

Acquisition of English Tense-Aspect Morphology by Korean Instructed Learners

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This study investigated the acquisition of English simple past and present progressive markers by 84 Korean high school students (grade 10) learning English as a foreign language in the classroom context. Students in four proficiency level groups completed a passage cloze test with a brief questionnaire. The findings indicated that the students' uses of tense-aspect markers were influenced by the lexical aspect in support for the Aspect Hypothesis (Andersen 1991, Andersen and Shirai 1994): The students were more successful at marking the simple past with achievement verbs and the present progressive with activity verbs. However, the analysis of the alternatives to target contexts also revealed the overuse of progressive form contrary to the prediction of the AH.

Keywords: lexical aspect, past tense and progressive aspect, the Aspect Hypothesis, Korean instructed learners in the secondary level, English as a foreign language

1. Introduction

One of the central language competences that learners of English as a second or a foreign language have to acquire is the ability to express English tense and aspect through morphological markers. Acquiring simple English verb morphology such as past tense and progressive aspect takes considerable time with L2 learners' interlanguage fluctuating between target-like and non-target-like forms. It is partly because the language tasks for L2 learners involve not just learning the language form, but also matching the form with the appropriate meaning in the appropriate context.

The issue of the acquisition of morphological markers has long been a focus of second language research. Apart from earlier work of the

morpheme studies in the 1970s, more sophisticated approach referred to as the Aspect Hypothesis (AH) was taken in the 1980s. The AH claims that “first and second language learners will initially be influenced by the inherent semantic aspect of verbs or predicates in the acquisition of tense and aspect markers associated with or affixed to these verbs” (Andersen and Shirai 1994: 133). As the learners become more competent, it is expected that they will move away from strict association between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect and extend the uses of lexical aspect more broadly approximating native speakers of English. This approach focuses on the influence of lexical aspect in the L2 acquisition of tense-aspect morphology. It originated from L1 acquisition studies, but later, Andersen (1991) formulated the hypothesis in its present form based on the pioneering work of Vendler (1967) and Weist et al. (1984).

Over the past two decades, significant numbers of studies have found evidence, though varying in degrees, supporting the AH predictions for various target languages in both naturalistic and instructed L2 learning contexts (for a comprehensive review see Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 2000, Salaberry and Shirai 2002). In spite of the abundance and importance of findings of previous studies, there is still a research gap in need of representing certain age groups and L2 learning contexts. Previous studies were mostly carried out in naturalistic ESL settings or intensive instructed ESL settings in the university level (e.g., intensive ESL programs provided by universities). Therefore, not much is known about the acquisition patterns of the instructed foreign language learners in secondary schools. Further, various data elicitation tasks used in the literature have often produced mixed results causing difficulty to make coherent inferences about certain target groups of L2 learners.

Thus, the goals of this study were as follows: First, to fill a research gap to the literature with regard to the acquisition of past tense and progressive aspect by Korean learners of English in the secondary school level. Second, to gain insight into the acquisition patterns of English tense-aspect morphology by Korean learners of English as a foreign language. For the goals of this paper, the study replicated the methodology employed by Collins (2002, 2004) using a written passage cloze test as an elicitation task.

2. The Aspect Hypothesis

While grammatical aspect is marked by using auxiliary or verb morphology, lexical aspect is regarded as an inherent semantic property of the verb phrase or predicate which represents the temporal conditions of the situation. Lexical aspect is also independent of tense and grammatical aspect. For example, *I rode my bicycle along the beach* and *I was riding my bicycle along the beach* are different in grammatical aspect (simple vs. progressive) but same in lexical aspect (both are activities). A majority of the studies testing the AH have used Andersen's (1991) semantic feature description of four aspectual categories as shown in Table 1. Depending on the presence or absence of three semantic features dynamic (i.e., with change over time), telic (i.e., with an inherent endpoint), and punctual (i.e., with no continuity over time), situations can be marked states (e.g., *look neat*), activities (e.g., *swim in the ocean*), achievements (e.g., *arrive at the building*) or accomplishments (e.g., *write advertisements*).

Table 1. Semantic Features of Lexical Aspectual Categories (Andersen 1991)

Aspectual category	Semantic features		
	Dynamic	Telic	Punctual
States	×	×	×
Activities	○	×	×
Accomplishments	○	○	×
Achievements	○	○	○

However, it should also be noticed that in the case of telic verbs the lexical property of telicity can be either realized or not realized being affected by the predicates they take. Verbs like *swim*, *ride*, and *run* can be used either activity (i.e., atelic) or accomplishment verbs (i.e., telic) depending on the definiteness of their objects as shown in the examples below (Collins 2002: 64).

- (1) Bill swam a kilometer, ran 5 kilometers and rode his bicycle 10 kilometers. (Accomplishments)
- (2) The weather was nice so my mother swam in the ocean and my father rode his bicycle along the beach. Sometimes my mother

ran along the beach beside him. (Activities)

The AH predicts that the lexical aspect will influence the way L2 learners use tense/aspect markers as they develop productive systems of verb morphology. General findings from research in a number of target languages have shown that L2 learners at early stages of acquisition display a preference for using past tense markers with achievement and/or accomplishment verbs (i.e., telics) and for using progressive markers with activity verbs. As they become more proficient in their second or foreign language, the AH predicts that past forms will emerge with achievements and then proceed to accomplishments, activities, and states; and that progressive forms will emerge with activities and spread through to achievements, with no inappropriate overgeneralization to states.

3. Previous Studies on Testing the Predictions of the AH

In the literature of L2 development of tense-aspect morphology, the AH is one of the most heavily researched area. Since 1990s, there have been significant numbers of empirical studies investigating a variety of target languages either in natural or instructed context of language uses. The participants were from various L1 backgrounds learning the target language mostly as a second language. Since it is not the purpose of this paper to cover a comprehensive review of the literature, sixteen studies were selected to suit the scope and goals of this paper. They were mostly cross-sectional studies with an exception of two studies (E-J Lee 2001, 2006) and all analyzed English data collected from instructed learners of English in a second or a foreign language learning context. For the ease of the review, they were divided into two groups based on the types of data elicitation tasks used in the studies.

3.1. Studies that Used a Passage Cloze Task

The first group of studies mainly used a cloze test as their data elicitation task (Ayoum and Salaberry 2008, Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, Collins 2002, 2004, J-j Hong 2007, J Lim

2004). The passages of the cloze test varied in length and the participants were asked to supply the missing word(s) in the blank using the given base form as a hint. Bardovi-Harlig (1992: 257) asserted that the cloze passage provides “a type of extended temporal frame that could serve the same function as the short scenarios” that were used in the studies of 1980s, but the form is more suitable for linguistically less competent participants. The passage cloze task has many advantages over more natural methods of data collection: It creates context for a variety of target forms, eases comparison across learners, reduces avoidance greatly, and makes comparable data for native speakers available.

