A REVISED APPROACH TO TEACHING THE ENGLISH TENSE AND ASPECT SYSTEM BASED ON EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CURRENT PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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Submitted to the faculty of University Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts
in the Department of TESOL and Applied Linguistics,
Indiana University
August 2004
Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

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September 2, 2004
To

Papá y Yeyi for giving me the gift of life and for teaching me to reach for the stars,
Dan for helping cope with my life in a new culture,
and Rosario (que descanse en paz) for pushing me to pursue my dreams and to go beyond my goals.
I would like to thank Fulbright-LASPAU and the Universidad Nacional-Costa Rica for making this degree possible and my thesis committee for all the help that they gave me in the writing process of this thesis.
Teaching grammar to students of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) has long been based on drills and fill-in-the-blank tasks, and on other exercises that present the syntactic constructions as the product of simple, mechanical steps without taking into account the actual learning processes involved. Traditionally, grammarians have treated the teaching of grammar as a matter of memorizing structures and substituting lexical items. Relatively little work has been done based on the construction of form-meaning-use associations in tense and aspect systems, especially from a pedagogical point of view. This thesis presents an overview of the English tense-aspect system and its components, recent findings regarding the acquisition processes of tense and aspect used by second language learners, a description of the tense aspect form (i.e. structure), the model used in ESL/EFL textbooks for teaching it, and a short overview of the input processing theory which serves as the pedagogical framework for the present work. Eighteen ESL/EFL textbooks are analyzed in terms of what types of teaching activities and visual aids are used to introduce the English tense-aspect system in order to establish a link between what the books present and what SLA research says about the acquisition of the English tense-aspect system. The outcome of this examination serves as the basis for the development of a multilevel pedagogical approach for the teaching of English tense-aspect. The approach proposed takes into account the recent findings and pedagogical implications proposed by SLA researchers and translates these findings into a pedagogical grammar using the input processing theory of VanPatten (1996) as the underlying theoretical framework. A discussion of the implications and limitations of this multilevel pedagogical model is presented and it includes recommendations for future research and for developing pedagogical tools and their presentations in language textbooks.
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A NEW APPROACH TO TEACHING THE ENGLISH TENSE AND ASPECT SYSTEM BASED ON EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CURRENT PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

Introduction

Teaching grammar to students of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) has long been based on drills and fill-in-the-blank tasks, and on other exercises that present the syntactic constructions as the product of simple, mechanical steps without taking into account the actual learning processes involved. Traditionally, grammarians have treated the teaching of grammar as a matter of memorizing structures and substituting lexical items. Reflecting this traditional influence, we find publications such as the following in many ESL/EFL classrooms: Azar (1999), Butler and Podnecky (2000), Elbaum (2001), Richards, Hull and Proctor (1997), and Kirn and Jack (2002). For the most part, these texts do not attempt to integrate or apply recent scholarly work on tense and aspect. A few approaches have focused on the relationships among form, meaning and use (cf. Thewlis, 2000; Badalamenti and Henner-Stanchina, 2000), but even these texts do not fully acknowledge current theorizing and the empirical findings from research in this area.

In fact, relatively little work has been done based on the construction of form-meaning-use associations in tense and aspect systems, especially from a pedagogical point of view. The potential value of such work provided the motivation for this thesis, which is organized as follows: I present an overview of the English tense-aspect system and its components, recent findings regarding the acquisition processes of tense and aspect used by second language learners, a description of the tense aspect form (i.e.
structure), the model used in ESL/EFL textbooks for teaching it, and a short overview of
the input processing theory which serves as the pedagogical framework for the present
work.

Chapter 2 relates the findings from Chapter 1 with the presentation of the tense-
aspect system in commonly used ESL/EFL textbooks. Eighteen ESL/EFL textbooks are
analyzed in terms of what types of teaching activities and visual aids are used to
introduce the English tense-aspect system in order to establish a link between what the
books present and what SLA research says about the acquisition of the English tense-
aspect system.

The outcome of this examination serves as the basis for the development of a
multilevel pedagogical approach for the teaching of English tense-aspect which is
presented in Chapter 3. The approach proposed takes into account the recent findings
and pedagogical implications proposed by SLA researchers and translates these findings
into a pedagogical grammar using the input processing theory of VanPatten (1996) as the
underlying theoretical framework.

Finally a discussion of the implications and limitations of this multilevel
pedagogical model is presented which includes recommendations for future research and
for developing pedagogical tools and their presentations in language textbooks.
Chapter 1

English Tense and Aspect

According to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, three concepts are crucial in the acquisition of temporal expression in a language: tense, grammatical aspect, and lexical aspect (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). These concepts are crucial not only within the field of SLA, but also in the different fields involved in the teaching of second/foreign languages including ESL. In fact, these concepts should serve as the keystone in presentations of the English tense and aspect system in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks but typically are not. Therefore, the current proposal takes into account the findings of the Primacy of Aspect hypothesis (POA) (Andersen, 1991), the perception of personal time against public time (Bull, 1960), and recent pedagogical findings in the interpretation and processing of input (VanPatten & Lee, 2000) in order to construct a visual aid to help learners understand and learn the English tense and aspect system. The main purpose of this chapter is to explicate these concepts.

English Tense and Aspect

Temporal expression has become its own area of research in adult SLA (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000); therefore, it has shed light on many findings in the field of teaching and material development. Some of these findings are the acquisition sequences of tense and aspect and the primacy of aspect hypothesis (POA) (Andersen, 1991), the phonetic constraints related to tense and aspect (Bayley, 1994), and the means of expression of temporality employed by second language learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Andersen &
Shirai, 1994; Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995; Giacalone-Ramat, 1997; among others).

For the purposes of this thesis, the POA serves as the basis for a pedagogical approach to help learners in ESL/EFL contexts accelerate or improve their acquisition of the tense-aspect system of English.

Before the presentation of a new pedagogical approach for the teaching of it, a definition of the tense-aspect system of English is needed. The tense-aspect system of English can be divided into two components (i.e. tense and aspect) that help define its structure, its meaning, and its use. I would like to start with the definition of these two key components and a presentation of their corresponding forms and uses.

**Tense**

The definition of *tense* used by SLA researchers is summarized by Bardovi-Harlig (2000) as a deictic category that locates an event on a timeline, usually with reference to the time of speaking. _Deictic means the specification of identity or spatial or temporal location from the perspective of one or more of the participants in an act of speech or writing_ (Radom House Webster’s College Dictionary, 1997). Thus we can define *tense* as a category that identifies or locates an event, temporally or spatially from the perspective of the speaker, on a timeline in any act of speech or writing.

Tense is composed of three perceptions of time: present, past, and future. Before defining these three perceptions of time, it is important to define the moment of speech as the moment in which an utterance is said or written. Because we are talking about locating an event spatially or temporally on the timeline with reference to the time of
speaking, the moment of speech does not represent what is generally referred to as the actual *present* tense or present time.

**The Present Tense**

The present tense conveys immediate factuality, it expresses habitual actions in the present, general timeless truths, or describes an event occurring at the moment of speech (Azar, 1992). Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) distinguish between three types of present. The first is a *timeless present* which in English is expressed with the simple present grammatical structure (third person singular –s); the second is a *limited present* which is expressed with the present progressive structure (*be* + *V+ing*); the third is an *instantaneous present* which is expressed with either the simple or the progressive structure. Regarding form, I will focus on the structures utilized to represent these different types of present and they will be divided according to the aspectual marker they possess (See Table 1.1).

