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The influence of lexical aspect on non-target like uses of L2 English progressive verb forms

Mike Tiittanen
Seneca College, Toronto, Canada

This study sought to determine if lexical aspect would influence the oversuppliance of progressive English verb forms in L2 obligatory contexts for the use of the simple past tense in two oral tasks, namely, a film retell task and an interview questions task. It also sought to determine if the L1 of the ESL learner participants, Mandarin and Tamil, would interact with lexical aspect in the oversuppliance of the progressive verb forms. The results of this study revealed that both L1 groups used primarily activities and accomplishments with the oversupplied progressive verb forms on both tasks. In addition, there appeared to be L1 influence in this oversuppliance as only the Tamil learners had a greater proportion of accomplishments than achievements and a greater proportion of activities than states for the oversupplied progressive forms on both tasks.

Keywords: simple past tense; progressive; lexical aspect; ESL; L1 influence; Mandarin; Tamil; interlanguage

Introduction

Previous research indicates that lexical aspect, the inherent temporal semantic properties of predicates, has an influence on the production of progressive verb forms. More specifically, verbs which have the lexical aspect of activities, which semantically are dynamic and without an inherent endpoint, are the most commonly used verbs that are given a progressive marking by ESL learners. Verbs which have the lexical aspect of accomplishments, which are also dynamic but which have an inherent endpoint, are the second most commonly used verbs to be given a progressive marking by ESL learners. Such influence for lexical aspect is part of what is commonly referred to as the Aspect Hypothesis (Chan, Finberg, Costello, & Shirai, 2012).

Previous research has also indicated (Tiittanen, 2013b) that the proportion of the oversuppliance of progressive verb forms in L2 English obligatory contexts for the use of the simple past tense may be influenced by the participants' L1, depending on whether it has a bound progressive suffix as in English (e.g., Tamil) or not (e.g., Mandarin). However, little research to date has been conducted on the possible interaction of L1 and lexical aspect in ESL learner overproduction of progressive verb forms in English. This study sought to determine whether lexical aspect plays a role in the oversuppliance of progressive forms by both Mandarin and Tamil ESL learners, and if so, if there is an interaction between lexical aspect and participant L1. The study is part of a series of studies contrasting the use of the simple past tense by L1 Mandarin and L1 Tamil intermediate students of English (for more see Tiittanen, 2013a, 2013b, 2015a, 2015b).

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Literature Review

Within studies of the Aspect Hypothesis, the most commonly cited classification of lexical aspectual categories was devised by Vendler (1957, 1967) who proposed the existence of the four lexical aspects: states, activities, accomplishments and activities. These Vendlerian lexical aspects have normally been conceived as consisting of the following three features (or some variation of them) with binary values of [+/- static], [+/- telic] and [+/- punctual]:

1. The static feature "… distinguishes verbs which code a 'happening' from those that code a 'non-happening'" (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, p. 93). For example, "have" in the sentence "I have a car" would be construed as a state while "paint" in the sentence "I'm painting my room" would not be construed as a state.
2. The telic feature distinguishes between verbs that portray a state of affairs with an inherent endpoint and verbs that portray states of affairs without an inherent endpoint. For example, the verb "paint" in the sentence "I painted my room" would be construed as telic while the same verb in "I'm painting" is atelic.
3. The punctual feature differentiates telic verbs that portray events with an internal duration from those events without internal duration. For example, "drop" in "I dropped my keys" is punctual while "paint" in "I painted my room" is not punctual.

The Vendlerian lexical aspects have the following values on these features (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997, p. 93):

- States: [+ static], [-telic], [-punctual]
- Activities: [- static], [-telic], [-punctual]
- Accomplishments: [- static], [+telic], [-punctual]
- Achievements: [- static], [+telic], [+punctual]

An important distinction for this study is that states and activities are atelic lexical aspects in that they refer to situations with no inherent endpoint (Salaberry & Shirai, 2002). Accomplishments and achievements are telic lexical aspects in that they both refer to situations with a clear endpoint (Li & Shirai, 2000). The differences between the Vendlerian lexical aspects are fairly clear. However, in practice, it is often difficult to classify verbs within the contexts of their usage into these four categories. To make the relevant distinctions, tests involving linguistic usage are made (see Appendix A).

