

- Ringbom, H. (1987) *The Role of the First Language in Foreign Language Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Ringbom, H. (2007) *Cross-linguistic Similarity in Foreign Language Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Sanchez, L. (2011) Luisa and Pedro's dog will the breakfast eat: Interlanguage transfer and the role of the second language factor. In G. De Angelis and J.-M. Dewaele (eds) *New Trends in Crosslinguistic Influence and Multilingualism Research* (pp. 86–104). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Schepens, J., Van der Slik, F. and Van Hout, R. (2013) Learning complex features: A morphological account of L2 learnability. *Language Dynamics and Change* 3 (2), 218–244. doi:10.1163/22109332-13030203.
- Shin, J.-A. and Christianson, K. (2009) Syntactic processing in Korean-English bilingual production: Evidence from cross-linguistic structural priming. *Cognition* 112 (1), 175–180.
- Slobin, D. (1996) From 'thought and language' to 'thinking for speaking'. In J. Gumperz and S. Levinson (eds) *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (pp. 70–96). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stutterheim, C. and Nüse, R. (2003) Processes of conceptualization in language production: Language-specific perspectives and event construal. *Linguistics* 41, 851–881.
- Tarone, E. and Parrish, B. (1988) Task-related variation in Interlanguage: The case of articles. *Language Learning* 38 (1), 21–44. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-1770.1988.tb00400.x
- Thierry, G., Athanopoulos, P., Wiggert, A., Dering, B. and Kuipers, J. (2009) Unconscious effects of language-specific terminology on pre-attentive colour perception. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106, 4567–4570.
- Tokowicz, N. and MacWhinney, B. (2005) Implicit and explicit measures of sensitivity to violations in second language grammar: An event-related potential investigation. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 27, 173–204.
- Trude, A.M. and Tokowicz, N. (2011) Negative transfer from Spanish and English to Portuguese pronunciation: The roles of inhibition and working memory. *Language Learning* 61 (1), 259–280. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00611.x
- von Stutterheim, C. (2008) Linguistic structure and information organization: The case of very advanced learners. *EUROSLA Yearbook* 3, 183–206.

### 3 The 'Perfect Candidate' for Transfer: A Discussion of L1 Influence in L2 Acquisition of Tense-Aspect Morphology

Ann-Kristin Helland Gujord  
University of Bergen

#### Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the role of learners' L1 in a domain in which language-specific factors have traditionally received less attention: L2 acquisition of temporal morphology. Research on how learners acquire temporal expressions in a second language is fairly extensive within second language acquisition (SLA). A lot of research has been conducted on the acquisition of tense aspect morphology in particular (Bardovi-Harig, 2000; Shirai, 2009; Mitchell *et al.*, 2013). However, the research in this area has revolved around the universal aspects of the developmental process and the identification of stages of acquisition. Although this research has certainly provided important insight into L2 acquisition of temporal expression, the role of language-specific factors has received less attention. The L1 has not been regarded as a significant factor, and the effect of the L1 on the L2 acquisition process has not been studied systematically (Collins, 2004; Shirai, 2009). Accordingly, the knowledge we have about how L2 learners acquire temporal markers in an L2 stems predominantly from universalistic-oriented research aiming to identify the common features and paths. For instance, this applies to the ESF project<sup>1</sup> on L2 acquisition of temporal expressions by adult immigrants (Dietrich *et al.*, 1995). Although the question of transfer was considered in the ESF project, and it was designed to compare interlanguages from different L1 groups (Dietrich *et al.*, 1995: 3), the researchers concluded that 'there is no significant SL [source language] influence in the acquisition of temporality' (Dietrich *et al.*, 1995: 276). Other examples are found in

transfer has been explored most deeply (Golden *et al.*, 2007). These transfer studies have been comparison-based and founded on contrastive analyses of the L1 and L2, and often the Norwegian interlanguages of learners of remote language backgrounds have been explored. Vietnamese and Turkish are the L1s that have been studied most frequently in L2 Norwegian (Golden *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, these studies have been largely meaning-oriented or concept-oriented in approach; they are not primarily structural/formal analytical, but place a good deal of emphasis on the underlying meaning of grammatical categories when exploring how temporal marking in the learners' L1 affects the acquisition of the tense system of Norwegian.<sup>2</sup> This line of research is closely related to the SLA milieu at the University of Bergen. The main findings of these studies will be outlined, starting with Tenfjord's (1997) doctoral thesis, which has been an important impetus for the study of transfer in L2 acquisition of temporal morphology conducted in Bergen.

Tenfjord's (1997) dissertation is a longitudinal case study of four Vietnamese pupils' grammaticalization of the preterite and the present perfect in Norwegian. The data included audio recordings; the first recordings started immediately after the pupils arrived, and the last recordings were done after the pupils had been in Norway for between five and six years (Tenfjord, 1997: 134). Tenfjord predicted that (1) the interlanguages of the Vietnamese learners would be characterized by a lack of the preterite and (2) the present perfect would emerge as a grammatical category before the preterite in the interlanguages. The observed sequence of the acquisition of verb morphology in Germanic languages is contradicted by the latter hypothesis (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000: 419),<sup>3</sup> where the preterite is predicted to emerge before the present perfect.<sup>4</sup> However, according to Tenfjord's functionalist view of language use and language learning, the perfect category has properties that make it more important to express during the early stages of acquisition than the redundant preterite category. This hypothesis was supported by the data. Even though highly individual paths towards the tense system in the target language were displayed by the learners, only 21% of the obligatory contexts for the preterite were inflected by the learners as a group. In contrast, the perfect was morphologically expressed in as many as 60% of the contexts where it would be the appropriate form. These quantitative results were further supported by qualitative analyses, such as productivity analyses. The learner's tendency to begin using the present perfect before the preterite applied only to the basic perfect function, which Tenfjord regarded as the resultative perfect (1997: 218). Tenfjord interpreted her findings in terms of L1 influence and functionalism (1997: 237). As for L1 influence, Tenfjord argued that the Vietnamese learners may have relied on their L1 when acquiring the basic perfect function in Norwegian because there a similarity between the temporal/aspectual markers of Vietnamese and the resultative function of the perfect category in Norwegian exists. This will be further elaborated on in the section discussing contrastive relations.

Bardovi-Harlig's (2000) extensive survey of research on temporality in an L2. The sequences of acquisition found in learners' emergent tense and aspect systems in several Germanic L2s were emphasized, and the findings of the relevant studies led to the conclusion that 'the target language exerts a much greater influence in the acquisition of morphology than a learner's first language' (2000: 419). Moreover, the studies as a whole do not reveal a 'significant L1 effect' on the acquisition of temporal expressions (2000: 411). Rather, the acquisition of tense and aspect is developmentally constrained.

The conclusions of the ESF project and Bardovi-Harlig's synthesis of the existing literature contrast with the findings from several studies that will be presented in this chapter, including the current one. The results of the present study will show that Vietnamese and Somali learners of Norwegian exhibit systematic differences in their grammatical encoding of past time (Gujord, 2013, 2015), and that these differences may be accounted for in terms of L1 influence. The structures addressed are the preterite and the present perfect. Further support to a finding that seems to be consistent across several studies of L2 acquisition of tense in Norwegian is added by the current study: systematic differences in the acquisition of tense in Norwegian are shown by learners from different L1 backgrounds, and this L1 influence is revealed particularly in the learners' encoding of present perfect contexts. The hypotheses in the current study not only build on previous findings, but also on L1-L2 contrastive relations. Three very typologically different languages are included in the current transfer investigation, which involves an exploration of the differences and similarities in past time encoding in Norwegian and the L1s, both in terms of how the languages contrast, as well as how the different L1 groups compare in their reference to past events in Norwegian. Special attention will also be received by the present perfect category in the section analysing the contrastive relations between Norwegian, Somali and Vietnamese. The reasons for this are the semantic complexity that is associated with the present perfect category, as well as the findings from studies of L2 Norwegian and L2 English that suggest that L2 acquisition of the present perfect, when certain L1-L2 relations exist, seems to result in L1 influence. These findings will be presented in the following literature review.

## Evidence for Transfer in L2 Acquisition of Temporal Morphology

Although it is probably fair to say that the role of learners' L1 has been downplayed in research on temporal morphology, this is not true for the *Norwegian* SLA research. On the contrary, L1 influence has been an important issue in many of the studies of how learners acquire grammatical categories in Norwegian, and temporality is the domain in which the issue of

Tenford's longitudinal study broke ground for several cross-sectional transfer studies of written interlanguage data, which focused specifically on the present perfect category. In a study of German learners' ( $N = 16$ ) choices of past tense forms in Norwegian, Karrer (1999) observed that German learners had problems with the perfect-preterite distinction in Norwegian. In translations of a German text into Norwegian, she found that the preterite and the present perfect were used by the learners in a manner that corresponds to the distributional pattern of the two forms in their German L1. The German present perfect and Norwegian present perfect are similar in form, but not in function. Whereas the German perfect has expanded into the territory of the preterite and is used as a marker of general past, the Norwegian perfect cannot be used in combination with definite time reference under any circumstances. According to Karrer, the functions of the perfect category were transferred by the German learners from their L1 to the L2, which resulted in inappropriate uses of the forms in Norwegian.