**The Past Tense**

The simple past tense states facts with a sense of remoteness (Knowles, 1979 in Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). It can also be defined as an action that took place at a particular point of time or over a period of time. If it were over a period of time it could be seen as a completed event, an event that has not been completed, or an event that has been completed but took place over a specific period of time. The simple past can also express former habituality (Quirk & Greenbaum Sydney, 1973).
Table 1.1
English Tense and Aspect System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Simple</th>
<th>Perfect</th>
<th>Progressive</th>
<th>Perfect Progressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>have + -en</td>
<td>be + -ing</td>
<td>have + -en be + -ing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>write/writes</td>
<td>has/have written</td>
<td>am/is/are writing</td>
<td>has/have been writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walk/walks</td>
<td>has/have walked</td>
<td>am/is/are walking</td>
<td>has/have been walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>had written</td>
<td>was/were writing</td>
<td>had been writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walked</td>
<td>had walked</td>
<td>was/were walking</td>
<td>had been walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>will write</td>
<td>will have written</td>
<td>will be writing</td>
<td>will have been writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>will walk</td>
<td>will have walked</td>
<td>will be walking</td>
<td>will have been walking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Celce-Murcia et al., 1999: p. 110)

The Future Tense

In order to define the future we have to take into consideration that the English language does not use verbal morphology to represent the future tense as Spanish and French do. Therefore, there is no obvious future tense shown in its verbs. In lieu of this lack of future grammatical structure, English uses different present tense structures to show future reference (e.g. will/shall + Verb, be + going to + verb, the present progressive) rather than verbal morphology (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Quirk et al., 1973).
Aspect

Aspect is the second component in tense-aspect systems and SLA distinguishes between two types: grammatical and lexical. **Grammatical aspect** is a means of expressing one’s view of a situation or event, and **Lexical aspect** or inherent aspect is the set of semantic properties of the utterances used to refer to a situation. These semantic properties belong to the utterance and not to the event itself (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

Based on this, we can define aspect as combination of the structure that is used to express an event and the meaning that is embedded into the lexicon chosen to express the same event.

**Grammatical Aspect**

Grammatical aspect is also known as view-point aspect and provides different ways of viewing situations (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000) or as stated above the use of a structure to express an event regardless of the link between structure and its meaning. For example, *I was eating an ice-cream cone*. In this case the grammatical aspect is the one shown by the structure *be+v-ing* of the verb phrase. It has been widely used as a key for the production of ESL/EFL language materials (e.g. Azar, 1999; Butler & Podnecky, 2000; among others). The mastery of certain tense-aspect forms have been taken as criteria for the placement and/or advancement from one level to the next one (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000) and for standardized tests such as TOEFL.
Lexical Aspect

Also referred to as inherent aspect, *lexical aspect* refers to the inherent semantic properties of the linguistic expression used to refer to a situation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). For example, in the sentences *I was eating an ice-cream cone* and *I ate an ice-cream cone*, the lexical aspect is the one that tells us that in the first sentence the action has duration and in the second sentence the action is completed. In this study lexical aspect will refer to the inherent aspect of the English predicate referred to in the literature as verbs. The semantic features of verbs are often referred to as the lexical aspect; therefore, verbs not only have grammatical aspect but also lexical aspect (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999).

Vendler (1967) divided verbs into four categories: states (STA), activities (ACT), accomplishments (ACC), and achievements (ACH). States persist over time without experiencing change, are not interruptible, and refer to a situation that is assumed to last more or less indefinitely. They can also be subdivided into verbs of sensory or mental perception (e.g. know, believe), possession (e.g. own, belong), emotions (e.g. love, hate), attitudes and opinions (e.g. like, dislike), measurement (e.g. contain, sound), relationship (e.g. equal), and description (e.g. look like). Activities have inherent duration. They are durative and describe an ongoing action, have undefined beginning and end points, and involve a specific time span. Achievements capture a well defined start or end point, but they do not have duration. Achievements are usually related to the past tense. Accomplishments have both endpoints and inherent duration. They show when the particular action described in the verb phrase is or is not completed.
These four categories can be assigned inherent semantic features as seen in Table 1.2 (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Celce-Murcia et al., 1999; Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995). These features are dynamic, punctual, and telic. From these three features we derive six types of lexical aspects that are present in verbs. The dynamic feature [+ dynamic] distinguishes other verbs (paint, realize, swim, study, etc) from states, which are [- dynamic] (have, contain, seem, like). The punctual feature [+ punctual] distinguishes predicates that are instantaneous or single points (begin to walk); and [- punctual] predicates with duration (read a poem, read). The telic feature [+ telic] distinguishes predicates with endpoints (read a poem); and [- telic] predicates without endpoints (read) (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

Vendler’s (1967) categorization and feature description serve as basis to develop a pedagogical model that attempts to make these more salient in order to bring them to learner’s attention.

Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Accomplishments</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punctual</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000)
In English, the combination of tense and aspect is used to form representations of temporal expressions (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999) like the present, past and future tenses in their simple, perfect, progressive, and present perfect progressive aspects. Thus, what has been known as the twelve English tenses are actually twelve combinations of tense and aspect (See Table 1 above) (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999) and that have been recognized due to the particular structure and lexical selection each one employs. This study focuses on the structures employed to represent these combinations.

**Acquisition of English Tense and Aspect**

Bardovi-Harlig (2000) claims that adult learners of second or foreign languages have access to the full range of semantic concepts from their previous linguistic and cognitive experience (p. 22). This means that adult second language learners already have a clear perception of what temporality is, and how to express it in their own language. Grammar and language books introduce learners to structures and concepts to express temporality. These concepts are sometimes abandoned before creating a link between the sentence structure and its meaning. Furthermore, the concepts of tense and aspect are sometimes fused into only one term, “tense”. These structures and concepts are introduced and taught as memorizable items. They are not introduced or explained in a manner that appeals to the learners’ real or personal understanding of temporality. This lack of a pedagogical approach to the presentation of the tense-aspect system of English is another key component for the development of this work.
Role of Instruction

Lee (2003) defines instruction as a synonym of intervention. He further states that the difference between naturalistic acquisition and instructed acquisition is the presence or absence of intervention in the acquisition process. Studies in SLA suggest that learners process meaning before form, content words first, and lexical items over grammatical items (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). If learners process meaning before form and instructed acquisition is characterized by the presence of interventions, then students are to be presented with meaningful concepts in order to be able to deal with the grammatical structures. Learning how to use the meaning of the lexicon and the structures that are available to their interlanguage in order to produce meaningful utterances is a primary task for learners. In order to achieve this, learners must pay attention to the structure and its meaning.

The concept of *attention* in learning is an important component of the learning process according to researchers in cognition; in fact, they claim that learning takes place via attention and that people do not learn unless they are attending to the stimulus to be learned (VanPatten, 1996). Therefore, making students aware of the form and its meaning can enhance acquisition and the creation of form-meaning-use associations. This issue is addressed by processing instruction (PI) which is an instructional technique that addresses both the learner’s attentional resources and the target form’s characteristics such as salience and communicative value (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten, 1996) and it will be described in the next section.
Thus, the intensity with which the learner relates form and meaning in the target language is more important than the length of time in contact with it (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). It is my intention to introduce a pedagogical approach that takes into account both the presentation of the input in a meaningful way and its presentation with a higher intensity for learners to be able to attend to the input in the tense-aspect area being presented.

These facts about the importance of form-meaning associations and the fact that many teachers rely on textbooks to teach English tense and aspect, are among the reasons why this project focuses on the instruction of the English tense and aspect system and the relationship between meaning, form and use as a result of processing of meaningful input. Input processing instruction attempts to affect the ways in which learners attend to input data (VanPatten, 1996). Input Processing instruction is the cornerstone of the study outlined in the following sections.

**Processing Instruction (PI)**

As stated above PI is an instructional technique that addresses both the learner’s attentional resources and characteristics of the target form such as salience and communicative value (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993, VanPatten, 1996, 2003). It is a type of grammar instruction which tries to affect the ways in which learners attend to input. One main tenet of PI is that it is input-based instead of output-based, and it is consonant with general SLA theory and communicative language teaching (VanPatten, 1996; Lee & VanPatten, 2003).
PI is an extremely well described type of intervention in the acquisition process as stated by Lee (2002). Furthermore, it is a psycholinguistically motivated approach to focus on form that always considers the nature of input processing and tries to alter the default processing strategies of learners if they fail to create optimum input. It is beneficial when it identifies an incorrect or less-than-optimal processing strategy and then approaches input activities that help to avoid that strategy (VanPatten, 1996). PI also attempts to make forms more salient (i.e. bringing them to learners’ attention) and it attempts to provide opportunities for consistent form-meaning mappings in activities (VanPatten, 1996; Hwu, 2004).

Sanz (2003) describes Processing Instruction’s main purpose as follows: [Processing Instruction] seeks to change the way input is processed by the learner through provision of a clever mix of raw positive evidence, that is, practice in decoding input, and information about how the language works in the form of explicit information involving explanation of the target form as well as information about wrong processing strategies (p. 241).

