The L2 Acquisition and L1 Attrition of the Interpretation and Use of Aspectual Properties in Spanish among English-speaking L2 Learners and Long-term Spanish Immigrants

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of aspectual properties in Spanish. Specifically, it investigates preterite versus imperfect distinctions and the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense among English-speaking L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants. In contrast to previous research which explains L2 learners’ difficulties as a result of either maturational constraints or morphosyntactic development, this study provides a supplementary explanation focusing on L1 transfer of the semantic patterns of tense morphemes.

The study proceeds by comparing data from L2 learners with that of long-term Spanish immigrants. Unlike what is argued for L2 acquisition difficulties, the difficulties immigrants may have with tense and aspect cannot stem solely from impairment reasons. These immigrants acquired the L2 as adults. Therefore, to the extent that L2 learners share similar patterns of errors with adult immigrants, L2 speakers’ difficulties cannot be unequivocally linked to causes related to impairment. Instead, following a selectional approach to aspectual variation (De Swart, 1998), it is argued that transfer of the selectional patterns of tense morphemes offers a more encompassing explanation of the difficulties L2 speakers face with tense and aspect.
Data collection involved two truth-value judgment tasks, two acceptability judgment tasks and two elicited production tasks. Twenty long-term immigrants, twenty English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish, and twenty native speakers of Spanish serving as control participants took part in the study. Results show incorrect activation of aspectual patterns by both experimental groups and similar patterns of difficulties in some of the conditions under investigation. I conclude that transfer from the other language offers a more adequate explanation of the difficulties L2 learners face.
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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study examines and compares the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of aspectual properties in Spanish by English-speaking L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants. Specifically, it investigates the interpretation and use of Spanish preterite versus imperfect distinctions and the ongoing value of the present tense.

Research has consistently demonstrated that the acquisition of tense and aspect presents particular challenges for L2 learners (e.g., Coppieters, 1987; Montrul & Slabakova, 2003; Pérez-Leroux, Cuza, Majlanova & Sánchez-Naranjo, in press; Salaberry & Shirai, 2002). Such difficulties are due in great part to learners’ confusion concerning the aspectual opposition between the perfective and imperfective states of the verbs. As in other Romance languages, the internal process of the situation expressed by the verb (i.e., the perfective versus imperfective) is realized morphologically through verbal inflections in Spanish, as shown in (1) and (2) below:

(1) María tocaba el piano cuando niña. [habitual interpretation]
    María played-IMP the piano when child.
    “Mary played the piano as a child.”

(2) María tocó el piano ayer. [completed interpretation]
    María played-PRET the piano yesterday.
    “Mary played the piano yesterday.”

In (1), the event described is a habitual action in the past (i.e., Mary regularly played the piano as a child). In such contexts, the imperfect is preferred. The event described in (2) is rather a completed action in the past (i.e., Yesterday, Mary began and finished playing the piano); the
preterite is preferred in such contexts (e.g., Alcina & Blecua, 1975; Hernández-Alonso, 1984; RAE, 1973). In contrast, the English simple past can be interpreted either as a habitual or completed event, as shown in the translations of (1) and (2). This grammatical encoding of aspectual interpretations is commonly referred to as Grammatical or Viewpoint Aspect (e.g., Comrie, 1976; Smith, 1997).

As concerns acquisition, the L2 learner’s task involves not only the acquisition of the explicit morphosyntactic forms (i.e., -é, -ba, -ó) but also of their associated aspectual meanings (habitual or completed). Research on the acquisition of tense and aspect in Spanish shows that this form-to-meaning mapping often causes difficulties for L2 speakers (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Montrul & Slabakova, 2001; Salaberry, 2002).

English and Spanish also differ in the way they represent their aspectual properties in the present tense. In English, the simple present can only have a generic interpretation, as shown in (3a). An ongoing meaning is not allowed. For ongoing interpretations, the progressive must be used (3b). In Spanish, on the other hand, the present tense can be interpreted as an ongoing or generic event (4a). Example (4a) can be interpreted either as ‘Juan is a runner’ or as ‘Juan is running right now’. The progressive (4b) also selects an ongoing meaning (Schmitt, 2001).

(English)

(3)  a. John runs (#right now). [+generic] [-ongoing]
    b. John is running right now. [-generic] [+ongoing]

(Spanish)

(4)  a. Juan corre (en este momento). [+generic] [-ongoing]
    b. Juan está corriendo ahora. [-generic] [+ongoing]

In terms of acquisition, the L2 learners’ task involves learning new semantic values associated with the Spanish present tense (generic, ongoing). This may cause difficulties for English-
speaking L2 learners of Spanish evidenced by low levels of acceptance and use of the Spanish present tense with an ongoing interpretation due to the transfer of more restrictive options in English (e.g., Klein-Andreu, 1980). Another important factor in the learning of these semantic properties in Spanish is that they are not necessarily distinguished morphologically. Given the lack of explicit markings for each semantic value in the input, L2 learners may have more difficulty acquiring the target interpretations. Similarly, this could also make these semantic values more vulnerable to L1 attrition.

While research on the L2 acquisition of tense and aspect is extensive (see e.g. Slabakova 2002 for review), there is little agreement on what impedes learners from fully mastering L2 aspectual interpretations. Some researchers have proposed a role for maturational constraints linked to age at onset of L2 acquisition (e.g., Coppieters, 1987). Coppieters argues that the L2 acquisition of aspectual properties by English-speaking L2 learners of French remains non-native due to biological development related to the age at which the second language was learned. This proposal follows the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) which argues that after puberty, native-like attainment of an L2 is inherently impeded due to brain maturation (e.g., Johnson & Newport, 1989; Patkowksi, 1990). Other researchers argue that learners’ difficulties stem from the absence of morphosyntactic features instantiated in Romance languages [±perfective] but not in languages like English [+]perfective (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). I will refer to these to two approaches for L2 learners’ difficulties as the ‘maturational approach’ and the ‘morphosyntactic approach’. Within this latter approach, in Romance languages like Spanish, the preterite marks perfective aspect (bounded events) while the imperfect marks imperfective aspect (unbounded events). In English, in contrast, bounded and unbounded events can be expressed through the use of the preterite (‘Mary played the
piano as a child or Mary played the piano yesterday’). The task of the L2 learner is then to acquire the aspectual features not instantiated in English (L1) [-perfective] and associate these sets of features with tense/aspect morphemes (e.g., Montrul, 2002). Thus, the development of morphosyntactic features is the necessary trigger for the acquisition of aspectual meaning.

As I will discuss in Chapter 3, these explanations do not fully account for the difficulties L2 learners’ often have with aspectual distinctions. Concerning the maturational approach, L2 acquisition research finds no sharp discontinuity in language learning as age at onset of L2 acquisition increases, but instead, has demonstrated a gradual decline (e.g., Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). A hallmark of the CPH is a necessary discontinuity in language learning after puberty, and this is not found. Research also shows that children are generally better learners than adults although for entirely different reasons than brain maturation. As Jia (1998) argues, the way in which children interact with the environment and external circumstances enhances their L2 acquisition considerably, along with better quantitative and qualitative input, and other factors. Age effects are thus the byproduct of multiple environmental and bilingualism factors related to age (e.g., implicit and explicit attitudes, external circumstances).

Regarding the morphosyntactic approach, Montrul and Slabakova’s (2002) own results indicate that L2 learners may acquire complete knowledge of overt morphosyntax without complete mastery of some semantic representations (i.e., use of the imperfect with achievement predicates). It is therefore not completely clear why, if morphology is in place and it is the trigger necessary to activate semantics, some aspectual interpretations are still not fully acquired. Moreover, if divergent semantic representations arise from different morphosyntactic development, then languages with similar morphosyntactic systems should have similar
semantic representations. Research shows that this is not the case since languages with almost identical verbal systems, such as Spanish and Portuguese, still diverge in their aspectual meanings (Schmitt, 2001).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a supplementary explanation of the difficulties L2 learners often encounter when acquiring verbal aspect to those offered by the maturational and morphosyntactic approaches. Specifically, I will argue that transfer from the other language offers a more encompassing account of the difficulties that English-speaking L2 learners have in the acquisition of the aspectual properties of the Spanish past tense. It is widely recognized that L1 knowledge influences both L2 comprehension and production including that of verbal systems (e.g., Liceras, 1989; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; Slabakova, 2000; White, 1985). Weinreich’s (1953) defines transfer as “those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language.” (p.1). Concerning verbal aspect, I specifically propose that English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish will transfer the selectional patterns of the L1 tense heads (eventuality descriptions), leading to a neutralization of the aspectual selection of either head in Spanish, due to influence of the English simple past (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., in press). That is, since the English simple past has neutral selectional properties, L2 learners may transfer the lack of selectional patterns of the simple past into Spanish, and use one tense head (e.g., the preterite) for both habitual and completed events. One of the two tense heads (the imperfect or preterite) would then assume the neutral value. Previous research has argued that English-speaking L2
learners of Spanish tend to use the preterite as the default equivalent for the English simple past (e.g., Liskin-Gasparro, 1997; Salaberry, 2002).

To develop this argument, I adopt De Swart’s (1998) selectional approach of aspectual variation. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, De Swart argues that aspectual differences between English and Romance languages are determined by the semantic patterns or eventuality descriptions tense morphemes can select and the compositional relation established between the verb and other elements within the phrase such as adverbs (e.g., De Swart, 1998; Schmitt, 2001). For instance, the simple past in English allows both homogeneous and heterogeneous eventuality descriptions (semantic patterns), since there are not selectional restrictions. In contrast, the Spanish preterite and imperfect are aspectually sensitive in that each of them will select specific eventuality descriptions: the preterite selects heterogeneous eventualities (accomplishment and achievements), and the imperfect selects homogeneous eventualities (states and activities).

Unlike the morphosyntactic approach (e.g., Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997), a selectional perspective offers a more encompassing explanation for aspectual differences in that it does not link aspectual variation to pre-determined morphological paradigms. This approach is more adequate because it allows for a transfer-based explanation of the difficulties often found among instructed L2 learners and adult immigrants undergoing L1 attrition (e.g., Sorace, 2000; Tsimpili, Sorace, Heycock & Filiaci, 2004). L1 attrition refers to the grammatical restructuring of a previously acquired L1 system due to intense contact with a dominant L2 (e.g., Köpke & Schmid, 2004; Seliger & Vago, 1991). As argued in previous research (e.g., Guasti, 2002; Liceras, 1989, 1996), L2 learners are not always able to reset all L1 features successfully, partly because of the transfer of divergent properties in the L1 and insensitivity to aspects of
the target language input, among other factors. In the specific case of verbal aspect, research has argued that the L2 learners’ task involves a gradual construction of the lexicon with all its feature specification rules — lexical, morphosyntactic and semantic. Some aspectual contrasts may be fully acquired while others may remain indeterminate, probably due to transfer of different L1 semantic patterns into the L2 (e.g., Pérez-Leroux, et al., in press). Moreover, research shows that even languages with identical morphosyntax show divergent aspectual representations, as is the case with Spanish and Portuguese (e.g., Schmitt, 2001). If aspectual differences were unequivocally linked to morphosyntactic development, as has been argued, then these two languages would show congruent aspectual representations.

A transfer perspective more adequately accounts for current data that show the occurrence of optionality in the grammar of long-term immigrants undergoing L1 attrition (e.g., Major, 1997; Sorace, 2000; Tsimpli et al., 2004). Following the Full Transfer/Full Access model of Schwarz & Sprouse (1994), Sorace (2000) argues that the use of non-target forms in the L1 by long-term immigrants is best explained by transfer from the L2 (L2 induced L1 attrition). The author predicts that L2 forms will specifically affect syntax-semantic interface structures (locus of optionality) regulated by interpretable features (e.g., tense and aspect) which are more complex and difficult to process. The coexistence of L1 and L2 forms will then lead to a divergent grammar resulting from the loss of restrictions on the application of less economical rules in the L1 (e.g., Sorace, 2000; 2005). In addition, the difficulties that adult immigrants have cannot be solely explained in terms of impairment reasons, since these bilinguals immigrated to the L2 context with a fully developed system. Therefore, transfer from the other language, affecting specifically the syntax-semantic interface, has been proposed as a complimentary explanation for the difficulties faced by L2 learners and adult
immigrants alike (e.g., Pavlenko, 2004; Robertson & Sorace, 1999). Research on L1 attrition has also found similar patterns of deficits between L2 learners and adult long-term immigrants, which questions previous research relying solely on impairment as an explanation for L2 acquisition difficulties (e.g., Sorace, 2000). This is why I consider this approach more encompassing in accounting for parallels between L2 acquisition and L1 attrition.

Building on this research, in this study I isolate the role of transfer as a critical source of L2 difficulties by comparing data from English-speaking L2 learners with that of long-term Spanish immigrants. I compare these two groups of bilinguals because, unlike what has been argued for L2 acquisition difficulties, the difficulties adult immigrants sometimes have due to L1 attrition cannot be solely explained in terms of maturational development or a lack of instantiation of morphosyntactic features. These bilinguals acquired the L2 as adults and with a fully developed L1 grammar. Therefore, to the extent that L2 learners share similar patterns of errors with adult immigrants, L2 learners’ difficulties cannot be unequivocally related to these potential causes of impairment. Instead, I argue that transfer from the other language (L1 in L2 acquisition and L2 in L1 attrition) offers a more encompassing explanation of the difficulties L2 learners face.

I examine tense and aspect because they are ideal candidates for research on L2 acquisition and L1 attrition difficulties and the important role of transfer. As discussed earlier, the learners’ task requires not only the acquisition of morphosyntactic forms not available in the L1, but also of the lexical/semantic patterns associated with their use. Thus, tense and aspect stand at the interface between syntax and semantics. At this interface, morphosyntactic structures rely on the licensing and coordination of semantic factors (e.g., distribution of subject pronouns in Spanish and Italian, tense and aspect). Some researchers argue that transfer is
selective, as it affects mostly interface levels such as, where L2 learners and bilingual speakers coordinate syntactic and semantic representations which have been argued to be more complex and computational costly (e.g., Hulk & Müller, 1999; Platzack, 1996; Serratrice, Sorace & Paoli, 2004; Sorace, 2000; Tsimpi et al., 2004). Yet, purely syntactic aspects (computational system) will not be affected. Hulk and Müller (1999) were among the first to put forward this proposal on transfer selectivity and vulnerable domains when examining the bilingual L1 acquisition of object drop and root infinitives among Germanic and Romance bilingual children.

Other linguists have since extended this proposal to L2 acquisition and L1 attrition research from a generative grammar perspective (e.g., Montrul, 2004; Sánchez, 2004; Sorace, 2000). If transfer affects the syntax-semantic interface and divergent semantic features associated with the L1 and the L2, then tense and aspect are prime candidates for research among Spanish-English bilinguals.

Previous studies have examined the L1 loss of aspectual properties in Spanish among heritage speakers or early bilinguals (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; 2003). However, the difficulties these studies find may stem from incomplete acquisition during childhood rather than L1 attrition proper. This study contributes to this existing research in that it focuses instead on the L1 attrition of previously acquired linguistic knowledge among adult immigrants. Moreover, this study examines the interpretation and use of the semantic values of the Spanish present tense, an area of research that remains underexplored, in both SLA and L1 attrition research.
The Spanish present tense is an interesting area of investigation because in contrast to preterite versus imperfect distinctions, the semantic values of the Spanish present (e.g., generic and ongoing) are not necessarily distinguished morphologically. Therefore, it is interesting to examine whether the transfer of English semantic values also affects the acquisition or attrition of semantic representations in Spanish regardless of the absence of morphological cues. If this is the case, then L2 learners’ difficulties should not be linked to morphosyntactic development.

In order to test the general proposal outlined above, an experimental study of the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of aspectual properties in Spanish was conducted using data from twenty English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish, twenty long-term Spanish immigrants and twenty native Spanish speakers as a control group. Data collection entailed two acceptability judgment tasks, two truth value judgment tasks and two elicited production tasks (oral narratives). The goals of these tasks were to examine whether participants had knowledge of the aspectual interpretations of past-tense morphemes in Spanish and of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I examine standard treatments of tense and aspect (e.g., Comrie, 1976, Vendler, 1967) as well as two of the main theoretical perspectives on aspectual variation: Giorgi and Pianesi’s (1997) morphological-development approach and De Swart’s (1998) selectional perspective. This chapter also presents a descriptive analysis of aspectual differences in Spanish and English for the past and present tenses.
In Chapter 3, I survey and evaluate L2 acquisition and L1 attrition research on tense and aspect. I examine research that explains L2 learners’ difficulties as a result of (a) maturational constraints linked to age at onset of L2 acquisition; (b) morphological developmental differences; and (c) lack of acquisition of the semantic properties of tense morphemes. I conclude that the difficulties L2 learners face can also be explained in terms of transfer of the semantic patterns of tense morphemes.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I present two experiments testing the interpretation and use of Spanish preterite and imperfect distinctions and of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense. I describe and discuss the research questions, specific hypotheses, participant groups, methods and results. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the conclusions, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research. I conclude that L1 transfer of the semantic properties of tense morphemes provides a valid supplementary explanation that can help us further understand the difficulties that L2 learners experience.
2. Tense and Aspect

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is two fold: (1) to present descriptive and theoretical approaches for aspectual variation; (2) to describe and explain aspectual differences between English and Spanish. In the first Section (2.1), I introduce general concepts of tense and aspect. In Section 2.2, I present previous treatments to aspect and discuss their contributions and limitations. Section 2.3 examines two main theoretical analyses of aspectual variation recently discussed in the literature. In Section four (2.4), I present a descriptive analysis of aspectual differences in Spanish and English for both the past and present tenses. I conclude the chapter with a global summary of the basic differences between the two languages and theoretical approaches.

2.2 What are Tense and Aspect?

Following Comrie (1976), tense is defined as a deictic, morphological category that “relates to the time of the situation referred to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking.” (p. 2). That is, tense situates a particular event or situation in relation to the time of utterance (absolute tense). The present tense usually refers to a situation occurring simultaneous with the moment of speech, as in (5); the past tense describes a situation which occurred prior to the moment of speech (6), while the future tense refers to a subsequent situation (7):

Comrie (1976)

(5) John is singing.

(6) John sang/John was singing.

(7) John will sing/John will be singing.
Besides absolute tense as exemplified in (5) to (7), Comrie also describes another form of tense: relative tense. In this case, the time of a situation is related to the time of some other situation, as in (8):

(8) When driving to work, I normally drink coffee.

In (8), the present participle *driving* denotes an event that occurs simultaneous to the act of *drinking coffee*.

In contrast, aspect is non-deictic and is defined as “different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of the situation.” (Comrie, 1976, p. 3). That is, it describes how an event occurs over a period of time. An event can take place habitually, iteratively or punctually in the past while ongoing or generic in the present (e.g., Comrie, 1976; de Miguel, 1999; Li and Shirai, 2001; Schmitt, 2001; Smith, 1997).

These aspectual interpretations have been examined traditionally from a grammatical, lexical and compositional perspective. From a grammatical perspective aspectual differences are linked to verb inflections or periphrastic expressions. Lexically, aspectual differences are encoded in the lexical aspect of the verb. Compositionally, the relation between the verb, its complements and adjuncts determines aspectual interpretations. These descriptions have seminal contributions but also some limitations. It is widely accepted by most scholars today that aspectual interpretations are not fixed to either lexical entries or type of inflection but are rather compositionally formed. However, the compositional view, as originally presented by Verkuyl (1972), presents a complex machinery. Thus, recent theoretical research has provided a more “minimal” account of its fundamental claim by attributing the compositionality of aspect to the selectional properties of tense heads (De Swart, 1998). In the following section I address these treatments to tense and aspect in detail.
2.3 Descriptions of Aspectual Differences

Previous treatments of tense and aspect have examined aspectual oppositions from three perspectives:

(i)  *Lexical Aspect* (Vendler, 1967)

(ii) *Grammatical Aspect* (Comrie, 1976)

(iii) *Compositional Aspect* (Verkuyl, 1972)

Since aspectual differences are represented differently among languages, some linguists adopt different *nomenclatura* than those above. For instance, Smith (1997) refers to grammatical aspect as *Viewpoint Aspect*, while lexical aspect is also known as *Aktionsart*, from the German ‘action type’, or *Situational Aspect*. In this study, I will use lexical, grammatical and compositional aspect following Comrie’s (1976) and Verkuyl’s (1972) terms. Compositional and VP aspect will be used interchangeably.

2.3.1 Lexical Aspect

From a *Lexical Aspect* perspective, aspectual distinctions are based on the lexical properties of verbs including telicity and durativity and their semantic entailments. Vendler (1967) categorizes verbs into four predicate types:

a. States: *know, be, love, need, want, see, feel, enjoy, like.*

b. Activities: *run, sing, write, draw, walk, paint, swim, play, watch, dance, help.*

c. Accomplishments: *build a house, run a mile, play a sonata, draw a circle.*

d. Achievements: *sink, break, fall, reach, die, find, destroy, realize.*
This classification is made according to the verbs’ lexical temporal properties. Each lexical category contrasts with the others based on three lexical aspeccial features: durativity, telicity and dynamicity.

The aspectual feature of *durativity* refers to the length of duration of the event expressed by a verb. States, activities and accomplishments are durative in that they can endure indefinitely or for a specific interval of time. In contrast, achievements predicates are instantaneous. That is, they have no time duration and are punctual.

*Telicity* refers to the aspectual properties of verbs at the lexical level in terms of potential endpoints. Telic verbs denote the existence of an endpoint to which the event will lead (e.g., Slabakova and Montrul, 2002). If a verb does not present an intrinsic endpoint, as is the case with stative and activity verbs, it is considered *atelic*. If it presents both a beginning and a culmination point, as do accomplishments and achievements, it is *telic* (e.g., Olsen, 1997; Smith, 1997; Verkuyl, 1972). Finally, *dynamicity* indicates the ability of a verb to denote a change or transformation from one condition to another, as in *John destroyed the book* (e.g., Dowty, 1979). Stative verbs represent situations with no internal structure (no beginning or end) and are thus atelic. They are also durative (e.g., *Mary loves John*), and non-dynamic. They are non-dynamic in that they do not normally have a continuous interpretation as in *Mary is loving John*. In some cases, however, a stative verb can have a continuous interpretation but it is treated as non-stative, as in *Mary is being silly* (e.g., Comrie, 1976).

Activity verbs represent a durative and dynamic event. They are atelic, since they do not have an inherent endpoint (e.g., *John ran for hours*). Accomplishment verbs denote events that are also durative and dynamic. In contrast with statives and activities, they are telic in that they are characterized by an inherent beginning and end (e.g., *John built a house*). An
accomplishment predicate describes a process leading to a result. Similarly, achievement predicates (e.g., John reached the top, The man died) are also dynamic and telic but differ from accomplishments in that they are not durative (e.g., Labelle, Godard & Lonting, 2002; Montrul & Slabakova, 2001). They also carry an inherent endpoint but, in contrast with accomplishments, the event happens punctually or instantaneously (there is no time duration).

As Labelle et al. (2002) explain, achievement predicates encode a simple instantaneous transition from the non-existence of a state or situation to the existence of that state or situation. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the four verb classes in terms of their lexical aspectual properties:

Table 2.1: Lexical verb classes definitions (Vendler, 1967)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb Classes</th>
<th>Durativity</th>
<th>Telicity</th>
<th>Dynamicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lexical perspective is seminal in that it has influenced previous and even current research in tense and aspect. However, this lexical difference approach is limited in that verbs do not belong to one specific lexical class but rather move from one class to another (Schmitt, 1996). A rigid classification such as the presented by Vendler does not account for instances where aspectual interpretations are not determined by the “inherent” lexical aspect of the verb but by other elements within the verbal predicate (VP), as shown in (9):

(9)  

a. John drew for hours.  
    [activity] 

b. John drew a circle. 
    [accomplishment]
In (9a) the verb *to draw* is as an activity verb. It is dynamic, durative and atelic (no inherent endpoint). However, in (9b) the direct object *a circle* shifts the activity meaning of the verb and renders another aspectual interpretation: An accomplishment. In cases like these, the aspectual interpretation is determined solely by other elements within the phrase including the subject, direct object and time expressions rather than by the “inherent” lexical aspect of the tense head. The literature refers to this process as *Compositional Aspect* (Verkuyl, 1972), which I examine in detail in Section 2.3.3.

In the next section, I address another current analysis from aspectual data: *Grammatical Aspect*. This approach is widely extended in Spanish for pedagogical treatments to explain perfective versus imperfective differences between languages based on their inflectional verb morphology or periphrastic expression (e.g., Jarvis, Lebredo Mena-Ayllón, 2003).

2.3.2 **Grammatical Aspect**

In contrast with lexical aspect, *Grammatical Aspect* depends on the morphological distinctions tense heads are able to instantiate. That is, it refers to the encoding of aspectual differences through inflectional or derivational morphology or periphrastic expressions as shown in (10)-(12):

(10) Mary **played** the piano. [perfective/imperfective]

(11) Mary **used to/would play** the piano. [habitual/imperfective]

(12) Mary **was playing** the piano when I arrived. [progressive/imperfective]
In (10), the event can be interpreted as a completed or habitual action. In (11) and (12), however, the action of playing the piano is interpreted as a habitual or continued event in the past respectively, with no beginning or end.

According to Comrie (1976), the most common aspectual distinction marked morphologically among languages is that between perfective and imperfective interpretations. Comrie demonstrates perfectivity and imperfectivity to be carriers of separate aspectual notions: perfectivity carries punctuality as well as durativity whereas imperfectivity carries habituality and progressiveness, as schematized below in Figure 2.1 (adapted from Comrie, 1976, p. 25):

Figure 2.1: Aspectual Oppositions (Comrie, 1976)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfective</th>
<th>Imperfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctual</td>
<td>Habitual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durative</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-progressive</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Within this perspective, perfective aspect normally indicates a temporally restricted and completed event or state (punctuality). In most Western languages, a perfective reading is marked overtly by inflectional morphology attached to the verb in the case of regular verbs. Imperfective aspect, in comparison, can have either a habitual or continuous interpretation. Comrie defines habituality conceptually as a situation “that extends over a specific period of time and is not viewed as an incidental property of the moment but as a characteristic feature of the whole period.” (p. 28). Continuousness is a type of imperfectivity that can be progressive
or non-progressive. A non-progressive continuous form appears in Romance languages like Spanish where the past or present tense (simple forms) allows for continuous interpretations (e.g. *María cantaba cuando llegué* / *María canta ahora*).

Following Depraetere (1995), researchers such as Montrul (2002) have applied the notion of boundedness when describing grammatical aspect. She argues that boundedness is as relevant to morphological aspect as is telicity for lexical aspect. Within this view, the imperfective is unbounded since it concerns the internal structure of the situation without specifying when it started or finished. The perfective, on the other hand, is bounded since it examines the situation from the outside, as having a beginning and an end (e.g., Montrul, 2002). Montrul argues that atelic predicates — states and activities — will normally appear with the imperfective (unbounded) while telic predicates — accomplishments and achievements — will normally appear with the perfective (bounded).

This morphological description of perfective versus imperfective aspect has been used extensively. However, as in the case of lexical aspect, it focuses on the verbal head as the carrier for aspectual and temporal properties of an event. Therefore, it is also limited in that it cannot account for cases where the compositional relation between the verbal head and its complements determines aspectual notions. There are instances where the event expressed by the verb occurred repeatedly or iteratively in the past but is still marked with the preterite (simple past), as in (13) and (14):

(13) *Por varios días, el jefe llegó tarde.* [habitual]
    For several days, the boss arrived PRET late.
    “For several days, the boss was late.”

(Pérez-Leroux et al., 2003)
In (13) and (14) there is a conflict between the habitual or iterative aspectual interpretations of the two sentences and the perfective morphological forms of the tense heads (*lleg-*ó, *alumbr-*ó).

The adverbial phrases *por varios días* and *hasta el amanecer* change the inherent perfective interpretation of the tense heads and an imperfective aspectual interpretation is obtained. Therefore, aspectual interpretations are not directly dependant on verb morphology but on the syntactic relation between the verb and other elements in the phrase.

In order to explain examples like (13) and (14), Verkuyl (1972) and more recently Schmitt (1996) follow a Compositional Approach to aspectual interpretation. They argue that there are syntactic constraints within the VP than allow or disallow semantic interpretations.

As I explain in the next section, within this view aspect is compositionally formed.

2.3.3 Compositional Aspect

A compositional perspective to aspectual differences argues that aspectual notions are not to be found in the verb itself but rather at a Verb Phrase Structure level (VP). The interaction between the verb and its complements changes the lexical or grammatical aspect of the verb. Smith (1997) exemplifies this position very clearly in the examples below:

(15) John smoked *cigarettes.* [atelic,activity] (Smith, 1997)

(16) John smoked *a cigarette.* [telic, accomplishment]

In (15), the verb *to smoke* has an atelic interpretation. It is an activity that occurred indefinitely with no beginning or culmination point. In (16), however, the direct object noun phrase (NP) *a
cigarette shifts the lexical aspectual class (atelic, activity) into telic and accomplishment, following Vendler’s classification. The verb to smoke is lexically specified so as to take either a quantized NP (a cigarette) or a generic one (cigarettes). However, the choice of one over the other results in a different aspectual interpretation. That is, the NP shifts the original lexical aspect of the verb.

Following Verkuyl, Schmitt (1996) argues that aspect is not parameterized at all and that there is no such thing as durative or terminative aspectual features. In her study, she argues that aspectual differences are not only constrained by the semantics of the lexical head and different verb classifications, as defended by Vendler (1967), but also and most importantly by the syntax of the noun phrase complements that allows for different aspectual interpretations (p. 9). According to Schmitt, aspectual classes “merely provide convenient labels for event or situation descriptions rather than characterizations of the categoricity of particular verbs” (p. 45). As mentioned earlier, a particular verb can describe an accomplishment or an activity depending on its internal arguments (direct object, adverbial phrase), making lexical class characterization of verbs redundant.

In sum, in contrast with grammatical and lexical aspect, a compositional approach accounts for cases where the morphology or lexical entry of the verb does not explain aspectual interpretations by itself. Tense heads (T’s) are lexically specified in terms of what type and how many arguments and pseudo arguments they can take, and in this regard the compositional approach intersects with the lexical perspective. However, it is the syntactic combination between verbal and nominal features that actually defines the aspectual description (Schmitt, 1996, p. 8).
In the following section, I address how current linguistic theory incorporates these previous descriptions and their contributions. A featural approach (Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997), for instance, links semantic aspectual representations to the development of verbal morphology. Languages like Spanish and Italian have the capacity to instantiate certain morphosyntactic features while languages like English do not. It is not clear in this analysis though what happens with languages with similar morphology but still different aspectual representations, as is the case of Spanish and Portuguese. On the other hand, linguists like De Swart incorporate Verkuyl’s compositionality perspective into Discourse Representation Theory to argue for a selectional nature of aspectual interpretations. Within a selectional view, aspectual interpretations depend on the semantic patterns of tense heads and the compositional relation between the verb and other elements within the phrase.

2.4 Theoretical approaches to Tense and Aspect

2.4.1 A Morphosyntactic Approach

Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), hence forward G&P, defend a morphosyntactic approach to aspectual differences. Within this perspective, the semantics of the verbal head depends on the development of verbal morphology.

In contrast to Spanish and other Romance languages, in English, there is no morphological distinction between perfective and imperfective aspectual meanings. Both aspectual states are morphologically realized with the simple past tense (−ed). English is thus morphologically neutral as to a one-time event versus an on-going or habitual event. The locus of this variation, argue G&P, resides in the fact that English and Romance instantiate differently the morphosyntactic features available in the functional category Aspectual Phrase
(AspP), where [±perfective] semantic (interpretable) features are checked by overt morphology. Montrul (2002) provides the following arboreal representation of the AspP within the larger phrase:

(17)

\[
\text{AgrSP} \\
\text{AgrS} \quad \text{VP} \\
\text{Spec} \quad \text{V'} \\
\text{V} \quad \text{TP} \\
\text{TP} \quad \text{AspP} \\
\text{Asp} \quad \text{[±perf]} \quad \text{VP} \\
\text{V} \quad \text{NP}
\]

(Montrul, 2002)

Following an analysis of the aspectual properties of the present tense in English and Romance, G&P argue that aspectual variation results from the fact that English verbs do not have a rich inflectional morphology and a [±perfective] feature has to be added to distinguish them from the nominal domain. That is, verbs in English do not present visible agreement features of number and person since their agreement features and tense (T) features are represented together. Only when an inflectional morpheme is added (e.g. played or plays) can verbs be distinguished from nouns. Therefore, G&P defend that a null perfective morpheme has to be added to verbs in order to differentiate them from nouns. As a consequence, a word like play will necessarily have two features: a [-perfective] feature associated with the nominal form,
and a [+perfective] feature associated with the verbal form. English verbs are thus inherently associated with the feature value [+perfective] with eventive predicates. This is the only way they can obtain the correct categorial features. The [-perfective] feature is not relevant to verbs since they belong to the nominal domain (G&P, p. 164).

On the other hand, in Romance languages like Spanish and Italian, verbs have a very strong inflectional system consisting of a lexical morpheme plus inflection, which automatically distinguishes them from nouns (+Verb; -Noun). Thus, there is no need to associate them with the [+perfective] aspectual feature. They associate unambiguously with both categorial features ([±perfective]) through overt morphology. As a consequence, they denote non-closed temporal interpretations and an ongoing reading is allowed, as happens in the Spanish and Italian present tense. The rich inflectional system of Romance languages also allows verbs to represent separately interpretable [±perfective] and uninterpretable (syntactic) features such as number and person. These features appear independently of each other. In English these features are fused. G&P explain these parametric differences through the following examples:

(18) a. John saw Mary eat an apple. [+perfective]
b. John saw Mary eating an apple. [+past progressive]
c. Juan vio a María comer una manzana. [±perfective]

In (18a), the meaning conveyed is that of a completed event in the past (Mary ate the apple). In (18b), the verb takes the ending –ing to indicate that the event was in progress in the past (Mary was eating the apple). However, in (18c), the Spanish example could be interpreted as either John saw that Mary ate the apple [+perfective/bounded] or John saw Mary eating the apple [-perfective]. Mary could have had finished eating the apple or not.
G&P provides this explanation based on their analysis of the present tense in English and Romance. They maintain that English verbs are bare forms without inflectional features that can be distinguished from nouns only when overt morphology is added (e.g. it walks). Thus, a null (zero) perfective morpheme has to be added which inherently associates the verb with the functional feature value [+perfective]; this entails temporal closure with eventive predicates (closed events) and explains why the present tense disallows an ongoing reading. In Spanish, on the contrary, verbs always bare inflectional morphology and cannot be confused with nouns. Thus, there is no need to add a null perfective morpheme and an ongoing reading is allowed, argue G&P.

In sum, this featural approach defends the position that aspecual differences among languages depend on the activation or absence of overt morphology at the functional Aspectual Phrase (AspP) level: “languages convey different temporal and aspecual information because the morphemes expressing tense and aspecual exhibit different properties.” (G&P, 1997, p. 6). Thus, in Spanish, aspecual interpretations can be either [±perfective] and the opposition is morphologically grammaticalized (preterite versus imperfect). English verbs, in contrast, are inherently [+perfective], as a result of their bareness, and are normally associated with the simple past form. English and Spanish are then considered to be parametrically different in the way they instantiate their aspecual functional features in AspP. This position, however, does not explain instances of aspecual variation among languages with similar morphology. As mentioned earlier, Schmitt (2001) addresses the issue of languages like Spanish and Portuguese, which present almost identical verbal systems but diverge in their aspecual representations in the present tense. Thus, a featural approach is limited in that it can not
account of aspectual variation among Romance languages nor for other languages which present no verbal inflection at all for tense and aspect but still display different semantics.

