# 19 Advanced Conceptualizations of Tense and Aspect in L2 Acquisition

M. RAFAEL SALABERRY

Rice University

## Introduction

Within the realm of multi-layered concepts such as tense and aspect, learners can make use of frequently used morphological markers in association with specific verbs (e.g. perfective marker with telic events) or with specific narrative structures (e.g. imperfective markers with descriptions). The acquisition of such prototypical conceptualizations of tense and aspect has been the main focus of analysis of a number of empirical studies starting in the late 1980s (e.g. Andersen, 1986; Bardovi-Harlig, 1992). The use of concrete hypotheses and the collection of a significant body of empirical data for over 30 years have helped the field make significant progress on the analysis of tense-aspect development (see Salaberry & Comajoan, 2013, for a recent review). On the other hand, the majority of previous studies have primarily focused on the analysis of data from the initial stages of development. Spearheaded by Andersen's hypothesis, by and large, it was assumed that once learners were able to overcome the influence of lexical aspectual values inherent in the lexicon, the acquisition of tense/aspect would proceed unimpeded given enough exposure to the L2. Alternative hypotheses proposed from within different theoretical models (i.e. Minimalism) did not focus on advanced levels of development either because, as a matter of theoretical premise, non-prototypical pairings of lexical and grammatical aspect (e.g. coercion as described in de Swart, 1998) were regarded to be outside of the grammatical system (i.e. they were considered part of the realm of pragmatics). As a consequence, despite the number of studies focused on the acquisition of tense and aspect, there is yet a lot to learn about the advanced stages of acquisition of temporality in L2 acquisition.

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In the present chapter, I will review the various definitions of tense and aspect, concentrating primarily on the concept of aspect, given its inherent complexity for the development of advanced knowledge, to conceptualize and mark temporality in the L2. The main objective of this analysis is to show how the proper description of the concept of aspect (e.g. the limitations of imprecise and incomplete definitions) is crucial to both assess and understand the development of advanced knowledge in the use of tense-aspect phenomena. For the analysis, I will make reference primarily to Spanish data, because there is a substantial body of empirical data that can be used to evaluate the various theoretical proposals. I will then review two recent hypotheses that have focused on the study of the advanced knowledge of tense-aspect morphology. Even though each hypothesis is framed within a very distinct theoretical framework, they both describe the development of the advanced understanding of temporality in the L2 with reference to the use of complex conceptualizations. To conclude, I will reframe these two hypotheses within the perspective of the definition of aspect and temporality in general in light of the description to be presented in the first section of the chapter.

# Aspect: From representation to acquisition

## *The representation of aspect*

The standard definition of aspect highlights the effect of a broad range of contextual factors on the linguistic construal of a situation (see Comrie, 1976; Klein, 1994, inter alia for extended discussions). The consequence of considering such a broad contextual level of support to define aspect leads to differing interpretations about speakers' selections of aspectual markers. Not surprisingly, thus, most definitions of aspect make reference to perspective or construal of aspectual knowledge. Klein (1994, p. 16, italics added), for one, points out 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." Similarly, Michaelis (2004, p.5, italics added) describes "aspectual categorization as a product of the manner in which people, as producers and processors of texts, *construe scenes, rather than as a reflection of the properties which situations have 'in the world'*." As a consequence, there is a component of subjective interpretation and expression that baffles both researchers and learners looking for a delimited and precise way to determine "right and wrong" selections of aspect reflected in verbal morphology.

The variable selection of aspectual predicates is magnified by the effect of various levels of linguistic representation to define aspect. In concrete terms, restricting the construct of aspect to the level of lexical information (Aktionsart concept) has resulted in an incomplete account. Ever since the publication of the groundbreaking paper of Verkuyl (1972), there has been a general consensus on the value of the linguistic context beyond the verbal predicate including the composite effect of both internal and external arguments on the representation of aspect (e.g. Depraetre, 1995; Filip, 1999; Klein, 1994; Tenny, 1994). In some cases, definitions of

aspect include the compositional value of adjuncts (e.g. adverbial phrases). Consequently, aspectual information straddles a number of layers of linguistic interpretation, including lexical, syntactic, discursive, and pragmatic levels of analysis (see Salaberry, 2008, for an overview of relevant studies). In fact, the complexity of aspectual knowledge is understated once we consider the range of phenomena affected by aspect such as the aspectual uses of Spanish copula (e.g. Luján, 1981), the so-called Spanish impersonal se (e.g. Suñer, 1990; Zagona, 1994), the use of the perfective–imperfective contrast to segment the discourse structure of a narrative (e.g. Silva-Corvalán, 1983, 1984), and the effect of repeated instances of an event as reflected in habituality or iterativity (e.g. Salaberry, 2013a; Slabakova & Montrul, 2007), among many other topics.