A similar pattern was also detected in Randen (1999). She investigated the uses of the present perfect by Russian students enrolled in Norwegian courses in Russia ( $N = 7$ ), and her analyses were based on the Russian students' email correspondence with Norwegian students at a university in Norway. In Russian, each verb has to be inflected for the imperfect or perfective aspect, and Randen's study aimed at investigating whether – and if so how – the Russian speakers' knowledge of these aspectual distinctions affected their use of the Norwegian perfect category. Randen adopted Tenford's explanation of the present perfect in Norwegian as being primarily a marker of aspect and not tense. Randen further argued that the various uses of the Norwegian present perfect<sup>5</sup> are all tied to the perfective aspect because they all express termination (Randen, 1999: 68). Randen's analysis revealed that Russian learners use the perfect in Norwegian predominantly to express terminated actions. In fact, in 97% of the Russian learners' uses of the present perfect in Norwegian, the forms referred to events or conditions that started in the past and reached an endpoint. Furthermore, Randen's interpretation of her findings indicated that Russian learners make associations between the perfective aspect in their Russian L1 and the (resultative) function of the present perfect in Norwegian because they restricted their uses of the present perfect to the uses that correspond to the Russian perfective aspect, and because they use the Norwegian perfect correctly in contexts in which they would use the perfective aspect in their L1. For instance, a tendency that was exhibited by the Russian learners was to encode contexts for the *extended now*-perfect in Norwegian incorrectly, and to use the present instead of the present perfect (e.g. 'I live in Bergen for seven years now' instead of 'I have lived in Bergen for seven years now'). In Russian, the perfective aspect would not appear in such contexts where the situation that started in the past still holds.

Further evidence for L1 influence in the use of the preterite and present perfect in Norwegian is found in Moskvil (2004), Helland (2005) and Janik

(2010). The same type of information as the present study was used by these studies: written texts produced in response to an official test of Norwegian as a second language. Moskvil (2004) examined Turkish learners' use ( $N = 51$ ) of the preterite and the perfect in Norwegian in written texts.<sup>6</sup> Moskvil compared the distribution she found in the Turkish learners' texts to the distribution from a comparison group of texts produced under the same conditions by Vietnamese learners ( $N = 9$ ). Helland (2005) conducted a similar study, but used texts from Vietnamese learners ( $N = 36$ ) as the primary material and texts written by Turkish learners as the comparison group ( $N = 15$ ). Both studies found that the distributions of the preterite and the perfect in the two L1 groups were distinct in that Turkish learners, whose L1 lacks a perfect category, displayed a stronger tendency for non-appropriate use of the perfect in preterite contexts when compared to the Vietnamese learners. On the other hand, a more frequent target-like use of the perfect was exhibited by the Vietnamese learners, a finding that underscores that of Tenford (1997). Janik (2010) investigated transfer in Polish learners' use of the present perfect and the preterite in Norwegian. She found that the Polish learners ( $N = 100$ ), who lack a perfect category in their L1, had more problems in distinguishing the preterite from the perfect in Norwegian as compared to learners whose L1s have a perfect category similar in form to the one in Norwegian (English  $N = 100$  and German  $N = 100$ ). In a study of the acquisition of interrogative clauses and verb morphology in Swedish – a language very similar to Norwegian – Philipsson (2007) observed that Somali learners of Swedish ( $N = 12$ ) have more problems with the present perfect form when compared to other L1 groups (Iraqi Arabic  $N = 12$  and Persian learners  $N = 12$ ).

The studies surveyed have observed patterns that appear to be L1-specific. Furthermore, several of these studies have found that differences between the L1 groups often involve an overuse of the present perfect in preterite contexts. Importantly, this is a pattern that is not exclusive to studies of L2 Norwegian. For instance, Polunenko (2004) observed a similar pattern to that of Randen (1999) in an investigation of Russian-speaking learners of L2 English ( $N = 120$ ). Similar to Randen, Polunenko found that her Russian participants overused the present perfect in the L2. She attributed this to their interlingual identification between perfective aspect in L1 Russian and the present perfect in the L2. Likewise, Collins (2002, 2004) and Ayoun and Salaberry (2008) found that French learners of English frequently overuse the present perfect in preterite contexts, but for a different reason from Russian learners of English. The explanation for French speakers' overuse of the present perfect is similar to Karrer's (1999) explanation of German learners' problems with the present perfect-preterite distinction in Norwegian. Formal similarities accompanied by semantic (and functional) differences lead to L1 effects. The *passé composé* (=simple past) in French is structurally similar to the present perfect in English even though it has a very different function (see Collins, 2002).

As discussed by Bardovi-Harlig (2000: 419), the findings of studies on the order of emergence of verb morphology in several Germanic L2s suggest that a common path is followed by L2 learners regardless of L1 background. Nevertheless, the studies of L2 Norwegian, L2 Swedish and L2 English reviewed in this section show that the perfect is more challenging than the preterite for learners from some L1 backgrounds. In particular, L1 influence has been observed when the L1 does not have a perfect category at all (e.g. Janik, 2010; Moskvil, 2004; Philipsson, 2007; Polunenko, 2004; Randen, 1999), and also when there are formal or conceptual differences or similarities between a temporal category in the L1 and a perfect category in the L2 (e.g. Ayoun & Salaberry, 2008; Collins, 2002, 2004; Helland, 2005; Karrer, 1999). In summary, the studies reviewed here lead to the conclusion that learners' L1s seem to play a role in the acquisition of temporal morphology. However, there are methodological challenges connected to several of these studies which warrant a new study. Firstly, in several of these studies, a control group of learners with another L1 background is not included. Secondly, in some of these studies, inferential statistics is not applied at all. Even though the doctoral theses and the master theses have generated important insight into transfer, there remains a problem of generalizability; the amount of data collected has simply been too small. This is not a uniquely Norwegian 'problem'. The problem of study design and generalizability in transfer studies is one of the objections that Jarvis (2000) puts forth in his article discussing methodological issues in transfer research. Finally, the lack of empirically validated contrastive analyses is another problem in transfer studies in general. Granger (2003: 18) holds that a lot of previous contrastive studies and contrastive statements are 'largely intuition-based' and not empirically founded. In view of this discussion, it might also be that not enough attention has been paid by SLA researchers in general to methods for comparing the L1 and the L2. However, the methodological challenges identified here are accounted for in Jarvis's (2000) methodological framework for transfer studies. The current study predicts systematic differences in the Vietnamese and Somali learners' use of present perfect and the preterite in Norwegian based on the earlier findings outlined in the present section and contrastive analyses of how past time in the learners' L1 is encoded. However, contrary to several of the previous studies, the analysis of transfer in the current study departs from a traditional contrastive analysis in that the present study is empirically grounded and adheres to Jarvis's (2000) methodological framework.

## The Present Study

### Approach

The approach taken in the current study of L1 influence is the comparison-based approach. It relies on comparisons of the Norwegian interlanguage

performances of two different L1 groups, comparisons of the encoding of time in three different language systems (Vietnamese, Somali, Norwegian), and comparisons of the grammatical encoding in the learners' Norwegian interlanguage performance with the system of their L1s (Vietnamese or Somali). The method for identifying L1 effects meets several of the criteria set forward in Jarvis's (2000) framework. The investigation of *intra-L1-group homogeneity* (criterion 1) and *inter-L1-group heterogeneity* (criterion 2) entails comparisons of the interlanguage performances of the Vietnamese-speaking learners and the Somali-speaking learners. Effect 1, intra-L1-group homogeneity, is identified if a detected pattern of grammatical encoding is sufficiently similar in the interlanguage performances of speakers who share the same L1 background. Effect 2, inter-L1 group heterogeneity, is found if the detected pattern of grammatical encoding in one L1 group is sufficiently dissimilar to the pattern of the other L1 group. Effects 1 and 2 were tested statistically by means of the Mann-Whitney U test. The group's internal behaviour is compared to the differences in behaviour between the groups by this test (see the Statistics section). Consequently, a significant result indicates that the observations within one group are sufficiently similar, and are sufficiently dissimilar from the observations in the other group, to establish that the groups behave in reliably different ways with respect to the measured variable. The application of criterion 3, *intra-L1-group cross language congruity*, is not completely aligned with how Jarvis described cross-language congruity. The current study does not have access to the informants' use of past marking in their L1 since only the texts that they have written in their L2, Norwegian, is in the possession of the current study. However, the current study does have empirically validated contrastive data of the encoding of time in Somali and Vietnamese as will be described in the Contrastive relations section. Furthermore, the results from the contrastive analyses strongly inform the specific predictions raised in the current study. Hence, the hypotheses are presented after the Contrastive section. In this section, the rationale for expecting a different outcome in the learners' use of past morphology in Norwegian will be given based on translation data and careful analyses and comparisons of past time encoding in Norwegian, Vietnamese and Somali.

### The data

The current study is based on written performances by 161 adult test takers of an official test of Norwegian for immigrants. Of the 161 texts in the sample, 73 were written by native speakers of Vietnamese and 88 were written by native speakers of Somali. The Vietnamese and Somali learners constitute a mixture of immigrants comprising a variety of social and educational backgrounds, language skills, ages etc. Some of this variety is controlled for by means of a form with personal information that the test takers

notions. Tense is a category of the verb (Klein, 2009: 40) and is traditionally defined as 'grammaticalised expressions of location in time' (Comrie, 1985: 9). Tense is a deictic relation between a situation<sup>9</sup> and the time of the utterance. Furthermore, within the canonical view of tense, the time of the utterance is taken to be the reference point. Contrary to the grammatical category of tense, aspect is a non-deictic category and does not express reference to time as tense does. Instead, it conveys different types of temporal perspectives that focus on different parts of the situation, such as the beginning of a situation or the completeness of a situation. Comrie's definition of aspect is a classic reference: 'aspect is different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation' (Comrie, 1976: 3, 5).

### Past Time in Norwegian

Norwegian is a tense-prominent language; neither aspect nor mood is grammaticalized. Instead, these notions are conveyed through lexical and syntactic devices. Together with the preterites in the Nordic language, the Norwegian preterite category is a typological peculiarity because of the fact that it only refers to the past without differentiating between aspects (Hammarberg & Viberg, 1977: 139). Hence, when compared to languages with several categories of grammatical aspect and tense, fewer distinctions are marked grammatically on the verb in Norwegian. However, the Norwegian language does grammaticalize temporal distinctions through a perfect category, which is lacking in many languages with morphologically rich verbal systems. Accordingly, L2 learners of Norwegian have to figure out the appropriate contexts for two past forms, the preterite and the perfect, in order to encode temporal information in a target-like manner. As indicated in the review of previous studies, it is seemingly not an easy task to know when to use the perfect and when to use the preterite for some learner groups. However, the notion that the perfect is a particularly challenging category to acquire is also supported by typological studies. The perfect category is characterized as a complex category across languages. It is one that is more complex than its related past category, the preterite (e.g. Comrie, 1976, 1985; Dahl, 1985, 2000; Bybee, 1985; Bybee *et al.*, 1994; Bybee & Dahl, 1999), which according to Dahl, can be described as a tense form without any controversy because it does not carry any aspectual functions (Dahl, 1985: 116).