A previous child SLA study has found oversuppliance of the progressive form in obligatory contexts for the simple past tense (Rohde, 2002). A possible factor in the frequency of this kind of error may include the lexical aspect of the verbs for which the *-ing* form was incorrectly used. A multitude of L2 studies have found that language learners of various target languages, including English, very frequently or primarily use progressive forms with activities (Bardovi-Harlig, 1998, 2012; Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström, 1996; Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds, 1995; Giacalone Ramat, 1995, 1997; Qian, 2015; Robison, 1995; Shirai, 1995; Shirai & Kurono, 1998; Vraciu, 2013; Willie, 2011).

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were 21 native speakers of Tamil (16 females and 5 males) and 21 native speakers of Mandarin (15 females and 6 males). Both groups were also very similar in their mean age at the time of the study, their mean age of arrival in

an English-speaking country and their mean length of residence in an English-speaking country. These differences were not statistically significant. In addition, both groups were very similar in their mean OPT (Oxford Placement Test) scores. The Tamil participants had a mean OPT grammar score of 49.8 % and the Mandarin participants had a mean OPT grammar score of 53.1%. This difference was statistically non-significant according to an independent samples t-test, $t = (1, 40) = .708$, $p = .483$.

There were some differences between the two groups' self-reports of the languages they spoke at home, other languages they knew, and how they had learned English. The Tamil group reported a greater variety of languages spoken at home. In addition, five members of the Tamil group stated that they spoke English at home with some family members while only two members of the Mandarin group claimed to speak English with family members. In relation to learning English beyond formal school learning, there was a small difference in the number of Tamil and Mandarin participants who claimed use of English professionally, socially or at college/university. Twelve Tamil speakers reported such use of English and eight Mandarin speakers indicated such use (for a more detailed description of the participants see Tiittanen, 2015b).

Data Collection

The data was collected from native speakers of Tamil and Mandarin who were primarily in the same ESL level at the researcher's school and other schools where the researcher either worked or had access to students. Data were collected using the instruments and in the order shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Data collection instruments and order of collection

Step	Instrument	Description
1	Student language background form	A questionnaire to collect information about participants' age at the time of the test, age-of-arrival and length of residence, gender, languages spoken at home and types of exposure to English
2	Grammar section of the Oxford Placement Test	A timed test (50 minutes) following the specifications of the test as described in Morell Moli (1999), which was used to determine participant language proficiency level
3	Film retell task	An oral retelling which took place immediately after a participant had watched the video twice. Note that relevant vocabulary was pre-taught to participants individually.
4	Interview questions	A semi-structured interview conducted individually by the researcher. All questions on the interview questions schedule (Appendix B) were asked and when deemed appropriate, further questions were asked to elicit more verb tokens in obligatory simple past tense environments.

Data Analysis

OPT grammar test

Each test item was marked as being either correct or incorrect.

Film retell task and interview questions

A token analysis rather than a type analysis of the verbs used was conducted. Verb tokens in obligatory simple past tense contexts were marked as being either correct, incorrect, or partially correct. Partially correct marks were given to verbs that were uttered both correctly and incorrectly in the same utterance as in self-corrections (e.g., I go, went to the store). In addition, repetitions of the same verb were counted only once (e.g., I go, go to the store). Thus, multiple tokens in contexts of self-corrections and repetitions were treated as single obligatory contexts for the use of the simple past rather than as multiple obligatory contexts for the simple past tense.

The types of learner mistakes in contexts for the obligatory suppliance of the simple past tense were also categorized. Verb forms which had an *-ing* suffix without an auxiliary verb (e.g., going), past progressive verb forms (e.g., was going) and present progressive verb forms (e.g., am going) were classified as "ALL verb-ING" mistakes.

The determination of lexical aspect in the film retell task was made using tests which had been used in previous research on second language learners' acquisition of English tense-aspect forms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Robison, 1995).

