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İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Türk Öğrencilerin Geçmiş Zamansallığın Ediniminin İncelenmesi

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ÖZET

Bu kesitsel çalışma, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce (EFL) öğrenenlerin geçmiş zamansallığı konusuna hem kelime bilimsel bakış hem de dil bilgisi yönüne odaklanarak, Görünüş Hipotezi çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Özellikle yazma alanında olmak üzere dilbilimsel çalışmalara duyulan ihtiyacı ele alan verilerle, Türkiye'nin farklı yerlerindeki üniversitelerde iki farklı yeterlik seviyesinden öğrenciler tarafından tamamlanan öyküsel yazma ödevleri aracılığıyla geçmiş zamansal koşullara ilişkin veriler toplanmıştır. Çalışma, öğrencilerin hem sözcüksel yönden hem de dilbilgisel yönden öğreniminin önemini vurgulamıştır. Bulgular, fiil kullanımının yanı sıra zaman/görünüm edinimindeki zorlu alanları ortaya çıkarmıştır. Dahası, geçmiş zaman kipinin öğretilmesinin öğrencilerin dilbilgisel yetersiz genellemelerinin üstesinden gelmelerine yardımcı olduğu bulunmuştur. Öğrenenlerin farkındalığını artırmak ve sınıfın ötesinde girdi öğrenenlerin dil gelişimi için tavsiye edilir. Ayrıca, geçmiş zamansallığın gelişimini gözlemlemek için boylamsal çalışmalar yapılabilir ve kapsam genişletilebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yabancı Dil olarak Türkçe öğrenenler, geçmiş zamansallığı, görünüş hipotezi, kesitsel çalışma

An Analysis of the Acquisition of Past Temporality of Turkish EFL Learners

ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional study investigates the use of past temporality by Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, focusing on both lexical aspect and grammatical aspect within the framework of the Aspect Hypothesis. Addressing the need for linguistic studies, particularly in writing, the data were gathered on past temporality circumstances through narrative writing assignments completed by students from two distinct proficiency levels at universities located in different places around Türkiye. The study emphasized the significance of both lexical aspect and grammatical aspect in the learners' grammar. The findings revealed challenging areas in the acquisition of tense/aspect, as well as verb usage. Moreover, teaching the past tense is found to assist learners in overcoming their grammatical undergeneralizations. It is recommended to enhance learners' awareness and input enhancement beyond the classroom. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be carried out to observe the development of past temporality, broadening the scope.

Keywords: EFL learners, Past temporality, Aspect hypothesis, Cross-sectional study.

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition process of English past temporality has been a salient topic of discussion among second language acquisition researchers (AlShahrani, 2018; Ayoun & Salaberry, 2008; Hinkel, 1997; Lee, 2001; Salaberry, 2000,). The focus on past temporality in the field of second language acquisition can be attributed to several factors. First of all, the proper acquisition of temporality is believed to be a prerequisite for effective communication (AlShahrani, 2018). What is more, gaining an understanding of how the concept of temporality is acquired, can provide researchers with valuable insight into learners' semantic and syntactic knowledge (Ayoun & Salaberry, 2008). Andersen (1985) highlighted the gravity of temporality studies which he attributed to the fact that it forces learners to simultaneously capitalize on their morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic competence. As a result, research on the acquisition of temporality can provide SLA scholars with a window into the interplay of these competencies (Andersen, 1985). Finally, the acquisition of temporality by L2 learners is a complex and intricate issue for linguists and learners. McCarthy (1991) illustrates this complexity by comparing the acquisition of temporality to a "traditional stumbling block for learners" (p.62). Among all tenses, past temporality is observed to be the most difficult for language learners to develop (Hinkel, 1997). Taking into account, the concept of temporality can be described as one of the central issues in developing language competence among foreign language learners (Lee, 2001). Despite the fact that the significance of researching the acquisition of past temporality has been widely recognized in the SLA community, Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) point to the lack of diversity in extant studies. The comparison of study contexts in which the research on past temporality was implemented points to a wide discrepancy between studies being conducted in the ESL setting (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Bergström, 1996; Bayley, 1994; Collins, 2002; Khattiya, 2018; Lee, 2001) and those in a foreign language environment (Robison, 1995). The lack of variety in research contexts has also resulted in a limited diversification of their participants. Most respondents in studies conducted in the inner-circle can be characterized as naturalistic learners, in contrast to learners who acquire past temporality in an instructional setting of an EFL classroom (Ayoun & Salaberry, 2008). The importance of increasing the diversification of research contexts is also emphasized by the fact that findings collected from naturalistic learners and classroom learners are disparate rather than similar (Dietrich et al., 1995; Slabakova & Montrul, 2002). Similarly, Salaberry (2000) stresses the importance of exploring how EFL classroom learners, who have no or largely limited contact with native speakers of English, go through the process of acquiring past temporality. By the same token, Lee (2001) called for more research to be conducted among learners with different L1 backgrounds in order to produce cross-linguistic explanations influencing the process of acquiring past temporality.

Apart from extending the research on the acquisition of past temporality to speakers of other L1 languages in an EFL context, AlShahrani (2018) highlighted the need for conducting more cross-sectional studies with learners at different levels of English proficiency. Comparing data from participants with different degrees of command of their target language can broaden the understanding of if and to what extent the learners' reliance on lexical means is dictated by their proficiency level.

