

Contrasting Preterite and Imperfect use among advanced L2 learners: Judgments of iterated eventualities in Spanish¹

M. RAFAEL SALABERRY

Abstract

There are numerous studies that analyze the second language (L2) acquisition of aspect (e.g., see overviews and summaries in Ayoun and Salaberry 2005; Bardovi-Harlig 2000; Labeau 2005; Salaberry, 2008; Salaberry and Shirai 2002). The present study focuses on a specific component of tense-aspect: the iteration of eventualities (iterativity and habituality) conveyed with the use of Spanish Preterite and Imperfect respectively. The analysis is based on data from monolingual Spanish speakers and L1 English speakers with near-native competence in the L2 with the use of contextualized grammaticality judgments. The findings of the study show that near-native speakers of L2 Spanish do not distinguish fine-grained representations of aspectual knowledge (iterativity versus habituality), even though they demonstrate native-like judgments with more prototypical uses of aspect. The discussion of the findings points to possible effects of mapping of meaning and form in the L2, as well as possible instructional effects paired with frequency effects prompted by classroom environments.

1. Tense and aspect

Definitions of aspect tend to make reference to viewpoints. For instance, Klein (1994: 16) proposes that aspect ‘concerns the different perspectives which a speaker can take and express with regard to the temporal course of some event, action, process, etc.’. A typical aspectual distinction represented in various languages is the perfective-imperfective contrast. Caudal and Roussarie (2005: 267-268) assert that, by and large, the perfective form focuses on changes of

1. I am thankful to Iria Feijoo for help with the design of the linguistic prompts and data collection among non-native speakers, and to Sonia Bierbrauer for help with the collection of data among native speakers in Argentina.

state, whereas the imperfective form focuses on the permanence of the state in the world. Therefore, the basic meaning of the perfective is associated with boundedness and may refer to the beginning and/or end of a situation, thus it may be inceptive, punctual or completive (see Depraetre 1995 for a detailed explanation of boundedness as opposed to telicity). Thus, in example (1a), the verb *to eat* is associated with a sense of termination of the activity (i.e., the consumption of the apple). In contrast, imperfective aspect, being unbounded, focuses on the internal structure of the situation viewing it as ongoing, with no specific endpoint (imperfective aspect can be durative or habitual), as in (1b).

- (1) a. *Julián comió una manzana.* [bounded]
 ‘Julián ate (PRET) an apple.’
 b. *Julián comía una manzana.* [unbounded]
 ‘Julián ate/was eating (IMP) an apple.’

Note, however, that the reference to the different perspectives of speakers in Klein’s definition above is rather vague. That is, speakers’ points of view may vary according to how much contextual information one may consider as relevant to determine a viewpoint. Given this constraint, most definitions of aspect propose a division of aspectual distinctions into two levels: lexical aspect (ontological distinctions or situation types) and grammatical aspect (viewpoint or speaker’s perspective). For instance, Smith (1997: 2) explains that “[s]ituation type is conveyed by the verb constellation, which I define as a main verb and its arguments, including subject. Viewpoint is conveyed by a grammatical morpheme, usually verbal. Adverbials may give relevant information . . .” The above-mentioned distinction between levels of representation of aspectual meanings (lexical or grammatical) will become important for the analysis of data to be presented in this paper. For now, however, it is worth noting that not every researcher necessarily agrees with Smith’s position insofar her argument that adverbials are not regarded to be an essential component of lexical or grammatical aspect (e.g., Salaberry 2008; Sasse 2002).

2. Spanish Preterit and Imperfect

The perfective-imperfective aspectual contrast may be expressed with inflectional morphemes (e.g., Spanish Preterite and Imperfect or French *Passé Composé/Passé Simple* and *Imparfait*) or periphrastic expressions (e.g., English Past Progressive, French periphrasis *être en train de* + verb, Spanish *soler* + verb). In Spanish, Preterite and Imperfect have been traditionally described as syncretic forms that convey both tense (past) and aspectual information (e.g., Comrie 1976).

However, not all definitions of the meanings of the Preterite and Imperfect make reference to tense-aspectual meanings (e.g., Doiz-Bienzobas 1995, 2002; Klein 1994). Doiz-Bienzobas (1995, 2002), for instance, argues that the Preterite conveys the meaning of tense, whereas the Imperfect conveys the meaning of aspect. More specifically, Doiz-Bienzobas argues that the ‘Imperfect does not interact with the boundedness of the situations’ (p. 32). For instance, in sentence (2a) the Preterite is used to convey a perspective associated with speech time (tense). In contrast, in sentence (2b) the Imperfect is used to signal a view of the given situation from a past viewpoint (strictly aspectual) given an implicit reference point situated in the past (e.g., when I arrived home).

- (2) a. *Ayer Julián comió una manzana.*
 ‘Yesterday Julián ate (PRET) an apple.’
 b. *Cuando llegué a casa, Julián comía una manzana.*
 ‘When I arrived home, Julián ate/was eating (IMP) an apple.’

Focusing on the analysis of English mostly, Klein (1994) proposes a definition of tense and aspect that parallels Doiz-Bienzobas’ definition, arguing that tense is defined as the contrast between Topic Time (TT) and Time of the Utterance (TU) (or speech time in Doiz-Bienzobas’ model). Klein adds that aspect should also be defined in deictic terms (contrary to traditional views described in Comrie (1976) inter alia that depict aspect as a non-deictic concept). Thus, aspect is the contrast between TT and Time of the Situation (TSit). Thus, the Preterite and Imperfect may be conceptualized as distinct tense and aspect markers respectively.

3. Iterativity and habituality

3.1. Grammatical distinction

The Spanish Preterit and Imperfect may also convey specific aspectual notions such as habituality and iterativity as shown in sentences (3) and (4) below (cf. Montrul and Salaberry, 2003; Slabakova and Montrul 2007; Pérez-Leroux et al. 2007).

- (3) *Cuando era niño, Lucas jugaba al fútbol.* [habitual]
 When [he] was a child, Lucas played/used to/would (IMP) play soccer.
 (4) *Por años, Lucas jugó al fútbol.* [iterative]
 For years, Lucas played (PRET) soccer.

Even though both sentences above make reference to the iteration of eventualities, there is a subtle aspectual difference between them through the use of

Preterite and Imperfect. Whereas the Imperfect conveys the aspectual notion of habituality, the Preterite conveys a rather distinct aspectual concept, the notion of iterativity (cf. Langacker 1999). By and large, iterativity makes reference to the basic idea of the repetition of specific eventualities (focus on the repeated eventualities), whereas habituality is akin to generic statements that make reference to the overarching concept that an eventuality has been iterated (focus on the iteration). Despite the fact that iterativity and habituality are inherently associated with distinct morphological markers in Spanish, the principled distinction between iterativity and habituality remains an elusive target, both for researchers as well as Spanish L2 learners (i.e., Salaberry 2008). In part, the vagueness in the description stems from the fact that both iterativity and habituality are based on the iteration of eventualities. In English, iterativity is normally represented with the Simple Past Tense, whereas habituality is represented with various forms, including the Simple Past. For instance, sentence (3) shows that habituality may be formally conveyed in English with periphrases such as *used to* and *would*, but also with the Simple Past.