In the United States, Bardovi-Harlig (1992) and Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) investigated university students at an intensive ESL program. The participants were mixed groups of different L1 backgrounds ranging from 14 to 15 different nationalities. Korean students were also involved in the studies. Bardovi-Harlig (1992) found that in the past contexts her participants distinguished the verbs between the punctuals and the duratives which have semantic meaning of ‘no continuity over time’ and ‘change over time’ respectively. They used more past tense markers with punctual verbs and more progressive aspect markers with durative verbs. Three years later, Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds, BHR (1995) in short, confirmed the findings of the earlier study by observing higher use of past markers with telic verbs (i.e., achievements and accomplishments) and lower use with activity and state verbs across all levels of proficiency. State verbs showed higher use of non-past, while activity verbs showed higher use of progressive markers. They posited that level of proficiency influenced tense use and proposed three stages in the acquisition of the simple past: First, telic verbs were favored over activity and state verbs, then states started being used more than activities; and finally activity verbs showed the same rate of use of past as state verbs. The findings of these two studies lend support to the predictions of the AH.

In a French-speaking area of the Canadian province of Québec, Collins (2002, 2004) conducted two studies examining use of English tense-aspect markers in past contexts by Francophone university students of an intensive ESL program. English learning in Québec is unique in the sense that they have both features of ESL and EFL contexts (Collins 2002: 51-52). Collins (2002) comprised of two studies in which the first

one replicated BHR (1995) and the second one modified the cloze passage and included lower proficiency students. Although the findings of the first study were consistent with those of BHR (1995), the second study revealed more interesting results. The study reported that the lower level students tended to connect past morphology more strongly with achievements. As they move away from the very early stage of past tense development, they became equally successful with accomplishments and achievements. Also, they preferred progressive markers with activities than any other lexical aspect categories. However, unlike the finding of BHR (1995), states rather than activities were the least possible candidate for simple past. Moreover, in both study 1 & 2 there was no interaction between lexical aspect and proficiency groups. In other words, the students who had become proficient in using past markers continued to have more success with achievements and accomplishments. Collins concluded that the observed overuse of progressives with states seemed to be the result of students' familiarity with those particular state verbs in activity contexts rather than the effect of L1 influence. In Collins (2004), Japanese university students in the English-speaking Canadian region also joined the study to investigate the possible L1 effect at interplay with the lexical aspect effect. The marking of past spread from telics through activities to states was once again observed in both groups of learners at all levels although Francophone learners were less successful with achievements as they increased using more of perfect markers instead. Moreover, both groups produced progressive markers more often with activities than with other aspectual categories. The study confirmed that the lexical aspect predicted by the AH played a significant role and the L1 influence was observed to be minimal not disturbing the spread of the past tense from achievements to states.

Next two studies involved Korean learners of English in ESL (J Lim 2004) and EFL (J-j Hong 2007) contexts. J Lim (2004) examined the use of English past tense of Korean learners at the ESL or the graduate program at the American universities. Partly, the findings were consistent with the BHR (1995) in that the study supported the influence of lexical aspect in the English acquisition of simple past: higher rate of use with telics than with states and activities. However, unlike the BHR (1995), Korean learners had more difficulties with states than with activities. On the other hand, the advanced learners

were not affected by the lexical aspect behaving more like native speakers. However, they were the only group which showed the influence of lexical aspect producing more progressive markers with activities as alternative responses. J-j Hong (2007) examined the use of English past and present perfect markers by Korean students at a Korean university. The study did not specify the number and the English proficiency level of the participants and did not divide proficiency level groups. The findings on the use of the past tense were that the students were more proficient with telics than activities and states; and that there were no significant differences in achievement and accomplishment pair and activity and state pair.

The more recent study in the group, Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) was noticeable in that it was carried out with 21 high school students in an instructed foreign language context, France. Their ages ranged between 16 and 20 with an average of 6-12 years of foreign language learning in school. A written narrative task along with a cloze test were used to address two research agendas: the possible effect of the lexical aspect in the use of past tense morphology and the possible transfer effect of L1 (French) represented in the overuse of the English present perfect due to its similarity with French counterpart. Both elicitation tasks showed a strong lexical class effect but the patterns varied depending on the tasks. In the cloze test, the participants were more successful with states and telics and less so with activities. However, on the written task students marked states verbs most often for past tense closely followed by telics contradicting the predictions of the AH. According to the AH, states should be the last verbs to be consistently marked for past tense. Aysoun and Salaberry reasoned that state verbs such as *'be, want, think'* are a few in number and frequently appear in the narrative stories often with past markers representing a distributional bias in the input data. Moreover, they suggested a predicate effect that the participants were more familiar with some predicates with certain specific tense markers so that when they were asked to respond in different tense marking it might cause difficulty for them. As for L1 effect, they claimed that the effect was minimal representing more of individual differences which mirrored the findings of Collins (2004).

To summarize, seven studies above all supported the AH hypothesis that the lexical aspect has stronger influence over marking English

tense-aspect morphology. Most studies reported that the participants were more successful marking past tense with telics and progressive aspect with activities. However, the latest study of Ayoun and Sala-berry (2008) with secondary school students produced different findings from the rest: their participants were more successful marking simple past with states and/or telics. They also reported minimal L1 effect and the effect of proficiency. Moreover, the issue of task effect and a need for fine-grained control of learner proficiency were raised for further studies.

3.2 Studies that Used Oral or Written Production Tasks

The second group comprised of studies that used an oral or a written production task as their main data elicitation method (Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996, H Hahn 2005, S-H Kim 1998, 2001, E-J Lee 2001, 2006, Muñoz and Gilabert 2011, G No 2000, Robinson 1995). Robinson (1995) analyzed the data elicited from a conversational interview with Puerto Rican college students learning English as foreign language, while Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström (1996) used a written film retelling task to compare the ESL students enrolled in an intensive ESL program at an American university and the American university students learning French as a foreign language. Both studies found that there was a strong link between morphological marking and aspectual category in line with the study of BHR (1995). Robinson (1995) found that the progressive marker *-ing* was attached to activity verbs and almost never to state verbs. Also, in the lowest group more achievements were marked with the progressives and then the rate dropped sharply with the next proficiency level group. This finding from the early stages of language development of the adult classroom learners implied that the proficiency level might affect the use of tense-aspect morphology markers. Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström (1996) found both ESL and EFL groups marked past first with achievement and accomplishment verbs, and then extended to activity verbs. The English group marked activity verbs with progressives extensively in Group 1 to 3 and the highest level group showed the spread to accomplishments. However, they showed no overgeneralization of progressives to states.