The purpose of this study is to address the above-mentioned gaps in extant literature by collecting and analyzing data from a group of Turkish university preparatory class students who are in the process of acquiring past temporality in a strictly instructional setting and with no interaction with native speakers of English. What is more, in order to explore the interplay between learners' level of competence in English and their use of past temporality, the data for this study were collected from learners at two different levels of English proficiency; pre-intermediate and upper-intermediate. In their investigation of the acquisition of past temporality among Turkish EFL learners, the researchers were guided by two research questions:

1. To what extent is the participants' command of English past temporality consistent with the postulates of the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis? Specifically:

- Is the distribution of the perfective form higher with Achievements and Accomplishments than Activities and States (atelic events)?
- Is the imperfective past more common with States and Activities?
- Is the progressive marking more common with Activities?
- Is the progressive marking not used with States?

2. Does the extent to which the participants rely on the inherent lexical aspect change according to the level of proficiency in English?

Background

Lexical Aspect Hypothesis in The Research of Temporality

The notion of aspect has been claimed often in the literature, especially since the 1980s with the emergence of a number of research studies focusing on the interaction between tense-aspect morphology and innate semantics of verbs in the field of second language acquisition. To have a deeper understanding of this subject, it is initially pivotal to know what the Aspect Hypothesis (henceforth, AH) is. In the literature, the following events are considered to occur depending on the AH:

1. Learners initially utilize perfective (past marking) on the verbs (Achievement and Accomplishment) and then on the verbs (Activity or State).
2. In encoding languages to differentiate the perfective and imperfective, perfective past is followed by imperfective past and its marking starts with verbs (Stative and Activity, atelic) and later it is extended to verbs (Accomplishment and Achievement, telic).
3. In the languages which have progressive aspects, at first, progressive marking is seen with Active verbs and later this marking is extended to Accomplishment and Achievement verbs.
4. Learners do not wrongly associate stative verbs with progressive marking. (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, p. 227)

The presumptions presented above stem from a thorough analysis of L1 acquisition studies in several languages (e.g. Turkish, French, Italian, Polish, Greek, English) and were then encompassed to L2 acquisition research studies in English and Spanish (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Shirai, 1991; Shirai & Kurono, 1998). Therefore, it could be said that the AH concentrates on the relationship between form and meaning and predicts the high relationships between lexical aspect and tense-aspect morphology usage since most theories distinguish between two types of aspects: lexical and grammatical (Li, 2000). It is assumed that lexical aspect traits influence the distribution of grammatical aspect morphemes in the early stages of development. The apparent nonindependence of lexical aspect verb classes and grammatical aspect morphology in the child can be explained under a theory in which lexical and grammatical aspect categories are part of the inherent endowment, the Universal Grammar (UG) named by Chomsky (1957).

In addition, it becomes complicated when there is consideration of the difference and interaction between lexical and grammatical aspects. Therefore, a brief introduction to the lexical aspect is presented and then the grammatical aspect is examined.

Lexical Aspect

Lexical aspect, in other words, “situation type,” “inner aspect,” or “Aktionsart” (van Hout, 2016) in the literature, is defined as the information offered by predicative words about the event they represent and has been described as the outcome of the operation of systems that generate lexical meaning. Lexical aspect is a feature of a linguistic description as supplied by the verb phrase without tense or grammatical aspect. It includes both lexical and syntactic-semantic aspects. In addition, Johnson and Fey (2006, p.420) have described the lexical aspect as "a system for classifying utterances into categories based on temporal properties of situations referred to by lexical items in sentences". It is a linguistic expression of a condition that identifies an occurrence or situation in the world by using a specific word or phrase by “carving out” an absolute “time slice” (Parsons, 1990; van Hout, 2016).

It is assumed that an aspectual coercion mechanism exists by determining the lexical aspect of verbs. Verbs are the best predicative words. They have been assigned to several aspectual classes based on the sort of event they signify. These lexical categories can be defined as follows (Haznedar, 2007; Li, 2000; Shirai &Kuroono, 1998):

1. Achievement: happens suddenly and can be reduced to a single moment (e.g. die)

2. Accomplishment: has duration and an endpoint (e.g. build a house)

3. Activity: has duration but no endpoint (e.g. walk)

4. State: is not dynamic and does not need additional energy to carry on (e.g want)

A considerable number of scholars offered studies related to aspect and the most well-known writers are Dik (1997), Comrie (1976), Smith (1997), and Vendler (1967). According to Dik (1997), it is important to distinguish between lexically expressed aspectual distinctions ("Aktionsart") and grammatically stated aspectual distinctions ("Aspect"). As a result, the term "Aktionsart" can be described as the lexical equivalent of the grammatical category "Aspect." Dik (1997) uses the term "aspectuality" for both subareas and is concerned about the internal semantics of the predication as seen in the following table (Dik, 1997, p. 114):

general term	[+ control]	[-control]
[-dyn] Situation	Position	State
[+dyn] Event	Position	State
[-telic] Event	Activity	Dynamism
[+telic] Event	Accomplishment	Change

The classification proposed by Dik (1997) shows that the concept of dynamism differentiates Situations ([-dyn]) from Events ([+dyn]), which are then subdivided in terms of the control parameter, resulting in categorization of Positions, States, Actions, and Processes. Accomplishment [+tel], Activity [-tel], Change [+tel], and Dynamism [-tel] are the classifications for actions and processes based on telicity.

Vendler (1967) suggested another well-known event categorization, distinguishing four groups (states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements) based on three parameters: *change*, *end*, and *duration*. The table illustrates examples from Spanish and English and event classification: (1a) represents a non-changing durative event with no end- *a state* ; (1b) shows a changing durative event with no end - *an activity*; (1c) demonstrates a changing durative event with an end- *an accomplishment*; and (1d) a non-durative changing event with an end *an achievement*.

