

**TEACHING THE SPANISH PRETERITE TENSE THROUGH TEMPORAL  
ASPECTUAL DISCOURSE**

**By**

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## DEDICATION

To my husband, Terry Jenkins, who encouraged and inspired me to follow my interests and explore new avenues of inquiry; to my children and their spouses, Vicki and Dana, and John and Mary, my sister, Gloria and her husband, Jim, and to dear friends, Anne and husband Luis, for their unfailing encouragement.

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## TEACHING THE SPANISH PRETERITE TENSE THROUGH TEMPORAL ASPECTUAL DISCOURSE

English-speaking students of Spanish as a second language frequently have difficulty understanding the distinction between the two Spanish simple past tenses. Since English has only one simple past tense, students must distinguish between two possible past tenses: the preterite and the imperfect. In the present study the preterite tense, only, was taught to first- and third-semester students to determine whether beginning and intermediate students may better understand the functions of this tense through the use of a temporal discourse approach. To date no study has examined the relationship between instruction at both the beginning and intermediate levels using a temporal discourse approach. The significance of this study is that it examines the potential effect of teaching with this approach to beginning and intermediate students.

A total of sixty-three subjects participated in the investigation. One research cell of twenty-one subjects was used in Instruction group 1 at the first-semester level. Two research cells were used at the third-semester level: Instruction group 2 and No Instruction group. The No Instruction group was included as a control group for the third-semester level. All subjects in groups 1 and 2 received instruction; all subjects in all three groups received one pretest and three posttests.

Findings reveal a significantly greater production of correct preterite tense verbs as compared to learners receiving no instruction. Findings also reveal that learners receiving temporal aspectual instruction maintained increases in correct preterite tense verb production over time. Performance by both beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal aspectual discourse instruction showed no significant difference in the pattern of change in scores on the production of preterite tense verbs.

Results of the present study provide evidence that temporal discourse instruction improves correct production of preterite tense verbs.

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## Chapter One – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore potential advantages to teaching the preterite tense, one of the Spanish past tenses, through temporal aspectual discourse. Second language (L2) learners, after acquiring the ability to engage in discourse in the present tense, move on the past tense discourse. This involves the ability to convey a combination of ideas that are cohesive in form and coherent in their presentation. It is important to note that discourse is an important skill for L2 learners. L2 learners who have developed discourse competence are able to express ideas and determine relationships among different ideas, and to use devices such as adverbs, conjunctions, and transitional phrases in order to communicate (Widdowson 1978; Hatch 1978, 1983, 1992; Larsen-Freeman 1991).

In a study of the use of verbal morphology in oral narratives, Liskin-Gasparro (2000) evaluated the production of advanced learners when recounting the events in a silent film and a personal experience. This research analyzed the production of preterite and imperfect verb forms, the role of the narrator in constructing discourse, and the impact of instruction. Liskin-Gasparro commented in regard to the pedagogical implications of her study that,

A recurrent frustration of teachers and advanced students alike is the apparent

imperviousness of particular linguistic problems to repeated instructional intervention. The appropriate of temporal aspect in narrative discourse is certainly one such area. Three pedagogical observations emerge from the findings of this study that are worthy of continued consideration: the linguistic input students receive in upper-division courses; incorporating awareness of narrative structure into tense and aspect instruction into tense and the disparity between the sequence of acquisition of tense and aspect the approaches commonly taken in teaching. (p. 841)

While Liskin-Gasparros observations are made in regard to advanced learners, they may have implications for the type of instruction provided for beginning and intermediate learners, as well. The present study does not address factors related to the contrast between the preterite and imperfect, but explores the presentation of the temporal and aspectual properties of the Spanish preterite tense to L2 learners in a way that may increase their perception of the preterite as the past tense that introduces new reference times into narrative discourse. The aspectual properties of past tense verbs involve the way time is organized in Spanish. In Spanish events and actions are viewed being a beginning, a middle, or an end of an event (Bull 1965). Since the introduction of new reference times into the discourse moves the timeline of the narration forward in time (Westfall & Foerster 1996; Westfall 1995), L2 learners should benefit from becoming more aware of the preterite functions and forms in discourse.

## *Second Language Teaching Theories*

The importance of learner strategies and the type and level of instruction in the classroom is essential. In order to gain a better understanding of language learner styles, I will trace the principal theories of second language (SL) teaching. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the L2 learner is the center of focus as the teaching profession seeks to a better understanding of the theories behind L2 acquisition and to develop approaches that make second languages more accessible. However, in understanding the development of SL teaching, we must first focus on SL teaching in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dominant teaching method at that time was based primarily on the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) which had been developed to teach Greek and Latin and was applied to the teaching of modern languages. Students learned the grammar rules deductively from long lists of rules and their exceptions followed by practice exercises. The students' understanding of the rules was tested through translation. Vocabulary was learned from bilingual lists of words pertaining to the lesson. Native and target languages were compared frequently with the goal of being able to translate from one to the other. Oral use of the language was normally limited to reading translated passages and talking about the language rather than speaking in it. There was no theory behind the Grammar-Translation Method or attempts made to relate it to issues in other fields such as education, linguistics or psychology (Richards & Rodgers 1986). The original objective of the GTM, to translate ancient and then modern languages, was not effective in facilitating communication in general and speech in particular in the target languages.

## *Audiolingual Method*

During the mid- to late-nineteenth century, in order to make commercial and social exchanges more effective, a need developed in European countries for proficiency in foreign languages leading to the development of several teaching methods that stressed speech as the primary form of language instead of the written language (Richard & Rodgers 1986). In the United States, the Audio Lingual Method (ALM) (Cowan 1947) of language teaching emerged and dominated the classroom from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. It was based exclusively on structural linguistics and focused on the teaching of grammatical structures (Bloomfield 1942; Fries 1945, 1957). Teaching stressed memorization, pattern practice and drills, but included few grammar explanations. Behaviorist psychology (Watson, 1925; Skinner 1957) also influenced this methodology by supporting the hypothesis that learning occurred as a response to stimuli. The materials were sociolinguistically appropriate, culturally accurate, and classroom activities supported accurate pronunciation. The repetition of forms and patterns was viewed as consistent with providing necessary conditioning for language learning.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s theorists in second language acquisition began to favor two contrasting approaches to language learning. *Naturalistic* language acquisition occurred in naturally occurring social situations, while *instructed* language acquisition took place through study, instruction in the classroom, and with the help of “guidance” from reference books (Ellis 1994). A similar distinction was made by Klein (1986) who proposed that ‘spontaneous’ acquisition occurs incidentally, whereas “guided” acquisition depends on the learner focusing on some aspect of the language.



### *Universal Grammar*

In contrast to the behaviorist theories of language learning, GMT and ALM, Chomsky's Universal Grammar (1957, 1965) proposed that humans are born with an innate language learning system that leads to the development of language based on the interaction between the biological "language acquisition device" and the specific input from the language to which they are exposed. Chomsky supported the importance of different types of knowledge. He defined "competence" as implicit or explicit knowledge of a language, and "performance" as comprehension and production of a language. Chomsky's theories "created a crisis in American language teaching circles from which a full recovery has not yet been made" (Richards & Rogers 2001, p. 66) Chomsky's ideas had a strong influence on language teaching, drawing attention away from behaviorist psychology and Audiolingualism and leading in part to cognitive code learning theory (Richards and Rogers 2001). It is important to understand that Chomsky's reaction to the stimulus-response focus of behaviorist theories of SL acquisition had a strong influence on the foundation of cognitive theory.

### *Cognitive Theory*

As a result of research that viewed language as a cognitive system, changes in language teaching and language learning began to develop with a modification in the perception of how first and second languages are learned. Ausubel (1968) suggested that learning occurs when new material can be integrated into the learner's existing cognitive structure. He proposed that learning takes place when meaningful material is presented in a sequential order that can be related by the learner to previously learned material.

The significance of learners' errors was viewed by Corder (1967) as representative of the learner's effort to develop a system of the language being learned. He characterized SL acquisition as a constantly changing "transitional competence." Along the same lines as Corder, Selinker (1972) proposed the concept of an "interlanguage" as an intermediate system on a continuum between the native language and the target language, governed by its own rules. This system would be restructured as the learner approached, but seldom became congruent with, the second language system. Selinker (1974) suggested that most learners would achieve a level of similarity with the target-language speaker system at which he or she would become "fossilized" and maintain that level of similarity with the L2 system, regardless of age and in spite of further instruction.

### *Communicative Competence*

Another component of Chomsky's (1957, 1965) definition of grammatical competence was sociolinguistic and contextual competence. Hymes (1972) expanded on Chomsky's definition of grammatical competence to include these. Campbell and Wales (1970) proposed that *appropriateness* of speech and its *sociocultural significance* in a particular context were of more importance than its grammatical correctness.

Savignon, who compared several types of practice on the development of communicative skills, stated that "*Communicative competence* (Hymes 1971) may be defined as the ability to function in a truly communicative setting – that is, in a

dynamic exchange in which *linguistic competence* must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (1972, p. 8). In order for the learner to communicate successfully, he or she needed to be willing to take risks and use the grammatical structures and vocabulary they knew in order to make themselves understood. Savignon (1983, 1997) emphasized the interpersonal nature of learners negotiating meaning in order to communicate. The contexts in which learning is taking place should be taken into account so that the interests and needs of the learners are addressed. In this way, the learning process is focused on meaning rather than grammatical structure isolated from context, which leads to opportunities for learners “to interpret, to express, and to negotiate meaning in real-life situations,” (1983, p. vi).

Because the focus of this study is language learning and SL teaching, I now turn to look at its potential applications of in SL acquisition theory to instruction approaches. In order to define communicative competence for application to teaching approaches, Canale and Swain (1980a) drew on the work of researchers including Campbell and Wales (1970), Hymes (1972), Savignon (1972), Charolles (1978), Munby (1978), and Widdowson (1978), to arrive at a theoretical framework for communicative competence. This framework Canale (1983a) summarized as: (1) grammatical competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) discourse competence, and (4) strategic competence. All of these concepts are related to the instructional materials in the present study which encourage grammatical competence through focus on form, include situations in the teaching materials that take into

account cultural issues in Hispanic societies that are different from those typical of the learners' environment, begin to develop the ability to express themselves in speech and writing choosing lexical and grammatical forms that reflect accurately what they intend to communicate in a manner appropriate to the situation.

Classroom research carried out initially in ESL classrooms led to a shift in the focus of research and its pedagogical implementation for second language researchers and teachers. This came about with a move from a classroom emphasis on the instructor as the central figure to an emphasis on the language learner, the language used by learners, and the process of second language acquisition (Woods 1996). *Focus on the Learner: Pragmatic Perspectives for Language Teacher* (Oller and Richards 1973) explored theory and causal factors in second language acquisition with the intention of applying the information gathered to the classroom.

#### *Monitor Theory, Natural Order of Acquisition, and Affective Filter*

The research carried out by Krashen (1981) had long-term influence on language learning research and approaches to teaching. He pursued the concept of a natural order of acquisition and the existence of a cognitive mechanism that controlled acquisition. He observed that learners seldom benefited from error correction and that they appeared to know the language without consciously being aware of the rules. In his Monitor Model Krashen, proposed that the 'natural' process of language acquisition and the learning of rules operate independently and do not interact. An important aspect of his theory was the

concept that learners who are exposed to understandable language that is just beyond their existing level ( $i + 1$ ) will acquire new syntactical items. His Monitor Theory stated that conscious learning of rules, on the other hand, would only be useful to learners in situations when they were able to control and monitor their speech. Krashen suggested that the language classroom should offer abundant opportunities for communication similar to that encountered in life outside the classroom. While some second language acquisition researchers criticized Krashen's 'comprehensible input hypothesis', many teachers interested in placing more emphasis on communication and less on syntax welcomed elements such as the use of simplified syntax, slower speed, and repetition to make input more comprehensible. The Natural Approach teaching methodology was developed by Terrell (1977, 1982) based on Krashen's theory of language acquisition.

Terrell's stated goal was:

that a student ...understand the essential points of what a native speaker says to him in a real communicative situation and ...respond in such a way that the native speaker interprets the response with little or no effort and without errors that are so distracting that they interfere drastically with communication (1977, p. 326).

Long (1981) added to these ideas by focusing on the 'negotiation of meaning' carried out in conversations between native and non-native speakers. He proposed that the effect of interactional input was of primary importance for second language acquisition. Commenting on Krashen's Monitor Theory, Long (1983), suggested that the function, rather than the simplification of speech, made the utterances comprehensible and useful to the learner for acquisition. Long (1983, 379) proposed a broader definition of *learning*, "by upgrading the definition of learning, and thereby the importance of

instruction” in order to indicate that *learning* through instruction can become *acquisition*. In his Natural Order Hypothesis, Krashen proposed that grammatical structures, primarily morphemes, are acquired following a predictable order when acquisition is natural.

Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1982) is based on L2 learners being exposed to “comprehensible input” that consists of structures that are “a little beyond” their current level of competence ( $i + 1$ ) but can be understood from the context, world knowledge and other cues.

Pienemann (1984) determined in a study of children learning German.

that the acquisition of word order occurred only when the learners had previously acquired the grammatical rule preceding it in the sequence. He formulated a Teachability Hypothesis (1985) which stated that learners must be psycholinguistically ready to learn the material and that teaching it before learners were ready to cognitively accommodate it could lead to negative consequences such as avoidance (Pienemann 1986).

### *Comprehensible Input and Comprehensible Output Theories*

The importance of the nature of input, outlined in Krashen's input hypothesis (1982), states that learners acquire language through exposure to "comprehensible input" that is "a little beyond" his/her current level ( $i + 1$ ). Krashen's input hypothesis also proposed that learners should not be required to produce language unless they are ready and that fluency in a second language "emerges" naturally over time when the learner receives sufficient comprehensible input. Hatch (1983) described simplified input based on a slower rate of speech; vocabulary that is of high frequency; syntax that relies on short sentences, repetition and restatement; and situations that are repeated.

Criticism of, and modifications to Krashen's Monitor Model were proposed by McLaughlin (1987, p. 37-51) and others. McLaughlin (1990b) explained two means through which input can be processed, "automatic processing" in which consistent mapping of the same input utilizes a relatively permanent set of associative connections in long-term storage (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 134) and "controlled processing" which is not a learned response, but a temporary activation of nodes in a sequence...under attentional control of the subject and, since attention is required, only one such sequence can normally be controlled at a time without interference (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 135). Gass (1988, p. 202) proposed a model for "apperceived" input that was "noticed in some way by the learner because of some particular features." In other words, in order for input to be useful in learning a second language, it has to be processed by the learner.

After investigating immersion programs in Canada, Swain (1985) found that children who received large amounts of input in a second language but had very little

opportunity to speak, did not advance as much as would have been expected according to the comprehensible input hypothesis. As a result, she proposed the “comprehensible output” hypothesis indicating that opportunities to produce language were important for acquisition.

### *Sociocultural Theory*

As a result of the interest in communicative classroom activities, research has been carried out into the relationship between language and the mind. One of the main concepts of this theory is that “language activity, including both speech and writing, functions as the chief mediating mechanism for human cognitive activity” and that language gives humans the ability to organize processes such as voluntary memory, planning, attention, rational thought and learning (Antón, Dicamilla, and Lantolf, 2003). The effect of social context on language learning was emphasized by Lantolf and Appel (1994) based on the work of the Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1962). Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development is defined 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 (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development is based on interpersonal activity and the higher cognitive process that results from it, rather than the performance of a specific task (Lantolf and Appel, 1994). Coughlan and Duff (1994), in the context of their study, define a task as “a kind of ‘behavioral blueprint’ provided to subjects in order to elicit



linguistic data” and an activity as “the process as well as the outcome, of a task, examined in its sociocultural context” which has “no set of objectives in and of itself – rather, participants have their own objectives, all of which are negotiated (either implicitly or explicitly) over the course of the interaction” (p. 174-175). Another study (Brooks, Donato, and McGlone, 1997) following Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of speaking and learning examined the use of L1 and L2 in metatalk (learners talking about their own talk) and metacognition (talking about how they will carry out the task). They found the use of these strategies an important part of language acquisition.

Also of importance to this theory is the concept of “scaffolding” in which an expert, through verbal interactions, guides a novice in problem-solving situations (Wood, Bruner, and Ross 1976; Stone 1993). In the process of scaffolding, individuals work in collaboration to arrive at the same definition of objects, events and goals (Wertsch 1985). Studies have been carried out by other scholars to determine how dialogue between teachers and students, and between students working in collaboration, leads to language learning (Donato 1994; Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994; Villamil and De Guerrero 1996; Swain and Lapkin 1998).

A study by Gillette (1994) suggested that “Vygotskian psycholinguistic theory, with its claim that the initial motive for engaging in an activity is what determines its outcome, provides a useful framework for explaining why the isolated use of positive language learning strategies on the part of ineffective language learners rarely leads to success.” Gillette’s study “cautions against the assumption that strategy training will automatically lead to better language learning” and further states that “successful language learning depends on an individual’s willingness to make every effort to acquire

an L2 rather than superior cognitive processing alone” (p. 212). The theories proposed by Vygotsky and others, provide evidence for the potential for positive outcomes related to cooperative groupwork such as that included in the present study.

### *Communicative Language Teaching*

The teaching of language for communication grew out of the teaching tradition of Sweet (1899), Jones (1917, 1918), and Firth (1951) which viewed language as interaction that is clearly related to society. In this way language study approached language in both its linguistic and social contexts, taking into account verbal and nonverbal actions of the learners in a specific context (Berns, 1984).

Richards and Rodgers (1986) describe Communicative Language Teaching as an *approach* that does not follow a particular theory of language learning, but does adhere to the following principles:

1. The communicative principle: Activities that involve communication promote language learning.
2. The task principle: Activities that involve the completion of real-world tasks promote learning.
3. The meaningfulness principle: Learners must be engaged in meaningful and authentic language use for learning to take place (Richards and Rodgers 1986, p. 72)

Typical classroom activities would include information sharing activities, task-based activities, social interaction, functional communication practice and interactive language games (Richards and Rodgers 1986). Savignon (1983, 1997) proposes designing classes to include language analysis activities, content-based activities, personalized language use, and role plays, among others.

Pica (1987) and Pica and Doughty (1985) determined from classroom research that teacher-centered classrooms offered little opportunity for negotiation of meaning or group work in which students must arrive at a consensus. Also addressed in this study (Pica and Doughty 1985) were the questions regarding the differences between teacher-fronted and small group activities regarding the grammatical accuracy of production, level of turn taking, the monitoring that occurred, and the overall language production by each student. They found that the level of grammatical accuracy in the teacher-fronted activities was greater, but that it was due to the teachers providing greater accuracy. The student production was not significantly more accurate in teacher-fronted activities than in small group activities. The study indicated that small group activities provided more opportunity for individual learners to participate (p. 131). (Pica and Doughty's (1985) research indicated that information gap activities, in which each participant has information needed by the others, led to language modification. They determined that language modification made language comprehensible and that comprehensible language, in turn, led to acquisition. The researchers recommended a combination of small-group and whole-class instruction since relying primarily on group activities might "restrict the amount of grammatical input available" (p. 132). These results indicate the potential advantages for the inclusion of a variety of group- and whole-class strategies in the

classroom, as has been incorporated into the present study. Further developments in approaches to SL teaching are described in the next section.

### *The Importance of Instruction*

In the late 1980s and 1990s linguists became more aware of the individual differences among learners, the importance of learner strategies and the type and level of instruction in the classroom. There was concern that when learning focuses almost exclusively on meaning and almost completely eliminated formal aspects of language, learners might not reach high levels of performance and linguistic knowledge in spite of extensive input in the target language (Harley & Swain 1984; Lightbrown & Spada 1990; Swain & Lapkin 1982, 1986).

