

Tense and aspect in Romance languages: Theoretical and applied perspectives.

2008-10-22 17:15:58

Tense and aspect in Romance languages: Theoretical and applied perspectives. Ed. by **Dalila Ayoun** and **M. Rafael Salaberry**. (Studies in bilingualism 29.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005. Pp. x, 316. ISBN [9027241406](#). \$155 (Hb). **SIBIL 29**

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This book brings together contributions by linguists working on the second language (L2) development of Romance tense-aspectual systems. The aim of the book is to present new experimental data and to set a common ground for their analysis, in order to start elaborating a more comprehensive model of the acquisition of tense-aspect in Romance languages.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter, by M. Rafael Salaberry and Dalila Ayoun, presents a review of the current hypotheses about the development of tense and aspect within six different theoretical approaches, classified according to the importance they place on pragmatics, semantics, text, input, cognition, and syntax. After this review, some potential theoretical and methodological challenges are identified, such as the difficulty of classifying lexical aspectual classes, the difficulty of incorporating the various insights into a coherent theoretical framework, the difficulty of separating the levels of lexical and grammatical aspect, and the problem of research design.

Chs. 2–5 present novel empirical data on the acquisition of tense and aspect in L2 Catalan (Ch. 2, by **Llorenç Comajoan**), L2 French (Ch. 3, by **Dalila Ayoun**), L2 Italian (Ch. 4, by **Sonia Rocca**), and L2 Spanish and L3 Portuguese (Ch. 5, by **M. Rafael Salaberry**). A number of theoretical issues is also addressed in these chapters, such as the extent to which grounding categories are binary (Ch. 2), whether L2 learners actually acquire both the inflectional morphology and the semantic properties associated with the AspP projection (Ch. 3), whether the aspect hypothesis proposed in Shirai 1991 and Andersen & Shirai 1994 may explain the data collected by studying the development of past forms in the Italian interlanguage of three English-speaking children (Ch. 4), and the role of lexical semantics, distributional biases in native speaker discourse, and general cognitive processes (Ch. 5).

In Ch. 6, **Carl Blyth** uses the results of the empirical studies presented in Chs. 2–5 to outline a proposal for classroom applications for the teaching of the aspectual distinctions in Romance languages. After an overview of the pedagogical principles derived from the research on L2 aspect acquisition, Blyth shows how to design lessons on aspect and provides a very useful appendix in which a class for beginners is sketched.

In Ch. 7, Ayoun and Salaberry summarize the results addressed in the book in order to elaborate a comprehensive model of the development of tense-aspect marking in the Romance languages.

This book is a very good example of how bringing together different approaches can result in an effective and fruitful discussion and in a better understanding of the topic as a whole.