	Spanish	English	Event classification
1a	Juan sabe japonés.	Juan knows Japanese.	[state]
1b	Juan está estudiando japonés.	Juan is studying Japanese.	[activity]
1c	Juan estudió la forma -teiru en japonés.	Juan studied the form -teiru in Japanese.	[accomplishment]
1d	Juan pronunció -teiru en japonés.	Juan pronounced -teiru in Japanese.	[achievement]

Despite the common sides, there is a distinction between the classifications of Vendler and Dik. Whereas Vendler focuses on a verb classification, Dik concentrates on predications. According to Olsen, aspectual categorization of verbs acts at the level of semantic characteristics (Olsen, 1997), and the typical aspectual classes are created by combining these more rudimentary properties as seen in the table below:

Lexical Aspect: Event Structure representation in lexicon (Olsen 1997 [1994])

Aspectual Class	Telic	Dynamic	Durative	Examples
State			+	Know ,have
Activity		+	+	March,paint
Accomplishment	+	+	+	destroy
Achievement	+	+		Notice,win
Semelfactive		+		Jump, tap

Smith (1997) uses the same parameters ([±dynamic], [±durative], [±telic]) to make a distinction between them by adding another class, “Semelfactives”. When there is the movement of the subject, the verb is +dynamic verbs (such as walk). The verb “love” is static, so it is a -dynamic verb. Comparing the verbs, when there is an expansion in time, the verbs are +durative whereas the verbs do not expand in time (e.g. break), they are -durative verbs. Regarding telicity, it shows the endpoint of the event. Considering a verb phrase, there is an endpoint, so the verb is telic. As an example of this, the verb “walk” is an atelic verb, but the verb phrase “walk to school” is a telic verb. Smith’s classification has been reviewed by Taylan (2001) with the five examples as in the following:

i. States: [-dynamic], [+durative] and [-telic]

Ex. John is tall; John resembles his father.

ii. Activities: [+dynamic], [+durative] and [-telic]

Ex. John is playing soccer; He listened to music.

iii. Accomplishment: [+dynamic], [+durative] and [+telic]

Ex. John walked to the bus stop; He made that sculpture.

iv. Achievements: [+dynamic], [-durative] and [+telic]

Ex. John found that hat; John broke the window.

v. Semelfactives: [+dynamic], [-durative] and [-telic]

Ex. John winked; John knocked on the door. (Taylan 2001: 99-100)

Besides this, lexical aspect characteristics have an interaction with grammatical aspect and adverbials based on Olsen's theory. States are notably inconsistent with progressive. For instance, (7) "*John is resembling his father", but the others have various associations with progressive such as Activities as seen in (ii) showing the whole event. But the moment displayed with a progressive in Accomplishment or Achievement disallows the outcome. For example, (8) "John is walking to school" does not have the same meaning as (9) "John has arrived at school". Finally, semelfactives are impermanent; thus, they result in repetitive interpretation in progressive (like (10) "John is knocking on the door" or (11) "John is opening the bottle" show repetitive interpretation by touching the door or trying to open the bottle). In addition, Adverbials show the distinction between the verbs "telic" and "atelic". While selecting adverbials, telic verbs indicating "in" are chosen with Accomplishments and Achievements (12) but adverbials indicating "for", atelic verbs are selected with States, Activities and Semelfactives (13) as Kuram (2015) exemplified:

(12)

- a. He made that sculpture in an hour (Accomplishment)
- b. John found that hat in an hour (Achievement)
- c.* John resembles his father in an hour (State)
- d.*He listened to music in 10 minutes (Activity)
- e.*She winked in 10 minutes (Semelfactive)

(13)

- a. He listened to music for an hour (Activity)
- b. John knocked on the door for 10 minutes (Semelfactives)
- c. John was in love with Mary for 2 years (State)
- d.* He made that sculpture for an hour (Accomplishment)
- e.*John broke the window for 10 minutes (Achievement)

(Kuram, 2015, p.12)

Grammatical Aspect

One of the aspects is the grammatical aspect, which relates to unique perspectives on certain circumstances. (Li, 2000). Johnson and Fay (2006, p.421) define the grammatical aspect as "a system for classifying utterances according to the perspective or viewpoint that conveys to the listener". It is also considered to show the relationship of an occurrence or state to a certain reference point before, after, around, or a specific moment in time (Anderson,1973). As a result, whether a phrase depicts a continuing or completed activity is a question of grammatical aspect (Li, 2000). The grammatical aspect is frequently confused with tense as it is concerned with time. And it examines circumstances internally, regardless of time. Aspect is not a deictic category; rather, it is a referential category that connects an event to a reference point that is deictically defined by tense. However, tense is deictic linking the period of the occurrence referred to another time (Aksu-Koç,1988; Comrie, 1976,1985). Furthermore, tense is the "grammaticalized expression of location in time" (Comrie (1985), and Comrie explains that the tense marker is essential (bound) or grammaticalized.

Chomsky, with the generative theory, is largely dedicated to understanding the mental representation of grammar and has long studied several functional categories among tense, aspect, and mood to create syntagmatic rules. In addition, Uzun (2004) asserts that the relationship between aspect, tense, and mood is like *Bermuda Triangle*.

Tense is the position of the event in time. Tense necessitates a steady time in order to denote the time of an event. The assessment point is the speech moment when the statement is said and even though the assessment point regarding time changes, tense is still the same. When the speech point is known, the time of the event can be confined. If it is before the speech point, it is "past", if it occurs at the same time, it is "present" or if it is after the speech point, it is "future". Despite the fact that such a three-way differentiation is conceivable, a two-way distinction is typically seen in languages (Comrie,1985) such as "past vs. non-past distinction" or "future vs. non-future distinction" and Comrie (1985) asserts that almost all languages use some means to denote time despite some variations. For instance, Cinque

(1999) claims that *adverbs* as lexical categories are universal and are used to refer to times such as “yesterday” referring to before the speech point and “tomorrow” referring to after the speech point; however, they are not considered to be tense markers as they are not bound. The examples refer to times without adverbials:

(14) John left.