Language teaching approaches such as the Natural Approach (Terrell 1977), The Silent Way (Gattegno 1976), and Suggestopedia (Lozanov 1978) were structured so that learners received little or no linguistic explanation or practice in the classroom, studied structures and vocabulary independently outside of the classroom, and used time in class for communicative activities. Discussions arose, leading to renewed interest in the role of formal instruction on learners gaining proficiency in the target language and the roles of grammar instruction versus communication. Bratt-Paulston (1987) proposed that the integration of form and content was the most important issue. Pica (1989) suggested it was important to assess learner readiness and to select and sequence grammatical rules. About this same time a debate began regarding the roles of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) and comprehensible output (Swain 1985). Researchers such as Long (1985) and Pica et al. (1987) emphasized the importance of negotiated interaction in

order to facilitate comprehension and acquisition among learners. This type of research was expanded upon, as described in Chapter 2 of the present study, by Leow (1998a, 1998b) who stressed the importance of the acknowledgement of interlanguage (IL), and negotiation of meaning in the classroom.

### *Meaning, Focus , Form*

In general, linguists are in agreement that language acquisition occurs in L2 learners when they participate in classroom activities that involve interaction that includes comprehensive input and output (Krashen 1985; Long 1983, Pica, 1992; Swain 1985). Ellis (1995) suggested that, in addition to drawing L2 learners' attention to communicating a message, a case has been made for including activities that also require a focus on form (Ellis 1993a; VanPatten 1993, 1996, 2002; White 1987) so that they will notice the difference between the form of the item as they are currently using it, and the input they are receiving. Long (1998a, 1991) made a distinction between *focus on forms* (*forms-focused instruction*), which involves the learner paying systematic attention to specific aspects of grammar, and *focus on form* (*FonF instruction*), in which the formal properties of the language are contextualized within the framework of communicative interaction. Long (1981, 1983b, 1996) proposed an Interaction Hypothesis which states that second language acquisition (SLA) is neither purely environmentalist nor purely linguistic. According to this hypothesis, it is interaction between learners and other speakers and, particularly, interaction between learners and more proficient speakers that creates a crucial site for language development and stresses the importance of the

negotiation for meaning that can happen, depending on the type of tasks in which learners participate (Long 1997b).

As stated by Doughty and Williams (1998):

*Focus on form* refers to how focal attentional resources are allocated. Although there are degrees of attention, and although attention to forms and attention to meaning are not always mutually exclusive, during an otherwise meaning-focused classroom lesson, focus on form often consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features – by the teacher and/or one of more students – triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production...The usual and fundamental orientation is to meaning and communication, but factors arise that lead even the fluent language user temporarily to attend to the language itself (pp. 23-24).

The importance of determining when attention to form may be of most benefit to L2 learners was addressed by Lightbrown and Spada (1990) who indicated that “the timing of the focus on form is of an importance equal to that of the techniques used in teaching or correcting grammatical points (p. 433).

The brief focus on form in context is not the right moment for explanations or presentations of grammatical points. When explicit grammar teaching is done, however, VanPatten’s “input-processing instruction” is a good model of the type of grammar teaching that ... separate lessons or minilessons might take (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993a, 1993b). In these contexts where the emphasis is on understanding the linguistic features rather than on producing them, students can get clear examples, simple explanations, and some experience in paying attention to one thing at a time (p. 194).

Lightbrown and Spada (1990), in an English as a Second Language (ESL) study found significant differences in accuracy in the use of English structures such as progressive –ing endings and adjective-noun order between groups using a teaching approach that combined “focus on form” with a communicative approach to language teaching. The study was carried out with speakers of French, aged 10-12, in an intensive 5-month ESL class. The outcome suggested that “accuracy, fluency, and overall communicative skills are probably best developed through instruction that is primarily meaning-based but in which guidance is provided through timely form-focus activities and correction in context” (p. 443).

In another study, Doughty (1991) examined the role of salience in a study of three groups of learners participating in a computer-assisted language learning project about relative clauses. There were two groups in addition to the control group. One experimental group received meaning-oriented instruction -with no explanation of the grammar involved; the second group was given rule-oriented materials. Both groups improved more or less equally, demonstrating that both pedagogical interventions drew the learners’ attention to the formation of relative clauses.

DeKeyser (1995) and Robinson (1995a) found that explicit FonF instruction led to significantly greater short-term learning than did rule-based instruction. Ellis (1993) studied the learning of the highly complex rules of Welsh morphology by English speakers. He found that the learners in the structured group, who were taught a blend of rules and examples in which the structural changes were salient, showed a greater knowledge of the rules than the learners in the random group or the grammar group that was taught the rules. These studies suggest that awareness of and focus on morphological

features can improve L2 learners' acquisition of particular forms. When this Focus on Form is combined with a focus on meaning through Processing Instruction, insight into acquisition can be further enhanced.

### *Processing Instruction*

Input processing stresses the form-meaning relationship and the importance of the learner focusing on form so that input is converted to intake. Research in cognitive psychology sees language acquisition as limited by the human being's inability to process all of the information he or she is exposed to at one time (McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod, 1983). The fact that second language learners are able to take in only part of the language they are exposed to can be attributed to limited processing capacity as well as other factors such as content, grammatical complexity, and pragmatic information. VanPatten (1985, 1989) explained that the information (input) that learners are exposed to is processed as intake. He stated that "Given the limited capacity for processing involved in conscious attention and that conscious processing is serial in nature, it is doubtful that learners in the early and intermediate stages of acquisition consciously attend to form in the input" (1989, p.409).

VanPatten (2000) proposed that the goal of Processing Instruction is to change the less-than-optimal strategies for making form-meaning connections, so that learners can use them in the task of acquisition." Harrington (2004) explained:

At the heart of the Information Processing model is the connection the learner makes between form and meaning...Form is used in two different ways in the input processing account. In the first instance it is used to refer to the *surface*



*forms* the learner encounters in the input. These written or spoken forms are what the learner perceives, notices processes, and potentially internalizes. Form in this sense is interchangeable with the term *items*. But the term is also used to refer to non-content words in the input or what is called grammatical form. Grammatical form is a linguistic category and is defined by its role in the abstract linguistic system (pp. 82-83).

In the presentation of grammar and activities used to practice a grammar point, studies have shown a positive effect for input processing in a communicative classroom setting (VanPatten and Oikkenon 1996; VanPatten and Sanz, 1995; VanPatten and Cadierno 1993).

The study carried out by VanPatten and Cadierno (1995) explored the relative effects of traditional instruction and processing instruction on comprehension and production of Spanish preterite tense morphology. Learners who received processing instruction showed a positive effect in comprehension and production while learners receiving traditional instruction showed positive effect only in production. These results are of interest to the present study since they illuminate a related area of inquiry in the acquisition of Spanish past tense morphology. The teaching approach proposed by Westfall and Foerster (1996), which forms the basis for the present study, incorporates Information Processing concepts as outlined in the next section.

### *Temporal Aspectual Discourse*

Temporal aspectual discourse as described here reflects elements related to both time and aspect in Spanish. Second language acquisition research has shown that in

beginning and intermediate acquisition, aspect predominates over tense (Andersen 1986, 1991; Andersen & Shirai 1994; Bardovi-Harlig 1995). In this research a relationship was also found between the lexical aspect and the marking of grammatical aspect through the use of verbal morphology. Aspect was defined by Comrie (1976) as the “way of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation (p. 3).” Grammatical aspect is related to the meaning expressed by the inflectional morphology the speaker uses. Inherent lexical aspect, on the other hand, refers to the meaning of the verb that represents the action or event (López-Ortega 2000).

Other factors that enter into an analysis of discourse are the grounding principles of discourse (Hopper 1979). Hopper proposed that a narrative consists of principles of foreground and background events. Foreground events move the narrative forward along a timeline, while background events consist of commentary, observations, and evaluations that add more information, but do not move the story line forward in time (p. 215).

The Spanish temporal system has both simple and compound tense marking. The preterite encodes the perfect aspect, while the imperfect encodes the imperfective aspect. For example:

Preterite – *Luis trabajó esta mañana.* (Luis worked this morning.)

In this sentence, Luis worked at a definite time in the past, a perfective action with a specific time frame.

Imperfect – *Luis trabajaba todas las noches.* (Luis worked/used to work every night.)

In this sentence, Luis habitually worked at night, an imperfective action with an undefined time frame.

The above is a general outline designed to highlight some of the primary guidelines for beginning and intermediate L2 learners. These and other factors were taken into account by Westfall and Foerster (1996) in the preparation of a teaching approach with the potential for providing orientation for SL learners beyond the traditional focus on aspect. Their approach proposed the integration of the use of discourse along with instruction in order to assist learners to focus not only on the differences in aspect between the Spanish preterite and imperfect, but also the differences between temporal and aspectual issues when learners are engaged in discourse strategies.

In Westfall and Foerster's (1996) approach, learners were asked "to invest mental energy so that they can move from the input stage (semantic level) to the intake stage (syntactic level) through conscious effort to recognize form and meaning" (Westfall and Foerster 1996, p.79) as outlined by VanPatten (1993), Van Lier (1988), and VanPatten (1990). These studies revealed that when students are given the opportunity to make form and meaning connections, they are more likely to have a positive learning outcome.

Westfall and Foerster (1996) proposed that temporal discourse serve as the focus of the presentation of the past tenses to L2 learners, as opposed to the traditional focus on aspect in most textbooks. This would be accomplished by providing learners with explanation and practice related to the introduction or non-introduction of "new reference times into the discourse and the forward movement of the narrative timeline" (p. 551). The authors suggested that by receiving instruction and practice in both the temporal and aspectual properties of the preterite tense, learners would gain more experience and a clearer understanding of differences in meaning between the preterite and imperfect. The initial emphasis in this approach is on the preterite tense as the starting point for learners'

becoming more aware of meaning, morphological forms, and their interconnectedness. This theoretical approach and recommendations for its implementation in the classroom, as it affects the teaching of the Spanish preterite tense, will be considered in more detail later.

### *Summary*

The research and approaches to instruction outlined here explores efforts to provide an environment conducive to L2 acquisition. We began with the GLM, in which there was little opportunity for communicative interaction in the classroom, and followed the progression of some of the most salient L2 acquisition theories through the twentieth and into the early twenty-first-century. This chapter concludes with instructional theories leading to a greater focus on communicative strategies in the classroom, as is the case with the present study on the teaching of the preterite tense. Temporal aspectual discourse focuses primarily on learners' comprehension of meaning but emphasizes but emphasizes grammatical form and the opportunity for practice of morphological forms as well. informed by elements from earlier theories and teaching approaches. Previous theories and approaches to instruction play a role in the continuing pursuit of effective language learning strategies as can be seen also in the next section which will explore research that focuses specifically on teaching approaches to the preterite tense, and on theory related to its acquisition.

## Chapter Two – TEACHING THE SPANISH PRETERITE TENSE

### *Introduction*

A limited number of studies have been devoted to approaches to the teaching of preterite verbs and it is of interest to the present study to address them. Also included in this chapter are theoretical approaches that have led, or may lead, to classroom applications. The majority of the research carried out related to the teaching of the Spanish preterite tense has focused on the necessary distinction L2 learners must make between using the preterite or the imperfect tense when referring to past events. Since the forms of preterite verbs are more complex morphologically than are those of imperfect verbs and present more of a challenge to learners and their teachers, it appears worthwhile to analyze the ways in which the preterite is taught. Imperfect verbs follow very regular conjugations and there are only three irregular verbs. The following are examples of imperfect verbs in the *-ar*, and *-er/-ir* (since these verbs have the same endings in the imperfect tense) conjugations:

*-ar*  
*hablar* (to talk)

*yo      hablaba*  
(I talked/was talking)

*tú      hablabas*  
(you talked/were talking)

*él/ella, Ud. hablaba*  
(he/she, you talked/were talking)

*-er*  
*comer* (to eat)

*yo comía*  
(I ate/was eating)

*tú comías*  
(you ate/were eating)

*él/ella, Ud. comía*  
(he/she, you ate/were eating)

*nosotros hablábamos*  
(we talked/were talking)

*nosotros comíamos*  
(we ate/were eating)

*vosotros hablábais*  
(you talked/were talking)

*vosotros comíais*  
(you ate/were eating)

*ellos/ellas/ Uds. hablaban*  
(they/you talked/were talking)

*ellos/ellas, Uds. comían*  
(they/you ate/were eating)

An example of an irregular verb in the imperfect is:

*ser* (to be): *yo era* (I was), *tú eras* (you were), *él/ella, Ud. era* (he/she, you were) *nosotros éramos* (we were), *vosotros érais* (you were), *ellos/ellas, Uds. eran* (they/you were)

It is of interest to note that preterite verb acquisition entails the recognition and production of a large number of irregular verbs that occur with high frequency, as well as a number of verbs with stem-changes that follow a different pattern from those that occur in the present tense. Due to the morphological complexity of preterite verbs, a few researchers have focused on approaches to teaching this verb form. Example of preterite tense verbs may be found in Appendix B.

A summary of publications related to approaches to teaching the Spanish preterite is outlined in Table 2.1. Other theory-based studies that have analyzed the manner in which preterite verbs might best be acquired are outlined in Table 2.2. Because the present investigation examines an approach to teaching the Spanish preterite, the research studies reviewed in this chapter are related primarily to empirical studies that examine the application of thematicity, cognitive awareness, and processing instruction. Also included are five studies exploring theory-based explorations of preterite tense acquisition. The first section of this chapter describes research into the effects of using interlanguage analysis and thematicity in teaching the Spanish preterite tense. The

second section describes research on cognitive awareness strategies in learning the Spanish preterite tense. The third section examines research that studies the implementation of processing instruction and the alteration of strategies used by learners. The fourth section describes SL acquisition theories applied to the preterite tense that may provide the basis for future empirical studies leading to new or modified teaching approaches.

Table 2.1

*Research on Teaching the Preterite Tense*

Author	Participants	Teaching Approach	Results
Wieczorek, J.A. (1989)	19 high school students learning Spanish	athematicity and interlanguage analysis	-instruction in athematic data before test led to better recall of verb forms -may be useful as an alternative to teaching 'regular' and 'irregular' verb systems
Wieczorek, J.A. (1991)	800 high school students learning Spanish	interlanguage analysis	-provided concentration on interaction and negotiation of meaning compared to negative error analysis
Leow, R.P. (1997)	28 university undergraduates learning Spanish	think-aloud awareness	-different levels of awareness lead to differences in processing -meta-awareness correlates with use of concept-driven processing, testing of hypotheses, and morphological rule formation
Leow, R.P. (1998a)	83 university undergraduates learning Spanish	effects of cognitive awareness	-learners showing greater cognitive registration of targeted forms and perform better on recognition and written production.
Leow, R.P. (1998b)	88 university undergraduates learning Spanish	cognitive awareness and amount, type, & time of exposure	-multiple exposures to morphological forms lead to L2 learner's ability to produce forms; effects hold over 1 semester -learner-centered teaching appears to facilitate greater ability to take in and write the forms after 1 semester compared to teacher-centered instruction
Cadierno, T. (1995)	61 university undergraduates learning Spanish	processing instruction vs. traditional instruction	-changes in how learners process input are more beneficial than how they process output -learners alter strategies by using input processing to make input salient



### *Athematicity*

As part of a larger study Wieczorek discussed the application of the principles of Natural Generative Grammar (NGG) to teaching Spanish grammar, as opposed to the methodology of presenting Spanish verbs based on Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) and identifying the verbs as a “stem-and-ending” system of verb conjugation. Athematicity (Cressey 1972, 1978) presents a framework that applies to Spanish verbs. In this theoretical construct, the theme vowels normally present in verb conjugations are absent. In Spanish, a, e, or i are the theme vowels that appear before the infinitive marker, r, in the infinitive form of the verb. “Athematicity therefore implies a degree of regularity within verb morphology, and encompasses specified forms of the preterite...” (Wieczorek, p.3). The concept of emphasizing the surface forms of verbs for TL (target language) learners is supported by research indicating that there is a high degree of similarity between verb forms and generalization for L2 learners (Canale & Swain 1980; Larsen-Freeman 1983b; Evin-Tripp 1974). In this study Wieczorek (1989) addresses,

(1) how to characterize and organize verb morphology within a Natural Generative Grammar; (2) how this organization relates directly to the results of testing; (3) how such an organization leads to implications for second language pedagogy. An attempt is made in this study to organize Spanish verb morphology for ultimate application in the classroom (p. 2).

The object of this study was the application of linguistic theory in the second language classroom. The combined control and experimental groups consisted of twenty second- and third-year high school students. The experimental group of eleven high

school students was taught Spanish verbs in the present tense, preterite tense, present subjunctive, future tense, past participles, and affirmative familiar commands as an athematic set of verbs. These students were compared to a control group of nine high school students who were taught that some of these types of verbs are ‘regular’ while others are ‘irregular.’ All participants took a pre-test, test, and posttest. The test items for preterite verbs consisted of a series of short, unrelated sentences in which students provided the TL form of the verb in the preterite tense (Wieczorek, p. 112).

The experimental group of students was given an explanation of verb morphology for the three theme vowels in Spanish verbs with the infinitive endings, *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir* verbs. Wieczorek (1989) followed features of athematicity (Theme Vowel Deletion) discussed by Foley (1965), Harris (1969), and Cressey (1972, 1978). Wieczorek (1989) proposed a preterite teaching methodology, as illustrated below for *-ar* verbs using ‘hablar’ (to speak):

Current method		Proposed method		
STEM	ENDING	STEM	THEME VOWEL	ENDING
habl	é	habl	--	é
habl	aste	habl	a	ste
habl	ó	habl	--	ó
habl	amos	habl	a	mos
habl	aron	habl	a	aron (p. 230)

Using the proposed method the explanation given to students was that only athematic forms of the verb that do not include the theme vowel, the first and third person singular forms, have a stress mark.

Preterite verbs that are considered ‘irregular’ in TGG, “follow the stress pattern for Spanish, but their inflection does not contain the theme vowel. Athematicity in this

case is clear in NGG...the athematicity of these verbs is predictable,” (p. 93-94). The testing of preterite verbs showed that Interlanguage (IL) (Selinker 1972, 1974) “strategies are more numerous in the preterite tense” and a “greater number of non-standard forms,” (Wierczorek p. 158). Wierczorek’s (1989) results demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, indicating that “athematicity is a learnable feature of verbs,” (p. 251) and “further testing can indicate if pursuit in these areas is worthwhile,” (p. 253). Athematicity presents a less complicated morphological system for preterite verbs that shows potential for encouraging learners to view the preterite tense as less of a challenge in the process of second language acquisition. It is related to the present study in its efforts to focus learners’ attention on preterite verb forms in a way that may make it easier for learners to make form-meaning connections. The next section describes additional research by the same investigator who used data from this study to explore Interlanguage Analysis in the classroom.

### *Interlanguage Analysis*

Wierczorek (1991) stated that “It is now considered *passé* in applied linguistics to analyze errors; we opt instead for an all-encompassing interlanguage analysis (IA) to characterize the speech of nonnatives,” (p. 498-499). However, error correction, or Error Analysis (EA), in the classroom can be a main source of feedback to students on their language production (Chaudron 1988). Wierczorek (1991) proposed “options beyond error analysis” in the Spanish classroom by focusing on written corrections to preterite forms taught to L2 students. He provided data (Wierczorek 1989) “to demonstrate the potential usefulness of IA to the second language classroom,” (p. 499).

Wieczorek (1991) acknowledged that a current focus on communicative competence in the classroom has led to the meaningful use of language in the classroom being stressed (Davies, 1989; Major 1988, 82; Pica 1988b, 72; Terrell 1989, 992). In addition, other researchers have questioned the effectiveness of direct error correction (Krashen 1982, Krashen & Terrell 1983). Echoing other studies (e.g., Brown 1981, p. 171; van Berken 1987), Wieczorek (1991, p. 500-501) provided reasons to justify the existence of error correction in the L2 classroom. These included:

1. Performance objectives written in behavioral terms.
2. Norm-oriented standardized local, state, and national testing.
3. The professional obligation of teachers to administer and correct exams.
4. Texts that seldom allow for nonstandard or dialect forms.
5. State teacher certification in many states that require training in methodology but not applied linguistics.
6. Grading policies tend to be based on right/wrong TS forms, rather than on developing IL forms.
7. Grades are based on an evaluation of L2 consistent with written norms from TL forms.

