through these lexical words. This strategy is already used in their
native-English language. As learners improve proficiency and command of aspectual verbal morphology, their reliance on adverbials might diminish or other functions to adverbials might be incorporated.

In one hand, some researchers have favored the conclusion that adverbials are mainly crucial at beginning levels of acquisition before morphology is completely acquired (Miesel, 1987). In this respect, Bardovi-Harlig (1992), analyzed written and oral production data to test the role of adverbials in advanced learners after verbal morphology has been acquired. Her findings show a decrease of adverbial use as proficiency increased performing similarly to the native speakers. She concluded that there was no major role of adverbials to assign aspectual meaning in advanced learners as it is for beginning learners.

On the other hand, results obtained in Lubbers-Quesada (2006) from intermediate and advanced learners’ oral narratives show that intermediate levels use adverbials less frequently and when used they replace aspectual morphology; whereas, for advanced learners reliance on adverbials was mainly to convey complex temporal sentences in addition to their use of aspectual morphology. She found an adverbial-aspectual morphology relationship for advanced learners, adverbials of frequency was paired with imperfect and temporal adverbials of position with preterite. This contrasts to intermediate learners who did not find any type of relationship between adverbials and morphology.

Further research that described the role of these same types of adverbials in aspect selection was carried out by Baker (2009). She analyzed data of intermediate and advanced learners of Spanish using 5 comprehension cloze passages with temporal and
frequency adverbials and 5 passages without adverbials. Participants had to select preterite or imperfect to fill a blank in an online task. Baker found the presence of adverbials increased the accurate selection of aspectual morphology across all levels of proficiency. However, their absence decreased the likelihood to select the accurate aspectual morphology mainly for intermediate learners followed by advanced learners. In addition, adverbials of duration and frequency were related to the use of imperfect more with all levels of learners than with native speakers. She concluded that adverbials were decisive to select aspectual morphology in learners, while morphology was the determining factor to comprehend the adverbial reading in native speakers. She further noted that her findings support the DPTH by intermediate learners since preterite was preferred in contexts where imperfect were expected in the absence of adverbials. The fact that imperfect morphology and adverbials of frequency and duration were related in learners’ performance can be due to the pedagogical conventions to teach the use of these adverbials with imperfect in beginning levels of instruction, also explained in detail previously in this chapter.

**Lubbers-Quesada (2013)**

This study researches the acquisition of grammatical aspect morphology in relationship with inherent lexical aspect and adverbial influence. It is specifically analyzed how learners and native speakers of Spanish combine preterite and imperfect with telic and atelic events in the presence of adverbials. Lubbers-Quesada following prior studies (Baker, 2009; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006) examined the influence of adverbials in the selection of grammatical aspect morphology and its interaction with lexical aspect. She adapted the restrictions of combinations of the four types adverbials in Dietrich et al.,
(1995) (see Chapter 3 for details) with the classes of lexical verbs provided in Dowty (1999) and adapted it to Spanish as shown in Table 10 (Lubbers-Quesada, 2013, p. 67).

Table 10

Restrictions of adverbial types in relation to verb class and morphology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverbial type</th>
<th>Verb Class</th>
<th>Verb morphology</th>
<th>Non-prototypical</th>
<th>Verb morphology</th>
<th>Aspectual shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAP position</td>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Atelic</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Becomes bounded telic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAD duration</td>
<td>Atelic</td>
<td>Preterite/imperfect</td>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Duration of result/repetition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAD time span</td>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAQ quantity</td>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>Preterite/imperfect</td>
<td>Atelic</td>
<td>Preterite/imperfect</td>
<td>Bounded/series bounded telic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC contrast</td>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>Preterite/imperfect</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 shows a list of restrictions that license the combination of preterite and imperfect with telic and atelic events in the presence of specific adverbials. For instance, TAP adverbials (ayer/yesterday) are supposed to be felicitous with the prototypical combination of telic verbs (salir/leave) and preterite. TAP adverbials can also be combined with atelic verbs (trabajar/work) and preterite; however, they are considered as a non-prototypical combination that originates an aspectual shift or coercion which makes the verb to be read as bounded telic due to the preterite morphology. The other TAD, and TAQ adverbials also have a prototypical combination but can also be combined with non-prototypical types of verbs to originate an aspectual shift.

The purpose of this study was to find out how Dowty’s restriction of adverbials and verbal classes applies with Spanish learners’ oral narratives and further investigate the interrelation of aspectual shifts with adverbials and lexical verbs. In order to shed
light to these questions, Lubbers-Quesada used the oral personal narratives of Spanish learners at three proficiency levels. She analyzed all verbs in preterite, imperfect and present and classified them as telic (achievement and accomplishment), activity and stative (subsequently joined in an atelic category). All adverbials were classified according to Dietrich’s distribution of adverbials. Then the codification was performed based on verbal class, verbal morphology and adverbial type.

Results show that for temporal adverbials of position (TAP), adverbials were mainly used in prototypical structures, telic with preterite across all levels of proficiency. Aspectual shifts were also attempted across proficiency levels, however, only native speakers produced them in an acceptable structure. The aspectual shifts attempted were atelic with preterite and imperfect and telic with imperfect. TAP were associated with preterite with adverbial classes, in contrast to native speakers who used all combinations of types of verbs with preterite and imperfect, signaling that morphology is the factor that take precedence when assigning grammatical aspect.

Temporal adverbials of duration (TAD) as predicted by Dowty’s restriction, (atelic predicates with preterite/imperfect) were prototypically used across proficiency levels exclusively with preterite. The other prototypical option to combine atelic with imperfect was restricted for only advanced learners and native speakers. In addition, aspectual shifts were only produced as acceptable by native speakers. One more time, there is a constant pattern that morphology is the primary tool to communicate grammatical aspect in native speakers and not the adverbial as occur with learners.

The results for temporal adverbials of quantity (TAQ) show that the prototypical use of telic with preterite or imperfect did not occur as expected and only in limited
occasions with native speakers. The non-prototypical use of atelic with preterite and imperfect was the preferred combination, with imperfect for beginning and intermediate learners, and preterite with advanced learners and native speakers. The use of imperfect with TAQ such as frecuentemente/frequently, muchas veces/many times, is usually introduced in the classroom to prompt the use of imperfect, that might have influenced in the selection of this specific combination in learners with lower levels of proficiency.

Results of temporal adverbials of contrast (TAC) show that the prototypical use of telic events and preterite (sometimes imperfect to signal repetition or habituality) was used only for basic and intermediate learners. Advanced learners used TACs with atelic verbs only and preterite/imperfect; whereas native speakers produced all four combinations.

Lubbers-Quesada concluded that native speakers are not constraint by prototypical combinations of adverbials, verbal class and morphology since their main resource to express grammatical aspect is morphology. Whereas learners seem to be restricted by both the type of adverbial and the verbal class in order to select morphology. However, this trend dissipates as proficiency increases. Lubbers-Quesada emphasized the role of adverbials to select aspectual morphology in beginning and intermediate learners and explained that it might be due to the influence of the learners’ L1 strategy to rely on lexical cues to comprehend the aspectual meaning of verbs. These results also show that Dowty’s restrictions do not apply completely to the actual use of native speakers and even learners since other combinations that are not mentioned in these restrictions are used.
The impact of Lubbers-Quesada (2013) for this dissertation is that it provides the evidence that adverbials might influence in the decision to select grammatical aspect in participants at beginning levels and that could be a sign that they are using an L1 strategy to decide for preterite or imperfect. In addition, it seems to exist a correspondance between instruction and grammatical aspect assignment. The combination of some types of adverbials (TAP, TAC) with telic verbs and preterite as in (2 a, b) and adverbials of TAQ with atelic verbs and imperfect (3 a) are found in textbooks of Spanish instructions.

(2) a) Juan compró un libro ayer
     Juan buy(PRET) a book Yesterday
     John bought a book yesterday

     b) Derrepente Juan llegó a la escuela
     Suddenly John arrive(PRET) to the school
     Suddenly John arrived to the school

(3) a) Juan frecuentemente revisaba su correo electrónico
     John frequently checked(IM) his e-mail
     John frequently checked out his e-mail

The only adverbial that combined with atelic verbs and preterite was TAD (duration) but was used only by beginners, advanced learners used atelic verbs with imperfect which signal a habitual meaning. This adverbials are taught to be combined with preterite for episodic events as in (4); however, the habitual meaning as well as the continous meaning (combined with another subordinated sentence) used with imperfect seem to be acquired in latter stages of proficiency as in (5) and (6).

(4) Juan manejó por una hora
     John drive(PRE) for one hour
     John drove for one hour

(5) Juan manejaba toda la noche (habitual meaning)
     John drive(IM) all the night
     John used to drive all night long
(6) Juan manejaba cuando se chocó con otro carro
John drive(IMP) when crash(PRE) with other car
John was driving when he crashed against another car

In addition, Lubbers-Quesada argues that the tendency to use more preterite than imperfect not only in beginning levels but intermediate and advanced ones as well corroborates prior studies that support the DPTH (Salaberry 1999, 2000; Camps 2002; Quesada 2006).

The second part of this chapter provides a summary of prior studies that contribute with important findings that shape up the design of this dissertation and will provide a reference of comparison with it. The main elements that were taken away from each of these prior studies are:

a) the DPTH hypothesis. Salaberry (2003) explicitly tests this hypothesis using comprehension tasks. Other studies such as Baker (2009), Lubbers-Quesada (2006, 2013), and Montrul and Slabakova (2000) support a preference of preterite at basic and intermediate levels of proficiency.

b) Comprehension tasks. A similar task used in Montrul and Slabakova (2000) testing habitual and episodic readings as well as stative and eventive readings will be incorporated in this dissertation. Baker (2009) also tested adverbial influence with comprehension task and it provides a reference on how influential adverbials are at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency.

c) Adverbial influence. Baker (2009) and Lubbers-Quesada (2013) provides valuable information on the degree of significance to select or assign aspectual morphology and their interaction with lexical aspect at three levels of proficiency. Even though Lubbers-Quesada (2013) tested adverbial
influence with oral production tasks, her findings provide a perception of the trend followed by L2 learners to be compared with data from comprehension tasks.
CHAPTER 6

THE STUDY

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The acquisition of L1 aspect has been extensively studied across languages and prior research has provided valuable referential information to investigate whether learners behave similarly to native speakers when acquiring aspect in a second language. As we have seen in the first chapters of this dissertation, researchers have approached these studies from various theoretical perspectives, incorporating a large number of influential variables, and a wide variety of research designs. In spite of this extensive research, no final postulates have been adopted, and there are still questions of how grammatical aspect is acquired (morphologically, semantically, and developmentally) – and why these preterite/imperfect and morpho-semantic contrasts are not totally acquired at advanced levels of proficiency. For these reasons, there is still ongoing research continuously carried out to respond to these and other relevant questions about grammatical aspect acquisition.

Prior studies in which developmental sequences were proposed, have shown some type of support for either the LAH or the DPTH. There is, however, no conclusive support due to variety of results obtained in these studies. Even though a wide variety of tasks have been incorporated in the research design, results have not always shown similar outcomes for the same type of tasks due to the complex interaction with other intervening variables such as: type of participants, proficiency level, educational settings, pedagogical procedures, the variety of Spanish textbooks, among others.
Justification of this Study

Taking into consideration prior studies that analyzed the emergence of preterite/imperfect morphology and the influence of adverbials in the comprehension and assignment of grammatical aspect, this study attempts to contribute to the research of grammatical aspect by incorporating variables that were studied in separate prior studies (Lubbers-Quesada, 2013; Salaberry, 2003; Montrul & Slabakova, 2000). This dissertation presents a cross-sectional study that analyzes experimental data and quantitative data.

There are three main elements incorporated into this dissertation.

1. The analysis of the emergence of preterite/imperfect morphology within the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salaberry, 1999) framework.

2. The impact of comprehension tasks, instead of oral production tasks, to analyze grammatical aspect morphology emergence.

3. The role of adverbials at all levels of proficiency when selecting grammatical aspect with comprehension tasks.

First, prior studies, even though they were not designed to explicitly identify a default marker, they have shown that there is a preference for a default past tense (Baker, 2009; Bergstrom, 1995; Camps, 2002; Comajoan, 2001; Dominguez et al, 2013, Granda, 2004; Hasbún, 1995; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006, 2013; Salaberry, 1999, 2002, 2003; Schell, 2000, Montrul & Slabakova, 2000; Salabakova & Montrul, 2003). Most of these studies documented that preterite was the preferred morphology as a means of marking past tense and not aspect. This was initially associated with beginning learners, but extended even to advanced learners to account for results with this preference (Salaberry, 2008). In order to test the developmental sequence proposed by Salaberry (1999) in the DPTH, this
study includes participants with three levels of proficiency. In addition, the tasks only compare episodic and habitual readings while most previous studies have analyzed continuous and episodic readings. The fact that episodic and habitual readings are represented with past tense only in English while continuous and episodic readings are represented with progressive and past tense respectively may be more challenging for learners to find an analogical correspondence with their Spanish aspectual counterparts.