PI also assumes that learners filter input. Therefore, when designing input activities it takes into account the limited capacity of attentional resources during language learning activities. PI works with structured input, input that has been simplified, to facilitate the process of conversion of input into intake which will help restructure the learner’s developing language system (Hwe, 2004).

Public time and personal time and Bull’s (1960) Framework

Bull (1960) states that almost all people have the same concepts of time and order, and that all possible tense structures can be predicted from the concepts of time, order, and aspect. He also states that the differences between languages and their
structures do not necessarily imply fundamental differences on the perception of time by individuals. Tense is traditionally used interchangeably with the word *time*. Likewise, the function of tense morphemes is used in a similar way to that of *time* with their compatibility or incompatibility with tense and aspect markers. For this work, I divide these two terms and their functions following Bull’s framework of time reference and grammatical structures. Bull (1960) divides objective time into two segments: personal time which is an individual’s estimate of duration of an event (e.g. The ceremony was very long), and public time which is externally marked by the calendar or by natural phenomena such as the seasons (e.g. The ceremony was on April 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2004).

**Public time**

Public time happens when we divide time by events or event substitutes. This division is unidirectional and towards the future. Thus, our experience of time and events is serial and unidirectional. Every event that uses a point of time as its orientation point is thought to be within a time interval and it is categorized in accordance to the order and relation with this orientation point. In other words the perception of the event and its position within the calendric time (e.g. the party lasted four hours.)

**Personal time**

Personal time is constructed when we define a point of orientation that is not the one defined by public time. This creates personal time intervals that have no measurable length and are related to the personal point of orientation or as Bull (1960) calls it the
axis of orientation. In this case the axis of orientation will be the individual’s perception of the event (e.g. the party went on for a long time.).

**Time Intervals**

Time intervals, whether public or personal, cannot be established without recall, anticipation or without experiencing it. Bull (1960) points out that it is impossible to relate the role of events with the structure of tense systems without considering the relationship between events and an observer (p. 17). In other words, the perception of time among people is important in order to be able to express temporality through a sentence structure.

In order to understand the construction of time intervals within personal time, it is important to look at the seven descriptive principles of the objective nature of events. These principles are:

1. All events take place in time.
2. All events take time to take place; they have length and are measurable.
3. All events –with, perhaps, some theoretical or irrelevant exceptions— have a beginning (initiative aspect), a middle (imperfective aspect), and an end (terminative aspect).
4. All events take place unidirectionally; the end is always later in time than the beginning.
5. No event can be identical with itself.
6. All repetitions of the same event are sequent and serial.
7. All events are either cyclic or noncyclic, that is, desident or indesident in traditional grammatical terminology. (Bull, 1960; pp. 16-17)

When we place ourselves in relationship to real events in time, we perform three acts: we experience, recall, and anticipate. This is what provides the perception of present, past and future.
Bull’s (1960) Framework of time expression and grammatical structures

The visual in Figure 2 aid has been widely adopted for grammar instruction and textbook production in order to teach the perception of tense and aspect in language teaching. It has three major points that determine the perception of time. One point represents the moment of speech or the axis of orientation for time events, one represents the recollection of events represented by an arrow to the left of the axis of orientation representing the past tense, and one point represents the anticipation of events represented by an arrow to the right of the axis of orientation representing the future (see Figure 1.1). Events are represented in this framework as intervals with an initiative, middle, and a terminative aspect.

Figure 1.1: The Bull Framework applied to the English language tense-aspect system

(Celce-Murcia et al., 1999, p. 129)

Having reviewed several major studies related to the expression of temporality, this thesis now turns to an exploration of the types of teaching activities and visual aids that are used to introduce the tense-aspect system of English present in eighteen
ESL/EFL textbooks. This investigation is done with the hope of finding a link between what books present and what SLA research says about the acquisition of this system.
Chapter 2

Tense and Aspect Assessment in ESL/EFL Textbooks

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I reviewed the main empirical findings concerning the acquisition of the tense-aspect system of English, the role of instruction in second language acquisition, and a pedagogy approach that has been demonstrated to enhance the conversion of input into intake thus modifying the learner’s language developing system (i.e. PI). I now turn to the question of what research findings have been incorporated into commonly used ESL/EFL textbooks with respect to the teaching of the English tense-aspect system.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, studies suggest that learners process meaning before form, content words first, and lexical items over grammatical items (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000); therefore, it is suggested that students need to be introduced to tense and aspect embedded in meaningful materials in order to be able to deal with the grammatical structures. They must learn how to use the lexicon that is available in their interlanguage to be able to process the structure. Input needs to be processed in order for it to become intake and be part of learners’ developing interlanguage. By drawing learner’s attention to the grammatical form, processing instruction (VanPatten, 1996; VanPatten & Lee, 2000, among others) states that it is possible to make them aware of the structure; and this in turn will enhance the chances that this input will become intake for their developing language system (VanPatten, 1996). Attention is drawn by presenting one thing at the time. This is supposed to enhance and accelerate the processing of input. According to the theory (PI), this enhancement and acceleration affects the acquisition
and usage of the grammatical structures of tense and aspect and the expression of temporality, in this case, of English.

Instruction can be a positive influence on the acquisition of a target-like tense-aspect system (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). Thus, if learners process meaning before form and instructed acquisition is characterized by the presence of interventions (Lee, 2003); then students should be presented with meaningful concepts in order to deal with the grammatical structures that are involved in the English tense-aspect system.

Furthermore, the expression of tense and aspect, which is part of the grammar of natural languages (Bybee & Dahl, 1989; Dahl, 1985) is potentially part of the learner’s interlanguage. This appears to be the case, as demonstrated by the empirical evidence reviewed in Chapter 1. Therefore in principle, learners do not need to learn the tense-aspect systems; on the contrary; they need to use the one available to them through their L1 in order to make form-meaning associations. The processing of input is a key component for the acquisition of second/foreign languages (Krashen, 1985; VanPatten, 1996; VanPatten, 2004, VanPatten & Lee, 2000; among others). Therefore, the way we introduce the tense-aspect system of English to our students, the activities, and the lexicon we use to introduce it should be subject to linguistic inquiry. The main question in this chapter is what types of activities ESL/EFL grammar books or textbooks mainly dealing with grammar, use for the teaching/learning of the English tense-aspect system.

With these facts in mind and this question in mind, eighteen textbooks produced and published to be used in ESL/EFL classrooms were analyzed in order to determine the way the tense and aspect components of the tense-aspect system of English are

\[\text{\footnote{This is an assumption that has been adopted by White (1990) and VanPatten (1996) when discussing the role of L1 in the acquisition of foreign language grammar.}}\]
introduced to students, how verbs and their complements (i.e. predicates) are introduced, and what type of learning activities are employed. This and the possibility that the expression of tense and aspect might need to be assessed as different skills in language learning is what drives this part of the study.

**Method**

**The books**

Close to thirty ESL/EFL textbooks were selected from a group of many more textbooks. The books were given to the researcher by the publishers at two ESL/EFL teachers’ conventions when told about the purpose of the study and as promotional materials. They are advertised as being utilized in both ESL and EFL settings. After the poll of textbooks was completed, a detailed selection process in order to be present in this study. The process took into account the following criteria:

a. language level at which they were aimed;

b. type of approach under which they were constructed (e.g. Form, meaning, and use, traditional grammar);

c. level of proficiency, type of book (i.e. series, non-series), and teaching approach;

d. the inclusion of grammar points in their lessons (if they were claimed not to be grammar books); and

e. the probability that the book is used outside the United States (i.e. EFL setting).
Textbook selection

The selection process was enhanced by grouping the books from the first poll according to their compliance with questions a and b. The selected books were further grouped, based on question c, according to levels of proficiency they were aimed at (i.e. if they were part of a series) and the specific approach to language teaching (e.g. form, meaning, and use in communicative classrooms). After narrowing the poll, the next two questions (e and e) were used for the last grouping of the sample. The textbooks had to include grammar points in their lessons if they were claimed not to be grammar books in their entirety; and finally whether these books were said to be used inside or outside the United States. For the latter selection I took into account the publishing house information. Texts that are published in different areas of the world as well as in the United States were selected. This was done to have a more representative sample of the ESL and EFL settings. Although this does not imply or represent to what extent they are used, it is good evidence that they are available in both ESL and EFL settings, and they are most likely to be used by ESL/EFL learners and teachers. This last grouping yielded a total of eighteen books ranging from grammar only use (e.g. Azar, 1999) to communicative language teaching with grammar components (e.g. Richards et al., 1997).