In the next section, I address De Swart’s (1998) selectional approach. In contrast to G&P’s proposal, De Swart sustains that aspectual interpretations among languages are not tied to morphological structure but are rather determined by the semantic patterns of the tense head in semantic composition with other parts of the sentence including adverbs.

2.4.2 A Selectional Approach

De Swart follows the semantic model of Discourse Representation Theory (e.g., Kamp & Reyle, 1993), which incorporates sentence-level and discourse-level semantics in the processing of narrative discourse. This author examines preterite versus imperfect aspectual differences in English, French and other Romance languages based on the semantic-selectional features each tense head selects.

In her analysis, the author assumes two basic tenets: (i) aspect is compositional and (ii) aspect is layered. The compositionality of aspect resides in Verkuyl’s (1972) principle of Verb+Arguments=Aspect outlined in Section 2.3. The assumption that aspect is layered is based on the principle that aspect is determined at the lowest layer of the predicate-argument structure defined as eventuality description. Eventuality description refers to lexical classes. Within this approach the syntactic structure of a sentence is as follows:

(19)  [UPPER LAYER Tense [aspect*[LOWER LAYER eventuality description]]]

In this syntactic structure, there are upper and lower layers. The lower layer is made up of the eventuality description. The eventuality description is determined by the verb and other elements within the phrase and can be an event (achievement and accomplishment), a state or a
process. State and process eventualities involve no inherent endpoint and are classified as *homogeneous*. On the other hand, achievements and accomplishment predicates (events) involve an inherent endpoint and are classified as *heterogeneous*. Table 2.2 provides a summary of these properties:

Table 2.2: Eventualities classes or descriptions (De Swart, 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homogeneous</th>
<th>Heterogeneous (quantized)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td>Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events (achievements/accomplishments)</td>
<td>Dynamic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The upper layer is made up of aspectual and tense operators.\(^1\) According to De Swart, aspectual operators (e.g. adverbs, direct objects, prepositional phrases, etc.) are eventuality modifiers since they can shift eventuality description if there is a clash between the tense operators (e.g. morphemes –*ba* or –*é* in Spanish) and their respective aspectual notions (perfective versus imperfective).

De Swart (1998) and Schmitt (2001) also argue that the semantic properties of a tense in any particular language cannot be directly correlated to the presence or absence of overt morphology. Rather, these properties are correlated with the particular semantic features tense morphemes carry. That is, in French and other Romance languages, the simple past (*passé simple*) and the imperfect (*imparfait*) are aspectually sensitive Past tense operators in that they select specific types of eventuality descriptions: the simple past selects events (achievements and accomplishments), while the imperfect selects states and processes in the past.

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\(^1\) The Kleene star (*) that appears in the syntactic structure indicates that there can be one grammatical operator, more than one or none.
If either marker (i.e., the simple past or the imperfect) merges to a VP projection of the target type, selection is satisfied, and nothing else happens. However, if there is a mismatch and either the simple past combines with a state or process, or the imperfect combines with an event, an aspectual operator (type shifter) must be introduced. It shifts the type of the eventuality description to satisfy the selectional requirements of the tense head. To illustrate, consider the sentences in (20) and (21):

(20) Mario corrió en el parque. [homogeneous process -activity]  
    Mario ran PRET in the park  
    “Mario ran in the park.”

(21) Mario corrió una milla. [heterogeneous event -accomplishment)]  
    Mario ran a mile  
    “Mario ran a mile.”

In (20), the eventuality type, i.e., a process, is homogeneous, with no inherent endpoint. However, in (21), the direct object _una milla_ changes the homogeneous eventuality into a heterogeneous one, triggering a transition in the eventuality aspectual class at the lower layer. According to Schmitt, tenses (e.g., preterite, imperfect, present) are syntactic heads that encode the relation between the utterance time and reference time, and as other heads, they can have subcategorization features, selecting for specific types of verbal complements (Schmitt, 2001; p. 404). That is, they have the ability to select semantically for particular types of eventuality descriptions. De Swart (1998) argues that this is the same type of process by which some determiners select for homogeneous or heterogeneous nominals (i.e., mass versus count nouns), within the DP. Analogously, past tense heads can select for particular eventuality descriptions.
Moreover, other aspectual operators like adverbials can also shift the aspectual interpretation of the clause as exemplified in (22) and (23):

(22) Juan escribió una novela. [heterogeneous event]  
John wrote \textsc{pret} a novel  
“John wrote a novel.”

(23) \textit{Por muchos años}, Juan escribió una novela. [homogeneous process]  
For many years, John wrote \textsc{pret} a novel  
“For many years, John wrote a novel.”

In (22), the aspectual class is heterogeneous in that it is an event with an inherent endpoint — an accomplishment in Vendler’s terms. However, in (23), there is a clash between the preterite/punctual tense of the verbal head and the imperfect/continuous interpretation given by the duration adverbial \textit{por muchos años}. In such cases, the latter interpretation prevails and the heterogeneous aspectual class of (22) is coerced into a homogeneous process in (23) with no inherent endpoint. This reinterpretation process is what semanticists call aspectual coercion. De Swart’s defines the process of aspectual coercion as an implicit, contextually governed process of aspectual reinterpretation or transition which comes into play whenever there is a conflict between aspectual nature and eventuality description (p. 349). De Swart’s view of coercion as an eventuality description modifier means that coercion is of the same semantic type as other aspectual operators (e.g., duration adverbials, the progressive) but with the difference that it is not morphologically or syntactically overt. Rather, coercion is governed by implicit contextual reinterpretation mechanisms and world knowledge for which there are no explicit morphological markers.
In English, there is no selectional restriction. The tense head (simple past) is neutral in that it applies to either a homogeneous or a heterogeneous event. However, an aspectual coercion process is also available in English, as shown below:

\[(24)\]

| a. Suddenly, I knew the answer.          | (from De Swart, 1998) |
| b. Peter is believing in ghosts these days. |

In (24a), the state of “knowing the answer” has been coerced into an event by emphasizing the starting point of the state, giving the sentence an inchoative meaning. Sentence (24b) presents a stative verb as a dynamic situation, which in English usually happens with eventive verbs (Smith, 1999). Within De Swart’s theory of aspectual coercion, the state of (24b) has been coerced into a dynamic event in order to satisfy the input conditions of the aspectual operators.

De Swart’s selectional approach offers a theoretical account of aspectual differences which encompasses previous treatments to tense and aspect (e.g., grammatical aspect, *aktionsart*, compositional approach). In contrast to G&P’s approach, De Swart does not limit aspectual variation to featural development. Rather, the author accounts for aspectual differences based on the lexical properties of tense morphemes and their compositional relation with other elements within the phrase. This proposal contributes to current theoretical discussions in that it accounts for aspectual differences among languages with similar verbal systems and for L2 acquisition data which show that not all aspectual distinctions are acquired equally.

Schmitt (2001) extends De Swart’s proposal to the present tense. The author examines aspectual differences between the English and Portuguese present tense and refutes G&P’s morphosyntactic approach. The Portuguese verbal system is identical to that of Spanish in that
the verb stem always has bound morphology attached to it. However, contrary to a morphological development view for aspectual variation, the Portuguese present tense does not allow an ongoing reading with eventive predicates as in Spanish; rather it behaves like English. For an ongoing event, the present progressive must be used:

(Schmitt, 2001)

(24) SPA Pedro come frutas (en este momento). [+generic] [+ongoing]
(25) PORT O Pedro come frutas (#neste momento). [+generic] [-ongoing]
(26) ENG Pedro eats fruit (#right now). [+generic] [-ongoing]

In (24), the reading is either that Pedro is a fruit eater or that Pedro is eating fruit right now. The Portuguese example in (25) and the English example in (26) are interpreted only as Pedro is a fruit eater. They both disallow an ongoing reading with eventive (processes) predicates, regardless of the morphological properties of the verb inflection. Thus, Schmitt sustains that absence of morphological marking on the tense head cannot possibly account for aspectual differences among languages. Instead, she proposes that aspectual differences depend on the aspectual selection restrictions imposed by the tense head. Spanish selects homogeneous predicates, which include both states and processes, while English and Portuguese select only states. This analysis can be syntactically represented as below:

(27)

a) TP
   T       +States
English/Portuguese

b) TP
   T       +Homogeneous
Spanish (states/processes)
If T takes as a complement a state as in *Pedro está cansado* (‘Peter is tired’), English, Portuguese and Spanish behave alike since states are homogeneous and no coercion is necessary. However, if T takes a process as complement then coercion is necessary in English and Portuguese because their present tense cannot select processes. A generetic reading is then obtained as in (25) and (26) above. In Spanish, if the T head takes a process as a complement nothing happens because both processes and states are compatible with the selection restrictions of the Spanish present tense, as in (24) above.

To summarize De Swart’s proposal, in languages like Spanish and French aspectual selection is restricted to either a homogeneous (imperfect) or a heterogeneous (perfective) eventuality. However, when there is a mismatch between predicate type and eventuality class, an aspectual operator is inserted, which triggers a transition in the eventuality aspectual class at the lower layer (i.e. aspectual coercion). This position is more optimal that the featural approach in that it accounts for aspectual differences among languages with similar morphological representations. Table 2.3 summarizes these two theoretical approaches:
Table 2.3: Summary of theoretical perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morphosyntactic Approach (Giorgi and Pianesi, 1997)</th>
<th>Selectional Approach (De Swart, 1998)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspektual variation</td>
<td>in the activation of [+perfective] features</td>
<td>in the semantic properties of T’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English VP</td>
<td>Romance VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perf.- Imp. readings allowed.</td>
<td>Morphologically established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I studied music.</em></td>
<td><em>Estudié música</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Estudiaba música</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Bare forms [-+perfective]</td>
<td>Bare forms [-±perfective]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-only generic (closed) readings</td>
<td>-ongoing &amp; generic readings allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>allowed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>John eats fruit.</em></td>
<td><em>Juan come fruta.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>PORT: O João come fruta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*[-±perfective]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-only generic reading allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following section, I review some of the main aspektual differences in English and Spanish between the past and present tense. It is these languages and their relevant aspektual differences what will be tested in this study.

2.5 Aspektual variation in English and Spanish

2.5.1 Aspektual Variations in the Past Tense

As mentioned earlier, from a morphological point of view aspektual distinctions in the past are represented differently in English and Spanish. In Spanish, in contrast to English, there are overt morphological markers for both perfective and imperfective aspektual interpretations (-é; -í; -ba, -ia).
In English, both aspectual interpretations are represented by only one morphological form (-ed), as shown below:

(28) María estudi-ó música.  
Mary studied -PRET music  
“Mary studi-ed music”  
[perfective –punctual]

(29) María estudia-ba música de niña.  
Mary studied -IMP music as a child  
“Mary studi-ed music as a child.”  
[imperfective –habitual]

In (28) and (29), aspectual distinctions in Spanish are marked by the aspectual markers -ba/-ó.

In contrast, in English there is no morphological distinction, with both aspectual notions normally realized with the simple past tense (-ed).

In English, an imperfective interpretation is also expressed periphrastically by the expression used to, as in Mary used to study music as a child, or using the past progressive as in Mary was studying Music as a child. Moreover, in order to express a continuous event in the past, the past progressive must be used in English, as in (30), and a non-progressive form is not allowed (31):

(30) Mary was playing the violin when I arrived. [past continuous -progressive]

(31) #Mary played the violin when I arrived. [perfective -#progressive]

In Spanish, in contrast, imperfective morphemes have a wider range of interpretations as they allow for a continuous reading, as shown below:

(32) Rosa preparaba la cena cuando llegó Manuel. [imperfective -progressive]  
Rosa prepared -IMP the dinner when arrived Manuel.  
“Rosa was preparing dinner when Manuel arrived.”

In (32), the imperfective denotes that Rosa was preparing dinner when John arrived. Thus, progressive and non-progressive forms are not obligatorily distinguished. The Spanish imperfective can provide either a habitual or an ongoing reading. A progressive aspectual
notion can also be conveyed using the *past continuous tense* as in English:

\[
(33) \quad \text{Rosa estaba preparando} \text{ la cena cuando llegó Manuel.} \quad [\text{progressive}]
\]

Rosa was preparing-IMP the dinner when arrived Manuel

“Rosa was preparing dinner when Manuel arrived.”

The following table summarizes the main aspectual differences between the two languages in the past:

Table 2.4: Summary of aspectual differences: Past Tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspectual Interpretations</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perfective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imperfective</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[habitual]</td>
<td>María estudiaba música de chica.</td>
<td>Mary studied music as a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Mary used to study music as a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Mary would study music as a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[progressive]</td>
<td>María estudiaba cuando llegué.</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>María <em>estaba estudiando</em> cuando llegué.</td>
<td>Mary was studying when I arrived.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of this study I focus only on the punctual and habitual representations of the perfective and imperfect tenses respectively. The progressive reading of the imperfect is relevant to the discussion in that the present tense in Spanish behaves similarly. As I explain in the following section, the present tense (e.g. *Juan canta*) allows for both habitual and ongoing interpretations. In English, however, the present continuous tense (*John is singing*) must be used to express an ongoing reading (e.g., Comrie, 1976; Dowty, 1979).
2.5.2 *Aspectual Variation in the Present Tense*

Cowper (1998) argues that the present tense in English has four main aspectual interpretations with eventive and activity verbs: *habitual, generic, futurate* and *reportive or narrative:*

- (34) John runs (every day). [habitual]
- (35) Bats sleep during the day. [generic]
- (36) The *Toronto Maple Leafs* play next week. [futurate]
- (37) I am talking to Robin when John comes and asks me… [reportive/colloquial]

In these examples, the eventuality expressed by the verb extends over a period of time. In (34), the use of the present indicates that *John is a runner;* it is an activity that he does habitually. In (35), the present indicates a generic fact concerning bats. In (36), the present has a future value and is equal to *The Toronto Maple Leafs will play next week.* In (37), the present is used to refer to a past event. The speaker is reporting an event of the past. This use, though, is exclusively reserved for colloquial situations.

In any of the examples above, the use of the simple present refers to a situation that is occurring simultaneous to the moment of speech since the present tense in English cannot denote an ongoing event (*#John runs now*). In order to express an eventuality simultaneous with the moment of speech (an ongoing event), the *present progressive tense* must be used:

- (38) John is running (now). [ongoing]

Thus, in English the distinction between progressive (ongoing) and non-progressive meaning has to be expressed by a progressive form (gerund) or by a non-progressive form (simple present) respectively. An exception to this rule is the use of the present tense as a performative act. In a sentence like *I declare you husband and wife* the person uttering the sentence is simultaneously performing the act described by it and the present tense is used. Another
exception is the simultaneous report of an ongoing series of events in the present, as in the case of *Carlos runs to third base* (e.g., Comrie, 1976; Smith, 1997).

The notion of progressiveness is arguably interrelated to predicate type. Within this perspective, stative verbs or those referring to inert perception (e.g., *hear, see*) do not have a progressive form in English due to their internal stativity meaning:

(39) #John is knowing the truth.

(40) #I am hearing.

However, Comrie argues that in English there are lexically stative verbs that can be treated as non-stative depending on their specific meaning within the sentence as, as in (41) and (42):

(41) I am being silly.  (Comrie, 1972)

(42) I am understanding him more as each day goes by.

The use of the progressive with a stative verb can also imply a temporary state versus a more permanent state, as in (43) and (44):

(from Slabakova, 2003):

(43) Mike is lazy.  [characteristic state]

(44) Mike is being lazy today.  [temporary state]

In (44), the use of the present continuous tense extends beyond the traditional idea of continuous meaning.

In Spanish, the present tense behaves almost identical as in English except for the fact that it does allow for an ongoing reading:

(45) Juan corre (en este momento/todos los días).  [habitual/ongoing]

John runs *pres* (now or everyday).

“John runs/is running.”
(46) Los murciélagos duermen por el día. [generic]
The bats sleep **PRES** during the day
“Bats sleep during the day.”

(47) Los Orientales juegan la próxima semana. [futurate]
The **Orientales** play **PRES** next week
“The **Orientales** play next week.”

(48) Hablaba con Rosa cuando viene Marco y me dice... [reportive/colloquial form]
(I) was talking **IMP** with Rosa when comes **PRES** Marco and me tells **PRES**
“I was talking to Rose when Marco comes and tells me…”

As represented in example (45), in Spanish the present tense with eventive verbs is ambiguous in that it can have either a generic or an ongoing interpretation. *Juan corre* means either that *John is a runner* or that *John is running now*. This is the main difference with English where the simple present (it runs) cannot have an ongoing interpretation (*John runs right now*). As in English, an ongoing interpretation can also be obtained using the present continuous tense:

(49) Juan está corriendo. [-generic] [+ongoing]
John is running **PRES CONT**
“John is running.”

In both English and Spanish, it is also possible to use the present progressive to refer to a generic event, as in (50):

(50) Juan está estudiando en la Universidad de York.
John is studying **PRES CONT** at the University of York.
“John is studying at York University.”

In (50), the sentence is interpreted as *John studies at York University*. This generic reading with the progressive is available with certain predicate types but is becoming quite acceptable with a wider selection of verbs in Spanish. Moreover, more recently the present continuous tense is Spanish is being used to refer to immediate future events as in *Estoy llegando el lunes*
por la mañana (“I’m arriving on Monday morning”). Prescriptive grammar forbids this use but it is quite common in many parts of the Spanish world nowadays.

In sum, English and Spanish present tense differs mainly in that, in English, an ongoing interpretation is not allowed and the present continuous tense must be used. In contrast, in Spanish the present allows for an ongoing interpretation. The following table summarizes the main aspectual differences between the two languages as concurs the present tense:

Table 2.5: Summary of aspectual differences in the Present tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspectual Interpretations</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>[+ongoing] María canta en la ducha.</td>
<td>Ø</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>[+ongoing] María está cantando en la ducha.</td>
<td>Mary is singing in the shower.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the aspectual differences that I will examine in the following chapters.

### 2.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have examined prescriptive and theoretical approaches for aspectual variation. I examined how neither grammatical (e.g., Comrie, 1976) nor lexical aspect (e.g., Vendler, 1967) can account for cases where the aspectual description is formed by the relation established between the verb and other elements within the phrase. Within this vein, I described Verkuyl (1972) and Schmitt’s (1996) compositional approach to aspectual variation as the most comprehensive perspective. Then, I examined new theoretical approaches (De Swart, 1998; Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997; Schmitt, 2001), their contributions and limitations. De Swart’s selectional approach is presented as a more optimal account than the featural approach.
in that it accounts for aspectual variation among languages with similar morphosyntax (e.g., Schmitt, 2001). This approach is also more optimal in that it follows as one of its tenets the compositional character of aspectual representations. As I will explain in Chapter 3, a selectional approach can also account for L2 acquisition and L1 attrition data where some aspectual properties are present while others remain indeterminate or attrited in the bilingual grammar. At the end of the chapter, I presented a description of the most important aspectual differences between English and Spanish in the past and present tense.

In the next chapter (Chapter 3) I present a literature review of L2 acquisition research on Tense and Aspect and examine how current research accounts for L2 acquisition data based on the theoretical perspectives outlined in this chapter.
3 The L2 Acquisition of Aspectual Properties

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I examined two main theoretical perspectives on aspect: Giorgi and Pianesi’s (1997) morphological-development approach and De Swart’s (1998) selectional perspective. Within a selectional perspective, the final aspectual description is jointly determined by the semantic properties tense morphemes select and their compositional relation with other elements within the phrase. In addition, I described the standard treatments of tense and aspect (e.g., Comrie, 1976; Smith, 1997; Verkuyl, 1972). I concluded that De Swart’s selectional approach offers a better explanation for aspectual differences since it accounts for aspectual variation even among languages with similar morphosyntax, for example Spanish and Portuguese (e.g., Schmitt, 2001).

In this chapter I examine previous research on the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of tense and aspect. I argue that L2 learners’ difficulties in the aspectual domain can be accounted for via L1 transfer. As discussed in Chapter 2, English and Spanish diverge in the way both languages represent their aspectual properties. The English simple past is aspectually neutral in that both homogeneous and heterogeneous descriptions apply. Spanish past tenses, however, are aspectually sensitive. Therefore, if transfer affects the syntax-semantic interface and the divergent semantic features associated with L1 and L2 forms, then tense and aspect are prime candidates for transfer among English-Spanish bilinguals.
The transfer-based argument developed here stands in contrast to previous research on L2 acquisition that claims that learners’ difficulties stem from impairment reasons such as maturational constraints or lack of instantiation of morphosyntactic features (e.g., Coppieters, 1989; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). These proposals cannot account for L1 attrition. This is because long-term immigrants undergoing L1 attrition acquired their L2 after puberty and with a complete instantiation of morphosyntactic features. Therefore, to the extent that long-term immigrants and advanced L2 learners demonstrate comparable patterns of difficulties, L2 learners’ difficulties should not be solely linked to impairment. Instead, I argue that transfer from the other language best explains L2 learners’ difficulties.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I begin in Section 3.2 by examining previous research on L2 learners’ difficulties with tense and aspect. Specifically, I evaluate research that explains such difficulties as a result of (1) maturational development linked to age at onset of L2 acquisition, and (2) morphological developmental differences. I conclude that neither of these impairment reasons completely accounts for L2 acquisition difficulties. Instead, I explain learners’ difficulties via transfer of the semantic selectional patterns of tense morphemes (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., in press). I then address current research that shows that transfer is selective since it affects mainly areas where the syntax interfaces with semantic or pragmatic domains (e.g., Robertson & Sorace, 1999; Sorace, 2000). In Section 3.3, I further evaluate the role of transfer as a valid explanation for L2 learners’ difficulties by examining adult L1 attrition research. Finally, in Section 3.4, I outline the general hypotheses for the present study and introduce the study conducted in Chapter 4.
3.2 The L2 Acquisition of Tense and Aspect

Research has demonstrated that the acquisition of tense and aspect is challenging for L2 learners (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Coppieters, 1987; Slabakova & Montrul, 2002). For instance, research shows (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; 2003) that English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish often have difficulties with preterite versus imperfect aspectual distinctions, over-extending the preterite to contexts where the imperfect should be used as in (51) below:

(51) #José normalmente jugó en el parque cuando niño. [habitual context] 
Joseph normally played-PRET in the park when child
“As a child, Joseph usually played in the park.”

In the above example, the event described is a habitual situation in the past; the imperfect is normally used in such contexts.

While research on aspect is extensive, it is still unclear why L2 learners experience difficulties. Previous accounts of L2 acquisition propose roles for maturational constraints related to learners’ age at onset of acquisition (e.g., Coppieters, 1987; Johnson & Newport, 1989), lack of instantiation of [±perfective] morphosyntactic features (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002), or lack of acquisition of the semantic properties tense morphemes select (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., 2003). In this section, I examine these proposals and argue that neither the age at onset of L2 acquisition nor impaired featural development can adequately account for the variability observed.² In contrast, I propose an analysis involving L1 transfer.

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² I follow Robertson’s (2000) definition of variability as the inconsistent or variable use/non use of a particular structure.
In what follows, I examine research concerning the role of age at onset of L2 acquisition as a plausible cause for L2 learners’ difficulties. I argue that learners’ difficulties should not be unequivocally linked to age at onset of L2 acquisition and maturational development. Instead, I follow Jia’s (1998) proposal that argues that age is a factor in the acquisition process, but not directly related to maturational development, but rather, to the way in which children and adults develop new social-cultural networks and integrate in the new linguistic community they are exposed to.

3.2.1 The Role of Age at Onset of L2 Acquisition

Research on L1 acquisition has long argued that there is a specific period of time extending from birth to around puberty within which language has to be learned to ensure complete success. This is most often referred to as the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH). After this period, the task of learning a language will not be completely successful due to brain maturation (e.g., Curtiss, 1977; Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield & Roberts, 1959).

Some researchers in L2 acquisition follow the CPH to argue that the neurological and cognitive systems become less plastic after a certain age. Therefore, adult L2 learners will not reach native-like competence in the way younger learners do (e.g., Johnson & Newport, 1989; Patkowosky, 1990; Scovel, 1988). Within this perspective, the L2 acquisition process during adulthood is inherently or biologically impaired. That is, there are critical period effects stemming from biological factors which affect the adult language faculty, and prevent L2 learners from acquiring formal features of the L2 necessary for native-like competence (e.g., Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Tsimpli & Roussou, 1991).
A seminal study on age effects in adult L2 acquisition is that of Johnson and Newport (1989). The authors tested the endstate English syntax of 46 Chinese and Korean immigrants who arrived in the US at different ages. Participants were tested on their knowledge of English syntax and morphology, including the past tense, particle movement (e.g. climbed up the ladder or climbed the ladder up) and morphological marking on tense, as in (52) and (53) respectively:

(52) *The man climbed the ladder up carefully.  [particle movement]
(53) *Yesterday the hunter shoots a deer.  [tense marking]

The authors found a direct correlation between age of arrival and syntactic competence. Younger learners, who arrived in the US before age 7, outperformed those who arrived later even when the length of residence in the US was matched. Performance declined linearly among those who arrived between 7 and 15 years of age. Those who arrived after 17 years of age performed at random. Thus, the authors argue that there is a first critical period of learning extending from birth to 7 years of age, and a second maturational period extending from 7 to around puberty. After puberty, the capacity for native-like L2 competence decreases gradually and native-like attainment is not possible. Johnson and Newport’s study is typical of those claiming the existence of a critical period for L2 acquisition (e.g., Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Schachter, 1996).

The existence of a critical period for learning is not accepted by all researchers. For example, Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) found no support for maturational constraints. The authors replicated Johnson and Newport’s data and found a linear decline of proficiency as age of arrival increased (mainly after 20 years of age). However, there was no specific identifiable critical period after which acquisition drastically declined. A hallmark of the CPH is a
necessary discontinuity in language learning, and this was not found by Bialystok and Hakuta. They argued that no critical period exists and that language-learning ability is not fundamentally impaired after puberty. In a similar study using US census data from 1990, Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley (2003) found no marked discontinuity or significant change in learning after puberty. The authors used census data from 2.3 million immigrants with Spanish and Chinese language backgrounds. They chose these language backgrounds because they differ structurally from English and both immigrant groups have long history in the US and similar sociolinguistic variables of interest. The census form asked participants to rate their ability to speak English from “Not well” to “Very well”. The variables controlled for were age of immigration, length of residence and educational background. The authors concluded that variability among groups is compounded with other socio-linguistic factors such as level of education and socioeconomic status.

Similarly, other researchers have also argued against the existence of a biologically determined critical period by providing evidence of age-related environmental and language competition factors in second language acquisition (e.g., Flege, 2005; Flege et al., 1999; Jia, 1998; Jia & Aaronson, 1999). Jia and Aaronson (1999) argue that age effects are not deterministically related to maturation, but rather, result from many different environmental factors related to age. For instance, children have to undergo compulsory schooling and have a strong motivation to fit in and interact with their peers, which occurs almost always in the L2. Adults, by contrast, often make social choices that put them in contact with fellow L1 speakers and thus receive limited contact or exposure to the L2. Thus, children and adults are exposed to different language learning environments and conditions, which may contribute to the differences in their ultimate proficiency. Another important issue is cultural identity. In
contrast with children, adults recognize the need to learn the new language for employment purposes and other matters, but at the same time strive to preserve their linguistic-cultural identity. Flege et al. (1999) also argued that environmental age-related factors, such as educational level, length of residence or quality of input, predict L2 performance in morphosyntactic areas (e.g., regular versus irregular morphology) and pronunciation accuracy. The authors found a direct correlation between children’s time of exposure to good quality input and their final L2 attainment.

Other researchers working within a UG-perspective have also made claims regarding the existence of age-related impairment while examining whether adult L2 learners achieve native-like attainment (e.g., Tsimpli & Roussou, 1991). Tsimpli and Roussou (1991) among others have proposed the existence of maturational constraints as being the main cause for lack of access to Universal Grammar (UG) and consequent non-native L2 like attainment of an L2. As the learner matures, access to Universal Grammar (UG) decreases and therefore adult learners will not acquire the target language as children do. Some L2 speakers may superficially behave as native speakers but their underlying representations do not conform to UG principles (e.g., Beck, 1998; Hawkins & Chan, 1997).

In this regard, White and Genesee (1996) argued that age at onset of L2 acquisition does not impede access to UG and that L2 native-like competence is indeed possible after puberty. The authors examined the final English attainment of 89 native speakers of French divided in subgroups according to their age at onset of L2 acquisition. They investigated grammatical properties constrained by UG, such as the Subjacency Principle. This syntactic principle limits constituents within a clause (e.g., wh- words) from moving too far from their

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3 The age groups were 0-7, 8-13, 14-16, and 16+. 
original point, as represented in the ungrammaticality of (54) below:

\[(54) \quad *\text{What, did you hear the announcement that Ann had received } t_i ?^4\]

White and Genesee chose to study this grammatical property since it is not explicitly taught and is therefore a good domain to test the validity of a critical period for L2 acquisition. White and Genesee’s results show no evidence of age effects or maturational decline in either of the groups. Adult L2 learners (age at onset of L2 acquisition: 16+) were as accurate as those who had acquired the L2 at younger ages. All learners rejected ungrammatical *wh- movement regardless of their age at onset of acquisition or first exposure to the L2. The authors conclude that native-like attainment after puberty is possible (see also White (2003), Birdsong (2002) and Bongaerts (1999) for further discussion of the possibility of native-like attainment in adult L2 acquisition).

In the specific case of tense and aspect, Coppieters (1987) examined the final attainment of aspectual properties in the endstate grammars of 21 near-native English speakers of French. Among other things, the author examined the aspectual distinctions between the *imparfait* and *passé composé* in French, as in (55) and (56) below:

\[(55) \quad \text{Est-ce que tu } \underline{\text{as su}} \text{ conduire dans la neige?} \quad \text{[passé composé]}\]
\[
\text{Q you have known drive-INF in the snow } \\
\text{“Did you manage to drive in the snow?”}
\]

\[(56) \quad \text{Est-ce que tu } \underline{\text{savais}} \text{ conduire dans la neige?} \quad \text{[imparfait]}\]
\[
\text{Q you knew-IMP drive- INF in the snow } \\
\text{“Did you know how to drive in the snow?”}
\]

---

4 The *t* at the end of the sentence indicates the trace (*t*) left by the moved constituent.
In (55) the meaning of the verb *savoir* in the French *passé composé* is that of ‘to manage’ or ‘to be able to’. In (56) the meaning of *savoir* in the *imparfait* is ‘to know’.

Coppieters’ results demonstrate that the L2 learners in his study behaved significantly different from native speakers in the acquisition of semantic properties, such as *imparfait–passé composé* distinctions. Non-native speakers displayed considerable variation and deviated from native speakers in 42% of cases. Coppieters concludes that the acquisition of these cognitive/functional properties remains non-native in the interlanguage of French learners, and that they are subject to maturational constraints.

Birdsong (1992) criticized Coppieters’ (1989) study on methodological grounds. He argued that the task employed (grammaticality judgment) was very metalinguistic and did not reflect the unconscious knowledge of the language. The author partly replicates Coppieters’ study and finds no significant differences between native speakers and L2 learners. However, Birdsong’s study does not include the aspectual distinctions tested by Coppieters and thus does not target acquisition difficulties across different domains (syntactic versus semantic/pragmatic).

In summary, previous research does not agree on the source of age effects in SLA nor on whether there exists age constraints at all (e.g., Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Tsimpli & Roussou, 1991; White & Genesse, 1996; White, 2003). Some researchers argue that there is a critical period ending around puberty after which the acquisition of an L2 is biologically impaired due to brain maturation. Most researchers, though, have demonstrated that there is no such dramatic drop in learning after puberty and that the discontinuity often claimed by the Critical Period Hypothesis does not hold. More recent research also provides evidence that children are indeed better learners than adults, not because their brains have matured but
because of the way children interact with the environment and external circumstances. Age effects are not directly linked to brain development but are rather the byproduct of multiple environmental and bilingualism factors related to age (e.g., implicit and explicit attitudes, external circumstances like TV, games, affective factors).

Apart from age effects, other researchers have argued that L2 learners’ difficulties are rather the result of morphological developmental differences (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Montrul, 2002). Within this framework, as we saw in Chapter 2, the locus of variability lies in the lack of instantiation of morphosyntactic features. In the following section, I discuss this proposal and explain why it does not fully account for the variability observed in languages with different morphosyntax, as is the case of English and Spanish.

### 3.2.2 A Featural Perspective

As discussed in Chapter 2, a featural approach to aspect (Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997), argues that aspectual representations among languages vary according to a set of functional features represented in the functional category AspP (aspectual phrase). This model follows generative grammatical theory according to which the grammar is a generative system composed of two main components: a computational system and a lexicon (e.g., Chomsky, 1995; Smith & Tsimpli, 1995). The computational system is invariant; the lexicon is viewed as the locus of language variation (e.g., Borer, 1984; Hawkins & Chan, 1997). It is composed of lexical categories (e.g., nouns, verbs) and functional categories including aspectual phrases (AspP), tense phrases (TP) and agreement phrases (AgrP). These functional categories also include functional features, which are argued to be instantiated differently across languages (G&P, 1997). This analysis can be summarized as follows:
Within this framework, English is inherently [+perfective] and the [-perfective] feature is not relevant. Montrul (2002) argues that, unlike in English, in Spanish the AspP is associated with both [+perfective] and [-perfective] features. Spanish has overt preterite and imperfect tense/aspect morphology, which are checked against the [+perfective] functional features. The preterite (-é) marks perfective aspect [+perfective] (bounded or telic events) while the imperfect marks imperfective aspect [-perfective] (unbounded or atelic events). English, in contrast, lacks the [-perfective] feature. In this language, habituality or continuity is expressed through the use of the preterite, periphrastic phrases such as used to or would to, or by using the past progressive, as in (58)-(60) respectively:

(58)  My parents danced very well when they were young.

(59)  My parents used to/would dance very well when they were young.

(60)  My parents were dancing when I arrived.
English verbs are normally associated with the simple past form [+perfective], while Spanish verbs are [±perfective]. English and Spanish are thus considered to be parametrically different in the way they instantiate their aspectual functional features in the Aspectual Phrase (AspP) (e.g., Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997; Montrul, 2002; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002).

Montrul and Slabakova (2002) argue that this parametric difference between Spanish and English plays an important role in accounting for English-speaking L2 learners’ variability in the acquisition of aspectual properties in Spanish. The task of the L2 learner is to acquire the functional aspectual features not instantiated in his/her L1 and associate these sets of features with tense/aspect morphemes. The acquisition of morphosyntactic features then automatically triggers the acquisition of semantics.

Montrul and Slabakova examine the L2 acquisition of aspectual interpretations across lexical classes (states, activities, achievements and accomplishments). They tested 72 English near-native speakers of Spanish on the acquisition of morphological and semantic interpretations of aspectual tenses. The authors employed a Morphology Task, where participants had to select the correct form of the verb, and a Sentence Conjunction Task. The latter task consisted of a list of sentences made of two coordinated clauses conjoined by ‘and’ or ‘but’. Participants were instructed to judge the sentences as illogical or logical depending on whether or not the two clauses made sense together, as in (61) below:

(61) #La clase fue a las 10 pero empezó a las 12:30. [preterite]  
the class was-PRET a the 10 but started a the 12:30  
“The class was at 10 but started at 12:30.”

In (61), the use of the preterite of the verb to be ‘fue’ (was) in the first clause makes the sentence illogical, based on the meaning of the second clause. The imperfect form era should
have been used. Montrul and Slabakova found near-native performance on all conditions except in the imperfect with achievement predicates, as in (62) below:

(62)  # Juan alcanzaba la cima.  [imperfect]
     Juan reached-IMP the top
     “John reached the top.”