3.2. Principled contrasts

Salaberry (2008) reviewed various proposals that account for the distinct nature of habituals and iteratives (e.g., Binnick 1991; Comrie, 1976; de Swart, 1998; Klein 1994; Langacker 1999; Smith, 1991/1997). For instance, within the scope of his conceptualization of aspect as Time of the Situation (Tsit) related to Topic Times (TT), Klein claims that habituals are represented by a series of topic times, whereas iteratives refer to one single TT. That is, iteratives are represented by situations in which a “single but complex lexical content is linked to one TT, whereas in habituals the same lexical content is linked to several TTs” (p. 48). Thus, habituality is represented as an overarching aspectual phenomenon above the level of inherent lexical aspect, whereas iterativity is restricted to the realm of inherent lexical aspect (i.e., “inner quantification of a lexical content”). This solution is problematic because we reduce the scope of application of iterativity to the realm of lexical aspect, when in fact the evidence shows that the selection of the Spanish perfective form makes reference to grammatical aspect or viewpoint aspect (cf. Smith 1997).²

Binnick (1991: 155, stress added) uses the criterion of time magnitude to define iteratives as “repetitive episodes rather *closely spaced* in time and viewed

2. Michaelis (2004: 21) points out that “habitual-event radicals and iterated-event radicals are indistinguishable at the level of Aktionsart structure: both qualify as heterogeneous activities.”

as a unit,” whereas habituais are “repetitive episodes somewhat *distantly spaced* in time [which] are viewed as a unit.” Binnick offers sentences (5) and (6) as examples of iteratives and habituais respectively.

(5) *He repeated his question several times.*

(6) *Sometimes, I would reread writers whom I especially liked.*

Time magnitude, however, is a conceptual rather than a grammatical criterion. For instance, sentence (7) shows that the same predicate from (5) can be described as a repetitive episode somewhat *distantly spaced* in time. Thus the argument about time magnitude cannot hold.

(7) *He repeated his question every year on Christmas eve.*

Yet, another alternative to contrast habituality and iterativity is to consider the role of adverbials (adjuncts). For instance, Smith (1997: 51) notes that in sentence (8), there is a time discrepancy in the temporal information conveyed by the verbal predicate (*riding a bicycle*) and the adverbial (*last year*).

(8) *Susan rode a bicycle last year.*

The clash of temporal features between adverbial phrase and verb type is resolved by means of a repetitive interpretation of the basic verb type. In contrast with (8), Smith notes that sentence (9) is not likely to be regarded as a repeated event.

(9) *John moved to a new apartment last year.*

Thus, given the conceptual (cf. world knowledge) nature of the distinction represented in the understanding of the meanings of sentences (8) and (9) above, Smith considers that the information provided by the adverbials represents pragmatic information that lies outside the scope of the grammatical representation of the sentence (cf. Smith’s derived situation types).

Along the same lines, de Swart (1998) proposes the contextual reinterpretation process of coercion to account for the shift in meaning of basic lexical aspectual classes brought about by the effect of adjuncts. Coercion “is triggered if there is a conflict between the aspectual character of the eventuality description and the aspectual constraints of some other element in the context” (p. 360). For instance, de Swart claims that we can coerce a telic event into a state by providing an iterative meaning (10a), or a habitual meaning (10b).

- (10) a. *John played the sonata for about eight hours.*
 b. *For months, the train arrived late.*

Notice, however, that both (10a) and (10b) are labeled as habituais, even though it is evident that in languages like Spanish the translation of such sentences would make use of the perfective form (to signal iterativity), not the imperfective (the latter being the preferred form to convey habituality). Thus, the proposal about coercion as a contextual reinterpretation process does not help us discriminate between iterativity and habituality.

- (11) a. *John tocó la sonata por unas ocho horas.*
 ‘John played (PRET) the sonata for about eight hours.’
 b. *Durante (varios) meses, el tren llegó tarde.*
 ‘For months, the train arrived (PRET) late.’

Finally, Langacker (1999: 251–253) makes a distinction between repetitive (iterative) sentences on the one hand, and habitual (and generic) sentences on the other hand. Langacker argues that the actual plane (that corresponds to iterative sentences) “comprises event instances that are conceived *as actually occurring*,” whereas the structural plane (that corresponds to habitual sentences) “comprises event instances with *no status in actuality*” (p. 251, stress added). Thus, iterated-event predications are anchored to particular points in time (expressing actual, episodic events), whereas habitual sentences express structural events (not anchored to any particular points in time) similar to the meanings expressed by generic sentences. The difference between a habitual and a generic sentence is that in the latter there is no reference to any particular instance of individuals, but rather there is reference to the type of individual (see also Depraetre 1995).

Following up on the proposal made by Langacker, Doiz-Bienzobas (1995: 107) distinguishes two cases in which multiple instances of the same event are represented through distinct morphological means in Spanish: the event of swimming is presented as habitual with the Imperfect (12a) and as iterative with the Preterite (12b).

- (12) a. *El año pasado iba a nadar todos los días.*
 ‘Last year, I used to go (IMP) swimming every day.’
 b. *El año pasado fui a nadar todos los días.*
 ‘Last year, I went (PRET) swimming every day.’

In line with Langacker’s proposal, only the habitual allows for the failure of the event to take place at one particular time during last year (i.e., instances of the event are not anchored to specific times). Thus, any one of the events depicted in (12a) may fail to be present without necessarily affecting the interpretation of the habitual meaning of the sentence. In contrast, the use of the Preterite in sentence (12b) implies that all events are anchored to particular points in time: it would be less felicitous (an implicature as argued by Comrie 1976) to state

that the speaker went to swim every day last year if indeed any of the events did not take place.

3.3. *The role of adverbials*

As reviewed above, adverbial phrases seem to act as “triggers” that determine whether the perfective or imperfective forms will be grammatical within the given discourse frame that provides a larger context for the interpretation of aspectual distinctions.

Thus, Menéndez-Benito (2002), for instance, points out that Spanish Preterite and Imperfect behave differently with respect to generic adverbs (e.g., *normalmente* ‘normally’) and durational phrases (e.g., *durante dos años* ‘for two years’). That is, whereas the perfective (13a) cannot combine with generic adverbs, the imperfective (13b) is acceptable (13b). In contrast, the perfective is acceptable with durational phrases (14a), but the imperfective (14b) is unlikely to be regarded as grammatical.

- (13) a. **El año pasado Juan normalmente fue al cine.*
 ‘Last year, Juan normally went (PRET) to the movie theater.’
 b. *El año pasado Juan normalmente iba al cine.*
 ‘Last year, Juan normally went (IMP) to the movie theater.’
- (14) a. *Durante dos años Juan fue al cine.*
 ‘During two years, Juan went (PRET) to the movie theater.’
 b. **Durante dos años Juan iba al cine.*
 ‘During two years, Juan went (IMP) to the movie theater.’

Extending these examples to cases of iterated eventualities, sentences (15a) and (16b) have, arguably, a lower probability of being accepted by many native speakers, when compared to sentences (15b) and (16a) which likely sound more natural, and thus are more acceptable.

- (15) a. *Durante muchos años, Julián jugaba al béisbol.* [low probability of acceptance]
 ‘For (many) years, Julian played (IMP) baseball.’
 b. *Durante muchos años, Julián jugó al béisbol.*
 ‘For (many) years, Julian played (PRET) baseball.’
- (16) a. *Cuando era niño, Julián jugaba al béisbol.*
 ‘When he was a child, Julian played (IMP) baseball.’
 b. *Cuando era niño, Julián jugó al béisbol.* [low probability of acceptance]
 ‘When he was a child, Julian played (PRET) baseball.’

Furthermore, there are some types of generic adverbial phrases that, despite being putatively incompatible with the Preterite (cf. 13a above), they are nonetheless perfectly acceptable with the use of the perfective marker (17a) when used with some types of generic adverbs.

- (17) a. *El año pasado Lucas fue al cine repetidamente.*
 ‘Last year, Lucas normally went (PRET) to the movie theater.’
 b. *El año pasado Lucas iba al cine repetidamente.*
 ‘Last year, Lucas normally went (IMP) to the movie theater.’

