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Verbalizing in the Second Language Classroom: The Development of the Grammatical Concept of Aspect

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VERBALIZING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAMMATICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT

A Dissertation Presented

by

PROSPERO N. GARCIA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 2012

Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
VERBALIZING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAMMATICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT

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Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
Pa mama, papa, Chechu, Saúl, Tomasín y les güelis.
El vuesu neñu fízose méliçu.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin by expressing my deepest appreciation to my thesis director, Professor Eduardo Negueruela for all his help and mediation over the years. This dissertation is a direct result of learning, collaborating and studying with him. Eduardo raised me academically and introduced me to the works of Lev Vygotksky, changing my life forever. Without his mentorship, support, constant challenges, and infinite patience to read each and every one of my drafts (and rewrites), I don’t think that I could have completed this dissertation. Even though he became a professor at the University of Miami, Florida, he always found time and ways to make our collaboration possible (even during vacation!), and for that I will be forever thankful. Eduardo continues to be an intellectual inspiration and I feel very fortunate for having him as a teacher, mentor and colleague. His insightful mediation has allowed me to develop more than I ever thought possible.

I also would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of other members of my committee: Professor Luiz Amaral, for his help when I was designing the study, his constant encouragement and willingness to participate in each one of my committees, his enthusiastic feedback in our meetings, and his continuous reminders of the importance of making my research consistent and accessible to scholars working in other linguistic paradigms. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Craig Wells, for agreeing to be part of this committee, for showing me that there is life outside of qualitative research, for his enthusiasm, and for his willingness to work with my schedule, which was critical in allowing me to complete this work on time.
I would also like to thank Professors Jose Ornelas and Nina Scott for taking a personal interest in my career and being there in every step of the way. Even though I never took a class with them, their exceptional personal and intellectual quality helped me grow into the person and the scholar that I am today. Nina, you are my guardian angel -- words cannot describe how thankful I am to have had the opportunity of working with you.

On a personal level I would like to thank my friends David, Fran, and Kim for their support from the beginning of the process; Jayne for her editing and support, for reminding me that I had to rest from time to time, and for being there every step of the way; Elena for the highly needed laughs and support at work; and Katia for bullying me into finishing my dissertation during lunch and at AC.

I also would like to thank my family: my parents Próspéro and Paula; my three brothers Chechu, Saúl, and Tomás; and my grandmothers Alicia and Telvi. Thank you for supporting me when I realized that I wanted to be a teacher. Even from this side of the world, I feel that everything I do is the result of the loving environment where I had the luck to grow up.

Finally, I would like to thank my editor, adviser, friend, colleague, and partner in crime for all her personal and loving support in everything I do. Silvia without your sense of humor, intelligence, passionate advice, indescribable patience, and love this dissertation would have not been possible. A thousand-page volume of praise would fall short in describing how thankful I am for having you in my life.

We’ve made it!
ABSTRACT

VERBALIZING IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GRAMMATICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT

September 2012

PROSPERO N. GARCIA, B.A., UNIVERSIDAD DE OVIEDO
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Framed within a Sociocultural Theory of Mind (SCT) in the field of Second Language Acquisition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), this dissertation explores the role of verbalizing in the internalization of grammatical categories through the use of Concept-based Instruction (henceforth CBI) in the second language (L2) classroom.

Using Vygotsky’s (1986) distinction between scientific and spontaneous or everyday concepts applied to L2 development (Negueruela, 2008), this study focuses on the teaching and potential development of the grammatical concept of aspect in the Spanish L2 classroom, and the role of verbalizing in its internalization. It is proposed that verbalizing mediates between the learners’ initial understandings of the grammatical concept of aspect, the development of conscious conceptualizations, and students’ written and oral production of preterite and imperfect grammatical forms.

This study presents and analyzes data from one of the thirty-two adult college students enrolled in an advanced Spanish conversation course.
Data is analyzed through a clinical analytic approach, which has its roots in Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method of analysis. The study was carried out over a 12-week period and collected multiple sets of developmental data, including learners’ definition of the grammatical concept of aspect, written performance protocols, and verbalization data recorded during two oral interviews. The study interprets learner performance in these three complementary, and dialectically connected types of L2 conceptual data. A close analysis of this participant’s data provides critical insights to understand the role of verbalizing in L2 conceptual development.

Findings confirm that learners’ verbalizations are key factors to ascertain L2 conceptual development, as well as a mediational tool that fosters learners’ internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. It is proposed that verbalizing notably contributes to research on L2 development. Not only does it allow the researcher to have a more comprehensive picture of L2 development, but it also helps learners develop a more sophisticated semantic understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect and fosters their ability to understand and control relevant grammatical features in L2 communication.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“Any function in the learner’s cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the learner as an intrapsychological category. [...] It goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships.” (Vygotsky, 1981: 163)

1.1 Statement of Purpose

Grounded on Vygotsky’s (1978) cultural-historical theory of human consciousness, sociocultural theory of mind (SCT) is a relatively young discipline in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). Ever since its emergence in SLA (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985), SCT research has focused in reaching a better understanding of how learners develop the ability to use new languages to mediate their mental and communicative activity (Lantolf, 2011: 24). Unlike other approaches, a Vygotskyan approach to L2 learning emphasizes the importance of sociocultural elements in shaping the learners’ developmental processes, and points to the crucial role of a properly organized instruction in the development and internalization of new languages.

My own experiences as a Spanish teacher, and a close study of Sociocultural theory in SLA lead to the inception of the present work. The idea behind this dissertation emerges fundamentally from two pedagogical and research concerns:

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establishing which principles should guide our instructional practices when teaching the grammatical concept of aspect, and determining the types of data that researchers/we should take into account to ascertain L2 development as a conceptual process. In this study, instruction and research are mediated and dialectically united (Negueruela, 2003) by the genetic method of research and instruction informed by Vygotskyan theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

Framed within a Sociocultural Theory of Mind (SCT) paradigm in the field of Second Language Acquisition (see Lantolf, & Thorne, 2006), this dissertation explores the role of verbalizing in the internalization of grammatical categories through the use of Concept-based Instruction (henceforth CBI) in the second language (L2) classroom. Using Vygotsky’s (1986) distinction between scientific and spontaneous or everyday concepts applied to L2 development (Negueruela, 2008), I focus on the teaching and potential development of the grammatical concept of aspect in the Spanish L2 classroom, and the role of verbalizing in its internalization. It is proposed that CBI pedagogy mediates between the learners’ initial understandings of the grammatical concept of aspect, the development of conscious conceptualizations, and students’ written and oral production of preterite and imperfect grammatical forms.

1.2 Relevance of the present study

This study represents a detailed report of the implementation of CBI instruction in the L2 classroom to teach the grammatical concept of aspect and analyzing the role of verbalizing in the development of L2 grammatical concepts. As
described in chapter 2, very little work has been published on L2 learning and development from a CBI perspective, although the appearance of recent studies (Ferreira 2005; Gánem-Gutierrez & Harun 2011; Negueruela 2003, 2008; Negueruela & Lantolf 2006; Swain et. al. 2009, 2010; Yañez-Prieto 2008) suggests that this is becoming an area of interest in both applied linguistics and CBI instruction, amplifying the knowledge base in the field of Spanish L2 learning.

The present study has its roots in Negueruela (2003) and argues that verbalizing in the context of CBI instruction is a mediational tool that fosters L2 learners’ conceptual development. With that in mind, the present work contributes to L2 CBI literature by implementing CBI instruction and analyzing the role of verbalization as a mediational tool to foster L2 conceptual development in an advanced college student of L2 Spanish. Through a review of the main tenets of SCT and the analysis of data collected from one student of Spanish in an advanced conversation course in a North American University, this dissertation suggests that CBI, as operationalized in the present research, fosters L2 development in the classroom, which leads to learner’s internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. Following Negueruela (2003), it is proposed that the use of verbalizations as a mediational tool for conceptualizing the grammatical concept of aspect fosters learners’ L2 conceptual development.

1.3 Research question in the context of the present study

In the research literature on CBI, a good deal of evidence has been offered to illuminate the potential of languaging (Swain, 2006) and verbalizing (Negueruela,
2003), to foster learning and conceptual development. In order to explore the role of verbalization in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect in the L2 classroom, the present study intends to answer the following question:

1. *What is the role of verbalizing as a mediational tool for the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect in this case study?*

To answer the previous question I implemented a concept-based instruction (CBI) approach to teach L2 Spanish at college level. CBI, as presented in this dissertation, follows Negueruela’s (2003) approach in four steps: the grammatical concept of aspect is used as the minimal unit of instruction in the Spanish L2 classroom; it is also materialized in a didactic tool that can be assigned psychological status; concepts are verbalized, and used as tools for understanding to explain the deployment of meaning in communication, both individually and in mediated classroom joint activity; and finally, categories of meaning are connected to one another through meaningful activity aimed to the learners’ zone of potential development (ZPOD).

Due to the scope of the present work, this dissertation considered data from one learner following a case study methodology to data collection and analysis. An advanced Spanish conversation course, Spanish 301, was chosen to conduct the present study at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst during Spring 2009. The participants in the classroom were 32 students enrolled in two different sections of Spanish 301. The study focused only on the grammatical component of the course.

The study was carried out over a 12-week period. The course followed the standard syllabus but incorporated communicative activities, group dynamics, and
assessment from a CBI approach to L2 instruction. The collected data is divided in two main sets: Personal and conceptual data. Personal data consists on a bio-data questionnaire, a biographical and language survey, and ethnographic notes taken over the course of CBI instruction. Conceptual developmental data is also divided into three complementary types: Definition, performance, and verbalizing data. All these sets of data are presented in chapter 3 and discussed in chapter 4 to answer the leading question of the present study and ascertain the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect.

1.4 Overview of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 includes a review of the pertinent literature on SCT, verbalizing and L2 conceptual development. This chapter explores the main tenets of Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Mind (1978, 1986) applied to L2 development and the internalization of theoretical concepts in the L2 classroom, reviewing and advocating for the use of key concepts such as the zone of potential development (ZPOD) to understand instructed SLA. This chapter also discusses the importance of verbalizing in the internalization of theoretical concepts, linking it to Swain and colleagues’ notion of *languaging* and with Slobin’s (1996, 2003) theory of thinking-for-speaking. Finally this chapter reviews concept-based instruction (CBI) - Negueruela’s (2003) implementation of Gal’perin’s systemic theoretical instruction (STI) - applied to L2 learning, and links it to one of the main applications of Vygotsky’s work in the ZPD: Dynamic Assessment (DA),
considering the inseparability of instruction and assessment in L2 conceptual development.

Chapter 3 on research methodology explores Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method of research and instruction, the implementation of a case study research methodology, and explains the research question that leads the present study. This chapter also examines the concept of aspect as the minimal unit of instruction, discusses the different types of data available, and presents a detailed account of the course and the participant analyzed in this study. This chapter also explains the organization of the study, making a special emphasis in the implementation of CBI instruction in the classroom.

Chapter 4 deals with the data analysis of L2 conceptual development. This chapter considers the use of the grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of analysis, explores the grammatical features of the concept of aspect, and discusses the rationale for considering definition, performance, and verbalizing data as valuable tools for the study of L2 development as a conceptual process. This chapter analyzes the collected data, and links the learner's verbalizations, before and after CBI, to conceptualization and L2 conceptual development.

Finally, chapter 5 reviews the findings, contributions and relevant conclusions emergent from this dissertation as well as a critical analysis of the research reported here. This chapter also explores the limitations of the present study, outlines possible directions for future research on L2 development as a conceptual process from a SCT perspective, and advocates for the importance of verbalizing –using concepts as mediational tools for understanding- in the
internalization of concepts in the Spanish classroom. To conclude, this chapter adds some personal reflections on the role of the language learner, the teacher, and the process of instruction in L2 development as a conceptual process.
CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT, VERBALIZATION AND DA

2.1 Introduction: Research and Pedagogical Practice

In Sociocultural Theory (SCT), research and teaching are not seen as two separate practices, but as a unified activity. The goal of research is not only to understand the world but also to transform it. This is also true for research conducted in the L2 classroom, where the investigator should become both researcher and practitioner, seeking to put into practice new ideas through observation and careful study of student’s process of L2 learning.

This unity between theory and practice is also captured in Vygotsky’s (1978) Genetic Method. The genetic method studies the development of mental functions in their formation. For Vygotsky “development originates in the integration of biologically endowed abilities and culturally organized artifacts that mediate thinking” (Lantolf, 2011: 26). The key is to ascertain development so as to follow the relevant conceptual processes during their formation and restructuration, as they still operate in the external plane (i.e. before internalization).

Following Negueruela (2003), L2 instruction and L2 development are united in SCT through Vygotsky’s (1978, 1986) theories of conceptual development and internalization, which are also the basis for the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical approach to the present work. Researchers working on a SCT approach to L2 learning and development have built upon a series of theoretical proposals

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2 Lantolf (2001: 26) argues that genetic does not refer to genes, but rather that is historical in nature. In other words, it tracks changes over time.
and pedagogical tools over the years. In this chapter I focus on Concept-based Instruction, henceforth CBI (Negueruela, 2003, 2008), given its relevance for the present study.

CBI still is relatively new in the field of Applied Linguistics. In fact, considering the few studies conducted in CBI (Ferreira, 2005; Gánem-Gutierrez & Harun, 2011; Negueruela, 2003, 2008; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006; Swain, 2009, 2010; and Yañez-Prieto, 2008) this dissertation expands the knowledge base in the field of Spanish L2 learning. Given the novelty of CBI in the field of Applied Linguistics, a detailed discussion of this pedagogical approach's theoretical framework and the procedure for implementation and interpreting results, as operationalized in the present study, is critical, and more so since CBI departs from mainstream pedagogical approaches in transcendent ways.

Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Mind is built upon several key concepts such as mediation, higher mental functions, internalization, and the zone of proximal development. However, the literature review that follows does not pretend to be an exhaustive review of each one of the concepts upon which SCT is built. Rather, it will review the research and literature specifically related with the present discussion. I will link aspects of SCT theory with previous research in Systemic Theoretical Instruction (STI) and CBI in order to observe the role of verbalizations as mediational tools for conceptualizing the grammatical concept of aspect in the L2.

In what follows, I pay special attention to L2 teaching and L2 conceptual development, as SCT and the present work have a direct connection with both areas
of research through the Vygotskian notion of conceptual development and internalization (1978, 1986). The second part of this chapter delves into the relation between thinking and speaking, and the importance of the use of sophisticated theoretical concepts for instruction. The third part of this chapter explores the Vygotskian concept of zone of proximal development. In this section, and following Negueruela (2008), I discuss the need of a shift from studying proximalities to that of potentialities in L2 development, bringing about a new terminology: The zone of potential development, henceforth ZPOD. The fourth part of the chapter discusses the role of verbalizations in L2 instruction and L2 development. In this section I pay special attention to the notion of languaging (Swain, 2009), its connection to Slobin’s (1986, 2003) framework of thinking-for-speaking, and L2 development. This discussion is particularly relevant because it is directly related to the research question of the present study. In the fifth part of this chapter I focus on L2 teaching as a conscious learning process. I review the main principles behind Gal’Perin’s (1969, 1989, 1992a, 1992b) STI, Negueruela’s CBI, and the studies conducted using these approaches to L2 instruction. The sixth part of the present chapter outlines the theoretical basis for Dynamic Assessment (DA), explores the work on DA conducted on L2 contexts, discusses how the processes of instruction and assessment are bridged through DA, and examines how DA uses the notion of ZPOD to understand and promote L2 development.
2.2 Conceptual development from a SCT perspective

The idea of mediated mind is paramount to SCT and, it particularly applies to language learning, and the importance of instruction in L2 development. SCT, based on the ideas of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s (1978), departs from the fundamental concept that the human mind is mediated. Human beings do not interact directly with the world, but through physical and psychological tools (Lantolf, 2000). These tools and symbolic systems are socially constructed, ever evolving, and they are passed on to future generations that can keep reshaping them. Concepts, as symbolic tools, are the essence of mediation in verbal thinking. Vygotsky’s theory of conceptual development (Vygotsky, 1986) argues for a distinction between everyday and scientific concepts. This understanding of conceptual development can be applied to L2 development (Negueruela, 2003).

But, what is L2 development and how can we measure it? According to Vygotsky’s (1998: 190), development is “a continuous process of self-propulsion characterized primarily by a continuous appearance and formation of the new which did not exist at previous stages”. This conception leads to “an understanding of development as a process that is characterized by a unity of material and mental aspects, a unity of the social and the personal during the learner’s ascent up the stages of development” (Ibid.). Lantolf and Poehner (2008: 281) in interpreting Vygostky’s definition of development adjust it as “the ability to regulate one-self in carrying out an activity. This means that the person understands the nature of what is to be done, is able to bring the appropriate resources to bear, and can evaluate her or his activity in the activity.” Attending to these definitions, development is in
essence a dynamic and qualitative process by which concepts are internalized and then used as tools for further development. Learners’ development emerges in mediated activity in social contexts first, and then in private oneself directed activity later on.

Development can be measured not only through learner performance but also through shifts in the type of mediation needed to complete a task. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) illustrate how the development and use of English tense, articles, prepositions, and modal verbs by three adult ESL learners is observed and documented in terms of shifts in the type of mediation negotiated between learners and instructors. This mediation, sensitive to the learners’ ZPD (see section 2.3), shifted from the most implicit to the most explicit, and the instructors adjusted it to the learners’ responses and uptake over a period of two months. According to their study, a shift from explicit to a more implicit mediation reveals that development is taking place, and according to Lantolf and Poehner (2007: 85) “learner that is able to respond to implicit mediation is considered to be at a more advanced level of development than a learner who requires more explicit mediation.”

Negueruela (2008: 194), however, sees L2 development as “a conceptual process where the emergence of meaningful consciousness, that is, conscious awareness through categories of meaning – i.e. concepts- leads to control.” Following Negueruela’s view L2 development is in essence a dynamic and qualitative process by which concepts are created, internalized, and then used as tools for further development. Learners’ L2 development is linked directly to social activity and mediation first, and to oneself later on. In line with Negueruela’s view, I
explore L2 development in this study by looking at learners’ ability to accurately use and understand the grammatical concept of aspect. This control is manifested in the creation of new meanings, which mediate language performance.

2.3 From ZPD to ZPOD: Exploring potential L2 development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is perhaps one of the better-known and most explored concepts in SCT (Chaiklin, 2003: 40):

“The term [ZPD] now appears in most developmental and educational psychology textbooks, as well as some general psychology books. Within educational research, the concept is now used widely (or referred to) in studies about teaching and learning in many subject-matter areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, second language learning (e.g., Dunn & Lantolf, 1998; Lantolf & Pavlenko) [and many more].”

Even though the word “zone” may evoke a physical realm, the ZPD is a metaphor used in SCT to understand the influence of mediation in the internalization of concepts, or as Lantolf (2004: 24) puts it “the ZPD is not a place situated in time and space; rather it is a metaphor for observing and understanding how mediational means are appropriated and internalized.”

But, if it is not a place in time or space, what is the ZPD? The reality is that the concept of ZPD only appears in Vygotsky’s writings for the first time a year prior to his death (Chaiklin 2003: 43). Nevertheless, Vygotsky sees the ZPD as:

“The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.” (1978: 86)

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3 For a broader discussion of this notion refer to Dunn & Lantolf (1998), Lantolf (2000, 2004), Lantolf & Poehner (2008), or Lantolf & Thorne (2006) to name a few.
4 In Lantolf and Poehner 2008:14
If we follow Vygotsky’s original definition of ZPD, which was created in the context of children psychology, the zone of proximal development would indicate and determine the child’s cognitive developmental transitions, which go from the current state of the individual to the “objective zone”, which reflects “the psychological functions that need to be formed during a given age period in order for the next age period to be formed” (Chaikin, 2003: 49).

The concepts of proximality and development play a crucial role in the understanding of the notion of ZPD. The former implies a linear nature of development, where individuals eventually develop in a certain ‘proximal’ way Negueruela (2008). It is precisely Negueruela who argues that such a narrow notion of ZPD can be misleading, deriving into “interpretations based on either simple causality or a constructivist view of development” (2008: 199). Even though the notion of ZPD is undeniably connected to Vygotsky’s perception of human agency as non-individualistic, implying that social development has to be culturally constructed, collaborative task solving does not necessary lead to L2 development if the mediation used to solve such task is not oriented to promote “new conceptual understandings.” (Ibid.). From and educational point of view, first there needs to be a shift from identifying the learners’ individual abilities towards creating socially constructed activities aimed at the development of the learner higher psychological functions and learning potential.

The existence of a ZPD also affects education and L2 pedagogy in various levels; first of all, learning is a collaborative process that shifts from inter-personal to intrapersonal. Second, the focus of education has to be the learners’ L2 cognitive
development. The main focus of L2 teaching, as suggested by Negueruela (2003, 2008) is the transformative internalization of concepts available in the language, and the internalization of concepts as tools for orientation and regulation in L2 learning. The third implication is the need for a type of assessment aware of the learner’s ZPD: Dynamic Assessment. Dynamic Assessment (DA) is one of the applications of Vygotsky’s work on the ZPD. In DA learning and assessment are seen as two sides of the same coin, where assessment is aimed to the learner’s ZPD in order to trigger development. Vygotsky considers that what the learner can do with help today, he will be able to do independently tomorrow. I will discuss DA’s relevance to SCT and to this particular study in the last section of this chapter.

Given the popularity that this concept has achieved, the notion of ZPD has been widely reinterpreted over the last couple of decades, often times bringing to the table conflicting definitions (Wolff-Michael and Radford, 2010; Lantolf and Poehner, 2008; Chaiklin, 2003; Valsiner and van der Veer, 1993). To avoid the misuse of the concept, Chaiklin (2003: 48-50)\(^5\) advocates for a restriction in its use, resorting to ZPD only in discussions related to age periods in child development, and employing different terminology to describe other forms of learning and development.

2.3.1 ZPD and the L2 classroom

Based on Chaiklin’s (2003) proposals and Negueruela’s (2008) theoretical distinction between proximalities and potentialities to describe the non-linear

\(^5\) In Lantolf & Poehner 2008: 14.
nature of development, in this section I will argue for the use of the concept of Zone of Potential Development, henceforth ZPOD (Negueruela, 2008), rather than that of Zone of Proximal development (ZPD), to describe L2 conceptual development in the present study.

In the notion of ZPOD, L2 development is the result of a process of appropriation and internalization of concepts mediated by social and interpersonal activities, but more importantly, it is not the product of a causal relationship. In ZPOD the notion of potentiality implies that there is a potential for the internalization of a given concept; however, this potential does not necessarily have to lead to L2 development in all cases. By shifting from proximalities to potentialities –that is, from the notion of ZPD to that of ZPOD- the understanding of cognitive development changes from what is about to happen to what has the potential of happening, but may never will. Negueruela (2008) explores three issues in shifting the focus of study from proximity to potentiality to promote L2 development. First, it is of the upmost importance to understand the role of ‘metamediation’, that is, “understanding the dynamic quality of instruction an interaction that mediates the internalization of new orienting concepts that learners are internalizing” (200). Second, concepts are psychological mediators that need to be provided as unfinished products to allow learners to create their conceptualizations through guided imitation, and verbalization activity. Concepts are in constant development, and need to interact with other concepts through

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* Kozulin (2003) makes a distinction between human mediation -provided to learners by instructors- and psychological mediation (signs, symbols, graphs, etc.). In this study, the grammatical concept of aspect is essentially a psychological mediator of L2 development.
mediation in the ZPOD in order to become functional. Third, the ZPOD emerges through imitation - understood as a transformative process (see Valsiner and van der Veer, 2000). Imitation in SCT is not just plain mimicry, but a goal-oriented conscious process of copying that, using the language as a tool for understanding, usually transforms the original concept.\footnote{For a broader discussion of the notion of imitation in L2 development see Lantolf and Thorne (2007).}

In using the notion of ZPOD in the L2 classroom, learning becomes a collaborative, properly organized process designed to trigger L2 internalization through carefully designed activities aimed to promote conceptual development through conscious imitation. In that way, the notion of ZPOD is not only used to observe L2 development, but to facilitate it. In summary:

“The ZPOD emerges when the teaching-learning process is ‘properly organized’. [...] when the dynamics of interaction created in specific contexts allow for the emergence of the dynamics of imitation, where there are proper conceptual tools (i.e. developing categories of meaning) at the disposal of learners and where learning activity-mediated by others is perceived as meaningful by the participants” (Negueruela, 2008: 202).

In this section -and based on Negueruela (2008)- I have advocated for the use of the notion of ZPOD associated to L2 development for the following reasons:

Vygotsky’s original notion of ZPD is a construct restricted to the study of child development and is framed under very specific theoretical and research considerations (see Chaiklin, 2003). In addition, ZPOD gives the researcher more freedom to explore the potentialities -rather than proximalities- of L2 development. And finally, the notion of ZPOD focuses on development as a conceptual process rather than on L2 learning as ability. For all of these reasons, this dissertation
explores a shift from proximalities to potentialities in L2 development, and uses the notion of ZPOD as a theoretical construct to capture the revolutionary emergence of the grammatical concept of aspect in the L2 classroom.

2.4 Verbalizations that lead to conceptualization

Humans do not interact directly with the world, but through physical and psychological (symbolic) tools (Lantolf, 2000). Humans create, and modify these tools or artifacts and pass them from generation to generation constantly transforming them. Psychological tools help humans interact with the world and include numbers and arithmetic systems, music, art, computers, maps, diagrams etc. But above all, the most important mediational tool is language. Language is central to SCT and, Vygotsky (1978) does not contemplate it just as a tool for thinking, but also as a tool for conceptual development:

“The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge.” (24)

Language is the most powerful mediational tool that connects humans with themselves and with the world. It allows us to communicate, reflect on our actions, and makes visible experiences that were invisible before. In other words, it allows us to think conceptually and gain control over higher mental functions (Vygotsky, 1987), including intentional memory, voluntary attention, planning, logical thought and problem solving, learning, and evaluation of the effectiveness of these processes (Lantolf, 2000).
It is important to bear in mind that, from a sociocultural theory of mind perspective, thinking and speaking (thought and language in Vygotsky's words), are not the same thing. SCT also rejects the so-called communicative view of language (see Carruthers and Boucher, 1998⁸), which states that thought and language are completely separated processes, where language is used only to transmit already formed thoughts. Lantolf (2000) argues that:

“While separate, thinking and speaking are tightly inter-related in a dialectic unity in which publicly derived speech completes privately initiated thought. Thus, thought cannot be explained without taking account of how it is made manifest through linguistic means, and linguistic activities, in turn, cannot be understood fully without 'seeing them as manifestations of thought'” (7).

Taking Vygotsky's example, trying to break the dialectical relationship between thinking and speaking to explain how the mediated mind functions is like trying to explain how water can extinguish fire by analyzing separately oxygen and hydrogen – when both of them acting independently can actually intensify the power of a fire. The fact that that SCT considers thinking and speaking dialectically united, brings up a series of consequences for L2 pedagogy, and most importantly, for L2 development. In this section I explore the role of language and verbalizations in L2 concept formation and development.

2.4.1 Languaging

Over the last decade, Swain and colleagues (Swain & Lapkin, 2011, 2006, 2002, 1998; Brooks, Swain, et. al., 2010; Knouzi, Swain et. al., 2010; Lapkin, Swain, &

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⁸ In Lantolf (2000).
Psyllakis, 2010; Swain, Lapkin et. al., 2009; Brooks & Swain, 2009; Lapkin, Swain, & Knouzi, 2008; Swain, 2010, 2006, 2005, 2000; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2007, 2005) have developed a research agenda focused on the concept of ‘languaging’ and its applications to L2 instruction, assessment and, most importantly, L2 development. Languaging, or producing language, according to Swain and colleagues (2009) is in essence a form of verbalization that works as a mediator when engaged in solving complex problems or tasks. Swain (2006: 95-98) does not see languaging as plain output (i.e. just producing language that exist as a thought), but rather as a cognitive activity - in the Vygotskyan sense of the word\(^{10}\) - that humans use as to mediate our thinking. Languaging, however, is not restricted to verbalizations, as it also refers to mediated activity - written or spoken - with objects, other people, or with the self that promote cognitive development.

For Swain language is not only used to convey meaning but “as an agent in the making of meaning” (96), and for that very reason, Swain sees languaging as “the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language” (98). In languaging we have a powerful tool to learn a language, as it affords L2 learners to use their L1 to “language” about the target language:

“Languaging about language is one of the ways we learn language. This means that the languaging (the dialogue or private speech) about language that learners engage in takes on new significance. In it, we

\(^{10}\) The concept of activity in SCT has recently emerged as a theory in its own right. Activity Theory is in essence a research method in which inquiry (research) and intervention are dialectically united through activity. Activity Theory according to Lantolf & Thorne (2006) “encourages critical inquiry wherein an investigation should afford an analysis that would lead to the development of material and symbolic conceptual tools necessary to enact positive interventions” (210). For a deeper and broader analysis of this theory check Engeström (2001), Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamaki, (1999), Lantolf and Thorne (2006).
can observe learners operating on linguistic data and coming to an understanding of previously less well-understood material. In languaging, we see learning taking place.” (Ibid.)