Montrul and Slabakova follow Giorgi and Pianesi in arguing that these difficulties stem from the clash between the unbounded aspectual nature of the imperfect, which normally encodes habitual or generic situations, and the telic lexical nature of achievement verbs such as alcanzar (to reach). Achievement predicates are telic in that they have an inherent endpoint, as we saw in Chapter 2. However, even though L2 learners reject this type of construction native speakers accept it, contrary to Giorgi and Pianesi’s prediction. Normally, this clash between lexical class and aspectual tense can be resolved through aspectual coercion, as in (63) below:

(63)  Juan alcanzaba la cima cuando una ráfaga de viento se lo impidió.
     John reached-PRET the top when a gust of wind self him prevented
     “John reached the top when a gust of wind prevented him from doing so.”

In (63), the adverbial phrase cuando una ráfaga de viento se lo impidió shifts the emphasis onto the process preceding the change of state, turning the achievement predicate into an accomplishment. This process of aspectual coercion avoids a clash between aspectual tense (unbounded) and lexical class (telic). Montrul and Slabakova argue that even though coercion is also available in English, L2 learners fail to coerce because coercion may be peripheral (outside) of UG competence and thus harder to acquire (p. 140). The authors conclude that L2 learners fully acquire the morphosyntactic and interpretive features of AspP, but unlike native speakers, they don’t have the pragmatic ability of coercion. In a subsequent study, Slabakova (2002) argues that while pragmatic competence among L2 learners should be fully developed
and is arguably universal, processes like coercion are more complex to process and thus more likely to remain indeterminate with L2 learners.

A morphosyntactic approach does not provide a complete account of L2 learners’ difficulties with tense and aspect. From an empirical perspective, Montrul and Slabakova’s (2002) results suggest that L2 learners do acquire complete knowledge of overt morphosyntax, but that not all semantic representations are fully acquired. However, in this case it is not clear why, if morphology is fully acquired and morphology is the trigger necessary to activate semantics, aspectual interpretations are not fully acquired. From a theoretical perspective, if divergent semantic representations arise from different morphological paradigms, then languages with similar morphosyntactic features should have similar semantic representations. However, theoretical research shows that this is not the case and that verbal morphology does not determine semantics (Schmitt, 2001). Schmitt demonstrates that languages with similar morphosyntactic paradigms such as Spanish and Portuguese still diverge in their aspectual representations. As we saw in Chapter 2, Portuguese and Spanish are similar in that the verb stem always has bound morphology attached to it and thus cannot be confused with nouns. However, contrary to Spanish, Portuguese present tense disallows an ongoing reading with eventive predicates; rather, it behaves like English, allowing only a generic reading (e.g., Oliveira & Lopes, 1995; Schmitt, 2001). For an ongoing event, the present progressive must be used. Spanish, in contrast, allows both generic and ongoing interpretations.

In contrast to the morphological development perspective, a selectional approach to the acquisition of aspect argues that L2 difficulties are not related to featural activation but rather are explained in terms of the L2 acquisition of the aspectual properties tense morphemes can select (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., in press). That is, the task of the L2 learner involves the
acquisition of the corresponding semantic patterns selected by tense heads. On this perspective, some semantic patterns may be acquired while others may remain indeterminate, possibly due to transfer from different selectional patterns in the L1. This perspective is less restrictive than the morphosyntactic developmental view in that it does not link the acquisition of aspect to predetermined morphological paradigms. In what follows, I examine this approach in detail.

3.2.3 A Selectional Perspective

A selectional approach to aspectual differences treats aspect as compositionally formed. Rather than being morphologically based, aspectual interpretations are the result of the interaction established between the tense morpheme(s) (e.g., -é, -ba in Spanish), aspectual operators (e.g., time adverbials), and other elements within the verb phrase (e.g., direct objects). This interaction provides a specific aspectual interpretation (eventuality description). Aspectual operators play an instrumental role in the composition of aspect, since they can shift a heterogeneous event (an achievement or accomplishment) into a homogeneous event (states or processes events), as in (64) and (65) below.

(64) Juan pintó un cuadro de su madre. [heterogeneous event]
    John painted-PRET a portrait of his mother.
    “John painted a portrait of his mother.”

(65) Por muchos meses, Juan pintó un cuadro de su madre. [homogeneous/process]
    For many months, John painted-PRET a portrait of his mother.
    “John painted a portrait of his mother for many months.”

In (64), the heterogeneous event is an accomplishment, with a beginning and end. In (65), the time adverbial for muchos años “for many years” shifts the heterogeneous event into a homogeneous process with no inherent endpoint (an activity).
This selectional perspective accounts for aspectual variation among languages with similar morphosyntax, like Spanish and Portuguese. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, languages like Spanish and Portuguese have almost identical verbal systems but still differ in their aspectual properties. This is unaccounted for within the morphosyntactic approach. On a selectional view, languages have different semantic properties. The Spanish present tense can select states and processes (homogeneous eventualities), while the Portuguese present tense selects only states. From an acquisition perspective, the task of the L2 learner then lies in acquiring the corresponding semantic features selected by the tense heads (morphemes).

Pérez-Leroux et al. (in press) examine the acquisition of preterite/imperfect semantic aspectual representations. Specifically, the authors investigate habitual and iterative (repetitive) aspectual shifts triggered implicitly by aspectual coercion or explicitly through an iteration adverb, as in (66) and (67) respectively:

\[(66)\] Los niños se cambiaron de asiento por horas, [iterative coercion, preterite] the children self changed-PRET of seat for hours “The children changed seats for hours.”


The authors found different degrees of difficulty among participants and significant problems with iterative contexts. Their participants acquired the selectional properties of the preterite (heterogeneous eventualities) but failed to attain target representations of the imperfect (homogeneous eventualities). Results also showed that errors patterns were predicted in part by the content of instruction, as shown in previous research (e.g., Pérez-Leroux, 2000). L2 learners were more successful in reaching target aspectual values with instructed aspectual
interpretations (e.g., habitual and episodic) than with non-instructed interpretations (e.g., iterative interpretations). Moreover, iterative interpretations dependent only on coercion (e.g., the earthquake shook the city for days) were more challenging than those provided explicitly by an adverb (e.g., The earthquake shook the city repeatedly). The authors attributed these difficulties to L1 transfer from English, which appears to facilitate the interpretation of the selectional properties of the preterite while obscuring those of the imperfect.

Pérez-Leroux et al. (in press) conclude that homogeneous and heterogeneous aspectual representations in Spanish are acquired independently of each other. The target semantic representation one morpheme selects may be acquired (e.g., preterite) while the target representation of another morpheme (e.g., imperfect) may remain indeterminate. Within this approach, the acquisition of aspect is not constrained by feature activation or morphological development but rather is accounted for as part of lexical development and transfer of the semantic patterns of tense heads.

De Swart’s selectional approach to aspectual differences allows for a transfer-based explanation of acquisition difficulties. This is because L2 learners may activate incorrect aspectual patterns due to divergent semantic patterns in the L1 and L2. This transfer sensitivity scenario is consistent with recent research in SLA and L1 attrition that shows that grammatical areas where the syntax interfaces with semantics, such as tense and aspect, are very vulnerable to transfer and cross-linguistic influence among bilinguals (e.g., Müller & Hulk, 2001; Sánchez, 2004; Sorace, 2005). In the next section, I examine this research to show that transfer appears to offer a better account of the difficulties L2 learners face.

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5 Standard pedagogical treatments emphasize that habitual situations in the past are best expressed with the imperfect and that completed events are best expressed by the preterite (e.g., Lebedo, Jarvis and Mena-Ayllón, 2003).
3.2.4 The Role of Transfer and Vulnerable Domains

Transfer refers to the stable use of elements and structures from the native language, or any other language previously acquired, during the acquisition of an L2 (e.g., Adjémian, 1983; Gass, 1996; Odlin, 2003; Weinreich, 1953). For many decades, researchers have tried to explain why certain properties of the L1 grammar are more transferable to the L2 than others, and why some never transfer at all (e.g., Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela, 2005; Kellerman, 1979; Kellerman & Sharwood-Smith, 1996; Liceras, 1996; White, 1988; 2004). It has often been argued that the structural complexity of the languages in contact and their typological differences and similarities constrain what is transferred from language A to language B (e.g., Müller & Hulk, 2001).

Research on L1 attrition, L2 acquisition and L1 bilingual acquisition has argued that transfer is selective, affecting some structures more than others depending on several factors (e.g., Hulk & Müller, 2000; Serratrice, Sorace & Paoli, 2004; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; 2001; Sorace, 2000; Vainikka-Young-Scholten, 1996; Zobl, 1980). Within a generative grammar framework, Sorace (2000) has argued that transfer affects “interface” features only, rather than “narrow” syntax (syntactic domains). The part of the grammar in which the syntax interfaces with semantics or pragmatics will be vulnerable to transfer and grammatical optionality (divergence from the target grammar). In contrast, purely syntactic features will remain intact. This approach follows generative linguistic theory in differentiating morphosyntactic features

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6 Previous research has examined the selective nature of transfer within different frameworks. For instance, Zobl (1980) argues that the selectivity of transfer depends on the extent to which the L1 and L2 converge and their structural congruity (structuralist framework). On the other hand, Silva-Corvalán (1994) argues that bilinguals do not transfer morphosyntactic structures but rather discursive-pragmatic values when there are paralleled structures in the L1 and L2.
in terms of their interpretability (e.g., Chomsky, 1995; Chomsky & Lasnik, 1995).

Sorace’s approach to transfer selectivity in L2 acquisition, and specifically in adult L1 attrition, offers a more adequate account than those in previous frameworks in that it challenges current theoretical discussions within formal models of generative grammar (e.g., Minimalist Program) that rule out syntactic optionality. Although an “interface” vulnerability approach is not completely satisfactory, it proposes a framework to account for current data that show the occurrence of optionality among L2 learners and adult immigrants (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Sánchez, 2004, Sorace, 2000; Tsimpli et al., 2004). Current models of generative grammar (e.g., Chomsky, 1995) rule out the occurrence of optionality in end-state L2 grammars and adult L1 grammars or relegate it to factors external to the grammar proper. More importantly, Sorace’s framework is interesting in that it challenges current views which defend a distant relationship between L1 and L2 acquisition development (e.g., Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Meisel, 1998). As shown by recent research, these two process have common characteristics which challenge impairment views to the adult language faculty due to age effects (e.g., Functional Feature Hypothesis) (see Zobl & Liceras 2005 for discussion along these lines).

Within the Minimalist Program, there are two classes of functional features: interpretable features, those contributing to meaning such as preterite/imperfect distinctions in Spanish; and uninterpretable or purely syntactic features (e.g., agreement). Transfer will affect only interpretable features, which are checked at the syntax-semantic interface, causing grammatical variability. In contrast, purely syntactic (e.g., uninterpretable) properties will

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7 Previous research in L1 attrition (e.g., Cuza, 2001) has evidenced L1 attrition of syntactic structures proper (e.g., verb movement in Spanish interrogative sentences).
remain intact (e.g., Sorace, 2005)

It is argued that this selective nature of transfer accounts for the variability observed among long-time immigrants undergoing attrition and L2 learners. Syntactic constructions will be fully acquired and impermeable to attrition, while more complex grammatical domains requiring the integration of syntax and semantics will be more difficult to acquire and easier to undergo L1 attrition (e.g., Sorace, 2004; Tsimpli et al., 2004).

Sorace (2000) examines the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of the distribution of overt subject pronouns and postverbal subjects among Italian near-native speakers of English. In pro-drop or null subject languages like Italian or Spanish, preverbal subjects \((pro)\) can be omitted, as in (68a), in contrast to non-pro-drop languages like English where the subject is obligatory, as in (68b):

\[
(68) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } (pro) & \text{ E’ partito.} \\
& \text{is gone} \\
& \text{“He/she left.”}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
(68) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{b. } * & \text{ (He/she) left} \\
& \text{[English]}
\end{align*}
\]

Unlike English, null subjects in Italian are possible due to the phonological realization of agreement features (uninterpretable features) on the verb. Postverbal subjects are also possible in Italian due to the null subject value of the parameter, as in (69b):

\[
(69) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. Che cosa è successo?} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \text{b. E’ arrivato Gianni.} \\
& \text{“What happened?”} \\
& \text{is arrived Gianni} \\
& \text{“Gianni arrived.”}
\end{align*}
\]
Sorace argues that since the production of null subjects in Italian is under the specification of uninterpretable features, it will not be vulnerable to transfer. However, the distribution of null subjects will be vulnerable to transfer from English, since they are under the specification of [+interpretable] features.

In Sorace’s study, English near-native speakers of Italian (L2) showed an overgeneralization of Italian overt pronouns in contexts where monolingual Italian speakers would use the null option (as in (68)). Moreover, their results were similar to those of Italian near-native speakers of English undergoing L1 attrition. Both groups produced preverbal subjects optionally in contexts where a monolingual speaker would use the postverbal option, as in (69b) above. However, the Italian native grammar remained null subject and the English native grammar remained overt subject. Only the distribution of overt pronominal subjects (syntax-discourse interface condition) was affected. Sorace concludes that interpretable features, which characterize the syntax-discourse/pragmatic interface, are optionally unspecified in L2 attainment and L1 attrition.

Transfer is then unidirectional as the L1 will affect the L2 only if it instantiates the less complex option. Italian offers two interpretable options associated with the syntactic distribution of subject pronouns (null/pro and overt); English does not. In a language contact situation, there will be a process of competition where the less complex grammar (English) will overrule the more complex grammar (Italian), leading to a syntactic reduction in the range of syntactic choices in Italian (e.g., attrition of the null subject option).

This selective nature of transfer affecting mainly the syntax-semantic interface was also observed in Robertson and Sorace’s (1999) study. The authors investigated the verb-second (V2) constraint among German near-native speakers of English. In German, finite verbs always
occupy the second position in the sentence, regardless of the nature of the elements occupying initial position. However, in English the verb can sometimes appear in second position but only when certain types of elements are fronted, such as negative adverbials, as in (70) below:

(70) In no circumstance are guests allowed to smoke in the bedroom.

V2 constructions in English, such as that in (70), are constrained by the illocutionary force of the utterance and the speaker’s pragmatic choice. Moreover, they are also syntactically conditioned, producing a specific word order. As a working hypothesis, Robertson and Sorace argue that German learners transfer their L1 V2 constraint into their interlanguage grammar. However, results provide no consistent evidence for this constraint among L2 learners. Some L2 learners, though, do occasionally produced V2 constructions in English, as in (71) below:

(71) *For many kids is living with their parents a nightmare.

In (71), the finite verb appears in second position preceding the subject. Robertson and Sorace argue that there is optionality on the part of L2 learners, which involves the more consistent V2 German system and the less consistent English V2 constructions. They conclude that complex areas like these, requiring the interplay of syntactic and discourse domains, are the locus of vulnerability and optionality, leading to L2 indeterminacy.

In summary, these studies support the claim that the syntax-semantic interface is vulnerable to linguistic transfer and optionality among L2 learners. As we will examine in the next section, this perspective has also been argued to account for the variability observed among adult immigrants undergoing L1 attrition (e.g., Tsimpli et al., 2004). If transfer indeed affects the syntax/semantics/discourse interface and the interpretable features associated with different options in the L1 and L2, then tense and aspect would be prime candidates for variability and transfer among English-Spanish bilinguals. On the one hand, tense and aspect
are semantically and syntactically constrained. On the other hand, English and Spanish differ in terms of the semantic aspectual patterns their tense morphemes can select.

3.3 Transfer Effects and L1 Attrition: A Further Evaluation

In the previous section, we saw current approaches to the selective role of transfer mainly affecting areas of the syntax-semantic domain, such as the distribution of subject pronouns in pro-drop languages like Italian. However, in order to further evaluate the role of transfer as a plausible explanation for L2 learners’ difficulties, in this section I examine another type of transfer-dependent bilingualism phenomenon: L1 attrition among first generation adult immigrants.

In both L2 acquisition and L1 attrition research, results have shown that the aspectual domain is vulnerable to grammatical permeability and transfer effects (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1991). However, if as argued by some researchers, bilinguals’ difficulties arise from maturational constraints or the activation of morphosyntactic features, how can one explain that native speakers who immigrated to the L2 during adulthood share similar patterns of difficulties with advanced L2 learners? I would argue that in both language contact phenomena (L2 acquisition and L1 attrition), grammatical difficulties are the result of transfer of the lexical semantic patterns of the bilingual’s dominant language (L1 or L2).

First, I discuss previous L1 attrition research and related linguistic and psycholinguistic factors, such as age at onset of L2 acquisition and transfer (e.g., Kaufman & Aronoff, 1991; Sharwood-Smith & Van Buren, 1991; Seliger, 1996). Departing from previous research, I adopt a narrow definition of L1 attrition that excludes language loss among heritage speakers
(second or third-generation immigrants), a process more commonly known as incomplete acquisition (e.g., Polinsky, 2005; Silva-Corvalán, 2003; Sorace, 2004). Second, I examine current research that demonstrates that grammatical domains where the syntax interfaces with semantics, as is the case with tense and aspect, are vulnerable to L1 attrition and L2 indeterminacy due to contact with a dominant L2.

3.3.1 First Language Attrition

As discussed in Chapter 1, L1 attrition refers to the loss of previously acquired L1 grammatical properties due to intense contact with a dominant L2. It implies the incorporation of L2 grammatical rules and structures into the L1 leading to native grammatical restructuring (e.g., Gürel, 2004; Köpke and Schmid, 2004; Schmid, 2002; Seliger & Vago, 1991). This restructuring is often reflected in the speaker’s acceptance of structures considered odd by monolingual native speakers of their first language, as represented below:

(72) *Pensé que eres español.
    I thought you are-PRES. INDICATIVE Spaniard
    “I thought you were from Spain”

In (72), the speaker has avoided the use of the imperfect indicative (_eras_ ‘you were’), as required by the context, using instead the present indicative _eres_ (‘you are’). This is a typical error a long-term immigrant undergoing attrition would make.⁸

L1 attrition correlates with many factors, including L2 transfer (e.g., Gürel, 2004; Major, 1992; Pavlenko, 2000; Seliger, 1991), age at onset of L2 acquisition (e.g., Ammerlaan, 1991; Cuza, 2001; Kaufman & Aronoff, 1991; Major, 1997), amount of contact with the L1 (e.g., Jaespert & Kroon, 1992), and length of residence in the L2 context (e.g., de Bot,

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⁸ This utterance was produced by a Puerto Rican long-time immigrant in the United States.
Gommans & Rossing, 1991). In this study, I am particularly concerned with the role of age at onset of L2 acquisition and transfer effects.

The role of age at onset of L2 acquisition is an important factor in the L1 attrition process. As mentioned earlier, L1 attrition refers to the erosion of previously acquired L1 grammatical properties. Difficulties often found among native speakers who immigrated to the L2 context during early childhood are not considered as instances of L1 attrition proper, but rather as cases of incomplete acquisition (Sorace, 2004). Incomplete acquisition is a language contact phenomenon characteristic of early-immigrants and heritage speakers that includes L1 loss due to reduced input and contact with the parental language (e.g., Polinsky, in press; Silva-Corvalán, 2003; Zentella, 1997). However, data from early bilinguals must be examined very carefully. If the difficulties immigrants have are related to grammatical structures fully acquired during early childhood (e.g., subject-verb inversion in Spanish), then these difficulties can also stem from L1 attrition (Cuza, 2002).

In what follows, I examine age effects in L1 attrition followed by a discussion on the role of transfer in L1 attrition. The goal of this discussion is to help to evaluate the claim that transfer best explains the difficulties L2 learners have. My assumption is that if adult immigrants who came to the L2 context with fully developed grammars undergo L1 attrition and show patterns of deficits similar to those of adult L2 learners, then L2 acquisition difficulties cannot be accounted for solely in terms of impairment. Instead, I argue that transfer offers a further, necessary explanation of the difficulties both L2 learners and immigrants face.
3.3.2 The Role of Age at Onset of L2 Acquisition

Most researchers agree that children (early arrivals) undergo much more severe L1 attrition than adult or late arrivals (e.g., Jaespaert & Kroon, 1992; Köpke, 2004). Environmental-language competition factors (e.g., TV, music, games, prestige of the L1, acculturation degree) which have been argued to favor children’s L2 acquisition process and bilingual development in general (e.g., Jia, 1998, Genesee, Paradis & Crago, 2004; Silva-Corvalán, 2003) also make young learners more susceptible to L1 attrition and loss.

Children approach their new linguistic and cultural environment differently than adults and usually assimilate to the new context completely. This attitude leads in most scenarios to limited exposure to and use of the L1 and intense exposure to the L2, which may lead to L1 attrition among grammatical structures acquired very early during childhood (e.g., subject-verb inversion, object pronouns). However, the difficulties observed among immigrants who came to the L2 context during early childhood is not always the result of L1 attrition. It may stem from incomplete acquisition, especially if it implies more complex, experience-based structures (e.g., tense and aspect), which are acquired late and are normally affected by incomplete L1 acquisition (e.g., Silva-Corvalán, 2003).

Kaufman and Aronoff (1991) examined the L1 attrition of the verbal system of a Hebrew-English bilingual child (age at onset of acquisition: 2;9). The authors found patterns of integration toward L2 verbal forms and subsequent disintegration of the L1 inflectional and derivational morphological system. Although the authors consider the results as evidence of L1 attrition, it is not clear whether complex structures such as derivational morphology had been.

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9 Researchers examining the sociolinguistic nature of language change intergenerationally (at the community level) might also consider the variation found among young immigrants as cases of L1 attrition (e.g., Lambert & Freed, 1982).
fully acquired at time of immigration. The participant acquired the L2 at the age of two and a half, and was probably exposed to very limited L1 input after immigrating to the L2 context. Therefore, it is difficult to interpret her non-native performance as attrition of previously fully-learned properties.

Silva-Corvalán (2003) examined patterns of grammatical simplification (e.g., loss of past tense morphology and tense and aspect) among Spanish-English bilinguals residing in Los Angeles, as shown in (73) and (74) below:

(73)  *Yo resbalé en sand, porque había arena en…
I slipped-PRET on sand, because there was sand on…
“I slipped on the sand, because there was sand on…”

(74)  *En la casa, mi mamá era la única que habló español…
in the home, my mom was the only one who spoke-PRET Spanish
“At home, my mom was the only one who spoke Spanish.”

In (73), the speaker uses third-person singular (resbaló “he slipped”) instead of the first person singular (resbalé “I slipped”). In (74), the speaker uses the preterite (habló “spoke”) instead of the imperfect (hablabá “spoke”). The author questions whether the simplification observed is the result of incomplete acquisition during early childhood or L1 attrition of previously acquired knowledge. She compares the verbal system of adult Spanish-English bilinguals with those of seven fully bilingual children, ranging from ages 5;1 to 5;11. These children acquired Spanish from birth and English either from birth (bilingual parents) or later in early childhood.

Silva-Corvalán argues that by age 5;6 the bilingual children have not yet acquired the complete system tense, mood and aspect system in Spanish. Moreover, children with more exposure to Spanish at home display the same deficits (e.g., neutralization of preterite versus imperfect distinctions) as adult bilinguals who were born in the US or immigrated before the age of six. These results support the hypothesis that the verbal simplification observed among
this type of adult bilinguals (non-simultaneous) is the result of incomplete acquisition between the ages of 3;0 and 5;0, rather than L1 attrition. Exposure to English-only daycares, television, music, and social-interactional factors in general made it impossible for these bilinguals to continue developing their L1 at such an early age, resulting in an incomplete system. Formal instruction in the baseline language could help in these cases but that does not normally happen.

Other studies examine the role of age at onset of acquisition in L1 attrition among early arrivals and late arrivals (e.g., Ammerlaan, 1996; Cuza, 2001; Pelc, 2001). Contrary to previous attrition research on children, these studies evaluate syntactic structures or other grammatical properties that are usually acquired very early on in the L1 acquisition process, and that are thus permeable to L1 attrition.

Cuza (2001) examined the role of age in the L1 attrition of 20 Spanish-English bilinguals living in Canada for 15 years or more. Participants were divided into two groups according to age at onset of acquisition: an early arrival group, 6 to 9 years in age (n=10); and a late arrival group (20 years or more (n=10)). The study evaluated morphosyntactic structures in Spanish such as the compounding parameter in relation to noun-noun compound formation and resultative constructions, as in (75) and (76), and subject-verb inversion in interrogative phrases, as in (77):

(75) a. John has given me his telephone number.
b. *Juan me ha dado su teléfono número. [ung.compound/prep.omission]c. Juan me ha dado su número de teléfono. [gram. NN compound]

(76) a. The butcher cut the meat thin.
(77) a. Where did Mario buy the present?  
b. *¿Dónde Mario compró el regalo?” [ung. Wh phrase/no verb inversion]  
c. ¿Dónde compró Mario el regalo?” [gram. Wh phrase]

Results showed significant attrition between both experimental groups as compared with the control group. Early arrivals were overall more severely affected by attrition than late arrivals, displaying significant loss of subject-verb inversion in both types of wh-phrases under examination (embedded and matrix). Adults, however, were also significantly affected by L1 attrition, in contrast with previous research that claims mild or almost no attrition during adulthood (e.g., Köpke, 2001; Olshtain & Barzilay, 1991; Schoenmakers-Klein, 1998).

To summarize, L1 attrition research shows that age of L2 acquisition plays an important role in the attrition process and that, although children are normally more vulnerable to attrition, the adult grammar is also permeable. However, patterns of simplification or variability among early arrivals may stem from incomplete L1 acquisition during early childhood rather than L1 attrition. Therefore, data from children should be examined very carefully. For this reason, in order to avoid the possibility of incomplete acquisition, in this dissertation I investigate only adult long-time immigrants. If adult immigrants — who immigrated with a fully developed grammar — are vulnerable to L1 attrition, as we have seen, then the cause of their variability cannot be directly related to maturational constraints. Instead, I argue that transfer best explains native speakers’ difficulties.

As discussed at the beginning of this section, research has demonstrated that L2 transfer is selective in that it affects mainly syntax-semantic interface structures. If this is indeed the case, then tense and aspect constitute a vulnerable domain for both transfer and L1 attrition among long-time immigrants in intense contact with a second language.
3.3.3. The Role of Transfer and Vulnerable Domains

Tsimpli et al. (2004) examined the L1 attrition of the production and interpretation of overt preverbal and postverbal subjects among Greek and Italian near-native speakers of English (L2). In contrast to English, Greek and Italian are pro-drop languages. However, as explained earlier, in cases where discourse factors in Italian or Greek require the topicalization and focusing of the subject, it must be overt, as in (78a) and (78b):

(78)  

a. [topic context]  
Both John and Mary have bought the same book  
*(Aftos) tis to protpine [Greek]  
he her it recommend  
“He recommended it to her.”

b. [focus context]  
I don’t know if Mary will come  
*(Afti) tha erthi [Greek]  
she will come  
“She will come.”

In (78a) the subject (*he) is a contrastive topic while in (78b) the subject (*she) is focused. In both cases an overt subject pronoun is obligatory. Greek and Italian also allow postverbal subjects due to the null subject value of the parameter, whereas English does not, as shown in (79a)-(79c):

(79)  

a. Sono arrivati alcuni studenti [Italian]  
Arrived-3p some students  
“Some students arrived.”

b. Eftasan kapii fitites. [Greek]  
Arrived-3p some students  
“Some students arrived.”

c. *Arrived some students [English]

The distribution of preverbal or postverbal subjects in Italian and Greek is constrained by the definiteness of the subject and the thematic properties of the verb (e.g., Tsimpli et al., 2004).
The verb *arrivare* (‘to arrive’), for instance, favors a post-verbal subject for indefinite subjects (79a & 79b).

The authors found that attrition affects the distribution and interpretation of overt preverbal subjects in Italian and Greek, which are regulated by interpretable features. These features become unspecified due to lack of similar interpretable features in the L2 (English). As in Sorace’s (2000) study, participants show an over production of overt preverbal subjects in contexts where monolinguals would use the null option. Participants also optionally assign a topic or focus reading under the influence of preverbal subjects in the L2 (English). However, there is no attrition in terms of the uninterpretable features of subjects. Both Italian and Greek remain null subject languages and English remains overt subject. There is also no attrition in the use of postverbal subjects, given that this is a syntactic option not shared by English. The results validate the cross-linguistic influence proposal that attrition only affects interpretable features, as is the case of the distribution of pronominal subjects in Italian and Greek. However, uninterpretable features remain intact.

Regarding tense and aspect specifically, Montrul (2002) examined the incomplete acquisition and L1 attrition of morpho-semantic aspectual properties among Spanish-English bilinguals. Specifically, she evaluated whether the attrition of morphology also entails the loss of semantic features and if there are systematic patterns of incompleteness in the production and interpretation of aspectual distinctions. Participants were divided in three groups determined by the age at onset of bilingualism: (1) 16 simultaneous bilinguals born in the US (age of exposure to English 0-3 years old); (2) 15 early child L2 learners (age of exposure to English 4-7 years; and (3) a Latin American-born group of 8 child late L2 learners (age of exposure to English 8-12 years). There was also a monolingual group (n=20).
Montrul found significant differences between the bilingual and monolingual groups, with age at onset of acquisition being the main predictive factor of the degree of divergence. Simultaneous bilinguals and early child L2 learners differ significantly from the monolinguals on achievement predicates in the imperfect (coercion cases), as in (80), and stative verbs in the preterite that shift aspectual class, as in (81):

(80) Juan alcanzaba la cima cuando una ráfaga de viento se lo impidió.
John reached the top when a gust of wind prevented
“John reached the top when a gust of wind prevented him from doing so.”

(81) Juan sabía/supo la verdad.
Juan knew-IMP/PRET the truth
“Juan knew/found out the truth.”

Montrul concluded that both morpho-phonological spell-outs and semantic features are affected by incomplete acquisition in the case of simultaneous and early bilinguals, and L1 attrition in the case of the Latin American-born group. Participants confused morphological forms and neutralized the semantic differences between the preterite and imperfect. Montrul also argues that, contrary to monolinguals, L2 learners do not have the ability to coerce, based on the difficulties demonstrated with achievement predicates in the imperfect. The author argues that coercion may be peripheral to UG competence, more dependent on input, repeated exposure and therefore more difficult to acquire (p. 60).

Sánchez (2004) examines the effect of transfer in the acquisition of tense, aspectual and evidentiality systems by Quechua-Spanish bilingual children. Quechua and Spanish present different aspectual systems. In Spanish, tense and aspectual features are associated with each other. The preterite entails perfective aspect, while the imperfect entails imperfective aspect. However, in Quechua tense and aspectual features are not fused and are independently marked. The distinction between the two past tenses (-sqa and -rqa) does not involve aspectual
distinctions as in Spanish. In contrast, they involve evidentiality features related to the source of information (first-hand information versus hearsay information). Nonetheless, both evidentiality features in Quechua and aspectual features in Spanish are associated with the same functional category; tense.

Evidentiality features are interpretable features that contribute to the semantic interpretation of the clause. For instance, the reportative past tense morpheme –sqa refers to past events not witnessed by the speaker as well as historic events or hearsay information, as in (82a). However, events evidenced by the speaker or considered as “completed” are reported using the attested past tense morpheme –rqa, as in (82b):

(82) a. Manku Qhapaq-qa Titiqqa qucha-manta-s lluqsimu-sqa.
Manku Qhapaq-TOP Titikaka lake-ABLATIVE-EVID/VAL emerge-PAST
“Manku Qhapaq emerged from Lake Titicaca.”

b. Huwan-mi Mariya-ta qhawa-rqa-n.
Huwan-EVID Mariya-ACC see-PAST
“Huwan saw Mariya.”

The -s marker in (82a) indicates hearsay information while the -mi marker in (82b) indicates first-hand information. Sánchez finds that bilingual speakers converge with Quechua evidentiality features, displaying higher frequency of imperfective morphology than Spanish monolinguals. These results show an association of imperfective morphology with evidentiality features. The data support the hypothesis that interpretable features at the syntax-semantic interface are the locus of cross-linguistic influence and permeability among bilingual grammars.
3.4 Chapter Summary and General Hypotheses of the Study

To summarize, research on the L2 acquisition of tense and aspect is extensive. Yet, it is still not clear why this domain is challenging for L2 learners. Previous proposals have tried to relate learners’ difficulties to the existence of a critical period for learning (e.g., Coppieters, 1989) or a lack of development of morphosyntactic features (e.g., Montrul and Slabakova, 2002; 2003). However, as discussed in this chapter, these approaches have yet to provide a complete explanation for aspectual variation.

On the one hand, research shows no dramatic drop in learning after puberty and the discontinuity often claimed by the Critical Period Hypothesis has not been validated (e.g., Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). On the other hand, a morphological development approach as a trigger for the acquisition of semantic properties is not complete either, since it does not explain why languages with almost identical verbal system behave aspectually differently. Moreover, research shows that L2 learners who appear to have acquired morphological aspectual forms fail to acquire some specific semantic properties (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). Therefore, morphological development cannot be the trigger for the acquisition of lexical meanings that tense heads carry.

A supplementary proposal regarding impairment reasons is that learners’ difficulties stem from the lack of lexical development, and the failure to acquire the semantic properties tense morphemes can select due to transfer effects from the L1. This view is in line with recent proposals that argue that grammatical domains belonging to the syntax-semantic interface, such as tense and aspect, are vulnerable to transfer effects.
Based on this research, my assumption is that L2 learners’ difficulties with tense and aspect do not arise solely from some form of impairment. Instead, I argue that differences between native speakers and L2 learners, and non-attrited versus attrited native speakers, can also be attributed to transfer. In order to further develop this claim, in Chapters 4 and 5, I examine empirical data on the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of aspectual properties in Spanish in the past and present tense. I analyze whether English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and Spanish immigrants undergoing attrition demonstrate comparable variability. If maturational and featural approaches to aspect are correct, L2 learners and adult immigrants should not have comparable patterns of difficulties in the aspectual domain, since these immigrants acquired the L2 after puberty. However, if we follow a selectional approach to the L2 acquisition of aspect, where the selectional patterns of one language are able to influence the selectional patterns of the other language, then L1→L2 influence may be comparable to L2→L1 influence.

In a language contact scenario, I expect bilingual speakers to activate incorrect selectional patterns due to the interrelation between the L1 and the L2. The less restrictive patterns of English will interfere with the acquisition of new properties in Spanish L2. Within this framework, I consider the following general hypotheses:

H₀: English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants undergoing attrition will behave significantly different from each other in the aspectual domain.

H₁: English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants will show comparable trends in their interpretation of aspectual properties in Spanish.
To the extent that adult immigrants undergoing attrition share with L2 learners comparable difficulties, the alternative hypothesis (H1) will be borne out and the null hypothesis (Ho) will be rejected. If adult immigrants and advanced L2 learners demonstrate comparable patterns of difficulties, it cannot then be argued that L2 learners’ difficulties stem solely from maturational constrains or lack of instantiation of morphosyntactic features.

In the next chapter, I examine the interpretation and use of past-tense aspectual properties among English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants. I formulate the underlying research questions followed by the specific hypotheses for the study. Data collection involves the use of a truth value judgment task, a grammaticality judgment task and an elicited production task.
4 The Interpretation and Use of Spanish Preterite and Imperfect Distinctions among English-speaking L2 Learners and Long-term Spanish Immigrants

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined two proposals concerning L2 learners’ difficulties with tense and aspect: (1) that difficulties stem from maturational factors linked to age at onset of L2 acquisition (e.g., Coppieters, 1989) and (2) that morphosyntactic development is the necessary trigger for the acquisition of aspectual meaning (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2003). I argued that neither of these proposals concerning acquisition fully explains L2 learners’ difficulties; research on L2 acquisition finds no sharp discontinuity in language learning as age at onset of L2 acquisition increases (e.g., Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994), and Montrul and Slabakova’s (2002) own results indicate that L2 learners may acquire complete knowledge of overt morphosyntax without complete mastery of semantic representations. It is therefore unclear why, if morphology is in place and it is the trigger necessary to activate semantics, some aspectual interpretations are still not fully acquired.