Textbook classification

The eighteen selected books are aimed at students ranging from beginning to advanced language proficiency. They are intended for the teaching of ESL/EFL and grammar through different skills, communication with some degree of grammar (i.e.
grammar not as the main focus of the lesson), and grammar as the main focus of the lesson.

These textbooks can be classified according to the language skill through which they teach grammar. I found one for listening, four for communication in general, two for writing, and twelve for grammar as a specific skill (within the grammar category I found two subcategories: communicative grammar and structural grammar. Two major groups according to the kind of evidence, positive or negative (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995) were found among textbooks. Some use positive evidence to introduce grammatical structures, and some use negative evidence to do so. Nine rely on negative evidence to introduce certain type of constructions (i.e. they use examples of ungrammatical sentences to demonstrate a violation of rules for example *Mary is liking the lesson*), and nine use positive evidence (i.e. no ungrammatical sentences are used to demonstrate the grammar; on the contrary, they use only grammatical sentences as examples) (See Table 2.1).

Data Collection

Due to the fact that this is an overview of what it is being done in the ESL/EFL textbooks, the data collected in this part of the study was gathered as a sample from specific units aimed at the teaching of the present tense and its simple and progressive aspects hoping that, based on this sample, a generalization could be made.

Three sets of questions were asked for the analysis of the units. These questions are the following:
1. General Information
   a. What type of book is it?
   b. What population is it aimed at?

2. Simple and Progressive Aspects of Present Tense
   a. What type of verbs does the text use to introduce the simple present and what quantity?
   b. What type of verbs does it use to introduce the present progressive and what quantity?

3. Teaching techniques and the presentation of the tense-aspect system
   a. What type of visual aids does the text use to introduce the expression of tense and aspect?
      a.1. Does it use graphs?
      a.2. Does it use formulas?
      a.3. Does it use examples?
   b. Does it use any technical vocabulary? If yes, does it explain it in detail?
   c. Does it use any type of discussion activities concerning the expression of temporality?

Question set number 1 was used to determine the type of books and the population of students they are aimed at. These criteria were used to categorize the textbooks and to describe the units. Set number two was designed to search for a link between the role of instruction and the natural process of the acquisition of tense and aspect in English as a second/foreign language. This search was done taking into account the type of predicates that are used to introduce the structure being studied.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Grammar: Grammar Through Listening</td>
<td>Ellis &amp; Gaies</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>ESL/EFL students</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitty Gritty Grammar</td>
<td>Young &amp; Strauch</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>high beginners/low intermediate</td>
<td>Drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Grammar</td>
<td>Folse</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>beginners/low intermediate</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Interchange Intro</td>
<td>Richards, Hull &amp; Proctor</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>beginners</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Interchange 1</td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>beginners</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Headways</td>
<td>Soars &amp; Soars</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar as a skill</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Grammar in Use</td>
<td>Murphy &amp; Smalzer</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>beginners/low intermediates</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Links 1</td>
<td>Butler &amp; Podnecky</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin</td>
<td>ESL/EFL students</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar in Context 1</td>
<td>Elbaum</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Heinle &amp; Heinle</td>
<td>ESL beginners</td>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Express</td>
<td>Fuchs &amp; Bonner</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>Intermediate/high intermediate</td>
<td>Drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Dimensions: Form, Meaning &amp; Use</td>
<td>Badalmenti &amp; Henner-Sanchina</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Heinle &amp; Heinle</td>
<td>High beginners</td>
<td>Drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and Using English Grammar</td>
<td>Azar</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>intermediate/advanced</td>
<td>Drills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic English Grammar</td>
<td>Azar</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Longman</td>
<td>EFL/ESL students</td>
<td>Drills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, set number three was designed to determine to what degree the English tense-aspect system is presented as a system or if its components are highlighted as individual components, and if attention is drawn to the structures and their meaning being presented in the textbook (i.e. if there is a presentation of its form, meaning, and use).

**Data Analysis and Results**

**Data Analysis**

For the analysis of the data gathered from the three sets of questions described above, a percentages and raw scores approach was selected.

Data for the first set of questions was gathered from the section “To the teacher” that appears either as part of the introduction of each textbook or on the back cover of the book. All the information that describes the method utilized within the units of the books and the level the textbooks were designed for was gathered as part of the data.

For the second set of questions, units that claim to introduce the simple or progressive aspects of the present tense were selected. Predicates that were used to present the use of each of these aspects were selected and divided into the four categories that have been used in the studies of the acquisition of second language tense-aspect systems (i.e. STA, ACT, ACC, and ACH). After sorting the verbs out, each of the units was analyzed using the third set of questions in order to determine to what extent and with what method the English tense-aspect system was introduced. Examples from the units are presented in order to establish a comparison among the books. They are used to determine if the English tense-aspect system is introduced or mentioned and how it is presented as a whole.
Results

Predicate type utilized for the introduction of the simple aspect.

The predicate categories that are used in this part of the analysis are the ones used by Vendler (1967). As stated in Chapter 1, these categories have been used in studies of the acquisition of the English tense aspect system (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). The reason to use these categories is to search for possible implications of the role of instruction in the acquisition of the English tense-aspect system by instructed learners.

In Table 2.2 we observe that activities (ACT) occupy the first place followed by accomplishments (ACC) in second place and states (STA) in third place. Not only do ACTs occupy the first place among the verbs presented to students in these books, but also they represent the highest number of predicates shown to represent the simple present in generic and habitual events. From the results of this analysis, we can also see that, in the majority of books, ACTs outnumber any other type of predicates (e.g. I am eat lunch at the cafeteria; Azar, 1992, p. 3).

Six of the eighteen books, however, present a balance between ACTs and ACCs. Twelve present an imbalance between these two categories in with ACTs outnumbering ACCs by more than three predicates. This is an important number if we consider the amount of input presented. ACHs are almost non-existent with the exception of four books that introduce between one and five tokens in the simple present.
Table 2.2

Distribution of type of predicates used to introduce the simple aspect of the present tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book*</th>
<th>Simple Present</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STA %</td>
<td>ACT %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Grammar: Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Through Listening</td>
<td>3 25.0</td>
<td>5 41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nitty Gritty Grammar</td>
<td>5 8.5</td>
<td>24 40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Clear Grammar</td>
<td>6 11.3</td>
<td>28 52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New Interchange Intro</td>
<td>1 7.1</td>
<td>13 92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 New Interchange 1</td>
<td>2 10.5</td>
<td>8 42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 American Headway 1</td>
<td>3 13.0</td>
<td>9 39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tense Situations</td>
<td>4 33.3</td>
<td>7 58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Basic Grammar in Use</td>
<td>3 13.0</td>
<td>12 52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Grammar Links 1</td>
<td>2 8.3</td>
<td>17 70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Grammar in Context</td>
<td>4 23.5</td>
<td>8 47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 New Grammar in Action</td>
<td>1 7.1</td>
<td>8 57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Grammar Express</td>
<td>5 20.8</td>
<td>13 54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Grammar Dimensions</td>
<td>6 12.0</td>
<td>27 54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Interactions Access: Grammar</td>
<td>5 12.8</td>
<td>25 64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Interactions 1: Grammar</td>
<td>4 18.2</td>
<td>10 45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals of English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Grammar</td>
<td>3 15.8</td>
<td>15 78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and Using</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 English Grammar</td>
<td>2 16.7</td>
<td>6 50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Basic English Grammar</td>
<td>1 2.2</td>
<td>33 71.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Predicate type utilized for the introduction of the progressive aspect

I am concerned, in this section, with the type of predicates that were used to introduce the use of the progressive aspect in present tense. As we can see from Table 2.3., ACT represented the highest group of verbs presented to introduce the present progressive. Seventeen of the eighteen books introduce the present progressive mostly with ACT. These books use more than fifty percent of all verbs found in the two units under study in the unit that deals with the progressive. Only one book introduces the present progressive with an equal amount of verbs between ACTs and ACCs, nine tokens each. Five books use STA verbs in fixed expression such as “I am having problems”. Three books introduce the use of ACHs also in similar fixed expressions.