Taking the above into account, Wieczorek (1991) explained that IA seems to be more in line with communicative approaches to L2 teaching (Nickel 1987). However, EA focused on form or structural output (Königs & Hopkins 1986), but did not take into account the IL processes involved in IL strategies (Celce-Murcia & Hawkins 1985; Chaudron 1987; Tarone 1979). Based on data from his 1989 study Wieczorek suggests that interlanguage analysis (IA) could potentially respond to theoretical and practical issues in the classroom and that there are “some justifiable reasons that error correction should exist in the L2 classroom.” As a continuation of his initial study (Wieczorek 1989), Wieczorek (1991) presented an analysis of IL development of errors and correct forms of preterite verbs. The learners were taught the preterite tense using the “normal

introduction to the preterite based on the addition of the inflectional morphemes *-é, -aste, -ó, imos, -isteis, -ieron* (i.e. to the stem minus the theme vowel and the infinitive marker), and *-í, -iste, -ió, -imos, -isteis, -ieron* to the base of both *-er* and *-ir* infinitives. A third set of endings, *-e, -iste, -o, -imos, -isteis, -(i)eron*, is added to the “irregular” set of verbs (p. 502).” By adding the third set of endings, the learners were provided with another set of endings applicable to a group of “irregular” verbs that occur in *-ar, -er, and -ir* conjugations. Wiczorek then tested experimental and control groups on 22 preterite verb forms in order to determine IL development of the preterite tense. The author noted a number of incorrect IL preterite verb forms produced in the study. Some of them, such as *\*tenió, \*poní, or \*yo dijo, \*tuviaó, and \*pusió*, could possibly be comprehended by native speakers or nonnative speakers and, therefore, serve a communicative purpose and further negotiation of meaning could occur. The data indicated that while EA and error correction are negative forms of feedback, negotiation of meaning and interaction in the TL (Chaudron 1988; Long 1988; Pica 1988a, 1988b) can be realized without the need to define developing IL forms as errors. In Wiczorek’s (1991) research, the learners’ attention was focused on the preterite verb endings and included what are normally defined in most textbooks as “irregular” verbs, as a set of verbs with systematic endings. This approach to presenting the preterite tense relates to the present study in its emphasis on the developing morphological systems of L2 learners, and its focus on learners’ being encouraged to engage in communicative activities in their developing systems. In the next section another study focuses on the amount of exposure to preterite verb forms in a cognitive attentional framework. In the present study, in order to take into account intermediate effects of instruction that might have influenced the learners’ developing

language system, the scoring procedure used on pre- and posttests was in a 2, 1, 0 format, rather than an either/or scoring procedure that would not have revealed this effect. The next section explores further research into attention and its potential relationship to L2 acquisition.

### *Cognitive Attention*

Schmidt (1990) proposed that for adult learners to acquire a second language, awareness and attention are necessary to facilitate the process of input being converted to intake. Leow (1997) studied the role of consciousness and awareness in L2 learning of the Spanish preterite tense, based on Schmidt's (1990, 1994) noticing hypothesis. Also taken into account was Robinson's (1995) proposal that the type of task may affect the way learners process information. Other SLA researchers (Doughty, 1991, 1998; White, et al, 1991) have studied the presentation of input designed to draw attention to certain forms. Pica (1992) studied the usefulness and effectiveness of negotiation of meaning in the classroom. Comprehensible input and attention to form (Mangubhai, 1991; VanPatten 1990) have also been studied.

Leow (1997) carried out a study related to Schmidt's (1990, 1993, 1994, 1995) noticing hypothesis in SLA. Schmidt's "noticing hypothesis" proposes that learners need to be consciously aware of specific forms in the input at the level of noticing them in order for language acquisition to occur. In order to evaluate this hypothesis, Leow addressed the role of learners' awareness and how it affects L2 learners' behavior. The study evaluated awareness on recorded think-aloud protocols in the completion of a problem-solving task in the form of a crossword puzzle. Production of correct forms was measured by a fill-in-the-blank written task. The subjects were 28 first-year Spanish

college-level students. The learners completed a crossword-puzzle task and recorded their thoughts while completing the puzzle. In addition, the learners' performances were measured on two pre-test and immediate post-exposure tasks in the form of a multiple-choice recognition task and a fill-in-the-blank written production task.

The morphological form targeted on these tasks was the Spanish *-ir* conjugation, stem-changing preterite verbs in the singular and plural third-person forms. The preterite verbs used were those "irregular" *-ir* verbs that undergo a stem change like that in the verb *repetir* "to repeat" in which the *e* in the stem changes to an *i*, or the verb *morir* "to die" in which the *o* changes to a *u*. The patterns for these two verbs would be as follows:

*Repetir: repetí* (I repeated), *repetiste* (you repeated) *repitió* (he repeated)...

*Morir: morí* (I died), *moriste* (you died), *murió* (he died)...

The author selected these forms and used them in a crossword-puzzle format because the learners would be involved in a problem-solving activity requiring a degree of awareness and attention to the task. Also, the crossword puzzle encourages some kind of cognitive change (awareness) related to the design of the task. The crossword puzzle promotes "naturally occurring processing that lends itself to the use of think-alouds and therefore should not have any substantial effect on participants' performances (p. 475)." In order to support learners' noticing of the targeted linguistic forms, the author manipulated clues to the crossword puzzle by providing the stem-changing vowels in irregular forms. For example, the irregular "u" in the third person singular "*murió*" was supplied by the "u" of the possessive adjective, "tu" in the clue, "*Es un adjetivo posesivo (segunda persona singular)*" ("It is a possessive adjective [second person singular]" (p. 476). This would have the effect of promoting some kind of attention to the variance between the two

vowels under consideration. The crossword puzzle was designed to measure awareness, the multiple-choice recognition task to measure learner's intake, and the fill-in-the blank test to measure production. The items included in the pre- and post-tests were similar to the crossword puzzle items, except that the subjects of verbs were changed and the items were randomly assigned.

The results from the think-aloud protocols found that “meta-awareness appears to correlate with an increased usage of conceptually-driven processing, such as hypothesis testing and morphological rule formation; absence of meta-awareness appears to correlate with the absence of such conceptually-driven processing” (Leow 1997, p. 484). The results of the investigation of the effect of level of awareness on the learners' immediate performance on both a recognition and a written task indicated that more awareness led to more recognition and more accurate written production. This study suggested that the learners who demonstrated meta-awareness and also expressed an understanding of underlying morphological rules showed a higher level of recognition and production of morphological forms than other learners. This study was purposely limited to the exploration of the effects of noticing at a morphological level in order to provide more information about the facilitative role of awareness on L2 behavior.

In a similar study, to test Tomlin and Villa's (1994) cognitive science perspective, Leow (1998b) used a task-based approach to investigate the immediate and delayed effects of “alertness, orientation, and detection” (p. 133) . The subjects were 83 college level beginning Spanish learners. After receiving instruction in regular Spanish *-ir* verbs they were divided into four groups (one a control group) and completed a crossword made up of irregular *-ir* verbs. The targeted morphological forms were third person



singular and plural Spanish preterite verbs. The puzzles were designed to determine differences in attention, alertness, and detection, and consisted of the same materials described above for Leow's (1997) earlier study on preterite verbs. While solving the crossword puzzles, the subjects tape-recorded their thoughts about the puzzles. Posttests were given immediately following the experimental treatment and at 3-week and two-month periods.

Leow (1998b) determined that detection was crucial to the development of L2 morphology and its processing into short-term memory. It also appeared from this study that "alertness and/or orientation" may contribute to the occurrence of detection. However, the effects of detection seemed to wear off if the subjects received no further exposure to the targeted forms. Leow's research provides insight into L2 learners' processing of morphological forms that provides indications that focus on and detection of preterite verb forms may be an important factor in acquisition. The present study is designed around an approach that incorporates strategies designed to promote learners' attention to and awareness of preterite verb morphology, and showed similar outcomes to those of a temporal aspectual discourse approach. In an additional study Leow (1998a) investigated cognition and attention over a longer period of time.

#### *Cognitive Attention and Amount and Type of Exposure*

Leow (1998a) continued research on the irregular third person singular and plural stem-changing preterite *-ir* verbs in Spanish. These morphological forms were studied because they tend to be more problematic due to their irregularity and lack of salient features. Under a cognitive attentional framework, Leow (1998a) investigated the effects

of the type and amount of exposure to the same morphological forms in teacher-centered and learner-centered classrooms. In addition, this study illuminated performance related to the type of postexposure task, either recognition or production. The study was carried out in four subject groups and instruction was received over 3 weeks (7 1/2 hours) at the beginning of the study. The subjects were 88 first-year college Spanish students. Those in the amount of exposure groups were given a pretest, exposure, an immediate posttest, additional exposure and two posttests. All groups took delayed posttests at 11 weeks, and at 14 weeks (two weeks into the following semester.)

The results of Leow's (1998a) investigation demonstrated that learner-centered exposure that is designed to encourage attention at the level of noticing was beneficial to the L2 learners' cognitive registration of the morphological forms to which they were exposed. Their recognition and production of the targeted forms were significantly higher than in the teacher-centered groups, that showed a significant decline in their delayed tests. The results of this study by Leow demonstrated a positive effect for a learner-centered teaching approach. This is similar to the emphasis the in present work on learner-centered strategies with a focus on drawing attention to preterite verb forms, however, in the present study learners were provided with instruction and practice for two consecutive days. The effects of production over time are similar to those of the present study. Additional research into learner attention to preterite verb morphology is described in the next section.

### *Applied Processing Instruction*

The ways in which L2 learners process input as proposed in Processing Instruction (VanPatten 1985, 1989, 2000, 2002) was explored by Sanz and Fernández (1992) who analyzed the processing of temporal cues in the form of temporal adverbs and verb tense morphology. The verb morphology under study was the simple present, preterite, and simple future tenses. The purpose of this study was to determine whether beginning L2 learners would attend predominantly to the more salient temporal adverbs, and advanced L2 learners would attend chiefly to the more reliable verb tense morphology. Also included in this study were sentences with ambiguous temporal adverb and tense sentences.

The subjects were two groups of 30 L2 learners, one beginning group of non-native students and one advanced group, and one group of 30 native-speaker students. They viewed fifty sentences containing both adverb and tense cues, some of which were contradictory. The results indicated that the beginning group depended on the temporal adverbs to decide on the tense, while the advanced L2 group attended to the verb morphology to determine tense. The contradictory cues proved difficult for both groups of L2 learners as compared to the native speakers. The results of Sanz and Fernández's research appear to be consistent with those of the present study, with the difference that the materials in the present study included adverbials. The research that follows is related to Sanz and Fernández's study in its emphasis on Processing Instruction.

In her study on the teaching of the Spanish preterite tense, Cadierno (1995) compared two types of instruction, traditional instruction and processing instruction. Traditional instruction was defined as grammar explanation followed by practice based

on output. In contrast, processing instruction consisted of grammar explanation and input-based practice “aimed at redirecting learners’ strategies in processing input data” (p. 179).

In previous studies VanPatten and Cadierno (1993a, 1993b) found that processing instruction appeared “to impact both on how subjects processed input and on what the subjects could access for production,” (Cadierno 1995, p. 181). In comparison, traditional instruction demonstrated little influence on how learners processed input, but did have a significant impact on what learners could produce. This study examines the effect of instruction on an input processing strategy, “lexical processing,” reported to be the preferred processing strategy for L2 learners who would rather process lexical items than grammatical items (Cadierno and Glass 1991; Glass and Cadierno 1990; Musumeci 1989). In these studies, when L2 learners were presented with utterances containing adverbs and verbal morphology, they tended to depend on the information in the adverbs for making temporal distinctions. Terrell (1991) also supported these results and further stated that instruction could lead to L2 learners forming grammatical meaning-form relationships for nonsalient morphological forms and past-reference forms made redundant by the presence of adverbs. In this way, learners could be encouraged to notice and pay attention to the morphological information present in the input.

Taking this into account, Cadierno (1995) investigated the possibility of changing the way learners process preterite past tense verb forms. The subjects were 61 college level students enrolled in a third-semester course. They were divided into three treatment groups: no instruction, traditional instruction, and processing instruction. The traditional instruction group received traditional grammar teaching of past tense verb morphology.

The subjects were presented with preterite verb endings which they practiced and used to produce past-tense sentences in mechanical, meaningful, and open-ended contexts. The processing instruction group received instruction that included focusing the learners' attention on past tense verb morphology during the input phase. The preterite verb endings were presented and clues given as to how they could be recognized; present and preterite tense verbs were contrasted and de-coded; instruction emphasized interpretation and comprehension of the targeted items rather than production.

The results of this study suggested that L2 learners benefited more when instruction was directed at the processing of input rather than the manipulation of output. Teaching grammar by implementing input processing gives the learners strategies to use as they process the input. In the course of this instruction, input becomes salient, in accordance with other research (Ellis 1990; VanPatten, 1986) in this area. This study suggested altering the way L2 learners process input as part of a program for second language acquisition instruction that seeks first to make changes in the learner's developing system but later include the opportunity for output practice. The research design of the present study is related to Cadierno's (1995) research design in its focus is on a learner-centered, information processing approach to teaching the preterite tense. As in Cadierno's study, a positive effect for production following temporal aspectual discourse instruction, also a learner-centered approach, was found at the intermediate level in the present study. A positive effect was also reflected in the present study for beginning learners. The teaching approach proposed by Westfall and Foerster (1996) is also based on information processing (VanPatten 1986) in its design.

The research presented in the next section provides an overview of studies carried out involving the preterite tense. The research related to athematicity (Wieczorek 1989) focused on the form in which preterite verb conjugations were presented to L2 learners, showing more consistencies, in comparison to the traditional presentation of the forms. The results showed a positive effect for learnability. In a subsequent study, Wieczorek (1991), using data from his 1989 study, evaluated the usefulness of interlanguage analysis as a potential means for L2 learners to communicate through negotiation of meaning using IL, or “nonnative” forms of preterite verbs. The testing in both cases was based on production and did not necessarily involve understanding of the meaning of the test items.

In his research related to the effects of alertness, orientation, and detection, Leow (1997, 1998b) found that L2 learners who were alert and oriented to the crossword puzzle format of the task they were completing were better able to recognize and produce the preterite forms. Leow (1998a) also carried out this line of investigation over a longer period of time and included additional exposure to the morphological forms in learner-centered and teacher-centered classrooms. In all three studies a crossword puzzle format was used for testing. The findings suggest that L2 learners given multiple exposures to preterite verbs in learner-centered classrooms are better able to identify and produce this morphological form. In these studies, Leow explored the effect of alerting and orienting learners to morphological form, and moved beyond to study the results of adding the factor of differences in teaching methodology as they might affect the production of the preterite verb forms.

Cadierno (1995), testing acquisition of preterite verb forms, examined the effects of the type of instruction received, either processing instruction or traditional instruction. In the processing instruction group, learners' attention was focused on morphological forms in the input phase, but instruction went beyond emphasizing recognition and production of verb forms to include interpretation and comprehension. The next section describes studies based on L2 acquisition theory.

### *Theoretical Approaches*

The Spanish preterite tense has been used as a way of exploring L2 acquisition in several studies. This research will lead to greater understanding of how second languages are acquired and may also have classroom applications. In the following section, theoretical approaches to the acquisition of preterite verbs are described. To the best of my knowledge, no classroom research has been published directly related to them.

Table 2.2

*Theoretical Approaches to Preterite Tense Acquisition*

Author	Participants	Theoretical Approach	Results
Sanz, C. & Fernández, M. (1992)	90 university beginning, advanced Spanish students, and native-speakers	cognitive information processing	-beginning learners will attend to temporal cues -advanced learners will attend to verbal tense morphology -contradictory tense & temporal adverb more difficult for L2 learners
Lee, J.F., Cadierno, T., Glass, W.R., VanPatten, B. (1997)	102 undergraduates learning Spanish	processing instruction	-lexical cues help learners to reconstruct propositional content -learners notice past-tense morphology better in absence of temporal lexical cues -learners may make form-meaning connections through processing instruction
Camps, J. (2000)	30 university beginning Spanish learners	cognitive processing	-preterite morphological accuracy maintained after introduction of a second past tense -some confusion in appropriate use of verb forms when second past tense introduced
Leow, R.P. (2000)	32 university beginning Spanish learners	cognitive processing	-awareness of morphological forms led to more written production -aware learners recognized and produced more target forms in writing
Westfall & Foerster (1996)	none	temporal aspectual discourse	-could replace emphasis on aspect in teaching approaches



### *Cognitive Information Processing*

Sanz and Fernández (1992) studied the differences in L2 Spanish learners at beginning and advanced levels in the use of cues to assign tense. The study is related to two earlier studies. Slobin and Bever (1982) note the preference of early L2 learners for one to one mappings. However, Sanz and Fernández point out that Spanish presents the potential difficulty for learners that each tense includes six possible morphological forms for learners to consider in formulating sentences. Alternatively, Peters' Operating Principles (Peters 1985) states that since adverbs are invariable lexical items and tend to appear at the beginning or end of a sentence, they would be more salient. For example, in "*Mañana iré a cenar fuera*" (Tomorrow I will go out for dinner) future is indicated by the verb form and by the adverb and that corroborates the meaning. Sanz and Fernández (1992) point out that some adverbs in Spanish are used in such a way as to be contradictory, for example, "*Hoy iré a cenar fuera*" (Today I will go out for dinner) in which the temporal adverb and the verb morphology convey two different tenses: "*hoy*" (today) expresses the present tense while the verb indicates that the action will take place in the future. On the other hand, in "*Hoy voy a cenar fuera*" (Today I am going out for dinner) the temporal adverb and the verb morphology are corroborating.

Sanz and Fernández (1982) refer to earlier studies on the Competition Model (Bates, McNew, MacWhinney, Devescovi, and Smith 1982; MacWhinney and Bates 1989), a functionalist approach to explaining the relationships between grammatical forms and functions, and VanPatten's (1985) "communicative input processing strategy". VanPatten proposed that L2 learners, especially those with low levels of proficiency,

filter the input received and attend to the items that are most important communicatively. This indicates that learners at early stages will focus on the adverbs for assigning tense rather than morphology.

This study explored accuracy and latency with the expectation that beginning learners would respond more slowly and with less accuracy; also, beginners were expected to prefer lexical cues and advanced learners and native speakers to process morphology. In the sentences that contained contradicting information, L2 learners were expected to have more difficulty processing the sentences than native speakers. Sanz and Fernández collected data from a total of 90 participants, 30 third-semester beginning Spanish students, 30 advanced-level participants (American graduate students in Spanish), and 30 native speakers of Spanish as a control group. Each participant was exposed to 50 sentences indicating simple present, preterite, or simple future tenses in the third person singular or plural. Three different adverbs, *ayer*, *hoy*, or *mañana* (yesterday, today, tomorrow), were used corresponding to one tense. Each sentence appeared on a computer screen and participants had a total of 7000 milliseconds to respond by pressing a key indicating one of three tenses.

The results of this study showed that there was no significant difference in processing for tense at the sentence level between L2 learners and native speakers. However, a developmental shift was noted between beginning learners and advanced learners. Learners began by relying on temporal adverbs, but advanced learners relied on morphological cues. This research is of some interest to the present study since it

analyzes comprehension of the preterite tense in early and late learners, at the sentence level.

### *Theoretical Processing Instruction*

Along similar lines, but exploring the preterite tense and adverbs in an aural format, Lee, Cadierno, Glass, and VanPatten (1997) used a recorded narrative passage, with and without past tense lexical indicators in the form of adverbs. It appeared that more advanced learners showed gains in their ability to identify and make form-meaning connections with the preterite morphological forms. In this study, they explored previous research into the part played by attention in SLA. Schmidt (1990, 1994) determined that attention to what is being learned is essential and that it is necessary for adult L2 learners in order for acquisition to take place. Also, Tomlin and Villa (1994) proposed that in order to attend to new material, learners must be alert, oriented to the stimuli, and must detect the information in order to focus on it. VanPatten (1986, 1992, 1996) suggested that learners first seek meaning from the input before they look for grammatical information and in the process learners will look for meaning first in the content words.

This study (Lee, Cadierno, Glass, and VanPatten 1997) was designed to present learners with a narrative of the type that might be heard in a listening comprehension activity (as opposed to decontextualized sentences.) After listening, the subjects were asked to “reconstruct the propositional content in order to determine what they actually have processed and stored as the tense of particular events” (p. 7). The subjects were first, third, and fifth semester subjects totaling 102 college level students. One half of each group of subjects listened to a two-minute passage. One of the two versions of the same

narrative included past temporal references in lexical (adverbs) as well as grammatical (verb inflections in the preterite tense); in the other version the narrative excluded temporal adverbs and the subjects needed to attend to the verb inflections in order to process past temporal references. Assessment was made through “free recall reconstruction of the text,” followed by a multiple-choice tense identification test.