In addition to these maturational and morphosyntactic-development proposals, I claimed that L2 learners’ difficulties can also be explained via L1 transfer of the semantic properties of tense heads (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., in press). A transfer explanation is more adequate, as it does not link aspectual difficulties to pre-determined morphological paradigms or maturational constraints. Thus, it accounts for aspectual difficulties even among long-term immigrants who came to the L2 context with a fully developed L1 system. This chapter tests this claim by comparing the grammars of long-term Spanish immigrants with those of English-
speaking L2 learners of Spanish. If long-term immigrants, who acquired the L2 (English) as adults, share similar patterns of grammatical errors with L2 learners, then L2 learners’ difficulties should not be unequivocally and solely related to impairment. I will argue instead that transfer of English semantic patterns provides a more encompassing explanation of the difficulties English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish have. This is because (a) English and Spanish have different selectional properties for the past tense; (b) transfer is a process that affects both L2 learners and adult immigrants; and (c) the difficulties adult immigrants have cannot be solely explained via impairment reasons since these immigrants came to the L2 context with a fully developed L1 grammar.

I develop this argument through an analysis of the interpretation and use of preterite and imperfect distinctions in Spanish. Recall that in Spanish, preterite and imperfect morphemes are sensitive to aspectual descriptions (De Swart, 1998). The preterite selects heterogeneous eventualities (e.g., María estudió_pret mística ayer, “Mary studied_pret music yesterday”) and the imperfect selects homogeneous eventualities (e.g., María estudiaba_imp mística de niña, “Mary studied_imp music as a child”). In English, on the other hand, the simple past is aspectually neutral: both homogeneous and heterogeneous eventualities are possible (e.g., Mary studied music yesterday and Mary studied music as a child). Based on these aspectual differences, and the demonstration by previous research that transfer is selective and affects mostly the syntax-semantic interface (e.g., Robertson & Sorace, 1998; Sorace 2005), I expect L2 learners and long-term immigrants to have difficulties with aspectual selection in Spanish due to semantic transfer from L1 English in the case of L2 learners and L2 English in the case of immigrants.
The present chapter is structured as follows. In Section 4.2, I discuss the research questions underlying the study and present the specific hypotheses under examination. In Sections 4.3 and 4.4, I examine the participant groups and the materials used to elicit the data and discuss the results.

4.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

As discussed in Chapter 2, past tenses in Spanish and the simple past (preterite) in English differ in their inventory of aspectual descriptions (e.g., De Swart, 1998). In Spanish, the preterite and the imperfect are aspectual operators that select specific types of eventuality descriptions: the preterite selects non-homogeneous (heterogeneous) eventualities in the past (events; 83a), whereas the imperfect selects homogeneous eventualities (states and process; 83c). In English, in contrast, the preterite is neutral, lacking selectional restrictions. It applies to both non-homogeneous (83b) and homogeneous (83d) descriptions:

(83)  

a. (Spanish)  Susana hizo-PRET una torta.          [-homogeneous]  
b. (English)  Susan baked-PRET a cake.              [-homogeneous]  
c. (Spanish)  Susana siempre hacía-IMP tortas.     [+homogeneous]  
d. (English)  Susan always baked-PRET cakes.       [+homogeneous]  

Accordingly, English and Spanish share the same range of eventuality types, both homogeneous and non-homogeneous. However, these eventuality types are associated with different morphological expressions in each language. In English, they are both realized by the simple past. In Spanish, they are respectively selected by the imperfect and the preterite. Thus, Spanish-English bilinguals are exposed to two different grammars. The Spanish grammar (L1 or L2) will be in competition with the English grammar (L1 or L2) due to its wider range of
semantic selection. This competition between the two grammars in the bilingual mind may cause confusion in the correct activation of target aspertual values, evidenced in L2 indeterminacy among English-speaking learners of Spanish and L1 attrition among long-term Spanish immigrants. This analysis is represented in (84) below:

(84)

If as argued, transfer affects mostly grammatical areas in which syntax interfaces with semantics among bilingual speakers (e.g., Sorace, 2000; Tsimli et al., 2004), one would expect the neutral values of the English preterite to affect the selectional properties of preterite and imperfect tense.aspect heads in Spanish. Based on this assumption, the research questions underlying this study are the following:

i. To what extent do English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish acquire the selectional patterns of preterite and imperfect forms? Where attainment is not complete, can it be also explained in terms of transfer from English?

ii. To what extent does L1 attrition affect the understanding of aspertual distinctions in the past tense among long-term Spanish immigrants?
iii. Do L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants perform comparably?

Regarding questions (i) and (ii), Spanish-English bilinguals could possibly show three different types of errors due to transfer of the neutral values of the English simple past:

(i) Full neutralization of the selectional values of both preterite and imperfect forms:

- PRET/ IMP [±HOM] # [Full neutralization]

By full neutralization I mean the simplification of the aspectual opposition existing between preterite and imperfect tenses in Spanish, where both tenses may be in free variation (unrestricted distribution) without affecting meaning (e.g., Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Zentella, 1997).

(ii) Neutralization of the selectional values of the imperfect form:

- IMP [±HOM] # [Imperfect overextension]

(iii) Neutralization of the selectional values of the preterite form.

- PRET [±HOM] # [Preterite overextension]

Regarding full neutralization, the neutral values of the English simple past [±HOM] could broaden the selectional values of the Spanish preterite and imperfect tenses. That is, the range of lexical selection of preterite and imperfect tense heads in Spanish would be broadened to include both homogeneous and non-homogeneous descriptions [±homogeneous].

Although full neutralization is plausible, research in L2 acquisition (e.g., Eubank, 1996; Gregg, 1996) and L1 attrition (e.g., Gürel, 2004; Köpke, 2004; Pavlenko, 2000) indicates that external factors such as input (exposure to L1 or L2) play an important role in facilitating the specification of target features and as well as in the maintenance of said features in the case of L1 attrition. This may not allow for a full neutralization of forms. From a pedagogical
perspective, research also indicates that a combination of meaning-bearing input and explicit
feedback in the classroom contributes to an increased accuracy in the L2 and enhances the
saliency and processing of L2 forms (e.g., Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Sharwood-Smith, 1993;
Spada, 1997). Regarding L1 attrition, research shows that input and interaction has a direct
implication on activation levels (Threshold Hypothesis), influencing the balance between the
L1 and L2 grammar in the bilingual speaker (e.g., Gürel, 2004; Köpke, 2004; Paradis, 1993). 10

Regarding possibility (ii), it is possible that transfer of the neutral value of the English
simple past, together with other external factors such as input, could broaden the selectional
properties of the imperfect, allowing it to select both homogeneous and non-homogeneous
descriptions (±HOM). In this case, L2 learners and immigrants would use the imperfect in
homogeneous contexts in which it should be used while overextending it to heterogeneous
situations where the preterite should be used (e.g., #A Rosa le encantaba\textimp mucho la cena de
ayer, “Rosa enjoyed\textimp yesterday’s dinner very much.”).

However, following the Full Transfer Hypothesis of Schwartz & Sprouse (1996) and
previous research on the effects of L2 transfer on the L1 grammar (e.g., Cook, 2003; Pavlenko
& Jarvis, 2002; Sharwood-Smith, 1983), I would expect L2 learners and immigrants to
demonstrate possibility (iii). That is, I expect transfer of the neutral value of the simple past in
English to directly affect the selectional properties of the Spanish preterite, a closer equivalent
to the English simple past, causing it to become selectionally neutral ([±HOM]). Schwartz &
Sprouse argue that the L1 grammar is the L2 learners’ initial state and that this may cause them
not to converge on the target grammar. L2 learners may miss-interpret L2 features and adopt

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10 According to Paradis’ (1993) Threshold Hypothesis, the lack of use of a specific linguistic item raises its
activation threshold and therefore the item is less available to the bilingual user. On the other hand, the frequent
use of a specific item leads a lower activation threshold, which makes the item more accessible by the bilingual
user.
an UG constraint that is not target like (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996). Regarding L1 attrition, Sharwood-Smith’s crosslinguistic influence hypothesis argues that in the absence of L1 input, the L2 will serve as indirect positive evidence, and as a result L2 values with a wider semantic distribution (e.g., English simple past) will replace more narrowly distributed L1 rules. (e.g., Gürel, 2004; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Sorace, 2000). Due to transfer from English neutral values of the simple past, participants may also have difficulties with the selectional values of the imperfect.

In this regard, previous research on the L2 acquisition and L1 loss of tense and aspect among Spanish-English bilinguals has found a direct association of the Spanish preterite with the English simple past (unmarked, default option) (e.g., Salaberry, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994; Zentella, 1997). This will predict that L2 learners and immigrants would overextend the Spanish preterite to homogenous contexts where the imperfect should be used, as shown below:

(85)  #Normalmente, **jugué** béisbol cuando niño.  [eventive characterizing, pret] normally, (I) played-PRET baseball when child.

“I often played baseball as a child.”

In a characterizing context like (85), the imperfect tense (**jugaba** ‘used to play’) is preferred.

Although I expect full transfer of English simple past semantic properties, it is possible that the effects of transfer in homogeneous contexts like (85) may be mitigated by the role of instruction among L2 learners. Pedagogical practices highly emphasize that the Spanish imperfect should be used to describe habitual or repeated events in the past (e.g., Blanco & Donley, 2005; Jarvis, Lebredo & Mena-Ayllón, 2003, 2004). Some studies of the effects of explicit instruction (direct intervention in interlanguage development) have not always shown long-term effects on the acquisition of some structures (e.g., White, Spada, Lightbown &
Ranta, 1991). However, other researchers have shown that form-focused instruction is effective, and positively influences L2 development by enhancing the input (e.g., Carroll, Swain & Roberge, 1991; Doughty, 1991; Ellis, 1999; Lyster, 2004; Spada, Lightbown & White, 2005).

In the specific case of the L2 acquisition of inflectional morphology (e.g., tense and aspect markers), researchers have argued that inflectional endings cannot just feed into the L2 grammar simply out of exposure to comprehensible input, and that explicit intervention is necessary to establish more accurately form-meaning connections (e.g., Bergström, 1995; Buczowska & Weist, 1991; Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman & Doughty; 1995; Salaberry, 1998). For instance, Leeman et al. (1995) examined whether focus on form improved the accuracy of preterite versus imperfect aspectual distinctions among English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish. Results from post-tests showed an improvement for the focus-on-form group on all three tasks (cloze tests, essays, debates) in contrast with the purely communicative group. The authors concluded that a focus on form made the target forms more salient and garnered the learner’s attention. Therefore, although I expect similar patterns of difficulties between both groups stemming from transfer, it is conceivable that L2 learners may show higher levels of accuracy than immigrants in characterizing contexts.

Another important factor is the role of input. The use of the imperfect to refer to habitual situations is widely used in daily speech. In contrast to L2 learners, immigrants do not benefit from instruction. They are also in intense contact with English, which conflates both imperfective and perfective meanings with the preterite. Moreover, the L1 input they receive is in most cases also “attrited” or influenced by English (e.g., Sharwood-Smith & Van Buren, 1991). Therefore, although I expect similar patterns of difficulties between both groups
stemming from transfer, it is conceivable that L2 learners may show higher levels of accuracy than immigrants in characterizing contexts.

Based on the above considerations, I formulate the following three specific hypotheses:

1) The immigrants and L2 learners will use the preterite in heterogeneous situations where it should be used. Yet, they will also overextend it to homogeneous situations (characterizing events) due to neutralization of the selectional properties of the Spanish preterite:

   (86) #De chico, Juan usualmente comió cereal por las mañanas. [+homogeneous] as a child, John usually ate-PRET cereal for the mornings “John often ate cereal in the mornings as a child.”

2) The immigrants and L2 learners will also show selectional errors with the imperfect given the overextension of the preterite to contexts where the imperfect should be used.

3) If aspectual difficulties L2 learners have are also constrained by L1 transfer, among other factors, then I expect the advanced L2 learners and immigrants to show similar patterns of difficulties.

In summary, if English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants who immigrated to the L2 context with fully developed grammars show similar patterns of errors, aspectual difficulties should not be linked solely to some form of inherent impairment (maturational constraints or development of morphosyntactic features). This is because adult L1 attrition cannot be explained in terms of lack of instantiation of functional features or maturational constraints. Instead, I would like to propose that the difficulties L2 learners have with tense and aspect can also be explained in terms of transfer of the neutral semantic properties of the English simple past into the L2.
4.3 Methodology

In order to test the hypotheses outlined above, a study was conducted, as outlined in the following sections.

4.3.1 Participants

Sixty (n=60) Spanish-English bilinguals residing in Canada and the US participated in the study, including long-term immigrants (n=20), advanced L2 learners (n=20) and Spanish native speakers (control group) (n=20). All participants completed a consent form before the completion of the tasks. Participants also filled out a language history questionnaire (see Appendices A and B) to determine age of onset of L2 acquisition, length of residence in the L2, languages used at work and home, etc.

Ten Spanish monolingual and ten bilingual speakers (n=20) formed the control group. All participants from the control group were Caribbean Spanish speakers from Cuba (n=15), Cartagena de India, Colombia (n=3) and Venezuela (n=2). The mean length of residence in the L2 context was one year and four months (see Appendix C for a summary of all the participants’ linguistic profiles).

The immigrant group consisted of 20 Caribbean speakers who had resided in the US and Canada for more than 20 years. Seventeen (n=17) of the participants resided in Union City, New Jersey, located directly across from New York City. This city was targeted because it is home to a large Latino community. Latinos comprise 82.32% of the city’s population, and constitute the second largest Cuban community in the United States after Miami (US census data, 2000). Moreover, many members of the Latino community in Union City share important

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11 Bilingual speakers were included in the control group due to practicality reasons.
similarities regarding both the age at which they immigrated, and the length of time they have resided in the US.

The selection criteria included (1) dialectal region (Caribbean Spanish); (2) age at onset of L2 acquisition (14 years old or older) and (3) length of residence in the L2 context (10 years or longer). Participants were originally from Cuba (n=13), the Dominican Republic (n=6) and Venezuela (n=1). Although there are no studies to my knowledge examine dialectal differences in the use of preterite versus imperfect distinctions in Latin-American Spanish, I consider it important to control for dialectal differences to avoid any possible confounding factor. Age at onset of L2 acquisition (14+) was controlled for in order to have only adult L2 learners of English, who immigrated to the L2 context with a fully developed L1 grammar. Most long-time immigrants were native speakers who immigrated to the US or Canada during early adulthood and had extensive formal schooling in English and were thus proficient in the L2. The mean age at onset of L2 acquisition was 16 years and 5 months. Ten years of residence in the L2 context was also a criterion because it is sufficient time for attrition to emerge (e.g., Gürel, 2004).

Advanced proficiency in English was assumed based on the socio-linguistic profile of the participants (e.g., education in English-speaking schools, employment where English was a requirement), and their own assessment of their English skills. The majority of them had acquired English (L2) during early adulthood (14-19 years old), had received formal schooling in English, and had lived in Canada or the US for more than 20 years. During the interview process, participants also demonstrated their linguistic competence in English and indicated that they felt equally comfortable in both English and Spanish. In addition, participants worked in environments where good proficiency in English was a requirement: the group included
teachers, students, lawyers, and health/social services employees, among others. The normal procedure of administering a standardized proficiency test in English was not followed due to overall task time.

The advanced L2 learner group consisted of 20 native English speakers enrolled in advanced Spanish courses at the University of Toronto. Participants had been in contact with the Caribbean dialect of Spanish through Spanish instructors from the Caribbean at the University of Toronto. As discussed earlier, although there are not dialectal differences in the use of the preterite and imperfect distinctions in Latin American Spanish, it was preferred to have L2 speakers that were familiar with the same Spanish dialect as the immigrant and control groups (Caribbean Spanish).

Two judges independently assessed the L2 speakers’ proficiency in Spanish on the basis of the learners’ oral narratives (e.g., Bongaerts, 1999; White & Genesee, 1996). As discussed above, a standardized proficiency test was not followed due to overall task time. The assessment was done by intermixing narratives from long-time immigrants and control participants (n=5) with those of the L2 learners. Judges were informed about this beforehand so they would reserve upper scores for the most proficient (i.e. native) speakers. The judges were native speakers of Spanish who had explicit knowledge of Spanish grammar but no linguistic training. They were instructed to listen carefully to both narrations and then to rate the speakers’ ability in Spanish based on their syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and overall grammar (see Appendix D for methods and raters’ instructions). Each speaker was assessed based on the following scale:
The obtained mean for the overall grammar rating condition among L2 learners was 3.2. There was no significant variation between individuals’ mean scores for the overall grammar condition ($p = .069$). The obtained mean for the overall grammar rating condition among long-time immigrants and control participants was 5. None of the native Spanish speakers received a score other than 5.

In the next sections, I present the structures under analysis and the tasks employed followed by a discussion of the results. As mentioned earlier, the goal of these tasks were to examine the interpretation and production of preterite versus imperfect aspectual representations in Spanish among English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants. Specifically, I evaluated (1) whether participants overextended the preterite to characterizing situations (homogeneous events) where the imperfect should be used; (2) whether participants overextended the imperfect to episodic situations (heterogeneous events), where the preterite should be used; and (3) whether both L2 learners and immigrants showed comparable patterns of difficulties.

### 4.3.2 Structures under Analysis

As discussed in the previous section and in Chapter 2, Spanish and English differ in the semantic patterns of their past-tense morphemes. In Spanish, past-tense morphemes are

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<th>intermediate</th>
<th>advanced</th>
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aspectually sensitive to the types of eventuality descriptions: the preterite selects heterogeneous eventualities and the imperfect selects homogeneous eventualities. In contrast, the English preterite is neutral, lacking selectional restrictions (De Swart, 1998).

To evaluate participants’ interpretation and use of these selectional properties in Spanish, I tested preterite versus imperfect distinctions in characterizing and episodic situations with eventive and stative predicates. Characterizing situations refer to habitual or continuous states or events while episodic situations usually refer to one-time, bounded events in the past (e.g., Carlson & Pelletier, 1995). The testing included four conditions: (1) eventive predicates in characterizing situations; (2) eventive predicates in episodic situations; (3) stative predicates in characterizing situations; and (4) stative predicates in episodic situations. Table 4.1 summarizes these conditions:
Table 4.1. Conditions used to test Preterite versus Imperfect distinctions in Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eventive predicates</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterizing interpretation</td>
<td>Juan siempre jugaba béisbol con sus amigos.</td>
<td>“John often played-IMP baseball with his friends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Juan siempre jugó béisbol con sus amigos.</td>
<td>“John often played-PRET baseball with his friends.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic interpretation</td>
<td>Juan construyó su casa en un año.</td>
<td>“John built-PRET his house in a year.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Juan construyó su casa en un año.</td>
<td>“John built-PRET his house in a year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stative predicates</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterizing interpretation</td>
<td>María parecía molesta esta mañana.</td>
<td>“Mary seemed-IMP upset this morning.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>María pareció molesta esta mañana.</td>
<td>“Mary seemed-PRET upset this morning.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic interpretation</td>
<td>María disfrutó muchísimo la cena con Juan.</td>
<td>“Mary enjoyed-PRET the dinner with John very much.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>María disfrutaba muchísimo la cena con Juan.</td>
<td>“Mary enjoyed-PRET the dinner with John very much.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As represented in Table 4.1, characterizing interpretations in Spanish are realized by the imperfect and the use of the preterite in these contexts is not preferred. On the other hand, episodic situations in Spanish are realized by the preterite and the use of the imperfect to denote a single event is odd. In English, in contrast, both characterizing and episodic interpretations are realized with the preterite (e.g., John played\textsubscript{PRET} the guitar (as a child/yesterday)).
There were a total of twenty test sentences (5 test sentences x 4 conditions) counterbalanced across participants plus twenty distracters. Distracters included use of the indicative mood in contexts where the subjunctive is required (e.g., \textit{#Te aconsejo que no manejas} \textit{INDICATIVE} \textit{tan rápido}, “I advise you not to drive too fast”); no subject-verb inversion in interrogative phrases (\textit{#¡A quién Joel conoció en Londres?}, “Whom did Joel meet in London?”) and ungrammatical noun-noun formation (e.g., \textit{#Quiero comprar una ninja tortuga}, “I want to buy a ninja turtle”) (for the complete stimuli set, see Appendix E):

4.3.3 Tasks

Data elicitation took place by means of a (i) Truth-Value Judgment Task (TVJT) (e.g., Crain & Thornton, 1998); (ii) an Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) (e.g., McDaniel, Mckee & Smith-Cairns, 1996; Dekydtspotter, Sprouse & Anderson, 1997); and (iii) an Elicited Production Task (EP) (e.g., Montrul, 2002). The TVJT and the AJT were interpretation tasks designed to examine the participants’ comprehension of preterite versus imperfect aspektual differences in Spanish. The EP was a semi-spontaneous oral production task designed to directly assess the linguistic performance of the participants without making inferences from ‘yes’ or ‘no’ responses or acceptability data. In what follows, I discuss the specific goals of each of these tasks, their particular characteristics, and the procedure followed in their implementation.

4.3.3.1 Truth Value Judgment Task: Preterite versus Imperfect Distinctions

The goal of the TVJT was to examine whether L2 learners and long-term immigrants had knowledge of the aspektual interpretations of past-tense morphemes in Spanish. Specifically, it evaluated whether participants would judge the preterite or the imperfect forms as ‘true’ within
semantic contexts that require the other form. This task is a common psycholinguistic method of assessing participants’ judgment (interpretation) of a first or second language (e.g., Bruhn de Garavito, 1995; Crain & Thornton, 1998; Dekydtspotter, Sprouse & Anderson 1997; Montrul & Slabakova, 2003). The task tests the range of possible meanings that speakers can and cannot assign. An advantage of this elicitation tool is that it is particularly simple. The participant is presented with a short passage contextualizing test sentences followed by the construction in question, and is required only to make a categorical ‘yes’ or ‘no’ judgment as to whether the construction is true to the preceding scenario. All sentences were counterbalanced across participants:

(89) This morning María attended a lecture by Prof. Ramírez. She said the lecture was great and that she really loved it.

   a. A María le encantó la conferencia del profesor Ramírez. Yes No
      “Mary loved-PRET this morning’s lecture.”

   b. #A María le encantaba la conferencia del profesor Ramírez. Yes No
      “Mary loved-PRET this morning’s lecture.”

In (89), the preceding scenario supports an episodic situation in the past where the preterite should be used. Therefore, a positive response in (89a) demonstrates that the sentence was true to the preceding scenario A negative response in (89b) demonstrates that the sentence was not true to the preceding scenario.  

The preceding scenarios were in English in order to avoid any priming effect on the use of the preterite or the imperfect form. However, the monolingual participants from the control group were given the preceding scenarios in Spanish. In these cases an effort was made to ensure that the Spanish preceding scenarios avoided priming the specific answers (see

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12 In this task a binary response could be a limitation as participants are forced to make a categorical decision.
Appendix F for stimuli set in Spanish). A native English speaker and a native Spanish speaker made the corresponding recordings.

In contrast with previous research, in this study the TVJT was administered aurally. The task was presented using the Praat program (Boersma, 2001). The program was configured so that there was a yellow box in each corner of the computer screen. The boxes in the left and right corners were labelled ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ respectively. After listening to each test sentence preceded by its contextualizing scenario, participants were instructed to click ‘Yes’ if they believed the sentence to be true, ‘No’ if false (see Appendix G for sample instruction). A true (yes) response meant that the sentence was consistent with the story and grammatically fine. A false (no) answer meant that the sentence was not consistent with the story or that it was odd. Each response was assigned a numerical value: a ‘Yes’ response was assigned a value of 1 and a ‘No’ response was assigned a value of 0 for statistical analysis. Once a selection was made, the next audio file played automatically. The order in which the audio files were played was randomized. There were no time constraints, but in the briefing preceding testing participants were encouraged to respond based on their first impression. At the end of the testing session, participants’ responses to each individual stimulus were written into a text file and coded for statistical analysis.

4.3.3.2 Acceptability Judgment Task: Preterite versus Imperfect Distinctions

To complement the results from the TVJT and possible limitations of this task, an AJT was also conducted. The goal of this task was to examine whether L2 learners and Spanish immigrants would accept the use of the preterite or the imperfect in aspectual contexts where the opposite form was preferred. This task complements the limitations of TVJT in that it does
not require a categorical measure. Instead, participants are required to judge the acceptability of a construction on a five-point scale (e.g., odd, slightly odd, I don’t know, fine or completely fine). Moreover, unlike spontaneous or elicited production methods, this task allows the researcher to assess the speakers’ judgments on specific grammatical structures that are difficult to elicit with oral production tasks (e.g., Sorace, 1996; White & Genesee, 1996).

The test was a paper-and-pencil task. It comprised forty (n=40) test sentences in Spanish preceded by a scenario in English. As in the TVJT, the sentences were counterbalanced across participants and the preceding scenarios were given in English in order to avoid any priming effect. There was an instruction page (see Appendix G) explaining what to do at the beginning of the task, and a training exercise. Participants were instructed to (1) read the given context carefully, (2) read the test sentence in Spanish, and (3) indicate the level of acceptability of the sentence on a scale from –2 to 2, as shown below:

(90) As a child, Francisquito always liked to play sports with his friends after school. He liked to play baseball and was very good at football.

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) 0 (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)

b. De niño, Francisquito siempre jugó con sus amigos.
   “As a child, Francisquito always played-PRET with his friends.”

In (90), the preceding scenario supports a characterizing situation in the past and therefore the imperfect tense (jugaba) should be used, as in (90a). The use of the preterite, on the other hand, is considered odd (90b) since the preceding scenario does not support an episodic interpretation. Participants were asked not to change their answers once they had made their
choice. If the participants found the test sentence “odd” or “slightly odd”, they were asked to indicate why they thought so. This was done so that their answers could be interpreted more accurately. If the participant judged a test sentence as odd, but provided a rationale not relevant to aspect (e.g., adverb type, adverb placement, choice of lexical items), the answer was disregarded. For instance, some Spanish speakers may prefer to use the adverb *normalmente* rather than *usualmente*, both meaning ‘often’ in English.

4.3.3.3  *Elicited Production Task: Preterite versus Imperfect Distinctions*

An EP is a controlled oral production method in which participants are instructed to narrate a specific story or series of events (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). In contrast to the AJT or TVJT, this method has the advantage that the researcher can elicit a series of grammatical structures without the participant relying too heavily on his or her metalinguistic knowledge (e.g., Liskin-Gasparro, 2000).

The specific goal of this task was to evaluate the production of preterite and imperfect forms by English-speaking L2 learners and Spanish immigrants. I predicted that participants would overextend the preterite to characterizing situations where the imperfect should be used due to the transfer of the [+neutral] value of the English preterite. I did not expect participants to have difficulties with the use of the imperfect.

The task required participants to retell the fictional story *Little Red Riding Hood* in the past tense. The participants were provided with wordless images from the story (see Appendix H for text of the story) and asked explicitly to narrate the events using the past tense. The initial question posed to the participants to start narrating the story was “Tell me what happened in the story”. In the case that the participants did not know or remember a specific
word in Spanish (e.g., Little Red Riding Hood or the Woodsman), the Spanish equivalent was provided. There was no time constraint for this activity. Narratives were recorded with an RCA digital voice recorder and later transcribed for statistical analysis.

A total of 60 narratives were transcribed. A monolingual native Spanish speaker from Cuba did the transcriptions. Each narrative had a recording time of approximately three to six minutes. The control group’s narratives ranged from 168 to 587 words (mean length 285). The narratives from the L2 learner group ranged from 101 to 405 words (mean length 224) and those for the immigrant group ranged from 188 to 595 words (mean length of 310). To examine whether participants behaved differently in the length of their narrations, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted with the total number of words produced as within subjects factor and group as the between subjects factors. This measurement served as an indicator of the participants’ oral proficiency skills.\(^{13}\) Results showed significant differences per group, \((F(2, 57) = 4.42, p = <.016)\). A Scheffé post-hoc test measuring differences pairwise showed significant differences only between the L2 learners and the immigrants \((p = .020)\). L2 learners had more problems with lexical retrieval than immigrants, which may have slowed down their production. However, L2 learners were not significantly different from control participants in the length of narratives produced \((p = .132)\). There were also no significant differences between immigrants and controls \((p = .702)\).

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\(^{13}\) Although this analysis is helpful in order to have a general idea of the oral skills of the participants, a total word count has the limitation that speakers who repeat themselves (L2 learners) would be given overly generous estimates of their proficiency.
The story was divided into six different frames according to the event(s) depicted in the images. For instance, Frame 1 was the little girl talking to her mother before leaving home, and Frame 2 included the girl walking in the woods and picking up flowers. Each frame included a minimum of three possible aspectual targets to be used according to the context. For example, in Frame 2 there were approximately eleven possible aspectual targets in the imperfect and the preterite that described the event of *Little Red Riding Hood* walking in the forest, picking up flowers and meeting the Wolf. These aspectual targets describing the specific frames were determined by following a sample of 6 narratives produced by monolingual speakers from the control group. A template was then created that served as an aspectual scheme (see Appendix I). The aspectual scheme was useful to establish the target aspectual use (preterite or imperfect). It was reviewed by two non-linguist native speakers of Spanish in terms of the most likely corresponding use of the preterite or imperfect according to the situation depicted by the image. All verbs used by each of the participants were selected and classified according to the following criteria: (1) predicate type (accomplishment, achievement, states, and activities); (2) situation type (characterizing or episodic); (3) expected aspectual target; and (4) actual aspectual target. The aim of this analysis was to examine whether L2 learners and immigrants demonstrated differences relative to each other and the control group in the production of preterite forms in episodic contexts and of imperfect forms in characterizing situations. The total number of preterite and imperfect forms used in episodic and characterizing situations respectively over the expected aspectual target was calculated individually and then pooled by group. In what follows, I discussed the results of these tasks.
4.4 Results

4.4.1 Truth Value Judgment Task

The objective of this task was to examine the comprehension of the aspectual interpretation of past-tense morphemes in Spanish. Participants had to decide whether the sentences provided were true or false within the context in which they appeared. For instance, true conditions included sentences in the preterite that were preceded by an episodic context, or sentences in the imperfect that were preceded by a characterizing context. In these conditions, a true judgment was expected since these are the contexts where the preterite and the imperfect are used. On the other hand, false conditions included sentences in the preterite or in the imperfect that were preceded by a characterizing or episodic context respectively. A false judgment was expected in these conditions, since these forms are not normally used in these situations.

Based on the expectation of transfer of the English semantic values, I predicted a neutralization of the selectional properties of the Spanish preterite (±HOM). Therefore, I expected L2 learners and immigrants to overextend the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect is preferred (e.g., #De niño, Juan siempre jugó\textsuperscript{PRET} con sus amigos, “As a child, John always played\textsuperscript{PRET} with his friends”). I did not expect participants to overextend the imperfect to episodic contexts where the preterite should be used (e.g., #Los niños sentían\textsuperscript{IMP} miedo durante el temblor de esta mañana “The children were scared\textsuperscript{IMP} during this morning’s earthquake”). In addition, if the difficulties L2 learners and immigrants face stem from transfer effects from English, I would expect both groups to show comparable patterns of difficulties.
Results of the interpretation of false conditions showed lower levels of accuracy with both the immigrants and the L2 learners with respect to the control group. Test participants overextended the preterite to characterizing situations (homogeneous events) in which the imperfect should be used, as expected in hypothesis (1). The immigrants had more difficulty than the L2 learners with eventive characterizing contexts, while both groups behaved similarly with stative characterizing situations. As predicted in hypothesis (2), participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect to episodic situations (heterogeneous events) in which the preterite should be used. In these contexts, L2 learners had more difficulty than immigrants with eventive verbs. Eventive episodic situations in which the preterite was required due to aspectual coercion were particularly challenging for L2 learners.

Results for the average score per false conditions were submitted to an analysis of variance (ANOVA) with repeated measures, with predicate type (eventive, stative) and situation type (characterizing, episodic) as within-subjects factors and group (immigrants, L2 learners and control) as the between-subjects factors. Overall results showed significant differences for group ($F(2, 57) = 22.592, p < .000$). In order to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means, a Scheffé post-hoc comparison was conducted.\(^\text{14}\) Results showed significant differences between the two experimental groups and the control group ($p = <.000$). Both the immigrants and the L2 learners were significantly less successful than the control subjects. There were no significant differences between the immigrants and the L2 learners ($p = .455$). The predicate-by-situation type interaction was also significant ($F(3, 57) = 2.93, p = <.035$). The immigrants showed lower levels of accuracy with the preterite in characterizing situations than in episodic situations.

\(^{14}\) A Scheffé post-hoc test is usually employed for evaluating pairwise comparisons. It is a very robust procedure with respect to heterogeneity of variance (e.g., Keppel, 1991).
ones. Stative verbs were overall more challenging for both participant groups than eventive verbs. Figure 4.1 displays these results: 15

Figure 4.1. Truth Value Judgment Task: Mean scores for Preterite and Imperfect per group by predicate and situation type for false conditions.

As Figure 4.1 shows, L2 learners showed higher levels of accuracy than immigrants in all conditions, except in eventive episodic contexts. These differences were particularly relevant only with the overextension of the preterite to characterizing situations with eventive verbs (e.g., #Mis padres usualmente esquiaron PRET en el invierno, “My parents often skied PRET during the winter”).

As discussed in section 4.2, a plausible explanation for the advantage of the L2 learners in this condition may be instruction (e.g., Spada, Lightbown & White, 2005). The use of the imperfect receives special attention in instructional settings and it is possible that this pedagogical effect could have mitigated the role of transfer among L2 learners in this condition. However, this is only a speculative explanation for this outcome.

15 In the analysis of false conditions, participants’ ‘false’ responses were assigned a value of 0, and participants’ ‘true’ responses were assigned a value of 1.
Another factor that could have helped L2 learners in this condition is the use of frequency adverbials (e.g., “usually”, “always”). These frequency adverbs may have highlighted the aspectual meaning of the phrase, helping L2 learners to activate the right tense and aspect morphology (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Lubbers-Quesada, 2006; Sagarra, in press).

Regarding the overextension of the preterite to characterizing situations with stative verbs, both immigrants and L2 learners had similar difficulties with stative verbs that change to an eventive meaning in the preterite (e.g., tener “to have”, saber “to know/to find out”, ser “to be”), as shown below:

(91) #El maestro de geografía a veces tuvo la cara sucia.
the teacher of geography normally had-PRET the face dirty
“The geography teacher’s face was usually dirty.”

Six of ten immigrants overextended the preterite in (91), compared to five of ten L2 learners. Although the use of the preterite in (91) is not ungrammatical in Spanish, within the context in which it was provided, it referred to the characterizing fact that the teacher often had a dirty face. Thus, the imperfect should have been used. However, the participants overextended the preterite to this sentence, which provided an episodic, one-time event interpretation (e.g., “The geography teacher’s face was dirty”). These results confirm previous research that shows simplification and loss of the preterite with this type of stative verbs among long-time immigrants undergoing language loss (e.g., Silva-Corvalán, 1994).