## *A (broad) grammatical representation of aspect*

The combined effect of the speaker's construal of a situation and an ever-expanding range of contextual information (that the speaker may rely on to profile a situation) has led some researchers to compartmentalize such complexity. One immediate way to do this is to hierarchically organize the various levels of linguistic information available to determine aspectual representation. To this extent, the layers of meaning closest to the verbal predicate are the most stable, thus the most likely to limit the variability of aspectual composition. One of the most well-known multilevel models has been the one proposed by Smith (1997).

Smith proposes a basic two-level system: viewpoint or grammatical aspect (broadest level of contextual support) and situation type or inherent lexical aspect (restricted to internal and external arguments of the verbal predicate). The concept of situation aspect has a long history through the division of verbal predicates into lexical aspectual classes. Vendler's (1967) classification of four main verb types has become the benchmark classification in studies in L2 acquisition: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements (some researchers argue for three classes, or, in other cases, five: see Salaberry, 2008, for a review). Viewpoint aspect, on the other hand, is encoded not only on the verbal predicate, but in components beyond the head of the verb phrase as well, such as adverbials as in (1), and contextual information including world knowledge and pragmatics as in (2).[1]

(1) Suddenly, I was asleep.
(2) Last year I fed my cat.

In (1), the adverbial prompts an inchoative interpretation of the verbal predicate focusing our attention on the inception of the state of being asleep. In (2), the adverbial provides a timeframe that forces a habitual interpretation, rather than a punctual one. As a consequence, it is not necessarily the case that we can avoid the inherent complexity of aspectual contrasts by means of restricting our analysis to the effect of lexical aspectual classes. At a minimum, we face the challenge of deciding where to draw the line between one type of aspect (i.e. situation versus viewpoint) as we attempt to partition the effects of the contextual information that aspectual contrasts always require.

In some cases, adverbial information can bring up complex interpretations that require a fine-grained analysis of the compositional value of adjuncts in combination with internal and external arguments and the predicate proper.[2] Note, for instance, that in Spanish the adverbial phrases in the sentences below (from Güell, 1998, p. 102) set up a conflict with the prototypical aspectual marker for states.

(3)  a.  *Lo supo (PRET)/*sabía (IMP) durante mucho tiempo*.
         (S/he) knew it for a long time.
     b.  *Lo *supo (PRET)/sabía (IMP) desde hacía mucho tiempo*.
         (S/he) knew it from a long time ago.

In (3a) there are two pieces of information that would normally steer L2 speakers to use the imperfective form. First, states are prototypically associated with the imperfect. Second, the contextual information provided by the adjunct (the aspectual role of the adverbial phrase *durante mucho tiempo*) contradicts the meaning of inchoativity (i.e. the beginning of the state) which is the one that normally triggers the use of the perfective. In fact, despite the effect of the durational adverbial phrase, the preterit is the preferred marker in (3a) among native speakers. Along the same lines, in (3b) the presence of the adverbial *desde hacía mucho tiempo* provides an initial point of that state and would—in principle—trigger an inchoative interpretation (requiring the use of the perfective). But, this is not the case here as the use of the imperfective maintains the focus on the actual state irrespective of the explicit highlighting of the inception point.

Analyses from other Romance languages are also relevant and useful for the present discussion of Spanish aspect given the almost identical representation of aspectual construals in Romance languages. Brisard (2010, p. 489) proposed that a contextualized definition of aspect is necessary to understand the concept of aspect and what non-native speakers need to learn: "interpreting the concrete (temporal or modal) values of this tense [imperfective] depends on pragmatic inferences *on the basis of contextually provided information and is, as such, not to be attributed to the semantics of the [imperfective] proper*" (italics added). In this regard, one of the earliest studies to (indirectly) assess the relative effect of contextual effects on the selection and use of aspect was the analysis of Coppieters (1987). Among a number of phenomena, Coppieters analyzed the selection of past tense endings in French (i.e. *passé composé-imparfait*) and concluded that the biggest contrast in the judgments of grammaticality among native and near-native speakers was between imperfective and perfective meanings (highest deviation of 39.5% between groups). Coppieters noted that whereas native speakers had a strong sense of which choices to make, near-native speakers were more ambivalent about their selections. He argued that the locus of such discrepancy was probably due to the highly contextualized nature of aspectual markers: "it may be difficult (particularly for one whose native language does not formally mark the category or distinction in question) *to separate contextual from grammatical information*" (p. 567, italics added). For a review of the relevance of Coppieters' study, see Salaberry (2016).

## Imperfective as the true aspectual marker

The complexity of aspectual contrasts in Spanish appears to be closely associated with the imperfective given that the latter is the marker most relevant to carry aspectual information. On this point, Doiz (1995, 2002) argues that whereas the Spanish preterit is used to convey a perspective associated with speech time (tense), 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.