The results showed that lexical content helped subjects to reconstruct more propositional content than did the grammatical cues. On the tense identification test, while the test scores were low at the first level, they increased markedly at the third and fifth semester levels showing consistent development. However, the subjects whose material contained lexical cues did not show significantly better ability to identify tense. It appears that learners, as they advance, attend to grammatical cues and detect morphological features. The grammatical cues, however, may not help learners to reconstruct propositional content. The authors suggested that there may be potential benefits in the classroom to directing learners’ attention, through processing instruction, to make form-meaning connections. This research is related to the present study in its focus on processing instruction, which informed the instructional design of Westfall and Foerster’s (1996) temporal aspectual discourse theory.

### *Cognitive Processing*

In research closely related to earlier studies outlined here, (Leow 1997, 1998a, 1998b), Leow (2000) investigated the effects of awareness, or lack of awareness in L2 learners of the Spanish preterite tense. He mentions related research (Tomlin & Villa 1994; Velmans 1991) that argues for a disassociation between awareness and learning,

stating that awareness may not be required for alertness, orientation, and detection in their model of processing.

Leow (2000) used a think-aloud problem-solving task in the form of a crossword puzzle, and post-exposure assessment tasks in the form of a multiple-choice recognition task, and a fill-in-the-blank written task. In this study Leow investigated whether or not the role of awareness is crucial for later L2 processing by replicating his 1997 study with “a major change to the experimental exposure task together with several methodological features added to the research design,” (p. 561). The crossword puzzle task was designed to test for lack of awareness by supplying the stem change vowel in the irregular *-ir* verbs so that participants would focus on the verb endings rather than the stem changes. The study was carried out with 32 university-level beginning students who had received three weeks of formal exposure to Spanish and were familiar with present tense stem-changing verbs.

The target morphology was irregular preterite *-ir* verbs, as previously explained for his 1997 study. Participants were asked to provide think-aloud comments while performing the post-exposure assessment tasks. The results of the think-aloud recordings were used to distinguish between aware and unaware participants. Before completing the assessment tasks, the participants were interviewed and asked, “What do you think the purpose of the task (crossword puzzle) was?” and, “Did you notice anything interesting about the verbs? If so, what?” in order to assess their level of awareness (p.564).

The results of this study suggested that the 16 learners who showed awareness of the targeted morphological forms were able to take in and produce significantly more forms than were the 16 unaware participants. The participants who appeared to be aware

were also able to recognize and produce in writing significantly more of the targeted verbs. This replication and modification of an earlier study suggests that there may be an important role for awareness in the processing of input by L2 learners. This research is of interest to the present study because learners' awareness of the preterite verb forms appears to be important to their ability to acquire and produce them.

In an investigation into the early stages of the differentiation between the preterite and imperfect, Camps (2000) examined the written production of first-year learners of Spanish, first in the preterite alone, and later combining both preterite and imperfect. The study focused primarily on the difficulty native English speaking L2 learners have in determining which tense to use since English does not distinguish between perfect and imperfect aspect as Spanish does. The study analyzed learners' written production after receiving instruction on the preterite, and next, after receiving instruction on the imperfect. The study explored the interaction of choice of form in the appropriate context, and morphological accuracy, as they are related to the cognitive limitations of L2 learners in terms of input processing (VanPatten 1986) and attention to production (Sanz 1997; Tarone 1998).

Only the references to preterite morphology explored in Camps' (2000) study on the contrast between preterite and imperfect are described here since the focus of the present study is the acquisition of preterite tense morphology and its production. Camps' subjects were 30 first-year university-level learners who had received no Spanish instruction in high school. Each participant wrote two compositions, the first following the initial regular classroom instruction on the preterite, and the second following regular classroom instruction on the imperfect. The topic for both compositions was: "Write

about the best vacation you ever took.” Six participants (NIM group) produced only preterite, present tense, or infinitive verb forms in both compositions, while 24 of the participants (IM group) produced imperfect and preterite, present tense, and infinitive verb forms in the second composition. When a comparison was made between the accuracy of preterite morphology of the NIM and IM groups, it was found that there was a reduced number of morphological errors on the second composition that “took place in spite of the increased processing load due to the addition of the imperfect form to the learners’ repertoire. Even more, the increase in accuracy was seen mostly in the IM group, the group that actually produced forms of the imperfect. Therefore, based on the data analyzed here, it seems that having to distinguish between the two past tense forms did not affect the learners’ ability to produce the right morphological forms for the preterite” (p. 14). In the study, the NIM group produced more errors of form in the second composition than in the first. On the other hand, the IM group produced fewer errors of form on the second composition.

The results of the composition task used in Camps’ study may be relevant to the present study since it consisted of a narrative produced by the participants, beginning with the use of only the preterite tense. The result, showing that the NIM group chose not to integrate their knowledge of the imperfect by producing very few contexts where the imperfect could have been used, may suggest that this group had understood the basic function of the preterite tense in moving the storyline forward in time as described by Westfall and Foerster (1996). The next theoretical approach also explores the use of narration in the context of presenting the preterite/imperfect contrast. However, for the

purposes of the present study, it is placed out of chronological order, and described only insofar as it deals with the preterite tense.

### *Temporal Aspectual Discourse*

The teaching application theory proposed by Westfall and Foerster (1996) presents the preterite tense to learners stressing its temporal aspectual discourse properties rather than focusing primarily on aspectual properties as occurs in most textbooks. The process begins by focusing students' attention on the temporal properties of the preterite tense and, "While the learners are practicing the PRET conjugations, the instructor provides examples that show the various interpretations and uses of the PRET in context" (p. 551). In the steps that follow, the instructor (p. 556):

Step 1. shows the use of the preterite in a sequence of past events. Each of these events moves the storyline forward in time. Example:

*Elena se despertó a las 7:00, se vistió, y salió para el trabajo a las 8:00.*

(Ellen woke up at 7:00, dressed, and left for work at 8:00)

Step 2. demonstrates how the preterite indicates the repetition of action that is quantitatively bounded. The exact number of repetitions is often specified by adverbial phrases such as *as muchas/tres veces* (many/three times). Example:

*David leyó la carta tres veces.* (David read the letter three times.)

Step 3. shows that the preterite signifies the beginning of a state with verbs such as *creer, conocer, parecer, saber* and *sentirse* (to believe, know, seem/appear, know, and feel) or with inceptive verbs such as *enfermarse* or *ponerse* (to get sick or to become). This interpretation may be triggered by adverbial dues as in:



*De repente empezó a darse cuenta de la verdad.*

(Suddenly he began to realize the truth.)

Step 4. show that adverbials of duration that have definite endpoints (a closed interval), such as *por tres días* (for three days) occur with events or states in the preterite.

Example:

*Juan estuvo enfermo por cinco días.* (John was sick for five days.)

The learners examine the meaning and uses of the preterite while they are learning the conjugations. In this way they can begin to understand how the preterite functions in discourse, (p. 553). Adverbs may be used to locate the time of an event or state in discourse, or they may be determined in reference to another time in the context (Westfall 1995, p. 48). The temporal features of the preterite tense reflect the incipient nature of the situation in its context (Westfall 1995, p. 53).

The next step in the process of producing a narrative is for learners to begin constructing discourse. The construction of discourse begins in a simple way with a series of actions in the preterite and starts the process of constructing simple stories which are practiced orally and in written form. Taken into account in this approach is Krashen's (1982) input hypothesis which proposes that successful acquisition is closely related to the input learners receive. On the other hand, other research (Pienemann 1985; Faerch and Kasper 1986; White 1987) states that learners' exposure to comprehensible input in the classroom does not guarantee acquisition. However, Westfall and Foerster's (1996) process creates a basis in comprehensible input that can prepare learners to make form-meaning connections. Learners first attend to meaning and then become sensitized to the verbal morphology and the meaning it carries. When learning the preterite tense based

on temporal and discourse models, learners are exposed to a process that is more similar to that of native speakers of Spanish. While non-natives tend to center on the immediate context and make a choice based on whether the verb is a state or event, native speakers tend to focus on the over-all development of the narrative (p. 551).

To date no research has examined the relationship between instruction at both the beginning and intermediate levels using a temporal discourse approach. The significance of the present study is that it examines the potential effect of teaching this approach to beginning as well as intermediate students.

The investigation described in this chapter presents a variety of studies focused on the acquisition and/or teaching of the preterite tense. These studies are of interest to the present work directly or indirectly and provide an indication of the interest of some researchers in the preterite tense as an opportunity for testing SL acquisition theory, or for testing and analyzing the effectiveness of teaching approaches.

## Chapter Three - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### *Introduction*

This chapter describes the experiment designed to investigate the impact of instruction on the acquisition of the Spanish preterite tense through a temporal aspectual discourse approach.

The research questions guiding the present study were as follows:

- 1. Do learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction produce a significantly greater number of correct responses in the use of preterite tense verbs as compared to learners receiving no instruction?*
- 2. Do learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction maintain increases in correct preterite tense verbs over time?*
- 3. Do both beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction show significant differences in the pattern of change in scores on the production of preterite tense verbs?*

The chapter includes the following sections: the overall experimental design; the subjects included in the study; instructional and data collection procedures; scoring procedures; and an outline of the statistical analyses.

### *Experimental Design*

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of instruction on the Spanish preterite tense through temporal aspectual discourse. Instruction was given to beginning and intermediate subjects. A pretest was given to determine the levels of familiarity with the preterite tense at the outset. Three posttests were carried out, one immediately after instruction, another two weeks later and a third one month following instruction. A group of intermediate subjects who received no instruction was included as a control to the design. The impact of instruction (i.e., temporal-aspectual) was examined for learners of Spanish at the first- and second-year levels of university language study. The subjects section below further describes the characteristics of the learners studied.

In order to carry out the research design one research cell was used at the first-semester level for a total of 21 subjects: Instruction group 1; two research cells were used at the third-semester level for a total of 42 subjects: Instruction group 2 and No instruction group. A total of 63 subjects participated in the study.

Due to the fact that the study proposed to examine both short- and longer-term effects of instruction, posttests were given at three different points in time following instruction.

### *Subjects*

The pool of subjects consisted of 298 students enrolled in two Spanish courses at Indiana University, Bloomington. The subjects participating in Instruction group 1 were enrolled in four sections of a first-semester course. The subjects participating in Instruction group 2 and the No instruction group were enrolled in ten sections of a third-semester course.

All of the subjects were enrolled in a four-course Spanish language sequence. Most of the students enrolled in these courses were not pursuing a major or minor in Spanish but were fulfilling graduation requirements, which require from two to four semesters of foreign language instruction. The first-semester classes met four days a week for 50 minutes each day; the third-semester classes met three days a week for 50 minutes each day. In their regular classes all of the subjects were taught with a communicative teaching method that stressed the development of speaking and reading skills. Brief grammar instruction was given in the classes but most of the grammar explanations and practice were assigned as homework from the textbook and the workbook. The subjects in the experiment, however, had not received explicit instruction in past-tense verbs in their regular classroom prior to or during the experiment. The subjects in the third-semester classes had received classroom instruction in the past-tense verbs during the previous academic year.

Within each class level, all of the sections used the same textbooks, syllabus, and exams. The first semester classes (Instruction group 1) used the textbook, ¿Sabías qué...?: Beginning Spanish, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (VanPatten, Lee & Ballman, 2000). The third semester classes (Instruction group 2 and No instruction group) used ¿Qué te parece...?: Intermediate Spanish, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lee, Young, Wolf & Chandler, 2000).

All of the experimental classes were taught the preterite tense by the investigator in order to avoid possible problems resulting from variation in teaching by several different instructors. Entire classes participated in the experiment to avoid possible problems with the self-selection of volunteers. Only those students with scores of less than 60 percent on the pretest were included in the study in order to allow sufficient room for improvement following the instructional treatment. Instruction groups 1 and 2 originally contained 23 and 25 members, respectively. In order to avoid any distortion of the comparison and obtain groups with identical numbers of members, the subjects

excluded at random were: two subjects from Instruction group 1 and four from Instruction group 2. The No instruction group contained 21 members and none were removed. The use of entire classes ensured a total of at least 20 subjects per cell. The participation of at least 20 subjects in each section also controlled for the possibility of skewed results caused by the superior or inferior performance of a particular group due to the inclusion of a larger or smaller number of subjects. Only subjects whose first language was English were included in the study in order to control for education and language background problems.

### *Materials*

An instructional packet, a pretest and three posttests were prepared for use in the classroom during the instructional treatment. An approach to the teaching of the Spanish preterite tense through temporal aspectual discourse was used. This teaching method focused on the verb forms and on narration in the past tense. The information and activities included in the packet and tests were adapted from materials that appear in Punto y aparte: Spanish in Review - Moving toward Fluency, Manual que acompaña Punto y aparte (Foerster, Lambright & Alfonso-Pinto, 1999), and Puntos de partida: An invitation to Spanish, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Knorre, Dorwick, Pérez-Gironés, Glass, & Villarreal 1997).

### *Pretest*

The pretest consisted of two sections. The first was a cloze passage in which subjects were asked to conjugate an infinitive into the preterite tense in the context of five sentences. The second section consisted of two parts: a list of suggested infinitives together with a series of illustrations numbered from one to five and corresponding

blanks in which the subjects were asked to conjugate infinitives that expressed the action carried out in each illustration; space in which to write a series of complete sentences using the verbs conjugated in the first part. Sample activities are shown in Table 3.1. The complete set of instructional materials is included in Appendix A.

Table 3.1

*Sample Pretest Activities*

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Directions: Complete the following sentences by conjugating the verbs indicated in the PRETERITE tense.

1. Ayer [*yesterday*] (yo) \_\_\_\_\_ (desayunar) a las 10:00.
  2. Mi amigo, Fernando, \_\_\_\_\_ (llamar) por teléfono anoche [*last night*].
- 

*Instructional Packet*

One instructional packet was prepared for both first- and third-semester subjects. The vocabulary consisted of highly frequent items. In order to assure that the vocabulary would be understood by both groups, only items that appeared in the regular first-semester textbook (*¿Sabías qué...?*) prior to the experimental treatment were included. Only first- and third-person singular verb forms were emphasized because of their morpho-phonetic structural similarities; both have the written accent and spoken stress on the last syllable of the word. The instructional packet was created by the researcher with the exception of the illustrations, which were taken from the following sources: Manual

que acompaña Punto y aparte, and Manual que acompaña ¿Sabías qué...? and Puntos de partida. (See Appendix B)

The subjects were given instructions for the activities were given in English in order to assure that the results of the pre- and posttests reflected their understanding of the concepts presented, rather than their comprehension of the instructions. It was also important to avoid any difference in understanding of the directions between subjects in the beginning and intermediate groups. The experimental packet was organized as follows:

Day 1: (1) Presentation of all preterite verb forms, with the emphasis placed on the tense endings so that the subjects' attention would be focused on the verb endings. Regular verbs and verbs with stem-changes and spelling changes were included. One high frequency irregular verb (ir: to go) was emphasized in the presentation. (2) Explanation of the four instances in which preterite verbs are used to express past events with major emphasis on the beginning, end or completeness of actions. (3) Practice assigning third person singular verb endings. (4) Verb endings used to form a sequence of third person singular verbs from infinitives that represented actions in a sequence of drawings. (5) Use of the verbs formed to write simple sentences narrating the story depicted in the illustrations. (6) Completion of a chart contrasting present tense verb endings with preterite tense verb endings. (7) Formation of first person singular preterite verbs. (8) Interview of a classmate about past activities using present tense, then past tense.

Day 2: (1) Explanation that preterite verbs move the story forward and form the "backbone" of a story. (2) Reading of a familiar story with focus on first and third person preterite verbs. (3) Identification of preterite verbs missing from the story. (4) Contrast of first and third person singular present tense and preterite tense verbs on verb chart (5)



Formation of preterite tense verbs from the chart or other packet materials. (6) Sequence of simple sentences narrating past activities of subjects.

There were four main types of activities: (1) subjects identified first and third person preterite verb forms in a story and chose one of four possible reasons for using the preterite tense; (2) subjects conjugated first or third person singular preterite tense verbs, then used them to construct a narrative; (3) subjects contrasted first and third person singular present tense verbs with first and third person preterite tense verbs - the learners' attention was directed to the difference in verb endings and stress patterns; (4) subjects interviewed a classmate and reported to the class what that person did. The characteristics of the activities are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

*Characteristics of Activities in the Instructional Packet*

No. of activities	No. of whole-class activities	No. of pair activities	No. of visuals
9	6	3	3

Sample activities for the experimental groups are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3.

*Sample Activities Used in the Instructional Packet*

1. Directions: Mark the preterite verbs, also, draw a line between each subject and verb. Indicate a reason for using the preterite for each verb.

Después, cuando Caperucita Roja llegó a la casa de su abuela, llamó a la puerta. Una voz le preguntó, “¿Quién es?”

2. Directions: Una cita a ciegas. Look at the following drawings that show what happened to Sergio the first time he accepted a blind date. Paso 1. List the verbs that tell the sequence of actions. Paso 2. Use the verbs listed above to tell (narrate) what happened. Use connecting words such as: cuando, entonces, después, etc.
3. Directions: complete the chart by writing in the form of the verb indicated.

Infinitivo	Presente	Pretérito	Infinitivo	Presente	Pretérito
comer (yo)			vivir (ella)		

1. Later, when Little Red Riding Hood arrived at her grandmother’s house, she knocked at the door. A voice asked her, “Who is it?”

2. The students conjugate the verbs given, then write short sentences to narrate the actions depicted.

3. Infinitive, Present, Preterite  
to eat (I)                      to live (she)

The students fill in the blanks with contrasting verb forms in the first and third person of the present and preterite tenses.

4. Directions: Preguntas personales. Ask the classmates in your group the following questions and write the answers on a piece of paper.

¿Qué deporte practicó Ud. ayer?

¿Qué compró ayer?

4. Personal questions.

What sport did you play yesterday?

What did you buy yesterday?

The students ask each other the questions using preterite verb forms to tell each other about completed events in the past.

### *Pretest and Posttests*

A pretest and three posttests were used to measure the effect of instruction. The same pretest was given to all groups to determine their knowledge of preterite verbs. The three posttests were used to evaluate short- and longer-term effects. Three different posttests were given to the subjects: one immediately after instruction, another one week after instruction and the third one month after instruction. All four tests had the same format. The second part of the pretest, which had drawings of a series of actions, verb conjugations and narration in short sentences, was used again on the third posttest.

The pretest included two production tasks. The first section of the pretest consisted of five incomplete sentences narrating actions with first- and third-person preterite verbs. Only five sentences were included in the first section of the pretest in order not to discourage the first semester subjects who were expected to have no knowledge of the preterite tense. The second section consisted of drawings of a sequence of actions, a list of verbs to conjugate in the third person singular preterite tense and then use to narrate the actions depicted in the drawings. All of the verbs used were regular or stem-changing verbs. Sample items are shown in figure 3.4.

Table 3.4

#### *Sample Pretest Items*

---

##### Section 1: Narration

Directions: ¿Qué pasó? Complete the following sentences by conjugating the verbs indicated in the PRETERITE tense.

1. Ayer (yo) \_\_\_\_\_ (desayunar) a las 10:00.

2. Mi amigo, Fernando, \_\_\_\_\_ (llamar) por teléfono a las 11:00 para ir a clase.

Section 2: Narración en el pasado: Jacobo y Javier

Directions: Look at the drawings that show what happened to Javier. List the verbs in the preterite tense that form the “backbone” of the story and move the story ahead.

(Five drawings of small boys playing with a ball; a glass vase is broken; one child blames the other; grandmother takes child to the store; they buy a new vase.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Use the verbs from Paso 1 to write five complete sentences telling about the sequence of events that happened to Javier in the illustrations. (Space is provided for narration.)

---

Section 1: (What happened?)

1. Yesterday I \_\_\_\_\_ (to eat breakfast) at 10:00.

2. My friend, Fernando, \_\_\_\_\_ (to call) me at 11:00 to go to class.

Section 2: (Narration in the past). Jacobo and Javier.