Swain and colleagues (e.g., Swain, 2005; Swain and Lapkin, 1998, 2002, 2006) have researched the effect of languaging in adolescents (learners between 11 and 13 years old) in a French immersion program. In their study, participants have to write a story based on either a set of images or an audio recording. These stories are then reformulated (rewritten) by an adult native speaker of French who is asked not change the meaning of the original story but the forms, in order to make it more fluent and grammatically correct. The participants are then videotaped while comparing the original and the reformulated texts. In the next stage the participants are exposed to the tape, which is stopped every time that they notice a difference between texts, and they are asked questions about their thoughts at the time of noticing these changes.

Swain and colleagues report the use of languaging in all the phases of the study. In the first stage the participants mediated their writing through languaging (i.e. how I write my intended meaning). In the noticing and simulated stages participants languaged about their L2 beliefs, and they tried to explain and understand the changes in the reformulated version by languaging themselves through. Swain sees the impact of languaging when the participants rewrite their original versions incorporating the items that they had been languaging before.

Verbalizing (or Swain’s preferred term ‘languaging’) incorporates a series of semiotic tools such as reading aloud, repetition (in the Vygotskian sense), discourse markers, gesture, and the use of the L1 that Gánem-Gutiérrez (2003, 2009) deems as
essential for L2 learners to gain regulation\textsuperscript{11}. These tools mediate L2 leaning “while students are verbalizing during collaborative activity or while working individually on either or both cognitively of linguistically demanding tasks” (Gánem-Gutierrez & Harun, 2011: 100).

Language in SCT is the most important mediational tool, as it helps us to interact with the world, with ourselves, and allows us to experience and shape reality through concept formation. Language in SCT is not only a tool used for communicative purposes (tool for result), but rather is a ‘tool and result’ in concept formation as, it is both the content and the tool that mediates thinking. Negueruela (2008: 191-192) based on Newman and Holzman (1993) discusses the distinction between ‘tools-for-result’ and ‘tools-and-result’, where the former are constructed with a firm goal in mind (e.g. I use a screwdriver to screw nails with the purpose of assembling Ikea furniture), and the latter are constructed and utilized as part of the results (e.g. Negueruela, 2008: 191) provides the example of the toolmaker tools, which are both tools, and the result of tool making). In the following section I will discuss the role of verbalizing as tool and result in L2 concept formation.

\textbf{2.4.2 Thinking and Speaking: Concept formation through verbalizations}

Verbalizing in SCT, as mentioned in the previous section, is not understood as just plain output, but rather as a cognitive tool used to connect language and thought. In the present study, I align myself with Negueruela (2003) in understanding verbalizations as the intentional use of concepts as tools for

\textsuperscript{11} Regulation in SCT is a type of mediation that “refers to the ability to accomplish activities with minimal or no external support” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007:104).
understanding grammatical concepts. But verbalizing is not about using metalinguistic language out loud to explain (or self-explain) a grammatical concept. Verbalizing is about using the concept as a tool and result, that is, “applying the concept consciously to concrete communicative utterances” (Negueruela, 2008: 211). When engaged in verbalization activities L2 learners do not limit themselves to talk about a grammatical concept, instead they talk through the grammatical concept in the context of activity. The goal of verbalizing in the context of activity is to allow learners to internalize a concept while verbalizing it, being in that way tool and result.

Verbalizing as a tool for concept formation connects directly with Slobin’s (1996, 2003) ‘thinking for speaking’ hypothesis by which “thinking takes on a particular quality as experiences are filtered through language into verbalized events” (Lantof, 2006: 79). Slobin suggests that when one speaks –or writes- in a particular language, that given language has an influence not only in the way a person describes events, but also in how they experience these events. Slobin’s ‘thinking for speaking’ affords us to delineate a more precise connection between thinking and communication, and as Negueruela (2003, 2008) proposes, it is very compatible with Vygotsky’s (1986, 2004) ‘thinking and speaking’. Speaking completes the thinking process, and allows us to transform the world.

Verbalizing seems to be an essential tool in the internalization of grammatical concepts, and in the learner’s L2 development -L2 development being regarded in this study as the learners’ ability to understand and control the grammatical concept of aspect to create new meanings, which will mediate the
learners’ language performance. Here, I theorize that verbalizing is linked to development when the learner shows conceptual coherence in the context of activity, that is, when the grammatical concept of aspect is used as a mediational tool to solve a task in a coherent and appropriate way.

Verbalizing allows the learner to use the grammatical concept of aspect as a tool and result, that is, it provides the learner with the necessary mediational tools to create meaning through conceptualizing in the context of activity. Being able to conceptualize through verbalizations (i.e. using the grammatical concept of aspect as a tool and result) is seen in this study as another form of L2 development as it shows awareness of the concept and (morphological) control over it.

Verbalizing in SCT is a tool for L2 learning and development, and therefore is deemed as essential in the process of instruction and assessment. In the following sections I will explore the application of verbalization activities in SCT to both instruction (Concept-based Instruction) and assessment (Dynamic Assessment). It will also be proposed that verbalizing in the context of activity is the link that unifies instruction and assessment.

2.5 Towards a pedagogical model aimed towards L2 development

SCT understands that both language -communicative activity- and participation in social activities are key elements in the process of development. Language, from this perspective, is seen as a tool for cognitive regulation, while learning is understood “as a process of becoming a member of a certain community” (Sfard, 1998: 6). Considering L2 learning from a SCT view of mind brings up a series
of issues to L2 pedagogy and L2 development. Learning and development are two different and interconnected processes, where a carefully designed learning process may lead to development, as explained above in connection to the notion of the ZPD. Vygotsky (1978) proposes that properly organized instruction bridges the connection between learning and development, and so “properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes” (90).

Vygotsky’s ideas on conceptual formation and education (Vygotsky, 1986), where learners’ cognitive development is promoted through concept formation, were concretized by two contemporary interpreters of his educational theories: Vladimir Davydov (1999) and Piotr Gal’perin (1969, 1989, 1992a. 1992b). Even though their approaches to instruction are grounded on the importance of theoretically conceptual thinking as the base of pedagogically grounded development, both views are operationalized in a different manner. Davydov’s (1999) ‘movement from the abstract to the concrete’ approach (MAC) is less rigid than Gal’perin’s and does not follow a specific sequence to promote conceptual development. Opposite to Gal’perin’s Systemic Theoretical Instruction (STI), in MAC learners are encouraged to design their own model of the concept of study (habitually by drawing it) to achieve a deeper understanding of the concept at hand. Davydov believes that successful instruction helps learners to connect “theoretical knowledge [concepts] to specific concrete goal directed activity guided by their knowledge” (Ferreira & Lantolf, 2008: 283). In that way, MAC “take[s] account of the functionality theoretical concepts as symbolic tools for
carrying out concrete practical activity” (286). Students in MAC become active learners through research and the materialization of concepts. They move from the abstract to the concrete through tasks structured in the following manner: 1) problem situation; 2) modeling; 3) modifying the model; 4) applying the model to solve tasks; 5) monitoring the actions; and 6) evaluating the actions.

MAC framework has been used—and taken account of—in several fields of study, perhaps the most comprehensive one(s) being Markova’s (1979) implementation in the curriculum of L1 Russian in Moscow over a 10-year period. Aidarova (1982) uses this approach to teach Russian morphology and spelling to 7 year old Russian children. Lompschner (1984) in his 30-hour study, uses MAC to teach natural sciences. Hedergaard and colleagues (Hedergaard 2002, 1999, 1990, 1987; Hedergaard, Chaiklin, & Pedraza, 2001; Hedergaard and Sigersted, 1992) implemented a 3-year study in Danish schools in children ranging from third to fifth grade, successfully integrating biology, history and geography into the same curriculum.

In the field of L2 learning, Ferreira (2005) and Ferreira and Lantolf (2008) report their findings after implementing a MAC approach in a university ESL course over a 16 week period in which the guiding concept is that of genre, based on systemic-functional linguistics. In her study, Ferreira analyses development from two different perspectives. On the one hand she sees development as a shift from empirical thinking to theoretical thinking and on the other hand as improvement in writing performance throughout the course of the semester. After building the syllabus around the concept of genre and implementing a MAC approach to
teaching, Ferreira and Lantolf (2008) report that there were some indications of
students beginning to think theoretically about writing (at the level of
conceptualization of genre), but did not internalize it to the point where they could
use it as a mediational tool to write.

Looking for a more systematic approach to L2 instruction that would allow
students to internalize the grammatical concept of aspect, in this study I
implemented a modified version of Gal’perin’s Systemic-Theoretical Instruction

2.5.1 Negueruela’s take on STI: Concept-based Instruction in the L2 classroom

Gal’perin’s Systemic-Theoretical Instruction (STI) model, as explained by
Negueruela and Lantolf (2006: 93) is a linear six-stage sequence comprised of:
Motivation, orientation, materialization, overt-verbalization, sub vocal verbalization,
and silent verbalization.

Gal’perin’s main challenge was to implement a six-stage sequence in formal
educational settings. As noted by Haenen (1996), implementing STI in a real
classroom requires the reorganization of the entire curriculum because concepts
and actions are systematically connected to one another. That is, each concept needs
to be coherently connected to the next. Gal’perin proposes that there has to be a
reconfiguration of the subject matter of instruction in which conceptual units
organize coherently what is to be learned in a way that allows for learners’
development.
Gal’perin “viewed learning as a progression from socially shared to internalized knowledge, in which learners are provided with cultural tools by members of their communities in joint activities of teaching and learning” (Arievitch & Haenen, 2005: 164). This position links Gal’perin’s proposals to notions such as learning as social participation (e.g., Lave and Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1998), and knowledge acquisition and reciprocal cognitive growth (e.g. Bandura, 1978; Cronbach, 1967; Resnick, 1994; Solomon, 1993) into a unified view of development (see Arievitch and Haenen, 2005).

Gal’perin’s ideas in education have been adapted to the field of L2 learning by Negueruela (2003, 2008) in the form of CBI. Based on Vygokstky’s ideas and Gal’perin’s STI, Negueruela understands that “education as CBI is about promoting the cognitive development of students through concept formation” (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006: 81). But, what makes CBI such a powerful tool in the internalization of concepts? If learning is seen as “the activity of intentionally appropriating knowledge and abilities which do not necessarily involve the internalization of new tools and the re-structuring of psychological functions”, and development as “the internalization of psychological tools resulting in the restructuring of psychological functions to achieve self-regulation in the process of participating in human activity” (Negueruela, 2008: 196) then a pedagogical approach to L2 that fosters conceptual development in the ZPOD seems necessary. In his study, Negueruela (2003) implements CBI by adapting Gal’perin’s STI into a conceptual approach, aimed to the L2 students’ ZPOD in the following manner:

“The course was framed by four basic principles of Gal’perin’s approach to teaching: 1) concepts form the minimal unit of instruction
in the L2 classroom; 2) concepts must be materialized as didactic tools that can be assigned psychological status; 3) concepts must be verbalized: speaking to oneself utilizing concepts as tools for understanding to explain the deployment of meaning in communication; 4) categories of meaning must be connected to other categories of meaning, that is, a curricular articulation of categories of meaning” (Negueruela, 2008: 203)

Working with college students enrolled in a L2 Spanish course, in his study Negueruela (2003) developed pedagogical units on three relevant grammatical concepts: Aspect, mood, and tense. He treated the assigned grammatical concept as the minimal unit of instruction for each one of those conceptual units; each concept was then operationalized in charts and diagrams (conceptual tools) that could be assigned psychological status; and finally verbalization activities focusing on the target concepts were assigned as homework due to time constraints in the classroom.

Negueruela (2003) reports that even though development was not even in all the participants, their performance in production of the formal features associated with the targeted concepts improved towards the end of the semester (especially in their written production). Negueruela proposed that this improvement in the use of the explored grammatical forms was due to development on their conceptual understanding. But what links Negueruela’s (2003) research to the present study is that he argues that the conceptual understanding is internalized through verbalizing, which mediates subsequent oral and written communicative performance.

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Negueruela (2008:212) argues that students in his classroom tended to abbreviate and simplify their verbalized conceptual explanations to peers in order to complete the assigned activities within the 50 minutes of each session. This tendency seemed to disappear once verbalization activities were assigned as homework.
Inspired by the research conducted in Negueruela’s (2003), Swain and colleagues (Knouzi, Swain, Lapkin, & Brooks, 2010; Lapkin et al., 2008; Swain 2010; Swain, et al. 2009) have also explored the potential of languaging (verbalizing) in CBI to help nine L2 French learners develop a conscious understanding of the concept of voice. These series of studies are relevant for the study at hand because they provide a detailed methodological account of both a feasible pedagogical implementation of CBI, and how to carry out a systematic research of languaging as a mediational tool for the internalization of grammatical concepts.

Gánem-Gutiérrez & Harum (2011) also report the implementation of a CBI approach to instruction -based on Lapkin et al. (2008) and Knouzi et al. (2010)- to investigate the potential applicability of their CBI materials the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the concept of tense-aspect marking in L2 English. After a microgenetic analysis of their data (see Knouzi et al., 2010), Gánem-Gutiérrez & Harum (2011: 113) concluded that although the overall quality of the definitions of the concept improved in general, those with a lesser awareness of the concept of tense-aspect before the intervention, benefited the most from the CBI treatment. But the most transcendent of their findings for the present study is that found that verbalizing helped participants develop awareness and control over the concept of aspect (i.e. evaluating tasks and understanding the concept).

CBI, as operationalized in the present research, follows Negueruela’s (2003) approach. As a pedagogical tool, CBI intends to construct a monistic system in the L2 classroom where instruction and assessment come together. CBI is linked directly
with Dynamic Assessment (DA), and the interdependency of instruction (both formal and informal) in the process of cognitive development.

2.6 DA: Bridging the gap between instruction and assessment

Over the last few years a considerable amount of research concerning Dynamic Assessment has been published, suggesting that this is becoming an area of interest in the field of Applied Linguistics and L2 learning. Works such as Ableeva (2008, 2010); Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994); Schneider & Ganschow (2000); Grigorenko, Sternberg, & Ehrman (2000); Kozulin & Garb (2001); Antón (2003, 2009); Lantolf & Poehner (2004, 2007, 2008); Poehner & Lantolf (2005); Poehner (2005, 2007, 2008); or Summers (2008) suggest that DA could be a feasible tool to enhance L2 learners’ development while being assessed, breaking the dichotomy instruction-evaluation in the L2 classroom. In this section I outline and review the theoretical basis of Dynamic Assessment (DA), one of the most relevant applications of Vygotsky’s work on the Zone of Proximal Development, and I link it with the present study. While reviewing the existing literature related to DA and the different ways to administer it, in this section I will pay special attention to the potential of DA as a tool for bridging L2 instruction with assessment, and ultimately bringing about L2 development.

2.6.1 The origin of Dynamic Assessment

Even though Vygotsky never talked about DA per se, in his works he criticized the use of traditional individualized psychometric methods for establishing learners’ actual level of development (i.e. IQ tests), and proposed a more dynamic method to
unfold learners’ potential development: “In studying what the learner is capable of doing independently, we study yesterday’s development. Studying what the learner is capable of doing cooperatively, we ascertain tomorrow’s development” (Vygotsky 1998: 202). In his research, Vygotsky seeks for a method of evaluation that, through appropriate mediation, could provide an accurate prognosis of the learner’s ZPD, serving as an orientation for the instructors to supply learners with the necessary mediational tools and strategies to promote development:

“What the learner can do today in cooperation and with guidance, tomorrow he will be able to do independently. This means that by ascertaining the learner’s potential when he works in cooperation, we ascertain in this way the area of maturing intellectual functions that in the near stage of development must bear fruit and, consequently, be transferred to the level of actual mental development of the learner.” (Vygotsky 1998: 202)

Vygotsky, however, never had the chance to introduce his ideas to the western culture. It was Luria, one of Vygotsky’s collaborators and advocates of his theories, the first to introduce the concept of DA to the western world. Luria (1960) points out that assessment has to be dynamic, and not static or psychometric - as tests used to be at that moment- in order to uncover the learners’ true potential. In that way, tasks need to be mediated at first with the help of a more capable individual, reducing this mediation sequentially to the point where the individual is able to execute a task with little or no mediation.

Of course, this is a basic explanation of Luria’s theory13, however, it allows the

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13 Given the scope of the present study, this section does not intend to review in depth Luria’s contribution to the field of sociocultural psychology and L2 assessment. For a more extensive reflection on his theories please check Luria (1960, 1981); Lantolf & Poehner (2004, 2007, 2008); Poehner & Lantolf (2005); or Poehner (2005, 2007, 2008).
reader to see that DA can be used as a tool to create a prognosis of the learner’s potential development. DA can also focus on the individual potential development that may transfer from mediated or assisted learning into independent problem solving. This theory is known as Transfer Theory (Lantolf and Poehner, 2007) and it “involves determining whether or not learners have appropriated the mediation from DA and can carry out new tasks either independently or with much less assistance than at the outset of the process,” (54). This theory introduces a key principle of DA: independent problem solving has to be the goal and not the focus of assessment. In other words, mediation in DA has to be a tool that allows for concept formation, and development through activity.

DA presents a series of characteristics that make it a unique form of evaluation. Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) point out the main differences among non-dynamic forms of assessment (NDA) and DA: On the one hand while NDA focus on the outcome of past learning, DA tries to ascertain learner’s potential development. On the other hand, in NDA the instructor remains neutral, whereas in DA the examiner can intervene while the assessment process is taking place. Lastly, NDA does not allow any performance feedback until the assessment is completed, while in DA the evaluator uses mediation tuned to the learners’ ZPD. That is, DA does not distinguish instruction from assessment, but rather considers them two sides of the same coin (Lantolf & Poehner 2004, 2008). DA focuses “on modifiability and on producing suggestions for interventions that appear successful in facilitating improved learner performance” Lidz (1991: 6), insisting on the inseparability of assessment and instruction. Of course, these are not the only differences among the
aforementioned methods of assessment. As Poehner (2008: 37) points out, NDA approaches are generally described as *norm-referenced*, where an individual score is compared to a global score distribution or *criterion referenced*, where individual performance is compared to a standard. But DA is about activity in the ZPD and should be understood as *development-referenced* (see Poehener, 2007), where learners’ needed mediation is tracked over time for observational, diagnostical, and interventional purposes.

In this study, following Vygostky’s interpretation of the notion of ZPD applied to L2 learning, I advocate that arguably, the aspect that makes DA a unique form of assessment is that it focuses on the learners’ emergent L2 development through mediation targeted to the their ZPOD. L2 DA, therefore, focuses on promoting development through mediation in the ZPOD while the evaluation is in progress, insisting on the inseparability of assessment and instruction. For that very reason, when using DA in the L2 classroom, the goal is to assess the learners’ potential development in a way that will allow the instructor to implement a mediation tuned to their individual, or sometimes collective (see Brunner, 1985) ZPOD’s. For that reason, independent problem solving must be the goal rather than the means of the evaluation process.

Taking into account the mediated nature of human cognition in SCT (i.e. internalization is a process that goes from interpersonal to intrapersonal, from the society to the individual), the mediation required to complete an activity needs to be sensitive to the learners’ ZPOD in order to foster learner’s development. Following this chain of thought, L2 development though DA can be defined as a collaborative
process that leads to the completion of an activity through a qualitative process of mediation, sensitive to the learners ZPOD, internalization, and eventual concept formation.

In this study I will use DA to gather and assess verbalization data. DA allows me to mediate learner’s verbalization and ascertain his level of L2 conceptual development in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect. Development in DA is observed when the participant is able to use the grammatical concept of aspect as tool and result (i.e. awareness of the concept that leads control) with little or no mediation on the mediator’s part. That is, when the use of the concept of aspect allows the participants to “guide their performance and ultimately internalize [it] as a means of regulating their meaning-making ability in the L2” (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006: 80).

2.6.2 Interactionist Vs. Interventionist DA: Tuning Assessment to the learner’ ZPOD

I discussed in the second section of the present chapter that one of the biggest challenges present in SCT is the existence of multiple, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations of the Vygotskian notion of ZPD. Keeping in mind that Dynamic Assessment is one of the applications of Vygotsky’s work in the ZPD, the existence of several approaches for co-constructing ZPDs with learners through DA is only logical. Keeping in mind that the goal of the present study is to ascertain the role of verbalizations in the internalization of the concept of aspect, it is essential to implement a DA as close as possible to the notion of ZPOD.

Even though all the approaches to DA have the same goal (i.e. to support
learners’ development of their cognitive abilities), according to Lantolf and Pohener (2004: 54) DA methods can be classified in Interventionists and Interactionists [italics not in the original] attending to the way in which they co-construct the learners ZPD.

Interventionist approaches to DA are closer to traditional NDA and other psychometric methods of assessment (e.g. IQ tests) in that they are characterized for their emphasis on the generalization, quantification and standardization of their results. This type of approaches to DA also use mediation but, in their quest to generalize results and speed up the learning process, the mediation used is usually very tightly scripted (see Haywood and Lidz, 2007), created beforehand, and provided through a series of hints or prompts that generally go from the most implicit to the most explicit.

Interactionist approaches to DA, on the one hand, do not limit the types of mediation available to help learners’ L2 development. Interactionist DA is more sensitive to the learner’s ZPOD in that it favors a dialectic relationship between learner and evaluator in order to increase the possibilities for observation and intervention in learner development (Minik, 1987: 137). In essence, when an interactionist DA is in play “performance belongs neither to the mediator nor to the learner but comprises the interplay between them as they raise questions, debate ideas, brainstorm alternatives, offer explanations and jointly work out solutions to assessment tasks.” (Poehner, 2008: 38) Interactionist DA focuses on co-creating a ZPOD that will allow for future individual problem solving. In this type of DA, the quality of the mediation needed is just as important as the answer, because it allows
the mediator to clearly identify a problem (e.g. misinterpreting task directions, carelessness, inefficient use of strategies, etc.), establish a prognosis, and immediately tune mediation (i.e. interventions) to the learner’s ZPD.

While both interventionist and interactionist approaches are grounded on the Vygotskian notion that present mediation in the ZPOD leads to future development (see Cole, 2003), it is essential for the researcher to consider their advantages and disadvantages. Interventionist approaches to DA seem to be a better fit for larger scale assessments where accountability is a priority due to their focus on generalizability and standardization. However, they are not very sensitive to the learner’s ZPOD, since they only allow for limited forms of mediation and only accept one valid answer.

Interactionist approaches to DA have the advantage of being very close to the notion of ZPOD because the mediational tools used in this type of assessment are not standardized, but tuned to the learner’s cognitive needs. Since mediation in this approach is not standardized but tuned to the learner’s ZPD, the learner receives as much mediation as he or she needs in order to complete a task. On the other hand, it can be argued that if the mediation used during the DA is not standardized, then the assessment may not be as reliable as expected. We have to keep in mind, however, that interactionist DA is based on the premise that independent problem solving has to be the outcome and not the means of the assessment, and because each learner has its own independent needs, the mediation required to successfully complete a task will not the same for all of them. That is why the learner has to be seen as a moving target (see Lantolf & Poehner, 2004) where the student’s ZPOD is the key
factor that determines the mediation needed.

Given the fact that the goal of using DA in this study is to determine the learner’s ZPOD in order to provide the necessary mediation to guide learners towards their potential development, then it is essential to implement mediational tools sensible to each individual’s needs. For that very same reason, this study implements an Interactionist DA to interpret and foster the learner’s ZPOD in relation to the conceptualization of the concept of aspect.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the main tenets of Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Mind (1978, 1986), applied to L2 development and the internalization of theoretical concepts in the L2 classroom. I have reviewed the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD) based on Chailkin (2003) and have supported the use of the notion zone of potential development (ZPOD), as proposed in Negueruela (2008) for the field of second language acquisition (SLA). I have argued that the notion of ZPOD refers explicitly to L2 learners, provides more freedom to the L2 researcher, and promotes a change from studying proximalities to potentialities.

In the present chapter I have also discussed the importance of verbalizing in the internalization of theoretical concepts. I have also linked the notion of verbalizing, and Swain and colleagues’ languaging, with Slobin’s (1996, 2003) theory of ‘thinking for speaking’ to explain the importance of verbalized language in the way humans experience the world. Attending to previous studies in the field of L2 learning, it was proposed that verbalizing in the context of activity could be used
as a mediational tool in the internalization of theoretical concepts.

In the section that followed I reviewed the main approaches to instruction from a SCT perspective: Davidov’s ‘Movement from the abstract to the concrete’ (MAC) and Gal’perin’s ‘Systemic Theoretical Instruction’ (STI) approaches to learning. I analyzed the differences between both models, and the main advantages and disadvantages of using one instructional approach or the other. I finished the section reviewing the most relevant studies conducted in Concept-based Instruction (CBI) - Negueruela’s (2003) implementation of Gal’perin’s STI- applied to L2 learning, and I linked it to the present study.

Finally, I reviewed one of the main applications of Vygotsky’s work in the ZPD: Dynamic Assessment (DA). Then I proposed that the importance of DA for the present study. DA is a form of assessment that allows the researcher to capture L2 conceptual development in formation while using mediation aimed to the learners’ ZPOD. I explored the origins of DA, the main differences with non-dynamic methods of assessment, the different approaches to understanding assessment from an SCT perspective, and I linked them to the notion of ZPOD, L2 internalization and development. I ended the chapter commenting on the advantages of proposing an interactionist approach to DA to identify the learners’ ZPOD in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect and offer them adequate mediation that would foster L2 development.

In the following chapter I will explore Vygotsky’s ‘genetic method’ of research and development in depth, and I will present my application of CBI to L2 teaching in a university 12-week course of Advanced Spanish Conversation.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present chapter describes both the context in which the study took place and the research methodology used to explore the research question outlined in the first chapter. Here I pay special attention to the different types of data collected throughout the study. I also discuss research methodology used for data collection, and the implications of implementing such methodology to the study of L2 development as a conceptual process.

From a SCT perspective, L2 development is emergent and based on categories of meaning (Negueruela, 2003). Hence, studying L2 learning is about documenting the development of categories of meaning, and not only about finding simple casual relationships between independent and dependent variables, but about ascertaining L2 conceptual development. The key is to study development as a historical dynamic process based on Vygostky’s (1978) genetic method. In a genetic approach to L2 research, the goal is to “describe process analysis, explain through dynamic relations, and understand through developmental analysis that returns to the source and reconstructs all the points in development.” (65).

The present work has been structured as a reconstructive case study (Duff 2012, 2008). Data relevant to L2 development as a conceptual process comes from four sources: Performance data, definition data, verbalizations, and ethnographic notes taken during CBI instruction.
Different types of data available are analyzed in relation to their connection with the potential development and internalization of the concept of aspect. As I mentioned earlier, in the present study both the minimal unit of instruction and the minimal unit of analysis is the grammatical concept of aspect.

1. Performance data collected before and after CBI comes from two written protocols.
2. Definition data is based on students’ written definitions of the grammatical concept of aspect before and after CBI instruction.
3. Verbalization data comes from the oral interviews held before and after CBI instruction, and consists of two individual DA aimed to determine the learners’ potential development in reference to the grammatical concept of aspect in Spanish.
4. CBI instruction, as operationalized in the present study, is based on Negueruela (2003) and is reported through ethnographic data collected in the classroom.

In CBI instruction each type of data (performance, definition, and verbalization data) shows traces of conceptual development in a different manner. Negueruela (2003) proposes the use of these three types of data for the study of L2 development as a conceptual process. Whereas written performance data attests control over the grammatical features of the concept of aspect, definition data has an orienting quality and shows the learner’s awareness and understanding over the grammatical concept of aspect. Finally, verbalization data –the most relevant from a
genetic perspective - shows conceptual coherence when solving a task, that is, the learner’s ability to use the grammatical concept as a mediational tool to solve a problem in a coherent and appropriate way.

In order to both promote and evaluate the participants’ conceptualizations (i.e. awareness and control over the grammatical concept of aspect) I use Dynamic Assessment (DA), a method of evaluation tuned to the students ZPOD. DA focuses on promoting development through mediation in the ZPOD while the evaluation is in progress, insisting on the inseparability of assessment and instruction. Assessment, in a DA fashion, is a collaborative process that leads to the completion of the assigned task through a qualitative process of conceptual mediation that goes from interpersonal to intrapersonal. The mediation required to complete this task needs to be sensitive to the learners’ individual cognitive profile, providing them with the appropriate mediation for each particular case.

