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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF PAST TENSE MORPHOLOGY IN L2 SPANISH.**  
*M. Rafael Salaberry.* Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000. Pp. x + 210. \$76.00 cloth.

This book is a revised and updated version of the author's 1997 Cornell University dissertation, which investigated the acquisition of Spanish past-tense morphology by classroom learners whose L1 was English. Based on three main studies, the author argues against the Aspect Hypothesis (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2000), the dominant view in SLA research, which predicts strong associations between lexical aspect and tense-aspect morphology at the early stages of acquisition.

The book consists of seven chapters. After an introductory overview in chapter 1, chapter 2 introduces readers to the domain of inquiry in this book: aspect. Special emphasis is placed on the comparison between English, the source language, and Spanish, the target language in this study. Chapter 3 reviews the acquisition of tense-aspect in L1, and chapter 4 reviews the L2 studies on the development of tense-aspect, with special emphasis on Romance languages as L2 and English as L2 with native speakers of Romance languages. Chapter 5 reports on the pilot study and the methods of the main studies, and chapter 6 discusses the results from the three main studies (movie narra-

tives, written tests on past-tense forms, and the protocol analysis, which is called a "speak-aloud" task). Chapter 7 presents general discussion and conclusions.

Overall, the book is well written and very readable. The literature review is solid, covers most of the relevant studies, and is filled with many original insights. The main studies are meticulously designed and present important data that significantly contribute to the understanding of the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology in Spanish and other languages. Particularly important are the findings from the main studies that showed that learners are not influenced by inherent lexical aspect at the early stages of development and that they use preterite as the default marker of past tense, becoming more influenced by inherent lexical aspect as their proficiency increases. This directly contradicts the prediction of the Aspect Hypothesis that perfective past morphology (preterite in Spanish) is initially restricted to telic verbs.

Although the author does not discuss this, it appears that the results were heavily influenced by the tasks. In both oral narrative and written tasks, the instructions strongly suggested that the participants should use past-tense forms. In other words, learners were induced to use preterite as the default past-tense marker. It would be interesting to replicate the studies with conversational interviews and written tasks in which participants are not told to use the past tense and can freely choose any tense-aspect forms.

One problem is that the author focuses so much on making his case that the alternative positions are not clearly presented. For example, in chapter 2 it is argued that the standard, four-way classification of lexical aspect (i.e., achievements, accomplishments, activities, and states) is both theoretically and empirically inadequate, and the author advocates instead a three-way classification that combines achievements and accomplishments. However, this is not such an easy issue to resolve, either theoretically or empirically. Theoretically, there are numerous proposed classifications of inherent lexical aspect, not just three-way or four-way, each having its strengths and weaknesses. Empirically, a four-way classification makes a finer distinction and therefore may be able to reveal the effect of punctuality, as has been the case in other studies. These questions need to be weighed carefully. Also apparent is the occasional lack of attention to details. Some works cited in the text are missing from the references, including Shirai (1997), which the author extensively cites and argues against (pp. 168–169).

Despite these shortcomings, the book constitutes a very important addition to the literature on the acquisition of tense-aspect in L2. I recommend it to readers interested in tense-aspect as well as in SLA processes. It should also be useful for teachers of Spanish because the book is highly readable and aspect is one of the areas most students have difficulty with. However, to get a more balanced view, it would be best to read it together with books by the proponents of the Aspect Hypothesis, such as Bardovi-Harlig (2000) or Li and Shirai (2000).

#### REFERENCES

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