(15) John will leave.

(Lin, 2012)

As it is seen, both of these sentences show times but adverbials are not available.

The following table summarizes the positions of event time (E), reference time (R) and speech time (S) for tenses:

E, R, S	Zekiye Yeşim is studying.
S — E, R	Zekiye Yeşim will study.
E, R — S	Zekiye Yeşim studied.
E — R — S	Zekiye Yeşim had studied.
S — E — R	Zekiye Yeşim will have studied.
R — E — S	Zekiye Yeşim would study.

In English, there are single morphemes utilized in both tense and aspect systems as English distinguishes the continuous aspect by using the verb to be with the present participle and the perfect aspect by using the verb to have with the past participle.

For instance, the affix may mark imperfective is denoted by the affix emerging with the auxiliary **be** in different tense forms as a participle (16):

(16) Dorothy walked out the house, turning her head for a last look at her own place.

The perfective is marked by the -ed affix and used with the *have* auxiliary, also known as the perfective participle denoting a completed situation, because the perfective grammatical aspect concentrates on the bound of situations; the end shown by the [+telic] feature. An example is from COCA:

(17) Having finished the test, he left the room.

Aspects of the present tense:

- Present simple : "I play"(not progressive, not perfect)
- Present progressive : "I am playing" (progressive, not perfect)
- Present perfect : "I have played"(not progressive, perfect)
- Present perfect progressive : "I have been playing"(progressive, perfect)

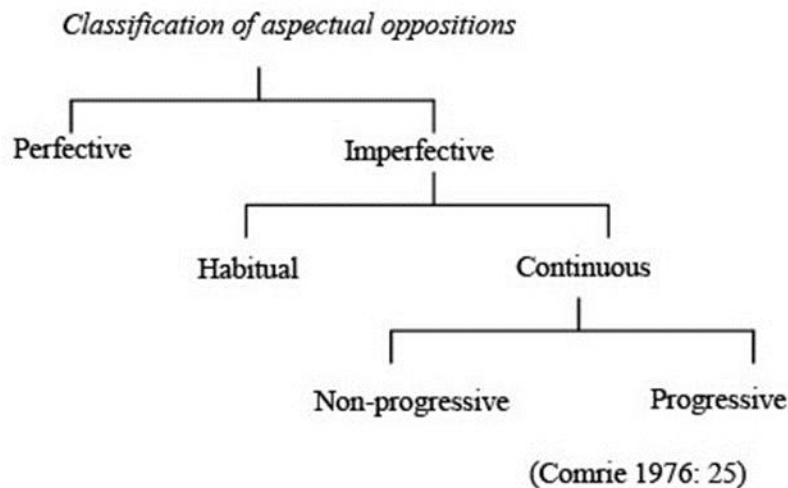
Aspects of the past tense:

- Past simple : "I played"(not progressive, not perfect)
- Past progressive: "I was playing"(progressive, not perfect)
- Past perfect: "I had played"(not progressive, perfect)
- Past perfect progressive: "I had been playing" (progressive, perfect)

Future or hypothetical reference with aspectual meaning:

- Simple future, simple conditional: "I will play", "I would play"
- Future progressive, conditional progressive: "I will be playing", "I would be playing"
- Future perfect, conditional perfect: "I will have played", "I would have played"
- Future perfect progressive, conditional perfect progressive: "I will have been playing", "I would have been playing"

For these aspectual distinctions, Comrie (1976) made a classification:



Briefly, the perfect is expressed analytically in European languages with an auxiliary (have and be) and a past participle (Dahl, 2000). In addition, the grammatical aspect interacts with the properties [+durative] and [+dynamic] in a significant way. As a result, grammatical aspects might be unconstrained or limited in predictable ways. Azerbaijani and Turkish, for example, have no lexical limitations on the imperfective.

Turkish, as an agglutinative language, one single affix can demonstrate the precedence relation in the present perfect and perfective past. For instance, the morpheme “-DI” displays precedence relation, but its function is disputed as a present perfect or perfective past marker, and the glossing and the translation given in a specific environment depends on the availability of a past adverbial. These examples (29) are taken from the Turkish linguistics literature:

- (29) a. Gel -di -m
 come-PFC-1SG
 ‘I have arrived’
- b. Dün gel -di -m
 yesterday come-PST-1SG
 ‘I arrived yesterday’

Regarding perfective and imperfective aspects, it is revealed that there are some distinctions as shown in Summary Table below:

Summary Table

Bounded/Perfective Aspect	Unbounded/Imperfective Aspect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentrates on the activity from the <u>OUTSIDE</u>. - Has a beginning and an ending point. - Is <u>UNMARKED</u>/prototypical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looks at the event from the <u>INSIDE</u>. - Does NOT have a specific beginning/ending point.

Grammatical Modifiers

Grammatical modifiers have a general, often abstract, meaning whereas lexical modifiers have a definite, often tangible meaning. For instance, in English, the grammatical word of past tense, –ed, implies that the event occurred before the time of the speech, while lexical expressions of past time, such as yesterday, two days ago, or in 1907, convey considerably more precisely when the event occurred. In addition, grammatical modifiers are referred to as operators and are represented in the semantic representation by the symbol π and lexical modifiers are represented by the symbol σ .