Reliability measurements were calculated for the study. Six of the forty-two oral production scripts (14.3% of the total scripts) were double-coded by a second rater. The second rater coded verbs that the researcher had identified as being in an obligatory simple past tense environment (or oversupplied past tense forms) for the following:

a) correct/incorrect
b) lexical aspect
c) types of mistakes (for incorrect or partially correct tokens)

The verbs which the second rater coded were not provided with the coding for the factors a, b and c already made by the researcher. Afterwards, the inter-rater agreement and reliability (Cohen's Kappa and Pearson's *r*) between the judgments of the researcher and the second coder on the different factors were determined.

On the film retell task, inter-rater agreement on whether the verbs in obligatory simple past tense environments were correct or incorrect was perfect (1.00). Agreement on types of mistakes was high (0.928). Agreement on lexical aspect was lower (0.718) than agreement on the other features. On the interview questions, the inter-coder agreement on the correctness of the verb forms in simple past tense environments was very high (0.986). The interrater agreement with types of mistakes was high (0.939). As with the film retell task, coder agreement on lexical aspect was lower (0.783) than with correctness or types of mistakes.

Results

As reported elsewhere (Tiittanen, 2013b), on the film retell task, 3.71% (13.34 tokens) of the Mandarin learners' mistakes were of the ALL verb-ING form (i.e. progressive) verb form under investigation here while the corresponding figure for the Tamil learners for this task was 12.71 % (69.5 tokens). On the interview questions task, 3.06% (25.5 tokens) of the Mandarin learners' mistakes were progressive verb mistakes and 6.28% (38.5 tokens) of the Tamil mistakes were of this form. Mistakes included the inappropriate use of the present progressive, past progressive, and verb-ing (e.g., speaking). In addition, there were a few uses of the form *be* (both present and past) and verb-ing (e.g., am, was speaking).

As seen in Figure 1 and Table 2, on the film retell task both L1 groups' ALL verb-ING mistake tokens consisted primarily of verbs which were activities and accomplishments. 53.6% of the Mandarin learners' tokens with this error class consisted

of activities (e.g., "Uh Frankie said he was doing exercise every day") while 54.2% of the Tamil learners' tokens were activities. Accomplishments (e.g., "They going to uh going to [pause] gym") formed 32.1% of this class for the Mandarin participants and 37.9% of the total figure for the Tamil participants. In comparison to the above two lexical aspects, the use of achievements (e.g., "And she beginning to do the exercise from last year") for this mistake category was more infrequent with both Mandarin learners (14.3%) and Tamil learners (5.4%). States (e.g., "Then Joe is thinking 'oh, how it's come he's a tennis player!?'") were the least frequently used lexical aspect. States consisted of only 2.4% of the total output of the Tamil learners with this mistake while the Mandarin learners did not produce a single stative verb within this mistake category on the film retell. There were no statistically significant inter-L1 differences between the two groups' use of any of the lexical aspects (Table 2).

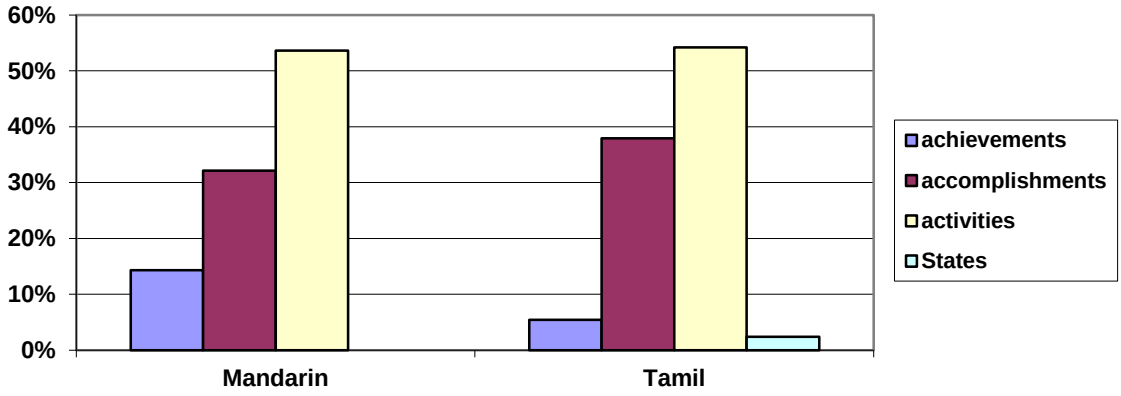

Figure 1. Lexical aspect of ALL verb-ING mistakes (film retell)