In the present study, DA complements CBI instruction in exploring and promoting potential L2 development through mediation during verbalization activities. As argued in the previous chapter, a significant way to trace and document L2 conceptual development is when a participant is able to use the grammatical concept of aspect as tool and result (with little or no mediation on the mediator’s part). That is, when the concept of aspect is used as a tool for regulation that allows the participants to orient their performance towards internalization of the very same concept (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006: 80).

The present chapter is organized as follows. In section 2, I review Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method of research and praxis and I connect it with case study
methodology. In this section I also explore the theoretical and practical implications of proposing the grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of instruction in the Spanish L2 classroom, and outline the research question for the present study. In the third section of the chapter I describe the course where the study was conducted, and the pedagogical and theoretical implications of implementing CBI instruction in the Spanish L2 classroom. Section 4 documents the process of data collection and serves as introduction for the different types of data considered relevant for the present study in order to ascertain L2 conceptual development of the grammatical concept of aspect. Section 5 introduces the participant profile as well as a commentary of relevant issues occurred during the implementation of CBI instruction. I also use this chapter to thoroughly explore the participant's personal data collected in class. Section 6 covers the implementation of the present study in the Spanish L2 classroom in chronological order. In this section I also describe the assessment procedures, the timeline of the experiment, the challenges to implement CBI instruction in the L2 classroom, and finally I analyze in detail each one of the sessions by means of ethnographic notes collected throughout the development of the study.

3.2 The Genetic Method

Sociocultural theory (SCT) departs from the understanding that the human mind is mediated. Human beings do not interact directly with the world, but through physical and psychological tools (Lantolf, 2000). In SCT, research and praxis are not seen as two separate processes, but as dialectically united. This view of the
human mind is captured in Vygotsky’s (1978) Genetic Method of research. This method is not just an alternative to other research methodologies, but rather “a necessary consequence of Vygotsky’s new way of theorizing humans and human psychological functions as mediated by social practices and cultural artifacts” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006: 35). A SCT view of empirical research differs from mainstream SLA research in that the latter usually follows formal analytic procedures, where the data from a control group is contrasted with that of an experimental group through the manipulation of a series of variables (Yañez-Prieto, 2008: 293). Instead, SCT “focuses on the formation of mediational ability through appropriating and internalizing symbolic artifacts” (Lantolf, 2011: 26), focusing on development in its formation and during its progress, while concepts are still on the external plane, rather than observing causality once an ability is fully formed or fossilized (Vygotsky, 1978: 68). According to Lantolf (2011) the reason why this method is called genetic is not because it is grounded on the human genes, but rather because it is historical, that is, it tracks changes over time.

This notion determines the way in which research is approached. While the homogeneity of the participants engaged in the same activity is assumed in the majority of SLA studies (Roebuck, 2000: 84), SCT sees learners as unique, socially-constructed beings. From this perspective, it is also understood that human activity is a complex process determined by the sociohistorical setting (as well as) and by the goals and sociocultural history of the participants (Roebuck, 2000: 79).

As mentioned before, SCT does not understand theory without praxis. The goal of research from this approach is not only to understand the world but also to
transform it. From a sociocultural perspective, data are social constructs developed through the relationship between the researcher, the participants, their context (including its historical antecedents), and the means of data collection (Smagorinsky, 1995: 192). This is also true for research conducted in the L2 classroom, where the investigator must develop the role of both researcher and practitioner, seeking to put into practice his theories through observation and mediation in the learner’s process of L2 development. In Vygotsky’s words:

“Previously theory was not dependent on practice; instead practice was the conclusion, the application, an excursion beyond the boundaries of science, an operation which lay outside science and came after science, which began after scientific operation, was considered completed. Success or failure had practically no effect on the fate of the theory [...] Now the situation is the opposite. Practice pervades the deepest foundations of the scientific operation and reforms it from beginning to end. Practice sets the task and serves as the supreme judge of theory, as its truth criterion. It dictates how to construct the concepts and how to formulate the laws” (2004: 304)

In line with Lantolf (2011: 35), I argue that the biggest challenge that a praxis-based approach to research faces is to create an environment that allows for the promotion of development or transformation of new concepts or processes rather than focusing on what has already been materialized. The goal of a praxis-based approach is to use theory to create an impact on learning and development, rather than just a tool to observe learning processes. Thus, the analysis of data must present a genetic or historical view of linguistic-tool formation (see Lantolf & Thorne: 2006; Daniels, 1996: 58; Yañez-Prieto, 2008: 297). In order to be able to implement this particular approach to research methodology, teachers need to fulfill

14 In Lantolf (2011: 35)
the role of both researcher and practitioner, and as part of their formation they need to:

“understand the relationship among the mediational tools, their historical cultural uses within the learner's community, their means of employment in the learning (and research) environment, the intersubjectivity between the learner's understanding of the learning task and the evaluator's (teacher's or researcher's) understanding of the task, and other factors that make up the interrelated social environment of learning.” (Smagorinsky, 1995: 200)

Instructors (i.e. researcher & practitioner) working within the framework of Vygotsky’s genetic method need to create situations in the classroom that facilitate the process of L2 conceptual development, and explain the learner's behavior (i.e. performance), so that the underlying dynamics of L2 conceptual development can be revealed.

Following Vygotsky’s experimental-developmental method, I choose to analyze the data of one of the participants in the present study using a case study methodology. A case study is “a study of one case [where] the researcher focuses attention on a single entity” (Johnson, 1992: 75). Implementing of this methodology to the data analysis allows me to interact, observe and focus on a particular individual during the process of L2 concept formation.

Johnson (1992) observes that one of the biggest advantages of this type of methodology is that it allows the researcher to analyze learning processes and strategies as well as the nature of individual L2 written and oral development, and sociopsychological and affective aspects of classroom learning more thoroughly/in depth (92). Duff (2008: 43) adds that case studies present a high degree of completeness, depth of analysis, and readability. However, this type of methodology
presents the disadvantage from a hypothetic-deductive perspective that it is very
difficult to generalize the findings to other cases (Duff, 2008, 2012; Johnson, 1992).

The implementation of a case study methodology within the context of an
experimental genetic method allows the researcher to analyze a learner as meaning-
making, tool-mediated, socio-historical being full of agency, constrained and
enabled by his histories, emotions, motivations, goals, and personal significance
(Yañez, 2008: 297). For all the above reasons, in this dissertation I am implementing
a case study embedded in a Vygotskyan praxis-based approach to research to elicit
L2 conceptual development.

3.2.1 The grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of instruction

L2 conceptual development is understood in the present study as the
learner’s awareness and control over the grammatical concept of aspect. Negueruela
& Lantolf (2006: 82) argue that CBI instruction promotes precisely learners’
awareness and control over conceptual categories through explicit grammatical
instruction. In the case of aspect, the key is not so much mastering the
morphological forms and endings, as understanding how this concept allows
learners to adopt a range of temporal perspectives that they can manipulate
according with their communicative intentions. Taking this into account,
Negueruela & Lantolf (2006) propose that:

“The concept that is the object of instruction and learning (e.g., aspect)
must be organized into a coherent pedagogical unit of instruction.
This unit must have two fundamental properties: It must retain the
full meaning of the relevant concept and be organized to promote
learning, understanding, control, and internalization.”
Unfortunately, this is not the case in most traditional textbook approaches to teaching preterite and imperfect. Textbooks rely, for the most part, on rules of thumb that fail to reflect the full meaning of the concept, and are not organized in a way that promotes understanding, control, and internalization (Ibid.) Salaberry (2008: 228) suggests that there is a general dissatisfaction with textbook rules on the use of the preterite-imperfect contrast in Spanish, mentioning –among others– authors such as Delgado-Jenkins (1990); Frantzen (1995); Hernán (1994); Negueruela & Lantolf (2006); Ozete (1988); Westfall and Forester (1996); and Whitley (1986/2002). Indeed, the way in which the aspectual dichotomy preterite-imperfect is presented in Spanish textbooks seems to be inconsistent, and in most cases, inaccurate (see table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Uses of the preterite/imperfect according to Aparisi, Blanco, & Rinka (2007).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of the preterite</th>
<th>Uses of the imperfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Expresses the beginning and the end of an action</td>
<td>• Describes an action with no beginning nor end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed actions</td>
<td>• Habitual actions in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Narrates a series of actions</td>
<td>• Describe a mental, physical, or emotional state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tells the time and describes the scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preterite is used to narrate actions that tell what happened and imply movement in</td>
<td>• Imperfect gives the narration a feeling of completeness by providing descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the narration. It has an informative goal.</td>
<td>details (people, landscape, etc.). This description provides an expressive and lyric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>value to the narration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In summary:** the preterite narrates and the imperfect describes
Table 3.1 illustrates the presentations of grammar for preterite and imperfect from *Revista 2nd edition* (Aparisi, Blanco, & Rinka, 2007), the textbook used in the course where the study was conducted. An analysis of the values present in table 3.1 reveals\(^{15}\) that this representation has many defects. The first thing that can be noticed is that this characterization represents the two categories as arbitrary groupings of independent uses: 4 different preterits, 6 different imperfects, and a general distinction of the two tenses. Also, the use of the narration appears in both tenses, which seems very arbitrary. Secondly, it suggests that the imperfect is used more frequently, or at least, in more instances than the preterite. Third, this method seems extremely difficult to apply because of its decontextualization from specific contexts. Borrowing Whitley's (1986: 109) argument “if students wish to convey their *I slept all day*, should they opt for ‘what was happening’, ‘describes physical state’, ‘describes background’, or ‘records, reports [narrates]? All these seem applicable and conflicting. Thus students are baffled when their teacher recommends *Dormí todo el día* [preterite] over *Dormía todo el día* [imperfect].”

Rules in table 3.1, just like those present in Negueruela & Lantolf (2006) are capricious to the extent that some are semantic (preterite for completed actions), some are functional (describes background), and others are perceptual or concrete (imperfect for telling time). Rules of thumb have the potential to do more harm than good because “they depict the language as a sediment that appears to have a life of its own independent of people” (83), which may lead learners to confusion.

\(^{15}\)This analysis is based on Whitley’s (1986: 109) review of Dasilva & Lovett’s (1965) description of the uses of preterite and imperfect.
Once the concept that is going to be used as the minimal unit of instruction is identified—the grammatical concept of aspect for teaching Spanish preterite and imperfect in this case—, the next step is to materialize it in a didactic model (84). Following Negueruela (2003) and Poenher (2005) I drew on Bolinger's (1991) formal accounts of aspect and Bull's (1965) pedagogical recommendations for Spanish L2 teachers to develop explanations and supporting visual representations to help their students arrive at a conceptual understanding of the preterit and the imperfecto in Spanish (see Appendix E).

In a CBI approach to instruction it is essential to develop adequate didactic models that represent the concept at hand avoiding over simplification (Engestrom, 1996). Didactic models have to be as simple yet as sophisticated as possible, representing structural, procedural, functional, and content properties of the concept of study (Karpova 1977)\(^\text{16}\). In this way, learners can use them as mediational tools to mediate their performance, and pull up L2 conceptual development. According to Negueruela & Lantolf (2006), when creating didactic models in the form of charts, we must take two factors into account:

- **Quality** (empirical or theoretical): Models need to raise awareness of the linguistic resources available to the learners to solve linguistic tasks.
- **Presentation**: They could be prefabricated or leave room for the student to explore the concept.

Finally didactic models must allow learners to use them as tool and result to explain their communicative intentions in actual performances (85). This last factor

\(^{16}\) In Negueruela and Lantolf (2006: 84).
is related to the research question, and will be discussed in depth in the sections concerning verbalization data in the present chapter and in chapter 4.

3.2.2 Research question

1. What is the role of verbalizing as a mediational tool for the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect in this case study?

3.3 The course

The participant in the present study was a learner in a class of 32 adult college students enrolled in a multi section course of advanced conversation (Spanish 301) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst during the Spring semester of 2009. The course met three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), for 50 minutes. The learner whose data is considered in this study was enrolled in section 4, which met from 10:10 to 11:00 am.

Spanish 301 is the continuation of Spanish 240, and it is the first course that the students can count towards their minor or major. In order to enroll in Spanish 301 students should have completed two semesters of basic Spanish (Spanish 110, and Spanish 120) and another two semesters of intermediate Spanish (Spanish 230 and Spanish 240). Students also have the possibility to enroll in Spanish 301 by taking the placement exam administered by the New Students Orientation Office prior the beginning of the academic year.

Spanish 301 focuses on the development of the learners’ speaking skills, and it also incorporates some grammar instruction. In this course, speaking instruction follows a speaking-as-process approach. The approach to grammar in this course
generally follows a conventional methodology based on the course textbook
(Aparisi, M. C., J. Blanco, & M. D. Rinka 2007). Although the tasks and activities done
in class have some variation from instructor to instructor, almost without exception,
grammar instruction follows a pedagogical sequence based on the presentation of
grammatical points, practice through filling the blanks, translation and editing
activities. Testing in this course is also a standardized procedure that reflects the
classroom activities.

As I have been explaining, this study focuses on the grammar component of
this course, and to be more specific, on the development of the grammatical concept
of aspect. However, all the participants in the present study had to complete the
same exams and assignments as the other sections of Spanish 301. Nevertheless,
after consulting with the Language Program Director of the Spanish program, I was
given the freedom to modify the syllabus so the timeframe of the CBI instruction of
the grammatical concept of aspect would fit in the calendar. For that reason, the
sections where the study took place, covered lesson 3 (which deals with
prepositions) before lesson 2, which presents the differences in use between the
preterite and the imperfect (see appendix B to see a copy of the syllabus). The
grading criteria, quizzes, exams, and system of evaluation, on the other hand, were
the same for all the sections of Spanish301.

Other than the dates chosen to tackle the grammatical concept of aspect, the
main difference between the sections in which the study took place and the rest,
was the pedagogical approach to grammar instruction. Instead of using the
traditional sequence presented earlier in this section, participants in this study were
exposed to a CBI approach to instruction that incorporated didactic models, verbalization activities, and strategic oral interactions based on Di Pietro’s (1987) scenarios methodological approach to L2 instruction.

The rationale for choosing this particular course was based on my own pedagogical experience. As a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I had the opportunity of teaching every Spanish course ranging from elementary 1 (Spanish 110) to Advanced Grammar (Spanish 311). While teaching those courses, I noticed that, even after 6 semesters of Spanish at a university level, learners still had significant problems in using grammatical features such as the grammatical concept of aspect (even though they had been exposed to it several times over the course of their Spanish career). I saw Spanish 301 as the perfect course to observe the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect especially taking into account that:

1. Its syllabus included a chapter devoted to the difference between Spanish preterite and imperfect.

2. Spanish 301 is second to the last language course in the curriculum articulation of the Spanish Language Program at the University of Massachusetts.¹⁷

3. Students enrolled in this course are not looking for general education credit. Furthermore, they are dedicated students either pursuing a minor or a major in Spanish.

¹⁷ The last language course in the curriculum of the Spanish Language Program is Spanish 311, Advanced Spanish Grammar.
4. Finally, even though learners at this level have been exposed and have had the opportunity to practice the grammatical features that configure the preterite and imperfect several times, they still have problems using these grammatical forms.

Given the amount of instruction received on the concept at hand, the question is then, why are learners still finding the notion of aspect problematic at this level? Negueruela (2003: 163) argues that there is either a L2 maturational barrier preventing them from acquiring the concept and that could be overcome with time, or that L2 instruction has not been aimed to L2 development. Negueruela proposes the use of CBI, a revolutionary approach to instruction based on Gal’perin’s Systemic Theoretical Instruction (STI) to provide the learner with the necessary tools to foster L2 development (see Chapter 2). The study of the role of verbalizing in CBI instruction is precisely the point of departure of the present study.

As it has been previously established, the present dissertation is a case study that analyzes data from one of the 32 students that were part of a Spanish conversation course. The participant was not aware that a different approach to grammar instruction was going to be implemented before enrolling in the sections of Spanish 301 where the study took place. The researcher was also the instructor of the experimental section of Spanish 301. Following the regulations of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, all the students were informed at the beginning of the semester that some parts of the course would be different from the other sections of the same course, and that their instructor would collect data for a research project.
At this point, as well as the rest of the students, the participant in this case study had three options: He could leave the class and enroll in a different section of the same course; stay in the course, participate in the study and allow the researcher to use his data, or stay in the course, participate in the study but not allowing his data to be used. The participant was assured complete anonymity, and he was also informed that his participation in the study, whether or not he allowed the researcher to use the data, would not have an impact on his final grade. Once this information was appropriately explained to the class, those students interested in becoming active participants in the study signed the required informed consent form (see Appendix A). To insure that the instructor/researcher was not aware of the identity of the students actively participating in the study, the students did not hand in their signed consent form until the end of the semester, when all their grades had been turned in.

3.4 Data Collection

The data shown in this study was collected over a 12-week period during the Spring semester of 2009. I consider here three types of data: personal, ethnographic, and conceptual. Personal data consisted in a bio-data questionnaire that the participants had to complete during the first week of classes.

Ethnographic data is mostly qualitative and descriptive in nature. It consists on the instructor’s report about each one of the sessions in which CBI instruction took place. This pedagogical report will be examined later in this chapter in the section devoted to the implementation of CBI in the classroom.
Conceptual development data is divided in three subsections: The learner's definition of the grammatical concept of aspect collected before and after CBI instruction; written performance data also collected prior and after CBI; and verbalization data. The learner's written performance consisted on a narration in the past based on a comic strip that had been provided by the instructor. The images were accompanied by related vocabulary aimed to mediate the student’s written performance (see Appendix H). The verbalization data analyzed in the present study was collected during oral interviews with the instructor in a DA format. During verbalization the learner, whose data has been transcribed and coded to keep his identity anonymous, had to solve a series of tasks related to the concept of aspect, using this grammatical notion as a tool for mediation.

3.4.1 Personal data

Personal data fits right into the qualitative approach to research methodology presented in this study. It provides a more complete and personal account of the learner's background, and of L2 instruction and its influence to L2 development.

During the first week of the semester, the participant filled out a bio-data questionnaire in the classroom (see appendix C). Bio-data questions were intended to clarify issues such as: Age, country and region of birth, projected major, years in college, other foreign language experience, motivation for taking the course, possible relation to other Spanish speakers, experience learning Spanish at home, in High School, or in college, levels of proficiency in Spanish, extracurricular activities,
and relevant personal stories (travel abroad, relevant learning experience). The objective of collecting this type of data was to learn about the personality, ideas, and goals of the learner participating in the present study. In addition to this questionnaire, the researcher compiled a set of notes throughout the semester based on informal conversations with the participant.

3.4.2 Ethnographic data

The ethnographic data consisted in a report based on the classroom notes and observations that the instructor made over the course of the pedagogical intervention. The function of this type of data is to illustrate how CBI instruction was operationalized in the present study, and to observe the activities and techniques used in the classroom to promote L2 development. The ethnographic data is presented later in this chapter, and it is a particularly informative qualitative tool for the reader to comprehend the context in which the study took place.

3.4.3 Data for L2 development as a conceptual process

As mentioned earlier, the empirical design of the present study is based in large part on Negueruela’s (2003) concept-based approach to language instruction. Following his model of study of L2 development as a conceptual process, I consider here three types of data: definition, performance, and verbalization data. Each one of these types of data is connected to L2 conceptual development in a different way. Definition data shows awareness of the grammatical concept of aspect and may be used by the learner as a tool for orienting his production. Performance data considers morphological accuracy over the grammatical concept of aspect in written
discourse. Finally, verbalization data shows the dialectical relation between understanding and performance, and allows the researcher to see the process of concept formation through the learner’s ability to solve tasks related to the grammatical concept. In the next subsections I discuss the main characteristics of the data analysis procedure employed for each one of those types of data.

3.4.3.1 Definition data

As part of the course, the participant in this study was asked to define and explain his understanding of the main grammatical points tackled in this course before instruction. These definitions included topics such as *ser/estar*, preterite/imperfect, and indicative/subjunctive. Only data related to the grammatical concept of aspect was collected for analysis for this study. Group discussion was frequently used in class to generate a basic understanding of the concept either as a whole class or in small groups. In the case of aspect, learners were asked to write a definition of this notion individually. Definitions of the grammatical concept of aspect were collected in class twice over the course of the semester: the first time during the fourth week of classes (2/13/2009) and the second time (4/29/2009) a week and a half before the end of the semester.

Even though conceptual definitions were written and collected during class time, where the lessons where conducted in Spanish, the participant in this study was allowed to write them either in English or in Spanish. The question that he received before instruction regarding the definition of the grammatical concept of aspect, however, was in Spanish (see appendix I). The learner whose data I analyze
in the present study encountered no problems in discussing his own understanding of the relevant grammatical features of the concept at hand in Spanish, since he had studied the language for several years. In the next chapter, devoted to data analysis, I will provide translations of the original learner’s definitions in Spanish. The analysis of the learner’s definitions in this dissertation is based on Negueruela’s (2003) Conceptual Interrelated Feature Analysis (CIFA), to study definition data in relation to L2 conceptual development. I will discuss the main characteristics of this method of analysis in chapter 4.

3.4.3.2 Performance data

Performance data allows me to explore the emergence and coherent use of preterite and imperfect morphological forms in a written text before and after CBI instruction. Performance data comes from the participant’s written performance narrating a story in the past. The learner is expected to first interpret and then write a narration based on a comic strip taken from the activity *El accidente de Miguel* (Miguel’s accident) from the Spanish textbook *Dos mundos*, 5th edition (2002: 422). The aforementioned comic strip depicts a chronologically ordered sequence of events in which a kid riding his bike is run over by a car. This graphic story is complemented with a vocabulary word bank intended as a tool for the participant’s individual mediation.\(^{18}\)

The learner’s first written performance protocol was collected on 2/13/2009 (three weeks into the semester), and his second and final written performance

\(^{18}\) See Appendix H
protocol was collected on 4/29/2009 (a week and a half before the end of the semester to allow time for a subsequent oral interview).

Both definition and performance data were collected on the same dates and had the same format in the pretest and in the posttest. In order to assess the learner’s potential L2 development between the pretest and the posttest (before and after CBI instruction), I observe the emergence and consistent use of the Spanish aspectual morphology by recording the cases where the learner used the forms coherently and accurately. The analysis of the learner’s written performance before and after CBI instruction is summarized in the form of tables. In each table I take account of the instances in which the participant uses inconsistent or incoherent aspectual forms (when choosing preterite/imperfect, other tenses, or just incoherent morphology) or accurate ones (preterite and imperfect conveying a coherent use of aspect). I finally tally and analyze the participant's performance data before and after CBI in the next chapter (see Table 4.5 for an example of how the performance data was accounted for).

3.4.3.3 Verbalization data

As argued throughout the present study, L2 conceptual development is the learner’s ability to understand and control the grammatical concept of aspect to create new meanings, which in turn will mediate their language performance. As I will discuss in depth in chapter 4, even though definition and performance data provide information about the student’s awareness, understanding and control over the grammatical features that form the concept of aspect, they fail to show an
accurate picture of L2 development. This is the reason why verbalization data plays such a crucial role in this study.

Verbalization data come from the oral interviews held before and after the pedagogical intervention, and consist of two individual DA aimed to determine the learner’s potential development in reference to the grammatical concept of aspect in Spanish. During these interviews, the participant was asked to solve specific grammatical tasks and explain his rationale for choosing a particular solution to the problem at hand, either in English or Spanish. All the tasks to which the student was exposed were chosen by the researcher, and were based on his own written performance protocol before and after CBI instruction. In the second part of the interview, which took place once the participant had finished the assigned tasks, the researcher asked the learner to read his definition of the grammatical concept of aspect. At this moment, the learner is allowed to complement his previously written definition by changing it (adding or eliminating information) or providing examples connected to his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect. The first set of verbalization data was collected four weeks into the semester on 2/17/2009, and the second set was collected a week before the end of the semester on 5/1/2009. Both sets will be discussed and analyzed in depth on chapter 4.

3.5 Participant profile and commentary of relevant issues

As mentioned in section 3, the participant in this study was recruited from a fifth-semester undergraduate Spanish course, Advanced Spanish Conversation. Even though the final number was 31 students, 32 students were initially enrolled in the
course. The section in which the participant was enrolled presented a wide range of linguistic backgrounds. The vast majority of the students in this course were seeking either a minor or a major in Spanish, and all but one of them were undergraduate students.

In what proceeds I provide a brief description of Julian (pseudonym), the student whose data I analyze in chapter 4, with the intent of providing a closer look into this learner’s personality. As mentioned above, this description is based on Julian’s response to a bio-data questionnaire, which was completed in class during the first week of the semester and in subsequent talks. Here I reproduce his responses to those questions, having previously changed or deleted any personal data that could identify the participant. The length of the description depends on how much this particular participant decided to elaborate on his responses. This profile offers “windows of meaning and emotion” (Negueruela, 2003: 170) into the participant’s personality by revealing the significance of certain experiences such as relevant language learning experience, traveling, professional expectations and personal goals for his L2 learning.

3.5.1 Julian's personal data

Julian was 24 years old at the time the course started. He had majored in economics from another institution and was starting his first year as a Masters student in the field of education. Julian was a member of the Graduate Student Senate and a very active member of the campus live, as well as a very participative student in the classroom. Before this course, Julian had taken 2 years of Spanish in
middle school, as well as 3 years of in high school\textsuperscript{19}, and 6 semesters as an undergraduate student, but Spanish 301 was his first Spanish course at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Julian had traveled Germany, Italy, China and Tibet, but never to a Spanish speaking country. Julian enrolled in this class because he wanted to maintain and improve his fluency in the language. He expected to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of grammar in Spanish, and most importantly, to improve his oral (listening and speaking) abilities. He felt that learning a foreign language was important because it enable him to understand and communicate with people from other cultures. Julian also expressed that Spanish could be very useful in his current occupation. In the questionnaire he mentioned that, in the future, he would like to continue improving his Spanish and achieve a native-like fluency. He thinks that being able to communicate in Spanish is an invaluable tool in his life.

Julian is not the typical student in a Spanish 301 class. However, the fact that he had taken so many semesters of Spanish during his academic life and has not being able to internalize the concept of aspect makes him an ideal candidate for the present study.

\textsuperscript{19} In his bio-data questionnaire, Julian mentions that he took 2 years of middle school and 3 of high school Spanish, the last one being “Accelerated Spanish”. However, it is hard to predict the duration or level of these courses. When the investigation was conducted, his level of Spanish was quite advanced, despite the fact that he had not taken any Spanish classes for over a year.
3.6 Ethnographical data: Implementation of CBI instruction in the Spanish classroom.

The present study was divided in three parts: Pretest, pedagogical intervention (CBI instruction, and posttest. These parts are developed as follows:

**Table 3.2 Chronological development of the present study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline of data collection</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Bio-data questionnaire&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>It includes questions about the participant’s age, current studies, and linguistic background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Written performance data&lt;sup&gt;21&lt;/sup&gt; #1 Based on a graphic story, the participant had to write a narrative in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Written definition data #1&lt;sup&gt;22&lt;/sup&gt; The participant had to write a definition of the concept of aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Verbalization data #1 Recorded data. Based on his performance and definition data, the participant was interviewed in a DA fashion to ascertain his ZPOD in relation to the concept of aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; to 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Pedagogical Intervention</td>
<td>Ethnographic data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Pedagogical Intervention</td>
<td>Group oral performance data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Written performance data #2 Based on a graphic story, the participant had to write a narrative in the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Written definition data #2 The participant had to write a definition of the concept of aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Verbalization data #2 Recorded data. Based on his performance and definition data, the participant was interviewed in a DA fashion to ascertain his ZPOD in relation to the concept of aspect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>20</sup> See appendix C
<sup>21</sup> See appendix H
<sup>22</sup> See appendix I
3.6.1 Pretest:

The pretest consisted in three different sections:

- **Performance data #1: Narratives in the past.**
  
The participant has to write a narrative in the past using the Spanish preterite or imperfect. This narrative is based on a comic strip (see Appendix H), which shows a sequence of events ordered chronologically. This graphic story is complemented with a vocabulary word bank as a tool for student’s individual mediation.

- **Definition data #1**
  
  After the narrative is completed, the participant is asked to write in his own words a definition of the notion of aspect. In other words, how he sees the preterite and its relation or differences -if any according to him- to the Spanish imperfect (see Appendix I).

- **Verbalization data #1**
  
  After the previous phase is completed, and once the instructor has revised the participant’s written performance and definition data, he is interviewed in an interactionist DA fashion (see Lantolf & Poehner, 2004), to establish the participant’s ZPOD in relation to the conceptualization of the grammatical concept of aspect in Spanish. Mediation, in this case, is tuned to the participant’s individual mediational needs to solve a task. I explain the implementation of the pretest and the different types of collected data in chapter 4.
3.6.2 Pedagogical Intervention: CBI instruction of the grammatical concept of aspect and group distribution.