Second, most prior studies analyzed grammatical aspect with oral or written production data (narratives, story retell, fill-in the blanks). But, few studies used comprehension data such as grammaticality judgment tasks, multiple choice tasks, and conjunction tests among others (Montrul & Slabakova, 2000; Slabakova & Montrul, 2003). One of the differences between production tasks and comprehension tasks is that the former has time constraints that derivate in a high processing demand –which is translated by focusing more in content than in form. In contrast, comprehension tasks provide more time to monitor the morphology to be chosen providing a better view of the underlying grammatical aspect knowledge. There are two views on this. Shirai (2004) argues that the use of paper-and-pencil tasks tends to provide support to a lexical aspect hypothesis, due to the additional processing time available. But Salaberry and Ayoun (2005) challenge that view by arguing that overall beginning learners rely on a default marker independently of the lexical influence, due to a less systematic use of past tense morphology (mainly due to their inexperience with this morphology). The use of comprehension tasks is not free of criticism (Salaberry, 2008), given that most of these tasks basically use sentences –sometimes isolated from a bigger context –and do not represent the real competence of tense-aspect morphology. In spite of these drawback
arguments, it is of interest to find out how learners process aspectual morphology, and learn if they really rely on a default morphology or lexical aspect with comprehension tasks.

Third, based on the assumption that beginning learners rely on their L1 strategy to select grammatical aspect and that at initial stages of acquisition only past tense is marked and not aspect –this study can provide good insight into the degree of adverbial influence as a lexico-semantic tool to interpret and select Spanish grammatical aspect morphology across three levels of proficiency. This will also help analyze the effect of instruction that combines the use of adverbials with the application of rules for preterite and imperfect selection. The design of this study will allow observation of the magnitude of adverbial influence in learners’ results when compared with the native speakers’ results.

Based on prior findings, the main purpose of this study is to continue testing the validity of DPTH. This requires analysis of the degree to which learners rely on adverbials as an L1 strategy to assign grammatical aspect, and the use of a default marker as a means to mark tense and not aspect across all levels of proficiency. This study analyzes this hypothesis with comprehension tasks, in order to expand prior studies that support a default marker by primarily using mainly production tasks either directly (Salaberry, 1999, 2002, 2003; Dinan, 2007) or indirectly (Baker, 2009; Bergstrom, 1995; Camps, 2002; Comajoan, 2001; Dominguez et al, 2013, Granda, 2004; Hasbún, 1995; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006, 2013; Schell, 2000). In addition, the fact that English habitual and episodic readings of eventive verbs are not morphologically overt and do not have a morphological correspondence in Spanish, might create a point of confusion that would
promote the use of L1 strategies to differentiate preterite from imperfect morphology. In this scenario, the influence of adverbials is also analyzed.

**Questions and Hypotheses**

This study poses the following research questions:

1. **Can the DPTH be supported by testing the interpretation of grammatical aspect with episodic and habitual readings of eventive verbs and stative verbs across three levels of proficiency?**

**Hypothesis:** Beginning learners are expected to overgeneralize habitual and eventive readings with preterite, regardless of the verbal class (including statives). This will be due to the fact that past tense marking is independent of the inherent lexical aspect of the verb. In other words, learners will not check the aspectual feature in the spec of AspP, and will raise directly to the spec of TP to check past tense. As proficiency increases, the past tense morphological marking will be dependent on the inherent lexical aspectual value of the verbs stated in the DPTH. Learners are expected to perform with higher accuracy with prototypical sentences than with coerced ones. Data is limited to the sentential level and not the discursive one.

2. **Do temporal adverbials facilitate the interpretation of grammatical aspect (preterite/imperfect) with episodic and habitual readings for eventive verbs?**

**Hypothesis:** Temporal adverbial influence may be strong in beginning learners at selecting grammatical aspect. Temporal adverbials taught for habitual reading (e.g., usualmente/usually, frecuentemente/frequently, etc) may trigger imperfect. For episodic reading (ayer/yesterday, anoche/last night, etc.), temporal adverbials may trigger preterite. If there is a significant difference between the acceptance rate of acceptable and
unacceptable sentences, it can suggest that adverbials influence grammatical aspect selection. On the contrary, if no significant difference is found between these rates, then this can suggest that adverbials do no facilitate grammatical aspect selection –since acceptable and unacceptable sentences have been accepted at a similar rate. As for intermediate and advanced learners, even though morphology may become more influential, adverbials will continue to play a relevant role in aspectual selection. This will be noticed in the high acceptance of coerced verbs: for example, achievement and accomplishment verbs combined with imperfect to have a habitual readings and state verbs coerced to achievement verbs combined with preterite to have episodic readings.

As for state verbs, for intermediate and advanced learners, adverbials may mostly influence episodic readings (coercion) of those stative verbs that became achievement verbs due to coercion. For state verbs, adverbials may not be relevant but redundant due to their stative nature.

**Methodology and Procedure**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were composed of two groups:

1. A control group of fifteen native-Spanish speakers who grew up in Mexico, Chile and Peru and moved to the Southwest of the United States as adults.

2. A group of twenty-eight learners of Spanish enrolled in Spanish courses at a large Southwestern university. All of these participants are native speakers of English, and were recruited from three different Spanish courses. These three courses representing three different levels of proficiency: basic SPA102, intermediate SPA202, and advanced SPA314. These are the courses in which the contrast
between preterite and imperfect is taught. None of the participants are heritage speakers of Spanish or any other Romance language. Two individuals spoke Navajo and one Arabic from birth—while one learned Italian as an adult. All were exposed to Spanish after the age of 7. A total of 10 advanced learners, 10 intermediate learners, and 8 beginning learners participated in the tasks. The proficiency level required in each Spanish course involved in this study was used as the first reference of the participants’ level of proficiency. Other referential means were also used to classify a participant under a specific level of proficiency:

1. The Wisconsin test was used as a proficiency test.
2. Participants were also requested to self-rate their proficiency according to their confidence, knowledge and experience with the language.
3. Participants were also asked about their time of Spanish instruction at secondary and college level. All participants had exposure to Spanish in educational settings between for a time of period that ranged between 1.6 to 4 years. I
4. In addition, all participants were recruited from only SPA102, SPA202, and SPA314. This provides a proficiency level determined by the university’s standards of proficiency level classification according to the Spanish course assigned. Following Salaberry (2003), it was assumed that the two course levels between courses (SPA102, SPA202, and SPA314) provides this discrimination of proficiency levels.

These variables together were considered sufficient to classify a participant under a specific level of proficiency.
**Materials and Design**

All participants were provided a written consent form which informed them of their rights with reference to the study. Their participation in the questionnaires and tasks was considered their consent to be part of this study.

Native-English speaking participants also filled out a demographic questionnaire surveying their language background such as exposure to Spanish before the age of 6, years of Spanish instruction, time spent in a Spanish-speaking country or study abroad, time of exposure to Spanish out of the classroom and a self-evaluation on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the highest proficiency in Spanish. Participants who were heritage speakers of Spanish and/or were exposed to Spanish before the age of 6 were discarded from the study. Native-Spanish speakers also filled out a language background questionnaire about the length of stay in their country of origin before immigrating to the United States –and if they were exposed to English at a young age. All participants lived in their countries until at least the age of 20.

A short version of the Wisconsin Spanish proficiency test was administered to the Spanish learners only. This is a multiple choice test with 35 questions; the score range is 0 to 35 points –but it does not have a fixed score to delimit each level of proficiency. Then, in order to determine the proficiency level, it was necessary to triangulate with at least two more assessments. In this study, a self-evaluation of their Spanish proficiency, the years of Spanish education and the level of Spanish course were also considered to classify a participant under a specific level of proficiency. Beginning learners scored from 0 to 18, intermediate learners scored from 19 to 26, and advanced learners from 27 to 35. Two intermediate learners scored 27 and 28, but they were kept in the intermediate
level since both of them were enrolled in SPA202, their proficiency self-rate was 2 and 3, and an average of only two semesters of Spanish instruction. In addition, an ANOVA showed a main effect of proficiency on groups, $F(2, 25) = 57.91, p < .00001$. See Table 11 for details.

Table 11. Variables used to determine proficiency level of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency level</th>
<th>Course SPA</th>
<th>Proficiency test means and ranges</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Self-rate evaluation means 0 to 5</th>
<th>Secondary instruction years</th>
<th>University instruction semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>29.9 of 35 (27-34)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.5 (3-4)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2.2 (1-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>23.7 of 35 (20-28)</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8 (2-4)</td>
<td>2.6 (0-4)</td>
<td>2.3 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>15.5 of 35 (18-10)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.9 (1-3)</td>
<td>2.2 (0-4)</td>
<td>1.6 (1-2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n=8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two main comprehension tasks were used: A truth-value judgement task and a grammaticality judgment task.

Tasks

Truth-Value Judgment Task

This task tests the semantic interpretation of aspect and its morphological realization. The model of this comprehension task was taken from Montrul & Slabakova (2000). It consists of 40 written short stories, with each story followed by two sentences $a$) and $b$) that summarize the idea of the story. The verb in sentence $a$) is presented in imperfective, and the verb in sentence $b$) in preterite. The instructions indicate that participants must select only one of the sentences as true, based on their comprehension of the story. The stories contain verbs in present, present perfect or present progressive as possible—in order to avoid priming the participants of the aspectual morphology required
as true. In addition, no adverbials are included in sentences a) and b) that could prompt the use of one specific aspectual morphology.

The purpose of this task is to answer Question 1. The stories provide the information needed to select an event as habitual or episodic. Two examples of this task is shown in (1), sentence b) is the true sentence since the story describes an event that occurred one time only. In (2), sentence a) is true since the story describes a habitual event that has been done for the last 10 years.

(1) Hoy los estudiantes juegan un partido de vóleibol. El juego está muy difícil Pero finalmente obtienen el primer lugar. [The students are playing a volleyball game today. It has been giving them a hard time but they finally obtain the first place]

a) Los estudiantes ganaban
   The students win(IMP)
   The students used to win.

b) Los estudiantes ganaron.
   The students win(PRET)
   The students won.

(2) Carol ha participado en la maratón de Nueva York durante los últimos 10 años. Solo este año no puede correr porque está embarazada (pregnant). [Carol has participated in the New York marathon for the last 10 years. This year alone, she is not able to run it because she is pregnant]

a) Carol corría la maratón
   Carol run(IMP) the marathon
   Carol used to run the marathon

b) Carol corrió la maratón
   Carol run(PRET) the marathon
   Carol ran the marathon

These forty stories are divided in four blocks of ten stories per block. Each block has one of the four lexical verb classes. At the same time, each block has five stories with the true sentence in imperfect/habitual reading, and the other five stories with the true
sentence in preterite/episodic reading. This means that half of the sentences had the prototypical morphology associated with a specific lexical verb, and the other half was coerced. Then a total of 20 habitual readings and 20 episodic readings are true. It is important to note that state verbs inherently express stativity and they are used in this study as a way to control the significance of adverbials for participants –and to have some evidence of lexical aspectual influence at basic levels of proficiency.

All stories are original to this dissertation. The vocabulary words incorporated in the stories were part of the Spanish textbook Plazas (Hershberge, et al. 2011), used in the basic course SPA102. Some of the words in the story which are not part of the vocabulary from the textbook have a written translation in parenthesis next to the word. Ten additional stories are presented as distractors. The format of these stories is the same as the testing ones. However, the verbs in the two sentences a) and b) are in future, present tense, present/past progressive or past perfect, as in (3). The true sentence is b).

All stories are presented in a randomized sequence. See Appendix 2 for complete tasks.

(3) Julio es un excelente chef. La comida que cocina es deliciosa y siempre recibe premios (prizes) en todos los concursos (competitions). Mañana será el concurso de navidad. [Julio is an excellent chef. The food he cooks is delicious and he always earns prizes in every competition he participates. The Christmas competition will be tomorrow]

a) Julio gana un premio en la competencia de cocina
   Julio win(PRES) a prize in the competition of cooking
   Julio wins a prize in the cooking competition

b) Julio ganará el primer premio en la competencia de cocina
   Julio win(FUT) a prize in the competition of cooking
   Julio will win a prize in the cooking competition

Five additional stories are presented before the task: the first two as examples to model the task, and three as practice stories.
In order to classify the verbs into the four aspectual classes, two operational tests used in Salaberry (2003, p.565) were also used in this study. One test distinguishes stative verbs – and the question asked was, *if the verb cannot have a habitual interpretation it is a stative verb*. The second test distinguished telicity, atelic (activity) vs telic (accomplishment, achievements) – and the question was, *if you stop in the middle of V-ing have you done the act of V?* If the answer is no, then you have an activity verb. If the answer is yes, then the verb is telic. However, since in this dissertation four verbal classes are used, those two telic verbs need to be distinguished as achievement and accomplishment verbs. For this purpose, punctuality was tested. If the verb has some duration, then it is accomplishment. But if the verb has no duration and it is an instant event, then it is an achievement verb. The selection of verbs were based on the vocabulary found in the Spanish textbook *Plazas* (Hershberge, et. al., 2011, pp. 198-258) used by participants at beginning level SPA102.