(4)  *Mis hermanos y yo crecimos en una familia muy grande.*
    My siblings and I grew up (PRET) as part of a large family.
(5)  *Mis hermanos y yo hacíamos mucho ruido.*
    My siblings and I made (IMP) a lot of noise.

The sentence in (4) uses speech time as a point of reference to mark past tense. In contrast, sentence (5) relies on the use of a relative moment in the past as the reference point. Doiz distinguishes the present viewpoint (the speech moment or the here-and-now) from the past viewpoint (an alternative here-and-now). The latter is the one that serves to visualize the situation (and mark it) as imperfective. In essence, the imperfective may be regarded as the true aspectual marker, although it does achieve its function when contrasted with a true tense-marker, the perfective. The proposal made by Doiz is further justified given that previous models of aspect seem to point in a similar direction, as is the case of Klein's (1994) proposal for the use of the concept of Topic Time as an additional point of reference to be differentiated from Time of the Situation.

Recent L2 empirical data (e.g. Labeau, 2005, and McManus, 2013, for L2 French; Salaberry, 2011, for L2 Spanish) confirm previous claims (e.g. Salaberry, 1999; Wiberg, 1996) that there is an increase in the use of prototypical pairings of lexical and grammatical aspect along with increased L2 proficiency. Furthermore, the same publications show that the perfective form acts as a default marker of past tense, whereas the imperfective form takes longer to acquire given its more complex aspectual connotations. In the case of L1 English speakers learning L2 Spanish, the perfective is a productive marker to the extent that it functions as a grammatical category applicable to old and new lexical items. In contrast, the imperfective is added to the system in an associative fashion.

## Iterativity and habituality: fine-grained distinction

As stated above, the inherent complexity of the imperfective form as the basic carrier of aspectual information obtains by reference to the perfective (even if the latter acts as a carrier of tense). By the same token, the aspectual meaning of the perfective obtains in contrastive use with the imperfective. One particular case in which such complexity can become a daunting learning target for L2 learners is the case of iterated eventualities that can be marked with either one of the aspectual markers of verbal morphology in Spanish, as shown in sentences (6a) and (6b).[3]

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

In principle, the situation that is described in (6a) and (6b) can be exactly the same one (let us assume, for instance, that Lucas played soccer for exactly 10 years in both cases). The linguistic representation is, however, different. The representation of the eventuality has been aspectually qualified. We conclude, thus, that the effect of the adverbial phrase is associated with the type of aspectual representation. The identification of the specific aspectual effect of various adverbial phrases remains, however, a challenge (see Menéndez-Benito, 2002).[4]

One theoretical proposal has been more promising with regards to the identification of the specific conceptualization of iterated eventualities differentially classified as instances of habituality versus iterativity. Langacker (1999, p. 251–253) makes the case for the existence of two distinct types of aspectual concepts associated to the repetition of events in the past: iterative sentences and habitual sentences.[5] The conceptual distinction, Langacker claims, hinges on the existence of two types of knowledge that he labels the *actual plane* and the *structural plane*. Langacker proposes that iterativity ('repetitive' is his choice of words) shows the component events of individual instances of the entire eventuality anchored to particular points in time ("conceived as actually occurring" on the actual plane), whereas in a habitual sentence, the component events are not anchored to any particular points in time ("with no status in actuality") (p. 251).

Doiz (1995, p. 107) contrasts the distinctive meanings of habituality and iterativity as they are represented through imperfective and perfective morphology, respectively, in Spanish:

(7) a. *El año pasado iba a nadar todos los días*.
      Last year I went (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 explanation, Doiz states that the implicature of sentence (7a) is that the repetition of the event of swimming does not continue into the present, thus signaling the concept of habituality. In contrast, there is no such implicature for the interpretation of sentence (7b), in which case the repetition conveys the aspectual concept of iterativity. Doiz notes further that the concept of habituality allows for the failure of the event to take place at one particular time during last year (i.e. events not anchored on the actual plane allow for this interpretation). In sentence (7b), on the other hand, Doiz points out that the use of the perfective form (associated with iterativity) conveys the notion that the speaker went to swim every day last year (i.e. constrained by events anchored to specific points in time on the actual plane).

As we can see, in both habituality and iterativity, a series of events are iterated or repeated. How should learners apprehend the distinction? Salaberry (2013a) and Salaberry and Martins (2013) analyzed the effect of iterativity in contrast with the concept of habituality among monolingual Spanish speakers and L1 English speakers with near-native competence in the L2. The study was carried out with the use of grammaticality judgments based on contextualized sentences (short passages). The findings revealed that Spanish near-native speakers, despite their extensive experience with the L2, did not distinguish fine-grained representations of the aspectual concepts of iterativity versus habituality. The same speakers demonstrated, nevertheless, native-like judgments of more prototypical uses of aspect. Both findings combined confirm the positive effect of language experience in general, but the failure to acquire conceptual distinctions that are rarely (if ever) taught explicitly. The role of explicit descriptions of nuanced semantic descriptions may lead to novel conceptualizations of aspect, thus pedagogical intervention may have an important role to play (e.g. Lantolf, 2011). I return to the role of pedagogical intervention in subsequent sections.