Table 2. ALL verb-ING mistakes by lexical aspect (film retell)

Lexical aspect	Mandarin L1 (N = 7*) Mean (SD)	Tamil L1 (N=11*) Mean (SD)	Statistical significance of inter-L1 difference (Mann-Whitney)
achievements	14.3% (37.8)	5.4% (13.3)	p = .944
accomplishments	32.1% (47.2)	37.9% (33.8)	p = .704
activities	53.6% (50.9)	54.2% (40.6)	p = .778
states	0% (0)	2.4% (5.4)	p = .246

* N = participants within the L1 group who made any mistakes of the ALL verb-ING form

Despite the frequency of activities and accomplishments for both L1 groups within this mistake category, only the Tamil L1 groups' use of accomplishments over achievements (p = .018; z = -2.371; Wilcoxon) and activities over states (p = .007; z = -2.692; Wilcoxon) for this verb token reached statistical significance (Table 3). The

difference in use between accomplishments and activities did not reach statistical significance for either L1 group.

Table 3. Statistical significance of differences in lexical aspect of all verb-ING mistakes (film retell)

Lexical aspects compared	Mandarin (Wilcoxon)	Tamil (Wilcoxon)
achievements vs. accomplishments	p = .450 z = -.756	p = .018 z = -2.371 accomplishments > achievements
accomplishments vs. activities	p = .579 z = -.556	p = .383 z = -.872
activities vs. states	p = .059 z = -1.890	p = .007 z = -2.692 activities > states

As with the film retell task (Figure 2 and Table 4), on the interview questions both L1 groups used ALL verb-ING mistake tokens primarily with activities and accomplishments. 49.2% of the Mandarin group's output of this mistake category consisted of activities (e.g., "We are wai-, waiting for long time.") while the corresponding figure for the Tamil group was 47.1%. Accomplishments (e.g., "… because uh first time we are meeting them.") were 42.5% of this total figure amongst the Mandarin learners and 43.6% of the total amongst the Tamil learners. Achievements (e.g., "I landing in Canada in 2003") were not used frequently by either group with this error category; only 8.3% of the Mandarin L1 group and 7.3% of the Tamil L1 group used this lexical aspect in this error context. No states were produced by the Mandarin participants and states consisted of only 2.0% of the total produced by the Tamil participants (e.g., "but I'm feeling like cold"). In addition, as on the film retell task, there were no inter-L1 differences in the two L1 groups use of any lexical aspect with this category of mistake on the interview questions.

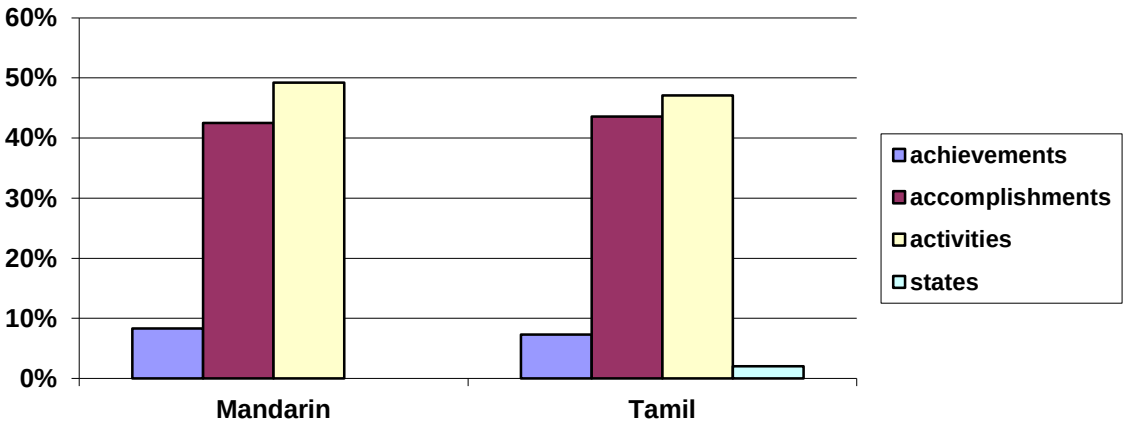

Figure 2. Lexical aspect of ALL verb-ING mistakes (interview questions)