There were four studies that analyzed the data from Korean learners

of English in the ESL context (S-H Kim 1998, 2001, E-J Lee 2001, 2006). S-H Kim (1998) tested the AH with 10 Korean university students enrolled in a ESL or a graduate program at an American university. She used both an oral and a written story retelling task. Learners showed a higher rate of appropriate use of past tense markers in the written narratives than in oral narratives in which they focused more on the grammatical accuracy than on the story. The results showed that the participants used more past morphology with achievements and accomplishments and progressive with activities in both oral and written narratives. However, in both tasks they also showed as frequent use of state verbs as that of telic verbs despite the analysis excluded copula verbs. Another noticeable finding was that the overgeneralization of the progressive to state verbs was observed only with the lowest level group in both oral and written narratives. In another study, S-H Kim (2001) studied Korean and Chinese graduate students at an American university with the research interest of the L1 influence on English tense-aspect acquisition using two different oral production tasks. The findings revealed that the two groups showed slightly different use of past tense markers. In the picture description task, the Chinese learners used the simple past more with achievements and accomplishments than activities and states, while the Korean group showed higher use of states than the telic verbs. In the film re-telling task, both groups used as much state verbs as the achievement verbs followed by the accomplishments and activities. In terms of progressives, both groups used progressive forms with activity verbs although Koreans showed the higher frequency of the use. The L1 effect was minimal in the study and the overgeneralization of the progressives was not observed in the data. On the other hand, in two longitudinal studies of Korean teenagers E-J Lee (2001, 2006) reported findings in support of the AH. Each study followed two Korean teenagers who had recently arrived in the United States and begun schooling. In E-J Lee (2001), the data were collected using a story narration, a picture description task, a story translation, and casual conversation; while in E-J Lee (2006) the data were collected from 10 sessions of casual conversation. In terms of lexical aspect, the findings of these studies revealed that the participants marked past tense first on achievement and accomplishment verbs spreading to activity and state verbs as predicted by the AH. The progressive was first marked

in activities but the spread of progressive was not observed. Contrary to the predictions of the AH, the overgeneralization of the progressive form to the state verbs was also observed. Another noticeable finding was that in E-J Lee (2001) the irregular past tense was observed to dominate the use of simple past. Overall, all four studies supported the basic predictions of the AH that the lexical aspect played more role in the students' use of tense-aspect morphology. However, the findings were different in regards to the specific category of aspect in effect and the L1 transfer of overusing the progressives with the state verbs.

There were two more studies which investigated Korean learners, however, the language learning context was EFL. First, H Hahn (2005) investigated the acquisition of English past tense by Korean university students who remained at a basic level even after a long period of exposure to classroom English. The analysis of written diary entries showed that the sequence of these students' past morphology development was not affected by the influence of lexical aspect as predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis: the sequence was in the order of states, accomplishments, achievements, and activities. Meanwhile, the learners' use of past morphology was only partially affected by phonological salience. Interestingly, Hahn concluded that these learners seem to rely heavily on L1 transfer and word-to-word translation as their learning strategies. The study suggested that the students still at the low level of English proficiency even after considerable time of English instruction tended not to follow the development pattern of past tense predicted by the AH. Next, G No (2000) reported her study of elementary school students in grade 6 with no specific focus on testing the AH. The students' use of the progressive was analyzed using the data from a guided interview and a translation task. The findings from both tasks showed that the young learners did not know the meaning or function of the progressive form even when they produced the form often overusing the progressive form in inappropriate contexts. In other words, they learned some progressive forms (e.g., swimming and reading) as simple lexical items and used them in the context of base form. The study implied that in the very early stage of English learners, especially in instructed foreign language learning, the type of input rather than the lexical aspect might have stronger effect on the learners' development of English tense-aspect morphology.

Lastly, the most recent study by Muñoz and Gilabert (2011) used a semi-guided interview and an oral story retell task to study the progressive marking of secondary school students (grades 9-12) and university students with Catalan-Spanish L1 background. States verbs were only minimally marked for progressive aspect supporting the predictions of the AH. However, the two tasks produced different results on the use of activity verbs with the progressive aspect. Muñoz and Gilabert argued that the analyses have shown a strong task effect: accomplishments outnumbered all other types of predicates in the data from the narrative task whereas activities have the highest frequency in the data from the interview task which followed the prediction of the AH more closely. Overall, their data showed that more accomplishment predicates were marked for progressive aspect than activity predicates in the lowest level of proficiency, and the extension of progressive marking to achievements was observed at the two higher levels of proficiency, though very limited. Their findings contradicted the predictions of the AH, however, they were in line with a number of studies that revealed that the association of activities with the progressive was not necessarily stronger at the lower levels of proficiency (Robinson 1995, Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996).

To summarize, with an exception of two studies (H Hahn 2005, G No 2000) most studies above supported the prediction of the AH that the lexical aspect has stronger influence over marking English tense-aspect morphology. However, the specific findings differed depending on the type of tasks used in the studies. While S-H Kim (1998, 2001) reported more use of state verbs in the past context, Muñoz and Gilabert (2011) showed more use of achievements in the progressive context. The study of Muñoz and Gilabert (2011) is noteworthy in that the participants were secondary school students learning English as a foreign language. Moreover, the issue of possible L1 effect in the overuse of the progressives was raised for further studies.

4. Research Questions

This paper replicated the methodology employed by Collins (2002, 2004) using a written passage cloze test as a data elicitation task to gain more empirical evidence with regard to the acquisition of past

tense and progressive aspect by Korean learners of English in the secondary school level. The use of the replicated methodology can be justified in two ways: First, previous studies which used the cloze test produced most consistent results making it comparable with the findings of present study. Second, the proficiency level of the target students in this paper is not advanced enough to produce spontaneous oral or written production data. Research questions of this study are the followings:

- (1) Does the young Korean learners of English display a preference for marking past tense with telic verbs and extend its use to activities and state verbs?
- (2) Does the young Korean learners of English show a preference for marking progressive aspect with activity verbs and extend its use to telic verbs?
- (3) Does the young Korean learners of English show an overuse of progressive markers with state verbs?

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

The participants were 84 Korean secondary school students (grade 10) learning English as a foreign language in school context. The students were from three intact classes of English in two high schools located in Seoul and Gyeonggi Province. They had been studying English for about seven years beginning from their third year of elementary school. Only six students reported brief stays to an English-speaking country that it can be claimed that they well represented instructed learners in the foreign language classrooms.

The results of the English section on the National Achievement Test administered in the beginning of the school year were used to divide the students according to their English proficiency levels. They ranged from 2% (the lowest) to 91% (the highest) of national percentage rank on the English test and were divided into four proficiency level groups accordingly. Therefore, Level1 represented the lowest proficiency level, while Level 4 represented the highest. Three exceptional

students whose national percentage rank were well above 80% and two other students who did not take the National Achievement Test or complete the test task were excluded from the data analysis. A total of 79 students formed the final data set.

Table 2. Descriptions of Participants across English Proficiency Levels

Groups	N		National percentage rank
Level 1	14	4	2~9%
		10	10~19%
Level 2	21	11	20~29%
		10	30~39%
Level 3	24	11	40~49%
		13	50~59%
Level 4	20	13	60~69%
		7	70~79%
Total	79		

5.2 Elicitation Tasks

The students completed one written elicitation task administered with a brief questionnaire during their English class. They were given 30 minutes to complete the task. In a study of young instructed learners in a foreign language learning context, an oral task to produce a stretch of discourse may be too overwhelming. Also, previous studies generally agreed that a cloze-type test produced the most consistent results. Therefore, a passage rational cloze task, originally developed by Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds (1995) and further adapted by Collins (2002, 2004), was used to suit the purposes of this study. Despite the shortcoming of eliciting less naturalistic data from the learners, it allowed for a broad sampling of verbs within each aspectual category.

Following guidelines used in the previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, Collins 2002, 2004), a 20-passage rational cloze task was prepared. Passages were mostly selected from various English textbooks and adapted for the research purposes, with the exception of passage number 3, 10, 13 and 18 which were taken from Collins (2002). Out of 42 items, 21 items targeted simple past and present progressive.