**Grammaticality Judgment Task.**

The model of this task was taken from Perez-Leroux, et al. (2008). The main purpose is to test the influence of adverbials, when judging the acceptability of eventive verbs with episodic and habitual readings. The grammaticality judgment task attempts to provide data to respond to Question 2, but also will provide some evidence to respond to Question 1. This task tests whether adverbials facilitate the interpretation of these episodic and habitual readings. Participants must read sentences and judge them using a five-point Likert scale detailed as (2) *totally acceptable*, (1) *acceptable*, (0) *=unsure*, (-1) *unacceptable* and (-2) *totally unacceptable*. 

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There is a total number of 80 sentences including distractors. 40 sentences are totally acceptable and 40 totally unacceptable. Sentences are grouped in blocks of 4 with episodic/preterite reading and 4 with habitual/imperfect reading for each verbal class making a sub-total of 32 sentences. 8 additional sentences are totally acceptable and used as distractors that include other tenses. The remaining 40 sentences were designed to be judged as totally unacceptable, since the adverbial contradicts the morphological concept of the verb. For instance, (4) shows an achievement verb with episodic meaning in preterite; therefore, 2 is expected to be selected in contrast to (5) which attempts to convey a episodic meaning in imperfect, so -2 is expected to be selected on the Likert scale.

(4) La niña se cayó en el río el lunes pasado.  -2 -1 0 1 2
The girl fall(PRET) in the river the Monday past
The girl fell off into the river last Monday

(5) La niña se caía en el río el lunes pasado.  -2 -1 0 1 2
The girl fall(IMP) in the river the Monday past
The girl used to fall off into the river last Monday

Two types of adverbials in the classification of Dietrich et al. (1995) are considered in this task. For episodic readings with preterite morphology, adverbials of position were included: ayer/yesterday, anoche /last night, anteayer /the day before yesterday, and el viernes pasado /last Friday. For habitual readings, adverbials of quantity included: usualmente /usually, habitualmente /habitually, frecuentemente /frequently, regularmente /regularly, generalmente /generally, en mi niñez, de niño /in my childhood, antes /in the past. The Likert scale measurement used in this task will assist in perceiving the acceptability of the combinations of preterite and imperfect morphology with
adverbials. The different degrees of acceptability can provide a more refined perception of influence of adverbials in selecting aspectual morphology.

The true-value judgment and the grammaticality judgment tasks include the four verbal classes. The primary reason is this: in order to support or reject the default past tense hypothesis, it is necessary to investigate the accuracy of responses in all verbal classes. Even though state verbs can only have a stative reading, they are also included for comparison purposes.

**Procedure**

All data was collected by the end of the spring semester of 2015. Participants were recruited through flyers and written announcements in the bulletin board at the university, and short presentations in their Spanish classrooms. Participants took the test individually in a room used for these purposes. They were given a paper packet that contained a consent form, a background questionnaire, the two testing tasks and the Wisconsin proficiency test. They were guided through the packet for any potential questions. All instructions were provided in written form and orally in English by the researcher. Participants were also provided with a pencil to mark their answers. The entire process of their participation lasted approximately 60 minutes, after which they received a nominal monetary retribution for their participation. As for native speakers, they were also recruited on campus and by word of mouth in the Hispanic community in the Southwestern city where all data was collected. The tasks were carried out in the presence of the researcher, in case any questions arise.

The tasks were administered during the last days of the semester and participants of SPA102, SPA202, and SPA314 had already been explicitly exposed to the difference
between preterite and imperfect during the first part of the semester. This provides certain control that these grammatical points were taught before testing. The researcher was not the Spanish instructor of any of the participants at any moment.

**Codification**

The truth-value judgement task was coded as follows: 1 point was assigned for each true sentence that was selected, and zero points if it was not selected. The highest possible score was 50 points. However, only 40 points were included in the statistics, since 10 of them are distractors. All points were first grouped according to each verbal class per participant; then, each participant’s results were grouped by proficiency level. Means and standard deviations were obtained, and paired t-tests and ANOVAS were conducted to compare accuracy between preterite and imperfect by proficiency level and across all four verbal classes.

The grammaticality judgment task was coded as follows: out of the 80 items, only 64 items were considered for coding, the other 16 were distractors. 32 were to be totally acceptable and 32 totally unacceptable. The Likert scale was transformed to a score from 1 to 4, (-2) becoming (1), (-1) becoming (2), (0) did not obtain points, (1) becoming (3), and (2) becoming (4). Points used for the codification are, at one extreme, (4) totally accepted and on the other end of the spectrum (1) totally rejected. Points were grouped according to the type of verbal class and the proficiency level. For this specific task, ungrammatical sentences were also examined to see –in a more extensive magnitude –the impact of adverbials in selecting aspectual morphology, not only with learners but also with native speakers of Spanish.
All materials, design and procedure were approved by the University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB).

**Results**

Results from the two tasks are presented based on the analysis of two sets of data, the truth-value judgment task and the grammaticality judgment task. This data were obtained from Spanish learners at three levels of proficiency and a control group of native speakers. The data were classified into the four Vendlerian verbal classes and grouped by proficiency level.

**Truth-Value Judgment Task**

Results are analyzed by proficiency level. Habitual readings will be represented by imperfect, and episodic readings by preterite. This contrast of preterite and imperfect is carried out across all four verbal classes. The task is designed to investigate the existence of a preferred aspectual morphology across three proficiency levels. This will be compared to prior studies which support the emergence of morphology as a past tense marking alone (Salaberry, 1999, 2000, 2003). For this purpose, the results of beginning learners is crucial. Combined with the performance of intermediate and advanced learners; however, results will provide a pattern that learners follow when tested with comprehension tasks.

Table 12 shows the results from the analysis of the responses provided by participants. All accurate responses were given 1 point, and the mean was obtained per proficiency level for each of the four verbal classes. All means were transformed to a percentage value.
Table 12

Task 1: Mean percentage accuracy in the Truth-value judgment task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Class</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Proficiency Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Adv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1 provides visual representation of the results of table 12.

Chart 1

Task 1: Chart of the accuracy mean in the Truth-value judgment task

A 4x2x4 repeated-measures ANOVA was performed on the data. Verb type (state, activity, accomplishment and episodic) and tense (preterite versus imperfect) were the within-subject factor. The ANOVA indicates a main effect of verb type, $F(3, 633) <$
5.520, \( p = .001 \), as well as a significant interaction of verb type and group, \( F (9,633) = 2.191, p<.05 \). A significant interaction of tense and group was found \( F(3, 211) = 8.208, p<.0001 \). This effect is due to the high accuracy of advanced learners and native speakers in selecting preterite and imperfect as expected.

A breakdown of the results based on proficiency level and verbal classes was carried out and planned paired t-tests further revealed that beginning learners accepted more imperfect than preterite forms with state verbs, \( t(39) = 3.122, p <.003 \), and intermediate learners accepted more preterite than imperfect forms with achievement verbs, \( t(49) =3.070, p<.005 \). Advanced learners did not show any significant difference, while native speakers performed better with preterite with state verbs, \( t(74) = 2.786, p<.01 \), accomplishment verbs, \( t(74) = -2.042, p< .045 \), and achievement verbs, \( t(74) = 3.754, p< .000 \).

The descriptive data in means show some trend, beginning learners tend to be more accurate with imperfect (61%) than preterite (48.5%). In contrast, intermediate learners tend to perform better with preterite (81.5%) than imperfect (69%) across all four verbal classes (see Chart 2).
Chart 2

Task 1: Mean accuracy of preterite and imperfect by proficiency level

![Bar chart showing mean accuracy on preterite and imperfect by proficiency level]

These results mirror the findings of Slabakova and Montrul (2003) for intermediate learners who also performed higher with preterite in episodic readings than imperfect with habitual readings. These researchers used the same task as was used in this dissertation. Finally, advanced learners tend to perform very similarly in both preterite (92%) and imperfect (94%).

A detailed analysis of the significant difference found in beginning learners with state verbs reveals that the lower accuracy with episodic readings (preterite) occurred with verbs such as saber, poder and gustar. These verbs are highly associated with imperfect at beginning levels of proficiency due to the explicit instruction in classrooms. In other words, this trend makes sense as learners are selecting the imperfective morphology regardless of the semantic coercion triggered by the perfective morphology in task 1. Intermediate learners in Montrul and Slabakova (2000) tended to perform with
higher accuracy with these types of verbs in the imperfect form as well. See the illustration of these findings in chart 3.

Chart 3. Task 1: Accuracy means for state verbs with stative reading (imperfect) and episodic reading⁷ (preterite).

![Chart showing accuracy means for state verbs with stative and episodic readings.]

Interestingly, beginners’ accuracy with habitual readings/imperfect is higher even though the verbs used in this reading in this task (costar/to cost, respetar/to respect, conocer/to know, comprender/to understand, olvidarse/to forget) are usually presented with less frequency in Spanish textbooks than the ones used with episodic readings/preterite. There is a possibility that learners overused imperfect as a strategy to select habitual vs episodic meaning, not necessarily discriminating between them in semantic terms.

This tendency to choose imperfect across all verbal classes shown in the descriptive data suggests that beginning learners use imperfect as a default marker of

⁷ State verbs have inherently stative readings if coerced to an episodic reading, the verbal nature changes to an eventive verb.
aspect. The results of this task for beginning learners are similar to Salaberry’s (2003) findings for personal narratives. His report showed that beginning learners used more imperfect than preterite across all verbal classes, which gave him reason to assume that imperfect was competing as the default marker. However, this has not been supported by subsequent studies (Dinan, 2007) using the same research design. This preference for imperfect can be due to instruction effects since the contrast between preterite and imperfect had been taught for the first time shortly before the data collection of this dissertation.

Although only accuracy with achievement verbs is significantly different in the intermediate learners, the descriptive analysis shows that participants tended to be more accurate with preterite (81.5%) over imperfect (69%) across all verbal classes. These results seem to be close to the findings in Montrul and Slabakova (2000) for their intermediate learners. They argue that at this point, intermediate learners have acquired the notion that preterite is associated with episodic readings but the imperfect semantics is still developing at a slower pace. There is no evidence of morphological assignment triggered by lexical aspect at this level but a subtle preference for preterite as a default marker.

The descriptive data show that advanced learners perform similarly with preterite (92%) and imperfect (94%). This can suggest that learners are influenced by the lexical aspect value of the verb for prototypical meaning, while at the same time being able to accept coerced sentences to a same rate. This can imply that advanced learners might have progressively acquired the semantic differences between habitual and episodic readings of most verbal classes with no preference for one specific morphological form.
Native speakers in general did not perform at 100% of accuracy. These similar results for native speakers have been reported in Perez-Leroux et al. (2008) and Slabakova and Montrul (2002, 2003). Native speakers performed significantly higher with episodic readings (97%) than with habitual readings (87%) (See Chart 2). Their performance seems to be mostly guided by the context of the narratives. Even though the two sentences with preterite and imperfect provide a clue of the aspectual meaning, it seems to be insufficient for them to categorically decide for one of them. Instead, it appears that a single sentence with no additional information other than aspectual morphology provides room for speculations to validate the non-expected response.

**Grammaticality Judgment Task**

The purpose of this task was to examine the influence of adverbials at selecting grammatical aspect morphology. In addition, this task provided some evidence of a morphological preference - either preterite or imperfect- by analyzing acceptance of grammatical sentences and acceptance of ungrammatical sentences. The results of the acceptability of preterite and imperfect across lexical verbal classes are shown in table 13 and Chart 4. Note that 4 points indicate that sentences were totally acceptable, while 1 point indicates totally unacceptance. Therefore, a value closer to 4 indicates that participants accepted these sentences, whereas a value closer to 1 indicates that participants rejected these sentences. Table 13 shows the means and standard deviations of acceptability rate for acceptable sentences. Sentences are considered acceptable when adverbial contradicts the morphological concept of the verb of preterite (episodic) and imperfect (habitual).
Table 13.

Task 2: Acceptability rate of acceptable habitual and episodic readings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Class</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Native</th>
<th>Adv.</th>
<th>Interm.</th>
<th>Basic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of a repeated-measures ANOVA indicate a main effect of tense $F(1, 168) = 9.285, p < .005$. Two interactions proved significant verb type and tense $F(3, 504) = 5.440, p < .001$, and verb type, tense and group $F(9, 504) = 2.239, p < .05$. This effect is due to the high acceptance rate of advanced learners and native speakers in selecting preterite over imperfect for the tense variable. Selecting aspect with activity-imperfect for beginners and advanced learners and accomplishment-preterite verbs for intermediate and advanced learners also had a significant effect across at least three of the four participant groups.