In sum, it is apparent that the correlation of type of iterativity with the adverbial phrase is more likely to be lexicalized in the form of constructions (cf. Michaelis 2004) that cut across the durative-generic classification (i.e., it is orthogonal to it). What determines whether a particular construction will favor an iterative or a habitual meaning is not categorical, in part because aspectual representation is subjective to the extent that speakers may provide more than a single linguistic representation of the same eventuality (e.g., Comrie 1976; Klein 1994; Smith 1997).

4. Previous studies

4.1. L2 studies on the acquisition of iterativity

Despite the abundant literature on the topic of the L2 acquisition of aspect, there have been very few studies on the acquisition of the iterativity-habituality contrast among L2 second language learners in general. In Spanish in particular, there have been two published studies on this topic: Slabakova and Montrul (2007) and Pérez-Leroux et al. (2007). Slabakova and Montrul (2007) tested de Swart’s argument about pragmatic coercion of iterated eventualities (“pragmatic processing abilities” p. 456). For instance, they argue that sentence (18b) represents a case of “implicit coercion” of the lexical aspectual class of an achievement verb (i.e., *llegar* = *to arrive*) into a habitual activity, prompted by the use of the adverbial phrase that precedes it (i.e., *durante muchos meses*).

- (18) a. *Ayer el tren del mediodía llegó tarde.*
 ‘Yesterday the 12 o’clock train arrived (PRET) late.’
 b. *Durante muchos meses, el tren del mediodía llegó tarde.*
 ‘For months the 12 o’clock train arrived (PRET) late.’

Slabakova and Montrul analyzed data from grammaticality judgment tests from 60 English native speakers and 27 native Spanish speakers. The sentences were presented in pairs to test the meaning contrast of verbs with a basic and a

shifted interpretation brought about by grammatical or pragmatic means. Overall, the pattern of responses of advanced learners was indistinguishable from the responses from native speakers in statistically significant ways, except for one condition: iterated telic events (e.g., 18b above). Essentially, the findings showed that both advanced and intermediate learners as well as the native speakers consistently accepted the use of the Preterite with sentence (18a) in which the single arrival of the train is depicted. In contrast, both the advanced and intermediate learner groups rated iterated achievements (exemplified in sample sentence 18b) lower than native speakers on the grammaticality scale. Slabakova and Montrul point out that these findings are difficult to explain because the participants' L1 (i.e., English) maps iterativity in the same way that Spanish does, and therefore it should have been relatively easy to transfer this aspectual concept to the L2.

Another study that investigated the representation of iterativity among non-native speakers was Pérez-Leroux et al. (2007). Their analysis was based, primarily, on the possible differential effect of implicit and explicit triggers of iterativity as shown in sentences (19a) and (20a) respectively.

- (19) a. *El terremoto sacudió la ciudad por días.* [implicit coercion]
 'The earthquake shook (PRET) the city for days.'
 b. *El terremoto sacudía la ciudad por días.*
 'The earthquake shook/used (IMP) to shake the city for days.'
- (20) a. *El terremoto sacudió la ciudad repetidamente.* [explicit coercion]
 'The earthquake shook (PRET) the city repeatedly.'
 b. *El terremoto sacudía la ciudad repetidamente.*
 'The earthquake shook/used (IMP) to shake the city repeatedly.'

Pérez-Leroux et al. implemented the distinction between explicit and implicit coercion through the use of specific durational and generic adverbials (e.g., *por días* and *repetidamente* respectively) that are expected to trigger distinct aspectual representations.³

Pérez-Leroux et al. analyzed data from 41 students and ten native speakers on the effects of unique, habitual and iterated situations with the use of a 50-item grammaticality judgment task and an 18-item translation task. The results revealed that, as expected, both groups of learners accepted the prototypical combinations of perfective marker with unique punctual event, and

3. Notice that the expectation of Pérez-Leroux et al. with regards to the effect of both generic and durational adverbials (i.e., both assumed to be compatible with the Preterite) does not coincide with the proposal advanced by Menéndez-Benito (2002). I believe Pérez-Leroux et al. are right in their analysis. I return to the analysis of this possibility in the discussion of findings of the present study.

imperfective marker with a generic habitual event. However, learners—unlike native speakers—failed to reject the use of the Imperfect with both implicit and explicit iterated events (19b and 20b respectively).⁴ Pérez-Leroux et al. point out that as far as knowledge about the effects of iterativity on verbal marking, “[g]rammatical instruction does not distinguish between these senses, it merely states that ‘repetition in the past is expressed in the Imperfect form’.” In other words, if learners have access to only explicit instruction to develop their L2 system, we should expect them to mistakenly use the imperfective marker with iterated, non-habitual events.

4.2. *Analysis of findings of previous studies*

The studies reviewed above assessed knowledge of aspectual contrasts (represented in Spanish Preterite and Imperfect) with the use of decontextualized sentences. This is a limiting factor because single utterances lacking any narrative context may not provide enough information to determine the aspectual contour of any given eventuality. This may be a significant liability for non-native speakers, given that native speakers are more likely than non-natives to think of potential contexts that may validate (or invalidate) possible interpretations (cf., the homogeneity of the native speakers’ responses in Coppeters 1987). In fact, Pérez-Leroux et al. acknowledge this limitation stating that their decontextualized sentences may have left some (control) native speakers wondering about the actual meaning of the sentences they had to evaluate:

Native speakers’ mild acceptance of iterative sentences with imperfect suggests ... the possibility that our sentences failed to supply enough semantic cues to rule out the habitual representation of the events portrayed. (2007: 446)

Another constraint of the research design of previous studies on the analysis of iterativity-habituality contrasts is the potential effect of knowledge of English on the judgments of the control group of Spanish native speakers. That is, the control groups were composed of Spanish-English bilingual speakers. Given the rather nuanced and subtle differences in meanings associated with iterativity-habituality contrasts, potential influences of the L2 on the L1 are likely to affect the judgments of the native Spanish speakers. This possible effect of cross-linguistic influence is in some cases compounded by the fact that the groups of native speakers that served as control groups were very small,

4. Pérez-Leroux et al. argued that the problems that L2 learners have with complex aspectual representations such as habitual versus iterative contexts can be accounted for within the perspective of semantic selectional restrictions (rather than feature activation proposed by Slabakova and Montrul).

comprising no more than 10 subjects. The number of native speakers is also relevant given that very subtle differences in meaning may easily sway native speakers in their judgments. Thus, more robust numbers of native controls may provide a better baseline group. Finally, it is possible that the L2 learners used in previous studies are not advanced enough, or that they do not have enough experience and exposure to Spanish to make accurate judgments of grammaticality about complex aspectual concepts.

In sum, the analysis of previous studies highlights the relevance of three methodological factors that could be incorporated to the research design of a study on the analysis of iterative-habitual aspectual meanings: (a) a broader discursive context, (b) the use of advanced Spanish learners, and (c) the use of monolingual native speakers instead of bilinguals to ascertain the interpretations of nuanced aspectual meanings. The present study contributes to the ongoing investigation of subtle aspectual meanings by incorporating specific methodological procedures to address the above-mentioned methodological liabilities of previous studies (see also Salaberry 2012 for a discussion of the constraints brought about by aspect cues embedded in contextualized linguistic prompts)

5. Present study

5.1. Hypotheses

The present study assesses the knowledge representation of iterated eventualities among both native and near-native speakers. The dependent variable is represented by the selection of past tense markers in L2 Spanish in the context of short paragraphs. In line with the results from previous studies, the present study tests the hypothesis that Spanish near-native speakers will reject the marking of an iterated eventuality with the perfective form (i.e., aspectual concept of iterativity). In turn, it is expected that the same near-native speakers will favor the use of the imperfective with all iterated eventualities irrespective of the type of iteration effected by the discursive context that accompanies each predicate. On the other hand, it is anticipated that the control group of native speakers will accept the use of the perfective form to signal the concept of iterativity, and that concomitantly, it will also accept the use of the imperfective to signal the aspectual concept of habituality.