Regardless of the theoretical perspective used to assess the acquisition of the phenomena reviewed above, it is clear that the acquisition of some components of the definition of aspect continue to be a challenge for advanced L2 learners. Studies within the perspective of Minimalism (e.g. Montrul & Slabakova, 2002; Rothman & Iverson, 2008; Slabakova & Montrul, 2007) have shown similar empirical results even if the theoretical description differs from the one provided above within the framework of cognitive linguistics. However, some recent analyses hint at the possibility that advanced L2 learners are not able to acquire the concept of aspect in the L2. For instance, Diaubalick and Guijarro-Fuentes (2016) collected data to assess the relevance of two hypotheses (i.e. the Interpretability Hypothesis and the Feature Reassembly Hypothesis) on the interpretation of "coerced" meanings (de Swart, 1998). They conclude that neither hypothesis can be confirmed with the data from their study, noting, furthermore, that "even advanced speakers do not reach native level" with respect to the "coercion condition in the grammatical judgment task" (p. 192).

## Temporal vs. non-temporal meanings of aspect

The representation of aspect is even more complex when we consider the fact that the traditionally labeled *past tense morphology* is actually used to convey non-temporal information as well (e.g. Fleischman, 1989, 1990; Waugh, 1990). Fleischman (1990, p. 5–6), for instance, pointed out that the grammatical category past might convey multiple oppositional properties at different levels of analysis: referential (based on truth conditionals especially related to temporality), textual (organization of discourse: foreground versus background), expressive (conative, affective, and social functions), and metalinguistic (styles, registers, or types of language). In line with the previous argument about the inherent aspectual value of the imperfective with regard to the perfective, Brisard (2010) contends that the imperfective "presents a situation as part of a mentally construed reality which

does not coincide with the speaker's and which is not to be considered as actual for that reason" (p 488). Brisard thus argues that strictly temporal accounts of the imperfective as past tense cannot account for all of its possible uses, including the non-temporal (modal) ones. For reasons of space, I will not discuss the uses of aspectual contrasts to convey non-temporal meanings.

## The acquisition and development of aspect across the bilingual continuum

The task of providing a comprehensive definition of aspect is further complicated once we take into account two important theoretical dimensions that must be factored into any description of aspectual knowledge: not only do we need to describe the representation of aspect among monolingual native speakers, but we also need to consider (i) the description of aspect among bilinguals as well as (ii) the description of the development of aspectual meanings among L2 learners of varying levels of proficiency as they approach a bilingual stasis. Given the wide range of contextualization of aspectual knowledge (subjective viewpoint), it is relevant to consider a continuum of bilingual speakers with monolingual native speakers on one end of the spectrum and non-native speakers on the opposite end. This continuum of various levels of representation of aspect is most useful to account for the wide range of outcomes across many different empirical studies. Most famously, Silva-Corvalán (1991, 1994) demonstrated that aspect is among one of the last concepts to be acquired by English-Spanish bilingual speakers, and it is also one of the first grammatical concepts to be negatively affected by language attrition (once bilinguals start to shift away from the use of Spanish). Given that the bilingual speakers studied by Silva-Corvalán spanned many different levels of Spanish competence (i.e. she collected data from up to three generations of bilingual speakers), it is necessary to consider a wide spectrum of aspectual knowledge, including L2 learners.

The use of a continuum of language proficiency is also useful to match discrepancies in outcomes in empirical studies with specific theoretical claims. For instance, Salaberry (2011) empirically demonstrated that the use of the imperfective continues to increase proportionally relative to the increase of the perfective form across a wide range of proficiencies in L2 Spanish among L1 English speakers. Using these findings, Salaberry argued that as non-native speakers gain more experience with the target language, they may develop an increasingly accurate system of proceduralized knowledge (e.g. DeKeyser, 2009; Paradis, 2009) that allows them to track target-like selections of aspectual markings based on probabilistic frequencies associated mostly with lexical aspectual values (cf. Andersen, 1991, 1994), and to some extent, with discourse grounding (cf. Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Salaberry, 2011). In general, theoretical claims about the nature of the acquisition/learning system will be most informative in the context of a wide range of proficiencies across the spectrum of language competence, from monolingual to bilingual. In this respect, among Spanish L2 learners, aspectual contrasts are among the most difficult topics to be mastered in the traditional language

classroom (along with other semantic-based phenomena such as ser-estar, the subjunctive, various functional uses of se, etc.).