One issue that arose from the analysis of these units was the fact that several textbooks treated the teaching of STAs as part of the present progressive unit. Nine books treated them as part of the unit introducing the present progressive, and nine introduced them as a separate unit or as a separate topic. Nine used positive evidence and nine relied on the use of negative evidence. (see Table 2.4).

An interesting finding from this analysis is that none of the books under study makes a contrast between the progressive and the simple aspects of the present tense to show learners the differences in use. This is an issue that processing instruction covers within the importance of bringing learners’ attention to the structure and its meaning in order for learners to be able to process the input and SLA research has demonstrated that learners need to pay attention to the input in order for it to become part of their developing interlanguage (VanPatten, 1996)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book*</th>
<th>Present Progressive</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STA</td>
<td>ACT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Grammar: Grammar Through</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Listening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nitty Gritty Grammar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Clear Grammar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New Interchange Intro</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 New Interchange 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 American Headway 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tense Situations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Basic Grammar in Use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Grammar Links 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Grammar in Context</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 New Grammar in Action</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Grammar Express</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Grammar Dimensions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Interactions Access: Grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Interactions 1: Grammar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Fundamentals of English Grammar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Understanding and Using English Grammar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Basic English Grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.4

Distribution of type of activities, evidence and the treatment of STA verbs and adverbials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Type of Activities</th>
<th>Type of Evidence</th>
<th>STA Treatment***</th>
<th>Use of Adverbials****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drills</td>
<td>Comm**</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Impact Grammar: Grammar Through Listening</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nitty Gritty Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Clear Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New Interchange Intro</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 New Interchange 1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 American Headway 1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tense Situations</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Basic Grammar in Use</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Grammar Links 1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Grammar in Context</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 New Grammar in Action</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Grammar Express</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Grammar Dimensions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Interactions Access: Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Interactions 1: Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Fundamentals of English Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Understanding and Using English Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Basic English Grammar</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Communicative  
*** Treatment of the STA within or separate from the present progressive unit  
**** Use of adverbials to exemplify the use of the progressive or the simple present (i.e. create a direct link between form and adverbials)
Exercise type and visuals and the presentation and explanation of tense and aspect

For the explanation of tense and aspect, nine textbooks make use of drills and nine use communicative activities. By drills I refer to the traditional fill-in-the-blanks in sentences with no context or in cloze passages, and by communicative activities I refer to the type of activities that require the oral use of the structures being studied (i.e. oral output). A similar pattern was found when looking at the way they treat the use of STA verbs.

Adverbials and time expressions were used as a direct link between the form and the meaning to such extent that some books rely heavily on their use to tell students what aspect should be used in a particular sentence. Some of these books also treat the time adverbial as part of the correct form of a specific aspect. As we can see from Table 2.3, thirteen rely heavily on the use of adverbials to introduce the simple aspect (e.g. every day, usually, etc.) as well as the progressive aspect (e.g. now, right now, etc.) in the present tense. Only five textbooks rely on the structure at a higher percentage than they rely on the use of adverbials to introduce these aspects. Contrary to the majority, these five books introduce the adverbials as a help to express tense and aspect.

From what we know in second language acquisition, learners acquire content words before they acquire function words; therefore, the introduction of these adverbials may lead learners to learn these adverbials as aspectual markers. Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) found that learners rely heavily on the use of adverbials in their interlanguage to mark aspect. For pedagogical purposes if we are trying to focus learners’ attention to the form-meaning associations, a heavy presence of adverbials will override the communicative value of the form and learners could direct their attention to a word
heavy in communicative value such as adverbials instead of the form. The implication of the introduction of tense and aspect sentences with and without adverbials from the perspective of the role of instruction is an issue that should be further studied.

**Pedagogy and the expression of temporality**

The third set of questions involved a search for the type of activities and visuals which books use in order to teach or introduce the expression of tense and aspect (i.e. what pedagogical approach is being used by these textbooks). It is important, at this point, to note that the form or structure of a sentence is not the same as the expression of temporality. As demonstrated in studies of the acquisition of English tense and aspect, the expression of temporality could be present in the learners’ interlanguage in different ways. One of them is the use of adverbials (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995). It can also be present at the structural level, but not marked morphologically (Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Bardovi-Harlig, 1998; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1995; Giacalone Ramat, 1992).

In this study, since my interest is pedagogical and not acquisitional, I make a distinction between the expression of tense and aspect (i.e. meaning and use) and the structure of sentences (i.e. form) which represents different aspects of a specific tense (e.g. present tense). The latter, the present tense, can be represented in two ways: the simple and the progressive aspects. We need to keep in mind that not only can these structures express the present tense, but they can also express time reference other than present (e.g. future and past).

Therefore, the expression of tense and aspect, in this study, is the use of tense, aspect, and time reference as a system composed by form, meaning, and use. It is the
ability to explain the position of events in the tense-aspect system of a language, in this case English. It is the way in which tense and aspect are presented to the learner, and the ability to make learners aware of what the structure really means and how they can use it.

In sum, the expression of tense and aspect is connected to the idea of making structures meaningful to the learners. This may be achieved taking into account the psycholinguistic processes put forward by the input processing theory and through processing instruction (VanPatten, 1996).

Paradigms

After defining the key concepts for the interpretation of the data in Table 2.5, we see that fifteen books use the entire verb paradigm to introduce morphological markers. Only three make no use of it.

A paradigm is a representation to display the various forms of a given grammatical structure. It is an abstraction, generalization, and a tool to help organize information and present data; but it does not correspond to how knowledge is structured in the brain (VanPatten & Lee, 2000). Bybee & Dahl (1989) state that paradigms are not present in native speakers’ heads. If they are present, they have been put there by teachers or books. A paradigm is shorthand, which has no psycholinguistic validity for acquisition, for a particular set of connections. VanPatten and Lee (2000) refute the use of paradigm for acquisitional purposes by stating that if the goal of a lesson is to learn the grammar and to be tested on the grammar (i.e. structure with no meaning and/or use), then it makes perfect sense to use such shorthand devices (i.e. paradigms). They go on to say that if the purpose of the lesson is to learn how to perform particular tasks (i.e. form-
meaning associations), then paradigms lose their purpose in the class. Thus, they argue that learners only need to know part of a rule or parts of a paradigm at a time for learners to be able to make the necessary form-meaning associations and to pay attention to the input being presented to them.

**Bull’s Framework**

Bull’s Framework (Bull, 1960), or time graphs as I call the different versions of this visual aid, were also found only in four books. This low level of representation was not expected since Bull’s framework has been used in traditional grammar textbooks for almost four decades, but it is not surprising since the four books that contained these graphs are within the category of traditional grammar-only instruction textbooks and the others claimed to be new approaches to grammar instruction and/or conversational English textbooks.

Time graphs are visual aids to help the learner understand the meaning of tense and aspect. They constitute a comprehensive tool, and they help learners understand abstract concepts such as tense, aspect, and time reference. Time graphs are also good visual aids for the creation of a better understanding of the tense-aspect system if they are used in a more comprehensive way. A more comprehensive way implies the use of the concepts public time and personal time. The fact that most of the books are focused only on structure rather than the expression of temporality might be the reason why textbooks lack explanation of relationships between public and personal time.
Explanation Charts

Before going into detail in the analysis of explanation charts, an overview of the role of explicit explanation in SLA is at stake. VanPatten & Lee (2000) express that, based on evidence from SLA research, in second language acquisition explicit information is not necessary for successful acquisition. They further their assertion by stating that aside from the knowledge of abstract rules that we develop without any explicit instruction, research on nontraditional approaches to grammar strongly suggests that explicit information is not necessary (p. 125). In this work, I would acknowledge the fact that explicit information has been proven not to be important in non-traditional approaches to grammar, but I would adhere to the fact that some research has shown that explanation may be beneficial to help learners acquire a structure in a faster manner than when there is no explanation at all (Schmidt, 1995) and that in order to process input learners’ attention has to be drawn to the particular structure being studied. I will not advocate the use of explicit explanation as it has traditionally been done but rather, explicit instruction within PI’s framework. This stand is taken because the main purpose of this work is pedagogical: to aid in the acquisition of the tense-aspect system of English.