Chart 4 shows a visual representation of the acceptability rates of acceptable habitual and episodic readings.
A breakdown of results based on proficiency level and verbal classes was carried out and planned paired t-tests further revealed that beginning learners significantly accepted more imperfect than preterite forms only with activity verbs only, $t(31) < 2.608$, $p < .05$. Intermediate learners accepted more preterite than imperfect forms only with accomplishment verbs, $t(39) = 2.784$, $p < .01$. Advanced learners also show significant differences by accepting more imperfect than preterite with activity verbs, $t(39) = 2.218$, $p < .05$ and by accepting more preterite than imperfect with accomplishment verbs, $t(39) = 2.276$, $p < .010$. In contrast, native speakers accepted a trend by accepting more preterite than imperfect with all four verbal classes: State verbs, $t(59) = 2.683$, $p < .01$, activity verbs, $t(59) = 3.406$, $p < .001$, accomplishment verbs, $t(59) = 4.128$, $p < .0001$, and achievement verbs, $t(59) = 3.428$, $p < .001$.

The descriptive data in Chart 5 shows that beginning learners tend to rate imperfect slightly higher than preterite. In contrast, intermediate and advanced learners
(as well as native speakers) in general tend to rate preterite higher than imperfect, although no statistical difference was found.

Chart 5

**Task 2: Acceptability rates on episodic (preterite) and habitual (imperfect) readings**

Table 14 presents the acceptance rates of unacceptable sentences. This means the degree in which learners accept a sentence that presents and adverbial that contradicts the morphological concept of the verb of preterite (episodic) and imperfect (habitual). If participants rely on the information provided by both the morphology and the adverbial, these sentences should be highly rejected. Numbers are thus expected to be closer to 1. If participants are accepting these unacceptable sentences as acceptable to some degree, it may suggest that the influence of adverbials in selecting morphology is not strong.
Table 14

Task 2: Acceptability means of unacceptable sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal Class</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Native Mean SD</th>
<th>Adv Mean SD</th>
<th>Intermed Mean SD</th>
<th>Basic Mean SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A U</td>
<td>A U</td>
<td>A U</td>
<td>A U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>2.3 1.00</td>
<td>1.5 0.95</td>
<td>2.1 1.22</td>
<td>2.4 1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>1.4 0.59</td>
<td>1.5 0.90</td>
<td>1.9 1.24</td>
<td>2.8 1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>1.7 0.84</td>
<td>1.2 3.66</td>
<td>1.9 1.23</td>
<td>2.7 1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>1.7 0.90</td>
<td>1.4 0.87</td>
<td>2.3 1.29</td>
<td>2.7 1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>1.5 0.72</td>
<td>1.2 0.33</td>
<td>1.8 1.14</td>
<td>2.3 1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>1.7 0.82</td>
<td>1.3 0.60</td>
<td>2.0 1.18</td>
<td>3.2 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>1.6 0.81</td>
<td>1.1 0.33</td>
<td>1.7 1.12</td>
<td>2.6 1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>1.4 0.52</td>
<td>1.2 0.56</td>
<td>1.8 1.14</td>
<td>2.8 1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 14, all sentences tend to be rejected by all groups, although the basic learners tend to accept these unacceptable sentences more often with numbers ranging between 2.4 and 3.2.

Table 15 shows a combination of data that includes mean rates of acceptable sentences versus unacceptable sentences, allowing for a direct comparison of both types of sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERBAL CLASSES</th>
<th>NATIVE</th>
<th>ADVANCED</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>Episodic</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
<td>Episodic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significant difference between acceptable and unacceptable sentences may suggest that adverbials play a role in selecting aspectual morphology. In order to find out adverbial influence, paired t-tests were conducted. They revealed that beginning learners only show a significant difference between acceptable and unacceptable rates for
accomplishment verbs by not accepting the preterite form with adverbials associated with habitual readings, \( t(31) = 2.598, p < .05 \). The other verbal classes did not show a significant difference for this group. As for intermediate, advanced learners, and native speakers, all verbal classes and aspectual forms showed a significant difference with a \( p < .005 \).

Examples of the similar acceptance rates found in beginning learners are shown in (6) and (7).

(6)  *El avión llegaba tarde ayer
      The airplane arrive(IMP) late yesterday
      The airplane used to arrive late yesterday

(7)  El avión llegó tarde ayer
      The airplane arrive(PRE) late yesterday
      The airplane arrived late yesterday

Participants were able to reject preterite with TAQ adverbials (frecuentemente/frequently, usualmente/usually) with accomplishment verbs denoting habitual meaning; however, they were not able to do that with the other verbal classes and aspectual readings. This tendency to accept both groups of sentences with similar rates may suggest that learners did not have enough experience to distinguish the inflectional morphology of preterite and imperfect in spite of the use of adverbials as a clue. Perez-Leroux et al. (2008) also found this random behavior using this same task to test acceptability of sentence with iterative sentences in intermediate learners. There is a possibility that due to this morphological inexperience, learners performed at chance; however, this is only a speculation.

The descriptive data in chart 5 shows that intermediate learners had similar acceptance rates for habitual and episodic readings, with a tendency to rate episodic readings slightly higher (3.7) than habitual readings (3.5) across all verbal classes. This
tendency opens the possibility to speculate that intermediate learners are prone to rely on preterite as a default aspectual marker.

The statistical difference shown between acceptable and unacceptable sentences in intermediate learners can provide a basis to argue that adverbials play a role in selecting aspect. It is important to highlight that unacceptable sentences were mostly rated below 2 points, except for sentences with activity verbs in imperfect (2.3) with TAP adverbials (ayer/yesterday, anoche/last night) (see (8a, 8b)), and state verbs in preterite (2.1) with TAD adverbials (frecuentemente, usualmente). See examples (9a, 9b).

(8a) *Michael Phelps nadaba anteayer
   Michael Phelps swim(IMP) the night before yesterday
   Michael Phelps used to swim the night before yesterday

(8b) Michael Phelps nadó anteayer
   Michael Phelps swim(PRET) the night before yesterday
   Michael Phelps used to swim the night before yesterday

(9a) María antes conocía a todos mis amigos
   Maria before know(IMP) to all my Friends
   In the past, Maria used to know all my friends

(9b) *María antes conoció a todos mis amigos
   Maria before know(PRET) to all my Friends
   In the past, Maria met all my friends

Advanced leaners accepted grammatical sentences at high rates between 3.6 and 4. Overall, their acceptability rates have been similar with both episodic and habitual readings. This suggests that advanced learners increased their ability to relate semantic knowledge of grammatical aspect with morphology. However, their reliance on adverbials seems to be very strong compared to the results of the other participant groups and even to the native speakers. This can be evidenced by the low acceptance rate of ungrammatical sentences, between 1.1 to 1.5 and their statistical difference across all
verbal classes between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. In general, their acceptance rates suggest that they are able to coerce assisted by the adverbial cues that provide them with the information to select aspectual morphology.

Native speakers scored similar to advanced learners with preterite (3.9); however, acceptable sentences were rated statistically higher with preterite (3.9) than imperfect (3.6) overall with achievement and state verbs, see Chart 5. The acceptance rates of ungrammatical sentences are higher compared to the advanced learners. However, these rates remain within the expected rejection rate below 2 - except for the subtly high acceptance of 2.3 of state verbs with preterite with non-matching TAQ (frecuentemente/frequently, usualmente/usually). These results show that adverbials are not as significant to aspectual selection as they are for advanced learners. This finding support prior studies (Baker & Quesada, 2011; Lubbers-Quesada, 2013) by showing that native speakers rely on morphology as the primary means to represent aspectual distinction. There is the possibility that the sentences in the task did not provide abundant semantic cues to discard the unacceptable sentences. Furthermore, this can signal that native speakers go beyond the sentence clause to obtain the necessary semantic cues to represent aspect. For this reason, these participants resort to all possible scenarios that could validate the acceptance of a given sentence. For instance, (10a) and (10b) are clear examples of how native speakers can produce various scenarios to justify the acceptability and grammaticality of their choices.

(10a) Ayer la gente bebió mucho
Yesterday the people drink(PRET) much
Yesterday, people drank so much
(10b) *Ayer la gente bebía mucho\(^8\)
Yesterday the people drink(IMP) much
*Yesterday, people used to drink much

Sentence (10b) shows an activity verb that was initially conceived to be rated as unacceptable due to the imperfect morphology that flags a habitual reading but conflicts with the TAP adverbial ayer/yesterday. In order to consider this sentence as acceptable, the imperfect morphology should trigger a continuous reading, which would provide background information when another event occurred or while a simultaneous event is happening. Therefore, additional information should be provided through adverbials, a subordinate sentence or the context outside the sentence to support this reading (see 11).

(11) Ayer la gente bebía mucho
Yesterday the people drink(IMP) much
Yesterday, people were drinking too much

[mientras bailaba]
[while dance(IMP)]
[while they were dancing]
[durante la fiesta]
[during the party]
[during the party]
[cuando la policía llegó]
[when the police arrive(PRE)]
[when the policed arrived]

In summary, results for task 1 show evidence for higher accuracy rates with imperfect than preterite for beginning learners. In contrast, intermediate learners performed better with preterite in task 1 and 2. There is no sign of lexical aspect influence in basic and intermediate learners. Advanced learners perform with high accuracy including coerced sentences. Adverbials show no impact on beginning learners.

\(^8\) This sentence was incorporated to be rated as unacceptable for the purposes of this task. However, if it is part of a context that justifies a continuous meaning, it is grammatical.
evidenced by the lack of statistical difference in acceptance rates of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences. In contrast, adverbials play an important role for intermediate and advanced learners as shown by a statistical difference between the acceptance of acceptable and unacceptable sentences. Native speakers appear to be guided morphologically to select aspect, and to use contextual cues that are not restricted to the clause level.
CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

This study investigates whether learners rely on a default morphology along an acquisition sequence of aspectual morphology, and how adverbials impact their decision to select aspectual morphology as a strategy borrowed from their first language. The DPTH (Salaberry, 1999, 2003, 2008) is tested with comprehension tasks - and for these purposes, this study analyzes the selection of aspectual morphology between habitual readings and episodic readings of eventive verbs in Spanish. These two readings might cause higher processing demands in Spanish due to their covert morphological representation in English (past tense only) when contrasting to their distinctive morphological representation counterpart in Spanish (preterite/imperfect). If beginning learners rely on a default past tense that excludes lexical aspect influence at selecting grammatical aspect, it would imply that adverbials play a role to clarify the aspectual meaning of the verb as it occurs in English.

Summary of Findings

Results in task 1 show an effect in tense (preterite and imperfect), group and verbal class. Beginning learners tend to rely on imperfect for all verbal classes, although only state verbs show a significant difference. Intermediate learners also show a tendency to rely on a default marker, but preterite is the preferred form with the four verbal classes. Only achievement verbs appear to be statistically different, selecting episodic readings with higher accuracy. Advanced learners select episodic and habitual readings with similar accuracy, and no statistical difference between them is found. Therefore, there is no evidence of a default aspectual marker.
Results in task 2, show a main effect in verbal class, tense and group with the four participants groups. Beginning learners tend to rate habitual readings higher than preterite across all verbal classes, although only activity verbs with habitual reading is statistically different. In contrast, intermediate learners show a tendency to rate episodic readings higher than habitual readings across verbal classes, but only accomplishment verbs with episodic readings are statistically different. Advanced learners do not show a preference for one specific reading; however, they significantly rate habitual readings with activities and episodic readings with accomplishments. These two readings are prototypical for each of those verbal classes. Native speakers significantly rate episodic readings higher than habitual readings across all verbal classes. A trend to select a default aspectual form is observed in beginning and intermediate learners.

Task 2 provides valuable information about the strong influence of adverbials as proficiency increases. The lack of significant difference between acceptable and unacceptable rates found in beginning learners suggests that adverbials have no impact in selecting aspectual morphology and the possibility of chance performance. It might be due to the lack of experience and practice with preterite and imperfect morphology and their semantic correspondence. Beginning learners (excluding learners who had some prior high school Spanish) were taught the contrast between preterite and imperfect morphology for the first time and it occurred approximately one month prior to the data collection of this study. Similar versions of task 1 and task 2 were tested in other studies (Perez-Leroux et al. 2008; Montrul & Slabakova, 2000, Slabakova & Montrul, 2003) with intermediate learners as the lowest proficiency level. However, this dissertation includes beginning learners to properly test the DPTH along three levels of proficiency as
claimed in this hypothesis to determine whether beginning learners provide meaningful data to support or reject it.

Questions and Hypotheses

Results in Chapter 7 provide answers to two questions posed in this study and their respective hypotheses.

Question One: The first question investigates whether the DPTH was supported by testing episodic and habitual readings with interpretation tasks across three levels of proficiency. The hypothesis predicts that beginning learners will rely on a default past tense marker (preterite), since their marking process will be independent of the inherent aspectual value of verbal classes. In other words, they do not check aspect but only past tense. As learners increase their proficiency, aspectual morphology selection gradually becomes dependent on the inherent lexical value of the verb. For task 1, learners are expected to perform with higher accuracy on proto-typical sentences than coerced ones.