On the other hand, the perfect has continued to be the subject of much debate, particularly regarding the issue of whether or not the perfect category is a category of tense or aspect. This discussion reflects the complexity of the category as well as its shifting and notoriously unstable nature (Bybee & Dahl, 1989; Lindstedt, 2000). Lindstedt (2000) has surveyed the general characteristics of the perfect and its diachronic development and current uses in

filled out when taking the test.<sup>7</sup> Table 3.10 in the Appendix shows how the 161 informants are distributed across various categories of personal information based on their background. The table reveals that the informants are rather similar when it comes to age, time of residence in Norway, length and duration of L2 instruction, and degree of practising Norwegian and socializing with Norwegians. The differences in the background variables between the two L1 groups include gender, reported levels of English knowledge, and educational background. However, analyses in Gujord (2013: 233–239) show that the difference in educational background and English skills between the Vietnamese and Somali learner group cannot account for the differences that evolve when the L1 is taken into account.

The texts were extracted from the Norwegian learner corpus, ASK. They are essay compositions written as part of the *Language test for adult immigrants (Språkeprøven i norsk for voksne innvandrere)*. This test measures Norwegian language abilities at the intermediate level, and is aimed towards a language level that is sufficient for managing everyday life in the Norwegian community (Carlsen, 2012: 9).<sup>8</sup> The test takers were asked to write a short text on a given topic that either related to personal experience, required a description of an event, or asked for a viewpoint on a subject of general, public interest (e.g. smoking, upbringing, equality of the sexes etc.). The test takers were allowed to choose between several different prompts, and thus their topics varied significantly. Topical diversity is a challenge for a study like the current one because the variable 'writing topic' strongly influences the temporal perspectives in the text, and therefore also determines the grammatical encoding that researchers can observe in the text (Gujord, 2013: 166; see also Golden, 2012). Furthermore, the prompt that asked the candidates to write about the future elicited the highest number of responses among the texts written by Vietnamese and Somali test takers. Hence, of the 99 Vietnamese and 97 Somali texts available in the corpus, 35 (26 Vietnamese and 9 Somali) of these could not be included in this study because they did not have content for the preterite or the present perfect. In addition, the considerable variety in the length of the texts made it challenging to compare them. As will be seen in the presentation of the analysis and results, there is great variation within the data set. However, this is strongly connected to the fact that the data was not elicited in a controlled research environment; the data comprised written texts that were not produced for a specific research goal, but were elicited for the purpose of evaluating learners' language skills in Norwegian.

### Contrastive relations

The current transfer investigation deals with the semantic domain of temporality and the grammatical domain of morphology, and tense and aspect are the two fundamental grammatical categories encoding temporal

several languages have been discussed. One of Lindstedt's main arguments is that the perfect category has shown a common path of grammaticalization in many different European languages from originally having aspectual constructions<sup>10</sup> to developing more general tense functions, as well as more modal functions later on. The development of the additional functions has been accompanied by a change in the nature of the time content because the perfect becomes less aspect-like and more tense-like as the form develops new functions (Lindstedt, 2000: 369). Accordingly, the type of perfect that is closest to the historical sources has more to do with aspectuality than time reference. The 'central and prototypical meaning' of the perfect that Lindstedt describes as 'expressing current relevance of a past situation' (2000: 378) is encoded by this type of perfect. Lindstedt's prototypical perfect, which he labels *current relevance perfect*, corresponds with Comrie's (1976: 56) *resultative perfect* in which 'a present state is being referred to as being the result of some past situation'. The aspectual character of the Norwegian perfect form is also a central topic in Tenfjord (1997) and is an integral part of her contrastive analysis of Norwegian and Vietnamese. The resultative perfect in Norwegian is regarded by Tenfjord as being a category of aspect and not of tense, whereas the preterite, on the other hand, is a category of tense (Tenfjord, 1997: 112).

Uses of present perfect forms<sup>11</sup> in the current study will be classified as either *prototypical perfect (PP)* or *secondary perfect (SP)*. This distinction is influenced by Lindstedt's analysis of European perfect forms, but there is not a one-to-one relationship between Lindstedt's current relevance perfect and the current study's prototypical perfect. This is because prototypical perfect in the current study's categorization includes the experiential perfect.<sup>12</sup> According to Lindstedt, experiential perfect is the first stage in the grammaticalization process of perfect categories in languages. Experiential perfect is slightly more tense-like than current relevance perfect, but Lindstedt underscores that the distinction between these two types of perfect is not immediately clear. Verb phrases containing a current relevance or experiential perfect can have elements of both (Lindstedt, 2000: 369). Both current relevance perfect and experiential perfect describe a completed situation in the past, which would make it challenging to distinguish between them in the interlanguage data. However, the distinction between completeness and non-completeness is highly relevant for understanding the contrastive relationship between Vietnamese and Somali.

The analysis of PP (prototypical perfect) in the present study has been conducted based on the following description of what characterizes a prototypical perfect: a PP refers to a terminated event which took place in the past and which has consequences for the current state of affairs. Termination is a criterion, and a PP cannot have inclusive reference to the present time. Uses of the present perfect in the texts that do not qualify as prototypical are lumped together in a rather broad group that the present study refers to as

*secondary perfect (SP)*. This is a much more heterogeneous category than the PP category as it comprises various additional functions of the Norwegian present perfect, such as the extended now. The uses of the present perfect forms are classified based on a contextual interpretation of what type of content the forms encode. Below, 1 and 2 are examples of uses of the present perfect in the texts classified as prototypical, whereas 3 and 4 are examples of uses which have been classified as secondary.

- 1) Jeg ha-r les-t en bok som het-er Sindhads verden  
I have-PRS AUX read-PST PTCP a book which be-call-PRS Sindhads world
- 2) Verden er ikke lenger så stor som den ha-r vært  
world be-PRS not any more so big as it have-PRS AUX be-PST PTCP
- 3) Jeg ha-r alltid ønsket å jobb-e i hjemmebasert i kommunen  
I have-PRS AUX always wish-PST PTCP to work-INF in home care services
- 4) Nå ha-r jeg vært i Norge i tre år  
now ADV have-PRS AUX I be-PST PTCP in Norway in three years

The present perfect uses in sentences 1 and 2 refer to past events or conditions that are finished. Hence, they are classified as PP. The present perfect forms in 3 and 4 are classified as SP because they refer to events or conditions that started in the past but are not terminated. For instance, it is possible to imagine sentence 3 being rephrased as follows: 'I have always wanted, and still want, to become a nurse'. Sentence 4 has an inclusive reference to present time because it describes conditions that apply at the time of utterance.

The subsequent sections address the question of how past time is expressed linguistically in the learners' L2s, with a particular focus on how the time content encoded in the present perfect and preterite in Norwegian is conveyed in Vietnamese and Somali. However, since reference grammars can only serve as a secondary source of contrastive data (Bybee *et al.*, 1994: 32; Gujrod, 2013: 74), translation is used in the current study as a method of obtaining primary data about the encoding of time in the informants' L1s. Two native speakers of Vietnamese and two native speakers of Somali have translated *The perfect questionnaire* (TPQ) developed by Dahl (1985, 2000) and Lindstedt (2000). This translation questionnaire is used to collect information about the perfect category and related categories, such as the preterite in Norwegian. TPQ consists of 88 contexts with 151 sentences. It is oriented towards semantic content and function and is based on universal features of crosslinguistic categories expressing concepts all natural languages are presumably able to express. Hence, the opportunity to observe how the same meaning is conveyed in the three languages is provided to the researcher.

## Past Time in Vietnamese

The typological distance between Vietnamese and Norwegian is vast. Vietnamese verbs are tenseless, and temporal reference is not marked linguistically because it is accessible through *the basic time* of the contexts.<sup>13</sup> Yet, in cases where the situation refers to 'time different from this basic time' (Thompson, 1965: 209), particular time markers must be used in order to clarify the temporal frame. Of these time markers, the markers *đã* and *rồi* merit special attention in the present contrastive analysis because they express past time. In the literature, *đã* is described as a tense marker that is used when the temporal reference is different from the basic time and is not accounted for in the context (e.g. Thompson, 1965; Ngo & Tran, 2001). *Rồi* is usually not presented as a marker of tense, but of aspect, and is commonly described as expressing 'a terminated action or condition' (Thompson, 1965: 112). Although the Vietnamese system for time marking is different from European languages such as Norwegian, where each sentence must express temporal reference morphologically, an important similarity relation between the Vietnamese temporal/aspectual markers and the resultative function of present perfect in Norwegian was revealed by Tenfjord (1995, 1997). This is a crucial point in her work, which provided the impetus for the current analysis of *đã* and *rồi*. Tenfjord argued that 'the perfect in Norwegian may be looked upon as an aspectual category ... the so-called past tense markers in Vietnamese mark anteriority and function in a way similar to the perfect in Norwegian' (1995: 236). Tenfjord's claims were rooted in a contrastive analysis, and not in empirical data. However, her claim will be explored in the current study based on the Vietnamese translations of TPQ.