To examine whether participants showed similar patterns of difficulties in these conditions, an individual difference analysis was conducted. To evaluate individual results, speakers with a proportion per condition ranging from 0 to 0.3 were considered as ‘false speakers’. Speakers with a proportion ranging from 0.4 to 0.5 were considered as ‘unsure
speakers’ and speakers with a proportion ranging from 0.6 to 1 were considered as ‘true speakers’. Table 4.2 presents the results of this analysis:

Table 4.2: Truth Value Judgment Task, False conditions: Results per group for characterizing situations in the Preterite with eventive and stative predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Characterizing</th>
<th>Stative Characterizing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preterite*</td>
<td>Preterite*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>25% (5/20)</td>
<td>20% (4/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>40% (8/20)</td>
<td>35% (7/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
<td>15% (3/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results showed that L2 learners and immigrants did not show similar patterns of difficulties in eventive characterizing contexts with preterite. Eleven of the twenty L2 learners considered this condition to be false versus five of the twenty immigrants. As discussed earlier, there is a possibility that the advantage of L2 learners in this particular condition could be related to instructional treatments but this is cannot be confirmed. On the other hand, in stative characterizing conditions in the preterite, both groups showed similar results. Ten of the twenty L2 learners considered this condition to be false versus only seven of the twenty immigrants. The L2 learners were slightly more unsure than the immigrants, which may be related to the fact that these were the weakest learners.

As mentioned earlier, participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect in episodic situations with eventive and stative predicates where the preterite was preferred, as predicted. As with the overextension of the preterite to characterizing conditions, participants were overall less successful with stative verbs than with eventive ones, as shown below:
Example (92) was provided within a preceding scenario that supported a completed, episodic interpretation in the past: an earthquake happened and the children got scared. In such a context, the preterite (*sintieron*) should have been used to refer to the fact that the children got scared when the earthquake happened. However, six of ten immigrants and six of ten L2 learners overextended the imperfect in this context.

A possible explanation for these results is the fact that the stative verbs used in this condition (e.g., *encantar* (‘to love’), *sentir* (‘to feel), *encantar* (‘to love/to like’), are normally associated with the use of the imperfect in Spanish. These results parallel with previous findings in early aspect development indicating an Aspect First effect; that is, a canonical distribution between past-tense morphology and lexical class (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Shirai & Andersen, 1995). Shirai & Andersen (1995) argue that the emergence of past-tense forms is guided by the inherent lexical aspect of the verb (p. 133). Learners will first use the preterite with achievement and accomplishment predicates (telic verbs) and the imperfect with states and activities (atelic predicates). These results are in line with this canonical association. Although this pattern of distribution has been argued to be characteristic mostly of first-stage language development, and thus no definite conclusion can be drawn from these results, research has also found similar patterns among intermediate L2 learners (e.g., Salaberry, 2002).

These results are also consistent with Cowper’s (2005) prediction that perfective/imperfective distinctions in English are restricted to eventive clauses. According to the author, aspectual differences between English and Spanish lie on the fact that preterite and imperfect tenses in Spanish instantiate the feature Entirety, dependent of the feature Precedence,
which allows each of them to have specific aspectual interpretations as to the completeness of a past event. The preterite denotes a completed event, while the imperfect does not. In contrast, English instantiates the feature Interval, dependent on the feature Event, which triggers the default interpretation that the event took place before the speech act. In Spanish, there is no such feature and thus the imperfect can be interpreted as a completed event but also with the possibility of the situation continuing into the present. Within this view, Cowper argues that perfective/imperfective distinction in English is restricted to eventive clauses. If L2 learners and immigrants are transferring English values (L1/L2), it would be predictable for these bilinguals to use the imperfect with stative verbs, since it is the less semantically marked form of the two past tenses, and the imperfect is best associated in English with the past progressive.

Episodic situations in the imperfect with eventive verbs also proved difficult for both types of bilingual groups, but especially for L2 learners in coercion cases. This was the only condition where the immigrants showed higher levels of accuracy than the L2 learners. L2 learners were less successful than the immigrants especially in cases of aspectual coercion where the preterite was required, since the continuous interpretation was already introduced by a ‘for’ or ‘in’ duration adverbial, as represented below:

\[(93)\quad \#Ayer, \textit{Lisa cantaba} por dos horas en el bar.\]
\[\text{yesterday, Lisa sang-IMP for two hours in the bar.}\]
\[\text{“Yesterday Lisa sang for two hours in the bar.”}\]

In (93), the continuous interpretation of the predicate is expressed by the duration adverbial \textit{por dos horas}, and the preterite should have been used since the adverbial already coerces the episodic interpretation into a continuous one. However, seven of ten L2 learners accepted the imperfect versus four of ten immigrants. Participants’ difficulties with these coercion contexts may stem from performance factors. The introduction of asaspectual shifts by implicit aspe...
operators is more computationally costly to process than semantically transparent sentences (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). Montrul & Slabakova (2002) found that intermediate L2 learners do not recognize aspectual shifts introduced by pragmatic devices and that advanced learners fail to recognize achievement predicates coerced into a habitual reading by an adverbial.

To examine whether participants showed similar patterns of difficulties in episodic situations in the imperfect, an individual difference analysis was conducted. Individual results showed similar patterns of difficulties between both bilingual groups in this condition. Table 4.3 presents these results:

Table 4.3: Truth Value Judgment Task. False conditions: Results per group for episodic situations in the Imperfect with eventive and stative predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Episodic Imperfect*</th>
<th>Stative Episodic Imperfect*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>30%  (6/20)</td>
<td>20%  (4/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>20%  (4/20)</td>
<td>5%   (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0%   (0/20)</td>
<td>5%   (1/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.3 shows, six of the twenty L2 learners considered the use of the imperfect in eventive episodic contexts as ‘true’ versus four of the twenty immigrants. Similarly, in eventive episodic conditions with stative verbs, the L2 learners and immigrant groups behaved similarly. Six of the twenty L2 learners considered the imperfect as true versus ten of the twenty immigrants. These results suggest similar patterns of responses among participants, as predicted in hypothesis (3).
The TVJT also examined the knowledge of preterite versus imperfect distinctions with true sentences. Results showed high levels of accuracy with both participants groups with characterizing and episodic situations in the imperfect and the preterite respectively. The average score per true conditions were submitted to an ANOVA with repeated measures, with predicate type and situation type as within-subjects factor and group as the between-subjects factor. Results revealed no significant main effects for group \( F(2, 57) = .071, p = .932 \). L2 learners and immigrants did not differ significantly from the control group, confirming hypothesis (1) and (2). Recall that hypothesis (1) predicted overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts but target use in episodic contexts where it is preferred (true conditions). On the other hand, hypothesis (2) predicted the imperfect to remain aspectually sensitive [+HOM], and thus to be used in characterizing contexts. The predicate-by-situation-type interaction was not significant either \( F(3, 57) = .301, p = .824 \). Figure 4.2 displays these results:

Figure 4.2. Truth Value Task: Mean scores for Preterite and Imperfect per group per predicate and situation type for true conditions
As Figure 4.2 shows, participants demonstrated high levels of accuracy in all conditions. These results may stem from the fact that the TVJT for aspect is predicted to have an acceptance bias. In this analysis, all conditions were true to the context and grammatically correct. In terms of individual results, participants showed similar patterns while accepting these true conditions, as predicted in hypothesis (3). Table 4.4 and 4.5 present these results:

Table 4.4: Truth Value Judgment Task. True conditions: Results per group for characterizing situations in the Imperfect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Characterizing Imperfect</th>
<th>Stative Characterizing Imperfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>95% (19/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>80% (16/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>80% (16/20)</td>
<td>10% (2/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Truth Value Judgment Task. True conditions: Results per group for episodic situations in the Preterite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Episodic Preterite</th>
<th>Stative Episodic Preterite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>90% (18/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>90% (18/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>80% (16/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Tables 4.4 and 4.5 show, 80% or more of the L2 learners and immigrants considered these conditions to be true.

To summarize, results from the TVJT showed overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect should be used, confirming hypothesis (1). L2 learners and immigrants appear to associate the Spanish preterite with the English simple past,
leading to a neutralization of the selectional properties of the preterite tense in Spanish. In contrast to what was predicted in hypothesis (2), L2 learners and immigrants also overextended the imperfect to episodic situations where the preterite should be used with stative and eventive verbs. I have suggested that the use of the imperfect with stative verbs in contexts where the preterite was preferred can be interpreted as a sort of Aspect First effect, where aspect is fixed for a lexical class (association of the imperfect with atelic verbs). Regarding eventive verbs, participants showed difficulty mostly with coercion cases. I argued that these results may stem from performance factors related to the complexity of coercing aspectual shifts by implicit aspectual operators, as shown by previous research (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002).

An individual analysis showed similar patterns of difficulties, except for the eventive characterizing condition in the preterite where the L2 learners outperformed the immigrants. It is possible that the advantage of L2 learners in this condition might stem from metalinguistic effects but this is only a speculative suggestion. This study did not test for instructional effects, and therefore no definite conclusions in this regard can be made.

4.4.2 Acceptability Judgment Task

As with the TVJT, the goal of this test was to evaluate L2 learners’ and immigrants’ interpretation of preterite and imperfect distinctions in characterizing and episodic situations, where the imperfect and the preterite are preferred respectively. I also examined whether both bilingual groups showed comparable patterns of difficulties.

Results for the interpretation of ungrammatical conditions showed overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts by L2 learners and immigrants, as predicted by hypothesis (1). Moreover, some participants also showed difficulties while accepting the imperfect in
episodic contexts where the preterite was preferred, as predicted in hypothesis (2). Immigrants showed greater difficulty than L2 learners in all conditions but specifically with the overextension of the preterite to eventive characterizing contexts. As with the AJT, L2 learners showed more difficulties with stative verbs than with eventive ones.

The average scores per ungrammatical conditions were submitted to an ANOVA analysis with repeated measures, with predicate type (eventive and stative) and situation type (characterizing and episodic) as within-subjects factor and group (immigrants, L2 learners and control) as the between-subjects factor. Results revealed highly significant differences for group ($F(2, 57) = 48.80, p = <.001$). In order to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means, a Scheffé post-hoc test was conducted. Results showed highly significant differences between the control group and the immigrant group ($p = <.001$) and between the control and L2 learner groups ($p = <.001$). In contrast to what was expected, the L2 learners and the immigrants also showed significant differences ($p = <.001$). Immigrants showed lower levels of accuracy than L2 learners in all conditions but especially in characterizing situations in the preterite. The predicate-by-situation-type interaction was also significant ($F(3, 57) = 6.013, p = <.001$). This significant interaction may stem from the low levels of accuracy shown by the immigrants in characterizing contexts. Figure 4.3 presents these results:
As characterizing conditions were concerned, both bilingual groups overextended the preterite to characterizing situations where the imperfect should have been used confirming hypothesis (1). However, as with the TVJT, L2 learners showed higher levels of accuracy than immigrants especially with eventive characterizing situations in the preterite, as shown below:

(94)  #De chico, Juan usualmente comió cereal por las mañanas.
of child, John usually ate-PRET cereal in the mornings.  “As a child, John often ate cereal in the mornings.”

In (94) the imperfect should have been used since the preceding context supported a homogeneous (characterizing) eventuality in the past (*John used to eat cereal in the mornings*). However, seven of ten immigrants accepted the preterite in this sentence versus two of ten L2 learners.

As with the TVJT, in stative characterizing situations participants demonstrated difficulties with stative verbs that change to an episodic meaning in the preterite (e.g., *parecer* “to seem”, *saber* “to know”), as shown in (95) and (96) below:
In (95), the preceding context supported the characterizing interpretation of ‘John being or seeming upset’. Therefore, the imperfect should have been used. However, eight of ten L2 learners accepted the preterite versus five of ten immigrants. Similarly, the imperfect should have also been used in (96) to provide the supported characterizing interpretation that John’s aunt was very knowledgeable about science-fiction. However, six of ten immigrants accepted the preterite versus only four of ten L2 learners.

To examine whether L2 learners and immigrants showed comparable patterns of difficulties at the individual level in this condition (characterizing contexts in the preterite), an individual difference analysis was conducted. To calculate individual results, I employed the following criteria to classify speakers. Recall that in this task “odd” sentences had been assigned a score on the scale between –2 and –1 and “fine” sentences had been assigned a score between 1 and 2. An “I don’t know” response was assigned a score of 0. In the individual analysis, speakers with proportion per condition ranging from –2 to –0.3 were considered as “rejected speakers”; speakers with a proportion ranging from –0.2 to 0.2 were considered as “unsure speakers”; and speakers with proportion ranging from 0.3 to 2 were considered as “accepted speakers”. Table 4.6 presents these results:
Table 4.6 Acceptability Judgment Task. Ungrammatical conditions: Results per group for characterizing situations in the Preterite with eventive and stative predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Characterizing Preterite*</th>
<th>Stative Characterizing Preterite*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>10% (2/20)</td>
<td>15% (3/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>80% (16/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As 4.6 shows, results are characterized by different patterns of performance at the individual level with eventive characterizing situations. Only two of the twenty L2 learners overextended the preterite to characterizing situations with eventive verbs versus sixteen of the twenty immigrants. In characterizing situations with stative verbs, participants also showed divergent patterns of performance. Only six of the twenty L2 learners accepted the preterite in this condition versus thirteen of the twenty immigrants. Thus, in contrast to what was expected in hypothesis (3), participants did not show comparable patterns with characterizing conditions in the preterite.

As discussed earlier, a possible explanation for the advantage of L2 learners over immigrants in this condition may be found in instructional treatments. In contrast to L2 learners, immigrants do not benefit from instruction and are exposed to an L1 input that is in most cases characterized by L2 influence (see Köpke 2004 for review). Research in L1 attrition argues that natural input is needed as confirming evidence to maintain and develop a first language (e.g., Gürel, 2002; Sharwood-Smith & Van Buren, 1991).
Some of the L2 learners and immigrants also overextended the imperfect to episodic contexts with eventive and stative predicates, but to a much lesser extent than the preterite. Seven of the twenty immigrants overextended both the preterite and the imperfect, which indicates a pattern of full neutralization among these participants. However, only two of the twenty L2 learners showed this pattern of neutralization. The use of the imperfect in episodic contexts was more challenging with stative verbs than with eventive ones, as shown below:

(97)  

    #María disfrutaba muchísimo la cena con Juan.
    María enjoyed-IMP a lot the dinner with John
    “María enjoyed the dinner with John very much.”

In (97) the preterite should have been used to express the episodic meaning supported by the context. However, five of ten L2 learners and four of ten immigrants accepted the imperfect in this context. As discussed earlier, the fact that stative verbs in this condition included verbs that described mental or emotional states in the past (e.g., disfrutar “to enjoy”, encantar “to love”, gustar “to like”, sentir “to feel”) could have influenced the results since these stative verbs are usually associated with the imperfect in Spanish. Moreover, as discussed earlier, these results are in line with previous research on Aspect First effects that shows that aspect is fixed for a given lexical class. Regarding the use of the imperfect with eventive verbs, as with the results of the TVJT, the immigrants showed difficulties mostly with coercion cases (e.g., #Por tres días, el jefe llegaba IMP tarde, “For three days the boss arrived IMP late”). Following Slabakova & Montrul (2002), I have argued that these results are due to performance factors in coercing implicit aspectual shifts.
To examine participants’ patterns of response at the individual level, an individual difference analysis was conducted. Regarding episodic conditions with eventive verbs, participants showed similar patterns of performance. Sixteen of the twenty L2 learners rejected the imperfect versus thirteen of the twenty immigrants. On the other hand, in stative episodic conditions ten of the twenty L2 learners rejected the imperfect versus seven of the twenty immigrants. Table 4.7 provides these results:

Table 4.7: Acceptability Judgment Task, Ungrammatical conditions: Results per group for episodic situations in the Imperfect with eventive and stative predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Episodic Imperfect</th>
<th>Stative Episodic Imperfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>15% (3/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>35% (7/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.7, participants behaved similarly as concerns in their interpretation of the imperfect in episodic contexts. There were some differences between the two groups but they were not very large. As mentioned earlier, seven participants from the immigrant group overextended both the preterite and the imperfect, which suggests a pattern of full neutralization. However, only two of the L2 learners showed this pattern.

Preterite versus imperfect distinctions with grammatical conditions were also tested. Results on the average score per grammatical conditions were submitted to an ANOVA with repeated measures, with predicate type and situation type as within-subject factors and group as the between-subject factor. Results revealed a significant effect per group at the .05 level ($F(2,57) = 5.655, p = .006$). A Scheffé post-hoc test measuring pairwise differences among the
means showed significant differences between the L2 learner and control groups \( (p = <.015) \) and between the L2 learners and the immigrants \( (p = .026) \). Immigrants and controls showed no significant differences \( (p = .974) \). L2 learners showed lower levels of accuracy with stative verbs in contrast to immigrants who did not show difficulty in any of the conditions examined, as I will explain shortly. The predicate-by-situation-type interaction was not significant, \( F(3, 57) = 2.647, p = .068 \). Figure 4.4 below displays these results:

Figure 4.4. Acceptability Judgment Task: Mean scores of judgment for Preterite and Imperfect per group per predicate and situation type for grammatical sentences

L2 learners showed lower levels of accuracy mostly with stative predicates in both episodic and characterizing situations, as shown below:

(98) Los niños sintieron mucho miedo durante el temblor de esta tarde.  
the children felt\-PRET a lot of fear during the earthquake of this afternoon.  
“The children were very scared during this afternoon’s earthquake.”

(99) Juan parecía molesto esta mañana.  
John seemed\-IMP upset this morning  
“John seemed upset this morning.”

In (98), the intended interpretation was an episodic one (‘The children got scared’) and thus the preterite was used. However, five of ten L2 learners rejected the preterite versus only one of ten
immigrants. Since pedagogical practices reinforce the notion that characterizing states in the past with no beginning or end should be expressed in the imperfect, L2 learners probably considered the preterite to be incorrect. In (99), the intended meaning was a characterizing state in the past (John seemed/looked upset) and thus the imperfect was used. However, four of ten L2 learners rejected the imperfect in this case. Immigrants on the other hand accepted it in 100% of cases. L2 learners may have interpreted the sentence as a one time, episodic event due to the temporal adverb \textit{esta mañana} (“this morning”), which limits the situation to a specific time in the past. Thus, they may have considered the use of the preterite more appropriate in this case than the imperfect.

To examine whether participants showed comparable patterns of performance, an individual difference analysis was conducted. Results showed comparable patterns of performance at the individual level, as shown below:

Table 4.8: Acceptability Judgment Task, Grammatical conditions: Results per group for the Imperfect and the Preterite in characterizing and episodic situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eventive Characterizing Imperfect</th>
<th>Stative Characterizing Imperfect</th>
<th>Eventive Episodic Preterite</th>
<th>Stative Episodic Preterite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learners</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>95% (19/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>95% (19/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>95% (19/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.8 shows, the L2 learners and immigrants showed comparable patterns in their judgment of grammatical sentences. Although post-hoc tests showed significant differences between these subjects, both groups accepted grammatical cases 90% of the time.
To summarize, results from the AJT showed an overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts where the preterite should have been used, confirming hypothesis (1). The immigrants showed much lower levels of accuracy with eventive characterizing contexts, where they were outperformed significantly by the L2 learners and controls (Figure 4.3). This overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts suggests an association of the semantic values of the English simple past with the Spanish preterite, as found by previous research (e.g., Salaberry, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994). Some participants also showed lower levels of accuracy with the use of the imperfect in episodic contexts with eventive and stative predicates. This was characteristic of the immigrant group mostly, although the L2 learners also showed low levels of accuracy particularly with stative verbs. I have suggested a parallel between these results and previous research on Aspect First effects arguing for a canonical association between tense and lexical class.

Individual results showed similar patterns of performance between L2 learners and immigrants, except with eventive characterizing situations in the preterite. In this condition, L2 learners showed much higher levels of accuracy than the immigrants (Table 4.6). Thus, hypothesis (3) predicting similar patterns of performance was only partially confirmed. I have claimed that the advantage of L2 learners with eventive characterizing situations may be related to instructional treatments.

4.4.3  Elicited Production Task

The goal of this task was to evaluate the production of preterite versus imperfect distinctions among English speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants. In contrast to the two previous interpretation tasks, this task provides data that is less constrained by
metalinguistic knowledge or language form. Previous research using this elicitation tool has found patterns of neutralization of preterite versus imperfect distinctions among Spanish-English bilinguals and overall simplification of tense and aspect forms (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994).

Based on the assumption of transfer from English, I predicted (hypothesis 1) participants to show patterns of neutralization of the preterite tense in Spanish evidenced by the overextension of the preterite to homogeneous or characterizing contexts where the imperfect should be used (e.g., #La niña siempre visitó\_\text{PRET} a su abuela, “The girl always visited\text{PRET} her Granny”). Moreover, I did not predict participants to overextend the imperfect to heterogeneous contexts where the preterite should be used (hypothesis 2) (e.g., El labrador mataba\_\text{PRET} al lobo, “The Woodsman killed\text{PRET} the Wolf”). Finally, I also examined whether L2 learners and immigrants showed similar patterns in their production of preterite and imperfect forms (hypothesis 3). In what follows, I examine each of these hypotheses.

4.4.3.1 Accuracy with the Preterite in Episodic Situations

In this analysis, I examine hypothesis (2). That is, whether L2 learners and immigrants substituted the preterite with the imperfect in episodic situations in which the preterite should be used (e.g., #El lobo mataba\_\text{IMP} a la Caperucita, “The Wolf killed\text{PRET} Little Red Riding Hood”).

To examine whether participants behaved differently in their production of the preterite tense, the mean rate of target responses for preterite selection in episodic situations was calculated individually and then pooled by group. The production of the imperfect tense in episodic contexts where the preterite was preferred was considered as a substitution
(substitution of preterite with imperfect). In contrast to what was expected, L2 learners showed substitution of the preterite with the imperfect in episodic situations where the preterite should be used (overextension of the imperfect). However, this substitution was limited only to activity and stative verbs. L2 learners showed no difficulty with accomplishment and achievement predicates in the past. On the other hand, the immigrants did not show substitution problems. Instead, they overextended the present tense to episodic contexts where the preterite was preferred, as I will explain shortly.

Results for the production of preterite forms were submitted to a one-way ANOVA analysis with situation type (episodic) as within-subjects factor and group (immigrants, L2 learners and controls) as the between-subjects factor. ANOVA results showed significant main effects for group ($F(2, 57) = 3.49, p = .037$). In order to evaluate pairwise differences among the group means, a Scheffé post-hoc test was conducted. Results showed significant differences only between the immigrants and the control group ($p = .038$). The L2 learners and the control participants showed no significant differences ($p = .313$). Tables 4.9 and 4.10 summarize these results:

Table 4.9: Mean rates of target responses for Preterite, Imperfect and Present tense selection in episodic contexts: stative and activity predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Stative Predicates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Activity Predicates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learner</td>
<td>73% (35/48)</td>
<td>12% (6/48)</td>
<td>15% (7/48)</td>
<td>62% (35/56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>48% (44/91)</td>
<td>0% (0/91)</td>
<td>52% (47/91)</td>
<td>54% (44/81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>94% (42/45)</td>
<td>0% (0/45)</td>
<td>6% (3/45)</td>
<td>82% (42/51)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10: Mean rates of target responses for Preterite, Imperfect and Present tense selection in episodic contexts: accomplishment and achievement predicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Accomplishment Predicates</th>
<th>Achievement Predicates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learner</td>
<td>92% (60/65)</td>
<td>5% (3/65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>72% (65/90)</td>
<td>0% (0/90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>94% (144/153)</td>
<td>0% (0/153)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show L2 learners substituted the preterite with the imperfect mostly with stative and activity verbs. However, in accomplishment and achievement predicates, L2 learners did not show substitution errors:

(i) **Substitution of the Preterite with the Imperfect by the L2 learners**

(100) ...y la abuela **miraba** (IMP x PRET) el lobo en la cama. [participant #12, L2 learner]

   “...and the grandmother looked at the wolf in the bed.”

(101) El lobo **iba** (IMP x PRET) a la casa de la abuela, oh my goodness... cambió identidad como la abuela de la niña... [participant #10 L2 learner]

   “The wolf went to the grandmother’s house, oh my goodness...he changed his identity to look like the child’s grandmother...”

In (100), the participant overextended the imperfect form of the stative verb ‘mirar’ (**miraba,** “saw”) to an eventive episodic context where the preterite (**miró,** “saw”) should have been used. Similarly, in (101), the L2 learner used the imperfect form of the activity verb ‘to go’ (**iba,** “went”) rather than the preterite (**fue,** “went”), as is often required in this context. These results are consistent with participants’ interpretation of the imperfect in episodic contexts in the TVJT.
and the AJT. However, in contrast to these previous interpretation tasks, only one L2 speaker showed substitution of the preterite with the imperfect in episodic contexts where the preterite was necessary due to aspectual coercion:

(102) Un día ella caminaba por el bosque y se encontró un lobo, el lobo le #seguía (IMP x PRET) por un rato y luego el lobo se fue. (participant #9 L2 learner).

“One day she was walking in the woods and she ran into a wolf, the wolf followed her for a while and then left.”

In (102), the participant described a continuous event in the past (the Wolf following Little Red Riding Hood) and used the imperfect of the verb ‘to follow’ (seguía), as Spanish grammar textbooks normally prescribe. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, when there is an adverbial phrase expressing continuity in the past, in this case por un rato (“for a while”), the adverb already shifts the meaning of the phrase into a continuous event in the past. Thus, the verb must appear in the preterite.

As discussed earlier, in contrast to the L2 learners the immigrants did not show substitution errors (see Tables 4.9 and 4.10). Instead, they used the present tense rather than the imperfect, as shown below:

(ii) Use of the Present tense instead of the Preterite by the Immigrants

(103) La Caperucita Roja se entretiene (PRES x PRET) porque hay (PRES x IMP) muchas flores en el camino. (participant #1, Immigrant)

“Little Red Riding Hood is distracted because there are a lot of flowers on the pathway.”
Entonces, ella lo descubre (PRES x PRET) y el lobo se come (PRES x PRET) a Caperucita Roja. (participant #5, Immigrant)

“Then, she realizes the wolf is not her grandmother and the Wolf eats Little Red Riding Hood.”

In (103) and (104) the participants narrated the stories in the present tense, even though they were instructed to retell the story using the past tense. The present tense in these contexts is neither ungrammatical nor odd, and its use can be a normal discourse strategy. However, the use of the present tense among immigrants appears to indicate an avoidance strategy due to the extent that immigrants differed from controls. Immigrants were explicitly asked to narrate the story in the past but still showed a high production of present tense forms in contrast to control participants. This suggests a bilingualism effect in their production of past tense forms. The present tense (with a historical or reportive meaning) may have become a “comfort zone” for long-time immigrants in order to avoid the preterite in episodic situations. Avoidance has been documented in the SLA literature in oral production activities, where students avoid previously learned linguistic structure that they find troublesome (e.g., Schachter, 1974). However, to my knowledge, there is no documented evidence of avoidance strategies among long-time Spanish immigrants in intense contact with English. Although the immigrants may have used the present tense (historical or reportive) to avoid past tense forms, this cannot be confirmed by the results. It is possible that the participants (including controls) used the historical present or reportive present in order to make the story more vivid, rather than as an avoidance strategy.
To summarize, results from the production of preterite forms in episodic contexts showed substitution errors (substitution of preterite with the imperfect) only by L2 learners. However, their substitution errors were mostly with activity and stative verbs. These results are in line with previous research on early aspect production that shows that speakers tend to associate the use of the imperfect with atelic predicates (e.g., Shirai & Andersen, 1995). Accomplishment and achievement predicates showed no substitution errors (see Table 4.9). L2 learners seemed to be sensitive to the use of the preterite with accomplishment and achievement verbs but at the same time showed patterns of indeterminacy with stative and activity ones. As with the TVJT and the AJT, stative verbs seem to be more challenging for L2 learners than eventive ones. On the other hand, in contrast to L2 learners, immigrants used the present tense instead of the preterite which appears to be an avoidance strategy. However, this cannot be fully confirmed by the results. In contrast to what was predicted in hypothesis (3), L2 learners and long-term immigrants did not show similar patterns of difficulties in this condition.

4.4.3.2 Accuracy with the Imperfect in Characterizing Situations

Another important question in this task was whether L2 learners and immigrants substituted the imperfect with the preterite in characterizing contexts (homogeneous situations). Based on the expectation of transfer from English, in hypothesis (1) I predicted L2 learners and long-term immigrants to overextend the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect is preferred (e.g., #La niña siempre visitó\text{\textsuperscript{PRET}} a su abuela, “The girl always visited\text{\textsuperscript{PRET}} her Grandmother”) due to neutralization of the selectional values of the preterite in Spanish.
To examine whether participants behaved differently in their production of the imperfect tense, the mean rate of target for imperfect selection in characterizing situations was calculated individually and then pooled by group. The production of the preterite in characterizing situations where the imperfect was preferred was considered as a substitution (substitution of imperfect with the preterite).

As predicted, L2 learners showed substitution of the imperfect with the preterite. However, as with the case of the preterite (Table 4.9), the substitution was limited only to stative and activity verbs. Accomplishment and achievement predicates presented no difficulties for L2 learners. Regarding the immigrants, they did not show substitution of the imperfect with the preterite but instead used the present tense, as with the production of the preterite. The use of the present tense was limited only to stative verbs.

Results on the production of imperfect forms were submitted to a one-way ANOVA analysis with situation type (characterizing) as within-subjects factor and group (immigrants, L2 learners and control) as the between-subjects factor. ANOVA results on the production of the imperfect tense showed significant main effects for group ($F(2, 57) = 3.58, p = <.034$). A Scheffé post-hoc test measuring pairwise comparisons showed significant differences between the L2 learners and the control participants ($p = <.035$), as predicted. However, in contrast to what was expected, the immigrants and the control participants showed no significant differences ($p = .317$). Tables 4.11 and 4.12 show these results:
Table 4.11: Mean rate of target responses for Imperfect, Preterite and Present tense selection in characterizing situations: stative and activity predicates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Stative Predicates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Activity Predicates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learner</td>
<td>73% (121/165)</td>
<td>9% (14/165)</td>
<td>18% (30/165)</td>
<td>75% (36/48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>82% (133/163)</td>
<td>0% (0/163)</td>
<td>18% (30/163)</td>
<td>96% (27/28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>98% (92/94)</td>
<td>0% (0/94)</td>
<td>2% (2/94)</td>
<td>96% (43/45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12: Mean rate of target responses for Imperfect, Preterite and Present tense selection in characterizing contexts: accomplishment and achievement predicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Accomplishment Predicates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Achievement Predicates</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Imperfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Learner</td>
<td>100% (2/2)</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>0% (0/2)</td>
<td>0% (0/0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>0% (0/0)</td>
<td>0% (0/0)</td>
<td>0% (0/0)</td>
<td>100% (1/1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>100% (1/1)</td>
<td>0% (0/1)</td>
<td>0% (0/1)</td>
<td>100% (1/1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Tables 4.11 and 4.12, L2 learners’ difficulties with the imperfect were mostly with stative (73%) and activity verbs (75%), as shown in (105) and (106) below. Accomplishment and achievement predicates did not show difficulties among L2 learners:

(iii) *Substitution of the Imperfect with the Preterite by L2 learners*

(105) ...y la abuela #pareció (PRET x IMP) muy extraña. (participant #4, L2 learner)

“...and the grandmother seemed PRET very strange.”

(106) Había una vez una niña que #vivió (PRET x IMP) con su mamá. (participant #6, L2 learner)

“Once upon a time there was a girl that lived with her mother.”

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In (105), the stative verb ‘to seem’ (parecer) is in the preterite (pareció) rather than in the imperfect (parecía), as is preferred in characterizing situations. Similarly, in (106) the activity verb ‘to live’ (vivir) is in the preterite (vivió) rather than in the imperfect (vivía), as is usually preferred in these contexts.

As the immigrants were concerned, they showed difficulties only with stative verbs. However, as in the production of the preterite, their difficulties were not due to substitution errors (use preterite instead of imperfect) but mostly due to the use of the present instead of the imperfect, as shown below:

(iv) Use of the Present instead of the Imperfect by the immigrants

(107) …la abuelita #está (PRES X IMP) tranquilita leyendo un librito… (participant #1, Immigrant)

“...the grandmother is very quiet reading a little book…”

In (107), the verb ‘to be’ is in the present indicative (está “is”) rather than in the imperfect (estaba “was”), as required in a characterizing situation like this one in the past tense. As shown in Table 4.12, L2 learners and immigrants did not show difficulties with achievement and accomplishment predicates. In these situations the imperfect was occasionally used.

To summarize, results for the production of the imperfect in characterizing contexts showed difficulties mostly with stative predicates with both L2 learners and immigrants (see Table 4.11). In contrast to the immigrants, L2 learners also showed difficulties with activity verbs (75%). However, the difficulties faced by both groups were mostly due to the use of the present tense instead of the imperfect rather than substitution (use of preterite instead of imperfect). As shown in Table 4.11, the total number of present tense uses of stative verbs was comparable between L2 learners and immigrants (18%). However, L2 learners showed
substitution errors with activity verbs, in contrast to immigrants who showed no difficulties with this lexical class. Although the use of the present tense by the immigrants (historical present or reportive present) could be characterized as an avoidance strategy, this cannot be fully confirmed by the results. Participants did not show difficulties with accomplishments and achievements predicates in the imperfect. Patterns of performance in this task were not comparable between the two groups.

In sum, concerning the production of the preterite, only L2 learners showed substitution errors with the imperfect. However, this was limited to stative and activity verbs. Immigrants, on the other hand, used the present tense considerably mostly with stative and activity verbs as well. Accomplishment and achievement predicates showed no substitution errors. As concerns the production of the imperfect, the L2 learners and immigrants had difficulty mostly with stative verbs but these difficulties were not due to substitution errors but rather due to use of the present. L2 learners did show some cases of substitution of the imperfect with the preterite but only with activity verbs.

It is not surprising that participants showed lower levels of accuracy in the production of preterite forms than imperfect ones due to the nature of the story to be retold (*Little Red Riding Hood*). Most of the passages in this story included past events that favored, mostly, (1) the use of preterite with eventive predicates in episodic situations (e.g., the Wolf’s encounter with Little Riding Hood, with the Granny and finally with the Woodsman); and (2) the use of the imperfect in stative characterizing contexts (e.g. physical description of the Granny and the Wolf, where the Granny lived, where her home was, what the Granny was wearing, etc.). Although there might have been some opportunity to make characterizing statements with eventive verbs (e.g., *La Caperucita usualmente visitaba a su abuelita*, “Little Red Riding Hood
often visited her Granny”), they were few. As shown in Tables 4.11 and 4.12, participants (including controls) used only very few instances of the imperfect tense with eventive predicates. However, L2 learners and immigrants did use the imperfect extensively with stative predicates, and were significantly inaccurate in doing so when compared to the control group. Thus, L2 learners and immigrants probably did not have difficulties with the imperfect in eventive predicates because the task did not succeed at eliciting enough instances where the imperfect had to be used. Therefore, difficulties with the use of imperfect forms in eventive characterizing contexts might well exist, but this EP task did not provide the necessary contexts to evaluate this possibility.

Another possible interpretation of these results could be that participants did not use the imperfect enough not because of the nature of the story but rather because the imperfect is usually less likely to occur with telic predicates (accomplishments and achievements), as argued by the Aspect First Hypothesis (e.g., Shirai & Andersen, 1995). As mentioned earlier, research on early aspect production shows a clear pattern of distribution where telic events (e.g., achievements and accomplishments) are prototypically associated with the preterite and atelic events (e.g., states) with the imperfect. Previous research has also found similar patterns of distribution among intermediate English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish (e.g., Salaberry, 2002).