5.2. Participants

There were two distinct groups of participants represented in this study: 20 highly proficient non-native speakers of Spanish, and 22 monolingual Span-

ish native speakers. The non-native speakers were all native English speakers recruited among graduate-level students who, at the time of the study, were enrolled at a major public research university and who were also working as Spanish instructors (teaching assistants). Even though some of the non-native speakers had more experience than others (e.g., period of study-abroad experience, social relations with Spanish speakers), all of them had been screened for an adequate level of proficiency in Spanish to be able to teach the language to undergraduate students. The control group was comprised of 22 college-level native speakers who were undergraduate students at a major public university in Argentina. All native speakers had limited or no English proficiency at all, as determined by the length of academic instruction received on the topic (no significant formal instruction to a maximum of 2 semesters) and self-identification. All subjects participated voluntarily in the experiment. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the authors' home institution.

5.3. Methodology

For reasons of efficiency, and given the high level of competence of both groups participating in the study, there was a single Spanish proficiency test administered to provide information about both their general competence in Spanish and to assess their knowledge of basic aspectual contrasts. The basic premise of this type of procedure is that L2 learners need to have an advanced level of proficiency in order to process the information in the text and to assess the aspectual choices provided for each target item. Learners with limited knowledge of the L2 will not be able to complete the test successfully, thus ensuring a minimum (high) level of proficiency. This procedure has been used successfully in other aspect studies (see Bardovi-Harlig, 2000 for a review of relevant publications). The test was represented by a discourse-based 30-item forced-choice test (i.e., Preterite or Imperfect). The target items were part of a narrative text based on the plot of the movie *Psycho* (Appendix A). This particular text has been used in previous analyses of aspectual knowledge (Salaberry 1999; Slabakova and Montrul 2007); thus it provides a measure that can be cross-referenced across studies. Furthermore, it has been used in at least one of the studies that investigated knowledge of iterativity in Spanish among L1 English speakers (i.e., Slabakova and Montrul 2007). The items in the test are mostly representative of the prototypical congruent correlation of lexical aspect and grammatical aspect. That is, all dynamic events (i.e., accomplishments and achievements) are marked with the Preterite whereas all non-dynamic events (i.e., activities and states) are marked with the Imperfect. The only exception to this trend are one state and one activity (items 10-*buscar* and 29-*querer* re-

spectively) that are foregrounded in the narrative, thus they are marked with the Preterite.

The main instrument used in the present study to measure the dependent variable was a discourse-based grammaticality judgment test. There were 28 discursive contexts created on the basis of seven discourse frames that were further modified according to two sets of adverbial phrases (7 frames × 2 types of adverbials = 14) that represented triggers for iterative or habitual representations of the iterated eventualities (Appendix B). Each one of the 14 contexts was presented with two optional sentences that provided a conclusion to each paragraph showing uses of Preterite or Imperfect for participants to judge in terms of their acceptability (14 discourse prompts × 2 aspectual markers = 28). In total, each participant had to make 28 judgments of acceptability. All discursive contexts were presented in randomized order.⁵

The following example shows how each one of the seven basic discursive contexts was further subdivided according to two types of adverbial phrases (i.e., *cuando éramos niños* . . . versus *con el paso del tiempo* . . .), and how each adverbial phrase was further subdivided into two judgments of acceptability, one with the Preterite and the other one with the Imperfect (the items in bold and underlined were highlighted for the purpose of this paper only; that is, they were not highlighted in the original test).

- (1) *Mi amiga Luisa es muy detallista. No sólo porque compra regalos para sus familiares en fechas destacadas, sino también porque hace manualidades durante horas y horas en las que siempre consigue hacer el detalle perfecto para cada persona. Es gracioso que Luisa no siempre fue así, ya que . . .*
*. . . **cuando éramos niños**, Luisa (a) se olvidaba (b) se olvidó del cumpleaños de su hermana.*

- (2) *Mi amiga Luisa es muy detallista. No sólo porque compra regalos para sus familiares en fechas destacadas, sino también porque hace manualidades durante horas y horas en las que siempre consigue hacer el detalle perfecto para cada persona. Es gracioso que Luisa no siempre fue así, ya que . . .*
*. . . **con el paso del tiempo**, Luisa (a) se olvidaba (b) se olvidó del cumpleaños de su hermana.*
 My friend Luisa is very attentive to details. Not only because she buys gifts for other family members on special occasions, but also because

5. The final list of 14 items was based on a pilot study using a set of 21 items including some ambiguous contexts.

she spends hours doing crafts that can be the perfect gift for each person. It is curious that Luisa has not always been like that, given that . . .
 . . . **when we were kids**, Luisa (a) would forget (b) forgot her sister's birthday.

...

. . . **as time went by**, Luisa (a) would forget (b) forgot her sister's birthday.

The reader should note that participants were not led to make direct comparisons of these contrasting options because, as stated above, these contexts were presented in randomized order. The participants were given the option of choosing one out of four scores to grade the acceptability of the use of Preterite or Imperfect with each adverbial phrase in context: 1 (totally UNACCEPTABLE), 2 (unacceptable), 3 (acceptable) and 4 (perfectly ACCEPTABLE). The two extreme scores were highlighted with capital letters to make sure that participants did not confuse which one was each extreme of acceptability. The use of a four-point scale guaranteed that participants would provide a more categorical response than it would be the case with the use of a five-point scale with a neutral point. Given the high level of competence of both groups of participants (i.e., native speakers and near-native speakers), this procedure was not expected to force any decision that participants were not capable of making on their own.

5.4. Data analysis

First, I describe the findings from the 30-item test that measured general proficiency with a specific focus on aspectual distinctions (i.e., the text narrating events of the movie *Psycho*). An analysis was conducted on the means by level for each sentence that made up the narrative text by assigning a value of 0 to the Preterite selections and a value of 1 to the Imperfect selections. An item by item analysis served to measure the homogeneity of the selections of all levels by showing which sentences had been categorically marked by each group as represented by the group means. The means for each sentence by level is provided in Table 1.

The judgments made by native speakers matched the results of other native speakers used in previous studies that used the same test (cf. Slabakova and Montrul, 2007). With regards to the comparison of native and non-native speakers' judgments in the present study, there were no significant contrasts. Furthermore, the results of the test revealed that both groups of participants made categorical selections in all cases, except for the judgment of non-native speakers about item 11 (*Ilover*). Categorical selections were determined to be sentences with a mean of 0.8 or higher for the Imperfect and 0.2 or lower for the

Table 1. Mean scores for test of prototypical meanings of aspect

Item #	Lexical aspect	Native speakers	Non-native speakers
1	1	0.1	0
2	2	0.9	1
3	3	0.9	0.9
4	3	0.8	0.9
5	3	0.8	0.9
6	1	0	0
7	1	0	0
8	1	0	0
9	3	0.8	0.8
10	2	0	0.2
11	2	0.9	0.6
12	1	0	0
13	3	0.9	0.8
14	1	0	0.2
15	3	0.9	1
16	2	0.9	1
17	1	0.2	0.1
18	1	0.2	0.1
19	2	0.9	0.8
20	1	0	0
21	1	0	0
22	1	0	0
23	3	0.9	1
24	3	0.9	0.9
25	3	0.9	0.8
26	3	0.9	0.9
27	1	0	0
28	1	0	0
29	3	0.2	0.4
30	2	0.9	1

Preterite. Thus, in line with results from previous studies reviewed above, natives and non-natives showed similar judgments of grammaticality about prototypical choices of aspectual marking in past tense Spanish.