There are 60 contexts for the Norwegian present perfect in the questionnaire. Of these, *đã* and/or *rồi* appear 42 times. However, *đã* occurs with a higher frequency than *rồi* (30 versus 20). There seem to be three factors explaining why neither *đã* nor *rồi* occurs in the 18 remaining contexts for the Norwegian perfect as exemplified in the sentences<sup>14</sup> from the questionnaire in Table 3.1.15

Table 3.1. Vietnamese translations without *đã* and/or *rồi* in TPQ

Nr. 4	Question: You MEET my sister (at any time in your life up to now)?
Ha-r	du noen gang min søster?
have-PRS AUX	you ever meet- PST PTCP my sister?
Bạn gặp chị gái của tôi chưa	
you meet older sister of I not yet	
Nr. 14	[It is morning. A wakes up, looks out of the window and sees that the courtyard (or the streets) is wet.] A: It RAIN during the night.
Det regner- i natt	
it has-PRS AUX rain - PST PTCP last night	

Table 3.1. (Continued)

Nr. 56	tối hôm qua tốt mưa	
	night day over good rain	
	[A has just seen the king arrive. The event is totally unexpected.]	
A. The king ARRIVE!		
Kongen ha-r	come-tt	
the king has-PRS AUX arrive- PST PTCP		
Ông vua tối kia		
sir king arrive there		

Firstly, the presence of a time marker would be redundant in sentence 4 because the sentence is a question formulated with the negative *chưa*, which means 'not yet'. According to Ngo and Tran (2001), interrogatives usually refer to the past when they are placed at the end of sentences. Hence, *chưa* adds temporal information to the discourse since it expresses that something has not happened yet. All the Vietnamese translations that contain this negative marker *chưa*, as well as the present perfect in the Norwegian translation of the same sentence, never include *đã* and *rồi*.<sup>16</sup> The presence of a time marker is also redundant in sentences such as sentence 14 because the presence of an adverbial or lexical expression clarifies the temporal frame. Finally, *đã* and *rồi* do not appear in sentences such as sentence 56, where it is clear from the context that the speaker is describing a present time situation: the king is (unexpectedly) coming in the moment of speaking.

Table 3.2 shows some of the contexts for the Norwegian present perfect in the perfect questionnaire in which either *đã* and/or *rồi* occur.

Table 3.2 Vietnamese translations with *đã* and/or *rồi* in TPQ

Nr. 2	[A: It seems that your sister never finishes books.] B: (That is not quite true.) She READ this book (=all of it).
Hun ha-r	les-t denne boken
she has-PRS AUX read- PST PTCP this book	
Vâng có chị ấy đã đọc quyển sách này	
yes exist sister that TM read CLF book this	
Nr. 3	[Question: Is the king still alive?] No, he DIE.
Nei han er død	
no he be-PRS dead	
không ông ấy đã chết rồi.	
no sir that TM die TM	

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Nr. 30	[A: Don't talk so loud! You'll wake the baby.] Answer: He WAKE up already.	Han ha-r he has-PRS AUX	allerede våkne-t already wake up- PST PTCP	Nó thức dậy rồi he wake up TM
Nr. 36	[A has been talking to B about C's personal tastes.] B: You MEET her (sometime) as you know all that? A: Yes, I MEET her, so I know	Ja jeg ha-r yes I have-PRS AUX	mø-tt henne så jeg kjenn-er meet- PST PTCP her so I know-PRS her	Vâng tôi gặp cô ta rồi nên tôi biết yes I meet she TM so I know
Nr. 49	[A is still living in this town] I LIVE here for seven years.	Jeg ha-r I have-PRS AUX	bo-dd her i syv år live-PT PTCP here for seven years	tôi sống ở đây được bảy năm rồi. I live here for seven year TM
Nr. 59	A comes from the kitchen where he has just seen the sad remains of the cake. He tells B what he assumes happened.] The dog EAT our cake!	Hunden ha-r the dog have-PRS AUX	spis-t kaka vår eat-PST PTCP the cake our	Con chó ăn bánh của chúng tôi rồi. dog eat cake of we TM

*Đã* and *đã* appear in various types of contexts. However, in the majority of cases (36 of the total 42 cases), *đã* and/or *đã* occur in a context which the present study classifies as PP (nr. 2, nr. 3, nr. 30 and nr. 36). Of these 36 contexts, 20 of them correspond to current relevance perfect/resultative perfect (e.g. nr. 2) and 16 are contexts for the experiential perfect (e.g. nr. 36). *Đã* and *đã* appear in contexts that involve SP in Norwegian in only five cases. This observation can be made in sentence 49 where the situation described still holds, as well as in sentence 59 where *đã* seems to have an evidential function. As for the translations of the 70 sentences on the questionnaire where the preterite is the appropriate form in the Norwegian translation, the past time marker *đã* is used by one of the Vietnamese informants once out of all the 70 contexts. However, the usage of *đã* in these contexts has little to do with temporality. Rather, *đã* is used in order to emphasize something, as in sentence 24 in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The Vietnamese translation of sentence 24 in TPQ

Nr. 24 [Question: Do you know what remarkable event TAKE PLACE in 1550?]

Answer: In that year, our town BE FOUNDED

I	det året ble	byen	vår	grunnlagt
in	that year	become.PRT	the town	our found
Vào năm đó	thành phố	chúng tôi	đã	đư thành lập
in year	that town	many I		get found

The Vietnamese translation data provides information that is important for the present transfer study. Firstly, empirical support for Tenfjord's (1997) prediction that there exists a parallel between the system of encoding past time in Norwegian and the use of temporal/aspectual markers in Vietnamese is added by the findings. Secondly, additional information about the semantic overlap between the Norwegian present perfect and *đã* and *đã* and *đã* in Vietnamese is also provided by the analysis. Tenfjord's (1997) assumption concerned resultative perfect. However, the Vietnamese translation data show that *đã* and *đã* frequently appear in contexts with the experiential perfect as well. In fact, it is suggested by the present analysis that it is completeness that governs the distribution of *đã* and *đã*. Completeness is a common semantic point between the current relevance perfect/resultative perfect and the experiential perfect, and in 86%<sup>17</sup> of the 42 contexts for the Norwegian perfect in which *đã* and/or *đã* appear, the situation described refers to a completed action in the past. Finally, the analysis also clearly shows that there exists a zero contrast between Vietnamese and what the preterite in Norwegian grammaticalizes: purely past reference. When past time is marked by means of time markers in the Vietnamese translation data, it takes place in contexts describing a completed situation in the past.

### Past Time in Somali

Somali has a very complex grammar, and the basic structure for most suffixed verbs in Somali is this: [ROOT + LEX + AGR + INFL]. The morphological analysis of the Somali sentence *way keenay* ('She brought (it)') in (5) below illustrates the basic structure<sup>18</sup>:

5) <i>way</i>	<i>keenay</i>
<i>waa=ay</i>	<i>keen-t-ay</i>
<i>she.DM=CPRO.3.SG.F</i>	<i>bring-3.SG.F-PST SIMPLE</i>

Indeed, Somali has a very complicated morphology compared to Norwegian. Somali verbs carry information about tense, aspect and mood. This information is expressed mainly by affixes, but also by vowel alternations and accentual patterns. According to Saeed (1993: 85), there are three aspects and six moods that can be identified in Somali. There are three different categories that encode the notion of pastness (Saeed, 1993): *past*



*simple, past progressive and past habitual*. The past simple in Somali is used for completed actions in the past, the past progressive denotes actions in process in the past, and the past habitual expresses repeated or habitual actions in the past (1998: 74–86). The perfect does not exist as a grammatical category in Somali. According to Saeed (1998: 77), the past-simple in Somali includes both the 'still-going on' meaning of the English present perfect, and the 'complete' meaning of the English simple past. This implies that the past simple in Somali will cover some of the semantic aspects of the Norwegian present perfect category, and most likely content encoded in the prototypical perfect because it expresses completed situations in the past.

Table 3.4 shows how the 60 contexts for the Norwegian present perfect are encoded in Somali. As expected, the past simple in Somali will, in the majority of cases, be used in contexts where Norwegian native speakers use the present perfect, but contexts for the Norwegian present perfect are coded by means of other past forms as well.

Table 3.4. Somali translations of sentences in TPQ

Nr. 1	[A: I want to give your sister a book to read, but I don't know which one. Are there any of these books that she READ already?] B: Yes, she READ this book. Ja hun ha-r les-t denne boken yes she has-PRS AUX read- PST PTCP this book Haa, iyadu way akhriid-ay buugan yes she DM read-PST SIMPLE book
Nr. 2	[A: It seems that your sister never finishes books.] B: (That is not quite true.) She READ this book (=all of it). Hun ha-r les-t denne boken she has-PRS AUX read- PST PTCP this book Iyadu way akhriid-ay buugan yes she read-PST SIMPLE book
Nr. 4	Question: You MEET my sister (at any time in your life up to now)? Ha-r du noen gang mø-tt min søster? have-PRS AUX you ever meet- PST PTCP my sister? Adigu ma la kulant-aa walaashay? you Q with meet-PRS GEN my sister [Question: Do you know my sister?] Answer: Yes, I MEET her (so I know her). Ja jeg ha-r mø-tt henne Yes I have-PRS AUX meet- PST PTCP her Haa, iyadda waan la kulm-ay yes she DM with meet-PST SIMPLE

Table 3.4. (Continued)