Table 4. Proportion of all verb-ING mistakes by lexical aspect (interview questions)

Lexical aspect	Mandarin L1 (N=14*) Mean (SD)	Tamil L1 (N=17*) Mean (SD)	Statistical significance of inter-L1 difference (Mann-Whitney)
achievements	8.3% (21.4)	7.3% (24.6)	p = .838
accomplishments	42.5% (46.6)	43.6% (41.4)	p = .983
activities	49.2% (47.5)	47.1% (42.1)	p = .950
states	0% (0)	2.0% (8.1%)	p = .364

* N = participants within the L1 group who made any mistakes of the ALL verb-ING form

Unlike on the film retell task, on the interview questions both L1 groups' preference for the use of accomplishments over achievements and the use of activities over states within this verb mistake category reached statistical significance (Table 5). The Mandarin participants used accomplishments more than achievements with this category of mistake at a level which reached statistical significance (p = .031; z = -2.154; Wilcoxon). In addition, the Mandarin learners' use of activities over states reached statistical significance (p = .010; z = -2.585; Wilcoxon). However, the relatively small difference between accomplishments and activities did not come even remotely close to reaching statistical significance (p = .870; z = -.164; Wilcoxon). As stated above, the Tamil learners' preference for the use of accomplishments over achievements also reached statistical significance (p = .027; z = -2.218; Wilcoxon) as did their preference for activities over states (p = .003; z = -2.970; Wilcoxon). As with the Mandarin participants, the small difference between accomplishments and activities amongst the Tamil participants did not approach statistical significance (p = .799; z = -.254; Wilcoxon).

Table 5. Statistical significance of differences in lexical aspect of mistakes (interview questions)

Lexical aspects compared	Mandarin (Wilcoxon)	Tamil (Wilcoxon)
achievements vs. accomplishments	p = .031 z = -2.154 accomplishments > achievements	p = .027 z = -2.218 accomplishments > achievements
accomplishments vs. activities	p = .870 z = -.164	p = .799 z = -.254
activities vs. states	p = .010 z = - 2.585 activities > states	p = .003 z = -2.970 activities > states

In summary, both L1 groups were primarily using activities and accomplishments when they produced ALL verb-ING mistakes. However, for this mistake category, the difference between accomplishments and achievements and the difference between activities and states reached statistical significance on both tasks only with the Tamil L1 group. For the Mandarin L1 group, the above differences reached statistical significance only on the interview questions.

Discussion

An investigation into the influence of lexical aspect on the ALL verb-ING mistakes revealed that both L1 groups were more likely to use these error forms with activities and accomplishments. This result is consistent with the Aspect Hypothesis, which predicts that progressive forms first appear on activities and then spread to accomplishments (Li & Shirai, 2000). These results support Housen's (2002) findings on the strong connection between inherent aspect and *-ing* markers. The results of this study are also consistent with research which indicates that there is a strong association between *-ing* morphology and activities and accomplishments, which are both durative (Munoz Lahoz & Gilabert, 2011).

Thus, it would appear that for these oversupplied progressive verb forms both groups of learners were influenced by the inherent semantic properties of the predicates. Verbs which in their linguistic contexts were durative and dynamic were more likely to mistakenly be given a progressive form than verbs which in their linguistic contexts were non-durative and non-dynamic. Therefore, it appears plausible that both L1 groups were influenced by the lexical semantics of the predicates with which they made such mistakes. This is consistent with findings of the Aspect Hypothesis and appears to be a common developmental phenomenon amongst second language learners (Bardovi-Harlig, 2012).