# Instructional settings and pedagogical rules

## *Imprecise and incomplete descriptions of aspect*

There is an abundant literature on the topic of pedagogical rules to explain the aspectual contrast in Spanish (e.g. Frantzen, 1995; Lunn, 1985; Westfall & Foerster, 1996). In most cases, the effort to provide learners with descriptions that can capture the entire spectrum of meanings of aspect has resulted in simplistic descriptions. These incomplete (and thus misleading explanations) have been referred to as rules of thumb (e.g. Whitley, 1986). In general, most rules of thumb focus on examples that carry only prototypical marking of verbal morphology according to lexical aspectual classes (i.e. imperfect is associated with statives and preterit with telic events), thus limiting the applicability of the concept that learners need to develop. Despite numerous expansions, modifications, and new classifications, alas, rules of thumb do not appear to be more than mere 'crutches' to help learners move along in the process as they gather more experience in the L2 (and can start to make sense of aspectual contrasts on their own).

## *Advanced knowledge of aspect: Beyond rules of thumb*

To address the challenge of using inaccurate rules of thumb, two theoretical proposals have argued for a reconceptualization of the way traditional deductive instructional procedures guide learners to develop a representation of aspectual contrasts in L2 Spanish: Concept-Based Instruction (CBI) (e.g. Lantolf, 2011; Negueruela, 2003; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006; Yáñez-Prieto, 2008) and the Competing Systems Hypothesis (CSH) (e.g. Long & Rothman, 2012; Rothman, 2008). Rothman, for instance, proposes the pedagogical value of (good) instruction to develop important complex concepts (or, at a minimum, not to "compete" with the positive effects of access to language data in context). Even more strongly, the proposal from the CBI hypothesis relies on the development of explicit linguistic knowledge (organized in a way to promote understanding, control, and organization) as the solution: "models must raise learners' awareness of what linguistic resources are available to them to carry out concrete linguistic actions with specific purposes across all contexts" (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006, p. 84–85). Both hypotheses (CBI and CSH) identify the same problem (i.e. oversimplification of grammatical concepts through the use of rules of thumb), and they favor, in general, the use of more developed conceptual representations of aspect. On the other hand, each hypothesis defines the role played by explicit instruction within different theoretical frameworks. Lantolf (2011), for instance, privileges the perspective on grammar derived from cognitive linguistics, whereas Rothman (2008) aligns himself with the Universal Grammar (UG) model associated with the theory of Minimalism.

## *Developing an advanced conceptualization of aspectual knowledge: CBI and CSH*

Negueruela and Lantolf's (2006) position against the beneficial effect of traditional pedagogical rules is predicated on the deficiency of an instructional program narrowly focused on a mechanistic approach to learning: "Simplified and reductive rules of thumb have the potential to do more harm than good because, for one thing, they depict language as a sedimented entity that appears to have a life of its own independent of people" (p. 83). The conceptualization of language of CBI is inherently defined by social phenomena and is demarcated by the co-construction of linguistic meanings among interlocutors (more precisely, developed through intermental mediation). Interestingly, Long and Rothman (2012, p. 67) make a similar case for the futility of most instructional intervention through the teaching of oversimplified (and misleading) rules of grammar: "Oversimplification in classroom instruction can lead to the formation of a static system of learned rules." The latter suggestion is framed within the perspective of a definition of rules less affected by social interaction and more so by underlying language abilities residing within each individual speaker as the outcome of a genetically guided developmental process. Furthermore, both CBI and CSH argue for the pedagogical relevance of explicit and rigorous linguistic explanation. Rothman, for instance, claims that "Most language teachers are not trained in formal linguistics despite compelling reasons to expect they could benefit from such training" (Rothman, 2008, p.77).

In sum, both CBI and CSH have important points in common as they both reject the adduced benefits of traditional pedagogical rules. Both hypotheses also acknowledge the development of knowledge (probably akin to a transition from declarative to procedural knowledge) as learners gain more experience with the language (through classroom instruction). The hypotheses do differ on the causal effect of the instructional setting (classroom versus natural, non-instructional setting of communication) on the accurate and complete conceptualization of aspectual knowledge.