Once all student’s, including the participant’s, ZPOD was established based on the notion of mediation (verbalization data # 1) they were distributed in groups according to their individual ZPOD (from lower to higher and vice versa). The main purpose was to promote mediation at all levels (instructor to group mediation; group to group mediation; intra-group mediation and, self-mediation). The final goal was that group work and collaborative mediation among learners should lead to the internalization of the minimal unit of instruction (Spanish aspect in this case). The internalization of a genuine functional conceptual meaning should result in improvements in communicative performance by L2 learners.

Taking into account that learners in Julian’s section come from wide variety of backgrounds, have had different learning experiences with Spanish, and present visible disparities in their ZPODs according to the pre-test, the distribution of the students in the present study is based on A.I. Lipkina’s work:

A.I. Lipkina formulated and psychologically substantiated the method of using a weak pupil of a senior class to help a weak pupil in a junior class. As a result of this, not only is a certain teaching effect achieved, but noticeable changes take place in the personal traits: the senior pupil’s level of pretensions and self-appraisal in the sphere of academic activity rise and the junior pupil’s consciousness of this academic ‘inferiority’ is not increased. (Petrovsky, 1985: 181-182)

It is expected that students in this course will develop the same attitude towards activity as those in Lipkina’s study, and therefore will benefit from mediation through socially meaningful activities. From a sociocultural point of view, development proceeds from inter-personal to intra-personal, and from intra-personal to interpersonal, (i.e. from the individual to the group), hence the
importance of meaningful mediated group joint-activity (Petrovsky, 1985).

Moreover, Swain, etc. al. (2009) also argue the positive effect of verbalizing in collaborative settings where students explain to each other the concept at hand. Based in Vygotskyan principles, theses authors imply that speech has reflexive properties and, henceforth, can be used as a tool to mediates other or the self.

Once the group distribution was completed, the instructor continued with the dynamic process of instruction started with the previous individual DA. According to Petrovsky (1985) students in these groups should go through the following stages: Individual, group relevancy, and collaboration towards a common goal (i.e., identify group success with individual success).

It is important to keep in mind that in order to maintain group cohesion interpersonal relations need to be mediated by socially valuable and personally significant content of joint activity (Petrovsky, 1985). According to Dontsov’s hypothesis (1979), group cohesion depends on the objective, value-based unity of the nucleus of intra-group activity. For this reason, practitioners should use meaningful, goal-oriented activities to reinforce group integration and cohesion. In this step, it is also important to keep in mind the emergence of group leaders, reference groups, and their influence to the group and the individual in the process of concept formation and its internalization.

Although these groups are formed on hierarchical basis according to its members’ ZPODs, the group leader is not necessary the highest ranked member. It can be any member regardless of his or her ZPOD. Actually, there is not such an internal hierarchy up until the group members begin to interact through activity.
is by this mediation that every member sets his or her status within the group: “The higher a group’s development and the more mediated its interpersonal relations are by the content and values of joint socially set activity, the more likely the emergence and stabilization of a leader in the group is to occur as a realization of precisely these relations.” (Petrovsky, 1985: 142) These relationships, however, are continually evolving and may change as the group develops into an activity-mediated community.

3.6.3 Implementing CBI in the classroom: The teaching of aspect

One of the challenges of this study was to implement CBI in the instruction of the grammatical concept of aspect in real classroom time. This is one of the biggest departures from Negueruela’s study (2003). While he chose to collect most of his verbalization data through activities outside of the classroom, I decided to conduct the major bulk of the present study in the classroom. The rationale behind this decision is twofold: First, considering that SCT sees L2 internalization as a conceptual process that proceeds from intrapersonal to interpersonal through mediation in the learner’s ZPOD, it seems only logical that learners with different ZPODs working together in joint activity would foster their L2 conceptual development. Due to the different academic schedules of all of the students, including the participant’s, having them all together at the same time was only possible by conducting the whole study in the classroom.

Second, and as highlighted before, SCT sees research and praxis as two sides of the same coin, paying special attention to concrete classroom activity and its
impact on learning (Lantolf, 2011). I argue here that the role of the researcher in the L2 classroom from a Vygotskian perspective is not only observing development, but also trying to foster it through direct instruction. Consequently, the researcher implemented a CBI approach for the grammatical concept of aspect, which could fit in the proposed timeline for a conversation class. One of the biggest challenges was designing a course calendar in which CBI instruction would “grow organically” (Negueruela, 2003) during the time allowed for instruction for preterite and imperfect.

As mentioned before, the approach to CBI instruction implemented in the present study is based on Negueruela (2003), where L2 instruction is supported by a CLT approach in which communication is the focus of teaching. Communicative activity and language reflection play fundamental roles in this approach to L2 pedagogy. It incorporates the following elements: a pedagogical sequence based on the dialectical synthesis of communication and reflection; a pedagogical unit of instruction based on Vygotsky’s (1986) understanding of theoretical concepts; the importance of didactic models as materialized learning aids; and the use of verbalization with the function of internalization to promote learner awareness and self-regulation (Negueruela, 2003: 224).

Based on the ethnographical notes collected in the classroom, in the next subsections I discuss in detail the implementation of CBI instruction in the present study. Since Julian was enrolled in section 3, I explore each of the sessions implemented in that particular section with a focus in Julian ZPOD based group of work.
3.6.3.1 Session 1

The first session builds up from the pretest, and from the two lessons that had been covered in class up to that point in the semester. As for the instruction students in this section had been exposed to two different grammatical topics up to this point (different uses of *ser* and *estar*, and Spanish prepositions), following a traditional approach to teaching with the help of the textbook *Revista 2nd edition* (Aparisi, Blanco, & Rinka, 2007). In the previous class, the researcher had already organized the students in 4 groups of 4 according to their results on the pretest. As mentioned before, students were grouped according to their ZPOD in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect. The grouping was done in the class before the beginning of the session, and the participant was told that he would work with the same group of learners for the entire duration of the semester. However, neither of the students were informed of the rationale behind the grouping nor of the results of their pretests. This was done to avoid lack of motivation in learners whose ZPODs were the lowest in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect. As for Julian, he was ranked second in his group after analyzing his available data from the pretest.

In the first class devoted to CBI instruction, the groups were asked to create a working definition for the concept of aspect. Once they put together a definition, each group was asked to write it on the board so they could be compared and discussed in the classroom. These definitions could be written in Spanish or English. At this point, most of the definitions relied on previously acquired rules of thumb such us: “If the action happens more that once you use imperfect”, “if it happens just once you use preterite”, “I use imperfect to describe habitual actions in the past”,

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“you use preterite for completed actions”, “imperfect is used to tell the time in Spanish”, “you use preterite to describe a specific action in the past”, or “if the action happens very fast, you use preterite”. These examples reflect that at that point, most of the learners’ definitions, including the participant’s, were perceptual or functional in nature, and there was no trace of the notion of lexical aspect in any of them. However, even though Julian group’s definition used some rules of thumb (“Imperfect in Spanish is used to tell the time”), it was also the only one to establish a point of reference in their definition: “The preterite is used to describe specific events from the speaker’s point of view that happened in the past, that occurred only once, with a set beginning and end”.

Once their definitions had been analyzed and discussed, the students were presented with what Gal’perin calls a Scheme of Complete Orienting Basis of Action (SCOBA), designed as a mediational tool for internalizing the grammatical concept of aspect in Spanish (See Appendix E). Learners were allowed some time to explore and discuss these SCOBAs, and try to figure out the way to use them. Most of the groups were confused by these didactic models and could not come up with a rational way to use it. A notion that the whole class found especially difficult to understand was that of lexical aspect, represented in the SCOBAs as cyclic or non-cyclic events (Bull, 1965: 168).

The main goal of this session was to introduce this didactic model so the learners could use it as a mediational tool that would orient their performance when solving conceptual tasks related to the concept at hand. For that reason, in what followed, there was a phase of explicit instruction in which the instructor/teacher
discussed these charts thoroughly with the class. Most of the questions posed in this part of the session were devoted to cyclic and non-cyclic events. According to their interactions, none of the learners in this class had been exposed to lexical aspect before, and this particular notion created a great deal of confusion in all the groups, including Julian’s.

To help the students understand (and facilitate) the use of this didactic model as a mediational tool for internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect, the instructor asked the groups to solve the following task in the class: They all had to listen to the original theme song of “The Fresh Prince of Bell-Air” in English, which happens to be a narrative in the past (see Appendix G). After listening to the song, the instructor distributed a transcription of the lyrics and asked the groups to analyze the verbs present in the song and to discuss whether they were perfective or imperfective actions. Even though past events may be perfective or imperfective, English verb morphology does not represent these events differently. For that reason, and even though the source material was in English, the instructor implemented this type of activity to help them understand that, although English does not differentiate between perfective and imperfective events in its morphology, these actions have an inherent lexical aspect. With this in mind, students were asked to identify all the past events in the song and then reflect upon the following question: “If these actions were to be represented in Spanish, would you use preterite or imperfect to do so? Why? Justify your choice with the help of the didactic charts.” Given the length of the sessions (50 minutes each), students
were not able to complete the assigned task in one meeting, and they were asked to finish it in the following class.

3.6.3.2 Session 2

Classes on Monday March 2nd were cancelled due to the snow, and therefore, the syllabus had to be modified. The second session was held on Wednesday March 4th, 5 days after the first day of CBI instruction (Friday, February 27th). The time-gap between sessions forced the instructor to take a little detour, and reintroduce the SCOBAs to the learners. In normal circumstances, the instructor would have implemented a 5 to 10 minute question and answer oral review of the use of these didactic models, so we could immediately proceed to the analysis of the song. However, due to the time gap between sessions, the complexity of this approach to instruction, and the general confusion on the learners' part, the instructor decided that more time was needed to grant a more efficient understanding of the SCOBAs. After 15 minutes of instruction, the groups resumed their analysis of the whole song, and tried to find a rational explanation for the choice of verb aspect using the previously distributed and explained SCOBAs (see Appendix E). After the groups had discussed all the verbs in the song, each one of them was asked to focus on a specific paragraph assigned by the instructor which they would have to analyze out loud in front of the classroom. For example, if group one was assigned the first paragraph of the song, they would have to identify all the verbs that appeared in the past. Then taking individual turns (student 1 would analyze verb 1, student 2 would analyze verb 2, etc.), they would have to decide, based on their previous group
discussion, whether an action had to be expressed in preterite or imperfect and verbalize their choice using the SCOBA as a mediational tool to ascertain the grammatical concept of aspect.

It is important to remember that learners were allowed to interact with the SCOBA and other learners at all times during this phase of CBI instruction. Learners would receive immediate feedback from the other groups first, and from the instructor later on, after all the learners had completed the explanation for the rationale behind their tense choice. Julian was an active participant during the group discussion, and volunteered in the feedback phase almost in every instance. However, at this point, he still heavily relied on rules of thumb, and seemed unable to identify neither the lexical aspect, nor the speaker’s point of reference as markers of perfective or imperfective aspect.

There are two other characteristics from this activity, which are relevant for the present study. First, even though the participant was allowed to use the SCOBA for mediation, he and most of the other students relied on rules of thumb to explain their asceptual choices, and almost none of them referred to lexical aspect to justify their explanations. Moreover, the notions of cyclic or non-cyclic verbs were not used appropriately, and they were generally used as a substitute for a rule of thumb (i.e. when the action happens only once in the past equals cyclic event). From a SCT point of view L2 conceptual development is not an instant process. It requires a qualitative change in the way the learner approaches the concept to pull up

23 Mediation on the instructor’s part would always go from the most implicit to the most explicit until the task was solved. The type of mediation used during these types of activities follows the same steps as the one used during the Dynamic Assessment, employed to assess and analyze verbalization data (see table 4.8).
development. Therefore, it makes sense that at this point in time the participant had trouble using the SCOBA as a tool to mediate their performance.

To finish the analysis of this activity I would like to point out that, like Negueruela (2003), the instructor observed that some learners rushed to finish their analysis during the group phase. This may have affected the quality of their individual interventions and analysis, given that these same students were the ones that provided the least amount of feedback to the other groups’ explanations. I hypothesize that this could be due to lack of interest in the topic or lack of mastery of the concept at hand.

The last minutes of the session were devoted to introduce a scenario activity based on Di Pietro’s (1987) strategic interaction approach to language pedagogy. Scenarios allow for the implementation of communicative activity and language reflection in the classroom, and are comprised of three interconnected stages: preparation, performance, and debriefing. Di Pietro argues that scenarios are different to role-playing in that the former include a dramatic element: students have different agendas, and only the learner knows his own role in the scenario. These characteristics provide scenarios with a “communicative meaning-making improvising quality” (Negueruela 2003: 226) lacking in role-playing activities. The session concluded when I was explaining the context of the scenario.

3.6.3.3 Session 3

For homework, the participant, alongside with the rest of the class, was assigned to complete a narration in the past in Spanish by using the appropriate
aspectual verb morphology. The narration at hand was an adapted transcription of the song *El príncipe de Bell-air* (see Appendix G), which happens to be the Spanish version of the theme song of the *Fresh Prince of Bell-air*. I found this activity particularly interesting because: 1) As any good translation, it was not literal; and 2) Events that could be interpreted as cyclic in English, could not be considered that way in Spanish, and vice versa. This activity allowed students to reflect on the importance of the speaker's point of view (and reference) to decide if an action should be preterite or imperfect in Spanish. The discussion of this activity opened the class, and it showed mixed results. On the one hand, there were some learners that decided to translate the English version literally, on the other hand there were others that completed the text based on rules of thumb. Finally, there were some students who attempted to follow the SCOBA (Julian among them).

Once this activity was completed and all the questions were answered, each group received instructions to work on a scenario called *reclamación* (claim). The implementation of scenarios in the classroom always followed the same structure: First, there was a preparation stage in which the learners received instructions about the context and their role in the scenario. In this stage they were allowed to come up with their part in 5 minutes. Once this phase was completed, each group had to perform their scenario out loud and in front of the other students in the classroom, which in turn had take notes regarding their use of the preterite and imperfect tenses. In the last phase, the debriefing stage, the whole classroom gave each group feedback about their use of the preterite and the imperfect in their performance. At this point, the performers had to justify their choices using the
grammatical concept of aspect, and if they were unable to give a satisfactory answer, other members of their group first, other learners in the classroom second, and finally the instructor could offer them mediation to solve the task. This mediation would go from the most implicit to the most explicit, until the problem at hand was solved.

In the scenario reclamación, the context involved a couple of roommates going to the customer service office to complain about the price of their bill. In the store, a costumer service representative helps them at first, but he has to resort to the manager’s help in order to deal with these two unhappy costumers. These four roles were divided as follows:

- **Role A**: The monthly telephone bill has again been much higher than you were expecting. You and your roommate walk to the phone company’s customer service office to try to fix the problem. Once there, you try to convince the representative to give you a discount on your bill. You know that your roommate hates confrontation, and you will be taking the initiative. Your strategy is convincing the customer service representative that you did not make any phone calls last month. You also tell him that this is not the first time that you have this problem: Last year, when you where living in another city the same thing happened, and you got another company to give you a discount. You will not get no for an answer.

- **Role B**: The monthly telephone bill has again been much higher than you were expecting. You and your roommate walk to the phone company’s customer service office to try to fix the problem. Your roommate does not
know that you met someone in Spain and you have been calling this person for the last two months. It is all over now, but you do not want your roommate to find out that you are responsible for making several phone calls unless it is absolutely necessary. Your strategy is to bring up that your phone bill at your old place was higher than this one. You are happy not to get a discount, but if the situation gets out of hand, you are willing to confess that you made those calls.

• Role C: You are a customer service representative at a phone company. You have been instructed to be polite with the clients, but to never give them a discount no matter what their issue might be. The company advices you to find out all the possible information about their problem and then tell them about other cases where the situation was solved without giving a discount. Luckily enough, the company gave you access to several past cases during your training, and you will be able to use those in the conversation. If you cannot convince the clients, you are supposed to call the manager.

• Role D: You are the manager of the customer service at a phone company. The company has recently informed you that due to a miscalculation, they have been overcharging the clients. However, they ask you to keep this situation secret, and deal with upset costumers with the upmost discretion. Your job is to keep costumers happy, and to remind them of the fantastic deal they got when they signed up for service. You should also inform them of how the company invested some of their revenue in health, services and education. If you are not able to convince the client with these arguments,
you have to decide what type of compensation to give them so they do not decide to terminate their contract.

Julian’s group, as well as two others, was able to perform their scenario and complete the debriefing stage. The other group was instructed to perform in the following class session. As for the scenario, it was the first time in the semester that learners were exposed to this type of activity, and there were problems in all of the stages. For instance, during the preparation phase, member of groups 1 and 3 shared their information with one another, which made their performance much smoother, but missed part of the communicative meaning-making improvising quality that scenarios should have. On the performance stage there were 2 main issues. On the one hand, students either found difficult to understand some of the vocabulary and expressions that more advanced learners used at times, or could not come up with an expression, and would refer to English instead. On the other hand, and more relevant for the present study, learners tended to use simple present in almost all of their interactions, even in those where they were supposed to describe past events.

As for the debriefing stage, learners did not provide much feedback to their peers, especially during the first group performance. It is important to keep in mind that the debriefing stage is the most relevant for the present study because it is here when the students analyze aspectual choice and verbalize the reason why an event should use preterite or imperfect. At this point, students had considerable trouble identifying problems regarding the use of the targeted tenses for past events. Julian’s group and the heritage learners’ were the most active during the debriefing
stage. However, while the heritage group mostly resorted to the use of rules of thumb, Julian and two other learners (one of them was a member of Julian’s group) started to use a more semantic (abstract meaning-based reasons) approach following the SCOBAs.

3.6.3.4 Session 4

At the beginning of this session learners were allowed a couple of minutes to review their roles in the scenario reclamación. This last group’s performance and debriefing stages were more similar to the first group’s (Julian’s) than to the other two in terms of lack of organization and overall execution, most likely due to the time gap between sessions. For this reason, the instructor decided to spend the next 10 to 15 minutes of the class going over the didactic charts. However, in this case, learners would be the ones explaining them. The majority of the class seemed to be comfortable discussing the use of the SCOBAs. In spite of that, almost none of them (Julian included) seemed to comprehend the notion of cyclic and non-cyclic events, not to mention identify or use them in context.

After a thorough discussion, we moved into the next activity: a scenario called ¡Castigados! (Grounded!). Since I have already discussed the way roles were distributed in the classroom, I briefly explain here the context of this scenario for the reader. In this situation, two students had the role of parents and the other two, the role of their 19 and 20 year old children. It is the morning after a party and both kids got back home at 4 am, way after their curfew. Learners acting as the children have to explain what happened the night before, the two of them have different
stories. Students acting as parents are to tell them what would happen to them in this kind of situation when they were younger. They also have to give them an example of a specific event similar to the one that their children had just gone through.

Before providing them with their roles, the instructor made special emphasis in: 1) the importance of not sharing their individual roles with their group peers; 2) students should not use the present when describing past events in Spanish, and 3) it was essential that students paid careful attention to their peers’ performance and took notes so that they could provide the other groups with useful feedback in the debriefing stage.

Just like in the previous session, only three groups were able to perform the scenario, Julian’s group being the one that would have to recreate it in the following class. As for ¡Castigados!, there was a significant improvement in all three stages from the previous scenario. In the preparation stage, learners did not share their roles among them. However, the instructor observed that some of the students rushed into their preparation and finished it earlier so they could talk with their peers. During the performance stage, students were especially careful to avoid the present to describe past events. In the debriefing stage, the whole class seemed to be much more active. Not only did they discuss most of the problematic utterances, but they also made the effort to use the SCOBAs, engaging in discussions in Spanish in three occasions when there was a conflictive event. Verbalizations during the debriefing event improved quantitatively, but there were still traces of rules of thumb, especially the “this action only happens once, and therefore it is preterite”,

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and “the event happens several times, therefore it needs to be in the imperfect”. The instructor particularly emphasized the importance of avoiding this type of explanations to describe the grammatical concept of aspect, and I provided them with examples of cases were these rules of thumb did not work.

3.6.3.5 Session 5

At the beginning of this session learners were allowed a couple of minutes to review their roles in the scenario ¡Castigados! Julian’s group did not receive any feedback from their peers during the debriefing stage, which forced the instructor to point out all the forms that they had misused, and then provide them with the necessary mediation (from the most implicit to the most explicit) until the task was solved.

The absence of students’ feedback could be interpreted as either a lack of motivation (students had not warmed up before this activity took place, not enough interest) or as a pointer that evidenced their lack of control over the target concept (they could not find any problems with Julian’s group performance).

After the debriefing was completed, each group went on to discuss the SCOBAs again. Once they had discussed the didactic chart in the groups, the discussion was opened to the whole class. As it had previously happened, some of them had trouble with lexical aspect. However, this time, two groups were able to explain the difference between cyclic and non-cyclic events, and one of them (one of the learner’s in Julian’s group) was able to give concrete examples of their use in
context. The class seemed to respond very well to these groups’ explanations of the grammatical concept of aspect.

At this point, the instructor exposed the class to a new scenario called *Terapia de grupo* (group therapy). There were four different roles: A psychologist in charge of the therapy, a married couple, and their son/daughter. The students in the role of parents had to talk about both general and specific problems and situations that had happened to them in the past. The son/daughter, already living on his/her own in college, had to discuss the things he/she had to cope with while living with them. The psychologist, on the other hand, had to refer to similar experiences that other patients had had, and then offer the family some advice to start solving their marital trouble. As with the previous scenario, the instructor made sure to remind the class that they were not supposed to share their roles, that they should avoid using the present when talking about past events, and that they had to take notes of their peers’ performances.

The outcome of this scenario was the best yet. Learners seemed to have automatized the mechanisms behind this type of activity, and the preparation time needed was much shorter than in the other situations. The performance stage was also smoother, the implementation of aspectual features had a wider range, and learners’ interactions seemed to be more fluid. However, the problems with vocabulary persisted (although at a lower level), and there were some cases where over utilization of the preterite and the imperfect tenses was observed. In the debriefing stage, the participation was also more significant. It is important to remember that in previous scenarios Julian’s group and the heritage learners’ group
used to be the ones that tried to participate the most. In this occasion, participation was more homogeneous and allowed the instructor to distribute the participation among all the groups. At this point, almost all the students were using the concept of aspect to mediate their performance—with more or less success—, and leaving aside the rules of thumb that they had previously relied on.

Before the end of the class the students received a review packet for the upcoming midterm. The packet included a series of activities related to all the grammatical features seen in the classroom up to that point in time (ser and estar, Spanish prepositions, and the grammatical concept of aspect). They had to complete all of them at home and we would go over them in the following class.

3.6.3.6 Session 6

This session was entirely devoted to review the grammatical features that were going to be in the midterm exam. Even though learners were supposed to complete the review packet at home, the class spent the first five minutes of this session reviewing and discussing their answers with their group. Once this part was completed, the class started to go over each one of the activities. Learners were asked to verbally justify their answers for every activity. This created an open debate in the class, where it was observed that:

1. Students, including Julian, seemed to have less difficulty to use Spanish to verbally justify their answers. This was the case not only for the activities related to preterite an imperfect, but also those related to ser and estar, or
prepositions. This was particularly surprising since the last two grammatical notions had been presented using a traditional approach.

2. Even though Julian, and most learners were using the SCOBAs more consistently to mediate their performance in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect, some of them still relied on rules of thumb to explain the use of preterite and imperfect in constructions related to telling age, or time.

The rest of this session continued until all of the activities were corrected. Then there was some time for last minute questions. One of the queries was related to the notion of cyclic and non-cyclic, and was responded with examples provided by one of the students in Julian’s group.

The next session was devoted to the midterm exam. It was also the last class before the Spring recess. They were informed that they would have to undergo a group oral interview the second and third sessions right after the end of the recess.

3.6.3.7 Sessions 7 & 8: Group Dynamic Assessment

As I mentioned in the previous section, as part of CBI instruction the students had to participate in a group oral interview executed in a Group Dynamic Assessment (GDA) fashion, planned to facilitate mediation in the students’ ZPODs in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect. These interviews took place during two different class sessions, two groups being assessed each day (Julian’s group had theirs during the first day). In this section I only analyze Julian group’s performance in the GDA.
The GDA was divided in two parts. In the first part students had to perform the scenario *Problemas de pareja* (couple trouble), and during the second part the instructor asked them questions aimed to trigger an answer using either preterite or imperfect, depending on the question. In *Problemas de pareja* (see Appendix F) there are 4 people involved, and each one has a different role (boyfriend, boyfriends’ friend, girlfriend, girlfriends’ friend). The context of the scenario revolved around a couple that had had a big fight in front of their friends the previous weekend. This confrontation was not an isolated incident, but rather one of many. Both boyfriend and girlfriend meet with their friends to tell them their version of the story. Their friends give them advice based on previous life experiences. Finally, the couple meets and decides whether or not the crisis can be solved. Learners were allowed to provide and receive mediation in the target language at all times during the assessment. The scenario was divided in preparation (10-15 minutes), performance, and debriefing.

In the case of Julian’s group, this part of the assessment was particularly revealing since the group performance was not adequate. During the preparation stage, students shared their roles and prepared their conversations as a team, thus, losing the communicative meaning-making improvising quality of the assessment. During the performance stage, this group did not use the preterite or the imperfect a single time. Not only did the students not notice the fact that they had not used any past events in their scenario, but they also neglected to provide their peers with mediation during the performance stage.
The last part of the GDA consisted, as I mentioned above, on a series of individual questions aimed to trigger the use of preterite and imperfect on the students’ answers. At this point of the test, the learners did not have any problems to use these tenses to respond questions about past events in Spanish. Once again, however, Julian’s group failed to provide any sort of mediation to their peers while solving the task, being the instructor the only person in the room procuring mediation targeted to the students’ ZPOD. The question of what caused such unsatisfactory performance in this particular group remains without an answer. Julian’s group behaved as what Petrovsky (1985) classifies as a “diffuse group” during GDA in which “one person’s success does not determine the success of others’ activity and the failure of one has no effect on the results of others” (1985:81). What makes this situation even more complicated to analyze is that, during class activity, this particular group had no problem giving or receiving mediation to themselves and to other groups. My assessment of the situation is that:

1. There might have been problems with the activity design. Even though learners had plenty of practice working with scenarios, maybe this particular one did not allow for job distribution, or was not as clear, or as easy to understand than the ones that students had seen before.

2. Another possibility is that the pressure of being formally assessed (even though this grade did not affect their grade in the course) interfered with the group’s cohesion and, therefore, affected their overall performance.
Either of these two possibilities, or even a combination of the two, could explain the group’s performance and behavior during the GDA. In the chapter devoted to data analysis I examine the role of CBI instruction in the learner’s L2 conceptual development of the grammatical concept of aspect.

3.6.4 Posttest

The posttest was implemented during the last two weeks of classes. It follows the same steps as the pretest and, therefore, it also collects the same 3 types of data: performance, definition and verbalization data. The verbalization data collected in this last part of the study will allow the researcher to identify potential development, as well as the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect without breaking away from the process of instruction.

3.7 Conclusion

In the present chapter I have discussed Vygotsky’s genetic method of research and instruction, the implementation of a case study research methodology, outlined the research question, explored the concept of aspect as the minimal unit of instruction, discussed the different types of data available, presented a description of the course in which CBI instruction was implemented and a profile of the participant whose data I analyze in the next chapter. I also explained the organization of the study, making a special emphasis in the implementation of CBI instruction in the classroom.

In this chapter I also show that implementing CBI instruction in the L2 curriculum is a feasible task. CBI, as operationalized in the present study, follows
three principles: The grammatical concept of aspect is the minimal unit of instruction; the concept of study needs to be materialized as a didactic tool to foster internalization; and there needs to be verbalization activities with the function of internalization. Throughout the chapter, I have outlined a pedagogical sequence that meets these essential conditions for L2 CBI instruction.