This developmental phenomenon may be influenced by the prototypical lexical aspects that correspond to the use of the progressive *-ing* marker in English in which activities are the most prototypical lexical aspect for the progressive and accomplishments are the second-most (Li & Shirai, 2000). Thus, both the Tamil and Mandarin learners in the study may have been influenced by the typical usage of the progressive *-ing* marker to form a prototypical notion of its use. Previous studies of L2 tense-aspect acquisition have found that L2 learners at less proficient levels of development more frequently use prototypical combinations of lexical aspect and tense/grammatical aspect than non-prototypical combinations (Li & Shirai, 2000). For the learners in the study, a prototype model could plausibly explain that English verbs which are durative and dynamic are better exemplars of the progressive form than verbs which are non-durative and/or non-dynamic. In addition, the prototypical association by both L1 groups of grammatical aspect and lexical aspect may perhaps be partially explained by the distributional principle (see Andersen, 2002). If the input that the participants had been exposed to had a distributional bias in favour of activities and achievements, this may have been a factor in the participants' higher use of activities and accomplishments.

In addition to exhibiting developmental patterns, the fact that accomplishments were more frequently used than achievements and that activities were more frequently used than states by Tamil learners (in terms of statistical significance) on both tasks, unlike Mandarin learners, may also reflect L1 interference. The suffix *-ing* is a bound suffix to the right of the verb root, which is similar to the morphological structure of Tamil verbs in which the progressive morpheme appears as a bound suffix to the right

of the verb stem (Asher, 1982). This similarity between Tamil and English may have predisposed the Tamil ESL learners to be more sensitive to the lexical aspect of the English progressive suffix in the input that they were exposed to due to their application of the Transfer to Somewhere principle (Andersen, 1983). This principle asserts that L2 learners may notice some L2 input which corresponds to their L1 and then apply it in their production (Kellerman, 1995).

Nevertheless, the possible limitations of this study must be acknowledged. One such limitation is the somewhat lower inter-rater reliability scores and agreement percentages with lexical aspect than with the other measures investigated. The higher number of disagreements (and lower Cohen's Kappa scores) on lexical aspect than correctness or mistake type may partially be the result of the second coder's previous lack of knowledge of lexical aspect. Indeed, more time was spent on training the second coder on this feature of the coding scheme than on any other facet of the coding. Ideally, perhaps a second coder who was conversant with the notion of lexical aspect should have been employed. However, the higher number of disagreements on lexical aspect and the fact that the majority of disagreements differed by only one feature (i.e., instantaneous, dynamic, telic) may lend credence to the viewpoint that lexical aspect is not a categorical classification, but may rather be a matter of prototypical family resemblance.

Conclusion

The results of this study appear to indicate that lexical aspect influenced the oversuppliance of the progressive *-ing* morpheme on two oral tasks by Tamil and Mandarin ESL learners. In addition, it is also possible that the morphological similarity of Tamil and English verb structure with regard to bound progressive suffixes may have made the Tamil L1 group more sensitive to noticing the prototypical lexical aspect of this grammatical aspect. Nevertheless, the reliability scores of lexical aspect determination between the researcher and a second rater may cast some doubt on the results of this study.

If these results are valid, they may have some implications for ESL classroom pedagogy. If ESL learners are predisposed to using the prototypical lexical aspect of grammatical aspect such as the progressive, thereby causing them to oversupply such verb forms when other verb tense-aspect forms are obligatory, some classroom exercises intended to heighten their awareness of their incorrect answers (and the correct forms) may be beneficial. The exact nature of such grammatical exercises would be usefully informed by future empirical research.

About the author

Mike Tiittanen is the coordinator of the part-time TESL program at Seneca College. His research interests are primarily in second language acquisition and L1 influence.

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Appendix A: Tests used by the researcher to determine lexical aspect

Tests for states and activities based on Robison (1995)

Tests for Stative/Dynamic

1. Non-states are regularly used in the present progressive, states normally are not.
   a) * Carla is knowing the answer.
   b) Carla is working.

2. Non-states can insert in *do*-clefts, states cannot. Equivalently, only non-stative predicates can answer the question *What did he do?*
   a) * What Carla did was know the answer.
   b) What Carla did was work.