SLA research has found that adverbials play an important role in assigning aspect with instructed language learners (Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995). As we can see from the two definitions above mentioned, the present progressive structure is directly linked, and sometimes presented only with this tense-aspect structure, to the adverbial now. This lack of or simplification of the input may be the cause of under-generalizations of the present progressive to describe only activities that are in action at
the moment of speech and not the use of it to express future events. It could also create an over-generalization of the use of the adverbial \textit{now} for activities only in the progressive leaving aside the imperatives. In future studies whether learners use adverbials as means of expressing tense-aspect because they are processing content words before the structure or whether explicit instruction is triggering this behavior when learners pay attention to these words heavy in communicative value should be an area of inquiry.

Thus, explanation charts, another type of visual aid, were found in the entire sample of textbooks. Although these charts are intended to help the learner understand the use of certain structures, some of them lead learners to under-generalizations about the use of the structure. According to PI theory, learners could be overwhelmed with the amount of information presented to them, an issue that has not been studied enough up to this point. Studies in processing instruction have demonstrated that if learners’ attention is drawn to the target structure (i.e. one thing at the time), learners have been able to recognize the structure at more often than learners with traditional instruction (i.e. explanation charts and paradigms) (VanPatten, 1996, VanPatten & Lee, 2000, among others).

For example, some of the authors define the present as the moment of speaking, or simply “the present” with no reference to whether it is time-related or aspect-related, a distinction I consider is crucial for the construction of form-meaning associations. Within the explanations of the present tense, we find the inclusion of aspectual definitions with no mention whatsoever of the word aspect or what it implies. An example of this situation is the definition of the progressive aspect of the present tense found in two of the textbooks studied:
“Use the present progressive tense for actions happening now. Use it with time expressions like now, right now, and at the moment.” (Butler & Janet Podnecky, 2000 p. 79); and

“The present progressive expresses an activity that is in progress (is occurring, is happening) right now. The event is in progress at the time the speaker is saying the sentence. The event began in the past, is in progress now, and will probably continue into the future.” (Azar, 1992 p. 3)

Explanations of this kind are found in most of the books which makes one wonder how learners process this information and what effects are caused by them and to what degree they notice the structure and construct form-meaning associations. A question that needs to be addressed in future studies on the influence of instruction in the acquisition of second and foreign languages. After being presented with these definitions, learners are asked to produce accurate utterances by means of drills and fill-in-the-blank exercises.

It is not my intention to suggest that the explanation charts are wrong; on the contrary, what I am saying is that they can be strengthened in order to trigger reflection about the expression of tense and aspect in the target language and to lead learners’ attention to the uses of the structure one at the time.

One way to do so is to use the input processing theory to present explanation of the structure in a way that is beneficial to the conversion of input into intake. This will be explained in detail in Chapter 3.
Syntactic Formulas

VanPatten and Lee (2000) also mention that it is not uncommon for people to generalize from experiences and that we tend to imply that the way we learn a language is the way language is learned in general. This comment makes me reflect that the grammar instruction I received when I was at the beginning of my learning process does not vary much from what the textbooks under study are presenting to learners (i.e. it has not changed in about 15 years or even more).

An example of this tendency is the use of syntactic formulas, a technique used by the grammar translation method, which is used as a tool to help learners produce grammatical sentences. For several learners, formulas do not seem to help when they are faced with spontaneous speech or in settings outside the classroom.

Formulas were used in thirteen books, and they varied in form and in the way they are presented. Some of the formulas used technical vocabulary such as subject, and verb. Examples of the formulas used are:

a. “am/is/are + verb + ing” (Young & Strauch, 1994 p. 71)

b. “Subject + Verb // Subject + Verb + -s” (Werner, Nelson, & Steedman, 2002”)

Formulas can be very helpful, but they are also very abstract, which in turn makes it difficult for the learner to establish a direct link between meaning and form. Formulas tend to substitute for the paradigm. Textbook writers use items like the ones shown in a and b above; and this, in turn, creates confusion when the learner attempts to attach, in this case, the third-person-singular“-s” to the verb.

In addition to these formulas, spelling and pronunciation rules, which are formulas, were also found among the aids presented to help students learn the structure of
the simple and progressive aspects in present tense. These rules are used in thirteen of the eighteen books. These spelling and pronunciation rules are the ones to convert the base form of the verb into the present participle or the pronunciation of the third person singular –s in its different phonetic environments. These rules can also be accounted for as formulas for the production of the structures under study because they require the memorization of a specific pattern linked to the spelling of the verbs.

**Summary of how the Tense-Aspect System is presented**

The eighteen books were also analyzed in order to find what kinds of activities or visual tools they use, if any, in order to present the learners with the concepts of tense, aspect, time reference, and the different perceptions that these terms enclose. None of the eighteen books show a differentiation between the terms tense, aspect, and time reference and their structures. On the contrary, they present the different aspects of the present tense as individual tenses.

These books did not have any activity related to the perception of tense and aspect and how it triggers the use of specific structures to express temporality in different ways. The lack of these kinds of activities may be related to the difficulty learners have to produce grammatical structures and to retain them when dealing with the expression of tense and aspect. Research has demonstrated that learners need to make a meaningful link between the meaning, the structure, and its use in order to incorporate the structure into their interlanguage (Giacalone Ramat, 1992; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1995, among others). This link is enhanced through the use of Input Processing Theory which advocates that we need to lead students attention to a particular form at a time for
students to notice the structure’s meaning. They have to be able to recognize the structure before we ask them to produce it.

Discussion

SLA research suggests that learners need to create a more durable link between the meaning and the form of sentences in the target language. As teachers and SLA researchers, we need to implement a pedagogy that appeals to the analysis, the practice, and the use of the English tense and aspect system, or foreign languages’ tense-aspect systems for that matter. As shown in this study, traditional methods for the teaching of grammar still dominate textbook production. The focus changes, but still the assessment and classroom practices from old methodologies remain in the textbooks. A new pedagogy has arisen from the need to overcome these traditional approaches to the teaching of grammar. With this pedagogy comes a different form of classroom-activity construction.

PI has shown through empirical evidence (see VanPatten 1986 and VanPatten 2004 for a comprehensive review of the literature) to be a strong, new pedagogy for the teaching of grammar in foreign language instruction. PI has proven to be beneficial for the comprehension of romance-language grammars in foreign language settings. PI does not dismiss other methodologies or claim to be a unique way to teach grammar; on the contrary, its claims are that it could very well complement the existing methodologies for the teaching of foreign/second languages. It can complement these methodologies by enhancing learners’ attention to form and meaning in order for learners to be able to produce meaningful utterances. PI deals with perception rather than production. Perception will help learners to understand how the grammar of the language they are
learning works. It also helps learners to make form-meaning association from the first stages of their language acquisition. By paying attention to form, meaning, and use; learners are able to process and filter input in a way that is beneficial to their developing linguistic system.

In an attempt to implement processing instruction and input processing theory in the teaching of tense and aspect systems, a multi-level model for the teaching of the English tense and aspect system is developed in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3
Towards pedagogy for the teaching of English tense-aspect system: A Model for the Teaching of English Tense-Aspect

Introduction

Empirical research with second language learners on the interaction between grammatical and lexical aspect strongly indicates that tense-aspect systems of second languages are complex structures the same way first language tense-aspect systems are (Andersen, 1991; Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Liskin-Gasparro, 2000; among others).

Yet very few tense-aspect researchers have made claims that inform or reflect on pedagogy for the teaching of tense aspect systems. Among these few, we find work by Liskin-Gasparro (2000), who aside from studying the acquisition of tense and aspect by second language learners of Spanish, presents implications for pedagogical practices related to the teaching of tense and aspect. Liskin-Gasparro makes three pedagogical observations regarding the role of instruction in the acquisition of second language tense-aspect systems. The first one has to do with the linguistic input that students receive in upper-level division courses where it is rare that courses include systematic attention to the development of students’ language skills. The second is the need to incorporate awareness of narrative structure into tense and aspect instruction to advanced students. This observation includes the question of whether the inclusion of emphasis on the relationship of aspect to narrative effectiveness would be beneficial for the teaching of tense and aspect. The last observation is related to the disparity of the sequence of acquisition and the sequence of presentation of structures in the classroom. In this regard, SLA research obviously is at odds with pedagogical practices. This last observation
prompted me to construct a new pedagogical approach. My goal is to build a bridge between SLA research and classroom practices to help learners acquire the English tense-aspect system.