By altering semantic units and thereby designating the designated entity of a semantic unit, modifiers contribute to the communication functions of description, positioning, and presenting content. Modifiers are classified primarily by the scope of their modification and can be directed at the attribute or relation specified by the predicate, the event specified by the prediction, or the propositional content specified by the proposition. Arguments can be modified as well.

Studies on English Past Temporality

Many researchers in the field of second language acquisition attempted at analyzing their data with reference to the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis. Bardovi-Harlig (1992) conducted a cross-sectional study with a large number of participants from 14 different countries. The respondents were asked to complete a cloze test, multiple-choice test, and write a short composition. The findings revealed that although the level of proficiency of the respondents had an impact on their overall command of past temporality, a strong relationship between the tense and lexical aspect of verbs was consistent with the postulates of AH (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992). A subsequent study conducted by Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) was instrumental in identifying three separate stages that learners go through in the process of acquiring the past simple tense with the final stage involving an undergeneralization in the use of this tense. Whereas the above studies involved administering data collection tools to a large group of participants in a highly controlled environment, other researchers interested in the acquisition of past temporality selected a

different approach to their studies. Instead of analyzing data collected from a diverse group of respondents at a single time, they opted for conducting longitudinal studies focused on the development of past temporality over time in a much smaller group of respondents. Lee (2001) spent 13 months with a Korean family who recently relocated to the United States. He recorded and analyzed data collected from two siblings in the family (aged 14 and 10) at regular intervals. Unlike Bardovi-Harlig, he favored spontaneous, oral production of language instead of structured written tasks. His findings corroborated the postulates of AH proving that past tense was used more often with telic events while the progressive marking was first used with activities before spreading to other lexical aspects (Lee, 2001). Khattiya's (2018) study was also conducted with two participants in the ESL context. He interviewed two adult Thai participants who moved to Australia and were enrolled in intensive ESL courses. His study focused on the order of acquisition of regular and irregular past verbs. He found that the participant with a lower English proficiency did not produce any regular past tense verbs whereas the higher-level participant was able to successfully produce both kinds of past forms. The findings corroborated previous research in this area (Ortega, 2009; Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001) and supported the claim that "irregular verbs are typically frequent and the morphological differences are perceptually salient, compared to a regular ending such as -ed, which may be hard to process for many learners" (Klein et al., 1995, p.271). As a result, the acquisition of inflectional morphology is expected to commence with irregular inflections on the account of the fact that they are perceived as more salient compared to regular past tense endings (Salaberry, 2000).

On the other hand, many researchers presented findings inconsistent or only partially consistent with the Lexical Aspect Theory. Housen (2002) tracked the development of temporality of a Dutch boy and suggested that AH can hold more validity over regular past tense than the irregular past. He attempted to explain this discrepancy by speculating that irregular verbs are acquired through a process similar to rote learning which was not involved in the acquisition of regular past verbs. The results of Rohde's (1996) study were also not compatible with AH in terms of the use of the progressive marking with Achievements. In the light of inconclusive evidence, Lee (2001) voiced a need for more research studies aimed at testing the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis which is also a primary aim of the current study.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The current study was conducted among a group of 20 university students aged 18-22. All students were enrolled in preparatory classes with an intensive English language learning program (20 hours a week). The participants were selected in the process of criterion sampling. The two criteria guiding the sampling process were the participants' L1 background (all respondents were Turkish) and their English language learning experience (none of the respondents learned English in the inner-circle, visited an inner-circle country, or has ever had direct, prolonged contact with a native speaker of English). The second criterion was necessary in order to minimize inconsistencies that might result from different educational backgrounds and to make sure that all the respondents learned English in an exclusively instructional EFL setting (Dietrich et al., 1995; Slabakova & Montrul, 2002). The respondents represented two different levels of proficiency. 10 participants were at a pre-intermediate level and the other half was at an upper-intermediate level. The participants' proficiency levels were established by standardized placement tests implemented at their university. The inclusion and equal distribution of two different proficiency levels allowed the researchers to gain an insight into the role of inherent lexical aspect in the choice of past temporality marking.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedures

The data for this research study was collected through written narratives. Narratives are a common data collection tool in the studies of the acquisition of temporality (Bardovi-Harlig, 1998; Bergström, 1995; Salaberry, 1999). The rationale behind the effectiveness of written narratives in temporality studies is twofold. First of all, they require the respondents to produce an extended sample of data which can be later analyzed. Secondly, due to the fact that all participants write their narratives in response to an identical or similar prompt, the collected data can be analyzed with more efficacy (Lee, 2001). The participants of the current study were asked to write a personal narrative about an embarrassing situation that happened to them at school. They were explicitly instructed to use past tenses in their narratives. The participants were given 45 minutes to complete their narratives and they were not allowed to use online dictionaries or translators when completing the task. After the task, all narratives were collected by the researchers in order to commence the data analysis procedures.

Data Analysis

The analytical procedures implemented in the current study were conducted in the following order. First, obligatory occasions for past tense were identified by the researchers. Since both of the researchers are nonnative speakers of English, two native speakers of English with a background in linguistics were asked by the researchers to independently control the results of the preliminary obligatory occasions analysis. The native speakers (one American, one British) were in the process of completing their doctoral studies in ELT, majoring in Linguistics. The comparison of the researchers' analysis and their independent analysis showed no inconsistencies which allowed the researchers to move on to the second phase of data analysis. All the verbs in the past were identified and listed for both groups of participants. Operational tests were conducted in order to determine the lexical aspect of each verb (Vendler, 1967). Distributional analysis was carried out to calculate the percentages of the use of past tense marking in relation to the lexical aspect. Finally, the findings were compared between two proficiency levels in order to determine the impact of the respondents' level of English on their use of past temporality in English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