Findings do not categorically reject the DPTH; however, there are no unanimous statistical results that support it. The descriptive data tend to show a preferred morphological marking for beginning learners, which is the imperfect. Other studies (Salaberry, 2003; Leeman et al. 1995) also found that imperfect was overgeneralized in preterite environments. Salaberry argued that the type of narrative (personal) triggered imperfect overgeneralization in a multiple-choice task by beginning learners. Leeman et al. attributed it to the effect of instruction, which led learners to overuse imperfect to contrast preterite as a consequence of attention to form. Although results in Leeman et al. (1995) were obtained from intermediate and advanced learners, it can be assumed in their lines that the higher accuracy with imperfect in this dissertation is due to the effect of
instruction and their inexperience with aspectual morphology. A comprehension task provides more time to monitor responses and this could have caused learners to overuse imperfect as the marked form. This last speculation can find some support on the higher accuracy means with imperfect for coerced sentences (achievement and accomplishment verbs with imperfect morphology) than preterite with prototypical verbal inflection in task 1. Results in task 2 also show this same trend of selecting imperfect over preterite as in task 1.

Intermediate learners also show a tendency to prefer one verbal morphology over another. In contrast to beginning learners, preterite morphology is the preferred form - which seems to be independent from the inherent lexical value of the verb. This can be observed in the higher accuracy means of non-prototypical forms by selecting state and activity verbs with preterite. It can be suggested that intermediate learners’ grammatical knowledge is still in the process of constant change. From a functional category perspective, these learners seem to fail checking [-bounded] or [-perfective] in the Spec of the AspP in a steady way. This may be due to the incorrect mapping of this feature with the corresponding grammatical aspect morphology at outer aspect level.

Schell (2000) proposes that the incorrect mapping of preterite and imperfect might have two reasons: First, telicity features are correctly checked at inner aspect but misread at outer aspect. Second, the information of telicity (arguments, adjuncts) found in inner aspect is not properly understood by learners and therefore, the correct information is not sent to the outer aspect level. Following Schell, it can be argued that the incorrect mapping might occur due to a misreading of these inner aspect features at outer aspect level since this is a comprehension task. This causes learners to incorrectly assign
[+bounded] to imperfective readings or [-bounded] to perfective readings. It can be speculated that it might be due to the learners’ inexperience with the aspectual morphology leads them to rely on an unmarked form which underspecifies the appropriate aspectual form.

The DPTH proposal can lead to the implication that the information received from inner aspect goes straight to TP to check tense avoiding any feature checking in the spec of AspP. However, the data from intermediate learners provide some evidence that learners do check [-bounded] in AspP, although in an unsteady way. The tendency to use a default marker can be considered a strategy used when the mismatch occurs in outer aspect - and might not be due to a direct tense checking in TP without checking aspect. Other studies have also found that intermediate learners perform better with preterite than imperfect in production and comprehension tasks (Perez-Leroux et al. 2008; Salaberry, 2003; Schell, 2000; Montrul & Slabakova, 2000; Slabakova & Montrul, 2003).

The descriptive data of beginning learners show a tendency to be more accurate with imperfect across verbal classes in task 1 and 2. The lack of statistical significance between acceptable and unacceptable sentences in task 2 provides some reason to speculate that these learners performed at chance. This can be rooted in the type of task utilized in this dissertation. A comprehension task with only two options provides room for selecting answers at random if learners do not know the answer. In addition, learners seem to be influenced by instruction when selecting their answers. In order to contrast preterite (first introduced in instruction) with imperfect, learners might have overused imperfect.

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The DPTH assumes that as proficiency increases, the inherent lexical aspect dependence increases as well. Beginning and intermediate learners do not seem to be influenced by the lexical aspect value of the verb but advanced learners’ data show some descriptive support of this influence. Advanced learners were more accurate with prototypical verbal forms than with coerced ones in task 1 and 2, with the exception of state verbs with preterite in task 2.

Summarizing, the DPTH is partially supported due to the lack of statistical significance across all verbal classes. Intermediate learners show evidence of using preterite as a default marker when the corresponding aspectual morphology was not used. This is not necessarily due to only checking tense and not aspect - but I assume it is due to the underspecification of imperfect, and the surfacing of preterite as the default morphology. As proficiency increases, advanced learners show aspectual morphology selection guided by the influence of inherent lexical aspect. However, the grammatical knowledge of advanced learners is proficient enough to comprehend prototypical and coerced aspectual morphology. Beginning learners appear to be influenced by instruction at selecting imperfect over preterite in all verbal classes with prototypical and coerced sentences.

Question two: The second question investigates whether temporal adverbials facilitate the interpretation of grammatical aspect with episodic and habitual readings for eventive verbs. The hypothesis predicts that adverbials will influence in selecting aspectual morphology overall at basic levels of proficiency. If there is a significant difference between the rate of acceptable and unacceptable sentences, then adverbials play an important role in grammatical aspect selection. In contrast, if no significant
difference is found, then adverbials do no facilitate grammatical aspect selection. It is predicted that in addition to the increase of morphological reliance, intermediate and advanced learners will remained influenced by adverbials. This will be noticed in the high acceptance of coerced verbs. At intermediate and advanced level of proficiency, adverbials may primarily influence episodic readings of former state verbs that became achievement verbs due to coercion. However, adverbials may not be relevant -but redundant- for state verbs due to their stative nature.

Results provide evidence that adverbials facilitate grammatical aspect selection at only intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency with comprehension tasks. However, adverbials do not facilitate selection with beginning learners as hypothesized. These findings contradict other studies (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992, 2000; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006) carried out with oral production tasks, and which have shown that adverbials were used as a lexical resource to express tense/aspect with present tense. For instance, learners used present indicative in various situations -when learners were not sure, did not recall the correct morphological form, or simply did not know the inflectional morphology. Since a closed-ended task was utilized for this dissertation, it did not allow the freedom to use other resources. So selecting from the available options constrained the learners’ choices. Therefore, the influence can be seen only through the acceptability rate of the sentences. Results obtained with beginning learners do not support the hypothesis at this level of proficiency.

Intermediate learners show that adverbials are important lexical resources to select the appropriate morphological form in Spanish –just as it occurs in English with past tense. This can be due to an L1 strategy, as well as the influence of instruction by co-
indexing verbal morphology with specific adverbials. The results in tasks 1 and 2 show a trend to accept episodic readings with no clear influence of inherent lexical value of the verb. Similar results were reported (Slabakova & Montrul, 2003; Perez-Leroux et al. 2008; Salaberry, 2003) with comprehension tasks at this level of proficiency. For instance, achievement and accomplishment verbs statistically favored preterite with their inherent lexical value of the verb but activity and state verbs did not favor imperfect. Even coerced verbs with preterite form were accepted to a higher degree than with imperfect. Even though adverbials seem to be influential, it is not sufficient to equally use preterite and imperfect in the appropriate environments. Instead, there is a tendency to rely mostly on preterite. This can be due to the assumption that intermediate learners are still in the process of acquiring these aspectual semantic features, and tend to rely on a default marker. Results from intermediate learners partially support the hypothesis set forth in Question Two, since the inherent lexical value of the verb is not as significant as the lexical value of the adverbials.

Advanced learners appear to be highly accurate in accepting prototypical and coerced verbs. This seems to be due to the increased experience with aspectual morphology in combination with the strong influence of adverbials. A comparison of performance between advanced learners and native speakers shows that there is no significant difference between them in task 1 and 2. It can be assumed that advanced learners rely heavily on adverbials to select aspectual morphology.

Native speakers in this dissertation performed similarly to native speakers in prior studies (Baker, 2009; Garcia & VanPutte, 1988; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006, 2013; Salaberry, 1997). Adverbials are not influential to select grammatical aspect but, they
expand temporal information in the sentence. The acceptance of unacceptable sentences that contradict the prototypically combined adverbial/verbal morphology taught in classroom settings [e.g. TAP adverbials (ayer/yesterday, anoche/last night), TAQ (frecuentemente/frequently)] suggests that native speakers rely on information at the discursive level. This makes it possible for them to accept unacceptable sentences if they are included in an appropriate discursive framework. In contrast, learners appear to rely primarily on lexical cues at the sentential level. Native speakers tend to be more inclined to accept non-prototypical aspectual morphology, as shown in this dissertation. As also noted by Salaberry (1999) also noted that this can be due to the tendency of native speakers to rely on the “big picture” or the discourse when processing the information. Since the grammaticality judgment tasks do not provide discursive information, native speakers provide themselves with information that could justify the morphology presented in the task sentences. This is true for activity and accomplishment verbs which can also have a continuous meaning, in addition to the habitual meaning.

Instruction has been noted to influence aspectual selection in learners (Salaberry, 2008). Results presented in this dissertation indicate that beginning learners preferred imperfect across lexical verbs. It might be possible that learners overused imperfect to contrast preterite. But why choose imperfect? I assume there are two reasons: first, preterite was the first past tense form taught to generally represent “past tense” –just as it is used in English. Later, imperfect is introduced as a contrastive past tense to preterite. For this reason preterite can be considered an “instructional” default morphology for

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9 Salaberry (1997, 1999) based on Binnick, 1991; Comrie, 1985; Fleischman, 1990 argued that preterite is the more basic form of the perfective-imperfective contrast.
past tense in addition to the extended experience with it. Prior studies using oral production data showed that preterite is preferred at beginning levels of proficiency, due to the focus on content (VanPatten, 2004), so learners rely on the form with which they have more experience. However, in the tasks I have utilized in this dissertation, imperfect is the preferred morphology. I assume that the type of task might have influenced this trend. A comprehension task provides more time to focus on form, in addition to the content. In order to contrast preterite and imperfect, however, learners overused the marked morphology (Salaberry, 1999) more than preterite. It is important to recall that these learners were introduced to the preterite/imperfect contrast approximately four to six weeks before the data collection.

In contrast, intermediate learners tended to be more accurate, and accepted sentences with preterite more often than imperfect. I assume that at this level, learners’ experience with preterite and imperfect –provided through instruction –allows them to more accurately differentiate perfective and imperfective morphology. However, it is obvious that their performance is unsteady and they tend to overuse preterite for two reasons: first, their more prolonged experience with preterite compared with imperfect in instructional settings; and second, preterite constitutes their default marker. I assume that they do check aspect, and do not raise straight to tense.

The higher accuracy of intermediate and advanced learners seems to be due to these two reasons: first, the high significance of adverbials in their L1 to differentiate between episodic and habitual readings is transferred as a strategy in the L2; and second, the instructional strategies used to teach aspectual morphology in classroom settings emphasize the co-indexation between a specific adverbial and type of aspectual
morphology. However, as also noted by Rothman (2008), this pedagogical strategy seems to conflict with the native speakers’ interpretation of aspectual morphology – since they do not account for some uses of this instructional co-indexation of adverbial-morphology, as shown in the data of this dissertation. This also applies to the naturalistic learners in Rothman’s study. Instead, the most relevant element used by native speakers in aspectual interpretation and production is the meaning that the speaker wishes to convey. This is the element that triggers preterite or imperfect morphology within a contextual discursive framework, and not the lexical cues at a clause level.

The frequency of input also played an important role in beginning learners. This is apparent in the lower accuracy with state verbs coerced to achievement verbs by using the preterite morphology. Due to instruction and input, beginning learners highly associated imperfect with state verbs. But when these verbs were coerced into achievement verbs, the preterite version was not accepted as correct – due to the high frequency of state-imperfect combination in the input. This can be supported by other studies, Salaberry (1999) noted that the type of input received by learners compared to the input provided by native speakers is different. And perfective morphology with achievement and accomplishment verbs were found to be used more extensively in the classroom, whereas input from native speakers is more diverse in their use of prototypical and coerced forms of the verbs (Lubbers-Quesada, 2013). This brings up the question: Does instruction guide the developmental sequence of grammatical aspect in tutored learners? Based on the data in this dissertation, instruction seems to have a strong impact in learners when selecting aspectual morphology. However, this cannot be generalized
since the type of task did not allow the examination of the full spectrum of a learner’s knowledge of this grammatical point.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to answer two main questions. First, is the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (Salaberry, 1999) supported with comprehension tasks? And second, what is the influence of adverbials at selecting aspectual morphology as derived from a first-language strategy?

The findings of this dissertation reveal a partial support for the Default Past Tense Hypothesis (DPTH) at intermediate and beginning level of proficiency. Only partial support is evidenced, since only two of the four verbal classes provide statistically significant data –while the other two provide only descriptive support.