The analysis of data of the main test was based on a repeated measure ANOVA that modeled participant scores as a function of two within subject factors (iterative or habitual, and imperfective or perfective) and one between-subject factor (experience in the L2). All data were analyzed using the SPSS 15.0 statistical software. The results of the analysis show that the *p*-values show a significant effect on the scores of each subject (type I error $\alpha = 0.05$) for the

Table 2. Summary of statistical results of the main test

		Mean	St. Error	<i>T</i> statistic	<i>p</i> -Value
<i>Habitual meanings</i>					
Preterite	NS	1.6753	0.1068	−3.67	0.0007*
	NNS	2.2429	0.112		
Imperfect	NS	3.7273	0.0904	1.79	0.0813
	NNS	3.4929	0.0948		
<i>Iterative meanings</i>					
Preterite	NS	3.3506	0.0978	2.93	0.0056*
	NNS	2.9357	0.1026		
Imperfect	NS	2.4026	0.1043	−3.24	0.0024*
	NNS	2.8929	0.1094		

effect of Preterite-Imperfect (< 0.0001), Iterative-Habitual (0.0032), two-way interactions between grammatical markers and aspectual concepts (< 0.0001) and three-way interactions between grammatical markers, aspectual concepts, and levels of proficiency (< 0.0001). Because the *p*-value for the three-way interaction is significant, it only makes sense to discuss the interpretation in terms of this outcome. Thus, pairwise comparisons were done for different levels of all the three-way interactions in the analysis with associated *t* statistics and *p*-values (Table 2). These findings and presented in graphical format in Figures 1 and 2.

The interaction plots of Figure 1 and the data from Table 2 show the following outcome within the category of habituales. Overall, both groups have lower mean scores for perfective than imperfective selections (1.675 versus 3.727 for natives and 2.242 versus 3.492 for non-native speakers). For the category imperfective, in particular, the mean scores are not significantly different between native and non-native speakers (3.723 versus 3.492). That is to say, the use of the Imperfect to signal habituality cannot differentiate native speakers from non-native speakers. However, the mean scores for the judgments for the Preterite are significantly different between native and non-native speakers (*p*-value of 0.0007). That is, only native speakers distinctly reject the use of the perfective to signal habituality. The distinct outcome of these results mirrors the findings from Pérez-Leroux et al. study (non-natives accept imperfect to mark habituality, but they do not necessarily reject the perfective form to mark the same aspectual concept).

Most noteworthy, however, are the results for the iterativity examples as shown graphically on the interaction plots in Figure 2: for both imperfective and perfective, the mean scores between native and non-natives are significantly different (*p*-values of 0.002 and 0.005 respectively). For native speak-

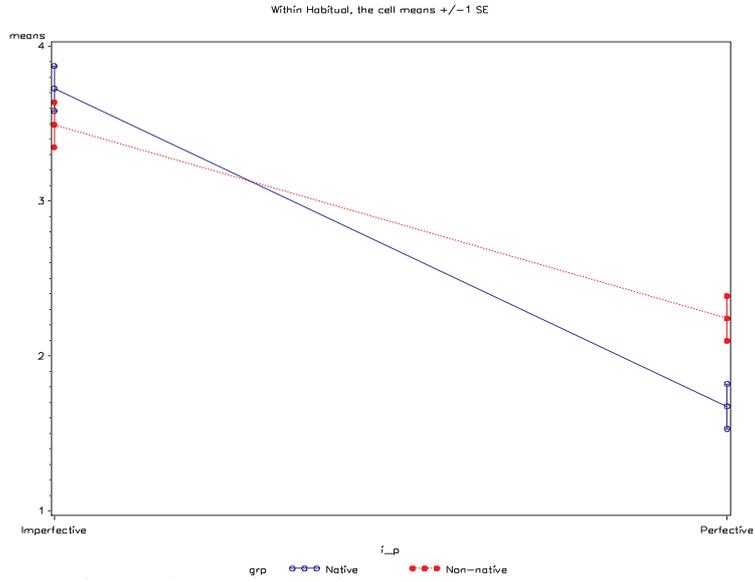


Figure 1. Interaction plots of results for the aspectual meaning of *HABITUALITY*

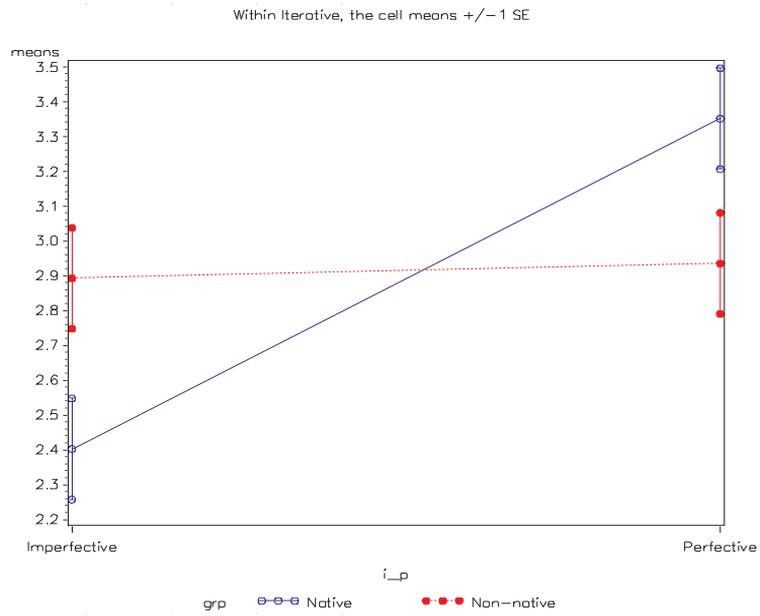


Figure 2. Interaction plots of results for the aspectual meaning of *ITERATIVITY*

ers, the mean scores are consistently higher for perfective than imperfective (2.402 versus 3.350). This shows that native speakers categorically preferred the Preterite to mark the aspectual concept of iterativity. In contrast, the mean scores for non-natives are approximately the same for both Preterite and Imperfect (2.892 versus 2.935). That is, non-native speakers appear to be ambivalent about which grammatical marker to associate with iterativity. In essence, the results show a clear contrast for the selections made by native and non-native speakers within the category iteratives, but not within the category habituals.

5.5. Discussion of findings

The overall findings of the present study show two distinct outcomes according to the type of test (i.e., general test versus test of iterated eventualities). On the one hand, the test of general competence of aspectual distinctions (cf. *Psycho* text) revealed no differences in the judgments of native and near-native speakers. On the other hand, the test of iterated eventualities demonstrated that the near-native speaker group did not make the same judgments that the native speaker group made about the distinct representations of iterativity versus habituality. In essence, the failure of non-native speakers to select the grammatical markers to signal iterativity versus habituality stands in contrast with the overall success in the selection of Preterite and Imperfect in the context of more prototypical meaning of aspect (i.e., boundedness). The present study confirms previous trends with ever more stringent methodological conditions (i.e., discourse-based judgments and larger sample of monolingual speakers as baseline data), thereby ascertaining an increasingly robust trend in the acquisition of nuanced aspectual contrasts.

5.6. Possible theoretical account

Despite the fact that non-native speakers of Spanish do not achieve native-like knowledge of the representation of iterativity versus habituality in Spanish past tense, such aspectual contrast is represented in English (albeit through more ambiguous morphological means). That is, simply through L1 transfer, English speakers should be able to notice the distinct representation of iterativity with the Preterite and habituality with the Imperfect (Slabakova and Montrul 2007 make the similar argument to analyze the results of their study). For instance, learners should have been able to determine that the use of the adverbial phrase “*when we were kids*” in the example shown above (cf. description of the study) was inherently compatible with the option “*Luisa . . . would forget.*” In turn, the use of the adverbial phrase “*as time went by*” represents a more compatible op-

tion for the selection of “*Luisa ... forgot.*” What are the possible reasons why positive transfer may not happen even at very advanced levels of proficiency in the L2? I will discuss two possible factors that may concurrently account for this outcome: the lack of a direct correspondence of the morphological means to convey aspectual concepts in the L1 and L2, and the effect of instructional practices about the description of iterated eventualities.