They were distributed across the four lexical aspectual categories: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements. There were fifteen distractors which targeted other tense and aspect contexts such as simple present, present perfect, and future. Obligatory contexts for the target items were determined by the responses of two native speakers of English. Six items which turned out to be problematic (e.g., dual possible answers) were excluded from the final data analysis. Data were collected in one of regular English classes under the supervision of school English teachers. (See Appendix I & II for the passage cloze task and the index of task verbs.)

Table 3. Descriptions of Task Verbs

Tense & Aspect		N	Lexical aspectual categories			
			States	Activities	Accomplish- ments	Achievements
Simple Past		12	3	3	3	3
Present Progressive		9	0	3	3	3
Distractors	Simple present	11	3	3	2	3
	Other	4	1	2	0	1
Total		36	7	11	8	10

6. Results

The participants produced a total of 2528 responses. They were analyzed to examine overall uses of simple past and present progressive; distribution of their uses in each of the four aspectual categories; and the alternative forms to each of the three tense and aspect (simple past, present progressive and simple present) that the learners responded in the target contexts.

6.1 Overall Uses of Simple Past and Present Progressive

The participants' overall productive knowledge of tense-aspect morphology was measured by analyzing 21 target contexts for simple past and present progressive. Students' uses of 11 simple present verbs were excluded at this stage because not all items targeted the third person

singular context and there was no way of differentiating a correct answer from a mere guessing. For simple past, both target-like (*felt, came, drew, arrived*) and non-target-like uses, including regularized irregulars (*feeled, comed, writted*) and orthographic or phonetic misspellings were rated as appropriate attempts following Collins (2002). Likewise for present progressive, both target-like (*is flying, is taking, is sitting*) and non-target-like uses, including progressive without auxiliary *be* and orthographic or phonetic misspellings were included.

Table 4 shows the means and the mean percentages of correct responses for simple past and present progressive. Participants as a whole group showed fairly low means for simple past (4.58, 38.19%), present progressive (2.75, 30.52%), and sum of the two (7.33, 34.90%). While Level 1, the lowest English proficiency group consistently produced the lowest means for simple past (3.29, 27.38%), present progressive (2.57, 28.57%), and sum of the two (5.86, 27.89%), Level 4 the highest proficiency group showed the highest means for simple past (5.95, 49.58%), present progressive (2.85, 31.67%), and sum of the two (8.80, 41.90%).

Table 4. Means and Mean Percentages of Correct Responses for Overall Uses

Groups	N	Means & Mean percentages		
		Past	Progressive	Sum
Level 1	14	3.29 (2.16) 27.38%	2.57 (1.70) 28.57%	5.86 (2.69) 27.89%
Level 2	21	3.43 (2.16) 28.57%	2.62 (2.16) 29.10%	6.05 (3.07) 28.80%
Level 3	24	5.21 (2.57) 43.40%	2.88 (1.62) 31.94%	8.08 (3.44) 38.49%
Level 4	20	5.95 (2.69) 49.58%	2.85 (1.73) 31.67%	8.80 (2.71) 41.90%
Total	79	4.58 (2.63) 38.19%	2.75 (1.79) 30.52%	7.33 (3.23) 34.90%

6.2 Distribution of Uses in Four Aspectual Categories

Following the procedures used in the previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig

and Reynolds, 1995, Collins, 2002, 2004), the second analysis examined how the instructed learners of English used simple past and present progressive morphology in the four lexical aspectual classes. The means and the mean percentages of correct responses for each aspectual class were calculated across the four proficiency level groups.

6.2.1 Simple Past

The results showed that the instructed Korean learners of English were most successful with achievement verbs and least successful with state verbs across all proficiency levels (see Table 5). With one exception of Group 1, their overall use of simple past tense tended to decrease in the order of achievements, accomplishments, activities, and states. Figure 1 summarizes the results of the students' use of simple past morphology.

The results were further analyzed by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measures using SPSS 20.0 software. The Mauchly's test statistic showed that sphericity cannot be assumed, therefore the results of multivariate tests were used instead as shown in Table 6. There were significant differences in the uses of simple past tense across lexical aspect verbs ($F(3, 73) = 13.51, p = .00$) and across proficiency level groups ($F(3, 75) = 5.55, p = .00$). There was

Table 5. Means and Mean Percentages for Simple Past by Lexical Aspectual Classes

Groups	N	Simple past			
		STA	ACT	ACC	ACH
Level 1	14	.43 (.85) 14.29%	.79 (.89) 26.19%	.79 (.80) 26.19%	1.29 (1.07) 42.86%
Level 2	21	.43 (.68) 14.29%	.71 (.64) 23.81%	.86 (.91) 28.57%	1.43 (1.08) 47.62%
Level 3	24	.75 (.90) 25.00%	1.25 (.79) 41.67%	1.38 (1.17) 45.83%	1.83 (.82) 61.11%
Level 4	20	.90 (1.21) 30.00%	1.60 (.88) 53.33%	1.65 (.99) 55.00%	1.80 (.83) 60.00%
Total	79	.65 (.93) 21.52%	1.11 (.86) 37.13%	1.20 (1.04) 40.08%	1.62 (.95) 54.01%

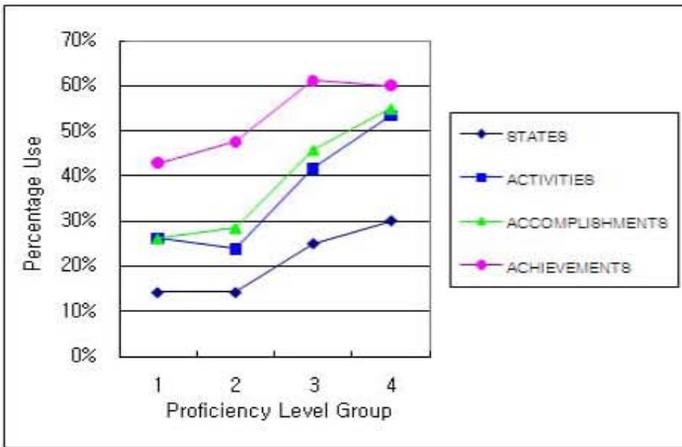


Figure 1. Distribution of Simple Past by Lexical Aspectual Classes

Table 6. Results of Multivariate Tests

Variables	Pillai's trace	F	df	Error df	p	η2
Verb types	.36	13.51	3	73	.00	.36
Groups	-	5.55	3	75	.00	.18
Verb types X groups	.05	.44	10 9	225	.91	.02

no interaction between groups and lexical aspect ($F(9, 225) = .44, p = .91$). In other words, lexical aspect affected the appropriate use of past tense morphology across all proficiency level groups.

Further, contrast tests between lexical aspectual classes shown in Table 7 revealed significant differences between all verb type pairs ($p = .00$ respectively) with an exception of the activity and accomplishment pair ($F = .53, p = .47$). In addition, Scheffe post hoc tests between proficiency groups shown in Table 8 indicated significant differences between Level 1 & 4 ($p = .03$) and Level 2 & 4 ($p = .02$).