The default past tense in this study is also preterite for intermediate learners as shown in task 1 and 2. This study provides an alternative argument for the reasons intermediate learners rely on a default marker. It is assumed that it occurs due to an unsteady feature checking of aspectual features that underspecifies [-bounded] at outer aspect level. See (16) and (18) in Chapter 3. This does not support Salaberry’s (1999) proposal that learners only check past tense and not aspect. These results are similar to findings in prior studies (Baker, 2009, Montrul & Slabakova, 2000, Perez-Leroux et al. 2008). In contrast, beginning learners tend to rely more on imperfect across verbal classes and it can be due to instructional strategies that co-index adverbials and aspectual morphology.

The increasing proficiency in advanced learners allows them to select preterite and imperfect with high accuracy in task 1, and rate highly acceptable sentences and
reject unacceptable sentences at similar rates as native speakers in task 2. The data show that inherent lexical aspect is independent from aspectual morphology selection in basic and intermediate learners. It seems, however, that lexical aspect exercises some influence in advanced learners as predicted by the DPTH.

Adverbials do play an important role in selecting aspectual morphology at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency with comprehension tasks, but there is no impact shown in beginning learners. This has been supported by the lack of statistical significance in the selection of acceptable and unacceptable sentences. For these reasons, it can be suggested that beginning learners performed at chance in task 2, and they seem to be influenced by instructional rules of high frequency verbs found in their input.

Findings related to native speakers provide information that supports the results in prior studies. First, morphology is the primary means to convey aspectual meaning and adverbials only provide emphasis to the meaning conveyed in the morphological marker (Baker, 2009; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006, 2013,). Second, native speakers convey aspectual meaning by paying attention to cues at a discursive level –not at a sentential one (Garcia & VanPutte, 1988; Lubbers-Quesada, 2013; Salaberry, 1997, 1999). This explains the important role of adverbials for intermediate and advanced learners when selecting aspect with comprehension tasks. Instruction and the limited exposure to the target language contribute to highlight the outstanding status of adverbials in aspect selection with instructed learners of Spanish.

**Limitations of this Study**

This study has some limitations that will provide suggestions for future research.
One of the primary limitations is the type of task. It seems that the narratives in task 1, even though they had some translations, were too complex for the beginning learners’ comprehension level. And, even if they were able to understand the narratives, there is the possibility that the beginning learners were not able to properly discriminate between the semantic values of each aspectual form. If this is true, then the task was not productive at this level of proficiency. This also applies to task 2.

In order to overcome the limitation of priming in narratives that included preterite and imperfect in tasks utilized in prior studies (Slabakova & Montrul, 2003), the narratives in this study mostly presented the stories most often in present tense, present progressive or present perfect tense. However, it seems that the stories were not always clear enough to interpret – causing some confusion and allowing room for speculation overall for the native speakers.

This study did not use a written production test to assess morphological knowledge of preterite and imperfect. This would have provided insight and a more accurate appreciation of the beginning learners’ knowledge of aspectual morphology.

The results obtained in this study can only be generalized to comprehension tasks. These data are limited to one facet of the learner’s linguistic knowledge-comprehension. Oral/written production tasks testing the DPTH, comparing habitual and episodic readings, and investigating the role of adverbials could have provided a more holistic knowledge of aspect, at basic levels of acquisition.

A closed-ended task, such as task 1, limits the possibility of understanding the learner’s aspectual knowledge in a more objective way. By having only two options from
which to select, learners could have randomly selected their answers when they were not sure of the correct answer.

The adverbials (adverbs of position and duration) in Task 2 provided limited information in the sentences. This caused confusion for native speakers who resorted to supposed scenarios to validate both preterite and imperfect morphology in the sentences – regardless of the adverbial information.

**Further Research**

Due to the limitations presented in this study – and in order to test the DPTH and influence of adverbials – researchers may approach these questions using a diversity of tasks following a similar design similar to that of this dissertation. Perhaps comprehension tasks could designed with more options from which to select the correct answer. Another valid alternative would involve the use of written and oral productions tasks.

In order to have productive results from beginning learners, the story comprehension task should incorporate more answer choices which include other tenses, such as: *preterite, imperfect, present,* and *I am not sure.* This could help understand with greater precision the sequence in which tense markers are part of the learners’ repertoire. These results would also be more appropriate for comparison with oral production tasks found in the literature. This study highlights the importance of production tasks to test the DPTH and to provide realistic data to document an acquisition sequence of aspectual morphology in beginning learners.

Future studies could include naturalistic learners and tutored learners to compare the sequence of morphological emergence across three levels of proficiency. This could
provide valuable information to test the DPTH, the influence of adverbials and the role of instruction.

A further study could include adverbial clauses to compare the effect against adverbials of position and duration only [see (5) in Chapter 4].

In summary, this dissertation attempted to cover several elements that were separately studied in prior studies: First, test the DPTH with comprehension tasks and provide some insight into how feature checking occurs. Second, test aspect selection with episodic and habitual readings. And third, investigate the influence of adverbials in aspect selection across three levels of proficiency.

Results mirror prior findings and provide information that: partially supports the DPTH with comprehension tasks; support the influence of adverbials at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency; highlights the role of instruction in aspectual selection and contrasts the role of adverbials in native speakers and learners of Spanish.
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APPENDIX A

TRUTH VALUE JUDGMENT TASK
TASK 1

INSTRUCTIONS
Based on the story, chose only one of the two sentences (a) or (b) as true (T). Circle the sentence that you believe summarizes better the idea of the short story. Only one sentence can be circled as true.

For example:
1. Juan no tiene zapatos negros y va a la tienda a comprar un par. Juan paga con una tarjeta Mastercard.
   (a) Él no paga en efectivo (cash).
   b) Ella no paga en efectivo (cash).
2. Elena tiene hambre pero no hay comida en casa y decide comer una pizza..
   a) Elena los compra en Domino’s.
   (b) Elena la compra en Domino’s.

Now let’s practice with some stories.
3. Carlos juega basquetbol todos los fines de semana porque no trabaja. Hoy ya está listo para jugar basquetbol.
   a) Hoy es sábado
   b) Hoy es lunes
4. Los estudiantes tuvieron un examen de matemáticas ayer y obtuvieron 100.
   a) Los estudiantes estudiaron para el examen de matemáticas.
   b) Los estudiantes van a estudiar para el examen de matemáticas.
   a) La quiero mucho.
   b) Los quiero mucho.

Now, let’s proceed to the task.
1. Maria juega voleibol con sus amigos de lunes a viernes a las 5pm. Mañana martes tiene un examen muy importante a las 5pm y no puede faltar (cannot miss it).
   a) María no juega voleibol con sus amigos.
   b) María no jugará voleibol con sus amigos.
2. En la cena de ayer, Karla le cuenta a Juan sobre su inesperado despido (layoff) del trabajo. Juan recién se entera del despido en ese momento.
1. Juan sabía sobre el despido de Karla en la cena.
2. Juan supo sobre el despido de Karla en la cena.
3. Chile es un país pacífico (peaceful), pero hoy un coche bomba (car-bomb) explota y derriba (turn down) el palacio de gobierno (Chilean White House).
   a) Los terroristas destruían el palacio de gobierno.
   b) Los terroristas destruyeron el palacio de gobierno.
4. El profesor no sabe jugar poker pero esta noche sus amigos le enseñaron (taught) como se juega y con sorpresa (surprisingly) gana el juego.
   a) El profesor jugaba bien.
   b) El profesor jugó bien.
5. Claudia era muy buena en voleibol porque usualmente practicaba todos los días en la escuela. Ahora ya no juega más.
   a) Claudia jugaba mucho.
   b) Claudia jugó mucho.
   a) Los atletas correrán dos kilómetros
   b) Los atletas corrieron dos kilómetros
7. La tía Anita sufre de amnesia. Luego de un tratamiento médico largo, ahora se recupera (recover) satisfactoriamente. Ya no se pierde más (she does not get lost anymore) como antes.
   a) La tía Anita se perdía.
   b) La tía Anita se perdió
8. Mónica va a comprar un cd de música a la tienda. El cd cuesta 30 dólares y ella solo tiene 20 dólares. Ella se va porque no puede comprarlo.
   a) El cd costaba mucho dinero.
   b) El cd costó mucho dinero
9. Desde hace años, Juanita toca una pieza (play a piece) en el piano después de la cena y todos la escuchan alegres. Hoy está enferma y no puede tocar el piano como antes.
   a) Juanita tocaba una pieza en el piano.
   b) Juanita tocó una pieza en el piano.
10. El Dr. Gonzales es muy puntual. Hoy tiene un accidente y está retrasado (delayed) para su cita (appointment) de las 10am. Ya son las 11am.
    a) El doctor no llegaba a la cita.
    b) El doctor no llegó a la cita.
11 El profesor de la clase sabe mucho su curso. Hasta ahora él es muy respetado por los estudiantes y siempre siguen (follow) sus instrucciones.
   a) Los estudiantes respetaban la autoridad del profesor
   b) Los estudiantes respetaron la autoridad del profesor

12. Carla quiere mucho a su abuelita y trata de verla (see her) frecuentemente en su casa de Arizona. Ahora Carla vive en Miami y ya no la visita pero la llama por teléfono.
   a) Carla venía a ver a la abuelita.
   b) Carla vino a ver a la abuelita.

   a) Mi abuelita se recuperaba de cáncer.
   b) Mi abuelita se recuperó de cáncer.

14. María es una chef reconocida e invita a cenar a Juan a su casa. Ella se lastimó (hurt) las manos y no puede cocinar. Esta vez, decide comprar comida de un restaurante para esta cena.
   a) María no podía cocinar.
   b) María no pudo cocinar.

15. El maestro siempre escribía la tarea en la pizarra luego de terminar la lección. Hoy no tiene lápiz para escribir y dice oralmente la tarea.
   a) El maestro dice oralmente la tarea a los estudiantes luego de terminar la lección.
   b) El maestro estuvo diciendo oralmente la tarea a los estudiantes luego de terminar la lección.

16. A Jessica le gusta hacer ejercicios. Por muchos años ha corrido en el parque. El viernes pasado tuvo un accidente en la pierna (leg) y no puede caminar.
   a) Jessica corría en el parque.
   b) Jessica corrió en el parque.

17. Hoy los estudiantes juegan un partido de voleibol. El juego está muy difícil pero finalmente obtienen el primer lugar (place).
   a) Los estudiantes ganaban.
   b) Los estudiantes ganaron.

18. Mis amigos nunca han fumado (to smoke) en su vida pero ayer probaron (tried) por primera vez unos cigarrillos.
   a) Mis amigos fumaban.
   b) Mis amigos fumaron.
19. Carol ha participado en la maratón de Nueva York durante los últimos 10 años. Solo este año no puede correr porque está embarazada (pregnant).
   a) Carol corría la maratón.
   b) Carol corrió la maratón.

20. Después de cenar, Juan siempre lee durante una hora. Esta noche después de cenar Juan no lee nada y decide tocar el piano.
   a) Juan está tocando el piano después de cenar
   b) Juan tocaba el piano después de cenar

   a) Pablo bailaba con sus amigos.
   b) Pablo bailó con sus amigos.

22. Teresa entró en la reunión de trabajo. Hay un nuevo vicepresidente. Ella lo saluda de manera familiar y le pregunta por sus hijos José y Carlos.
   a) Teresa conocía al vicepresidente
   b) Teresa conoció al vicepresidente

23. Desde niño, mi familia ha almorzado en la casa de la abuelita todos los domingos. Después del almuerzo siempre hemos comido un pastel de chocolate y uno de vainilla. Ahora, la abuelita está enferma y ya no puede cocinar (cook). Ya no vamos a la casa de la abuelita a almorzar.
   a) La abuelita preparaba dos pasteles.
   b) La abuelita preparó dos pasteles.

24. Los montañistas (rock climbers) caminan 46 horas para llegar a la cima. Finalmente lo logran y ganan el premio.
   a) Los montañistas llegaron a la cima
   b) Los montañistas llegarán a la cima

25. Mi mamá limpia la casa todos los días para eliminar insectos. Hoy encuentra un escorpión grande y lo pisotea (step on it) hasta matarlo (kill it).
   a) El escorpión se moría.
   b) El escorpión se murió.