Nr. 7	[Can you swim in this lake? (=Is it possible for anybody to swim in this lake?)] Answer: Yes, at least I SWIM in it several times. Ja jeg ha-r i det minste svøm-t her flere ganger yes I have-PRS AUX at least swim- PST PTCP here several times Haa, uguu jaraan dhowr jeer waan ku dabaash-ay yes at least several times DM in swim-PST SIMPLE [She is still watching television! How long she DO that?] Answer: she WATCH (it) for three hours. Hun ha-r se-tt på TV i tre timar she have-PRS AUX watch- PST PTCP on TV for three hours Saddex saacadood ayey daawan-ayse three hours she watch-PRS PROG [A is still living in this town]. I LIVE here for seven years. Jeg ha-r bo-dd her i syv år I have-PRS AUX live- PST PTCP here for seven years Amigu, halkan waxaan ku nool-a toddoba sanadood I here DM live-PRS GEN seven years [A is visiting a town she used to live in several years ago; now she lives somewhere else.] A. I LIVE here, so I know every street here. Jeg ha-r bo-dd her, så jeg kjenn-er hver eneste gate I have-PRS AUX live-PST PTCP here so I know-PRS every street Halkan, aadan waan u kala aqaan-aa wayo waan ku noolan jirey here every street DM know-PRS GEN because DM live-PST HAB [A tells what she has heard from her father. Nothing shows that she would believe it.] A. My father TELL me that when he BE a child, schools BE better than nowadays. Min far ha-r fortalt meg at da My father have-PRS AUX tell-PST.PTCP me that when han var liten, var skolen bedre enn i dag he be-PRT young be-PRT the school better than today abahay wuxuu iiga sheeke-eyey in father my DM me to about tell-PST PROG that marki uu yaraa, iskuuladu ka he CPRO be-child.PST SIMPLE schools better wanaagsan-aayeen siday manta yi-hiin be-PST SIMPLE the way today be-PRS GEN
Nr. 48	
Nr. 49	
Nr. 51	
Nr. 63	

In 77% (46 occurrences) of the sentences with a Norwegian present perfect, the past simple occurs in the Somali translation (sentences 1, 2, 6 and 7). These are prototypical contexts for the Norwegian present perfect. In seven sentences, the perfect contexts are translated by means of the present general in Somali (e.g. sentences 4 and 49). The latter example is interesting. The past and the present are combined by the temporal frame given in sentence 49. Since Saeed remarks that the past simple in Somali also includes the 'still-going on' meaning of the English present perfect, we should expect the Somali past simple to occur here as well, which it does not. Finally, in the remaining seven sentences in which a present perfect form is required in Norwegian, there are two occurrences of the past progressive in the Somali translation (e.g. nr. 68): one of the past habitual (sentence 51), and one occurrence of the present progressive (sentence 48).

The analysis of the Somali translation data shows that the prototypical perfect in Norwegian must, in the great majority of cases, be rendered by the simple past in Somali, which is a general past. However, in some contexts for the Norwegian perfect form, usually in secondary contexts, the temporal information must be encoded by means of other forms in Somali, such as a present general form, a present or past progressive form, or a past habitual form.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses specify how the effects of L1 influence are predicted to emerge in the texts written by the learners in the Vietnamese learner group and in the Somali learner group. These are based on previous findings and the L1-L2 contrastive relations involved. Several of the studies referred to in the literature review not only point to L1 influence, but also to the fact that the perfect category is subject to influence from the tense and aspect system in the learner's L1 in many cases, and moreover, that this transfer is particularly evident in the encoding of perfect contexts and often shows up as overuse of the perfect in preterite contexts. The findings from the contrastive analysis further warrant the specific hypotheses in the current study. Firstly, the Somali language does not encode the distinction that exists between the preterite and the present perfect in Norwegian. Contexts that require the present perfect in Norwegian are usually rendered through the past simple in Somali. In particular, the past simple in Somali encodes the content encoded in the PP in Norwegian. In order to use the Norwegian past forms correctly, Somali speakers have to notice that the Norwegian preterite does not cover all the functions of the past simple in Somali. They must also notice that they need an additional category, the Norwegian present perfect, to express the functions not covered by the Norwegian preterite. Hence, it can be expected that the Somali learners will have difficulties in the distribution of the two forms in accordance with the target language rules. By comparison with Somali, the contrastive data from Vietnamese point to the existence of a semantic parallel between the present

perfect in Norwegian, and the use of the time markers *đã* and *rồi* in Vietnamese. Whereas the translation data indicate that contexts for the preterite in Norwegian will not be marked by a time marker in Vietnamese, in many cases, when the present perfect in Norwegian describes a situation completed in the past, the presence of *đã* or *rồi*, or both, is required in a Vietnamese translation. To sum up, the following are the hypotheses to be tested in the present study:

- (1) The Vietnamese-speaking learners will use the present perfect correctly more frequently than the Somali-speaking learners in contexts in which a completed situation in the past is described.
- (2) The Somali-speaking learners will have a higher degree of incorrect use of the preterite than the Vietnamese-speaking learners in contexts where Norwegian requires the present perfect, and will also show a higher degree of incorrect use of the present perfect in preterite contexts.

### Coding procedure

Two types of analysis were required in order to test the hypotheses: an analysis of the learners' correct encoding of preterite contexts and contexts for the present perfect where a completed situation in the past was referred to (PP), as well as an analysis of the learners' incorrect encoding of preterite and present perfect contexts of all types. Hence, for the purpose of performing these analyses, each of the clauses that comprise the individual texts were analysed and coded as described below.

Firstly, a context analysis, which generated the identification of obligatory contexts for use of past morphology in Norwegian, was conducted based on internal properties of the clause (e.g. time expressions) as well as through contextual inference based on the parts of the discourse in which the clause occurs. These 161 texts generated 1984 obligatory contexts for the preterite and 235 obligatory contexts for present perfect.

Next, the learners' morphological marking of the temporal content in the clauses was analysed. These grammatically encoded clauses were coded as either present, preterite, present perfect or past perfect depending on which of these forms occurred in the clauses. Furthermore, clauses were coded as correct if the temporal morphological form used in a clause (preterite or present perfect) encoded the identified past context. In cases with no correspondence between the past context identified in the clause (e.g. a preterite context), and the temporal morphological form that occurs in the clause (e.g. a present tense form), the clause was coded as incorrect encoding, and the type of error distribution was registered. The analysis of the grammatical encoding in the clauses generated 1712 correct uses and 222 incorrect uses of the preterite, and 178 correct uses and 57 incorrect uses of the present perfect. The uses of the present perfect were also coded as PP or SP in accordance with the principles accounted for in the Contrastive section.

## Statistics

For testing differences between the L1 groups, the Mann-Whitney U test is used, a standard non-parametric test for identifying differences in the group medians of two independent groups. If a significant result is detected, additional steps will be taken. This is because the distributions for the variables measuring correctness rates are highly left-skewed because many texts obtain a 100% score, while the rest are scattered from 0–99%. However, the distributions tend to take the reversed form for some variables measuring error rates. Hence, if a significant difference is detected, and more than 30% of the texts obtain a 100% score or a 0% score, a post hoc chi-square test will be conducted. The chi-square test tests if the overall significance revealed in the initial testing is due to a significant difference between the groups in the proportion of texts having a 100% value or a 0% value for the quality measured. Effect sizes will also be reported. The effect sizes for the Mann-Whitney U test and the Wilcoxon signed rank test are indicated by  $r$ , which is calculated from the Z statistics from the U test by dividing the Z statistics by the square root of  $N$  (Larson-Hall, 2010: 377). For the chi-square test on a  $2 \times 2$  table, Cramer's V is used as a measure of effect size (Larson-Hall, 2010: 237).

## Results

### Analysis of correct encoding

The proportion of correct use of PP<sup>19</sup> is reported by Table 3.5, which is perfect in (obligatory) contexts for completed situations in the past. For instance, it can be ascertained from Table 3.5 that there are 1.9 contexts for the PP in the Vietnamese texts, on average, and that the Vietnamese learners inflect these correctly in 90.4% of the cases (mean). However, if the median is studied, it can be seen that 100% is the middle value in the data set, and from the last row, it is found that 26 out of the 51 Vietnamese texts inflect contexts for the PP in Norwegian correctly in all cases. The gap between the mean and the median is an indication that the distribution is skewed.

It is important to keep in mind that a feature that does not occur very often in the data set is not only being compared now, but that proportions in two rather small groups are also being compared. A notable difference is seen in correct uses of the present perfect in the predicted direction: Prototypical perfect is used correctly more frequently in the Vietnamese group (mean 90.4%) than in the Somali group (mean 80.8%), and the highest proportion of texts with 100% correct use of PP is found in the Vietnamese group (26 versus 21, or 51% versus 36%). However, a marginally significant result for the difference in medians between the groups ( $U = 4390$ ,  $z = -1.687$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ) and a small effect size ( $r = 0.2$ ) are revealed by a Mann-Whitney U test.

**Table 3.5** Comparison of the L1 groups' proportions of correct use of prototypical perfect (PP)

	Correct use of PP	
	No. of contexts for the present perfect	% of correct uses of PP
<b>Vietnamese</b>		
Mean	1.9	90.4
Median	2.0	100.0
Std.d.	1.1	23.4
Texts with 100%/texts total		26/51
<b>Somali</b>		
Mean	2.2	80.8
Median	2.0	100.0
Std.d.	1.7	29.2
Texts with 100%/texts total		21/58

A broader picture of the correctness rates in past contexts in the Vietnamese and Somali texts can be found in Table 3.6, which reports the proportion of correct uses of the present perfect and the preterite in all contexts.

**Table 3.6** Comparison of the L1 groups' proportions of correct uses of perfect and preterite contexts

	Correct use of present perfect		Correct use of preterite	
	No. of contexts	% of correct uses	No. of contexts	% of correct uses
<b>Vietnamese</b>				
Mean	1.8	83.4	13.6	87.1
Median	1.0	100.0	6.0	100.0
Std.d.	1.1	33.3	13.1	21.5
Texts with 100%/texts total		40/53		32/63
<b>Somali</b>				
Mean	2.1	72.5	15.2	85.1
Median	1.0	100.0	13.0	93.3
Std.d.	1.6	39.9	12.6	18.4
Texts with 100%/texts total		42/66		24/71

It can be seen from Table 3.6 that a pattern similar to the one observed in Table 3.5, which presented the proportion of correct encoding of the contexts for PP, is found. Also, the proportion of texts with 100% correct use of the present perfect is higher in the Vietnamese group (40 out of 53) than in the Somali group (42 out of 66). A one-tailed Mann-Whitney U test finds that

compared to Vietnamese texts, and that the effect size of this difference is medium (Cramer's  $V = 0.3$ ). Secondly, the proportion of perfect forms occurring incorrectly in contexts for the preterite is also higher in the Somali group. This difference was tested for significance by means of the same stepwise approach, which produced a significant result ( $U = 1292.5, z = -1.752, p = 0.04$  with a small effect size,  $r = 0.2$ ). A significantly higher proportion of Somali texts than Vietnamese texts were shown by a post hoc chi-square test to exhibit an incorrect distribution of the present perfect in preterite contexts ( $\chi^2 = 8.130, p = 0.04$ ), and that the size of this effect is small (Cramer's  $V = 0.2$ ).