Directions: Use the verbs from Step 1

---

The posttests followed the same format and had the same type of production tasks but included ten incomplete sentences in the first section. The complete pretest is provided in Appendix A, and the three posttests are provided in Appendix C.

*Instructional and Data Collection Procedures*

Entire classes were used for the experiment. All instruction and experimentation took place in the classrooms during the subjects’ regular class periods. All subjects received the same pretest and posttests. To be sure that all of the subjects knew sufficient

vocabulary to complete the items, Spanish-English verb equivalents were included with the illustrations section of the tests. In addition, only high-frequency vocabulary, taken from the chapters of the first semester textbook studied prior to the experiment, was used.

All instruction during the experiment was performed by the same person, the researcher. She instructed the subjects only on the two days of the experiment and she was not the regular classroom instructor. The regular instructors were requested not to discuss with the subjects the materials being taught during the experiment.

The pretest was given one week before the experimental instruction began. Subjects who scored 60 per cent or higher on the pretest were excluded from the study. The first posttest was given at the end of the second day of experimental instruction. The second posttest was given one week later. The third posttest was taken one month after the experimental instruction. The subjects who failed to take all four tests or who did not complete all items on each of the tests were also excluded from the data analysis. The researcher conducted all of the testing except for the testing of the No instruction groups. The timetable for pretest - instruction - posttests is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5

*Timetable for Pretest - Instruction - Posttests*

---

Pretest -----	Instruction -----	Posttest 1 -----	Posttest 2 -----	
Posttest 3				
Day 1	Days 2 & 3	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
One week	Two consecutive days	Immediately	One week after	One month
before instruction	of instruction	after instruction	after instruction	after instruction

---

The No instruction group did not receive any special instruction during the experimental period. As required by University regulations, the researcher explained the project to all groups, including the No instruction group. All subjects received copies of the Human Subjects Committee approved consent form which contained an outline of the experiment. The pretest was administered to the No instruction group by the regular classroom instructors. These instructors carried out the normal course of instruction according to the regular syllabus during the experiment. An amended syllabus, reflecting the experimental instruction, was given to Instruction groups 1 and 2. The informed consent form is provided in Appendix D.

### *Scoring Procedures*

The preterite verbs were scored with a 2, 1, 0 scoring procedure since an either / or scoring procedure would not reveal possible intermediate effects of instruction. Instruction might have had an influence on the learners' developing language system, but not have resulted in native-like accuracy. Two points per response if the subjects provided correct preterite tense verbs. Responses were given one point if the subjects provided an incorrect past tense form or an incorrect spelling of the correct past tense form. All other responses were given a score of zero. There were 15 items on the Pretest for a total possible score of 30 points; a total of 40 points was possible on each of the three posttests. Examples of the scoring procedure for the production tasks are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6

#### *Scoring Procedure for Preterite Tense Verbs.*

---

Sample production task scoring for section one:

Test sentence: 'Ayer Fernando \_\_\_\_\_(salir) de su casa a las ocho.

(Yesterday Fernando \_\_\_\_\_ (to leave) his house at eight o'clock.)

1. The only response scored as two:

'Ayer Fernando salió de su casa a las ocho.

2. Examples of responses scored as one:

'Ayer Fernando saló de su casa a las ocho. (incorrect past tense form)

'Ayer Fernando salío de su casa a las ocho. (incorrect placement of accent)

'Ayer Fernando salí de su casa a las ocho. (incorrect past tense form)

3. Response scored as zero:

'Ayer Fernando sale de su casa a las ocho. (no past tense form used)

---

Sample production task scoring for section 2, step 1:

Verb that corresponds to the drawing of a man eating breakfast: desayunar

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Correct response: 1. desayunó

Sample production task scoring for section 2, step 2:

Only the preterite verb was graded.

A sentence is written using the verb from step 1:

1. The only correct response is:

‘Ricardo desayunó cereal y café.’ (Ricardo ate cereal and coffee for breakfast.)

2. Examples of responses scored as one:

‘Ricardo desayunió cereal y café.’

(incorrect spelling of the correct past tense form)

‘Ricardo desayuné cereal y café.’ (incorrect past tense form)

3. Response scored as zero:

‘Ricardo desayuna cereal y café.’ (no past tense form used)

---

### *Analysis*

Percentage scores were calculated in order to answer the first two research questions:

(1) whether there would be differences in how subjects receiving instruction at the beginning and intermediate levels, or receiving no instruction, would produce correct preterite tense forms to express past-tense meanings, and (2) whether these differences



would persist over time. Percentage, rather than raw scores, were used due to the fact that the pretest was worth a maximum of 30 points, while each of the posttests was worth a maximum of 40 points. The pretest was designed to include only five questions in the first section so that beginning learners would not feel unduly discouraged by their inability to respond to a larger number of questions.

Percentage scores were submitted to a Two-way Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (Test x Instruction) with one within, one between factorial design.

The third research question was whether, given an effect for instruction, that effect would persist over the time of the three posttests for learners receiving instruction. The Post-hoc Sheffé's Tests were used to determine if the effect of instruction would persist over the time of the three posttests. Separate Analyses of Variance with a one within (Test), between repeated measures factor design were carried out on the percentage scores on the three posttests for production of correct preterite forms.

The statistical package used in all statistical analyses was SPSS, Version 10 (1999).

## Chapter Four - RESULTS

### *Introduction*

This chapter will present the results of the experiment conducted to investigate the effect of instruction, over time, on the teaching of the Spanish preterite tense with a temporal aspectual discourse approach, based on the temporal and aspectual characteristics of discourse.

The names of the instruction groups and tests will be capitalized when they are used as variables. For example, Instruction 1 with a capital I will refer to the variable Instruction included in statistical analyses but instruction with a lower-case letter will refer to instruction as teaching type. Test with a capital T will refer to the variable Test included in statistical analyses but test with a small letter will refer to a test included in the design of the study.

### *Data*

The first research question addressed by the present study is whether there would be differences in the production of correct responses on preterite verb forms following instruction between learners receiving instruction and learners receiving no instruction. The second research question addressed by the study is whether learners at the beginning and intermediate levels would maintain changes in the production of correct preterite tense verb production over time. The third research question addressed by this study is whether both beginning and intermediate learners receiving instruction would show different patterns of change in the production of preterite tense verbs.

In order to establish the level of prior knowledge of the preterite tense for the subjects, a pretest was given to all three groups: Instruction 1, the beginning-level group to receive instruction; Instruction 2, the intermediate group to receive instruction; and the No instruction group, the intermediate group serving as a control group. The pretest

scores indicated that there was no significant difference. The means, standard deviations and standard errors were determined on the pretest percentage scores of the Instruction 1, Instruction 2 group and the No instruction groups and are presented in Table 4.1. Instruction group 1 demonstrated no prior knowledge of the preterite tense, as was expected, because they were in their first semester of Spanish language study and had not received instruction in the preterite tense. The subjects in the intermediate groups had received instruction in the preterite tense during the previous semester of Spanish language study. The tests showed no significant difference between the Instruction 2 group and the No instruction group prior to receiving instruction in this study ( $p = .632$ ). These results indicate that any comparative effects attributed to instruction will not be related to prior knowledge of any of the groups. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

*Means (%), Standard Deviations and Standard Errors on the Pretest and Posttests for all Groups*

---

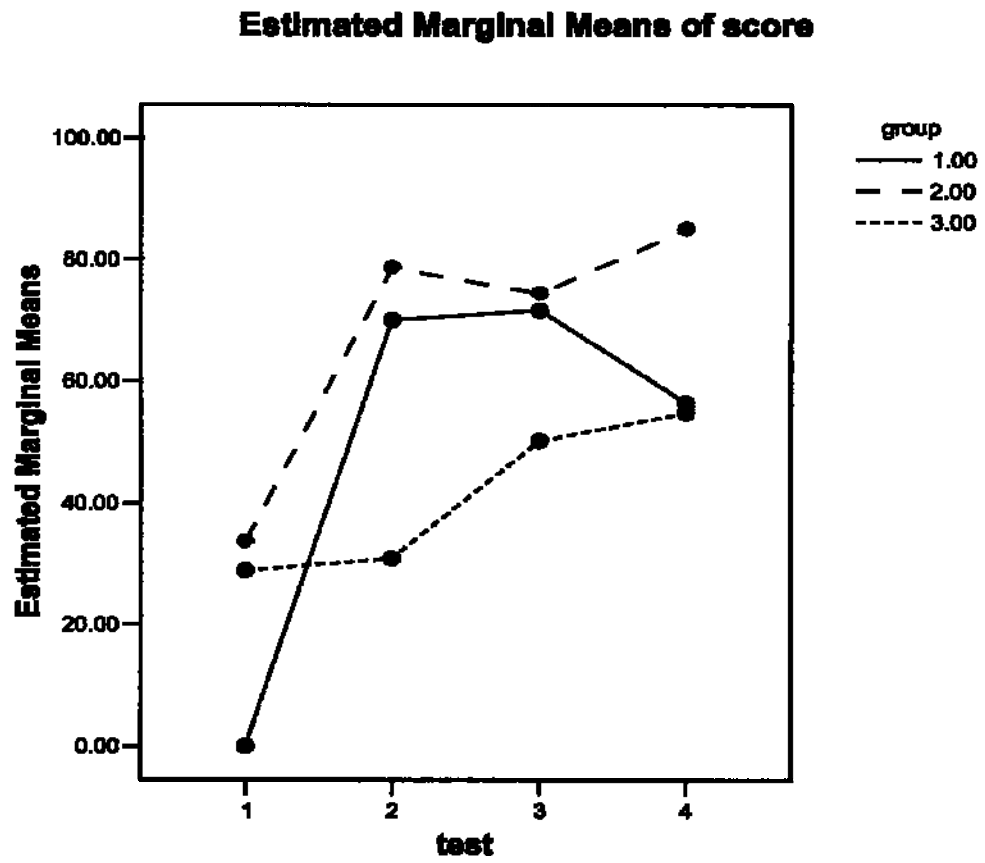
Instruction 1	Pretest	Posttest 1	Posttest 2	Posttest 3
Mean	.0000	70.2857	71.5952	56.4286
SD	.0000	14.6201	11.8876	23.2858
SE	.0000	3.1983	2.5929	5.0750
Instruction 2				
Mean	33.624	78.571	74.333	85.3333
SD	18.5778	9.4727	3.8540	8.5183
SE	3.485	3.172	4.9898	1.8443
No Instruction				
Mean	28.8857	30.1814	50.2381	54.8095
SD	20.4957	18.1814	16.5624	23.5878
SE	4.0606	3.9602	3.5955	5.0750

---

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) using percentage scores for Instruction 1, Instruction 2 and No instruction was carried out using percentage scores on the Pretest. This outcome is shown in Figure 4.2 in graph form.

Figure 4.2

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Between Groups Variable Instruction*



Group 1 – Instruction 1      \_\_\_\_\_

Group 2 – Instruction 2      - - - - -

Group 3 - No Instruction      ········

A two-way repeated measure Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Instruction Group by test time, was performed on the percentage scores from all three groups. The results indicate a significant main effect for both Instruction ( $p < .0005$ ), and Test ( $p < .0005$ ), as well as a significant interaction between the two ( $p < .0005$ ). Percentage scores for the pretest and for the three posttests were included in the analysis which shows a significant effect for test. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

*Summary Table for Repeated Measure ANOVA Using Percentage Scores for Tests and Instruction*

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Value	p
Tests	31413.714	3	15706.857	53.811	.000
Instruction	88220.996	2	29406.9986	100.753	.000
Tests vs Instruction	29395.777	6	4899.296	16.784	.000

A post-hoc Sheffé's test was performed on Instruction to compare the group means for the pretest. The test showed that the mean scores for the Instruction 2 groups and the No instruction group were not significantly different from each other ( $p = .632$ ), supporting the earlier results of the ANOVA performed on the pretest percentage scores for these two groups. The Instruction 1 group and the No instruction group showed significant difference ( $p < .0005$ ) on the pretest percentage scores. The summary scores from this statistical analysis of the data are shown on Table 4.3.

The significant differences between Instruction 1 and Instruction 2 as well as the significant difference between Instruction 1 and No Instruction at Time 1 account for the significant interaction.

Table 4.3

*Summary Table for Pos-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for the Pretest*

Dependent Variable		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Pretest	Instruction 1 vs Instruction 2	-33.6238	4.9287	.000
	Instruction 1 vs No Instruction	-28.8857	4.9287	.000
	Instruction 2 vs No Instruction	4.7381	4.9287	.632

A post-hoc Sheffé's test was performed on Instruction to compare the group means for posttest 1. Again, the Instruction 2 group outperformed both the Instruction 1 and No Instruction groups. The Instruction 1 group outperformed the No Instruction group. The data indicate that instruction affects performance for both beginning and intermediate levels and that intermediate learners maintain their initial advantage. The summary scores from this statistical analysis are shown on Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

*Summary Table for a Post-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Posttest 1*

Dependent Variable	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Posttest 1 Instruction 1 vs Instruction 2	-8.5714	4.4864	.170
Instruction 1 vs No Instruction	39.0952	4.4864	.000
Instruction 2 vs No Instruction	47.6666	4.4864	.000

A post-hoc Sheffé's test was performed on Instruction to compare the group means for posttest 2. The Instruction 2 group outperformed both the Instruction 1 and No Instruction groups. The Instruction 1 group outperformed the No Instruction group. The data from Posttest 2 show that the initial advantage intermediate learners had over beginning learners did not reach a level of statistical significance. The summary scores from this statistical analysis are shown on Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Summary Table for Post-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Posttest 2*

Dependent Variable	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Posttest 2 Instruction 1 vs Instruction 2	-2.7381	5.4506	.882
Instruction 1 vs No Instruction	21.3571	5.4506	.001
Instruction 2 vs No Instruction	24.0952	5.4506	.000



The Instruction 2 group and the No instruction group were significantly different from each other ( $p < .0005$ ). The instruction 1 group and the No Instruction groups were not significantly different on this test. The summary scores from this statistical analysis are shown on Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

*Summary Table for Post-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Posttest 3*

Dependent Variable	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Posttest 3			
Instruction 1 vs Instruction 2	-28.5714	6.0952	.000
Instruction 1 vs No Instruction	1.6191	6.6986	.965
Instruction 2 vs No Instruction	30.1904	6.6986	.000

In summary, temporal aspectual discourse instruction was shown to demonstrate higher percentage scores for beginning and intermediate-level learners than the scores obtained by intermediate learners who received no instruction. The changes observed between the Instruction 1 beginning learners and the Instruction 2 intermediate learners were not significant. The No instruction group showed a small increase in percentage scores between posttest 1 and posttest 2, however, the increase was not significant ( $p < .0005$ ).

A post-hoc Sheffé's test was performed on Test to compare the group means over time for the Instruction groups and the No Instruction group. The test showed that the mean scores for Instruction 1 group between the Pretest (T1) and Posttest 1 (T2), and between T1 and Posttest 3 (T3) were significant ( $p < .0005$ ), supporting the earlier results of the ANOVA performed on the tests for this group. The mean scores for Instruction 1 between Posttest 1 (T2) and Posttest 2 (T3), were not significant ( $p = .989$ ). The mean scores for Instruction 1 between Posttest 2 (T3) and Posttest 3 (T4), and between Posttest 2 (T3) and Posttest 3 (T4) were also not significant ( $p = .041$ ). The summary scores from this statistical analysis of the data are shown on Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

*Summary Table for Pos-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Time for Instruction 1*

	T1 vs T2	T2 vs T3	T3 vs T4	T1 vs T3
Instruction 1				
Mean Difference	-70.0000	-1.5952	15.1666	-71.5952
Standard Error	4.6221	4.6221	4.6221	4.6221
Sig.	.000	.989	.041	.000

Table 4.7 (cont.)

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	T2 vs T4	T1 vs T4
<hr/>		
Instruction 1		
Mean Difference	13.5714	-56.4285
Standard Error	4.6221	4.6221
Sig.	.041	.000

---

A post-hoc Sheffé's test performed for Instruction 2 group to compare means over time showed the mean scores were significant between the Pretest (T1) and Posttest 1 (T2), between Posttest 2 (T1) and Posttest 3 (T3), and between Posttest 1 (T2) and Posttest 3 (T4) ( $p < .0005$ ), supporting the earlier results of the ANOVA performed on the tests for this group. The mean scores between Posttest 1 (T2) and Posttest 2 (T3), and between and Test 2 were not significant ( $p = .989$ ). The mean scores for Instruction 2 between Posttest 2 (T3) and Posttest 3 (T4) were not significant ( $p = .041$ ). The summary scores from this statistical analysis of the data are shown on Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

*Summary Table for Pos-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Time for Instruction*

	T1 vs 2	T2 vs T3	T3 vs T4	T1 vs T3
Instruction 2				
Mean Difference	-44.9476	-1.5952	-10.6666	-40.7095
Standard Error	4.9418	4.9418	4.9418	4.9418
Sig.	.000	.885	.207	.000
	T2 vs 4	T1 vs T4		
Instruction 2				
Mean Difference	-6.4285	-51.3761		
Standard Error	4.9418	4.9418		
Sig.	.041	.000		

A post-hoc Sheffé's test performed for the No Instruction group to compare means over time showed the mean scores were not significant between the Pretest (T1) and Posttest 1 (T2), Posttest 2 (T1), or Posttest 3 (T3). The level of significance between the Pretest (T1) and between Posttest 1 (T2) was  $p = .991$ ; between Posttest 1 (T2) and Posttest 2 (T3),  $p = .024$ ; between Posttest 2 (T3) and Posttest 3 (T4),  $p = .906$ . Also, there was no significant difference between the Pretest (T1) and Posttest 3 (T4) ( $p = .001$ ). All of these measures support the earlier results of the ANOVA performed on the tests for this

group. The summary scores from this statistical analysis of the data are shown on Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

*Summary Table for Pos-hoc Sheffé's Test Comparing Means for Time for Instruction 3.*

	T1 vs T2	T2 vs T3	T3 vs T4	T1 vs T3
Instruction 3				
Mean Difference	-2.0191	-19.3333	-4.5714	-21.3524
Standard Error	4.6221	4.6221	4.6221	4.6221
Sig.	.991	.024	.906	.010
	T2 vs T4	T1 vs T4		
Instruction 3				
Mean Difference	-23.9047	-25.9238		
Standard Error	4.6221	4.6221		
Sig.	.003	.001		

In the investigation on preterite tense production, the ANOVA's with repeated measures carried out on the percentage scores yielded significant main effects for Instruction and for Test in addition to significant interactions between Instruction and

Test. The first post-hoc tests indicated that the learners in all three groups began the investigation with low scores that did not differ from each other significantly. The second, third and fourth post-hoc tests showed that there were significantly different percentage scores for the learners receiving instruction. Although the learners receiving no instruction showed some increase in their scores over time, there was not a significant difference in their percentage scores on the posttests. It was noted that there was a small decrease in the percentage scores for the instruction groups on Posttest 2, however, the difference was not significant. A further increase was observed for Posttest 3. It was concluded that, overall, the effect for instruction held over the three posttests.

The results of the statistical analyses of the experimental data suggest the following:

Hypothesis 1: Supported. Learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction produced a significantly greater number of correct responses in the use of preterite tense verbs as compared to learners receiving no instruction.

Hypothesis 2: Supported. Learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction maintained increases in correct preterite tense verb production over time.

Hypothesis 3: Supported. Both beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction showed no significant difference in the pattern of change in scores on the production of preterite tense verbs.

## Chapter Five – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### *Summary of Study*

The present study was conducted in order to explore the effects of teaching the Spanish preterite tense using a temporal-aspectual approach that focused on the narrative. The relationships were explored between instruction or no instruction, persistence of correct production of preterite verbs over time, and levels of learners receiving instruction and between. These three variables were integrated into one study.

### *Discussion*

The research questions guiding the present study were:

- 1. Do learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction produce a significantly greater number of correct responses in the use of preterite tense verbs as compared to learners receiving no instruction?*
- 2. Do learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction maintain increases in correct preterite tense verbs over time?*
- 3. Do both beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction show significant differences in the pattern of change in scores on the production of preterite tense verbs?*

Each of the research questions will be addressed in this section keeping in mind the statistical analyses reported in Chapter 4.