26. La pequeña Rosita recién ha aprendido a caminar. Hoy por primera vez puede correr en el parque.
   a) Rosita corría en el parque.
   b) Rosita corrió en el parque.
27. Hoy Juan tiene que dejar (drop off) una caja (box) en el correo. Va y luego regresa a casa sin nada.
   a) Juan llevaba la caja al correo.
   b) Juan llevó la caja al correo.
28. María es vegetariana. Nunca ha probado la carne. Sus amigos la convencen de probar una barbacoa y ella acepta. Ella sonríe (smiles) porque le parece que la carne es rica.
   a) A María le gustaba la carne.
   b) A María le gustó la carne.
29. Rosa regañó (scold) a su hijo Carlitos cuando no se porta (behave) bien. El siempre se va de la habitación (room) para no escucharla. Hoy su mamá lo regaña pero no se va esta vez.
   a) Carlos salía de la habitación.
   b) Carlos salió de la habitación.
30. María tiene clases de matemáticas los martes y de historia los miércoles. Hoy es miércoles.
   a) María está usando el libro de historia
   b) María usó el libro de historia
31. Pepito ve unos soldados de juguete en la tienda y le pide a su madre que se los compre. Su madre cree que $100 es mucho dinero pero los paga.
   a) Los soldados de juguete costaban mucho dinero.
   b) Los soldados de juguete costaron mucho dinero.
32. Viviana ha tenido un ipod para escuchar música todos los días. Ahora no lo tiene más. Ya no puede escuchar música.
   a) Viviana escuchaba música.
   b) Viviana escuchó música.
33. A mí me gusta escuchar cuentos pero mi mamá nunca me los ha leído. Hoy por primera vez me lee Robin Hood. Estoy feliz de escucharla.
   a) Mi mamá me leía cuentos.
   b) Mi mamá me leyó un cuento.
34. Mi familia se muda (move) a una casa nueva que tiene escaleras (stairs). Tenemos un niño de 1 año y no sabe subir escaleras (go upstairs). El niño intenta (tries to) subir las escaleras sin supervisión y luego, escuchamos que el niño llora (cry).
   a) El niño se caía (fall down) de las escaleras.
   b) El niño se cayó (fall down) de las escaleras.
35. Recuerdo mi niñez con amor, yo me dormía luego de escuchar cuentos (stories).
   a) Mi madre me contará cuentos de princesas (princess stories)
b) Mi madre me contaba cuentos de princesas

36. Sara nunca ha bebido (drink) alcohol. En la fiesta de anoche prueba vino (try wine) y le gusta. Finalmente esta noche termina bebiendo dos botellas de vino.
   a) Sara bebía mucho.
   b) Sara bebió mucho.

37. Lisa habla español y estudia cursos de portugués. Ella siempre visita a sus amigos de Brasil y cuando ellos hablan en portugués, ella disfruta de la conversación.
   a) Lisa comprendía las conversaciones
   b) Lisa comprendió las conversaciones

38. Carlos está a dieta (on a diet). Ha perdido (have lost) 20 libras (pounds). Ahora ya no come panes en las mañanas como antes (as in the past).
   a) Carlos comía tres panes grandes.
   b) Carlos comió tres panes grandes.

39. Por muchos años los estudiantes han saludado (greet) al profesor cuando ha entrado al salón de clase (classroom) durante todos los días.
   a) Los estudiantes se paraban (stand up) para saludarlo.
   b) Los estudiantes se pararon (stand up) para saludarlo.

40. Juanito vive lejos de la escuela. La hora de entrada es a las 7 y 30 de la mañana y Juanito siempre llega a las 7 y 45 de la mañana.
   a) Juanito llegará tarde
   b) Juanito llega tarde

41. Tres carros chocan en la autopista (crush in the freeway) esta mañana. Yo llamo al 911 e inmediatamente se aparecen la policía, los bomberos y la ambulancia.
   a) La policía venía al lugar (place) del accidente.
   b) La policía vino al lugar del accidente.

42. Luego del robo a una tienda, la policía muestra al cajero 10 fotografías de posibles ladrones. El cajero revisa las fotografías y de pronto se detiene en la sexta fotografía y dice “¡él es!”.
   a) El cajero reconoció al ladrón.
   b) El cajero reconoció al ladrón.

43. Enrique ha sido adicto al alcohol. Entró en un tratamiento para la adicción y ahora ya no consume alcohol como antes.
   a) Enrique tomaba alcohol.
   b) Enrique tomó alcohol.
44. La maestra de matemáticas está enferma. Llama al colegio y le dice al director que no va a ir a la escuela. El director va a la sala de clase para comunicárselo a los estudiantes pero no encuentra a nadie. Entonces el deja (leave) un mensaje (message).
   a) El director escribía un mensaje en el pizarrón (blackboard).
   b) El director escribió un mensaje en el pizarrón.

45. Mi padre tiene un restaurante. El restaurante debe cerrar a las 8:00 pm, pero él nunca cierra a las 8:00 pm porque tiene muchos clientes. Son las 8:05 pm y aún hay 5 clientes.
   a) Mi padre está trabajando hasta tarde
   b) Mi padre trabajó hasta tarde

46. La clase de matemáticas debe durar 2 horas, pero el profesor ha terminado la clase antes de tiempo por muchos años.
   a) La clase terminaba sin aviso (no notice).
   b) La clase terminó sin aviso (no notice).

47. Desde muy niña, Elena nunca ha recordado los cumpleaños de nadie, ni siquiera el de su mamá.
   a) Elena se olvidaba de los cumpleaños.
   b) Elena se olvidó del cumpleaños.

48. Roberto tiene un año y está aprendiendo a hablar. Hoy al escuchar la radio, canta (sing) por primera vez.
   a) Roberto cantaba.
   b) Roberto cantó.

49. Sandra ha pasado todos los veranos (summers) en la casa de sus dos tíos. Cada vez que se va, escribe dos cartas de agradecimiento (thank you letter). Ahora que ya no pasa (spend) los veranos allá, ya no escribe más cartas como antes (as in the past).
   a) Sandra escribía dos cartas de agradecimiento.
   b) Sandra escribió dos cartas de agradecimiento.

50. Julio es un excelente chef. La comida que cocina es deliciosa y siempre recibe premios (prizes) en todos los concursos (competitions). Mañana será el concurso de navidad.
   a) Julio gana un premio en la competencia de cocina.
   b) Julio ganará el primer premio en la competencia de cocina.
APPENDIX B

GRAMMATICALITY JUDGMENT TASK
TASK 2

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following sentences and score them according to the degree of acceptability for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE</td>
<td>UNACCEPTABLE</td>
<td>NOT SURE</td>
<td>ACCEPTABLE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

1. Paola lee una libro de historia. -2 -1 0 1 2
2. Mis amigos hablan español -2 -1 0 1 2

Let’s practice with some sentences.

3. Las manzanas es verdes -2 -1 0 1 2
4. Los niños comiendo fruta -2 -1 0 1 2
5. La clase va a terminar tarde -2 -1 0 1 2
6. Mis libros son rojos. -2 -1 0 1 2
7. La escuela tienes diez maestros -2 -1 0 1 2

Let’s proceed to the task.

1. Teresa conoció a Rebeca ayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
2. Mi tía llamará por teléfono mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
3. Michael Phelps nadaba anteayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
4. El viernes pasado, el cirujano (surgeon) operaba a la paciente chilena. -2 -1 0 1 2
5. El avión llegaba tarde ayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
6. Juan usualmente lavaba dos coches (cars) italianos. -2 -1 0 1 2
7. El atleta ha corrido 4 kilómetros pasado mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
8. En mi niñez me gustaba comer pasteles (cakes) de mi abuelita. -2 -1 0 1 2
9. Habitualmente terminaba mi tarea escolar a tiempo (on time). -2 -1 0 1 2
10. La niña lloraba frecuentemente.
11. Teresa conocía a Rebeca ayer.
12. En estos momentos trabajará mucho.
14. Mi presentación duró (to last) dos horas anteayer.
15. Mi papá habitualmente tomó dos tazas de café.
16. María antes conoció a todos mis amigos.
17. Juan verá a María el próximo jueves.
18. Usualmente fumé (smoke) mucho.
19. La niña se cayó (fall into) en el río (river) el lunes pasado.
20. Mary tomó un vaso de vino anteayer.
21. La profesora regularmente llegó tarde a la clase.
22. Carol llegó tarde a la cita mañana.
23. De niño, yo sabía tocar piano.
24. Daniel y Diego jugaban anoche.
25. Anoche, no me olvidaba de cerrar la puerta con seguro.
26. El lunes pasado los niños perdían sus boletos para el concierto.
27. Carol va a llegar tarde a la cita mañana.
28. Mi profesora frecuentemente caminaba un kilómetro.
29. Lucy regularmente bailaba tango.
30. La semana pasada, la niña corría (run) un kilómetro.
31. El bebe frecuentemente se caía (fall) de las escaleras.
32. Juan está viendo a María el próximo jueves.
33. María encontraba 100 dólares anoche.
34. La gente se sentía feliz con frecuencia.
35. Ayer la gente bebía mucho.
36. Juanito comía una manzana anoche.
37. Alemania está ganando la copa mundial de fútbol el próximo año. -2 -1 0 1 2
38. Mis hijos habitualmente jugaban basquetbol. -2 -1 0 1 2
39. El tren usualmente llegaba a la parada (stop) de Madrid. -2 -1 0 1 2
40. Teresa generalmente escribía veinte correos electrónicos (emails). -2 -1 0 1 2
41. El viernes pasado, la profesora tenía gemelos (identical twins) en el hospital. -2 -1 0 1 2
42. Alemania ganará la copa mundial de fútbol el próximo año. -2 -1 0 1 2
43. En mi niñez me gustó comer pasteles (cakes) de mi abuelita. -2 -1 0 1 2
44. Michael Phelps nadó anteayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
45. Juan usualmente lavó dos coches (cars) italianos. -2 -1 0 1 2
46. El avión llegó tarde ayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
47. El atleta correría 4 kilómetros pasado mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
48. La niña lloró frecuentemente. -2 -1 0 1 2
49. El viernes pasado, el cirujano (surgeon) operó a la paciente chilena. -2 -1 0 1 2
50. Habitualmente terminé mi tarea escolar a tiempo (on time). -2 -1 0 1 2
51. El atleta correrá 4 kilómetros pasado mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
52. María antes conocía a todos mis amigos -2 -1 0 1 2
53. La profesora regularmente llegaba tarde a la clase. -2 -1 0 1 2
54. Ayer trabajaban poco. -2 -1 0 1 2
55. Mary tomaba un vaso de vino anteayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
56. Usualmente fumaba (smoke) mucho. -2 -1 0 1 2
57. Mi presentación duraba (to last) dos horas anteayer. -2 -1 0 1 2
58. Mi papá habitualmente tomaba dos tazas de café. -2 -1 0 1 2
59. La niña se caía (fall into) en el río (river) el lunes pasado. -2 -1 0 1 2
60. El atleta correrá 4 kilómetros pasado mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
61. De niño, yo supe tocar piano. -2 -1 0 1 2
62. Lucy regularmente bailó tango. -2 -1 0 1 2
63. El lunes pasado los niños perdieron sus boletos para el concierto. -2 -1 0 1 2
64. Daniel y Diego jugaron anoche. -2 -1 0 1 2
65. En estos momentos estoy trabajando mucho. -2 -1 0 1 2
66. La semana pasada, la niña corrió (run) un kilómetro. -2 -1 0 1 2
67. El bebe frecuentemente se cayó (fall) de las escaleras. -2 -1 0 1 2
68. Anoche, no me olvidé de cerrar la puerta con seguro. -2 -1 0 1 2
69. Mi profesora frecuentemente caminó un kilómetro. -2 -1 0 1 2
70. Anoche estoy recibiendo cartas por correo postal. -2 -1 0 1 2
71. El tren usualmente llegó a la parada (stop) de Madrid. -2 -1 0 1 2
72. La gente se sintió feliz con frecuencia. -2 -1 0 1 2
73. Juanito comió una manzana anoche. -2 -1 0 1 2
74. El viernes pasado, la profesora tuvo gemelos (identical twins) en el hospital.-2 -1 0 1 2
75. Anoche he recibido cartas por correo postal. -2 -1 0 1 2
76. Teresa generalmente escribió veinte correos electrónicos (emails). -2 -1 0 1 2
77. Mis hijos habitualmente jugaron basquetbol. -2 -1 0 1 2
78. Ayer la gente bebió mucho. -2 -1 0 1 2
79. María encontró 100 dólares anoche. -2 -1 0 1 2
80. Mi tía ha llamado por teléfono mañana. -2 -1 0 1 2
APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS
Background questionnaire (native-English speakers)

In what Spanish course are you currently enrolled? SPA ______

1. Which is your native language? (language you learned before 6 years old)
   ______________________________

2. Were you exposed to another language than your native language as a child?
   • YES, Which ones? _______________ at _____ years old. For how long? ________
   • NO.

3. What other languages have you learned/studied and which one do you speak fluently?
   • I learned/ studied ______________________ I speak fluently ______________
   • N/A

4. Academic experience studying Spanish.
   a) How many years in high school? __________________
   b) How many semesters in college? __________________

5. Have you visited/lived in a Spanish-speaking country? If yes, for how long?
   • YES, in ________________, for ________________(days, months, years).
     a) What was the reason for your visit? (study abroad, vacation, military service)
        ________________________________
     b) How many hours a day did you use Spanish while abroad?
        ________________________________
   • NO.

6. Do you use Spanish outside your Spanish class? If yes, how often? With whom?
   • YES, I use it with ____________ How often? ________________ hours a day/month
   • NO.