This statistically significant pattern of incorrect encoding is illustrated by Figure 3.1. The bars represent individual texts, and the y-axis refers to the number of misuses of the present perfect and the preterite in place of each other per text. Clearly, the encoding of past time in Somali texts is characterized by this type of error. The grey bars, representing Somali texts, dominate (31 out of total 39 texts):

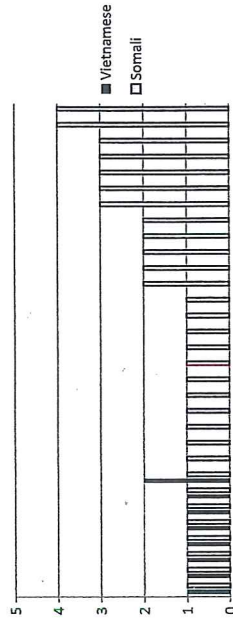


Figure 3.1 Texts with incorrect uses of the preterite and the present perfect in place of each other by L1

The incorrect use of the prototypical present perfect is scrutinized by the final analysis and an L1 difference seems to be present in Table 3.8:

Table 3.8 Comparison of the L1 groups' proportions of incorrect use of PP

	No. of perfect forms	% of incorrect uses of PP
<b>Vietnamese</b>		
Mean	1.9	9.6
Median	2.0	0.0
Std.d.	1.1	23.3
Texts with 0%/texts total		26/51
<b>Somali</b>		
Mean	2.2	19.2
Median	2.0	0.0
Std.d.	1.7	29.2
Texts with 0%/texts total		21/58

this difference is not significant ( $U = 1514.5, z = -1.533, p = 0.1$ ) and that the effect size is small ( $r = 0.1$ ). As for preterite contexts, the percentage of correct uses of the preterite by both groups is rather similar (87.1 and 85.1), and the difference between the proportions of correct uses in preterite contexts is also of no significance ( $U = 1904.5, z = -1.537, p = 0.1$ , small effect size,  $r = 0.1$ ).

Analysis of incorrect encoding

The next step is to analyse L1 differences in incorrect encoding of past contexts. This part of the analysis concerns those texts with clauses in which the temporal context was not encoded correctly due to the use of a preterite or a perfect in an inappropriate context (see the section describing the coding procedures). The two types of error distribution are presented in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Proportions of preterite and perfect forms incorrectly used in place of each other

	Preterite incorrectly occurring in a ps. perfect context	Prs. perfect incorrectly occurring in a preterite context	% incorrect uses	No. of forms	% incorrect uses
<b>Vietnamese</b>					
Mean	12.5	1.8	1.9	4.1	
Median	6.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	
Std.d.	13.1	8.9	1.1	13.4	
Min-Max	1-51	0.0-50.0	1-5	0.0-66.7	
Texts with 0%/texts total		64/67		46/51	
<b>Somali</b>					
Mean	13.2	8.2	2.2	10.3	
Median	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Std.d.	11.2	21.0	1.7	23.1	
Min-Max	1-46	0.0-100.0	1-10	0.0-100.0	
Texts with 0%/texts total		58/77		45/58	

A systematic difference between the two L1 groups in their error distribution is indicated by Table 3.7. Firstly, the incorrect use of the preterite in perfect contexts appears mainly in Somali texts. This type of error is found in only three Vietnamese texts (64 of 67 texts have no occurrences), but is found in 19 Somali texts. This difference is significant ( $U = 2066.0, z = -3.285, p = 0.0005$ ) and the effect size is medium ( $r = 0.3$ ). Because more than 30% of the texts obtain a 0% score (see the Statistics section), a post hoc chi-square test was performed showing that there is a significantly higher proportion of Somali texts with 0% incorrect encoding ( $\chi^2 = 11.291, p = 0.001$ ).

Very different trends between the two groups in their incorrect encoding of PP are shown by Table 3.8. The Somali informants use the PP (19.2) incorrectly more often than the Vietnamese do (9.6). The dispersion is vast, and Table 3.9 provides information about the individual variation:

**Table 3.9** Comparison of the L1 groups' incorrect PP use in relation to the number of texts with different proportions of errors

<i>P</i> used incorrectly	Frequency of texts	
	<i>V<sub>i</sub></i> ( <i>N</i> = 51)	<i>S<sub>o</sub></i> ( <i>N</i> = 58)
0.0	45	45
≤25.0	1	3
≤50.0	3	7
≤75.0	1	1
≤99.0	0	0
100.0	1	2
total <i>N</i>	51	58

It can be seen from Table 3.9 that in the Somali group the number of texts with incorrect use of the PP (16) is larger than the number of texts with incorrect use of the PP (6) in the Vietnamese group. This suggests an L1-related difference in the frequency of incorrect use of the PP. The observed tendency for Somali texts to have more incorrect use of the PP than Vietnamese texts was confirmed to be marginally significant by means of a two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test ( $U = 439.0$ ,  $z = -1.687$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ) and the effect size was small ( $r = 0.2$ ).

### Summing up: Outcome of the hypothesis predicting L1 effects

Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The evidence for the present perfect in contexts describing completed situations in the past being used correctly more frequently in Vietnamese texts than in Somali texts was simply not solid enough because only a marginally significant difference and small effect size were detected. The analysis of correct encoding of all types of present perfect contexts also showed that the Vietnamese learners did not use the present perfect in Norwegian correctly more often than the Somali learners. However, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed. The analysis of the incorrect encoding revealed systematic differences between the L1 groups. The Somali-speaking learners used the preterite incorrectly in present perfect contexts more often than the Vietnamese-speaking learners did, and the difference was significant at a very robust alpha level ( $p = 0.0005$ ) and with a medium effect size (Cramer's  $V = 0.3$ ). As for the incorrect use of the present perfect in preterite contexts, the frequency of this type of incorrect distribution was also higher in the

Somali group. However, this was a slightly weaker result than the difference in incorrect use of the preterite in present perfect contexts ( $p = 0.04$ ,  $r = 0.2$ ). The analyses of incorrect uses of the present perfect in prototypical contexts indicated that contexts describing a completed situation in the past are more challenging for the Somali-speaking learners than for the Vietnamese-speaking learners (marginally significant difference,  $p = 0.09$ , and a small effect size,  $r = 0.2$ ). These results will be discussed in the following section.

## Discussion

### The 'perfect candidate' for transfer

It seems that the L1 difference in the encoding of past time revealed in the current study is not so much about correctness, but instead constitutes a difference in distributional patterns that emerge as a particular type of incorrect encoding. The analysis supports one of the specific hypotheses for transfer: Somali-speaking learners use the preterite and the present perfect incorrectly in place of each other more often than Vietnamese-speaking learners do. In particular, the Somali-speaking learners' overuse of the preterite in Norwegian is solidly documented. However, even though the Somali learners have more difficulty distinguishing the preterite from the present perfect, we do not have evidence for claiming that the Vietnamese-speaking learners overall use the present perfect category more successfully than the Somali learners do. Surely, the detected L1 effects in the current study are first and foremost a matter of tense-marking errors: the Somali learners, whose L1 does not grammaticalize the content of the present perfect category, have more problems distinguishing the preterite from the present perfect form. The clearest proof of this is the high frequency of incorrect use of the preterite in present perfect contexts. This result aligns with previous findings presented earlier from studies of L2 Norwegian, L2 English and L2 Swedish of learners of different L1 backgrounds (Somali, Turkish, French, Russian, Polish), that show that the present perfect category poses challenges when L2 learners are not familiar with the category from their L1 or when there are formal or conceptual differences or similarities between a tense-aspect category in the L1 and the perfect category in the L2.

### Types of transfer

The two L1s in question in the current study are both very different from the Norwegian language, but they are distinguished from Norwegian in very different ways. Somali is a highly synthetic language with rich verb morphology. Yet, the semantic distinction that exists between the preterite and the present perfect in Norwegian is not encoded in Somali because a perfect category does not exist. In contrast, Vietnamese verbs are tenseless,

and temporal reference is not marked linguistically because it is accessible through the basic time of the contexts. However, the Vietnamese translations of the perfect questionnaire empirically document the existence of a semantic parallel between temporal/aspectual markers in Vietnamese and the present perfect category in Norwegian. In sum, as a consequence of these very different L1-L2 relations, Vietnamese-speaking and Somali-speaking learners of Norwegian exhibit different types of linguistic and conceptual knowledge when learning Norwegian, which in turn indicates that different types of transfer process could be going on in the Vietnamese and Somali learners. This can help explain why Vietnamese-speaking and Somali-speaking learners have a different degree of success with the present perfect in Norwegian.