Table 7. Results of Contrast Tests between Lexical Aspectual Classes

Verb Type Pairs	<i>MS</i>	df	F	<i>p</i>	η^2
STA- ACT	16.12	1	13.78	.00	.16
STA - ACC	22.16	1	13.65	.00	.15
STA - ACH	70.00	1	41.22	.00	.36
ACT - ACC	.48	1	.53	.47	.01
ACT - ACH	18.94	1	17.15	.00	.19
ACC - ACH	13.39	1	11.52	.00	.13

Table 8. Results of Scheffé Post Hoc Tests between Groups

Group pairs	Mean differences	Std. errors	<i>p</i>
Level 1 - 2	.04	.21	1.00
Level 1 - 3	.48	.20	.15
Level 1 - 4	.67	.21	.03
Level 2 - 3	.44	.18	.12
Level 2 - 4	.63	.19	.02
Level 3 - 4	.19	.18	.80

The findings indicated that students were more successful at marking the simple past with achievements than accomplishments, activities, and states. Moreover, the data illustrated the possible tendency of the past morphology spreading from achievements to states. The outcome of the study added another empirical evidence that past morphology is strongly associated with achievement (Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996, Collins 2002, 2004, E-J Lee 2006, J Lim 2004) supporting the Aspect Hypothesis. However, one complication also arose from the results. There was no significant difference between the mean percentage of correct responses of activities and that of accomplishments across all groups. One possible source for this outcome could be two target verbs 'swim' and 'ride' that were used twice in the elicitation task: once as an activity verb (e.g., My mother *swam* in the ocean and my father *rode* his bicycle along the beach.) and once as an accomplishment verb (e.g., He *swam* a kilo-

meter and then *rode* his bicycle 10 kilometers.). The same forms were intentionally used twice to test if the Korean students were competent enough to differentiate the uses of the same verb in the two contexts. However, the identical forms seemed to have caused much confusion and led them to respond in the same manner regardless of the lexical aspect. In the further studies, it needs to be examined to what extent the selection of the target verbs could affect the final outcome of the elicitation task.

6.2.2 Present Progressive

For present progressive, the results displayed that with an exception of the lowest proficiency group, Level 1, the instructed Korean learners of English were most successful with activity verbs and least successful with achievement verbs across the rest three proficiency levels (see Table 9). Figure 2 summarizes the findings on the students' use of present progressive morphology.

Table 9. Means and Mean Percentages for Present Progressive across Lexical Aspectual Classes

Groups	N	Present Progressive		
		ACT	ACC	ACH
Level 1	14	1.07 (.92) 35.71%	1.21 (.89) 40.48%	.29 (.61) 9.52%
Level 2	21	1.24 (1.04) 41.27%	1.05 (1.07) 34.92%	.33 (.58) 11.11%
Level 3	24	1.54 (1.10) 51.39%	1.04 (1.12) 34.72%	.29 (.46) 9.72%
Level 4	20	1.45(1.00) 48.33%	1.00 (1.08) 33.33%	.40 (.50) 13.33%
Total	79	1.35 (1.03) 45.15%	1.06 (1.04) 35.44%	.33 (.52) 10.97%

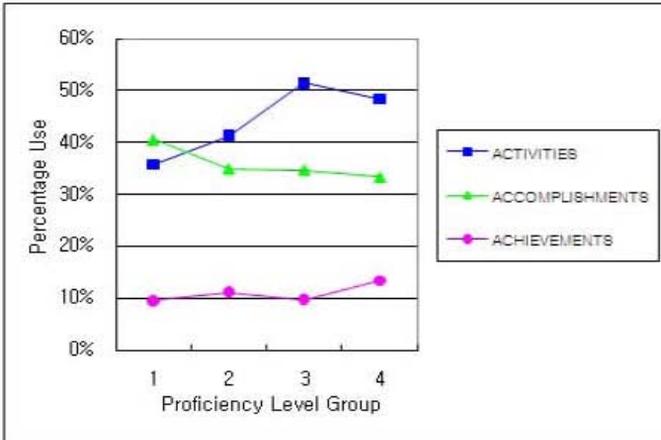


Figure 2. Distribution of Present Progressive by Lexical Aspectual Classes

The results were further analyzed by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measures using SPSS 20.0 software. The results are shown in Table 10. There was a significant difference in the uses of simple past tense across lexical aspect verbs ($F(2, 225) = 29.90, p = .00$) and there was no interaction between lexical aspect verbs and proficiency groups ($F(6, 225) = .62, p = .71$). In other words, the effect of lexical aspect was not mediated by proficiency level with progressive morphology. Further, contrast tests between lexical aspectual classes shown in Table 11 revealed significant differences between activities and achievements ($F = 64.69, p = .00$) and between accomplishments and achievements ($F = 35.22, p = .00$). There was no significant difference between the activity and accomplishment pair ($F = 2.73, p = .10$).

Overall results tended to support the Aspect Hypothesis that learners will be more successful at marking the present progressive with activities. This is in line with the findings of previous studies that progressive morphology *-ing* is strongly associated with activity verbs receiving more *-ing* marking (Andersen 1991, Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996, S-H Kim 2001, E-J Lee 2006). Also, the participants in this study generally showed low use of progressive marker with achievements.

Table 10. Results of Repeated Measures MANOVA

Variables	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Verb Types	20.47	29.90	2	.00	.29
Groups	.05	.14	3	.94	.01
Verb Types X Groups	.42	.62	6	.71	.02

Table 11. Results of Contrast Tests between Lexical Aspectual Classes

Verb Type Pairs	<i>MS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
ACT-ACC	4.72	1	2.73	.10	.03
ACT-ACH	75.57	1	64.69	.00	.46
ACC-ACH	42.51	1	35.22	.00	.32

In this study there was no significant difference between the mean of activities and that of accomplishments. Moreover, Level 1, the lowest proficiency group, caused a complication showing more uses of present progressive morphology with accomplishments (40.48%) than activities (35.71%). One of the possible sources for such results can be again traced back to the target verbs that were used in the elicitation task. The cloze task produced by 14 students of Level 1 were re-examined for their uses of present progressive markers. Regardless of correctness of the responses, all the verbs that were marked in present progressives were tallied to check for any preference. It turned out that verbs such as *swim*, *draw*, *watch*, *fly*, *look*, *paint*, and *read* were most frequently overgeneralized using present progressives. In the further studies, it needs to be examined if the classroom learners of English in the beginner level have the tendency to mark certain types of verbs with the progressive morphology regardless of lexical aspect. In other words, for the beginners certain verbs are recognized as one chunk rather than the verb plus *-ing* form.

6.3. Distribution of Alternatives in the Target Contexts

The third analysis looked at the alternatives to simple past, present progressive and simple present produced by the Korean learners to ex-

amine further possible influence of lexical aspect. Inappropriate responses for simple past were divided into five categories: present/base; progressive (either present or past, with and without the auxiliary); perfect (either present or past); blank; and “other” (low-frequency forms and morphological innovations that were difficult to interpret). For present progressive, inappropriate responses were categorized as present/base, past, perfect, blank, and “other”.