As mentioned above, English speakers already have a representational knowledge of iterativity versus habituality (cf. Comrie 1976; Langacker 1999). It is possible, however, that what prevents L2 learners from properly transferring this specific type of aspectual knowledge is the fact that there is no one-to-one mapping of the formal means (e.g., morphological, periphrastic) available in the L1 and the L2 to convey the contrastive aspectual notions of iterativity and habituality. That is, L2 learners face two challenges: the transfer of the actual aspectual concepts, and the matching of the means by which those concepts are conveyed in the L2. Thus, the concept of iterated eventualities in the L1 is not guaranteed to transfer to the L2, not because the concept itself is problematic, but rather because the morphosyntactic means do not match up (cf. Pienemann et al. 2005).

If the previous analysis is correct we can thus expect some oversimplification and overgeneralizations in the development of the L2. In this respect, one element that becomes relevant to the analysis of these findings is the possible effect of a primordial past tense marker. The latter has been proposed as the possible theoretical explanation for the empirical outcome of various studies on the selection and use of past tense markers among beginning L2 learners (e.g., Salaberry 1999, 2002; Wiberg 1996). The present findings, however, expand the application of the hypothesis of a default past tense marker among adult L2 Spanish learners to relatively advanced stages of development of knowledge about aspect contrasts (cf. Labeau 2005; Salaberry 2008). Within this account, the Preterite would develop as a generalizable marker of past tense that can be productively applied to any predicate (rule-like), and that, furthermore, it is strongly associated with unique sequential events. The Imperfect, in contrast, appears to develop in association with specific lexical units (e.g., state verbs) and to mark specific aspectual concepts (e.g., habituality, progressivity). In line with this explanation, the findings from the present study show the apparent lack of “recovery” from the incorrect overgeneralization of the use of the Imperfect with all iterated eventualities in the past (regardless of whether they are iterative or habitual) among very advanced learners of Spanish.

Along the lines of this argument, it is worth noting that Pérez-Leroux et al. (2007: 448) propose a hierarchical sequence of acquisition:

... nonnative speakers find it easier to identify the association between preterite and unique events. Next, they show mastery of preference for the imperfective

with the habitual condition. Because they did not actively reject the preterite in habitual contexts, they failed to reach native-speaker levels of contrast.

Pérez-Leroux et al. thus conclude that the aspectual restrictions associated with the Preterite are learned separately from the ones that correspond to the Imperfect: "If a learner has determined that the Preterite selects eventualities, but has not determined the selection of the Imperfect, we would expect patterns of results such as those encountered." The fact that nuanced concepts of aspectual contrasts (i.e., iterativity versus habituality) present in the L1 are not (positively) transferred to the L2 among near-native speakers is revealing of the fact that learners rely on a limited representation of aspectual contrasts. In essence, no matter the amount of experience with the L2, learners do not seem to move beyond the most basic association of aspectual contrasts represented in English (e.g., boundedness).

Further compounding the effect brought about by a selective process of L1 transfer, instruction on the contrastive uses of the Spanish Preterite and Imperfect tends to focus on prototypical combinations of lexical aspect and grammatical aspect (cf. Negueruela and Lantolf 2006). That is, the use of the Imperfect to mark habituality is typically taught and is also frequent in most samples of language. In contrast, the use of the Preterite to mark iterativity is rarely mentioned in formal instruction, and moreover, it is not very frequent in most typical interactions or language samples available to most L2 learners.⁶ Thus, by and large, instructional procedures and rules tend to mirror and confirm the association of the perfective form with punctual events only (not iterated events) and the imperfective form with all iterated events mostly represented through habituality. In other words, if the L2 developmental process of aspectual concepts is primarily guided by instruction, we should expect L2 learners to mistakenly use the imperfective marker with iterated, non-habitual events.

Even though there is largely no data on the actual explanations and language used in L2 classroom interaction, the analysis of textbook data and the occasional description of the student populations used in previous studies confirm this possibility. For instance, Pérez-Leroux et al. (2007) point out that grammatical instruction provided in academic programs does not distinguish the aspectual meaning of habituality expressed with the Imperfect and the iterative meaning expressed with the Preterite. Similarly, Negueruela and Lantolf (2006) gather a similar conclusion with regards to the lack of sophistication of most treatments of aspect in Spanish L2 classrooms. Furthermore, the analysis

6. To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies that have done any systematic analysis of the type of linguistic input that most classroom learners may have access to in a typical classroom environment. Thus, this argument is largely speculative because it is based mostly on anecdotal evidence.

of recent studies that incorporate a larger database indirectly point to the effect of experience and instructional effects on the gradual and slow progress made by non-native speakers as they incorporate lexical and narrative constraints that determine the use of morphological markers of aspect (e.g., Salaberry, 2011).

In sum, the present findings provide empirical evidence to substantiate the proposal about a dissociation in the types of L1 and L2 knowledge shared by bilingual speakers who have learnt the second language as adults in formal settings. That is, even though non-native speakers of Spanish have a conceptual knowledge of aspectual contrasts (i.e., iterativity versus habituality) instantiated in their native language, such representation of knowledge is not transferred successfully to the L2. The apparent lack of ultimate attainment is rather subtle given that non-native speakers are perfectly capable to control and use successfully most cases in which aspectual contrasts are needed. However, it appears that there are limitations to this story of success, mostly restricted to contrasts that are not directly taught. Interestingly, these findings support the claim originally made by Coppieters with regards to the apparent lack of homogeneity about aspectual selections among near-native speakers, relative to the high degree of homogeneity in the responses among native speakers.

5.7. *Limitations*

There are several limitations of the current study that should be taken into account to properly assess its outcome within the overall analysis of the acquisition of aspectual concepts in the L2. First, despite the fact that the present study incorporated some significant changes with respect to previous research designs (cf. monolingual native speakers, discourse-based prompts), it is also the case that the findings from the present study are based on a limited data set with one single L1-L2 combination. Thus, the present findings need to be replicated with larger pools of subjects and with additional L1-L2 combinations that could analyze similar aspectual contrasts. An additional limitation of the present study is given by the fact that there is very limited research on the nature and influence of adverbial expressions on the overall composition of aspectual representations. For instance, currently there are no studies that have looked at the possible effect of frequently used adverbial phrases (e.g., *Cuando era ...* as a trigger for habituality) on the specification of aspectual concepts (Menéndez-Benito 2002 being an exception to this trend). That is, the present study cannot properly assess the effect of different types of adverbial phrases given the dearth of empirical findings in this area. The present findings further justify the need for a more fine-grained analysis of the selective effect of adverbial phrases on the interpretations of iterated eventualities as iterative or habitual.

It is also possible that the results of judgments of grammaticality/acceptability of written sentences (albeit in a discourse-based context) will not be replicated in the more dynamic environment of normal interaction in a social context. That is, it is conceivable that near-native speakers are responsive to a number of redundant cues that can help them become more likely to distinctly mark iterativity versus habituality. In essence, these findings cannot be extrapolated to socially mediated contexts in which substantial contextual support (more than it was implemented in this study) may become an important independent variable. Finally, it is worth noting that in an effort to use baseline data from monolingual—as opposed to bilingual—speakers, the population of native speakers used in this study was restricted to one particular Spanish-speaking region (i.e., Argentina) for obvious logistical reasons. Future studies could replicate the findings of the present study with the analysis of additional regional varieties to confirm how robust these judgments are.