Starting with the Vietnamese transfer, this is not a clear-cut example of linguistic transfer, such as Collins' (2002, 2004) and Karrer's (1999) studies for instance, where the learners will obviously find a target language structure (the present perfect in English and in Norwegian) that is formally similar to an L1 structure (the passé composé in French and the present perfect in German). Another possible interpretation of the process taking place could be suggested: conceptual transfer. This reasoning holds another type of understanding of what the identified similarity relation between Norwegian and Vietnamese encompasses. Namely, that this is an example of a similarity in conceptual distinctions underlying the linguistic encoding which can be found between languages. The distinction grammaticalized through the present perfect in Norwegian usually provides information about a present result or a present state of affairs. Accordingly, it can be argued that the conceptualization of time in Norwegian entails two fundamental distinctions: the past-nonpast distinction grammaticalized in the preterite-present opposition, and the past-present result distinction grammaticalized in the contrast between the preterite and the present perfect. According to Jarvis and Pavlenko, speakers develop sensitivity towards conceptual distinctions that are encoded in the language they are exposed to through the language socialization process (2008: 73). Norwegians learning their L1 are tuned to different distinctions than are native speakers of languages with other sets of grammatical categories, one of them being the fundamental distinction between pure reference to the past (the preterite) and reference to a present state resulting from a past event (the present perfect). In this case, despite the enormous contrast between the Norwegian language system and the Vietnamese language system, there would be a similarity in conceptualization between the languages in that both languages direct their speakers to pay attention to the specific distinction in time accounted for here, which in Norwegian requires the use of a present perfect tense form, and which in Vietnamese requires the use of *đã* and *rồi*. Accordingly, the Vietnamese speakers are possibly supported by their L1 when acquiring the present perfect form in Norwegian. Remember that the Vietnamese speakers have less

trouble using the present perfect correctly in prototypical contexts, a result which aligns with the reasoning given here because the present perfect in Norwegian has the closest parallel to *đã* and *rồi* in Vietnamese.

A reasonable interpretation of the L1 effects on the encoding of present perfect contexts in the Somali group is that the Somali learners overuse the preterite in present perfect contexts because they make intralingual identifications between the Somali general past and the Norwegian preterite. This is also evident in the analysis of the incorrect use of the prototypical perfect, which is marginally and significantly more prevalent in the Somali data than in the Vietnamese data. The Somali-speaking learners have more problems with PP because this type of perfect is often used to code contexts that would be candidates for the Somali general past, a form which resembles the preterite in Norwegian. This result may serve as an indication that the Somali learners are making interlingual identifications between the preterite in Norwegian and the general past in Somali because a similarity relation exists. The Somali learners probably understand at some level that there exists an underlying similarity between these languages in that both languages, by means of different types of verb inflection, supply information about when the situation referred to took place, and moreover, that this information is something which all sentences require. However, this correspondence between Norwegian and Somali exists at a rather abstract level, and according to Ringbom's (2007) types of contrastive relations,<sup>20</sup> it is probably at a level that is too abstract for the learner to even reflect upon consciously and be able to exploit in learning the L2:

The zero relation does not mean that the learner finds nothing at all that is relevant to L1 as the learning progresses. There are, after all, some linguistic universals common to all languages. But the level of abstraction is too high that an average learner cannot easily notice features that a totally different TL [target language] has in common with L1. The zero relation merely means that items and patterns in the TL at early stages of learning appear to have little or no perceptible relations to the L1 or any other language the learner knows. **The learner's L1 may lack the concepts necessary to perceive fundamental distinctions in the TL.** (Ringbom, 2007: 6, author's own emphasis added)

If we consider the fact that a perfect category is missing in Somali, the last line in bold in Ringbom's quote is particularly interesting regarding the possibility of describing the relation between Norwegian and Somali encoding of time as a zero relation. This opens for interpreting the transfer effects in the Somali data as conceptual instead of linguistic, or possibly both. It could be argued that Somali speakers are not socialized through their L1 to pay attention to this particular distinction when encoding events. This possibly makes them less sensitive than Vietnamese learners of Norwegian to

the distinction captured in the Norwegian present perfect. To put it differently, at this particular point in the encoding of time in Norwegian, the Somali learners might face a greater challenge in restructuring their conceptualization of time than the Vietnamese learners, who have probably developed a stronger awareness of this particular distinction, which enables them to encode present perfect contexts more easily and maybe also earlier than Somali learners do. This interpretation of the difference in incorrect use of the preterite and encoding of present perfect contexts as a matter of conceptual transfer is supported by the new theoretical accounts of the relation between cognition, language and crosslinguistic influence as well as by findings generated from studies within these new frameworks (e.g. von Steutterheim & Carroll, 2006). The L1 effects documented in the Somali texts can be understood in the framework of Slobin's thinking for speaking hypothesis as well as Jarvis and Pavlenko's perspective on conceptual transfer because the L1-L2 differences analysed concern not only structural differences, but also conceptual differences that underlie the forms and structures. In addition, temporal distinctions are abstract relations and not visible distinctions that can be observed by the eye. According to Slobin (1993, 1996), Kellerman (1995), and the more recent theoreticians exploring the relation between language and cognition, linguistic categories coding such notions are the ones that learners typically have a hard time restructuring when learning a new and different language. Furthermore, Jarvis and Pavlenko consider 'L2 learners' failure to mark temporality in accordance with the language-specific temporal system of the target language' (2008: 142) as one of the possible outcomes of transfer originating at the conceptual level. In that case, if we bring in Jarvis's (2000) perspective that conceptual transfer results from something very different than a process of transference based on intralingual identifications between L1 items and L2 items, the transfer effects observed in the Somali texts in the current study may also be interpreted as a matter of L1 influence arising as an inert outcome.

## Conclusion

As cited in the introduction, Bardovi-Harlig (2000) did not find strong evidence for claiming the L1 to be an important variable in the L2 acquisition of temporality. The principal reason for this claim is believed by this study to be found in how studies of temporality have typically been designed and carried out: they have largely been designed to reveal common paths in language development, and the learner's L1 has mostly been treated as a secondary variable. It is my view that the current study has shown that in order for transfer effects to be identified, the analysis must rely on systematic investigations of group internal and group external behaviour in transfer studies as

requirements that are captured in Jarvis's (2000) framework for transfer studies, and which the current transfer study has used. However, Bardovi-Harlig did add that transfer effects might be found 'in the details', and it is believed that this is what is actually demonstrated in the current study. The transfer effects observed emerge from a close scrutiny of how the different temporal contexts are encoded in the learners' interlanguages, and not merely from a comparison of correctness rates between the L1 groups. The present study has demonstrated L1-specific patterns in learners' use of the present perfect and preterite in L2 Norwegian. From these patterns, which have been documented in previous studies as well, the perfect rises as a 'perfect candidate' for the study of transfer in L2 acquisition of temporal morphology.

## Notes

- (1) *The European Science Foundation Project* (the ESF project) studied language acquisition in adult immigrants living in Western Europe. One of the research teams investigated temporality in a second language (Dietrich *et al.*, 1995).
- (2) According to Bardovi-Harlig (2000), one can distinguish between two approaches to the acquisition of temporal expressions: the *meaning-oriented* (or concept-oriented or semantically-oriented) approach and the *form-oriented* (including Sato's 1990 *form-to-function* studies) approach. The meaning-oriented approach investigates how a concept, e.g. pastness, is expressed through pragmatic, lexical and/or morphological devices. Form-oriented studies start at the other end and investigate the distribution of particular forms, and ask 'how and where it is used by the learners' (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000: 11). The Norwegian tense-aspect studies share features of both these approaches; however, they are characterized by their emphasis on the underlying meaning of the forms.
- (3) According to Bardovi-Harlig (2000: 419), findings from studies of the order of emergence of verb morphology in several Germanic L2s (Swedish, Dutch, English, German, French, Spanish and Italian) lay the basis for posing the following acquisitional sequences for tense and aspect morphology: present (default form) – simple past (the past – nonpast distinction is acquired first) – present perfect – past perfect.
- (4) Bardovi-Harlig attributes this observation to the morphosyntactic complexity of the perfect category (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000: 180–182).
- (5) This does not apply to the extended now perfect in Norwegian as in *Jeg har bodd i Bergen i syv år* ('I have lived in Bergen for seven years'). According to Randen, this use of the present perfect is more related to imperfective aspect (Randen, 1999: 68).
- (6) 20 of the 51 Turkish informants in Moskvil's study did not pass the test. The texts in Helland (2005) and Janik (2010) were all written by informants who passed the test. However, Moskvil's analysis did not reveal important differences in error distribution between the fail-texts and the pass-texts (Moskvil, 2004: 103).
- (7) See Gufjord (2013: 145–146) for detailed information about the distribution of the 161 informants across various categories related to their personal backgrounds.
- (8) The texts are also linked to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, CEFR. However, this level placement is not taken into account here because the CEFR level does not influence the results presented in this chapter (Gufjord, 2013: 172).
- (9) The term *situation* is used in the same manner as Comrie (1985: 5): as a general term for events, processes and states.
- (10) The historical sources of the perfect in many European languages, including Norwegian, are two resultative constructions (Bybee & Dahl, 1989; Lindstedt,

- 2000): a possessive construction *have* plus a participle, as exemplified in Norwegian in (a), and a copula construction *be* plus the participle of the main verb (b):
- (a) *Ek hefi brefti skriffti > Eg har skriveit brevet* (I have written the letter)  
 (b) *Gestirnir eru farnir > Gjestene er reist* (The guests are gone)
- (11) The past perfect form is excluded from the investigation because it occurs very infrequently in the data (only 44 contexts and 35 uses of the form).  
 (12) The experiential perfect indicates that a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present' Comrie (1976: 59).  
 (13) The basic time is 'the time which has been made clear in the context up to that point' (Thompson, 1965: 209).  
 (14) The numbering of the sentences in Table 3.1 corresponds to the original numbering in the perfect questionnaire available in the appendix in Gufjord (2013: 342–348), which is downloadable.
- (15) See Appendix for abbreviations.  
 (16) There is only one exception. However, the informant explains that *4a* in that specific context is used for emphasis (Gufjord, 2013: 95).  
 (17) (20 current relevance + 16 experiential SFs = 36 out of 42)  
 (18) Apparently, this is a rather consistent system; however, the morphological pattern in Somali is very difficult to see because of a rich system of lexical affixes that can be added to many categories, such as verbs (Saeed, 1998: 22). This affixation process leads to sound changes that make it challenging to see past the fusion of forms and the change of lexical meaning that occurs after an affix is added to the root (Saeed, 1998: 22).  
 (19) Since PP (prototypical perfect) and SP (secondary perfect) are mutually exclusive categories, it is sufficient to analyse only one of the categories.  
 (20) Ringbom (2007) outlines three types of relations which he believes can be found between languages: similarity relation, contrast relation and zero relation. A similarity relation exists if 'an item or pattern in L1' (Ringbom, 2007: 5). A contrast relation is functionally similar to a form or pattern in L1, but knows nevertheless that there are also some underlying similarities between them (Saeed, 1998: 6). A zero relation is described as existing when the learner does not assume the L1 knowledge to be significant for the learning task.