By implementing the discussed approach to research, based on Negueruela (2003), I expect to capture the whole picture of L2 development as a conceptual process. In the next chapter, I discuss in depth how these three types of data complement each other to capture L2 conceptual development from the earlier stages of concept formation, and into internalization.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS: INSIGHTS INTO LEARNER L2 DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

In the present chapter I focus on the analysis of three different types of data connected to L2 development as a conceptual process. The three of them: Definition data of the grammatical concept of aspect, performance data (written production), and verbalization data (recorded as part of the pretest and posttest) were collected before and after the implementation of CBI in a L2 advanced Spanish conversation course. Following Negueruela (2003) I argue that the analysis of these types of data allows for the study of grammatical concepts in their formation. Most importantly, these three types of data are connected to conceptual development in different ways, providing significant and complementary insights to L2 development. The present chapter is organized as follows. In section 4.2 I argue for the use of the grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of analysis and instruction. I explore the present ambiguity in SCT literature in defining a unit of analysis (see Lantolf, 2000; Negueruela, 2003) I also insist on its importance in the study of L2 conceptual development. In the third section of this chapter I explore the grammatical features of the concept of aspect. Then, I discuss the rationale for

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24 This study proposes that a CBI pedagogy mediates between students’ initial understandings of the grammatical concept of aspect, the development of conscious conceptualizations, and students’ written and oral production of preterite and imperfect grammatical forms. Therefore, it becomes apparent there is a need of analyzing definition, performance, and verbalizing data as complementary to ascertain L2 conceptual development.
considering definition data a valuable tool to explain L2 development, and I go over the data analysis procedure for this type of data. In this section, I also explore the conceptual representation of the grammatical concept of aspect. I link it to the learner's own conceptual definitions before and after CBI instruction. In the fourth section of the present chapter I explore the importance of written performance data to study L2 development. In the first part of this section I discuss the rationale behind the data analysis procedure for this type of data. To do so, I provide arguments for the use of such tools to study L2 development as a conceptual process. In the second part of this section I offer specific examples of learner's performance data before and after CBI to propose that conceptual tools are essential in L2 development. This claim is supported by the learner's improvement in the use of formal properties of the target language. In section 4.5 I discuss the third type of conceptual data available in this study: verbalization data. I begin this section exploring the relation of verbalizing with L2 conceptual development. In this section I also discuss the theoretical principles and the rationale behind the data analysis procedure, and I provide examples from the learner’s verbalizations before and after CBI that link verbalizing to L2 conceptual development. I conclude the chapter going back to the initial notion that L2 development, in its mediated connection to instruction, can be explored through three different types of data (definition, performance, and verbalization data), suggesting that a properly organized conceptual instruction may lead to learning first, and development later on.
4.1.1 Notes about abbreviations and transcription conventions

The data analysis in the present chapters includes excerpts from the transcriptions of the learner’s assessment before and after CBI instruction. Whenever Spanish was used during the collection of data, an English translation is provided below. All translations given are literal in order to capture the full meaning of the learner’s production as well as the awkwardness of his Spanish sentences, when relevant. The transcription conventions are adapted from Negueruela (2003, 2008), and they intend to capture particular aspects of the learner's discourse. Indeed, the minimal coding conventions employed in this study relate directly to that goal. Thus, in the transcriptions, words marked in bold indicate coherent use of relevant aspect morphology and underlined words indicate incoherent use of the relevant morphology. Italics are used to indicate that the learner is conveying the information in the target language.

4.2 The concept of Aspect as the minimal unit of analysis

In chapter 3, I discussed the importance of implementing the grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of instruction. In this chapter, I also want to argue for a use of this grammatical concept as the minimal unit of analysis of L2 development. This consideration allows me to study the relationship between instructional activity, concept formation, and L2 conceptual development from its early stages, achieving (deriving in) a better understanding of the learner's L2 development.
Negueruela (2003: 265) discusses the importance of finding an appropriate unit of analysis of the specific object of study to be interpreted, and sets a warning about the dangers of not depicting a clear one in any given object of study. However, SCT is not very concise in its definition of a minimal unit of analysis, despite Vygotsky’s insistence on the importance of establishing a consistent unit of analysis of the human mind. This ambiguity is clear in SCT literature and has brought about a debate among its scholars. Vygotsky (1986) proposes the word as the minimal unit of analysis of verbal thinking. Notwithstanding, Wertsch (1985) explains that other SCT scholars do not accept Vygotsky’s proposal unanimously. Leont’ev (1978), for instance, rejected the word as a unit of analysis, deeming it too psychological, and therefore removed from concrete activity. Instead, he argues for activity, which could be used as the unit of analysis of life. Zinchenko (1985) goes a step further than Leont’ev and proposes that the unit of analysis should be tool-mediated goal directed action.

Cole and Engestrom (1993) debate that activity is the unit of behavior, and not life as proposed by Leont’ev. Of course, it is not the same to have a unit of analysis of verbal thinking, of activity, or of life. For that very reason I align myself with Negueruela (2003: 265) in advocating for the use of different units of analysis coherent with a particular field of study. Negueruela (2003, 2008) argues for the concept as the minimal unit of analysis and instruction to study L2 development as a conceptual process.

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Lantolf (2000:7) indicates that Vygotsky “proposed the word [italics in the original] as this unit, because, in the word, meaning, the central component of thought, and linguistic thought are united.”
Following his rationale, I advocate for the use of the grammatical concept of aspect as the unit of analysis L2 conceptual development in the present study.

As I have argued in chapter 3, in this study, the notion of aspect is not considered metalinguistic knowledge nor a stable concept, but rather the focus of instruction and L2 development. As such, grammatical concepts can be used for learners as cognitive tools for L2 development.

4.3 Definition data

Definition data by itself, as it has been discussed in chapter 3, does not show the whole picture of L2 conceptual development. However, it is argued here that it is complementary to performance and verbalization data (items that will be discussed in sections 4 and 5 of the present chapter) in ascertaining L2 conceptual development. Definition data shows the orienting quality of the concept available for the learner during communicative activity. Valsiner (2001: 87) suggests that being able to fully define a concept does not necessarily translate into a perfect linguistic performance. However, it plays a critical role in guiding the learner’s development of performance ability by showing them the meaning-making possibilities available in the target language.

4.3.1 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis of the learner’s definitions present in this study is based on Negueruela’s (2003) Conceptual Interrelated Feature Analysis (CIFA) to study definition data in relation to L2 conceptual development. A CIFA analysis is divided in 3 stages:
1. Determining the ideal grammatical concept and its definition.

2. Determining the features that conform the concept.

3. Comparing these to the features present in the learners’ definitions.

In the next three sections I analyze the available definition data with a CIFA methodology to outline the relation of this type of data with L2 conceptual development.

4.3.1.1 Establishing an ideal definition of the grammatical concept of aspect

In this section I review the ideal definition of the grammatical concept of aspect that I introduced to the classroom through CBI instruction. This survey is not meant to be an exhaustive review of the grammatical concept at hand, particularly since the focus of the present study is to ascertain the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the concept of aspect. For that reason, I refer interested readers to relevant literature on the topic such as Bull (1965/1884), Bolinger (1991), Whitley (2002) Salaberry (2008, 2000), and Comrie (1976/1998) to mention just a few.

As mentioned in the previous section, learner’s grammatical definitions of concepts do not provide an accurate vision of L2 conceptual development by themselves. They do, however, show the conceptual resources available for a learner in that precise moment, and orient his future activity. It is important to note that a good definition is one that a learner can use as a tool for mediation while participating in a communicative activity, orienting his performance. A good definition of the grammatical concept of aspect in Spanish (the notion behind the use of either preterite or imperfect) does not need to follow word by word the
definition proposed below. What defines the quality of the definition is that it covers its main features. For this study I used Negueruela’s (2003: 284) definition of the concept of aspect as a model for the classroom instruction:

“The notion underlying this grammatical feature [the notion of using preterite or imperfect] is verbal aspect, that is, the perspective the speaker gives to an event or the part or ‘aspect’ of the action that the speaker wants to emphasize in an event: the beginning, the “middle-going” part, the end, or the completion of the action [from a present perspective]. The meaning of aspect can be understood by the conjunction of three factors: lexical aspect of an event (the aspectual meaning that an event has: cyclic or non cyclic), grammatical aspect provided by the verb morphology through different tenses (in Spanish preterite and imperfect), and the establishment of a point of reference.”

It is essential to note that concepts, from a SCT perspective, do not have stable meanings. They are “changing categories where speaking and thinking meet comprised on sense a meaning.” (Negueruela, 2003: 81). Therefore, a certain degree of variation in the learner’s definition data from the pretest to the posttest was expected.

4.3.1.2 Determining the ideal features that form a concept

In this study, the learner’s understandings of the grammatical concept of aspect are compared to basic qualities of the definition proposed in the previous section. According to Negueruela (2003: 286) grammatical concepts are comprised of the following essential features:

1. Explicability or the ability to produce a definition. It shows awareness of the concept.
2. Level of generality: The learner’s definition is based on semantic criteria, instead of functional or perceptual features of the concept. There are two important features that characterize aspectral definitions based on semantic criteria. The learner should be able to identify that verbal aspect—whether lexical or morphological—can be used to emphasize a particular stage of an action (the beginning, its continuity or the ending). The decision to focus in any of these moments in time is made by the speaker, whose point of view will be materialized in the choice of imperfectivity or perfectivity. It is understood that the definition’s semantic value helps learners to recontextualize their definition in a wide variety of tasks related to the grammatical concept of aspect. Perceptual and functional definitions, on the other hand, are grounded on very context-specific cues, which prevents them from being generalized to other situations. A definition is considered functional when it is not based on a systematic-theoretical understanding of the concept, but rather on how the verb is used within a context (e.g. preterite is used to interrupt an action in the past, imperfect to describe habitual actions, etc). Perceptual definitions imply that the appearance of very precise elements in the discourse (expressions of time, certain adverbs) will trigger the use of preterite or imperfect.

3. Abstractness: All the essential features of the grammatical concept of aspect (lexical, establishes a point of reference in time) are present in the learner’s definition.
4. Systematic: The relevant features of the definition are coherently related in the explanation of this concept, which allows for extrapolation of the concept.

5. Independence: It can be used in other contexts, and it depends on the level of generality of a definition.

6. Functionality: The definition is applicable in context, i.e. it can be used to orient activity and discourse. It is heavily related to the abstractness and coherence of the definition.

7. Significance: It shows intentionality and learner’s agency in the linguistic choice of words present in the definition (pronouns, prepositions, etc.).

   The concept has a personal significance for the learner, that is, the learner has made the concept his own.

   In order to determine the value of each one of these features, I use the table 4.1 based on Negueruela’s (2003: 289) own design for the analysis the learner’s conceptual definitions. I consider all of these interrelated categories to analyze the learner’s definitions of the grammatical concept of aspect.
Table 4. 1 Proposed values for each of the proposed features of a grammatical concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES OF THE THEORETICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explicability (Awareness) Ability to explain a concept</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generality (Quality) Definition Based on Criteria that is...</td>
<td>SEMANTIC (Meaning/idea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL (How is it used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PERCEPTUAL (Describes specific properties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abstractness* (Completion of orientation). All essential features are present in definition (See next table)</td>
<td>YES (ALL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOME (Which ones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Systematic (coherence) Relevant features are coherently related in explanation to this concept and to other concepts (taxonomic quality of concept)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Independence (re-contextualization) Concept can be easily recontextualized (Depends on generality #2)</td>
<td>YES (Semantic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOME (functional) Similar contexts of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO (perceptual) Specific to one context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Potential Theoretical Functionality (applicability) Provides a complete orientation and can potentially be applied to orient activity with some coherence and completeness. (Depends on features #3 and #4)</td>
<td>YES (Depends on a yes/some in #3 and a yes in #4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significance (Agency) Evidence of agency in definition: use of pronouns, subject references, target language</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine the level of abstraction of features in the learner’s definition I use table 4.2. I consider abstractness a key factor in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect, therefore, I deem essential the presence of an in-
depth analysis of the features available in that category, to be compared later on with learner's performance and verbalization data.

**Table 4.2 Proposed values for the features that form the abstractness of the grammatical concept of aspect.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. ABSTRACTNESS OF FEATURES</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical (Cyclic, non-cyclic)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a Point of Reference</td>
<td>Marks beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marks end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sees the action as completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action is ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the challenges (and goal) of the present study was to implement a CBI approach to the teaching of aspect in actual classroom time. The section in which the experiment took place had the same assignments (essays, exams, class projects, etc.) as the other sections of Spanish 301, and therefore, the instruction time using CBI was limited by syllabus constrains. The contrast between the preterite and imperfect was the focus of instruction for two and a half weeks, with two hours devoted to classroom explanations of the concept of aspect. As it has been described in chapter three, the rest of the time was divided between group performance and verbalization activities. In addition to this, the participant worked on a class project, and had some homework related to the concept at hand.
4.3.1.3 Learner’s definitions before and after CBI instruction

I turn now to the analysis of the definitions produced by Julian\textsuperscript{26}, the learner whose data I will consider in this case study. I consider his data relevant for this study because of his high proficiency in the target language, and his apparent control of the concept during performance before CBI instruction. Julian was able to formulate his definitions and verbalize his conclusions in the target language from the very first moment. Since SCT sees concepts as non-stable and in constant development, I found very interesting to analyze whether Julian, a very advanced L2 Spanish learner, could experience development in his conceptualization of the grammatical concept of aspect.

In order to obtain the relevant data in this part of the study, the participant was asked to answer the following question in his own words and at two different stages (before and after CBI instruction):

**El Aspecto.** Explica con tus propias palabras la relación entre el pretérito y el imperfecto y describe cuándo y cómo se usa cada uno de estos tiempos verbales. Puedes escribir tu explicación tanto en español como en inglés.

‘**Aspect.** Explain with your own words the relationship between preterite and imperfect and describe when, and how to use each one of these verb tenses. You can write your explanation in Spanish or English.’

In what follows, I show Julian’s answers to this question before and after CBI instruction. I summarize its analysis in the form of tables as shown in the previous section (see tables 4.1 and 4.2). Each table analyzes Julian’s explanations considering the features of the grammatical concept of aspect outlined in section

\textsuperscript{26} Julian is not the participant’s real name. This is the name that I will be referring to throughout the data analysis to protect the participant’s identity.
4.3.1.3. Definition data was part of the pretest and posttest protocols (see Appendix I). It was collected through in-class written protocols where the participant had to explain the notion behind the relation preterite/imperfect (see question above) before and after CBI instruction. Julian’s first definition was collected on 2/13/2009 (three weeks onto the semester) and his second and final definition was collected on 4/29/2009, (a week and a half before the end of the semester to allow time for a subsequent oral interview).

4.3.2 Analysis of the learner’s definitions before and after CBI instruction

Julian’s definition of the grammatical concept of aspect before CBI instruction (2/12/2009):

_Puedo usar el imperfecto cuando estoy describiendo una acción en el pasado que no es completa. Puedo usar el pretérito cuando estoy describiendo una acción completa. Los dos pueden ocurrir en la misma frase, por ejemplo: “Hablaba con mi hermano cuando mi amigo entró en el cuarto”. “Hablaba” es una acción que continúa pero “entró” es una acción completa. En algunos casos especiales, y un ejemplo es con el tiempo, siempre uso el imperfecto con tiempo: “Eran las 11:00”, no “fueron las 11:00”._

‘I can use the imperfect when I am describing an action in the past that is not completed. I can use the preterite when I am describing a complete action. Both of them can happen within the same sentence. For example: “I was talking with my brother when my friend entered the room”. “I was talking” is an action that carries on but “entered” is a completed action. In some especial cases, and an example is
with time. I always use the imperfect with time: “It was [imperfect] 11:00”, instead of “it was [preterite] 11:00”.

Julian’s definition of the grammatical concept of aspect after CBI instruction (4/29/2009):

*El pretérito describe una acción completa en el pasado. El imperfecto describe una acción que no es completa en el pasado. También el imperfecto describe una acción habitual en el pasado. Pero todo de esto depende en el punto de vista del narrador. Si hay un verbo que no es cíclico, siempre uso el pretérito. Por ejemplo, “abrir”. Si el verbo es cíclico, todo depende en el punto de vista del narrador. Si el verbo es cíclico y es algo habitual (“cada lunes mi hermano y yo trabajábamos en un restaurante”) o es una acción que no es completa, según el punto de vista del narrador (“caminaba por el parque”), uso el imperfecto.*

“The preterite describes a complete action in the past. The imperfect describes an action that is not complete in the past. Also, the imperfect describes a habitual action in the past. But everything depends on the narrator’s point of view. If there is a verb that is not cyclic, I always use preterite. For example, “to open”. If the verb is cyclic and something habitual (“every Monday my brother and I worked at a restaurant”) or is an action that is not complete, from the narrator’s point of view (“I walked through the park”), I use imperfect.”

Summary of the analysis of Julian’s definition data:
Table 4. 3 Julian’s analysis of the definition of the grammatical concept of aspect before and after CBI instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES OF THE THEORETICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explicability</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Generality</td>
<td>SEMANTIC / PERCEPTUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abstractness</td>
<td>SOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Systematic</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Independence</td>
<td>SOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Potential Theoretical Functionality</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significance</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. 4 Julian’s analysis of the features that configure the abstractness of the grammatical concept of aspect before and after CBI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. ABSTRACTNESS OF FEATURES</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRETEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical (Cyclic, non-cyclic)</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a Point of Reference</td>
<td>Marks beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marks end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sees the action as completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action is ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the tables 4.3 and 4.4, and in the actual definitions, Julian shows conceptual development at the level of generality, systematicity, and independence and significance after CBI instruction. He also shows some development at the level of abstractness (he is able to mark a point of reference after CBI instruction). However, even after CBI instruction, he is not able to mark
neither lexical nor referential aspect appropriately. In his definition data, on the other hand, the learner seems to be aware of the existence of lexical aspect (expressed in this study as cyclic/non-cyclic). This awareness, however, is not reflected in a coherent understanding or conceptualization of this notion. His understanding of cyclic (as reflected in this type of data) is incoherent with the grammatical concept of aspect, and the examples provided are not connected appropriately to this notion either. Furthermore, it seems to be the case that the learner uses the term cyclic to cover habitual actions in the past (traditional rules of thumb dictate that habitual actions in the past are always marked by imperfect morphology), showing that his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect is still perceptual at some level. Having said that, it can also be observed that after CBI instruction, his definition has a more semantic nature, in that he does not rely as much in perceptual knowledge and rules of the thumb. This is not the case before CBI instruction, where he clearly relies in perceptual knowledge and a rule of thumb to explain that the imperfect is always used to tell time:

*En algunos casos especiales, y un ejemplo es con el tiempo, siempre uso el imperfecto con tiempo: “Eran las 11:00”, no “fueron las 11:00”.*

‘In some especial cases, and an example is with time. I always use the imperfect with time: “It was [imperfect] 11:00”, instead of “it was [preterite] 11:00’.”

After CBI instruction, we can see how the learner’s understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect is much more semantic in nature, prioritizing in his definition the narrator’s point of reference to mark aspect:
El pretérito describe una acción completa en el pasado. El imperfecto describe una acción que no es completa en el pasado. También el imperfecto describe una acción habitual en el pasado. Pero todo de esto depende en el punto de vista del narrador.

‘The preterite describes a complete action in the past. The imperfect describes an action that is not complete in the past. Also, the imperfect describes a habitual action in the past. But everything depends on the narrator’s point of view.’

After CBI, the learner begins to realize that the key for choosing between preterite and imperfect morphology is not the verb, but the narrator’s point of view. It is also apparent that the learner has incorporated the notion of point of reference when he tries to use it to explain lexical aspect, even though his definition data at this point shows that he does not fully understand the difference between cyclic and non-cyclic verbs:

Por ejemplo, “abrir”. Si el verbo es cíclico, todo depende en el punto de vista del narrador. Si el verbo es cíclico y es algo habitual ("cada lunes mi hermano y yo trabajábamos en un restaurante") o es una acción que no es completa, según el punto de vista del narrador ("caminaba por el parque"), uso el imperfecto.

‘For example, “to open”. If the verb is cyclic and something habitual (“every Monday my brother and I worked at a restaurant”) or is an action that is not complete, from the narrator’s point of view (“I walked through the park”), I use imperfect.’
4.3.3 Conclusions

As seen in Julian's definition data, after CBI instruction there was an emergence of a more coherent semantic understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect. However, the qualitative changes in his conceptual knowledge do not show a complete picture of L2 conceptual development by themselves. As seen in Julian’s data, even a very sophisticated notion of a concept may be mere verbalism if it is not contrasted with actual performance in communicative activity. Thus, from a Vygotskyan perspective of conceptual development, this type data must be complemented with performance and verbalization data to actually ascertain L2 conceptual development. In the next section of the present chapter I will show the relevance of the grammatical concept of aspect for improving formal properties of the language in Julian's written performance.

4.4 Data analysis from performance data

In this section I explore the link between written performance data and L2 conceptual development. From a Vygotskyan analysis, this type of data allows the researcher to observe the connection between the learners’ notion of the grammatical concept of aspect as a cognitive tool to orient their performance, helping them produce a richer and more coherent use of the morphological forms. In his conceptual analysis of discourse data, Negueruela (2003) proposes that, when L2 learners develop more sophisticated conceptual understandings, an improvement in their linguistic performance should also be present.
Here I also argue that if the learner’s notion of the concept of aspect becomes functional in its orientation and execution in discourse, the aspectual morphology produced by the learner should be more coherent and of a higher quality after CBI instruction. However, it is important to point out that I am not trying to make a casual relation between definition data and performance data. Learners’ development of conceptual understanding can be reflected in discourse but is not directly related to their ability to define the grammatical concept of aspect. Negueruela (2003: 339) argues that a learner’s “definition [data] cannot be used to explain linguistic performance. Definition data are valid to study L2 development of concepts, and cannot be used to explain ‘behavior’, i.e. performance since learner’s understandings do not determine activity but orient activity.” As I have mentioned in the previous sections of the present chapter, in order to ascertain L2 conceptual development we need to observe definition, performance and verbalization data.

In Slobin’s (1996) notion of ‘thinking for speaking’,27 grammatical categories are notions that are only internalized through language, “and have no other use except to be expressed in language. They are not categories of thought but categories of thinking for speaking” (91). Following this idea, Negueruela (2003: 341) argues that mood, aspect, or tense are then categories of thinking for speaking. If aspect is a category of thinking for speaking, then it is implied that learners’ L2 conceptual development of the grammatical concept of aspect can be observed in connection to performance data by assuming that, in a particular moment in time,

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27 Slobin’s notion of thinking for speaking refers to the quality that thinking assumes in the activity of speaking. In other words, the process of thinking (when speaking) is determined by the affordances and constraints offered by a language.
the language that L2 learners use, reflects the present state of their thinking for speaking.

Analyzing written performance data before and after CBI instruction, and departing from the notion of thinking for speaking, allows the researcher to observe the extent to which the use or lack of use of certain forms may be connected to the development of the grammatical concept of aspect in the learner’s thinking for speaking. In the next section I will analyze Julian’s performance data before and after CBI instruction precisely from this perspective.

### 4.4.1 Data analysis procedure for performance data

For the analysis of performance data I consider Julian’s emergence and coherent use of preterite and imperfect morphological forms in a written text before and after CBI instruction. These narratives are based on a comic strip taken from the activity *El accidente de Miguel* (Miguel’s accident) in the Spanish textbook *Dos mundos*, 5th edition (2002: 422). The aforementioned comic strip shows a chronologically ordered sequence of events in which a kid riding his bike is run over by a car. This graphic story is complemented with a vocabulary word bank, which serves as a tool for the participant’s individual mediation.\(^\text{28}\)

In order to assess the learner’s potential improvement between the pretest and the posttest (before and after CBI instruction), I recall the number of times that the different forms of preterite and imperfect are used coherently and accurately in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect. That is, I observe the learner’s

\(^{28}\) See Appendix H
emergence and consistent use of the verbal morphology related to aspect in Spanish. I will show Julian’s written performance before and after CBI instruction and summarize its analysis in the form of tables. In each table I tally uses of morphological forms that are inaccurate or accurate (preterite and imperfect conveying coherent aspect in its use). I use Table 4.5 to account for the (coherent and incoherent) uses of preterite and imperfect verbal morphology in written performance before and after CBI instruction. Julian’s first written performance protocol was collected on 2/13/2009 (three weeks onto the semester) and his second and final written performance protocol was collected on 4/29/2009, (a week and a half before the end of the semester to allow time for a subsequent oral interview).

**Table 4.5 Assessment of the participant's aspectual morphology in performance data before and after CBI instruction.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretest / Posttest:</th>
<th>Total # of aspectual utterances:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Performance: Narrative</td>
<td>Preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preterite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of utterances:</td>
<td>Number of utterances:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pret.</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.4.2 Learner’s performance before and after CBI instruction**

In what follows, I show Julian's written performance in Spanish (see English translation right after each narrative in the L2) before and after CBI instruction. I
also point out his choices of aspectual morphology, and then I proceed to the
analysis of these sets of data, and their connection with L2 conceptual development.
Please, refer to section 4.1.1 for the transcription conventions. Here is Julian’s
written performance before CBI instruction (2/13/2009):

John un estudiante de Amherst montaba en bicicleta cuando un coche chocó con él. La velocidad del coche era muy alta. Después del accidente había mucha sangre y el conductor del coche, Tom, no tenía teléfono celular. Otra persona, que vio el accidente, telefoneó a la policía. Algunos minutos después una ambulancia llegó al sitio del accidente. Los médicos que llegaron en la ambulancia ayudó a John y lo tomó a un hospital. En el hospital, John tuvo dos cirugías y recuperó. Conté a la policía que Tom no se dio cuenta a la señal de Stop y, por eso, el coche chocó con John. La falta de este accidente fue totalmente con Tom.

‘John, an Amherst student was ridding his bike when a car crashed into him. The car’s speed was very long. After the accident there was a lot of blood and the driver of the car, Tom, didn’t have a cellular phone. Another person that saw the accident called the police. Some minutes later an ambulance arrived at the accident site. The doctors that arrived with the ambulance helped John and took him to the hospital. At the hospital, John had two surgeries and he recovered. I told the police that Tom did not realize the stop sign, and that is why the car crashed into John. The accident’s fault was totally with Tom.’
Table 4. 6 Analysis of Julian’s written performance before CBI instruction

Pretest

Written Performance: Narrative    Total # of aspectual utterances: 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Imperfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of utterances:</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What follows is Julian’s written performance after CBI instruction (4/29/2009):

*Pedro, un estudiante de UMass, Amherst, montaba en bicicleta por la mañana cuando un coche chocó contra él. El conductor de este coche, John, estaba hablando por su teléfono celular cuando lo atropelló a Pedro. Su velocidad era más alta que la ley permite. Había mucha sangre en la escena del accidente. Otras personas vieron el accidente y una mujer, Rona, llamó a la policía por su teléfono celular. Pero John, el conductor del coche, no quería que Rona llamara a la policía. Él no quería ninguno problema contra la policía porque era un empleo del gobierno. Algunas otras personas trataron de ayudar a Pedro. Sin embargo, la policía respondió a la llamada de Rona y llegaron con la ambulancia. John tenía mucho miedo y declaró su inocencia pero la policía no lo creyó. Todas las otras personas dijeron la verdad a la policía y por eso la policía lo arrestó a John.*
Pedro, a student at UMass, Amherst, was riding his bike in the morning when a car crashed into him. The car driver, John, was talking to his cell-phone when he ran over Pedro. His speed was higher than the law allows. There was a lot of blood at the scene of the accident. Some other people saw the accident and a woman, Rona, called the police with his cell-phone. But John, the car driver, did not want Rona to call the police. He did not want any problems with the police because he was a government employee. Some other people tried to help Pedro. However, the police answered Rona’s call and arrived with the ambulance. John was very afraid and declared his innocence but the police did not believe him. All of the other people said the truth and that is why the police arrested John.

Table 4. 7 Analysis of Julian's written performance after CBI instruction

Posttest:

Written Performance: Narrative Total Utterances: 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preterite</th>
<th>Imperfect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of utterances:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperf.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pret.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.3 Analysis of the learner's performance before and after CBI instruction

In relation to the concept of aspect, Julian does not show significant improvement in the use of preterite and imperfect morphology when comparing his written performance before and after CBI instruction. As can be recalled from
section 4.3.2, before CBI instruction, Julian’s understanding of preterite was based on the notion of completion, and his understanding of imperfect was diffuse and based on the concept of incompletion and some rules of thumb (used when telling time, an action stopped by another action). After CBI instruction, Julian’s understanding of preterite and imperfect displayed a movement towards a more semantic idea based on the notion of aspect. However, his definition after CBI instruction did not show complete internalization of the concept of aspect since there were still traces of perceptual understanding (using the imperfect for habitual actions), and he couldn’t master lexical aspect (he is unable to make a clear distinction between cyclic and non-cyclic verbs).

By observing tables 4.6 and 4.7 it becomes apparent there has not been improvement in terms of morphological accuracy, from the pretest (2/13/2009) to the posttest (4/29/2009). Before CBI instruction, preterite (N: 13) and imperfect (N: 4) are used accurately 92.3% and 100% of the time respectively. After CBI instruction, preterite (N: 11) is used accurately 100% of the times, and the imperfect (N: 9) 66.6%. Whereas his total aspectual accuracy in the first written protocol is of 94% (16 out of 17 aspectual utterances), Julian’s total aspectual accuracy in the last written protocol is of 85% (17 out of 20 utterances). The small number of utterances appearing in the pretest and the posttest is not sufficient to
make any significant claims regarding Julian’s control over aspectual morphology.

Figure 4.1 Comparison of Julian’s total written utterances before and after CBI instruction.