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the interpretation and use of Spanish preterite and imperfect tenses among English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants. Based on the assumption of transfer from English, I expected participants to have difficulties with the
selectional properties of the Spanish preterite. Specifically, I predicted neutralization of the Spanish preterite and consequent overextension to characterizing situations where the imperfect should be used. I did not predict participants to have difficulties with the selectional properties of the imperfect and overextend it to episodic contexts. Additionally, if the difficulties bilinguals have stem from transfer, I expected both participant groups to show comparable patterns of errors. Results from the TVJT revealed an overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect should be used, as expected (hypothesis 1). Both L2 learners and immigrants appeared to associate the Spanish preterite with the English simple past, leading to a transfer of the neutral value of the English preterite ([±HOM]) into Spanish. As predicted in hypothesis (2), participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect in contexts where the preterite should be used. Eventive episodic situations in which the preterite was necessary due to aspectual coercion were particularly challenging for L2 learners. I argued that the difficulties participants have with aspectual coercion might stem from performance factors (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). An individual analysis showed comparable patterns of performance between the L2 learner and the immigrant groups, except in the overextension of the preterite to characterizing situations with eventive verbs. In these situations, L2 learners outperformed long-term immigrants. I claimed that the advantage of L2 learners over immigrants in this condition might be attributed to instructional treatments but this is only speculative since this study did not test the role of instruction.

Results from the AJT also validated hypothesis (1). The L2 learners and immigrants overextended the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect was preferred, mostly with stative verbs (e.g., John pareció pret molesto esta mañana “John seemed pret upset this
morning”). As predicted in hypothesis (2), participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect in episodic contexts where the preterite should have been used. Episodic situations where the preterite was required due to aspectual coercion were challenging, as in the TVJT. Participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect with stative verbs referring to emotional states or feelings (e.g., ‘to feel’, ‘to love’). Hypothesis (3) was partially confirmed. Participants did not show similar patterns of errors with characterizing situations in the preterite. In these conditions, L2 learners showed higher levels of accuracy than immigrants. However, participants did show comparable patterns of performance in episodic contexts with eventive and stative verbs.

The EP task investigated participants’ accuracy in the production of the preterite and the imperfect in episodic and characterizing contexts respectively. Results for the production of the preterite in episodic contexts showed an overextension of the imperfect to episodic situations (e.g., El lobo iba\textsubscript{IMP} a la casa de la abuela, “The Wolf went\textsubscript{IMP} to the grandmother’s house”) among L2 learners, in contrast to what was expected in hypothesis (2). L2 learners substituted the preterite with the imperfect primarily with activity and stative verbs. L2 learners had no difficulty with eventive verbs. On the other hand, immigrants showed no substitution problems but instead appear to have avoided the preterite with the use of the present tense. In contrast to control participants, the immigrants used the present tense across all lexical classes in episodic situations where the preterite was necessary, even though they were instructed explicitly to narrate the story in the past tense (see Tables 4.9 and 4.10).

Regarding the production of the imperfect, results showed overextension of the preterite to characterizing contexts in which the imperfect was preferred among L2 learners, confirming hypothesis (1). Substitution of the imperfect with the preterite was limited to stative and activity
verbs only (see Tables 4.11 and 4.12). On the other hand, as with the production of the preterite, immigrants did not show substitution problems. They instead demonstrated avoidance of the imperfect with the present. Both groups did not experience difficulty with eventive verbs in the imperfect. I have argued that this may result from failure of the task to elicit enough instances where the imperfect was required with eventive predicates. Results from the production task showed no comparable patterns of performance between both bilingual groups. L2 learners showed substitution errors which were limited mostly to activity and stative verbs, while immigrants avoided the past tense with the use of the present tense.

In contrast to previous research (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1991; 1994), this study examined the interpretation and use of Spanish past tenses among participants who acquired the L2 as adults and with a fully developed L1 grammar. My underlying assumption was that, to the extent that L2 learners and adult immigrants show comparable patterns of errors, transfer would best explain the difficulties L2 learners face. Although results from the two interpretation tasks did not show similar patterns of performance between participants in characterizing situations, they did show similar patterns or errors with episodic contexts.

Even though L2 learners and immigrants resorted to different strategies in their oral production, the underlying cause of the variability observed from the control group may stem from transfer effects from English, and the consequent reduction of the range of aspectual selection in Spanish. The use of the present tense among immigrants undergoing L1 attrition in contexts where control participants preferred the past tense indicates that immigrants are interpreting the grammar that they already have differently from native speakers. This is most likely due to the interaction of two divergent linguistic systems and attrition of the L1.
However, this conclusion cannot be fully confirmed by the results given the possibility that immigrants did not resort to an avoidance strategy.

As discussed in this chapter, the selectional properties of the Spanish past tense are morphologically distinguished: the imperfect selects homogeneous events and the preterite selects heterogeneous ones. We have seen that although aspectual interpretations are selected by two different forms, they are still permeable to semantic transfer from English, where there are no selectional restrictions. This leads to a new question: what happens with aspectual properties that are not morphologically distinguished? If L2 learners’ difficulties stem from semantic transfer, as argued, then the absence of morphological cues should not prevent transfer from occurring. Semantic transfer should occur regardless of whether aspectual properties are morphologically distinguishable or not.

To address this issue, in the next chapter I examine the interpretation and use of the Spanish present tense. The selectional properties of the Spanish present (states and processes) are not necessarily distinguished morphologically. The present tense in Spanish can select either states or processes whereas a process interpretation is not allowed in English (Schmitt, 2001). Based on the assumption of semantic transfer from English into Spanish, I examine whether English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-time Spanish immigrants will also show difficulties with the selectional properties of the Spanish present tense, and specifically with its ongoing semantic value.
5 The Interpretation and Use of the Aspectual Values of the Spanish Present Tense among English-speaking L2 Learners and Long-term Spanish Immigrants

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter argued that the difficulties L2 learners face with preterite versus imperfect distinctions should not be solely related to maturational constraints nor to the instantiation of morphosyntactic features. Instead, I proposed that transfer from the neutral selectional values of the English simple past offers a complimentary explanation to difficulties L2 learners have.

This chapter examines the interpretation and use of the aspectual values of the Spanish present tense. More specifically, it investigates the grammatical knowledge that L2 learners and long-time immigrants have of the ongoing meaning of the Spanish present, an area that remains under-explored in the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition literatures with a few exceptions (e.g., Klein-Andreu, 1980; Morales, 2000).

The Spanish simple present is considered to be the most open and flexible of all verbal forms. This is due to the broad spectrum of situational values it carries and its ability to either precede or follow the speech act (e.g., Alcina & Blecua, 1975; Alarcos Llorach, 1994). The present tense does not refer necessarily to the chronological relationship existing between the verbal notion and speech act but to a temporal segment in which the speech act is included (Alarcos Llorach; p. 156). Thus, besides its common habitual meaning, the present can refer to
a situation preceding the speech act (e.g., *Llaman a la puerta*, “Someone has knocked on the door”), simultaneous to the speech act (e.g., *Ya sube la escalera*, “S/he is going up the stairs now”), or posterior to the speech act (futurate interpretation) (e.g., *Ahora mismo subo*, “I am coming up right now”) (e.g., Cowper, 2005; Torres-Cacoulls, 2000). The present tense can also refer to past events (historical present) as a discourse strategy to describe them more vividly (e.g., *Colón descubre a América en 1492*, “Colon discovers America in 1492”).

In contrast, the present progressive or ‘verbal periphrasis with gerund’ (*está + V + -ndo*) is the most commonly used to refer to ongoing events that occur simultaneously with the speech act (e.g., Yllera, 1999). However, it can also refer to habitual events when restricted to a specific period (e.g., “*Miguel está fumando demasiado*” “Michael has been smoking too much”) or with an iterative meaning (e.g., *Están viniendo muchos Españoles*, “Lots of Spaniards have been arriving”). An immediate future reading is also available (e.g., *Estamos alcanzando la meta*, “We are reaching the goal”) (e.g., Cortés-Torres, 2005; Yllera, 1999). The use of the progressive then parallels with the simple present in that they can both refer to an ongoing event simultaneous to the speech act (e.g., Comrie, 1976; Torres-Cacoulls, 2001). As I will explain shortly, in Spanish a sentence such as *Pedro come frutas* (“Peter eats fruits”) can be interpreted either as an ongoing or generic event. In English, in contrast, the simple present disallows an ongoing meaning, as discussed in Chapter 2.

This study is important because as discussed in Chapter 2, the semantic values of the Spanish present tense (ongoing and generic) are not distinguished by inflectional morphology, as are those of the past tense. Therefore, it is interesting to examine whether L2 learners and

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16 For a recent discussion on the ongoing value of the simple present in Spanish see Cowper (2005).
immigrants would also have difficulties with two distinctive semantic values not morphologically distinguished.

If semantic transfer constrains the difficulties L2 speakers have, as argued in the last chapter, then transfer should also occur in the absence of contrastive morphological cues. If difficulties exist, then the L2 acquisition of aspektual properties cannot be predetermined by previous morphosyntactic development, as has been argued (e.g., Slabakova, 2003).

Regarding L1 attrition, this study is important in that it will shed light on the role of morphology in the L1 attrition of semantic values. Based on the assumption of transfer from English, I do not expect the absence of morphological cues to play a role in the attrition process. Following the work of Sorace and others, I argue that the attrition process is selective as it affects mostly semantic and pragmatic domains of language but not the syntax proper (Sorace, 2000; 2005). Long-term immigrants may then undergo attrition of L1 semantic properties regardless of the absence or the presence of morphological cues.

The present chapter is structured as follows. In Section 5.2, I outline the research questions and hypotheses of the study. I predict that transfer of the semantic value of the English present (states) will reduce the range of aspektual selection of the Spanish present tense (states and processes) that long-term Spanish immigrants and English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish can assign. Specifically, I expect transfer from English to affect the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense as evidenced by low levels of acceptance and use of the present with an ongoing interpretation. In Section 5.3, I review the methodological design, including the participant groups, the structures under analysis, and the data elicitation tools. Section 5.4 presents and discusses the results, followed by a summary and general discussion in Section 5.5.
5.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

English and Spanish differ in the semantic values of the present tense. These differences can be illustrated with the examples below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
<th>Generic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. (English) Rose plays tennis.</td>
<td>‘right now’#</td>
<td>‘tennis player’√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. (Spanish) Rosa juega al tenis.</td>
<td>‘right now’√</td>
<td>‘tennis player’√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. (English) Rose is playing tennis.</td>
<td>‘right now’√</td>
<td>‘tennis player’#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. (Spanish) Rosa está jugando al tenis.</td>
<td>‘right now’√</td>
<td>‘tennis player’#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in (108a) and (108b), the present tense in English disallows an ongoing meaning, while in Spanish it can have either an ongoing or a generic interpretation. The progressive cannot have a generic interpretation in either language (108c-108d).\(^{17}\) As discussed in Chapter 2, Schmitt (2001) extends De Swart’s (1998) selectional approach to the analysis of the present tense. She attributes these semantic differences to the selectional patterns of tense morphemes. On this view, the Spanish present selects homogeneous events, which include states and processes, while the English present selects only states. Based on these selectional differences between the two languages and previous predictions on semantic transfer as the source of L2 learners’ and immigrants’ difficulties in Spanish, I formulate the following research questions:

i. To what extent do English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish acquire the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense? In cases where acquisition is not complete, can it be described in terms of transfer?

\(^{17}\) In both Spanish and English the progressive can occasionally be interpreted as an event that has been occurring lately or recently (e.g., Rosa is studying very hard (recently)).
ii. To what extent does L1 attrition affect the interpretation and use of the ongoing value of the present tense among long-term Spanish immigrants in contact with English?

iii. Will both types of bilinguals behave comparably in the interpretation and use of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense?

Based on the assumption of semantic transfer from English, L2 learners and immigrants may activate incorrect aspectual patterns due to divergent selectional properties in the L1 and L2. Specifically, they may transfer the selectional properties of the English present (+states) leading to a narrowing of the range of aspectual selection in Spanish (+states, +processes). Attrition research has demonstrated that bilinguals tend to converge towards the most restrictive or narrow grammatical configuration, thereby reducing the scope of semantic options (e.g., Sorace, 2005). If this were to happen with L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants, one would expect low levels of acceptance and use of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense due to transfer from English. Moreover, one would not expect both types of bilinguals to have difficulties with the generic interpretation of the present tense or with the ongoing interpretation of the progressive, since these two interpretations are fully available in both languages. If the difficulties speakers face indeed arise from semantic transfer from English, then I would expect both types of bilinguals to share similar patterns of behavior.

As discussed earlier, if difficulties are found with the ongoing meaning of the present tense, which is not morphologically distinguished, then this will question previous research arguing that the acquisition of semantics is predetermined by previous morphosyntactic development (e.g., Slabakova, 2003). Specifically, I hypothesize the following:
1) English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants will show low levels of acceptance and use of the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present due to transfer from English selectional values (+states).

2) If, as I argue, the difficulties L2 learners and immigrants have stem from transfer, then both bilingual groups should behave comparably.

In what follows, I test these hypotheses and discuss the results.

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were the same as the speakers in the past tense study (see Section 4.3.1). Recall they included 20 long-term Spanish immigrants (n=20), 20 advanced L2 learners of Spanish and 20 native speakers of Spanish (control group). All the participants from the control group were Caribbean Spanish speakers. As discussed earlier, the selection criteria for the immigrant group included dialectal region, age at onset of L2 acquisition, and length of residence in the L2 context. The L2 learners were advanced students of Spanish from the University of Toronto. As discussed in 4.3.1, their level of L2 proficiency was independently assessed by two native judges via narratives and by self-assessment.

5.3.2 Structures under Analysis

I tested four aspectual conditions to examine the L2 learners’ and immigrants’ knowledge of the ongoing interpretation of present-tense forms in Spanish. These included the (1) present tense with an ongoing interpretation (e.g., Juan corre\textsubscript{PRES} en este momento, “John is running right now”); (2) the present tense with a generic interpretation (e.g., Juan corre\textsubscript{PRES} todos los
días, “John runs everyday”); (3) the present progressive with an ongoing interpretation (e.g., \textit{Juan está corriendo} \textsubscript{PROG} \textit{ahora}, “John is running right now”); and (4) the present progressive with a generic interpretation (e.g., \#\textit{Juan está corriendo} \textsubscript{PROG} \textit{todos los días}, “#John is running every day”). Although the progressive is not logical with a generic interpretation, in both English and Spanish it can be coerced into a ‘lately’ situation if interpreted as an event that has been occurring recently (e.g., \textit{Estoy trabajando mucho (ultimamente)}, “I am working a lot (recently)” (Schmitt, 2001).

There were twenty (n=20) test sentences counterbalanced across participants plus distracters (see Appendices J and K for the complete list of stimuli). These aspectual conditions are summarized in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Summary of aspectual conditions testing the ongoing value of the Present Tense: Tense by situation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Ongoing interpretation</th>
<th>Generic interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Juan corre en este momento. “John is running right now.”</td>
<td>[PRES√]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generic interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Juan corre todos los días. “John runs every day.”</td>
<td>[PRES√]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progressive Tense</th>
<th>Ongoing interpretation</th>
<th>Generic interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ongoing interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Juan está corriendo en este momento. [PROG√] “John is running right now.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generic interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Juan está corriendo todos los días. [PROG#]\textsuperscript{18} “John is running every day.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{18} The symbol # means that only a non-intended meaning is available (De Swart, 1998). For instance, it is possible to use the present progressive in this condition if interpreted as ‘John is running every day recently’.

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The goal of the test was to examine the ongoing interpretation of the present tense, which is not allowed in English.

As with the analysis of the aspectual interpretations in the past (Chapter 4), data collection took place by means of (i) an acceptability judgment task (AJT); (ii) a truth value judgment task (TVJT) and (iii) an elicited production task (EP). The procedures followed for the two interpretation tasks were identical to those of the past-tense study. The EP task consisted of the narration of the story *Frog Goes to Dinner*, which participants were explicitly asked to narrate in the simple present (see Appendix N for text of the story). In what follows, I discuss the specific goals of each of these tasks.

5.3.3 Tasks

5.3.3.1 Acceptability Judgment Task: Present-tense Forms in Ongoing and Generic Situations

The goal of this task was to examine participants’ comprehension of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense. I expected transfer from the [+state] aspectual value of the English present to decrease the acceptability of present-tense forms in Spanish with an ongoing interpretation. The task comprised a total of forty (n=40) test sentences in Spanish including distracters. As with the analysis of the aspectual values of the past tense, this was a paper-and-pencil task and the sentences were counterbalanced across participants. Participants were required to judge the acceptability of the test sentences on a five-point scale (odd, slightly odd, I don’t know, fine or completely fine) in the context of a specific preceding scenario. As discussed in Chapter 4, the preceding scenario provided a context for the test sentences and were given in English in order to avoid any priming effect. Participants were instructed to (1)
read the given context carefully, (2) read the test sentence in Spanish, and (3) indicate the level of acceptability of the sentence on a scale from –2 to 2, as shown below:

(109) *My sister Giselle is very happy today and she has started to sing her favorite song.*

a. En este momento, mi hermana Giselle canta su canción preferida. [pres. ong.] in this moment, my sister Giselle sings-PRES her song favorite “My sister Giselle is singing her favorite song right now.”

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) 0 (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)

b. En este momento, mi hermana Giselle está cantando su canción preferida. [prog. ong.] in this moment, my sister Giselle is singing-PROG her song favorite “My sister Giselle is singing her favorite song right now.”

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) 0 (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)

In (109), the preceding scenario supported an ongoing situation and thus the simple present (109a) or the progressive (109b) was acceptable. The preceding scenarios also supported generic situations, as in (110) below:

(110) *My friend Benancio is very athletic. He likes to go to the gym every day and usually prefers to walk to work rather than driving.*

a. Mi amigo Benancio normalmente camina al trabajo. [pres. generic] my friend Benancio normally walks to his work “My friend Benancio usually walks to work.”

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) 0 (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)

b. Mi amigo Benancio normalmente está caminando al trabajo. [#prog. generic] my friend Benancio normally is walking to his work “My friend Benancio is usually walking to work.”

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) 0 (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)
In (110), the preceding scenario supported a generic interpretation and thus the simple present was preferred, as in (110a). The used of the present progressive in this context is odd, as shown in (110b).

5.3.3.2 Truth Value Judgment Task: Present-tense Forms in Ongoing and Generic Situations

As with the AJT, this task evaluated participants’ interpretation of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense. Specifically, it evaluated whether the L2 learners and the immigrants would judge the present tense within an ongoing context as ‘true’. As with the past tense study, this was a listening comprehension task and it was conducted using the Praat program (Boersma, 2001). Participants listened to the preceding scenario first and then the test sentence (see Appendices L and M). All the preceding scenarios were in English in order to avoid any priming effect. After listening to the test sentence, participants clicked ‘Yes’ if the sentence was true to the context, or ‘No’ if false, as shown below:

(111) Miguel does not like to run. However, today it’s a nice sunny day and he has started to run around the park.

a. Miguel corre por el parque. Yes No [pres. ong]
   Miguel runs-PRES for the park
   “Miguel is running around the park.”

b. Miguel está corriendo por el parque. Yes No [prog. ong]
   Miguel is running-PROG for the park
   “Miguel is running around the park.”

In (111), the preceding scenario supports an ongoing interpretation and thus both the simple present (111a) and the progressive (111b) should elicit a ‘yes’ answer. However, if the speakers are transferring from English, the simple present would elicit a ‘no’ answer since the
English present tense does not allow an ongoing meaning. As with the AJT the task comprised forty (n=40) digitally-recorded sentences in Spanish counterbalanced across participants.

### 5.3.3.3 Elicited Production Task: Present and Progressive Forms in Ongoing Situations

The EP consisted of an oral narration of the story *Frog Goes to Dinner*. Participants were provided with wordless black-and-white images of the story and were asked to narrate the story using the simple present. As discussed in Section 4.3.3, this method is advantageous as there is less monitoring of language form, so participants rely less heavily on their metalinguistic knowledge (e.g., Liskin-Gasparro, 2000).

The specific goal of the task was to evaluate the production of the present tense with an ongoing interpretation. I predicted that English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants would show low levels of acceptance and use of the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present due to transfer from the selectional values of the English present tense [+state] into Spanish. All narratives were recorded with an RCA digital voice recorder and later transcribed for statistical analysis.

### 5.4 Results

#### 5.4.1 Acceptability Judgment Task

In this task I examine the L2 learners’ and the immigrants’ interpretation of the ongoing value of the present tense in Spanish. I predicted that participants would reject the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present due to overextension of English selectional values (+states) into Spanish.
Results showed low levels of acceptance of the ongoing value of the present tense by L2 learners and long-time immigrants, as expected. In contrast to what was predicted in hypothesis (2), L2 learners failed to accept the present tense with an ongoing meaning at higher levels than the immigrant group. Participants did not show difficulties with the ongoing value of the progressive or with the generic value of the present, since these two interpretations are available in both English and Spanish. The proportions of responses were submitted to an ANOVA analysis with repeated measures, with tense (present and progressive) and situation type (ongoing, generic) as within-subjects factors and group (immigrants, L2 learners and control) as the between-subjects factors. Results revealed significant main effects per group ($F(2, 57) = 4.350, p = .017$). Both types of bilinguals failed to accept at high levels the ongoing value of the present. The interaction between tense and predicate type was also significant ($F(3,57) = 112.11, p = <.001$). This interaction is due to the fact that the present ongoing condition and the progressive generic condition were treated differently than the present generic and the progressive ongoing conditions, where all participants showed high levels of acceptance. Figure 5.1 displays these results:

Figure 5.1: Acceptability Judgment Task: Mean scores of judgment for Present and Progressive tense by ongoing and generic situation type per group
To identify where the differences existed between groups, a Scheffé post-hoc test was conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. Results showed significant differences only between the control and the L2 learner groups ($p = .029$). There were no significant differences between the controls and the immigrants ($p = .903$) nor between the L2 learners and the immigrants ($p = .080$). Overall significant differences between both test-participants and the control group were not expected since only the present ongoing condition was expected to be vulnerable to transfer.

Differences between groups in the present ongoing condition were then tested by means of independent-samples t-tests. Results revealed significant differences between the immigrant and the control group ($p = .001$) and between the L2 learner and the control group ($p = .001$) for the present ongoing condition. Results also indicated no significant differences between the experimental groups in rejecting the present tense with an ongoing interpretation ($p = .103$). However, in order to examine whether both bilingual groups showed comparable patterns of errors, an individual analysis within each group was conducted.

To calculate individual results, I employed the following criteria to classify speakers. In this task “odd” and “slightly odd” sentences had been assigned a score of −2 and −1, and “fine” and “perfectly fine” sentences had been assigned a score of 1 and 2. An “I don’t know” response was given a score of 0. Therefore, in the individual analysis speakers with a proportion per condition ranging from −2 to −0.6 were considered as ‘rejected speakers’; those with a proportion per condition ranging from −0.5 to 0.4 were considered as “unsure speakers”; and those with a proportion ranging from 0.5 to 2 were considered as “accepted speakers”. Table 5.2 displays these results:
Table 5.2. Acceptability Judgment Task. Results per group for present ongoing condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>65% (13/20)</td>
<td>30% (6/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learners</td>
<td>45% (9/20)</td>
<td>20% (4/20)</td>
<td>35% (7/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>100% (20/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.2, in contrast to what was expected in hypothesis (3), L2 learners and immigrants did not behave similarly in the present ongoing condition. The L2 learners showed lower levels of acceptance than the control and the immigrant groups.

The results from the L2 learners may stem from transfer of the restricted semantic values of the English present tense (states). Yet, it is also possible that the absence of morphological cues to mark the ongoing value of the simple present in Spanish could have made it more difficult for the L2 learners to arrive at a target-like analysis, specially when confronted with conflicting values in the L1 (English). Regarding the immigrants, on the other hand, the lack of an overt form-meaning distinction could have made this area of the grammar more vulnerable to attrition and cross-linguistic influence from English.

In contrast to what would normally be expected, the immigrants showed significant differences from the control group ($p = .004$) and the L2 learners ($p = .046$) by accepting the present progressive with a generic situation (e.g., #Paco está corriendo todos los días, “Paco is running every day”). As discussed earlier, the use of the progressive with a habitual or generic meaning is pragmatically odd in Spanish but it allows a coerced ‘lately’ interpretation (Schmitt,
For instance, as Schmitt explains, in an example like *Paco está corriendo todos los días* could be possible in a situation where Paco is obsessed about losing weight and is therefore running every day. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, the use of the present progressive as a temporary state versus a more permanent state is also common in English (e.g., *Mary is loving it*), where the use of the progressive extends beyond the traditional idea of a continuous meaning (e.g., Slabakova, 2003).

The results from the immigrants with the generic value of the progressive may stem from the fact that these bilinguals are in intense contact with different variants of Spanish where the progressive may not be restricted solely to ongoing interpretations but also include reference to habitual contexts, as is the case of Mexican Spanish (e.g., Torres-Cacoullas, 2000; 2001). Torres-Cacoullas (2001) argues that the development of the progressive periphrasis (*estar* + V+ -ndo) in Mexican Spanish follows a ‘gramaticalization channel’ (e.g., Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca. 1994), through which the progressive form extends from its locative meaning (e.g., *Ahí están botando la basura* ‘They are throwing the garbage over there’) to include other contexts such as ongoing (e.g., *Están sacando la foto*, ‘They are taking a picture’) and habitual (¿*Desde nené está trabajando entonces?* ‘Is he then working since he was a baby?’). This habitual aspect of the progressive describes a situation characteristic of an extended period of time and that occurs often. Thus, it also has a frequentative pragmatic reference (e.g., Torres-Cacoullas, 2001). Therefore, the results may be due to a possible dialectal leveling.

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19 Recently, the progressive tense in Spanish is also being extended to include the immediate future (e.g., *Isabel está llegando la semana próxima*, “Isabelle is arriving next week”).
In summary, results from the AJT showed low levels of acceptance of the present tense with an ongoing meaning by both immigrants and L2 learners. Yet they had no difficulty with the generic value of the present nor with the ongoing interpretation of the progressive, as these selectional properties are fully available in both languages. In contrast to what was expected, L2 learners and immigrants did not show similar patterns of performance. Following a selectional approach to tense and aspect, I have claimed that transfer of the selectional patterns of the English present tense (+state, -processes) appears to have caused a narrowing in the scope of lexical selection of the Spanish present tense (+processes). Moreover, I have argued that these results might not be constrained solely by transfer from English. The fact that the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense is not morphologically distinguished from the generic one may have also played an important role in the variability shown by the participants.

Regarding L1 attrition, there was no categorical loss of the ongoing value of the present tense nor was it expected. In the same way L1 transfer in L2 acquisition does not imply complete indeterminacy, I did not expect L2 transfer to cause complete loss of already established L1 values. Research on L1 attrition within the UG framework (e.g., Montrul, 2004; Sorace, 2000; 2005; Tsimpli et. al., 2004) has shown that L2-induced L1 optionality is not a categorical process and predicts it to occur only at the syntax-semantic interface. Recent research in the L2 acquisition of aspeectual values has also shown that L2 learners may acquire some aspectual interpretations while other may remain indeterminate (e.g., Pérez-Leroux et al., in press).
5.4.2 Truth Value Judgment Task

Like the AJT, this task evaluated participants’ interpretation of the ongoing value of the present tense in Spanish. I expected L2 learners and immigrants to show difficulties in their interpretation of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense due to transfer from English selectional patterns (+states).

As expected, the immigrants showed lower levels of accuracy in the interpretation of the present tense with an ongoing meaning when compared to the control participants. On the other hand, the L2 learners behaved similarly to the control group, with high levels of accuracy of the ongoing meaning of the present tense. Both types of bilingual groups did not show difficulties with the ongoing meaning of the progressive form. However, all groups, including the control group, showed difficulties with the generic meaning of the present, in contrast to what was expected.

The average proportions of responses were submitted to an ANOVA analysis with repeated measures, with tense (present and progressive) and situation type (ongoing, generic) as within-subjects factor and group as the between-subjects factor. Overall ANOVA results revealed no significant main effects per group ($F(2, 57) = 1.293, p = .282$). Participants behaved overall similarly in all the conditions examined. The interaction between tense and predicate type was significant ($F(3, 57) = 77.497, p = .001$). As I will explain shortly, this interaction may be a result of participants failing to show higher levels of accuracy in the present generic condition and the progressive generic condition. Figure 5.2 displays these results:
It is not surprising that overall ANOVA results revealed no significant differences between groups since English and Spanish only differ in the ongoing value of the present tense.

Since the specific goal of the analysis was mainly the interpretation of the ongoing value of the present tense, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to measure the obtained differences between groups per present ongoing condition. Results showed significant differences between the immigrants and the control participants ($p = .018$). As with the AJT, the immigrants showed low levels of accuracy with the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense. As discussed earlier, this narrowing may stem from transfer from English values and the fact that the aspectual values of the present tense are not morphologically distinguished. This could make the L1 attrition process more vulnerable to L2 transfer. However, independent sample t-tests indicated no significant differences between the L2 learners and the control groups, contrary to what was predicted ($p = .378$).
To find out whether participants showed similar patterns of responses in the present ongoing condition, an individual analysis was conducted. To calculate individual results, I followed the following classifying criteria. In this condition all sentences were correct. “Yes” answers were given a value of 1 and “no” answers were given a value of “0”. Speakers with proportions ranging from 0 to 0.3 per condition were considered as ‘rejected speakers’; speakers with proportions ranging from 0.4 to 0.5 were considered as ‘unsure speakers’, and speakers with proportions ranging from 0.6 to 1 were considered as ‘accepted speakers’. Table 5.3 presents these results:

Table 5.3. Truth Value Judgment Task. Results per group for present ongoing condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Accepted (%)</th>
<th>Unsure (%)</th>
<th>Rejected (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>70% (14/20)</td>
<td>20% (4/20)</td>
<td>10% (2/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 learners</td>
<td>80% (16/20)</td>
<td>15% (3/20)</td>
<td>5% (1/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>90% (18/20)</td>
<td>0% (0/20)</td>
<td>10% (2/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 5.3, L2 learners and immigrants behaved similarly. Moreover, L2 learners and control participants also behaved similarly. Although the control participants showed higher levels of accuracy than the L2 learners, the differences were not robust. These results appear to indicate that the L2 learners are becoming sensitive to the ongoing value of the Spanish present. It could also be hypothesized that L2 learners have lexicalized the semantic values of the present tense given the different semantic interpretations of Spanish present (e.g., ongoing, generic, historical, reportive). However, there is no evidence that their results are different from those of the control group and thus no conclusion can be drawn in this regard.
Results from the TVJT also showed low levels of accuracy with the present generic condition (around 48% acceptance) among all participants including the controls. These results may be due to the fact that these conditions were ambiguous, as shown below:

(112) *John likes to walk to work. He enjoys doing it everyday, but today it is raining so he decided to take a taxi instead.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juan camina al trabajo.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John walks to work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“John walks to work.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In example (112), the intended meaning of the sentence was a generic one (‘John walks to work every day’) but it could have also been interpreted as ongoing (‘John is walking to work’), since the sentence does not have a temporal adverb (e.g., ‘usually’, ‘always’, ‘now’) to disambiguate these two meanings. Both types of bilingual groups rejected the generic interpretation of the progressive.

To summarize, results of the TVJT partially confirmed what was expected. Regarding the immigrants, they showed significant differences from the control group, which I have argued may stem from transfer from English selectional properties. Moreover, the absence of overt morphology to distinguish the ongoing value of the present tense may have influenced these results. However, while the control subjects showed higher levels of accuracy than the L2 learners, the differences were not robust enough to be significant. L2 learners appeared to be sensitive to the ongoing value of the Spanish present, contrary to what was expected.
5.4.3 Elicited Production Task

A production task was conducted to examine further the L2 learners’ and immigrants’ understanding of the ongoing value of the Spanish present. As discussed in 5.3.3.3, this task consisted of an oral narration of the story *Frog Goes to Dinner*. I predicted that participants would show a decreased production of present-tense forms with an ongoing interpretation due to transfer from the selectional values of the English present [+state, -processes]. As a result, I expected participants to overuse the progressive form in ongoing situations.

A total of 57 narratives were transcribed (18 for the L2 learner group, 19 for the immigrant group and 20 for the control group). Two of the L2 learners and one participant from the immigrant group were not available to complete this oral task. The narratives from the control group ranged from 171 to 901 words (mean length 462). The L2 learners’ narratives ranged from 197 to 450 words (mean length 321), and those of the immigrant group ranged from 305 to 694 words (mean length 551). To examine whether the length of the narratives were significantly different among groups, a one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted with the total number of words produced as within-subjects factor and group as the between subjects factor. As discussed earlier, this measurement served as an indicator of the participants’ oral proficiency skills. Results showed highly significant differences per group, $F(2, 57) = 14.07, p = <.000)$. A Scheffé post-hoc test showed significant differences between the L2 learner and control groups ($p = <.008)$ and between the L2 learners and the immigrants ($p = <.000)$. There were no significant differences between the controls and the immigrants ($p = .120)$. The L2 learners had more difficulty than control subjects and the immigrants in the lexical retrieval of some words (e.g., doorman, saxophone; head waiter) and were less explicit than native speakers in their descriptions. In contrast to well-known stories like the one used in the past tense study
(Little Red Riding Hood), the L2 learners were not familiar with this story. This may have made the task of retelling it more challenging.

Only eventive finite-verbs were included in the present tense analysis. Stative verbs (e.g., ‘be’, ‘like’, ‘know’, ‘have’, ‘want’) and all non-finite forms (e.g., ‘to eat’, ‘to catch’) were excluded. Stative verbs were excluded because they usually cannot take a progressive form in either Spanish or English. Non-finite verbs were also excluded since they are not marked for aspect and thus were not relevant to the analysis. Another exclusion was the verb *ir* (‘to go’). I excluded this verb because this verb is normally used in the present form in Spanish (e.g., *Ellos van a una fiesta*, “They are going to a party”). and the progressive construction (“están yendo”) is odd. Moreover, Spanish textbooks explicitly state that verbs like *ir* “are rarely used in the progressive construction (‘yendo’)” (Jarvis, Lebredob & Mena-Ayllón, 2004, p. 118). Finally, following previous research (e.g., López-Ortega, 2000), fixed verbal phrases functioning as discourse markers (e.g., *Aquí se ve que*… “Here we can see that…”) were also excluded.

The total count of all eventive and finite verbs was classified according to tense (present, progressive and “other”) and situation type (generic or ongoing). The tense classification “other” included four subdivisions: past tense (preterite, imperfect), present perfect (e.g., *Ella ha comido*, “She has eaten”), past progressive (*Ella estaba comiendo*, “She was eating”) and periphrastic future constructions (e.g., *Ellos van a comer a un restaurante*, “They are going out to eat at a restaurant”). Other tense forms (e.g., past perfect) with less than three tokens per group were not counted. The total number of all eventive verbs were calculated individually and then pooled by group.
To evaluate the production of the present tense with an ongoing interpretation, I measured the individual proportion of present-tense forms selected per ongoing statements. Ongoing statements referred to contexts where the speaker’s communicative intent in the context of the narrative was that of describing a continuous and non-generic event. Results showed high levels of production of present tense-forms by the L2 learner group (60%) and by the control group (69%). Immigrants, on the other hand, showed the lowest level of present tense use (43%). Table 5.4 presents these results:

Table 5.4: Average proportion per speaker per group of Present, Progressive and Past tenses selected per ongoing statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Progressive</th>
<th>Past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L2 learners</td>
<td>60% (317/530)</td>
<td>23% (121/530)</td>
<td>12% (67/530)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>43% (440/988)</td>
<td>28% (282/988)</td>
<td>19% (180/988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>69% (717/1046)</td>
<td>17% (189/1046)</td>
<td>6% (54/1046)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the L2 learners, the immigrants showed the lowest level of present tense use and the corresponding highest production of progressive forms, which may suggest transfer effects from English. The immigrants also showed the highest production of past tense forms.