6. Conclusion

The outcome of the present study indicates that L2 learners of Spanish are not capable of distinguishing the contrast of iterativity versus habituality expressed in Spanish through the use of Preterite and Imperfect respectively. These results are based on judgments of contextually supported sentences, thus replicating previous empirical findings with a broader discourse framework. More specifically, the present empirical findings provide additional empirical evidence to reveal an apparent dissociation in the judgments about prototypical uses of the Preterite and Imperfect (as represented in the traditional test) compared to the judgments about the contrast of iterativity versus habituality among non-natives. In practical terms, it is difficult to argue that non-native speakers can achieve ultimate attainment in the representation of aspectual concepts when they seem to be so distinct from native speakers even at highly advanced levels of overall proficiency in the L2 (cf. Coppieters 1987; Labeau 2005).

Rice University
salaberry@rice.edu

Appendix A: Test of general proficiency

El jefe le (1) *daba/dio* el dinero a la empleada para depositarlo en el banco. La empleada (2) *trabajó/trabajaba* para la compañía, pero no (3) *estuvo/estaba* contenta con su trabajo y (4) *quiso/quería* otro trabajo. La mujer (5) *necesitó/necesitaba* salir del pueblo. (6) *Hizo/Hacía* las maletas y (7) *ponía/puso* el dinero en una bolsa.

Luego (8) *salió/salía* del pueblo en coche, pero (9) *tuvo/tenía* miedo de las autoridades. Al rato (10) *buscó/buscaba* un lugar para descansar. (11) *Llovió/Llovía* mucho. De pronto (12) *llegó/llegaba* al Motel Bates. Por suerte (13) *tuvieron/tenían* habitaciones libres. En el hotel, la mujer (14) *conoció/conocía* a Norman, que (15) *era/fue* un hombre muy tímido. Mientras (16) *hablaron/hablaban*, ella (17) *firmó/firmaba* su nombre y (18) *tomó/tomaba* las llaves de su habitación.

Hacia rato que la mujer (19) *sintió/sentía* hambre, pero primero (20) *subió/subía* a su habitación y (21) *decidía/decidió* ducharse antes de salir a cenar. Norman (22) *decía/dijo* que (23) *vivía/vivió* solo con su madre, pero en realidad su madre (24) *estuvo/estaba* muerta. Norman (25) *estuvo/estaba* un poco loco y (26) *tuvo/tenía* dos personalidades. (27) *Se disfrazó/Se disfrazaba* de su madre, (28) *entró/entraba* al cuarto de la muchacha y (29) *quiso/quería* matarla a puñaladas mientras ella (30) se *duchó/se duchaba*.

Approximate English translation

The boss gave (1. Pret-Imp) the money to the employee to be deposited in the bank. The employee worked (2. Pret-Imp) for the company, but she was not happy (3. Pret-Imp) with her job and wanted (4. Pret-Imp) another job. The woman needed (5. Pret-Imp) to leave town. She packed (6. Pret-Imp) her suitcase and put (7. Pret-Imp) the money in the bag.

Then she drove (8. Pret-Imp) out of town, but she was afraid (9. Pret-Imp) of the police. Later she looked for (10. Pret-Imp) a place to rest. It was raining (11. Pret-Imp) hard. Suddenly, she arrived (12. Pret-Imp) at Motel Bates. Luckily, they had rooms (13. Pret-Imp) available. At the hotel, the woman met (14. Pret-Imp) Norman, who was (15. Pret-Imp) a shy man. While they were chatting, (16. Pret-Imp) she signed (17. Pret-Imp) her name and got (18. Pret-Imp) the room keys.

It has been a while since she was hungry (19. Pret-Imp), but she first went (20. Pret-Imp) up to her room and decided (21. Pret-Imp) to take a shower before dinner. Norman said (22. Pret-Imp) that he lived (23. Pret-Imp) alone with his mother, but in reality his mother was (24. Pret-Imp) dead. Norman was (25. Pret-Imp) a bit crazy and he had (26. Pret-Imp) two personalities. He disguised (27. Pret-Imp) himself like his mother, went (28. Pret-Imp) into the woman's room and wanted (29. Pret-Imp) to stab her to death while she was taking (30. Pret-Imp) a shower.

Appendix B: Test of general iterativity-habituality

Items were scrambled in the test given to participants, but they are organized here by category for reading convenience. Please see description of sample item in the main text of the article.

En una escala del 1 al 4, clasifica los usos de los verbos conjugados en contexto (a) y (b) en las siguientes situaciones.

- 1 = EN ABSOLUTO NO ACEPTABLE**
- 2 = NO ACEPTABLE**
- 3 = ACEPTABLE**
- 4 = CLARAMENTE ACEPTABLE**

Contexts expected to favor habitual choices

- (1) Hacía 20 años que Carmen se había casado con su marido, pero casi nunca estaban juntos porque los dos viajaban constantemente por razones de trabajo. Un día su esposo tuvo un accidente muy grave y se quedó paralítico. A partir de ahí las cosas empeoraron. Casi siempre discutían porque su marido no tenía paciencia.
Cada vez que se peleaban, Carmen (a) descubría (b) descubrió el verdadero carácter de su marido.
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (2) Estaba hablando con mi prima, que es enfermera, y me contó varios casos increíbles. Por ejemplo, una pareja llegó al hospital para una simple intervención de pulmón, pero resulta que los médicos cometieron un fallo, y su paciente se quedó en coma por varios meses. Hacía mucho tiempo ya que el paciente (a) no reconocía (b) no reconoció a su esposa, hasta que
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
finalmente se despertó y pudo recuperar su memoria sin problema.

- (3) Cuando era pequeña, me gustaba ir con mis hermanos de excursión. Nunca le contábamos nada a mamá, y ella nunca se daba cuenta de nuestros viajes. El problema es que...
... cuando era niña el tren del mediodía (a) llegaba tarde (b) llegó tarde con frecuencia y entonces
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
mamá se enteraba que nos habíamos ido de excursión.

- (6) Juan y Mónica eran compañeros de facultad y siempre estudiaban juntos los sábados. Sin embargo, hace unos días Mónica recibió la desagradable noticia de que su mamá había sido diagnosticada con la enfermedad de Alzheimer. En efecto...
... hacía varios días ya que Juan (a) notaba (b) notó que Mónica estaba distraída
- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
- (5) José estudió turismo y se graduó hace 5 años. Entonces decidió buscar un trabajo en Inglaterra, para así aprender inglés. Por eso, solicitó varios puestos en el sur del país, para estar cerca de la playa. Sin embargo, nunca consiguió un trabajo porque cada vez que llegaba a la parte final de su entrevista...
José (a) se daba cuenta (b) se dio cuenta que no era un buen candidato para el puesto que solicitaba
- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
- (6) Julia y su hermano Víctor venían con frecuencia a visitarme los fines de semana. Un día tuvieron un accidente de tráfico. No fue muy grave, pero Julia quedó marcada por el suceso. Desde entonces, nunca más quiso venir a mi casa porque
... normalmente (a) se acordaba (b) se acordó del accidente y se ponía a llorar.
- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4
- (7) Mi amiga Luisa es muy detallista. No sólo porque compra regalos para sus familiares en fechas destacadas, sino también porque hace manualidades durante horas y horas en las que siempre consigue hacer el detalle perfecto para cada persona. Es gracioso que Luisa no siempre fue así, ya que...
... cuando éramos niños, Luisa (a) se olvidaba (b) se olvidó del cumpleaños de su hermana.
- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Contexts expected to favor iterative choices

- (1) Hacía 20 años que Carmen y su marido se habían casado pero casi nunca estaban juntos porque los dos viajaban constantemente por razones de trabajo. Hasta que un día su esposo tuvo un accidente muy grave y se quedó parálítico. A partir de ese momento, Carmen y su esposo comenzaron a compartir mucho más tiempo juntos. Así es que...
... a través de los años Carmen (a) descubría (b) descubrió el verdadero carácter de su marido.
- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (2) Estaba hablando con mi prima, que es enfermera, y me contó varios casos increíbles. Por ejemplo, una pareja llegó al hospital para una simple intervención de pulmón, pero resulta que los médicos cometieron un fallo, y su paciente se quedó en coma por varios meses. Hacía mucho tiempo ya que el paciente (a) no reconocía (b) no reconoció a su esposa, hasta que

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

finalmente se despertó y pudo recuperar su memoria sin problema.