## *The problems with the advanced conceptualizations of aspect of CBI and CSH*

Despite their bold theoretical claims about learning, the definition of aspect used by both hypotheses (CBI and CSH) is in conflict with the broad definition of aspect outlined in previous sections. For instance, previous classroom-based studies that have been advanced as evidence for CBI have used shallow descriptions/definitions of aspect that do not do justice to the full range of meaning potentials of aspect. Whereas studies such as Negueruela (2003) and Yáñez-Prieto (2008) have addressed important components of the CBI hypothesis (i.e. visualization and verbalization of conceptual knowledge), they have not incorporated a comprehensive definition of the concept of aspect. Negueruela,

for instance, specifically restricts his analysis to the definition of aspect from Bull (1960, 1965), and in particular, Bull's contrast between cyclic versus non-cyclic verbs. As a consequence, the definition of aspect chosen by Negueruela does not match the level of complexity of aspect as a matter of perspective/construal and/or the existence of various layers of representation of aspectual meanings. For her part, Yáñez-Prieto uses the same operational definition of aspect from Bull (1960, 1965), while making some passing reference to the concept of non-prototypical pairings of lexical and grammatical aspect described in Salaberry (2008). While the notion of non-prototypical meanings helps to focus our attention on a slightly more complex definition than the one provided by Bull, it is still not as comprehensive as the definition described in the first sections of this chapter.

The bulk of the analysis of both these studies (i.e. Negueruela and Yáñez-Prieto) is focused squarely on the ways students verbalize their understanding of aspect as they react to various teaching procedures that communicate that "the selection of aspect depends on the perspective and focus that the speaker or writer wants to adopt" (Yáñez-Prieto, 2008, p. 426). In fact, while Lantolf and Poehner (2014, p. 121) note that the pedagogical scaffolding based on flowcharts used by Negueruela (2003) was significantly improved with the use of images in Yáñez-Prieto (2008), it is noticeable that the definition of aspect used by both authors remained essentially the same. As much as there is an improvement in the process of visualization of the concept, the latter was not matched by an expanded definition of aspect. In essence, if the real target of L2 instruction is to develop learners' knowledge of the linguistic resources available in the L2 to be able to convey the intended information, we have a problem insofar as the descriptions of the target grammatical item (in this case aspect) have not been properly configured for explicit presentation, analysis, and implementation.

For its part, the CSH adopts the definition of aspect used in all studies carried out within the Minimalist framework (e.g. de Swart, 1998; Giorgi & Pianesi, 1997; Slabakova & Montrul, 2007). The theoretical compromise of such a theoretical approach is that many contextual effects that are part of viewpoint aspect (the higher aspectual phrase or AspP) are regarded to be outside of the realm of grammar proper (i.e. they are part of pragmatics or world knowledge). That is, the most variable interpretations of aspect are left outside of the scope of the definition of aspect (see Salaberry, 2013b, for an extended discussion of related problems). At the same time, the least variable component of lexical aspect (mostly associated with the lower aspectual phrase) becomes the main target of analysis for most UG-based studies. The methodological decision (i.e. related to research design) to leave some components of the concept of aspect outside of the scope of analysis is not under scrutiny. As a matter of research design, by definition, researchers can delimit their research space. On the other hand, we cannot blur the lines between methodologically efficient decisions and theoretical representations. For instance, Slabakova and Montrul (2007) methodologically "constrain" the theoretical representation of aspect by considering the context above the lower verb phrase as

information representing pragmatic information, thus outside of the realm of aspectual representation. The concern with regards to the delimitation of the concept of aspect is relevant because, as we have seen in previous sections, it is not necessarily the case that information provided by adjuncts should be relegated to pragmatics knowledge (or, at least, they should not necessarily be completely isolated from grammatical knowledge).

Furthermore, unlike the claim advanced by CBI, the proposal of CSH does not focus on specific pedagogical procedures to acquire aspectual knowledge in the L2. Instead, the CSH shifts the focus of attention to the potential effect of the natural setting of communication, under the assumption that direct access to language data will be enough for learners to activate their knowledge and modify the representation of aspect. While access to rich and varied input is a necessary component of understanding and learning aspectual contrasts, it is not entirely clear that access to the non-instructional setting is a solution to the negative effect of pedagogical rules of thumb. For one thing, loosely defined conditions of natural settings may include access to some type of pedagogical scaffolding in the form of some explicitly stated generalizations about language structure. Long and Rothman concede as much: "We do not intend to suggest that naturalistic learners are never offered 'rules' by native speakers with whom they interact or do not attempt to form their own version of descriptive rules" (2012, p. 71). Furthermore, previous research findings on natural learners with no access to any type of pedagogical intervention are not very promising. Many longitudinal studies of naturalistic learners of various ages and with varying levels of exposure to non-instructional uses of the L2 reveal little marking of past tense morphology (e.g. Sato, 1990; Schumann, 1987; Trévise, 1987). In general, most studies of natural learners show that the development of verbal endings is a slow and gradual process which in some cases takes years, and in others merely leads to fossilization (e.g. Klein & Perdue, 1992). Dietrich, Klein, and Noyau (1995) concluded that natural language learners seem to be especially affected by the particular contextual features of natural discourse: the use of verbal morphology is not necessary to establish communication in the L2 among natural learners.[6]