The available data does not fully reflect the quality of the discourse used by the learner and the improvement when considering specific written samples, especially because the number of utterances was not high enough to make the percentage of accuracy relevant. To illustrate Julian’s aspectual performance I now provide and analyze some examples from his written performance data.

The (1) in the transcriptions indicates that the examples are taken from the written performance before CBI instruction (pretest):

(1.a) Otra persona, que *vio* el accidente, *telefoneó* a la policía.

‘Another person, that saw the accident, called the police.’

(1.b) *La velocidad del coche* *era* muy alta. Después del accidente *había* mucha sangre y el conductor del coche, *Tom, no tenía* teléfono celular.
The car's speed was very long. After the accident there was a lot of blood and the driver of the car, Tom, didn’t have a cellular phone.’

In the following examples number (2) indicates that the utterances come from the written performance after CBI instruction (posttest):

(2.a) Otras personas vieron el accidente y una mujer, Rona, llamó a la policía por su teléfono celular.

‘Some other people saw the accident and a woman, Rona, called the police with his cell-phone.’

(2.b) Su velocidad era más alta que la ley permite.

‘His speed was higher than the law allows.’

(2.c) Pero John, el conductor del coche, no querría que Rona llamara a la policía.

‘But John, the car driver, did not want Rona to call the police.’

In the case of the preterite, Julian seems to follow his own notion of aspect, as he always uses preterite morphology when a verb marks a completed action. This notion of completeness is very likely to affect his interpretation of the tense needed for the verb ver in 1.a. He uses the preterite vio when he should have used the pluscuamperfect, since the action is completed but happens before the act of calling the police. However, this error could also be interpreted as the learner seeing both actions as being completed at the same time, in which case, both could be marked with preterite morphology. That is the case in 2.a, where the learner observes a series of completed actions (vieron, and llamó), and he considers them to be in preterite tense, illustrating his control over morphological aspect.
In 1.b, he accurately uses 3 verbs consecutively in three simple sentences (*era, había, and tenía*). Even though he uses the imperfect tense coherently and marks morphological aspect accurately, the structure of these three sentences remains very simple (subject + verb + complements). In 2.c, after CBI instruction, as well as in another example produced after CBI instruction, he chooses an incorrect verbal morphology (that of the conditional), where he should have used imperfect morphology.

Another example of inaccurate use of verbal morphology occurs in 2.b. Julian uses the present tense with the verb *permitir* (*permite*), but he should have resorted to imperfect morphology instead (*permitía*), since he was describing an action that was not completed in the past. This particular view of the use of imperfect verb morphology—to mark incomplete actions in the past—is not present in his definition data either, which could explain the incoherent use of the verb *permitir* in the previous example.

### 4.4.4 Conclusions

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the present study understands L2 development as a conceptual process, and this heuristics emerge from a Vygostkyan perspective on concept development. The relation between form and meaning in language development according to Vygotsky (1986) is based on the fact that, when the form is almost ready to emerge in speech, the concept begins to emerge as well. Of course this view on language development implies that the emergence of form marks the beginning of L2 development as a conceptual process.
Therefore, and as discussed by Negueruela (2003), it seems essential to implement in the L2 classroom an instruction based on teaching conceptual meanings that foster the emergence of forms in performance. However, given the amount of data available in the present investigation, there is not sufficient evidence to imply that CBI instruction affects written performance in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect.

Before CBI instruction Julian had already became a sophisticated L2 user after several years of traditional grammatical instruction based primarily on rules of thumb. His conceptual understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect was not complete, being incoherent at times (as can be seen in section 3 of the present chapter), but, in the available data, he was able to use most grammatical features accurately. However, it would be interesting to observe how he uses the features of the grammatical concept of aspect in all possible contexts of use, and not only in the cases present in his performance data. I tackle this issue in the next section devoted to the analysis of verbalization data.

4.5 Verbalization data

This section concludes my data analysis on the development of the grammatical concept of aspect in the L2 classroom as a conceptual process. In previous sections of this chapter I analyzed the role of CBI instruction in promoting the emergence of a sophisticated understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect in L2 learners. I also discussed the role of aspect as a category of thinking for
speaking in fostering the use of more coherent and accurate morphological forms and grammatical features in spontaneous written performance.

In this section, I explore the role of verbalizing as a conceptual tool in the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. To do so, I analyze Julian’s verbalization data collected during two oral interviews with the course instructor in DA format before and after CBI instruction. Verbalization data allows me to study conceptual development in its formation, and fills in the gaps left by definition and performance data in relation to the learner’s L2 conceptual development of the grammatical concept of aspect.

While definition data showed Julian’s awareness of the concept in its orienting quality, performance data displayed the learner’s control over the morphological form of the concept of aspect in its executive potential. An analysis of his verbalization data allows me to explain L2 conceptual development as a dialectical connection between understanding and execution. I propose here that a concept is fully internalized when used as a tool and result and, even though L2 development can be partially explained through the analysis of the learner’s definition and performance data (see sections 3 and 4 of the present chapter), internalization can only be fully shown through verbalization data.

In my view of L2 development as a conceptual process, verbalizing in communication plays an essential role in the process of internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. For that very reason, verbalization activities used in the classroom (see chapter 3) and in the data collection (before and after CBI instruction) were specifically designed to allow for mediation in the definition,
execution, and conceptualization of the grammatical concept of aspect. I argue that conceptualizations in the context of verbalizing, or the dialectical links between conceptual definition and execution, are a key factor to explore and explain L2 conceptual development. In the next section, I discuss the notion of conceptualization in the context of L2 conceptual development, as well as its connection to verbalization.

4.5.1 Verbalizing and its connection to L2 development

Verbalizing in CBI instruction is not only a key element to organize L2 instructional activity, but it is also a valuable tool to ascertain L2 development. According to Negueruela (2003: 408) in the use of verbalization activities as a pedagogical technique, the main conditions for the internalization of theoretical concepts are present. The grammatical concept of aspect works as the minimal unit of instruction and is materialized in a didactic model that can be used as a tool for internalization. Verbalizing allows the learner to access the concept and use it as a tool for understanding through conceptualization (Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006).

During conceptualization, the dialectical relationship between the learner’s understanding and control over the grammatical concept of aspect can be observed. In the next sections, I will show how in conceptualization the learner is able to use the concept as tool and result, breaking the dichotomy between definition and performance. While conceptualizing, the learner uses the grammatical concept of aspect to mediate his understanding and create new meanings based on the same concept. At the same time, this concept becomes tool and result closing a circle in
constant evolution as the learner’s awareness and control over the concept changes over time. Figure 4.2 illustrates the dialectical relationship between understanding and performance that leads to conceptualization.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.2 Dialectical relationship between awareness and control over the concept of aspect that leads to conceptualization.**

Understanding L2 conceptual development as conceptualization implies that definition and performance data are not two independent variables, but rather dependent variables that rely on one another to foster L2 conceptual development. Definition data shows awareness and performance data shows control over the concept, which makes them both markers of L2 development. However, if considered independently they do not present conclusive evidence of internalization. To truly show a complete picture of L2 development, definition data (understanding) should parallel performance data (production), that is, the learner’s discourse should be backed up by his understanding and vice versa; he should be able to create meaning departing from his notion of the grammatical
concept of aspect. In this study, conceptualization is seen as the learner’s ability to establish a dialectical relationship between understanding and production of the grammatical concept of aspect during verbalization activities. Consequently, I analyze the learner’s verbalization data from two different perspectives. On the one hand, I consider his ability to use the concept as a mediational tool to interpret his own performance, and on the other hand as the learner’s ability to create meaning departing from his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect.

4.5.2 Data analysis procedure for verbalization data

In this section I analyze Julian’s verbalization data collected at two different times: The first one before CBI instruction on 2/17/2009, and the second one after CBI instruction on 5/01/2009, right before the end of the semester. Verbalization data was collected in the form of two recorded interviews using a Dynamic Assessment (DA) approach to assess spontaneous conversation between the learner and the instructor. The interviews, which include the verbalization activities presented in this section, took place three days after the definition and performance data was collected. I chose DA to gather verbalization data for a variety of reasons. First of all, from a Vygotskyan perspective of L2 development, learners do not interact directly with the world, but through physical and psychological tools. If mediation is a key factor in the learner’s L2 development, then it seems pertinent to use a method of assessment that allows for the use of mediation and takes into account a mediated view of the human mind.
Second of all, in CBI instruction as implemented in this study, learners were allowed to interact with one another as well as with the instructor in the classroom when solving different tasks related to the grammatical concept of aspect. Verbalization, performance and definition activities in CBI instruction were all social in nature (see chapter 3 for an in depth description of the development of the CBI instruction in the classroom). Individual concept formation and L2 development was both self and socially mediated all through CBI instruction, therefore, it seems to be appropriate to use a type of assessment that captures L2 conceptual development while allowing mediation in the very process of concept formation and development.

Lastly, Negueruela & Lantolf (2006: 86) define verbalization as “the intentional use of overt self-directed (i.e. private speech) to explain concepts to the self”, and for that very reason in Negueruela (2003, 2008), his verbalization data was collected in the form of home recordings. In these tasks, students were instructed to solve several tasks related to the concepts treated during instruction, so these could be explained out loud to the self with the only mediation of the conceptual charts. In what is arguably the biggest contribution of the present study, I consider verbalizing in dialogic interaction, and explore the role of mediation in the process of problem solving and concept formation through verbalization activates in social communication. Using Dynamic assessment, I explore learner’s concept formation, and potential L2 conceptual development through the use of mediation aimed to the learner’s ZPOD.
Consequently, I consider Julian’s potential L2 conceptual development in verbalization data attending to three different factors:

1. Shifts in the quality of the mediation needed to solve a task.
2. Value of the learner’s theoretical concept as a tool for internalization.
3. Ability to conceptualize the grammatical concept of aspect.

In the next subsections I explore the learner’s internalization from those three different but complementary ways of ascertaining L2 conceptual development. By analyzing the quantitative changes in the mediation needed to solve a verbalization task before and after CBI instruction, I was able to study the changes in the learner’s agency and control over the concept of aspect. On the other hand, analyzing the value of the learner’s theoretical concept as a tool for internalization allows me to observe the concept in its formation, as well as to understand how the learner uses the concept as a tool for solving a task. I use a variation of Negueruela’s (2003) theoretical Concept as Tool for Internalization (CTI) to analyze verbalization data from this perspective (see Table 4.11). Lastly I discuss the notion of conceptualization in verbalizing and its relation to L2 conceptual development. At that point, I provide some specific examples from Julian’s verbalization data. Then, I discuss that they show traces of L2 conceptual development.

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29 To this respect, Lantolf and Thorne (2007: 212) argue that “evidence of development in a new language is taken to be changes in control over the new language as a means of regulating the behavior of the self and others in carrying out goal-directed activity”. While their claim is a valid way to define development, from my perspective this only explains the process of development and internalization of theoretical concepts partially. Precisely due to this reason, I analyze other types of data that would show the whole picture of L2 conceptual development.
4.5.2.1 Shifts in the quality of the mediation needed to solve a task as markers of L2 conceptual development.

One of the characteristics that makes Dynamic Assessment a unique method of evaluation is that it does not make a distinction between instruction and assessment. Rather, it sees them as two sides of the same coin, and advocates for their inseparability in the process of L2 development (see chapter 2).


This hierarchy of moves, from implicit to explicit, is common to interventionist approaches to DA, and generally used with every participant to preserve the standardization of the procedure. However, in this study mediation was aimed to the learner’s ZPOD with the intent to promote the participant’s L2 conceptual development while being assessed. Therefore, the interactionist approach to DA performed during the interviews was based on Vygotsky’s and Luria’s work in the ZPD, and parallels in many ways the arguments made by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994), Poehner (2005), or Anton (2009). That is, the nature of the mediation used during DA was determined by the dialogic interaction between the learner and the mediator during each interview. For that very reason, not every form of mediation
listed above was used during DA sessions, rather they were selected by the researcher according to the type of mediation he deemed necessary for the learner to solve a particular task. The interviewer/mediator was free to skip around different forms of mediation and offer it based on the learner’s reciprocity.

With this in mind, I created a table to record the types of mediation needed by the learner to solve a task during the verbalization activities. Seven categories are considered in table 4.8, which range from the most implicit to the most explicit types of mediation needed. In this way, the more tasks the learner could solve with no mediation (category #1) the higher his level of L2 conceptual development in relation to the grammatical concept of aspect.

**Table 4.8 Classification of the types of mediation needed to solve a task used in the present study.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome depending on the type of mediation needed to solve a task</th>
<th>Morph. Correct</th>
<th>Morph. Incorrect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Solves the task with no mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Solves the task through self-mediation, during the reading stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Solves the task through self-mediation, after the reading stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Solves the task with implicit mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Solves the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Unable to solve the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.5.2.2 Learner’s verbalizations before and after CBI**

In what follows, I discuss Julian’s conceptual development of the grammatical concept of aspect based on this learner’s shift on the quantity and quality of mediation needed to solve a task in relation to the notion of aspect. To do so, I
interpret his verbalization data before and after CBI instruction and analyze it with the help of tables 4.9 and 4.10 I also analyze excerpts from the verbalization activities. In the examples provided from the verbalization data, the ‘J’ implies that Julian was talking at the time, and the ‘I’ indicates when the instructor is interacting.

Both verbalization activities, before and after CBI instruction, proceed as follows. First, the learner reads out loud his written performance data (see section 4.4.2 in the present chapter for more details about this type of information). He is allowed to take notes and make changes while reading. During the second phase of the DA, he is asked to make any changes that he considers necessary. After that, the learner is asked to solve a series of conceptual tasks related to this performance data. In this phase, the instructor provides the learner with mediation when he considers it necessary. It is important to remember at this point that the goal of DA is not problem solving, but to observe what the student is able to do both independently and with mediation. In SCT it is considered that what a learner can do today with the help of a more expert individual, he will be able to do in the future independently.

In the last part of the DA, the student is asked to read aloud his definition data. Then, he is asked to make changes and provide examples of his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect. At this point, the instructor provides mediation when he considers it necessary. The goal of this activity is to ascertain whether or not the student is able to conceptualize the grammatical concept of aspect, that is, whether or not he is able to use the concept as a tool and result (i.e.
awareness over the concept –definition- that leads to control –execution of the form-).

**Table 4. 9 Julian’s verbalization data before CBI instruction (2/17/2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome depending on the type of mediation needed to solve a task</th>
<th>Morph. Correct</th>
<th>Morph. Incorrect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Solves the task with no mediation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Solves the task through self-mediation, during the reading stage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Solves the task through self-mediation, after the reading stage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Solves the task with implicit mediation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Solves the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Unable to solve the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the verbalization activity before CBI instruction, on 2/17/2009, Julian reads his narrative out loud (see section 4.4.2 in the present chapter), and takes notes. Then, he is asked to provide an explanation and make changes, when necessary, on a number of verbs. In his case, the learner was asked to explain the use of a total of 7 verbs (montaba, chocó, tenía, ayudó, tomó, recuperó, and dio,). In three of these instances, there was a problem in the chosen verb morphology (ayudó, tomó, and recuperó), and in the other four cases he had used the verb coherently (montaba, chocó, tenía, and dio). In all cases he was asked to provide a rationale for the use of preterite and imperfect, and he was procured with the necessary mediation to solve the given task. The (1) in the following transcriptions indicates that the examples are taken from the DA before CBI instruction (pretest),
and the (2) indicates that the examples come from the DA after CBI instruction (posttest):

(1.a)

I: ...Sí, por qué, ahm... ¿Por qué utilizas en el primer verbo, en la primera línea, montaba? ¿Cuál es tú...?

‘Yes, why, ahm... Why do you use in the first verb, in the first line, ride, what is your...?’

J: Sí...

‘Yes...’

I: ¿Cuál es tu explicación para ello...?

‘What is your explanation for using it...’

J: Porque no es una acción terminada, o completa...

‘Because is not a finish action, or completed...’

I:... O completa, aha. Encontes, ¿por qué utilizas chocó?

‘...Or completed, aha. Then, why do you use run crashed?’

J: Ah, chocó porque, ah, era un accidente, fue una, una acción completa.

‘Ah, crashed because, ah, it was an accident, it was a completed action.’

I: Aha...

‘Aha...’

J: Ah... Montar en bicicleta era algo que [pauses] continuó...

‘Ah... Riding a bike was something that [pauses] continued...’

I: Aha...

‘Aha...’
J: ... Pero cuando él, ah, montaba en bicicleta...

‘But when he, ah, was riding his bike…’

I: Aha...

‘Aha…’

J: ... El coche chocó con él. Es algo ah, [pauses] no hay más.

‘... The car crashed into him. It is something, ah, [pauses] no hay más.’

I: Sí.

‘Yes.’

J: Es algo como, pero cuando montaba en bicicleta...

‘It is something like, but when he was riding his bike…’

I: Aha...

‘Aha…’

J: ...es algo que, ah [pauses]… quiero decirte en español pero no sé si no... puedo tener algunos problemas... [laughs]

‘... It is something that, ah [ah] ... I want to tell you in Spanish but I don’t know if I won’t... I can have some problems... [laughs].

In 1.a, he was asked about the form *montaba*, for which he had produced the right form of the verb *montar*, and was able to provide a coherent explanation based on his definition of aspect at the time without external mediation. However, in the case of *chocó*, even though he marks preterite morphology correctly, he has trouble justifying his answer and needs a lot of self-mediation. His justification is related to his definition of aspect, which at the time was incomplete and not fully semantic in
nature (in opposition to the control that he shows over the aspectual notion of imperfectivity).

(1.b)

I: Perfecto. Ah... ¿Por qué dices “Tom no tenía teléfono celular”?

‘Perfect. Ah... Why do you say Tom didn’t have a cell phone?’


‘[Pauses] Because it wasn’t something in a moment.’

I: Aha.

‘Aha.’

J: No es, [que] no tuvo teléfono celular este, este momento, es que él no tenía teléfono celular...

‘Is not [that] he didn’t have a cellular phone this, this moment, it is that he didn’t have a cellular phone.’

I: Aha.

‘Aha.’

J: Ni en el pasado, ni en este momento, ni en algunos momentos pasados, ni en algunos momentos en el futuro.

‘Not in the past, not in this moment, nor in some past moments, nor in some moments in the future.’

In 1.b, when he is describing tenía, Julian appropriately uses the concept of aspect to mark imperfectivity. However, at this time his reasoning inconsistencies, and turns into a more incomplete semantic explanation of the concept of aspect. It
can also be observed the amount of self-mediation used in order to solve the task in a more or less appropriate way.

(1.c)

I: Muy bien. Ah, después... ah, “los médicos que llegaron en la ambulancia ayudó a John”.

'Very well. Ah, then... ah, the doctors that arrived in the ambulance helped [singular] John.'

J: Sí.

'Yes.'

I: ¿Los dos en pretérito?

'Both in the preterite.'

J: Sí.

'Yes.'

I: mmm, vale, eh, ayudó, ¿por qué ayudó?

'mmm, ok, ah, helped [singular], why helped?

J: Porque, ah... [pauses] en este...

'Because, ah... [pauses] in this...

I: ... ¿Quién ayudó? ...

‘... Who helped [singular]? ...’

J: ... en este ejemplo es, ah, ah, ayudaron

‘... In this example is, ah, ah, helped [plural].’

I: Ok.

'Ok.'
J: Sí, hay un, hay un problema ahí.

'Yes, there is, there is a problem there'

I: Y después, ¿Tomó?

'And then, took [singular]?'


Thank you.'

In the cases of ayudó and tomó in 1.c, the problem lies in the morphology used for both verbs. Even though the learner knows that the two actions are completed, he fails to convey the correct form. In both cases he should have used 3rd person plural, but instead, he chose to use 3rd person singular. In addition to that, he also misses the number agreement between subject and verb. In the case of ayudó, the learner is able to solve the task and use ayudaron after the instructor provides him with implicit mediation. In the case of tomó, he does not need implicit mediation and solves the task through self-mediation right after solving the problem with a very similar form: ayudó. By analyzing these cases, one can venture that the learner shows number morphology is in his ZPOD, but has not been fully internalized yet.

(1.d)

I: Ahm, bueno, entonces, “en el hospital John tuvo dos cirugías y recuperó”.

'Ahm, well, then, at the hospital John had two surgeries and recovered.'

J: Sí.

'Yes'
I: Aha, eh, bien, ah…

‘Aha, ah, well, ah…’

J: John recuperó en el pasado porque es una acción completa.

‘John recovered in the past because it is a complete action.’


Aha. Well, the only thing is that recuperar is a reflexive verb. It is to recover [one self].

J: Ah, se recuperó.

‘Ah, he recovered [himself].’

The case of recuperó in 1.d is a little different. The learner uses the notion of aspectual completion to explain the use of the preterite in that case. However, he does not know that the verb recuperar is reflexive in this particular case, missing the necessary reflexive pronoun se. The learner mediates himself to solve the task related to the grammatical concept of aspect satisfactorily, but he is not able to provide a completely morphologically accurate form of the verb recuperarse in the preterite.

(1.e)

I: Vale, vale. Ahm, después “conté a la policía que Tom no se dio cuenta”… ahm, ¿por qué “dio”? 'Ok, ok. Ahm, then I told the police that Tom did not realize’… ahm, why realized?’

J: Porque era en un momento…
‘Because it was in a moment…’

I: Aha...

‘Aha...’

J: ... el momento antes del accidente. El no se dio cuenta...

‘... The moment before the accident. He did not realize...’

I: Aha...

‘Aha...’

J: ... al señalizada. No es algo que puede durar por algunos minutos.

‘At the signalization. This is not something that can last for minutes.’

I: Aha...

‘Aha...’

J: ... porque la velocidad del coche fue tan alta...

‘Because the car speed was so high...’

I: Sí...

‘Yes...’

J: ... que no hay mucho tiempo. Necesita ser una acción completa.

‘that there is not a lot of time. It needs to be a complete action.’

In 1.e, the last example within this set of data, Julian provides an explanation of his use of no se dio cuenta. His account for this case seems to reveal that he is using aspect to understand preterite and imperfect correctly. Even though he apparently uses the notion of aspect to mediate his answer, his reasoning at this time is somehow semantically inconsistent, and denotes the use of a rule of thumb from a textbook approach to teaching. The learner argues that the event should be
in the preterite, and that the action happened in a short period of time because of the car’s high speed. In his approach, speed is the element that suggests a perfective aspect. Even though his answer is based on a semantic perception, it is not the right one, which makes his answer incorrect.

At this point I turn my attention to Julian’s verbalization data after CBI. In table 4.10 I show the types of mediation that Julian needed to solve each one of the tasks, and I indicate whether that mediation was successful or not.

Table 4. 10 Julian’s verbalization data after CBI instruction (5/1/2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome depending on the type of mediation needed to solve a task</th>
<th>Morph. Correct</th>
<th>Morph. Incorrect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Solves the task with no mediation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Solves the task through self-mediation, during the reading stage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Solves the task through self-mediation, after the reading stage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Solves the task with implicit mediation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Solves the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Unable to solve the task with explicit mediation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After CBI instruction, on 5/1/2009, the quality of the learner’s performance data improves noticeably (see section 4.3), and therefore Julian needs less mediation during the verbalization stage in order to solve the tasks related to the grammatical concept of aspect. At this point, only 4 verbs were analyzed, the ones where the learner failed to mark aspect accurately (choca, permite, querría, and querría). The learner solves the task in three of those cases (choca, querría, querría)
by changing the morphology while he is reading his performance data out loud. In
the case of permitir, he is able to successfully complete the task after receiving
implicit mediation by marking the verb with imperfect morphology (permitía) and
coherently explaining, with the help of his definition, the reason why he has chosen
imperfect, as can be seen in 2.a:

(2.a)

I: Vale, eh, no, está muy bien. Sólo una pregunta. En la línea 4, dices, eh, “su
velocidad era más alta que la ley permite”. ¿Por qué permite?
‘Ok, ah, no, It’s ok. Just a question. In line 4 you say, ah, his speed is higher
than the law allows. Why allows?’
‘Uhm... [pauses] Oh! Allowed! [Laughing]. I am sorry’
I: Ok, vale, eh, ¿por qué permitía? ¿Por que imperfecto y no pretérito?
‘Ok, alright, ah, Why allowed? Why preterite and not imperfect?’
J: Es una acción que, que no es completa en el pasado. Todavía puede ocurrir en
el presente.
‘It is an action that is not complete in the past. I can still occur in the present.’

The learner’s need for mediation from the instructor decreases from the first
set of verbalization activities to the second. It can also be observed that he is able to
mediate himself in a more productive way, being capable of correcting
morphological mistakes on the reading stage, and with no mediation from the
instructor. The learner shows L2 conceptual development from the first set of
verbalization data to the second, in the fact that he is able to solve tasks individually that he was unable to complete without mediation before. Julian’s verbalizations exhibit a qualitative development in his understanding and control over the grammatical concept of aspect. In figure 4.3 it can also be observed that the mediation needed to solve verbalization tasks decreased from the pretest to the posttest.

![Figure 4.3 Julian’s qualitative shift in his need for mediation to solve a task related to the grammatical concept of aspect before and after CBI.](image)

4.5.2.3 Verbalizing: The value of the learner’s theoretical concept as a tool for internalization.

From a Vygotskyan perspective, the key to understanding L2 conceptual development is studying the quality of the concepts (from the earliest stages of their formation) as mediational tools for development (understood here as awareness.
and control over the features of the grammatical concept of aspect). As discussed earlier in the chapter, both definition and verbalization data are valid tools to analyze L2 conceptual development. However, if considered individually, they are unable to show the whole picture of development. Development is about creation and transformation through activity, and for that very reason, I argue here that the whole picture of development can only be seen through verbalization data complemented with definition and performance observations.

In the previous section I discussed how mediation, in the context of verbalization through DA, is a valuable tool to ascertain a learner’s potential development. In this section I also argue that verbalizing also shows the true value of the learner’s theoretical concept as a tool for internalization. Verbalizing allows the learner to show the levels of abstraction and control over the grammatical concept of aspect necessary to create new meanings in the context of activity. It is precisely in conceptualization when the learner is able to show the extent to which a concept has been internalized.

I hypothesize here that verbalizing in the context of activity can be a mediational tool for the learner to achieve conceptualization (i.e. conscious awareness of the grammatical concept of aspect that leads to control over the forms). Therefore, full internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect can be observed when the learner is able to use the grammatical concept of aspect to mediate his performance and create new meanings, that is, when he is able to conceptualize (see figure 4.2).
In order to analyze the value of the learner’s theoretical concept as a tool for internalization and its connection with conceptualization, I use Negueruelas’s (2003: 423) *Concepts as Tools for Internalization* (CTI). This system of analysis of verbalization data does not differ much from the *Concept Interrelated Analysis* (CIFA) used to analyze definition data in section 3 of the present chapter. Both systems are meant to study the same unit of analysis of L2 conceptual development: the grammatical concept of aspect. Furthermore, the implementation of this heuristic system to analyze the quality of concepts in verbalization helps maintaining the integrity of the data analysis procedure. CTI allows me to study the quality of the learner’s verbalizations while using the grammatical concept of aspect. This analytical tool pays special attention to the core features of a concept: Semantic generality, complete abstraction, and systematic coherence. In table 4.11, I show the features and values that the grammatical concept of aspect has as a tool for internalization in verbalization.
Table 4. Proposed values for theoretical concepts as tools for internalization. Based on Negueruela (2003: 423).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURES OF THE THEORETICAL CONCEPT OF ASPECT AS A TOOL FOR INTERNALIZATION IN VERBALIZATION</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Usability (Control) Ability to use the grammatical concept to explain the object of learning activity</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality of tool use (connected to tool use) Explanation of feature based on criteria that is either semantic, functional or perceptual.</td>
<td>SEMANTIC (Meaning/idea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL (How is it used)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PERCEPTUAL (Describes specific properties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Completeness of explanation* (Connected to abstractness). Semantic explanation based on the grammatical concept of aspect (See next table)</td>
<td>ALL (Semantic based on concept)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOME (based on meaning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO (functional or perceptual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coherence of reasoning (systematic) Reasoning coherently related to the solution of the task</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Versatility (re-contextualization) Concept is a psychological tool that can be recontextualized (Depends on #2)</td>
<td>YES (Semantic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer to different contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SOME (functional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Similar contexts of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No (perceptual or incoherent reasoning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific to one context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Functionality (correct solution to task) Explanation coherently applied to orient task and arrived at correct solution</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significance (Meaningfulness) Evidence of meaningfulness of thinking in explanation: Reasoning (semantic) vs. justification (functional or perceptual)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptualization of the grammatical concept of aspect, however, does not only imply the learner’s ability to use the concept to mediate the analysis of his own performance during verbalization activities. Conceptualization also requires a level
of abstraction in which the awareness and the quality of the concept available allow
the learner to create and control new meanings based on the features of the concept.
For that reason, I deem essential to pay special attention to the completeness of the
learner's explanations and his ability to connect them to new meanings. Table 4.12
shows the proposed value for the features that conform the completeness of the
explanation as well as the degree of abstraction the learner exhibits while
verbalizing the grammatical concept of aspect.