*Research Question Number 1: Do learners receiving temporal discourse instruction produce a significantly greater number of correct responses in the use of preterite tense verbs as compared to learners receiving no instruction?*

In the present study, preterite tense verbs were presented to learners as part of a temporal aspectual discourse approach to developing the ability of students to use appropriate tenses in the context of narration.

In previous research on the instruction of the preterite, Wieczorek (1998) presented an athematic preterite morphological forms as an alternative to traditional instruction that presents preterite verbs as a “regular” and “irregular” dichotomy. Wieczorek’s study showed a significant difference in the production of correct forms for learners given explicit instruction in athematicity as opposed to those receiving traditional instruction. In the present study, preterite verbs were presented in a temporal aspectual context as ‘regular’ and ‘irregular.’

In 1991, Wieczorek used data from his 1989 study to explore the effects of applying Interlanguage Analysis (IA) in the classroom in place of traditional Error Analysis (EA). In this study on the acquisition of preterite tense morphology, he determined that, in order for L2 morphological development to occur, learners must first detect items so that they can be further processed into short-term memory. In the present study, in order to reflect intermediate effects of instruction that might have had an influence on the learners’ developing language system, the scoring of the pre- and posttests was carried out in a 2,1,0 scoring procedure since an either / or scoring procedure would not reveal this effect.



Cadierno (1995), in a study comparing two types of instruction, processing instruction and traditional instruction, found a positive effect in production for processing instruction. Cadierno's production results were comparable to the positive results of the present study in the outcomes for intermediate learners. There was a small difference in the production of the No Instruction intermediate groups of the two studies. In the present study learners showed an increase in their production of correct preterite verb forms over time but it was not significant. Since these learners received no instruction in the preterite tense, it seems possible that this effect was due to exposure to the pre- and posttests.

Leow's (1997) study of the role of attention and awareness in L2 learning suggested that increased learners' awareness contributes to increased written production of preterite morphological forms. These results appear to coincide with the results of the present study since one of the goals of the temporal aspectual approach is to encourage learners to become aware of the form-meaning relationships of the preterite tense. Leow (1998a) also studied the effects of amount and type of exposure to the preterite tense. The written production results from this study indicated positive effect for learner-centered instruction versus traditional instruction, and also as an effect of multiple exposures to the morphological forms. In the present study, the temporal aspectual approach is a learner-centered form of instruction and in that regard shows similar results to those of Leow (1998a). On the other hand, in the present study, the learners were exposed to the materials for two consecutive days of classroom instruction.

In a third study, Leow (1998b) used a task-based approach to teaching the preterite tense. Following one day of classroom instruction in preterite *-ir* verbs, beginning learners in the experimental groups recognized and produced morphologically correct verb forms in

a significantly superior amount compared to the control group. This study, based on the Tomlin and Villa's (1994) model which indicates that the attentional function is crucial in order for acquisition to occur, appears to be consistent with the results of the present study.

The statistical analyses presented in Chapter 4 support the findings of previous research. Temporal Aspectual instruction in the preterite effectively increases the number of verbs learners produce correctly. Prior to instruction beginning learners produce no preterite verbs correctly, but immediately after instruction, their production increases to 56% of the time. Prior to instruction intermediate learners produce preterite verbs 34% of the time, but after instruction, their production increases to 85% of the time. No previous study had specifically examined how temporal aspectual discourse instruction affects the production of preterite verb forms.

*Research Question Number 2: Do learners receiving temporal-aspectual discourse instruction maintain increases in correct preterite tense verbs over time?*

In previous research on the instruction of the preterite to learners of Spanish, implementing EA in the classroom, Wieczorek (1991) suggested that, without further exposure, the effects of detection of preterite tense morphological features appear to wear off after about two months. Cadierno's (1995) comparison between processing instruction and traditional instruction, included a pretest, and three posttests given immediately following instruction, one week later, two weeks later, and one month later. The same sequence was followed in the present study, but a beginning learner group was

included as well. The effects over time in Cadierno's (1995) research were similar to those found in the present study for intermediate learners.

Leow's 1997 study was carried out over one day. However the other two studies mentioned here (1998a) were carried out over one semester. Effects of time were measured for four groups on a posttest immediately following instruction and a second posttest after three weeks. Two groups were given a delayed posttest 14 weeks after initial instruction. The groups receiving multiple exposures to instruction held the effects of instruction over 3 ½ months without further instruction. These results, although, including different amounts of instruction, and a longer period of time, would appear to support the results of the present study. Leow's (1998b) research showed a decline in production on the second posttest but on two subsequent posttests, increased slightly and stabilized after two months. The author suggested that the time effects may have been influenced by the limited amount of instruction received by the learners. The results obtained by Leow (1997,1998a, 1998b) on crossword puzzle tasks appear to support the results for time in the present study.

The analyses presented in Chapter 4 support the findings of previous research. Temporal instruction in the preterite to learners of Spanish has an immediate effect on the number of verbs learners produce correctly. This effect was shown to be sustained one week and one month after instruction. Prior to instruction first-year learners produced no preterite verbs correctly. Immediately after instruction their accurate production increased to 70%. One week later, the learners maintained their accurate production at 72%. One month later accurate production was at 56%. Prior to instruction second-year learners produced preterite verbs correctly 34% of the time. Immediately after instruction their

accurate production increased to 79%. One week later, the learners maintained their accurate production at 74%. One month later their accurate production increased slightly to 85%. The effects of instruction over time were greater for intermediate learners than for beginning learners.

*Research Question Number 3: Do both beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal aspectual discourse instruction show significant differences in the pattern of change in scores on the production of preterite tense verbs?*

Previous research on the instruction of preterite to learners of Spanish carried out by Wieczorek (1989, 1991) showed a significant positive effect for production on the posttest given following instruction.

Cadierno (1995) demonstrated the positive effects of processing instruction over traditional instruction. Her data showed a similar pattern of change in intermediate learners, to those found in the present study for intermediate learners, but the beginning learners in the present study showed a smaller positive effect. The pattern of change in Leow's (1997, 1998a, 1998b) studies, although carried out over a long period of time, were consistent with those obtained in the present study.

The statistical analyses presented in Chapter 4 support the findings of previous research. Temporal instruction leads to improved production of preterite verbs for both beginning and intermediate learners. Prior to instruction, beginning learners produced no correct preterite forms but after instruction, they improved to 70% on Posttest 1. On Posttest 2 the scores were 72%, but on Posttest 3 they decreased to 56%. Prior to

instruction, intermediate learners produced accurate preterite forms 34% of the time, increased to 79% on Posttest 1, decreased to 74% on Posttest 2, and increased to 85% on Posttest 3. Intermediate learners benefited more from temporal instruction than did beginning learners, but these learners began with far more knowledge of the preterite than did the first-year learners.

### *Summary of Discussion*

Second language learners need to comprehend, and express themselves with reference to past events and this involves acquiring two simple past tenses. The teaching of the preterite tense may be aided by temporal aspectual instruction (Westfal & Foerster 1996) explained following information processing concepts (Cadierno 1995; VanPatten & Cadierno 1993a, 1993b; Cadierno & Glass 1991; Glass & Cadierno 1990; Musumeci 1989). Both understanding preterite tense verb forms and producing them are important aspects of L2 learners' ability to make form-meaning connections and learners can be encouraged to pay attention to the grammatical inflections of the tense (Ellis 1990; Terrell 1991; VanPatten 1986). The present study indicated that focusing on form and meaning in an information processing format led to encouraging results.

### *Implications for Second Language Preterite Tense Instruction*

This study suggests that the type of instruction used to teach the preterite tense is of importance and should be considered when planning for the classroom. The implementation of a temporal discourse approach for the teaching of the preterite tense has been implemented in the textbook, *Punto y aparte* (Foerster, Lambright & Alfonso-Pinto, 1999, 2003) and is a viable option as an input-based teaching approach prepared for intermediate learners.

Temporal aspectual discourse instruction appears to have the effect of encouraging learners to make form-meaning associations. In this approach, meaning is introduced before emphasis is placed on morphological forms by having learners focus on the functions of the preterite tense before they are expected to produce them. Learners can start producing past-tense discourse by relating events that introduce new reference times and move the narration forward in time. When learners receive instruction based on a temporal aspectual discourse approach, they are assisted in making verb tense choices in a way more similar to that of native speakers of Spanish. By focusing specifically on the temporal features of the preterite first, and later on those of the imperfect, learners are better able to create their intended meaning while expressing themselves in reference to the past. Also, based on the present study, learners appear to maintain their acquisition of preterite verb morphology over time.

*Limitations of the Present Study and  
Suggestions for Future Research*

The present exploration is the only research study to date that examines a combination of a temporal discourse approach to teaching the preterite tense presented in a processing instruction context. However, the dissertation has limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the results are based on an experimental sample drawn from students at a large Midwestern university. The experimental nature of the study limits the generalizability to other groups with different characteristics. Only two levels of learners participated in this study: beginning- and intermediate-level students. Future research of this type should include learners from more advanced levels, in a wider range of settings and/or over longer periods of time. Future studies comparing temporal aspectual instruction to other types of instruction, for example, processing instruction, and traditional instruction might provide additional insight into approaches to the acquisition of the preterite tense. Another future study using the temporal aspectual approach might compare other types of activities different from those used in the present study to evaluate their effectiveness.

*Conclusions*

The present study examined the relationships between instruction and no instruction, production differences that persist over time, and production difference



between levels. The following conclusions are based on the statistical findings and the discussion:

1. Temporal aspectual discourse instruction leads to both a greater amount and accuracy of production than no instruction.
2. Learners receiving temporal aspectual discourse instruction show differences in production that persist over time.
3. Beginning- and intermediate-level learners receiving temporal aspectual discourse instruction showed no significant difference in their production of preterite tense verbs.

In conclusion, the results of the present study indicate that the exposure of L2 learners of Spanish to temporal discourse instruction in the preterite tense, when presented in the context of processing instruction, can affect their comprehension and production of this Spanish past tense.

## APPENDIX A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section No: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Jeanne Martinez

## PRETEST

### PRETERITE

#### ¿Qué pasó ayer?

Complete the following sentences by conjugating the verbs indicated in the **PRETERITE** tense.

1. Ayer [*yesterday*] (yo) \_\_\_\_\_ (desayunar) a las 10:00.
2. Mi amigo, Fernando, \_\_\_\_\_ (llamar) por teléfono anoche [*last night*]
3. Entonces (yo) \_\_\_\_\_ (asistir) a varias clases con él.
4. En la clase de literatura Fernando \_\_\_\_\_ (leer) un poema.
5. Después de clase Helena \_\_\_\_\_ (ir) con nosotros a tomar café.

## PRETEST

### C. Narración en el pasado: Jacobo y Javier.

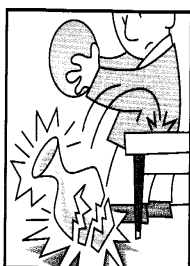
**Paso 1.** Look at the drawings that show what happened to Javier when he was seven years old. List the verbs **in the preterite tense** that form the “backbone” (column) of the story and move the story ahead.

**Palabras útiles:** acusar (*to accuse*); caer (*to fall*); comprar (*to buy*); jugar (*to play*); llorar (*to cry*); romper (*to break*); el vaso de cristal (*the vase*); la pelota (the ball); la abuela (*the grandmother*); la tienda (*the store*); la madre (*the mother*).

1



2



3



Backbone (column): write the verbs in the **preterite** tense:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

4.



5.



**Paso 2.** Use the verbs from Paso 1 to write five complete sentences telling about the sequence of events that happened to **Javier** in the illustrations.

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## **Appendix B**

### **Instructional Packet**

Jeanne Martínez

## Day 1

PRETERITE: Form, Meaning and Function

### Purpose:

- Form: third person singular of regular preterite verbs
- Meaning: the aspect of beginning or end of an action (a completed action)  
reaction statement
- Function: the sequencing of events in chronological order

-to show the connections between form (morphology), meaning (aspect) and function (sequence).

### Task:

- notice form
- understand meaning and function

### Materials:

- explanation with verb forms for the preterite (from *Punto y aparte: Spanish in review - moving toward fluency*, pp. 186 - 188.)

In order to narrate in the past you need to know the past-tense verb forms and practice the two Spanish past tenses the preterite and the imperfect. Section (A) shows how preterite verbs are formed. Section (B) gives hints for understanding when it is used.

- transparency of uses of the preterite
- illustrations for story narration from *Manual que acompaña Punto y aparte*, pp.

67-68

### Procedure:

- use a transparency of this paragraph to introduce each sentence
- students offer opinions as to which of the four uses given above would apply to each preterite verb
- use illustrations to assist in narration of a sequence of events:
  - list preterite verbs
  - write sentences using verbs in sequence

### Practice:

- continue the story from **Paso 2**, adding three to four sentences
- complete verb chart

## A. Formation of the preterite

### REGULAR PRETERITE FORMS

-ar	-er	-ir
<b>hablar</b>	<b>comer</b>	<b>vivir</b>
<i>yo</i> hablé	<i>yo</i> comí	<i>yo</i> viví
<i>tú</i> hablaste	<i>tú</i> comiste	<i>tú</i> viviste
<i>él, ella, Ud.</i> habló	<i>él, ella, Ud.</i> comió	<i>él, ella, Ud.</i> vivió
<i>nosotros</i> hablamos	<i>nosotros</i> comimos	<i>nosotros</i> vivimos
<i>vosotros</i> hablasteis	<i>vosotros</i> comisteis	<i>vosotros</i> vivisteis
<i>ellos/as, hablaron</i>	<i>ellos/as, comieron</i>	<i>ellos/as, vivieron</i>
<i>Uds. hablaron</i>	<i>Uds. comieron</i>	<i>Uds. vivieron</i>

### IRREGULAR PRETERITE FORMS

	andar: (to walk)	conducir: (to drive)	dar: (to give)	decir: (to say)	estar: (to be)	hacer: (to do)
<i>yo</i>	anduve	conduje	di	dije	estuve	hice
<i>tú</i>	anduviste	condujiste	diste	dijiste	estuviste	hiciste
<i>él/ella</i>	anduvo	condujo	dio	dijo	estuvo	hizo
<i>Ud.</i>	anduvo	condujo	dio	dijo	estuvo	hizo+
<i>nosotros</i>	anduvimos	condujimos	dimos	dijimos	estuvimos	hicimos
<i>vosotros</i>	anduvisteis	condujisteis	disteis	dijisteis	estuvisteis	hicisteis
<i>ellos/as, anduvieron</i>	anduvieron	condujeron	dieron	dijeron	estuvieron	hicieron
<i>Uds.</i>	anduvieron	condujeron	dieron	dijeron	estuvieron	hicieron

	ir* (to go)	poder: (to be able)	querer: (to want)	ser (to be)	venir: (to come)	ver (to see)
<i>yo</i>	fui	pude	quise	fui	vine	vi
<i>tú</i>	fuiste	pudiste	quisiste	fuiste	viniste	viste
<i>él/ella</i>	fue	pudo	quiso	fue	vino	vio
<i>Ud.</i>	fue	pudo	quiso	fue	vino	vio
<i>nosotros</i>	fuimos	pudimos	quisimos	fuimos	vinimos	vimos
<i>vosotros</i>	fuisteis	pudisteis	quisisteis	fuisteis	vinisteis	visteis
<i>ellos/as,</i>	fueron	pudieron	quisieron	fueron	vinieron	vieron
<i>Uds.</i>	fueron	pudieron	quisieron	fueron	vinieron	vieron

\*The -c- in the preterite stem is replaced with -z- in order to maintain the /s/ sound.

+Notice that *ir* and *ser* share the same forms in the preterite. The context will determine meaning: *Fui a México en agosto.* (I went to Mexico in August) *Fui la primera persona en llegar.* (I was the first person to arrive.)

- Verbs that end in **-car**, **-gar**, and **-zar** show a spelling change in the first person singular (**yo**) form of the preterite.

buscar [to look for]: *yo busqué, tú buscaste, ...*

pagar [to pay]: *yo pagué, tú pagaste, ...*

empezar [to begin]: *yo empecé, tú empezaste, ...*

- An unstressed **-i-** between two vowels becomes **-y-** in the preterite.

creer [to believe]: *creíó → creyó*

*creiron → creyeron*

leer[to read]: *leíó → leyó*

*leieron → leyeron*

- Although **-ar** and **-er** stem-changing verbs have no stem change in the preterite:

*me acuesto → me acosté*

*almorzar → almorcé*

*entender → entendí*

**-ir** stem-changing verbs do have a change in the preterite, but **only** in the third person singular (*él, ella, Ud.*) and third person plural (*ellos, ellas, Uds.*).

The stem vowels **e** and **o** change to **i** and **u**, respectively:

	dormir:	vestirse:
<i>yo</i>	dormí	me vestí
<i>tú</i>	dormiste	te vestiste
<i>él, ella</i>	<b>durmió</b>	se <b>vistió</b>
<i>Ud.</i>	<b>durmió</b>	se <b>vistió</b>
<i>nosotros</i>	dormimos	nos vestimos
<i>vosotros</i>	dormisteis	os vestisteis
<i>ellos/as</i>	<b>durmieron</b>	se <b>vistieron</b>
<i>Uds.</i>	<b>durmieron</b>	se <b>vistieron</b>

## B. Uses of the preterite

Four uses of the **preterite** are listed below. Find a sentence that corresponds to each of the uses. Circle the sentence and number it according to the type of use.

1. Completed action. May refer to events that happened and ended quickly: *Se sentó en la silla*. (S/He sat on the chair). Completed actions may also refer to the beginning or end of an action: *La película empezó*. (The movie began.) *La película terminó* (The movie ended.). They may also refer to actions that started and ended in the past: *Limpió la casa entera*. (S/He cleaned the entire house.)

2. Completed actions in succession. A series of actions in which one action ends before the other begins, is considered to be completed: *Comió el desayuno, leyó el periódico y salió*. (S/He ate breakfast, read the newspaper and left.)

3. Completed action within a specific time period or number of times indicated. The preterite can be used to describe an event which took place a specific number of times or occurred throughout a closed interval of time (for example: por tres horas): *Ramón visitó a su familia 6 veces el semestre pasado* (he visited a specific number of times). *Juan estudió en Bloomington por cuatro años* (he studied during a closed interval of time - four years).

4. Summary or reaction statement. The preterite is also used to represent a summary or reaction to a series of events packaged as a whole: *¿Qué tal la película? ¡Me gustó mucho!* (overall reaction to the movie as a whole). *¿Qué tal el viaje a México? ¡Fue maravilloso!*  
(from *Punto y aparte*, p. 191)



**Day 1 - Activity 1**

**A. Lo que hizo Diego ayer.**

**Paso 1.** Using the guidelines for the use of preterite verbs (p. 3), decide which condition(s) apply to each preterite verb in bold print.

Ayer Diego ( ) **se levantó** a las 8:00, ( ) **tomó** café con leche y ( ) **salió**.  
( ) **Fue** a la biblioteca para estudiar pero no ( ) **pudo**. Cuando ( ) **salió** de la biblioteca,  
( ) **habló** con varios amigos y **decidió** jugar al tenis. ( ) **Jugó** por tres horas y después  
( ) **asistió** a clase. En la clase Ramón ( ) **se durmió**. Un compañero de clase ( ) **trató**  
[tried] de despertarlo y le ( ) **habló** tres veces pero Diego no ( ) **se despertó** hasta que  
el profesor le ( ) **hizo** una pregunta.

¿Qué tal el día, Diego? ( ) **Fue** un buen día excepto el quedarme dormido en  
clase.

**Paso 2.** Make a list of preterite verbs to use to tell what Diego might do after being  
awakened in class by a question from his professor.

_____	_____
_____	_____

**Paso 3**

In groups of three, compare your lists, then write a list for your group on the board.

**Day 1 - Activity 1 (cont.)**

**Paso 4. Explanation of the use of preterite verbs.**

In order to narrate in the past you need to know the past-tense verb forms and practice the two Spanish past tenses the preterite and the imperfect. Section A (pp. 1-2) shows how preterite verbs are formed. Section B (p. 3) gives guidelines for understanding when it is used.

Ayer Diego **se levantó** a las 8:00, **tomó** café con leche y **salió** (1).