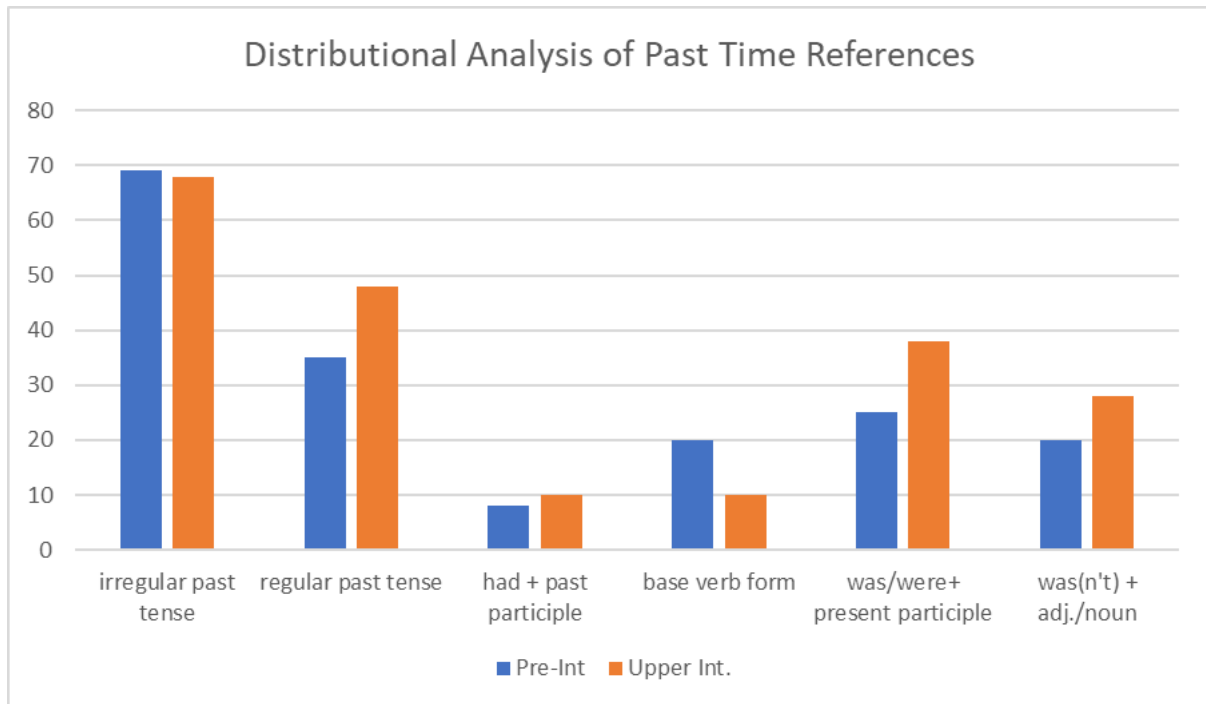
Findings From the Analysis of Upper-Intermediate and Pre-Intermediate Students' Narratives

Past-Time Reference

All the ways used by the students to encode events in the past time have been organized and illustrated in Table 1.

Categories	Examples	Frequency in upper-intermediate students' narratives	Frequency in pre-intermediate students' narratives
irregular past tense form	My best friend said "Come on!" We went to a basketball court I woke up at six o'clock	68 31,5% of all verbs	69 23 % of all verbs

regular past tense form	I stayed in Denizli I kicked the ball I apologized	48 22,2% of all verbs	35 17,5 % of all verbs
was/were + present participle	We were playing volleyball I was cycling My friends were looking at me	38 17,6% of all verbs	25 8,3 % of all verbs
was(n't) + adjective/noun	Everything was good There were six stairs It was rainy	28 13% of all verbs	20 8 % of all verbs
had + past participle	The ball had been in the garden The bone in my arm had broken Incredible things had come to my head	10 4,7% of all verbs	8 4 % of all verbs
base verb form	I thought they want to throw a ball Everyone look at me Everyday I learn my role	10 4,7% of all verbs	20 % of all verbs
didn't + base verb form	It didn't continue like this I didn't feel pain The teacher didn't punish us	5 2,3% of all verbs	10 10 % of all verbs
could(n't) + base verb form	I couldn't get down I couldn't do it We couldn't win	5 2,3% of all verbs	3 1,5 % of all verbs
didn't + past verb form	He didn't punished us	1 0,5% of all verbs	5 2,5 % of all verbs
was + past participle	It was broken	1 0,5% of all verbs	1 0,5 % of all verbs
have + past participle	We have done a dangerous thing	1 0,5% of all verbs	1 0,5 % of all verbs
can't + base verb form	We can't do anything	1 0,5% of all verbs	1 0,5 % of all verbs



The researchers were able to discern 12 verb categories that the participants of the current study employed in order to express past-time events. Out of all the categories, irregular verbs were most frequent amounting to 68 instances. Out of all the irregular verbs used in the students' personal narratives, there were only three instances of an erroneous form used by two different students:

I falled down on the ground.

Suddenly something very heavy hitted my head.

My teacher immediatly choosed me.

All the above instances involved an overgeneralization of the past simple regular marking *-ed* by applying it to irregular verbs. The high number of instances of irregular verbs combined with an extremely low percentage of errors in their use (4,4%) can be attributed to perceptual saliency (Wolfram, 1985). Pinker (1991) observed that this cognitive saliency accredited to irregular verbs does not “correlate with any feature of verb meaning” (p.531). Kumpf (1984) observed the use of past temporality in a Japanese learner of English and found that whereas the past tense marking on regular verbs was largely limited, the speaker was able to correctly make use of irregular verbs in the past tense. In order to account for this phenomenon, he proposed that, unlike regular verbs, irregular verbs are acquired as lexical items. A cross sectional study conducted by the European Science Foundation Project further substantiated this claim. The researchers found that even though the principle of past tense formation of regular verbs is very straightforward, learners tend to acquire irregular verbs first (Klein et al., 1995).