3. With the verb in the simple present form and in a non-narrative context, the predicate is stative if it can be assigned a clearly non-habitual meaning.
   a) Carla knows the answer (non-habitual implies state)
   b) Carla works (habitual implies non-state)
   c) Carla builds a house (? implies non-state)

Tests for Telic/Atelic

1. Imperfective paradox. Assume that SUBJECT is (in the process of) PREDICATE [verb in present progressive form]. If SUBJECT stops in the middle, is it true that SUBJECT PREDICATE [verb in present perfect form]? If the answer is "yes", the predicate is atelic, otherwise it is atelic.

   a) Assume that Ana is (in the process of) studying. If she stops in the middle, is it true that she has studied? [yes]
   b) Assume that Victor is (in the process of) walking home. If he stops in the middle, is it true that he has walked home? [no]

2. Which of the following frames is more natural, assuming the interpretation that the entire situation occurs throughout the duration of the time period?
   Atelic: He/she can _____ FOR two minutes (hours, days, etc.)
   Telic: He/she can _____ IN two minutes (hours, days, etc.)
   a) ? Victor can walk home for ten minutes (or 2 hours, etc.)
      Victor can walk home in ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.)
   b) Ana can study for ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.)
      ? Ana can study in ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.)

3. Which of the following frames is more natural, assuming the interpretation that the entire situation occurs within the time period?
   Atelic: He/she spent two minutes (hours, days, etc.) _____ (verb in present participle form)
   Telic: It took (him/it/me) two minutes (hours, etc.) to _____
   a) ?Victor spent ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.) walking home.
      It took Victor ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.) to walk home.
   b) Ana spent ten minutes (or 2 hours etc.) studying.
      ? It took Ana ten minutes (or 2 hours) to study.

Test for "enjoy" based on Bardovi-Harlig (1998)

1. "still" test
   If the predicate is ungrammatical with "still", it is a state. Otherwise, it is dynamic.

2. Present perfect progressive test
   If the predicate is ungrammatical in the present perfect progressive, it is a state. Otherwise it is dynamic.

Tests to distinguish accomplishments and achievements based on Bardovi-Harlig (2000)

Step 1: State or nonstate
Does it have a habitual interpretation in simple present?
If no – state (e.g., *I love you*.)
If yes – Nonstate (e.g., *I eat bread.*) → Go to step 2.

Step 2: Activity or nonactivity
Does "X is V-ing" entail "X has V-ed" without an interative/habitual meaning?
In other words, if you stop in the middle of V-ing, have you done the act of V?
If yes – Activity (e.g., *run*)
If no – Nonactivity (e.g., *run a mile*) -> Go to step 3.

Step 3: Accomplishment or achievement
If test (a) does not work, apply test (b) and possibly (c).

a) If X V-ed in Y time (e.g., 10 minutes), then X was V-ing during that time.
   If yes -> Accomplishment (e.g., *He painted a picture)*
   If no -> Achievement (e.g., *He noticed a picture)*

b) Is there ambiguity with *almost*?
   If yes -> Accomplishment (e.g., *He almost painted a picture* has two readings: he almost started to paint a picture/he almost finished painting a picture)
   If no -> Achievement (e.g., *He almost noticed a picture* has only one reading)

(Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, pp. 220-221)

Appendix B: Film retell and interview questions tasks

Film retell task

Please tell me everything that you remember that happened in the video from the beginning.

Interview Questions

1. What's your (full) name?

2. a) What do you normally like to do on the weekend?
   b) What did you do you last weekend?
   c) What sort of hobbies do you have?

3. a) Let's talk about school now. What was your favourite subject in high school? (Why?)
   b) i. Did you study English in your first country?
      ii. (If "yes" to above question) Did you like studying English in (country)? Why/why not?
      (If "no" to above question) When you first started studying English in Canada, did you like studying English? Why/why not?

4. a) Where were you born?
   b) When did you immigrate to Canada?
   c) Do you remember your trip to Canada? Can you tell me about it?
   d) Do you remember your first day in Canada? What happened?
   e) If you don't mind my asking, why did you immigrate here?

5. Can you tell me about a trip you took to another country or city?

6. Are you married?
   a) (If "yes") Can you tell me about your wedding day?
   b) (If "no") Can you tell me about another person's wedding celebration you attended?