The proposals outlined by the CBI hypothesis and the CSH provide an auspicious opportunity to focus our attention on the conceptualization of aspect among advanced learners of the L2. Accordingly, both hypotheses rightfully point out the inadequacies of providing learners with incomplete and misleading generalizations (rules of thumb) to guide the development of knowledge of aspect among adult L2 learners. Even if not completely on target, both hypotheses represent the first step toward developing an agenda that can help L2 learners become better users of language resources. In the final analysis, however, the CBI hypothesis underestimates the potential of the inductive processes managed by learners as the agents of change, whereas the CSH makes the opposite mistake by ignoring the fact that adult (especially literate) learners normally make a connection between form and function even when not placed in a (formal) instructional setting.

# Guided (enhanced) induction

## *Guided induction: language data and metalinguistic awareness*

There are two basic principles that present a straightforward solution to the previous deficiencies of CBI and CSH, leading to an alternative proposal: (i) the conceptualization of grammatical concepts such as aspect, being as complex as it is, can only be achieved (developed) through numerous encounters with samples of (mostly natural) language data, and (ii) (deductive) pedagogical interventions (mostly represented as metalinguistic awareness events) can be useful to guide the development of conceptualizations of the L2. The first principle follows as the natural consequence of considering a broadly contextualized definition of tense-aspect meanings, whereas the second one focuses on the type of processing needed to modify the form-meaning mapping of aspectual knowledge in the L2. The integration of both of these principles into a single theoretical proposal creates an inductive-deductive continuum that is critical to address the multilayered representation of tense-aspect meanings.

First, as described above, the deficiency of the CBI proposal is that the development of metalinguistic descriptions of highly complex grammatical concepts (such as aspect) was predicated on an incomplete and inaccurate definition of aspect. To use the more comprehensive definitions of aspect described in previous sections, learners need access to an extensive language database. That is, to properly conceptualize the complex notion of aspect requires the use of a comprehensive, data-based approach to represent the concept of aspect along with a reduced focus on the attempt to develop complete models of grammatical concepts (i.e. more inductive than deductive). Contrary to the main claim inherent in the CBI proposal, the actual force of this process resides primarily in the inductive process managed by the learner with the guidance of the instructed process. Interestingly, the proposed (qualified) improvements in the conceptualizations of aspect among learners in the studies conducted by Negueruela, Yáñez-Prieto, and other proponents of CBI happened despite the fact that the proposed explanations from instructors are incomplete or misleading (see critique of Bull's proposal above). In sum, pedagogical interventions are most useful when used in synchrony (over time) with inductive processes of analysis of large samples of language data.

Second, the development of (explicit) metalinguistic awareness is necessary to develop advanced knowledge about aspect. The proposal of CSH eschews instructional procedures, arguing for a reliance on extended access to sociolinguistically contextualized language use (orthogonal to classroom-based language use, and thus primarily inductive). Contrary to the claim of CSH, however, the effect of metalinguistic awareness, especially in natural language use contexts, cannot be discounted. Among some early studies in SLA, Klein (1986, p. 16) posited a communication-learning paradox: for a learner to be able to communicate and interact with other speakers, "he must learn the language,

and in order to learn it, he must communicate." This paradox notwithstanding, Klein points out that learning occurs when a mismatch is perceived between the learner's own output and that of others (p. 141). For that mismatch to be perceived, learners must engage in some type of metalinguistic awareness. In line with Klein's proposal, Jessner (2008) defined metalinguistic awareness as "the ability to focus on linguistic form and to switch focus between form and meaning."[7]

Along those lines, Swan (2005) argues that it is precisely in areas above the sentence level (for which we may erroneously adduce the positive effects of unguided induction) that we need a more explicit approach to guide the learner's metalinguistic focus. Swan stated that, for instance, "… if students do not already know the linguistic conventions for opening and closing conversations, interrupting and challenging, etc, how are they supposed to learn them without input from the 'dominating' teacher? One cannot teach by eliciting what is not there" (p. 350). The focus of analysis chosen by Swan is relevant for our discussion given the prevalent belief that study-abroad settings are ideal for the development of sociolinguistic-appropriate language use. In fact, the basic concept of metalinguistic awareness (spanning the entire range from traditional grammar points to sociocultural norms) reminds us that we cannot—idealistically—define the context of non-classroom language use and interaction as devoid of any opportunity for the metalinguistic analysis of language. In fact, the available empirical evidence of study-abroad settings casts doubts on some of the proposed benefits of unguided natural settings of communication (Collentine, 2004; Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004) while highlighting the positive effects of intensive at-home programs that are based on extensive access to input data along with pedagogical scaffolding of various types (the latter more akin to enhanced classroom-based environments).[8]