Table 4. 12 Proposed values for the features that conform the completeness of
the explanation while verbalizing the grammatical concept of aspect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Completeness of explanation*</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical (Cyclic, non-cyclic)</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a Point of Reference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks beginning</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marks end</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees the action as completed</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action is ongoing</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In what follows I show data pertaining to Julian’s verbalization data to
exemplify the changes on this learner's level of abstraction before and after CBI
instruction. Then, I use CTI to analyze Julian’s use of the concept of aspect as a tool
for internalization during his verbalization, paying special attention to the changes
in his level of abstraction.
4.5.2.4 Conceptualizing during verbalizations and its relation to L2 conceptual development.

As a part of the verbalizing data, and once concluded the analysis of their performance data, learners were asked to read out loud their written definition of the concept of aspect and reflect upon it. They were allowed to make changes, provide examples, create new meanings, or simply add information that they interpreted was necessary to complete the definition that they had previously provided. In this part of the process, no explicit mediation was offered by the instructor, only answers to move the narration along. In what follows, I show Julian’s reaction after reading his definition before CBI (see Julian’s definition in section 4.3.2). The I indicates the intervention of the instructor and the J points out that Julian was talking at the time:

I: Vale, ¿hay alguna más, alguna cosa más que quieras añadir a esta definición?
‘Ok, is there some more, something more that you would like to add to this definition?’

J: Umm… [pauses] Si puedes darme algunas horas para pensar, a lo mejor, pero en este momento no [Both laughing].
‘Uhmm… [pauses] If you can give me some hours to think, maybe, but not right this moment [both laughing].’

I: Vale, no me parece bi… no, es una buena, es una buena conceptualización, pero…
Ok, I don’t think that… no, it is a good, it is a good understanding but…’

J: ¿Hay problemas con esta…
'Are there problems with this...?'

I: No, no, está bien, está bien. Podría ser un poco más completa quizás pero, no, está muy bien.

‘No, no, it is ok, it is ok. It could be a little more complete maybe, but no, it is very good.’

J: Sí.

‘Yes.’

In this conversation we can observe how the learner’s understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect has not been modified from the time it was written. The interviewer offers him the chance to make changes or add new meanings, but Julian seems to be perfectly happy with his definition. Consequently, the instructor offers some implicit mediation, which makes the learner doubt his own definition. Julian does not act upon the implicit mediation neither of the times that it is offered to him. Instead, at the end of the conversation, he explains that that there is nothing else that he could add to his definition. This shows that learner’s understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect is functional, and even after verbalizing it, there is no awareness of the lexical features of the concept. In other words, in his understanding of the notion of aspect he is not able to use verbalizations as mediational tools to articulate the concept in examples at this point.

His reaction after reading his written definition (see section 4.3.2) out loud after CBI is a little different:
I: Sí, vale, pero, entonces para ti, [después de hablado leído tu definición en voz alta] ¿cuál es para ti la diferencia entre el pretérito, o la relación entre el pretérito y el imperfecto?

‘Yes, ok, but for you, [right after having read your definition out loud] what is the difference between preterite, or the relationship between preterite and imperfect?’

J: [Pauses] Uhm, depende en el punto de vista del narrador...

‘[Pauses] Uhm, it depends on the narrator’s point of view’

I: Aha...

‘Uhu...’

J: El imperfecto describe una acción habitualmente, una acción que no [pauses], hasta ahora no...

‘The imperfect describes an action habitually, and action that doesn’t [pauses], until now doesn’t.’

I: Aha

‘Uhu...’

J: ... No está terminado...

‘... It's not completed'

I: Aha...

‘Uhu...’

J: TerminADÁ [capitalized to mark emphasis].

‘ComplETED [capitalized to mark emphasis].’

I: Sí.
'Yes.'

J: Y, eh, el pretérito es una acción completa.

'And preterite is a completed action.'

I: Aha…

'Uhu…'

J: Hay algunos [pauses] hay algunos casos cuando necesitamos usar el pretérito y algunos cuando necesitamos usar el imperfecto, según esta clase…

‘There are some [pauses] some cases when we need to use preterite and some when we need to use imperfect, according to this class…’

I: Sí…

‘Yes…’

J: ... por ejemplo, cuando hay verbos que no son cíclicos...

‘...For instance, when there are verbs that are not cyclic…’

I: Sí…

‘Yes…’

J: ... son cíclicos y cuando hay verbos no cíclicos...

‘...That are cyclic and when there are verbs non-cyclic…’

I: Sí…

‘Yes…’

J: ... Por eso si quiero decir que, abrí, la puerta, no puedo decir “abría” la puerta porque es una acción completa no hay un…

‘That’s why if I want to say that, I opened [preterite], the door, I can’t say opened [imperfect] because it is a complete action. There is a…’
I: Aha, ¿siempre?
‘Uhu, always?’
J: [pauses] ¿Para mí?
‘For me?’
I: Aha.
‘Uhu.’
J: No, no siempre...
‘No, not always...’
I: ... ¿Por ejemplo? ...
‘... For example? ...’
J: Puedo decir, ah, según está clase...
‘I can say, uh, according to this class...’
I: Aha...
‘Uhu...’
J: ... abrir la puerta es “abrió” la puerta, pero...
‘... to open the door is opened [preterite] the door, but...’
I: No siempre...
‘Not always...’
J: No siempre, pero, ah, por ejemplo si quiero decir “mientras abría la puerta oí un explosion”, por ejemplo.
‘Not always, but, uh, for instance, if I want to say “while I was opening the door I heard [preterite] an explosion” for example’.
I: Sí, sí, sí. Pero, en, en el esquema también ves que la, que aunque [el verbo] sea cíclico, si la acción, si se ve la acción como continua, puede ser imperfecto.

‘Yes, yes, yes, in, in the graphic one can also see that the, that even though [the verb] is cyclic, if the action is seen as ongoing, it can be imperfect’.

J: Sí...

‘Yes...’

Looking at Julian’s verbalization data after CBI, the first thing that calls for attention is not only the quantitative, but the qualitative jump in his verbalizations. The change is significant in relation to the verbalization data before CBI (see tables 4.13, and 4.14) but it is even more significant if compared to his definition data. In this verbalization, the learner is able to achieve levels of abstraction that he was not capable to reach before. He is able to distinguish lexical aspect and to exemplify correctly the different uses of cyclical verbs attending to the speaker’s point of view at the time (see example with the verb abrir). To do this, he still needs some mediation to understand that one can use the imperfect with cyclical verbs, which points to the importance of DA procedures in conceptual development. At this point, he is also able to identify a specific point of reference in the past as well as marking the end of an action (although he is still unable to use preterite in verbs that mark the beginning of an action). If we look at table 4.13, it seems apparent that there has been an improvement in semantic generality and complete abstraction in his verbalizations before and after CBI (points 2 and 3 in the table), which are two of the core features that a theoretical concept should have.
Table 4. 13 Julian’s control over of the grammatical concept of aspect in verbalization before and after CBI instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNER’S USE OF THE CONCEPT OF ASPECT AS A TOOL FOR INTERNALIZATION IN VERBLIZATIONS</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRETEST 2/17/2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Usability</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quality of tool use</td>
<td>FUNCTIONAL/PERCEPTUAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Completeness of explanation*</td>
<td>SOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Coherence of reasoning</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Versatility</td>
<td>SOME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Functionality</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Significance</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important observation in Julian’s verbalizing data is his ability of abstraction of the grammatical concept of aspect (see table 4.14). Julian shows in his verbalization after CBI awareness and control over the grammatical concept of aspect, which is linked directly to L2 development. He is able to conceptualize about the grammatical concept of aspect, using it as tool and result, which is argued here as a key aspect for the internalization of concepts.

Table 4. 14 Julian’s analysis of the features that configure the completeness of the explanation during verbalization activities before and after CBI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Completeness of explanation*</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRETEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical (Cyclic, non-cyclic)</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes a Point of Reference</td>
<td>Marks beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marks end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sees the action completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action is ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.3 Conclusions

This section concludes my analysis of the learner's verbalization data. At the beginning of the present dissertation, I stated my intention to research upon, and eventually determine the role of verbalizing as a mediational tool for the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. Verbalizing in the context of communication, as seen in Julian’s data, plays a key role in ascertaining the potential development of the grammatical concept at hand. Verbalizing is the mediational tool that connects thinking and speaking, allowing the learner to reach the necessary level of abstraction to complete a task that he would not be capable of completing otherwise. Furthermore, verbalizing is not only a useful tool for the researcher, who is able to observe the concept in its formation, but it is also the dialectical glue that unifies the learner's understanding and performance through conceptualization. In this type of activity, the learner is able to reflect upon his own performance through his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect, using the concept as tool and result. Lastly, verbalization activities allow the learner to reflect upon his understanding of a concept through performance, helping him reach levels of abstraction that he had not exhibited during the definition or the written performance phase. For all these reasons, I conclude that verbalizing as a mediational tool plays a key role in the learner's potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect.
4.6 Conclusion

In this section I finish my analysis of Julian’s data of L2 development as a conceptual process. Throughout this chapter, I have analyzed three different types of data (definition, performance, and verbalizing) and observed their individual role in the study of L2 development as a conceptual process, more specifically in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. I have argued that, even though each one of them is able to show potential L2 development in their own way, these three types of data are actually complementary.

If definition and performance data point that a learner has more awareness and control over the concept, it is reasonable to assume that there is L2 development of the grammatical concept of aspect. However, the evidence presented by these two types of data alone cannot possibly fully explain L2 development. Definition data by itself can be seen as just metalinguistic knowledge, in other words, mere verbalism. Performance data, on its own, also present partial evidence and regardless of its shape, it may also be seen as mere formalism on the learner’s part.

To fully explain L2 conceptual development from a Sociocultural perspective, we need to see how the learner uses the concept as a tool to pull up development. It is also necessary to observe how he uses his understanding of the notion of aspect to enhance his performance, how he connects the concept with the grammatical feature. Verbalization activities show how the learner uses the grammatical concept of aspect to improve his awareness (understanding) and control (performance) over the L2.
In this chapter I have argued for the use of the grammatical concept of aspect as the minimal unit of analysis, exploring the present ambiguity in SCT literature to define a unit of analysis. I have also explored the grammatical features of the concept of aspect, and discussed the rationale for considering definition data a valuable tool to study L2 development, by analyzing the pertaining data. In addition, I have argued for the importance of performance data in the study of L2 development, discussing the rationale for incorporating this type of data to the research of L2 development as a conceptual process, even though the data available was insufficient to draw any conclusions. I ended this chapter with the analysis of the available verbalization data. I explored the relation between verbalizing, L2 conceptual development, and the theoretical principles behind the data analysis procedure for this type of data. To do so, I provided examples from the learner's verbalizations before and after CBI, and I linked them to conceptualization and L2 conceptual development. I would like to conclude the present discussion with the notion that, as seen in this chapter, L2 development as a conceptual process needs to be explored through definition, performance, and verbalization data.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

Throughout this study I have explored the role of verbalizing as a mediator in the potential L2 development of the grammatical concept of aspect. Following the pedagogical approach to study L2 development as a conceptual process proposed by Negueruela (2003), I also discussed the implementation of CBI instruction in the L2 classroom to teach aspect as the minimal unit of instruction for preterite and imperfect.

In terms of analysis I used a clinical analytic approach, which has its roots in Vygotsky’s (1978) genetic method of analysis, to interpret learner performance in three complementary, and dialectically connected types of L2 conceptual data. Taking into account the case study design implemented in this dissertation, I presented and analyzed data from one of the learners that participated in the study, which provided some critical information to observe the role of verbalizing in L2 conceptual development and the understanding of L2 development as a conceptual process.

The goal of this chapter is twofold. On the one had, while it further expands conclusions, implications and findings of the present study, it also aims to offer a set of recommendations for future research in the current landscape of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. On the other hand, this chapter is intended to stimulate new research by suggesting ways to expand and improve the
present and past research studies that attempted to integrate CBI instruction in the L2 classroom to foster L2 conceptual development through verbalization activities. The present chapter (or dissertation for that matter) is not seen as a conclusion, but rather a call for continuity of research in this field.

As mentioned before, this study represents a detailed report of the implementation of CBI instruction in the L2 classroom to teach the grammatical concept of aspect and to analyze the role of verbalizing in the development of L2 grammatical concepts. As described in chapter 2, very little work has been done on L2 learning and development from a CBI perspective, although the appearance of recent studies (Ferreira, 2005; Gánem-Gutierrez & Harun, 2011; Negueruela, 2003, 2008; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006; Swain et. al., 2009, 2010; Yañez-Prieto, 2008) suggests that it is becoming an area of interest in both Applied Linguistics and CBI instruction, amplifying the knowledge base in the field of Spanish L2 learning. The present study is inspired by Negueruela (2003) and argues that CBI instruction is a feasible tool to foster L2 learners’ conceptual development. With that in mind, the present work contributes to L2 CBI literature by implementing CBI instruction and analyzing the role of verbalization as a mediational tool to foster L2 conceptual development in an advanced college student of L2 Spanish.

Following the work initiated by Negueruela (2003), in this study I implemented Vygostkyan theoretical principles, research methodology, and pedagogical practice to understand L2 conceptual development in all of its complexity.
In the next section I review the evidence that supports my previous claims. I reproduce the research question that guided the present study to help framing the discussion, and making special emphasis on how this question was explored and the findings derived from its analysis. In the following sections I turn my attention towards the study’s design, data analysis, and address the limitations of the present study.

This final chapter is organized in five sections. Section two reviews the findings, contributions and relevant conclusions emergent from this study. Section three explores the limitations of the present study. In section four I outline in possible directions for future research on L2 development as a conceptual process from a SCT perspective. Finally, section five adds some personal reflections on the role of the learner, the teacher, and the process of instruction in L2 development as a conceptual process.

5.2 Review of Findings

At the beginning of the present study I set myself to explore the role of verbalizing as a mediational tool for the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect. My answer to the research question posted in chapter 3 can be summarized as follows:

1. What is the role of verbalizing as a mediational tool for the potential internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect in this case study?

Learner’s verbalizations proved to be a key factor to ascertain L2 conceptual development, as well as to foster the internalization of the grammatical concept of
aspect in the learner’s case. As can be seen in the available data, verbalizing allowed Julian to perform beyond his level of ability at the time, and to use the concept to mediate his understanding and performance. Julian’s verbalizations before and after CBI instruction help to illustrate how he used the grammatical concept of aspect as a mediational tool to solve problems, and as a conceptual basis that oriented his aspectual choices.

L2 development in this study is understood as a 3 piece puzzle that proceeds as a conceptual process “where form and meaning need to develop both in their quality and in their dialectical connection to each other” (Negueruela, 2003: 462). Verbalizing is precisely the tool, which allows to dialectically connect form and meaning to pull up development. Julian’s definition data before and after CBI instruction shows a qualitative improvement in that his understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect seems to be more semantic after CBI; however, even after the implementation of this type of instruction, his internalization of the concept is far from being complete. He is aware of the existence of lexical aspect, but it is clear that he does not fully understand grammatical and lexical aspect, given that the examples he provides for cyclic and not cyclic events are not coherent with these notions. If we were to analyze his definition data alone, it would be clear that, even though there has been some development from the pretest, Julian has not internalized the concept of aspect. However, if we attend to his verbalization data, the picture is quite different. Using verbalization as a tool for mediation in the context of DA, Julian is able to achieve the necessary level of abstraction to explain
the grammatical concept of aspect, a (conceptual) complexity that was not entirely conveyed by his previous (aspectual) definition.

At the level of performance, Julian’s data does not fully show his actual level of conscious conceptual development, nor does it inform us of the rationale behind his choices. During verbalization, the learner uses the grammatical concept of aspect, up to the extent that he is aware, to reflect on his choices and improve his performance to levels that he was not able to achieve through plain performance before. Verbalizing allows the learner to access the concept in performance to mediate his activity. This is particularly clear in the present study when the learner mediates himself to change his written narrative while verbalizing it (i.e. reading it out loud in this particular case). It seems clear from Julian’s data that verbalizing is a mediational tool that connects thinking and speaking, allowing the learner to reach the necessary level of abstraction to complete a task that he would not be able to complete otherwise.

The fact that the learner in this case study showed a capacity to conceptualize the grammatical concept of aspect in the L2, as evidenced by his verbalization data, is a key element in our understanding of development from a SCT perspective. This data illustrates Vygotsky’s (1986) argument that the goal of instruction should be to render the invisible visible. After CBI instruction the participant in this study also showed improvement in his performance and understanding of the grammatical concept of aspect. But perhaps, the defining characteristic of L2 conceptual development was his ability to create new meanings.
through the concept of aspect. That is, his use of the concept as tool and result during the verbalization activities after CBI instruction.

For Negueruela (2003) the principle for understanding development from a genetic perspective is mediated activity, and more specifically, “the use of the concept as tool for learner understanding” (457). In the present study, I would like to go a step further and follow the Vygotskyan notion that development itself, rather than evolutionary is a revolutionary process (Negueruela, 2008), which in turn implies not only awareness and control of the concept, but also abstraction and creation of new meanings, i.e. being able to use the concept as tool and result. Development as a revolutionary process can be seen in the form of conceptualization in the verbalization stage, when the learner uses the concept to mediate his understanding (awareness), and performance (control) to create new meanings.

In terms of assessment, verbalizing gives the researcher the opportunity to ascertaining learners’ L2 conceptual development from a new, and more complete standpoint. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, development in this study is a three piece puzzle that can only be solved through the analysis of every type of available data. Definition and performance data help the researcher to establish a diagnosis of the learner’s current development. Verbalization data allows the researcher to analyze the multiple layers that constitute the notion of development and foresee the learner’s potential L2 conceptual development. In other words, it allows the researcher to materialize a prognosis of the learner’s potential L2 conceptual development. To summarize, verbalizing as seen in the
present study affects research and development in different manners: On the one hand, it allows the researcher to observe the whole picture of L2 conceptual development, and on the other hand, it is a mediational tool that empowers the learner and allows him to reach levels of abstraction that he would not be able to reach through plain performance or definition alone.

5.3 Limitations of the Present Study

Regardless of the positive and potential implications of the findings reported in the previous section and in chapter four, other potential methodological issues became apparent during the implementation of the present study and in the stage of data analysis.

Even though the approach to instruction and data analysis has its roots in studies such as Negueruela (2003) or Poehner (2005), the implementation of CBI in this Spanish classroom led me to create new methods of analysis, pedagogical and assessment tools adequate to the challenges posed by this method of research and instruction. In this line, Vygotsky\(^\text{30}\) (1978: 58) argues that: “In general, any fundamentally new approach to a scientific problem inevitably leads to new methods of investigation and analysis.

The development of new methods that are adequate to the new ways in which problems are posed requires far more than a simple modification of previously accepted methods.” Due to the experimental nature of the present study and the focus on the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the grammatical

\(^{30}\) In Negueruela (2003: 467).
concept of aspect, new ideas emerged during the design of the study, as well as while it was being conducted. As a consequence, the sets of data available in the study are not as complete as one would like them to be.

In future studies, verbalization data should be collected with greater consistence than in the present study. For instance, even though ethnographic notes are a great way to describe longitudinal studies, perhaps it would have been a good idea to videotape the sessions where CBI instruction was conducted. This would have allowed me to observe concept formation in verbalizations during social interaction. Given the premise that SCT understands that L2 development proceeds from interpersonal to intrapersonal through mediated activity, and that the genetic method of research advocates for analyzing concept formation and its development, videotaping classroom interaction would have allowed me to explore in greater detail the role of verbalizing in the internalization of the grammatical concept of aspect.

Another issue that came up during the implementation of the present study was the way in which learners interpreted activity during the sessions related to group dynamic assessment (GDA). As seen in chapter three, even though learners had been exposed to different scenario activities aimed to the development of the grammatical concept of aspect all throughout CBI instruction, this session was not successful in implementing DA procedure. After reflecting on this issue, it is my hypothesis that GDA, as operationalized in the present study, could be problematic for a variety of reasons.
First, this was the first time that learners were videotaped while performing a scenario activity, and it was during a session labeled as GDA. Even though this session was not considered towards their final grade in the course, the fact that the word “assessment” was present in the description of the session, could have had affected the students’ attitude towards the activity by fostering individualism, and thus, compromising the social nature of the task. In addition, it was the first time that the students performed alone and with a camera in the classroom, a fact that could have very well affected their performance as well as the ecological validity of the GDA session.

Second, the scenario at hand was designed to allow for division of labor and inter-student mediation. Learners were expected to each interpret a role that would allow them to interact with other learners in the past in the context of that particular scenario (see Appendix F). Given the misinterpretation of the task, one could argue for problems in the design of the activity, or in its explanation before the preparation stage. Either of these possibilities, or even the both of them combined could explain the group’s performance and behavior during the GDA. A complete redesign of this type of session should be considered in future research.

From a pedagogical point of view, the didactic models designed and implemented to teach the grammatical concept of aspect (see Appendix E) are still a work in progress, and more research needs to be done for the creation of adequate didactic charts that help the learner materialize and internalize the grammatical and lexical features of the concept of aspect. To this respect, the work of Yañez-Prieto (2008) creating new SCOBAs for each one of the grammatical concepts covered in
her study represents a good example of the direction that future designs should follow. In my study I adapted Negueruela’s (2003) SCOBAs for CBI instruction, modifying them as needed (see second SCOBA in appendix E). However, a clearer, more visual approach to Bull’s (1965) interpretation of lexical aspect in the line of Yañez-Prieto’s (2008) didactical charts for materialization of concepts may have been more effective during CBI instruction.

There are two other issues that I consider worth reviewing in relation to the implementation of CBI instruction in the present study. First SCT considers that instruction has a key role in learners’ L2 conceptual development (i.e. learning precedes development). Therefore, properly organized instruction may lead to L2 learning first, and L2 conceptual development later on. The implications of such statement are multilayered, but here I am only going to consider the one that affects this study: Curriculum design. In this course a CBI approach was implemented to teach the grammatical concept of aspect, but the other concepts were taught following the standard course syllabus. Learners were reluctant to CBI instruction at first, and by the time they had gotten used to work with this approach, we had to move into the next topic.

L2 conceptual development in SCT is a complex process that needs to be preceded by organized instruction. Therefore, it seems to be essential to organize the course syllabus around concepts that will help learners develop their agency in the L2. Unfortunately, that was not possible in this study, but it should the next step in the implementation of a CBI approach in the L2 Spanish curriculum.
The last issue that affected the pedagogical implementation of CBI in this course was the rush of some students to finish in-class activities to resume a different activity (talking to a peer, etc.). Negueruela (2003) reported the same problem. However, he solved it by assigning his verbalization activities as homework. Given the social and collaborative aspect of the verbalizations analyzed in the present study, Negueruela’s solution did not fit this study’s framework. For that reason, it would be advisable to review this problem in future studies, so time for CBI instruction may be managed better.

From a research point of view, the implementation of a case study methodology in this dissertation allowed the researcher to study in depth issues such as learning processes and strategies, the nature of individual L2 written and oral development, as well as social and affective aspects of learning and development in the classroom. However, scholars such as Duff (2008, 2012), and Johnson (1992) discuss that one could argue from a hypothetic-deductive perspective that there is an implied difficulty to generalize the findings of one participant to other cases. Due to the scope and research question of the present study, I decided to implement a case study methodology as a tool to collect and analyze, in as much depth as possible, data from an advanced Spanish L2 learner.

A defining characteristic that makes SCT different from other approaches to second language acquisition is the way in which it defines a person. According to Negueruela (2003: 456) “the person is a socio-historical being whose consciousness arises in the social plane through the construction of meaning in concrete material activity.” Roebuck (2000: 79), in her analysis of activity in SCT discusses that
individuals “participating in the same task are necessarily involved in different activity, since they bring to the task their unique stories, goals and capacities.”

Taking into account how SCT sees the person in the context of activity, I advocate for the use of case study methodology to study/analyze the individual and a *multiple case methodology* (Duff, 2008) to study L2 conceptual development in groups of people engaged in activity. In this approach generalizability is based not on studying the variable in many subjects, but on studying one subject in detail.

### 5.4 Directions for Future Research

Observing the relatively small but increasingly growing literature on L2 CBI instruction and verbalizing (see Swain and colleagues *languaging agenda* in chapter 2), several areas of research need to be followed in order to increase our understanding of L2 development as a conceptual process as well as our pedagogical practices. In a recent paper, Lantolf (2011) proposes the following lines for future research:

1. Division of labor in the L2 classroom.

2. Extend the scope of CBI beyond grammar and into fields such as pragmatics, figurative language, and the interface between language and culture (i.e. *languaculture*).

3. The role of educational praxis in the restructuration of developmental processes.

I find Lantolf’s proposals convincing, especially looking at the evolution that the field has gone through over the last couple of decades. Notwithstanding, in this section I would like to discuss points one and four, as I find them especially relevant for the present study.

As I mentioned in the previous section, I find division of labor in the L2 classroom a promising area for more research. Lantolf & Poehner (2007: 85) report that both Vygotsky (1998) and Feuerstein (1988) were interested in the creation of a collective ZPD in the classroom. Bruner (1984: 94) points out Vygostky’s interest in observing the role of the ZPD in a collectivist society, “the idea is a fusion of the idea of collectivism and of the role of consciousness”. He adds that “the ZPD is a direct expression of the way in which the division of labor expresses itself in a collectivist society. It involves not only sharing of knowledge but of consciousness, albeit a historically shaped consciousness. Those who ‘know’ more, those who have ‘higher’ consciousness share it with those who know less, who are less developed in consciousness and intellectual control”. This share of knowledge and consciousness (mediation in Vygotsky’s words) would be the key for the development of higher mental functions. Petrovsky (1985) also argues that division of labor in activity-mediated communities fosters development.

This notion of becoming part of a collective (and constantly evolving) ZPD was also proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991) through the model of apprenticeship and the notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) in communities of practice. The function of LPP in communities of practice is transforming a newcomer (apprentice) into a full member of a community (master) through limited
and controlled participation that will eventually lead to development, legitimation and a movement towards the center of the community (mastery). Lave and Wenger (1991: 110) imply, however, that classroom settings cannot be communities of practice “rather than learning by replicating the performance of others or by acquiring knowledge transmitted in instruction, we suggest that learning occurs through centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community.” After seeing this debate it seems to be the case that division of labor is an area of interest for SCT researchers. The question for the future of how to implement successfully division of labor in the L2 classroom in a way that it fosters learners’ conceptual development still needs to be fully answered, especially after observing the unsuccessful application of GDA in the present study.

My second observation is related to Lantolf’s (2011) fourth proposition for future research linked to Slobin’s (2003) framework for thinking-for-speaking. It seems more relevant in the context of the present work to discuss the role of thinking-for-speaking in verbal thinking than discussing its relevance in McNeill’s (2005) speech-gesture synchronization. In this study I observed the role of verbalization in the internalization of a grammatical concept in an advanced Spanish learner.

As mentioned in the findings, I could observe how verbalizing in his L2 allowed this learner to restructure the way he viewed the grammatical concept of aspect and showed understanding and control over this concept during complex grammatical activities. Lantolf (2011: 28) reports that Ushakova (1994), after extensive research in Russia, argued that L2 learners are not likely to develop the
capacity to use an L2 to mediate mental functioning, even when they can use it in social interaction. Lantolf (2011: 28) also reports that Centeno-Cortés & Jiménez-Jiménez (2004) found that L2 speakers (even advanced learners) were unable to use their L2 to mediate their online thinking to resolve complex tasks. Even when they were able to maintain L2 private speech, speakers could not complete the given tasks. Another finding was that if learners switched to their L1 in its psychological function, they were much likely to complete the task.

These two studies reported by Lantolf (2011) are relevant to the present study, and especially in relation to Julian’s data. One of the most relevant findings of the present study is that verbalizing allowed Julian to solve complex tasks related to the grammatical concept of aspect. And while he was allowed to use his L1 at any point, after CBI he only used his L2 as a tool for mediation when solving the assigned tasks. Based on Julian’s performance after CBI instruction, I advance the following question: Is it possible for advanced L2 learners to develop the capacity to only use their L2 to mediate their verbal thinking during complex tasks? The scope of the present work does not allow me to explore this topic, but it should be pursued in future research to broaden our understanding of L2 development as a conceptual process as well as our pedagogical practices.