- (3) Cuando estaba en la universidad, tenía que ir todos los días en tren desde Toledo a Madrid. Carolina siempre me esperaba en la estación, así que no me aburría tanto en esa hora de trayecto. Sin embargo, el último año casi nunca caminamos juntas porque. . .

. . . durante muchos meses el tren del mediodía (a) llegaba (b) llegó tarde.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (4) Juan y Mónica eran compañeros de facultad y siempre estudiaban juntos los sábados. Sin embargo, hace unos días Mónica recibió la desagradable noticia de que su mamá había sido diagnosticada con la enfermedad de Alzheimer. Ayer comenzaron a estudiar desde temprano como todos los sábados, pero no pudieron avanzar mucho en sus lecturas.

Todo el día Juan (a) notaba (b) notó que Mónica estaba distraída.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (5) Mi cuñado José es un médico especialista en pediatría. Siempre estaba hablando de lo mucho que le gustaría trabajar en África con una ONG, por eso, el año pasado, lo puse en contacto con *Médicos Sin Fronteras*. Decidieron concederle una entrevista, para considerar si era un candidato adecuado. Durante las dos horas de entrevista. . .

. . . José (a) se daba (b) se dio cuenta de que no era un buen candidato para el puesto.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (6) Un día mis primos, Víctor y Julia, iban a venir a verme a casa porque su madre tenía que trabajar. Mi tío los traía a mi casa cuando otro coche se les cruzó en la carretera y chocó con ellos. A mis primos y a mi tío no les pasó nada, pero el hombre del otro coche estuvo hospitalizado varias semanas.

Durante muchos años Julia (a) se acordaba (b) se acordó del accidente.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

- (7) Mi amiga Luisa es muy detallista. No sólo porque compra regalos para sus familiares en fechas destacadas, sino también porque hace manualidades durante horas y horas en las que siempre consigue hacer el detalle

perfecto para cada persona. Es gracioso que Luisa no siempre fue así, ya que...

... por unos cuantos años Luisa (a) se olvidaba (b) se olvidó del cumpleaños de su hermana.

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

References

Ayoun, Dalila & M. Rafael Salaberry. 2005. *Tense and aspect in the Romance languages: Theoretical and applied perspectives*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Bardovi-Harlig, Kathleen. 2000. *Tense and aspect in second language acquisition: Form, meaning, and use*: Language Learning Monograph. Ann Arbor, MI: Blackwell.

Binnick, Robert. 1991. *Time and the verb*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Caudal, Patrick & Laurent Roussarie. 2005. Aspectual viewpoints, speech act functions and discourse structure. In Paula Kempchinsky & Roumyana Slabakova (eds.), *Aspectual inquiries*, 265–290. Dordrecht: Springer.

Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coppieters, René. 1987. Competence differences between native and near-native speakers. *Language* 63. 544–573.

de Swart, Henriette. 1998. Aspect shift and coercion. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 16. 347–385.

Depraetere, Ilse. 1995. On the necessity of distinguishing between (un)boundedness and (a)telicity. *Linguistics and Philosophy*. 18:1–19.

Doiz-Bienzobas, Aintzane. 1995. The Preterite and the imperfect in Spanish: Past situation vs. past viewpoint. San Diego, CA: University of California-San Diego dissertation.

Doiz-Bienzobas, Aintzane. 2002. The preterit and the imperfect as grounding predications. In Frank Brisard (ed.) *Grounding: The epistemic footing of deixis and reference*, 299–347. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Klein, Wolfgang. 1994. *Time in language*. London: Routledge.

Labeau, Emmanuelle. 2005. *Beyond the aspect hypothesis: Tense-aspect development in advanced L2 French*. Contemporary Studies in Descriptive Linguistics. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Langacker, Ronald. 1999. *Grammar and conceptualization*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Menéndez-Benito, Paula. 2002. Aspect and adverbial quantification in Spanish. Paper presented at *Proceedings of the 32nd North Eastern Linguistics Society*, Amherst, MA.

Michaelis, Laura. 2004. Type shifting in Construction Grammar: An integrated approach to aspectual coercion. *Cognitive Linguistics* 15. 1–67.

Montrul, Silvina & M. Rafael Salaberry. 2003. The development of Spanish past tense morphology: Developing a research agenda. In Barbara Lafford & M. Rafael Salaberry (eds.), *Studies in Spanish Second Language Acquisition: State of the Science*, 47–73. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Neguera, Eduardo & James Lantolf. (2006). Concept-based instruction and the acquisition of L2 Spanish. In M. Rafael Salaberry & Barbara Lafford (eds.), *The art of teaching Spanish: Second language acquisition from research to praxis*, 79–102. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Pérez-Leroux, Ana, Alejandro Cuza, Monika Majzlanova & Jeanette Sánchez-Naranjo. 2007. Non-native recognition of the iterative and habitual meanings of Spanish preterite and imperfect tenses. In Juana Liceras, Helmut Zobl & Helen Goodluck (eds.), *Formal features in second language acquisition*, 432–451. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Pienemann, Manfred, Bruno Di Biase, Satomi Kawaguchi & Gisela Håkansson. 2005. Processability, typological distance and L1 transfer. In Manfred Pienemann (ed.) *Cross-linguistic aspects of processability theory*, 85–116. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael. 1999. The development of past tense verbal morphology in classroom L2 Spanish. *Applied Linguistics* 20. 151–178.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael. 2002. Tense and aspect in the selection of past tense verbal morphology. In M. Rafael Salaberry & Yasuhiro Shirai (eds.), *The L2 acquisition of tense-aspect morphology*, 397–415. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael. 2008. *Marking past tense in second language acquisition: A theoretical model*. London: Continuum Press.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael. 2011. Assessing the effect of lexical aspect and grounding on the acquisition of L2 Spanish Preterit and Imperfect among L1 English speakers. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 14. 184–202.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael. 2012. Research design in aspect studies: Operationalizing and testing hypotheses. In M. Rafael Salaberry & Llorenç Comajoan (eds.), *Research design and methodology in studies on second language tense and aspect*. New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Salaberry, M. Rafael & Yasuhiro Shirai. 2002. *The L2 acquisition of tense-aspect morphology*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Sasse, Hans-Jürgen. 2012. Recent activity in the theory of aspect: Accomplishments, achievements, or just non-progressive state? *Linguistic Typology* 6. 199–271.
- Slabakova, Roumyana & Silvina Montrul. 2007. L2 acquisition at the grammar-discourse interface: Aspectual shifts in L2 Spanish. In Juana Liceras, Helmut Zobl & Helen Goodluck (eds.), *Formal features in second language acquisition*, 452–483. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Smith, Carlota. 1997. *The parameter of aspect*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press.
- Wiberg, Eva. 1996. Reference to past events in bilingual Italian-Swedish children of school age. *Linguistics* 34. 1087–1114.