All the preterite verbs in the sentence present a sequence of events starting with **se**

**levantó** (he got up), **tomó** café (he drank coffee) and **salió** (he left).

**Fue** a la biblioteca para estudiar pero no **pudo**.

(1) **Fue** - completed action (went to the library)

(1) no **pudo** - completed action (tried but was unable to study)

Cuando **salió** de la biblioteca, **habló** con varios amigos y **decidió** jugar al tenis.

(2) A series of actions, each one completed before the other.

**Jugó** por tres horas y después **asistió** a clase.

(3) **Jugó** por tres horas - he played tennis for a closed interval of time

(1) **asistió** a clase - he attended a class, complete action

En la clase Ramón (1) **se durmió**.

(1) **se durmió** - he fell asleep, the beginning of an action

Un compañero de clase **trató** [tried] de despertarlo y le (3) **habló** tres veces pero Ramón no **se despertó** hasta que el profesor le **hizo** una pregunta.

(1) **trató de despertarlo** - tried to wake him, completed action

(3) **le habló tres veces** - spoke to him three times, action with specific number of times indicated

**Fue** un buen día excepto el quedarme dormido en clase.

(4) **Fue** - it was a good day, reaction statement



**Day 1 - Activity 2 (cont.)**

**Narrating:**

**Paso 1. Lo que hizo Diego ayer.** Using this list, write a paragraph (4 - 5 sentences) explaining the events that happened after Diego woke up when the professor asked him a question. Include connecting words (adverbs) such as: *cuando, entonces, después, etc.*

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**Paso 2.** Conjugate the verbs on the presente/pretérito verb chart for the pronoun indicated for each verb.

	presente	pretérito		presente	pretérito
hablar (él)			entender (ellas)		
comer (ella)			practicar (Uds.)		
vivir (Ud.)			salir (ella)		
llegar (ellos)			pagar (él)		
escribir (Uds.)			volver (Ud.)		

Activity 1  
TRANSPARENCY (a)

## Uses of the preterite **PRETERITE** X

a. completed action

- **Fui** al cine.
- **Me gustó** el coche y decidí comprarlo.
- El picnic **terminó** cuando **empezó** a llover.

b. completed actions in succession

- **Me levanté, me vestí y salí** a la calle.

c. completed action with specific time period or number of times indicated

- **Llamó** por teléfono tres veces.

d. summary or reaction to statement weather and age

- **Fue** un verano perfecto.

Activity 1

TRANSPARENCY (b)

Ayer Diego ( ) **se levantó** a las 8:00, ( )  
**tomó** café con leche y ( ) **salió**. ( ) **Fue** a la  
biblioteca para estudiar pero no ( ) **pudo**.  
Cuando ( ) **salió** de la biblioteca, ( ) **habló** con  
varios amigos y ( ) **decidió** jugar al tenis.( )  
**Jugó** por tres horas y después ( ) **asistió** a clase.  
En la clase Diego ( ) **se durmió**. Un compañero  
de clase ( ) **trató** de despertarlo y le  
( ) **habló** tres veces pero Diego no ( ) **se**  
**despertó** hasta que el profesor le ( ) **hizo** una  
pregunta. ¿Qué tal el día, Diego? ( ) **Fue** un  
buen día excepto el quedarme dormido en clase.

### Day 1 - Activity 3

#### Purpose:

- conjugate verbs in the preterite, focusing on third person singular and first person singular and plural.
- practice the narration of activities in the past

- Task:**
- read information in instructional packet
  - organize information for use in activity

#### Materials:

- information about **los cinco amigos** from *Punto y aparte*, pp. 2-8
- tables for organizing information about los cinco amigos and other students and friends
- from *Manual que acompaña Punto y aparte*, pp. 1-2, 2 - 6

#### Procedure:

- review homework and third person preterite verb forms
- present first person preterite conjugations; individual students practice the forms
- students read information on **los cinco amigos** for **Paso 1** and, working in groups of three, fill in the table in **Paso 2**
- students work individually to write short sentences in **Paso 3** and write several on the board
- practice first person conjugations by completing the sentences in **Paso 4**, write some on the board

#### Practice:

- write sentences to practice first person singular and plural preterite verbs
- conjugate verbs in the present and preterite tenses

## Day 1 - Activity 3 - Las preferencias de los cinco amigos.

### Sara

Sara **nació** en Salamanca, España. **Estudió** periodismo en la universidad y trabajó en una emisora [station] de radio. Cuando le **hablaron** de aprender otro idioma y estudiar comunicaciones **decidió** venir a Estados Unidos para estudiar. Ahora trabaja en la emisora de la universidad, donde hace un programa para hispanohablantes [Spanish speakers]. \*ratos libres - *free time*



¿De dónde es?	Salamanca, España
¿Qué estudia?	Radio, Televisión y Cine
¿Dónde trabaja?	en la emisora de la universidad
¿Qué prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres?	jugar con la computadora, hablar por teléfono
¿Qué comida y bebida prefiere?	la paella, las galletas [cookies] y café
¿Cómo es su fin de semana ideal?	ir a la playa

### Javier

Javier **nació** en Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. **Estudió** periodismo en la universidad y **trabajó** para varios periódicos hispanos de los Estados Unidos, pero ahora trabaja de mesero [waiter] en el café Ruta Maya.

¿De dónde es?	Mayagüez, Puerto Rico
¿Qué estudia?	periodismo
¿Dónde trabaja?	en un café, como mesero
¿Qué prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres?	explorar sitios nuevos, bailar
¿comida y bebida que prefiere?	el agua de coco ( <i>coconut milk</i> )
¿su fin de semana ideal?	salir con los amigos



### Laura

Laura **nació** en Sacramento, California. Estudió español en la universidad y **se interesó** mucho por la cultura hispana. Por eso **trabajó** en el Cuerpo de Paz [Peace Corps] en Quito, Ecuador por dos años. Entonces **volvió** a los Estados Unidos para hacer cursos en estudios latinoamericanos y administración pública.



¿De dónde es?	Sacramento, California
¿Qué estudia?	Estudios latinoamericanos y administración pública
¿Dónde trabaja?	la biblioteca de la universidad
¿Qué prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres?	dormir la siesta y salir a bailar salsa por la noche
¿Qué comida y bebida prefiere?	el pastel de chocolate con café
¿Cómo es su fin de semana ideal?	hacer deporte con los amigos



## Diego

Diego **nació** en Monterrey, México. **Estudió** en la Universidad Tecnológica y después **vino** a los Estados Unidos. **Abrió** [he opened] una tienda que se llama “Tesoros” [“Treasures”] donde vende artesanía [arts and crafts] de Latinoamérica. En la universidad **se especializó** en administración de empresas pero siempre **se interesó** por las artes.

¿De dónde es?

¿Qué estudia?

¿Dónde trabaja?

¿Qué prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres?

¿Qué comida y bebida prefiere?

el

¿Cómo es su fin de semana ideal?

Monterrey, México

administración de empresas

una tienda de artesanía [arts & crafts] de  
Latinoamérica

ir a museos y al teatro, cocinar [to cook]

la sopa de flor de calabaza [*pumpkin flower*] y

café fuerte

escuchar música y bailar



## Sergio

Sergio **nació** en El Paso, Texas, pero **vivió** en Chihuahua, México hasta los 8 años. Entonces **fue** a vivir en Boston, Massachusetts, donde **nació** su padre. En la universidad **estudió** administración de empresas y ahora trabaja como agente de negocios-promotor de conjuntos musicales.

¿De dónde es?

¿Qué estudia?

¿Dónde trabaja?

¿Qué prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres?

conciertos

¿Qué comida y bebida prefiere?

¿Cómo es su fin de semana ideal?

El Paso, Texas

administración de empresas

es agente de negocios-promotor de  
conjuntos musicales

pasar tiempo con sus amigos, jugar al  
básquetbol, ir al cine y a

las fajitas, el pastel de chocolate y la  
limonada

ir al teatro, tocar la guitarra, cantar



**Day 1 - Activity 3 (cont.)**

**A. Los cinco amigos y los míos.**

**Paso 1.** Fill in a table like the one below with the required information about the friends you have just met. You should include information about your own friends also.

	Los cinco amigos	Mis mejores amigos
1. ¿De dónde son?	Sara: Javier: Laura: Diego: Sergio:	
2. ¿Qué hacen o qué estudian?	Sara: Javier: Laura: Diego: Sergio:	
3. ¿Qué prefieren hacer en sus ratos libres?	Sara: Javier: Laura: Diego: Sergio:	

(from *Punto y aparte*, p.8)

**B. Mis amigos y yo.** Using information about you and your own friends, write about things you and they have done. Write the preterite form of the verb in the space that precedes the verb. Write your own information in the other blanks. A small (n) appears in blanks where the name (**nombre**) of a person is necessary.

1. Ayer por la mañana yo \_\_\_\_\_ (desayunar) a las \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Después (n) \_\_\_\_\_ y yo \_\_\_\_\_ (hablar) por \_\_\_\_\_ minutos(s).

3. Luego yo \_\_\_\_\_ (estar) en mi clase de español por \_\_\_\_\_ hora(s).

4. Por la tarde (n) \_\_\_\_\_ y yo \_\_\_\_\_ (jugar) al \_\_\_\_\_ y después \_\_\_\_\_ (escuchar) la música de \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Por la noche yo \_\_\_\_\_ (estudiar) por \_\_\_\_\_ horas.

6. Yo \_\_\_\_\_ (nacer) en la ciudad de \_\_\_\_\_ en el estado de \_\_\_\_\_.

**Day 1 - Activity 4**

**Práctica:** A. Complete the chart by writing in the form of the verb indicated.

PRESENTE/ PRETERITO

Infinitivo	presente	pretérito	Infinitive	present	preterite
1. pagar (yo)			dar (yo)		
2. jugar (ue) (tú)			hacer (tú)		
3. comer (ella)			ver (él)		
4. salir (nosotros)			ir (nosotros)		
5. pedir (i) (ellos)			sacar (ellos)		
6. tener (ie) (yo)			poder (ue) (i) (yo)		
7. dormir(ue)(u) Ud.			venir (ie) (I) (Ud.)		
8. estudiar (Uds.)			querer (ie) (I) (Uds.)		
9. ser (nosotros)			decir (i) (i)		
10. saber (él)			estar (ella)		
11. conducir (yo)			empezar (ie) (yo)		

## Day 1 - Activity 5

### Práctica:

**B. Detalles** [details] **personales.** Read the following information. Then, complete the second sentence with personal information about yourself. Use different verbs in the **preterite** for each question.

*Modelo: Sara fue al cine anoche. Yo fui al circo [circus] anoche.*

1. Diego nació en Monterrey, México.

Yo \_\_\_\_\_

2. El primer [first] trabajo de Sara fue en una emisora de radio [radio station]. Mi primer trabajo \_\_\_\_\_

3. Laura empezó a aprender español en la universidad.

Yo \_\_\_\_\_

4. Anoche Sara jugó en la computadora y habló por teléfono. Anoche

yo \_\_\_\_\_

5. Ayer Sergio escuchó un grupo musical nuevo.

Ayer yo \_\_\_\_\_

6. Ayer Javier trabajó por cinco horas en la Ruta Maya. Ayer

yo \_\_\_\_\_

7. Anoche Laura y Sergio tomaron pastel de chocolate. Anoche mi amigo/a y

yo \_\_\_\_\_

8. Ayer Sara y Diego tomaron café en el café Ruta Maya. Ayer mi amigo/a y yo

\_\_\_\_\_

9. En agosto Javier fue a Puerto Rico de vacaciones.

En agosto yo \_\_\_\_\_

10. En julio Sara y su familia visitaron a sus abuelos en Barcelona. En julio mi familia y

yo \_\_\_\_\_

**Day 2**  
**Activity 1**

**Purpose:**

- introduce preterite conjugations for **tú** and **Uds.**
- practice these forms in the context of activities related to the students lives
- practice narration of a sequence of events that happened yesterday

**Task:**

- ask questions in groups to develop a personal profile
- answer a set of questions in the preterite
- each student makes a list of events from yesterday

**Materials:**

- exercises and directions in these section of the instructional packet
- from *Manual que acompaña Punto y aparte*, pp. 1-2

**Procedure:**

- interview classmate in groups of four; choose most interesting interests to share with the class
- students ask each other a set of questions about yesterday in the preterite; share the most interesting with the class
- students use the **tú** and **Uds.** preterite forms to tell another group member about activities

**Practice:**

- complete sentences with preterite form of the infinitives given
- using the list of events from **Paso 3**, write a paragraph narrating the events that happened yesterday. Be sure to include references to time and use connectors (adverbs) that help to indicate the sequence of events.

## Day 2 - Activity 1

**Paso 1. Perfiles (*profiles*) de sus compañeros.** Interview a classmate in order to develop a personal profile using the following guidelines. Then, choose the two or three most interesting points from each group and write them on the blackboard.

- El deporte que prefiere practicar
- Lo que prefiere hacer en sus ratos libres
- Sus músicos favoritos
- Sus películas favoritas
- Comida y bebida que prefiere
- Su fin de semana ideal

**Paso 2. Preguntas personales.** Ask the classmates in your group the following questions and write the answers on a piece of paper. As a group, choose the most interesting or unusual answers to share with the rest of the class.

*Modelo: ¿Qué película viste ayer? Ayer vi “Powder”.*

1. ¿Qué música escuchaste ayer?
2. ¿Qué comiste y bebiste ayer?
3. ¿Qué hiciste ayer en tus ratos libres [free time]?
4. ¿Adónde fuiste tú con un/a amigo/a ayer?
5. ¿Por qué fueron Uds. allí?
6. ¿Qué hicieron Uds. allí?
7. ¿Qué hiciste en un fin de semana ideal?

## Day 2 - Activity 1 (cont.)

**Paso 3. ¿Qué pasó ayer?** In chronological order, write a list of 5 - 6 events that happened to *you* (**yo**), and to you and another person (**nosotros**) yesterday. Use **preterite** verbs for **yo** (for yourself) and for **nosotros** (for you and another person). Tell another member of your group about your day making references to time and using connectors (adverbs) such as: **primero, entonces, después, finalmente**, etc.

### Práctica:

#### Ayer

A. Complete the sentences by using the preterite forms of the verbs.

1. (tú) ¿Hablar / con tus amigos ayer?

---

2. “ ¿Practicar / un deporte?

---

3. “ ¿Ir / al cine? ¿Qué película / ver/ ?

---

4. “ ¿Comer / pizza?

---

5. (Ud.) ¿Con quién / hablar / por teléfono?

---

6. “ ¿Jugar / al basquetbol ayer?

---

7. “ Ir / al concierto en el MAC?

---

8. “ ¿Ver / el partido de fútbol? ¿Quién /ganar/?

---

**B.** Using the list of events from **Paso 3**, write a paragraph (4-5 sentences) narrating the events that happened yesterday. Be sure to include references to time and use connectors (adverbs) that help to indicate the sequence of events.

**Paso 1.** List the preterite verbs that tell what happened.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Paso 2.** Write four to five sentences using connecting words to narrate the sequence of events.

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## Day 2 - Activity 2

### Purpose:

- practice conjugating preterite verbs
- practice narrating
- develop an awareness of sequence

### Task:

- note the use of the preterite in students' paragraphs from homework assignment
- complete chart of **los cinco amigos'** activities and answer questions
- list preterite verbs to tell about an ideal weekend; write down partner's activities
- begin reading *Caperucita Roja*

### Materials:

- students' paragraphs
- information about **los cinco amigos**, from *Punto y aparte*, pp. 11-14
- *Caperucita Roja* story

### Procedure:

- students put together a list of the connectors to be written on the board
- each group chooses a paragraph to be written on the board
- elicit participation from students in examining the aspect and sequence features in their paragraphs
- use information provided to list activities; relate personal activities to a partner
- pre-reading: read the first sentence of each paragraph; ask what happened and how the story ended when read in childhood
- read *Caperucita Roja*

### Practice:

- read *Caperucita Roja*. Mark the preterite verbs and draw a line between each verb and its subject
- list the preterite verbs and use the guidelines on p. 5 to indicate a reason for the using of the **preterite** for each verb.

**Day 2 - Activity 2**

**A. Lo que pasó ayer.** In groups of three, choose one paragraph from the homework assignment to be read to the class. Each member of the group participates in:

- a) narrating the sequence of events in the preterite
- b) pointing out aspect
- c) pointing out sequence

**B. Las actividades de los cinco amigos.**

**Paso 1.** Work in pairs to fill in the table with the information you about the five friends.

	Sara	Javier	Laura	Diego	Sergio
<b>Actividades en sus ratos libres</b>					
<b>Comida y bebida que prefiere</b>					
<b>Su fin de semana ideal</b>					

(from *Punto y aparte*, p.

7)

**Paso 2.** Use the information from **Paso 1** to answer the following questions.

1. Sergio comió un postre. ¿A quién(es) invitó?
2. Diego fue a una clase de administración de empresas. ¿Quién fue con él?
3. ¿Quiénes son los más activos en sus ratos libres?
4. Los padres de Javier vinieron de visita. ¿Quién le ayudó a preparar la comida?

**Paso 3. Un fin de semana ideal.** In pairs, tell your partner about your ideal weekend by answering these questions: 1. ¿Con quién fuiste? 2. ¿Adónde fuiste? 3. ¿Qué hiciste? First, write down the preterite verbs that tell the sequence of your activities, then tell your partner what you did. Write down what you partner did. In groups of four, tell the other pair what your partner did.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Day 2 - Activity 3**

### **A. Caperucita Roja.**

**Paso 1.** Read the first paragraph of the story. Was this story read to you as a child? What happened? How did it end?

**Paso 2.** Read the rest of the story.

**Day 2 - Activity 3 (cont.)**

**Práctica:** Read *Caperucita Roja*. Mark the **preterite** verbs, also, draw a line between each subject and verb. If there is no explicit subject given, write in the subject. Make a list of the preterite verbs and use the guidelines on p. 5 to indicate a reason for the using the preterite for each verb.

Un día la mamá de Caperucita Roja le dijo que su abuela [grandmother] estaba enferma [sick]. La mamá preparó una cesta [basket] llena de comida deliciosa para llevar a la abuela y le dijo a Caperucita Roja, «Ten cuidado del Lobo Feroz [ferocious wolf].»

Caperucita Roja salió de su casa. Anduvo por una hora por la senda [path] en el bosque [forest] hasta llegar a la casa de su abuela. Pero en el bosque el Lobo Feroz vio [saw] a Caperucita Roja y el lobo corrió y llegó a la casa de la abuela antes que Caperucita Roja. El lobo se vistió con ropa de la abuela y escondió [hid] a la abuela en un

armario



io [closet].

Después cuando Caperucita Roja llegó a la casa de su abuela, llamó a la puerta [door]. Una voz le preguntó, «¿Quién es?» Entonces Caperucita Roja contestó, «Soy yo, abuela,» y entró en la casa. Cuando entró en la habitación [bedroom] y vio [saw] a su abuela, dijo, «Hola, abuela, vine a verte porque estás enferma. ¡Ay!, abuela, ¿Qué te pasó? Tienes los dientes [teeth] muy grandes.» «¡Así son mejores para comerte!,» dijo el lobo. En ese momento vino un leñador [woodcutter] para salvarla [to save her]. Entonces el leñador regañó [scolded] al lobo y la abuela salió del armario.

Luego en su casa Caperucita Roja le dijo a su mamá, «¡Fui a casa de mi abuela y un leñador me salvó del Lobo Feroz!» «Fue una maravilla,» dijo la mamá. Caperucita Roja y su mamá bailaron de alegría [happiness] y todos vivieron felices el resto de sus vidas.

## Day 2 - Activity 4

### Purpose:

- identify preterite verbs
- notice sequence of events
- notice aspect of preterite verbs
- practice listening for preterite forms
- use first and third person preterite verbs

### Task:

- listen for preterite verbs
- write about past holiday activities of self and others

### Materials:

- story of *Caperucita Roja*
- overhead transparency
- copy of story with preterite verbs missing

### Procedure:

- look at transparency without highlighted verbs
- identify preterite verbs and pair them and their subjects on the overhead transparency
- the instructor reads the story aloud and students fill in the blanks on a handout with only the preterite verbs missing
- briefly review the uses of preterite verbs

### Practice:

- use third person preterite verbs to complete cloze passage **about los cinco amigos**
- use first person preterite verbs to tell about sequence of activities yesterday

## Day 2 - Activity 4

### A. Caperucita Roja.

**Paso 1.** Review the story of *Caperucita Roja* on which you have marked the preterite verbs and drawn a line between the subjects and verbs.