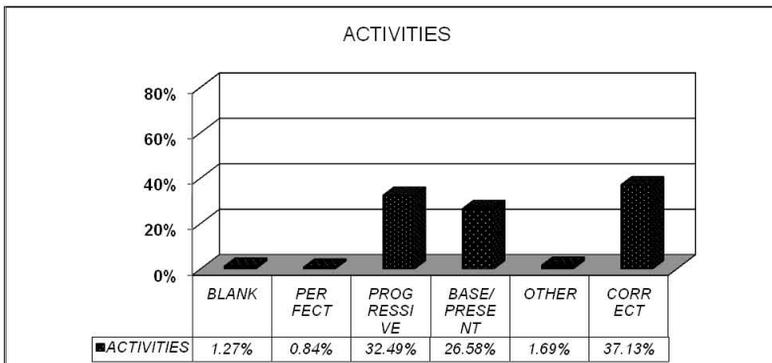
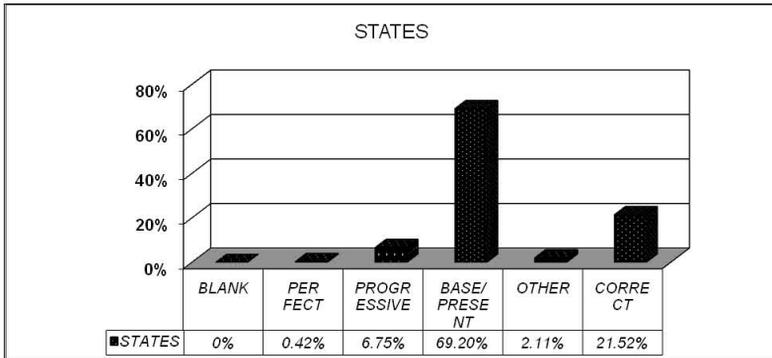
6.3.1. Target Contexts for Simple Past

Table 12 and Figure 3 show the distribution of the alternatives to simple past that the participants produced. Based on the Aspect Hypothesis, it was predicted that the students would produce the progressive morphology in the target context for activity verbs and the present or base form in the target context for state verbs. Confirming the findings of the previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig 1998, Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996, Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, Collins 2002, 2004, Robinson 1995), the main competing form for states was the base/simple present (69.20%); while it was the progressive (32.49%) for activities followed by base/simple present (26.58%).

For accomplishments and achievements, the participants in this study were more successful at supplying the past in the target contexts as predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis. However, as shown in Figure 3, the next competing alternative forms were the base/present (for accomplishments, 29.96%; for achievements, 39.66%) and progressives (for accomplishments, 26.58%; for achievements, 4.22%). For young learners relatively in the beginner stage of English learning, it was quite predictable that the base/present form that were provided next to the blanks would be the most attractive choice if they were unable to provide the answer. However, it was noticeable that 26.58% of the students produced progressive for simple past contexts for accomplishment verbs. This result was not predicted by the Aspect Hypothesis and needs further discussion.

Table 12. Mean Percentages of Alternatives to Simple Past

Error types	Simple past							
	STA		ACT		ACC		ACH	
Blank	0	0.00%	3	1.27%	1	0.42%	2	0.84%
Perfect	1	0.42%	2	0.84%	5	2.11%	2	0.84%
Progressive	16	6.75%	77	32.49%	63	26.58%	10	4.22%
Base/Present	164	69.20%	63	26.58%	71	29.96%	94	39.66%
Other	5	2.11%	4	1.69%	2	0.84%	1	0.42%
Total	186	78.48%	149	62.87%	142	59.92%	109	45.99%



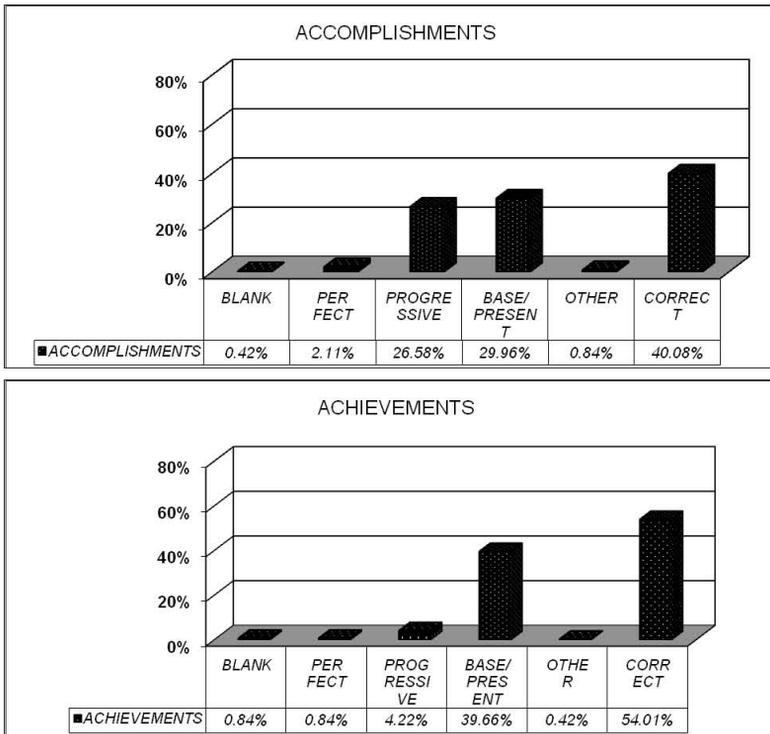


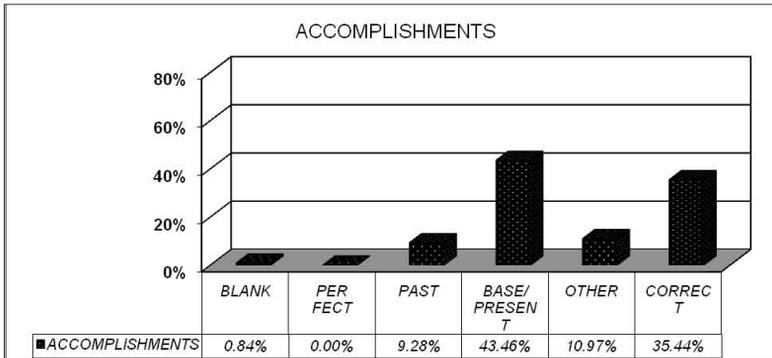
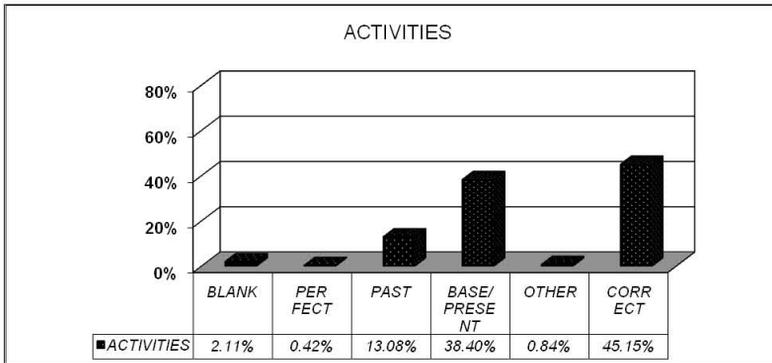
Figure 3. Distributions of Responses for Simple Past.