5.5 Final thoughts

Even though there is still much research to be done in CBI instruction and the role of verbalizing in L2 conceptual development, this approach to instruction seems to be a helpful tool for the internalization of conceptual categories,
grammatical and other types (pragmatic, metaphorical, rhetorical). From this work, I want to encourage L2 instructors to become researchers and practitioners in their everyday practice. As L2 researchers and instructors, we need to ask ourselves if traditional approaches to L2 instruction are enough to peak our students' curiosity, and more importantly, to pull up L2 conceptual development. We need to create an environment where learners are enthusiastic, passionate and aware of the learning process. A learning environment where learners engage in significant, and goal-oriented activity class after class.

Even with so much to be learned about its implementation and results, incorporating CBI instruction into the L2 curriculum seems to fit this bill. CBI instruction not only achieves these goals with learners, but it also promotes the educator's cognitive development. L2 teachers in CBI instruction are in charge of developing sophisticated yet cognitive friendly solutions to help learners use theoretical concepts as tools for thinking in the L2.

Some of my goals as a researcher and practitioner are to awaken students' passion and curiosity for the L2, help learners have more autonomy so they can assume more responsibility in their own learning, and doing so in an environment where they become part of global L2 community. Learning a new language changes our perceptions, motivations, and the way we see the world. As an L2 researcher and practitioner, I find that a CBI instruction in the L2 classroom helps me get a little closer to these objectives.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures – Unit of Spanish and Portuguese

- Informed Consent -

STUDY TITLE: Developmental tools in Group Dynamic Assessment: Interfaces between the collective and the individual ZPOD for constructing L2 narratives in the past.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: You are invited to participate in a research study on the teaching and learning of Spanish past tense at the University of Massachusetts. The purpose of this study is to understand how classrooms learners develop their understandings, conceptualization, and use of Spanish grammar, specifically, the past tenses in Spanish. The study will also consider the effect of group work on the internalization of Spanish grammar. It is hoped that this knowledge will contribute to improved teaching practices in Spanish and improved and more efficient learning and development of Spanish by classroom learners.

RESEARCHER: I, Prospero Garcia, doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts, will carry out this study under the supervision of professor Luiz Amaral (Chair), Assistant professor in Hispanic Linguistics, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures from the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Dr. Eduardo Negueruela (Director), Assistant Professor of Spanish Second Language Acquisition, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, from the University of Miami, Florida.

DATA: The data for this study will be collected during the teaching of past tense in the context of the classroom, in interviews, classroom observations, and in recorded verbalizations. I will gather general information using a written survey. I will take field notes and interview notes, and I will collect materials used and produced in trainings and classroom instruction. Only with your consent, data may be collected using audio and/or video recording devices. Should such recording devices be used, transcripts will be produced.

TIME COMMITMENT: Part of your participation will occur during the training sessions that you have already committed to attending. In addition, you may be asked to participate in interviews and classroom observations. Interviews may require one hour, should you be willing. Classroom observations and teaching may require approximately three to five hours, should you be willing. More or less time commitment is possible given individual circumstances and your consent.

USE OF RESULTS: The results of this study will be used to complete course and program requirements and contribute to the development of my doctoral dissertation in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, Unit of Spanish and Portuguese, at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Also, the results may be reported in academic publications, articles and book chapters, and/or academic presentations.

PRIVACY: Every effort will be made to protect your privacy. All data containing confidential information will be kept in a safe place in the possession of the researcher. Unless you request otherwise, your name will not be used in any research reports about this study.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: I do not know of any personal risk associate with participating in this study. The possible benefit is that you gain insight into both your learning and development of uses of Spanish past tenses and the teaching practices that are proposed here. An additional benefit is that through your participation in this study you will contribute to building knowledge about implementing pedagogical practices that could have a positive impact on the learning and development of Spanish aspect by Spanish learners.
YOUR RIGHTS: You should decide on your own whether or not you want to participate in this study. You will not be treated differently, should you decide not to participate. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

QUESTIONS: Should you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact Prospero Garcia at pngarcia@spanport.umass.edu, Dr. Luiz Amaral at amaral@spanport.umass.edu, or Dr. Eduardo Negueruela at enegueruela@miami.edu.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT AND SIGN BELOW IF YOU AGREE
I have had the chance to ask any questions I have about this study and my questions have been answered. I have read the information in this consent form and I agree to participate in the study. There are two copies of this form. I will keep one copy and return the other to Próspero García.

_________________________________________  ___________________________  ______________
Participant name (Print please)  Signature  Date
Spanish 301 – Advanced Conversation

Instructor ____________________________  
Office address ____________________________  
Office hours ____________________________  
Course Section ________  
Office phone ____________  
E-mail ____________

http://www.umass.edu/spanport/courses/SpanishUndergraduateSyllabi.htm

¡Hola y bienvenidos!

Spanish 301 is an advanced conversation course designed for students who want to improve their communicative abilities in Spanish. A variety of cultural texts will be the base for classroom activities. This course combines a content-based language instruction with an interactive task-based approach. Students will be expected to actively participate in a variety of interactive small and large group activities. These activities are designed to improve your conversational skills and your practical knowledge about culture and language. You will participate in a variety of communicative activities such as: dialogues, conversations, interviews, film reviews, group discussions and presentations. Your participation in these activities will require you to use Spanish in various situations that reflect normal use of different varieties of Spanish. The class will be conducted in Spanish.

Required Texts and Materials
- Revista. Conversación sin barreras. 2nd EDITION Blanco, García, Aparisi. Published by Vista Higher Learning.

Prerequisites: Grade of C or higher in Spanish 240.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, you will:
1. Have improved your communicative abilities (oral and written in Spanish), especially at the presentational mode.
2. Expand your vocabulary in Spanish so as to enable you to understand and read in Spanish accurately a variety of texts: newspapers, magazines, literature pieces, etc.
3. Improve your pronunciation.
4. Expand your cultural knowledge of the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world.
5. Help you become an independent learner of learning, i.e. responsible for your own learning of the Spanish language and culture.

Assessment: Assessment and testing procedures will be representative of the type of language instruction offered through classroom activities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Participation grades</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework and assignments</td>
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<td>2 Film reviews</td>
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<td>1 CD recording</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Oral exams (1 group oral exam &amp; 1 individual interview)</td>
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<td>Exam Type</td>
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### Grading Scale

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<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
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### Attendance Policy

Due to the nature of language learning in general, attendance to class is **mandatory** since it is absolutely critical for developing communicative abilities in Spanish. However, it is understood that, periodically, things such as illness may prevent your attendance. Therefore, you will be allowed a total of **three unexcused absences** during the semester. These days cover illness, weddings, funerals, job interviews, etc. These are not free days, so use them wisely.

Starting with the **fourth unexcused absence**, regardless of the reasons for the first three, **ONE percentage point will be subtracted from the final calculated course grade** for every absence. Late arrivals and early departures from class will also count as absences. **Be prompt!**

Official documented excuses are verifiable: doctor's notes and/or bills; hospital bills, religious holidays (with prior notification), and university sponsored and official athletic excuses. A note that does not meet the above stated requirements is not an official excuse. Your instructor reserves the right to verify any excuse, particularly in instances of excessive absence.

The make-up of any non-exam materials (homework, essays, etc.) will be accepted up to one **class day** after the due date with an official excuse. **After one class day, it will not be accepted at all.** It is always acceptable to turn in work early if you know that you will be absent on a particular day.

### Participation (15%)

Every three weeks, throughout this course, you will “self-assess” your participation. Your participation involves a number of variables, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Your use of Spanish in the classroom**
  - greeting people and taking leave using Spanish
  - using Spanish during class (i.e. with instructor and in small groups), when asking and responding to questions related (or not related) to the material at hand, when engaged in casual conversation with classmates or instructor...

- **Your willingness to participate in all class activities**
- **Your cooperation during group- and pair-work**
- **Your respect and attitude toward the class and toward your peers**
You will follow the attached criteria to self-assess your participation. **Please note: your instructor reserves the right to raise or lower your self-assessed participation grade if he/she feels that it does not adequately reflect your level of participation.**

**Homework, quizzes, and assignments (10%)**
You are responsible for completing all the assigned online activities (Supersite). Late homework and/or excuses for not having your homework in class every class period will not be accepted. There may be quizzes at unannounced times. They can only be made up in the case of excused absences provided they are justified in advanced or 48 hours after the absence.

**Film review (10%)**
You will write two film review essays. Throughout the semester, you have to watch at least two Spanish films at home and write a critique in Spanish about something that struck you in the movie. No late work will be accepted without an official documented excuse. See attached grading criteria. You will turn in a first and a final draft for each composition.

**Format:** Students must do a Spanish spell check for any writing assignment (this feature is available in word processing programs at every computer lab on campus). Reviews for compositions must be typed, double-spaced, with the student's name, the composition title, the draft number, word count and the date the assignment is due on the top of the first page. See model below:

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<th>Borrador # 1, etc. -o- Versión Final</th>
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<td># de palabras</td>
<td>11 de junio de 2008</td>
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<td>Título</td>
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**Cd Recording (10%)**
Each group should hand in a recording of spontaneous speech about a topic that will be announced by the instructor. The recording should last between 10 and 20 minutes and its content cannot be read. The grade will be based on its content, fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The due date is indicated in the course calendar.

**Oral Exams (20%)**
Spoken language and pronunciation will be evaluated in two oral interviews. Your interviews will be based on general themes or topics treated in class. See the attached grading criteria. If you miss your oral interview, you will not be allowed to make it up, unless you have a documented excuse. You must contact your instructor immediately and present him/her with acceptable documentation of the missed oral interview in order for it to be made up.

**Exams (20%)**
There will be two cumulative written exams assessing your comprehension of the material discussed in class. They will cover all material previously handled, but will focus on the most recent readings, information given in presentations, as well as information presented in class discussions. Also, you will find vocabulary and grammatical elements on these exams as they pertain to the readings and themes. **No make-up exams will be given without a documented excuse. Documentation must be presented within 48 hours of an absence in order for an exam to be made up. Exams are not curved.**

**Class presentation (5%)**
You will be required to give a short individual oral presentation in Spanish. It should last for five minutes and your instructor will provide you with a topic. You need to include short questions about your presentation at the end of it. You are encouraged to discuss your topic with the instructor beforehand.
You will be expected to use props, charts, pictures, and/or visual aids. Feel free to be as creative as you wish to present the material to your classmates. Presentations are not to be read although you may refer to note cards. Practice your presentation thoroughly and be well prepared. Your oral abilities will be evaluated through this presentation. Your classmates will also play an active role answering questions about the content of your presentation.

**Group presentation (10%)**
This presentation will be a 20-minute group presentation in front of the class. The specific requirements will be described at a later date. Again, it will be used to evaluate your proficiency in Spanish. Presentations will be graded on creativity, content and language – so be creative and well prepared! **Attendance on presentation days is mandatory. Absences on one of these days will lower your grade significantly.** Details for the presentations will be provided later in the course. See the attached grading criteria.

**General administrative issues**
**Expected Time Required (Approximate):** A general guideline for the amount of time you should plan to dedicate to this course is **2 hours of homework/review per hour spent in class. Review the material before coming to class, so you will find that the time you spend in class is much more productive in developing your communicative abilities in Spanish.**

**Extra Credit:** No extra credit will be given under any circumstances.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism, cheating, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, tampering with the academic work of others and other forms of academic dishonesty may lead to lowered course grades, failure of the course or more severe measures, depending on judgments of the gravity of the individual case.

**Disability Services:** During the first week of the course, students with disabilities are responsible for bringing official documentation from UMass Disability Services explaining the nature of the disability and specific arrangements the student will need to complete his/her work. This information will remain strictly confidential.

**Code of Student Conduct:** Student behavior or speech that disrupts the instructional setting or is clearly disrespectful of the instructor or fellow students will not be tolerated. Disruptive conduct may include but is not limited: 1. Rude or disrespectful behavior; 2. Unwarranted interruptions; 3. Failure to adhere to instructor’s directions; 4. Vulgar or obscene language, slurs, or other forms of intimidation; 5. Physically or verbally abusive behavior. Student behavior that is inappropriate will result in disenrollment from the course.

**Course calendar:** This schedule is subject to change. Any necessary change will be announced ahead of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK AND DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>In Class work</th>
<th>KEY DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>Introducción</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>syllabus</td>
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<td>W</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>Syllabus – Capítulo 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Capítulo 1</td>
<td>Capítulo 1</td>
<td>Capítulo 3</td>
<td>Last Day Add/Drop period</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>2/1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Capítulo 3</td>
<td>Capítulo 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/1</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>2/2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td>presidents' Day</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/09</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capítulo 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 3/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Repaso (Capítulos 1-3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 3/13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Examen 1 – Capítulos 1-3</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 3/16</td>
<td></td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 3/28</td>
<td></td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 3/20</td>
<td></td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Week 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capítulo 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 3/25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Exam 1 (Group oral exam)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 3/27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Exam 1 (Group oral exam)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M 3/30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capítulo 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W 4/01</td>
<td></td>
<td>Capítulo 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F 4/03</td>
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<td>Capítulo 4</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4/06</td>
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<td>Presentaciones individuales</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 4/08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentaciones individuales</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F 4/10</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M 4/13</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>W 4/15</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F 4/17</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M 4/20</strong></td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tu 4/21</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moday Schedule</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M 4/20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Capítulo 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W 4/22</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F 4/24</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M 4/27</strong></td>
<td>Capítulo 6</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W 4/29</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examen Oral 2 (Entrevistas individuales)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F 5/01</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examen Oral 2 (Entrevistas individuales)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
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<td><strong>M 5/04</strong></td>
<td><strong>Repaso (Capítulos 4 – 6)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>W 5/06</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exam 2 (Capítulos 4 - 6)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5/08</td>
<td>Presentaciones de grupo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16 M</td>
<td>5/11</td>
<td>Presentaciones de grupo</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADING CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE &amp; AFTER CLASS</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am responsible for my own progress in Spanish. I always come prepared to class and complete all my assignments on time.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DURING CLASS TIME</th>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. I try to use Spanish as much as possible.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I maintain a positive and attentive attitude during class. I am enthusiastic toward activities and the class in general.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I listen attentively to the instructor and I respect and listen to my peers.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I try to volunteer and participate as much as possible. I am an active and responsible participant in class/ group activities and often take a leading role.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADE:** /25

**MY NEXT STEP**
Write one specific objective for the next two weeks so as to improve your class participation considering the above criteria, and evaluate previous objectives. Be specific.
**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Write a couple of sentences about your participation in any other way that is not expressed above.

---

**GRADING CRITERIA FOR COMPOSITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-WRITING</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughly completed all required pre-writing tasks. Demonstrated good thought investment. Original and creative.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed all required pre-writing tasks. Demonstrated some thought investment. Somewhat creative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally completed pre-writing tasks. No thought investment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence of pre-writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITTEN COMPOSITION</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content and vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very complete information. Broad effective use of vocabulary needed for written task.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate information. Some development of ideas. Few errors with vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited information. Ideas present but underdeveloped.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional errors with vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas connected. Logically ordered from beginning to end.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order apparent, but somewhat choppy, loosely organized.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited order to the content. Disjointed and/or choppy.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basically a series of separate sentences. No transitions. No apparent order.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-edited for grammar needed for task. Very few errors overall.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional grammatical errors with the grammar needed for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
task.
Frequent errors that would probably impede comprehensibility for a reader not accustomed to language learners.
Abundance of errors. Mostly incomprehensible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POST-WRITING</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carefully and thoroughly completed all editing steps.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed all editing steps.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing apparent, but incomplete.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence of the required editing steps.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| GRADE: | / 50 |

**GRADING CRITERIA FOR ORAL EXAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPLETION OF ORAL TASK</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed oral exam with little or no problem. Completely comprehensible. No help needed. Maintained a very active attitude during the whole exam.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed oral exam satisfactorily. Would be understood by a sympathetic interlocutor. Needed some vocabulary and information to complete the task. Somewhat active.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed oral exam with some difficulty. Would be able to make him/herself understood by a very sympathetic interlocutor accustomed to interacting with non-native speakers. Needed many vocabulary words and help from the interlocutor and/or instructor to communicate own ideas. Somewhat passive during exam.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had problems completing the oral exam. Would probably not have succeeded if partner were not an English-speaker in an exam situation. Needed a lot of help from the interlocutor and/or instructor. Passive attitude.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVERSATION DYNAMICS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connected ideas. Obviously comfortable speaking Spanish. Natural turn-taking.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choppiness. Reticent, and slightly longer pauses in turn-taking.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disjointed sequence. The listener had to make a lot of effort to understand.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short answers with no sequence. The conversation was more dependent on the listener’s helping than on the speaker.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLARITY OF MESSAGE and VOCABULARY USED**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideas completely clear, well-developed, to the point, and communicated in a logical sequence. Used vocabulary needed for task effectively with no errors, and was able to create with it. Maintained Spanish throughout the conversation.</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas mostly clear, developed and to the point, and for the most part showed mastery of vocabulary needed for task with some errors, though at times the conversation lacked logical sequence and/or speaker struggled for needed vocabulary.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little development or ordering of ideas is apparent; speaker had difficulty and made errors with vocabulary needed for task.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas confusing, not well-stated, and/or poorly communicated. Frequent errors with vocabulary needed for task and/or vocabulary was inadequate to the task. Communication broke down; speaker lapsed into English very often.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRAMMAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Showed mastery of the grammar needed for task completion. Very few errors overall (i.e., subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, use of ser/estar, etc.). Appropriate use of register (i.e., tú / usted distinctions, appropriate formality level, etc.).</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showed limited mastery of the grammar needed for task completion. Some agreement errors were evident, but these generally did not interfere with communication of the message. Mostly appropriate use of register.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated little mastery of the grammar needed for task completion. Numerous agreement errors, including errors which interfered with communication of the message. Inappropriate use of register.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mastery of the grammar needed for task completion. Errors constantly interfered with communication of the message. Apparent unawareness of appropriate register.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADE:**

| / 50 |
APPENDIX C

BIO-DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

SPANISH _____
SEMESTER _________

Student Information Form
Please fill out and return to instructor

Name____________________________________
(First)                                              (Last)                                     (Nickname)
Date of Birth ________________________  Student ID___________________________
Local Phone_____________________    Email address___________________________
Hometown________________________________________
Major(s) or Projected Major_________________________________________________
Are you a Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior? _________________________________

Do you have any foreign language experience?
________________________________
Reason for taking this course________________________________________________

Do you know any Spanish speaker? _____________________________
Does someone speak Spanish in your home? _____________
If yes, what is your relation with that person?__________________________

Did you take Spanish classes in the high school? __________
If yes, what levels did you take?__________________________
Have you taken Spanish classes at UMass? ___________
If yes, what levels did you take?__________________________

Extracurricular activities (sport teams, performance groups, clubs, etc)
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Anything else you’d like to say about yourself? (places you’ve traveled or would like to see, goals, hopes, dreams, etc.....)
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________
APPENDIX D

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LANGUAGE SURVEY

Directions: Please provide the following information, Thanks in advance for your responses!

1. Before this course, did you take Spanish in High school / College? Up to what level?

2. Before this course, did you take Spanish in College? How many semesters? Up to what level?

3. What importance does foreign language study have for you?

4. Have you lived/studied/traveled abroad? Where? When? For what length of time? Please make emphasis in any Spanish speaking country that you may have visited.

5. Please describe your travel experience in general.

6. Why did you enroll in Spanish 301?

7. What were your expectations for this course?

8. In what ways does this course relate to your present/future professional life?

9. Were you planning on continue studying Spanish or another foreign language(s) after this course was over? If so, please describe in what capacity.

10. Please describe your study of Spanish up to this point. Please include as many details as possible, e.g. your approach to learning the language, the role of the teacher, aspects you consider important for learning a language, etc.

11. Do you have any stories about language learning, living or studying abroad, or interacting with speakers of other languages which you would like to relate here? Please give as many details as possible.
APPENDIX E

DIDACTIC MODELS FOR VERBALIZING THE CONCEPT OF ASPECT

Verbalization for Aspect (1). Borrowed from Negueruela and Lantolf (2006: 85)

VERBALIZATION for ASPECT

- The concept of “aspect” is, simply put, the perspective on an action. That is, what is the part_aspect of the action that you, as the speaker_writer, want to emphasize?

- The meaning aspect of a verb is determined by two components:
  - Lexical aspect: based on the meaning of the verb (cyclic or noncyclic)
  - Grammatical aspect: based on the verbal tense used (preterito/imperfecto)

- When these two elements are combined, you can emphasize the beginning, end, middle (ongoing), or completion of an action.

- Follow the flow chart below to explain to yourself why you can select preterit or imperfect to present an action as completed, ongoing, beginning, or ending.

```
Is there a recalled point in the past?  Yes  No
(Ayer, anoche...)

Is the verb cyclic?  Yes  No

Emphasize beginning of action?  Yes  No

Emphasize action as ongoing?  Yes  No

Use preterito

Use imperfecto

Present action as completed?  Yes  No

Use preterito

Use imperfecto
```

Verbalization for Aspect (1). Borrowed from Negueruela and Lantolf (2006: 85)
CONCEPTUALIZACIÓN DEL ASPECTO

El concepto de aspecto indica la perspectiva que tiene el hablante sobre una acción, es decir, cuál es la parte o naturaleza de la acción que se quiere enfatizar.

El concepto de aspecto viene determinado por dos factores:

a) **Aspecto léxico**: Se basa en el desarrollo de la acción/estado expresada por el verbo (cíclico o no cíclico).

b) **Aspecto gramatical**: Se basa en el tiempo verbal utilizado (pretérito o imperfecto).

Cuando estos dos elementos se combinan se puede enfatizar o bien el principio, el final o la duración de la acción, o bien su compleción. La perspectiva de la acción verbal que lleva a la selección del pretérito o del imperfecto viene determinada por:

- ¿Qué parte de la acción verbal quiere enfatizar el hablante?
- ¿Qué tipo de verbo es? ¿Es un verbo cíclico o no cíclico?
- ¿Hay algún marcador temporal que indique pasado?
- ¿En qué momento del pasado se encuentra la acción?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Se usa <strong>PRETÉRITO</strong> para…</th>
<th>Se usa <strong>IMPERFECTO</strong> para…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicar el principio o el final de una acción o que la acción está completada desde una perspectiva de presente.</td>
<td>Enfatizar que una acción es continua en el pasado.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inicio</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>presente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A las 6:00 <strong>vi a Juan</strong> (verbo no cíclico, inicio de la acción)</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El banco cerró a las 3:00</strong> (verbo cíclico, final de la acción)</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vivi en Londres durante un año</strong> (acción completada)</td>
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*Juan *vivi* en Perú* (acción continuada)
APPENDIX F

SCENARIO USED FOR GROUP DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

Problemas de de pareja

Situación – Tus mejores amigos son novios y llevan saliendo juntos más de un año. El gran problema es que están discutiendo todo el día y la semana pasada tuvieron una gran pelea. Ahora tu amigo/a viene a hablar contigo para contarte lo que pasó y pedirte consejo.

Estudiante A: Estás muy enfadado/a con tu novio/a y le cuentas a tu mejor amigo/a tu versión de la discusión y le explicas porque está discusión fue diferente de las anteriores. Le pides a tu mejor amigo/a que te aconseje lo que deberías hacer.

Estudiante B: Tu mejor amigo/a te cuenta la discusión que tuvo con su novio/a la semana pasada. Tú estás cansado/a de escucharle hablar siempre de sus problemas de pareja y le recomiendas que rompa con su novio/a basándote en tus experiencias de pareja anteriores.

Estudiante C: Estás muy triste porque has tenido una gran discusión con tu novio/a y le cuentas a tu mejor amigo/a tu versión de la discusión y le explicas porque está discusión fue diferente de las anteriores. Le pides a tu mejor amigo/a que te aconseje lo que deberías hacer.

Estudiante D: Tu mejor amigo/a te cuenta la discusión que tuvo con su novio/a la semana pasada. Tú crees que hacen una buena pareja y le recomiendas que intente reconciliarse con su novio/a basándote en tus experiencias de pareja anteriores.

IDEAS
Uso del Ser y Estar - Uso del pretérito e imperfecto.

PALABRAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duradero</th>
<th>Infelicidad</th>
<th>Autoestima</th>
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<tr>
<td>Comportarse</td>
<td>Sufrir</td>
<td>Suplicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulta</td>
<td>Respetar</td>
<td>Superar</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air  Junto a tu grupo lee la siguiente narrativa e indentifica los verbos en el pasado. Después decidid, de acuerdo con las tablas de representación del aspecto, si esos eventos representarían pretérito o imperfecto en español.

Now this is a story, all about how my life got flipped-turned upside down, 
And I'd like to take a minute, 
just sit right there, 
I'll tell you how I became the prince of a town called Bel-Air 
In West Philadelphia, 
born an' raised, 
on the playground is where I spent mosta my days, 
Chillin' out, maxin', relaxin' all cool, 
An' all shooting some B-ball outside of the school, 
When a couple o' guys who were up to no good, 
Started makin' trouble in my neighborhood, 
I got in one little fight and my mom got scared, 
She said 'You're moving with your auntie and uncle in Bel-Air'!

I begged and pleaded with her day after day, 
but she packed my suitcase and sent me on my way 
She gave me a kiss and then she gave me my ticket 
I put my walkman on and said 'I'd might as well kickin' 
First class, 'Yo, this is bad' drinking orange juice out of a champagne glass 
'Is this what the people of Bel Air live like?' 
'Hmm.. this might be all right!' 
The way I'd hear the percy, boots white and all 
I had to sit as I have a place of they just in this school cat 
'I don't think so', 'I see what i get there' 
I hope they're prepared for the Prince of Bel-Air!

Well I, tha plain land and when I came out 
there was a dude look like a cop standin' there with my name out 
'I ain't trying to get arrested yet, 'I just got here' 
I sprang with the quickness like light has disappeared

I whistled for a cab and when i came near, 
The license plate said 'Fresh', 
And had dice in the mirror, 
If anything i could say that this cab was rare, 
But I thought 'Nah, forget it - Yo, home to Bel-Air!' 
I pulled up to the house at bout seven or eight, 
I yelled to the cabbie 'Yo home, smell ya later!' 
I looked at my kingdom, 
I was finally there! 
To sit on my throne as the prince of Bel-Air!
**El príncipe de Bel-Air** Ahora vas a leer la misma historia en español. Recuerda que como toda buena traducción, **no reproduce literalmente los eventos de la canción original**. Junto a tu grupo lee la siguiente narrativa y decidid, de acuerdo con las tablas de representación del aspecto, si esos eventos deberían de estar en pretérito o imperfecto en español.

Aaaahora escucha la historia de mi vida de como el destino ______(cambiar) mi movida, sin comerlo ni beberlo ______(llegar) a ser el chuleta de un barrio llamado Bell Air...

Aaal oeste en Philadelphia ______(crecer) y ______(vivir) sin hacer mucho caso a la policía ______(jugar) al basket sin cansarme demasiado porque por las noches ______(sacarme) el graduado.Cierto día, jugando al basket con amigos unos tipos del barrio me ________(meter) en un lío y mi madre me ________(decir) una y otra vez:

- ¡Con tu tío y tu tía irás a Bell Air!

- ______(llamar, yo) a un taxi, cuando ______(acercarse) su molona matrícula ______(fascinar)._______(Querer, yo) conocer a la clase de parientes que me espera en Bell Air con aire sonriente...

A las siete ______(llegar, yo) a aquella casa y ______(salir) de aquel taxi que ______(oler) a cuadra, ______(estar) en Bell Air y la cosa cambiaba, mi trono me ______(esperar) y el príncipe ______(llegar).
**APPENDIX H**

**WRITTEN PERFORMANCE TOOL**

**Vocabulario y Gramática en contexto.** Imagina que fuiste testigo de un accidente automovilístico que ocurrió en Amherst. Usa la siguiente ilustración para describir la escena: ¿Cómo era la víctima? ¿Cómo se llamaba? ¿Qué hacía la víctima antes del accidente? ¿Quién era el conductor? ¿Cómo reaccionaron ante el accidente? ¿Qué hizo la gente cuando ocurrió este accidente? Etc.

- Utiliza el **pretérito** y el **imperfecto**.
- **Escribe un mínimo de 10 oraciones.**
- **Utiliza un mínimo de 10 palabras** del vocabulario en el recuadro.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Velocidad</th>
<th>El suelo</th>
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<th>Correrse la voz</th>
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<td>Miedo</td>
<td>Sangre</td>
<td>Moribundo</td>
<td>Animar</td>
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<td>Atropellar</td>
<td>El móvil</td>
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<td>Comportarse</td>
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<td>Ayudar</td>
<td>Contar</td>
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<td>Escuchar</td>
<td>Seguridad</td>
<td>Explicar</td>
<td>Generosidad</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX I

QUESTION FOR DEFINITION DATA

El Aspecto. Explica con tus propias palabras la relación entre el pretérito y el imperfecto y describe cuando y como se usa cada uno de estos tiempos verbales. Puedes escribir tu explicación tanto en español como en inglés.

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