Furthermore, the fact that learners process meaning before form provides us with the starting point for discovering perhaps more constructive ways to introduce the structure of a language. One of these meaningful ways is the use of reflection on the meaning of tense, aspect, and time reference. Reflection can be brought about through the use of visual tools. SLA studies demonstrate that directing learners’ attention to the form, its meaning, and its use is beneficial to the acceleration of the acquisition processes (Lee & VanPatten, 2003). The findings in the present study demonstrate that these useful tools are almost non-existent within the textbooks used in ESL/EFL classrooms with regard to the teaching of tense and aspect.

Therefore, I am proposing a model for the introduction of the English tense-aspect system in ESL/EFL settings. This model presents both meaning and form as a unit. Its main goal is to have learners reflect on their understanding of their L1 tense-aspect system in order to apply this knowledge to their interpretation of the L2 tense-aspect system. In other words, it is meant to gather learners’ attention and direct it to the interpretation and recognition of the form and its meaning and use. It is framed within the processing input theory and the pedagogy that derives from this theory (i.e. PI).

This model is also partly based on the assumption that Universal Grammar is still available to L2 learners, but that they access it through their knowledge of their L1 (White, 1990), assumptions that are also adopted by the input processing theory together with the assumption that L1 has a role in the acquisition process. These assumptions and
the finding that learners filter input by being aware of the form and its uses in order for
this input to become intake (VanPatten, 1996) are also key components of the model.
The model introduces metalinguistic terms to help learners and teachers work with tense
and aspect in a way that will benefit the acquisition process.

The Model

The present model appeals to different learning styles. It attempts to trigger the
use of memory strategies that help students to store and retrieve information; cognitive
strategies that enable learners to understand and produce new language; compensation
strategies that allow learners to communicate despite deficiencies in their language
knowledge; metacognitive strategies that allow learners to control their learning through
organizing, planning, and evaluating; affective strategies that help learners gain control
over their emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values; and social strategies that help
learners interact with other people (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, pp. 63-64)
2. It also
includes the metalinguistic components to allow learners to reflect on their own tense-
aspect system when approaching the English system.

The model is a representation of the English tense-aspect system made up of four
components: the concepts of public and personal time, the notion of events enclosed in
time intervals, the representation of these intervals within the perception of time, and the
integration of the first three components into a system as a whole.

This model does not treat events in a linear fashion, but rather as events that can
be recalled, experienced, and anticipated at the learner’s choice. It also accounts for the

2 For further explanation of learning strategies see Richards, 1996, Chapter 3; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford,
2003; and Ehrman & Leaver, 2003.
fact that not all events within the personal time frame represent actual intervals in the public time.

**Public Time and Personal Time**

Two key components that have been part of SLA research in tense and aspect are personal time and public time. As pointed out in Chapter 1, public time is when we divide time by events or event substitutes. This division is unidirectional and towards the future. Thus, our experience of time and events is serial and unidirectional. Personal time is when we define a point of orientation that is not the one defined by public time. This creates personal time intervals that have no measurable length and are related to the personal point of orientation what Bull (1960) calls the axis of orientation.

Thus, the combination of public time with personal time forms the concept of *tense*. Tense, a term which most teachers, students, and researchers are familiar with, can be represented as in Figure 3.1:

![Figure 3.1: Representation of tense in a multidimensional model](image_url)

Figure 3.1: Representation of *tense* in a multidimensional model
With this figure, we can establish and make differences between personal time (e.g. I used to eat bread when I was a child.) and public time (e.g. I ate a piece of bread at seven yesterday) visible to our learners. It represents the starting point to direct their attention towards the meaning of form. As we know from Bull’s (1960) framework events are organized within time intervals, and what the model presented here adds to our understanding of representation of time reference is the emphasis on the distinction between our perception of time and the establishment of time as a social convention; in other words, linear time (i.e. public time) versus perceived time (i.e. personal time).

As defined by Bull (1960) public time is linear and unidirectional, it moves toward the future. Personal time, on the contrary, is not unidirectional and it can be seen from different perspectives. Events can be recalled, experienced, and anticipated. Some events do not represent actual intervals of time; therefore, the perception of personal time should be represented as an area in space (or mind) rather than a single line. This will help to explain the difference between the events that happened and can be marked on a calendar such as birthdays, and the events that cannot such as habitual events or general truths.

I present this model taking into account the philosophical belief that all events are either future or past (Bull, 1960). The future and the past intersect in order to form the present tense. An important tenet of this model is the separation of the present tense with the moment of speech. The latter is the moment at which utterances are said; independently of the hour, day, or time. The present tense is the space formed from the intersection of the future and the past; therefore, the space that belongs to the present
tense does not have to be taken as a single point on the public time-line, it could be taken as a space that does not have a definite beginning or a definite end. This space will move in a linear fashion along with the public time, but contrary to the linear time it is not represented by specific marks in the public time (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: The relationship of past and future and the creation of the present

This figure shows the spatial and temporal location of any event on the time line. The present here is represented as the shared space in time, both personal and public, between the future and the past. And the past and future are represented as spatial ovals because of the complexity of temporal expressions, and the fact that all expressions, spoken or written, are not specifically marked as events on the public time-line (e.g. conditionals, activities in progress, among others). Therefore, tense will enclose these three conceptions of time (past, present, and future).
Time Intervals, Memory Indices, and the Present Tense

The combination of grammatical aspect (i.e. view point aspect) and lexical aspect (i.e. inherent semantic properties used to refer to a situation) forms the concept of time intervals. Bull (1960) states that a time interval happens when an event is used as an axis of orientation. This axis of orientation is what I call here “a memory index.” These time intervals position events in specific slots in the model. It is up to the learner to determine which tense the events belong to according to the axis of orientation that s/he chooses. The beginning or ending point of each time interval is represented by memory indices. Memory indices are the points within personal time that tell the learner when and for how long an event takes place. This is related to Bull’s (1960) assertion that every event, because it takes place in time, has length and three aspects: a beginning, middle, and an end. The initiative aspect (the absolute beginning) and the terminative aspect (the absolute end) of events present in extreme form the same problem as instantaneous events. Both of these aspects are perceptible. This notion triggers my theory about these memory indices as delimiters of the events (i.e. time intervals in personal time). As dates and hours are delimiter of events in public time, memory indices are the clues that learners need in order to recall, experience, or anticipate events. Memory indices can be of two types: the ones that are completed, and the ones that are hypothetically posited. The former is represented in this model with the symbol ✷. The former represent the events in the past or events that started at a certain point before the moment of speech. The latter represent events that are said not to be real and do not mark the concept of time either personal or public (i.e. conditionals, future, and habitual and generic events).
Memory indices are the graphic representation of the different features related to grammatical and/or lexical aspect.

In English, we can relate these memory indices to the perception of personal time and how this relationship affects the choice of grammatical aspect to be used within the model of tense and aspect. Sentences containing features such as [- punctual], [- telic], [- dynamic], [- complete] (i.e. simple present) and verbs with the same features (i.e. STA verbs) leave no memory indices in the time-line. They represent activities that are considered timeless truths. Utterances containing features such as [+ punctual], [+ telic], [+ dynamic] and [+ complete] (i.e. sentences with ACH in past tense) leave a single memory index in the time line. Utterances containing [- punctual], [± telic], [+ dynamic], and [- complete] (i.e. sentences with ACT and ACC in present tense) leave one memory index at the beginning of the action and then continue until the action is completed (see Figure 3.3). If the features are [± punctual], [± telic], [+ dynamic], and [+ complete] (i.e. all categories in present perfect), this type of predicate leaves one memory index in the time line with an un-recovered (i.e. invisible) memory index as a right boundary.