A one-way ANOVA analysis with group as a factor on the present ongoing condition revealed significant main effects per group ($F(2, 54) = 8.28, p = <.001$). A Scheffé post-hoc test used to identify the differences between groups showed significant differences between the immigrant group and the control group ($p = <.001$). Immigrants used the present tense significantly less than control participants and alternated it mostly with the progressive. This indicates that the immigrants are performing differently than the controls, probably due to
transfer effects from English wherein the present tense does not select for an ongoing interpretation. However, this cannot be fully confirmed. It is possible that the results of the immigrants do not stem from transfer effects from English but rather from transfer from other dialects of Spanish where the present progressive is the norm. These Caribbean speakers living in New Jersey and New York for more than twenty years may be in contact with other dialects of Spanish (e.g., Mexican Spanish) where the use of the simple present to refer to an ongoing event is not preferred. Therefore, the results from the immigrant group may not stem unequivocally from transfer from English but from other non-attributed dialects of Spanish.

A one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to find out whether the proportion of progressive tense selected per ongoing statements by the immigrant and control groups was significantly different. Results showed significant differences between the two groups ($F(1, 39) = 6.44, p < .015$). Immigrants used the progressive tense significantly more than controls. This may suggest transfer effects from English semantic values [+states]. L1 attrition research has shown that long-time immigrants tend to converge towards the most restrictive configuration in the L2 (e.g., Tsimpli et al., 2004). The English simple present has a more restrictive semantic configuration than Spanish as it only selects one semantic representation (+states). However, as I mentioned earlier, these results may have also be conditioned by dialectal differences in the use of the present tense.

In contrast to what was expected, post-hoc results showed no significant differences between the L2 learners and controls ($p = .369$). Although the control group showed a slightly higher percentage of present tense use, their differences did not achieve significance.
It is possible that L2 learners’ results stem from the fact that a number of punctual verbs (e.g., ‘to jump’, ‘to fall’) in the context of this narrative would often occur in the present rather than in the progressive, as shown below:

(113) a. … la rana salta (pres.) al trompetón de un *tocador y entra (pres.) en la trompeta. (L2 learner #5)

“…the frog jumps on the trumpet of one the musicians and gets inside the trumpet.”

b. … la rana otra vez salta (pres.) y cae (pres.) dentro de un vaso de vino y la rana le da (pres.) un beso al hombre. (L2 learner #8).

“…the frog jumps again and falls into a wine glass and the frog gives
the man a kiss.”

In (113a) and (113b), the participants used the present tense in these cases. This is not surprising since the use of the progressive would have had an iterative reading (e.g., ‘The frog is jumping’; ‘The frog is falling on the wine glass’). Such a reading would not have fit the theme of the story.

It is also worth exploring the possibility that the L2 learners used the historical present (e.g., Cowper, 1998). The historical present implies the narration of past events as if they were occurring at the moment of speaking, as shown below:

(from Cowper 1998)

(114) The young boy enters the room. He looks around. He notices the book on the table… (p. 1).
It is possible that L2 learners interpreted the events depicted in the story as completed in the past rather than as non-completed events related to a continuous reference time.\textsuperscript{20} Since they were asked to narrate the story in the present they may have resorted to the historical present.

However, these two explanations are only speculative. I mentioned earlier in the analysis of the results from the TVJT, there is no concrete evidence from the results that L2 learners’ interpretation is different from those of the control group. In fact, these results may actually indicate that L2 learners are acquiring the semantic values of the Spanish present tense.

In this task, the L2 learners also outperformed the immigrant group. These results may stem from the fact that the immigrant group is more bilingual than the L2 learners and use both languages on a daily basis in their community. This intense contact with both English and Spanish could make the L1 system more permeable to transfer from English, leading to an over production of the progressive form to instantiate ongoing meanings, as argued by previous research (e.g., Klein-Andreu, 1980; Morales, 2000).

To summarize, the goal of this task was to measure the production of present-tense forms with an ongoing meaning by English-speaking L2 learners of Spanish and long-term Spanish immigrants. I predicted both test-participants to show a lower production of the present tense with an ongoing meaning due to transfer from the semantic selectional value of the English present tense [\textit{+states}]. I also expected participants to employ the progressive form in lieu of the present due to convergence with English selectional patterns. Results from the immigrant group seem to confirm these expectations. I claimed that there appears to be a

\textsuperscript{20} I follow Reichenbach’s (1947) temporal specification of \textit{speech time} and \textit{reference time}: \textit{Speech time} is the actual time of speaking and \textit{reference time} refers to the time at which the narrative events occur (prior, continuous to or after the speech time).
narrowing in the range of selectional properties in Spanish due to transfer from English semantic patterns. However, these results are not conclusive. It is also possible that the participants have been in contact with dialects of Spanish where the simple present is not preferred to refer to ongoing situations. Thus, immigrants may not have undergone attrition from the L2 English but rather from another variety of Spanish of equal merit.

On the other hand, the L2 learners were not significantly different from the controls, in contrast to what was expected. I argued that these results appear to indicate that L2 learners are acquiring the semantic values of the Spanish present tense.

5.5 Summary of Results and Conclusions

In this chapter, I examined the interpretation and use of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense among English-speaking L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants. I predicted that both types of bilingual groups would show low levels of acceptance and use of the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present due to transfer from English selectional values (hypothesis 1). Specifically, I expected transfer from English to cause a narrowing in the range of aspectual selection of the Spanish present tense (+states, + processes). I also expected both L2 learners and immigrants to behave similarly due to transfer effects from English (L1) (hypothesis 2).

The long-term Spanish immigrants demonstrated significant differences from control subjects in the two interpretation tasks and in the production task. As predicted in hypothesis (1), the immigrants showed lower levels of acceptance and use of the present tense with an ongoing interpretation. Transfer from English selectional patterns appears to have affected the range of lexical selection of the Spanish present tense (+processes), as evidenced by the low
levels of acceptance of the present with an ongoing interpretation. However, the results of the production task cannot be conclusively interpreted as attrition due to transfer from English ongoing semantic values. It is also possible that the participants have been in contact with dialects of Spanish where the simple present is not preferred to refer to ongoing situations.

On the other hand, the L2 learners showed significant differences from the control subjects only in the AJT. L2 learners failed to accept at high levels the present tense in ongoing situations. In contrast to the immigrants, the L2 learners were not significantly different from the control subjects in the TVJT or in the EP. Thus, hypotheses (1) was only partially supported. Regarding the results of the L2 learners, I argued that it is possible that they are becoming sensitive to the ongoing value of the Spanish present. Regarding hypothesis (2), the immigrants and the L2 learners showed comparable patterns of performance only in the TVJT (Table 5.3). In the AJT and the EP, both types of bilinguals did not show similar patterns of performance, in contrast to what was expected. Thus, hypothesis (2) was only partially confirmed.
6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation examined and compared the L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of aspectual properties in Spanish by English-speaking L2 learners and long-term Spanish immigrants. It examined maturational and morphosyntactic development proposals of L2 acquisition difficulties, and argued that they cannot solely account for the difficulties L2 learners face with tense and aspect. In addition to these proposals, this study offered a supplementary explanation focused on the role of transfer of the semantic properties of tense and aspect morphemes.

Following De Swart’s (1998) selectional view of aspectual variation, I specifically claimed that transfer of the semantic patterns of English tense morphemes (homogenous and heterogeneous eventualities) provides a more encompassing account of the difficulties that L2 speakers face with tense and aspect (e.g., Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Schmitt, 2001). This argument was developed by examining and comparing the interpretation and use of Spanish past-tense aspectual properties and of the ongoing value of the present among L2 learners and long-term immigrants. The study hypothesized that, to the extent that the L2 learners share similar patterns of performance with the long-term Spanish immigrants who acquired the L2 (English) as adults, L2 learners’ difficulties should not be linked solely to maturational constraints or lack of morphological development, as has been argued (e.g., Johnson and Newport, 1989; Montrul & Slabakova, 2002). This is because, in contrast to what has been proposed for L2 acquisition difficulties, adult L1 attrition cannot be explained in terms of any of these two impairment reasons.
6.2 Summary of Results

6.2.1 The Interpretation and Use of Spanish Preterite and Imperfect Distinctions

Results from the AJT and the TVJT showed overextension of the preterite to characterizing situations in which the imperfect was preferred (e.g., #De niño, Francisquito siempre jugó con sus amigos, “As a child, Francisquito always played with his friends.”). These results confirm hypothesis (1). I argued that the L2 learners and the immigrants appear to have associated the Spanish preterite with the English simple past, leading to a transfer of the English neutral value ([±HOM]) into Spanish, as predicted.

As predicted in hypothesis (2), participants also showed selectional errors with the imperfect in stative and eventive contexts where the preterite should have been used. This was characteristic of mostly immigrants who overextended the imperfect to eventive predicates in coercion contexts (e.g., #Ayer, Lisa cantaba por dos horas en el bar, “Yesterday, Lisa sang for two hours in the bar”). Moreover, some participants also showed difficulty with the use of the imperfect with stative verbs in contexts were the preterite should have been used. I argued that although these data are not on first-stage language development but advanced L2 acquisition and L1 attrition, the association shown between the imperfect and stative verbs is in line with previous research on aspect first, indicating a pattern of distribution between imperfect tense and atelic predicates.

Regarding hypothesis (3), results demonstrated similar patterns of difficulties between L2 learners and immigrants, except for characterizing situations in the preterite. In these conditions, L2 learners were more accurate than immigrants, partially confirming what was predicted. I claimed that although transfer affects both L2 learners and long-term immigrants, L2 learners might have had an advantage over immigrants in these conditions due to
instructional treatments. The use of the imperfect with a habitual or characterizing meaning is highly reinforced in classroom instruction and Spanish textbooks (e.g., Blanco & Donley, 2005; Jarvis, Lebredo & Mena-Ayllón, 2003; 2004). Although the L2 learners and immigrants did not behave similarly across all conditions, the similarities that they did have suggest that L2 learners’ difficulties should not be solely accounted for in terms of impairment reasons. Moreover, in some instances (e.g., eventive characterizing contexts in the preterite), the L2 learners outperformed the adult immigrants significantly which questions previous research arguing for an impairment case in L2A (e.g., Tsimli & Roussou, 1991).

As concerns the EP task, the L2 learners overextended the preterite to characterizing contexts where the imperfect should have been used (e.g., #Había una vez una niña que vivió\text{pret} con su mamá, “There was a girl that lived\text{pret} with her mother”), confirming hypothesis (1). They also overextended the imperfect to episodic contexts (e.g., #El lobo iba\text{imp} a la casa de la abuela, “The Wolf went\text{imp} to the grandmother’s house”). However, these difficulties were primarily with activity and stative predicates. Results showed no problems with accomplishment and achievement predicates. As concerns immigrants, they did not overextend the preterite or the imperfect to contexts where the other form was preferred, in contrast to L2 learners. Instead, they showed higher levels of present tense production compared to the L2 learners and the control participants, which appears to indicate an avoidance strategy. The marked preference for the use of the present tense suggests bilingualism effects (e.g., transfer from the other language) or at least that something has changed in the way these long-term immigrants interpret their L1 grammar. Although these bilinguals did not make grammatical errors, they appeared to be interpreting the grammar that they already have differently from native speakers. However, it is also possible that an avoidance strategy by the immigrant group
was not the case. Participants could have used the present tense due to other discourse strategies.

6.2.2 The Interpretation and Use of the Spanish Present Tense

To develop the transfer explanation further, I also examined the interpretation and use of aspectual properties which are not morphologically distinguished, namely the semantic values of the Spanish present tense. I expected L2 learners and immigrants to show low levels of acceptance and use of the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present due to transfer from English selectional values (+states) (hypothesis 1). I also expected participants to behave similarly (hypothesis 2).

Results of the AJT showed significant differences between both participant groups and the control group in the interpretation of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense. The L2 learners and the immigrants failed to show high levels of accuracy with the ongoing value of the Spanish present. I have argued that transfer from English selectional properties (+states) appears to have reduced the range of lexical selection of the Spanish present tense (+states, +processes), leading to a narrowing of its ongoing interpretation. Moreover, I argued that the fact that the ongoing interpretation of the Spanish present tense is not morphologically distinguished might have also played a role in the variability shown by the participants.

In the TVJT, results showed significant differences between the immigrants and the control groups. However, there were no significant differences between the L2 learners and the control participants, in contrast to what was predicted in hypothesis (1). It appears as if the L2 learners are developing sensitivity to the ongoing value of the present tense.
Results of the EP task showed a reduced proportion of present tense forms and a high proportion of the progressive form among the immigrants, as shown in previous research (e.g., Klein-Andreu, 1980). I claimed that the restrictive values of the English present are affecting the scope of lexical selection in Spanish, causing a narrowing of its ongoing value. However, L1 attrition due to L2 transfer among immigrants cannot be fully confirmed. It is possible that these immigrants have been in contact with other dialects of Spanish of equal merit where the progressive tense with an ongoing meaning is not preferred. As with the TVJT, the L2 learners did not show significant differences from the control group. I argued that it appears as if the L2 learners have acquired the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense.

As concerns hypothesis (2), results from the AJT and the EP task did not show similar patterns of difficulties between the L2 learners and the immigrants in their interpretation and use of the ongoing value of the present tense, in contrast to what was predicted. However, in the TVJT, individual results showed comparable patterns between the two bilingual groups, as expected.

To conclude, these results demonstrate that the strong hypothesis on the existence of comparable patterns of performance between bilingual groups is not completely confirmed. However, the underlying argument that the difficulties L2 learners face cannot be linked directly to impairment reasons stands because bilingual populations did share comparable behavior in some of the conditions examined, and because adult immigrants demonstrated significant attrition of their previously developed L1.
6.3. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

In contrast to previous research examining the L1 loss or incomplete acquisition of grammatical properties in Spanish among heritage speakers or early bilinguals (e.g., Montrul, 2002; Silva-Corvalán, 1994), this study contributes to the existing literature by focusing instead on the L1 attrition of previously acquired linguistic knowledge among adult immigrants. Results demonstrate that the adult L1 grammar is permeable to attrition and restructuring in a situation of intense contact with a second language. They also show that both long-term immigrants and advanced L2 learners of Spanish share similar patterns of difficulties in some of the areas examined.

Although this study did not test maturational effects and thus no definite conclusion in this regard can be proposed, these results suggest that L2 learners’ difficulties should not be explained solely with reference to maturational constraints or lack of instantiation of morphosyntactic features, since these immigrants came to the L2 context with a fully developed L1 grammar. Instead, I argued that transfer of English semantic values offer a supplementary explanation of the difficulties L2 learners have (e.g., Gass, 1996; Pérez-Leroux et al., in press; Salaberry, 2002; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996). Moreover, these results question previous research that argues for a critical period of learning ending around puberty or for an idealized stability of a linguistic system developed before this period (e.g., Johnson & Newport, 1989; Lenneberg, 1967).

In addition to current discussions of L2 acquisition and L1 attrition of past-tense aspectual interpretations, this study has introduced the analysis of the interpretation and use of the semantic values of the Spanish present tense. As mentioned earlier, the Spanish present tense is a grammatical domain that remains under-explored in both L2 acquisition and L1
attrition research. Research on this domain is interesting because, in contrast to preterite versus imperfect distinctions, the semantic values of the Spanish present are not necessarily distinguished morphologically. If long-term immigrants and L2 learners also show difficulties with aspectual values which are not morphologically distinguished, then the acquisition of aspectual semantics cannot be triggered by morphosyntactic development. Therefore, this study examined whether transfer from English semantic values also affected the semantic values of the Spanish present tense regardless of the absence of morphological cues. Results corroborated these expectations among long-term immigrants. However, expectations were only partially confirmed among L2 learners, since they showed difficulties only in the AJT.

As discussed earlier, results from the TVJT and the EP task in the present tense did not show significant difference among L2 learners and controls. I argued that it is possible that L2 learners have acquired the ongoing value of the Spanish present. However, there is also the possibility of a task effect. Since the TVJT required a categorical response on grammatical sentences, it may not have been sensitive enough to differentiate the L2 learners from the control participants. In future research, it would be interesting to implement a task that does not require a categorical response. Instead, tasks that provide a wider range of responses may be more successful at eliciting more subtle differences between L2 learners and control participants. Future research may also benefit from an oral elicitation task that involves an open discussion of a current event familiar to the participants. This production task may more effectively provide a continuous reference time that will prompt participants to use the ongoing value of the present and not other possible values such as the historic present.
The results from this study are a good starting point for further examination on the relationship between the L2 acquisition of inflectional morphology and semantics. Specifically, I wonder whether the acquisition of the ongoing value of the Spanish present tense is linked to the development of inflectional morphology (e.g., person, number), as has been suggested in the L2 acquisition of the English present and progressive semantic values by Bulgarian learners (e.g., Slabakova, 2003). Slabakova’s results indicate that Bulgarian L2 learners of English are able to acquire interpretable formal features not available in their L1 (e.g., the fact that the English present tense disallows an ongoing interpretation, which is not instantiated in Bulgarian). More than 90% of the participants show target like knowledge of inflectional morphology (-s, -ed, -ing). However, they were much less accurate (60%) in recognizing the semantics of the progressive form in English. Slabakova concluded that knowledge of simple and progressive morphology briefly precedes the acquisition of the semantic properties associated with these aspectual tenses (p. 66).

On the basis of semantic transfer from English, I would expect advanced L2 learners to show incomplete knowledge of the range of aspectual selection in Spanish, specifically of those patterns not supplied by their L1 English (e.g., ongoing value) but not necessarily incomplete knowledge of inflectional morphology (e.g., markers of person and number). If this were the case, then it would be interesting to compare these results with those of intermediate L2 learners. If in contrast to advanced learners, intermediate learners show incomplete acquisition of person and number markers but similar levels of semantic knowledge as their advanced counterparts, then the acquisition of semantics cannot be linked directly to morphosyntactic development, as the results of this study suggest.
Another topic that would be interesting to examine in future research is the role of explicit instruction across different levels of proficiency. As discussed in Chapter 4, although explicit or implicit instruction does not necessarily imply long-term effects on the linguistic competence of the speaker, it does imply a manipulation of the linguistic input, which may favor the acquisition of specific aspectual values. Moreover, an examination of instructed learners from different L1-L2 pairings may also shed more light on the role of transfer in the acquisition of tense and aspect.

To conclude, this dissertation examined the grammar of adult L2 learners and adult immigrants as regards their interpretation and use of aspectual properties in Spanish. In contrast to previous research arguing that impairment is at the source of the problems with verbal aspect, I have provided a supplementary explanation in which transfer is the underlying cause for L2 learners’ difficulties. This study is a step forward in re-examining current proposals and identifying new avenues of research with the aim of shedding more light on the psycholinguistic nature of L2 acquisition, L1 attrition and the bilingual grammar in general. Moreover, this study demonstrates the importance of L1 attrition research in helping us understand and scrutinize not only the restructuring of previously acquired systems but also the underlying nature of L2 language development and behavior.
References


APPENDIX A
Language History Questionnaire for Spanish Native Speakers

1. Participant Code ______________________
2. Age Group (please, circle)
3. At what age did you start living in Canada/USA? ____________________________
4. Total number of years living in Canada/USA ________________________________
5. Present occupation ______________________________________________________
6. Mother's dominant language __________________________
   Father's dominant language __________________________________________
7. Language(s) spoken at home as a child ______________________________________
8. Language(s) spoken during the first five years of your life ____________________
9. Language(s) of instruction in:
   Primary School ___________________________________________________________
   High School _____________________________________________________________
   University/College _______________________________________________________
   Other institutions _________________________________________________________
10. What other languages do you presently speak? ______________________________
11. What language do you feel most comfortable with at this time?
    Spanish  English  Both
12. What languages do you presently use?
    At Home _________________________________________________________________
    At School ______________________________________________________________
    At Work ________________________________________________________________
    When you dream _________________________________________________________
13. Present contact with Spanish:
    Approximate hours/week: ________________________________________________
    Context: (e.g. friends, family, school, etc.): _______friends, family__________
14. Have you visited a Spanish-speaking country after your arrival in Canada/USA?
    YES  NO
    If YES
    When? _________________________________________________________________
    For how long? ___________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B
Language History Questionnaire for L2 Learners

1. Participant Code _______________________

2. Age Group (please, circle)

3. At what age did you start learning Spanish? ________________________________

4. Present occupation ________________________________

5. Mother's dominant language ________________________________
   Father's dominant language ________________________________

6. Language(s) spoken at home as a child ________________________________

7. Language(s) spoken during the first five years of your life ________________________________

8. Language(s) of instruction in:
   Primary School ________________________________
   High School ________________________________
   University/College ________________________________
   Other institutions ________________________________

9. What other languages do you presently speak? ________________________________

10. What language do you feel most comfortable with at this time?
    Spanish  English  Both

11. What languages do you presently use?
    At Home ________________________________
    At School ________________________________
    At Work ________________________________
    When you dream ________________________________

12. Present contact with Spanish:
    Approximate
    hours/week: ________________________________
    Context: (e.g. friends, family, school, etc.): ________________________________

13. Have you visited a Spanish-speaking country after your arrival in Canada/USA?
    YES  NO
    If YES
    When? ________________________________
    For how long? ________________________________
## APPENDIX C
### Summary of Participant’s Profile

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<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>SPA</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
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<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College/University</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
Raters’ Instructions for L2 Assessment and Assessment Sheet

Raters’ instructions:
In this task, you will hear pairs of narratives produced by L2 learners of Spanish. There are a total of 25 pairs ranging from 5 to 8 minutes each. Please note that you do not have to listen to and rank all the narratives at once. Please take breaks as you need them. The narratives are the classic story Little Red Riding Hood (La Caperucita Roja) and the frog story Frog Goes to Dinner. Please listen carefully to both narratives and then, and only then, rate the speaker’s ability in Spanish based on the following four aspects:

(1) Overall syntax (word order, subject-verb agreement, use of simple and complex sentences, use of prepositions).

(2) Vocabulary (use of a varied vocabulary, less frequent words, idioms).

(3) Pronunciation and Fluency (overall impression of intonation and fluency, rhythm, stress as well as pronunciation of vowels and consonants).

(4) Overall grammar of the speaker disregarding pronunciation and fluency.

Please use the scale provided below each criterion to rank the speaker. As we are interested in knowing your first impression, please do not listen to the tapes more than once or change your scores.

Assessment Sheet
Rater’s Name:_________________________________________________
Participant Code:______________________________________________

(1) Overall syntax

<table>
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<th>5</th>
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<td>native like</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2) Vocabulary

<table>
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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>beginner</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>near-native</td>
<td>native like</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(3) Pronunciation and Fluency

<table>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>intermediate</td>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>near-native</td>
<td>native like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) Overall grammar of the speaker disregarding pronunciation and fluency

<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>beginner</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>advanced</td>
<td>near-native</td>
<td>native like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E
List of Past Tense Stimuli

Target Stimuli

1. As a child, Francisquito always liked to play with his friends after school. He liked to play hide and seek and was very good at baseball.
   - De niño, Francisquito siempre jugó con sus amigos.

2. My grandfather always liked to smoke after dinner and read the same newspaper.
   - Mi abuelo siempre fumaba después de cenar.

3. When my parents were young they always went skiing in the winter. Now, they are old and can’t go anymore.
   - Durante su juventud, mis padres usualmente esquizaron en el invierno.

4. As a child John usually ate cereal for breakfast. He did not like it very much but his mother always told him it was good for him.
   - De chico, Juan usualmente comía cereal desayuno.

5. My grandparents always went to Florida for the winter. I was really happy because I got the house to myself.
   - Mis abuelos siempre fueron a la Florida durante el invierno.

6. Something strange happened at work last week. For three days in a row the boss was late.
   - Por tres días, el jefe llegaba tarde.

7. Last night was John’s birthday and he went to Mary’s house to celebrate. After drinking ten martinis he was so drunk that he passed out on the couch.
   - Anoche, Juan se bebió diez martinis.

8. Lisa is a very good singer. Yesterday we went to a Karaoke bar and she sang for two hours. We all loved how she sang and we had a great time.
   - Ayer, Lisa cantaba por dos horas en el bar.

9. John is a very hard worker. He is so good that he built his house in just one year.
   - Juan construyó su casa en un año.

10. Paco likes to paint a lot and he does it every day. Last week he painted a portrait of his mother in two days.
    - Paco pintaba un retrato de su madre en dos días.

11. Last night was Mary’s 25th birthday and her friend John took her out for dinner. Mary had a great time and enjoyed dinner very much.
    - Maria disfrutaba muchísimo la cena con Juan.

12. This morning Maria attended a lecture by Prof. Ramirez. She said the lecture was great and that he really loved it.
    - A María le encantó la conferencia del profesor Ramirez.

13. Last week I went to see the movie “Talk to Her”. I liked it a lot and will probably see it again.
    - Me gustaba mucho la película “Hable con ella”.

14. Last night, I went to a house party with a friend. Most of the people there were twice my age and all they did was to talk about hockey. I was bored to death.
    - La fiesta de anoche me aburrió muchísimo.

15. This afternoon there was a minor earthquake. Kids got really scared and many of them started crying.
    - Los niños sentían mucho miedo durante el temblor de esta tarde.
16. Rodolfo always knew that he was not a member of the Fuentemayor’s family. As much as his adopted father tried to hide the truth her always knew it.
- Rodolfo supo la verdad.
17. This morning when John came down to the kitchen he was very serious. He drank a glass of water and left the house without uttering a single word.
- Juan parecía molesto esta mañana.
18. When John was a child he liked to spend a lot of time with his aunt Martha. She always told him interesting stories about life on other planets, amazing space ships and great adventures on the planet Volcan.
- La tía de Juan conoció mucho de ciencia ficción.
19. When Joseph was a kid he was really overweight. His mother always urged him to eat less and exercise more but he never listened.
- José era gordo cuando niño.
20. Sometimes our geography teacher’s face was dirty. I always wondered if he knew what we all were laughing about.
- El maestro de geografía a veces tuvo la cara sucia.

Distractors

1. My friend Rosa is going to Paris for vacation and is very excited. She wants her sister to go with her but she can’t make it this time.
- Rosa quiere que su hermana va con ella a Paris.
2. Martica is going to Lisboa next week to visit her boyfriend’s family. She is very excited about her trip since she is also planning to visit her sister in Madrid.
- Martica está muy excitada por su viaje a Lisboa.
3. Pepito likes to play guitar. Today he is in a bad mood because his guitar broke and he can’t play it anymore. His father promised to buy him a new one but only if he helps around the house.
- Pepito se pregunta cuándo su padre le comprará una nueva guitarra.
4. My friend Ramiro always gets very mad when his students talk in class. He is very strict and assigns lots of homework.
- A Ramiro no le gusta que sus alumnos hablan en clase.
5. This Thursday was Calvin’s birthday and his mother asked him what he wanted as a present. After thinking about it for a while he decided to tell her what he wanted:
- Madre, quiero que me regale un salchicha perro.
6. Richard’s grandfather lives in the country. He has a very nice house there and Richard likes to visit him very much.
- A Richard le gusta mucho la campo casa de su abuelo.
7. Paco has not seen his brother for a long time. He does not know where he lives now and he feels sad.
- Paco se pregunta dónde su hermano vivirá ahora.
8. My friend Jorge likes to play tennis very much. He always goes to the club late in the afternoons and plays for about two hours.
- Mi amigo Jorge gusta jugar mucho al tenis.
9. Calvin thinks his friend Joel met the Queen while in London but he is not sure. He is really bothered by this and decides to ask Joel’s father
- ¿A quién Joel conoció en Londres?
10. Ramoncito likes to read comic books about superheroes. His favorite comic book is about a superhero who is half monkey and half man.
   -A Ramoncito le encanta su super héro el mono hombre.
11. Martica and Calvin are shopping in the mall. Martica does not know what to buy her mother for Christmas and Calvin suggests what to buy:
   -¿Por qué no le compras una ninja tortuga?
12. My friend Peter is organizing a birthday party for his friend Monica. It is a surprise party, so he asked his friends not to tell anyone.
   -Pedro no quiere que nadie sepa lo de la fiesta para Mónica.
13. Last night Elisa came home very late. Her parents were really worried about her. This morning they asked her about it and she got upset, went to her bedroom and closed the door shut.
   -Elisa golpeó cerrada la puerta de su cuarto.
14. Calvin's mother was very worried because it was late and Calvin was not home. When Calvin got home his mother asked him where he was and he replied:
   -Mamá estaba en la arte galería.
15. It is almost Christmas and Calvin is writing his letter to Santa. However, he is not sure whether Santa will bring him anything this year because he has not been a good boy.
   -Calvin no sabe qué regalos Santa le traerá este año.
16. My friend María is looking for a house to buy. She wants to buy a house with a big garden in the front and a swimming pool but she has not found anything yet she likes.
   -María quiere comprarse una casa que tiene un jardín bien grande y piscina.
17. Pepito is obsessed with one of his superheroes: Spiderman. The other day he jumped from the second floor of his building and broke one of his legs. His mother was really mad and told him:
   -Ya te he dicho cien veces que no eres el araña hombre.
18. Miriam is going home with her son. She is a worried because her son is driving too fast on the highway and she tells him:
   -Andrés, no me gusta que manejas tan rápido.
19. Last week Mario was playing football when a player from the opposite team pushed him really hard. Mario broke his right leg and got a concussion. He can’t play until next season.
   -Mario se rompió su pierna jugando football la semana pasada.
20. Martica bought a very nice car and Calvin wants to know where. He asks his friends:
   -¿Dónde Martica compró ese carro?
APPENDIX F
List of Past Tense Stimuli (Spanish)

Target Stimuli

1. A Francisco siempre le ha gustado mucho jugar con sus amigos y aún de adulto muchas veces juega béisbol con ellos. Hoy le preguntan, ¿y de niño? y contesta: ¡casi todos los días!
   -De niño, Francisquito siempre jugó con sus amigos.
2. A mi abuelo siempre le ha gustado fumar después de cenar, pero ya no lo hace tanto como antes. En realidad, ya casi ni se acuerda de fumar pero le pregunto ¿y de joven? y me responde: ¡Oh esos cigarrillos de mi juventud!
   -Mi abuelo siempre fumaba después de cenar.
3. A mis padres les encanta esquiar. Siempre han esquiado todos los inviernos pero ahora ya no esquían tan regularmente como cuando jóvenes.
   -Durante su juventud, mis padres usualmente esquían en el invierno.
4. A Juan le gusta mucho el cereal. Desde niño, el cereal ha sido su desayuno preferido.
   -De chico, Juan usualmente comía cereal de desayuno.
5. Durante el invierno, mis abuelos en ocasiones viajan a la Florida. Por mucho que quieran hacerlo con más frecuencia ya están viejos y no pueden hacerlo tan frecuentemente como cuando en su juventud.
   -Mis abuelos siempre fueron a la Florida durante el invierno.
6. Nuestro jefe es un extremista que siempre nos está exigiendo puntualidad perfecta. Lo interesante del caso es que últimamente el también está llegando tarde y actúa como si no pasara nada. El colmo es que esto no pasa un día, ni dos, sino hasta tres días seguidos, como por ejemplo la semana pasada.
   -Por tres días, el jefe llegaba tarde.
7. Nunca he ido a un cumpleaños tan bueno como el de anoche. Esta mañana le pregunto a Juan, el cumpleañero: ¿qué tal tu cumpleaños anoche? y me dice: bueno, después de esos diez martinis tan fuertes... ¡Uff... que quedé dormido en el sofá!
   -Anoche, Juan se bebió diez martinis.
   -Ayer, Lisa cantaba por dos horas en el bar.
   -Jesús construyó su casa en un año.
10. Mi amigo Paco pinta muy bien. Lo interesante es que no sólo pinta bien sino rápido. Un cuadro le toma dos días para pintarlo, como es el caso del cuadro de su madre que ves en la sala.
    -Mi amigo Paco pintaba un retrato de su madre en dos días.
11. Ayer mi amiga Beatriz decide salir a cenar con José, un chico que acaba de conocer.
    Hoy me cuenta que nunca ha tenido una cena tan romántica y placentera como la de ayer.
    -Mi amiga Beatriz disfrutaba muchísimo la cena con José.
12. Esta mañana María decide ir a una conferencia del profesor Ramírez. Por la tarde, viene a verme y me cuenta que la conferencia ha sido todo un éxito y que el profesor Ramírez es uno de los mejores profesores que ha conocido.
- A María le encantó la conferencia del profesor Ramírez.
13. La película “Hable con ella” es buenísima. Me ha gustado tanto que creo que volveré a verla.
   -Me gustaba mucho la película “Hable con ella”.
14. Anoche fui a ver una película con Susana. Hoy ella me pregunta mi opinión sobre ésta y le digo: ¡burrísimisa! La próxima vez no te dejaré escogerla.
   -La película de anoche me aburrió muchísimo.
15. El temblor de esta tarde no fue de mucha intensidad, pero imagínate los niños...Por poco se mueren del miedo.
   -Los niños sentían mucho miedo durante el temblor de esta tarde.
16. Desde chico, Rodolfo ha sabido que él no es hijo legítimo de Don Camilo y la verdad sobre sus padres. Hoy, Don Camilo conversa con él sobre esto pero para Rodolfo ya no es una sorpresa.
   -Rodolfo supo la verdad.
17. Yo no sé que le pasa a mi sobrino Rolandito últimamente. Por ejemplo, esta mañana baja de su cuarto con tremenda cara y aparentemente molesto.
   -Mi sobrino Rolandito parecía molesto esta mañana.
18. Juan es una persona que de adulto adora las historias fantásticas, y el gran conocimiento de ciencia ficción de su tía y sus historias es el recuerdo más memorable que tiene de ella.
   -La tía de Juan conoció mucho sobre ciencia-ficción.
19. José no siempre ha sido delgado como ahora. De niño, ¡no te imaginas qué glotón y qué gordito!
   -José era gordo cuando niño.
20. A Rosa siempre le gustó la geografía y recuerda con mucho cariño a su maestro. Hoy en día su maestro es ya viejito pero continúa con la misma mala costumbre: no lavarse a veces la cara y tenerla sucia. Éso es algo que a Rosa nunca se le olvida.
   -Rosa nunca olvida que su maestro de geografía a veces tuvo la cara sucia

**Distractors**

1. Mi amiga Rosa se va para París y está muy entusiasmada. Ella quiere que su hermana la acompañe pero no puede en esta oportunidad.
   -Rosa quiere que su hermana va con ella a París.
2. Martica se va para Lisboa la próxima semana y está super contenta. Ella quiere visitar a su hermana y viajar por todo el país.
   -Martica está muy excitada por su viaje a Lisboa
3. A Pepito le encanta tocar la guitarra. Hoy está muy molesto porque se le rompió. Su papá le prometió comprarle una nueva pero no le dijo cuándo.
   -Pepito se pregunta cuándo su padre le comprará una nueva guitarra.
4. Mi amigo Ramiro siempre se molesta cuando sus estudiantes hablan en clase. Es el muy estricto y asigna muchas tareas.
   -A Ramiro no le gusta que sus alumnos hablan en clase.
5. Este jueves fue el cumpleaños de Pepito y su madre le preguntó qué quería de regalo. Él le respondió:
   -Quiero de regalo un salchicha perro.
6. El abuelo de Richard vive en el campo. Él tiene una casa muy buena allá y a Richard le gusta mucho visitarlo.
   -A Richard le gusta mucho la campo casa de su abuelo.
7. Ramiro no ha visto a su hermano por un largo tiempo y no sabe dónde pueda estar viviendo en estos momentos.
   -Ramiro se pregunta dónde su hermano vivirá ahora.
8. Mi amigo Jorge normalmente juega al tenis. Él siempre va al club por las tardes y juega mucho al tenis con sus amigos.
   -Mi amigo Jorge gusta jugar mucho al tenis.
9. Pepito piensa que su amigo Joel conoció a la Reina cuando fue Londres y está un poco celoso. Él quiere saber qué pasó y decide preguntarle al papá de Joel.
   -¿A quién Joel conoció en Londres?
10. A Ramoncito le gusta leer libros de aventuras sobre superhéroes. Su aventura favorita es sobre un superhéroe que es mitad mono y mitad hombre.
    -A Ramoncito le encanta su superhéroe el mono hombre.
11. Martica está de compras en la tienda. Ella no sabe qué comprarle a su hermano para Navidad y Pedro le sugiere:
    -¿Por qué no le compras una ninja tortuga?
12. Mi amigo Pedro está organizando una fiesta sorpresa para Mónica. Él le pidió a todo el mundo que mantuvieran el secreto.
    -Pedro no quiere que nadie sepa lo de la fiesta para Mónica.
13. Esta mañana Elisa se despertó muy molesta y cerro la puerta de su cuarto de un tirón
    -Elisa golpeó cerrada la puerta de su cuarto.
14. La mamá de Calvin estaba muy preocupada porque no sabía dónde él estaba. Cuando Calvin llegó le dijo:
    -Mamá estaba en la arte galería.
15. Es casi Navidad y Calvin está escribiéndole una carta a Papá Noel. El no está seguro si Papá Noel le traerá algo este año pues no se ha portado muy bien.
    -Calvin no sabe qué regalos Papa Noel le traerá este año.
16. Mi amiga María quiere comprarse una casa. Ella quiere una casa bien grande con jardín y piscina.
    -María quiere comprarse una casa que tiene un jardín bien grande y piscina.
17. Pepito está obsesionado con sus superhéroes. El otro día se lanzó del primer piso de su edificio pensando que era el hombre araña. Su mamá se molestó mucho y le gritó:
    -Ya te he dicho cien veces que no eres el araña hombre. ¡Te vas a matar!
18. Miriam está en el carro con su hijo. Ella está un poco nerviosa porque él está manejando muy rápido y le dice:
    -Andrés, no quiero que manejes tan rápido.
19. La semana pasada Mario estaba jugando football cuando se cayó y se fracturó la pierna.
    -Mario se rompió su pierna jugando football la semana pasada.
20. Martica compró un carro muy bonito y Pepito quiere saber dónde fue que lo compró. Él le pregunta a los amigos de Martica.
    -¿Dónde Martica compró ese carro?
APPENDIX G
Instructions for Interpretation and Production Tasks

1. Truth Value Judgment Task

Instructions:
In this task you will hear a series of stories in English. After each story, you will hear a sentence in Spanish. After hearing the sentence, please click ‘Yes’ if you believe the sentence to be true to the story, ‘No’ if false. We are interested in knowing only your first impression.