# Conclusion

For L2 learners to demonstrate advanced knowledge of aspect, they must know and be able to manage not just the shallow meanings represented in prototypical pairings of aspectual markings (i.e. rules of thumb), but also the integrated representations of aspect that underlie the non-prototypical choices that, despite not being common in the data, are managed and used precisely by competent speakers of the language. Such advanced knowledge of aspect cannot be achieved by making reference to verbal forms in isolation which can only convey general referential meaning. As Silva-Corvalán (1986, p. 244) claimed early on, "… the general referential meaning of a verbal form may in part overlap with the meaning of another and … form-specific meanings must be identified in contexts of use." L2 learners with access to advanced knowledge of aspect are able to integrate the superficial layer of mearning conveyed by lexical aspect, and internal and external arguments, with additional layers of information that contribute to the complete value of the aspectual contour of eventualities. Even though proficient learners of a

language with complex aspectual representations may function reasonably well in the use of the L2 while making reference to the components that are most salient and most used to compute the aspectual value of verbal predicates, only advanced learners are able to integrate the deeper layers of aspectual meanings when they are required to produce native-like interpretation and production of aspectual morphology.

Future studies of tense-aspect among advanced L2 learners should probe further into the highly contextualized layers of meaning that are part of the conceptualization of temporality that have been described in this chapter. As noted above, one of the first studies to assess the advanced knowledge of temporality in the L2 (among other grammatical categories), Coppieters (1987) analyzed native and near-native speakers' judgments of uses of French *passé composé-imparfait*. Even though Coppieters's study was focused on decontextualized sentences, the judgments of native speakers reflected access to nuanced contextual meanings apparently recovered from such decontextualized utterances. For such a recovery to happen, new empirical studies need to expand the context of use of aspectual meanings while precisely identifying the sources of information used by participants in future studies. A few initial studies have already eschewed the sentence-level approach to studying aspectual interpretations to incorporate instead a comprehensive view of temporality that provides access to the analysis of the complete construct of aspectual representation (e.g. Salaberry, 2013a). Future studies should continue to circumscribe the dependent variable they will use to ascertain the level of knowledge about aspect to be investigated. From a methodological perspective, new studies of aspectual knowledge should consider the effect of such a broad level of contextualization of aspect for the description of independent variables such as lexical aspect, discourse grounding, and other lexical and discursive factors. In a recent review of the methodological options available to future researchers of advanced levels of knowledge of tense-aspect, Salaberry and Comajoan (2013) provide a summary of multiple perspectives on how to approach this task. Finally, some pedagogical proposals, such as the CBI, have also moved our field toward the analysis of the acquisition of aspect beyond the narrow perspective of the sentence level (typically associated with rules of thumb) to a broader realm of contextualization, and consequently a more accurate conceptualization of the grammatical representation of aspect.

The first 30 years of research on the acquisition of tense and aspect in the L2 have laid the foundation for the next stage of collection of empirical data to develop a comprehensive picture of the acquisition of the complex, multilayered grammatical concept of tense-aspect marking in the L2. Future studies should expand on the knowledge acquired so far and incorporate new methodological approaches that are in line with the theoretical knowledge developed to date. The advantages of a broad view on the description of aspectual knowledge stand to benefit the field of second language acquisition given the multifaceted description of aspect and the need to include such a concept as part of the definition of the advanced L2 learner.

## NOTES

1  The examples are taken from Smith (1997).
2  In some cases, even in the absence of adverbial information, the same effect obtains when relevant information is implicit: see Bybee (1995).
3  The sentences are taken from Salabery and Martins (2013).
4  Menéndez-Benito proposed that Spanish preterit and imperfect cannot combine with generic adverbs (e.g. *normalmente* 'normally') and durational phrases (e.g. *durante dos años* 'for two years'), respectively. Nevertheless, there are many counter-examples that challenge that assumption, as acknowledged by Menéndez-Benito.
5  Langacker considers generic sentences together with habitual sentences.
6  An exception to this developmental/acquisition trend represented by studies of natural learners happens when learners focus more explicitly and consistently on grammatical form, in which case they show some clear signs of development of aspectual morphology (e.g. Giacalone-Ramat, 2002).
7  Jessner (2008) added that "[i]ndividuals who are metalinguistically aware are able to categorize words into parts of speech; switch focus between form, function, and meaning; and explain why a word has a particular function."
8  For the context of classroom instruction, Toth, Wagner, and Moranski (2012, p. 19) demonstrated the notion of "richness of engagement" whenever learners can "formulate L2 rules and use contributions from other learners to further their thinking." In fact, even when students seem not to be actively engaged in the analysis of language, as measured by behavioral indices (actual talk), they may still be focused on the active analysis of language as shown in the extended study of Amy Ohta (2001).

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