The second most common category was regular verbs. No mistakes in the use of regular past-tense verb forms were detected in the narratives collected by the researchers. There is a wide discrepancy between the number of instances of irregular (68) and regular verbs (48). This finding was also noticed by Salaberry (2000) in his study of 14 Spanish learners of English. He analysed written and oral narratives of his participants and found that irregular verbs were approximately twice as common in both types of narratives as regular verbs.

Students used the past continuous tense correctly in all 38 instances identified by the researchers. The distribution of this category was mainly detected in the first paragraph (exposition) offering background information for the main story (It was raining / We were cycling with my friends in the school garden).

The use of was/were + noun/ adjective was largely limited to the first (exposition) and third (resolution) paragraphs of the narratives with instances of the was/were + noun/adjective verb category in the second paragraph (the climax of the story) totaling up to approximately 10% of all instances of the category. The sentences in the first paragraph consisted of information about the spatial and temporal setting of the narrative (e.g., It was a rainy day/ The school was big and yellow). On the other hand, sentences pertaining to feelings and emotions were prevalent in the final paragraphs of the narratives (I was scared/ We were really embarrassed).

The had+ past participle category proved to be most challenging for the participants of this study. The category could be found in the narratives of 4 students leaving the remaining 6 narratives devoid of any attempts (correct or erroneous) at producing sentences in the past perfect simple tense. What is more, out of 10 instances identified in the narratives, there was only one correct illustration of this category (The emergency service came because my teacher had called them). All other examples of the category were erroneous and they all involved applying the had + past participle verb category to the second verb in a sentence regardless of the chronological order of the actions.

Based on students' writings including upper-intermediate and pre-intermediate students' writings, it has been observed that Turkish students avoid the use of the past perfect. In the narrative structure, events are expected to progress. Past perfect gives a backward look. However, the use of past perfect becomes necessary if a missed event is returned. It is seen that instead of the chronological order of the events, there is the reliance on the order of verbs in writing narratives. Thus, it may be explained that Turkish learners have difficulty in experiencing the retrospective use of the past perfect in the written language as presented in narrative writing.

I fell down and had broken my arm.

I fell but I hadn't been injured.

I had a nightmare so I had decided to go for a walk.

The base verb form category was observed in three different personal narratives collected from the participants. A deeper analysis of the instances of this category revealed two different contexts in which a base verb form was used to encode a past-time event. The first context involved the use of a frequency adverbial or a direct reference to the regularity of action.

Every lesson the teacher allows us to ride our bicycles.

Every day I learn my role.

The second context in which the use of a base verb form referring to a past-time action was identified, is the omission of the past-tense marking in sentences with more than one action. Even though the first action mentioned in a sentence was correctly marked with a past-time marker, the subsequent verbs were given in their base verb forms, as illustrated in the examples below taken from two different narratives:

I thought they want to hit my head with a ball.

They bought chocolate for me and I forgive them.

An explanation of this phenomenon might be attributed to the reliance of learners, in particular lower-proficiency learners, on pragmatic means of expressing past-time events. There are several different strategies which learners take advantage of when encoding past temporality such as the use of adverbs, implicit references to context as well as sequentiality (Schumann, 1987). It can be postulated that in the above instances, the learners relied on sequentiality of the verbs in a sentence as a means of expressing past temporality. Similarly, Peterson (1998) observed that learners whose proficiency level is still

relatively low may switch to a present tense form if past-tense was already marked in the preceding verb or sentence. He refers to this phenomenon as “nail frame” (Peterson, 1998, p.33). Although these hypotheses might account for the occurrences of base forms in the data collected for this study, they were both formulated with beginner students in mind. In contrast to this, the participants of this study are all at an upper-intermediate level of proficiency. The reliance on pragmatic means of encoding past-time temporality, is however, not limited to novice learners. Schumann (1987) conducted a study with advanced learners of English and noticed similar instances of base form verbs even though his participants were fully capable of producing verbs with past-time marking. Nevertheless, the fact that the reliance on pragmatic means of encoding past temporality was limited to only two participants corroborates the claim that the use of pragmatic and lexical means of expressing past-time events is in inverse proportion to learners’ competence level (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000).

Lexical Aspect

Each instance of a past-time reference in the students’ narratives was classified according to lexical aspect. The frequencies and examples of states, achievements, activities, and accomplishments were illustrated in Table 2.

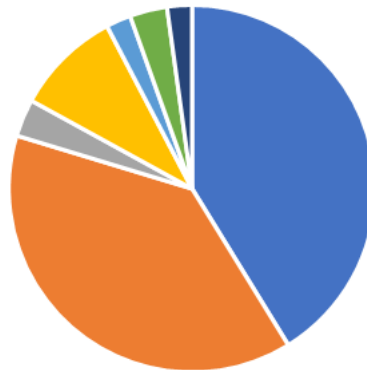
Lexical Aspect	Examples	Upper Intermediate students Frequency & Grammatical Aspect	Pre-Intermediate students Frequency & Grammatical Aspect
State	It was a sunny day. I was 18 years old.	73 in total (33,8%) all states were used in the imperfective aspect (not progressive)	75 in total (33,33 %) all states were used in the imperfective aspect (not progressive)
Achievement	I lost my balance. I didn’t notice the tree in front of me. The theatre had begun.	70 in total (32,4%) 63 (90%) achievements were used in the imperfective aspect (not progressive) 7 (10%) achievements were used in the perfective aspect	76 in total (38%) 70 (53,2 %) achievements were used in the imperfective aspect (not progressive) 6 (4,56%) achievements were used in the perfective aspect
Activity	They were watching our race. I was playing football Two other students played bilardo behind us.	48 in total (22,2%) 38 (79,2%) activities were used in the imperfective, progressive aspect 10 (20,8%) activities were used in the imperfective, not progressive aspect	21 in total (15,96 %) 17 (12,75%) activities were used in the imperfective, progressive aspect 4 (3 %) activities were used in the imperfective , not progressive aspect
Accomplishment	I studied for the exam. He had walked to the director’s office.	25 in total (11,6%) 22 (88%) accomplishment were used in the imperfective, not progressive aspect 3 (12%) accomplishment were used in perfective aspect	10 in total (7,5 %) 6 (4,5%) accomplishment were used in the imperfective, not pogsressive aspect 4 (3%) accomplishment were used in the perfective aspect