7. How do you rate your Spanish proficiency?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Basic Intermediate Advanced
APPENDIX D

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE NATIVE-SPANISH SPEAKERS
Background questionnaire (native-Spanish speakers)

1. Is Spanish your native language? Please, let us know what other languages you were exposed to in your childhood?

______________________________________________________________________

2. In what country did you learn your native language?

______________________________________________________________________

3. What languages do you speak other than Spanish? How old were you when you learned it/them?

______________________________________________________________________

4. How do you rate your proficiency in English?

   1 Basic  2 Intermediate  3  4  5 Advanced

5. For how long have you lived in the United States?

______________________________________________________________________

6. How frequently do you read, write, speak and read in Spanish?

   Read:  never  almost never  sometimes  frequently  always

   Write: never  almost never  sometimes  frequently  always

   Speak:  never  almost never  sometimes  frequently  always

   Listening:  never  almost never  sometimes  frequently  always
APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM NATIVE-ENGLISH SPEAKERS
CONSENT FORM

Research: The Interpretation of Spanish Grammatical Aspect with Habitual and Episodic Readings and the Influence of Adverbials.

Dear Fellow Student,

My name is Tatiana Fistrovic and I am a Ph.D. student in the Applied Linguistics program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation to determine how native-English speakers learning Spanish interpret grammatical aspect with habitual and episodic readings which has been difficult to acquire by English speakers.

I would like to ask for your participation in a study that will help us understand the magnitude of the native language influence in Spanish grammatical aspect interpretation. Your participation as a native-English speaker studying Spanish at ASU is important.

If you decide to participate in the study, you must be 18 years or older. Your name or any other identifying information will not be disclosed, and as such, responses will be anonymous. Your participation will last approximately 70 minutes and 80 people are expected to participate. You would have to answer a paper-and-pencil background survey, complete a short test and do two tasks. These two tasks require that you answer based on your intuition and knowledge of Spanish. The first task consists of reading two-line stories and choose one of two sentences that explain better the idea of the story. The second task requires reading a sentence and deciding how good it sounds to you. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications and they will be shown in the aggregate form, but your name will not be known. In addition, you will receive $15.00 in cash for your participation.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may skip questions and stop participation at any time. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the principal investigator Dr. Elly Van Gelderen at ellyvangelden@asu.edu or the research investigator Tatiana.Fistrovic@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you have complaints not answered by the research team, you want to get information or provide input about this research or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788 or by email at research.integrity@asu.edu. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Social Behavioral IRB.

Sincerely,
Tatiana Fistrovic

Participation in the questionnaires will be considered your consent to take part in this research.
FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO

Investigación: La interpretación del aspecto gramatical del español con lectura habitual y episódica y la influencia de los adverbios.

Estimado Participante:

Mi nombre es Tatiana Fistrovic y soy candidata del doctorado de Lingüística Aplicada de la facultad de Artes Liberales y Ciencias de Arizona State University. Estoy conduciendo un estudio de investigación para mi tesis doctoral con el fin de determinar cómo los hablantes nativos del inglés que estudian español interpretan el aspecto gramatical con lecturas habituales y episódicas, estructuras que son difíciles de adquirir por los hablantes nativos del inglés.

Quisiera pedir tu participación en este estudio que ayudará a comprender la magnitud de la influencia de la lengua nativa al interpretar el aspecto gramatical en español. Tu participación como hablante nativo del español es importante.

En caso decidas participar en este estudio, tu nombre o cualquier información que te identifique no será divulgada, por lo tanto, tus respuestas serán anónimas. Tu participación durará aproximadamente 70 minutos y se espera que participen 80 personas. Tendrás que responder con papel y lápiz un cuestionario de antecedentes y dos tareas. Las respuestas de estas dos tareas serán basadas en tu intuición y conocimiento del español. La primera tarea consiste en leer unas historias de aproximadamente dos líneas y escoger una de dos oraciones que explique mejor la idea de la historia. En la segunda tarea tendrías que leer una oración y decidir asignando un número cuán bien te suena. Los resultados de este estudio se utilizarán en reportes, presentaciones o publicaciones; sin embargo, tu nombre no se dará a conocer. Además, los resultados se presentarán de manera agregada. Recibirás $15.00 en efectivo por tu participación.

No existen posibles riesgos o incomodidad que puedas experimentar al participar. Tu participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Si deseas puedes dejar de responder algunas preguntas o interrumpir tu participación en cualquier momento. Si decides no participar o retirarte del estudio en cualquier momento, no habrá ningún tipo de penalidad.

Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre este estudio de investigación, agradeceré que contactes con la investigadora principal Dra. Elly Van Gelderen al ellyvangelderen@asu.edu o con la investigadora Tatiana Fistrovic al Tatiana.Fistrovic@asu.edu. Si tienes alguna consulta sobre tus derechos como participante en esta investigación, tienes quejas no respondidas por el equipo de investigación o sientes que te han expuesto a algún tipo de riesgo, puedes contactarte directamente a la Presidencia del Comité de Revisión Institucional de Sujetos Humanos (Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board) a través de la Oficina de Investigación, Integridad y Garantía (ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance), al (480) 965-6788 o por correo electrónico a research.integrity@asu.edu. Esta investigación ha sido revisada y aprobada por el IRB división conducta social.

Atentamente,
Tatiana Fistrovic

Tu participación en estos cuestionarios se considerará como tu consentimiento para tomar parte en esta investigación.
APPENDIX G

WISCONSIN SPANISH PROFICIENCY TEST – SHORT VERSION
### Sección 1 – La gramática

**Instrucciones**
Escoja una respuesta que completa la frase correctamente. Si no hay un cambio y la frase ya es correcta, escoja (d) No hay cambio.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hay _____ mil personas aquí.</td>
<td>a. un</td>
<td>b. una</td>
<td>c. uno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cuando yo _____ joven, fui a Chile.</td>
<td>a. fue</td>
<td>b. soy</td>
<td>c. era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Juan me dijo _____ su hermana iba a visitar España el año que viene.</td>
<td>a. que</td>
<td>b. cual</td>
<td>c. quien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. – ¿Quisieras ayudar a la gente pobre? – Sí, quisiera _____ .</td>
<td>a. ayudarla</td>
<td>b. ayudarlas</td>
<td>c. la ayudo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cuando necesito dinero, _____ pido a mi padre diez o quince dólares.</td>
<td>a. le</td>
<td>b. lo</td>
<td>c. les</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. _____ un examen el viernes.</td>
<td>a. Ha</td>
<td>b. Es</td>
<td>c. Está</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 8. | – ¿Cuándo es tu cumpleaños?  
   – Es _____ tres de abril.  
   a. a  
   b. en  
   c. el  
   d. No hay cambio |
| 9. | ¿Conoces a alguien que _____ bien?  
   a. cante  
   b. cantes  
   c. cantas  
   d. cantar |
| 10. | Si no estuviéramos en clase, _____ en la playa.  
    a. estamos  
    b. estaremos  
    c. habríamos  
    d. estaríamos |
| 11. | No hay duda de que ellos _____ dinero.  
    a. ganan  
    b. ganen  
    c. ganasen  
    d. hayan ganado |
| 12. | – ¿Debo decirte la verdad?  
     – Sí, ¡_____ la verdad!  
     a. dime  
     b. me dice  
     c. me dices  
     d. me digas |
| 13. | – Anoche hablé con Ricardo.  
    – ¿Y qué dijo?  
    – Que _____ hoy.  
    a. él te llame  
    b. te llamo  
    c. te haya llamado  
    d. te llamaría |
| 14. | Su esposa esperaría hasta que él _____.
    a. volviera  
    b. volvería  
    c. haya vuelto  
    d. había vuelto |
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Paco es _____ alto _____ Juanita.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. tan, de</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. tan, que</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. más, de</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. más, que</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– El edificio es _____ la montaña.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. alto como</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. más alto que</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. tan alto como</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. menos alto que</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Cuando la vi, _____ triste.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. estás</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. estaban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. estaba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. estuviera</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Voy a buscar _____ mi abrigo.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. por</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. para</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. No hay cambio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Enrique compró unas rosas y _____ las dio a sus padres.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. le</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. se</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. les</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>¡Cuidado! ¡No _____ caigas!</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. se</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. te</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. tú</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. ti</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Sección 2 – La gramática

Instrucciones
Después de leer la siguiente historieta una vez del principio hasta el fin, léala otra vez mientras escoger las palabras apropiadas en orden para completar la historia. Las respuestas siguen la historieta.

   Como me gusta ayudar a otras personas y tengo bastante tiempo libre, (21) _____ voluntaria en un hospital muy grande de la ciudad de Milwaukee. A veces es muy agradable (22) ______ allí, pero también, de vez en cuando, tenemos problemas con (23) _____ paciente majadero y ciertos doctores arrogantes que se creen muy importantes.

   Con frecuencia, para (24) ______ el tiempo, nos reunimos los voluntarios y nos contamos chistes. Un día, un paciente me (25) _____ éste que me pareció muy gracioso:

   Dicen que un hombre que tenía cien años se murió y fue directamente al cielo. Allí (26) _____ encontró en una enorme cafetería con muchas personas que hacían cola para que les sirvieran la comida. De repente, un hombre vestido de blanco que acababa de llegar, pasó del último lugar hasta el primero sin hacer caso a los demás. El hombre recién llegado al cielo, (27) _____ muy enojado: “Pero, ¿quién es ese señor?” Otro que (28) _____ pacientemente en la cola (29) _____ contestó: “¡Hombre! Ése (30) _____ Dios, pero a veces cree que es médico”.

   Todos nos reímos, (31) _____ sabíamos que no todos los médicos son así.

| 21. | a. estoy  
    | b. tengo  
    | c. soy   | 27. | a. preguntó  
    | b. preguntara  
    | c. preguntaría |
| 22. | a. trabajo  
    | b. trabajar  
    | c. trabajando | 28. | a. esperó  
    | b. esperando  
    | c. esperaba |
| 23. | a. algún  
    | b. alguna  
    | c. alguno | 29. | a. le  
    | b. lo  
    | c. se |
| 24. | a. pasando  
    | b. pasar  
    | c. pasado | 30. | a. es  
    | b. sea  
    | c. está |
| 25. | a. contó  
    | b. contaría  
    | c. conté | 31. | a. desde que  
    | b. aunque  
    | c. tanto que |
| 26. | a. se  
    | b. me  
<pre><code>| c. les |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sección 3 – Comprensión de lectura</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrucciones</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Por favor lea el próximo párrafo y conteste a las preguntas que lo siguen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

El teatro mexicano, después de la poesía y la novela, empieza a adquirir rasgos personales por primera vez hacia 1928 con la fundación de un centro experimental, el Teatro Ulises. Anteriormente, en México, la producción dramática había sido una mediocre imitación de la de España. Los directores se limitaban a presentar un teatro comercial y disponían de locales viejos y de actores que carecían de preparación profesional adecuada. El Teatro Ulises operaba en una sala con una capacidad de cincuenta asientos. La carencia de repertorio genuinamente mexicano les indujo a traducir obras del teatro norteamericano moderno. A través de esta producción extranjera, los nuevos dramaturgos mexicanos decidieron desarrollar una forma de expresión propia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>32.</th>
<th>Había poco teatro original en México antes de 1928.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Verdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Falso</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>33.</th>
<th>Hasta 1928 los directores mexicanos tenían buenos lugares para presentar obras teatrales.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Verdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Falso</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>34.</th>
<th>Cientos de aficionados del teatro asistían a cada función del Teatro Ulises.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Verdad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Falso</td>
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<tr>
<th>35.</th>
<th>En los primeros años del Teatro Ulises, sólo se presentaban dramas nacionales.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Verdad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Falso</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>36.</th>
<th>El teatro extranjero tuvo gran influencia en la formación del drama mexicano.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Verdad</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b. Falso</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL
EXEMPTION GRANTED

Elly Van Gelderen  
English 480/965-563  
ellyvangelderen@asu.edu  
Dear Elly Van Gelderen:  
On 3/3/2015 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Review:</th>
<th>Initial Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>The Interpretation of Spanish Grammatical Aspect with Habitual and Episodic Readings and the Influence of Adverbials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator:</td>
<td>Elly Van Gelderen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB ID:</td>
<td>STUDY00002346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant ID:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Documents Reviewed: | • Background questionnaire native-English speakers, Category: Screening forms;  
|                 | • Final tasks of research, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions/interview guides/focus group questions);  
|                 | • Consent form native-Spanish speakers, Category: Consent Form;  
|                 | • Recruitment script native-Spanish speakers Spanish version, Category: Recruitment Materials;  
|                 | • Consent form native-English speakers, Category: Consent Form;  
|                 | • Wisconsin test - Spanish proficiency test, Category: Screening forms;  
<p>|                 | • Recruitment script native-Spanish speakers, |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Recruitment Materials;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Recruitment script native-English speakers,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category: Recruitment Materials;</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category: Consent Form;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Consent form native-Spanish speakers Spanish version, Category: Consent Form;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Translation certification, Category: Translations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Background questionnaire native-Spanish speakers, Category: Screening forms;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 3/3/2015. In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc:  Tatiana Fistrovic
     Tatiana Fistrovic