**Paso 2.** Write in the preterite verbs you hear read by your instructor. The story will be read twice.

Un día por la mañana, la mamá de Caperucita Roja le \_\_\_\_\_ que su abuela [grandmother] estaba enferma [was sick]. La mamá \_\_\_\_\_ una cesta [basket] llena de comida deliciosa para llevar a la abuela y le \_\_\_\_\_ a Caperucita Roja, “Ten cuidado [be careful] del Lobo Feroz [ferocious wolf].”

Caperucita Roja \_\_\_\_\_ de su casa. \_\_\_\_\_ por una hora por la senda [path] en el bosque [forest] hasta llegar a la casa de su abuela. Pero en el bosque el Lobo Feroz \_\_\_\_\_ [saw] a Caperucita Roja y el lobo \_\_\_\_\_ y \_\_\_\_\_ a la casa de la abuela antes que Caperucita Roja. El lobo \_\_\_\_\_ con ropa de la abuela y escondió [hid] a la abuela en un armario [closet].

Después cuando Caperucita Roja \_\_\_\_\_ a la casa de su abuela, \_\_\_\_\_ a la puerta [door]. El Lobo Feroz le preguntó, “¿Quién es?” Entonces Caperucita Roja \_\_\_\_\_, “Soy yo, abuela,” y \_\_\_\_\_ en la casa. Cuando \_\_\_\_\_ en la habitación [bedroom] y a su abuela, dijo, “Hola, abuela, \_\_\_\_\_ a verte porque estás enferma. ¡Ay!, abuela, ¿Qué te \_\_\_\_\_? Tienes los dientes [teeth] muy grandes.” “¡Así son mejores para comerte!” dijo el lobo. En ese momento \_\_\_\_\_ un leñador [woodcutter] para salvarla [to save her]. El leñador regañó [scolded] al lobo y la abuela \_\_\_\_\_ del armario.

Luego en su casa Caperucita Roja le \_\_\_\_\_ a su mamá, “¡Yo \_\_\_\_\_ a casa de mi abuela y un leñador me salvó del Lobo Feroz!” “¡ \_\_\_\_\_ una maravilla!” dijo la mamá. Caperucita Roja y su mamá \_\_\_\_\_ de alegría [happiness] y todos \_\_\_\_\_ felices el resto de sus vidas.

**Day 2 - Activity 4 (cont.)**

**B. Un día de fiesta.** What did you do last Día de las brujas / Día de Acción de Gracias / Noche Vieja (Halloween/Thanksgiving/New year's Eve)?

**Paso 1.** Choose **one** of these holidays. Use preterite verbs to make a list of four or five activities you did on that holiday.

**Palabras útiles:**

disfraz (*costume*)

fantasma (*ghost*)

bruja (*witch*)

pavo (*turkey*)

viajar (*to travel*)

visitar (*to visit*)

medianoche (*midnight*)

reloj (*clock*)

sonar (*to strike, ring*) [(*ue*) in present tense]

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Paso 2.** In groups of three, use this list of activities and preterite verbs to write one story for each group telling the sequence of events involving two or more of **los cinco amigos** on the same holiday.

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**Paso 3.** Share your story with another group of three.

## Day 2 - Activity 5

### Práctica:

**A. Lo que pasó ayer con los cinco amigos.** Use information about **los cinco amigos**. Choose **three** of the **amigos** and fill in the blanks with their names and the preterite form of the verb indicated. Write the preterite form of the verb in the space that follows the infinitive.

A small (n) appears in the blank for the name of a person.

1. Primero (n) \_\_\_\_\_, (n) \_\_\_\_\_, y (n) \_\_\_\_\_ (desayunar) \_\_\_\_\_ en la IMU.
2. Después (n) \_\_\_\_\_ y (n) \_\_\_\_\_ (ir) \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Pero (n) \_\_\_\_\_ (ir) \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Por la tarde (n) \_\_\_\_\_ (escuchar) \_\_\_\_\_ y entonces (asistir) \_\_\_\_\_ a una clase de \_\_\_\_\_.
5. (n) \_\_\_\_\_ y (n) \_\_\_\_\_ (jugar) \_\_\_\_\_ al \_\_\_\_\_.



Sara



Javier



Laura



Diego



Sergio



**Day 2 - Activity 5 (cont.)**

**B. ¿Qué hiciste tú ayer?**

**Paso 1.** List preterite verbs in sequence to tell about four things you did yesterday.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Paso 2.** Write four sentences to tell what happened yesterday (remember to use connecting words).

## Caperucita Roja

Un día la mamá de Caperucita Roja le dijo que su abuela [grandmother] estaba enferma [sick]. La mamá preparó una cesta [basket] llena de comida deliciosa para llevar a la abuela y le dijo a Caperucita Roja, “Ten cuidado del Lobo Feroz [ferocious wolf].”

Caperucita Roja salió de su casa. Anduvo por una hora por la senda [path] en el bosque [forest] hasta llegar a la casa de su abuela. Pero en el bosque el Lobo Feroz vio [saw] a Caperucita Roja y el lobo corrió y llegó a la casa de la abuela antes que Caperucita Roja. El lobo se vistió con ropa de la abuela y escondió [hid] a la abuela en un armario

[closet].

TRANSPARENCY (p. 2)

Después cuando Caperucita Roja llegó a la casa de su abuela, llamó a la puerta [door]. Una voz le preguntó, “¿Quién es?” Entonces Caperucita Roja contestó, “Soy yo, abuela,” y entró en la casa.

Cuando entró en la habitación [bedroom] y vio [saw] a su abuela, dijo, “Hola, abuela, vine a verte porque estás enferma. ¡Ay!, abuela, ¿Qué te pasó? Tienes los dientes [teeth] muy grandes.” “¡Así son mejores para comerte!” dijo el lobo. En ese momento vino un leñador [woodcutter] para salvarla [to save her]. Entonces el leñador regañó [scolded] al lobo y la abuela salió del armario.

TRANSPARENCY (p. 3)

Luego en su casa Caperucita Roja le dijo a su mamá, “¡Fui a casa de mi abuela y un leñador me salvó del Lobo Feroz!” “¡Fue una maravilla!” dijo la mamá. Caperucita Roja y su mamá bailaron de alegría [happiness] y todos vivieron felices el resto de sus vidas, excepto el Lobo Feroz.

## APPENDIX C

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Jeanne Martinez

## POSTTEST 1

### PRETERITE

**A. Un fin de semana no muy ideal.** Last weekend was less than ideal. Complete the sentences in the following paragraph with the appropriate PRETERITE tense forms of the verbs indicated.

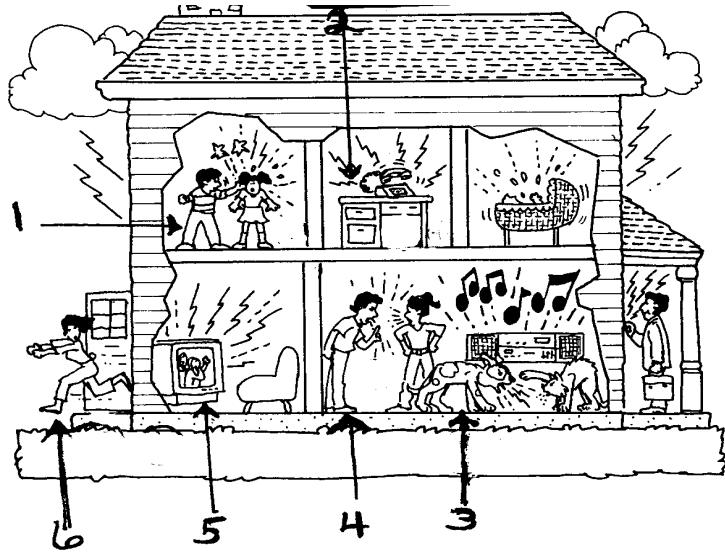
1. El sábado pasado por la mañana yo me \_\_\_\_\_ (despertar) muy temprano.
2. A las 7:00 yo \_\_\_\_\_ (salir) con mi amigo para la playa para nadar en el mar [*the ocean*].
- 3-4. Yo \_\_\_\_\_ (manejar) [*to drive*] el coche y mi amigo \_\_\_\_\_ (leer) el mapa [*map*] para llegar a la playa.
5. En la playa \_\_\_\_\_ (empezar) a llover mucho y hacer mucho viento.
6. Una ola [*a wave*] \_\_\_\_\_ (llegar) a nuestro coche.
7. Entonces, un policía \_\_\_\_\_ (venir) para llevarnos a un lugar seguro.
- 8-9. En un restaurante mi amigo \_\_\_\_\_ (comer) una hamburguesa y yo \_\_\_\_\_ (tomar) un refresco.
10. No me \_\_\_\_\_ (gustar) ese fin de semana.

POSTTEST 1

**B. ¿Qué ocurrió con la niñera?** Babysitting can be simply dull, but sometimes it can even be dangerous.

**Paso 1.** Use preterite verbs to tell a sequence of six events that happened at this babysitting job. First make a list of the verbs in the **preterite**, then narrate what happened.

**Palabras útiles:** pegar [*to hit*]; sonar [*to ring*]; discutir [*to argue*]; ladrar [*to bark*]; perder la paciencia [*to lose patience*]; correr [*to run*].



Write the sequence of verbs in the **preterite** tense:

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

**Paso 2.** Use the verbs from Paso 1 to write a paragraph of five complete sentences telling the sequence of events that happened in the illustration of the babysitter's experience.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## POSTTEST 2

### PRETERITE

**A. Un día de Fernando.** In the following paragraph Fernando tells what happened **yesterday** when he missed an exam. Complete the sentences by writing in the appropriate PRETERITE tense forms of the verbs indicated.

- 1-2. Ayer Fernando \_\_\_\_\_ (salir) de su casa a las ocho  
y \_\_\_\_\_ (asistir) a un concierto de música rock con sus amigos.
3. Una amiga le \_\_\_\_\_ (invitar) a Fernando a una fiesta después del concierto.
4. Fernando \_\_\_\_\_ (volver) muy tarde a su casa.
5. Entonces \_\_\_\_\_ (estudiar) por tres horas para un examen de matemáticas a las 10:00 de la ma al día siguiente [*the next day*].
6. Fernando no se \_\_\_\_\_ (acostar) hasta las 3:00 de la mañana.
7. Al día siguiente \_\_\_\_\_ (dormir) hasta las 11:00 de la mañana.
8. Fernando no \_\_\_\_\_ (llegar) a tiempo para tomar el examen.
9. Por eso Fernando \_\_\_\_\_ (llamar) a su profesor para pedir tomar el examen por la tarde.
10. Su profesor \_\_\_\_\_ (entender) el problema y le dijo [*told him*] que sí.

POSTTEST 2

**B. El día que Ricardo tuvo ayer.** The following drawings depict what Ricardo did yesterday. **Paso 1.** Make a list of the verbs you need to tell the story using the preterite.

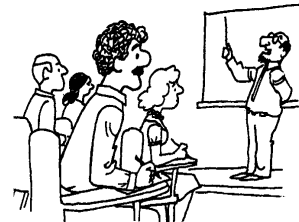
**Palabras útiles:** despertar(se) [to wake up]; desayunar [to eat breakfast]; asistir [to attend]; volver [to return]; comer [to eat]; acostar(se) [to go to bed]



1



2



3



4.



5.



6.

backbone (columna): write the verbs in the **preterite** tense in the spaces below

1. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Paso 2.** Using the verbs from Paso 1, write five complete sentences telling about the sequence of events shown in the illustrations. Narrate what **Ricardo** did **yesterday**.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Jeanne Martinez

### POSTTEST 3

#### PRETERITE

**A. La semana pasada de Elena.** Last week Elena participated in her favorite activities. Complete the following paragraph by filling in the blanks with the appropriate PRETERITE forms of the verbs indicated.

1-2. La semana pasada por las mañanas Elena se \_\_\_\_\_ (levantar) temprano y \_\_\_\_\_ (salir) a sus clases.

3. A mediodía Elena \_\_\_\_\_ (comer) en la cafetería con los miembros de su equipo de baloncesto.

4-5. El lunes por la tarde Elena \_\_\_\_\_ (jugar) al tenis pero \_\_\_\_\_ (perder) el partido.

6. El martes por la tarde \_\_\_\_\_ (practicar) baloncesto por tres horas.

7. El miércoles el equipo de baloncesto de Elena \_\_\_\_\_ (ganar) el partido contra Michigan.

8. El jueves Elena \_\_\_\_\_ (cenar) en un restaurante con su familia.

9-10. El viernes por la noche Elena \_\_\_\_\_ (conocer) a muchas personas en una fiesta y \_\_\_\_\_ (volver) a su casa tarde.

POSTTEST 3

**C. Narración en el pasado: Javier y Jacobo.**

**Paso 1.** Look at the drawings that show what happened to Javier when he was seven years old. List the **preterite** verbs that form the “backbone (columna) of the story and move the story ahead.

**Palabras útiles:** acusar [*to accuse*]; caer [*to fall*]; comprar [*to buy*]; jugar [*to play*]; llorar [*to cry*]; romper [*to break*]; el vaso de cristal [*the vase*]; la pelota [*the ball*]; la madre [*the mother*]; la abuela [*the grandmother*]; la tienda [*the store*]



1



2



3



4



5

backbone (columna): write the verbs in the **preterite** tense

1. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Paso 2.** Using the verbs from Paso 1, write five complete sentences telling about the sequence of events that happened to Javier in the illustrations.

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## APPENDIX D

Study #99-3412

### INDIANA UNIVERSITY - BLOOMINGTON INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

#### Teaching the Spanish Preterite Through Narration

You are invited to participate in a research study. It has been noted that English speaking students of Spanish typically have difficulty understanding the distinction between the two past tenses in Spanish. One of these tenses, the preterite, is the focus of this study. The purpose of this study is to explain the uses of the Spanish preterite through a narration framework. The narration of past events, orally and in writing, was practiced in class. As determined by the posttests, the results will be compared with a different teaching method used in a previous study involving the teaching of the preterite.

#### **INFORMATION**

All members of the class have done the same activities. These were included in the syllabus as a required part of instruction in the course. There was no homework related to these activities. The materials for the study were supplied by the researcher at no cost to the subjects. A pretest was given before instruction began.

The researcher explained the conjugation of preterite tense verbs. The past-tense contexts in which the preterite is used were also explained. Students practiced using preterite verbs in specific situations; the verbs used were examined to determine which of four contexts trigger the use of the preterite. Students listed preterite verbs that they used to write short paragraphs that were shared with the rest of the class. Series of illustrations formed a basis for listing verbs in the preterite and then using them to narrate a series of events in a paragraph. Students completed with preterite conjugations of frequently used verbs. In another activity students identified the preterite verbs in a reading. They later listened for those verbs in the same text read to them by the researcher. Students interviewed each other in class. Students wrote lists of preterite verbs that were used in writing about a sequence of events that took place in the past. The paragraphs were shared with the rest of the class. Verb charts were completed in class in order to practice the preterite forms. The students read sentences about a sequence of life events of a Hispanic student and then wrote a corresponding sentence about themselves.

Following instruction, the students took an immediate posttest. Two additional posttests were taken after one week and one month. The students participated in two class days of instruction. Each of the posttests took approximately 20 minutes. Approximately 120 subjects participated in the activities required for class. All class members have done the same work. Only the pretest and posttest results of those who wish to participate will be used for research purposes. Neither the above-mentioned activities done in class, nor the pretest and posttests, will count towards any student's course grade.

\_\_\_\_\_subject's initials

## **BENEFITS**

It is anticipated that the subjects will benefit from this instruction by gaining a clearer understanding of the uses of the preterite tense in Spanish. It is also anticipated that this study will add to the body of knowledge in the field of second language instruction and of the teaching of the Spanish past tense verbs. A goal of this study is to explore the possible advantages of teaching the preterite by using narration activities as the primary focus.

All test results will be kept confidential. The resulting data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study. The test results will not be used in any way for grading purposes.

## **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Jeanne Martinez, at Ballantine Hall 848, and 332-1949. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the office for the Human Subjects Committee, Bryan Hall 110, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, 812/855-3087, by e-mail at iub\_hsc@indiana.edu.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

## **CONSENT**

This consent form is being given to you at the beginning of the instruction period but will not be collected until the end of the period. I have read this form and received a copy of it. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study. I agree to let my work done in this section be used for research.

Subject's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



Consent form date December 20, 1999

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Spanish Lecturer, Coordinator, Spanish 111, Arizona State University, Tempe, August 2004 – present  
Spanish Lecturer, Coordinator, Spanish 201, Arizona State University, Tempe, January 2002 – May 2004  
Spanish Lecturer, Coordinator, Spanish 111, Arizona State University, Tempe, August 2000 – December 2001  
Instructor of Spanish. Conversational Spanish 1 & 2, Dept. of Continuing Studies Indiana University, Bloomington, 1998 - 2000  
Instructor of Spanish. CIBER Foreign Language Tutoring Program, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1999 - 2000  
Preceptor / Associate Instructor of Spanish. Indiana University, 1995-97  
Associate Instructor of Spanish. Indiana University, 1991-98  
Elementary Spanish I – 1 section  
Elementary Spanish II – 1 section  
Second-Year Spanish I – 6 sections  
Second-Year Spanish II – 6 sections  
Introduction to Hispanic Culture – 7 sections  
Spanish Grammar – 1 section  
Assistant Director & Grammar Instructor. Indiana University Honors Program in Foreign Languages for High School Students, San Luis Potosí, México, Summer, 1997 and 1998  
Grammar Instructor. Indiana University Honors Program in Foreign Languages for High School Students, San Luis Potosí, México, Summer 1996

### Additional Training

McGraw-Hill Satellite Teleconference in Second Language Teaching, "Testing and Assessment in the Second Language Classroom," Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. October 2004.

"Conflict Transformation in Arizona: Academics and Practitioners in Dialogue," Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. November 2003.

Disruptive Student Workshop, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ. November 2003.

"A Language Teaching and Technology Workshop: Teaching Culture in the Digital Millennium," Phoenix College, Phoenix, AZ, November 2003.

AZLA Annual Conference. "Rediscovering the Resources Within," Glendale Community College, Glendale, AZ. September 2003.

Teaching with Technology Workshop, Mesa Community College, Mesa, AZ. March 2003.

### **Related:**

1999 – 2000, Volunteer Interpreter. WIC program, Bloomington, IN

### **Residence Abroad:**

San Luis Potosí, México: 6 months

San Juan, Puerto Rico: 6 months

Madrid, Spain: 2 years

Rome, Italy: 1 year

### **Conference Papers:**

"Planning, Production, and Process: A Practical Guide to FL Course Hybridization." AZLA Annual Conference 2004: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities. Coconino Community College, Flagstaff, AZ. October 2004.

"Don't be afraid of the preterite." AZLA Annual Conference 2002: Language for the Global Community. Thunderbird, Glendale, AZ. September 2002.

"Tools for success in the FL Classroom." AZLA Annual Conference 2001: An Odyssey. Wickenburg High School. Wickenburg, AZ. September 2001.

"El pretérito: Primer paso hacia el pasado." Quinto Congreso de Didáctica del Español, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, September, 2000.

“Teaching Culture through Cooperative Learning II.” Indiana Foreign Language Teachers’ Association Conference. November 1997.

“Teaching Culture through Cooperative Learning.” Indiana Foreign Language Teachers’ Association Conference. November 1996.

“Cooperative Learning in the Foreign Language Classroom.” Indiana Foreign Language Teachers’ Association Conference. October 1995.

“Catalán: Language Survival.” School of Education Graduate Student Forum on Language Planning and Policy Conference. Indiana University, Bloomington. April 1995.

“Teaching Languages for Special Purposes: Spanish for Medical Personnel.” Indiana Foreign Language Teachers’ Association Conference. October 1994.

Professional Organizations:

Arizona Language Association  
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese  
Modern Language Association