Lexical Aspect and Grammatical Aspect: Upper Int. Students



- states in imperfective aspect
- achievements in perfective aspect
- activities in the perfective aspect
- accomplishments in the perfective aspect
- achievements in imperfective aspect
- activities in the progressive aspect
- accomplishments in the imperfective aspect

Lexical Aspect and Grammatical Aspect: Pre-Int. Students



- states in imperfective aspect
- achievements in perfective aspect
- activities in the perfective aspect
- accomplishments in the perfective aspect
- achievements in imperfective aspect
- activities in the progressive aspect
- accomplishments in the imperfective aspect

The analysis of students' personal narratives revealed that achievements and accomplishments were used with the non-progressive marker. This observation is in congruence with the predictions pertaining to telic events made by Anderson (1994). He noted that telic events, that is events with an inherent end point, will be most likely to be marked with past tense. This claim was further corroborated in a number of studies including Robinson's (1995) study of L1 Spanish speakers. He found that the past-tense marking is initially limited to telic events. The explanation of this tendency is based on two principles: the Relevance Principle and the Congruence Principle (Andersen, 1994). According to the former, aspect

holds more relevance than tense, agreement or mood. The latter principle states that learners show a strong tendency to select morphemes with aspectual meaning consistent with the lexical aspect of the verb (Salaberry, 2000). In that sense, the postulate of the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis which predicts a strong proclivity on the part of L2 learners to mark achievement and accomplishment verbs with a past or perfective marker has also been corroborated in the current study. The findings of the current study echo the results of Lee's (2001) study of two Korean siblings. Just like the participants of this study, there was a sustained tendency to mark accomplishments and achievements with a past-tense marker. In line with the results of the current study, Lee (2001) was also not able to identify any instances of achievements or accomplishments in the progressive. This observation stands in opposition to the claim that the progressive marking, although initially limited to activity verbs, continues to spread to accomplishments and achievements. In that sense, the postulate of the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis pertaining to the use of progressive marking was only partially confirmed by the data. Whereas Lee (2001) attributed this inconsistency to his participants' lower proficiency levels, the same explanation cannot be given for the current study since all the participants were at a high level of English proficiency. It can be hypothesized that the lack of progressive marking in accomplishments and achievements was a result of the narrative task given to the participants. Since all the students were learning English in an instructional setting, they largely relied on model personal narratives provided to them by their teacher in the course of writing classes. An investigation of these models conducted by the researchers proved that the overwhelming majority of accomplishments and achievements (98,5%) were used with a non-progressive marker. In addition, the second paragraph (climax) of these narratives consisted mainly of punctual events that added intensity and pace to the narration. It can therefore be assumed that the spread of the progressive marking to accomplishments and, in particular, achievements, was to some extent blocked by the students' intention to add intensity to their stories and conform to example narratives they analyzed in their classes. Despite the inconsistencies with the previous claim of the Lexical Aspect Hypothesis, the assertion that the progressive marker will be completely absent with states has been fully corroborated by the data. The participants of the study did not mark any states with a progressive marker. Among all state verbs, the use of the copula was most widespread (95% of all state verbs). Furthermore, no instances of the copula without a tense marker were observed in the data. This fact is corroborated in studies by Kumpf (1984) and Sato (1990) with the former observing that the copula is never left untensed.

The vast majority of the instances of activity verbs (79%) were observed with the progressive marking. This observation is consistent with extant studies on lexical aspect and temporality conducted by Bardovi-Harlig (1995), Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) and Shirai and Kuruno (1998).

CONCLUSION

This study is a cross-sectional study and it is a study in which Turkish EFL learners' use of past temporality is discussed in terms of Aspect Hypothesis including both the lexical aspect and the grammatical aspect. Since it is observed that there is a need for studies in linguistics, especially by writing, in this study, data on past temporality situations were obtained by making narrative writing of students from two different level groups at universities in two different cities in Turkey and the results were presented.

This paper underlines the significance of the lexical aspect and the grammatical aspect on EFL learners' grammar as is emphasized by Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995). We have discovered areas of difficulties in the acquisition of the tense/aspect through research as well as the use of verbs. We have also discovered that teaching past tense will aid learners in broadening their grammatical undergeneralizations. We contend that focused noticing and positive evidence as suggested by Bardovi-

Harlig and Reynolds (1995) gives learners an awareness that promotes input enhancement outside of the classroom.

For future studies, it may be appropriate to work with students with a larger sample. At the same time, students' use of past temporality can be examined by using multiple choice tests and closing passages with different data collection tools. Since this study was carried out in Turkey, replicate studies can be done in different countries and the results can be compared. Additionally, the development of past temporality can be monitored and the scope of the study can be increased by performing longitudinal studies.

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