6.3.2. Target contexts for Present Progressive

Table 13 and Figure 4 show the distribution of the alternatives to present progressive. For all three lexical aspect (activities, accomplishments and achievements), base/present was the main competing form (38.40%, 43.46%, 45.57% respectively) followed by past (13.08%, 9.28%, 37.55% respectively). As shown in Figure 4 the students produced more past morphology as an alternative form for achievement verbs following the predictions of the AH.

Table 13. Mean Percentages of Alternatives to Present Progressive

Error types	Simple past					
	ACT		ACC		ACH	
Blank	5	2.11%	2	0.84%	5	2.11%
Perfect	1	0.42%	0	0.00%	2	0.84%
Past	31	13.08%	22	9.28%	89	37.55%
Base/Present	91	38.40%	103	43.46%	108	45.57%
Other	2	0.84%	26	10.97%	7	2.95%
Total	130	54.85%	153	64.56%	211	89.03%



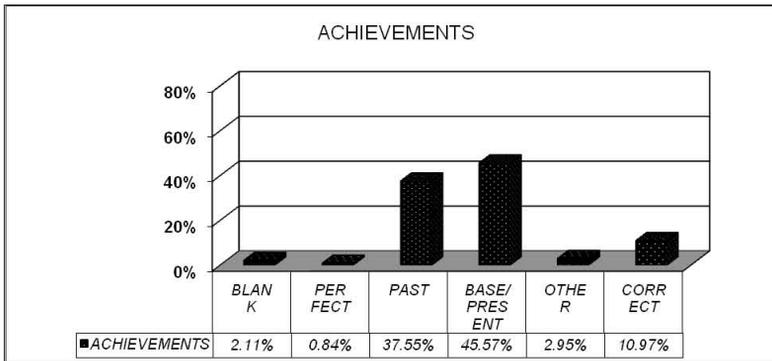


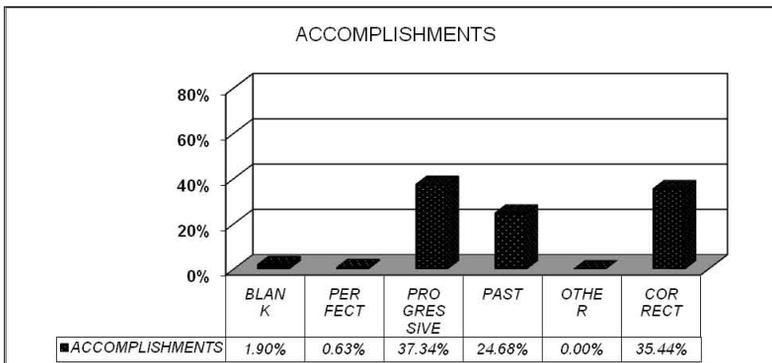
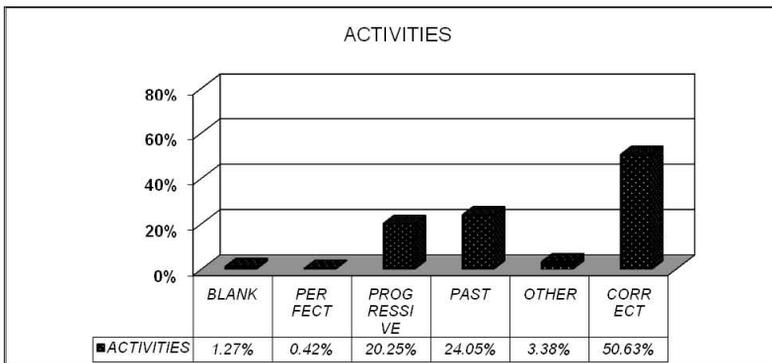
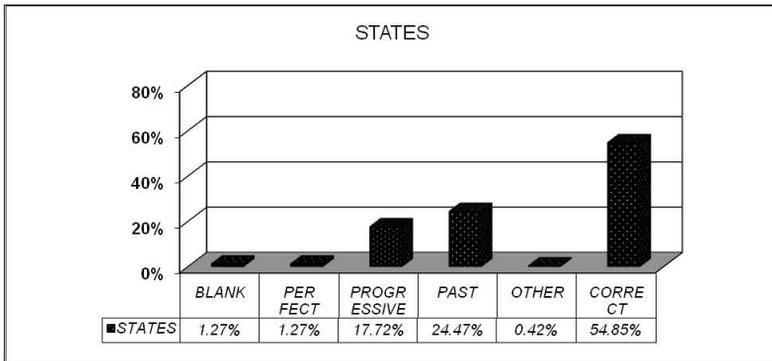
Figure 4. Distributions of Responses for Present Progressive

6.3.3. Target Contexts for Simple Present

Table 14 and Figure 5 show the distribution of the alternatives to simple present. For achievements verbs, the most competing alternative form turned out to be the past in line with the prediction based on the Aspect Hypothesis. In the case of state verbs, however, participants of current study showed 42 cases (17.72%) of the progressive contradicting the prediction based on the Aspect Hypothesis. Also, the most competing alternative forms for accomplishment verbs revealed further complication in that participants associated them more with the progressive than the past. Unusual findings regarding the overgeneralization of the progressive form *-ing* are noticeable because they are frequently reported in L2 studies.

Table 14. Mean Percentages of Alternatives to Simple Present

Error types	Simple past							
	STA		ACT		ACC		ACH	
Blank	3	1.27%	3	1.27%	3	1.90%	2	0.84%
Perfect	3	1.27%	1	0.42%	1	0.63%	4	1.69%
Progressive	42	17.72%	48	20.25%	59	37.34%	19	8.02%
Base/Present	58	24.47%	57	24.05%	39	24.68%	108	45.57%
Other	1	0.42%	8	3.38%	0	0.00%	11	4.64%
Total	107	45.15%	117	49.37%	102	64.56%	144	60.76%



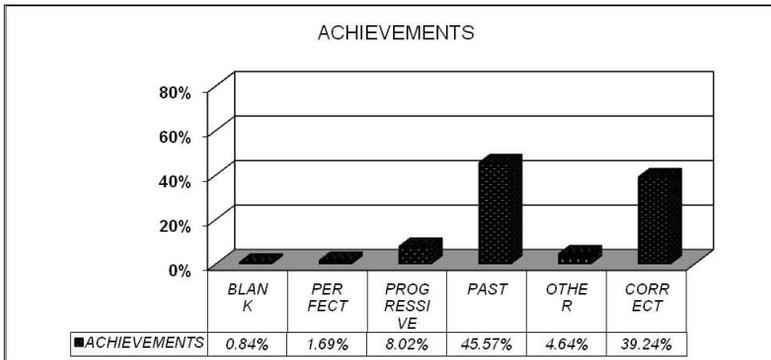


Figure 5. Distributions of Responses for Simple Present

7. Discussion

The goals of this study were as follows: First, to fill a research gap to the literature with regard to the acquisition of past tense and progressive aspect by Korean learners of English in the secondary school level. Second, to gain insight into the acquisition patterns of tense-aspect morphology of Korean students learning English as foreign language. For the goals of this paper, the study replicated the methodology employed by Collins (2002, 2004) using a written passage cloze test as an elicitation task.