As we can see from Figure 3.3., the present tense utterances cannot be situated as a single mark in the time line. Due to their aspect, they occupy different spaces and express very different conceptions of time. For example, the simple present does not mark the time line with a memory index (♦). This happens because the simple tense represents habitual activities with immediate factuality, activities that occur at the moment of speech, and more specific timeless truths (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). Therefore, when using a single time line to explain the simple present it is, often times, difficult.
Time Intervals, Memory Indices, SLA research, and the Past Tense

If we take into account Bardovi-Harlig’s (2000) order of emergence for the past tense, we find that the simple past precedes the past progressive, and the past progressive in turn precedes the present perfect, and the present perfect precedes the pluperfect. If we analyze this sequence of emergence, the aspect that leaves a single memory index emerges first followed by the one that leaves two memory indices and implies continuity. Then, we find that the aspect that does not leave a specific memory index comes after these two that leave well-defined memory indices. Finally, we find the pluperfect which implies a greater distance from the moment of speech than the others, and also leaves two

Figure 3.3: Representation of the placement of memory indices according to the aspect features of an utterance.
well-defined memory indices (see Figure 3.4.). Memory indices in the past can be related to the prototypical features of the past [+ past], [+ telic], [+ punctual], [+ result] (Andersen & Shirai, 1994). Bardovi-Harlig (2000) affirms that achievements attract the simple past. This happens because the past shares most features with achievements according to the relevance principle and the congruence principle (for further explanation of the Aspect Hypothesis see Bardovi Harlig, 2000: Chapter 4).

Figure 3.4: Order of Emergence of the Past tense and Aspects according to Bardovi-Harlig (2000) represented in the English tense-aspect model

This study relates these findings with the choices that learners make to express present tense activities. It seems that, in the past or activities implying past events, the closer the aspect is to leaving a single memory index (i.e. [+ punctual], [+ telic], [+ result]) in the time line, the quicker the structure is incorporated into the learners.
interlanguage. This is a phenomenon that is yet to be studied under the framework proposed in this thesis.

**Time Intervals, Memory Indices, and the Future Tense**

For the *future tense* we have to take into consideration that English does not use verbal morphology to represent the future tense as Romance languages do. English relies on different present tense structures to show future reference (e.g. will/shall+ Verb, be+going to+ verb, the present progressive) instead (Celce-Murcia et al., 1999; Quirk & Greenbaum Sydney, 1973). An event in the future, in turn, does not mark the time line as the other tenses, but it can be represented as personal time within the *future* space of the model.

**Other Parts of the Model**

Some aspectual expressions cross boundaries between one tense and another (e.g. present progressive crosses boundaries from the present to the future, the present perfect crosses boundaries from the past to the present), a characteristic that Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) have termed “the boundary problem” (p.129) when they talk about conditionals. This boundary crossing is hard to show in Bull’s (1960) framework. This is not only true for the conditionals, but also for sentences in the different aspects of each of the tenses. For example, the present continuous crosses boundaries between the past and the present tenses; the present perfect also crosses boundaries between the past and the present tenses. This model takes into account the different aspects and how they interact with each other within a single time space and not as simple separate events in
time. Because these structures and perceptions of time cross boundaries between the three major tense divisions, they cannot be taken as belonging to only one of the tenses represented here. They have to be taken into account as part of both tenses to which they are related to as shown in Figure 3.5 for the case of conditionals.

![Figure 3.5: Conditionals in the Tense-Aspect System Model.](image)

This model could serve to guide the development of new pedagogical materials for teaching tense and aspect. It could also be incorporated into teacher education materials. I now turn to discuss some of the implications, limitations that arose from the development of this model.
Discussion, implications, and limitations

It has been discussed that the perception of time is different for people of different language backgrounds, which in turn affects the choice people make to construct (grammatical) sentences. Giacalone Ramat (1997) clearly pinpoints this idea by saying: “The English progressive is an obligatory category in the verbal system, while in Italian, as well as in all Romance languages, progressive constructions are an optional variant of the simple forms.” (267). Therefore, there is further research to be done in order to determine the perception of time among speakers of different languages, how this affects the acquisition of tense and aspect of a specific L2, and how the lexical aspect differs among languages. Giacalone Ramat (1997) also points out, about the latter, that verbs like see and hear which in English are verbs of inert perception and cannot occur in the progressive aspect can be used in the progressive aspect in Italian.

Implications

Pedagogical

For instructional purposes, the proposed model implies that teachers should introduce the concept of personal time (Bull, 1960), and how it interacts with different features of the language. It is also suggested to appeal to the concept of personal time of the learners L1 in order to trigger a better understanding of it in the target language. I hypothesize that making learners search for answers within their own knowledge of tense and aspect will help them develop strategies to acquire the target language tense and aspect system in a faster and easier way than if they are asked to memorize structures as simple mechanical processes which are meaningless for them.
In order to do this, we need a pedagogy that accounts for the processes and strategies learners go through in order to construct form, meaning, and use associations. Input processing theory and processing instruction (VanPatten, 1996; VanPatten & Lee, 2000) serves as the pedagogy that has demonstrated to be efficient in the teaching of tense and aspect in Spanish and Romance languages (Lizkin-Gasparro, 2000; Sanz, 2003; Wong, 2003; VanPatten & Oikkenon, 1996; VanPatten & Sanz; 1995; among others). PI has been taken as a theoretical framework here for the creation of a model to teach tense and aspect informed by both SLA theory and by pedagogical approaches to teaching. I suggest we, as teachers and researchers, aim at creating links between SLA and instructed language learning.

**Material Development**

For material developers this implies a rethinking of the space provided to the creation of form-meaning associations through visuals and reflection along with mechanical or communicative drills. Learners need to pay attention to the meaning and use of the grammatical form before they are asked to produce. It does not need to be an extensive period of time, but learners need to be allowed the time to process the input they are receiving. If they have limited resources for the processing of input (VanPatten, 1996; VanPatten & Lee, 2003), it is suggested that we give them time to process the input before we ask them to produce grammatically correct utterances. Thus, I propose to incorporate models like the one presented here into textbooks that are well informed by SLA and, more importantly, by pedagogies that translate SLA findings into pedagogical strategies for the improvement of language learning.
SLA Research

For research in SLA, since most of the empirical evidence that informs SLA comes from instructed language learners; the search needs to be directed towards the effects of instruction, how it is being delivered, and the acquisition processes. We need to start building bridges between what learners do and what instruction is supplying to the process. Not only do learners learn languages in particular stages, but variables that affect this acquisition process also exist. It is suggested to search for these variables and tease them out in order to understand the acquisition of second and foreign language by instructed learners. This model has been created to aid the teaching of tense and aspect and it still needs to be validated and tested for its effectiveness in SLA.

Limitations

The main limitation of this project is the fact that it is still in the developing stages. Its effect in the enhancement of the acquisition of second/foreign languages is still to be demonstrated. With this research, also comes the need to develop “user friendly” aids and methods of presenting tense-aspect systems, which also implies the need to do research on what aids/presentation methods work best and for what types of learners.
Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, teaching grammar to students of English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) has long been based on drills and fill-in-the-blank tasks that introduce the syntactic structures as simple mechanical processes without taking into account the learning process. It has been discussed throughout this study that there are certain drawbacks to this approach. Grammarians have treated the teaching of grammar as a process of memorizing structures and substituting lexical items, an approach that has proven to be ineffective to the acquisition process (Lee & VanPatten, 2000). This study surveyed available pedagogical work on the construction of form-meaning associations in the English tense aspect system, the empirical evidence in the SLA research field on the acquisition of it, its form, its use, and its meaning. Findings from this survey were compared with the presentation of this system in ESL/EFL textbooks. The results of this comparison have served as the basis for the creation of a pedagogical model for the teaching English tense-aspect.

This study also presented an overview of the English tense-aspect system, its components, recent findings regarding the acquisition processes of tense and aspect used by second language learners, a description of its form, the model used in ESL/EFL textbooks for teaching it, and a short overview of the input processing theory, which served as the pedagogical framework for the present work. This overview was intended to help to create a bridge from theoretical SLA to a pedagogical grammar for the teaching of tense and aspect. To fulfill this goal eighteen ESL/EFL books were analyzed to study what types of teaching activities, and visual aids are used to introduce the English tense-aspect system.
The analysis resulted in a multilevel pedagogical approach to the teaching of the English tense-aspect system. The model was constructed taking into account the recent findings and pedagogical implication proposed by SLA researchers in their different studies on the acquisition of tense and aspect, which were linked to a pedagogy that accounts for the formation of form-meaning-use associations. This linkage was done in an attempt to translate these findings and implications into a pedagogical grammar.

Finally a discussion of the implications and limitations of this pedagogical multilevel model was presented followed by recommendations for future research and/or developing of pedagogical tools and their presentations in language textbooks.
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