Example:
Susan goes to the gym everyday. Today, she runs into her friend Mary and Mary’s brother Paul. Mary introduces her brother Paul to Susan.

Susana conoció a Paul

Yes No

2. Acceptability Judgment Task

Instructions:
In this task you will be presented with a short story followed by a sentence. Please read the story carefully. Then, read the sentence and based on the scale provided indicate whether the sentence sounds odd, slightly odd, more or less fine or perfectly fine. If you think the sentence sounds odd or slightly odd, please specify why you think so. Once you have made your choice, please do not make any corrections. We are interested in knowing only your first impression.

Example:
This morning when the teacher arrived to class, Mario was doing his homework.

Cuando la profesora llegó al aula esta mañana, Mario hizo la tarea.

-2 (odd) -1 (slightly odd) (I don’t know) 1 (more or less fine) 2 (perfectly fine)

3. Elicited Production Task (Past Tense): Little Red Riding Hood

Instructions:
Please examine each image carefully. Then, retell what happened in the story using the past tense. You can start narrating the story with the expression once upon a time...

4. Elicited Production Task (Present Tense): Frog goes to Dinner

Instructions:
Please examine each image carefully. Then, retell what happens in the story using the present tense.
APPENDIX H
Text for the Past Tense Production Task (*Little Red Riding Hood*)

Había una vez una niña que se llamaba la Caperucita Roja. A ella le decían así porque siempre llevaba una capa roja que le había hecho su mamá. Ella vivía en una casita muy bonita cerca del bosque y siempre ayudaba a su mamá con las cosas de la casa. Un día, su mamá le pidió que fuera a la casa de su abuelita para llevarle una cesta de frutas y algo de comer porque estaba muy enferma.

Cuando caminaba por el bosque, la niña se encontró con el lobo feroz y el lobo le preguntó que adónde iba. Caperucita desobedeció los consejos de su madre de no hablar con extraños y le dijo que iba a casa de su abuela para llevarle unas frutas porque estaba enferma. El lobo malvado tomó por otro camino y se le adelantó. La niña mientras tanto decidió recoger algunas flores para llevárselas a su abuelita. El lobo llegó a la casa de la abuela, quien estaba acostada porque se sentía mal, y se la comió. Después, se vistió como ella y se acostó en la cama a esperar a la caperucita para comérsela también.

Cuando la niña llegó a la casa, notó que la abuelita estaba muy extraña, porque en realidad era el lobo disfrazado de la abuela, y le preguntó: “Abuelita que ojos más grandes tienes”, y el lobo le dijo “son para verte mejor”, y la niña le preguntó otra vez: “pero abuelita qué orejas más grandes tienes” y el lobo le dijo “son para oírte mejor” y al final la caperucita le dijo: “pero abuelita que boca más grande tienes” y el lobo le dijo “es para comerte mejooor”. Y diciendo esto se la comió. Un labrador que pasaba por la casa escuchó los gritos de la Caperucita y fue inmediatamente a rescatarla. Tomó su hacha y de un solo hachazo mató al lobo. Después, le abrió la barriga y sacó a la caperucita y a la abuelita de la barriga de este. Al final, todos estaban muy felices y se comieron las frutas que la Caperucita había traído.
APPENDIX I
Story Frames for Past Tense Production Task: Little Red Riding Hood

FRAME 1: La niña en su casa con la madre (“The child and her mother at home”)

1. Había-IMP una vez una niña que
2. se llamaba-IMP la Caperucita Roja porque
3. siempre llevaba-IMP/usaba-IMP una capucha roja
4. esta vivía-IMP con su mamá en una casita en el campo.
5. ella siempre ayudaba-IMP a su madre con las cosas de la casa
6. un día su mamá le pidió-PRET/le preparó-PRET una cesta de frutas
7. para su abuela que estaba-IMP muy enferma y
8. la niña se fue-PRET para la casa de la abuela y
9. se despidió-PRET de la madre.

FRAME 2: La niña caminando por el bosque y encuentro con el lobo (“The child walking in the woods and encounter with the wolf”)

10. La niña iba-IMP/estaba-IMP/caminaba-IMP por el bosque
11. ella hablaba-IMP con los animalitos y cantaba-IMP mientras
12. recogía-IMP algunas flores para llevárselas a la abuelita
13. mientras caminaba-IMP por el bosque
14. se encontró-PRET/se le apareció-PRET /le saltó-PRET el lobo feroz
15. y le preguntó-PRET qué hacía-IMP por el bosque/ a dónde iba-IMP
16. la niña se asustó-PRET y le dijo-PRET que iba-IMP a casa de su abuelita
17. que estaba-IMP enferma
18. el lobo corrió-PRET hacia la casa de la abuela
19. el lobo tomó-PRET otro camino/se le adelantó-PRET
20. y la niña se entretuvo-PRET recogiendo flores.

FRAME 3. El lobo llega a la casa de la abuela (“The wolf arrives at the Granny’s House”)

21. El lobo llegó-PRET / se metió-PRET/ entró-PRET/ a la casa de la abuela
22. la abuela estaba-IMP acostada, leyendo
23. la abuela dormía-IMP /leía-IMP en su cama
24. el lobo asustó-PRET a la abuela/la abuela gritó-PRET
25. se comió-PRET/ mató-PRET a la abuela
26. la encerró-PRET en el closet
27. el lobo se vistió-PRET/se disfrazó-PRET /se puso-PRET la ropa de la abuela
28. se maquilló-PRET y se acostó-PRET en la cama
29. esperó-PRET a la caperucita.
FRAME 4: La niña llega a la casa de la abuela (“The child arrives at the Granny’s house”)

30. La niña llegó-PRET a la casa
31. abrió-PRET la puerta y entró-PRET a la casa
32. vio-PRET a la abuela que estaba-IMP acostada en la cama
33. pero que no era-IMP la abuela sino el lobo
34. ella se dio cuenta-PRET que la abuela tenía-IMP algo raro
35. y le dijo-PRET abuela que...
36. y el lobo le dijo-PRET …
37. al final le dijo-PRET abuela que boca tan grande tiene…
38. y el lobo le dijo-PRET ...
39. la niña gritó-PRET y el lobo se la comió-PRET
40. el lobo la mató-PRET.

FRAME 5: El labrador salva a la Caperucita (“The Woodsman saves Little Red Riding Hood”)

41. Un labrador que pasaba-IMP/caminaba-IMP/andaba-IMP por la casa
42. que era-IMP amigo de la abuela
43. escuchó-PRET/oyó-PRET los gritos de la niña
44. y entró-PRET a la casa con su hacha en la mano
45. y mató-PRET al lobo
46. el lobo se desmayó-PRET/se asustó-PRET
47. le abrió-PRET/le cortó-PRET la barriga al lobo
48. y el labrador salvó-PRET a la caperucita
49. sacó-PRET a la caperucita y a la abuela
50. que estaban-IMP vivas.

FRAME 6: Un final feliz (“A happy end”)

51. Estaban-IMP todos felices
52. comieron-PRET las frutas y
53. celebraron-PRET/festejaron-PRET juntos
APPENDIX J
List of Present Tense Stimuli for the Acceptability Judgment Task

Target Stimuli

1. My friend Benancio is very athletic. He likes to go to the gym every day and usually prefers to walk to work rather than driving.
   -Mi amigo Benancio, normalmente camina a su trabajo.
2. Pepito is a very good child. He always helps his mother around the house.
   -En general, Pepito ayuda a su madre en la casa.
3. My brother Jason loves to paint. He usually stays home and paints for many hours.
   -Mi hermano Jason usualmente pinta
4. My sister Julia sings very well. She usually sings boleros at a bar near where we live and everyone loves her voice.
   -Mi hermana Julia usualmente canta boleros.
5. My best friend Julio usually skis twice a month during the winter. He is always skiing in different places and is never afraid of falling.
   -Mi amigo Julio usualmente esquía dos veces al mes en el invierno.
6. My neighbor’s son is very friendly and he loves to play baseball with my son Jorgito. This afternoon, he knocked on the door and invited my son to go out and play. My son has decided to step outside and play for a while with his neighbor.
   -En este momento, Jorgito juega con su vecino.
7. This afternoon, Ruben and Lindsay have decided to work out together. Now, they have started to run around the park and do some sit-ups.
   -En este momento, Rubén y Lindsay corren por el parque.
8. My brother and his girlfriend Lisa are at home tonight and they have decided to watch “Desperate Housewives” on TV. Lisa likes that show very much.
   -Esta noche, mi hermano y su novia Lisa miran “Desperate Housewives” en la tele.
9. Rosa and Mary are out at a party this evening. They are having a lot of fun. Rosa has met a new friend and has started to dance salsa with him.
   -Ahora, Rosa baila salsa con un amigo en la fiesta.
10. My friend Rosita needs to stay up late working on a project, so she decides to drink a strong cup of coffee.
    -Ahora, Rosita se toma una taza de café para no dormirse.
11. My best friend Sara loves to dance. She goes dancing every weekend to a salsa bar near our house.
    -Mi mejor amiga Sara, usualmente está bailando en un bar cerca de la casa.
12. My nephew Rolandito usually prefers to drink chocolate milk. He drinks three or four glasses day.
    -Mi sobrino Rolandito normalmente está tomando leche con chocolate.
13. My son Ken is a very friendly child. He always likes to play with his friends and loves to ride his new bicycle. -Mi hijo Ken usualmente está jugando con los demás niños en el barrio.
14. My friend Alan likes to exercise every morning. He loves to run around the park every Saturday morning for about an hour.
    -Mi amigo Alan regularmente está corriendo por el parque.
15. My brother likes TV very much. Normally, he spends about five hours a night watching TV.
    -Mi hermano normalmente está mirando la televisión.
16. Today it’s a beautiful day outside and my friend Antonio has now started to walk to work.
    -En este momento, mi amigo Antonio está caminando al trabajo.
17. My friend Miguel is with a couple of friends in the Alps and he has started to ski with them. 
-En este momento, mi amigo Miguel está esquiando en los Alpes con sus amigos.
18. Today, Rodolfo wants to impress his girlfriend, so now he has started to paint a nice 
landscape for her. -En este momento, Rodolfo le está pintando un lindo paisaje a su novia.
19. My sister Giselle is very happy today and she has started to sing her favorite song. 
-Mi hermana Giselle está cantando su canción preferida en estos momentos.
20. Luis wants to go out and needs some money from his dad, so now he has decided to help his 
dad shovel the snow. 
-En este momento, Luis está ayudando a su padre a pallear la nieve.

Distractors

1. My friend Rose is visiting Boston for two weeks. Her brother lives there and she visited him 
yesterday. They had a great time. 
-El hermano de mi amiga Rosa vive en Boston y ayer ella visitólo.
2. Kim, my roommate, is really worried because she can’t find her purse. She does not know where she 
put it when she got home from school. 
-Mi compañera Kim no recuerda dónde ella puso su cartera.
3. My friend Margaret lives in a very nice house in the country. She invited me to visit her this 
weekend and go fishing together. 
-Mi amiga Margaret invitó me a su casa este fin de semana.
4. My friend Roberto is a very ambitious man. He was very poor when he first came to this country but 
now he is one of the most successful businessmen in town. 
-Roberto es muy ambicioso.
5. My sister Alicia just finished college and she already received a job offer in New York City. She is 
very happy. 
-Mi hija Alicia acaba de terminar el colegio y ya tiene una oferta de trabajo.
6. Mary loves the fashion scene and she knows many famous designers in New York City. 
-María está muy vinculada con la escena de moda.
7. My cousin Rodrigo was playing hockey last night when he fell and broke his jaw. I don’t think he is 
going to play any more after this. 
-Mi primo Rodrigo se cayó y se rompió su mandíbula.
8. My brother Alexander is at Yale University right now. He wants to become a very important lawyer. 
-Mi hermano Alexander quiere ser un famoso abogado.
9. My sister Martha is having a farewell party this evening. She is really excited about living in 
Australia with her boyfriend but at the same time she is sad to leave home. 
-Mi hermana Martha es triste porque se tiene que ir a Australia.
10. Mr. Rodriguez, the city mayor, is running for governor. He is a very intelligent man and everyone 
loves him. 
-El señor Rodríguez está corriendo para gobernador.
11. My neighbor Rosa got married last week. Her husband is a very decent man and loves 
her very much. 
-El esposo de mi amiga Rosa es muy decente.
12. My friend Julia is coming tomorrow from Greece. I have not seem her for five years and 
I am really excited. 
-Mi amiga Julia está vieniendo mañana de Grecia.
13. Maria asked the history teacher if we could send him our essay by email and he said it was OK. 
-El profesor dijo que podíamos le enviar el ensayo por email.
14. Sarah went to Paris for vacation and sent me a very nice postcard from there.
   -Sara mandó me una postal desde París
15. My best friend Ruben is getting married next week. He has been dating his fiancée Lisa for three years now. Everyone is really excited about the wedding.
   -Mi amigo Ruben se está casando la próxima semana.
16. My son Luis is very happy with his new bicycle. He likes to ride it every afternoon after school.
   -Mi hijo Luis encanta su nueva bicicleta.
17. Rita is a very intelligent girl. She always does well in school and loves to study every evening. She wants to be a math teacher when she grows up.
   -Rita es una inteligente chica.
18. This morning I had lunch with my friend Luis in the cafeteria. He was really exited about his new book and gave me a free copy.
   -Luis dio me una copia de su libro en la cafetería.
19. Susan’s father is very strict. Every time Susan goes out with her friends she has to be home before 11:00 PM. Also, he never allows her to sleep over at her friend’s house.
   -Al padre de Susan no le gusta Susan llege a la casa después de las 11 de la noche.
20. Maria lives in San Luis, 20 km from Santiago.
   - Maria vive 20 kilómetros de Santiago.
APPENDIX K
List of Present Tense Stimuli for the Acceptability Judgment Task (Spanish)

Target Stimuli

1. Mi amigo Benancio es muy atlético. Para todos en el barrio el bus es el medio ideal para ir al trabajo pero para él caminar es mucho mejor y normalmente eso es lo que hace.
   -Mi amigo Benancio, normalmente camina a su trabajo.
2. José es un niño muy bueno. Generalmente, está dispuesto en ayudar a su mamá con las cosas de la casa.
   -En general, Pepito ayuda a su madre en la casa.
3. Mi hermano Jasón es un pintor muy bueno. Regularmente, le gusta quedarse en su cuarto y pintar por muchas horas.
   - Mi hermano Jason usualmente pinta.
4. Mi amiga Julia es una cantante excelente. Regularmente, a ella le gusta cantar boleros en un bar cerca de su casa.
   -Mí amiga Julia usualmente canta boleros.
5. Mi amigo Julio regularmente sale a esquiar dos veces por semana en el invierno. A él no le da miedo caerse y le gusta esquiar en diferentes lugares todos los años.
   -Mi amigo Julio regularmente esquía dos veces por semana en el invierno.
6. Pepito, el hijo de mi vecino, es un chico muy amistoso. Ahora, él y mi hijo han comenzado a jugar en el patio de la casa.
   -En este momento, mi hijo juega con su amigo Pepito.
7. Rubén y Lindsay están en el gimnasio y han comenzado a correr en la pista.
   -En este momento, Rubén y Lindsay corren en la pista del gimnasio.
8. Esta noche mi hermano y su novia Lisa están en la casa y han comenzado a ver el programa Desperate Housewives.
   -Esta noche, mi hermano y su novia Lisa miran Desperate Housewives en la tele.
9. Rosa y María están en una fiesta esta noche. Rosa ha conocido a un chico y ha comenzado a bailar con él.
   -Ahora, Rosa baila salsa con un chico en la fiesta.
10. Mi amiga Rosita necesita quedarse hasta tarde trabajando en un proyecto y ha comenzado a tomar un poco de café bien fuerte para no dormirse.
    -Ahora, Rosita se toma una taza de café para no dormirse.
11. A mi mejor amiga Sara le gusta mucho bailar. Generalmente, los fines de semana su diversión bailar salsa en un bar cerca de la casa hasta el amanecer.
    -Mi mejor amiga Sara, usualmente está bailando salsa en un bar cerca de la casa.
12. A mi sobrino Rolandito le gusta mucho la leche con chocolate. Ya es algo regular en él: dos o tres vasos al día...
    -Mi sobrino Rolandito normalmente está tomando leche con chocolate.
13. Mi hijo Ken es muy amistoso y siempre le gusta jugar con otros niños en el barrio cada vez que tiene tiempo.
    -Mi sobrino Ken usualmente está jugando con los demás niños en el barrio.
14. A mi amigo Alain es muy atlético y generalmente le encanta correr en el parque los sábados por la mañana.
    -Mi amigo Alain regularmente está corriendo por el parque.
15. A mi hermano le gusta mucho mirar la tele. Normalmente, él se pasa como cuatro horas enfrente del televisor todos los días.
   -Mi hermano normalmente está mirando la televisión.
16. Hoy hace un día precioso y mi amigo Antonio ha comenzado a caminar al trabajo.
   -En este momento, mi amigo Antonio está caminando a su trabajo.
17. El señor Pérez está con un grupo de amigos en los Alpes y ha comenzado a esquiar con ellos.
   -En este momento, el señor Pérez está esquiando en los Alpes con sus amigos.
18. Mi hermano Rodolfo quiere regalarle algo especial a su novia y ha comenzado a dibujar un cuadro muy bonito para ella.
   -En este momento, Rodolfo le está pintando un lindo cuadro a su novia.
19. Mi hermana Giselle se ha levantado muy feliz hoy y ha comenzado a cantar su canción favorita.
   -Mi hermana Giselle está cantando su canción preferida es estos momentos.
20. El señor Silva necesita ayuda para palear la nieve y ahora su hijo Luis está con él para ayudarlo.
   -En este momento, Luis está ayudando a su padre a palear la nieve.

Distractors

1. Rosa está visitando Boston por tres días. Ayer, ella visitó a su amigo Marcos que vive allá y la pasaron muy bien.
   -El amigo de Rosa vive en Boston y ayer ella visitólo.
2. Mi compañera Kim está muy preocupada porque no puede encontrar su cartera. No se acuerda dónde la puso después de llegar del trabajo.
   -Mi compañera Kim no recuerda dónde ella puso su cartera.
3. Margaret vive en una casa muy linda en el campo. Ayer, ella me invitó a pasar el fin de semana con ella.
   -Mi amiga Margaret invitó me a su casa este fin de semana.
4. Roberto es una persona muy emprendedora. Él era muy pobre cuando vino a este país y ahora es uno de los empresarios más conocidos de la ciudad.
   -Roberto es muy ambicioso.
5. Mi hija Alicia acaba de terminar sus estudios universitarios y ya tiene una oferta de trabajo en Nueva York. -
   -Mi hija Alicia acaba de terminar el colegio y ya tiene una oferta de trabajo.
6. María es una modelo muy famosa. A ella le encanta el mundo del la moda y el del espectáculo.
   -María está muy vinculada con la escena de moda.
7. Anoche Rodrigo estaba jugando hockey cuando se cayó y se lastimó la espalda.
   -Rodrigo se cayó y se lastimó su espalda.
8. Mi amigo Alexander esta estudiando en Yale University. Él quiere ser un abogado muy famoso.
   -Mi hermano Alexander quiere ser un famoso abogado.
9. Mi amiga Martha se va a vivir a Australia y tiene una fiesta de despedida en su casa esta noche. Ella se siente un poco triste por tener que dejar a sus amigos.
   -Mi amiga Martha es triste porque se tiene que ir a Australia.
10. El señor Rodríguez, alcalde de la ciudad, ha decidido que quiere ser gobernador en las próximas elecciones. Él es una persona muy inteligente y todo el mundo lo quiere mucho.
    -El señor Rodríguez está corriendo para gobernador.
11. Mi vecina Rosa se casó la semana pasada. Su esposo es una persona muy correcta y la quiere mucho.
   -El esposo de mi amiga Rosa es muy decente.

12. Mi amiga Julia viene de Grecia mañana. Hace cinco años que no la he visto y estoy muy entusiasmado.
   -Mi amiga Julia está viniendo mañana de Grecia.

13. María le preguntó al profesor de historia si le podíamos enviar el ensayo por correo electrónico y él dijo que sí.
   -El profesor dijo que podíamos le enviar el ensayo por email.

14. Mi vecina Sara fue a París de vacaciones y tuvo la delicadeza de mandar una postal.
   -Sarah mandó me una postal desde París.

15. Mi amigo Rubén se casa la semana que viene. El ha estado saliendo con su novia Eva por tres años.
   -Mi amigo Ruben se está casando la próxima semana.

16. Mi hijo Luis está muy feliz con su nueva bicicleta y le gusta montarla todas las tardes después de la escuela.
   -A mi hijo Luis encanta su nueva bicicleta.

17. Rita es muy inteligente. Ella siempre sale bien en la escuela y estudia todos los días.
   -Rita es una inteligente chica.

18. Esta tarde almorcé con mi amigo Juan en la cafetería. El acaba de escribir un libro y me regalo un ejemplar.
   -Juan dio me un ejemplar de su libro en la cafetería.

19. El padre de Susan es muy estricto. Cada vez que Susan sale con sus amigos ella tiene que regresar antes de las 11 de la noche.
   -Al padre de Susan no le gusta Susana llegue a la casa después de las 11 de la noche.

20. María vive en San Luis, 20 km de Santiago.
   -Maria vive 20 kilómetros de Santiago.
APPENDIX L
Present Tense Stimuli for the Truth Value Judgment Task

Target Stimuli

1. Mary loves to dance. She has been going to a Salsa club every week. Lately though, she has been feeling very tired and so she decided to take some time off.
   -María baila.
2. Mary is a very good singer. She always sings at church and has a beautiful voice. It is Sunday and Mary is at church, but she does not feel well and thus decides not to sing.
   -María canta.
3. Angelo enjoys skiing very much and does so every winter. This winter though he is in Cuba and can’t ski.
   -Angelo esquía.
4. Miguel likes to run every morning. Today though, he is not feeling well and decides to stay in bed.
   -Miguel corre.
5. Marco likes to watch TV every night. His favorite show is Doctor Who. However, tonight he is very busy and can’t watch it.
   -Marco mira la televisión.
6. Calvin never eats soup. However, he has a very bad cold right now and decides to have a delicious chicken soup his grandmother made for him.
   -Calvin se toma la sopa que le hizo su abuela.
7. José hates to walk to work. However, today there is a transit strike and after waiting for more than an hour he has started to walk to work.
   -José camina al trabajo.
8. Paco is a shy boy who normally stays home with his mom. Today, though, he feels very happy and has started to play on the street with his friends.
   -Paco juega con sus amiguitos.
9. Luisito does not like art but his girlfriend does. He prefers to play baseball, but today it’s different. He wants to impress his girlfriend and starts to paint a nice landscape for her.
   -Luisito le pinta un paisaje muy bonito a su novia.
10. Calvin is a very lazy boy who is never around when his mother needs him. But today he needs money so things are different. Calvin starts to clean the floor just before his mother arrived.
    -Calvin ayuda a su mamá.
11. John likes to walk to work. He enjoys doing it everyday. However, today it is raining so he decides to take a taxi instead.
    -Juan está caminando al trabajo.
12. Paco is a very friendly child who always plays with his friends. However, today he is sick and cannot play, so he stays at home.
    -Paco está jugando con sus amiguitos.
13. Paquito is a very good son. He always helps his mother around the house. However, now he is upset with his parents and decides not to do anything.
    -Paquito está ayudando a su madre.
14. Paco is a very good artist. He really likes to paint and does so every single day. However, today he is not feeling well and decides to read instead.
    -Paco está pintando.
15. Rosita loves to drink chocolate milk while having dinner. This evening, she is having dinner at a restaurant with her parents. She orders her usual chocolate milk but they are out.
-Rosita está tomando leche con chocolate.
16. Marcos hates televisión because of all the advertisements. He never watches TV but tonight there is a great show on and he has turned the TV.
-Marcos está mirando un programa muy bueno en la tele.

17. Mary hates to dance but tonight we are out at a party and Mary is a bit drunk. All of a sudden, she stands up and starts to dance like Madonna.
-María está bailando como Madonna.

18. Miguel does not like to run. However, today it’s a nice sunny day and he has decided to run around the park.
-Miguel está corriendo por el parque.

19. Mary rarely sings. However today she is very happy and decides to sing while taking a shower.
-María está cantando en la ducha.

20. Angelo does not like to ski because he is always afraid of falling. However, today he is with a couple of friends at Blue Mountain and has decided to try it out.
-Angelo está esquiando con sus amigos.

**Distractors**

1. Manuel has not seen his brother for a long time. He does not know where he lives now and he feels sad.
-Manuel no sabe dónde su hermano vive ahora.

2. Calvin is always very hungry. His mother hid the cookie jar so that he won’t eat the cookies. Calvin is looking for the jar but he can’t find it.
-Calvin se pregunta dónde su mamá escondió la lata de galletas.

3. José likes to play guitar. However, today he is in a bad mood because his guitar broke and he can’t play it anymore.
-José es molesto porque no puede tocar más guitarra

4. Elisa, Calvin’s friend, is on vacation but Calvin does not know where and decides to ask her mother where she is.
-¿Dónde Elisa estará de vacaciones?

5. Santiago studies law at the University of Havana. Today he is at the University and meets Martha, an international exchange-student from Colombia.
-Santiago encontró con una estudiante de Colombia en la Universidad

6. Mary loves the fashion scene and she knows many famous designers in New York City.
-María está muy vinculada con la escena de moda.

7. My cousin Rodrigo was playing hockey last night when he fell and broke his jaw. I don’t think he is going to play any more after this.
-Mi primo Rodrigo se cayó y se rompió su mandíbula.

8. My brother Alexander is at Yale University right now. He wants to become a very important lawyer.
-Mi hermano Alexander quiere convertirse en un famoso abogado.

9. Martica is going to Lisboa and Calvin is very sad. Calvin does not know how long she is going to be away and decides to ask her parents:
-¿Cuándo Martica regresa de Lisboa?

10. Mr. Rodriguez, the city mayor, is running for governor. He is a very intelligent man and everyone loves him.
-El señor Rodríguez está corriendo para gobernador.
11. My neighbor Rosa got married last week. Her husband is a very decent man and loves her very much.
-El esposo de mi amiga Rosa es muy decente.
12. My friend Julia is coming tomorrow from Greece. I have not seen her for five years and I am really excited. -Mi amiga Julia está viniendo mañana de Grecia.
13. Maria asked the history teacher if we could send him our essay by email and he said it was OK.
-El profesor dijo que podíamos le enviar el ensayo por email.
14. Sarah went to Paris for vacation and sent me a very nice postcard from there.
-Sarah mandó me una postal desde Paris.
15. Martica bought a very nice car and Calvin wants to know where, so he asks Martica’s friend:
-¿Dónde Martica compró ese carro?
16. Calvin is curious to know what Joel got for Christmas and he asks Joel:
-¿Qué te ha Papá Noel traído para Navidad?
17. Rita is a very intelligent girl. She always does well in school and loves to study every evening.
She wants to be a math teacher when she grows up.
-Rita es una inteligente chica.
18. This morning I had lunch with my friend Luis in the cafeteria. He was really excited about his new book and gave me a free copy.
-Luis dio me una copia de su libro en la cafetería.
19. Susan’s father is very strict. Every time Susan goes out with her friends she has to be home before 11:00 PM. Also, he never allows her to sleep over at her friend’s house.
-Al padre de Susan no le gusta Susan llegue a la casa después de las 11 de la noche.
20. María lives in San Luis, 20 km from Santiago.
- María vive 20 kilómetros de Santiago.
APPENDIX M
Present Tense Stimuli for the Truth Value Judgment Task (Spanish)

Target Stimuli

1. A María le gusta bailar mucho. Ella siempre va a bailar salsa a un bar que está cerca de la casa. Sin embargo, ultimamente se ha sentido muy mal y ha decidido no bailar tanto.
   -María baila.

2. María es una cantante muy buena. A ella siempre le gusta cantar en la iglesia y tiene una voz muy preciosa. Hoy es domingo y María está en la iglesia, pero ella no se siente bien y decide no cantar.
   -María canta.

3. A Angelo le gusta mucho esquiar y lo hace todo los inviernos. No obstante, este invierno él está en Cuba y no pude esquiar.
   -Angelo esquía.

4. A Miguel le gusta correr todas las mañanas. Sin embargo, hoy no se siente bien y decide quedarse en cama.
   -Miguel corre.

   -Marco mira la televisión.

6. A Calvin no le gusta la sopa. Pero hoy tiene un catarro y ha decidido tomarse la sopa que le hizo su abuela.
   -Calvin se toma la sopa que le hizo su abuela.

7. A Josué no le gusta el arte pero a su novia sí. Luisito prefiere jugar beisbol. Pero hoy es diferente porque quiere impresionar a su novia, así que empieza a pintarle un paisaje muy bonito.
   -Luisito le pinta un paisaje muy bonito a su novia.

8. Calvin es un chico my aragán y nunca hace nada para ayudar a su mamá. Sin embargo, hoy es diferente porque necesita dinero, así que ha empezado a ayudar a su mamá en la casa.
   -Calvin ayuda a su mamá.

9. A Juan le gusta caminar al trabajo y lo hace todos los días, pero hoy está lloviendo y ha decidido tomar un taxi.
   -Juan está caminando al trabajo.

12. Paco es un niño muy amistoso a quien siempre le gusta jugar con sus amigos. Sin embargo hoy está enfermo por lo que no puede jugar así que se queda en la casa.
   -Paco está jugando con sus amiguitos.
13. Paquito es un muchacho muy bueno. El siempre está dispuesto a ayudar a su madre en la casa. Sin embargo hoy está molesto y no quiere ayudar a nadie.  
- Paquito está ayudando a su madre.
- Paco está pintando.
15. A Calvin le gusta mucho la leche con chocolate cuando cena. Sin embargo, esta noche está en un restaurante y no hay leche con chocolate. Calvin está muy molesto.  
- Calvin está tomando leche con chocolate.
16. Marcos detesta la televisión por todos los anuncios que siempre hay. Sin embargo esta noche hay un programa muy bueno y él decide verlo.  
- Marcos está mirando un programa muy bueno en la televisión.
17. A María no le gusta bailar pero esta noche está en una fiesta con unos amigos y está un poquito borracha. De momento se levanta y empieza a bailar como si fuera Madonna.  
- María está bailando como Madonna.
18. A Miguel no le gusta correr pero hoy hace un día muy bonito y ha comenzado a correr por el parque.  
- Miguel está corriendo por el parque.
19. María raramente canta. Sin embargo hoy está muy contenta y decide cantar mientras se baña en la ducha.  
- María está cantando en la ducha.
20. A Angelo no le gusta esquiar porque siempre tiene miedo de caerse. Sin embargo, hoy está con unos amigos en Blue Mountain y ha decidido tratar de esquiar.  
- Angelo está esquiando con sus amigos.

Distractors (as per GJT-Spanish)
En esta historia hay un niño que se llama Pepito. Esta noche Pepito va a salir con sus padres a cenar a un restaurante muy lujoso. Pepito se despide de su ranita, su perrito y de su jigotea, quienes están muy tristes porque también quieren ir a pasear con él. Cuando Pepito se va del cuarto la ranita se le cuela dentro del saco para irse con él. Pepito no se percata de esto y sale con sus padres, su hermana y la ranita metida en el saco hacia el restaurante. Una vez en el restaurante, se preparan para ordenar cuando la ranita salta del bolsillo de Pepito hacia el saxofón de unos de los músicos. El músico se da cuenta que el saxofón no funciona y lo sacude para ver qué pasa y en ese momento sale la rana y le cae en la cara al señor. El hombre se asusta, se cae de espalda y rompe el tambor de otro de los músicos. La rana salta otra vez y cae arriba de una ensalada que lleva un dependiente a una señora. Cuando la señora ve la rana en su ensalada, casi se desmaya del susto.

Luego la rana salta otra vez y cae dentro una copa de un señor que va a brindar con su esposa y lo besa en la nariz. Se forma tremendo espaviento en el restaurante y los clientes se quejan con el capitán. Este trata de atrapar a la rana pero no puede hasta que al final lo logra. En eso, Pepito ve que el capitán va a botar a su rana y le dice que por favor que esa es su rana, que no la bote, y el capitán entonces les dice a toda la familia que abandonen el restaurante inmediatamente.

En el carro todo el mundo va muy serio y molesto por lo que ha pasado por culpa de la rana de Pepito. Cuando llegan a la casa, el papá muy incómodo castiga a Pepito y lo manda para su cuarto. Al final, Pepito está en su cuarto riéndose de todo lo que ha ocurrido con su perrito, su ranita y su jicotea.