The first research question was whether or not young Korean learners display a preference for marking past tense with telic verbs and extend its use to activity and state verbs. The results revealed that the lexical aspect indeed influenced L2 learners' use of tense/aspect markers as they develop productive systems of verb morphology as predicted by the AH. They displayed a preference for using past tense morphology with achievements confirming the findings of previous studies (Bardovi-Harlig 1992, Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström 1996, Bardovi-Harlig and Reynolds 1995, Collins 2002, 2004, J-j Hong 2007, E-J Lee 2001, 2006, J Lim 2004, Robinson 1995) and showed a tendency to extend its use to states. However, the results showed that there was no significant difference between the means of activities and those of accomplishments. It was reasoned that a predicate effect suggested by Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) could be one of the possible explanations. That is, the participants especially in the lower proficiency level group

tended to mark the predicates with tense markers often associated with them so that when they were asked to respond in different context they might have produced non-target forms.

The second research question was whether or not young Korean learners display a preference for marking progressive aspect with activity verbs and extend its use telic verbs. Except for the lowest proficiency group (Level 1), overall results supported the Aspect Hypothesis that learners were more successful at marking the present progressive with activities. This is in line with the findings of previous studies that progressive morphology *-ing* is strongly associated with activity verbs receiving more *-ing* marking (Andersen 1991, Bardovi-Harlig and Bergström 1996, S-H Kim 2001, E-J Lee 2006). However, the participants in this study generally showed low use of progressive marker with achievements. Moreover, Level 1, the lowest proficiency group, displayed more uses of present progressive morphology with accomplishments than activities. Based on this finding it can be inferred that the proficiency of the young Korean learners, i.e., at the early stage of the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology, interfered with the effects of lexical aspect.

The last research question was whether or not young Korean learners display an overuse of progressive markers with state verbs as reported in the studies investigating possible L1 influence (Collins 2002, 2004). The analysis of the alternatives to target contexts revealed interesting findings. The participants overused the progressive markers with accomplishment verbs in the simple past contexts and with accomplishment and state verbs in the simple present contexts contrary to the prediction of the AH. Further findings indicated that this group of young Korean learners overused the present progressive markers with particular verbs such as *swim*, *draw*, *watch*, *fly*, *look*, *paint*, and *read*. Although inconclusive, once again it can be reasoned that the overuse of progressives in non-target context resulted from a predicate effect suggested by Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) at interplay with the students' proficiency level rather than the effect of L1. Despite an average of seven years of English learning, instructed learners in foreign language classrooms still tended to stay at the early stage of tense-aspect morphology development and revealed the tendency to mark certain types of verbs with the progressive morphology less affected by the lexical aspect. In other words, for the beginners certain verbs are recognized

as one chunk rather than the verb plus *-ing* form (G No 2000). Effects of L1 were unclear from the above findings.

This paper revealed interesting findings with regard to the acquisition of English past tense and progressive aspect by Korean learners in the secondary school level learning English as a foreign language despite some limitations occurring from the data elicitation task itself and limited numbers of task items. For further studies, it would be interesting to test the predicate effect with a set of target verbs that frequently appear with particular morphological markers.

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APPENDIX I. A Passage Cloze Task

1. What is John doing tomorrow morning? He (take) _____ his parents to the airport. They (fly) _____ to Europe.
2. Have you ever been to the circus? It's the best place to go for a good laugh. When the circus (come) _____ to town, I go to every show.
3. Last night John (work) _____ very hard. He (write) _____ two papers and (finish) _____ all of his grammar homework.
4. It is a very pleasant, warm summer day, and I am looking out the window at Jefferson Park. There are lots of people in the park today. Some (read) _____ newspapers and some (paint) _____ pictures. This is one of my favorite pastimes*. 취미, 기분전환
5. One of the most dangerous times for aircraft* is the point at which a plane (land**) _____. *항공기**착륙하다
6. A tornado* is a kind of typhoon, which often (happen**) _____ in the Midwest of the USA. Tornadoes are very strong and dangerous because they destroy almost everything they meet. *폭풍**발생하다
7. Welcome to *Fashion Today!* A new look for this season is short skirts! Women who like the color black (be) _____ happy, because black is popular this season. Also, pockets are popular, too! I (like) _____ clothes which have many pockets.
8. Abebe Bikila lived in a small town in Ethiopia. His hobby was to run. Running was fun for him. Every day he (run) _____.
9. Jack is an elevator operator*. He usually goes to work by subway. He (arrive) _____ at the building by 8:00 A.M. Before he (start) _____ his job, he (put on) _____ his uniform. Jack (look) _____ neat** in the mirror. At 8:30 he is ready to work.* 승강기 기사**깔끔한
10. My parents' vacation in Florida didn't start off* very well. It rained for the first 6 days! After that, the weather was nice so my mother (swim) _____ in the ocean and my father (ride) _____ his bicycle along the beach. They (plan) _____ to go back to the same place next year.* 시작하다
11. I (stand) _____ in front of SS501's house now. They (live) _____ here for a year. And hundreds of fans have been coming here every day since last year. This (show) _____ how

- popular SS501 is. I'm Rita Han for JBC news.
12. Dear Mrs. Rowling, my son has just finished reading your book. He (think) _____ it is the best book that he has ever read! The main character, Harry Potter is so wonderful. Thank you for writing such a good book!
 13. When George was away at school he usually (seem) _____ happy, but really he often (feel) _____ sad.
 14. Tony and Susan are a young married couple. Tony (write) _____ advertisements* for a large advertising agency** and Susan (teach) _____ French. They are at home now. It is evening and they (sit) _____ in the living room and (watch) _____ TV. *광고**광고 회사
 15. "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows," the last of Harry Potter book series (break) _____ a record, with 12 million copies set for its first printing. The book's publisher* Scholastic is planning a national bus tour to promote** the new book. *출판사**판매를 촉진하다
 16. Christmas was coming. Susan was thinking about a gift for Tom. He (want) _____ to get a watch chain, but she didn't have any money to buy one with. She (decide) _____ to cut her long beautiful hair and sell it.
 17. What does Anne do for living? Mostly she (draw) _____ pictures.
 18. Bill was a participant* in a triathlon** here last summer. He didn't win but he (seem) _____ satisfied at the end of the race. He (swim) _____ a kilometer, (run) _____ 5 kilometers and then (ride) _____ his bicycle 10 kilometers. Maybe next year I (participate***) _____, too. *참가자 **3종 경기 ***참가하다
 19. My 83 year old mother (realize*) _____ that she is forgetting things. Her memory is getting weaker and from time to time** she is facing difficulties with her daily routines***. What do we tell her? How do we, the family deal with her problem? *깨닫다, 알게 되다 **때때로 ***일상 생활
 20. Do you lie? Well, people often do. Last week Mom asked Jerry to bring his girlfriend home. But he (lie) _____ to her, "I don't have a girlfriend." He (want) _____ a little privacy* from her. *자유, 사생활

APPENDIX II. An Index of Task Verbs

States	Activities	Accomplishments	Achievements
be	come	draw (pictures)	arrive
feel	live	fly (to Europe)	break (a record)
like	participate	paint (pictures)	decide
look	ride	read (newspapers)	finish
seem	show	ride (10 kilometers)	happen
think	sit	swim (a kilometer)	land
want	stand	write (two papers)	lie
	swim	write (advertisements)	plan
	teach		realize
	watch		start
	work		

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