## References

- Ayoun, D. and Salaberry, R.M. (2008) Acquisition and English tense-aspect morphology by advanced French instructed learners. *Language Learning* 58 (8), 555–595.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2000) Tense and aspect in language acquisition: Form, meaning and use. *Language Learning* 50 (1), xi–491.
- Bybee, J. (1985) *Morphology: a Study of the Relation between Meaning and Form*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Bybee, J.L. and Dahl, Ö. (1989) The creation of tense and aspect systems in the languages of the world. *Studies in Language* 13 (1), 51–103.
- Bybee, J., Perkins, R. and Pagliuca, W. (1994) *The Evolution of Grammar: Tense, Aspect, and Modality in the Languages of the World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Carlsen, C. (2012) Proficiency level – a fuzzy variable in computer learner corpora. *Applied Linguistics* 33 (1), 1–24.
- Collins, L. (2002) The role of L1 influence and lexical aspect in the acquisition of temporal

- Collins, L. (2004) The particulars on universals: A comparison of the acquisition of tense-aspect morphology among Japanese and French-speaking learners of English. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 61, 251–274.
- Comrie, B. (1976) *Aspect: an Introduction to the Study of Verbal Aspect and Related Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Comrie, B. (1985) *Tense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dahl, Ö. (1985) *Tense and Aspect Systems*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Dahl, Ö. (2000) *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Dietrich, R., Klein, W. and Noyau, C. (1995) *The Acquisition of Temporality in a Second Language*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins.
- Golden, A., Kulbrandstad, I.I. and Tenfjord, K. (2007) Norsk andrespråksforskning – utviklingslinjer fra 1980 til 2005. *Nordand* 2 (1), 5–41.
- Golden, A. (2012) Metaphorical expressions in L2 production: The importance of text topic in corpus research. In F. MacArthur, J.L. Oncins-Martínez, M. Sánchez-García and A.M. Fiquer-Frizz (eds) *Metaphor in Use: Context, Culture, and Communication* (pp. 185–148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Granger, S. (2003) The corpus approach: a common way forward for contrastive linguistics and translation studies? In S. Granger, J. Lerot and S. Péc-Tyson (eds) *Corpus-based Approaches to Contrastive Linguistics and Translation Studies* (pp. 17–29). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Gufjord, A.K.H. (2013) Grammatical encoding of past time in L2 Norwegian. The roles of L1-influence and verb semantics, Doctoral dissertation. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen. (downloadable here: <https://bora.uib.no/handle/1956/6867>)
- Gufjord, A.K.H. (2015) L2 acquisition of temporality: Findings from a corpus based study of the grammatical encoding of past time. *BELLS* 6, 68–86. See <https://bells.uib.no/index.php/bells/article/view/809>
- Hammarberg, B. and Viberg, Å. (1977) The place-holder constraint, language typology, and the teaching of Swedish to immigrants. *Studia Linguistica* 31 (2), 106–163.
- Helland, A.K. (2005) *I møte med eit tempusprominent språk: ei undersøking av mellomspråka til vietnamesiske norskspråklearar* Encounter with a tense prominent language: a study of Vietnamese speaking learners of Norwegian], Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen.
- Janik, M.O. (2010) *En polakke i norsk fortid. Om feil de polskspråklige norskspråklærerne gjør i bruk av perfektum og preteritum* [A Pole in the Norwegian Past. About errors produced by Polish speaking learners of Norwegian regarding perfect and preterite]. *Folia Scandinavica* 11, 87–100.
- Jarvis, S. (2000) Methodological rigor in the study of transfer: Identifying L1 influence in the interlanguage lexicon. *Language Learning* 50 (2), 245–309.
- Jarvis, S. and Pavlenko, A. (2008) *Crosslinguistic Influence in Language and Cognition*. New York: Routledge.
- Larson-Hall, J. (2010) *A Guide to doing Statistics in Second Language Research using SPSS*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Karret, I.U. (1999) *Falske venner: en studie av preteritums-og perfektumsformene i tyske språklæreres norske mellomspråk* [False friends? A study of German speaking learners of Norwegian regarding the forms used in preterite and perfect tense]. Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen.
- Kellerman, E. (1995) Crosslinguistic influence: Transfer to nowhere? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 15, 125–150.
- Klein, W. (2009) How time is encoded. In W. Klein and P. Li (eds) *The Expression of Time* (pp. 39–82). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Lindstedt, J. (2000) The perfect – aspectual, temporal and evidential. In Ö. Dahl (ed.) *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe* (pp. 365–388). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Mitchell, R., Myles, F. and Marsden, E. (2013) *Second Language Learning Theories*. London: Routledge.



- Moskvič, M.E. (2004) Temporalitet i morsmål, målspråk og mellomspåk, Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen.
- Ngo, B.N. and Tran, B.H. (2001) The Vietnamese language learning framework. *Journal of Southeast Asian Language Teaching* 10, 1–24.
- Philipsson, A. (2007) Interrogative clauses and verb morphology in L2 Swedish. Theoretical interpretations of grammatical development and effects of different elicitation techniques. Doctoral dissertation. Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University.
- Polunenko, A. (2004) English past tense forms in Russian's speakers oral and written production. Unpublished MA thesis. Department of Linguistics, Ohio University.
- Randen, G.T. (1999) Aspektualitet: en sammenlignende studie av norsk, russisk og russiske informanternes norske mellomspåk. Unpublished MA thesis. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen.
- Ringbom, H. (2007) *Cross-linguistic Similarity in Foreign Language Learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Saeed, J.I. (1998) *Somali Reference Grammar*. Kensington, Md.: Dunwoody Press.
- Sato, C.J. (1990) *The Syntax of Conversation in Interlanguage Development*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Shirai, Y. (2009) Temporality in first and second language acquisition. In W. Klein and F. Li (eds) *The Expression of Time* (pp. 167–193). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Slobin, D.I. (1998) Adult language acquisition: A view from child language study. In C. Perdue (ed.) *Adult Language Acquisition: Cross-linguistic Perspectives* (pp. 289–252). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Slobin, D.I. (1996) From 'thought and language' to 'thinking for speaking'. In J.J. Gumperz and S.C. Levinson (eds) *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (pp. 70–96). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tenford, K. (1995) On the acquisition of tense... In M. Kalin and S. Latomaa (eds) *Nordens språk som andraspråk 3: tredje forskarsymposiet i Jyväskylä 24.–25.3.1995*. Jyväskylä universitet: Högskolornas språksentrum.
- Tenford, K. (1997) *Å ha en fortid på vietnamsisk: en kasusstudie av fire vietnamsiske språklærere utvikling av grammatisk fortidsreferanse og perfektum* [To have a past in Vietnamese: A case study of the development of past reference and perfect tense by four Vietnamese speaking learners], Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Faculty of Humanities, University of Bergen.
- Thompson, L.C. (1965) *A Vietnamese Grammar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- von Stutterheim, C. and Carroll, M. (2006) The impact of grammatical temporal categories on ultimate attainment in L2 learning. In H. Byrnes, H. Weger-Guntharp and K. Sprang (eds) *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities* (pp. 40–53). Georgetown: Georgetown University Press.

## Appendix

### List of abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
AGR	agreement
ADV	adverb(ial)
AUX	auxiliary
CLF	classifier
CPRO	clitical pronoun
DM	declarative marker
F	feminine
FOC	focus word
INF	infinitive
INFL	inflection
LEX	lexical affix
M	masculine
ROOT	verb root
PST	past
PRS	present
PRT	preterite
PTCP	participle
PRS GEN	present general
PRS PRF	present perfect
PRS PROG	present progressive
PST HAB	past habitual
PST PRF	past perfect
PST PROG	past progressive
PST SIMPLE	past simple
PL	plural
SG	singular
TM	time marker
Q	question marker

Table 3.10 (Continued)

	Vietnamese (N = 73)	Somali (N = 88)
Duration of L2 instruction (months)	not reported	19
	less than 6	2
	6-12	16
	13-24	38
	25-36	10
	37 or more	3
Do you practice Norwegian? (outside the classroom)	no answer	3
	never	0
	seldom	40
	daily	45
Do you socialize with Norwegians?	no answer	5
	yes	72
	no	11

Table 3.10 Overview of personal information about the informants

	Vietnamese (N = 73)	Somali (N = 88)
Gender	female	26
	male	62
Age group	not reported	0
	less than 25	23
	25-34	47
	35-44	14
	45-55	4
	more than 55	0
Years of residence in Norway (before taking the test)	less than 1	4
	up to 2	43
	up to 3	23
	up to 4	8
	up to 5	4
	5 and more	6
English skills	not reported	5
	none	0
	basic	15
	intermediate	50
	advanced	18
	not reported	2
Educational background	not reported	25
	elementary	34
	high school	21
	higher educ.	23
	other	4
	not reported	5
Current status	not reported	15
	working	39
	studying	17
	applying to jobs	12
Amount of L2 instruction (hours)	other	12
	not reported	6
	201-400	13
	401-500	14
	501-850	29
	851-1500	20
	1501-2000	3
	2001-3000	3
		0
		6